

1. RATIONALE

Community gardens are important sites for community connection, urban food production and environmental education. They also offer a wide range of health, wellbeing, social, cultural, economic and food security benefits for communities. Council has an important role to play in enabling and supporting community gardens.

The Policy provides guiding principles on how Council will support community gardens and how decisions will be made about allocation of Council land for community gardens.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

Where local residents have expressed commitment to establishment of a community garden, Council will support appropriately located, designed, managed, and resourced community gardens. Council will also foster a diverse range of community gardens and support community garden groups to run vibrant, inclusive community gardens.

3. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this Policy are as follows:

- Build the capacity of community garden groups to establish and maintain community gardens.
- Foster a diverse and geographic spread of community gardens to meet a range of community needs.
- Encourage accessible and inclusive community gardens that cater for a range of community groups and needs including people with disabilities, children, older people, First Nations peoples, and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Support community garden groups during the planning and establishment phase.
- Ensure security of tenure for community garden groups so they can plan for the long-term future and viability of the garden.
- Reducing ongoing expense for community garden groups by not charging a fee for use of the land and covering the cost of water.
- Ensure community gardens are well-maintained, visually appealing and make a positive contribution to the local community.

4. POLICY SCOPE AND IMPLEMENTATION

Scope

This policy applies to community gardens on land that Council owns and/or manages. This policy does not apply to the keeping of animals or livestock on Council land. This policy does not apply to verge gardens. Council's position on verge gardening is currently outlined in the *City of Marion Verge Development Guidelines*.

Implementation

The implementation of this policy is outlined in the City of Marion Community Garden Guidelines.

The use of Council land for community gardening will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The following considerations will be taken into account when assessing the suitability of potential community garden sites:

- Connection to community facilities.
- Compatibility with surrounding land uses.
- Minimal impact on neighbouring residents.
- Appropriate land size.
- Water access.
- Suitable growing conditions including soil, sunlight, and orientation.
- Favourable topography with minimal slopes.
- Toilet access.
- Vehicle access for deliverables.
- Pedestrian and disability access.
- Minimal impacts on biodiversity, water resources and trees.
- Safety and security for members and visitors.
- Storage for tools and equipment.

Where community gardens are managed by a community garden group, a *Community Gardens Agreement* will be prepared between Council and the community garden group. Simple agreements will be prepared for small community gardens to reduce the complexity and administrative work required.

5. DEFINITIONS

<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Community Garden	Community Gardens are community led and managed, not-for-profit initiatives, where members of the local community come together to grow food in individual or shared plots. Community gardens are open to the public on a regular basis.
Community Gardens Agreement	A legal agreement between a community group and Council regarding the use of Council land for a community garden.
Community Gardens Guidelines	Guidelines developed by the Council Administration to assist community garden groups with the interpretation of relevant policy. The Guideline outlines the procedures for setting up and managing a community garden.
Community Garden Group	A not-for-profit community group or organisation using Council land or the purpose of a community garden.
Community Capacity	The skills, knowledge, resources, social networks, and volunteer time available in each community that can be dedicated to community initiatives such as a community garden.
Verge Gardens	A garden located on the area between the kerb and the property boundary that is managed by one or more nearby households following approval by council (under Section 221 of the <i>Local Government Act 1999</i> and City of Marion Verge Development Guidelines).

6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

<i>Role</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>
Council Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide advice to community groups on planning, design, and management of community gardens. • Assess proposed community garden locations based on site selection criteria. • Ensure community garden groups have appropriate governance and safety measures in place. • Promote community gardens as sites for environmental education and building social connections. • Encourage best practice water and waste management in community gardens.

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<i>Role</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Build the capacity of community garden groups through provision of networks and training.
Community Garden Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Liaise with Council's Community Gardens Coordinator throughout the process of establishing a community garden.• Design the garden for accessibility and ensure it is inclusive of a range of community groups and needs.• Engage with the local community and communicate with neighbours to seek support for the garden.• Ensure the group has the capacity to manage the garden.• Develop a plan outlining how the garden will be managed.• Ensure community gardens are open to the broader community on a regular basis.• Source funding and public liability insurance.

7. REFERENCES

City of Marion

- City of Marion Community Gardens Guidelines.
- City of Marion Verge Development Guidelines.
- City of Marion Environmental Policy.
- City of Marion Open Space Framework (including Open Space Policy and Open Space Plan).
- City of Marion Leasing and Licensing Policy.
- City of Marion Community Land Management Plans.
- City of Marion Public Consultation Policy.
- City of Marion Local Government Land by-law.

8. REVIEW AND EVALUATION

This Policy will be reviewed every four years in accordance with the Policy Framework.