

# MEDIA RELEASE



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## **Increasing Body Coverage for Better Skin Protection**

Australia and New Zealand experience the highest rates of skin cancer in the world. In fact, at least 2 in 3 Australians will be diagnosed with skin cancer before the age of 70.<sup>1</sup>

As a result, it is important that effective sun protective measures are readily available for the Australian and New Zealand public.

Standards Australia recently completed the revision of AS/NZS 4399:2017, *Sun protective clothing—Evaluation and classification*.

This standard sets out procedures for determining the performance of materials and items of clothing to provide protection against solar ultraviolet radiation (UVR).

The standard now includes a new requirement specifying the minimum amount of body surface that must be covered in order to make an ultraviolet protection factor (UPF) claim.

Terry Slevin, Chair of the committee TX-021, Sun Protective Clothing, said this standard is an important step for the region when it comes to sun protection.

“The total cost of skin cancer treatments in Australia is in excess of \$1 billion a year, the highest cost to the system of all cancers. Our goal is to help reduce this figure and the overall occurrence of skin cancer across Australia and New Zealand.”

“Even though there are bikinis on the market today made of UPF fabrics, it would be irresponsible of us to label them as sun protective. We had to take the standard one step further,” said Mr Slevin.

CEO of Standards Australia, Dr Bronwyn Evans thanked the committee for their work.

“AS/NZS 4399 impacts the way consumers make informed decisions about the clothes they wear and buy for their families when in the sun,” said Dr Evans.

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<sup>1</sup> Staples MP, Elwood M, Burton RC, Williams JL, Marks R, Giles GG. [Non-melanoma skin cancer in Australia: the 2002 national survey and trends since 1985](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/16398622). Med J Aust 2006 Jan 2;184(1):6-10 Abstract available at <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/16398622>