

Media Release

The Hon Mary-Anne Thomas MP

Leader of the House

Minister for Health

Minister for Health Infrastructure

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CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF 'SLIP, SLOP, SLAP' ACROSS VICTORIA

With the new school year underway, the Allan Labor Government is reminding students and parents across Victoria of the importance of being sun smart in the schoolyard, as UV levels reach record highs.

The back-to-school warning follows the release of new research that highlighted the major impact exposure to UV radiation during childhood can have on skin cancer risk.

Skin cancers including melanoma are preventable by using sun protection and educating children at a young age about the dangers of UV exposure and how to stay safe in the sun.

With the back to school routine in full swing, the advice to parents is clear on how to keep their children safe:

- Teach them to apply their own sunscreen, so they know how to do it independently before and during school
- Attach sunscreen to their backpack, so it can be an easy reminder to reapply at school
- Label their child's hat, so they can easily grab it before heading outdoors
- Encourage their child to look for shady spaces while outdoors.

This important and timely guidance comes as the Labor Government celebrates a major milestone, marking 30 years of supporting the Cancer Council's SunSmart Victoria School Program.

Established in 1994, 90 per cent of primary schools now participate in the program – reaching almost 462,000 primary school students and their families, ensuring they remember to Slip, Slop, Slap, Seek and Slide.

Over the past three decades, Victoria's hardworking teachers and educators have played a significant role in reducing the risk of melanoma and skin cancer by implementing SunSmart policies that reduce students' UV exposure at school and teaching sensible sun protection habits from an early age.

Prior to the SunSmart School Program in 1994, only 19 per cent of primary schools reported hat wearing. Today that figure is 100 per cent of primary schools – showing that simple and consistent messaging works to help educate the next generation how to be smart while out in the sun.

The SunSmart program has received ongoing investment from the Labor Government for more than 30 years, helping to deliver programs to prevent skin cancer and save lives.

Quote attributable to Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas

"Victoria's lifesaving SunSmart program has been keeping children safe for 30 years – as the UV radiation increases, it is now more important than ever for kids to be taught and practice Slip, Slop, Slap, Seek and Slide."

Quote attributable to Minister for Education Ben Carroll

"Establishing sun smart habits early is so important and our hardworking teachers and educators are playing an incredibly important role, helping Victorian kids understand the risks of harmful UV exposure."

Quote attributable to Head of SunSmart Victoria Emma Glassenbury

“The SunSmart Schools Program is a world leading public health success story and we acknowledge the strong support from government over this time – undoubtedly it is making a significant difference to the burden of skin cancer in this state.”