

13<sup>th</sup> January 2022

Georgie Davies  
Councillor  
Wagga City Council  
243 Baylis Street  
Wagga Wagga NSW 2650

Dear Councillor Davies,

**Re: Support for shade in local playgrounds in the Wagga Wagga LGA**

Cancer Council NSW is committed to reducing the impact of cancer on individuals and the community. We are community funded and community focused. We believe health is central to urban planning to create environments that promote cancer-smart behaviours and reduce exposure to known cancer risks such as solar ultraviolet (UV) radiation.

This letter of support outlines the importance of the role of quality shade in playgrounds to help protect the community of Wagga Wagga from over-exposure to UV radiation, and makes specific suggestions for inclusion of shade in this setting.

As a NSW Cancer Council Community Programs Coordinator (based in Wagga Wagga) I work across the entire Riverina region and am committed to driving positive and lasting change towards a cancer free future for our local communities. One of the priority cancer prevention advocacy areas our organisation is committed to is skin cancer prevention, and quality shade in priority locations plays a critical role in reducing this risk.

**Skin cancer in Australia and the Wagga Wagga LGA**

Australia has the highest levels of UV radiation and the highest incidence rates of skin cancer worldwide, where two out of every three people are likely to be diagnosed with skin cancer by the age of 70. Children are particularly vulnerable, with overexposure to UV during childhood and adolescence a major factor in determining future skin cancer risk:

UV radiation causes 95% of melanomas and 99% of non-melanoma skin cancers in Australia. This means skin cancer is highly preventable. In the Wagga Wagga LGA, the age-standardised incidence rate of melanoma between 2013 and 2017 was 55.2 per 100,000 population, which is higher than the NSW average rate.<sup>1</sup>

**The importance of shade in reducing the risk of skin cancer**

Wagga Wagga City Council can play an important role in reducing the risk of skin cancer of children and residents through thoughtful planning and designing of effective shade. Good quality shade can reduce UV exposure by up to 75 per cent. In priority spaces, including spaces used by children, well designed, appropriately located and

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<sup>1</sup> Cancer Institute NSW Statistics Portal <https://www.cancer.nsw.gov.au/research-and-data/cancer-data-and-statistics/cancer-statistics-nsw/#/analysis/incidence/>

properly budgeted shade is a critically important design consideration assisting the community in reducing its exposure to UV radiation, and hence in reducing its risk of skin cancer.

Further information including the co-benefits of shade (including mitigating heat) are accessible via Cancer Council NSW's [website](#), along with the *Cancer Council NSW Guidelines to Shade* and example case studies of well-designed shade. [Local Government NSW](#) has also featured a recent and very relevant case study example of a UV Smart Cool Playground as a prototype for other playgrounds.

### **Shade in playgrounds in Wagga Wagga LGA**

Cancer Council NSW would like to commend council on its shade provisions at playgrounds throughout Wagga Wagga. A great example of this is the shade provided at the park in Gobbagombalin (cnr Cootamundra Blvd & Paradise Dr) which allows the playground to be used by more people in the area even in hot weather. We strongly support the provision of quality shade in *all* playgrounds in the Wagga Wagga LGA, and urge council to:

- Consider retrofitting shade to existing playgrounds that lack quality shade.
- Plan and budget properly in advance for built and natural shade in local playgrounds.
- Ensure the value of shade for UV radiation protection and other co-benefits are fully recognised in upcoming plans and projects, such as your Community Strategic Plan.

Quality shade is an asset that is critical to ensuring the health and well being of the community. Whilst we recognise the need to balance elements such as design and budget, failure to provide appropriate shade for children and the wider community is a core safety issue. We know that when shade is provided, people will use it. However, most frequently the key problem is insufficient access to shade in the right spaces.

If you would like to discuss further, please feel free to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

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