

26 November 2012

Secretary, Strategic Review of the Workplace Health and Safety System

**Submission to Taskforce; on workforce UVR exposure and skin cancer.**

**By Des O'Dea – Health economist**

I am making this brief written submission rather than completing your submission template or your on-line questionnaire. I have, however, read your consultation document, and attended one of your public meetings, and found both excellent in informing me about the issues you are tackling.

I am a health economist who has taught health economics for a number of years at the University of Otago, Wellington. I have also carried out research contracts for ACC, on the total cost of injury to New Zealand, and for the Cancer Society of New Zealand on the costs to New Zealand of skin cancer.

It is about the latter I wish to comment. The prevalence of Skin cancers (particularly of non-melanoma types) in New Zealand is high, much more so than most would think. An important causal factor is exposure to solar ultraviolet radiation (UVR). Outdoor workers are more exposed to such radiation than others, and therefore at increased risk of skin cancer.

It would be helpful in coping with this problem to have more and better information than we now have about the magnitude of the risk. I accordingly support the recommendations in the submission by the Cancer Society of New Zealand Incorporated (Q25) that

- Cancer Register data on Melanomas should endeavour to capture occupation (or at a minimum categorised into indoor and outdoor work)
- It be a requirement that non-melanoma skin cancers be reported to the Cancer Register, in the same way as other cancers.

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission.

Yours sincerely

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