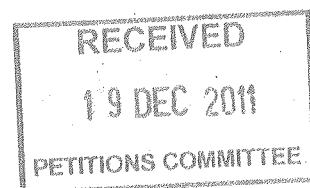




Senator Chris Evans

Leader of the Government in the Senate
Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills, Jobs and Workplace Relations



The Hon John Murphy MP
Chair
Standing Committee on Petitions
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Murphy

Thank you for your letter of 25 August 2011, on behalf of the Standing Committee on Petitions, regarding the petition you have received requesting that Australia take a leading role in the establishment of an international treaty to prevent the mining and exporting of asbestos. I apologise for the delay in responding.

The petition appears to deal principally with matters that fall under the portfolio responsibilities of the Hon Kevin Rudd MP, Minister for Foreign Affairs. I note from your letter that you have forwarded a copy of the petition to Minister Rudd.

However, asbestos exacts a terrible human toll in Australia and the Australian Government is committed to doing everything it can to ensure that asbestos management arrangements in Australia minimise the risk of avoidable exposure. That is why on 29 October 2010 I announced the establishment of the Asbestos Management Review. The review will assess current activities in the area of asbestos management and research and make recommendations for the development of a national strategic plan to improve asbestos awareness and management.

I also note from your correspondence that the petition requests that business ethics be taught in Australian schools and universities. As this matter falls within the portfolio responsibilities of the Hon Peter Garrett AM MP, Minister for School Education, Early Childhood and Youth, you may wish to forward a copy of the petition to his Office for appropriate action.

Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention.

Yours sincerely

CHRIS EVANS