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MEDIA RELEASE

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PLAN TO IMPROVE ASBESTOS MANAGEMENT IN NSW

Minister for Finance and Services Greg Pearce has released a plan to reduce the incidence of asbestos-related diseases across the State.

Mr Pearce said the plan will increase awareness of the dangers associated with asbestos and ensure its safe management to improve long term health and safety outcomes.

“Australia has one of the highest mesothelioma rates in the world with the NSW Dust Diseases Board reporting 201 asbestos related deaths across the state in 2011,” he said.

“Tragically, the number of people with asbestos related diseases may increase in the next few years, as there is often a delay of up to 40 years between exposure and the onset of disease.

“The level of asbestos related illness in NSW is unacceptably high and this plan is a call to government, industry and the wider community to responsibly manage asbestos,” he said.

Mr Pearce said the plan includes four priority areas - research, risk communication, prevention and coordination - to ensure current practices for managing asbestos do not contribute to exposure.

“Tackling asbestos disease rates will be challenging but this plan will help ensure current practices for working with and managing asbestos reduce the risk of asbestos related disease,” he said.

The Asbestos Plan was developed by the Heads of Asbestos Coordination Authorities (HACA) in consultation with government agencies, local councils, industry and worker representatives and disease research groups.

HACA was established in response to the NSW Ombudsman recommendations for significant asbestos reform in NSW.

“This plan is another example of the NSW Government’s commitment to reducing asbestos related diseases and we will continue to work with federal bodies to properly manage asbestos,” Mr Pearce said.

The plan can be downloaded from www.workcover.nsw.gov.au or call **13 10 50**