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**DON'T PLAY RENOVATION ROULETTE!**  
ASBESTOS AWARENESS WEEK 2012

**Global Alliance COMM PRIX Awards 2014**

**Category:** Division A - PUBLIC SERVICE  
**Entry:** *Don't Play Renovation Roulette: Asbestos Awareness Week 2012*  
**Client:** The Asbestos Education Committee in partnership with the Asbestos Diseases Research Institute  
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**Awards:** Public Relations Institute of Australia National Golden Target Awards 2013 ♦ *Winner Best Government Sponsored Campaign*;  
 Public Relations Institute of Australia State Awards for Excellence 2013 ♦ *Winner Best Government Sponsored Campaign NSW*  
 AMEC Awards 2014 ♦ *Shortlist for Best Use of Communication Management: Not-for-Profit (award announced 12 June 2014)*





## OVERVIEW

Australia has one of the highest incidences of asbestos-related diseases in the world because Australia was among the highest consumers of asbestos cement products per capita prior to 1987. There is no safe level of exposure to asbestos fibres and if inhaled can cause mesothelioma, an incurable cancer with an average life-expectancy after diagnosis of 6-18 months.

The 'First Wave' of asbestos-related diseases affected Australians working in asbestos mining and production. The 'Second Wave' impacted people working with asbestos products - tradesmen and their families. The 'Third Wave' of asbestos-related diseases and fatalities is internationally recognised as a direct result of exposure to asbestos fibres during home renovations and maintenance. With 'Third Wave' asbestos-related deaths in Australia increasing and predicted to exceed the number of Australians killed in World War I, unsafe management of asbestos during renovations is considered a significant health threat to Australians.

If undisturbed and well maintained, asbestos products do not pose a health risk. However, if homeowners damage or disturb asbestos when renovating or maintaining their home and release fibres into the air, they're putting their health and the health of their family at risk. Few Australians knew ANY home built or renovated prior to 1987 (1 in 3) might contain asbestos in some form. The solution; during Asbestos Awareness Week (26 – 30 November 2012), generate greater awareness of the dangers of asbestos and educate Australians as to where asbestos products might be found in homes and how to manage it safely.

In 2011, the Asbestos Awareness Week campaign was conducted and funded in NSW by the Asbestos Education Committee (AEC) working in partnership with the Asbestos Diseases Research Institute (ADRI). With awareness of the dangers of asbestos being of national concern, Insight proposed the 2012 campaign be rolled out nationally with NSW the primary focus.

The challenges were extensive including a lead-time of just 118 days, only three case studies, and limited budget, extreme variations in state and territory asbestos management policies; and, apathy among some councils purporting there was no asbestos in their communities. Asbestos has a contentious history in Australia and we struggled to gain support from proposed partners due to the controversy. The fear associated with the word 'asbestos' meant our primary challenge was to inform without inciting panic among homeowners. The campaign also competed for media coverage going up against other well-established national health and community awareness campaigns including Movember and White Ribbon Day.

Insight undertook ongoing research to develop and deliver a creative, strategic, integrated, national communication campaign to alert but not alarm homeowners about the dangers of asbestos and motivate them to seek information at [asbestosawareness.com.au](http://asbestosawareness.com.au). Innovative tools and tactics delivered a multi-touch campaign incorporating public relations, marketing, digital and experiential communications, advertising, events, stakeholder and online engagement. The campaign delivered significant national media coverage providing more than 18.5 million opportunities to be seen and heard across Australia effectively increasing traffic to [asbestosawareness.com.au](http://asbestosawareness.com.au) - the leading Australian online resource for homeowners to access potentially life-saving facts.

The risks of renovating homes without knowing where asbestos might be found and how to manage it safely has been likened to playing 'Russian Roulette'. 'Don't Play Renovation Roulette - Asbestos Awareness Week 2012' was an innovative and strategic national health awareness campaign which achieved all goals and exceeded all objectives by as much as 2700%.

## STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

Asbestos-related diseases can take 20 to 30 years to develop after exposure to asbestos fibres. To create behavioural change in how homeowners manage asbestos, we needed to motivate Australians to seek information on the dangers of disturbing asbestos commonly found in homes, and educate them on how to manage it safely. Extensive research before, during and following the campaign commenced with a SWOT analysis of the 2011 NSW campaign and the current national issue surrounding asbestos management. Formal, qualitative, quantitative and comparative research including analysis of statistics on asbestos-related diseases, asbestos products, home renovations, home building characteristics, the demographic of homeownership, the history of asbestos, regulations and safe practices identified various stakeholders and target publics.

The campaign's primary target publics were homeowners, renovators and DIY enthusiasts. To reach them, part of the solution would be to engage influential publics and stakeholders including; opinion leaders in government (all states and territories at all levels), community, health, research, celebrity ambassadors and those affected by asbestos-related diseases (case studies/spokespersons), potential partners and a variety of relevant industry associations including Master Builders, Master Electricians, Master Plumbers, and real estate associations. Identifying and segmenting all target publics and stakeholders determined multi-touch tactics and access points ensuring engagement with each group. A key component would be to engage media, a primary intervening target public to disseminate key messages to the primary audience.

Insight developed a multi-layered, integrated campaign strategy to engage stakeholders, influential and intervening target publics including governments (all levels), media (national, state, community, online), relevant television programs, industry associations and advertising outlets, nationally. Each would contribute to effectively deliver our messages directly into the homes of our primary target public through multiple communication channels to increase awareness of asbestos and advance community education by motivating homeowners to seek information from the website, [asbestosawareness.com.au](http://asbestosawareness.com.au).



## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The six primary goals were to; generate awareness of asbestos to alert homeowners to asbestos dangers in and around homes and direct them to online information on how to manage it safely within regulated guidelines; develop a truly integrated campaign; expand the 2011 NSW campaign to become a national awareness campaign; increase stakeholder engagement including governments; and, create national brand awareness of asbestosawareness.com.au as Australia's primary education resource while delivering value on investment for our client and partners through effective budget management.

Objectives included; redeveloping asbestosawareness.com.au to reflect all national guidelines; generate awareness across Australia with a focus on NSW, Sydney and surrounding regions through media, marketing, advertising and stakeholder engagement; minimise media mentions of manufacturers relating to past issues ensuring campaign messages focussed on current issues; gain support from industry groups and appropriate television programs; engage authoritative spokespersons, ambassadors and case studies; engage state and local governments (councils) including non-NSW, and increase NSW council participation by 100%.

We also aimed to increase WorkCover NSW enquiries relating to asbestos management by 30%; boost organic-search ranking and increase website traffic, unique visitors, pageviews, mobile device access and referral sites to asbestosawareness.com.au by 100%; deliver wide-spread media coverage nationally increasing the number of media pieces on 2011 by at least 100% to drive traffic to the website nationally proportionate to populations; and, deliver campaign longevity continuing community education beyond the week-long campaign by increasing ongoing daily website traffic by 100%.

## PLANNING

The budget was tight. To effectively extend the reach of the campaign into homes Australia-wide, we needed to be creative delivering key messages in various formats through a variety of stakeholders, spokespersons and outlets multiple times and in multiple languages specific to multi-cultural communities. The ADRI partnership (a registered research charity), would enable low-cost production of collateral and underpin the importance of campaign messages with world-leading scientific credibility.

Insight developed a targeted, strategic media engagement plan, appointed and briefed all spokespersons, developed a call to action, key messages and detailed journalist notes featuring locations of asbestos in homes, asbestos management strategies and statistics on asbestos-related diseases enforcing the significance of our potentially life-saving message. Campaign research determined the creative for the campaign slogan, 'Are you playing renovation roulette?' to address the issue of homeowners taking potential health risks and featured across all campaign collateral including advertising, digital, marketing and media. The production of ads was part-sponsored and developed for television and radio as charitable Community Service Announcements (CSAs). Print ads were created for use as 'filler space' and digital ads produced and distributed to stakeholders to link to asbestosawareness.com.au. Posters and brochures were developed in multiple languages.

Originally specific to NSW, the asbestosawareness.com.au website required redevelopment to make it a national resource incorporating information relevant to each state and territory with links to specific regulations and resources. An extensive state-wide photo shoot of homes was conducted producing a comprehensive photo gallery giving visual references to various products, styles of homes and locations within homes where asbestos might be found. A video gallery was included to feature asbestos education videos, news items and the television CSA which could be downloaded for use by stakeholders. Social media 'Sharing' buttons were added for Facebook, Twitter and Google Plus.

Five well-known celebrities primarily linked to DIY and renovations were appointed as ambassadors and briefed. Relevant television programs were approached to become partners and promote key messages including the mini-series 'Devil's Dust' and Australia's highest-rating renovation program, 'The Block' with presenter Scott Cam named an ambassador.

'Betty - The ADRI House' was developed as a world-first experiential communication tool. Betty, a model house designed for transportation to multiple communities to demonstrate asbestos locations in homes features a kitchen, bathroom, family room, garage/shed, a dog kennel that doubles as storage for amplifier and generator when required. Betty's exterior was branded with the website URL and key messages while internally, Betty's education resources include images and audio visual presentations. Volunteers with experience in engineering, renovating, and customer service were recruited as Betty's chauffeurs and curators and trained in all aspects of asbestos education and management and as media spokespersons. Betty's inaugural tour schedule was designed to cover Sydney and surrounding regions specific to media outlets during the campaign.

Stakeholder collateral was developed to strategically engage individual audiences. User-friendly campaign resource kits specific to each stakeholder were developed and distributed in digital formats. Resources included print-ready posters, flyers, webtiles, email signatures, tailored media templates for localised distribution, photographs, print ads, detailed briefing notes for spokespersons and notes for use in mayoral columns, newsletters, websites and intranet sites. Many printed collateral and distributed it to their communities. Radio CSAs were included for use as 'on-hold' messaging for stakeholder telephones.

Effective budget allocation and providing online access to digital resources would enable stakeholders, influential and intervening target publics to engage directly with our primary target - homeowners, maximising campaign reach extending it to become a national campaign and continuing to inform and educate Australians beyond the week-long campaign.



## EXECUTION

The campaign strategy was rolled out. Television, radio and print ads were distributed nationally as CSAs. Stakeholders were engaged including governments in all states and territories and relevant associations. All featured links from organisations' websites to [asbestosawareness.com.au](http://asbestosawareness.com.au) and utilised digital resources. Councils (key stakeholders and intervening publics) were provided with digital campaign kits which were utilised across communities Australia-wide. Baseball caps featuring the URL were also issued to NSW mayors and worn during localised media photo opportunities generated by councils using our release.

Multiple events throughout the week-long campaign effectively engaged media including the launch of the campaign featuring Betty in the heart of Sydney, ambassadors, influential representatives from the AEC, ADRI and the NSW Government including WorkCover NSW. Insight also created a unique special event - the inaugural lighting of Australian icon, the Sydney Opera House in blue (international colour for lung disease) combined with Australia's first Candlelight Tribute dedicated to asbestos victims providing a national media-worthy event. The launch of the NSW Government's Model Asbestos Policy and 17 localised media-call events throughout Sydney and surrounding areas featured Betty and her volunteers who averaged three media calls in designated media regions daily, over 5 days, travelling more than 600 kilometres.

Distribution of 34 individual, strategically targeted media releases with key messages and a call to action secured national media coverage driving traffic to the website. Interviews with all spokespersons including ambassadors, case studies and representatives of the AEC and ADRI were conducted. Stakeholders including mayors and associations distributed pre-prepared media releases tailored specifically to target publics and utilised digital collateral including online banner ads.

## RESULTS

This innovative, strategic, integrated campaign and messaging addressed the contentious issue of asbestos to influence the mindset of target, intervening and influential publics. The 'Renovation Roulette' theme critically communicated messages to engage targets. Manufacturers' negligence was no longer the focus rather educative, proactive messages dominated. Insight's world-first, experiential communication tool 'Betty' engaged the public, councils and media in multiple communities to deliver her vital message directly into homes. All state and territory governments accepted our invitation to participate featuring links from websites to [asbestosawareness.com.au](http://asbestosawareness.com.au) and engaged state-based media to promote campaign messages. Television partners promoted [asbestosawareness.com](http://asbestosawareness.com). Television and radio ads aired nationally and print ads featured in newspapers (all without fee) incorporating additional communication streams complementing the overarching campaign messages.

Strategic management of the week-long campaign achieved 901 media pieces including 299 online and delivered coverage nationally, in every state and territory and across all NSW and Sydney-Metropolitan regions. Media coverage exceeded the 2011 campaign by 400%. Post campaign analysis determined print circulation reached 14+ million Australians and 14 television and 147 radio interviews reached over 4.5 million Australians. Feature stories included national coverage in leading weekend publications such as Body+Soul and Sunday Magazine. All primary Australian television networks covered the campaign - ABC News (National & State x 4), Channel's 7, 9, 10 and SBS News. Print included six cover and three AAP stories. All key messages were covered in the media including; Asbestos Awareness Week (664), DIY Renovation (628), health statistics (617), councils (442), the website URL (413), ADRI (303), governments (169), Betty (147), ambassadors (120) and patients/survivors (72). Only 3% mentioned the contentious history of asbestos in Australia.

Campaign media coverage and website traffic metrics proved to be relative to each as well as to population (P), demonstrating thorough and effective reach of campaign messages. NSW (32% P) gained the most media coverage - 308 clips (51% of total) and 48% of website traffic. Queensland (15% P) 91 (15%) clips and 11% website traffic. Victoria (24% P) 66 (11%) clips and 24% traffic. Western Australia (10.7% P) 57 (9.5%) clips and 7.5% traffic. South Australia (7% P) 41 (7%) clips and 5% traffic. Tasmania (2% P) 18 clips (3%) and 1.5% traffic. Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory (1% P) 8 and 6 clips (1% & 2%) received 1% and 2% traffic respectively, plus seven national and 299 online pieces. Traffic to [asbestosawareness.com.au](http://asbestosawareness.com.au) continues to increase following the campaign with the average daily traffic increased by 235% (31 November to April 2013).

Stakeholders increased including; Heads of Asbestos Coordination Authorities NSW, five ambassadors, all governments, health, research and support groups including ADRI and ADFA. It was the second year NSW councils were approached and the first for other states and territories. 148 councils participated nationally, 116 NSW and 33 non-NSW increasing participation by 118%. 58 NSW councils held workshops post-campaign. The campaign increased WorkCover NSW enquiries by 61% and engaged relevant industry/associations. Through substantial stakeholder and media engagement nationally, the campaign drove unprecedented traffic to the website increasing traffic by 261%, pageviews by 268%, unique visitors by 262%, and return visitors by 243%. Mobile device access increased by 2700% confirming Australians acted on messages whenever and wherever they received them. Stakeholder and media referral sites increased by 169% driving the increase in referral traffic by 170%, while search-engine traffic increased by 401%. [asbestosawareness.com.au](http://asbestosawareness.com.au)'s Australian Google organic search ranking was first for 'asbestos and renovating', 'asbestos renovation' and second for 'asbestos' - second only to Wikipedia.

Insight's innovative integrated national awareness campaign achieved all goals and exceeded all objectives advancing asbestos awareness and education in NSW and nationally. Importantly, awareness of the issue and brand has been significantly strengthened and continues beyond the campaign with increasing numbers of Australians accessing vital and potentially life-saving information at [asbestosawareness.com.au](http://asbestosawareness.com.au), daily.