



Asbestos Disease
Support Society

Summer 2015 NEWSLETTER



Asbestos Disease Support Society

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Date Claimers

Ecumenical Service

25th November 2016

Brisbane South Social Group

Second Friday of the Month

- 12th February
- 11th March
- 8th April
- 13th May
- 10th June
- 8th July
- 12th August
- 9th September
- 14th October
- 11th November

At Sunnybank Hills Library from 9:30am

Brisbane North Social Group

First Wednesday of every month

- 3rd February
- 2nd March
- 6th April
- 4th May
- 1st June
- 6th July
- 3rd August
- 7th September
- 5th October
- 2nd November

At Bracken Ridge Library from 10:00am



Front cover photo: Reindeer kindly donated by our member Eric Murfin.

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Office Closure Over Xmas

The Asbestos Disease Support Society will close on the **18th December and reopen on the 11th January 2016**. A staff member is on call for new referrals or urgent matters on 0427 785 873.



As I write, we are heading into Christmas and the holiday season. On behalf of the Board and staff of the Asbestos Disease Support Society we wish you all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

However for many Queenslanders this is also storm season, cyclone season, bushfire season or drought season!

So we have come on board with the Queensland Government's "Get Ready" Campaign and included some information in this newsletter that may be of assistance to you should we have a severe weather event.

2015 has been a huge year for us in the office and we would like to thank all our members for being part of this fantastic organisation enabling us to support many people suffering from an asbestos related disease.

Once again, James Hardie has raised its ugly head and made a decision to half its contributions to the compensation fund, despite increasing cash flow and outputs! This organisations behaviour is absolutely disgraceful.

The Board continues to work to the Strategic Plan and I have provided a report below on our activities over the last quarter.

Sound Corporate Governance and Compliance

As you may have noticed we are now the Asbestos Disease Support Society. We are currently in the process of changing our name on everything and what a mammoth task that is!

The new Board has been meeting and we are working with BoardConnect along with Queensland Health to continue lifting our level of governance.



Office staff Kay, Amanda & Kerrie

Sound and Sustainable Finances

The Society continues to receive donations from the community which helps with our monthly expenditure.

ADSS have signed up to the "Giveback Campaign", so if you are an internet shopper please:

- go to thegivebackcampaign.com register yourself;
- register us as your charity of choice; and
- then go shopping!

A percentage of the goods purchased as identified on the site will come to us.

We have also been fortunate enough to receive advice from the Health Minister advising us of the extension to our funding for a further three and a half years.



Minister for Health Hon Cameron Dick and Not for Profit groups at Parliament House receiving advice regarding future funding.

Race Day was also very profitable and this has allowed us to give a few donations ourselves, which I will talk about a little later on.

Sound Support arrangements for Sufferers

Support for members includes the following:

- Phone support
- Support groups
- Linkages with the medical and allied health profession
- Occupational Therapy Services
- Legal Services
- Newsletters
- Community Forums
- Annual Ecumenical Service

- Participating in and donating to Research on Asbestos Related Diseases
- Donating to hospitals to assist with the care of our members
- Publishing relevant information



Board members meet with QLD Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk at Parliament House

In this area the Board has made three very important decisions since the last newsletter:

1. To create a partnership with the University of Queensland to provide Nutritional and Dietetics services for our members free of charge. This service can be done via the telephone or face to face in one of UQ's clinics at Annerley, Ipswich and soon to be at St Lucia. This service will commence in January 2016. Members will be able to access the service by contacting the Society for a referral.
2. Donation to Research. The Asbestos Disease Support Society has donated \$100 000 to the Asbestos Disease Research Institute for research into asbestos related diseases.
3. Donation of a Hill-Rom VersaCare Bed and a humidifier to 3 public hospitals for use by patients with an asbestos related disease. The hospitals will be The Prince Charles Hospital, Princess Alexandra Hospital and Hervey Bay Hospital.

Strengthen engagement with community, government, business and other Societies

Since our last newsletter the Society participated in Workplace Health and Safety Queensland's Big Breakfast in King George Square. Trevor Gillmeister came along and gave us a hand for a while. He also managed to bring Shane Webcke over for a media opportunity as well.

We have also held a Community Forum at North Lakes in conjunction with Turner Freeman Lawyers with over 50 people in attendance who got to listen to two great presentations from Dr Slaughter on Radiology and Professor Bauer on Nutrition.

We are planning to continue these forums with requests coming in from Bribie Island and Kingaroy, which we are preparing to go to in the New Year.

This year we held a thank you event for individuals and companies that have had a major impact on the Society. The Board have also introduced Recognition Awards to honour the commitment of individuals and or an organisation that has gone above and beyond for us.

We continue to work with government at all levels to stop exposure to asbestos in the community. This however is quite difficult sometimes, particularly getting through to the right person at the right time.

The Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency held their International Conference here in Brisbane and worked on our relationships with the other Societies whilst they were visiting Brisbane.

You may recall in the last newsletter the call to support the push to have Keytruda on the PBS list for people with Mesothelioma. This campaign carries on and we need your support. However I must add that this will probably need clinical trials in Australia for this to occur. Lou Williams, Mesothelioma Warrior, was here in Brisbane and spoke about this at the Conference.

Finally **Asbestos Awareness Week** this year was a big one for us with the following events:

I was privileged to be invited to a High Tea with some fantastic Meso Warriors, and some very brave widows. We all ate too much, made many new friends and had a great time. Thank you Lou Williams for organising this for us all.



Mesothelioma Warriors High Tea

The Asbestos Eradication and Safety Agency International Conference was also held this week with many international visitors also in attendance. The Society sponsored an industry breakfast at this event.

On the Wednesday we had a stall in King George Square – BIG thank you to Andrew and Trish Ramsay, Rod Smith from the Bernie Banton Foundation, Mark O'Connor and Noel Pinkerton from Workplace Health and Safety.

Wednesday night was our Thank You Event which went off very well for our first one.

Thursday I addressed the Queensland Health and Safety Board meeting about Asbestos Awareness Week.

Friday was our Ecumenical Service with over 200 people in attendance. Thady Blundell kindly did the main address with other members assisting with readings and prayers.

Oh, and Brisbane City Hall was bathed in blue, it was a beautiful sight to see.

Our plans for next year include visits to Cairns, Mackay, Gold Coast and Rockhampton.



Rod Smith, Noel Pinkerton and Andrew Ramsay



Andrew & Trish Ramsay, Amanda Richards & Kay Ravbar at City Hall



Asbestos disease sufferers are of course often entitled to compensation through court claims or workers' compensation benefits. Another important source of financial benefit to those with asbestos disease, but one which is often neglected, can be through superannuation.

All members of superannuation funds will generally hold some form of insurance arranged by their superannuation provider. That insurance can include benefits which can become payable early upon diagnosis of a terminal illness. Unfortunately, many asbestos diseases are classified as terminal.

Some insurance policies define terminal illness as an illness which will reduce life expectancy to less than 12 months. Superannuation law currently provides for early access to superannuation account balances where an illness has reduced life expectancy to less than two years.

Other forms of insurance include total and permanent disablement (TPD) benefits where an injury or illness means that a person can no longer work within their usual occupation or any other job that they are reasonably qualified for. This can be of particular assistance to those with benign or non-cancerous asbestos disease, such as asbestosis. Sufferers of this condition can often be incapacitated from work but the condition may not be seen as life-threatening.

Terminal illness and TPD claims will result in a lump sum payment being made into your superannuation account and you will be given early access to your entire superannuation balance.

Superannuation providers may also offer income protection insurance. This can be accessed in circumstances where you require time off work for intensive treatment but will ultimately return to work at some stage. In those cases of temporary disability to work then income protection can pay a proportion of your usual salary whilst you are incapacitated.

Claims for insurance amounts through superannuation can be complicated by the involvement of the insurer and the trustee of the superannuation fund in the process. In order to ensure a claim has the best possible prospects of succeeding it needs to be carefully prepared and supported by appropriate specialist medical evidence which is focused on the correct questions to be answered in order to determine the claim.

If you believe you might have a benefit through your superannuation or you have any general queries about this, please contact the Society for further information.

Thady Blundell
Society Legal Adviser



Myths of Radiology – Dr Robert Edwards

The frequency of chest x-rays and CT scans required in subjects who have had significant asbestos exposure

There are a number of conditions that subjects who have had asbestos exposure may develop. Fortunately, in the majority of people who have had exposure, nothing serious happens.

Approximately 50% of individuals who are regularly exposed to asbestos may develop pleural plaques. Because the pleural plaques do not cause any symptoms, they are only discovered after a chest x-ray or a CT scan of the chest has been performed for other reasons.

If pleural plaques have been detected by a chest x-ray, then a CT scan of the chest should be performed to see if there is any significant abnormality in the pleural cavity, such as irregular lumps or small collections of fluid or if indeed there is any evidence of asbestosis.

If a CT scan is performed, it should be done when the subject is lying flat on his/her back and also when lying on his/her front. This helps differentiate early asbestosis from just postural changes in the lung tissue.

If pleural plaques are detected and they are asymptomatic, then probably no further investigation is required for at least five years. At that time, a chest x-ray should be performed. If there is doubt as to whether there has been any progression or change, then a CT scan of the chest could be performed.

If subjects have had heavy asbestos exposure, i.e. working in an asbestos factory or an asbestos mine for at least one year, then asbestosis may develop. Asbestosis is the condition where the lung tissue becomes scarred or fibrosed and this can lead to shortness of breath and a dry cough. If subjects have these conditions, they should initially have a chest x-ray and also a high resolution CT scan of the chest. They should also be referred to a respiratory physician for detailed assessment of lung function.

A very heavy exposure to asbestos is also required to make subjects at risk of developing lung cancer.

The risk of developing lung cancer is also increased if subjects have been heavy smokers.

Only small amounts of asbestos are required for the development of malignant mesothelioma. This usually presents with symptoms such as chest pain, shortness of breath or feeling weak and exhausted. If this does develop, it is important that subjects see their doctor who should arrange for them to have a chest x-ray and, if necessary, a CT scan of the chest.

When considering the frequency of follow-up investigations for subjects who have been exposed to asbestos, one needs to look at the amount of radiation that is delivered to a subject every time they have an investigation.

The specific unit for measurement of radiation dose is called a millisievert (MSV). Naturally occurring background radiation exposure for the average person is approximately 3 MSV per year.

A chest x-ray exposes a subject to 0.1 MSV, that is equivalent to 10 days of natural radiation. The risk of developing a malignancy as a result of that amount of radiation is very small, i.e. approximately a million to one chance.

A CT scan of the chest exposes a subject to 7 MSV of radiation, that is equivalent to two years of background radiation. This produces a risk of developing a malignancy that is approximately one in 100,000.

Therefore, although there is a risk of developing malignancy and complications of x-rays and CT scans, it is very small. However, there is a cumulative risk. If the subject was exposed to a CT scan of the chest every year for 10 years, then they would be exposed to 70 MSV of radiation and this would increase the risk of developing a cancer by 25 times. For that reason, if subjects are otherwise asymptomatic, they do not need yearly CT scans of the chest. However, if a subject developed symptoms such as chest pain or breathlessness, they should see a doctor promptly to have follow-up radiology, such as a chest x-ray and a CT scan of the chest if necessary.

If a subject has been diagnosed with very early minimal asbestosis, then they should have complicated lung function tests performed. These tests are safe and can be repeated at 6 to 12 monthly intervals. If there is no progression of the disease documented by complicated lung function tests, then a CT scan is not required to be repeated on a regular basis. It could perhaps be repeated every five years.

Generally, subjects who have been exposed to asbestos have too many CT scans and chest x-rays. The risk of radiation from each one is very small but it is a cumulative risk of developing a malignancy and complications as a result of the radiation from frequent CT scans and chest x-rays. Unfortunately, many subjects become very anxious if they have an abnormality detected as a result of asbestos exposure and it is worrying for them. However, unless there is change in the symptoms, they do not require regular CT scans. A chest x-ray could be performed very safely every three to five years, with only minimal risk of developing malignancy. If a chest x-ray showed any change, then a CT scan would be indicated.

Are you missing out on cheap taxis?

FIND OUT HOW TO SAVE ON TRAVEL

People with Asbestosis and Mesothelioma are possibly missing out on hundreds of dollars a year in travel savings because many are not aware they could be eligible for the Queensland Taxi Subsidy Scheme (TSS).

Under TSS, eligible taxi users have half their standard fares to a maximum of \$25 per trip reimbursed by the Queensland Government for any journey within Australia. This means TSS members could pay, for example, only \$5 of a \$10 fare, \$25 of a \$50 fare, or \$45 of a \$70 fare.

A Queensland Transport and Main Roads (TMR) spokesperson said people with Asbestosis and Mesothelioma could be eligible if they met the criteria.

However, there was confusion in the community over who was and who was not eligible. He urged ADSS members to visit the TMR website at www.qld.gov.au/disability/out-and-about/taxi-subsidy/ to review conditions and download an application form.

To be eligible, taxi users must be permanent Queensland residents and have a disability or illness that meets one of six eligibility criteria. The relevant criteria for people with Asbestosis and Mesothelioma are:

- Has a physical disability or other medical condition that restricts the person from walking unassisted and without a rest for 50 metres or less and

1. makes the person permanently dependent on a walking aid; OR
 2. prevents the person from ascending or descending three steps without assistance; OR
 3. has resulted in a history of frequent falls; OR
 4. is a condition that is an advanced cardiovascular, respiratory or neurological disorder; OR
- causes severe pain limiting ambulation, verifiable by appropriate clinical investigations; OR
 - has a physical disability or other medical condition requiring
 1. the person to ordinarily carry equipment which, when carried, restricts the person from walking, unassisted and without rest for 50 metres or less; OR
 2. someone else to ordinarily carry or administer treatment equipment for the person.

TSS was introduced in Queensland in 1987 to provide an affordable and accessible transport option for people who have profound difficulties using other modes of public passenger transport because of a disability or illness.

Membership is not means tested and members are allowed unlimited taxi trips and subsidies. Members are also entitled to a maximum of 20 interstate travel vouchers a year for taxi travel in any other Australian state or territory.



Inaugural Thank You Event



The Asbestos Disease Support Society held our first "Thank You Event" to thank everyone who had given freely to ARDSSQ in the past. This was an opportunity to say thank you to them and invite them to be with us for the start of our next journey as the Asbestos Disease Support Society Limited.

We had a number of formalities on the night

- Life Membership
- In Appreciation Awards to individuals or companies that have made a significant contribution to the Society

However, we commenced proceedings with a presentation to Professor Nico van Zandwijk from the **Asbestos Disease Research Institute**. One of The Asbestos Disease Support Society's Objectives is to "encourage and support research into asbestos-induced disease".

The Society quite often receives donations that our members specifically request should be directed to research. After consideration the former Management Committee made a decision to make a donation to ADRI this year to support the research that they are undertaking. We were very proud to be able to hand over a cheque to ADRI for \$100 000 to assist them with their journey conducting research into asbestos related diseases.

Professor van Zandwijk invited representatives from the Society's Board to visit ADRI and be briefed on the research that they are undertaking.

Under our new Constitution the Board now has the power to award individuals life membership, and the Board thought who more fitting to be the first recipient for Life Membership than Mrs Helen Colbert.



Unfortunately, Helen was unable to attend on the night.

Helen Colbert is the immediate past President of the Asbestos Related Disease Support Society Queensland. Mrs Colbert first joined the Society with her late husband and former ARDSSQ Secretary, Mr Ray Colbert in August 2003.

Helen became a member of the Management Committee in 2006, she became Vice President in 2008 and elected president in 2009 a position she held until she stood down in September of this year.

Mrs Colbert also carried out the role of support person to our members working four days a week in the office in an honorary capacity.

Mrs Colbert continued running the Society after Ray passed away.

Mrs Colbert has given outstanding service to the Asbestos Related Disease Community.



The following awards were presented to individuals or companies that have made a significant contribution to the Society.



CFMEU Construction and General – QLD & NT



The first award went to the CFMEU C & G QLD and NT branch. The award was accepted by Michael Ravbar.

The CFMEU have made space in their building for us and their members have designated us their Charity of Choice. Their staff assist us with Race Day, their asbestos knowledge and their assistance for a range of odd requests that the Society has from time to time. The CFMEU are also developing an asbestos awareness course for their members. This has been reinforced through their enterprise agreements.

The CFMEU is making an outstanding contribution to asbestos awareness.

Turner Freeman Lawyers

The Award was accepted by Thady Blundell.

Turner Freeman Lawyers are the Societies lawyers, however they go above and beyond for our members. Always making contact with them within 24 hours of receiving advice. They expedite our members' claims throughout what for us can often be a very complex process. Staff are always volunteering (or being volunteered!) to assist us with morning teas, BBQ's, awareness stalls always with a smile on their face. Turner Freeman also make a significant donation to the Society that assists us run the organisation.

Electrical Trades Union



The Award was accepted by Garry Rogers.

The ETU are receiving this award for their support of Race Day, they always hold their delegates conference at a time that they can bring them along to race day. They usually pay for about 100 delegates to be in attendance at the Event, contributing significantly to the success of the day.

The ETU is also conscious of the safety of their members as they are continually asking for someone to come over to talk to their members about the dangers of asbestos exposure.



Ilfracombe Community

[unable to be present] - David Back contacted us because his best mate was dying of mesothelioma and he was devastated and wanted to do something. So he organised

a walk from Ilfracombe to Longreach and the local community got behind him. At the time this area was in severe drought. So early in the morning approximately 150 walkers started their trek raising money for the Society.

So on behalf of the Society we are presenting this award to the Ilfracombe Community via the local pub.



Springsure State School

[unable to be present] – care of Michelle Smith along with the local community, also got behind the Society and held a walkathon raising a significant amount of money for the Society. Once again this was done in an area ravaged by drought.



The last two events were however inspired by a man who decided he was going to walk from Townsville to Brisbane to raise awareness about the dangers of asbestos.

Trevor Gillmeister was presented with an award



Trevor Gillmeister, Aiden, Sandra & Brendan Williamson and Don Booth

Trevor didn't do this walk on his own and I would also like to acknowledge the people that participated and were present at our event. Sandra, Brendan and Aiden Williamson and Sandra's father Don Booth. Sandra also lost her mother to Mesothelioma. Also our own Trish Ramsay who drove the vehicles for a few weeks and there were many more who helped along the way.

Trevor, however hasn't stopped his work there, he often visits strangers in hospital and he continues to work with the Society giving freely of his time. Trevor has become the face of the Society and our **Investigate before you Renovate** Campaign. A slogan that Trevor himself suggested. We have also listened to his feedback from the trip and built more regional work into our plan.



Garry Partridge was presented with an award



Garry is a man who has also given freely of his time and despite being in the process of recuperating after back surgery came along to the event. Garry has donated money from his Muay Thai events, allowed us to do the car park and door for these events. He has also freely donated goods for our Charity Auction at Race Day. Garry lost his father to Mesothelioma.

Hutchinson Builders



Garry Partridge accepted the award on behalf of Hutchinson Builders.

Hutchinson's have always been a main supporter of Race Day with the various teams always buying a table. Over the years they have also made sizable donations to the Society.

United Voice

United Voice, or I should just say Blocker who single handedly helps make Race Day a success. He brings along his staff, he buys books of raffle tickets, he pushes up the prices in the auction and often has to buy the item himself. But it goes in concert with the values of United Voice.



Gerard "Bud" Neiland

Last but not least there is an annoying little blue eyed, Irish catholic, red head that works in the same building as the Society, who also happens to be a Board member - **Gerard "Bud" Neiland**.

Without Bud, Race Day just wouldn't happen. He gets behind the organisers to get people to buy tickets, he chases us up in the office to make sure we are on top of everything, he sources the memorabilia for the auction and rounds up the trailer for the raffle.

As I mentioned, Bud is also a Board member and it is not unusual to hear him coming into the office to check up that all is going well or tell us about some scheme he has dreamed up for us to implement.

Nothing is too much for Bud as he responds also to our many requests.

We were very proud to award to Gerard "Bud" Neiland an award.

It was a great night and is the first of many to come. Everybody who attended was worthy of an award and we thank everyone for their continued support.



Prepare now for storm season

With storm season already upon us, it is timely for Queenslanders to start working on their emergency plans to be ready when disaster strikes.

This is especially the case for Asbestosis and Mesothelioma sufferers, and people with other disabilities who have restricted or limited mobility, or might otherwise need additional support not required by the general population.

The Queensland Government, the RACQ and the Australian Red Cross have launched a joint **Get Ready** planning booklet to make people aware of storm dangers and to provide advice on how to keep safe.

Filled with an exhausting range of guides, advice and hints for householders and others, it is an essential resource for anyone who wants to protect themselves and their families during Queensland's sometimes volatile storm season.

Of particular interest to ADSS members is a section dedicated to people with a disability or otherwise debilitating disease. It provides information on the four steps to prepare for emergencies (See break out).

Each section includes directions and check lists to help:

- establish a support network
- keep informed about hazards, local support and emergency contacts
- identify specific needs in an emergency
- develop a personal emergency plan and
- decide on appropriate items for personal emergency and evacuation kits

The booklet is also handy for carers, family and support staff who are encouraged to work through it with their relative's and client's as they prepare their emergency and evacuation plans.

Oxygen and medication

People suffering from Asbestosis and Mesothelioma could experience additional difficulties that do not affect the majority of Queenslanders in an emergency or evacuation situation. This includes dealing with oxygen tanks and other essential medications.



Emergency services recommend attaching a notice to your tank and equipment identifying the required flow rate per minute as advised by your doctor. This will ensure the correct oxygen level is administered should you not be in a position to monitor it yourself.

If possible, ensure you have a backup supply of spare full tanks on hand in case you can't reach your regular supplier. It is also recommended to limit your physical activity as much as possible to conserve oxygen until the crisis has passed.

If you are stranded at home without power, use torches and other battery-powered sources for lighting. Under no circumstances use matches or candles while on oxygen therapy.

With your medications, if possible, make sure you obtain a 14 day supply from the pharmacist before the weather event strikes. Keep a detailed list for emergency workers and doctors that includes the names of medicines and dosages, the condition for which you take the medication, any allergies and sensitivities, the name of the doctor who prescribed it and the doctor's phone number.

If possible, attach copies of prescriptions and health insurance cards to your equipment, or carry it with you at all times.

Copies of the booklet will be provided to all Queensland council libraries or can be downloaded from **www.disaster.qld.gov.au** by following the links to Be Prepared. Alternatively, copies can be obtained by contacting your local EMQ Area Office (**www.emergency.qld.gov.au/emq**) or your Red Cross office (**www.redcross.org.au**).



IMPORTANT THINGS TO CONSIDER AND ANSWER BEFORE A DISASTER STRIKES.

Discuss this check list with your family and carer

Step 1. Be informed

Considering and answering a few essential questions can help you better understand what may be required should you become isolated during an emergency. For example:

- **Daily living.** Do you need assistance with personal care, such as bathing and grooming? Do you use adaptive equipment to help you get dressed? Do you use special utensils that help you prepare or eat food independently? Do you need to use equipment that runs on electricity, such as dialysis, electrical lifts etc?
- **Communications.** Do you need assistance to communicate with others? Does your ability to communicate with others diminish when you are under stress? Will your ability to communicate be affected by loss of power or phone lines? Do you speak another language, e.g. Auslan?
- **Getting around.** Do you need assistance or adaptive equipment (eg. cane or walking frame) to walk? Do you use a specially equipped vehicle or accessible transportation? Do you need assistance to get groceries, medications and medical supplies?
- **Evacuating.** Do you need help to leave your home or office? Do you need assistance to speak or call for help? Do you need assistance in hearing? Are you able to hear a siren? Do you need assistance in seeing? If yes, do you have a service animal?

Step 2. Make a plan

Prepare a list to help your family, carers and emergency services should they need information from you in an emergency. This will provide easy reference to emergency contacts, doctors, pharmacists and anyone else you rely on to manage your condition.

Nominate in your plan who you wish to contact first in the event of an emergency or evacuation, and include details of where you intend to stay should your home be inaccessible for a considerable time. Include a list of any medications you take regularly and any equipment, such as oxygen tanks, you need to bring with you.

Step 3. Get an emergency kit

Put together an emergency kit, and make sure this is ready for use when you become aware it could be required. It should include basic first aid materials, as well as 14 days worth of any specialist medication you require. Clothing, blankets and food should be collected if you believe you might be stranded.

Step 4. Know your neighbours

Too many of us do not know our neighbours, yet they can often be the first people to offer help if any is needed. Get to know them and get their contact details for future use.

Asbestos Safety & Eradication Agency – International Conference 2015

The conference kicked off with welcome drinks on the Sunday night which was a good opportunity for us all to catch up with people we only talk to on Facebook, via email or the phone.

Once again, Matt Peacock was the conference facilitator and did a fantastic job over the two days.

Ms Judith Hackitt, Chair, Health and Safety Executive, United Kingdom was the International Keynote speaker and told us how they are addressing asbestos issues in the United Kingdom. Some of their areas of legislation appear to be a bit stronger than ours particularly in the community so we will be doing some more research into this area.

A presentation on the eradication of Mr Fluffy from the Canberra community was presented by Andrew Kefford – Head of the ACT Asbestos Response Taskforce. He advised that 950 houses were surrendered and that the response cost over 1 Billion dollars. The laws around asbestos in the ACT have been strengthened because of this issue.

Nadine Hume (NSW Govt) gave a presentation on managing asbestos following a natural disaster, along with Steve Moran from Worksafe New Zealand. They both talked about the need for a well-coordinated approach to asbestos contamination.

Monday afternoon all the Australian Support groups met with a view to having better communication between us on issues affecting the asbestos community.

Monday night was the formal gala Dinner and this was followed the next morning by an industry breakfast.

Day two international key note speakers concentrated on the threat of asbestos imports and in particular what is happening in Vietnam in their move to an asbestos free country.

A number of Concurrent Sessions were also run on both days and in particular there was a session on Australian trials and treatments. The speakers were Tanya Segelov, Dr Allan Zimet, Professor Nico van Zandwijk and Lou Williams. At this session we heard about the need for multi-modality therapy involving a team approach.

Dr Zimet made a number of statements:

- Surgery is not curative
- Main role of radiotherapy is palliative
- Dr's need to look at the quantity and quality of life

Dr Zimet also discussed the following treatments:

- Keytruda
- Amatuimab
- Anetumab
- Nintedanib

Unfortunately most of the information was very technical.

Professor van Zandwijk advised that they had discovered that Mesothelioma lacked specific genetic information, the regulator of cell death is not there and the cell continues on in a malignant nature. ADRI have a clinical trial of a medication which is targeted and injected into the blood stream. These injections are repeated every week and after 8 weeks all recipients felt really better.

Lou talked about her fight to get Keytruda listed on the PBS for Mesothelioma and her progression from dying to being able to get around and have a relatively normal life. However Lou has Keytruda treatments every three weeks, but her tumours are decreasing in size.

For further information on the conference, presentations are available on the ASEA website: <https://www.asbestossafety.gov.au/>



26th November 2015

Ms Amanda Richards
Chief Executive Officer
The Asbestos Disease Support Society
16 Campbell Street
Bowen Hills QLD 4006



Dear Amanda

I would like to thank you, Andrew Ramsay, and the Asbestos Diseases Support Society for your wonderful donation. At the meeting yesterday it was a great pleasure to have the opportunity to meet with you and your members. It was unfortunate that we had to leave early for the airport as it would have been nice to stay for the entire Thank You Event.

We are extremely grateful for the generosity of the ADSS. Please be assured that your donation will enable us to continue with our research, and in particular the clinical trial reported in your Spring Newsletter. Whilst the results reported there were very exciting it was a very early observation that requires confirmation in the next phase of clinical testing. The next stage will focus on efficacy and your donation will contribute to the transition from phase I to II. The obvious goal of our clinical studies is to eventually add a new form of treatment to the limited therapeutic arsenals for malignant mesothelioma and non-small cell lung cancer; two cancer diagnoses associated with asbestos exposure.

As I mentioned last night I would be delighted if you and any of your members accepted the invitation to visit the ADRI in the future. We would be happy to introduce you to the research staff and provide you with an overview of our research and a tour of our labs.

Once again thank you and all your members for your wonderful support.

Yours sincerely,



Nico van Zandwijk MD, PhD, FRACP, FCCP
Director

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THE SOCIETY AT WORK



Wynnum Seminar



Big Breakfast in King George Square



North Lakes Seminar



ASEA Conference



Inaugural Thank you event





Support Those Who Support The Society



Thanks to QLD Health for providing funding to ARDSSQ to help carry on our services.

Corporate Sponsors



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The contact details for all of our corporate sponsors and corporate members are available by ringing the ADSS office on 1800 776 412

ADSS is an endorsed charity (ABN 29 150 479 514).
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