

MEDIA RELEASE
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TANNING TEENS STILL SEEK THE SUN

New Cancer Council research shows teens still prefer a tan, despite health risks.

New research released today by Cancer Council Australia has shown the message that there's nothing healthy about a tan is still not reaching the majority of Aussie teens, with an alarming 62% saying their friends think a tan is a good thing.

The latest results from Cancer Council's National Sun Protection Survey provide a snapshot of Australian teenagers' beliefs about tanning.

Overall, 38% of teens say they like to get a tan and girls proved to have a greater desire to tan, with 43% saying they prefer a tan. 67% of girls also believe their friends think a tan is a good thing.

Worryingly, while tanning preferences amongst teenagers have dropped since 2003, improvement in the preference for a suntan has stalled since the last survey in 2013.

In light of the findings, Cancer Council Australia and the Australasian College of Dermatologists are calling on teenagers and young adults to own their skin tone this National Skin Cancer Action Week. This year's theme, #OwnYourTone, aims to encourage teenagers and young people to embrace their natural beauty and protect their skin from the sun.

Professor Sanchia Aranda, CEO, Cancer Council Australia said, "Australia has one of the highest rates of skin cancer in the world and these results show that the messages about the dangers of too much UV exposure are not getting through to our teenagers.

"We know that teens are influenced by their friends and 62% of teens saying they believe their friends think a tan is a good thing, the reality is many teens may be seeking a tan this summer.

"The Federal Government has not invested in skin cancer prevention in Australia since 2007 and these new results show that we urgently need to see renewed investment.

Dr Andrew Miller, President of the Australasian College of Dermatologists explained, "Approximately two in three Australians will be diagnosed with skin cancer by the time they are 70.

"Tanning is a sign that you have been exposed to enough UV radiation to damage your skin and we need to make sure teenagers get this message, to prevent a rise in the incidence of skin cancer for the next generation.

"It's as important as ever that we remember to slip, slop, slap, seek shade and slide on sunglasses to protect ourselves from skin cancer," he said.

National Skin Cancer Action Week is a skin cancer awareness event held in November each year. During the event Cancer Council Australia and the Australasian College of Dermatologists join together to raise awareness of skin cancer prevention and early detection.

For more information visit website www.cancer.org.au/ownyourtone

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For more information please contact:


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Notes to editors

About the National Sun Protection Survey

The National Sun Protection Survey was conducted via phone over the summer of 2016-17. Over 4,500 Australians were interviewed. Conducted every three to four years by Cancer Council, the survey provides a perspective on changing trends in Australians' sun protection behaviours and rates of sunburn over the past decade.

Tanning attitudes and beliefs of adolescents in 2016-17 (%) N=894	Overall	Boys	Girls
Preference for a suntan			
Like to get a suntan (yes)	38	34	43
Beliefs about suntans			
A suntanned person looks more healthy (yes)	31	31	31
A suntanned person is more healthy (yes)	12	16	9
Perceived social norms for tanning			
Close family think a suntan is a good thing (yes)	23	25	21
Friends think a suntan is a good thing	62	57	67
Perceived peer tanning behaviour			
Of my male friends most try to get a tan (yes)	23	21	25
Of my female friends most try to get a tan (yes)	59	56	63

Trends over time in tanning preference of adolescents (2003 to 2017) N=4673	Change 2003-2017	Change 2013-2017
Preference for a suntan		
Like to get a suntan (yes)	0.41*** (0.33-0.50) 	1.02 (0.84-1.23) No change

*p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001