SUBMISSION

Public consultation on the prohibition on the use of engineered stone

Instructions

To complete this online submission:

- Download and save this submission document to your computer.
- Use the saved version to enter your responses under each question below. These questions are from the public consultation on the prohibition on the use of engineered stone.
- Once you have completed your submission, save it and upload it using the upload your submission link on the Engage submission form.

Submissions will be accepted until **11.59 pm on 2 April 2023.**

Additional documentation

Up to three additional documents can also be uploaded when you submit your response. Relevant documents to upload could include cover letters or reports with data and evidence supporting your views.

Help

If you are experiencing difficulties making your submission online, please contact us at occhygiene@swa.gov.au.

Respondents may choose how their submission is published on the Safe Work Australia website by choosing from the following options:

- submission published
- submission published anonymously
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For further information on the publication of submissions on Engage, please refer to the Safe Work Australia Privacy Policy and the Engagement HQ privacy policy.

Please note the following are unlikely to be published:

- submissions containing defamatory material, and
- submissions containing views or information identifying parties involved in hearings or inquests which are currently in progress.

Your details

(Please leave blank if you wish to remain anonymous)

1. Name or organisation

[redacted]

2. Email used to log into Engage

[redacted]

Consultation questions

1. Do you support a prohibition on the use of engineered stone? Please support your response with reasons and evidence.

No I don't support the prohibition of the use of engineered stone. I support the regulation what Victoria state government has done by introducing the stone licence scheme to be able to manufacture reconstituted stone. If it is manufactured correctly e.g wet cutting etc it is safe to use. I support the industry in reducing the silica level to below 40% which will bring it into line with other building materials like concrete, bricks, glass, porcelain, paint etc. Any form of dust needs to be control. I believe what the government should be doing is introducing a nation wide Stone license scheme similar to Victoria and then police this and ban businesses not complying

2. If yes, do you support a prohibition on the use of all engineered stone irrespective of its crystalline silica content? Please support your response with reasons and evidence.

Click or tap here to enter text.

3. If no, do you support a prohibition of engineered stone that contains more than certain percentage of crystalline silica? If yes, at what percentage of crystalline silica should a prohibition be set? Please support your response with reasons and evidence.

I do support a prohibition of engineered stone that contains more than 40% silica which will bring it into line with other building materials used like concrete, bricks, glass, paint, ceramics/porcelain etc. If we try and ban engineered stone we will need to shut the whole building industry down as concrete has up to 60% silica for example. What needs to be done is a thought out controlled methods for the whole industry to control dust etc and the methods used to cut these type of products. Cutting stone and engineered stone is safe if wet cutting and dust suppression methods are followed like the introduction of the Victorian Stone License scheme

4. How many businesses work with engineered stone only?

   For these businesses, please provide where possible:

a) the number of sole traders and small businesses (1-20 employees), medium businesses (21-200 employees), large businesses (>200 employees)
b) the number of workers in these businesses, by business size
c) the average annual revenue, by business size
d) the proportion of business activity with engineered stone containing 40% or more crystalline silica content, by business size
e) the proportion of business activity with engineered stone containing less than 40% crystalline silica content, by business size.

Please use the table below to enter this information.

Business type	**Description**	**Sole traders and small business**	**Medium business**	**Large business**
Business working with engineered stone only	Number of businesses			
	Number of people employed			
	total annual revenue (approximate, rounded to nearest $10,000)			
	Proportion of business activity involving ES with ≥ 40% silica			
	Proportion of business activity involving ES with <40% silica			

I don't have data for the above

5. How many businesses work with both engineered stone and non-engineered stone products?

For these businesses, please provide where possible:

a) the number of sole traders and small businesses (1-20 employees), medium businesses (21-200 employees), large businesses (>200 employees)
b) the number of workers in these businesses, by business size
c) the average annual revenue, by business size
d) the proportion of their business activity with non-engineered stone products, by business size
e) the proportion of their business activity with engineered stone containing 40% or more crystalline silica content, by business size
f) the proportion of their business activity with engineered stone containing less than 40% crystalline silica content.

Please use the table below to enter this information.

Business type	Description	Sole traders and small business	Medium business	Large business
Business working with both engineered stone and non-engineered stone products	Number of businesses			
	Number of people employed		48	
	Average yearly revenue (approximate, rounded to nearest $1000)		$18m	
	Proportion of business activity involving ES with ≥ 40% silica		25%	
	Proportion of business activity involving ES with <40% silica		40%	
	Proportion of business activity involving non-engineered stone products		35%	

The above figure relate to our business, I don't have the data for other businesses. Our portion of 35% natural stone or porcelain, 25% of engineered stone under 40% Silica and 40% of stone over 40% silica

6. Do you have any data or information on the risks to workers from the other non-crystalline silica elements of engineered stone? Are these risks increased in engineered stone of less than 40% crystalline silica content?

Click or tap here to enter text.

7. In relation to Option 3, do you have:
    a) any information on the additional benefits of a licensing scheme over the enhanced regulation agreed by WHS ministers (Option 5a) that would already apply to engineered stone products containing less than 40% crystalline silica content?
    b) feedback on the implementation of concurrent licensing schemes for both prohibited engineered stone and non-prohibited engineered stone?

I believe a national stone licensing scheme for both Engineered stone and natural stone would be a good idea. This would then give vision, guidance and control nationally on the handling and processing of such material. I also strongly believe the appropriate worksafe bodies need to monitor and police businesses that have these Stone licenses to make sure they are complying with the scheme. I also firmly believe the whole construction industry needs cleaning up how building materials are processed in especially in the suppression of dust. As already mentioned there are so many building materials that contain silica e.g concrete, bricks, sand, glass, ceramics/porcelain, paint etc and these need control on dust suppression and then other products like MDF dust needs control as well

8. Are the assumptions and scenarios described for Option 6 in the Decision RIS accurate and appropriate? If not, why? Please provide additional information to support the impact analysis.

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9. Are there any other options or issues you think should be considered for a prohibition on the use of engineered stone?

If we try and ban engineered stone under 40% silica we would need to ban all building material with silica which in turn would shut the construction industry down. Common sense needs to prevail.

10. Should there be a transitional period for a prohibition on engineered stone? If so, should it apply to all options and how long should it be?

I believe there should be a minimum 12 month transitional period from when a decision has been made

11. Do you have any evidence or data on the number of cases of the other silica-related diseases (such as lung cancer, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, kidney disease, autoimmune disease) attributed to exposure to crystalline silica from engineered stone?

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12. Do you have any additional evidence or information on the impacts of silicosis or silica-related diseases?

    For example, the direct impacts on the affected worker from the disease, the impacts on the mental health of affected workers and their families, the healthcare costs to the affected worker, loss of income for affected workers and their families, the costs to the health, workers' compensation and social support systems.

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