



**ASBESTOS VICTIMS ASSOCIATION  
(SA INC.) Est. 2000**

# Newsletter

December, 2017

*"There For Our Members Whenever and Wherever They Need Us"*

## Welcome to this edition

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### Executive Committee:

#### President

Kat Burge

#### Vice President

Peter Baxter

#### Office Manager/

#### Treasurer

Pam Sandys

#### AVA Advisor

Terry Miller

#### Events

Maxine Williams

Les West

Lesley Shears

Gloria Hinks

Doreen Ryan

Rosanna Tepper

### Message from President Kat Burge:

First of all I would like to thank the many well-wishers who rang me when I assumed the role of President.

There have also been many calls inquiring after Terry's health, asking me to pass on their kind thoughts to him. He has left me some mighty shoes to fill and I am fortunate enough to have him as a presidential adviser.

All that we do would be impossible without our team. All are volunteers and they give up much of their time. Without the team members, Maxine, Lesley, Gloria, Rossana, Doreen, Pam and Peter half of what we do would not be possible. Peter also keeps us entertained, with never a dull moment.

I have recently attended a meeting of South Australian Asbestos Coalition which meets each month, discussing a variety of topics on current asbestos-related matters.

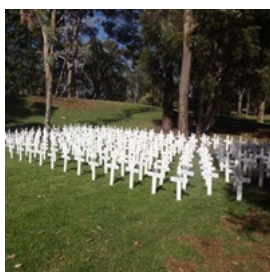
Coalition members represent many sides of the asbestos problem – safe removal, disposal, victims, worker concerns, laws and legal matters, efforts of government departments, safety provisions and the continuing importation of asbestos-containing products – to name just a few.

### Memorial Day - 24th November, 2017

In November I attended the Asbestos Victims Memorial Ceremony held in Pitman Park Salisbury.

When the invitation came to attend my first thought was - 'No, it's too soon,' as my husband had died in September. But when on the invitation I saw the many crosses I knew that to attend would be my way to honour my husband's life and the lives of all those who had died needlessly from asbestos no matter how difficult it would be for me.

It was such a peaceful and respectful ceremony and in such a perfect setting I felt strengthened and at one with the many families who had also lost a loved one to asbestos.



I will always be grateful to AVA and to Kat, Maxine Williams and Lesley Shears for their help through difficult times and their continuing support.



Catherine Wegener

## **Field Days and Shows**

**Introduction:** At AVA, we love country field days and shows. It gives us the opportunity to spread the asbestos message far and wide, and we always hear some interesting stories from the people who drop by our stand.

Our team of volunteers participated in three events in September 2017: The Riverland Field Days at Barmera, the Murray Bridge Show and the Yorke Peninsula Field Days at Paskeville.

**From Lesley:** The Yorke Peninsula Field Days are acknowledged as the oldest in Australia and are held at a large purpose-built venue about 4 km west of Paskeville on the main road to Kadina. The three-day event, held every two years, has a major focus on agriculture with extensive displays of the latest agriculture machinery and equipment, technology, information and services. The event program includes working sheep dogs, wool and sheep, guest speaker presentations and general interest products and services. People come from far and wide - it is well worth making the drive from Adelaide.

There is still a great deal of asbestos in the country in older buildings such as barns & sheds, and V6 fencing. We were told that it can be difficult to get professional services willing to travel the distance from Adelaide. People wanted to know how to identify asbestos, how to safely remove it and where it could be disposed of. The AVA information bags were very well received.

Councilor Carol Martin (Port Adelaide & Enfield) called at the stand to offer support.

It was a very successful show and we were able to reach a good many people to promote asbestos awareness.



### **From Maxine:**



From Maxine: The Riverland Show held in Barmera is a very popular event not only for those living in the Riverland but outer regions as well and also people travelling up from Adelaide to attend.

AVA's stand was in one of the halls and in a very good position and was very well attended by the public. This gave opportunity for people to take free literature and information containing information on Asbestos.

Our display boards were set up with lots of pictures of Asbestos, showing – History of Asbestos, Where mining still takes place, How to identify Asbestos in work areas and the home, Safety procedures, and Current asbestos-containing imports to be aware of.

Questions most commonly asked were “places willing to take Asbestos re disposal” and “licensed companies that will identify Asbestos” particularly in the Riverland area.

### **From Pam:** AVA's first visit to Murray Bridge Show was a pleasant one. We had worried that the

Pedal Prix Competition might affect attendance at the Showgrounds but this was not the case.

The show crowds were friendly and good humoured, as were the other stallholders - and we gave out almost every bit of our informational material. People were keen to ask about identification/removal/disposal of asbestos, health problems and current news items regarding the continued importation of asbestos-containing products into Australia.

We enjoyed seeing the great displays of children's art work, baked goods, needlework, woollen fleeces, farm animals, old farm machinery - to list just a few of the highlights. The weather was kind until the last couple of hours on the final day when very strong winds became too much for those stallholders who were out in the open. Luckily we were in the basketball arena and were unaffected.. All-in-all, it was a trip worth making.\



### **News from AVA's Whyalla Office — John Arthur.**

Things were very busy for most of the year. It has slowed down now.

Please ring the office on 86450555, or drop into our office at:

Shop 5, 87-89 Essington Lewis Ave.

After hours - 0416482673, or 86453322.

### **News from AVA's Port Augusta Office— Geoff Maul**

I have contacted people responsible for the disposal of ASBESTOS.

**There is a charge of \$133.00 for a small piece wrapped in plastic** - this is why people are dumping it out on country roads for the cost of **a few cents worth of petrol.**

We need to be protesting, bringing notice of this problem to all the relevant bodies.

If nothing is done it will become someone else's concern later, to pick it up and take it to a Registered Disposal Site. If not stopped, this practice will endanger the lives of many people in years to come.

All Local Councils need to allow free disposal of asbestos waste to save lives in the future.

Meetings: Port Augusta Bowling Club, Corner Marryatt & Jervois Streets. Contact Geoff on 8642 2884. Everybody is welcome, do come along and join in our discussions.

## **Landmark case against James Hardie**

On 26 May 2017 Judge Gilchrist of the District Court handed down judgment against James Hardie, ordering it to pay a record amount of compensation to Mr Anthony Latz, who contracted mesothelioma after constructing a fence from James Hardie's products in 1976. Judge Gilchrist found James Hardie was negligent in failing to warn Mr Latz of the dangers of its products and entered a judgment in his favour in the sum of \$1,062,000.

The case was significant for a number of reasons. Firstly, Mr Latz was the first person in Australia to receive damages for the loss of his Age Pension entitlements in the "lost years". He argued that because his life will be cut short as a result of his condition, James Hardie should compensate him for the pension he would have received up until his normal life expectancy. The judge agreed and awarded damages on this basis.

Further, Mr Latz was the first person to successfully claim exemplary damages against James Hardie. Exemplary damages are rarely awarded, and they are only awarded to punish a defendant for their conduct. Despite the thousands of claims brought against James Hardie, they had never previously been punished by an award of exemplary damages. Judge Gilchrist awarded \$30,000 at first instance.

The case went on appeal however and Mr Latz cross-appealed in relation to the award of exemplary damages. The Full Court handed down its decision on 30 October and increased the award of exemplary damages to \$250,000.

The case will likely go to the High Court of Australia, although Hardies are not appealing the increased award of exemplary damages.

Turner Freeman ran the case for Mr Latz. For further information on the case, please contact Annie Hoffman at Turner Freeman on 8213 1000.

## **3rd International Conference on Asbestos Awareness and Management** 26-28 November 2017, Old Parliament House, Canberra, Australian Capital Territory

In National Asbestos Awareness Week this November, as part of the events around the country, the Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency held International Asbestos Safety and Eradication Summit.

It is now four years since the Asbestos Safety & Eradication Agency (ASEA) produced a National Strategic Plan to review how Australia is dealing with the problems caused by asbestos. The theme for this year's summit was about consideration of what has been achieved to date and invite comments and questions for a plan to move beyond 2018.

The summit brought together industry, advocacy groups, work, health & safety agencies, the Environmental Protection Agency, unions and support groups. It was heartening to see so many people in one place with a common purpose.

Speakers addressed how social media influences public health, the economic and social impact of asbestos related disease, and removal and legacy issues.



Several speakers reiterated the point that many asbestos buildings are deteriorating as asbestos containing material is coming to the end of its useful life.

Overall the summit was an excellent opportunity for AVA volunteers to learn more about developments in dealing with asbestos around Australia.

Representing AVA at the conference: Maxine Williams, Lesley Shears and Gloria Hinks.

## Diary dates

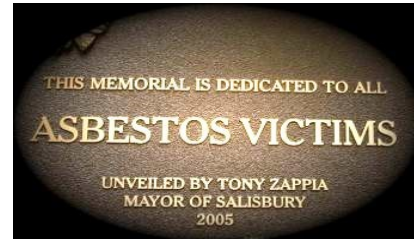
**International Workers Memorial Day - 24th April 2018 - details yet to be announced.**

**Please put this IMPORTANT date in your diary NOW**

### **Asbestos Victims Memorial Day**

**DATE: Friday November 30th 2018**

**VENUE: Pitman Park SALIBURY**



If you would like to catch up with AVA, you'll be able to find us at the following events:

Lucindale Field Days	16-17 April 2018
Goolwa Community Hub	19 April 2018
Kapunda Field Days	13-14 April 2018
Tradies Expo (Showground)	4-6 May 2018

### **Your social mornings - Remember you are not alone.**



You are welcome to share a cuppa with us and other members on the second Wednesday of each month from 10am onwards. Stay as little or as long as suits you.



**Dates:** 14th February, 14th March, 11th April, 9th May and 12th June 2018, etc.

### **AVA THANKS THE FOLLOWING MAJOR SPONSORS & SUPPORTERS**

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