

TALKING POINTS**as at 4PM, Sunday 16 November**

- The ACT Government made the decision to close or partially close a number of of its ACT public schools on Friday 14 November 2025.
- Students and staff returning to school will depend on testing and remediation advice.
- This is following national advice from the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission that a decorative, coloured sand (Kadink Decorative Sand) has been found to contain traces of chrysotile asbestos.
- Education Directorate worked with schools on Thursday 13 November and identified this product is used at those schools for sensory play, and arts and crafts.
- WorkSafe ACT has identified the risk of exposure to traces of chrysotile is low.
- The safety of students, staff and the community is our highest priority.
- The decision has been made in line with Education Directorate procedures, and in the interest of the safety of our students, staff and the community.
- Closing impacted schools or impacted spaces/some year levels within schools will allow testing and remediation to occur as soon as possible.
- We will follow all advice from WorkSafe ACT and recommendations from licenced asbestos contractors.

For families

- **On Sunday afternoon, all impacted ACT public schools will provide an update to families about arrangements for learning on Monday.**
- **This information will be provided as soon as it is available, please keep an eye on your emails.**
- We will keep families updated and thank them for their understanding.
- Our [hotline](#) will not be operating over the weekend and will reopen at 7am on Monday 17 November. For urgent enquiries please contact [Access Canberra](#).
- **This situation is evolving. The latest information is on [our website](#).**

Safety

- Testing is already underway in some schools. Testing and remediation will also occur over the weekend.
- Contractors engaged to undertake this work are suitably licenced and work is carried out under Work, Health, and Safety Codes of Practice.
- Assessors will provide a clearance certificate deeming the space safe to use.

More Information

- You can read the full Safety Alert on the [WorkSafe ACT website](#).
- Information about this product is also available through the [Australian Competition and Consumer Commission](#).

Advice for Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) and non-government schools

DRAFT

- The Children’s Education and Care Assurance (CECA), and Regulator for non-government schools, has provided updated advice to these sectors on the management of this product on Friday 14 November 2025.
- Families are asked to seek advice from their ECEC or school about arrangements in place for their specific location.

List of closures for Friday 14 November 2025:

Latest advice as at 1PM Friday 14 November.

Whole School Closures for Friday 14 November 2025:

- Black Mountain School
- Campbell Primary School
- Charles Weston School
- Charnwood-Dunlop Primary School
- Evatt Primary School
- Florey Primary School
- Lyons Early Childhood School
- Malkara School
- Namadgi School
- Latham Primary School
- Chapman Primary School
- Cranleigh School
- Miles Franklin Primary School
- Fraser Primary School
- Wanniasa Hills Primary School
- Forrest Primary School

Partial School Closures (multiple class closures) for Friday 14 November 2025:

- Charles Conder Primary School – Preschool and Small Group Program
- North Ainslie Primary School – Preschool and year 1
- Torrens Primary School – Preschool, Kindergarten and Year 1
- Wanniasa School – Preschool to year 6 (junior school)
- Yarralumla Primary School – Montessori, Kindergarten, Year 1, Small Group Program
- Throsby School – Kindergarten, year 1 and year 2
- Amaroo School – Preschool and Small Group Program
- Franklin School - Preschool

Preschool Closures only Friday 14 November 2025:

- Curtin Primary School – Preschool
- Kingsford Smith School – Preschool including Koori Preschool
- Narrabundah Early Childhood School – Preschool including Koori Preschool

DRAFT

- Mount Rogers Preschool
- Monash Preschool

Advice for Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) and non-government schools

The Children's Education and Care Assurance (CECA), and Regulator for non-government schools, has provided updated advice to these sectors on the management of this product on Friday 14 November 2025.

Families are asked to seek advice from their ECEC or school about arrangements in place for their specific location.

From: [Attridge, Vanessa](#)
To: [Hobbs, Rebecca](#)
Cc: [Wood, Jo](#); [EDU, Director-General Office](#); [Spence, Angela](#)
Subject: FW: SAFETY ALERT: Asbestos contamination confirmed in coloured sand product
Date: Thursday, 13 November 2025 11:34:00 PM
Attachments: [CECA Alert Safety Alert - Contaminated Sand November 2025.msg](#)
[FW FOR AWARENESS Independent Schools Safety Alert Asbestos contaminated confirmed in coloured sand product .msg](#)

Hi Bec,

Please see attached information provided by CECA and the Association of Independent Schools today.

We expect CECA will distribute further clarified information tomorrow.

Regards,

Nessa

Vanessa Attridge

Executive Group Manager | Finance & Infrastructure

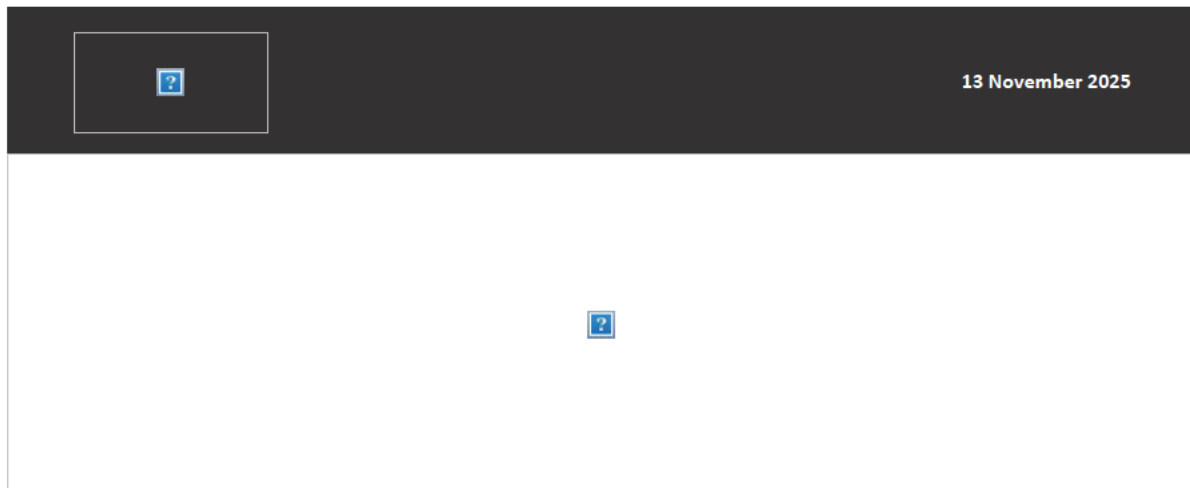
02 6205 3502 | vanessas.attridge@act.gov.au

Education | ACT Government

www.education.act.gov.au

From: [CECA EducateandInform](#)
Subject: CECA Alert: Safety Alert - Contaminated Sand November 2025
Date: Thursday, 13 November 2025 12:16:50 PM
Attachments: [image005.png](#)
[image006.jpg](#)
[image007.png](#)
[image008.png](#)
[image009.png](#)
[image010.png](#)
[image011.png](#)
Importance: High

OFFICIAL



Safety Alert: Asbestos contamination confirmed in coloured sand product

WorkSafe ACT has informed CECA that decorative sand products imported from China have been found to contain chrysolite, a type of asbestos.

One product, sold as **Kadink Decorative Sand**, is present in the ACT and sold at Officeworks.

Other sand products **EC Rainbow Sand & Creatistics Coloured Sand** are sold through suppliers such as Educating Kids, Modern Teaching Aids and Zart Art.

For further details go to: [Educational Colours - Rainbow Sand \(1.3kg\), Creatistics - Coloured Sand \(1kg\) and Kadink - Sand \(1.3kg\) | ACCC Product Safety](#)

ECEC providers and services are advised to conduct an audit of their resources to identify if these products are used in their service/s.

What do Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) services affected need to do?

- Ensure children and staff do not come into contact with the sand products
- Read this information about how to protect yourself from exposure when handling the product:
 - Wear disposable gloves. Tuck the gloves under the elasticised cuffs of your clothing. If the cuffs are loose, tape them down to create a proper seal
 - Wear a P2 rated face mask. Do not use a standard dust mask. A P2 respirator should fit snugly and cover half your face
 - Wear protective eyewear. Use safety glasses to protect your eyes from dust and debris
- Carefully wrap the sand, in its container, and any related materials in 200-micron plastic bags and seal securely with tape

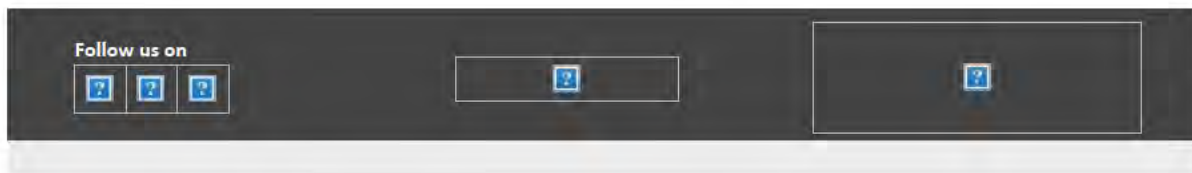
- Clearly label the package as asbestos waste.

Further advice on how to manage the products and dispose of them available here: [Asbestos contamination confirmed in coloured sand product - WorkSafe ACT](#)

ACT services who have used these products must notify CECA via the NQAITS of a risk to children's health and safety under [Regulation 175\(2\)\(c\)](#)

If you have any questions or require assistance acquiring disposal bags, contact WorkSafe ACT via WorkSafe_Asbestos@worksafe.act.gov.au

This email has been authorised by the ACT Regulatory Authority (CECA).
CECA are responsible for administering the National Quality Framework within the ACT.



From: [Attridge, Vanessa](#)
To: [Wood, Jo](#)
Cc: [EDU, Director-General Office](#); [EDU, EGMFIG](#)
Subject: FW: FOR AWARENESS: Independent Schools: Safety Alert: Asbestos contaminated confirmed in coloured sand product
Date: Thursday, 13 November 2025 10:33:00 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image004.jpg](#)
[Outlook-ky2p2lqq.png](#)

Hi Jo,

FYI, information distributed to non-government schools from the Association of Independent Schools.

Regards,
Nessa

From: James, Brooke <Brooke.James@act.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, 13 November 2025 5:00 PM
To: Attridge, Vanessa <VanessaS.Attridge@act.gov.au>; Bailey, Anthony <Anthony.Bailey@act.gov.au>
Cc: Steele, Peter <Peter.Steele@act.gov.au>
Subject: FOR AWARENESS: Independent Schools: Safety Alert: Asbestos contaminated confirmed in coloured sand product

OFFICIAL

Hi All

This was the advice provided by Independent Schools

This advice aligns with that provided by CECA earlier today.

With thanks,

Brooke James | Senior Director
School Operations

School Improvement Branch | Education Directorate | ACT Government
Phone: 0401 805 628 or +61 02 6205 0293 | Email: Brooke.James@act.gov.au
Hedley Beare Centre for Teaching and Learning | GPO Box 158 Canberra ACT 2601
www.education.act.gov.au

I acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands and waters where we live and work and pay my respects to elders past, present and future.

Please note – this email is sent at a time that is convenient for me. No expectation of action is required outside of regular working hours.

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@ais.act.edu.au>
Sent: Thursday, 13 November 2025 4:53 PM
To: James, Brooke <Brooke.James@act.gov.au>

Subject: Fw: Safety Alert: Asbestos contaminated confirmed in coloured sand product

Caution: This email originated from outside of the ACT Government. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi Brooke,

Thanks for the call. This is the email I sent below - keep scrolling down to see the message received from Non Gov Schools.

Let me know if anything eventuates and I will let you know if any schools contact me with concerns.

Warm regards,



www.ais.act.edu.au

Unit 4, 16 Thesiger Crt, Deakin ACT 2600 | PO Box 9562 Deakin West ACT 2600



Independence Choice Diversity Excellence

This email, and any attachments, may be confidential and also privileged. If you are not the intended recipient, please notify the sender and delete all copies of this transmission along with any attachments immediately. You should not copy or use it for any purpose, nor disclose its contents to any other person.

From: [redacted]@ais.act.edu.au>
Sent: Thursday, November 13, 2025 3:38 PM
To: [redacted]@ais.act.edu.au>; [redacted]@ais.act.edu.au>
Subject: Fw: Safety Alert: Asbestos contaminated confirmed in coloured sand product

Dear Principals/Heads of Schools and Business Managers,

Sorry for yet another email today. Not sure if you all received this email below, but I thought I should send to be safe. If you have an Early Learning Centre on site please advise them also.

Warm regards,



www.ais.act.edu.au

Unit 4, 16 Thesiger Crt, Deakin ACT 2600 | PO Box 9562 Deakin West ACT 2600

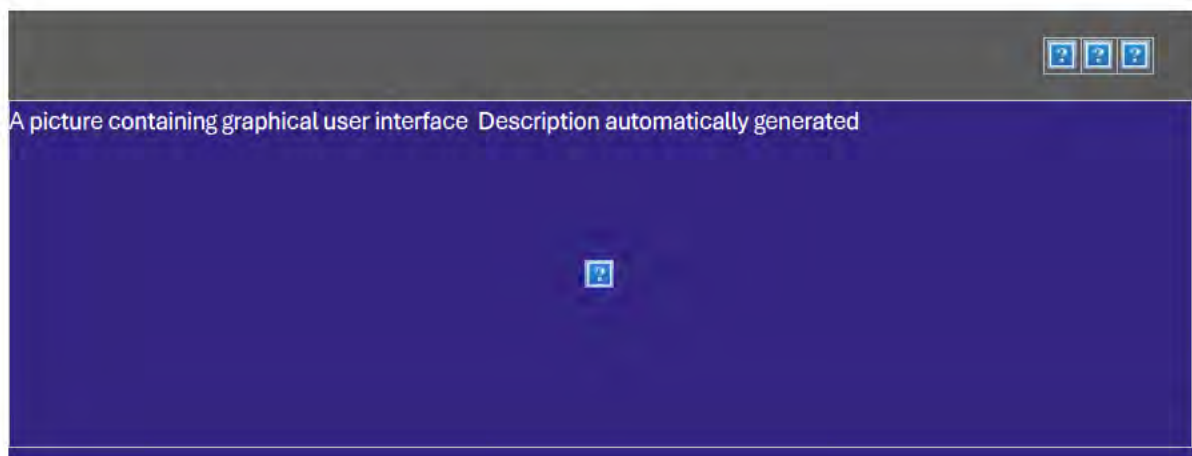


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From: NonGovSchools <NonGovSchools@act.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, November 13, 2025 3:35 PM
To: NonGovSchools <NonGovSchools@act.gov.au>
Subject: Safety Alert: Asbestos contaminated confirmed in coloured sand product

OFFICIAL



A picture containing graphical user interface Description automatically generated

13 November 2025

Safety Alert: Asbestos contaminated confirmed in coloured sand product

WorkSafe ACT has informed ECRS that decorative sand products imported from China have been found to contain chrysolite, a type of asbestos.

One product, sold as **Kadink Decorative Sand**, is present in the ACT and sold at Officeworks.

Other sand products **EC Rainbow Sand & Creatistics Coloured Sand** are sold through suppliers such as Educating Kids, Modern Teaching Aids and Zart Art.

For further details go to: [Educational Colours - Rainbow Sand \(1.3kg\), Creatistics - Coloured Sand \(1kg\) and Kadink - Sand \(1.3kg\) | ACCC Product Safety](#)

All Non-government Schools are encouraged to conduct an audit of their resources to identify if these products are used in their school.

What should Non-government Schools do?

- Ensure children and staff do not come into contact with the sand products
- Read this information about how to protect yourself from exposure when handling the products:
 - Wear disposable gloves. Tuck the gloves under the elasticised cuffs of your clothing. If the cuffs are loose, tape them down to create a proper seal
 - Wear a P2 rated face mask. Do not use a standard dust mask. A P2 respirator should fit snugly and cover half your face
 - Wear protective eyewear. Use safety glasses to protect your eyes from dust and debris
- Carefully wrap the sand, in its container, and any related materials in 200-micron plastic bags and seal securely with tape
- Clearly label the package as asbestos waste.

Further advice on how to manage the products and dispose of them is available here: [Asbestos contamination confirmed in coloured sand product - WorkSafe ACT](#)

If you have any questions or require assistance acquiring disposal bags, contact WorkSafe ACT via WorkSafe_Asbestos@worksafe.act.gov.au

This email has been authorised by the ACT Registrar of Non-government Schools

NonGovSchools@act.gov.au

From: [Hobbs, Rebecca](#)
To: [Attridge, Vanessa](#)
Cc: [Wood, Jo](#); [EDU, Director-General Office](#); [Spence, Angela](#)
Subject: Re: SAFETY ALERT: Asbestos contamination confirmed in coloured sand product
Date: Friday, 14 November 2025 12:05:58 AM

OFFICIAL

Thanks so much Nessa. We'll need some talking points about why the advice to these entities seems inconsistent with what the worksafe commissioner has advised for public schools. A job for the morning.

Talk soon

Bec

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: Attridge, Vanessa
Sent: Thursday, November 13, 2025 11:34:15 PM
To: Hobbs, Rebecca
Cc: Wood, Jo ; EDU, Director-General Office ; Spence, Angela
Subject: FW: SAFETY ALERT: Asbestos contamination confirmed in coloured sand product

OFFICIAL

Hi Bec,
Please see attached information provided by CECA and the Association of Independent Schools today.

We expect CECA will distribute further clarified information tomorrow.

Regards,

Nessa

Vanessa Attridge

Executive Group Manager | Finance & Infrastructure

02 6205 3502 | vanessas.attridge@act.gov.au

Education | ACT Government

www.education.act.gov.au

From: [Whitty, Anna](#)
To: [Laurent, Kristen](#); [BERRY](#); [Hobbs, Rebecca](#)
Cc: [Wood, Jo](#); [EDU, Director-General Office](#); [Spence, Angela](#); [DDGEDUoffice](#)
Subject: RE: FOR URGENT CLEARANCE: GOVERNMENT & STAKEHOLDER RELATIONS - Customer Service - MO REQUESTED CAVEAT BRIEF : contaminated sand products
Date: Monday, 17 November 2025 7:46:38 AM
Attachments: [image002.png](#)
[image004.png](#)
[image006.png](#)

Hi Kristen,

Thank you for sending this through.

Many thanks,
Anna

Anna Whitty | Senior Adviser
02 6207 7937 |

Office of Yvette Berry MLA | Member for Ginninderra
Deputy Chief Minister
Minister for Education and Early Childhood
Minister for Homes, Homelessness and New Suburbs
Minister for Sport and Recreation
Phone: +61 2 6205 0233 | Email: berry@act.gov.au
[Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | www.yvetteberry.com.au



I acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land, the Ngunnawal people, and pay my respect to their Elders past, present and emerging.

From: Laurent, Kristen <Kristen.Laurent@act.gov.au>
Sent: Saturday, 15 November 2025 3:03 PM
To: BERRY <BERRY@act.gov.au>; Hobbs, Rebecca <Rebecca.Hobbs@act.gov.au>; Whitty, Anna <Anna.Whitty@act.gov.au>
Cc: Wood, Jo <Jo.Wood@act.gov.au>; EDU, Director-General Office <EDUDirectorGeneralOffice@act.gov.au>; Spence, Angela <Angela.Spence@act.gov.au>; DDGEDUoffice <DDGEDUoffice@act.gov.au>
Subject: FW: FOR URGENT CLEARANCE: GOVERNMENT & STAKEHOLDER RELATIONS - Customer Service - MO REQUESTED CAVEAT BRIEF : contaminated sand products

OFFICIAL

Good afternoon Bec and Anna

Please see attached the brief requested by your office on the Directorate’s response to the contaminated sand issue. Please note Attachment A is at the end of the brief.

Kind regards

Kristen Laurent | **Executive Branch Manager Governance and SERBIR**
 Phone: 6205 6749 | Mobile: 0466 244 203 | Email: kristen.laurent@act.gov.au
 Education Directorate | ACT Government
 GPO Box 158 Canberra ACT 2601 | www.act.gov.au



From: Kuar, Sarabjit **On Behalf Of** EDU, Ministerial Liaison Officer
Sent: Thursday, 13 November 2025 11:43 AM
To: EDU, CBS & WHS
Cc: EGMSDD ; DDGEDUoffice ; EDU, Education and Care, Regulation and Support ; EDU, Ministerial Liaison Officer ; EDU, Director-General Office
Subject: FOR ACTION : FILE2025/39069 : GOVERNMENT & STAKEHOLDER RELATIONS - Customer Service - MO REQUESTED CAVEAT BRIEF : contaminated sand products
Importance: High

OFFICIAL

Hi

Please see below for action.

Minister Office Brief Request	
TRIM Number	FILE2025/39069
Title/Question	MO REQUESTED CAVEAT BRIEF : contaminated sand products
Action(s)	The MO would like a Caveat Brief on today’s incident regarding WorkSafe issuing a safety alert "Asbestos contamination confirmed in coloured sand products". Further to the brief including information about how EDU will support

	schools regarding this issue, the MO would also like to know if there is anything EDU can/will do to support the ECEC and OSHC sectors.
Responsible Area	CBS WHS – input from ECRS
Response type	Caveat brief
Clearance level required	DG
Response Due	If the MO could receive the Caveat brief by COB Friday 14 November, that would be appreciated.
Further information i.e external deadlines, who requested the input, any additional context	If a redirection is required: Please liaise directly between business units and once redirection is accepted, please forward allocation email to the accepting business unit with EDU Ministerial Cc'd for visibility.
Comment	Please contact EDUMinisterial@act.gov.au if you have any questions.

Regards

Sarabjit Kuar | Ministerial Liaison Officer

Phone: Microsoft Teams | **Email:** Sarabjit.Kuar@act.gov.au

Communications, Engagement and Government Support | ACT Education Directorate | ACT Government

220 London Circuit Canberra City ACT 2601|GPO Box 158 Canberra ACT 2601

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I often work outside of regular business hours. I do not expect you to respond to my request outside of your normal working hours.

From: Education DLO <EDUDLO@act.gov.au>

Sent: Thursday, 13 November 2025 11:09 AM

To: EDU, Ministerial Liaison Officer <EDUMinisterial@act.gov.au>

Subject: ALLOCATION - caveat brief - CBS WHS: Caveat Brief regarding contaminated sand products (MO requested)

OFFICIAL

Hi Sara,

Could we please task out the below request for a caveat brief to CBS WHS. They will need

input from ECRS.

Many thanks,
Adrienne

Adrienne White | Directorate Liaison Officer, Ministerial and Corporate Reporting

Pronouns: She/her

[You can call me directly on MS Teams](#)

Phone: 71833 | Email: Adrienne.White@act.gov.au

MCR | Education Directorate | ACT Government

GPO Box 158 Canberra ACT 2601

www.education.act.gov.au | [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Instagram](#)

My employer supports me working flexibly, so I may email you outside of normal office hours. I don't expect you to read or respond outside of your normal work hours.

From: Meeth, Sybilla <Sybilla.Meeth@act.gov.au>

Sent: Thursday, 13 November 2025 10:53 AM

To: Education DLO <EDUDLO@act.gov.au>

Subject: Request for Caveat Brief regarding contaminated sand products

OFFICIAL

Hi Adrienne

The MO would like a Caveat Brief on today's incident regarding WorkSafe issuing a safety alert "Asbestos contamination confirmed in coloured sand products".

Further to the brief including information about how EDU will support schools regarding this issue, the MO would also like to know if there is anything EDU can/will do to support the ECEC and OSHC sectors.

If the MO could receive the Caveat brief by Friday 14 November, that would be appreciated.

Thanks
Sybilla

Sybilla Meeth

A/g Education Adviser

Pronouns: she/ her | sybilla.meeth@act.gov.au | Phone + 61 2 6205 3619

Office of Yvette Berry MLA | Member for Ginninderra

Deputy Chief Minister

Minister for Education and Early Childhood

Minister for Homes, Homelessness and New Suburbs

Minister for Sport and Recreation

Phone: +61 2 6205 0233 | Email: berry@act.gov.au
[Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | www.yvetteberry.com.au



I acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land, the Ngunnawal people, and pay my respect to their Elders past, present and emerging.

From: [Pilicic, Courtney](#) on behalf of [DDGEDUoffice](#)
To: [EDU, Ministerial Liaison Officer](#)
Cc: [Huxley, Mark](#); [Spence, Angela](#); [Laurent, Kristen](#); [Allen, Tracey](#); [Steele, Peter](#); [DDGEDUoffice](#); [EDU, Director-General Office](#)
Subject: FOR PROGRESSION TO MO: Minister Brief- Contaminated Sand - Update 3
Date: Tuesday, 18 November 2025 11:09:04 AM
Attachments: [Minister Brief - Contaminated Sand - Update 3.tr5](#)

OFFICIAL

Good morning team,

Please find attached caveat brief providing the third update on the contaminated sand for progression to the MO on EGMSI clearance.

DROP COPY to the DG.

Kind regards,
Courtney

Courtney Pilicic | Acting Executive Officer to the Deputy Director-General

Phone: 0450 792 799 | Email: courtney.pilicic@act.gov.au

Deputy Director-General's Office | Education | ACT Government

Level 4, 220 London Circuit, Canberra City | GPO Box 158 Canberra ACT 2601

www.education.act.gov.au | [Facebook](#) | [X](#) | [Instagram](#) | [LinkedIn](#)

From: Huxley, Mark <Mark.Huxley@act.gov.au>
Sent: Tuesday, 18 November 2025 9:49 AM
To: Laurent, Kristen <Kristen.Laurent@act.gov.au>
Cc: Spence, Angela <Angela.Spence@act.gov.au>; DDGEDUoffice <DDGEDUoffice@act.gov.au>; Allen, Tracey <Tracey.Allen@act.gov.au>; Steele, Peter <Peter.Steele@act.gov.au>
Subject: RE: FOR CLEARANCE: Minister Brief- Contaminated Sand - Update 3

OFFICIAL

Approved to progress.

With thanks

Mark

Mark Huxley PSM
Executive Group Manager - School Improvement
ACT Education Directorate
Email: Mark.Huxley@act.gov.au Ph: 02 62059388

Please note that these communications are sent at a time convenient to me. There is no expectation that action or attention is required outside of working hours.

From: Laurent, Kristen <Kristen.Laurent@act.gov.au>
Sent: Monday, 17 November 2025 6:19 PM
To: Huxley, Mark <Mark.Huxley@act.gov.au>
Cc: Spence, Angela <Angela.Spence@act.gov.au>; DDGEDUoffice <DDGEDUoffice@act.gov.au>;
Allen, Tracey <Tracey.Allen@act.gov.au>; Steele, Peter <Peter.Steele@act.gov.au>
Subject: FOR CLEARANCE: Minister Brief- Contaminated Sand - Update 3
Importance: High

OFFICIAL

Hi Mark

Please see Minister's update caveat brief for today for your clearance.

Regards

Kristen

Kristen Laurent | **Executive Branch Manager Governance (and SERBIR)**
Phone: 6205 6749 | Mobile: 0466 244 203 | Email: kristen.laurent@act.gov.au
Education Directorate | ACT Government
GPO Box 158 Canberra ACT 2601 | www.act.gov.au



Caveat Brief

To: Minister for Education and Early Childhood

From: Director-General

Subject: Hazardous Materials Response – Contaminated Sand (ACM) – Update 3

Cleared By: Director-General

Does this deal with a Child Safety issues or concern? Yes

1. This brief summarises actions undertaken by the Directorate since Update 2 (REC25/490702) to support reopening of ACT public schools.
2. Visual inspections of all school sites were completed today. Information from these assessments informed an operational impact assessment to determine which schools could fully or partially open and which would need to remain closed for Tuesday 18 November 2025.
3. You were provided a verbal update at the 4.30pm briefing to the list of school openings and closures for publication on the Directorate website and communication to schools and families. The outcome was:
 - a. Number of open schools: 51 (42 with some changes in operations)
 - b. Number of schools partially closed: 16
 - c. Number of schools fully closed: 25
4. Woden School started as open this morning but had to be closed as staff identified Kmart products across the site. Parents were contacted to pick up students and the Special needs Transport Program assisted to transport students to their homes. A team of assessors was sent to the school today.
5. The Directorate is working closely with licensed assessors to schedule full required assessment and remediation for the 25 closed schools and 16 partially closed schools. Pace of reopening will be constrained by capacity of the assessors to complete the necessary works at each school. A prioritisation approach has been developed and was being applied. This includes prioritising specialist schools and schools that are fully closed.
6. The Directorate will continue to provide updates.

Yvette Berry MLA /...../.....

Action Officer: Kristen Laurent – Executive Branch Manager Governance

Date: 17 November 2025

From: [McMahon, Zoe](#) on behalf of [EDU, EGMFIG](#)
To: [Attridge, Vanessa](#)
Subject: For Information SIGNED_Minister Brief Hazardous Materials Response Contaminated Sand (ACM)- Update 1
Date: Wednesday, 19 November 2025 10:24:33 AM
Attachments: [SIGNED_Minister Brief Hazardous Materials Response Contaminated Sand \(ACM\)- Update 1.tr5](#)

OFFICIAL

Hi Nessa,
To have on your radar that this has been signed with nil comment.
Thanks
Zoe

From: Education DLO
Sent: Tuesday, 18 November 2025 4:47 PM
To: DDGEDUoffice
Cc: EDU, EGMFIG ; EGMSloffice ; Laurent, Kristen
Subject: SIGNED_Minister Brief Hazardous Materials Response Contaminated Sand (ACM)- Update 1

OFFICIAL

Hi team,

The attached brief has been signed without comment.

Many thanks,

Adrienne

-----< Content Manager Record Information >-----

Record Number: REC25/493650
Title: SIGNED_Minister Brief Hazardous Materials Response Contaminated Sand (ACM)- Update 1

OFFICIAL



Education Directorate

Ministerial Brief

To:	Minister for Education and Early Childhood	Tracking No.: FOL25/7375
Date:	15/11/2025	
CC:	Click here to enter text.	
From:	Incident Controller – Contaminated Sand (ACM)	
Subject:	Hazardous Materials Response – Contaminated Sand (ACM) – Update 1	
Critical Date:	17/11/2025	
Critical Reason:	Hazardous Materials Response - ACM in Sand - 2025	

- DG .../.../...
- DDG .../.../...

Recommendations

That you:

1. Note the information in this brief outlining action taken by the Education Directorate to respond to advice of Asbestos contamination in sand products, following confirmation these products are present in ACT public schools;

Noted / Please Discuss

Yvette Berry MLA

...../...../.....

Minister's Feedback

Background

1. On 12 November 2025 the Australian Competition & Consumer Commission published a [recall notice](#) and [media release](#) for a decorative coloured sand product sold as Kadink Decorative Sand, stating it may contain tremolite asbestos.

2. On the same day WorkSafe ACT issued a [safety alert](#) *Asbestos contamination confirmed in coloured sand products*, after WorkSafe laboratory testing of samples confirmed that some product lines contain traces of Chrysotile, another type of asbestos, is present in the ACT.

Issues

3. At 11:40am on 13 November 2025, School Operations issued urgent communications to all schools requesting priority stocktake to identify if the product was present and/or used at ACT public schools.
4. School responses confirmed presence of the product, and informed triaging levels of hazard/risk across sites, from sites that actively use the sand recently and frequently, compared to schools that have unused sealed product in storerooms.
5. Education Directorate notification was made to WorkSafe ACT as per ss35-38 of the *Work Health and Safety 2011 (WHS Act 2011)*, on the basis Directorate, is aware, through information provided by the ACCC and WorkSafe ACT, that products in schools contain asbestos/may contain asbestos.
6. In accordance with legislative requirements under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* and Regulations (Part 8), and alignment with the Directorate's usual methods of addressing suspected asbestos containing material (ACM), School Facilities Management engaged licensed asbestos assessors to assess risk at each site.
7. Assessors provided verbal advice that these spaces must not be accessed until testing and any remediation was completed.
8. At a Teams meeting in the evening of 14 November, also attended by other Chiefs of Staff and the WorkSafe ACT Commissioner, Directorate officials provided you with advice and an update on the responses to address this risk.
9. At that meeting, the Directorate noted advice from the Commissioner including:
 - a. Concern about risk of exposure to asbestos fibres;
 - b. From the perspective of WHS Act, regardless of the Directorate's determination of the level of risk, the risk requires the same treatment and the expectation in relation to risk is isolation and then elimination, in line with the hierarchy of controls;
 - c. The Directorate is aware of the risk and legislatively obligated to take immediate action, and the need to balance psychosocial risk;
 - d. Risk of exposure to traces of asbestos is low;
 - e. In addition to air monitoring, TEM (polarised light providing defined resolution) and Polarized Light Microscopy (PLM) tests should occur;
 - f. Assessors should be the only people attending these sites from tonight. If contained to one building in a big school, isolate that building. If its over multiple classrooms then consider is it the whole school.
 - g. Remediation of areas is required to eliminate asbestos and receive certificate of clearance.

Legislative Obligations

10. A range of legal duties arise from the identification of Asbestos Containing Material (ACM) or suspected ACM, particularly with respect to the due diligence of officers under the WHS Act and the requirement to minimise the exposure of workers and others to identified risks. This is further refined through the WHS Regulations, particularly clause 419 which provides that a PCBU must not knowingly expose a worker to asbestos (including handling and removal).
11. In the evening of 13 November 2025, the WorkSafe ACT Commissioner advised the Directorate that impacted spaces should be isolated and advised testing requirements should include air testing, TEM testing (polarised light providing highly defined resolution) and Polarized Light Microscopy (PLM) testing.
12. The advice from the WorkSafe ACT Commissioner and subsequent advice for PCBUs published on the WorkSafe ACT website on 14 November 2025 accords with Part 8 of the WHS Regulations 2011:
 - a. Clauses 422 and 423 provide that asbestos or ACM must be treated as asbestos until it is determined that it is not asbestos or ACM.
 - b. Part 8 also steps out the requirements for assessment and identification of asbestos and removal of it requiring these activities to be conducted by licensed professionals.
 - c. None of the exemptions (clause 419) apply to Education Directorate workers in the context of this product recall.
 - d. Further requirements apply to the removal of asbestos requiring a licensed remover to conduct that activity, including isolation of location of material (clause 470) and provision of a clearance certificate by a licensed professional (clauses 473 and 474).
13. Key Regulation excerpts are provided at Attachment A.
14. Note while Chrysotile is a naturally occurring type of asbestos and there are specific requirements under the WHS Act for treatment of naturally occurring asbestos. However the Directorate considers these do not apply given the product is a manufactured product no longer in its natural form.

Decision to Close or Partly Close Schools

15. The Directorate commenced decisions and implementation for full and partial closure of these schools, due to:
 - a. Legal obligations under the *WHS Act 2011* and WHS Regulations 2011;
 - b. Advice from assessors which stated these spaces must not be accessed;
 - c. Verbal advice from the WorkSafe ACT Commissioner on 14 November;
 - d. School impact triaging and a risk assessment, which considered operational impacts of isolation of spaces where the product was stored or used.
16. Prioritisation is being given to sites that have been closed and/or have higher risk based on opened containers of product, frequency, prevalence and recency of use.

Testing, Remediation and Clearance

17. Air monitoring is being undertaken at impacted sites in areas of use/storage.
18. Assessors have provided air monitoring results, all results received for 16 schools to date are negative to the presence of airborne asbestos fibres.
19. As air monitoring results are obtained, the assessors, based on the known risks, are providing guidance to inform removal by a licensed asbestos removalist. A licensed removalist, in conjunction with the assessor, will safely remove identified product from schools in accordance with legal requirements/Codes of Practice.
20. In accordance with the Directorate's usual methods of managing ACM (or suspected ACM), assessors will conduct air monitoring during the removal and disposal process, identify the location of the product on a school map and conduct a further inspection of remediated spaces following the removal. Should the assessor deem it required, they will undertake cleaning of impacted spaces.
21. Assessors are expected to issue clearance certificates stating the impacted spaces are safe to occupy. One clearance certificate has already been provided for Florey Primary School.
22. Regulations only require that a clearance certificate is provided by a licensed assessor.
23. Advice from Licensed Assessors is that the timing of TEM testing means that it is not a valuable tool in determining the clearance of an isolated space, and it is understood to be the view of assessors that the TEM test is not reasonably practicable.
24. The Directorate is taking a risk-based approach to testing and will implement the following measures:
 - a. assessors to collect and test product samples from each site representing around 10% of products, and
 - b. Some TEM testing to occur, noting clearance certificates will be provided prior to those results being available in approximately 10 days.
25. Assessment and remediation is being prioritised at closed schools and Specialist Schools, to ensure these sites are able to reopen on Monday, 17 November 2025.
26. Current advice is that this will be achievable. Addressing the needs of schools with partial closure remains at risk and is dependent upon the capacity of assessors and removalists working over the weekend of 15 and 16 November and during the week of 17 November after hours so that there is no disruption to school operations.
27. Given the evolving nature of this situation it is reasonable to expect further product may be identified in schools in future. This may include schools that have been remediated through the current process. Further advice will be provided on responses should this occur, informed by outcomes of 13-17 November.

Financial Implications

28. Asbestos assessment, remediation and removal costs are expected to be in the range of approximately \$50,000 - \$100,000 – further advice will be provided.

Consultation

Internal

- 29. School Facilities Management, Work Health and Safety, School Operations.
- 30. Incident Management Team and Crisis Management Team.

Cross Directorate

- 31. Engagement has occurred with CMTEDD and Health.

External

- 32. Unions (AEU, CPSU UWU) and ACT Parents are being regularly informed on this matter.
- 33. Engagement and information sharing is occurring with the Association of Independent Schools and Catholic Education.

Work Health and Safety

- 34. The safety of students, staff and the community is our highest priority.
- 35. The Directorate continues to follow all advice from WorkSafe ACT and recommendations from licenced asbestos contractors.

Benefits/Sensitivities

- 36. As of 12.15pm on 14 November 2025, 43 schools have been identified as having this product on site.
- 37. The Directorate acknowledges significant disruption for students, staff and the community associated with schools being closed or partially closed on 14 November, and has provided regular communication to ensure transparency, awareness and mitigate negative impacts as much as possible.
- 38. The Directorate has taken a risk based approach to uphold legislative obligations and respond to the risk. Closing and partly closing impacted schools has enabled more rapid testing and remediation, outside of school hours, which will also enable risk elimination and clearance certificates more rapidly.

Communications, media and engagement implications

- 39. There has been extensive media coverage locally and nationally.

Signatory Name:	Deputy Director-General	Phone:	Teams
Action Officer:	Executive Group Manager, Finance & Infrastructure	Phone:	Teams

Attachments

Attachment	Title
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Attachment A	WHS Act Regulations: Key Regulation Excerpts
Attachment B	Asbestos Regulation Comparison table

Attachment A**Key Regulation Excerpts**

The following are key excerpts of the [Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011](#) relevant to Education Directorate obligations and action taken to address contaminated sand in ACT public schools, provided for information.

PCBU must not direct or allow worker involvement with asbestos
Chapter 8 Part 8.1 419 (1), (2), page 340

Chapter 8 Asbestos**Part 8.1 Prohibitions and authorised conduct****419 Work involving asbestos or ACM—prohibitions and exceptions**

- (1) A person conducting a business or undertaking must not carry out, direct or allow a worker to carry out, work involving asbestos.

Maximum penalty: tier E monetary penalty.

Note Strict liability applies to each physical element of each offence under this regulation, unless otherwise stated (see s 6A).

- (2) In this section, work *involves* asbestos if the work involves manufacturing, supplying, transporting, importing, storing, removing, using, installing, **handling**, treating, disposing of or disturbing asbestos or ACM.

Identification by a licenced assessor
Chapter 8 Part 8.3 422 (1), (2)(a), page 344

422 Asbestos to be identified or assumed at workplace

- (1) A person with management or control of a workplace must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that all asbestos or ACM at the workplace is identified by a licensed asbestos assessor.

Maximum penalty: tier E monetary penalty.

Note Strict liability applies to each physical element of each offence under this regulation, unless otherwise stated (see s 6A).

- (2) A person with management or control of a workplace must—
- (a) if material at the workplace cannot be identified but a licensed asbestos assessor reasonably believes that the material is asbestos or ACM—assume that the material is asbestos; and

Analysis of a sample

Chapter 8 Part 8.3 423 (1) (2), Page 36

423 Analysis of sample

- (1) A person with management or control of a workplace may identify asbestos or ACM by arranging for a sample of material at the workplace to be analysed for the presence of asbestos or ACM.
- (2) If a person with management or control of a workplace arranges for an analysis, the person must ensure that the sample is analysed only by—
 - (a) a NATA-accredited laboratory accredited for the relevant test method; or
Note NATA—see the dictionary.
 - (b) a laboratory approved by the regulator in accordance with guidelines published by Safe Work Australia; or

Removal of asbestos by a licensed removalist

470 (1), (2), page 384

470 Limiting access to asbestos removal area

- (1) This section applies to—
 - (a) a person conducting a business or undertaking at a workplace who commissions a person to carry out licensed asbestos removal work at the workplace; and
 - (b) a person with management or control of a workplace who is aware that licensed asbestos removal work is being carried out at the workplace.
- (2) Subject to subsection (4), the person must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that no-one other than the following has access to an asbestos removal area:
 - (a) workers engaged in the asbestos removal work;
 - (b) other persons associated with the asbestos removal work;
 - (c) anyone allowed under this regulation or another law to be in the asbestos removal area.

Clearance certificate

473 (1),(2),(3), page 388 & 389

474 (1), (2), page 389

473 Clearance inspection

- (1) This section applies if a person commissions licensed asbestos removal work at a workplace.
- (2) The person or, if the workplace is residential premises, the licensed asbestos removalist must ensure that, when the licensed asbestos removal work is completed, an independent licensed asbestos assessor carries out a clearance inspection of—
 - (a) the asbestos removal area; and
 - (b) the area surrounding the asbestos removal area, including access and egress pathways.

Maximum penalty: tier E monetary penalty.

Note Strict liability applies to each physical element of each offence under this regulation, unless otherwise stated (see s 6A).

- (3) In this part:

clearance inspection means an inspection of an asbestos removal area after asbestos removal work has been completed to verify that the area is safe for normal use, that—

- (a) includes a visual inspection; and
- (b) may include air monitoring.

Note If it is not reasonably practicable for the licensed asbestos assessor to be independent, the person or licensed asbestos removalist may apply to the regulator for an exemption under pt 11.2 from the requirement that the assessor be independent.

474 Clearance certificates

- (1) This section applies if a clearance inspection has been made in accordance with section 473.
- (2) The licensed asbestos assessor who carried out the clearance inspection must issue a clearance certificate, in accordance with this section, before the asbestos removal area at the workplace is re-occupied.

Maximum penalty: tier E monetary penalty.

Note Strict liability applies to each physical element of each offence under this regulation, unless otherwise stated (see s 6A).

- (3) The licensed asbestos assessor must ensure that the asbestos removal area does not pose a risk to health and safety from exposure to asbestos.

Attachment B) Asbestos Regulation Comparison table

Regulatory Area	Model WHS Regulations (2024)	ACT WHS Regulation 2011 (2025)	NSW WHS Regulation 2017 (as at 2025)	Other States/Territories
General Prohibition	Prohibits work involving asbestos, with exceptions for research, sampling, maintenance of non-friable asbestos installed before 31 Dec 2003, removal/disposal, etc. (Reg 419)	Same as Model, with ACT-specific references (e.g., to ACT notices, minor/routine maintenance) (s419)	Same as Model. Prohibits work involving asbestos, with similar exceptions (Reg 419).	Generally consistent with Model; minor local variations.
Definition of Asbestos/ACM	As per Act; ACM = asbestos-containing material.	As per Act; ACM = asbestos-containing material.	As per Act; ACM = asbestos-containing material.	Consistent nationally.
Identification of Asbestos	All asbestos/ACM at workplace must be identified by a competent person (Reg 422).	Must be identified by a licensed asbestos assessor (s422).	Must be identified by a competent person (Reg 422). NSW does not require a licensed assessor for identification, but does for clearance inspections.	Most require competent person; ACT is stricter.
Asbestos Register	Must be prepared and kept at workplace, updated as necessary, includes location, type, condition, and date of identification (Reg 425).	Same as Model, but must include risk assessment if made (s425, s422A).	Same as Model. Must be kept up to date and accessible (Reg 425).	Consistent nationally; some require inclusion of risk assessment.
Risk Assessment	Not mandatory unless required by regulator or for friable asbestos; must consider condition, likelihood of exposure, disturbance, etc.	Mandatory written risk assessment for friable asbestos, by licensed assessor (s422A).	Not mandatory unless required by regulator or for friable asbestos. NSW follows the Model approach (Reg 422).	Most require risk assessment for friable asbestos; ACT is explicit about licensed assessor.
Asbestos Management Plan	Required if asbestos/ACM is identified or likely present; must include identification, decisions, procedures, and worker info (Reg 429).	Same as Model, but must include risk assessment if made (s429).	Same as Model (Reg 429).	Consistent nationally.
Review of Register/Plan	Must be reviewed if further asbestos is identified, removed, disturbed, or at least every 5 years (Regs 426, 430).	Same as Model (s426, s430).	Same as Model (Regs 426, 430).	Consistent nationally.
Access to Register/Plan	Must be accessible to workers, health and	Same as Model (s427, s429(5)).	Same as Model (Regs 427, 429(5)).	Consistent nationally.

	safety reps, and others carrying out work (Regs 427, 429(5)).			
Demolition/Refurbishment	Register must be reviewed before demolition/refurbishment; all asbestos likely to be disturbed must be identified and removed as far as practicable (Regs 448–457).	Same as Model, but requires licensed assessor for identification and risk assessment; additional requirements for residential premises (s448–457).	Same as Model. For demolition/refurbishment, all asbestos likely to be disturbed must be identified and removed as far as reasonably practicable (Regs 448–457).	Consistent nationally; some local variations for residential premises.
Asbestos Removal Licensing	Class A licence required for friable asbestos; Class B for non-friable >10m ² ; recognition of licences from other jurisdictions (Regs 485–488).	Same as Model, but with ACT-specific notification and supervisor requirements (s485–488).	Same as Model. NSW recognises interstate licences and has similar supervisor requirements (Regs 485–488).	Consistent nationally; some local administrative differences.
Asbestos Assessor Licensing	Licence required for air monitoring, clearance inspections, and certificates for Class A removal (Regs 489–490).	Same as Model, but with expanded scope (includes risk assessment, identification, advice, and reporting) (s489).	Same as Model. NSW requires a licensed assessor for air monitoring and clearance for Class A removal (Regs 489–490).	Consistent nationally; some local differences in scope.
Notification of Removal	Regulator must be notified at least 5 days before licensed removal; immediate notification allowed in emergencies (Reg 466).	Same as Model, with ACT-specific forms and additional requirements for notification content (s466).	Same as Model. Notification to SafeWork NSW at least 5 days before removal; emergency provisions apply (Reg 466).	Consistent nationally; notification forms/processes may differ.
Clearance Inspections & Certificates	Independent licensed asbestos assessor must conduct clearance inspection and issue certificate before re-occupation (Regs 473–474).	Same as Model, but must include area surrounding removal area; air monitoring may be required (s473–474).	Same as Model. NSW requires a licensed assessor for clearance inspection and certificate for Class A removal (Regs 473–474).	Consistent nationally; some local differences in independence requirements.
Health Monitoring	Required for workers at risk of exposure during removal or asbestos-related work; must be supervised by registered medical practitioner (Regs 435–444).	Same as Model, but records must be kept for 40 years (s444).	Same as Model. NSW requires health monitoring for at-risk workers, with records kept for 40 years (Regs 435–444).	Consistent nationally; record-keeping periods may vary.
Training	Workers involved in asbestos removal or related work must be trained in	Same as Model, but ACT Minister may declare required courses/occupations;	Same as Model. NSW requires training for all workers involved in asbestos work, with	Consistent nationally; some local differences in course requirements.

	identification, safe handling, and control measures (Reg 445).	records must be kept for 5 years (s445, s445A).	records kept for 5 years (Reg 445).	
Use of Equipment	Prohibits high-pressure water spray and compressed air on asbestos/ACM; power tools/brooms only if use is controlled (Reg 446).	Same as Model, with detailed definition of "controlled" use (s446).	Same as Model. NSW prohibits high-pressure water and compressed air; power tools only if use is controlled (Reg 446).	Consistent nationally.
Waste Disposal	Asbestos waste must be contained, labelled, and disposed of at authorised sites (Reg 472).	Same as Model, with ACT-specific requirements for labelling and decontamination (s472).	Same as Model. NSW requires asbestos waste to be double-bagged, labelled, and disposed of at licensed facilities (Reg 472).	Consistent nationally; local differences in authorised sites.
Recognition of Other Jurisdictions' Licences	Yes, provided licence is current and not suspended/cancelled (Regs 488, 490).	Yes, but ACT requires notification before first work in ACT (s488, s490).	Yes, NSW recognises interstate licences, provided they are current and not suspended/cancelled (Regs 488, 490).	Consistent nationally; notification requirements may differ.

References

Safe Work Australia. (2024). *Model Work Health and Safety Regulations* (as at 1 September 2024). <https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/model-whs-regulations>

Australian Capital Territory Parliamentary Counsel's Office. (2025). *Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011* (Effective 27 February 2025). <https://www.legislation.act.gov.au/sl/2011-36/>

New South Wales Government. (2025). *Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017* (as at 2025). <https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/sl-2017-404>

Safe Work Australia. (n.d.). *Work health and safety laws by jurisdiction*. <https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/law-and-regulation/laws-jurisdiction>

Microsoft Copilot. (2025). *Comparison table generated using AI assistance based on legislative documents*.

Abigail, Claire

From: Steele, Peter
Sent: Thursday, 20 November 2025 11:09 PM
To: Huxley, Mark
Cc: Spence, Angela; DDGEDUoffice; Allen, Tracey; Education DLO; James, Brooke
Subject: FOR CLEARANCE: Minister Brief- Contaminated Sand - Update 5 and 6
Attachments: Minister Brief - Contaminated Sand - Update 5.tr5; Minister Brief - Contaminated Sand - Update 6.tr5

OFFICIAL

Mark,

Please see Minister's update caveat brief for your clearance for 19 November (Update 5) and 20 November (Update 6).

Peter

[@James, Brooke](#) – can you please provide Update 7 for 21 November tomorrow afternoon. A template is available in TRIM - **SUB25/40370**

All caveat briefs are in folder - FOL25/7375

Once cleared please send to EDUDLO, with a drop copy to DDGO and DGO.

OFFICIAL



Caveat Brief

To: Minister for Education and Early Childhood

From: Director-General

Subject: Hazardous Materials Response – Contaminated Sand (ACM) – Update 5

Cleared By: Director-General

Does this deal with a Child Safety issues or concern? Yes

1. This brief summarises actions undertaken by the Directorate since Update 4 (SUB25/40036) to support reopening of ACT public schools.
2. Activities on 19 November focused on continuing to process clearance certificates received from licensed assessors overnight to continue to reopen closed or partially closed schools.
3. The emerging issue continues to be the further discovery of sand products throughout schools as staff and students return. In efforts to reduce assessors from having to return to sites multiple times (and delaying the overall process), schools were requested today to conduct a walk through of their sites (following a set of instructions provided by the Directorate) and identify any other product.
 - a. Staff have again been reminded not to interact with the product and to ensure if identified they isolate and report the location (with a photo if possible) per the instructions.
 - b. At close of business, schools had identified a further 496 potential instances of the product being on site.
4. A meeting was convened at HBCTL with the environmental assessors from companies engaged by the Directorate, where it was re-confirmed that:
 - a. a clearance certificate covers an entire site (not just specific areas that product was removed).
 - b. the approach when a product is identified is to isolate (which can be in a cupboard or a draw) is appropriate. If it was in an open classroom space then the classroom should be isolated. No one should touch the substance and a licenced assessor should be contacted. This remains consistent with our approach to date.
5. At 3:00pm, the first tranche of schools for opening on 19 November was communicated via the Education website, social media and school communications.
6. At 6:00pm, the second tranche of schools for opening on 19 November was communicated via the Education website, social media and school communications.
7. For the commencement of school on Thursday 20 November:
 - a. Closed – 3
 - b. Partially open – 13
 - c. Open to all students – 72
 - i. Note – some of these open sites have areas that continue to be isolated.



Caveat Brief

- 8. The Malkara School was required to move back to a full closure, following the discovery of additional sand products within the site on the morning of 19 November and that some of the sandpit sand (which had been contaminated with some of the recalled craft sand products) had been spread across other parts of the playground making the entire outside space inaccessible to students. Students were able to remain on site during the day with the support of staff, however, the decision was made to return the school to a full closure for 20 and 21 November while further remediation work is undertaken. The Malkara community will be updated by 6pm on Sunday 23 November on the status of the school for Monday 24 November.
- 9. The Directorate will continue to provide updates.

Yvette Berry MLA /...../.....

Action Officer: Peter Steele – a/g Executive Education Leader, School Operations

Date: 19 November 2025



Caveat Brief

To: Minister for Education and Early Childhood

From: Director-General

Subject: Hazardous Materials Response – Contaminated Sand (ACM) – Update 6

Cleared By: Director-General

Does this deal with a Child Safety issues or concern? Yes

1. This brief summarises actions undertaken by the Directorate since Update 5 (SUB25/40197) to support reopening of ACT public schools.
2. Activities on 20 November focused on continuing to process clearance certificates received from licensed assessors overnight to continue to reopen closed or partially closed schools.
3. There continues to be identification of sand products across school sites. This is reported to the incident management team to then schedule a licensed assessor to clear the area. Schools have now identified over 500 instances of the product being on site (was 496 instances on 19 November).
4. At 12:30pm, the first tranche of schools changes for 20 November was communicated via the Education website, social media and school communications.
5. At 6:00pm, the second tranche of schools for changes on 20 November was communicated via the Education website, social media and school communications.
6. For the commencement of school on Friday 21 November:
 - a. Closed – 2
 - b. Partially open – 8
 - c. Open to all students – 82
 - i. Note – some of these open sites have areas that continue to be isolated.
7. Communications were sent to the Neville Bonner Primary School community, confirming that the school would be remain closed for Friday 21 November. A review of the site by assessors had identified that the school had at least 19 areas that required significant remediation to provide a clearance certificate for the site. The community will be updated 6pm on Sunday 23 November on the status of the school for Monday 24 November.
8. The Directorate will continue to provide updates.

Yvette Berry MLA/...../.....

Action Officer: Peter Steele – a/g Executive Education Leader, School Operations

Date: 20 November 2025

Abigail, Claire

From: Spence, Angela
Sent: Sunday, 23 November 2025 8:08 AM
To: EDU, Director-General Office; Wood, Jo
Cc: DDGEDUoffice; Huxley, Mark; Laurent, Kristen
Subject: RE: FOR CLEARANCE: Caveat Brief - Updates 6 and 7
Attachments: Minister Brief - Contaminated Sand - Update 6.tr5; Minister Brief - Contaminated Sand - Update 7.tr5

OFFICIAL

Approved

Not sure if these progressed or not so I will progress again.

Thanks

Angela Spence

Deputy Director General

Education Directorate

Email: angela.spence@act.gov.au

Education Directorate| ACT Government

Hedley Beare Centre for Teaching and Learning|GPO Box 158 Canberra ACT 2601

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I acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands and waters where we live and work, the Ngunnawal people, and pay my respects to elders past, present and future.

From: Laurent, Kristen
Sent: Saturday, 22 November 2025 9:43 AM
To: Spence, Angela
Cc: DDGEDUoffice ; Huxley, Mark
Subject: FW: FOR CLEARANCE: Caveat Brief - Updates 6 and 7

OFFICIAL

Hi Ange

Do you need to clear these before I send to Jo?

Regards

Kristen

From: Huxley, Mark <Mark.Huxley@act.gov.au>
Sent: Saturday, 22 November 2025 9:41 AM
To: Laurent, Kristen <Kristen.Laurent@act.gov.au>

Cc: EGMSlofficce <EGMSlofficce@act.gov.au>; James, Brooke <Brooke.James@act.gov.au>; Allen, Tracey <Tracey.Allen@act.gov.au>

Subject: RE: FOR CLEARANCE: Caveat Brief - Updates 6 and 7

OFFICIAL

Approved.

Thanks

Mark

Mark Huxley PSM
Executive Group Manager - School Improvement
ACT Education Directorate
Email: Mark.Huxley@act.gov.au Ph: 02 62059388

Please note that these communications are sent at a time convenient to me.Â There is no expectation that action or attention is required outside of working hours.

From: Laurent, Kristen <Kristen.Laurent@act.gov.au>

Sent: Friday, 21 November 2025 5:56 PM

To: Huxley, Mark <Mark.Huxley@act.gov.au>

Cc: EGMSlofficce <EGMSlofficce@act.gov.au>; James, Brooke <Brooke.James@act.gov.au>; Allen, Tracey <Tracey.Allen@act.gov.au>

Subject: FOR CLEARANCE: Caveat Brief - Updates 6 and 7

OFFICIAL

Hi Mark

Caveat Brief Updates 6 and 7 are now ready for your clearance. I have worked with Brooke to check and update the numbers in Update 6.

Regards

Kristen Laurent | **Executive Branch Manager Governance (and SERBIR)**
Phone: 6205 6749 | Mobile: 0466 244 203 | Email: kristen.laurent@act.gov.au
Education Directorate | ACT Government
GPO Box 158 Canberra ACT 2601 | www.act.gov.au



Caveat Brief

To: Minister for Education and Early Childhood

From: Director-General

Subject: Hazardous Materials Response – Contaminated Sand (ACM) – Update 6

Cleared By: Director-General

Does this deal with a Child Safety issues or concern? Yes

1. This brief summarises actions undertaken by the Directorate since Update 5 (SUB25/40197) to support reopening of ACT public schools.
2. Activities on 20 November focused on continuing to process clearance certificates received from licensed assessors overnight to continue to reopen closed or partially closed schools.
3. There continues to be identification of sand products across school sites. This is reported to the incident management team to then schedule a licensed assessor to clear the area. Schools have now identified over 500 instances of the product being on site (was 496 instances on 19 November).
4. At 12:30pm, the first tranche of schools changes for 20 November was communicated via the Education website, social media and school communications.
5. At 6:00pm, the second tranche of schools for changes on 20 November was communicated via the Education website, social media and school communications.
6. For the commencement of school on Friday 21 November:
 - a. Closed – 2
 - b. Partially open – 8
 - c. Open to all students – 82
 - i. Note – some of these open sites have areas that continue to be isolated.
7. Communications were sent to the Neville Bonner Primary School community, confirming that the school would be remain closed for Friday 21 November. A review of the site by assessors had identified that the school had at least 19 areas that required significant remediation to provide a clearance certificate for the site. The community will be updated 6pm on Sunday 23 November on the status of the school for Monday 24 November.
8. The Directorate will continue to provide updates.

Yvette Berry MLA/...../.....

Action Officer: Peter Steele – a/g Executive Education Leader, School Operations

Date: 20 November 2025



Caveat Brief

To: Minister for Education and Early Childhood

From: Director-General

Subject: Hazardous Materials Response – Contaminated Sand (ACM) – Update 7

Cleared By: Director-General

Does this deal with a Child Safety issues or concern? Yes

1. This brief summarises actions undertaken by the Directorate since Update 6 (SUB25/40342) to support reopening of ACT public schools.
2. Activities on 21 November 2025 focused on continuing to process clearance certificates received from licensed assessors to continue to reopen the remaining closed and partially closed schools.
3. The identification of sand products across school sites has significantly decreased and has not resulted in the need for any further closures.
4. The first tranche of communications occurred at 12:30pm via the Education website and school communications to confirm an additional 6 schools that will be open on Monday. Social media content was posted at 6:00pm to confirm school opening of Monday. No further clearance certificates were received before the 6:00pm website update.
5. Certificates are still outstanding for Muliyan (Closed) and four remaining schools: Malkara School (closed), Neville Bonner Primary School (closed), Margaret Hendry School (partially open) and Torrens Primary School (partially open). Work will continue over the weekend to remediate these sites with the aim of having these schools ready to open on Monday. The completion of extensive outdoor remediation at Malkara School may be impacted by poor weather across the weekend.
6. Letters have been prepared to send to parents of these settings to provide an update this evening. Pre-staged communications have been prepared in readiness for receipt of their clearance certificates.
7. The Directorate will provide further updates to families and the community over the weekend.
8. Work continues on remediation activities over the weekend with areas in schools isolated this week requiring after hours work by assessors. The timing of this is to ensure assessors in hazmat are not working in schools with students and staff present to minimise psychosocial risk. These remediation works will impact after hours users of school sites across the weekend and into next week. Schools are advising their users on a case by case basis.

Yvette Berry MLA /...../.....

Action Officer: Kristen Laurent, Executive Branch Manager Governance (Crisis Management Team Manager)

Date: 21 November 2025

From: [Education DLO](#)
To: [EDU_EGMFIG](#); [Attridge, Vanessa](#)
Subject: FW: CC Berry - Signed - Pettersson - WorkSafe Brief - Notifications re: contaminated sand
Date: Monday, 24 November 2025 2:51:19 PM
Attachments: [0_Signed - WorkSafe Brief - Asbestos Contamination.pdf](#)
[Att A - Timeline of events.pdf](#)
[Att B - Safety alerts.pdf](#)
[image006.png](#)

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

FYI – I'll also progress this formally on TRIM for noting.

Many thanks,

Adrienne

Adrienne White | Directorate Liaison Officer, Ministerial and Corporate Reporting

Pronouns: She/her

[You can call me directly on MS Teams](#)

Phone: 71833 | Email: Adrienne.White@act.gov.au

MCR | Education Directorate | ACT Government

GPO Box 158 Canberra ACT 2601

www.education.act.gov.au | [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Instagram](#)

My employer supports me working flexibly, so I may email you outside of normal office hours. I don't expect you to read or respond outside of your normal work hours.

From: Harbin-Owens, Scarlett **On Behalf Of** CMTEDD, Public Service and Industrial Relations DLO

Sent: Monday, 24 November 2025 2:46 PM

To: Education DLO

Cc: CMTEDD, Public Service and Industrial Relations DLO

Subject: CC Berry - Signed - Pettersson - WorkSafe Brief - Notifications re: contaminated sand

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

Hi Adrienne,

Minister Berry has been cc'd on the attached WorkSafe brief, grateful if you could please share with the DCMO

Kind regards,

Scarlett Harbin-Owens | Directorate Liaison Officer | CMTEDD

Phone: Teams | Email PSIRDLO@act.gov.au

Chief Minister Treasury and Economic Development Directorate | ACT Government

GPO Box 158, Canberra ACT 2601 | www.act.gov.au

Minister for Skills, Training and Industrial Relations

Minister for the Public Service

Manager of Government Business



to

Minister Pettersson

Minister for Skills, Training and Industrial Relations

Date 19 November 2025

To Minister for Skills, Training and Industrial Relations

From Jacqueline Agius, WHS Commissioner

Subject Asbestos Contamination in Imported Coloured Sand Products

Recommendations

That you:

1. **note** WorkSafe ACT's response to asbestos contamination in imported coloured sand products, which is ongoing.

NOTED / PLEASE DISCUSS

Michael Pettersson MLA.....

.....21/11/25

Minister's Comments

cc Minister for Education & Early Childhood

Background

1. WorkSafe New Zealand became aware of third-party testing which indicated that coloured sand used in education facilities in Australia contained tremolite and chrysotile asbestos. The indication at the time was that the product was imported from China and distributed nationally.
2. WorkSafe ACT was made aware of this issue late on 6 November 2025 at a scheduled Heads of Workplace Safety Authorities (HWSA) dinner by Queensland WorkSafe. At 10:14 pm the WHS Commissioner received an email from Sarina Wise (WorkSafe Qld) with an attached social media post from a laboratory alleging the presence of tremolite fibres in coloured sand.
3. On 7 November 2025, in a scheduled HWSA meeting the WHS Commissioner was provided the name of the product containing the potentially contaminated sand.
4. On the same day (7 November), the WHS Commissioner directed WorkSafe ACT staff to seize a sample of Kadink Decorative Sand available at Officeworks stores in the ACT. The decision to seize a sample was done as a precaution and to ensure chain-of-custody for laboratory testing of the material for asbestos contamination. The seized sample was sent to a NATA accredited laboratory (National Association of Testing Authorities) in the ACT on the same day.
5. On Wednesday 12 November 2025, a NATA accredited laboratory, using the Polarized Light Microscopy (PLM) method, confirmed the presence of chrysotile asbestos in the sample.
6. The samples were then sent for further testing using the Transmission Electron Microscopy (TEM) method to test for the presence of tremolite asbestos. At the time of writing the TEM results have not been provided to WorkSafe ACT.
7. On the same day the positive laboratory test results for chrysotile asbestos were received (12 November), WorkSafe ACT issued a [Safety Alert](#), providing advice for consumers who may have the potentially contaminated sand in their home.
8. Also late on 12 November, ACCC released a product recall which included products which had not been tested by WorkSafe ACT.
9. The Safety alert issued by WorkSafe was subsequently updated on 14 November 2025 with expanded information and advice.
10. The potentially contaminated products are believed to have been sold in Australia since 2020 through approximately 80 retailers, including Officeworks, Woolworths, Educating Kids, Modern Teaching Aids, and Zart Art. The full list of retailers is available on the ACCC product recall.
11. Under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (WHS Act), a person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU) has a primary duty of care to ensure the health and safety of workers and other persons as a result of the conduct of the business or undertaking.
12. Since 13 November 2025, WorkSafe ACT has received 23 notifications of asbestos-contaminated sand products through notifiable incidents and complaints (as at 9 am on 19 November). There were instances where multiple notifications were received for one PCBU. Further breakdown of the sources of the notifications can be found below.

Type	Number of notifications
Early childhood education centre	11
Other*	10
Public School	1
Non-government school	1
Total	23

*Other includes notifications received from individuals and other directorates (e.g. Education Directorate and Canberra Health Services).

13. WorkSafe ACT is receiving information from the ACT Education Directorate on how they are managing the risk of asbestos-contaminated sand products. The notifications provided do not distinguish between the government schools managed by the ACT Education Directorate and individual schools. They are captured through a single notification. Similarly, notifications by individual teachers are captured through a separate single notification.
14. WorkSafe ACT is required to receive asbestos removal notifications at least 5 days prior to the removal of asbestos. WorkSafe have provided an exemption for the usual 5 day removal notice period for the asbestos-contaminated sand products to speed up the removal.
15. As at 9 am on 19 November, WorkSafe ACT received 78 asbestos removal notifications related to asbestos-contaminated sand products. Asbestos removal notifications for each individual school are captured separately. Further breakdown of the sources of asbestos removal notifications can be found below.

Type	Number of asbestos removal notification
Public school	41
Non-government school	20
Early childhood education centre	11
Other*	6
Total	78

*Other includes not-for-profit organisations providing child support.

Issues

16. Although the risk of exposure to chrysotile asbestos in the coloured sand is considered low, no level of asbestos exposure is safe. The presence of asbestos in products used by children raises serious health concerns for students, staff, and families.
17. On 12 November 2025, WorkSafe ACT advised the ACT Education Directorate of potential asbestos contamination in coloured craft sand and forwarded to New Zealand product recall information and subsequently the WorkSafe Safety Alert and the ACCC product recall.

18. Acting on this advice to eliminate risk as far as reasonably practicable, the Directorate conducted a risk assessment.
19. WorkSafe ACT has proactively reached out to private and independent schools, early learning facilities, aged care facilities and mental health facilities in the ACT via email or phone advising that WorkSafe ACT is available to provide information on how this matter can be best managed if impacted products have been found. WorkSafe ACT also reminded these facilities of their responsibilities as PCBUs under the WHS Act and that they have a primary duty of care to ensure the health and safety of workers and other persons.

Stronger laws in the ACT and Mr Fluffy history

20. While the ACT's WHS Act and Regulations broadly align with the [Model WHS laws](#) developed by Safe Work Australia, the ACT has stronger provisions for managing asbestos. For example, the model WHS Regulations adopted by most other jurisdictions, allow a non-licensed person/s to remove up to 10 square metres of non-friable asbestos, whereas the ACT requires all asbestos removal to be carried out by a licensed asbestos removalist (section 458 of the ACT [WHS Regulation 2011](#)).
21. This requirement also applies to residential premises under the [Dangerous Substances \(General\) Regulation 2004](#) (section 312). These higher standards help explain why the ACT response, such as school closures and comprehensive remediation, has been more stringent compared to other jurisdictions to date and which has come under media scrutiny.
22. Stronger laws in the ACT can also be attributed to the [Mr Fluffy loose fill asbestos insulation](#) which was used in more than 1,000 homes ACT from the late 1960s to late 1970s. The material comprised raw asbestos, crushed and blown into roof spaces and allowed to settle across the battens and ceilings, and behind the cornices, of more than 1,000 Canberra homes. The impacts on the ACT community are still ongoing and include the [Loose Fill Asbestos Insulation Eradication Scheme](#).

Product supply

23. The contaminated sand products have been sold in Australia since 2020 through major retailers. This raises public concern about how asbestos-containing products could enter the market despite existing import controls.
24. While WorkSafe ACT does not regulate the importation of products, the agency plays an active role in national prevention strategies. Through the Imported Materials with Asbestos Working Group (IMAWG), WorkSafe ACT collaborates with other WHS regulators, Safe Work Australia, WorkSafe New Zealand, and Commonwealth agencies including Australian Border Force, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC), and the Asbestos and Silica Safety Agency (ASSEA).
25. Importing asbestos or goods containing asbestos into Australia is prohibited, unless a permission has been granted or a lawful exception applies, under Regulation 4C of the [Customs \(Prohibited Imports\) Regulations 1956](#), which is enforced by Australian Border Force.



Engagement

26. WorkSafe ACT's public messaging has focused on minimising risk, supporting safe disposal, and ensuring clear guidance for businesses, schools, and the community. (See [Attachment B](#) for Safety Alert)
27. WorkSafe ACT provided the Laboratory results commissioned by WorkSafe ACT finding Chrysotile Asbestos to Fair Trading ACT who then provided them to ACCC. This resulted in another product recall by ACCC.
28. WorkSafe have continue to liaise with WHS regulators in other jurisdictions.
29. WorkSafe ACT liaised with Remondis who provides waste disposal services for the ACT including hazardous waste to confirm disposal protocols and supported the Education Directorate in instructing schools and childcare facilities to isolate and dispose of affected products.

Financial

30. Disposal of unsealed contaminated sand products at ACT Resource Management Centres is free of charge. WorkSafe ACT has made 200-micron disposal bags available to the public to assist with safe disposal of the product.

Risks/ Sensitivities

31. Public concern remains high due to the presence of asbestos in educational settings. Messaging has emphasised safety, swift action, and transparency. The risk of exposure is low unless the product is disturbed, but precautionary measures are essential.

Action Officer: Gemma Godwin

Phone: 02 6207 0416

Attachments

Attachment A	Timeline of events and WorkSafe ACT's response
Attachment B	Safety alert: Asbestos contamination confirmed in coloured sand product

Attachment A

Timeline of events and WorkSafe ACT's response

Date	Event Description
Early-November	WorkSafe New Zealand became aware of third-party testing indicating that coloured sand used in Australian education facilities contained tremolite and chrysotile asbestos.
6 November	Queensland WorkSafe informed the ACT's WHS Commissioner of the issue.
7 November	At a scheduled HWSA meeting, the WHS Commissioner was provided the name of the product containing potentially contaminated sand and directed WorkSafe ACT staff to seize a sample for laboratory testing. The seized sample was sent to a National Association of Testing Authorities (NATA) accredited laboratory.
12 November	The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) published initial recall notices for products supplied by Educational Colours.
12 November	A NATA-accredited laboratory confirmed the presence of chrysotile asbestos in the ACT's sample. WorkSafe ACT published a safety alert (updated 14 November) informing the public of the findings.
13 November	The ACCC published further recall notices , following up on the initial actions from 12 November.
13 November	The ACT Work Health and Safety Commissioner advised the ACT Education Directorate and Minister of the potential asbestos contamination in schools.
14 November	ACT public school closures began (initial closures involved 23 schools and preschools) to allow for testing and remediation.
14 November	Commissioner reported that initial air monitoring tests at eight ACT schools returned negative for airborne asbestos fibres.
14 November	The Asbestos and Silica Safety and Eradication Agency (ASSEA) issued a notice - recall of coloured sand – November 2025



16 November	The ACCC issued a further recall to include products sold at Kmart and Target.
16 November	The ACT government announced that a total of 69 ACT public schools had been identified as stocking the contaminated sand and would be closed on the following Monday (November 17) for assessment and clean-up.
17 November	WorkSafe ACT proactively engaged with all private and independent schools and early learning facilities (over 300 entities) offering assistance and advice on how to approach the risk management process if the potentially contaminated sand has been identified in the workplace.

Attachment B

[Safety alert: Asbestos contamination confirmed in coloured sand product](#)

12 November 2025

(Updated 14 November 2025)

A decorative coloured sand product imported from China has been found to contain traces of chrysotile, a type of asbestos. Laboratory testing of samples taken by WorkSafe ACT has confirmed that the contaminated product, sold as Kadink Decorative Sand, is present in the ACT and contains chrysotile.

The risk of exposure to traces of chrysotile is low. However, do not use the product and avoid any contact with potentially contaminated material. The product tested is sold in 6 packs of 10gram tubes.

If you are a PCBU:

If you believe that you may have the product in your business or undertaking (e.g. educational facility)

- Stop using the product
- Determine whether and where the product is present and then isolate/restrict access to that area (isolation should include turning off air conditioners and ceiling fans in the potentially contaminated area and closing windows and doors).
- The person conducting the business or undertaking will need to engage a licensed asbestos assessor. The licensed assessor will assess the risk and determine the appropriate remediation action and, if necessary, the class of licensed asbestos removalist required to conduct the removal work.
- Once the removal work has occurred to the satisfaction of the licensed assessor, a clearance certificate will be issued by the assessor.

If you have potentially contaminated sand in your home:

Sealed potentially contaminated coloured sand in unopened containers

- Do not open the product
- Place the product into a 200 micron plastic waste bag or, suitable alternate waste container dedicated for asbestos waste that is clearly labelled with an appropriate warning sign indicating asbestos waste. An example of the appropriate label can be found here: [Work Health and Safety \(How to](#)



Safely Remove Asbestos Code of Practice) Approval 2022 | HTML view – Part 4.8)

- Dispose of it at an appropriate asbestos disposal facility (Hazardous waste - City Services)

Minor potentially contaminated coloured sand (On a hard surface)

- Identify location of the sand.
- Stop using the sand,
- Determine whether your sand is the potentially contaminated product and where the sand is present.

If you are not confident, or uncomfortable, cleaning the potentially contaminated area yourself, you should take the following steps:

- Contact a licensed asbestos assessor and advise of your situation. The licensed assessor will assess the risk and determine the appropriate remediation action and, if necessary, the class of licensed asbestos removalist required to conduct the removal work.
- Once the removal work has occurred to the satisfaction of the licensed assessor, a clearance certificate will be issued by the assessor.

You may choose to clean the potentially contaminated area. If you choose to do so you should take the following steps:

- Wear disposable gloves. Tuck the gloves under the elasticised cuffs of your clothing. If the cuffs are loose, tape them down to create a proper seal.
- Wear a P2 rated face mask. Do not use a standard dust mask. A P2 respirator should fit snugly and cover half your face.
- Wear protective eyewear. Use safety glasses to protect your eyes from dust and debris.
- Use the wet spray method to wet the potentially contaminated area. For very small areas, a small spray water bottle may be sufficient (you can also add a small amount of surfactant (cleaning product) into the water which will help to limit dust generation). In all cases, the use of water should be in the form of a mist to minimise the potential to generate any dust (Note: Airborne asbestos fibres can be significantly suppressed when the wet spray method is used; however, they may not be entirely eliminated so effective PPE (see above) is also essential).
- The wetted material should be removed (e.g. via a wet cloth).



- Alternatively, wet wipes/ wet paper towels can also be used to clean up the material. This involves using a wet wipe to wipe and collect the material (with the same PPE). This material and wipes can be all be disposed of in the waste bag.
- To effectively decontaminate yourself after the clean-up, remove gloves by rolling them down gently, taking care to keep the gloves inside out to contain any potential contamination. Keeping the P2 mask on, wipe hands and face around the mask with a wet wipe or wet paper towel to remove any potential fibres on your skin. Remove face mask and wipe hands again.
- Place the product, wet cloth/wipe, gloves, and P2 mask / filter into a 200-micron plastic waste bag or, suitable alternate waste container dedicated for asbestos waste that is clearly labelled with an appropriate warning sign indicating asbestos waste. An example of the appropriate label can be found here: ([Work Health and Safety \(How to Safely Remove Asbestos Code of Practice\) Approval 2022 | HTML view – Part 4.8](#))
- Dispose of it at an appropriate asbestos disposal facility ([Hazardous waste - City Services](#))

Potentially contaminated coloured sand on an artwork or arts and craft project

If you are not confident, or uncomfortable, disposing of an artwork or arts and craft project yourself you should take the following steps:

- Contact a [licensed asbestos assessor](#) and advise of your situation. The licensed assessor will assess the risk and determine the appropriate remediation action and, if necessary, the [class of licensed asbestos removalist](#) required to conduct the removal work.
- Once the removal work has occurred to the satisfaction of the licensed assessor, a clearance certificate will be issued by the assessor

You may choose to dispose of the artwork or arts and craft project yourself. If you choose to do so you should take the following steps:

- Wear disposable gloves. Tuck the gloves under the elasticised cuffs of your clothing. If the cuffs are loose, tape them down to create a proper seal.
- Wear a P2 rated face mask. Do not use a standard dust mask. A P2 respirator should fit snugly and cover half your face.
- Wear protective eyewear. Use safety glasses to protect your eyes from dust and debris.

- Use the wet spray method to wet the potentially contaminated item/s. A small spray water bottle may be sufficient (a binding agent such as PVA glue can be added to the spray to help stick any loose material down). In all cases, the use of water should be in the form of a mist to minimise the potential to generate any dust (Note: Airborne asbestos fibres can be significantly suppressed when the wet spray method is used; however, they may not be entirely eliminated so effective PPE (see above) is also essential).
- The wetted item/s should be removed from its location
- To effectively decontaminate yourself after the clean-up, remove gloves by rolling them down gently, taking care to keep the gloves inside out to contain any potential contamination. Keeping the P2 mask on, wipe hands and face around the mask with a wet wipe or wet paper towel to remove any potential fibres on your skin. Remove face mask and wipe hands again.
- Place the product, wet cloth/wipe, gloves, and P2 mask into a 200-micron plastic waste bag or, suitable alternate waste container dedicated for asbestos waste that is clearly labelled with an appropriate warning sign indicating asbestos waste. An example of the appropriate label can be found here: ([Work Health and Safety \(How to Safely Remove Asbestos Code of Practice\) Approval 2022 | HTML view – Part 4.8](#))
- Dispose of it at an appropriate asbestos disposal facility ([Hazardous waste - City Services](#))

Minor presence of potentially contaminated coloured sand (e.g. carpet, rugs or other soft furnishing)

- Identify location of the sand.
- Stop using the sand,
- Determine whether your sand is the potentially contaminated product and where the sand is present.
- **Do not** use a household vacuum cleaner to clean the area/items.
- Contact a [licensed asbestos assessor](#) and advise of your situation. The licensed assessor will assess the risk and determine the appropriate remediation action and, if necessary, the [class of licensed asbestos removalist](#) required to conduct the removal work.
- If removal work has occurred to the satisfaction of the licensed assessor, a clearance certificate will be issued by the assessor.



Moderate/significant presence of potentially contaminated coloured sand (e.g. landscaping, playgrounds)

- Determine whether your sand is the potentially contaminated product and where the product is present and then isolate/restrict access to that area.
- Engage a licensed asbestos assessor. The licensed assessor will assess the risk and determine the appropriate remediation action and, if necessary, the class of licensed asbestos removalist required to conduct the removal work.
- If removal work has occurred to the satisfaction of the licensed assessor, a clearance certificate will be issued by the assessor.

Small quantities of asbestos can be disposed of at Mugga Lane and Mitchell Resource Management Centres for no cost. When disposing of asbestos at resource management centres in the ACT:

- Material must be double wrapped in 200 micron (min) plastic and sealed (taped up)
- Plastic packages should be no larger than 800 mm x 800 mm and weigh less than 250kg
- Packages must be identified to facility operators at the weighbridges on arrival at the Resource Management Centre

Visit the City Services page for more information on disposal of asbestos:
<https://www.cityservices.act.gov.au/recyclopaedia/items/a/asbestos>

200-micron disposal bags are available from hardware and safety supply shops. WorkSafe ACT can also provide them to anyone who believes they may have purchased the potentially contaminated product.

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) has issued a recall on related products Educational Colours - Rainbow Sand (1.3kg), Creatistics - Coloured Sand (1kg) and Kadink - Sand (1.3kg) | ACCC Product Safety

If you have any questions or require assistance acquiring disposal bags, contact WorkSafe ACT via WorkSafe_Asbestos@worksafe.act.gov.au

This information is accurate for the ACT.



Caveat Brief

To: Minister for Education and Early Childhood

From: Kristen Laurent Executive Branch Manager, Governance

Subject: Commencement of Recovery Phase following Hazardous Materials Response – Contaminated Sand (ACM)

Cleared By: Director-General

Does this deal with a Child Safety issues or concern? Yes

Recovery Phase

1. On 13 November 2025, the Directorate activated an Incident Management Team (IMT) to coordinate the emergency management response to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) recall on decorative coloured sand product, due to potential contamination with tremolite asbestos. This was followed by activation of a Crisis Management Team (CMT) on 14 November 2025 to provide strategic oversight. Both teams were stood down as of 24 November 2025.
2. On 24 November 2025 the IMT and CMT were stood down, and a Recovery Committee (the Committee) was established to transition the organisation and school communities to the recovery phase. The Committee will focus on key activities required under four recovery domains (social, economic, environment and built) including assessment of financial impact, recovery communications, completion of remediation works, recovery communications and an after-action review of the emergency management response.
3. As of 25 November 2025, all schools have reopened. There are 36 schools still requiring removal of isolated products. This continues to be managed by the Directorate.
4. With the transition to all schools opening the Directorate has ceased providing the list of schools closed on the website and replaced this with general advice about the remediation processes being followed.
5. The Feedback and Complaints phone line has returned to normal operating hours and the after-hours support from Access Canberra has been stood down.
6. Access Canberra responded to 202 calls across the duration of the response, including calls from parents, school-based staff and the general community in relation to domestic use and handling of the products. The Feedback and Complaints team responded to 76 calls for the same period.



Caveat Brief

WHS Exemption – Notifiable Instrument

- 7. On 24 November 2025 a notifiable instrument was made under the *Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011 - Work Health and Safety (Coloured Sand Products Clearance Inspection and Clearance Certificate) Exemption 2025*.
- 8. This exemption, effective 25 November 2025, potentially allows for a modification/simplification of existing processes for addressing coloured sand on school sites. A competent person may undertake the removal and issue a clearance certificate.
- 9. The Directorate is working with the Work Safety Group in the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate to interpret the legislative amendment and how it will impact our approach for the remaining remediation works. Further advice will be forthcoming.

Further Incidents

- 10. The ACCC published a recall for an additional coloured sand product on 24 November 2025. The Work Health and Safety team are updating the work instruction, however the current advice around Type A and Type B product, and the broader actions to remove all coloured sand products will assist in mitigating any further risks.
- 11. On 25 November 2025 an incident involving preschool students occurred at Amaroo School. Toy dinosaurs were put out for children to play with, and it was then identified that the dinosaurs had been used with the Type A sand in the past, with remnants of the sand on the toys. There were [redacted] students in contact with the toys. The area was isolated immediately. All impacted families, Children’s Education and Care Assurance and the EDU Work Health and Safety team have been notified of the incident, who will make a report to WorkSafe.

[redacted]
 Yvette Berry MLA/...../.....

Action Officer: Jolene Clinch, Director, School Operations

Date: 25 November 2025



Caveat Brief

To: Minister for Education and Early Childhood

CC: CMT Sand - Incident Controller, Mark Huxley

From: Executive Group manager, Finance & Infrastructure

Subject: Impacts of School Closures on OSHC Providers

Cleared By: Executive Group Manager, Finance & Infrastructure

Does this deal with a Child Safety issues or concern? No

1. Closure/partial closure of schools required in response to identification of recalled decorative sand products, has resulted in Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) and Early Childhood Education and Care Services (ECEC) providers at ACT public schools being prevented from operating.
2. OSHC and ECEC providers are engaged by the Education Directorate to deliver services at ACT Public Schools under service and licence agreements.
3. Under the Commonwealth Government Childcare Subsidy Scheme (CCS), providers are able to apply for a waiver of their CCS gap fees and seek special consideration to ensure the annual allocation of allowable absences for families is not impacted, in the event of a period of emergency being recognised by the Department of Education.
4. This would require the ACT Government to issue a formal notification of forced closure due to a localised emergency.
5. It is anticipated this would be a Director-General decision, subject to confirmation.
6. Urgent advice is being sought from the ACT Government Solicitor Office regarding the Directorate’s authority and obligation to issue a closure notice, and any liability for damages and costs incurred due to the closures.
7. [Redacted]
8. The Directorate recognises the valuable contribution OSHC and ECEC services and providers make to the community and is committed to supporting providers as much as possible, in line with Government obligations and where feasible to do so.

Yvette Be [Redacted] /...../.....

From: [Short, Paul](#)
To: [Laurent, Kristen](#); [Steele, Peter](#)
Subject: FOR REVIEW TODAY: SUB25/40234: New MIN Statement - Sand
Date: Wednesday, 26 November 2025 12:09:55 PM
Attachments: [Ministerial Statement - Sand.tr5](#)
[image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
Importance: High

OFFICIAL

Hi Kristen and Pete

As foreshadowed, MO has requested a Ministerial statement about sand, for use in next week’s assembly sitting.

Grateful if you can run your eyes over the attached draft **today**, before I progress to Mark H for approval. Please track any edits/comments.

Cheers,
Paul

From: Do, Patrick <Patrick.Do@act.gov.au> **On Behalf Of** EDU, Cabinet & Assembly
Sent: Friday, 21 November 2025 3:57 PM
To: Education DLO <EDUDLO@act.gov.au>; Short, Paul <Paul.Short@act.gov.au>; Sloane, Brenton <Brenton.Sloane@act.gov.au>
Cc: Burn, Emma <Emma.Burn@act.gov.au>; Barges, Joanne <Joanne.Barges@act.gov.au>; Van Aalst, Sally <Sally.VanAalst@act.gov.au>; EDU, Cabinet & Assembly <EDUCabinetAssembly@act.gov.au>
Subject: RE: FOR ACTION: SUB25/40234: New MIN Statement - Sand

OFFICIAL

Good afternoon

Formal tasking for the Min Statement below.

Please see below MO requests for Min Statement on sand for next sitting. MO guidelines for Min Statements are for a length of between 500-600 words maximum.

MINISTER’S OFFICE REQUEST			
TRIM Number	SUB25/40234		
Branch, title and status	Branch	Min Statement topic	Status
	CEGS	Sand	NEW
Action(s)	1. Draft Min Statement		
Clearance level required	EGM		

Date due to EDUCabinetAssembly@act.gov.au	COB Thursday 27 October 2025
Date due to MO	COB Thursday 27 October 2025
BACKGROUND INFORMATION	
Sitting week dates	2-4 December 2025
Other details	Please manage any redirections between branches directly.
For more info	Please contact EDUCabinetAssembly@act.gov.au if you have any questions.

Kind regards

Pat

Patrick Do | Assembly Liaison Officer

Phone: via MS Teams | Email: EDUCabinetAssembly@act.gov.au or patrick.do@act.gov.au

Ministerial & Corporate Reporting – Communication, Engagement and Government Service
Branch| Education Directorate| ACT Government

220 London Circuit, Canberra City, ACT 2601 | GPO Box 158 Canberra ACT 2601

From: Education DLO <EDUDLO@act.gov.au>

Sent: Thursday, 20 November 2025 9:51 AM

To: Short, Paul <Paul.Short@act.gov.au>; EDU, Cabinet & Assembly
<EDUCabinetAssembly@act.gov.au>; Sloane, Brenton <Brenton.Sloane@act.gov.au>

Cc: Burn, Emma <Emma.Burn@act.gov.au>; Barges, Joanne <Joanne.Barges@act.gov.au>; Van
Aalst, Sally <Sally.VanAalst@act.gov.au>

Subject: RE: FOR ACTION: New MIN Statement - Sand

OFFICIAL

Hi team,

If we could have it by COB on Thursday 27th, that would be perfect.

Many thanks,
Adrienne

Adrienne White | Directorate Liaison Officer, Ministerial and Corporate Reporting

Pronouns: She/her

You can call me directly on MS Teams

Phone: 71833 | Email: Adrienne.White@act.gov.au

MCR | Education Directorate | ACT Government

GPO Box 158 Canberra ACT 2601

www.education.act.gov.au | [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Instagram](#)

My employer supports me working flexibly, so I may email you outside of normal office hours. I don't expect you

to read or respond outside of your normal work hours.

From: Short, Paul <Paul.Short@act.gov.au>
Sent: Wednesday, 19 November 2025 5:32 PM
To: Education DLO <EDUDLO@act.gov.au>; EDU, Cabinet & Assembly <EDUCabinetAssembly@act.gov.au>; Sloane, Brenton <Brenton.Sloane@act.gov.au>
Cc: Burn, Emma <Emma.Burn@act.gov.au>; Barges, Joanne <Joanne.Barges@act.gov.au>; Van Aalst, Sally <Sally.VanAalst@act.gov.au>
Subject: RE: FOR ACTION: New MIN Statement - Sand

OFFICIAL

Thanks Adrienne, I'm off for the rest of the week but I am tagging in Brenton who is the man for the job!

[@Sloane, Brenton](#) you might like to make a start, but I imagine this will be an evolving story for a few more days before we can add in final numbers and details.

[@Education DLO](#) can you please give us a rough deadline, noting next sitting day is 2 December.

Cheers,
Paul

From: Education DLO <EDUDLO@act.gov.au>
Sent: Wednesday, 19 November 2025 4:58 PM
To: EDU, Cabinet & Assembly <EDUCabinetAssembly@act.gov.au>
Cc: Short, Paul <Paul.Short@act.gov.au>; Burn, Emma <Emma.Burn@act.gov.au>
Subject: FOR ACTION: New MIN Statement - Sand

OFFICIAL

Hi team,

A new min statement for the next sitting week – one for us to discuss/action tomorrow.

Many thanks,
Adrienne

Adrienne White | Directorate Liaison Officer, Ministerial and Corporate Reporting

Pronouns: She/her

[You can call me directly on MS Teams](#)

Phone: 71833 | Email: Adrienne.White@act.gov.au

MCR | Education Directorate | ACT Government

GPO Box 158 Canberra ACT 2601

www.education.act.gov.au | [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Instagram](#)

My employer supports me working flexibly, so I may email you outside of normal office hours. I don't expect you to read or respond outside of your normal work hours.

From: Whitty, Anna <Anna.Whitty@act.gov.au>
Sent: Wednesday, 19 November 2025 4:54 PM
To: Education DLO <EDUDLO@act.gov.au>
Subject: MIN Statement - Sand

Hi Adrienne,

Can EDU please provide a draft MIN statement for the next sitting on the sand issue. I understand that this is still evolving but wanted to give the team as much notice as possible.

Many thanks,
Anna

Anna Whitty | Senior Adviser
02 6207 7937 |

Office of Yvette Berry MLA | Member for Ginninderra
Deputy Chief Minister
Minister for Education and Early Childhood
Minister for Homes, Homelessness and New Suburbs
Minister for Sport and Recreation
Phone: +61 2 6205 0233 | Email: berry@act.gov.au
[Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | www.yvetteberry.com.au



I acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land, the Ngunnawal people, and pay my respect to their Elders past, present and emerging.

2025

**THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

ELEVENTH ASSEMBLY

Ministerial Statement

ACT public schools sand management and remediation

**Presented by
Yvette Berry MLA
Education and Early Childhood
December 2025**

ACT PUBLIC SCHOOLS SAND MANAGEMENT AND REMEDIATION
MINISTER FOR EDUCATION YVETTE BERRY
DECEMBER 2025

Mister Speaker, I rise today to make a statement to the Assembly about the management and remediation of craft sand products across ACT public schools.

On 12 November 2025, WorkSafe ACT released a safety notice about Kadink Decorative Sand. By 16 November 2025, the ACT Competition and Consumer Commission released a product recall for Anko magic sand. Both safety notices advised that traces of asbestos had been found in the two brands of craft sand.

These products were in wide use across ACT public schools, particularly because of its benefits for students with sensory needs.

Faced with this challenge, the government acted decisively, in accordance with our regulatory requirements, and put the safety of our staff and students first.

This meant we had to make a difficult but necessary decision to close impacted spaces in schools - and in many cases whole schools - for a period of days.

We acknowledge this was disruptive for students, staff and families across Canberra. It wasn't a decision taken lightly. I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone across Canberra for their patience and understanding. I thank everyone in our school communities, of course, including students, parents and carers. I thank our stakeholders – including ACT Parents, the Australian Education Union, the United Workers Union

and the Community and Public Sector Union – for their understanding and working collaboratively with us as we managed this process.

On the process, Mister Speaker, the laws in the ACT around asbestos removal are the most rigorous in the country. While we understood the risk of exposure to the traces of asbestos in these products was identified as low, under ACT work health and safety laws, any products containing asbestos must be assessed and removed by a licensed asbestos assessor. Spaces and rooms where the craft sand was located needed to be isolated until the product could be safely removed, and the space was then cleared for use by the licensed asbestos assessors.

How this played out on the ground was different for each school, Mister Speaker. There were schools that had no sand products at all, and they were not impacted. There were others where there was very little sand, or sand that was easily able to be isolated, and those schools were able to operate effectively without access to those impacted spaces. But for other schools, the loss of available learning spaces to this process was significant – so much so that they were unable to operate in such a way to accommodate all students and staff. This led to some schools being partially closed, and others being fully closed, for periods of up to several school days.

I want to take a moment to acknowledge Malkara School, and the Malkara School community, who were unfortunately significantly impacted by this situation. While Malkara and other specialist schools were prioritised in the initial remediation works, it was subsequently discovered that coloured sand had been mixed in the sand pits and spread extensively across the outdoor spaces at Malkara. This meant the school had to be closed for a second time to undertake extensive remediation works. These works included clearing out the school's sand pit, digging out and replacing turfed areas,

pressure cleaning all hard surfaces, as well as scraping of the top layer of all soft fall spaces before clearance from an assessor was provided. Following this work, there was also landscaping to remediate the playground done before students could return.

Through you Mister Speaker, to the Malkara School students, staff and broader school community, I appreciate this disruption was a difficult time and I want to thank you all specifically for your patience while we resolved this issue.

I also want to acknowledge Out of School Hours Care providers across our public school system, and Early Childhood Education and Care providers who deliver services in public school facilities, who have been impacted by these events. I'm pleased to report that the ACT Government has been working with our Federal counterparts to minimise financial impacts on service providers and families, by ensuring they can apply for gap fee waivers, extra absences and Child Care Subsidy (CCS) claims.

Mister Speaker, I want to be clear that there is still a bit more work to do on this across our ACT public schools. While all our schools are back and operating, some still have isolated areas waiting to be remediated.

In addition, while every effort was made to identify and isolate recalled and unidentified sand products, given the size of our schools and their significant storage areas, there is a possibility more of this coloured sand will be found. If it is, appropriate work health and safety processes will be followed. I will say though that even if more sand products are located, I am confident our schools will continue to stay open for all students. The kinds of significant learning space impacts that resulted in the full or partial closures of schools we were seeing in November are very unlikely to occur

again as a result of these coloured sand products. Mister Speaker, I have to stress the incredible amount of work that was done across the system to address this challenge.

As part of that work, the Education Directorate's Hazardous Materials Team has engaged contractors who have managed testing of sand products.

Hundreds of air monitoring tests have been undertaken across our public schools. I can confirm for the Assembly that this monitoring has shown no positive results for airborne asbestos fibres.

In addition to air monitoring, testing has been conducted on a limited number of sand samples. Of the 10 samples tested so far, chrysotile asbestos has been detected in 4 of them. Unidentified mineral fibres and organic fibres have also been found in 3 samples.

This testing confirms what experts told us from the outset – that these products do contain asbestos, and should be properly handled in line with ACT regulations for suspected asbestos and asbestos removal.

Sometimes unexpected challenges arise that require significant and coordinated action. So before I conclude, I would like to thank all staff across our ACT public schools for their patience and professionalism. Thanks also to staff in the Education Support Office for helping to coordinate this incident response. Thank you to the licensed asbestos professionals who worked around the clock to help us remove, remediate and clear schools for reopening. A shout out also to the SES volunteers who helped with school inspections and to the Transport Canberra special needs transport workers who were very supportive in our specialist school settings.

It was an enormous collective effort, and both the government and community are extremely grateful for your work.

Mister Speaker, I think I can confidently speak for the ACT public school system when I say everyone is very happy to be back at school now after this unexpected disruption, but is also very much looking forward to a well-earned break during the upcoming summer holidays!

From: [Huxley, Mark](#)
To: [Laurent, Kristen](#)
Cc: [Steele, Peter](#); [EGMSlooffice](#); [DDGEDUoffice](#)
Subject: RE: FOR ACTION: SUB25/4603: Question Time Briefs for Assembly Sitting Period – Sitting Week 2-4 December 2025 (IMT)
Date: Monday, 1 December 2025 12:48:05 PM

OFFICIAL

Approved with thanks.

Please accept track changes and remove highlighting.

Thanks

Mark

Mark Huxley PSM
Executive Group Manager - School Improvement
ACT Education Directorate
Email: Mark.Huxley@act.gov.au Ph: 02 62059388

Please note that these communications are sent at a time convenient to me.Â There is no expectation that action or attention is required outside of working hours.

From: Laurent, Kristen <Kristen.Laurent@act.gov.au>
Sent: Monday, 24 November 2025 4:03 PM
To: Huxley, Mark <Mark.Huxley@act.gov.au>
Cc: Steele, Peter <Peter.Steele@act.gov.au>; [EGMSlooffice](#) <EGMSlooffice@act.gov.au>; [DDGEDUoffice](#) <DDGEDUoffice@act.gov.au>
Subject: FW: FOR ACTION: SUB25/4603: Question Time Briefs for Assembly Sitting Period – Sitting Week 2-4 December 2025 (IMT)

OFFICIAL

Hi Mark

For your clearance please.

Kristen

From: Steele, Peter <Peter.Steele@act.gov.au>
Sent: Monday, 24 November 2025 3:53 PM
To: Laurent, Kristen <Kristen.Laurent@act.gov.au>
Subject: RE: FOR ACTION: SUB25/4603: Question Time Briefs for Assembly Sitting Period – Sitting Week 2-4 December 2025 (IMT)

OFFICIAL

Thank you – have accepted mark up and addressed comment.

Pete

From: Laurent, Kristen <Kristen.Laurent@act.gov.au>
Sent: Monday, 24 November 2025 3:45 PM
To: Steele, Peter <Peter.Steele@act.gov.au>
Subject: FW: FOR ACTION: SUB25/4603: Question Time Briefs for Assembly Sitting Period – Sitting Week 2-4 December 2025 (IMT)

OFFICIAL

Hi Pete

Great job covering this as clearly and succinctly as you have. I have picked up a couple of small edits and considerations.

Kristen

From: Steele, Peter <Peter.Steele@act.gov.au>
Sent: Monday, 24 November 2025 2:04 PM
To: Laurent, Kristen <Kristen.Laurent@act.gov.au>; EDU, Cabinet & Assembly <EDUCabinetAssembly@act.gov.au>; Henderson-Smith, N <N.Henderson-Smith@act.gov.au>
Cc: Burn, Emma <Emma.Burn@act.gov.au>; Allen, Tracey <Tracey.Allen@act.gov.au>; James, Brooke <Brooke.James@act.gov.au>; EDU ELSO Office <EDU.ELSOoffice@act.gov.au>
Subject: RE: FOR ACTION: SUB25/4603: Question Time Briefs for Assembly Sitting Period – Sitting Week 2-4 December 2025 (IMT)

OFFICIAL

Thanks Kristin – I have drafted the QTB #52 – School Closures (at REC25/493938) using previous briefs and talking points to inform.

Appreciate if you can please review.

Can we please confirm the appropriate clearance pathway now that the IMT is stood down.

It may require review across SET due to the almost all areas of the directorate being involved.

Pete

From: Laurent, Kristen <Kristen.Laurent@act.gov.au>
Sent: Tuesday, 18 November 2025 11:45 AM
To: EDU, Cabinet & Assembly <EDUCabinetAssembly@act.gov.au>; Henderson-Smith, N <N.Henderson-Smith@act.gov.au>
Cc: Burn, Emma <Emma.Burn@act.gov.au>; Allen, Tracey <Tracey.Allen@act.gov.au>
Subject: RE: FOR ACTION: SUB25/4603: Question Time Briefs for Assembly Sitting Period – Sitting Week 2-4 December 2025 (IMT)

OFFICIAL

Thanks Patrick. I'll add this to the action log for the Incident Management team. It would be best for this to be prepared as close as possible to the sitting week so will likely come through last minute.

[@Henderson-Smith, N](mailto:N.Henderson-Smith@act.gov.au) please add to IMT action log – can be assigned at later stage but likely a Pete job.

Kristen

From: Do, Patrick <Patrick.Do@act.gov.au> **On Behalf Of** EDU, Cabinet & Assembly
Sent: Tuesday, 18 November 2025 11:40 AM
To: Laurent, Kristen <Kristen.Laurent@act.gov.au>
Cc: Burn, Emma <Emma.Burn@act.gov.au>; EDU, Cabinet & Assembly <EDUCabinetAssembly@act.gov.au>
Subject: FOR ACTION: SUB25/4603: Question Time Briefs for Assembly Sitting Period – Sitting Week 2-4 December 2025 (IMT)
Importance: High

OFFICIAL

Hi Kristen,

Please see below and attached for action, a QTB on School Closures to be added to the Minister's pack for sitting week 2-4 December 2025.

Please let me know if I should allocate this elsewhere.

QUESTION TIME BRIEFS REQUEST			
TRIM Number	SUB25/4603		
Branch, title and status	Branch	Brief number and title	Status
	IMT	40. School Closures	NEW
Action(s)	1. Draft/review/update Question Time briefs as required		
Clearance level required	As appropriate		
Date due to	COB Wednesday 26 November 2025		

EDUCabinetAssembly@act.gov.au	
Date due to MO	COB Wednesday 26 November 2025
BACKGROUND INFORMATION	
Sitting week dates	2-4 December 2025
Other details	Please manage any redirections between branches directly.
For more info	Please contact EDUCabinetAssembly@act.gov.au if you have any questions.

Kind regards

Pat

Patrick Do | Assembly Liaison Officer

Phone: via MS Teams | Email: EDUCabinetAssembly@act.gov.au or patrick.do@act.gov.au

Ministerial & Corporate Reporting – Communication, Engagement and Government Service
Branch| Education Directorate| ACT Government

220 London Circuit, Canberra City, ACT 2601 | GPO Box 158 Canberra ACT 2601

School Closures

Talking points

- The safety of students, staff and the community is our highest priority.
- Following the recall of products and safety alerts issued by WorkSafe ACT on Wednesday 12 November, the Directorate took steps to identify the use of these products in school settings and respond accordingly.
- Feedback from schools confirmed that these sand products had been used widely across our schools for sensory play, and arts and crafts.
- The Directorate discharged their responsibilities under ACT work health and safety laws, ensuring that any products potentially contaminated with asbestos are isolated and removed by a licensed asbestos assessor.
- The widespread use of these products meant that, unfortunately, many of our schools needed to be fully or partially closed while the necessary steps were taken by licensed asbestos assessors to ensure our schools remain safe for our students, staff and community.
- The Directorate and teams of licensed asbestos assessors and removalists worked tirelessly through days, evenings and across weekends to ensure that all schools were able to reopen by Tuesday 25 November.
- The Directorate will continue to engage licensed assessors over the remainder of term 4 to remove products from schools who were able to isolate them and maintain operations.
- It is possible schools will continue to find sand products they have in storage. When this happens, school staff will follow work health safety processes to isolate the product until it can be removed and cleared by a licensed asbestos assessor.

Key information

- The Education Directorate response has considered both the recall of Kadink decorative sand and Anko magic sand. Any coloured or decorative sand that could not be identified by packaging (loose sand) was assessed as a recalled sand type.
- The Directorate fully or partially closed several schools on Friday 14 November to allow assessors to remove and clear areas impacted by the Kadink product.
- Over the weekend of Saturday 15 and Sunday 16 November, there was a further recall of the Anko magic sand product.
- Due to the Anko product being in use across more sites, there needed to be further partial and full closures of schools commencing Monday 17 November.

Cleared as complete and accurate:	26/11/2025	
Cleared for public release by:	Deputy Director-General	Ext:
Contact Officer name:	Peter Steele	Ext:
Lead Directorate:	Education	
TRIM Ref:	SUB25/4603	

Background information

- On the evening of Wednesday 12 November, WorkSafe ACT issued a safety alert: *Asbestos contamination confirmed in coloured sand product*. The product identified in this alert was Kadink Decorative Sand, which was also subject to an Australian Competition and Consumer Commission recall due to containing traces of chrysotile asbestos.
- On Thursday 13 November, the Directorate communicated with schools to identify if this product was used and its location.
- Due to the widespread use of the sand and presence in schools, in line with Education Directorate procedures, a decision was made by the Director-General to close or partially close school on Friday 14 November.
- The Directorate commenced remediation activities on Friday 14 November, in order to re-open all schools impacted by the Kadink decorative sand by Monday 17 November.
- On the afternoon of Friday 14 November, Florey Primary School was cleared for reopening following the successful removal and remediation of the Kadink product. This allowed for the Florey Fair to proceed on the school site on Saturday 15 November 2025.
- Over the weekend of Saturday 15 and Sunday 16 November, there was a further recall of the Anko magic sand product.
- On Sunday 16 November, the Directorate undertook a further visual inspection of school sites to identify the location of the Anko product. This information would also inform triaging and recommended action. This work was undertaken by Education staff and volunteers from the State Emergency Service.
- These inspections confirmed that the Anko product was more widely used in schools and required the Directorate to close or partially close more schools from Monday 17 November.
- On Monday 17 November the Directorate prioritised returning schools to operations, where it was possible to isolate areas where sand had been identified.
- From Tuesday 18 November through until Monday 24 November, the Directorate prioritised the removal and reopening of fully closed and then partially closed school sites.
- Announcements were then made by schools, the Education website and via social media channels as schools were confirmed to be cleared by licensed assessors and able to return to operations.
- The Woden School had opened on Monday 17 November, however, was required to close that day as staff identified Anko products across the site. A team of assessors was sent to the school as a priority.
- The Malkara School was cleared for reopening on Thursday 20 November, however, the site needed to be returned to a full closure from Friday 21 November due to the discovery of more sand throughout the site, including external areas that are vital to the operation of the school. Further remediation was undertaken from Friday 21 November and the school was able to re-open on Tuesday 25 November.

Abigail, Claire

From: Attridge, Vanessa
Sent: Tuesday, 9 December 2025 12:12 PM
To: EDU, EGMFIG
Cc: EDU, School Operations Incidents; Huxley, Mark
Subject: FW: FOR APPROVAL: Sand Management DG & MIN Briefs
Attachments: MIN Brief_Presence of Contaminated Sand and Ongoing Risk Management – 5 December 2025 Update.tr5; DG Brief_Presence of Contaminated Sand and Ongoing Risk Management – 5 December 2025 Update.tr5

Importance: High

OFFICIAL

Hi Zoe

I recommend this progress to DDG for decision in DG's absence this week.

Thank you,
Nessa

From: Attridge, Vanessa
Sent: Friday, 5 December 2025 8:36 PM
To: Wood, Jo
Cc: EDU, Director-General Office ; Laurent, Kristen ; EDU, EGMFIG ; Huxley, Mark ; EDU, School Operations Incidents
Subject: FOR APPROVAL: Sand Management DG & MIN Briefs

Hi Jo,

Re: sand risk management reflecting current regulatory requirements and testing

Please see DG brief for decision – Min brief is almost identical, reflecting anticipated outcomes from your consideration of the DG brief.

I'm sorry these are late given the MO cut off for briefs is Monday.

Drop copy [@Huxley, Mark](#) and [@Laurent, Kristen](#)

Regards
Nessa

Vanessa Attridge
Executive Group Manager | Finance & Infrastructure
02 6205 3502 | vanessas.attridge@act.gov.au
Education | ACT Government
www.education.act.gov.au



Education Directorate

Ministerial Brief

To:	Minister for Education and Early Childhood	Tracking No.: FOL25/7695
Date:	05/12/2025	
CC:	Deputy Director-General	
From:	Executive Group Manager, Finance and Infrastructure	
Subject:	Presence of Contaminated Sand and Ongoing Risk Management – 5 December 2025 Update	
Critical Date:		
Critical Reason:		

Recommendations

That you:

1. Note information about contaminated sand products in ACT public schools, including positive test results confirming the presence of asbestos in some decorative sand product samples.

Noted / Please Discuss

2. Note, in line with current regulatory requirements and advice, action being taken to mitigate and remove the associated risk in ACT public schools.

Noted / Please Discuss

3. Note the Directorate is not intending to undertake further testing of contaminated sand products, informed by current information and advice.

Noted / Please Discuss

Yvette Berry MLA/...../.....

Minister's Feedback

Background

1. On 12 November 2025, the Australian Competition & Consumer Commission published a [recall notice](#) and [media release](#) for a decorative coloured sand product sold as Kadink Decorative Sand, stating it may contain tremolite asbestos.
2. On the same day WorkSafe ACT issued a [safety alert](#) *Asbestos contamination confirmed in coloured sand products*, after WorkSafe laboratory testing of samples confirmed that some product lines containing traces of Chrysotile, another type of asbestos, is present in the ACT.
3. Further recall notices for similar products have been issued, expanding the number of impacted schools.

Issues

4. To date there have been more than 700 reports of these sand products identified in ACT public schools.
5. Assessment and removal of products
6. Since 13 November 2025, the directorate have been engaging with licensed asbestos assessors and removalists to remove products and remediate impacted areas.
7. Assessment and removal has included:
 - a. Air monitoring (for a minimum of two hours) in areas where products were present, as part of all removal and collection of samples.
 - b. As air monitoring results are obtained, advice from assessors, based on known risks, including recommendation for removal by a licensed removalist and cleaning in some cases.
 - c. Assessors recording the location of products at each school.
 - d. Final inspection of remediated spaces, followed by assessors issuing a clearance certificate stating the impacted spaces are safe to occupy.
8. All schools have received a copy of the clearance certificate for each occasion of product removal at their site.
9. Schools have been instructed to print a copy of the clearance certificate and place it in their hazardous materials register onsite.

Testing Results – Air Monitoring

10. All air monitoring results received from licensed assessors to date are negative to the presence of airborne asbestos fibres.

Other Testing Results – PLM

11. 10 Polarised Light Microscopy (PLM) tests were requested by the directorate.
12. PLM tests identified 4 positive asbestos results, as below.
13. Note the directorate is not intending to undertake any further PLM testing.

PLM Test Results

School	Material	Result
Curtin South Preschool	Creatistics orange Sand	Chrysotile Asbestos
Forrest Primary School	Green Decorative Sand	UMF and Chrysotile Asbestos
Malkara School	Kadink coloured Sands	UMF and Chrysotile Asbestos
Wanniassa Junior Campus	Red Sand	UMF and Chrysotile Asbestos
Amaroo School	Various Sand Products	No Asbestos Detected
Curtin Primary School	Green Sand	No Asbestos Detected
Lyons Early Childhood Centre	Creatistics red Sand	No Asbestos Detected
Mount Rogers Primary School	Various Sand Products	No Asbestos Detected
Throsby School	ANKO Green Magic Sand	No Asbestos Detected
Torrens Primary School	Pink Kinetic Sand	No Asbestos Detected

Other Testing Available - TEM

14. Assessors have provided verbal advice to the directorate that as Transmission Electron Microscopy (TEM) testing takes 8-10 weeks, it is not a valuable tool in determining the clearance of an isolated space, and it is understood to be the view of assessors that the TEM test is not reasonably practicable.
15. WorkSafe ACT have advised of recent TEM test results, key findings and results are at Attachment A.

No Further Testing to Occur

16. Based on information received through testing to date and current advice, the directorate will not undertake further PLM testing or any TEM testing.
17. The directorate will request assessors retain existing untested samples until 30 June 2026, to provide opportunity to seek additional targeted testing if required.

Further removal and remediation

18. Sand products are continuing to be identified in schools.
19. On 2 December 2025, the Territory executed Notifiable Instrument NI2025-653 made under the *Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011*, section 419 (Work involving asbestos or ACM—prohibitions and exceptions).
20. Under this Instrument the removal of contaminated sand products and the following activities has been declared to be minor or routine maintenance work, or minor work, for the purposes of section 419(3)(k) of the Regulation if carried out by a licenced or competent person:

- a. removal and disposal of recalled coloured sand products from a workplace
 - b. cleaning of hard surfaces where small, confined contamination from the recalled coloured sand may have occurred
 - c. cleaning of soft surfaces where small, confined contamination from the recalled coloured sand may have occurred.
21. Notably, the Instrument removes the need for air monitoring during removal. This will expedite further remediation required, allowing removalists and assessors to remove sand products in a more efficient manner, in line with current requirements.
 22. These changes apply from 3 December 2025 to 30 December 2026.
 23. It is expected that sand products will continue to be identified in ACT government schools in the future. Identified products are and will be secured in cupboards or storerooms with appropriate signage in place, until they can be removed, in line with current regulations.

Financial Implications

24. The costs of contaminated sand removal and remediation is estimated to be approximately \$2.3 million. Total costs are currently unknown.
25. Invoices to the value of approximately \$0.750 million have been received to date.
26. Indicative costs are reflected in the 2025-26 mid year review business case provided to your office on 5 December 2025.
27. The cost of 10 PLM tests is expected to be \$6,000.

Consultation

Internal

28. School Facilities Management, Work Health and Safety, School Operations.
29. Incident Management Team and Crisis Management Team.

Cross Directorate

30. Engagement has occurred with CMTEDD and Health.

External

31. Unions (AEU, CPSU UWU) and ACT Parents are being regularly informed on this matter.
32. Licensed Asbestos Assessors and Licensed Asbestos Removalists have completed site risk assessments, provided advice and undertaken removal and remediation.

Work Health and Safety

33. The safety of students, staff and the community is our highest priority.
34. The Directorate continues to follow advice from WorkSafe ACT, recommendations from licenced asbestos contractors and fulfil current regulatory and legislative obligations. The risk of exposure remains low based on current advice.

35. Guidance has been provided for ACTPS employees on what the Regulatory changes mean for workplaces.

Benefits/Sensitivities

36. The Directorate has taken a risk-based approach to uphold legislative obligations and respond to the risk. Closing and partly closing impacted schools has enabled more rapid testing and remediation, outside of school hours, which will also enable risk elimination and clearance certificates more rapidly.
37. Testing results confirming the presence of asbestos demonstrates the Directorate response to address suspected risk to staff, students and visitors to ACT government schools was reasonable and proportionate, in addition to the requirement to fulfil regulatory obligations. This is also supported by further testing results by WorkSafe ACT and in other jurisdictions.

Communications, media and engagement implications

38. There has been extensive media coverage locally and nationally.
39. WorkSafe ACT published information about Regulatory changes on 3 December 2025.
40. The Directorate will continue to provide information to schools about safely managing contaminated sand.
41. In the interest of transparency, the Directorate will provide communications to your office for approval, to advise the community of positive PLM test results identified at 4 government schools in week 9, Term 4, including information about these hazards recorded in each school's hazardous materials register.

Signatory Name: Executive Group Manager, Finance & Infrastructure Phone: Teams

Action Officer: Executive Branch Manager, School Facilities Management Phone: Teams

Attachment A**Summary of WorkSafe ACT Recent Testing & Key Findings**

WorkSafe ACT advice issued 3 December 2025 identified the following key findings and results of Transmission Electron Microscopy (TEM) testing of Kadink sand products:

- The coloured sands contain tremolite and chrysotile asbestos.
- The sand and the fibres can be easily separated and crumbled, meaning they meet the definition of friable asbestos-containing material.
- This crumbling is consistent with actions where the asbestos contaminated sand would release fibres when rubbed between human fingers. Where asbestos is found to be friable, it may also be considered respirable. Under Work Health and Safety legislation, removal and disposal of friable asbestos is treated differently to non-friable asbestos.
- Airborne testing in schools did not detect airborne fibres, which provides reassurance. However, handling the Kadink Decorative Sand poses a higher risk than initially understood but the likelihood of a person being harmed is low.

WorkSafe ACT Kadink Sand Testing - Asbestos Results

Sample	Colour	Type	Fibrous content
Kadink Sand	Purple	Friable	Chrysotile Asbestos Tremolite Asbestos
Kadink Sand	Blue	Friable	Chrysotile Asbestos Tremolite Asbestos
Kadink Sand	Green	Friable	Chrysotile Asbestos Tremolite Asbestos
Kadink Sand	Yellow	Friable	Chrysotile Asbestos Tremolite Asbestos
Kadink Sand	Pink	Friable	Chrysotile Asbestos Tremolite Asbestos
Kadink Sand	White	No asbestos detected.	N/A