

# Queensland Government Asbestos Contact

## 13 QGOV (13 7468)

### [www.qld.gov.au/asbestos](http://www.qld.gov.au/asbestos)

#### Ministerial Media Statement - Sunday, November 27, 2011

A single point of phone contact and a dedicated website for government information on asbestos will be available from 1 January 2012, Minister for Government Services Simon Finn and Minister for Industrial Relations Cameron Dick announced today.

Mr Finn said from the beginning of next year, the one-stop-shop phone contact would be provided through **13 QGOV (13 7468)** and Queenslanders would be able to access the dedicated asbestos-related website at **[www.qld.gov.au/asbestos](http://www.qld.gov.au/asbestos)**.

This announcement is particularly significant as Asbestos Awareness Week comes to a close, □ Mr Finn said. Asbestos Awareness Week is a time to commemorate those lives that have been affected by asbestos-related conditions. It's also an opportunity to highlight the dangers of asbestos, and that's what this new one-stop-shop approach will do. But more importantly, it will ensure the public can readily and easily access information and advice from a coordinated source.

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 the one place. Mr Dick said the single point of contact was developed by the Interagency Asbestos Group, which coordinates the Bligh Government's response to asbestos-related matters. It adds to the Australian Government's review into asbestos management, which will make recommendations for the development of a national strategic plan to improve asbestos awareness and management by 30 June 2012.

The Bligh Government takes the handling and management of asbestos very seriously and leads by example, □ Mr Dick said. We have introduced some of the most stringent asbestos regulations in Australia, and we have made the safe removal of asbestos from government buildings a priority. In fact, since 1999, we've spent more than \$180 million removing asbestos from Queensland Government buildings, including \$142 million removing asbestos from schools.

This commitment has been reinforced by a further \$25 million allocated in 2011-12 for asbestos removal works in Department of Education facilities. All government buildings must also maintain an asbestos register detailing the presence of any asbestos. In addition, we have the Workplace Health and Safety Queensland (WHSQ) asbestos unit which is working effectively. This unit provides advice to government, employers and workers regarding asbestos safety, and its work has included the development of the Asbestos Work Health and Safety Action Plan 2011-16.

In 2010-11, WHSQ issued 188 improvement notices, 106 prohibition notices and 62 infringement notices for asbestos-related matters. Mr Finn said the Bligh Government's compulsory asbestos training for all contractors entering into arrangements for building trade services with QBuild was a benchmark for the rest of Australia. QBuild's Practical Asbestos Training (PAT) Program was nationally accredited in October 2010 and has been recognised as an industry leader, □ he said. More than 1,150 QBuild staff now hold a B Class' certificate. Asbestos containing material was commonly used in Australian residential, commercial and industrial buildings between the 1940s and late 1980s until dangers of the substance became apparent. It can take as long as 40 years from the time of exposure to the development of an asbestos-related disease such as mesothelioma.

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