

## Welcome to the second ASEA newsletter, Summer edition

Issue 2, Summer 2015

Welcome to the second *ASEA matters* newsletter issued by the agency.

We hope to keep you well informed on the projects the agency is working on and the implementation of the national strategic plan.

Please feel free to contact the agency with information or stories that you'd like to share with others.

Stay tuned for more newsletters in 2016. Merry Christmas and a happy and safe New Year!



### Inside this issue:

2015 Conference	1
Research Advisory Committee and Framework	2
Best practice case studies	2
Photo highlights from the conference	3
About the agency	4
Rapid Response Protocol and stopping imports	4

## 2015 conference-a huge success

International Conference on  
**ASBESTOS AWARENESS  
AND MANAGEMENT 2015**  
Towards an asbestos-free Australia  
**22-24 November 2015**  
Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre



The 2015 International Conference on Asbestos Awareness and Management held in Brisbane was a huge success and has set the bar very high for the 2016 conference.

Over 360 delegates converged on the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre to hear International keynote speakers and local experts talk about asbestos awareness and management, with a particular focus on best practice and international leadership, particularly in South East Asia.

This year we had delegates from Vietnam, Laos, New

Zealand, United States, United Kingdom, Papua New Guinea, Sri Lanka, Belgium and the Netherlands.

The conference featured International speakers including Judith Hackitt, Chair of the Health and Safety Executive in the UK, Dr Luong Mai Anh and Dr Tran Tuan from Vietnam and Dr Barry Castleman from the United States.

The conference also looked at the impact to the community resulting from exposure to asbestos with the Australian Stories: the impact of asbestos-related disease on the

community session on day one and the Acknowledgement to Lives Lost introduction of day two.

See page 3 of this newsletter for some photo highlights of the conference. More photos will be loaded onto the agency website soon.

Materials from the conference have started to be loaded onto the agency website with more to be added over time.

Please also take the time to complete the feedback survey sent to you last week. It is very important to let us know how we can improve the 2016 event.

### Community events and awareness opportunities

If your organisation has an event you would like the agency to publicise, send the details through to the [events email address](#)





## Research Advisory Committee and Research Framework

In line with Section 8(f) of the [Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency Act 2013](#), the Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency supports research related to asbestos risks in Australia through coordination, monitoring, promoting and commissioning research about asbestos safety. This supports the agency's role to coordinate the [National Strategic Plan for Asbestos Management and Awareness](#), which includes a research strategy.

To assist the agency to achieve the aims of the research strategy, it established a Research Advisory Committee to provide advice on research priority areas including:

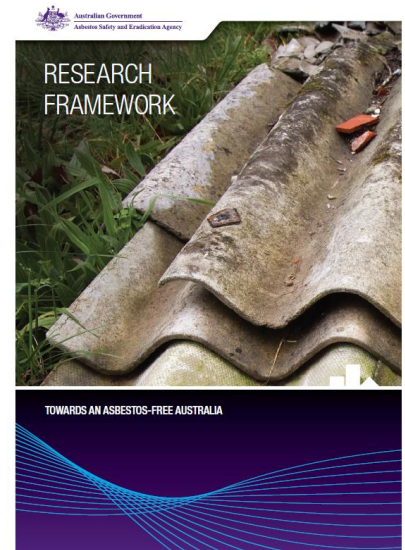
- best ways to achieve value for money by reviewing current and future research projects
- supporting the agency to bring together researchers to achieve a common goal

- endorsement of the agency's research plan
- best practice approaches to research methodology to answer priority research questions
- feedback on research-focussed projects.

The inaugural meeting of the Research Advisory Committee was held on 25 June 2015. The committee has overseen the development of the Research Framework and meets at least three times per year to provide advice to the agency. The membership of this committee is broad and includes experts in asbestos, public health, workplace health and safety, and evaluation.

### How can you be involved?

If you have feedback on the research framework, or are doing any research you would like to tell us about, please email the agency at [secretariat@asbestossafety.gov.au](mailto:secretariat@asbestossafety.gov.au)



member	organisation
Ms Tanya Segelov	Chair, member of the Asbestos Safety and Eradication Council
Prof Tim Driscoll	University of Sydney
Dr Deb Vallance	Australian Manufacturing Workers Union
Dr Peta Odgers	Department of Employment
Ms Carolyn Davis	Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry

## Best practice case studies launched at conference

The agency has launched a range of best practice case studies on asbestos management at its conference on Monday 23 November 2015 in Brisbane.

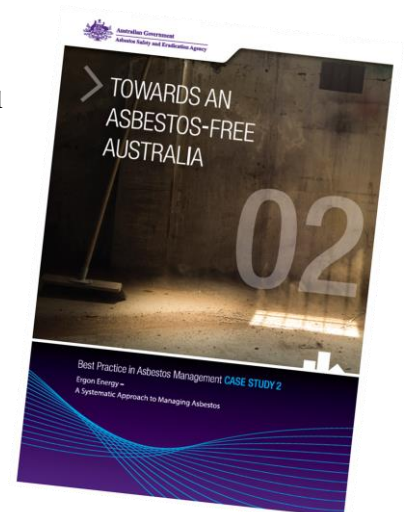
In the second half of the 2014–15 year, the agency commenced a project to identify and promote a range of organisations and individuals currently demonstrating best practice across a variety of areas in asbestos management.

The goal of this project was to highlight examples of best-practice asbestos management across Australia, and promote these examples to the wider community and their industry contemporaries while encouraging them to employ similar innovative ideas or practices that lead to safer handling/management of ACMs.

What the agency found was that there is a significant amount of knowledge in industry and the community about the dangers of exposure to asbestos that is translating into a strong commitment towards workplace health and safety for the whole organisation, top to bottom.

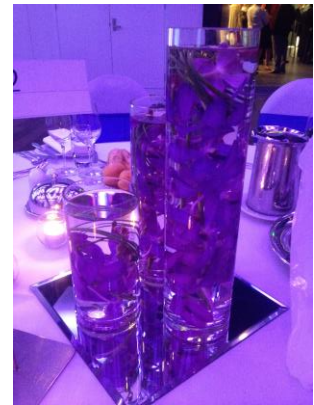
A strong workplace health and safety culture builds employee satisfaction, increases productivity and reduces costs for the organisation.

The agency will be using these [best-practice case studies](#) during 2015–16 as examples for organisations in those industry sectors to replicate in their own workplaces.





## Highlights of the conference





## Rapid Response Protocol and stopping imports



**Heads of Workplace Safety Authorities**  
Queensland and New Zealand

### MANAGING THE IMPORTATION OF GOODS OR MATERIALS CONTAINING ASBESTOS INTO AUSTRALIA

Persons conducting a business or undertaking need to be aware of the risk of importing goods or materials into Australia that contain asbestos.

All types of asbestos were prohibited in Australian workplaces from 31 December 2003. This ban is reflected in work health and safety (WHS) laws in all jurisdictions. The prohibition on the use of asbestos in Australia is supplemented by the *Customs (Prohibited Imports) Regulations 1956* (the Regulations), which bans the importation of all types of asbestos and products containing asbestos, except under limited circumstances. This fact sheet outlines:

- how the importation of asbestos is regulated at the Australian border and the products at particular risk of containing asbestos
- what businesses importing material must do to ensure the imported products do not contain asbestos, and
- what verifications exist for Australian importers or consumers to show those imported materials do not contain asbestos

### WHY ARE GOODS OR MATERIALS THAT CONTAIN ASBESTOS STILL BEING IMPORTED?

Asbestos is still widely used in some countries. Despite being a prohibited import in Australia, goods containing asbestos are still being located at the border. Certification provided to importers from overseas manufacturers that goods are asbestos-free has sometimes been proven incorrect or unreliable for the purposes of the Regulations.

Local standards in some supplier countries may classify goods 'asbestos free' where they meet a certain low level of asbestos content. In Australia a product found with any level of asbestos is prohibited for import or use. Importers should be aware of the varying definitions and standards applied in the country of origin and/or supply. The Australian Regulations will apply at the border.

### REQUIREMENTS FOR THE LAWFUL IMPORTATION OF MATERIALS CONTAINING ASBESTOS

The importation into Australia of amphibole or chrysotile asbestos is prohibited under the Regulations unless:

- the goods are raw materials that contain naturally occurring traces of amphibole or chrysotile asbestos, or
- the importation is of 'hazardous waste' as defined in the *Hazardous Waste (Regulation of Exports and Imports) Act 1989*; or
- a Commonwealth Government ministerial exemption is granted to an importer, and
  - for chrysotile asbestos, the goods are for research, analysis or display, or
- the importation is from the Australian Antarctic Territory (chrysotile only), or
- all of the following apply:
  - the importation is of a ship or resources installation, and
  - the amphibole or chrysotile asbestos in the ship or resources installation was fixed or installed before 1 January 2005, and
  - the amphibole or chrysotile asbestos in the ship or resources installation will not be a risk to any person unless the amphibole or chrysotile asbestos is disturbed

### INTERACTION WITH WORK, HEALTH AND SAFETY LAWS

While the above exemptions apply to the importation of asbestos-containing materials into Australia, you should check with the relevant WHS regulator within your state or territory to determine whether use under the above circumstances is permitted. For example, while a ship or resource installation with asbestos fixed or installed between 1 January 2004 and 1 January 2005 is permitted to be imported into Australia (where the asbestos will not be a risk unless disturbed), the ship cannot be supplied, stored, transported or used in Victoria, under Victorian

Asbestos is still widely used in some countries. Despite being a prohibited import in Australia, goods containing asbestos are still being located at the Australian border.

The Heads of Workplace Safety Authorities (HWSA) have developed a fact sheet to assist Australian businesses in stopping asbestos entering the country when importing goods and machinery or parts. The fact sheet outlines:

- how the importation of asbestos is regulated at the Australian border and the products at particular risk of containing asbestos
- what businesses importing material must do to ensure the imported products do not contain asbestos
- what verifications exist for Australian importers or consumers to show those imported materials do not contain asbestos.

The HWSA Imported Materials With Asbestos Working Group has also developed a Rapid Response Protocol to enable government agencies to work cooperatively and efficiently across jurisdiction and portfolio lines when products have been identified as containing asbestos and there is concern such products may cross or have crossed state lines.

The protocol will ensure that pertinent information is shared by all government agencies with an interest in a particular incident and enable a nationally uniform compliance and enforcement approach to be undertaken in response to future incidents.

See the [agency website](#) for more details

## Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency

Level 10  
255 Elizabeth Street  
SYDNEY, NSW 2000

### Postal address:

GPO Box 9880  
SYDNEY NSW 2001



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[www.asbestossafety.gov.au](http://www.asbestossafety.gov.au)

## About the agency

The Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency (the agency) was established on 1 July 2013 to provide a national focus on asbestos issues which goes beyond workplace safety to encompass environmental and public health concerns.

The agency aims to ensure asbestos issues receive the attention and focus needed to drive change across all levels of government and reduce the risk of asbestos-related diseases.

*The National Strategic Plan for Asbestos Management and Awareness 2014-18* is the first of its kind and coordinates a national approach to asbestos management, eradication, handling and awareness in Australia. The agency works with all levels of government and stakeholders to implement the goals of the plan.

The plan is available on the agency's website at [asbestossafety.gov.au/national-strategic-plan](http://asbestossafety.gov.au/national-strategic-plan)