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### Executive Committee:

**President**  
Maxine Williams

**Vice President & Office Manager**  
Lesley Shears

**Treasurer**  
Doreen Ryan

**Committee members**  
Gloria Hinks  
Brendan Shears

**Fleurieu representative**  
Catherine Wegener

**Whyalla Support Group**  
Marlene Arthur

### AVA Annual General Meeting 23 May 2023

The AGM this year saw a changing of the guard. Peter Baxter, President of AVA since 2018, stood down from his position as President & Treasurer. Pete has been a member of AVA since its beginnings and his commitment and hard work has been outstanding. Our sincere thanks Pete, we look forward to your continued involvement with AVA.

### Meet your new committee.

At the AGM Maxine Williams was elected President, with Lesley Shears as Vice President and Doreen Ryan as Treasurer.

Gloria Hinks will continue as Chair and Brendan Shears oversees IT & Media.



### Fleurieu Support Group – Remembrance Service at Mount Compass

A remembrance service was held at the Mount Compass Tavern to remember lives lost to asbestos disease.



Catherine Wegener and her team (Ruth Goddard & June Taylor) are to be congratulated for putting together such a beautiful service.

It was very much appreciated by those present. Rebekha Sharkie MP, Rex Patrick, Mayor Moira Jenkins and Mathew Werfel were in attendance.



## Flinders University Research donation

AVA has donated a state-of-the-art freezer to Associate Professor Sonja Klebe and her team at Flinders Medical Centre. Dr Klebe has developed a 'tumor in a dish' model that uses tumor cells to seek out new treatments for asbestos-related diseases.

This unique model enables the researchers to test different treatments in the laboratory and compare their results with how patients respond in real clinical settings. But to accomplish these ambitious goals, multiple cell samples from the same patient need to be stored at exceptionally cold temperatures. The freezer will store valuable tumor cells at minus 80 degrees - this capability is invaluable for the research process because normal freezers operate at only minus 20 degrees.

The freezer will be used by the laboratory team led by Flinders University researcher and Associate Professor in Pathology, Sonja Klebe who says each case of mesothelioma has its own unique genetic challenges, and it's difficult to predict how a patient will respond to treatment.



"Our unique model tests potential treatments *in vitro*, correlating the findings with actual clinical responses, which enables us to mimic tumor progression and resistance development by closely mimicking the host tumour and its environment, including immune cells and stroma," says Professor Klebe.

"It's important we undertake this testing effectively because while a new type of immunotherapy can help improve symptoms for some patients, it can also cause significant side effects for others. Each case of mesothelioma has its own unique genetic challenges, and it's difficult to predict how a patient will respond to treatment. This donation of high-quality freezing equipment is an invaluable asset and will ensure we can continue to develop therapies that can transform our approach to effective treatment."

## International Workers Memorial Day Pilgrim Church

The service at Pilgrim Church is organized by Voices of Industrial Death (VOID). It brings together a diverse group of people who have lost a loved one or a workmate through a workplace accident or industrial disease. Union members attended to highlight the importance of safe work practices. Candles for LOVE, JUSTICE, HOPE, GRIEF & COURAGE were lit.

After the service a smoking ceremony was held at the rear of the church.



### **AVA presentation to the Prospect SES unit.**

This group has around 50 members, ranging from new young inductees attending for the first time on the night we were there through to those with 40+ years of experience.

SES members are all volunteers – they can be called out for building impacts (such as a car going into a house), land searches (missing persons), fallen trees, storm damage, heatwaves, damaged roofs or floods. The Prospect unit worked in the Riverland during the recent floods and some members volunteered to help in the NSW floods.



### **The Specialist Mesothelioma Learning Module by ADDRI**

The Specialist Mesothelioma Learning Module by ADDRI is an e-learning resource designed to increase awareness and understanding among nurses and allied health professionals about the different types of mesothelioma, its presentation, and how to provide optimal care throughout the disease cycle. The module covers topics such as the history of asbestos use in Australia, how asbestos exposure occurs and who is at risk, the types and histopathology of mesothelioma, and the presentation and diagnosis of patients with pleural mesothelioma.

You can view the module here: <https://tinyurl.com/ADDRI-SMLM>

### **Clinical trial shows tumour-starving drug improves survival of mesothelioma**

A clinical trial has shown that a tumour-starving drug can improve the survival of mesothelioma patients. The trial was conducted by researchers at Queen Mary University of London and involved the use of a drug called CB-839. The drug works by blocking the production of glutamine, which is essential for the growth of cancer cells. The trial showed that CB-839 in combination with chemotherapy drugs pemetrexed and cisplatin was an active and safe combination for front-line treatment of unresectable malignant pleural mesothelioma. The trial also showed encouraging overall survival results with no increase in systemic toxicity.

This is good news for patients with malignant pleural mesothelioma, which is an aggressive cancer that affects the lining of the lungs and is associated with exposure to asbestos. It has a five-year survival rate of less than 10%.

For more information visit: <https://tinyurl.com/CB839QMU>

### **ASEA**

Are you thinking of renovating? Do you know what you are working with? One in three houses in Australia contains asbestos, which can cause life limiting illnesses.

722 cases of mesothelioma diagnosed in 2021 had been reported to the AMR as at 1 November 2022— the median age at diagnosis was 77. Males are around 4 times as likely to be diagnosed with mesothelioma as females.

# Asbestos Victims Memorial Day

## DATE: 24 November 2023



# Social Mornings

2nd Wednesday of the month  
at AVA (Lvl 9/60 Waymouth Street)



12 July  
9 August  
13 September  
11 October  
8 November

## 2023 UPCOMING EVENTS

- 4-5/9 ASEA conference in Adelaide
- 28 /10 Kapunda show
- 24/11 Asbestos Memorial Day (National Asbestos Week)



### LIVING WITH AN ASBESTOS DISEASE?

### NEED HELP WITH YOUR EXPENSES?

Do you need to travel and or stay in Adelaide for treatment or care?

AVA can assist you and your family with the costs of travel and short-term accommodation while you are having treatment or care in Adelaide.



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