

Presented by:



Government
of South Australia

SafeWork SA

South Australian Silica Plan

2024-2030

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Purpose

The *South Australian Silica Plan 2024-2030* sets out the strategic actions the South Australian Government will undertake to support the implementation of the *Silica National Strategic Plan 2024-30* (SNSP) developed by the Asbestos and Silica Safety and Eradication Agency (ASSEA).

The SNSP has been developed in response to the re-emergence of silicosis and other silica-related diseases in Australia. The plan has three aims and five priority areas. The overall outcome is 'sustained elimination of silicosis and other silica-related diseases in Australia.

SNSP Aim	SNSP Priority	SNSP Target
Eliminate silica-related diseases in Australian workplaces Improved worker health and wellbeing	Priority 1: Workplace risk reduction	Increased compliance with silica-related Work Health and Safety (WHS) legislation
	Priority 2: Education and awareness	Increase level of awareness and knowledge related to respirable crystalline silica (RCS) and silica-related diseases among target groups
Support workers and others affected by silica-related diseases Continued improvements in diagnostic and therapeutic systems and methods	Priority 3: Health monitoring, screening, surveillance and support	Increased number of individuals currently working in high-risk industries receiving health monitoring services consistent with WHS requirements
		Support groups are available to all Australians affected by silica-related diseases and their families
	Priority 4: Research and development	Increased high-quality silica-related research and data
		Increased level of funding provided to silica related research
Be an international leader Leverage global effort to improve silica safety and silica-related disease outcomes	Priority 5: International collaboration	Increased interaction with international networks and organisations

The SNSP is designed to ensure that Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments are working to a shared purpose that includes nationally consistent priorities to meet agreed aims, and that government agencies with silica-related responsibilities in each jurisdiction work together to provide a whole of government response to address silica safety issues and silica-related diseases. It also aims to ensure that business and non-government organisations facilitate, support and influence implementation and take action.

The *South Australian Silica Plan 2024-2030*, developed by the South Australian Asbestos and Silica Strategic Group, sets out key initiatives and actions that will be undertaken by the South Australian Government to support the implementation of the SNSP to demonstrate its commitment to eliminating silica-related diseases. The Silica Working Group has supported the South Australian Asbestos and Silica Strategic Group in its development of this plan.

Roles and responsibilities

While certain departments have lead roles in administering legislation such as SafeWork SA in enforcing work health and safety laws, and the Environment Protection Authority in regulating environmental hazards and investigating breaches of the *Environment Protection Act 1993* (SA) and the *Environment Protection Act Regulations 2023* (SA), this does not diminish or replace the legal obligations of all South Australian government departments and agencies under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2012* (SA) and the *Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012* (SA).

Department/Agency	Area of Responsibility
Consumer and Business Services SA	• Provision of general consumer advice in disputes between consumers and businesses under Australian Consumer Law. • Enforcement of product safety provisions of the Australian Consumer Law (SA).
Department for Energy and Mining SA	• Administration of the <i>Mining Act 1971</i>, which provides the legislative framework for authorising mineral exploration, production, and quarry operations in South Australia. • Provision and maintenance of geoscience and mineral information for South Australia.
Department for Health and Wellbeing SA	• Administration of <i>South Australian Public Health Act 2011</i> which provides the legislative framework for protecting public health. • Works in collaboration with other departments and agencies to support silica-related health risk assessments and responses.

Department/Agency	Area of Responsibility
Mining and Quarrying Occupational Health and Safety Committee (MAQOHSC)	• Works with stakeholders to implement a statewide health monitoring approach that effectively integrates with and contributes to the national silicosis strategy. • Engages with small to medium employers in the mining and quarrying and other industries at risk from silicosis and dust related diseases to support improvements in prevention and management practices.
OccMed SA	• Qualified and experienced medical practitioners and specialists in occupational medicine. • Provides services to a wide range of organisations within a broad variety of industries. Services include alcohol and drug services, vaccination services, injury prevention, and injury management and rehabilitation.
SafeWork SA	▪ Administration of the <i>Work Health and Safety Act 2012 (SA)</i> and the <i>Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012 (SA)</i> which governs the safe management, control and removal of engineered stone in workplaces. ▪ Issuing workplace licences.
ReturntoWorkSA	▪ Administers the <i>Return to Work Act 2014 (SA)</i> ▪ Oversees the Return to Work Insurance Scheme in South Australia that protects South Australian businesses and their workers from the costs of a work injury.
SA Housing Trust	▪ Management of a large portfolio of government-owned residential properties, including maintenance responsibilities. ▪ Responding to concerns by tenants and maintenance requests through its Maintenance Contact Centre which coordinates asbestos-related work orders and updates property records accordingly.

Priorities

The *South Australian Silica Plan 2024-2030* aligns with the aims and national priorities identified in the SNSP:

Aim 1: Eliminate silica-related diseases in Australia; and improved worker health and wellbeing

Enablers:

- improve awareness, skills and resources
- strengthen and align relevant legal frameworks
- support and enforce compliance with silica-related laws
- innovate and inspire action and collaboration.

National Priority 1: Workplace risk reduction

Preventing exposure to respirable crystalline silica (RCS), consistent with the WHS hierarchy of controls, to meet the aim of eliminating workplace silica-related diseases.

Success will look like a strong national framework that eliminates and minimises exposure to RCS, that is reviewed periodically to ensure effectiveness over time. Duty holders and workers understand silica safety measures and are supported to consistently apply the safety measures. Where this does not occur, regulators are actively enforcing compliance.

National Priority 2: Education and awareness

Targeted and nationally consistent education and awareness is essential to change risk taking behaviours and work practices regarding silica that lead to a risk of exposure to RCS. The 'National Dust Disease Taskforce' found significant gaps in knowledge of silica as a risk, or effective methods to prevent exposure to RCS.

Success will look like nationally consistent and targeted education and awareness activities which create a deep understanding by core audiences of the risks of RCS and how to minimise the risks, which in turn, will successfully changes risk taking behaviour and improve work practices to minimise the risk of exposure to RCS.

Aim 2: Support workers and others affected by silica-related diseases; and continued improvements in diagnostic and therapeutic systems and methods

Enablers:

- improve awareness, skills and resources
- innovate and inspire action and collaboration
- grow the evidence base to inform decisions.

National Priority 3: Health monitoring, screening, surveillance and support

Regular, systematic, and longitudinal health monitoring of workers at risk of exposure to RCS is required, because adverse health effects can take months or years to develop.

Success will look like increased detection of the pre-clinical effects of exposure to RCS, which will inform efforts to reduce further exposure to RCS.

Success will also look like better support for workers affected by silica-related disease, and better support for workers' families.

National Priority 4: Research and development

There are gaps in knowledge about the risk of RCS which hinders efforts to educate people about the risks of RCS, silica-related diseases, and methods to diagnose and treat silica-related disease.

Success will look like targeted and reliable research is coordinated and conducted to address information gaps about the risks of RCS, silica-related diseases, and methods to diagnose and treat silica-related disease.

Aim 3: Be an international leader; and leverage global effort to improve silica safety and silica-related disease outcomes

Enablers:

- improve awareness, skills and resources
- innovate and inspire action and collaboration
- grow the evidence base to inform decisions.

National Priority 5: International collaboration

The existence of silicosis and other silica-related diseases across the world make it a global disease. Millions of workers continue to be exposed to hazardous levels of RCS in a wide range of occupational settings.

Success will look like Australia learning from and sharing knowledge with other countries to build collective capability and capacity to educate persons conducting a business or undertaking, workers and workers' families about the risks of RCS, improve work practices to minimise the risks of RCS, and to test for and treat silica-related diseases, including new initiatives.

For additional detail, please refer to the *Silica National Strategic Plan 2024-30* and the *Silica National Strategic Plan 2024-30 Companion* on ASSEA's website.

Measurement and Reporting

Each department and agency is responsible for preparing and submitting an annual progress report detailing their strategic actions under the *South Australian Silica Plan 2024-2030*. Reports must be submitted to SafeWork SA of the Attorney-General's Department, via the SafeWork SA National Meetings Secretariat via email at: AGDSWSANationalMeetingsSecretariat@sa.gov.au.

SafeWork SA's Secretariat is responsible for collating and tabling these agency reports to the Asbestos and Silica Strategic Group for review and approval.

Once endorsed, one consolidated progress report will be submitted to the Asbestos and Silica Safety and Eradication Agency (ASSEA) as part of South Australia's contribution to the SNSP.

Priorities for South Australia

The priorities for South Australia, mapped against the national targets outlined in the SNSP, are detailed below.

Additional actions may be introduced throughout the life of the plan, subject to approval by the Asbestos and Silica Strategic Group members. This ensures the plan remains responsive to emerging issues and evolving national priorities.

Implementation

The Silica Working Group will work collaboratively to implement the actions identified in the *South Australian Silica Plan 2024-2030*, as identified by the Asbestos and Silica Strategic Group, on behalf of the South Australian Government.

National actions are detailed in bold with the corresponding actions for South Australia listed below.

National Priority 1: Workplace risk reduction

Preventing exposure to RCS, consistent with the hierarchy of controls, to meet the aim of eliminating workplace silica-related diseases.

Success will look like a strong national framework that eliminates and minimises exposures to RCS, that is reviewed periodically to ensure effectiveness over time. Duty holders and workers understand and are supported to consistently apply silica safety measures. Where this does not occur, regulators are actively enforcing compliance.

Adopt and implement amended model work health and safety (WHS) laws

Adopt and implement amended model WHS laws for:

- crystalline silica substances, including the prohibition on uncontrolled processing and additional requirements for high-risk processing such as Silica Risk Control Plans
- the prohibition on engineered stone, including the national framework to work with legacy engineered stone products.

South Australian actions

- 1.1 On 1 July 2024 and 1 September 2024, South Australia implemented changes to the *Work Health and Safety Act 2012* and *Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012* (WHS Regulations) which reflect the amended model WHS laws. These changes included the prohibition of engineered stone, associated transition arrangements, training requirements, and requirements Silica Risk Control Plans.
- 1.2 The WHS Regulations include that a person conducting a business or undertaking must ensure their workers receive training regarding crystalline silica if the worker may be involved in the processing of a crystalline silica substance that is high risk or be at risk of exposure to respirable crystalline silica because of the processing of a crystalline silica substance that is high risk. The WHS Regulations require that crystalline silica training must be either training that is accredited, or training that is approved by the work health and safety regulator.

- 1.3 SafeWork SA will undertake planned, proactive compliance activities on the Torrens to Darlington tunnel projects and, where appropriate, align these activities with Comcare, including the sharing of de identified intelligence and observations within legislative authority, to reduce regulatory duplication, prevent inconsistent messaging to duty holders, and support early identification of emerging silica risks and coordinated preventative action.
- 1.4 SafeWork SA will continue to review any additional future amendments to model WHS laws with a view to recommend to the South Australian Government that the laws be implemented in South Australia.
- 1.5 The Mining and Quarrying Occupational Health and Safety Committee (MAQOHSC) conducted two webinars on the amended regulations regarding crystalline silica substances (CSS) and jointly presented information with Business SA on regulatory requirements.
- 1.6 MAQOHSC via ReturnToWorkSA, will consider providing further education, including about the use of new generation products that have a low silica content.
- 1.7 MAQOHSC provided persons conducting a business or undertaking that used or processed engineered stone with information about the ban on engineered stone.
- 1.8 MAQOHSC is an approved trainer under the *Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012* and will provide training regard RCS and engineered stone to sole traders and small businesses in high risk classified occupations. This includes quarries, small construction businesses and manufacturing businesses.
- 1.9 Government will embed silica risk prevention requirements into the delivery of construction projects.

Review the effectiveness of WHS laws for the prohibition on engineered stone, and any other model WHS laws for respirable crystalline silica agreed by Safe Work Australia members and WHS Ministers.

The South Australian Work Health and Safety regulator, through SafeWork SA, is a member of Safe Work Australia.

As a member, SafeWork SA will support Safe Work Australia in reviewing the effectiveness of the model work health and safety laws regarding RCS and the ban on engineered stone. This includes contributing to reporting requirements to Safe Work Australia.

Develop and implement nationally consistent measures to improve the quality of air monitoring carried out and reported to assist with prevention of exposure to RCS

Develop and implement nationally consistent measures to improve the quality of air monitoring carried out and reported to assist with prevention of exposure to RCS including by:

- securing duty holder compliance with requirements for carrying out air monitoring to assess exposure to RCS
- defining the level of knowledge, skills and experience needed to undertake air monitoring for potential RCS exposure
- taking appropriate regulatory action in response to exceedances of workplace exposure standards (WES) for RCS reported to the relevant regulator in accordance with the WHS regulations.

South Australian actions

- 1.10 SafeWork SA will contribute to discussions with Safe Work Australia regarding developing and implementing nationally consistent measures to improve the quality of air monitoring carried out and reported to assist with the prevention of exposure to RCS.
- 1.11 SafeWork SA will undertake proactive compliance and enforcement campaigns regarding engineered stone and crystalline silica substances to ensure persons conducting a business or undertaking are complying with their duties and requirements under WHS legislation.
- 1.12 SafeWork SA will make enquiries into exceedances of workplace exposure standards for respirable crystalline substances to determine if adequate controls are in place to minimise exposure to workers and others. Where adequate controls are not in place, SafeWork SA will take appropriate action in accordance with the WHS legislation and SafeWork SA's *Compliance and Investigation Manual*. Appropriate action may include investigation with a view to enforcement and education regarding appropriate controls.
- 1.13 MAQOHSC will investigate two predictive models developed in British Columbia, Canada, that estimate airborne worker exposure to respirable crystalline silica. These models are tailored to the following industry sectors:
 - construction exposure estimation tool, which is being reviewed by a broader group of Government Occupational Health Regulators (GOHR) members, including representatives from Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland.
 - mining and quarrying exposure estimation tool, which is being assessed by mining regulators from Western Australia, Queensland, South Australia and New South Wales, in collaboration with the Canadian developers.
- 1.14 Government Occupational Health Regulators (GOHR) members, including representatives from Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland to consider the question of whether an assessment tool based on real data can be used as regulatory evidence with a verification process.

Implement measures to ensure that the workplace exposure standard (WES) for respirable crystalline silica (RCS)

Implement measures to ensure that the WES for RCS protects workers from adverse health effects, including by:

- reviewing WES for RCS every five years to ensure it reflects available health evidence.
- reviewing WES methodology undertaking further research to enable lower WES for RCS to be effectively measured.

South Australian actions

- 1.15 SafeWork SA has provided feedback to Safe Work Australia regarding its Decision Regulatory Impact Statement regarding the WES for respirable crystalline silica.
- 1.16 MAQOSHSC will continue to actively explore research in the area of workplace exposure standards for non-silica alternatives to engineered stone.
- 1.17 MAQOSHSC will continue to support education and research.

Examine the availability and visibility of product label and warning information

Examine the availability and visibility of product label and warning information, such as safety data sheets, across the supply chain by:

- investigating current requirements for product labels and warnings on crystalline silica substances
- using investigation results to develop and implement a nationally consistent requirement for product labels and warnings for crystalline silica substances
- Implementation should include nationally consistent compliance, education and awareness campaigns on product labels and warnings targeting product and chemical suppliers.

South Australian actions:

- 1.18 SafeWork SA will work with ASSEA to undertake compliance, education and awareness campaigns to reduce the risk of workplace exposure to RCS. This will include educational material which focusses on appropriate control measures designed to reduce or eliminate exposure to RCS.
- 1.19 MAQOHSC will support changes to information relating to labelling requirements and safety data sheet legislation if this occurs.
- 1.20 MAQOHSC will support persons conducting a business or undertaking in investigating the applicability of the work health and safety crystalline substances legislation through the identifying processes exposing workers to more than 1% crystalline silica through respirable dust.

Assess industry capacity to eliminate silica-related diseases and develop and implement a workforce plan to ensure the multi-sector and multi-disciplinary workforce is suitably trained, resourced and distributed, including occupational hygiene, health and medical workforce, and inspectors

South Australian actions

- 1.21 On 13 March 2025, SafeWork SA implemented a process for the work Health and Safety regulator to consider and approve training regarding crystalline silica within South Australia.
- 1.22 SafeWork SA will undertake proactive compliance campaigns to monitor that persons conducting a business or undertaking are complying with their duty to adequately train workers regarding RCS.
- 1.23 Green Industries SA will review and update the existing Disaster Waste Management Guidelines to include emerging and challenging waste streams such as respirable crystalline silica.
- 1.24 SafeWork SA will provide input into updated Disaster Waste Management Guidelines which includes disposal of products containing respirable crystalline silica as requested.

Develop and implement best practice regulatory compliance and enforcement principles for laws associated with RCS, including in response to reports of workplace exposure standard (WES) exceedance

South Australian actions

- 1.25 SafeWork SA will support the Heads of Workplace Safety Authorities to develop and implement best practice regulatory compliance and enforcement principles regarding RCS, including in response to reports of WES exceedances.
- 1.26 MAQOHSC, through membership of the Government Occupational Hygiene Regulators group, will contribute to development of the workplace exposure standard process.

National Priority 2: Education and awareness

Targeted and nationally consistent education and awareness is essential to change behaviours around silica risks and safety in the workplace. The National Dust Disease Taskforce found significant gaps in knowledge of silica as a risk, or effective methods to prevent exposure to RCS.

Success will look like a deep understanding of core audiences informs nationally consistent and targeted education and awareness activities which successfully change behaviour.

Develop and deliver targeted education, awareness, and behaviour change initiatives to prevent exposure to RCS. Use behavioural insights research once available. Initiatives should, at all stages of the supply chain, increase awareness and knowledge of RCS exposure risks, control measures including equipment and its correct use, health and safety duties including use of silica risk control plans, and any other relevant topics

South Australian actions:

- 2.1 SafeWork SA will work with OccMed SA and ReturnToWorkSA to improve awareness of health monitoring in the workplace related to chemical exposures. This will include consideration of webinars.
- 2.2 SafeWork SA has a range of published information on its website regarding RCS and engineered stone, including links to material provided by other government departments and agencies, and other organisations. SafeWork SA updates this information as appropriate.
- 2.3 SafeWork SA will continue to develop proactive compliance campaigns related to respiratory disease caused by exposure to silica.
- 2.4 SA Housing Trust will support the dissemination of information about preventing silica-related diseases through their head contractors.
- 2.5 The Public Health Division of SA Health will help develop material identifying the broader health risks associated with exposure to respirable crystalline silica and potential issues from taking home respirable crystalline silica on work clothes.
- 2.6 SA Health will develop material for the public on ambient or community respirable crystalline silica exposure and the related health effects.
- 2.7 MAQOHSC will continue to promote health monitoring requirements for crystalline silica substances for high-risk workers in their crystalline silica substances training.
- 2.8 MAQOHSC, through links with the Australian Institute of Occupational Hygienists, will support occupational hygienists to be approved as trainers regarding crystalline silica substances regulations.

Improve silica awareness training for all industries

Improve silica awareness training for all industries where workers are at risk of RCS exposure, including by:

- implementing the model WHS regulations for those undertaking high-risk crystalline silica processes to complete nationally accredited training, or training approved by the applicable regulator
- investigating the effectiveness of nationally recognised training at driving behavioural change
- raising duty holder awareness of the obligation to provide training across all industries with a risk of exposure to RCS
- investigating current and potential subsidies for undertaking nationally recognised training for workers at risk for RCS exposure and developing options to increase access and affordability.

South Australian actions

- 2.9 On 13 March 2025, SafeWork SA implemented a process for the regulator to approve training on crystalline silica throughout South Australia.
- 2.10 SafeWork SA will continue to administer and enforce the *Work Health and Safety Act 2012* and the *Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012* regarding the duties of persons conducting a business or undertaking to manage the risks of exposure to RCS and to train their workers regarding the risks of exposure to RCS, and the requirements regarding workers undertaking high-risk crystalline silica processes.
- 2.11 SafeWork SA will liaise with relevant key industry groups to promote the need for accredited and approved training.
- 2.12 SA Housing Trust will support the dissemination of information regarding the risks of exposure to RCS and preventing silica-related diseases through their head contractors.
- 2.13 MAQOHSC is an approved trainer regarding engineered stone and the risks of exposure to RCS and will provide the training course to sole traders and small business in high-risk classified occupations. This includes quarries, small construction businesses and manufacturing businesses.
- 2.14 MAQOHSC will provide training regarding crystalline silica substances and lung health screening in regional areas for small businesses with high-risk workers.

National Priority 3: Health monitoring, screening surveillance and support

Regular, systematic, and longitudinal health monitoring of workers at risk of exposure to RCS is required as development of adverse health effects can take months or years.

Success will look like increased detection of pre-clinical effects of exposure to RCS, to inform efforts to reduce further exposure and workplace risk. Better support for workers affected by silica-related disease and their families.

Conduct a rapid desktop review of current health monitoring, screening and surveillance requirements and practices for RCS exposed workers across all jurisdictions and at-risk sectors.

South Australian actions

- 3.1 As part of the procurement process ReturnToWorkSA (MAQOHSC) has reviewed the available screening services in South Australia and provided education where appropriate. This involved discussion with the CALHN thoracic specialist who is currently part of the trial screening that MAQOHSC has been running since 2022 to develop a South Australian protocol for lung screening.

Undertake a comprehensive review of current evidence to establish the optimal health surveillance methodology for workers exposed to RCS in all industries, with particular reference to the role and methodology of high-resolution computed tomography imaging, to inform relevant laws and guidance

South Australian actions

- 3.2 MAQOHSC will continue to complete work related to this item using lung cancer screening programs material which details the available High-Resolution Computed Tomography (HRCTs) for South Australia.
- 3.3 MAQOHSC will continue to utilise both public and private computed tomography (CT) provides and will share relevant information as needed.

Provide specific health surveillance recommendations for workers in the engineered stone sector though the *National Guidance for doctors assessing workers exposed to respirable crystalline silica dust* (National Guidance), for doctors assessing workers exposed to respirable crystalline silica dust.

Measures to include:

- undertaking regular review of the National Guidance in consultation with experts and medical colleges
- translating the National Guidance into evidence-based clinical guidelines
- national dissemination of clinical guidelines, including education and training of health and medical professionals.

South Australian actions

- 3.4 MAQOHSC (ReturnToWorkSA) will meet with Monash University, which is undertaking the review of the National Guidance for doctors. The outcome of the Monash report may make the testing align more closely with the South Australian Screening Protocol developed by MAQOSHSC (TBA).
- 3.5 MAQOHSC will continue to actively support efforts to harmonise medical guidance and screening practices across jurisdictions, ensuring consistency and improved health outcomes for exposed workers.
- 3.6 ReturnToWorkSA will continue to provide information to diagnosed workers. This will include via its factsheet, '*Support for people diagnosed with silicosis*'.

Develop and implement a competency-based silica health monitoring accreditation program for medical professionals

South Australian actions

- 3.7 SA Health will consider establishing and implementing a competency-based silica health monitoring accreditation program for medical professionals.
- 3.8 ReturnToWorkSA, via the South Australian Postgraduate Medical Education Association, provided a webinar for general practitioners about silicosis using the Royal Adelaide Hospital Thoracic specialists Professor Hubertus Jersmann's presentation, 'SAPMEA Occupational Dust Exposures Workshop Recording 1' (available on YouTube).
- 3.9 ReturnToWorkSA, through MAQOHSC, will work with professional colleges to determine whether further educational materials are needed.

Implement measures to improve compliance with and enhance the health monitoring of all current and former RCS exposed workers

Implement measures to improve compliance with and enhance the health monitoring of all current and former RCS exposed workers, including:

- government support to develop systems and provide access to ongoing health monitoring of RCS exposed workers who are retired or have left employment where RCS exposure occurred
- implementing processes to promote optimal health monitoring to all current and former exposed workers and employers
- delivering outreach services to increase access to optimal health monitoring (as determined by activity 3-B) in regional, rural, and remote communities across Australia
- establishing a nationally consistent system to ensure ongoing delivery of optimal health monitoring for RCS exposed workers.

South Australian actions

- 3.10 SafeWork SA will enforce compliance with health monitoring where workers are at significant risk of exposure.
- 3.11 SafeWork SA will develop website content which is targeted at improving compliance with and enhancing the health monitoring of all current and former RCS exposed workers.
- 3.12 MAQOHSC will provide lung health screening to workers in small business who meet the screening criteria.
- 3.13 MAQOSC will support national lung cancer screening to workers who meet the screening criteria of the national lung cancer program.

Design and implement an early detection and rapid response protocol to identify emerging workplace risks using silica-related disease data from the National Occupational Respiratory Disease Registry and other relevant data

South Australian actions

- 3.14 SA Health to consider developing a system for jointly progressing an early detection and rapid response protocol to identify emerging workplace risks using silica-related disease data from the National Occupational Respiratory Disease Registry and other relevant data

- 3.15 MAQOHSC, through ReturnToWorkSA, will support the early detection screening for small businesses in South Australia.

Support the work of advocacy and support groups around Australia in providing assistance to those affected by silica-related diseases and their families

South Australian actions:

- 3.16 SafeWork SA will continue to attend bi-monthly meetings of the Dust Disease Alliance SA
- 3.17 MAQOHSC and ReturnToWorkSA will work with injured workers through the claim processes.

National Priority 4: Research and development

Gaps in knowledge exist which hinder efforts to educate people about RCS safety and silica-related diseases, as well as to diagnose and treat them.

Success will look like targeted and reliable research is conducted to address information gaps in a coordinated manner.

Develop, implement, and maintain a National Silica-Related Diseases Research Strategy to identify gaps and priority areas for research that will enhance understanding of related risks, effective prevention measures, and treatments across all cohorts including Culturally and Linguistically Diverse and Indigenous peoples.

South Australian actions

- 4.1 SA Health, through the Public Health Division, will explore initiatives, including working closely with universities to bring in epidemiological knowledge and collaborations. It is acknowledged that any work in this area will most likely occur at a broader community/ambient air public exposure level rather than at an occupational exposure level.
- 4.2 ReturnToWorkSA will continue to undertake work on disease research issues, in alignment with the MAQOHSC strategy.

Invest in, collaborate on, and support research projects consistent with the National Silica-Related Diseases Research Strategy, including sharing information and research outcomes

South Australian actions

- 4.3 SA Health, through the Public Health Division, will assist in initiatives under this item including working closely with universities to bring in epidemiological knowledge and collaborations. It is acknowledged that any work in this space will most likely occur at a broader community/ambient air public exposure level rather than at an occupational exposure level.
- 4.4 MAQOHSC will support research in the area of silicosis and continue to provide both in-kind and financial support to projects.

Engage with Australian Research Council (ARC), National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), Medical Research Futures Fund (MRFF) and any other relevant bodies to establish funding for research on prevention and treatment consistent with the National Silica-Related Diseases Research Strategy

South Australian actions

- 4.5 MAQOHSC's strategy continues to support universities to engage in the national research agenda.

Improve existing data and develop additional data on RCS exposure, including exposure sources and levels, to inform preventative actions

Improve existing data and develop additional data on RCS exposure, including exposure sources and levels, to inform preventative actions including by:

- leveraging regulator data on RCS reporting, notification and enforcement actions
- investigating systems to enable visibility, insight and use of national data.

South Australian actions

- 4.6 SafeWork SA will explore with other Work Health and Safety regulators to publish reports of examples with a view to include the data in national datasets.

National Priority 5: International Collaboration

The high prevalence of silicosis and other silica-related diseases all over the world makes it a global disease. Millions of workers continue to be exposed to hazardous levels of RCS across a wide range of occupational settings.

Success will look like learning from and sharing knowledge with other countries to build our collective capability and capacity.

Support improvements to international standards relating to RCS exposure and health monitoring

South Australian actions

- 5.1 SafeWork SA, as a member of Safe Work Australia, supports Safe Work Australia's *Research and Evaluation* Strategy, which includes undertaking research, including engaging universities, research funding bodies, and research institutes.
- 5.2 SafeWork SA, as a member of Safe Work Australia, will contribute to discussions about how to be abreast of emerging initiatives and improvement to international standards relating to respirable crystalline silica exposure and health monitoring. This includes exploring partnerships with universities and researchers in Australia.