

# Wyndham Open Space Community Garden Policy (2024)

## DOCUMENT CONTROL

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# Wyndham Open Space Community Garden Policy

## PURPOSE

This Policy aims to provide clear direction on the approval, establishment, management, and maintenance of community gardens within Wyndham's Open Spaces.

## SCOPE

This Policy applies to all community gardens within Wyndham City's owned and/or managed Open Spaces.

This Policy excludes gardening on nature strips, gardens associated with community centres or gardening on private land. This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Community Gardens Guidelines.

This Policy will be used to assess proposed locations and the suitability of the community groups who propose them for the development of a community garden within Council's Open Spaces.

Where Council, through its own processes, has identified an Open Space as being suitable for a community garden, an Expression of Interest process will be put to the local community for an interested group to enter into an agreement with Council to establish, manage and maintain the garden.

## POLICY STATEMENT

Wyndham City recognises the important role community gardens play in building the social fabric within local communities and the many social, cultural, environmental, and economic benefits. Community gardens are places that community can come together to learn and share, make friends, practice cultural traditions, and connect with nature.

Community gardens contribute to community wellbeing, increase mental and physical health, improve food security, and positively impact the environment. Wyndham City values the contributions of community groups and organisations in building and maintaining community gardens across Wyndham and providing local communities the opportunity to enjoy the enormous benefits community gardens provide.

## PRINCIPLES AND RULES

This Policy is based on the following three key principles:

1. Community gardens will be located within Open Spaces and will not compromise the Open Space function
2. Community gardens will be the responsibility of an incorporated group to establish, manage and maintain
3. Community garden will meet minimum standards

## POLICY OBJECTIVES

### 1. Community gardens will be located within Open Spaces so as not to compromise the open space's function.

Community Gardens will not be supported on Open Space land where contamination is known to exist or may be present through a past land use.

For an area within an Open Space to be deemed appropriate for use as a community garden, it must:

- Be available long term
- Not impact on current and intended activities within the Open Space
- Not impact on visual surveillance/sight lines
- Not impact on existing trees

Consideration must be given to:

- Level of support from surrounding residents
- Proximity to amenities, such as toilets nearby the site
- How water will be made available for gardening

### 2. Community gardens will be the responsibility of an incorporated group to establish, manage and maintain.

It is the responsibility of community groups to establish, manage and maintain community gardens.

The community group must:

- Be incorporated or operating under an auspice
- Enter into a Lease agreement with Council
- Have Public Liability Insurance (minimum 20 million)
- Use their own funds to manage and maintain the garden
- Secure funds to establish the garden
- Provide a community inclusion plan
- Provide evidence of support from the local community
- Provide an operational plan
- Obtain all planning and building permits as required

If a community garden becomes unsightly, or if the group ceases to function, be insured or is no longer auspiced by an incorporated organisation, Council will terminate the lease agreement and the group must remove all infrastructure from the Open Space.

### 3. Community Garden minimum requirements

Community gardens within an Open Space must include:

- A fence to protect the garden and delineate between the community managed space and Council managed space
- A compost bin and waste management plan for excess garden waste
- Storage, such as a shed
- Access to water, such as rainwater tanks
- Garden beds and paths
- Seeds, plants, equipment, materials, and signage

## ASSESSMENT AND APPROVAL PROCESS

Please see the step-by-step process below for completing a community garden application form.

The following highlights the approval process and timelines:

### Step-by-Step Application Process

**STEP 1.** Visit Council's website and check the Green Living Map for existing gardens and/or garden groups.

- *If there is an existing garden available, reach out to the group/center to join.*
- *If there are no suitable groups or existing spaces available, proceed to step 2*

**STEP 2.** Contact Council to speak with an Officer from Open Space Planning about your ideas and chosen site. If the site is supported in principle, proceed to step 3.

- *If the chosen site is not suitable, the application process will not go any further.*

**STEP 3.** Seek Auspicing or establish an incorporated community group

- *If the applicant is unable to obtain Incorporation, the application process will not go any further.*

**STEP 4.** Refer to the Community Garden Guidelines and: **Develop all relevant plans, seek community feedback**

- *If the local community is not supportive, the application will not go any further.*

**STEP 5.** Complete and submit the Community Gardening Application form with all the relevant information attached to: [parksfeedback@wyndham.vic.gov.au](mailto:parksfeedback@wyndham.vic.gov.au)

### Application Approved

Establishment of a community garden and license agreement with Council. Council will work with the group to implement a license agreement for an initial period of 12 months. If the garden is successful after the 12-month period, a longer-term lease agreement can be negotiated.

## TERMINOLOGY

**Open Space** – A Council owned or managed public space for people to relax, exercise, play and enjoy the natural environment.

**Community Garden** – A piece of land gardened or cultivated by a group of people. Community gardens are designed for growing edible and ornamental plants such as fruits, vegetables, and flowers.

**Incorporated** – Community groups, operating as not-for-profit, whose members have decided to give their organisation a formal legal structure. An incorporated association has the word 'Incorporated' or the abbreviation 'Inc.' after its name.

**Auspice** – To 'auspice' means to provide support, sponsorship, or guidance. The group or person requiring support is known as the 'auspicee' and the entity (usually an incorporated organisation) that auspices the group or person is known as the 'auspicator'.

**Nature strip** - A grass strip in front of a house between a fence or footpath and a roadway, owned by the Local Government Authority and maintained by the resident.

**Lease Agreement** – A lease agreement grants a tenant use of a property for a specific period and is subject to certain terms and conditions.

**Community Inclusion Plan** - A detailed proposal on how a group will allow the broader community to participate in the community garden.

## BREACH OF POLICY

Groups will be expected to manage and maintain their gardens to a suitable standard. Council can revoke an agreement with a community garden group if:

- You have been unable to secure/maintain sufficient local support for your garden.
- Your garden is not maintained or becomes unsafe for public access.
- You fail to gain appropriate insurance cover.
- Your group disbands or stops functioning due to internal conflict.
- The site of your garden is no longer available or suitable

## REFERENCES

The following Strategies, Policy's, and Guidelines can be found at [www.wyndham.vic.gov.au](http://www.wyndham.vic.gov.au)

Strategies/Policy's:

- Resilient Wyndham 2021 – 2025
- Wyndham Public Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021 - 2025
- Wyndham City Council Plan 2021 – 2025
- Environment and Sustainability Strategy 2016 -2040
- Wyndham Open Space Strategy 2045
- Beatification of Nature strips Policy - 2022 - 2026
- Wyndham Design Guidelines and Standards

Relevant Guidelines:

- Wyndham Community Garden Guidelines
- Wyndham Community Garden Application Form
- Nature Strip Landscaping Planting Guidelines
- Nature Strip Landscaping Guidelines
- Green Living Map (Council's existing community gardens mapped)

VERSION HISTORY				
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**NOTE:** BLUE TEXT – PROVIDES GUIDANCE – DELETE FOLLOWING POPULATION OF SECTION REFER TO PROMAPP FOR SPECIFIC GUIDANCE AND EXAMPLES