



COMMUNITY GARDEN POLICY

Date Adopted:	28 June 2011
Council or Corporate Policy	Council Policy
Responsible Division:	Environment and Community Management
Supporting documents, procedures & forms of this policy:	Checklist for new community garden projects Establishing a Community Garden Group Dealing with Conflict within a Community Garden Group Accessing your own funds Master Planning and Garden Management Plans Site Selection and Assessment Requirements Designing a garden Sample Forms: - Booking Form - Risk assessment
References & Legislation:	References and Useful resources

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1 Introduction

Community gardens involve local residents in a shared vision which is focused on the creation, maintenance and shared rewards of gardening. Community Gardens provide food, recreation and therapeutic opportunities for a community. They also provide opportunities for developing new skills, developing friendships through socialisation, improving health and living standards and promoting a sense of community pride and wellbeing.

Community gardens can also play an important role in educating the community on the benefits of growing food, the need for biodiversity and in developing sustainable living practises for everyday living. In this respect community gardens can form an important part of a community's identity and add to the vibrancy of uses of its open space network.

Community gardens need not be restricted to public open space alone and where opportunities exist in privately owned or communal spaces, such opportunities should be explored and nurtured. Opportunities can include the use of school land, churchyards, NSW housing land and other publicly accessible sites including crown administered reserves. Where developed in parkland settings, community gardens add to the diversity of open space experiences for both local residents and visitors alike.

There are many reasons that members of a community come together and create a garden.

Some reasons can be for practical purposes including:

- Limited outdoor space at home;
- The desire to grow one's own food;
- The opportunity to enjoy and work with nature;
- The opportunity to socialise, isolation reduction, make new friends and learn new skills;
- A feeling of achievement and belonging;
- Exercise and health;
- Learning and education; and
- A space to compost and reduce waste.

Leichhardt Council recognises that community gardens can play an important role in community development. The facilitation of gardening as a form of recreation and as a leisure activity can be viewed as being positive to a community's sense of wellbeing, its sense of pride, identity and involvement in local initiatives.

Community gardens require ongoing community input and dedication. The intrinsic benefits and outcomes from being part of a community garden group, participating in community gardening or learning from others can be positive. The benefits derived from such facilities mirrors the benefits which are derived from similar community facilities, e.g. swimming pools, community centres and libraries. In this sense a community garden can be viewed as having a positive contribution to the community at large. In addition, in terms of the cost of other types of community facilities, the benefits from community gardens can be achieved at relatively low costs.

2 Purpose of Policy

Leichhardt Council's Community Garden Policy provides clarity and direction to the community on Council's role in community gardening – from consulting and setting up a new Garden to day-to-day management. It outlines the rights and responsibilities of everyone involved.

It is also aimed at encouraging initiatives and providing opportunities for the community to work in partnership with Council to promote sustainability and gardening, not only as an important form of recreation but also as a therapeutic opportunity.

3 Definitions

Word/Term	Definition (with examples if required)
LGA	<p>Leichhardt Local Government Area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Leichhardt Local Government Area includes the suburbs of Annandale, Balmain (including Balmain East), Birchgrove, Leichhardt, Lilyfield, Rozelle and a small part of Camperdown.

4 Policy Statement

This policy document advocates Council’s role in community gardens as one which is an enabler and supporter of community garden initiatives, rather than a provider or ongoing funding source for such initiatives.

In this respect Council will support community gardens on land it administers where it can be demonstrated to Council that:

- There is wide community support for a community garden in a particular neighbourhood and that such needs cannot be currently met locally;
- Where parkland is proposed to be utilised, the open space values of the park as a whole are not adversely affected and the potential for conflict with existing users and neighbours is minimised;
- The garden group has established an agreed framework for governance and self-management of the proposed community garden i.e. Code of Conduct;
- The design and function of the proposed community garden is one which will have long term benefits for the community as a whole;
- Where the garden is to be located on community land, the proposed community garden is in keeping with any adopted plan of management or master plan for the site;
- There has been robust community consultation on the development of the garden; and
- The group has a level of match funding to assist in the establishment of the community garden (through a successful grant application, voluntary contributions, fundraising or otherwise).

5 Roles & Responsibilities

The Role of Council

As previously outlined in Section 4 Council’s role in community gardens is as an enabler and supporter of community garden initiatives, rather than a provider or ongoing funding source for such initiatives.

The Role of the Community

The most successful community garden projects are those where the initiating group takes the time to undertake a detailed process of committee formation, clarifying various roles and responsibilities, identifying fundraising techniques, undertaking planning and design. This is a true representation of successful community development.

Practical advice on establishing community gardens is contained in the [Community Gardening in South Australia Resource Kit](#).

The kit suggests that before you commit to a community garden project you ask yourself:

- Is there enough interest and energy within the group to sustain the project in the long term?
- Is a community garden the most effective way to address your community's needs, e.g. for food security, social opportunities, health promotion, environmental improvement or learning for sustainability?
- Would joining an established community garden be a better way to achieve your aims, while also strengthening and enhancing that garden?
- Would another form of gardening in the community be more appropriate, e.g. sharing and distributing produce from neighbourhood fruit trees, gardening collectively in backyards or starting a bush care group?

Community gardening is not only hard work; it is an ongoing commitment for the group as a whole.

In this sense it is essential that:

- The garden group is strong and committed with established goals and objectives.
- The garden group has shared work principals, a clear vision and a shared work ethic.
- The project has been researched thoroughly and jointly by the group.
- The garden proposal has been carefully planned to address identified needs and objectives.
- The garden group works collectively to establish external partnerships, i.e. local Council, school, community garden network.
- The garden group is flexible to allow for changes within the group eg recruiting new members when plots are vacated.

6 Policy Implementation

Land Management

Community gardens developed on open space or land under the care, control and management of Council must comply with existing park plans of management. Where a proposal for a community garden does not comply with an existing park plan of management Council can consider to amend the plan of management and in doing so, carry out community consultation. Note: This process may take a number of months to finalise.

Where no park plan of management is present and Council has care control and management a proposal for a community garden can be approved by Council provided that adequate community consultation has been undertaken and Council is satisfied that the policy criteria for establishing a community garden has been met.

Where a proposal for a community garden is situated on land not owned by Council, i.e. a school, church yard, NSW Housing or Crown land reserve, a license agreement governing occupation, use and tenure must be in place between the garden group and the appointed owner/administer of that land. Such gardens may be eligible for funding support from Council provided that Council's Policy Criteria is met, the group has a level of match funding and the land is located in the Leichhardt Local Government Area (LGA).

Funding

Identifying funding and fundraising opportunities to develop a community garden is an important management issue and a major challenge for a Community Garden Group. Without funding support a garden group's vision will falter. It is essential that as part of the long term planning process that the initiating group takes the time to understand the full and true costs involved with

the project and not to expect that the landowner will facilitate nor meet the full costs of the project.

Fundraising techniques and seeking out external sponsorship and donations are key management issues which the garden group needs to consider early on during the vision process.

Leichhardt Council's role is that of an enabler and supporter of community gardens. To facilitate and support Community Garden establishment, Council will assist garden groups on an annual basis through a Community Grant Funding Process and through the initial donation of materials and education support. Leichhardt Council's Community Funding Programme is dedicated to supporting cultural and community development within the Leichhardt Local Government Area.

To facilitate new Community Garden initiatives Council will provide one off grants of \$10,000 to fund the establishment of new Community Gardens in the Leichhardt LGA. Such assistance will be on a one off basis and funding is limited to the establishment of two gardens per year with funding limited to capital works associated with the establishment of the garden.

In addition:

- Groups must have a minimum of three quotes to support their application for funding support; and
- Groups must meet the eligibility criteria as outlined below.

Eligibility

- The Community Garden Group and the proposed community garden must be based in the Leichhardt Local Government Area and be not-for-profit;
- Where on Community land or Council owned/administered open space the Community Garden Group must be incorporated or be auspiced by an incorporated body. The garden group must comply with Leichhardt Council's Health and Safety Policy and have a copy of this policy which its members are familiar with. Where the proposed community garden is not on Council owned or administered land, the Community Garden Group must be incorporated or be auspiced by an incorporated body. The group must have public liability insurance up to the value of 20 million dollars. (Refer to Supporting Documents for potential Insurers of Community Garden Groups); and
- As part of the grant application process the Community Garden Group must submit their own adopted plan of management for their proposed community garden. The plan must address issues of accessibility, environmental sustainability, ongoing financial sustainability and demonstrate a level of community and cultural focus. The overall vision for the Community Garden should also be clearly documented.

As part of the capital development of new community gardens Council will also contribute directly by supplying the following:

- Recycled materials for use in the garden – mulch (where available);
- Provision of portable worm farm (will not include worms);
- Provision of portable compost bin;
- Provision of a site survey and identification of services;
- A licence for use of the space (where the garden is proposed on Council land); and
- Advertising and promotion of the Community Garden through Council's web site.

Note: Where access to a mains water system is requested by a garden group this will be considered by Council but will be metered and the garden group will be required to pay for water usage.

In terms of ongoing maintenance, Council's assistance will be limited to providing and delivering mulch and recycled materials where these are available and can be provided at little cost.

Waste Management

Leichhardt Council requires that the garden group manage all materials brought to and from the site. This is part of a Zero Waste Policy with respect to community gardens. Council will charge for rubbish collections generated from community gardens.

Beehives

Beehives or beekeeping is not permitted within community gardens located on public open space i.e. parkland. There are inherent safety risks associated with such facilities particularly where children are involved or a level of public access is permitted within the garden.

Raised Beds

On land under Leichhardt Council's care, control and management, the development of raised garden beds only is permitted. Such gardens must be designed and developed with clean imported soil only. Issues associated with possible soil contamination as well as accessibility are two key reasons for this policy.

7 Acknowledgements

Leichhardt Council would like to thank the individuals and organisations who have provided input, shared their valuable and practical experiences, provided ideas and maintained a keen interest in the development of this document. Valuable input and advice has been received from the Friends of Whites Creek Valley Park, Transition Towns Leichhardt, representatives of the Glover Street Community Garden and the Mort Bay Community Garden Group. A Community Garden workshop held on the 24th January 2010 and attended by over 40 local residents was useful in helping to formulate the policy and provide useful direction and information for Council officers on community perceptions and needs.

In the development of this document other policies have also been researched, studied and where appropriate areas of interest and relevance incorporated. This has included the Community Gardening in South Australia Resource Kit, Auckland City Community Garden Policy, Community Gardens: Policy Directions for Marrickville Council, Marrickville, Towneley Park Permaculture Project (Burnley, Lancashire, England) and the Sydney City - Community Garden Policy.

8 Version Control and Change History

Version Control	Date Effective	Approved By	Amendment
1	28 June 2011	Council	

9 Supporting Documents

Checklist for new community garden projects



The following checklist is adapted from the Australian City Farms and Community Gardens Network. It is a useful starting point for gardeners seeking to clarify their aims and objectives before commencing a more detailed planning process.

1. What type of community garden?

- A shared garden where participants share the gardening and the harvest.
- An allotment garden where participants garden their own plot and share the maintenance of common areas.
- A garden with both allotments and shared gardening space.

How long can allotments be held while they are not being used?

What size will we make the allotments?

2. What will be the purpose of the community garden?

Recreation/community building:

- A place for people to come to grow food and get to know each other.
- A place where parents can bring their children.
- Other

Food security and nutritional health

- Access to fresh, nutritious food
- Reducing family expenditure on food
- Supplementing the family food supply
- Other

Education

Will the garden be open to use and/or visitation by community colleges, schools and other educational bodies? ■ Yes or ■ No

Will gardeners offer public workshops (e.g. compost making, gardening etc)? ■ Yes or ■ No

If not, will the gardeners make the garden available for others to provide educational services?

■ Yes or ■ No

Other educational activities

3. How will we garden?

Organic gardening? ■ Yes or ■ No

Reasons:

If it is to be an organic garden, will this be explained to new gardeners when they join the garden - either verbally or in writing? ■ Yes or ■ No

Explained in some other way?

4. What types of plants will we grow?

Remember that fruit and nut trees need to be spaced about 3-5 metres - sometimes more - apart. Ensure there is enough space to accommodate the trees you would like.

- | | |
|---|-------------------|
| ■ Vegetables | ■ Herbs |
| ■ Flowers | ■ Fruit/nut trees |
| ■ Berry fruit shrubs | ■ Water crops |
| ■ Medicinal plants | ■ Bush foods |
| ■ Herbal tea plants | |
| ■ Native or indigenous plants (native plants are those originating in Australia: indigenous plants originate in the local region) | |

5. What animals will we keep?

- No animals
- Chickens
- Other poultry
- Other animals

6. What structures will we build in the community garden?

- Sitting area to shelter from the sun and rain
- Lockable shed for storing tools, seeds etc
- Nursery for plant propagation
- Fireplace for making coffee and tea - barbecue for preparing food
- Play area for children
- Public art
- Educational signs
- Rainwater tanks collecting water from shed/shelter roof to irrigate the garden
- Other

7. What training do we need?

Gardening and construction skills:

- Plant propagation
- Soil analysis
- Improving soils
- Making compost
- Using mulch - irrigation
- Pest management
- Seed saving
- Construction
- Developing a planting calendar
- Planting out and harvesting
- Other

Design skills:

- Site analysis for site design
- Garden design

Education:

- Cooking what we grow
- Other

Are any of these skills available within the group?

- Yes or No

If not where will we find these skills?

8. How will we cooperate with local government?

Will the garden be a place where communities and local government can work together to demonstrate social and environmental practices compatible with the aims of community gardening, such as:

- Waste reduction
- Water conservation
- Regreening
- Energy efficiency
- Biodiversity
- Nutritional health
- Agenda 21
- Other

9. How will we support biodiversity?

Will we plant the non-hybrid seed of heritage or heirloom vegetables and fruits so we can collect, save and replant the crops? Yes or No

Will the garden join the Seed Savers Network to learn more about food plant biodiversity, to obtain non-hybrid seed from the members of the network or to become the focus of a Local Seed Network?

- Yes or No

Will we propagate and distribute seed of endangered or rare local native (indigenous) plants?

- Yes or No

10. How will we educate gardeners and the public in waste reduction?

Will we demonstrate the reuse and recycling of waste organic matter through:

- Compost
- Worm farms
- Use of recycled materials
- Mulching
- Other

11. How will we conserve water in the garden?

- Rainwater tanks
- Mulching
- Low-water-use plants
- Efficient irrigation
- Other

12. How will we fund the garden?

- Apply for grants
- Membership fees
- Other types of self-funding

How will we fund ongoing costs?

13. What will we look for in a preferred site for the garden?

- Size of area needed
- Access to public transport
- Access to sunlight, water and wind protection

Comments/suggestions

14. Description of the proposed management structure for the garden:

Will the organisational structure be an incorporated association? ■ Yes or ■ No

Will the garden obtain public liability insurance?

- Yes ■ No or ■ N/A

How will decisions be made?

What will be the proposed conflict resolution process?

How will new members be recruited?

15. How will gardeners ensure there are no problems with:

Odour

Vandalism

Excessive noise

Site aesthetics - how the site looks

Rodents

Parking

Non-gardener access

Other



Gardening for Success - Establishing a Community Garden Group



As previously discussed, the most successful community garden projects are those where the initiating group takes the time to undertake a detailed process of committee formation, clarifying various roles and responsibilities, identifying fundraising techniques, undertaking planning and design.

Prior to establishing a Community Garden Group it is strongly recommended that those initiating the garden proposal undertake the following procedures:

- Discuss the concept with Council, identify any obstacles, issues and opportunities prior to commencing group formation.
- Hold a public meeting to inform and enlist potential group members, your ward Councillors, neighbours and your local precinct committee. This should also involve advertising through a letter box drop, the local paper or by way of a notice in your local park (permission from Council must be gained first). At the public meeting consider inviting a speaker from an established community garden to discuss their experiences and the benefits of community gardening. Don't forget to record the names and contact details of those who attended for future reference.
- Anticipate that not everyone may share your vision. Change can disturb, particularly where public land is involved or neighbours perceive they may be adversely affected, i.e. loss of access, views, noise etc. They may even have other ideas on how the space you want to access should be utilised or developed. Where concerns arise make sure you note these and spend time working through the issues. Be respectful and courteous.
- Once a committed group is established work on developing trust and collaboration. Hold a BBQ or planning workshop, invite speakers and learn about each member of your group's individual skills, needs and aspirations.
- In terms of planning and design keep an open mind and remember to aim high but start with practical small steps first and foremost. Future plan by envisaging what your group wants the garden to look like in five years time.

- Identify and develop community partnerships-with your local Council, school groups, community colleagues and university, local businesses and the community garden network. Take a group tour of a successful community garden, learn from others and research what works well and how such a vision was achieved.

The Australian City Farm and Community Gardens Network recommends asking the following questions when visiting other community gardens:

- How did the garden start?
- What type of organisational structure do you have?
- Where do you obtain resources: mulch, compost, seeds?
- How are you funded?
- What are your links with local government/ with other educational or business organisations?
- How do you make decisions, solve problems and resolve conflict?
- How do you build a sense of community around the garden?
- How do you pass on skills to new gardeners and improve people's skills?



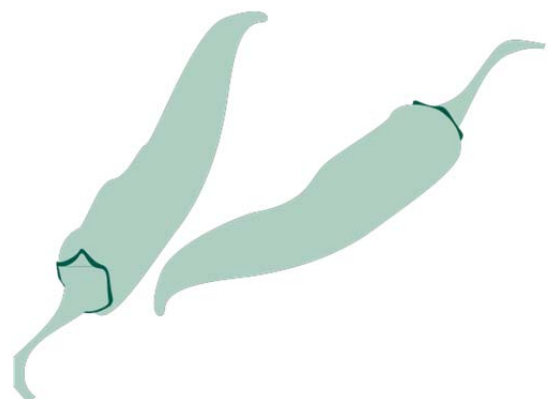
Food for Thought - What will our Garden be?



Conflict within any group can be a major failing in the early planning of any community driven project. It is essential that with any group a shared vision is established early on with respect to how the garden will look, operate and function in the future.

The Australian City Farm and Community Gardens Network recommends that in the initial planning stages the group keeps an open mind on how the garden may look and that in this process they enlist the skills of an independent facilitator to assist in planning the garden. The facilitator needs to be neutral to the group and allow each member to share his or her ideas and vision for the future garden space. Things to consider include:

- Community art (e.g. sculpture, mosaics and murals);
- Social spaces, seating and outdoor eating areas;
- Shady and covered areas;
- Spaces for performance and areas for workshop delivery;
- Tool shed and work areas-sustainable buildings;
- Raised or un-raised beds;
- Signage, displays and notice boards;
- Special plots for education or school groups;
- Bicycle parking space;
- A bubbler;
- Fruit trees;
- Rainwater tanks and irrigation;
- Predatory insect attracting plants to help manage pests;
- Propagation area and stall for sale of plants;
- Food waste composting;
- Worm farm;
- Beehive (Refer to: Council Policy);
- Solar and wind power;
- Polytunnels; and
- Herb spiral.



Accessing your Own Funds



Garden tools, a tool shed for equipment storage , paths, promotion materials, irrigation, fencing, gates and paths, professional landscape advice and the future maintenance of facilities will be ongoing costs which a community garden group must plan for.

Accessing funds to support facilities and materials can be a daunting task so spending time thinking about, group brainstorming and researching funding opportunities is very important to the long term continued success of your garden.

Ways in which other successful community gardens have carried out fundraising include:

- **Annual Plot and Membership Fees** - The fee amount should be established by the garden group and reviewed annually. Such fees are annually based and assist with maintenance costs, license fees, open days, meetings and newsletters.
- **Open Days and Showcase Events** - Promoting your Garden and selling vegetables, seeds, preservatives, handmade crafts and donated products produced locally is also a way of assisting with fundraising. Having a sausage sizzle to promote your garden is also a popular option.
- **Education Tours and Courses and Workshops** - These can attract donations especially where there is a demand to visit a site which has been developed by a community group and has adopted and has functional sustainable living practises in place. A donation box is also a useful tool for such events.
- **Grant Funding** - Due to their social, community and environmental benefits, there are a range of grants which can be sourced and applied for to support Community Gardens. Refer to www.ourcommunity.com.au and www.grantslink.gov.au

Involving children in community gardening not only teaches young people about food production and team work it also promotes sustainability, life skills and use of the garden. With a little luck they may even take the messages home to spread the word.



Master Planning and Garden Management Plans



Prior to any community garden commencing on Council owned or administered land, Leichhardt Council requires that a community garden group produces a garden management plan and master plan for their proposed community garden. This also applies where a garden group seeks funding support from Council to develop or improve a community garden on non Council owned/administered land.

Developing a master plan and a garden management plan not only creates a shared vision but helps clarify roles and responsibilities as well as practical steps to developing your garden.

Garden management plans also demonstrate to the landowner that the garden group is organised, well structured and has a vision which is long term. Such plans not only provide direction and structure for the garden group but can also be used to set the strategic long term direction for the garden. In doing so the plan can also become a useful tool to:

- a) promote the garden and its members; and
- b) assist in fundraising assistance with potential grants.

A Garden Management Plan for a community garden should contain:

- The name of the garden;
- Proposed site location;
- Statement of purpose;
- Aims and objectives of group;
- Proposed Management Structure;
- Proposed risk management framework and a completed risk assessment;
- Proof of Liability Insurance (where required) and registered ABN (Australian Business Number);
- Policy regarding public access and equity (hours of access, access by children), all abilities access and participation-raised beds etc;
- Communication with neighbours;
- Current and potential future membership;
- Annual Membership fees;

- Proposed policies regarding sustainable land management - soil, water, energy, organic and non-organic waste, biodiversity and building materials;
- Proposed decision making process and conflict resolution processes;
- Proposed funding and financial model e.g. membership fees, fundraising, grants;
- Promotion strategies, external partnerships and opportunities for education;
- Proposed policy regarding smoking, drugs and alcohol;
- Proposed policy regarding companion animals (dogs and cats);
- Landscape plan of proposed garden and long term vision;
- Partnerships and roles - local schools, cafes, churches, Council etc; and
- Role for non-gardeners i.e. the elderly.



Site Selection & Assessment Requirements



Public Land Owned/Administered by Council

Leichhardt Council will assist Community Groups which meet Council's Policy Criteria for Community Garden establishment with site selection and assessment costs where a community garden is approved for development on Council land, or land which is under the care, control or management of Council.

Assistance will be in the form of:

- Site Survey (where required); and
- Access Report (where required).

Private Land (Non Council)

On private land, not owned or administered by Council the full costs of assessment must be met by the Garden Group, not Council.

Prior to commencing the development of a Plan of Management for a Community Garden Groups must undertake their own assessment of the proposed site to identify the opportunities, issues and threats which may impact upon any future garden success. This should be done by the group as a whole and not individually. As a guide it is recommended that this should include the site criteria highlighted in the Community Gardening in South Australia Resource Kit :

- What community groups and businesses are nearby that might support/partner or object to the project? Consider churches, schools, childcare centers, community or aged care facilities, environment groups, restaurants, chambers of commerce, garden stores, nurseries etc
- Who lives nearby? What are their age groups? What are the employment levels? Is housing primarily public, community, private rental or owned? What are people's cultural and linguistic backgrounds?
- How safe and secure is the site? Is it near other community facilities? Can it be seen from nearby houses or shopping areas? Is there any graffiti or vandalism? Is there lighting? What is the crime rate in the area?
- What other land uses surround the site? Consider

commercial, industrial, open space, major roads and residential.

- What is the land currently used for? E.g. as a shortcut for local residents, a place to dump rubbish or for illegal activities, children's play or sport, walking dogs or even sleeping. Will the project conflict with these uses?
- What plants are already on the site? Are there areas of weed infestation? What plants grow well in the local area?
- How big is the land? How much of the land is really suitable for gardens?
- Who owns the land? What is the land use zoning category? What does this zoning allow/restrict?
- How does water move through the site? Does it soak in quickly or cause water-logging? Are there flooding issues?
- What is the current ground-cover? E.g. grass, gravel, paving, compacted earth, concrete.
- What is the slope of the land? Is there opportunity for terracing or swales? Swales are mounds and trenches built on the contour of the slope that allow infiltration of water.
- What is the soil type? Has soil testing been undertaken? What is the history of the site? Is there a risk of soil contamination? (Leichhardt Council only permits raised garden bed development).
- How many hours of sun does the site get each day? Are any large trees or buildings blocking solar access?
- What direction does wind come from? Is the wind likely to affect plant growth? Is there wind turbulence caused by nearby buildings or walls?
- Are there any existing structures on site? Consider buildings, seating, sheds, walls, fences, paving and existing gardens.
- Are there existing services to the site? Consider electricity, water, phone, sewers, stormwater drains, public transport and parking.
- Are there major roads nearby? If so, are there barriers to pollution and noise from traffic? Is it safe for small children?

Designing for Success - Options for Your Garden



Establishing a shared vision for your community garden is a key step to a successful garden plan. The Community Gardening in South Australia Resource Kit recommends that a number of design considerations for new gardens be part of the consultation process. This includes:

- **Designing for Low Waste** - Composting and Worm Farming are a good way of managing organic waste generated on site.
- **Designing for Zero Waste** - Your community garden is the perfect place to design a Zero waste system. In nature there is no such thing as 'waste'. Rather, it is a cyclical system where all 'wastes' from one part of the system become 'resources' for another part. Consider what materials are being brought onto the

site and what will happen to them at the end of their life. If they cannot be reused or reprocessed on the site, then avoid using them. Bring reusable cups and plates for social fundraisers; compost/wormfarm all organic materials on-site; consider bulk purchase of garden products from suppliers to avoid packaging; swap pots/seedling trays with other gardeners or ask suppliers to take back.

- **Design of integrated Soil Fertility** - Compost generated on site can be reused in your garden. Ensure that you grow a range of plant species including legume species which produce biomass and fix nitrogen. Also encourage crop rotation in the garden. This not only offers variety, colour and interest but also assists in good soil management and plant health.

Design for Interest, Learning, Diversity and All Abilities



Where possible encourage community art, wood craft demonstrations, pottery making and provide educational opportunities for the community.



Include plants which promote the senses and encourage people of all abilities into the garden. Ensure that paths are designed to take account of ability needs and include rest points which foster such use.



Seating which includes backrests and side arms assist with mobility particularly for the elderly.

- **Design for biodiversity and pest management** - Include in your design plants and features which attract native birds, bees and other animals. This not only promotes diversity within the garden but also assists in creating valuable habitats and corridors for local wildlife.
- **Design for Sustainability** - When considering construction think of using recycled materials in your garden design. This can be for fencing, bed establishment, garden stakes, paving, seating etc.
- **Design for Water Savings** – Where buildings are near by or present investigate options for rainwater harvesting. On sloped sites plan your garden so it takes advantage of water run off by using swales and

terraces. Remember to that wind dries your garden out just as much as the sun and wind can damage your garden. Planting shrubs and trees on the western and southern perimeters will help with shade and wind protection.

- **Individual Plots vs. Communal Space** - Discuss with the group the pros and cons of each, visit other successful gardens and see how they operate. Individual plots are popular but a combination of both individual and communal can be beneficial in promoting cohesion and cooperation with the garden, pest management through planting regimes, as well as opportunities for external groups ie school groups.

Design for Interest, Learning, Diversity and All Abilities



Paths should be wide enough for prams, pushchairs and wheel chairs (eg at least 1.5m-2m in width).



Worm Farming is great for the environment and the garden ! Demonstrations can be educational and fun as well as involve a range of age groups.



Shelter in the garden is useful not only for quiet reflection and appreciation but also as a meeting point and as a valuable source of shade. Shelter can also be attractive, sustainable and have artistic value.

Staying Safe - Management of a Community Garden



Your group has formed a successful committee, harnessed much needed community support and membership, gained Council approval, raised match funding, built the first stage of your garden, planted your first seedlings and the Mayor has cut the ribbon to your garden with press coverage - What a success !

As much as you may enjoy gardening, ongoing management will require that you put down your gardening tools from time to time and carry out administration duties. How such duties are managed is up to the garden group but must be undertaken and will be a condition of any license which you enter into for use of Council open space.

Administration Duties should as a rule include:

- **Developing a Health and Safety Policy and Risk Assessment** - anyone who uses or accesses the community garden is at risk of an accident or injury. The management of tools, soils, manures, poisons and pesticides, pathway maintenance (trip hazards etc), wet weather, sun safe practices, deliveries etc are all important matters which you should consider in a health and safety policy for the garden. Having a first aid kit on site is also important and Implementing an induction process for your members

is critical to managing your site and ensuring that both visitors and regular users have an enjoyable and safe time at the garden.

- **Records and Money Management** - Keeping good records (both financial and group decisions) is an important skill for any community garden group. It not only ensures that the garden has a good management framework with regards to decision making and expenditure but also that there is an historical legacy which can be referenced to by new members and at times where there may be disagreements. Future grant funding opportunities can also require historical information and in the long term such information can be used to help promote the garden. As a basic rule community garden groups should acquire an Australian Business number (ABN) through the Australian Tax office. This should be included on any receipts you issue for annual membership, plant and craft sales. In addition make sure that all receipts are retained for purchases for the garden. Grant authorities for example require detailed proof of invoices and there can be occasions where a completed grant is independently audited.



Wearing gloves in the garden not only protects your hands from injury and potential insect bites its also sun safe in reducing UV damage to your hands.



Being creative in the garden can generate interest, be fun, involve different ages and be artistic!

Organising Your Garden - Issues of Management



Like anything which is new there is bound to be a level of excitement, enthusiasm and passion for your community garden when it is first opened. Harnessing this passion and ensuring the enthusiasm for the garden is continual and that members equally share a communal responsibility of management and maintenance is an important and ongoing challenge for the garden group.

Some key issues for the group to consider long term include:

- Promotion and branding-Information packages for new members, publishing workshops, school visits and maintaining relationships with your neighbours.
- Attracting new members, retaining current and involving the community at large. Developing policy on rules for garden members (code of conduct) and committee agreement on how plots are allocated and the process of handing back a plot.

- Scheduling working bees, garden talks, open days, outreach work, BBQ's and get-togethers. (Develop a calendar of events and ways to communicate and promote such events).
- Revising your management plan as trends and visions change.
- Harnessing members individual skills and assigning garden and administration tasks.
- Establishing external relationships with other community garden groups.
- Seasonal Soil improvement - adding manure, compost and mulch.
- Types of Plants - herbs, flowers and vegetables. Communal policy development with respect to trees and shrub plantings (these can shade other plots so a policy is a good idea).



Booking Form and Risk Assessment Sheets (Part A&B) Examples Only



Community Garden Booking Form and Risk Assessment Sheets (Part A&B) - Examples Only

Mushroom Lane Community Garden

Charity No. 201012 and incorporated as Company No. 20102012

Garden use by private groups

The garden can be booked for meetings or events (including children's birthday parties), as long as they are outside the public opening hours (currently 11am – 5pm Saturday and Sunday).

The person booking the garden must sign and return an agreement (see page 2) and must agree to be accountable for use of the site during its use. This includes carrying out a full risk assessment before the meeting or event takes place. (An example risk assessment is shown on pages 3-6; this is intended to supplement rather than replace any existing risk assessment procedures carried out by the group making the booking. The garden coordinator does not need a copy of any risk assessment undertaken, only confirmation that one has been carried out).

Whilst using the garden please ensure that:

- children are accompanied at all times by their parents or carers, who have responsibility for their safety
- alcohol or drugs are not consumed on site
- any waste materials that cannot be used for composting or in the garden development are taken away by the person(s) who brought them on site (Mushroom Lane Community Garden has a Zero Waste Policy).
- Dogs are not permitted within the garden areas.

Bookings: should be made in writing and a hardcopy, signed agreement returned to address shown, along with a donation. Any provisional booking made by phone or email will not be confirmed until these are received.

To see when the garden is available, please visit the public calendar at:

<http://calendar.yahoo.au.mushroomlanecommunitygarden> to choose a date and time that is available.

Picking up the key for access: once your booking has been confirmed, you should contact George Mcphee (Trustee) or Rochelle Notman (Coordinator) at least 48 hours before your booking starts, to arrange a time to collect the key to access the garden for your event. Email: mushroomlanecommunitygarden@yahoo.au or call George: Ph 93679270.

Donations: go towards the running costs of the communal spaces of the garden. The garden is run almost entirely by volunteers and relies on generous donations and good will to continue operating as a resource for the local community. As a guide, for private bookings people generally donate around \$10 per hour. Some people pay a lot more because they want to support the garden as a community resource. We ask people to donate based on their circumstances and the number of people they will have at the garden. We also aim to ensure that no-one is excluded from using the garden if they cannot afford a donation of a particular value. Please contact the Garden Coordinator if you have any questions about donations.

If you have any queries or want to make or change a booking, please contact the Garden Co-ordinator by email at mushroomlanecommunitygarden@yahoo.au. Please note that emails to this address are not checked every day, and so there may be a short delay in replying to you.

Booking Form

(please use block capitals)

I/we _____

wish to book Mushroom Lane Community Garden Project on __/__/2011 from _____ to _____

Address _____

_____ Postcode _____

email _____ Telephone/mobile _____

I/we enclose a donation of \$ _____

When using the site I/we agree to:

- Only use of the space for activities in keeping with the aims, objectives and the community spirit of the garden.
- Abide by the rules and the health and safety policies which are displayed on the site notice board and outlined in the introduction to this agreement.
- Be aware that all gardens potentially contain some plants that may be poisonous or may cause an allergic reaction. Users are responsible for taking care around plants to ensure your safety, and that of your dependants, within the garden. Please note allergic skin reactions can result simply from touching certain plants.
- Be responsible for myself/ourselves and any others I/we bring onto the garden site, and undertake any risk assessments for special activities or groups that I/we bring on site.
- Report damages or hazards to the garden coordinator.
- Ensure that no rubbish or tools are left out at the end of the session and that all rubbish is taken off site.
- Ensure that the gate is closed when I/we leave and the key returned to the address below (unless otherwise agreed).
- Ensure that the implement shed is locked and the garden is left at least as tidy as it was on arrival.
- To only use equipment or tools or materials from the shed if and when agreed by the Garden Coordinator .
- To use the minimum amount of water from the tap and to make sure the tap is turned off after use.
- To ensure that the compost toilet is used according to the instructions and is left in a clean and orderly state.

Signed: _____

Please return one copy of this form, along with your donation to:

Mr George Mchpee
Garden Coordinator
Mushroom Lane Community Garden
C/O 401 Lamb Street
Leichhardt, 2040

Part (A) Sample Risk Assessment: Group Booking for Mushroom Lane Community Garden

Note: each group booking must carry out their own risk assessment for their particular groups and activities.
By signing the booking form you are agreeing to undertake responsibility for risk assessment for the time you use the garden.

Group booking:	Name of person of responsibility:	Person(s) carrying out assessment:	Date assessment started: Review dates:
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HAZARD	RISK	PERSONS AT RISK	CONTROL MEASURES	COMMENTS/ ACTIONS	RESIDUAL RISK	INITIAL IF DONE
Animals, insects, poisonous plants etc	Injury, possible fatality	Volunteers visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid high risk situations • Take necessary avoidance actions if encountered • Ensure those with known allergies carry medication 	Brief group	Low	
Avoidable object dangers/unsuitable location	Injury	Volunteers visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check garden to ensure no objects hazards (tools & materials safely stored in shed, no open lying water) • Ensure first aid kit available (there is one kept in the tool shed) 	Brief group	Low	

HAZARD	RISK	PERSONS AT RISK	CONTROL MEASURES	COMMENTS/ ACTIONS	RESIDUAL RISK	INITIAL IF DONE
Emergencies	Injury, possible fatality	Volunteers visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The group has an emergency plan for dealing with an incident including mobile phone and contact details for emergency services 		Low	
Extreme weather, heat, lightening or injury	Sun burn, lightning strike (possible fatality)	Volunteers visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seasonal activity, consideration of forecast and amendment of plans if necessary, use of suitable clothing and equipment including sunscreen, wide brimmed hat, clothing to cover up Where storms predicted or likely remain indoors Daily weather forecast obtained and plans adjusted accordingly 	Pre-planning, clothing advice to group, Children checked before departure	Low	
Group control	Injury, possible fatality	Volunteers visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Close supervision, large groups split into small groups each with leader Responsible person allocated to each group understands hazards Overall leader remains in touch with all groups and ensure everyone has left premises before locking up 	Pre-planning of activities and supervision	Low	

HAZARD	RISK	PERSONS AT RISK	CONTROL MEASURES	COMMENTS/ ACTIONS	RESIDUAL RISK	INITIAL IF DONE
Fires, including use of gas barbecues	Injury, burns, food poisoning	Volunteers visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close supervision of any fires, burn or other heat sources • Gas bottles stores and used according to instructions • Barbecues only to be used by responsible adult with food hygiene training and experience of cooking using BBQ equipment 	<p>Only have BBQ if there is a responsible adult supervising at all times.</p> <p>Running water and first aid kit accessible all times.</p> <p>Barbecues and ovens only used with the express permission of the garden coordinator.</p> <p>Identified, qualified adult to supervise cooking at all times.</p>	Medium	
Compost toilet	Infection	Volunteers visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure normal hygiene procedures followed Handwashing facilities and toilet paper • Ensure all visitors understand instructions for use 			

**(Part B) Mushroom Lane Community Garden:
Risk Assessment Sheet for Garden Members**

IDENTIFIED RISKS	CONSEQUENCES	LIKELIHOOD	OVERALL RISK LEVEL	MITIGATION/ CONTROL MEASURES
Sharp cutting equipment:eg. lawn mower, whipper-snipper, shovels, power tools	Major: Cuts, deep wounds, broken bones	Possible	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety check activity incorporated into sign on sheet • First Aid kit available at site • Under 18s not to use power cutting tools • Members using power tools MUST wear enclosed shoes, long sleeved shirt, long trousers and eye protection • Safety goggles provided in shed • Annual maintenance schedule for power tools to ensure they are in good working order
Pointed gardening tools: e.g. crowbars, pitch forks	Major: Deep wounds	Possible	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety check activity incorporated into sign on sheet • Age-appropriate training provided for all Under 18s in safe use of gardening tools. • First Aid kit available at site • Active children encouraged to play away from main garden area • Annual maintenance of garden tools (e.g. check mattock heads)
Trip hazards	Major: Sprains, broken bones	Possible	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety check activity incorporated into sign on sheet • First Aid kit available at site • Members encouraged to store tools so that they cannot be tripped over • Active children encouraged to play away from main garden area • All gardening members must wear enclosed shoes when on site

IDENTIFIED RISKS	CONSEQUENCES	LIKELIHOOD	OVERALL RISK LEVEL	MITIGATION/ CONTROL MEASURES
Sun, heat	Moderate: Sunstroke; dehydration	Possible	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage wearing of hats • Provide 30+ suncream protection • Water available on site
Falling tree branches	Major: Broken bones; concussion	Rare	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual check for unsafe branches
Uneven ground, holes	Major: Sprains; broken bones	Unlikely	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members encouraged to barricade and/or fill in holes
Stings and bites – insects, spiders, ants	Minor: Swelling; pain; itching	Possible	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First aid kit available at site
Inhalation of potting/ compost mixes	Major: Legionnaires disease	Rare	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Masks available in shed
Vehicles	Major: Collision, injury to pedestrians/passers by from a slow-moving vehicle in the garden	Rare	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vehicular access padlocked and entry of vehicles to garden area minimised
Inappropriate conduct towards children and young people by garden members	Major: Safety and wellbeing of children compromised/child abuse	Rare	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active garden members must hold current blue card • Parents/accompanying adult required to supervise children at regular garden activities • Garden members to seek permission from parents before engaging children in activities or moving out of sight of parents/other members • Protective behaviours eg staying in sight, going to toilet in pairs/groups, checking with parents before leaving 'line of sight' area encouraged and promoted by garden members

IDENTIFIED RISKS	CONSEQUENCES	LIKELIHOOD	OVERALL RISK LEVEL	MITIGATION/ CONTROL MEASURES
Inappropriate conduct towards children and young people by garden members (cont.)				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities/events offered specifically for children and young people to have additional risk assessment conducted and risk management strategy incorporated into event planning
Inappropriate conduct towards children and young people by garden visitors or other members of the public	Major: Safety and wellbeing of children compromised/child abuse	Rare	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warning parents of children that this area is not policed by the school and the public have ready access • Parents encouraged to supervise children at regular garden activities • Protective behaviours eg staying in sight, going to toilet in pairs/groups, checking with parents before leaving 'line of sight' area encouraged and promoted by garden members
Recreational hazards: cyclists; soccer games	Moderate: Injury from collision	Unlikely	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advising public and local residents of timing of garden activities and events • Advising members of the multi-functional nature of the area
Dogs off leash	Moderate: Bites, mauls	Unlikely	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advising members to stay away from dogs off leash. Dogs not permitted in garden areas. • Any problem dogs to be reported to owners, and if necessary, Leichhardt Council.
Gardening equipment	Insignificant: Cuts, blisters, abrasions, chaffing	Possible	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety check with sign on sheet • Encourage wearing of gloves

Assessment Date:	Name of Group Member:	Person(s) carrying out assessment:	Member(s) Signature:	Issues encountered:
Assessment Time:				