

12 April 2013

Mr Tim Watling
Secretary
Standing Committee on Education, Employment
& Workplace Relations
Email: eewr.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Mr Watling

Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency Bill 2013

Thank you for the invitation to make a submission on the *Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency Bill 2013* (the Bill). I support the proposal to establish a national agency to provide a co-ordinated approach to the management of asbestos nationally, and the proposed functions of that agency. I welcome national policy which works towards improving the administrative efficiency and outcomes in Australia's asbestos management.

I note that the agency would comprise a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and staff. The CEO would manage the agency and be responsible for the performance of its functions. I also note that the Bill establishes the Asbestos Safety and Eradication Council (the Council) which will have the functions of providing advice to the CEO and Minister.

In respect to the composition of the Council, I wish to point out that a number of the participants at the National Asbestos Safety Reference Group Meeting held on 5 December 2012 expressed concern that a high level governing body, such as the proposed Council may be too cumbersome and disconnected from on ground networks and technical expertise to work effectively. The Tasmanian Government expressed similar concerns in correspondence to Mr Steve Kibble dated 17 December 2012. It was originally proposed that the governing board would consist of tripartite membership, including an independent chairperson, a medical expert, representation of all Australian Governments including Local Government, and national peak bodies. However, I note that it is now proposed the Council will comprise a Chair, one member representing the Commonwealth, two members representing State, Territory and Local Governments and four other members appointed by the Minister.

I understand that discussions around the structure of the Council and the Agency are ongoing. Tasmania would like to ensure that the resulting structures enable the Tasmanian Government to be actively engaged in the Council's work and facilitate the provision of constructive input to the Agencies actions and outcomes.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on the Bill.

Yours sincerely

Roy Ormerod
General Manager