Integrating UV protection

into Municipal Public Health & Wellbeing Plans or Council Plans

Maroondah City Council

Spending time outdoors is important for health and wellbeing, but it also means exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation – the leading cause of skin cancer. More than 95% of skin cancers are caused by UV exposure. Most skin cancer can be prevented by being SunSmart and using personal sun protection and shade.

Skin cancer prevention through equitable and accessible UV protective shaded environments builds further support for Maroondah City Council's urban greening and canopy cover targets.

Tailored UV protection strategies for your 2025–29 Municipal Public Health & Wellbeing/Council Plan

To support UV risk reduction across Maroondah City Council and integrate UV protection as a key co-benefit of urban greening for both climate resilience and public health in upcoming plans, SunSmart has outlined some examples of possible UV protection recommendations (in yellow) for your consideration based on content in your current plan.

Maroondah Liveability Wellbeing and Resilience Strategy 2021-2031

Healthy Lifestyles

Physical health and activity

- Provide and enhance accessible active and passive open spaces, active travel infrastructure, sporting precincts and integrated recreation facilities, including the provision of cool, UV protective shade, to increase opportunities for and participation in physical activity.
- Work in partnership to provide safe, inclusive and accessible cool, UV protective shaded environments and opportunities for all community members to undertake physical activity.

Connection to nature

- Enhance Maroondah's canopy vegetation, habitat corridors, parklands, bushlands and waterways to promote mental wellbeing, increase thermal, reduce UV exposure, facilitate safe physical activity and encourage the community's social connection to the natural environment.

Liveable neighbourhoods

Walkability / Bike-friendly

- Work in partnership to facilitate local neighbourhood networks that are walkable and bike-friendly, and promote cool, UV protective shaded active travel of all ages, abilities and backgrounds.

Open spaces

- Promote and enhance Maroondah's active and passive open spaces to provide opportunities for cool, UV protective shaded connection, exercise, play and enjoyment for all people.

These actions contribute Maroondah City Council's support of VPHWP *Priority 7: Tackling climate change and its impact on health* and the following:

- Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2023–2027
- Victorian Cancer Plan 2024–2028
- Climate Change Act 2017
- Climate Change and Energy Legislation Amendment Act 2024 Planning and Environment Act 1987
- Local Government Act 2020 (Vic)
- Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008

A partnership between:

VicHealth Cancer Council Victoria

Shade supports your community's climate resilience

Shade and UV protection advance UN SDGs, contributing to improved health, urban resilience, environmental sustainability, and climate adaptation.

Shade and urban greening are key to climate-related heat mitigation and provide multiple co-benefits for the environment and health including reduced UV exposure.

By integrating UV protective shade across council policies and planning, we can mitigate heat and reduce UV related harms such as skin cancer.

54.2% *of adults (18+ years) across North Eastern Public Health Unit reported often or always seeking shade to protect themselves from the sun when they were outside for more than 15 minutes during summer.*

Your shade planning considerations

UV can reach you directly from the sun. It can also be reflected off different surfaces and scattered by particles in the air.

Not all environments are optimised for UV protection, and some interventions can even increase UV exposure.

Light colours reflect more solar radiation and absorb less heat, helping to keep surface temperatures low. However, the reflected radiation can increase "feels like" temperatures and reduce human thermal comfort. These surfaces also reflect more visible light and UV.

Natural, soft, rough surfaces typically reflect less UV and solar radiation compared to hard, smooth surfaces like aluminium and concrete.

Using a combination of built and natural shade is highly effective in reducing surface and ambient temperatures, as well as direct and indirect UV radiation. Shade has been shown to reduce overall UV exposure by 60% to 90% and lower surface temperatures by up to 20°C, particularly under tree canopies where the lowest air and surface temperatures are consistently recorded.

Creating optimal shade includes utilising trees with wide, dense canopies and low reflective surfaces and green spaces or building large structures near existing structures with surrounding vegetation.

Find more information on planning for shade and UV reduction in your community here.

Resources to support you

Support for shade policy and planning

- Tackling climate change and its impacts on health through municipal public health and wellbeing: Guidance for local government 2024
- RMIT policy brief: UV Exposure and Shade
- Cool routes tool
- Which plant where
- SunCalc
- iTree Canopy
- Shade comparison check

Promote sun protection to the community

- Events and festivals
- Sports groups
- Be a SunSmart family
- Interactive tools and resources

Embed sun protection in council-managed early childhood services

- SunSmart Early Childhood Program

UV exposure as an OH&S issue for council employees

- Sun protection at work

Please share this document with:

- Sustainability officers
- Policy & planners
- Strategic planners
- Parks & open space team
- Infrastructure team
- Transport team
- Health & wellbeing team

For shade and UV protection policy and planning support, please contact:
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