

Contents

What is community gardening?	1
Purpose and aims of the guidelines:	1
Advice and materials	2
Education, training and support	2
Community gardener's role	2
The process for determining feasibility for a new community garden	3
Step 1 – Fill in the Community Garden Self-Assessment Checklist	3
Step 2 – Fill in and submit a Community Garden Feasibility Application Form	3
Step 3 – Community Engagement Plan and Risk Assessment	3
Step 4 – Completion of Community Garden Agreement Form and Issue of licence.	4
Flowchart of process	5
Appendix 1 Example of a community garden design	6
Appendix 2 Example of a Plan of Management template	7

What is community gardening?

A community garden is a single piece of property where people come together to grow food and a sense of community. Community gardens are encouraged to:

- be open, inclusive community hubs which facilitate social interaction and involvement with the broader community
- involve diverse community groups and people of all ages and backgrounds
- focus on horticulture, usually of food including vegetables, herbs and fruit and nut trees
- use sustainable practices such as water-wise gardening, organic principles and seed saving.

Community gardens can also include:

- educational opportunities through shared knowledge, workshops and activities
- incorporation of arts and cultural activities
- skill sharing around cooking and use of edible and medicinal plants
- planting of fruit and nut trees on verges or in public spaces by individuals on application and in agreement with council.

Purpose and aims of the guidelines:

- provide community members with clear guidelines about establishing a community garden on council owned land
- offer advice and support in relation to community gardening
- ensure that community gardening has the best chance to be successful and sustainable
- help community groups identify suitable council owned sites for gardening
- support community led food initiatives.

We are committed to promoting and supporting community gardens and other community food growing. Community gardens are strongly encouraged to include sustainable practices, learning opportunities, organic gardening and are inclusive of all members of the community.

For the purpose of this document, community gardens are not-for-profit. Please refer to our [Road Verge Landscape Guidelines](#) for information on road verge planting.

Council's role

We will provide a first point of contact for people wanting to be involved in community gardening.

Our role specifically is to:

- identify suitable sites within the our council area for gardening
- ensure sites are complaint with community Land Management Plans and Open Space Strategic Plans
- provide support around community engagement for proposed garden sites
- support community food growers with signage and other risk management assessments
- support community food growers regarding effective governance structures
- promote funding opportunities
- provide advice about what is appropriate to plant
- link community gardeners with training opportunities

Advice and materials

- provide information around education and training
- support communities who want to establish new community gardens
- help groups to gain access to information to develop garden management plans
- support to establish recycling, worm farms and composting facilities.

Education, training and support

- provide information about training that is taking place within the City of Onkaparinga and other council areas
- provide training and support in developing governance processes through a membership with the [Onkaparinga Active Community Network](#) (OACNET)
- connect local gardens and gardeners to each other to help build relationships and encourage the sharing of information and experiences
- provide support in obtaining grants and resources
- promote community gardens through the council website, publications and events
- support with facilitation of garden meetings when needed and community engagement processes.

Community gardener's role

- ensure the garden is an inclusive, friendly, accessible space for all members of the community
- establish a group and recruit active members
- talk to other users of the identified space
- to investigate and source insurance for the gardening group
- implement and maintain appropriate governance structures for the successful management of the community garden
- establish and ensure that group norms are adhered to
- ensure safe practices.

The process for determining feasibility for a new community garden

Step 1 – Fill in the Community Garden Self-Assessment Checklist

This should help you think about some of the practicalities involved with setting up a community garden.

Things to consider:

- current land use, neighbours, accessibility, location, size, soil quality, sun, wind and water
- the design and construction of the community garden including sustainable sources of construction materials and soils
- sources of information, including links to online resources provided by council and community garden organisations.

Contact our Customer Centre on 8384 0666 and ask for the Community Connections Officer (CCO) for your district to forward you the checklist.

Step 2 – Fill in and submit a Community Garden Feasibility Application Form

Once you have completed the self-assessment checklist, discuss it with your CCO. If you decide to progress, your CCO will provide you with a Community Garden Feasibility Application Form.

The CCO is able to meet you on your proposed site to talk through any aspects of the application so that concerns and opportunities can be raised.

We recommend you familiarise yourself with [*Growing Community: Starting and Nurturing Community Gardens*](#).

This will help to develop an outline on the purpose of the garden, the goals and objectives you want to achieve, programs that may be planned to run in the garden, how the garden will be used and who will be able to access it.

At this point it is good to consider your management and governance structure. Remember your group will need to become incorporated or seek an auspicing agency so you can be insured, receive grants or obtain funding. You will also need to think about the ongoing financial management of the garden to ensure the economic sustainability and longevity of the project.

Please refer to Appendix 2 for a Management Plan template. Include how you will implement some of these elements. More information can also be found at [Appendix 2 – Example of a Plan of Management template](#)

Once you have completed the form, submit it to your CCO including a basic concept plan of the proposed garden. Please see Appendix 1 for an example. It will then be presented to the assessment panel. The panel may require further information from you dependent on the proposed location, scale and complexity of the proposal. The CCO will liaise with you in regards to this feedback.

Step 3 – Community Engagement Plan and Risk Assessment

It is important to offer genuine opportunities for people to participate in decision making that affects them throughout the process, this is called community engagement. Community engagement will allow the group to gauge the opinions and attitudes of local residents and community groups to get a sense of how well the proposal would fit with your community. The community garden can be strengthened by including other community groups and individuals.

Once preliminary approval is made by the panel, the CCO will inform you and provide you with an Engagement Plan template and with relevant methods and techniques for your group to use.

Anticipate that there may be concerns about the garden. Make sure there is room for these to be heard and that you can provide information to address these. The community engagement will help to lessen the risk alongside completing a Risk Assessment Checklist.

Risk Assessment is a process of identifying potential risks and measures to control these. The CCO will provide you with a Risk Assessment Checklist for a community garden to work through.

Step 4 – Completion of Community Garden Agreement Form and Issue of licence

Following the completion of the community engagement and risk assessment, the Assessment Panel will ensure all documentation and criteria are met before the application is forwarded to the Property and Commercial section for review and approval.

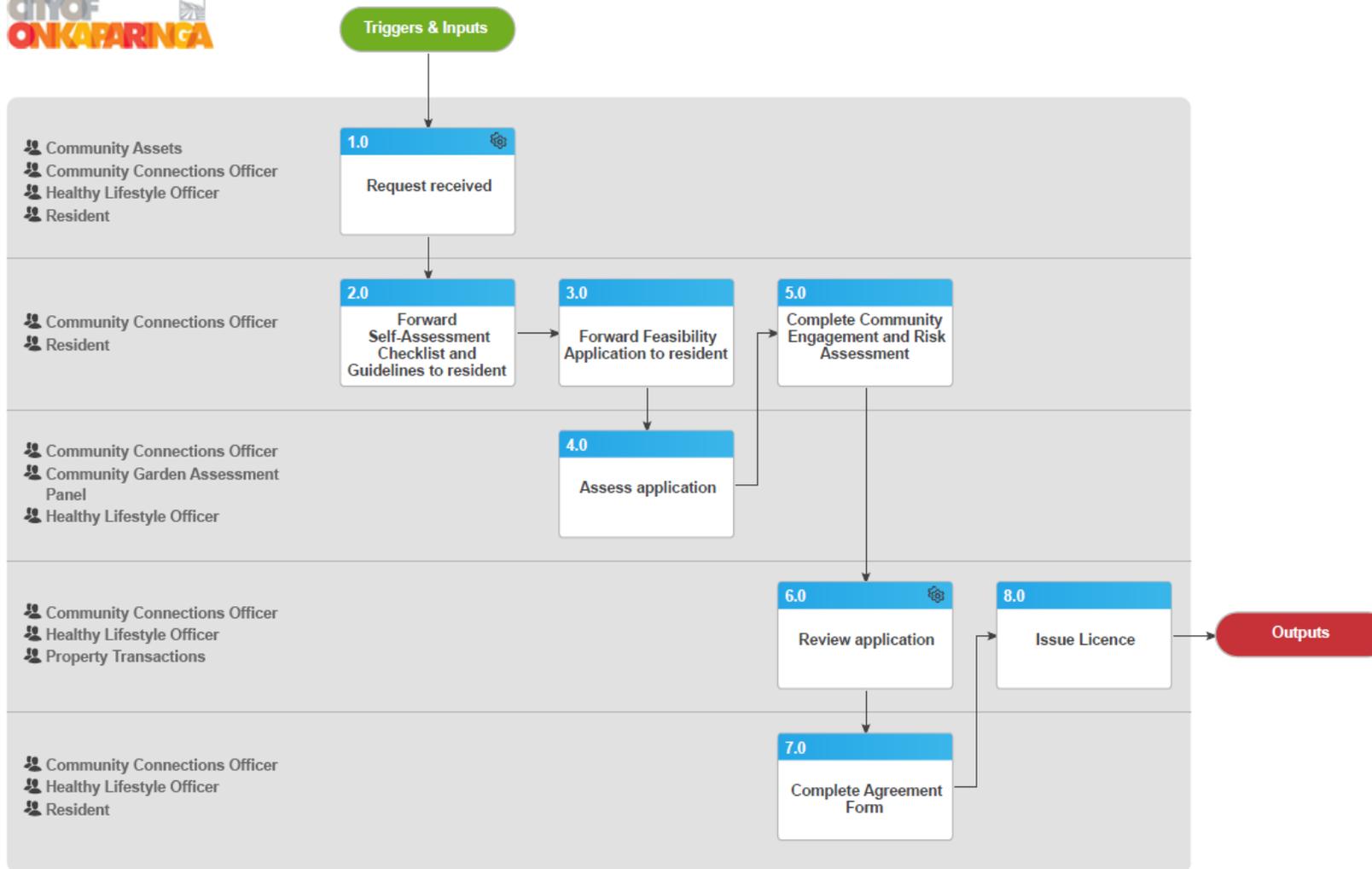
Once approved, the Community Connections Officer will provide a Community Garden Agreement Form to residents for sign off and return to the Community Connection Officer, alongside a copy of the group's Public Liability Insurance Certificate and the Risk Assessment Checklist.

A licence then will be issued and work can then begin. Please note that some applications will require development application approval if permanent structures are to be erected. This will need to be processed prior to work commencing. Fees may apply.

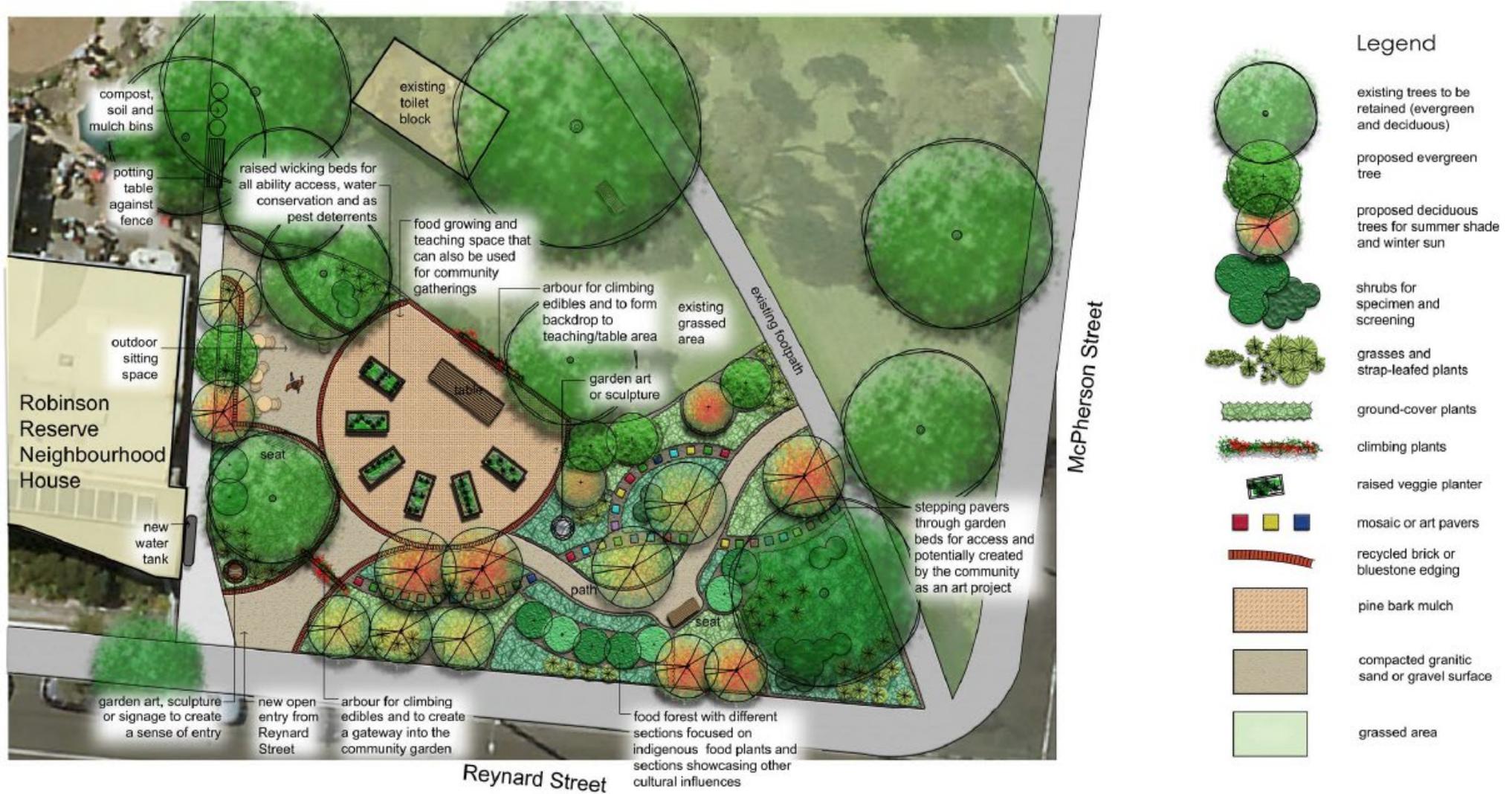
Community gardeners will be asked periodically to provide information to update council on the progress of the garden and to promote community food growing in the City of Onkaparinga.

The City of Onkaparinga also encourages successful applicants to apply for Community Grants following their approval.

Flowchart of process



Appendix 1 – Example of a community garden design



Source: www.morelandfoodgardensnetwork.org/2018/03/robinson-reserve-community-garden-is

Appendix 2 – Example of a Plan of Management template

The Community Garden PLAN OF MANAGEMENT

The Plan of Management format that follows was devised as a template for the 'social design' or 'organisational design' phase of community garden development that precedes site design and construction. It is intended:

- for developing plans to assist the effective management of community gardens
- to present to council, or other landholder, accompanied by an application for access to land and for assistance in starting a community garden.

A tested template

More councils are asking for plans of management when considering assistance to community gardens.

The template was devised, field tested and refined while working with local government and new community garden teams in NSW preparatory to their starting to design and construct their community gardens. This is the appropriate time at which to devise management criteria.

This template is designed to:

- ensure that community garden start-up teams have thought through what could happen and what might be needed for the effective management of their community garden
- indicate to council staff or staff of other landholder institutions that, having considered the contingencies that can arise in community gardening, the start-up team is prepared to deal with them in a fair and responsible manner.

How to use the template

The template is a thinking tool or guide to discussion in devising a Plan of Management. It is formatted so that you can type into it following the headings, add additional headings or delete those not applicable.

The Plan of Management template can be:

- printed and given to participants in a community garden planning team to fill in as a worksheet
- used as a template for the completed Plan of Management for your community garden.

You can insert the name of your community garden in the heading of the document and in the footer where indicated.

We have distributed the Plan of Management template under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 3.0 Australia licence (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/au/>) to enable you to print, adapt and distribute it providing your work remains within the Creative Commons domain (see notice on last page).

Plan of management for (INSERT YOUR NAME) COMMUNITY GARDEN

The topics that follow are a guide. You may have additional topics to consider or, perhaps, you may not need all of these.

Suggestions for discussion follow each heading.

1. Vision

1.1 Purpose of our community garden

What role will our community garden play for members, the public and the local government area?

State this in general terms.

1.2 Objectives of our community garden?

What sort of place will our garden be? What specific things do we hope to accomplish?

Objectives help us achieve our purpose. They are steps or milestones in moving towards what we plan to accomplish.

2. Management of site

2.1 Managing waste on site - organic and non-organic waste

How will we manage organic wastes and other waste materials on-site?

2.2 Will our garden use organic gardening practices?

Organic gardening techniques avoid the use of synthetic chemical fertilisers, pesticides and herbicides because they require precautions in their application such as wearing protective clothing, applying withholding periods before crops can be eaten and care to avoid spray drift and contamination of rainwater runoff.

Organic, botanical chemicals also require care in their application but are considered to pose less danger to gardener and visitor health and safety and to environmental contamination.

Some councils require that community gardeners adopt only organic gardening techniques.

Will our garden use organic techniques or leave that decision to individual gardeners?

adopt organic gardening practices

leave the decision on gardening methods to individual gardeners

2.3 Outline our proposed organic gardening practices

Building healthy soil to reduce pest and diseases, use of organic practices such as crop rotation, companion planting, mulching, watering, Integrated Pest Management etc (include as attachments to your application for assistance in starting a community garden some of the Australian City Farms and Community Garden Network fact sheets on organic gardening, crop rotation, no-dig gardening if you wish).

2.4 Water management

Outline how we would prevent runoff and fertilisers flowing onto neighbouring properties or into adjacent waterways.

How would our garden harvest, store and use rainwater for irrigation?

2.5 Use of sustainable materials on site

Outline the types of materials you will use for construction and how you will store these materials safely on site. Specify what types of materials we would use for garden beds, paths and structures.

2.6 Garden tools and storage

How will we maintain and store tools on site?

Where will we store building materials on-site.

2.7 Site safety

How will we cover safety within the member induction process?

How will we document any accidents on-site?

How will we communicate any safety issues on site eg gardeners read through any risk report and sign in on the working bee days (see Australian City Farms and Community Garden Network fact sheet on safety in the garden — *Safety in the Community Garden*)

How will we store materials on-site safely (including solid and liquid composts, tools, building materials)?

2.8 Allocation of plots

Who can have a plot? (Plots or allotments are areas allocated for gardening by individuals, families, groups of friends, schools).

How do members apply for a plot?

How do we allocate plots?

Do members complete introductory workshops and working bees before being allocated a plot?

How does a member forfeit their plot?

How long can a plot be retained while in disuse?

Does a plot holder need to be involved in the maintenance of shared garden areas and infrastructure?

Will we start a waiting list for plots?

2.9 Management of shared areas

Will we set up teams to manage specific areas and tasks in the shared areas?

How often will we have working bees?

Will we have a roster of tasks to maintain shared gardening areas and garden infrastructure such as paths, compost, structures, garden beds etc?

2.10 Dealing with common objections to new community gardens

There can be a number of common objections raised to proposals for new community gardens. They are likely to appear, if at all, during a public consultation phase before starting the community garden. Addressing these at the planning stage allows us to consider how we would deal with them.

Most of the objections are dealt with through the design of the community garden and the training of community gardeners. The objection that community gardens alienate public open space for the benefit of the few is dealt with by thinking about how we make it possible for the public to visit our site without interfering with our gardening.

How will we deal with:

Odours—these may come from poorly managed compost and the use of some organic fertilisers such as blood and bone.

Noise

Attraction of vandals and undesirables—the attraction of vandals and consequent damage to the community garden and adjacent areas; the attraction of people who might overnight in the garden or otherwise misuse it. On the rare occasion gardens maybe graffiti and young fruit trees may stolen.

Loss of parking space for local people.

Poor aesthetics and unsightly or messy gardens— this is a subjective appreciation that depends on how individuals think gardens should look.

Alienation of public open space and the benefit of the community garden only to those who participate it.

Vermin – rats and mice – are attracted to poorly maintained composts; improved composting procedures is the solution.

3. Management structure

What roles are useful in making our community operate effectively? Roles may be combined.

3.1 Roles in the community garden

ROLE	ADOPT?	FUNCTIONS	WHO?
MANAGEMENT TEAM			
Coordinator	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	Responsible for the coordination of the agreed development of the community garden and its effective operation.	
Secretary	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	Organises meetings; keeps records; correspondence.	
Treasurer	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	Manages community garden funds; banking and payments; management of grant funds; needs ability to produce a balance sheet of incoming/outgoing funds. Produces financial reports for meetings, for the annual general meeting and reporting to the state government authority that administers community associations.	

ROLE	ADOPT?	FUNCTIONS	WHO?
Public officer	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	A role called for when incorporating, the public officer is a signatory for the association and a contact for official business.	
Committee members	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	Elected members that attend management team meetings.	
OTHER ROLES			
Membership coordinator	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	Maintains register of members, organises member inductions and other membership business. This role helps with internal communication between members.	
Media liaison	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	Someone articulate, who has a knowledge of the community garden (and perhaps of the media), its processes and purpose. The role responds to media enquiries and issues media statements.	
Liaison with landholder	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	Communication and negotiation. Passing information back and forth between the community garden team and the council/landholder.	
Social organiser	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	Plans and implements social activities such as shared meals in garden and celebrations.	
Compost coordinator	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	It can be helpful for someone who knows about composting to help skill people up and monitor compost. This is also a training role.	
Shared garden working bee coordinator	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	Someone who organises working bees and makes sure the shared areas and garden infrastructure are well maintained.	
Education coordinator	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	Someone may wish to coordinate the skilling up of gardeners over time. Training could be in the areas of gardening skills, construction or arts in the garden skills.	
Other	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no		

3.2 Code of conduct/gardeners agreement

What will be our members' responsibilities to other gardeners and to the community garden site?
 What behaviours are appropriate?
 What will be our attitude towards visitors?
 Will we develop a code of conduct for behaviour in the community garden?

3.3 Decision making process

How often will we meet?
 How much notice do we need to give to call a meeting?
 When making a decision do we need a quorum?
 Does each member have one vote?
 How do you make minor decisions? How do you make major decisions?
 How will we make decisions - majority rule/consensus/other?

3.4 Resolving disagreement

What will be the process for resolving major and minor conflict within the garden?
How will we deal with conflict between individuals or between groups?
Under what circumstances and after which processes can we exclude a difficult person from the garden?

3.5 Communication

Internal — How will we communicate with one another and between the management team and membership?

External — How will we communicate with our stakeholders, the public and the media?

4. Policies

4.1 Access and acceptance

What will be the opening times for our community garden?
Will the garden be locked at night? When can interested people enquire about joining? Will we provide disabled access?
Will we have a statement about acceptance of a range of people and children?

4.2 Alcohol, smoking and drugs on site

Should we have a no-smoking policy?
Do we allow alcohol only at events or at any time?

5. Funding

How do we fund the continued operation of the community garden?

5.1 Membership fees

Outline our types of membership and their fees.

5.2 Applying for grants

5.3 Fundraising activities

5.4 Other

6. Training

6.1 Start-up phase – planning and construction

What initial training will be needed in the planning phase of the garden?
What initial training will be needed in the construction phase of the garden?

6.2 Recruiting and induction of new gardeners

What will be our process for recruiting and inducting new gardeners?

How will we familiarise new gardeners with accepted practices? eg. compost production, organic gardening methods

Will there be a series of workshops to introduce our preferred gardening techniques?

6.3 Ongoing training workshops

What ongoing training will be required?

7. Partnerships and community engagement

Are there potential partnerships with other organisations that would be mutually beneficial? How will our garden involve the local community?

8. Contacts

For the public / for council / internal / coordinators of teams

9. Other information that might be applicable

Produced by the Australian City Farms & Community Gardens Network.

This community garden Plan of Management template is issued under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 3.0 Australia licence (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/au/>).



You may copy, distribute, transmit & adapt this work providing this notice and adjacent logo remain on any derivative work and the original work is attributed to the Australian City Farms & Community Gardens Network.

www.communitygarden.org.au Version 1, March 2011.