



Public Health Association
AUSTRALIA

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Hon Tony Burke MP
Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations
PO Box 6022, House of Representatives
Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600

22/11/2023

RE: Engineered Stone Prohibition

The Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA) is recognised as the principal non-government organisation for public health in Australia working to promote the health and well-being for all. PHAA seeks to drive better health outcomes through increased knowledge, better access and equity, evidence informed policy and effective population-based practice in public health.

PHAA strongly urges Work Health and Safety Ministers to heed the recommendation from Safe Work Australia (SWA) and initiate a prohibition on the use of all engineered stone, irrespective of crystalline silica content.

While there are evidently other examples where silica exposure is a problem in a range of workplaces, engineered stone is clearly at the extreme end with respect to dose exposure and the consequent adverse health outcomes, so it is unacceptable to expose workers to this level of established risk. Previous regulatory attempts have failed to protect workers from debilitating and fatal diagnoses of silicosis, lung cancer and progressive massive fibrosis.

A complete prohibition of engineered stone is the only way to truly reduce the extreme risk for stonemasons, so as to improve safety in their workplaces.

The need for a total ban is now broadly accepted in the industry and community, as seen by the actions of several major national building supply and construction companies announcing bans on the use and sale of the product in the wake of the SWA Report. Safer options will remain on the market.

PHAA stands united with unions, other public health organisations, work health and safety specialists, and now the SWA Report in our call to end the use of this dangerous and discretionary product. We call upon Work Health and Safety Ministers to allow no further delay and make the necessary decision at their meeting in December 2023.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Terry Slevin'.

Adjunct Professor Terry Slevin
Chief Executive Officer
Public Health Association of Australia

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