



## Media Release

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### **New evidence: Melanoma risk from solarium use even higher**

#### **Medical community joins together to call for a ban**

- **161 medical professionals sign letter of support for a solarium ban in Victoria**
- **New review of research shows that using a sun bed before you are 35 boosts your risk of melanoma by 87% (previously thought to be 75%).**

Today, SunSmart and the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre join together to honour the memory of Clare Oliver, who passed away from melanoma five years ago, aged 26.

Clare visited a solarium about 20 times in her early 20s and believed that these visits contributed to her diagnosis. Clare pioneered the campaign against sunbeds, determined to use her tragic story of skin cancer, and of a life lost far too early, to help others avoid the same fate.

SunSmart Manager, Jen Makin, said: "Today we remember Clare and how she bravely spent the last weeks of her life, campaigning for solariums to be banned. Clare brought about great change by telling her story, which resulted in the industry being regulated, but more needs to be done."

"Five years later, her message to young women that no tan is worth dying for remains sadly relevant. In fact, if current regulations existed 10 years ago, Clare would still have been able to visit solariums."

"Unfortunately Clare's story is not an isolated case and with melanomas generally developing over time with a lag of 10 to 30 years, this means we will be seeing a lot more stories, like Clare's, over the next few years. This problem will continue to grow unless we act now and enforce a ban."

161 dermatologists and cancer specialists and clinicians of the Victorian Co-operative Oncology Group (VCOG), have joined together to call on the Victorian government to follow the lead of NSW and ban solariums in this state and work towards implementing a ban on a national level.

Co-chair of the Skin and Melanoma Service at Peter Mac and VCOG member, Professor Michael Henderson, commented on the strong backing from the medical community supporting a solarium ban.

"As a cancer clinician I see the real effects skin cancer has on patients and their families. A solarium ban can protect Victorians and help to reduce melanoma incidence in this state."

New figures highlight that while legislation initially had a strong effect in reducing the number of operators and tanning units, in subsequent years the solarium industry has stabilised.





Ms Makin said: “The number of solarium sites almost halved in the first year after the introduction of legislation (45%), however the rate of decline has slowed down dramatically. Falling just an additional 11% in the second year, followed by a 5% and 6% drop in the third and fourth year, it is clear that the industry has stabilised after the initial impact of regulation.”

Jay Allen, a melanoma survivor and founder of SunbedBan.com, successfully campaigned for a solarium ban in New South Wales (NSW), which will take effect in 2014.

Mr Allen said: “My surgeon is adamant that my sunbed use contributed to my stage 3 melanoma diagnosis. To finally see a total ban means so much. I am now advocating for a national ban around Australia and this whole campaign has been about saving lives. I will continue Clare’s legacy to stamp out solariums for good.”

Ms Makin said there's no place for solariums in society.

“They are dangerous, unnecessary, outdated and irrefutably linked to cancer. Now that NSW has announced a ban and with Queensland’s health minister giving it serious consideration, it is the time for Victoria to take action. Unfortunately for some, like Clare Oliver, it is already too late,” said Ms Makin.

#### **Additional figures:**

- Prior to the regulations coming into effect on Feb 1st 2008, there were approx. 436 sites in Victoria operating 1021 tanning units. There has been a reduction of 55% in the number of tanning units, since the regulations came in to effect. The number of sites has decreased even more dramatically by 67%.
- Almost 200 of the 436 sites with a tanning unit closed in the first year after the introduction of legislation, but only 100 further sites have closed in the 3 years since then.
- According to the Environment Protection Authority, there are currently 77 solarium businesses in New South Wales with a total of 215 tanning units compared to 133 businesses possessing a total of 447 tanning units in Victoria.

#### **The facts:**

- An estimated one in six melanomas in young Australians aged 18-29 could be prevented if solariums were shut down.
- It has been estimated that each year in Australia, 281 new melanoma cases, 43 melanoma-related deaths, and 2,572 new cases of squamous cell carcinoma are attributable to solarium use, at a cost to the health system of around \$3 million.

#### **References:**

<sup>1</sup> Latest figures from the Department of Health.

<sup>2</sup> A systematic review and meta-analysis was conducted in 2012 to estimate the burden of melanoma resulting from sunbed use. Boniol M, Autier P, Boyle P, Gandini S. Cutaneous melanoma attributable to sunbed use: systematic review and meta-analysis. *BMJ* 2012; 345.