

14 December, 2010

Mr Tom MacDonald
Consul General of Canada
Consulate General of Canada
Level 5, 111 Harrington Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Mr MacDonald,

RE: Opposition to the Re-opening of the Jeffrey Asbestos Mine in Canada

The organisations we represent are very concerned about the proposed re-opening of the Jeffrey asbestos mine in Quebec. We understand that the new mine may have annual exports of 200,000 tons of asbestos for the next 25 to 50 years. The main importers of Canadian asbestos will be countries in Asia.

Australia has had a long and grievous experience with the exposure of workers, families and members of the community exposed to asbestos over many years. The peak of expected deaths from asbestos related diseases, many of them cancer, in Australia will not occur until 2020.

It is in part due to this experience that we urge the Canadian Government to not support the re-opening of asbestos mining and exporting activity. Asbestos, in all its forms, is carcinogenic and its trade should not be supported. This is particularly so for countries in the Asian region where conditions of work will mean that many thousands of workers will be exposed to respirable asbestos, resulting in many thousands of preventable deaths over coming decades.

We understand that for the Jeffrey mine to reopen a \$58 million government guarantee is proposed to support an Indian consortium. We urge instead that this government money be put to helping the Jeffrey mine region invest in healthy, sustainable development.

We further understand that delegations of workers from the Asia region have visited Canada this week, urging that asbestos not be exported to their countries. The Australian trade union movement and Cancer Council Australia support the calls of this delegation to keep further imports of asbestos out of their country.

Yours sincerely,



Jeff Lawrence
Secretary
ACTU



Paul Bastian
President
AMWU



Professor Ian Olver
Chief Executive Officer
Cancer Council Australia