

Silicosis is a deadly, incurable disease caused by inhaling dust containing silica. It is being called the next asbestosis but could be much larger in scope than asbestos because many more people are potentially exposed to it. Silica Dust is released into the air when concrete, brick and stone materials are cut. The segment on the Project focussed on cutting artificial stone for benchtops because these material have very high silica levels. However the story is equally relevant to concrete cutting and wall chasing of bricks where the silica levels are also significant. Current solutions in this market include water or vacuum extraction but in many situations, fitted respirators must still be worn as silica dust is still produced at potentially harmful levels.

Our wall chasing/concrete cutting business in Perth uses equipment specifically designed in-house to mitigate silica dust and data shows it is industry best practice. The story talked about the use of water to dampen the dust. Our system uses a combination of both water and vacuum to deal with the issue very effectively. No other system does that, and we have independent data to show it is highly effective at mitigating silica dust, even when cutting indoors. The safety code of practice states that where best practice exists, it should be used. This, combined with the growing awareness of the issue, puts our business in a very strong position to grow.

The larger Edge Saw we are developing for the wider concrete cutting industry utilises the same technology we have developed for wall chasing to mitigate silica dust in general purpose concrete cutting settings. The launch of the Edge Saw will coincide with the growing awareness around this silica issue and we can capitalise on this to build a distributor network in the US where the industry standards are much tougher than in Australia.

Silicosis is real, and it is dangerous. It kills, and it incapacitates formally healthy people, young and old. As awareness grows, government will be forced to act, and the industry will have to take action. In Australia, workplace safety laws are being strengthened and harmonised and penalties for breaches of the code will be much higher. The building industry and the regulator in Western Australia, where we operate, is already taking note and have begun to act. This growing awareness has facilitated a rapid expansion of our business over the past 3 months.

Our business is well set to benefit from the changes that are starting to take place and we will be leveraging all of these factors to expand our service business in Australia and product sales in the other markets we are focussed on.

We are confident our solution handles silica dust better than anything currently on the market. It is protected by patents creating a barrier to copies. The launch of the Edge Saw will be a crucial step in showcasing the technology and the safety and efficiency benefits it brings to the industry.

Watch this space!

Craig Penty



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