

MEDIA RELEASE: 7 February 2018

## Nambucca Shire Council Offers Naturally Occurring Asbestos Management Guide to Landowners and Property Managers

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With the recent launch of the *Naturally Occurring Asbestos – Management Plan Guide* Council is offering landowners and property manager's free copies of the new resource developed to help people living and working in rural and regional NSW to effectively manage Naturally Occurring Asbestos (NOA) safely.

NOA occurs in some rocks, sediments and soils in various regions of NSW including Mid North Coast. If covered and left undisturbed, NOA is not considered dangerous. However, if disturbed and microscopic fibres become airborne or settle on clothing or equipment and can be inhaled, NOA can cause incurable diseases including malignant mesothelioma, lung cancer and asbestosis. The more fibres inhaled, the greater the risk to health.

**Mayor Rhonda Hoban** said, "While only one percent of land in NSW is believed to contain NOA within 10 metres of the ground's surface, in our region where NOA is known, property owners, managers and workers who may disturb the ground surface during their day-to-day work must take appropriate precautions to ensure NOA is identified and managed safely in accordance with regulations.

"The user-friendly *Naturally Occurring Asbestos – Asbestos Management Plan Guide* explains the reasons why people must manage NOA safely, when and where NOA may pose a potential health risk, who to contact for advice, and the steps required to manage NOA safely in accordance with NSW Work, Health and Safety Regulations 2017 and the Codes of Practice for asbestos management," She said.

"Although the guide is free and can be downloaded from [asbestosawareness.com.au](http://asbestosawareness.com.au), Council is offering a limited number of printed copies to property owners and managers of smaller properties to help them develop and maintain a NOA Asbestos Management Plan," **Mayor Hoban** said.

The Guide provides step-by-step instructions on how to determine if a property lies within a high, medium or low probability of NOA area. Instructions include how to conduct risk assessments, when, why and who should conduct testing, the training requirements for workers, safe work procedures, control measures, and how to dispose of NOA according to government regulations.

User-friendly templates are also provided including; property and site specific risk assessments, incident procedures and reports, worker training records and Fact Sheets on how to use and dispose of Respiratory Protective Equipment (RPE), Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) as well as providing step-by-step decontamination procedures.

"If we disturb NOA and fibres are released into the air that can be inhaled, it can be just as dangerous to our health as when we disturb asbestos products commonly found in homes and farm structures. It's vital that those living and working on properties where NOA has been identified follow the regulations and take every precaution to ensure they don't disturb NOA and generate fibres that can lead to incurable diseases such as malignant mesothelioma or lung cancer," **Mayor Hoban** said.

The *Naturally Occurring Asbestos – Asbestos Management Plan Guide* was developed by the Heads of Asbestos Coordination Authorities (HACA) in consultation with key stakeholders including Councils and SafeWork NSW while the NSW Government's online mapping tool can help landowners and managers identify if their property lies within a high, medium or low probability region for NOA.

**-ENDS-**

- See Journalist Notes for further information about NOA.
- Download the *Naturally Occurring Asbestos – Asbestos Management Plan Guide* from [www.asbestosawareness.com.au](http://www.asbestosawareness.com.au)

- For interview requests contact: **Rhonda Hoban Mayor 65680202**

## JOURNALIST NOTES

### ABOUT NATURALLY OCCURRING ASBESTOS (NOA)

- Asbestos is a group of minerals that readily separate into long flexible fibres.
- It occurs naturally in some rocks and sediments in various regions in NSW.
- NOA can be blue (crocidolite), brown (amosite), green (anthophyllite and tremolite, actinolite) or white (chrysotile and tremolite, actinolite).
- Blue and brown asbestos are not common in NSW.
- NOA can be found in some rocks, sediments and in soils and is not easily identified.
- Less than 1% of land in NSW is believed to contain NOA within 10 metres of the ground's surface.
- Only testing of a sample collected by a competent person conducted by a National Association of Testing Authorities (NATA) laboratory, can confirm the presence of asbestos in any workplace including in building materials or in its natural forms in the environment.
- People who conduct work or activities on properties, where NOA is identified or is suspected are legally required to develop an Asbestos Management Plan under the NSW Work Health & Safety Regulations 2017.
- By identifying the potential for the occurrence of NOA people can determine the risks, control measures and the levels of controls required to manage it safely.
- If stable, covered and undisturbed, it is believed that NOA doesn't pose a risk to health.
- NOA can become a health risk if weather conditions or work that may be undertaken (such as digging, cultivation and excavation) disturbs NOA and releases fibres that can be inhaled.

### ABOUT THE NATURALLY OCCURRING ASBESTOS – ASBESTOS MANAGEMENT PLAN GUIDE

To assist landowners to understand NOA and manage it in accordance with regulations, the NSW Government Heads of Asbestos Coordination Authorities (HACA) has developed a series of useful online tools including the Naturally Occurring Asbestos – Asbestos Management Plan Guide.

#### The Guide Includes:

- What landowners need to know about NOA
- When NOA is a potential risk
- How to know if an Asbestos Management Plan for NOA is required
- The steps to take to develop an Asbestos Management Plan
- How to conduct a Risk Assessment for NOA
- Safe work procedures and control measures for NOA
- Useful resources and contact details for advice and information.

#### NOA Templates and Fact Sheets Include:

- Asbestos Management Plan - Property Risk Assessment - Template
- Asbestos Management Plan - Site Specific - Template
- Incident Procedures & Report - Template
- Workers Training Requirements & Records - Template
- NOA RPE & PPE - Factsheet
- NOA Asbestos Decontamination - Factsheet

#### For more information about asbestos or NOA contact:

SafeWork NSW (13 10 50)  
SafeWork NSW 1800 Asbestos Hotline (1800 272 378)  
NSW Health for health enquiries (1300 066 055)  
NSW Environment Protection Authority (131 555)

#### Additional online resources for information on asbestos and Naturally Occurring Asbestos (NOA)

Visit: [www.asbestosawareness.com.au](http://www.asbestosawareness.com.au) to access all NOA resources and information about asbestos



Visit [www.safework.nsw.gov.au](http://www.safework.nsw.gov.au) to access the online map - NOA in NSW Map  
Visit [www.safework.nsw.gov.au](http://www.safework.nsw.gov.au) for regulations and Codes of Practice for Asbestos Management  
Visit [www.epa.nsw.gov.au](http://www.epa.nsw.gov.au) for regulations about disposal of asbestos and NOA