

FILE NAME: Colonial Sugar Refinery (CSR)

DATE: 1960

DOC#: CSR092

DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION: Wittenoom Chest X-Ray Survey & Related Correspondence

(88)

DISTRICT HOSPITAL

KAIGORLIE

JMcN:MKV

Date 1st November, 1960

Dr. W. S. Davidson,
A/Commissioner of Public Health,
Department of Public Health,
57 Murray Street,
PERTH

Dear Dr. Davidson,

Enclosed is a brief report on Wittenoom, which
is forwarded for your information. I have sent copies to Dr. King,
and Dr. Letham.

Kind regards,

[Handwritten signature]

CHEST PHYSICIAN.

PLAINTIFF'S
EXHIBIT
103400
PENGAD-Exhibit, M. J.

WITTENOOM CHEST X-RAY SURVEY 1960.

The following are the results of the chest x-ray examination of workers employed for more than one year at Australian Blue Asbestos, Wittenoom, examined by the Mines Mobile X-Ray Unit during September, 1960. A few workers have been excluded but their exclusion does not affect the over-all picture. Also excluded are men diagnosed as suffering from industrial chest disease in previous years, who have left the industry.

The diagnostic symbols represent:-

- N. No evidence of industrial chest disease or other pulmonary pathology.
- F+ Increased lung markings of a non specific type possibly due to the very earliest stage of silicosis or asbestosis, but too inconclusive to justify even a provisional diagnosis.
- F+(s1) Fairly conclusive evidence of Silicosis/asbestosis and the men concerned have been advised to leave the industry. Definitive diagnosis awaits further investigation to exclude other pulmonary disease and to assess disability, if any.
- S1 Silicosis and/or asbestosis.

X-RAY CLASSIFICATION

No. of years at Aust. Blue Asbestos.	N.	F+	F+(s1) & S1	% of workers affected per year of exposure. (F+S1, S1)
1	71	-	-	0%
2	43	1	-	0%
3	24	5	1	3%
4	6	4	3	23%
5	2	4	-	0%
6	4	2	3	33%
7	1	4	4	44%
8	1	2	2	40%
9	-	-	3	100%
10	1	1	1	33%
11	1	1	-	0%
12	-	-	2	100%
13	-	1	-	0%
Total:	151	25	19	100%

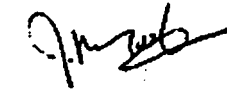
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There is no need to comment on the figures save to say that only the huge labour turnover (over 70% of workers have worked at Wittenoom for 3 years or less) prevented large numbers of men from being affected. The concurrent dust counts prepared by the Senior Inspector of Mines showed how dusty the mill and mine really are, and the results of the chest x-ray examinations show the effect. It would appear that silicosis is a more serious problem than asbestosis and that frequently the disease is of a mixed type. This explains why the classical radiological appearance of asbestosis is rarely seen.

It is also worth noting that mere presence at the mine or mill over a relatively short period is sufficient to produce disease and that unlike the Gold Mines, the actual occupation of the worker is not too important.

An attempt was made to x-ray the men employed in transporting the asbestos bags to the coast, but only a few were actually done. It is desirable that these workers and those engaged in loading asbestos at the docks should be examined regularly and their conditions of work investigated.

Effective dust suppression at Australian Blue Asbestos, is an urgent and immediate necessity.



J. McNulty
CHEST PHYSICIAN.

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UNDER SECRETARY FOR MINES:

This report comes as something of a shock. We have known that conditions in the mill were very dusty.

No cases of asbestosis had been reported until recently and quite a few men had served considerable terms without apparent effect.

I had formed the opinion that the risk was not particularly serious and I think that this opinion was shared by the management.

The mill has been very much improved and we are now paying attention to the underground conditions. Several visits have been made by our ventilation men.

Dr. McNulty has been in direct touch with the management and they have advised me that they will co-operate to reduce the dust.

The value of special detailed study of the results of the medical examinations is evident.

We will press for the further improvement of conditions both in the mine and the mill.

I think we should also make a careful study of the industrial history of all employees at the next medical examination.

E. L. Piskun
STATE MINING ENGINEER.

EEB:JW:
17th November, 1960.



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AMT/JF.
258/60.

21st November, 60.

Dr. J. McNulty,
Chest Physician,
Kalgoorlie District Hospital,
KALGOORLIE.

Dear Dr. McNulty,

Thanks for the report on the recent x-ray examinations at Wittenoom. I have discussed it with the State Mining Engineer and as a result of same we will press for the further improvement of conditions both in the mine and the mill. We also propose to make a careful study of the industrial history of all employees at the next medical examination.

I agree with you that effective dust suppression at Wittenoom is an urgent and immediate necessity.

Yours faithfully,

UNDER SECRETARY FOR MINES

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THE STATE MINING ENGINEER:

It would appear to me desirable that an early conference between yourself and your Inspectors and the Company Management should take place in regard to this matter.

Could this be arranged, please?



UNDER SECRETARY FOR MINES

AHT/JF.
21st November, 1960.

L.O. P... 1/12/60 26B 23/11/60
24.11.60.

S.H.E. 1.12.60.

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NEW SOUTH WALES
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

ABA 89

POSTAL ADDRESS:
BOX 31, GEORGE STREET Nth. P.O.
SYDNEY

TELEPHONE: BU 4249
and 3 056 EXTENSIONS 977, 1908

Our Ref. No. _____
Your Ref. No. _____

Please address all communications
to the Director.

Division of Occupational Health
~~DIVISION OF INDUSTRIAL HYGIENE~~

86-88 GEORGE STREET Nth.,
SYDNEY

AB: R.W.

2nd December, 1960.

Dr. D. D. Letham,
Physician,
Department of Public Health,
Box 134, G.P.O.,
PERTH, West Australia.

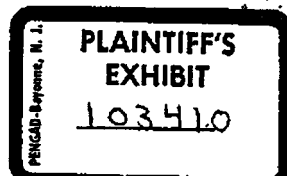
Dear Dr. Letham,

SUBJECT: Asbestos Dust Counts.

In reference to your letter of the 28th November, reference I/~~225/60~~ - DDL/PM, I wish to advise you that I have discussed this matter with several of my scientific staff. In our experience it is rarely that one meets situations where a mixture of silica and asbestos dust exists where there is difficulty from the point of view of dust counts; it is easy to determine which is the major hazard, e.g. in the manufacture of asbestos sheets very small quantities of sand are used and it is clear that the only significant hazard is the asbestos one. I feel that the matter can only be tackled on general common sense lines; it is not practical to have dust standards for mixtures of dusts.

Yours faithfully,

Alan Bell
ALAN BELL
Director,
Division of Occupational Health.



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P.O. Box 66,
Port Hedland, 9th October 196

The Senior Inspector of Mines,

KALGOORLIE W.A.

Re:- Australian Blue Asbestos Pty Ltd - Wittenoom.

Your query regarding the company policy at Wittenoom over the matter of providing a bank of nylon bag dust filters is not answerable as yet. During my last visit to the mine I was told that head-office were still deliberating on the matter. However, I will be at Wittenoom tomorrow with Inspector Hunt and will make further enquiries. Messrs Broadhurst and Thomas were over at Wittenoom during the week following my last inspection and it is possible that some decision may have been reached - naturally, we will have to ask what has been decided for despite our intense interest in this matter it is most unlikely that the management would have the courtesy to advise us voluntarily.

I did observe that the general mill atmosphere appeared to be dustier than usual. Without means of checking this aspect I could only attribute the apparent dustiness to the fact that once again the mill output has been taken above the figure of 14,000 ton (short) of ore per two weekly period. This was the figure I set late last year and at the time it was agreed that the mill dust collection unit did not appear to be capable of reasonable operation once the throughput exceeded this total.

With typical A.B.A. custom the output has been increased, and is to be increased further, but no reference was made to me despite the fact that they have never been given the O.K. to take the production over my earlier restricted figure. Possibly the management have discussed the restriction with the State Mining Engineer, but I feel sure that I would have been informed had this been so.

I will advise you further within a few days.

DISTRICT INSPECTOR OF MINES, PORT HEDLAND.

PLAINTIFF'S
EXHIBIT

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RECEIVED - Registry, N. I.