



# Community Gardens Policy - Procedure

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## Related Policy

This Procedure relates to the City of Ryde Community Gardens Policy.

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## Procedure

### Applications for Community Gardens

Applications must be in writing and addressed to the General Manager for the attention of the Manager of Open Space.

Applications must include a supporting statement detailing how the nominee meets the conditions as stated in the policy. The following procedure, being an administrative process, may be altered as necessary by the General Manager.

### Procedure for Applicants

- Applicant/s establish a Community Garden group and identify a potential Community Garden site.
- Applicant to undertake site assessment of any potential site/s.
- Applicant to discuss their proposal with the City of Ryde to identify any potential issues.
- Applicant to submit a completed Community Gardens application form and scaled drawing of the proposed Community Garden to Council.
- A Council Report is prepared to assess cost to Council (maintenance etc).
- Application is supported and Council undertakes Community Consultation with local residents. Or,
- if the application is not supported by Council written feedback will be provided and an alternative site may be considered.
- Council will consider any feedback gained from the consultation process and work with the community group to ensure any concerns are addressed. If there is considerable opposition to the project Council reserves the right to consider alternative sites for the project.
- Application and a Report on maintenance costs will be presented at a Council meeting for final approval. If the application is approved, Council staff will meet with the applicant to develop any relevant written agreements for the management of the Community Garden.
- Apply for grants and funding. Once all documents have been approved by Council applicants may wish to apply for grants and start building their Community Garden.

### Applicants will need to address the following criteria:

Please note the criteria is part of the rights and responsibilities of all stakeholders.

- Demonstration of cooperation and effectively managed relationships with the surrounding neighbourhood, partnering organisations and other gardeners relationship
- A policy of equity and diversity
- Regular communication with relevant City of Ryde staff
- Democratic, transparent and inclusive decision making

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- Ensuring that any water leaving the site is not contaminated or has the potential to pollute waterways
- Ensuring that no noxious weeds or illegal plants are present within the garden
- Ensuring the garden is used only as a Community Garden and for no other purpose
- Ensuring the Community Garden is not used for purposes of trade or the conducting of a business
- Noise levels within the garden are maintained at a level that does not disturb neighbours and is in accordance with the NSW Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water legislation relating to Noise Control.
- Compost, worm farming systems and fertilisers are adequately maintained so as not to attract vermin or produce unpleasant odours.
- Rainwater harvesting systems are maintained to ensure that water is of a high quality and does not permit the breeding of mosquitoes or the harbouring of other water borne diseases.
- Lawn areas, garden beds on the site are regularly maintained and materials must be stored in accordance with all relevant Occupational Health and Safety legislation and Workcover requirements.
- Visitors are welcomed to the site, and members of the public can access the garden during daylight hours
- Gardeners must develop their own internal policies, organisational procedures and Plan of Management whilst liaising with the relevant landowner
- Gardeners must consult with, and advise Council of any changes that may impact upon the City of Ryde
- A minimum \$20,000,000 public liability insurance policy is required, therefore incorporation of the group is advised
- Where feasible, through partnership with the City of Ryde, Gardeners are encouraged to develop educational opportunities supporting environmental and sustainable living objectives.

## **Site selection criteria for new Community Gardens on Council owned land should address the following criteria:**

- Sites classified as Community Land may be appropriate. Priority may be given to sites which are located in high density areas or near community centres or community organisations that may be able to support or partner the project
- Sites will have no major safety or health concerns. Each site will provide adequate levels of surveillance for relevant law enforcement authorities.
- Sites will be accessible for a range of user groups. They will be located close to public transport, allow universal access, have vehicular access (for deliveries) and accommodate groups wishing to visit the garden
- Sites must receive adequate sunlight, with a minimum of five (5) hours per day received
- Sites will be large enough to accommodate standard and raised garden beds, composting systems, rainwater tanks, seating areas, shelter for Gardeners and space for the conducting of community workshops and demonstrations
- Sites will have easy access to water or buildings nearby from which rainwater can be collected

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- Sites will be checked for the presence of contaminated soils. If required expert advice will be sought regarding the suitability of the site for food production and community use.
- Sites in which a Community Garden can be integrated without conflict with other land uses, particularly community land uses, and where the Community Garden can be used by non Gardeners for passive recreation and educational workshops

It is not always possible to find a site that meets all the above criteria. Council will prioritise sites that can meet as many of the requirements as possible.

## Financial Support

Funding is critical for the long-term success of any Community Garden project. Community Gardens should be planned with the goal of self management and long term financial sustainability so that they are not dependent on unreliable sources of funding such as grants or sponsorship from partnering organisations. Being financially independent may also increase the feeling of empowerment and security as participants manage more aspects of the Community Gardens themselves.

## Security of Tenure

New gardens established on Council land will be given an initial licence for a trial period of one (1) year. The City will not charge Community Garden groups for licence preparation fees. If the garden group fulfils all its responsibilities with regard to the management of the garden, a longer arrangement may be negotiated with the group.

A licence or agreement with the group may be revoked or not renewed if:

- the group disbands or ceases to function due to internal conflict. In this situation the City of Ryde may try to assist the group to resolve the conflict through the engaging of an independent mediator or facilitator;
- the garden is not maintained or becomes unsafe for public access; and,
- appropriate insurance cover is not maintained.

## Open Space Management

The City of Ryde considers Community Gardens to be a valid and important land use within the City's open space network. Where appropriate, Community Gardens may be incorporated into Plans of Management for public open space.

Existing community facilities can be ideal sites for a Community Garden as they may have suitable existing infrastructure such as public amenities, shelter and storage areas.

Consideration should be given to reducing or eliminating a possible alienation of public land in the planning, design and functionality of a Community Garden.

In those circumstances where an application for a Community Garden is potentially controversial or questionable, community consultation and advertising of the proposal will be in line with Council's Community Engagement framework policy.

Applications and community feedback received will be given careful consideration prior to being presented to Council with recommendation(s) for review and decision.

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## Council's Role

Council will provide the following services to Community Garden groups:

- advice on the design of the Community Garden;
- advice and ongoing communication with Garden Co-ordinators as resources allow;
- make budget provisions as appropriate for additional costs or responsibilities that may be incurred by Council, such as fencing, graffiti control, vandalism, provision of materials, access etc;
- assist with the development of Garden Management Plans and provide assistance with obtaining grants and resources;
- deliver workshops and training on an as-needs basis;
- support the establishment of recycling, worm farms and composting facilities;
- connect local gardens and Gardeners to each other to help build relationships and encourage the sharing of information and experiences; and
- promote existing Community Gardens through the Council's Internet Site publications and events.

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## Attachments

<i>Number</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Trim Reference</i>
1.	Community Gardens Policy – Council Policy	D10/0088798
2.	Community Gardens Policy - Guideline	D10/0088805

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