Contents

Introduction ................................................................................................................................. 3
Policy Context .............................................................................................................................. 3
  Redlands 2030 Community Plan .............................................................................................. 3
  Corporate Plan 2010-2015 ........................................................................................................ 3
  Operational Plan 2010/2011 ..................................................................................................... 3
  Social Infrastructure Strategy ................................................................................................... 4
Responding to Community Interest ............................................................................................ 5
  Growing nationwide popularity ................................................................................................. 5
  Community gardens in the Redlands ......................................................................................... 5
  Redlands consultation feedback ............................................................................................... 5
Research Findings ....................................................................................................................... 6
  What is a community garden? ..................................................................................................... 6
  Purpose and advantages of a community garden ...................................................................... 6
  Models of Community Gardens ............................................................................................... 7
Issues to be considered ............................................................................................................... 7
  1 Initiating a Garden .................................................................................................................. 7
  2 Types of Gardens .................................................................................................................... 8
  3 Tenure .................................................................................................................................... 9
  4 Membership & Group Structure ........................................................................................... 10
  5 Design of Gardens .................................................................................................................. 11
  6 Commercial considerations of community gardens ........................................................... 13
  7 Community Garden Sustainability ....................................................................................... 13
  8 The Nature of Local Government Support ........................................................................... 14
  9 Community Gardens on non-council land .......................................................................... 15
Council’s strategy for supporting Community Gardens in the Redlands ................................. 16
  1. Develop a Council policy to support community gardens in the Redlands ....................... 16
  2. Establish a process for community garden site selection ................................................... 16
  3. Adopt a suitable tenure instrument ................................................................................... 16
  4. Provide educational support to community garden groups ............................................... 17
  5. Establish resourcing provisions ........................................................................................... 17
  6. Adopt a simple Council application process ....................................................................... 17
References .................................................................................................................................. 18
  Appendix 1 A Snapshot of Community Garden Models across Australia and New Zealand .... 19
  Appendix 2 Summary of Redlands Responses to Community Garden Public Consultation .... 22
Introduction
Community gardens can fulfil a variety of functions in addition to food production, including the enhancement of healthy lifestyles and good nutrition, reduction in social isolation, encouraging a sense of place, improving local food security and management of public spaces. The people of the Redlands through the Redlands 2030 Community Plan have identified the significance of community gardens and have expressed their support for the development of these as well as other local food systems.

Policy Context
Redlands 2030 Community Plan. The Redlands 2030 engagement process revealed a growing interest in community gardens across the City. Submissions from community members indicated their support and their visions of being able to access local produce and to have functional gardens within their communities. The Redlands 2030 Community Plan which was adopted in April 2010 sets the strategic vision of what the community wants the Redlands to be like in 20 years. The identified priority outcome areas, vision and goals will inform the Council’s Corporate Plan, long term financial and asset management plans. Under the Green Living outcome area, the identified goal of Local food production articulates:

“...we grow and share food in homes and community gardens, schools and edible streetscapes; small crops are harvested from working farms; and people support locally grown produce at growers’ markets within the city and throughout the region.”

Corporate Plan 2010-2015. The Corporate Plan identifies Council’s response to what the community considers important as represented in the Redlands 2030 Community Plan. The document is Council’s key strategic plan and sets out what Council will do for the next 5 years.

Under the Corporate Plan, the Community Gardens Policy significantly relates to Strong and Connected Communities, particularly the strategy to:

- Provide practical programs, support and guidance to the community sector in its delivery of highly valued support services and community projects

It also relates to the Green Living strategy:

- Promote a ‘go local’ attitude towards working, socialising, shopping, playing and supporting local production of food

Community gardens improve the social fabric within and among communities by increasing and deepening social connections. They also foster community engagement and improve participation as members are able to self-manage the gardens.

Operational Plan 2010/2011. The Operational Plan links Council’s strategic direction as set out in the Corporate Plan to the projects, initiatives and ongoing activities that Council will deliver each year and which are funded through the budget. The Operational Plan particularly highlights Develop community gardens policy as a performance measure under the Promoting Grow Local Output of the Green Living Outcome. The Community Gardens Policy will act as a corporate framework across the organisation for establishing and supporting community gardens. Council recognizes the value that community gardens provide.
The **Strong Communities Policy** (POL-3087) recognises that a strong community is “a connected community with access to the full range of options required for a rich community life and an active attachment to place”.

The principles underpinning this policy include:

- Living culture
- Social justice
- Sustainability
- Quadruple bottom line
- Active citizenship
- Community development and community driven processes
- Collaborative partnerships approach
- Best value solutions
- Innovation

**Social Infrastructure Strategy.** The Social Infrastructure Strategy outlines Council’s approach in identifying and delivering high priority, facilities and networks to achieve a strong community in the Redlands. The strategy picks up on the themes and aspirations emerging from the Redland’s 2030 Community Planning process. It will support the Community Plan by delivering on four social infrastructure goals:

- **Well serviced communities**: the community will have access to a range of services, facilities and networks to meet local needs and aspirations

- **Prioritised responses**: the Strategy will prioritise infrastructure over the next 20 years based on comprehensive analysis of existing social infrastructure, demographic profiles, recognised benchmarks, social trends and cross-sector planning

- **Partnership and innovation**: all levels of government, non-government organisations and the private sector will create innovative models, contribute funds and develop partnerships to provide integrated social infrastructure. The Strategy includes catalyst projects that will change the face of the Redlands

- **Informed communities**: community members and infrastructure providers will have evidence to support planning and advocacy, inform funding allocations and leverage resources.

The strategy will provide for a range of catalyst, city-wide and local projects. One of the identified city wide projects is the **Green Living Hubs**, which aims to:

“..achieve broader community outcomes by linking existing and new environment education/sustainable living hubs and programs through partnerships with community and private organisations. The project builds upon local natural and human assets, economic potential for eco-business development, recreational activities, social and cultural enterprises and sustainable building principles. Potential to support local food through advice/infrastructure to neighbourhood community gardens and neighbourhood enterprises.”
Responding to Community Interest

Growing nationwide popularity
Community gardens and other local food system are increasingly being supported in Australian towns and cities in consonance with growing demand for local/regional food. The high community demand in local government associations across Australia for community gardens is in recognition of the wide range of benefits they provide.

External factors such as concerns about the environment and climate change, food miles and ‘Grow Local’ movement are also giving impetus towards the provision of space for community garden and contribute to an increasing number of community gardens.

Community gardens in the Redlands
Two public community gardens have been the successfully established at Alexandra Hills and Cleveland.

- **Oakland Street Community Gardens.** The Oakland Street Community Gardens located in Alexandra Hills was established in 2005 and is currently experiencing a resurgence in membership. The garden often hosts activities for children and young people with disabilities and has formed partnerships with schools that are also developing their community gardens.

- **Delancey Street.** A plot of land beside the Heritage Garden is being managed by U3A. The area is situated in the Department of Primary Industries site on the corner of Shore St. West and Delancey St.

A number of local schools have also established community gardens and others have expressed interest in making communities garden part of their curriculum. In addition community interests in gardens have been expressed for Russell Island and Runnymede.

Redlands consultation feedback
Community responses to various engagement processes have indicated strong support for community gardens in the Redlands. Through the Redlands 2030 consultation community gardens were regarded as

- Providing local food access and hence, creating a more self-sufficient community or household
- Fostering the communal nature of gardening. The shared activity could involve all ages and creates social connectedness
- Promoting training and support in food growing and sustainable land management

Additional feedback was sought through surveys and a community gardens workshop, the summary of this feedback is included in Appendix 2.
Research Findings

What is a community garden?
Community gardens are areas where people from a community come together to participate in the cultivation of food and other plants. Community gardens are viewed as creating a sense of place, connectedness and community.

The Australian City Farms and Community Gardens Network (ACFCGN) recognises gardens as:

“...places where people come together to grow fresh food, to learn, relax and make new friends.”

Food production plays a central role in establishing community gardens. Some community gardens also cultivate ornamental plants and most are multifunctional. Activities beyond food production encourage non-members to participate. Opportunities for social interaction are diverse and some have included community education and workshops as important components to assist in promoting and developing gardens.

Purpose and advantages of a community garden

- **Health and Well-being.** Gardening as a form of physical activity gives a positive impact on health. Access to nutritious and fresh food as well as being able to cultivate herbs that are used as traditional health cures contributes to well being.
- **Social Connectedness.** Community gardens have a role in enhancing social life in communities by increasing social cohesion and connectedness. They also bring together people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds which help break down cultural barriers.
- **Food and Economic security.** Community gardens provide access to locally grown food. Engaging in community gardens has helped reduce household’s food costs. Some gardens producing surplus are able to sell their produce to adjacent neighbourhoods and organisations for profit, earning them extra income. Gardens create more economic activities and social or community enterprises as they stimulate the creation of food co-operatives and markets.
- **Psychological.** Working in community gardens for some individuals has given them psychological and spiritual benefits. It gives them a sense of purpose and comfort as well as peace and relaxation.
- **Education.** The practice of community gardening creates an atmosphere of learning as new skills are taught on topics that include sustainable gardening, horticulture, food and ornamental plant cultivation and in some areas even food preparation. Socialisation skills are also learned as members can become adept at negotiation, participation and conflict management.
- **Environmental/sustainability.** The establishment of community gardens provides access to land by utilizing public open spaces. It increases green spaces in urban areas that contribute to the creation of sustainable cities. The conversion of green waste helps promote recycling and sustainable farming practices.
- **Management of Public Space.** Community gardens contribute to the protection and use of public open space. The development of unused spaces adds value to the land and increases the amount of functional green spaces in an area.
Models of Community Gardens

The idea of creating community gardens originated in the United Kingdom during the 18th century. This was in response to the need of low income labourers to supplement their food sources. The government later established a legislative framework through the Allotments Act 1887 which defined and guided the allocation of plots to residents for their use. Community gardens in Australia are fairly new with the first one being established in 1977 in Nunawading, Victoria. It has become an innovative model on which other community gardens have been based. A number of community gardens have been established around Australia and New Zealand and there has been a growing interest to establish more in recognition of the positive impact of gardens on community life. (See Appendix 1 for details)

Issues to be considered

1 Initiating a Garden

The establishment of community gardens may take two forms. The first is the top-down approach where local government associations initiate the idea of community garden and the other is the bottom-up approach where the community leads the process of developing a community garden.

A. Top down approach (LGA-led)
This is the approach used by Brisbane City Council to establish the community garden at Seventeen (17) Mile Rocks, Brisbane most recently developed major regional Rocks Riverside Park. This park has been operating successfully since 2003. Local governments would lead the process of establishing community gardens and later invite community residents to participate in this activity once the garden has been set up. This is a very intensive approach requiring commitment and resources particularly in the design, construction and management of gardens.

Once the garden has been completed however, government can opt to hand over management to an organised group. In some cases where there are no existing associations in the community, councils can help organise interested community members into groups and assist them in developing capacity-building skills. Group and government roles need to be defined for accountability purposes.
B. Bottom up approach (Community initiative)

This is the approach used by the Redland Bayside Disability Services to establish a community garden at Keith Surridge Park, Alexandra Hills. This garden has been operating successfully since 2005. The bottom-up approach is a process where an organisation or citizens form a community gardening group and approach local government associations (LGAs) or other landholders to propose the establishment of community gardens. The group would request assistance in identifying and accessing land and they would generally also design and cultivate the gardens themselves.

Since this process is demand-driven, the bottom-up approach potentially offers the most efficient use of local government resources. Community associations would do most of the work, particularly organisational and construction works. This requires associations to have ample skills and sufficient capacity in managing this kind of project. The sense of ownership is more intense since the groups put in all the effort to develop the gardens. However, there have been cases where community initiated gardens were unable to sustain their operations since memberships and overall management deteriorated.

Both approaches will have an influence on the roles of the community residents and council staff, the nature of community participation and resource needs and use. A bottom-up approach may be effective in the long term as community’s feeling of ownership is stronger. However, membership issues such as decline in participants and resource availability are concerns that have to be dealt with if gardens are to be sustainable. A top-down approach on the other hand may alienate community members as government workers do most of the tasks involved in establishing community gardens. Local government staff may be perceived as controlling the community group which is antithetical to building community capacity. Nonetheless, it is possible that the top down approach can succeed if council staff adopt a community development approach and foster a more participatory process in the planning and implementation phases of community gardens. A participatory strategy in the long term builds a sense of inclusion, connectedness and involvement from the community.

2 Types of Gardens

Community gardens make use of either allotment or shared garden approach. Most models have integrated both and have attracted a variety of users. Allotment gardens are the type that provides a plot for each member for their exclusive use. Shared gardens require the sharing of tasks and produce. Generally, gardens have a combination of both types and become more multifunctional. They attract a variety of users which not only includes the producers but residents who would also like to take part in garden activities.
A. Allotment gardens
The idea of allotment gardens originated from the United Kingdom. Gardeners have exclusive rights to the use of an area of land identified by local government and thus members feel a sense of ownership over individual plots. Although members are awarded individual plots, they are expected to share in the maintenance of common areas within the garden. Allotment holders may be a single person, family or a group of friends.

B. Shared gardens
A shared garden is a kind of structure where members have a common plot that requires all members to do the process of gardening together. Members are expected to cultivate in common and the produce is divided among the gardeners generating genuine feelings of community.

3 Tenure

Local government and the community group or organisation can enter into an agreement for the purpose of managing and operating a community garden on Council-owned land. The community group has to be incorporated and should have a public liability cover. Newly formed groups can be ausped by more established organisations. The tenure agreement may take the form of a permit to occupy or lease agreement. It can contain the roles and responsibilities of garden groups in the management of community gardens. Sites for community gardens are potentially be administered with a permit to occupy. The term of the permit is usually 1 to 5 years and responsibilities and financial contributions of both council and the community group can be documented in this agreement. Table 1 provides a distinction of a lease and a permit to occupy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Permit to Occupy</th>
<th>Lease</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>A written agreement by which Council permits a licensee (a community organisation) to use Council-owned or controlled land/facilities for activities that support the organisation’s purpose</td>
<td>A written contract between the lessor (Council) and the lessee (community organisation) and is held over a defined area of Council-owned or controlled land/facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Individual case basis (1 to 5 years)</td>
<td>The period of standard lease term be up to 10 years, 20 years or 30 years as required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Maximum of 3 years on Crown Land</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fees and Charges</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lease fee of Category A (no liquor license) is $1 per year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asset Management/ Maintenance Responsibilities</td>
<td>The lessee is to maintain the leased area to the satisfaction of Council</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asset Management/ Maintenance Responsibilities</td>
<td>Mowing and maintenance costs outside lease area to be negotiated between Council the Lessee with financial contribution from Council.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asset Management/ Maintenance Responsibilities</td>
<td>Responsibilities and financial contributions to be documented in the Permit to Occupy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4 Membership & Group Structure

The recruitment and retention of members is important in the sustainability of community gardens. A formal membership structure allows community garden organisations to better manage their risk. Being able to manage the human element of gardens can also translate to better outcomes since internal conflicts which may arise from misunderstandings can be effectively dealt with.

A code of conduct, organisational guidelines or even the rules of the incorporated association may address the following organisational and membership matters:

- Recruitment and induction of members (should be open to all residents of the community)
- Adherence to legislative requirements (such as Queensland Anti-discrimination Act 1991)
- Selection of leaders through democratic and participatory means
- Ensure sustainable gardening practices by its members
- Control of harmful weeds and pests
- Selection of sustainable farming techniques
- Maintenance of area such as fencing and vegetation
- Managing safe access in and around the site and should be open to the general public

If the garden is operated by an incorporated community organisation they can set a fee for membership to help offset costs. Discounts may be available for certain categories of members.

Managing Conflicts

A. Internal Conflict
Community gardens typically experience internal issues that may affect their operation and eventually the group’s sustainability. Differing allotment sizes and boundary disputes may be potential sources of internal conflict. This can be prevented through garden design which ensures that plots do not vary greatly in terms of size.

Misunderstanding among members and issues on leadership roles can be dealt with through consultation
and a participative decision making process. Other local government associations have assigned a coordinator who acts as mediator and who assists in identifying ways of minimising misunderstandings. In contrast, more established gardens have created their own rules as an indication of self-management. Northey Street City Farm in Brisbane, for instance has developed its own policy and procedures manual that establishes the members guiding principles and shared beliefs.

B. External conflicts
Misdemeanours such as vandals and delinquents are often identified as sources of external conflicts. The solution may be to fence the gardens as a way of securing the area. However, this may be construed as limiting access to public open spaces and hence, discouraging others to participate in the garden’s activities. This may build resentment within the community which is contrary to the basic objectives of establishing communal garden spaces.

5 Design of Gardens

Community gardens can be flexible in design. The design may be dependent on the nature of the area or space that is identified for community garden use. In communities outside the Redlands where there is constraint on land supply, rooftops, existing community centres and halls, as well as local, district and regional parks have become places to establish community gardens.

Community gardens are also valuable as open spaces and may attract a wide variety of users and visitors. Basic public amenities such as benches, toilets, play areas for children and even art spaces can be incorporated in the design of gardens. Safety is, of course, a primary concern particularly if an area has multiple uses and multiple activities. The negative impact can be mitigated if the design of gardens adheres to quality standards.

A. Basic Amenities
Gardens function more efficiently if basic provisions are available. A key element in establishing and maintaining gardens is securing water supply. Some councils have provided water tanks to groups as part of their support to new gardens. Other councils install water meters to manage the supply of water to the garden. In some cases community groups were provided with a special water rate to ensure supply in their gardens. Some community gardens demonstrate best practice water sensitive design and recycling as part of their educational and horticulture objectives. Toilet facilities are also important both for users and non-users of gardens. These can likewise feature water harvesting and recycling techniques.

B. Accessibility
Lands for community gardens may be situated in public open spaces and accessibility issues need to be considered. Local residents may view gardens as private use of public open space which may limit public access. This raises questions on whether gardens are to be given exclusive rights to occupy public space. This could defeat the very purpose by which community gardens are created as exclusivity may bring about feelings of alienation from other residents. Conditions on allowing public access should be indicated in the license and/or user agreements.
Successful community gardens are located in areas where people already tend to gather and are well-serviced by public transport which increases the likelihood of attracting more volunteers to participate in the gardens. Thus, planning for community gardens should consider accessibility to a variety groups such as seniors, youth, people with diverse cultural backgrounds. The needs of people with restricted mobility in particular should be part of design considerations.

C. Safety and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)
Safety in community gardens can be addressed if Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) measures are in place. Adopting CPTED principles into planning, design, construction, management and maintenance of the urban environment would contribute in dealing with safety issues. Community gardens, for example, can benefit through CPTED strategies like maximizing natural surveillance, placement of signs and lighting and creating visual prompts to distinguish public and private spaces.

Based on a survey of literature, existing models of community gardens have become deterrents against crime within their communities as they have increased the presence of individuals in an area and therefore discouraged opportunistic crimes and unlawful behaviour. In instances where vandalism and theft do occur in gardens, various strategies can be adopted to reduce crime. One way is for the community garden group to engage community residents and visitors around the site and focus on building community relations. Garden volunteers can also become facilitators to deal with external conflict positively. This approach has worked successfully at the Beelarong Community Farm in Morningside, Brisbane.

D. Planning and design considerations
An effective community garden begins with a well thought out plan. Site assessment is an essential phase in determining the design of the garden because it gives pertinent information about the land as well as the surrounding areas. The design should consider the following elements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Physical Elements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Garden infrastructure</td>
<td>• Storage for gardening tools and materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Composting areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Water sources and Irrigation system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Rainwater tanks or catchment and recycling systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Pathways, parking requirements and proximity to public transport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Waste disposal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Fencing and security considerations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garden spaces</td>
<td>• Individual plots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Shared and display gardens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Raised beds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Propagation area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Sensory garden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Smaller plots for children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Nursery</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 6 Commercial considerations of community gardens

Food production is the central activity of community gardens. Gardens increase access to locally produced, safe and nutritious food that enhances a household’s level of food security. They also contribute to reducing food costs and may indirectly have an impact on savings.

With improved gardening skills, members of community gardens may be able to produce surplus food i.e. producing beyond their food needs and establishing their own seed banks. Community gardens stimulate local enterprise as small community businesses are able to sell produce and plants. Local government associations (LGAs) have to think about the implications of commercial use of public open space. Income generation may considerably improve the viability of community garden groups as it can be used for costs of the garden’s upkeep. Agreements between LGAs and the community group can stipulate how income should be used i.e. for garden’s upkeep or for individual purposes.

### 7 Community Garden Sustainability

Sustainability of community garden activities is based on:

- **A stable and effective organisation.** Models of community gardens have shown that having participatory decision-making processes is effective in sustaining organisations. In terms of membership turnover, it would also be wise to have a defined management plan so the day-to-day management of the garden can be transferable to new group members and leaders.

- **Ability to attract diverse users and consumers.** Community garden groups cite very low participation rate as the reason for their inability to sustain activities. Organising a variety of events like training and workshops as well as designing gardens (e.g. sensory garden) to suit the needs of other potential users can attract more community involvement and encourage maximum resident population.

- **Good risk management.** An organisation’s ability to respond to risks and conflicts is an essential element of a strong organisation. Clear guidelines can enhance a group’s management of risk.

- **Ongoing funding sources.** Access to resources is vital for the growth of community garden. More funding allows for the physical improvement and development of the garden with added infrastructure as well as for the conduct of more activities that enhances community participation.
• **Supportive LGAs.** Community initiatives like community gardens should be given ample recognition and support either in the infrastructure and/or program level. Local government associations can provide a policy framework in the establishment of gardens in the short term and can assist with capacity building and organisational development in the long term.

• **Developing partnerships with key organisations.** Establishing links to other organisations like TAFE, schools, and Australian City Farms and Community Gardens Network (ACFCGN) help improve information sharing and strengthen networks.

### 8 The Nature of Local Government Support

Investigation of models for established gardens have shown that local government and other organisations provided significant resources and expertise during the start-up phase. Although this might be initially resource-intensive, long-term costs will be significantly lower as the members of community gardens take responsibility for the development and the maintenance of the site. Support may come in the form of:

**A. Determining an interest threshold**
To help ensure project success and make best use of available resources it will be helpful to establish a threshold of interest that must be satisfied before a community garden can considered. This could be as simple as setting a minimum number of people who have registered their commitment to seeing a community garden established in a certain location.

**B. Infrastructure design and provision**
Local government can identify key infrastructure such as:
- Path and cycle ways and parking provision
- Water connections
- Access to public amenities
- Waste collection points

**C. Identification and assessment of land for gardens**
A major form of council assistance is the identification of possible garden sites on council owned land. It involves:
- Site identification (See Table 3 for the criteria for identifying suitable sites)
- Assessment of site viability and risk
- Surveying

#### Table 3 – Criteria for suitable sites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria for suitable sites</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Existing Council Plans e.g. Planning Scheme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Availability of water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Amenity of neighbours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Accessibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Other potential usages (on contested spaces)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Crime prevention through Environmental Design principles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Planning considerations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
D. Material and Financial support
Council assistance may be through in-kind and financial assistance:
  o Community grants
  o Approaching water authority for water rebates

E. Information dissemination and promotion
Information and promotion are important for newly established gardens as well as for sustaining older ones. Council may assist through:
  o Press Releases
  o Facilitating conversations among community groups and stakeholders
  o Councillor and other Council newsletters and reports

F. Staff resources
Local government staff can assist an interested group in the establishment and ongoing operations of a community garden. It is important a primary point of contact between the community garden group and council is established and all interactions are carried out through that contact. This would prevent an uncoordinated and piecemeal response.

9 Community Gardens on non-council land

Community Gardens are not the sole domain of Local Government. Provided that the elements addressed in Table 3– Criteria for suitable sites are addressed, a Community Group could establish a garden on private land with an appropriate tenure arrangement with the land holder. Providing interest threshold tests and appropriate levels of equitable community access, similar levels of organisational and grant funding support could be made available for community gardens on non-council land.
Council’s strategy for supporting Community Gardens in the Redlands

1. **Develop a Council policy to support community gardens in the Redlands**
   The development of a policy to support community gardens would provide Council with a consistent and coordinated approach towards groups who are interested in pursuing community gardens. Having a policy and guidelines would ensure a cohesive rather than a piecemeal response on community gardens.

2. **Establish a process for community garden site selection**
   A panel of council officers will convene to evaluate a site’s viability for community gardens based on a set of criteria (see Table 4 below). The sites are either pre-identified by Council or suggested by the community group. The panel will be composed of officers from
   - Community & Social Planning
   - Community Development
   - Environmental Education
   - Parks and Conservation Services
   - Environmental Management Group
   - Property Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITERIA</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Availability of Water</td>
<td>Distance from water sources; Type of water sources near the area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbours</td>
<td>Supportive neighbours and willingness to participate in the project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proximity to public transport</td>
<td>Distance from public transport, bicycle tracks and footpaths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to toilets</td>
<td>Distance to the nearest toilet for public use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPTED</td>
<td>Safety concerns in the area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current and potential use of the land</td>
<td>Description of the current use of land including existing structures on the site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental considerations</td>
<td>Suitability of soil, access to sunlight etc</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 4 Assessment of Site Viability*

3. **Adopt a suitable tenure instrument**
   Redland City Council and the successful community garden group or organisation will enter into an agreement for the purpose of managing and operating a community garden on Council-owned land. Under Council’s Corporate Policy POL-3071 **Leasing of Council Land and Facilities**, a “Permit to Occupy” will be administered for use of Council land and facilities. “Permits to Occupy” cover the use of activity areas outside the footprint of buildings (i.e. associated with fields and courts). The term of the permit is up to 5 years and responsibilities and financial contributions of both Council and the community group will be clearly defined and documented in this agreement.
4. Provide educational support to community garden groups

To assist the success of community gardens, education should be provided to groups covering:

- Organisational structure
- Resources
- Gardening practice
- Sustainability
- Networking & collaboration

5. Establish resourcing provisions

5.1. Grants: The first phase of a community garden is very resource-intensive. Having access to funding allows for the physical development and improvement of a garden site. Although it is the primary responsibility of the community garden group to generate funding, Council can provide financial assistance through its Community Assistance Grants program. Funding is available for community groups providing projects that bring long-term benefits to the community. The community garden group would be responsible for all outgoings associated with the garden, including insurance, water and electricity. Organisations will also be provided with advice on external funding programs to support community garden activities and infrastructure.

5.2. Staff: A Community Gardens Officer (CGO) would serve as the primary liaison between Council and interested community garden groups. The role of the officer would also include:

- Facilitating the “Permit to Occupy” process
- Assisting gardeners to form a management group and to develop group protocols and guidelines
- Supporting groups in terms of increasing their organisational capacity

6. Adopt a simple Council application process

Council can provide a flexible and simple approach for new groups applying for community gardens. This approach will involve the Community Gardens Officer who will assist the groups to step through a simple process that supports the group, as well as ensuring compliance with relevant Council requirements and maximising the chance of success.
References

Reports and documents
Burnside Council, Community Gardens: Policy Directions for the City of Burnside (2008)

City of Victoria, Community Gardens Policy (September 2005), Victoria, Canada

Marrickville Council, Community Gardens: Policy Directions for Marrickville Council (2007)

Northeys Street City Farm, A Visitor Guide to Northeys Street City Farm Brochure (2007) Windsor, Brisbane

Woollahra Council, Community Gardens Policy (29 January 2008), Woollahra Municipal Council, Sydney

Websites


Redland City Council Reports and documents
Redlands 2030 Community Plan Creating Our Future, Adopted on April 2010

Redland City Council Corporate Plan 2010-2015

Building Strong Communities: Redlands Social Infrastructure Strategy 2009, Adopted on December 2009

Operational Plan 2010/2011, Adopted on June 2010

Saunders, Kris, Alexandra Hills Community Garden Report, March 2005
Appendix 1  A Snapshot of Community Garden Models across Australia and New Zealand

A. Brisbane City Council, Queensland
Brisbane City Council has promoted community gardens through its vision for the future in Living in Brisbane 2026. Part of Council’s goal in relation to Natural Environment, is Food in the City which states:

“In 2026, residents will have fun growing their own food and sharing their access to affordable food.”

The targets include:
- Increase resident and community participation in food gardening
- Increase economic value of food gardening and local processing
- Reduce its food miles (food miles are the vehicle kilometres travelled by food before it gets to the table)

A Community Gardens officer facilitates the application of groups who are interested in establishing and managing community gardens. Council also assists community gardens and city farms by:
- Providing land for community gardens
- Providing information about community gardens and city farms in Brisbane
- Providing grants for community gardens
- Organising events including the Growing Old and Living Dangerously (GOLD) program, library talks and workshops, and Greenfest
- Food in the city strategy with city wide outcomes

There are approximately 9 community gardens within Council’s park estate.

B. Northey Street City Farm, Brisbane, Queensland
Northey Street City Farm (NSCF) is located on the banks of Brisbane's Breakfast Creek in Windsor. From its initial inception in April 1994, the four-hectare land has been planted with 1500 exotic and native fruit trees, shrubs, bush tucker plant and ground covers.

The farm primarily promotes permaculture and organic gardening and has been a venue to educate individuals, schools and community groups on the principles of these methods. Aside from education workshops, the farm also hosts a nursery and a Sunday organic market. Other features of the farm include:
- hosting school tours and events such as Solstice celebration and Harvest Festival
- welcoming volunteers to be involved in the farm but also encouraging others to become members through membership packages which include exclusive benefits
- The farm has several committees to manage its operations and recognises the role of the farm elders across all of farm activities
- Brisbane City Council and NSCF have entered into 5 year lease agreement. Council has provided in-kind support and grants to the farm and has recently funded the development of NSCF’s policy and procedures manual.
The farm is a model of sustainable city living as it provides ways for urban residents and community groups to grow their own food as well as being able to access nutritious fruits, vegetables and other agricultural products.

C. Marrickville City Council, New South Wales

- Community gardens can become the focus of building a sense of community.
- The low cost option for Council is supplying assistance to a community association that will have care, control and maintenance of a community garden.
- Council will supply start-up funds to help with
  - Fencing
  - Legal fees
  - Purchase of tools
  - Installation of a tap, water tank or other infrastructure

D. Woollahra Council, New South Wales

Woollahra Council recognizes community gardens as valuable recreational activity that contributes to health and well-being, positive social interaction, community development, environmental education and sustainable principles, protection and use of open space.

- Community gardens are regarded as parcels of open spaces operated by the community with Council assistance.
- The spaces are used for the cultivation of produce for the personal use of members through allotments or shared plots.
- Council envisions that the garden will act as a demonstration site for the community.
- Community gardens will be licensed to an incorporated group with an approved Public Liability Cover of $10 million that indemnifies Council.
- The non-profit organisation agrees to develop, manage and operate the community garden according to a user agreement with their members.

E. Hurstville, New South Wales

- Community gardens are regarded as spaces where local residents can gather to grow food and relax, learn and make new friends.
- The garden includes a communal area and 30 plots which were allocated to residents through a ballot system.
- The garden is managed by a garden association. However, the site is also used by Council as training venue for community courses in green waste conversion and minimal water use.

F. Woolloomooloo, New South Wales

- Council designed and constructed the gardens and continues to have a role in the garden’s ongoing maintenance.
- The garden contains both communal area and individual plots. The gate is unlocked and is open to
the public everyday.

G. *Wagga Wagga, New South Wales*

- Council assists in the selection of site for community gardens based on
  - The existence of suitable land
  - The approval and support of neighbours living 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 sites
  - Proximity to higher density living areas
  - Compatibility with surrounding land uses
  - Soil quality and drainage
  - Sun exposure
  - Accessibility to public transport
  - Accessibility to supporting infrastructure such as water

H. *Auckland City Council, New Zealand*

Auckland City views itself as an enabler of community gardens rather than as a provider of gardens or funds. Its policy recognises that community gardens can be established in public open spaces but should be in compliance with the City’s District Plan and Local Government Act. Schools, residual land adjoining rail corridors, vacant or temporary lots are also regarded as potential open spaces that may be suitable for community gardens. Gardens are treated as ‘desirable community facilities’.
## Appendix 2 Summary of Redlands Responses to Community Garden Public Consultation

### Site Selection

Overall community feedback indicates support for the criteria indicated in the discussion paper with a few additions:

- Access to Water
- Security of Tenure
- Accessible to
  - Transportation
  - Toilets
  - Other facilities (e.g. skate park, children’s playground)
- Consideration of
  - Soil quality
  - Sunlight & Shade
  - Drainage / Flood zones
  - Hazardous waste/Contamination level
- Potential for putting up a facility such as storage shed
- Communication with neighbours
- Commitment of community

### Council support

Desirable Council support included:

- Organisational Development and Support such as
  - Assistance in conflict resolution
  - Sharing of Knowledge, access to information and financial advice
  - Website hosting for promotion and networking purposes
  - Legal advice
  - Sponsorship
- Material support
  - Mulch
  - Equipment
  - Fencing
- Access to sites
- Formation of a network of community garden
- Group insurance
- Council/Resource Officer
- Central Auspicing body

### Council pre-identifying sites

Most of the responses agree with the process of Council identifying the sites beforehand but others also suggest that:

- Council should also be open to other sites that groups will be proposing
- There should be sufficient public interest to drive community gardens
- Site selected is indicative of need in the area
- Local knowledge from potential gardeners should be considered

### Interest Threshold

Responses indicate that there is recognition of the need for having a core number of people to start a garden. Most suggest 6-12 as the minimum number

Other suggestions:

- 1 person with a vision should be sufficient as a threshold
- 20 to 25 members
- No minimum number as it is dependent on the size of the land

### General Comments

- Simplify process, minimise bureaucracy & maintain flexibility
- Improve communication and coordination between council and community groups
### List of garden sites suggested by the community during consultation process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Catchment 1</th>
<th>Suburb</th>
<th>Areas/Specific Sites</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thorneside</td>
<td>▪ Foreshore area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Birkdale</td>
<td>▪ Private land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wellington Point</td>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Wellington Point Farm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Riverton Drive Reserve (Park between Tulloch Drive and Riverton drive) or near wetlands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Road Corridor-Wellington Point/Ormiston at Starkey Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Burnett St. – vacant farm land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Behind mobile library carpark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Sportsfields</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wellington Point</td>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Riverton Drive Reserve (Park between Tulloch Drive and Riverton drive) or near wetlands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Road Corridor-Wellington Point/Ormiston at Starkey Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Burnett St. – vacant farm land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Behind mobile library carpark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Sportsfields</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catchment 2</td>
<td>Capalaba</td>
<td>▪ Park near Bunnings Capalaba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Runnymede</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Space between Capalaba Park and Capalaba Central</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catchment 3</td>
<td>Cleveland</td>
<td>▪ William Ross Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Donald Simpson Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Cleveland Showgrounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Near Cleveland Primary State School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>▪ GJ Walter Park (near off lease dog area)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Near car park for the Stradbroke Island Ferry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Near Memorial Hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catchment 4</td>
<td>Thornlands</td>
<td>▪ Community Hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Walter Taylor Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Along Eddie Santagiuliana Way between Manning Esplanade and George Thorn Drive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>▪ End of Thornlands Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria Point</td>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Link Road near sewage treatment plant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redland Bay</td>
<td></td>
<td>▪ School of Arts Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Fielding Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Pt. Talburpin Park and hall area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Denham Bvl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Corner of Unwin Road and Muller St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catchment 5</td>
<td>Mount Cotton</td>
<td>▪ Next door to the church opposite the Mt. Cotton Primary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catcment 6</td>
<td>SMBI</td>
<td>▪ Lamb Island near Pioneer Hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Macleay Island</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Point Lookout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSI</td>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Foreshore areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General</td>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Every single park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Local Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Nature Strips/Verges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Near train stations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>