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Australasian Faculty of
Occupational and Environmental Medicine

7 January 2019

Mr Aaron Harper MP
Chair
Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence
Prevention Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000

Via Email: health@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Mr Harper

Submission to the inquiry into the *Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018*

Thank you to the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee (the Committee) for the opportunity to provide a submission to its inquiry into the *Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018* (the Bill).

The Australasian Faculty of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (AFOEM) is a Faculty of The Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP) representing specialist occupational and environmental physicians in Australia and New Zealand. We are committed to establishing and maintaining the highest standards of practice in occupational and environmental medicine in Australia and New Zealand through training, continuing professional development and advocacy.

AFOEM's submission to this inquiry relates specifically to the Bill's proposal "to amend the Public Health Act 2005 to establish the Notifiable Dust Lung Disease register and require prescribed medical practitioners to notify the chief executive of Queensland Health about cases of notifiable dust lung disease."

The recent sudden increase in confirmed cases of accelerated silicosis in Queensland and other States as well as the re-emergence of Coal worker's pneumoconiosis over recent years call for urgent actions from both State/Territory and Federal Governments.

Over recent months, AFOEM and TSANZ have been providing specialist medical guidance to assist all stakeholders in dealing with the recent outbreak of accelerated silicosis. In particular, AFOEM and TSANZ have been leading the development of

documentation to address specific issues faced by stakeholders¹ and have been advocating for effective measures to be put urgently in place to address this crisis.²

AFOEM understands that the Bill's proposed Notifiable Dust Lung Disease Register aims to provide greater clarity about the rates of occupational dust lung disease in Queensland and that its purpose is twofold as outlined in the [Bill's Explanatory Notes](#): (1) to monitor and analyse the incidence of notifiable dust lung diseases and (2) to exchange information about notifiable dust lung diseases with other entities of the State.

AFOEM is supportive of the proposed establishment of the Notifiable Dust Disease Register. As per the [Bill's Explanatory Notes](#), we note that The Thoracic Society of Australia and New Zealand, (TSANZ), The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiologists and the Australasian and New Zealand Society of Occupational Medicine have previously been consulted on the proposed register and have also expressed their support.

As occupational lung diseases are a national problem, in addition to measures taken at State/Territory level, an effective response requires the collaboration of all stakeholders, including both the Federal and State Governments to work together to deliver a prompt and effective response to this serious health problem. AFOEM has recently written to all State and Territory Governments calling on them to collaborate with other jurisdictions to develop a coordinated, effective national response to this important health issue as a matter of urgency, including provision of support for the proposed national dust diseases register that was considered at the COAG Health Council meeting of 12 October 2018 and is being progressed through COAG's Clinical Principal Committee.

Should you require further information about this correspondence, please contact AFOEM on AFOEM@racp.edu.au.

Yours sincerely

Dr Beata Byok
President AFOEM

¹ [Dedicated webpage](#) including links to resources developed jointly by AFOEM and TSANZ: [Accelerated Silicosis Overview](#) and [Accelerated Silicosis FAQs](#). This information was also sent directly to AFOEM members, all RACP respiratory physicians and other medical colleges.

² 10 October 2018 - [Joint AFOEM/TSANZ media release](#) issued following the [ABC 7.30 program](#) which exposed this issue nationally on the same day. Dr Graeme Edwards, FAFOEM and Dr Ryan Hoy, FRACP, TSANZ, featured on the program.

12 October 2018 – Media release: [RACP welcomes COAG consideration of Silicosis at its meeting today](#)

13 October 2018 – Media release: [RACP welcomes COAG review of silica exposure standards and register](#)