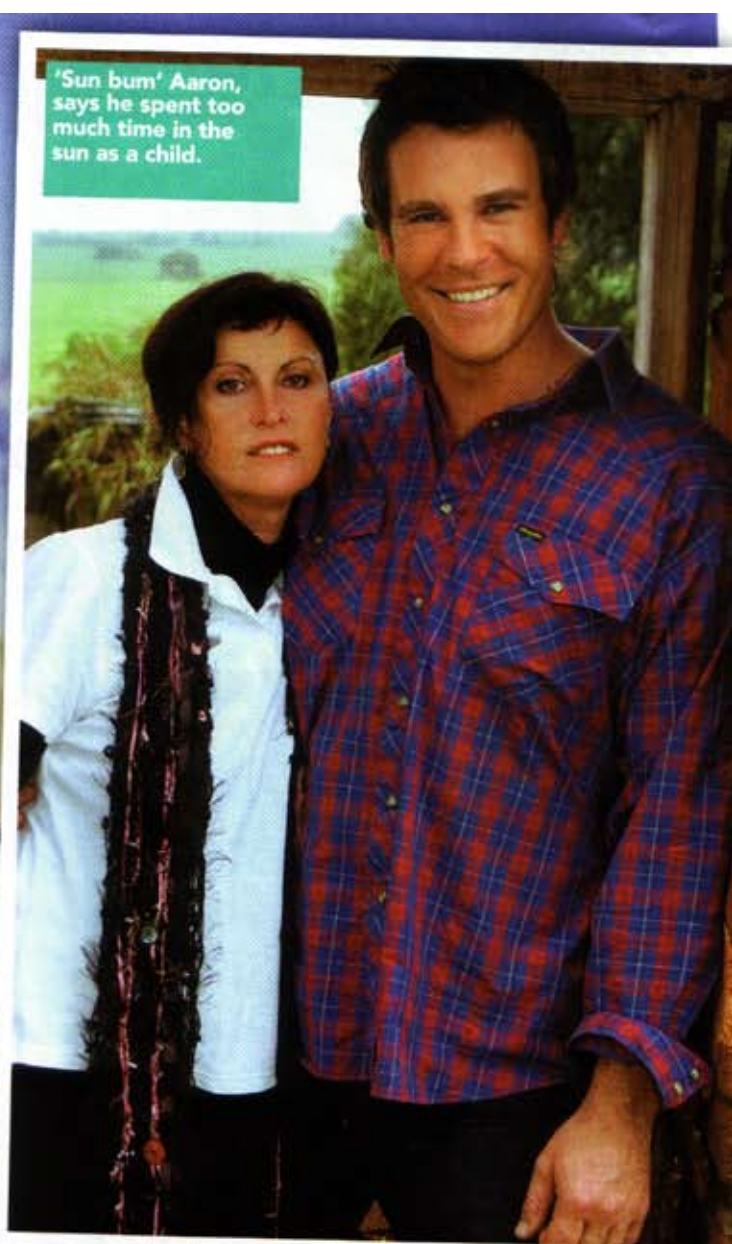


AARON'S cancer scare



'Sun bum' Aaron, says he spent too much time in the sun as a child.

McLeod's Daughters' Aaron Jeffery owes his life to a vigilant make-up artist

Every morning bright and early, when filming *McLeod's Daughters*, **Aaron Jeffery** plonks himself down in the make-up chair for his daily dose of hot coffee, gossip and stage advice from the show's head make-up artist **Suzie Warhurst** – but he never thought her words of wisdom would save his life! "I had a skin lesion on my face and Suzie was worried about it," says Aaron, who plays Alex Ryan. "I didn't think there was too much to be concerned about because I'm constantly having checks."

When Suzie found the spot on Aaron's right temple she recommended he visit skin specialist **Dr Michael Papps** in Adelaide, and now he's glad he made the appointment.

"The doctor said the one on my face was fine, although you don't usually get that sort of sun spot until you're in your

40s or 50s, but because I'd been such a sun bum, it'd decided to come earlier for me," says Aaron, who just celebrated his 35th birthday.

"And then he checked my body and found three moles that looked suspicious on my calf, my shoulder blade and in the centre of my back. He cut them out, got them checked and found all three of them were bad.

"He said I had an angel

'The doctor said I must have had an angel looking after me'

looking after me because if they'd gone unchecked there was a possibility I would've been a goner within the next two to five years. Apparently once these moles grow into your bloodstream you're just about dead. It's frightening."

Aaron says he's paying for his love of the outdoor life –

which began when he grew up in a New Zealand beachside community in the '70s.

"I gave myself a pasting in the sun when I was younger," he explains. "I lived in the water and I've always surfed. I didn't really know about taking care of my skin until I got older."

Shocked by the results, Aaron headed back to the Barossa countryside in South Australia, where the top-rating, Logie award-winning show is

filmed, and gave Suzie a huge bear hug of thanks.

"It's the big thing on-set that Suzie saved my life," Aaron says. "She's a great stick. I don't mind owing my life to her."

Suzie says she likes to give all the *McLeod's Daughters* cast a once-over for suspicious spots and moles.

"They're out in the elements all the time so it's just sensible to give them a check every now and then," she says. "And if I find anything suspicious I give them a push to see the doctor."

Aaron and the rest of the *McLeod's* cast always wear sunscreen and hats in the heat, which can rise up to 45°C in the middle of summer, with ground temperatures reaching a staggering 64°C. He says it's impossible to avoid sun damage during the long hours on set.

"With the way the sun's intensity has changed over the years and the hole in the ozone layer getting bigger, well, it has got to do some damage when you've been working outdoors for four years," says Aaron, who lives close to the set in the pretty suburb of Gawler. He shares his 100-year-old home with beautiful wife **Melinda Medich** and their 15-month-old daughter **Ella-Blu**.

Story: Leigh Reinhold