



# Australian Government

## Asbestos and Silica Safety and Eradication Council

### Silica Advisory Committee

#### Communique

#### Meeting 3 – 25 March 2026

The Silica Advisory Committee (SAC; the Committee) held its third meeting on Ngunnawal and Ngambri lands on 25 March 2026. After the Chair's welcome, members reflected on the outcomes of ASSEA's Forum held the previous day and acknowledged the value of ASSEA's committee and Council members coming together to share ideas and expertise.

Members discussed the progress of the Silica Advisory Plan, with the agency highlighting completed and outstanding actions. Members noted that approximately 80% of ASSEA led actions for both silica and asbestos as identified in ASSEA's Operational Plan 2025-2026 are on track or completed.

Members discussed how they could support ASSEA in implementing actions that have not yet commenced, especially regarding the study to assess industry capacity to eliminate silica-related diseases and the effectiveness of nationally recognised training at driving behavioural change. The Committee agreed to contact the Australian Institute of Occupational Hygienists (AIOH) to explore what data is available on the number and coverage of occupational hygienists.

Members also discussed the need for a competency framework for silica-related work, drawing on learnings from asbestos frameworks, and suggested engaging with Build Skills Australia and the College of General Practitioners to understand capacity and capability requirements.

Members considered a revised version of the Silica Facts and Figures resource, based on member's out-of-session and meeting feedback. The agency clarified that the purpose of the document is to consolidate key facts and explanatory information about silica and the associated health risks into a central resource, to facilitate consistent, accurate and clear communication. Members noted that the agency will publish the resource on the ASSEA website, invite further stakeholder input and update the document with the latest research and data.

Members discussed the interim findings of the agency's review of product labelling and the availability of Safety Data Sheets (SDS) at the point of sale, specifically for higher-risk products containing crystalline silica. They discussed issues around imported products, inconsistent terminology used on labels, the need for improved labelling, and availability of SDSs at point of sale. ASSEA indicated final comments from members is welcomed.

Members noted a presentation from the Asbestos and Dust Diseases Research Institute on its award-winning Silicosis Support Hub, including how it was developed with expert advice, plain language, and multilingual options. The Hub was funded by the NSW Government. Website analytics show significant engagement with the site's resources nationally. The presentation also outlined the new statewide multidisciplinary meeting for diagnosis and management of cases of silicosis and other diseases. Members highlighted the ongoing need to provide effective and accessible support for all silicosis sufferers and their families.

Members also received a presentation from Safe Work New South Wales, which provided an update on the Silica Worker Register. The presentation covered its legal foundation, how to register, data collection processes, compliance efforts, and ongoing challenges such as dealing with interstate contractors and skill shortages. Collaboration with iCare and focused industry communications have



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supported these efforts. Members noted that, since its launch in October 2025, more than 13,000 workers and 669 PCBUs have registered, with tunnelling projects monitored separately.

Finally, Safe Work Australia (SWA) briefed the committee on progress toward a national silica-related diseases research strategy. This strategy is intended to establish a nationally coordinated framework for addressing silica-related diseases by identifying research gaps, establishing priority research areas, and supporting evidence-based policy outcomes, aligned with the Silica National Strategic Plan. Lung Foundation Australia (LFA) member noted that the research priorities for silicosis developed and published by LFA can be used as a basis for SWA's research strategy.

The next meeting will be held virtually in September 2026.