



**Skin Cancer
Prevention
Queensland**

**SKIN CANCER
AWARENESS
IN THE PERSONAL
SERVICES INDUSTRY**

INDUSTRY FORUM REPORT

NOVEMBER 2023



About this Report

Skin Cancer Prevention Queensland: Industry Forum

This report summarises the key discussion items and future directions identified in the November 2023 Skin Cancer Prevention Queensland Annual Industry Forum for non-medical professionals in the personal services industry including dermal, hair, tattoo, beauty and wellness industries.

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- Cancer Council Queensland
- Hair and Beauty Australia Industry Association
- Melanoma Patients Australia
- QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute
- Queensland Health
- Royal Australian College of General Practitioners
- Skin Cancer College Australasia
- Skin Deep Learning
- University of Queensland
- Victoria University

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1 Executive Summary

Early detection of skin cancer, in particular its deadliest form, melanoma, is associated with higher survival and better health outcomes. According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, an estimated 18,257 cases of melanoma were diagnosed in 2023.¹ When diagnosed early, over 90% of melanomas can be successfully treated with a simple excision, while late-stage melanomas require wide excisions and extensive adjuvant treatment and have a much worse prognosis.²

Nearly all skin cancers are directly related to exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation. Protecting the skin from the sun's UV radiation reduces the risk of developing skin cancer. Preventive sun-safety actions include reducing time outdoors during hours when the UV radiation is most intense, seeking shade, wearing broad-brimmed hats and protective clothing, such as long-sleeved shirts, wearing sunglasses, and applying sunscreen to exposed skin.^{3,4} People living in Australia who have susceptible skin types are advised to apply SPF 30+ or higher sunscreen to the face, head, neck and all parts of the body not covered by clothing as part of their usual routine on days when the UV index is forecast to reach three or greater.⁴

Non-medical professionals in the personal services industry including hairdressers, tattooists, dermal therapists, massage therapists and beauty therapists, among others, see a lot of skin in their daily work and are well placed to talk to clients about changes to the skin and provide sun-safety advice. Professionals in the personal services industry can be empowered to give evidence-based advice about sun protection and to encourage their clients to get a skin check when they see a suspicious skin lesion. This can prevent disfiguring surgery, the need for advanced cancer treatments and possibly save lives. Currently, skin cancer education is not uniformly addressed in training curricula for these professions.

This report summarises key issues discussed and opportunities to enhance skin cancer prevention and early detection capacity among professionals working in the personal services sector identified at the Skin Cancer Prevention Queensland industry forum on 7 November 2023.

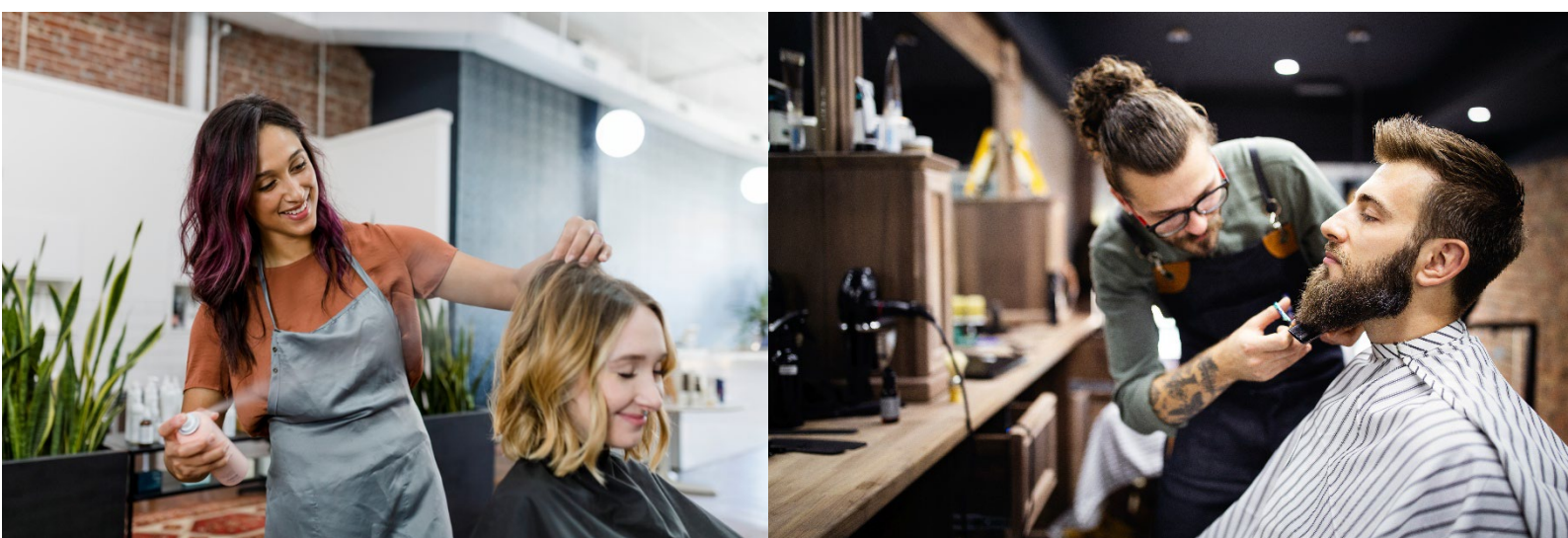
2 Why Skin Cancer Awareness in the Personal Services Industries?

Australia does not have a skin cancer screening program. Instead, people are advised to be aware of new and changing lesions on their own skin and to present to a doctor if they notice anything of concern.³ People working in the personal services industry can play an important role by identifying lesions that look unusual. Importantly, they also have opportunities to talk about skin cancer prevention strategies, harnessing the effect of sun exposure on beauty to introduce the discussion.

An example of the role that personal services professionals can play occurred in July 2022 when Queensland Health Minister Yvette D’Ath had a routine hair appointment when her hairdresser noticed an unusual lesion on her scalp not previously seen before.^{5,6} Following a skin examination with her doctor the next day, Ms D’Ath was told that the lesion was a melanoma.⁶ This is a great example of how non-medical professionals can be valuable partners aiding skin cancer early detection.

Skin cancer can affect all areas of the body, even where you least expect it such as the scalp. This is where a hairdresser could play an important part in skin cancer awareness, as they can easily view behind the ears or the scalp of their clients.^{7,8} Scalp melanomas tend to be more aggressive and mortality rates are more than twice that of melanoma on other parts of the body.⁹ This may be due to scalp melanomas being located in a hard to see area and are easily hidden by hair making them more difficult to self-detect.

A review assessing skin cancer knowledge, attitudes, and practices among non-medical professionals found hairdressers, massage therapists and beauticians were willing to recommend their clients seek a doctor when observing concerning skin lesions. However, knowledge, education, comfort and confidence are often barriers to skin cancer surveillance amongst non-medical professionals.^{7,8,10}



3 Industry Forum

The forum convened by Skin Cancer Prevention Queensland (SCPQ) brought together over 90 delegates from the dermal, hair, tattoo, beauty and wellness industries and a diverse group of stakeholders from universities, government departments, cancer control agencies, research institutions, non-for-profit organisations, and clinical practice. The program is shown in Table 1.

To discuss how we can equip the personal services industries (including dermal, hair, tattoo beauty and wellness industries) with the information and skills to start a conversation about skin changes and skin cancer awareness, SCPQ and the Australian Skin and Skin Cancer Research Centre held an industry forum in November 2023. The forum aimed to highlight the skin cancer burden in Queensland and UV radiation exposure as primary cause, primary prevention approaches, the importance of early detection and explore how SCPQ could work with industry to embed curriculum and enhance sector's capacity to influence and educate clients on:

- The risks of overexposure to UV radiation
- How to prevent skin cancer by practicing sun-safe behaviours
- How to identify suspicious lesions – including those that could be the three most common types of skin cancer; basal cell carcinoma, squamous cell carcinoma and melanoma
- How to communicate concerns to clients and encourage them to have suspicious lesions assessed by a doctor

Table 1: Industry Forum Program

Topic Overview	Presenter
Session 1: Skin Cancer Prevention Queensland	
Welcome and Opening <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skin cancer reduction targets – 2030 and 2050 • 2022 sunscreen industry forum outcomes and next steps 	Professor Rachel Neale <i>Co-Chair, Skin Cancer Prevention Queensland</i> <i>QIMR Berghofer</i> Professor Monika Janda <i>Co-Chair, Skin Cancer Prevention Queensland</i> <i>University of Queensland</i>
A brief overview of skin cancer: causes, burden, control and costs in Australia	Professor Louisa Gordon <i>QIMR Berghofer</i>
What are the different types of skin cancer? Including rare and special cases (scalp, nails, feet)	Professor Peter Soyer <i>Dermatology Research Centre, University of Queensland</i>
Skin protection: Indoors, outdoors and in between doors	Dr Yousuf Mohammed <i>Senior Research Fellow</i> <i>Frazer Institute, University of Queensland</i>
Session 2: The perspective of the industry on skin cancer prevention	
Queensland Health’s policy and investment directions to reduce skin cancer rates	Adjunct Associate Professor Mark West <i>Executive Director, Prevention Strategy Branch, Queensland Health</i>
How hairdressers and beauticians can help clients with skin cancer prevention and detection	Jan Gawel <i>Chief Executive Officer, Hair and Beauty Australia Industry Association</i>
Current beauty and hairdressing curriculum and how to fill the gaps to educate students on skin cancer prevention	Hayley Griffiths <i>Chief Executive Officer</i> <i>Skin Deep Learning</i>
Cancer Council Queensland skin prevention resources	Sharyn Chin Fat <i>Prevention and Early Detection Manager, Cancer Council Queensland</i>
Session 3: Role of the Beauty Industry to Improve Skin Awareness	
Speak up about Skin! Harnessing the power of informed conversation	Lynette Hunt <i>Chief Executive Officer</i> <i>Skin Cancer College Australasia</i>
Skin (Dermal) Health Professionals: Working Toward Improving Interprofessional Practice	Jennifer Byrne <i>Dermal Clinician and Lecturer in Dermal Science</i> <i>Victoria University</i>
Consumer perspective	Anne Gately <i>Consumer Representative – Melanoma Patients</i> <i>Australia</i>
You noticed something on your client’s skin: what should you do?	Dr Jeremy Hudson <i>General Practitioner, Chair of Dermatology</i> <i>Royal Australian College of General Practitioners</i>
Session 4: Panel Discussion	
Discussion Topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflecting on the day and how we can work together to improve skin cancer prevention and early detection activities. • What research ideas can we progress together? 	Facilitator: Professor Rachel Neale <i>Co-Chair, Skin Cancer Prevention Queensland</i> <u>Panel members:</u> Dr Jeremy Hudson Jennifer Byrne Lisa Della-Bosca Jan Gawel

4 Industries identified

Non-medical professionals (personal services) who see a lot of skin in their daily work that were identified include:

- Hairdressers and barbers
- Dermal therapists
- Dermal clinicians
- Makeup artists and cosmeticians
- Beauty therapists and beauticians
- Aestheticians
- Tattooists
- Nail technicians
- Spa therapists

5 Discussion and Recommendations

The following were core themes discussed throughout the day:

5.1 Working with curriculum providers to develop course content

In Australia, the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) is one of three peak bodies regulating Australia's vocational education and training (VET) sector and audits registered training organisations (RTOs) and their training packages for Certificate I-IV and Diploma courses.^{11,12} SkillsEquipped is the jobs and skills council (JSC) that oversees the personal services industry and is responsible for reviewing and updating mandatory curriculum requirements for education and training programs and certificates delivered by RTO's.^{11,12} JSCs work with RTOs and industry bodies such as Hair and Beauty Australia, Skin Deep Learning and SCPQ to identify skills and workforce needs to improve training and assessment products.

Anecdotal information from the industries is that beauty professionals, especially hairdressers and barbers, are already practicing as advocates for skin cancer awareness. However, despite well-established research on the rising rates of melanoma and keratinocyte cancers in Australia, information about skin awareness is not mandatory in the current commonwealth curriculum for many non-medical professionals in the personal services industry. Embedding skin cancer prevention and awareness information into the curriculum and highlighting the role industry can have through conversations with clients about skin cancer awareness is important to enhance prevention and early detection in Queensland.

5.2 What information needs to be included in training programs?

The SCPQ Collaborative discussed the core information about sun protection and skin cancer early detection that should be embedded within current RTO training packages, particularly in the hair and beauty fields. For example, in the beauty courses sunscreen use currently relates mostly to anti-aging rather than skin cancer prevention; highlighting the importance of sunscreen and other protective activities for skin cancer prevention could further empower professionals to discuss sun protection with their clients. With respect to early detection, the curriculum does require the student to identify contraindications to some cosmetic treatments

and to refer clients to medical professionals where required. However, there is no requirement for students to know what to say to the client when they see a suspicious skin spot. In light of these gaps, the need for updates to existing training packages was acknowledged. The exception is for dermal clinicians who undertake a 4-year degree that already includes primary and secondary prevention of skin cancer within the University course offering.

5.3 Opportunities to revisit training

SkillsEquipped is responsible for the personal services industry sector and ensures hairdressing and beauty services training packages are in alignment with the [Australian Qualifications Framework](#) and [Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2021](#). Training packages are updated in 5-year cycles, with the next update due in 2026 for beauty and 2024 for hairdressing. The opportunity for SCPQ is to request to be consulted in the next review and update of curriculum requirements for each professional. Formation of working groups to facilitate this process was suggested.

Dermal clinicians often perform treatments such as chemical peels, microdermabrasion, laser therapy, and other non-invasive procedures to improve the health and appearance of the skin. The Australian Society of Dermal Clinicians has assembled a multidisciplinary working group commencing in 2024 to review the evidence for skin health professionals that perform non-surgical cosmetic, aesthetic and skin health services. The review will focus on therapies that may alter or remove markers used to monitor for skin cancer and aims to develop an evidence-based guideline for future practice and facilitate inter-professional client management. Until the current curriculum is updated, individuals and those already working in the field can immediately upskill and take refresher courses using standalone courses throughout their career.

Upskilling courses currently available that are specific to the dermal, hair and beauty industry:

- Skin Cancer College of Australasia - '[Understanding Skin Cancer](#)'
- TAFE NSW - '[See a spot: See something, Say something](#)'

An output of this workshop was SCPQ's collaboration with Skin Deep Learning, a national provider of learning and assessment resources to hair and beauty RTOs, to create an educational brochure and skin cancer prevention quiz for their course participants titled 'How you can play a part in skin cancer prevention and early detection (pictured)'. Skin Deep Learning courses are completed by approximately 8,000 beauty therapy and hairdressing students each year.

The freely available pamphlet can be viewed and a quiz is available from [Skin Deep Learning's](#) website (Figure 1).

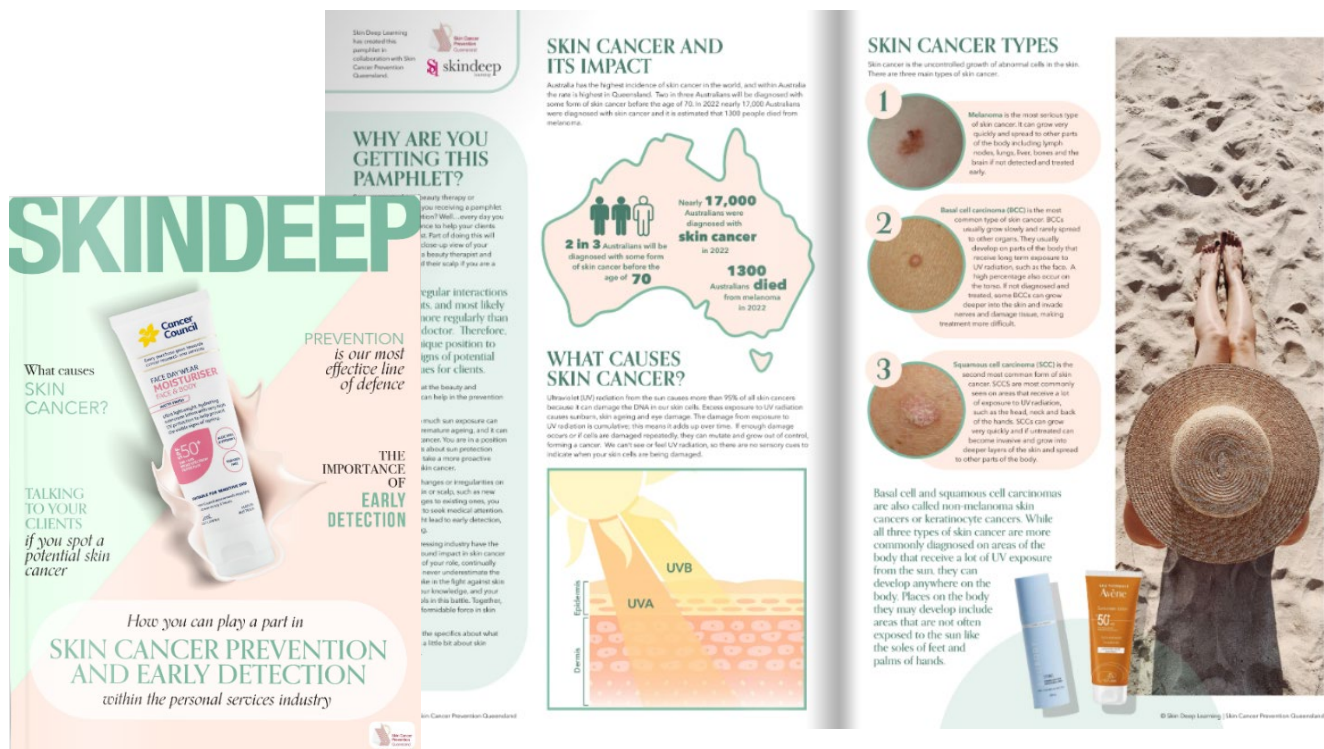


Figure 1: Skin Cancer Prevention and Early Detection within the personal services industry

Image source: [Skin Deep Learning](#)

5.4 Normalising conversations about sun safety and early detection in the beauty and wellness industries

Resources for beauty and wellness industries on how to talk to clients about skin cancer prevention and early detection should be developed. Providing examples for professionals working in these industries to use will increase their confidence to discuss these topics with their clients.

5.4.1 Talking about primary prevention

An important component of training around this issue is encouraging professionals to identify opportunities to talk about sun protection. Those working specifically with the skin clearly have many opportunities to raise sun protection, due to its dual role in reducing the risk of skin cancer and minimising skin aging. For other therapists in this industry, such as hairdressers and tattoo artists, the opportunities are less obvious. However, hairdressers could use discussions about the need for hats in people with no or thinning hair, or the effect of UV radiation on dyed hair, to begin a broader discussion about sun protection. Similarly tattoo artists could discuss the fading effect of sun exposure as the entrée to these discussions.

Opportunities for educating clients include:

- Highlighting that sunscreen should be used on all days when the UV index is forecast to reach at least 3, but that this should be considered the base level of protection and should be accompanied by clothing, hats, shade, sunglasses, and reapplication during planned outdoors activities when the UV index is 3 or more.
- Advising that the UV index reaches 3 in summer well before 10am in most parts of the country, so sun protection is critical, even outside the middle of the day.
- Providing information about the different types of sunscreen and, in particular, emphasising the limitations of sunscreen in moisturisers and makeups that don't meet the Therapeutic Goods Administration definition of a therapeutic sunscreen.
- Dispelling myths about harms of sunscreen (e.g., nanoparticles, chemicals, vitamin D deficiency)
- Providing practical suggestions about protection, such as fashionable broad-brimmed hats or use of sun-sleeves to avoid having to wear long-sleeved clothing routinely.

5.4.2 Talking about early detection

In the absence of specific training in skin cancer diagnosis, it can be challenging for those working in the personal services industry to identify and point out something that they feel is concerning. Key points for training include:

- Australia does not have a formal skin cancer screening program, so there is no expectation that all people have an annual (or more frequent) skin check. Rather, individuals should be guided by their doctor about the best course of action for early diagnosis of skin cancer.
- Professionals in the personal services industry need to recognise that although they are not expected to be experts in diagnosis, they are ideally placed to notice anything that looks new or unusual, particularly in locations that clients may not see frequently themselves, such as on the scalp or back. These professionals should be confident to point out a lesion that may be concerning, ask if the client has already had it checked by a doctor and, if not, recommend that they consider seeing a general practitioner within 2 weeks (or their dermatologist if they are already receiving specialist care).
- If the client does not have a regular general practitioner or dermatologist, professionals in the personal services industry can assist by providing information about finding a doctor. Relevant state [health departments](#) or the [Skin Cancer College of Australasia](#) are useful resources.
- Taking a photo of the lesion that has been identified and sending it to the client so that they can show their doctor may be of value for the doctor to identify recent changes.

5.5 Resources

A list of Cancer Council Queensland handouts are available to provide as posters or brochures within facilities:

- [Spot the Difference – Factsheet – Cancer Council Queensland](#)
- [Understanding Melanoma – Cancer Council Queensland](#)
- [Always Be SunSmart and Avoid Skin Cancer – Cancer Council Queensland](#)
- [SunSmart UV Alert – Cancer Council Queensland](#)
- [Correct Sunscreen Application – Cancer Council Queensland](#)
- [10 Myths about Sun Protection – Cancer Council Queensland](#)

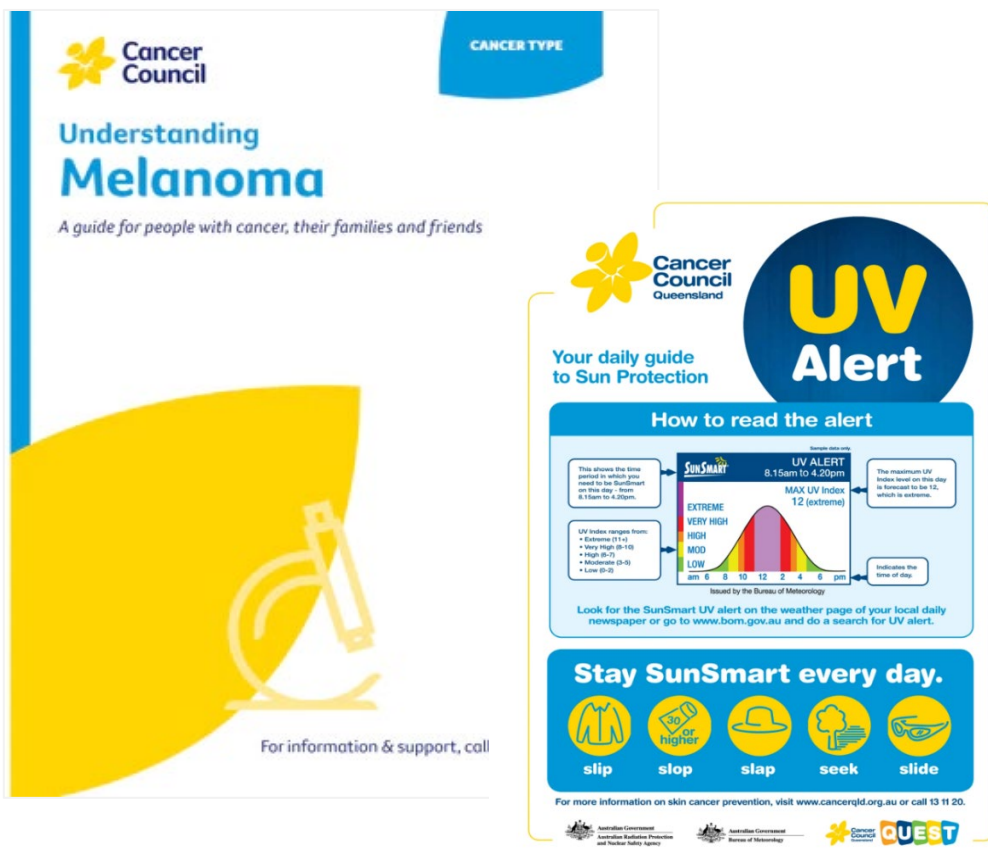


Figure 2: Understanding Melanoma: A guide for people with cancer; Your daily guide to Sun Protection - SunSmart UV alert

Image source: [Cancer Council Queensland](#)

5.6 Encouraging use of digital tools to encourage primary prevention

A number of technologies / social media platforms provide opportunity for the beauty and wellness industries to engage in skin cancer prevention. For example:

- Apps: SunSmart app, Sunscreen reminders, UV index and weather apps can be recommended to clients.
- UV photography. Many beauticians and dermal clinicians already use UV photography to illustrate anti-aging. This technology can be used to show an individual's sun damage under a UV filter, particularly when taking images over time to compare. Sunscreen can also be visualised under UV photography to ensure correct application. Expanding the use of this technology may help to broaden the discussion about the dangers of over-exposure to UV radiation.
- Social media campaigns: Beauty bloggers and influencers can reach teens and young adults. Campaigns that use UV photography may be appealing on TikTok. Salons and industries that use social media to promote their business, can also use this channel to be an advocate for skin awareness.
- There has been an increase in professionals using Facebook or other social media groups to ask questions about their professions, share resources and experiences. Course providers could facilitate and moderate these channels.

5.7 Challenges

The SCPQ Collaborative recognised the importance of non-medical professionals working within their scope of practice, ensuring industry professionals are not diagnosing their clients with skin cancer. Discussing potential skin cancer concerns with clients can be a sensitive matter and training resources are needed to handle these conversations delicately, as there is a risk of causing undue stress or anxiety. Non-medical professionals can contribute to preventive activities and client education, but should always encourage clients to seek medical advice for any concerning skin issues.

A challenge was identified that sun damage is often seen as part of living in Australia. There is a sense of inevitability within the public that skin cancer as an Australian may be "unavoidable". When it comes to sun safety, industry professionals had encountered the idea that "the damage is done". To counteract these beliefs, professionals could emphasise that as we all are living longer, we need to take good care of our skin at any age, and that there is always the potential to make skin healthier. The beauty industry can help to change the narrative to emphasise that skin can repair over time and that it's never too late for sun protection.

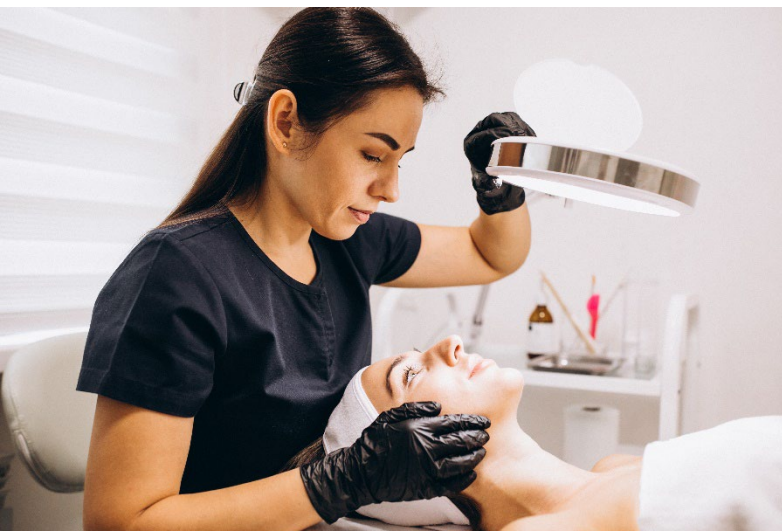
Attendees on the day acknowledged that more skin awareness in the community may lead to more individuals visiting a health professional for a skin check. This could lead to challenges such as longer wait times and workforce shortages of health professionals such as GPs. The skin cancer field is rapidly advancing, and using technology as part of the triage process, including imaging and artificial intelligence systems, may help to overcome workforce shortages.

6 Next steps

The recordings from the day are available on the Australian Skin and Skin Cancer website.

The next steps include research within the personal services industry to understand the levels of knowledge in this industry, how often they are engaging in these conversations, and how confident they are with having these conversations.

SCPQ will work with the stakeholders encouraging the addition of sun safety and skin awareness to the training curriculum and developing curriculum-consistent education and training materials.



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