



NOT ABOUT THE HEAT

Meter warns of sunburn risk

■ Phoebe Wearne

The Cancer Council WA wants public UV index meters installed in school playgrounds and at popular beaches, parks and sporting grounds to warn of sunburn and skin cancer risks.

Australia's first public UV index meter, which measures solar radiation intensity every minute, was switched on at Deep Water Point in Mt Pleasant this week.

The solar-powered meter is on a 4m nautical-themed sculpture by renowned Perth artist Tony Jones, whose best known works are the sculptures Eliza in Crawley and that of CY O'Connor near Fremantle.

Cancer Council WA SunSmart manager Mark Strickland said the real-time UV index meter, which only recently became possible with new technology, would show when the UV level was above

three — the level when people are advised to protect themselves from the sun.

Mr Strickland said it was important people were aware of the UV level because it was not linked to the sun's heat and people could not see or feel UV radiation.

"We hope people will find it a useful reminder to know when they really should be protecting themselves from UV and are at risk of sunburn and skin cancer," he said.

"People tend to make the false correlation that they need to protect themselves from the sun when it's hot, but it doesn't work that way."

The Deep Water Point sculpture was funded with \$20,000 from the City of Melville.

Mr Strickland hoped other councils, schools and businesses with outdoor staff

would express an interest in installing the UV meters in public open spaces, playgrounds and workplaces.

He wants people to plan their day around the highest risk from UV radiation once they have the information to do so. "We hope people who are in the area will see the signs over a period of time and realise UV is not always correlated with heat," Mr Strickland said.

"If people know the UV is really going to be cranking in the middle of the day we hope they might move their outdoor activities to earlier or later in the day when the UV level will be lower."

Melville deputy mayor Duncan Macphail said public health and safety was a priority for the city and it supported Cancer Council efforts to educate people.



Solar: The meter.