

Dear Members and Friends,

The COVID pandemic has impacted our lives in many ways, including our communications, physical interaction with each other and how we spend our holiday time. The ADSA has invested in improving our digital communications including the use of Zoom meetings, e-newsletters, Facebook, Instagram and a dedicated YouTube channel.

Please sign up via our website

www.asbestosdiseases.org.au to

keep regularly informed. These digital communication channels save us money and help us get our information out across Australia. We will be continuing with a hardcopy newsletter twice a year for those members who do not have access to email at this time.

With the country still focused on making events as safe as possible, the ADSA has made the following decisions:

1. Regrettably we have decided to cancel this year's annual **ADSA Christmas Picnic**. Given the size of this event, the best health advice would suggest we wait until we are mostly safely vaccinated in 2022.
2. **Asbestos Awareness Week (22-26 November)** will be focused on WA holidaymakers. With travel very much restricted to a state level for the foreseeable future, we felt compelled to release our awareness campaign ahead of November, to warn travelers for the upcoming school holidays. We are also hoping a permanent memorial of the Wittenoom tragedy in Karijini National Park will act as a deterrent to tourists tempted to put their lives and their children's at risk for a social media post.
3. Given the lack of memorial to all those lost to deadly asbestos diseases, our **26th Annual Ecumenical Memorial Service** will go ahead on Friday 26 November with precautions. It will also be professionally live streamed to our Facebook page for those unable to attend. Once again, we will have a

Memorial Photo Presentation on rotation throughout the service.

Anyone wishing to include photos of their passed loved ones can send their pictures to our office by mail or deliver in person. All photographs will be returned upon request. Alternatively you can send it via email to ecumenical@asbestosdiseases.org.au

4. We are confident that we will be able to go ahead with our **annual fundraising Golf Day** hosted by Vice President Dave Hall, on Sunday 27 February 2022 in Mandurah. The tournament includes lunch, fundraising auction, and the presentation of the Perpetual Cup to the winning team, plus a special Hole-in-One prize for one lucky golfer! Visit our website for more information and to register your team.
5. Our **lifesaving Christmas Raffle** is going ahead as per usual, so please support the ADSA by purchasing a book of 10 tickets for \$30. First prize is \$20,000 cash, a great Christmas present! All funds raised will be used to maintain our support services, our Medical Research Scholarships and the purchase of equipment to enhance our doctor's service.

We are very pleased to announce we have received some positive news from The Attorney General Hon John Quigley MLA regarding the Asbestos Compensation Bill of 2013. Sadly dedicated medical research funding is still not on the Government's agenda but our PhD Scholarship Fund will be up and running in 2022.

We are so grateful for your continued support, so please help us with our campaign for permanent memorials to not only Australia's worst industrial tragedy Wittenoom, but for all the lives lost and those maimed from the deadly asbestos industry across Australia.

Kind Regards,

Melita Markey (CEO) & Robert Vojakovic AM JP (PRESIDENT)



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

After being postponed due to COVID restrictions, our 2021 Annual General Meeting was held at the ADSA on 25 May with limited guests. All office bearers were re-elected unopposed. An important part of our AGM is annual Professor Eric G Saint Memorial Award. Prof Saint is honoured by our organisation for communicating his deep concern for the dusty conditions he observed at Wittenoom. In 1948, while working as a young flying doctor in the Pilbara, he wrote to the WA Health Department stating, "That ABA [Company] would produce the most lethal crop of asbestos diseases in the worlds literature". This year, the 29th annual award was presented by Rose Marie Vojakovic AM to Professor Gary Lee (pictured with ADSA President, Robert Vojakovic AM JP).

Do not visit Wittenoom.

IT IS NOT SAFE. The area is heavily contaminated with asbestos fibres.

The death toll from Wittenoom will not stop until visitors stop.

www.asbestosdiseases.org.au | www.facebook.com/AsbestosDiseasesAus



Congratulations to Professor Gary Lee

As a professor of respiratory medicine at the University of Western Australia and a respiratory physician at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital in Perth, Professor Lee established and directs Australia's first centralised hospital pleural service. He has won successive fellowships from the National Health and Medical Research Council and is currently a recipient of a prestigious Practitioner Fellowship.

Prof Lee is a recognised world leader in pleural research and leads his translational research group at the Institute for Respiratory Health. As most asbestos complications relate to the pleura, his research has directly benefited patients with asbestos related diseases. As we well know, WA has the highest rate of mesothelioma per capita in the world, so we are very fortunate that Prof Lee chose to specialise and

perfect his work with the indwelling pleural catheter here.

Our members speak of Prof Lee's care, kindness, patience, compassion and wisdom at their greatest time of need and the future that they are facing. From the ADSA and our members, we would like to extend our heartfelt 'thank you' to Prof Lee for his contribution to enhancing the quality of life for patients affected by asbestos diseases.

Permanent Memorial Update

Please visit www.change.org/WittenoomMemorial to sign our online petition for permanent memorials to the Wittenoom industrial disaster and all Australian lives lost to deadly asbestos diseases. We are delighted with the momentum. We now have over 4000 signatures, but we'd love to get more than 10,000.

We have approached the State Government about the construction of permanent memorials in Perth and the Pilbara. The meeting was very positive and it was felt it should be linked with the Wittenoom Closure Bill 2021. We have created a link on our website whereby we can collect and collate ideas sent to us. The feedback to date has been very specific, with the most important being:

- The names of loved ones lost included on any memorial, with additional space for those to come
- The memorial in Karijini National Park in the Pilbara for those lost directly attributed to the mining, milling, living, visiting, working, schooling and transporting of asbestos from Wittenoom and the surrounding areas e.g. Point Samson
- Special consideration and input by the Traditional Owners of the land on how their loved ones lost should be incorporated into the memorial
- The Perth asbestos memorial should be broader and include not only occupational exposures such as tradies, wharfies, and workers from James Hardie plants and Government Railways, but also non-occupational exposures such as housewives (washing work clothes), DIY renovators etc.

We were recently offered a space in Solidarity Park (Harvest Tce West Perth) by Unions WA as part of their update to the small 1970s site. Currently we have the plaque, which we placed in 2018. However, realistically we would need most of Solidarity Park to create a memorial to accommodate all the current names of those lost and indeed those to be lost in the future. So we will continue our discussions with the Unions to see if they can assist us further.

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. For more of their amazing memorial work, visit their website www.smithsculptors.com. We would like our Blue Angel of Wittenoom by Jen Senbergs created in a sculpture included as part of the design (pictured below).



Legalisation Update

The Asbestos Diseases Compensation Bill 2013 was introduced on 31 October 2013 by the Hon. Kate Doust MLC, at the time Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Council. We have been advised The Attorney General the Hon. John Quigley MLA that a bill will be introduced into this term of Government to: **Remove "once for all" damages and introduce provisional damages for asbestos related diseases provision.**

Our organisation is also to be consulted in the drafting of this, so we will keep you posted on the timing of this Bill. While long overdue, this will be great news for many sufferers and their families. However, we will still need to campaign for the inclusion of gratuitous damages i.e. *to provide compensation for the loss or impairment of the injured person's capacity to perform domestic services for another person.*

This is very important particularly as most sufferers have responsibilities as parents, grandparents or carers of a loved one. It seems very unfair that Western Australians are statute barred when residents from NSW, Victoria, Qld, ACT, and SA have access to this compensation.

Many thanks to Mr David Michael MLA Balcatta for keeping us updated on the progress of this legislation.

Advisory Service Update

The Advisory Service is following government health protocols and taking a very cautious approach to ensure our members and friends are protected when attending our premises. However, the careful approach by the WA Government has meant we are feeling confident to commence our program of support groups and information sessions for the last quarter of this year. Our first series of guest speakers will be on a range of approaches to Pain Management.

The building boom in WA has pushed our office renovations back to mid-October. These have been supported by our caring local member Mr David Michael MLA via a communities grant. On behalf of our staff and members we are extremely grateful.

As always our clinic is available with Dr Deleuil if you are concerned regarding your exposure or requiring follow up please call 08 9344-4077 to make an appointment. Alternatively, you can Register Your Exposure through our website.

ADSA PhD Mesothelioma Medical Research Scholarships

We have discussed the great value our program has brought to supporting our members and friends especially as we **do not have dedicated asbestos diseases research Government Funding in WA**. Irony, considering we have the highest incidence of mesothelioma in Australia. One person in Australia dies every 12 hours from incurable mesothelioma cancer. The first recipient Dr Melvin Chin Oncologist/Scientist is now a treating Oncologist at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital. We will be launching our broader PhD Scholarship program in early 2022. **Please note:** Donations to our scholarships are 100% tax deductible.

Dedicated WA Dust Diseases Medical Research & Treatment Funding

Whilst we are concerned for our workers and home renovators developing dust diseases, we are also now concerned for the tourists who have visited Wittenoom over the last few decades. Our research has uncovered that in 1993 alone, an estimated 40,000 tourists visited Wittenoom and the surrounding area. We also know there has been a lot of mixed messaging to tourists over the years. As asbestos cancers have a latency period of approximately 20-50 years, those who visited Wittenoom in 1993 should consider commencing health checks, especially if they were smokers.

There is no safe level of exposure to asbestos especially in relation to deadly mesothelioma cancer. Considering WA has the highest incidence of malignant mesothelioma in Australia, it would be in our citizens' best interest to create a dedicated Dust Diseases Research and Treatment Fund for medical research into, not only mesothelioma cancer, but also silicosis and other dust diseases. We need to understand more about these diseases and our researchers should not be competing with other chronic disease research funding. There should be a strong desire by Government and industry to create this urgently, especially as these diseases are entirely preventable.

Festive Season Office Hours

We will be closed from 5pm on Tue 21 Dec until 9am on Mon 10 Jan 2022. For urgent enquiries, phone 0409 883 594 or 0419 931 687.



Recycle the love

Please consider donating the refund from your returned containers to ADSA (scheme ID C10489525). For locations and details, visit www.containersforchange.com.au

Every dollar counts

We would be most grateful if you would consider making a tax-deductible donation for use in medical research into asbestos diseases, as well as help our patients and their families fight for justice and recognition. Visit our website for full details.

Please help us save on printing and postage

If you no longer wish to receive our hard copy newsletters, or if you would prefer to receive them electronically, please let us know. Any money we can save on printing and postage can be invested into much-needed medical research. Similarly, if your contact details have changed recently, please contact our office.

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Asbestos Awareness Week 22-26 November 2021

This year, we will be focusing on WA holidaymakers. We were alerted by the media about a year ago to a number of videos circulating online of so-called 'adventure tourists' camping and playing in the asbestos tailings in Wittenoom, in the Pilbara region of WA. This concerned us - after all the deaths and the fact Wittenoom continues to devastate families, people were still choosing to visit the deadly blue asbestos contaminated town. This led us to research why the message and the warning signs were not getting through.

We discovered that there is a younger generation who are unaware of the dangers caused by limited exposure to blue asbestos fibres, such as developing incurable mesothelioma

cancer. Our research also highlighted that both The New Zealand Herald and the UK Daily Mail have published numerous articles in recent years, warnings their citizens not to visit Wittenoom.

So with holiday travel very much restricted to WA in the foreseeable future, we felt compelled to release our awareness campaign early. We are also hoping a permanent memorial of the Wittenoom tragedy in Karijini National Park will act as a deterrent to tourists tempted to put their lives and their children's at risk for an Instagram post. If you haven't already signed our petition, please do so at www.change.org/WittenoomMemorial



Merry Christmas

Best wishes to our members, friends and their families for a safe and peaceful Christmas. We are incredibly grateful for all your support during this pandemic and look forward to seeing you in 2022!

- President, Committee and Staff

In remembrance of those who have died of asbestos related diseases, please join us for our 26th Annual Ecumenical Memorial Service

Redemptorist Monastery, 190 Vincent Street, North Perth

9:30am on Friday 26 November 2021

Please join us to light a candle in memory of a loved one or friend. We light a candle as a symbol of our love, the hopes, dreams and prayers we would share with our departed loved one. The candle can express feelings and thoughts we cannot, things we might want God to know. It continues to burn, long after we have left. Its light in this very holy place symbolises these things we continue to offer.

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, we may only be able to accommodate a maximum of 120 people, so please RSVP at your earliest convenience to confirm your place. Alternatively you can watch the service online, as we will be live-streaming to our Facebook page. For more information please call 9344 4077 or 1800 646 690, or visit our website www.asbestosdiseases.org.au.

