

Shade in Playspaces

Policy Owner: Executive Manager Strategic Planning and Environment	
Date Last Adopted: 15 August 2023	Review Date: 15 August 2026

1. Policy Statement/Objective(s)

Shellharbour City Council is committed to creating comfortable and safe environments that encourage people to enjoy the outdoors and to have healthy, active lifestyles. As our population grows, there is increasing pressure on our open spaces to meet the outdoor recreational needs and aspirations of our local community. Playspaces have an important role to play in meeting these needs whilst making a positive contribution to the health and wellbeing of our residents. As temperatures rise and our awareness of the damaging effects of exposure to solar ultraviolet (UV) radiation and heatwaves increases, there is an opportunity to improve the way we provide shade to key assets and facilities within the public realm. Numerous studies have identified that people are far more likely to be active and engage with the outdoors and natural spaces if they have access to clean, well-maintained, shaded, and visually appealing spaces and pathways. There is increasing awareness of the benefits of shade to:

- reduce sun exposure and protect against UV radiation and skin cancer.
- reduce heat by keeping the grounds and equipment cool.
- promote active lifestyles by creating more comfortable and cooler outdoor spaces in hotter weather.

The objective of this policy is to provide a direction and approach to the design and provision of shade facilities to ensure that future and existing playspaces have infrastructure that:

- provides opportunities for everyone to stay at the playspaces for as long as they like in a safe, welcoming and comfortable environment.
- promotes activation and higher community use of playspaces through the provision of better quality and more functional open space.
- improves the liveability of the City through providing playspaces that contribute to social (e.g. health, safety, social connection), environmental (e.g. cooling the City) and economic outcomes (e.g. infrastructure investment, impact on property values).

2. Scope

This policy applies to all Council owned and managed open spaces including active and passive reserves, playspaces and open space land to be dedicated to Council in the future for recreational purposes.

The policy is in alignment with the Open Space and Recreation Needs Study and Strategy 2020-2030 and the Community Strategic Plan 2022-2032, addressing the following objectives and strategies:

Objective: 1.2 We are a liveable community

Strategy: 1.2.1 Inclusive, accessible and safe spaces for our entire community

Strategy: 1.2.2 Promote healthy living and high-quality public spaces that are well maintained and activated.

3. References

Cancer Council NSW, 2013. *Guidelines to Shade*, Cancer Council NSW, Sydney.

State of NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, 2020. *Draft Greener Places Design Guide*, Department of Planning, Industry and Environment.

NSW Government Department of Planning and Environment, 2019. *Everyone Can Play: A Guideline to Create Inclusive Playspaces*. Office of Open Space and Parklands.

National Heart Foundation of Australia, 2012. *Healthy by Design. A guide to planning environments for active living in Victoria*. Melbourne, National Heart Foundation of Australia.

Municipal Association of Victoria. *Shade: A resource for local government*, Municipal Association of Victoria, Melbourne.

NSW Ministry of Health, 2020. *Healthy Built Environment Checklist: A guide for considering health in development policies, plans and proposals*, NSW Health.

Cancer Institute NSW, 2022. *Shade and UV inclusion in NSW local government planning policy*. Cancer Institute NSW, Sydney.

SunSmart Victoria, 2015. *Shade Policy Framework*, SunSmart, Victoria.

4. External/Internal Consultations

Internal

- Assets Officer
- Children and Families Officer
- Community Engagement Officer
- Graduate Strategic Planner
- Group Manager Asset Strategy
- Group Manager Built and Natural Environments
- Manager Asset Planning
- Manager Community Engagement and Activation
- Manager Environment
- Manager Parks
- Recreation Planner

External

- Cancer Council NSW
- Cancer Institute NSW

COLLABORATION

ACCOUNTABILITY

INTEGRITY

RESPECT

SUSTAINABILITY

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5. Definitions

Active open space	Land set aside for the primary purpose of formal outdoor sports for the community. Active open space supports team sports, training and competition and typically features sports facilities such as playing fields, change rooms, grandstands and car parks. May accommodate unstructured community or individual use when not required for its primary purpose and could include informal lawns, play, picnic and other facilities in the peripheral. Active open space is inclusive of sportsgrounds and sportsfields. ¹
Playspace	A place that is designated primarily for children's play, including playgrounds and recreation grounds. ²
Natural shade	Shade from trees or tall shrubs. ³
Built shade	Built shade can be stand-alone, or it can be built onto existing buildings or structures. All built shade consists of two parts: the supporting structure that keeps the shade structure in place and holds it up, and the primary shading element – which is the material that makes up the canopy or roof of the shade device. ⁴
Open space	Land that has no buildings or other built structures, which is accessible to the public, including green space. ⁵
Open space hierarchy	Council uses a park hierarchy to determine if additional elements such as shade, lighting and water stations are suitable and appropriate at any specific park.
Passive open space	Land set aside for parks, gardens, linear corridors, conservation bushland nature reserves. These areas are made available for passive recreation, play and unstructured physical activity. ⁶

¹ Shellharbour City Council, 2020. Open Space and Recreation Needs Study 2020. Shellharbour City Council, NSW.

² Shackell, A., Butler, N., Doyle, P. & Ball, D. 2008, Design for play: A guide to creating successful play spaces, Play England and UK Department for Children, Schools and Families.

³ Cancer Institute NSW. Why is shade is important for UV protection? Accessed at: [Why is shade important for UV protection? | Cancer Institute NSW.](#)

⁴ Cancer Council NSW 2013, Guidelines to Shade, Cancer Council NSW, Sydney.

⁵ Government Architect of NSW, Glossary.

⁶ Greater Sydney Commission 2016, Greater Sydney Public Open Space Audit Parks and Leisure Australia 2013, Open Space Planning and Design Guide.

6. Variation and Review

Council reserves the right to review, vary or revoke this policy.

Review History

Date Policy first adopted – version 1	15 August 2023
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7. Policy

The following principals identify Council's direction for shade provision in playspaces across the Shellharbour Local Government Area:

- 7.1 When designing playspaces, assessment of availability and usability of existing natural shade will be evaluated when determining location. Shade provision covering play facilities and seated areas should be maximised where possible. The aim is for 50% of natural shade to the playspace.¹
- 7.2 Provide shade at sites where a particular need for built and/or natural shade has been identified during the development of a master plan or landscape concept plan.
- 7.3 Council will prioritise natural shade solutions involving the strategic planting of native trees and other vegetation. Incorporation of interim built form shade will be considered on a site-by-site basis. Once trees are established and providing adequate shade, a review of the ongoing need of the built form structure will be undertaken and removed if deemed appropriate. Where practical and appropriate, Council will consider mature stock trees.
- 7.4 Council will actively seek opportunities to improve the provision of shade across existing and newly developed Council open space and facilities. The open space hierarchy is an important factor to consider with shade provision, as it is more beneficial and cost effective to implement shade in playspaces that are at a district or citywide level as they attract high visitation, utilisation and have higher budgets for embellishment.
- 7.5 Play equipment that incorporates shade is to be considered when purchasing play equipment, dependent on resource availability and level of shade provided or planned for the site.
- 7.6 Playspace designers and developers are to provide a shade diagram for each park and play location during peak UV times, for example between 10am and 2pm Eastern Standard Time and 11am and 3pm Daylight Saving Time from September to April.⁷
- 7.7 Council will inform playspace designers and developers of this policy and they will be encouraged to comply with the requirements of shade provision.
- 7.8 Council will actively seek funding to support the provision of shade at key locations across the City that align with this policy.
- 7.9 Council will apply asset management principles for effective lifecycle management of all shade structures including; service need, project planning, project implementation, maintenance (routine and reactive), inspections (defect and condition), renewal, and disposal.

⁷ SunSmart, 2015. Shade Policy Framework

- 7.10 Safety will be a major consideration in the provision of natural and/or built form shade to ensure the provision of shade does not create safety hazards or risks.

8. Related Forms/Documents

- Open Space and Recreation Needs Study and Strategy 2020-2030
- Shellharbour Community Strategic Plan 2022-2032

Note: Related forms can be located Online under “Forms”

9. Attachments

Nil

Policy Authorised by:

Name: Council Resolution Number 127

Date: 15 August 2023