



NAME OF POLICY: Community Gardens Policy

POLICY MANUAL: Governance

BACKGROUND

The concept of community gardens originated in Britain during the eighteenth century and was further developed in the nineteenth century, where plots of land known as allotments were made available under the Allotments Act 1887, to poor labourers for the production of vegetables and flowers.

The practice of community gardens among urban working class people, spread throughout industrial countries in Europe and the USA in the 1800s. In Australia, however, there has been no legislative basis for community gardens. Nevertheless, they can be traced back to the Depression era and the Second World War era when food shortages prompted the government to encourage families to work together in “Victory Gardens” to produce food for the table.

The first Australian community garden was established in 1977 in Nunawading, Victoria and was a successful and innovative community development project that has become a model on which subsequent community gardens in Australia are based.

A number of community gardens have been established in South Australia. The first Community Garden established in the City of Norwood Payneham & St Peters, *Linde Community Garden*, is located at Linde Reserve, Stepney.

DISCUSSION

Community Gardens are a unique community based activity through which citizens can learn, recreate and socialise. Community gardens can contribute to improved health and well-being, an increase in positive social interaction, an appreciation of environmental and sustainability principles and the greater use and protection of public open space.

Definition:

A Community Garden is defined as a piece of open space operated by citizens where the site is used for the following purposes:

- the production of produce for the personal use of its members through allotments or shared plots; and
- the demonstration of best practice environmental initiatives, organic gardening practices and sustainability principles to the wider community including local schools, community groups and individual citizens which will lead to the building of community capacity.

KEY PRINCIPLES

The City of Norwood Payneham & St Peters Community Gardens Policy will be guided by the following key principles:

- **Inclusion:**
The Council values diversity and seeks to reflect and engage all sectors of the community in community gardening.
- **Collaboration:**
The Council values collaboration and will seek a partnership approach with community based organisations to add value to community life through community garden activity.
- **Equity:**
The Council values equity and will seek an equitable approach in its support of community activity within a community garden.
- **Participation:**
The Council values participation and will seek to engage the community and other stakeholders in community garden activity.
- **Access:**
The Council values access and requires that any community garden is accessible to the wider community.

POLICY

The City of Norwood Payneham & St Peters recognises community gardening as a valuable activity which can contribute to health and wellbeing, positive social interaction, community capacity building, environmental education and sustainability principles as well as the protection and use of open space.

Objectives:

The objectives of this Policy are to:

- recognise the benefits of community gardens;
- set out the requirements for the establishment of a community garden on Council owned land;
- recognise the value of a community garden as a “Third Place”, thereby offering a site to the community that is informal, local, cheap to visit and which generates ideas, creativity and collaboration;
- ensure that community gardens are managed in an efficient manner and maintained to a suitable standard; and
- build skill and capacity in the knowledge and practice of organic gardening throughout the local community.

Council Support:

The Council will:

- promote and raise awareness as required of community gardening;
- provide information to the community about the operation of community gardens within the City of Norwood Payneham & St Peters; and
- assist interested groups in searching for suitable public open space for the development of Community Gardens within the City of Norwood Payneham & St Peters.

Site Selection:

The Council will assist in locating a possible new garden site subject to consideration of the following:

- the existence of suitable available land;
- the support of property owners and occupiers living adjacent to and near the proposed site;
- demonstrated interest and commitment from a community group;
- alignment with existing Community Land Management Plans and all other planning, regulatory and legislative requirements;
- usability of the site;
- proximity to higher density living areas;
- compatibility with surrounding land uses;
- soil quality and drainage;
- sun exposure;
- accessibility to public transport; and
- accessibility to supporting infrastructure such as water.

In addition, it will be important that users of open space are not displaced as a result of the establishment of a Community Garden.

Management Framework:

A Community Garden will be leased to an incorporated community group who will be required to develop, manage and operate the garden. The incorporated group will be required to have approved public liability cover and manage safe access in and around the site.

The establishment and ongoing operation of a garden will also need to abide by relevant environmental legislation, in particular the *Environment Protection (Water Quality) Policy 2003*, which legislates local stormwater pollution prevention strategies to reduce the incidence of stormwater pollution.

The management of a Community Garden will also be required to support the Council's target of reducing waste to landfill and will help to promote waste minimisation techniques to the wider community.

The incorporated community group will encourage members, through its functions and activities, to act more sustainably.

The incorporated community group will be required to liaise with Council staff regarding any new infrastructure or projects planned for the Garden. Prior to the erection or installation of any infrastructure and/or structure, written approval from the Council and, where relevant, Development Consent will be required.

The incorporated community group will be required to report on an annual basis to the Council on the function of the garden and how they are meeting the Council's objectives.

Information regarding Community Gardens will, from time-to-time, be promoted through the Council's website and publications.

As part of the Management Framework, a User Agreement will be developed.

User Agreement:

The incorporated community group will, as part of its lease with the Council, develop, manage and operate the Community Garden. A User Agreement will be developed which specifies the terms of use, management responsibilities, user fees and access procedures, including the following:

- priority of membership for residents of the City of Norwood Payneham & St Peters with the majority of membership being within walking distance;
- revocation of membership and use of the site for non-compliance with the organisation's constitution, the applicable lease and user agreements or this Policy;
- commitment by gardeners to work in the communal garden and to demonstrate various skills and knowledge of organic gardening practice before being allocated an individual allotment;
- maintenance of allotment gardens to a minimum standard of aesthetics and orderliness with year-round planting to be encouraged;
- produce to be organically grown and not to be sold for private profit. Any excess produce can be donated;
- the organisation to provide its own Public Liability Insurance;
- monitoring and review of the garden, including performance measures;
- no livestock (eg poultry) permitted in the garden; and
- compliance with best practice for community gardens.

Lease:

A lease agreement must be agreed to and entered into between the Council and the incorporated community group for the purpose of developing and maintaining a Community Garden on Council owned open space. The lease will also contain conditions for the use of the site. At the initial establishment of a new garden, a lease will be granted for a 12 month period, with an option for a further three (3) year lease after this period, subject to lease conditions and user agreements being met in the initial twelve (12) months. A restitution clause will be included within the Lease.

Funding:

The incorporated community group will also be responsible for appropriate income generation or fund raising to support the operation of the community garden. In part, this will be through the establishment of appropriate membership fees and also through application for funding from external grant providers.

Staffing:

Staffing of the Community Garden will be the responsibility of the incorporated community group. This will include responsibility for the recruitment and management of volunteers, consistent with best practice volunteer management principles.

Implementation:

On receiving a request from the community for a community garden, an assessment will be undertaken in accordance with this Policy. Such a request will need to be in the form of a detailed proposal which deals with the following issues:

- the basis for a garden (eg individual allotments, a shared communal garden or a combination of these);
- a suggestion for a site, if known, and a site plan for development;
- numbers of people to be involved and whether they are residents of the City of Norwood Payneham & St Peters;
- incorporation and membership of the applicant community group;
- proposed opportunities for public access and use;
- proposed fees and/or membership charges;

- how establishment costs and ongoing costs, such as water and other infrastructure costs, will be met;
- evidence of public liability insurance or the capacity to provide public liability insurance;
- how funding and other income will be generated;
- staffing and management of the garden, including volunteer management;
- proposed materials, equipment, shelter and storage and how these will be available and managed on site; and.
- decommissioning of the community garden.

REVIEW PROCESS

This Policy will be reviewed within three (3) years.

INFORMATION

The contact officer for further information at the City of Norwood Payneham & St Peters is the Council's General Manager, Governance & Civic Affairs, telephone 8366 4555.

ADOPTION OF THE POLICY

This Policy was adopted by the Council on 13 October 2008.

This Policy was reviewed and adopted by the Council on 5 November 2018.

This Policy was reviewed and adopted by the Council on 4 October 2022.

TO BE REVIEWED

October 2025