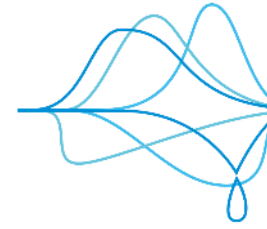




Australian Government

Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency



**Asbestos National
Strategic Plan**

**Implementation
2019–23**

Annual Operational Plan and Corporate Plan

2021–2022



Who we are

The Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency (ASEA) was established in 2013 to coordinate the implementation of the *National Strategic Plan for Asbestos Management and Awareness* (Asbestos National Strategic Plan). The Asbestos National Strategic Plan aims to prevent exposure to asbestos fibres in order to eliminate asbestos-related diseases in Australia.

ASEA is a non-corporate entity under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.

What we do

ASEA coordinates national actions to improve asbestos awareness and the effective and safe management, removal and disposal of asbestos.

ASEA is not a regulator. Our key functions under the *Asbestos Safety and Eradication Act 2013* are to:

- ✓ encourage, coordinate, monitor and report on the implementation of the Asbestos National Strategic Plan, as well as reviewing and amending the plan as required and publishing and promoting it
- ✓ liaise with Commonwealth, state, territory, local and other governments, agencies or bodies about reviewing and implementing the Asbestos National Strategic Plan and asbestos safety
- ✓ commission, monitor and promote research about asbestos safety.

How we carry out our functions

Consultation, collaboration and cooperation

We work with all tiers of government as well as non-government groups to ensure consistent and coordinated awareness messages and asbestos management approaches.

Evidence-based decision making

We identify, analyse and disseminate Australian and international evidence, and where gaps exist, commission national research and data collection.

Transparency

We undertake our activities in an open and transparent manner so that stakeholders have access to all relevant information.

Sharing best practice

Our actions and resources are aimed at reducing duplication across jurisdictions, encouraging innovation and driving continuous improvement in asbestos awareness and management.

Precaution

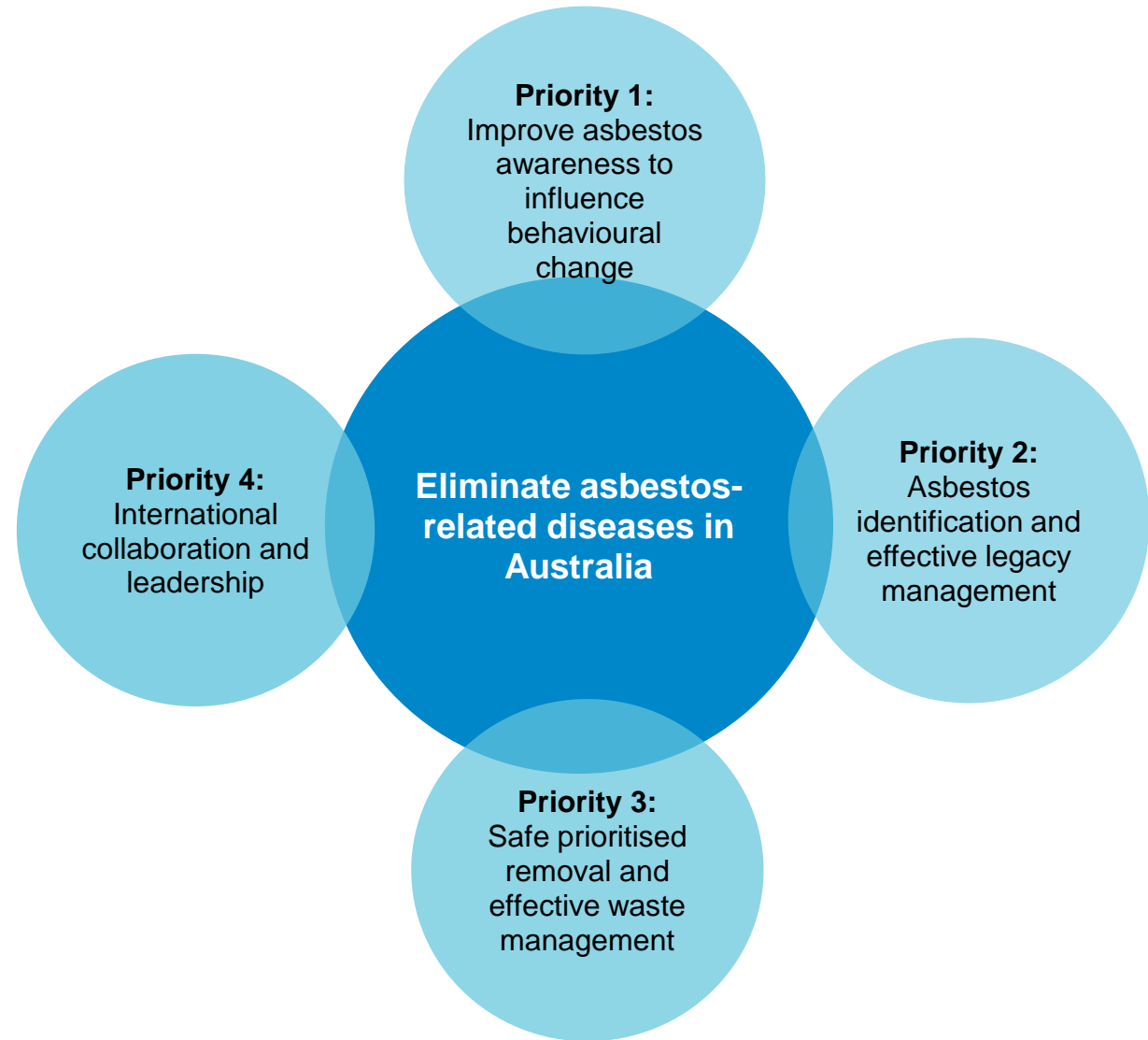
We take a proactive and precautionary approach to how we consider and address the risks of asbestos exposure.

The Asbestos National Strategic Plan

The Asbestos National Strategic Plan facilitates a consistent and coordinated approach to asbestos awareness, management and removal.

The Commonwealth and all state and territory governments have agreed to implement the Asbestos National Strategic Plan, which commits signatories to develop jurisdictional action plans aligned with the four national priorities and to measure progress against a set of national targets.

This Annual Operational Plan is consistent with the principles and national priorities of the Asbestos National Strategic Plan.



Our priorities and activities

Coordinate implementation

During 2021–22 we will provide advice and support to assist governments implement the Asbestos National Strategic Plan, including by:

- ✓ providing guidance on how to develop action plans aligned with the Asbestos National Strategic Plan, measure progress against the national targets and establish more sophisticated governance and reporting systems
- ✓ participating in interagency coordination group meetings
- ✓ hosting an annual forum for jurisdictions to discuss implementation challenges and share information
- ✓ developing a dedicated webpage for implementation resources, including an online reporting tool.

We will collect and analyse data against the national targets and prepare a mid-term progress report on implementation.

Asbestos awareness

During 2021–22 we will continue to develop communication resources that can be easily adopted by governments and other stakeholders. We will also:

- ✓ develop an awareness campaign for National Asbestos Awareness Week in November 2021, including for culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) and Indigenous communities
- ✓ complete guidelines to assist government agencies and others communicate with the public
- ✓ broaden engagement with hardware retailers and television producers of home DIY renovation programs to provide better information about asbestos safety to the community
- ✓ improve awareness of potential presence of asbestos in residential properties at the point of sale or lease
- ✓ host an Asbestos Safety Summit in early November 2021.

Research

During 2021–22 we will continue to ensure our research program is designed to assist governments implement the Asbestos National Strategic Plan, including by:

- ✓ completing the development of a national 'heatmap' of where asbestos might still be present in the residential environment
- ✓ working with the National Indigenous Australians Agency to identify the extent of legacy asbestos in remote Indigenous communities
- ✓ refining a model to estimate the amount of asbestos material that was used in the built environment and the rate at which it is being removed to better manage future volumes of asbestos waste
- ✓ addressing specific concerns raised by stakeholders in relation to unlicensed asbestos removal and asbestos waste management
- ✓ updating 2016 data on the illegal dumping of asbestos waste
- ✓ conducting an awareness survey with a target cohort.

International engagement

While asbestos remains in use elsewhere in the world, there is a risk that illegal imports will enter Australia. We will continue to work across South-East Asia and the Pacific, along with partners in the field, to support nations and non-government organisations progress asbestos bans.

Until a worldwide ban is implemented, we will continue our important work in preventing goods containing asbestos from entering Australia by managing the asbestos import and export permissions system under Customs Regulations. We also continue to:

- ✓ liaise with the Australian Border Force (ABF) on imported products containing asbestos and publish ABF data on asbestos testing and detections carried out at the border
- ✓ manage the secretariat for the Heads of Workplace Safety Authorities Imported Materials with Asbestos Working Group, which collaborates to trace imports and commence remediation of asbestos containing goods that have entered the Australian market.

Measuring our performance

Performance measures	Targets
Number of jurisdictions that have developed action plans aligned with the Asbestos National Strategic Plan and are reporting against the targets	All jurisdictions
Level of satisfaction of Asbestos Safety and Eradication Council members and other stakeholders	80% satisfaction
Level of public awareness about asbestos safety	Awareness survey shows increase in awareness
Effective stakeholder engagement	Increased reach of ASEA's communications
National adoption of National Asbestos Awareness Week 2021	All jurisdictions promote National Asbestos Awareness Week 2021 and adopt ASEA's messages
Applications for permission to import and export asbestos finalised within 60 days	All applications

Our Corporate Plan

Section 5A(2) of the *Asbestos Safety and Eradication Act 2013* states that the Asbestos National Strategic Plan is taken to be ASEA's corporate plan for the purposes of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.

However, the Asbestos National Strategic Plan is designed to be implemented by all governments across Australia and does not include the requirements of a corporate plan as described under the [*Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014*](#).

Until such time that the *Asbestos Safety and Eradication Act 2013* is amended, this section includes the additional matters that must be included in corporate plans.

Our operating environment

Australia imposed a total ban on the mining, manufacture and use of asbestos on 31 December 2003. However, the past use of asbestos has left us with a harmful legacy. Australia has one of the highest rates of asbestos-related diseases of any country in the world. Some 4,000 Australians currently die each year from past exposure to asbestos, which is more than double the number of annual Australian road deaths.

Many public and commercial buildings, homes and infrastructure still contain large amounts of ageing asbestos-containing materials. Asbestos, if not managed safely, poses a significant public health threat. Ensuring the safe management, removal and disposal of asbestos involves governments at all levels, across a range of areas, as well as a network of organisations and people that can influence and assist in achieving the aims and targets of the Asbestos National Strategic Plan.

ASEA plays a critical role in working with these stakeholders to prevent exposure to asbestos fibres by coordinating practical and targeted actions across Australia. We will:

- ✓ assist governments implement the Asbestos National Strategic Plan and track performance against the national targets
- ✓ identify any performance gaps and recommend new activities
- ✓ promote nationally consistent messaging to ensure everyone in the community understands the risks of asbestos exposure and knows what actions to take.

Our capabilities

Data

Become a more data-driven agency and continue developing our data management capability to establish an evidence base and measure progress against the national targets.

We will progress work as an Australian Government data custodian, including digital curation of new datasets, and forge partnerships with other data holders.

Communication

Deliver asbestos-related messaging that is nationally consistent, coordinated and targets groups most at risk of asbestos exposure.

Through our dedicated Communications team, the Asbestos Awareness Committee and targeted engagement activities, such as bilateral meetings and summits with our stakeholders, we will raise awareness and be the trusted source of asbestos information at the national level.

Workforce

Attracting and developing a workforce of highly skilled, dynamic, outward looking and resilient employees is central to achieving our key functions.

We are building human capital with relevant expertise to ensure we meet the expectations of our stakeholders. We will invest in tailored learning opportunities to strengthen skills and assist staff to work more efficiently and effectively.

Engagement

We proactively engage and collaborate with new and existing stakeholders.

We have established four consultative committees consisting of representatives from government and non-government sectors to assist in the performance of our functions. We will also work more closely with local government to identify their asbestos challenges and support councils with asbestos awareness and management.

Governance and risk management

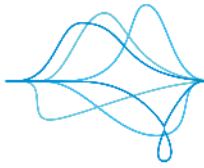
The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is advised by the Asbestos Safety and Eradication Council (the Council) established under Part 5 of the *Asbestos Safety and Eradication Act 2013*. The Council's key functions include monitoring the implementation of the Asbestos National Strategic Plan, providing advice and making recommendations to ASEA's CEO, and providing advice to the Minister about asbestos safety.

As a micro-agency, our corporate governance structure and processes are streamlined, and include weekly meetings with all staff and the executive who oversee the risk management framework and corporate compliance. Our risk management framework is determined by a broader Commonwealth framework of legislation, policies, standards and guidelines and meets the requirements of section 16 of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*. All risk identification, analysis, evaluation and treatment for our operations are recorded and updated in ASEA's Risk Register.

The management of risk is incorporated in our day-to-day business activities, discussions and decisions. We consult and cooperate with our stakeholders to actively manage our shared risks.

Our Audit Committee's role is to provide independent advice and assurance to the CEO on ASEA's control framework, including risk oversight and management. Regular reporting on our risk profile is provided to the Audit Committee. Risk management activities are also reported in our annual report.

Over the period of this operational plan, we will continue to integrate, strengthen and embed our risk management framework in order to deliver on our priorities. We will regularly review our risk register to ensure ratings give a realistic appraisal of the risk profile and align with ASEA's risk management framework. Any high risks will be actively controlled.



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