Tis the sea-sun to slip, slop slap as almost half of Aussies admit to having a suntan

With the first weekend of summer approaching, Cancer Council is again reminding Australians about the importance of being SunSmart with new data showing an alarming number of Aussies are still getting a tan despite the well-known risks.

New data from the 2019 Summer Sun Protection Survey (Life in Australia™), found nearly one in two Australians reported having a tan from sun exposure last summer (46%). Males were more likely to have tanned skin than females (51% compared to 42%).

Australia has one of the highest rates of skin cancer in the world, with the Australian Government estimating that 16,221 new cases of melanoma, the deadliest type of skin cancer, will be diagnosed in 2020 alone, equating to nearly one person every thirty minutes.

Cancer Council Australia, Director Cancer Control Policy, Megan Varlow, says that as we approach summer and with the east coast having just sweltered through their first heatwave of the season, now is the time to re-think our attitudes to sun tanning and to recall the SunSmart messages we grew up with.

"Summer is upon us and we know that many of us will want to be spending time outdoors, enjoying fewer restrictions and the warmer weather but the message that tanning is bad for you is still the same.

"Tanning is a sign that you have been exposed to enough UV radiation to damage your skin.

Sun damage accumulates over time, so even if you're not seeking a tan, but unintentionally getting caught out without sun protection, which results in a tan, the risks will be heightened and for some people this can result in skin cancer. That's why it's so important for Australians to use adequate sun protection and avoid tanning."

"We need to shift the perception that having a tan is desirable and consider the impacts of the damage having a tan can cause. We urge you to scrap your plan to tan this summer, and instead protect your skin from UV radiation which can cause skin damage, premature ageing and skin cancer.

When looking at the adult age groups who were most commonly tanned, over half of 45-69-year-olds reported having a tan from the sun (52%) followed by 25-44-year-olds (46%).

Recognising that many in this age group are parents, Cancer Council is urging parents in particular to be SunSmart, not just for themselves but as the most important role models for their children.

This year Cancer Council will be revitalising the Sid the Seagull campaign from the 80s to remind this generation that it's *Still the Same Sun*.

Whenever the UV level is three or above it's important to follow the five simple steps to be SunSmart:

- ✓ **Slip** on clothing that covers as much skin as possible
- ✓ **Slop** on SPF30 (or higher) broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen
- ✓ **Slap** on a Broad-brimmed hat that shades the face, ears and neck
- ✓ **Seek** shade and
- ✓ **Slide** on sunglasses that meet the Australian Standard for UV protection

ENDS

Learn how to protect yourself and your family at cancer.org.au.

Access *It's Still the Same Sun* campaign resources: https://we.tl/t-RPoibj2RiB

For support relating to cancer, call Cancer Council **13 11 20** Information and Support line to talk to a trained health professional.

For media enquiries please contact Darcy Witherdin via the Cancer Council Australia media line: (02) 8063 4109 (diverts to mobile) or email media@cancer.org.au

About the survey:

The 2019 Summer Sun Protection Survey was funded by Cancer Council Victoria and Cancer Council New South Wales and conducted through the Social Research Centre using Life in Australia™, a probability-based panel of adults recruited through random selected of landline and mobile numbers. Panel participants take part in regular surveys. 2,154 people completed the survey. All results have been weighted to be as representative as possible of the Australian population.

Proportion of Australian adults with suntanned skin (%)

	Overall	Gender		Age Group (years)			
	n=2154	Male	Female	18-24	25-44	45-69	70 or more
Tanned from sun exposure	46	*51^*	*42*'	39	46	52	36
Natural skin colour is tanned	14	15	14	18	13	12	20
Use fake tanning product	2	*<1*'	*3^*	1	2	2	2
Not tanned / no answer	38	*34*'	*41^*	42	39	34	42
Total % Tanned	62	66	59	58	61	66	58

^ = significantly higher* = significantly lower