

RESPIRABLE SILICA

982. Hon ALISON XAMON to the Minister for Commerce:

I refer to respirable silica, such as may be generated at sand mines and other quarries.

- (1) What safety measures regarding respirable silica should be in place to protect the health and safety of workers in sand mines and other quarries?
- (2) What monitoring and measuring regime for respirable silica is recommended to ensure that the levels of exposure to respirable silica remain within the Australian levels?

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of this question.

- (1) Crystalline silica is classified as a hazardous substance in part 5 of the Occupational Safety and Health Regulations. This part includes requirements that no person is exposed to a hazardous substance in excess of the exposure standard for that hazardous substance, and that as far as practicable, the risk to a person arising from the exposure to a hazardous substance is reduced.
- (2) Neither the OSH act nor the OSH regulations prescribes particular measures or monitoring regimes in relation to crystalline silica. Under the OSH act, employers have a duty to provide safe systems of work.