

12 April 2019



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

Dear Members and Friends

Hopefully this Easter newsletter will find you in reasonable health. As some of you may recall, on 24th February this year we held our AGM and Special General Meeting in the matter of certain protocol which was required to amend our constitution in compliance with the new *Associations Act 2015*. In this regard we were required to accept the model rules into our constitution as per the regulations. To accommodate the *Associations Act 2015*, the ADSA Committee accepted the amendments in December last year which was required to be presented to the Special General Meeting on 24th February 2019 where it was unanimously accepted. Further, the Committee met on 26th March 2019 to unanimously confirm the members' resolution which makes our constitution a valid instrument as required by the *Associations Act 2015*.

1. MEDICAL RESEARCH UPDATE - PROF ANNA NOWAK

As clinical trials don't change from newsletter to newsletter, and I recently spoke about these at the ADSA AGM, it seems like a good time to update members on our research students, and what they are doing. So who are our students and what do they do? Every year a new batch of 'Honours' students join us to do a fourth year, on top of their undergraduate science degree. During this honours year, they gain their first real laboratory experience, studying one defined question in the lab, and coming out with a thesis. They learn more about research science, and some members may occasionally come across them in the clinic, as they sit in with me to understand a little about the experience of people with mesothelioma. This year, we have recently been joined by William, Alexandra, Catherine, Jess, Shahama, and Kiesha (from the UK). We are proud of our equal opportunity record – that's 5 young women finishing off their degrees in our lab! PhD students are undertaking a 3-4 year major research 'apprenticeship', during which they complete a significant project under supervision of senior scientists, and learn both laboratory skills and how to think like an independent scientist. This is a huge commitment and at times very high pressure. They are a very important part of our team, often doing much of the actual laboratory work. We were delighted to see two of our students, Rachael Zemek and Wayne Aston, finish their PhD theses earlier this year. Rachael was studying the differences between a successful and unsuccessful response to immunotherapy in mesothelioma. Wayne was studying combinations of chemotherapy and immunotherapy in mesothelioma. Wayne is now working as a clinical trials data manager in our clinical trials at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital, including on some mesothelioma trials. Members with mesothelioma may meet Wayne in his new role.

Some of you will have met Dr Melvin Chin, who is both an oncologist working in the mesothelioma clinic at SCGH, and a PhD student. Melvin's PhD is supported by a scholarship from ADSA, with funding coming from the annual walk and golf day. Melvin's PhD is extending work on the differences between successful and unsuccessful immunotherapy in mesothelioma, but using very sophisticated maths and computing to understand this from genes. We also have Caitlin Tilsed (studying why chemotherapy works in some mesothelioma), Shaokang Ma (finishing his PhD on genetics of mesothelioma), Joel Kidman (using computing to understand some aspects of the immune response in mesothelioma), Lizeth Morales (all the way from Mexico, studying why mesothelioma invades tissues and how to prevent this), Wes Wilson (from Canada, studying how radiotherapy and immunotherapy can combine), and Nicola Principe (studying how the immune system changes during chemotherapy for mesothelioma).

2. WITTENOOM IS THE MOST DANGEROUS GHOST TOWN IN THE SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE

To minimise risk to the public, many tourists and the Banjima traditional owners, the Western Australian Labour Government showed unique courage and determination to acquire the toxic properties contaminated with asbestos tailings in the Wittenoom Township and those who fail to accept the generous offer from the State Government to vacate their properties, their properties will be compulsory acquired. ADSA would strongly suggest to our State Government to seriously consider taking action on the mountains of blue asbestos tailings to prevent further erosion and dissemination into Joffre Creek which is contributory to the Fortescue River. Regrettably very little pressure, if any, was put on CSR by the then Sir Charles Court Liberal Government to persuade CSR any its associates to remove the deadly tailings from



around the utilities and indeed clean up the actual Wittenoom Township and all amenities i.e. schools, hospital, hotel, airport tarmac etc. Historically speaking the early Wittenoom Gorge asbestos leases were worked by L G Hancock and W. McLarty which were located in the branch now known as Colonial Gorge. In 1938 Hancock and McLarty formed a company called Australian Blue Asbestos Mines (no liability) which took over these leases. Meanwhile, Hancock had pegged a seam exposed in the main trunk of the gorge then called Joffre Creek, which has since become known as Wittenoom Gorge. Mr Lang Hancock with E A Wright formed the L G Hancock Asbestos Company to work the new claims. The partners approached the Colonial Sugar Refining Limited Company (CSR) which had previously expressed interest in obtaining blue asbestos for their Building Materials Division. Mr Lang Hancock introduced CSR to the Wittenoom prospects and they bought a controlling interest in the L G Hancock Asbestos Company in 1943 and formed the company Australian Blue Asbestos Pty Limited to develop the leases. This development resulted in the opening of the Wittenoom mine on the site of Mr Hancock's original claim in Joffre Creek. The Wittenoom mine stayed in production until about 1956 however in 1953, prior to the closure of production, the company had started to develop the Colonial mine on the seams exposed in Colonial Gorge and when the Wittenoom mine was closed, all the plant was transferred to the new site known as Colonial Gorge. Apart from its leases at Wittenoom Gorge it held ground covering the deposits at Yampire Gorge, Calamina Gorge, Bee Gorge, Range Gorge, Junction Gorge and Marra Mamba. Although it never worked on any of these, however it did carry out a programme of Government subsidised diamond drilling to test the Yampire, Junction and Bee Gorge deposits. Australian Blue Asbestos Ltd. subsequently became Australian Blue Asbestos Pty Ltd, then CSR Building Material Sales Pty Ltd and, since 1 October 1970, has been known as Micalco Pty Ltd. The Colonial Mine was worked until 31 December 1966 when it was closed down due to allegedly high production costs and, more likely, to our understanding there were too many complaints by the various health authorities about the operation of the mine which had already yielded a substantial number of diseases to their workers i.e. asbestosis, lung cancer and mesothelioma. To better understand the enormous task, we have herewith suggested approximate tonnage of asbestos tailings i.e. **Yampire Area and its Mine - about 16,000 tonnes, Old Wittenoom Mine and adjacent area including powerhouse - about 1.2million tonnes, and Old Colonial Mine including powerhouse and mill - 2,600 tonnes.**

3. IMPORTATION OF ASBESTOS CHANGES TO REGULATIONS

Recently, the Minister for Home Affairs Hon. Peter Dutton said the Coalition has strengthened and streamlined existing regulations to further protect Australians from the importation of potentially deadly asbestos. He went on to say that importers who knowingly or recklessly import goods containing asbestos could now face up to five years jail, under increased penalties announced by the Morrison Government. "From today the 28th March 2019 anyone unlawfully bringing asbestos across Australia's border is a Tier 1 offence. This means those who import or export asbestos face the prospect of jail time following a successful prosecution," Mr Dutton said. "These changes will help to ensure that our communities are protected from the unlawful importation of asbestos materials into the future." The Minister for Jobs and Industrial Relations Hon. Kelly O'Dwyer, said that while Australia has had a strict asbestos importation ban in place since 2003, some importers attempt to bring goods containing asbestos into Australia illegally. "Tragically, 4,000 people each year die from asbestos-related diseases. This figure is far too high. That's why the Coalition Government is taking action to improve the safety of the Australian community," Ms O'Dwyer said. "In boosting the regulations we are sending a strong, unequivocal message to importers — we will not tolerate the importation of asbestos."

The Asbestos Diseases Society of Australia response to the Media Release of the Honourable Minister Peter Dutton and the Honourable Kelly O'Dwyer, Minister for Jobs and Industrial Relations.

Dear Peter Dutton MP, Minister for Home Affairs

Your proposed changes to strengthen asbestos border control to prevent the importation of asbestos products into Australia are a step in the right direction however I am concerned for those who have already been, for more than 10 years, exposed to imported carcinogenic asbestos. It saddens me greatly that, according to your release, you said that more than 4,000 Australian are still dying annually from asbestos-caused diseases. I may respectfully differ on this number, I would suggest perhaps 6,000 – 7,000 would be a more likely number which will increase obviously with the passage of time. As you may already be well aware, asbestos and its products were being used to a large extent in the home building industry, in commercial construction and another 300 uses. I am somewhat disappointed that asbestos is assumed to be a fairly simple problem that has been corrected by the Australian Government and industries. However, in my view the problem has been greatly underestimated for at least a decade which in itself speaks for the enormous cost to those which have developed diseases and facing an uneasy future.

However I would respectfully suggest that by underestimating the problem then the necessary precautions may also be underestimated and the public health problem will continue. To our understanding the current problem in Australia appears to be acute shortage of funds for asbestos diseases medical research and our dedicated scientists who are working extremely hard on the smell of an oily rag to provide a remedy or cure for some of the asbestos diseases victims to save lives. For example non-malignant diseases to my understanding may be somewhat scaling down, but however the incurable malignant mesotheliomas and lung cancers are alarmingly escalating to numbers which are overwhelming the medical fraternity and indeed sadly the community which is facing an epidemic of malignant mesotheliomas and lung cancer.

Having regard to the above I would most respectfully suggest that you, Honourable Minister, should you be in the position to persuade your Coalition Colleagues to consider urgently substantive funding for research to abate the alarming numbers of asbestos caused malignant mesothelioma and lung cancer which in fact are higher in Australia than anywhere else in the world. Honourable Minister, as you may observe at present we have an epidemic of mesothelioma and lung cancer in Australia and failure act now, within a year or two it will be pandemic.

I am fully aware of your current commitments and indeed likely demand associated with the Federal election within months.

With very best wishes and kindest regards, Robert Vojakovic AM JP, President ADSA Inc.

4. ADSA WALK FOR RESEARCH AND AWARENESS 2019 - AUGUSTA TO PERTH - 10 Nov to 15 Nov The Asbestos Diseases Society of Australia annual Walk for Research and Awareness is on again this year! The ADSA Walk starts at the south west tip of Western Australia the Cape Leeuwin Lighthouse on Monday 11 November 2019 and over the next three days the ADSA Walk Team walk to Busselton via Augusta, Margaret River, Cowaramup, Wildwood, Dunsborough, and Cape Natrualiste. The ADSA Walk Around Town is in Busselton on Thursday 14 November 2019 from 11:00am to 1:00pm starting at the Busselton Jetty play area and including a 1.5km loop through the centre of Busselton. The ADSA Walk Around Town is an event for everyone even if you just come to cheer us on! The ADSA Walk ends on Friday 15 November 2019 with the walk from the Wellington Street Train Station in Perth up to Solidarity Park behind Parliament House starting at 10:00am. Everyone is welcome to participate in the ADSA Walk by joining family, friends and supporters in the walk up to Parliament House OR at Solidarity Park to welcome the Team home at 11:00am. **“If you walk one step you walk with us”** is the spirit of the ADSA Walk. For more information or to register to be part of the ADSA Walk Team go to adsawalk.org.au or call 1 800 646 690.

5. PERIODICAL MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS

As in previous newsletters, we are urging our members and friends to take advantage of the services provided by our organisation with the support of our medical practitioner at our premises every Tuesday and Thursday from 10am to 1pm. Please phone our office on (08) 9344 4077 or email adsinc@inet.net.au to arrange your appointments. Asbestos caused malignant diseases are on the increase and as mentioned in previous newsletters, the early detection of malignant disease, i.e., cancer and in some cases pleural diseases, is of absolute necessity to start with the best treatment available sooner rather than later. Mesothelioma appears to be a more complex disease and in this regard early detection is crucial to acquire the best treatments and medical options as to further trials.

6. FUNDRAISING AUTUMN RAFFLE - Drawn on 22nd May in our office at 2pm

The Autumn fundraising raffle is to support medical research to find a cure for mesothelioma which is alarmingly presenting in higher numbers than the beginning of last year. The Raffle is now in progress and will be drawn on 22nd May 2019. Raffle tickets are available and we would greatly appreciate help from members and friends to disseminate at least a book of ten tickets amongst their family and friends.

For now, my very best wishes and kindest regards,



Robert Vojakovic AM JP
PRESIDENT

***Very Best Wishes to
members, friends, and
families for a peaceful
and pleasant Easter***

***President, Committee
and Staff***



If you walk *one* step
you walk with us



ADSA Walk Team 2018 with family friends and supporters at Wave Rock

Walk for Research and Awareness 2019

Augusta to Perth, 10 November 2019 to 15 November 2019



A ship and a whale tangle in the new sea themed
Busselton Jetty play area

The ADSA Walk 2019 is 'joining the dots' by doing the distance from Augusta to Dunsborough & Perth via Cape Leeuwin, Margaret River, Cowaramup, Wildwood, Cape Naturaliste, Dunsborough, Busselton, and Perth. We are 'joining the dots' as the ADSA Walk Team walked from Dunsborough to Perth in 2013 and we are taking the opportunity in 2019 to build on that awesome effort. The Asbestos Diseases Society of Australia Walk for Research and Awareness raises lifesaving funds for research into a cure for mesothelioma and to raise awareness of the risks of asbestos exposure. For more information please go to adsawalk.org.au or call 1 800 646 690.

Busselton ADSA Walk Around Town

The ADSA Walk Around Town 2019 is in Busselton on **Thursday 14 November 2019** starting at the new and beautifully inviting Busselton Jetty play area. The ADSA Walk Around Town is an event for everyone with an easy 1.5km loop in the heart of Busselton and prizes for most laps and most feet on the ground for teams. Registration is from 10:30am with an 11:00am Start and 1:00pm Finish. For more information please go to adsawalk.org.au or call 1 800 646 690.

Dates & Locations of the ADSA Walk 2019

Sunday	10 Nov	We leave Perth
Monday	11 Nov	Cape Leeuwin to Margaret River
Tuesday	12 Nov	Margaret River to Dunsborough
Wednesday	13 Nov	Cape Naturaliste to Busselton
Thursday	14 Nov	Busselton Walk Around Town
Friday	15 Nov	Perth Train Station Parliament House