

Dr Marisa Paterson MLA

MEMBER FOR MURRUMBIDGEE

MEDIA RELEASE

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IMPROVED SUN SMART MESSAGING FOR ACT PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS

Dr Marisa Paterson MLA will be moving a motion during private members' business in this week's Assembly, calling on the ACT Government to explore opportunities for improved sun smart messages targeted at parents and primary caregivers at ACT playgrounds.

Dr Paterson is concerned about the rates of skin cancer among the community, particularly given Australia's world-leading rates of skin cancer, and that skin cancer is one of the most easily preventable forms of cancer.

"Kids are great at sun safety behaviours, and their parents and primary caregivers are also excellent at helping children adopt sun safety practices. But parents and caregivers are not necessarily so good at looking after themselves" Dr Paterson said.

Melanoma is the most common cancer affecting 15- to 39-year-old Australians, the age group that is likely standing around ACT playgrounds supervising children.

"Many of these adults grew up with the Cancer Council's 'slip, slop, slap' messaging, which now also includes 'seek and slide', but research shows that it's not always put into practice, including when supervising children at our local playgrounds".

Dr Paterson points to research undertaken by Dr Vangelis Kanellis, lecturer at the ANU College of Health and Medicine, seeking to understand the practices and perspectives of adults at a major public playground in the ACT in the 2019 summer.

Dr Kanellis' findings identify that:

- Nearly 1/3 of caregivers were not wearing sunscreen;
- Nearly ¾ were not wearing a sun-safe hat for their entire period of time at the playground;
- Over 80% believe it's important to model sun smart behaviours;
- 93% stated a desire for government-supported sun safety messaging at playgrounds to reinforce and support good sun-safety practices by parents/adults and the child/children in their care.

"It would be great to see some of our talented local artists develop messaging for sun smart behaviours for adults through murals, signage and posters at playgrounds across the ACT. I'm calling on the ACT Government to explore opportunity for this" Dr Paterson said.

Statement ends

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