



Australian Government

Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency

# Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency Annual Operational Plan 2020-21 and Corporate Plan



# Our Operational Plan 2020-21

## Who we are

The Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency (ASEA) was established in 2013 to coordinate the implementation of the National Strategic Plan for Asbestos Management and Awareness (NSP). The NSP aims to prevent exposure to asbestos fibres in order to eliminate asbestos-related disease in Australia.

ASEA is a non-corporate entity under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*. The Chief Executive Officer is appointed under the [Asbestos Safety and Eradication Act 2013](#) and performs functions in accordance with that Act. ASEA staff are engaged under the *Public Service Act 1999*.




## What we do

ASEA coordinates national actions to improve asbestos awareness and the effective and safe management, removal and disposal of asbestos. ASEA is not a regulator. Our key functions under the *Asbestos Safety and Eradication Act 2013* (the Act) are to:

- Encourage, coordinate, monitor and report on the implementation of the NSP, as well as reviewing and amending the plan as required and publishing and promoting it
- Liaise with Commonwealth, state, territory, local and other governments, agencies or bodies about reviewing and implementing the NSP and asbestos safety
- Commission, monitor and promote research about asbestos safety.

## What is the NSP?

The NSP facilitates a nationally consistent and coordinated approach to asbestos awareness, management and removal. The NSP 2019-2023 contains four national priorities:

1. **Improve asbestos awareness to influence behavioural change** 
2. **Identification and effective legacy management** 
3. **Safe prioritised removal and effective waste management** 
4. **International collaboration and leadership** 

NSP 2019-2023 also contains nine targets to measure progress against the national priorities.

This 2020-21 Operational Plan is consistent with the principles and national priorities of NSP 2019-2023.

## Why it matters

- An estimated 4,000 Australians die annually from asbestos-related disease – double the annual road toll.
- Asbestos was used in over 3,000 products prior to 1990.
- Over 6,000 tonnes of asbestos is illegally dumped in Australia each year
- There is no known safe level of exposure to asbestos.

## How we carry out our functions

**Consultation, collaboration and cooperation:** we work with all tiers of government as well as non-government groups to ensure consistent and coordinated awareness messages and asbestos management approaches.

**Evidence-based decision making:** we identify, analyse and disseminate high-quality Australian and international evidence, and where gaps exist, commission national research and data collection.

**Transparency:** we undertake our activities in an open and transparent manner so that stakeholders have access to all relevant information.

**Precaution:** we take a proactive and precautionary approach to how we consider and address the risks of asbestos exposure.

**Sharing best practice:** our actions and resources are aimed at reducing duplication across jurisdictions, encouraging innovation and driving continuous improvement in asbestos awareness and management.

## ASEA's key activities during 2020-21

	Supporting the implementation of the National Strategic Plan	Liaising with government and non-government bodies	Research and data
Activity	Develop reporting templates and other materials to assist governments implement NSP 2019-2023	Host events to enable collaboration and cooperation on asbestos safety issues	Conduct annual awareness survey
	Continue to develop and distribute consistent awareness messages, including consistency in public health messaging, with the core objective of encouraging behavioural change	Collaborate to develop a national picture of where ACMs are located	Analyse findings and recommendations from research conducted under NSP 2014-2018 to identify where further action and research may be needed
	Identify gaps in, and improvements to, asbestos-related laws	Continue to support the whole-of-government strategy to preventing asbestos containing materials entering Australia	Examine how to improve the collection of data to measure the targets under NSP 2019-2023
	Identify and share effective practices in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; asbestos awareness training</li> <li>&gt; managing asbestos-cement water pipes</li> <li>&gt; managing asbestos in emergencies and natural disasters</li> </ul>	Support local government with their asbestos-related responsibilities	Identify and report on leading Australian research on asbestos-related disease
		Continue to assist South-East Asian and Pacific countries in moving towards implementing asbestos bans	

### Performance Measures

The effectiveness of these activities will assist in ensuring there is a nationally consistent and coordinated approach to asbestos awareness, management and removal. Performance will be measured against the targets below:

Performance Measures	Targets
Number of jurisdictions that have developed action plans aligned with NSP 2019-2023 and are reporting against the targets	All jurisdictions
Level of satisfaction of Asbestos Safety and Eradication Council members and other stakeholders	80% satisfaction
Level of public awareness about asbestos safety	Awareness survey shows increase in awareness
Effective stakeholder engagement	Increased reach of ASEA's communications
National adoption of Asbestos Awareness Week	All jurisdictions promote Asbestos Awareness Week and adopt ASEA's messages

# Our Corporate Plan

Section 5A(2) of the Act states that the NSP is taken to be ASEA's corporate plan for the purposes of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*. However, the NSP is designed to be implemented by all governments across Australia and does not include the requirements for corporate plans under the [Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014](#).

Until such time that the Act is amended, this section includes the additional matters that must be included in corporate plans.

The purpose of ASEA, its statutory functions, key activities and performance measures are as set out in this Operational Plan for 2020-21 and in the Portfolio Budget Statements.

## Our Operating Environment

Australia imposed a total ban on the mining, manufacture and use of asbestos on 31 December 2003. However, the past use of asbestos has left us with a harmful legacy. Australia has one of the highest rates of asbestos-related diseases of any country in the world. Some 4,000 Australians currently die each year from past exposure to asbestos, which is more than double the number of annual Australian road deaths.

Many public and commercial buildings, homes and infrastructure still contain large amounts of ageing asbestos-containing materials. Asbestos, if not managed safely, poses a significant public health threat. Ensuring the safe management, removal and disposal of asbestos involves governments at all levels, across a range of areas, as well as a network of organisations and people that can influence and assist in achieving the aims and targets of the NSP 2019-2023.

ASEA plays a critical role in working with these stakeholders to prevent exposure to asbestos fibres by coordinating practical and targeted actions across Australia. ASEA will assist governments implement NSP 2019-2023 and track performance against the national targets. We will identify any performance gaps and recommend new activities. We will promote nationally consistent messaging to ensure everyone in the community understands the risks of asbestos exposure and knows what action to take.

## Our Capabilities

Our capabilities enable us to achieve our key functions. The strategies and initiatives we use to grow our capabilities and improve our performance are:

**Data:** *Become a more data-driven organisation and continue developing our data management capability to establish an evidence base and measure progress.*

We will gather data from our stakeholders and coordinate targeted initiatives such as our awareness survey, to more effectively evaluate our national performance and measure progress of the nine NSP 2019-2023 targets.

**Communication:** *Deliver consistent asbestos safety messages through coordinated engagement and communication.*

Through our dedicated Communications team, Asbestos Awareness Committee and targeted engagement activities such as conferences, bilateral meetings, and summits with key stakeholders, we will raise awareness and develop consistent awareness messages to encourage behaviour change.

**Workforce:** *Our people are essential to the ongoing success of the agency. Attracting and developing a workforce of highly skilled, dynamic, outward looking and resilient employees is central to achieving our key functions.*

In February 2019, a new organisational structure was put in place aligned to our key function of coordinating the implementation of the NSP. We will continue to adapt and improve our internal capabilities by adapting skills and fostering talent. We offer learning opportunities that build and strengthen our workforce.

**Engagement:** *We proactively engage with new and existing stakeholders.*

We will continue to engage Commonwealth, state, territory, local and other governments, agencies or bodies, business and community, peak bodies, industry, research and non-government organisations to undertake our key activities, deliver our priorities and perform our key function. We will identify and recognise the risks we share with others and consult to identify, understand and manage risks.

## Governance

The Chief Executive Officer is advised by the Asbestos Safety and Eradication Council established under Part 5 of the Asbestos Safety and Eradication Act 2013. The Council's key functions relate to the NSP and involve monitoring its implementation by Commonwealth, state and territory and local governments. Other functions include providing advice and making recommendations to ASEA's Chief Executive Officer and providing advice to the Minister about asbestos safety.

## Risk Management

Management of risk enables the successful achievement of our organisational outcomes and ensures effective and ethical use of Australian Government resources. The policies and procedures for managing risk are described in ASEA's Risk Management Framework.

ASEA's Risk Management Framework is determined by a broader Commonwealth framework of legislation, Commonwealth policies, national standards and guidelines and meets the requirements of section 16 of the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013. All risk identification, analysis, evaluation and treatment for ASEA operations are recorded and updated within ASEA's Risk Register.

The management of risk is everyone's responsibility and is essential to ASEA's day-to-day business activities, discussions and decisions. We consult and cooperate with our stakeholders to actively manage our shared risks.

While managing risk is everyone's responsibility, some officers have particular risk responsibilities.

- ASEA's Executive receives quarterly updates on risk activity, including strategic risks and key risk initiatives. The Executive are responsible for establishing, reviewing and endorsing ASEA's Strategic Risk Statement, approving the Risk Appetite Statement and leading by example to support creating a positive risk culture.
- ASEA's Audit Committee's role is to provide independent advice and assurance to the CEO on ASEA's control framework, including risk oversight and management. Regular reporting on ASEA's risk profile is provided to the Audit Committee.

Risk management activities are also reported in ASEA's annual report.

Over the period of this operational plan, we will continue to integrate, strengthen and embed our risk management framework in order to deliver on our priorities. We will regularly review our risk register to ensure ratings give a realistic appraisal of the risk profile and align with ASEA's risk management framework. Any high risks will be actively controlled.