



Newsletter

July-September 2021

There for our Members whenever or however they need us

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Group

John Arthur

Port Augusta Support

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Geoff Maul

NEW TREATMENT AVAILABLE FOR MESOTHELIOMA PATIENTS ON THE PBS

From 1 July 2021 Australians living with inoperable malignant mesothelioma – a rare and aggressive cancer due mainly to asbestos exposure – can access the nation’s first reimbursed immunotherapy for this cancer.

OPDIVO® (nivolumab) plus YERVOY® (ipilimumab) is now listed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) for unresectable malignant mesothelioma. Known as ‘checkpoint inhibitors’, these immunotherapies work together to help activate the immune system to recognise and attack cancer cells.

Each year, between 700-800 Australians are diagnosed with mesothelioma

an aggressive cancer with poor survival rates. More than 90 per cent of Australians living with mesothelioma cite possible or probable exposure to asbestos, as the cause of their disease, with men more likely to be diagnosed due to increased workplace exposure to asbestos.

Mesothelioma can lay dormant for decades, taking between 20 – 60 years to develop after asbestos exposure. This means diagnosis is often delayed and most patients present with advanced or inoperable disease.



Anyone currently living with mesothelioma should talk to their oncologist to discuss whether this treatment is suitable for them.

Further information for patients can be found at www.opdivopatientinfo.com.au

living with an asbestos disease?

NEED HELP WITH YOUR EXPENSES

Asbestos Victims Association (SA) Inc
BEINKE BEQUEST
Support, awareness and advocacy for victims of asbestos disease and their families

NEWS FROM THE AVA OFFICE

COVID restrictions have severely impacted our activities this year, with many planned events cancelled. We have been able to continue our regular committee meetings and SA Asbestos Coalition meetings online. We continue to visit patients and to provide telephone support.

There is one important initiative we would like to share with you.

The 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.

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

The fund 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.

The fund does not cover legal or medical expenses.

Please contact us to learn more about the fund.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Asbestos campaign progresses in Cambodia despite worsening COVID-19 crisis

Despite a new and devastating wave of COVID-19 spreading across Southeast Asia, progress is being made in APHEDA's Eliminating Asbestos Diseases campaign in Cambodia. The **Asbestos Not Here Not Anywhere** campaign by Union Aid Abroad – APHEDA (Australian People for Health, Education and Development Abroad) is working in SE Asia with trade unions, governments, NGOs, health experts, UN agencies and employers in an effort to raise alarm bells on asbestos exposure risks and to urge action to eliminate asbestos related diseases.

Strengthening awareness raising and testing

The Building and Wood Workers Trade Union Federation of Cambodia is strengthening its campaign targeting construction workers at high risk of asbestos exposure. This has been done through the development of the first Khmer language asbestos hazard awareness video that will be used during information sessions for construction workers. New flyers for construction workers to take home and distribute within their family and community to encourage use of alternative safer materials have also been developed. These flyers also provide advice to those who currently have asbestos in their homes. The new materials add to information sessions promoting workplace and collective action to reduce exposure. Information sessions have been recently updated and improved through a participatory review of training sessions conducted by a volunteer from the Australian union movement.



These new materials also encourage anyone with specific concerns on asbestos in their house or workplace to get materials tested at the new asbestos testing laboratory within the Ministry of Customs (pictured).

This laboratory was funded in 2019 through **the Asbestos Not here Not anywhere** campaign with the support of the Australian Government's Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency (ASEA). The laboratory consists of a polarised light microscope and other equipment used for testing for asbestos.



Cruise Ship ban in Venice

Have you ever enjoyed a romantic gondola ride in Venice, or are you one of the thousands holidaying on a cruise ship who dropped in for the day?

On July 13 2021 Italy's prime minister banned cruise ships from the Venice lagoon and canals — a move long sought by environmentalists and local activists to protect the fragile ecosystem and exasperated residents after years of mass tourism.

Tourists now disembark at Monfalcone, a coastal town with important shipyards, to be greeted by towering cranes and a peppermint-striped thermoelectric cooling

tower looming over walls wrapped in barbed wire. In the hotel, where a model of a Crown Princess cruise ship sits in the lobby, the front desk manager recommends the exhibit "**dedicated to people who died of asbestos**" in the **Shipbuilding Museum**.

The Monfalcone shipyard opened in 1908 and became the largest shipbuilding installation in the Mediterranean region. During the late 1930s and early 1940s, the workforce was about 5,000 people, with an additional 4000-5000 workers also employed in electro-mechanic shops and in aeronautic works, which were located at the shipyard. This area in North-Eastern Italy has a very high incidence of asbestos-related mesothelioma.

We know now that shipbuilding and the aeronautical industry carried a very high risk of asbestos exposure. Our Port Augusta members know it all too well.

Tamkin Ahmadzada is doing important research work

Turner Freeman will fund the vital research work of Tamkin Ahmadzada over the next two years.

Tamkin was born in Kabul, Afghanistan, in the middle of that country's civil war. She was barely a year old when her family fled Afghanistan in order to seek asylum. They left behind their home and all of their treasured possessions.

Her parents' ambition was to move the family to a country that offered education and opportunity to their children. They lived in Pakistan for a number of years until they were fortunate to be granted a humanitarian visa to settle in Australia. Tamkin was 10 when they arrived in Australia to start a new life, settling in Sydney. She gained an education through our public schools that enabled her to pursue her ambitions in life.

Tamkin earned a degree in Biomedical Engineering from The University of Sydney and worked as a regulatory consultant in a medical device regulatory firm. After five years she felt the urge to expand her research skills and is now a third year PhD student at The University of Sydney. The focus of her research is to discover novel biomarkers in malignant pleural mesothelioma (MPM).

The long term aim is to be able to diagnose mesothelioma through a blood test, rather than an invasive biopsy. It could mean a much earlier diagnosis and hopefully a better outcome for patients.

We wish Tamkin well in her future career.



Chinese Welfare Association visit

Serving the Chinese Community of South Australia, The Chinese Welfare Association provides information and advice regarding settlement, health, housing, social security, employment, education and training, childcare, aged care, parenting, relationship issues and consumer rights.

The CWA run weekly sessions for their elders, one for Cantonese speakers and another for Mandarin. These sessions are held at St Luke's church hall, Whitmore Square in Adelaide.

We welcomed the opportunity to talk to the Chinese elders to alert them to where asbestos can be found and the dangers of working with asbestos.

It was a new experience for us to talk to a group where English is a second language.



We were ably assisted by Jennifer who was there to translate our commentary and explain the slides. There were questions afterwards, and again Jennifer's assistance was invaluable.

This presentation was one of the few we have been able to do this year, due to COVID restrictions.

Please give us a call if you belong to a group and need a speaker —Probus, Mens' Shed, U3A or Vietnam Vets—we are very happy to attend. Phone Lesley or Maxine on 0455 120 588.



DIARY DATES

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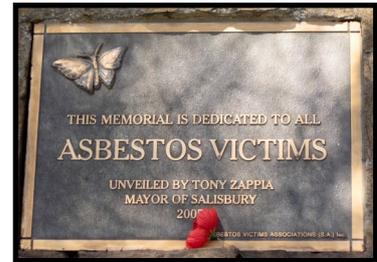
Asbestos Victims Memorial Day
DATE: Friday 26 November 2021
VENUE: Pitman Park SALISBURY

AVA will be represented at the following events:

Kapunda Show 30 October 2021

Gawler Show 20 & 21 November 2021

PLEASE NOTE: All events may be subject to changed COVID restrictions.



INVITATION

Do you like helping other people? Do you want to make a difference?

At AVA you can volunteer as little or as much time as you wish. We welcome people of different ages and cultures, people who are retired or unemployed, and students.

The benefits for volunteers include the sense of 'giving back' to the community, gaining experience that can assist in professional development or employment opportunities, or simply the pleasure of doing something that is clearly appreciated by another person.

We can't do it without you!

Your social mornings - remember you are not alone.

All members are welcome to share a cuppa with us on the second Wednesday of each month from 10 am onwards. Call in and see us.

2021 dates: 8 September, 13 October, 10 November, 8 December

COVID restrictions may apply



AVA THANKS THE FOLLOWING MAJOR SPONSORS & SUPPORTERS

**TURNER FREEMAN ADCO PRINT TOTAL ASBESTOS SERVICES
RETURN TO WORK SA**

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Communications, Electrical & Plumbing Union (CEPU)
Construction, Forestry, Mining, & Energy Union (CFMEU)
Maritime Union of Australia United Voice SA Branch
Australian Workers Union Public Service Association of SA**

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