



SUNSMART COUNCILS

*A Guide for Territorial Local
Authorities and Health Promoters*



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Introduction

SunSmart Councils: A Guide for Territorial Local Authorities and Health Promoters has been developed by the Health Sponsorship Council (HSC) in collaboration with the Cancer Society of New Zealand Social and Behavioural Research Unit, Department of Preventive & Social Medicine, Dunedin School of Medicine, and in response to research-identified needs. Its purpose is to inform and help guide health promoters, non-government organisations with an interest in sun exposure issues, and councils through the process of advocating for, and implementing, seasonally and regionally appropriate sun protection policies.

It draws on the experiences of councils and health promoters in relation to sun protection policies and practices. Some councils have adopted a comprehensive sun protection policy, while in other instances changes limited to a specific area or specific events have been made. In each case, the key points learnt have been noted and summarised so that submissions made and strategies adopted in the future can have the best possible chance of success.

The guide also sets out the steps to be taken once a council has agreed to the introduction of a sun protection policy. This is a stage that is crucial to the success of the project – thorough planning and effective communication greatly increase the likelihood of a smooth transition to sun protective environments.

The successful introduction of a sun protection policy requires considerable planning and on-the-ground work. But the end result is worth it. If we can support New Zealanders to practice seasonally appropriate SunSmart behaviour, the alarming numbers of people being diagnosed with skin cancer in this country may start to decrease, without compromising the functionality and attractiveness of outdoor areas.

This resource could not have been developed without the help of those involved in the featured case studies. Many thanks to the health promoters and council staff who supplied information, answered numerous questions and reviewed drafts.



Background and rationale

Skin cancer is the most common cancer in this country, with New Zealanders at high risk of developing a skin cancer during their lifetime, in particular those with light-coloured skin. Each year there are an estimated 69,000 or more new cases of skin cancer and over 300 New Zealanders die from the disease.

Melanoma is the most serious form of skin cancer and New Zealand has one of the highest melanoma death rates in the world. In 2005, the year for which the most recent figures are available from the New Zealand Cancer Registry, there were 2,017 recorded cases of melanoma (Ministry of Health, 2008).

In 2006, skin cancer was conservatively estimated to cost the New Zealand health system more than \$57 million each year (O'Dea, 2009). The burden of skin cancer in this country is due to a number of factors. These include the strength of the ultraviolet radiation (UVR) reaching New Zealand during September to April, depending on the region; our love of the sun and outdoor activities; and the large proportion of people with fair skin.

It is important to note that a certain amount of sun exposure is beneficial, providing the body with vitamin D. However, excessive and harmful patterns of exposure to the sun increase the risk of developing skin cancer. Most skin cancers are potentially preventable if people avoid these harmful patterns of excessive exposure to UVR. Sunburn in early life increases the risk of developing melanoma later.

While it is the responsibility of the individual to make healthy choices, when it comes to sun protection, the opportunity to exercise that choice in public places should be supported by local authorities.

Why develop TLA sun protection policies?

There have been significant efforts in recent years to raise public awareness of the dangers of patterns of harmful and excess exposure to UVR. However, issues surrounding local government and sun protection have less often been touched upon.

A report in 2001 outlined the need to reinforce and complement personal sun protective strategies with environmental change and supportive public policies, including for many outdoor areas and facilities administered by territorial local authorities (TLAs) (Reeder, 2001). The Primary Prevention Expert Working Group, convened for the development of the *New Zealand Cancer Control Strategy*, identified the need to encourage the provision of environmental sun protection (Ministry of Health, 2003). Subsequently, a research project on the sun protection policies and practices of TLAs was funded by the University of Otago and the Cancer Society (Reeder, 2004). The *New Zealand Cancer Control Strategy: Action Plan 2005-2010* identified that one of the major ways to prevent

the growing incidence of skin cancer is to involve organisations such as local government. Increasing the provision of summer shade in public areas and settings was identified as a primary focus.

The Local Government Act 2002 highlights the need for a healthy and safe environment both now and in the future. Individual councils across New Zealand have reference in their long-term council community plan (LTCCP), and other plans, to health and wellbeing goals. Melanoma and other skin cancers are serious public health issues, and local government has the potential to play a key role in helping to create environments that support sun protection. Health professionals dealing with skin cancer urge local government to assume a responsible approach in encouraging SunSmart behaviour within their communities.

TLAs have the potential to influence many aspects of our lives in the community. They have responsibilities that cover leisure and sports facilities (including outdoor swimming pools), assisting community events, employing outdoor workers, managing public places, and granting planning and building approvals (Reeder & Jopson, 2006).

TLAs can enhance appropriate seasonal sun protection by:

- adopting sun protection policies, for example at childcare centres
- developing guidelines for sun protection at outdoor events
- providing sun protection for outdoor workers, such as appropriate clothing, sunscreen and shade
- providing sun protection and appropriately placed shade at pools, sports grounds, parks and gardens
- providing sun protection and appropriately placed shade at other outdoor facilities, such as camping grounds
- including sun protection measures in building codes and planning requirements.

Current status of TLA sun protection strategies

Research shows that there are gaps and weaknesses in current council policies and practices. The New Zealand survey *Sun protection policies and practices of NZ Territorial Authorities* (Reeder & Jopson, 2006) made strong recommendations for change in councils.

Aside from initiatives in primary schools and sports organisations, skin cancer prevention efforts in New Zealand have been based mainly on media campaigns to raise public awareness. While useful, these actions need to be complemented by supportive outdoor environments. The public requires local government not only to inform, but also to offer the best possible opportunities to practice being SunSmart.

The 2006 survey found that, although there are achievements in certain areas, sun protection policies covering all local government activities were virtually non-existent. Only one of the responding councils had a comprehensive sun protection policy that

covered the full range of council activities and that had a consistent shade planning approach. Three other authorities had policies under development.

Sun protection was poorly represented in district and long-term council community plans. However, some councils had more specific policies, which included sun protection measures – most often for outdoor workers. There appears to be a belief that sun protection is an issue for councils only in regard to outdoor workers rather than one affecting the wider community.

The survey revealed that most council guidelines on sun protection had not changed in the previous three years, but any changes that had been made were positive.

The survey also indicated that over half the TLA staff interviewed were interested in adopting sun protection policies or practices but were unsure how to go about this. They signalled they would welcome support in this area. Two-thirds of council staff members who completed the questionnaire said they would appreciate receiving further assistance with sun protection policy development.

Skin cancer, while a growing concern in New Zealand, is still not at the forefront of either public or governmental thinking. It is essential that local government recognises the risks of patterns of excessive and harmful exposure to UVR and makes a commitment to protect the public. It need not be an overwhelming exercise if planned and implemented over time. The first step is formally recognising the intent to act on sun protection for community wellbeing.

Next steps

The sun protection survey carried out by Reeder and Jopson in 2006 listed a number of recommendations for those involved in the prevention of skin cancer. Promoting and assisting the development, implementation and monitoring of TLA sun protection policies was high on the agenda.

TLA workers, health promoters, and other interested parties will benefit from working together to advocate for, and implement, sun protection policies. Building contacts and strengthening relationships between those involved in skin cancer prevention and local government are vital to successfully developing sun protection in the community setting.

It appears many council officials are unaware of the extent of the harm that can be caused by excessive exposure to UVR and the part they can play in providing protection. As UVR exposure is an issue that affects everyone, sun protection measures will inevitably link in with councils' community plans and strategies. Community outcomes will be furthered by implementing SunSmart strategies and will lead to positive results for local government as well as for the New Zealand public.

There are already some measures in place around New Zealand that can be adopted and promoted strategically in terms of sun protection. For example, the common New Zealand city council policy of requiring verandas to shop fronts is advantageous in providing shade from the sun as well as shelter from the rain. The horizontal shading generally provides good protection from the midday sun. Some workers seek out the sun during their lunch hour, precisely when the sun can cause most damage, particularly during summer. Incidental sunburn is a real risk for indoor workers at this time.

Motivated individuals and groups can have a significant impact in achieving change in TLAs. The approach to councils needs to primarily raise awareness of the potential dangers of excessive and harmful exposure to UVR and the alarming impacts of skin cancer already being seen in New Zealand. The ultimate aim is to increase the number of environments in the community that provide protection from sunburn, and to increase public support for such environmental change.

A report on observations of children and caregivers on Hawke's Bay beaches concluded that, when compared with personal sun protection, environmental strategies indicate:

...a way that community agencies can accept some collective responsibility and exercise leadership in directions that have the potential to positively influence and sustain levels of sun protection among a greater number of people. (Reeder & Richards, 1999)

A comprehensive sun protection policy template for councils should be made as widely available as possible, serving as a guide to TLAs who are committed to improving sun safety in their area. Key areas in the development of TLA sun protection strategies are (Reeder & Jopson, 2006):

- the development of policies and guidelines for specific groups (such as outdoor workers) and areas (such as outdoor pools, parks, gardens and sport facilities)
- building strong relationships between local government decision makers and sun protection advocates
- including shade provision in the design of community and sporting facilities¹
- including sun protection considerations in building codes and planning requirements
- encouraging councils to focus on taking steps to provide seasonably usable shade while also allowing sunlight for warmth and health in recreational settings
- adopting a systematic process for planning shade for locations where the public could be at risk of over-exposure to UVR.

¹ Well-designed built shade structures can provide safe and comfortable outdoor spaces for summer activities. For further information on designing shade refer to *Under cover – Guidelines for shade planning and design*, available from the Cancer Society of New Zealand: <http://www.cancernz.org.nz/reducing-your-cancer-risk/sunsmart/sunsmart-information-sheets/> or visit www.webshade.co.nz.

Health problems caused by patterns of excessive and harmful exposure to the sun are likely to increase in coming years. A coordinated, long-term effort, supported by both national and regional government, is needed in order to tackle the problem. Only then can we keep communities as safe as possible from the risks of skin cancer and other diseases related to harmful UVR exposure.



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Case study – Christchurch City Council

Christchurch City Council's sun protection practices focus largely on the protection of council staff and outdoor events. It does not yet have a generic sun protection policy, covering all areas of council activity. The sun protection measures were developed as part of the council's health and safety manual during the 1990s and have been further developed in recent years.

The council has practices pertaining to sun safety in the following ways:

1. Outdoor events – in conjunction with the Cancer Society, the council operates shade programmes for summer events and recreation facilities. This includes the use of portable shade units, free sunscreen for the public and umbrellas for council staff
2. Swimming pool – shade structures are in place at outdoor swimming pools
3. Outdoor workers – protective clothing including long-sleeved shirts are supplied, along with wide-brimmed hats, sunscreen, and appropriate sunglasses. The council also tries to rotate working schedules so staff work as little as possible during the hottest hours of the day. More recently, free annual skin checks have been introduced for workers who are exposed to the sun for a significant period of time.

Implementation

The council's previous health and safety advisor initiated Christchurch City Council's sun protection practices as part of their official health and safety manual. The original sun protection practices were based on the Department of Labour's Occupational Safety and Health Service guidance notes for the protection of workers from UVR.

The council's sun protection measures relate to its Healthy City scheme that aims to provide a safer environment for staff and public in the area.

Development of sun protection practices

In recent years, the council's current health and safety advisor began to expand measures to protect outdoor workers from the sun. This included the introduction of yearly skin checks. The checks are offered free of charge to staff who are exposed to sunlight for a significant part of their working day. They are also available to other council employees at their own cost.

To promote SunSmart behaviour in the public arena, the council has been working alongside the Cancer Society Canterbury/West Coast Division on a shade programme for outdoor events, since 2003. At present the Cancer Society provides seven portable units of shade that can be booked for outdoor events and use at recreational facilities.

The shade programme partnership works in the following way: the Cancer Society is responsible for maintenance of shade units and sunscreen dispensers, and replacement of equipment when necessary. The council provides storage of shade units and sunscreen dispensers. It also operates a loan system for the borrowing of equipment by council teams and community groups. All bookings are made through the council's health promotion coordinator, who also organises any free SunSmart merchandise such as balloons, drink bottles or back packs.

Initial responses

The incorporation of sun protection into council policy has met with a positive response from the outset.

The recent introduction of skin checks was promoted to management as part of monitoring for staff who work outdoors. The only obstacle to the introduction of these checks was how the council would define workers who are exposed to the sun for a "significant part of their working day". It was eventually decided that an employee must be outside for a period of at least three hours on a consistent basis every week to qualify for the free skin checks.

The outdoor events shade programme has been very well received by the council, with the agreement being re-evaluated and renewed each year.

Health and safety manual specifications

All clothing provided to outdoor workers must meet specific standards as set out in the council's health and safety manual. The council provides wide-brimmed hats or legionnaire style hats, which must be worn except when a hard hat is required. Sunscreen (minimum SPF15) is provided and all sunglasses allow less than 5 percent of UVA transmission.

Policy wording

A number of Christchurch City Council's sun protection practices pertain to the council's commitment to the provision of a healthy and safe working environment for employees. The updated 2005 policy covers three primary areas of sun protection:

1. *Education: Staff are to receive education on the dangers of UV radiation and how to minimise the risk. The information should be presented in verbal, written and audio-visual forms.*
2. *Work Organisation: Ideally work should be organised so that minimum sun exposure occurs. That is, work in shady areas, avoid outside work, or if possible work under cover between the hours of 10.00am – 3.00pm (11.00am – 4.00pm during daylight saving).*
3. *Personal Protection: This will be required when work cannot be organised as above to provide for minimum sun exposure.*

Promotion

The written promotion of the skin checks took numerous forms including emails to managers, team leaders and throughout the council's health and safety network. These emails were followed up with phone calls to key staff within the health and safety network, encouraging them to promote the policy. Posters about the free skin checks were displayed on notice boards and advertising was placed on the council's intranet for two weeks.

As a result of the yearly skin checks, three outdoor workers were found to have melanomas and were referred for appropriate treatment. Promotion was particularly built up around one council park ranger who had a malignant mole removed. She was featured heavily in internal publications and communication networks as a 'real life' example of how sun protection and monitoring can save lives.

The outdoor events shade programme has been promoted within Christchurch City Council internal publications such as handbooks and brochures.

Evaluation

The Christchurch City Council sun protection policy is reviewed periodically as required but minimally at three-yearly intervals.

What worked well

Within the council, people are now far more conscious of sun protection. Internal promotion had a big impact, particularly publicity around the worker who was found to have melanoma through the annual skin checks. A story such as this brings home the very real dangers of skin cancer and harmful exposure to UVR.

The skin checks have become so popular in the past few years that 300-400 council staff members now attend them (many at their own cost). Outside of the annual checks, staff were encouraged to consult a doctor immediately if they noticed changes in freckles or moles.

The outdoor events shade programme has also been very successful. There has been little if any negative feedback and only minimal damage incurred on the shade units. Since the commencement of the programme Christchurch City Council has remained the largest user of the shade equipment, along with community leisure teams.

What could have worked better

Christchurch City Council's outdoor worker policy does not currently reflect updated Cancer Society recommendations when it comes to appropriate personal sun protection. SPF30+ broad-spectrum sunscreen must be available to workers, as well as some

changes to clothing requirements, for the policy to meet Cancer Society recommendations.

The promotion of the outdoor events shade programme has not been as extensive as it could be and future changes are being looked into. The Cancer Society plans to advocate to the council for SunSmart branding to be included in the promotion of outdoor summer events.

Suggestions

The following suggestions for TLAs intending to extend or develop sun protection practices came from key staff members at Christchurch City Council and a Cancer Society health promoter.

- Rather than working from scratch, find a sun protection policy template that can be adapted for your council. That way, you have a solid starting point and can learn from those who have worked on the issue before you.
- Re-evaluate the policy on an ongoing basis to reflect up-to-date recommendations when it comes to sun protection.

Case Study – Horowhenua District Council

Horowhenua District Council adopted a generic sun protection policy in 2001 after its parks manager attended a SunSmart awareness and training session organised by the Cancer Society and featuring John Greenwood, an Australian shade expert. The majority of the council's sun protection policy relates to public outdoors areas, contractors and council staff.

The policy was driven by a champion within the

council and assisted by other members of council staff as well as health promoters from the Cancer Society. Since the adoption of the policy, a number of practices have been employed by the council in order to meet the policy's requirements, including:

1. Outdoor workers – ensuring staff awareness of sun protection, wide-brimmed hats provided, contract managers have attended a council-organised SunSmart training day
2. Parks and gardens – strategic tree planting for shade provision
3. Swimming and paddling pools – at the council's only outdoor pool, umbrellas are provided as well as free sunscreen
4. Planning and building approvals – a tree-planting scheme in public open spaces ensures trees are planted three to four years prior to the creation of any outdoor areas. Council staff members also work closely with cafe owners who have outdoor areas to encourage them to incorporate shade provision
5. Council staff – free wide-brimmed sunhats have been provided for all staff members of Horowhenua District Council.



Parks and Property Supervisor Mick Longley at Jubilee Park, Levin

Implementation

Horowhenua District Council's sun protection policy was championed by the parks manager who attended a SunSmart awareness and training session held by the Cancer Society. Through taking part in this event, he immediately saw that improved sun protection could be achieved without having huge implications in terms of workload and budget. He raised with the council's chief executive the possible development and implementation of a sun protection policy.

SunSmart workshop

After consulting with the council's chief executive, a SunSmart workshop was arranged to raise awareness of the issue internally. The entire council was invited to attend, along

with relevant staff members, a representative from the regional sports trust, school principals, school Board of Trustees' members and contracting managers commissioned by the council to undertake outdoor work. The council received positive feedback about the workshop session. As a result of the workshop's success, the parks manager was given the go-ahead to develop a sun protection policy.

Initial responses

Initial responses to the idea of a sun protection policy were extremely positive. The chief executive of Horowhenua District Council was enthusiastic about raising awareness internally and the council was open to making changes to its district plan. Outdoor contractors employed by the council also reacted positively and were happy to build relationships over the issue. Both council and contractors agreed on the significance of sun protection and on what should be done to protect workers from the sun.

Development of policy

Web-based research was undertaken around the topic of sun protection. The parks manager also liaised with the Cancer Society, landscape architects, and other council staff members to develop the sun protection policy.

The policy was designed to complement the council's long-term council community plan (LTCCP). It relates directly to the council's health and wellbeing goals of making the district an enjoyable, safe place where people can make the most of the outdoors and recreational opportunities.

Policy adoption by council

A draft sun protection policy was presented to council members and a discussion on the policy's implications took place. It was accepted that the proposal was both practical and affordable, and the Horowhenua District Council passed a resolution in December 2001.

Resolved: "That council's potential role in this matter as consent authority be further investigated.

That council undertake a shade audit when upgrading any facility and make proper provision as part of that upgrade.

That council ensures that shade is included in the consideration of all new facilities."

Policy objectives

At the time the policy was developed, and then adopted, the main aim was to construct a solid foundation for increasing sun protection in the Horowhenua region, and to strengthen the council's practices over time. More specifically the policy outlined the following objectives:

- *to ensure that the provision of shade is an integral part of council's planning processes*
- *to seek to increase the provision of shade at council-owned parks, playgrounds and facilities*
- *to seek to increase the provision of shade at sporting and recreation facilities*
- *to seek to increase the provision of shade by private developers*
- *to seek to increase the provision of shade by private homeowners through education and promotion of shade concepts.*

Budget

No budget was allocated to the development of Horowhenua District Council's sun protection policy. The costs were simply the time put in by the council's parks manager – a matter of a few weeks.

Promotion

Although there was no official launch of the sun protection policy, it has been promoted in various ways since its implementation in 2001.

The council-organised workshop was the first attempt to raise awareness both internally and within the community. In addition to this, the council ran an internal awareness campaign, which involved emailing and talking, to staff face-to-face about sun protection. Staff members working on the design of outdoor areas were provided with a software programme (WebshadePRO), a tool designed to develop appropriate shade solutions when planning the construction of outdoor areas. The council also invited the Cancer Society to talk at the national park managers' conference.

It was acknowledged that raising public awareness was a vital element of increasing sun protection practices. With this in mind, sunscreen was provided for both staff and customers in the council's reception foyer. The council also distributed Cancer Society posters and stickers to schools around the region.

Media coverage

When wide-brimmed hats were approved for all council staff, a local media campaign was undertaken. Council staff members were photographed together wearing the hats and the story received good coverage in regional newspapers.

Evaluation

Horowhenua District Council aims to develop its sun protection policy on a strategic level. Planning has been a key element in the success of the council's sun protection measures.

What worked well

One of the council's biggest successes was the continuous involvement of both staff and council members in the development and implementation of the sun protection policy. Raising awareness within the council through the council organised SunSmart workshop was an invaluable part of the process. A great deal of effort was made in communicating the positive nature of the policy and enabling interested parties to contribute to it.

The planning and planting of trees in advance of the construction of outdoor spaces – such as car parks and playgrounds – has also been a success. With the help of experts such as landscape architects, strategic sites are identified and by the time the construction begins, medium to large trees are already providing shade. The council's commitment to the ongoing necessity and development of shade protection has also contributed to the success of its policy.

Cancer Society health promoters observed that the commitment of a 'champion' within the council really drove the project from the outset, right through to its implementation.

What could have worked better?

The timeframe in which changes have been made has been approximately seven years. During this time, no re-evaluation of the policy has taken place and the council acknowledges that it is time to do so. Although the council has been proactive in delivering sun protection, regular re-evaluation of sun protection practices has not occurred due to lack of time, resources and large workloads.

It is also noted that more thorough long-term planning with the involvement of the Planning Team from the outset would have been advantageous. The Planning Team are the ones who drive changes to the District and Strategic Plans.

Future plans

For the future, the council is considering constructed shelters for outdoor spaces, and is currently in the process of planting trees for shade protection in council-owned car parks. It also intends to increase links with the wider community in terms of sun protection, eg, further work with private enterprises when the council is planning outdoor areas.

Suggestions

The following suggestions for TLAs intending to develop or extend a sun protection policy came from key team members at Horowhenua District Council and Cancer Society health promoters.

- A well-planned, simple policy means it isn't necessary to spend lots of time and money to achieve a positive effect on the community.
- At the very least look at strategic planting of trees, and build-in further practices over time.
- Embrace the community and get people involved as much as possible. There are always people out there who are passionate enough to help push the message, sponsor events etc.
- Be proactive in promoting the benefits of sun protection, and of health and recreation in general, in the community.
- Integrate sun protection into council planning. Sun protection has to be well considered from the very beginning of a project if the final result is to be effective.

Case Study – New Plymouth District Council

New Plymouth District Council has sun protection practices incorporated into its health and safety measures. It does not yet have a generic sun protection policy, covering all areas of council activity. The sun protection practices that have been adopted relate to the council's generic health and safety policy.

The council has the following sun safety practices:

1. Sunscreen recommended and endorsed by a dermatologist is provided to outdoor workers
2. Education and literature from Cancer Society is provided during the annual healthy staff expo
3. Provision of compulsory head protection ie, caps with wide brim or neck flap
4. Annual health checks for outdoor workers with the council's occupational health nurse and, where appropriate, referrals as needed to a dermatologist or medical centre for further examination of moles
5. Compulsory uniform for outdoor workers, made of cooling fabric that provides ventilation and sun protection
6. Rotation of outdoor workers' duties to ensure work within shaded areas
7. Provision of water on site so staff can fill water bottles before commencing work, during breaks and after work
8. Provision of sunscreen in work vehicles.

Implementation

Following submissions over a number of years to New Plymouth District Council by the Cancer Society, sun protection measures have been introduced steadily.

Development of sun protection measures

Internal awareness of sun protection has gradually built up through health and safety events and communication strategies. This has led to widespread staff involvement in the process of initiating and implementing sun protection practices.

The council's occupational health nurse and parks operations manager have an 'open door' policy whereby staff can raise issues with them at any time. The council holds a health and safety meeting each month where any concerns can be addressed. Sun protection practices tend to be staff driven, and introduced as issues are raised. Once a request or suggestion is made, it is then taken to council management and goes through a process of assessment and approval before it is adopted.

Initial responses

The implementation of sun protection practices has been well received within the council due to the high awareness among staff of the dangers of UVR. The council is open to the expansion and development of its sun protection measures.

Promotion

The council is proactive in promoting health and safety internally, including sun protection practices. Every year the council holds a week dedicated to health promotion, which includes a staff health expo. During this expo, a dermatologist gives a presentation on UV exposure and melanoma.

Support for the promotion of sun protection has come from the Taranaki Cancer Society, which provides pamphlets to be distributed to individual council departments and the council cafeteria.

Evaluation

Staff meetings are held on a regular basis to provide feedback on how sun protection can be provided more effectively.

What worked well

The level of awareness that has been raised within the council is an essential element in the success of the council's sun protection measures. The annual council-organised health expo has been key to educating staff about UVR and skin cancer.

The council has found that, since sun spot checks were introduced, the number of staff being referred for further investigation is decreasing each year, a sign that the measures put in place may already be having a positive effect. Many staff members who are not outdoor workers are also taking responsibility for their own health and requesting sun spot checks when they are available.

What could have worked better

Taranaki Cancer Society health promoters have suggested that they would like to see the council promote sun protection more in the wider community. It has also been suggested that council departments may benefit from working more collaboratively on sun protection to ensure an organisational commitment to the issue.

Future plans

New Plymouth District Council is soon to start running a 'health bus' which will include the service of visiting workers on site for spot checks. This will be implemented annually in order to check for any early signs of skin cancer.

Suggestions

The following suggestions for TLAs intending to extend or develop sun protection practices came from key staff members at New Plymouth District Council and Cancer Society health promoters.

- Increase your knowledge before you start to put ideas into action. Look at what has worked and what hasn't in other places.
- To make a policy or practice work, you need to help people within an organisation understand why the issue is important. Never neglect internal communications.
- Keep your practices as simple and achievable as possible, otherwise you risk your policy just sitting on a shelf gathering dust.
- The best health practices are achieved in local government when there is a collaborative approach within the organisation at all levels.



Case Study – Wanganui District Council

The Wanganui District Council adopted a sun protection policy in 2005, and has taken action to implement sun protection and raise awareness in the district. All projects that are included in the council's long-term council community plan (LTCCP) are expected to align to the sun protection policy.

The policy was created after a successful submission to the council by the Wanganui Cancer Society health promoter. This led to a partnership between the health promoter and the council. A council policy analyst and the Cancer Society health promoter worked together to develop a sun protection policy.

Wanganui District Council offers protection from harmful exposure to UVR in the following ways:

1. Outdoor events – there is substantial shading from trees in public areas where outdoor events take place. Community groups are also made aware of SunSmart practices when they apply to hold an outdoor event on council-owned property
2. Outdoor workers – workers are provided with appropriate sunhats, sunscreen and sunglasses. Those employed in the council's parks department are also required to wear long-sleeved shirts and gloves
3. Parks and gardens – trees are being planted in parks to eventually provide more shade. Free sunscreen is offered at some children's playgrounds during daylight saving months
4. Swimming and paddling pools – umbrellas are provided at Wanganui East Pool, and a shade sail has also been built on the outdoor section of a new swimming pool in the area.

Implementation

The Wanganui Centre of the Cancer Society began making submissions to the Wanganui District Council on the introduction of sun protection measures in 2001. Then in 2004, a Cancer Society health promoter went through the council's community outcomes step by step and highlight where and how the council could offer sun protection. In her submission, she highlighted these opportunities in both the council's draft annual plan and the draft service management plan.

Links to community outcomes included:

- *a safe environment*
- *development and positive management of recreational and sport facilities*
- *community participation in the decision-making process*
- *to improve, promote and protect public health and safety*

- *joint projects with other groups or agencies where there are mutual goals or a significant benefit to the community.*

At this time, the health promoter also approached a policy analyst at Wanganui District Council who became a sun protection 'champion' within the council and began work on an official policy. The development of the policy was a partnership, with the community and the council working together to achieve better outcomes for the community.

Initial responses

Members of council were shocked at the statistics they were given – at the time, Wanganui had two skin cancer diagnoses² a day with one a month being melanoma – and were receptive to the idea of a sun protection policy.

Some concerns were raised about costs and workloads. It was decided that the policy should not be statutory (ie, legally binding) as it would then need to be monitored, with considerable cost involved. Instead, it was agreed that the policy should be designed to provide education, information, advice and encouragement both within the council and the community.

Development of policy

The Wanganui District Council's policy analyst worked with the Wanganui Cancer Society's health promoter to develop the sun protection policy. Although no formal project plan was developed; an informal document served as a guide throughout the process.

To aid in the development of the policy, the council contacted other TLAs around New Zealand via email, to discuss their sun protection policies and practices.

Internal communication of the policy and its importance was essential, to ensure it was implemented properly. With this in mind, it was decided to build up awareness of sun protection through staff newsletters, while the policy was being developed.

Policy adoption by council

The process of adopting the policy began with informal discussions between councillors and those working on the policy, prior to a formal meeting. At the formal meeting a report was presented to the council's community development committee by the policy analyst and health promoter. Following this report, the council adopted the policy.

² Personal communication, Sue Stewart, Wanganui Cancer Society.

Policy objectives

The approved policy was designed to cover four key roles the council had in providing sun protection:

1. *As managers of parks, gardens and recreational facilities:* goals include - giving guidelines on sun protection to organisations which book out recreation facilities; providing information to organisations about the use of Wanganui Cancer Society's umbrellas and sunscreen; encouraging SunSmart events; looking for opportunities to plant trees or build shade structures where required etc
2. *As employers of outdoor workers and contractors:* goals include providing sun protection information to employees; providing a training module for outdoor workers about skin cancer; providing outdoor employees with access to protective clothing such as hats and sunscreen etc
3. *As community educators:* goals include - reminding the public about the need to cover up and minimise exposure to the sun; provide brochures on the importance of sun protection at customer service and visitor information centres; including appropriate images of SunSmart behaviour in council publications etc
4. *As a consent authority:* goals include - encouraging owners of outdoor eating venues to provide shade (such as umbrellas, canopies and awnings) for patrons; providing information on sun protection to people prior to making application for consent to council; maintaining a street tree policy to ensure appropriate selection, planting and maintenance of street trees etc.

Promotion

Wanganui District Council held an official launch for the sun protection policy. Once the launch had taken place, the policy was promoted in internal newsletters and on the council website.

The policy was also promoted in the community through the council offices. This led to requests from outdoor workers for shade provision on some sites, and requests from parking attendants for sunhats.

Media coverage

When the sun protection policy was launched, local newspaper the *Wanganui Chronicle* was contacted to cover the story. The newspaper gave significant coverage and ran a photograph to go with the article. The story relied heavily on skin cancer statistics that were provided to journalists by the Wanganui Cancer Society.

Evaluation

An internal evaluation was undertaken by the Wanganui District Council's policy analyst about a year after the sun protection policy was launched. This evaluation was

conducted through one-on-one interviews with council staff and external stakeholders. The report concluded the sun protection policy had raised awareness of the need for sun protection considerably within the council itself and the wider community.

What worked well

Raising awareness of the issue within the council was key to the eventual adoption of the policy. The health promoter's presentation of how council goals and objectives could be married with sun protection measures helped the council understand how a sun protection policy could work. By highlighting particular community outcomes in the council's draft annual plan and the draft service management plan, the benefits of incorporating sun protection measures were spelled out clearly and persuasively.

Promotion of the policy through council offices was a positive aspect to the process, which resulted in high compliance of sun protection measures and council workers proactively requesting sun protection. This demonstrated a change in attitude as a result of the council's efforts to educate council employees about the need for sun protection. The council evaluation found that the introduction of the policy had led to a generally higher level of awareness amongst staff about the link between excessive exposure to UVR and the development of skin cancer.

Providing media with local and national skin cancer statistics and publicising the policy resulted in good coverage, helping to increase public awareness of the issue.

What could have worked better

The council's policy analyst would have preferred to undertake additional monitoring of the policy. This has proved difficult due to limited staff resources, workload and little time available to do follow-up work.

Health promoters have noted that clearer accountability could improve the implementation of sun protection measures. With outside contractors and event organisers, compliance with sun protection requirements is not as robust as it could be. This is a difficult area for the council to control as the policy is not statutory.

Future goals

Wanganui District Council is looking into ways to implement sun protection as part of development and planning processes. For example, the incorporation of shade design.

The council has continued to raise awareness of the issue internally by inviting the Cancer Society health promoter to give an induction course to current council staff on the danger of UVR.

Suggestions

The following suggestions for TLAs intending to extend or develop a sun protection policy came from staff members at Wanganui District Council and regional health promoters.

- Sun protection is still new to people's thinking – in order to get it on people's agenda, keep persevering.
- For a health promoter, getting the submission process right is vital. Individual council objectives should be matched up with sun protection measures. This ensures the council has a clear understanding of how a policy is going to work without increasing workload and costs too dramatically.
- Look at integrating sun protection into the council's long-term health strategy rather than as a stand-alone mechanism.
- Have an implementation plan so everyone knows what they're doing
- Identify and mitigate risk so there is more chance of the policy being adopted and successfully implemented.

Case Study – Wellington City Council

Wellington City Council has sun protection practices incorporated into health and safety measures. It does not yet have a generic sun protection policy, covering all areas of council activity. The council's decision to systematically develop sun protection practices for outdoor workers began in 2003. The sun protection practices that have been employed pertain to the council's health and safety policy.

The council has practices pertaining to sun safety in the following ways:

1. Outdoor events – provision of shade (in the form of umbrellas) and sunscreen
2. Parks and gardens – trees have been planted to offer shade
3. Swimming and paddling pools – all outdoor pools have tables with umbrellas available
4. Outdoor workers – workers are now provided with their own tube of sunscreen, wide-brimmed hats, wraparound sunglasses, collared shirts (with a long sleeves option), as well as water containers to prevent dehydration.

Implementation

Wellington City Council's SunSmart project for outdoor workers was initiated through discussions in 2003 between its health and safety manager, occupational health nurse, and corporate health and safety team. Some sun protection practices for outdoor workers were already in place at the time, but individuals within the council wanted to make these practices more effective and take extra measures to protect outdoor workers.

Development of project plan

Council staff researched and developed their project plan through various means. Staff members consulted with the Cancer Society, attended health and safety meetings, and explored the measures that had been taken by other TLAs around the country. Having previously worked as a health promoter, the council's occupational health nurse contributed extensive prior knowledge of sun protection.

A vital component of the project plan was to raise awareness of the issue within the council itself – through the use of internal publications. In addition, Cancer Society health promoters were invited as guest speakers to health and safety meetings for the council's outside workers. Skin cancer statistics were presented to the corporate health and safety committee.

An idea was put forward to aid the council in providing not only protection but also monitoring of health and safety issues. As well as minimising risk by providing

protective shade, work gear and sunscreen, it was proposed that spot-checking for outdoor workers should take place on a yearly basis. This involved all outdoor workers being invited to attend a 'lumps, bumps and moles check' which was carried out by the nurse and a doctor after summer.

Initial responses

Council management and the corporate health and safety team provided substantial support to implement the new suggested practices. Spot checking was the most difficult element of the project to get approved, due to expense.

However the project met most resistance from outdoor workers themselves. Some workers showed reluctance to wear the provided clothing as they felt too hot, and some fashion issues were raised with regard to the hats and sunglasses.

Wellington City Council health and safety policy

Although practices to protect outdoor workers from the sun are implemented every year, Wellington City Council has not adopted or developed a specific sun protection policy. The practices outlined in this case study fall under the council's health and safety policy. Sun protection costs are incorporated into the council's health and safety budget, with no separated budget having been allocated.

Policy wording

Wellington City Council's sun protection practices are contained within the council's commitment to the provision of a healthy and safe working environment for employees. They relate specifically to the council's resolve to:

- *ensure that an effective health and safety system is maintained and regularly reviewed for continuous improvement*
- *integrate health and safety into day-to-day management practices*
- *involve employees in health and safety matters and encourage their active participation in hazard identification and control*
- *establish communication channels to ensure health and safety issues are discussed and that information and decisions are fed back to all interested parties.*

Promotion

The written promotion of sun protection for outdoor workers took numerous forms and continues to do so. Internal newsletters carry the message; SunSmart posters are displayed at pools, in staff tearooms, meeting rooms, lifts and foyers; spot checking pamphlets are handed out to workers and also made available at public pool information stands.

Evaluation

Over the course of five years, Wellington City Council's outdoor worker project continues to be successful and is implemented during summertime every year. It has been noted that there has been an increase in compliance during this time from outdoor workers – they are now far more willing to use the sun protection gear and sunscreen provided by the council.

Informal monitoring and evaluation of the project takes place after summer, through a report to the health and safety manager. This includes how many workers have attended the spot checking sessions as well as how many have been referred for medical attention.

What worked well

The large number of promotional materials helped to raise awareness of sun protection both internally within council buildings and for outdoor workers. Written information had the benefit of allowing the key messages to be expressed clearly and reinforced continually through different visual resources such as posters and pamphlets. The council still works in conjunction with the Wellington Division of the Cancer Society to keep up-to-date with current sun protection issues and key messages.

One of the major factors in getting buy-in from outdoor workers and compliance with council policy was through the council's occupational health nurse being on the ground 'walking the talk'. This reinforced the messages on a more personal level and allowed workers to enter into discussions about the issues, if they wished to. The occupational health nurse continues to spend a lot of time each summer 'on site' with outdoor council workers at parks, pools, zoos etc, promoting sun safety.

What could have worked better

A specific sun protection practice that the council originally implemented was to put two litre tubs of sunscreen on site for council workers to use. The tubs had a tendency to 'go missing' and this practice was eventually abandoned. Workers are now supplied with tubes of sunscreen for personal use.

Suggestions

The following suggestions for TLAs intending to extend or develop sun protection policies for outdoor workers came from health and safety team members at Wellington City Council.

- Be very specific about what is needed before implementation and make targets achievable. Practices can be built on and improved every year.
- Work on the ground is vital. Contact with outdoor workers and offering time to discuss sun protection practices helps enormously with mutual understanding and compliance.
- Target the audience carefully – get the SunSmart message out in internal publications including business groups that work with the council, for example, newsletters for people working in the building industry.
- Make sure your messages are always culturally appropriate. Maori and Pacific staff are sometimes under the impression that their colouring will protect them from harmful exposure to UVR. It is important to highlight that this is not the case.
- Listen to what outdoor workers have to say and consider each year how to do things better.



Case Study – City of Whittlesea, Australia

Skin cancer (both non-melanoma and melanoma) is the most common form of cancer in Australia, which has highest rate of skin cancer in the world. The City of Whittlesea was the first council in the Victoria region to design and implement a shade policy to reduce the incidence of skin cancer.

Whittlesea City Council's Municipal Public Health Plan (1996-1999) identified skin cancer as a major health issue and proposed the development of a municipal shade policy. The resulting policy was adopted in 1999 and covers a number of areas.

- *Council-owned and operated facilities*, including sports and recreation facilities, playgrounds and parks – the council identifies areas to improve and develop shade, shade provision is included in all planning or upgrading of facilities.
- *Council-owned facilities operated by committees of management*, including childcare centres and pre-schools – the council undertakes to provide constructed or natural shade to all pre-schools and childcare centres on a priority basis.
- *Privately owned facilities in the city of Whittlesea* – all planning applications that pertain to the use of commercial and industrial outdoor areas where people congregate will need to demonstrate that shade has been considered and addressed.
- *Council staff* – a SunSmart Policy for council staff had previously been developed and implemented as part of council's Occupational Health and Safety Strategies. The policy covers sunscreen, protective clothing, education and shade.
- *Information for the general public* – where possible the council provides information to new landowners in the City of Whittlesea to help them design their gardens to enhance shade provision.
- *Council-run events* – portable shade is provided where necessary and practicable for events held on council owned or managed land.
- *Amendments to planning guidelines* – the policy outlines a number of specific amendments to incorporate shade provision.

Implementation

To implement its shade policy, Whittlesea Council formed a staff working group made up of members from each council department that had a major stake in the project.

Policy development

The policy was developed with a whole-of-council approach to shade creation and was designed after extensive interdepartmental consultation through the working group.

It was written to incorporate a strong emphasis on appropriate shade planning both within council and as part of the planning application process. It addresses issues of both natural shade and constructed shade and was implemented with the support and assistance of the Cancer Council of Victoria.

John Greenwood, one of Australia's leading authorities on shade design, provided a staff training seminar on sun protection. The training focused on the principles of shade involved in the planning and design of sun protection at public venues. Representatives from councils in other areas of Australia also attended this seminar.

Policy wording

The Whittlesea City shade policy outlines the following objectives:

- 1. to ensure that the provision of shade is an integral part of council's planning processes*
- 2. to seek to increase the provision of shade at council-owned pre-schools and child care centres*
- 3. to seek to increase the provision of shade in parks and playgrounds*
- 4. to seek to increase the provision of shade at sporting and recreation facilities*
- 5. to seek to increase the provision of shade by private developers*
- 6. to seek to increase the provision of shade by private home owners by education and promotion of shade concepts.*

Promotion

Whittlesea Council held an official launch of its shade policy that was attended by Australia's shadow Minister for Health. This resulted in significant local media coverage, both in newspapers and on the radio. All elected council representatives attended the launch.

Whittlesea's shade policy gained additional publicity when it received a Victorian public health award for excellence in 1999. The council continues to try to maintain a high public awareness of the issue by informing local media each time a new shade structure is erected.

Evaluation

Whittlesea Council is currently undertaking an evaluation of its shade policy. It is attempting to address issues such as the provision of more specific guidelines for different shade needs in different settings.

What worked well

The initial shade training seminar was crucial in educating staff on including shade design in planning processes. Raising awareness internally has resulted in shade being incorporated into a number of different council policies with reasonable regularity.

The council has noted a behavioural change in the public in terms of sun protection. It has found that in recent years, wherever shade is offered, the public will seek it out and make use of it.

What could have worked better

Although initial training of council staff was extremely successful, the council acknowledges that refresher training is also needed. It has found that shade design skills have dropped as people have left the council over the years and the shade policy has lost some momentum. It has been suggested that this could have been avoided if the original working group had been ongoing.

The council is also considering how to solve the ongoing and significant problem of vandalism of shade structures which is resulting in high damage costs.

Suggestions

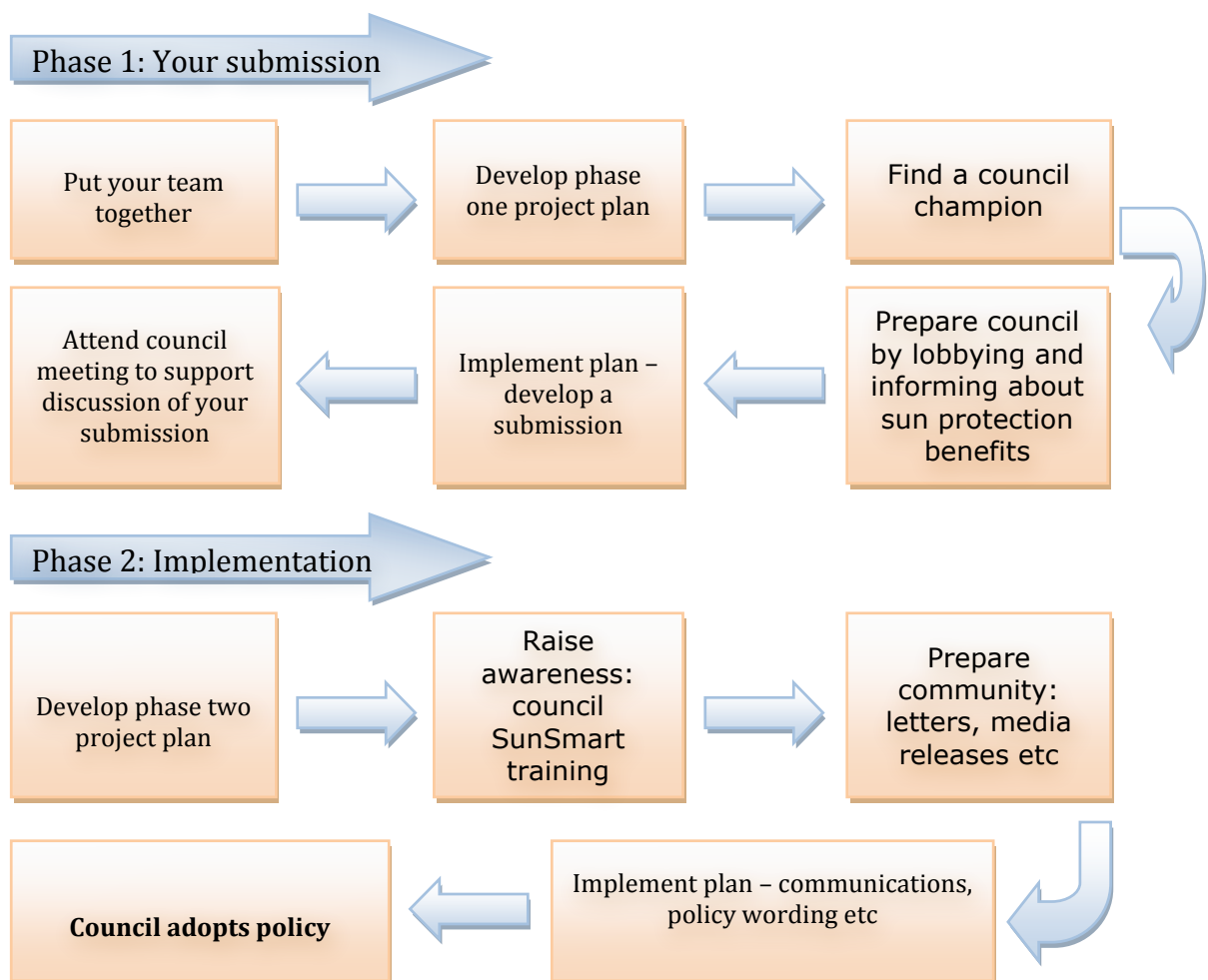
The following suggestions for TLAs intending to extend or develop a shade protection policy came from key staff members at Whittlesea Council.

- Organise an inter-departmental internal working group of members who have a stake in the policy. Collaboration yields the best results.
- Make sure everyone working on the policy knows why they're doing it and is aware of the local issues surrounding shade protection.
- Incorporate staff training into the policy actions.

Developing your submission

This section has suggestions for approaching your local council or governing authority about introducing sun protection measures, and developing a formal submission.

The diagram below summarises the process for approaching your council and implementing a sun protection policy.



Putting your team together

While it only takes one person to approach a local council with the request that a sun protection policy be considered, taking a team approach has several advantages including:

- sharing the workload
- pooling budgets
- wider expertise and input
- clear indication to councils that the issue is well supported.

Project plan phase 1

At the start of the project it is important to put together a project plan that will act as a 'road map' for the tasks that need to be carried out to convince the council to introduce a sun protection policy. If your submission is successful, the plan will need to be updated to include the implementation phase of the project.

The plan should include:

- background to the project
- working group members' details
- aim
- rationale
- key messages
- supporting agencies' details
- communications opportunities
- a timeline that includes who does what by when.

Long-term council community plans (LTCCP)

It is important to point out to councils how sun protection measures can link in with their LTCCPs and strategies.

When preparing your submission, look through the council's LTCCP and other supporting planning documents such as district annual plans and community recreation plans. Find the community outcomes that tie in with a sun protection policy and marry them with particular measures or strategies. Point out to council how its outcomes will be furthered by implementing these measures or strategies. See Wanganui District Council case study for an example of how a health promoter has done this previously.

Most councils have their LTCCPs and other plans available on their website. They should also be available to community members on request, or from local libraries.

Timing

It's essential to get your approach to council right. Planning should be done with thought and care, and without rushing it! Skin cancer, while a growing concern in New Zealand, is not at the forefront of public thinking. The need for sun protection will need to be approached carefully.

You may need to gauge the receptiveness of council to the introduction of a sun protection policy. Setting up a time to talk to a councillor or committee member may help you to communicate the benefits of the policy before you actually make a submission. This will also help identify whether there are going to be difficulties in getting councillors' support.

Approaching your local body

While all local bodies are required by law to develop plans in consultation with the public, different councils take different approaches to fulfilling these requirements and processes may not always work the same in all localities. However, there are some general steps you can follow.

The submission process

The ideal time to approach a council is when submissions are requested from the public on the development of strategic or district annual plans. Some councils hold quarterly forums to which the public is invited and notice of meetings will be posted in community newspapers or on the council's website.

Individual councils will have differing requirements and deadlines for submissions; you can find out about these by ringing the council – many have an information line. However, presenting a submission to council can be done at any time and you can contact the council directly with your submission. If you know of a councillor or council staff member who is supportive, ask them for help with your approach to council. They will be familiar with council plans to which sun protection policies could be linked. This may also be useful during the submission process, as council officers will be asked to prepare a report on the issue, with their recommendations.

Approaching councils directly

If you are approaching a council directly, first approach a community services staff member, such as the environment manager community services or the parks and reserves manager. Sun protection practices will affect their area so it is important they are adequately consulted, even if they refer you to somebody else. If you can develop a good working relationship with your first contact, your approach to council members and other decision-makers may be easier. The phone numbers and addresses of

councillors, the mayor and senior council staff are often listed on council websites. If not, phone your local council directly for contact details.

Council 'champions'

TLAs in New Zealand that have already implemented sun protection measures have often had a 'champion' within the council who is willing to push for inclusion of these measures. Look for allies within the council who may already have an interest in the issue, or make someone interested! Sometimes if one influential person is made aware of the dangers of UVR, it can be the breakthrough you need. In Horowhenua, for example, the council's parks manager attended a Cancer Society awareness session on sun protection which inspired him to write a sun protection policy for the council.

Focusing your message to fit the council

In seeking to get your message across effectively you may need to think not only about what you want to say, but also about what you may need to say to persuade your council or councillors to take the actions you recommend. For example, they will need to hear how such a policy will further their particular community outcomes. Individual council objectives should be matched up with specific aspects of sun protection. This ensures council or councillors have a clear understanding of how the policy can work for them without increasing workload and costs too much.

Anticipating obstacles

Many council officials and staff will be supportive of sun protection measures, however, you can never take their support for granted. Any of the following issues may arise.

Perceived costs

Some councils may have concerns about introducing sun protection policies because of cost, or an increase in workload. However, as demonstrated by the New Zealand case studies, sun protection policies have already been implemented around the country at low costs and without big workload implications. Give examples of councils who have implemented a simple, achievable policy and how your council can adopt similar strategies to link in with their particular community plans.

Necessity of generic sun protection

A further barrier could be the common perception that harmful exposure to UVR is an issue concerning only outdoor workers, rather than one affecting the wider community. Many councils offer sun protection measures as part of employee health and safety regulations but don't think about them in terms of protecting the public. This is why your submission must be geared towards enabling people to see the bigger picture when it comes to sun protection. Make sure you have an emphasis on local skin cancer statistics (which can be provided by your local Cancer Society division or branch or the

Health Sponsorship Council) – council officials may not be aware of the extent of the problem in your region and this could jolt them into action.

Necessity of a council policy

Councillors who already have sun protection practices in place may not see the benefit of going through the process of writing and implementing a specific policy on sun protection. Point out that a well-designed sun protection policy will help the council to achieve an organisation-wide commitment to the issue, raise awareness both internally and in the public arena, and ensure sun protection becomes an integral part of the council's planning processes.

Many decisions and actions by local council staff are determined by what is in the council's plans. By adopting a policy, it shows the council has considered the implications of sun exposure and made a commitment to reduce the risk of skin cancer among its staff and community. A change of general culture throughout the organisation is more likely to result in practices that are enduring and across the board.

Mixed messages

There have been some media reports suggesting that people may suffer from vitamin D deficiency as a result of practicing sun protective behaviours. Local government staff and councillors need to be reassured that experts agree exposure to UV has both benefits and risks. However, sensible sun protection behaviour between the start of September and the end of March should not put people at risk of vitamin D deficiency. For more information, see the position statement *The Risks and Benefits of Sun Exposure in New Zealand* supported by the Cancer Society of NZ, Health Sponsorship Council and others (www.cancernz.org.nz/about-us/position-statements/).

Barriers to action

Perceived and real barriers to erection of shade structures and/or the planting of trees in public spaces include cost, potential vandalism concerns, maintenance issues and the impact on grass/turf in the shade. Developing shade solutions through a sound process will ensure consideration of all potential issues. The process could involve seeking the advice of shade auditors or contacting staff at other local councils.

Project plan template phase 1

SUNSMART POLICY PROJECT PLAN: PHASE ONE – SUBMISSION

A project plan that will act as a 'road map' for the tasks that need to be carried out to convince the council to introduce a sun protection policy. If your submission is successful, the plan will need to be updated to include the implementation phase of the project.

Following is a template for a project plan for the development of a submission to council.

| | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Project Name: | Council SunSmart Policy Project Plan |
| Project Sponsor(s): | |
| Project Team Leader | |
| Team Members: | |

| | | | Change 1* | Change 2* |
|--|--|-------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Project signed off by: Name: Signature | | Date: | | |
| | | | | |
| Project signed off by: Name: Signature | | Date: | | |
| | | | | |
| Project signed off by: Name: Signature | | Date: | | |
| | | | | |

*Sponsors should initial and date these boxes to approve any substantial changes to the project.

AIM

To make a successful submission to [name] council for the implementation of a sun protection policy.

RATIONALE

Skin cancer is the most common of all cancers and New Zealand has one of the highest incidence and mortality rates in the world. Many cases of skin cancer could be prevented if New Zealanders adopted SunSmart behaviours, whenever they are outside.

Decisions made by council frequently impact on the health of our community. Melanoma and other skin cancers are serious public health issues for which local government needs to assume some responsibility.

Local statistics show that skin cancer is a very real problem within the [name] area. [Include regional skin cancer statistics]. Almost all skin cancer is preventable, but people need a supportive environment to help them practice SunSmart behaviours.

Links to community outcomes: There are many opportunities throughout the [name of council plan] to incorporate proactive initiatives:

[List specific council community objectives that would be impacted by the implementation of a sun protection policy]

KEY MESSAGES

- Skin cancer is a very real personal danger in New Zealand. New Zealand has one of the highest levels of UVR in the world, as well as one of the highest melanoma death rates in the world.
- Skin cancer is not only a national issue but also a local one, as demonstrated by the area's statistics.
- Almost all cases of skin cancer are preventable, by people taking measures to protect themselves from harmful exposure to UVR.
- A sun protection policy will help create a healthy community by providing the best opportunities for people to be SunSmart.
- Council is acting on its responsibility to provide a safe public environment.
- There is growing public support for sun protection as people are becoming more aware of the dangers of harmful exposure to UVR.
- Sun protection practices will have an impact on the future health of residents of the district/city.
- The council is progressive, responding to health risks and assisting in long-term health benefits.
- The council is investing in sun protection measures to save both human suffering and health expenditure.
- Appropriate sun protection practices will not place people at risk of vitamin D deficiency.
- Many places around New Zealand and the world have implemented successful sun protection policies.
- Shade audits result in cost-effective shade solutions.

COMMUNICATION OPPORTUNITIES

- Supportive letters to the editor
- Work with local health reporter
- [Other relevant to your area]

RISK MANAGEMENT

| Risk | Likelihood H/M/L | Impact H/M/L | Consequences if happens | Mitigation strategies |
|---|-----------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| Council does not understand the policy and rationale | M | H | Policy will not be adopted by council | Ensure council is clear about the need for, and benefits of, a sun protection policy |
| Concerns around cost of implementation/ increase in workload | H | H | Policy will not be adopted by council | Work through concerns with council Reassure councillors that the implementation of such policies in other areas has been done at low cost and without big workload implications |
| [Other concerns relevant to your area] | | | | |

ACTIVITIES, TASKS AND TIMEFRAMES

Project start date:

Project end date:

| Task | Who | By when | Resources/ cost |
|---|------------|----------------|----------------------------|
| Obtain a copy of your council's LTCCP | | | |
| Find out when submissions on annual plans and LTCCPs due (note, submissions can also be presented at other times) | | | |
| Identify the community outcomes that will be furthered by a sun protection policy, for use in your submission | | | |
| Talk to supporters to gain their endorsement for the submission and to discuss using them in media work | | | |
| Draft submission | | | |
| Arrange supportive letters to the editor and work with local health reporter (possibly using supporters) | | | |
| Finalise submission | | | |
| Submission presented | | | |
| Oral presentation given if invited | | | |

BUDGET

| Expenses Code | Item | Budgeted Expenditure | Total |
|---------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-------|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | Total Costs (GST exclusive) | | |

Submission content

There are a number of elements important to your sun protection submission to council. It is recommended that your submission covers (at least):

- who you are and the organisations you represent
- a clear statement of the purpose of your proposal
- some background and research into the risks of UVR, with a focus on local statistics
- what a sun protection policy will achieve
- how a sun protection policy will contribute to the council's community outcomes
- your key messages.

Here is an example of wording that could be included with a submission to council requesting development of a sun protection policy.

We recommend that:

1. Council offer protection from harmful exposure to UVR by taking action in the following areas.

Outdoor events

- Develop a SunSmart outdoor events policy which includes consideration of timing of events, shade provision, role-modelling by officials and promotion of SunSmart behaviours at all council run or contracted events. Promote this to all community groups using council facilities.
- Where possible, schedule outdoor events, such as parades and festivals, at times when the risks of harmful exposure to ultraviolet radiation (UVR) are low (usually before 11am and after 4pm during September to March when peak UVR levels exceed those when sun protection is recommended).
- Provide information, appropriately placed shade provision, and appropriate personal sun protection such as sunscreen, at all council-run outdoor events.

Outdoor workers

- Develop a council SunSmart outdoor workers policy in line with the Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992. This would include provision of SunSmart clothing, sunscreen, appropriately placed shade, scheduling of work and a commitment to SunSmart behaviour.
- Work with Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) to encourage employers to undertake appropriate monitoring to safeguard the health of employees exposed to high UVR levels.

Parks and gardens

- Look for opportunities to provide sufficient natural or man-made shade structures where regular activities take place during times of high UVR levels.

- Conduct shade audits of all parks over time, prioritising those where new facilities or other upgrading is being planned.

Swimming pools, paddling pools and other outdoor facilities

- Provide shading options, appropriate personal sun protection and information to public.
- Conduct shade audits of all swimming pools and other outdoor facilities over time, prioritising those where new facilities or other upgrading is being planned.

Planning and building approvals

- Introduce and implement a universal policy requiring all relevant departments and public facilities to include appropriately placed shade, or take advantage of existing shade as an essential component when designing and developing outdoor facilities and settings.
- Ensure shade development is incorporated into all council environmental plans – this includes all council-managed facilities such as housing, parks, playgrounds and street scenes.
- Ensure shade auditing is a requirement of all new external developments which council permits.
- Provide information about planning and designing quality shade, or contact details of shade audit professionals, with planning application kits.
- Outdoor planners to carry out regular shade audits of public places and to keep up-to-date with current shade practices.
- Amend planning guidelines to reflect these changes.

2. The public is made aware of the risks of UVR and encouraged to make use of any sun protection measures made available to them. Including:

- community grants to outdoor groups, such as sports bodies, to include provisions about SunSmart behaviour
- information on sun protection practices to be promoted to both employees and community members to raise awareness of the risks of skin cancer
- reminders about the need to limit exposure to the sun, usually between 11am and 4pm, to be placed at swimming pools, and announcements made over public address systems.

3. Council use publicity to inform the public of the sun protection provisions and encourage use of these provisions.

Example submission

Dovedale Cancer Control Network Submission to the Dovedale District Council on the matter of a sun protection policy

November 2010

Enquiries to:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is a submission to the Dovedale District Council by Jane Smith on behalf of the Dovedale Cancer Control Network. This submission requests council implement a sun protection policy covering outdoor summer events, outdoor workers, parks and gardens, swimming and paddling pools, other outdoor facilities (eg, camping grounds), and planning and building approvals.

It outlines the reasons why such a policy would be of benefit to the people in our community. In short, we believe such a policy would help to raise awareness of the risks of harmful exposure to ultraviolet radiation (UVR), reduce the incidence of skin cancer in the region, and provide a more supportive environment for those wishing to protect themselves from the sun during the months of high UVR. A sun protection policy would contribute to a number of the community outcomes outlined in the Dovedale District Council's long-term council community plan and district annual plan (see below).

ABOUT THOSE MAKING THIS SUBMISSION

The Dovedale Cancer Control Network is a group of health promoters from the Dovedale District and includes representatives from the Dovedale District Health Board, Dovedale Primary Health Organisation, Dovedale Cancer Society and Plunket. The Cancer Control Network's aim is to reduce the rates of melanoma and other skin cancers in the Dovedale region caused by harmful exposure to the sun.

REASONS FOR A SUN PROTECTION POLICY

Skin Cancer in New Zealand: Skin cancer is the most common cancer in the country, with New Zealanders at high risk of developing a skin cancer during their lifetime. Each year there are an estimated 69,000 or more new cases of skin cancer and over 300 New Zealanders die from the disease.

Melanoma is the most serious form of skin cancer and New Zealand has one of the highest melanoma death rates in the world. In 2005, the year for which the most recent figures are available, there were 2,017 recorded cases of melanoma (<http://www.cancernz.org.nz/reducing-your-cancer-risk/sunsmart/about-skin-cancer/costs-of-skin-cancer/>).

At the time of this submission, there are two skin cancer diagnoses a day, with one a month being melanoma, in the Dovedale region. The vast majority of skin cancers are preventable at all ages if people avoid excess exposure to UVR and if attitudes towards tanning are changed.

Decisions made by council frequently impact on the health of our community. Melanoma and other skin cancers are serious public health problems for which local government needs to assume some responsibility. Long-term and sustainable sun protection practices will have an impact on the future health of Dovedale residents.

The *New Zealand Cancer Control Strategy: Action Plan 2005-2010* stated that skin cancer prevention strategies need to target both the individual and appropriate organisations. Such organisations include early childhood centres, schools, sporting and recreational organisations, and local government.

The *Cancer Control Strategy* highlighted that while there has been an emphasis on raising awareness of the need for sun protection among individuals through media campaigns, there is also a need for public policy for skin cancer control. One of its key areas of focus is increasing the provision of shade in public areas and settings.

The introduction of a sun protection policy has at its core the aim of reducing the number of skin cancer cases by raising awareness of the issue in the community, and offering the best possible opportunities for people to practice sun protective behaviours. Studies looking at factors that affect skin cancer show that:

- most skin cancers are considered to be caused by excess exposure to sun UVR, and are therefore potentially largely preventable
- New Zealand experiences high levels of UVR between September and March. Levels can be up to 40 percent higher than those at equivalent latitudes in the Northern Hemisphere
- people are particularly at risk from harmful exposure to UVR between September and March when peak UVR levels exceed those when sun protection is recommended.'
- episodes of sunburn have been associated with increased risk of melanoma

- the encouragement of sun-protective behaviour is the most effective public health measure to reduce the incidence of skin cancer
- appropriately placed shade provides good protection from harmful exposure to UVR and can reduce exposure to UVR if available as a choice for individuals
- shade audits are an effective means of determining how outdoor spaces can be used and, if necessary, modified to minimise the risk of over-exposure to UVR
- clothing and hats provide a natural shield for the skin, and use of a broad spectrum, SPF30+ broad spectrum sunscreen provides extra protection. Wrap-around sunglasses will protect the eyes by filtering out the harmful rays.

What benefit is there to the Dovedale District Council in having a sun protection policy?

A sun protection policy gives the council an opportunity to promote a healthier community and shows it believes safety is important for those using its parks, reserves and swimming pools. It creates a healthy environment in the district's recreation areas and gives Dovedale District Council the chance to play a large part in educating people on how to stay safe in the sun.

An increasing number of organisations are recognising the need to provide shade, and as the community's knowledge about sun protection improves, so does its demand for public facilities with adequate seasonally appropriate shade. Sun protection practices also further a number of community outcomes relating to health, wellbeing, recreation and the environment.

Skin cancer has a number of impacts on the wellbeing of communities. Dovedale District Council will be investing in reducing skin cancer to save both human suffering and health expenditure. The Dovedale district offers a range of fantastic sporting facilities and top range playgrounds. Wouldn't it be great to ensure residents and visitors can enjoy these facilities in the safest possible environment?

COMMUNITY OUTCOMES

We believe that a sun protection policy covering all relevant council activities will help to further the following community outcomes listed in the Dovedale long-term council community plan (LTCCP) and the Dovedale draft annual plan.

- LTCCP Community Outcome 4.2: The community is safe, healthy and strong.
- LTCCP Community Outcome 5.7: People of all ages, cultures and abilities enjoy recreation, cultural and leisure activities.
- LTCCP Community Outcome 6.1: ...a region that provides a safe, healthy and friendly place to work, live or visit.
- Dovedale Draft Annual Plan Outcome 5.3: Development and positive management of existing recreational and sports facilities.
- Dovedale Draft Annual Plan Outcome 7.10: Community participation in the decision-making process.

- Dovedale Draft Annual Plan Outcome 8.2: Environmental design is highlighted as an important issue.
- Dovedale Draft Services Management Plan: Joint projects with other groups or agencies where there are mutual goals or a significant benefit to the community.

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE ELSEWHERE?

Horowhenua District Council and Wanganui District Council have implemented generic sun protection policies successfully and with little cost involved. Sun protection practices for outdoor workers, outdoor events and beaches have also been implemented in places such as Wellington, Christchurch, New Plymouth and Nelson. Internationally, the City of Whittlesea, Australia has had a shade policy in place since 1999 for which it has received a health award.

In all cases, the practices have been seen as successful in terms of raising awareness of the risks of UVR exposure and, in some cases, saving lives. This has been demonstrated in New Zealand where sun protection practices put in place by Christchurch City Council resulted in a far higher awareness of sun protection issues amongst council staff.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend that:

1. The council offers protection from harmful exposure to UVR by taking action in the following areas.

Outdoor events

- Develop a SunSmart outdoor events policy which includes consideration of timing of events, shade provision, role-modelling by officials and promotion of SunSmart behaviours at all council run or contracted events. Promote this to all community groups using council facilities.
- Where possible, schedule outdoor events, such as parades and festivals, at times when the risks of harmful exposure to ultraviolet radiation (UVR) are low (usually before 11am and after 4pm between September to March when peak UVR levels exceed those when sun protection is recommended).
- Provide information, appropriately placed shade provision, and appropriate personal sun protection such as sunscreen, at all council-run outdoor events.

Outdoor workers

- Develop a council SunSmart outdoor workers policy in line with the Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992. This would include provision of SunSmart clothing, sunscreen, appropriately placed shade, scheduling of work and a commitment to SunSmart behaviour.
- Work with Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) to encourage employers to undertake appropriate monitoring to safeguard the health of employees exposed to high UVR levels.

Parks and gardens

- Look for opportunities to provide sufficient natural or man-made shade structures where regular activities take place during times of high UVR levels.
- Conduct shade audits of all parks over time, prioritising those where new facilities or other upgrading is being planned.

Swimming pools, paddling pools and other outdoor facilities

- Provide shading options, appropriate personal sun protection and information to public.
- Conduct shade audits of all swimming pools and other outdoor facilities over time, prioritising those where new facilities or other upgrading is being planned.

Planning and building approvals

- Introduce and implement a universal policy requiring all relevant departments and public facilities to include appropriately placed shade, or take advantage of existing shade as an essential component when designing and developing outdoor facilities and settings.
- Ensure shade development is incorporated into all council environmental plans – this includes all council-managed facilities such as housing, parks, playgrounds and street scenes.
- Ensure shade auditing is a requirement of all new external developments which council permits.
- Provide information about planning and designing quality shade, or contact details of shade audit professionals, with planning application kits.
- Outdoor planners to carry out regular shade audits of public places and to keep up-to-date with current shade practices.
- Amend planning guidelines to reflect these changes.

2. The public is made aware of the risks of UVR and encouraged to make use of any sun protection measures made available to them. Including:

- community grants to outdoor groups, such as sports bodies, to include provisions about SunSmart behaviour
- information on sun protection practices to be promoted to both employees and community members to raise awareness of the risks of skin cancer
- reminders about the need to minimise exposure to the sun, usually between 11am and 4pm (during the September to March period, during which peak UVR levels exceed those when sun protection is recommended) to be placed at swimming pools, and announcements made over public address systems.

3. Council use publicity to inform the public of the sun protection provisions and encourage use of these provisions.

We thank you for your time and wish to be heard in support of this submission.

Jane Smith
On behalf of Dovedale Cancer Control Network.

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Implementing the policy

Phase two project plan

Congratulations, the council has agreed to adopt a sun protection policy! Now you move into phase two of the project – implementation.

For this stage you will need to update your project plan to focus on implementation. The updated plan will have a strong focus on the tasks that need to be undertaken to support the introduction of the policy (such as raising staff awareness of the issue, incorporating sun protection into planning and building approvals etc), evaluation of the policy, as well as a plan for communicating the new policy to the public and key stakeholders.

Raise awareness of the issue

Your sun protection policy will be most successful if as many people as possible within the council and the community understand why it is needed. Encourage and assist the council in organising a SunSmart awareness and training session – this can really help to raise the profile of the issue. Invite local councillors and relevant council staff, for example, health and safety managers and parks managers. Other people on the guest list could include representatives from other regional councils, council contractors and managers of local recreational facilities.

Collaboration

A sun protection policy will work best if there is an organisation-wide commitment to it. Encourage the set up of an inter-departmental working group within the council. This will be made up of staff from each department who have a stake in the policy, and may also have a representative from an organisation such as the Cancer Society or local building and landscape architects. Make sure all the goals and actions set out in the policy are simple and achievable for those whose job it will be to implement them.

Evaluation

Evaluating the new policy will give you a gauge of what is working well and where the policy may need refinement. It is important to think about evaluation of the policy from the outset of the implementation process. A 'baseline' survey prior to the introduction of the policy will allow you to monitor the changes brought about by the policy. For more information see *Evaluating the policy*.

Working with the media

Communicating the new policy to the public is a big part of the awareness-raising that will be vital to the policy's success. Ensure at least one person in your team is in charge of promotion of the policy. Ideally, this will be someone with previous media or communications experience. This person can make sure media releases are well written and can call local reporters to encourage them to cover the launch of the policy. Find out which media are most highly read/watched/listened to in your area, and target these as a priority.

Develop simple, clear information

To ensure those supporting the introduction of a sun protection policy are communicating the same information, develop a list of key messages and frequently-asked questions. These will enable all the information and research relevant to the initiative to be gathered in one place. This information can form the basis for media articles and releases, information flyers, information for school newsletters, letters to the editor and so on.

Develop relationships with the media

The media is always on the lookout for stories with a local flavour. Keep reporters at your local newspapers and radio stations up-to-date with statistics, and progress on the development and implementation of a sun protection policy. Provide local reporters with succinct and accurate key messages about the reasons behind the sun protection measures.

Think like a journalist

Journalists often get inundated with people wanting publicity for their cause so when you approach them, it's important to make sure your issue sparks their interest. The first thing to remember is that the media thrive on dramatic statistics, and these should be one of the first things to highlight when trying to gain coverage of your story.

'Real life' stories are also an effective way to get the media interested in an issue. If you know of anyone willing to speak out in support of the policy who has had first-hand experience of skin cancer, this will immediately appeal to journalists, giving the story a human face. This strategy can also be used in ongoing promotion of the policy.

A good example of this is when an outdoor worker from Christchurch City Council – when taking part in their free annual skin checks – was found to have melanoma. Her mole was subsequently removed which may have saved her life. This story was promoted within council publications but it would also have been a great opportunity to get publicity in local media. Make the most of every chance to raise awareness in the public arena.

Media releases and letters to the editor

Talk to local supporters such as DHB staff, or health promoters, to see if they are able to help by writing supportive letters to the editor of your local newspaper, or by putting out a supportive media release. The letters page in the local newspaper is widely read

and a collection of letters will make it clear to the council that there is support for sun protection practices.

If your group puts out a media release, follow up with a phone call to local media to check they received the release and to ask if they need any more information. Taking the time to do this will increase your chance of gaining media coverage. And don't just stick to local media – regional and national media often cover local stories. Don't be afraid to send media releases to the major daily paper that covers your area – you might just get lucky! Likewise, you never know when television news is looking for a 'quirky' local story, so consider contacting them as well. SunSmart stories are ideal 'fillers' for the weather segment of the television news. You can usually find newsroom contact details or information on how to submit news items at the organisations' websites.

When putting out a release, try to provide a photo opportunity that could be used to support your story and mention this in your correspondence or when you call. An example of this was when all Horowhenua District council staff were provided with wide-brimmed sunhats. The council informed their local newspaper and were photographed outside the council buildings wearing the hats. As a result they received positive media coverage.

Project plan template phase 2

SUNSMART POLICY PROJECT PLAN: PHASE TWO – IMPLEMENTATION

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Project Name: | Council SunSmart Policy Implementation Plan |
| Project Sponsor(s): | |
| Project Team Leader | |
| Team Members: | |

| | | | Change 1* | Change 2* |
|--|--|-------|--------------|--------------|
| Project signed off by: Name: Signature | | Date: | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| Project signed off by: Name: Signature | | Date: | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| Project signed off by: Name: Signature | | Date: | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

*Sponsors should initial and date these boxes to approve any substantial changes to the project.

AIM

To ensure the sun protection policy is effectively implemented in [area].

BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

[Name] council has agreed to implement a sun protection policy covering outdoor summer events, outdoor workers, parks and gardens, swimming pools, paddling pools and other outdoor facilities, and planning and building approvals. The policy will be in place from [date]. The purpose of this plan is to summarise the actions that need to be taken for the policy to be successfully implemented.

Melanoma and other skin cancers are serious public health problems for which local government needs to assume some responsibility. Councils have the potential to promote SunSmart behaviour amongst employees, residents and visitors to the region by providing a supportive environment for people to make SunSmart decisions.

KEY MESSAGES

- Skin cancer is a very real personal danger in New Zealand. New Zealand has one of the highest levels of UVR in the world, as well as one of the highest melanoma death rates in the world.
- Skin cancer is not only a national issue but also a local one, as demonstrated by the area's statistics.
- Almost all cases of skin cancer are preventable, by people taking measures to protect themselves from harmful exposure to UVR.
- A sun protection policy will help create a healthy community by providing the best opportunities for people to be SunSmart.
- Council is acting on its responsibility to provide a safe public environment.
- There is growing public support for sun protection as people are becoming more aware of the dangers of excessive and harmful patterns of UVR exposure.
- Sun protection practices will have an impact on the future health of residents of the district/city.
- The council is progressive, responding to health risks and assisting in long-term health benefits.
- The council is investing in sun protection measures to save both human suffering and health expenditure.
- Appropriate sun exposure practices will not place people at risk of vitamin D deficiency.
- Many places around New Zealand and the world have implemented successful sun protection policies.
- Shade audits result in cost-effective shade solutions.

COMMUNICATION OPPORTUNITIES

[List local and regional communication vehicles – for example community newspapers, regional paper, regional radio stations, council and public health unit/District Health Board publications, website, intranet and email.]

RISK MANAGEMENT

| Risk | Likelihood H/M/L | Impact H/M/L | Consequences if happens | Mitigation strategies |
|---|-----------------------------|-------------------------|--|--|
| Lack of understanding of the policy and rationale | M | H | Policy will not be implemented by council | Ensure council is clear about the need for, and benefits of, a sun protection policy |
| Failure to implement policy successfully (ongoing risk) | M | H | Policy will not be implemented by council | Work with council on an ongoing basis to help implement the policy Offer support and reassurance, as well as resources and merchandise (as budget allows) |
| Lack of information to monitor and evaluate policy | M | M | Unable to assess policy effectiveness or make improvements | Conduct baseline evaluation survey and evaluate policy regularly following implementation |
| Conflicting messages about the benefits of sunlight, including vitamin D and seasonality issues may confuse people. | | | | Provide council with simple, clear key messages about sun protection. |

ACTIVITIES, TASKS AND TIMEFRAMES

Project Start Date:

Project end date:

| Task | Who | By when | Resources/ cost |
|--|-----|---------|--------------------|
| Confirm wording of sun protection policy | | | |
| Agree date of launch of new policy | | | |
| Organise council training and awareness session | | | |
| Conduct initial baseline evaluation survey | | | |
| Develop question and answers document | | | |
| Decide whether to have a launch event | | | |
| Confirm spokespeople, eg, council, DHB | | | |
| Plan launch event – find venue, develop guest list, invite guests and media, arrange catering, write media release | | | |
| Contact local media and talk to them about the new policy. Provide the frequently-asked questions document | | | |
| Develop and find people willing to submit supportive letters to the editor | | | |
| Develop information promoting the new policy and distribute through various communications channels, eg, newsletters, websites, newspapers | | | |
| Launch new policy | | | |

BUDGET

| Expenses Code | Item | Budgeted Expenditure | Total |
|---------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|-------|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | Total Costs (GST exclusive) | | |

Sun protection policy template

This sun protection policy template can be used as the basis for your council's sun protection policy.

[Name of council] Sun Protection Policy

AIM

To reduce the incidence of skin cancer in [name of district/city] by the improved provision of shade and other sun protection measures that are appropriate for the site, time of day and season.

POLICY OBJECTIVES

- To ensure that the provision of appropriately placed shade³ is an integral part of council's planning processes.
- To seek to increase the provision of appropriately placed shade at council-owned parks, playgrounds and facilities.
- To seek to increase the provision of appropriately placed shade at sporting and recreation facilities.
- To seek to increase the provision of appropriately placed shade by commercial developers.
- To seek to increase sun protection for outdoor workers.
- To provide, encourage and promote the use of appropriate personal sun protection measures amongst the general public.
- To seek to increase sun protection for the public by appropriately scheduling outdoor events.
- To seek to increase the knowledge of council employees, community organisations and the public about effective sun protection practices.

POLICY STATEMENT

[Name] Council recognises that New Zealand has one of the world's highest rates of skin cancer. This is related to the high levels of UVR that are present throughout much of the year, and especially during the summer months.

³ Well-designed built shade structures can provide safe and comfortable outdoor spaces for summer activities. For further information on designing shade refer to *Under cover – Guidelines for shade planning and design*, available from the Cancer Society of New Zealand: <http://www.cancernz.org.nz/reducing-your-cancer-risk/sunsmart/sunsmart-information-sheets/>

The council recognises that local government has an important role in minimising the risk of excessive and harmful exposure to UVR that is experienced by residents, workers and visitors to the area. Protection from UVR that is appropriate for the time of day and season can best be achieved through a combination of personal and environmental strategies, primarily well-positioned shade. [Name] Council will provide appropriately developed public facilities and information to developers and the community.

The council recognises that there are excellent opportunities for increasing appropriate shade provision by integrating shade requirements into land use planning processes. Council also recognises however that constructed shade can be a costly intervention and that it needs to be sited correctly in order to provide usable shade that is appropriate for the time of day and season. Where possible, shade provision will be increased in a cost neutral, co-operative and incremental way, as outlined in this policy.

POLICY GUIDELINES AND ACTIONS

To assist the minimisation of excessive and harmful patterns of UVR exposure, [name] Council will take action in five areas.

Managers of parks, gardens and recreational facilities

Policy guidelines

- Include natural and constructed shade as a consideration in the planning and upgrading of all sports and recreation facilities.
- Ensure shade audits of all council-owned facilities are undertaken and regularly reviewed.
- During the season of high UVR, encourage the scheduling of outdoor community events outside the hours 11am – 4pm in order to avoid the times of greatest risk of harmful exposure to UVR.
- Where additional costs will be incurred continue with provision of constructed shade in accordance with identified priorities and within available funding.

Actions to be taken

Education

- In public areas and council buildings, erect signage and use publicity materials reminding people about the importance of appropriate sun protection.
- Ensure contractors and employees are role models for users of parks and gardens.

Outdoor events

- Investigate provision of portable shade where necessary and practicable for events held on council-owned or managed land.
- Include promotion of SunSmart behaviours during the September to March period, during which peak UVR levels exceed those when sun protection is recommended.'
- all council-run or contracted events.

- Give information on “Planning a SunSmart Event” to organisations which book outdoor recreation facilities.
- Outdoor events, such as parades and festivals, to be scheduled where possible, at times when the risks of excessive UVR exposure are low (usually before 11am and after 4pm, during the September to March period).
- Provide information, shade provision and appropriate personal sun protection such as sunscreen at all council-run outdoor events held when there is a likelihood of exposure to excessive and harmful patterns of UVR exposure.

Beaches

- Encourage development of shade areas near beaches.
- Encourage council employees to be SunSmart role models.

Shade

- Conduct a shade audit at all council-owned parks and recreation facilities and activity stations (for example, playgrounds, swimming pools, skate ramps, picnic areas, along footpaths, bike paths, lookouts) in order to prioritise need and options.
- Set priorities based on this audit for a work programme to improve provision of appropriate shade both natural and constructed in priority areas. These developments will occur on an incremental basis, in accordance with identified priority areas and will be subject to funding availability, where additional or new costs are incurred.
- Promote the use of verandas outside shop fronts as a method of protecting the public from harmful exposure to UVR.
- Look for opportunities, at beaches or rivers within local government boundaries, to plant trees or build appropriate shade structures over specific use areas in adjacent reserves.

A consent authority

Policy guidelines

- Introduce and implement a universal policy requiring all relevant departments and public facilities to include shade as an essential component when designing and developing outdoor facilities and settings.
- Private developers need to demonstrate that shade has been considered in places where people congregate outside (eg, housing developments, sidewalk cafes, lunch areas for factory workers) by submitting a shade audit of the site as part of their application for consent.
- Incorporate shade in any future building and development plans for streets and public transport stops.
- Maintain a street tree policy to ensure appropriate selection, planting and maintenance of street trees.
- Incorporate a clause in community contracts requiring organisations to demonstrate satisfactory provision of appropriate shade/sun protection will be provided (usually between 11am and 4pm during the September to March period).

- Incorporate shade provisions in permits for new cafes and restaurants (or permit renewals for existing facilities) with outdoor eating areas and require the submission of a shade audit of the site as part of their application for consent.
- Relevant guidelines should be amended to require applicants to consider shade in their planning process.

Actions to be taken

- Require owners of outdoor eating venues to provide shade (such as umbrellas, canopies and awnings) for patrons.
- Seek to increase protective shade at public transport stops.
- Seek to increase protective shade to pedestrian thoroughfares linking schools to transport and pick up points.
- Seek to increase protective shade to streets that receive significant levels of use by pedestrian traffic on a regular basis.

Employers of outdoor workers and contractors

Policy guidelines

- Develop a council SunSmart outdoor workers policy in line with the Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992.
- Outdoor employees can include parks and gardens staff, road maintenance workers, engineers, parking officers, environmental health officers and others.
- Require contractors to observe local government policy and standards for outdoor work.

Actions to be taken

Education

- Provide a training module on skin cancer for outdoor workers; include this in the induction process of any new employees.
- Ensure planners and design professionals have access to information on the best shade practices.

Clothing

- Encourage employees to wear broad-brimmed hats, sunglasses and long-sleeved shirts outside.

Appropriate personal sun protection

- Provide employees with SPF30+, broad-spectrum sunscreen.
- Encourage volunteers to use SPF30+, broad-spectrum sunscreen or have it available on site.

Shade

- Undertake a shade audit to ensure development of cost-effective shade solutions. The use of existing shade can be optimised and new shade will only be created where it is really required.
- Install cabin covers and canopies on plant and equipment where practicable.

- Design work schedules where practicable to avoid exposure to the sun for long periods, especially between 11am and 4pm during the September to March period. Where this is not possible, rotate work schedules to minimise UV exposure during these hours.
- Inform workers participating in skin cancer education training of the need to schedule work activities to limit the amount of time exposed to the sun.
- Show workers effective ways of scheduling work activities.

Community educators

Policy guidelines

Provide information and publicity on UVR exposure and sun protection to council staff, community organisations and the general public.

Actions to be taken

- Post information about sun protection on council's website.
- Erect warning signs at selected outdoor venues alerting people to the dangers of sunburn.
- Make regular announcements over the public address system at swimming pools during relevant months.
- Provide information for new landowners to encourage planning for shade in building and garden design.
- Provide brochures on the importance of sun protection at customer service and visitor information centres.

Trainers

Policy guidelines

- Ensure all relevant council staff are sufficiently trained and able to effectively put the sun protection policy into action.

Actions to be taken

- Hold a training and awareness session for all employees affected by the sun protection policy.
- Work in conjunction with the Cancer Society to ensure all training and information is current and comprehensive.
- Provide information about planning and designing quality shade with planning application kits.

Evaluating the policy

Why evaluate?

Evaluating your sun protection policy will give you concrete information about whether your policy is making a difference, and in what ways. Ideally, you should conduct a 'baseline' survey prior to the introduction of the policy, so you can measure the changes that take place after the policy is introduced. For example, ask council outdoor workers what sun protection measures they are currently using, prior to introducing an outdoor workers' sun protection policy.

Consider the following when evaluating your policy:

Introduction of the policy

- What are people's attitudes and behaviours prior to the policy's implementation?
- What are the desired outcomes in terms of behaviour change following implementation? What is the best way to measure this?
- What are the desired outcomes in terms of the sun protection provided by council? How can this be measured effectively?

Implementation of the policy

- What impact is the policy having on desired outcomes in terms of behaviour change in the community?
- Is delivery of the policy consistent with original intentions? Are all elements of the policy being delivered adequately and consistently?
- Are there ways in which the policy can be expanded and adapted to other areas of sun protection e.g. at childcare centres?

Areas for consideration

Depending on the scope of the sun protection policy, there are a number of areas that you may want to examine during evaluation. The following areas may be considered both before and after the implementation of the policy.

Outdoor events

Consider how many outdoor events have been held over the course of the year, and how many of these have had sun protection measures in place. Are guidelines available for organisations planning outdoor events? Is the public encouraged to use personal sun protection in addition to using council-provided measures?

Swimming pools and other outdoor facilities

Think about how many council-owned swimming pools there are in the district and the number of these that offer shade provisions. How is SunSmart behaviour promoted at the pools? Consider what other council facilities are in need of sun protection e.g. camping grounds.

Outdoor workers

Consider the sun protection measures that are provided to outdoor workers such as appropriate clothing, sunscreen and shade. The general attitudes of outdoor workers to sun protection will have an impact on whether they make use of measures provided. Think about the proportion of outdoor workers that make use of sufficient sun protection and how they are informed about the importance of being SunSmart.

Parks and gardens

Consider the number of natural or man-made shade structures that are available in outdoor areas. Look at whether the public makes use of these shade structures. In addition, think about how SunSmart is promoted in these areas.

Planning and building approvals

How are sun protection measures included in building codes and planning requirements? Consider information provided to help outdoor planners comply with regulations, including how to conduct shade audits.

Current examples

Councils that have already implemented sun protection policies have evaluated them in a number of different ways, including:

- Christchurch City Council's sun protection policy is reviewed periodically as required but minimally at three-yearly intervals.
- An internal evaluation was undertaken by the Wanganui District Council's policy analyst about a year after the sun protection policy was launched. This evaluation was conducted through one-on-one interviews with council staff and external stakeholders.
- Informal monitoring and evaluation of the Wellington City Council's outdoor worker project takes place after summer, through a report to the health and safety manager. This includes how many workers have attended spot checking sessions as well as how many have been referred for medical attention.
- In Whittlesea Council's policy evaluation, it is attempting to address issues such as the provision of more specific guidelines for different shade needs in different settings.

Strategies that work

Through the national and international case studies set out in this document, key insights have been noted and summarised so future sun protection measures can be implemented effectively. Strategies that work well when introducing a sun protection policy include:

Take a planned approach

Spend time at the beginning of the project to develop a comprehensive project plan. The plan should include a timeline and clearly indicate which members of the team are to undertake which tasks. Be realistic about timeframes. Time may be needed to convince councillors and council staff of the benefits of introducing a sun protection policy.

Emphasise that the policy is for safety

Skin cancer is the most common of all cancers in New Zealand. Melanoma and other skin cancers are a serious public health issue for which local government needs to assume some responsibility. Almost all skin cancers are preventable – people need to learn about and practice sun protective behaviours.

Work closely with council and don't give up!

Prepare evidence-based supporting documentation to provide to council and the media that clearly explains the reasons for the proposed policy. Try to find someone on the council who is supportive of the issue and will help promote it to the rest of the council. This person can act as your 'champion' inside council and help keep the issue on the council's agenda.

Don't be surprised if your local body does not immediately embrace the idea of a sun protection policy. Sometimes it can take time for a new idea to be accepted. Keep promoting the benefits of sun protection practices to council at every opportunity. Emphasise how well the policy has worked in other regions and the positive feedback and endorsement local bodies in those areas have received from health and wellbeing groups. It is important to be realistic about timeframes – it takes time to provide positive information about sun protection practices to local bodies and the public. Be persistent.

Use the media

The media is a valuable tool for informing the public of the benefits of a sun protection policy. Local bodies also monitor the media to gauge public support for various issues.

Positive media coverage of an issue suggests public support. Contact reporters and talk to them about the reasons why a sun protection policy is necessary for your region. Identify key messages and repeat them in media releases, letters to the editor, and conversations with journalists.

Evaluate

The introduction of a sun protection policy is a significant commitment for all those involved. Therefore it is important to assess the success of the initiative. This enables you to determine what worked well and what others may want to do differently when they seek to introduce a similar policy.

Key messages

It's important to define key messages early in the planning process and to make sure these are repeated often in written materials and spoken comments.

Key messages include:

- Skin cancer is a very real personal danger in New Zealand. New Zealand has one of the highest levels of UVR in the world, as well as one of the highest melanoma death rates in the world.
- Skin cancer is not only a national issue but a local one, as demonstrated by the area's statistics.
- Almost all cases of skin cancer are preventable, by people taking measures to protect themselves from harmful exposure to UVR.
- A sun protection policy will help create a healthy community by providing the best opportunities for people to be SunSmart.
- Council is acting on its responsibility to provide a safe public environment.
- There is growing public support for sun protection as people are becoming more aware of the dangers of excessive and harmful patterns of UVR exposure.
- Sun protection practices will have an impact on the future health of residents of the district/city.
- The council is progressive, responding to health risks and assisting in long-term health benefits.
- The council is investing in sun protection measures to save both human suffering and health expenditure.
- Appropriate sun protection practices will not place people at risk of vitamin D deficiency.
- Many places around New Zealand and the world have implemented successful sun protection policies.
- Shade audits result in cost-effective shade solutions.

Frequently-asked questions

Your local council is likely to have a number of questions about the reasons for, and benefits of, the introduction of a sun protection policy. Some frequently-asked questions and answers are provided below.

Why should we worry about high levels of exposure to ultraviolet radiation (UVR)?

Skin cancer is the most common cancer affecting New Zealanders, with citizens at high risk of developing a skin cancer during their lifetime. Each year in New Zealand, a conservative estimate is that there are 69,000 or more new cases of skin cancer and over 300 New Zealanders die from the disease. Melanoma is the most serious form of skin cancer and New Zealand has one of the highest melanoma death rates in the world. In 2005, the year for which most recent figures are available, there were 2,017 recorded cases of melanoma.

Melanoma and other skin cancers are serious public health problems for which local government needs to assume some responsibility. Most skin cancer is preventable – people just need the best possible opportunities to learn about and practice sun protective behaviours.

For information and statistics on skin cancer, visit the SunSmart website (www.sunsmart.org.nz).

What is the benefit to our area of a sun protection policy?

A sun protection policy gives the council an opportunity to promote a healthier community and shows it believes safety is important for those using its parks, reserves and swimming pools. It creates a healthy environment in the district's recreation areas. Appropriate sun protection practices show a council is progressive and prepared to take positive action to help reduce the worryingly high rates of skin cancer in New Zealand.

Sun protection practices also further a number of community outcomes to do with health, wellbeing, recreation and the environment.

Do we have a legal responsibility to offer employees protection from harmful exposure to UVR?

Under the Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992 employers have an obligation to ensure that a significant hazard does not result in harm to employees.

OSH guidelines recommend that for every group of employees, an assessment should be made of the UVR to which they are likely to be exposed. This should include identification of the tasks with the time of day they are carried out and the period

involved. The greatest risk occurs between September and March, usually between 11am and 4pm when the UVR is most extreme.

Employers should ensure that the risk posed by harmful patterns of exposure to excessive UVR is minimised. In some instances, this may be achieved by taking actions such as simply changing the time of day when a task is carried out. This is the preferred option, but where this is not practical, protection should be provided. The steps that may be taken to reduce the risk posed by harmful patterns of exposure to UVR include working under cover when the sun is most intense, the use of appropriate shade and providing suitable personal protection. Smart employers will look after the short-term and long-term wellbeing of staff.

For more information on how to protect outdoor workers from UVR, see www.osh.govt.nz

What can we provide to staff in terms of training and education on sun protection?

Training should be offered to those responsible for organising outdoor work, new employees and those who are at risk of prolonged exposure to UVR. However, raising awareness amongst all council employees of the risks of harmful exposure to UVR is beneficial. Training sessions will highlight the importance of the issue and encourage people to be aware of protecting themselves from the sun, even if they are not working outdoors for a prolonged period of time.

Training should be ongoing and designed to achieve:

- awareness of the effects of exposure to excessive UVR
- promotion of preventative measures to reduce the risk of harmful UVR exposure
- awareness of information on the early detection of skin cancer by self-checking.

Council staff are not health workers; is it really our job to offer sun protection to the public?

Councils have always had an important role in public health activities within their communities. In recent years councils have provided leadership and innovation in a broad range of public health and safety-related activities, including injury prevention, road safety and health promotion on issues such as drugs, alcohol and smokefree outdoor areas.

There is no specific law that requires councils to have sun protection policies in place. However, under the Local Government Act 2002, councils are required to work with other agencies, including non-government organisations such as the Cancer Society, to improve health outcomes. A strategic partnership between the council and agencies such as the Cancer Society has the potential to significantly benefit the community and enhance positive health outcomes in terms of reduced incidence of skin cancer. The cost of skin cancer to the New Zealand health-care system is conservatively estimated at \$57 million per year.

What will a sun protection policy cover?

A sun protection policy should cover the following areas:

- outdoor summer events
- outdoor workers
- parks and gardens
- swimming and paddling pools
- other outdoor facilities (eg, camping grounds)
- planning and building approvals.

For example, a sun protection policy will ensure shade appropriate for the time of the day and season is provided in public areas, including parks, playgrounds and recreational facilities. Shade provision should ideally also be incorporated into new developments and facilities where there is significant use of outdoor space. Planning shade in advance is cost-effective. By undertaking shade audits council can ensure they create cost-effective shade solutions.

Summer events are another area where sun protection is important. Some councils currently offer free sunscreen, ensure provision of appropriate shade is available, and educate the community on the importance of being SunSmart.

Why spend time and effort on a sun protection policy when we can just implement practices?

Many decisions and actions by local council staff are determined by what is in the council's plans. By adopting a policy, it shows the council has considered the implications of harmful exposure to UVR and made a commitment to reduce the risk of skin cancer and other diseases related to excessive exposure to UVR among its staff and community. A change of general culture throughout the organisation is more likely to result in practices that are enduring and across the board.

How can we encourage private developers in the region to provide sun protection?

A number of councils both nationally and internationally have amended applications that pertain to the use of commercial and industrial outdoor development. Developers are now asked to demonstrate that appropriate shade has been considered and addressed in their plans.

Raising general public awareness of the issue as much as possible is one of the best ways to encourage the consideration of sun protection, as private developers are likely to respond to public demand.

Is there a lot of public support for sun protection?

People are recognising the risks of harmful exposure to UVR and the subsequent development of skin cancer. Health organisations, doctors, parents and those who have

suffered the effects of skin cancer first hand are just some of the people who have made efforts to raise public awareness of the need to be SunSmart over recent years. This is evident in other areas such as schools where policies and practices have been designed to protect children.

This is an opportunity for your council to be seen as progressive and proactive in this area and you can play a large part in providing a supportive environment for people to make SunSmart decisions. The public will see your council promoting wellbeing in the community and giving residents and visitors to the area the opportunity to enjoy the district's outdoor and recreation areas as safely as possible during the summer months.

Do other areas have sun protection policies?

Horowhenua District Council and Wanganui District Council have implemented generic sun protection policies successfully and with little cost involved. Sun protection practices for outdoor workers, outdoor events and beaches have also been implemented in places such as Wellington, Christchurch, New Plymouth and Nelson. Internationally, the City of Whittlesea, Australia has had a shade policy in place since 1999 for which it has received a health award.

Media kit

Questions and answers

These questions and answers can accompany media statements released and/or can be worked into media statements.

Why should we worry about high levels of exposure to ultraviolet radiation (UVR)?

Skin cancer is the most common cancer affecting New Zealanders, with citizens at high risk of developing a skin cancer during their lifetime. Each year in New Zealand there is an estimated 69,000 or more new cases of skin cancer and over 300 New Zealanders die from the disease. Melanoma is the most serious form of skin cancer and New Zealand has one of the highest melanoma death rates in the world. In 2005, the year for which most recent figures are available, there were 2,017 recorded cases of melanoma.

Melanoma and other skin cancers are serious public health problems for which local government needs to assume some responsibility. The health-care costs of skin cancer to New Zealand are conservatively estimated at \$57 million (O'Dea, 2009). Most skin cancer is preventable – people just need the best possible opportunities to learn about and practice sun protective behaviours.

For information and statistics on skin cancer, visit the SunSmart website (www.sunsmart.org.nz).

What is the benefit to our area of a sun protection policy?

Skin cancer is a very real danger in New Zealand. New Zealand has one of the highest levels of UVR in the world, as well as one of the highest melanoma death rates in the world. Skin cancer is not only a national issue but a local one, as demonstrated by the area's statistics.

A sun protection policy will help create a healthy environment in the community's public spaces, including sports and recreation areas. The council is responding to health risks by helping to reduce the worryingly high rates of skin cancer in New Zealand. This policy will give the district's residents the best opportunities to be SunSmart when they're outdoors. Long-term and sustainable sun safe practices will improve people's future health by reducing their risk of developing skin cancer.

Is it the council's job to offer sun protection to the public?

Councils have always had an important role in promoting public health within their communities. In recent years councils have provided leadership and innovation in a broad range of public health and safety-related activities, including injury prevention,

road safety and health promotion on issues such as drugs, alcohol and smokefree outdoor areas. A sun protection policy has the potential to significantly benefit the community and keep the community as safe as possible from harmful exposure to UVR.

What will the sun protection policy cover? [amend as relevant to your particular policy]

The sun protection policy will cover the following areas:

- outdoor summer events
- outdoor workers
- parks and gardens
- swimming and paddling pools
- other outdoor facilities (eg, camping grounds)
- planning and building approvals.

The policy will ensure shade is provided in public areas, including parks, playgrounds and recreational facilities. Shade considerations will also be incorporated into new outdoor developments and facilities.

Is there a lot of public support for sun protection?

People are recognising the risks of harmful exposure to UVR and the subsequent development of skin cancer. Health organisations, doctors, parents and those who have suffered the effects of skin cancer first hand are just some of the people who have made efforts to raise public awareness of the need to be SunSmart over recent years.

A sun protection policy shows a commitment by local government to play a part in providing a supportive environment for people to make SunSmart decisions.

Do other areas have sun protection policies?

Horowhenua District Council and Wanganui District Council have implemented generic sun protection policies successfully and with little cost involved. Sun protection practices for outdoor workers, outdoor events and beaches have also been implemented in places such as Wellington, Christchurch, New Plymouth and Nelson. Internationally, the City of Whittlesea, Australia has had a shade policy in place since 1999 for which it has received a health award.

Sample letters to the editor

Dear Editor

Congratulations to the council for its plan to adopt a sun protection policy. Parks are there for families to enjoy, for sporting activity, for recreation. It is entirely reasonable then to ask that people are kept as safe as possible from harmful exposure to UVR at these venues. The last thing we want is for our children to be at risk when they're outdoors enjoying the summer. I'm so glad to see the council is doing their best to keep its residents healthy.

Yours sincerely

Dear Editor

As a parent and [area] resident, I'd like to congratulate the [name of local council] on its plan to introduce a sun protection policy on [date]. People's attitudes towards the sun and tanning have got to change if we're to keep ourselves safe from the sun. I want my kids to grow up knowing the risks of skin cancer and ensuring they protect themselves from it. By supporting our efforts to protect people from the sun, [name of local council] is showing itself to be a progressive local body, prepared to take positive action to help everyone stay safe.

Yours sincerely

Dear Editor

As a [GP/doctor/nurse/health worker] I see all too often the effects of over exposure to the sun. The number of people being diagnosed with melanomas and other skin cancers in the [region] district is of great concern. So I wholeheartedly support [council's] sun protection policy. Anything that reduces the number of people suffering because of skin cancer is vital to the health of our community. We need to make sure that people know how important it is to protect themselves from the sun and give them the opportunity to do so. A sun protection policy is a great first step.

Yours sincerely

Dear Editor

The [organisation] fully supports [council's] sun protection policy. We all know that UV radiation is linked to skin cancer and that almost all these cases are preventable. The vast majority of skin cancers would be prevented if people were SunSmart when they're outdoors. By giving people the chance to stay safe from the sun in [place's] outdoor areas, we might see the incidence of skin cancer in the region drop. Good on you [council] for this positive and forward-thinking move!

Yours sincerely

Sample media release

[Name of Council]
Media Release

For Immediate Use

[Name] Council to join fight against skin cancer

[Name of district] residents will be safer from harmful exposure to the sun with the launch of [name] Council's new sun protection policy today. The council is responding to the alarming numbers of people being diagnosed with skin cancer in the district, currently at the rate of [local stats] every day.

[Name and title of council spokesperson] says the council wants to do everything possible to reduce the chance of people in [name of district] developing skin cancer.

"Skin cancer is a very real danger in New Zealand – but if people protect themselves from the sun, most skin cancers are preventable. We're launching this sun protection policy to help provide the best opportunities for everyone in our community to be SunSmart."

He/she says skin cancer is the most common cancer in the country, with New Zealanders at high risk of developing a skin cancer during their lifetime.

"Each year there is an estimated 69,000 or more new cases of skin cancer and over 300 New Zealanders die from the disease. Melanoma is the most serious form of skin cancer and New Zealand has one of the highest melanoma death rates in the world.

"The council wants to do whatever it can to reduce human suffering and the burden on the health system in the future. We want our communities to enjoy summer activities safely" [name] says.

The [name of council's] sun protection policy covers outdoor summer events, outdoor workers, parks and gardens, swimming and paddling pools and other outdoor facilities, as well as council planning and building approvals.

The policy will ensure shade is provided in public areas and that shade will also be incorporated into the design of new outdoor developments and facilities. [amend according to content of your policy].

[spokesperson] says the council recognises that local government has an important role in minimising the harmful exposure to UV radiation that is experienced by residents, workers and visitors.

“People have become more aware of the dangers of UVR exposure and are realising how important sun protection is. We want people to know that local government is taking the issue very seriously and will continue to keep the community as safe as we can. The policy will ensure that high risk activities and locations will be identified and shade provided where it is really needed.”

[Name] Council is following in the footsteps of other local bodies around New Zealand such as Horowhenua, Wanganui and Wellington City which have also implemented successful sun protection policies and initiatives.

ENDS

Further Information: [spokesperson contact details]

Further information

For more information of sun protection, there are a number of tools and resources available.

Cancer Society of New Zealand

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

Phone: 04 494 7270

Web: www.cancernz.org.nz

The Cancer Society of New Zealand is dedicated to reducing the incidence of cancer and ensuring the best cancer care for everyone in New Zealand. The Cancer Society consists of a national office, located in Wellington, and six regional divisions, all involved in raising their own funds and providing local support services.

SunSmart New Zealand

Health Sponsorship Council (HSC)
Level 3, 181 Wakefield Street
P.O. Box 2142, Wellington, 6011

Phone: 04 472 5777

Web: www.sunsmart.org.nz

The promotion of sun safety in New Zealand is lead by the HSC (Health Sponsorship Council), the Cancer Society of New Zealand, and public health units. SunSmart™ is the national brand for sun safety. The aims of all involved are to increase sun safety behaviours among New Zealanders, particularly those with fair skin, and therefore reducing skin cancer incidence and morbidity.

NIWA

Private Bag 99940, Auckland
369 Khyber Pass Road
Newmarket, Auckland

Phone: 09 375 2090

Web: www.niwa.cri.nz/services/free/uvozone

The mission of the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA) is to provide a scientific basis for the sustainable management and development of New Zealand's atmospheric, marine and freshwater systems and associated resources. Established in 1992 as one of nine New Zealand Crown Research Institutes (CRIs), NIWA is a stand-alone company with its own board of directors and its shares held by the Crown.

Melanoma Foundation of New Zealand

PO Box 91094
Auckland Mail Centre
Auckland

Phone: 09 486 5322
Web: www.melanoma.co.nz

The Melanoma Foundation of New Zealand was set up as a charitable trust in New Zealand in 2004. The trust was formed to raise funds to support those suffering from the disease melanoma, and their families. Its goal is to provide a single focus resource where information on melanoma is easily accessible for all those who need it.

Resources

Cancer Society New Zealand Information Sheets
<http://www.cancernz.org.nz/information/information-sheets/>

Cancer Control Strategy
<http://www.moh.govt.nz/moh.nsf/0/3d7504ad140c7ef0cc256d88000e5a16?OpenDocument>

NZ Skin Cancer Steering Committee Framework
<http://www.sunsmart.org.nz/skin-cancer-control-in-nz/who's-involved.aspx>

Providing shade

Well-designed built shade structures can provide safe and comfortable outdoor spaces for summer activities. They are particularly appropriate where groups congregate. In public spaces, summer shade is required over outdoor cafes and for spectators watching sports. In schools, shaded spaces can be created for outdoor teaching, small assemblies, eating lunch, and places where children gather to play, over play equipment, sandpits and courts. In homes, shade can provide attractive outdoor living spaces for dining, lounging and children's play.

The New Zealand environment creates unique challenges for shade design, which needs to be appropriate for the intended use and the microclimate of the location.

The Cancer Society resource *Under cover: Guidelines for shade planning and design* provides comprehensive information about designing effective shade. It is available from the Cancer Society: www.cancernz.org.nz/reducing-your-cancer-risk/sunsmart/sunsmart-information-sheets/. The SunSmart website: www.sunsmart.org.nz also has information about shade, including why it is important, how much is needed, shade materials, shade structures and shade guidelines for schools.

WebShade Pty Limited

1/340 Darling Street
Balmain NSW 2041
Sydney, Australia

Contact : John Greenwood
Ph: +61 2 9818 2177
E-mail: j.greenwood@webshade.com.au
Web: www.webshade.co.nz

WebShade has developed simple to use software that allows council planners to model shade outcomes involving buildings, shade structures and trees before and after they are built and planted. The software has automated many of the tasks of undertaking a shade audit as described in the NZ Cancer Society publication *Under cover – Guidelines for shade planning and design*. The software features also include: UVR risk profile analysis of activity areas and time series shade projection reports and video production capability.