The Queensland Government is continuing to work with the local community to address concerns relating to the former Wunderlich asbestos manufacturing site, located at 51 Prospect Road, Gaythorne.

These concerns relate to the ongoing off-site risk from the historical manufacturing practices of asbestos products from the former factory and asbestos materials dumped in the vicinity of the former factory in the Gaythorne area.

This information sheet has been prepared to update residents on the pilot asbestos monitoring program recently conducted in Gaythorne.

**Testing update**

The owners of five of the six houses previously tested by the Courier-Mail gave consent for further testing for the presence of asbestos fibres in their ceiling cavities.

Inspection and testing of the roof cavity and nearby ceiling sheets revealed the current or past presence of asbestos containing materials in the houses. The surface testing of dust inside the roof cavities revealed trace amounts of asbestos. However, this is most likely to be due to the presence of asbestos in the building materials in the properties tested.

Asbestos only becomes a risk to your health when the fibres are small enough, are airborne and are inhaled. Air sampling for fibres was also undertaken on 24 November 2014 by Workplace Health and Safety Queensland.

In four of the five houses, air samples were taken in the roof cavities, living spaces and outside the houses. Filters were used to capture particles of material present in the air at these locations.

Two air samples were also collected within a park bordering the old asbestos cement manufacturing plant, and two samples were collected in the suburb of Carina, approximately 14 kilometres from Gaythorne.

Carina was selected to provide a benchmark of the general Brisbane airborne asbestos fibre concentration as it is not in proximity to any former asbestos cement manufacturing sites or known asbestos material burial sites.

Two methods were used to assess the collected air samples in accordance with Safe Work Australia’s *Guidance Note on the Membrane Filter Method for the Estimation of Airborne Asbestos Fibres*, 2nd Edition, 2005 [NOHSC:3003: (2005)].

The first method uses the less sensitive phase contrast microscope to count the number and size of fibres.

The second method is more sensitive and uses scanning electron microscopy (SEM) to analyse the material from the air filters.

SEM can provide the following information:

- Quantity of materials in a sample
- Identification of the types of materials in a sample
- Size of materials in a sample.

The results from the air testing have shown that for all houses tested, no asbestos could be detected in the air. The results are consistent with the samples from Carina which is not located near any known asbestos manufacturing or disposal sites.

On this basis, the proximity of the tested houses to the former factory site does not present an increased level of health risk to the occupants.
Next steps

To validate the findings of the pilot monitoring program, a number of additional houses within 1000 metres of the former Wunderlich factory will be monitored in the coming weeks.

The additional monitoring will provide more data that will give Queensland Health greater confidence in its assessment of any current health risk to residents living in the vicinity of the former Wunderlich factory.

The investigation team will be seeking homeowners to participate in this next phase of monitoring. Inclusion in the monitoring program will be based upon specific eligibility criteria that include the age of the house, roof type and location.

A final report will be provided to the community in due course.

The privacy and confidentiality of all residents will be protected throughout this process.

Key points to remember about asbestos

- Avoid disturbing materials containing asbestos.
- If you must disturb asbestos materials, follow precautions to reduce the risk to a very low-level. This includes using a licensed asbestos removalist or wearing safety equipment if you’re handling asbestos material.
- Use personal protective equipment such as P2 face mask, gloves and protective clothing if you are entering a roof space. This will minimise exposure to dust containing harmful chemical or biological agents settled in roof spaces, including insulation material. Remember, there are also electrical and physical trip hazards in roof spaces, so take care.

Further information

Further information including other outcomes of the investigation to date, fact sheets and FAQ pages can be found at [www.health.qld.gov.au/asbestos](http://www.health.qld.gov.au/asbestos).

If you have any queries or concerns, please call 13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84).

If you have any concerns about your health, please contact your usual GP or health care provider.