



The Lead Education and Abatement Design Group
Working to eliminate lead poisoning globally and to protect the
environment from lead in all its uses: past, current and new uses
ABN 25 819 463 114

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Asbestos and lead policy synergies will save lives

Is there a single doctor in Australia who knows that lead researchers in the USA have estimated that 30 million Americans (approximately 10% of the population) will die early, mainly from heart attack or stroke, due to exposure to lead?, asks Elizabeth O'Brien, President of The LEAD Group.

"Whereas a diagnosis of mesothelioma or asbestosis points to asbestos exposure, a diagnosis of hypertension, or even a heart attack or stroke do not automatically suggest to the doctor that the patient has been exposed to lead," she says.

"In the case of lead, Cause and Effect are not clear cut.

"Lead education strategies have to begin with doctors, whereas with asbestos, they begin with builders and DIY renovators.

"The ACTU has proposed an Asbestos strategy for Australia, which calls for the establishment of a National Asbestos Authority (NAA) for a Safe Asbestos Free Environment by 2030. We propose that such an Authority be widened to also deal with the problem of lead exposure: a 'National Asbestos and Lead Authority' (NALA) for an Asbestos-Free and Lead-Safe Environment by 2030.

See: http://www.lead.org.au/lanv12n4/LEAD_Action_News_vol_12_no_4.pdf

"The ACTU strategy, as put to the Federal Government - see the latest issue of LEAD Action News - covers education, prevention and research into treatment of asbestos-related diseases.

"A joint authority, such as The LEAD Group proposes, would include doctor education, as part of the Lead Safe policy. This could potentially increase longevity for 2 million Australians, (arrived at by applying the US estimated 10% of the population who will die their earlier-in-life exposure to lead).

"Lead legislation developed by the US Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the EPA and Housing and Urban Development (HUD), provide excellent models to follow.

"We intend to ask Sharan Burrow, General Secretary of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), and Ged Kearney, current President of the ACTU, to support The LEAD Group's efforts to keep lead – especially lead mined in Australia – out of consumer products which cause the most exposure to lead worldwide, such as petrol and paint.

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