



# ASEA FACTS



Barriers, motivations and options  
for increasing asbestos removal in  
the residential and commercial sectors



As prepared by Ipsos Social Research Institute

# > RESIDENTIAL SECTOR

## Key findings

The following conclusions have been drawn from the research in relation to homeowners and asbestos removal in the residential sector:

- **Cost** is the main factor when making decisions relating to asbestos removal
- **Low awareness of the risk** of products containing asbestos is a barrier to informed decision making
- **Perceived likelihood of health impacts** is associated with a likelihood to remove asbestos
- **Government initiatives** which reduce the combined cost of removal and disposal are effective
- **Interest-free loans** are an effective means of increasing removal, although less so than reducing costs.
- **Renovators are more likely than others to remove asbestos** but are limited in their information-seeking behaviours.

## Importance of factors

Conjoint analysis was undertaken to understand the impact that the following three factors had on homeowners who are making decisions on asbestos removal:

- location of the asbestos
- application of a hypothetical government initiative
- the amount/cost of asbestos to be removed

### Location

The results suggest that the influence of the location of asbestos is smaller than the influence of a government initiative and size/cost of the asbestos.

### Government initiatives

- The results show that initiatives which offer the greatest reduction in total cost of removal and disposal are the most effective in encouraging homeowners to remove asbestos.

- The initiative under which immediate removal of asbestos is most likely, is free disposal (this initiative also offers the highest reduction in cost).

### Amount of asbestos to be removed/cost

- The results suggest that homeowners and renovators are more likely to remove small amounts of asbestos where the cost of the job is around \$500.

## Motivations and barriers

### Motivations

The research shows that the key motivations for homeowners to remove asbestos are:

- Avoidance of potential associated health risks
- Intention to renovate (and potentially disturb asbestos materials) was a trigger for the consideration of removal (note: conversely, the presence of asbestos also acted as a barrier to renovation work in some instances).
- Presence of others in the home (particularly children)
- Moral obligations
- Potential depreciation in property value

### Barriers

The research shows that the key barriers for homeowners to remove asbestos are:

- Cost of removal
- Income - those with lower incomes are less likely to remove asbestos immediately
- Location - there was a perception that asbestos inside the home posed a higher risk than external materials
- Lack of urgency or plans to disturb

# COMMERCIAL SECTOR

## Key findings

The following conclusions have been drawn from the research in relation to commercial building managers and asbestos removal in the commercial sector:

- The role of strata and property managers is relatively limited in terms of decision-making power regarding asbestos
- Property managers were strongly motivated by an adherence to legislative requirements
- Cost is regarded as the primary barrier to asbestos removal, and are perceived as being high.
- Asbestos removal was thought to be a commercial decision for owners, rather than a risk-based one.
- Perceived factors of the total cost of asbestos removal include:
  - the cost of specialist contractors
  - the cost of disposing asbestos appropriately
  - the disruption to business for the tenant (the cost of which may be passed on to the owner)
  - the loss of rental income for a period
  - further inspections and reporting of the status of the building after removal

## Future directions

- Government initiatives or incentives to keep costs down are likely to have a positive impact on increasing the rate at which asbestos is removed from the built environment.
- Levels of asbestos awareness are generally high, but knowledge and understanding of when asbestos may begin to deteriorate and pose a greater risk to health is lower. Future efforts should target improving risk literacy relating to asbestos in the commercial and residential sectors.
- Those planning to undertake renovations are the group most likely to consider asbestos removal. Further asbestos awareness messaging targeting renovators should be considered.
- Property managers believe asbestos removal is likely to be a commercial decision for property owners rather than risk-based. Tools should be developed and promoted to assist the commercial sector in considering return on investment.