



# Workplace *Wellness* Program

A report commissioned by Safe Work Australia acknowledged that the construction industry, including landscape construction, scored well for providing their workers with sunscreen, protective clothing, hats or sunglasses (personal protective equipment or PPE) which is great news for our industry. The not so great news is being based in Queensland put workers at a higher risk of significant sun exposure.

Employers not only have an obligation under WHS laws to provide sun protection equipment but also have a responsibility to ensure that supervisors monitor the routine and correct use of PPE. These measures coupled with ensuring adequate hydration throughout the day will see risks for your employees minimised. Since 2002 businesses have been able to claim the cost of PPE as a tax deduction as these items contribute to worker safety no less than safety boots, hard hats or gloves. Cancer Council [Infosheet](#) on workplace uniforms.

Of course PPE is only one measure of control against prevention of skin cancer whilst on the job site. You can use shade structures, rotate staff and working in off peak UV times wherever possible, may also be options to consider.

## Australia has the highest rate of skin cancer in the world!

Over 2000 Australians die each year from skin melanoma and the cost on the health system is huge however both the **human** and **financial** cost of skin cancer can be reduced since skin cancer is highly preventable. Due to the nature of the outdoors work undertaken in our industry, **education** and **training** of workers is a key factor in managing the risk and reducing these figures.

*Discuss the information below with your staff to get the ball rolling!*



### Did you know?

**A fair skinned person in Brisbane may experience sunburn in as little as 8 minutes compared with 27 minutes in Hobart at midday in January.**

## Fast Facts

- Skin cancers account for around 80% of all newly diagnosed cancers
- Between 95 and 99% of skin cancers are caused by exposure to the sun
- GPs have over 12 million patient consultations per year for skin cancer
- There are 3 main types of skin cancer
- [Melanoma](#) – the most dangerous form of skin cancer
- [Basal cell carcinoma](#)
- [Squamous cell carcinoma](#)

(Both basal cell carcinoma and squamous cell carcinoma are known as non-melanoma skin cancer)

As is the case with all cancers, early detection is vital. Make sure your GP is aware that you work outside and get into the habit of having regular skin checks with your GP or other specialist.

Become familiar with the look of your skin which will help you to notice any changes you might want to get investigated. <http://www.cancer.org.au/preventing-cancer/sun-protection/check-for-signs-of-skin-cancer.html> Check for –

- Any crusty, non-healing sores
- Small lumps that are red, pale or pearly in colour
- New spots, freckles or any moles changing in colour, thickness or shape over a period of weeks to months (especially those dark brown to black, red or blue-black in colour)

**Check out this great poster you can display at work or email to employees**

### **Cancer Council's skin cancer identification poster**

Or provide them with this [guide](#) for working safely in the sun Skin Cancer & Outdoor Work.

Everyone has a mobile phone these days so why not download this app [http://www.cancerqld.org.au/page/prevention/skin\\_cancer/sunsmart\\_iphone\\_app/](http://www.cancerqld.org.au/page/prevention/skin_cancer/sunsmart_iphone_app/) which allows you to access the latest information on UV levels and weather forecasts for your current location.

There's also a very comprehensive [guide](#) from the Cancer Council for employers which includes a sample sun protection policy for your business.

More detailed information as well as education services offered by Cancer Council can be found on their website. <http://www.cancer.org.au/preventing-cancer/sun-protection/sun-protection-in-the-workplace.html>

Here's a wonderful toolbox talk [video](#) to share with your staff introduced by former Queensland cricketer Ian Healy

## **Prevention is better than cure!**

- **Slip** on some sun-protective clothing that covers as much skin as possible
- **Slop** on broad spectrum, water resistant SPF30+ sunscreen 20 minutes before going outdoors and every two hours afterwards.
- **Slap** on a hat – that protects your face, head, neck and ears
- **Seek** shade
- **Slide** on some sunglasses – make sure they meet Australian Standards

Your business can sign up to QUEST a free service provided by Cancer Council Queensland to access lots of information and resources to assist you put into place and promote healthy policies across a number of areas including sun safety. [www.quest.org.au](http://www.quest.org.au)

**In our next edition we'll conclude the Landscape Queensland Workplace Wellness Program and bring you details on wellness policies you can implement into your business**

Parts of this information were taken from

[http://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/SWA/about/Publications/Documents/310/NationalHazardExposureWorkerSurveillance Exposure DirectSunlight Provision SunExposureControls AustralianWorkplaces 2010 PDF.pdf](http://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/SWA/about/Publications/Documents/310/NationalHazardExposureWorkerSurveillance%20Exposure%20DirectSunlight%20Provision%20SunExposureControls%20AustralianWorkplaces%202010.pdf)

<http://www.cancer.org.au/preventing-cancer/sun-protection/sun-protection-in-the-workplace.html>

This information was reproduced from information available from Cancer Council Queensland's QUEST program – [quest.org.au](http://quest.org.au) or available from Cancer Council Queensland's website – [cancerqld.org.au](http://cancerqld.org.au).



More information can be found at: <http://www.landscapequeensland.com.au/healthier-happier-workplaces>

Landscape Queensland is working with Workplace Health and Safety Queensland on a Healthy Workers Initiative as part of the Queensland Government's Healthier.Happier.Workplaces.Initiative.

**Healthier. Happier.** Workplaces