

Monday 1 July 2024

Cancer Council welcomes the national ban on engineered stone coming into effect, safeguarding the lungs of thousands of Australian workers

Cancer Council welcomes the national ban on the use of engineered stone coming into effect today, safeguarding the lungs of thousands of Australian workers who are regularly exposed to the deadly harms of silica dust.

Crystalline silica dust, a fine dust 100 times smaller than a grain of sand, is classified as a Group 1 carcinogen or cancer-causing substance by the leading authority, the International Agency for Research on Cancer.

Breathing in the dust can cause silicosis and lung cancer. Each year approximately 230 people will develop lung cancer because of past exposure to silica dust at work.

Professor Tim Driscoll, Chair of Cancer Council's Occupational and Environmental Cancers Committee said the ban will make a critical difference in the lives of Australian workers.

"Cancer Council is pleased to see the decision made last year on the banning of engineered stone has come into effect. Minimising exposure to silica dust is essential to protecting the health of current and future Australian workers.

"The ban on engineered stone should prevent approximately 100 lung cancers and 1,000 silicosis cases over the lifetime of Australian workers from across the entire supply chain from factory workers to tradespeople working in Australian homes."

There is no requirement to remove engineered stone that is already installed, recognising that the engineered stone only poses a health risk when worked on, where the fine dust from cutting or grinding is produced. Transitional arrangements are in place in NSW, SA, WA, NT, and Tasmania for contracts entered into before 31 December 2023, providing they are completed by 31 December 2024. The ACT, Victoria, and Queensland do not have a transitional period for the ban.

Cancer Council has been working to prevent the risk of cancer in workplaces and calling for governments, employers and regulators to take action to reduce, regulate and control workplace carcinogens such as silica dust. The ban on all engineered stone, including 'low silica' products, is consistent with Cancer Council's calls and evidence, the findings of the National Dust Disease Taskforce Report to the previous Federal government in June 2021, and the Draft National Silicosis Prevention Strategy.

"Cancer Council commends each government and enforcement agency for their collective efforts in bringing this ban into effect and for keeping more Australians safe at work," Professor Driscoll concludes.

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Contact details

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About Cancer Council Australia

Cancer Council Australia is Australia's leading cancer charity, working to reduce the impact of cancer for all Australians. Cancer Council Australia works with its members, the eight state and territory Cancer Councils to:

- Undertake and fund cancer research
- Prevent and control cancer
- Provide information and support for people affected by cancer
- Shape and influence policy and practice

Find out more at cancer.org.au, or visit our [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#) or [LinkedIn](#).