

# ASBESTOS IMPORTS INTO AUSTRALIA

(If you thought all products in this country were asbestos free - and it was over - then you are sadly mistaken)

ACV/GARDS was a part of a delegation that was organised by the ACTU on June 23rd 2015 – 6 asbestos support groups and unions from around Australia took part in meetings informing senior advisors of Ministers of Parliament and heads of Depts. such as Border Force. Our reason for making this trip together was to enlighten those in Parliament to an alarming occurrence of the importation of asbestos products into Australia.

Asbestos, as everyone knows, has been banned in Australia since Dec 2003 but it has been silently coming in in products from China, India, America, Russia and many other places who still produce products containing asbestos. These products, of course, have no labels stating that they may contain asbestos and there is a variety of things that are coming into this country, such as in 2012 Great Wall cars and Chery Ute 24,000 with 17 asbestos gaskets in some models and 12 asbestos gaskets in other models. Buyer beware of these cars and utes even though the ACCC initiated the company to providing training for Dealerships and giving those who purchased the vehicles the option to take these cars to the dealerships and have most of the asbestos gaskets removed if the purchaser felt so inclined to do so, or opt for stickers to be placed in the engine bay or exhaust area where these gaskets are located – this will not be all these vehicles that will go back to dealerships and other motor vehicle repairers may not even know about the asbestos in these vehicles. Let alone may not have access to the training video. Which ACV/GARDS was advised was on line but has not been able to find it to this day. There are many of these vehicles which will never be repaired till they need attention. They might be on sold and the stickers that are supposed to be placed in the engine bays and exhaust pipes might have fallen off or be covered over with road dirt. Many vehicles are serviced by their owners in later life, and farmers often do their own repairs to save money – be very careful with these vehicles. ACV/GARDS poses the question, what happens to these vehicles when they come to the end of their life for disposal – how will they be disposed?

As asbestos products should be or?

Asbestos has been found in other imports coming into this country in brakes, trains, boilers, drilling equipment, barges, tugs and many other items of goods. Above in the pictures is a CSI kit (ACV/GARDS has in its possession) that was bought



on line from a private seller here in Australia, and we believe it was also available quite freely in children's toy stores here in Australia as another CSI kit was purchased at an Op shop in Victoria. The necklace of asbestos was also purchased on line and now we believe through an alert in the United States that crayons – yes, crayons have been found to have asbestos in them. In all of these products there was no warning of the presence of asbestos. The list is becoming endless and people must be ever vigilant when purchasing something from overseas. EWG (environmental Working Group) were quoted as saying in a media release on news.com.au – 22nd July after our trip to Canberra. CRAYONS made with cancer-causing asbestos are the last thing you want your child to be putting their mouth. But an investigation by public health watchdog the EWG Action Fund has found kids' crayons sold in Australia contained the deadly material — along with several other toys shipped down under by online retailers. Now the head of the Australian Border Force, the new agency merging customs and border control, has promised a crackdown. The toys alleged to contain asbestos include a CSI-style science kit with “forensic” powder, a necklace and several brands of children's crayons. “We didn't expect to find asbestos in crayons. But it's there,” said EWG senior analyst Sonya Lunder. “The results are significant because even trace exposure to asbestos can cause cancer and other fatal lung diseases.” The products that test positive for asbestos, all of them made in China, were:

- Amscan crayons
- Disney Mickey Mouse Clubhouse crayons by Greenbrier International Inc.
- Nickelodeon Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle Crayons by MII Inc.
- Saban's Power Rangers Super Megaforce crayons by Greenbrier International Inc.
- Black fingerprint powder in the Toys R Us Eduscience Deluxe Forensics Lab kit
- White fingerprint powder in the Buy-Rite Inside Intelligence Secret Spy kit

ABF Commissioner Roman Quaedvlieg told The

Australian the dangerous products were slipping “below the radar” and vowed to bolster the force's seizure efforts.

But he admitted the agency had struggled to win convictions – “because of the difficulty in terms of proving the source and the intent”.

ACV/GARDS has had conversation with two Executives from Australian Border Force since the meeting with Roman Quaedvlieg in Canberra and there is a hot line set up by the Australian Border Force for anyone who thinks they might have a product containing asbestos.

“The Australian Border Force (ABF) has been actively working with industry, consumer groups and the ACCC to ensure that any imported crayons or other products that may contain asbestos are identified, traced and responded to appropriately. The ABF has established a multi-stage operation that, in the first phase, has had its officers working in partnership with importers and retailers to establish immediate assurance about products of concern through accredited testing. This is a priority matter for the Department and we welcome continued partnership and encourage any information about imported products of concern to be reported to the Department on 1800 009 623.”

You can also go to the Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency web site where there are contact details for each state and more info on importing asbestos into this country <https://asbestossafety.gov.au/managing-importation-asbestos-australia>.



Above is the delegation of support groups, ACTU and unions in Canberra meeting with Roman Quaedvlieg, Shadow Minister for Immigration & Border Protection

## SEPTEMBER 2015 CRAYONS WITH ASBESTOS IN AUSTRALIA



ACV/GARDS has conducted its own research into crayons in local shops in our area and has had these crayons pictured left tested with a recognised and registered Laboratory for asbestos and they have come back positive.

L3 – Mickey Mouse crayons content is Tremolite (Asbestos), Talc and Chrysotile (Asbestos)

L2 – Frozen crayons content is Asbestos and Talc

There are many more well-known brand name characters that children love and adore on the packets of crayons like these. Buyer beware!. At the time of going to print we are contacting Australian Border Force on the 1800 number listed in our news item for them to organise the appropriate Federal Dept to deal with this.

**These need to be recalled.**