

Winter 2022
NEWSLETTER

adss

Asbestos Disease
Support Society

Asbestos Disease Support Society
Silicosis Support Network

16 Campbell Street, Bowen Hills, QLD 4006

PO Box 280, Spring Hill, QLD 4004

1800 776 412 | inquiries@adss.org.au

inquiries@silicosissupport.org.au

Silicosis
Support Network



**NO KNOWN
SAFE LEVEL
OF EXPOSURE**

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



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2022/23 Membership

We thank those members who have already paid for their membership renewal and invite those that are still outstanding to renew their membership.

We would also like to thank those that have made a donation in the process of paying their membership renewal. We are greatly appreciative of your support.

Please call the Society to pay over the phone with a credit card or to check if your membership is still outstanding.

Thank you!



Newsletter front cover:

MYTH

You need to work with asbestos all the time for it to be harmful.

FACT

Some people who develop asbestos related diseases can only identify one exposure in their past.

In Loving Memory

Donald McKinnon

Hans Peter Steyger

Frederick McKinnon

Rim Ramalli

Robin William Moore

Lionel Henry Starkey

William Walter Austin

Colin Terence Jones

Lorraine Lee Mizzi

Robert Pegoraro

John Ashley

Denis Parker

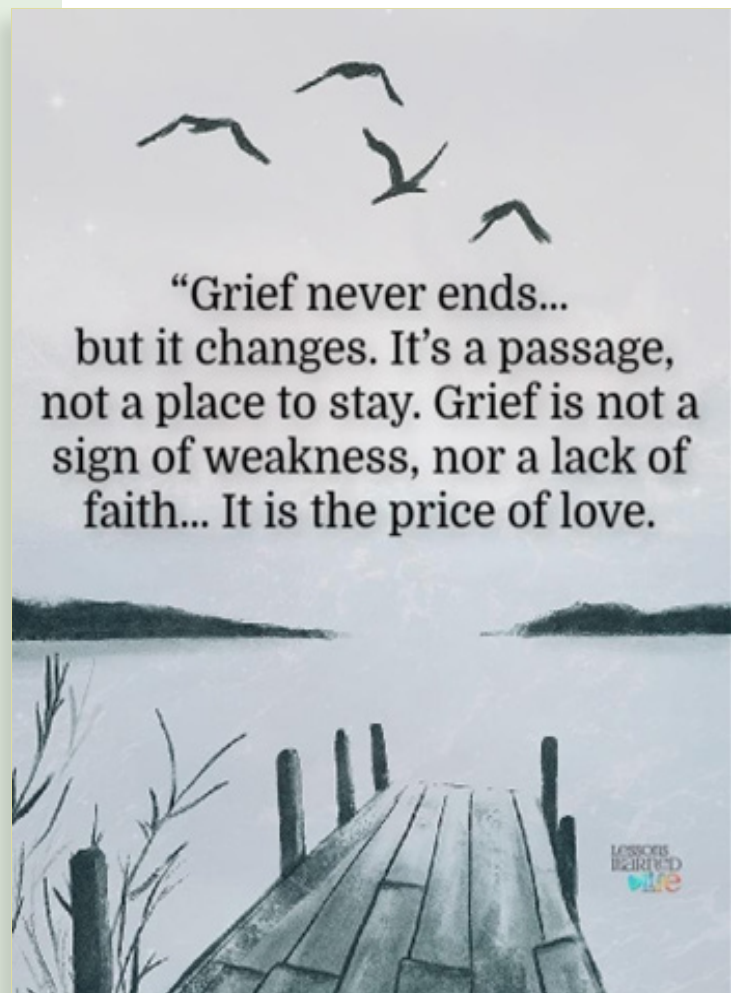
Robert Alexander Wyatt

Harry Bernard Cramp

Raymond Wylie Symons

Kevin George Boswood

Brendon Mortimer



General Managers Report

TREVOR TORRENS



Welcome to the 2022 Winter edition of the Society's newsletter. The team has just returned from our community morning teas in North Queensland – Cairns, Townsville, Mackay and Rockhampton. Thank you to everyone who attended these events and the other morning teas held so far. Also, a big thank you to Julie Sager and Trevor Gillmeister for giving their time in discussing their own personal experiences at our Chermside and Redlands's morning teas – their stories are certainly powerful. The dates and venues for our remaining morning teas are listed in the Newsletter.

Amendment of the Definition of Terminal Condition

In 2019, the Queensland Government amended the definition of "Terminal Condition" (as defined in S39A of the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003 Qld) by removing the 2 year time frame for life expectancy for terminal compensation. This resulted in many of the Society's members with progressive lung diseases such as asbestosis and silicosis becoming 'eligible' for a lump sum terminal payment. In March 2022, the Society was advised by the Government of a proposal to reinsert a timeframe. Specifically, the change to the legislation would result in an explicit timeframe of up to 3 years of life expectancy when the entitlement for terminal compensation arises. The Government advised: "this proposed change would not prevent access to terminal compensation entitlements but clarifies the policy intent of this specific payment in the scheme. I note the

proposed 3 year timeframe is more beneficial than any other jurisdiction in the country, consistent with the policy intent of the 2019 amendment and still more generous than the former 2 year timeframe that applied prior to 2019 (and more than superannuation schemes)". In briefings held with the Government, financial implications for the worker compensation scheme and a recent court decision which resulted in compensation for a person with a life expectancy of 18 years were also cited.

The Society provided a submission requesting consideration of:

- A five year life expectancy time-frame; and
- Claims lodged but not yet determined to be assessed under the current 39A definition.

(Interestingly, no submission on this issue agreed with the Government's proposal)

Additionally, Margot Hoyte, Society Director and I appeared before the Government's Legal Affairs and Safety Committee hearing on 4 May 2022 into the proposed legislation to prosecute our position.

Even though the Society considers the reintroduction of a time frame a retrograde and unfair step, it was a case of striving to get the best outcome. The Government subsequently accepted the Society's submission that a five-year time frame was appropriate. Additionally, claims lodged prior to the date of commencement of the legislation will be assessed under the former S39A provisions. The legislation has now been passed with a commencement date of 30 June 2022.



General Managers Report

TREVOR TORRENS



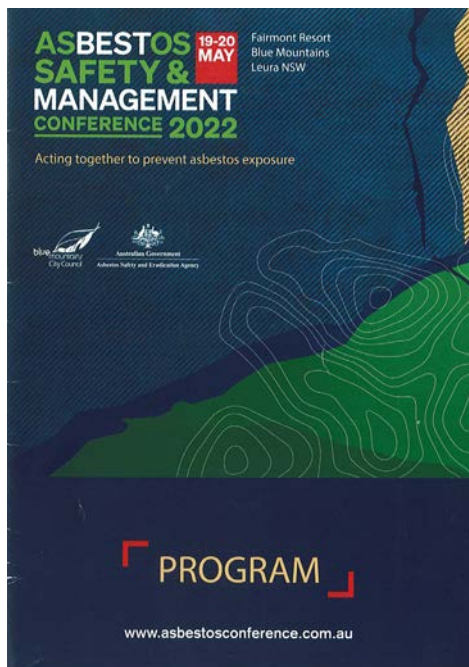
Asbestos Safety and Management Conference 2022

The Society was represented at the Asbestos Safety and Management Conference 2022 which was held on 19 and 20 May 2022 at Leura, NSW. The conference was co-hosted by the Blue Mountains City Council and the Federal Government's Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency. Over 350 delegates from all over Australia and South-East Asia attended with a diverse range of speakers and topics. Topics included:

- A 40,000 km challenge in managing asbestos containing water and sewer pipe legacy
- Progress in mesothelioma diagnosis and treatment
- Legal and compensation complexities
- Assessment, remediation and management of asbestos contaminated sites
- Clean-up on Country: Insights into working with Aboriginal Communities
- How do we get the message out there? Learnings from recent awareness campaigns
- Where are we in South-East Asia? What progress has been made towards ban?
- Can we fix this? Yes we can! Driving improvements for the future.
- Cleaning up after disaster events.

The above topics are only a selection of the many that were presented over the 2 days.

While there were many "takeaways" from the conference, there is no doubt that more needs to be done!



Membership Renewal

It's that time of the year again when membership fees are due. Once again, there has been no increase in the fees payable. The Society currently has around 800 members which translates to a strong voice in our advocacy role – as the old adage goes – **"there is strength in numbers"**.



Asbestos Disease Support Society
PO Box 280
SPRING HILL QLD 4004
P: 07 3252 7852
E: inquiries@adss.org.au

2022/23 Membership Renewal

Title: _____ First Name/s: _____ Surname: _____
Address: _____
Home Phone No: _____ Work Phone No: _____
Mobile Phone: _____ Email: _____
Date of Birth: _____ ARD Diagnosis (if any): _____

Family Membership* \$30.00 *List family members on back of the form
Single Membership \$20.00
Associate Membership \$10.00

Preferred Method of Correspondence: (please✓) MAIL E MAIL

Payment Information

Method (please✓): Credit Card Cheque Money Order Cash

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Membership fee (as above) | \$ |
| Donation (optional) | \$ NB Only donations are tax deductible |
| Total | \$ |

Credit Card Payments:
Mastercard Visa
Account Name: _____
Card No: _____/_____/_____/_____
Expiry Date: ____/____/_____
Signature: _____ Date: ____/____/_____
If you wish to pay by credit card over the phone, please call the office on (07) 3252 7852

Date Received: ____/____/20____ Receipt No: _____ Office Use Only
Year End: 30 June 2023 Person Responsible: _____

Kindly check all details on your membership form and amend if needed.
Please return your completed form and membership fees to our office at:
ADSS, PO Box 280, SPRING HILL, QLD 4004

2022 Worker's Memorial Day

The Society again was represented at the Workers' Memorial Day at St John's Cathedral on Thursday 28 April. Workers' Memorial Day is an opportunity to highlight the preventable nature of workplace injuries and illnesses and to continue advocating for improvements in work health and safety. Society Chair, Mr Phil Blair, delivered a message on the right to return home safely from a day's work. As Phil said in his speech:

General Managers Report



TREVOR TORRENS

“Each of the workers we honour today left home to go to work one day, expecting to return as usual without illness or injury. It is sad and senseless that some never returned at all. It is difficult to accept that they could be taken from us so suddenly, under such terrible circumstances. Any workplace fatality or illness is tragic and unacceptable. We must always strive to make workplaces safer and healthier. We must make sure that every worker is alert to every potential danger or health risk. We must stand up and never be silent. The only acceptable rate of fatality, injury, illness and near miss is zero”



Labour Day

The Society once again provided volunteers to cook the BBQ for CFMEU members and their families after the Labour Day march at the RNA Showgrounds. The march was very well attended and we worked hard to help feed everyone – about 1,500! While the Society has been involved in this event for many years, it is still a big logistical effort as can be seen from the below numbers:

- 1,000 burgers
- 600 sausages
- 1020 burger buns
- 600 hot dog rolls
- 35kgs of onions
- 28kgs of lettuce
- 50kgs of tomatoes

A big thank you to everyone who assisted on the day.



Race Day and Annual Raffle

The Society’s Annual Race Day (and major fund raiser) will be held on Wednesday 14 September 2022 at Doomben Racecourse. The Race Day is a corporate event aimed to raise money for the Society and hence its members. Our annual raffle, consisting of a trailer with a load of terrific “goodies” valued at \$5,000 is also drawn on this day. Look for the tickets at our morning teas or contact ADSS office if you would like to purchase a ticket.

Asbestos Disease Support Society
2022 Annual Raffle
\$5.00 Per Ticket

adss
Asbestos Disease Support Society

1st Prize: 7 x 5ft Cage Trailer along with various Power/Hand Tools, Cement Mixer, Dan Murphy’s Gift Card, Spa Gift Card, Various other Gift Cards – Value \$5,000

2nd Prize: Flight Centre Voucher - \$1,500

3rd Prize: Various Gift Cards - \$1,000

Closing date – 14 September 2022.
Drawn on 14 September 2022 at ADSS Charity Race Day, BHC Doomben QLD. Winners will be notified by phone.
All proceeds go to Asbestos Disease Support Society.

Ticket No.

Thank you for your Donation

Thank you for your Donation

A big thank you to everyone who has donated to the Society since last Newsletter. Without this support we could not provide support! In particular, we would like to recognise the following donations over \$500.00:

- Turner Freeman Lawyers
- Pam and Ernie Elliott
- Thomas Graham O’Brien
- Vend2Go:
- CFMEU Members
- BERT / CIP
- Christopher Beqiri
- Colin Nicholson

All the Best,
Trevor

Trevor Torrens

Trevor Torrens
General Manager



DUST DISEASES AND EXPOSURES LEADING TO NON-LUNG HEALTH PROBLEMS

A common question asked by those suffering from dust diseases - such as asbestosis and silicosis, is whether the exposure or their conditions can lead to other health problems?

For years it has been the case that Respiratory Physicians have noted in reports that fibrotic lung disease, such as asbestosis and silicosis and other occupational lung disease can exacerbate or predispose a person to chest infections. A chest infection that a healthy person might quite easily fight off can lead to hospitalisation in a person suffering from an underlying dust disease. The lungs are already compromised so the ability of the lungs and the body to fight off infection is reduced.

However, can a dust disease exacerbate or indeed cause a cardiac condition? Can silica exposure lead to other health problems? These are two questions that are often asked.

In terms of cardiac disease, the answer is somewhat complicated, but it appears to be the case that dust exposure in and of itself does not lead to cardiac disease. However, much like exacerbation of chest infections, significant underlying occupational lung disease can potentially exacerbate a heart condition. What a "fibrotic" lung disease does is limit the ability of the lungs to take oxygen from the air and place it in the bloodstream - the gas transfer mechanism. What occurs is, sometimes even at rest in severe cases, the body has to work harder to place oxygen into the bloodstream. This puts added burden on the heart and in simple terms potentially can exacerbate or worsen an underlying cardiac disease.

If a person does have significant lung disease and also a cardiac condition and is being treated by a cardiologist or other doctor, it is important to bring to that doctor's attention the impact of the underlying lung disease.

An emerging area of medical knowledge in relation to dust exposure causing non-lung disease is in the area of silica exposure. As we know, silica is contained in virtually every rock or sand type substance, such as brick, cement, concrete, fibro, ceramic tiles and other products. Different types of rock and stone contain varying levels of silica with engineered stone and sandstone containing particularly high percentages.

There is now emerging knowledge that silica exposure can cause a range of autoimmune conditions. At this stage, this does not appear to be fully understood. Whether or not actual silicosis is required for an autoimmune response to be proved is not known at this stage but it appears that there must be heavy silica exposure for an autoimmune response to occur.

A generally accepted autoimmune response to silica exposure is a condition called scleroderma. In addition, diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis are also being considered. There are numerous studies that have been done on the connection between silica exposure and certain autoimmune responses and this is ongoing.

What the above highlights is emerging knowledge and ongoing research about the impact of asbestos, silica and other dusts on the body generally. It has often been stated by doctors that these dusts cause an inflammatory response in the body so the fact that there can be impact outside the lungs is not surprising.

The Society will be continuing to monitor this emerging area and will update members at future seminars and in newsletters as information becomes available. The important thing is to discuss any symptoms that you have with your treating doctors so that all possible outcomes and consequences of dust exposure are understood and treated, if possible.



Society Social Worker

RHONDA WHEATLEY



I feel very fortunate that over the past 6 months working with ADSS, I have met and spoken with many members who have helped me gain an understanding of what it is like to live with lung disease. Their skills, knowledge, and resilience, listening to their life experiences both pre and post diagnosis has been an excellent education and learning experience for me.

I would like to thank Peter & Melita Orton for their willingness to share their journey.

Peter's Journey

Working as an exploration geologist was a great experience, so too has my career as a teacher. I thought the only thing I had to remind me of my geology days were the rocks I collected, and memories, but in 2020 all that changed when I was informed that I had silicosis. The diagnosis of silicosis was the easy part of the process, the acceptance and dramatic change to our lifestyle took a much longer time to come into fruition, because you not only have to deal with it yourself you must also go through the impact it is having on your family. Luckily for me I only have chronic silicosis and we caught it before the damage to my lungs had progressed too far, but the process of living with this life changing disease is still ongoing almost 2 years later.

The doctors I have seen have been great and helpful in treating the condition, but they have not been so good at treating the person, a problem faced by many that live with such conditions. Asking a doctor about the prognosis or the progression of the disease is often answered with "everyone is different" which is probably true but extremely unhelpful when you are trying to get things straight in your own head.

Support agencies are great and talking to others can make a big difference. However, talking to your loved ones, sharing your thoughts, and listening to theirs can make an even bigger difference. For example, there will be days when you just want to be left alone and do not want to talk to anyone for any number of reasons like the pain is too much to handle, you are struggling to breathe, you cannot get out of bed due to fatigue or you just do not see the point. These are the days when you must talk to someone or just know that someone is there for you, supporting you and loving you.

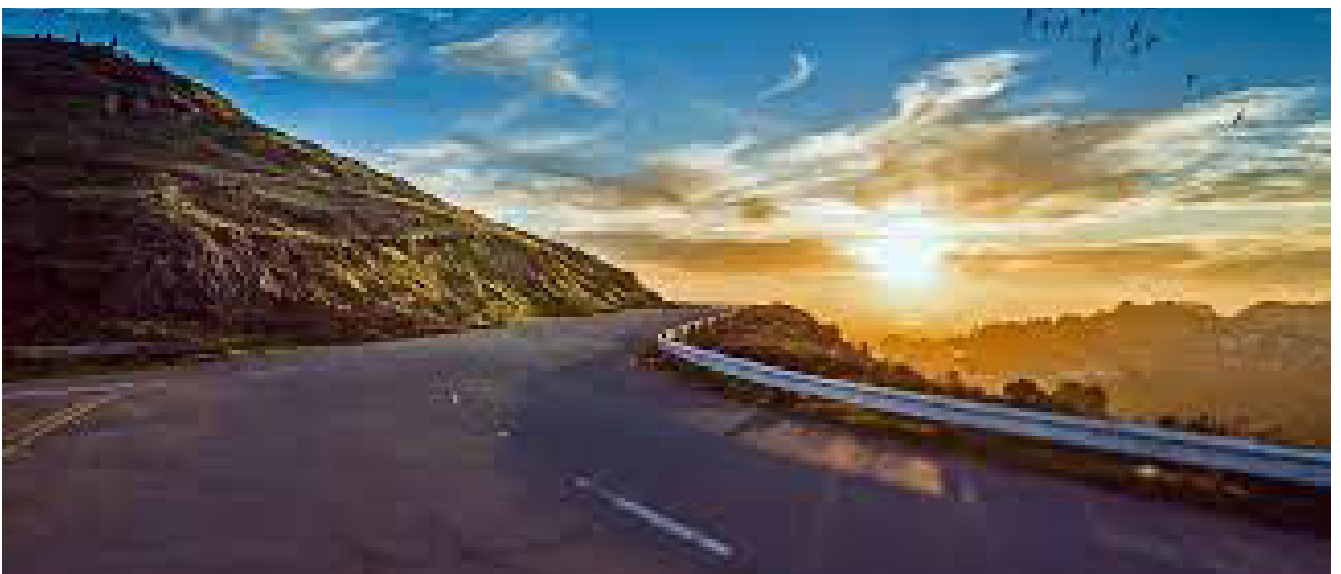
The journey of this disease is different for every person, but this is what has help me:

- I looked for support from others and I let them help me. I realized that while I have the disease, I do not have to be alone. Talk to others about it and share your story if able.
- Do not try to get all your answers at once from any one doctor, it will take time and many different health care professionals before your treatment will settle.
- This is a lifelong condition accept this fact and then adjust your life to suit it, do not let it control your life, find ways to do the things you enjoy or find new things that you can do that are just as rewarding to you.

Kind regards,

Rhonda

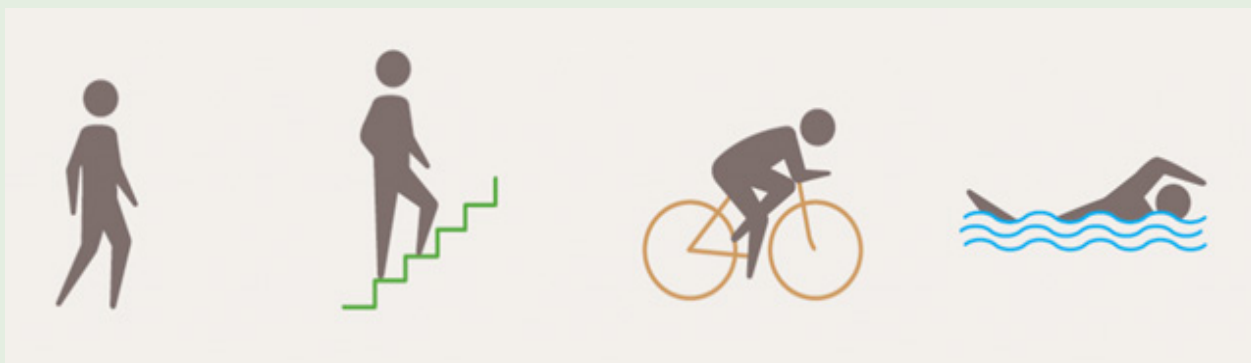
Society Social Worker





KAREN SELMON

EXERCISING AND LUNG DISEASE



When you have been diagnosed with an acute or chronic lung disease, it is often difficult to stay active due to feelings of breathlessness and fatigue even with low physical activity. This inactivity can lead to deconditioning, worsening breathlessness and further inactivity. By exercising and being active, you can increase fitness and muscle strength, and improve symptoms.

Benefits of exercising:

- Improves ability to do everyday tasks,
- Helps to reduce breathlessness,
- Improves arm, body and leg muscle strength,
- Helps to clear mucus from your chest,
- Improves your balance through core strengthening,
- Assists with weight control,
- Improves bone density,
- Improves your mood and helps to make you feel more in control,
- Helps to reduce the need for hospital admission.

Before starting an exercise program, it is very important to talk to your health professional about what type of exercise would suit you.

Set aside time each day to exercise choosing a time when your energy levels are high and aim to exercise at this time each day.

Choose an activity you enjoy doing and ask a family member or friend to join you.

Obtaining the correct advice is essential, and this can be achieved by using an Accredited Exercise Physiologist or Physiotherapist. You may be able to access a Medicare rebate for a Physiotherapist or Exercise Physiologist under the Chronic Disease Management (CDM) Program. You must fit the criteria of having a chronic condition that you have suffered from for over 3 months. You can talk to your GP to see if you are eligible for the CDM program which allows up to 5 rebated consults to any allied health practitioner per year.

As previously stated, it is strongly advised to consult with your health professional before starting a new exercise program.

For further information please visit:

exerciseright.com.au

lungfoundation.com.au

A Members Journey

LYN MACLEAN - Coordinator Bundaberg Asbestos Disease Support Group



My first involvement with the Queensland Asbestos Disease Support Society, was when my late husband, Lynn Maclean was diagnosed with mesothelioma in 2016. Lynn had worked as a fitter and turner at both the Bundaberg Foundry and Millaquin Sugar Mill during the 1960/70s where he worked with asbestos, not knowing of the consequences later in his life.

He contacted pneumonia which led to his hospitalisation in Brisbane where the mesothelioma diagnosis was made. We immediately made contact with Turner Freeman and from there Thady handled the case giving us great peace of mind.

Lynn was quite well for the first few years and underwent regular chemotherapy at the Friendlies Hospital Oncology Unit in Bundaberg. We were fortunate to have several trips away in between treatment to New Zealand and the Northern Territory.

I was approached by the Brisbane ADSS office, to Coordinate the new support group in Bundaberg which started in February 2018. I had no hesitation in becoming involved. We had a wonderful attendance and in the four years we have been together have welcomed new members and sadly farewelled some of our beloved members.

We all look forward to the support group, where we meet the first Wednesday of the month at the Bundaberg Neighbourhood Centre. Firm friendships have been formed and all enjoy the Christmas lunch in December. I always remember one member making a note on the sign in sheet saying "please don't close for too long over the Christmas break" showing how important the fellowship meant to them.

During the last twelve months of Lynn's life he struggled with the cancer and was hospitalised many times. He was offered five treatments of Keytruda which was being trialed at that stage, so we travelled to Brisbane to have it administered. Unfortunately it was too late as the cancer had travelled to other organs. Lynn passed away on 1st February 2019 with all his family by his side. I miss him terribly, as we had only been married for ten years.

I must make mention of the love and support I have had from the ADSS in Brisbane and in particular Kerrie who has been with me from the beginning.

Mesothelioma, like all asbestos related diseases, is a cruel disease and no family ever wishes to go through the journey. I am so fortunate to have such a wonderful family who have been on the journey from 2016 to 2019. We have a star in honour of our beloved Poppy and many evenings when we are outside the grandchildren will say "look there is Poppy shining down on us" How true.

I feel honoured to be involved with the ADSS in some small way and know the wonderful work they are doing to assist those affected by this disease. Congratulations to all involved.

I look forward to another year of friendships, social gatherings and giving assistance to anyone wishing to know more about asbestos related diseases.

Lyn Maclean



**If you would like to share your journey,
please email the Society –
inquiries@adss.org.au**

On the National Front

**FLOOD CLEAN-UP COULD CAUSE ASBESTOS DISEASE
SPIKE IN COMING YEARS, EXPERTS WARN**
ABC Radio Brisbane / By Alicia Nally and Rebecca Levingston



Julie and Don Sager want to prevent more deaths like their son's. (ABC News: Sophie Volker)

When Adam Sager was small he told his mother he was going to break records.

Little did the Sager family know that their son and brother would indeed make history — but in the most heartbreaking way possible.

At 25, just 10 months after being diagnosed with mesothelioma, Adam died.

He became the youngest person to have succumbed to the insidious disease caused by inhaling microscopic asbestos fibres.



Tiny fibres of asbestos can enter lungs and develop into deadly cancers or debilitating diseases decades later. (Supplied)

Adam's parents, Julie and Don, believe their eldest child was exposed when he was just 20 months old during a renovation project the couple undertook at their home.

After the 2011 Brisbane floods, Mr and Mrs Sager looked on with horror as thousands of the city's residents, friends, family members — and of course, the famous Mud Army volunteers — poured into damaged homes, ripping apart fibro walls and ceilings made of asbestos.

Two weeks ago, they witnessed the same scenes as floodwater again inundated south-east Queensland, and also lay waste to thousands of homes across the border in New South Wales.

In an effort to honour their son's memory and prevent more people from dying from mesothelioma and other asbestos-related illnesses, the Sagers are speaking out about the dangers of asbestos exposure.



Mr Sager worries asbestos safety has been disregarded after recent flooding. (ABC News: Sophie Volker)

'Fit, healthy' young man taken too early

The Sagers were young parents in the early 1980s when they decided to "save some money" and paint their new kit home in Townsville.

With the help of some others, the pair sanded the walls and kept their young son confined to the house to prevent him from running out onto the street in the new housing estate where they lived.

"We didn't realise the walls were asbestos and we had subjected him to asbestos dust as a 20-month-old toddler," Mrs Sager said.

"We didn't come from a building family, the house we built was prefabricated, it had no warnings on the outside. We just knew nothing."

The family moved to Cairns a few years later and Adam grew into a sporty young man who loved martial arts.

He was due to compete in a tournament in Korea when he was diagnosed with mesothelioma.



Adam was fit and healthy but was diagnosed with the disease just over 20 years after he was exposed to asbestos fibres. (ABC News: Sophie Volker)

On the National Front

**FLOOD CLEAN-UP COULD CAUSE ASBESTOS DISEASE
SPIKE IN COMING YEARS, EXPERTS WARN**
ABC Radio Brisbane / By Alicia Nally and Rebecca Levingston

After battling a persistent cough for weeks, Adam was admitted to hospital one day after collapsing in pain at work.

Doctors drained two litres of fluid from his lungs before conducting dozens of tests, ultimately delivering the terminal cancer diagnosis.

The next 10 months felt like 10 years, said Mrs Sager, "because we spent every waking moment with [Adam]".

"We moved from Cairns without realising we moved from Cairns, we had support from friends and family so we could just concentrate on him," she said.

"We just hung out. If we went to the doctor that was just a small part of the day. He had chemo, he did natural therapies.

"We focused on him without making it a big deal.

"To be honest, even the last night we took him to hospital, we still didn't realise he wasn't coming home with us."



Efforts to clean up after Brisbane's 2011 and 2022 floods could have a deadly legacy in decades to come, says Mrs Sager. (ABC News: Sophie Volker)

Asbestos warnings 'forgotten' in rush to help

Fifteen years after they lost Adam and days from what would have been his 40th birthday, Mr and Mrs Sager want to make sure those cleaning up after last month's floods protect themselves from asbestos exposure.

"We need to get the message out because there were other areas of Brisbane that weren't affected in 2011 that were impacted by the latest storm event," Mr Sager said.

"We saw in the newspapers after the 2011 flood reports of asbestos left on footpaths. People had the best intentions but that's a community health issue.

"That seems to have been forgotten."



There are recorded spikes of asbestos-related disease diagnoses years after natural disasters such as floods. (Jean-Christophe Bonavia: ABC News)

Mrs Sager said it could still be another 10 years before the effects of possible asbestos exposure from 2011 were discovered.

"It could be another 20 years and nothing could happen. That's the fickle thing about asbestos exposure, it's non-discriminatory," she said.

"It doesn't affect everybody but it may affect somebody.

"There could still be a diagnosis coming another 10 years down the road from the 2011 floods, and now here we go again in 2022. It's happening again."

Annual deaths double road toll

Asbestos Disease Support Service general manager Trevor Torrens said each year 4,000 people passed away from an asbestos-related disease.

Sometimes, the smallest exposure to the material can cause the worst disease — mesothelioma.

Treatments can sometimes extend life expectancy for those with mesothelioma to up to five years, but most die within 12 months of diagnosis.

Mr Torrens said there had been spikes in diagnoses of asbestos-related diseases decades on from major natural disasters such as Cyclone Tracy in Darwin and the 1974 Brisbane floods.

"We're yet to see people [diagnosed] from the 2011 floods, the Bundaberg flood, recent bushfires," he said.

"The Queensland spirit in rushing in to help is very commendable but once the fibres become airborne, [they're dangerous].

"Any house built before 1990 potentially includes asbestos; it could be in the roof, the walls, even the lino.

"We don't understand why some people get it and some people don't but the science shows it takes decades to manifest in disease.

"Mesothelioma, asbestosis, pleural effusion are only capable of being diagnosed from asbestos exposure."

For more information on asbestos diseases, visit the Asbestos Disease Support Society website. www.adss.org.au

On the National Front

EYE-WATERING ASBESTOS COST

Sunday Mail Brisbane, Brisbane by Stephanie Bennett



The state oppositions says any asbestos exposure in schools needed to be investigated immediately. (ABC News: Kirsty Sadler)

Millions spent on hazards in schools

ASBESTOS was removed from almost 200 Queensland state primary and high schools in the past financial year, with the government forced to fork out more than \$13m in costs.

A high number of the state's older school buildings are known to contain building materials with the potentially dangerous matter, with asbestos identification procedures occurring at more than 500 schools during the 2020-21 financial year.

Sunnybank State High School was among those with the most serious and extensive asbestos cases, with \$2.6m spent on removal.

Documents obtained under Right to Information revealed there was a delay in late 2020 between a cleaner reporting a concern that contractors installing air-conditioning had drilled into asbestos sheeting and a professional clean-up crew being deployed.

Asbestos was also found at Townsville State High, costing \$697,721 for removal, Mornington Island State School (\$508,375) and Maryborough Special School (\$410,594).

On top of the millions in removal costs, more than \$2.6m was spent on the asbestos audit.

The report states "it is important to know that 'asbestos containing material' (ACM) that is in good condition and left untouched is relatively low risk".



Asbestos was extensively used in Queensland buildings prior to the 1990s. (ABC News: Clarissa Thorpe)

LNP education spokesman Christian Rowan said nothing was more important than student safety.

"These latest figures highlight the critical importance of ongoing asbestos identification and removal in Queensland schools," he said.

Dr Rowan also slammed the government for changing reporting of asbestos incidents from monthly to six-monthly.

"The government now expects parents and teachers to wait every six months for this important information, which is buried in an excel spreadsheet," he said. "The failure to provide this vital safety information publicly on a monthly basis is yet another example of the government abandoning its commitment to being open, transparent and accountable with Queenslanders. Parents, teachers and school staff have a right to know." According to the Department of Education, the change in reporting procedure was an "operational decision" which was taken to "better align reporting to ensure consistency".

"Educational facilities where the presence of asbestos is confirmed or assumed are required to keep and maintain an asbestos register under work health and safety regulations," a spokeswoman said.

"Schools also ensure relevant staff have an awareness of asbestos or have received training for asbestos management responsibilities.

"Parents, caregivers, staff and other visitors are entitled to view the school's asbestos register on request at their school administration."

On the National Front

SUPPORTING THOSE WITH LUNG DISEASE

Burnett Today 18/05/2022



Some of the members of the Asbestos Disease Support Group, Agnes Young, Greg Trevor, Pam Trevor, Audrey Sampson, Ron Sampson and Trevor Torrens at the back. PHOTO: Euan Morrisson

Be aware of asbestos risks -warns the Asbestos Disease Support Society.

The Asbestos Disease Support Society (ADSS) and Turner Freeman Lawyers held an afternoon tea for their members at the Kingaroy RSL on Thursday, 5 May.

According to Asbestos Awareness Australia, more than 4000 people die from asbestos-related diseases each year -this is thousands more deaths than the national road toll.

In 2020, the number of road users killed was 1106, according to the Bureau of Infrastructure and Transport Research Economics' Road Trauma Australia 2020 statistical summary.

Trevor Torrens, the Kingaroy support event's key speaker, said that while cases of Asbestosis were trending down, another asbestosis-related disease called Mesothelioma was more likely to see an increase in cases.

"We know it doesn't take a lot of doses. You don't necessarily have to have used it in a workplace," Mr Torrens said.

"The partners of men [who worked with asbestos] who washed the clothes, they didn't get asbestosis, or pleural plague, they got mesothelioma."

Another case of mesothelioma was in Brisbane.

"A toy wholesaler... he developed mesothelioma and he said he'd never done a renovation [or] picked up a hammer," Mr Torrens said.

"But through investigation, they found out that the toy wholesalers' business was close to a hardware shop and the hardware shop used to cut the fibro and the dust used to blow over."

Mesothelioma is a type of cancer that develops in the thin layer of mesothelial cell tissue that covers many of the internal organs- including the lungs.

According to the Cancer Council, the five-year survival rate for mesothelioma is approximately 6.3 per cent.

Mr Torrens said he expects to see a rise in mesothelioma from natural disasters and people doing DIY renovations.

"We saw a spike in mesothelioma diagnosis from Cyclone Tracy. We've seen spikes from the '74 floods," he said.

"I suspect we'll see spikes from the 2011 Brisbane floods, we'll see spikes from the Bundaberg floods, Townsville floods.

"I think you'll see some spikes from the recent floods in February... and good on the mud army. That's fine, but they go in and they rip things out."

Before Mr Torrens took on his role with the ADSS and learnt about asbestos, he too was part of the mud army after the 2011 Brisbane floods.

"It was probably not too bad, because it was still in a damp condition, but it was January, it was hot... and I just chucked it on the footpath and of course it dried out," he said.

When asbestos is wet it poses little threat, but when dry and frayed the fibres pose a serious risk. The particles are hundredths the size of a human hair so you often won't even see the follicles.

People doing renovations are also considered at-risk. Mr Torrens said any properties built before 1990 is very likely to have asbestos in it.

"Where we're seeing a trickle start to come through, which is going to increase, is home renovations," he said.

"Particularly people doing their own, they do DIY those people will try and save money, but a lot of them wouldn't know it's asbestos."

As the consequence of asbestos-related diseases usually take years before the onset is noticed, some people will take little care even if they know they're dealing with asbestos.

"They can't take back the exposure, but it's not like putting a finger into an electric socket and saying 'well, I shouldn't do that' they've been exposed," he said.

Mr Torrens said that silicosis- another dust-related disease, is one that more people are approaching the group for support.

Many of the people with silicosis that Mr Torrens has found, work with the manufacture and fitting of stone benchtops.

A lot of the factories where these stone benchtops are made did not have the right procedures in place -it is because of this lack of procedures that Mr Torrens said, that workers have developed silicosis.

"In fact, one of the fellows, who's in his 40s, told me it is like a badge of honour- you come out dusty... they've had intense exposure, because of the lack of controls," Mr Torrens said.

"We say there's a failure of the employers to provide a safe workplace and there's also a failure by the Work Health and Safety Regulator to ensure a safe workplace."

On the National Front

WITTENOOM IS OFFICIALLY CLOSED, BUT CAN THE ASBESTOS BE CLEANED UP?
ABC Pilbara - By Tom Robinson



The remaining homes at Wittenoom will be demolished by the state government. (Supplied)

Cleaning up the asbestos in and around Wittenoom would be one of the biggest and most complex mine site rehabilitations in history, according to a mine restoration expert.

But Curtin University's Adam Cross says rehabilitating the land in Western Australia's Pilbara region, which could cost more than \$100 million, would still be a worthy investment.

Dr Cross's comments come as traditional owners renew calls for the McGowan government to lead the clean-up and return their country to its original state.

The state government formally closed Wittenoom last month, but has not released rehabilitation

plans for the former asbestos mining region, which it feels will probably never be safe to visit.

The disastrous industry left behind three million tonnes of asbestos tailings, which litter the 46,000 hectare Wittenoom Asbestos Management Area, now considered the largest contaminated site in the southern hemisphere.



Asbestos tailings are littered around Wittenoom. (Supplied)

Dr Cross said efforts to restore the landscape would be unprecedented because of the scale of the task and the potentially deadly risks for the people doing it.

"Wittenoom really is something that is almost unparalleled around the world," he said.

"The physical area that now potentially has been affected is going to make it a significant challenge."

Key Points

- Wittenoom was formally closed by the state government last month
- An expert and a traditional owner say the site should be remediated no matter the cost
- The government says restoration goals need to be "realistic"

On the National Front

WITTENOOM IS OFFICIALLY CLOSED, BUT CAN THE ASBESTOS BE CLEANED UP?
ABC Pilbara - By Tom Robinson



Dr Cross says Wittenoom's natural environment should be restored, but it won't be easy. (Supplied: Curtin University)

Owners want country back

The country surrounding Wittenoom belongs to the Banjima native title holders of the Pilbara.

Banjima elder Maitland Parker said the final closure of the town was "the best news", but his attention had turned to fixing the contamination.

The asbestos has prevented Mr Parker from visiting his country around Wittenoom for more than 20 years.

He says the government should spare no expense in its rehabilitation efforts.

"I don't care what the cost is," Mr Parker said.

"It's about time the government put their hand in their pocket and did something about it.

"It's a legacy that we will carry — it's so important for us to take the fight on to the government about the clean-up."

WA Lands Minister John Carey said the Wittenoom Steering Committee would be re-established to assess and advise the government on management options for the area.

He said the cost of restoration had not been estimated and goals needed to be "realistic", because completely cleaning up the site might not be possible.

"No detailed work has been done on estimating the cost of clean-up, but given the severity and extent of the contamination, it would be a significant undertaking," he said.

"Sadly, even with remediation, it is unlikely the area will ever be safe to visit."



Asbestos tailings near Wittenoom. (Supplied)



All types of asbestos have been banned in the UK since 1999.
Photograph: David Gee/Alamy

According to documents, Cape played down dangers and lobbied for warning labels to be tempered

One of the UK's biggest manufacturers of asbestos and the industry bodies that it co-founded historically withheld information on risks posed by the carcinogenic material, playing down the dangers while lobbying the government for product warnings to be tempered, according to documents released after a lengthy court battle.

A lawyer who acted for the Asbestos Victims Support Groups Forum UK in its fight to obtain the documents about Cape compared its behaviour to the tobacco industry's former refusal to admit evidence of harms from smoking while its own research showed the opposite.

Despite all types of asbestos being banned in the UK since 1999, it still kills thousands of people every year.

According to the court documents, a partner company of Cape's was considering a warning label on asbestos products in 1958, but Cape advised it that "a caution label on our products and none on [our competitors] would make our selling efforts most difficult".

They also state that in 1969, Cape's group medical adviser accepted in a document that the fatal cancer mesothelioma could be caused by "short and possibly small" exposure and that "no type of asbestos proved innocent". In the same year, a research review by the Asbestos Research Council (ARC), of which Cape was a founding member, accepted the link between asbestos and mesothelioma, stating: "Elimination of the dust hazard is therefore the only answer."

Nevertheless, when Cape began to label its product in 1976 with a "take care with Asbestos" warning, it said "breathing asbestos dust can damage health", but made no reference to the risk of mesothelioma, the documents show.

Additionally, from 1966, the ARC successfully lobbied the government for regulation of asbestos products to be on a "maximum allowable concentration" basis rather than the "no dust policy" that had been proposed.

The forum says the documents also show Cape's in-house sampling data threw up significantly higher dust counts than industry standards for accepted levels of exposure, but data unfavourable to Cape was withheld.

At the same time, the company provided reassurances about asbestos. A 1976 booklet by the Asbestos Information Committee, of which Cape was also a founding member, said: "The normal use of asbestos products should not be a cause for anxiety."

Advertisement

In light of the information in the documents, the forum is demanding that Cape apologise and make a £10m donation towards mesothelioma research.

The forum's chair, Joanne Gordon, said: "We believe victims and their families deserve this by way of an apology from Cape for their deliberate deception and shamelessly causing deaths, adding insult by vehemently defending cases."

The documents originate from litigation brought against Cape on behalf of insurers by who had settled employers' liability claims resulting from workers' exposure to asbestos and who wanted to recoup some of their outlay.

The case was settled before judgment, but Graham Dring, then chair of the forum, successfully fought a three-year battle for the forum to access the court documents. Cape resisted disclosure, taking the case to the supreme court, but Dring succeeded in setting a legal precedent allowing written material placed before a court to be seen by a non-party.

Harminder Bains, partner at Leigh Day, and whose father died of mesothelioma, acted for the forum on a pro bono basis for three years. She said she felt "revulsion and anger" when going through the documents. "They clearly show that Cape knew of the high risk of fatal disease, yet deliberately withheld information and lobbied the government to protect their profits," she said. "As a result of their greed, many men and women, including my father, have lost their lives."

"This cover-up would not have come to the light had it not been for the forum's persistence."

A spokesperson for Cape said: "Cape was taken over in 2017 and its current management cannot comment on this matter, based on historical events that occurred over 40 years ago. However, Cape remains fully committed to the scheme of arrangement that was put in place and approved by a UK court to provide compensation payouts and will continue to meet all its obligations associated with that scheme."

JAPAN'S TOP COURT HOLDS STATE LIABLE FOR ASBESTOS DISEASES IN WORKERS

Kyodo News - (May 17, 2021 - 22:45)

Tokyo - Japan's top court on Monday ruled in favour of around 500 plaintiffs in four suits seeking damages from the state over diseases contracted by construction workers following exposure to asbestos.

In the first unified judgment handed down by the Supreme Court over the suits, the ruling said the government was negligent in its duty to protect workers from contracting lung cancer and other diseases linked to asbestos.

It said manufacturers of construction materials containing asbestos were also responsible to some extent, in its ruling on the four lawsuits filed with district courts in Tokyo, Yokohama, Osaka and Kyoto.

Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga, who will meet with the plaintiffs on Tuesday, is planning to offer them an apology, a ruling party source said.

As a way to support the victims, the ruling coalition of the Liberal Democratic Party and Komeito decided to propose that the government pay compensation of up to 13 million yen (\$119,000) to each victim exposed to asbestos.

Toshitaka Onodera, a lawyer for the plaintiffs, told reporters it will accept the compensation proposal.

In the ruling, Presiding Judge Takuya Miyama said the state should have warned of the dangers of asbestos by October 1975 through labels on construction materials or at construction sites, and should have instructed workers to wear dust-protective masks.

"It significantly lacks rationality" that the state did not exercise its authority to regulate the use of asbestos, Miyama said. The substance, a naturally occurring fibrous mineral, was widely used for insulation, fire protection and sound absorption, in buildings.

Since 2008, a number of damages suits, including the four on Monday, have been filed nationwide related to asbestos exposure at construction sites, with a total of 1,200 plaintiffs as of April this year, according to the lawyers involved. The plaintiffs include bereaved family members of workers exposed to asbestos.

"I feel responsibility and offer my deep apologies," said Yoshihisa Tamura, minister of health, labor and welfare, in a statement.

The four suits were examined by the top court after high court rulings differed in assigning responsibility to the state and manufacturers. The top court had previously ordered the state and manufacturers to pay compensation to the victims but had not provided detailed reasoning for awarding damages.

The plaintiffs argued that state regulations for asbestos, which did not require workers to wear protective masks, were insufficient. They also said manufacturers failed to properly indicate the dangers of the material.

The state, meanwhile, argued it only had a responsibility to protect company employees as self-employed workers are responsible for their own health and safety.

Manufacturers denied responsibility on the grounds that it was impossible to confirm which materials were responsible for the diseases contracted.

The use of the substance was gradually regulated as it was found that inhaling asbestos fibers could cause lung cancer and other diseases. Due to the decades-long latency period, it was referred to as a "silent time bomb."

A law to provide financial support to people suffering from asbestos-linked diseases took effect in Japan in 2006.



Lawyers hold up banners showing victory in an asbestos health damage case in front of the Supreme Court in Tokyo on May 17, 2021. (Kyodo)

The Society at Work



15.3.22 - Gold Coast Morning Tea



15.3.22 - Gold Coast Morning Tea



17.3.22 - Rockhampton Support Group



22.3.22 - Ipswich Support Group



25.3.22 - BERT CIP Charity Golf Day



31.3.22 - Redlands Morning Tea



31.3.22 - Redlands Morning Tea



20.4.22 - Maroochydore Morning Tea



21.4.22 - Rockhampton Support Group



28.4.22 - International Workers Memorial Day



2.5.22 - May Day



2.5.22 - May Day

The Society at Work



11.5.22 - Chermside Morning Tea



11.5.22 - Chermside Morning Tea



23.5.22 - AMWU Delegates Convention



23.5.22 - Beaudesert Morning Tea



24.5.22 - Ipswich Support Group



1.6.22 - Bundaberg Support Group



6.6.22 - Cairns Morning Tea



7.6.22 - Townsville Morning Tea



8.6.22 - Mackay Morning Tea



9.6.22 - Rockhampton Morning Tea



9.6.22 - Rockhampton Morning Tea



29.6.22 - Warwick Morning Tea

Upcoming ADSS Events



- 3.8.22 – Bundaberg Support Group
- 4.8.22 – Chermside Support Group
- 10.8.22 – Hervey Bay Support Group
- 12.8.22 – Sunnybank Support Group
- 18.8.22 – Rockhampton Support Group
- 23.8.22 – Ipswich Support Group
- 25.8.22 – Gold Coast Support Group
- 31.8.22 – North Brisbane Morning Tea Event –
Norths Leagues Club Kallangur**
- 6.9.22 – Ipswich Morning Tea –
Brothers Leagues Club Ipswich**
- 7.9.22 – Bundaberg Support Group
- 9.9.22 – Sunnybank Support Group
- 14.9.22 – Hervey Bay Support Group
- 14.9.22 – ADSS Charity Race Day**
- 15.9.22 – Rockhampton Support Group
- 27.9.22 – Ipswich Support Group
- 28.9.22 – Sunshine Coast Support Group
- 19.10.22 – ADSS Symposium and AGM –
Brisbane City Hall**
- 25.11.22 – ADSS Ecumenical**

For further information or to RSVP to any of our ADSS events, please feel free to contact the Society on 1800 776 412 or email inquiries@adss.org.au

ADSS Member - Richard McKenzie and Valma Dalton,

Members of the Society since March 2020 with some kind words about the Society services.

“Really good to catch up with other members who understand what you are going through. The morning tea information session are excellent, fabulous morning tea, lots of giveaway merchandise. The staff at ADSS go out of their way to help. Plus the DOTS referral for Occupational Therapist to visit us at home has also been helpful and made a huge difference.”

Occupational Therapy for ADSS members:



Why?

What?

How?

Why Occupational Therapy Assessment?

ADSS has partnered with an experienced Occupational Therapy (OT) practice, trained in the management of asbestos related diseases. We have worked closely with ADSS since 2011. These services are funded by ADSS.

The aim of our assessment is to maximise your safety and independence and to plan for your future.

We want you to feel prepared for possible changes to your lifestyle. And, to help you and your family avoid having to manage changes in 'crisis mode'.

Together with ADSS' own Social Worker, we can offer a team, community health care approach.

What is Occupational Therapy?

Occupational Therapy (OT) is a client-focussed Allied Health profession concerned with promoting health and well-being.

The goal of OT is to enable people to participate in the activities (the things that 'occupy' them) of their everyday life.

OTs assess each individual wholly. We are trained to assess physically, cognitively, socially and psychologically.

We aim to help you meet your goals of staying at home and participating in home, family and community activities that are important to you.

How we can help:

- Managing your energy levels so that you can get through each day, and each week
- Maintaining quality of life by helping you to keep doing the activities that are important to you
- Pain Management skills that enable you to better understand, and better communicate your pain and pain experience
- Improving your home environment, safety and accessibility
- Maintaining or improving your mobility and ease of movement
- Improving or maintaining your independence in everyday activities
- Accessing health services for your needs
- Reducing future risks and loss of independence
- Reducing falls risk
- Helping to prevent hospitalisation

Working together for your quality of life and peace of mind.

Note: Veterans and war widows may be eligible for FREE ongoing treatment via DVA funding.

For further information on DOTS Occupational Therapy Services, please call the Society on 1800 776 412.

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

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We thank all members for their ongoing support.

