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Australian Government
Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency

TOWARDS AN ASBESTOS-FREE AUSTRALIA



Asbestos usage in Australia

- Australia was one of the world's highest per capita asbestos users
- Asbestos was extensively used in the building and construction, shipping and manufacturing industries
- An estimated one third of homes built between 1945 and the late 1980s may contain asbestos in areas such as ceilings, internal walls, roofs, eaves, external cladding, wet areas and vinyl floor tiles
- Asbestos was used widely in the production of a variety of products including brake pads, gaskets and seals, pipes and pipe lagging
- The manufacture and installation of products containing crocidolite and amosite asbestos was banned from 1985
- By the late 1980s, the use of any asbestos in building products was banned entirely
- The National Industrial Chemicals Notification and Assessment Scheme (NICNAS) full public report on chrysotile asbestos was published in February 1999
- On 31 December 2003, a national ban on the importation and all uses of chrysotile asbestos came into effect.

National Asbestos Exposure Register

The agency manages the first National Asbestos Exposure Register. The register records the details of members of the community who may have been exposed to asbestos.

If you think you may have been exposed to asbestos either during the course of your employment, at home or in the community, you can register your details on the national exposure register that is available from our website at **www.asbestossafety.gov.au**.

All information contained on the register is kept confidential and details will not be released to a third party without your express consent.

Use the QR code at the top of this page, to navigate to the online form on the agency website.

Contact details:

Web www.asbestossafety.gov.au
email enquiries@asbestossafety.gov.au
Phone 1300 326 148

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History

In 2010, a wide ranging review was established by the Australian Government to make recommendations for the development of a national strategic plan to improve asbestos management in Australia.

The *Asbestos Management Review Report* released in August 2012 recommended the development of a national strategic plan to improve asbestos awareness and management in the broader community. The review recommended that an independent national agency be established to guide the implementation of the plan.

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.

Asbestos Safety and Eradication Council

The work of the agency is supported by the Asbestos Safety and Eradication Council (the council). The council provides advice to the CEO and the Minister for Employment on the national strategic plan and other asbestos safety matters.

National Strategic Plan

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's aim is to prevent exposure to asbestos fibres in order to eliminate asbestos-related disease in Australia.

The goals of the plan are to:

- Increase public awareness of the health risks posed by working with or being exposed to asbestos
- Identify and share best practice in asbestos management, education, handling, storage and disposal
- Improve the identification and grading of asbestos and sharing of information regarding the location of asbestos-containing materials
- Identify priority areas where asbestos-containing materials present a risk, the barriers to safe removal of asbestos and review management and removal infrastructure to estimate the capacity and rate for the safe removal of asbestos
- Commission, monitor and promote research into the prevention of asbestos exposure and asbestos-related disease
- Support Australia to play a leadership role in a global campaign for a worldwide ban on asbestos mining and manufacturing.

The plan is available on the agency's website.

Asbestos-related disease

- The World Health Organisation (WHO) states that exposure to asbestos fibres can cause cancer and other diseases, including pleural disease, asbestosis, lung cancer and mesothelioma
- The WHO has stated there is no minimum safe exposure level for any form of asbestos fibres
- Australia has the highest reported per capita incidence of asbestos-related disease in the world, including the highest incidence of mesothelioma which is fatal and incurable
- In 2014, 672 Australians died from mesothelioma
- In the next 20 years, an estimated 30,000 to 40,000 Australians will be diagnosed with an asbestos-related disease.

Facts

- Asbestos is a term for a group of six naturally occurring mineral fibres
- These fibres belong to either the Serpentine group (chrysotile or white asbestos) or the Amphibole group (anthophyllite, amosite, crocidolite, tremolite and actinolite or brown, grey or blue asbestos)
- Asbestos was long considered a very versatile mineral because of its flexibility, tensile strength, heat or electrical insulation properties and affordability.

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