



THE HON NICOLA ROXON MP
Minister for Health and Ageing

MEDIA RELEASE

30 December 2009

PROTECT YOURSELF IN FIVE WAYS AND ENJOY THE WARM SUMMER DAYS

Spending time outside during the summer months to have a family BBQ or to lounge around the beach or pool is synonymous with the Australian way of life. While it's a great time of year to be with our friends and loved ones, it's also a time when we need to be extra vigilant about protecting ourselves from the sun and the risk of skin cancer.

With a climate such as ours, it is no coincidence that 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.

In November, the Rudd Government launched the 2009-10 *National Skin Cancer Awareness Campaign*, which focuses on the dangers of cumulative exposure to the sun, particularly for young Australians.

It's the time of year when we particularly need to inform and educate young people between the ages of 14 and 17 about the dangers of sun exposure when outdoors. This group of people has the highest frequency of sunburn and risky sun protection habits in our population. Cumulative exposure to ultraviolet radiation over our lifetimes, especially while our skin is young and more vulnerable, can damage it and increase the risk of getting skin cancer later in life.

However, everyone also needs to continue protect themselves from the sun, as anyone's skin can receive new damage if left unprotected.

This campaign will help remind all of us about five simple and effective measures that can protect us from sun damage:

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 wraparound sunglasses
5. Apply SPF30+ broad spectrum water-resistant sunscreen every two hours.

By consistently following these five simple steps, we can all greatly reduce our risk of skin cancer.

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 0409945476.