

Autumn 2021 NEWSLETTER



Asbestos Disease
Support Society

Walls and ceilings

'Versilux' sheets used internally in the walls and ceilings (manufactured with either bevelled edged, square edge or recessed for flush jointing)

'Hardiflex' ceiling sheets to the verandah log cabin profiled wall panels used vertically or horizontally

Guttering

Non-asbestos guttering may contain asbestos residue from 'Super Six' roofs

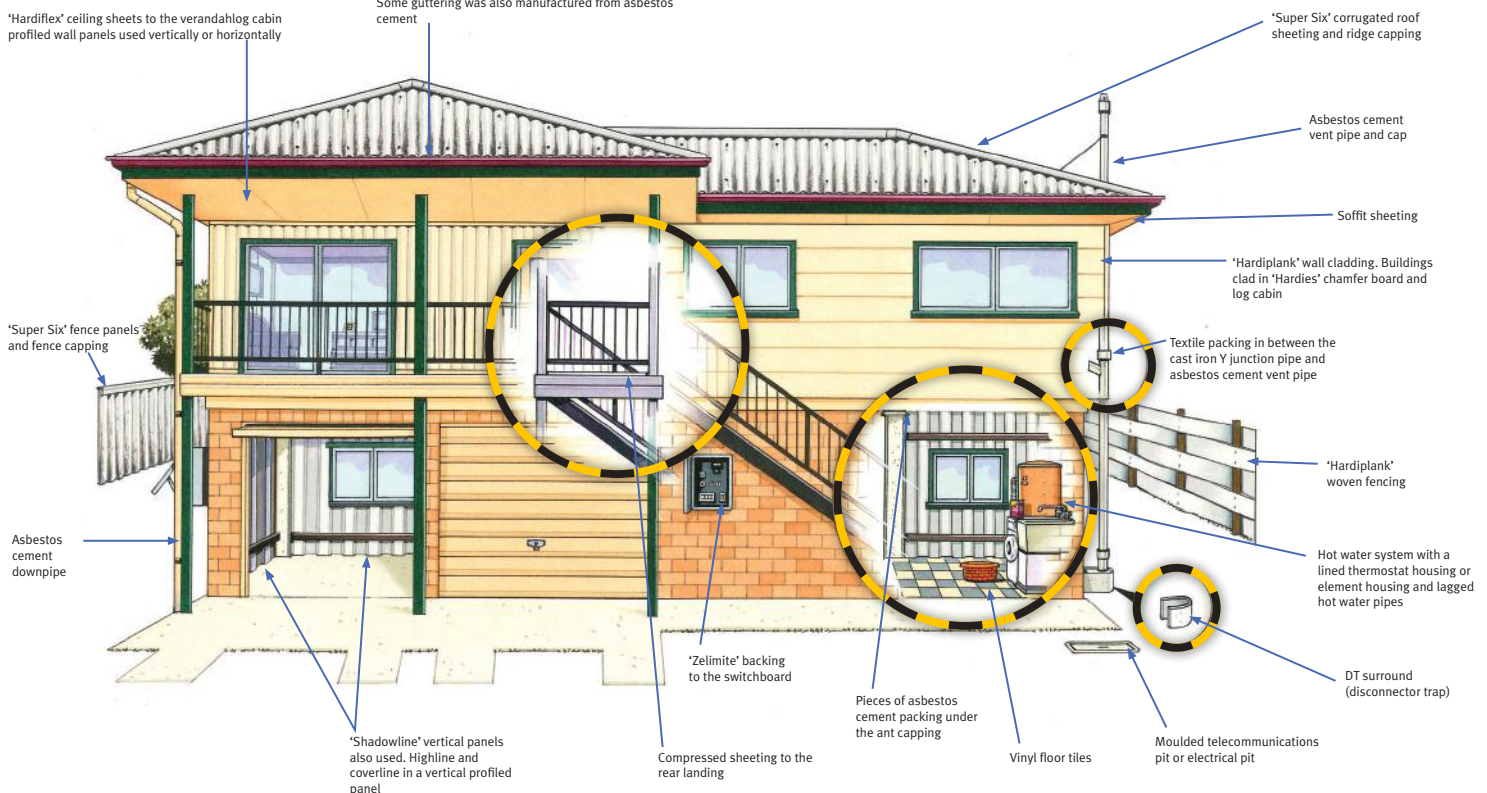
Some guttering was also manufactured from asbestos cement

Bathrooms

Walls and ceiling in 'Versilux' sheets with a recessed edge, plastered over and then tiled over or with Tilux sheeting over the bath tub and shower recess

Dining and kitchen

Asbestos backed vinyl sheet flooring and/or vinyl floor tiles



Asbestos Disease Support Society

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DO YOU KNOW
BEING AN
**ADSS & SSN
MEMBER**

There is free assistance through the provision of:

Information on asbestos & silica related diseases

Support from our social worker

Clinical support from the registered nurse

Medical aids on loan

Community morning tea groups and support groups

Nutritional advice

Occupational therapy assessment

Quarterly Newsletter

**Legal consultation with our preferred lawyers experienced
in asbestos and silica compensation.**

**Call the Society if you would like to
discuss any of these services**

1800 776 412



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ADSS Staff & Directors would like to wish you
a happy and safe Easter Holiday



Newsletter Front cover:
Common locations of materials containing asbestos in a house built in the 1970's
For more information visit www.asbestos.qld.gov.au/ or call 13 QGOV (13 74 68).

In Loving Memory

Jean O'Brien
Max Desmond Wickenden
Maurice Ellvey
John George Budden
Jack Pierce
Gert Engelsmann
John Robert Hall
Phillip Thomas Newman
William Herbert Fielding
Peter Graydon
Mervyn Smith
Carolyn Barsby
Kevin Henry Helsham
Carol Owen
Howard Jones
Thomas Victor Firth



when
SOMEONE YOU LOVE
BECOMES A
MEMORY
...THAT MEMORY
BECOMES A
Treasure

General Managers Report

TREVOR TORRENS



Welcome to the Autumn edition of the Society's Newsletter and our first for 2021.

This time last year I wrote that news has been dominated by the COVID-19 pandemic which was continuing to spread in Australia and globally. While COVID is still very much in the news, it is the vaccine roll-out that now leads the headlines – and a very welcome change indeed. Included in the newsletter and also as an insert is relevant information in relation to the vaccine roll-out. Further information can be sourced from your medical practitioner or at: <https://www.qld.gov.au/health/conditions/health-alerts/coronavirus-covid-19/protect-yourself-others/covid-19-vaccine>

As many of the Society's members are particularly vulnerable to viruses, let alone a virus as serious as COVID-19, we took the decision to suspend our morning teas, much of our person to person support, the annual Symposium, support groups, charity race day etc. At this stage, the Society is planning for the recommencement of all events and activities, including our popular morning teas, which kicked-off in Toowoomba on 22 February with 30 attendees. A full list of the morning tea locations and dates is included in the newsletter.

In the Summer newsletter I also wrote about the possibility that we might see a COVID-19 spike of asbestos related diseases in years to come due to the boom in DIY home improvements. This is an important issue.

The use of asbestos was phased out of Australia during the 1980s and on the 31 December 2003 a ban was placed on importation and use of all forms of asbestos. This ban does not apply to legacy asbestos containing material (ACM). It is estimated 44% of consumed asbestos is still contained in the built environment. Due to the ongoing legacy of ACM in Australia, the risk of exposure continues in both occupational and non-occupational settings where building materials and other ACMs are deteriorating or undergoing renovation, maintenance or demolition. According to the World Health Organization (2015), there is no safe level of exposure to asbestos because no threshold level of asbestos exposure has been established below which all individuals would be risk free of contracting asbestos-related diseases. Between 700 and 800 people are diagnosed with mesothelioma each year in Australia, with symptoms typically appearing 20 to 40 years after a person has been exposed.

Where ACMs are in poor condition and present a risk to health and safety, they need to be removed to prevent the risk of exposure to asbestos fibres. Safe prioritised asbestos removal means considering the material type, condition and location of ACMs and prioritising removal according to the potential risk to health. A number of businesses and organisations in Australia (such as Ergon Energy (now Energy Queensland), AusGrid, CSBP, BOC, Tas Paper (PaperlinX)) have proactively sought to remove asbestos from their buildings and facilities to not only improve worker safety, but also to provide net savings to the organisation from future unplanned service interruptions due to asbestos issues on site.

The significant upfront costs of asbestos removal appear to be the main deterrent to governments and businesses with in-situ management the preferred policy position. In many instances, asbestos removal appears to occur only when allowed for by existing building works, included in building refurbishment budgets, or in response to a disturbance event (that exposes asbestos fibres) or in response to a natural disaster (e.g. a cyclone, fire, hail or flooding). In fact, studies suggest there is a median 20% cost difference between planned asbestos removal and urgent removal of asbestos, indicating significant cost savings if early intervention occurs against unplanned and accordingly urgent removal.

The Society's position is that the elimination of asbestos from our built environment is the only effective way to eradicate asbestos related diseases.

Government can show the way by developing schedules and processes for the prioritised safe removal according to ACMs from public buildings and infrastructure, eg. schools, hospitals, government housing.

The Society has commenced engagement with the State Government regarding a more proactive approach in the elimination of ACMs.

Low Density Board Win for the Society



LDB ceiling sheet torn from the ceiling battens. The corner of the sheeting remains attached with a flex sheet nail. Torn is an apt descriptor because LDB tears like cardboard.

On 29/10/18, The Society wrote to the Minister for Industrial Relations requesting ministerial direction that low density asbestos fibre board (LDB) be classified as friable asbestos material, thereby requiring a higher level of safety procedures when removed or during other work processes.

Manufactured from the 1950s to the 1970s LDB was used for wall and ceiling panels, thermal and acoustic insulation, fire protection and for general building work in industrial and commercial buildings, educational facilities and domestic premises and generally sold under product names such as 'Asbestolux' and 'Duralux'.

LDB contains up to 70% by volume of asbestos fibres and is generally composed of amosite (brown asbestos) and chrysotile (white asbestos) in a calcium silicate plaster. If in good condition and left undisturbed, LDB presents a low risk of releasing asbestos fibres and causing harm. However, as it is softer than asbestos cement sheeting, LDB can break up more easily when disturbed, thereby increasing the likelihood of exposure to airborne fibres.

After an exhaustive and comprehensive government consultation process, with COVID interruption, the Society was advised that from 1 May 2021 LDB will be classed as a friable asbestos containing material. A copy of the letter from the Minister for Industrial Relations to the Society with this advice is contained in the newsletter.

Another Portable Oxygen Concentrator Purchased

Thanks to Chris Heenan, CFMEU delegate and Precision Interior Wall and Ceilings owner, John Kelly for their fund raising efforts as I reported in the last newsletter. As a result of the \$5,000.00 donation, the Society has purchased a Philips SimplyGo Portable Oxygen Concentrator, which brings the number of these machines the Society is able to loan to members to 8. These machines are battery operated designed to be taken out of the home and are very light so they can be carried or wheeled in a small trolley.



BERT/CIP Charity Golf Day

The Building Employees Redundancy Trust (BERT) and the Construction Income Protection (CIP) scheme Charity Golf Day was held on Friday 5/3 at the Gailles Golf Club on a picture perfect day. The Society was a beneficiary of the generosity of the broader building and construction industry along with two other charities – Mates In Construction and the Mater Prostate Cancer Research Institute. A total of \$6,212.00 was raised for the Society. This also included the "Buy a shot from the PRO" hole ably managed by Society staff – Kerrie, Kay and Meg.



Fit Testing Partnership

An important element of the Society's mission is to reduce the incidence of both asbestos and other dust related lung diseases – particularly silicosis. In relation to silicosis, the Society has taken steps to provide support for people who have been diagnosed with this disease (and their families and carers) under the banner of the Silicosis Support Network.

While there is no cure for silicosis, the disease is preventable by using proper controls to prevent or minimise exposure to the silica dust. An effective silicosis prevention strategy should be based on primary (i.e. controlling the release of silica dust at source using engineering methods), and secondary (e.g. respiratory protective equipment, air and health monitoring) prevention approaches.

The Society has partnered with Future Skills, a not-for-profit registered training organisation, to deliver fit testing of respiratory protective equipment (to ensure the equipment is appropriately sealed to the worker's face) and awareness training covering:

- Why respiratory protection equipment is required
- When respiratory protection equipment must be worn
- Limitations of respiratory protection equipment
- How to correctly put on and take off respiratory protection equipment
- How to conduct a seal check
- How to clean and maintain respiratory protection equipment
- How and where to store respiratory protection equipment when not in use

The Society has purchased a Porta Count Quantitative Fit Testing device with particle generator and provided it on loan to Future Skills, who has also secured funding from Construction Skills Queensland (an industry training fund) – this means that the fit testing and awareness training will be able to be delivered by Future Skills to workers without cost.



Corporate Membership

On the back page of the newsletter are our corporate members who play a valuable role in providing support to the Society to enable the delivery of the much-needed support services for sufferers of asbestos and silica related diseases. This year we will be featuring these organisations in the newsletters "Get to know our corporate members". The Society is very thankful for their support.

Annual Board Planning Day

The Society is governed by a board of nine (9) directors elected by the membership from the membership. The board is responsible for the governance of the Society - ensuring it is effectively and properly run and is meeting its overall purposes as set out in the Constitution.

On Friday 26 February, the Board came together to review the current three (3) year strategic plan, consider new initiatives and get up-to-date information on asbestos and silica related issues.

The Board received updates from the Society's legal adviser, Thady Blundell of Turner Freeman Lawyers regarding compensation issues, Julia Collins of the federal government's Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency, John Payne of Hall Payne Lawyers regarding the currency of our Constitution and representatives from JB Were regarding the investment of funds. While our 3 year strategic plan is still current, the Board has determined that the Society could provide a stronger focus on communicating our services to the community more broadly eg retirement villages, Men's Sheds, CWA's etc. Additionally, a major focus will be lobbying the State Government to abolish the "10 square metre rule". Contained in the health regulations, this regulation allows the homeowners to remove bonded asbestos under certain circumstances. The Society's position on this issue is that asbestos removal/repairs should only be undertaken by a licensed professional.

Thank you for your donation

The Society would like to thank all those that have made a donation to the Society since the last newsletter. Without your kind financial support, the Society would not be in a position to provide the services, advocate on your behalf or lobby Government for improvement in asbestos and silicosis related matters. In particular, we would like to recognise the following donations over \$500.00:

- CFMEU QLD/NT Members
- Steve Cowell
- Corvex Pty Ltd
- Thomas O'Brien
- Warren and Kay Findlay
- C&C People Pty Ltd
- Turner Freeman
- Building Employees Redundancy Trust/Construction Income Protection (BERT/CIP)

On behalf of the Board of directors and the staff of the Society I wish you a happy and safe Easter.

Trevor Torrens
General Manager

Trevor Torrens



Occupational Lung Disease – A Proper History

The title of my last article was “All Dust is Dangerous” and in that article I commented on the fact that silica had recently re-emerged as a cause of occupational lung disease, particularly causing silicosis amongst those working with engineered stone. There has been a lot of publicity about this and rightly so.

The re-emergence of silicosis though has led to increased scrutiny on all types of dust exposure and importantly sources of dust exposure.

Many products which have been long considered fairly “benign” in terms of lung disease are now seen in a completely different light. Cement, concrete, ceramic tiles, general stone and even fibro (both asbestos containing and non-asbestos containing) contain large quantities of silica.

It may come as a surprise but fibro sheeting actually contained more silica by percentage content than it did asbestos and continued to contain silica after the asbestos was removed.

A carpenter working with fibro sheeting, say starting in the 1970s and continuing into the 2000s, would have had silica exposure throughout that period. This type of exposure, not just to fibro but the

multitude of products which contained silica in the general building industry, all potentially cause lung disease, including emphysema, COPD and other lung damage.

The impact of various fumes and dust on lungs and general health is not even properly understood and, in addition, exposure to silica may extend beyond lung disease to autoimmune type diseases.

This highlights the importance of a patient seeing a respiratory physician providing a full occupational history, particularly if there has been years of exposure to various dusts and indeed fumes. If this history is not obtained, an “occupational” lung disease goes undiagnosed.

It is therefore vital when seeing a respiratory physician, and indeed when seeing a general practitioner about breathing and respiratory difficulties, to provide full details of occupational dust and fume exposure. The medical focus historically has often just been on smoking and to a certain extent asbestos but anyone who has worked in a dusty environment needs to ensure that this information is provided to the treating doctors so proper diagnosis can be made.



Society Social Worker

MEG REDMOND



Firstly, I want to take a moment to introduce myself. My name is Meg, I am the new Social Worker with the Society. I started here just before Christmas, so I have slowly been meeting many of our wonderful members. I always have known I wanted to work within the health care sector and for me, after witnessing firsthand how advocacy and support can influence a person's overall health and wellbeing, I knew I needed to be a social worker. I have found the society to be a good fit for me as I get to work closely with our members and their families who empower each other every step of the way, who seek to educate themselves and their communities about the dangers of asbestos and crystalline silica.

It has been such an honour working at ADSS over the past few months, it appears that I have very large "shoes to fill" from both Natalie and Judith. I'm excited to stand up to that challenge. The benefits of having social work services with both the Asbestos Disease Support Society and the Silicosis Support Network all comes down to the word both names share, **SUPPORT**.

Social workers work with those who have increased needs to help them best interact within their social, cultural and physical environment. Occupational lung diseases often add extra pressure on a person and their family as it can make daily living harder, ability to complete tasks more difficult and with more systems to navigate it can often feel more complicated than it's worth. That is where I come in, part of my role, alongside offering direct support to members, is to gain a good understanding of the systems and what services and subsidies are available to our members. I want to use this opportunity to discuss some of these items, including funding options to provide support around the house, funding for medical equipment and the processes to access.

My Aged Care (MAC), National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), and Queensland Community Service scheme (QCSS) are all schemes that provide funding for people who require help and support to meet their needs and where possible build their skills and independence. All of these schemes work off a needs base, meaning you will require an assessment in order to find out if you are eligible for services through a particular scheme and for what kind of support is offered. All of these assessments and eligibility are different depending on the scheme you are looking at.

- **MAC** eligibility is based on age and then, depending on your need, there are different levels of funding to help support you either in your home or in residential aged care.
- **NDIS** is based off disability and your application will need evidence of your disability which may mean working closely with particular health professional.
- **QCSS** works with those who need support to live independently in their community especially those who have chronic illnesses.

Alongside schemes that offer funding for support services there are also schemes that provide funding for more physical items to help you with your day-to-day needs. Two of these are Home Assist Secure (HAS) and Medical Aid Subsidy Scheme (MASS).

- **HAS** provides repairs, maintenance and minor modifications for those either over 60 or who have a disability. The service provides safety related information, referrals and subsidised assistance to eligible clients unable to undertake or pay for critical maintenance services without assistance.
- **MASS** helps make medical equipment and aids more accessible for those who have a permanent and stabilised condition or a disability (such as a lung condition). The scheme helps people to live at home and avoid early or inappropriate residential care or hospitalisation. Equipment that our members may find beneficial include daily living and mobility aids, home oxygen systems, spectacles, communication aids and medical grade footwear. Depending on what your needs are you will need different assessments by particular medical professionals. The type of funding for MASS also depends on your needs, some aids are permanent loans, private ownership or even supplying consumable products.

There are number of other programs available, including:

- Taxi Subsidy Scheme
- TransLink Concession Card
- Concessional Motor Vehicle Registration
- Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme
- Rates, electricity, gas and water rebates
- Energy Management rebate

I'M HERE TO HELP! Schemes are made to assist those who need it. However, it can be difficult to navigate and understand the eligibility requirements. As your Social Worker I am available to provide you with the necessary assistance to understand the schemes and the processes to access them.

PLEASE CONTACT ME IF YOU REQUIRE ANY HELP OR FURTHER INFORMATION.



Immunotherapy

In our Spring 2020 Newsletter, we gave an update on the **Durvalumab with Chemotherapy as First Line Treatment in Advanced Pleural Mesothelioma Trial (Dream3R)**. This trial is now recruiting nationally and internationally with a number of Queensland Hospitals participating. You will need to talk to your treating specialist to find out if you are eligible for this trial.

There also has been a recent development of another clinical trial called Checkmate 743 for Malignant Pleural Mesothelioma that combines two immunotherapies, Nivolumab and Ipilimumab which are immune checkpoint inhibitors. They block the tumours ability to put the breaks on the immune system, which then allows the immune systems to see the tumour and attack it.

The **CheckMate 743** trial found an improved overall survival compared to standard chemotherapy. In all, Malignant Pleural Mesothelioma (MPM) patients treated with Nivolumab and Ipilimumab, the overall median survival ranged from 16.8 months to 21.4 months in patients treated with Nivolumab and Ipilimumab. This was compared to 12.4 months to 16.2 months in patients treated with standard chemotherapy. The two year overall survival rates were 41% for patients treated with the combined immunotherapy and 27% for patients treated with standard chemotherapy. The link to the trial is listed below.

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(20\)32714-8/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(20)32714-8/fulltext)

In October 2020, Nivolumab plus Ipilimumab have been approved in the USA as first line treatment for Malignant Pleural Mesothelioma. This treatment is currently before the Pharmaceuticals Advisory Committee in Australia for consideration to be included on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS). As previously stated, you will need to talk to your treating specialist to see if you are eligible for this treatment.

Your relationship with your treating specialist whether a Respiratory Specialist or Oncologist is very important. You should feel confident and comfortable with your treatment plan. If you have doubts with either of these, then talking to another Doctor can help to give you peace of mind. You may want to get a second opinion from another specialist. Some people feel uncomfortable asking their doctor for a second opinion, but specialists are used to patients doing this. A second opinion can be a valuable part of your decision-making process. It can confirm or clarify your doctor's recommended treatment plan and reassure you that you have explored all of your options. A second specialist can also answer any questions you may still have. Your original specialist or family doctor can refer you to another specialist and you can ask for your initial results to be sent to the second-opinion specialist.



Covid Information

SOURCE: AUSTRALIA GOVERNMENT – DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

How to book your COVID-19 vaccine

Where do I go and how do I book in?

Go to health.gov.au/covid19-vaccines. Using the Eligibility Checker, you can find out which phase of the rollout you are in. If you are eligible, you will be able to view vaccination clinics and book an appointment online or via phone. If you are not yet eligible, you will be able to register your interest so that you can be notified when you are able to book. If you prefer not to use the online option, you can call the National Coronavirus and COVID-19 Vaccination Helpline on 1800 020 080.

Will I be able to choose where I can book?

You will be able to view and select clinic locations based on the postcode you enter.

What happens if there are no clinics or appointments in my area?

A list of Commonwealth vaccination clinics, participating General Practices, and state and territory vaccination clinics will be made available as they come online.

Do I have to use the Eligibility Checker in order to book?

The checker is a helpful tool to help you find out if you are currently eligible to book. The checker will guide you through to a simple way to find and book vaccine appointments, or help you register to be notified if you are part of a later phase. If you prefer to book appointments directly at a participating general practice or Commonwealth state vaccination clinic, you can contact them directly to do so.

Society resources available

Eating well with Mesothelioma

A nutrition guide for Mesothelioma patients and their carers



Eating well with Asbestosis

A nutrition guide for Asbestosis patients and their carers



Nutrition Guide for Asbestosis & Mesothelioma Patients and their Carers.

Eating well is essential for everyone, especially if you have been diagnosed with Asbestosis or Mesothelioma. The benefits of good nutrition include assisting you to maintain muscle strength, maintaining weight and providing you with enough energy to cope with the everyday tasks required to maintain your quality of life. Good nutrition can also assist your body's immune system enabling you to fight off infections and repair tissue damage following treatments such as surgery, chemotherapy and radiotherapy while helping you to manage any side effects from these treatments.

Please call the Society on **(07) 3252 7852** if you would like a copy of this booklet.

On the National Front

FULL COURT UPHOLDS PRECEDENT-SETTING ASBESTOS VICTORY

Source: Turner Freeman Lawyers Jan 20, 2021



The Full Court of the Supreme Court of South Australia has rejected an appeal by James Hardie against a precedent-setting asbestos compensation claim, unanimously finding that the company owed the public a duty of care to warn them of the risks posed by in-situ asbestos cement products.

Lawyers representing 44-year-old Adelaide father-of-three Mathew Werfel said the decision had far-reaching consequences for former asbestos manufacturers and their insurers, potentially opening up compensation claims for people who contract mesothelioma due to home renovations.

Mr Werfel, who lives in Adelaide's northern suburbs with his wife Jenny and three daughters, was diagnosed with mesothelioma — a terminal cancer caused by asbestos exposure — after discovering a lump in his groin in 2017. He has subsequently undergone multiple major surgeries, along with aggressive rounds of radiotherapy and chemotherapy.

He was first exposed to asbestos as a teenager, while working for a fencing contractor after leaving school. He was subsequently exposed during home renovations, including when he sanded and painted the walls of his first home in Adelaide's northern suburbs, which he didn't realise were constructed from asbestos cement sheets.

Mr Werfel welcomed the Full Court decision, saying he hoped it would finally force James Hardie to undertake the extensive public health campaign needed to ensure all Australians were aware of the risks posed by asbestos products.

"I'm extremely thankful for this outcome, which will at least provide financial security for my wife and children when I am gone," Mr Werfel said.

"Compensation doesn't make up for the decades of life I have been robbed of by James Hardie's negligence. I will miss out on so many important milestones that most people take for granted, such as seeing my daughters grow up and have families of their own.

"This case was never about me. From day one we were fighting on behalf of everyone across Australia who continues to be unknowingly exposed to James Hardie's deadly asbestos products in their homes, workplaces, and schools.

"The Full Court unanimously shared our view that James Hardie owed the community a duty of care to run an extensive public health campaign warning of the ongoing risks posed by their asbestos products.

"My hope is that the lasting legacy of my legal battle will be James Hardie finally taking responsibility for their past actions and devoting the millions of dollars needed to get the message out to every Australian about the asbestos risks that continue to lurk in the community.

"If I can prevent even one other person from contracting a deadly asbestos disease, this legal fight will have been worth all the energy we put in."

Mr Werfel's solicitor, Turner Freeman Lawyers partner Annie Hoffman, said the case would have far reaching consequences for anyone who contracts mesothelioma as a result of undertaking home renovations.

"This judgment has significant and far-reaching implications for 'third wave' asbestos victims, those exposed to asbestos products that still remain in millions of homes, workplaces, and public buildings," Ms Hoffman said.

"The decision extends James Hardie's legal liability beyond the products they sold to end users to all those who may come into contact with those products in future, including those who are still being exposed during home renovations.

"The Full Court confirmed that James Hardie had a duty of care to the public to warn them of the ongoing risks posed by their asbestos products and remains legally liable for the lives those products continue to destroy.

"This decision sets a precedent for any person who contracts mesothelioma due to drilling, sanding, cutting or handling James Hardie asbestos cement in their homes.

"The court unanimously agreed with our argument that James Hardie had an obligation to run a public awareness campaign to warn the Australian public about what these products look like, where they are found, and what to do to avoid asbestos exposure.

"Sadly, James Hardie's asbestos cement building products can still be found in homes, schools, workplaces, and public buildings built before 1983, where they continue to pose a significant threat to public health, with many people still at risk of being unknowingly exposed to this deadly fibre."

On the National Front

HUNDREDS OF ASBESTOS PIECES FOUND ACROSS REMOTE NT COMMUNITY BUT HEALTH RISK IS LOW, STUDY FINDS

Source: ABC News by Kate Ashton 12 March 2021



A Northern Territory government-commissioned report has identified hundreds of pieces of asbestos debris littered across the remote Aboriginal community of Galiwin'ku on Elcho Island, including near a church, clifftops and an arts centre.

But the Territory's health authorities said there were no health warnings relating to asbestos in the community 550 kilometres north-east of Darwin, and there was no need for residents to be concerned.

The report said recreational activities like ceremonial dancing, sports and campfires could generate airborne asbestos particles, but found risk of this was mostly low.

A spokeswoman for the Northern Territory Department of Chief Minister said a multi-agency Working Group had been set up to develop a "whole of community" action plan focusing on short- and longer-term priority actions to address the risks.

"There are no current health warnings or need for community concern, however, to ensure the community is aware of the presence of asbestos and some of the areas where the risk of asbestos exposure is higher the Working Group is providing information to the Galiwin'ku community," the spokeswoman said.

Separately, the NT government recently awarded two tenders totalling \$312,000 to remove surface and soil asbestos at the local school, Shepardson College.

Federal government relocates employee over asbestos

The National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA), which implements federal programs on the island, has relocated one employee normally based in the community as a result of the report, a spokesman told the ABC.

"While there is no current public health advice in regards to asbestos in Galiwin'ku, following consultation with the individual concerned, Galiwin'ku's Government Engagement Coordinator (GEC) is currently working from NIAA's Nhulunbuy office while we await further advice from the Northern Territory government," the spokesman said.

A spokeswoman from the NT government said it had not relocated any of its own staff.

She said information about asbestos risk management had been provided to staff in the Galiwin'ku community and asbestos management plans were in place.

When asked why the NIAA would relocate its staff member from the community, the NT government spokeswoman said organisations were required under law to "assess their own workplace health and safety requirements".

"This is a matter for NIAA," she said.

Asbestos debris worsened by cyclones: report

The NT government, East Arnhem Regional Council and the Northern Land Council funded the study by Agon Environmental after asbestos was observed in the island's public areas during the construction of houses in Galiwin'ku in late 2018.

Agon Environmental was awarded a \$5 million contract in 2019 to carry out surveys and establish asbestos management plans for the NT government over five years.

Asbestos is a known carcinogen and can cause cancer when small asbestos fibres become airborne and are inhaled, which can happen when debris containing asbestos is disturbed or breaks down over time.

Agon's report said the identified asbestos in Galiwin'ku was "likely a result of historical poor building and demolition practices, structural fires and vandalism". It said asbestos was in the past spread on the island by weather events, including two serious cyclones, Lam and Nathan, which destroyed 80 homes.

More than 1,000 pieces found

Agon's surveyors collected and tested suspected "asbestos containing materials" from several areas around the community, including on roads, verges and other public spaces.

They found 270 pieces of asbestos debris in and around a local church, 60 pieces in a park, 15 stockpiles of buried asbestos in bushland near the school and more than 250 pieces on vacant land on cliff faces near the art centre, including some larger asbestos cement sheets.

Agon's report said that of particular concern was a large amount of asbestos found at the local tip and illegal historical dump sites that had been burnt, leaving more than 500 pieces of asbestos in "poor" condition. It said where asbestos was in poor condition there was a greater potential for the fibres to be disturbed, posing a potential health risk.



Pieces of asbestos debris have been found scattered across the remote community of Galiwin'ku. (Supplied: Facebook)

Varied risk to the community

The consultants looked at different types of activities undertaken in the community and what the risk was of releasing asbestos fibres into the air.

The report said that mostly there was only a low risk to the community from normal recreational activity but that actions such as renovations and repair of buildings, excavation of soils and handling of asbestos waste posed higher risk.

It found that in some areas where asbestos was in the soil, recreational activities like camping, walking, playing sports or gathering, mowing or slashing of ground vegetation, could pose a “low to moderate” risk.

The report recommended conducting a community awareness program and establishing a centralised asbestos register.

It recommended a feasibility study to see whether a licensed asbestos waste facility could be developed on the island that would reduce illegal dumping, costs, and provide local employment.

The Darwin tip — a 900 kilometre barge trip away — is the closest facility that can legally accept asbestos waste.

“[This] presents a considerable constraint to the cost-efficient management of large volumes of asbestos waste,” the report said.

“The Working Group includes members of the Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet, the Department of Infrastructure Planning and Logistics, NT Health, the East Arnhem Regional Council, the National Indigenous Australians Agency and the Northern Land Council.”

Local member calls for health survey

The independent Member for Mulka, Yingyia Mark Guyula said the report would help the community understand how to manage the risks.

“It’s concerning that in many areas of the community, activities such as sport and play, campfires, ceremonial activities and mowing are likely to create risk due to airborne asbestos dust,” he said.

Mr Guyula called for an information campaign in the local language, Yolngu Matha, and a government response that included a survey to check for any asbestos illnesses in the community.

He said similar work should be done in other Aboriginal communities that have a history of asbestos materials.

“This again highlights the ongoing issue of the movement of people away from homeland towns and into overcrowded hub towns, such as Galiwin’ku, creating many complex issues, including this environmental problem of asbestos waste and poison in highly populated areas,” he said.

When asked about the removal of the NIAA employee, Mr Guyula said the federal government had to respond to the issue “how they see best”.

“It does show that we need to act quickly and protect all community members — so that visitors and locals are looked after.

“We welcome people onto our country and we want to ensure that everyone is safe.”

Breathing in asbestos fibres can cause a number of serious health issues, including respiratory diseases and potentially cancer.(Supplied: Facebook)



On the National Front

RANDWICK COUNCIL CLOSES LITTLE BAY BEACH IN SYDNEY DUE TO ASBESTOS

Source NCA NewsWire by Eric Lyons 2 March 2021

A Sydney beach has closed after hundreds of fragments of asbestos have washed ashore over the last seven months.

A popular beach in Sydney's southwest will be closed for two weeks as authorities try to work out why asbestos fragments keep washing up at the swim spot. Little Bay Beach will close to the public, Randwick City Council said, after hundreds of pieces of material containing asbestos, mainly small fragments from cement sheeting, have been collected from the beach since August last year.

The first alert came from a local resident on August 2 and within a week more than 100 visible fragments were found across the beach.

All of them were removed and tested.

While the fragments are regularly removed by specialists, they continue to wash ashore, leaving experts searching for the source.

Randwick City Council said the beach would be closed for two weeks in late April and early May while the investigation is carried out.

But it will be open on weekends during that period. According to the council website the material found is a form of bonded asbestos (fibro) "which represents a low-level risk".

"We recommend that people do not touch or pick up any material on the beach that may look like fibro material or asbestos," the council said in a statement.

"Sometimes the material may be weathered and can look like a piece of shell or sandstone. If you see anything that you think may be asbestos on the beach, please notify Council and we will safely remove it."

Council is working with the theory that the material is surfacing from nearby gullies which may have been used for landfill sites decades ago.



People flock to Little Bay Beach during Summer.

Did you know?

Nellie Kershaw – The First Named Victim of Asbestos Disease, 1924.

Born in 1891, Nellie Kershaw left school at the age of 12 to work in a cotton mill. She later moved into the asbestos industry, transferring to Turner Brothers Asbestos in 1917 until 1922 when she became too sick to work. There, she worked as a factory rover, spinning raw asbestos fibre into yarn. That trade would eventually truncate her life in tragic circumstances. On July 22, 1922 Nellie was issued a National Health Insurance certificate of ill health which identified her condition as “asbestos poisoning.” As this was not a recognised occupational disease, Kershaw failed to qualify for any significant benefits. To compound the problem, Turner Brothers refused to make any financial contributions, leaving Kershaw to spiral towards destitution as her illness deteriorated.

She died in poverty on March 24, 1924 leaving behind a grieving widower and young son.

Details of Kershaw's death were recorded in the British Medical Journal. Perhaps more importantly, the coroner for Rochdale launched a formal inquest into Kershaw's case, kick-starting the journey to industry regulation. The autopsy and returned ‘pulmonary tuberculosis and heart failure’ as the cause of Kershaw's death. However, the inquest was subsequently adjourned to allow for a closer inspection of the lungs. After completing that process, her death was attributed to “mineral particles in the lungs originated from asbestos and were, beyond reasonable doubt, the primary cause of the fibrosis of the lungs and, therefore, of death.”

Dr Walter Joss, the man who made the initial diagnosis of ‘asbestos poisoning,’ contributed a written testimony to the inquest. He explained how “previous experience of such a lung condition for many of his patients who were asbestos workers” contributed to the diagnosis and said that up to twelve cases per year came before him.



As such, when Nellie Kershaw's death certificate was issued on 2nd April 1924, it cited ‘fibrosis of the lungs due to the inhalation of mineral particles’ as the cause of death. Three years later, in a more detailed reporting of Kershaw's case by the British Medical Journal, the disease was given the name: ‘pulmonary asbestosis’

Following the British Medical Journal article, Parliament launched an inquiry into the effects of asbestos dust. The resultant report – Occurrence of Pulmonary Fibrosis & Other Pulmonary Affections in Asbestos Workers – concluded that asbestosis was irrefutably linked to the inhalation of asbestos dust. It also contained the first significant health study of asbestos workers and found that 66% of those employed as such for more than 20 years suffered from asbestosis. In turn, this led to the first Asbestos Industry Regulations, which came into effect in March 1932.

More than seven decades later, in April 2006 – seven years after a final ban on the supply and use of asbestos in Britain – a relative of Kershaw unveiled a memorial stone to all asbestos victims around the world.



Media Article

TEACHERS, STUDENTS EXPOSED TO ASBESTOS AT SUNNYBANK STATE HIGH SCHOOL AMID 'DISTURBING REPORTS' OF TEACHERS WRITING IN DUST

Source: ABC News by Antonia O'Flaherty 9 March 2021



Parts of Sunnybank State High School were closed after a contractor penetrated walls known to contain asbestos while installing air-conditioning. (Supplied: Sunnybank State High School website)

Students and teachers at a Brisbane high school were exposed to asbestos last year after a contractor penetrated the ceiling and walls of a building known to contain the potentially deadly material, it has been revealed.

Builders struck an area of Sunnybank State High School known to contain asbestos in October last year while installing air-conditioning.

Seven weeks later, four contaminated blocks of the school were closed, and the school sent a letter to parents informing them of the incident on November 27.

It comes amid concerns that some teachers were writing their names in the dust on desks, unaware it could have contained asbestos, which can cause cancer.

"A contractor may have penetrated the ceiling and walls, known to contain asbestos in Block 4," the letter sent to parents last year said.

"I can advise that the contractor has also undertaken work in other areas of the school, so in the interests of safety, the contractor has been directed to cease all work immediately pending further investigations."

The letter said the contractor worked in Block 2 and 3 on November and October last year.

Both blocks were known to contain asbestos.

The letter said QBuild did a "thorough clean" of the site under the guidance of a professional hygienist and areas were closed as a "precautionary measure".

The Department of Education appointed a specialist physician to manage the health risk to students and staff, but said the risk of exposure was "very low".

The contractor has since been suspended and stood aside from the rollout of air-conditioning in schools across Queensland.

'Disturbing reports' of cover-up

Teachers' Professional Association of Queensland (TPAQ) state secretary Jack McGuire said the association was aware of "disturbing reports" of teachers writing their names in dust on classroom desks at the Sunnybank school, without knowing it could have contained asbestos.

Mr McGuire called for Education Minister Grace Grace to launch an investigation into the incident.

"Members have told of senior management using intimidation to try and cover up the fact that students and teachers had been working amongst asbestos dust," he said.

Media Article

TEACHERS, STUDENTS EXPOSED TO ASBESTOS AT SUNNYBANK STATE HIGH SCHOOL AMID 'DISTURBING REPORTS' OF TEACHERS WRITING IN DUST

Source: ABC News by Antonia O'Flaherty 9 March 2021

"The cover-up is almost always worse than the problem."

"Minister Grace must launch an investigation into how this could happen and the Department's subsequent response."

Mr McGuire also called on Ms Grace to reveal how many other Queensland teachers could be at risk of asbestos exposure in state school buildings.

"Teachers who are impacted are urged to come forward to the TPAQ so that they can assist them industrially," he said.

Members of the school community, who asked to remain anonymous, suggested a staff member attempted to report the incident with the school administration on the day it occurred but had their concerns dismissed.

The incident has not been added to Education Queensland's asbestos register or reported to the government's incident sample testing.

The department's asbestos register said there had been 572,701 incidents of either presumed, confirmed or removed asbestos at Queensland state schools as of early November last year.

A government asbestos register found three schools reported incidents of asbestos sample testing last year, not including Sunnybank State High School.

It also showed a further two schools in 2019 and four in 2018 reported asbestos sample testing.

A Workplace Health and Safety complaint was lodged about the asbestos concerns on November 24 by a member of the public.

School decontaminated

In a statement, the Department of Education said within an hour of receiving advice of the incident, a clean-up crew and hygienist were dispatched to begin the decontamination process.

The department did not respond to questions about why it took seven weeks for the contaminated areas of the school to be closed and for parents to be notified.

The spokesperson confirmed Sunnybank State High School restricted access to blocks 2, 3, 4 and 5 on November 27 after the discovery of asbestos material.

"This incident was managed in accordance with the Queensland Government Asbestos Management Plan," the spokesperson said.

"Decontamination and remediation were completed in consultation with Workplace Health and Safety Queensland. "The classrooms were ready for use for the start of the 2021 school year.

"QBuild suspended the contractor and issued a show cause notice. The contractor is no longer working on the air-conditioning program."

The Queensland Teachers' Union's Cresta Richardson said it appeared the investigation by WorkSafe Queensland was still ongoing.

"The regional organiser is continuing to work with members at the school and liaising with the regional facilities staff," she said.

In a statement, Education Minister Grace Grace said Sunnybank State High School worked with the school community and the Queensland Teachers Union to ensure staff and students were informed and supported.



Breathing in asbestos material can cause cancer and respiratory issues.

"I am advised that as soon as the department was made aware of the issue, action was taken immediately, including communication with all staff and the Queensland Teachers Union," she said.

"I have been assured that the department has no record of these unsubstantiated allegations regarding intimidation of staff having been raised in any forum either formally or informally."

Ms Grace confirmed Workplace Health and Safety Queensland was still investigating the incident at the school.

Media Article

MINISTER GRACE GRACE SLAMS STATE'S STONE BENCHTOP FABRICATION INDUSTRY - DECEMBER 2020

INDUSTRIAL Relations Minister Grace Grace has slammed the state's stone benchtop fabrication industry after an ongoing safety blitz continued to reveal young men are still being exposed to deadly silica dust.

"There is no excuse to cut corners when it comes to the safety of workers in this industry," said Minister Grace. **"The risks are just too high, people's lives are at risk."**

A Workplace Health and Safety Queensland (WHSQ) spokesman said the watchdog was continuing to audit all silica stone benchtop fabricators in operation throughout Queensland as part of its Stage 3 compliance campaign that began in August.

It comes as five more Queenslanders are diagnosed with the potentially fatal lung disease silicosis bringing the total to 184, with 32 of these diagnosed with advanced silicosis.

The state's safety blitz started as a result of inquiries from this paper, with the regulator originally saying it would audit a "sample" of the state's 166 workplaces to ensure they were complying with the Silica Stone Benchtop Code of Practice 2019. But after discovering widespread noncompliance during the early stages of the audit, it committed to visiting every single workplace across in the state.

As of November 23, 118 stone benchtop workplaces have been audited, with 236 enforcement actions taken because workplaces have failed to adequately protect their workers.

The Gold Coast region has the largest concentration of stone benchtop fabricators in the state, with 35 workplaces. Of those, 31 workplaces have been audited with 69 enforcement actions taken, this includes three prohibition notices. A prohibition notice requires a workplace immediately stops an action because it poses a serious risk to the health or safety of a person from an immediate or imminent exposure to a hazard. Inspectors must follow up these notices to ensure the dangerous activity has been stopped or risk is mitigated.

"If an inspector forms a reasonable belief that a person is contravening the law, then they take appropriate action to remedy the situation," said the WHSQ spokesman. "Rest assured, WHSQ will act quickly and decisively to ensure workers are protected from silica exposure. "It is encouraging that there has been a significant reduction in hazardous dry cutting as well as improvements in health monitoring levels since the last campaign. "However, more work still needs to be done." Minister Grace said workplace health and safety responsibilities employers under the new Code of Practice were clear. "WHSQ will continue its enforcement and compliance campaign to ensure workers are protected and laws, regulations and codes of practice are adhered to" she said.

A Gold Coast workplace showing how a safe environment should look for stonemasons.

Photo: Scott Powick News Corp



Media Article

RENOVATING YOUR KITCHEN? HELP AUSTRALIA'S TRADIES AVOID SILICOSIS BY NOT CHOOSING ARTIFICIAL STONE

Mirage News by Ryan Hoy, Respiratory Physician. Senior Research Fellow.

Monash Centre for Occupational and Environmental Health, Monash University 19 March 2021

In 2012, my wife and I renovated our house – a two-storey extension with a brand new kitchen. Inspired by various renovation-themed TV shows and magazines, we chose a sleek stone island bench as the focal point for the kitchen.

I knew the benchtop material was some form of stone. You could choose almost any colour and it cost a lot less than marble. But I didn't know much else and I didn't ask any questions. As a respiratory physician who has diagnosed numerous workers with silicosis over the past four years, I regret my ignorance.

Like many Australians who have renovated or built homes since the early 2000s, the material we chose was artificial stone (also known as engineered or reconstituted stone, or quartz).

In 2015, after the first Australian stone benchtop industry worker was reported to have severe silicosis, I was astonished to discover artificial stone contains up to 95% crystalline silica.

Inhalation of crystalline silica dust is one of the best-known causes of lung disease, including silicosis and lung cancer. The adverse health effects of silica exposure were established while there was still debate about the harm of cigarettes and asbestos. But Australians' affinity for artificial stone benchtops has seen silicosis make a major comeback in recent years.

New research in Victoria shows the extent of silicosis among workers in the stone benchtop industry.

What is silicosis?

Silicosis is a preventable disease characterised by scarring on the lungs, called pulmonary fibrosis.

Over time, inhalation of tiny silica dust particles triggers an inflammatory response that causes small growths called nodules to build up on the lungs. These nodules can grow and cluster together, causing the lungs to become stiffer and impeding the transfer of oxygen into the blood.

In the early stages of the disease, a person may be well. Symptoms of silicosis can include a cough, breathlessness and tiredness. Generally, the more widespread the disease becomes in the lungs, the more trouble a person will have with breathing.

There's not currently a cure. In severe cases, a lung transplant may be the only option, and the disease can be fatal. Brisbane researchers, however, recently demonstrated early but promising results from a trial in which they washed silica out of a small number of silicosis patients' lungs.

The road to reform

Tradesmen in the stone benchtop industry cut slabs of stone to size and use hand-held power saws and grinders to form holes for sinks and stove tops. This generates crystalline silica dust from the stone which may be released into the air.

Using water in this process can suppress the generation of dust significantly, but until recently dry processing of artificial stone has been ubiquitous in the industry. Almost 70% of workers with silicosis in Victoria indicated they spent more than half their time at work in an environment where dry processing was occurring.

Stone benchtop workers suffering silicosis have called out poor work conditions over recent years, including being made to perform dry cutting with inadequate protections such as effective ventilation and appropriate respirators.

Queensland was the first state to ban dry cutting in 2018. Victoria followed in 2019, and New South Wales in 2020.

It's too early to assess whether these changes have affected the prevalence of silicosis, but hopefully they will make a difference.

Our research

Around the time the Victorian government introduced the ban, it launched an enforcement blitz in high-risk workplaces, while WorkSafe Victoria implemented a free screening program for the estimated 1,400 workers in the stone benchtop industry across the state.

The Monash Centre for Occupational and Environmental Health recently released a report detailing the findings from the first year of the screening program. Some 18% of initial 324 workers who completed the assessments were diagnosed with silicosis.

We've seen similar results in Queensland, where as of February 2021 the government had screened 1,053 stonemasons exposed to crystalline silica dust from artificial stone. Some 223 (or 21%) were diagnosed with silicosis, including 32 with the most severe form, called progressive massive fibrosis.

The Monash report indicates workers in Victoria are diagnosed with silicosis at an average age of just 41. The average time spent working in the stone benchtop industry when diagnosed was 14 years, and the shortest was just three years, reflecting an extremely high level of silica dust exposure.

Media Article

We published some earlier results of this research project in Occupational and Environmental Medicine late last year. But this latest data hasn't yet been published in a peer-reviewed journal, meaning it hasn't been subject to the same level of scrutiny as other published research.

A broader problem

Failure to protect workers from silica exposure goes well beyond the stone benchtop industry.

Around 3.7% of Australian workers are estimated to be highly exposed to silica at work, and we see workers in other industries, such as quarry work, with silicosis too.



Some 59% of Earth's crust is silica, so in certain workplaces such as mines and quarries, eliminating silica is not feasible.

In these circumstances, exposure must be identified and tightly controlled with measures to prevent dust generation, isolation of workers from the dust, and effective ventilation. If silica cannot be eliminated from a workplace, constant vigilance and evaluation of control strategies are essential.

But when it comes to the choice of material for your kitchen benchtop, it's hard to argue elimination of high-silica artificial stone isn't feasible. There are many other materials suitable for benchtops that contain little or no silica, such as wood, laminate, steel or marble.

Compared with other countries, Australian consumers have developed a particular fondness for artificial stone, which accounts for 45% of the benchtop market here, but just 14% in the United States.

Workers' lung health may seem like a strange thing to contemplate when designing a kitchen. But increased awareness of this issue is crucial to drive change.

Ryan Hoy

Respiratory Physician. Senior Research Fellow.

Monash Centre for Occupational and Environmental Health, Monash University

Media Article

HUNT IS ON FOR ASBESTOS DUMPER

Courier Mail by Isabella Magee 22 March 2021

AN INVESTIGATION has been launched after the illegal dumping of asbestos at a Fraser Coast waste facility last week, an action labelled as "downright dangerous".

Fraser Coast Regional Council was forced to organise an urgent, costly clean-up at the Nikenbah Transfer Station after staff discovered the asbestos.

The back section of the transfer station was shut down as a safety measure while the clean-up was organised.

Councillor David Lee said the dumping of the asbestos was "not just lazy" but "downright dangerous" as there were strict safety procedures required when disposing of the material.

"Council staff were alarmed to discover ... that someone had dumped asbestos in the steel pile and the builders' waste area," Cr David Lee said.

As part of its investigation into the incident, the council is reviewing CCTV footage of people who attended the facility in the lead-up to the illegal activity.

Fines for dumping asbestos start from \$2,669 for individuals, while a corporation, could be forced to pay from \$10,008.

The Saltwater Creek Road landfill in Maryborough is the only Fraser Coast waste facility that accepts asbestos.

All asbestos waste taken for landfill disposal must be double wrapped or double bagged in heavy-duty 0.2mm polyethylene sheeting with a tape seal, clearly marked with "ASBESTOS".



Media Article

LOW DENSITY ASBESTOS BOARD



Minister for Education
Minister for Industrial Relations and
Minister for Racing

5 JAN 2021

Mr Trevor Torrens
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Dear Mr Torrens

I refer to my letter to you dated 28 October 2019 in which I outlined that I was considering changing the current published guidance on low density asbestos fibre board (LDB) after further consultation with relevant stakeholders.

As you are aware, there have been some delays in progressing this matter due to the assessment of the regulatory impacts of the proposed change to the guidance through the Queensland Productivity Commission. I apologise for these delays.

I am pleased to advise that after consideration of the evidence and feedback presented to me, I have made the decision to change the guidance on LDB to clearly state that LDB is a friable asbestos containing material. As you would agree, this will greatly assist in ensuring the dangerous health and safety risks associated with this asbestos containing material are appropriately managed.

These changes will be published as soon as practicable and will commence after a three-month transition period. The Work Health and Safety Regulator will use this short transition to prepare industry for the changes and give them an opportunity to obtain any skills and training necessary to undertake work legally on LDB. This will address recommendations made by the Queensland Productivity Commission in its assessment of the proposal to ensure support is provided to Class B asbestos removal licence holders who may be impacted by the guidance changes.

I also note some concerns were raised during consultation on these changes about the current lack of education, awareness and knowledge of LDB, particularly around its identification. To address these concerns, I have asked the Office of Industrial Relations to deliver a range of awareness and engagement activities to support industry, workers and the community. I also call on organisations, such as yours, to communicate these important changes through your networks.

Thank you again for raising this important issue with me.

Yours sincerely

GRACE GRACE MP
Minister for Education
Minister for Industrial Relations and
Minister for Racing

2021 ADSS MORNING TEAS

TOOWOOMBA - 22 FEBRUARY
BRIBIE ISLAND - 10 MARCH
SUNSHINE COAST - 18 MARCH
REDLANDS - 29 MARCH
BALLINA - 20 APRIL
GOLD COAST (NERANG) - 16 APRIL
KINGAROY - 5 MAY
CHERMSIDE - 12 MAY
DARWIN - 17 MAY
CAIRNS - 24 MAY
TOWNSVILLE - 25 MAY
MACKAY - 26 MAY
ROCKHAMPTON - 27 MAY
BEAUDESERT - 14 JUNE
WARWICK - 29 JUNE
GLADSTONE - 27 JULY
BUNDABERG - 28 JULY
HERVEY BAY - 29 JULY
GYMPIE - 30 JULY
LOGAN - 26 AUGUST
NORTH LAKES - 23 SEPTEMBER
IPSWICH - 14 OCTOBER
GOLD COAST (CURRUMBIN) - 28 OCTOBER
REDCLIFFE - 9 NOVEMBER



Support Groups

Social groups play a big role within the Society and were set up with the aim of bringing people together who are affected by asbestos related diseases. It is a space for people to share experiences in a safe environment. Below is a list of the Society Support Groups, where and when they meet.

Bundaberg - 1st Wednesday of the month, 9.30am, Bundaberg & District Neighbourhood Centre

Chermside - 1st Thursday of the Month, 9.30am, Chermside Library

Hervey Bay - 2nd Wednesday of the Month, 9.30am, Hervey Bay Neighbourhood Centre

Sunnybank - 2nd Friday of the month, 9.30am, Sunnybank Hills Library

Gold Coast - 3rd Wednesday of the Month, 9.30am, Robina Community Centre

Rockhampton - 3rd Thursday of the month, 9.30am, Rockhampton Leagues Club

Ipswich - 4th Tuesday of the month, 10am, Ipswich Brothers Sports Club

Sunshine Coast - 4th Wednesday of the month, 9.30am at Maroochydore RSL

We encourage you to come along and meet with other people affected by asbestos disease. It is an opportunity to catch up over a cup of tea or coffee and morning tea and to share experiences and make new friends.



Contact the Society for further information

The Society at Work



4.2.21 Chermside Support Group



12.2.21 Sunnybank Support Group



22.2.21 - Toowoomba Morning Tea



23.2.21 - Ipswich Support Group



4.3.21 - Rockhampton Support Group



5.3.21 - BERT Charity Golf Day



8.3.21 - International Womens Day



8.3.21 - International Womens Day



8.3.21 - International Womens Day



10.3.21 - Bribie Island Morning Tea



10.3.21 - Bribie Island Morning Tea



15.3.21 - March 4 Justice



18.3.21 - Sunshine Coast Morning Tea



18.3.21 - Sunshine Coast Morning Tea

Get to know our Corporate Members



Corvex Pty Ltd

Corvex are Australian owned and operated, expert leaders in the Asbestos industry. We offer a team of highly skilled and trained technicians, backed by a dedicated, well experienced senior management team.

Corvex provide cost-effective solutions for all Hazmat removal situations with an impeccable commitment to safety.

We can remove and dispose of any type of material from any location; residential, commercial or industrial friable or non-friable.

Our team have invested in market-leading technology which is implemented throughout all work sites operating across the East Coast of Australia. This ensures that clients maintain connected with the project, gaining real-time access and up-to-date information.



Demolition & Asbestos Industry association (QLD)

The Demolition & Asbestos Industry Association Queensland Inc. (DAIA) was established in February 2006 to represent the broader resource recovery sector. DAIA is formerly known as the Demolition Industry Association Queensland (DIAQ, 2017-2018), the Demolition Contractors Association (QLD) Inc. (DCAQ, 2013-2017) and from 2006 to 2016 the association was known as Demolishers, Recyclers & Asbestos Contractors Association of Queensland Inc. (DRACAQ).

DAIA promotes safe work practices for the demolition, asbestos removal, recycling and associated industries and the diversion of waste from landfill achieved through increased recycling of valuable resources and materials resulting from relocation and deconstruction activities. DAIA encourages and promotes a high standard of service, workmanship and integrity within the demolition and asbestos removal and recycling industries.

Our membership includes individuals, kindred associations, government agencies, demolition contractors & yards, recycling facilities, landfill operators, earth-moving contractors, asbestos removal contractors, consultants, testing laboratories, machinery and equipment suppliers and labour hire and training organisations, and other associated professionals. The Association has been at the forefront of initiatives with government agencies to help improve training, reduce waste, preferred deconstruction methods to increase recycling, better identification of asbestos hazards, and safer asbestos removal methods. Information forums and regular newsletters advise membership of issues that need to be considered and addressed.



DOTS Allied Health Services

DOTS Allied Health staff are highly experienced (average of 15 years' experience) and committed to professional development. We ensure that all interventions are evidence based and meet your needs. You can be assured that you are engaging with experience and up to date knowledge.

We have been around long enough to value the ongoing learning that's essential for high quality practice and to understand the limitations of our skills. We work closely with colleagues with differing skill sets.

We maintain an active role in Occupational Therapy Australia events and volunteer with national reference and professional development groups.

Our Dietitians are Accredited Practising Dietitians (APD) and members of the Dietitians Association of Australia. And our Social Workers are Accredited with the AASW.



North Australian Contracting

North Australian Contracting Pty Ltd is a specialist contractor in the commercial building industry specializing in works in the following areas:

Steel stud wall framing, Partition linings (fibre cement and plasterboard), Suspended ceilings, Compressed fibre cement façade, Aluminium composite cladding, Hebel power panel, Speedpanel, Fire doors, Non rated doors, Skirting, Specialist fitout works

Secondary subcontract works including:
Glazing, Toilet Partitions, Operable Walls, Masterkeying, Structural Steel and Project management.

NAC is one of the largest wall and ceiling contractor in Queensland and is widely recognized by builders, suppliers, architects and project clients as a market leader in its field with a proven track record for quality and performance that results in ongoing repetitive works for our clients.

The company has over 35 supervisory and administrative staff, over 40 apprentices and at times has employed in excess of 400 tradesman and labourers. It holds a full QA system and an extensive safety suite of documents that is audited and updated regularly and is prepared specifically for every project.

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DOTS Allied Health Services Pty Ltd
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North Australian Contracting
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The Construction Training Centre (CTC)
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We thank all members for their ongoing support.

