



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

STANDING COMMITTEE ON LAW AND JUSTICE

MEDIA RELEASE

PARLIAMENTARY REPORT ON SILICOSIS CASES IN THE MANUFACTURED STONE INDUSTRY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

10 JUNE 2022

The Standing Committee on Law and Justice has today tabled its Review of the Dust Diseases Scheme, examining the government's response to silicosis re-emerging as an occupational disease in New South Wales.

This review follows up on the committee's 2019 review, which noted an alarming increase in silicosis cases associated with the manufactured stone industry, and recommended a suite of measures to improve work health and safety standards, and to ensure effective health screening and support for workers in that industry.

The Committee Chair, the Hon Chris Rath MLC stated: 'In 2019 the committee was greatly concerned about safety standards in the manufactured stone industry, and the rise of silicosis cases. While some progress has taken place in New South Wales, such as a reduction in the workplace exposure standard for silica, and establishment of a dust diseases register, there is clearly more to be done to ensure manufactured stone workers are not developing a preventable and deadly illness.'

The Chair continued: 'We recognise that this is a national issue, and that a coordinated national response is desirable, but would like to see New South Wales taking further proactive steps to prevent and manage silicosis in the manufactured stone industry. We have recommended the introduction of a licencing scheme for manufactured stone businesses, as Victoria has already implemented.'

The committee's report makes 12 recommendations to improve work health and safety standards relating to silica exposure, improve the accessibility and quality of health monitoring for workers, and ensure appropriate, client-centred support services and compensation are available for workers diagnosed with silica related illness. The Chair stated: 'The committee urges the government to implement these recommendations in a timely manner, to prevent further human, social and economic costs associated with silicosis.'

The committee has also recommended that the NSW Government indicate its support for a ban on manufactured stone, should the industry not demonstrate sufficient improvement by 2024, in accordance with the National Dust Disease Taskforce's recommendation.

To access the committee's report and recommendations, see www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/lawandjustice.

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For further information please contact Committee Chairman, The Hon Chris Rath MLC, on 9230 2534