

## **Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment**

### **QUESTIONS ON NOTICE Supplementary Budget Estimates 2016 - 2017**

**Agency - Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency**

**Department of Employment Question No. EMSQ16-000998**

**Senator Marshall provided in writing.**

#### **Question**

##### **ASEA - Removal of Asbestos - Management Plan**

Just last week dozens of people were potentially exposed to asbestos in Sydney Town Hall where known asbestos was interfered with, despite an asbestos management plan to remove asbestos. Why, in 2016, is this still occurring in a government building and what commitment has been made by federal and state governments to eradicate asbestos from the built environment since the removal of the target to remove asbestos by 2030 from the National Asbestos Management Plan by the Abbott/Turnbull government?

#### **Answer**

Australian governments commenced phased banning of asbestos in the 1980s with the installation of asbestos in buildings generally banned in all jurisdictions by 1990. In 2001, the National Occupational Health and Safety Commission declared a prohibition on all uses of chrysotile asbestos to take effect from 31 December 2003. This confirmed a total ban on all uses of asbestos in Australia.

Asbestos that was fixed or installed prior to asbestos bans in Australia must be managed and removed in accordance with detailed requirements set out Commonwealth, state and territory work health and safety laws. This includes a duty to identify any asbestos containing material present in the workplace.

*The National Strategic Plan for Asbestos Management and Awareness*, endorsed by the Australian Government and all state and territory governments, provides a nationally coordinated approach to meeting the challenge of Australia's asbestos legacy. The plan comprises six key strategies, including the removal strategy which will inform the potential practicality of removing asbestos from the built environment to eliminate asbestos-related diseases.