

We are a stone masonry registered with Worksafe. However, we only found out about the public consultation process via one of our suppliers [REDACTED] on 24th March. Upon looking into it, we found that the public consultation process was open from 2nd March 2023.

It's extremely disappointing that while the outcome of this consultation will have the most significant impact on us yet, our opinion was not sought after.

As fabricators, we have paid the highest price in this Silicous epidemic. Those of us who have been lucky enough not to get sick have paid the price psychologically and financially. To date, we've invested between \$100,000 - \$150,000 in:

- Machinery & tools to eliminate dry cutting
- Advanced PPE
- Staff training
- Health checks

While we are only a small family business, our business;

- Supports [REDACTED] employees & [REDACTED] contractors
- Our annual turnover is \$160,400

A complete ban on engineered stone to mean our business it is unlikely that our business and thousand more like us will have no choice but to close our doors.

We have worked closely with Worksafe Victoria to ensure that we provide a safe work environment for our employees so that they can continue to work and provide for their families without compromising their health. We have been granted our Engineered Stone license with Worksafe Victoria.

Most of our suppliers already manufacture products with 40% or less silica content with the view to move all their lines to low silica in the near future. At this level, the new, improved range of engineered stone will have silica content similar to that of natural stone. With the proper safety procedures in place, silicosis is entirely preventable. Therefore, it is my view that Work Safe Australia should consider:

**Prohibition on the use of engineered stone containing 40% or more crystalline silica and licensing of PCBU's working with engineered stone containing less than 40 % crystalline silica.**