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ABB AUSTRALIA FAREWELL GIFT

GARDS was thrilled to accept a donation cheque from ABB Australia who has been working for 6 years at the Yallourn W Power Station site. Their contract is now completed and those who have been working there are moving on to other places in Australia and overseas. We believe we have been very lucky to get to know this wonderful bunch of workers and we have been very fortunate to be the grateful recipients of two donations from them in the last 12 months.

GARDS wanted to show their appreciation for the support ABB Australia had shown towards our asbestos sufferers and their families so we held a thank you morning tea to say goodbye. We have made some great friendships with this terrific bunch of people and they have promised to keep in touch. We wish them all the best in their future endeavours and hope someday they will again be working in the Gippsland area.

Pictured above are some of the workers from ABB Australia and some of the GARDS committee. This money will certainly be put to good use, as it will go part way to supply the GARDS office with a new computer. The GARDS computer blew up the day before the cheque presentation. Thank you so much ABB Australia - it means a great deal.

Major sponsors:
GIPPSLAND ASBESTOS RELATED DISEASES SUPPORT INC.

INTERNATIONAL WORKERS’ MEMORIAL EVENT

In the last week of April on Monday 28th GARDS held its Annual Wreath Laying and International Workers’ Memorial at the Rose Garden in Morwell. The weather was atrocious, those who attended would attest to this. It was bitterly cold and very wet with a breeze that could cut you through. But the event was well attended and the speakers – Senior Sgt Howard Jones from Victoria Police, Tony Medina and Steve Dodd from Gippsland Trades & Labour Council were terrific! Our priest, Father Peter Mizera, who conducted the ecumenical service did such a wonderful job. It was a pity the Newborough Primary School choir had to pull out at the last moment but we totally understood why with the bad weather.

David Duncan our Scottish bag piper did his usual excellent work on the bagpipes alerting all in at least a one-kilometre radius that something special was taking place in the Rose garden. Talking about something special that was how the day turned out to be – many families came up to me after the ceremony and told me how much the event had meant to them and how connected they feel to others who have walked the path they are walking or who are taking the journey with them. It gives us a great sense of togetherness to know that we are making a difference in the lives of these families.

I would like to thank Johan Scheffer, the Upper House Member, for taking time out of his busy day to support the families who have lost a loved one.

To Graeme and Rod thank you for helping to set up and pack up on the day; you both did a mountain of work and should be commended for all you do.

Gippsland Trades and Labour Council supplied a BBQ and meat on the day, which might I say tasted pretty darn good – I know all those who attended appreciated the hot food and there was none left. Thank you to GTLC and the butcher who supplied the meat for putting this on. The hot drinks went down well too!

Slater & Gordon must have read the weather forecast because they turned up with 10 umbrellas to donate to GARDS so that people would not get wet – Thank you so much they were greeted with open arms and truly appreciated on the day.

As I said it was a special day with special people what more could you want? … Maybe good weather – Oh well!
LAW CHANGE IS WELCOME

GARDS was very pleased to hear the announcement on Friday 23rd of May 2008 by John Brumby that the law in Victoria was going to be changed later in the year for asbestos sufferers.

GARDS wrote letters and emails to the Victorian government earlier this year to highlight the plight of sufferers.

The new laws being changed later in the year will give Victorian workers & the general community who have contracted and been compensated for asbestosis the right to seek further compensation if they develop mesothelioma and asbestos related cancers, with compensation payments to match the severe impact of those conditions.

Until now if an asbestosis sufferer made a claim they could not make any more claims for their condition if further down the track they developed mesothelioma or asbestos related lung cancer. It has been like trying to second guess whether you should or should not make a claim now, or wait till later in case the unspeakable happens. Meanwhile these sufferers would have to endure a debilitating illness that took away their health and freedom so that they could not even do the simplest of tasks because they could not get enough breath. Which meant that they would need aids such as oxygen, wheel chairs, or hire tradesmen to do jobs that they would normally have done themselves. The cost of supplying medical equipment to make life easier or to have others come in and maintain their home environments was a real burden on families.

We are very happy that these changes are taking place and bringing Victoria into line with the other states that already allow this to happen.

These changes will now bring fairer compensation for Victorian workers who so rightly and justly deserve to be looked after in this manner.

VALE TO TERRY CARROLL “TURK”

GARDS would like everyone to know how much Terry “Turk” Carroll meant to us. We had dubbed him the Saint along with his very good friend Duane Morrell. Terry and Duane came to GARDS to ask if they could help fundraise for our organisation. We were all overwhelmed with the enthusiasm that these two men had in wanting to help our asbestos sufferers and their families.

Terry liked to help people and it gave him a great sense of satisfaction to do so. Our relationship with these two men started and many thousands of dollars later and many years later we were all very good friends.

We at GARDS’ are very sad at the passing of Terry because he gave us unwavering support and it was always terrific to see him turn up to our events. This was a time when we could catch up on all the news. Even when he was having treatment and not feeling the best he came to the Asbestos Awareness Day last year and it was so good to see him and just let him know how much we cared. Words cannot express how much we will miss him. Terry was held in such high regard for his enthusiasm to help others not as fortunate as himself and he will always hold a special place in our hearts and will always be remember by us as a real Saint!!.

To Terry’s family – Norma, Kevin Helen, Darren, Stacey and Fiona our deepest sympathy to you all.
To Duane the other “Saint” we know you will miss your friend immensely but you will always have a place at GARDS with us.

The picture to the right was taken of Terry in April 2006 at our International Workers’ Memorial Day
CHURCHILL FESTIVAL

The Churchill festival takes place biannually in March. Many organisations and clubs come together to showcase the many and varied groups that make up the community. As you can see by our photo the GARDS organisation took part in this worthwhile event as they did in 2006. The weather was a lot kinder to us this year and it was quite hot. GARDS showcased the organisation and also displayed the asbestos in the home removal kit. We answered questions on how this kit was developed and what prompted us to initiate this project with our project partners. The hard working band of members gave out many bags of information on the kit and information around asbestos disease. We were there on hand to answer any questions residents in the area might have about doing home renovations around asbestos, and how the kit could be used if residents were thinking of taking on the job of removing small quantities of asbestos such as cement sheet from bathrooms or small sheds, flues and vinyl floor tiles etc. We always look forward to attending these days and meeting people in the community. The event was certainly a great day for all the family with attractions for all ages.

UPDATE ON GARDS GOOSE

Our beloved GARDS Goose has been doing okay – he has won some and lost some and that is about all you can expect. We at GARDS have been keeping a close eye on him and have supported him whenever we can. He has raced all over Victoria and has taken the GARDS name many places over the last few months. Good luck to our courageous dog and may he have many more wins and places, injury free. Our wonder dog!!!

THANK YOU TO NEWBOROUGH/YALLOURN RSL

As most of you are aware, at the beginning of this year we had to find a new meeting place to have our 2 meetings a month. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the RSL committee and members for being able to make their establishment available for us to use. They have made us feel very at home and have welcomed us with open arms. We are very lucky to have such community spirited people who have been more than willing to help us in our hour of need. Thank you to you all we can’t begin to tell you how much this means to us. From all of us at GARDS to all you at the Newborough/Yallourn RSL thank you. THANK YOU SO MUCH!

ARE YOUR FEES DUE?

Just a reminder if you have not already paid your fees can you please do so as soon as possible. The fees you pay go a little way to helping with the newsletter and the flyers we send out during the year. We try to keep our fees to a minimum by applying for any Foundation monies that we might be eligible for and also through kind and generous donations from the community, memorial bequests and sponsorships. Financial membership of this organisation helps us when we are tackling issues for asbestos sufferers and their families and we can say that we are speaking for our members and for their right to be heard. To those of you who have paid thank you so much for your support of our organisation, it is greatly appreciated.
The day I travelled to Moe, it was unseasonably cold. I drove the 2-hour commute from Melbourne with my windows down to prevent the windscreen from my hired Toyota from fogging up. Outside it was cold. So cold it was snowing on the higher mountain areas and it was only April!

24 hours earlier I was recovering from the busy commercial schedule—working on a guide dogs advertising campaign, and a 14-hour haul on a cosmopolitan editorial shoot on the NSW Central Coast. If the cold was not enough to snap me into the importance of what I was here to do, the view that revealed itself coming into Latrobe Valley was.

In the distance I saw the 8 large stacks of Hazelwood Power Station in Morwell. Then my eyes fixed further into the distance where I saw a more foreboding site—several large nuclear-like cooling stacks, staring back at me from Traralgon.

5 minutes later, a look over my left shoulder revealed a similar vista from Yallourn North. It became clear to me from the outset that this valley was Victoria’s engine room. I made my 5th call to Vicki Hamilton and eventually we met up at the GARDS office where I also met Dorothy and Marie.

The scale of the Latrobe Valley began to dawn on me; from the in-car view as I entered Moe to the eventual understanding I accumulated in the tour Vicki Hamilton, Dorothy Roberts and Marie Smith gave me on this afternoon, and my watching of ABC’s “power without Glory.”

With my stills camera ready, we set off to find some locations for the coming days.

When we drove past Hazelwood, I spotted a portrait opportunity. Dorothy volunteered and we braved the cold and set about getting my first portrait. The wind was icy-cold and this exaggerated the usual quantity of steam rising from the Hazelwood dam to an even thicker veil of mist and uncertainty. Dorothy looked at the ominous power lines that littered this countryside. A cold breath of wind pushed on her coat and at this point we got our portrait.

My second day was spent in the company of Marie Smith. As we ate in the kitchen of her original SEC kit home, she discussed her resolve to finish an eight hundred page book titled “Asbestosis, Medical and legal issues.”

I sat her in the lounge room where we shot a series of images of her holding this text—indicative of how Marie has chosen to spend her time without her late husband Bruce. Marie has an intellectually erudite mind and she doesn’t read with glasses.

Next was Rhonda Dunn’s portrait. As I walked up her driveway, I was emotionally affected by the sight of a caravan— a symbol for retired freedom, the kind my parents currently enjoy. Rhonda gave me a delicate insight into the final days of home palliative care - the constant stream of friends and relatives paying final respects, the high level of emotional strain and the need to organise. Rhonda is now learning to drive the caravan, which is what Garry wanted her to do.

Pam De Vries has been through more than her youthful face tells you. I spoke with her kids Ken and Julie about losing their father Hank when they were teenagers and their lives ahead. I’ve found grief affects families in many ways. This seemed a young family dealing with life’s unfair hand with cohesion and strength.

We got several portraits in Hank’s shed as well in the Asbestos-ridden wasteland at Yallourn. Pam has a long life ahead of her.

Chris, 25, is an advertising and fashion photographer living in Sydney. He is compiling a body of work featuring widows affected by asbestos, which will be exhibited in Sydney in 2009. He will return to Latrobe Valley later this year.
MONASH UNI MEDICAL TUTORIAL – CLAYTON CAMPUS

The GARDS team were again at Monash University Medical School - Clayton campus this year. Again we were privileged to be a part of the tutorial for the 1st year medical students. This year there were approx 320 students learning about the impact that asbestos has on the sufferers and their families. They too learnt about the social, emotional and environmental issues that are brought about by this deadly material - asbestos.

The students had lots of questions for our team of community experts and we hope that with the experience provided by the speakers that they got a real insight into the effects that asbestos has in a community. The GARDS team that took part this year certainly gave the students the perspective of what it is like from the individual effects it has on a sufferer and the family also having to cope with the diagnosis of asbestos disease, not only in their family environment but with the day to day health issues that they must face.

This is the 7th year our GARDS team has made the trek to Monash Clayton and each year that we go there are another 300 plus students that know something about the issues and the hardships these brave men and women endure. In this picture seated is Frank Leister, although he was in the last stages of asbestos related lung cancer he wanted to come to Monash Clayton so that he could pass on his knowledge and experience of what was happening to him and to tell his story. His wife Joan accompanied him on this journey and she also took part in the tutorial. If it wasn’t for people like Frank and Joan and many others who have made this trip with us to Monash Clayton these students would be all the poorer for having not experienced the real life facts that unfolded in front of them. I always believe that each year these 1st year med students are so lucky to have been granted a small piece of the precious time of these very brave people’s lives for just an hour or so to listen and experience what so many families endure while fighting to maintain their dignity in battling this very preventable disease.

Preventable because it should not have happened in the first place.

GARDS is trying to make real change that will in the future save lives. So to those brave families who make this trip to Monash Clayton we salute you for your bravery and sense of community. But of course I have come to expect this of our GARDS group because they are very special people and I am proud to know each and every one of them.

Pictured right are: the team of sociologists at Monash Clayton and the GARDS team consisting this year of – Lyle Seear, Marie Smith, Dorothy Roberts, Joan Leister, Graeme Hamilton, Vicki Hamilton, Evelyn Griffiths, Rhonda Dunn and Frank Leister

GARDS RAFFLE DRAW

The GARDS raffle was drawn on the 20th of May at the night meeting. The winners of the 6 prizes were:

1st prize – Opal Pendant - Joan Leister of Moe
2nd prize – Chivas Regal & glasses – Kylie Waite of Morwell
3rd prize – Stainless Steel BBQ set – Olivia Vincent
4th prize – Bottle of Johnnie Walker Red Whiskey – Frank Manduci of Moe
5th prize – Bottle of Jameson Irish Whiskey – Maureen Richards of Erica
6th prize – Hand made crocheted rug – Dave Heriban of Yallourn North

Congratulations to all our lucky winners we hope you enjoy your prizes.

A big thank you goes to all those GARDS members that sold raffle tickets, your help in this fundraiser was very much appreciated

To our wonderful members and supporters who donated the prizes for this raffle. Kath & John Simpson, Evelyn Griffiths, Chris Cheetham and House – Mid Valley Morwell.
VERY SPECIAL PEOPLE WHO HAVE DONATED TO GARDS

GARDS was very lucky to receive donations from the following people and organisations and we thank them so much for their generosity without them we would not be here. Those who have donated are; “C” Roster at Hazelwood Mine in memory of Merv Treasure, Duncan & Jessie Fergus, Ritchie’s Stores with the support from the Churchill Community in March 2008, International Power Hazelwood in memory of Merv Treasure, Jackie Treasure in Memory of her husband Merv, A & M Siinmaa in Memory of Merv Treasure, Crosby’s Contractors in April 2008. The following families and individuals in Memory of Merv Treasure - McKeand Family, A Wilkinson, Butler Family, Gwen Marinkovic in Memory of her brother Merv.

The following families made donations in Memory of Reno Ingravalle – Gwen Marinkovic, Lidia Mooney in memory of her father Reno, Helena Nachorny, A Georgio, Catherine Ingravalle in memory of her father Reno, D & C Robinson. We thank all those families for their support and please accept our sincere sympathy at the passing of these two wonderful men.


NEW COMPUTERS FOR GARDS

Our organisation has had to replace its two computers. The main one has ceased to work but lucky we had most things backed up on an external hard drive. We did lose our email addresses but we hope to get that back with the expert work from our IT specialist PC DOC on call. If you know anyone who complains in the future of not receiving anything from us by email please advise them that we have had a computer problem and get them to get in contact with us and we will remedy the problem. The new main computer is now installed so we are up and running as usual. Our second computer is that old that it would not take the transfer of information from our main computer so we are updating this one too. This now should bring us back up to date in the computer equipment area and make life a bit easier. All this would not be possible without the generosity of the community to donate to GARDS and we appreciate this very much. Thank you to you all!

VALE TO FRANK LEISTER

On Sunday the 1st of June our esteemed member Frank Leister passed away from asbestos related lung cancer. We are all very saddened by his passing and he will be greatly missed. Frank has been a member for many years and was quite active in GARDS: he travelled down by bus to protest about James Hardie on a number of occasions and stood side by side with us on the steps of parliament chanting Make James Hardie Pay!! He also took part in the tutorial at Monash University School of Medicine, Clayton campus at the end of March 08 (Frank was already quite ill by then) He believed that he could make a difference and he did! Our deepest sympathy goes to Joan and her family. We have shared some happy and sad times with Frank and he will always be remembered fondly by our organisation.
UP DATE

Study: A Very Public Death
The Experience of Mesothelioma & Asbestos Related Lung Cancer (M/ARLC) in the Latrobe Valley

Authors
Dr Susan Lee, Professor Margaret O’Connor, Professor Karen Francis, Associate Professor Ysanne Chapman, Professor John Humphreys, Ms Vicki Hamilton and Ms Barbara-Anne Cass

This small study was undertaken in 2007 by the Palliative Care Research Team at Monash University’s School of Nursing and Midwifery, the School of Rural Health and GARDS. Thirteen people were interviewed about their experience of asbestos related cancer. Some were those with the disease, some were family carers and others were health professionals or lawyers or community volunteers. Local media, reports and past studies were used to enhance understanding from these interviews.

The preliminary results indicate that people experience unpredictability and fear during diagnosis and treatment of mesothelioma or asbestos related cancer. The requirement for them to navigate complex legal and health systems is a significant burden when so ill. They travel long distances for care and advice and their care and desire to die at home is often complicated by living in a rural area and isolation from support. In addition, people are often reluctant to be referred to palliative care and miss out on valuable support until very late in the illness process.

The final report of this study is currently being reviewed and recommendations are planned for further research to investigate new models of support for people in the Latrobe Valley.

UP DATE

Project: Latrobe Valley Power Industry Cohort Study – Andrew Holloway - Peter Mac & Tony LaMontagne – Melbourne University

Andrew Holloway will be attending the July 15th night meeting at 7.30pm. Venue will be the RSL Newborough/Yallourn, Cnr Darlimurla Ave & Ellinbank Street, Newborough. If there are any people wanting to talk with Andy here is your opportunity to do so - you are most welcome.

The study is moving along. The first 200 participants have received their packs/kit of information and the sample tubes to take to Gippsland pathology. The information kits/packs are still going out at 50 each week so don’t worry if you have not received your kit/pack as yet. Dr Holloway is still keen to recruit former workers in the power industry, who were directly employed by the SEC or as a contractor in the power stations. He is looking for anyone from the industry who worked in a manual trade or people who worked as managers as well as clerical roles. It doesn’t matter if you were directly or indirectly exposed to asbestos, the study would work better if they had a varying high to low frequency to conduct a proper study. So if you would like to participate and be a part of this study you are welcome to do so, the invitation is open.

If you have any questions about the study or the July 15th night meeting please give the GARDS office a ring or phone Vicki Hamilton on 0407274173.

LATROBE UNIVERSITY – Elizabeth Pascoe & Jessica Campbell – La Trobe/Austin Health Clinical School of Nursing, Faculty of Health Sciences.

Project: Breathlessness Issues Of People Living With Asbestosis In The Community
Elizabeth & Jessica will be attending the June 24th Afternoon support group meeting to meet with those who are taking part in the study and to conduct interviews. GARDS thanks very much those members who have agreed to be a part of this study. We look forward to Elizabeth and Jessica’s visit to our meeting and hope that good things come out of the study for Jessica. Research data provided by the participants may be included in a thesis, presented at conferences and published in journals. GARDS members are always happy to help when they know that the information they are supplying will help with health issues into the future of asbestos sufferers and their families. We at GARDS are very proud of those members who donate their precious time to studies such as these to try and help make a real difference for future generations. You are real heroes!!!
G.A.R.D.S. SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS FOR 2008
1.30PM – 3.30PM

Meetings are held at Village Community Centre,
1 Ollerton Ave, Moe

Tuesday 26th February
Tuesday 25th March
**Monday 28th April – Memorial Wreath Laying Ceremony
– Rose Garden, Morwell**
Tuesday 27th May
Tuesday 24th June
Tuesday 29th July
Tuesday 26th August
Tuesday 30th September
Tuesday 28th October
**Friday 28th November – Asbestos Awareness Day – Rose Garden, Morwell**
Christmas Break-up to be advised

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G.A.R.D.S. NIGHT MEETINGS FOR 2008
7.30PM – 9.30PM

These meetings are held at the centre

Tuesday 19th February
Tuesday 18th March
Tuesday 15th April
Tuesday 20th May
Tuesday 17th June
Tuesday 15th July
Tuesday 19th August
Tuesday 16th September
Tuesday 21st October
Tuesday 18th November
**Christmas Break-up to be advised**
GARDS Inc. Membership Form

Name…………………………………………………………………………………………
Address……………………………………………………………………………………
P/Code……………………………………………………………………………………
Telephone……………………………………………………………………………………
Email…………………………………………………………………………………………
Occupation…………………………………………………………………………………..

GARDS NEW MEMBERS Joining Fee

$5.00

PLUS

GARDS Annual Subscription 2008

1. Concession (Pensioner/unemployed) $3.00

2. Full Rate (employed) $11.00

Upon my admission as a Member, I agree to be bound by the rules of GARDS Inc.

Signature……………………………………………………………………………………
Date…………………………………………………………………………………………

Please return to GARDS Inc. with payment, PO Box 111, MOE, Vic. 3825

Office Use Only

I………………………………………………., a Member of the GARDS Inc. nominate the Applicant for Membership of the Association

Signature of Proposer…………………………………………………………………………Date…………

I……………………………………………….., a member of GARDS Inc., second the nomination of the Applicant for membership of the Association.

Signature of Seconder…………………………………………………………………………Date…………
G.A.R.D.S. INC.
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GARDS INC. SUPPORT

GARDS provides support and information to asbestos sufferers, their families and carers. This includes home visits by GARDS volunteers, a telephone information/support service 24 hours, 7 days a week. GARDS has an office, which is open for sufferers, their families, carers and the general community to access at the times listed below in the “About GARDS Inc section”

GARDS INC. Support also conducts a monthly meeting (1.30pm – 3.30pm) on the last Tuesday of the month where guest presenters are invited to provide information about support services of all kinds and any other topics of interest that the members might find of relevance. The meetings also provide a gathering place for experiences; GARDS Support is open to anyone whose lives have been affected by asbestos, their families and the general public.

GARDS loans out free of charge to asbestos sufferers - oxygen bottle regulators, conserving devices, oxygen home concentrators, wheel chairs, oxygen bottle carriers, nebuliser, walking frames & walking sticks. We also have an extensive library of books, DVDs and CDs on asbestos issues, health, social and environmental that we loan free of charge to those wishing to improve their knowledge

GARDS can provide professional counselling free of charge from a qualified psychologist for those who have been diagnosed with asbestos related disease and their families. This support can be face to face or in one of our group situations, or telephone counselling can be arranged if this is preferred.

GARDS INC. EVENING MEETING

GARDS has an organisational, activities and advocating arm. Interested financial members can come along to evening meetings, which are, conducted 7.30pm – 9.30pm on the third Tuesday of the month.

These meetings provide a focal point for information sharing and problem identification. The aim of this group is to focus on improving health and support services and any other issues deemed relevant to improving overall outcomes to asbestos sufferers, their families and the general public. Thus ensuring asbestos-related issues are kept in the public eye and trying to rid our environment of asbestos products.

ABOUT G.A.R.D.S. INC.

Committee of Management
President: Lyle Seear – Ph. 51671376
Vice President: Dorothy Roberts – Ph. 51274174
Mobile 0407274174
Secretary: Vicki Hamilton – Ph. 51278219
Mobile 0407274173
Treasurer: Pam Nicholson – Ph. 51275843
Mobile 0408535671
Member: Marie Smith – 51271427
Mobile 0427271427
Rodney LeLievre – 51261656
Mobile 0403397800

G.A.R.D.S. FEES
Joining Fee - $5.00
Annual Fees:
- Pensioners/Concession - $3.00
- Employed persons - $11.00

MEETINGS:
Support: Last Tuesday of month, 1.30pm – 3.30pm
Evening: 3rd Tuesday of month, 7.30pm – 9.30pm

OFFICE HOURS
- MONDAY: 9.30am –12 midday
- TUESDAY: 1.00pm – 3.00pm
- WEDNESDAY: 1.00pm-3.00pm
- THURSDAY: 12 noon – 3.00pm
- FRIDAY: BY APPOINTMENT
- CALL IN FOR A CHAT & CUPPA

UP AND COMING EVENTS
Our Night/Day Meetings
24th June – Latrobe University
Jessica Campbell & Elizabeth Pascoe
Their project with GARDS on Breathlessness Issues of People Living with Asbestos in the Community

15th of July – Dr Andrew Holloway
Peter Mac – LV Power Industry Cohort Study Update

29th July – Marie Charleston LRH
Manager of Improving Care for Older People