

Australia invests \$3.9 M to prevent and support workers with incurable dust disease

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Investment will be used to establish a research forum, and develop a National Rapid Response Protocol



The government is taking action to reduce the rates of occupational respiratory disease in Australia and eliminate silicosis, an incurable lung disease caused by long-term exposure to silica dust.

Nearly one in four engineered stone workers who have been in the industry prior to 2018 have been diagnosed with silicosis or other silica dust related diseases. This number is predicted to rise.

A grant of \$3.95 million will support Lung Foundation Australia to focus on prevention and awareness, strengthen the dust disease evidence base, and build research capability.

This grant will fund targeted education and communication activities to prevent workers from developing dust diseases and raise awareness of the risks of working in dust generating industries, including construction, tunnelling, mining and quarrying.

“Workers deserve to feel safe and protected on the job, and go on to live happy, healthy lives with their loved ones, not deal with the consequences of a preventable and incurable respiratory condition. Silicosis is a preventable disease, and yet it continues to affect too many of our workers and we know the numbers are likely to increase. Raising awareness and developing better coordinated care strategies is an integral part of tackling the problem. There’s work to be done and this is a step in the right direction”, said Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care Ged Kearney.