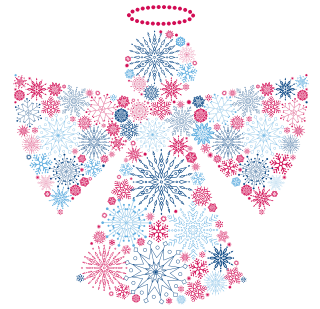


1 December 2019

SEASON'S
GREETINGS



We desperately need more funding for research into an early detection test for Mesothelioma and eventually a cure.

Dear Valued Supporter

My name is Sandie Foreman and I have Mesothelioma.

In March 2016 I went to my GP after experiencing what felt like a pinched nerve in my abdomen. He sent me for a colonoscopy and an X-ray. Everything looked normal except the X-ray had picked up the bottom of my lungs and displayed a 2cm lesion on the pleura of my left lung. He wasn't concerned, as I have never smoked or worked in an environment that would have exposed me to any dust diseases (or so I thought) and I have always been very fit and healthy.

I had no symptoms at all, I was exercising regularly with no breathing difficulties or cough. He put the lesion down to old scar tissue from a chest infection but advised another X-ray in 3 months just to be safe. The lesion had grown to 2.2cm in 3 months and they picked up another lesion, 0.8cm in size at the top of that lung on the pleura and a couple of 1mm spots on the side and so I was referred to a respiratory specialist. He continued to reassure me that this was most likely nothing as I did not fit any of the markers for any type of lung disease. After a needle and core biopsy, much to the disbelief of the specialist, it was confirmed I had **Mesothelioma**.



I was referred to a respiratory specialist and took a close friend with me for support as I didn't know how I would react if it was bad news. In my mind I really felt that nothing would eventuate but if it did then at least it would be something that was easily treatable. They would just cut the lump out, right?

Up until starting chemotherapy in Sept 2016 I was unaffected physically by the Meso. I had 5 rounds of chemo. The first week of each treatment was really tough; nausea, dizziness, tiredness, constipation, thinning and brittle hair, mouth ulcers etc but I got into a rhythm with that and all the tumours reduced in size and heat measurably so it felt worth it. Then in March 2017 I had the operation called **EPP (Extrapleural Pneumonectomy)** by Professor Tristan Yan, a surgical procedure to remove my left lung. In addition, my pericardium, left diaphragm, part of a rib (that Prof Yan was concerned might have come in contact with the lesion) and the lining of my rib cage was also removed.

Following the surgery, I had 30 rounds of radiation therapy!

I was only able to have this treatment program because my cancer was detected early. I was therefore eligible to have the operation that extended my life. Unfortunately, this is not the case for thousands of others due to a lack of resources for early detection.

At this point there is no cure and like me a significant number of the 700 new people each year that are diagnosed with Mesothelioma are women and young people who were, many years ago, accidentally exposed to asbestos through their partners or parents, through home renovations or through incidental exposure at work. Most of us had no idea that we had ever been exposed to asbestos.

Professor Yan says I am either the unluckiest person in the world or the luckiest, I prefer the latter.

The reality is that we desperately need more funding for research into an early detection test and eventually a cure, I am one of the lucky ones as my cancer was picked up early and that enabled me to have treatment, most are not that lucky and don't have the option of treatment at all. So, please help The Baird Institute's Christmas Appeal so that we can raise more funds for research into this debilitating disease.



We are very grateful to Sandie for sharing her journey with us.

Sandie had an Extra Pleural Pneumonectomy or EPP which is performed on patients in the early stages of malignant pleural mesothelioma, when the cancer is confined to the chest cavity. This treatment allows for the maximum amount of cancerous tissue to be removed and can also help ease breathing and improve quality of life. Because mesothelioma is usually not diagnosed until it reaches stage 3 or 4, many patients are unfortunately not candidates for this surgery. As Sandie says, she was one of the lucky ones! Her case highlights the critical importance of early detection for Mesothelioma.

Professor Brian McCaughan and Professor Tristan Yan are the only surgeons in NSW who offer patients radical surgical treatment options for selected patients with malignant pleural mesothelioma, with long-term survivors beyond 5 and 10 years. With support from The Baird Institute, their research focus is on the early detection of mesothelioma, increasing awareness of asbestos related diseases and molecular and genetic analyses of mesothelioma.

The Baird Institute published a book a few years back entitled *"Diagnosis and Treatment, The Journey of a Patient with Malignant Pleural Mesothelioma"*, written by Jocelyn McLean and Prof Brian McCaughan. Please don't hesitate to contact us for a copy if it would be of interest.

As you well know, at The Baird Institute we are committed to helping ordinary people who have been diagnosed with serious heart or lung conditions that require surgery. I thank you most sincerely for your past support. Your trust in us and our work, is highly valued by every member of our team. If you can, please support us again this Christmas as we continue the journey to help others facing life threatening cardiothoracic conditions.

Your generous gift of \$50, \$100 or \$200 will go directly towards our research – please support us today.

Thank you again and on behalf of all of us at The Baird Institute, I wish you a joyous, healthy and safe festive season.

Yours sincerely



Professor Paul Bannon MB BS, FRACS, PhD
Chair, The Baird Institute

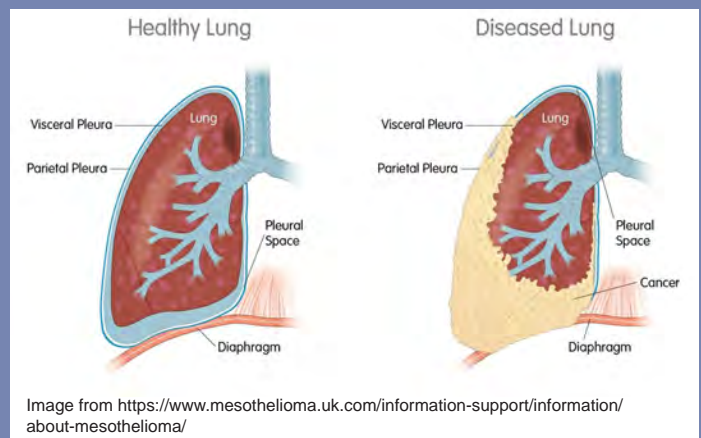
MESOTHELIOMA

Mesothelioma is a rare form of cancer that develops from cells of the mesothelium, the lining that covers many of the internal organs of the body. The main purpose of the mesothelium is to produce a lubricating fluid that is released between layers. This fluid provides a slippery and protective surface to allow movement between tissues and organs. For example, it allows the lungs to expand and contract smoothly. When the cells of the mesothelium turn cancerous they become mesothelioma. The mesothelium that covers each lung is called the pleura and mesothelioma that develops in the pleura is known as malignant pleural mesothelioma or, simply, pleural mesothelioma. Pleural mesothelioma, affects the tissue that surrounds the lungs. About 90% of all mesotheliomas are in the chest.

In its early stages, mesothelioma may not cause many symptoms. It is only later, when the cancer moves into the underlying tissues or causes fluid to leak into the cavity in the chest or abdomen that symptoms appear.

Australia has one of the highest rates of mesothelioma in the world as a result of the high rate of mining and asbestos use over many years. Asbestos is in many buildings, houses and landfill sites. Initially, those who handled the raw material became sick; then people who worked with asbestos filled materials such as builders and carpenters were diagnosed; now we are seeing people becoming sick with no specific asbestos exposure – it seems that asbestos being in the environment is enough to make some people, like Sandie, sick. There is often a long gap between exposure to asbestos and the development of the disease, anywhere from 20 and 70 years.

Sandie has had what is called "trimodality therapy". This involves a combination of chemotherapy, radical surgery and radical radiation therapy to treat the mesothelioma. The aim of having the three types of treatment is to remove as much pleural mesothelioma as possible, and to stop any remaining mesothelioma cells from growing or spreading.



PLEASE SUPPORT US THIS FESTIVE SEASON

Without you, we cannot carry on Professor Doug Baird's vision – to identify the problem at the bedside, investigate in the laboratory and apply the solution to future patients. This Christmas we want to give hope to Australians battling heart and lung disease. Your gift today will give more people, like Sandie, the chance to survive life threatening diseases.

Your support will save lives

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On occasion we will send you email updates about our work, while your date of birth helps us to distinguish donors with the same name

MY GIFT

☐ Yes, I would like to make a gift to support The Baird Institute Research and Training Program

☐ **Single donation Amount**

and/or

☐ **Regular Monthly Donation Amount ***

☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$200 ☐ \$ _____

\$ _____ (minimum \$20 a month)

* A **regular** tax-deductible donation of \$20 or more **per month** entitles you to become a **Partner in Research**. Your regular gift will ensure that we have the necessary funds available to help ordinary people as they battle unexpected, life threatening diseases of the heart and lungs. As a **Partner in Research**, you will receive Baird Institute newsletters and invitations to special events. For more information, contact Catherine on 02 9550 2350

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Please contact Catherine on 02 9550 2350 for further information or a confidential discussion

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