

Media Release/Alert

24 March 2017

Asbestos disease support coming to Ipswich

The Asbestos Diseases Support Society (ADSS) fears the number of people in the Ipswich region at risk of being diagnosed with an asbestos-related disease could be higher than expected because of the region's status as an industrial, power generating and mining hub.

ADSS knows of up to 400 people in Ipswich and the surrounding area currently needing support for themselves or someone they know with an asbestos-related disease, but believe the true figure could be higher.

In a bid to reach out to people seeking support for and information on asbestos and associated diseases, ADSS is visiting Ipswich this **Tuesday, March 28, 2017**, with a team made up of compensation specialists, a social worker and support staff.

ADSS Chief Executive Officer Amanda Richards said Ipswich's long history with mining, power generation, locomotive construction and manufacturing meant the city and its surrounding areas could have higher than average instances of asbestos-related diseases.

In addition, the city had a large number of pre-war homes and other buildings that had most likely been built with asbestos products. Many of these had been damaged in floods and storm events in recent years, leaving people exposed to dangerous asbestos particles and disease.

"It is important people are aware of the dangers of asbestos, how to protect themselves from it and what avenues for treatment and compensation are available if they unfortunately contract a disease," she said.

"We have about 100 members who live in the Ipswich area and we know of up to 300 more who are registered in one way or another to have been affected to an asbestos-related disease.

"But given Ipswich's industrial, mining and manufacturing history, we suspect there are many more people in the region who could use some support."

ADSS will be hosting a public morning tea at the **Ipswich Civic Centre between 10am and 11.30am on Tuesday, March 28**. A team of support staff, including a social worker and a lawyer with asbestos-related disease compensation experience, will be at the morning tea to advise sufferers and help people navigate government and other support services.

It is free and open to anyone who suffers from diseases they have contracted from working with or otherwise handling asbestos, their carers, families and friends. ADSS also wants to meet anyone who might have been exposed to asbestos but not yet diagnosed with an illness, or people with an interest in stopping the spread of asbestos products.

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Ms Richards said it was also important to let people affected by asbestos diseases know there were other people living in their own communities who were going through the same issues.

“There is a general feeling among people who have repository disease arising from asbestos that they are isolated and alone,” she said. “They don’t know that there are others in their community who are going through or have been through the exact experiences they are dealing with.

“They could be fellow sufferers, the spouses of sufferers or people who have helped others who have had the disease. We want to bring them together. We want to let them know they are not alone.”

Sufferers, carers, families, friends or anyone with an interest in helping people live with asbestos diseases are welcome to attend. To RSVP or for more information, call ADSS on 1800 776 412.

Media: CEO Amanda Richards is happy to take part in an interview or talk-back before Tuesday’s morning tea. To arrange an interview time, please call John Reynolds on 0419 7893 048.