

## **Avoid the road to UV exposure**

Australia holds the unenviable title of having the highest incidence rate of skin cancer in the world<sup>1</sup>, which is why the recent story about US truck driver Bill McElligott can be seen as a warning to Australian motorists.

A truck driver for 28 years, Bill suffered severe drooping and wrinkling to the left side of his face only due to UV rays penetrating the driver side window of his truck.

UV light reaching Earth's surface is divided into two categories – UVA and UVB.

Penetrating deep into the skin, UVA is recognised as the primary cause of photo-aging. UVB has been found to cause sunburn, which is why it was traditionally thought to be the main culprit of skin cancer. However recent studies indicate that both UVA and UVB can lead to skin cancer. In October 2011 the *Journal of Investigative Dermatology* reported a study which determined that "...UVA1 may be more carcinogenic than has previously been thought<sup>2</sup>."

Michael Miller, President of the Window Film Association of Australia and New Zealand (WFAANZ), comments, "Plain glass can block most UVB, yet it transmits the majority of harmful UVA, which we now know also causes skin cancer. To prevent UVA rays from penetrating the glass your options are window film or screens."

According to the Cancer Council of Australia, film applied to car windows can substantially reduce the amount of UV radiation transmitted into the vehicle<sup>3</sup>.

There is a broad selection of solar control car window films, or tints, available in Australia that are designed to block as much as 99.9% UV transmittance through car windows.

Michael continues, "It's not only professional drivers who need to be aware of the risks, UV exposure can happen at any time of day, in any season or location so it pays to be cautious, whether you're the driver or passenger. Parents are advised by child safety authorities to install baby and booster seats to the position next to the rear window, so you should also be mindful of the time a child is potentially exposed in the back seat."

There is a perception that only dark film protects against UV. "This is not true," Michael said, "Virtually clear films allow light to enter while blocking UV and heat. The main priority in regards to UV-protection is choosing a solar control window film that comes with a manufacturer warranty, and is applied by a professional within legal limits."

Across Australia, window film is not generally permitted on the main part of a windscreen. Each State and Territory has its own regulations regarding the acceptable darkness, or VLT<sup>4</sup>, of installed after-market film to side windows. In all States except the Northern Territory, the legal limit for a passenger vehicle is 35% VLT for all side windows. WFAANZ is currently petitioning for the regulations to be brought into line in all States, and for it to be legal for darker VLT films to be applied to windows rear of the driver.

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<sup>1</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare and Australasian Association of Cancer Registries (2004). [Cancer in Australia 2001](#). AIHW cat. no. CAN 23. Canberra, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

<sup>2</sup> *Journal of Investigative Dermatology* advance online publication, 6 October 2011; doi:10.1038/jid.2011.283

<sup>3</sup> The Cancer Council of Australia, *Position Statement on Window Tinting*, endorsed by the Australasian College of Dermatologists, 2004. [http://www.cancer.org.au/File/PolicyPublications/Position\\_statements/PS-Window\\_tinting\\_October\\_2004.pdf](http://www.cancer.org.au/File/PolicyPublications/Position_statements/PS-Window_tinting_October_2004.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Visible Light Transmittance. A VLT rating measures the amount of light that passes through glass with film. The lower the VLT percentage, the darker the film.

Visit [www.wfaanz.org.au](http://www.wfaanz.org.au) to sign the auto film petition, learn about the VLT regulations governing your state, or find a window film installer that abides by a strict code of practice.

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#### About window film

Window film, or window tint, has come a long way since its introduction in 1961. In addition to film made specifically for vehicles, flat glass films are also available for windows and skylights in the home or office. Advanced technologies mean window films now offer greater variety of shades, colours and performance levels. The best products are guaranteed to survive the harsh Australian climate with scratch resistant coatings for protection and metallic layers for colour stability.

#### About WFAANZ

A non-profit organisation, WFAANZ is dedicated to improving the standard of product and installation of window film in Australia and New Zealand, while promoting the performance, values and cost effectiveness of window film. The association sets out strict performance guidelines for its members and is a reliable voice for window film manufacturers and applicators at all regulatory levels.

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