



## Protect children from sun, or they risk melanoma later – new sun safety campaign

**Media release: embargoed until 26 December 2007**

On the cusp of the sunniest period of the year, an uncompromising sun safety campaign is being launched. The campaign warns parents to protect their children from sunburn now – or put them at risk of deadly skin cancer later in life.

Wayde Beckman from the Health Sponsorship Council (HSC) says skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in New Zealand and this country has among the highest rates in the world.

“Never let your children get sun burnt. Sunburn now is linked to melanoma later on.”

He says New Zealanders are particularly at risk of skin cancer because of a set of unique conditions.

“The sun’s UV (ultra violet) rays which do the damage are much more intense in New Zealand than in the northern hemisphere. We naturally have more UV light than northern climes anyway, but our atmosphere is also cleaner which allows even more UV through.

“The orbit of the earth around the sun means the planet is closer to the sun in December and January than when the northern hemisphere is having its summer.

“It’s also cooler here in summer than in somewhere like Australia. In really hot places, you often have no choice but to stay undercover. But in New Zealand in summer the temperature can be perfect for staying out in the sun at the beach or pool all day. You can get severely sunburnt, and not realise it until you painfully peel off your togs in the evening.

“All this adds up to constant exposure to the sun’s UV rays. And constant exposure to the sun as a child leaves them with an increased risk of getting melanoma as adults.”

Central to the SunSmart campaign is a television commercial depicting the painful reality of children’s sunburn. The television commercial is supported by radio commercials.

“All parents need to be proactive about sun safety and make sure their children slip into protective clothing like shirts with collars and longer sleeves

and some shade especially in daylight saving months between the peak UV hours of 11am-4pm when the sun is at its strongest.

“Slap on a broad brimmed hat or cap with flaps; wrap on a pair of close fitting sunglasses that knock back at least 90 percent of the sun’s UV rays; and slop on a broad spectrum SPF 30+ sunscreen,” Mr Beckman said.

**For further information:**

Wayde Beckman  
HSC  
Mob 027 289 6680

**Key numbers**

Television commercial:	SST/030/007
Radio: “Before you go out”	SST/030/1142
“Childhood sunburn”	SST/030/1143
“Role Model”	SST/015/1144
“UV Levels”	SST/015/1145
“Cloudy days”	SST/015/1146
“Anniversary Weekend”	SST/015/1147
“Sunburnt Kids”	SST/015/1148