



ASEA MATTERS

AUGUST 2018

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Welcome to the August ASEA matters newsletter issued by the agency. This edition will provide an update on activities that the agency has undertaken so far during 2018, as well as provide insight into the planning of our annual conference, 'Asbestos: the next national plan – proactivity, prevention, planning' which will be held in Sydney this November.

We are also pleased to announce that ASEA matters will be issued on a monthly basis as a 'quick-read', providing you with key updates on agency projects, activities and noteworthy media stories from the month, ensuring that our valued stakeholders are kept up to date with agency matters and asbestos news.

Thank you and farewell to Peter Tighe

On Friday August 17, the agency farewelled Peter Tighe following the completion of his five year term as the Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency's Chief Executive Officer. Peter Tighe was appointed CEO from the inception of the agency in 2013. Peter's work in establishing the agency and driving the first phase of the *National Strategic Plan for Asbestos Management and Awareness* is a valuable legacy that he has left for the agency to continue to develop.

Former Minister for Small and Family Business, the Workplace and Deregulation, Craig Laundry thanked Peter for his valuable work in a recent statement:

"I commend Peter Tighe for his commitment to the agency's important work, building awareness and delivering long-term solutions to tackling the scourge of asbestos," former Minister Laundry said.

"The ongoing legacy of asbestos in our workplaces and communities presents a difficult challenge, and the reality is that there are no easy fixes to this insidious problem."

During his five-year term as CEO, Peter was instrumental in driving Australia's leadership role in the global campaign for a worldwide ban on asbestos mining and manufacturing. Peter has worked closely with many key stakeholders both on a national and international level to ensure the success of the agency and to increase public awareness of the health risks posed by asbestos exposure, reduce asbestos-related disease in the country, and work towards creating an asbestos-free Australia.

There will be an opportunity to formally thank Peter for his contributions at the upcoming conference, *Asbestos: the next national plan Proactivity, Prevention, Planning* in Sydney this November.



Welcome to new CEO Justine Ross

As the agency farewells Peter, we are also delighted to welcome Ms Justine Ross as newly appointed Chief Executive Officer of the agency. Justine's appointment as CEO was announced on Tuesday, 14 August 2018.

Former Minister for Small and Family Business, the Workplace and Deregulation, Craig Laundry, congratulated Ms Ross on her appointment.

"Her extensive experience in Work Health and Safety policy and law will stand her in good stead to lead this important agency," former Minister Laundry said.



For the past seven years, Ms Ross has worked at the Department of Jobs and Small Business, formerly Employment, in a range of legal and WHS roles at the senior executive level. Previously, she has worked at Safe Work Australia, where she played an instrumental role working with the states and territories, unions and industry in developing the model work health and safety laws.

Ms Ross has been a Safe Work Australia member and a Commissioner on the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission. She has a Masters in Occupational Health and Safety from the International Training Centre of the International Labour Organization and Turin University and is admitted as a legal practitioner in the ACT.

DID YOU KNOW?



ASBESTOS CAN BE FOUND IN A THIRD OF AUSTRALIAN HOMES



6300 TONNES ILLEGALLY DUMPED PER YEAR



4000 AUSTRALIANS DIE FROM ARDs PER YEAR

More information on our website: <https://asbestosafety.gov.au>



Asbestos: the next national plan – proactivity, prevention, planning

The agency has been busy working to organise the 2018 conference, 'Asbestos: the next national plan – proactivity, prevention, planning' which will be held across three Sydney based venues this year from Sunday 18 to Tuesday 20 November 2018.

The conference and tradeshow will be held at Sheraton on the Park, with the social events taking place across two stunning Doltone House venues, Jones Bay Wharf and Darling Island.

During our 2017 Summit, we asked over 250 delegates for their input to inform the next national strategic plan, and at this year's event we will be looking in depth at the new

strategies and goals that have been developed as a result of this feedback.

We will consider what the next national strategic plan for asbestos management in Australia will look like, and will be hearing from local and international experts in asbestos management, governance, advocacy and research.

[Conference registrations](#) are open, with discounted early bird rates extended until Friday 12 October 2018.

Keep an eye on the monthly editions of 'Conference News' emails, and be sure to follow our Facebook and Twitter for program, speaker and registration updates.



If you are interested in sponsoring or exhibiting at this event, there are still opportunities available! View the prospectus [here](#) or email events@asbestossafety.gov.au for more information.

We look forward to welcoming you to this year's conference in Sydney this November!

National, consistent approach needed in managing Australia's legacy asbestos in water mains

With the cost of dealing with 40,000 kilometres of water main pipes containing asbestos across Australia expected to significantly rise, a nationally clear and consistent approach to managing asbestos in water mains is required.

A new [report](#) by the agency examines six cases of rehabilitation of water and sewerage pipes containing asbestos in Victoria, Queensland and Western Australia, and identifies best practice for safe and effective management and removal.

The issue is most significant for Victoria, with around 70 per cent of the country's asbestos containing water main pipes located within the state.

ASEA CEO Peter Tighe said: "Around one quarter of Australia's water main pipes as well as 5000 kilometres of sewer mains contain deteriorating asbestos."

"While there is no evidence that asbestos in cement pipes is a danger to drinking water, planning for the long term management of asbestos is important for community safety.

Currently, the cost of rehabilitation of asbestos water pipes is around \$400 million nationally. This cost is expected to rise significantly as the infrastructure ages, and this has implications for water consumers.

However, there are no nationally consistent regulations around asbestos pipeline programs.

Water authorities and governments around the country are encouraged to follow the findings of this report to ensure that planning is in place, and that best practice in removal of legacy asbestos from water mains is followed."

The agency recommends governments, water authorities and the industry all work toward the development of a clear set of nationally consistent regulations around practices to remove asbestos from water mains.



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New report commissioned by the agency seeks to understand what would make home renovators remove asbestos

With around one in three Australian homes containing asbestos, and the rates of mesothelioma in Australia yet to peak due to the third wave of asbestos exposure, the agency has conducted research to identify factors that would make homeowners more likely to remove asbestos in the future.

The study found that the cost of dealing with asbestos is the main factor in decisions relating to asbestos removal.

ASEA CEO Peter Tighe said:

"there is no safe level of exposure to asbestos. The property boom and the popularity of DIY home renovation means that Australians will be at risk of dying of an asbestos-related disease for a long time to come.

The eradication of legacy asbestos from our built environment needs to be an urgent national priority if we want to save lives.

This research provides the community and governments at every level with the evidence needed to target interventions and education campaigns." The report can be found [here](#).



Asbestos-related diseases costing over \$500 million a year – new research commissioned by the agency released

Direct health care combined with the impact on productivity in the workplace as a result of asbestos-related diseases costs Australia over half a billion dollars a year.

A new [report](#) commissioned by the agency has measured the medical and economic opportunity costs associated with asbestos-related disease.

It estimated hospital and primary care costs to be \$192 million per year, and indirect costs arising from time out of the workforce to be \$321 million per year.

ASEA Chief Executive Peter Tighe said that this is the first time the cost of asbestos-related disease had been quantified in Australia in this way.

"We know of the terrible human toll of asbestos-related disease, which takes the lives of approximately 4,000 Australians each year," Peter Tighe said.

"And we now know that it costs the Australian community at least half a billion dollars a year.

Given the high cost of these avoidable diseases, it is very clear that our focus should be on the prevention of exposure to asbestos in Australia.

This focus should include high profile community education and public information campaigns, and a clear plan for the permanent removal of all legacy asbestos in Australia's built environment.

There is no safe level of exposure to asbestos, and Australian workers and DIY home renovators will remain at risk until we take a proactive approach to eradication and remove asbestos from our community once and for all."



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Raising awareness about the risk of imported products containing asbestos

In April this year, the agency and the Queensland Building and Construction Commission (QBCC) held a seminar in Brisbane that focussed on raising awareness about the risk of imported products containing asbestos.

The seminar brought together a variety of stakeholders to address how the importation of asbestos is regulated at the Australian border, the responsibilities of businesses in relation to importing goods and how goods can be verified to ensure that they do not contain asbestos.

A key update from the presentations came from Brett Bassett (Commissioner, QBCC) who provided details of the new QLD Non-Conforming Building Product legislation (NCBP) which enables the QBCC to declare buildings or building sites as unsafe and prosecute offences relating to supplying or installing a non-conforming building product.

Additionally, Stephen Hledik (Acting Commander, Customs Compliance Branch Australian Border Force, Department of Home Affairs) discussed Australian Border Force's zero tolerance policy on imports containing asbestos including classic vehicles, and the importance of established processes in the supply chain to ensure that no asbestos reaches Australian shores.

For more information on the seminar click [here](#).



Working with Canadian Government post asbestos ban

ASEA CEO Peter Tighe attended and spoke at the International Mesothelioma Interest Group Conference held in Ottawa, Canada between 2 – 5 May earlier this year. Peter delivered a presentation entitled "After the asbestos ban: the Australian experience".

Whilst in Canada, Peter held a number of meetings with conference participants and Canadian Government/parliamentary representatives to provide advice on how Canada can avoid the delays in action that Australia experienced between the asbestos ban in 2003 and the establishment of the agency in 2013.

Guidance for people arranging or undertaking an asbestos assessment now available

The agency has teamed up with the Victorian Asbestos Eradication Agency (VAEA) to produce information brochures for those arranging an asbestos assessment (such as a PCBU) and those undertaking an asbestos assessment (such as licenced asbestos assessors or occupational hygienists). The aim of this information is to assist those arranging an asbestos assessment in understanding what to expect from the process, and to improve the consistency of asbestos assessments undertaken in Australia. The brochures can be downloaded [here](#) or to order printed copies, email events@asbestossafety.gov.au.



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