

GIPPSLAND ASBESTOS RELATED DISEASES SUPPORT INC.
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ASBESTOS NEWS

Inside this issue:

Page 2.

- Memorial Wreath Laying Ceremony
- PIGP Memorial Quilt
- Palliative Care Visit
- Fundraiser for GARDS

Page 3.

- Update on Office Space
- Colleen Lux Visit
- AGM Report

Page 4.

- About Rotary Centenary House

Page 5.

- Rotary Centenary House plan

Page 6.

- James Hardie Inquiry

Page 7.

- Sponsors/Supporters Page

Page 8.

- GARDS info page

Dates to Remember:

- **International Day of Mourning**
Wednesday 28th April
- **GARDS Annual Wreath Laying**
Wed 5th May
At 11.00 am in the Rose Garden, Morwell



WORKSAFE SPONSOR G.A.R.D.S.

On the 11th of March Workcover Minister Rob Hulls and WorkSafe Victoria Executive Director, John Merritt made a \$15,000 sponsorship donation at the GARDS headquarters in Newborough. Minister Hulls made mention that this money would help Gippsland families and carers dealing with the impact of asbestos related diseases and deaths.

Mr Hulls also commented that Australia has one of the highest rates of asbestos related disease in the world and that the volunteers at GARDS can give a practical perspective to the effects of asbestos disease and how to manage aspects of daily life. He also mentioned that talking to someone who understands what you and your family are going through can make a huge difference.

John Merritt informed the meeting that groups such as GARDS play an important advocacy role in ensuring that asbestos related issues are kept in the public eye.

Vicki Hamilton, Secretary emphasised the importance of the Sponsorship in ensuring GARDS future and with the incidence of asbestos related diseases growing in the valley and not expected to peak until 2020 this money will help us in the next 12 months to support those families that need our help in some way as the demand on GARDS keeps growing. Thank you Minister Hulls & Mr Merritt for your support.

A SPECIAL THANK YOU

GARDS would also like to convey a special thank you to some very special people who helped us with our sponsorship application and whom we are proud to say have become firm friends of GARDS. John Bottomley and Bette Phillips from Creative Ministries, Bill Lawler, Project Officer with Latrobe City.

Supported by





MEMORIAL WREATH LAYING CEREMONY AT MORWELL ROSE GARDEN

The annual Wreath Laying Ceremony is being held on Wednesday, May 5th at 11.00am. The venue will be the Rose Garden in Morwell this year. This ceremony is to celebrate the lives of loved ones lost to asbestos related disease and other industrial toxins. The Memorial Quilt from Partnership in Grieving Program will also be on display at this ceremony. At the conclusion of the ceremony there will be light refreshments at Slater & Gordon Lawyers, Elgin Street, Morwell. Could you please bring a plate to share. Put this date in your calendar and if you know someone or family whom you think would like to share in the moment please feel free to bring them along.

PIGP MEMORIAL QUILT

The Memorial Quilt from Partnership in Grieving Program will be on display for the first time in Latrobe Valley. The Quilt has been created to unite families grieving for loved ones lost to work place fatalities. The Quilts first public appearance will be at the Memorial Wreath Laying Ceremony and then onto other destinations in Latrobe Valley. The Quilt is an ongoing project where families can add a square at anytime to remember their loved one. If you would like to make a square for this quilt please contact Vicki Hamilton at GARDS office for details.

PARTNERSHIP IN GRIEVING PROGRAM 27th April Support Meeting

Bette Phillips Co-ordinator of PIGP will be our next guest speaker at the Support Group meeting. Bette will be bringing the quilt along to show our members how they and other families across Victoria can unite in their grief by creating a piece of work that conveys a powerful message of the impact to families when a loved one dies through work related circumstances. Hopefully some in our Latrobe Valley community find a sense of belonging rather than feeling that they are living in isolation with their grief.

We encourage all our members to bring someone along that they know who may find this a way of dealing with their grief.

PALLIATIVE CARE VISIT

Bernie Carstein from Latrobe Palliative Care Service was a guest speaker at our March 30th Support Group Meeting. Bernie gave an informative talk on what Palliative Care is all about. She also spoke about her team of dedicated nurses, doctors and volunteers. Our support group members kept Bernie busy answering questions on some very tricky areas. All in all I think the members got a lot out of Bernie's visit and we thank her very much. Bernie has made a commitment to come along to as many meetings as her work will allow her to and she promises to keep in touch as much as possible with us. We thank Palliative Care and really do appreciate the time.

GARDS INC. METAL BADGES AND PENS

GARDS now have pens with our logo and details printed on them if you are a member of GARDS you may have one of these pens free. If you would like to sell these pens outside GARDS they are \$1.00 for non-members. We also have metal badges with the GARDS logo; these badges are \$6.50 to members & \$10.00 to non-members.



UPDATE ON OFFICE SPACE

As reported in the last GARDS newsletter GARDS was moving into bigger office area, this is still to take place but it has been longer than first anticipated. We are now on track and the management of Latrobe Business Centre, RecruitNet Career Skills is running a Community Jobs Program with Neighbourhood Renewal residents. There are 17 enthusiastic people who for the next 15 weeks will be learning new skills here such as typing, painting, repairing, remodelling and redesigning the layout of the business centre. You will notice some wonderful things over the next weeks happening in this centre. We would also like to congratulate Fay Needham, one of our GARDS committee members, who was successful in obtaining one of these positions. GARDS has purchased and had donated paint and other equipment to paint our new office space. We are hoping to be in our new space next month if all goes well. GARDS is planning to have an official opening of the new office when we have moved in and everything is in place. Flyers for this occasion will be forwarded to all members notifying you of the date and time for this event.



COLLEEN VISITS VALLEY

There were 50 people who attended the support group meeting on the last Tuesday in February for GARDS. Guest speaker Colleen Lux graduate in Environmental studies from Montana University, USA, spoke about asbestos issues in Libby, Montana. Colleen spoke about the gritty struggle for justice in Libby, which was the site of the most lethal environmental disaster in U.S. history created by a private company. The members had lots of questions for her to answer. It was realised in her report that a great deal of what has happened in Libby can also be related to what has happened here in Latrobe Valley. GARDS committee treated her to a tour of Latrobe Valley where she enjoyed the local cuisine, Power Stations and the local wild life, such as kangaroos, native birds etc. GARDS organisation presented Colleen with a picture book of Gippsland along with Australian mementos and an honorary GARDS member's certificate and badge to take back with her to America. Colleen has since written to us by email and has spoken with great joy about her visit with us in Latrobe Valley and how much she enjoyed the life style here. She hopes to come again and visit in the near future. Ms Lux is attending an Asbestos Symposium in the US where she will be showing some news items that we have supplied her with, on disc, about Latrobe Valley, Victoria, Australia.

G.A.R.D.S. INC. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting was held on Tuesday, January 27th in the meeting rooms at Latrobe Business Centre. All positions were declared vacant and the present committee were re-elected unopposed. We thank all those members for continuing on in their positions and for all their hard work they have undertaken over the previous 2 years. Please note that the Vice President, Secretary and one committee member's position are due to become vacant at the next AGM.

About Rotary



Centenary House

Gippsland Rotary Centenary House will provide affordable temporary accommodation based on the Ronald McDonald House model for Gippsland families.

As you would be well aware by now GARDS is supporting the initiative of the Latrobe Group of Rotary Clubs from Rotary District 9820. These 9 clubs are from Drouin, Warragul, Trafalgar, Moe, Morwell, Hazelwood, Mirboo North, Traralgon, Central & Traralgon. District 9820 comprises of 51 Clubs extending from Dandenong and the Mornington Peninsula in the west to the New South Wales border in the east and includes the referral catchment area of the Gippsland Cancer Care Centre. As the facility will primarily assist the communities of East and South Gippsland it is anticipated that many more Rotary Clubs will embrace the project as it rolls along.

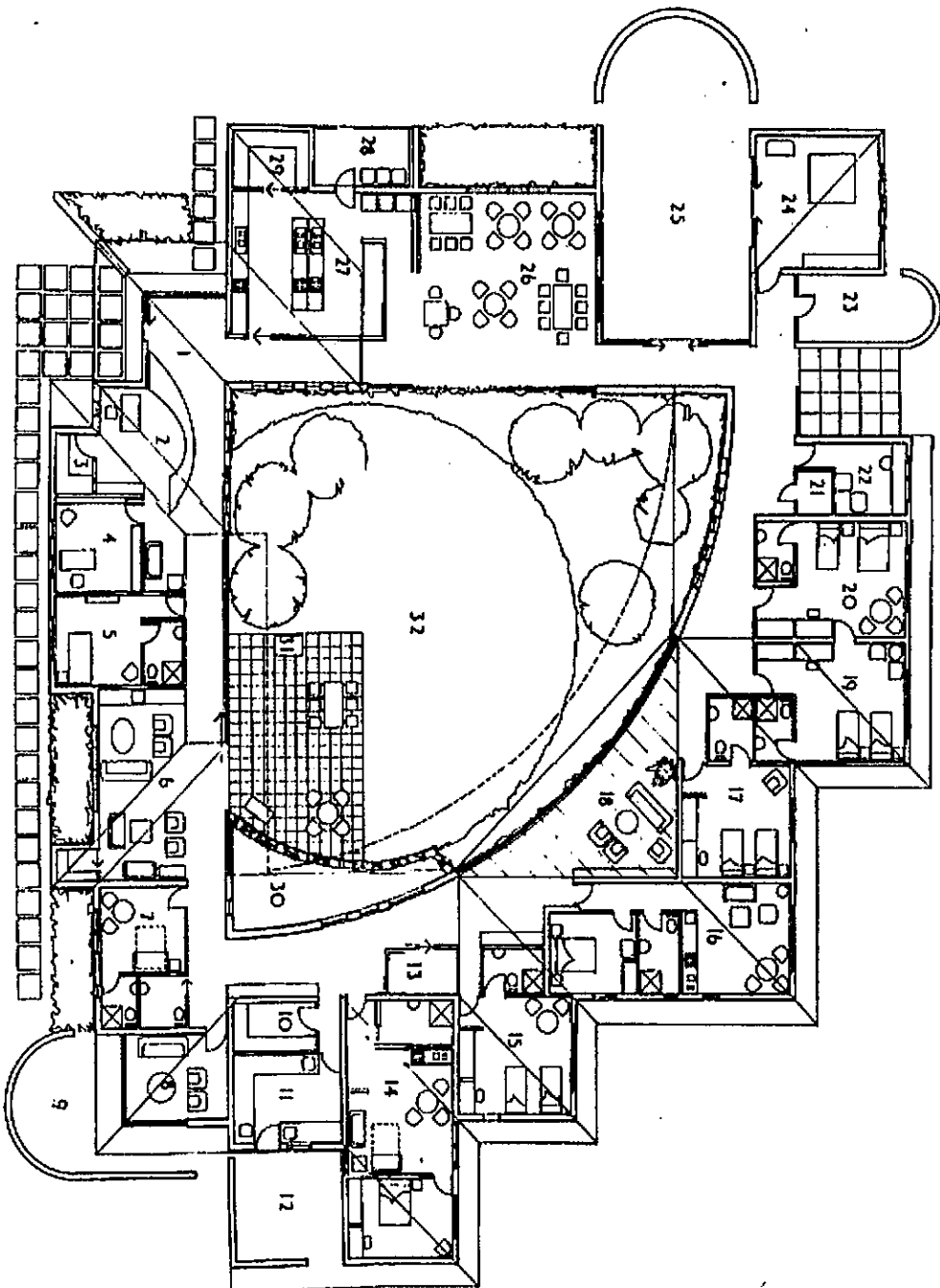
The new Gippsland Rotary Centenary House will be a purpose built single story facility. This will be located on the site of the old Central Gippsland Hospital site in Traralgon. The facility will be located in a residential area in Washington Street amidst planned parkland, and away from the busy Princes Highway. The building design brief is based on experience from Ronald McDonald House, Clayton and will comprise of:

- 6 large “motel style” en suite units with double bed, sofa bed and room for temporary fold out beds, with northerly and landscaped garden aspect
- 2 self-contained units with cooking and eating facilities, with northerly and landscaped garden aspect.
- “Community” kitchen with at least 2 workstations.
- “Community” dining and lounge facilities.
- Secure children’s playground and recreation room adjacent to lounge.
- Reception and administration office.
- Resident volunteer en suite bedroom unit.
- Tranquil courtyard with seating and water feature.
- Tea making, library and casual lounge areas adjacent the bedrooms.
- “Quiet Room” for family privacy.
- Parking
- Close circuit TV security system for after hour’s access.
- Close to public transport and serviced by LRH volunteer courtesy car drivers

This cost of this facility is expected to be about \$1 million and will be funded by private donations. However the capital cost will be minimised by the generous support of Rotarians who are offering their professional services free of cost except for unavoidable out of pocket expenses such as compulsory fees and specialist services unable to be provided by Rotarians. Some of the professional services include: Architectural, Civil and Structural design, Survey, Site Safety, Legal, Accounting.

The capital project and on-going operation of the facility will be managed by a Committee of Management operating under the Incorporated Associations Act, the committee have also adopted the “Model Rules”. The committee of Management comprises of representatives from Rotary, The Community and the Latrobe Regional Hospital. Committee members are Doug Bell, Yvonne Wood, Mark Vitlin, Vicki Hamilton, Julie Hocking, Diane Wilkinson, Barry Dunstan, Neil McCluskey, Norm Butler, Kay Radford and Ken Peake. Fundraisers at this time are the book “Rubbish” by Chris Barfoot & Simon Klapish, at a cost of \$20.00, Centenary House Pens at a cost of \$2.00 which can be purchased through GARDS. Fundraising Charity events will be advertised through the local media outlets. The committee has been very active organising and coordinating with Rotary Clubs for the Toad Hall Ball which took place on the 27th of March, an Irish Shindig on St Patrick’s Day 17th of March, Moe Rotary Club Golf Day 1st of April all of these events were a great success. Please support this worthwhile cause with either a monetary donation or pledge of support with goods, services and or time in the future. For more information please contact Vicki Hamilton on 51281218 or 0407274173

FLOOR PLAN
10m



- LEGEND**
- 1. RECEPTION
 - 2. GENERAL OFFICE
 - 3. RECORDS STORAGE
 - 4. OFFICE
 - 5. STAFF BLEEP-OVER
 - 6. LOUNGE
 - 7. VOLUNTEERS
 - 8. QUIET ROOM
 - 9. QUIET COURTYARD
 - 10. LINEN
 - 11. LAUNDRY
 - 12. DRYING AREA/SERVICE
 - 13. STONE
 - 14. ONE-BEDROOM UNIT (accessible)
 - 15. EN-SUITE UNIT
 - 16. ONE-BEDROOM UNIT
 - 17. EN-SUITE UNIT
 - 18. RESOLVING AREA
 - 19. EN-SUITE UNIT (accessible)
 - 20. EN-SUITE UNIT (accessible)
 - 21. STONE
 - 22. INTERNET/COUNSELLING ROOM
 - 23. PLANT & EQUIPMENT
 - 24. CHILDREN'S GAMES ROOM
 - 25. GAMES AREA
 - 26. DRINK ROOM
 - 27. KITCHEN
 - 28. SERVICE AREA
 - 29. PANTRY
 - 30. REFLECTION POOL
 - 31. BARBEQUE
 - 32. COURTYARD
 - 33. ACCESSIBLE TOILET



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JAMES HARDIE SPECIAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

The NSW government has set up an inquiry into James Hardie as concerns are rising that Australians could be left with a massive bill because the company had left insufficient money to pay for asbestos victims claims. The NSW government called for the inquiry after an apparent shortfall of \$700 million was discovered in the foundation. Now asbestos victims, facing the prospect of their compensation claims not being met, will be able to have the inquiry look at how that shortfall came about.

As you would be aware James Hardie shifted its head office to the Netherlands in February 2001 after the financial restructure of the James Hardie Group to reorganise its affairs, leaving a trust to look after its ongoing asbestos liability.

The NSW premier Bob Carr has made mention that it appeared James Hardie has limited its liability and that some of the hundreds of asbestos victims may never see any compensation.

James Hardie's company has produced some of the largest amounts of asbestos products in Australia, particularly fibro. The power stations in Latrobe Valley were some of the biggest customers of James Hardie.

The Medical Research and Compensation Foundation that James Hardie has set up is a separate company from the main company, it is run by trustees with \$295 million in assets which are suppose to meet claims into the future. But analysts and experts have predicted that the compensation rates at this present moment will see that fund run dry in the next five years. Asbestos victims are increasing and not expected to peak in Australia till at least 2020. More than 500 Australians die each year of asbestos diseases and the rate, rather than decreasing over the years, is accelerating. In the early 1990s, Australians were dying at a rate of about 300 a year from these diseases. The latest actuarial research suggests that, over the next 50 years, between 10,000 and 14,000 will die of asbestos-related causes. What is more, the victims are getting younger. It is no longer an old person's disease.

Firms, which advised James Hardie on disposing of subsidiaries with a potential exposure to asbestos liabilities would be among those, questioned, including Trowbridge Deloitte, Towers Perrin, PricewaterhouseCoopers, Access Economics, UBS and Grant Samuel.

The commission's findings are crucial to asbestos victims, with an estimated \$6 billion of total asbestos liabilities in Australia. State governments also face higher liabilities if there is a shortfall in MRCF.

The worst scenario for James Hardie would be a finding that the company arranged the move offshore to escape its full liabilities. Other obvious lines of inquiry for Jackson are to establish James Hardie's level of knowledge of potential blow-outs in claims at the time of reconstruction and whether it fully realised the dangers of asbestos before it was forced to stop selling asbestos products in 1984. At the heart of the inquiry is a question whether the legal technicality of James Hardie's actions has overridden corporate responsibility for damage caused by its products. The foundation is investigating whether it should sue Hardie, subject to inquiry's findings

Slater & Gordon and Turner & Freeman Lawyers, are representing GARDS INC. and other asbestos related disease support groups they are also representing a number of unions including the Maritime Unions of Australia, the Construction Forestry Mining and Energy Union and the Communications Electrical and Plumbing Union.

Slater & Gordon and Turner & Freeman are not charging a fee for this work as these two law firms are committed to social justice and advocating for the rights of others. Which GARDS and others appreciate their support.

David Jackson, QC, the inquiry's chairman, has also been asked to investigate the circumstances behind the separation of the fund from James Hardie and whether this contributed to the projected shortfall of funds to meet future liabilities. Jackson, a senior QC who is one of the most active advocates in the High Court, has acted for a number of asbestos claimants. He is a former federal court judge who opted to return to the rough and tumble of the bar.

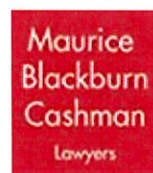
The hearings are being held in Sydney and commenced in April they will be going through till the end of May at this stage. Mr David Jackson QC, the Commissioner of Inquiry, is due to report by the 30th of June.

GARDS will write an update in the next newsletter if the results of the inquiry are known by then. Keep watching!

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



Valley Signs
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www.valleysigns.com.au



Loy Yang B Power Station





www.gards.org

Gippsland Asbestos Related
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Phone: 51281218

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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

Treasurer:

Pam Nicholson – Ph. 51275843

Member:

Fay Needham – 51272038

Dorothy Roberts - 51274174

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

Annual Wreath Laying

Ceremony

Wednesday 5th of May

Our Night/Day Meetings

Bette Phillips

Partners in Grieving Program

27th of April, 1.30pm

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