



MEDIA RELEASE

Sports stars Michael Klim and Brad Hodge team up as new research shows men aren't protecting themselves in the sun

TUESDAY 31 JANUARY 2023 – The Australian Government and Cancer Council are teaming up with sports stars Michael Klim and Brad Hodge to call on Australian men to pick up their sun protection game this summer.

The Olympic swimmer and former cricketer have come together in a quirky 'in-sun' safety video, designed to ensure Australian men are thinking about sun safety every time they step outside – just as they think about in-flight safety every time they board a plane.

New Cancer Council research reveals fewer than half (45%) of Australian men agree sun protection is part of their daily routine, despite the fact it's estimated that men are almost twice as likely as women to die from melanoma.

Data released today from the Summer Sun Protection (Life in Australia) report also found men are half as likely as women to report applying sunscreen (SPF30 or more) as part of their routine most days in summer (22% compared to 41%).

When it comes to where the risky behaviour is occurring, men were more likely than women to have recently been sunburnt at an outdoor swimming pool or sporting facility (11% vs 7%), or their workplace (7% vs 3%).

Having spent most of their sporting careers outdoors, Klim and Hodge are familiar with being exposed to the elements and say sun protection is an important part of their warmup routines.

Klim said: "It's very alarming to hear that men my age tend to be negligent when it comes to being sun smart.

"Enjoying the outdoors is part of our culture, and with that comes a sense of responsibility. This video is a great reminder of the simple steps that all Australians can take to make sure we're ready to safely enjoy time outdoors."

Hodge said: "Sun safety is critical to me because of my history as a cricket player spending hours on end in the sun. When I was a professional athlete, we had everything supplied for us – sunscreen, zinc, long sleeved shirts, hats and sunglasses. Now, I have to step up and take the necessary precautions to be sun safe. That's my message for men – be proactive! Add sun smart items to your artillery for when you're out in the sun, whether you're working, playing with your kids, or even just resting."

Federal Minister for Health and Aged Care, the Honourable Mark Butler, said: "Overexposure to harmful UV radiation causes 95% of melanomas, making skin cancer almost entirely preventable.

"We know if we can get people to be safer in the sun – by checking the UV, covering up from the sun with hat, sunnies, clothes, shade and sunscreen – we can save lives.



“We are asking all Australians, in particular men aged over 40, to think of sun safety every time they head outdoors. This video is a fun way to encourage that group to think twice and be SunSmart, whether that’s while playing a round of backyard cricket or on the tools at work,” he said.

Australia has the highest rate of skin cancer in the world. Currently, two in three Australians will be diagnosed with skin cancer in their lifetime.

Cancer Council CEO, Professor Tanya Buchanan, noted that it’s never too late to improve sun protection habits and more needs to be done to ensure males are safeguarding themselves from the cumulative impact of the sun.

“We are proud to be working with the Australian Government once again and enlisting the help of respected Australian sporting stars to save lives from our ‘national cancer’,” she said.

“Even on a cloudy or rainy day, UV levels can still be high and put you at risk, so always check the UV before you head outside.”

“Most skin cancers can be prevented by using all five forms of sun protection. Whenever the UV levels are 3 or above, Australians should Slip on sun protective clothing, Slop on SPF30 or higher, broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen, Slap on a broadbrimmed hat, Seek shade, and Slide on sunglasses.”

For more information about how to be SunSmart, visit <https://www.saveyourskin.org.au>

ENDS

For all media enquiries and interview opportunities, please contact Cancer Council Australia:

- media@cancer.org.au
- 02 8256 4109 (redirects to mobile outside of business hours).

Notes to editor

A cancer diagnosis can be a distressing and overwhelming experience for many Australians and stories about cancer can raise questions or cause anxiety for readers who have been directly impacted by cancer.

We suggest that any content of this nature should direct to a consumer resource for further information or support. Cancer Council Australia recommends the inclusion of the following line within any content:

If you or someone you know has been diagnosed with cancer and needs support, please know that help is available. You can contact Cancer Council’s free and confidential support line on 13 11 20 – for practical, emotional and financial support.

You can check the UV in your local area by downloading the free SunSmart app, or via the Bureau of Meteorology website or app.

About the research



The 2022 Summer Sun Protection Survey (Life in Australia™) was conducted by the Social Research Centre on the January 2022 wave of the probability-based online panel, Life in Australia™.

The survey was funded by the Cancer Councils of Australia.

In total, 3,194 respondents, representing Australian adults aged 18 years and over, completed the survey between 17 and 31 January 2022.

References

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2022). *Cancer Data in Australia*.

Social Research Centre. (2022). *2022 Summer Sun Protection Survey (Life in Australia™) -Analytical Report*. Melbourne, Victoria.

About Cancer Council Australia

Cancer Council Australia is Australia's leading cancer charity, working to reduce the impact of cancer for all Australians. Cancer Council Australia works with its members, the eight state and territory Cancer Councils to:

- Undertake and fund cancer research
- Prevent and control cancer
- Provide information and support for people affected by cancer
- Shape and influence policy and practice