



# FIBRES

Connecting ADRI Friends to Research

WINTER 2015

ASBESTOS DISEASES RESEARCH INSTITUTE

## Patron of the Asbestos Diseases Research Foundation



His Excellency General The Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Ret'd), the 38th Governor of NSW, has granted Vice Regal Patronage to the Asbestos Diseases Research Foundation (ADRF) in October last year shortly after commencing his five year tenure as Governor of NSW. The ADRF is very proud to receive this patronage. Most of you will know that prior to his appointment as Governor, His Excellency served for 42 years in the Australian Army. He concluded his service as the Chief of the Defence Force and he was awarded a Companion of the Order of Australia in 2010 for eminent service. In 1993 he received the Distinguished Service Cross for his leadership during Operation SOLACE in Somalia.

As Governor of New South Wales, His Excellency intends to support the people and community organisations of New South Wales, through:

- promoting industry and regional development
- assisting programs and organisations that promote inclusiveness, diversity and active citizenship
- recognising innovation, achievement and excellence
- providing support in times of adversity
- advocating for marginalised members of our community.

## A novel targeted microRNA-based treatment approach for malignant pleural mesothelioma

The results of the ongoing clinical trial examining the optimal dose of intravenously administered TargomiRs have been published in the American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine on June 15th. Tiny cells (EDV™ nanocells, invented by the Lane Cove-based biotech company EnGeneIC) packaged with a microRNA that is deficient in mesothelioma cells (ADRI research) are being used in this trial. They are directed to their target - the mesothelioma cells - by an antibody and therefore called TargomiRs.

One of the very first patients in this trial had an especially favourable response to this treatment. After 8 weekly TargomiR infusions, the mesothelioma patient, who had failed on previous chemotherapy, had completely recovered and the disease was now almost invisible on scans.

Whilst this is a very exciting result it is a very early observation that requires confirmation in the next phase of clinical testing.

This study involves ADRI, EnGeneIC, the Northern Cancer Institute, the Chris O'Brien Lifehouse/Royal Prince Alfred Hospital and Concord Repatriation General Hospital.

**Kao SC, Fulham M, Wong K, Cooper W, Brahmabhatt H, MacDiarmid J, Pattison S, Sagong JO, Huynh Y, Leslie F, Pavlakis N, Clarke S, Boyer M, Reid G, van Zandwijk N.** A significant metabolic and radiological response after a novel targeted microRNA-based treatment approach in malignant pleural mesothelioma. *American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine*. 2015;191(12):1467-1469.

## ADRI awarded a major Cancer Institute NSW Research Equipment Grant

ADRI has been awarded a Cancer Institute of NSW (CINSW) Research Equipment Grant which will allow for the purchase of a A PALM microBeam IV, Laser Microdissection System, a Leica CMI860 Cryostat and a QuantStudio digital PCR system. With this new equipment next generation genome analysis tools will be available for the Sydney/Concord Cancer Research Consortium. This new equipment means that a state-of-the-art facility will open to all cancer researchers involved in studies into the molecular basis of variations in cancer patients vs healthy persons, as well as disease model systems.

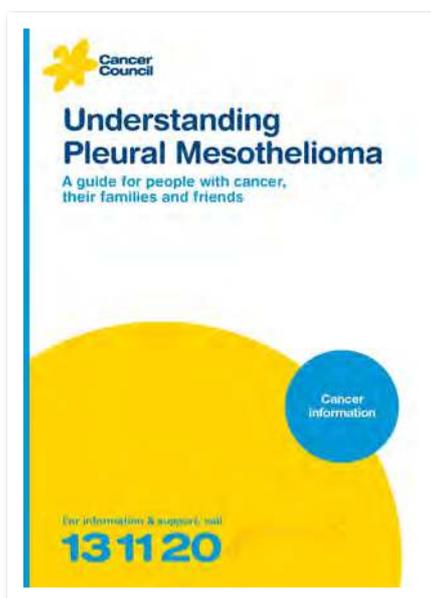


### Dr Anthony Linton awarded PhD

Dr Anthony Linton joined the ADRI in January 2011, as the Biaggio Signorelli Fellow, was awarded a PhD from the University of Sydney for his scientific work at ADRI in February 2015. The title of his thesis is: *Epidemiological, Clinical and Experimental Studies in Malignant Pleural Mesothelioma*. His PhD studies were supervised by Professors Nico van Zandwijk, Janette Vardy and Stephen Clarke.

During this time at ADRI Anthony has published 5 papers including his critical review entitled: *'The ticking time-bomb of asbestos: Its insidious role in the development of malignant mesothelioma.'* - a frequently cited overview of the world's asbestos problems. Anthony is currently employed at Concord Hospital as a Medical Oncologist and also continues to invest one day per week in research at ADRI.

[Above] Professor Nico van Zandwijk, Dr Anthony Linton and Professor Janette Vardy



**Understanding Pleural Mesothelioma** has just been published by the Cancer Council in collaboration with the ADRI. The information in this booklet is based on an extensive review of the medical literature and clinical practice guidelines developed by the ADRI and approved by the National Health & Medical Research Council.

**Understanding Pleural Mesothelioma** A guide for people with cancer, their families and friends is available from the Cancer Council and the ADRI. If you would like a copy please call ADRI 02 9767 9800 or visit [cancercouncil.com.au](http://cancercouncil.com.au)

# THE Betty Awards

To mark the global Awareness Week (1-7 April), the Asbestos Education Committee (AEC) in partnership with the Asbestos Diseases Research Institute (ADRI) announced 28 national 'Betty Award' winners for their significant contribution to asbestos awareness.

The *Betty Awards* (named after 'Betty the ADRI House'), are designed to recognise the outstanding commitment of organisations/community leaders to educate Australians about the dangers of asbestos.

Three hundred and forty three councils (out of a total of the 563 councils) around Australia registered to participate in the 2014 Asbestos Awareness Campaign, including councils from remote Queensland, to WA and Tasmania.

The *Betty Awards* recognised the significant efforts of the 28 councils as the best Asbestos Awareness campaigners. It is expected that this level of participation and the high standard of community engagement will encourage other councils to become more actively involved and to assist in preventing asbestos-related diseases in their communities.



[Above] Members of Mornington Shire Council (QLD), winners of the **Most Innovative Asbestos Awareness Month Council Campaigner** and the **Most Active Asbestos Awareness Month Council Campaigner Award** for Regional Queensland.



[Above] Members of Wollongong City Council (NSW) were Highly Commended for the **Most Innovative Asbestos Awareness Month Council Campaigner** and winners of the **Most Active Asbestos Awareness Month Council Campaigner Award** for Regional New South Wales.

For more information on the Betty Awards visit <http://asbestosawareness.com.au/asbestos-awareness-campaign/entry-details/>

## Asbestos Ban World Asbestos Congress 2015



[Above] Linda Reinstein, President/CEO & Co-founder, Asbestos Disease Awareness Organisation (l) and Professor Nico van Zandwijk, Director ADRI (r).

Syed Haroon Ahmed, President of the World Asbestos Congress 2015, and his son Syed Mezab Ahmed were the organizers of the first congress on asbestos in Karachi from the 31<sup>st</sup> January – 1<sup>st</sup> February 2015. The Congress brought together representatives from Pakistan's society including: Generals, Brigadiers, Doctors and Scientists, and a group of asbestos experts from around the world to discuss the health, social and economic impacts of asbestos in Pakistan for the coming decades.

We are all aware that the continuing use of asbestos in many developing countries may lead to an unprecedented epidemic of asbestos cancers. This is complicated by the fact that the diagnosis of asbestos-related cancer is very difficult and therefore most of this epidemic may have passed largely unnoticed.

Professor Nico van Zandwijk gave an overview of the huge problems caused by Australia's asbestos consumption and highlighted how important it is for countries like Pakistan to learn from the sad Australian experience.

It is vitally important that the Pakistani society receives education about the dangers of asbestos and that Pakistan follows those countries that have banned the use and importation of all forms of asbestos to bring an end to this deadly man-made preventable epidemic. The efforts of Syed Haroon and the Mesothelioma Foundation are to be commended and it is very much hoped that his mission for a healthier and safer Pakistan are achieved by effectively raising awareness and ultimately completely banning all forms of asbestos.



Professor van Zandwijk (2<sup>nd</sup> left) and Syed Haroon Ahmed (2<sup>nd</sup> right) with the organisers from the World Asbestos Congress 2015 in Karachi [above]

## European Asbestos Forum



Professor Nico van Zandwijk (centre holding flowers) and Mr Barry Robson, President, Asbestos Diseases Foundation of Australia (blue shirt – 7<sup>th</sup> r).

The first international conference of the European Asbestos Forum (EAF) was held on May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2015 at the NH Grand Hotel Krasnapolsky on Dam Square in Amsterdam. The main theme of the conference was 'Asbestos & Labour'. The aim of the EAF was to improve professional networks and exchange the best and newest knowledge regarding all matters relating to asbestos.

Professor Nico van Zandwijk, Director of the ADRI, spoke on a "Hopeful treatment of asbestos cancers." After his presentation he was awarded the Dr J. Stumphius Recognition Award, for ADRI's ground-breaking discoveries in treating the asbestos cancers, providing hope and saving the lives of many people. The award, is a glass plate on a bronze base, signifying a heavy burden shared by many, it was presented by Dr. Yvonne Waterman and Hans van der Wart Msc, MBA, Bsc. The award is named after the company doctor at the Dutch shipyard De Schelde, who discovered and proved the relationship between the use of asbestos at the shipyard and malignant mesothelioma among the workers. He published a Ph.D. thesis of this discovery in 1969, which has been held as the year that all Dutch employers are considered to know of the dangers of asbestos exposure. Dr Stumphius was the initiator of asbestos awareness in the Netherlands, one of the main aims of the EAF.



The Dr J. Stumphius Recognition Award [above]

