

The Hon. Greg Donnelly MLC
Chair
Standing Committee on Law and Justice
Parliament House
Macquarie St, Sydney NSW 2000
c/o Law@parliament.nsw.gov.au

11 June 2025
D25/025317

Re: 2024 Review of the Dust Diseases Scheme – Clarification of evidence

Dear Chair,

I thank you for the opportunity to provide clarity in relation to the evidence I gave before the Standing Committee on Law and Justice on 11 December 2024 in relation to the use and introduction of Versaflo masks on tunnelling projects.

Respiratory Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is mandatory for all tunnel workers underground and in high-risk areas that generate dust. During the hearing on 11 December 2024, I spoke of Versaflo masks being introduced to tunnelling sites and being used by workers. I indicated that Versaflo masks are an improvement on the P2 mask, while noting that the P2 masks remain satisfactory for many tunnelling activities.

In my evidence I did state that Versaflo had been introduced, but is not mandatory, on the M6 and Western Harbour Tunnel projects. I also said that contractors are shifting towards Versaflo as better practice, but in some instances, P2 masks are still used and preferred by workers.

On the Western Harbour Tunnel project, determinations in relation to worker health and safety, including PPE, are the responsibility of the delivery contractor, Acciona. Respiratory PPE includes P2 masks as well as Powered Air Purifying Respirators (PAPRs). Versaflo is a brand of PAPR. For certain activities as determined by a health risk assessment, the use of a PAPR is mandated on the Western Harbour Tunnel project.

As David Mullins and I discussed during the hearing, in consultation with health and safety, and in most circumstances, workers can choose what respiratory PPE is worn. On the Western Harbour Tunnel project Versaflo is one of a number of PAPRs products used by workers including but not limited to, Trident and Maxisafe.

Sincerely,

Camilla Drover
Deputy Secretary, Infrastructure Projects and Engineering
Transport for NSW