

## HOWZAT TO REMAIN CLOSED UNTIL ROOF IS REPLACED

The Board and Management of Howzat Newcastle have adopted in full the recommendations of a comprehensive report from specialists HAZMAT Services and agreed unequivocally to close the facility pending a full replacement of the roof.

Howzat, which was closed last week following the incident, will remain closed following confirmation this morning of low levels of asbestos.

Air monitoring was conducted by HAZMAT Services, at 12 locations within Howzat. The results at all 12 monitoring locations were recorded as <0.01 fibres per millilitre of air which is below the occupation exposure standard of 0.1 fibres per millilitre of air and the acceptable control level of 0.01 fibre per millilitre of air. These air monitoring results are indicative of normal background levels and were also consistent with previous background monitoring conducted within Howzat in January 2010.

A total of 48 settled dust samples were collected by Hazmat Services from various locations within Howzat. Asbestos fibres were present in 21 of the 48 samples. These locations included various parts of both upper and lower levels. While the levels of asbestos fibre in air were low, the presence of asbestos fibres in various locations in the premises has led the consultants to recommend further action, which has been fully endorsed and supported by Howzat Management.

"The Board and Management of Howzat fully endorse closing the facility. Due to a small number of positive dust samples during the more detailed analysis undertaken, the results of which were returned this morning. Howzat will be closed until the roof has been replaced," said Mr Alan Green, Howzat Director.

"It has been agreed by Howzat and the building owners to implement the recommendations from HAZMAT Services as soon as possible. Discussions with a builder and other professionals, including Hazmat, have already taken place so that the work can commence as soon as is practical. The repair work is expected to take until January 2012 to complete," said Mr Green.

Howzat have at all times been a willing participant in the on-going investigations and the resultant recommendations.

"We would like to reassure everyone that all current and past testing has revealed levels below the occupational exposure standard.'

In the interim Howzat expect to move in to temporary premises during the closure period. The location of the temporary facility is expected to be announced within the next 48 hours.

"All members will have their memberships put on hold for December and January; meaning all current memberships will be extended by another 2 months. Current competitions will be put on hold with refunds to be made to those groups who have paid for the competition in full, less the 3 weeks already held," said Mr Green.

As a precaution, the assessment of other tenancies within the Cooks Hill Commercial Centre is expected to commence on Tuesday with results to be obtained and reported in the next 24-48 hours.

"We sincerely apologise for the inconvenience this incident has caused and are doing our best to ensure your member privileges continue in a temporary manner whilst the repair work is in progress. The safety of our members, staff, visitors and neighbours is paramount to us and remains our number one priority," said Mr Green.

### **For further public information:**

#### **Health concerns re: asbestos exposure**

NSW Hunter New England Population Health (02) 4924 6477

#### **Investigation of asbestos concerns**

Newcastle City Council's Compliance Services on (02) 4974 2522

#### **Members information**

Howzat (02) 4926 4488