

COMMUNITY GARDENS POLICY

Reference number: POL 024
Approval date: 17 October 2022
Policy owner: Manager Community Services
Next review: September 2029

Wagga Wagga City Council recognises community gardening as a valuable activity which contributes to health and wellbeing, positive social interaction, community capacity building, environmental education and sustainability principles as well as the protection and use of open space.

This policy formalises the general principles under which Wagga Wagga City Council can determine appropriate use of Council owned space for the purpose of use as a community garden. Council's Community Garden Policy has been developed to respond to the needs of the community of Wagga Wagga in line with Council's Community Strategic Plan.

Purpose

This Policy determines the parameters and guidelines for the use of Wagga Wagga City Council land as community garden space.

Scope

This policy applies to the identification and usage of Wagga Wagga City Council public land for use as a community garden by incorporated not for profit community groups or organisations residing in the Wagga Wagga Local Government Area.

Policy Provisions

Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of all Wagga Wagga City Council Staff to abide by this Policy.

General Provisions

Service and program levels will be reported through Wagga Wagga City Council's annual reporting processes.

Approval Arrangements

The Manager Community Services in consultation with the Manager Environment Sustainability and Property Coordinator will approve applications under this policy as per Wagga Wagga City Council's organisational approval process.

Review Procedures

This policy will be reviewed in line with Wagga Wagga City Council planning cycle which occurs every four years.

Policy Implementation Procedures

Application Procedures

On receiving a request from the community for a community garden, an assessment will be undertaken. Any request will need to be in the form of a proposal which addresses the following issues:

- The basis for a garden: e.g. individual allotments, a shared communal garden or a combination of these.
- A suggestion for a site (if known) and a site plan for development.
- Numbers of people to be involved and whether they are residents of the Wagga Wagga Local Government Area.
- Proposed opportunities for public access and use.
- How establishment costs and ongoing costs, such as water and other infrastructure costs, will be met, including maintenance and vandalism management
- Evidence of public liability insurance or the capacity to provide public liability insurance.
- Staffing and management of the garden, including volunteer management.
- Proposed materials, equipment, shelter and storage and how these will be available and managed on site.
- Decommissioning of the community garden.

Council Support

Council will assist incorporated not for profit community groups and organisations in searching for suitable public open space for the development of community gardens within Wagga Wagga Local Government Area.

Site Selection

Wagga Wagga City Council will assist in locating a possible new garden site subject to the following:

- The existence of suitable available land
- The support of neighbours living adjacent to and near the proposed site
- Demonstrated interest and commitment from an incorporated not for profit community group or organisation
- Alignment with existing Community Land Management Plans and all other planning, regulatory and legislative requirements
- Usability of the site
- 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

In addition, it will be important that existing open space users are not displaced as a result of the establishment of a community garden.

Approval Arrangements

A formal agreement must be entered into by Council and the incorporated not for profit community group or organisation for the purpose of developing and maintaining a community garden on Council owned public space. The agreement will set out period of usage and contain conditions for the use of the site along with a restitution clause.

Management Framework

The incorporated not for profit community group or organisation will develop, manage and operate the community garden. This group will be required to have approved public liability cover and manage safe access in and around the site.

The incorporated not for profit community group or organisation will liaise with Council staff in regard to any new infrastructure or projects planned for the garden. Prior to the erection or installation of any infrastructure, written approval from Council or, where relevant, Development Consent will be required.

It is the responsibility of the incorporated not for profit community group or organisation:

- Ensure Development Applications are lodged as required.
- Ensure the safety at all times of any visitors and participants at the site and comply with WHS legislation.
- Cover all costs associated with the establishment and day to day operation of the community garden.
- Ensure all building structures that may be established on the proposed community garden land are constructed by licensed or qualified persons.
- Staff the community garden as deemed appropriate. This will include responsibility for the recruitment and management of volunteers, consistent with best practice volunteer management principles.
- Ensure the community garden complies with all relevant legislation and regulations.
- Ensure that the garden is maintained to an acceptable standard.
- Ensure any persons using the garden have appropriate insurances, as identified in the agreement that will be established with the incorporated not for profit community group or organisation undertaking the management of any proposed community garden project under this policy.

Legislative Context

- NSW Local Government Act 1993
- NSW Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979

Related Documents

- Council's Community Strategic Plan 2050
- Biodiversity Strategy: Maldhangilanha 2020-2030
- Recreation Open Space Community Strategy (ROSCS)
- Acquisition, Disposal and Management of Land Policy (POL 038)

Definitions

Term	Definition
Community Garden	<p>A piece of open space operated by community members where the site is used for the following purposes:</p> <p><i>The production of produce for the personal use of its members through allotments or shared plots.</i></p> <p>The demonstration of best practice environmental initiatives, organic gardening practices and sustainability principles to the wider community including local schools, incorporated not for profit community groups or organisations and individual citizens which will lead to the building of community capacity.</p>

Revision History

Revision number	Council resolution	Council meeting date
1	Res. No. 09/090.6	24 August 2009
2	E-Team	26 March 2013
3	Res No: 13/244.1	26 August 2013
4	E Team	1 August 2017
5	Res No: 17/279	28 August 2017
6	Revision approval under General Manager delegated authority	24 November 2021
7	Res No: 22/354	17 October 2022
8	Revision approval under General Manager delegated authority	24 June 2025