



ANDREW CONSTANCE MP

Minister for Finance and Services

MEDIA RELEASE

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NSW GOVERNMENT COMMITTED TO TACKLING ASBESTOS RELATED DISEASE

Minister for Finance and Services Andrew Constance has today reaffirmed the NSW Government's commitment to protecting workers, home renovators and the wider community from the dangers of asbestos.

"Australia has one of the highest rates of mesothelioma in the world, and the largest numbers of mesothelioma deaths in Australia have occurred in NSW," Mr Constance said.

"Tragically, asbestos-related diseases are the legacy of unsafe work practices of the past, and home renovators represent the next wave of asbestos-related disease in NSW.

"The number of people with asbestos-related diseases in NSW is expected to increase until at least 2018 as there is often a delay of up to 40 years between exposure and the onset of disease.

"In November 2012 the Model Asbestos Policy for NSW Councils and a supporting guide was launched during Asbestos Awareness Week.

"In April 2013, the Government launched the State-wide Asbestos Plan.

"The Plan was developed in consultation with key Government agencies, local council authorities, industry and employee representatives, researchers and asbestos diseases groups.

"The four priority areas in the Plan provide a more effective and coordinated approach between Government agencies and local councils and will provide greater awareness of asbestos in the local community.

"Tackling asbestos disease rates will be challenging, but the NSW State-wide Asbestos Plan will help ensure that current practices for working with and managing asbestos reduce the risk of asbestos-related disease."

The Plan can be downloaded from WorkCover's website www.workcover.nsw.gov.au or obtained by calling the WorkCover Assistance Service on 13 10 50.

"The Government has also funded a high-profile asbestos awareness campaign in partnership with the Asbestos Education Committee and Asbestos Diseases Research Institute (ADRI)," Mr Constance said.

"The campaign targets home renovators who could come into contact with asbestos if they don't properly manage asbestos in their homes.

“The campaign includes Asbestos Awareness ambassadors Don Burke, Scott Cam, John Jarratt and Scott McGregor as well as the launch of ‘Betty’, a purpose-built model house designed to demonstrate areas in the home where asbestos might be, which is presently touring NSW.”

The www.asbestosawareness.com.au website has also been developed to provide home renovators with practical advice on how to safely manage asbestos in their homes.

For more information on safely managing asbestos, visit the WorkCover NSW website at www.workcover.nsw.gov.au or the ADRI website at www.asbestosawareness.com.au.