

Autumn 2022
NEWSLETTER

adss

Asbestos Disease
Support Society

**Damaged asbestos after floods
can be dangerous.**



#QLDFloods

Asbestos Disease Support Society
16 Campbell Street, Bowen Hills, QLD 4006
PO Box 280, Spring Hill, QLD 4004
1800 776 412 | inquiries@adss.org.au

DO YOU KNOW
BEING AN
**ADSS & SSN
MEMBER**

There is free assistance through the provision of:

Information on asbestos & silica related diseases

Support from our social worker

Clinical support from the registered nurse

Medical aids on loan

Community morning tea groups and support groups

Nutritional advice

Occupational therapy assessment

Quarterly Newsletter

**Legal consultation with our preferred lawyers experienced
in asbestos and silica compensation.**

**Call the Society if you would like to
discuss any of these services**

1800 776 412



In This Issue

| | |
|---|----|
| In Loving Memory | 4 |
| General Managers Report – <i>Trevor Torrens</i> | 5 |
| Our Legal Advisor – <i>Thady Blundell</i> | 7 |
| Society Social Worker – Rhonda Wheatley | 8 |
| Society Clinical Nurse – Karen Selmon | 10 |
| Did you Know? | 10 |
| Around the World | 11 |
| Media Articles | 14 |
| ADSS Media Releases | 16 |
| 2022 Society Events | 17 |
| The Society at Work | 19 |

ADSS Staff and Directors would like to wish you a happy and safe Easter Holiday.



In Loving Memory

Kevin Richard Miller
Robert Leslie McKee
Edward (Eddie) Adrian Smith
Peter Richard Westle
Terrence John Brookhouse
Ken Hunter
Paul Anthony Togni
Andrew Paul Young
John Robert Howard Thomson
Frank Welton
Alan Frederick LeMarshall
Slavko Mikulandra
Dennis Green
Daniel Graham Wells
Peter Clement Sparks
Norman Wogan
Maurice Mirabito
Sidney George Richards
Beverley O'Neill

*What we have once
enjoyed we can
never lose,
all that we love
deeply
becomes a part of us.*

Helen Keller

Simple
Sympathy

General Managers Report

TREVOR TORRENS



Welcome to the Society's first Newsletter for 2022 – the Autumn Edition.

As we mark approximately 2 years of the COVID pandemic, we are entering a new phase of stabilisation and normalisation. Being aware of the “new normal” and adjusting in a healthy way to such a circumstance is important for all of us as we learn to cope with the challenges and difficulties of the pandemic. While the “mandates” are now easing, it is important to still consider social distancing practices and even continuing the use of masks, if circumstances and venues warrant.

The Society will be ensuring that appropriate measures are taken for our community morning teas and when undertaking member home visits.

Flood disaster sparks asbestos fears

The devastating impact of the recent rain deluge which lead to widespread flooding and subsequent damage also raises the issue of asbestos exposure during the clean-up. Many of the residences and commercial properties that were affected were built prior to 1990 and therefore are likely to contain asbestos containing materials, such as wall sheeting, roofing, fencing. Our tremendous community spirit means we have a tendency to render assistance at great speed. The health risks posed by broken sheets of asbestos can easily be forgotten in our rush to clean up in the aftermath of natural disasters. Failure to take precautions now could result in potentially fatal health issues many years after the impacts of a natural disaster are a distant memory.

The State Government has assured the Society that appropriate flood recovery messaging and guidelines in relation to asbestos materials have been issued, particularly to the volunteer “mud army”.

A copy of the media release on the floods and asbestos awareness during the clean-up is contained in the “Media” section of the Newsletter.

Annual Board Planning Day

The Society is governed by Board of nine (9) directors elected by the membership and from the membership. The board is responsible for the governance of the Society - ensuring it is effectively and efficiently managed and is meeting its overall purposes as set out in the Constitution.

On Wednesday 23 February, the Board came together to review the current three (3) year strategic plan, consider new initiatives and get up-to-date information on asbestos and dust related issues.

The Board received updates from the Society's legal adviser, Thady Blundell of Turner Freeman Lawyers and Stacey Tomley, Assistant Director of the Federal Government's Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency (ASEA). ASEA is undertaking some important work on asbestos related issues including;

- Asbestos safety training options for workers entering the trades where they are likely to encounter asbestos
- Options to address concerns that currently allows unlicensed persons (including homeowners) to remove limited amounts of asbestos (also known as the 10m2 rule)
- Options for asbestos disclosure requirements when purchasing a residential property

The main priority of the Society will be to continue to provide support to our members and their loved ones who have been diagnosed with an asbestos or other dust related disease, such as silicosis.

A major policy ‘push’ by the Society in 2022 will be to lobby the Queensland Government to commence a review (with the intent to abolish) of what is commonly referred to as the ‘10m2’ rule. Under both work, health and safety and public health laws, up to 10m2 of bonded asbestos can be removed by ‘unlicensed’ persons.

This is an important asbestos issue and it is considered this legislation is inappropriate in a modern and responsible society that is still reeling from the legacy of “second wave” exposure. The existence of such legislation will only continue the asbestos legacy for another generation or more.

A big thank you to the Society's Directors for their invaluable input and stewardship of the Society.

Member Services

Just a reminder that the following support services are available to members:

- Access to the ADSS social workers and nurse;
- Telephone and home visit support;
- Access to the medical aids loan scheme
- Free occupational therapy assessment;
- Dietetics and nutrition advice
- Consultation with ADSS lawyer;
- Morning teas in the local community;
- Up to date information on asbestos and silicosis related issues through the quarterly newsletter
- Invitation to the ADSS Symposium;
- Invitation to the annual Ecumenical Service

Please do not hesitate to contact the Society if support is needed.

General Managers Report

TREVOR TORRENS



Thanks Again Chris and Precision Interior Walls and Ceilings



Chris Heenan, CFMEU Delegate for 80 Ann St handing over a cheque for \$7,000.00 to ADSS GM Trevor Torrens following "Precision Day".

This is the second fundraising event by the workers for Precision Interior Walls and Ceilings Pty Ltd to raise funds for ADSS. The workers raised \$3,500.00 which was matched by Precision.

A big, big thank you to all – another portable oxygen concentrator to help an asbestos related disease sufferer is on the way!

Thanks Tamryn and Paul



Tamryn Caldwell, Partner in Turner Freeman Lawyers (Northlakes Office) presenting a cheque donation of \$3,000.00 to ADSS Chair Phil Blair and our GM, Trevor Torrens.

The donation was provided by Paul Jones following the successful completion of his asbestos disease compensation claim by Tamryn.

Thanks Paul and Tamryn!

Thank you for your donation

The Society would like to thank all those that have made a donation since the last newsletter. Without your kind financial support, the Society would not be in a position to provide the services, advocate on your behalf or lobby Government for improvement in asbestos and silicosis related matters. In particular, we would like to recognise the following donations over \$500.00:

Vend2Go
Precision Interior Walls & Ceilings
Paul Jones
Rosemary Cowtan
Corvex Pty Ltd
CFMEU Members Qld/NT
Turner Freeman Lawyers

Wishing you a happy and safe Easter.

Trevor Torrens

Trevor Torrens
General Manager

Our Legal Advisor



THADY BLUNDELL

THE RECENT FLOODS

Natural disasters, such as the recent tragic floods, are a reminder of the dangers of asbestos exposure.

Because of the long latency period (the time from exposure to development of disease) associated with asbestos, it is usually many years following a natural disaster that the effects are still being felt in the form of diagnosis of asbestos disease.

In 2011, when Queensland was badly affected by flooding in many different areas, the Society warned of the exposure that the Mud Army was at risk of. As we know, even brief and one-off exposures to asbestos can cause mesothelioma. There is no safe minimal dose.

As times goes on, there will be less and less asbestos present in the community and the areas affected by flooding in 2011 may no longer contain as much old asbestos cement fibro as they once did, but one of the features of the recent flooding is areas unaffected in 2011 were flooded on this occasion.

It is obvious driving around the streets of Brisbane, and indeed other areas of Queensland, that quick removal of damaged building materials is being undertaken. Some of these will contain asbestos and the Society has issued a press release warning of this danger.

Historically we have seen asbestos disease follow other natural disasters, such as Cyclone Tracy, which hit Darwin in late December 1974. Many workers, including Defence Force personnel, were involved in the clean-up of Darwin. Much of the destroyed homes were built with asbestos cement fibro sheeting and the Society has had a number of members who developed asbestos disease decades after that clean-up.

A tragic consequence of the recent flooding in Queensland is that long after the immediate affects of the flooding are virtually forgotten, tragic diagnosis with mesothelioma and other asbestos disease could occur, if precautions are not now taken.

Again, this is a timely reminder that all asbestos exposure must be avoided and any type of work with asbestos containing materials should only be done by licenced contractors.

Cleaning up after the recent storms and floods?



Homes built before 1990 can contain **asbestos**

Make sure you know what to do to stay safe

You are at greatest risk of inhaling asbestos fibres after a flood or storm and during the clean-up, when debris and damaged asbestos-containing materials are disturbed, demolished and moved.

Make sure you know what to do to stay safe.

For more information, visit:

QLD – <https://www.asbestos.qld.gov.au/.../cleaning-after-floods...>

NSW – <https://www.safework.nsw.gov.au/.../asbestos-cleaning...>



Firstly, a warm welcome to 2022. In this edition of the ADSS Newsletter, I would like to provide you with information on “Mental Health well-being and lung disease. This autumn edition is on anxiety and includes handouts on mindfulness, relaxation and breathing techniques.

The information below is from the European Respiratory Society website: www.europeanlunginfo.org.

What is mental wellbeing?

Mental wellbeing is a term used to describe how you are feeling and how you cope with daily life. This includes how you feel about living with your lung condition.

If you have good mental wellbeing, you are more likely to be taking good care of yourself and managing your treatment well. You will feel positive about life and want to be a part of things that are happening around you.

If you are experiencing poor mental wellbeing, you may find that you are less interested in doing things you once enjoyed. You may feel more anxious and tense and find it harder to cope with daily life and the stress of your condition.

Living with a lung condition

You may be more likely to experience poor mental wellbeing or a mental health condition if you are living with a lung condition. This might be because:

- you find it harder to do the same activities that you did before you became ill
- you worry that you will not be able to breathe
- you feel frustrated if you now need regular medical treatment and more support from others, or
- you worry about the future with your lung condition.

This could then have an impact on how you view your role at work, interactions with your family and friends, and your self-esteem.

Having a mental health condition may also affect your ability to cope with your lung condition. This might mean:

- feeling anxious about being out of breath, so you avoid exercise
- being depressed and not feeling able to take your medication, or
- avoiding social situations and feeling isolated.

This creates a negative circle of events; if your symptoms are not well-managed, it could then make you feel worse.



What mental health conditions might I experience?

Approximately one in four of us will experience a mental health condition at some point in our lives. Here we look at anxiety.

Anxiety

Many experiences linked to your lung condition could lead to anxiety. These could include:

- being hospitalised if you have a chest infection or your symptoms flare up
- being frequently or constantly breathless
- losing your job or missing interactions with friends and family, or
- feeling that your symptoms are out of control.

If this feeling of worry continues for a long time or overwhelms you, these are symptoms of anxiety which you can get help for.

Things to look out for:

- Racing thoughts
- Difficulty concentrating
- Feelings of panic, dread, or doom
- Problems with sleep
- Feeling like you want to escape
- Heavy and fast breathing linked to your mood
- Sweating or hot flushes
- Nausea
- Palpitations and trembling

How can I look after my mental wellbeing?

Looking after your mental wellbeing is a personal process and it is important to find something that works for you. There are lots of different approaches:

Society Social Worker

RHONDA WHEATLEY



Keeping active

Living an active life when you have a lung condition can help to manage your symptoms and keep you feeling well. The more active you are, the easier you will find daily activities, despite your breathing difficulties. It is important to find an activity that matches your level of breathlessness. You could find something to build into your daily routine, such as gardening, walking up and down the stairs or getting off the bus one stop early and walking home. Or you could try something more structured like keep-fit classes, running or strength exercises.

Remember that experiencing some breathlessness during activities is normal and not a sign of disease flare-up. You could also look to join a pulmonary rehabilitation course. This is a highly effective structured programme of exercise and information classes that are specific for people with lung conditions to help you stay active.

Mindfulness

Mindfulness means focussing on the present moment. It teaches that an emotion or feeling is our normal reaction to something, but that you can respond to this feeling in different ways. It helps you understand that some thoughts and feelings might be positive and some negative. But that neither of these reactions changes the reality.

Research has shown the benefits of mindfulness for people with lung conditions, particularly to help relieve the stress that could be caused by breathlessness. Experiencing some breathlessness during activities is normal in people with lung conditions and accepting this can help you feel better about your condition and about life in general.

Self-help

You can take steps to help yourself, such as learning what affects your mood – what improves it and what makes you feel worse? This may help you to prevent feelings of being unable to cope. You might also want to build things into your life that you find enjoyable, such as learning something new, a phone call with a friend or taking more time for yourself to relax. This might be particularly helpful if you feel that you cannot do the things that you used to. Instead, you could find something enjoyable that you can do now.

It is important to regularly 'check in' with yourself. Notice how you are feeling and whether you have felt better or worse recently.

If you experience changes in your mental health, please talk with family and friends about how you are feeling. Making an appointment with your GP can help, talk through the symptoms and if needed they can refer to a psychologist through the Mental Health Treatment Plan. A Mental Health Treatment Plan (previously known as a 'mental health care plan') is a plan for people with a mental health disorder. If you have mental health issues, your doctor can write a plan for you. The plan identifies what type of health care you need and spells out what you and your doctor have agreed you are aiming to achieve. It may also refer you to local mental health services.

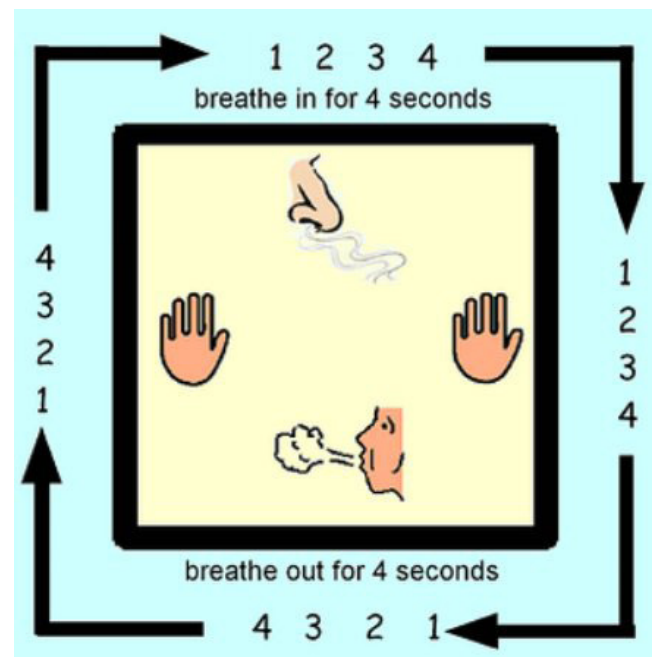
There are also many good support services available, and I would be happy to discuss these options with you.

I am here to help you and your family, so please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards,

Rhonda

Society Social Worker





UPDATE ON MESOTHELIOMA TREATMENT NEWS

During 2021, for the first time in 14 years we saw the addition of Dual Immunotherapy Nivolumab (Opdivo) and Ipilimumab (Yervoy) added to the Australian Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) as a new treatment for Mesothelioma. Both agents are checkpoint inhibitors and work by taking the breaks off the immune system and allowing it to attack the tumour. Immunotherapy is demonstrating a promising improvement in overall survival across all types of mesothelioma (epithelioid, sarcomatoid and biphasic (a combination of both)). Dual immunotherapy is showing to benefit non-epithelioid types the most by doubling their median survival when compared with standard chemotherapy.

Prior to 2021, the foundation of mesothelioma treatment for almost 20 years was the combination chemotherapy of pemetrexed (Alimta) with a platinum drug such as Cisplatin or Carboplatin. Recently these original chemotherapy drugs have had other drugs used in combination such as bevacizumab (Avastin) which is an anti-angiogenesis drug that inhibits blood vessels around the tumour and has demonstrated additional survival benefit.

The Dream3R phase 3 clinical trial is currently in progress and is determining the potential benefits of combining original chemotherapy with Durvalumab, a checkpoint inhibiting immunotherapy. This trial is an Australian led trial by Professor Anna Nowak in Perth and is currently recruiting patients worldwide. When conducting clinical trials, clinicians are gathering data including genomic

analyses that can provide detailed information about who benefits the most and the least from these different treatments.

Other emerging research is Transarterial Chemoperfusion which is chemotherapy (Methotrexate, Cisplatin & Gemcitabine) delivered directly to the arteries that supply the tumour site via an angiogram. This treatment is currently being studied in Europe, USA and Australia.

Surgery for treatment of mesothelioma is an accepted option, however the patient must meet certain criteria in terms of disease stage, overall well being, and the histological type of mesothelioma. There are 2 main types of surgery; Pleurectomy Decortication (PD) which is known as lung sparing surgery and Extrapleural Pneumonectomy (EPP) which involves the removal of the entire lung. EPP surgery is combined with chemotherapy (usually before surgery) and radiation treatment after surgery. Currently there are studies underway to determine whether immunotherapy can be beneficial before and/or after surgery.

As with all information on the treatment of mesothelioma, you need to discuss these options with your treating specialist.



Did You Know?

It is estimated that more than 40,000 km of asbestos-cement (AC) water and 5,000 km of AC sewer pipes remain in the ground across Australia. Installed between the 1920s and 1980s, these AC pipes are reaching the end of their usable lifespan, requiring maintenance or replacement. AC pipes become hazardous when asbestos fibres are released into the air or soil, which can occur when the pipes are damaged, disturbed or deteriorating.

The Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency, in collaboration with state and territory work health and safety regulators, environment protection regulators and trade unions, has produced guidelines on controlling asbestos exposure risks during maintenance and removal of AC water and

sewer pipes, as well as methods to safely remediate deteriorating AC pipes and manage decommissioned AC pipes that remain in the ground. These guidelines can be found at: <https://www.asbestossafety.gov.au/what-we-do/news-and-announcements>



Around the World

ASBESTOS SCARE EMERGES AS HMAS ADELAIDE'S TROUBLED TONGA MISSION CONCLUDES

By defence correspondent Andrew Greene - Sat 5 Mar 2022

ABC NEWS



Australian soldiers have been clearing Atata Island as part of Operation Tonga Assist.

(Defence Department: David Cox)

Australian Defence Force personnel fear they were exposed to dangerous asbestos fibres during clean-up operations in tsunami-devastated Tonga.

Key points:

- Australian soldiers had been helping Tonga recover from a devastating tsunami
- Defence insists precautions were immediately taken once potentially hazardous material was discovered
- HMAS Adelaide is set to return home after a deployment that saw it hit by a COVID-19 outbreak and power outages

Defence has confirmed members of Operation Tonga Assist discovered asbestos material while clearing debris and destroyed local infrastructure on Atata Island after the January disaster.

The revelation comes as HMAS Adelaide begins returning home from a troubled six-week deployment that saw the Navy's largest warship hit by a COVID-19 outbreak and crippling power failures on board.

Last month Navy officials suggested volcanic debris around Tonga was considered the likely cause of an initial power outage on the landing helicopter dock, which is still being formally investigated.

A COVID outbreak also hit the ship's crew while en route from Brisbane to Tonga, with at least one fifth of the crew eventually testing positive to the virus.



HMAS Adelaide was sent to Tonga to help locals. (Defence: POIS Christopher Szumlanski)

A source connected to the operation said troops were "worried" they may have been exposed to friable asbestos fibres.

"A problem with the clean-up in the last days has been the disturbance of asbestos from damaged and bulldozed structures," the official told the ABC, speaking on the condition of anonymity.

"No risk assessment [was] done on friable asbestos material and [it] wasn't identified as a risk until the pile of rubbish was set fire to."

In a statement, Defence confirmed safety precautions were immediately taken once the potentially hazardous material was discovered.

"The safety of Defence personnel is our highest priority and work on Atata Island ceased in the asbestos-affected areas after the discovery of the material," a Defence spokesperson said.

"The Australian Defence Force remains committed to supporting the Government of Tonga in their recovery efforts and are working with the government to identify other areas where asbestos may be present, whilst ensuring the safety of our personnel."

This week HMAS Adelaide's sister ship HMAS Canberra was formally welcomed to Tonga and is expected to remain there for several weeks completing further recovery efforts.

Around the World

JOHNSON & JOHNSON FACES PUSH TO FORCE GLOBAL BAN ON TALC BABY POWDER SALES
Jasper Jolly - Mon 7 Feb 2022



Move to hold shareholder vote follows withdrawal of product in US and Canada and lawsuits alleging link to cancer cases



A bottle of Johnson's Baby Powder taken in 2016. The company has now stopped selling talc-based baby powder across Canada and the US. Photograph: Mike Segar/Reuters

The healthcare company Johnson & Johnson is facing an attempt to force a shareholder vote to halt its sales of talc-based baby powder across the world, including the UK, amid concerns over alleged links to cancer.

Johnson & Johnson (J&J) withdrew its talc-based baby powder from sale in the US and Canada in 2020. Sales of baby powder had dropped after US regulators detected carcinogenic chrysotile fibres, a type of asbestos, in a sample.

The company is now facing more than 34,000 lawsuits including many from women who claim they used baby powder and later developed ovarian cancer.

The shareholder vote has been proposed by Tulipshare, a London-based investment platform that allows customers to pool shares in order to meet the threshold to submit resolutions for shareholder votes. The proposal has been submitted to the US Securities and Exchange Committee (SEC) to consider if it is eligible ahead of J&J's annual meeting, expected in April.

Talc, the world's softest mineral, is mined in several countries, with uses across industries as diverse as paper, plastics and pharmaceuticals. Talc's astringent properties mean it is used to treat nappy rash and for other personal hygiene uses.

However, talc deposits can sometimes be contaminated with asbestos, a mineral that can cause cancer if its fibres enter the body. Corn starch can be used as a replacement.

J&J strongly denies that its baby powder is harmful and said it only pulled the product in North America after a slump in sales "fuelled by misinformation around the safety of the product". A spokesperson pointed to a 2020 cohort study that found no statistically significant increased risk of ovarian cancer with talc use.

A spokesperson said: "We stand behind the ingredients we use in our products, and Johnson & Johnson has a rigorous testing standard in place to ensure our cosmetic talc is safe. Not only is our talc routinely tested to ensure it does not contain asbestos, but our talc has also been tested and confirmed to be asbestos-free by a range of independent laboratories, universities, and global health authorities."

The barrage of legal claims "have no valid scientific basis", the spokesperson said.

J&J's lawyers, Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom, have written to the SEC asking that it exclude the shareholder resolution as ineligible because it would affect pending lawsuits in state and federal courts in the US and in other countries, including "thousands of personal injury claims alleging that talc causes cancer".

J&J has already spent billions on costs and settlements, including a \$2bn (£1.5bn) judgment by a Missouri appeals court in favour of 22 plaintiffs who suffered from ovarian cancer. In October, J&J moved the potential liabilities for talc products into a separate company, which then entered bankruptcy in a highly controversial move that could limit its financial exposure.

Ian Lavery, a Labour MP, last year sponsored an early-day motion in parliament condemning the "hypercritical and unjustifiable" decision by J&J to continue to sell talcum powder products outside North America. Lavery said he welcomed the attempt to force a shareholder vote.

"It is shocking that products that we know can cause serious illness through contamination with asbestos are still available to buy in the UK, or anywhere else in the world for that matter," he said.

"Any action taken against Johnson & Johnson, who continue to profit handsomely from the sale of this harmful substance despite knowing its potential effects, is welcome in my book."

Around the World

TEACHERS AND PUPILS AT RISK FROM ASBESTOS AT 3,000 UK SCHOOLS, MPS TOLD

Christopher McKeon, PA - Thu, 18 November 2021

Children and teachers at thousands of schools across the UK could be at risk of developing cancer thanks to a policy of leaving asbestos in place, MPs have heard.

Campaigner Charles Pickles warned the Commons Work and Pensions Committee on Wednesday that between 200 and 300 children every year would have their lives shortened by asbestos-related illness “just as a result of going to school”.

Mr Pickles, a former asbestos consultant who founded the campaign group Airtight on Asbestos, added: “Female primary school teachers now have one of the highest prevalences of mesothelioma as an occupational group.

“This is alarming, because female primary school teachers never worked with asbestos. They have merely worked in buildings containing asbestos.”

Mesothelioma is a form of cancer, mainly affecting the lungs, commonly caused by exposure to asbestos fibres, and kills around 2,500 people in the UK each year.

It previously mainly affected people who had worked directly with asbestos, such as in heavy industry or construction, but the committee, which is holding an inquiry into asbestos management, heard this is changing.

Joanne Gordon, chairwoman of the Asbestos Victims Support Groups’ Forum UK, said: “We are seeing more people with low-level exposure to asbestos. We see a change in occupation, we are seeing more women diagnosed with mesothelioma.”

Tony Hood, a solicitor who works with people who have been exposed to asbestos, said more sufferers who had been indirectly exposed to asbestos were contacting his firm for help.

He said: “It’s clear that people continue to be exposed despite the asbestos ban and despite the asbestos regulation. That’s the legacy of leaving asbestos in situ as it comes back to haunt those affected.”

Mr Pickles was particularly concerned about so-called “CLASP” schools, prefabricated schools built between the 1950s and 1970s that contain substantial amounts of asbestos. Around 3,000 are still in use in the UK.

He said the fact these schools contain the more dangerous brown asbestos, combined with their dilapidated state and the vulnerability of young children to asbestos exposure, meant the risks were “too hot to handle”.

Figures from the Office for National Statistics show 371 teachers died of mesothelioma between 2001 and 2020, including 139 primary school and nursery teachers and 110 in secondary schools.

Other witnesses highlighted similar problems with hospitals and social housing, although people working there may be unaware of the dangers or even of the possibility that asbestos is present.

MP Stephen Timms chairs the Work and Pensions Committee (Jonathan Brady/PA)

Mr Pickles said the UK should abandon its policy of “management in situ”, where asbestos is left in place as long as it is not damaged or disturbed, and introduce phased removal.

Breathing in the fibres released when asbestos is disturbed or damaged can cause illnesses such as mesothelioma, meaning undisturbed asbestos is often considered safe.

But Mr Pickles said much of the UK’s asbestos is now in a “dilapidated condition” and releasing fibres, while tests to determine the level of asbestos in an area are not sensitive enough to be safe.

He said: “The risks are increasing with age rather than decreasing.”

Committee chairman Stephen Timms raised concerns about Health and Safety Executive (HSE) monitoring of asbestos risks in 2020 following a report by the Res Publica think tank in conjunction with Mr Pickles’ Airtight on Asbestos campaign.

In response to Mr Timms’ concerns, employment minister Mims Davies said the HSE would begin research this year to review asbestos control regulations.



Australians have admitted to disposing of asbestos illegally - even dumping it in their neighbour's bin - during a COVID-19 home improvement surge, raising cancer fears.

A study of DIY enthusiasts around the country has revealed 46 per cent cited the pandemic as the motivation to start working on projects around the house.

But the Asbestos Safety Eradication Agency (ASEA) - who commissioned the poll of 1506 home improvers - said their data revealed more worrying trends.

Results showed 38 per cent worked on a "risky property" built between 1940 and 1990 - the decades of greatest asbestos concern.

And 28 per cent conceded they had illegally disposed of asbestos, most commonly placing it in their household bin or in their neighbour's trash.

ASEA urged Australians to be aware of asbestos while renovating, saying it was still causing cancer in the country.

ASEA chief executive Justine Ross said hundreds of cases of mesothelioma - a usually fatal form of asbestos-related cancer most commonly found in the lungs - were diagnosed in Australia each year.

"For anyone who thinks asbestos-related diseases are a thing of the past, think again," Ms Ross said at the start of National Asbestos Awareness Week.

"Around 700 cases of mesothelioma are diagnosed in Australia each year and the estimated annual health system expenditure for mesothelioma is more than \$27 million annually."

Ms Ross said there was an estimated six million tonnes of legacy asbestos in Australia, affecting one in three households.

She said at the current rate of disposal, legacy asbestos is likely to remain in "significant amounts" until at least 2060.

ASEA is developing a national residential asbestos "heat map" they hope will help manage the problem.

"Once completed next year, it will allow governments to target awareness and removal programs where they are most needed, protecting home owners and tradespeople," Ms Ross said.

"It also means we can better target infrastructure and resources, such as waste disposal facilities, in areas that will need it most.

"We want to see Australians treat asbestos with the same caution as electricity.

"People working on homes built before 1990 can stay safe if they know where asbestos is, if they don't disturb or damage it, and if they seek professional help to locate, manage or remove it."



**DANGER:
ASBESTOS**

Media Article

ALCOA AND MONADELPHOUS ENGINEERING ASSOCIATES FINED \$50,000 AFTER TWO WORKERS EXPOSED TO ASBESTOS
Hannah Cross The West Australian - Wed, 23 February 2022



Alcoa and Monadelphous Engineering Associates have been fined more than \$50,000 after two workers were exposed to asbestos at Alcoa's Pinjarra alumina refinery in 2018.

It's understood two contractors were not given the appropriate asbestos awareness training before being allowed on-site at the Pinjarra refinery.

Appearing separately in Mandurah Magistrates Court, both companies pleaded guilty to failing to providing a safe work environment.

Alcoa was fined \$30,000 and ordered to pay costs of \$5000 and Monadelphous was fined \$25,000 and ordered to pay costs of \$6000.

On January 30, 2018, Monadelphous was working at the Pinjarra refinery after Alcoa contracted the company to install a 33kV power cable at the site.

Two Monadelphous employees were attaching a cable tray to a steel column when one employee used an angle grinder to remove a coating from the support, potentially causing particles and fibres to become airborne.

Testing on the coating sample found it contained a low concentration of white asbestos — a Class 1 carcinogen.

It was found a Monadelphous supervisor had left a vital part of an Authority to Proceed form blank, leaving the two employees unaware the coating on the steel column contained asbestos.

Director Mines Safety at the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety Andrew Chaplyn said Alcoa and Monadelphous should have done more to ensure its employees were working in a safe environment. "No amount of asbestos exposure is considered safe

and inhaling the fibres can cause asbestosis, lung cancer and mesothelioma," Mr Chaplyn said.

"Employers need to make workers aware of asbestos hazards, use appropriate signage to warn of the hazard and refer to a site's asbestos register during risk assessments.

He said any uncertainty around asbestos contaminants in working materials should be remedied with sample testing from a competent person.

An Alcoa spokesperson told the Mandurah Coastal Times the charge related to "a failure to provide two contractors . . . with asbestos awareness training prior to deploying them for relevant duties".

"In response to the incident, Alcoa's asbestos management controls were strengthened to ensure existing detailed asbestos awareness training is now provided to employees and contractors prior to them commencing any work at Alcoa operations where asbestos may be present," the spokesperson said.

A spokesperson for Monadelphous said it was "disappointing that a failure of safety processes led to two of our employees being exposed to a potential hazard on a customer site".

"We take any failure of safety protocols very seriously. Following the event, we have implemented additional controls to mitigate any future risk and continue to offer support to those involved," the spokesperson said.

Alcoa's Pinjarra refinery is one of the world's largest alumina refineries and produces about 4.7 million metric tonnes every year. Approximately 1,100 employees and 270 contractors work at the refinery.

ADSS Media Release

FLOOD DISASTER CLEAN-UP SPARKS ASBESTOS FEARS

1 March 2022

The Asbestos Disease Support Society (ADSS) is expressing concerns for the community, volunteers and workers following the recent devastating impact of flood waters in South-East Queensland.

“Given the age of some buildings in affected areas, it is highly likely debris and damaged walls, roofs and floors will contain asbestos. Asbestos can be found in such things as fibro wall sheeting, corrugated super six rooves, Hardie plank cladding and the older type of lino,” said ADSS General Manager, Trevor Torrens.

Mr Torrens urged the community and the volunteer “mud” army and other workers expected to help flood affected areas to be careful and treat every pile of damaged building material as asbestos-contaminated until professional tests proved otherwise. Failure to take precautions now could result in potentially fatal health issues many years after the impacts of a severe weather event were a distant memory.

“One of the great things about Queenslanders is that it brings out the best of our community spirit and when we’re hit by these sorts of events, the tendency is to launch into it very quickly to provide others with assistance,” said Mr Torrens.

He says in the rush to clean up in the aftermath of a cyclone, flood or bushfire, the health risks posed by broken sheets of asbestos can easily be forgotten.

Mr Torrens urged people to take extreme care during the repair and clean-up period, especially on buildings and residences built prior to 1990, which are more likely to have asbestos materials.

The longer the debris is left out, the more dangerous it becomes. As the materials dry, the asbestos fibres dislodge and become airborne. When asbestos fibres get into the lungs, which can occur if the asbestos product is disturbed or in a friable condition, it can cause deadly conditions like mesothelioma, asbestosis, lung and other cancers. Known as the latency period, these diseases can take many decades to develop.

Anyone who thinks they have been exposed to asbestos containing materials can contact ADSS for advice and further information.

The Asbestos Disease Support Society is a registered charity and was established in 1992 to support sufferers of asbestos related disease, their families and caregivers and promotes awareness about the risks of exposure to asbestos.

ENDS

Media Contact: Trevor Torrens (ADSS) M 0435 895 928 or trevort@adss.org.au

Safety risks in flood water include:



- electrical risks
- asbestos
- solar panels
- displaced fauna
- hazardous chemicals
- working from heights
- water and mud borne diseases.

#QLDFloods

If you are preparing to clean up in or around your workplaces or home, please remember there are serious risks that lurk in flood water. Always consider the below:

- electrical hazards
- asbestos
- solar panels
- snakes and other dangerous animals
- hazardous chemicals
- working from heights
- water and mud-borne diseases.

Visit www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/.../dan.../storms-and-floods for more information and resources. Stay safe!

#QLDFloods #QueenslandFloods

2022 ADSS MORNING TEAS

TOOWOOMBA - 21 FEBRUARY
BRIBIE ISLAND - 9 MARCH
GOLD COAST - 15 MARCH
REDLANDS - 31 MARCH
SUNSHINE COAST - 20 APRIL
KINGAROY - 5 MAY
CHERMSIDE - 11 MAY
BEAUDESERT - 23 MAY
CAIRNS - 6 JUNE
TOWNSVILLE - 7 JUNE
MACKAY - 8 JUNE
ROCKHAMPTON - 9 JUNE
WARWICK - 29 JUNE
LOGAN - 12 JULY
GLADSTONE - 19 JULY
BUNDABERG - 20 JULY
HERVEY BAY - 21 JULY
GYMPIE - 22 JULY
NORTH BRISBANE - 31 AUGUST
IPSWICH - 6 SEPTEMBER

Come along & join as a community for morning tea and presentations by ADSS and Turner Freeman Lawyers on asbestos and dust related disease.

Please call the Society to RSVP or for further information



ADSS SUPPORT GROUPS

Bundaberg - Neighbourhood Centre, Targo Road Bundaberg
1st Wednesday of the Month (February - December)

Chermside - Kedron Wavell Services Club (in the Cafe)
7 April, 2 June, 4 August & 6 October

Hervey Bay - Neighbourhood Centre, Charles Street Pialba
2nd Wednesday of the Month (February - December)

Sunnybank - Sunnybank Hills Library
2nd Friday of the Month (February - November)

Rockhampton - Call the office for monthly venue
3rd Thursday of the Month (February - November)

Gold Coast - Parkway Cafe, 16B / 361 Robina Parkway Robina
23 June, 25 August & 27 October

Ipswich - Brothers Leagues Club (In the Cafe)
4th Tuesday of the Month (February - November)

Sunshine Coast - Maroochydore RSL (In the Cafe)
22 June & 28 September

For further information, please call the Society



The Society at Work



1.12.21 - Bundaberg Support Group Xmas Lunch



3.12.21 - Queenswharf 'Have a cuppa on us'



8.12.21 - Hervey Bay Support Group Xmas Lunch



8.12.21 - Hervey Bay Support Group Xmas Lunch



14.12.21 - ADSS Board, Staff & Turner Freeman Xmas Lunch



21.2.22 - Toowoomba Morning Tea Event



21.2.22 - Toowoomba Morning Tea Event



22.2.22 - Ipswich Support Group



4.3.22 - International Women's Day Event (Small Steps 4 Hannah)



8.3.22 - International Women's Day Event (CFMEU Women)



9.3.22 - Bribie Island Morning Tea



11.3.22 - Sunnybank Support Group

Support Those Who Support The Society



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

Corporate Sponsors



**Turner
Freeman**
LAWYERS

Corporate Members

Allens Industrial Products Pty Ltd
Australian Manufacturing Workers Union (AMWU)
Aztech Services Australia Pty Ltd
Beta Sigma Phi – Bayside Chapter
Building Employees Redundancy Trust (BERT)
Construction Forestry Mining Energy Union (CFMEU) - Mining & Energy Division
Construction Income Protection Limited (CIPL)
Corvex Pty Ltd
Demolition & Asbestos Industry Association (QLD) Inc. (DAIA)
DOTS Allied Health Services Pty Ltd
Electrical Trades Union (ETU)
Electro Group Training Group Limited
Future Skills

GBAR Group
Gumdale Demolition Pty Ltd
Hype Promotions
IRT Asbestos Management Pty Ltd
Kallibr
Maritime Union of Australia (MUA)
North Australian Contracting
Office of Industrial Relations
Plumbers Union QLD (PPTEU)
Queensland Building & Construction Commission (QBCC)
Queensland Council of Unions (QCU)
Queensland Nurses & Midwives Union
Specsavers Indooroopilly
The Construction Training Centre (CTC)
United Workers Union
X Vend



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

DONATE NOW

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

Donations of \$2.00 or more are tax deductible.

We thank all members for their ongoing support.

