

**9.6 Community Gardens - Draft Policy**

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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**Purpose**

To approve exhibition of the draft Policy on Community Gardens.

**Summary**

A draft Policy on Community Gardens is attached. It has been developed following consultation with the community and research of models for successful community gardens.

The draft Policy takes a 'bottom-up' approach where the community initiates, develops and manages gardens with Council playing a minor role providing access to land, empowering the community to create and run their own gardens through a Policy and Guidelines and providing limited financial support via a grants program. In 2011-2012 a total of \$50,000 has been provided for community gardens (maximum of \$5,000 per application).

The Guidelines are currently under development; they will be placed on exhibition before being finalised.

Public exhibition of the draft Policy is recommended in accordance with Council's Policy Development and Management policy (PL 910 Policy). Exhibition will be in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Policy (PL 520 Engagement).

**Financial Impact**

The exhibition of the draft Policy is funded within the 2011-2012 Budget.

**Policy Impact**

The draft Policy, once adopted will provide the framework for further development of community gardens in Warringah.

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**RECOMMENDATION OF ACTING DEPUTY GENERAL MANAGER  
STRATEGIC AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES**

- A. That this report, together with the draft Policy on Community Gardens (attached) be placed on public exhibition in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Policy.
  - B. That following consideration of submissions the draft policy be reported back to Council for adoption.
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## REPORT

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### Background

Warringah's first community garden was developed at Innes Road Manly Vale comprising a garden, playground and central shelter. The facility was constructed by Council in response to community demand for the facility at a cost of \$470,000. These costs included work on the playground (\$100,000) as well as shared items between the playground and community gardens (\$110,000).

To better understand the demand and most appropriate model for delivery of future community gardens, Council resolved to conduct a research project at its meeting on 6 October 2010. The results were reported to the meeting on 18 October 2011 and are summarised below:

#### *Views of Warringah Community*

- There is strong support for the establishment of community gardens in Warringah – expressed both in the telephone and online survey, 82% and 92% respectively
- Support for Council providing some financial support
- Recognition that the benefits from community gardens extend beyond gardening providing opportunities for building and strengthening local communities and increasing social interaction

#### *Elements of Successful Community Garden Models*

- A bottom-up approach is the preferred model –interested members of the community form an incorporated association (or are auspiced by an incorporated body) and develop and manage the gardens on a day to day basis.
- Garden groups need to be financially sustainable, there is limited funding support from councils primarily via grant programs (subject to budgetary constraints).
- Councils are not an active players, they provide access to land, initial training and workshops, promotion, advice regarding design and management and appropriate policy and guidelines.
- Policy and guidelines provide clear direction for community groups on site selection (criteria), the application process and the roles and responsibilities of councils and the garden groups

#### *Lessons learnt from Manly Vale Community Garden*

- There was no policy or guidelines in place to direct site selection, application process etc
- Roles and responsibilities of the community garden group and Council were not defined
- Design costs escalated due to changes part-way through the project
- The construction costs were higher due to the site being integrated with the children's Playground

Council considered the research and resolved in part as follows:

- B. That Council place information on community gardens on its website so that the community can easily access such information.*
- C. That Council staff, in consultation with the community and in accordance with Council's community engagement policy, develop a policy and guidelines for community gardens in Warringah."*

## Draft Policy

The draft policy for community gardens is at Attachment 1 to this report. It has been developed with reference to the survey results and to other councils' policies and guidelines for community gardens. The draft policy aims to support the establishment and operation of community gardens in Warringah and is underpinned by principles, including fairness, equity and accessibility.

A 'bottom-up' approach to community gardens is provided for in the Policy. Under this model the community initiates the development of a garden by identifying a site, establishing an incorporated group, obtaining approval for the garden, securing funding, constructing and managing the facility on a day to day basis. Council's plays a support role through the policy and guidelines, assess applications, grant access to suitable land, provide funding via a grants program and general advice and support to groups. This approach is broadly outlined in the draft Policy.

Guidelines to complement the draft Policy are currently under development. They will provide community groups with direction and support with details on:

- How to become an incorporated body
- Site selection criteria - the land has access to water, storage and the like to minimise start up the cost
- The application process – form and checklist
- Roles and responsibilities of the community groups and Council
- Template designs for gardens
- Resources and links
- Memorandum of understanding between the community garden group and Council to occupy and operate the garden.

Once the Guidelines are in a draft form they will also be placed on exhibition to obtain feedback from the community before being finalised.

## Expectation Management

The community garden at Manly Vale has potentially raised expectations in the community about the type of garden and associated infrastructure that will be delivered. Council's capacity to fund similar facilities in the future is limited; the policy recognises this and empowers the community to fund via grants and other means the development of local gardens.

The cost to establish a mid sized community garden is in the order of \$50,000 depending on infrastructure available on site – design, utilities (water/energy), shelter, shed, fence, materials and construction works. Council has provided total funding of \$50,000 in 2011-2012 for a grant program to support community gardens. The program will provide a maximum \$5,000 per application.

These expectations will need to be managed as new community gardens are developed across the area following adoption of the draft Policy.

## Consultation

Council's Policy Development and Management policy (PL 910 Policy) provides that the draft Policy be placed on exhibition prior to adoption by Council. The exhibition will be undertaken in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Policy (PL 520 Engagement) - promoted in the Manly Daily, online, at Council libraries and the Civic Centre.



**Timing**

Due to the exhibition period being over the Christmas / summer holiday season, it is proposed to hold the exhibition and associated consultation from 26 November 2011 to the end of January 2012 so that there is ample time for consultation.

**Policy Impact**

Once adopted, the policy will provide the framework for the development of community gardens in Warringah.

**Financial Impact**

The exhibition of the draft Policy can be funded from the 2011-2012 Budget.

**Acting Group Manager Strategic Planning**





## Warringah Council Policy

### Policy No. Number

### Policy name: Community Gardens

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#### 1 Purpose of Policy

This policy aims to:

- Support the establishment and operation of community gardens on Council owned or managed land.
- Establish the roles and responsibilities of Council and the community in developing and managing community gardens.

#### 2 Principles

This policy recognises that:

- a) There is support for the establishment of community gardens in Warringah.
- b) The community has identified advantages of community gardens that include:
  - A place which enables people to come together to help build community spirit and make friends
  - A place to grow local produce
  - A place to help people without their own gardens
  - A place to share gardening knowledge and to teach children where produce comes from
  - A place for education and demonstrations of sustainable living practices
- c) The principles of equity, fairness and accessibility underpin the establishment of a community garden in Warringah.
- d) A clear process needs to be in place for establishing a community garden on public land in Warringah and guidelines for this process form part of this policy.
- e) Easy access to this policy and its guidelines for establishing community gardens in Warringah is important.
- f) A community garden must coexist with existing uses and add value to the park as a whole
- g) The establishment of a community garden will be 'bottom-up', ie initiated by the community, rather than 'top-down' from Council.

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**Policy - Community Gardens**

- h) Due to budgetary constraints, there is minimal financial support available from Council for community gardens.

### **3 Role of the Community**

Community gardening is a valuable recreational activity that contributes to the health and well-being of the wider community and provides a wide range of environmental, social and educational benefits. Interested members of the community, community/gardening groups, and other groups will be supported in establishing and operating a community garden provided the group:

- is an incorporated body or auspiced by an incorporated body
- enters into a memorandum of understanding for the land and operation of the garden
- complies with the Policy and Guidelines
- maintains the garden so that the health and safety of the surrounding community is not adversely impacted, the public land remains accessible to the public and the aesthetics of the public land is maintained
- Meets the establishment and ongoing cost of the garden

### **4 Role of Council**

Council has a responsibility to provide safe and accessible public open spaces for all users.

Warringah Council will support community gardens by working with incorporated groups to:

- Promote and raise awareness of community gardening, eg through Council's website
- Provide contact information of existing community garden organisations
- Provide a policy and guidelines for starting and operating a community garden
- Provide access to land
- Identify the roles and responsibilities associated with community gardens
- Provide monetary support where feasible, eg through a grants program, for start up or development of community gardens.

### **5 Authorisation**

This Policy was adopted by Council on [insert date].

It is effective from [insert date].

It is due for review on [insert date].

### **6 Amendments**

This Policy was last amended on [insert date].

### **7 Who is responsible for implementing this Policy?**

Group Manager, Community Services

Policy - Community Gardens

Group Manager, Parks Reserves and Foreshores

## 8 Document owner

Deputy General Manager, Community and Environmental Services

## 9 Related Council Policies and documents

- a) Community Engagement Policy
- b) [Community Development Grants Program - financial assistance to community organisations: CCS-PL 425](#)
- c) [Asset management: GOV-PL 550](#) – as applicable and subject to any assets on the site
- d) Guidelines for establishing community gardens in Warringah (under development)

## 10 Legislation and references

NSW Fair Trading – cooperative and associations

[http://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/Cooperatives\\_and\\_associations.html](http://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/Cooperatives_and_associations.html)

## 11 Definitions

**Community gardens** are areas of public land owned or managed by Council where community members grow food and other plants

**Equity** means fairness and impartiality towards all concerned  
(<http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/equity.html>)

**Fairness** means even handedness in dispensing [justice](#) whereby [claims](#) are recognised in the [order](#) of their [legal](#) and contractual [priority](#)

**Accessibility** means the

1. Extent to which a [consumer](#) or [user](#) can [obtain](#) a good or [service](#) at the time it is needed.
2. Ease with which a [facility](#) or location can be reached from other [locations](#)
3. Ease of [contact](#) with a [person](#) or [organisation](#)
4. [Authorisation](#), [opportunity](#), or [right](#) to [access records](#) or retrieve [information](#) from an [archive](#), [computer system](#), or [website](#).