

# Calls for IPL regulation intensify after woman allegedly suffers serious burns

ABC Far North / By Jemima Burt

Posted Fri 17 Sep 2021 at 6:24am, updated Fri 17 Sep 2021 at 10:31am



Julene Yates alleges her legs, pictured in April 2020, were burnt and blistered after the treatment. (Supplied: Julene Yates)

Five years ago Julene Yates moved to tropical Mission Beach for the warm weather but since March last year she has found the heat unbearable.

She has launched legal action against local beautician Alina Shaderkova for \$503,000 after an intense-light treatment session she alleges left her with burnt and blistered legs.

**Readers are advised this article contains an image some may find distressing.**

Ms Yates claimed her life had been irreversibly altered by a constant sensation of burning, light sensitivity and an inability to sweat.

"If I go for a walk, then I can't go for any great lengths of time because as my body heats up, my legs heat up and that just exacerbates my legs because I can't sweat on my legs," she said.

"It's like the heat just rises through my body and I feel like I'm going to combust."

Ms Shaderkova strenuously denies the allegations, saying she performed the procedure with due care and skill.

Ms Yates is calling for health authorities to improve oversight over salons performing intense pulsed light (IPL) treatments.

## Key points:

- Julene Yates was hospitalised for second degree burns after an intense-light treatment on her legs
- Cosmetic physicians are calling for tighter regulation of intense pulsed light treatment
- The beautician says she exercised "due care and skill"

## 'Excruciating pain'



Mission Beach woman Julene Yates claims she has been permanently injured by the treatment in March 2020. (ABC Far North: Brendan Mounter)

In documents filed to the District Court in Cairns, Ms Yates said that she immediately felt excruciating pain and expressed that to the defendant.

"In the end I was just holding my breath waiting for it to be finished," she said.

"After that I came home that afternoon. I didn't know what to do with myself, it was excruciating."

She said in the following days her legs blistered, but alleged Ms Shaderkova reassured her that this was a normal response.

Ms Shaderkova has denied these allegations.

In the days following her treatment, Ms Yates was treated for second-degree burns in the nearby Tully Hospital, in consultation with the burns unit at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital.

Ms Yates claimed she had lost the capacity to work as a dog groomer and the injury had significantly affected her quality of life.

"We love Mission Beach... I always have been a sun lover, but unfortunately, we really need to relook at that and maybe reassess where we live," she said.

## Beautician 'exercised due care and skill'

In her defence filed to the court, Alina Shaderkova strenuously denied that she administered IPL treatment, rather she used "e-light" treatment – a combination of Intense Pulsed Light and radio frequency technology.

She said she told Ms Yates to expect what might feel like an "extremely painful sunburn" for two weeks, and that her skin would blister.

Ms Shaderkova alleged she told Ms Yates to expect pain like a "rubber band being flicked on her skin" during the treatment.



Beautician Alina Shaderkova strenuously denies that she breached her duty of care, and said she acted with due care and skill in providing the e-light treatment. (Supplied: Facebook)

She also denied telling Ms Yates she was a dermatologist in Russia.

Ms Shaderkova did not respond to the ABC's requests for an interview, but in her defence documents, she said she was trained to use the machine, exercised due care and skill and obtained informed consent from the plaintiff before performing the treatment.

## IPL burns 'common'

The Cosmetic Physicians College of Australasia said it has been pushing for national regulation of non-ionising radiation devices, including IPL, for the past two decades.

President, Dr Michael Molton, said it was common for people to report first, second and third degree burns from IPL treatments.

"From personal experience, I would see probably one a month," Dr Molton said.

"I find it quite surprising that we aren't able to get that regulatory control."



Cosmetic Physicians College President, Dr Michael Molton, said clients visit his clinic monthly with IPL burns. (Supplied: ABC News Adelaide)

Tasmania is the only state in Australia that regulates the treatment.

Dr Molton urged people to consult a doctor before pursuing IPL treatments.

"Some of these lesions that may be treated by an unsuspecting practitioner may, in fact, be missed melanomas or other skin cancers," he said.

"There's a significant number that we know that are missed by not being diagnosed by a medical practitioner prior to being treated."

Associate Professor Ken Karipidis, Assistant Director, Health Impact Assessment at the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency, said there is not enough data to demonstrate the extent of the issue.

"Examples or reports like that still remain anecdotal, so although we know this occurs, we don't know the extent of the problem," Dr Karipidis said.

"There isn't enough research to show the extent of the problem in Australia.

"Although greater regulation is often called for, we just don't have the research to know what the extent of the problem is."



Julene Yates was treated for second-degree burns at the local hospital. (Supplied: Julene Yates)

He said the agency has teamed up with Monash University to research the frequency of injuries, which will inform whether further regulation is necessary to be administered by states and territories.

He said the agency has also provided advice for consumers of non-ionising radiation.

## Queensland safety review excludes IPL

The Queensland government recently reviewed its Radiation Safety Regulation, but it did not include regulation for IPL treatments.

A Queensland Health spokesperson, however, said it was considering bringing in additional measures for the industry.

"Queensland Health has developed, and are considering, a range of options for the regulation of intense light sources and other non-ionising radiation devices used by the cosmetic industry," the spokesperson said.

"There are currently no enforceable standards applying to operators who conduct cosmetic procedures using intense light sources."