

24/03/2023

Engineered Stone Industry

To Whom it may concern,

The stone bench top industry is unique, stubborn, rigorously scrutinised, overachieving and in so many ways a truly amazing industry to be a part of.

The recent and not so recent media attention surrounding the issues we face in our industry with dust control and silicosis are of no surprise to those of us who have long advocated for change. Change in terms of better control measures, better funding, more education and time to implement strong and reasonable changes.

The industry, in SE Qld and Northern NSW is a huge part of the construction industry here and employs a large number of skilled and unskilled trades people. The vast majority of companies are doing everything possible to provide a safe and healthy working environment, while facing roadblock after roadblock, with little to no support from the government or unions. The industry is at a crossroads, of which could tip thousands of workers into the already huge pool of unemployment. Simply by broadcasting this heavily bias and extremely uneducated media coverage of what our industry is about and what it stands for, has already added huge strain on all who strive for a better future for the industry.

Yes change is required and yes change is inevitable, but beating an industry publicly and without two sides to a story does nothing but provide doom for those doing the right thing.

Guidelines have changed, annually, half yearly, quarterly and sometimes weekly since the word broke about the issues around Silicosis. The 2 largest companies in Australia went bankrupt, many small and incredibly skilled masons went out of business, only for those legislations to change weeks later.

The industry needs one approach which highlights the risks but also the safe use of all products containing silica. This needs to allow for funding, for large and small companies to adopt those changes, while continuing along the same guidelines we have all spent millions of dollars already implementing over the last 8-10 years, at the advisement of Safe Work Australia.

Banning this product achieves NOTHING and I implore you to speak with industry professionals, large and small to understand the impacts of your decision and what we do daily to provide a safe and healthy work environment for our employees.

All products containing silica are SAFE, when safe work practises are carried out and those guidelines are clear. This industry can continue to thrive and provide incredible opportunities for young trades men and women looking to be apart of something they create and be proud of, which can not be said of all trades.

Yours sincerely,

Edward Hendry
General Manager
Custom Stone Solutions

Signed:

Date: 24 / 03 / 2023

Print name: Edward Hendry