Australians were once the biggest users of asbestos in the world. A staggering 12.8 million tonnes of asbestos-containing materials were used in Australia between 1920 and 2003. Sadly, this has resulted in us having one of the highest rates of asbestos- related diseases in the world which kills about 4,000 people every year. That’s three times the annual road toll.

Our past love for asbestos means there’s a good chance you’ll find it lurking somewhere in your local environment. It could be in your home, or your neighbours. Asbestos is still present in millions of Australian homes and can be easily disturbed if you’re renovating.

Many people aren’t even aware of the possibility of asbestos being in their home.

You could also find small pieces of asbestos mixed up in soil, particularly on old industrial sites. As a naturally occurring mineral, it can also be found in the ground and can be disturbed during excavation works.

You could also find some illegally dumped asbestos in your community. Its really important that asbestos waste is disposed of correctly and 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.

Illegal dumping of asbestos is a big problem and should be reported to your council or Environmental Protection Authority. We all have a responsibility not to harm those around us and keep our environment safe.

There’s lots of places you can go for help and advice including our website www.asbestossafety.gov.au