

**T**HE NIGHTLY cleanse, tone and moisturise routine has become a modern woman's mantra for ultimate skin care.

But how much of what she rubs into her skin is the real deal? Does 'the best products from science and nature' really mean that?

Not according to Narelle Chenery.

The Nerang mum started out selling 'natural' skincare products after graduating with a Bachelor of Applied Science in Information Management.

But after browsing through a cosmetic ingredient dictionary one day, she realised the products were full of toxins she had previously believed to be 'natural', because they claimed to be derived from natural ingredients.

"I was disillusioned and quite annoyed... I felt that I had been deceived," she says.

"I began searching for truly natural products - I started experimenting with some skin creams and giving them away as gifts.

"I was inspired to let people know about the toxic synthetic ingredients in skincare, and felt I could offer a real alternative."

She laughs and recalls how she first began to research common ingredients in everything from toothpaste and shampoo, to lipstick and cleanser.

"I used to harass people down the aisles of my local supermarket, because I was so mad that nobody knew what the companies were putting in their products.

"I don't do that anymore. But I do try to educate as many people as possible through talks and information evenings."

She says chemicals and toxins are used liberally in many everyday products, ever since they became readily available in the 1950s and '60s.

"You just have to think about the fact that our mothers and grandmothers never had the products to use that we have now - they used to wash their hair with soap, but we use shampoo and conditioner with everything under the sun put into them.

"Just look at the cancer figures for westernised countries... 100 years ago it used to be one in 9000, and now it's one in three."

It's glaringly apparent that it's Narelle's passion for the truth over all else which transformed her life from mixing up home-made lotions on the kitchen table, to a multimillion-dollar business that now sells to multiple countries worldwide, from Norway to Canada.

Narelle's Missence Skincare has become the world's first certified organic skincare range, and it's created in the lab right here on the Gold Coast at Nerang.



Narelle Chenery... health with a corporate twist  
Photo: WAYNE JONES

## COSMETIC crusader

A Nerang mother of three is leading a battle for health by creating the world's first certified organic cosmetic company.

Rachel Syers reports.

"However, it does not stop there," says Narelle.

"Our intention is to create a whole range of certified organic lifestyle products, from cosmetics, to garden products, household cleaners, pet products, as well as a range of healthy food

supplements to increase our wellness and vitality."

She's already branched out from cosmetics into hair care, health food supplements, oral care and body care products.

It's certainly an ambitious vision, but it seems Narelle's

well down the pathway to achieve her goal. "Let there be no doubt that we will revolutionise the health and beauty industry," she says.

One of Narelle's personal objectives is to help level the playing field between

multi-national companies with big marketing budgets, and the consumer.

She says education is the key. "If we know how to read labels, we can choose to avoid toxins - as consumers are incredibly powerful.

"If we tell the big multi-nationals we will no longer put up with the toxic waste they put into our bodies and the environment through their products - by refusing to buy them - they will have no choice but to make the changes we wish to see.

"As Ghandi said, 'Non-cooperation with evil is a sacred duty'."

They may sound like strong words to link with skin cream, but for Narelle, the pursuit of her cause calls for such statements to get people to sit up and take notice.

"There are so many candy-coated evils promoted to us by tabloids, women's magazines, and television," says Narelle.

"We need to look beyond the hype of big-business propaganda, and not believe everything we hear.

"If we commit to educating ourselves and acting responsibly upon that new knowledge, there is no limit to what we can achieve."

Part of Narelle's busy schedule these days includes delivering talks around town to help educate women on the woes of modern-day cosmetic formulas.

Just last week she spoke at the community hall at Paradise Point, and this Saturday, Narelle will be a guest speaker at the Women Planting Seeds of Change Forum, at the Coolangatta Tweed Golf Club.

Narelle Chenery will be part of the Whole Woman Festival, being held on the Tweed on Saturday to celebrate International Womens Day on March 8. Other speakers on the day will include comedian Katrina Shiels, whose subject will be 'Sex is not a weapon, it's a way of life', and artist Camilla Connolly, who will discuss the issues of facing adversity and finding resilience.

The event will run from 10am to 4pm at the Coolangatta-Tweed Golf Club, Tweed Heads South. For details contact 5524 4544. Cost is \$30 if booked ahead, or \$40 on the day. All proceeds go towards supporting young homeless women.

A mind body and soul workshop will be held in conjunction with the Whole Woman Festival on Monday March 7 and Tuesday March 8. It will feature health professionals covering issues such as stress, organic makeovers, and work opportunities. It will be held at the Women's Business Centre, Burleigh. Contact 1300 660 367.

### coming clean

**S**ODIUM laureth sulfate is one reason why Nerang businesswoman Narelle Chenery is determined to make a difference in the world.

"The substance is a key ingredient in most hair shampoos and many other products because it is a foaming agent," says Narelle.

"But what many people don't realise is that sodium laureth sulphate contains four different toxic substances - formaldehyde, dioxane, ethylene oxide and acetaldehyde."

Narelle explains that every company that makes and sells chemicals has to produce a Material Safety Data Sheet to tell people using the chemical how to stay safe around it.

The data sheets for the use of those four substances includes statements such as 'may cause cancer' and 'may cause inherited genetic damage'.

"Some people say, 'oh well, that's just for concentrated amounts and it's very diluted by the time a person uses a product'.

"But ninety-five per cent of shampoos contain it, and we are using it every morning, every week, every year, for decades, on both ourselves and our children.

"Plus we're using perfume, mascara, lipstick, deodorant, moisturiser, and the list goes on, every day as well, so it all adds up for what we're putting into our system.

"It's crazy that the cosmetics industry is mostly self-regulated, so there is little restriction on what is put in the everyday products we all depend on."