

## FACTS & FIGURES:

### National:

- More than 4000 Australians die each year from asbestos-related diseases; nearly four times the annual road toll. Across the country, one person dies every 12 hours from mesothelioma.
- Australia has one of the highest death rates of asbestos-related diseases per capita in the world.
- Asbestos is still present in millions of homes, as well as public and commercial buildings. Many buildings constructed before 1990 still contain asbestos.
- Across Australia, asbestos is in 1 in 3 homes.
- Alarmingly, research\* has shown that over a third of those who have encountered asbestos during a DIY project or renovation admitted to illegal and dangerous disposal – mostly in their own or a neighbour's household bin.

*\* Conducted by Newgate Research on behalf of the Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency. Report available at [www.asbestossafety.gov.au](http://www.asbestossafety.gov.au).*

### Western Australia:

- WA has the highest incidence of mesothelioma cancer in the world per capita, owing to the high penetration of asbestos products contaminating our built and natural environment.
- The World Health Organisation (and more recently the WA Govt) says, “there is no known safe minimum level of exposure to asbestos fibres.”

### Asbestos Diseases Society of Australia:

- We have seen over 100 new cases this year (2-3 per week), most diagnosed with mesothelioma.
- Women are the fastest growing group. We are seeing more women diagnosed with asbestos-related diseases than ever before, most from DIY renovations in 1980s/90s.
- We've been campaigning for a permanent memorial for 27 years and have more than 5000 signatures. Despite our best efforts, the government is yet to commit to a permanent memorial.
- We have repeatedly asked (by letter, email, social media) to be a part of the new Wittenoom Steering Committee (having been a part of the previous one) but the Lands Minister has yet to acknowledge our requests.

### Memorials:

- **The Bali Bombings killed 16 Western Australians. Within a year, there was a memorial in Kings Park to which the state government contributed \$1 million. That's \$62,500 for each West Aussie life lost.**
- In addition, the Kingsley Football Club's Bali memorial project received \$100,000 from the then WA government and \$156,000 from the City of Joondalup.
- The WA Govt also committed \$60,000 to the Bali Peace Park Association to purchase the Sari Club site, and funded an annual Bali Nursing Fellowship awarding \$15,000 p/a.
- In 1993, Gina Rinehart (and Hancock Prospecting) funded a memorial to the 'Graves of the Pilbara Pioneers' but there is no mention of the Wittenoom workers and their families. <https://monumentaustralia.org.au/themes/landscape/settlement/display/60761-pilbara-pioneers-memorial-lonely-graves-memorial>

### QUESTIONS WE NEED TO BE ASKING:

- Why is there still no memorial to those who have lost or will lose their lives to asbestos diseases?
- Considering WA has the highest rates of asbestos disease in the world, should dedicated research funding not be our highest priority?