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ASBESTOS NEWS

GIPPSLAND ASBESTOS RELATED DISEASES SUPPORT INC.
ASBESTOS COUNCIL OF VICTORIA
GARDS is endorsed as a charity. Donations of \$2.00 & over are tax deductible.

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ADVOCACY ARM OF GARDS INC.



Asbestos Council of Victoria

The GARDS organisation is pleased to announce that it now has recognised officially the advocacy arm of its organisation. This part of our group has been, and is dedicated to, addressing issues relating directly to asbestos awareness and advocacy.

For as long as GARDS has been an Incorporated Association it has been addressing the issues around asbestos such as domestic asbestos - laws, dumping and environmental, pharmaceuticals not being on the PBS for our sufferers, research around health and well being, medical services such as infrastructure that was not on offer to our sufferers, especially in the Gippsland region, James Hardie campaign.

In more recent times enHealth publications, changing of legislations, lobbying for more investigations into deaths around asbestos, gaining an apology from the Premier John Brumby for our power workers/contractors, families and the general community - the list goes on.

We have had some wonderful people who are recognised around the world in their fields of interest help us with so many of the things that we deem important while trying to keep the community safe. The help of these experts is invaluable and without it we would not succeed with most of the issues we take on. They come from many areas in the medical field, legal arena, unions of all persuasions, political candidates, research fellows, OH&S field, private companies that deal with asbestos in all its forms, overseas organisations and groups who have helped to make changes on our behalf.

We class all of this support as very special, and we are honoured that we have been able to make changes in so many areas on behalf of sufferers and their families and the general community. These friendships and collaborations inspire us to keep up the work/fight and we have made many friends and supporters on this journey. Some who do not understand what we are trying to achieve have come to understand the work we



do and where the passion for that work comes from - it comes from those who are affected in our community. Nothing else drives you on more than trying to help those in our community who are suffering, especially from something that is so preventable.

Johan Scheffer MP, Upper House Member For Eastern Victoria, ACV/GARDS would like to thank you so much for all the support you give to our organisation in so many ways too numerous to mention. Just recently though Johan helped our organisation with our logo redesign. As with anything you do in life and changes you make - it all costs money. We were fortunate to have mentioned to Johan that we were formalising our advocacy arm of the organisation and we would have to look for sponsorships to help pay for a new logo. Johan generously offered to help us by dipping into his own pocket and now our new logo has become another positive example of Johan's support. We are always grateful for help and donations but they are even more special when they come from the heart.

We would also like to thank Valley Signs - Rod LeLievre for making changes to our signage at the office.

Trevor Watson we would like thank you so much for all the hard yards you put in with our web site updates and the changes you have made recently to accommodate the name addition. It is an honour to know all these people who do special things for the sake of the of the organisation.

Thank you one and all.



DID YOU KNOW?

You can make an online donation to our group at our home page www.gards.org

Make a Donation



Using the secure engine of GiveNow.com.au



You can find our link on the home page of the GARDS website or at facebook.com/GARDSInc



Lawyers Est. 1952



INTERNATIONAL WORKERS MEMORIAL DAY 2013



Centenary Rose Garden, Commercial Road, Morwell Held on Monday 29th of April, 2013

Gippsland Trades and Labour Council along with Gippsland Asbestos Related Diseases Support Inc. held the annual International Workers Memorial event. The day was filled with mixed emotions from those who attended. Stories of poor OH&S were discussed with tragic results for workers, their families and innocent community. The hopes and aspirations of those who attended the event talked about more responsibility on OH&S standards, accountability for those who continually flout the law and risk innocent lives.

No one knows more about that than those who

attended the day as most had lost a loved one, work colleague or friend to a workplace accident or illness.

Those that attend the day, I hope, get a sense of community and support, knowing that people care about their plight and the plight of people who are caught up in a work place accident.

Speakers on the day were:

Johan Scheffer, Upper House Member of Parliament, **John Parker** Secretary of the GTLC and CFMEU organiser, **Vicki Hamilton** CEO/ Secretary of GARDS.

The weather was kind to us on the day and after the official event was adjourned those who attended were invited to stay for a free BBQ lunch with the compliments of Gippsland Trades & Labour Council.

The BBQ was enjoyed by all.



OFFICE OF ASBESTOS SAFETY

The Australian Government has stated that it is rolling out a national plan to prevent exposure to asbestos fibres in order to eliminate asbestos-related disease in Australia.

The primary function of the Office of Asbestos Safety is to establish a new independent national asbestos safety and eradication agency and work with state, territory and local governments to develop a national strategic plan for asbestos eradication, handling and awareness by 1 July 2013.

On 20 March 2013, legislation to establish the Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency (the Agency) was introduced into Parliament. The Agency will provide a focus on issues which go beyond workplace safety to encompass environmental and public health issues and ensure asbestos issues receive the attention and focus needed to drive change across all levels of government.

National Asbestos Exposure Register

A national asbestos exposure register has been

created to capture the details of members of the community who think they may have been exposed to asbestos containing materials, should they develop an asbestos related disease in the future.

If you think you may have been exposed to asbestos containing materials you can register your details on the site by going to this link: <http://deewr.gov.au/national-asbestos-exposure-register>

National Asbestos Taskforce

There have been several reports in the media recently of poor work health and safety practices in the handling of asbestos in telecommunication pits across the country. These pits are designated as federal workplaces and regulated by Comcare.

An independent taskforce has been established to monitor Telstra's ongoing actions to prevent exposure to asbestos including comprehensive training and supervision of contractors. See our news item on page 5 concerning Telstra and the pits.

For information and advice on asbestos related

concerns within the federal jurisdiction please contact the asbestos hotline on 1800 888 468 Monday to Friday between 8.30 am and 5.00 pm (AEST).

The Federal Government through the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations are advertising the position of Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency - Chief Executive Officer - closing date for this is 28/6/2013. There is a call for nominations going on at this present time for names to be put forward for the new Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency Council being formed.

There are certainly some interesting times ahead and it will be a learning curve for all who are involved in this over the next few years.

Anyone wanting general information can contact the Office of Asbestos Safety on General enquiries line - 1300 363 079 - 8am to 6pm nationally.

DOMESTIC ASBESTOS KIT

GARDS/ACV are very pleased to see the new Domestic Asbestos Removal kit finally at a stage for piloting out into the community. Councils who are taking part in the scheme will be able to offer this kit for the removal of less than 10 square metres of non-friable asbestos such as Asbestos Cement sheet and flu pipes, possibly asbestos lino tiles etc.

WorkSafe Vic have been working with ACV/GARDS and interested parties on this kit for more than 12 months - the kit items are mirrored from the Latrobe City kit which was designed by GARDS & GTLC, with input and expertise from WorkSafe Vic, EPA, DoH, Veolia, Victorian Waste Management Assoc, G & J Crosby Contractors, Latrobe City. The kit at Latrobe City was



Pictured above are from left to right Marie Smith - GARDS, Richard Versteegen - WorkSafe Vic, Ray Watson - GARDS, Dorothy Roberts - GARDS, Johan Scheffer MP - Upper House Member for Eastern Victoria, Vicki Hamilton - GARDS, and absent from photo on the day was one who was an integral part of the process, Gary Blackwood MP - Member for Narracan - a great achievement for all concerned!!!!

launched in 2007 & has been given out for the last 6 years and more than 700 kits have gone out over that time. ACV/GARDS and GTLC

would prefer to see home owners choosing to pay for a qualified reputable registered asbestos removalist to do the asbestos

removal, but we know that for some in our community that this is out of the question and not an option.

Remember this sort of work can be dangerous. This is a low cost alternative, but please make sure you heed all the recommended literature & DVD supplied with the kit - keep yourself safe and do not be complacent - anytime you are removing asbestos from your home can be dangerous if you do not take all precautions. Remember if you find friable asbestos (powder like or crumbling A/C) in your home somewhere you must call an asbestos removalist - this kit is not for removing friable asbestos.

It is great to see Government Departments working with the community to address issues around domestic asbestos. We wish all councils who are taking part in the pilot every success. ACV/GARDS would like to thank all those who have helped in the last 12 months to make this project a success.

TURNER FREEMAN SPONSORSHIP FOR GARDS

GARDS was very thrilled to receive sponsorship from Turner Freeman law firm. Tanya Segelov, Partner, with Turner Freeman was happy to advise GARDS of the news that a cheque to the organisation was in the mail. A little bit of a history about Turner Freeman law firm - the birthplace of Turner Freeman was in New South Wales in 1952.

From humble beginnings, a one man office in George Street, Sydney, Roy Turner was instrumental in building the firm's foundations and implementing a strong ethical spirit that the firm still proudly follows.

Turner Freeman is one of the leading asbestos disease law firm in Australia. Turner Freeman ran the first product liability case in 1984, ran the first claim for a child at Wittenoom who contracted mesothelioma and obtained the first verdict against James Hardie for a home renovator who contracted mesothelioma. In 2011 Turner Freeman successfully upheld a verdict for a man with mesothelioma in the High Court of Australia who was exposed to asbestos from brake linings. James Hardie tried to argue that to win his claim he must identify the exposure to asbestos that caused his mesothelioma and that if he could not do so his case must fail. Turner Freeman called evidence that all non trivial exposure to asbestos was causative of mesothelioma. As a result of this



Tanya Segelov - Partner at Turner Freeman

ground breaking claim all mesothelioma claims can proceed if a non trivial exposure can be identified.

As well as running thousands of claims for asbestos victims Turner Freeman has successfully lobbied governments to change the laws in various states that have resulted in asbestos victims being able to claim provisional damages, limitation periods being abolished and damages for pain and suffering surviving death.

Turner Freeman senior partner, Armando Gardiman has run more asbestos claims than any other plaintiff lawyer in Australia. Tanya Segelov acted for the late Bernie Banton in both his claims against James Hardie. Armando and Tanya appeared pro bono for the unions and

asbestos support groups at the James Hardie Commission of Inquiry.

Tanya was also appointed to the Federal Government's Asbestos Management Review in 2010.

As well as asbestos claims Turner Freeman provide advice in all forms of negligence compensation law, family law, employment and industrial law, defamation law, will disputes and estates law and litigation services in all of these areas as well as a dedicated commercial and civil litigation team.

Tanya stated that we would like to acknowledge the dedicated work GARDS is doing in the community and further afield.

Vicki Hamilton CEO/Secretary stated that the organisation was proud of making a difference in the lives of asbestos sufferers and their families. It has always been our goal to support families anyway we can. In doing this, it is a bonus that along the way we can identify areas where we are able to make real change for sufferers and their families by advocating for change around legislation, pharmaceutical drugs to be put on the PBS, gaining a Cancer Care Centre in the Gippsland area and educating students, workers, and the general community to the dangers of asbestos so that in the future we can try to prevent others from unnecessary exposure to this deadly carcinogen. GARDS is very proud of its achievements so far for the community, for Victoria and Nationally and intends to keep on fighting for asbestos sufferers everywhere.