

Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Supplementary Budget Estimates 2014-2015**

Outcome 2 - Workplace Relations & Economic Strategy

Department of Employment Question No. EM1644_15

Senator Lines provided in writing.

Question

Wunderlich factory in Sunshine North - reports of asbestos

There have been recent media reports about asbestos contamination of the Melbourne suburb Sunshine North around a former asbestos factory. The Sunday Herald Sun reported on Sunday October 14: "At least 16 people who grew up within 1km of the plant — none of whom worked there — have died of asbestos-related diseases, the latest on Thursday. Another eight are known to be sick." Is the Department aware of these concerns about the asbestos levels around the Wunderlich factory in Sunshine North? When did the Department become aware of this issue? Is the Department involved in any response to these concerns? If so, what have you done to date in relation to this matter? Has the Department dedicated any specific resources towards addressing this issue? If not, why not? Have there been any communications with the relevant Victorian Department?

Answer

From the outset, it is noted that the Minister has discussed this matter with the Victorian Assistant Treasurer.

Is the Department aware of these concerns about the asbestos levels around the Wunderlich factory in Sunshine North?

The Department of Employment is aware of concerns about asbestos contamination around the former Wunderlich factory in Sunshine North, Victoria.

When did the Department become aware of this issue?

When the matter was raised by the media.

Is the Department involved in any response to these concerns? If so, what have you done to date in relation to this matter?

The department is not involved in the response to these concerns as it is a matter for the Victorian Government.

The Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency is an Australian Government agency which provides a national focus for asbestos awareness and education. People who believe that they may have been exposed to asbestos can register their details on the National Asbestos Exposure Register which is managed by the Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency.

*Has the Department dedicated any specific resources towards addressing this issue?
If not, why not?*

This is a matter for the Victorian Government

The Victorian Government has established an Expert Advisory Panel including representatives from the Victorian Department of Health and the Victorian Environmental Protection Authority. An incident management team involving representatives from a range of Victorian Government departments and the Brimbank Council has also been formed and is working with surrounding businesses and residents.

Have there been any communications with the relevant Victorian Department?

Yes, the department contacted the Victorian WorkCover Authority about this matter.