

# Champion shade for school and play

## A toolkit to advocate for shade in school and play settings

Shade in schools and play settings protects our children from the harmful effects of ultraviolet radiation – also known as UV.

UV exposure during the first 18 years of life is the most critical risk factor for developing skin cancer.<sup>1</sup> Our children need our help!

Advocating for shade is one of the best things we can do to protect our children and others in our community from the harmful effects of UV and the risk of skin cancers. There are also many other benefits of shade, which you can read about in this toolkit.

**Become an advocate for shade!**



*Aboriginal Respect Symbol. Designed by  
Marcus Lee Design for Cancer Council NSW.*

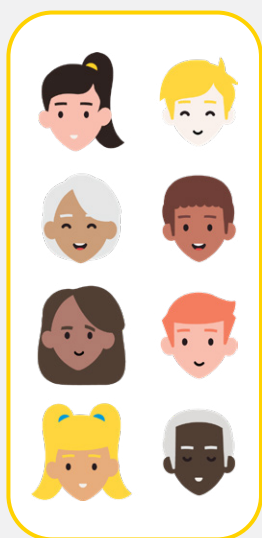


# How to use this toolkit

You can use the messages and information in this toolkit to get tips on how to advocate for shade.

You can also download tools, templates and resources to share with decision makers and influencers from our handy [toolbox](#) and use any part of it to talk about the importance of shade. There are steps to help you begin advocating and to start the conversation in your community.

## Who this toolkit is for



**Cancer Council** has put this toolkit together for parents, school staff, and other advocates, influencers, and decision makers.

This toolkit has been developed to champion shade in school settings, including early years, primary and secondary schools, and even TAFEs or Universities where children and young people spend time during the day.

The messages and templates within the toolkit can also help you advocate for shade in other settings, such as playgrounds and recreation facilities run by local councils and communities.

Everyone in the community can benefit from more shade, including teachers, sports groups, parents and even local wildlife!

## Who is Cancer Council

Cancer Council is standing by everyone living with cancer, protecting life's moments, for life. This is only possible thanks to the incredible generosity of our volunteers, supporters, and employees. Together, we work across every area of cancer, supporting communities where and when it's most needed. With the help of our supporters, we are leading the way to a cancer free future.

We promote and advocate for the implementation of best practice sun protection in key community settings, such as schools.

*Cancer Council acknowledges Traditional Custodians of Country throughout NSW and recognises the continuing connection to lands, waters and communities.*

*We pay our respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, cultures and to Elders past, present and emerging.*

# Champion shade solutions in your community



We need champions in the community to help advocate for shade.



## Advocacy creates action.

When people speak out about issues that are important to them, they can help to create an action or make an important change in the community. Preventing skin cancer is an issue you can help do something about!



## Advocacy brings people together.

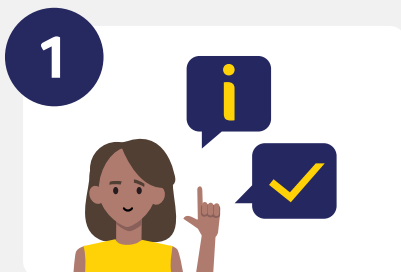
Advocacy is often done by bringing people together around an issue or challenge.



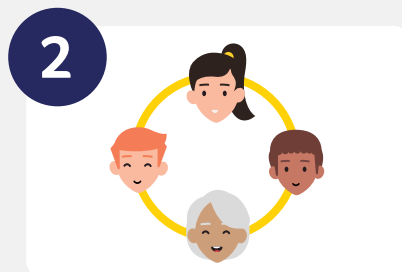
## Advocacy can help change minds and hearts.

It helps to educate others so there's shared responsibility, and leaders and influencers can make informed decisions.

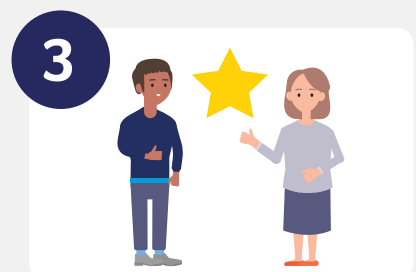
### Our top 3 tips for advocating:



**1** Be clear about the facts and the benefits of shade.



**2** Make connections with others who care about the issue.



**3** Get buy-in from leaders and influencers.

# Your shade advocacy journey

There are a few simple steps you can take to advocate for shade in schools and play settings. Use the advocacy guide to help you on your journey.



1

## Choose to advocate for shade

I want to protect children from UV exposure while they are at school or play, but I'm not sure where to start.



2

## Make the case - why shade is important

Have you already built the case for shade?

YES

NO

i

Download the [Campaign Scoping Template](#) or [Powerpoint](#) to get the facts and help educate others about why shade is important.

3

## Choose the best types of shade for your setting

Do you know what type of shade will be most appropriate?

YES

NO



Learn about the different [types of shade](#)

4

## Share with others

Do you have the support of others in the community for more shade in the school or play setting?

YES

NO



Use the [influencer map](#) for tips on how to get support

5

## Get the support of influencers and decision makers

Do you have the right people on board?

YES

NO



Use a [letter template](#) to write to decision makers



Check out our [FAQs](#)

6

## Prepare yourself for tricky questions

Do you know how to answer key questions from decision-makers?

YES

NO

7

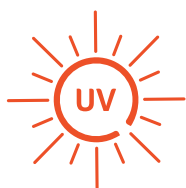
## Share your success

Complete our [case study form](#) to share your success with others.



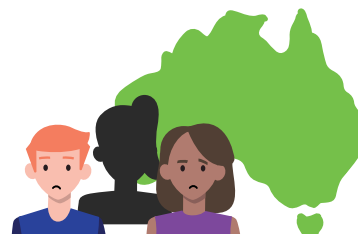
# The facts

## Reducing UV exposure prevents skin cancer

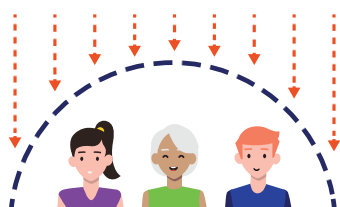


You can't see UV but it's enough to damage unprotected skin at least 10 months of the year in NSW. It's especially high at the times of day when children are at school or out and about on the weekends.

**UV causes skin cancer.** Exposure to solar UV is the cause of at least 95% of all skin cancers in Australia, making it one of the most preventable cancers when you protect your skin.



At least **2 in 3** people who have grown up in Australia will be diagnosed with **skin cancer**. Yet skin cancer is **highly preventable**.



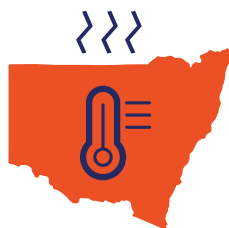
Shade can reduce UV exposure up to **75%**.

## Shade is great

**Shade is one of the most effective ways a community can be protected from the harmful effects of UV.** This is because shade significantly reduces UV exposure compared to other types of sun protection.<sup>2</sup>

## Shade at school matters

**Shade in schools is particularly important because children and young people spend most of their time at school during peak UV hours.** School leaders have a duty of care to make sure teachers and students have safe areas to play and work.



### NSW is heating up!

Since the pre-industrial period, NSW has warmed 1.4–1.6°C\*. That's **1.4 times** faster than the global average.

\*CSIRO 2021

### Help reduce surface temperatures.

When it comes to extreme heat, our children are some of the most vulnerable. Shade can help to reduce the surface temperature of outdoor spaces and lower the 'feels like' temperature for children while they play and rest. Not only does this minimise the direct impact of extreme heat (e.g. heat exhaustion), it can also help to promote more physical activity.

### Create a better environment for all.

Natural shade (trees) can improve air filtration, reduce respiratory illness and improve wellbeing and mental health. Trees can also make the surrounding environment cooler and support erosion control and stormwater runoff.

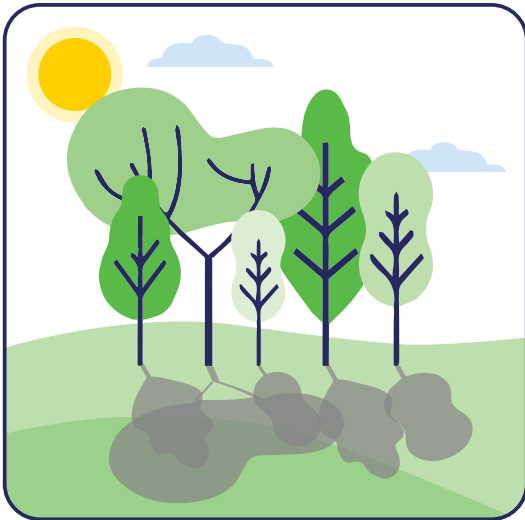
[Find more benefits of shade](#) >

[Go back to Advocacy Journey](#) ^

# There are different types of shade

Shade comes in different forms...

## Natural shade



### Cancer Council recommends:

- A combination of **built and tree shade** in every playground.
- Shade should cover **at least 70%** of the play equipment and nearby seating, including **45% of tree shade**, to reduce children and caregivers' overexposure to UV radiation.

## Built shade



### **TIP:** Starting the conversation about the need for shade is the first step!

You might have a particular type of shade in mind when you're advocating for shade. But decision makers will have to think about a range of factors including cost, maintenance and where it is safe and appropriate to build structures or grow trees. Use these [resources](#) to help propose different types of shade.

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# The benefits of shade

The good news is there are plenty of benefits of shade!

And these extend beyond sun protection.

Shade can help to:



Reduce UV exposure  
by up to 75%



Reduce the temperature  
of playgrounds and  
outdoor facilities



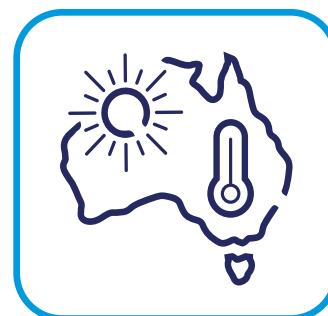
Improve the health  
and wellbeing of  
communities



Help to promote outdoor  
activities and play for  
children at school



Contribute to greater  
biodiversity in your  
local area



Help protect local  
communities from  
climate change impacts



## **TIP: Share the benefits!**

Tell people about the benefits of shade in less than 10 minutes.

Our [PowerPoint](#) helps you to showcase the benefits of shade to influencers and decision makers.

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# Share the benefits of shade with others – making the case

When you advocate for shade, it's important to make a strong case. Most schools and community settings have many competing priorities, so sharing the full extent of the benefits of shade can help convince people.

**Here are 5 key themes to help you make your case:**

Download our sharable content and graphics relating to these main message themes.



## Everyone deserves protection from harmful UV

- UV exposure during the first 18 years of life is the most critical risk factor for developing skin cancer.<sup>3</sup>
- Shade reduces UV exposure by up to 75%.<sup>4</sup>
- Everyone in the community benefits when there is more shade.
- UV levels in NSW are high enough to damage unprotected skin at least 10 months of the year.



## Shade creates a safer play environment

- Shade is one of the best ways to protect children from the sun and reduce UV exposure.
- Shade reduces heat related illness, as children are particularly vulnerable to heat.<sup>5</sup>
- School leaders have a duty of care to make sure teachers and students have safe areas to play and work.



## Use shade to make areas more comfortable

- Shade provides a more comfortable play environment by reducing exposure to the sun and creating cooler environments.
- Shading surfaces like asphalt and artificial grass reduces their surface temperature by up to 20°C, which lowers 'feels like' temperatures by 10°C. This improves human thermal comfort.<sup>6</sup>
- Shade reduces glare and improves eye comfort. In classrooms with large windows or outdoor learning environments, shade helps reduce glare from the sun and makes it easier for teachers and students to see their work and use digital screens.



## Save on future costs with shade

Shade has cost saving benefits:

- Shade decreases the amount of heat that a building absorbs. This reduces the need for air conditioning and saves energy.
- Shade protects infrastructure, like tables and play equipment, from intense sun damage.

## Encourage children to play outdoors

- Shade promotes outdoor activities and increases the use of outdoor spaces. This helps children stay active during the day.
- Being outdoors in nature helps children thrive. It reduces stress, promotes relaxation, improves mood and stimulates creativity and imagination.
- If shade is available, research shows people use it.
- In secondary schools, students use, rather than avoid, social shaded spaces.<sup>7</sup>



[Go back to Advocacy Journey](#)





# Share shade solutions - you're not alone!

Sun protection is important and there are lots of people who can support you to advocate for shade. Influencers and decision makers may have some questions or concerns about your shade ideas. **Match the most persuasive themes below with the key messages on page 8 of this toolkit to get them onboard!**

Decision maker    Influencer    Supporter

*"I understand shade is important to help protect our students from the sun, but a new shade structure could be costly. Also, who will look after the maintenance?"*



## Principals are:

**decision makers** who decide about applications for funding and priorities within the school environment.

### Share with them:

- A safer play environment
- Make areas more comfortable
- Save on future costs

*"Our no hat, play in the shade rule helps to protect children from the sun."*



## Teachers are:

able to **influence** others, including principals, parents and students, to make shade a priority.

### Share with them:

- Everyone deserves protection from harmful UV
- A safer play environment
- Make areas more comfortable

*"Why should our P&C prioritise shade solutions over other issues?"*



## P&C are:

able to **influence** school priorities and others, including parents and the broader community. Opportunities to fundraise.

### Share with them:

- A safer play environment
- Everyone deserves protection from harmful UV

*"I want my child to be safe at school but there's so many other issues to worry about... is more sun protection needed if we already use sunscreen and hats?"*



## Parents can:

**support** campaigns and issues impacting students and the school and **influence** decision-makers.

### Share with them:

- A safer play environment
- Make areas more comfortable

*"We want to see more shade in our community to help prevent skin cancer and the harmful effects of UV."*



## Community and health organisations:

**can support** health prevention and health related advocacy.

### Share with them:

- Spread the word about the importance of shade!
- Use the resources in this toolkit to advocate for shade.

*"Shade infrastructure and planting trees is part of a longer term plan."*



## Organisations who own or operate schools are:

**decision makers** that can drive priorities in a school setting.

### Share with them:

- The facts and urgency for protecting children from the harmful effects of UV

*"We have limited funding and a schedule of works for outdoor spaces."*



## Local councils are:

**decision makers** that can make shade available in their communities.

*"I support a community where we keep our kids safe but we already invest a lot in sun protection."*



## Local members of parliament can:

**lead and support** the prioritisation of shade including co-benefits.

### Share with them:

- The facts and urgency for protecting children from harmful effects of UV
- Everyone deserves protection from the harmful UV
- A safer play environment
- Make areas more comfortable
- Save on future costs
- Getting outdoors

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## Get your children or student peers on board!

Students have a say in what's important at their school.  
Here are some tips to get students excited about shade...



1. Do a **presentation** at assembly about the importance of shade using the facts and benefits in this toolkit

2. Organise a **competition** for students to draw or design their ideal shade structures or create a video to be uploaded to the school's social media highlighting the importance of shade.

3. Start a **letter of petition** and ask other students to sign it. Give the letter and signatures to your P&C and Principal.

4. Students could conduct a **Shade Audit** to help measure and map out where shade is needed.

5. Organise a **tree-planting event** that allows students to contribute to the creation of natural shade at their school.

6. Conduct a **science experiment** to learn more about the risk of unshaded areas using a UV Index Meter [like this one](#) promoted by APRANSA.

## Funding sources

It is important to consider how the shade project could be funded. There are lots of opportunities and we have included some of these below. Remember to use your imagination and consider who might have a vested interest in the project (e.g. do other community groups use the space? Is there an opportunity for local businesses to be involved?).

### Grants

There are a wide range of grants available, from Commonwealth, state and local government to community organisations like Rotary and Lions Clubs, and even businesses like Bendigo Bank. To find out what grants are available, you can contact your local council, who may have a list, or jump online and search for 'grant'. We've also included some website links below with grant opportunities to get you started.

- [Our Community](#) (Note: a membership fee applies)
- [Grant Guru](#)
- [NSW Government Grants and Funding](#)
- [Regional Development Australia – Northern Inland NSW](#)
- [Club Grants](#)
- [Community Enterprise Foundation](#)

### Sponsorship

You could approach a local business to fund the project. In sponsorship arrangements, you'll need to think about how a sponsorship partner would benefit from the project (e.g. a sign acknowledging their contribution, naming rights, media coverage).

### Fundraising

Fundraising is a great opportunity to involve the community and promotes ownership of the item for which funds are being raised. This could be a great option to involve your school's P&C.



#### **TIP: Consider a combination of funding sources**

Potential funders will often look favourably on multiple funding sources as it means that there is not only community buy-in, but they can also spend less and see more impact for their investment.



# Creating communities that care – the toolbox

Here are the tools to help you advocate for shade in your school or community setting.

## PowerPoint presentation



Download this powerpoint presentation to share with influencers and decision makers. You can use this presentation in full or pick and choose relevant slides.

## Letter to decision makers and leaders



Use this email and letter template to advocate for shade in a school or play setting. This letter can be used with decision makers such as Principals and leaders, including local Councils or local Members of Parliament.

## Campaign template



If you're in the early stages, you might like to complete the campaign template to help you work through the steps to make the case and get support for shade.

## Letter of support template



Email [sunsmart@nswcc.org.au](mailto:sunsmart@nswcc.org.au) to Request a letter of support from Cancer Council NSW to help you advocate for shade in your school or play setting.

## Social media content and tiles



Use these social media posts and graphics on your own social media channels to share with others why shade in schools and play settings is important.

## Share your shade success



Fill out the simple form to share your story with us and other champions for shade!

## Frequently Asked Questions



Download our FAQs to help answer questions about shade.

[Go back to Advocacy Journey](#)



# Resources

There are plenty of resources to help you plan and advocate for your shade project. Visit the websites below for more information.

## Benefits of shade

- [Shade factsheet](#)
- [Why is shade important?](#)
- [Tree cover and species composition effects on academic performance of primary school students](#)

## Shade planning and design

- [Shade priority checklist](#)
- [Guidelines to shade – a practical guide for shade development in NSW](#)
- [Considerations for planning shade in schools](#)
- [Shade design at public places](#)
- [Shade design planning considerations](#)
- [What is high quality shade](#)
- [Shade advice flyer](#)

## Built shade

- [Types of shade structures](#)

## Green shade

- [NSW Government – Trees in your school resource](#)
- [School microclimates \(data and information\)](#)
- [Urban Planning with green infrastructure](#)
- [Benchmarking shade in NSW playgrounds \(project findings – preference for tree shade\)](#)
- [Nature Play: For New South Wales – Insights and Recommendations](#)

## Advocacy information

- [Playground shade best practice principles for action](#)

## Contact

SunSmart

Email: [sunsmart@nswcc.org.au](mailto:sunsmart@nswcc.org.au)

Phone: (02) 9334 1761



## References in this toolkit

1 Kimlin MG, Guo Y. Assessing the impacts of lifetime sun exposure on skin damage and skin aging using a non-invasive method. *Sci Total Environ* 2012 May 15;425:35–41. Available at <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/22459885/>.

2 Armstrong BK. How sun exposure causes skin cancer: an epidemiological perspective. In: Hill D, Elwood JM, English DR, editors. *Prevention of Skin Cancer*. Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands; 2004. p. 89–116.

Armstrong BK, Kricger A. How much melanoma is caused by sun exposure? *Melanoma Research*. 1993;3(6):395–401.

3 Kimlin MG, Guo Y. Assessing the impacts of lifetime sun exposure on skin damage and skin aging using a non-invasive method. *Sci Total Environ* 2012 May 15;425:35–41. Available at <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/22459885/>

4 Parsons, P., Neale, R., Wolski, P. & Green, A., 'The shady side of solar protection,' *Medical Journal of Australia*, 1998; 168: 327–330.

5 New South Wales Health, 'Babies and children in the heat, 2002, available [www.health.nsw.gov.au](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au)

6 Pfautsch S., Rouillard S., Wujeska-Krause A., Bae A., Vu L., Manea A., Tabassum S., Staas, L., Ossola A., Holmes, K. and Leishman M. (2020) *School Microclimates*. Western Sydney University, p. 56. Available at [www.climatechange.environment.nsw.gov.au](http://www.climatechange.environment.nsw.gov.au)

7 Dobbins SJ, White V, Wakefield MA, Jansen KM, White V, Livingston PM, et al. Adolescents' use of purpose built shade in secondary schools: cluster randomised controlled trial. *BMJ* 2009 Feb 17;338:b95 Available from: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19223344>

We're here for impactful prevention, early intervention and changing outcomes.

If you need to talk about cancer, call **Cancer Council** on **13 11 20** for Information and Support.



Aboriginal Respect Symbol. Designed by  
Marcus Lee Design for Cancer Council NSW.

