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**MEDIA RELEASE**

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**Don't let your time in the sun catch up with you**

The Australian Government's skin cancer prevention campaign, which I am launching today, is aimed at young people and focuses on the dangers of repeated and unprotected exposure to the sun.

Preventing disease is pivotal to the Government's health policy. A growing number of Australians are developing chronic diseases and dying prematurely from lifestyle-related illnesses which could be prevented. Skin cancer is preventable – provided we make smart and healthy choices when exposing our skin to the sun.

The National Skin Cancer Awareness Campaign especially aims to make young people aware of the five effective ways to protect themselves from the sun:

- seek shade
- wear sun-protective clothing that covers as much of your body as possible
- put on a broad-brimmed hat that shades your face and neck
- wear wrap-around sunglasses
- apply SPF30+ broad-spectrum water-resistant sunscreen every two hours.

Melanoma, the most life-threatening skin cancer, is the most common cancer in the 15-24 year age group, with 213 new cases in 2003. Melanoma is the tenth most common cause of cancer death overall in Australia, with a total of 1,146 deaths (382 females and 764 males) in 2003.

The 13-24 year age group is the primary target audience for the campaign because it is the group that has been least likely to use adequate protection, and has the highest frequency of sunburn.

Cumulative sun exposure over years, even without sunburn, can result in skin damage, skin cancer and premature ageing. As repeated exposure to ultraviolet radiation increases the risk of getting skin cancer, the campaign will focus people's attention on the amount of time they spend unprotected in the sun.

The Australian Government's campaign will feature graphic television and print advertising that reinforces the vital message that young people in particular are vulnerable to life-threatening skin cancers.

News organisations can download examples of campaign advertising from [www.skincancer.gov.au](http://www.skincancer.gov.au).

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