

## Strategic policy

### Community Gardens Policy

Corporate Plan reference:	<p><b>A healthy environment</b></p> <p><i>Maintaining and enhancing the region’s natural assets, liveability and environmental credentials</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A resilient region shaped by clever planning and design</li> <li>- Protection and enhancement of our natural assets and distinctive landscapes</li> <li>- Responsive, accessible and well managed assets and infrastructure</li> <li>- Transitioning to a sustainable and affordable way of living</li> <li>- A reputation for innovation, sustainability and liveability</li> </ul>
Endorsed by Council on:	2 February 2011 (OM11/14)
Policy Owner:	<p>Group Executive Built Infrastructure</p> <p>Group Executive Economic &amp; Community Development</p> <p>Manager Parks &amp; Gardens</p>

### Policy purpose

This policy sets out the framework for ensuring community enquiries in relation to establishing publicly accessible community gardens, on council owned or managed land are managed consistently and professionally.

Community Gardens are described as “...places where people come together to grow fresh food, to learn, relax and make new friends<sup>1</sup>.”

This policy should be read in conjunction with the *Community Gardens Guidelines*.

### Policy outcome

This policy aims to:

- achieve strategic goals set within the *Energy Transition Plan* and the *Waste Minimisation Strategy* by preparing a policy to support the establishment of 10 community gardens by 2014
- provide a consistent, equitable and transparent approach to the processing of community enquiries relating to publicly accessible community gardens on council owned or managed land, and

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<sup>1</sup> (Australian City Farms and Community Gardens Network, 2010)

- recommend criteria which supports the development of appropriately placed community gardens on land established for community use and, if possible, to be integrated into new development.

## Policy scope

The policy responds to community garden groups wishing to establish a community garden within the Sunshine Coast Regional Council Local Government Area on council owned or managed land, for the purpose of growing and learning to grow fresh food produce.

## Policy statement

Community gardens are unique forms of public open space which are managed by the community primarily for the production of food and to contribute to the development of a sustainable urban environment. They are places for learning and sharing about sustainable living practices, and for community building through shared activities.

Community gardening is seen as a valuable recreational activity that contributes to the health and wellbeing of the wider community, and provides a wide range of environmental, social and educational benefits.

This policy applies to land under public ownership and designated for use by the community for social and cultural activities, sport, informal recreation and leisure use, and for conservation purposes. Community land is the preferred land type for this activity; however a similar process may be used to consider applications on a case-by-case basis for the use of other land types (i.e. Crown land, where council is the trust manager, or council owned operational land). This policy does not commit council to providing any direct support or resources to such community groups.

## Guiding principles

The guiding principles contained within council's *Open Space Strategy* to support this policy are:

- Enhanced wellbeing
- Community involvement and partnerships.

## Community Gardens Enquiry Management Framework

The following diagram sets out the components of how a community enquiry in relation to the proposed establishment of a community garden will be processed.

Diagram 1: Community Gardens Enquiry Management Framework



## Community garden site selection criteria considerations

The following table provides criteria to be used when considering potential sites for the establishment of a community garden on council owned or managed land.

Community Garden Site Selection Criteria Considerations	
<b>Preferable</b>	Sites located in higher density areas and near community centres, community organisations and/or schools that might be able to support or partner the community garden, provided these sites are consistent with the management intent of the open space category and desired standards of service and are not in close proximity to another publicly accessible community garden.
<b>Location</b>	Sites classified as Community Land under the Local Government Act. These sites are usually established for community use such as park lands, open spaces and community centres that have outside areas as well as shelter and storage options.
<b>Safety</b>	Sites should have no major safety or health concerns and have good passive surveillance (for example, can be easily seen from nearby houses or shopping areas).
<b>Accessibility</b>	Sites should be accessible for a range of user groups. Sites should be located close to public transport and toilets, and allow disabled access, appropriate car parking, and accommodate groups wanting to visit the garden. Should also have street frontage wide enough to allow maintenance vehicles and deliveries (e.g. topsoil, mulch etc.).

<b>Sunshine</b>	Sites need to be suitable for growing vegetables and receive full sunlight - ideally for at least 5-6 hours per day.
<b>Size</b>	<p>There are no minimum site size stipulations for community gardens.</p> <p>Size limits may need to apply, however this can only be determined on a site specific basis. Community Garden sites will need to ensure they do not compromise public space accessibility and any of the current or planned functional requirements of public land or have a significant detrimental impact on neighbouring land uses.</p> <p>Sites with the ability to accommodate garden beds, composting systems, rainwater tanks, seating areas, shelter for gardeners and for community workshops and demonstrations without compromising other functions of the public space are preferred.</p>
<b>Water</b>	Sites with easy access to water or buildings nearby from which rainwater can be collected.
<b>Soil contamination</b>	Sites may need to be checked to ensure there is no soil contamination.
<b>Multiple use</b>	Sites where a community garden can be integrated without conflicting adversely with other land uses and where the community garden can still be used by non gardeners for passive recreation and educational workshops.

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

## Roles and responsibilities

**Group:** Built Infrastructure

**Branches:** Parks and Gardens and Waste and Resource Management

Responsible for:

- handling initial community garden enquiries
- the provision of advice on initial site suitability
- connect local community gardens and gardeners to each other to help build relationships and encourage the sharing of information and experiences
- administering a Community Gardens Review Panel (consisting of a representative of each branch identified within this policy) which reviews potential community garden expression of interest applications quarterly
- ongoing liaison with garden groups to ensure compliance with organisational park management processes
- deliver training on an 'as needs' basis and referral of information for gardeners regarding access to external training and support
- initial liaison with councillors about community garden enquiries in their division, and
- may assist meeting the provisional compost and mulch needs of community gardens, (although this does not include transport).

## **Group: Economic and Community Development**

### **Branch: Community Planning and Development**

Responsible for:

- the provision of advice and assistance to community groups in relation structure, development and partnership opportunities
- the provision of advice and assistance in relation to land tenure arrangements
- the provision of advice and assistance with external and internal grant applications
- compliance with relevant local law requirements
- relationship management of garden groups with local communities, and
- implementation and review of this policy.

## **Group: Customer Engagement and Planning Services and Liveability and Natural Assets**

### **Branches: Strategic Planning, Environment and Sustainability Policy and Development Services**

Responsible for:

- the provision of strategic advice in relation to assessing a sites strategic suitability for a potential community garden
- the provision of strategic advice in relation to potential community garden sites suitable for land acquisition
- assessing any development applications which may be necessary, and
- administering the Living Smart Program and providing advice and resources on urban and sustainable food practices.

## **Group: Business Performance**

### **Branch: Property Management**

Responsible for:

- the provision of advice and assistance in relation to land tenure arrangements
- creating and issuing land tenure documents

## **Measurement of success**

This policy will be reviewed to evaluate:

- the policies progression in achieving of desired strategic outcomes
- financial impact on council including maintenance and administrative costs for council owned or managed land used for community gardens
- level of compliance with community gardens guidelines by garden groups
- contribution made by community gardens in achieving the aims of other council policies and strategies, and
- satisfaction levels of all stakeholders (internal and external).

## Definitions

**Compliant:** compatible with, or following, guidelines, specifications, rules, or laws.

**Council:** Sunshine Coast Regional Council.

**Council owned or controlled land:** land under public ownership and designated for use by the community for social and cultural activities, sport, informal recreation and leisure use, and for conservation purposes.

**Council owned or controlled land includes:**

- a) council owned land – freehold
- b) land where council is nominated as trustee under the Land Act 1994 and Local Government Act 2009, and
- c) Crown Land where council is nominated as trustee.

**Tenure:** a lease, licence, lessee permit, permit to occupy or such other similar tenure as is appropriate to land use and allocation.

## Related policies and legislation

When applying this policy, all relevant Sunshine Coast Regional Council and state legislation must be taken into consideration, with particular, consideration given to the following:

### Local Government

Sunshine Coast Council Local Law No. 3 (Community Health and Environment Management) 2011

Sunshine Coast Council Local Law No. 4 (Local Government Controlled Areas, Facilities, Infrastructure and Roads) 2011

Sunshine Coast Council Authorising local law, s 5(1) (Prohibited activities, restricted activities and prohibited conduct)

Sunshine Coast Council, Corporate Plan 2018-2022

Sunshine Coast Council Planning Scheme 2014

Sunshine Coast Council Social Strategy 2015 Sunshine

Coast Council Open Space Strategy 2011

Sunshine Coast Council, Community Land and Complementary Commercial Activity Policy

Sunshine Coast Council, Procurement Policy

### State Government

*Land Act 1994*

*Land Vegetation Act 2009*

*Local Government Act 2009*

*Public Health Act 2005*

South East Queensland Regional Plan (SEQRP) 2009-2031

*Sustainable Planning Act 2009*

*Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995*

Version control:

Version	Reason/ Trigger	Change (Y/N)	Endorsed/ Reviewed by	Date
1.0	Create new		Ordinary Meeting	02/02/2011
2.0	Review	Y	Director	29/09/2015
2.1	Update department name and rebranding	N	Corporate Governance	18/1/2017
2.2	Updates as per new Organisation Structure			13/112017

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