

Welcome to the sixth ASEA newsletter, Winter edition

Issue 6, Winter 2017

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

about the 2017 summit over the next few months.

We are pleased to announce the details of our 4th annual event, this time a Summit in Canberra as part of direct engagement with our stakeholders on planning for Australia's next National Strategic Plan.

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

Stay tuned for more information

Peter Tighe, CEO



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Asbestos Safety and Eradication Summit announced!



The agency is pleased to announce the Asbestos Safety and Eradication Summit 2017 will take place at Old Parliament House Canberra from Sunday 26th to Tuesday 28th November 2017.

This year's summit style event will be different from previous international conferences, with major focus on engagement and debate in preparation for developing Australia's next National Strategic Plan beyond 2018.

The summit will again bring together well renowned local and international experts in asbestos management, health, advocacy and governance to look at what is best practice in managing the dangers of asbestos in our community and abroad.

Although we hope to once again have an international focus, the focus of the summit will primarily be what Australia needs to do to manage the legacy issues of asbestos into the future, including removal and disposal.

Registrations will be open later in June 2017 so please keep an eye on the agency e-news messages, [Twitter](#) or [Facebook](#) for updates. You can download the [summit flyer](#) here.

The agency is looking for sponsors and exhibitors for this event so if you are interested, or know someone who might be, send an email to events@asbestossafety.gov.au and a prospectus can be forwarded to you.

The agency looks forward to seeing as many of you in Canberra in November to continue this important debate.

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](#)



Vale Louise 'Lou' Williams

18 April 2017



Australian Government

Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency

The agency is saddened to hear the news that long time mesothelioma warrior and campaigner, Lou Williams passed away on the morning of 18 April 2017.

Lou was a long surviving mesothelioma patient, being first diagnosed with peritoneal mesothelioma in 2003 at the age of 48. Since then, she went through many rounds of treatment and receiving Keytruda for the past couple of years.

She was a strong fighter for those who have been diagnosed with an asbestos-related disease and their families, a voice for the Asbestos Diseases Foundation of Australia,

Australian National Director for the Global Ban Asbestos Network and also worked with the Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization in the United States.

Lou was deeply involved with the agency from day one, participating wherever she could and attending our conferences in Melbourne in 2014 and Brisbane 2015 - unfortunately her health didn't allow her to travel to Adelaide in 2016, sending a [video of support](#) instead.

Agency CEO Peter Tighe and staff attended the celebration of Lou's life on 2 May in Victoria and expressed condolences to her husband Keith and her family.



Lou Williams (centre) with husband Keith and Linda Reinstein at the 2015 Conference

National Asbestos Exposure Register

The agency manages the National Asbestos Exposure Register for the Australian Government which has the details of over 5,000 people who have been exposed or believe they have been exposed to asbestos in the past.

The register provides a point in time reference of exposure, or potential exposure so that if person is diagnosed with an asbestos-related disease decades later, they can refer to the register for the information to assist in determining when and how the exposure event occurred.

The agency provides annual statistical analysis of the register in its annual reports which show in the 2015-16 year:

- 69% of registrants were male
- 64% of exposures occurred in the workplace
- One third of registrants were from NSW
- 72% were first exposed before the age of 40.

If you have been exposed, or suspect you have been exposed to asbestos, the agency encourages you to register. If you know of someone else in this position, please pass the details of the register on to them.

For more information, to register and to access the statistical summaries, visit the [register page](#) on the agency website.

CoP8 fails again to list chrysotile on Annex III to Rotterdam Convention

The 8th Conference of the Parties (CoP) to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions was held in April/May 2017 with chrysotile again proposed for listing on Annex III to the Rotterdam Convention.

The ongoing issue preventing listing is that the rules only allow for decision by consensus, therefore requiring 100% support of the CoP to approve listing.

As with the 4 CoPs before, a small number of member countries blocked listing with the assistance of the pro-asbestos lobby and the International Chrysotile Association.

The CoP also failed to approve a proposal to alter the rules of procedure to bring the Rotterdam Convention into line with the Basel and Stockholm Conventions allowing for listing to be approved by 75% majority vote.

The agency will meet with the Department of Environment and Energy to discuss the 9th Conference of the Parties in 2019, including the intersessional work and survey of member countries on the effectiveness of the Rotterdam Convention in regulating dangerous chemicals.

The agency will also assist Australian and international organisations through the Global Asbestos Action Alliance (GAAA) to develop a campaign strategy leading up to the 2019 CoP to keep the momentum up and build on the gains they made during the 2017 CoP.

This will include working with Union Aid Abroad – APHEDA to consolidate the positions of South East Asian nations and



Report highlights impact of Australia's asbestos legacy on remote Indigenous communities

A report into asbestos in remote Australia sets out ways that communities and government can work together to manage the identification and removal of deadly legacy asbestos in remote areas to eliminate the ongoing risks.

The study, commissioned by the agency (ASEA), looked at asbestos management practices and current issues faced in remote areas in Northern Territory, South Australia, Queensland, NSW and Western Australia.

Asbestos is a problem in all parts of the country, but there are unique challenges with asbestos in remote Australian communities.

The legacy of asbestos is felt everywhere, but for remote Indigenous communities it's an even bigger problem.

Indigenous corporations and land councils inherited ageing infrastructure that was full of asbestos – structures such as housing, churches and public buildings – and they require targeted resources to deal with this legacy.

The cost of removing asbestos in remote areas is up to three times higher than for other parts of the country. And in most cases the communities have limited resources and many other priorities to address. This creates an ongoing challenge to effectively manage this insidious risk.

The findings of this study will give remote communities and governments practical options to consider which can overcome the enormous obstacles to dealing with asbestos.

The study has examined what works, and sets out effective ways to tackle this problem.

Importantly, the report is realistic about limited funding and has a focus on ways to do things better right now. It also recognises that what works in one remote community might not work in another, and accordingly recommends a broad range of approaches based on the practical experience of community stakeholders.

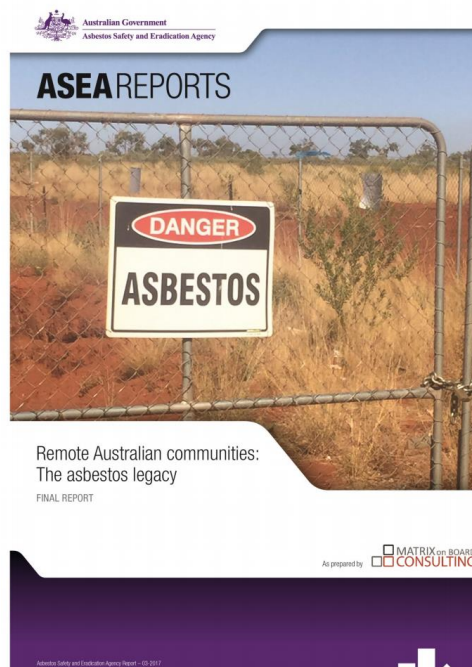
The report sets out seven approaches to better managing asbestos in remote communities:

- Building **partnerships** among organisations managing asbestos and increasing the participation of Indigenous corporations and land councils in those partnerships

- Building the **capability** of existing staff in regional councils, land councils and Aboriginal corporations, and tapping into the expertise of those in the community with experience in managing asbestos.
- **Incorporating asbestos management** into other community waste management initiatives.
- Following best practice models for **communication** with remote communities, and updating cultural awareness training at regional councils.
- Maximise **community engagement**, through land councils, long-term active residents, senior community leaders and Elders.
- Adopt a co-operative approach to the use of **existing infrastructure** and equipment in the removal of asbestos.
- Attract, train and retain a **qualified local workforce** to make significant in-roads in managing asbestos risks and deliver significant cost savings.

The study was conducted by Matrix on Board Consulting for ASEA in 2016.

In total, 52 stakeholders including regional councils and Aboriginal corporations, government bodies and institutions, and private contractors working in remote communities participated in the project.



Senate Inquiry into Non-Conforming Building Products



The Agency has lodged a further submission to the inquiry into the effects of non-conforming building products on the Australian building and construction industry following a decision by the Senate Economics References Committee resolving to re-open submissions.

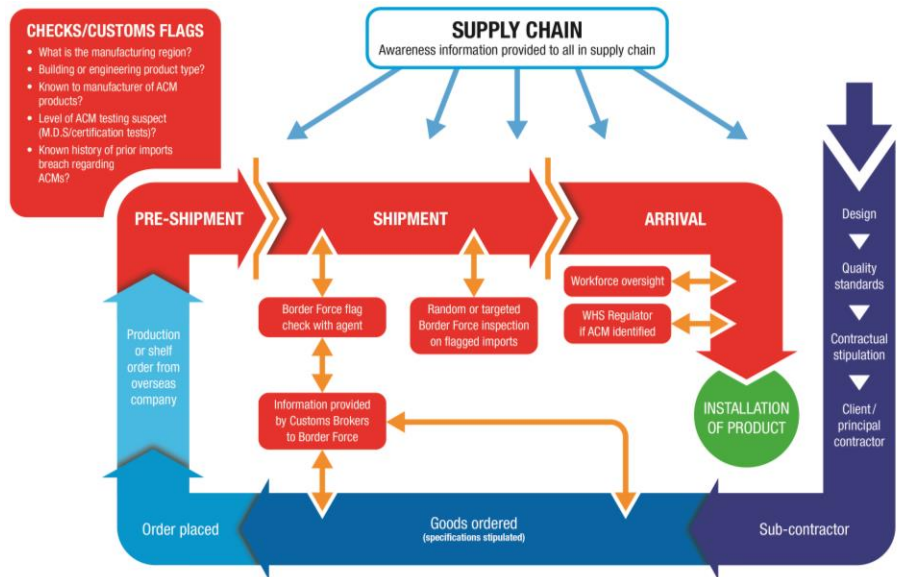
As part of its broader inquiry, the Committee resolved to inquire into the illegal importation of products containing asbestos and adopted additional terms of reference.

On 15 February 2016, the CEO of the agency appeared at the Senate Economics References Committee Inquiry into non-conforming building products hearing in Melbourne to discuss the illegal importation of asbestos-containing materials in the building industry.

An Australia-wide ban on the manufacture and use of all types of asbestos and asbestos-containing materials (ACMs) took effect on 31 December 2003. This ban is reflected in workplace health and safety laws in all jurisdictions.

Despite being a prohibited import in Australia, asbestos is still widely used in some countries around the world and goods containing asbestos are still being located at the border and on worksites around Australia. There have been a number of incidents where ACMs have been imported into Australia.

This supply chain diagram outlines the process in which a product is created for



installation as part of a project, from the concept and design phase through to manufacturing and then installation.

At all stages of this supply chain, particularly the designer, manufacturer, importer, head contractor and all sub-contractors are required to be aware of Australian laws and regulations regarding the importation and use of asbestos-containing materials to ensure compliance.

The supply chain process is further complicated by the fact that most products are now manufactured outside of Australia and therefore, strict controls on materials and production are harder to verify or enforce.

The strict prohibition on asbestos-containing materials must be stipulated from the commencement or design stage

and then fed through the process to production or shelf order stage, prior to shipment. Ensuring compliance with Australian regulations prior to shipment will minimise the need for inspection at Customs ports and delays in clearance of goods.

The checks/customs flags are the questions that need to be asked at the points throughout the supply chain process in identifying whether the products comply with regulations and quality standards, particularly materials used in production. The next page provides a detailed explanation of each stage of this supply chain.

The final report for this Inquiry is due for publication by 31 October 2017.

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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 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