

Guilty charge for asbestos dump

Council successfully prosecuted a Woreen woman at Korumburra Magistrates Court on 4 August 2016 for the illegal storing of asbestos on her property.

The court heard Dianne Niblett was the sole owner of the property located in the farming zone at the time of the offence. She was one of three directors of an asbestos removal company. The other directors were her husband and son. Ms Niblett pleaded guilty to the charge, was convicted, fined \$8000 and ordered to pay Council's prosecution costs of \$337.

Manager Regulatory Services and Municipal Building Surveyor, Matthew Patterson, said Council officers inspected the property in March this year following a complaint.

"Council officers found four piles of building rubble consisting predominantly of asbestos sheeting, conservatively estimated at approximately 20 tonnes of asbestos. The officers also found a substantial amount of asbestos sheeting in a nearby shed," Mr Patterson explained.

In Victoria licensed asbestos removalists are required to transport asbestos material they have removed directly to a landfill that accepts commercial asbestos.

"If you are thinking of undertaking any repairs, renovation and demolition work in a house built prior to 1990, please be aware that it is likely it has asbestos containing products," Mr Patterson warned. "Asbestos can also be found in certain types of machinery. Your legal responsibilities for finding and identifying asbestos will depend on whether you are in the workplace, home, environment or a builder or tradesperson."

When disturbed, asbestos produces a dust that contains asbestos fibres. Fibres breathed into the lungs can cause a range of health problems including asbestosis, lung cancer and mesothelioma.

"If you have to work with asbestos, such as removing, drilling, cutting or cleaning, you need to understand the legal requirements and how to start planning the work," Mr Patterson concluded.

Information about finding and managing asbestos can be found at www.asbestos.vic.gov.au.

Photo caption: One of the illegally dumped asbestos piles at the Woreen property.

PR1898 11/8/16