

ASBESTOS, BAN ON IMPORTATION AND SALE

989. Hon. C.L. Edwardes to the Minister for Consumer and Employment Protection; Training

- (1) When will the National Occupational Health and Safety Commission present its recommendations to the Workplace Relations Ministerial Council on legislative and regulatory issues, and phase-out timetable for the banning of the manufacture, importation, distribution and sale of products containing asbestos?
- (2) Will the proposed dates of an importation ban from 1 July 2003, and sales ban from 31 December 2003, be met?

Mr KOBELKE replied:

- (1) The National Occupational Health and Safety Commission agreed at the 21st September 2001 meeting of the Workplace Relations Ministers' Council to the amendment of the National Model Regulations for the Control of Workplace Hazardous Substances to include prohibitions on uses of chrysotile, crocidolite and amosite asbestos from "no later than 31 December 2003". The National Commission will also recommend arrangements for finalising consideration of inclusion of all other forms of asbestos in the proposed ban.
- (2) In relation to the proposed import prohibition by 1 July 2003, the National Occupational Health and Safety Commission and the Commonwealth Department of Employment, Workplace Relations and Small Business, in consultation with the Australian Customs Service, are currently in the process of developing a report on the detailed operations and implications of import prohibitions, and this report will be presented to the Workplace Relations Ministers' Council in the first half of 2002.

The Workplace Relations Ministers' Council meeting on 21st September 2001 agreed to ban the use of chrysotile, crocidolite and amosite by 31 December 2003 or earlier if all parties agree.