

Dear Safe Work Australia

I write as a concerned individual with medical, public health and publishing experience to seek a ban on the use of engineered stone containing silica in the Australian construction and building industry. These products should be withdrawn from the market and not be available for use.

Australian respiratory and occupational health physicians have been highlighting the link between composite stone cutting and silicosis since at least 2017 (see for instance [this article](#), in which their concerns were well developed and backed by clinical and research evidence). The link was recognised even earlier overseas.

This is a problem that affects mainly working class males, often in insecure or casual employment. Many individuals and their employers have low health literacy. They did not get the memo about the causal link between silica dust and silicosis. They are people you need to protect.

Different states and entities, including the Queensland government Safe Work Australia, have been asked and have tried to intervene. Standards and safeguards have been developed, but the industry has largely defied regulation, and new cases of silicosis continue to emerge in people exposed long after the link between stone cutting and silicosis was established. The regulators, those who have been charged with ensuring compliance, employers and manufacturers have blood on their hands that even a single case has emerged in Australia due to exposure in the past five years.

Now the industry has called for more regulation and “safe” silica levels or low silica level engineered stone. The past few years of poor compliance and dereliction by industry have shown that this will not work. The industry cannot self-regulate and the regulators have shown that are also not able to regulate workplaces where people are exposed to any level of silica in composite stone.

We have prevaricated for long enough. The best solution is a ban.

Sincerely

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