

### MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT – July 2020

Our State has done particularly well in handling the COVID-19 virus, but the situation is still far from clear. Opportunities are opening up once again for people to resume their previous activities, but whether this will precipitate a new wave of the illness in the community has yet to become apparent.

**Memorial Day 2020:** Within ADSSA, we are mulling over the wisdom of holding our traditional Memorial Day, which would be held at the Jack Watkins Memorial Park on Friday 27 November. As always, your health is the prime consideration in this decision, and we are very conscious that people with impaired lung function or other health issues are particularly vulnerable. We will follow the SA Health guidelines closely as time develops, but as yet we do not feel we can definitely say that the Memorial Day can take place in this usual format. We will keep you informed as time goes on and we will certainly find a way to mark this special commemoration.

On a more positive note, the Jack Watkins Memorial Park pathway has now been totally restored, thanks to the City of Port Adelaide/Enfield. All the pavers that had become eroded over time have been re-engraved and re-laid.



**ADSSA has moved offices:** ADSSA recently moved location, although our office is still based within the Uniting Care Wesley office complex at **77C Gibson Street, Bowden**. Quite a move for us, but we are steadily getting everything in order again. In the meantime, our 24-hour phone line remains open and our social worker is always available.

**ADSSA Ambassadors:** In addition to the honour of having the Governor of South Australia, His Excellency The Honourable Hieu Van Le AC as our Patron, we are proud to announce the appointment of four ADSSA Ambassadors: Steve Georganas, MP; Connie Bonaros, MLC; Peter Malinauskas, MP; and Andrea Michaels, MP. We look forward to a productive relationship with them.

**Peter Photakis – President**

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#### From the Social Worker

It would be ‘the elephant in the room’ if I did not mention the Corona pandemic in this newsletter.

Although I phoned clients in March, April and May, it felt less than satisfactory. There is nothing like face-to-face contact. In the past month I have re-commenced home visits. I have been heartened to hear how well people have coped in Corona times. The Covid-19 experience will have taught people different things, but for almost all of us, it has shown that we can quickly change our daily routines.

One client said they had focussed on home maintenance. He and his wife undertake their exercise regimen via a programme on TV. His wife also does laps in her backyard. They are waiting to go away in their motor-home once borders re-open. Another client's wife, who I met last week, said they were keen to get away in their caravan, to have a break from the 'daily grind' of Corona news, grim world news and medical appointments. We talked about how important it is to 'park' our problems sometimes, and just step away from usual routines. I did this recently, having 36 hours on my brother's farm at Warooka, with a trip into Innes National Park. The spectacular coastline was just the 'shot in the arm' I needed.

The third mesothelioma client I saw last week, was a 73 yr old man who greeted me in shorts and a T-shirt - the day was freezing! When I commented on his attire, he said, "I was born in Scotland"! This man has 4 children, 14 grand-children and 3 great- grandchildren, who are a lifeline for him. His exact words were, "I'm not ready to die yet", but in the same breath I detected a quiet resignation about his prognosis. What never ceases to amaze me, is the lack of overt anger displayed by my clients who have been diagnosed with mesothelioma.

Another part of my role is to visit and support the bereaved relatives, subject to need. There are some people I have known and still see, from 15 years ago. Yesterday I visited Chrissy who I have known since 2007. Her husband died of mesothelioma in 2008. I saw Chrissy in a respite/transition bed, in an aged care facility in Adelaide. Tomorrow, she will be transferred to a permanent aged- care bed (nursing home) in the country, to be near one of her sons. She kept saying how thankful she was for her son's help. Although there was still glimpses of her usual feistiness, it was sad, to now see her so dependent on professional carers. This lady had been a theatre nurse and loved to regale stories to me about her nursing days. Her son will 'keep me in the loop' about Chrissy's progress. I left the facility tinged with sadness.

This year won't go quickly enough for me. I am thankful to be living in SA and that restrictions are easing. I have eaten out a number of times recently. It is slowly starting to feel like normal again - whatever normal is!! A term being used now is, the 'new normal'. Last night I asked for a bowl of crisps to have with a drink at a hotel. It was not permitted. The waitress said, "That is classified as sharing food"! I didn't need the crisps anyway!!

With a little bit of reflection, planning and action, hopefully we can all come out of the Covid-19 experience with a more adaptive mindset.

*Penny Jacomos, B.A.Soc.Wk.,MA(SS), Social Worker*

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