

3 February 2017



**OVER 35 YEARS OF CARE AND
SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY**

Dear Members and Friends

1. ADSA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING SUNDAY 19TH FEBRUARY 2017

Our organisation the Asbestos Diseases Society of Australia Incorporated (ADSA) will hold its Annual General Meeting (AGM) on Sunday 19th February 2017 at 2pm at the usual place, 11 Royal Street, Osborne Park - City of Stirling Library - Osborne Park Community Centre. The Centre is located almost diagonally from our office in a north-east direction, behind the BP service station situated on the corner of Main and Royal Street - opposite the Osborne Park Hotel car park. Limited parking is available under the Osborne Park Library building off Royal Street. However, additional parking can be accessed in the car park of the Osborne Park Hotel and the Osborne Park Supermarket behind the Osborne Park Hotel, almost directly opposite the ADSA Office.

All members and friends are cordially invited to attend the 2017 AGM. Afternoon tea and light refreshments will be served upon conclusion of the meeting. There will also be an opportunity for members and friends to meet and have a chat with guest speakers, members and friends, and also those with similar medical conditions to share their information and experiences. To assist with catering arrangements, please call our office on 9344 4077 to confirm the number of persons attending the AGM.

The formal part of the AGM Agenda will include receiving reports from the Office Bearers of the Society's activities and management of the preceding calendar year. Upon conclusion of the reports an election will be held to elect the Office Bearers and Ordinary Committee Members of the Asbestos Diseases Society of Australia Incorporated for the Calendar Year 2017. The current members of the Management and ordinary Committee of the Asbestos Diseases Society of Australia Inc. have accepted nomination for the 2017 Calendar Year. However, additional nominations will be considered provided they are in writing, co-signed by two financial members of the ADSA Inc., accompanied by the written acceptance of the nominee who is a financial member of the ADSA Inc. The nominations should be addressed to the Electoral Officer of the ADSA Inc. PO Box 1394, Osborne Park 6916 and received by close of business at 5pm on Thursday 16th of February 2017.

Upon conclusion of the formal part of the Agenda several eminent speakers have graciously accepted our invitation to attend the AGM and present the latest medical research investigations and treatments of asbestos malignant diseases such as Lung Cancer/Mesothelioma. Professor Anna Nowak will speak about the latest mesothelioma research. The Honourable Kate Doust MLC will provide an explanation on the position of the overdue Compensation Bill in the matter of Provisional Damages and Damages for Gratuitous Service. The other speakers will be Tim Hammond MP & Senior Barrister, Tricia Wong Practice Manager Slater and Gordon, David Michael Osborne Ward Councillor & Labor Candidate for Balcatta, Dr Greg Deleuil and Dr Helen Clayson author of the Mesothelioma Handbook.

2. 2016 CALENDAR YEAR

The 2016 Calendar Year was on a par with previous years, again showing up an unacceptable number of asbestos caused diseases and in particular malignant mesothelioma, lung carcinoma and other non-malignant diseases i.e. asbestosis and pleural disease. Sadly, more than 300 of our members and friends have succumbed to asbestos caused diseases during the 2016 Calendar Year.

2016 Asbestos Awareness Week

Started on Monday 21st November, a morning tea meeting was held on Tuesday with nurses from several hospitals exchanging their views of best care for patients and in the following days an Information Stand was established on the main concourse at Royal Perth Hospital to provide information about asbestos diseases and the unacceptable risk to asbestos fibres still in the West Australian community. In addition ADSA staff set up a commemorative exhibition and displayed information including hundreds of articles and pictures relating to Wittenoom Mining and Milling Operations of blue asbestos, its closure some 50 years ago, and indeed, its sad consequences of greed to make a profit at the expense of miners and their families. The exhibition is available to be viewed at the ADSA office.



Asbestos Diseases Society of Australia 'Steve Aiberti Memorial Walk' for Research and Awareness 2016

Asbestos Diseases Society of Australia 'Steve Aiberti Memorial Walk' for Research and Awareness 2016 – Geraldton to Perth was exceptionally well received and supported by country folks, in particular the City of Geraldton, Dongara, Three Springs, Coorow, Moora and Bindoon. On behalf of the ADSA our thanks and gratitude to the generous sponsors of the Walk and the magnificent group of walkers for their dedicated commitment to raise funds for medical research into a cure for asbestos caused cancers. A magnificent sum was raised please refer to the photo below taken at the ADSA Christmas Picnic at Whiteman Park on Sunday 4th December 2016.

The Fundraising Golf Tournament for Mesothelioma Research which was held for the last 4 years will not be run this year due to technical difficulties of golf site availability and the absence of the organising committee Vice President Dave Hall and family for some considerable time this year. However, on a brighter note, the Fundraising Golf Tournament will recommence next year on Sunday 18th February 2018 at the same venue, the magnificent Meadow Springs Golf Course and Country Club. I would most sincerely suggest to place this date on your calendar and join us at the Golf Course to continue fundraising for less fortunate members and friends of our organisation who are suffering from the thus-far incurable mesothelioma and lung cancer.

Ecumenical Memorial Service 25th November 2016 was again greatly appreciated by our members and friends, the Church was filled to capacity and again a presentation made of the Memorial Photographs of our passed members and friends during the service. As the inaugural photo presentation in 2015 was a well received part of the Service and a number of members and friends expressed a desire for the presentation to continue the management Committee of the ADSA Inc. has decided that this commemorative photo presentation of passed members and friends will continue as long as the photos are being made available. Anyone wishing to send a photograph to be included in this year's service is welcome to do so by post or email (adsinc@iinet.net.au)

3. DR HELEN CLAYSON MESOTHELIOMA HANDBOOK

The Dr Helen Clayson Mesothelioma Handbook is being well received by members and friends diagnosed with malignant mesothelioma and their families. The input we have received is very encouraging for patient management by their family members. Also we were told by several medical practitioners that patients are able to better explain their symptoms and general understanding of the disease itself. One particular person explained to Rose Marie that he has now been empowered to confidently talk about mesothelioma by reading Dr Clayson's book. Great news for members and friends, Dr Helen Clayson will be attending our AGM on 19th February and will be available to answer any questions about the Mesothelioma Handbook.

4. THE LATEST UPDATE ON CLINICAL TRIALS OF MALIGNANT MESOTHELIOMA AT SIR CHARLES GAIRDNER HOSPITAL

So far we are unable to provide you with any more up-to-date information on mesothelioma treatment trials than already provided. However Professor Anna Nowak will be attending the AGM and, I am sure, will be in a position to update the members and friends attending the AGM. Should anyone be unable to attend the meeting but wishing to obtain the information, please ring our office or send an e-mail or letter and we will send the information.

5. THE LATEST UPDATE ON COMMON LAW (PROVISIONAL DAMAGES) AND BENEFITS TO DISABLED RELATIVE

In our Christmas 2016 newsletter we have advised that the legislation introduced on 31st October 2013 has, to our surprise, been looked upon favourably by the Law Reform Commission and accordingly was referred to the Western Australian Attorney General, the Honourable Michael Mischin MLC.



We were hoping to receive a response from the Attorney General but to date we have not received any communication other than some rumours that the apparent legislative amendments may be causing cost concerns to the West Australian Government and therefore the matter will be discussed by Cabinet as to the likely costs arising out of the amendments to the law recommended by the Law Reform Commission. **With due respect to the Honourable Attorney General he is wrong because these legislative amendments will not affect the West Australian Government but rather will be placing the obligation on the wrongdoers causing asbestos diseases who most likely will be subrogated by insurers.** Moreover, I believe passing this legislation will be beneficial to mesothelioma patients or indeed any other asbestos sufferers of significant impairment because they will be in a financial position to acquire a better living standard and may very well be in a position to purchase their own home. This will give many people now waiting in a queue for Public Housing a chance to acquire private accommodation. At the forthcoming AGM the Honourable Kate Doust MLC will be attending to explain the latest position of the current Government on the amendments.

6. RISKS TO HEALTH FROM ASBESTOS CARCINOGENIC FIBRES

Over the last 12 months, there have been a number of instances where concerns of some magnitude have been raised in connection with asbestos exposure i.e. importation of asbestos building products from overseas which were banned by Australian legislation on 1st January 2004 and specifically in Western Australia. In recent months a number of concerns have arisen about asbestos exposure in the construction of the Perth Children's Hospital adjacent to QEII complex in Nedlands, and also the anxiety arising from the release of asbestos fibres through the work being carried out by the clearing of bushland for the construction of the **Roe 8 project**. It is therefore necessary to provide at least limited information to Members and Friends in this Newsletter in connection with asbestos exposure and the risk of developing asbestos caused diseases. The catastrophic effects of carcinogenic asbestos fibres released into the air through mining, manufacturing of building products, and indeed now from decaying asbestos products have made this carcinogenic substance the number one occupational and non-occupational cause of death amongst members of the Australian community today. Three types of asbestos fibres were generally used in the manufacture of asbestos cement products. They were **Amosite** (brown asbestos), **Chrysotile** (white asbestos) and **Crocidolite** (blue asbestos). The combination of asbestos and cement created revolutionary building products, in particular flat and corrugated asbestos sheeting and pipes, which were widely adopted as a standard building material in industrial and residential building projects from the 1920s up to mid 1980s. These products were seen as extremely cheap and a versatile alternative to conventional building materials and in many instances the 'fibro' (the common name used by the asbestos industry for asbestos products now known as 'assie') construction completely replaced the brick and tile approach to building. It is estimated that Australian building manufacturers produced **15 billion square metres** of asbestos cement sheeting between 1903 and 1987 and that almost the entire production has been used in buildings around Australia. It is further estimated that at least 30% of that figure was corrugated asbestos sheeting (which was commonly used as roofing and fencing material). CSIRO studies in the late 1970s found that asbestos cement sheeting deteriorates more rapidly than brick or other building materials. Studies have revealed these products release considerable asbestos fibre when exposed to the elements for 20 years or more. The deterioration of the bonding and cement component can commence in some instances after only several years of exposure to the elements. It is probable that a significant amount of asbestos carcinogenic fibres are being released into the immediate environment and result in inhalation by the general public. Asbestos cement building products typically contain 10-15% by weight of asbestos. Each sheet of asbestos cement will contain hundreds of millions of asbestos fibres. (Asbestos cement sheeting contains mostly Chrysotile asbestos, however sometimes combined with up to 3-5% of Crocidolite or Amosite for specific purpose of building i.e. strength, flexibility and corrosion resistant). Regrettably, what is not exactly known is how many billions of the carcinogenic asbestos fibres are typically released into the environment as a result of weathering of or interference



with asbestos products i.e. renovating etc. Weathering will in each case depend on the severity of elements (e.g. wind, pollution, sun, hail etc). For example, it is generally accepted that an asbestos cement roof will deteriorate faster than an asbestos fence due to its pitch position. **Depending on the environmental conditions the asbestos products will decay and deteriorate releasing billions of carcinogenic asbestos fibres into the ambient air to be inhaled by the community.**

The problem of ascertaining asbestos diseases latency period. When assessing the effects of asbestos health it must be borne in mind that both the “benign” and malignant diseases occur with a considerable delay after the asbestos exposure. There are practically no acute symptoms of disease which are recognisable within months, and those are extremely rare. As a rule, it is not until many years and mostly decades after the initial exposure that complaints or diagnosable changes manifest themselves. This is called the latency, or latency period by the medical fraternity. The scientific evaluation of the latency periods for asbestosis, lung cancer and other asbestos tumours of the pleura and the peritoneum (mesothelioma) has confirmed an average time of approximately 30 to 50 years. Deaths resulting from “benign” disease like asbestosis usually occur from 25 to 45 years from exposure or even later. Once the disease has developed, the risk of becoming ill with cancer continuously remains even if the last exposure to asbestos was a long time in the very distant past. There is no solid medical data which could identify a reduction in risk with increasing exposure-free time. For example, once absorbed, asbestos fibres can hardly ever be removed from the body. Taking on the body’s immune-defence cells, they begin their destructive work which cannot be stopped by therapeutic or prophylactic measures. Diagnosis of **mesothelioma** is critical and difficult to treat but there are a number of remedies available to alleviate the symptoms and indeed prolong survival. However the only real option in finding a cure for asbestos diseases is through medical research. Western Australian researchers are the best in the world and have received many recognitions by their peers around the globe for their innovative and ground breaking work to develop a cure for **mesothelioma**. The only obstacle to progressing the research in a more meaningful way is the lack of funding by State and Federal Governments which appear to be ignoring the more than 3,000 deaths in Australia per annum from asbestos diseases. Therefore, a positive commitment is urgently needed by both State and Federal Governments, and indeed with substantial lobbying by the Australian community and Australian Trade Unions to put pressure on our aloof politicians to fund the life-saving research and to avert the pandemic of asbestos diseases.

7. PERIODIC EXAMINATIONS OF PERSONS EXPOSED TO ASBESTOS

The follow-ups and referrals from Dr Greg Deleuil have been extremely beneficial this year to a number of our members who have taken the opportunity to attend Dr Deleuil’s clinics. For example a number of members and friends have experienced early diagnosis of malignant disease through referral by Dr Deleuil for specialist care. As mentioned on previous occasions, the most important part of the periodical examinations is to detect the early onset of malignant diseases. That provides the opportunity for patients to seek early medical intervention and indeed the opportunity to start a claim for compensation without feeling pressured and anxious about whether his/her family will be able to be looked after. One of the most experienced asbestos diseases GPs in Australia Dr Deleuil has 40 years experience in attending to the West Australian community and is available every Tuesday and Thursday from 10:00am to 1:00pm for consultation at our office in Osborne Park. Anyone wishing to make an appointment call our office on 9344 4077 or 1800 646 690 or email adsinc@iinet.net.au.

8. AUTUMN FUNDRAISING RAFFLE

The Autumn raffle is now in progress and will be drawn on 24th May 2017. Raffle tickets are now available and we would greatly appreciate assistance from members and friends to disseminate at least a book of ten tickets amongst their friends and acquaintances. All funds raised by our raffles are used to maintain the support services for Asbestos Diseases Society of Australia members and the purchase of various items of equipment to enhance our Doctor’s service to members and friends.

For now, my very best wishes and kindest regards,



Robert Vojakovic AM JP
PRESIDENT



***Very Best Wishes to you and your family for a peaceful and pleasant
Easter. President, Committee and Staff***

asbestos diseases society of australia inc.

