

City Playground Shade Policy

City Policy

Responsible Directorate: Infrastructure Services

Objective: To guide the circumstances where artificial shade is to be provided on City managed playgrounds.

1. Application:

This policy shall apply to all playgrounds on parks and public open spaces managed by the City of Joondalup.

2. Definitions:

'Playground' - means a set of play elements including infrastructure, landscape, built play equipment and when required, consolidated in a soft fall area which is sufficiently retained.

'Long stay' - means the length of time spent recreating on the park by the local and wider community which may extend through the peak periods of ultraviolet (UV) radiation exposure. That is patrons attending social, community and sporting events and activities, affecting the patronage levels and periods of use on the park playground.

'Natural shade' - means the shade provided by tree canopy.

'Artificial shade' - means the shade provided by a built structure which can be either an adjustable or fixed system; that is shade sails or a rigid structure with a fixed roof.

3. Statement:

The City acknowledges that Australia experiences high levels of UV radiation which can be harmful to those recreating in the outdoors. The City is also committed to affording the community opportunities to recreate that support social interaction and their overall health and well-being.

In order to afford suitable opportunities for the community to recreate in City Playgrounds; the provision of natural or artificial shade is required. Notwithstanding, users are responsible for recreating at suitable times of the day to minimise the harmful effects of UV radiation.

If artificial shade is provided over playgrounds within parks and public open spaces, it will be recognised only as an interim solution until a time where natural shade is suitable.

4. Details:

4.1. Natural Shade:

To maintain the natural amenity of parks and public open spaces the City's preference is to support the use of natural shade provided by trees, over artificial options.

- a) In the development of new playgrounds and renewal of existing playgrounds:
 - Location and design features of the playground should take advantage of existing and appropriate natural shade.
 - If no suitable natural shade exists, appropriate species of trees should be planted in a suitable location that will provide shade.
 - Design should take into account materials that are less conducive to heat conduction while maintaining economic whole of life costs benefits.
- b) In the management of existing natural shade around playgrounds and planning for tree canopy succession:
 - Undertake infill tree planting around existing playgrounds in strategic locations.
 - Identification of trees in decline and undertake tree planting for continuation of tree canopy into the future.

4.2. Artificial shade:

It is not economically viable to supply artificial shade to all playgrounds across the City. Built shade structures will only be considered if all of the following criteria can be satisfied:

- a) The playground is known to be subject to regular use; high patronage by the local and wider community attending social, community and sporting events and activities. Included may be smaller parks within areas of high housing density.
- b) The playground is located nearby other park amenities that encourages long stay; supporting infrastructure such as BBQ and picnic facilities, sporting facilities and toilets.
- c) In locations where the establishment of natural shade is difficult or impossible; insufficient space for healthy development, rocky or poor soil condition and exposed coastal locations.
- d) The relocation of new playgrounds under existing natural shade is not possible.
- e) Large playgrounds that cannot be effectively shaded by trees; playgrounds with several play items grouped in a large expanse of soft fall.

In the instance where the criteria in section 4.2 (e) is met and artificial shade is provided; at the time of renewal of the artificial shade an assessment is to be completed. If the assessment deems that the natural shade is sufficient, the artificial shade is to be removed from the site.

4.3. Requests for artificial shade:

All requests for artificial shade will be assessed using the criteria outline in section 4.2.

4.4. Duty of care:

Users of playgrounds are subject to their own duty of care when using City managed playgrounds. It is expected that users will use their own discretion when using City playgrounds during peak UV level times. Users are encouraged to avoid exposure between 11am and 3pm and should make effort to prevent sun damage.

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