

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

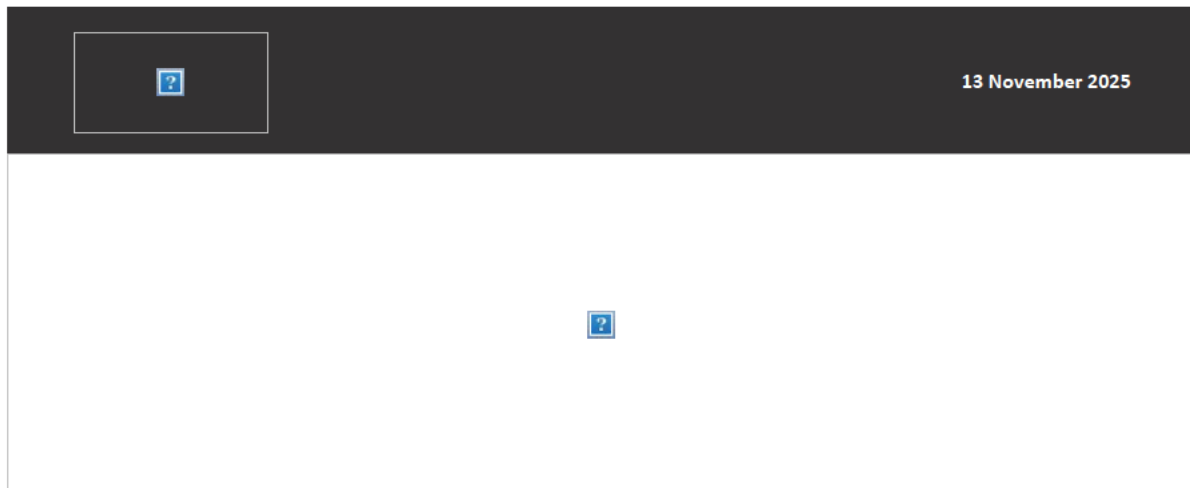
02 6205 3502 | vanessas.attridge@act.gov.au

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

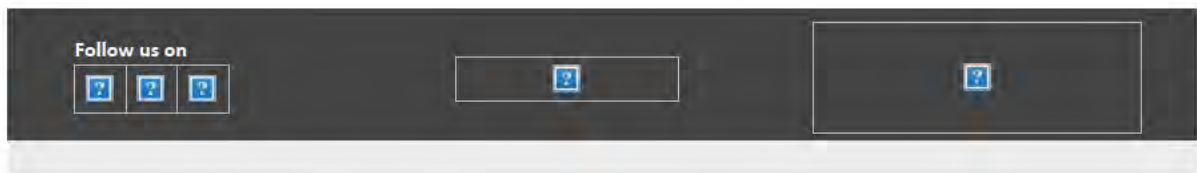
- Clearly label the package as asbestos waste.

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

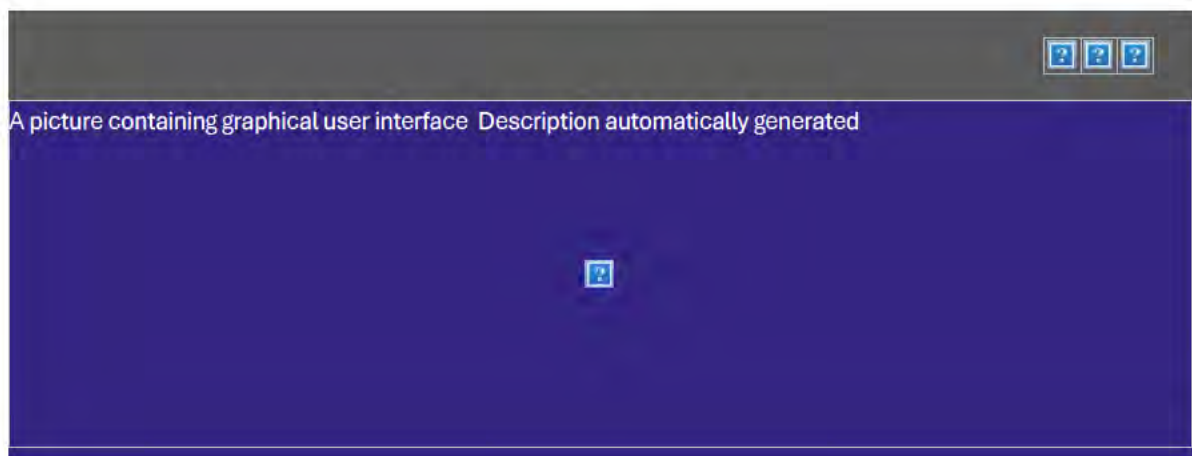


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This email, and any attachments, may be confidential and also privileged. If you are not the intended recipient, please notify the sender and delete all copies of this transmission along with any attachments immediately. You should not copy or use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

From: 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: BERRY

Sent: Friday, 14 November 2025 7:39 AM

To: BARR ; BARRY ; BRADDOCK ; CAIN ; CARRICK ; CASTLEY ; CHEYNE ; CLAY ; ED ; EMERSON ; HANSON ; LEE ; Milligan, James ; MORRIS ; NUTTALL ; ORR ; PARTON ; PATERSON ; PETTERSSON ; RATTENBURY ; STEEL ; STEPHEN-SMITH ; TOUGH ; TAIMUS.WG

Subject: Full and partial closures of public schools TODAY

Dear colleagues

A number of public schools will be fully or partially closed today in response to WorkSafe ACT advice about decorative coloured sand containing chrysotile asbestos. While the risk is low, the clear advice from WorkSafe is to isolate and remediate the risk. Below is my statement from this morning which has the latest information including which schools are impacted and where to find more information.

My office is arranging a briefing for any interested MLAs. Stay tuned- we'll send an invite to everyone.

STARTS:

A number of public schools will be closed on Friday 14 November 2025. Some schools will be fully closed while others will be partially closed.

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. This product is used at some of our public schools for sensory play, and arts and crafts.

I understand that this news might be upsetting for families. WorkSafe ACT have advised the risk of exposure to traces of chrysotile is low, however the safety of students, staff and families is our highest priority.

The decision to close schools has been made in line with Education Directorate policy and on the advice of WorkSafe on the safe management and remediation process required.

Closing schools will allow testing and remediation to occur as soon as possible. The Education Directorate will advise of the testing results as soon as possible and families will have received notification from their school about these closures. The Education Directorate is providing advice to non-government schools, as well as early childhood education and care services.

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

Partial School Closures impacting multiple cohorts 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
- Yarralumla Primary School – Montessori, Kindergarten, Year 1, Small Group Program

Preschool Closures only Friday 14 November 2025:

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

A hotline has been created for questions about the response in public schools.

Please call 6205 5429. Information will also be updated on the Education website:

[Education and training - ACT Government](#)

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](#).

I appreciate that this may be upsetting for students and families. There are support services available:

- eHeadspace 1800 650 890 - open 9am-1am daily (AEST).
- Mindmap 1800 862 111 phone support all day, every day from 11am to 10pm www.mindmap@act.gov.au
- Lifeline 13 11 14 - phone support all day, every day and online support 7pm-4am daily (AEST).
- Beyondblue 1300 22 4636 - phone support all day, every day and online support 3pm-midnight every day.
- Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800 - phone support all day, every day and online support from 8am-midnight every day (AEST).

This situation is evolving and I will keep you updated as I know more.

ENDS

Thank you

Yvette

From: [Hobbs, Rebecca](#) on behalf of [Berry, Yvette](#)
To: [Phillips, Tori](#); [Meeth, Sybilla](#); [Hobbs, Rebecca](#); [Wood, Jo](#); [Spence, Angela](#); [Huxley, Mark](#); [Attridge, Vanessa](#); [Gilbert, SallyL](#); [Education DLO](#)
Subject: BRIEFING: EDU

MO's list of issues:

- * Advice re legislation requirements compared with other states
- * Confirm hotline hours- what time does it close this arvo, can we open at 7am on Monday?
- * How many calls did the hotline take today?
- * Afternoon facebook posts
- * Florey Fair
- * Weekend staffing arrangements for MO and EDU execs
- * What to expect on Sunday in terms of test results/decision-making
- * Update re non-govs
- * Update re ECEC & school aged care

Microsoft Teams Need help? <<https://aka.ms/JoinTeamsMeeting?omkt=en-US>>

Join the meeting now <https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_OTY0NTBkYWYtMGU0Yy00YTMyLThlZDgtM2MwMDkxZjUzNGUz%40thread.v2/0?context=-%7b%22id%22%3a%22b46c1908-0334-4236-b978-585ee88e4199%22%2c%22oid%22%3a%227d5fa868-eebf-4943-b385-083074eaf4a6%22%7d>

Meeting ID: 468 853 432 613 4

Passcode: e7Rj3CY6

For organizers: Meeting options <https://teams.microsoft.com/meetingOptions/?organizerId=7d5fa868-eebf-4943-b385-083074eaf4a6&tenantId=b46c1908-0334-4236-b978-585ee88e4199&threadId=19_meeting_OTY0NTBkYWYtMGU0Yy00YTMyLThlZDgtM2MwMDkxZjUzNGUz@thread.v2&messageId=0&language=en-US>

<https://www.act.gov.au/__data/assets/image/0019/2541430/ACTGov_inline_black.png>

Org help <https://actss.service-now.com/ddts?id=ddts_ls_category&sys_id=e15706fc0a0a0aa7007fc21e1ab70c2f> | Privacy and security <<https://www.act.gov.au/privacy>>

From: [Hobbs, Rebecca](#)
To: [Education DLO; Meeth, Sybilla](#)
Cc: [BERRY](#)
Subject: Fw: Contact regarding alternative care options during school closures
Date: Friday, 14 November 2025 2:47:30 PM
Attachments: [Outlook-fxnugib.png](#)
[image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)

Adrienne

Can you please ask EDU to contact [REDACTED] this arvo?

Thanks

Bec

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: BERRY
Sent: Friday, November 14, 2025 2:45:15 PM
To: Hobbs, Rebecca
Subject: FW: Contact regarding alternative care options during school closures

Kind regards

Sam Bessey

Office Manager

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 Ngunnawal people as traditional custodians of the land and recognise any other people or families with connection to the lands of the ACT and region. I acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of this city and this region.

Please consider the environment before printing this email. If printing is necessary, print double-sided and black and white.

Please note that from 1 January 2018 ACT Government ministerial diaries are subject to publication on the ACT Government's open access website under section 23 of the *Freedom of Information Act 2016*.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, 14 November 2025 2:40 PM

To: BERRY

Cc: [redacted]

Subject: Contact regarding alternative care options during school closures

You don't often get email from [redacted] [@wcs.org.au](mailto:[redacted]@wcs.org.au). [Learn why this is important](#)

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.

To whom it may concern,

I just left a voicemail for Minister Berry's Chief of Staff regarding an idea related to the asbestos issue affecting schools.

I work with Woden Community Service (WCS), which provides outside school hours care across multiple ACT schools. [redacted] has just spoken with Sean Moysey, who was supportive of exploring options for WCS to provide alternative care if school closures extend beyond Sunday.

Could you please advise who within the Education Directorate would be the best person to discuss this with?

If possible, please contact [redacted] directly on [redacted]. If you're unable to reach [redacted] directly, feel free to call me on [redacted] even if it's outside business hours.

Kind regards,

[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]

Website: wcs.org.au | northside.asn.au

Woden: [2-6 Shea St, Phillip ACT 2606](#)

Northside: [2 Rosevear Pl, Dickson ACT 2602](#)



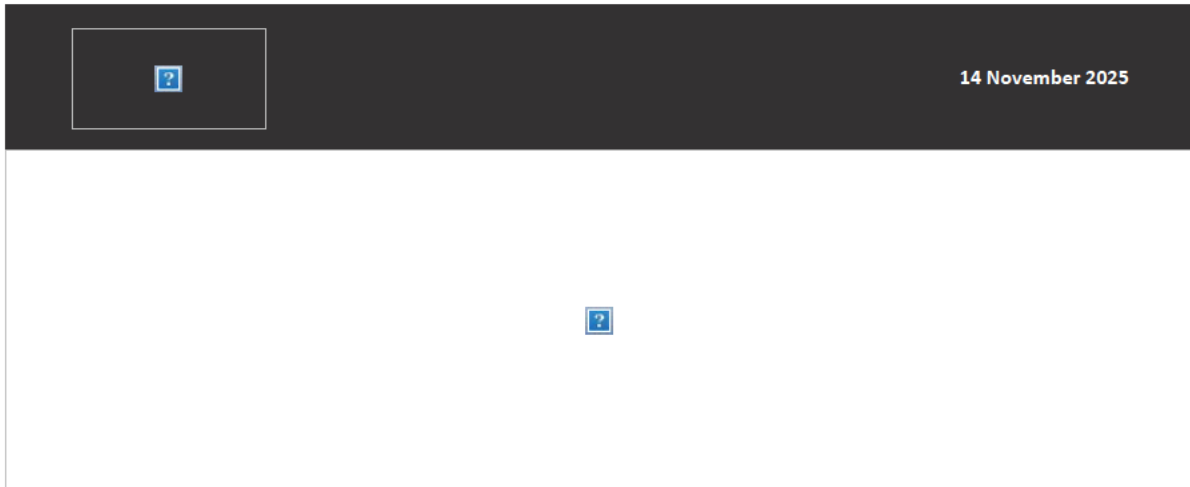
Woden Community Service and Northside Community Service are partnering together to combine our strengths and better serve our community.

Woden Community Service and Northside Community Service recognise the Ngunnawal people as traditional custodians of the ACT and surrounding region and acknowledge that other people and families also have a traditional connection to the lands of the ACT and region. We pay our respects to their cultures, ancestors and Elders, past and present.

From: [Meeth, Sybilla](#)
To: [Hobbs, Rebecca](#); [Phillips, Tori](#)
Subject: FW: CECA Alert: Additional WorkSafe ACT advice: Asbestos contamination confirmed in coloured sand product
Date: Friday, 14 November 2025 4:51:07 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.jpg](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image004.png](#)
[image005.png](#)
[image006.png](#)
[image007.png](#)
Importance: High

OFFICIAL

From: CECA.EducateandInform
Sent: Friday, 14 November 2025 3:42 PM
Subject: CECA Alert: Additional WorkSafe ACT advice: Asbestos contamination confirmed in coloured sand product
Importance: High



Additional WorkSafe ACT advice: 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](#)

New WorkSafe ACT advice published

WorkSafe ACT have now published **new information** for all impacted businesses (including ACT early childhood education and care services)

This includes:

- 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 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.

Read more about these updates at: [Asbestos contamination confirmed in coloured sand product - WorkSafe ACT](#)

All ECEC providers must ensure they meet safety obligations under the WHS Act. Further information is available on the WorkSafe ACT website at [Asbestos - WorkSafe ACT](#).

ACT ECEC 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, 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.

Follow us on



From: [Laurent, Kristen](#)
To: [BERRY](#); [Hobbs, Rebecca](#); [Whitty, Anna](#)
Cc: [Wood, Jo](#); [EDU, Director-General Office](#); [Spence, Angela](#); [DDGEDUoffice](#)
Subject: FW: FOR URGENT CLEARANCE: GOVERNMENT & STAKEHOLDER RELATIONS - Customer Service - MO REQUESTED CAVEAT BRIEF : contaminated sand products
Date: Saturday, 15 November 2025 3:02:46 PM
Attachments: [image007.png](#)
[image001.png](#)
[Attachment B Asbestos Regulation Comparison Table.docx](#)
[Minister Brief Hazardous Materials Response Contaminated Sand \(ACM\)- Update 1.docx](#)
[image003.jpg](#)

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.

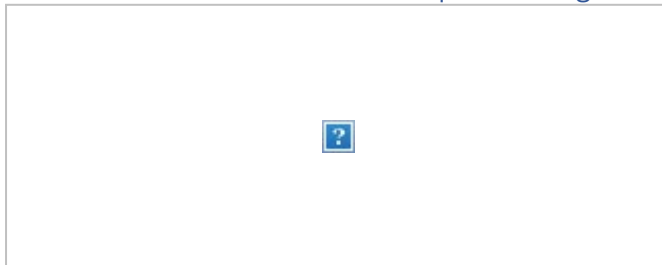
Kind regards

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>i.e external deadlines, who requested the input, any additional context</i>	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

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

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

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



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
------------	-------

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

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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*.

From: [BERRY](#)
To: [BERRY](#); [BARR](#); [BARRY](#); [BRADDOCK](#); [CAIN](#); [CARRICK](#); [CASTLEY](#); [CHEYNE](#); [CLAY](#); [ED](#); [EMERSON](#); [HANSON](#); [LEE](#); [Milligan, James](#); [MORRIS](#); [NUTTALL](#); [ORR](#); [PARTON](#); [PATERSON](#); [PETTERSSON](#); [RATTENBURY](#); [STEEL](#); [STEPHEN-SMITH](#); [TOUGH](#); [TAIMUS.WG](#)
Subject: Additional public school closures tomorrow
Date: Sunday, 16 November 2025 6:14:04 PM

Dear colleagues

With additional coloured sand products now part of the national re-call, more public schools will unfortunately be closed tomorrow for testing and remediation by licensed asbestos contractors.

I can advise that:

- 69 public schools are fully closed tomorrow
- 23 public schools are fully open tomorrow (3 of these are relocating some classes within the school)

The list is on the [Education Directorate website](#) now. The hotline will be open from 7am: 6205 5429.

Thank you

Yvette

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 7:46:35 AM
Attachments: [image002.png](#)
[image004.png](#)
[image005.jpg](#)
[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
Sent: Saturday, 15 November 2025 3:03 PM
To: BERRY ; Hobbs, Rebecca ; Whitty, Anna
Cc: Wood, Jo ; EDU, Director-General Office ; Spence, Angela ; DDGEDUoffice
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

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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

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

From: [BERRY](#)
To: [BERRY](#); [BARR](#); [BARRY](#); [BRADDOCK](#); [CAIN](#); [CARRICK](#); [CASTLEY](#); [CHEYNE](#); [CLAY](#); [ED](#); [EMERSON](#); [HANSON](#); [LEE](#); [Milligan, James](#); [MORRIS](#); [NUTTALL](#); [ORR](#); [PARTON](#); [PATERSON](#); [PETTERSSON](#); [RATTENBURY](#); [STEEL](#); [STEPHEN-SMITH](#); [TOUGH](#); [TAIMUS.WG](#)
Subject: RE: Additional public school closures tomorrow
Date: Monday, 17 November 2025 5:10:04 PM

Good evening colleagues

The Education Directorate has now updated the [website](#) with the list of school closures for tomorrow.

Here's the latest:

- 51 schools are fully open (42 with some changes in operations)
- 16 schools are partially open
- 25 schools are closed

Thanks

Yvette

From: BERRY

Sent: Sunday, 16 November 2025 6:14 PM

To: BERRY ; BARR ; BARRY ; BRADDOCK ; CAIN ; CARRICK ; CASTLEY ; CHEYNE ; CLAY ; ED ; EMERSON ; HANSON ; LEE ; Milligan, James ; MORRIS ; NUTTALL ; ORR ; PARTON ; PATERSON ; PETTERSSON ; RATTENBURY ; STEEL ; STEPHEN-SMITH ; TOUGH ; TAIMUS.WG

Subject: Additional public school closures tomorrow

Dear colleagues

With additional coloured sand products now part of the national re-call, more public schools will unfortunately be closed tomorrow for testing and remediation by licensed asbestos contractors.

I can advise that:

- 69 public schools are fully closed tomorrow
- 23 public schools are fully open tomorrow (3 of these are relocating some classes within the school)

The list is on the [Education Directorate website](#) now. The hotline will be open from 7am: 6205 5429.

Thank you

Yvette



Caveat Brief

To: Minister for Education and Early Childhood

CC:

From: A/g EGM System Policy and Reform

Subject: Contaminated Sand: Non-government and ECEC Update

Cleared By: A/g EGM System Policy and Reform

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

1. On Wednesday 12 November, WorkSafe ACT issued a safety alert: "SAFETY ALERT: Asbestos contamination confirmed in coloured sand product". This advice:
 - a. confirmed that a decorative coloured sand product had been found to contain traces of chrysotile, a type of asbestos.
 - b. confirmed that laboratory testing undertaken by WorkSafe ACT had confirmed that the contaminated product is present in the ACT and contains chrysotile.

2. On 13 November 2025 the Education Directorate and Children's Education and Care Assurance (CECA) sent advice to non-government schools and Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) providers to alert them to the product recall and provided advice on steps to be undertaken, based on information available on the WorkSafe ACT website.
 - a. At the time the information available was that this product may have been purchased for home use in the ACT but advice was sent to providers out of an abundance of caution.
 - b. Subsequent discussions with WorkSafe ACT (night of 13 November 2025) identified that the website information was targeted to households, not Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBU) under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (WHS Act).
 - c. The advice on steps to respond to the product recall were reasonably practicable based on the information known at the time.

3. On 14 November 2025 the following actions were taken:
 - a. Updated advice #1 send to Association of Independent Schools ACT (AISACT) and Catholic Education Canberra Goulburn (CECG), non-government schools and ECEC providers:
 - i. The actions communicated on 13 November 2025 were appropriate for households and not a PCBUs under the WHS Act.
 - ii. Directing to information available on the WorkSafe ACT website regarding asbestos.
 - iii. Further advice would be provided once available from WorkSafe ACT.
 - b. Communication materials prepared for ACT public schools shared with AISACT and CECG.
 - c. Update to website for families of non-government schools and ECECs that providers have been given advice and families should contact them about arrangements at those locations.
 - d. Updated advice #2 send to Association of Independent Schools ACT (AISACT) and Catholic Education Canberra Goulburn (CECG), non-government schools and ECEC providers providing updated WorkSafe ACT advice, which included actions for PCBUs.



Caveat Brief

4. Current advice / intelligence from sector stakeholders:

- a. AISACT – 6 of 18 schools affected, with schools following advice provided and still operating.
- b. CECG – some schools impacted (number will be confirmed with the Directorate) and triaging from 1 (affected and will cause operational disruptions) to 4 (not affected). Schools still operating.
- c. Out of School Hours Care – some providers have contacted CECA regarding potential approval to operate from alternative locations if schools continue to be impacted.
- d. ECEC providers – high volume of calls with providers seeking advice (referred to WorkSafe ACT) and 54 notifications of presence of recalled product(s).

Yvette Berry MLA

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

Action Officer: Michael Crowther

Date: 14 November 2025

OFFICIAL



Caveat Brief

To: Minister for Education and Early Childhood

From: Director-General

Subject: Hazardous Materials Response – Contaminated Sand (ACM – Update 2)

Cleared By: Director-General

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

1. Since the 15 November 2025 brief on this incident (FOL25/7375), Kmart and Target issued a voluntary [recall notice](#) for one of their sand products stating asbestos has been detected in some samples. The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission subsequently published a recall for this product late this afternoon.
2. In response, the Directorate undertook an audit of all schools for this product and any other similar products to inform triaging and recommended actions. This process identified the Kmart product is widespread across ACT public schools.
3. While the health impacts of these products is low, a decision was made at 5pm today in relation to school closures on Monday 17 November 2025 to allow the time required for assessment, clean-up and remediation to occur:
 - a. 17 schools identified as having no sand products can operate on Monday.
 - b. 2 schools partially closed on Friday have been cleared by the Assessor in relation to the Kadink products and do not have any other sand products and can fully operate on Monday.
 - c. The 17 schools fully closed on Friday all have Kmart product across their school sites and will remain closed on Monday.
 - d. Lake Tuggeranong College identified the Kmart product in one building which is able to be isolated. This school will operate on Monday with the one impacted building closed.
 - e. Hawker College and Melba Copland have identified and isolated the Kmart product without operational impact. These two schools will operate on Monday.
 - f. The remaining 69 schools will remain closed pending visual inspection of the sites to inform next steps.
4. This decision, communicated to schools, families and the media this evening, is in the interest of the safety of students, staff and the community and is in line with our regulatory obligations under the *Work Health Safety Act 2011*.
5. The Directorate will continue to follow all advice from WorkSafe ACT and recommendations from licensed contractors. All other craft sand products will be removed from every ACT public school this week.
6. The Directorate kept key stakeholders informed including the unions, Parents ACT, Catholic Education Office, the Association of Independent Schools and early childhood education and care providers. The Health Directorate has also been informed to support their business continuity planning given expected impact on their workforce availability.
7. The Directorate will continue to update you on the process and timeline for reopening of schools.



Caveat Brief

Yvette Berry MLA



Action Officer: Kristen Laurent – Executive Branch Manager Governance

Date: 16 November 2025

From: [Hobbs, Rebecca](#)
To: [Education DLO](#)
Subject: Re: FOR ACTION: Contact Wesfarmers/Officeworks
Date: Tuesday, 18 November 2025 5:02:42 PM

OFFICIAL

Thank you!

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: Education DLO
Sent: Tuesday, November 18, 2025 5:00:12 PM
To: Hobbs, Rebecca
Subject: FW: FOR ACTION: Contact Wesfarmers/Officeworks

OFFICIAL

For info

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: Doherty, Sarah On Behalf Of EGMSloffic
Sent: Tuesday, 18 November 2025 5:00 PM
To: Education DLO
Subject: FW: FOR ACTION: Contact Wesfarmers/Officeworks

OFFICIAL

Hi Adrienne

Please see before from Mark.

Thank you

Sarah Doherty | A/g Executive Officer to Mark Huxley

School Improvement Group | Education Directorate | ACT Government

Phone: 0468 556 406 or MS Teams | Email: sarah.doherty@act.gov.au

www.education.act.gov.au

I would like to respectfully acknowledge the Ngunnawal people who are the traditional custodians of the land on which we live, learn, work, and play, and pay my respect to the Elders past, present and emerging.

From: Huxley, Mark <Mark.Huxley@act.gov.au>
Sent: Tuesday, 18 November 2025 4:55 PM
To: EGMSloffic <EGMSloffic@act.gov.au>; DDGEDUoffice

<DDGEDUoffice@act.gov.au>; Allen, Tracey <Tracey.Allen@act.gov.au>

Subject: Re: FOR ACTION: Contact Wesfarmers/Officeworks

OFFICIAL

Called. Action closed.

Thanks

Mark

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: Doherty, Sarah <Sarah.Doherty@act.gov.au> on behalf of EGMSlofficce <EGMSlofficce@act.gov.au>

Sent: Tuesday, November 18, 2025 4:34:25 PM

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

Subject: FOR ACTION: Contact Wesfarmers/Officeworks

OFFICIAL

Hi Mark

Please see below from Bec Hobbs. DDGO has asked if you could please make the call.

I took a call this afternoon from [REDACTED], [REDACTED] for Wesfarmers, who own Officeworks and Kmart.

Here are my notes from the call:

- Their standard product testing identified an issue
- They then did extra safety testing, which then prompted contact with the ACCC
- The testing has all demonstrated negligible risk/no identifiable safety hazard
- Respirable fibres are only released through mechanical means (crushing or pulverising), which is unlikely to occur in the settings where the sand is used
- They have identified 322 schools that purchased the sand through Officeworks (nationally) and can provide data about which ACT schools they have on file (noting that we've already searched our schools, and that teachers may have purchased product themselves for classrooms)
- I said that all of our air testing so far has been negative
- I committed to getting EDU in touch with Wesfarmers to enable the sharing of the sales data, and any test results that we can share
- Can an EDU snr exec please call [REDACTED] Head of Officeworks [REDACTED] on [REDACTED]

Thank you

Sarah

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

Sent: Tuesday, 18 November 2025 4:26 PM

To: EGMSlofficce <EGMSlofficce@act.gov.au>

Subject: FOR ACTION: Contact Wesfarmers/Officeworks

OFFICIAL

Hi team,

I've touched base with Ang's office and they have asked that Mark please call [REDACTED]

from Officeworks. [REDACTED] details are below.

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: Hobbs, Rebecca <Rebecca.Hobbs@act.gov.au>

Sent: Tuesday, 18 November 2025 4:10 PM

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

Subject: Contact from Wesfarmers

Hi Adrienne

I took a call this afternoon from [REDACTED] [REDACTED] for Wesfarmers, who own Officeworks and Kmart.

Here are my notes from the call:

- Their standard product testing identified an issue
- They then did extra safety testing, which then prompted contact with the ACCC
- The testing has all demonstrated negligible risk/no identifiable safety hazard
- Respirable fibres are only released through mechanical means (crushing or pulverising), which is unlikely to occur in the settings where the sand is used
- They have identified 322 schools that purchased the sand through Officeworks (nationally) and can provide data about which ACT schools they have on file (noting that we've already searched our schools, and that teachers may have purchased product themselves for classrooms)
- I said that all of our air testing so far has been negative
- I committed to getting EDU in touch with Wesfarmers to enable the sharing of the sales data, and any test results that we can share
- Can an EDU snr exec please call [REDACTED] Head of Officeworks [REDACTED] on [REDACTED]?

Thanks

Bec

OFFICIAL



Caveat Brief

To: Minister for Education and Early Childhood

CC: Director General Education Directorate

From: Executive Branch Manager, Education and Care Regulation and Support

Subject ECEC – Notifications regarding recalled sand product

Cleared By: Executive Group Manager, System Policy and Reform

Does this deal with Child Safety issues or concerns? Yes

Background

1. On 13 November 2025, CECA was informed by WorkSafe ACT that decorative sand products from China have been found to contain chrysolite, a type of asbestos. CECA sent an alert out to all ECEC services advising of the contamination.
2. On 13 November 2025, WorkSafe ACT updated the advice. CECA alerted all ECEC services to contact WorkSafe directly and to notify CECA providing details of how they are managing risk.

Summary

3. As at COB 17 November 2025, CECA received 96 notifications that the suspect-coloured sand was present at a service.
4. As at COB 17 November 2025, there were 111 ECEC services temporarily closed within the ACT. 106 of these are an ACT Government service or located on an ACT Government school site. Five services notifying as closed are not located at school site.

Yvette Berry MLA

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

Action Officer: Jo Williams, Director Regulatory Operations

Date: 17 November 2025



Caveat Brief

To: Minister for Education and Early Childhood

CC: Director General Education Directorate

From: Executive Branch Manager, Education and Care Regulation and Support

Subject ECEC – Notifications regarding recalled sand product

Cleared By: Executive Group Manager, System Policy and Reform

Does this deal with Child Safety issues or concerns? Yes

Background

1. On 13 November 2025, CECA was informed by WorkSafe ACT that decorative sand products from China have been found to contain chrysolite, a type of asbestos. CECA sent an alert out to all ECEC services advising of the contamination.
2. On 13 November 2025, WorkSafe ACT updated the advice. CECA alerted all ECEC services to contact WorkSafe directly and to notify CECA providing details of how they are managing risk.

Summary

3. As at COB 19 November 2025, CECA received 9 new notifications the suspect-coloured sand was present at a service.
4. As at COB 19 November 2025, there were 56 ECEC services temporarily closed within the ACT. 51 of these are an ACT Government service or located on an ACT Government school site. Five services notifying as closed are not located at school site.

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

Action Officer: Jo Williams, Director Regulatory 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 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 M 

Action Officer: Kristen Laurent – Executive Branch Manager Governance

Date: 17 November 2025

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

From: Phillips, Tori <Tori.Phillips@act.gov.au>
Sent: Wednesday, 19 November 2025 12:49 PM
To: EDU Media <EDU.Media@act.gov.au>; Short, Paul <Paul.Short@act.gov.au>
Cc: Whitty, Anna <Anna.Whitty@act.gov.au>; Hobbs, Rebecca <Rebecca.Hobbs@act.gov.au>
Subject: FW: Questions, Sand, Malkara and testing
Importance: High

Hey team

Can you please assist me on the testing questions highlighted below? I can draft a statement on Malkara but need help on the testing.

Tori Phillips

Media Adviser | Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister

M: 047 878 7065

From: >
Sent: Wednesday, 19 November 2025 12:32 PM
To: Phillips, Tori <Tori.Phillips@act.gov.au>
Subject: Questions, Sand, Malkara and testing

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 Tori,

Thanks again for keeping in touch about the day.

Re Malkara

- parents are obviously very confused about what happened this morning and would like some assurance about the safety of the school
- why was the school cleared by the specialists team if all of the sand had not been found yet?
- can the education directorate be 100% sure there is no decorative coloured sand left at the school?
- are there any concerns about the asbestos assessment completed at Malkara?
- will the school be able to be fully open or are parts now closed to students?
- is the minister confident in the certificates issued to the other schools in the ACT?

Testing

- have there been samples of sand taken for testing from all schools which had sand?
- have all the air tests come back yet? What were the results?
- have any fibre test results come back? What were the results?

Thank you for your help, Ill keep in touch throughout the day



From: Short, Paul <Paul.Short@act.gov.au>
Sent: Wednesday, 19 November 2025 2:17 PM
To: Hobbs, Rebecca <Rebecca.Hobbs@act.gov.au>
Cc: Phillips, Tori <Tori.Phillips@act.gov.au>; Whitty, Anna <Anna.Whitty@act.gov.au>; EDU Media <EDU.Media@act.gov.au>; Barges, Joanne <Joanne.Barges@act.gov.au>
Subject: RE: Questions, Sand, Malkara and testing

OFFICIAL

Yes the red text is accurate.

Cheers,
Paul

From: Hobbs, Rebecca <Rebecca.Hobbs@act.gov.au>
Sent: Wednesday, 19 November 2025 2:14 PM
To: Short, Paul <Paul.Short@act.gov.au>
Cc: Phillips, Tori <Tori.Phillips@act.gov.au>; Whitty, Anna <Anna.Whitty@act.gov.au>
Subject: RE: Questions, Sand, Malkara and testing

Sorry Paul, I still need the red text fact-checked.

From: Short, Paul <Paul.Short@act.gov.au>
Sent: Wednesday, 19 November 2025 2:08 PM
To: Hobbs, Rebecca <Rebecca.Hobbs@act.gov.au>
Cc: Phillips, Tori <Tori.Phillips@act.gov.au>; Whitty, Anna <Anna.Whitty@act.gov.au>
Subject: RE: Questions, Sand, Malkara and testing

OFFICIAL

Mark Huxley will call you about this one. Let me know if you need anything more after you've chatted with him.

Cheers,
Paul

From: Hobbs, Rebecca <Rebecca.Hobbs@act.gov.au>

Sent: Wednesday, 19 November 2025 1:54 PM
To: Short, Paul <Paul.Short@act.gov.au>
Cc: Phillips, Tori <Tori.Phillips@act.gov.au>; Whitty, Anna <Anna.Whitty@act.gov.au>
Subject: RE: Questions, Sand, Malkara and testing

Paul, can you please fact check the red text below for us?

Thanks

Bec

From: Phillips, Tori <Tori.Phillips@act.gov.au>
Sent: Wednesday, 19 November 2025 1:45 PM
To: Hobbs, Rebecca <Rebecca.Hobbs@act.gov.au>; Whitty, Anna <Anna.Whitty@act.gov.au>
Subject: FW: Questions, Sand, Malkara and testing
Importance: High

For urgent clearance please

Tori Phillips
Media Adviser | Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister
M: 047 878 7065

Malkara

Malkara received a clearance certificate from a licensed assessor on Monday evening. The school was re-opened for all students from this morning.

Part of the remediation included cordoning off the playground sandpit, which had been contaminated with some of the recalled craft sand products.

On arrival at the school this morning staff discovered some of the sandpit sand has been spread across other parts of the playground.

Students were held on the bus for 7 minutes while staff found an appropriate space to move students into.

An assessor has been onsite this morning and will give us advice about how to properly remediate the area.

The school is open for students and staff today, with the impacted areas cordoned off. Some students, who would ordinarily access the cordoned off areas, have left school for the day.

Testing

Licensed asbestos assessors have been instructed to take samples of craft sand products from every public school site they have assessed. These samples are being securely stored for future testing, if deemed necessary.

All air monitoring tests have been conducted at all public schools as part of the clearance

process by licensed assessors. All tests conducted to date have returned negative results. Air monitoring tests are used to detect airborne asbestos fibres. All tests conducted to date have returned negative results.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 19 November 2025 12:32 PM
To: Phillips, Tori <Tori.Phillips@act.gov.au>
Subject: Questions, Sand, Malkara and testing

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Hi Tori,

Thanks again for keeping in touch about the day.

Re Malkara

- parents are obviously very confused about what happened this morning and would like some assurance about the safety of the school
- why was the school cleared by the specialists team if all of the sand had not been found yet?
- can the education directorate be 100% sure there is no decorative coloured sand left at the school?
- are there any concerns about the asbestos assessment completed at Malkara?
- will the school be able to be fully open or are parts now closed to students?
- is the minister confident in the certificates issued to the other schools in the ACT?

Testing

- have there been samples of sand taken for testing from all schools which had sand?
- have all the air tests come back yet? What were the results?
- have any fibre test results come back? What were the results?

Thank you for your help, Ill keep in touch throughout the day



From: Short, Paul <Paul.Short@act.gov.au>
Sent: Wednesday, 19 November 2025 2:35 PM
To: Phillips, Tori <Tori.Phillips@act.gov.au>; Hobbs, Rebecca <Rebecca.Hobbs@act.gov.au>; Whitty, Anna <Anna.Whitty@act.gov.au>; Wood, Jo <Jo.Wood@act.gov.au>; EDU, Director-General Office <EDUDirectorGeneralOffice@act.gov.au>
Cc: EDU Media <EDU.Media@act.gov.au>; Barges, Joanne <Joanne.Barges@act.gov.au>; Huxley, Mark <Mark.Huxley@act.gov.au>; Spence, Angela <Angela.Spence@act.gov.au>
Subject: Dotties for 3pm stand up
Importance: High

OFFICIAL

Status update – 3pm update including schools being announced as reopening tomorrow.

- 4 Closed
- 16 Open (for some students)
- 72 Open (for all students)

Announcing at 3pm

- Macquarie Primary School – full closure to full open
- Wanniasa School – full closure to full open
- Yarralumla Primary School – partial closure to full open
- Gowrie Primary School – full closure to full open
- Kaleen Primary School - partial closure to full open
- Evatt Primary School - full closure to full open
- Red Hill Primary School - partial closure to full open
- Further update at 6pm.

Clearance certificates

- The Education Directorate delayed its 12:30pm update today while it was undertaking due diligence to cross check Clearance Certificates for schools.
- This was to ensure full clearance was provided across whole site schools.
- Our clearances have been re-confirmed by assessors and our efforts are continuing.

WHS processes

- Every effort has been made to identify coloured sand products at our schools.
- However, as staff and students return, it's possible that additional items may be found.
- Please be assured that we have clear procedures in place to manage this safely.
- Under WHS regulations, any recalled sand products must be removed by a licensed asbestos removalist.
- Until removal occurs, these products can be safely isolated. For example:
 - recalled craft sand found in cupboards can be safely left in place without needing to isolate an entire room.
 - If sand products are found on desks or floors in learning spaces, the entire room needs to be closed off from use until the sand can be cleaned and removed by a licensed remover.
- This will continue to happen in our schools - in line with strong WHS practices.

Malkara

- Malkara received a clearance certificate from a licensed assessor on Monday evening. The school was re-opened for all students from this morning.
- Part of the remediation included cordoning off the playground sandpit, which had been contaminated with some of the recalled craft sand products.
- Additional sand has been discovered by the school in the playground area and some internal spaces at the schools.
- These areas have been isolated and assessors are on site doing further work and an assessment of impact.
- We will notify the school community of impact asap.
- Assessments at Malkara by licensed assessors are still underway.
- Some students, who would ordinarily access the cordoned off areas, have left school for the day.

Cranleigh

- Cranleigh received a clearance certificate from a licensed assessor on Monday evening.
- The school was re-opened for all students from this morning.
- On arrival at the school this morning staff discovered new instances of the recalled sand products which had not been previously identified.
- In line with WHS advice these products have been isolated until they can be cleared and remediated.
- The school is continuing to operate safely using other spaces for learning.

ECEC

- As at COB 18 November 2025, CECA (early childhood education and care regulator) received 95 new notifications the suspect-coloured sand was

present at a service.

- As at COB 18 November 2025, there were 69 ECEC services temporarily closed within the ACT. 64 of these are an ACT Government service or located on an ACT Government school site. Five services notifying as closed are not located at school site.

Alternative learning

- The Education Directorate is focused on remediating and reopening all of our impacted ACT public schools as quickly as we possibly can.
- We understand this has been disruptive for students and families, but safety in our schools is our top priority. We will continue to communicate regularly with families on the operational status of our schools moving forward.
- To support families interested in learning resources and activities while they are at home with the children, the Education Directorate has updated its online learning resources, developed during the COVID lockdown: [ACT Education - Resources to support home learning](#)
- This advice was share with ACT public school principals yesterday and is available for sharing with students and families at their discretion – there is no expectation that parents need to use the resources or undertake home learning activities.

Cheers,

Paul

Paul Short

Executive Branch Manager, Communications, Engagement & Government Support

Education Directorate | ACT Government

Phone: 02 620 72809 | Mobile: 0408 368 746

www.act.gov.au/education-and-training

From: Phillips, Tori <Tori.Phillips@act.gov.au>
Sent: Wednesday, 19 November 2025 2:37 PM
To: Hobbs, Rebecca <Rebecca.Hobbs@act.gov.au>
Cc: Whitty, Anna <Anna.Whitty@act.gov.au>
Subject: RE: Questions, Sand, Malkara and testing

Thanks I am SO glad we dropped the word held on the Malkara response – I should have flagged earlier

Tori Phillips
Media Adviser | Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister
M: 047 878 7065

From: Hobbs, Rebecca <Rebecca.Hobbs@act.gov.au>
Sent: Wednesday, 19 November 2025 2:34 PM
To: Phillips, Tori <Tori.Phillips@act.gov.au>
Cc: Whitty, Anna <Anna.Whitty@act.gov.au>
Subject: RE: Questions, Sand, Malkara and testing

Tori, this response is now cleared by DCM:

Malkara

Malkara received a clearance certificate from a licensed assessor on Monday evening. The school was re-opened for all students this morning.

Part of the remediation included cordoning off the playground sandpit, which had been contaminated with some of the recalled sand products.

On arrival at the school this morning staff discovered some of the sandpit sand has been spread across other parts of the playground.

Students remained on the school bus for approximately 7 minutes while staff cordoned off the impacted spaces and found appropriate spaces to move students into.

An assessor has been onsite this morning and will give advice about how to properly remediate the area. The school will update staff and families as soon as possible.

The school is currently open for students and staff, with the impacted areas cordoned off. Some students, who would ordinarily access the cordoned off areas, have left school for the day.

Testing

Licensed asbestos assessors have been instructed to take samples of sand products from every public school site they have assessed. These samples are being securely stored for future testing, if deemed necessary.

Air monitoring tests have been conducted at all public schools as part of the clearance process by licensed assessors. Air monitoring tests are used to detect airborne asbestos fibres. All tests conducted to date have returned negative results.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 19 November 2025 12:32 PM
To: Phillips, Tori <Tori.Phillips@act.gov.au>
Subject: Questions, Sand, Malkara and testing

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Hi Tori,

Thanks again for keeping in touch about the day.

Re Malkara

- parents are obviously very confused about what happened this morning and would like some assurance about the safety of the school
- why was the school cleared by the specialists team if all of the sand had not been found yet?
- can the education directorate be 100% sure there is no decorative coloured sand left at the school?
- are there any concerns about the asbestos assessment completed at Malkara?
- will the school be able to be fully open or are parts now closed to students?
- is the minister confident in the certificates issued to the other schools in the ACT?

Testing

- have there been samples of sand taken for testing from all schools which had sand?
- have all the air tests come back yet? What were the results?
- have any fibre test results come back? What were the results?

Thank you for your help, Ill keep in touch throughout the day

--



From: [Short, Paul](#)
To: [Phillips, Tori](#); [Whitty, Anna](#); [Hobbs, Rebecca](#)
Cc: [Barges, Joanne](#); [Huxley, Mark](#); [Sloane, Brenton](#); [Wood, Jo](#); [Spence, Angela](#); [Education DLO](#)
Subject: FYI: Parent message - safety procedures
Date: Wednesday, 19 November 2025 3:45:43 PM
Attachments: [Parent comms - sand safety procedures.docx](#)

OFFICIAL

Hi all

For information, today we have provided the attached message to our open and re-opening schools for use with their parent communities.

The advice is intended to reassure parents that it's very possible we will find more sand with everyone back onsite, and let them know we have WHS management processes in place.

Cheers,

Paul

Paul Short

Executive Branch Manager, Communications, Engagement & Government Support

Education Directorate | ACT Government

Phone: 02 620 72809 | Mobile: 0408 368 746

www.act.gov.au/education-and-training

Subject: Update on Craft Sand Safety Measures at Our School

Dear Parents and Carers,

We're pleased to welcome **all/some** of our students back onsite following the recent disruption caused by the discovery of recalled craft sand products at our school.

The safety and wellbeing of our students and staff remains our highest priority. Authorities have advised that the health risk from these products is very low, and we are following all recommended work health and safety (WHS) guidelines.

Every effort has been made to identify coloured sand products at our school. However, as staff and students return, it's possible that additional items may be found. Please be assured that we have clear procedures in place to manage this safely.

Under WHS regulations, any recalled sand products must be removed by a licensed asbestos removalist. Until removal occurs, these products can be safely isolated.

For example, recalled craft sand found in cupboards can be safely left in place without needing to isolate an entire room. If sand products are found on desks or floors in learning spaces, the entire room needs to be closed off from use until the sand can be cleaned and removed by a licensed remover. While this may mean some classes need to be relocated within the school for short periods, these measures ensure that our school remains a safe environment for all students.

Thank you for your understanding and support as we manage this situation. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the school office.

More information about the recalled craft sand products, including health and safety advice, is available on the [ACT Education website](#).

Regards,

[Principal's Name]

[School Name]

From: Whitty, Anna
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.



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

CC: Director General Education Directorate

From: Executive Branch Manager, Education and Care Regulation and Support

Subject ECEC – Notifications regarding recalled sand product

Cleared By: Executive Group Manager, System Policy and Reform

Does this deal with Child Safety issues or concerns? Yes

Background

1. On 13 November 2025, CECA was informed by WorkSafe ACT that decorative sand products from China have been found to contain chrysolite, a type of asbestos. CECA sent an alert out to all ECEC services advising of the contamination.
2. On 13 November 2025, WorkSafe ACT updated the advice. CECA alerted all ECEC services to contact WorkSafe directly and to notify CECA providing details of how they are managing risk.

Summary

3. As at COB 20 November 2025, CECA received 8 new notifications the suspect-coloured sand was present at a service. An additional 23 notifications regarding the sand are also being processed.
4. As at COB 20 November 2025, information currently available through NQAITS indicates there were 41 ECEC services temporarily closed within the ACT. 36 of these are an ACT Government service or located on an ACT Government school site (20 OSHC services and 16 Preschools). 5 services notifying as closed are not located at school site.

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

Action Officer: Sean Moysey
 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



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;

[Redacted] **Noted / Please Discuss**
 Yvette Berry MLA [Redacted]/...../.....

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.

OFFICIAL



Caveat Brief

To: Minister for Education and Early Childhood

From: Director-General

Subject: Hazardous Materials Response – Contaminated Sand (ACM) – Update 4

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 3 (REC25/493137) to support reopening of ACT public schools.
2. Activities on 17 November had focused on reviewing schools based on visual inspections to assess which schools could open (either fully or partially) for Tuesday 18 November.
3. The focus of the response from shifted on 18 November to the appropriate process required to re-open closed or partially closed schools. This process ensures that clearance certificates have been received from licensed assessors and that notification had been made to WorkSafe ACT before seeking authorisation from the Director-General to re-open a closed or partially closed school.
4. The approved approach is to work through clearance certificates and update the community twice per day – at 12:30pm and 6:00pm. This approach will continue until such time that all schools are able to be opened for full operations.
5. At 12:30pm, the first tranche of schools for opening on 19 November was communicated via the Education website, social media and school communications.
 - a. This includes the opening of all specialist schools, which were prioritised by the licensed assessors on 17 November.
6. At 6:00pm, the second tranche of schools for opening on 19 November was communicated was communicated via the Education website, social media and school communications.
7. For the commencement of school on Wednesday 19 November:
 - a. Closed – 11
 - b. Partially open – 16
 - c. Open to all students – 65
 - i. Note – some of these open sites have areas that continue to be isolated.
8. There continues to be further discovery of contaminated sand. It is expected that this will continue as staff and students return and advice has been provided to schools to continue to isolate and report any additional products discovered so that it can be managed through the appropriate process.



Caveat Brief

- 9. Requests have been received from Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) providers requesting the Directorate/Regulator to issue a formal notification of forced closure due to a localised emergency which would allow them to waive fees for parents and still receive their Federal Government CCS fees for the period of the closure. Discussions with EBM ECRS have confirmed that as the regulator they will not be issuing this notice and the closure notice issue is to be managed through the management of the licence agreements with OSHC providers.
- 10. Additionally, one OSHC provider has written to the Directorate seeking a waiver of their Term 4 licence fees in consideration of the school closures and closure of OSHC services.
- 11. The Directorate is seeking urgent legal advice from the Government Solicitors' Office regarding both of these matters (OSCH related).
- 12. The Directorate will continue to provide updates.

Yvette Berry MLA

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

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

Date: 18 November 2025



Caveat Brief

To: Minister for Education and Early Childhood

CC: Director General Education Directorate

From: Executive Branch Manager, Education and Care Regulation and Support

Subject: ECEC – Notifications regarding recalled sand product

Cleared By: Executive Group Manager, System Policy and Reform

Does this deal with Child Safety issues or concerns? Yes

Background

1. On 13 November 2025, CECA was informed by WorkSafe ACT that decorative sand products from China have been found to contain chrysolite, a type of asbestos. CECA sent an alert out to all ECEC services advising of the contamination.
2. On 13 November 2025, WorkSafe ACT updated the advice. CECA alerted all ECEC services to contact WorkSafe directly and to notify CECA providing details of how they are managing risk.

Summary

3. As at COB 18 November 2025, CECA received 95 new notifications the suspect-coloured sand was present at a service.
4. As at COB 18 November 2025, there were 69 ECEC services temporarily closed within the ACT. 64 of these are an ACT Government service or located on an ACT Government school site. Five services notifying as closed are not located at school site.

Yvette Berry 

Action Officer: Jo Williams, Director Regulatory Operations
 Date: 18 November 2025

From: [Short, Paul](#)
To: [Phillips, Tori](#); [Hobbs, Rebecca](#)
Cc: [Barges, Joanne](#); [Education DLO](#)
Subject: Today's web and social updates - sand remediation
Date: Monday, 24 November 2025 12:48:08 PM
Attachments: [Website copy for updating for Mon 24 Nov 2025.docx](#)
[Social media post Mon 24 Nov.docx](#)

OFFICIAL

Hi Tori and Bec

When we update the website later today, we intend to remove the school lists and replace it with a more general update on what has been happening in schools and next steps. We wanted to check you are comfortable with this approach before progressing.

See web proposed content attached (changes tracked) and our EDU social for this arv.

If you are happy, we will publish later today once we have confirmation re Malkara – expected between 3.30pm-4.30pm.

Cheers,

Paul

Paul Short

Executive Branch Manager, Communications, Engagement & Government Support

Education Directorate | ACT Government

Phone: 02 620 72809 | Mobile: 0408 368 746

www.act.gov.au/education-and-training

Copy current Mon 24 November 2025 – edits for publishing PM Mon 24 Nov

Craft sand products in schools

On this page

- [Advice for ACT public school families](#)
- [Our asbestos safety measures](#)
- [Out of hours access to schools](#)
- [Advice for Early Childhood Education and Care and non-government schools](#)
- [Safe disposal at home](#)
- [Health advice](#)

Advice for ACT public school families

Authorities have issued safety warnings about 2 brands of craft sand found to include traces of asbestos:

- Kadink Decorative Sand – [WorkSafe ACT safety notice 12 November 2025](#)
- Anko magic sand – [ACCC product recall 16 November 2025](#)

These products have been used in many ACT public schools.

While personal health risks are very low, under ACT work health and safety laws, any products containing asbestos must be removed by a licensed asbestos assessor.

This has required us to close some schools, or close off spaces in some schools, where the products are present.

All ACT public schools are now open to all student cohorts.

Call centre numbers

The Education Directorate feedback and complaints line is available 9:00am to 5:00pm weekdays – call [02 6205 5429](tel:0262055429). For all enquiries outside these hours please contact Access Canberra [13 22 81](tel:132281).

Our asbestos safety measures

Why did schools need to close?

- Under ACT work health and safety laws, any products containing asbestos must be removed by a licensed asbestos assessor.
- The use of craft sand is widespread in educational settings and was found at most of our schools.
- Spaces and rooms where the craft sand was located needed to be closed off from access until the product could be safely removed and cleared for use by a licensed asbestos assessor.
- In some schools this meant the closure of multiple rooms and learning spaces. This loss of available space for learning lead to the closure of some schools.

- Sand products have now been safely removed and these schools have been cleared by a licensed assessor so all students can return.

What is the process for clearing schools?

- When a contaminated sand product is found the area is isolated from use and the product contained. In some cases this may mean safely leaving the product in a cupboard, or could mean the closure of an entire room or learning space.
- Licensed asbestos removalists and assessors are then engaged to attend the school.
- Air monitoring tests are conducted to confirm there is no airborne asbestos. So far, all air monitoring tests done in our schools have returned negative results.
- Contaminated products are safely removed and spaces are cleaned.
- The licensed asbestos assessor will then provide a clearance certificate confirming the spaces are safe to re-open.

Is contaminated sand still at some schools?

- In many of our schools the sand products have been found in spaces that can be securely closed off (like cupboards and store rooms). These schools have been able to remain open.
- These spaces will also need to be cleaned and cleared by a licensed asbestos assessor. This work is occurring outside school hours and on weekends to minimise disruption to learning.
- 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 assessor.

Out of hours access to schools

- While the majority of our schools have returned to normal operations during the school day, after hours access to school facilities may be limited.
- Many schools have isolated rooms and spaces where the recalled sand products are present. These spaces will be cleared by a licensed asbestos assessor before they can be used again. Much of this work will occur outside school hours and on weekends, which may impact community availability.
- If you hire or use public school facilities outside school hours, please confirm your booking with the school.

Advice for Early Childhood Education and Care and non-government schools

- The Children's Education and Care Assurance (CECA), and Regulator for non-government schools, has provided advice to early childhood education and care (ECEC) services and non-government schools about the management of both products.
- Families are asked to seek advice from their ECEC or non-government school about arrangements in place for their specific location.

Safe disposal at home

- [ACCC's Product Safety advice](#) will help you understand how to safely dispose of any recalled craft sand products. It also provides health information about these products.
- [Worksafe ACT's safety advice](#) provides step-by-step guidance on removing the product from your home or workplace.
- If you have any craft sand products at home, **do not bring them to school.**

Health advice

- On Friday 21 November 2025, enHealth issued updated [health advice](#) regarding the recall of imported coloured and decorative sand products.
- Testing to date indicates that there is very low risk to human health from these products.
- Regulatory authorities maintain a precautionary approach and are advising people to stop using the products and dispose of them appropriately.
- Workplace settings, including schools, are advised to follow the advice from their state or territory work, health and safety agency.
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SOCIAL MEDIA POST – time tbc Monday 24 November 2025

Sunday 24 November: Malkara School will re-open to all students tomorrow (Tuesday 24 November). This means all ACT public schools have returned to normal operations following remediation works due to recalled craft sand.

A big thank you to the Canberra community for your patience and support while we worked through the important process of clearing closed schools for re-opening.

Thank you also to our school staff, directorate teams, and licensed asbestos specialists who have been working hard to get all students back into classrooms as quickly as possible.

Many of our schools were able to remain open because the sand products they found were held in closed spaces like cupboards and store rooms. These spaces will also need to be cleaned and cleared by a licensed asbestos assessor. This work is occurring outside school hours and on weekends over the coming weeks.

The latest information on schools, including sand recall and health advice, is on our website <https://www.act.gov.au/education-and-training/latest-articles/act-public-school-closures-friday-14-november-2025#Advice-for-ACT-public-school-families>.

