



Community Gardens Guidelines



Community Development Team

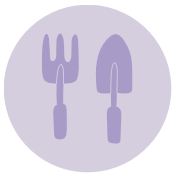
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Community gardening provides many social, environmental, and economic benefits.

The City of Burnside encourages community gardening as a sustainable living option and a way for people to get involved with their local community. Community Gardens can create a greater sense of belonging and neighbourliness through collaboration over shared interests and the opportunity to help others, further building community. On an individual level, residents can learn forgotten or new skills, share knowledge, explore new techniques and celebrate success through harvests.

Community gardens involve substantial community participation in planning, management and daily activities. Successful community gardens are generally established by a committed group of residents and volunteers and are often sponsored by a competent community organisation or local business.



Purpose

This guide introduces Community Gardening and explains how the City of Burnside will support local groups seeking to establish a Community Garden on council-owned or controlled land.

The City of Burnside is committed to promoting and supporting community gardens. Community gardens are strongly encouraged to include sustainable practices, learning opportunities, and organic gardening, and they should be inclusive of all community members.

Verges are not considered community gardens. Please refer to the Council's Verge Development Policy for information on verge planting.



What is a community garden?

A 'community garden' is a parcel of public open space operated by the community to produce food through allotments or shared plots and contribute to a sense of community. Community gardens should:

- Involve diverse community groups and people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds.
- Focus on growing edible plants (vegetables, herbs, fruit, etc).
- Demonstrate sustainable gardening and living practices.

Community gardens can include:

- Educational opportunities through shared knowledge, workshops and activities.
- Skill sharing through cooking and eating.
- Incorporation of arts and cultural activities.
- Positive social interactions and improved health and wellbeing outcomes.

Community gardens are not typically located on the verge or road reserve. However, residents in the City of Burnside can apply for landscaping or planting on the verge/road reserve near their property. Verge upgrades differ from community gardens in that they are typically managed by nearby households rather than a community group. More information about verge/road reserve landscaping or planting is available on the [City of Burnside website](#).



How Council supports community gardens

Council's priorities for our city and community are set out in a suite of strategic management plans. Burnside 2030 Strategic Community Plan is Council's lead strategic planning document, setting out our high-level vision, goals and priorities for our city and community. Community gardens meet several objectives in this Plan.

These objectives are:

- A thriving, healthy, inclusive and connected community.
- Our city will be a leading environmental custodian.

Council's Connected Communities Strategy 2022-2026 also provides strategic direction. The goal of 'Participation - well used community spaces and services that enable connection, learning and wellbeing' and the Priority 'community, volunteer and mentor programs and partnerships that support social, physical or environmental outcomes' provide the mechanisms from a strategic standpoint.

The City of Burnside takes a community development approach to community gardens. This means building effective partnerships within the community, where designated groups are responsible for managing community gardens with support from Council.



Council's Role

Council supports community gardens by collaborating with community groups and volunteers to facilitate community ownership and ensure long-term success. This includes assisting in identifying new sites and activities.

Subject to available resources, Council may:

- Promote and raise awareness of community gardening.
- Provide information to the public about the operation of community gardens.
- Assist interested groups and volunteers searching for suitable public land to develop community gardens.
- Review and consider the approval of community garden proposals.
- Guide the development of management plans for community gardens, as required.
- Facilitate community engagement for proposed garden sites.
- Project management of site development, including site planning and design, surveying and site preparation, installation of basic infrastructure and construction.
- Provide in-kind support where feasible (i.e. water options, mulch, etc.)
- Promote community gardens to help build membership.
- Support community gardens regarding effective governance structures.
- Provide support in obtaining grants.

Community Garden's Role

Once a community garden is established, not-for-profit gardening groups are expected to be self-reliant and take responsibility for the ongoing management, maintenance, partnership development and funding. This means:

- Implement and maintain appropriate governance structures (if required).
- Recruit active members.
- Ensure safe practices.
- Ensure the garden is an inclusive, accessible space for all community members.
- Cooperate and manage effective relationships with surrounding neighbours, partnering organisations and other gardeners.



Process for starting a community garden on Council land

A community garden is an asset to any neighbourhood and generates many benefits. However, building and managing a community garden is a significant undertaking. A considerable amount of planning, design, community consultation, resources, approval and building is involved before you can start gardening.

The following provides an overview of the steps required.

If you need assistance, please get in touch with the City of Burnside Community Development team at:

Phone: 8366 4200

Email: burnside@burnside.sa.gov.au

Website: burnside.sa.gov.au



1. Form a group

Form a working group to start planning your community garden.

It is important to speak to the local community to gauge interest, seek support and find members and volunteers. Neighbours can become great members of gardening groups and can form a working group to assist with the initial stages of starting a new community garden.



2. Research

Research different types of community gardens and have a clear vision of what you want to achieve.

Before starting a community garden, it is essential to understand what is involved. The following organisations can provide valuable resources and connect you with like-minded community groups around Australia.

- Community Gardens Australia - www.communitygarden.org.au
- Sustainable Gardening Australia - www.sgaonline.org.au
- SA Urban Food Network - www.saurbanfood.org

It is also recommended that you talk to one or more of the existing community garden groups within the City of Burnside.



3. Contact Council

Please get in touch with the Council's Community Development team to discuss your vision and express your interest in starting a new community garden.

Community Development team:

- Phone: 8366 4200
- Website: burnside.sa.gov.au



4. Choose a site



There are many factors to consider when deciding if a site is suitable for a community garden. Council will assist in identifying new garden sites where council land is available, where neighbours are supportive, and where community groups or volunteers demonstrate interest and commitment. Once a site is chosen, contact is strongly encouraged with adjacent neighbours and overlooking residents early in the process.

Council considers a range of factors when determining whether a site is suitable for a community garden. In addition to the site assessment criteria, existing land uses, impacts on biodiversity, water and trees, traffic and parking impacts, and proximity to existing community gardens are considered.

In identifying new sites for community gardens, the following guidelines should be considered:

- Consistency with the relevant Community Land Management Plan and/or Master Plans.
- Interest and commitment of a gardening group and volunteers.
- Informed and supportive neighbours.
- Availability and usability of the site.
- Proximity to medium-high density living areas and retirement villages.
- Soil quality and drainage.
- Sun exposure.
- Accessibility to public transport.
- Proximity to supporting infrastructure, such as water.
- Proximity to public toilets.
- Impact on street and public car parking.
- Impact on existing park users.

When considering a site for a new community garden, Council will consult with the community and report on the matter to Council for its consideration.



5. Formal application



A formal community garden application must be submitted to Council for initial consideration and feedback. The application should include the proposed site location, garden details, budget, proposed management framework, and considerations for accessibility to ensure that the garden is inclusive and usable by all community members. The Community Development team will provide feedback and discuss recommended changes if required.

Management Framework

There are generally two models of community garden management frameworks: **Fenced and Leased** or **Open Access**. However, a community garden can occasionally accommodate each of these aspects. Laurel Avenue Community Garden is an example of this.

Both management framework models require developing, managing, and operating the community gardens' user agreement. This will specify the terms of use, management responsibilities, user fees (if applicable) and access procedures.

1. Community Garden – Fenced and Leased

Fenced and Leased Community Gardens are leased to an incorporated community group to develop, manage and operate the community garden. This incorporated group will be required to have appropriate public liability insurance and manage safe access in and around the site.

The Community Group and Council will develop a user agreement as part of the Fenced and Leased Community Garden management framework.

The incorporated community group will:

- Encourage members, through its functions and activities, to act more sustainably.
- Liaise with Council staff regarding any new infrastructure or projects planned for the garden.
- Seek written approval from the Council's Chief Executive Officer or their delegate before the erection or installation of any infrastructure.
- Where required, seek Development Consent.
- Report annually to the Council on the garden's function and how they are meeting the agreed objectives.

An example of this type of community garden is Chapel Street Community Garden.

2. Community Garden – Open Access

An Open Access Community Garden will not be fenced and will be managed by volunteers. Garden beds are open access to the public.

Volunteers who manage Open Access Community Gardens will be managed through the City of Burnside Volunteer Program.

Volunteers will manage the community garden with the support of Council and will foster an inclusive ethos.

Garden beds will be managed in the 'spirit' of providing food or pleasure for the community/public.

An example of this community Garden is The Shed Community Garden at Conyngham Street.

Budget and funding

Council recognises the resources, time and labour required to establish a new community garden. Council will work closely with community garden groups during the establishment phase and strive to support those groups.

The incorporated community group or volunteers will be responsible for appropriate income generation or fundraising to support the operation of the community garden. This will partly be through establishing appropriate membership fees (if applicable) and applying for funding from external grant providers.

Community garden groups can apply to the City of Burnside's Community Grants program to obtain funding to establish their garden; however, other funding sources must be explored to ensure the longevity of a community garden.

Construction costs can be high for new community gardens. Consideration for a budget to build a new community garden should be discussed by Council as part of the Council Report process. It is highly recommended that external grant funding be sought to strengthen your application for a new community garden.

Council's contribution towards the development of a community garden and the ongoing operational costs will vary depending on the type of community garden and will be in accordance with the Council's [Leasing and Licensing of Community Facilities Policy](#) and/or the [Hire of Community Open Space and Facilities Policy](#).

6. Community consultation

Council approval is required for community consultation on the community garden idea and proposed location. At this stage, Council will also seek expressions of interest from community members to join a co-design working group.



Consultation allows all community members to have a voice and provide valuable insight, giving the project the best opportunity for success. Council will listen to all ideas and concerns and work with the interested community garden group to find solutions.

Community consultation will follow the Council's [Community Engagement and Consultation Policy](#). Findings from the consultation process will be provided to Council for consideration.

7. Co-design

Council will work with interested residents and stakeholders to develop a design for the Community Garden. This may involve a process called 'co-design' where the community works directly with experts and Council in designing the community garden. Through a series of workshops, community members are empowered to design their gardens, working side-by-side with their neighbours, Council and experts, building on each other's ideas. This helps build enthusiasm and buy-in for the final result.



8. Council approval

Council administration will draft and submit a formal report to Council for approval of the new community garden. The report will detail the community garden design, community consultation findings, budget and the management framework.



9. Development Application



A Development Application may be required for the community garden and/or any planned structures or buildings. Information about planning regulations and the application process can be found on the [PlanSA website](#).

The City of Burnside Planning department can assist with any questions.

Phone: 8366 4200

Website: burnside.sa.gov.au

10. Formalise group



Incorporated Association

Depending on the management framework, a community garden group may need to become an incorporated association and obtain the necessary insurance. An incorporated association provides community garden groups clear legal recognition and structure as a non-profit organisation, helping them operate effectively while ensuring accountability and transparency in their activities. It allows the group to manage funds, open a bank account, obtain public liability insurance coverage, enter a formal agreement and apply for grants.

Key steps to becoming an incorporated association include agreeing on a constitution, electing a public officer and establishing a management committee that meets regularly. The committee generally includes a president, vice president, treasurer, secretary, and committee members. Having a structure helps share the tasks of garden management.

Your group must apply to the South Australian Office of Consumer and Business Services to become an incorporated association. For more information, visit the [Consumer and Business Services website](#).

Insurance

Garden groups must know the risks of undertaking a publicly accessible community garden. Community garden groups have a duty of care to the community that access the garden areas and must ensure adequate coverage, including an appropriate public liability insurance policy.

11. Agreement

Council approval is required for all new community gardens on council land. Should Council approval be granted for a new community garden, a suitable agreement will be developed between the interested parties. Depending on the length of tenure, the agreement will be in accordance with the Council's [Leasing and Licensing of Community Facilities Policy](#) and/or the [Hire of Community Open Space and Facilities Policy](#).



12. Construction

Depending on the size and complexity, Council will oversee the project management of the community garden construction, with the resident group assisting where possible.





Useful Links

City of Burnside website

[Community Gardens](#)

[Verge Landscaping](#)

Community Gardens Australia

communitygarden.org.au

South Australian Community Gardens Network

Contact them through their public [Facebook page](#)

PlanSA

Lodging a development application

plan.sa.gov.au

Consumer and Business Services

Information about becoming an incorporated association

cbs.sa.gov.au/associations-cooperatives

Green Adelaide

Provides education, resources and grants to grassroots community groups

greenadelaide.sa.gov.au

Garden Clubs of Australia

Provides competitive insurance policies for members

gardenclubs.org.au



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