

# Annual Operational Plan 2017-18

**TOWARDS AN ASBESTOS-FREE AUSTRALIA**

## Chief Executive Officer foreword

The risks posed by asbestos can impact all Australians. Addressing Australia's asbestos legacy continues to be an important challenge for all levels of government. Coordination, information sharing, promotion, research and reporting are vital in ensuring that we contribute to the reduction and ultimate elimination of asbestos-related disease in Australia.

The Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency administers the National Strategic Plan for Asbestos Management and Awareness 2014-18. This supports a coordinated effort across all levels of government in Australia to contribute to eliminating asbestos-related disease in Australia.

2017-18 will be an important year for the Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency as we come to the fourth year of the planned work under the current *National Strategic Plan for Asbestos Management and Awareness*. We will complete the research and evidence program we have developed in support of the current plan and work will commence on the development of the next phase of the National Strategic

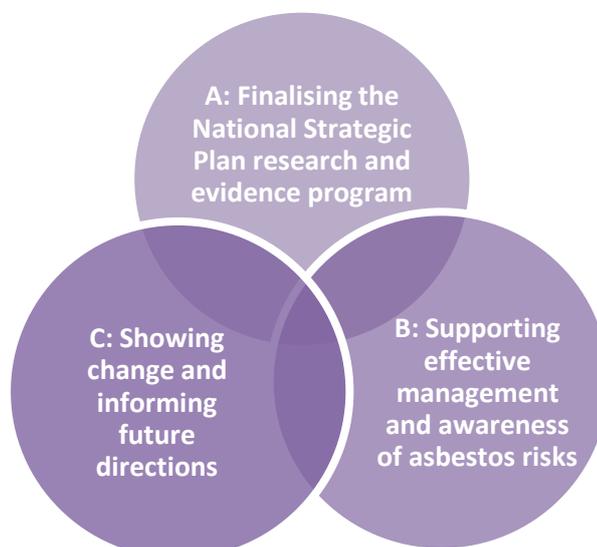
Plan. This is why I have focused the agency's work around three streams that are designed to prepare the evidence and information to support this work, and to ensure a continued focus towards the elimination of asbestos-related disease.

Going forward into 2017-18, our challenges will be:

- Ensuring all of our stakeholders are aware of nationally available resources and information
- Sharing the outcomes of our body of research in simple and effective ways
- Communicating to stakeholders what is required within their roles to ensure national collaboration to support the implementation of the National Strategic Plan, and
- To effectively coordinate the preparation, consultation and development for the second National Strategic Plan.

**Peter Tighe**  
Chief Executive Officer

### 2017-18 streams of work:



## Introduction

The 2017-18 Annual Operational Plan outlines how the agency will support the operation of the National Strategic Plan by providing a national focus on asbestos issues which go beyond workplace safety to encompass environmental, public health and cross-government issues and support the development of the next phase of the National Strategic Plan.

The agency's Annual Operational Plan sets out how the agency will work in 2017-18 across work health and safety, environment, public health portfolios and in undertaking cross government initiatives to:

- Continue to build evidence to inform practical approaches to asbestos management and awareness
- Increase awareness amongst stakeholders and the Australian community about the risks posed by legacy asbestos in the built environment
- Contribute to the improved coordination of asbestos issues across all levels of government in Australia to reduce the risks of asbestos exposure

- Monitor and track progress towards eliminating asbestos-related diseases in Australia
- Identify and address future challenges posed by the remaining legacy asbestos containing material in the built environment and develop options for consideration by government.

In achieving these activities, the agency's operations and decision making will be guided by the five principles of the National Strategic Plan. Our work will demonstrate a commitment to:

- Precaution
- Evidence-based decision making
- Transparency
- Public participation
- Collaboration

The 2017-18 Plan sets out

- The agency's purpose (page 4)
- Environment (page 5)
- Planned performance (page 6) and
- Our capability and governance (page 11)

## Purpose

### ***Working towards an asbestos-free Australia***

The Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency was established in 2013 to work towards the prevention of exposure to asbestos fibres in order to eliminate asbestos-related disease in Australia. This is primarily achieved through administering the [National Strategic Plan for Asbestos Management and Awareness 2014-18](#).

The agency's functions are prescribed by Section 8 of the *Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency Act*, which are:

- To encourage, coordinate, monitor and report on the implementation of the National

Strategic Plan, as well as to review and publish the plan

- To provide advice to the Minister about asbestos safety
- To liaise with Commonwealth, state, territory, local and other governments, agencies, or bodies about the National Strategic Plan, or asbestos safety
- To commission, monitor and promote research about asbestos safety.

The agency's goals and work plan are further informed by the six strategies of the National Strategic Plan, which are:

1. Awareness
2. Best Practice
3. Identification
4. Removal
5. Research
6. International Leadership.

## Environment

### History and context

Australia has been one of the world's leading users of asbestos containing material, and because of this, has one of the world's highest incidences per capita of asbestos-related disease, particularly for mesothelioma. Due to the long latency period between exposure to asbestos and diagnosis of mesothelioma, the number of cases are expected to continue rising with estimates that they may peak between 2020 and 2025.

Asbestos containing material has been progressively banned in Australia since the 1980s and on 31 December 2003 a national ban on all uses of chrysotile asbestos came into effect. There is a remaining legacy of asbestos containing material in the built environment. As asbestos containing materials continue to age, the likelihood of their deterioration and need for removal increases.

The agency brings together key stakeholders who can contribute to reducing the risks of asbestos-related disease through increased coordination, collaboration, and consultation. This includes oversight from the Asbestos Safety and Eradication Council, and advice from its Technical Research Advisory Committee and the Building, Construction and Demolition Sectors Committee.

ASEA works with all levels of government to assist in responding to the strategic risks of asbestos in Australia. The agency coordinated the development of a Rapid Response Protocol through the Heads of Workplace Safety Authorities (HWSA) Imported Materials with Asbestos

Working Group. The protocol is the first of its kind, enabling government agencies to work cooperatively and efficiently across jurisdiction and portfolio lines when products have been identified as containing asbestos. This allows agencies to work through the practicalities of concerns that such products may cross, or have crossed, state lines.

The agency also works closely with industry, employer groups, unions, local governments, researchers, medical experts and health professionals, and community support groups. These groups represent the diverse stakeholders who can work collaboratively to reduce the impact of asbestos-related disease.

### Strategic Challenges for 2017-18

The elimination of asbestos-related disease is a long-term and complex challenge. To achieve this, we need to first work towards a better understanding the current risk factors and exposure pathways in the Australian community. There is no single source of evidence to measure this.

As we are moving into the fourth year of the current National Strategic Plan, we are now looking to evaluate the impact of the implementation of the plan and development of the next plan. This work will be complex and require ongoing discussions across governments in order to identify how we can best continue to work under the plan towards the elimination of asbestos-related disease in Australia.

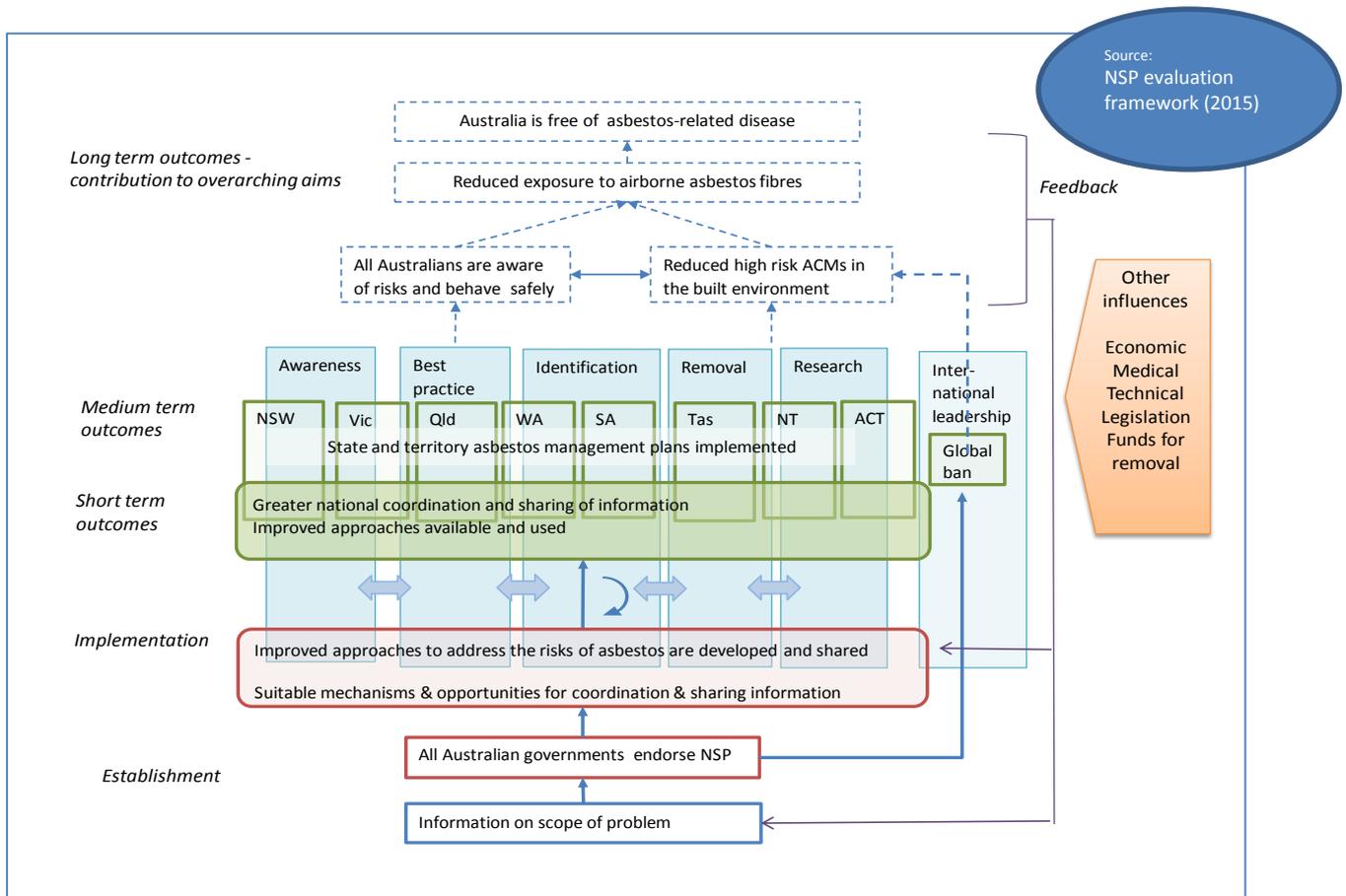
## Performance

The agency's planned performance aligns with the provisions of the *Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency Act 2013*, the goals of the *National Strategic Plan for Asbestos Management and Awareness* and the agency's Portfolio Budget Statements.

### Outcome:

Assist in the prevention of exposure to asbestos fibres and the elimination of asbestos-related disease through implementation of the National Strategic Plan for Asbestos Management and Awareness in Australia 2014-2018.

The agency developed a robust evaluation framework for the current National Strategic Plan in order to identify short term measures that will contribute to the plan's long term aim of eliminating asbestos-related disease in Australia. The evaluation framework highlights the critical importance of fostering greater collaboration and information sharing about asbestos risks and practical solutions in order to improve asbestos awareness, encourage safe behaviours and reduce high risk asbestos in the built environment.



The following table demonstrates ASEA’s delivery in meeting annual targets for **showing impact** in 2017-18 and how this contributes to **seeing change** and **delivering the next steps** over the next three years, using the evaluation framework and the performance criteria of the PBS.

### How will ASEA measure its performance in 2017-18?

<b>PBS Aim:</b>	<b>2017-18 Performance Measures</b>	<b>What are we working towards each year?</b> <i>Annual target: showing impact</i>	<b>What are we working towards by 2020-2021?</b> <i>Long term vision: seeing change</i>
To prevent exposure to asbestos fibres in order to eliminate asbestos-related disease in Australia	Increase public awareness about asbestos safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing trend in asbestos awareness through national awareness survey</li> <li>• Increasing trend in utilisation of agency information and resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased national asbestos awareness demonstrates changing behaviour towards asbestos risks</li> <li>• Collaboration and coordination supports increased evidence and understanding about the future challenges posed by ageing asbestos containing material in the built environment</li> <li>• Targeted initiatives increase evidence base available to inform policy decisions regarding asbestos safety</li> </ul>
	Effectively coordinate national issues that relate to the plan and asbestos issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey of Asbestos Safety and Eradication Council, and committees agree the agency effectively engages with stakeholders</li> <li>• Progress report on the plan demonstrates coordination of national initiatives</li> </ul>	
	Identify targeted and practical initiatives to reduce the risks of asbestos-related disease in Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project initiatives demonstrate a reduction in asbestos exposure risks through delivering evidence to support:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Increased local and international coordination</li> <li>○ Reduced exposure risks for workers</li> <li>○ Increased asbestos awareness and support for preventing asbestos-related disease</li> <li>○ Improved practices for waste management and land contamination</li> <li>○ Informing the practicality of areas defined under Section 5A of the ASEA Act</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
			<p><b><u>Long term vision: delivering the next steps</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outcomes of the first phase of the plan inform the design, and delivery of the next phase of the National Strategic Plan for Asbestos Management and Awareness, including considerations for costs, infrastructure needs, risks, and safe rate of removal</li> </ul>

## 2017-18 ASEA Annual Operational Plan Activities

The work of the Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency contributes to the implementation of the *National Strategic Plan for Asbestos Management and Awareness* through promotion and dissemination of asbestos safety research and delivering new research and evidence that informs asbestos management policy and practice. ASEA achieves this by working with governments across various portfolios at all levels, industry and social partners, researchers and with the oversight of the Asbestos Safety and Eradication Council, which is a tripartite body. The work for 2017-18 will be delivered in three streams:

- A: Finalising the National Strategic Plan 2014-18 research and evidence program
- B: Supporting effective management and awareness of asbestos risks
- C: Showing change and informing future directions

Theme	Focus Area	Activity	NSP link	Current progress	Expected outputs	Expected completion
<b>A. Finalising the National Strategic Plan 2014-18 research and evidence program</b>	<b>a) Finalising research and evidence</b>	1. Review of asbestos awareness training unit developed for the utilities sector to identify/recommend opportunities for broader industry adoption	D2.2 O2.2	Asbestos safety in telecommunications infrastructure issues paper (2015) Model awareness training (2016)	Recommendations to improve asbestos awareness learning/training	Jun 18
		2. Dissemination of asbestos grading guidelines	D3.1 O3.1	Pilot study of industry approaches to grading (2015) Industry consultation (2016) Visual guidance Delphi Study (2017) User testing (2017)	Release and promotion of guidance to inform grading of in-situ asbestos	Nov 17
	<b>b) Disseminating and promoting outcomes</b>	3. Summary and dissemination of ASEA research	ALL	ASEA has commissioned and delivered multiple research projects. There is now a need to consolidate this information, make it accessible in shorter summaries and targeted fact sheets to inform policy and practice	Summaries of research projects for targeted audiences, identifying key messages, themes and implications for policy and practice, and monitoring of research impact	Nov 17- June 18
		4. Best practice awareness and identification guidance for key industry groups where asbestos containing material (ACM) is common	D2.1 O2.1	Asbestos awareness information for electricians (2017) Industry guides and information (various)	Awareness and identification information for industry groups where ACM may be common (plumbers, electricians, removalists, maintenance workers)	May 18

		5. Dissemination of awareness campaign resources	D1.3 O1.3	National asbestos awareness communications strategy (2017)	Finalise materials for dissemination by governments and community stakeholders	Nov 17 - March 18
<b>B. Supporting effective management and awareness of asbestos risks</b>	<b>a) Building the business case for safe management and removal of asbestos</b>	6. Asbestos management and removal –analysis of the business case for safe management and removal of asbestos by individuals, business and government	D4.5 O4.4	Case studies of significant asbestos removal projects in Australia (2017) and return on investment analysis (2017) National Asbestos profile (2017) including economic impact of asbestos	Analysis of business case for different management and removal options to identify best investment by individuals, business and governments	March 18
	<b>b) Developing residential local government resources and information to mitigate and manage residential asbestos risks</b>	7. Development of model residential and local government awareness and identification resources	D3.3 O3.5	Local government literature review and research report (2017) Database of current local government asbestos safety initiatives (2017) Report on national survey of local governments & review of 560 local government websites (2017)	Trial consistent awareness and identification resources with local governments to promote asbestos safety, particularly amongst DIYers and evaluate outcomes	July 18
	<b>c) Supporting a coordinated effort to prevent importation of products containing asbestos</b>	8. Continue to raise awareness about the risks of asbestos in imported products across stakeholder supply chain	D3.4 O3.6	Heads of Workplace Safety Authorities (HWSA) Working Group on imported materials containing asbestos (2013) Interdepartmental Committee (2016) Promotion and awareness material and activities (2014-ongoing)	Focus at 2017 Summit Seminars in targeted locations	Nov 17 - June 18

<b>C. Showing change and informing future directions</b>	<b>a) Commencing evolutions, consultation to ensure evidence and information is available to inform the next phase of the National Strategic Plan</b>	9. Review the future trends for asbestos management, removal, transport and disposal industries	D4.4 O4.3	Literature review commenced (2017); links to project undertaken by Safe Work Australia - <i>The work health and safety and workers compensation implications of the future of work</i>	Report on the influence of megatrends on asbestos industries and implications for policy an practice	Nov 2017
		10. Review of asbestos research: the status of research on the preventions of asbestos-related disease in Australia, including strengths/weakness and future recommendations on the extent of non-mesothelioma asbestos-related diseases (ARDs), and trends to inform risk prevention	D5.1 O5.1	Project plan developed (June 2017)	Report on status of prevention research in Australia – including recommendations for future directions Report on trends of ARDs (excluding mesothelioma)	Dec 2017
<b>ASEA Business as Usual (BAU) Functions</b>	• Evaluation of first <i>National Strategic Plan for Asbestos Management and Awareness</i> (2014-18)	ALL	Evaluation Strategy (2015), quarterly reporting and annual progress report	Evaluation of outcomes and progress achieved through the first phase of the NSP, recommendations for next NSP	Feb 2018	
	• Redesign of ASEA website with additional functionality and online resources	D1.2 O1.2	User testing Website design developed Deployment to commence July 2017	Further enhancements including online asbestos identification tool	From July 17	
	• Biannual National Awareness survey	D1.3 O.1.1 -1.3	Survey completed in 2014,2016	Survey to be undertaken in 2018	May 18	
	• Annual conference - 2017 Asbestos Safety and Eradication Summit	ALL	International conferences delivered in 2014, 2015, 2016	New approach: Asbestos Safety and Eradication Summit	Nov 17	
	<u>Other BAU:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ASEC Secretariat</li> <li>• ASEA committee secretariat</li> <li>• Progress report on the implementation of the NSP (November 2017)</li> <li>• Quarterly reporting and coordination of the NSP</li> <li>• Asbestos import permits</li> </ul>					

## Capability and governance

### ***Our People and workforce planning***

The Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency is a small dedicated team committed to reducing the impact of asbestos-related disease in Australia. The agency's vision for our people is to foster a collaborative and adaptive team, with technical skills and experience to deliver the work set out in the Annual Operational Plan and to administer the *National Strategic Plan for Asbestos Management and Awareness*.

### ***Enabling Services***

The agency engages support services from the Department of Finance Service Delivery Office and the Department of Employment to assist the agency to conduct its day to day business in a streamlined and cost effective manner. The services include information technology, human resources support and other administrative services.

### ***Risk management and oversight***

ASEA's risk management framework is determined by a broader Commonwealth Framework including the Commonwealth Risk Management Policy and the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*. It is overseen by an agency risk and work health and safety committee, which reports to the agency's audit committee. The agency is also subject to annual audits by the Australian National Audit Office.

In developing ASEA's Annual Operational Plan for 2017-18, the agency has reviewed its risk register and updated the agency's risk register.

### **The agency's strategic risks for 2017-18 are:**

1. **Delivery:** Ensuring the work prescribed by ASEA's Annual Operational Plan is undertaken in a timely manner and in line with the Commonwealth Procurement Rules, and deliverables are achieved by 30 June 2018.
2. **Purpose:** Ensuring the agency's expenditure of money is within the statutory functions prescribed by the Act. Importantly, this recognises the primary responsibility for asbestos management policy lies with state and territory governments. The agency works to encourage improved national coordination, including through the administration of the National Strategic Plan and delivering practical, targeted and evidence-based research and associated promotion amongst stakeholders.
3. **Outcome:** Ensuring that the agency remains on schedule to support the implementation of the outcomes and deliverables of the National Strategic Plan.

### ***Reporting***

One of ASEA's key roles is to report on the implementation of the National Strategic Plan. This is achieved by requesting Quarterly progress updates from Commonwealth, state and territory government officials. This information on progress at the state and territory and Commonwealth levels is reported to the Asbestos Safety and Eradication Council, and the Minister for Employment. The quarterly reporting also includes ASEA's progress in implementing the Annual Operational Plan.