

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT – January 2020

Not only are we into a New Year, but a new decade! Let’s hope there will be some relief for those who are struggling with drought and bushfires throughout this country. The dust haze in the Eastern States certainly takes its toll on people with breathing difficulties.

Although the year has ticked over, we can’t forget the ADSSA Memorial Day breakfast ceremony in November at the Jack Watkins Memorial Reserve. It was a particularly moving and memorable observance of all the lives lost to asbestos over the years and ongoing. We very much appreciated the speakers who gave their time to share their thoughts and experiences, to all those who attended the ceremony, and particularly to Phil who shared his experience coping with mesothelioma.

ADSSA gratefully acknowledges support from the City of Port Adelaide Enfield in covering catering costs.



Tribute to Kay Tidswell – inaugural ADSSA CEO

On 20 September 2019, Kay Tidswell passed away, aged 69. Kay was instrumental in establishing ADSSA in 2005 and was CEO until late 2009. During her 4 years at the helm, Kay oversaw ADSSA’s growth from a small organisation providing limited assistance, to the professional organisation it is today. Kay spent a great deal of time speaking with those suffering asbestos conditions and their families. She was a regular contributor to the SA Unions Asbestos Coalition. She also actively campaigned for victims and to members of the public alerting them about the dangers of asbestos. Kay had first-hand knowledge of the devastating impact asbestos conditions had on people, having lost her partner Russ to mesothelioma shortly prior to her appointment as CEO. Kay was always bubbly, full of life and accommodating. She was a “people’s person” who will be greatly missed.

Peter Photakis – President

From the Social Worker - Penny Jacomos, B.A.Soc.Wk.,MA(SS), Social Worker

At the start of this year, with our beautiful country being ravaged by bushfires I have hesitated in wishing people a Happy New Year, because it just hasn't felt quite right. I think we all know of someone who has been affected - I certainly do.

To quote the Chair of Palliative Care SA in their Palliative Care Matters January 2020 newsletter email: *"It is very hard at this time to greet people with a Happy New Year. Perhaps we should be wishing each other a new year that is full of compassion and thoughtfulness for others"*.

It is Australia Day as I sit here and write my section for this newsletter. It is a glorious day. I've walked for an hour on the picture-perfect Port Noarlunga beach, then home to continue 'overdosing' on watching my beloved tennis. I 'turn over' another year tomorrow (64 years young!) and my 5 year grand-daughter starts school on Tuesday 28th, so life is good, and fills me with hope.

Harking back now to Memorial Day. Firstly, the weather was kind to us. I want to thank everyone who attended and made it a special day. I particularly want to thank Phil Sjostrom, who shared his 'mesothelioma journey' with us - heartfelt, honest and peppered with humour. I have spoken to Phil and he has promised to fine tune his speech for ADSSA to have on their website. Special thanks also, to a 90 yr widow - you know who you are Mavis! - and Junette (not sure of your age!) who continue to get up early and make the effort to come each year. Inspirational women!

During my long, summer break I 'lost' one of my clients to mesothelioma, on January 7th. Warren was a 62 yr old married man. I've known Warren and Sue for 18 years (from a previous life!). What an ordeal it has been for both of them over the last 2+ years. Warren spent his final 8-9 weeks in the Hospice. He was a brave, country boy at heart. He was protective of Sue, right up until the end, not wanting her to sleep in his hospital room, so that she could get some sleep! It was an honour to accompany Sue to the viewing/visitation. Sue and I will continue to have contact for a long time into the future. I want to quote a paragraph from an opinion piece by Fiona Rice and Craig Bossie titled 'Spiritual Care', which also appeared in the Palliative Care SA Matters January 2020 email: *"Death is a momentary occurrence. Life turns into death in an instant; yet what happens either side of that profound point in time is endless. Leading up to that moment there have been countless seconds forming joy, sadness, connectedness, elation, grief, pain and meaning. On the other side of death is mystery, memories and emotion. This is all part of our lived experience and speaks to the unknowable depth of the human spirit"*.

I am really glad I don't know what is ahead of me in 2020. To use some tennis 'lingo' - I'll just take it point by point.

Please feel free to contact me anytime on my mobile: 0412701630 or email me on: pjacomos@hotmail.com

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