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Tonga tsunami causes asbestos worries for ADF personnel

Australian Defence Force personnel may have been exposed to dangerous asbestos fibres during clean-up operations in tsunami-devastated Tonga. HMAS Adelaide and HMAS Canberra were sent to Tonga to help the local population recover from the devastating tsunami.

Defence confirmed members of Operation Tonga Assist discovered asbestos material while clearing debris and destroyed local infrastructure after the January disaster.

Asbestos from damaged and bulldozed structures was not identified as a risk until the piles of rubbish were burned.

Many serving and former members of the ADF were exposed to asbestos during their service, mostly those who served in the Navy but also the RAAF and the Army. There could have been exposure to other hazardous materials.

If you are a former member of the ADF and have any concerns, contact The Department of Veterans' Affairs who can arrange a special health check. It is a test

to check and track the health of people who may have been exposed to asbestos or certain hazardous chemicals. It provides an opportunity to access early intervention care and appropriate referrals when you need it.

People who take part in the test will have access to health advice and support.

Further information available on this link:

www.dva.gov.au/health-and-treatment



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Gloria Hinks

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representative

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Whyalla Support

Group

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Just how much asbestos is still in situ in Australia?

The Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency (ASEA) has released updated asbestos stocks and flows information for Australia. The model estimates the amount of legacy asbestos remaining in the built environment (stocks), and the quantity of asbestos-containing materials (ACM) reaching the end of its productive life, and is now becoming waste or is in disuse (flows).

The updated estimates show that in 2021, around 6.4 million tonnes of legacy asbestos remain in the built environment in Australia. This includes 3.4 million tonnes of asbestos cement pipes, 1.7 million tonnes of asbestos cement sheeting (domestic) and one million tonnes of asbestos cement sheeting (commercial). Together, asbestos cement pipes and commercial and domestic sheeting make up approximately 95% of the remaining legacy asbestos in the built environment in Australia.

It is estimated that one in three houses in Australia contains asbestos. If your house was built before 1980, asbestos could be found in the wet areas: bathrooms, laundry, toilets as well as in the eaves.



BEFORE YOU START, BE AWARE.

ASBESTOS

lurks in more places than you'd think.

AVA
ASBESTOS VICTIMS ASSOCIATION (SA) INC

Disposable Coveralls, Shoe Covers, Gloves, Respirator Mask, Protective Eyewear

Safety is more than just PPE.

Beginners Beekeeping – Asbestos found in imported Bee Smokers

Asbestos dangers extend beyond the house to the outdoors. There has been a marked increase in amateur beekeeping, perhaps taken up as a hobby during COVID times. In some States, beekeepers need to be registered even if they only have one hive.

There is another hazard that is easily overlooked. Battery powered electrical and manual smokers are commonly advertised in online shopping websites by international sellers but both electric and manual models imported into Australia have been found to contain asbestos.



Australian Border Force has warned professional and amateur apiarists to use caution and check with the suppliers as some parts are coming from countries where asbestos is not banned. During a recent four-month period the ABF found 39 imports of smokers at risk of containing asbestos.

Please keep this in mind if you have started keeping bees in your own backyard.

SafeWorkSA suspends Class A licence

A South Australian asbestos removalist and demolition contractor had their class A licence suspended by SafeWorkSA in March 2022. The contractor created health and safety risks by potentially exposing people to friable asbestos by failing to identify asbestos backed vinyl floor sheeting in a residential dwelling before removing it and without adequate controls in place.



The business failed to comply with section 19 of the *Work Health and Safety Act 2012* (SA) to take reasonable care of their workers' health and safety and to ensure that they do not adversely affect the health and safety of others.

Old asbestos backed vinyl sheet floor covering is where the 'backing' (the side attached to the floor) contains friable (easily broken) asbestos material. The vinyl sheeting itself does not contain asbestos, however, manufacturers sometimes incorporated a felt-like 'backing' for cushioning purposes which contained asbestos (typically 80–100 per cent).

Asbestos backed vinyl sheet floor covering must be removed by a class A asbestos removal licence holder. SafeWork SA Executive Director Martyn Campbell reminds businesses that SafeWork SA are currently undertaking a statewide proactive compliance campaign on asbestos management and asbestos removal practices.

"This repeated disregard for following asbestos regulations by a licenced asbestos removalist clearly shows a serious lack of judgement and cannot go without consequences."

"Asbestos licence holders must have a good understanding of the asbestos legislation and code of practices. An expectation exists amongst the community, including the business community, that the engagement of a licence holder will give them some certainty that compliance with the legislation is being met".



Dealing with asbestos is the responsibility of the homeowner.

If you are thinking of undertaking any repairs, renovation and demolition work in a house built prior to the mid-1980s, use the [find and identify tool](#) and the [residential asbestos checklist](#) to help identify where asbestos might be present.

While there is no legal requirement for individual homeowners to have a licence to remove asbestos-containing material from their own property some jobs are best left to the experts. Due to the risk of exposure during removal, it is recommended that homeowners engage a licensed asbestos removalist who will have the proper training and equipment to safely remove the asbestos from your home.



Thoracic Oncology Group Australasia

TOGA Trial Highlights 2021: a silver lining

The Thoracic Oncology Group of Australasia (TOGA) is a member-based research organisation and lung cancer and mesothelioma charity, representing the full range of professional disciplines involved in caring for patients with lung cancer, clinical trial professionals and consumer representatives.

TOGA reported on the DREAM3R trial in December

“This Phase III trial is trying to understand whether adding immunotherapy to standard chemotherapy will improve overall survival for patients with malignant pleural mesothelioma (MPM).

Pleural mesothelioma is a particularly aggressive cancer, with most patients surviving less than a year after diagnosis.

Current treatment involves chemotherapy, and two earlier small-scale studies have indicated that adding durvalumab (Opdivo), an immunotherapy agent, to standard chemotherapy can benefit these patients. DREAM3R aims to answer this question in a larger randomised study with the capacity to change practice.”



AVA is aware of several patients with mesothelioma who have had very encouraging results using Opdivo+Yervoy.

If you want to learn more about the DREAM3R trial or treatment by immunotherapy with Opdivo+Yervoy, contact your medical specialist.

AVA visit to Flinders Medical Centre

Maxine Williams and Catherine Wegener, AVA's Fleurieu representative, visited Flinders Medical Centre to meet Professor Sonja Klebe and her team to learn about their scientific research to better understand asbestos disease.

It is wonderful to see this work being done in South Australia. It gives us hope that in the future we will be better equipped to treat asbestos related disease.

Pictured:

Back row: Sarita Prabhakaran, Catherine Wegener, Sonja Klebe, , Alix Farrall

At front: Maxine Williams, Ash Hocking



Restoring a vintage caravan

It's the classic Aussie holiday – load up the car, hook up the caravan and set off with the family for a summer break.



The caravans of today are a long way from those from the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s when the 'mod cons' were basic, but those little vans still have their own appeal. Vintage caravans can be found on sites like gumtree and e-bay and many DIY enthusiasts are keen to have a go at restoring one.

They make good 'pop-up' coffee stalls or similar businesses.

If you are thinking about doing this, please **stop and think** before you begin – could there be asbestos in situ? An older caravan may be reasonably well-kept and only require a new paint job and new surfaces but beware of caravans that require a lot of structural work.

Some of these old vans may contain asbestos which requires advice from a professional removalist. Asbestos was used in caravan construction because this was the standard building practice at the time. Caravans had power, plumbing, internal frames and linings, insulation, and windows, just as a house did. As a result, there are as many places to find asbestos in an older caravan as in a house from that period.

- * Floor tiles: The original floor tiles could contain asbestos (used to make them more hard-wearing). This also applies to linoleum or vinyl flooring.
- * Sealants: asbestos was bonded into the mastic (i.e., around windows) - common practice for all sealants and putties of this era.
- * Insulation in the wall cavity could contain asbestos
- * Electrical components like flash guards in fuses.
- * Heat insulation: often there is a heat shield at the back of the stove top (or gas burner stove). The heat shield is a metal cover, but behind the metal cover there may be a small sheet of "fibro-type" material which is likely to contain asbestos.
- * Fridge insulation: If there is an old fridge in the van, the insulation used within the shell of the fridge body may contain asbestos.
- * Brake linings (shoes): If the brake linings are the original ones, it's almost certain they will contain asbestos.
- * And if that wasn't enough to worry about – the original mattresses could be manufactured from horsehair and asbestos (to make them inflammable).

Just as with houses, it is worth getting a pre-purchase inspection. Can you imagine your children being diagnosed with an asbestos disease in later life as a result of exposure from the caravan? Calling in asbestos experts and getting lab tests of suspected asbestos can save lives and help you make informed decisions about asbestos and asbestos removal in caravans.



Asbestos Memorial Ceremony 26 November 2021

As we look back over 2021, we can be grateful that our Memorial Ceremony at Pitman Park was able to go ahead in November and that the sun shone for us.

Gillian Aldridge, Mayor of the City of Salisbury, welcomed everyone to the ceremony. The Reverend Mark Baker spoke of a friend who lost his life to asbestos related disease and offered a prayer.

The speakers were The Hon Dennis Hood MLC (representing the Premier Steven Marshall and The Hon Rob Lucas MLC), Senator Penny Wong and Mr Peter Malinauskas, Leader of the Opposition (and now Premier of SA). We also heard from Dr Ash Hocking of the Doug Henderson Research Foundation based at Flinders University. Dr Hocking told us about the research being done to allow an early diagnosis of mesothelioma. Adelphie Stokes and Abigail Williams told the story of their grandfather, Trevor Williams, and the effect on their family of losing him to mesothelioma.

Once again the Pipes & Drums of the Royal Caledonian Society of SA did us proud, playing Amazing Grace after the one minute's silence. Ella Sargeant, who also lost her grandfather Leo Ryan to mesothelioma, sang 'Angel' as family & friends laid flowers on their loved ones' crosses. This is such an emotional moment – lives lost needlessly to the scourge of asbestos.

President Peter Baxter and Vice President Maxine Williams thanked all who attended as well as the volunteers who keep AVA running.

We thank all the politicians who attended and laid floral tributes. The flowers were collected afterwards and taken to the Icon Cancer Centre in the Tennyson Centre, to brighten the lives of staff and patients.

The photo shows our President, Peter Baxter (centre) with some well known political figures who attended the ceremony.





Beinke Bequest Fund

The Beinke Bequest Fund has been set up to honour the name of one of AVA's benefactors, Peter Beinke, who died from mesothelioma in 2014.

Peter Beinke was an Adelaide man whose work as an electrician exposed him to asbestos and led to his diagnosis of mesothelioma. Peter died in 2014. He very generously made a bequest to AVA in his will to help with expenses for anyone with an asbestos related disease who had to travel a distance for treatment, support and care.

The fund is available to help with travel & accommodation expenses for patients with an asbestos related disease (ARD) who are required to travel to the Adelaide area for treatment.

Funding can also cover expenses of family members who accompany patients. These expenses may be covered in whole or in part and will be reimbursed on production of receipts.

A visit to the Salisbury branch of the SES

The South Australian State Emergency Service (SASES) is a volunteer-based emergency assistance and rescue service providing emergency assistance to the people of South Australia 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Volunteers respond to thousands of calls for assistance from the South Australian community each year and have saved the lives and property of countless South Australians. The SES responds to extreme weather events (floods, storms, and heatwaves), road crashes, marine, swiftwater, vertical and confined space rescues.

They assist South Australia Police (SAPOL) in land search operations and traffic management and support the South Australia Country Fire Service (CFS) during major bushfires.

Extreme weather events in particular could expose volunteers to asbestos in damaged buildings. AVA was invited to speak to the SES branch at Salisbury to promote awareness of where asbestos could be present.

We were impressed with the big group of enthusiastic people present and give them a big Thank You! for their service.



Our first show for 2021!

The Gawler Show was held in November 2021—

our first show since the beginning of the pandemic.

We weren't the only ones pleased to be out and about—the showground was packed with people making the best of the weather and the freedom to get out and about.



Diary dates

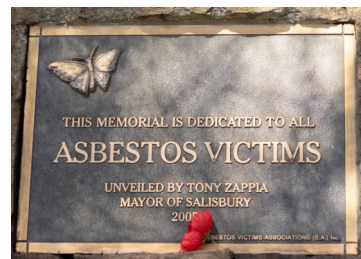
Asbestos Victims Memorial Day

DATE: Friday 25 November 2022

VENUE: Pitman Park SALISBURY

AVA will be represented at the following events:

- Asbestos Safety & Management Conference 19 & 20 May 2022
- Master Builders SA Home Show
Wayville Showgrounds
Friday 3 to Sunday 5 June 2022
- Salisbury Community Health Expo Thursday 16 June from 10 am to 1 pm,
Salisbury City Centre



INTERNATIONAL WORKERS MEMORIAL DAY 28 April 2022

Sadly there will be no service at Pilgrim Church in 2022.

This will be a disappointment for anyone who attends regularly but this year the brave volunteers at VOID have been unable to pull it together in time.

One of the VOID stalwarts died unexpectedly in 2021.

We remember with love the hard work, good humour and delicious cakes, slices and fudge provided by Edith Logan.

Edith never missed a service and was always ready to help.

Visitors welcome

You will always find us in the office in the morning of the second Wednesday of each month. We offer a friendly welcome to visitors, members and anyone affected by asbestos disease. If you want to chat with others and find out more about what AVA does, join us for tea/coffee and biscuits.

2022 dates: May 11, June 15, July 13, August 10, September 14, October 12, November 9, December 14

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Maritime Union of Australia United Voice SA Branch
Australian Workers Union Public Service Association of SA**

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