



# Raising Melanoma Awareness

Let's get Proactive!

Kate Seabrook

24<sup>th</sup> October 2018

# Raising Melanoma Awareness

2 in 3 Australians will be diagnosed with some form of skin cancer by the time they are 70

Melanoma is the most dangerous form of cancer. It represents 2% of all skin cancers but causes 75% of all skin cancer related deaths.

Most melanomas are caused by prolonged and repeated exposure to UV radiation in sunlight.

# Raising Melanoma Awareness

**Slip**



**Slop**



**Slap**



**Seek**



**Slide**



**Protect yourself in five ways from skin cancer**

This is my story...

This is my story...



# Let's get proactive!

**28 NEWS**

**GRANT MCARTHUR**  
HEALTH EDITOR

**PACT OF LOVE IN SHADOW OF FINAL BATTLE**

**With no medical options left, Dale's last act was to marry his beloved**

THE most solemn of wedding vows can't begin to touch on the commitment and love of Dale Seabrook and Kate Pasley.

Amid hope they had overcome Dale's melanoma together, the couple were engaged in August and looked forward to a long life together.

When the cancer returned in November and treatment options ran out, they planned a December 29 wedding, determined to confirm their commitment before it was too late.

As the cancer tried for one last final indignity on the eve of their wedding, the couple again refused to yield, bringing their vows forward to spend their final hours together celebrating love rather than in grief.

Surrounded by those closest to them, Dale and Kate were married in his Kew palliative care room at 4pm on December 28. After the vows Dale became unresponsive and at 2am — just 14 hours after being married — Dale died with his soulmate by his side.

Days earlier, the couple devoted some of their precious remaining hours to tell their story and send the most heartfelt message to others — get your skin checked so you have more time with those you love.

**SYDNEY'S** Vincent's palliative care unit in Kew may not seem like a typical place for a wedding, but the setting sums up the devotion and determination shared by Dale Seabrook and Kate Pasley.

"I'm not sure how that happened," Dale 33, told the Herald Sun, days before the couple's planned ceremony.

"I'm not sure Kate knows how much she is doing for me."

For the past four years, he has staged an on-again, off-again fight with skin cancer, seemingly beating it on several occasions as the Albany pair planned to continue their ridiculously close life together into old age.

Then, just five weeks before this interview, the melanoma returned and they ran out of options — other than to hastily organise a wedding.

"It felt right," he said, 34, said. "This means everything to me and I think Dale has every day since I first met him."

"I don't know what it is, but he brings out the best in me."

The couple started dating in August 2009 while working at an Albany paper mill.

They moved to Canada and spent two-and-a-half years in the tightest confines of a van travelling between ski resorts.

"We spent periods of three months at a time where it was just us living in a van together and the only time we were away from each other was when we went to the toilet," Dale said.

"We only had one fight the entire time, and it was the only fight we've had in eight-and-a-half years."

When they returned to Australia at the end of 2013, Dale had a suspect mole on the back of his left shoulder checked, learning on Christmas Eve that it was a stage 3A melanoma.

After removing the melanoma, Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre surgeons took the lymph nodes from Dale's neck, however none tested positive for cancer and the only time we were away from each other was when we went to the toilet," Dale said.

"It was one of the hardest things I've ever seen, watching that it was back, and then watching Dale just crumple."

Kate said, "I was in shock for quite some time. That was stage 4, and it has been a roller coaster the whole time."

The news from Peter Mac was still positive in terms of treatment options.

In September 2016 a drug targeting a mutation in Dale's melanoma was successful in inhaling the cancer.

But on January 24 last year, tests revealed the disease had found a way around the drug, so Dale was moved onto the latest groundbreaking immunotherapy.

Four cycles of combination treatment with the drugs nivolumab and ipilimumab were going well until Easter

when Dale ended up in the emergency department with breathing complications.

"There was a scan that came back and showed the immunotherapy was not working and the cancer was advancing quite aggressively," he said.

"It still wasn't the end of it. There was talk of trial treatments."

While waiting for a medical trial to start, Dale was placed on another drug to "clean up" the cancer in preparation, but it nearly killed him.

Dale became only the fourth person to suffer a severe reaction to the drug, his body shocked into a condition called DRESS syndrome, where it swelled up and he had to be resuscitated, pumped with oxygen and adrenaline, and eventually saved.

The incident damaged Dale's liver and kidney and meant he was no longer able to go on the trial.

But a scan the day before he was due to start traditional chemotherapy showed an amazing turnaround — the same shock to Dale's body also hit his cancer and caused substantial regression in all areas of his body.

With the cancer retreating, Dale and Kate again breathed a sigh of relief and began planning a long life together, getting engaged in August.

"It wasn't necessarily a saviour, but it was a 'wow, we have dodged a bullet again here, things are starting to look up,'" Dale said.

"It wasn't perfect, it wasn't like we knew we were out of it, but suddenly things looked good."

"We were very excited. It was a couple of weeks after we got the news, when we were in that happy period and everything was looking up, that we got engaged."

In preparation for another medical trial, Dale underwent a CAT scan in September only to find the cancer was again spreading, this time to his brain.

"The spread ruled him out of the trial but could still be treated with radiation and chemotherapy."

After the first round of treatment things again appeared positive.

Then all of a sudden Dale became sick and was taken to Albany hospital with uncontrollable pain.

A fortnight later he was transferred to Peter Mac, where a "family meeting" was organised to inform the couple and their loved ones that the

**NEWS 29**

**CHECK SKIN TO GIVE MELANOMA THE SLIP**

NO medical treatments were able to save Dale Seabrook from melanoma, but those who loved him are determined to ensure his story can save others.

Their plea is for Australians to keep an eye on the skin of the ones they love, to ensure any concerns can be dealt with before requiring radical treatments.

"A lot of people think

you only get melanoma if you bake in the sun all day, and that if you slip slap slap you are fine, but that is not always the case," his wife, Kate Pasley, said.

"Dale was always sunsmart. He was never the one to be out without sunscreen or a shirt on. He was always protected.

"Keep an eye on yourself, keep an eye on your partner, keep an eye on your kids — and if something changes or doesn't look right, don't wait, get it checked immediately."

"If you do have something you don't like the look of but your doctors says it's fine but you are not comfortable with that, go seek a second opinion."

Knowing how sunsmart his son was, and that Dale's melanoma may not have been caused by exposure to the sun, Rod Seabrook would like to see "skin check" added to the "slip, slap, slap message".

"There is too much reliance on sunscreen," he said.

**Clockwise from main: Dale Seabrook and Kate Pasley's wedding; Dale, centre, with his dad and brother; and Dale and Kate at a Sydney concert.**

**Herald Sun — Saturday 20th January 2018**



Let's get proactive!

# Let's get proactive!

- Melanoma March and Morning tea fundraiser
- Skin Check Tools to all employees.
- Information sessions and Skin Cancer Toolbox Talk





Let's get proactive!

Skin Cancer Toolbox Talk



I am skin cancer

<https://www.iamskincancer.com.au/education/>

# Let's get proactive!

Thank you for listening

Please be sun smart when outdoors – practice slip, slop, slap, seek and slide.

But also get to know what is normal for your skin, your partner skin and your children's skin.

Conduct regular skin checks and see a doctor if you notice any changes to your or your loved ones skin or moles.