

	COUNCIL POLICY	
	Shade for Playgrounds	
POLICY NO	070	
DEPARTMENT	Development Services	
PROGRAM	Parks, Environment and Sustainability	
APPROVED BY COUNCIL	10 June 2020, Resolution ORD-2020-115	

1.0 Scope

This policy relates to the provision of shade facilities to playgrounds within the Mackay Regional Council (MRC) area. Copies of the policy should be made available to those groups, associations or developers seeking to install shade facilities on playgrounds which will ultimately become MRC's responsibility to maintain.

2.0 Purpose

To ensure a uniform approach and direction to the provision of the most suitable form of shade for playgrounds to existing and future playgrounds across the region.

3.0 Reference

- Creating Shade at Public Facilities, Policy and Guidelines Edition 2 Australian Queensland Government, Institute of Environmental Health;
- SunSmart Policy Guidelines, Cancer Council Queensland;
- SunSmart - Council Events (Policy No 074);
- Planning Scheme Policy - Landscape.

4.0 Definitions

To assist in interpretation the following definitions shall apply:

Council shall mean the Mayor and Councillors of Mackay Regional Council.

MRC shall mean Mackay Regional Council.

Shade Sail shall mean any shade cloth whether mounted over a portal frame or suspended between columns.

Solid Roofed Shade Structure shall mean a roof usually steel (e.g. Colorbond) or aluminium which is waterproof and provides maximum protection against UVR penetration and reflected UVR.

UVR shall mean ultraviolet radiation.

5.0 Background

MRC provides a range of parks, community facilities and events and has a responsibility to ensure that those facilities and events are utilised by the community in a safe manner.

Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in Australia, with 80 per cent of all cancers diagnosed in Australia being skin cancer. Queensland has the highest rate of skin cancer in the world. More than 430,000 Australians are treated a year for skin cancers. Each year there are around 1600 deaths from melanoma and non-melanoma skin cancer.

Thankfully, almost all of these cancers are preventable, and MRC is determined to ensure that we play our part in ensuring the safety of our community. The major cause of skin cancer is too much exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun.

In a tropical climate, such as Mackay's, skin can burn in as little as 15 minutes, so it is important to provide opportunities for residents to protect their skin from UV radiation.

In the past, natural shade (e.g. trees) was the most common form of shade for most playgrounds, however many had no shade at all. While natural shade is the best option, it is difficult to provide in playgrounds where mature trees do not already exist. Faced with the need to provide shade to playgrounds, the next best option is for built shade; this comes in many forms, including solid roof structures and shade sail structures.

While shade sails have become popular and can provide a very colourful addition to a playground, they are the least effective material for protection from UVR. They do not provide protection from reflected UVR anywhere near as well as natural shade or solid roofs. They have a short life span, are susceptible to vandalism and are highly maintenance intensive.

Solid roofed structures provide a much higher level of sun protection, do not need to be removed and replaced when the wind exceeds 35 knots, are much more resistant to vandalism, have a much longer life span and require far less maintenance. They also provide a greater degree of protection to the play equipment and soft fall under them which results in a much lower maintenance requirement and longer life span for these items.

6.0 Policy Statement

Sun Safety and protection is a key part of MRC's overall responsibility. MRC is determined to ensure that the facilities it provides allow the community to recreate in a safe and enjoyable manner.

6.1 Forward Planning: Parks and Environment

MRC will develop and maintain a Playgrounds Shade Master Plan which:

- (a) Describes and lists all playgrounds across the region;
- (b) Determines whether shade trees and/or built shade structures are appropriate at each location;

- (c) Specifies the location of built shade structures if they exist;
- (d) Determines preferred tree species for each location should shade trees be the preferred mode of shade;
- (e) Determines preferred built structures for each location;
- (f) Is subject to periodic review.

6.2 Forward Planning: Development Assessment and Development Engineering

With the transfer to MRC of new parkland through the subdivisional process, developers are to be made aware of this Policy and advised that only solid roof shade structures are allowable for the provision of shade over play facilities in new subdivisions.

A landscape master plan is to be provided from a qualified landscape architect for each park and play location where shade provision over play facilities is to be provided.

6.3 New Trees

All plantings are to be carried out under the direction of Parks, Environment & Sustainability (PES) staff and are to conform to approved standards.

6.4 New Shade Structures

All new solid roof shade structures are to be designed with architectural merit and are to adhere to the MRC List of furniture and materials in terms of appropriateness of design, materials and colour selection. Relevant staff in the Parks, Environment & Sustainability program are to be consulted through this process.

All new structures are to be built to conform to approved standards. Hold points at specified stages of the construction are to be monitored by Development Assessment or PES Building Services.

Under this Policy lightweight portal frame shade-sail structures are not to be installed on new playgrounds within the MRC area.

Any existing shade-sail structures are to be progressively phased out and replaced in accordance with the Playgrounds Shade Master Plan subject to the availability of funding.

7.0 Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed when any of the following occur:

1. The related documents are amended or replaced.
2. Other circumstances as determined from time to time by a resolution of Council

Notwithstanding the above, this policy is to be reviewed at intervals of no more than three (3) years.

Version Control:

Version	Reason / Trigger	Change	Endorsed / Reviewed	Date
1	Review of Policy	No amendments	Council	22.03.17
2	Review of Policy	Minor amendments	Council	10.06.20