



-New Report Presented-

Skin Cancer in Australia: Our National Cancer

The House of Representatives Health Committee today released its report entitled *Skin Cancer in Australia – Our National Cancer*.

According to Cancer Council Australia, two in three Australians will be diagnosed with a skin cancer by the time they turn 70 years of age. In 2011, 1544 people died from melanoma skin cancer and 543 people died from non-melanoma cancers such as basal cell carcinoma and squamous cell carcinoma. More than 400 000 people in Australia are treated for one or more of these non-melanoma skin cancers each year. Melanoma remains the most common cancer in Australians aged 15 to 44 years.

As part of its inquiry into skin cancer in Australia, the Committee examined: ways to improve the implementation of evidence-based best practice treatment and management, strategies to enhance early diagnosis and prevention, and the increasing awareness of skin cancer in the community and among healthcare professionals.

On release of the report, Mr Steve Irons MP, Committee Chair stated 'The UV rays reaching our sunburnt country are more damaging due to Australia's geographical position on the globe. When combined with the active outdoor lifestyles which many Australian's enjoy, the importance of sun protection cannot be ignored.'

'Australia has earned a global reputation for its medical research on cancer research and it is vital that Australia continue to lead in this area. Although an overall increase in the incidence of skin cancer in Australia's ageing population is likely, current trends indicate that mortality rates are likely to decrease. Australia has made great advances in preventing and treating skin cancers, but there is always more that can be done', Mr Irons said.

The Committee has made 12 recommendations. Key recommendations include:

- Adoption of sun smart policies by national sporting bodies and associations engaged in outdoor activities, modelled on those of Cricket Australia and Surf Life Saving Australia.
- Incorporation of sun smart policies in Australia's secondary school curricula and providing more outdoor covered learning areas.
- Notification information about skin cancer checks being included in reminders sent as part of the National Bowel Cancer Screening Program and by GPs at health assessments for people aged 75 years and over (a skin cancer target group).
- Dermatology components of the undergraduate medical curriculum be expanded, including proficiency in the use of a dermatoscope (tool used to diagnose skin cancer).
- Regularly updating the clinical guidelines for the management of melanoma following the addition of approved new treatments and as recommended within the medical profession.
- Creating a virtual platform for multi-disciplinary treatment of skin cancer for regional and remote patients, and further developing and implementing best practice models for multi-disciplinary care.

The report is available from the Committee's website at:

http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House/Health/Skin_Cancer/Report

For media comment, please contact Mr Jonathan Martin from the office of Mr Steve Irons MP on 0439 412 855. **For all other enquiries**, please contact the committee secretariat on: (02) 6277 4145 or visit the committee's website: www.aph.gov.au/health.