

A Statement from Victorian Health Professionals

Solariums: dangerous, unnecessary, outdated and irrefutably linked to cancer

We, the undersigned cancer specialists and clinicians of the Victorian Co-operative Oncology Group, call on the Victorian government to follow the lead of New South Wales (NSW) and ban solariums in Victoria and work towards implementing a ban on a national level.

The solarium industry in Victoria has been regulated since 2008 following Clare Oliver's campaign (No Tan is Worth Dying For), which highlighted the dangers of solarium use. Her plight resulted in new legislation and tough regulation from government, but more needs to be done to end the needless loss of lives.

In early 2012 the NSW government became the first in the country to announce a solarium ban. In Victoria, 458 tanning beds still operate in Victoria - more than twice as many as NSW.

Why solariums need to be banned:

- New review of research shows that using a sun bed before the age of 35 boosts melanoma risk by 87%.
- Studies also show the melanoma risk increases with every sunbed session.
- Current regulations are not being adhered to. A CCV study in 2009 found that 80% of solarium operators surveyed allowed access to teenagers who concealed their age or claimed to be 18, despite the ban on people under 18 years of age using solariums.
- Sunbeds emit ultraviolet (UV) radiation levels three times as strong as the midday sun, with some sunbeds up to six times stronger. This is equivalent to a UV Index of 48 (generally the highest UV Index level in Victoria is 12).
- One in six melanomas in Australians aged 18 to 29 years 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.
- In Victoria, 51 new melanomas, 7 melanoma-related deaths and 294 new cases of squamous cell carcinoma are attributed to solarium use.

The evidence is clear: Solariums are dangerous, unnecessary, outdated and irrefutably linked to cancer. As cancer clinicians we know the serious implications that skin cancer has on its victims and their families who face an uncertain future, painful treatments, high costs, and unimaginable stress.

A solarium ban can protect Victorians from the life threatening effects associated with sunbed use and reduce melanoma incidence in this state.

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