



Rachel Nolan MP

Member for Ipswich

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Apply for SUNBusters grants to provide shade structures

West Moreton sporting and community organisations are invited to apply for Queensland Health SUNBusters grants to help build shade structures to reduce sun exposure in children.

Ipswich MP Rachel Nolan and Health Minister Stephen Robertson said the seeding grants from the West Moreton Population Health Unit would help local communities establish good sun protective practices.

"Providing shade for children while they play is an important responsibility for early childhood facilities, schools, sporting clubs and community organisations catering for children," Ms Nolan said.

"The SUNbusters grants enable the purchase of high quality fixed or portable structures to provide that shade.

"Funding of up to 50 per cent of the total cost of the structure, or to a maximum of \$2,500 (excluding GST) is available.

"All funding applications will be assessed on merit."

Mr Robertson encouraged all Queenslanders to lead an active lifestyle, but said they should take care to protect themselves from the sun when outdoors.

"Skin cancer can kill and it is recognised that Queensland has the highest incidence of skin cancer and invasive melanoma in the world. Two out of three Queenslanders will develop skin cancer in their lifetime and every year more than 5000 cases of melanoma are reported in Australia.

"Children are more exposed to the sun than many other age groups. It's estimated that up to 80 per cent of a person's lifetime exposure to UV is received before the age of 18. Frequent sun exposure and sunburn in childhood sets the stage for high rates of melanoma later in life.

"Skin cancer could be prevented if children were adequately protected from UV radiation and were encouraged to learn sun smart behaviours early in their lives.

"Many organisations have a sun safe policy, which could mean there are measures such as provision of shade structures and/or varied breaks to limit the amount of time children spend in the sun between 10.00am and 3.00pm.

"These measures, combined with regular application of sun screen and the use of suitable hats which shade the neck, shoulders and ears from the sun, will help prevent skin cancer later in life.

"Queensland Health's West Moreton Population Health Unit continues to work with early childhood facilities, schools, other childhood settings and community organisations to develop and implement sun smart initiatives in line with the Queensland Skin Cancer Prevention Strategy."

Fact sheets on sun safety are available from the Queensland Health and Queensland Cancer Council web sites www.health.qld.gov.au and www.cancerqld.org.au.

For more information or a SUNbusters application kit, contact Michelle Trevino on (07) 3810 1500. Applications close 5.00pm, Friday 17 October 2008.