

The Asbestos Diseases Society of Australia Inc (ADSA)

The Asbestos Diseases Advisory Services (ADAS)

The Asbestos Diseases Society of Australia Inc. (ADSA) is an incorporated registered charitable organisation founded in 1979 for the purpose of:

- Providing counselling and support services to those who develop asbestos related diseases, and their families.
- Providing economic assistance to those who suffer financial hardship or social disadvantage as a result of contracting asbestos related diseases.
- Political lobbying and advocacy in asbestos related areas.
- Fundraising for medical research and support services.
- Raising community awareness of the dangers associated with asbestos in the community and providing information on these dangers.

The ADSA is a not for profit organisation charging only a nominal membership fee to its 15,000 plus members. The ADSA is reliant on fundraising activities and public donations for its operating revenue. The ADSA is therefore independent of public or private sector interests.

The Asbestos Diseases Advisory Services (ADAS) was established in 1984 in response to an identified need for independent advice and assistance with asbestos related issues. The ADAS provides free advice and assistance in the following areas:

- Medico/legal matters (including Workers Compensation and Common Law damages claims).
- Industrial and environmental hygiene.
- Collation and distribution of global medical and scientific research information on asbestos related issues.

Over the past 35 years, the ADSA and the ADAS have gained experience and developed expertise in asbestos related issues that is unparalleled in Australia. Every year both organisations spend tens of thousands of dollars staying current with medical and scientific developments associat-

ed with asbestos. The information gained is used in furtherance of the Society's objectives - often in the context of litigation and political negotiation. In particular the ADAS has accumulated a wealth of knowledge in relation to problems associated with the presence of asbestos in the community.

Finally in addition to the above resources and experience, ADSA and ADAS have distinguished medical and legal professionals with extensive backgrounds in asbestos related issues on call to offer advice as and when required - as well as a worldwide network of scientific and medical contacts who specialise in particular areas of asbestos related research. ADAS regularly directs people to specialist advice where it does not have the professional experience or resources to deal with a particular issue. Accordingly, ADSA and ADAS see themselves as an independent voice in any issue associated with asbestos and asbestos related diseases.

Rose Marie and Robert Vojakovic provide an invaluable service to the Australian public.



Rose Marie Vojakovic AM

Rose Marie has worked tirelessly for over 35 years to support the sufferers of asbestos disease and their families. Rose Marie was part of the original ADSA committee and part of the establishment of the Asbestos Diseases Advisory Service (ADAS) in 1984.

Rose Marie's role with the ADSA & ADAS includes her work as a Counsellor, providing expert counselling to asbestos disease sufferers and their families. As the Executive Officer of the ADAS Rose Marie among many duties coordinates fundraising activities and public events including the ADSA Christmas Picnic and the ADSA Ecumenical Memorial Church Service.

Rose Marie has been honoured for her services to asbestos disease sufferers with the ADSA Eric Saint Memorial Award and in 2001 she was an Australian Centenary Award recipient. In 2009 Rose Marie was made a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) and in 2016 she was named a Western Australian finalist for Senior Australian of the Year.

Rose Marie's dedication and commitment has been and continues to be a great support to asbestos diseases sufferers and their families.

Robert Vojakovic AM JP

President of the Asbestos Diseases Society of Australia Inc, Robert Vojakovic is a former Wittenoom mine worker who, after leaving the asbestos mine in 1962, studied and gained a Bachelor degree in Commerce. During the 1970s Robert became aware of the lack of support infrastructure (medical, legal and welfare) available for former Wittenoom co-workers who subsequently developed asbestos related lung diseases. Realising the potential enormity of the problem, in 1984 Robert incorporated the Asbestos Diseases Society of Australia in Western Australia (previously founded in Canberra in 1979).

Robert was appointed a Justice of the Peace in 1987. In 1992 he was awarded the Advance Australia Award for his service to the community, and a year later received recognition for his services to community health by being made a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in 1993. In 2001 Robert received the Australian Centenary Award for his contribution to Australian society and in 2011 he was named the Western Australian Senior Australian of the Year.

Robert is now regarded internationally as an authority on all aspects of asbestos and asbestos related disease. His expertise provides a range of essential services to victims through the ADSA and the ADAS. Robert is a Contributing Author to the *Sourcebook on Asbestos Diseases* published in the USA and other publications. Robert is also a popular speaker at International Conferences and Forums on asbestos issues and diseases.

Asbestos Awareness

July 2019

Asbestos education and awareness

Reduce your exposure. Reduce your risk.

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The dangers of asbestos in our communities and our homes are the focus of the ADSA Asbestos Awareness Week held annually. The widespread use of asbestos in building materials over many years has created an ongoing problem of exposure and asbestos disease risk for everyone. We aim to lift public awareness of asbestos risks at home and at

All asbestos fibres are potential killers.

work. Many homes still contain these products and there are many areas where you and your family can be exposed to asbestos (read more about these asbestos hazards on page 2).

Illegal imports of asbestos containing products are also creating risks that are difficult to identify. There is no safe level of exposure to asbestos fibres and even a small exposure can be a future risk.

The ADSA is committed to finding a cure for the asbestos caused cancer mesothelioma and we have created and fund the ADSA PhD Scholarship in Mesothelioma to support this medical research. Donations to the ADSA for medical research go towards funding the PhD Scholarship.



The ADSA Walk Team's youngest volunteer photographed on the ADSA Walk 2017. The ADSA holds various fundraisers each year to support the ADSA PhD Scholarship in Mesothelioma and to promote asbestos awareness. adsawalk.org.au

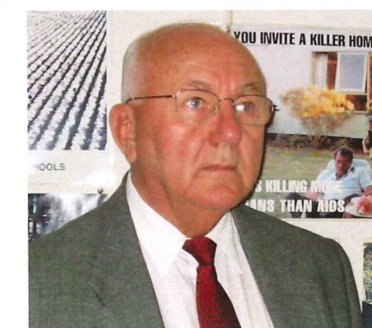
Special points of interest:

- All asbestos fibres are potential killers.
- Are you or your family at risk?
- We recommend a full asbestos audit of your home.
- Employ a professional for asbestos removal.
- We support medical research into a cure for asbestos caused mesothelioma.

The Asbestos Diseases Society of Australia Inc (ADSA)

The Asbestos Diseases Society of Australia Inc. is a Perth based charitable organisation that grew from the community need to come together and support the miners and town residents affected by the Wittenoom tragedy.

Wittenoom, in the Pilbara region of Western Australia, was the site of a now infamous blue asbestos mine that has already claimed thousands of lives. Wittenoom is now considered to be Australia's largest industrial disaster.



Robert Vojakovic AM JP
ADSA President

Most houses built before the 1990s contain asbestos in some form, and in fact asbestos building products continued to be used up until the late 1980s.

From the 1940s right through to the 1980s asbestos products were one of the most popular building materials in Australia. Recent illegal imports of building products containing asbestos are also a source of exposure to deadly asbestos fibres.

Renovating your home - a health hazard?

Asbestos use was not only prevalent in our homes, but most of our public buildings, schools, hospitals and government buildings contain asbestos in some form.

Asbestos was easy to work with, it was affordable and it had the added quality of being heat resistant.

There are more than 3000 applications of asbestos - the result is that workers have and are being exposed in virtually every occupation, and most Australian homes contain asbestos in some form.

Asbestos has also been used in theatre curtains, safety clothing, heat resistant pads for irons or on the stove, in gaskets, brake linings and clutches. The effect of its many and varied applications is that all of us have come into contact with asbestos in some form at some time in our lives.

It has now been established that asbestos materials begin to deteriorate after a period of 15 years as a result of weathering and exposure to other pollutants. Exposure to

sun, wind, rain, hail and frost cause asbestos products to corrode releasing asbestos fibres into the air and in the rain water from roofs.

Inhaled fibres lodge in the lining of the lung and lay dormant for up to 50 years. The inhaled fibres may produce scar tissue and in some instances the fibres may cause cancer to develop.

Despite articles appearing in medical journals as early as the 1920s on the dangers of asbestos in the development of severe respiratory conditions, asbestos mining continued. In Australia, the notorious Wittenoom blue asbestos mine in Western Australia was not fully operational until CSR Ltd took it over in 1943 and continued mining operations until 1966. This was regardless of literature published in the 1950s linking minimal exposure to asbestos and the development of malignant mesothelioma, a cancer affecting the lining of the lung. The manufacture of asbestos products in Australia continued until the late 1980s.

Asbestos disease has presented in waves of victims, the first wave being asbestos miners, transporters and the workers in asbestos product factories, the second wave are those in the construction and fabrication industries, such as, builders, fitters, boilermakers,

Never attempt to remove asbestos yourself. We recommend you employ a professional asbestos removalist. If the cost is prohibitive, there are some short term alternatives, call the ADSA on (08) 9344 4077 or 1800 646 690

electricians and mechanics, and now we are seeing the third wave of asbestos victims people that are exposed to decaying asbestos products and renovators.

People between 30 and 50 years old are now presenting with asbestos related cancers from exposure when they were children often from assisting with home renovations.

Look for asbestos products before you do any renovations or maintenance:

- 'Fibro' asbestos cement sheets in your walls, eaves, and roofing
- Shed/Garage walls and roofing
- 'Super Six' fences
- Kitchen, bathroom, & laundry
- Lagging around hot water pipes or exhaust pipes
- 'Lino' (Linoleum) backing
- Carpet underlay
- Acoustic/Insulation on the ceiling
- Furnace or fake log fire and slow burner

This list does not cover every use of asbestos in the home and we recommend a full asbestos audit of your home before renovating.

Removal of all asbestos products from the home by a professional asbestos removalist is recommended by the experts and the ADSA.

Asbestos related diseases - what are they?

Pleural Plaques

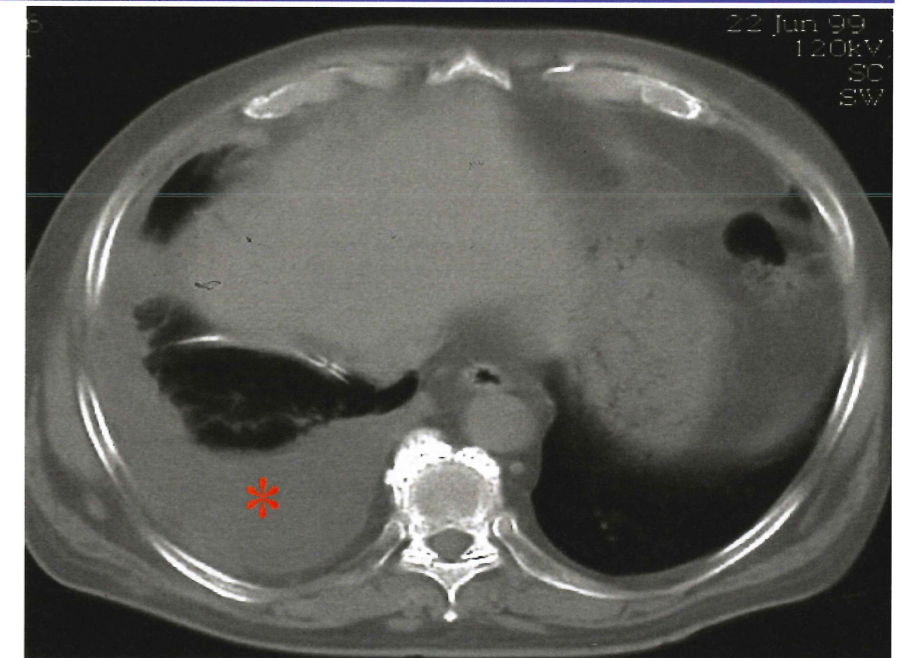
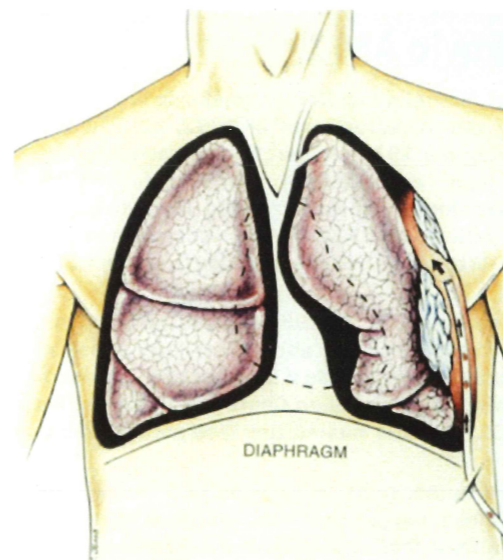
The most minor of the asbestos related conditions and a marker of past asbestos exposure which is evident on X-ray. Pleural plaques are patches of thickening appearing on the lining of the chest wall, over the diaphragm in the pleural membrane that lines the chest and over the pericardium where this membrane lies between the lungs. Pleural plaques may appear in the absence of any other chest sign resulting from asbestos inhalation, usually have minimal effect on lung function. Pleural plaques on occasion become calcified and harden. In some cases pleural plaques may reduce lung function and cause pain on exertion.

Asbestosis

Following heavy and prolonged exposure to asbestos, the inhalation of asbestos dust and fibres may result in scar tissue (or fibrosis) in the lungs. Further continued exposure increases the amount and distribution of the scar tissue. Such scarring is often referred to as interstitial fibrosis. Symptoms of asbestosis include shortness of breath, cough, chest tightness and bluish skin discolouration. Asbestosis is progressive, irreversible and leads to respiratory disability and in some cases death.

Mesothelioma

Mesothelioma was a rare cancer that affects the outer covering of the lung (the pleura).



ABOVE and BELOW: Mesothelioma and the lung (images courtesy of Daniel H. Sterman, M.D. Associate Professor of Medicine and Surgery Clinical Director, University of Pennsylvania, USA)

The only known cause of mesothelioma is past asbestos exposure but the lowest level of exposure sufficient to produce mesothelioma has not been established. Mesothelioma is usually associated with a long latency period from the time of exposure to asbestos to the development of the disease of between 10 and 60 years with a mean average of about 30 years. The tumour is highly malignant and can often be accompanied by chest pain that is greater than that of other lung tumours. There is no known association between the development of mesothelioma and tobacco smoking. Pleural mesothelioma symptoms may include fluid in the chest cavity, breathlessness, chest pain and sometimes abdominal swelling.

Lung Cancer

Lung cancer has been produced in asbestos workers by all types of asbestos. There is a dose-response relationship - increased exposure causes an increase in the incidence of tumour. There is usually a latency period of about 20 years or longer from the time of asbestos exposure

to the development of lung cancer.

Anyone exposed to Asbestos who smokes is at much greater risk of developing lung cancer than smokers in the general population who have not been exposed to asbestos. In fact, medical scientists at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York suggest that the risk is eight times greater. All types of lung cancer can be associated with past asbestos exposure. Symptoms included cough, pain on inhaling, a feeling of chest restriction, loss of weight and appetite.

Gastrointestinal Cancers

Asbestos exposure has been associated with the development of cancers that affect the gastrointestinal tract from the mouth to the anus. Studies have indicated an increased incidence of laryngeal tumours in smokers who have been exposed to asbestos. Asbestos inhalation can also result in peritoneal mesothelioma, the peritoneum being the lining of the stomach and intestines. Studies have suggested a possible increased risk of tumours on the inside lining of the intestines (the epithelium) in occupationally exposed asbestos workers.

"Aerosols of asbestos fibers of varying diameters and lengths can be generated by the disturbance ... of asbestos-containing materials in place. Once airborne, fine asbestos fibers remain in the air for many hours, even under still conditions. Air movement easily re-aerosolizes asbestos fibers which may have settled on surfaces." Levin et al, Medical Examination for Asbestos-Related Disease, American Journal of Industrial Medicine 37:6-22, 2000.