

**INQUIRY INTO PLANNING AND DELIVERY OF SCHOOL
INFRASTRUCTURE IN NEW SOUTH WALES**

Name: Name suppressed
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Partially
Confidential

The discovery of asbestos at Castle Hill High School appears to have been shrouded in secrecy with very little information provided to us as parents on the discovery or any remediation. There has been no comprehensive information provided by the school over the last few years on how the asbestos sources themselves have been remediated, so I can only assume that asbestos-laden dust is still falling in the affected rooms. I believe that the school continues to deny the issue and no classroom or other areas have been closed off. The fact that the issue of airborne friable brown and white asbestos has not been addressed in the many years since it was first confirmed by third party testing is extremely concerning. The refusal by the school leadership of the day to acknowledge the result and take action is unconscionable, negligent, inexplicable and an absolute disgrace. I would suggest that this behaviour is in breach of WHS legislation and that key individuals within the school leadership team could be held personally liable. The fact the loose asbestos was not addressed within an environment catering specifically to children is unbelievable. The actions of the school in lying to staff about the positive result has the feel of a deliberate coverup but I struggle to see what was to be gained. These actions have put the safety of teachers and children at risk. And while the death of former teacher Earle Morris from mesothelioma cannot be definitively linked to the school, it similarly cannot be discounted (albeit this exposure probably occurred before the risk was as well understood as it was in 2016 when the positive test was covered up).

The news report notes that the test results did not indicate whether the situation was hazardous. However, a simple Google search for the detected asbestos types, combined with the fact that the samples were from dust that had settled in the rooms, would indicate to any layman that dangerous airborne asbestos was present and falling on students and teachers.

The coincidental resignation of some of the school leadership, who held positions of authority at the time of the denial of the positive result, just prior to this information going public is suspicious at best and feels like a protective move by an Education Department who was aware of what was going on. If this turns out to be the case, surely liability must also extend to those involved.

While the quality of the general teaching staff is not in question, I am at a loss as to why they continue to turn up to work in the face of such apparent risk. Despite the high calibre of the teaching staff, I am considering removing my child from the school. At this stage I am holding out hope that this inquiry will force action to protect the interests and safety of the children and staff, and to address the culpability of the school staff involved in the denial and cover up of this appalling incident.