

# Annual Operational Plan 2018-19

**TOWARDS AN ASBESTOS-FREE AUSTRALIA**

## Chief Executive Officer foreword

Latest estimates from the WHO Global Burden of Disease study show an average of 4000 Australians die from asbestos-related diseases each year. Addressing Australia's asbestos legacy continues to be an important challenge for all levels of government.

Coordination, consistent messaging, information sharing, 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.

2018-19 will be a pivotal year for the Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency (the agency) as we come to the fifth and final year of the planned work

under the current *National Strategic Plan for Asbestos Management and Awareness 2014-18*. We will complete the research and evidence program we have developed in support of the current plan and will commence work on the next phase of the National Strategic Plan.

Our 2018-19 activities are detailed in this plan in two key areas - operating requirements and project work.

In 2018-19 our challenges will be:

- gaining consensus on the direction and content of the next phase of the National Strategic Plan
- sharing the outcomes of our research in clear and innovative ways
- operating in a tight fiscal environment with a changing workforce.

**Peter Tighe**  
**Chief Executive Officer**

## Introduction

The agency's Annual Operational Plan 2018-19 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 planning issues and support the introduction of the next phase of the National Strategic Plan.

The agency's Annual Operational Plan sets out how the agency will work in 2018-19 to:

- continue to build evidence to inform practical approaches to asbestos management and awareness
- increase awareness among 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 current National Strategic Plan:

- precaution
- evidence-based decision making
- transparency
- public participation
- collaboration.

The agency's Annual Operational Plan 2018-19 sets out our:

- purpose (page 4)
- environment (page 5)
- planned performance (page 6)
- activities (page 8)
- capability and governance (page 9).

## **Purpose**

### ***Creating an asbestos-free Australia***

The 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 2013*, 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

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

The agency's strategies and work plan are further informed by the six goals 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 was 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, consistency and consultation. This includes guidance from the Asbestos Safety and Eradication Council, and advice from its Technical Research Advisory Committee and the Building, Construction and Demolition Sectors Committee.

The agency works with all levels of government to assist in responding to the strategic risks of asbestos in Australia. The agency coordinated the development (and recent review) 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 2018-19

The elimination of asbestos-related disease is a long-term and complex challenge which requires proactivity, prevention and planning.

As we are moving into the fifth and final year of the current National Strategic Plan, we are now looking to evaluate the impact of the implementation of the plan and introduction of the next phase of the plan.

The results of the recently completed national asbestos awareness survey, and other agency commissioned research, will also inform our work in 2018-19 and beyond.

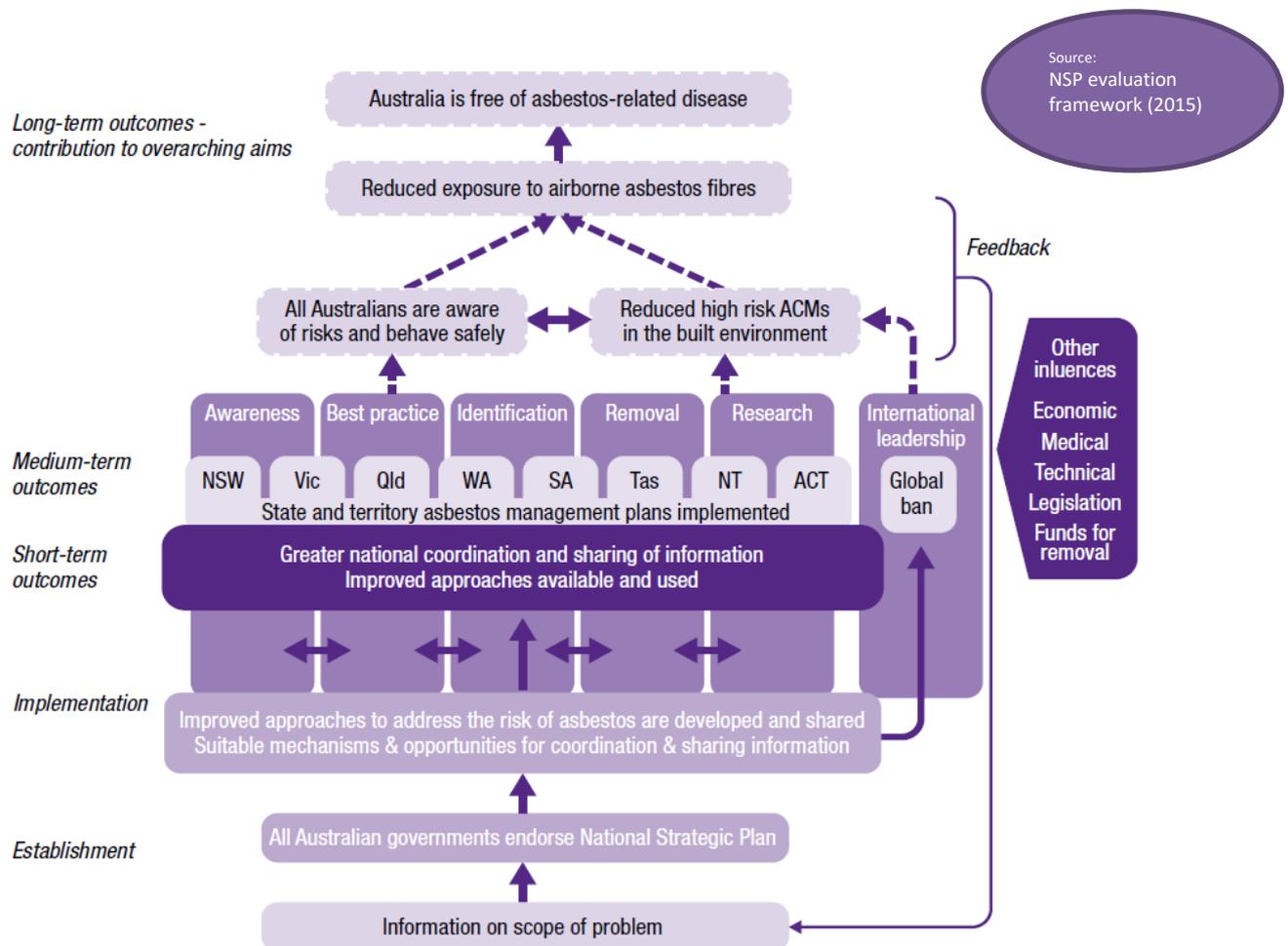
## Performance

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 2014-18* and the agency's Portfolio Budget Statements (PBS) 2018-19.

### 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.

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.



## How will the agency measure its performance in 2018-19?

<b>PBS Aim:</b>	<b>2018-19 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 2021-22?</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> </ul> </li> </ul>	
			<b><u>Long term vision: delivering the next steps</u></b>
			<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>

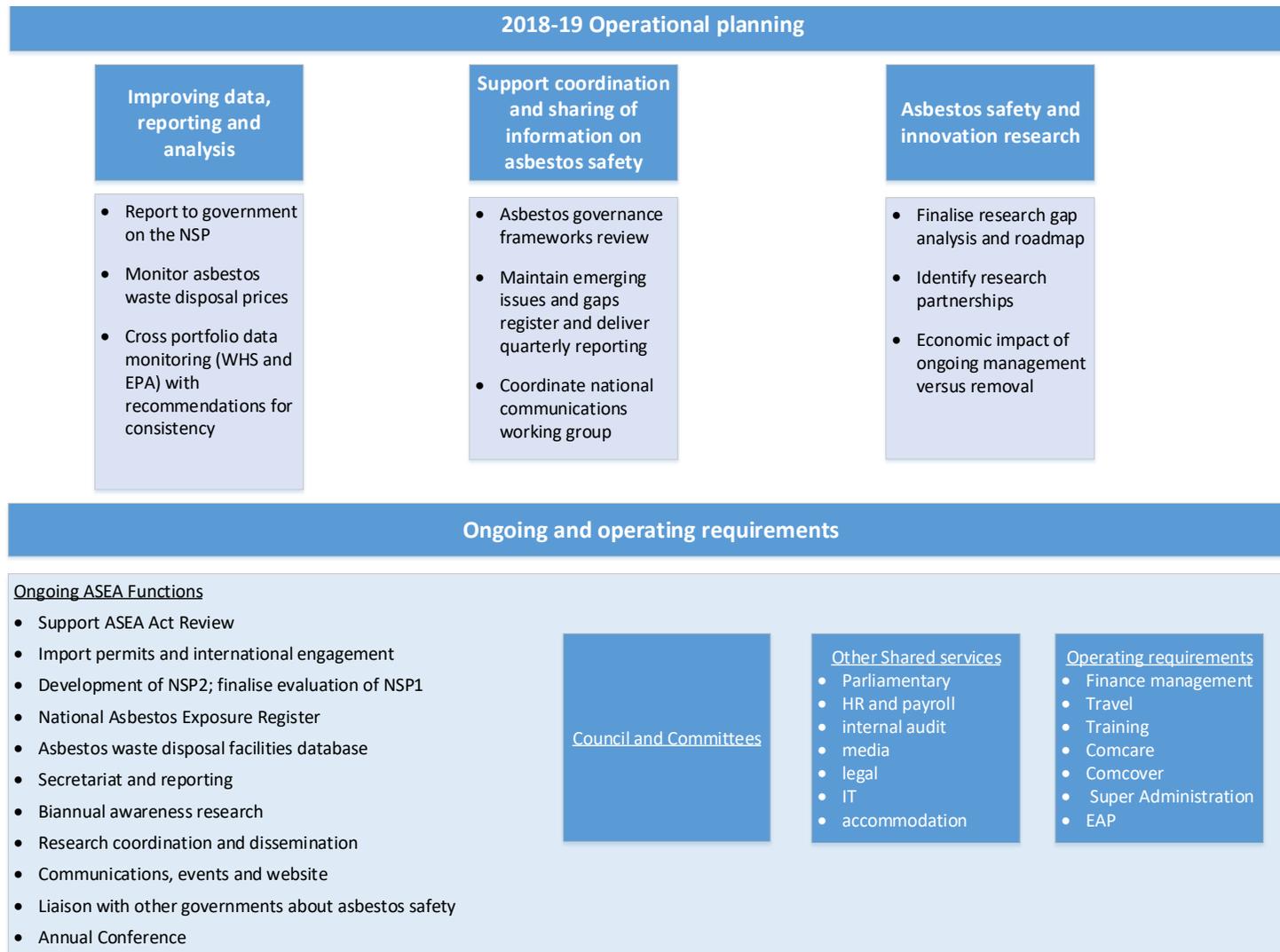


Figure 1 Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency Annual Operational Plan 2018-19 Activities

## Capability and governance

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

The 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 Jobs and Small Business 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***

The agency'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.

### ***The agency's strategic risks for 2018-19 are:***

1. **Delivery:** Ensuring the work prescribed by the agency'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 2019.
2. **Governance:** Ensuring the agency's expenditure of money is within the statutory functions prescribed by the Act.
3. **Outcome:** Ensuring that the agency remains on schedule to support the implementation of the next phase of the National Strategic Plan.

### ***Reporting***

One of the agency'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 is reported to the Asbestos Safety and Eradication Council, and the Minister for Jobs and Small Business. The quarterly reporting also includes the agency's progress in implementing the Annual Operational Plan.