

AIOH Media Release



AIOH says silicosis in stonemasons should never have happened.

The President of the AIOH, Brian Eva, announced that he has written to the Prime Minister about the recent cases of silicosis in stonemasons working in the manufacture of kitchen tops.

Mr Eva says, “Silicosis is a disease first recognised in the 19th century. It is well understood that it is caused by silica dust from working with stone. It is entirely preventable. Yet, we still see these cases arising in 2018. It should never have happened. It is a tragedy.”

The AIOH has written to the Prime Minister to commend the actions of the Minister for Health, the Hon. Greg Hunt, for his intervention through the Health Minister’s COAG meeting on 12 October 2018. He added that more work must be done on prevention.

Mr Eva told the Prime Minister that exposure to toxic dusts in the workplace is entirely preventable. Dust can be suppressed by use of simple controls such as wet cutting or extraction ventilation. There are good respirators available to provide personal protection. However, workers often use inadequate or inappropriate respirators.

Mr Eva said that the AIOH is willing to work with the government, to raise awareness in small and family businesses, and for trades persons through their vocational training.

Mr Eva pointed out that October is National Safe Work Month, with the theme “A moment is all it takes.’ It would be a great moment for the Morrison government to show their commitment to the health and safety of workers engaged in hazardous trades.

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