

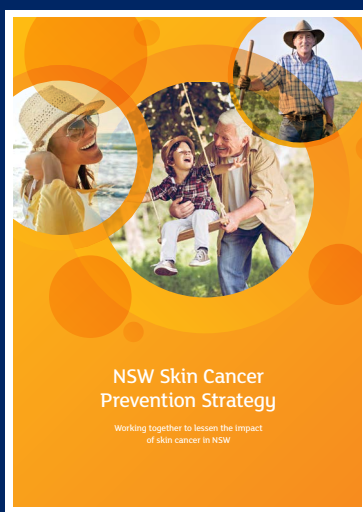
Evaluation of the NSW Skin Cancer Prevention Strategy 2016–2022

Executive summary

09 December 2022



We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we work and live and recognise the continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to Elders, past and present.



NSW Skin Cancer Prevention Strategy 2016–2022

Publisher

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Contents

Executive summary	4
Overall findings and achievements	6
Goal 1: Implementation of comprehensive and effective sun protection policies and guidelines	8
Goal 2: Improve access to adequate shade	10
Goal 3: Increase the adoption of sun protection behaviours	12
Opportunities for the next Strategy	15





Executive summary

The Cancer Institute NSW (the Institute) released the *NSW Skin Cancer Prevention Strategy 2016–2022* (the Strategy) to build on the achievements of the 2012–2015 Strategy. The Strategy defines a comprehensive approach to reduce overexposure to ultraviolet radiation (UVR) and reduce the incidence of skin cancer in NSW.

Figure 1 shows a summary of the Strategy.

An evaluation of the Strategy has been conducted; the evaluation involved:

- A document review
- Qualitative research (key informant interviews, focus groups and workshops)
- Review of quantitative data.

A limitation of the evaluation has been access to survey data. Several data sources used in previous Strategy

evaluations were not available at the time of this evaluation due to surveys being delayed or no longer running. Of note, the NSW Adult Population Health Survey (PHS) has only been used for 2016 and 2018, the 2020 PHS data was not included due to accuracy concerns regarding the sample size and missing data from winter months.

The findings of the evaluation are presented across the Strategy as a whole and against the three Strategy goals.

NSW Skin Cancer Prevention Strategy

Vision

To reduce the incidence of skin cancer in NSW

Priority populations

Children • Adolescents and young adults • Adult males over 40 years of age

Goals



To increase implementation of comprehensive and effective sun protection policies and guidelines



To improve access to adequate shade



To increase the adoption of sun protection behaviours

Objectives

- Improve awareness and understanding of what constitutes comprehensive and effective sun protection policies and guidelines.
- Increase capacity for the development and implementation of comprehensive sun protection policies and guidelines.
- Use data and information to monitor the extent and quality of sun protection policies and guidelines.

- Improve awareness and understanding of what constitutes adequate shade.
- Improve measurement of shade availability and adequacy.
- Increase availability of adequate shade.
- Use data and information to monitor shade availability and adequacy.

- Ensure that skin cancer messaging is consistent and in line with best practice.
- Promote positive change in UVR protection knowledge, attitudes and behaviours.
- Use data and information to assess the impact of public education campaigns and other interventions.

Priority settings

Community • Education • Workplaces • Recreation • Health care services

Guiding principles

Public sector, private sector and the community sharing responsibility and working effectively together to reduce the incidence of skin cancer in NSW

Learning from and building on the *NSW Skin Cancer Prevention Strategy 2012–15*

Use data and information to monitor and improve performance of skin cancer prevention policies, services, programs and campaigns

Figure 1: Summary of the NSW Skin Cancer Prevention Strategy

Overall findings and achievements

The Strategy evaluation found three over-arching achievements of the Strategy that have underpinned implementation and delivery:



Excellence in coordination and collaboration across sectors



Strong leadership and substantial investment by NSW Government and non-government agencies



Effective and strong governance

Two key enablers have supported the Strategy:

- The **Governance structures, membership and support** provided by the Institute and partner organisations to oversee the implementation of the Strategy (through the Advisory Committee) and facilitate activities under the Strategy (through the five Working Groups) was reported by all key informants as a significant achievement and the most influential enabler of the Strategy.
- The **Strategy itself** was reported as an enabler for skin cancer prevention across government and non-government sectors with its strategic framework assisting in highlighting, prioritising, and authorising skin cancer prevention activities.

Two barriers have hindered Strategy initiatives:

- All key informants raised the detrimental impact that the **COVID-19 pandemic** had on the activities of the Strategy, the capacity of partner organisations, and the ability of stakeholders to influence priorities within their sectors.
- **Resourcing** (both financial and human resourcing) was also recognised as a barrier; key informants noted that resource constraints of all partner organisations inhibited implementation, especially in organisations that did not have a specific resource allocation for skin cancer prevention activities.

The following details the achievement of the Strategy 2016–2022, by goal. The assessment was determined through review of evidence provided for the evaluation and is based on a scale of ‘not achieved’, ‘partially achieved’ and ‘achieved’ (as indicated by a tick) against the strategies themselves. The word ‘achieved’ is used to indicate accomplishment in the period 2016–2022, noting that strategies will likely remain current with work expected to continue in the next Strategy.







A key achievement of the Strategy has been the development and implementation of the ShadeSmart Program which brings experts together to develop best practice training in shade design.



Goal 1

Implementation of
comprehensive and
effective sun protection
policies and guidelines

Goal 1 strategies

Achieved



Develop and refine sun protection policies, guidelines, best practice templates and support material and effectively disseminate to relevant NSW Government agencies, industry bodies and community groups.



Provide ongoing advice, support and resources to NSW Government agencies and relevant industry bodies for the development and implementation of comprehensive and effective sun protection policies and guidelines, with a specific focus on agencies and bodies that cover priority populations and setting.

Partially achieved



Develop and implement formal mechanisms for robust measurement of development and implementation of sun protection policies, including the strength of a policy.

Activities have been implemented to improve understanding and awareness of comprehensive sun protection policies and guidelines; these have included activities within the community, education, workplaces, and sport settings.

Tailored and generic information was provided to local councils under the Strategy to embed skin cancer prevention in land use planning and development processes through submissions to Local Strategic Planning Statements (LSPSs). As a result, 66 final LSPSs contained at least one reference to shade, contributing to a greater understanding and awareness of the role of shade in skin cancer prevention in local government.

The promotion of sun protection policies and practices in NSW primary schools through the [SunSmart Program](#) is a key achievement under the Strategy, with the 2021 SunSmart evaluation¹ noting engagement across more than 1,000 schools and substantial evidence of sun protection policies being implemented.

A [webinar](#) aimed at reducing UVR risks to outdoor workers through workplace controls, has been developed by Strategy partners SafeWork NSW and Cancer Council NSW. Since its release, this webinar has been one of the top five SafeWork NSW webinars viewed in any month.

Collaboration between the NSW Office of Sport and other member organisations of the Sport and Recreation Working Group has resulted in increasing adoption of sun protection policies by State Sporting Organisations (SSOs). There has also been an increase in the coverage

of these policies to not only focus on heat management but also include UVR protection.

The Strategy stakeholders have consistently worked to increase capacity for the development and implementation of sun protection practices among industry bodies. Of note is the partnership between Strategy partners, the Institute, Cancer Council NSW, and the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA), which has resulted in the delivery of a two-year ShadeSmart program. The partnership is a multi-component approach to developing the capacity of the industry to understand the importance of shade and UVR protection, and has the potential to impact design of community, education, workplace and sports and recreation settings.

During 2019–2020:

- Over 190 submissions were made to NSW councils regarding their Local Strategic Planning Statements (LSPSs).
- Evaluation of the impact of 111 submissions found 66 LSPSs contained at least one reference to shade and to a lesser extent a reference to UVR.

¹ Cancer Council NSW (2021). SunSmart Program Evaluation: Unpublished document



75%

Quality shade can reduce
UV exposure by up to 75%



Goal 2

Improve access to
adequate shade

Goal 2 strategies

Achieved



Develop and refine benchmarks for quality, effective and well-designed shade, and effectively disseminate information to NSW residents and representatives of relevant NSW Government agencies, industry bodies and community groups.



Provide advice, support, and resources to relevant stakeholders to support the conduct of robust shade audits, with a specific focus on the auditing of priority settings and areas frequented by priority populations.



Provide advice, support, and resources (including funding) to allow for ongoing and increasing provision of adequate shade, with a specific focus on priority settings and areas frequented by priority populations.



Develop and implement formal mechanisms for robust measurement of shade availability and adequacy across NSW.

Between 2016–2022 there has been a significant amount of activity focused on improving access to shade.

One of the most recent significant achievements under this goal has been the [ShadeSmart Awards](#) in 2022. The ShadeSmart Awards were introduced as part of the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects Landscape Architect Awards Program. The awards process provided an opportunity for recognition of the work of landscape architects in designing and planning improved access to adequate shade. These awards support ongoing prioritising of sun protection amongst landscape architects and other design professionals.

The [Benchmarking Shade in NSW Playgrounds project](#) has made a significant contribution to measuring shade availability and adequacy in NSW. Under the Strategy and in collaboration with research partners the Queensland University of Technology and the University of Southern Queensland, over 2,500 playground audits were completed in 91 local government areas in NSW, providing state-wide data about shade and sun protection in playgrounds. This project provides significant, new, state-wide data about shade and sun protection in playgrounds that can be used in multiple settings and by

a range of asset owners and users (local government, schools, sports facilities, and community members).

SafeWork NSW, with support from the Strategy partners, developed a webinar focusing on the risks workers are exposed to when working outdoors, and how employers can manage these risks, including the risk associated with UVR exposure. This webinar is regularly one of the

The Benchmarking Shade project found:

- 19% (n=504) of the audited playgrounds had no shade over the play equipment.
- Where playgrounds were shaded, shade was commonly found over one quarter of the playground area.
- Where playgrounds were shaded, 70.4% (n=355) of playgrounds had both built and tree shade (the ideal combination for heat and UV protection).



Goal 2 continued.

top five SafeWork webinars viewed in any given month. To support and extend the reach of the webinar, SafeWork NSW provides eligible small businesses with a rebate of up to \$1000 (\$500 prior to 1 February 2022) for attending one of the workplace safety webinars. Registration data shows that the introduction of the rebate increased monthly registration.

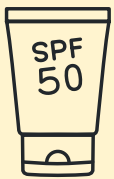
Under the Strategy a partnership was formed to retrofit the Memorial Park Playground in Merrylands to become the first UV Smart and Cool Playground, Western Sydney. The project included the installation of UVR and thermal resistant shade sails, a new playground surface, drinking fountains, and increases to the tree canopy.

The NSW Premier's Priority of Greening our City has provided Strategy partners with a supportive environment for the provision of shade across the breadth of NSW Government agencies. Recently, the Secretary of NSW Health has pledged to contribute to the priority with additional tree planting on NSW Health hospital grounds.

As a result of the changes to Memorial Park Playground:

- surface temperatures dropped by approximately 40°C.
- over 80% of the play equipment was shaded.





Goal 3

Increase the adoption
of sun protection
behaviours

Goal 3 strategies

Achieved



Ongoing review of best practice and audit of messaging from government, non-government, and private sector organisations.



Best-practice development, refinement, and implementation of non-targeted and targeted skin cancer prevention mass media public education campaigns (including complementary activities) and interventions.



Targeted campaigns and interventions should cover priority populations and settings.



Campaigns and interventions should cover sun protection attitudes and behaviours, including attitudes toward tanning.



Develop and implement formal mechanisms for robust measurement of campaign impact, including tracking of sun exposure and protection knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours among target audiences.

Substantial work has been undertaken by Strategy partners to increase the adoption of sun protection behaviours, with effort focused on priority populations and settings through:

- Public education campaigns
- Collaborative programs in schools and sporting organisations
- Programs targeting priority populations.

The consistent execution of skin cancer prevention public education campaigns by the Institute over the life of the Strategy (excluding 2020/2021, where there was no campaign due to the pandemic) has been a considerable achievement of the Strategy. The use of these campaigns to effect behaviour change is well supported by evidence. These campaigns have targeted 18–24-year-olds as primary audiences, along with 13–17-year-olds and 25–54-year-olds as secondary audiences for some campaign years. The content and execution of the campaigns was viewed positively by stakeholders and individual evaluations were undertaken to assess the reach and impact of each campaign. Several creative approaches were used during this time, including campaigns ‘Your time in the sun’, ‘Real stories’, ‘Pretty shady’ and a partnership with Cricket NSW.

The schools setting (targeting primary and secondary schools) has been a focus under the Strategy with programs including:

- SunSmart Program implemented by the Cancer Council NSW.
- Sun and UV at School syllabus resources for primary and secondary schools developed by the Institute.

Evaluation by the Cancer Council NSW of the SunSmart program in primary schools found:

- 66% of schools had a written a sun protection policy.
- SunSmart members were more likely to have a sun protection policy.



Goal 3 continued.

- Innovations in Cancer Control grant from the Institute to increase hat wearing at Western Sydney primary schools.
- Melanoma Institute Australia's SunSafe Student Ambassador Program in secondary schools.

In combination these programs represent a significant and coordinated contribution to skin cancer prevention behaviour change in NSW schools. The progress made in the education setting has mainly been within primary schools; achieving behaviour change in adolescents has been highlighted as a challenge for skin cancer prevention interventions.

Activity to promote sun protection behaviours has advanced in the sports setting, noting the [Improve your long game program](#) in golf showed benefits for players, clubs, and pro shop staff. The program has provided insight for the future development of workplace sun protection programs.

Men over 40 years of age in outdoor workplaces have been targeted with the aim of increasing the adoption of sun protection behaviours among this target audience. This has included formative research undertaken by the Institute for the development of an outdoor workers' campaign aimed at the construction and agriculture sectors. Whilst the launch of the campaign was delayed due to the pandemic, it will be implemented in 2022/23.

Evaluation of the Improve your long game program has demonstrated:

- The involvement of approximately 200 golf clubs in the program in 2021.
- Increased sun protection behaviour and attitudinal shift within golf clubs.
- An estimated reach of 140,000 golfers over the life of the program.

Opportunities for the next Strategy

The opportunities arising from the evaluation of the Strategy are summarised below:

Domain	Opportunity for the next Strategy
Overall approach	The overall goals and approach should be maintained in the next Strategy. There is also an opportunity to ensure the next Strategy contributes to the NSW Cancer Plan 2022–27 and covers any additional matters that arise from consultation in relation to scope of the Strategy, priority populations and settings.
Cross-agency Strategy	There is an opportunity to re-invigorate agency commitment to skin cancer prevention and maximise their involvement in its coordination and governance (given it is a cross-agency Strategy). As the governance structures were found to be a strong contributor to achievements, using similar structures to oversee and implement the new Strategy is appropriate. Broader representation and shared resourcing of the Governance structures could also be considered.
Partners and collaborators	As noted above, a new Strategy provides the opportunity to include additional Strategy partners and collaborators in skin cancer prevention.
Governance membership	Consideration of how best to oversee the implementation of the new Strategy will provide opportunities to review the membership of the Governance structures to ensure it is fit for purpose and aligns with the objectives of the new Strategy.
Resourcing	In recognition of the long-term goals of the next Strategy, there may be opportunities to seek additional funding and in-kind resources and/or new funding opportunities and models to support the implementation of the Strategy across the agencies involved in skin cancer prevention.
Priority settings	There is an opportunity to continue to focus on community, education, and workplace settings and to give greater prominence to the recreation setting in the next Strategy.
Priority populations	There is an opportunity to investigate further the inclusion of additional priority populations; based on the evaluation findings, Aboriginal communities and people living in regional and remote locations were suggested as potential inclusions.
Prevention and secondary prevention	There is an opportunity to broaden the scope of the next Strategy. Whilst maintaining an explicit focus on primary prevention, incorporating activities to promote awareness of the importance of early detection and diagnosis (secondary prevention) was considered worthy of further consideration.
Skin cancer prevention messages	There is an opportunity to continue to consider the content and style of sun protection messages, particularly to include messages that increase understanding of personal risk, and balancing UVR protection with solar access for Vitamin D.
Availability of data to assess the impact of the Strategy	Consideration is needed to determine what data should be collected and used to monitor and evaluate the Strategy. In developing the evaluation framework for the Strategy, there is an opportunity to review existing data sources and investigate whether new or additional data sources are required to contribute to assessing the impact of the Strategy.
Influencing system change	The new Strategy could harness the Institute's strengths in collecting and analysing health system data and information to drive system change in relation to skin cancer.

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