

Dark Side of Tanning Campaign Summary 2009/10



Despite being largely preventable, around 44,000 Western Australians are diagnosed with skin cancer and 197 die from this disease every year. Melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer, is the most common cancer in WA males aged 15 - 39 years and second most common in females of the same age.

Although adults are behaving more responsibly in the sun, adolescents aren't absorbing the SunSmart message with the same enthusiasm. Research reveals that 48% of WA adolescents continue to favour a tan, with females more likely to attempt a suntan than males. On average, 20% of WA adolescents are still getting sunburnt on summer weekends.

To combat these trends, the Cancer Council WA with support from the Department of Health and Healthway, launched the *Dark Side of Tanning*. This campaign, which targets adolescents (12 - 17 years) and young adults (18 - 24 years), graphically represents the damaging impact of overexposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun and the deadly nature of melanoma. It shows the effects of deliberate tanning but also emphasises that people who don't intend to tan can be exposed to dangerous levels of UV if their skin is not protected.

Campaign objectives

The *Dark Side of Tanning* aims to:

- increase understanding of the severity of melanoma;
- reduce pro-tanning attitudes;
- increase understanding of the risks of unsafe exposure to the sun; and
- increase the number of people frequently using a range of sun protection measures.

Media activity

- The campaign launches on 29 November 2009 and will continue through to March 2010.
- Two TV commercials will be broadcast from 1 December 2009.
- The campaign also features radio, cinema and outdoor advertising.

Evaluation

A cross-sectional telephone survey of the target group will be used to evaluate the campaign. The survey assesses respondents' attitudes towards skin cancer and sun tanning, engagement in sun protective behaviours, self-reported sunburn on the weekend preceding the survey, and awareness and impact of the media campaign.

For more information contact Jessica Delaney, SunSmart Campaign Coordinator, at jdelaney@cancerwa.asn.au or call the Cancer Council Helpline on 13 11 20.