



Australian Government
Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency

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27 August 2015

Senate Standing Committees on Economics
PO BOX 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

To whom it may concern

ASEA supplementary submission to the Inquiry into the effects of non-conforming building products on the Australian building and construction industry

Please find attached a supplementary submission from the Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency (ASEA) to the inquiry into the effects of non-conforming building products on the Australian building and construction industry.

I have authorised this supplementary submission as the Chief Executive Officer of ASEA. If you have any questions regarding this submission, please contact [REDACTED]

Thank you for allowing ASEA to contribute to this inquiry.

Yours sincerely

Peter Tighe
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER





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Supplementary submission - Inquiry into the effects of non-conforming building products on the Australian building and construction industry

1. On 3 August 2015, the Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency (the agency) made a submission to the inquiry into the effects of non-conforming building products on the Australian building and construction industry.
2. Included in the agency's submission was an attachment outlining recent incidents involving the importation of building materials found to contain asbestos, in breach of the *Customs (Prohibited Imports) Regulations 1956*.
3. The agency wishes to make a supplementary submission to inform the inquiry of further incidents that have occurred involving imported building materials found to contain asbestos, since the submission was made.
4. These incidents are outlined below.

Further incidents involving the importation of building equipment or materials found to contain asbestos

Expanded Polystyrene (EPS) Sandwich Panel

5. In early August 2015, a prohibition notice was issued by WorkCover NSW to a building site in NSW, following the discovery of asbestos in fibrous building panels that had been imported to construct a residential building.
6. The panels were imported from China and were thought to be asbestos-free, but subsequent testing by a laboratory accredited by the National Association of Testing Authorities (NATA) has shown they contain chrysotile asbestos.
7. The imported expanded polystyrene panels had been cut and significantly damaged on-site.
8. The builder was ordered to engage a licensed asbestos removalist to remediate the site and remove the remaining panels.
9. Further information in relation to this incident is available at <https://www.workcover.nsw.gov.au/news/safety-alert/asbestos-in-imported-building-products>

High Density Board

10. In mid-August 2015, the agency was informed of an incident involving samples of high density board or 'fiber reinforced cement board', imported into Australia from China.



11. Three samples of the high density compressed board (which had been supplied by the manufacturer for export as asbestos-free) were subsequently tested by a laboratory accredited by NATA, (COHLABS) which confirmed that one of the samples contained chrysotile asbestos.
 - This is despite the importer being provided with a test report indicating the materials were asbestos-free.
 - Following the detection of asbestos in one of the original samples, the Chinese manufacturer provided new samples that it again claimed were asbestos-free. When these subsequent samples were tested by COHLABS, chrysotile asbestos was again detected in one of the three samples tested.
12. Given all three of the original samples were supposedly manufactured at the same processing plant and appear to have similar physical morphology under stereo-microscopy examination, it was recommended by the Australian NATA accredited laboratory who undertook the testing, that all of the High Density Compressed Board samples be treated as asbestos containing until further information is provided by the manufacturer.