

NOVEMBER IS NATIONAL ASBESTOS AWARENESS MONTH



MEDIA RELEASE: 25 NOVEMBER 2024

Lifesaving National Asbestos Awareness Week Targets Renovators & Tradies

NATIONAL ASBESTOS AWARENESS WEEK IS NOVEMBER 25 TO DECEMBER 1 - FRIDAY 29 NOVEMBER IS ASBESTOS AWARENESS DAY 2024

With the annual death toll caused by exposure to asbestos fibres predicted to rise, national Asbestos Awareness Week is dedicated to saving lives by alerting homeowners and tradies to the dangers of asbestos that remains lurking in 1 in every 3 Australian homes, and educating them on how to identify and manage asbestos safely.

If sealed and in good, stable condition asbestos-containing materials don't pose a health risk. However, when disturbed during demolition, renovation or maintenance and microscopic fibres are released, this can lead to life-threatening diseases including malignant mesothelioma, asbestosis and lung cancer, while evidence suggests links to ovarian and laryngeal cancers and increased risk of breast, stomach and colon cancers.

Clare Collins, Chair of Advocacy Australia and the Asbestos Education Committee said, "Every year, asbestos kills around 4,000 Australians - that's more than double the national road toll!

"With no known safe level of exposure to asbestos fibres, the only way to prevent asbestos-related deaths is to increase awareness of the risks of disturbing asbestos during home renovations, demolition or maintenance and providing education tools and information about asbestos locations and how to manage it safely," she said.

Adding to its extensive suite of free resources endorsed by experts and government bodies; in 2024, the Asbestos Education Committee have announced its new user-friendly asbestos education tool to ensure property owners and tradies identify and remove asbestos-containing materials safely in accordance with regulations.

"In our new, 20-minute real-life, step-by-step video, ***Asbestos in Homes: A Guide to Identification, Testing and Removal*** we discuss asbestos safety, the legalities and the simple steps people should take for asbestos inspections and removal so they know how to protect themselves, their families, tradies and anyone who might risk exposure to asbestos fibres during renovation, demolition or maintenance," Ms Collins said.

Asbestos in Homes: A Guide to Identification, Testing and Removal features industry leaders including Cherie Barber, Australia's Renovation Queen™ with members of the Asbestos Education Committee; Bret Baker, President of the Asbestos & Hazmat Removal Contractors Association of NSW (AHRCA); John Batty, President of the Asbestos & Hazardous-Materials Consultants Association (AHCA); and Mathew Klintfält who continues the work of his late mother Carol Klintfält OAM in asbestos awareness advocacy.

Cherie Barber, Asbestos Awareness Ambassador who lost her grandfather to an asbestos-related disease said, "Because Australia was one of the highest consumers of asbestos-containing materials globally, the importance of continuing to increase awareness and providing practical resources that build community knowledge on identifying and managing asbestos safely, cannot be overstated.

"Most Australians don't know that asbestos was not only used in the construction of fibro homes, but it was also used extensively in the manufacture of more than 3000 building and decorator products that could be lurking in any brick, fibro, weatherboard, clad home or apartment built or renovated before 1990.

"Asbestos could be under floor coverings including carpets, linoleum and vinyl tiles, behind wall and floor tiles, in cement floors, internal and external walls, ceilings and ceiling space (insulation), eaves, roofs, around hot water pipes, fences, home extensions, garages, outdoor toilets, backyard and farm structures, chook sheds and even dog kennels. It was used everywhere!" said Ms Barber.

“Although in some states homeowners are permitted to remove up to ten square metres of asbestos-containing materials themselves, we strongly advise against it and encourage people to only use licensed asbestos professionals because the cost to homeowners and their families could be far greater if they’re exposed to fibres that can kill,” she said.

“For those planning to renovate a home built before 1990, it’s essential they budget for licensed asbestos professionals, who will inspect and safely remove asbestos because it’s just not worth the risk!” she said.

“The ***Asbestos in Homes: A Guide to Identification, Testing and Removal*** video, is extremely useful in explaining asbestos risks and shows property owners what they need to do BEFORE starting renovations by demonstrating the entire process of safe asbestos management from professional assessment, identification, removal and clearance certificates to ensure they don’t put their life or the lives of loved ones and others at risk.

“Renovating is exciting but ignoring the warnings by knocking down walls, smashing off tiles, ripping up carpets and pulling down fences and sheds might not only cost you your life, if asbestos isn’t removed and disposed of appropriately, it could end up costing a small fortune to dispose of and remediate a contaminated site,” she said.

“The main message we want people to hear is what NOT to do with asbestos! Don’t cut it! Don’t drill it! Don’t drop it! Don’t sand it! Don’t saw it! Don’t scrape it! Don’t scrub it! Don’t dismantle it! Don’t tip it! Don’t waterblast it! Don’t demolish it! Don’t dump it! **And whatever you do... DON’T remove it yourself!**” Ms Barber said.

With many Australians still unaware of asbestos risks and Australia’s annual asbestos-related death toll predicted to rise, the Asbestos Education Committee is urging homeowners, property managers and tradies to visit Australia’s most comprehensive source of asbestos information, asbestosawareness.com.au

The asbestosawareness.com.au website is world-leading in providing user-friendly information tailored to users including renovators, residential and commercial property owners and managers while offering extensive trade-specific resources for just about any trade that risks contact with the potentially deadly fibres.

The ***Asbestos In Homes: A guide to Identification, Testing & Removal*** video was proudly sponsored by EDP – an RSK Company, Renovating For Profit, Beasy PTY Ltd, The Asbestos Education Committee & Advocacy Australia.

-ENDS-

INTERVIEW REQUESTS

For interviews with Cherie Barber or expert industry spokespersons please contact Advocacy Australia on 02 9518 4744.
Alice Collins: 0414 686 091 ♦ alice@advocacyaustralia.org.au
Clare Collins: 0414 821 957 ♦ clare@advocacyaustralia.org.au

JOURNALIST NOTES, IMAGES & GRAPHICS AND FOOTAGE

DETAILED JOURNALIST NOTES: <https://asbestosawareness.box.com/v/media-releases>

IMAGES & GRAPHICS: For various images and graphics of asbestos-containing materials (ACMs), testing, removal or Asbestos Awareness Ambassador Cherie Barber, visit: <https://asbestosawareness.box.com/v/AsbestosAwarenessImages>

FOOTAGE: <https://asbestosawareness.box.com/v/Asbestos-Footage>

HASHTAGS

#AsbestosAwareness #AsbestosAwarenessWeek #RespectAsbestos #RenovationRoulette #RespectAsbestosRisks #StopPlayingRenovationRoulette #DIY #Asbestos #Renovate #Renovating

‘ASBESTOS IN HOMES: A GUIDE TO IDENTIFICATION, TESTING AND REMOVAL’ VIDEO SPONSORS



ASBESTOS AWARENESS CAMPAIGN NOTES & WEBSITE QUICK LINKS

NATIONAL ASBESTOS AWARENESS CAMPAIGN 2024

Marking 13 years campaigning in the prevention of asbestos-related diseases

November 2024 marks the 13th National Asbestos Awareness campaign - Australia's longest-running, multi-award winning (9) annual asbestos education campaign dedicated to saving lives, has been acknowledged in parliaments across Australia and global medical journals as a leading initiative in the prevention of asbestos-related diseases through warning homeowners, renovators and tradies of the dangers of asbestos and directing them to asbestosawareness.com.au

With the launch of the ***Asbestos in Homes: A Guide to Identification, Testing and Removal*** video, in 2024, the Asbestos Education Committee and Advocacy Australia continues their mission to save lives through actively providing effective information resources and increasing awareness of the dangers of asbestos and how to manage these deadly materials safely.

The importance of continuing the National Asbestos Awareness campaign and the asbestosawareness.com.au website in the prevention of asbestos-related diseases cannot be overstated. With state and federal government funding for the campaign ceasing in 2018 and funding to keep the website live concluding in January 2019, to help save lives the campaign is largely conducted in a pro-bono capacity.

To continue the campaign and keep the website live beyond 2024, funding is desperately needed.

ASBESTOS.AWARENESS.COM.AU

asbestosawareness.com.au is Australia's leading, most comprehensive, trusted online source of asbestos information dedicated to educating the community about the dangers of asbestos with a specific focus on homeowners, renovators, tradies, commercial property managers and the owners and managers of regional properties where naturally occurring asbestos can be found.

asbestosawareness.com.au, provides comprehensive asbestos information and user-friendly free resources:

- ♦ **[Asbestos in Homes: A Guide to Identification, Testing and Removal](#)** (Video guide on asbestos inspections and removal hosted by Australia's Renovation Queen™ and Asbestos Awareness Ambassador, Cherie Barber)
- ♦ **[Asbestos 101 for Residential Property Owners, Managers and Tradies](#)** (Education resource to help homeowners, tradies and property investors learn the facts about asbestos and how to manage it safely)
- ♦ **[Asbestos in Your Home – The Ultimate Renovators Guide](#)** (Easy to follow video hosted and produced by Australia's Renovation Queen™ and Asbestos Awareness Ambassador, Cherie Barber)
- ♦ **[Asbestos Awareness Residential Property Checklist – A Homeowner's Guide to Identifying Asbestos-Containing Materials](#)** (User-friendly step-by-step guide to identifying asbestos in the home)
- ♦ **[Asbestos Awareness - 20 Point Safety Check](#)** (Asbestos risks and how to manage asbestos safely)
- ♦ **[Fact Sheets for Homeowners](#)** (When, why and how to use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE))
- ♦ **[Asbestos Awareness Toolbox Talks](#)** (10 Toolbox Talks to help employers better inform workers of asbestos risks)
- ♦ **[Asbestos Awareness for Young Workers](#)** (Education resource developed with SafeWork NSW)
- ♦ **[Asbestos Awareness - 20 Point Safety Check](#)** (Asbestos risks and how to manage asbestos safely)
- ♦ **[Residential Checklist for Tradies – A Tradespersons Guide to Asbestos](#)** (Identify the product types and locations)
- ♦ **[Trade Specific Checklist for Tradies – A Tradespersons Guide to Asbestos](#)** (Tailored to 23 specific trades)
- ♦ **[Fact Sheets for Tradies](#)** (When, why and how to use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE))
- ♦ **[Asbestos Product Database](#)** (Australia's first comprehensive online asbestos product database)
- ♦ **[Asbestos Management for Commercial and Non-Residential Properties](#)** (Australia's only comprehensive resource)
- ♦ **[Naturally Occurring Asbestos – Asbestos Management Plan Guide](#)** (Australia's only comprehensive resource)

ASBESTOS AWARENESS SPONSORS



ASBESTOS AWARENESS CAMPAIGN 2024 – MEDIA SPOKESPERSONS

Cherie Barber – ASBESTOS AWARENESS CAMPAIGN AMBASSADOR

Cherie Barber is widely known as Australia's Renovation Queen™. 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.

Bret Baker JP

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.

John Batty

John Batty is the president and a the founding member of the Asbestos & Hazardous-Materials Consultants Association (AHCA) and 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.

Clare Collins

Clare Collins is the Director of the National Asbestos Awareness campaign and asbestosawareness.com.au. Clare is the Managing Director of Insight Communications, the creators and managers of the Asbestos Awareness campaign since 2011. Working in consultation with government experts and industry leaders, Insight are the creatives behind the multi-award winning campaign and asbestosawareness.com.au. Insight has presented the campaign to stakeholders and industry leaders in the UK, Europe and Australia. Clare is the Chair of Advocacy Australia and the Asbestos Education Committee for the National Asbestos Awareness Campaign.

Councillor Greg Cummings

Clr Cummings has previously served as Mayor and Councillor on the former Holroyd City Council since 2004. He was elected as the first Mayor of Cumberland since inception in 2017. Clr Cummings has been instrumental in the initiation of the Workplace Tragedy Memorial, the asbestos awareness campaign, and Reconciliation Day. He strives to represent his constituents and is passionate about local issues. Clr Cummings is a member of the Asbestos Education Committee for the National Asbestos Awareness Campaign.

Mathew Klintfält, Asbestos Awareness Advocate and son of the Late Carol Klintfält OAM

Mathew Klintfält is the son of the Late Carol Klintfält OAM who was honoured with an Order of Australia in Queen's Birthday Honours Roll 2015 for her tireless advocacy to Asbestos Awareness following her diagnosis with mesothelioma. Mathew is an advocated for the prevention of asbestos-related diseases providing personal insight into the impact asbestos had on his mother and his family. Mathew is a member of the Asbestos Education Committee for the National Asbestos Awareness Campaign.

Phillip Smith

Phillip Smith is the Group Executive for Environment, Health, Safety and Quality and Business Technology at SHAPE Australia Pty Limited. Phil has over 30 years' experience in the building industry and holds trade, construction, strategic leadership and WHS qualifications. Phil is a member of the Asbestos & Hazmat Removal Contractors Association and the OFSC Industry Reference Group, and strongly advocates for asbestos awareness causes, industry associations and charitable organisations. SHAPE has a strong focus on asbestos management, education, and awareness, with industry leading asbestos management systems. Phil is a member of the Asbestos Education Committee for the National Asbestos Awareness Campaign.

Joanne Wade

Joanne Wade is the Head of National Asbestos and Dust Diseases for Slater and Gordon Lawyers and is a respected thought leader in advocating for the needs of people with asbestos related diseases since 1996. Joanne brings a unique credibility and very personal experience to the role, as her father is a victim of asbestos disease, which has led her to a career she is passionate about. Ms Wade was a founding member of Australia's first Asbestos Education Committee for the Asbestos Awareness Campaign aimed at educating homeowners and renovators on the dangers of asbestos.

Health and Medical Researchers: Health and medical researchers are available on request.

SOURCES

- ♦ Mesothelioma in Australia 2021 - Published 3 April 2023 - [Mesothelioma in Australia 2021 \(aihw.gov.au\)](https://www.aihw.gov.au/getmedia/034ebfb9-554f-4eb7-8f0f-ad56d9d3c5ae/aihw-can-152.pdf?v=20230605165739&inline=true)
<https://www.aihw.gov.au/getmedia/034ebfb9-554f-4eb7-8f0f-ad56d9d3c5ae/aihw-can-152.pdf?v=20230605165739&inline=true>
Accessed 23 Oct 2023
- ♦ National Silicosis Prevention Strategy 2023-2028 and accompanying National Action Plan (Draft)– Published February 2023, Lung Foundation Australia – Accessed 23 Oct 2023 <https://lungfoundation.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/NSPS-NAP-Fifth-Full-Draft-Copy-for-Public-Consultation.pdf>
- ♦ Mesothelioma.com – Accessed 23 Oct 2023 - <https://www.mesothelioma.com/asbestos-cancer/other-cancers/>