

Bondi 'crime scene' puts tanning in the frame

Cancer Council exposes harsh reality of 1700 skin cancer deaths

Sydney's iconic Bondi Beach became a massive 'crime scene' today (15 Nov) in a new Cancer Council campaign that graphically depicts the dangers of tanning.

Startled beachgoers were greeted by the sight of 1700 towels stretched across the sand, each emblazoned with a 'crime scene' chalk outline of a 'victim'. The towels are a graphic representation of the 1700 Australians who die each year from skin cancer.

Cancer Council Australia CEO, Professor Ian Olver, said the 'Don't be a victim' campaign was aimed mainly at Australian teens, many of whom continued to desire a tan, despite the well publicised risks.

"Newly analysed data from our National Sun Survey shows that 43 per cent of teens believe a suntan 'looks healthy'," said Professor Olver.¹ "Peer pressure is largely to blame, with 71 per cent of teens saying their friends thought 'a suntan was a good thing.'"



Professor Olver said that with one in four teens still getting sunburnt on a typical summer weekend, Cancer Council believed it was time to send an "unambiguous message" about the deadly risks of tanning.

Australasian College of Dermatologists Honorary Secretary, Dr Cathy Reid, said the majority of lifetime sun exposure happened before the age of 20, which was when most of the damage was done. "The effects on the skin generally don't become apparent for 10 to 20 years, although in recent years, we are increasingly seeing skin cancer cases and prematurely aged skin in young people," said Dr Reid.

Cancer Council's latest awareness campaign features an edgy 30 second television commercial starring actress Nicole da Silva (of RUSH fame), as a crime scene detective following the case on Bondi Beach.

"More needs to be done to educate younger Australians about the dangers of getting sunburnt," said Professor Olver. "We hope this campaign will help get the message to sink in that a tan just isn't worth the risk."

Interviews available with experts and case studies.

Media contacts

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¹ National Sun Protection Survey 2006-07. While some data from this survey has been previously released, this is the first time these specific statistics have been released.