



## MEDIA STATEMENT

### **The Legacy of Asbestos Mining in SA – A Decade After its Ban**

**Medical, legal and epidemiological experts offer debriefs and insights to mark the tenth anniversary of the founding of the Asbestos Relief Trust**

A decade after asbestos mining ceased and five years after its use, manufacture and processing was banned in South Africa, those affected by asbestos mining continue to suffer its legacy. This year the Asbestos Relief Trust has invited experts from a variety of disciplines to offer their insights and updates with a series of talks that will take place at WITS School of Public Health at Lecture Rooms 1 and 2 in Gauteng on Tuesday, 17<sup>th</sup> September 2013. The seminar will take place from 14h00-17h00. Please RSVP to [artinfo@asbestostrust.co.za](mailto:artinfo@asbestostrust.co.za) to reserve parking.

Seminar topics range from legal and compensation issues to the challenges of medical treatments.

Among those speaking will be Human Rights Attorney Mr Richard Spoor, who will discuss: *Compensation for Noxious Exposures*. Given the thousands of gold miners suffering from silicosis and the resultant pending lawsuit against gold mining companies, the subject is highly relevant. Prof Jim Phillips of the National Institute for Occupational Health will speak on: *Current Asbestos Exposure - where and why it is still occurring*. Among the medical subjects covered will be Dr Naseema Vorajee: *The Pathological Challenges in Diagnosing Mesothelioma*, Dr Gill Nelson of Wits University on: *Predicting Mesothelioma Incidence near Kuruman (the MINKS study)*, as well as Prof Anthony Linegar of the University of Cape Town: *The Judicious Use of Surgery in Mesothelioma*. The full programme is available on [www.asbestostrust.co.za](http://www.asbestostrust.co.za)

Says Chairman of the Trust, Piet van Zyl. "This is an opportunity to share with all concerned parties the latest insights, research and medical strides being made. Asbestos remains a scourge and the challenges in ridding victims of its effects are still a priority. Both asbestosis and malignant mesothelioma are terrible diseases that cause great suffering to patients. It is important that, at this point, we take stock of where we are in the fight to rid South Africa of the scourge of asbestos and more importantly, how much further we have to go."

To date, the Asbestos Relief Trust has paid approximately R257,7million to 3,667 workers who were employed by or persons who lived within the vicinity of the mines owned by Gefco and ACA , or their dependent family members. Some claimants who were diagnosed with asbestosis have since developed an asbestos related cancer and they have successfully lodged a second claim. The Trust has processed over 14,500 applications.