

# Activity 26: A community health campaign

## Aim

- To examine SunSmart as an example of a successful community health campaign.

**Assessment outcomes** English 4.4, 4.11; H&PE 4.6, 5.7; S&E 4.11

**Worksheet** Worksheet 26: A community health campaign

## Requirements:

Class set of Worksheet 26: A community health campaign.

Access to the following websites:

[www.sunsmart.com.au/downloads/about\\_sunsmart/reports/sunsmart\\_20\\_years\\_on.pdf](http://www.sunsmart.com.au/downloads/about_sunsmart/reports/sunsmart_20_years_on.pdf)

[www.cancersa.org.au](http://www.cancersa.org.au)

[www.sunsmart.com.au/browse.asp?ContainerID=1524](http://www.sunsmart.com.au/browse.asp?ContainerID=1524)

[www.sunsmart.com.au/browse.asp?ContainerID=1557](http://www.sunsmart.com.au/browse.asp?ContainerID=1557)

## Teacher guidelines

- 1 Ask students about their awareness of the SunSmart campaign by discussing the following questions:
  - Have they seen advertisements or other promotional material?
  - Have they ever done related school work on skin cancer and sun protection?
  - How effective did they find it?
  - Did it cause them to reconsider their current practices?
  - Do they continue to actively remember and use aspects of the campaign.
- 2 Distribute and read through the Worksheet 26: A community health campaign. Discuss the campaign using the following key questions:
  - Why is skin cancer a major public health issue in Australia?
  - What strategies has The Cancer Council used to promote the skin cancer prevention message over the past 20 years?
  - Describe the way the messages about sun protection have become more comprehensive over the life of the campaign.
  - How effective has the SunSmart campaign been in achieving its goals?
  - Is this campaign a preventative one or a curative one? What is the difference between the two types of campaigns?

## Extension activities

- 1 Using the information from the above activity, write a report or newspaper article about the SunSmart campaign.
- 2 Students could investigate in groups, other community health campaigns e.g. Quit, 2-and-5 fruit and vegetable campaign, and other organisations that influence health like the Heart Foundation, Diabetes Australia, Arthritis Foundation of South Australia and the Asthma Foundation of South Australia.
  - Find out about the aims of the organisation.
  - What are the main health messages?
  - What form of promotion do they use to increase awareness of their health messages?
  - How successful have they been?

# Worksheet 26: A community health campaign

Since the early 1980s SunSmart has used advertising to promote sun protection and skin cancer prevention messages. Our media messages have always been tailored to work with the culture and community awareness of the time.

Early sun protection media messages were positive, encouraging, and designed to be good news. As the public became more aware of the Slip! Slop! Slap! message, the message moved from raising general awareness about covering up from the sun to how they can reduce their risk of skin cancer and how they can identify changes to their own skin that may be skin cancers.



The Cancer Council Victoria has tracked the public's response to our advertising campaigns since 1988. These results have played an integral role in guiding our messages and future advertising campaigns.

## SunSmart campaigns:

### The eighties

*Slip! Slop! Slap!*

One of the most successful health campaigns in Australia's history was launched in 1981, when a cheerful seagull in board shorts, t-shirt and hat danced his way across our TV screens singing the jingle:

*Slip, Slop, Slap!*

*It sounds like a breeze when you say it like that*

*Slip, Slop, Slap!*

*In the sun we always say "Slip Slop Slap!"*



*Slip, Slop, Slap!*

*Slip on a shirt, slop on sunscreen and slap on a hat*

*Slip, Slop, Slap!*

*You can stop skin cancer - say: "Slip, Slop, Slap!"*

At a time when melanoma rates were climbing and evidence of the link between UV radiation and skin cancer was mounting, the Anti-Cancer Council of Victoria (now The Cancer Council Victoria) approached broadcaster Philip Adams – then creative director of an ad agency – to come up with a campaign that would encourage Australians to protect their skin.

Adams and colleagues, Peter Best (composer) and Alex Stitt (designer/ animator), created Sid the Seagull, adapted a jingle from a Queensland Cancer Fund campaign - Slip Slop Shove – and put them together to develop the TV commercial that was an immediate hit with kids and parents alike.

Throughout the 1980's variations of the original Slip! Slop! Slap! advertisement were produced and shown as paid advertisements and as community service announcements. They featured Sid's kids and Sid and friends in protective sunglasses, seeking shade from a tree 'between 11 and 3'. The Slip! Slop! Slap! slogan is the core message of The Cancer Council's SunSmart program and has become part of the Australian language.

The Cancer Council believes its Slip! Slop! Slap! campaign has played a key role in the dramatic shift in sun protection attitudes and behaviour over the past two decades.

### The Nineties

*Leave your hat on*

Research from the Slip! Slop! Slap! campaign showed the population had begun to understand the importance of sun protection, however many young people still believed that a tan was 'healthy' and 'desirable'.<sup>1</sup>

# Worksheet 26: A community health campaign (cont.)

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The *Leave your hat on* campaign showed people with lighter skin colour getting ready to head outdoors and enjoy the day. It was a lighthearted advertisement that used the hit song 'You can leave your hat on'.

The advertisement was aimed at younger people, and in particular young men, as the research had continued to find they were most likely to place themselves at risk of skin cancer.

The campaign was a television and radio advertisement that ran in summer 1991/92 and then again in 1992/93. The media budget was over \$500,000 for the two years. Evaluation of the advertisement awareness levels showed 63% of the Victorian population remembering the advertisement.

## *How to remove a skin cancer*

In the mid-nineties, the population had high awareness of Slip! Slop! Slap!<sup>2</sup> However SunSmart was still concerned about young people's sunburn and tanning rates. In an effort to curb this behaviour SunSmart decided to develop a hard-hitting, graphic advertisement.

While hard-hitting health messages are now a part of every day television viewing, the *How to remove a skin cancer* campaign was the first of its kind. This campaign developed by James Woollett in 1996, provided SunSmart with significant public relations opportunities through the television and radio news outlets. The launch of the advertisement in 1997 generated over 100 media stories in television news and print and radio outlets.

The advertisement was created in close consultation with skin specialists (dermatologists) and plastic surgeons in Melbourne. The advertisement is an accurate depiction of the procedure used to remove skin cancer and graft skin onto the site of removal. The concept was focus tested with males and females aged 18–24 years. The concept tested very strongly as it gained the audience's attention quickly.

The advertisement ran in 1996/97 and 1997/98 seasons with a significantly reduced budget spend of \$240,000 over the two years.

While the media spend was reduced the awareness level of the advertisement was 75% over the two years. During this period, SunSmart found a decreasing trend in summer sunburn rates.

- 1 Murphy M. "A bit of colour": Young adults, tanning and sun protection: A report of focus group discussion. In: SunSmart Evaluation Studies No.4 Melbourne: Anti-Cancer Council of Victoria; 1995. p. 66.
- 2 Dixon H, Borland R, Hill D. Sun protection and sunburn in primary school children: The influence of age, gender and coloring. *Preventive Medicine* 1999;28:119-130.

## **2000 and beyond**

### *Timebomb*

The *Timebomb* advertisement was created following the success of the *How to Remove a Skin Cancer* campaign. The campaign was launched in January 2000 with a media spend of only \$100,000 per year over two summer periods. A significant part of the strategy was to gain unpaid media promotions through television and radio news outlets. Once again this strategy provided SunSmart with excellent coverage and additional support for the paid media campaign.

Support from television networks was very strong, resulting in many community service announcement spots. However as a result of the limited budget, the awareness level of the *Timebomb* campaign was just over 50%.

*Timebomb* provided SunSmart with the opportunity to communicate about preventing skin cancer and detecting it early. SunSmart received a letter from a melanoma patient who expressed their appreciation of the commercial. After viewing the advertisement they had a spot and lump checked, which was found to be a melanoma that was treated effectively, thanks to early detection.



## Worksheet 26: A community health campaign (cont.)

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### *Tattoo*

*Tattoo* is the most recent SunSmart advertising campaign, produced in response to evidence that many young Australians think they are safe if they tan, as long as they don't burn, and that a tan looks 'attractive' and 'healthy'. The advertisement carries the tagline "Skin Cancer – it's killer body art."

The target group for this advertisement was 17–24 year olds. When focus tested among the target group, the advertisement was considered credible and the tattoo was regarded as a symbol of youth culture. Importantly, most of the participants said it would make them think about their tanning behaviours.

The campaign, launched during National Skin Cancer Action Week in November 2003 has used television and radio and additional promotional material such as posters for secondary schools and community health settings.

The television and radio advertisement was put to air in January 2004 and again in January 2005 with a total budget of \$390,000 over the two years.

The awareness levels of the advertisement when researched in 2005 found:

- 71% of those interviewed remembered seeing the *Tattoo* advertisement
- 78% thought that it would influence their tanning behaviour.

The *Tattoo* campaign included the development of a resource kit for secondary teachers of Health, Media Studies, English and Personal Development . The kit includes a curriculum book and a documentary video titled "The Making of Tattoo".

**Source:** Media campaigns and advertising - SunSmart (Victoria) <[www.sunsmart.com.au/browse.asp?ContainerID=1524](http://www.sunsmart.com.au/browse.asp?ContainerID=1524)>

