#### Daylight saving means time to be sunsmart

##### Press release

## 27 September 2013

The arrival of daylight saving this weekend signals that ultraviolet (UV) levels are rising rapidly and it’s time for New Zealanders to be SunSmart.

Kath Blair, the Health Promotion Agency’s (HPA) SunSmart manager says with the arrival of spring weather and the start of daylight saving, it’s tempting to get outside more.

"While our temperatures are still quite low, UV is already strong enough to cause sunburn if we don’t use sun protection for our skin. Sunburn is a big concern because it’s linked to melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer. And New Zealand has one of the highest rates of melanoma in the world."

To make it easier to be SunSmart, the Sun Protection Alert is back and gives the exact time period each day when sun protection is needed. It takes into account geographical location and weather factors.

"It’s especially important to use sun protection between 10am and 4pm from September to April when the sun’s UV rays are strongest. But depending on the time of year and where in New Zealand you are, the period of time sun protection is needed is often longer."

Dr Richard McKenzie, Principal Scientist for Radiation at the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA), says the level of UV increases rapidly as the sun’s elevation increases, with the most rapid increase at the time of the spring equinox, 22 September.

"It means the UV is going to be significantly more intense at the end of September than at the beginning of the month, at exactly the time when people start to be outside more because of warmer days and the start of daylight saving."

Dr McKenzie says even at this time of year, UV levels over most of the country are high enough that we need to protect our skin.

The Sun Protection Alert is found on MetService.com, MetService phone apps and in all major daily newspapers. Kath Blair says using the Sun Protection Alert alongside your daily weather information means it’s easy to enjoy the longer days and still be SunSmart.

"During the daylight saving months, remember to ‘slip, slop, slap and wrap’ - slip on a shirt or into the shade, slop on plenty of broad-spectrum SPF30+ sunscreen, slap on a hat and wrap on a pair of wrap-around sunglasses."

**For more information:**

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