

**Tuesday 31st May 2022 - held on
Tuesday 28th June 2022 at 3:30pm**

AGENDA

LIMITED ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AGENDA 28 May 2022. The ADSA AGM scheduled for 31 May 2022 was postponed to 28 June 2022 due to office flood damage. As with the previous year, the AGM will go ahead with a limited number of persons and such persons being financial members to the limit of 35 members to comply with COVID safe distancing requirements.

1. **Meeting Open – Melita Markey, Chief Executive Officer**
2. **Welcome – Robert Vojakovic AM JP, President**
3. **Hon. Treasurer’s Report Calendar Year 2021 – Mr John Martelli BA (Trng & Dev), Treasurer**
4. **Confirmation of Executive or Ordinary Committee for 2022**
5. **ADSA Activities Report for 2021 - Melita Markey, CEO**
6. **Legislative Update – David Michael MLA, Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier; Treasurer; Minister for Public Sector Management; Federal-State Relations; Parliamentary Secretary of the Cabinet**
7. **Medical Research Update – Professor Richard Lake PhD**
8. **Prof Eric G. Saint Award lecture - Dr Greg Deleuil AM RFD MBBS (WA)**
9. **Announcement of the Prof Eric G. Saint Memorial Award Recipient 2021 – Rose Marie Vojakovic AM CTA, Office Manager**



REFRESHMENTS



Can West Australians really close the chapter on Wittenoom- Australia's Worst Industrial disaster?."

In 1978 Robert Vojakovic AM JP, a former Wittenoom worker, looking for more information, stumbled upon a very frightened and marginalised cohort of workers and their families left to fend for themselves after the closure of the CSR Wittenoom mine and mill in 1966. They were haunted by a sinister disease wasting away and killing family members and friends within months and weeks of diagnosis (if diagnosed at all).

No one wanted to know them they were seen as malingerers and looking for handouts. Upon investigation a terrible conspiracy was discovered to keep these people quiet, while they died and the problem of Asbestos Diseases disappeared with their deaths forever, leaving those responsible unaccountable. Well we know the history of that and 40 plus years on the ADSA, formed by Robert, Rose Marie and a group of dying Wittenoom workers, is still here assisting the dying, the ill and those at risk of Wittenoom's deadly dust legacy.

The recent passing of the Wittenoom Closure Bill 2021 in the WA Parliament has again raised many questions about the ongoing management of Wittenoom and the surrounding region of spectacular beauty all of which are dangerously contaminated with deadly blue asbestos tailings and fibre which have never been cleaned up. Concerned by the highlighted issues of adventure tourism to Wittenoom the ADSA commenced monitoring the activity of tourists social media during 2020/21 and found on average 60 people a week visited Wittenoom. NB This does not include school holiday activity.

Overwhelmingly the ADSA research found, that the visitors were not "stupid or idiots" as recently described by the current Lands Minister Mr John Cary on 6PR, many just didn't know Wittenoom's damning history. Tourists' were from overseas, interstate migration and just a younger generation and how would they have known. Up until the ADSA pointed it out to the RAC WA in November 2021 they had Wittenoom on their travel site as one of the top 8 Ghost Towns in Australia to visit. Travel statistics tell us that over 40,000 people visited Wittenoom and its surrounding gorges in 1993 alone.

The bill provides the funds to payout the last remaining residents and property owners. The government is seeking to demolish these buildings and the remaining buildings so as to reduce the allure of Wittenoom as a tourist destination. From the list of dates (below) sourced from a 1993 Parliamentary Inquiry in Wittenoom and its future closing Wittenoom has been dragged out over the last 60 years. Thus exposing more and more workers and visitors to deadly asbestos dust and fibres.

Intermingled with all of the issues is the relationship to this land and its Traditional owners the Banjima People. To maintain their connection with country means to risk their lives as the area is so contaminated. They too are seeking a resolution as many of their people over the years have succumbed to mesothelioma. Sadly we still expect more loss of life from Wittenoom exposures. The issues of how we truly close the chapter on Wittenoom are complex and need a broad ranging and pragmatic approach.

WITTENOOM - KEY DATES	
1966	December - Wittenoom CSR Mine and Mill closed due to WA Health Department's ongoing safety concerns.
1985	December 18 - Wittenoom Primary School closed.
1991	Wittenoom Race meets cancelled.
1992	October 31 - Fortescue Hotel closes.
1992	November 4 - Hon Ernie Bridge MLA, Minister for the North-West announces that Government will continue its policy to phase-down activity in Wittenoom and demolish all Government-owned buildings there, including the Fortescue Hotel.
1993	August - Hancock sells 74 blocks and 4 houses in Wittenoom. The blocks sold for \$150 -\$300.
1993	August - The Deputy Premier, the Hon Hendy Cowan, MLA visited Wittenoom and announced that he wanted to accelerate a strategy to deal with the problem of asbestos contamination in the town and surrounding areas.
1993	November - Airport is officially closed.
1993	December 17 - Government appoints engineering consultants CMPS & F to assess the practicability and cost of cleaning-up asbestos from the Wittenoom town site.
1993	The issue needs to be resolved so that the tourism based around the Hamersley Ranges and the Karijini National Park can be placed on a firmer basis.
1993	Wittenoom residents would not be forced to leave the town but the Government would not encourage new residents to the town nor would the Fortescue Hotel be re-opened.
2022	Wittenoom Closure Bill / Anniversary of Ernie Bridge passing from mesothelioma.
2022	Wittenoom Closure Bill Deadline extended to move on residents

Wittenoom Memorial

The Wittenoom death toll continues to grow and with no cure, dedicated medical research funding or plan to remediate the most contaminated town in the world it will continue to grow. The Bill has again highlighted that the issue of remembering those lost to Australia's Worst Industrial disaster has never been considered formerly. Like the World Trade Centre, the loss of HMAS Sydney. The momentum is growing for permanent memorials to the Wittenoom

industrial disaster. The ADSA has over 5000 signatures on a petition for funding to build a memorial. The people affected by Wittenoom have told the ADSA they needed a spiritual and symbolic place to reflect, grieve; to remind Australia of its worst industrial disaster and what can happen when corporate greed and indifference to life is poorly regulated and unlegislated. The people affected by the Wittenoom tragedy and the traditional owners of the land are a unique cohort in that they have lost multiple family members not just to asbestos diseases but to ongoing trauma and PTSD. So many of the victims were just innocent children, homemakers, traditional owners, tourists, geologists or just bystanders – not only miners.

Many feel betrayed and have had to watch their families and traditions crumble. They have had to suffer the indifference to their trauma, loss and lack of acknowledgement through what can only be described as a “blue dust wash”. Perpetrators and regulators ignoring the piles of blue asbestos fibre stacked in the Wittenoom gorges, flooding into Joffre Creek and on into the Fortescue River, blowing across the town and surrounding region for the last 80 plus years. Hoping that the red dust of the Pilbara would eventually cover the blue fibre. However, they forgot the geology of the mineral that attracted them to Wittenoom in the first place.

Asbestos is indestructible.

A permanent standalone memorial to the Wittenoom tragedy would enable our Western Australian community to honour those lost and assist in some healing as well as serve as an everlasting tribute to those who have passed. The courts have proven their deaths were preventable and caused by indifference and negligence.

Research on memorials talks about the concept of a “memorial site”. A 2007 report by Brett et al describes; “Public memorials are preserved for the future by carrying the past to the present in order to “remind” people and help them to remember and prevent changing historical facts and events. Thus, public memorials serve for both transferring information to all visitors, particularly the younger generation, and for giving tourists the opportunity to establish empathy with past events which the society they are visiting lived through. Moreover, these memorials help tourists to carry this frame of mind back to their own countries and inspire them to establish a bond with similar crimes and problems today, whether faced in different societies or in different contexts.”

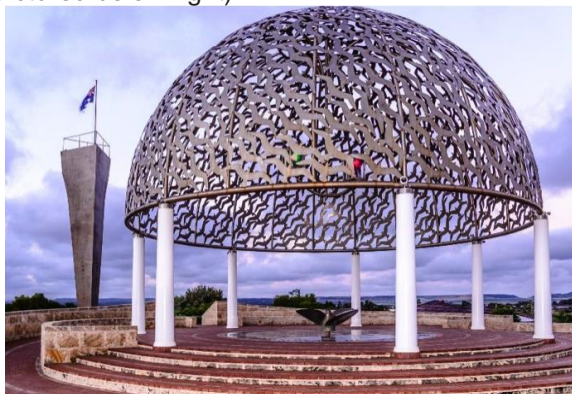
The ADSA believes that the lack of a Wittenoom “memorial site” will lead to the next Wittenoom cohort of asbestos diseases, death and family tragedy. The younger generation attracted to the beauty of the region and unaware of the history of industrial manslaughter, death and total contamination are visiting regularly. Our rough stats monitoring social media tell us at least 60 people visited Wittenoom in the last week. So perhaps the Wittenoom Memorial Site is the solution the Government is looking for to adopt jointly with the Wittenoom Closure Bill to ensure we keep people out of Wittenoom until one day the great Wandjina Spirit can make it pure again.

Feedback for the memorial has been very specific including 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.

Proposed Memorial Design

We respectfully request that Government most urgently addresses the need for the construction of permanent memorials in Perth and the Pilbara. It has been suggested we look at the design of the H.M.A.S. *Sydney II* memorial in Geraldton (pictured below left), which was designed by local artists Smith Sculptors who specialise in memorials. We would also like our Blue Angel of Wittenoom sculpture included as part of the design (pictured below right).



<https://www.change.org/p/please-support-construction-of-lasting-memorial-sculptures-of-the-wittenoom-tragedy-in-perth-the-pilbara>

Summary of 2021 - Calendar Year

Main Points

1. 793 members (in 1643 appointments) were reviewed by Dr Greg Deleuil for counselling and assistance in connection with asbestos exposure and likely health risk, including referral for further medical review.
2. 202 new registers were evaluated and counselled by the ADAS Advisory Staff in relation to issues of asbestos-caused diseases.
3. In excess of 1200 general enquiries were received by ADAS office regarding exposure to asbestos and its health risk, and medico/legal matters. All work related concerns were referred directly to asbestos inspectors at Worksafe WA.
4. Public health and awareness campaigns:
 - i. ADSA Do Not Visit Wittenoom TV / Radio / Social Media Campaign from 1 November to 31 December
 - ii. Wittenoom Memorial petition and media campaign
 - iii. Asbestos diseases awareness advertisement published in Western Nurse magazine
 - iv. Public stall providing information on asbestos, its consequences and safe work practices held in collaboration with Bunnings - Mandurah
5. Promotion of funding for medical research, including fundraising for the Professor Musk Scholarship
6. The 26th Ecumenical Memorial Service was held at North Perth Redemptorist Monastery on 26 November 2021 in memory of those who have died from asbestos caused diseases (several hundred members, families and friends attended).
7. 29 members were assisted with Workers Compensation matters, some were also referred to the Industrial Diseases Medical Panel in accordance with Section 36 of the Workers' Compensation and Injury Management Act 1981.
8. 55 members were assisted with investigating Common Law matters.
9. Confirmed diagnosis of asbestos-caused disability amongst ADSA membership Australia wide: asbestosis & silicosis: 25, lung cancer: 4, mesothelioma: 45, asbestos pleural disease: 76
10. Deaths: Sadly more than 153 of our dear friends and members have lost their lives due to asbestos-caused disease during the preceding year.

