



MEDIA RELEASE

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CANCER COUNCIL TASMANIA RESPONDS TO DHHS SOLARIA GUIDELINES

Cancer Council Tasmania (CCT) would support a complete ban on the use of any type of artificial ultraviolet (UV) radiation tanning device (solarium) for cosmetic purposes.

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) called for public comment by June 26 on the draft 'Guidelines for the Operation and use of Solaria in Tasmania', to be issued under the Public Health Act 1997.

CCT Director of Cancer Control Celia Taylor said CCT recommended a complete ban on solarium use, but it appeared such a move would not yet be made.

"The banning of solarium use by people under the age of 18 is an important step in the right direction and this move by DHHS is fully supported by CCT," Ms Taylor said.

The CCT paper calls on DHHS to highlight the risks associated with solarium use through a broad education program.

"Informing people that they are taking a risk, one that increases their possibility of melanoma by 75 per cent if they first use a solarium under the age of 30, is vitally important, and as such, CCT would call for more visual and written descriptions to be included for clients' consideration," Ms Taylor said.

CCT highlighted its concern surrounding operators being relied upon to determine an individual's skin type.

"The DHHS suggests that those with skin type 1 are not permitted to use a tanning unit. However, we believe that distinguishing between skin types 1 and 2 is not necessarily an easy task for operators," Ms Taylor said.

Should a complete ban of solaria not be possible, CCT recommends that;

- Individuals with skin type 1 and 2 not be permitted to be exposed in a sun-tanning unit.
- A broad community education program warning on the dangers of solaria use for cosmetic purposes be developed.
- Regular (annually or at least every two or three years) licensing under the Radiation Protection Act, with associated requirements of registration and compliance testing.
- Further thought be given to the meaning of informed consent given the self-motivation of a client seeking a tan in the first place and the lack of meaningful awareness.
- That the use of protective eye wear by both the solarium operator and the client be mandatory and spelled out in guidelines.

``CCT spent significant time developing their discussion paper and called upon a number of resources, and hopes the DHHS takes their informed recommendations onboard.

CCT is a not-for-profit organisation that works to minimise the impact of cancer on all Tasmanians through advocate, raising awareness of cancer prevention and offering advice and support those those living with cancer and their carers.

ENDS

For more information call Eliza Grey, Cancer Council Tasmania on 6233 4754.