

Welcome to the fifth ASEA newsletter, Spring edition

Issue 5, Spring 2016

Welcome to the fifth *ASEA matters* newsletter issued by the agency.

We are in full planning mode for the agency's 3rd conference in November 2016 in Adelaide and we hope that you can be with us again.

You can check out the program on the website and we will be adding more details as speakers are confirmed.

Please feel free to contact the agency with information or stories that you'd like to share with others through this newsletter.

We are looking forward in seeing everyone in Adelaide in November and for National Asbestos Awareness Week activities the following week.

Peter Tighe, CEO



Inside this issue:

2016 conference update	1
2016 National awareness survey	2
New guidance on asbestos sampling and surveys	3
Minister launches Operational Plan 2016-17	3
Exposure Register statistics for 2015-16	4

3rd International Conference on Asbestos Awareness and Management



Registrations are still open for the 3rd International Conference on Asbestos Awareness and Management being held at the Adelaide Convention Centre, 13-15 November 2016.

Starting with a welcome reception on Sunday 13 November then running the 2 days on 14-15 November 2016, this conference is building to be bigger than previous years bring together well-known local and international experts in asbestos management, health, advocacy and governance to look at what is best practice in managing the dangers of asbestos in our community and abroad.

Facilitated again by award winning ABC journalist Matt Peacock, the program also includes international speakers like Professor

Ted Emmett of the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine, long time Canadian campaigner Kathleen Ruff and President and founder of the Asbestos Diseases Awareness Organisation in the US, Linda Reinstein.

Registrations are now open through the [conference website](#) and program details will be available soon. Please keep an eye on the website and [Twitter](#) for updates.

Exhibition space is sold out but the agency is still looking for sponsors for this event so if you are interested, or know someone who might be, send an email to events@asbestossafety.gov.au and a prospectus can be forwarded to you.

The agency looks forward to seeing as many of you in Adelaide in November to continue this important debate.

Community events and awareness opportunities

If your organisation has an event you would like the agency to publicise, send the details through to the [events email address](#)





2016 National survey of asbestos awareness and attitudes

Asbestos present in more home renovations, but DIYers are less likely to know about the dangers

The 2016 National Survey of Asbestos Awareness and Attitudes conducted by the agency has found that an increasing number of DIY home renovators do not feel they are informed enough about asbestos, despite the number of home renovations requiring asbestos removal rising in the last two years.

Almost a quarter of all home renovations in the last two years required asbestos removal, yet half of home renovators do not obtain an asbestos assessment from a qualified professional.

And most DIYers – 74 per cent – have undertaken some home renovations themselves, even where they also used professional tradespeople.

Its findings are compared to a similar study two years ago, and show that DIY home renovators had the largest decline in awareness and attitudes about asbestos.

Recognition of the danger of asbestos is high among the general population, and more people feel strongly that knowledge about asbestos is important,” the Chief Executive of ASEA, Peter Tighe, said.

However, fewer home renovators feel sufficiently informed and knowledgeable about it today than they did two years ago.

Worryingly high numbers of home renovators are reluctant to pay for professional services like obtaining a proper asbestos assessment and the safe removal of asbestos.

Accompanying these findings is an increase in the proportion of real estate agents and landlords

who wrongly feel understanding asbestos is not important.

After tradespeople, DIY home renovators are the most at-risk group of Australians for exposure to asbestos, so a decline in their awareness is a major concern.

This research shows there is a pressing need for more education among home renovators about how to identify and safely remove and dispose of asbestos.”

The research found that tradespeople were more knowledgeable about asbestos than the rest of the population, but were also increasingly concerned about their exposure to asbestos.

One third of tradespeople felt the needed more training to safely deal with asbestos, even if they had already received formal training.

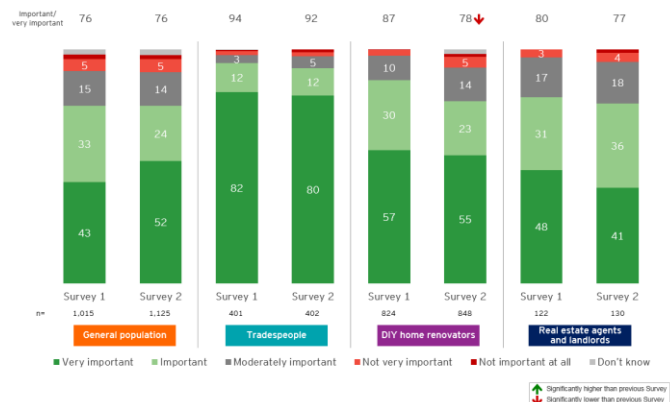
Other trends emerging from the research show a reluctance to pay for specialist services to deal with asbestos among most groups - tradespeople, DIYers, and landlords – with older people the only group more willing to pay.

The research also found lower levels of knowledge among younger people, and people who speak a language other than English at home.

ASEA will use the research to guide a national approach to asbestos education and awareness.

Key findings

- 76% of Australians felt it was important to be knowledgeable about asbestos (no change)
- 52% strongly agree it was important to be knowledgeable (up from 43%)
- 49% said they felt knowledgeable about asbestos (down from 53%)
- 53% of DIYers said they felt knowledgeable (down from 67%)
- 78% of DIYers felt that knowledge of asbestos was important (down from 87%)
- 84% of those aged over 50 felt knowledge was important compared to 70% of those under 50
- 62% of those aged over 50 felt knowledgeable compared to 40% of those under 50
- 39% of people who speak another language say they are knowledgeable of the dangers of asbestos compared to 53% who only speak English
- 36% who speak another language say they felt informed about the dangers compared to 50% who only speak English
- 74% of DIYers undertake some renovations themselves, either with or without assistance from professional tradespeople (down from 81%)
- 47% of DIYers do not conduct a risk assessment for asbestos before renovating (up from 44%)
- 32% of DIY home renovators undertake the removal of the asbestos themselves (down from 36%)
- 40% of estate agents/landlords believed that understanding asbestos is important. (down from 50%)
- 43% of landlords do not see it as their responsibility to find asbestos in their property





New guidance from agency on asbestos sampling process and surveys

The agency has released guidance recently on the process for taking samples of asbestos for testing and getting an asbestos survey on your property.

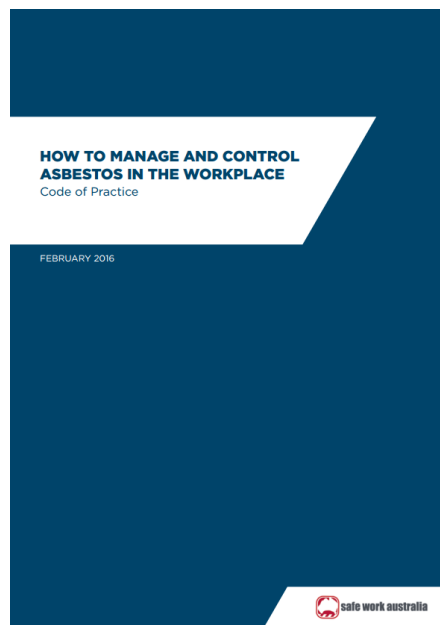
Sampling asbestos for testing

The only way to be certain that something contains asbestos is to have a sample of the material tested. It is recommended that all testing be undertaken by a laboratory accredited by the [National Association of Testing Authorities](#) to undertake asbestos testing to Australian Standard AS 4964 Method for the qualitative identification of asbestos in bulk samples or a laboratory recommended by the [work health and safety regulator in your state or territory](#).

It is recommended that samples be collected by an experienced professional such as an occupational hygienist or a licenced asbestos removalist, or by an accredited laboratory or inspection body. If you decide that you want to take the samples yourself, it is vital that you take appropriate precautions to

ensure you do not expose yourself or others to asbestos fibres.

The information provided by the agency has been adapted from the Safe Work Australia [How to Manage and Control Asbestos in the Workplace Code of Practice](#).



Asbestos surveys

If your house was built or renovated before 1990 it is likely that it will contain some form of asbestos containing material (ACM). If you are unsure whether your home contains asbestos, an asbestos survey will assist you to become informed of its location, condition and give guidance on how to manage the risk.

An asbestos survey is a process where an experienced asbestos contractor conducts an audit of your property to identify ACMs and provides you with a report making recommendations on removal or management strategies.

If you are planning home renovations, an asbestos survey will help to identify asbestos that needs to be managed or removed as part of the process. It is important that a survey be conducted before you start work to avoid disturbing ACMs.

A pre-renovation or demolition survey identifying asbestos may be required prior to undertaking certain activities. It is recommended that you check with the [work health and safety regulator](#) in your state or territory to find out what specific requirements apply.

For more information on these two issues, visit the [agency website](#).

Minister Launches agency Operational Plan 2016-17

The Minister for Employment, Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash launched the Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency Operational Plan 2016-17 at a special meeting of the Asbestos Safety and Eradication Council on Wednesday, 28 September 2016.

Highlights of the plan include investigating methods to improve asbestos awareness and conducting behavioural research to better understanding the choices, barriers and motivations for industry and homeowners to safely manage asbestos risks.

The plan represents an ambitious challenge for the agency, but by working with all levels of government over the next 12 months to support improved evidence, coordination and information for Australia to contribute to eliminating asbestos-related disease in Australia" CEO of the agency.



Minister Cash with members of the Council

The plan is available at: www.asbestossafety.gov.au/asea-annual-operational-plan-2016-17



National Asbestos Exposure Register statistics for 2015-16 available

Jurisdiction								
ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	Total
149	534	26	177	108	44	212	310	1560
9.55%	34.23%	1.67%	11.35%	6.92%	2.82%	13.59%	19.87%	

Since its commencement in June 2013, there have been 4085 registrations. There were 65 registrations in June 2013. With data corrections, there were 1062 registrations in the 2013-2014 financial year, 1398 in the 2014-2015 financial year and 1560 in the 2015-2016 financial year.

Relative to population, the ACT and Western Australia both had disproportionately high representation in the 2015-2016 financial year. For the ACT, this is attributed to the ongoing issue of loose-fill asbestos in Canberra home in WA it is attributed to a large number of registrations relating to one employer and also to one school. A large proportion of these registrations were due to the registrant being informed of the NAER by their employer or union. Conversely Queensland has a disproportionately low percentage of registrants; there is no clear indication as to why.

There have been significant fluctuations from one month to another in the number of registrations on the NAER. Influencing factors include media reports on asbestos issues and large numbers of employer or union initiated registrations.

At 69% to 31% for male to female registrations respectively, the reporting gap has decreased compared to the previous financial year. This is reflected by a large number of registrations reporting school-based exposures which are predominantly reported by females.

The occupational to non-occupational ratio has narrowed at 64% to 36% respectively; compared with approximately 75% to 25% in the previous financial year. This reflects a high incidence of reporting of potential exposure to loose-fill asbestos in the residential setting.

Location of exposure	Count	% of total
Environmental/Domestic	30	1.92%
Other	29	1.86%
Residential	374	23.97%
School/Educational	125	8.01%
Work	1002	64.23%
Total	1560	100.00%

Exposure by Job category	Total	% total
Asbestos Removal / Disposal	24	3.22%
Boilermaker	16	2.14%
Building / Construction	93	12.47%
Electrician	126	16.89%
Fitter and Machinist	43	5.76%
Mining / Resources Occupations	53	7.10%
Other	358	47.99%

Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency

Level 10, 255 Elizabeth Street
SYDNEY, NSW 2000
1300 326 148

enquiries@asbestossafety.gov.au

www.asbestossafety.gov.au

About the agency

The Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency (the agency) was established on 1 July 2013 to provide a national focus on asbestos issues which goes beyond workplace safety to encompass environmental and public health concerns.

The agency aims to ensure asbestos issues receive the attention and focus needed to drive change across all levels of government and reduce the risk of asbestos-related diseases.

The National Strategic Plan for Asbestos Management and Awareness 2014-18 is the first of its kind and coordinates a national approach to asbestos management, eradication, handling and awareness in Australia. The agency works with all levels of government and stakeholders to implement the goals of the plan.

The plan is available on the agency's website at asbestossafety.gov.au/national-strategic-plan

