

## Introduction to the AEES

The Asbestos Exposure Evaluation Scheme Information Kit has been developed to provide information about the Asbestos Exposure Evaluation Scheme.

The AEES is a free service that has been funded by Defence Safety Management Agency (DSMA) and provides assessment, counselling and if necessary any further testing

## Risks and Health Effects

Asbestos only becomes a health risk if fibres become airborne and inhaled. Should this occur, then the risk of asbestos related diseases occurring is dose related. The greater the exposure (duration and intensity) the greater the risk of illness.

The inhalation of asbestos fibres may cause the following conditions: asbestosis, pleural plaques, pleural effusion, lung cancer and rare cancer of the lung wall called mesothelioma.

There is a popular misconception that any exposure to asbestos is hazardous and possibly fatal. Many of the illnesses only occur after a person has experienced **long-term exposure** to asbestos. The risk of contracting asbestos related diseases after a brief exposure to asbestos is relatively small. Smokers are at significantly greater risk of developing asbestos related lung disease than non-smokers.

## History

On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of August 1990, the then Minister for Defence Science and Personnel announced an independent review of practices and procedures for dealing with asbestos in Defence.

The report recommended that Defence create a single umbrella on asbestos management policy, which would enable the effective control of asbestos including medical surveillance records.

One of the recommendations given in the report was to develop occupational health and safety practices relating to asbestos.

As a result, the Asbestos Exposure Evaluation Scheme has been developed.

## Who is the AEES for?

The AEES has been designed for current and former civilians of the Department of Defence and former ADF employees

Serving ADF employees are to visit their local ADF Health Services in regards to any concerns about asbestos testing and counselling.

By participating in the AEES, the individuals will have their cases independently assessed by Health Services Australia (HAS) to determine if they may require further examination and monitoring by their General Practitioner.

## Health Services Australia

Health Services Australia (HAS), formerly known as the Australian Government Health Service (AGHS), is one of Australia's largest and most experienced providers of independent health assessments and medical advice.

Each state office also has a comprehensive panel of independent specialists whom they can call upon where required to assist with assessments.

Each individual's case may be assessed by HS and if it is deemed necessary, the individual may be required to visit a HAS centre or appropriately selected medical practitioner.

The individual will receive a fair assessment of their case. Counselling is also available for both the individual and their immediate family.

## The role of Coordinators

The regional OHS Coordinators role as part of the AEES is to promote and manage the scheme within their region. Individuals wishing to access the scheme are advised to contact their nearest Regional Corporate Services Centre and liaise with the Regional OHS Coordinator.

The Coordinator is to provide a verbal overview of the scheme based on the updated policy found in the Defence Safety Manual (SAFETYMAN).

Where necessary, the Coordinator may have to make arrangements with HAS for assessment and counselling. Participants of the scheme are to be made aware of the steps needed to take, should they wish to make a claim with Comcare or Military Compensation and Rehabilitation Scheme (MCRS).

## **DSMA and Funding**

DSMA maintains a travel fund to meet reasonable costs associated with individuals accessing AEES.

Further information can be obtained from the DSMA Business Manager. Contact details can be found over leaf.

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## **The Asbestos Exposure Evaluation Scheme**