

Community Meeting Minutes

Topic: Asbestos Containing Material (ACM) – Risks, Management, and Future Actions

Date: Thursday, 29 May 2025

Time: 7:00pm – 8:30pm

Location: Glendowie Bowling Club, 27 Chelmsford Street, Glendowie

1. Meeting Opening and Objectives

- **Acknowledgements:** Thanks were extended to the following:
 - Cathy, the local Glendowie Bowling Club.
 - Honourable MP Brooke van Velden.
 - Professor Terri-Ann Berry (MSc, PhD, CCHEM, CENV, FRSV), Co-founder/Chair of the Mesothelioma Support and Asbestos Awareness (MSAA) Trust,
 - Julie Chambers (Chair of the Tamaki Estuary Protection Society (TEPS)),
 - Lauren Hawken (St. Heliers and Glendowie Residents Association (SHGRA)).
 - Margaret Voyce, Orakei Local Board.
 - Troy Churton from Orakei Local Board, for Chairing the meeting.
 - Marian Meredith, Tamaki / Maungakiekie Local Board Chairperson

Apologies: Josephine Bartley, Ward Councillor for Maungakiekie Tamaki.

- **Primary Purpose 1:** Inform the public about asbestos containing material (ACM) risks and its prevalence along the local coastline, of the Tamaki Estuary.
- **Primary Purpose 2:** Update the public on Auckland Council actions and experts on ACM perspectives.
- **Agenda Overview:**
 - Presentation by Professor Terri-Ann Berry on ACM. Supported by Dr Shannon Wallis, MSAA Trust.
 - Jason Milner – Asbestos Consultant, Director at Asbestos Management Consultants Ltd.
 - Rob Mc Allister – Facility of Asbestos Management of Australia and New Zealand (FAMANZ)
 - Interactive Q&A session.
 - Council executive presentations: Mark Townsend, Head of Project Specialisation, Craig Herbert, Daryl Thompson - Technical Specialist, Environmental Health Response, Licensing & Environmental Health.
 - Further Q&A session.
 - Remarks from Honourable Brooke van Velden, (local MP).
 - Conclusion by 8:30 PM.

2. Asbestos Presentation: Professor Terri-Ann Berry & Colleagues

2.1. Introduction to Asbestos Expertise

- **Professor Terri-Ann Berry (AUT Researcher):** Over 20 years of asbestos research. Co-founder of the Mesothelioma Support and Asbestos Awareness Trust (MSAA), supporting affected individuals, raising awareness, and preventing exposure.
- **Colleagues:**
 - Dr. Shannon Wallace: Research collaborator.
 - Jason Milner: Asbestos Consultant, Director at Asbestos Management Consultants Ltd.
 - Rob McAllister: Licensed assessor, representing the Faculty of Asbestos Management for Australia and New Zealand (FAMANZ).

2.2. Understanding Asbestos

- **Definition:** Commercial term for six minerals, commonly blue, white, and brown asbestos. White asbestos (Chrysotile) was most mined.
- **Properties:** Durable, heat and chemical-resistant, strong, and inexpensive to mine.
- **Global Production:** Over 200 million tons produced since the 1900s.
- **Applications:** Used in 3,000+ products, including building materials and items like ironing water and tea towels.
- **Building Stock:** WorkSafe NZ: Homes/buildings pre-2000 likely contain asbestos.
- **Hazard Classification:** Class 1 carcinogen.
- **Notable Cases:** Steve McQueen and Donna Summer died from mesothelioma. The "snow" in *The Wizard of Oz* was white asbestos.

2.3. Health Implications of Asbestos Exposure

- **Asbestosis:** Lung scarring from high-level exposure, now less common.
- **Lung Cancer:** Can be caused by asbestos, though direct links are hard to prove.
- **Malignant Mesothelioma:** Aggressive cancer of organ linings.
 - Prognosis: 6–12 months from diagnosis.
 - No cure.
 - NZ: Significant and rising mesothelioma deaths since the 1950s; ~100 deaths/year (one every 3–4 days).

2.4. Factors Contributing to Asbestos Danger

- **Fibre Size:** Microscopic fibres penetrate deep into lungs.
- **Fibre Shape/Persistence:**
 - Blue/brown (amphiboles): Sharp, needle-like, highly bio-persistent.
 - White (serpentine): Can be cleared over time but still hazardous.
- **Universal Risk:** All asbestos types are dangerous.

2.5. Global and New Zealand Asbestos Landscape

- **International Bans:** About one-third of countries have banned asbestos.

- **Ongoing Production:** Russia leads (50% of global supply, 100 years of reserves).
- **Major Consumers:** China, India, Russia.
- **NZ Timeline:**
 - Increased asbestos cement imports/production mid-20th century.
 - Widespread use in homes (1950s–1980s).
 - Complete ban in 2016, later than many developed nations.
- **Workplace Exposure (WHO):** 125 million globally exposed; diagnoses doubled in 30 years.
- **Cook Islands Example:** School roof deterioration led to playground contamination; highlights waste disposal challenges. Research paper available via QR code.

2.6. Asbestos Exposure Pathways

- **Historical:** Mainly occupational (mining, manufacturing).
- **Current:**
 - Tradespeople disturbing asbestos in buildings.
 - **Domestic:** DIY renovations.
 - **Para-occupational:** Workers bringing fibres home on clothing.
 - **Environmental:** Deterioration in buildings, disasters, demolition.
- **NZ Status:** Leading workplace killer; ~220 new cases/year. MSAA Trust (est. 2022) is the first national support group.

2.7. MSAA Trust Video and Prevention Message

- MSAA video raises awareness, featuring affected individuals.
- **Core Message:** Asbestos diseases are preventable; education and awareness are crucial.
- MSAA Trust is volunteer-run.

2.8. Evolution of Exposure Risk in New Zealand

- Risk has shifted from raw asbestos handling to:
 1. Repairs/renovations in older buildings.
 2. Deterioration and accidental discoveries.
- 2. **Home Renovation Advice:** Identify asbestos before disturbing materials (drilling, demolition), as this can release fibres.

2.9. Environmental Exposure Details

- Sources: Demolition, building deterioration. Natural outcrops exist but are not a primary concern.
- Emergencies (e.g., earthquakes) can release asbestos.

2.10. International Research Collaboration

- Collaboration with experts from University of Pennsylvania, University of Torino, and Fox Chase Cancer Centre (USA).

2.11. Future Research: Coastal Asbestos Study

- **Funding:** From TEPS, Jason Milner's company, AUT, and others.
- **Scope:** Study asbestos type/condition on 10 Tamaki estuary beaches.
- **Objectives:**
 - Identify exposure risks to beach users.
 - Review international management best practices.
 - Provide evidence for regulators.
- **Timeline:** Sampling to start once research assistant is trained.

2.12. **Asbestos Risk Assessment (Jason Milner, Asbestos Consultant, Director at Asbestos Management Consultants Ltd)**

- **Regulatory Framework:** Health and Safety at Work Act 2015, Asbestos Regulations 2016, ACOP for management/removal.
- **Asbestos Survey Types:**
 - **Management Survey:** For occupied workplaces/routine maintenance.
 - **Refurbishment Survey:** Before major renovations.
 - **Demolition Survey:** Before demolition.
- **Asbestos Management Plan:** Legally required for workplaces, rental, and commercial properties; not for private homes unless workers are present.
- **Risk Assessment (UK HSE-aligned):**
 - **Material Assessment:** Asbestos type (Class A - friable; Class B - non-friable), condition, fibre release potential. Scored by product, damage, encapsulation.
 - **Priority Assessment:** Human activity, location, space characteristics.
 - **Scoring:** NZ ACOP: 1–9 scale; future UK-aligned: up to 12 for material and priority (max 24). Scores 19–24 = high risk, requiring management/removal.

2.13. **Asbestos Risk Insights (Rob McAllister, FAMANZ)**

- **FAMANZ Objective:** Raise awareness and provide asbestos management insights.
- **Fundamental Risk:** Inhalation of airborne fibres.
- **Non-Friable Material (e.g., fibre cement):** Fibres bound, less likely to be released unless damaged/disturbed/weathered.
- **Friable Material (e.g., insulation):** Crumbles easily, higher fibre release.
- **Risk Conditions:** Highest when hazardous material is present and disturbed near people.
- **Context Matters:** High-use beaches increase exposure risk.
- **NZ Management:** "Manage and monitor"—remediate poor-condition asbestos, leave well-maintained asbestos in place. Contrasts with Australia's eradication approach.

2.14. **Concluding Remarks on Asbestos Presentation**

- Exposure does not guarantee disease, but prevention is key.
- Well-maintained asbestos (e.g., sealed cladding) can be safely managed.
- MSAA Trust offers support and information for those affected by asbestos diseases.

3. Q&A Session with Asbestos Experts

- **Source of Estuary Asbestos:** Will be addressed in Council presentation.
- **NZ vs. Australia Statistics:** NZ mesothelioma cases rising faster recently; lung cancer links harder to prove.
- **Wet vs. Dry Asbestos Risk:**
 - Wet asbestos (e.g., submerged) poses lower inhalation risk; water suppresses dust.
 - Chrysotile is hydrophilic; crocidolite and amosite are hydrophobic.
 - Risk increases if material dries and is disturbed; visible fibres can become airborne if handled.
 - High beach activity increases exposure risk.
- **Safe Asbestos Levels:** No "safe" exposure level; air monitoring aims for "acceptable" trace (0.01 fibres/ml).
- **Risk to Children:**
 - Children's lungs are more vulnerable.
 - Long latency (up to 60 years) means early exposure increases risk.
 - Experts advise children not to handle suspected asbestos on beaches.
- **Water-Blasting Roofs:** Strongly discouraged due to high fibre release risk.
- **Continued Global Use:** Driven by low cost and utility; countries like Mexico face escalating cases.
- **Beach Study Funding/Timeline:** Funding approved; sampling on 10 beaches to begin soon; report to TEPs and possibly published.
- **Impact on Marine/Bird Life:**
 - Mesothelioma found in marine mammals (e.g., sea lions) in high-fibre areas.
 - Dogs can develop mesothelioma (latency ~8 years).
 - Rodents used in testing; fibres found in fish.
 - Mesothelioma observed in sheep, calves; horses used as bio-indicators in Italy—potential for NZ studies.

4. Council Presentation: Asbestos Management and Response

4.1. Council's Commitment and Context (Mark Townsend, Craig Herbert, Daryl Thompson)

- **Council's Stance:** Committed to public facility safety; internal asbestos lab established five years ago.
- **Building Portfolio:** 2,700 buildings, many from 1960s–70s, contain asbestos.
- **Beach Asbestos:** Mainly cement-based ACM.
- **Source:** Predominantly ex-builders' rubble from historical land reclamation along ~1,450 km coastline; asbestos ban only in 2016.
- **Risk Perception:** Low risk when wet and contained in cement, especially in mudflats; risk increases if dry/fragments.

- **Mechanism:** Historical deposits in clay/mud disturbed by weather events; high tides push ACM onto embankments.
- **Alignment/Collaboration:** Approach aligned with Department of Health; collaboration with Ministry of Education on school safety.

4.2. Current Council Actions for Beach ACM

- **Responsive Clean-ups:** When high ACM concentrations are reported/observed.
- **Professional Sweeps:** Licensed asbestos removalists for large clean-ups; Council staff may use gloves for minor pick-ups.
- **Monitoring:** Daily beach observation by environmental services (also for other issues).
- **Public Notifications:** Respond to public information requests.
- **Illegal Dumping:** Major issue due to high disposal costs; worsens the problem.
- **Progress:** Situation improved over five years; complete eradication unlikely—focus on ongoing management and risk minimisation.
- **Public Advice:** Leave suspected ACM alone and report to council.

4.3. Future Council Initiatives for ACM Management

- **Detailed Site Investigations:**
 - Engage external consultants.
 - Review historical data.
 - Use aerial photography.
 - Interview residents for historical insights.
 - Targeted sampling/testing, including drier areas.
 - Develop monitoring plan and triggers for professional clean-ups.
- **Enhanced Public Information:**
 - Create a dedicated website with asbestos management info.
 - Add QR codes to new/updated beach signage linking to the website.
- **Collaboration with Community Clean-ups:**
 - Professional ACM sweeps before community clean-up events, so volunteers focus on general litter.

5. Q&A Session with Council Representatives

- **Landfill Contribution:** Landfills in Glendowie are not considered a current ACM source; historical mud deposits possible. New investigations will review nearby landfills; results to be shared.
- **Clean-up Notification:** Council-led clean-ups over 10m² of Class B ACM use notifiable procedures and licensed removalists; not required for volunteers after professional sweeps.

- **Community Group Collaboration:** Council open to refining collaboration with groups like TEPS, especially regarding tidal redeposition of ACM.
- **Specific Beaches:** List (Karaka, Anderson Bay, etc.) relates to Professor Berry's research; council monitoring is broader and report-driven. Panmure Basin not yet intensively investigated.
- **Reporting Suspected ACM:** If 2–3+ pieces are seen, public should call Council emergency number (09 301 0101); Council will investigate.
- **Contractor Dumping:** Report to WorkSafe NZ if contractors are seen dumping or leaving asbestos.

6. Remarks from Honourable Brooke van Velden, MP

- **Community Safety Event:** Crime and safety event scheduled for Friday, 13th June, 7:00 PM, with Minister of Police and Children attending.
- **Ongoing Engagement:** Plans for bimonthly community meetings on various topics.
- **Information Sharing:** Willingness to help distribute presentation slideshows.

7. Concluding Remarks and Information Sharing

- **Presentation Availability:** Slideshows to be shared via TEPs and Residents Association channels.
- **TEPS (Tamaki Estuary Protection Society):** Environmental charity advocating for clean, safe beaches, supported by science and thorough clean-ups. Contact via website/Facebook.
- **Professor Berry's Final Plea:** Urged greater asbestos - ACM awareness; highlighted lack of support/funding for awareness. Prevention through knowledge is vital, as diseases are preventable.

Next Arrangements and Action Items

Auckland Council

1. Council to commission and oversee detailed site inspections for beach ACM, including historical data review, aerial photography, resident interviews, sampling, and monitoring plan development.
2. Council to develop a public website with ACM information, accessible via QR codes on updated beach signage.
3. Council to finalise signage, with collaboration and location points from community groups/TEPS/SHGRA.
4. Council to formalise collaboration with community groups for beach clean-ups, ensuring professional ACM sweeps before volunteer events. *Community should be notified, when Council clean ups are occurring.*
5. Public to report sightings of 2–3+ pieces of suspected ACM on beaches to Auckland Council (09 301 0101 or online). Pushed through signage and Council Channels. Can also be supported by SHGRA & TEPS.
6. Public to report contractors improperly disposing of asbestos to WorkSafe New Zealand (needs to be pushed through Council channels).

Professor Terri-Ann Berry + Team

7. Professor Terri-Ann Berry's team to begin ACM sampling on 10 Tamaki estuary beaches.
8. Professor Berry's team to produce a report on beach study findings for TEPS, with potential wider publication.

TEPS/SHGRA

9. Meeting organisers/TEPS/SHGRA to distribute presentation slideshows to attendees and interested parties.
10. TEPS and SHGRA to continue engagement with Council, Local Board, and local MP on ACM management on our beaches/Tamaki Estuary.
11. Community stakeholders to consider supporting and promoting ACM awareness initiatives.

Meeting Closed 8.30pm.

Meeting minutes prepared by
Lauren Hawken, SHGRA.