

## ASBESTOS POLICY

### Summary:

The purpose of this policy is to provide information to Council workers, the local community and wider public on Asbestos.

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<b>File Number</b>	
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<b>Approved By</b>	Council
<b>Endorsed By</b>	Executive Management Team
<b>Minute Number</b>	169/20
<b>Consultation Period</b>	N/A
<b>Review Due Date</b>	August 2023 – 3 years
<b>Department</b>	Office of Chief Executive
<b>Policy Custodian</b>	Manager HR Workforce Development & Safety
<b>Superseded Documents</b>	N/A
<b>Related Legislation</b>	WHS Act WHS Regulation Model Asbestos Policy for NSW Councils
<b>Delegations of Authority</b>	Manager HR, Workforce Development & Safety

### 1. Overview

Local Government plays a critical role in reducing the risks posed by asbestos. Councils work together with the State Government and wider public to address the unfortunate legacy of asbestos in building materials and land contaminated with asbestos, as well as addressing naturally occurring asbestos.

### 2. Policy Principles

Tenterfield Shire Council acknowledges the serious health hazard of exposure to asbestos.

In Australia, asbestos was gradually phased out of building materials in the 1980s and the supply and installation of asbestos containing goods has been prohibited since 31 December 2003. Yet asbestos legacy materials still exist in many homes,

buildings and other assets and infrastructure. It is estimated that one in three Australian homes contains asbestos.

Where material containing asbestos is in a non-friable form (that is, cannot be crushed by hand into a powder), undisturbed and painted or otherwise sealed, it may remain safely in place. However, where asbestos containing material is broken, damaged, disturbed or mishandled, fibres can become loose and airborne posing a risk to health. Breathing in dust containing asbestos fibres can cause asbestosis, lung cancer and mesothelioma.

It is often difficult to identify the presence of asbestos by sight. Where a material cannot be identified or is suspected to be asbestos, it is best to assume that the material is asbestos and take appropriate precautions. Further information about asbestos and the health impacts of asbestos can be found in Council's Asbestos Procedure.

Council has an important dual role in minimising exposure to asbestos, as far as is reasonably practicable, for both:

- residents and the public within the Local Government Area (LGA);
- workers (employees and other persons) in council workplaces.

Council's legislative functions for minimising the risks from asbestos apply in various scenarios including:

- as a responsible employer;
- contaminated land management;
- council land, building and asset management;
- emergency response;
- land use planning (including development approvals and demolition);
- management of naturally occurring asbestos;
- regulation of activities (non-work sites);
- waste management and regulation.

### **3. Policy Objectives**

Manage the risks associated with asbestos by:

- identifying asbestos and asbestos containing material at the workplace and recording this in an asbestos register;
- assessing the risk of exposure to airborne asbestos;
- eliminating or minimising the risks associated with asbestos by implementing control measures;
- Reviewing control measures to make sure they are effective.

### **4. Policy Statement**

This policy aims to outline:

- the role of council and other organisations in managing asbestos
- council's relevant regulatory powers
- council's approach to dealing with naturally occurring asbestos, sites contaminated by asbestos and emergencies or incidents

- general advice for residents on renovating homes that may contain asbestos
- council's development approval process for developments that may involve asbestos and conditions of consent
- waste management and regulation procedures for asbestos waste in the LGA
- council's approach to managing asbestos containing materials in council workplaces
- sources of further information.

## 5. Scope

This policy applies to all of the Tenterfield Shire Council, Local Government Area (LGA) within council's jurisdiction.

The policy provides information for council workers, the local community and wider public.

The policy applies to friable, non-friable (bonded) and naturally occurring asbestos (where applicable) within the LGA and outlines council's commitment and responsibilities in relation to safely managing asbestos. For specific advice, individuals are encouraged to contact council or the appropriate organisation.

The policy does not provide detail on specific procedures. Practical guidance on how to manage risks associated with asbestos and asbestos containing material can be found in the:

- *Code of practice on how to manage and control asbestos in the workplace* (catalogue no. WC03560) published by SafeWork Australia.
- *Code of practice on how to safely remove asbestos* published by Safework Australia (catalogue no. WC03561) published by Safework Australia.

For information on Council's Asbestos Procedure contact Manager HR, Workforce Development & Safety on (02) 6736 6000.

## 6. Accountability, Roles & Responsibility

### **Elected Council**

Councillors are responsible for adopting the policy, allocation of resources, providing high level oversight of the delivery of the organisation's asbestos management plan and maintaining accountability mechanisms to ensure that organisational resources are appropriately utilized to address the organisation's asbestos plans, registers and priorities.

### **Chief Executive, Executive and Management Teams**

The **Chief Executive** has overall responsibility for developing an asbestos management plan, register and procedures and reporting on the status and effectiveness of asbestos management within Council.

**Chief/Director** and **Department Managers** are responsible for the day to day operational planning and implementation of this policy and associated plans and registers in the workplace under their control

## Management Oversight Group

Nil.

## Individual Managers

**The Work Health & Safety Officer** is responsible for the maintenance of this policy, asbestos management plan and register to ensure compliance with legislation and Council operational requirements and implementation procedures.

## 7. Definitions

Asbestos means:

The asbestiform varieties of mineral silicates belonging to the serpentine or amphibole groups of rock forming minerals including the following:

- actinolite asbestos
- grunerite (or amosite) asbestos (brown)
- anthophyllite asbestos
- chrysotile asbestos (white)
- crocidolite asbestos (blue)
- tremolite asbestos

Friable asbestos means material that:

- a. Is in a powder form or that can be crumbled, pulverised or reduced to a powder by hand pressure when dry;
- b. Contains asbestos.

Non-friable asbestos means:

Material containing asbestos that is not friable asbestos, including material containing asbestos fibres reinforced with a bonding compound.

## 8. Related Documents, Standards & Guidelines

To ensure **currency** and **compliance** with legislation and Council operational requirements and implementation procedures, Council approves the Chief Executive to maintain this policy, asbestos management plan and register without formal reporting to Council meetings, however, the Chief Executive is to advise Council of changes/updates in legislation through normal correspondence with Councillors.

### Council disclaimer

This policy was formulated to be consistent with Council's legislative obligations and within the scope of Council's powers. This policy should be read in conjunction with relevant legislation, guidelines and codes of practice. In the case of any discrepancies, the most recent legislation should prevail.

This policy and related procedure is based upon the *Model Asbestos Policy for NSW Councils* developed by the Heads of Asbestos Coordination Authorities to promote a consistent Local Government approach to asbestos management across NSW.

This policy does not constitute legal advice. Legal advice should be sought in relation to particular circumstances and liability will not be accepted for losses incurred as a result of reliance on this policy.

## 9. Version Control & Change History

Version	Date	Modified by	Details
V1.0	24/03/14	Council	Adoption of Original Policy (Res No. 93/14)
V2.0	23/08/17	Council	Review/Amended (Res No. 168/17)
V3.0	26/08/20	Council	Review/Amended (Res No. 169/20)