

MEDIA RELEASE

MelNet welcomes sunbed age restriction 1 July 2016

MelNet is welcoming legislation restricting the use of sunbeds to those aged 18 or over. The Health (Protection) Amendment Bill passed its third reading in Parliament yesterday.

MelNet spokesperson Dr Ben Tallon says Parliament is to be congratulated for recognising the need to protect young people from the harmful UV rays emitted by sunbeds.

“While New Zealand has a voluntary standard for sunbed operators that includes not allowing people under the age of 18 to use them, many operators do not comply with these standards.

“Sunbeds expose users to higher levels of dangerous UV radiation than the sun. There is strong evidence that exposure to UV radiation in a sunbed causes DNA damage that can lead to the development of both melanoma and non-melanoma skin cancers.”

He says people’s risk of skin cancer increases the more often they use sunbeds, and the younger they start using them.

“In Australia it has been estimated that among those who had ever used a sunbed and were diagnosed between 18 and 29 years of age, three-quarters of melanomas were attributable to sunbed use.

“Your skin will also age more quickly. People with pale skin or who have had skin cancer before are at particular risk if they use sunbeds.”

He said MelNet views the age restriction as a step towards a total ban on the use of commercial sunbeds.

MelNet is a network of professionals working together to reduce the incidence and impact of melanoma in New Zealand: <http://www.melnet.org.nz/>

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