



Australian Stone Advisory Association Ltd
PO Box 155, Ivanhoe VIC 3079, Australia

Email: info@asaa.com.au

MEDIA RELEASE

31 October 2018

Helping to protect the health and safety of everybody working in the stone industry is paramount to the Australian Stone Advisory Association (ASAA).

In response to recent calls in NSW for a moratorium on the cutting of engineered stone, ASAA believes this is unnecessary. Work practices that allow the safe use of engineered stone include wet cutting, the use of local exhaust ventilation, on-tool extraction, and respirators, to ensure the protection of worker health.

As an industry association, ASAA provides awareness and supports the provision of resources to assist employers and workers alike to control exposure to Respirable Crystalline Silica (RCS) and prevent silicosis. We welcome the recent COAG commitment to a review of standards governing the engineered stone benchtop industry and examining the establishment of a national dust disease register for workers. ASAA is represented on both the NSW taskforce and the Queensland Office of Industrial Relations working group on silicosis in the engineered stone industry by Carl Strautins, a Certified Occupational Hygienist.

Silicosis is preventable – what we are seeing now is the re-emergence of an old disease reflecting inadequate work health and safety practices with a comparatively new material.

ASAA recommends that everybody working with material that contains RCS (e.g. most engineered stone) should review work health and safety responsibilities in consultation with employers and workers. Consideration should be given to:

- raising awareness of the hazards of RCS exposure to all industry personnel
- the revision of documented safe work practices
- confirmation that potential exposures are adequately controlled (through training, exposure monitoring and respiratory protection programs)
- those at risk participating in an appropriate health surveillance regime

The management, control and monitoring of RCS exposures should be implemented and reviewed in consultation with a Certified Occupational Hygienist (COH) and an Occupational Physician.

This is an important health issue where we cannot be complacent. We need everyone in the stone and construction industries to work together in eliminating this disease. Silicosis is not limited to the engineered stone industry, and we can only hope that our experience can bring meaningful change across all industries faced with the challenge of preventing this wicked disease.

About ASAA:

The [Australian Stone Advisory Association](http://www.asaa.com.au) (ASAA) is an industry association formed to provide information about the installation, care and maintenance of stone in the built environment. It has a particular focus on the promotion of natural stone quarried in Australia.

For further information, contact:

David West, Secretary, Australian Stone Advisory Association
e: info@asaa.com.au m: 0411 692 696