Melanoma Awareness Campaign 2009–10
Dark Side of Tanning
November 2010

THERE'S NOTHING HEALTHY ABOUT A TAN

darksideoftanning.com.au
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.¹

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.²
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 2008.³

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) 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).

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

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

![Tanning attitudes diagram](image)

**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

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