



Australian  
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University

# Australian National University

## Potential Asbestos Exposure

## Health Surveillance Testing

ANU Work Environment Group

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Once printed, this is an uncontrolled document.

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# 1 BACKGROUND

The Australian National University (ANU) is committed to the health and safety of all its workers, students and visitors. This document should be read in conjunction with the Procedure: Health Surveillance [https://policies.anu.edu.au/ppl/document/ANUP\\_000504](https://policies.anu.edu.au/ppl/document/ANUP_000504) and is designed to provide those potentially exposed to asbestos with detailed information on health surveillance testing available.

## 1.1. Chronology of Events

- During works on the School of Art & Design clock tower in November 2016 the ANU was advised by a contractor that sections of the ceiling space above room 2.01 in building 105 may have building products that contain asbestos. Room 2.01 does not contain asbestos material, but was used as the access point into the ceiling space to access the clock tower above.
- Upon receiving this report the room was closed and isolated until further testing could be carried out.
- On 25 and 30 November 2016 suspected asbestos dust was identified in Building 105 room 2.01 and the ceiling space above, by an appropriately qualified asbestos consultant who was engaged to undertake testing of the dust samples. Consequently, some of these dust samples returned positive results for asbestos fibres. These samples were recorded as being in the low risk range and below the exposure limits of 0.01 as per the Australian standard.
- Since the closure of room 2.01 the facilities and services team have been working towards a remediation solution for the ceiling space above room 2.01
- The asbestos report completed by ACR ( A Class asbestos assessor) gave an indication that the levels of asbestos dust and fibres were of a low concentration
- Two air sampling monitors placed within room 2.01 returned levels of <0.01 and control measures were found to be effective in the room. Dust was visibly present in moderate concentrations in the interior of room 2.01. These were found in areas that were difficult to reach or hidden from general view.
- Attention was paid to areas that were situated below the access ladder and the clock cabling penetration, sampling conducted found that Chrysotile Asbestos was present in settled dust below the ladder room 2.01.

## 2 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

In response to the incident which occurred in November 2016, the following frequently asked questions and answers have been prepared for the information of staff and key parties.

### **Q. What is the extent of containment for the affected area?**

**A.** Further testing was carried out by the contracted assessor- ACR Asbestos Consultants, after Room 2.01 was sealed and closed off. The ceiling space above room 2.01 and room 2.01 was subject to testing and air monitoring and no asbestos fibres were detected.

### **Q. What corrective actions have been implemented?**

**A.** A scope of works recommended by ACR Asbestos Consultants has been formulated and has been out to tender. This includes repair or removal and environmental clean of contaminated areas before the containment area is released for use by the workplace. The ANU hazardous materials register will be updated regarding to the building involved.

### **Q. Have staff been identified and given advice about potential contamination?**

**A.** All staff involved in the initial incident, who have submitted an incident notification form in regards to this incident, have been contacted by the Work Environment Group (WEG), and received advice relating to health surveillance testing through Aspen Corporate Health (ACH).

To capture other affected persons, and provide additional information, this document will be made publically available on the School of Art & Design internet page <http://soa.anu.edu.au/about-menu> by Tuesday 12 December 2017.

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**Q. What are the known health effects relating to asbestos exposure?**

A. Asbestos, when inhaled, can get trapped in the lungs causing scarring and inflammation. Asbestos exposure is associated with an increased risk of developing a lung disease, however, development of an asbestos related disease (ARD) is not inevitable following exposure to asbestos. Some people who have been regularly exposed to asbestos may not contract an ARD.

**Q. What should I tell my family, friends or housemates about my potential asbestos exposure?**

A. There are several sources of information that can be accessed to provide answers in regards to potential exposure. The information is in plain language and can be useful for guidance. It can be found at: [www.asbestossafety.gov.au](http://www.asbestossafety.gov.au).

**Q. What medical advice should I be seeking?**

A. Individuals who may have been exposed to asbestos, are offered a consultation with Aspen Corporate Health (ACH) to voluntarily participate in a lung test and or chest x-ray. The medical staff at ACP can provide medical advice and guidance at this point.

**Q. What will health surveillance testing involve?**

A. As a health surveillance participant, you will be provided with a questionnaire to complete prior to attending your appointment with ACH. During the appointment you will see an Occupational Physician and possibly also a Registered Nurse. You may be asked to perform a lung function test (Spirometry), and may also be offered a chest x-ray.

Following your appointment a summary of the tests completed (along with your test results) and recommendations for future health surveillance testing is sent to WEG via an email address that can only be accessed by Injury Prevention and Injury Management staff.

The summary report and results are then sent to you and a time can be made to discuss your results if there are any concerns. A summary email (without results) and the invoice is then provided to the person/s in your College/Division that is organising the health surveillance appointments.

**Q. How will the privacy and confidentiality of my medical information be handled?**

A. A copy of all documents received by ACH is placed in the ANU's electronic Record Management System (ERMS), with access to this document restricted. There is a high level of ERMS access permission required to view sensitive documents such as a health surveillance summary. At all times your sensitive information must be stored securely and handled in accordance with the *Privacy Act 1988* and the ANU Privacy Policy.

**Q. Who is the most appropriate person at ANU to contact if I have concerns?**

A. The Work Environment Group will be your first point of call. The WHS team can assist with safety concerns and the Injury Prevention and Rehabilitation team can assist with health concerns, including questions relating to health surveillance testing. Concerns can be directed to WEG via the contact details on the front page.

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### 3 ADDITIONAL SUPPORT AVAILABLE

If you are feeling concerned about your test results or potential asbestos exposure, you are welcome to speak with the Injury Prevention Branch within WEG. Additionally, you may like to talk to one of our Employee Assistance Program (EAP) providers or the ANU Advisor to Staff, free of charge.

#### **Assure**

Assure Programs are located in multiple locations across Australia. Employees and their immediate family can access up to 4 appointments per year.

Telephone: 1800 808 374

Webpage: [www.assureprograms.com.au](http://www.assureprograms.com.au)

#### **Relationships Australia**

Located in Deakin, ACT, Relationships Australia offer appointments in person or over the phone.

Telephone: 02 6122 7100

Webpage: [www.relationships.org.au](http://www.relationships.org.au)

#### **ANU Advisor to Staff**

For ANU employees only, the Advisor to Staff provides free, confidential and professional counselling and advice services to staff.

Telephone: 02 6125 3616

Webpage: <https://services.anu.edu.au/human-resources/wellbeing/employee-assistance-program>

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