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## *A Message from the President of ADFA—Barry Robson*

Hello to all of our members and friends. This being our first Newsletter for 2012, I would like to convey my very best wishes to you all and take this opportunity to thank everyone on behalf of the Committee for the support and kindness shown to us here at ADFA during 2011.



Last year, there were many among us who experienced the loss of a loved one due the ever increasing death toll caused by Mesothelioma. Sadly, there is not near enough emphasis placed on this plague which will continue to destroy innocent families who will have to live their lives looking at an empty chair at the table.

On a brighter note, our fund raising race day held on 29 November last year was a remarkable success and will provide funding to help carry us throughout the year. Our thanks go out to our sponsors and all who took part. We could not survive without your help. It also enabled us to give a grant of \$30,000 to the Asbestos Diseases Research Institute (ADRI) at Concord Hospital. This makes a total of \$55,000 that ADFA has given to ADRI to help in their vital work in seeking a cure for diseases associated with Asbestos.

This year ADFA will continue to focus on educating the public on the dangers of Asbestos. We will also be holding fundraising events throughout the year to raise money for important research into finding a cure for Mesothelioma.

To all our Members and their families, I wish you a happy and safe 2012.



Carol Klintfalt (back) & Petrea King, founder of Quest for Life

## **Living with Mesothelioma**

Carol is living with Mesothelioma and has been for the past 5 years. We first saw Carol in a wonderful interview with the ABC's Peter McCutcheon on the "7.30" program in November last year and we realized how keen Carol was to get her message out and share her life with other victims who live in similar circumstances. Carol turns negative thoughts into positive actions and lives each day with hope for the future. You can find Carol's inspirational story on page 2 of this Newsletter.

*"In September 2006, 5 years ago to the month of writing this, I was diagnosed with Mesothelioma."*  
Carol Klintfalt

## An Inspirational Story—5 Years After Diagnosis

I was then a person living in fear: "I'm scared; I'm dying; there's no hope for me," after being given a prognosis of 6 to 9 months to live. "There is no cure; it's terminal." This was a lot to digest but I then proceeded, together with my family, to do research and see different doctors, receive second and even third opinions until I thought I had the right team on board for me. My family rallied around me and if it wasn't for them I probably wouldn't be here now.

In early 2007 I did the Quest for Life program. It was one of the most humbling and uplifting experiences I've ever had. Quest started me on the road to meditation and visualization; fruit and vegetable juicing and realizing that life was about putting myself (and my beloved family), first and removing the stressful and negative aspects and people as much as possible. Quest helped me put processes into practice.

Another great turning point was learning how important forgiveness is. The Quest program covered this quite a lot because once you can forgive those, present or past, who you feel have hurt you, you can start to feel a sense of freedom and liberation. You realize that you can't change them; they are doing the best job in this world that they know how. This forgiveness can apply to family members, friends or perhaps even work colleagues. For me, I found I could start to cleanse by purging the negatives out of my life and leaving more positives thus allowing myself to grow.

The road with cancer is not necessarily easy; it has many setbacks with emotions and health (more chemo or radiation may happen and I have lost many people that I had grown to love, to this disease), but life always has its ups and downs. You learn to work on your positive mind frame and realize that when you hit rock bottom, the only place is up.

Last week I completed another Quest program, Take a Stand for Life. This program reinforced that my life is on the right track. I

still have CT scans and blood tests every two to three months, along with a host of different medications I take and two handfuls of vitamins daily. I still have this disease and will never leave the cancer community. But now and today I feel fantastic. Five years on I feel so grateful and blessed to still be here. Five percent of patients survive to five years with this disease. No one quite knows why I am still here, including me. Maybe it's those longevity genes I inherited! Other than the advice I have already suggested, I would emphasize continuing to work on your immune system and simply not sweating the small stuff.

Another positive in my life that I believe continues to help is the painting I took up one and a half years ago. It started as three hours, one day a week through my local TAFE. I did that for most of 2010 and during this year I've practised what I've learnt. Every time I pick up a brush it's like I'm having my own meditation because everything else on my mind just leaves. It's the most therapeutic thing I've ever done. I'm not suggesting this for everyone but maybe try and find yourself a hobby or pass time that takes you away and enables you to heal.

Good luck to everyone on your personal journey. Why shouldn't you also be in the five to ten percent of survivors? Why shouldn't you wake up in the morning to live and not just to fight cancer? I thank everyone at Quest - especially Petrea who encouraged me to write this article. I also thank the other Quest participants for sharing their personal stories and experiences as so many carried insights and inspiration I took away with me. There is one thing that we need in our lives when times are tough and that is hope. I don't believe there is such a thing as 'false hope'. Have the courage to believe.



## Concord Asbestos Mesothelioma Support (CAMS) Group

It is a privilege to be a member of the Concord Asbestos Mesothelioma Support Group (CAMS), which meets at the Asbestos Diseases Research Institute at Concord.

Except for two meetings, I have been able to attend every meeting since the group started in January 2011. I have found the time spent there most helpful and encouraging. The advice, help and encouragement given by the leader Cherri Southerton has been wonderful and her concern and support for all the sufferers has been most appreciated. I have found it great by being able to encourage others from my experiences and to be encouraged by the circumstances others were having.

I would encourage any one who is suffering from this horrible cancer to join the group and thus receive the help that we can give each other. I truly have been helped to cope with the cancer and with life by being part of this group.

NEIL MATHIE

*Neil Mathie was diagnosed with Mesothelioma in August 2008. He and his wife Betty travel from the Central Coast to attend the CAMS support group meetings. CAMS meets on the fourth Wednesday of each month. If you would like any information about the group please call ADFA Head Office on 1800 006 196.*



**Australia holds the dubious title of being the country that can lay claim to having the highest death rate from Mesothelioma in the world per capita.**

## COSA

The Clinical Oncological Society of Australia (COSA) held its 38th Annual Scientific Meeting in Perth in November 2011. Those in attendance were told that Australia holds the dubious title of being the country that can lay claim to having the highest death rate from Mesothelioma in the world per capita.

This is caused by exposure to Asbestos and we here at ADFA well know this is backed by the findings of the National Health and Medical Research Council.

Mr. Geoff Fary, Chairman of the Asbestos Management Review, an initiative set up by the Australian Government, told COSA's Annual Scientific Meeting that Asbestos still posed a serious health risk through natural disasters and home renovations. They were told also

that natural disasters cause Asbestos fibers to be released into the atmosphere leaving Australians vulnerable to Asbestos related disease (ARD).

Mr. Fary says he has consulted with employment, health and research organisations, Federal, State and local Government bodies along with disease sufferers and support groups however, it is unfortunate that Mr. Fary did not consult with the Asbestos Diseases Foundation of Australia. Although we may not have scientists or oncologists on our Committee, we do have a wealth of experience and years of background knowledge available that only comes as a result of hands-on involvement and a serious resolve. However, to his credit he did highlight the dangers of natural disasters, the danger to home renovators the increase in Mesothelioma and the need for public awareness and a positive and ongoing removal of Asbestos from our

communities.

COSA's President, Professor Bogda Koczwara, said more than 600 Australians died of Mesothelioma each year and rates were increasing.

"This is a highly lethal cancer with very poor survival," Professor Koczwara said. "Yet many people don't realise they are exposing themselves to asbestos when they pull up their lino floors or recover relics from their flooded home."

"We need to be doing more to raise awareness and to remove asbestos, especially from areas prone to natural disasters like flooding, earthquake and bushfire."



# Looking Back

## with Mike O'Donnell

After years of watching his workmates die through asbestos related diseases, Lionel Dale last night achieved a long-cherished aim.

At Parramatta town Hall he helped his close friend Tom Cook launch a society to help the families of victims of asbestos come to terms with their loss and to campaign for a speedier path to compensation.

The tragedy is that for Mr. Dale, 54, time is running out. He will not be able to see the fruits of their labour. Mr. Dale, a father of four and grandfather of two, has been diagnosed as having the incurable asbestos-linked lung cancer, Mesothelioma.

"I always said, who was going to be next among those people I worked with in the asbestos industry. I never thought it would be me, although I knew how dangerous asbestos could be," said Mr. Dale, of Greystanes.

"I'm only one of a holocaust." Figures show that Australia leads the world in the incidence of Mesothelioma with a rate proportionally

twice as high as the United States where asbestos-linked cancers are claiming one death an hour.

Mr. Dale said the Asbestos Diseases and Industrial Cancer Victims Society of NSW would be an independent lobby group whose first aim would be to change the State's tough limitations under which anyone who contracts a dust-related disease has only 12 months to lodge his or her compensation claim.

The time limit for other industrial accidents and car accidents is six years.

"Let's face it, it's not like you are claiming to have a bad back. If you have asbestosis or Mesothelioma, you aren't out to rot the system. You are genuinely ill," said Mr. Dale.

His court case goes ahead next month in the UK where he is suing the English firm Turner Asbestos, for whom he worked for 16 years before emigrating to Sydney where he worked for a further 16 years with asbestos for the building giant James Hardie.

"I have to take one day at a time. Every morning I thank God I'm awake," he said. "People seem to be so complacent where asbestos is concerned—mainly the public. We want to make the people more aware of its dangers. For example, look at how many homes in NSW are made of fibro and that contains asbestos."

Mr. Cook, 38, worked for James Hardie before resigning to become self-employed a year ago. He has spent three years giving people advice.

"I got involved because, quite simply, I lost too many workmates to asbestos. In the society we will have a source of knowledge to share," said Mr. Cook.

The society's secretary, Mrs. Joan Hurd lost her husband to Mesothelioma two years ago.

Lionel Dale passed away in 1991, Tom Cook passed away in 2010.

**By Janet Fife-Yeomans**

## The

Asbestos Diseases Society of NSW was formed on 15 May 1990. The first meeting, at Parramatta Town Hall, was attended by almost 100 people, including Tom Cook, our first President, and the first Secretary, Mrs. Joan Hurd, whose husband Michael had died of Mesothelioma.

For a number of years the Society operated from spare rooms in the homes of Tom and Joan. Meetings were held at the office of the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union (AMWU). From the earliest days the union supported the Society as it still does today.

Over time, the Society became stronger and had more resources. Eventually we were able to get a small office in the union building.

The Society changed its name to the **Asbestos Diseases Foundation of Australia** in late 1998.



Did you know...

**That** more than sixty companies have been declared bankrupt as a result of successful claims made against Asbestos manufacturers and distributors in the US and that dog owners are now attempting to claim on behalf of their pets who have contracted Mesothelioma due to contact with Asbestos... Good Luck!

**That** the Chief of Unions Australia, Mr Mark Lennon stated recently that the airing of a popular D.I.Y. renovation program on TV paid scant regard to the dangers of Asbestos which may or may not be dormant in older buildings used as props.

These remarks were endorsed by ADFA's President, Barry Robson, who added, "Hundreds of victims die every year through unwitting exposure to Asbestos".

To anyone involved in any way in renovating, even as a casual by-stander, ADFA offers to the following advice. Obtain names and address of preferably independent witnesses. Also obtain dates, times and locations, were any warning signs in place and were local residents informed Asbestos may be present? Were suitably attired licensed Asbestos removalists present to take charge of the removal? Any other relevant information you can obtain should be filed away for possible future use and, remember, it may only take a small and invisible shard of live Asbestos lodged in the wall of a lung to promote a dreadful resolve in the years ahead.

Some applicants in the past have had difficulty when submitting a claim for compensation due to lack of evidence.

**Bryan Kirk** has Mesothelioma. He contracted the disease while working for the railways in Western Australia. A family friend advised him to contact an Aboriginal man whom he knew and ask his advice about a shrub known as Maroon Bush which, according to Aboriginal legend, has healing properties.

Bryan went bush and collected enough of the plant to last him three months. He boiled the stems of the plant and made a kind of tea from it and used to drink three glasses of the brew each day.

Since drinking this brew, Bryan says he is feeling much better than he has felt in months. His wife says he eats hearty meals and never vomits after them as he once did. Bryan doesn't claim this is a cure, that wouldn't be fair to cancer sufferers to say that, but it has also allowed him to give up his daily dose of morphine mix and improved his quality of life.

Some 70 patients are now using it with the blessing of the Health Department of WA and their doctors, who say it may have anti-tumour activity and is harmless.





"Massacre Eternit: Justice"

*"The Italian justice system had shown Australia and the rest of the world what an appropriate sentence looked like."*

**Barry Robson,  
President-ADFA**

## The Godfather of Asbestos

The name Schmidheiny is a dirty word in many parts of Europe. It also is the name of one of the richest men in Europe. After 12 years since a criminal investigation was launched, the end of the saga that surrounds this evil man and his associates draws to a close in a courtroom in the Italian city of Turin.

Barry Castleman is considered to be one of the world's leading authorities on Asbestos diseases and he points out that some 3,000 people have died as a result of contracting an Asbestos Related Disease (ARD) in one of the many factories Schmidheiny owns and manufactures Asbestos products. Castleman also points out that death on the job is treated as a crime in Italy and terms in prison are not uncommon for negligence causing death or injury.

The company that Stephan Schmidheiny owns is a multinational operation known as *Eternit* and has subsidiaries throughout Europe and other countries. He is a Swiss National. The evidence presented by Schmidheiny's defence lawyers was so sparse, that they had to resort to such measures as claiming a person should not be judged by what happened twenty years ago - when he started to amass a huge fortune on the back of many, many sick and dying employees. His lawyers also offered up the miserable excuse that he thought that plant manufacturers were taking care of protecting workers and even suggested that his philanthropic gestures should outweigh any doubts about how his huge profits were acquired and bold enough to suggest that the persecution of Schmidheiny was comparable to that of the Nazi oppression and Guantanamo detainees. Schmidheiny has never appeared in court and has stayed in hiding, leaving his battery of highly paid legal representatives to present his case. Schmidheiny is estimated to be worth up to \$3 billion.

### *Italy shows Australia what justice looks like*

"Australian regulators and lawmakers have been given a lesson in justice by Italy, which on 13 February, 2012 sentenced the Swiss billionaire and a Belgian baron to 16 years in prison for knowingly allowing workers to be exposed to deadly asbestos fibres", said Barry Robson, President of ADFA.

"This verdict vindicates what we have known all along - it is simply criminal to knowingly expose workers and their families to asbestos," Mr Robson said.

"Schmidheiny and de Marchienne were reckless and cavalier with the lives of others, resulting in countless deaths. 16 years in prison is an appropriate sentence for such a crime. "Yet, in Australia we have not seen one director or owner go to jail for manslaughter".

"If a worker killed a boss we would rightly call it murder. Yet when a boss slowly poisons workers it's somehow something different. Italy has thrown away this erroneous distinction. Australia should too.

"The fact is that a strong verdict like this is the only way to send a message loud enough to the asbestos industry. Today we have asbestos company directors still trying to push their deadly product onto developing nations, confident that the lives they put at risk aren't as valuable as their own.

"This verdict should give them pause - but it will only be truly effective if Australia and the rest of the developed world follows Italy's fine example."

One has to wonder why, when we have had similar events occurring in this country perpetrated by similar people who lived in denial, accrued fortunes and knew of the lethal dangers that Asbestos provides and did nothing to prevent it, are able to go with their lives as usual. Not one person in this country who faced the court, let alone jail, has been charged with a crime that caused the death of innocent people. Why?

# Central Coast Support Group

Welcome readers to another year, I trust you enjoyed the Christmas time and anticipating the New Year, to those who are unwell, we are thinking about you and supporting you as best as we can.

I would like to thank the members for their support in re-electing me for another year as the Asbestos Diseases Foundation of Australia Vice President; I shall endeavour to continue working with advocacy and whatever necessary to improve conditions for people and their families suffering with asbestos related diseases. I hope we can have a productive year and I look forward to working once again with Barry, Eileen, Helen and Mike.

## Central Coast Support Group (CCADS) Towards Another Year Formed In 2005

Our members enjoyed the Christmas luncheon at Niagara Park RSL Club Bistro on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> December. Seventeen members attended including ADFA executives Barry, Eileen and Mike who travelled from Granville. Thank you for joining us, the group members appreciate seeing and talking with you. The meetings will continue on the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of the month with the exception of April 25<sup>th</sup> which is Anzac Day so we will meet on April 18<sup>th</sup>.

To our readers, if you know of anyone in the Central Coast area who may like to join our friendly group please contact the office or me (Maree Stokes) on mobile **0419 418 190**.

*Maree Stokes,*  
Co-ordinator, CCADS



## About The House Safe Asbestos Removal

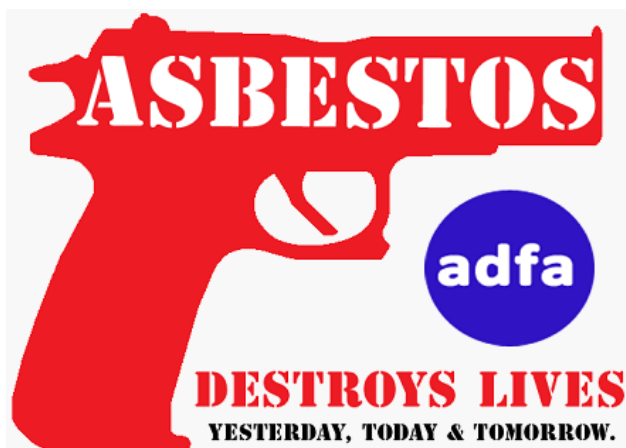
John Limpus from ATH (About The House) Asbestos Removal operates from the Central Coast. He is also a member of ADFA and a decent Aussie battler with a hands on approach who is striving to stay afloat and keep his workers in a job.

As most of us are aware, Asbestos is a massive problem in this country and it is not cheap to remove. Firstly, it has to be encased in plastic sheeting of a certain gauge, dampened down and sealed all round with masking tape and transported to certain tips that are set up to deal with its disposal. It then attracts a special levy over and above the already high tipping costs.

Be wary of those, mostly unlicensed removalists, who infest the Asbestos Removal industry. They undercut their prices by simply charging higher tipping charges and head for the bush where it is dumped and left to contaminate the area or be removed by Council at rate payers' expense. One such example was when some six tonnes of waste Asbestos was dumped on the side of the road on the Central Coast and the clean up bill amounted to \$17,000. John is one of the good guys in the game and disposes of Asbestos in the proper manner.

John can be reached on 0414-012-747 / [www.aboutthehouse.net.au](http://www.aboutthehouse.net.au)





### Information Resources

- ✓ What is Asbestos?
- ✓ Asbestos History.
- ✓ Asbestos Safety.
- ✓ Medical & Treatment Info.
- ✓ Legal Entitlements.
- ✓ Printed Material.



## Support Group Information

ADFA run support groups for people living with asbestos related diseases (pleural plaques, asbestosis and Mesothelioma). Family members, carers or anyone with an interest in asbestos related diseases are also welcome. For further information on Support Groups contact us on **1800 006 196**

### Concord Asbestos Mesothelioma Support (CAMS) Group

CAMS is a support group for people with Mesothelioma and their families and carers. Meetings are held on the 4th Wednesday morning of the month at Concord. For more information please contact the office on **9637 8759**.

### Central Coast Asbestos Support Group Information

Meetings are held the 4th Wednesday of the Month. For more information contact Maree Stokes on **0419 418 190**.

## Thanks to our Sponsor Walkin' Promotions.



### As a sponsor of ADFA, we can offer you:

- ✓ Free advertising in our Newsletter along with your Company logo and a short message;
- ✓ Free membership to a well known and successful charity that has been in existence for over 20 years;
- ✓ Tax concessions for any donation made over \$2;
- ✓ Free entry to any functions that may occur during the year (excluding fundraising events).

Please contact us on **1800-006-196** if you would like to discuss becoming a sponsor of ADFA.

## MEMBERSHIP

Should you want to become a member of the Asbestos Diseases Foundation of Australia, simply call our office and ask for a membership form to be sent to you. The annual membership fee is \$25 and you will be helping a most worthy cause as well as becoming a member of a highly desirable and prestigious charity.

Please contact us on **1800-006-196**.



## SPECIAL OFFER

Hanna from "Nutrimetics Feel Better" is offering a complementary facial for you and a friend.

Hanna is a supporter of ADFA's Annual Race Day.

Call **0452 234 465**