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ASBESTOS VICTIMS SUPPORT GROUP FORUM

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Press Release: use immediately.

Insider supports campaign for Cape/Altrad to pay for Mesothelioma Research

Cape was a leading, multinational manufacturer of asbestos products and is now owned by parent company Altrad. A 2019 legal case won by Asbestos Victims Support Groups Forum (AVSGF) in the Supreme Court unearthed documents proving that, from the 1960s, Cape deliberately withheld evidence on the risks its asbestos products posed to human life.

In light of the above AVSGF entered into negotiations with Cape/Altrad to discuss the AVSGF's demand in March 2022 that Cape pay £10 million towards medical research to find a cure for mesothelioma. The negotiations ended in failure.

Peter Gartside, a former employee of Cape who held several Cape Directorships over the course of 40 years, says in his recent book published in January 2024, 'Asbestos and Cape: A Tale of Three Stakeholders':

'The case put forward by the AVSGF for securing further funding for mesothelioma research has merit. Mesothelioma has the highest mortality rates of asbestos-related diseases and this is expected to continue for many years to come.'

'To those employees of Cape Industrial Services who generated the profits to provide for future disease liability it would be a fitting application of £10 million of the residual provision fund. They deserve the satisfaction of seeing that the fruit of their labours reach those who still remain as victims of Cape's asbestos legacy.'

David Ellis, Chair of AVSGF says:

'The first paragraph of the preface to Peter Gartside's book is uncompromising: "I found that nobody wanted me to write this book. Asbestos was a killer and Cape Asbestos was an accomplice". This insider's account does not shy away from criticising Cape and the failures identified in the 2019 AVSGF legal case. His support for our demand for £10 million for mesothelioma research is more than welcome as is his cogent argument that such research is in Cape/Altrad's interests by reducing future compensation liabilities. Informed advice that Cape/Altrad should take due notice of.'

'In his book he points out, Altrad has "potentially deep pockets" and the purchase of Cape was "a particularly good deal". The payment of £10 million is nothing for a large, multinational company, but could mean everything for mesothelioma sufferers.'

Harminder Bains, a lawyer at Leigh Day, whose father died from mesothelioma and who, along with the barristers, represented the AVSGF pro-bono to disclose Cape documents says:

'The support from such a well-placed company insider for the AVSGF's demand for £10 million should be a wake-up call for Cape/Altrad. The AVSGF court action broke new legal ground in establishing rights of a non party to obtain documents disclosed in previous litigation. The judge in the Bates & Ors v Post Office Ltd (No 3) [2019] cited the AVSGF case when allowing the press application for documents relating to the Post Office/Fujitsu scandal. It now seems likely that the Post Office and Fujitsu will be held to account for their past egregious behaviour. It is time for Cape/Altrad to account for its past.'