

17 February 2009

Mr Allen Little
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Ref. No _____

Dear Mr Little

Thank you for your letter of 24 January 2009 about the availability and subsidisation of approved sun screen for people with Albinism, effective eye protection for them, and enquiries about efforts to promote sun sense in the New Zealand environment.

You may be interested to know that a number of sunscreens, both in cream and lotion form, are subsidised by PHARMAC, the government's drug-buying agency. The Pharmaceutical Schedule lists the subsidised sunscreens, and the criteria for determining who has access to the subsidy (see page 68 of the Schedule). The latest version (February 2009) of the Pharmaceutical Schedule is freely available from PHARMAC's website (www.pharmac.govt.nz).

Work and Income (www.workandincome.govt.nz) has information about the Community Services Card, the High Use Health Card, the Pharmaceutical Subsidy Card and the Child Disability Allowance (as well as other benefits and allowances), which can help with paying less for some health services.

There are existing campaigns around being protected against New Zealand's damaging sun, particularly in summer, when ultra-violet radiation levels are very high. The Sunsmart campaign (www.sunsmart.org.nz) uses the 'Slip, slop, slap and wrap' message to help remind people to cover up and wear sunscreen when outside. There is also a campaign especially for schools (www.sunsmartschools.co.nz), which provides information on how schools can become sunsmart-accredited schools. This website includes suggestions about schools having adequate shade provisions for their pupils, and different kinds of appropriate hats that can be worn by pupils when outside at school.

During the month of February, Visique Optometrists is offering free sunglasses for new entrants beginning school. Information about this initiative can be found on Visique's website, www.visique.co.nz.

I trust this information is helpful.

Yours sincerely



Dr Ashley Bloomfield
Acting Deputy Director-General
Sector Capability and Innovation Directorate