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**BE READY FOR THE HEAT THIS SUMMER**

This summer is shaping up to be a hot one, meaning Australians will have to take extra precautions to prevent heat stress and dehydration, AMA President, Dr Tony Bartone, said today.

“The Bureau of Meteorology is predicting that temperatures over December, January, and February will almost certainly be higher than seasonal averages,” Dr Bartone said.

“In general, higher temperatures lead to more hospitalisations for heat stress and dehydration, particularly among older people, children, people who work outdoors, and people with pre-existing medical conditions.

“During heatwaves, it’s a good idea to stay inside in the cool whenever possible – but of course there’s a temptation to cool off at the beach or at the local swimming pool.

“With Australia having one of the world’s highest levels of UV exposure, sun protection is another important consideration during summer.

“To protect yourself from the sun, seek shade wherever possible and wear protective clothing, a hat, and sunscreen to cover up.

“Being aware of the health impacts of heatwaves – and understanding the signs and symptoms – is vital to protecting yourself and your family this summer.”

A recent Lancet report found that average summer temperatures have increased by 0.9°C since 2000, with a significant association between hotter days and higher mortality. It also found a strong relationship between hot days and increased suicide rates.

The AMA Position Statement on [Climate Change and Human Health – 2015](#) outlines the impacts of worsening heatwaves on human health, including increased rates of heat stress, mental ill-health, and lowered work capacity.

Heatwaves can often coincide with other weather events like bushfires, which cause additional harm to the mental and physical health of Australians.

AMA Tips for Riding out Heatwaves

- Stay indoors when possible and drink two to three litres of water each day.
- Look out for dehydration symptoms - these include increased thirst, dry mouth and swollen tongue, weakness or dizziness, and palpitations, feeling confused or sluggish, or fainting.
- Seek medical help if you think someone might be suffering from heat stress.
- Keep an eye on elderly relatives and neighbours to make sure they are doing ok on especially hot days.
- If you are outside during the day, make sure you stay in the shade and cover up with long sleeves, sunscreen and a hat.

- The Bureau of Meteorology provides handy daily information on UV levels, and recommends timeframes when sun protection is most needed. This information can be found on the [BOM weather forecasts](#), the [BOM Weather app](#) or the [SunSmart app](#).

The AMA *Position Statement on Climate Change and Human Health* is at <https://ama.com.au/position-statement/ama-position-statement-climate-change-and-human-health-2004-revised-2015>

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