

# Shade needs assessment: step by step guide

Use the following six steps as a guide to evaluate existing shade and assess the need for creating more. The site plan may be useful for this exercise.

## Step 1: Review key areas that should have some shade provision

Do these areas have adequate shade? Consider:

- Entry and exit points
- Meeting areas
- Recreational or eating areas
- Car parks, footpaths
- General outdoor areas and balconies
- Indoor and outdoor covered areas.

## Step 2: Define pattern of use

Assess the usage of each of the main areas under review.

- Note the time of day the area is generally used.
- Document daily usage patterns of the space during peak Ultraviolet Radiation (UVR).
- Assess whether activities are 'active' or 'quiet'.
- Determine the average length of time that is spent by the target group in each place.

The following questions may guide your observations:

- What time of year is the place in use?
- Who uses the place? When do they use it? What are the main activities? How many people are involved in these activities?
- Observe daily usage patterns of the setting in general during the peak UVR period.
- Observe usage patterns outside peak UVR periods.

## Step 3: Assess user satisfaction with shade currently provided

- Consult staff and/or users about their reasons for using or avoiding a setting. Do not make assumptions.
- Try to find out why some areas are popular and why others are not used at all.
- If possible, conduct an onsite measurement of UVR to demonstrate shade needs.

## Step 4: Assess existing UVR-protective shade

- Assess how much existing shade is UVR protective and available for use at the times that it is needed.
- Note how shaded areas and exposed areas are distributed over the whole useable outdoor area.

## Step 5: Assess the likely area of useable future shade based on current plans

Find out if there are already:

- Plans for planting new trees? If so, is this specifically for shade?
- Plans to increase the number and coverage of existing roof structures?

Check the site—Are there any new plantings which are not yet providing shade?

## Step 6

Analyse all the information which has emerged in your survey, and be as specific as possible in identifying and prioritising needs.

Look to see which shade requirements may be combined or whether one solution may provide further positive results.

## Source

Queensland Health (1997) *Shade for Young Children - Planning Sun-safe Outdoor Environments in Queensland*, p 35.