

Question on Notice
No. 176
Asked on 6 March 2024

MR M HART ASKED MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND MINISTER FOR YOUTH JUSTICE
(HON D FARMER)

QUESTION:

Will the Minister advise (a) if the Education Department was advised of any asbestos issues during construction of the Queensland Ballet Academy at Kelvin Grove State College and (b) if so, whether the department approved the burial onsite of any asbestos?

ANSWER:

Asbestos containing material (ACM) was commonly used in building products until the late 1980s. As many Queensland schools were built prior to 1990, it is not uncommon for ACM to be present in these facilities. It is important to note that ACM that is in good condition and left untouched is relatively low risk.

To ensure the safety of students and staff, the condition of ACM in Department of Education (DoE) owned facilities is monitored closely through asbestos audits conducted by the Department of Housing, Local Government, Planning and Public Works' QBuild.

During the construction of the Queensland Ballet Academy at Kelvin Grove State College in 2019–20, ACM was discovered as part of the initial excavation work in early 2019.

The builder immediately ceased work and notified DoE that suspected in-ground ACM had been identified. QBuild was engaged as the lead authority for the assessment and removal of ACM. This process was undertaken between February and April 2019.

In February 2019, in addition to safe work procedures being established for the safety of staff, students and the school community, an occupational hygienist was engaged to oversee this work and undertake air monitoring in accordance with the National Occupational Health and Safety Commission's Guidance Note on the Membrane Filter Method for Estimating Airborne Asbestos Fibres at the school.

The analysis of all the air monitoring samples undertaken found that the Safe Work Australia workplace exposure standards for airborne contaminants were met. Therefore, the hygienist determined the site to be safe for staff and students to return and for work to continue.

DoE has comprehensive procedures for the safe management of in-situ ACM and discovery of ACMs in soil.

During the construction of the Queensland Ballet Academy project, which was completed in January 2020, all ACM discoveries were managed in accordance with DoE's asbestos management procedures.