



Melbourne public hearing for skin cancer inquiry

The House of Representatives Health Committee will hold a public hearing for its inquiry into skin cancer in Melbourne on Friday 6 June.

The committee is investigating the awareness, prevention, early diagnosis and management of both melanoma and non-melanoma skin cancers.

Each year around 2000 Australian die from skin cancer, including some 1500 from melanoma. Melanoma has a higher impact on younger age groups compared with other cancers.

Experts in skin cancer diagnosis will appear before the committee, including some differing views on the roles of general practitioners and specialists.

"We know that when detected early, survival rates for melanoma are very high", said Committee Chair Steve Irons MP. "Unfortunately, these rates are much lower when the diagnosis is delayed."

"While the primary prevention of cancer is the gold standard for which we are all striving, the committee wants to hear more about how early diagnosis can be encouraged to reduce the impact on those who have already damaged their skin."

The committee will also speak with experts from Melbourne's Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre, whose pioneering research and trials of new drugs are offering treatment options that did not previously exist for patients with advanced melanoma.

"The past few years have been an exciting time for melanoma treatment, with gene-targeted drugs and drugs that boost the immune system offering new hope where there was little before," Mr Irons said.

"The committee is looking forward to hearing more about whether current policy settings are striking the right balance between rapid patient access to these treatments and proper consideration of their efficacy, risks and side effects."

Details of the hearing are as follows:

Friday 6 June – 9.00am to 3.55pm

Room G.3, 55 St Andrews Place (Vic Parliament ancillary building), East Melbourne

The hearing will be broadcast live (audio only) at: <http://www.aph.gov.au/live>

A detailed hearing program and further information on the inquiry, including the terms of reference, are available on the committee's website: www.aph.gov.au/skincancer

For media comment please contact Jonathan Martin from the office of Mr Steve Irons MP on 0419 993 677. **For all other enquiries**, please contact the committee secretariat by phone on (02) 6277 4145 or visit the committee's website: www.aph.gov.au/health.