

Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE Additional Estimates 2015 - 2016

Agency - Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency

Department of Employment Question No. EMSQ16-000212

Senator McKenzie provided in writing.

Question

ASEA - Functions

- o Can you explain to the Committee what ASEA's functions are?
- o Would be correct to say, that ASEA has a coordination role, not a regulation or enforcement role?
- o Is it correct that you have provided your staff with uniforms?
- o At what cost were the uniforms provided to staff?
- o If you are not a regulator, could you explain why staff have been provided with uniforms?

Answer

The functions of the agency are set out in section 8 of the *Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency Act 2013*

(1) The Agency has the following functions:

- (a) to encourage, coordinate, monitor and report on the implementation of the National Strategic Plan;
- (b) to review and amend the National Strategic Plan as required by the National Strategic Plan or at the request of the Minister;
- (c) to publish and promote the National Strategic Plan;
- (d) to provide advice to the Minister about asbestos safety, if requested to do so by the Minister;
- (e) to liaise with Commonwealth, State, Territory, local and other governments, agencies or bodies about:
 - (i) the implementation, review or amendment of the National Strategic Plan; or
 - (ii) asbestos safety;
- (f) to commission, monitor and promote research about asbestos safety;
- (g) such other functions as are conferred on the Agency by or under this Act, the rules or any other law of the Commonwealth;
- (h) to do anything incidental or conducive to the performance of any of the above functions.

(2) The Agency has the power to do all things that are necessary or convenient to be done for or in connection with the performance of its functions.

(3) In performing its functions, the Agency must act in accordance with the National Strategic Plan and any annual operational plan.

Yes, the role of the agency is to coordinate the delivery of the *National Strategic Plan for Asbestos Management and Awareness 2014–18* which the Commonwealth and all state and territory governments have endorsed. Regulation and enforcement of asbestos management and safety in the workplace is the responsibility of the state and territory workplace safety authorities in each jurisdiction (e.g. Worksafe NSW, WorkSafe ACT etc).

The agency purchased polo shirts for staff primarily to wear while working at agency's International Conference on Asbestos Awareness and Management in November 2015. These polo shirts were purple in colour to match the branding of the agency and were embroidered with Australian Government crest and agency name.

The polo shirts cost the agency a total of \$789.01 (GST inclusive) which was paid from funds within the budget for the conference.

The polo shirts were provided so that agency staff could be easily identifiable for delegates at the November 2015 conference and to wear in future when representing the agency at external events, meetings, forums or functions.