

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## Engineered stone prohibition to make workplaces safer and healthier for all Australians

Safe Work Australia will act immediately to progress today's decision by work health and safety (WHS) ministers to prohibit the use of engineered stone.

Safe Work Australia recommended the prohibition under the model WHS laws to protect thousands of workers from respirable crystalline silica (silica dust), which is generated in high levels when workers cut, shape, or polish engineered stone.

Exposure to silica dust from engineered stone has led to a rapid increase in the number of workers developing the serious lung disease silicosis in Australia.

Safe Work Australia will now draft amendments to the model WHS Regulations. The amendments will then be implemented in each jurisdiction's WHS laws. Safe Work Australia will also develop a national framework to ensure anyone working with engineered stone products installed prior to the prohibition is doing so safely.

Until the prohibition comes into effect, workers and businesses can continue to work with engineered stone in a controlled way, as detailed in the [model WHS Regulations](#).

### Quotes attributable to Safe Work Australia CEO Marie Boland:

"Today, WHS ministers from the Commonwealth, states and territories agreed to Safe Work Australia's recommendation to prohibit the use of engineered stone to protect the health and safety of workers.

"Workplace exposure to respirable crystalline silica has led to an unacceptable increase in the number of cases of silicosis and other silica-related diseases. Expert analysis shows that silica dust from engineered stone poses unique hazards and there is no evidence that low silica engineered stone is safe to work with.

"This prohibition will make Australian workplaces safer and healthier.

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“The vast majority of silicosis cases identified in recent years are in engineered stone workers. Many of these cases are in younger workers who are experiencing faster disease progression and higher mortality.

“The cost to industry, while real and relevant, cannot outweigh the significant costs to workers, their families and the broader Australian community that result from exposure to respirable crystalline silica from engineered stone.

“Continued work with engineered stone poses an unacceptable risk to workers, which is why we recommended a prohibition on the use of all engineered stone.

“Now that a prohibition has been agreed by WHS ministers, Safe Work Australia will progress amendments to the model WHS Regulations and develop guidance to support PCBUs and workers understand and prepare for the change.”

For more information see the [Safe Work Australia website](#).

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