



# Australian Government

## Asbestos and Silica Safety and Eradication Council

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#### Communique

#### Meeting 1 – 7 March 2024

The [Asbestos and Silica Safety and Eradication Council](#) (the Council) held its inaugural meeting on 7 March 2024 on the traditional Country of the Narrm people (Melbourne). Council members congratulated Jodie Deakes on her appointment as Chief Executive Officer of the Asbestos and Silica Safety and Eradication Agency (ASSEA) and acknowledged the appointment of incoming Council members, Yasmin Cox and Simone Stevenson.

The 2023-24 Budget provided \$4.2 million to expand the agency and Council's role to address the rise of silicosis and silica-related diseases. Amendments to create the [ASSEA Act 2013](#), which give effect to the budget measure, received Royal Assent on 14 December 2023 as part of the Fair Work Legislation Amendment (Closing Loopholes) Bill 2023.

A workshop was held with Council members to seek views on a number of matters including ASSEA's initial and planned efforts related to the new silica functions as it transitions to coordinate, monitor, and report on national efforts to eliminate both asbestos and silica-related diseases in Australia, and support those affected by these diseases. The Council also considered the current committee and working group structure to ensure that it remains fit for purpose and recommended ASSEA undertake a review and report back to the next Council meeting its findings.

Council members received an update on the third phase of the Asbestos National Strategic Plan (ANSP) and noted it was awaiting agreement by Commonwealth, state and territory governments. Under the ASSEA Act 2013, the ANSP must be agreed by at least six governments for it to be implemented. Council members agreed to publish the draft ANSP on the ASSEA website, acknowledging its current status as under consideration.

In addition, Council members received an update on progress to develop resources for jurisdictions that will support implementing asbestos removal incentives should they include that as part of their actions under the next phase ANSP. The achievements of the National Asbestos Awareness Week 2023 and the completion of the first burst of advertising under the National Asbestos Awareness Campaign (NAAC) were also discussed. Members noted that burst 2 of the NAAC will commence on 17 March 2024 and a stakeholder pack is available on ASSEA's website to assist stakeholders to disseminate messaging.

Council members congratulated the agency on the success of the Asbestos 2024 Conference, which was held in partnership with the Faculty of Asbestos Management of Australia and New Zealand on the 4-6 March 2024. The conference titled 'Sustaining Innovation' explored new ways to manage, remove and dispose of ageing asbestos containing materials as well as innovations in diagnosing and treating asbestos-related illnesses.

The next Council meeting will be held in Canberra on 31 July 2024.