

Melanoma Awareness Campaign 2009–10  
**Dark Side of Tanning**

November 2010



**THERE'S NOTHING  
HEALTHY ABOUT A TAN**

[darksideoftanning.com.au](http://darksideoftanning.com.au)

# Dark Side of Tanning

In 2010, DSOT won an international Sulzberger Institute sun safety award, announced at the sixty-eighth annual meeting of the American Academy of Dermatology.

In 2010, DSOT won a Gold Australian Advertising Effectiveness (Effie) award in the Government, Corporate and Social Services category.

Melanoma is the fourth most common cancer in NSW and the most common cancer among males aged 25-54 years and females aged 15-29 years. In 2008, there were 3,591 new cases of melanoma in NSW (2,127 in males and 1,464 in females) accounting for 10 per cent of all cancers.<sup>1</sup>

The Cancer Institute NSW places emphasis on melanoma and skin cancer as part of the Cancer Prevention Program and aims to reduce the annual risk of sunburn, promote sun protection behaviour, and reduce the incidence of melanoma and other skin cancers.

In 2007/08, the Cancer Institute NSW developed a new melanoma awareness campaign called the Dark Side of Tanning (DSOT). The campaign aimed to increase awareness of the dangers of melanoma and tanning by challenging the misconception that a tan looks healthy. It prompted youth and young adults to consider their sun protection behaviour, the damage caused by unsafe exposure to the sun and their need for greater sun protection.

The DSOT campaign was repeated in NSW in 2008/09 and 2009/10. This report provides a summary of key campaign evaluation results for 2009/10, making comparisons to 2007/08 and 2008/09 where relevant.



## Campaign Objectives

- Increase understanding of the severity of melanoma as a health issue.
- Reduce pro-tanning attitudes.
- Increase understanding of the health consequences of unsafe exposure to the sun.
- Increase the proportion of people frequently using sun protection, including use of a range of sun protection measures.

The World Health Organization recommends people practice sun safe behaviour by:



Avoiding the sun around midday, (between 11am and 3pm daylight savings time), when UVR is at its peak.



Wearing protective clothing.



Wearing a broad-brimmed hat.



Wearing sunglasses.



Using a broad spectrum waterproof sunscreen SPF30+ and reapplying every two hours.<sup>2</sup>

### Target Audience

The target audience for the campaign was young adults aged 18-24 years and youth aged 13-17 years.

### Campaign Strategy

The Dark Side of Tanning campaign has run over the summers of 2007/08, 2008/09 and 2009/10 and has employed a range of communication strategies across NSW.

The main advertising medium was a 30-second television commercial which has been supported by other broadcast media including radio, print and outdoor advertising (billboards, buses and shopping centres).

A campaign website ([darksideoftanning.com.au](http://darksideoftanning.com.au)) was developed and a digital strategy implemented to drive traffic to the website, including online display advertising and Google Paid Search. Printed resources including fact sheets and posters were also available.

### Evaluation

The 2009/10 campaign was evaluated through online tracking research. The online survey measures awareness, knowledge, attitudes and behaviour in relation to tanning, sun exposure and melanoma or other skin cancers as well as campaign advertising performance. The tracking survey commenced on 19 October 2009 and concluded on 6 February 2010 and involved approximately 100 interviews per week with NSW residents aged 13 to 44 years (achieving a total of n=1,521).

Preference for no sun tan has increased significantly amongst NSW school students (12 to 17 years) between 1993 and 2008 – the proportion of students who preferred no tan increased from 15% in 1993 to 35% in 2008.<sup>3</sup>



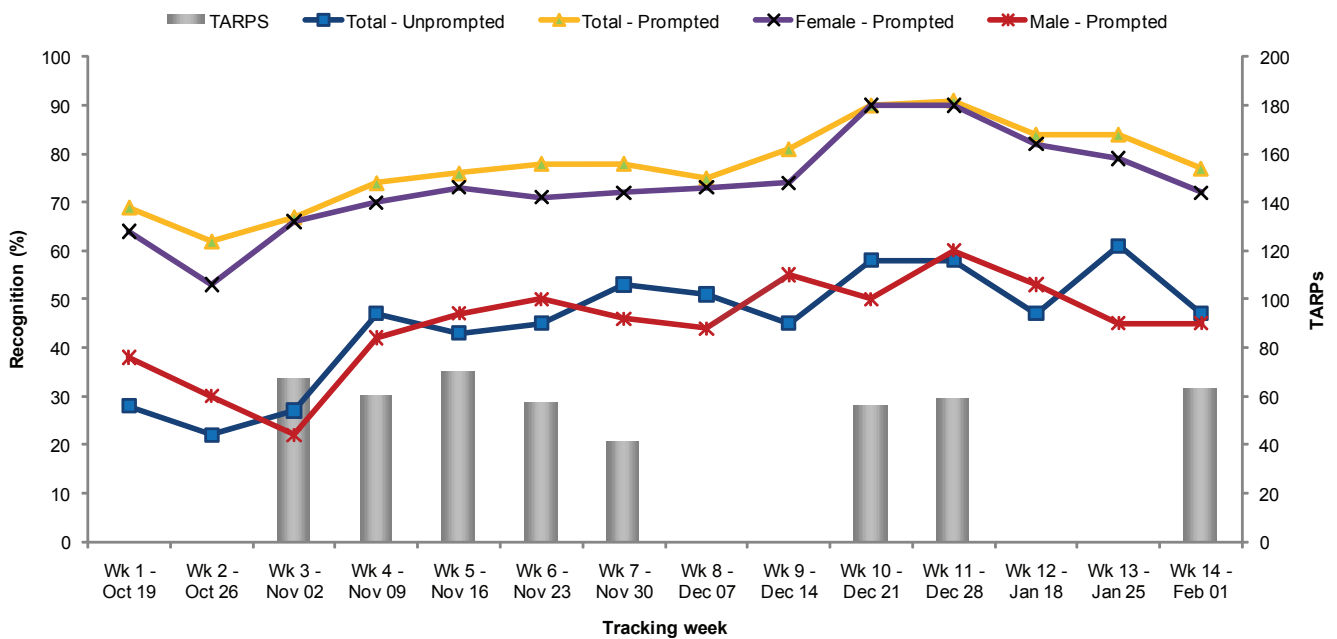
*Two versions of the Dark Side of Tanning advertisement have been developed: the first features a young woman tanning on a beach and the second depicts young men playing touch football in the park. The body of the ad demonstrates via an animation how overexposure to UVR damages skin cells even before signs of burning. It shows how melanoma can spread through the body.*

**Results:**

*Recognition*

As Figure 1 shows, unprompted and prompted awareness of the DSOT ads built steadily throughout the summer. Prompted awareness levels for the female version were significantly higher than those observed for the male version. Both prompted and unprompted awareness levels were lower than for 2008/09 (down from 57% and 84% to 48% and 79% respectively), due to reduced media weight.

Figure 1 Recognition of the *Dark Side of Tanning* advertisement (unprompted and prompted)



*Message Takeout*

The DSOT ads clearly conveyed their key messages, as shown in Table 1, with approximately 95% of all participants either strongly or somewhat agreeing that the DSOT ads conveyed the four intended messages. There were no significant differences between the male and female versions of the ad.

Table 1 Prompted message takeout from the *Dark Side of Tanning* advertisement

	Female		Male		Total	
	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree
Melanoma only needs to be small to get into your bloodstream and spread to other parts of your body	77%	17%	79%	18%	78%	18%
You don't have to burn to cause damage to your skin cells	74%	20%	76%	19%	75%	20%
Any level of tanning causes damage and can lead to melanoma	70%	25%	70%	27%	70%	26%
Even if a melanoma is cut out it can reappear later in other parts of the body	77%	19%	78%	18%	78%	19%

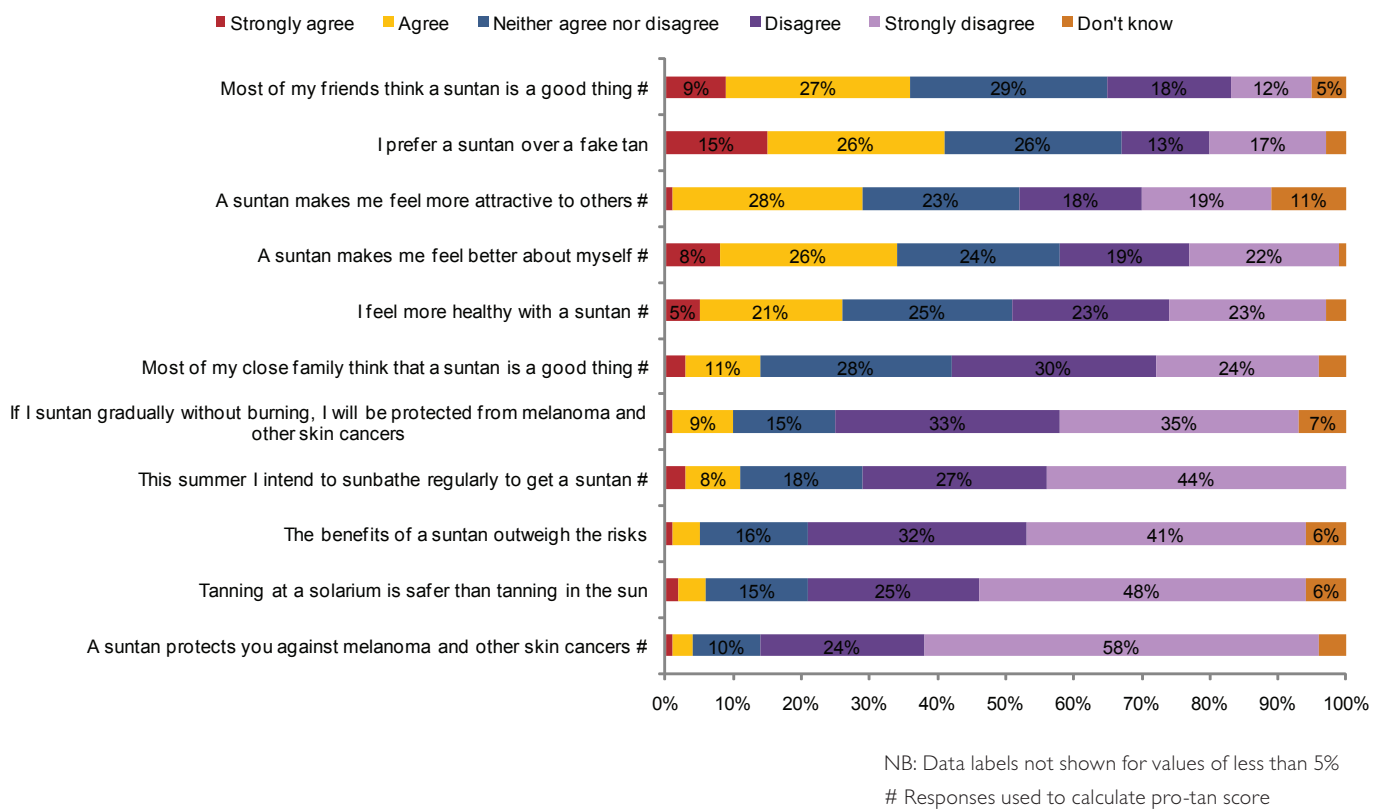
### Tanning

There was a significant decline in those preferring a tan for 2009/10 (45%) compared to 2008/09 (50%), with less than half of all participants saying that they liked to get a tan.

Amongst those who preferred a tan, a significant increase was observed in those who preferred a light tan (up from 35% in 2008/09 to 40% in 2009/10), as opposed to a moderate or dark tan.

Respondents' attitudes toward tanning were assessed through a series of seven statements and a pro-tan score was calculated [4] (Figure 2). Nearly four in ten respondents agreed that 'most of their friends think a suntan is a good thing' (39%) and 'a suntan makes them feel more attractive to others' (38%). Just over a third also agreed that 'a suntan made them feel better about themselves' (34%).

Figure 2 Tanning attitudes



### Behaviour – action or intention

As a result of seeing either of the ads, just over three-fifths (62%) of participants claimed that they are less likely to get a suntan and just under three-fifths (58%) have or are thinking about increasing their level of sun protection. These results have largely remained unchanged compared to 2008/09.

*Involvement Diagnostics*

As Table 2 shows, the female version of the ad performed slightly better compared to the male version of the ad on most involvement diagnostics. Overall, most participants agreed that:

- 'the ad made me think that it is dangerous to get a tan' (82%);
- 'it is an effective sun protection / skin cancer ad' (80%); and
- 'the ad made me stop and think' (72%).

Table 2 Involvement diagnostics for the *Dark Side of Tanning* advertisement

	Female	Male	Total
The ad made me think that it is dangerous to get a tan	85%	79%	82%
The ad is an effective sun protection / skin cancer ad	81%	79%	80%
The ad made me think about what it would be like to get skin cancer	71%	64%	68%
The ad made me stop and think	75%	69%	72%
The ad made me feel uncomfortable	34%	27%	31%
It is too graphic	10%	9%	10%
I don't want to see the ad anymore	14%	13%	13%
The ad provided new information	72%	66%	69%
The ad made me think about all the times I have got burnt or tanned in the past	68%	70%	69%

### Conclusions

The 2009/10 DSOT campaign performed well, achieving high levels of recognition and building upon positive results achieved during the 2007/08 and 2008/09 campaigns in relation to reducing pro-tanning attitudes and increasing understanding of the dangers of over-exposure to the sun. The increasing proportion of participants who prefer no tan and the increasing proportion of participants who prefer a light tan, as opposed to a moderate or dark tan, suggests that the dangers of tanning are becoming more salient, even if people still like the look of a tan.



1. Tracey E, Kerr T, Dobrovic A, Currow D. Cancer In NSW: Incidence and Mortality Report 2008. Sydney: Cancer Institute NSW, August 2010.
2. World Health Organization 1994, Protection Against Exposure to Ultraviolet Radiation.
3. NSW Department of Health, New South Wales School Students Health Behaviours Survey: 2008 Report. 2009, Centre for Epidemiology and Research, NSW Department of Health: Sydney.
4. Henry G.F.M, Reeder A.I, Gray A. Attitudes towards suntanning 1994-2003. Conference Paper.

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