

Media Statement

Australia's leading sunscreen manufacturers reaffirm their strong commitment to public health amid CHOICE testing claims

12 June 2025 – Australia's leading sunscreen manufacturers reaffirm their strong commitment to public health and the highest standards of product safety and efficacy in response to the recent CHOICE report on SPF testing

Australian consumers can remain confident that therapeutic sunscreens sold in this country are regulated under some of the most stringent requirements in the world. Sunscreen manufacturers formulate their products to be safe and effective. Sunscreens with an SPF greater than 30 block more than 95 per cent of harmful UV radiation.

Therapeutic sunscreens must meet rigorous standards for safety and effectiveness set by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA), including the Australian/New Zealand Standard AS/NZS 2604, which follows the international standard ISO 24444 for SPF testing.

A recent CHOICE report on the testing of sunscreen products yielded results it says diverge from the SPF values declared on the product label.

CHOICE conducted similar sunscreen testing back in 2018. At that time CHOICE highlighted the variability in results with the following observations: *'...the issue of different labs getting different results is longstanding and well-documented...'* and *'the problem with varying results also seems to be more pronounced with higher SPF products, where tiny differences in measured UV protection amount to big differences in SPF rating'*.

The very nature of SPF testing means that testing results between laboratories can be highly variable. SPF testing is conducted using human volunteers who are exposed to UV radiation lamps. Skin varies from person to person in how it reacts to both UV radiation and sunscreen application. SPF test results are also measured visually by human observation of the level of redness on impacted skin. This likewise can vary between observers. So, inherent to SPF testing is a high degree of subjectivity.

'The Australian sunscreen industry is deeply committed to ensuring Australians can trust the sunscreens they use,' said Accord spokesperson Dr Jennifer Semple. 'Understanding the requirements arising from Australia's extreme UV conditions, not only are these products subjected to extensive testing, but sunscreen manufacturers work to exceed regulatory requirements to protect consumers from skin cancer and sun damage.'

'The industry takes any concerns seriously. Where inconsistencies arise, manufacturers investigate potential reasons for divergence to ensure continued consumer protection.'

'For example, we have reached out to the TGA to suggest further investigation, as the highly divergent SPF result of 4 for Ultra Violette Lean Screen (compared to SPF > 60 in a separate test) appears incompatible with its reported zinc oxide content.'

'We also note that some of the CHOICE SPF testing was on just five volunteers, whereas a minimum of 10 is the regulatory requirement.'

‘Sunscreen remains a critical tool in Australia’s sun safety strategy. We echo CHOICE’s reminder: continue using sunscreen daily, apply it generously and regularly, and combine it with other sun protection measures such as hats, sunglasses and shade,’ concluded Dr Semple.

Accord welcomes constructive dialogue with regulators and stakeholders and supports measures that strengthen consumer confidence in sunscreen through science-based, transparent processes.

Key points

- **TGA oversight:** Every therapeutic sunscreen must be supported by robust testing conducted in accredited laboratories using controlled, standardised conditions.
- **Batch variability is normal:** Variability in SPF test results can occur due to biological differences in volunteer skin types, lab conditions and sample handling.
- **Sunscreen is an essential part of sun protection in Australia**

ENDS

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