



Invest more in spreading the slip, slop, slap message says Cancer Council

• Health

BY HAMISH HASTIE

The federal government should invest more into skin cancer education programs according to the Cancer Council.

The council made its case for more consistent education programs as the standing committee on health and ageing inquiry into skin cancer in Australia visited Perth last week.

Chaired by federal member for Swan Steve Irons, the committee heard from the state's leading researchers and organisations battling the deadly disease.

Skins cancer is one of Australia's biggest killers with more than 2000 people dying annually from melanoma and non-melanoma cancers.

More than 2000 people are treated for skin cancer each day equalling 750,000 per year and at least two in three Australians will be diagnosed with skin cancer before the age of 70.

The council told the committee in its submission that prevention and early intervention were the key to improving the mortality rate of the disease.

Cancer Council WA sun smart manager Mark Strickland hoped the committee would help the government realise how vital education programs were to skin cancer prevention.

"We've had slip slop slap programs running in Australia for about 30 years and

we're just starting to see the incidents of melanoma and non melanoma skin cancer starting to taper off," he said.

"Previously its been rising steadily.

"We'd like to think that's in a large part due to the effect of 30 years of skin cancer awareness programs in the country and we just think it would be such a mistake now to take our foot off the pedal at this point and stop funding skin cancer programs.

"Essentially what we are dealing with here is behaviour change ... continual reminders are needed in order to maintain the behaviour change. "As soon as those reminders disappear, then the behaviour tends to revert and of course that means with skin cancer the rates will begin to rise again."