



“The Victim is our Priority”

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



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT Winter 2021

The last few months continue to be very interesting but also rewarding at times. I met with the SA Unions WHS about the recent situation regarding cuts in future ADSSA grant funding, and I was asked to present our situation. The SA Unions WHS committee are investigating the matter further in support of ADSSA. It is believed that we are the only state that is losing grant money from the State Government, as other states are supported by their local Governments. As ADSSA president, I will continue to explore further funding to keep ADSSA running.

Asbestos Awareness and Silicosis Awareness training will continue with Doorways to Construction (D2C) Programs again this term. We have also introduced Hazardous Chemical Awareness and are waiting for approval from CITB. We are hoping that we can start training soon.

The ADSSA Board of Directors met with ADSSA's Patron, His Excellency the Honourable Hieu Van Le, Governor of South Australia on 19th July for a morning tea at Government House. We presented His Excellency with a personalised glass plaque upon his retirement and to show our gratitude for his dedicated support as our Patron. We also acknowledged Mrs Le, with a beautiful wooden clock, which His Excellency passed on to her, as she had a previous engagement to attend.

I would like to share my speech with you all.

“Your Excellency and Mrs Le,

Thank you for your kind words and for hosting this wonderful morning tea. The Asbestos Diseases Society of South Australia has been privileged in having the Governor of South Australia, as our Patron. Over the years, the ongoing support for ADSSA has been greatly appreciated, especially with the acknowledgement of our 10th anniversary, where your Excellency and Mrs Le hosted a reception for us.

It was a great event and an opportunity for ADSSA to celebrate this important milestone with many supporters and members of the ADSSA community.

Your Excellency, yourself and Mrs Le have always made time to genuinely connect with the invited volunteers, including our ADSSA committee members, at the annual event acknowledging the volunteers in South Australia. You were always happy to hear our updates.

On behalf of ADSSA, I present to you this personalised glass plaque as a sincere token of our appreciation for being the Patron of ADSSA. We wish you all the best in the future.

Please also accept this small token of our appreciation for Mrs Le's wonderful hospitality and support over the years. We also wish her all the best for the future.”

It has been difficult in this COVID environment, but we are always here to support the Asbestos victims and their families. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has donated in support of ADSSA. Thank you all for receiving our newsletter and please remember that you can contact us at any time. Take care and stay safe.

Many thanks

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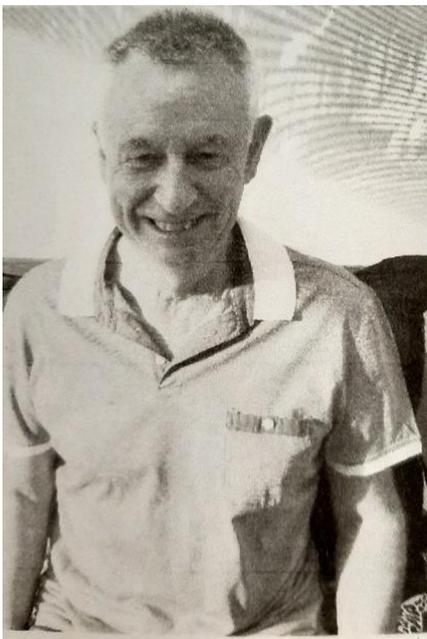


From the Social Worker

I had a full day on the road when I visited a 71-year-old man with mesothelioma, a 79-year-old lady with mesothelioma, and a 76-year-old widow, whose husband had died of mesothelioma 18 months ago.

The 71-year-old man has kindly allowed me to share his mesothelioma story in ADSSA's newsletter. Wayne greeted me at his front door, in shorts and T-shirt (it was freezing, in my books), and he looked so fit and healthy, he could have run a marathon. He did tell me that he walks 6km per day. He certainly shows me up!

State Emergency Services (SES) volunteer, retired accountant, and father-to-four, 71-year-old Wayne, is a Kiwi who has made Australia his home for the past 30 years. In mid-2020, Wayne saw his GP for chest pain he thought was due to a cracked rib. X-rays revealed nothing and he was told to come back in three months if symptoms worsened. When he returned with breathing difficulty, he was immediately referred to a respiratory specialist, who found fluid in his pleural cavity.



Further tests revealed mesothelioma, a rare and aggressive cancer mainly caused by asbestos. Despite his diagnosis, Wayne has maintained a positive outlook on life and is determined to keep doing things he loves.

This is Wayne's story....

Having worked as an accountant for most of his life, Wayne was shocked when he received his diagnosis. "Being told you have advanced stage 4 mesothelioma, with 12-14 months to live, pretty much turns your life around. I'm going to be honest; I did have a cry. It is a huge diagnosis to receive.

"Luckily, I have a great support system. When I initially told my family and friends about my diagnosis, they were extremely supportive. They didn't take it negatively at all. They call me a fighter", said Wayne. "I was aware of asbestos related diseases, however, due to my profession, I never considered myself at risk of developing mesothelioma. I had to

trace back to any places I could have possibly been exposed to asbestos in Australia and New Zealand. I believe that the pleural mesothelioma developed after renovation work being undertaken in an old building that I was working on, in 1999. Many people believe that only those who have worked directly with asbestos are at risk of developing mesothelioma; however I am proof that this is not the case”, said Wayne. After discussing treatment options with his doctor, Wayne started treatment with dual immunotherapy.

“I think one of the main things that helped me through this is my fitness! My fitness has not only helped with my lung capacity, but it’s also allowed me to do things I love, which has helped me stay positive”. “I love volunteering at the SES. I stopped shortly after being diagnosed as I thought it was the right thing to do. However, after speaking to my doctor last week, I’ve started back with the South Australian SES and could not be happier”, Wayne said.

Throughout his diagnosis and treatment, Wayne has been supported by his family and friends, which has helped him stay positive. “Yes, I’ve got this disease, but I just have to learn to live with it. I’m still myself, and there’s nothing changing that”.

Wayne is passionate about sharing his personal experience with mesothelioma, and strongly urges anyone who believes they might be at risk to get tested. “My partner said she’s really proud of me for having the strength to share my story in the hope it will help someone else”, said Wayne.

“I just want more people to be aware of potential asbestos exposure, and for those diagnosed with mesothelioma to keep doing the things they love with the people they love”.

My quote of the week: “Don’t seek an easier life. Strive to be a stronger person”.

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

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

ADSSA is proudly supported by:



Australian Government
Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency



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