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MEDIA RELEASE

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National Skin Cancer Awareness Campaign

For most Australians, summer means the beach, BBQs and a variety of outdoor activities.

Tragically, it also means the risk of skin cancer.

The Government is today launching the 2009/10 *National Skin Cancer Awareness Campaign*, with a focus on the dangers of cumulative exposure to the sun, particularly for young Australians.

This coincides with the Cancer Council's stark warning yesterday at Bondi Beach – where 1,700 beach towels will symbolise the number of Australian's who lose their lives to skin cancer every year.

The *National Skin Cancer Awareness Campaign* aims to inform and educate young people between the ages of 14 and 17 about the dangers of sun exposure when outdoors, and encourage them to protect themselves through five key sun protection steps:

1. Seek shade
2. Wear sun protective clothing that covers as much of your body as possible
3. Put on a broad-brimmed hat that shades your face, neck and ears
4. Wear wrap around sunglasses
5. Apply SPF30+ broad spectrum water-resistant sunscreen every two hours.

The message is clear - by consistently following these five simple steps, young Australians can reduce their incidence of skin cancer.

Australia has the highest incidence of skin cancer in the world, with 10,684 new melanoma cases in 2005, and approximately 430,000 diagnosed non-melanoma cases in 2008.

Cumulative exposure to ultraviolet radiation over the years, especially for young people, even without sunburn, can result in skin damage and increases the risk of getting skin cancer.

The *National Skin Cancer Awareness Campaign* will focus the attention of young Australians on the amount of time they spend unprotected in the sun.

The Rudd Government has committed \$2.5 million to this campaign which will feature cinema, radio and print advertising to reinforce the message that young people are particularly vulnerable to life threatening skin cancers, and promote sun protective behaviour

For more information on this campaign and the evaluation of last summer's campaign, see www.skincancer.gov.au

For all media inquiries, please contact the Minister's Office on 02 6277 7220.