

Transcript

Station: **CHANNEL 7** Date: **07/11/2008**
Program: **TODAY TONIGHT** Time: **06:30 PM**
Compere: **MATTHEW WHITE** Summary ID: **M00032688492**

Item: **REPORT ON CHEMICAL BURNS ON CLIENTS AT
HAIRDRESSING SALONS AND THE CALL TO REGULATE THE
INDUSTRY.**

**INTERVIEWEES: DANIELLE SKAFF, VICTIM; SHARNA
FRAGOLINI, VICTIM; CHRISTINA ARCULI, HAIR AND
BEAUTY AUSTRALIA; MOTHER OF SHARNA FRAGOLINI**

Demographics:	Male 16+ 109611	Female 16+ 156537	All people 266148	ABs 19634	GBs 157327
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MATTHEW WHITE: A call from within to help one of our billion dollar industries. Hairdressing professionals want new regulations to prevent the horror stories that have been happening for years.

With no uniform licensing laws anyone can open a salon but now the industry itself is concerned as more customers suffer the agonising after effects of chemical burns.

DANIELLE SKAFF: It was bloody and pussy and really, really infected. So he said you have to go to the doctor as soon as possible.

CHRISTINA ARCULI: We do feel the Government doesn't treat our hair and beauty industry seriously enough.

SHARNA FRAGOLINI: Pretty serious. Just like, yeah, when you fry bacon in a pan that's what's happened to my head. It's just come up in bubbles.

REPORTER: Going to the hairdressers is leaving some customers with chemical burns and lifelong scars.

CHRISTINA ARCULI: It felt like my head was on fire. It was agonising.

DANIELLE SKAFF: And then after maybe two hours it started to burn a lot on the top of my head and it was really, really painful.

REPORTER: Danielle Skaff(*) and Sharna Fragolini(*) are the latest victims of chemical burns. Both teenagers visited salons for colour and foils expecting a glamorous makeover but the result was the opposite. Sharna's mother devastated.

MOTHER OF SHARNA FRAGOLINI: It wasn't until two weeks later when the blisters were so badly infected that I just went back and I said I demand my money back.

DANIELLE SKAFF: Two weeks on it was still really sore and it was still weeping and it was - when I felt on it, it was like blood and pus. And I went to the medical centre and I met a doctor and she said this is a chemical burn to your skull.

[Three people look at picture on laptop of burn]

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: That is awful.

DANIELLE SKAFF: That's terrible.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: That is the worst picture.

REPORTER: It took three courses of antibiotics and twice daily dressings for weeks on end before the wound on the back of Danielle's head healed.

And now four months on she's left with this.

Oh, oh dear. Yeah, there's no hair there at all, is there.

DANIELLE SKAFF: No.

REPORTER: Is it still sore to touch?

DANIELLE SKAFF: Yeah. I mean, it's just my skin is so thin and, I mean, I don't dare to touch it.

REPORTER: Her only hope, plastic surgery.

And so to actually fix that you would have to get a skin graft.

DANIELLE SKAFF: Yeah. Either if - yeah, if they cut a piece off my neck and put it on, or they cut the scar away and then stitch it together again, or they inject

something which makes it expand and then hopefully...

REPORTER: And that's all going to cost money.

DANIELLE SKAFF: Yeah, everything is going to cost money.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: This is what's come out from - generated from one trip to the hairdresser.

REPORTER: After four months the salon finally gave Danielle her money back for the procedure while its insurance company is running for cover; this letter sent to Danielle offering to pay her medical costs so far of \$244, but only if she legally agrees the matter is finished.

DANIELLE SKAFF: They just want to get rid of me. They just want to give me that money and then they think it's the end, you know. They don't want to be up for thousands of dollars with surgeries costs and all of that.

REPORTER: These cases aren't isolated. Over the years *Today Tonight* has documented many chemical burns.

CHRISTINA ARCULI: They do happen and you do have to be aware of them.

Now, I'm going to be colouring your hair today.

REPORTER: Christina Arculi(*) is the vice president of Hair and Beauty Australia(*), a professional association concerned that hairdressing is one of only a few trades without a government body responsible for the industry.

CHRISTINA ARCULI: Because we are in an industry that makes people feel and look good, that the Government might think we're just here to, you know, only do that. But we are dealing every day with chemicals, with colours, with skin preparations, and things that should be taken seriously.

REPORTER: Originally hairdressing was a licensed industry but once you had one it could never be cancelled and there was very little monitoring of it.

So instead of fixing the problem each state government decided it was easier to simply abolish the licensing system. So now the industry is deregulated with little or no monitoring except in Western Australia where both hairdressers and salon owners have to renew their licences every year.

Professionals say this is the best way to control the quality in the industry.

REPORTER: So they've actually made it worse than what it was before.

CHRISTINA ARCULI: Well, they didn't help by taking away licensing. Licensing did nothing but - to our association, put us backwards, not forwards.

REPORTER: Danielle is now left with a scar and she gives this advice.

DANIELLE SKAFF: To consumers I would say, you know, be careful and really look the hairdresser up before you do anything.

CHRISTINA ARCULI: We'd love people to ask us questions and if your stylist doesn't know the answers then I would be a little bit concerned especially where there's chemicals involved.

MATTHEW WHITE: Now, it seems the chances of change as far as licensing aren't too good. In fact WA is now considering deregulation.

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ABs = Managers, administrators, professions. GBs = Grocery buyers.
