



6/06/2017

## **MEDIA ALERT**

### **Becoming better skin cancer spotters**

Medical and health professionals working in the Kimberley will become better skin cancer spotters with a one-off workshop coming to Broome thanks to a partnership between Skin Check WA, melanomaWA and Rural Health West.

On 10 June 2017, Rural Health West will be hosting the skin cancer workshop featuring Doctors Howard Lam and Henry Law from Skin Check WA and Clinton Heal, CEO of melanomaWA. The workshop is free of charge to health and medical professionals.

Rural Health West Chief Executive Officer, Tim Shackleton, said that people in the Kimberley are diagnosed with melanoma 40% more frequently and have greater difficulty accessing treatment services than people living in other areas of Western Australia.

“A previous skin cancer program offered in the Kimberley referred 20% of patients for further investigation into suspicious lesions; significantly higher than the State-wide average of 5 to 10%.

“To improve these rates, we must support the local health workforce to ensure they know how to detect, treat and manage skin cancer in its early stages,” said Tim.

melanomaWA founder, Clinton Heal will be sharing his personal journey with melanoma with the workshop participants.

“I would like them to see things from a patient perspective; to understand the impact of skin cancer, particularly melanoma, on a person and their loved ones, so health professionals in the Kimberley can provide quality clinical and patient care.”

Skin Check WA co-founder, Dr Law said it was not just doctors who could benefit from learning how to identify potential cancers.

“Other health professionals such as physiotherapists, nurses and occupational therapists may notice lesions or suspicious spots on the skin of their patients. Our mission is to teach all health professionals to become skin cancer spotters and improve early detection rates.”

The free session will cover diagnosing skin cancers, dermoscopy, treatment and management of skin cancers, and identifying uncommon skin cancers.

It will also provide information on how to talk to patients about becoming skin cancer-aware and ways to reduce their risk of developing skin cancer.

## **ENDS**

### **Photo/interview opportunities (by prior arrangement only):**

- Interview with Clinton Heal about his skin cancer journey and the work of melanomaWA

*Clinton was diagnosed with metastatic melanoma aged just 22. When diagnosed, Clinton found little by way of melanoma specific help, information and support in Western Australia so in 2008, he founded melanomaWA. melanomaWA provides a range of support services to people with skin cancer, including positive support groups to help people with cancer to 'live well'. He was a national finalist for Young Australian of the Year in 2011.*

- Interview Dr Howard Lam or Dr Henry Law regarding skin cancer lesions or other warning signs of skin cancer

*Dr Howard Lam and Dr Henry Law are the principals of Skin Check WA – one of the first skin cancer clinics in Western Australia to embrace dermoscopy. Dermoscopy, which is now the world standard in early skin cancer diagnosis, can be used to detect cancer in its very early stages leading to better patient outcomes.*

- Photo/filming opportunities during workshop
- Possible interview with local resident with skin cancer (to be confirmed)

### **Media enquiries:**

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*Rural Health West aims to improve access to quality healthcare for rural communities through the provision of a highly skilled, motivated and sustainable medical and allied health workforce. We are a not-for-profit organisation primarily funded through the WA Country Health Service and the Australian Government Department of Health.*