



## MEDIA RELEASE

### NATIONAL ASBESTOS AWARENESS WEEK 23 – 29 November 2020

It is easy to forget that asbestos is still present in millions of Australian homes, but it's a fact that if a house was built or renovated before 1990, there's a good chance it has some asbestos.

Asbestos can be easily disturbed when doing renovations, home improvements and maintenance.

National Asbestos Awareness Week 2020 reminds Australians to be asbestos aware before they start any work around the home. Asbestos lurks in more places than you'd think.

Asbestos is a known carcinogen and inhaling asbestos fibres can cause a number of life-threatening diseases including pleural disease, asbestosis, mesothelioma and lung cancer.

Asbestos-related diseases cause approximately 4,000 deaths a year.

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, Australians have increased their love of DIY and are using the extra time at home to do some home improvements and maintenance.

But what they may not know is that this work could be putting their health or someone else's health at risk. Asbestos materials are still commonly found in bathrooms, laundries, and kitchens as well as behind tiles and under flooring.

"We are encouraging Australians to make sure an asbestos check forms part of their DIY checklist before they start their home improvements," said Leonie.

"Research shows that 1 in 5 DIYers have encountered asbestos, but only half sought any kind of professional help to deal with it. Additionally, a third admitted to disposing of the asbestos improperly - including in their own household bin or in a neighbour's bin," added Leonie.

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

"This Asbestos Awareness Week we are calling on Australians to know the health risk, be aware of where asbestos might be found before starting work and call a professional for help.

Be aware: Asbestos lurks in more places than you'd think."

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