

# School's get SunSmart

A partnership with Telecom New Zealand, which has already provided 4,000 sunhats for the Cancer Society to distribute to schools, is primed for a second round.

Last year low decile schools were able to apply for the sponsored hats as part of becoming a SunSmart School. Thirteen schools took up the offer and their pupils now have fun – but are safe in the sun.

As summer approaches, the initial funding from the nation's leading telecommunications provider is providing further free sunhats for distribution to low decile schools which sign up to the Society's SunSmart schools programme. Nearly three thousand hats will be available this time.

"Telecom's involvement with the Cancer Society in 2008 was a natural fit," says Tina Symmans, Telecom Corporate Relations Director.

"This programme is not only a simple and effective way of educating kiwi kids on the dangers of sun exposure but also a preventative measure against UVR levels that most children experience each day in the school environment."

Louise Sandford, SunSmart Schools Coordinator said "students are in school when ultraviolet (UV) radiation levels are at their peak. Sunburn is a big concern as we know that sunburn in childhood and adolescence greatly increases the chances of developing skin cancer."

"Schools are uniquely placed to provide a safe sun environment, educate students about sun protection behaviour and thereby reduce their risk of skin cancer.

"Low decile schools face financial barriers in ensuring their schools are sunsafe, and sometimes even just ensuring the children have proper sunhats. The hats are a great boost towards becoming a SunSmart accredited school. Students are better protected while outside during breaks, sporting events and school trips."

About 350 Kiwis die from skin cancer every year, and New Zealand has the highest melanoma rate in the world.

"The good thing is that it is largely preventable.

"We recommend when UVR is at its highest, especially between 11am and 4pm, that students slip into protective clothing like shirts with collars and longer sleeves, slap on a broad-brimmed hat or cap with flaps, slop on a broad spectrum SPF 30+ sunscreen and seek some shade."

For further information on becoming a SunSmart school and applying for Telecom sun hats go to the SunSmart schools website

<http://www.sunsmartschools.co.nz/schools/accreditation/apply>