

Cancer Council celebrates 40 years of National Skin Cancer Action Week

Sid the Seagull reminds Australians to 'Slip, Slop, Slap, Seek and Slide'

This week Cancer Council is celebrating 40 years of National Skin Cancer Action Week (NSCAW) by reminding Australians to protect themselves from our national cancer.

To mark the anniversary, Cancer Council is bringing Sid the Seagull's iconic Slip, Slop, Slap Seek and Slide message back into focus, as new research from YouGov, undertaken in 2025, reveals his push for sun safety is as important as ever.

New research found that while almost two thirds (63%) of Australians express concern about developing or redeveloping skin cancer, only around one third (35%) believe sun protection is *extremely important* during outdoor activities.

One third (33%) of Millennials and one quarter (26%) of Gen Z believe that sun protection is *extremely important* when outdoors, compared to more than one third (37%) of Gen X and just under half (42%) of Baby Boomers.

Younger Australians (Gen Z & Millennials) are less likely than older generations (Gen X & Baby Boomers) to consider key individual sun protection habits as *very important* when heading outside, including:

Table: Sun protection habits generations rate as very important when outside

Sun protection habits	Gen Z & Millennials	Gen X & Baby Boomers	Difference
Slip on a shirt	43%	66%	23%
Slop on sunscreen	51%	62%	11%
Slap on a hat	42%	70%	28%
Seek shade	44%	63%	19%
Slide on sunglasses	35%	57%	22%

Sally Blane, Chair of Cancer Council's National Skin Cancer Committee, said the research findings show that more work can be done to encourage younger generations to be proactive about their own sun protection.

"Two in three Australians will be diagnosed with skin cancer in their lifetime, which is why sun protection across all generations is important," said Ms Blane.

The YouGov data showed that Gen Z and Millennials plan to spend more time outdoors this summer compared to older Aussies (Gen X and Baby Boomers: 15.4 hrs vs. Gen Z and Millennials: 18.4 hrs).

"Skin cancer is almost entirely preventable by using the five forms of sun protection – Slip on sun protective clothing, Slop on SPF50 or SPF50+ sunscreen, Slap on a broad brimmed hat, Seek shade and Slide on sunglasses. Younger Australians have learnt from older generations that overexposure to UV is not worth the risk of developing skin cancer – now they need to take action".

John Clements, 68, skin cancer survivor and resident of South Australia, said: "Growing up we spent a lot of time on the beach, no shirts, no hats, with our mothers putting baby oil on our skin. Sun protection wasn't talked about.

"It wasn't until later in life when I started undergoing skin cancer treatments that I really changed my sun protection habits. Now I always wear long-sleeve tops, a broad-brimmed hat, sunglasses, limit my time in the sun and have sunscreen at arm's reach. Slip, Slop, Slap, Seek and Slide, you can't get better than that message.

"It's important that our family are protecting themselves, so that they can avoid experiencing skin cancer. We encouraged our kids, as they were growing up, to look after themselves in the sun. My wife, Louise and I, have taught our granddaughter Hannah, who is 9, along with her parents, all the necessary tools and now she doesn't need much prompting for sun protection. She's very aware."

John has passed along important sun protection habits to his son Tristan Clements.

Tristan, 39, said: "Mum and dad always taught me and my brother about the importance of sun protection habits, this became even more important after dad's skin cancer diagnosis. Dad often told us stories of being at the beach when he was a kid, and how he would have made different choices with his clothing and sun protection if he'd known then what he knows now. I love getting out on my paddle board and my long-sleeve shirt, sunscreen, sunnies and broad brim hat are always on when I get out on the water. My kids take great care of themselves in the sun too, I don't even need to remind them to Slip, Slop, Slap, Seek and Slide. I'm really proud that as a family we encourage each other to take sun protection seriously."

Ms Blane added, "This year marks the 40th National Skin Cancer Action Week, and while much has changed since Sid the Seagull first landed onto our screens, one thing remains the same — it's still the same sun. That's why Sid's message is more important than ever. We're urging all Australians to take five simple steps—Slip, Slop, Slap, Seek, and Slide — whenever the UV level is three or above to protect their skin and reduce their risk of developing skin cancer."

National Skin Cancer Action Week runs from Sunday 16 November to Saturday 22 November. For more information about National Skin Cancer Action Week, and how to be SunSmart, visit www.cancer.org.au/ and the [Sunscreen Hub](#).

ENDS

Notes to editor

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).

About the research

This study was conducted by an independent market research firm, YouGov, between 16th - 20th October 2025.

The sample is comprised of a nationally representative sample of 1,035 Australians aged 18 years and older. Following the completion of interviewing, the data was weighted by age, gender and region to reflect the latest ABS population estimates. Respondents are sourced from the YouGov panel.

Breakdown of the generation groups captured in years

- Gen Z (1997 – 2009)
- Millennials (1981 – 1996)

- Gen X (1965 – 1980)
- Baby Boomer (1946 – 1964)

The result (63%) of Australians express concern about developing or redeveloping skin cancer comes from the net result of the responses that captured:

- Extremely concerned
- Somewhat concerned

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

Find out more at cancer.org.au, or visit our [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) or [LinkedIn](#).