



Community Gardens Policy

Reference Number:	4.31
Type:	Council
Category:	Safety & Community
Relevant Community Plan Outcome:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide accessible social infrastructure and services that engage our diverse community. • Create valued urban places that bring people together and reflect local character and identity. • Enhance the state of the City’s environment and biodiversity. • Be bold and innovative in our practices, leadership and decision making.
Responsible Officer(s):	Manager Open Space, Recreation and Property
First Issued/Approved:	12 March 2013
Minutes Reference:	CoS 6/11/2017, Item 3.53
Last Reviewed:	November 2017
Next Review Due:	November 2019
Applicable Legislation:	Local Government Act 1999
Related Policies:	Community Services Framework Living Green 2020 Open Space Strategy
Related Procedures:	

1. Purpose

The purpose of the Community Gardens Policy is to define the principles that underpin the City of Charles Sturt’s commitment to supporting Community Gardens within the City of Charles Sturt.

Community Gardens offer a wide range of cultural, social, economic, health and environmental benefits to our community, including:

- Building social networks and strengthening community relationships, within local neighbourhoods;
- Building members confidence, capacity and skill in gardening, community organisation, and group participation;
- Building community’ connection to place;
- Increased access to fresh, local produce (which contributes to increasing our community’s food security);
- Economic benefits to household budgets;
- Opportunity for both formal and informal education, for example, sustainable gardening, horticulture, food preparation, governance skills;
- Health and fitness benefits through physical activity;
- A sense of achievement that comes through growing one’s own food;
- Adding to the ecological sustainability and amenity in our urban environments;
- Psychological and spiritual benefits, including building one’s sense of purpose through ongoing participation, and offering a place for peace and relaxation.

The increase in medium and high density housing and the associated increase in population density across our City will see community gardens become an increasingly important and popular way to sustain the social, physical and mental health and wellbeing of our community through a continued connection to nature and place in an urban environment.

2. Scope

This policy relates to Community Gardens on:

- Council owned and/or managed land;
- Private land;
- Land owned by other public authorities.

Community Gardens are community led and managed, not-for-profit initiatives, where members of the local community come together to garden in individual or shared plots and produce is intended for the consumption of the gardeners.

3. Policy Statement

The City of Charles Sturt recognises the importance of sustainably managed Community Gardens to the ongoing health and wellbeing of our community.

The City of Charles Sturt acknowledges the importance of Community Gardens being community led initiatives, while recognising that, across our City, there are varying degrees of community capacity, social capital and skills available to establish and maintain gardens. As such, Council has a key role in community development, capacity building, skills development and place-making, to identify opportunities, support and empower communities to establish and manage their own gardens.

Community management of gardens will ensure:

- the establishment of a garden is based on a high level of local demand;
- the garden design and structure reflects the local community's own needs and character;
- the garden will have a cohesive and consistent membership base to ensure its long term sustainability.

Forms of support for Community Gardens

It is recognised that the ongoing success of any Community Garden is dependent on the successful partnership between Council and the Community Garden group. In this partnership, Council will assist in:

- Identifying, in consultation with the garden group, potential sites for the Community Garden;
- Work with Community Garden groups to ensure security of tenure, acknowledging that Community Gardens are medium to long term projects;
- Assist with the development of governance and management plans;
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- Provision of a suite of references and resources to assist community members in establishing and managing Community Gardens;
- Identification/facilitation of training opportunities;
- Promote and raise awareness of Community Gardens;
- Material support to assist in the establishment and non-regular maintenance of a community garden, such as labour, machinery or construction materials. Requests for support will be considered on a case by case basis;

- Identification of grant or sponsorship opportunities that are available from other sources, including state and federal government, private businesses or philanthropic sources.

The degree of support that may be provided by Council in the above (or other) cases will be determined by the following:

- The level of demand and support for a Community Garden in a given location;
- The level of community-wide benefit provided by the Community Garden (including the inclusiveness of its membership structure);
- The capacity for the community garden to deliver broader place making outcomes that celebrate and enhance a local sense of community and unique identity;
- Evidence of efforts to seek support from other sources;
- The availability and suitability of resources within the Council to respond to the request for support.

Use of Council-owned land will be considered for community gardens on a case by case basis. It is noted that Council will only enter a lease with Community Garden groups that are incorporated or willing to become incorporated in a mutually agreed time frame.