

Engineered Stone Prohibition Review: Safe Work Australia Implementation Plan

This implementation plan outlines a range of activities to support implementation of outcomes from the 2025 [review of the engineered stone prohibition](#) (the Review).

The engineered stone prohibition is part of a comprehensive range of measures being implemented in Australia to reduce the incidence of silicosis and other dust diseases. It builds on and supports the [Silica National Strategic Plan 2024–2030](#) (SNSP), which represents the commitment of the Commonwealth, state and territory governments, Safe Work Australia Members, along with experts and support groups, to address and ultimately eliminate silica-related disease in Australia.

In total, the Review outlined 6 recommendations for immediate action, together with 11 findings and 3 areas for additional research. This implementation plan prioritises action on the 6 recommendations and outlines next steps for the remaining findings and research areas. In some instances, actions will result in the creation of new projects and in others, actions will be integrated into existing projects that are already planned or underway.

Acronym	Name
ABF	Australian Border Force
ASSEA	Asbestos and Silica Safety and Eradication Agency
CSS	Crystalline silica substances
DHDA	Australian Government Department of Health, Disability and Ageing
HWSA	Heads of Workplace Safety Authorities
NSDRS	National Silica-Related Diseases Research Strategy
RCS	Respirable crystalline silica
SWA	Safe Work Australia
SNSP	Silica National Strategic Plan 2024-2030
WHS	Work health and safety



Product definition, testing, labelling and marketing

Recommendation	Status
Recommendation 1: Safe Work Australia should drive work to develop an urgently needed, nationally recognised, standard testing criteria that determines if a product is engineered stone; this may involve multiple laboratory techniques to test for the presence of crystalline silica and/or binders.	Ongoing Safe Work Australia has commenced this project. The criteria are expected to be published in 2027, subject to approval by Safe Work Australia Members. The establishment of nationally recognised, standard testing criteria will be important to the progression of other recommendations (see Recommendations 2, 3 and 4 below).
Recommendation 2: Safe Work Australia should engage with Commonwealth, state and territory consumer protection agencies and other relevant bodies to highlight the need for the marketing and labelling of engineered stone and alternative products to be accurate, reliable and consistent.	Ongoing Issues relating to the labelling of products where hazardous substances are released during processing (including engineered stone and alternative products) have been considered through Safe Work Australia's best practice review . The best practice review report was sent to WHS Ministers on 4 August 2026. A response to this recommendation, including potential engagement with consumer protection authorities, will progress in 2026-27 pending the outcomes from the best practice review.
Recommendation 3: Upstream duties of manufacturers, importers and suppliers should be enforced to ensure accurate and meaningful labelling of constituents present when processing alternative products.	Ongoing Safe Work Australia has sought advice from HWSA on this matter and is awaiting a response. As noted above, issues relating to the labelling of products where hazardous substances are released during processing have also been considered through Safe Work Australia's best practice review .
Recommendation 4: The model WHS laws should be amended to require the use of consistent labelling and/or safety data sheets (SDS) for engineered stone and alternative products.	Ongoing The issues identified in the Review relating to labelling and SDS requirements in the model WHS laws are not unique to engineered stone or alternative products. Accordingly, Recommendation 4 will be considered in conjunction with Safe Work Australia's best practice review .

Reinstallation of legacy engineered stone

Recommendation	Status
Recommendation 5: Safe Work Australia should amend model WHS Regulations 529E and 529F to allow for the reinstallation of legacy engineered stone benchtops, panels and slabs to address an unintended consequence of the prohibition.	Ongoing The amendments are expected to be finalised and published in 2026.

Waste management and disposal

Recommendation	Status
Recommendation 6: Consistent and clear guidance should be developed within and between jurisdictions on the approach to disposing of engineered stone and silica more broadly.	Ongoing Safe Work Australia is developing practical guidance on what persons conducting a business or undertaking must do to dispose of engineered stone and silica waste in accordance with their WHS obligations. Safe Work Australia is engaging with relevant stakeholders to support this work.

Public awareness and communication

Finding	Status
Finding 2: Simple and practical information is needed to support PCBUs, workers and other stakeholders working with products to determine if they are permitted where it is not readily apparent.	Ongoing Practical guidance on identifying whether a product is an engineered stone benchtop, panel or slab is being developed in consultation with relevant stakeholders. Subject to approvals, guidance is expected to be finalised by the end of 2026.
Finding 3: Further education and public awareness campaigns, including those with a culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) focus, are required to address complacency and misunderstandings around the need to engage in safe practices when processing engineered stone and alternative products, and to promote safe disposal practices.	Ongoing (findings 3 and 4) Findings 3 and 4 are relevant to a range of actions being delivered by various organisations under Priority 2 of the SNSP . As part of these actions, Safe Work Australia has collaborated with ASSEA on a joint communication campaign which was launched in July 2026, using the <i>Be Silica Smart</i> branding and website .
Finding 4: Further efforts are required to better target workers' education and awareness of the risks respirable crystalline silica poses to them.	

Notification framework, compliance and enforcement

Finding	Status
Finding 6: Consistent implementation of the national notification framework across jurisdictions, including the revised model notification form of 1 September 2024, will support stakeholder understanding of the framework, and facilitate the collection of data at a national level to provide valuable oversight of the permitted work.	Ongoing (findings 6, 7, 8 and 9) As of August 2026, there continues to be some variation in the implementation of the national notification framework across jurisdictions. This issue will continue to be monitored as part of broader work to monitor and evaluate the engineered stone prohibition. Also see below activities relevant to monitoring and evaluation.
Finding 7: Ongoing data collection and evaluation of the notification framework and engineered stone prohibition is needed to build a robust evidence base.	Relevant data collection and analysis will continue in accordance with the timeframes agreed for the SNSP.
Finding 8: Regular, detailed jurisdictional data collection is needed to inform compliance and enforcement efforts, facilitate monitoring and reporting, and ensure meaningful evaluation in the future.	As above, relevant data collection and analysis will continue in accordance with the timeframes agreed for the SNSP.
Finding 9: Safe Work Australia should consider, in consultation with WHS regulators, whether there is a legislative gap in relation to the suitability of compliance notices to address the conduct of prohibited work.	Safe Work Australia will consider whether any additional action on this matter is required pending advice from HWSA in 2026-27. The Best Practice Review report notes this finding and makes a recommendation on this topic. The Best Practice Review report is currently with WHS ministers for their consideration.



Research and future monitoring

Finding	Status
Finding 1: Further research and ongoing data collection is needed to understand the long-term effectiveness of the prohibition.	Ongoing (findings 1 and 10 and research areas 1, 2 and 3) Further research, data collection and evaluation as relevant to the prohibition will be undertaken in accordance with the timeframes to support evaluation of the SNSP. An interim evaluation of the SNSP is proposed in 2027.
Finding 10: Further and ongoing independent research, including longitudinal studies, are required to characterise the components of alternative products on the market and associated health risks with particular attention on porcelain, sintered stone and products identified as low or no silica	Relevant research will be considered as part of the National Silica-Related Diseases Research Strategy (NSDRS). The NSDRS is being developed in consultation with relevant stakeholders and is expected to be published in 2027, subject to approval by Safe Work Australia Members, the Australian Centre for Disease Control and/or relevant Ministers. <i>Note: the NSDRS will also have regard to other research and monitoring activities referred to in this implementation plan.</i>
Research Area 1: There is a need for more robust respiratory health monitoring and surveillance and continued investment in long-term epidemiological studies into occupational exposures, including potential exposures from working with alternative products, and associated diseases.	Safe Work Australia is currently undertaking a comprehensive review of its existing health monitoring guidance which includes reviewing current national and international evidence. Based on findings, existing guides will be updated and new guides will be developed, where needed, to ensure they are based on the most up-to-date and available evidence. Findings from the review will contribute towards research areas 1 and 2.
Research Area 2: There is a need for research to determine best practice diagnostic imaging for health monitoring under the WHS Regulations.	
Research Area 3: There would be benefit in conducting research to undertake the necessary exposure testing to develop a controls table for those working with engineered stone and alternative products.	Potential future work on the Silica Control Tool in 2026-27 is subject to agreement by Safe Work Australia Members. This work is currently being led by WorkSafe Victoria.

Governance

Finding	Status
Finding 5: Proactive engagement and collaboration between the three tiers of government with responsibility for waste management is needed to ensure the appropriate disposal of engineered stone	Ongoing (findings 5 and 11) Finding 5 will be addressed as part of the response to Recommendation 6 (waste management and disposal).
Finding 11: Improve collaboration between relevant government agencies and departments, such as Safe Work Australia, Australian Border Force and WHS regulators.	A range of new and existing forums are being used to strengthen collaboration between government agencies to support specific projects outlined in this implementation plan. This implementation plan also continues to be shared with key stakeholders, as required.