



## “The Victim is our Priority”

Patron:

His Excellency  
The Honourable Hieu Van Le AC  
Governor of South Australia



### MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT - Summer 2019

Already we're into another year and like so many of you, ADSSA has spent time reflecting on what we'd like to achieve this year to progress the aim of making the dangers of asbestos more widely recognised, and to support those already afflicted by the dreadful scourge of asbestos diseases.

Memorial Day on 30 November 2018 was a moving ceremony with the release of several doves in memory of those lost, and we were blessed with lovely weather. Although numbers attending were somewhat reduced from previous years, it was good to see so many familiar faces at the ceremony.

Our Management Committee has undergone some changes since the AGM. Tim Molineux has moved interstate for work and John Carter has decided it's time for him to step away from the Committee, to which he has contributed so much over many years. In acknowledgement of this, ADSSA presented him with Life membership at its December meeting, as well as a Certificate of Appreciation. We have a new member on the Committee, Derek Mart, who has been instrumental in delivering asbestos training to apprentices as part of our commitment to ensuring young workers in the construction industry understand the risks.

I'm pleased to say that since September last year, ADSSA has a new Office Manager – Diane Griffin. Diane works at the office on Tuesdays and Wednesdays each week, but she also monitors our email in between time and liaises with me whenever necessary.

Our website is progressively being updated. ADSSA has also taken on a new domain name for both our website and email, which is simpler to remember. So you might like to note our new email: [admin@adssa.org.au](mailto:admin@adssa.org.au). We also have an active Facebook page for those of you who like to keep in touch by social media. Just search for @ADSSAinc in Facebook. If you 'Like' the page, you can keep in touch with our posts and our audience expands.

Here's to a vibrant and positive year ahead.

**Peter Photakis – President**

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#### From the Social Worker:

As this newsletter reaches you, we will have entered the 2<sup>nd</sup> month of 2019. I am writing my segment, looking out over a parched front yard, on a 40 degree day, on the 15<sup>th</sup> January. I often agonize over what to include in my segment- so much I could write, and so little room, so will write some snippets and see how we go. Should we be reflective, or be in the moment? I think we can do both. **To quote Soren Kierkegaard, “Life can only be understood backwards, yet it is lived forwards”.** There were some Committee changes at ADSSA in 2018. The process of renewal is a 'constant' in organisations. My role remains unchanged and I am still here! One client- you know who you are Junette- thought I had left- but another client Mavis, reassured Junette that I was still at ADSSA!! I have known these clients for many years (asbestos widows) and somehow, Memorial Day wouldn't be complete without their attendance. I

am always impressed that they continue to make the early start! Thank-you to everyone else who attended on the day.

This article, by Claire Campbell 21.12.18, posted on the Palliative Care SA website caught my eye just before Christmas. **‘Australians want to die at home but struggle to get access to end-of-life care.’** Australians “are not dying well”, with only one in four people able to access palliative care, a national advocacy body has warned. In this article, Tracey Watters/ CEO of Palliative Care SA said, “75 % of people wanted to die in their own home, but only 14% of people in SA could, and most were dying in hospital”. Health Minister Stephen Wade said they had allocated \$16 million over the next 4 years to increase palliative care to a 24/7 service. Tracey Watters said, “SA needed an extra \$24.5 million a year to address the gaps in service delivery. We believe that would save the health system probably double that amount every year”.

I love this time of the year, as most of my long- term clients know - beach, watching far too much tennis, minding grand-children, time with friends, and devouring books. I am on my 3<sup>rd</sup> book since Xmas. “Any Ordinary Day” by the well-known ABC journalist, Leigh Sales, was my 2<sup>nd</sup> read. She interviews people in Australia, who have experienced the unimaginable, from terrorism to natural disasters, to simply being in the wrong place at the wrong time. Expecting broken lives, she instead finds strength, hope, even humour. One interviewee said, “To keep living life after such loss is not survival, it’s endurance. We endure”. “Nothing about recovering a devastating blindside is easy and often life is not better afterwards, it’s simply different”. She talks about acts of kindness and how one of the great human acts we should/can/must do is ‘accompany people’. I cannot do justice to this book, by selecting a few sentences here and there. I think, however, you would end up agreeing with Leigh’s final words, “The things you think you wouldn’t be able to survive, you probably can. You will be OK. There’s really, only one lesson to take from all of this, and that is to be grateful for the ordinary days and to savour every, last moment of them. They’re not so ordinary really. Hindsight makes them quite magical”.

There is no better example of this attitude, than that displayed/demonstrated by a Greek couple who I have known for 3+ years. My client has mesothelioma - he has now entered his 4<sup>th</sup> year, post diagnosis. His wife has considerable mobility and balance issues - that said, she makes amazing Greek biscuits! This is what I see and feel when I visit this beautiful couple:

- Strong faith factor – their belief in God, the comfort it gives them, and how it offers an explanation, for what is happening to them.
- Acceptance of death as part of the life cycle. “When God is ready for me”, as he points up to the ceiling.
- Zest for life continues, which has included an annual trip back to my client’s homeland- a Greek island! He manages the long flight beautifully and tells me he sleeps the entire way!!
- You sense the love, which binds this couple and family together. It feels alive and real when you are with them.

I want to finish with a quote by Kevin Covinsky: **“We live in the world as it is, not as it should be”.**  
**Penny Jacomos (0412701630)**

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