

Media Release

Strictly embargoed 00:01 Sunday 15 November 2020

Kids of the 80's and 90's failing the Slip Slop Slap-ometer

New data shows one in four 25-44 year olds still getting sunburnt on weekends

Cancer Council is encouraging parents of young children to be SunSmart this summer with new data showing that 25-44 year olds have worrying sun protection habits, with one in four (25%) getting sunburnt on summer weekends.

Released to mark the start of National Skin Cancer Action Week (15-21 November), results of the *2019 Summer Sun Protection Survey (Life in Australia™)* showed that in 2019, 25-44 year-olds also had a penchant for a suntan, with more than four in 10 (43%) saying they like to get a tan, a sign of harmful UV damage.

The study also showed only three in 10 (31%) 25-44 year olds spend most of their time in the shade when outdoors on summer weekends. Furthermore, fewer thought that skin cancer is an important issue in their community (77%), than those in older age groups (86%).

Cancer Council Australia Acting CEO, Megan Varlow, said "Cancer Council has made good progress in protecting our kids from the harmful effects of the sun however our attention now needs to turn to parents, to remind them to look after themselves too."

To help protect Australians this summer, Cancer Council has launched *Still the Same Sun*, a campaign designed to remind parents that while a lot has changed since the famous Slip, Slop, Slap jingle was introduced in the 80's, the dangerous nature of the sun remains an issue. It is just as important now as it was then for everyone to protect themselves from the sun.

Ms Varlow explained that while many remember Sid the Seagull from their childhoods, it's time to remind them of his important messages.

"Initiatives like Cancer Council's SunSmart Schools Program are helping to protect children however, we know that as children become teens and move into adulthood, sun protection behaviours are slipping.

"It's important that adults remember to not only look after themselves, but also that they are role models for their children, so the way they protect themselves can reinforce good behaviours for the next generation.

"It's been over a decade since we have seen large-scale national skin cancer prevention messaging like the well-known Slip, Slop, Slap campaign. If we want to achieve real change in the sun protection habits of all Australians, significant investment is needed in mass media campaigns to increase awareness about skin cancer risk, sun protection and support Australians to change their behaviour and be SunSmart.

“This is why we are calling on the Federal Government to invest \$10 million annually over the next two years in a skin cancer prevention campaign to save lives.”

President of the Australasian College of Dermatologists, Associate Professor David Francis, says that by using sun protection, parents are reducing their family’s risk of skin cancer, including potentially deadly melanoma.

“The time to stop skin cancer is before it starts. As UV levels are expected to be high to extreme this summer, we’re encouraging Australians of all ages to remember that it’s still the same sun.

“UV exposure from the sun is the single greatest risk factor for skin cancer and with around 2,000 Australians dying from skin cancer every year, protecting yourself from the sun is as important as ever.

“Whenever the UV index is three or above, which is the case for a significant proportion of the year throughout Australia, you need to use all five measures of sun protection – slip on a shirt, slop on sunscreen, slap on a hat, seek shade and slide on sunglasses.” he said.

Each year, Cancer Council Australia and the Australasian College of Dermatologists come together for National Skin Cancer Action Week. In 2020, the week’s campaign has now been extended throughout summer, when UV is at its strongest.

Learn how to protect yourself and your family at cancer.org.au.

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For media enquiries please contact Tegan Brown via the Cancer Council Australia media line: (02) 8063 4109 (diverts to mobile) or email media@cancer.org.au

About the survey:

The *Life in Australia™ 2019 Summer Sun Protection Survey* was carried out by the Social Research Centre on the January 2019 wave of Australia’s first and only probability-based online panel, Life in Australia™. In total, 2,154 respondents, representing Australian adults aged 18 years and over, completed the survey. All tables show survey estimates that are weighted to Australian population benchmarks.

25-44 year olds sunburn on the weekend prior to the survey during peak UV time and other times

Proportion sunburnt last weekend (%)	Sunburnt	Not sunburnt in last weekend
n=2154		
Total Adults	21	79

Age Groups

18-24 years	25	75
25-44 years	25	75
45-69 years	19	81
70 or more years	12	88