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## **ASBESTOS: A DEADLY LEGACY LAYS HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT**

**NOVEMBER IS NATIONAL ASBESTOS AWARENESS MONTH - FRIDAY 25 NOVEMBER IS ASBESTOS AWARENESS DAY 2022**

In the lead up to Asbestos Awareness Day (Friday 25 November) the women driving the National Asbestos Awareness campaign have a warning for homeowners, renovators and tradies about the dangers of asbestos in the fight against Australia's 'Third Wave' of asbestos-related diseases that's killing more than 4,000 Australians every year – 265% more than the annual national road toll.

Over the past 90 years, illness and death caused by inhaling asbestos fibres has become known as the "Three Waves" of asbestos-related diseases.

The 'First Wave' predominantly impacted men - miners, mill, transport and wharf workers who handled raw asbestos while the 'Second Wave' impacted workers in the production and installation of more than 3000 asbestos-containing products.

Despite being banned in Australia in December 2003, the extensive use of this wide range of asbestos-containing materials has led to Australia being among the highest consumers of asbestos-containing materials in the world.

With many of these products remaining in any brick, fibro, weatherboard, clad home or apartment built or renovated before 1990, disturbing this extensive deadly 'asbestos legacy' that remains hidden in plain sight in one-in-every three homes, is believed responsible for Australia's unenviable status of having the world's highest incidences of asbestos-related diseases known as the 'Third Wave'.

According to the Australian Mesothelioma Registry (AMR) Report (2021), the number of malignant mesothelioma cases diagnosed annually for men and women has consistently risen year-on-year with experts predicting deaths will continue to rise as a result of disturbing legacy asbestos that remains in millions of Australian homes.

Of those surveyed by the AMR, 47% believed exposure to asbestos fibres occurred while renovating. 39% said they'd been living in a house undergoing renovations and 10% said they'd lived in a house made of fibro built between 1947 and 1987 with the exposure of the latter group considered most likely to have occurred during home maintenance.

If undisturbed, well maintained and in a stable, sealed condition, asbestos-containing materials are not considered to pose health risks. However, when these materials are disturbed during maintenance, renovation or demolition, and invisible fibres are released into the air, inhaling fibres can lead to asbestos-related diseases including asbestosis, lung cancer and malignant mesothelioma.

There is no cure for mesothelioma, a cancer that can develop between 33 and 44 years after inhaling asbestos fibres and with limited treatments available, the average survival time following diagnosis is just 12 months.

Clare Collins, Chair of the Asbestos Education Committee and Director of Australia's National Asbestos Awareness campaign since 2011 said, "There is no known safe level of exposure to asbestos fibres.

"The only way we can stop the Third Wave of asbestos-related deaths is to prevent exposure particularly during the renovations of older homes and the only way we can do that is to increase awareness of the dangers of asbestos and provide useful, relevant information that can help people identify and manage the potentially hazardous materials safely," Ms Collins said.

Cherie Barber, Australia's Renovation Queen™ is an Ambassador for the National Asbestos Awareness Campaign and Australia's foremost expert on renovating having featured on many current affairs and lifestyle programs and in international media forums over her 30-year award-winning renovating career.

With a personal connection having lost her grandfather to asbestos-related diseases, Cherie is a passionate advocate for educating homeowners and DIYers on how to renovate homes that contain asbestos safely.



“Without knowing where asbestos might lurk in and around properties or knowing how to manage it safely, people could be risking their health and the health of families and bystanders if they fail to respect asbestos and disturb these hazardous materials.

“With the popularity of renovating continuing to rise, the only way we can stop Australia’s Third Wave is to stop playing ‘renovation roulette’ and start to respect the invisible dangers of asbestos by only using qualified professionals for asbestos detection, removal and disposal because it’s not worth the risk,” Ms Barber said.

Joanne Wade, a founding member of the Asbestos Education Committee and Head of National Asbestos and Dust Diseases for Slater and Gordon Lawyers has been a respected thought leader in advocating for the needs of people with asbestos-related diseases since 1996.

Ms Wade also has a very personal connection with her father a victim of asbestos-related diseases.

“Asbestos remains an ever-present danger in one-third of Australian homes and with growing evidence suggesting the Third Wave of asbestos-related deaths is as a result of exposure to asbestos fibres when renovating; preventing exposure through education is essential,” Ms Wade said.

“With more people, specifically women, diagnosed as a result of inhaling fibres in non-occupational settings; Australians must learn to respect asbestos and ensure they manage and dispose of it safely,” she said.

The women driving Australia’s national campaign are made up of a diverse group of professionals, volunteers, asbestos victims and advocates working together with the shared commitment to stop Australia’s Third Wave of asbestos-related diseases by increasing awareness and providing vital information at [asbestosawareness.com.au](http://asbestosawareness.com.au).

The website is Australia’s leading, most comprehensive, trusted source of asbestos information providing extensive information about the homes that may be affected and the types of products to look for.

The online **Asbestos Product Database** provides images and locations of products likely to contain asbestos and the **Asbestos Awareness – 20 Point Safety Check** provides information on the risks and how to manage asbestos safely.

The rule is, if your home was built or renovated prior to 1990 and you suspect it contains asbestos, before taking up tools be sure to engage a licenced asbestos assessor or occupational hygienist to inspect your property and if you need to remove asbestos, only use licenced asbestos removalists because it’s not worth the risk!

Now in its eleventh year, Australia’s longest-running, multi-award winning annual national Asbestos Awareness campaign continues to warn homeowners, renovators and tradies of the dangers of asbestos and directs them to Australia’s [asbestosawareness.com.au](http://asbestosawareness.com.au) to help save lives.

National Asbestos Awareness Day is on Friday 25 November 2022 when we honour the thousands of Australians who have lost their lives in the Third Wave of asbestos-related diseases including the late Carol Klintfält OAM and the late Serafina Salucci OAM who dedicated their final days to advocating for the Asbestos Awareness campaign.

**-ENDS-**

## HASHTAGS

#RespectAsbestos #AsbestosAwareness #AsbestosAwarenessMonth #RenovationRoulette #AsbestosSafety #DIY #StopPlayingRenovationRoulette #RespectAsbestosRisks #AsbestosAndRenovating #Renovating #Renovations

## INTERVIEW REQUESTS

For detailed Journalist Notes and interviews requests with a range of expert spokespersons contact:

**Insight Communications on 02 9518 4744** Clare Collins: 0414 821 957 ♦ [clare@insightcommunications.net.au](mailto:clare@insightcommunications.net.au)

Alice Collins: 0414 686 091 ♦ [alice@insightcommunications.net.au](mailto:alice@insightcommunications.net.au)

## FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT ASBESTOS & ASBESTOS PRODUCT IMAGES & GRAPHICS

For information and asbestos education resources refer to the Campaign Notes & Quick Links on page 3.

For a range of images and graphics of asbestos-containing materials or Asbestos Awareness Ambassador Cherie Barber, Australia’s Renovation Queen™ please visit: <https://asbestosawareness.box.com/v/AsbestosAwarenessImages>



## THE WOMEN BEHIND AUSTRALIA'S NATIONAL ASBESTOS AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

### **Cherie Barber – CAMPAIGN AMBASSADOR**

Cherie Barber is widely known as Australia's Renovation Queen™. Cherie is a regular TV renovator, highly sought-after public speaker, author and award-winning businesswoman with her renovating for profit career spanning more than 30 years. Cherie lost her grandfather to asbestos-related disease and has been a dedicated Ambassador, volunteering her efforts to the National Asbestos Awareness campaign to educate homeowners and DIYers on how to renovate homes with asbestos safely since 2013.

### **Clare Collins & Alice Collins – CAMPAIGN DIRECTORS**

Clare Collins and Alice Collins are a mother/daughter team and Directors of the National Asbestos Awareness Month campaign and [asbestosawareness.com.au](http://asbestosawareness.com.au). Both are Directors of Insight Communications, the creators and managers of the Asbestos Awareness campaign since 2011. Working in consultation with government experts and industry leaders, Insight are the creatives behind the multi-award winning campaign and [asbestosawareness.com.au](http://asbestosawareness.com.au). Insight has presented the campaign to stakeholders and industry leaders in the UK, Europe and Australia. Both Clare and Alice are founding directors of Advocacy Australia. Clare is the Chair of Advocacy Australia and the Asbestos Education Committee for the National Asbestos Awareness Campaign. Since funding for the campaign ceased in 2017, Clare and Alice have dedicated their expertise to the campaign in a pro-bono capacity.

### **Joanne Wade – FOUNDING MEMBER OF THE ASBESTOS EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

Joanne Wade is the Head of National Asbestos and Dust Diseases, Personal Injury for Slater and Gordon Lawyers and is a respected thought leader in advocating for the needs of people with asbestos related diseases since 1996. Joanne brings a unique credibility and very personal experience to the role, as her father is a victim of asbestos disease, which has led her to a career she is passionate about. Ms Wade was a founding member of Australia's first Asbestos Education Committee and volunteers her expertise to the Asbestos Awareness Campaign aimed at educating homeowners and renovators on the dangers of asbestos.

### **Karen Wicks - ASBESTOS AWARENESS EDUCATION ADVOCATE**

Karen Wicks has played a vital role in educating Australians about the dangers of asbestos since 2012. Volunteering her time alongside her husband Geoff Wicks, Karen has travelled more than 66,000 kilometres through every state and territory (except WA) with *Betty – The Asbestos Education House* to educate communities to help save lives. Karen has received 4 awards for her asbestos awareness commitment – 2 SafeWork NSW Awards and 2 Volunteering NSW Awards.

### **Sandie Foreman - ASBESTOS AWARENESS ADVOCATE AND MESOTHELIOMA PATIENT**

Sandie Foreman is a respected advocate in the prevention of asbestos-related diseases who seizes every opportunity to increase awareness of the dangers of asbestos in the community. Sandie was 57-years-old when she diagnosed with mesothelioma in 2016 and volunteers her time to the campaign to help prevent others from exposure to asbestos fibres.

### **Serafina Salucci OAM (8 November 1969 – 6 October 2019) ASBESTOS AWARENESS ADVOCATE**

In 2007, Mrs Serafina Salucci OAM was a seemingly healthy 37 year-old mother of four young children when she was diagnosed with malignant mesothelioma, a terminal cancer caused from inhaling asbestos fibres. Serafina's determination and courage in battling the disease was matched only by her passion and resolve to protect others in the community from asbestos risks. What makes Serafina's efforts so remarkable is that although battling terminal illness and in the face of her own imminent mortality, almost from the time of diagnosis she became an inspirational campaigner for Asbestos Awareness. At every opportunity Serafina actively promoted the dangers of asbestos through the Asbestos Awareness campaign to help educate Australians about the dangers of asbestos to help save lives. Serafina passed away from mesothelioma on 6 October 2019.

### **Carol Klintfält OAM (Late) - (9 August 1949 – 7 November 2014) - ASBESTOS AWARENESS ADVOCATE**

In 2006, Mrs Carol Klintfält OAM was 57-years-old when she was diagnosed with malignant mesothelioma. Carol hadn't heard of the disease and could barely pronounce its name. She was also unaware that the average survival time following diagnosis was just 10-12 months. Having learned that she'd been exposed to asbestos fibres while working with an architect who refurbished hotels and again when she worked with fibro sheeting while doing home renovations; Carol became a staunch campaigner for Asbestos Awareness warning Australians of the dangers of asbestos to prevent others from putting their lives and the lives of loved ones at risk. Carol passed away from mesothelioma on 7 November 2014.

**DEDICATION:** In 2021, [asbestosawareness.com.au](http://asbestosawareness.com.au) was officially dedicated to Carol Klintfält OAM & Serafina Salucci OAM. Their legacy drives asbestos awareness education and was the motivation behind founding the registered charity, Advocacy Australia.



## **ADVOCATES AND EXPERTS IN ASBESTOS AVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEW INCLUDE:**

### **Bret Baker JP**

Bret Baker is President of the Asbestos & Hazmat Removal Contractors Association of NSW (AHRCA). Bret is a Civil and Environmental Engineer and is the Managing Director of Beasy Pty Ltd with more than 25 years experienced in asbestos removal and demolition. Bret is a long-time industry representative on a number of government asbestos and demolition advisory committees including SafeWork NSW Demolition & Asbestos Consultative Committee and the Asbestos Safety & Eradication Agency of Australia – Management and Removal Committee Member. Bret has presented at state and national asbestos forums on asbestos-related industry issues. Bret is a member of the Asbestos Education Committee for the National Asbestos Awareness Campaign.

### **John Batty**

John Batty is one of the founding members of the Asbestos & Hazardous-Materials Consultants Association (AHCA) and the Managing Director of EDP Consultants, a global provider of Health, Safety and Environmental Services. John has more than 18 years' experience in asbestos and hazardous materials management and provides consultancy services to a number of government departments and private organisations. John is a member of the Asbestos Education Committee for the National Asbestos Awareness Campaign.

### **Councillor Greg Cummings**

Clr Cummings has previously served as Mayor and Councillor on the former Holroyd City Council since 2004. He was elected as the first Mayor of Cumberland since inception in 2017. Clr Cummings has been instrumental in the initiation of the Workplace Tragedy Memorial, the asbestos awareness campaign, and Reconciliation Day. He strives to represent his constituents and is passionate about local issues. Clr Cummings is a member of the Asbestos Education Committee for the National Asbestos Awareness Campaign.

### **Mathew Klintfält, son of the Late Carol Klintfält AM and Asbestos Awareness Advocate**

Mathew Klintfält continues the advocacy work of his mother, the Late Carol Klintfält AM who was honoured with an Order of Australia in Queen's Birthday Honours Roll 2015 for her tireless advocacy to Asbestos Awareness following her diagnosis with mesothelioma. Mathew is an advocated for the prevention of asbestos-related diseases providing personal insight into the impact asbestos had on his mother and his family. Mathew is a member of the Asbestos Education Committee for the National Asbestos Awareness Campaign.

### **Phillip Smith**

Phillip Smith is the Group Executive for Environment, Health, Safety and Quality at SHAPE Australia Pty Limited. Phil has over 30 years' experience in the building industry and holds trade, construction, strategic leadership and WHS qualifications. Phil is a member of the Asbestos & Hazmat Removal Contractors Association and the OFSC Industry Reference Group, and strongly advocates for asbestos awareness causes, industry associations and charitable organisations. SHAPE has a strong focus on asbestos management, education, and awareness, with industry leading asbestos management systems. Phil is a member of the Asbestos Education Committee for the National Asbestos Awareness Campaign.

### **Health and Medical Researchers**

Health and medical researchers are available on request.



## ASBESTOS AWARENESS MONTH NOTES & WEBSITE QUICK LINKS

### ASBESTOS.AWARENESS.COM.AU

[asbestosawareness.com.au](http://asbestosawareness.com.au) is Australia's leading, most comprehensive trusted source of asbestos information dedicated to educating the community about the dangers of asbestos with a specific focus on homeowners, renovators, tradies, commercial property managers and the owners and managers of regional properties where naturally occurring asbestos can be found.

Since launching on Monday 21 November 2011, the [asbestosawareness.com.au](http://asbestosawareness.com.au) website has had:

- ◆ Over 2.37 million pageviews - Over 1 million session with over 740,000 unique users.
- ◆ Averaged 11,000 users per month in 2021
- ◆ Average 23,231 pageviews per month in 2021
- ◆ During November 2021, more than 32,000 downloads of asbestos awareness information resources

Visit [asbestosawareness.com.au](http://asbestosawareness.com.au) for information and useful, practical resources including:

- ◆ [Asbestos Awareness - 20 Point Safety Check](#) (*Asbestos risks and how to manage asbestos safely*)
- ◆ [Residential Checklist for Tradies – A Tradespersons Guide to Asbestos](#) (*Identify the products and locations*)
- ◆ [Trade Specific Checklist for Tradies – A Tradespersons Guide to Asbestos](#) (*Tailored to 23 specific trades*)
- ◆ [Fact Sheets for Tradies](#) (*When, why and how to use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)*)
- ◆ [Asbestos Product Database](#) (*Australia's first comprehensive online asbestos product database*)
- ◆ [Asbestos Management for Commercial and Non-Residential Properties](#) (*Australia's only online resource*)
- ◆ [Asbestos in Your Home – The Ultimate Renovators Guide](#) (*Easy to follow video hosted and produced by Australia's Renovation Queen™ and Asbestos Awareness Ambassador, Cherie Barber*)
- ◆ [Fact Sheets for Homeowners](#) (*When, why and how to use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)*)
- ◆ [Asbestos Awareness Residential Property Checklist – A Homeowner's Guide to Identifying Asbestos-Containing Materials](#) (*User-friendly step-by-step guide to identifying asbestos in the home*)
- ◆ [Naturally Occurring Asbestos](#) (*Australia's only comprehensive online NOA resource*)

### SOURCES

- ◆ Mesothelioma in Australia 2020 Published November 2021 [26 August 2020 - Mesothelioma in Australia 2019 - Australian Mesothelioma Register](#) - Accessed 27 Sept 2021 Accessed November 2021
- ◆ February 2018 - Soeberg M, Vallance DA, Keena V, Takahashi K, Leigh J. [Australia's ongoing legacy of asbestos: significant challenges remain even after the complete banning of asbestos almost fifteen years ago](#). Int J Environ Res Public Health. 2018 Feb;15(2). doi: 10.3390/ijerph15020384. PMID: 29473898 - Accessed 6 Oct 2021
- ◆ February 2018 - Soeberg M, Vallance DA, Keena V, Takahashi K, Leigh J. [Australia's ongoing legacy of asbestos: significant challenges remain even after the complete banning of asbestos almost fifteen years ago](#). Int J Environ Res Public Health. 2018 Feb;15(2). doi: 10.3390/ijerph15020384. PMID: 29473898 - Accessed 6 Oct 2021

### ASBESTOS AWARENESS MONTH CAMPAIGN

2022 marks 11 years as Australia's longest-running, multi-award winning annual Asbestos Awareness campaign that warns homeowners, renovators and tradies of the dangers of asbestos and directs them to Australia's most comprehensive source of asbestos information and resources at [asbestosawareness.com.au](http://asbestosawareness.com.au) where they can learn how to manage asbestos safely. Since 2011, the campaign has won multiple peer-reviewed awards both nationally and internationally and has been acknowledged in medical journals as a leading initiative in the prevention of asbestos-related diseases.

The 2022 National Asbestos Awareness Month campaign is being conducted wholly in a pro-bono capacity. Funding for the campaign ceased in December 2017 and funding to keep the website live concluded in February 2020. Given the campaign and the website are of national significance in the prevention of asbestos-related diseases, Insight Communications (campaign and content creators and directors) have managed to keep the website live with the support of web developers, I-NEX and creative director, Gemma Waite of Moth Creative. Working in partnership with Advocacy Australia, to continue the campaign and keep the website current and live beyond 2022, funding is desperately needed.