

Thursday, 1 August 2013

## ACTU welcomes more funding to tackle asbestos

The ACTU welcomes new funding from the Federal Government to tackle deaths from asbestos exposure with \$6.4 million to go to the new Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency to implement the National Strategic Plan for Asbestos Awareness and Management.

ACTU Assistant Secretary Michael Borowick said Australia had the highest per capita use of asbestos in the world.

“Asbestos has caused a horrific death toll and much suffering in Australia, and the impact of asbestos-related diseases is not expected to peak until 2020,” he said.

“The funding will go towards reducing future deaths from asbestos-related disease with another 30-40,000 people expected to be diagnosed in the next 20 years.”

“Unions have campaigned for decades about the dangers and have successfully banned it from Australia and helped secure long term compensation for people affected by asbestos-related disease,” he said.

We think that the asbestos pilot programs announced by the government will provide practical examples and lessons in how we can realistically achieve asbestos identification and removal plan goals.”

The plan aims to identify and grade all asbestos by 2018, including getting all asbestos out of government buildings by 2030. This is what unions and the Australian people want: safe homes, safe workplaces and safe communities.”

Mr Borowick added, “Perhaps the Victorian government needs to heed this message because as the only government that has failed to support the development of the plan, the Napthine Liberal government is in a positions where they are endangering Victorians.”

“Too many people have already lost their lives through exposure in the workplace. Miners of asbestos have been badly affected but also many other tradespeople, workers and even family members of workers. The impetus to act is urgent.”

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