

This section provides an overview of the research context, design, findings and recommendations

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is the final in a series evaluating the National Skin Cancer Awareness Campaign. It focuses on the final phase of the campaign, conducted during the summer of 2008/09.

1.1 Background and objectives

The National Skin Cancer Awareness Campaign, which ran during the summers of 2006/07, 2007/08 and 2008/09, aimed to educate Australians about the importance of protecting themselves from skin cancer. The primary target audience was teenagers aged 13-17 years and young adults aged 18-24 years. The Ipsos-Eureka Social Research Institute was commissioned to conduct research to evaluate the effectiveness of this campaign.

The campaign commenced in the summer of 06/07, with a 30 second TVC, 2 radio advertisements, 3 print advertisements, internet and outdoor advertising. In the summers of 07/08 and 08/09, the campaign featured substantially the same advertisements (two of the print advertisements were dropped) with the addition of a new print advertisement in 07/08 and two new 15 second TVCs in 08/09. In addition, the modes of outdoor advertising differed in the different waves of the campaign. The first wave of the campaign ran from mid November 2006 to mid February 2007, the second from January to February 2008 and the third from November 2008 to February 2009. The TARPS (metropolitan weighted average against people 13-24 years) for the TVCs were 652, 701 and 408 for the summers of 06/07, 07/08 and 08/09 respectively.

1.2 Research design

Five online surveys were conducted, one prior to the launch of the campaign in November 2006, one after the conclusion of the first phase of the campaign in February 2007, one prior to and one after the second phase of the campaign, conducted in November 2007 and February 2008, and one after the third phase of the campaign, conducted in February 2009. In each

survey, the research involved around 1,000 interviews with 14-17 year olds¹ and 1,000 interviews with 18-24 year olds. The first two surveys also included a similar number of parents.

1.3 Methodological limitations

Climactic conditions are likely to have had some impact on the results of the research, although it is difficult to disentangle these climactic effects from the behavioural effects of the campaign. Tanning behaviour and burning are most likely to be influenced by seasonal variation and weather conditions. For example, the proportion of people burnt during wet and cloudy weather is likely to be lower than the proportion burnt in drier and sunnier weather. Seasonal and weather variations are less likely to have impacted upon knowledge, attitudes and campaign awareness and reactions. Thus, the impact of seasonal and weather variation should be borne in mind when interpreting the survey results.

Unsurprisingly, average national temperatures were higher for the February surveys than November surveys. Overall, there does not appear to have been a great difference between November 2006 and November 2007 in terms of wet weather, but it was much wetter in February 2008 compared with February 2007 and February 2009. In line with this, cloud cover was reasonably consistent during November 2006 and November 2007, but there was a greater proportion of cloudy days during the February 2008 period, than the corresponding periods in 2007 and 2009. The greater proportion of wet and cloudy days in February 2008, compared to the corresponding periods in 2007 and 2009, has implications for participants' opportunities for exposure to the sun during these survey periods.

1.4 Impact of campaign on behaviours

Tan-seeking and sunburn

The research found that deliberate tanning was lower among 14-17 year olds in February 2009 (30%), maintaining the decrease found in February 2008 (29%) compared to pre-campaign (39%) and February 2007 (42%). Whilst the pattern was similar for 18-24 year olds across the February surveys, the February 2009 result (40%) was not significantly different from that in the pre-campaign survey (41%). Among both 14-17 year olds and 18-24 year olds, fewer reported burning in the last fortnight between February 2007 and February 2008, perhaps due at least in part to the increased rainfall. These apparent improvements were not maintained in February 2009, with the incidence of burning being at their highest yet. In February 2009,

¹ Although the primary target audience was teenagers aged 13-17 years, 13 year olds were not included in the research as sample was not available directly from online panel providers.

63% of 14-17 year olds and 75% of 18-24 year olds reported reddening of the skin, compared to 56% and 59% respectively in the pre-campaign survey.

Sun protection behaviours

The pre- and post-campaign surveys show significant increases in the target audience's adoption of sun protection behaviours.

- 14-17 year olds' and 18-24 year olds' use of **sunscreen** on the body improved between each November and February survey. The February 2009 survey found the first conclusive evidence of an increase in use among 14-17 year olds, and showed maintenance of the February 2008 improvement among 18-24 year olds. The proportion of 14-17 year olds reporting that they use sunscreen on the body usually or always when outdoors on a typical summer day went from 40% in the pre-campaign survey to 48% in February 2009. The pattern of results for use of sunscreen on the face was similar for 14-17 year olds (50% in February 2009, up from 40% pre-campaign), while for 18-24 year olds there appeared only to be a seasonal increase.
- The proportion of 14-17 year olds who reported they usually or always wear **clothing** that protects their skin when outdoors on a typical summer's day increased from 37% pre-campaign to 41% in February 2007. Further improvement in February 2008 (to 48%) was maintained in February 2009, when 45% of 14-17 year olds reported using clothing to protect their skin. Among 18-24 year olds there appeared to be only a seasonal increase in reported use of clothing, with the results of February 2009 (40%) higher than the pre-campaign result (37%), but no different to the previous February results.
- 14-17 year olds' reported use of **shade** increased throughout the campaign with 47% indicating in February 2009 that they usually or always used shade when outdoors on a typical summer's day, up from 33% in the pre-campaign survey. However, no change from the pre-campaign survey was evident in 18-24 year olds' reported use of shade in February 2009.

There have also been significant improvements in the adoption of specific forms of sun protection in various situations. A small number of behavioural changes appear to have been influenced by the timing of data collection (e.g. results of February surveys higher than November surveys, but no differences between surveys conducted at the same time of year). However, a number of changes appear more likely to represent behavioural changes resulting from the campaign (e.g. results that showed continued improvements over subsequent February surveys, or maintenance into February 2009 of measured improvements between February 2007 and February 2008). These are outlined below.

- There was continued improvement in February 2009 after February 2008 increases in 14-17 year olds' use of protective clothing across all settings. This same pattern of results was found among 18-24 year olds at the park, lunchtime and at an outdoor café/pub/restaurant.
- February 2009 results saw continued increases from February 2008 in 14-17 year olds who said that they used shade at the beach / outdoor pool, the park and at lunch, and maintenance of February 2008 gains at an outdoor café/pub/restaurant and on a walk. A similar pattern of continued improvements was found among 18-24 year olds at the beach / outdoor pool, and maintenance of improvements from February 2008 at lunch.
- February 2009 results showed continued increases from February 2008 in the proportion of 14-17 year olds using sunscreen when at the beach / outdoor pool and park, while February 2008 improvements in their use of sunscreen when on a walk were sustained in February 2009. Eighteen to 24 year olds also showed continued increases in their use of sunscreen when at the beach / outdoor pool, park and on a walk, while improvement at lunch was maintained in February 2009.
- February 2008 improvements in 18-24 year olds' use of sunglasses at the beach / outdoor pool were maintained in February 2009.
- The February 2009 survey recorded a decline in the proportion of 14-17 year olds saying that they adopt no sun protection measures at the beach / outdoor pool (from pre-campaign and February 2007), lunch (from pre-campaign and February 2007) and at an outdoor café/pub/restaurant (from pre-campaign only). Similarly, a decline in the proportion of 18-24 year olds saying that they adopt no sun protection measures at the beach / outdoor pool (from February 2007 and February 2008), the park (from pre-campaign and February 2007), an outdoor café/pub/restaurant (from pre-campaign) and going on a walk (from pre-campaign).

1.5 Impact of campaign on knowledge

In comparison with the pre-campaign survey, the February 2008 survey showed significant increases in the proportions of 14-17 year olds and 18-24 year olds who, unprompted, mentioned specific sun protection methods (hats, sunglasses, shade, protective clothing and sunscreen), and most of these increases were maintained in February 2009, as outlined below.

- The proportion of unprompted 14-17 year olds who mentioned sunglasses jumped from 24% at pre-campaign to 59% in February 2008, and this increase was maintained in February 2009 (59%). The proportion of 18-24 year olds who mentioned sunglasses over this same time period rose from 39% to 59%, and was maintained at 56%.

- The proportion of unprompted 14-17 year olds who mentioned shade rose from 26% at pre-campaign to 53% in February 2008, and was maintained at 56% in February 2009. The proportion of 18-24 year olds who mentioned shade over this same time period rose from 35% to 53%, and was maintained at 50%.
- The proportion of unprompted 14-17 year olds who mentioned hats rose from 76% at pre-campaign to 87% in February 2008, and was maintained at 88% in February 2009. The proportion of 18-24 year olds who mentioned hats over this same time period rose from 80% to 87%, and was maintained at 85%.
- The proportion of unprompted 14-17 year olds who mentioned protective clothing also increased from 61% to 80% from pre-campaign to February 2008, and was maintained at 78% in February 2009.
- The proportion of unprompted 14-17 year olds who mentioned sunscreen increased from 92% to 94% from pre-campaign to February 2008, and was maintained at 95% in February 2009.

In addition, the mean number of the five key sun protection methods for which 14-17 year olds exhibited unprompted awareness was higher in February 2009 (3.8) than pre-campaign (2.8) and February 2007 (3.2). Among 18-24 year olds, there was also awareness of a greater number of sun protection methods, on average, in February 2009 (3.7), compared to pre-campaign (3.3) and February 2007 (3.5), although the mean was slightly lower than that for February 2008 (3.8).

1.6 Impact of campaign on attitudes

The February 2008 survey showed positive changes in the attitudes targeted by the campaign, and these improvements were maintained in the February 2009 survey, especially among 14-17 year olds.

- The proportion of 14-17 year olds who disagreed that, when used properly, sunscreen is an adequate protection on its own, rose slightly from 25% in the pre-campaign survey to 34% in February 2008, and was maintained at 31% in February 2009. There was no significant change in 18-24 year olds' disagreement with this question.
- The proportion of 14-17 year olds who disagreed that skin cancer is simple to treat increased from 59% pre-campaign to 74% in February 2008, and was maintained at 74% in February 2009. For 18-24 year olds, the proportion who disagreed over this same time period increased from 69% to 80% and was maintained at 79%.

- The proportion of 14-17 year olds who perceived skin cancer as potentially fatal increased slightly but significantly from 82% pre-campaign to 88% in both February 2008 and February 2009. No change was found among 18-24 year olds, but, in February 2009, only 3% of 18-24 year olds disagreed with the statement that skin cancer can kill.
- Across subsequent survey waves, there was evidence of an increase in 14-17 year olds' perceived personal susceptibility to skin cancer. The proportion who disagreed with the statement that skin cancers only affect older people who have spent years in the sun was 73% in February 2008 and 74% in February 2009, compared with 68% in the pre-campaign survey.
- After the second phase of the campaign, both 14-17 year olds and 18-24 year olds were more likely to reject the idea that it is safe to tan gradually, and this improvement was maintained in February 2009. Specifically, 33% of 14-17 year olds and 53% of 18-24 year olds in the pre-campaign survey disagreed with the statement that it's safe to tan gradually, as long as you don't get burnt. In February 2008, the proportions increased to 47% of 14-17 year olds and 54% of 18-24 year olds, and were maintained in February 2009 at 48% and 56%.

In addition, there was an increase in disagreement by 14-17 year olds to the statement that skin cancers mainly occur in people with fair skin, from 40% in the pre-campaign survey to 45% in February 2009, although this increase in disagreement to the statement was only apparent in the final summer of the campaign.

1.7 Campaign awareness and reactions

Salience of the campaign TVC, as measured by unprompted recall of the campaign TVC, was the same for 14-17 year olds in the February 2009 survey as it was in February 2008 (11%). Eighteen to 24 year olds' unprompted recall in the February 2009 survey was 8% - lower than in February 2007 (11%) and 2008 (12%). However, around a tenth of participants provided a description of an advertisement which made some reference to a surgical procedure. It is likely that at least some of these were descriptions of the National Skin Cancer Awareness Campaign TVC, such that unprompted recall of the TVC could have been as high as around 20%. Furthermore, around one in twenty described an advertisement with a message involving 1 to 5 ways of protecting oneself from the sun, some of which may also have represented the campaign TVC.

Prompted TVC recall remained very high among 14-17 year olds and 18-24 year olds. The results followed a typical pattern: prompted awareness fell when the advertisement had not been on air for some time, and then rose from its previous position after the second phase of the campaign. In February 2009, 14-17 year olds' prompted awareness was maintained at 94%, and 18-24 year olds' decreased only slightly to 87%.

Reactions to the TVC continued to be favourable, particularly among 14-17 year olds. The TVC was generally considered to be believable, attention-grabbing and informative, and it made the audience think about their risk of developing skin cancer. While these measures were as high in February 2009 as in previous rounds of research with 14-17 year olds, the strength of 18-24 year olds' agreement on these qualities decreased somewhat, with a general shift from agreeing strongly to simply agreeing.

Prompted awareness of the Stapler radio advertisement was higher in February 2009 (34%) than in February 2008 (27%) among 18-24 year olds, although there were no differences among 14-17 year olds. It is not clear to the researchers why this difference between the age groups was evident.

Prompted awareness of the print advertisement 'Don't let your time in the sun catch up with you', which was used in 2007/08 and 2008/09 summers, was higher in February 2009 for 14-17 year olds (72%) and for 18-24 year olds (61%) than it had been in February 2008 (48% and 44% respectively). However, for the print advertisement 'There is a lot more to treating skin cancer than removing a mole', fewer 14-17 year olds (30%) and 18-24 year olds (49%) reported awareness in February 2009 compared to February 2008 (75% and 57% respectively). These findings seem likely to reflect the 60:40 placement of print ads in 08/09, with 'Don't let your time in the sun ...' placed with greater frequency and perhaps some wear-out for the 'there is a lot more to treating ...' ad, which has been running for three years.

1.8 Conclusions and recommendations

A summary of the outcomes of the evaluation against the campaign objectives for the primary target audience is presented in Table 1.1.1.

Table 1.1.1 Summary of evaluation outcomes against campaign objectives

| Campaign communication objective | 14-17 year olds | 18-24 year olds |
|---|---|--|
| To increase perceived susceptibility to, and perceived severity of, skin cancer | Continuing increase in disagreement that "skin cancers mainly occur in people with fair skin" (Feb 09: 45%) | No change in disagreement that "skin cancers mainly occur in people with fair skin" (Feb 09: 49%) |
| | Increase in disagreement that "skin cancers only affect older people who have spent years in the sun" in Feb 08 maintained (Feb 09: 74%) | Increase in disagreement that "skin cancers only affect older people who have spent years in the sun" compared to Feb 07 only (Feb 09: 85%) |
| | Increase in agreement that "skin cancers can kill" in Feb 08 maintained (Feb 09: 88%) | No change in agreement that "skin cancers can kill" (Feb 09: 91%) |
| | Increase in disagreement that "treating skin cancer is a simple procedure" in Feb 08 maintained (Feb 09: 74%) | Increase in disagreement that "treating skin cancer is a simple procedure" in Feb 08 maintained (Feb 09: 79%) |

| Campaign communication objective | 14-17 year olds | 18-24 year olds |
|--|---|--|
| To reduce misperceptions about sun exposure | Increase in disagreement that "when used properly, sunscreen is an adequate protection on its own" in Feb 08 maintained (Feb 09: 31%) | No change in agreement that "when used properly, sunscreen is an adequate protection on its own" (Feb 09: 41%) |
| | No change in agreement that "even using all the recommended sun protection, I would still get plenty of Vitamin D" (Feb 09: 52%) | No change in agreement that "even using all the recommended sun protection, I would still get plenty of Vitamin D" (Feb 09: 52%) |
| To increase awareness of multiple sun protection behaviours | Awareness of more methods in Feb 09 than pre-campaign and Feb 07 (Feb 09: 3.8 out of 5) | Awareness of more methods in Feb 09 than pre-campaign and Feb 07, but slightly fewer than Feb 08 (Feb: 3.7 out of 5) |
| To increase and reinforce positive attitudes and socially normative beliefs towards adoption/modelling of multiple sun protection behaviours | Increase in disagreement that "having my skin checked regularly is sufficient to prevent skin cancers" in Nov 07 maintained (Feb 09: 24%) | No change in disagreement that "having my skin checked regularly is sufficient to prevent skin cancers" (Feb 09: 41%) |
| To reduce positive attitudes toward deliberate tanning. | Increase in disagreement that "it's safe to tan gradually as long as you don't get burnt" in Feb 08 maintained (Feb 09: 48%) | Increase in disagreement that "it's safe to tan gradually as long as you don't get burnt" in Feb 08 maintained (Feb 09: 56%) |

| Campaign communication objective | 14-17 year olds | 18-24 year olds |
|--|---|--|
| To increase perceived risk of cumulative exposure | No change in agreement that "small amounts of sun exposure without protection is healthy and won't lead to skin damage" (Feb 09: 32%) | No change in agreement that "small amounts of sun exposure without protection is healthy and won't lead to skin damage" (Feb 09: 36%) |
| To increase and reinforce the adoption of multiple sun protection behaviours | Significant increase in the average number of sun protection methods usually or always adopted (2.5), compared to pre-campaign (2.1) and February 2007 (2.3) results. | Seasonal increase only in the average number of sun protection methods usually or always adopted, with February 2009 (2.7) higher only than November 2006 (2.4) and November 2007 (2.4). |

Behaviour: There have been several significant increases in the use of sun protection methods among 14-17 year olds and 18-24 year olds. Deliberate tanning has decreased, with rates dropping by 12% among 14-17 year olds and 6% among 18-24 year olds between February 2007 and February 2009. However, the incidence of burning has increased.

Knowledge: The results suggest that the campaign has had a stronger positive effect on knowledge, with increases in knowledge of various sun protection methods, as well as perceptions of their effectiveness.

Attitudes: Consistent with knowledge improvements, there were found to be improvements in the target audience's attitudes towards tanning across the campaign. However, most of these increases maintain, rather than build on, improvements found in previous February surveys. The only new significant improvement observed this wave is that more 14-17 year olds disagreed that skin cancers mainly occur in people with fair skin.

Campaign awareness and reactions: The campaign TVC has continued to achieve high reach and high frequency. Reactions to the TVC continued to be favourable, though the intensity of the favourable opinion had fallen among 18-24 year olds, either a sign of some campaign wear-out or of the reduced TARPs in the last season.

Recommendations: Overall, the research results indicate that the campaign has been effective, particularly among 14-17 year olds. Despite these improvements in awareness, behaviours and attitudes, there is still significant scope for further change. Consistent use of sun protection was not high, with the proportion of 14-17 year olds and 18-24 year olds indicating that they used a specific form of sun protection either always or usually being generally well below half. Although the campaign appears to have generated significant improvements in awareness, attitudes and has contributed to some behavioural progress, there is still significant scope for more change. Given this, further investment in sun protection messages is warranted.

One issue that may need further attention is the dangers of sunburn. The proportions reporting sunburn during the last fortnight continues to be extremely high (63% for 14-17 year olds and 74% for 18-24 year olds).

While there has been some progress on tanning, even so, many still see tanning as safe, with over half (52%) of 14-17 year olds and 44% of 18-24 year olds, failing to reject the idea that it is safe to tan gradually. There continues to be 30% of 14-17 year olds and 40% of 18-24 year olds who report actively seeking a tan. Hence, subsequent campaigns may need to focus more specifically on widely-held misconceptions about the safety of tanning.

One final message which may need further attention is the risk associated with cumulative exposure. There has been no lasting change in the association of small amounts of unprotected exposure with the potential for skin damage after the second phase of the campaign. Also, despite some improvements in the adoption of various sun protection methods in specific situations, the extent to which people adopt comprehensive sun protection across a broad range of situations is still limited. These gains could be expected to be built upon if the risks associated with cumulative exposure received more emphasis in any future campaigns.