



ASBESTOS DISEASE SUPPORT SOCIETY LIMITED

2017/18 Board Report

I would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we meet the Toorabul and Jagurra peoples and pay my respect to elders past and present.

Thank you all for attending the 2018 Annual General Meeting of the Asbestos Disease Support Society.

Passing of Members

Before I begin to deliver the 2017/18 Board Report, I think it is appropriate we acknowledge, remember and pay our respects to all those who have passed away as a result of asbestos related disease.

All they did was just turn up to work to earn a living to support their families or just went about their daily lives – nothing more, nothing less. We are still seeing the affects today with over 50 members of the Society passing since 1 January this year. If we could all just take a moments silence please.

Board Report

I would like to acknowledge the Board of Directors here with me:

- Pat Cini
- Phil Blair
- Bianca Neve
- Trish Ramsay
- Sheila Hunter
- Margot Hoyte
- Peter Close
- Garry Rogers

I would also like to acknowledge Trevor Torrens, the Society's General Manager and Company Secretary and ADSS staff, Kerrie Williams, Kay Ravbar and Natalie Barber.

And special mention to our Ambassador, Trevor Gillmeister, who gives freely of his time to the Society. For those who may not know, Trevor's father passed away from mesothelioma after exposure as a boilermaker.

The Society was founded over 25 years ago by Shirley White OAM to support sufferers of asbestos related disease, their families and carers.

Over that period the Society's mission has grown to not only provide support to sufferers, but also to:

- Promote awareness of the risks associated with asbestos exposure
- Lobby all levels of Government for improvements on asbestos related issues; and
- Work and with health professionals and the broader health community to aid in a better understanding of asbestos related disease.
- Register asbestos exposure from workers and the community

The services provided by the Society continue to play an important role in the life journey of many of our members. These services include:

- Access to our Social Worker to assist members to understand their entitlements and support access to appropriate medical, health and other support services – which is a core role of the Society.
- Occupational therapy assessment
- Nutrition and dietary consultation and information
- Telephone support from our volunteers
- Community morning teas throughout Qld, the Northern Territory and Northern NSW community
- Peer to peer support through our member groups
- Up to date information on asbestos related issues through the quarterly newsletter and events, such the biennial Symposium.
- Legal Assistance through Turner Freeman Lawyers, who I have to say are second to none in the way they look after our members

Through these services the Society seeks to improve health and support services for our members with asbestos related disease, their families and carers.

Finance

As you will see from the 2017/18 audited Financial Statements, the Society is in a sound financial position. It takes a lot of support to provide the services just mentioned. On behalf of the Society I would like to thank the construction industry for their ongoing support. In particular, recognition and thanks must go to the CFMEU for their efforts in relation to our Charity Race Day - which contributes approximately 20 per cent of our budget.

We continue to receive a grant from Queensland Health which also accounts for approximately 20 per cent of our income. I would also like to thank our corporate sponsors for their ongoing support. The rest of our income is derived from donations. Our two main donors being members of the CFMEU Qld and NT Branch and Turner Freeman Lawyers.

Planning

ADSS held a Board planning day in February 2018 to consider such issues as a “Legal and Governance Health Check Report”, a Northern Territory Strategy and awareness and education campaigns in the community and schools.

Morning Teas and Events

Whilst all of our activities are reported in the quarterly Newsletter to members I would like to highlight a few areas.

Over the 2017/18 financial year ADSS held 28 morning teas across Queensland with over 800 attendees. These morning teas are great opportunity to get up-to-date information asbestos related issues and to network with other members.

The Society also involved in:

- CFMEU Delegates Convention
- Tradies Breakfast at a number of Bunnings stores
- An Awareness Stall for Health and Safety Month
- Workers Memorial Day
- ADSS Thank You Event
- Asbestos Safety Eradication Agency National Conference
- Presented at the seminar on illegally imported asbestos products
- Launch of the Queensland Workers Memorial Honour Roll
- The Affected Families Committee who have lost loved ones through workplace accidents
- Ecumenical Service at St Stephens Cathedral
- Labour Day BBQ

Donations

Asbestos patients at Robina and Logan Public Hospitals also benefited from state-of-the-art equipment donated by the Society. The equipment donated to each of the palliative care units of the hospitals included a Hill-Rom bed and AIRVO 2 Humidifier. This equipment allows for higher quality care for through advanced solutions, patient mobilisation and skin care. This is the sixth donation of beds and humidifiers made by the Society to Queensland hospitals, with a combined value over \$100,000.00.

Advertising

ADSS continued to advertise in “The Road Ahead”, which is producing good results in Society awareness. We also advertised in a number of union and senior’s journals. While not part of the 2017/18 financial year, it is worth mentioning in August this year, we have also commenced an advertising campaign on Radio 4BC, with the voiceover by the Society’s Asbestos Ambassador – Trevor Gillmeister who, once again, donated his services.

Governance

In accordance with the Society's Constitution, nominations were called for five Director positions in September 2017. The "retiring" Directors all renominated and were subsequently endorsed, without the need for a ballot. The returning Directors were:

- Phil Blair
- Margot Hoyte
- Sheila Hunter
- Peter Close
- Bianca Neve

Membership

As at 30 June 2018, there were 560 financial members of the Society.

Corporate Membership

We welcomed a further 12 corporate members into the Society taking the total to 24. All corporate members are recognised in the quarterly newsletter and at selected functions and events.

Staffing

A new general manager commenced in April 2018 – Trevor Torrens. Trevor has come to us with a strong managerial background in both the profit and not-for-profit sectors and has close connections with many of the key stakeholders interacting with the Society.

We also farewelled Leanne Pettersen, the Society's Services Support Officer who left to take up a business opportunity with her husband. We wish Leanne and her husband all the best.

Natalie Barber has since commenced as the Society's Social Worker. In recognition of the importance of this position and the volume of work that is being undertaken, the position has moved from part-time to full-time.

I would also like to extend the Board's gratitude to Bianca Neve who temporarily stepped down as an ADSS Director to undertake the role of Acting GM during the GM recruitment process.

Issues

Illegally imported asbestos products continue to be a big issue and ADSS is working with support groups in other states and the national Asbestos Safety and Eradication to lobby government to stop these products coming into Australia.

ADSS continues to lobby the Queensland Government on poor asbestos related policy. Submissions are currently being prepared requesting the abolition from legislation an exemption that allows home owners and workers to remove up to 10 square metres of bonded asbestos without any precautions.

The Society's stance is that any asbestos work should only be undertaken by licensed professionals.

Similarly, the Society is also calling on the Government to classify low density board as "friable" which provides for a higher level of safety when worked with or removed.

You can be assured the Society will continue to lobby vigorously on these issues.

I would particularly like to thank all the staff, our volunteers and the Board of Directors for all of their hard work. As I stated earlier, the Society is in a good financial position, we have strong governance and a good program supporting sufferers and we look forward to continuing our work over the next 12 months.

I have advised my fellow directors that I will not be seeking re-election as Chair of the ADSS Board. I have been involved with the Society for close to 10 years, 3 of those as Chair. It is time I hand the reins over and to give me a bit more time to enjoy my retirement.

I will still a director, and you can be assured my passion to fight for this good cause will not diminish.

In closing I would like to thank our members for their ongoing commitment to ADSS and we hope we continue to make a difference in your lives.