

Shade Policy

Background Information



This document provides background information to assist Local Government Authorities in Victoria to develop a Shade Policy. More detailed information on certain technical issues is available from SunSmart.

The role of local government

Local government is in a unique position to help prevent skin cancer at the community level. Local government can ensure that the community has access to facilities and services that provide protection from ultraviolet (UV) radiation which is known to cause the vast majority of skin cancers in Australia. In addition local government can provide information to the community about personal sun protection measures as recommended by SunSmart (see below).

UV radiation and shade

Our senses can easily detect sunlight and infrared radiation (heat), however they cannot detect UV radiation. UV radiation cannot be seen or felt and can cause skin damage even on cool cloudy days.

While UV radiation comes directly from the sun, it can also be scattered and reflected by surfaces such as buildings, concrete, sand, snow and water. This is known as indirect UV radiation.

Shade provides good protection from solar UV radiation and is easy to use. Shade alone can reduce overall exposure to UV radiation by about 75%¹ and when used in conjunction with sun protective clothing, hats, sunglasses and sunscreen – shade enables maximum sun protection to be achieved.

An increasing number of organisations are recognising the need to provide shade – and as the community's knowledge about sun protection improves, so does their demand for public facilities with adequate shade.

Creating effective shade can be complex. Even if you are shaded from direct sunlight, you can still be exposed to considerable indirect UV radiation.

Quality shade will provide shelter from solar UV radiation where it is needed, at the right time of day, and at the right time of year.

Well-designed shade should ensure that:

- The outdoor space is comfortable to use in all seasons.
- There is a barrier for protection from direct and indirect sources of UV radiation.
- The shade is attractive, sustainable, safe, practical and environmentally friendly.

Natural shade

People intuitively associate trees with shade. It therefore makes sense to place a high priority on using trees and plants to provide shaded areas. Trees and other plants can provide benefits besides shade, and make your outdoor space more appealing to people. Natural shade is particularly well suited to large recreational areas such as parks and beach reserves.

Some trees are inclined to drop branches or seeds/cones. Trees should be selected to minimise this risk. Appropriate species should be used to provide shade at the required location at times of



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peak UV, particularly during September to April in Victoria. Low maintenance varieties should be selected. Planting of tall-trunk, broad-leaf and broad-canopy trees will provide useful shade for park users, clear sightlines for people and an aesthetically pleasing environment.

Built shade

Built shade can be stand-alone or it can be built on to existing buildings or structures. While built shade structures may not always be as attractive as natural shade, their use has some advantages including casting a more predictable shadow and providing cover from the rain.

Some consideration must be given to the location of supporting structures to ensure adequate distance from equipment and walking paths. This will minimise trip hazards or the potential for children (or adults) to climb the structures posing a fall risk. Further, the effects of high winds and vandalism should be considered and a regular maintenance program developed and implemented.

SunSmart message

Check the sun protection times each day for your location in Australia to find out when you do and don't need sun protection. You can find these times on the free SunSmart app for smartphones and tablet devices, at sunsmart.com.au or at bom.gov.au/uv

During the sun protection times each day, use a combination of five sun protection measures:

1. Slip on clothing that covers as much skin as possible
2. Slop on SPF30 or higher, broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen
3. Slap on a broad-brimmed hat
4. Seek shade
5. Slide on sunglasses – make sure they meet Australian Standards.

From May to August, UV levels in Victoria are usually low (below 3). Therefore sun protection measures are not necessary during these months unless you are in alpine regions, near highly reflective surfaces like snow or water, outdoors for extended periods, or if sun protection times are issued.

Resources available from SunSmart

A full list of the resources available from SunSmart is available on the SunSmart website at sunsmart.com.au/resources. Most resources can be ordered via the web or by phoning SunSmart on 9514 6419.

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