

22 August 2017

MELANOMA DIAGNOSIS FOR AUSTRALIAN SURVIVOR CONTESTANT STARK WARNING ABOUT THE RISKS OF SUN EXPOSURE

Comes three weeks after reality TV show called out for sunburnt contestants

News reports today of a recently evicted *Australian Survivor* star being diagnosed with melanoma should serve as a stark warning to all Australians of the serious health risks posed by sun exposure.

50-year-old contestant Jacqui Patterson was only eliminated from the show in Monday night's program – news reports have now surfaced that on returning home from Samoa she was diagnosed with melanoma.

CEO of Melanoma Institute Australia, Carole Renouf, says she is saddened by the news.

“Unfortunately, this is the sad reality for some 14,000 Australians who are expected to be diagnosed with melanoma this year,” Ms Renouf said. “A melanoma diagnosis not only impacts the patient, but also their wider family and friends as they embark on what can only be described as a battle to beat this insidious disease.

“As the world's largest medical research institute with a sole focus on tackling melanoma, we are acutely aware of the challenges ahead for this *Australian Survivor* star, and our thoughts are with Jacqui and her family,” she said.

One Australian dies from melanoma every five hours and it is the most common cancer affecting 15 to 39 year-old Australians. Sun exposure leading to sunburn, particularly prior to puberty, is known to increase a person's risk of developing potentially deadly melanoma later in life.

Only three weeks ago, Melanoma Institute Australia CEO Carole Renouf publicly called out television executives after noticing *Australian Survivor* contestants who were blatantly sunburnt.

The [statement issued on 31 July](#) read in part:

“Melanoma is not a game, and its greatest risk factor - sunburn - has no place on a reality TV game show. It makes me frustrated. It makes me angry. But mostly it makes me sad. While we at Melanoma Institute Australia are trialling new melanoma treatments to save lives, and educating the community about the need to protect themselves from the sun, shows like *Australian Survivor* are doing the exact opposite during prime-time viewing.”

Whilst there is no suggestion that sun exposure during her time on *Australian Survivor* contributed to the contestant's melanoma diagnosis, the challenge issued to all television executives on 31 July is perhaps now even more pertinent.

“Let's outlaw sunburn on reality TV shows, and treat it like the potential killer it is, just like smoking and drink driving. By forging an alliance, we can outwit, outplay and outlast melanoma. Only then will our children and grandchildren be the ultimate survivors,” Ms Renouf said.

Media contact: Jennifer Durante M: 0412 798 990 jennifer.durante@melanoma.org.au