

# Asbestos and other workplace carcinogens: An Australian perspective (Learning from our mistakes)

Terry Slevin

research



prevention



support

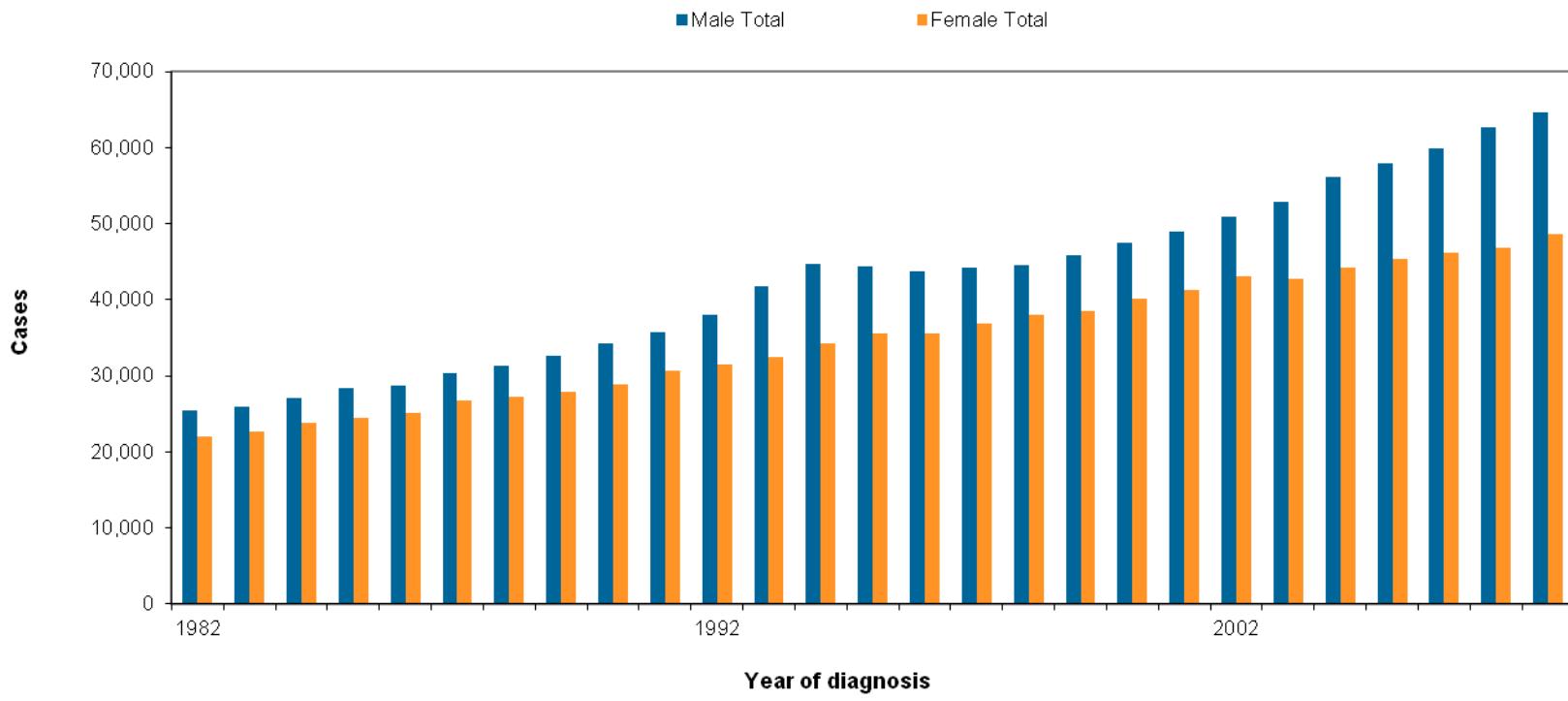


Cancer  
Council  
Western Australia

Chair, Occupational and Environmental Cancer Committee.  
Cancer Council Australia (CCA)

# Number of new cases of cancer in Australia 1983 - 2009

Number of cases by year and sex for All cancers combined  
(ICD10 C00–C97, D45–D46, D47.1, D47.3), Australia, 1982–2009



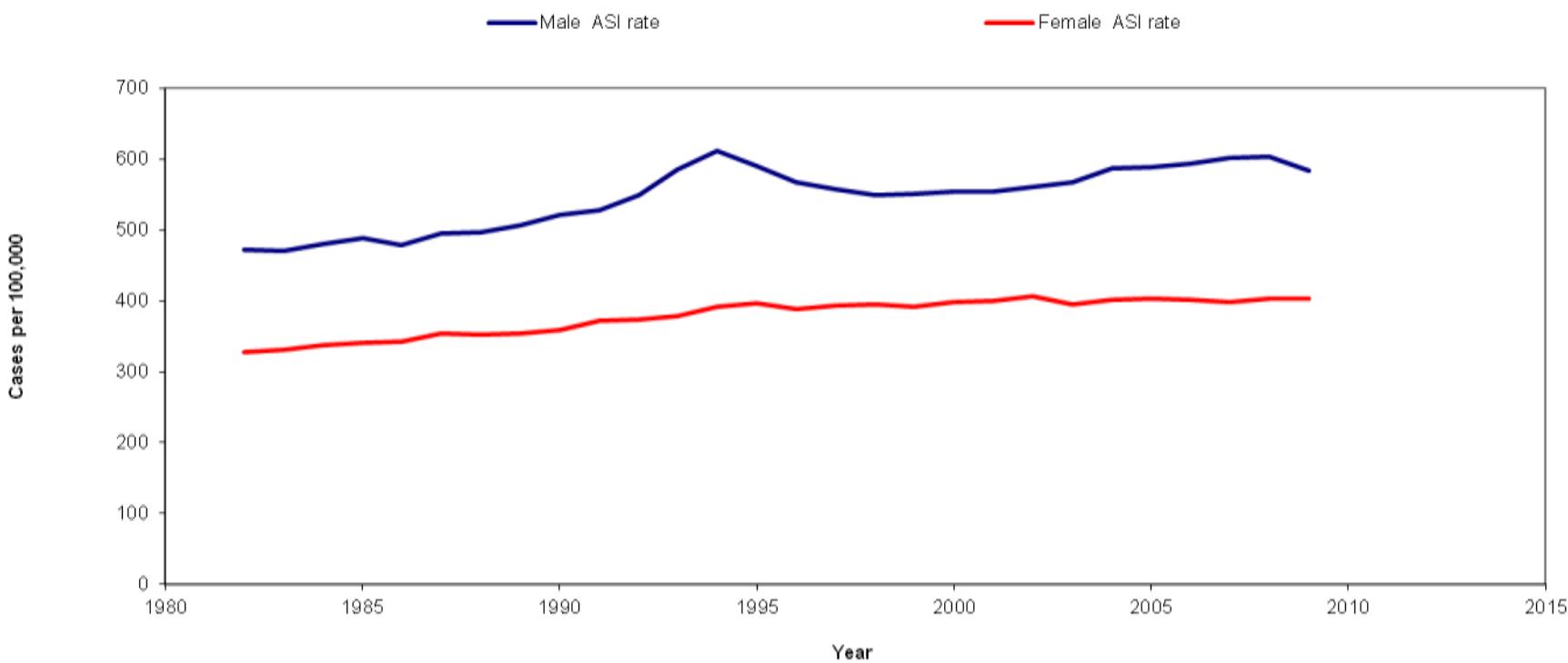
In 2009	Males	64,342	583.5
	Females	49,795	404.2
	Persons	114,137	485.7

Male/Female ratio 1.4



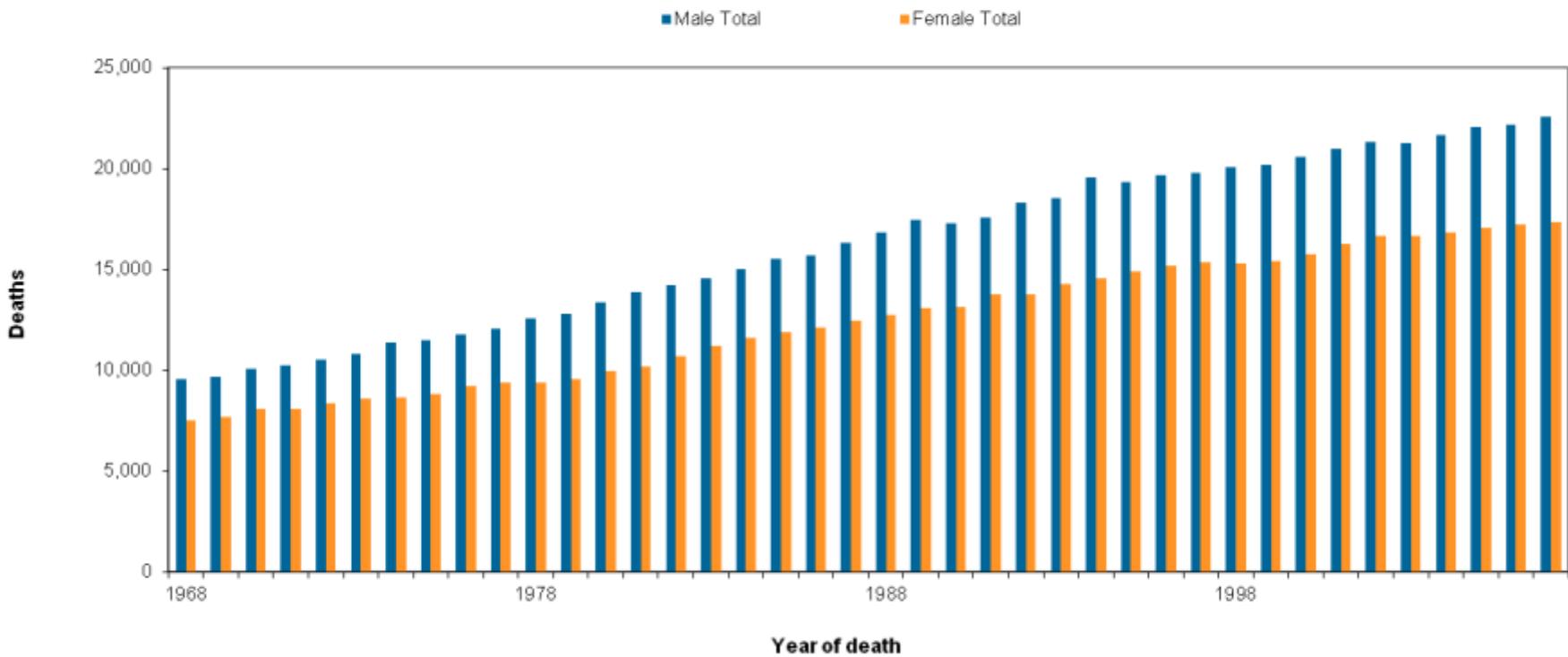
# Cancer Incidence (new cases) RATES in Australia 1983 - 2009

Trends in incidence rates for All cancers combined  
(ICD10 C00–C97, D45–D46, D47.1, D47.3), Australia, 1982–2009



# Cancer Mortality Count Aust 1968 - 2007

Number of deaths by year and sex for All cancers combined  
(ICD10 C00–C97, D45–D46, D47.1, D47.3), Australia, 1968–2007



In 2007

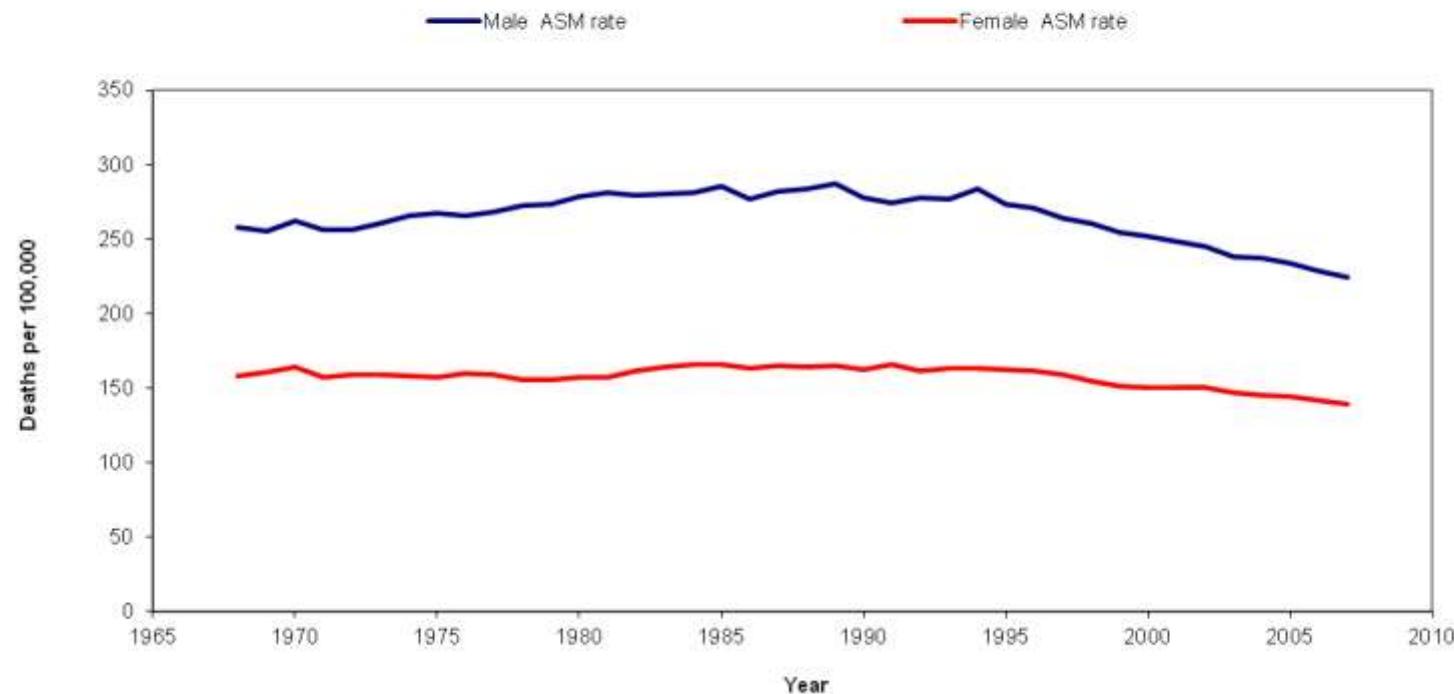
Males	22,562
Females	17,322
Persons	39,884

Male/Female ratio 1.6



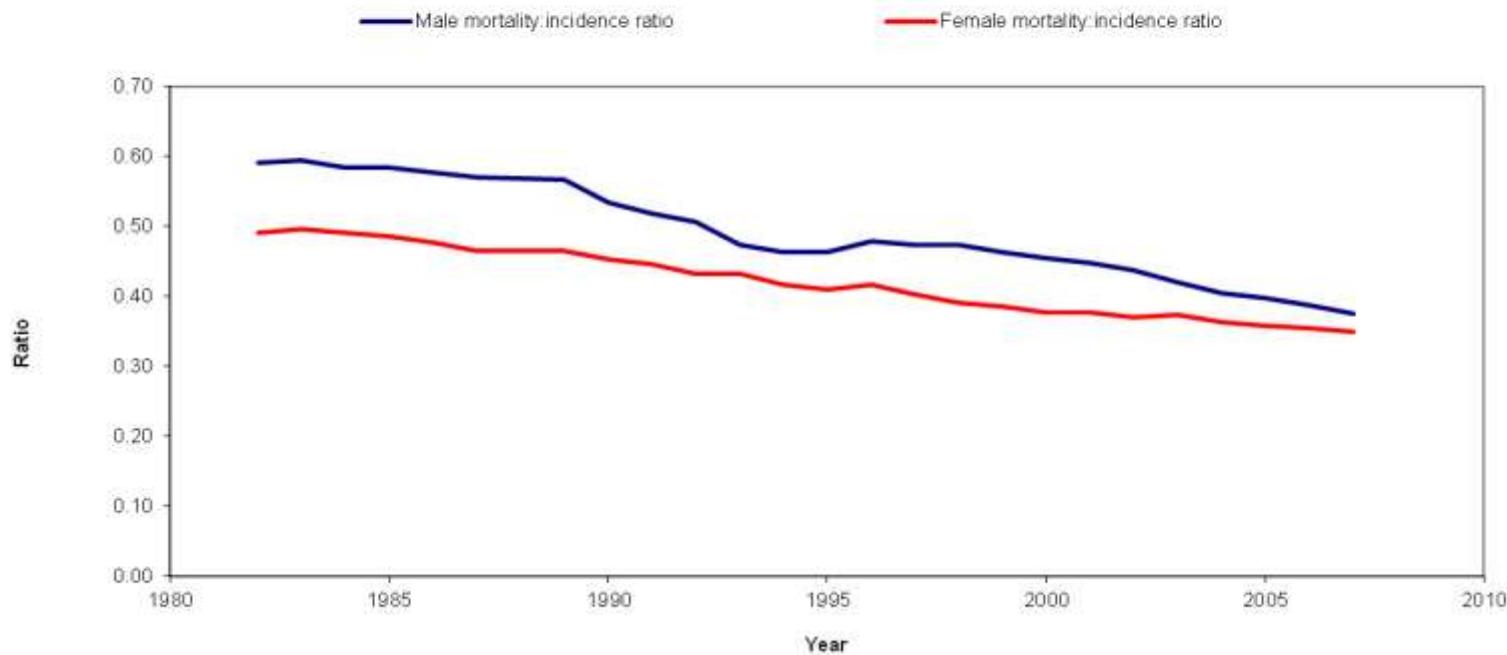
# Cancer Mortality Rate Aust 1968 - 2008

Trends in death rates for All cancers combined  
(ICD10 C00–C97, D45–D46, D47.1, D47.3), Australia, 1968–2007



# Cancer deaths as a proportion of cases diagnosed

Trends in mortality:incidence ratios for All cancers combined  
(ICD10 C00–C97, D45–D46, D47.1, D47.3), Australia, 1982–2007



# Cancer risks in the workplace



# How many cancers are due to occupational exposures ?

- **No one knows for certain**
- **Estimates are conservative as good data is not collected in terms of exposure or causality**
- **Best estimates suggest between 3.5 and 5%**

*“In Australia, we estimate that 5,000 invasive cancers and 34,000 non-melanoma skin cancers per year are caused by occupational exposures and 1.5 million workers are exposed to known carcinogens”.*(Fritschi and Driscoll ANJPH 2006)

# An international problem – Some recent UK data

- Occupational Cancer **3.7% (11,494 cases)** of all cancers in the UK are attributable to occupational exposures
- Of those asbestos exposure contributes approx. **4,200 cases**
- Industries where asbestos exposure is a possibility include Shipbuilding, construction, mining and milling, by-product manufacture, insulating, sheet metal work, asbestos cement industry

Parkin M Cancers Attributable to occupational exposures in the UK  
2010 BJC 2011 105 S70 – 72

Cancer Site	Asbestos	Shift work	Min. oils	Solar rad <sup>n</sup>	Silica	DEE	PAHs (Tars)	Painters	Dioxins	ETS	Radon	Welders	All
Bladder			296			106		71					550
Brain													14
Breast		1,957											1,969
Cervix													18
Kidney													3
Larynx	8												56
Leukaemia													38
Liver													5
Lung	2,223		470		907	695		282	215	284	209	175	5,442
LH cancers													1
Melanoma eye													6
Mesothelioma	1,937												1,937
Multiple Myeloma													10
Nasopharynx													15
NHL										74			140
NMSC			902	1,541			475						2,862
Oesophagus													188
Ovary													33
Pancreas													1
Sinonasal			55										126
STS										27			27
Stomach	47							83					157
Thyroid													1
<b>Total Attrib. Registrations</b>	<b>4,216</b>	<b>1,957</b>	<b>1,722</b>	<b>1,541</b>	<b>907</b>	<b>801</b>	<b>475</b>	<b>437</b>	<b>316</b>	<b>284</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>13,598</b>

# How many are exposed ?

To cite: Carey RN,  
Driscoll TR, Peters S, et al.  
*Occup Environ Med*  
Published Online First:  
[please include Day Month  
Year] doi:10.1136/oemed-  
2013-101651

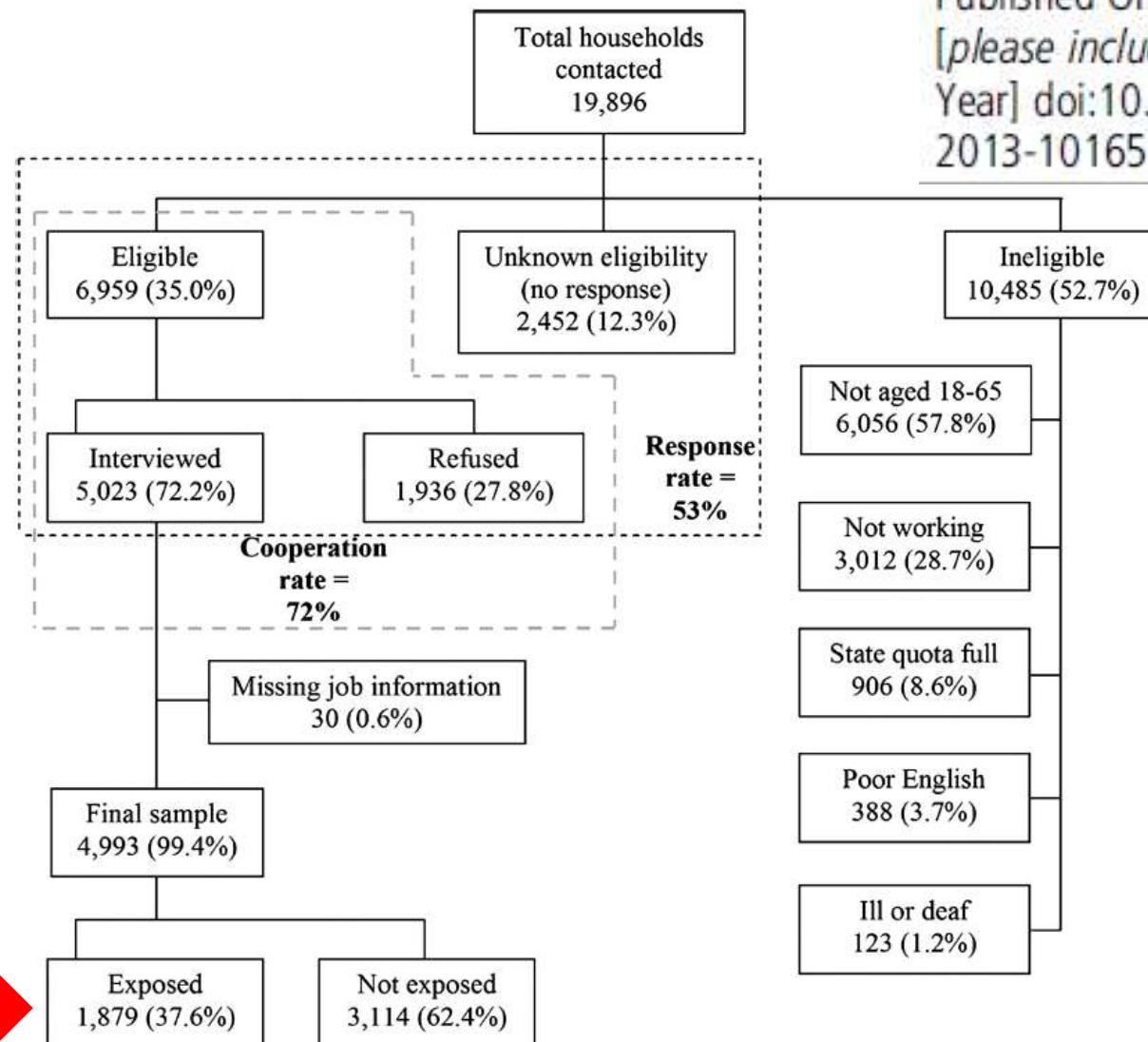


Figure 1 Response flow chart for the Australian Work Exposures Study (AWES) Sample, Australia, 2011–2012.

Table 3 Proportion of final sample and Australian working population estimated to be occupationally exposed by carcinogen

Carcinogen*	Most common occupational groups	Sample n (%)	Population n (%)
Solar UVR	Farmer, animal/horticultural, painter	963 (34.8)	1 737 500 (37.0)
Diesel engine exhaust	Farmer, heavy vehicle driver, miner	796 (28.8)	1 344 500 (28.0)
ETS	Painter, plumber, hospitality	589 (21.3)	1 164 000 (24.0)
Benzene	Farmer, animal/horticultural, automobile driver	370 (13.4)	636 440 (13.0)
Lead	Painter, vehicle worker, plumber	295 (10.7)	502 100 (10.0)
Silica	Miner, construction, engineer	289 (10.5)	543 390 (11.0)
Wood dust	Carpenter, painter, handyperson	271 (9.8)	449 470 (9.0)
Artificial UVR	Farmer, vehicle worker, metal worker	247 (8.9)	391 770 (8.0)
PAHs	Farmer, emergency worker, food service	239 (8.6)	454 160 (9.0)
Shiftwork†	Nurse, miner, passenger transport	203 (7.3)	396 120 (8.0)
Chromium VI	Painter, metal worker, carpenter	168 (6.1)	291 930 (6.0)
Asbestos	Vehicle worker, emergency worker, miner	138 (5.0)	251 960 (5.0)
Formaldehyde	Carpenter, painter, emergency worker	118 (4.3)	200 150 (4.0)
Nickel	Metal worker, plumber, vehicle worker	98 (3.5)	170 840 (3.0)
Ionising radiation	Health professional, miner, scientist	74 (2.7)	127 800 (2.0)
Trichloroethylene	Farmer, metal worker, plumber	44 (1.6)	73 570 (1.0)
Arsenic	Carpenter, office worker, heavy vehicle driver	33 (1.2)	49 750 (1.0)
Vinyl chloride	Emergency worker, machine operator	19 (0.7)	40 780 (0.7)
Ethylene oxide	Emergency worker, food factory, scientist	22 (0.8)	46 240 (1.0)
1,3-butadiene	Emergency worker	21 (0.8)	44 650 (1.0)
Cadmium	Metal worker, vehicle worker, electrical worker	13 (0.5)	20 840 (0.5)
Nitrosamines	Metal worker, scientist	8 (0.3)	14 710 (0.3)
Acid mists	Machine operator, metal worker, engineer	5 (0.2)	11 060 (0.2)

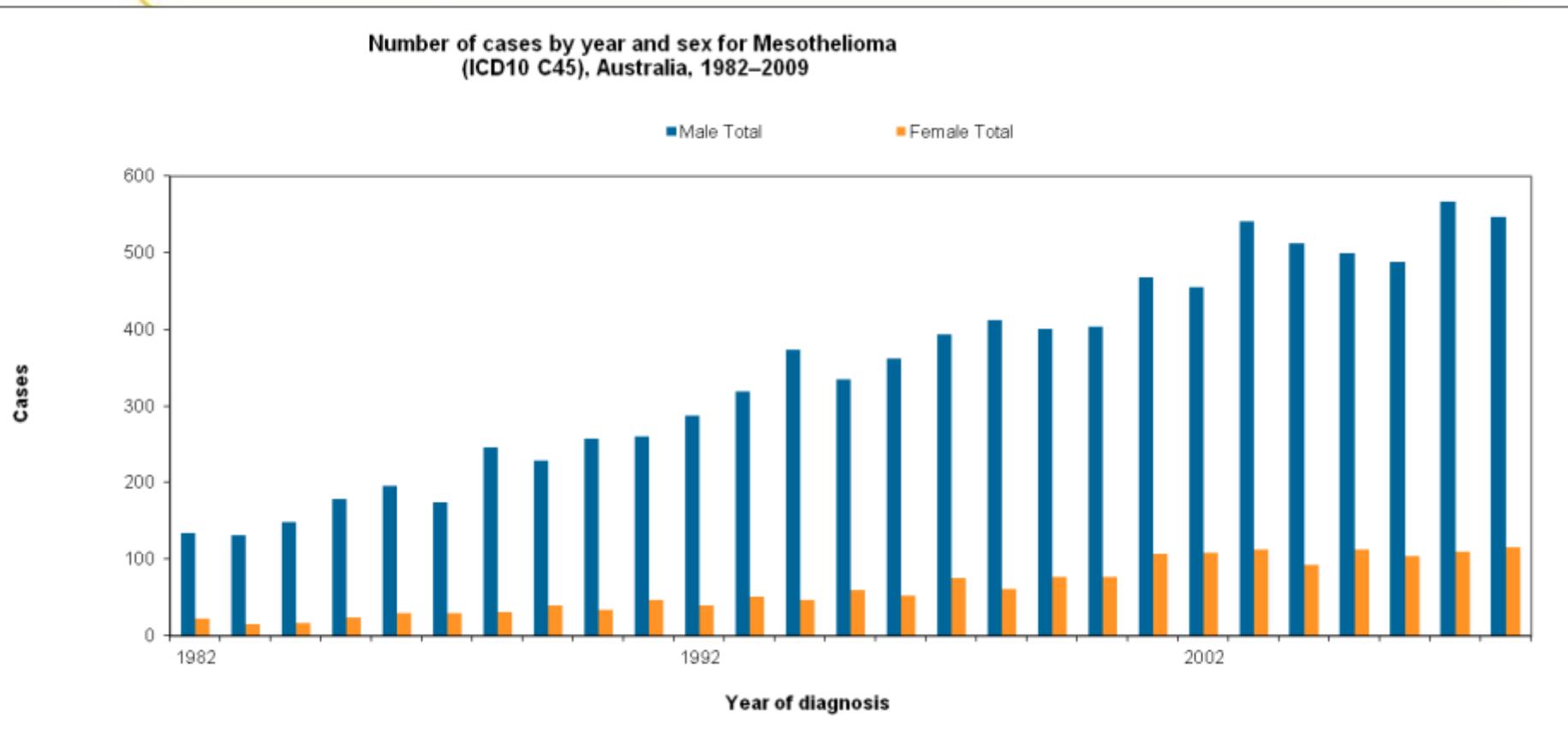
\*Includes only those priority carcinogens with five or more workers exposed.

†25% of the sample.

# asbestos

research  
prevention  
support

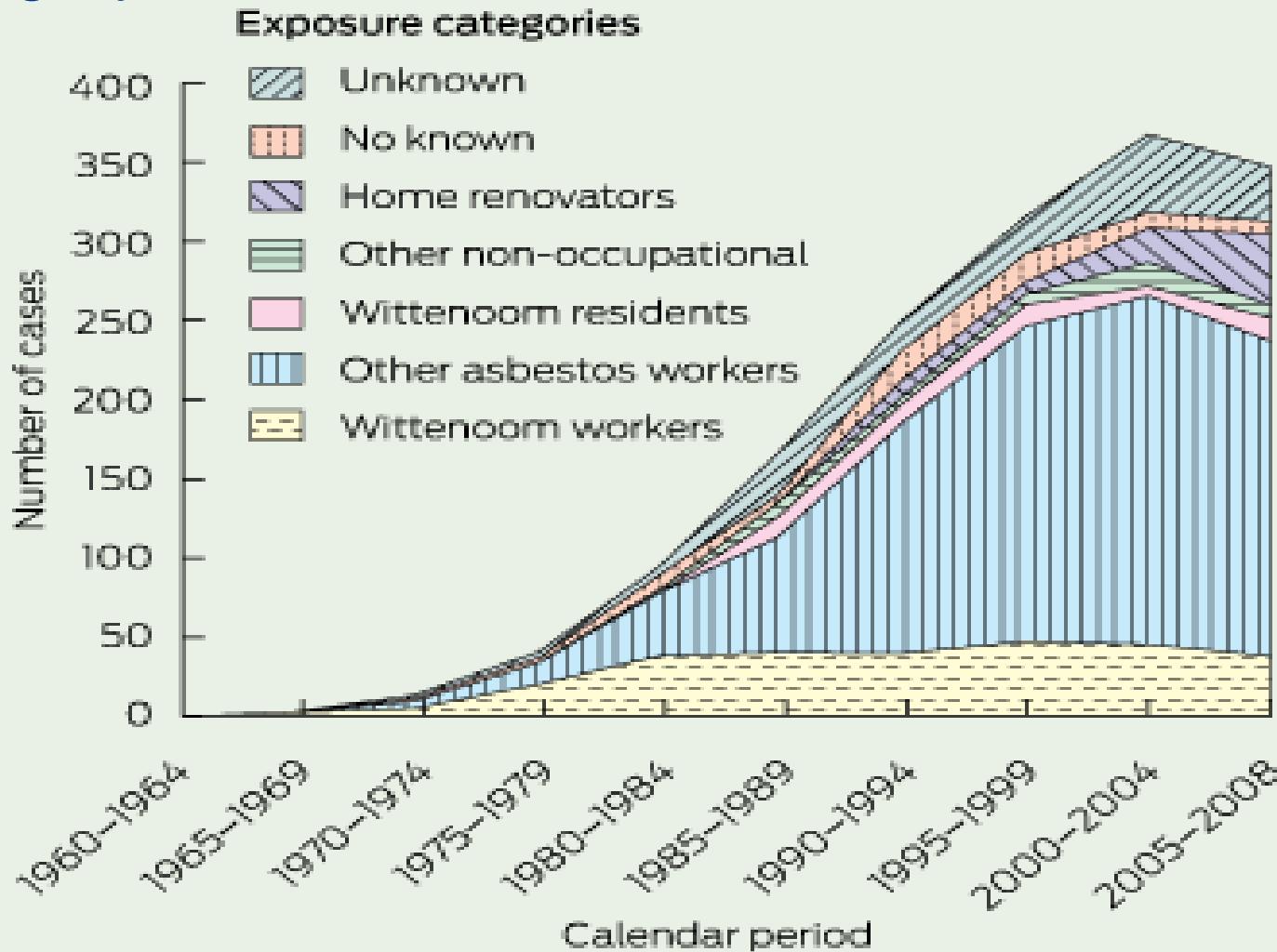
# We know about the health effects of Asbestos ?



**Mesothelioma in Australia 2009 - 666 new cases and 551 deaths**  
**Plus about 1200 Asbestos related lung cancers (McCormak et al 1.8 multiplier) and roughly (guessing !!) 1000 cases of Asbestosis – so a total of about 2,860 new asbestos related disease cases a year.**

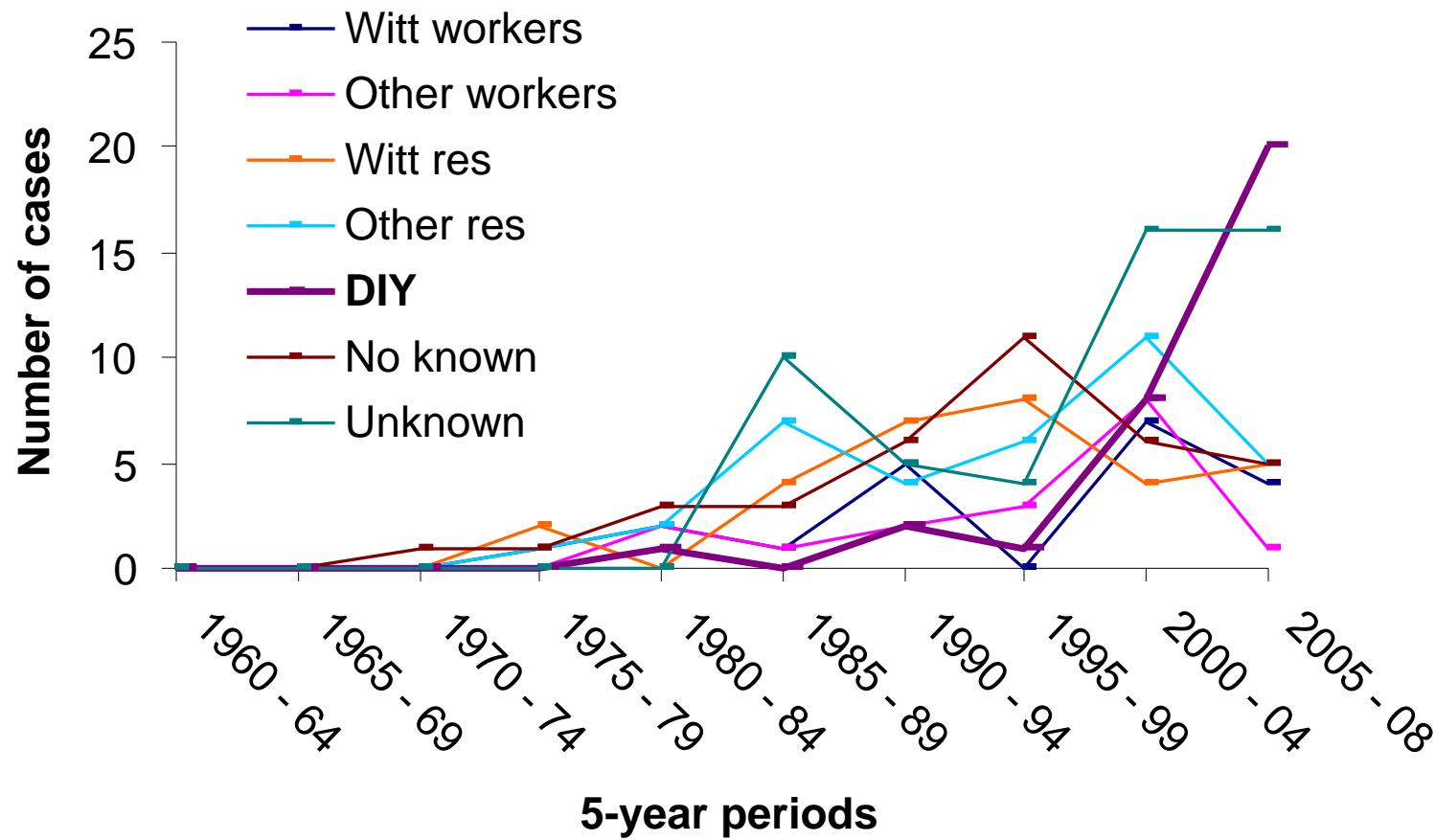
# Mesothelioma in Western Australia by Exposure Category (Olsen N et al Med J Aust 2011; 195 (5): 271-274).

(Olsen N et al Med J Aust 2011; 195 (5): 271-274).



# Females

## MM cases for females, 1960 - 2008



In the period 2005 – 08 DIY cases account for ~36% of total

# WA Tradespeople survey on Asbestos

- A survey was undertaken in late 2010 among 232 WA tradespersons.
- Almost all tradespersons have spent more than 10 years in their respective trade, half self employed
- Over 75% of respondents have not received any training in regard to identification, safe handling and disposal of ACM"s.
- The majority that did receive training, did so in their apprenticeship. Over 70% of respondents were over 45 years old

# Personal protection

- 75% of tradespersons considered the consequences of asbestos related diseases to be extremely serious
- 90% may come into contact with asbestos whilst working in their trade
- 15% do not take precautions when handling Asbestos Containing Materials (ACM"s).
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) was the most common form of controlled protection
- One third of respondents wash up/decontaminate after working with ACM"s.



# Barriers

Several key barriers were identified that reduced the likelihood of the safe handling of asbestos. They include:

- Lack of knowledge, experience and skill in identifying ACMs, arising potentially from a lack of training.
- The stigma associated with asbestos and public or community concern partially determines the work practices of the tradesperson.
- Tradespersons belief that because exposure is low, it is unlikely they will be affected.



## ASBESTOS Management Review

### Overview

The Hon. Bill Shorten MP, Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations [released](#) the Asbestos Management Review Report – June 2012 on 16 August 2012.

The [report](#) was provided to Minister Shorten by the Chairman of the Asbestos Management Review (the review), Mr Geoff Fary. The report contains recommendations for the development of a national strategic plan to improve asbestos awareness and management in Australia.

Australia has one of the highest rates of asbestos related disease in the world. Due to the long period between exposure to asbestos and the onset of disease, asbestos related diseases are projected to increase.

The Australian Government is committed to ensuring that asbestos management arrangements in Australia minimise the risk of avoidable exposure. Achieving this outcome requires a comprehensive understanding of the scope of the problem and the adoption of clear strategies for how to best address issues relating to awareness, management and removal of asbestos.

In support of this commitment, on 29 October 2010 the Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills, Jobs and Workplace Relations, Senator Chris Evans, [announced](#) the establishment of the Asbestos Management Review.

The [terms of reference](#) for the review were broad in scope and encompassed asbestos management issues beyond work health and safety, including environmental and public health issues. The review was designed to complement existing work already underway at both the Commonwealth and state/territory levels, such as development of [harmonised work health and safety laws](#) which include regulations and codes of practice relating to asbestos management and removal.

The review process included release of an [Issues Paper](#) for public comment in July 2011 to assist with the formulation of the recommendations and report. Submissions can be viewed on the [Public Submission](#) page. Mr Fary was assisted by an expert [advisory group](#) throughout the review.

# Action on Asbestos in Australia

2010-2011-2012-2013

The Parliament of the  
Commonwealth of Australia

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*As passed by both Houses*

## **Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency Bill 2013**

No. , 2013

**A Bill for an Act to establish the Asbestos Safety  
and Eradication Agency, and for related purposes**

- Led by then Workplace Relations Minister (now opposition leader) Bill Shorten
- Bipartisan support
- Parliamentary Asbestos interest group since 2011
- Act ascent 21 June 2013



# National Asbestos Strategic Plan

The Plan aims to prevent exposure to asbestos fibres in order to eliminate asbestos related disease in Australia. It will achieve this by:

- **increasing public awareness of the dangers posed by working with or being exposed to asbestos**
- **moving towards developing a prioritised removal program across Australia**
- **developing nationally consistent better practice in asbestos handling and management**
- **coordinating national research to minimise the risk of exposure to asbestos for the Australian community**
- **playing a leadership role in a global campaign for a worldwide asbestos ban.**

Credit Suisse M&A helped bring NEC and Lenovo together.

NEWS OPINION **BUSINESS**

NATIONAL AFFAIRS SPORT TECHNOLOGY ARTS EXECUTIVE L

NEWS | LATEST | OPINION | COMPANIES | DATAROOM | MARKETS | WALL STREET JOURNAL | WEALTH | MINING & ENERGY

## Asbestos setbacks to NBN laid bare

MITCHELL BINGEMANN AND ANNABEL HEPWORTH | THE AUSTRALIAN |

NOVEMBER 05, 2013 12:00AM

6

SHARE

YOUR FRIENDS' ACTIVITY



NEW! Discover news with your friends. Give it a try.

To get going, simply connect with your favourite social network:



LOGIN



**THE company building the National Broadband Network has warned that asbestos-related problems could crunch its profit-making ability, blow out construction costs and lead to potential litigation.**

NBN Co has also said that asbestos-related delays could hit the financing arrangements for the nation's biggest infrastructure project.

"The presence - or potential presence of asbestos - could significantly increase network build costs as well as lead to potential litigation and related costs," NBN Co says.

The admissions were contained in a decision by NBN Co to refuse a Freedom of Information request by The Australian to release the company's risk register and detail the impact that asbestos contamination could have on construction of the mammoth project.

They emerged as The Australian confirmed that, since January, federal workplace safety regulator Comcare had received 66 complaints related to asbestos in telecommunication pits that were part of the NBN rollout, of which 40 warranted further detailed investigation.

In a 12-page rejection of the FOI request, NBN Co said it would not release the information as it could be used by potential and current business partners to inflate their prices and increase the risk to the company's commercial position due to

## Asbestos researcher named WA Australian of Year

The West Australian  
November 10, 2013, 12:16 pm

Recommend 16 Tweeted 15 Email Print



Professor Bruce Robinson

Cancer researcher Professor Bruce Robinson AM has been named WA's Australian of the Year 2014 for his world-leading study of asbestos related cancer.

WA Governor Malcolm McCusker congratulated the 2014 WA's Australian of the Year Award recipients at an awards ceremony at Government House yesterday.

Professor Robinson, 63, leads a big research team at the University of WA's School of Medicine and Pharmacology which is studying cancer immunology and asbestos diseases. He and his team have been responsible for many world-first breakthroughs, including the first blood test for mesothelioma.

After establishing medical clinics focused on patients' emotional and physical needs, Professor Robinson initiated the highly successful Breaking Bad News course to help doctors with difficult conversations.

He is also a vocal advocate for fathering and has produced a number of books and DVDs on the topic, and also directs the Fathering Project at the UWA which aims to connect children with father figures.

A passionate volunteer who has donated many hours of service to rural Indonesian medical clinics, Bruce's personal philosophy is to turn compassion into action.



**Cancer  
Council  
Western Australia**

# Some solutions ?

## Levy scrapped to stop asbestos waste being dropped in city streets

EXCLUSIVE MALCOLM HOLLAND ENVIRONMENT REPORTER • THE DAILY TELEGRAPH •

NOVEMBER 07, 2013 12:00AM

SH-PE

YOUR FRIENDS' ACTIVITY



**NEW!** Discover news with your friends. Give it a try.

To get going, simply connect with your favourite social network:

**f** LOGIN



Ads By Google

**Newspaper Archives** [www.MyHeritage.com/Archives](http://www.MyHeritage.com/Archives)

Access Historical Obituaries, Birth Notices, Death Announcements & More

**Broome Package Deals \$536** [www.discoverAustralia.com.au/Broome](http://www.discoverAustralia.com.au/Broome)

Return Broome Flights + 2 Nights. Add Nights. Selling Fast, Book Now.

**Lose 8 Kilos of Belly Fat** [slimrecipes.net/Lose-Weight](http://slimrecipes.net/Lose-Weight)

Lose 8 Kilos of Belly Fat In Just 2 Weeks By Following This Diet Tip

**THE state government will scrap the waste levy on asbestos from home renovations sent to tips in an effort to stop the potentially deadly material being dumped on city streets.**

Environment Minister Robyn Parker will also announce today that, under the \$3 million trial scheme, the Environmental Protection Authority will pay \$50 towards the cost of removing and transporting asbestos to tips and landfill sites.

Asbestos dumping has become a major problem across the state, despite new laws that threaten imprisonment instead of a fine.

Dumpers are trying to avoid the waste levy, which is charged at tips and landfill sites and costs \$107.80 per tonne in Sydney and \$53.70 a tonne in regional NSW.



Health inspectors contain an asbestos dump in

**Cancer Council eLearning**

**Cancer Council eLearning Australia "Is that asbestos all my place? What now?"**

**Course Progress 60%**

**Introduction**

This course is designed to give the Cancer Council (Cancer Council eLearning Australia) knowledge about asbestos, the ways and risks practices when removing or removing, what amounts equal to or less than 10% asbestos (10%) of fibrous asbestos-containing materials.

With the increase in home-renovation (DIY) activities there is potential for renovators and their families to be exposed to asbestos if they do not know asbestos is contained in materials or how to handle it safely.

What the course identifies both bonded (i.e. asbestos fibres bound in another material) and friable (i.e. having loose asbestos fibres) asbestos. The CCR recommends that fibres are removed or encapsulated to use a licensed professional asbestos removalist for all friable asbestos asbestos and large amounts (more than 10%) of fibrous asbestos-containing materials. As a guide 10% of bonded asbestos is about asbestos cement cement or fibrous sheets. Why 10%? This is in line with national licensing requirements.

The preferred option is to avoid any disturbance of Asbestos Containing Material (ACM) that may cause the release of fibres. You should initially assess whether you need to do the work, not all asbestos needs immediate removal. If the ACM is in good condition, it may not need to be removed at all.

The Health (Asbestos) Regulation 1992 provides "reasonable measures" that must be taken by a DIY renovator who is working with asbestos. These requirements are established by local government environmental health officers. This course will outline these measures.

Before doing any asbestos related work, we suggest you check with your local government to see if you can legally carry out the work as they may have specific requirements.

After successfully completing this course, you will be able to print a statement of attainment. This statement will be useful as your proof of completing the training. This statement does not make you a qualified asbestos

[Home](#) > [Courses](#) > [Cancer Council eLearning Australia "Is that asbestos all my place? What now?"](#)

### Clues to identify Asbestos Fibro cladding

Clues that indicate possible asbestos cement sheeting or 'fibro' cladding

If your house was built before 1980 it may have been built or renovated with asbestos-containing materials. The only way to be certain is to obtain a asbestos-containing (i.e. not metal or asbestos) asbestos-free dry-lining manufacturer's certificate. In the 1940s, 50s and 60s many houses were clad in 'fibro' this was a common term for asbestos-cement sheeting. This term is still commonly used to describe asbestos' composition. The photo below shows common types of asbestos' fibro' cladding.



The most common form of 'fibro' was the flat asbestos cement sheeting, often used for outside cladding of houses, sheds and garages. This flat sheeting was simply nailed to the wooden frame structure thus making construction quick and cheap.

Common cladding for houses include fibro, such as backboards, membranes, tiles and panel roofs. It was especially popular for renovations and recladding. Special wet-area materials designed for bathrooms and laundry are also common in older houses. Panel houses.

### Brand names

The main manufacturer of fibro asbestos cement sheeting was James Hardie & Co who produced a range of products under the brand name of Fibroclad.

In fact, Fibroclad was used to describe virtually any of asbestos cement products such as flat sheeting, corrugated sheeting, decorative profiles, rollings and pipe. James Hardie's flat and corrugated asbestos cement sheeting was manufactured until the mid to late 1980s.

In the 1980s James Hardie & Co gave some products more marketable names such as Hardifibre, Colorbond, Shiplap, Corflute, Tita, Vericell, Super Six and Asbestosite. These products were used until the mid 1980s.

Asbestos versions of Hardifibre were manufactured until the mid 1980s after which the asbestos was replaced with safer calcium fibre versions. Note that the name Hardifibre was retained even though the product was now manufactured without asbestos.

+

http://elearning.cancer.org.au/

Courses

**kNOw asbestos in your home**

Working indoors – a SunSmart balance for vitamin D and skin cancer prevention

Sign Up

Ready to get started? Register to access an eLearning course.

**Sign up**

Find out more

Contact Us

Looking for more information?

**Contact**

**Courses**

**kNOw asbestos in your home**

Exposure to asbestos fibres increases the risk of developing asbestos-related diseases such as mesothelioma and asbestosis. Both home maintenance and renovations involving asbestos-containing building products are activities responsible for a growing number of people being exposed to asbestos. Any jobs around the home involving asbestos are a source of concern, given the large number of homes in Australian cities and towns thought to have been built with asbestos-containing products.

This course is designed to give the DIY home renovator basic knowledge about asbestos, and the risks and safe practices when working with or removing, small amounts of asbestos-containing material. If you are thinking of doing a renovation (ranging from painting to the removal of asbestos) this course will be invaluable.

Let's start by finding out more details about the course and about online learning.

**Find out more**

Sitemap • Contact Us • Privacy Policy • Disclaimer

by A



# UV exposure and skin cancer risk at work

research  
prevention  
support

# Effect of UV exposure in Australia

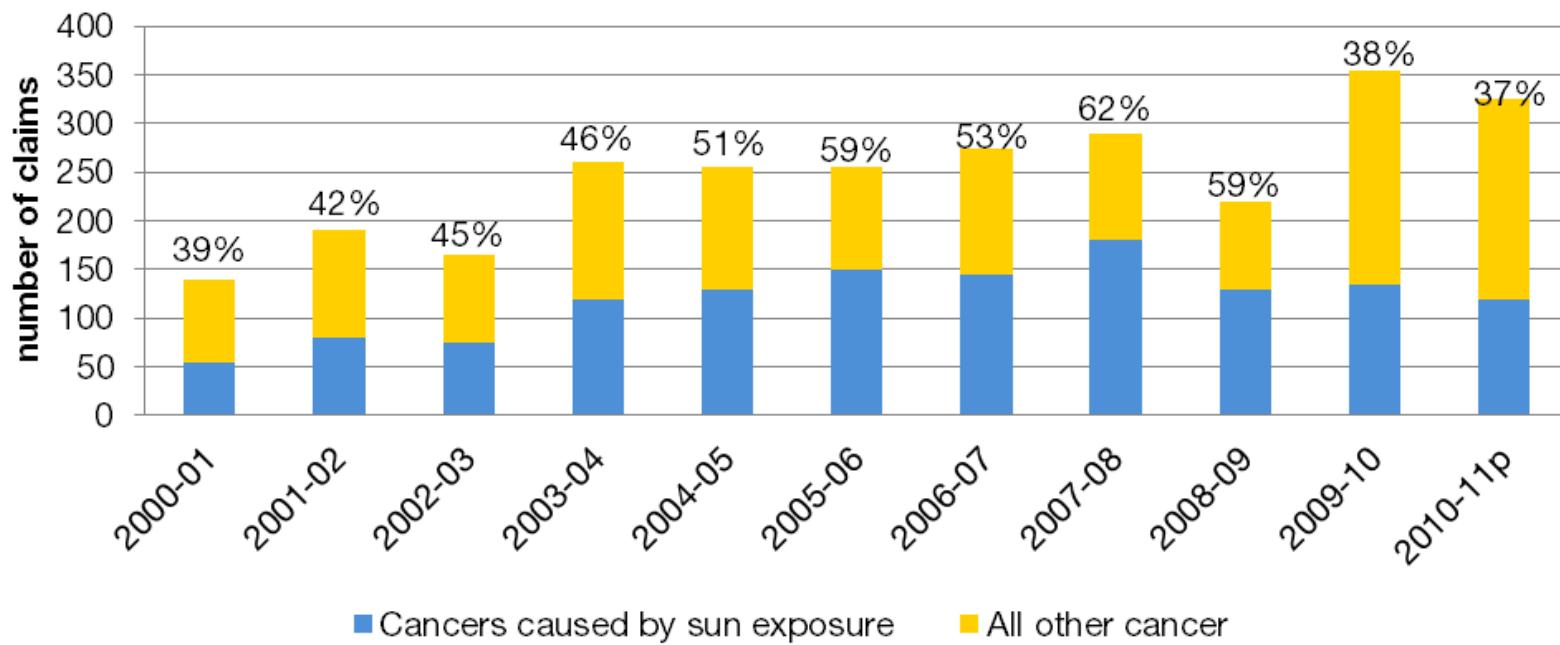
- Australia is the skin cancer capital of the world
- 750,000 diagnosis and over 1,800 deaths per year
- Cost to the healthcare system were calculated at over \$500 million in 2010
- 2/3 deaths are men
- In Australia, melanoma is the most common cancer in those aged 15-39 year olds
- Men are far more likely to be diagnosed with and die as a result of skin cancer than women (2:1 ratio)



Image courtesy Queensland Health

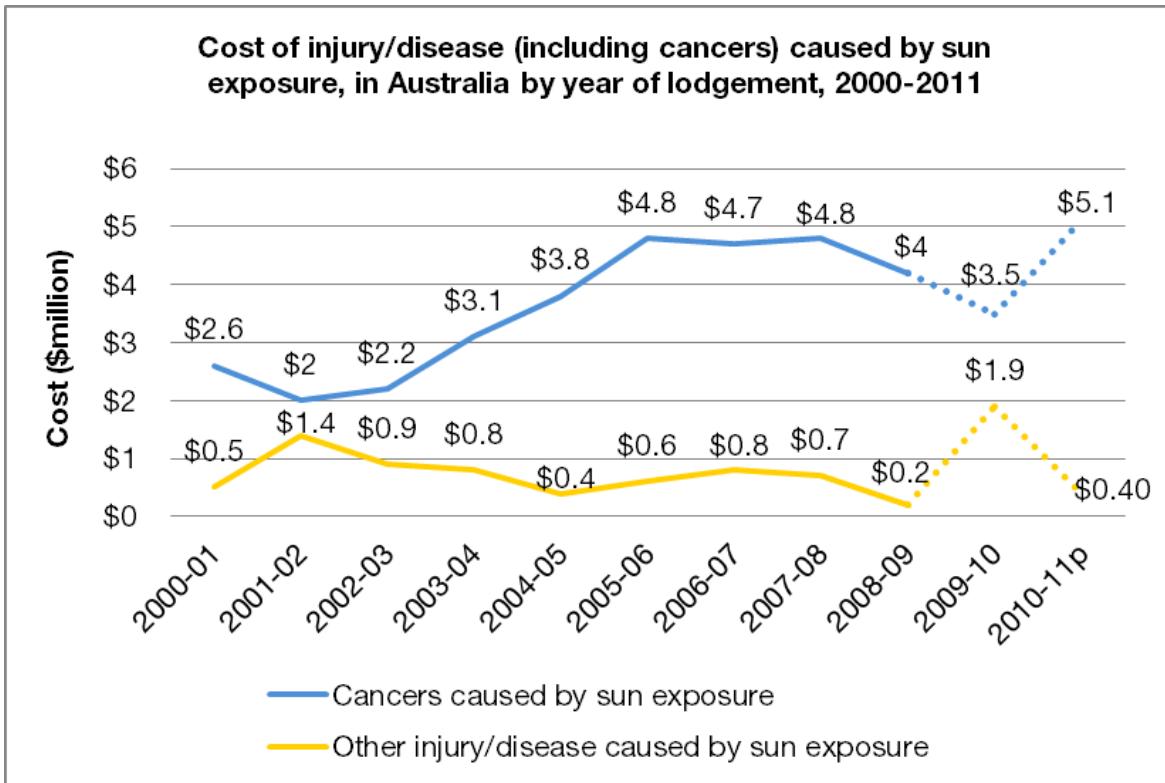
# Sun related cancers vs. all cancers

Australian workers' compensation claims for 'all cancers' compared to 'cancers caused by sun exposure' by year of lodgement, 2000-2011



# Sun related injury/disease costs 2000-2009 & beyond

A total of \$38.4 million has been paid for sun related workers' compensation claims in Australia from 2000-2009  
(cancers = \$32.1million; other sun related injury \$6.3 million)



Data from 2009-10 and 2010-11 shows the costs are continuing to increase.

# Code of practice - Safe Work Australia

**In August 2013, Safe Work Australia released a revised version of the Guide on Exposure to Solar Ultraviolet Radiation (UVR) and contains specific information on:**

- Strength of UVR
- Differentiating between heat stress and UVR
- Workplace UVR exposure auditing
- Hierarchy of risk management control
- Expanded PPE information
- Sun protection policy advice including a sample policy

**Cancer Council continues to advocate that the guidance note be developed into a model WHS Code of Practice to have regulatory force**

# The UV Index



Live UV Readings in  
recreational and  
occupational settings



what else is  
going on in  
occupational  
cancer in  
Australia ?

research  
prevention  
support

# Occupational cancers are not going away

- We are an aging society
- We are getting more cancer
- We are staying at work for longer so we are an aging workforce
- Inevitably we will see more cancer diagnosed in the active workforce
- Some will believe (rightly or wrongly) that their cancer may have been caused by exposures at work
- We need better systems to deal with these concerns



# safe work australia

By 2020 the aim is to reduce incidence of work-related death, injury and illness, *achieved by* reduced exposure to hazards and risks, *using* improved hazard controls, *and supported by* an improved national work health and safety infrastructure

**Target disorders**

**Musculoskeletal disorders**

**Mental disorders**

**Cancers (including skin cancer)**

**Asthma**

**Contact dermatitis**

**Noise-induced hearing loss.**

## Controlling occupational cancers in Australia

We have no strategy for measuring rates, mitigating risk and meeting individuals' needs

Work-related cancer attracts considerable public and media attention, but has received limited attention from researchers and policymakers in Australia, particularly in comparison to other cancers, such as those related to tobacco use and sun exposure. During the 1980s, the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) issued model regulations for the control of carcinogenic substances, and the National Occupational Health and Safety Commission (NOHSC) was formed to coordinate efforts to improve OHS. Policies and strategies on occupational cancer were developed by the NOHSC, and the Australian Mesothelioma Registry was funded. In 2005, the NOHSC was replaced by the Australian Safety and Compensation Council (ASCC).<sup>1</sup> In turn, in 2008 the ASCC was replaced by Safe Work Australia, which has the primary responsibility of "improving work health and safety and workers' compensation arrangements across Australia".<sup>2</sup> Despite these initiatives, little progress has been made on Australia's regulatory approach to occupational carcinogen exposure.

The number of cancers resulting from occupational exposures is difficult to estimate. Occupational cancers are not easily identifiable, as they have no unique pathological or clinical features and the lag time between exposure and cancer diagnosis may be decades. There is no unique independent system for collection of data on work-related cancers, and compensation data are of little help because of considerable underclaiming. By applying European attributable fraction estimates to Australian employment data, it has been estimated that about 5000 cancers a year are caused by occupational exposures.<sup>3</sup> In making this estimate, major assumptions needed to be made regarding the frequency and extent of exposure to occupational carcinogens in Australian industry, since definitive local information is lacking.

### International best practice

In Australia, there is limited systematic work aimed at identifying occupational carcinogens, informing users about carcinogenic risks, and reducing the use of chemicals in industry. Internationally, there are several such initiatives that could be considered for the Australian context.

A number of authoritative independent agencies such as the International Agency for Research on Cancer, have programs that review evidence regarding potential carcinogens and classify agents according to their carcinogenic potential.<sup>4</sup> Other agencies, such as the

American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists<sup>5</sup> and the United States National Toxicology Program,<sup>6</sup> classify agents with respect to carcinogenicity and set occupational and general population exposure standards that are regularly updated and revised. Germany maintains a database of international exposure limits for chemical agents.<sup>7</sup> Australian regulations related to carcinogens make use of these international classifications when identifying carcinogenic substances (eg, the Australian Model Work Health and Safety Regulations contain a limited schedule of nine prohibited and 11 restricted carcinogens).<sup>8</sup> However, there is no system to regularly update regulations and schedules based on best international knowledge.

The United Nations Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS) is being adopted internationally.<sup>9</sup> The GHS classifies chemicals by type of hazard (including carcinogenicity) and proposes standard labels and safety data sheets containing information on physical hazards and toxicity. The proposed Australian Model Work Health and Safety Regulations implement the GHS for chemical classification and hazard communication requirements.

The European Union (EU) introduced legislation in 2007 for the registration, evaluation, authorisation and restriction of chemicals (REACH).<sup>10</sup> The REACH approach is based on the premise of "no data, no use". That is, toxicological and epidemiological data must be provided for substances manufactured or imported into the EU in excess of 1 tonne. For some substances, derived no-effect levels (DNELs) for workers and the general population must be set. No human health effects are expected if exposure is kept below the relevant DNEL. REACH does not apply outside the EU, but it does apply to all substances on the EU market, including those imported from Australia.

A very successful example of legislation aimed at reducing exposure to toxic agents (including some carcinogens) is the Massachusetts Toxics Use Reduction Act (TURA).<sup>11</sup> Under TURA, a list of toxic or hazardous substances ("toxics") has been created, and any firm that uses, generates or imports any of these must prepare a toxics use reduction plan, report the quantities of toxics they deal with and pay a levy based on the quantity reported. An institute was established to provide resources and tools to support the TURA, including education, community outreach, research into less toxic alternatives, and incentives.<sup>12</sup> Between 1990 and 2009, and after adjusting for production decreases, reports to the program showed that emissions decreased by 56% and use of toxic chemicals decreased by 21%.<sup>13</sup>

Another legislative approach to reducing carcinogen exposure was introduced in Finland in 1979. Companies and institutions are required to report workplace exposures to specific carcinogens to a public register. The aim is to reduce the risk of occupational cancers by improving the

Ref: Fritschi, L et al  
*Controlling occupational cancers in Australia*

Medical J of Aust 196 (3) 162 – 164 20 Feb 2012

**Lin Fritschi**  
MB BS, PhD, FAPWH, FRCR  
Professor

**Renee C Fernando**  
MB BS, B Com, MPH,  
Research Assistant

**Deborah A Vallance**  
MB BS, BMedSci, MPH,  
National Occupational Health and Safety  
Coordinator

**Terry J Slevin**  
MB BS, FPRM, FRCR,  
Education and  
Research Director

**Alison Reid**  
PhD,  
Associate Professor

**Timothy R Desai**  
MB BS, MOrth, PhD,  
Associate Professor<sup>1</sup>

**Deborah C Glass**  
PhD,  
Senior Research Fellow<sup>1</sup>

**Western Australian Institute for Medical Research, University of Western Australia, Perth, WA**

**Australian Manufacturing Workers Union, Melbourne, VIC**

**Cancer Council Western Australia, Perth, WA**

**A Sydney School of Public Health, University of Sydney, Sydney, NSW**

**Epidemiology and Preventive Medicine, Monash University, Melbourne, VIC**

**fritschi@  
waimrc.wa.edu.au**

doi:10.5694/mjam.10485

# What are the big issues?

1. **Get occupational cancer issues “higher on the agenda”**
2. **Get better data**
3. **Get better systems**
  - TURA,
  - CAREX,
  - REACH

# Toxic Use Reduction Act TURA (Mass. USA)

- The Toxic Use Reduction Act was passed by the state of Massachusetts in 1989 after a significant industrial incident involving chemical exposure
- A list of hazardous substances (toxics) was established. Those who used any of these had to establish a plan to reduce their use.
- Between 1990 and 2009 there was a 56% reduction in emissions and 21% reduction of toxics used
- Is being taken up in various forms in some Canadian provinces

# CAREX Canada Monitoring and reporting on the problem

**CAREX is developing estimates of the number of Canadians exposed to known, probable and possible carcinogens in workplace and community environments.**

**Using a model from the Finnish Institute for Occupational Health CAREX Canada was created in the late 1990s at the University of British Columbia.**

**<http://www.carexcanada.ca/>**



# REACH Europe – “No data – no use”

- REACH is the European Community Regulation on chemicals and their safe use (EC 1907/2006).
- It deals with the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemical substances. The law entered into force on 1 June 2007 via the European Commission
- The REACH Regulation places greater responsibility on industry to manage the risks from chemicals and to provide safety information on the substances.
- Manufacturers and importers are required to gather information on the properties of their chemical substances

[http://ec.europa.eu/environment/chemicals/reach/reach\\_intro.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/chemicals/reach/reach_intro.htm)

**Table 1: The list of priority carcinogens for Australia.**

Agent group	Agent	
Combustion products (3)	Engine exhaust, diesel Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAHs) <sup>a</sup> Tobacco smoke, second-hand	Ref: Fernandez, Driscoll et al <i>A priority list of carcinogenic agents for preventive action in Australia</i>
Inorganic dusts (2)	Asbestos <sup>b</sup> Silica dust, crystalline, in the form of quartz or cristobalite	
Organic Dusts (2)	Leather dust Wood dust	
Metals (7)	Arsenic and inorganic arsenic compounds Beryllium and beryllium compounds Cadmium and cadmium compounds Chromium (VI) compounds Cobalt metal and tungsten carbide Lead compounds, inorganic Nickel compounds	Aust NZ J Public Health 24 Feb 2012
Radiation (4)	Artificial ultraviolet radiation (UVA, UVB, UVC) Ionising radiation <sup>c</sup> Radon-222 and its decay products Solar radiation	

Other industrial chemicals (19)	Acid mists, strong inorganic Acrylamide Alpha-Chlorinated toluenes <sup>d</sup> Benzene 1, 3-Butadiene Diethyl sulphate Dimethyl sulphate Epichlorhydrin Ethylene oxide Formaldehyde Glycidol 4, 4'-Methylenebis(2-chloroaniline) (MOCA) Nitrosamines <sup>e</sup> <i>ortho</i> -Toluidine (2-Aminotoluene) Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) <sup>f</sup> Styrene-7, 8-oxide Tetrachloroethylene (Perchloroethylene) Trichloroethylene Vinyl chloride
Non-chemical agents (1)	Shiftwork that involves circadian disruption

a Includes benzo[a]pyrene, coal-tar pitch, creosotes, cyclopenta[cd]pyrene, dibenz[a, h]anthracene, dibenzo[a, l]pyrene, frying emission from high temperatures, mineral oils (treated or mildly treated), soots.

b All forms including actinolite, amosite, anthophyllite, chrysotile, crocidolite, tremolite). Includes mineral substances that contain asbestos.

c Fission products including Strontium-90, ionising radiation (all types), neutron radiation, phosphorus-32 as phosphate, radioiodines including iodine-13, internally deposited alpha- and beta-emitting radionuclides, radium-224 and its decay products, radium-226 and its decay products, radium-228 and its decay products, thorium-232 and its decay products, x- and gamma-radiation.

d Includes benzal chloride, benzotrichloride and benzyl chloride and benzoyl chloride (combined exposures).

e Includes N-Nitrosodimethylamine and N-Nitrosodiethylamine.

f Includes 3, 4, 5, 3', 4'-Pentachlorobiphenyl (PCB-126).

The next step is to identify priority industries and priority job classes so as to focus our efforts

# Painters Firefighters and Shiftworkers



# Painters

**“There is sufficient evidence in humans for the carcinogenicity of occupational exposure as a painter. Occupational exposure as a painter causes cancers of the lung, and of the urinary bladder.” (Cat 1)**

**“At the time of writing, solvent-borne paints contain much less solvent (high-solids paints) and less hazardous solvents than a decade ago. Sometimes, the solvent content is reduced to such an extent that volatile organic compounds (VOCs) emission levels are similar to those of waterborne paints.”**

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION  
INTERNATIONAL AGENCY FOR RESEARCH ON CANCER



*IARC Monographs on the Evaluation of Carcinogenic Risks to Humans*

VOLUME 98

Painting, Firefighting, and Shiftwork



LYON, FRANCE  
2010

# Fire Fighters

There is limited evidence in humans for the carcinogenicity of occupational exposure as a firefighter. " (Cat. 2B)

"The terms 'firefighting' and 'firefighters' are broad and encompass several types of fire scenarios such as municipal, wildland, industrial, aviation, military, and oil wells. Some municipal firefighters may be permanently assigned to tasks other than fighting fires, including fire scene investigation (i.e. the investigation of suspected criminal fires started by arsonists), hazardous material response, building safety inspections, or technical and administrative support"

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION  
INTERNATIONAL AGENCY FOR RESEARCH ON CANCER



*IARC Monographs on the Evaluation of Carcinogenic Risks to Humans*

VOLUME 98  
Painting, Firefighting, and Shiftwork



LYON, FRANCE  
2010



COAST  
Western Australia

# Shiftworkers

“There is limited evidence in humans for the carcinogenicity of shiftwork that involves night work.”  
(Cat 2A)

“.... consistently pointed towards a modestly increased risk of breast cancer among long-term employees who performed night shiftwork, defined in different ways. Most studies reported this increased risk after controlling for potential confounders..”

***This is complicated !!!!!!!***

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION  
INTERNATIONAL AGENCY FOR RESEARCH ON CANCER



*IARC Monographs on the Evaluation of Carcinogenic Risks to Humans*

VOLUME 98  
Painting, Firefighting, and Shiftwork



LYON, FRANCE  
2010



COACH  
Western Australia

# Occupational cancer in Australia

## Where to from here ?

- **Much work to be done**
- **More data**
- **More action**
- **Focused efforts**
- **Small but constructive steps**
- **Investment from Cancer Organisations**
- **Persistence, persistence, persistence...**

# Any questions?

Terry Slevin,

Ph +61 893884345 or [terry@cancerwa.asn.au](mailto:terry@cancerwa.asn.au)