

The Biaggio Signorelli Foundation receives national recognition for its support of the Development of National Guidelines for Mesothelioma

At the 3rd Steering Committee Meeting of the National Group of Cancer Experts developing Guidelines for the Diagnosis and Treatment of Mesothelioma, Dr Andrew Penman AM, CEO of the Cancer Council NSW and Professor Nico van Zandwijk, Director, Asbestos Diseases Research Institute (ADRI), expressed their gratitude for a generous donation from the Biaggio Signorelli Foundation (www.biaggiosignorelli.org.au) allowing the completion of this important initiative by the end of 2011. As a token of appreciation Mr Paul Signorelli, Director of the Doltone House Group, received a Certificate of Appreciation. Paul and his sisters, Mrs Nina Milazzo and Mrs Anna Cesarano, were praised for their compassion and organisational excellence in raising funds for asbestos-related diseases. It has taken a long time before Mesothelioma became listed among the important health issues agenda of Australia. The major reason for this is the tragic fact that Asbestos is responsible for a significant and still increasing number of deaths in Australia. This year over 700 Australian families learned that a loved-one had been diagnosed with Mesothelioma.

In December 2003, the use and importation of all forms of Asbestos was prohibited. In the previous century, domestic production and importation made Australia the world's highest per-capita user of asbestos. This high rate of usage was in part the reflection of the unique thermal and mechanical properties of asbestos. These properties led to its use in a multitude of building and industrial products.

When asbestos is processed, or when asbestos-based products are sanded, sawn, drilled or just worn down, it can form a fine airborne dust made up of tiny fibres. These airborne fibres can be easily breathed in. Due to the small size and elongated shape of the fibres they can resist the lung's natural defense and may cause mesothelioma and lung cancer several (up to 40) years later.

The newly opened Asbestos Diseases Research Institute (ADRI) on the Concord Hospital Campus in Sydney is working hard to pave the way for a better future of asbestos victims. The process of formulating national guidelines for mesothelioma, one of ADRI's projects is now quickly progressing thanks to the support of the Biaggio Signorelli Foundation. The group of experts contributing to the 3rd Steering Committee meeting was very much impressed by such a great support.

For further information on research into asbestos-related disease visit: www.adri.org.au