

Asbestos National Strategic Plan

Phase Three
2024–30

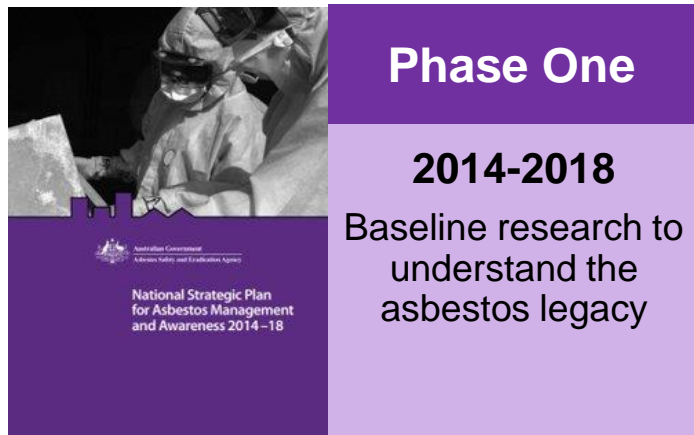
Consultation guide



Overview

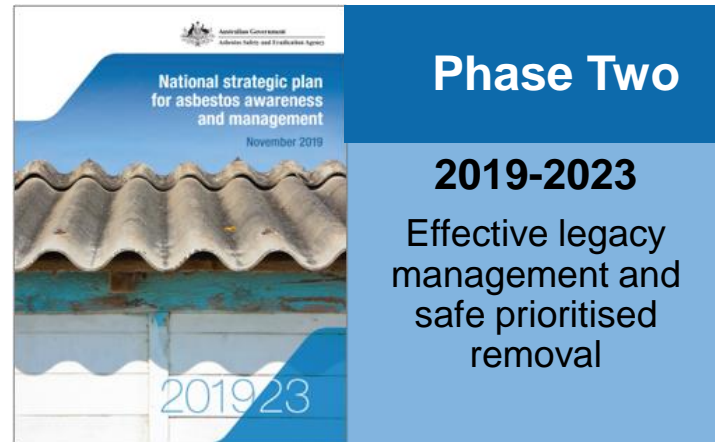
The **Asbestos National Strategic Plan** (ANSP) ensures there is a nationally consistent and coordinated approach to asbestos awareness, management and removal. It outlines a phased approach to eliminating asbestos-related diseases in Australia.

History of Asbestos National Strategic Plan development

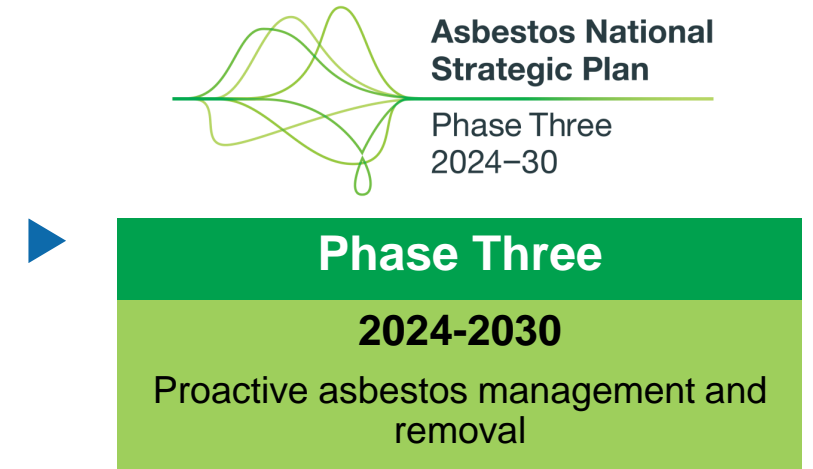


Phase One of the ANSP was endorsed by all jurisdictions' ministers with responsibility for work health and safety on 28 August 2015. [National Strategic Plan for Asbestos Management and Awareness 2014-18](#)

That plan explicitly established a three-phased strategy for asbestos management: **Phase One** would focus on establishing an evidence base; **Phase Two** would build on this base to identify achievable asbestos management goals; and **Phase Three** would identify the ongoing risks posed by the remaining asbestos-containing material (ACM) in the built environment and support prioritised removal.



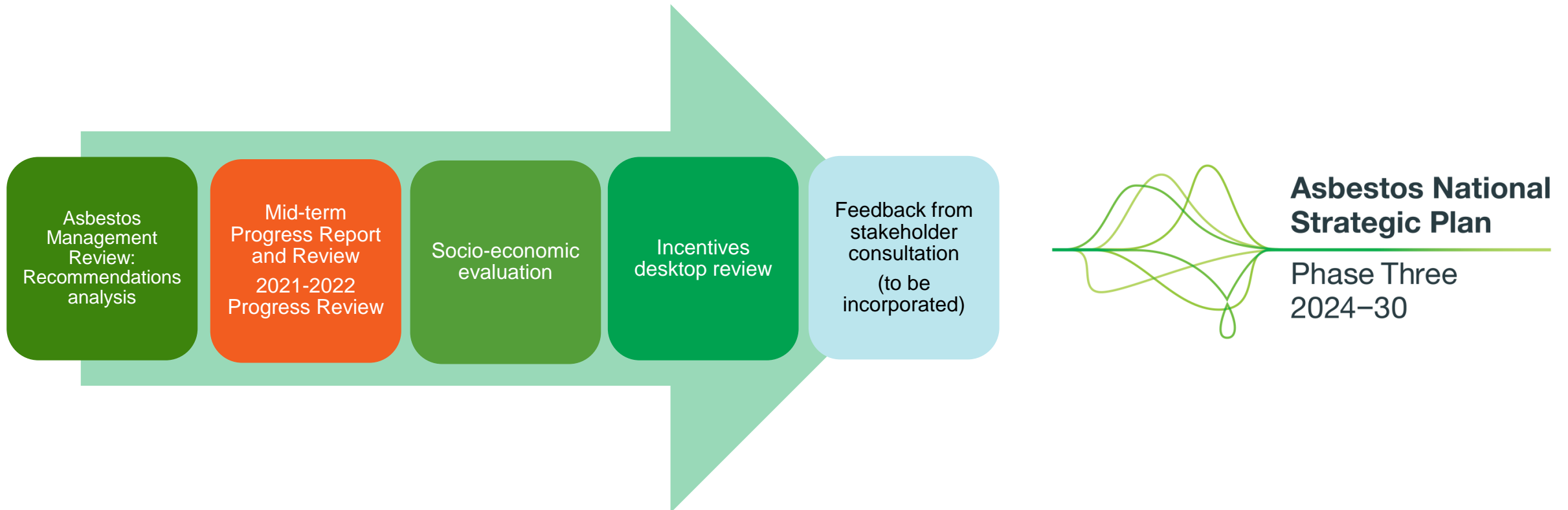
The current five-year phase of the ANSP, [National Strategic Plan for Asbestos Management and Awareness 2019-23](#) (NSP 2019-2023), was launched on 11 November 2019 and will end this year.



It is proposed the Phase Three plan be a six-year plan to provide a clear half-way point for reviewing progress.

Developing the Phase Three draft

The content of the Phase Three draft has been informed by key evaluations and investigations including:



2012 Asbestos Management Review: Analysis of recommendations

The Asbestos Management Review (AMR) was established by the Australian Government in 2010 to conduct a ***national investigation into asbestos management and research and make recommendations for developing a national strategic plan to improve asbestos awareness, management and control.*** The AMR made **12 Recommendations** which were tabled in Parliament in August 2012.

We have **considered** each AMR recommendation in detail, setting out the **context** in which it was made, **actions** taken to date and provided an **implementation summary**. Of the adopted recommendations, we identified three broad categories of implementation status:



Fully implemented

- ✓ ASEA established
- ✓ ASEC chair and members appointed
- ✓ Asbestos National Strategic Plan including the AMR's recommended aim and priority areas
- ✓ ASEA Act passed to enact above



Fully implemented and ongoing

- ✓ Improving asbestos awareness – provision of nationally consistent awareness materials with continued refinement based on evaluation/research
- ✓ International obligations – engagement established but ongoing work on the Rotterdam Convention; asbestos management in Asia and the Pacific; and prevention of ACM importation

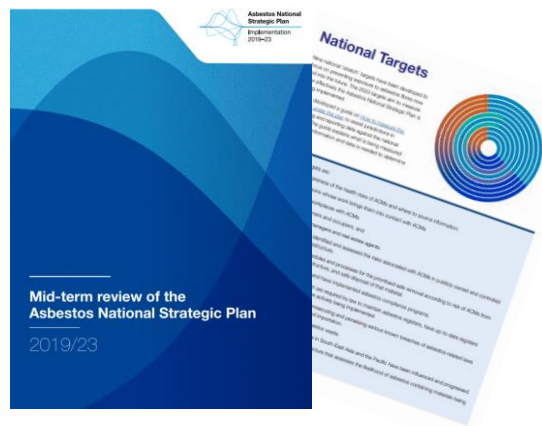


Partially implemented with further work required

- Improving asbestos:
- identification
 - management
 - transport, storage and disposal
 - education
 - data and information sharing and medical research

Actions in the categories of **fully implemented and ongoing** and **partially implemented with further work required** related to asbestos safety are incorporated into the Phase Three draft plan.

Mid-term review and progress reports



As part of its monitoring and evaluation processes, ANSP phase two specified a **mid-term review** to provide an opportunity to amend national priorities, strategic actions or targets if required. The review conducted in 2022 found that the 'national priorities and their strategic actions remained important and relevant, without any significant gaps'.

However, the review also found that some of the targets have proven difficult to achieve and measure, therefore future targets should be designed to be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time based. This finding has been incorporated into the Phase Three plan.



In **2022** an **ANSP mid-term progress report** examined progress against the nine national targets. The report acknowledged that the COVID-19 pandemic interrupted progress, as it competed for government resources that may have been allocated to asbestos awareness and management. Governments are also still strengthening their asbestos data collection and coordination capabilities, and consequently information for some targets was incomplete.

However, the benefit of having an ANSP and a national body dedicated to asbestos issues has been evident during this period, as the spotlight and momentum could be maintained.



A **second report on progress** was published in the first half of **2023**.

The report demonstrated good national progress as at 30 June 2022 to achieving the 9 national targets. One national target has been met with the release of the first iteration of the National Residential Asbestos Heatmap under target 9.

It also reported that targets 4 and 6 (i.e., compliance and enforcement activity) will be satisfactorily progressed by the end of the ANSP's current phase.

Socio-economic evaluation – key findings

We have evaluated the societal and economic costs and benefits of taking a more proactive approach to asbestos management and removal compared to the status quo approach of management in situ.

An extensive overview of the current literature was undertaken, followed by market sounding. Using this information, we estimated costs and benefits associated with the following options:

OPTION 1 – The status quo

This option establishes a baseline for comparison to the more proactive options. It evaluates the continuation of the existing policy and regulatory framework for managing, removing and disposing of ACMs.

OPTION 2A – Improved regulatory framework

This option includes proposals to change the existing regulatory framework to proactively increase the rate of removal of ACMs by various changes to the regulatory and non-regulatory framework for managing, removing and disposing of ACMs.

OPTION 2B – Incentives and government commitment to proactive asbestos removal

This option includes the proposals under Option 2A and extends this with incentive schemes to encourage the safe proactive removal and disposal of ACMs from residential and commercial properties. It also includes Australian, state, and territory governments committing to develop and implement a prioritised ACM removal program for publicly owned and controlled properties.

Quantified costs and benefits

The total costs and benefits of Options 2A and 2B, compared to Option 1 were discounted back to a Net Present Value (NPV) in 2023 dollars. From this, the Benefit-Cost Ratio (BCR) was calculated.

	Option 1	Option 2A	Option 2B
ACMs removed	(2100)	2075	2068
Total costs	\$0.0m	\$1,365m	\$2,713m
Total benefits	\$0.0m	\$4,292m	\$5,080m
NPV	\$0.0m	\$2,927m	\$2,367m
BCR	1.00	3.14	1.87

Compared to Option 1 – Option 2A has the greatest net benefit

Health Burden - High

The impact on, and cost of health burden was calculated using burden of disability adjusted life years. The **DALY was high** and added significantly to cost for Option 1.

In total, the **estimated health benefits** for options 2A and 2B from the proposals are over **\$4 billion**.

Qualitative costs and benefits

The evaluation also looked at impacts that could not be costed and found that **Option 2B had higher expected benefits** than either Option 1 or 2A. Significant qualitative impacts included:

Disaster Impact - High

With climate change, the impact of disasters and extreme weather events is expected to increase. The cost of clean-up and disposal will increase and depend on the remaining ACM stock.

Improved productivity - High

Less people being exposed to asbestos means less ARDs and a population that is typically healthier and productive for longer.

Peace of mind – High

Those who suspect or know they have been exposed to asbestos can experience significant distress. Removing ACMs will reduce accidental and uncontrolled asbestos exposure, providing greater comfort and peace of mind.

Other benefits identified include reduced insurance premiums, improved corporate reputation, increased development activity and asset value.

Asbestos removal incentives

To encourage the safe removal and disposal of ACMs from non-government residential and commercial properties, incentives have been included in the socio-economic evaluation. A review is being conducted of domestic and international government-funded asbestos removal programs, together with domestic royal commission and auditor reports on lessons learned from other recent government funded programs.

The asbestos removal incentives options identified so far cluster into **5 categories**, ranging from lowest cost and lightest touch (option 1 – free assessments) to the costliest and requiring greatest government administration (option 5 – government buy-backs). All incentives identified can be adapted for application to residential or commercial buildings.

Examples of government supported incentives

1.

Free assessments e.g., free testing for loose-fill asbestos insulation in pre-1980s properties in identified LGAs in the early phase of the NSW Loose-Fill Asbestos Insulation Program

2.

Grants / rebates e.g., the HomeBuilder grant program for home renovation (included asbestos removal) or home renovation and energy efficiency grants offered internationally (include funding for incidental asbestos removal)

3.

No / low interest loans e.g., low-interest home improvement loans for homeowners funded by local councils (LendologyCIC in the UK) or NSW Government Project Remediate's 10-year interest-free loan scheme for replacing high-risk flammable cladding in residential apartment buildings

4.

Tax incentives, e.g., ATO TR2020/2 ruling in Australia or Land Remediation Relief Program in the UK (150 % tax relief for asbestos remediation)

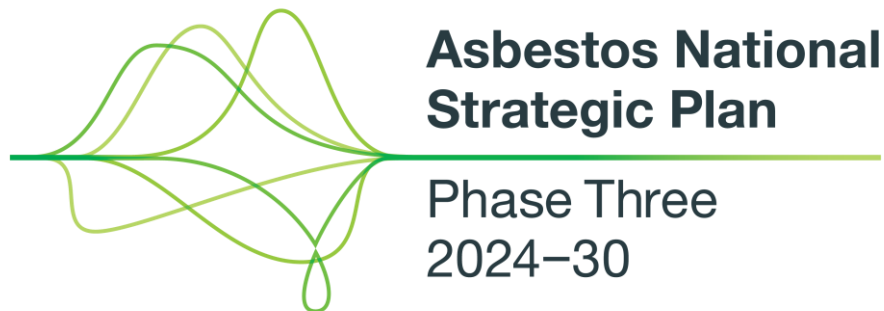
5.

Government buy-backs e.g., ACT Government Loose Fill Asbestos Insulation Eradication Scheme

Draft Asbestos National Strategic Plan Phase Three

This phase of the ANSP builds on our progress and will provide practical approaches to support the safe removal of ageing asbestos-containing materials.

What's the same and what's different



Additions and improvements include:

- ▶ recognition that Australia's asbestos legacy has aged, and materials have reached end of product life
- ▶ reduced text and five simplified principles
- ▶ increased focus on safe removal and disposal of ACMs consistent with the hierarchy of control
- ▶ inclusion of enablers that are essential for the effective implementation of the ANSP across all priorities, such as awareness raising
- ▶ inclusion of a National Action Plan, with actions to incentivise removal
- ▶ targets linked to clear performance measures
- ▶ clearly indicating those who are responsible for implementing the ANSP and those who facilitate and influence action to help achieve its aim and targets

Our key challenges

Asbestos materials have reached end of product life and are degrading, increasing the risk of exposure to asbestos fibres.

The increase in extreme weather events increases the risk of asbestos contamination and exposure.

Without significant intervention, Australia will still have around one million tonnes of asbestos in the built environment by 2060.

The general public mostly know that asbestos is dangerous, but do not have a good understanding of where asbestos can be found and how they can protect themselves.

This Asbestos National Strategic Plan (ANSP) builds on our progress and supports the safe removal of ageing asbestos materials to:

➤ prevent future generations from suffering disease

➤ prevent further contamination of our environment

➤ recognise that continued in situ management is not cost free

Principles that will guide our actions

1

Evidence-based decision making –

to deliver sustained improvement and ensure our focus is on areas of highest risk, including the most vulnerable populations

2

Efficiency –

eliminate duplication by leveraging our collective efforts

3

Transparency –

roles and responsibilities are acknowledged, and actions and outcomes are shared and publicly reported

4

Coordination –

across and within all tiers of government to ensure consistent and targeted actions

5

Partnerships –

between governments, non-government organisations and Australian communities to extend the reach and impact of our actions

Priorities

The first three priorities reflect the asbestos management life-cycle. The fourth priority reflects our commitment to continue advocating for a worldwide ban. It recognises that despite asbestos being banned in Australia for 20 years, it is still widely used in some countries around the world.



PRIORITY 1

Accurate identification and consistent assessment



PRIORITY 3

Safe and effective transport and disposal



PRIORITY 2

Proactive management and removal



PRIORITY 4

International collaboration and leadership



Consultation questions:

- ▶ Have the priority areas to prevent exposure to asbestos fibres been identified?
- ▶ If not, what should be added, removed or modified?

Enablers

We know that people do not always act safely and lawfully when dealing with ACMs due to powerful barriers that get in the way including that ACMs may be hard to identify and the effects of asbestos exposure are often felt many years after exposure.

To overcome these barriers several enablers have been identified that are essential for the effective implementation of the ANSP across all priorities.



Raise asbestos risk awareness



Support and enforce compliance with asbestos-related laws



Improve knowledge, skills and workforce capacity



Innovate, incentivise and inspire action



Strengthen and align relevant legal frameworks



Conduct research and data collection to inform policy and practice



Consultation questions:

- ▶ Have the key enablers been identified?
- ▶ If not, what should be added, removed or modified?

National Action Plan







Recognising the long-term nature of dealing with Australia's asbestos legacy, many of the actions in the current phase two plan continue to be necessary and relevant and are carried over to phase three. In addition, given the ageing asbestos-containing material in the built environment, actions to ensure proactive planning for removal are included that can avoid future costs and uncontrolled exposure.

Consultation questions:

- ▶ Do you agree with the national actions identified under each priority?
- ▶ If not, please specify what changes, if any, you would make to the national actions.



Measuring performance

Priority area enablers	Performance measures	Target
 Raise awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Level of awareness amongst target groups (survey data) ▶ National awareness campaign performance benchmarks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Awareness levels increases each year of the plan ▶ Campaign exceeds government performance benchmarks
 Improve knowledge, skills and workforce capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Number of workers trained ▶ Number of professionals accredited 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Workers who complete training ▶ People who are accredited increases each year of the plan
 Strengthen and align relevant legal frameworks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Percentage of national actions completed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 50% by 2026 ▶ 100% by 2030
 Support and enforce compliance with asbestos-related laws	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Increasing level of compliance (measured through campaigns, audits, etc) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 70% compliance by 2026 ▶ 90% compliance by 2030 ▶ Reduction in illegal dumping ▶ Reduction in illegal imports
 Innovate, incentivise and inspire action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Percentage of national actions completed ▶ Rate of ACM removal (stocks and flows data) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 50% by 2026 and 100% by 2030 ▶ Increased rate of removal
 Conduct research and data collection to inform policy and practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Percentage of national actions completed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 50% by 2026 ▶ 100% by 2030

Performance measures have been included to ensure transparency and to demonstrate whether public funds are making a difference and delivering on government objectives.

The enablers have been used to guide the development of the performance measures, as they support the priorities to achieve the aim of the ANSP. Targets have been chosen that are grounded in data, are specific and time-bound.

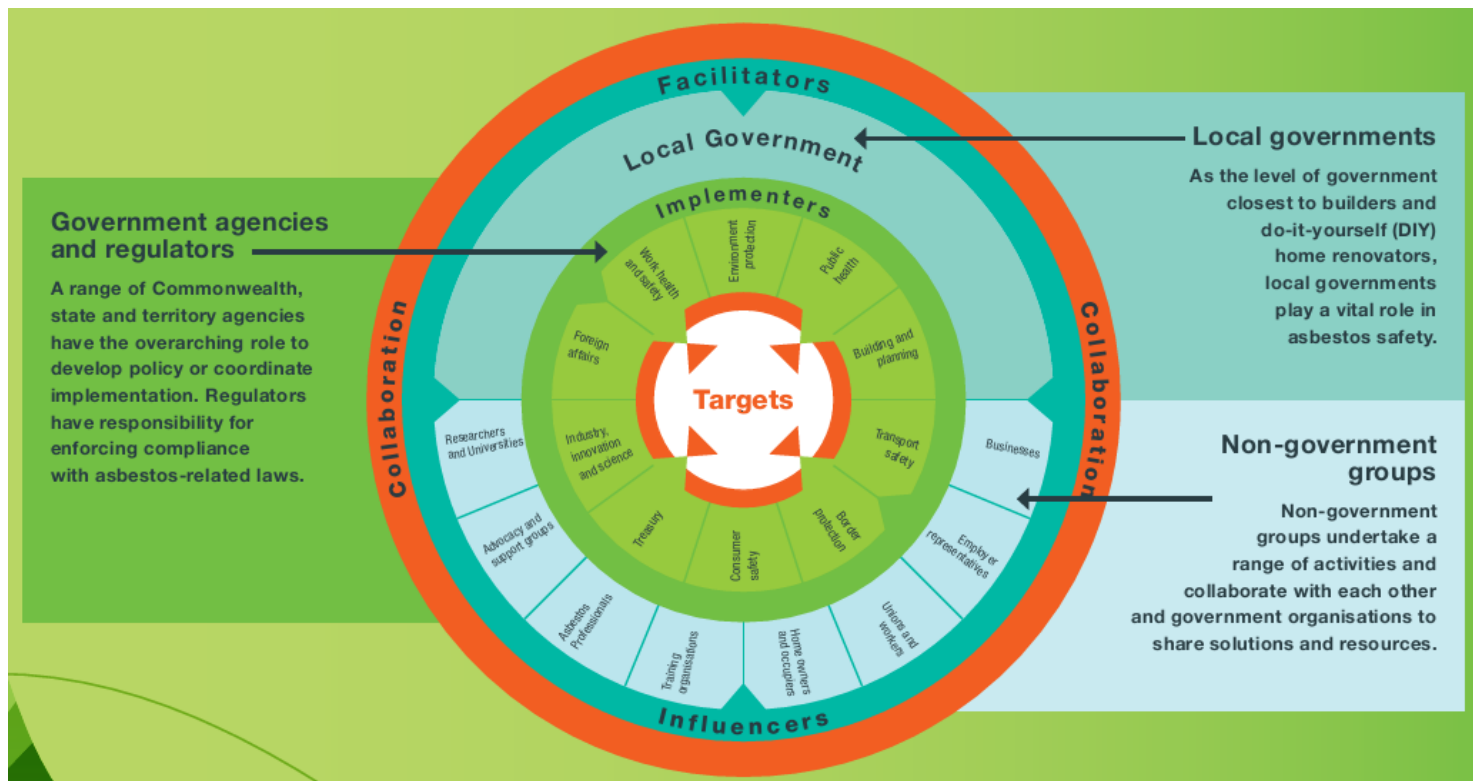


Consultation questions:

- ▶ Do you agree with the performance measures identified for each enabler?
- ▶ Do you consider each of the targets achievable?
- ▶ If not, what changes would you make to the performance measures or targets.

Asbestos Management System

The asbestos management system is comprised of implementers, facilitators and influencers. Australian, state and territory governments are responsible for implementing the ANSP's actions and achieving its targets, while importantly, local government and non-government groups facilitate, support and influence action.



Consultation questions:

- ▶ Have all participants in the asbestos management system been identified?
- ▶ Are their roles in achieving the aim and targets of the ANSP clearly reflected?
- ▶ If not, which participant(s) would you include/remove and why?

Next steps

Following the consultation workshops, we will:

- ▶ collate and analyse feedback
- ▶ publish a report on the feedback which will detail any changes to be made to the draft
- ▶ revise the ANSP to take into account consultation feedback
- ▶ provide the ANSP to ministers for approval
- ▶ launch the ANSP
- ▶ develop new implementation tools.