



**Cancer Society New Zealand
Te Kāhui Matepukupuku o Aotearoa**

National Office
Level 2, Red Cross House
69 Molesworth Street, Thorndon
PO Box 12700
Wellington 6011

Telephone: 64 4 494-7270
Facsimile: 64 4 494-7271

Websites: www.cancernz.org.nz
www.daffodilday.org.nz
www.relayforlife.org.nz
Email: admin@cancer.org.nz

MEDIA RELEASE

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Government urged to introduce sunbed controls

It's mid winter and if you are thinking about going to a solarium for a tan - don't! This advice comes from the Cancer Society which believes the risks are too great, especially if you are under 35 or have fair skin! Solaria, or sunbeds, significantly increase your risk of melanoma, especially if you start using them in your teens or twenties.

Last week the German parliament passed a law banning anyone under the age of 18 from going to solariums because of the risks of developing skin cancer. In the same week the UK Committee on Medical Aspects of Radiation in the Environment advised Governments to: ban sunbed use by those under 18, require all sunbed operators and staff to be licenced and issue strict regulations governing the standard of equipment. They also recommended that sunbeds should have to carry "cigarette-style" health warnings, given their potential to cause suffering, early death and potential disfigurement from skin cancer surgery.

Closer to home NSW recently joined the States of Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia and Queensland in banning people under 18 and those who burn easily from using commercial tanning facilities. Other controls include requirements to provide clients with accurate information about the health risks associated with sunbeds and greater supervision by operators.

Dr Judith Galtry, the Cancer Society's Skin Cancer Advisor, says "these moves are part of an international trend towards prohibiting the use of sunbeds by young people and those who burn easily. We know these individuals are at greater risk. The World Health Organisation's Agency for Research on Cancer determined a 75 percent increased risk of melanoma for people who first used a sunbed before the age of 35. Australian evidence goes further suggesting that using

a sunbed under the age of 35 increases the risk by 98 percent and that restricting sunbed use has a demonstrable impact in preventing avoidable skin cancers and in cost-savings to government.”

In New Zealand there is only a voluntary guideline standard for solarium operators which prohibits the use of sunbeds by individuals younger than 18 years and individuals with fair skin.

Dr Galtry says “it is of concern that the New Zealand government appears less concerned than its Australian and European counterparts, despite our far higher melanoma rates. Industry self-regulation is clearly not working in New Zealand, as shown by consumer surveys in 2005 and 2006. Therefore, the Cancer Society is strengthening its call for Government controls on the solarium industry in New Zealand through requiring premises to become licensed and prohibiting people under 18 years and those with fair skin from using them.”

Dermatologist Professor Marius Rademaker says “sunbed use adds to the burden of the skin cancer we see every day and directly contributes to premature ageing of the skin.”

For more information contact:

Dr Judith Galtry

Cancer Society National Office

Mobile: 0274 583 484

Tel: (04) 494 7196

Email: judith.galtry@cancer.org.nz

Professor Marius Rademaker

Waikato Hospital, Hamilton

Tel: 07-838-1035

Email rademaker@xtra.co.nz

About the Australian / New Zealand Solarium Standard AS/NZS 2635:2008

Solarium for cosmetic purposes provides a basis for setting up and operating artificial tanning equipment, particularly in commercial establishments with solarium facilities. The revised standard aims to provide operators and users of artificial tanning equipment with procedures for reducing the risk associated with indoor tanning. It sets out requirements for the operation of solarium including recommending:

- Solaria use is restricted to people over the age of 18
- People with skin that always burns and never tans be discouraged from using solaria
- All operations shall be supervised
- The person supervising a solaria shall have undertaken appropriate training in the operation and use of equipment and assessment of skin photo types
- Solaria operators provide skin type assessment and consent forms to clients to complete
- Protective eyewear should always be worn
- No claims are made of non-cosmetic health benefits or that solaria use is safe
- Client records covering date, time of visit, skin type assessment and level of exposure shall be kept for a minimum of two years.