

Across Government Asbestos Risk Reduction

Report for the year ended 30 June 2016



Government
of South Australia

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SUMMARY

The *South Australian Work Health and Safety Act 2012* and *Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012* require persons with management or control of a workplace to minimise health risks due to asbestos exposure in the workplace.

Premier and Cabinet Circular PC013 – *Annual Reporting Requirements* mandates agencies to provide information that will enable the production of an annual across government report on asbestos management for both non-residential and residential sites.

This twelfth annual report illustrates the current status of the across government data. It shows that 80% of sites are asbestos free or have asbestos-containing materials not recommended for removal, and less than 1% of sites have asbestos containing materials that have been recommended for immediate removal. The results are consistent with previous reports and demonstrate progress with asbestos removal.

INTRODUCTION

This report is part of the government's ongoing commitment to the work health and safety of employees, contractors and the public in relation to government owned buildings, plant and grounds that may have asbestos containing materials present.

The Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure (DPTI) collates agency¹ data and quantifies the main trends relating to removal works, the ongoing natural decay of asbestos containing materials (ACMs), the new classification of sites, and where possible any large-scale site acquisition/transfer/disposals. The report is submitted to Cabinet and tabled in Parliament to inform of the ongoing progress of government relating to asbestos management activities.

BACKGROUND

Asbestos Containing Materials in Building Products

ACMs have been used in a wide range of building products including cement cladding (wall and roof sheeting, fencing and pipes), heat-resistant textiles (gaskets, insulation and equipment linings) and as sprayed insulation for buildings and other structures. Buildings constructed before 1986 are most likely to contain asbestos.

The Australian construction industry used crocidolite, amosite and chrysotile asbestos. Crocidolite asbestos was phased out from 1967 and amosite asbestos was phased out in the 1980s. On 31 December 2003 all new uses of asbestos were banned in Australia – it is now illegal to import, export, re-use, or sell these products. ACMs installed before this date can remain in use (if appropriately safe).

Work Health and Safety Regulations

The *South Australian Work Health and Safety (WH&S) Act 2012* and WH&S Regulations 2012 require persons with management or control of a workplace to minimise health risks due to asbestos exposure in the workplace. Although residential buildings are not covered by this requirement, the government voluntarily includes a significant number of residential assets in this report.

The WH&S Regulations 2012 require a person with management or control of a workplace to ensure as far as is reasonably practical that:

- a competent person undertakes non-invasive inspection of buildings, plant and grounds;
- an asbestos register is maintained that must record the date of identification, the type, condition and location of all identified asbestos. The register must be maintained to ensure the information in the register is up to date;
- an asbestos management plan for each workplace is prepared and updated by each agency from 1 July 2015; and

¹ Attorney-General's Department; Courts Administration Authority; Department for Communities and Social Inclusion; Department for Correctional Services; Department for Education and Child Development; Department for Health and Ageing; Department of State Development; Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources; Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure; Department of the Premier and Cabinet; Department of Treasury and Finance; Environment Protection Authority; Renewal SA; South Australian Fire and Emergency Services Commission and South Australian Police.

- the asbestos register and management plans are made available to all site occupants, building contractors and health and safety representatives at all times at each site.

Consistency with Australian Government Policies

The South Australian Government has endorsed the National Strategic Plan for Asbestos Awareness and Management in Australia 2014-18 which aims to 'prevent exposure to airborne asbestos fibres in order to eliminate asbestos related disease in Australia'.

The Australian Government established the Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency to implement the National Strategic Plan. The strategies used to enable the aim of the National Strategic Plan to occur are:

- **awareness:** increase public awareness of the health risks posed by working with or being exposed to asbestos;
- **best practice:** identify and ensure best practice in asbestos management, education, transport, storage and disposal;
- **identification:** improve the identification and grading of asbestos and sharing of information regarding the location of ACMs;
- **removal:** identify priority areas where ACMs present a risk, identify the barriers to the safe removal of asbestos, and review management and removal infrastructure to estimate the capacity and rate for the safe removal of asbestos;
- **research:** commission, monitor and promote research into the prevention of asbestos exposure and asbestos related disease; and
- **international leadership:** Australia continues to play a leadership role in a global campaign for a worldwide ban on asbestos mining and manufacturing.

In November 2014, SafeWorkSA launched the asbestos.sa.gov.au website as the new home of advice for South Australians concerned about asbestos in their homes or workplaces. The website provides information on finding and identifying asbestos, what to do with it, how to remove it and where to put it for residential settings and workplaces.

Annual Asbestos Reporting

Premier and Cabinet Circular PC013 requires government agencies to annually provide DPTI with a table summarising their asbestos management activities. This data is aggregated to provide an across government view as presented in this report.

Overview of Agency Reporting

Historically agencies have managed asbestos at a site level where asbestos registers are held. A standard annual reporting format allows agencies to establish a portfolio-level view of the status of asbestos containing materials in their buildings and develop removal programs accordingly. This consistent approach taken by agencies facilitates analysis of asbestos issues at an across government level.

The simpler reporting format established in 2007 refers to the recommended actions recorded for each asbestos containing material (refer to Appendix 1 for the template). The reporting requirement is similar to that used for Work Health and Safety and Energy Efficiency.

Each asbestos containing material is assessed for risk and given a corresponding recommended action² by the inspector in an asbestos site register. Each site is assigned a category rating based on the highest priority recommended action for an item present at that site. The total number of sites for each category rating is then calculated and displayed in the table. Numbers for the start and end of the reporting year provide a simple progress measure, and optional further commentary can be included to highlight any particular achievements.

ASBESTOS RISK REDUCTION REPORT

Findings: Updated Risk Data

Analysis indicates that agencies are continuing to undertake removal works and improve data quality. Figure 1 shows progress in most categories for 2015/16. Aggregated data for categories 3, 4 and 5 indicates that 80.04% of sites are asbestos free or have asbestos-containing materials not recommended for removal.

² Which may be 'remove promptly' or 'remove as soon as reasonably practicable' where removal is recommended. 'Use care during maintenance' or simply 'monitor condition' are used for lower risk items.

Asbestos containing materials presence (based on recommended actions)

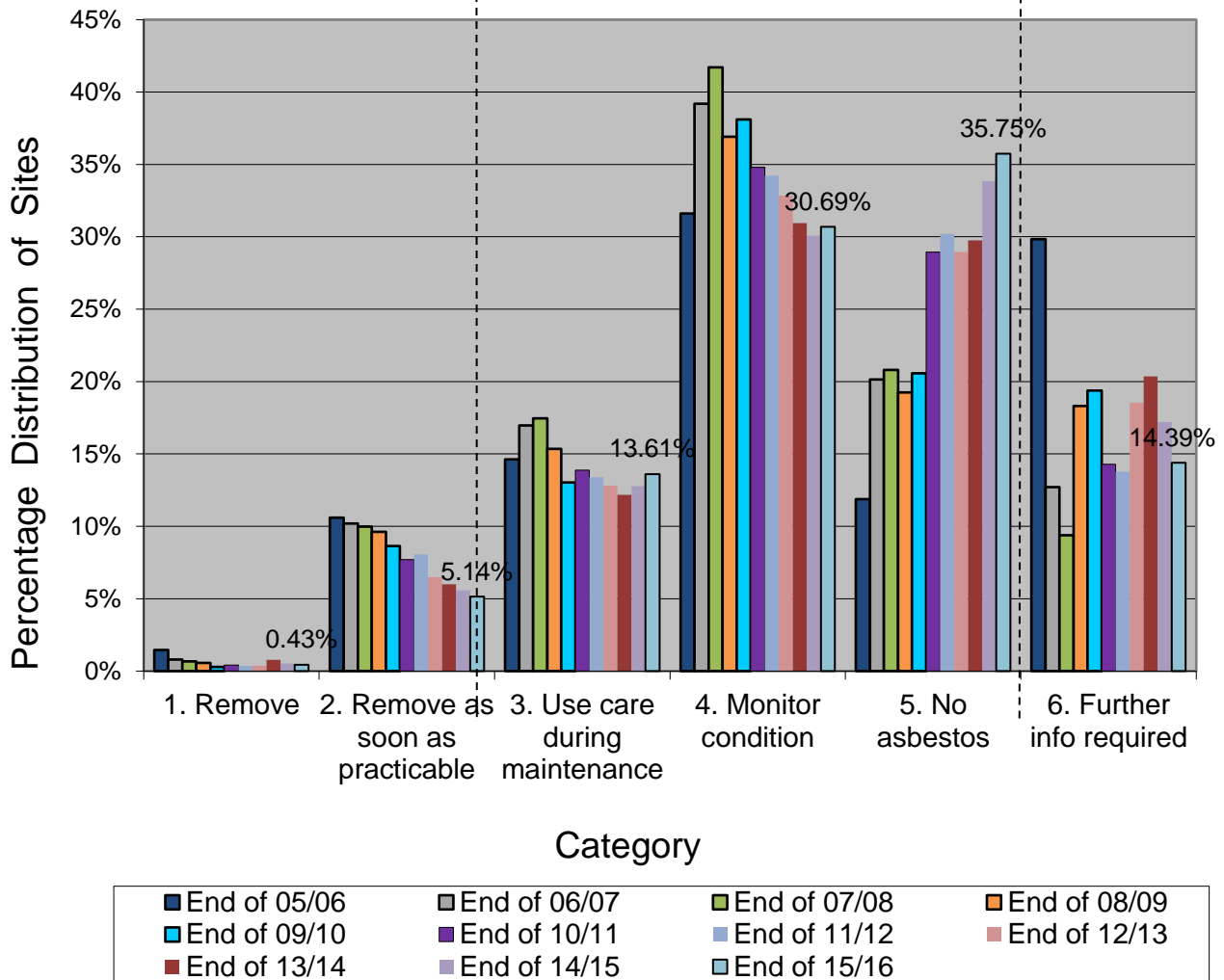


Figure 1 – This chart demonstrates that a majority of sites are asbestos free or have low risk asbestos containing materials present.

- Category 1 (remove immediately):** approximately 0.43% of sites have asbestos-containing materials recommended for prompt removal. Overall the outcome for Category 1 shows continuation of a low percentage i.e. 0.8% in 2006/07, 0.7% in 2007/08, 0.6% in 2008/09, 0.3% in 2009/10, 0.4% in 2010/11, 0.35% in 2011/12, 0.37% in 2012/13, 0.77% in 2013/14, 0.51% in 2014/15 and 0.43% in 2015/16.
- Category 2 (remove as soon as practicable):** there has been a 12.81% decrease since 2014/15 in the number of these sites - ‘remove as soon as practicable’. This reflects the number of assets that have had asbestos removal works completed during the 2015/16 year.

Approximately 14% of sites in Categories 1 and 2 have one or more asbestos containing materials that have been recommended for removal (compared to the 2004/05 baseline of 19%).

- Categories 3 and 4 (Use care during maintenance / monitor condition): show marginal change (2.42% increase for category 3 and 1.9% decrease for category 4 respectively).
- Category 5 (asbestos free): there has been a 1.56% increase in the number of assets with 'no asbestos' during 2015/16. This is due to removal of asbestos in a number of buildings, disposal of some buildings and reassessment of some buildings which changed the site category.
- Category 6 (further information required): there was a decrease of 24.25% since 2014/15 due to the completion of asbestos inspections and the required information being available to determine the site category.

APPENDIX 1

ANNUAL ASBESTOS REPORTING TEMPLATE

(Agency Name) : ANNUAL ASBESTOS MANAGEMENT REPORT, YEAR				
Category	Number of Sites		Category Description	Interpretation One or more item(s) at these sites...
	At start of year	At end of year		
1	#	#	Remove	Should be removed promptly.
2	#	#	Remove as soon as practicable	Should be scheduled for removal at a practicable time.
3	#	#	Use care during maintenance	May need removal during maintenance works.
4	#	#	Monitor condition	Has asbestos present. Inspect according to legislation and policy.
5	#	#	No asbestos identified / identified asbestos has been removed	All asbestos identified as per WHS Regulations 2012 (Chapter 8 – Asbestos) has been removed.
6	#	#	Further information required	These sites not yet categorised or some asbestos items do not have recommended actions.

Definitions:

Category: The site performance score, determined by the worst item performance score at each site.

Number of Sites in Category: A count of how many sites have the corresponding site performance score, with separate counts done at the start and the end of each year.

Category Description: Indicates the recommended action corresponding to the worst item performance score.

Interpretation: A brief real-world example of what each category implies for a site.

Additional Information

Please provide any further commentary to describe achievements for the year, and ongoing works and policies.

This report has been prepared by the Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure (DPTI)

For further details contact DPTI by phone: 8343 2161
or email: graeme.brown@sa.gov.au