

ASBESTOS NEWS

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BARYULGIL INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY



From left
 Jock McCulloch
 Ted Mundine
 Vicki Hamilton
 Elsie Gordon
 Rita Freeburn
 Lily Madden
 Chicka Madden
 &
 Granddaughters

GARDS Secretary Vicki Hamilton accompanied Dr Jock McCulloch from RMIT well known author on social justice & asbestos issues and Dr Tony LaMontagne Associate Professor with the centre for Health & Society, School of Population Health, Melbourne University on a trip to Sydney in late September to visit some of the last remaining families of mine workers from the Baryulgil James Hardie Asbestos Mine.

The plight of the asbestos mine workers, near Grafton was first broadcast on the ABC program called Broadband 30th of September 1977 by Matt Peacock who won second prize in the Sir William McKell award for environmental journalism. The programs were apart of an overall series on occupational health called “Work As A Health Hazard” designed to increase public awareness of the dangers, which are ever present at the workplace.

The mine first opened in 1944 and had mostly a predominantly indigenous work force but ironically, the very mine which had enable the people of Baryulgil to have financial stability and security was quietly but surely killing them. Their story is the same story of many communities where asbestos was mined or used.

The Baryulgil story talks about residents using waste from the local mine to fill in holes in their driveways. When the Health Commission team arrived at Baryulgil they found to their shock that the local shire council had used the waste to repair washaways on most of the nearby roads. It had been common practice for the council to dump truckloads of asbestos on the roads and driveways around the mine. In one twenty-mile drive they counted fourteen patches of tailings some up to a foot deep and one was at a local picnic spot. There were vast quantities of asbestos dust found in the settlement, significant readings were taken from the gutters, and on the leaves of nearby trees – indicating that a lot of dust was airborne in the area.

MAJOR SPONSORS:



The mine workers children played in the mine tailings for years & a large pile of tailings once stood next to the newly completed school building, the dust use to blow across the playground in the wind. The mine closed in 1979 a couple of years after the report went to air. Members of the Baryulgil community have been fighting for more than 20 years, seeking action and justice for their families and their community who they believe have suffered as a consequence of contact with the James Hardie Baryulgil asbestos mine.

There have been **two** major investigations, the reports of these inquiries were published in 1984 (the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs inquiry) and another one in 1990 (the Race Discrimination Commissioner of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission inquiry) they have also been the subject of intense investigation by the NSW Health Commission. Following one of the reports made some of the recommendations were implemented, but not without delays. For example the funding to establish the Bulgarr Ngaru Aboriginal Medical Service in Grafton was eventually provided. But there are many other recommendations that have not been implemented fully or not at all. In all there have been multiple recommendations about how the legal, medical, public health, environmental and other issues raised by the experiences of the community past and present residents could be addressed. Both in the past and recently, responses by government and others to issues relating to Baryulgil have been appalling.

After speaking with the people of Baryulgil it begs understanding why there has really been nothing done for this community. Is this situation just all too hard for governments to tackle? Again we see James Hardie at the front of another scandal that has been taking place for over 20 years. James Hardie has managed to successfully avoid addressing their moral and legal obligation to this community as they are now attempting to do with the rest of Australia. Its time for the Australian Government to stand up and be counted for the people of not only Baryulgil but all Australian communities who have been affected by asbestos.

Both Federal and State Governments should be making a concerted effort to make corporations accountable for their actions. The decisions these companies make in the name of profits kill workers and their families and they should not be able to avoid their legal & moral responsibilities. GARDS calls on **anyone** who could possibly assist the people of Baryulgil in seeking justice for their suffering. To Lily, her family and friends I thank you so much for making Jock, Tony and myself feel very welcome and sharing your personal stories with us. We will keep in touch and we will do whatever we can to help.

ASBESTOS AWARENESS WEEK 21ST – 25TH NOV

A BYO picnic will follow the GARDS asbestos awareness day event that will take place again in the Morwell Rose Garden on the 25th of November at 11.00am. We would love to see as many people there as possible from all walks of life. Asbestos awareness week is Nationally & Internationally recognised, over 100 countries mark this week in some way. The week highlights and raises the awareness of asbestos in the community and the dangers posed by handling and disposing of the products, we hope by our event that in some way we can highlight the dangers of asbestos and try to make not only workers but the whole community more aware and thus hopefully prevent needless exposure.

An ecumenical service will be apart of this event to remember those suffering or who have succumb to asbestos related disease. A Minister from the Morwell group of churches will conduct the service. Guest speakers will include: David Pargeter Executive Director, Commission for Mission, Uniting Church in Australia (David was an Industrial Minister in Latrobe Valley for some years). It is also hoped that some power industry management that have been invited, will be able to find sometime in their busy schedules to be able to show support by speaking at the event. John Parker Secretary of the Gippsland Trades & Labour Council will also be speaking.



The theme this year is a “whole of community response”. **Asbestos Awareness badges with a feather symbol on the front** are being sold on the day and prior to day for \$2.00. If anyone would like to purchase one before the day please contact the GARDS office. The badge highlights Asbestos Awareness week and the card the badge is attached to advises of common places asbestos may be found. Contact numbers for support and information are also on the card. **PLEASE NOTE: THIS DAY WILL TAKE THE PLACE OF THE SUPPORT GROUP MEETING THAT WAS SCHEDULED FOR THE 29/11.**

GOVERNMENT INTERDEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE

GARDS representatives attended a meeting on the 26th of September at the Justice Department in Melbourne along with other interested community, businesses and organisations on asbestos issues in Victoria. All voiced their concerns about asbestos issues affecting Victorians and the ways that this might be addressed by Government Departments. It is good to see the Victorian State Government at least trying to address some of the problems facing our society today.

A BIG THANK YOU TO THESE PEOPLE & BUSINESSES



To: Norm Rust from Siemens Bass Link you have just been so good to us you are our Treasure Norm!

SIEMENS AT BASSLINK donated money raised from their last BBQ raffle and they have also bought 65 stubby holders, this is just terrific support from all concerned.

A **Newborough gentleman** who wishes to remain anonymous gave a very generous donation to us and we thank him very much for this.

B P R TRENCHING & BORING PTY LTD – GARDS was very pleased to receive a generous donation from Peter Reed. Thank you so much Peter for thinking of us.

PETER MACALLUM CENTRE – ANDREW HOLLOWAY

Andrew is a senior researcher in the Centre for Cancer Genomics and Predictive Medicine at the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre. He is coming to outline his research project and describe ways in which members of the community can get involved.

He will speak at 1.30pm and again at 7.30pm on the 25th October at the Latrobe Business Centre, 36 – 38 Darlimurla Ave, Newborough. Please bring a plate to share for afternoon tea or supper



ASBESTOS SEMINAR FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The Australian Institute of Environmental Health (Victorian Branch) in conjunction with Department of Human Services, Victorian Government conducted an Asbestos seminar in Melbourne on the 8th of September for local councils. Councils were represented from all over Victoria. The seminar proposed to specifically target Local Governments – Public and Environmental Health professionals – Building & Planning enforcement and Managers – Waste and Asset management personnel and managers and other employees that may have dealings with asbestos. EPA, WorkSafe, DHS, Local Government and Asbestos Support & Advocacy groups attended this seminar. Approx 200 were at this function which indicated that councils were looking for answers to help deal with asbestos in their communities. We hope this is just the start of trying to address some of the issues facing the Victorian government and public about asbestos in our community.

XMAS BREAK UP PARTY

The GARDS Christmas party is on again this year and the date set for this is Saturday the 10th of December at 1.00pm. We would love to see as many GARDS members as possible come along for mirth and merriment. Santa will be making an appearance to check out who has been naughty or nice. The roast meat, baked potatoes, soft drinks, tea & coffee will be supplied by GARDS. Those attending please bring either a plate of salad or a sweet to share. The committee would appreciate it if you could please confirm your attendance by Tuesday the 29th of November either by email, snail mail or phone the GARDS office. Looking forward to seeing you on the day!



INFORMATION UPDATE: AsClear Pty Ltd Application

To all our members we have received a letter from the EPA notifying GARDS that AsClear Pty Ltd have modified the original proposal and it will now only store waste generated by licenced asbestos removalists.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

SUNDAY THE 29TH OF JANUARY 2006
VENUE: LATROBE BUSINESS CENTRE,
36 – 38 DARLIMURAL AVE,
NEWBOROUGH.
TIME: 2.00PM

Positions vacant -

President, Treasurer, and one committee member

Returning Officer: Graeme Hamilton

Nomination forms can be collected from the GARDS office or forwarded by post on request to GARDS Secretary.



CHURCH WINDOW DEDICATION

On Sunday the 9th of October GARDS was privileged to be apart of a dedication of a stained glass window for St Aidans Anglican Church, Torres Street in Newborough. The dedication of the window was to Mr Charles Prust and all asbestos sufferers. GARDS believes that this is the first stained glass window in a church in Gippsland to be dedicated to not only an individual asbestos sufferer but to all those who sufferer or have succumb to asbestos related disease. We think that this is a wonderful tribute by the Prust family and we thank and congratulate them for this very significant gesture.

Picture from left to right viewing the window are:
Dorothy Roberts, Vicki Hamilton, Minister Neil Thompson, Lyle Seear, Trevor Callow and seated with two of her granddaughters is in Kath Prust



FUNDRAISING EFFORTS BY ALSTOM WORKERS AT HAZELWOOD

We would like to thank two guys who work for Alstom at Hazelwood who have been doing a fantastic job of fund raising for asbestos sufferers; their enthusiasm is just overwhelming, so thus they have been dubbed the two Saints. Saint Terry & Saint Duane, the guys have raised nearly \$6,000 in total and that is a mighty effort. We know this could not happen without the generosity of lots of people who have been helping either behind the scenes or just giving of money, time and resources. One of the many efforts on their part is a Stubby holders in 4 different colours with the GARDS logo on the front and the sponsors who made this all happen on the back, those sponsors are:

Diamond Power

International Power Hazelwood

Diamond Protection

Alstom Power

Fluor

Andreco Hurl

Transpacific Industrial Solutions

Latrobe Valley Concrete Sawing

P & D Rigging & Crane Hire

Thank you all so very much we couldn't do this without the generosity of people and companies such as you, it makes our job a lot easier when we are not worrying where our next funding may come from and helps us to concentrate on the most important thing supporting sufferers and their families. **To all of you Many Thanks!!!**

Vale to Terrence Cooley



Joseph Spiteri

Barry Callow

We would like to extend our deepest sympathy to
Teresa Cooley & her family
Josephine Spiteri & her family
Sue Callow & her family
on the passing of these three wonderful men.
May they rest in peace!

**G.A.R.D.S. INC.
WOULD LIKE TO THANK THESE
SPONSORS & SUPPORTERS**





www.gards.org

Gippsland Asbestos Related
Diseases Support Inc.

36 – 38 Darlimurla Ave
Newborough, Vic. 3825

PO Box 111,
Moe, Vic. 3825

Phone: 51281218
Fax: 51261897

Email: info@gards.org

Web site: www.gards.org

GARDS INC. SUPPORT

GARDS provides support and information to asbestos sufferers, their families and carers. This includes home visits by GARDS volunteers, a telephone advice service, and drop-in service at GARDS office.

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 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:

Trevor Callow – Ph. 51342208

Secretary:

Vicki Hamilton – Ph. 51278219

Mobile 0407274173

Treasurer:

Pam Nicholson – Ph. 51275843

Mobile 0408535671

Member:

Dorothy Roberts – 51274174

Mobile 0407274174

Rodney LeLievre – 51261656

Mobile 0403397800

G.A.R.D.S. FEES

Joining Fee - \$5.00

Annual Fees:

Pensioners/Concession/

Unemployed - \$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

UP AND COMING EVENTS

Our Night/Day Meetings

**ANDREW HOLLOWAY
PETER MAC ALLUM CANCER
CENTRE**

Tues Oct 25th - 1.30pm & 7.30pm

ASBESTOS AWARENESS DAY
Friday 25th of Nov
Rose Garden, Morwell at 11.00am
BYO Picnic in Park

OFFICE HOURS

MONDAY: 9.30am – 12 noon
TUESDAY: 1.00pm – 3.00pm
WEDNESDAY: 1.00pm-3.30pm
THURSDAY: 12 noon – 3.00pm
FRIDAY: BY APPOINTMENT

CALL IN FOR A CHAT & CUPPA