



ASBESTOS VICTIMS ASSOCIATION (SA) INC
Established 2000

Newsletter

March - May 2020

There for our Members whenever or however they need us

Office Location

Level 9
60 Waymouth Street
Adelaide SA 5000

Postal Address

PO Box 4066
Elizabeth South
SA 5112

Tel: (08) 8212 6008
Mobile 0455 120 588

Country Callers:
1800 665 395

Email:
ava-sa@bigpond.net.au

Web Site:
<http://www.avasa.asn.au>

Facebook Page:
<https://www.facebook.com/asbestosvictimsassoca/>

Executive Committee:

President / Treasurer
Peter Baxter

Vice President
Maxine Williams

Office Manager
Lesley Shears

Committee members
Gloria Hinks
Doreen Ryan

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected AVA activities for the immediate future. We have had to cancel our planned activities and have closed the office in the short term. You can still contact us 24/7 by phone and we can also offer face to face chats via Zoom, accessible on computer or mobile device.

As restrictions ease in South Australia we will once again be able to travel to meet our members and offer information presentations to groups.

Seasonal illnesses - Prevention is your best protection

As a result of COVID-19 (coronavirus), we are not facing a 'normal' flu season. This year, it's more important than ever for Australia's vulnerable community members, including those impacted by asbestos disease and lung cancer, to get immunised against influenza and ensure their pneumonia vaccination is up to date.

These vaccines won't combat COVID-19 but they will help to reduce the severity and spread of influenza and pneumonia which alone can have a detrimental impact on our vulnerable community members. Now more than ever we need to protect against these conditions to help reduce additional strain on health resources which are needed to fight COVID-19.

Port Adelaide Workers Memorial

The Port Adelaide Workers Memorial recognises people who have made a significant contribution to promoting workers' rights in the South Australian community. The memorial bears the names of many prominent figures in the South Australian trade union movement and Labour Party, as well as workers who have lost their lives. It is located the corner of Commercial Road & St Vincent Street, Port Adelaide, just outside the Information Centre.

A service at the memorial was planned for Sunday 3 May 2020 when it was intended to unveil a plaque commemorating Terry Miller OAM.

Terry was a long-time advocate for workers and their families affected by asbestos; he was a true Working Man's Hero. We lost him on 31 May 2018 after a long struggle with asbestosis.

Sadly COVID-19 restrictions prevented the service from going ahead.

We remember the lives lost.





Country Shows

We miss our country shows! They provide a great opportunity to talk to people and spread the word about asbestos. They are also a lot of fun. By this time of year AVA volunteers would have dates booked for country shows around the State. Sadly the shows are another casualty of COVID-19 with more than a dozen winter and spring shows cancelling their 2020 events.

Shows are a great community event – they bring people together and help to link city and country as well as boosting the local economy for their communities.

The good news is that seventeen agricultural shows across SA will receive funding to carry out projects aiming to renew showground facilities and help sustain those show societies

which have been forced to cancel events. The SA grants, totalling more than \$2.33-million, form part of the Regional Agricultural Show Development Grants program, which is providing much-needed funds to 122 shows across the country. The grants would be used for a range of infrastructure works, from small-scale upgrades to major overhauls, and will be of benefit to the community year-round.

SA show societies which successfully received grants include Balaklava, Callington, Clare, Kadina, Karoonda, Keith & Tintinara, Kimba, Loxton, Millicent, Mount Pleasant, Mount Remarkable, Naracoorte, Parndana, Penola, Pinnaroo, Strathalbyn & Yankalilla.

We look forward to visiting again soon.

Cracking the Code to Cancer Immunotherapy

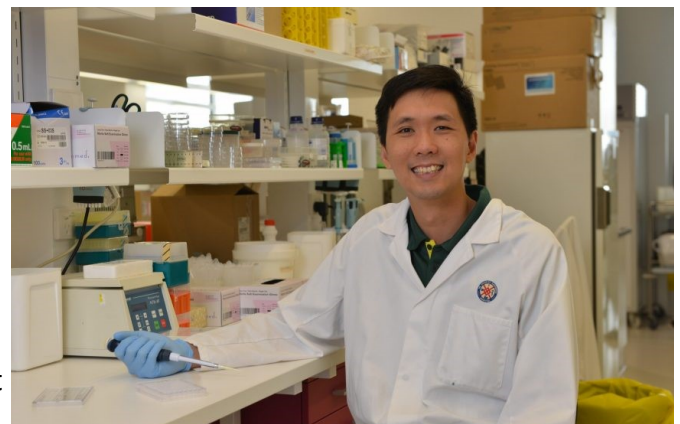
Through generous contributions from the WA community, Reflections Through Reality donated funds for a Postdoctoral Fellowship through Cancer Council WA under the supervision of Dr Jonathan Chee.

Dr Chee and his team have collected tumours from animals that responded well to immunotherapy and completed key experiments that generated a robust data set. With the dataset, Dr Chee is able to use new mathematical tools to interrogate how changes in the immune system can predict immunotherapy outcomes. The two research aims for the study are developing novel immune biomarkers of responses to immunotherapy in mesothelioma, and developing a personalised therapeutic vaccine targeting mutated cancer antigens.

Aim 1 has been successful in demonstrating that immunotherapy outcomes are reliant upon the dynamic changes that occur in the immune system within a tumour before and after treatment. This study is also being extended to patient blood samples from a recently completed clinical trial.

Dr Chee has formed a new collaboration with two Professors from the University of Pennsylvania. They have utilised novel analytical tools developed to study immunosequencing data derived from melanoma patients that underwent personalised vaccination.

Dr Chee and his students have presented their results to the general public through their annual community forum, and to members of the Ban Asbestos Network and the Asbestos Victims Association (SA).



Think you might have damaged or exposed asbestos in your home?



If you have started work on a home improvement project and suspect you have exposed or damaged asbestos during your work, you need to take precautions which may include arranging for an asbestos professional to come to your home to rectify the situation. This is the case even during the COVID-19 pandemic. If you are unsure if the material contains asbestos or not, treat the substance as if it does until a professional confirms otherwise.

Damaged asbestos presents an ongoing health hazard to you and anyone else in your home. Asbestos is a known carcinogen and breathing in asbestos fibres may cause life-threatening illnesses such as lung cancer, asbestosis, pleural disease and mesothelioma.

The only way to be sure if something is or isn't asbestos is to have it tested at an accredited laboratory – you cannot tell simply by looking at it.

If you think you've disturbed asbestos you should stop work and seek advice from an asbestos professional on how safely to remove the asbestos and clear up the work area. To find an asbestos assessor or a licensed removalist, you can call SafeWork SA or visit their website safework.sa.gov.au.

When you call an asbestos professional to come to your home, you must each follow the latest government coronavirus restrictions and guidelines. There are a number of precautions you should take to ensure that the latest government advice on hygiene measures and social distancing is followed.

Check in with the asbestos professional before they visit to ensure you are both feeling well and are not showing symptoms. If anyone in your home is showing symptoms linked to COVID-19, ask the asbestos professional to advise you on how to control the risk of asbestos exposure until you are able to have the professional attend.

Remember not to shake hands, you can wave hello instead. Maintain a safe distance at all times in line with current social distancing guidelines (1.5 meters at time of publication).

Provide facilities for the professional to wash their hands before and after the job is done and, if possible, supply alcohol based hand sanitiser for them to use. Clean and disinfect the surrounding surfaces if work is to be carried out (unless suspected asbestos has been disturbed or is in poor condition).

Ensure everyone in the household practises good hygiene at all times including covering coughs and sneezes with an elbow or a tissue and regularly washing hands with soap for a full 20 seconds

Many of the measures used for the safe removal of asbestos, such as isolating the work area, wearing of personal protective equipment and decontamination procedures, are also helpful in preventing the spread of the coronavirus.

Remember, like plumbing and electrical work, asbestos removal – or renovations that might uncover asbestos - are jobs best left to the experts.



Diary dates

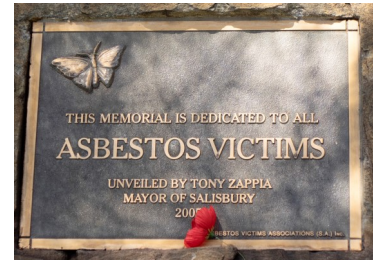
Due to COVID-19 all events have been cancelled until further notice.
We will update our events as restrictions are lifted.
Thank you for your understanding.

We are hopeful that Memorial Day can still go held as planned.

Asbestos Victims Memorial Day

DATE: Friday 27 November 2020

VENUE: Pitman Park SALISBURY



International Workers Memorial Day 28 April 2020

There was no service at Pilgrim Church this year for International Workers Memorial Day. Our friends at VOID (Voice of Industrial Death) commissioned a beautiful video as a tribute. You can find it on the VOID Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/VOIDSouthAustralia/>

Online Social mornings via ZOOM meeting rooms

Social mornings are cancelled for the time being but we will continue to meet online using Zoom on the 2nd Wednesday of each month. It's good to be able to talk face to face—an important part of communication. To join in you need to have a computer, tablet or mobile phone with a camera & microphone. You don't need to have Zoom installed as we will send you an email link. Please give us a call if you would like to be involved.

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