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Finance and
Administration Committee



DANGER SUN OVERHEAD

Submission



Proudly supported by Melanoma Patients Australia



Danger Sun Overhead

My name is Jo Crotty and I am widow with 4 young boys under the age of six. I lost my husband, Rohan Crotty to work related melanoma disease in July 2009. He was only 43.

This is my story

I met Rohan in January 2001 and we married two years later. We both came from large families and we immediately wanted to start a family. Our first son, Eddie, was born in 2004, followed by Will in 2005. I was 5 months pregnant with our third child in July 2006 when Rohan discovered a lump in his right groin while playing with our two young boys. Alarmed at what we found Rohan and I went to see our local GP.

From this point on things happened very quickly. Two weeks after first feeling the large lump Rohan had surgery to have it removed. After the surgery, the doctor called me over and told me they removed a malignant melanoma. "Malignant melanoma", it sounded scary but what was it?! After meeting Rohan in hospital we spoke with his doctor who informed us that while the spread of the melanoma had been surgically removed, it could still appear in the future.

Rohan recovered from his surgery and our lives continued with the birth of our son Jack three months later. From this time on, we gave little thought to the cancer reoccurring.

Rohan even began to campaign about the dangers of sun exposure in the construction industry through a program with the University of Queensland. He hoped to address the lack of knowledge of this silent killer in the construction industry which is where he had worked and been significantly exposed to the sun in Queensland.

We were feeling so confident that we had beaten melanoma that we had our fourth son Patrick in May 2008.

Towards September 2008 was when melanoma touched our lives again, this time for the worse. After exercising one day, Rohan felt a sharp pain in his lower back. He thought at first he had just pulled a muscle and he continued working with slight discomfort. But over the next 2 months the pain gradually worsened and after several visits to doctors, physiotherapists and chiropractors Rohan was finally sent to have another scan.

On New Year's Eve 2008 we were told the bad news - the melanoma had spread into Rohan's abdomen, pelvis and chest. Tests over the months following revealed a tumor on the right side of his brain, and spread to his lower vertebrae. At this stage, he was given 3 months to live. Our lives were shattered. We were incredibly frightened but determined to fight this disease. Rohan was our sole provider and his inability to work in order to fight the melanoma placed a great financial strain on our family.

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Sadly Rohan lost his battle to melanoma on Friday 17th July 2009 at the age of 43. I was left as a widow at the age of 38 with our 4 young boys aged 5, 4, 2 and 1. I was devastated, scared and anxious as to how I was going to support my family financially and emotionally as we had used all our spare savings in Rohan's treatment. I had mortgage repayments, bills to pay and I was worried about putting food on the table to feed our boys. My life was crumbling around me.

If it was not for my successful loss of dependency claim with WorkCover Queensland, I do not know where my boys and I would be.

The Creation of Danger Sun Overhead

I was very angry after the loss of my husband because melanoma is a preventable disease and can be cured if caught early. Furthermore, there is a definite lack of awareness and education amongst outdoor based industries and the general community on the dangers of workplace sun exposure.

I felt compelled to do something. I was determined to continue Rohan's campaign about the dangers of workplace sun exposure.

I started a workshop called **Danger Sun Overhead (DSO)** which is designed to educate various industries and workers about the dangers of unprotected sun exposure in the workplace and promote awareness and early detection of skin cancer and melanoma.

Queensland Workplace, Health and Safety have recognised and endorsed Danger Sun Overhead as an education program to address sun exposure in the workplace.


Over the past two years Danger Sun Overhead has **delivered this message to over 10,000 workers** and this number continues to grow. This has had a result of more people having skin checks and employers taking steps to protect their workers from sun exposure.

Maintaining Workers' Compensation Benefits for Work Related Solar Disease

Skin cancers and melanoma caused by workplace sun exposure are acknowledged by the Government to constitute a work injury. I understand this has been the case since at least 1990.

It is imperative that the Government continue to assist hard working Queenslanders, and their families, who have been affected by work related skin disease or melanoma, by maintaining workers' compensation benefits for these injuries.

I also urge the Government to **support Danger Sun Overhead** to ensure workers and employers take proactive steps to minimise workplace sun exposure and promote early detection of skin disease to ensure other Queensland families avoid the heartache experienced by my family.



Jo Crotty

Founder of Danger Sun Overhead

Danger Sun Overhead

