

Council Policy

Council policy title:	Community Garden Policy
Council policy owner:	Director Environment, Recreation and Infrastructure
Adopted by:	Bayside City Council
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([Council Policy](#) is a high level public statement formally resolved by Council, which clearly states Council's requirements, intent or position with regard to a particular matter or issue. It is not intended to be procedural in nature.)

1. Policy intent

The Bayside Community Plan 2020 describes Council's role in fostering community connections, encouraging recreation opportunities and leading by example in environmental sustainability. In this context Council supports the establishment of community gardens by community groups within the municipality in accordance with the criteria described in this Policy.

2. Policy purpose

A community garden is defined as a single parcel of land gardened collectively by a group of people. It is a community managed, multi-functional garden space that when carefully designed and managed can provide a wide range of environmental, social and economic benefits. There are three types of community gardens as defined by the Australian City Farms and Community Gardens Network:

1. Shared gardens, in which gardeners work in the whole garden, doing whatever is needed at the time and taking a share of what they grow;
2. Allotment gardens, in which individuals or families have their own garden; and
3. A garden with both allotments and shared gardening space.

Council's role in community gardens will vary according to land ownership. Council will work to enable its residents to pursue community gardening opportunities and provide support to community gardening groups. Council will not establish community gardens.

Bayside City Council recognises that community gardens can play an important role in community development. Community gardens provide a valuable recreation activity that contributes to health and wellbeing, social connectedness and interaction, environmental education and sustainable living practices. Gardening as a form of recreation and as a leisure activity can be viewed as being positive to a community's sense of well-being, its sense of pride, identity and involvement in local initiatives.

3. Glossary - Definitions and Abbreviations

Term	Meaning
Community Garden Group	A group focused on identifying appropriate sites for community gardening and proposing, establishing and managing community gardens.

Private land	Any land owned by an organisation/individual that members of the public may not enter or may not remain on without permission (e.g. church, schools, sport clubs etc.).
Council owned and/or managed land	Land which is in the care, control or management of Council.

4. Scope

This Policy applies to all community garden developments on:

1. Council owned and/or managed land;
2. Private land; and
3. Land owned by other public authorities.

Council's role will vary according to land ownership.

5. Policy statement

Council recognises the benefits of community gardens and is committed to encouraging its residents to take up community gardening opportunities and to develop community garden proposals. This refers to the application of two scenarios; 1) Council owned and/or managed land or 2) private land.

1. On Council owned and/or managed land, Council will consider community garden proposals that meet the following criteria:
 - a) Demonstrated community support for a community garden in a particular neighbourhood and capacity for operating the garden. This should be manifest in the formation of a community garden group to progress a proposal.
 - b) Completion and submission to Council by the Community Garden Group of the following documents:
 - i. Bayside City Council Community Garden Proposal – Site Assessment and Planning Tool; and
 - ii. Ideas to Consider before Starting a Community Garden (Australian City Farms and Community Gardens Network).
 - c) If required, a planning permit application.
 - d) Identification of a community engagement process.
 - e) Development of an agreed framework for governance and self-management of the proposed garden and a plan for becoming an incorporated association. An auspice arrangement with an existing incorporated association may be considered.
 - f) The identification and adherence to any relevant state and/or local laws regarding the planting of noxious and/or invasive plant species.
 - g) If public open space is to be used that the:
 - i. Open space values are not adversely affected and the potential for conflict with existing users and neighbours is minimised; and
 - ii. Proposed community garden is in keeping with any adopted plan of management or masterplan for the site.
 - h) The Community Garden Group has a level of funding to assist in the establishment and ongoing management of the community garden through a successful grant application, voluntary contributions, fundraising or other.
 - i) Where possible the community garden should be co-located with existing community facilities, e.g. community centres, to allow access to amenities such as public toilets and water.
 - j) The design and function of the proposed community garden is one which:
 - i. Will have long term benefits for the community as a whole; and

- ii. Has incorporated occupational health and safety and accessibility considerations for both gardeners and the public.
2. On privately owned land or land owned by other public authorities:
 - a) Written consent from the landowner for proposals would be required for any Council support.
 - b) This policy and its associated documents are provided as guidance material only, unless Council support is being sought.

6. Monitoring, evaluation & review

Compliance with the Policy will be measured through evaluation of individual community garden proposals submitted to Council for support and approval. The subsequent establishment and ongoing operation of community gardens will be periodically evaluated through an annual reporting process to be mutually agreed between Council and the community gardening group (e.g. annual event, verbal and/or written report).

To track the effectiveness of this Policy in achieving the intent described in section 1, Council's annual customer service survey questions that provide an insight into the level of engagement in sustainable environmental initiatives within the community will include a measure on the impact of community gardens.

This Policy will be reviewed in 2022.

7. Roles & Responsibilities

Council's support will be considered on the basis of individual merit according to the criteria described in Section 7 below.

This Policy is to be implemented by the Sustainability and Transport Department, and will be monitored and evaluated by the Manager Sustainability and Transport.

Community garden groups will take legal and financial responsibility for the establishment and ongoing operation of a community garden. Community garden groups will also be responsible for the following:

1. Nomination of a preferred site(s).
2. Completion and submission to Council of the relevant documents:
 - a) *Bayside City Council Community Garden Proposal – Site Assessment and Planning Tool.*
 - b) *Ideas to Consider before Starting a Community Garden*
3. If required, a planning permit application related to the preferred site.
4. Community engagement with neighbours and potential gardeners (e.g. surveys of neighbouring residents to the proposed site).
5. Site design and safety.
6. Implementation of appropriate management frameworks.
7. Development of a financial plan (including establishment and ongoing costs).
8. Public liability and site insurance as deemed appropriate by Council's risk manager.

Council will enable and support the establishment of community gardens by providing:

1. For community gardens on Council owned and/or managed land:
 - a) Identification of potentially suitable sites.
 - b) Advice on whether a planning permit is required for a community garden on Council owned and/or managed land.
 - c) Assessment of community garden proposals from Community Garden Groups.

- d) Development of a use agreement established under Council's leasing policy. The use agreement will include provision for tenants to return the site to its original condition at the expiry or termination of the lease.
2. For all community gardens:
- a) Advice (e.g. on land use planning regulations, management plans, obtaining grants and resources, site design and safety including risk assessment).
 - b) Education and training (e.g. assistance with the delivery of workshops, provision of access to online resources through Council's website).
 - c) Facilitation and promotion (e.g. assistance with determining site location and suitability, connecting local gardeners to community gardens, promotion of community gardens via Council's website and publications, facilitating community engagement processes as required).
 - d) Financial support – Council funding will only be provided through Council's Community Grants Program and will be determined on meeting the criteria of that Program.

The provision of Council support will be based upon the community garden group meeting the criteria outlined in the Policy Statement.

8. Related documents

Policies	Leasing Policy 2008
Strategies/Plans	Bayside Community Plan 2025 Bayside City Council - Council Plan Bayside City Council - Wellbeing for All Ages and Abilities Strategy 2017-2021 Bayside City Council - Open Space Strategy 2012
Guidelines	1. Checklist – <i>Ideas to Consider Before Starting a Community Garden</i> (Australian City Farms and Community Gardens Network). 2. <i>Bayside City Council Draft Community Garden Proposal - Policy Site Assessment and Planning Tool</i>

Please note: This policy is current as at the date of approval. Refer to Council's website (www.bayside.vic.gov.au) to ensure this is the latest version.