



## **Building and Construction Industry Group Unions**

The Building and Construction Industry Group of Unions consists of the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union (AMWU), The Australian Workers Union (AWU), The Communications, Electrical and Plumbing Union (CEPU) and the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU).

The BCIG Unions are deeply concerned about the occupational health and safety implications of asbestos in the workplace, the possible effect on construction industry employees and the impact on the community in general. The presence of asbestos is not always obvious and protective measures need to be put in place to avoid contact with and inhalation of asbestos fibres, including inadvertent contact which may occur after a construction project has been undertaken and completed.

## **Adherence to Occupational Health and Safety Act and Regulations**

Nothing in this policy should be read so as to undermine the current effect of the relevant Acts or Regulations in relation to the removal and disposal of asbestos and asbestos contaminated products. This policy will be in addition to current Acts and Regulations.

## **Asbestos Policy on Construction and Demolition Sites**

As a result the BCIG Unions have adopted a zero tolerance policy to asbestos in the construction and demolition industries. The BCIG Unions response to asbestos in the construction and demolition industries is outlined below. It is envisaged that this course of action will protect workers both during the construction project, and from inadvertent contact once the project is completed.

It will also ensure the possibility of exposure to the general community is minimised during and after the construction phase.

In Tasmania a three stage categorisation for removal of asbestos is broadly accepted as follows:

- Red: material classified as currently dangerous, or posing an immediate risk to health – immediate removal and exclusion of people from the area prior to removal.
- Amber: material classified as currently not dangerous but still a potential risk – this would require the workplace to develop and implement a removal plan.
- Green: this category recognises that asbestos containing materials (ACMs) are present but are in relatively reasonable condition. The workplace would develop a long term removal and management plan.

1. For the purposes of this policy **ALL** asbestos in the construction and demolition industries will be regarded as Category Red.
2. Before the commencement of work on any construction project, an asbestos audit must be undertaken and a copy of the audit made available to the BCIG Unions or their representatives. A copy should also be forwarded to Workplace Standards Tasmania. If an asbestos audit has previously been undertaken it needs to be current and made available to the BCIG Unions and Workplace Standards Tasmania.
3. If asbestos is found to be present, a licensed (class A) asbestos removal company will then be engaged to remove **ALL** asbestos or asbestos contaminated material from the site. A monitoring process which complies with current legislative requirements as a minimum will be used on site. This system must include asbestos dust monitoring of the work area and monitoring of areas immediately outside the work area to ensure contamination is contained within the work area.
4. Only when **ALL** asbestos is removed from site and clean-up is complete will general construction commence.
5. Asbestos and asbestos containing materials **MUST** be disposed of at an appropriate location as directed by Workplace Standards Tasmania or at a disposal site approved by the Environment Protection Division of the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment. This policy will not tolerate the crushing of asbestos containing materials in preparation for resale as fill or for other purposes.
6. In the event that further asbestos is discovered during the construction process, work will immediately cease until removal takes place consistent with the above procedure.
7. The BCIG Unions will work with local training authorities and industry training boards to develop an “asbestos awareness” course which will be available to current industry participants. The BCIG Unions will also work with the relevant bodies to include an “asbestos awareness” component in all construction industry training packages for apprentices and trainees.