

WITTENOOM AUSTRALIAS WORST INDUSTRIAL DISASTER

Asbestos Diseases Society of Australia Inc

Established 1979

Brief overview of asbestos diseases today and impact to local Government across WA

Shire Ashburton - Important in healing process

The Asbestos Diseases Society of Australia (ADSA) is Australia's leading health association assisting persons affected by **mesothelioma – asbestosis – silicosis – lung cancer**. The ADSA is a caring, non-profit, charitable organisation that aims to alleviate suffering, anxiety and financial stress experienced by asbestos sufferers and their families. It was founded to assist dying workers and their families in their fight for recognition of their asbestos caused diseases, justice and a cure.

Since 1979, the ADSA has been helping thousands of Australians and their loved ones access independent advice and assistance for asbestos-related issues. Its main services include:

- **Health Monitoring** (including screenings and breathing tests)
- **Advisory Services** (including medico-legal counselling)
- **Support Groups & Services** (including counselling and disease management)
- **Pastoral Care**
- **Indigenous Health Support**
- **Asbestos Exposure Registry**

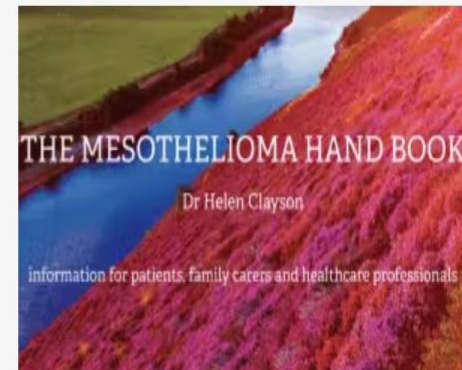
Asbestos Diseases Advisory Services

In 1984, the ADSA set up Asbestos Diseases Advisory Services (ADAS) in response to a perceived demand for independent advice and assistance in asbestos-related issues. Founders Robert and Rose Marie Vojakovic saw that asbestos diseases sufferers and their families needed ongoing support medically, socially and emotionally. This important service continues today providing:



[Book a Health Check](#)

Mesothelioma Handbook



WA MEMORIALS WHY IGNORE WITTENOOM

Over 4000 have perished and we still lose more every year – tourism the latest stats, people who visited the hospital in 1985 before it closed, the airport, the races.

Over 4000 people die a year from asbestos related lung cancer

WA is the mesothelioma capital of the world.

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-pioneersmemorial->

[lonely-graves-memorial](#)

PERMANENT MEMORIAL CAMPAIGN

By the Asbestos Diseases Society of
Australia Inc.

Over 30years of Campaigning

1. Flag Pole 1990's
2. Solidarity Park – West Perth 2018
3. Pilbara/ Perth?



In August 2018 a plaque was placed in Solidarity Place

We asked our members for their ideas for a dedicated memorial.

Feedback was very strong as many felt a plaque in Solidarity Park was for workers and didn't acknowledge all the families lost.

Approached the State Government about the construction of permanent memorials in Perth and the Pilbara at the time the Wittenoom Closure Bill 2021 bill was being touted.

We have created a link on our website to collect and collate ideas sent to us. The feedback to date has been very specific,

- The names of loved ones lost included on any memorial, with additional space for those to come,

A Pilbara location for those lost directly attributed to Wittenoom from mining, milling, living, visiting, working, schooling and transporting of asbestos e.g. Point Samson

- Special consideration and input by the First nations People Traditional Owners on how their loved ones lost should be incorporated into the memorial

- The Perth location to those lost through occupational exposures across the state eg; tradies, wharfies, teachers, James Hardie workers, Government Railways, etc + non-occupational exposures such as housewives (washing work clothes), DIY renovators etc, bystanders.

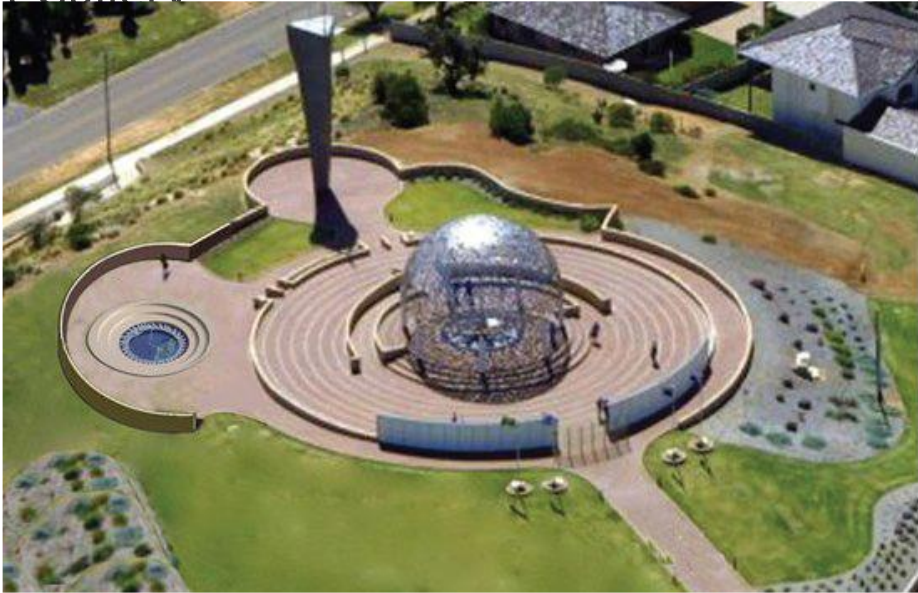
TOM PRICE – MEMORIAL/ MUSEUM

Objective: Build a memorial/ information center that provides a full historical record of Australia's worst industrial disaster that will also:

- acknowledge the sacrifice Wittenoom workers and their families made for the development of our state
- be a meaningful deterrent for those tempted to visit the region
- provide a place to grieve for those lost, but also a place to safely reminisce about their lives in Wittenoom
- educate locals on the very real dangers of visiting Wittenoom
- be a reminder to corporations that they cannot ignore the safety of the communities in which they operate

Memorial Design

It has been suggested we look at the design of the H.M.A.S. Sydney II memorial in Geraldton (pictured below). This monument commemorates the 645 service personnel who died when their ship sank during the war in 1941. This was designed by local artists Smith Sculptors who specialise in memorials. The Shire of Asburton recently used them to create the Red Dog Sculpture in Parabaddoo. www.smithsculptors.com. We have permission from the painter Jen Senbergs for the actual Blue Angel to be created in a sculpture form to be included as part of the memorial from his painting The Blue Angel of Wittenoom. The painting is in the WA Art Gallery



Proposed Details:

- Memorial walls with names of the thousands who lived and worked in Wittenoom, and since died from or with asbestos-related diseases. See memorial walls in Geraldton and Denham as examples.
- Allocate additional space on the walls to add more names in the coming decades
- Reflection Garden
- Land Rehabilitation eg. option for visitors / family members to 'plant a tree' for their lost ones.



ADSA ARCHIVES

Many thanks for a deeply inspiring tour of your offices and archives yesterday. I have rarely seen a more significant archive in terms of its social implications and its relevance to ongoing governance issues in Western Australia.

Benjamin Smith Archeologist

Chair, Project Steering Committee

Digitisation Centre of Western Australia

Features: Dedicated rooms using ADSA's huge library of photos and historical footage, as well as specially created mini-documentaries and sufferers stories (interviews/videos) to highlight the many, varied sections of community affected by exposure in Wittenoom.

- **Indigenous workers** – type of work, communities/elders
- **Immigrant workers** – Robert's story, and all those like him who came from overseas to work in the mines
- **Tourism** – guide, tours, school camps (inc. French/German docos), proposals for a resort
- **Racing** – history of the racetrack, race meets, highlighting jockeys, journalists, race callers and air hostesses who acquired an ARD due to the Wittenoom Races.
- **Greater community** – school teachers, nurses, wives washing mining clothes, etc.



THEY SHALL NEVER BE FORGOTTEN