

'Asbestos in the home Removal Kit' for Latrobe community an Australian first



GARDS Secretary Vicki Hamilton with Matt Viney, MLC at the launch of the 'Asbestos in the home Removal Kit'.

Anyone in the Latrobe City community planning to remove a small amount of dangerous asbestos material as part of a home renovation, can now do so in relative safety following the launch of the 'Asbestos in the Home Removal Kit'.

Asbestos was used in the Australian building industry between the 1930's and late 1980's, and in the brakes, clutches and gaskets of many cars. The most commonly found household building materials that contain asbestos are asbestos-cement products (also called 'fibro' and AC sheeting).

Other places where asbestos can commonly be found include cladding, textured walls and imitation brick, around hot water pipes, gaskets around ovens and stoves, under lino and as backing in tiled areas such as in bathrooms and toilets.

Many people exposed to asbestos fibres have developed asbestos-related lung disease, such as asbestosis, lung cancer or mesothelioma after inhaling microscopic asbestos fibres.

Special precautions must be taken by anyone needing to disturb asbestos containing material.

Secretary of the Gippsland Asbestos Related Diseases Support Group, Vicki Hamilton, said the 'Asbestos in the Home Removal Kit' was believed to be an Australian first. "There has been nothing like this available in the whole of Australia", she said.

The kit provides the necessary equipment and knowledge to safely handle asbestos during the removal, packaging, transport and disposal operations for a small domestic job by the householder.

It includes a professionally produced 11 minute DVD, demonstrating how to properly use the personal protective equipment and how to safely remove and package asbestos.

The kit has been developed by the Latrobe Asbestos Management Committee, with funding from the Department of Human Services and Latrobe City Council. The committee includes representatives from EPA Victoria, Gippsland Asbestos Related Disease Support Group (GARDS), Gippsland Trades and Labour Council, Worksafe Victoria and the Victorian Waste Management Association.

The kit was launched on March 22nd at the Moe Town Hall by MLC for Eastern Victoria, Mr Matt Viney, representing the Minister for Health, the Hon. Bronwyn Pike.

Also at launch, the State Coroner, Mr Graeme Johnstone, said that since 2004, when his office began investigating asbestos related deaths, 34 deaths were attributed in some way to exposure to asbestos from home renovations.

He said the kit was an excellent example of how the community, local and state government can work together to try and prevent further deaths from home renovations involving asbestos. "The development of the kit is important beyond what we can imagine", Mr Johnstone said.

The 'Asbestos in the Home Removal Kit' can be purchased from the Latrobe City Council service centre in Morwell for \$20. The cost also covers the disposal fee at the Latrobe City landfill and a free asbestos awareness and education session is provided with each kit.

Any Latrobe City resident planning a home renovation involving the removal of asbestos material should first contact Latrobe City Council Waste Education Officer Peter Collins on 1300 367 700 to arrange an appointment.

