

MEDIA RELEASE: 11 March 2025

Beware Asbestos Risks Following ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred's Flood Devastation

Visit asbestosawareness.com.au – it's not worth the risk!

In the wake of ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred, heavy rains and flooding have caused extensive damage across Southeast QLD and Northern NSW, displacing thousands of people and leaving homes, businesses, and properties severely affected. As communities wait for floodwaters to recede and rainfall to ease before beginning cleanup, homeowners, businesses, and rural property owners are urged to be aware of potential asbestos risks in damaged structures and debris.

Cherie Barber, Ambassador for the National Asbestos Awareness campaign is urging those impacted to be wary of potential dangers posed by damaged asbestos-containing materials found in homes, buildings, structures and flood debris that may have washed onto their properties.

“When homes and other buildings containing asbestos are damaged or destroyed during floods, wind and storms, asbestos-containing materials can become eroded, disturbed, broken or friable causing a health risk to homeowners, property owners, property managers and the community if these materials aren't managed correctly and disposed of safely,” Ms Barber said.

“Before commencing the clean-up, to protect themselves, their families and communities; property owners must visit www.asbestosawareness.com.au to learn how to identify and manage asbestos safely.

“They should also contact their local Council or Emergency Services for important information about asbestos, and if asbestos needs to be removed, people should only use professional licenced asbestos removalists because it's not worth the risk,” she said.

Asbestos was used in the manufacture of more than 3000 building and decorator products that can still be found in any brick, weatherboard, clad or fibro home built or renovated prior to 1990. It was used everywhere and may be in many forms including flat or corrugated sheets (fibro) used for walls, ceilings, roofing or in products such as pipes, electrical conduit, eaves, wall and floor tiles and other structures including garages and garden sheds.

In many coastal regions hit hard by the current flood and cyclone disaster, often original ‘weekenders or shacks’ were constructed from flat and corrugated (fibro) sheeting including external and internal walls and ceilings, while in rural and regional areas, homes; fences, storage sheds, chook sheds, out houses and stock sheds may have been constructed from asbestos-containing materials.

Asbestos was also commonly used in the construction of commercial and non-residential properties such as shops or public buildings prior to December 2003.

The Asbestos Education Committee's (AEC) John Batty said, “It's important that property owners and volunteers do not walk on corrugated asbestos roofs or enter any buildings until authorised to do so by Council or Emergency Services.”

“Erosion, heavy rains, winds and tree branches may have caused additional damage to already aged asbestos roofs as well as the walls of the structure. Homes, commercial properties and other structures (sheds, garages and stock sheds etc.) may be structurally unsound and vulnerable to collapse.

“Other potential hazards property owners need to avoid include damaged asbestos-containing materials, sharp edges, protruding nails and broken materials including glass and timber that could be found in building rubble, damaged structures and flood debris,” said Mr Batty.

Bret Baker, President of the Asbestos and Hazmat Removal Contractors Association of NSW and AEC Member “When it comes to managing asbestos, the first rule is, if you think a building material, product or debris may contain asbestos, treat it as if it is asbestos and take all the necessary precautions in line with regulations,” he said.

“When storms and floods hit, whole buildings and even stockpiled asbestos-containing materials (particularly flat or corrugated sheeting commonly known as fibro) can be picked up by floodwaters and moved from one location to another.

“So, even if your home was built after 1990, it is possible that during floods, miscellaneous debris including asbestos-containing materials from elsewhere can end up on your property and pose a risk.

“Should you find displaced structures and debris containing asbestos on your property, it’s vital that these materials are managed safely and in line with regulations,” Mr Baker said.

Homeowners, commercial and rural property owners and managers should visit www.asbestosawareness.com.au for information on how to identify asbestos-containing building materials and decorator products and find out what they need to know to manage asbestos safely following storms and floods.

-ENDS-

MORE INFORMATION ON SAFE ASBESTOS MANAGEMENT FOLLOWING FLOODS & STORMS

- **Asbestos & Floods:** <https://asbestosawareness.com.au/floods>
- **Asbestos products database:** <https://asbestosawareness.com.au/asbestos-products-database/>
- **Asbestosawareness.com.au** has been Australia’s leading source of comprehensive asbestos information since 2011.

INTERVIEW REQUESTS:

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- **HI-RES IMAGES:**
 - **Flood:** <https://asbestosawareness.box.com/v/flood-damage>
 - **Testing, Removal and Clearance Photos:** <https://asbestosawareness.box.com/v/Asbestos-ID-Test-Removal>
 - **Cherie Barber Photos:** <https://asbestosawareness.box.com/v/cherie-barber>
 - **All Photos – everything including locations, products etc:** <https://asbestosawareness.box.com/v/AsbestosAwarenessImages>
- **B-ROLL MEDIA FOOTAGE:**
 - <https://asbestosawareness.box.com/v/Asbestos-Footage>
- **RADIO CSA:**
 - <https://asbestosawareness.box.com/v/Asbestos-Awareness-Radio-CSA>
- **EDUCATIONAL VIDEOS:** <https://vimeo.com/showcase/11593928>

	Duration	YOUTUBE	VIMEO
Renovation Roulette Community Service Announcement	30 seconds	https://youtu.be/pfnqvHgxFRY	https://vimeo.com/634115169
Asbestos In Homes: The Complete Guide to Identification, Testing & Removal	22min	https://youtu.be/GdWpr0wjU9I	https://vimeo.com/1024191730
Asbestos In Homes: An Overview to Asbestos Identification, Testing & Removal	6:50min	https://youtu.be/nhmADxzDONg	https://vimeo.com/1032900362
Asbestos In Homes Promo Clip	48 sec	https://youtu.be/xdgt-V_xiAA	https://vimeo.com/1064130169
Asbestos In Homes: Identification	2:48min	https://youtu.be/NSJmCXjGSc4	https://vimeo.com/1032781388
Asbestos In Homes: Removal	2:22min	https://youtu.be/TKuSuzZZrrQ	https://vimeo.com/1032782399

Asbestos In Homes: Residential Checklist	0:44sec	https://youtu.be/PKTA_Ba2mic	https://vimeo.com/1032782399
Asbestos In Your Home: The Ultimate Renovators Guide	14:24 mins	tps://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wXTUuwXe_hk	https://vimeo.com/147058660
Asbestos In Your Home: A Renovators Overview	5:05 mins	tps://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ejj1pALBNs	https://vimeo.com/634130841
Asbestos In Homes: Clearance Certificates	0:55sec	tps://youtu.be/qAWWWmIP9Uk	tps://vimeo.com/1032781006

HASHTAGS

#AsbestosAwareness #Floods #RespectAsbestos #RespectAsbestosRisks #AsbestosSafety #Alfred #TCAlfred #AsbestosAndFloods #StormDamagedAsbestos #FloodDamagedAsbestos #AsbestosAndStorms

SPOKESPEOPLE



Cherie Barber – Asbestos Awareness Ambassador

Cherie Barber is widely known as Australia's Renovation Queen™ and in March 2024 was named the third Most Trusted celebrity according to the Australian Talent Index's Top Talent Report. Cherie is a regular TV renovator, highly sought-after public speaker, author and award-winning businesswoman with her renovating for profit career spanning more than 30 years. Cherie lost her grandfather to asbestos-related disease and has been a dedicated Ambassador for the National Asbestos Awareness campaign to educate homeowners and DIYers on how to renovate homes with asbestos safely since 2013.



John Batty – Asbestos Education Committee & Asbestos Assessment Expert

John Batty is the former president and founding member of the Asbestos & Hazardous-Materials Consultants Association (AHCA) and is the Managing Director of EDP Consultants, a global provider of Health, Safety and Environmental Services. John has more than 20 years' experience in asbestos and hazardous materials management and provides consultancy services to several government departments and private organisations. John is a member of the Asbestos Education Committee for the National Asbestos Awareness Campaign.



Bret Baker JP – Asbestos Education Committee & Asbestos Removal Expert

Bret Baker is President of the Asbestos & Hazmat Removal Contractors Association of NSW (AHRCA). Bret is a Civil and Environmental Engineer and is the Managing Director of Beasy Pty Ltd with more than 25 years experienced in asbestos removal and demolition. Bret is a long-time industry representative on a number of government asbestos and demolition advisory committees including SafeWork NSW Demolition & Asbestos Consultative Committee and the Asbestos Safety & Eradication Agency of Australia – Management and Removal Committee Member. Bret has presented at state and national

asbestos forums on asbestos-related industry issues. Bret is a member of the Asbestos Education Committee for the National Asbestos Awareness Campaign.

ABOUT

The Asbestos Education Committee (AEC) initiated asbestosawareness.com.au in NSW in 2011, later expanding it into the National Asbestos Awareness Campaign. Collaborating closely with stakeholders such as local and state governments, non-profits, research organisations, and businesses; asbestosawareness.com.au emerged as the premier educational platform for asbestos awareness in Australia. When government funding ceased in 2018, Advocacy Australia, a registered charity, was established in 2020 to ensure the continuity of asbestos education and revived the Asbestos Education Committee (AEC). Comprised of industry leaders and stakeholders, the AEC is dedicated to minimizing exposure to hazardous asbestos fibres and maximising education and awareness to help save lives.