

National Declaration for a Safe Asbestos Free Australia

Our aim is to eliminate asbestos related disease and exposures to all forms of asbestos in Australia.

Australia has an unenviable record of one of the world's highest rate of asbestos related diseases and a legacy of asbestos containing materials (ACMs) in many workplaces and buildings - public and private, commercial, domestic and industrial.

The use of all forms of asbestos in Australia has been banned since 2003, including its import and export. But, because of the legacy of its use, we have not solved the problem of asbestos exposures - for either people at work or in the general community.

The current evidence is that:

1. Despite a general level of awareness about the dangers of asbestos, workers are unsure and unclear about specific safe work practices.
2. Householders are not aware of the extent and nature of ACMs in domestic dwellings.
3. Affected householders are unsure and unclear about specific safe work practices for home maintenance and improvement.
4. The condition of asbestos containing building materials is deteriorating and
5. The safe disposal of ACMs, especially for householders, is difficult and very often not properly followed.

To eliminate deadly asbestos related disease in Australia we must decrease and eventually eliminate all exposures to asbestos.

To achieve that, governments and the community generally must adopt programs to safely and systematically remove Asbestos Containing Materials (ACMs) from the built environment.

Internationally, the Australian government must also take a leadership role through trade and other forums to work towards an international ban on the mining, use, and sale of asbestos.

This National Asbestos Summit calls for the establishment of a National Asbestos Authority (NAA) for a Safe Asbestos Free Environment by 2030.

The Summit calls on all levels of government to work with organisations like those represented here, in the establishment of such an Authority so that we can extend and implement successful and safe asbestos awareness, control and eradication programs across the nation.