

**Submission  
No 17**

## **INQUIRY INTO LOOSE FILL ASBESTOS INSULATION**

**Organisation:** ACT Government

**Date received:** 31/10/2014

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## Katy Gallagher MLA

CHIEF MINISTER

MINISTER FOR HEALTH

MINISTER FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

MINISTER FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

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MEMBER FOR MOLONGLO

Reverend the Hon Fred Nile MLC  
Committee Chairman  
Joint Select Committee on Loose Fill Asbestos Insulation  
Legislative Council  
Parliament House  
Macquarie Street  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

*Fred*  
Dear Reverend Nile

Thank you for your letter of 26 September 2014 confirming the establishment of the NSW Joint Select Committee Inquiry into Loose Fill Asbestos Insulation in homes in New South Wales (NSW) and inviting the ACT Government to make a submission to the inquiry.

The ACT Government welcomes the opportunity to participate in this important piece of work.

As you would be aware I established the ACT Asbestos Response Taskforce earlier this year to provide a coordinated and compassionate response to the lasting impacts of loose fill asbestos in Canberra homes. This week I announced the ACT Government's preferred way forward on loose fill asbestos through a voluntary buyback and demolition program for all affected homes.

I have included a number of documents for the Committee's consideration:

- The ACT Asbestos Response Taskforce Report: Long Term Management of Loose Fill Asbestos Insulation in Canberra Homes
- The ACT Government's Preferred Way Forward on Loose Fill Asbestos: Overview
- The ACT Government's Preferred Way Forward on Loose Fill Asbestos: Supporting Detail
- The ACT Government's Guidance in Relation to Contents in Homes affected by Loose Fill Asbestos Insulation in the ACT.

These documents and others are also available online at [www.act.gov.au/asbestostaskforce](http://www.act.gov.au/asbestostaskforce).

I am aware of various requests from NSW Government officials to access information held by the ACT Government in relation to the presence of loose fill asbestos insulation within NSW. The ACT Government holds anecdotal information concerning possible locations and numbers of homes in NSW that may be affected by loose fill asbestos insulation. Generally, this information is located on historic program files, and referred to from time to time in the media, particularly in 2005/06 during the

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(then) ACT Asbestos Management Taskforce, and again more recently in response to the emerging understanding around the impact of loose fill asbestos in our region.

The information largely comprises opinion, individuals' recollection and media reports, similar to that known by NSW officials. As you would be aware, media reports indicate that the company which had installed loose fill asbestos insulation in ACT homes had installed, or provided, loose fill asbestos insulation to homeowners across the border in NSW homes.

I previously provided the NSW Premier with the names of towns and regions potentially affected and I am advised that this information was considered during the development of recent initiatives to provide assistance to homeowners in obtaining a free asbestos assessment in potentially affected local government areas. I am also aware that officials are identifying other areas that might be affected and, in response, the NSW Government is expanding its offer of assistance in relation to free asbestos assessments for homeowners.

The ACT Government will continue to work cooperatively with NSW as it responds to this issue. Mr Andrew Kefford, Head of the Asbestos Response Taskforce, is available to appear before the committee and can be contacted on

Thank you again for your invitation to make a submission and the continuation of a collaborative response to this highly pressing issue for communities in both our jurisdictions.

Yours sincerely

Katy Gallagher MLA  
Chief Minister

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