

Summer 2022

NEWSLETTER

adss

Asbestos Disease
Support Society

Asbestos Disease Support Society
Silicosis Support Network

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1800 776 412 | inquiries@adss.org.au

inquiries@silicosissupport.org.au

Silicosis
Support Network



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.**

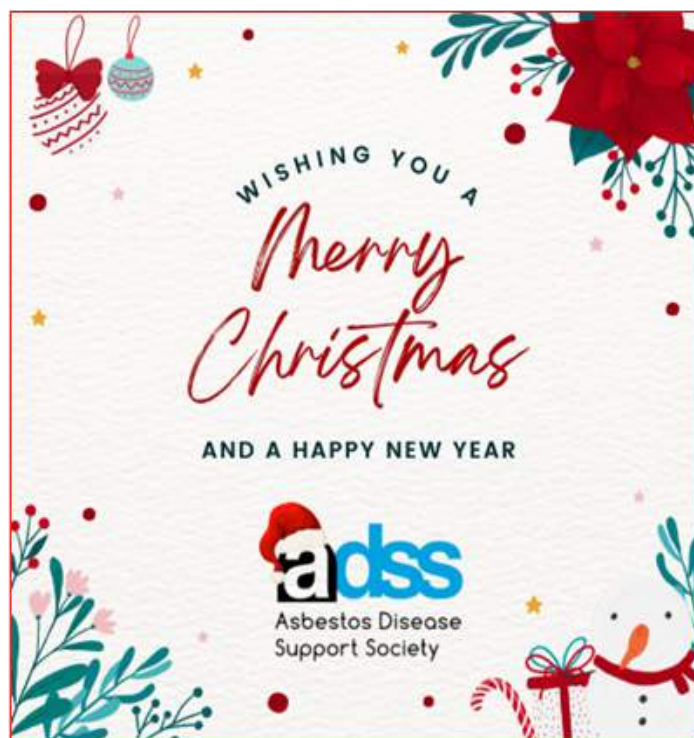
**Call the Society if you would like to
discuss any of these services**

1800 776 412



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We advise that this office will close at **12:00pm on Friday, 16 December 2022** and will re open at **8:30am on Monday, 9 January 2023**.

Our phone lines will be operating during this time, please leave a message and we will get back to you as soon as we can.

Alternatively, our after-hours mobile number is **0427 785 873**.

Newsletter front cover: In recognition of National Asbestos Awareness Week, The Story Bridge was lit up blue on Monday 21st November 2022.
Photo Credit – Kerrie Williams

In Loving Memory

Ross Neville Pickard
Alan John Krushka
Paul Michael Jones
Barry Arnold Jones
Selwyn Francis Nalder
Shane Michael Harrison
Beitske Smallegange
Raymond Batty
Anna Sutherst
Robert Dingeman Huyssen
Marie Eva Sawrey
Ronald Steven Horne
Beverley Perry
Desmond (Des) King
Terrence (Terry) Bailey



General Managers Report

TREVOR TORRENS



Farewell from Trevor

“How lucky I am to have something that makes saying goodbye so hard.” (a quote by A.A. Milne – author of Winnie-the-Pooh).

I am retiring as General Manager of ADSS, and from the workforce in general. While my retirement marks the end of my so called “working life” I am excited to start the next chapter which will include more time with family (particularly our first grandchild, Harry), travel and lots more time on the golf course – there is no such thing as a bad day on a golf course, just some challenges requiring solution-based thought processes!

However, I am very excited to still be involved with the Society as a director, following my recent appointment to the Board.

I started with ADSS on 5 March 2018, and to say It has been a privilege to be part of this organisation would be an understatement. Connecting with and providing support to the Society’s members has been my number one priority throughout my tenure as General Manager. I have met and got to know many, many good people - often under tragic circumstances. It has also been extremely heart-warming the personal messages I have received from members on how the information and services provided by the Society have made such a positive difference in their journey with this insidious disease. Presenting at the community morning teas and attending support groups has been a highlight and I hope to get to as many as possible in my role as a director.

As the saying goes, there is no ‘I’ in TEAM. I would like to acknowledge all the of the Society’s staff that I have worked with since commencing in the role. I deeply appreciate the devotion and compassion of the Society’s current team of Kerrie Williams, Kay Ravbar, Karen Selmon and Rhonda Wheatley – you have made a difference and I thank you for your support. In particular, a special mention to Kerrie and Kay who have been with the Society for many (many) years – their commitment, kindness and empathy is truly appreciated by the Society’s members. I am also grateful for the support they have provided to me as General Manager.

Beat wishes to Karen Selmon, our Clinical Support Nurse who is also retiring, but will be joining me on the ADSS Board as a director.

I would also like to acknowledge the Board of the Society, our wonderful volunteers and support group facilitators for their commitment – a big thank you from me and our members!

My final thank you is to Thady Blundell, Queensland managing partner at Turner Freeman lawyers and very well known to the Society’s members. Thady’s support, assistance and mentorship since I commenced has been invaluable and very much appreciated on both a personal and organisational level. Thank you Thady!

The measure of success can take many forms. Not long after I was appointed as General Manager, I set an organisational (and personal) goal to improve the information and services provided to the Society’s members. I feel that goal has been achieved. As the ‘GM’ baton is passed to Lee McCallum, I wish her all the best and success on continuing to provide and improve the valuable services to the Society’s members.

All the Best
Trevor



General Managers Report

LEE MCCALLUM



Hello from Lee

Wow! What an amazing Society and I know that I have been extremely fortunate to be entrusted with the General Manager role (and big shoes to fill of Trevor's).

I am delighted to have come onboard at the Society and am very excited about building on the great work already done and to continue expanding our services to assist our members. It is an absolute privilege to meet you all and do this work. I have been saying I joined at the right time – lots of support group meetings and now Christmas lunches with our wonderful members.

A little bit about myself – I grew up on dairy and potato cropping farm in North-West Tasmania. I can say, with absolute certainty, that I cannot foresee myself moving back to Tassie or ever being a farmer – very hard work! After finishing school in grade 10, I took myself off to the Royal Australian Navy. I served for almost six (6) years as a Communications and Information Systems Sailor (CIS – or for all of you ex RAN – the combined branch of RO and SIGS). My service took me to some wonderful places, and I had some interesting experiences, including Active Service in the Gulf, peacekeeping in the Solomon Islands to name a few.

Following my medical discharge, I was in Cairns, and felt that I was ready to go back and study, so I completed a Bachelor of Business – Bachelor of Laws degree. Since that time, I have been working as a lawyer, predominately in injury. It has been a journey and now this is my next career path that I am very excited about.

I have two wonderful children, both teenagers! A son who is a very keen fisherman who genuinely thinks school gets in the way of fishing, and a daughter who loves nothing more than her guinea pigs and is very crafty. I am very lucky and fortunate that they are happy, healthy and love a good argument!

In my short time that I have been here, we have been working hard on recruiting for Karen Selmon's position of Clinical Support Nurse. At the time of print, we have a couple of interviews to go, with some exceptional candidates, so we are confident of filling that position very shortly.

There are some other matters which remain ongoing – Trevor has done a fantastic job with keeping the Government accountable to date, and I hope that I can do the same.

2022 Annual General Meeting

The Society's Annual General Meeting was held at Brisbane City Hall on Wednesday 19th October. Thank you to those members who were able to attend. The Chair of the Society, Phil Blair delivered the Board Report to members which can be found on the Society's website at www.adss.org.au/annual-reports-financial-statements/

We have had some changes to our Board of Directors this year. Some well-known faces have retired, and some fresh faces have come onto the Board. We have farewelled Trish Ramsay, Sheila Hunter and Peter Close from the Board. In their place we have Trevor Torrens, Karen Selmon and Ross Davidson.



The returning Directors are Phil Blair (Chair), Bianca Neve (Deputy), Margot Hoyte, Patricia Cini and Garry Rogers.

Finances

The Society's 2021/2022 Audited Financial Statements were also presented at the AGM.

In the 2021/22 financial year, the Society produced a surplus of \$89,530.00. As at 30 June 2022, the Society had a net asset base of approximately \$2.9 million dollars. This was certainly aided by our 2022 Charity Race Day which raised just over \$128,000.00.

Additionally, in terms of financial stewardship, it is important to note that the auditors confirmed an unqualified audit opinion.

The Society's audited financials can be found on our website at: www.adss.org.au/annual-reports-financial-statements/

On behalf of the Society, I would like to thank the construction industry, our corporate sponsors and the many donations from individuals that we regularly receive.

Our finances are in good shape, which allows the Society to provide comprehensive services to asbestos and silica disease sufferers, their family and carers, undertake awareness activities and advocate on asbestos and silica related issues.

General Managers Report

LEE MCCALLUM



National Asbestos Awareness Week

This year's National Asbestos Awareness Week was held 21-27 November. The campaign is again focusing on asking Australians to Think Twice About Asbestos and challenged complacency by reminding home renovators and tradespeople that the danger of asbestos is far from over.

Asbestos is still present in millions of homes, as well as public and commercial buildings, across Australia. At the height of its use, asbestos was in over 3,000 products and many of these products are still contained in our homes and workplaces.

The only way of eliminating asbestos disease is by preventing exposure to asbestos fibres.

In recognition of National Asbestos Awareness Week, the Society organised a lighting program in the colours of blue:

- 21 November: Story Bridge, Victoria Bridge, Reddacliff Place sculptures
- 21 to 27 November: Queensland Parliament House
- 25 November: Queensland Country Bank Stadium Townsville

The Society would like to thank the Brisbane and Townsville City Councils and the Queensland Parliament Office of the Speaker for their assistance with the lighting program.



Nationally

At the national level, the Society continues to play its part through membership of the Non-Government Asbestos Advisory Committee, which is overseen by the Australian Government's Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency.

This committee is undertaking some interesting work, including:

- Identifying asbestos safety training options for workers entering trades where they are likely to encounter asbestos
- Developing asbestos guidance and awareness materials for real estate agents and property managers
- Developing a national picture of where ACMs are located in homes called a residential heatmap; and
- Exploring incentives to encourage the safe removal and disposal of ACMs from homes.

This is important work and it will be interesting to observe the Australian Government's response to any future recommendations.

Symposium

We held our annual symposium and AGM on 19 October 2022. We heard from Dr Ian Brown (Thoracic Physician) and Professor Ken O'Byrne (Oncologist).

Interestingly, Professor Ken O'Byrne was very excited about some results coming out of new clinical trials in the treatment for mesothelioma. Whilst there has not been a cure, there have been some very positive results which have shown to slow down the growth rates, people are living longer and the symptoms and side effects were not as severe. In his own words he was "excited" (and we all know how rare it is for a medical specialist to use the words "excited").

Ecumenical Service



The Society's 30th Ecumenical Service was held at the Cathedral of St Stephen on Friday 25th of November. The service is the Society's most important event of the year where we came together to remember those who have succumbed or have been inflicted by an asbestos or silica related disease. We gave thanks to all those people who do their utmost in supporting the Society and supporting sufferers, their families and carers - whether they be Society volunteers, doctors, researchers, carers, community leaders, family members, lawyers, unions or employers. Without the support of so many people, the Society would not be able to do what it does for that we are very appreciative.

General Managers Report

LEE MCCALLUM



Thank you Event

On Wednesday 23 November we hosted a “Thank You” event for our corporate sponsors, volunteers, lawyers, doctors, unions and politicians that have, and continue to support us over the past 30 years. Without their assistance we would not be where we are, in the fortunate position of being able to assist in easing the suffering, of our members.



At ADSS, we are continuing to grow from strength to strength. I really want to emphasize the “we”. Without everyone, collectively, we would not be able to shoulder some of the burden for our members. Some of what we do include hundreds of support calls from our very dedicated and wonderful volunteers Pat and Mark to check on the welfare of members, we also have:

- Support our wonderful Social Worker Rhonda to assist people with their well-being, understand and assist in accessing entitlements and be a support in a multi-disciplinary approach
- Support from a Clinical Support nurse to provide expert information and advice specific to the individual
- Access to Medical Aids Loan Scheme for items such as portable oxygen concentrators
- Occupational Therapy Assessments
- Dietetics and Nutrition consultation
- Morning teas with other members
- Telephone support from our volunteers
- Symposium with leading medical specialists who give up their time to come and discuss the medical advances being made;
- Quarterly newsletters; and
- Consultation with our legal partners – who always ensure that our members are spoken to very quickly and the level of service they are given is second to none.

Through your generosity over the years, the tireless effort by our volunteers and corporate sponsors alike, we have created real change.

Kay & Kerrie also deserve a very special mention, both who have been with the Society for a very long time. Their dedication and commitment to our members is truly exceptional. They go above and beyond day in and day out, incredibly caring and compassionate, and the Society is truly very lucky to have them both.

Thank you for your donation

The Society would like to thank all those that have made a donation to the Society 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 related matters. In particular, we would like to recognise the following donations over \$500.00.

- Turner Freeman Lawyers
- CFMEU Members
- Mr Don Harris
- The Sutherst Family
- Vend2Go

Finally Merry Christmas and Safe and Happy Holidays

I would like to thank the Society’ staff – Kerrie Williams, Kay Ravbar, Karen Selmon, Rhonda Wheatley and our wonderful volunteers, (particularly Pat Cini and Mark O’Connor) and the dedicated Board of Directors for all of their hard work and assistance throughout the year.

On behalf of the Board of Directors and the staff of the Society I wish you a Merry Christmas, joyful holidays and a happy and safe New Year.



MONITORING ASBESTOS AND DUST EXPOSURE

The nature of asbestos and other dust related lung disease is that the development of the disease usually (although not always) follows a lengthy period of dust exposure and develops over a long period of time. In fact many dust diseases never stop developing and indeed worsening.

Whilst some diseases such as mesothelioma can be associated with quite low level asbestos exposure, other conditions such as asbestosis, silicosis, and other fibrosis type lung disease tends to result from workplace exposure over a considerable period of time and do usually take years to develop.

What often occurs is a person might be undergoing medical treatment for an unrelated condition and have a chest x-ray. This might disclose some scarring on the lung, which could be due to asbestos, silica, or some other dust.

The finding on the chest x-ray might be quite mild at that point in time, but that is not the end of the story. These changes can and often do progress over a period of time. The Society has had members who have been with the Society for one or two decades, and over that period the dust related disease has progressed. A person might initially be diagnosed with pleural plaques (which is asbestos scarring on the outside of the lung), but then 5 to 10 years later might be diagnosed with asbestosis. Over that time period as well, breathing becomes more laboured and a person becomes more symptomatic.

What the above emphasises is the importance of having regular follow up. Whilst chest x-rays and particularly CT scans should not be carried out needlessly or too often, dust related lung disease needs to be monitored. Members should be guided by their treating doctors as to frequency of chest x-rays and chest CT scans and whilst again they should not be carried out too frequently, changes need to be monitored – particularly if symptoms are worsening.

It is not unusual for a person to initially be diagnosed with quite mild dust related changes, but over a period of time progress to more significant changes which are interfering with ability to breathe and causing impairment. For dust exposure in Queensland there are strict time limits that apply to lodging workers' compensation claims, so it is important that conditions be monitored, and even more important that action be taken promptly after worsening in the condition is diagnosed.

Dust related lung disease is latent (in the sense that it usually develops decades after exposure) and the possibility of progression never ceases. This emphasises the importance of regular monitoring and discussion with the treating doctor about frequency of chest x-ray and CT scans, and following up on those results.

If you have any questions about the frequency of being testing and how to go about it, please contact the Society.



Get to know our Corporate Sponsor

CORVEX – ASBESTOS REMOVAL EXPERTS

Introducing one of our wonderful sponsors – **Corvex**.

Corvex has taken the asbestos and hazmat removal industry by storm! Their team is determined to promote change through innovative ideas to ensure safety is at the forefront when dealing with hazardous materials such as asbestos.

Why are Corvex a corporate sponsor of ADSS?

Corvex are proud corporate sponsors and active supporters of the Asbestos Disease Support Society. We believe it is our duty to provide support to our industry and help those in need – particularly as they have usually left the industry a long time ago, but have worked in it their entire working lives.

Tell us a bit about Corvex

From humble beginnings, Corvex began with two (2) well known industry professionals and company Directors, Leigh Maxwell and Jered Cawdell.

We (Leigh and Jered) wanted to create a company where safety was at the forefront of our work – and safety was practiced! Our commitment to ensuring the health and safety of our employees, client and communities that we work within are our utmost priority. We believe that everyone is responsible to achieve a SAFE day, a SAFE tomorrow and importantly ensure SAFETY well into the future.

Corvex work with a number of specialists and we collaborate with leading builders, government agencies, worker unions and demolition contractors within the industry to safely tackle some of the largest and most complex asbestos removal projects throughout Australia.

Whilst we are in between large scale projects, we are actively promoting industry change, and alongside our hardworking Administration Manager, Korbie Lill, we are continuing to develop new and innovate ways to raise awareness around the dangers of Asbestos. We of course love to continually raise money to help support ADSS, and we always try to involve not only our direct team, but also our team members and colleagues working on construction sites.

Some of the things we have done to date to raise funds for ADSS include selling raffle tickets, undertaken auctions, held fundraising events across sites, organised fundraising competitions and have undertaken company direct donations.

Corvex commend the work ADSS do day in and day out to help provide support to those in need and put smiles back on people's faces.

Here at Corvex we are constantly looking for opportunities to educate our industry, continue to raise awareness about the dangers of asbestos to builders, demolition contractors, various trades, labourers and apprentices onsite.

The Corvex team are dedicated to shaping a new standard of safety in the construction industry. The importance of continuing to educate new people into the construction industry on the dangers of asbestos will help to ensure safety and prevention of any asbestos related diseases. We, along with the rest of Australia, strive to eradicate asbestos related diseases!



Society Social Worker

RHONDA WHEATLEY



Seasons greetings to all our members. The Christmas holiday time is full of mixed emotions: a time of joy and excitement, travel, spending time with family and friends but for some members it will be the first Christmas without their loved one, a sad and lonely time.

How do you spend Christmas holidays? It can be a very difficult time for families who are bereaved. Special occasions can bring the grief flooding back. Here are some strategies from the Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement that hopefully will assist.

Anniversary reactions are normal. Knowing that you're likely to experience anniversary reactions can help you understand them and even turn them into opportunities for healing.

- Look at your diary or calendar and make a note of events and milestones that might be difficult for you.
- Start thinking about what you can do during these times to look after yourself.
- Try and spend time with people who are supportive of you.
- Decide how you want to spend the day and let family and friends know.
- You might want to write a journal, making a note of what worked and what did not.

- Give yourself permission to not be okay, free yourself from expectations.
- Consider expressing your feelings in a creative way, such as artwork, writing or listening to music.
- Connect with others, if it feels right, share your memories.
- Stay connected to your usual support systems.
- Consider doing something you would not usually do in memory of the deceased; make a donation in their name, plant a tree or perhaps do some volunteer work.
- Do something that makes you feel good. It may be as simple as reading a magazine, going for a walk, listening to music, fishing, getting a massage or enjoying a cup of coffee at your favourite cafe.
- Take it slow and easy, rest if you feel tired, try not to over-commit yourself
- Choosing how to sign cards and whose name to include can be difficult. Give yourself permission not to send cards if that feels too confronting.

For more information please see

<https://www.grief.org.au/> or **1800 642 066**



Society Social Worker



RHONDA WHEATLEY

If you are planning a holiday, here is information from Lung Foundation which has some excellent tips. The rising temperatures, wet weather and increased humidity can impact on the severity of your symptoms too. If you're living with or caring for someone with a lung condition, it can help to take some time to plan ahead to ensure you can all make the most of the Christmas cheer. <https://lungfoundation.com.au/blog/your-festive-season-lung-health-guide/>

- **Have medicines on hand.** Make sure you have an adequate supply of your daily medicines as well as any emergency medicines readily available to get you through the holiday period. Monitor your symptoms and have a plan in place if your condition worsens.
- **Stay hydrated.** We all know drinking water is important for our health, but when your daily routine is interrupted it can be easy to forget. It may help to avoid drinks that increase dehydration like alcohol, tea and coffee. Foods high in water content such as fruits and salads, and smaller, cooler meals can help too. Focus on foods that are easily digestible, low in fat and contain carbohydrates and protein.
- **Keep an eye on the weather.** During bushfire season, it's important you look after yourself and be aware of extra pollutants in the air. Where possible, in areas affected by bush fires and smoke, people with poor lung health should stay indoors when smoke is thick. Keep windows and doors closed and use air conditioning on the recycle mode.
- **Travel plans.** Whether it's a short road trip or a long flight, travel can take its toll on your body. If you're living with or caring for someone with a lung condition, there may be additional considerations such as portable oxygen and regular medications. Where possible, allow extra travel time and plan ahead for regular breaks.

- **Stay cool.** Remember to stay safe in the sun. Avoid going outside between 11am and 3pm and aim to do activities such as gardening, exercise and housework in the cooler parts of the day. Wear light-coloured and loose-fitting clothes, wide brim hats, sunscreen and sunglasses.
- **Relax and unwind.** Holidays can be busy and sometimes stress can take hold. Remember, you don't need to do everything on your to-do list in one day. Work out which tasks are a priority, and work through them one at a time, taking breaks to recover where needed to maximise your energy levels. It's ok to ask for help from friends or family to lighten the load. Simple things like deep breathing exercises can also help you relax.
- **Plan your trip in advance.** Places you liked to visit in the past may not be suitable now. Think about how far you can walk, how many stairs you can manage, how accessible the toilets will be and what transport you can use.
- **Ask your doctor for a brief medical history to take with you.** This should include a list of your prescribed medicines and your oxygen prescription.
- **Research travel insurance** as different insurance companies have different policies for people with lung conditions, so find the best deal for you. Many travel agencies offer holidays for people with special requirements.

Merry Christmas to all our members, their family, and friends. Looking forward to speaking with you in the new year.





SUPPORT GROUPS



Support groups bring people together who are going through or have gone through similar experiences. This common ground might be a cancer diagnosis, chronic medical conditions, bereavement, or care giving.

A literature review commissioned by Connect Groups revealed that there is a large amount of evidence in the effectiveness of support groups, suggesting that they not only aid individuals through education, accepting, empowering and elevating hope, their reach also extends to include family and friends.

The value of support groups can help in many ways including;

- showing that you are not alone,
- providing you with emotional and social support,
- helping you adjust to your situation,
- allowing you to share information about your situation and how you feel,
- offering advice and a place to learn from others,
- giving tips on how to live with your condition or illness, and
- improving motivation.

Being a member of a support group has benefits of reducing stress, depression, anxiety and/or fatigue.

A support group provides an opportunity for people to share personal experiences and feelings, coping strategies, or it can be as simple as sharing a cuppa in a social environment with people who are likely to have a common purpose or experience and are more likely to understand each other.

So if you feel that you might benefit from joining in one of our support groups, please contact us. ADSS has support groups in Rockhampton, Bundaberg, Hervey Bay, Sunshine Coast, Cherside, Sunnybank, Ipswich and Gold Coast.

A YEAR IN REVIEW AND THANK YOU

As the year comes to a close, we reflect back, remember and celebrate that we were able to see family and friends again after a couple of years of turmoil and uncertainty. Here at ADSS, we were able to recommence our morning tea events and support groups which were very well attended.

As the society's Clinical Support Nurse, I was able to catch up at these events with members with whom I have spoken to over the past year. In the past 12 months, I have connected with members and families who have been diagnosed with Mesothelioma and an asbestos related disease. This includes 317 phone calls to "check in" and see if we can provide information and/or support, or just an ear to listen.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for allowing me to speak with you. It is an absolute privilege to help provide support and to help navigate different pathways you may be on.

As this is my final article as the society's Clinical Support Nurse, I would like to acknowledge that this role can only be effective when you are surrounded by a team of dedicated people. These are the ADSS staff, Trevor Torrens, Kerrie Williams, Kay Ravbar and Rhonda Wheatley, and the dedication of our volunteers Pat Cini and Mark O'Connor.

I am retiring from my role as Clinical Support Nurse, however I will continue to be involved in ADSS as a member of the Board of Directors. I will take my experience as a nurse and my experience as a carer for my husband who unfortunately passed away from Mesothelioma into this privileged role.

On the National Front

BRISBANE'S ABANDONED QUARANTINE CENTRE NOW HAS CONTAMINATION VIEWS
SEAN PARNELL - THE BRISBANE TIMES, OCTOBER 6, 2022



An artist's impression of the proposed Centre for National Resilience at Pinkenba near Brisbane Airport.

Brisbane's never-used quarantine centre, on Defence land in an industrial area next to Brisbane Airport, now offers views of dirt mounds contaminated with asbestos and other chemicals.

The Centre for National Resilience Brisbane at Pinkenba was officially completed on August 25 – less than a month after the Queensland government advised the Commonwealth it would no longer be needed.

Like the controversial Wellcamp quarantine facility near Toowoomba, and a soon-to-be closed centre in Melbourne, the Brisbane centre has been left without a purpose.

But after concerns the chosen site was contaminated, the surrounding Defence land is now being used to store vast mounds of tainted and potentially dangerous soil.

One corner of the site, the former Damascus Barracks, is still used as an immigration centre. Defence uses other areas for storage.

A spokesman for the federal Department of Finance, which financed the construction of the Brisbane centre, refused to say how much contaminated soil was now being stored on the site.

"There is no contaminated soil within the operational area of the centre," the spokesman told Brisbane Times in a statement.



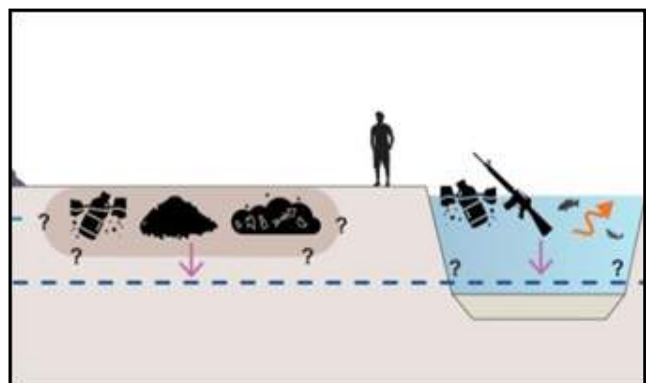
Large mounds of contaminated dirt have been stockpiled next to the quarantine centre at Pinkenba.

"Outside the centre, contaminated soil is being actively managed to ensure compliance with relative environmental standards, and work health and safety requirements."

While Brisbane Lord Mayor Adrian Schrinner has called on the Commonwealth to allow the 1000-bed centre to be used for crisis accommodation, the spokesman said only that the Queensland government was being consulted and "a number of future uses are under development".

Being on Commonwealth land, the site does not come under the jurisdiction of Queensland's environment department. The spokesman said the contaminated soil "does not need to be removed as it is being effectively managed".

By contrast, on the other side of the river at Lytton, the environment department issued an environmental protection order to Viva Energy over a site contaminated with the chemical PFAS. Viva Energy took the matter to court and the environment department issued an amended order in August.



On the National Front

TRADITIONAL OWNERS REIGNITE DEBATE ON STALLED PLANS TO CLEAN UP ASBESTOS WASTE AT WITTENOOM

ABC NEWS 7.30 / BY TOM ROBINSON



Traditional owners in Western Australia's north are reigniting the debate on who is responsible for cleaning up asbestos-contaminated Wittenoom, and raising concerns about potential mining in the area and a nearby national park

Key points:

- The town of Wittenoom housed asbestos mine workers from the 1940s to 1966
- Traditional owners say the contaminated area contains several sacred sites
- They say it is time to clean up the 3 million tonnes of asbestos tailings

The first custodians of the red-dirt country in the state's Pilbara region are the Banjima people, but their land is still scarred by mountains of asbestos tailings left by the historical mines near the ghost town.

That deadly mineral was mined in the area from the 1930s to 1966. Mining was started by the late tycoon Lang Hancock and later taken over by CSR.

Exposure to the mineral resulted in deadly diseases such as mesothelioma in thousands of workers and residents who passed through Wittenoom.

However, it took until September this year for the state government to remove the last residents who stayed for decades despite the risk.

No government has ever committed to cleaning up the area, which is understood to be the largest contaminated site in the southern hemisphere and home to 3 million tonnes of contaminant stretching across 46,000 hectares.

But the battle to address Wittenoom's environmental legacy is ongoing and personal for Banjima elder Maitland Parker, who suffers from mesothelioma.

"They're not only destroying country, but they're destroying our beliefs and our culture and everything else that goes with it," he told

"We've had enough of that, our country being taken and destroyed. It's been sitting there for over 60 years, no rehab done to it."



Banjima elder Maitland Parker says it's time for the asbestos to be removed from Wittenoom. (ABC News: Amelia Searson)

On the National Front

TRADITIONAL OWNERS REIGNITE DEBATE ON STALLED PLANS TO CLEAN UP ASBESTOS WASTE AT WITTENOOM

ABC NEWS 7.30 / BY TOM ROBINSON

Deadly but 'beautiful' place

Former Wittenoom school teacher Helen Osborne has watched the fatal effects of asbestos take hold since she left the town in 1985.

"Five children who've been at the school I taught have died, all of them probably 50 and under," she said.

"I was with one of the girls that I taught in year 1, and she died here in the hospital about two years ago, and I was with her the day before she died."

Despite the pain linked to Wittenoom, Ms Osborne also remembers it as a thriving and happy town.

"I loved the place," she said.

"We were very free to do what we wanted. Wittenoom was a wonderful place."



Helen Osborne left the town of Wittenoom in 1985. (ABC News: Andrew Tyndall)

What happens next?

Successive governments have focused on closing the town and removing residents from the area, but Mr Parker says the current regime must go further and return the land to its original state.

"For the government to step up, is what we want. They must make a decision. We need the government to step up," he said.

Mr Parker is worried mining could restart in the Wittenoom contaminated area and the renowned Karijini National Park, which is immediately south of the town and a popular destination for tourists.

Sections of both areas have been reserved for future iron ore mining, the industry that underpins most of the state and national economies.

The land was reserved before it gained national park status through the iron ore (Wittenoom) agreement act between the state and Hancock Prospecting, the company owned by Gina Rinehart — Australia's richest person and Lang Hancock's daughter.

In August, the ABC obtained documents which revealed Hancock Prospecting told the government how it would mine an area called Drillers Ridge and manage asbestos risk in 2008.

Drillers Ridge is a contaminated area wedged between Wittenoom and Karijini, and Mr Parker says it is home to several sacred Aboriginal sites.

Future mines would require further approvals and consultation, but Mr Parker's people are firmly against the prospect of mining at Wittenoom or Karijini.

"My people want to see the state government agreement that's been sitting there destroyed, deleted altogether, and a fresh start," he said.

"If the expansions happen within a very close proximity to the park or inside the park, that will destroy us."

Hancock Prospecting declined an interview request.

In a statement, a spokesperson said the company had no immediate plans to mine Drillers Ridge, but did not completely rule it out.

The spokesperson said the company supported a government-led clean-up of Wittenoom and was open to letting go of its tenements within Karijini National Park.



On the National Front

TRADITIONAL OWNERS REIGNITE DEBATE ON STALLED PLANS TO CLEAN UP ASBESTOS WASTE AT WITTENOOM

ABC NEWS 7.30 / BY TOM ROBINSON



The homes that remain in the Wittenoom township, about 12 kilometres from the former asbestos mine. (Supplied)



Drillers Ridge near Karijini National Park and Wittenoom. (Supplied)



Clean-up would 'cost millions'

The issue has attracted attention from the Labor government's political adversaries in the WA Greens.

Greens MP Brad Pettitt helped the Banjima people question the government on who was responsible for the clean-up; a petition was finalised in June but the response deflected their questions.

"Government does need to step up. We are seeing a total neglect of serious contamination that's stopping the Banjima people, who've got native title of this area ... [from] accessing their lands."

Curtin University mine rehabilitation expert Adam Cross said while fixing the problems at Wittenoom would be enormously expensive and take years to complete, it was still a worthwhile task.

"The going assumption is that this is going to be a very, very costly endeavour, possibly in the realms of tens or hundreds of millions of dollars," he said.

"There is no question that we have an obligation to return this area to something like the ecosystem that was there."

The ABC approached WA Mines Minister Bill Johnston and Lands Minister John Carey for an interview but neither accepted.

In a statement, a government spokesperson said a Wittenoom advisory group would meet before the end of the year to discuss all land management options.

The Banjima people will be invited to take part, but the spokesperson said a total clean-up of the land in and around Wittenoom was unlikely.

For Mr Parker, it could be too little, too late.

"All our Dreamtime stuff, that'll all disappear," he said.

"We'll still talk about it, we'll sing about it, but it's not there to be shown anymore."



Through her participation in the project Telemovtop, Serena Ivaldi, a researcher in Robotics within the Larsen project team, a joint undertaking involving Inria and Loria, is aiming to live out her team's motto: taking robots out of the lab. She is contributing towards improving a robot developed by Iso-Top, a company specialising in the removal of asbestos from industrial buildings.

Improving occupational health through robotics

A researcher at the Inria Nancy - Grand Est research centre, Serena Ivaldi has a passion for robotics, which she views as a vast field for scientific exploration geared towards practical applications. Alongside her colleagues from Larsen, the focus of her research is on collaboration between robots and humans, a subject which draws as much on theoretical concepts as it does on practical applications.

"As researchers, we work primarily on robot prototypes, developing tools that will enable them to interact with humans", explains Serena Ivaldi. "This might involve improving how their movements are controlled or sequenced in order to adapt them to diverse environments or increasingly complex tasks, or fine-tuning their capacity to interact with humans. For this we draw on a range of different disciplines, from control theory and automation to optimisation and machine learning."

But this research extends beyond the purely scientific: "Our goal is also to 'take our robots out of the lab': to bring our developments face-to-face with real-life applications in response to needs in sectors such as industry and medicine", explains the researcher.

Asbestos removal: a complex and critical operation

With Telemovtop, the aim of which is to develop a smart robot capable of removing asbestos from the roofs of buildings, Serena Ivaldi has very much been moving in this direction. This is a subject with a whole host of scientific challenges relating to occupational health and ecology. Jointly devised by Iso-Top and Larsen, this initiative received support from the Grand Est region as part of the "Digital Economy" call for projects in autumn 2019.

What field does Iso-Top operate in? "We are a family company from the Reims region which operates in the construction sector", explains Stanislas De



© Iso-Top Etanchéité

Benoist, the company's director. "We carry out work for major clients in industry, public services and local authorities, on jobs involving the removal of asbestos from buildings, roofs, cladding, and so on." Not only does the need to respect a strict protocol governing how asbestos is to be treated render such operations highly complex, but they are also difficult for the experts tasked with carrying them out, who have to wear fully airtight protective clothing and work in dangerous environments (at height, on slopes, etc.).

An innovative company in its sector

"Ever since the company was founded, we have always been open to innovation and technology when it comes to tackling environmental challenges", explains Stanislas de Benoist, Technical Manager at Iso-Top. "We are constantly on the lookout for ways of improving how we operate, particularly when it comes to maximising safety. Having considered the potential benefits of robotics for the most critical tasks involved in asbestos removal, we set out to become a real player in this field."

In 2018 Iso-Top was successful in a first call for projects from the French Ministry of Ecology for designing a robot as part of a collaboration with Arts et Métiers (ENSAM Metz). Tested first in the lab and then under real-life conditions, the robot system was found to be fully up to the task: through the use of a remote control, it could be moved around on roofs to remove fibre cement slates after first neutralising the fastenings holding them in place. Replacing humans for this task reduces risk for operators, and more broadly for other users and those living in the vicinity of treated buildings, during asbestos removal.

A wide variety of scientific problems

With momentum on its side, the company pressed on. “After this initial test, which proved highly successful, we wanted to take things further by perfecting the control system, enabling us to operate the robot remotely, without having to be nearby”, explains Stanislas de Benoist. “But there were a number of technical challenges relating to incorporating a more flexible automatic control system that we were unable to tackle on our own, given the lack of research resources at our disposal.”

With the funding from the Grand Est region to finance Telemovtop helping to pay for a research engineer to work for 18 months, the partnership with Inria was to prove decisive for Iso-Top. “We began by focusing on optimising and controlling the movements of the robot, factoring in the specificities of asbestos removal”, explains Serena Ivaldi. “The robot had to be able to grip and lift slates, while turning and moving around on sloped roofs, without sliding or knocking into anything, and without ever dropping these heavy asbestos slates. The expected performance levels were really high!”

Controlling the robot using a digital twin

The next stage for the team from Inria involved working on the ergonomics of the system, designed to be operated remotely, drawing on information about the environment. From configuring instructions and switches to controllers for the robot’s speed or positioning, the scientists left nothing to chance, and even developed an innovation: a digital twin.

Serena Ivaldi explains the benefits of this: “A digital twin is a simulated model of the robot system, incorporating a model of its mechanical behaviour and data from sensors, and can be used to simulate and visualise the status of the robot in real-time. In the first place, this lets you better sequence the robot’s movements, by adapting them to its environment or the diversity of tasks to be carried out in relation to asbestos removal. But it also gives you a comprehensive view of the system in situ while controlling the robot: you can see it on the roof, for instance, and access additional information on top of the information transmitted by the robot’s in-built cameras, which give a partial view of the operations in progress.”

An innovation tested in real-life conditions

With Telemovtop, the researcher was able to develop a digital twin of the Iso-Top robot, testing it in near-real conditions in order to assist operators. “The project is highly motivating, from both a theoretical and a practical perspective. Through this collaboration with Iso-Top, we were able to explore scientific subjects geared towards ensuring the system’s performance: stabilising the gripping of heavy objects, securing the robot’s rotations when transporting objects, preventing collisions, and so on.”

The project is now set to enter a new phase, with a second version of the robot - incorporating contributions from Inria and the ENSAM - set to be built between now and early 2023. Iso-Top has already identified practical applications, and is seeking funding to finalise this process. The company already has one success under its belt, something Stanislas de Benoist is particularly proud of: “There is a lot of talk about robotics in the construction sector, but there are still few practical applications. Through this project we were able to demonstrate that innovations devised in labs, like those from Inria, can quickly be transformed into operational solutions.” From the lab to the worksite, the distance is becoming ever smaller.



© *Isotop Etancheité*
Opérateurs en équipement de désamiantage – nettoyage de la charpente

Did You Know?

ALMOST 9 OUT OF 10 SPANIARDS DO NOT KNOW WHAT MESOTHELIOMA IS OR ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH ASBESTOS

87% of Spaniards do not know what mesothelioma is, a type of cancer linked to prolonged exposure to asbestos or asbestos, according to a survey carried out as part of the 'It's in the air, but you don't see it' campaign.

The campaign, carried out by Bristol Myers Squibb, aims to make the population aware of the risk of handling elements produced in this mineral, widely used in construction elements. Its use was banned in Spain in 2002 due to the risks it poses to health.

"Mesothelioma is a type of cancer that originates mainly in the pleura, a tissue that supports and protects the lungs. The main risk factor for this pathology has to do with exposure to asbestos. However, it is not occasional exposure to this material that produces this type of tumor, but exposure over the years," explained Dr. Julio Calvete, a specialist in Oncology at the Puerta del Mar University Hospital in Cádiz.

The campaign 'It's in the air', but you don't see it, consists of a series of informative videos on asbestos and its relationship with mesothelioma to increase the population's knowledge about the risk factors that cause this tumour.

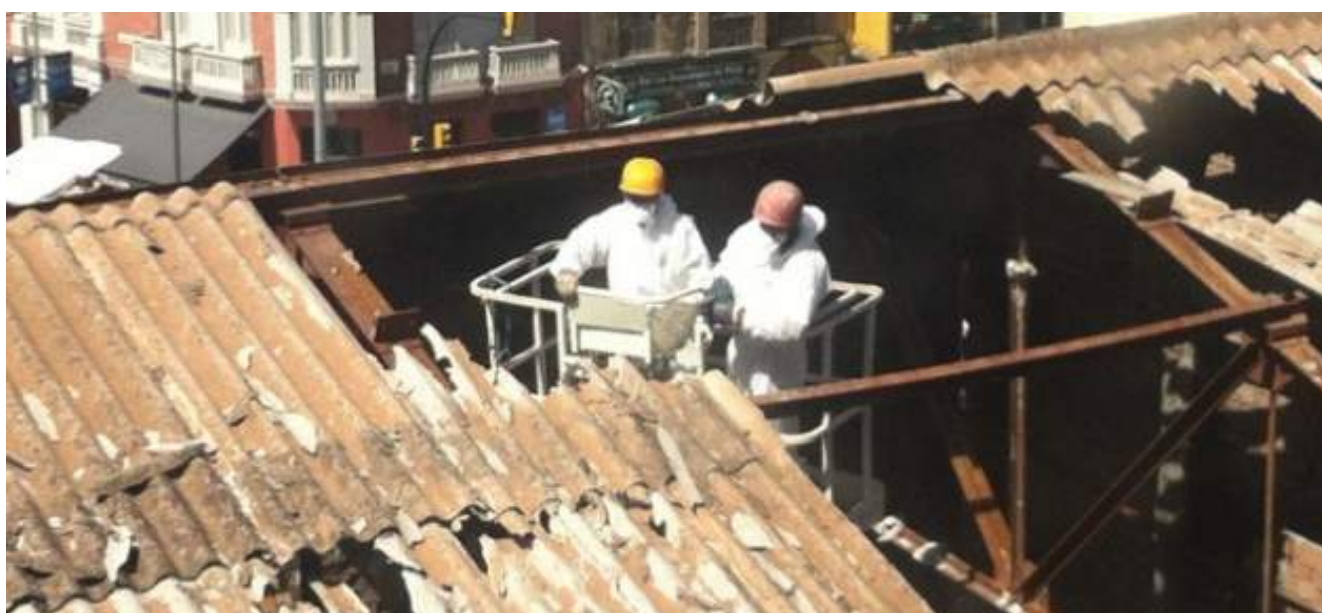
According to the survey, despite the fact that seven out of ten Spaniards perceive asbestos as a material that is very harmful to health, many do not know its relationship with mesothelioma and only 8.4% know if they have been in direct contact with it. Asbestos or asbestos materials made with asbestos must never be handled by unqualified professionals: they must be removed using protective equipment to avoid inhaling its particles.

For his part, Menchu Lavid, Director of Corporate Affairs at Bristol Squibb Myers, highlighted the lack of knowledge that the Spanish population has about mesothelioma. "Only 3.2% of people say they know the symptoms of mesothelioma and 84.6% of those surveyed have not located the therapeutic area of the pathology. This lack of general knowledge continues to reinforce the importance of awareness campaigns."

Asbestos is one of the components of fibre cement, a material present in construction materials, also known by the name of uralite. In addition, it is usually found in roof tiles, tiles, cement products, fire-retardant suits, and railway materials. It is composed of microscopic fibres that can remain suspended in the air long enough for nasal aspiration.

Some professional groups are more exposed to asbestos, especially those professions related to construction, such as bricklayers, electricians or plumbers. For this reason, mesothelioma is recognized as an occupational disease.

Finally, the goal of the European Union is to remove all asbestos from the continent by the end of 2032.



Two workers engaged in the removal of asbestos on the roof of a building where a cinema used to operate in the centre of the southern Spanish city of Málaga, in May 2014. Credit: Courtesy Plataforma Málaga Amianto Cero

The Society at Work



6.10.22 - Chermside Support Group



19.10.22 - ADSS Symposium



19.10.22 - ADSS Symposium
(Dr Ian Brown)



19.10.22 - ADSS Symposium
(Prof Ken O'Byrne)



19.10.22 - ADSS Symposium
(ADSS Directors and Staff)



26.10.22 - Gold Coast Support Group



3.11.22 - Chermside Support Group
Xmas Lunch



9.11.22 - Hervey Bay Support Group



11.11.22 - Sunnybank Support Group
Xmas Lunch



16.11.22 - NRL Premiership Trophy



16.11.22 - NRL Premiership Trophy
with Turner Freeman



16.11.22 - Jo Crotty (DSO)

The Society at Work



16.11.22 - ADSS Supporting DSO for National Skin Cancer Awareness Week



17.11.22 - Rockhampton Support Group Xmas Lunch



17.11.22 - Rockhampton Support Group Xmas Lunch



21.11.22 - Story Bridge lit up blue for Asbestos Awareness Week



21.11.22 - Victoria Bridge lit up blue for Asbestos Awareness Week



21.11.22 - QLD Parliament House lit up blue for Asbestos Awareness Week



21.11.22 - Brisbane City Hall lit up blue for Asbestos Awareness Week



22.11.22 - Corporate Sponsors - Corvex with Blue Lamingtons for Asbestos Awareness Week



22.11.22 - Ipswich Support Group Xmas Lunch



23.11.22 - ADSS Thank You Event (Minster Hon Grace Grace, Hon Di Farmer, Don & Julie Sager)



23.11.22 - ADSS Thank You Event



23.11.22 - ADSS Thank You Event

The Society at Work



23.11.22 - ADSS Thank You Event



23.11.22 - ADSS Thank You Event



23.11.22 - ADSS Thank You Event



23.11.22 - ADSS Thank You Event



25.11.22 - ADSS Ecumenical Service (Lyn Maclean)



25.11.22 - ADSS Ecumenical Service (Tamaryn Caldwell)



25.11.22 ADSS Ecumenical Service (Peter Russo MP)



25.11.22 - ADSS Ecumenical Service



25.11.22 - ADSS Ecumenical Service



25.11.22 - QLD Country Bank Stadium (Townsville) Lit up blue for Asbestos Awareness Week



25.11.22 - QLD Country Bank Stadium (Townsville) Lit up blue for Asbestos Awareness Week



30.11.22 - Sunshine Coast Support Group Xmas Lunch

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