

NEWS RELEASE
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Best Friends Brave a Shave on National TV **'Shave 09' – March 9-15**

Shave week kicked off on 9 March with best mates Kerri Smith and Kylee Leyton shaving on TV3's *Sunrise* with Josh Heslop in support of the Leukaemia & Blood Foundation (LBF).

The Shave for a Cure event was held at the Farmers store in Botany Downs. The first three brave employees were followed by Kerri Smith, store manager from the Farmers Porirua store.

The crowd of Farmers employees and supporters were humbled and near tears when Smith's best mate Kylee Leyton decided on the spot to demonstrate her support by joining her friend and shaving.

The two women, both with waist-length hair, held hands and braved a shave before dozens of Farmers employees and thousands of TV3 viewers.

"At first it was why not? It's such a good cause, let's raise some money" said Smith. "But now Stacy who I work with his friend Royce has lymphoma and also my brother-in-law has cancer now too; so it's pretty close to my heart now."

The best friends do everything together. Smith remarked that the shave was quite liberating, "the cool thing is that we are doing it by choice, not everyone gets that choice."

Inspired by the best friends, TV3 *Sunrise* weather guy Josh Heslop decided to shave on air. Following the event Josh registered on the site www.shaveforacure.co.nz and has begun fundraising.

Employees from all 58 Farmers stores around New Zealand are fundraising for Shave for a Cure. Farmers employees were joined by Cut Above Academy who volunteered to do the shaving for the event. Everyone participated with enthusiasm to raise awareness around the cause.

The LBF is aiming to get 10,000 people – the estimated number of New Zealanders who have a form of blood cancer – to shave their heads to help raise money for its work.

Blood cancers can strike anyone, of any age, at any time. Pru Etcheverry the LBF executive director said "shave is a bold and brave and a very symbolic way for people to show support" to those living with leukaemia, lymphoma and related blood conditions. Many patients lose their hair as a result of treatment.

Etcheverry said "the funds raised go to the LBF's Patient support programmes, awareness programmes and vital research."

In New Zealand, blood cancers combined are the fourth most common cancer. In fact six children and adults are diagnosed each day in New Zealand with leukaemia, lymphoma, myeloma or a related blood condition.

To take part in Shave 09, register at www.shaveforacure.co.nz.

Ends