

Media Release

National Skin Cancer Action Week

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Government commended for continuing 'five ways' skin cancer campaign

The Australian Government's continued investment in its national skin cancer awareness campaign will help to reduce the death and disease burden of Australia's most preventable cancer type, Cancer Council Australia said today.

Cancer Council Australia CEO, Professor Ian Olver, welcomed today's announcement by Health Minister Nicola Roxon of an additional \$2.5 million to continue the successful 'five ways' multimedia campaign for the fourth consecutive summer.

"Our own evaluation of the Government's campaign showed that it was effective in influencing behaviour among people who put themselves at risk of skin cancer," Professor Olver said.

"To allocate new funding, in addition to public health expenditure previously announced in this year's federal budget, shows that the Government is serious about reducing Australia's unacceptable skin cancer burden."

Professor Olver said that of all the cancers that cause substantial death and disease in Australia, skin cancer was the easiest to prevent through behaviour change, with almost all cases caused by unsafe exposure to ultraviolet radiation.

"The Government's campaign clearly sends the right message," he said. "Protect yourself from the sun in five ways: wear a hat and protective clothing; seek shade, put on wraparound sunglasses and apply sunscreen."

"Around 1700 Australians are likely to die from skin cancer this year, however if Australians followed these simple rules, our skin cancer rates would be dramatically reduced."

Professor Olver said the funding announcement came as Cancer Council Australia sent its own message to the Australian community by arranging 1700 beach towels emblazoned with a 'crime scene' chalk outline of a 'victim' – one for each annual skin cancer death – on iconic Bondi Beach.

"The Government clearly shares Cancer Council Australia's commitment to reducing Australia's skin cancer burden. We hope to see an ongoing commitment from Government, with increased funding next year as the national preventative health agenda gathers momentum."

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