



**Old scuba tank warning after WA explosion
12 April 2006**

Shadow Minister for Consumer Affairs Liz Penfold says consumers need to exercise great care with aluminium scuba tanks manufactured 15 to 30 years ago following an interstate explosion.

Mrs Penfold said the potential danger of the old tanks had come to light after Western Australian authorities issued a warning when one such tank exploded after being stored in a garden shed.

"I understand that this is not a one-off incident and that other explosions have caused injuries," Mrs. Penfold said.

"The Western Australian warning states that many years ago some scuba tanks were made of the aluminium alloy 6351, and that this material is susceptible to sustained load cracking – SLC – when it becomes aged and is stored containing compressed air.

"The warning advised that alloy 6351 tanks have historically been manufactured by a number of cylinder manufacturers and that SLC is not a manufacturing fault, rather a metallurgical phenomenon that occurs in later years after manufacture of the product."

Mrs. Penfold said that all scuba tanks must comply with Australian Standard AS 2337-1 and that they should be tested every 12 months.

She urged anyone who believes they may have an alloy 6351 tank manufactured prior to 1990 to contact their dive shop for testing or safe disposal.

"With the Easter long weekend almost upon us some recreational divers may be tempted to use aging tanks," Mrs Penfold said.

"The extended holiday break could be a good time for divers to clear out old equipment that has been sitting around unused for many years."