

**Question on Notice**  
**No. 1892**  
**Asked on 15 November 2011**

MS GRACE asked the Minister for Government Services, Building Industry and Information and Communication Technology (MR FINN)-

**QUESTION:**

With Asbestos Awareness Week approaching, will the Minister advise my constituents of the dangers of asbestos-containing material, particularly in relation to home renovations?

**ANSWER:**

Due to its durability, fire resistance and insulating properties, asbestos was once manufactured into many forms of building materials throughout Australia. It was typically used in roofing; wall, ceiling and soffit sheeting; and backing for vinyl flooring. Houses built prior to 1990 are likely to contain some form of asbestos containing material (ACM).

When it is in good condition, ACM is not dangerous. However, if disturbed (e.g. broken, drilled and sanded) or severely weathered, it can potentially release asbestos fibres into the air, increasing the risk of developing an asbestos-related disease, such as asbestosis, mesothelioma, lung cancer or benign plural diseases, which may occur many years after exposure.

The Queensland Government is committed to ensuring that the public can easily access information on asbestos. This is why the Government has committed to implementing a single point of phone contact and a dedicated website for government information on asbestos.

From 1 January 2012, the one-stop-shop phone contact would be provided through 13 QGOV (13 74 68) and Queenslanders would be able to access the dedicated asbestos-related website at [www.qld.gov.au/asbestos](http://www.qld.gov.au/asbestos).

The website and the 13 QGOV number will mean asbestos-related information from all Queensland Government departments, and from local governments with regulatory responsibility for asbestos-related matters, will be available in one place.

The Department of Public Works, Department of Justice and the Attorney-General, Queensland Health and the Department of Environment and Resource Management have all worked together to deliver this initiative, demonstrating a coordinated approach to asbestos management across the Queensland Government.

In the mean time, the Queensland Building Services Authority (BSA), a statutory authority within my portfolio, provides links on its website to the departments responsible for the licensing of operators for asbestos removal work and for information on health risks associated with asbestos removal.

The BSA has also developed a factsheet on asbestos removal to inform the community on related issues, including the types of asbestos, the licences required for asbestos removal and environmental tips for home renovators.

A BSA licence is not required for asbestos removal work. The licensing of operators undertaking asbestos removal work is administered by the Department of Justice and Attorney-General, Workplace Health and Safety Queensland. Further information can be found on its website at <http://www.justice.qld.gov.au>.

Homeowner and do-it-yourself renovators who are undertaking renovations should be aware of the risks of disturbing ACM, know their responsibilities and take precautionary measures.

Anyone performing minor work in domestic buildings can find out more information on how to handle, remove and dispose of asbestos safely and legally in Queensland in the document entitled *Asbestos: A home renovator's and tradesperson's guide for minor work in domestic buildings* that can be found on the Workplace Health and Safety Queensland website at:

<http://www.deir.qld.gov.au/workplace/subjects/asbestos/householders/index.htm>

Further information for homeowners and do-it-yourself renovators regarding asbestos related activities in domestic premises can be found on Queensland Health's website at [www.health.qld.gov.au](http://www.health.qld.gov.au).