

## Moles a bigger indicator in developing melanoma



FAIR WARNING: Redhead Amanda Gauthier is careful to cover up if she is outdoors for long.

Picture: Paul Riley

# Sun's role in skin cancer 'overstated'

Nick McDermott

WARNINGS that too much sunshine can lead to the most deadly form of skin cancer have been over-emphasised, a study has claimed.

It found that, although sunbathing is a risk factor, the number of moles on a person's skin is the most important indicator of whether they will go on to develop melanoma.

The scientists also identified

two genes that dictate how many moles someone will have, and their risk of getting skin cancer.

The research, published in the journal *Nature Genetics*, is likely to reopen the debate over whether health warnings about avoiding the sun are overstated and too general.

The study's authors said such warnings would be more useful if they focused on those most at risk — anyone with

more than 100 moles, redheads and people with fair skin and taught them how to check their moles for changes in shape, size or colour.

Queensland has the world's highest rate of skin cancer. More than 380,000 Australians are diagnosed and 1600 die from the disease each year.

Canadian student Amanda Gauthier was celebrating her 22nd birthday and catching some winter sun on the beach

at Surfers Paradise yesterday.

As a fair-skinned redhead, she is very careful to cover up if she is outdoors for long.

"I wear a hat, long sleeves and 30-plus sunscreen," she said.

Tim Spector, professor of genetic epidemiology at King's College London and one of the study's authors, said: "The number of moles you have is one of the strongest risk factors for melanoma —

stronger even than sunshine."

Dr Veronique Bataille, a dermatologist at West Hertfordshire NHS (National Health Service) Trust, added: "You often read that nearly all melanomas are caused by sunshine, which is not supported by the evidence. Let's keep sunshine in the picture, but let's move away from scaring people they are going to die because they go in the sun."

Daily Mail



MOVED: Kathryn Stevens is happy rents are falling.

## Rents are falling at long last

Melissa Ketchell  
HOUSING EDITOR

RENTS for two-bedroom units have fallen by \$10 a week, the first fall in more than seven years.

June quarter figures from the Residential Tenancies Authority show median rents for units fell from \$360 to \$350 a week. It is the first drop since March 2002.

Property researcher Rob Honeycombe of Bees Nees Research said the discounts were coming as landlords became nervous about properties sitting empty.

"Property owners are just more cautious and focused on economic issues," Mr Honeycombe said. "They don't want to have any downtime between tenants and they're dropping rents quickly to avoid that."

For renter Kathryn Stevens, any indication that rents are settling is good news.

If the trend continued, she and her husband Michael would think seriously about moving again when their lease expired in a couple of months.

"If it's moved from a landlord's market and prices change, then it's worth us reassessing if we could get a house," Ms Stevens said.

The RTA data found rents for three-bedroom houses were flat, with no change on the March quarter median of \$370 a week.

APM economist Matthew Bell said rising unemployment and the historic low cost of mortgages all helped push the balance in favour of renters.