



Reg. No. AOOO6141S ABN 32 386 589 943

Allergy and Environmental Sensitivity Support and Research Association Inc.

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Australia

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## CHEMICAL SENSITIVITY 2009

### MELBOURNE'S FIRST FRAGRANCE-FREE EVENT

15 May (Fri) 1-5pm **AESSRA MELBOURNE SEMINAR ON CHEMICAL SENSITIVITY**. Medical, legal and architectural experts discuss chemical sensitivity and its impacts on the lives of sufferers and family. Note: fragrance free event! \$30 non-member, \$15 AESSRA member, \$10 concession member contact [www.aessra.org](http://www.aessra.org) or phone 0425 810 291.

On Friday 15 May the Allergy and Environmental Sensitivity Support and Research Association Inc. (AESSRA) is holding a seminar for people with chemical sensitivities.

In the *New South Wales Adult Health Survey 2002*, 2.9% of respondents reported having been diagnosed with chemical sensitivity and 24.6% of respondents reported sensitivity to chemical odours.

Because the chemicals in fragrance can cause symptoms including headaches, chest tightness, wheezing, rhinitis and airway irritation, the venue is being cleaned with fragrance-free, non-toxic cleaning products and anyone wearing scented products will not sit in the same room as people who are sensitive to fragrance.

This is Melbourne's first fragrance-free event, but fragrance-free notices are becoming increasingly common in the US and Canada, not just for events but also for schools and hospitals.

People with chemical sensitivities are also affected by low levels of common chemicals such as those found in car and diesel exhaust, soft furnishings, wood smoke, cigarette smoke, pesticides, cleaning products and new building materials can trigger a reaction. Symptoms or conditions that can be made worse by exposure to these chemicals include:

- Coughs and other respiratory problems
- Migraines and headaches
- Dry, stinging, gritty, swollen or burning eyes
- Sinus problems
- Sneezing and runny nose
- Contact dermatitis and skin rashes
- Fatigue, aching muscles and joints
- Dizziness and nausea
- Inability to concentrate
- Lack of muscular coordination

- Depression and anxiety
- Memory lapses

Sufferers can be diagnosed with conditions such as Chronic Fatigue Syndrome and Fibromyalgia which overlap with chemical sensitivity. Those with more severe sensitivities have to live in isolation from the rest of the community, unable to work, study or take part in social activities because of the health risks involved.

Speakers at the seminar include:

**Dr Colin Little is a Physician-Allergist who specialises in chemical sensitivities and allergies.** His talk is titled “What is Chemical Sensitivity?” Topics will include the various types of testing that are available for the diagnosis of chemical sensitivities, the different types of changes people can make to their living arrangements that can help improve life with chemical sensitivities, controversial issues and future directions.

**Deborah Randa, a solicitor from the Disability Discrimination Legal Service,** will give a talk entitled ‘Disability Discrimination Law and Chemical Sensitivity’. Her talk will include some relevant case law and some case studies that her service has encountered. She will also give information about how to make a complaint to the Australian Human Rights Commission and the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission and will be providing handouts and brochures.

**Neil Blyth is an environmentally conscious architect.** He will be giving a talk titled ‘Chemically Sensitive? How safe is your house?’ He will look at problem issues within the home environment and how they can be removed or their effect minimized for people who either suffer from or are aware of chemical sensitivities.

**Maree Jeffs, from the Council of the Aging,** will talk on “Remembering Well”, how make the most of your memory.

\*For further information visit [www.aessra.org](http://www.aessra.org) or contact AESSRA’s Events Organiser, Misha Van Loder, on 0425 810 291 or [m.vanloder@aessra.org](mailto:m.vanloder@aessra.org)

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