

Frank Sartor MP

Minister for Climate Change and the Environment
Minister Assisting the Minister for Health (Cancer)



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Minister calls on NSW to stay sun smart this Australia Day

Assistant Health Minister (Cancer) Frank Sartor is urging sun seekers to cover-up this Australia Day, with too many people still risking cancer in pursuit of a tan.

“The good news is that our ‘Dark Side of Tanning’ campaign is cutting through, with six in ten people reporting they are less likely to get a suntan as a result of seeing the ad,” Mr Sartor said.

“The bad news is melanoma rates increased across almost all ages, with overall rates between 1998 and 2007 up 15.9 per cent in males and up 11.6 per cent in females.”

Australia has the highest rate of melanoma in the world. It is the fourth most common cancer in NSW, and it is the number one cancer amongst men aged 25 to 54 and women aged 15 to 29.

The Cancer Institute NSW estimates that there will be around 4,200 new cases of melanoma each year in NSW by 2011, compared with the 3,900 cases expected in 2009.

Melanoma is by far the most serious cancer affecting Australian youth, but this can be prevented by getting young people to protect their skin when they’re outdoors.

Australia’s outdoor lifestyle is a significant risk factor for melanoma and is directly related to the continued increase in melanoma rates in NSW in both males and females.

“We can all protect our skin in five ways by wearing protective clothing, and sunglasses, apply sunscreen and where possible seek shade.

The early signs of melanoma can be changes to the colour, shape and size of a freckle, mole or blemish. Everyone should get their skin checked regularly by a doctor.

The ‘Dark Side of Tanning’ campaign is part of the NSW State Plan to improve health through prevention.

Key Facts about Melanoma

- There were 3528 cases of melanoma in NSW in 2007. In 2009, it’s estimated there will be 3968 new cases and 5699 new cases in 2021.
- There were 482 deaths from melanoma in NSW in 2007. In 2009, it’s estimated there will be 478 deaths and 695 deaths in 2021.
- One in 13 males and one in 25 females will develop melanoma by age 85.