Media release

The Hon David Davis MLC
Minister for Health
Minister for Ageing

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Victorians urged to be sunsmart at any age

New research on melanoma in Victoria has revealed the rates of the deadly skin cancer are now falling in men and women under the age of 40.

Health Minister David Davis today launched new research with Professor Graham Giles, Director of the Cancer Epidemiology Centre at the Cancer Council Victoria, and Associate Professor Grant McArthur from the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre.

“These new statistics and research send a strong message that people should not be fooled into thinking it is too late or that all the damage may have been done in the early years of life,” Mr Davis said.

“The highest rates of melanoma are in men over 60. This comes as a vital reminder that we must continue to adopt sun protection behaviour whether aged 16 or 60.”

Mr Davis said while research shows that melanoma incidence rates are continuing to rise in Victoria, it was encouraging to see declining rates of melanoma in men and women under 40 years old.

“The slip, slop, slap message is set into the minds of those who grew up with the message from a young age,” Mr Davis said.

“However melanoma is still a significant burden on the individual and on our health system.”

In 2008 in Victoria, 2217 new cases of melanoma were diagnosed and 279 people died from the disease.

Mr Davis said Victoria had a proud history of working to reduce the incidence of skin cancer through the internationally recognised SunSmart program.

“There has been over 20 years of partnership between the Victorian Government, VicHealth and SunSmart, which has resulted in Victoria becoming a leader in skin cancer prevention worldwide,” Mr Davis said.

“These figures show that we need to continue our efforts in reducing the burden of melanoma through prevention, treatment and research.”

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