

Mayoral Minute or Council Motion



Mayoral Minute or Council Motion – Asbestos Awareness Week 23-29 November 2020

Recommendation

1. That <Council> notes that large amounts of asbestos are still present in Australian homes, workplaces and the built environment. Homes built or renovated before 1990 have a good chance of containing asbestos, as do public and commercial buildings.
2. That <Council> notes that exposure to asbestos fibres can cause deadly cancers. There is no known safe minimum level of exposure to asbestos fibres.
3. That <Council> notes that one way to be exposed to asbestos today is through Do-it-yourself (DIY) renovation or home maintenance activities. Furthermore, research shows that during COVID-19 home improvements, maintenance and small jobs have increased exponentially.
4. That <Council> notes the likelihood of asbestos being improperly disposed of in household bins when residents are unaware of asbestos.
5. That <Council> agrees to participate in Asbestos Awareness Week 2020 and engage in awareness-raising activities throughout the Council area during this time.
6. That <Council> reviews and if necessary, revises its policies and public information regarding asbestos, to ensure it is providing the most up to date information, as provided by state and federal governments and local government associations.

Report

I am calling on Councillors to support National Asbestos Awareness Week 2020 – ‘Asbestos lurks in more places than you’d think.’

Large amounts of legacy asbestos are still present in many Australian homes, workplaces and the environment. Australia was the highest user of asbestos per capita in the world, prior to it being fully banned in 2003.

Consistent research shows that Australians are unaware of how prevalent asbestos is, where it might be found, and how to protect themselves from exposure. Worryingly, many Australians doing DIY or home maintenance believe they are doing it safely, but may not be wearing the correct Personal Protective Equipment or taking correct safety precautions.

The Australian Government Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency’s (ASEA) research shows that even amongst targeted trades (for example, construction workers, electricians and plumbers), awareness of where asbestos can be and what to do to stay safe is low.

During 2020, when all of Australia has been focused on COVID-19, research shows that more Australians than ever are undertaking DIY work, renovations and minor maintenance around the home.

Research undertaken by ASEA shows that asbestos is not thought of as a risk when planning or undertaking DIY or maintenance work, despite 1 in 5 DIYers having had contact with it in the past. This suggests that most people are either handling it without knowing, or handling it in an unsafe manner. Additionally, a third of DIYers admit to disposing of asbestos inappropriately and the majority do not feel confident managing the risks.

Councils are highly engaged with the community at various points in the home improvement journey, Council is in the unique position to provide awareness materials to the public, advising them to be aware of where asbestos might be located, and to call a professional to check.

I am recommending that <Council> will therefore be participating in National Asbestos Awareness Week 2020 and also examining what Council can do locally to further raise awareness and also introduce checks and balances to ensure residents are not exposed to harmful asbestos fibres.

Digital Collateral and Social Media



Due to COVID-19 and the reduction of face to face activities and options for promotion, we have focused on digital collateral in 2020.

We are providing for use:

- 8 social media images (with suggested lead-in text) in sizes for different digital channels. The full 8 are provided in sizings for Instagram and Facebook. A smaller collection is available for Twitter. Editable files will be provided so you can insert your organisation's logo if desired, place alternative images or resize.
- 2 options for email or website banners.
- 3 short animations Asbestos in the home, workplace and environment (both captioned and non-captioned). These animations can be embedded in websites or shared on social media.

*If you would like the animations to feature your website on the last slide, please contact us by 1 October 2020 so we can try and arrange this. **Note**, the voice over and sound will not change.*

Social Media – Instagram and Facebook

We are providing 8 social media posts for Instagram and Facebook, and we have suggested an order for them to be posted in, which will shape a message narrative across the week.

We suggest you post stage 1 on Monday, Stage 2 Tuesday – Thursday, and Stage 3 on Friday.

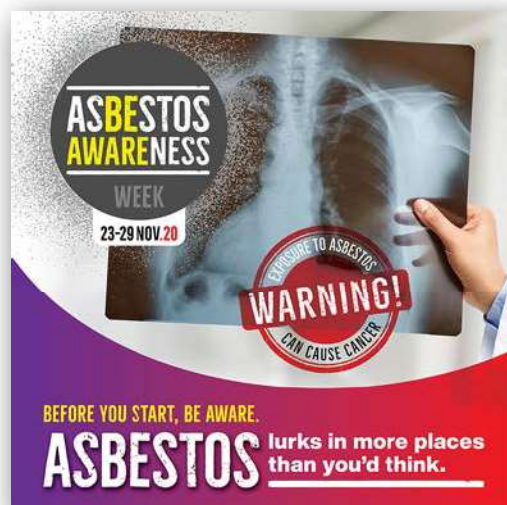
If desired, you could space this out further through the week to incorporate the weekend.

Stage 1: KNOW the health risks of asbestos exposure

Suggested lead-in text:

Inhaling asbestos fibres can cause life-threatening illnesses including mesothelioma and lung cancer.

If you're renovating an older home that may contain asbestos, call an asbestos professional for an assessment before you start. It's just not worth the risk.



Digital Collateral and Social Media



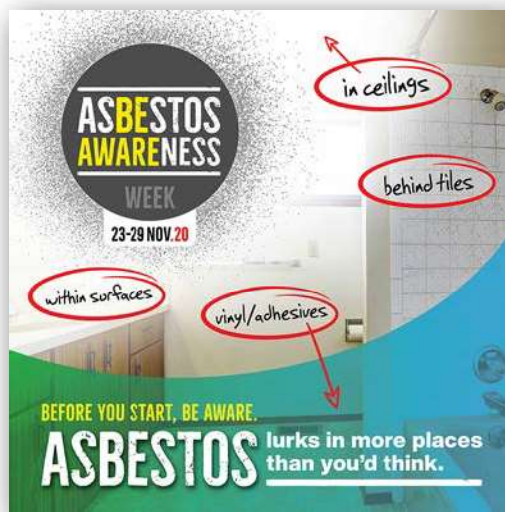
Stage 2: BE AWARE of where asbestos might be found

Choose 2 or 3 posts to use sequentially over consecutive days.

Suggested lead-in text options:

If a house was built or renovated before 1990 it has a good chance of containing asbestos. Whether you're doing up your own home or working on someone else's, be aware before you start of where asbestos might be found.

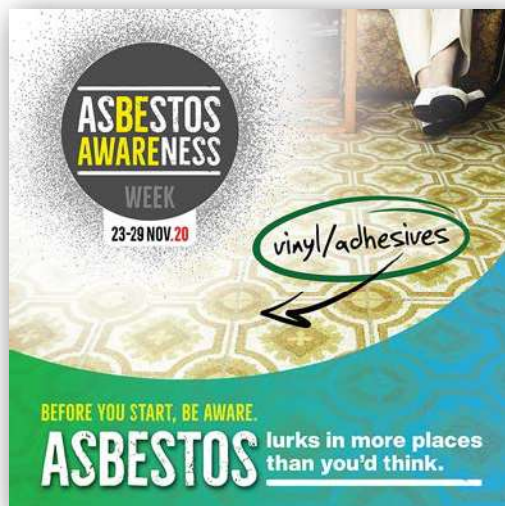
Investigate before you renovate.



If your house was built or renovated before 1990, there is a good chance it contains asbestos. Asbestos can be found in many places around homes – including bathrooms, under flooring and even in the fuse box!

Just like plumbing and electrical work, asbestos removal – or jobs around the home that might uncover asbestos - are jobs best left to the experts.

Investigate before you renovate.



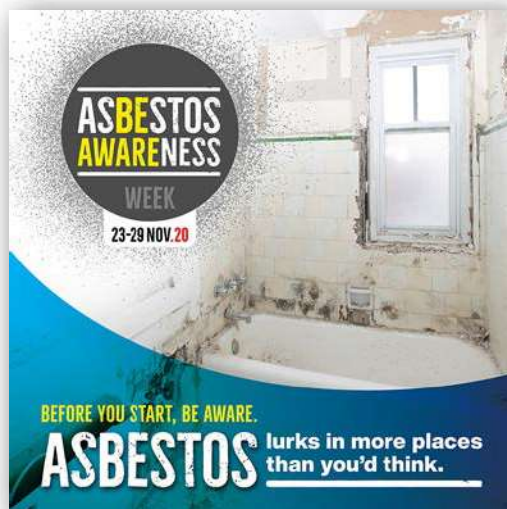
Digital Collateral and Social Media



Stage 2: continued

Many people aren't aware that it is common to find asbestos in older bathrooms (pre-1990). If you're thinking of creating a great new space, make sure you get an asbestos assessor to check for asbestos before you start to protect both you and your family.

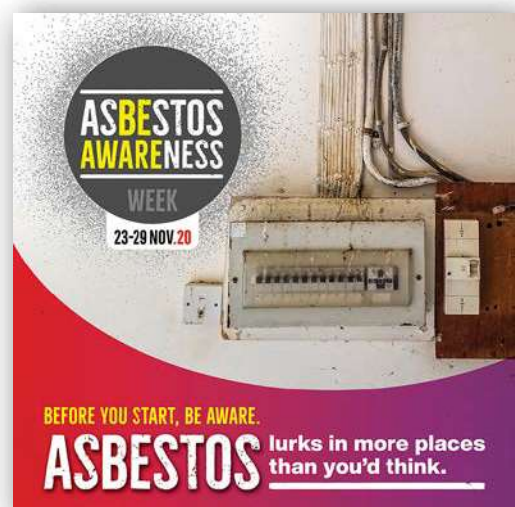
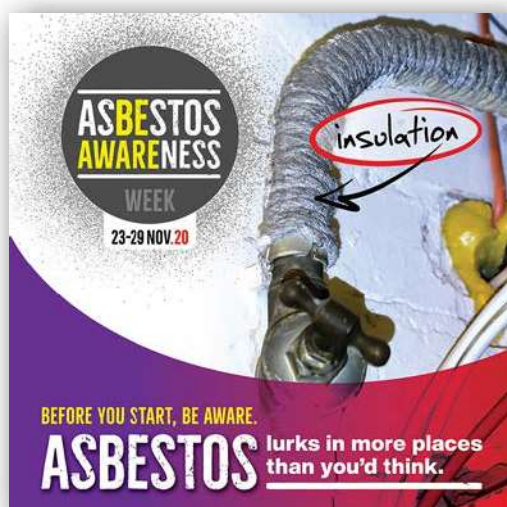
Remember that you have a legal responsibility not to harm those around you.



If you are unsure if something contains asbestos, do not disturb it, drill it, cut it or break it. Have it assessed by an asbestos assessor.

If asbestos needs to be removed before you start work, use a licensed asbestos removalist. In some circumstances the law requires it.

Be aware there is no known safe minimum level of exposure to asbestos fibres.



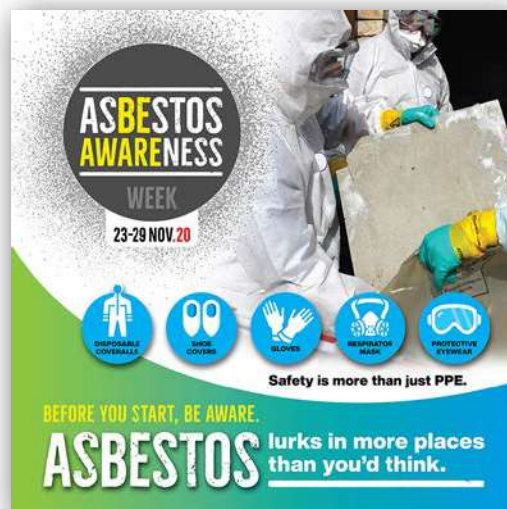
Digital Collateral and Social Media



Stage 3: CALL a professional to check, remove and dispose of it safely

Suggested lead-in text:

PPE cannot guarantee your health or safety, but it will help reduce your risk of exposure. It must be selected, worn and removed correctly to be effective. You also need to follow safe work practices to prevent asbestos contaminating everything around you.



Sample hashtags for Instagram and Twitter:

Twitter: #asbestosawarenessweek #asbestoslurks

Instagram: #asbestos #asbestosremoval #asbestostesting #asbestossafety #beasbestosaware #renovation #homerenovation #renovationlife #renovationideas #kitchenrenovation #diykitchen #bathroomrenovation #diybathroom #flashback #diy #aussiehomes #theblock

Asbestos waste can only be disposed of at a licensed facility. There are big penalties for the illegal disposal of asbestos, which includes putting it in a domestic rubbish bin, waste skip or dumping it in the bush.

