

Video transcript:

Reducing the Illegal Disposal of Asbestos

About this audit

Asbestos has been banned in Australia for decades because breathing in asbestos fibres can cause fatal and debilitating diseases.

When people remove asbestos from older homes and buildings they need to dispose of it safely. Dumping asbestos is a threat to their, and the community's, health.

We audited 5 of the agencies that deal with illegal asbestos disposal to find out whether the measures they have in place are working.

What we concluded

We concluded that these agencies do not take a coordinated approach to reducing asbestos dumping, leading to gaps, overlaps and inefficiencies.

We made 3 key findings.

Key finding 1

First, agencies don't have a good picture of the scale of asbestos dumping because they don't consistently collect, share or analyse data.

This means they can't be sure they are making the right decisions to address it or if the measures they take are working.

Key finding 2

Second, it's not always easy for members of the public to dispose of asbestos properly and the government's plan to address this won't achieve its goals.

Accurate public information can be hard to find and some people are a long way from a legal disposal site.

The government made a plan to open more disposal sites to reduce asbestos dumping.

But this plan was too ambitious and complex for its timeline and budget.

Key finding 3

Third, agencies don't consistently monitor and enforce compliance with asbestos disposal regulations.

Agencies clean up asbestos when they find it.

But asbestos dumpers can be hard to track down and agencies don't always prioritise pursuing and punishing them.

If agencies worked together and made better use of their tools, like 'Waste Tracker', they could deter, find and penalise more offenders.

What we recommended

We made:

- 4 recommendations to EPA about leading the government's response to asbestos dumping
- 3 recommendations to WorkSafe about correcting and updating online asbestos information.

More information

Interested in finding out more? See the full report on our website.