



Peter Mac
Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre
Victoria Australia

Melanoma School: An education program for patients with thin melanoma (Stage 0-2b)

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Funding



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Background

- On average, Stage 0-2b melanoma patients have 1 review appointment every 3-6 months post-surgery.
- This is resource intensive for the hospital and for patients (time, travel, financially)
- Follow up can be done safely by GP or skin cancer specialist
- Need increased capacity to see new patients in a timely manner and those consider 'high risk'

Aims

Melanoma School is a ***pilot patient education program*** which targets early-stage melanoma patients (Stage 0-2b)

The aims of this program are to:

- a) improve patient confidence in self-care through patient education,
- b) reduce the number of outpatients appointments, and
- c) ensure patients can re-access hospital care quickly if required.

Melanoma school is held monthly

Presented by a surgeon and a clinical nurse consultant



What is discussed in Melanoma School

- Information on melanoma/skin cancer
- Diagnosis and prognosis
- Skin self checking
- Follow up plans
- Being SunSmart
- What to do if you have a problem or are concerned
- Show bag – with any resources you want
- Bonus beach shade



Other Information provided to patients and GPs

- Slides presented at Melanoma School
- Patient diagnosis and history (diagnosis date, location, type of melanoma)
- Copy of letter to GP with explaining that the patient has attended Melanoma School, the rapid access program with a request that patients seeks advice from GPs in the first instance.

Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre
ABN 42 100 504 883
petermac.org

Dear Doctor,

Your patient has been attending the Melanoma clinic at the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre over the last two years at a minimum. Recently they attended a new program known as "Melanoma School".

At this session they were provided with detailed information about melanoma, encouraged to conduct their own skin surveillance, and have been made aware of the national guidelines for ongoing follow up.

From our perspective, your patient has been cleared of any active melanoma and advised to continue follow up locally. The various options for this have been discussed with them today.

They were also given access to several contemporary resources about melanoma and skin cancer in general.

Your patient has also been given details of our rapid access program. This allows them to return to our clinic at any point if either you or they are concerned. They are identified as eligible for this program on the electronic medical record.

We have requested they seek your advice in the first instance, but they will have exclusive direct access back to us if needed.

Kind regards,

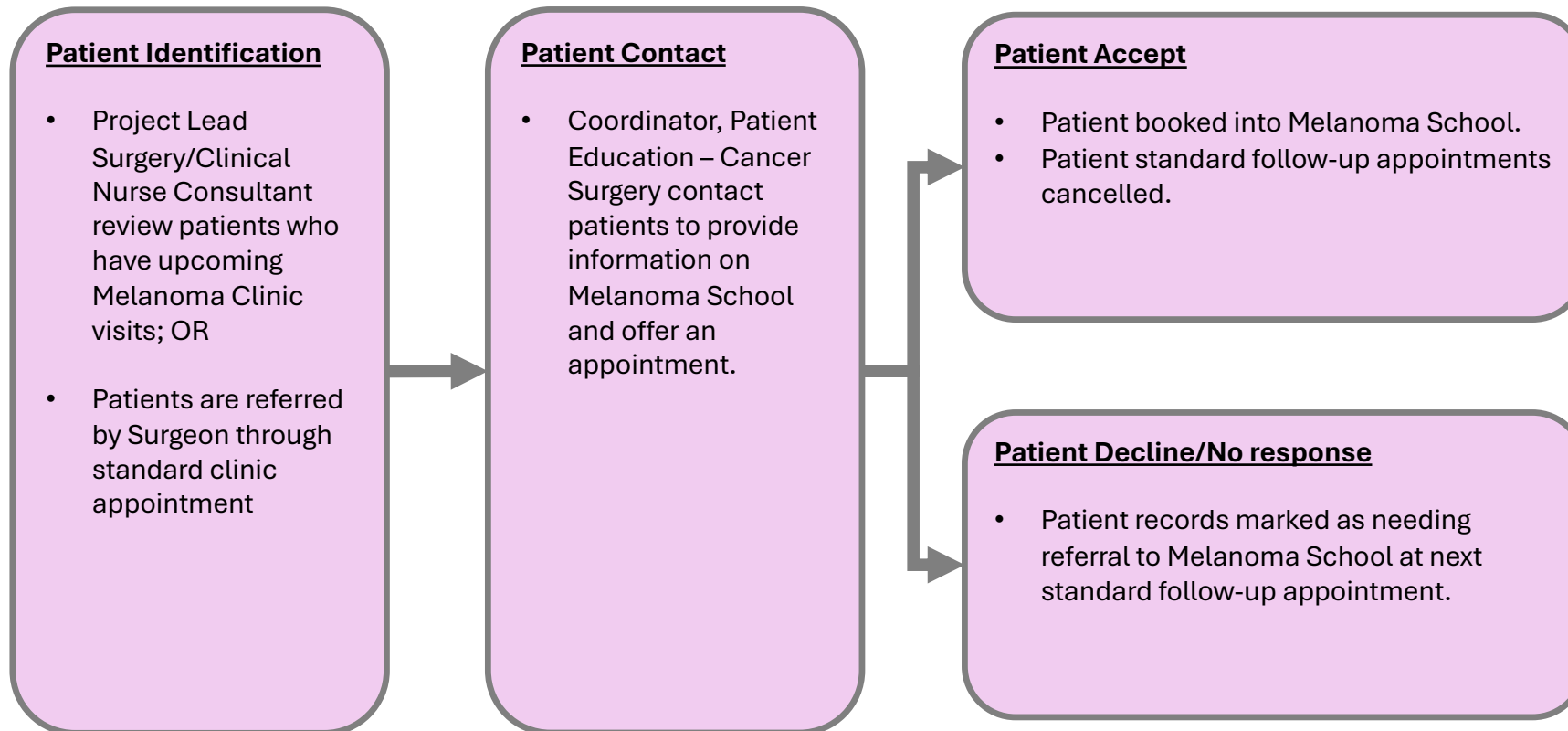


Rapid re-access to Peter Mac

- At each session we provide our patients with a 'Rapid Access Golden Ticket' that gives them ongoing access to return to Peter Mac if they or their General Practitioner or Skin Cancer Specialist has any concerns.
- The patients know to contact Peter Mac's Melanoma Clinical Nurse Consultant who will either:
 - Request a photo to assess the clinical concern; or
 - Book the patient back to our melanoma clinic within 1 week.
- This aims to alleviate patient stress and ensure they always feel connected to Peter Mac without the routine visits (a known barrier for "discharging" patients from Peter Mac).



Patient Selection Criteria



Access, eligibility and uptake

<i>(June 2025 to May 2026)</i>	Number of Eligible Patients	%Eligible Patients
Attended Melanoma School	112	32%
Referred, pending appointment	25	7%
Discharged without attending Melanoma School	96	28%
Booked into standard follow up appointment	111	32%
No longer eligible (change in condition)	3	1%
Total Eligible Patients	347	100%

Estimated between 224 to 448 clinic appointments no longer required for these patients annually (3,360 to 6,720 mins).

Reasons for discharging eligible patients from clinics without patients attending Melanoma School:

- Surgeon now has education 'script' to provide education to patients during their standard clinic visit.
- Patients require interpreter/group education session may not be suitable (require help in understanding from carer).
- Patient unable to travel for face-to-face education session (rectified with hybrid sessions commencing since Nov 2025).

Patients who are booked in standard follow up appointment will be reviewed by their primary surgeon to determine next steps (i.e. direct booking into Melanoma School without successful contact from Coordinator, Patient Education – Cancer Surgery).

Access, eligibility and uptake

- Patients are 2.5 times more likely to attend Melanoma School, if the first mention of Melanoma School is from their surgeon.

<i>(June 2025 to May 2026)</i>	% Eligible patients attended Melanoma School
First contact with Coordinator, Patient Education – Cancer Surgery	19%
Patient advised and referred to Melanoma School through standard surgeon clinic appointment	47%

- 14% of patients declined Melanoma School, with the top reasons listed as:
 - Prefers skin checks
 - Travel (this is no longer an issue as hybrid sessions were introduced from Nov 2025).

Use of Rapid Access

Over 11 months five patients have engaged with the rapid access process

Two sent photos of concerning lesion – no further action

One decided to go to GP after discussion with CNC – lesion excised – MIS

Two attended clinic – no intervention required



Participant evaluation

55% of patients who attended Melanoma School completed a post-session feedback survey. The feedback has been positive and has helped with incremental improvement and delivery of Melanoma School material.

Survey Questions	Responses
1. How helpful did you find the Melanoma School session?	98% responded positively with either: • ‘very helpful’ (87%); or • ‘somewhat helpful’ (11%).
2. How well do you understand process for rapid access back into Peter Mac melanoma clinic?	98% responded positively with: • ‘completely understand’.
3. How comfortable are you now with monitoring your skin at home?	86% responded positively with either: • ‘very comfortable’ (31%); or • ‘somewhat comfortable’ (55%).
4. How confident do you now feel to present to your GP with worrisome lesions?	92% responded positively with either: • ‘very confident’ (61%) • ‘confident’ (19%); or • ‘somewhat confident’ (11%)

Conclusions

Melanoma school is feasible, acceptable to patients and allows optimal utilisation of valuable hospital resources

First mention of 'melanoma school' by the treating surgeon increases uptake

A "rapid access program" is reassuring for patients

Constantly looking at how to improve what we do

"Melanoma high school" – considering patients with stage III melanoma – two groups – no adjuvant therapy – completed adjuvant therapy

Thank you



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