

# Winter 2023 NEWSLETTER



Asbestos Disease  
Support Society

Asbestos Disease Support Society  
Silicosis Support Network

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**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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### 2023/24 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!*





# In Loving Memory

Scott Moltzen  
George Moore  
Robert (Bob) John Lewis  
Neil Leander Sinclair  
Kay Lorraine Helmore  
Betty Rose Short  
James (Jim) Ross  
John Graeme Pummell  
Graham Matthew Pedley  
Joseph Bartolo  
Brian William Edgar  
Stephen Roughley  
John Loch Lacey  
Robyn Madonna Dalton  
Arthur John Brabyn  
Arthur Robert Carter  
John Marcus Whatley  
Tony Peter Lay  
Douglas Gray  
Rex Nightingale

## They say there is a reason

They say there is a reason,  
They say that time will heal,  
But neither time or reason,  
Will change the way we feel.

For no one knows the heartache,  
That lies behind our smiles,  
No one knows how many times,  
We have broken down and cried.

We want to tell you something,  
So there won't be any doubt,  
You're so wonderful to think of,  
But so hard to be without.

We cannot bring the old days back,  
When we were all together,  
The family chain is broken now,  
But memories live forever.



# General Managers Report

LEE MCCALLUM



Hi Everyone!

Well winter seems to have arrived here in South East Queensland. Personally, the cold change has been very welcomed. At the time of this being printed our team is having a week between visiting our members and holding the informative Morning Tea's in Far North Queensland before heading off to Central Queensland.

Thank you so very much for attending these – we love meeting our new members and also catching up with ones we have known for awhile. It is great to see everyone!

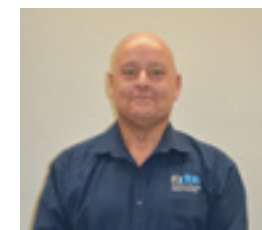
## Society

At the Society we have had some internal changes happening. After 4 years as Chair of the Board, Phil Blair has stepped down from that position, but remains a Director of the Board. Phil is one of the asbestos and silica trainers with the CFMEU and his workload has significantly increased, which is taking him all over Queensland to deliver training and fit test masks for on-site workers. Due to the increase in the demand for training and fit testing, Phil is on the road and felt it best that he step down from his duties. We cannot thank Phil enough for all the pro-bono hours he has spent assisting us in his role as Chair. He will remain a Director and will still help out at events where he can and continue to support the Society.

Bianca Neve has been elected as the interim Chair of the Board. Bianca has been a Director on the Board for the past 8 years, and 4 of those years as Deputy Chair. She is well versed and experienced in the Society matters, and Board governance, so there is no downtime for Bianca and she jumps headfirst into the role.

Andrew Ramsay has elected as interim Deputy Chair. Andrew has been around the Society almost since inception and has been a Director on the Board since inception. Andrew is very experienced in the role, previously being the Chair and Deputy Chair. His knowledge is invaluable and like Bianca, he gets no "easy" transition and dives headfirst into his duties.

Having Bianca and Andrew's knowledge is invaluable to the Society, but more importantly, ensures that with Phil stepping down as Chair that business continues as usual.



## Bunnings Expo

On Thursday 20 April, the team held a stall at the Bunnings Expo at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre. This was a great opportunity to educate tradies and the general public on the dangers of asbestos and silicosis. It was a bit confronting to have conversations with people who thought that asbestos was no longer a problem or an issue! To have these conversations with people, and educate them on the very current and real dangers of asbestos, particularly the younger generation was well worth it.

Kerrie and I did spend a large amount of time trying to convince "Bunnings kids" stall holders to give us a "junior tradie" high vis vest and helmet for my nephew. I can happily report that we were successful and my nephew loved the vest and helmet. Never too young to teach them about "Safety First"











## ASBESTOS PRODUCTS – THE LIST IS ENDLESS

In very basic terms there are three main categories of products that historically contained asbestos and from which people had exposure.

These are:-

1. Fibro sheets – roofing materials, pipes, etc.
2. Insulation products – lagging used around steam pipes and boilers, particularly in power stations and on steam ships.
3. Brake linings.

However the list of products that contained asbestos is virtually endless and there were many unexpected products in which asbestos was used.

### Asbestos pads

Asbestos was often used in mats or pads used in either jewellery or laboratory based employments. There have been a number of Society members who worked as jewelers or goldsmiths who used soldering irons and they would place the jewellery items on asbestos pads or mats when soldering.

Over time these pads or mats would break down and give off dust, and then tragically years later mesothelioma develops. Those working in the jewellery trade may be hard pressed to remember where they were exposed to asbestos but the use of these asbestos pads was very common. Similarly, they were used in laboratory settings where Bunsen burners were used. Many members have recalled in their younger years irons being placed on asbestos pads in the family home.

### Safety curtain

Another unusual but perhaps not so surprising use of asbestos was in theatre safety curtains. Theatres often had curtains that could be pulled across in the event of a fire and these were usually fabricated using asbestos fibres as the key fire retardant element in them. Those fabricating them of course were at risk, but those working in theatres for any length of time and coming in contact with these safety curtains were at risk of developing mesothelioma and other asbestos diseases. Even theatre goers were put at risk.

### Dental products

The Society has also had a dentist as a member who developed mesothelioma. Asbestos materials were used in the mouldings that this particular dentist used when making up fillings and prosthetic teeth.

### Paint

Asbestos can sometimes also be found in paint. We have had a number of members who worked with particular types of paints that were used in motor vehicles as a type of fire retardant or insulator and the paint contained asbestos fibres. When applied wet it was relatively safe, but when dry and then worked on it contained loose and respirable asbestos fibres.

### Cigarette filters

Perhaps one of the most infamous uses of asbestos was in the filters used in Kent cigarettes in the United States of America. There have been many instances of mesothelioma occurring through smoking Kent cigarettes. Smoke was inhaled via filters which contained blue asbestos fibres.

### Gloves, boots, and other “safety” items

Many safety items also contained asbestos such as gloves, boots, and full protective garments used by firefighters. Right up until the 1970s/1980s most firefighting vehicles in Queensland had asbestos gloves and other asbestos safety equipment in their standard kit.

Whilst the common asbestos products are fibro, insulation and brake linings, the application and use of asbestos was so widespread it is impossible to list all the products that contained asbestos. Working with any older product where there is a risk of dust exposure has to be considered very carefully and the dust exposure avoided given the risk of asbestos inhalation.

The Society has an excellent database of asbestos containing materials and if you have any concerns about older products contact the Society for advice.

# The List of Products are Endless...



- Asbestos cement building materials
- Flat and corrugated sheets
- Pipes, gutters and drains
- Roofing tiles
- Flooring tiles
- Preformed asbestos insulating materials
- Plastic wall finishes
- Water-resistant paints and colours
- Bitumen paints
- Roofing felts
- Cold moulded products
- Asbestos reinforced plastics
- Millboard, paper, slivers and roving for electrical installation
- Hot and cold moulded materials and ebonised panels for switchboards and boxes, handles, cords, cables and coverings for wires
- Wire inserting
- Jointing at base of electric light bulbs
- Battery boxes
- Dry cell sealing caps
- Packing and sealing compounds to resist chemical agents and acid fumes, dry and wet heat, high pressure steam, for pumps, glands etc..
- Lining of drying rooms, turbine insulations, furnaces and ovens
- Millboard and paper for heating plates, flat iron handles and stands
- Braided packings, manhole tapes
- Rubber or synthetic rubber coated cloth
- Wicks
- Torches
- Grease compounding and bearings
- Films and pads for filtering drugs, chemicals, wines, fruit juices, extracts, lubricants
- Gooch crucible asbestos (tremolite)
- Air and acid filtration
- Acid-resistant tubes and vats
- Cauxing sulphuric acid vats
- Brushes for corrosive liquids
- Moulded and woven friction linings in the form of discs, segments, blocks, belts and clutch linings
- Insulation in film industry
- Theatre safety curtains
- Fire brakes
- Firemen's clothing, gloves and boots
- Rubber filler
- Mattresses
- Tarpaulins
- Mats, belts, rope
- Space heaters
- Fire proof paints
- Slowing the cooling of steel and iron parts
- Comfort installation in ships (prevention of excessive temperature change and condensation)
- Compressed asbestos fibre jointings and gaskets
- Incombustible insulation boards, including marine insulation





# Do you know?

EMMA JAHNKE FROM TURNER FREEMAN LAWYERS



My name is Emma.

I was born in Brisbane. I was lucky enough to grow up on acreage in Samford (not too far from the city).

My parents thought I was going to be a pro tennis player and spent most mornings and evenings driving me to and from Coops (where all the top tennis coaches were). It was about 40 minutes from our house. Obviously, I did not make it to pro.

In between tennis, I gave water polo a go. A lot of fun.

In my final year of school, I thought I better get serious about life. I decided to go to University enrolling in town planning. In high school I envisioned myself as a town planner, however midway through the degree I realised it was not for me. It was too late to back out, so I decided to finish the degree and go onto studying law. All in all, I was at University for 7 years.

Surprisingly, law was a dream compared to town planning. While studying law, I was working for Parsons Brinckerhoff in the hazardous materials team and this is how I landed an interview at Turner Freeman. I thought knowing about asbestos would help me get the job – it didn't. I didn't get the job. I was disappointed to say the least.

I got a call back a few months later and reinterviewed for the job. I was thrilled.

And here we are. 8 years later. Still a lawyer in the dust team in Brisbane and could not be happier.

Working for Turner Freeman have been the best years of my life.

Helping those who have tragically been affected by asbestos and silica related diseases has its tough days, but it is extremely rewarding helping our clients and their families through a difficult time.

- 1. What is one of your career highlights?**  
Working for Turner Freeman.
- 2. What is on your bucket list that you haven't ticked off yet?** Adele in Concert.
- 3. Favourite Food?**  
Tempura prawn handrolls at Sono Japanese Restaurant, Portside
- 4. How much vegemite goes on toast?**  
30% veggie, 70% butter.
- 5. Where do you store your tomato sauce? Fridge or pantry?** Fridge !



# Get to know our Corporate Sponsor

BERT

Building Employees Redundancy Trust (BERT) was established to provide workers of the Queensland and Northern Territory building and construction industry with assured redundancy benefits. The benefits paid from the Fund help provide members and their families with financial assistance in the event of ceasing employment because of redundancy or relief from financial burdens. BERT is committed to supporting and promoting the building and construction industry.

Construction Income Protection (CIP) provides income protection and portability of sick leave benefits to workers in the building and construction industry. Celebrating over 22 years, CIP has paid out over \$147 million to members in their time of need.

Additionally, the BERT Group also includes the following entities:

**BERT Welfare Fund** – This fund was established to promote education and welfare initiatives in the industry. The Fund provides a range of benefits to members including travel insurance, funeral benefits, dental and ambulance cover.

**BERT Financial Services** - Has been established to provide financial services to members of the industry free from conflict, commission, and kickbacks.

**BERT Training Fund (BTF)** – This fund provides significant financial support for the acclaimed Apprentice and Mentorship Programs, currently supporting over 600 apprentices. Additionally, BTF provides assistance and additional training to upskill the industry.

The Fund supports several industry based charities that share a common vision and commitment to assist the building and construction industry. ADSS is one of these remarkable charities.

BERT proudly recognises the tremendous work the society does and its integral role in the industry.



ADSS Cheque Presentation



Cairns Convention Centre - Bluey Menon



Financial Counselling - Deb Gray



# Society Social Worker

RHONDA WHEATLEY



Welcome to winter, especially in Queensland – beautiful one day, perfect the next!

As the years roll on, we all experience health and functional changes and there maybe a need for assistance to remain living independently at home. This is often a very challenging time: difficulty with access, numerous assessments, wait times and the general frustrations in context of navigating large government funded agencies.

At some point it is highly likely that many of our members will need some support either through My Aged Care (MAC), National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) or the Queensland Community Support Scheme. I have given a brief description of each below, please contact me if you would like additional information or assistance in accessing services.

## My Aged Care

<https://www.myagedcare.gov.au/> or **1800 200 422**

Eligibility is based on factors like your health, how you're managing at home, and any support you currently receive. You may be eligible for aged care services if you have:

- noticed a change in what you can do or remember.
- been diagnosed with a medical condition or reduced mobility.
- experienced a change in family care arrangements.
- experienced a recent fall or hospital admission,
- 65 years or older (50 years or older for Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people).

To know for sure if you are eligible, you will need to have an assessment. The levels of support are listed below:

- Level 4: high-level care needs - \$53,268.10
- Level 3: intermediate care needs - \$35,138.55
- Level 2: low-level care needs - \$16,147.60
- Level 1: basic care needs - \$9,179.75 Transition Entry level, ongoing or short-term support services through the Commonwealth Home Support Programme –
- The figures are current from 1 July 2022. The individual amount that will be paid will depend on whether you need to pay an income tested care fee. For more information please visit: <https://www.myagedcare.gov.au/home-care-package-costs-and-fees#government-contribution>

## National Disability Insurance Scheme

<https://www.ndis.gov.au/> or **1800 800 110**

The NDIS is only available to people who have a disability caused by a permanent impairment . The impairment may be intellectual, cognitive, neurological, sensory, physical, or psychosocial.

- Aged between 7 and 65 years.
- Australian citizen, Permanent Visa Holder or Protected Special Category Visa holders.
- Complete the Access Request Form with supporting documentation : <https://www.ndis.gov.au/how-apply-ndis/what-access-request-form#access-request-form>

## Queensland Community Support Scheme

**1800 600 300**

You may be eligible for the QCSS if you are under 65 years old (or under 50 years old for Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people) with:

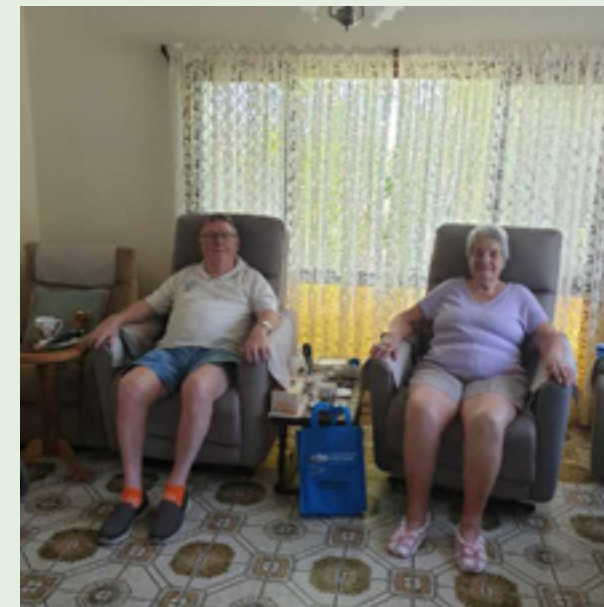
- a disability (and are not eligible for the National Disability Insurance Scheme)
- chronic illness, mental health, or other condition, or
- other circumstances that impact your ability to live independently in the community.

<https://www.qld.gov.au/community/getting-support-health-social-issue/community-home-care-services/queensland-community-support-scheme>



# Members Spotlight

I would like to thank Val and Richard for sharing their experience relating to their community home supports and strategies to keep as well as possible.



We have been with the society for approximately 20 years, enjoyed the morning teas and more recently the Social Work supports and referrals to DOTS for Occupational Therapy assessments. The OT assessments and follow up were extremely helpful in accessing the right home modifications and equipment.

Blue (Richard) and I met when I was cooking for Meals On Wheels back in 1990 in Caloundra and we have been an excellent team ever since. After Blue's asbestos related lung disease diagnosis in 2001 and his early forced retirement, we were fortunate in being able to travel: up to Cape York, over to Western Australia and a wonderful boat cruise on the True North. We both thoroughly enjoy fishing, and Blue commented that I have exceptional fishing skills with landing a prize Barramundi. During this time, we traversed Australia north to south and many of the backroads between.

The last few years have been a challenge, with deteriorating health issues for both of us but especially Blue and the asbestosis. We hope to remain living in our own home for as long as possible, so a My Aged Care assessment was needed. In March 2022 we were assessed for level 2 package – for me and level 3 package for Blue. It was not until October 2022 that these packages became available.

We now have excellent support through Integrated Living, **1300 782 896**: nursing, dietician, physiotherapy, podiatry, gardening, cleaning weekly, shopping fortnightly and spring clean each 6 months. The case manager with Integrated Living is easy

to talk to, prompt in getting services in place and generally 'knows the systems very well'. We would highly recommend Integrated Living as a service provider.

We spend most of our time at home now or out to medical appointments, have supportive family and neighbours who are very helpful. We enjoy reminiscing about all our adventures plus I still enjoy cooking, gardening, and sewing.

My tips for keeping up with the things you love, that are meaningful and are important to stay as healthy as possible. Plus, they are distractions from day to day worries, tricks your mind into forgetting about the pain by focusing on the activity:

- Baking shortbreads over the day: measure up in the morning, roll out mid-day and put in the fridge, bake in the afternoon.
- Sewing up new curtains: which was done over 3 weeks, when 'back in the day' it would have taken me only a day or two.
- Gardening: in stages and only small manageable tasks, although this passion may need to take a back step after my recent fall.
- Wordsearch: the book is near my recliner to exercise the grey matter.

We appreciate all the help from ADSS and encourage any other members to phone the office, if you need assistance or information about accessing community services, allied health assessments, medical aids, nursing, or social work support.



# On the National Front

## AUSTRALIAN ASBESTOS GHOST TOWN CEMETERY RAISES QUESTIONS WRITTEN BY MICHELLE WHITMER



Western Australia's most notorious ghost town known for widespread asbestos contamination and mesothelioma has been razed. But loved ones wonder how they can visit family and friends buried in the town's cemetery.

Demolition of the abandoned town of Wittenoom had begun in May after a brush fire in late 2022 destroyed the town's few remaining structures. Prior to its demolition, authorities had blocked off roads and other access routes to keep curious onlookers from visiting the toxic town.

Despite Wittenoom being wiped off the map, officials said the town's cemetery wouldn't be touched. But they haven't explained to loved ones of those buried in the cemetery how and when they can visit their graves.

Belinda McNicol, whose sister is buried in the cemetery, told Australian news outlet ABC News the government's silence is "disgusting."

"The fact that they haven't reached out to families is concerning," McNicol said.

### Loved Ones Left in the Dark

So far, Western Australian government officials have not said if visitors will be allowed to come to the cemetery. A spokesperson for the government's Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage said people accessing or camping in areas near Wittenoom after being advised to move on could be subject to action by the department, according to ABC News.

People are upset about the lack of communication and are calling for clarity from the government. They say they expected more dialogue between officials and families with relatives buried at Wittenoom.

"If they're going to go in and knock down these other buildings, to deter people from going there and visiting there, then they need to clearly label where the cemetery is," McNicol said. She said her family buried her sister in the cemetery in 1973, shortly after she was born in Wittenoom.

### Asbestos Contamination, Mesothelioma in Wittenoom

Mining in Wittenoom began in the 1930s after the discovery of blue asbestos in the town. A decade later, a second asbestos mine opened. More than 165,000 tons of asbestos were mined in Wittenoom between 1943 and 1966.

The Australian government began closing the entire town by the late 1970s because of potential health concerns. In 2007, after Wittenoom was officially removed from all maps and road signs, people were discouraged from visiting the area.

Wittenoom is often dubbed the largest asbestos contamination site in the southern hemisphere. Many of the buildings, driveways and other structures were made with leftover asbestos. A database maintained by UWA's Occupational Respiratory Epidemiology Group reports that at least 1,200 former Wittenoom residents and workers have died from lung cancer and mesothelioma.

### Mesothelioma in Australia

Although asbestos has been banned in Australia since 2003, the country has one of the highest rates of new mesothelioma cases in the world. A report published in 2023 by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare shows 722 mesothelioma cases were diagnosed in 2021. The agency also showed 701 people died of mesothelioma in 2020.

Australia mined and imported asbestos for use in construction and transportation. Asbestos still remains in many older buildings, leading to possible exposure and increased numbers of mesothelioma cases.

# Around the World

## ASBESTOS POSING A THREAT TO TOURISTS AND LOCALS IN LOMBOK ANNE BARKER 7.30 ABC - TUE 4 JUL 2023

**ANNE BARKER, REPORTER:** Senggigi Beach on the idyllic Indonesian island of Lombok is a tourist drawcard but this paradise is hiding a toxic secret.

**DAVE HODGKIN, MIYAMATO INTERNATIONAL:** Some areas, we're probably better to put in a layer of soil on top, at least immediately just to cover it up. Even if it's only 10 centimetres of soil, just to actually stop the immediate risk.

**REPORTER (2018):** Not one tremor but several sent people on Lombok, neighbouring Bali, running from fear.

**ANNE BARKER:** Lombok is covered in deadly asbestos rubble after a massive earthquake in 2018 destroyed hundreds of thousands of homes - a quarter of which had asbestos roofs. Instead of cleaning up the asbestos rubble - as would be mandatory in Australia - Indonesian authorities sent bulldozers in to crush it into millions of pieces.

**DAVE HODGKIN:** What that then means though, is that if say you had a million tons of broken asbestos sheeting, you now have millions of tons of asbestos contaminated rubble. All of that entire environment that we have got chickens landing in, kids playing in, people living in, is basically asbestos contaminated.

**ANNE BARKER:** Australian Dave Hodgkin works in disaster management for Miyamoto International. With a team of experts, he took 31 samples at more than 100 locations. They were tested in three different labs. Two-thirds were contaminated with asbestos.

**DAVE HODGKIN:** Where we've had an asbestos building in the middle of Australia - one building that's been demolished by accident - that whole area would be fenced off, it would be declared a hazardous zone, hazmat zone really.

**ANNE BARKER:** 7.30 tagged along as the team took more samples just a few kilometres from Senggigi Beach. They were sent to Australia for testing.

**KEN ARCHER, ENVIROSCIENCE SOLUTIONS:** What we're most interested in is if there's any contamination from pieces of bonded board from this, the rubble at the site of the earthquake.

**ANNE BARKER:** Experts and locals told 7.30 there isn't a single doctor in Lombok trained to diagnose asbestos-related diseases so it's impossible to know how many people here, including tourists, may have breathed in asbestos.

**PROF. KEN TAKAHASHI, UNIVERSITY OF WA:** Once they're breathed into lungs, they tend to stay there for a long time, and eventually cause many problems, including cancer.

**ANNE BARKER:** Lombok has an alarming rate of tuberculosis which shares many symptoms of asbestos caused cancer or mesothelioma. Experts including Ken Takahashi believe it's possible many don't have TB at all but asbestos-related disease.

**KEN TAKAHASHI:** Asbestosis, which is a fibrotic condition, caused by asbestos exposure is very often complicated with tuberculosis.

**ANNE BARKER:** Ibu Rauhun and her family, like others, have used recycled material from their old home to rebuild. They used broken asbestos roofing to make this tiny hut for her mother.

**IBU RAUHUN (translated):** She's scared, traumatised because of the earthquake so she refuses to stay in the house.

**DAVE HODGKIN:** We've got kids sitting here playing here with toys. This is a classic example where we can see a piece of asbestos that kids are probably using that as a little scoop to load their truck or to do something else with but the entire environment through here is broken asbestos throughout this rubble.

**ANNE BARKER:** Indonesia is one of a dwindling number of countries that still uses asbestos widely in the construction industry. Despite a global campaign, and reforms by other neighbouring countries, it hasn't banned the lethal substance. The Indonesian Government is considering what it can do to protect NGO workers and the people of Lombok. It concedes the situation is extremely challenging, and the only solution is to relocate entire villages so it can clear the area of asbestos but that's simply not possible.

**DAVE HODGKIN:** If you imagine little children who are lower down, more, closer to the dust, running and playing in the dust, disturbing the dust, breathing that dust in on a daily basis for years, then you've got to start to think that we are facing some serious risk.

**ANNE BARKER:** One and a half million tourists visited Lombok before the pandemic and with direct flights from Australia now bouncing back, that number is set to rise. As Indonesia emerges from the pandemic, tourism has rebounded in holiday destinations like Bali but on Lombok, the island next door, an invisible menace is threatening tourists in the form of deadly asbestos.

Indonesia correspondent Anne Barker reports.

**To watch the video (Click on the link)**

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-07-04/asbestos-posing-a-threat-to-tourists-and-locals-in/102561616>



# Around the World

**WE HAVE A RIGHT TO KNOW! THE ROTTERDAM CONVENTION MUST BE MODERNISED TO PROTECT HUMAN HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT.**  
MEDIA RELEASE - MAY 9, 2023

The Rotterdam Convention again remains paralysed by the tactics of Industry and a small group of countries, that block the listing of highly hazardous chemicals and pesticides, including chrysotile asbestos, that cause death and significant harm to human health and the environment.

The Rotterdam Convention is a critical tool for the safe and sound management of chemicals globally. Its Prior Informed Consent (PIC) procedure ensures that countries have a RIGHT TO KNOW what highly hazardous listed chemicals and pesticides are entering their country. This allows them to take appropriate regulatory action to restrict or prohibit entry to safeguard the health of their citizens and the environment.

Prior to COP11, which is meeting this week in Geneva, there were 5 chemicals which met all the criteria for listing, including the unanimous support of the Convention's Chemical Review Committee, that remain blocked for listing. This includes the highly hazardous chrysotile asbestos. Asbestos is one of the biggest killers of workers globally and is responsible for the deaths of more than 200,000 workers every year. In addition to chrysotile asbestos four pesticides remain blocked which cause significant harm to health of workers, particularly in developing countries. At this year's COP the list of blocked chemicals continues to grow with the addition of another hazardous pesticide. These tactics highlight the increasing threat the Convention faces and reinforce the need for reform.

A global coalition of more than **40 trade unions and civil society organisations** expressed their frustration and dismay that again the Parties have failed to list chrysotile asbestos and other hazardous chemicals. These blocking tactics threaten the viability of the Convention and make a mockery of its objective to warn countries of the most dangerous chemicals entering their country.

In an open letter they are now calling on all Parties to the Rotterdam Convention to support an amendment to the Convention which has been proposed by Australia, Switzerland and 12 other Parties<sup>1</sup>, and which offers a new simple solution to improve the effectiveness of the Convention, whilst protecting the consensus principle at its core. It enables Parties who want to share information about hazardous chemicals to continue to do so. If approved, the amendment will introduce a new pathway for listing chemicals, when the CRC has recommended them for listing, but unanimous agreement to list them in Annex III cannot be reached by the COP.

Recently three UN experts – Marcos Orellana, Special Rapporteur on toxics and human rights; David R. Boyd, Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment; and Pedro Arrojo-Agudo, Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation – also issued a statement urging Parties to adopt the amendment proposal.

**The proposal to amend the Convention will be considered later this week and we demand all Parties support the amendment.**

**Quotes attributable to:**

**Marcos Orellana, Special Rapporteur on toxics and human rights**

*"For too many years, a small number of States Parties have disregarded the recommendations of the Chemical Review Committee and blocked the listing of hazardous chemicals in Annex III. This has weakened the ability of the Convention to fulfill its core purpose"*

**Owen Tudor, Deputy General Secretary International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)**

*"A safe and healthy working environment has now been recognised internationally as a fundamental human right for workers. Workers in construction, agriculture and beyond must have the right to know if they are working with deadly substances like asbestos or dangerous pesticides. That right for workers would also protect consumers and communities. But without reform of the Rotterdam Convention, that information will remain hidden if just a handful of governments bend to the undemocratic, greed-driven lobbying of corporations who put profit before people and planet."*

**Ambet Yuson, General Secretary, Building Workers International (BWI)**

*"It is highly lamentable that the greed of some business interests is taking precedence over the right of governments to critical information and exercise the prior informed consent to protect its citizens and the community from harmful industrial chemicals. The proposed amendment to the Rotterdam Convention is intended to fulfil its envisioned mandate."*

# Around the World

**WE HAVE A RIGHT TO KNOW! THE ROTTERDAM CONVENTION MUST BE MODERNISED TO PROTECT HUMAN HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT.**  
MEDIA RELEASE - MAY 9, 2023

**Liam O'Brien, Assistant Secretary, Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU)**

*"Countries have a right to know about the hazardous chemicals that are entering their country. The blocking tactics of Industry and a small number of countries, is endangering workers, in particular those from developing countries. If the Rotterdam Convention is going to meet its full potential it must be reformed. The lives of millions of workers are at stake."*

**Sara Brosche, International Pollutants Elimination Network (IPEN)**

*"A small group of countries should not be able to block the world's right to know about trade in highly toxic chemicals. More information about chemicals that pose serious threats to our health and healthy environments should be welcomed by all countries. IPEN supports workers' and all people's right to know about toxic threats to our health."*

*"The continual blocking of lethal chemicals from Annex III by a small minority of Parties is seriously undermining the Convention's function to share vital information and empower governments to take responsible action on trade and use of hazardous chemicals. The current paralysis impacts poorer countries the most."*

**Dr Sheila Willis, Pesticide Action Network UK**

*PAN urges all Parties to support the proposed amendments and restore the proper functioning of a critical international treaty in order to better protect people and the environment from hazardous chemicals."*

**Phillip Hazelton, Union Aid Abroad-APHEDA**

*"For 18 years hazardous chemicals recommended for listing onto the Convention by its own scientific committee have been blocked by a small number of Parties who have exploited and manipulated the consensus principle within the Convention for their own self-interest. The time to fix this is long overdue. We call on all Parties to support the amendment proposed at this COP11."*

**Bernhard Herold, Solidar Suisse**

*"The theme of this year's Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conferences is "Accelerating Action". But in gross contradiction to this some Parties continue to block the listing of highly hazardous substances in the Rotterdam Convention. If the other Parties truly wish to accelerate action, they must amend the Convention now to stop the blocking tactics orchestrated by the industry."*





# Around the World

PARLIAMENT SO CRUMBLING AND ASBESTOS-RIDDLED IT'S AT RISK OF BEING  
'DESTROYED BY CATASTROPHIC INCIDENT', MPS WARN  
WEDNESDAY 17 MAY 2023 11:16, UK



**MPs have been debating what needs to be done to restore the 19th Century building for many years and despite plans to move everybody out for a full refurbishment, these have been dropped**

Parliament is so crumbling and asbestos-riddled it is at risk of being "destroyed by a catastrophic incident", MPs have warned.

The seat of British democracy is "leaking, dropping masonry and at constant risk of fire" with asbestos throughout the building, a report by the Commons public accounts committee found.

"There is a real and rising risk that a catastrophic event will destroy" the building before long-delayed restoration work is done, the committee said.

There have been warnings about the state of the 19th Century building for years, with scaffolding surrounding much of parliament but the committee said work had been painfully slow and mostly amounts to "patching up".

With refurbishment work costing about £2m a week, the committee hit out at "years of procrastination". The building, which attracts a million visitors a year, is a UNESCO World Heritage site so must be protected.

In 2018, after many years of indecision, MPs voted to move out of the Palace of Westminster by the mid-2020s to allow repair work that will take years.

But many MPs do not want to leave and last year, the independent group set up to oversee the project was scrapped - despite leaking rooves, century-old steam pipes bursting and chunks of masonry sometimes falling.

The group had warned if MPs and peers insisted on staying put, the project could end up lasting as long as 76 years, and cost as much as £22bn.



Image: Palace of Westminster on Fire 1834, Oil painting by Unknown © UK Parliament, WOA 1978 heritagecollections.parliament.uk

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**It has been about 80 years since the mechanical and electrical systems were last updated.**

The committee said there is so much asbestos that removing it "could require an estimated 300 people working for two and a half years while the site was not being used".

There is also a constant threat of fire, with 44 "fire incidents" in parliament since 2016 and wardens now having to patrol around the clock, the committee added.

However, MPs are wary of approving more ambitious restoration plans, with some concerned the public will resent the multi-billion pound cost during a time when people are struggling financially.

More traditional MPs are also reluctant to move out of the building, which has subsidised restaurants and bars, as well as a terrace with views of the Thames.

"The cost of renewal will be high, but further delays are hugely costly to the taxpayer - lack of action is not value for money," the committee said.

Committee chair and Labour MP Meg Hillier said there was a "real risk that the whole building will be destroyed by a catastrophic incident before the work is done, or perhaps even begun".

The committee has called on MPs, lords and parliamentary authorities to set out "a clear indication of the cost and timeline for getting this massive job done before it becomes too late to do so".

Authorities said they were "getting on with work across the parliamentary estate to ensure the safety of those who work and visit here," with dozens of repair and restoration projects already under way.

Officials said they are "planning for the large and complex restoration of the Palace of Westminster to preserve it for future generations".

MPs and lords are expected to vote on how to go forward with the refurb later this year.

There is concern history risks repeating itself after the Palace of Westminster burnt to the ground in 1834 following years of MPs arguing about the need to renovate the old parliament.



Image: Scaffolding covers much of the Houses of Parliament



# Kerrie's Korner

KERRIE WILLIAMS



Hello Members,

It was so nice to catch up with our members that attended the North and Central QLD Morning tea seminars. Even though these events take place once a year, they certainly come around very quickly. It's a great opportunity to catch up, to let you know of the Society services and to welcome new members to these morning tea events.

When we were in Cairns, our lovely members, Julie and John suggested to start up the Cairns Coffee Group and I couldn't be happier. So, our 1st Cairns coffee catch up will be held on Friday 11 August at 9.30am at Brothers Leagues Club, in the Café, (Ground floor). Come and have coffee and cake with our ADSS Cairns Facilitators Julie and John.

Just a reminder of the upcoming dates for our other coffee groups:

- Bundaberg:** Wednesday, 2 August, 6 September & 4 October
- Chermside:** Thursday, 3 August & 5 October
- Hervey Bay:** Wednesday, 9 August & 11 October
- Sunnybank:** Friday, 11 August, 8 September & 13 October
- Rockhampton:** Thursday, 17 August, 21 September & 19 October
- Ipswich:** Tuesday, 25 July, 22 August, 26 September & 24 October
- Sunshine Coast:** Wednesday, 27 September
- Gold Coast:** Thursday, 27 July & 26 October
- Cairns:** Friday, 11 August

We only have 4 morning tea seminars to go this year. If you do not receive an invitation and would like to attend, please do not hesitate to call us. The invitations only get sent to a certain radius of the event postcode and your postcode could be just 5 – 10km out of that range. So, If you feel like a drive and want to hear the presentations by both ADSS and Turner Freeman and have a lovely morning tea with other ADSS Members, please let us know.

**LOGAN** – Diggers Services Club (Logan) – 26 July

**NORTH BRISBANE** – Norths Leagues Club (Kallangur) – 7 August

**GOLD COAST** – Currumbin RSL – 17 August

**IPSWICH** – Brothers Leagues Club – 3 September

**Please call the Society for further details or to RSVP to any of our events: 1800 776 412**



**Q & A by the coffee machine with Kay:**

**What three words would you use to describe your role?** Jack of all trades (I know, that's 4 words)

**What do you like most about your job?** Always learning something new and the Members

**What is your motto or personal mantra?** Be Nice

**Given a chance, who would you like to be for a day?** A Formula 1 Driver

**If you could witness any historical event, what would you want to see?** The first rocket taking off to the moon

**What's your favourite line from a movie?** Ya Filthy Animal (from Home Alone)

**If you could meet anyone in the world dead or alive, who would it be and why?** Harry Styles, He seems like a nice, fun guy and I love his music

**Favourite travel spot?** Africa - without kids and Japan – with kids

**What book did you last read?** The Womens Pool by Lynne Spender

**What did you want to be when growing up?** Like my sister

# The Society at Work



20.3.23 - Bribie Island Morning Tea



20.3.23 - Bribie Island Morning Tea



22.3.23 - Sunshine Coast Coffee Group



23.3.23 - The Common Good Lab Tour



24.3.23 - BERT Charity Golf Day



28.3.23 - Ipswich Coffee Group



28.3.23 - Ipswich Coffee Group



29.3.23 - Redlands Morning Tea



29.3.23 - Redlands Morning Tea



6.4.23 - Chermside Coffee Group



11.4.23 - Ballina Morning Tea



12.4.23 - Hervey Bay Coffee Group



# The Society at Work



13.4.23 - Rockhampton Coffee Group



14.4.23 - Sunnybank Coffee Group



19.4.23 - Sunshine Coast Morning Tea



21.4.23 - Labour Day Dinner with Turner Freeman



26.4.23 - Ipswich Coffee Group



27.4.23 - Gold Coast Coffee Group



3.5.23 - Bundaberg Coffee Group



9.5.23 - Kingaroy Morning Tea



12.5.23 - Sunnybank Coffee Group



17.5.23 - Chermside Morning Tea



18.5.23 - Football with Turner Freeman (Broncos v Panthers)



23.5.23 - Ipswich Coffee Group

# The Society at Work



1.6.23 - Chermside Coffee Group



7.6.23 - Beaudesert Morning Tea



9.6.23 - Sunnybank Coffee Group



13.6.23 - Warwick Morning Tea



15.6.23 - Rockhampton Coffee Group



24.6.23 - On our way to Cairns



26.6.23 - Cairns Morning Tea



27.6.23 - Ipswich Coffee Group



27.6.23 - Townsville Morning Tea



28.6.23 - Mackay Morning Tea



28.6.23 - Sunshine Coast Coffee Group



29.6.23 - Rockhampton Morning Tea



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

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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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Donations of \$2.00 or more are tax deductible.

*We thank all members for their ongoing support.*

