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## **GET THE MESSAGE NATIONAL SKIN CANCER ACTION WEEK NOVEMBER 18-24**

Australia has the dubious distinction of having the highest incidence of skin cancer in the world, with the disease claiming over 1,500 Australian lives each year.

Australia's leading organisation for the detection and treatment of skin cancer, the Australasian College of Dermatologists (ACD), is using National Skin Cancer Action week as an opportunity to remind Australians of the dangers of UV exposure.

The Honorary Secretary of the ACD, Dr Stephen Shumack, says UV exposure causes skin damage which can lead to the development of skin cancer, including deadly melanoma.

"Whether it's from the sun or a solarium, leaving your skin exposed to UV light increases the risk of skin cancer," says Dr Shumack.

"In fact, a recent study conducted by the International Agency for Research on Cancer found that using solariums regularly before the age of 35 increased the risk of melanoma by 75%.

"Given statistics like this, it amazes me that anyone would put themselves at such risk."

Each year, Australians are four times more likely to develop a common skin cancer than any other form of cancer, while one in two Australians will develop skin cancer in their lifetime.

Dr Shumack says it is also the most common form of cancer in the 15-30 age group.

"Many Australians still have the perception that having a tan is a sign of health. But too many are paying the ultimate price for that so called 'healthy' look.

"Keeping covered up and wearing SPF 30+ sunscreen everyday is still the best defence for your skin and your health.

"It's a largely preventable disease yet nearly 400,000 Australians are treated for skin cancer each year," says Dr Shumack.

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### **MEDIA ENQUIRIES**

Dr Stephen Shumack  
Honorary Secretary  
The Australasian College of Dermatologists  
(0418) 212 576

or

Alison Crew  
S2i Communications  
(0412) 394 996