



ASBESTOS DISEASE SUPPORT SOCIETY

2018/19 Board Report to Members

My name is Phil Blair and I am the Chair of the Asbestos Disease Support Society. Thank you all for attending the 2019 Annual General Meeting.

I would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we meet and pay my respect to elders past, present and emerging.

Passing of Members

Before I begin to deliver the 2019 Board Report, I think it is appropriate we acknowledge, remember and pay our respects to all those who have passed away as a result of asbestos related disease and those who are suffering as a result of their exposure.

All they did was just turn up to work to earn a living to support their families or just went about their daily lives – nothing more, nothing less. We are still seeing the affects today with 44 members of the Society passing since 1 January this year. If we could all just take a moments silence, please.

Board Report

I would like to acknowledge the Board of Directors here with me – if you could put your hands up as I call your name please:

- Pat Cini
- Andrew Ramsay
- Bianca Neve
- Trish Ramsay
- Margot Hoyte
- Peter Close
- Garry Rogers

Sheila Hunter, also a director was unable to attend today.

I would also like to acknowledge Trevor Torrens, the Society's General Manager and Company Secretary and ADSS staff, Kerrie Williams, Kay Ravbar and Natalie Barber.

And special mention to our Ambassador, Trevor Gillmeister, who gives freely of his time to the Society. For those who may not know, Trevor's father passed away from mesothelioma after exposure as a boilermaker.

The Society was founded over 25 years ago by Shirley White OAM to support sufferers of asbestos related disease, their families and carers.

Over that period the Society's mission has grown to not only provide support to sufferers, but also to:

- Promote awareness of the risks associated with asbestos exposure;
- Lobby all levels of Government for improvements on asbestos related issues;
- Work and with health professionals and the broader health community to aid in a better understanding of asbestos related disease; and
- Register asbestos exposure from workers and the community.

Silicosis

Following the changes to the Society's Constitution at the 2018 AGM, support is now also provided to those who have been diagnosed with a dust related lung disease, their families and carers – particularly those who have been diagnosed with silicosis from their work in the engineered stone industry. This support is provided under the banner of "Silicosis Support Network". To date 2 successful forums have been held on the Gold and Sunshine Coasts.

Following representations to the Queensland Minister for Health, we were also successful in receiving a 3 year grant to assist in providing support and services in this area.

Services

The services provided by the Society continue to play an important role in the life journey of many of our members. These services include:

- Access to our Social Worker to assist members to understand their entitlements and support access to appropriate medical, health and other support services – which is a core role of the Society.
- Medical equipment loan scheme
- Occupational therapy assessment
- Nutrition and dietary consultation and information
- Telephone support from our volunteers

- Community morning teas throughout Qld, the Northern Territory and Northern NSW community
- Peer to peer support through our member groups
- Up to date information on asbestos related issues through the quarterly newsletter and events, such as the Symposium.
- Legal Assistance through Turner Freeman Lawyers, who I have to say are second to none in the way they look after our members

Through these services the Society seeks to improve health and support services for our members with, their families and carers.

Finances

As you will see from the 2018/19 audited Financial Statements, the Society is in a sound financial position. In summary, the audit indicates that revenue decreased slightly by 6% primarily through decreased donations and revenue from the race day. In comparison, total expenditure decreased by 1% when compared with 2018. Our auditors also confirmed:

- The yearly income of the Society is generally stable with good reserves
- Internal financial controls are sound
- There was full cooperation from Society personnel in the conduct of audit
- There were no issues identified from the audit; and
- The Society will be issued with an unqualified audit opinion.

It takes a lot of support to provide the services just mentioned. On behalf of the Society I would like to thank the construction industry for their ongoing support. In particular, recognition and thanks must go to the CFMEU and other unions such as the ETU and United Voice for their efforts in relation to our Charity Race Day - which contributes approximately 20 per cent of our annual funding requirements.

I would also like to thank our corporate sponsors for their ongoing support.

In welcome news, our grant from Qld Health to provide support in the asbestos related disease area was also renewed for a further 3 years.

Strategic Planning

The ADSS Board held a planning day in February 2019, which included the development of the 2019/21 Strategic Plan. This plan has now been finalised and sets out the goals of the Society over the next 3 years to ensure we stay true to our Mission, which is to “assist sufferers and those impacted by asbestos and other dust related lung diseases and eliminate incidences by preventing exposure”. We do this through the following 4 pillars:

- **Support** for our members
- **Awareness** raising activities on the health risks of exposure to asbestos and other dust materials
- **Advocating** to Government and other industry bodies on asbestos and dust related matters
- **Educating** organisations and individuals to better understand the diseases.

In relation to advocacy the Society will be lobbying for:

- A Queensland based asbestos eradication agency
- Introduction of a residential asbestos clearance certificate
- The abolition of DIY homeowner removal of asbestos containing materials (10/m² Rule)
- The classification of asbestos containing low density board from non-friable to friable.
- The inclusion of a training strategy aimed at workers who may be occupationally exposed
- Strengthening the ban on asbestos containing products, particularly their importation

A copy of the Strategic Plan can be found on Society’s web page.

Morning Teas, Events and Lobbying

Whilst all our activities are reported in the quarterly Newsletter to members, I would like to highlight a few areas.

Since the last AGM, the Society in partnership with Turner Freeman Lawyers, held 27 Community Morning Teas in Northern NSW, Queensland and Darwin with over 750 attendees. These morning teas are a great opportunity to get up-to-date information on asbestos related issues and to network with other members.

In addition to the morning teas the Society holds a number of support groups that are facilitated by Society volunteers. These groups are run differently to the morning teas and are very much member driven. It is great opportunity for members to mix in a relaxed social setting, to share experiences and information and make connections with others facing similar challenges.

Since the last AGM, 5 new support groups have been established in:

- Ipswich
- Cairns
- Sunshine Coast
- Gold Coast; and
- Rockhampton.

These are in addition to the existing support groups in Bundaberg, Hervey Bay, Sunnybank and Chermshire.

A big thank you to the volunteers that assist with these groups.

Just a snap shot of other activities the Society was involved in:

- Lobbying Government on asbestos related issues, such as:
 - the classification of asbestos containing low density board from non-friable to friable to ensure a higher standard of safety; and
 - the abolition of legislation that allows home owners the ability to remove up to 10 square metres of asbestos materials themselves.
- Lobbying the Federal Government to have the immunotherapy drug “Keytruda” placed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme
- Attendance at the Safe Work Week Community Breakfast in King George Square
- Attendance at the Asbestos Safety Eradication Agency National Conference
- Presentations at a number of seminars
- Attending the Affected Families Committee who have lost loved ones through workplace accidents
- Ecumenical Service at St Stephens Cathedral
- Labour Day BBQ
- Member of the Queensland Building and Construction Commission Asbestos Awareness Working Group; and
- Working with Support Groups in other States.

Medical Aides Loan Scheme

This year the Society ceased its donation program of Hill-Rom beds and AIRVO Humidifiers to public hospitals which had been operation for many years. While this was seen as a very worthwhile program with over \$100,000 of equipment donated, the Board considered a more member focussed program would provide greater benefit. In its place we have established the Medical Aides Loan Scheme. Through this scheme, the Society is able to loan members portable oxygen concentrators, humidifiers and various medical alert alarms.

Also, thank you to members who have lost loved ones and donated equipment to the Society for loan to other members.

Governance

In accordance with the Society's Constitution, nominations were called for five Director positions in September 2019. Four of the retiring Directors renominated and were re-elected unopposed. The returning Directors are:

- Myself
- Margot Hoyte
- Peter Close
- Bianca Neve

In accordance with the Constitution the Board is able to approve a person to fill a casual Board vacancy for a maximum 12 month period. Ms Sheila Hunter was endorsed by the Board to fill this vacancy.

Membership

As of today's date we have 711 members of the Society. I would like to thank our members for their ongoing commitment to ADSS

Corporate Membership

Corporate members of the Society are companies and industry organisations that show support for the Society's mission and values. We currently have 29 Corporate members. All corporate members are recognised in the quarterly newsletter and at selected functions and events and we thank them for their support.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I would particularly like to thank all the staff, our volunteers and the Board of Directors for all of their hard work. As I stated earlier, the Society is in a good financial position, we have strong governance and a good program supporting members and we look forward to continuing our work over the next 12 months.