

Media Release

The Hon Martin Foley MP

Minister for the Coordination of Health and Human Services – COVID-19
Minister for Health
Minister for Ambulance Services
Minister for Equality



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MORE SHADE TO PROTECT VICTORIAN STUDENTS FROM SKIN CANCER

More Victorian students will be protected from the sun's harmful UV rays, thanks to the Victorian Government installing more sunshades in school playgrounds and outdoor areas.

Minister for Health Martin Foley today announced 104 schools - including 16 located in areas impacted by the 2019-20 bushfires will share in over \$1.3 million from the latest round of the *School Shade Grants Program*.

The grants are available to schools to build new shade structures, repair existing structures, or create natural shade by planting trees. Funding is also provided to purchase sun protective items including hats and sunscreen.

When used alongside other sun protection measures such as sunscreen and clothing, shade structures are the best defense and can reduce overall exposure to UV radiation by up to 75 per cent.

In 2018, melanoma was the fifth most common cancer in Victoria with 3,096 new cases diagnosed and sadly 291 deaths.

Through this program, the Government is helping children to be sun smart and prevent skin cancer, while still embracing the outdoors and keeping fit, active and healthy.

It is important children and teenagers stay protected from the sun as these are critical periods when exposure to UV radiation is more likely to contribute to skin cancer later in life. Schools play an important role teaching effective SunSmart behaviours from an early age.

The *School Shade Grants Program* is complemented by the *Community Shade Grants Program*, which provides shade for community organisations. Together, these programs have awarded 1,429 grants across Victoria, totalling almost \$13.5 million.

It forms part of the Government's ambitious *Victorian Cancer Plan 2020-24* which sets out a target to halve the proportion of Victorians diagnosed with preventable cancers by 2040.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Martin Foley

"We know how much Australians love the outdoors. These grants mean that school kids can still enjoy playing outside while having the necessary shade to protect them from the sun."

"Skin cancer is one of the most prevalent forms of cancer in Australia. That's why this program is so important to ensure Victorian students are protected from harmful UV rays which could contribute to skin cancer later in life."

"Our grants programs have helped hundreds of schools and community groups provide the protection Victorians need to prevent cancer and stay SunSmart."