



OH&S Bulletin

ASBESTOS KILLS

In early March, six workers fitting out an entertainment venue in Glen Waverley suburban Melbourne spent a week cutting up and installing internal wall paneling, recently imported from China.

The manufacturer's website clearly states that the product is 100% asbestos free, so it was imported in good faith. But concerns were raised that the panels might contain asbestos. Two panels were subsequently sent for testing and the results showed they contained Chrysotile (white asbestos).

Work stopped immediately on the job and the CFMEU issued a nationwide alert over the alarming discovery.

WorkSafe Victoria and the Australian Customs Services have been informed, also the Department of Human Services Victoria.

"Six families now have reason to be concerned about their future health."

"The walls panels are currently being removed and disposed as contaminated waste by a Class A Asbestos Removalist at significant expense to the developer."

"For 20 years building workers have been eradicating asbestos from our buildings under strict safety guidelines and specifications.

"For two years we've had a complete prohibition on imports of asbestos products into Australia.

"All this is for good reason. Exposure to asbestos fibres is known to cause fatal Mesothelioma and lung cancer, as well as being associated with cancer of the colon, vocal chords, rectum and kidneys.



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It is a death sentence and Australia has the highest per capita rate of Mesothelioma in the world.

According to workers compensation statistics for 2002-2003 Asbestosis was the most common condition leading to a fatality for the Construction Industry.

**“For years, we’ve struggled with the shameful effects of exposure to this deadly fibre, but from this incident, it’s clear we have to exercise even more diligence to ensure that imported products are genuinely asbestos free.”
After some research, it was discovered that the manufacturer is a Canadian and Chinese Joint Venture.**



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