

Question on Notice

No. 80

Asked on 24 February 2021

MR S KNUTH ASKED THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND AMBULANCE SERVICES (HON Y D'ATH) –

QUESTION

With reference to the use of intense pulse light (IPL) machines which has come under intense scrutiny from the media due to severe burns, creating a significant health risk from the use of these machines in untrained hands—

Will the Minister outline plans to address this issue and commit to introducing legislation to regulate the use of IPL machines to ensure training is undertaken before staff are able to use and deliver IPL treatment?

ANSWER

Intense pulsed light sources emit visible radiation, that is, light. When used by a skilled operator, intense pulsed light (IPL) sources can have lasting cosmetic benefits such as hair removal.

However, unlike lasers used in the cosmetic and beauty therapy industries, intense pulsed light sources used for cosmetic purposes are currently not regulated under the *Radiation Safety Act 1999* (the Act), a main purpose of which is to protect people from the harmful effects of radiation. This means people using intense pulsed light sources are not subject to the training and licensing requirements of the Act. Similarly, the Act requirements for ensuring equipment and facility standards are met do not apply in relation to these devices.

The Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency advises that IPLs used for cosmetic purposes do not have any specific standards they need to comply with for radiation protection purposes. There are Australian standards for light sources/IPL equipment, however as far as is known compliance with them is not mandated under any legislation.

In addition, cosmetic devices are not be captured under TGA requirements as they would not meet the definition of therapeutic.

The introduction of legislation to regulate the use of such devices is one way of ensuring the operators who use them are adequately trained, and that the equipment they use and the facilities where they work meet acceptable standards.

The Department is already working on providing me options for the regulation of intense pulsed light sources and any other radiation devices for cosmetic purposes in Queensland.

This existing body of work is being undertaken in conjunction with the current review of the *Radiation Safety Regulation 2010* ahead of its expiry on 1 September 2021.