



THE HON KEVIN RUDD MP

MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS
CANBERRA

Mrs Laurie Kazan-Allen
Coordinator
International Ban Asbestos Secretariat
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Dear Mrs ~~Kazan-Allen~~ *Laurie*

Thank you for your email of 30 November 2011 regarding the global trade in asbestos. I regret the delay in responding to you.

The Australian Government is deeply concerned about the risks to human health associated with asbestos and is committed to working to combat the asbestos hazard internationally.

The Australian Government will continue to advocate for chrysotile asbestos to be listed under Annex III of the Rotterdam Convention. At the 5th Conference of Parties (COP) to the Convention in June 2011, Australia led efforts to secure a strong closing declaration, endorsed by more than 60 parties, expressing deep concern that the listing had been prevented by a small number of parties for the third consecutive time. The Australian Government will continue to lobby Canada, in particular, to reverse its position on the listing of chrysotile asbestos.

I share your concern that the dangers to human health posed by unsafe use of asbestos are not yet well understood in many countries, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region. Your efforts to raise awareness about asbestos, most recently during your visit to India, illustrate the importance of education in ensuring that asbestos-importing countries are aware of the true, long-term human and financial costs of its use.

The Australian Government intends to be at the forefront of global efforts to eliminate the use of asbestos and is determined to work with other countries, international organisations and other partners to this end.

As you may be aware, last December at the Australian Labor Party's National Conference in Sydney the following motion was adopted by conference:

Labor recognises the impact of asbestos on the health of those who are exposed to it and the legacy that it will leave, particularly on vulnerable people in the developing world, where exporters are focussing their trade to ensure the continued high usage of asbestos

Labor will lead international calls for a global treaty to ban the use of and trade in asbestos and will lead diplomatic efforts on this front including convening a Global Alliance against the Asbestos Hazard Conference in Australia

Thank you once again for contacting me on this very important issue. I wish you well in your endeavours going forward and I trust the information in this letter is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kevin Rudd', with a stylized, flowing script.

Kevin Rudd