

Introduction

Dear Members and Friends, a warm welcome to 2024 from the ADSA Committee and staff. The ADSA is 46 years old and heading rapidly to a Silver Anniversary of service to the sufferers of asbestos and other dust diseases, their families and the Australian community. It was a big end to 2023 when, on 7 December 2023, a Parliamentary Commemoration 20th Anniversary of the Asbestos Ban in Australia event was held at Parliament House Canberra.

“This event was to commemorate the 20th Anniversary of banning of Asbestos in Australia but also provide an opportunity to recognise the invaluable contributions of those who have campaigned and lobbied for the asbestos ban.”

- Lisa Chesters MP and Russell Broadbent MP, Co-Chairs, PGARD

In a poignant speech, the Industrial Relations Minister the Hon Tony Bourke noted that we have over 4000 deaths a year (3x times more than the national road toll) from asbestos

diseases, despite the 20-year ban. Urgent attention is needed from our Parliamentary leaders to assist in the eradication of asbestos from our environment and reduce these statistics.

We were saddened to note that, while prominent players in the ban from the eastern side of Australia were rightly congratulated and remembered in this parliamentary speech, WA's own leading role in the process for fair and just compensation and a ban on asbestos was not acknowledged and consequently not in the national public record Hansard.

To not mention the tragedy of “Australia’s Chernobyl” – the Town of Wittenoom, home to Australia’s worst Industrial disaster resulting in 1000’s of lives lost and more to come, compounds the loss of loved ones to this asbestos scourge. Also not included was the early work of the ADSA and its members fighting Corporate Giant CSR, which was vital in opening the doors for litigation across the country. It serves to highlight to the ADSA that WA’s isolation is impacting our ability to be heard in relation to the ongoing campaign for the public health funding that is so vital in saving lives, especially given WA has the highest incidence of mesothelioma in the world.

The ADSA has engaged an historian and archivist under the guidance of the UWA history department to correct the national narrative regarding Australian asbestos history and prove that the battle to limit the fallout of WA’s exposure to deadly asbestos fibres is worth its weight in gold. In aid of this, we are always on the lookout for images or information relating to your families at this time in history, which you can email to: info@asbestosdiseases.org.au

ADSA dedicates this newsletter to the legacy of the early WA fighters, with the hope that it will be another small step to ensuring they will be honoured by all Australians. A few names I’d like to mention here are Peter Heys and Tim Barrow and their families, Joan Joosten, Val Doyle, and Wally Simpson. There are many more that will have a place on the ADSA website created this year. Without their sacrifice for the thousands of other asbestos diseases sufferers to come across Australia, many more lives would have been lost and their families left uncompensated and destitute.

Kind regards,
Melita Markey CEO
Robert Vojakovic President

Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency Update

Whilst the commemoration in Canberra was disappointing for ADSA members and all Western Australians, those with the Federal Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency (ASEA) were heartening. The National Asbestos Eradication Plan is well advanced, and a number of options are being examined to assist homeowners and Councils to better access assistance in their efforts to eradicate 6.5 million tonnes of decaying asbestos nationally. It is important to note that this does not include the 3.5 million tonnes of asbestos dumped in Wittenoom as this is classed as “mining waste” and not manufactured materials.



Picture taken 7 December 2023 in the Speakers Courtyard. ADSA CEO Melita Markey 2nd row Centre next to Speaker of the House Hon. Milton Dick MP)

The ADSA has formally requested to the National Strategic Plan Parliamentary Committee that this

toxic asbestos dump is counted as part of Australia’s total asbestos burden.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Annual General Meeting

The ADSA will hold its Annual General Meeting (AGM) on Friday 22 March 2024 3:30pm-5:00pm at the ADSA Office, 219 Main Street Osborne Park. All members are cordially invited to join us for:

- A talk by our Guest Speaker, former WA Premier the Hon Peter Dowding, on the beginnings of ADSA.
- A presentation by oncologist and recipient of the ADSA PhD Scholarship for Mesothelioma Research, Dr Melvin Chin.
- A presentation of the 32nd ADSA Professor Eric Saint Memorial Award by Professor Saint's granddaughter, Ms Tabatha Saint.
- We will also outline the ADSA activities during the preceding fiscal year and the election of office bearers and the Ordinary Committee members for the 2024 calendar year. As it stands, the current members of the Management Committee have consented to accept re-nomination. Additional nominations will be accepted provided they are in writing and signed by two ADSA financial members, as well as being accompanied by the written acceptance of the nominee who is also an ADSA financial member.
- Light refreshments and cake will be provided.

As this is a popular event, please call our office on (08) 9344 4077 before Wednesday 13 March 2024 to confirm your attendance. There is parking available across the road at the Osborne Park Hotel, 216 Main Street, Osborne Park WA 6017.

Members unable to attend can enjoy the meeting live via Facebook or view it at your leisure on the ADSA Youtube channel. You can find our channel by searching the Asbestos Diseases Society in YouTube, or by following the links on our website.

All nominations should be addressed to:

The Electoral Officer of the ADSA, PO Box 1394, Osborne Park, 6916

and must be received by 5pm on Friday 15 March 2023.

ADSA 29th Annual Ecumenical Memorial Service 2024

Many thanks to our members and friends who braved the 40-degree heat for the ADSA 28th Annual Ecumenical Service in Kings Park in November 2023. Furthermore, we are so grateful for the ongoing support from the Rev. Ken Devereux, the Right Rev. Kate Wilmont, and the other members of the clergy that make it such a meaningful event. It was a moving service and great to hear from Former Premier Hon Peter Dowding SC on the early days in the battle for justice.

For the 2024 annual ecumenical memorial service we will be returning to the now renovated Redemptorist Monastery, 190 Vincent St, North Perth. Join us for a morning of remembrance to celebrate the brave legacy of those who have passed from asbestos related diseases, and an opportunity to look forward for things to come.

The Service will be held during Asbestos Awareness Week Nov 18-22. We are looking forward to seeing you all there.



The Rev. Ken Devereux



L-R Hon Peter Dowding SC, Melita Markey ADSA CEO, Sue John Former ABC journalist, Hon Bob Kucera APM, MLA, Prof Anna Nowak Oncologist and Deputy Vice Chancellor Research UWA.

Lifesaving Donation Campaign

This autumn, we will be foregoing our usual raffle to focus on a special donation campaign that will continue through until the end of the financial year. Your contributions are vital in aiding those affected by asbestos-related diseases and keeping our organisation doing what it does best, so please consider us for your donations before EOFY June 30th, 2024. Stay tuned for details on how you can make a difference and, as

always, thank you for your ongoing support. It means the world to us.

In coming months our friendly donations team will be in touch directly with previous supporters to enable purchases over the phone, direct debit, and PayPal. All funds raised by donations are used to maintain our pastoral care services, research scholarships, and bursaries, and to purchase consumables and equipment for our health services.

2024 ADSA Pastoral Care Fundraising Golf Day

Saturday 25 February 2024 Meadow Springs Golf and Country Club, Lake Lands Mandurah

ADSA Vice President Dave Hall welcomes members and friends to the 11th ADSA Fundraising Golf Tournament supporting ADSA's pastoral care program, run by ADSA Nurse Practitioner Ms Deirdre Louw. Deirdre will be joining the Golf Day luncheon as a guest speaker to outline the ADSA pastoral care program and share her insights in providing care and comfort for sufferers and their families.

There is a wonderful array of prizes available, including (but not limited to) rounds of golf and cart hire from the course itself, as well as gift vouchers and select prizes from Bunnings, Mandurah Tyrepower, and Coles Lakelands. We are also looking forward to seeing if anyone will walk away with our special hole-in-one prize: **A \$40,000 caravan from our friends over at Rockingham RV. Thank you Jim!**

Our generous ADSA and Dockers supporter Mr Dale Alcock has made



Guernsey donated by Dale Alcock



ADSA Golf Day trophies.

available another signed Dockers AFL guernsey. Please call our office to make a bid, with offers to start at over \$500. The bids will remain open until our AGM Friday 22 March 2024 unless we receive an offer well over reserve.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to our fabulous sponsors this year. Big thank you to:

- WA Railways
- Elphinstone Mechanical
- SKG
- Beyond Bank
- And special mention to **Action Trophies**, who have provided our tournament trophies this year.

The ADSA and our VP Dave send a heartfelt thanks to fellow committee member Mr Greg Comans, his wife Elain Hall, and all the family and friends that have helped him to make this a special and successful event.

For registrations, donations, or information, please call Vice President Dave Hall on 0428 817 151.

ADSA PASTORAL CARE UPDATE

The ADSA Pastoral Care agenda is off to a busy start in 2024. Alongside our usual programs the ADSA has teamed up NCARD Oncologist Dr Melvin Chin to explore a new patient research program. This will commence Monday 11th March as an adjunct to the support group/carer meetings.

For more info on our meetings

- Support group/carers meetings commencing Monday 11th March every 4 weeks.
- Guest speaker program commencing
- Deirdre's Lung Rehabilitation program
- Bereavement programs
- Our ongoing Pain and Anxiety Support programs

Appointments for specific health advice, scripts, referrals can be made with Nurse Practitioner Deirdre.

We would also like to invite more women exposed to asbestos through work, office buildings, DIY, washing contaminate work clothing, and so forth, to consider joining our screening program. We recommend women have additional screening of the abdomen.

To join our pastoral care program, research programs or general information on research please contact our office for an appointment with Nurse Deirdre call (08) 9344 4077. Appointments are bulk billed.



Nurse Practitioner Deirdre Louw

WITTENOOM MEMORIAL UPDATE

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Place of Reflection for 'Mr Fluffy' Legacy opens at the National Arboretum

THE ADSA has been advised that the Shire of Ashburton in the Pilbara has rejected a proposal for a lasting memorial of Australia's Worst Industrial Disaster - Wittenoom, claiming that they had based their decision on consultation with ADSA. We will be pursuing this misleading claim through our legal advisors.

In Canberra, caring politicians have acknowledged the Mr Fluffy asbestos insulation tragedy and provided a place of reflection and memorial.

Not great to be Western Australian when it comes to Asbestos; related diseases, workplace disasters, memorials and public health funding for life saving medical research.

Legal Update 2013 Asbestos Compensation Bill

Presented to the house as a Private Members Bill in 2013 by the Hon Kate Doust MLC.

ADSA CEO Melita Markey was invited to meet with Hon. John Quigley WA Attorney General in November 2023 to discuss the progress of the 2013 Asbestos Compensation Bill. The Bill seeks to address the inequity for Western Australian victims of asbestos related diseases, especially when compared to the rest of Australia. Minister Quigley advised that part 1 of the bill will be read into parliament before Easter 2024 and will not be retrospective, with part 2 on hold until after the election in a new 2025 WA

Parliament. ADSA has been advised of some challenges along the way in regard to concerns from the James Hardie Trust (JHT). Despite these challenges, the ADSA would like to congratulate the WA Government, the unions, and public who have supported this bill. We will be watching the progress closely and will give members and friends notice of the reading of the Bill into the WA Parliament. It will be great to celebrate this after 10 years of campaigning.

ASDA Dust Diseases Screening Program Lead by Dr Peter Brockhoff

ADSA also screens workers who are concerned regarding their exposure to silica dust at work, whether through mining or construction.

Curtin University estimates suggest 600,000 Australians have been exposed to crystalline silica at work, and over 100,000 could develop a life changing silicosis diagnosis. Many cases of advanced silicosis are asymptomatic, so it is very important to be screened.

An earlier diagnosis can enable treatment and facilitate action to prevent further irreparable injury.

If you are concerned about your exposure or require a follow up, please call our health check clinic on (08) 9344 4077 to make an appointment.

The Bill addresses the following;

1. Whether the “once and for all” rule under the common law should be modified through the introduction of “provisional damages”; and
2. Whether a specific head of damages for the value of gratuitous services (domestic or otherwise) provided by the plaintiff to others should be introduced.



Hon Kate Doust MLC and Melita Markey discussing the AG's announcement of the Asbestos Compensation Bill be read into Parliament before Easter 2024.

Newsletter OPT-IN

Please consider signing up to the Email newsletter instead, as it will help us save on printing and postage so that we have more to spend on ADSA members' pastoral care. If you want to continue to receive hard copies of this newsletter, delivered to your house 2-3 times a year, please contact the office on (08) 9344 4077.

