

## Donations to Scleroderma Victoria are tax deductible for income tax purposes

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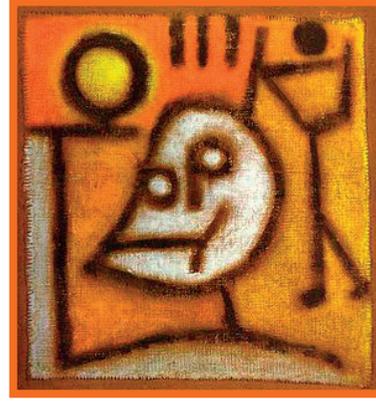
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I would like further information on how  
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*Death and Fire, known in German as Tod und Feuer, is a 1940 expressionist painting by Paul Klee. It was one of the last before his death on June 29 of that year.*



### June 29 is World Scleroderma Day

The gifted swiss artist, Paul Klee, made painting his life's work, but was strongly influenced by his illness, systemic scleroderma. In his painting above, you can see the actual words of 'Tod' (Death) spelled in the figures face. The red (Feuer) also suggest the inflammation and burning pain of scleroderma. There is also a slight representation of a scleroderma face, a very tight mouth, a thin (pinched) nose, with a pale hue almost representing shininess.



## Scleroderma - More than skin deep

[www.sclerodermavictoria.com.au](http://www.sclerodermavictoria.com.au)

### Why the Sunflower?

To raise awareness about the condition, Scleroderma Victoria has adopted the sunflower as it's icon. The sunflower is symbolic, as like the sunflower itself, it turns towards the sun for warmth.

## World Scleroderma Day is June 29

On June 29, we recognise the life and death of Paul Klee and all those who face the hard challenges of living with scleroderma.

We advocate for a world where equal access to treatments, quality care and community participation are available to people with scleroderma.

Our aim is to educate our community and raise awareness so that scleroderma is afforded the consideration and attention of other widely known medical conditions.

Having a medical condition that nobody has heard of is a lonely business.

The purpose of World Scleroderma Day is to create awareness of the everyday impacts of living with scleroderma.

June 29 is a day to recognise people with scleroderma and empower others to support us in our campaign for equity and improved quality of life.

## What is scleroderma?

A medical condition of the immune system, blood vessels and connective tissue, scleroderma can attack many body systems or just a few.

It is very hard to diagnose because each person may have a different combination of symptoms, and it progresses at different rates for everyone.

While some symptoms are visible, like hard puffy skin on the hands, Raynaud's, and tightened joints in systemic forms, the most serious symptoms are hidden, and the person with scleroderma may look quite well to outsiders. Inside that person,

the lungs, heart, kidneys and gut are only some of the systems that may be affected. On the other hand, sometimes the face alters significantly although the organs are healthy, and facial changes may be hard to accept.

## What happens in scleroderma?

The causes of the different types of scleroderma are unknown, but we do know what happens, the auto-immune system malfunctions. The body places excess collagen on its connective tissue which makes up the skin, joints, tendons and parts of the internal organs. Damage to the blood vessels, meanwhile, causes them to constrict and stiffen, and weaken the organs they supply.

## What can be done?

We now have many treatments that can help people with scleroderma, but each of these apply to specific symptoms. There is no overall cure, and we are yet to find a cause. It is extremely important that diagnosis is made as early as possible, so that treatment can begin, and we can potentially save lives.

## How can scleroderma be diagnosed?

An informed doctor can diagnose scleroderma through a combination of medical history, physical examination, blood tests and non-invasive investigations such as capillaroscopy.

## Who gets scleroderma?

Scleroderma may be a rare medical condition however, it is thought that scleroderma affects one in every 10,000 people.

We know that women are affected four times as often as men. It is not contagious or infectious.

## Research

Early diagnosis of scleroderma saves lives and leads to greater control of the medical condition and its devastating symptoms. We solely rely on donations and fund raising to support our research.

## What can you do?

You can support us with donations, by holding your own fund-raiser, and talking to others to help us spread the word.

## For more information please contact

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