



CEO Alistair John Lazenby
Yuanda (UK) Co Ltd
125 Old Broad St, London EC2N 1AR

Re: Yuanda (UK) Imports from China?

July 28, 2016

Dear Sir,

We are writing to you on behalf of a coalition of groups representing civil society stakeholders in the UK including asbestos victims, trade unionists, medical professionals and health and safety campaigners who are concerned about the possibility of Yuanda UK importing asbestos-containing materials from China for use on UK building projects.

These concerns have been stimulated by the scandal which has erupted in Australia this month over the use of illegally imported asbestos-containing building materials from China by Yuanda. One such high profile incident was triggered by the discovery that roofing panels at the site of a new children's hospital in Perth, Western Australia contained chrysotile (white) asbestos.¹ Since this incident, enquiries have documented the possibility of similar situations at scores of other construction projects around Australia.

On July 19, 2016, personnel from the Australian Border Force raided the headquarters of the Chinese-owned company which imported this banned material: Yuanda Australia PTY Ltd. Emergency measures have been put in place to impound Yuanda imports at the docks until they have been tested for asbestos.²

The intense level of media scrutiny, trade union agitation and public outrage are understandable. Exposures to asbestos are responsible for Australia's most deadly epidemic of occupational disease. In fact, the relatively small population of Australia has one of the world's highest incidences of the fatal asbestos cancer mesothelioma. Unfortunately, the UK has, for years, had the world's highest incidence of mesothelioma mortality. In July 2016, the Health and Safety Executive reported that: "Men who worked in the building industry when asbestos was used extensively are now among those most at risk of mesothelioma."³

If Yuanda Australia imported asbestos-containing building materials, it is not unreasonable to suspect that Yuanda UK Co. Ltd might have done likewise. Your company's website lists several high-profile UK projects including: 100 Bishopsgate (completion 2018), Newington Butts (2017), Nova Victoria (2017), One Blackfriars Road (2017), Indescon Court 2 (2016)

¹ *Asbestos Diseases Hit Home*. July 21, 2016.

<https://au.news.yahoo.com/thewest/wa/a/32104079/asbestos-diseases-hit-home/#page1>

² *Customs' asbestos checks strand China products at border*. July 20, 2016.

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/customs-asbestos-checks-strand-china-products-at-border/news-story/e023ad4e41c4bc162a2684e5f45f0cd8>

³ HSE. *Mesothelioma in Great Britain*. July 2016.

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/research/rrhtm/rr696.htm>

and others.⁴ Are asbestos-containing Yuanda products such as those used on the new children's hospital in Perth, Western Australia also being used on the London sites?

Australia's asbestos ban has not protected its workers from hazardous exposures to Yuanda's asbestos-containing imports. The same could also be true in Britain which has also enacted comprehensive prohibitions on asbestos use. Fiona Murie, Director of Health and Safety and Construction for the Building and Woodworkers International, "is extremely concerned about the welfare of building workers in the UK and other countries where Yuanda is active." Graham Dring, Chair of the Asbestos Victims Support Groups Forum, UK, agrees: "The precautionary principle dictates that if there is a suspected risk of causing harm to the public or the environment, then alternative measures or products should be used."

We urgently ask you to address this matter and communicate with us at the very earliest opportunity regarding the nature of the materials imported by your company and used on UK building sites. In the meantime, we are making our concerns known at the highest levels of government, trade unions, trading and standards authorities and British stakeholding associations.

Sincerely,

Graham Dring⁵
Chair: Forum of Asbestos Victims
Support Groups UK
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Laurie Kazan-Allen
Coordinator: International Ban
Asbestos Secretariat
Email: lka@btinternet.com

⁴ Yuanda Europe's Project Gallery.
<http://www.yuanda-europe.com/projects>

⁵ Postal address for Graham Dring: Asbestos Victims Support Groups Forum UK
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