

Media Release

Australian Sunscreen Association alarmed at sunscreen scare tactics

Sydney. Wednesday 30th September 2026. The Australian Sunscreen Association, part of industry body Accord Australasia, is alarmed by a press release from a group calling themselves the Australian Sunscreen Council, that uses selective quotes from the TGA to cast doubt on everyday sunscreens.

“Australia has one of the highest skin cancer rates in the world. Scaring people away from sunscreen is dangerous,” said Damian Mitsch, Executive Director of Accord. “The TGA’s advice is clear: the benefits of sunscreen far outweigh any risks, and people should choose a sunscreen they like, because they’ll use it more often.”

Who is behind the release

The Council describes itself as Australia’s “peak industry body for sunscreen safety”. ABC News reported in December 2025 that Australian zinc sunscreen manufacturer VeganicSKN “is involved in” the Council, which “actually advocates for mineral sunscreens only”. The ABC also reported that “VeganicSKN and Advance ZincTek share some directors and ownership interests”. Advance ZincTek is an ASX-listed zinc oxide manufacturer. The Council’s release discloses none of this. It calls for homosalate to be banned from children’s sunscreens and supports mineral sunscreens “including mineral sunscreens using ingredients such as zinc oxide”.

In the Association’s view, this is commercial marketing presented as public health advice.

The TGA has warned about this kind of campaign. The TGA page the Council quotes says: “We are aware of several social media and other marketing campaigns that promote zinc-based sunscreens over chemical-based sunscreens. These campaigns often present incomplete and alarmist narratives about sunscreen ingredients.”

The Australian Sunscreen Association is part of Accord Australasia, whose members include sunscreen manufacturers and suppliers, including those with organic and mineral filters. We say so openly, and everyone in this debate should do the same.

1. The TGA quote leaves out the rest of the passage. The TGA’s next sentences say the proposed restriction “is a precautionary measure based on potential signals from animal data studies, not human studies, when animals were exposed to these chemicals in high doses and for long periods of time, which is far beyond the amount that humans would be exposed to.” The page opens: “The benefits of sunscreen continue to far outweigh any risks. Australians are urged to continue using sunscreens”. The TGA also says: “We recommend that consumers choose the product that they prefer, as you are likely to use it more frequently.”

2. No decision has been made. The TGA says: “The interim decision on these ingredients will be published and subject to public consultation by the end of 2026.” The regulator’s scientific review should decide the outcome, not a marketing campaign.

3. The UK has found homosalate safe at 10%. The Council compares Australia's 15% limit with a 2021 European finding that homosalate was "not safe" at up to 10%. It does not mention that the UK Government's Scientific Advisory Group on Chemical Safety reviewed homosalate in March 2025. The group concluded that "homosalate is safe at a maximum concentration of 10% in sunscreen products". Great Britain's law still permits homosalate at up to 10%.

4. The European picture is incomplete. In December 2021, the European committee the Council quotes (the SCCS) advised that homosalate "is safe as a UV-filter at concentrations up to 7.34% in face cream and pump spray". The EU now permits homosalate in face products up to 7.34%. On endocrine concerns, the SCCS itself described the evidence as "inconclusive, and at best equivocal". It also said the key animal study had a flaw that "significantly affects the reliability of this study". The EU also still permits oxybenzone at up to 6% in face, hand and lip products and 2.2% in body products.

5. The Queensland study's own authors urge caution. The Council reports that 53% of children's pooled urine samples exceeded a German health benchmark. Each pool combined urine from 100 people, and the authors state that pooled samples "do not support exposure and risk assessment at the individual level". The authors also wrote that sunscreen "still plays an essential role in reducing UV radiation exposure", and that the results "must be viewed in a nuanced way". They said the high detection rates "suggest a high compliance with sunscreen recommendations particularly among children". The study does not mention mineral sunscreens.

The Australian Sunscreen Association, Accord Australasia supports the TGA's evidence-based review. We urge Australians to keep using a sunscreen they like, alongside shade, hats and protective clothing.

ends

For Media Inquiries – Damian Mitsch, Executive Director, Accord Australasia – 0403 372 900

The Australian Sunscreen Association is a registered business name of Accord Australasia Limited, ABN 83 205 141 267. Accord Australasia has represented Australia's hygiene, cosmetic and specialty products industry including sunscreens, for over 50 years.