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# Shade

Shade is a practical, user-friendly form of sun protection. Well-designed and positioned shade can significantly reduce ultraviolet (UV) radiation exposure, as well as create cool, comfortable spaces.

Ideally shade should be factored in at the planning phase of all new buildings, recreational areas and facilities.

Shade does not provide 100 per cent protection. For the best protection during the daily sun protection times (when the UV level is 3 and above), use all five SunSmart measures:

- Slip on clothing.
- Slop on SPF30 (or higher) broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen
- Slap on a broad brimmed hat.
- Seek shade.
- Slide on sunglasses.

The free SunSmart app tells you the sun protection times for your location and provides current UV levels. Sun protection times can also be found at [myuv.com.au](http://myuv.com.au), [bom.gov.au](http://bom.gov.au) and live UV levels are also available from [arpansa.gov.au/uvindex](http://arpansa.gov.au/uvindex).

## Planning effective shade

Good planning ensures effective shade. Whatever the scale of the project:

- Identify where and when shade is needed.
- Understand your shade options.
- Consider built shade.
- Consider natural shade.

## What is the shaded area to be used for?

Is this area mainly used for passive activities, active play, sports, spectators or all of these?

This will help determine the best type of shade structure to use.

## Will the shade affect user comfort?

Shade areas must provide UV protection from the start of August to the end of April, when the UV index reaches skin-damaging levels in South Australia. It should provide cool spaces for heat relief in summer. Adequate light and ventilation are also important. If the shaded area is permanent, it also needs to be warm and protected from the weather in winter so it can be utilised year-round.

## Understanding your shade options

### Built shade structures

- Permanent structures: these must provide UV protection and cool spaces from the start of August to the end of April and be warm and protected from the weather in winter. They should be able to withstand harsh weather conditions and high winds.
- Adjustable systems: these are often very flexible, allowing for changes in shade as the sun moves during the day and at different times of the year.
- Shade sails: these usually require minimal support structures making them ideal when you have limited space. Not all shade fabrics provide good UV protection, even if they provide good visible shade. The Ultraviolet Effectiveness (UVE) rating indicates how effective a shade fabric is at providing shade for sun protection. Consider using shade fabrics that have the highest UVE ratings available.



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UVE Classification AS4174:2018	
UVE (%)	Protection category
80.0 to 90.9	Effective
91.0 to 94.9	Very effective
95.0+	Most effective

- Temporary structures: these are easy to set up and take down, and include portable structures such as large tents, marquees and beach shelters. These are good for a space that only needs shade occasionally.
- Pre-made structures: these are ready for installation on any site. They can offer a cost-effective, readily-available shade solution. You will need to ensure that your structure is safe and provides adequate shade in the right area at the right time.

#### Textile and shade cloth covered structures

Textile or coated fabric such as canvas can provide up to 99 per cent UV protection. Features can include tight weave; coating to resist mildew, rot and light exposure; and water resistance. These fabrics often have a shorter lifespan than shade cloth.

Good-quality shade cloth is an important part of your shade structure. However, effective shade depends on more than the fabric you use. The location of the structure in relation to the area you want shaded, its size and height, and any surrounding reflective surfaces, will all contribute to the quality of UV protection provided.

Shade cloth may be either woven or knitted. It allows some light, air and water through and usually has a lifespan of up to 15 years, but only offers limited protection against UV radiation.

#### Natural shade

Natural shade is well-suited to large recreational areas such as parks and reserves and has a cooling effect and other health and environmental benefits.

The most suitable shade trees have large canopies, dense foliage, are appropriate for the soil type, climate and available water in the area, and are easily accessible. A higher canopy usually provides less overall shade. Be considerate of species with spiky branches, fruit or seed pods that could create litter or attract bees or cause allergic reactions.

It is best to seek professional advice about your particular site and a tree species that will perform well over many years. Local councils usually have trained horticulturalists or landscape architects on staff who will be able to suggest the best tree for your conditions. Be sure to explain that you want a tree with a generous shade canopy from the start of August to the end of April.

#### More information and resources

Shade Guidelines (PDF), an online shade comparison tool and other information is available at [sunsmart.org.au](http://sunsmart.org.au), or contact Cancer Council SA on 13 11 20.

UV-protective clothing and accessories can be purchased at Cancer Council SA's shop, or online at [cancercouncilshop.org.au](http://cancercouncilshop.org.au).

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