



Community Gardens Guidelines



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Maitland City Council acknowledges the Wonnarua People as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands within the Maitland Local Government Area. Council pays respect to all Aboriginal Elders, past, present and future with a spiritual connection to these lands.



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INTRODUCTION

Maitland City Council defines a community garden as ‘a not-for-profit community-based enterprise which manages an identified garden space for the production of food for the consumption of the gardeners and/or ornamental or artistic planting.’

Maitland City Council promotes and encourages community gardens across the Maitland region. These guidelines and the Application Form, alongside the Community Gardens Policy, contain everything you need to know and do to establish a community garden in Maitland.

Maitland City Council will have a suite of potential pre-identified community garden sites that the community can apply for. Alternatively, you are welcome to enquire about a site that has not been listed but may be suitable for a community garden.

Please read the guidelines carefully to ensure your application has the best chance of success.

1. STARTING A COMMUNITY GARDEN

The most successful community garden projects are those where the initiating group takes the time to undertake a detailed process of planning and design. Therefore, the first part of this guide looks closely at the various aspects of project planning applicable to community gardens.

a) Consulting your local community and forming a community garden group

A community garden should be wanted and engaged with by the local community surrounding the garden. The benefits of having community buy in include a manageable workload and long-term sustainability of the garden with shared satisfaction in the final product.

Promoting the proposal

You should inform as many people as possible that you are planning to establish a community garden in the neighbourhood. This includes local businesses and cafes as well as residents, community centres, schools and religious groups. A great way to generate awareness of the project is by holding a community meeting on the site if possible. This will allow you to get a sense of local support (or concerns) and recruit members to your group.

Maitland City Council will also engage with the local community once you have submitted an application. We will make elements of your garden proposal available for comment as part of our review process, so engaging with the community early in the development of your proposal is important to ensure their ideas, wants, needs and concerns are considered in your application.

Setting up a working group

A community garden is built on a sense of community and typically cannot succeed with the enthusiasm of just one or two people. Forming a working group of community members with a range of skills and experience is the first step in establishing the groundwork for your garden. You are required to have evidence of the support of five (5) community members for your application to be considered. These members can form the base of your community garden working group.

Council recommends the development of a motivated and engaged working group, as consistent contact between Council and the working group is required. The establishment of a working group reduces the responsibilities of individuals needing to both manage a garden and liaise with the Council, as well as reducing the financial burden on any one person.

Recruiting additional group members / volunteers

Below are a few suggestions on how you may build your membership/volunteer base:

- Holding a public meeting.
- Creating flyers and/or posters for a letter box drop.
- Newspaper advertisements.
- Participate and engage with local Landcare groups.
- Create a social media page e.g. a Facebook page or group.

Please note, the Community Garden Application Form requires working groups to be an incorporated association and/or auspiced by an incorporated association.



WHAT IS AN INCORPORATED ASSOCIATION?

An incorporated association is one which is incorporated under state or territory law and is often a not-for-profit. Incorporated associations are established to create a legal entity separate from its individual members, providing a level of security for individuals working or volunteering with the incorporated group.

WHAT IS AN AUSPICE ASSOCIATION?

An auspicing association is an incorporated association that agrees to manage the community garden's legal responsibilities, funding agreements and relevant documentation on behalf of the community garden group.

Examples:

- Established garden club
- Neighbourhood centre
- Landcare group
- Parent associations at local school
- Primary or secondary school
- Early childhood service

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF AN AUSPICE ASSOCIATION?

Working with an auspice association will allow garden groups to qualify for grant funding opportunities without needing to go through the process of applying for and developing an incorporated body which can be a time consuming process.

Developing community partnerships

Many successful community gardens have developed strong supportive partnerships with other community groups, businesses and organisations in their local area. This can be a source of valuable resources, collaborative projects and ideas. Having links with other community gardens can provide knowledge, experience and advice, while partnering with groups such as a migrant resource centre can provide opportunities for participation by individuals who may find integration within the community difficult.

b) Assessing and identifying a site location

When identifying a site, a detailed site assessment of the proposed location is required to ensure it is fit for purpose and to identify risks, opportunities and possible threats to the project. With a clear understanding of the site, the group will have a good foundation for success. If you or your group are proposing a community garden on a site that has NOT been pre-identified by Maitland City Council, you/your group will need to undertake a complete site assessment, which can be found on page 20.

Community garden requests on privately owned land

Maitland City Council is not responsible for managing private land. We invite community garden groups on private land to use these resources as a guide for your own group development.

Finding a site on Council owned land

We can help you identify and find a suitable location on Council owned land. We recommend you review the community garden sites that have been pre-identified by Maitland City Council. If you identify a location that has not been listed as a suitable location by Council, please contact the

Community Planner to discuss a site assessment.

Sites on Crown Land under Council management

We are happy to accept applications for community-identified sites on Crown Land, however it should be noted that consultation requirements for Crown Land sites can be lengthy and may delay the application process.

If you are unsure who owns the land at your proposed community garden site, please contact community.team@maitland.nsw.gov.au

Further site considerations

When finding a site for a community garden, the following should be considered:

What community groups and businesses are nearby that might support/partner or object to the project? Consider religious groups, schools, childcare centres, community or aged care facilities, environmental groups, restaurants, chambers of commerce, garden stores and nurseries etc.

Who lives nearby? What are their age groups? What are the employment levels? What are people's cultural and linguistic backgrounds?

Consider Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles such as access control, territorial reinforcement, surveillance and visibility etc. NSW Police outline these considerations in their [Safer By Design](#) online resource.



Accessibility

Community gardens sites should be accessible, safe and inclusive for all community members. Some considerations may include, but are not limited to, access to and around garden beds. Please consider the following questions when planning for accessibility:

- Will spacing between beds be wide enough for a pram, wheelchair or walking aid?
- Can the centre of the beds be easily accessed from the edges?
- Are beds raised and at an accessible height for various users?
- Will the pathway be an accessible surface material for wheelchair users?

To ensure the community garden plan meets accessibility requirements and expectations, review [Maitland City Council's Disability and Inclusion Action Plan \(DIAP\)](#).

c) When is a DA (Development Application) required?

Every potential site is different, meaning whether a DA is required will need to be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Council staff will support you through the process of determining whether a DA is required for your proposed Community Garden. In general, if you are applying for one of Council's pre-identified sites the likelihood of needing a DA is lower as these sites have already been through preliminary assessment by Council staff.

Keep in mind that the design of your garden will also influence whether you need to apply for a DA. Some works and structures may not need development consent if they meet specific criteria under the State Environmental Planning Policy (Exempt and Complying Development Codes) 2008. These might include:

- Garden sheds, fences
- Landscaping structures, pathways and paving;
- Rainwater tanks, water storage containers;
- Water features and ponds

Note: depending on you the specifics of your garden proposal, you may not need a DA, but Council may need to conduct a Review of Environmental Factors (REF).

Council staff can help applicants find out whether a proposed development is permissible or whether an REF or DA is required. This can be discussed during your consultation meeting. It is important to consider and research the features you wish to include in your garden design prior to submitting your application, as including structures that require a DA will impact your group's budget and the length of the application process.

d) Choosing the gardening methods and design

It is useful to obtain professional guidance in the design of proposed community gardens, maintaining a participatory process through a series of meetings and design workshops.

There are several design options for community gardens, it is important to consider the skill level in the garden committee and ease of use for the community.

In particular, the characteristics below are worth bearing in mind to help your group design ideas for your garden:

- **Aesthetics** – Think about how the broader community will see the garden. The overall look of the garden is important, not only for attracting new members but for

ensuring good relations with your neighbours and the landowner.

- **Benefits for individuals** – A garden designed to engage the senses will be a place where people want to be. It will also enable your garden to include a wider cross section of the community including children and people with a disability. Try to include scented plants, colour, public art and auditory elements such as wind chimes.
- **Low waste** – Maximise the opportunities for onsite management of organic waste generated by the garden, specifically compost and worm farming systems, as well as, potentially, organic waste materials produced by the surrounding community.
- **Integrated soil fertility management** – Aim to grow the biomass (organic material) you need for mulch and composting onsite, incorporate legume species that both produce biomass and fix nitrogen (an essential plant nutrient) in the soil for other plants to utilise and design in crop rotation. Crop rotation moves different plants through the garden beds in sequence so as not to exhaust the soil of nutrients and to help in the management of plant diseases.
- **Sustainability** – Use recycled and local materials in construction, avoid importing soils and other inputs and grow a variety of plants that can be used.
- **Introduction of trees to garden** – Trees that are planted in the garden will need to comply with Council's policies on appropriate species of trees and they will be required to be planted in pots or self-contained planter boxes.
- **Water management** – Maximise opportunities for water harvesting and passive irrigation, while reducing run off to the stormwater system. On sloped sites, use swales, terraces or beds that run along the contour of the slope to catch water.
- **Pest management and biodiversity** – Consider a range of plants that provide habitat for small birds, frogs, lizards and predatory insects. You could include sources of water such as ponds and bird baths.
- **Cultural diversity** – Include the plants and cultural traditions of the various cultural groups who make up your neighbourhood. Invite these communities to participate in the design process.
- **Accessibility** – Think about those with limited mobility. Raised beds should be incorporated where possible, pathways made wide enough for prams and wheelchairs to pass and beds made narrow enough for gardeners to reach the centre without strain. Even if gardeners with limited mobility do not join the garden immediately, the beds will still be more comfortable for all gardeners to use.
- **Safety** – Maintain clear lines of sight. Incorporate seating to encourage people to spend time in the garden and avoid creating enclosed or hidden spaces. Bearing safety in mind, spaces may still be created for people seeking solitude, for meeting with one or two others or to create a sense of intrigue in a garden that unfolds as you move along a twisting path.
- **Education** – Think about how groups will be accommodated. Design outdoor learning areas and paths with nodes that allow a group to pause for discussion. Create opportunities for experiential learning, demonstration and practical small group activities

Impact on Existing Trees and Facilities

Depending on the site you choose, your garden may be situated alongside other public facilities such as play spaces, kick-about spaces, and picnic areas. If your application is approved, your licence agreement will include a map which indicates the borders of your community garden site.

All garden activities must remain within this boundary and should also ensure that:

- Existing trees and their root systems are preserved and not removed for the new garden,
- Existing recreational facilities are not impacted, and the public freely able to access shared spaces

Banned Plants

To protect our natural environments and uphold our commitments to biodiversity and sustainability, there are several plants which cannot be planted in a community garden. See the below resources for information about banned plants.

NSW Government – [Weeds and Pest Animals](#)

NSW Government Department of Primary Industries – [List of Weeds](#)

e) Funding your community garden

Once you have a vision for your garden and a plan for implementing that vision, you will need to develop a budget and consider where you will obtain the necessary financial resources.

In-kind support (such as donations from local businesses), reusing ‘waste’ resources, and applying for grants or sponsorship with local garden centres are some of the ways community garden working groups have resourced their projects.

The requirements of each unique garden will vary, but most gardeners will need to consider the following:

- Ongoing cost of water and electricity to site

- Public liability insurance to the cover of (minimum and subject based on proposal) \$20 million
- Other insurances (including property insurance and personal accident insurance)
- Costs associated with a DA (if required)
- Costs of involving the community (e.g. producing promotional material, mail outs, local advertising and venues for meetings)
- Construction materials (e.g. termite free recycled sleepers or bricks)
- Organic material for no dig bed construction
- Tools and equipment (e.g. hand tools, wheelbarrows, watering cans, hoses and propagation supplies)
- Ongoing costs of tool or infrastructure maintenance and repair
- Irrigation equipment
- A lockable toolshed
- Rainwater tanks, including costs of fittings and professional installation
- A small selection of books as a resource for the group and
- Possibility of permanent or casual staff, such as a coordinator or design consultant.

Please note, the infrastructure mentioned above are suggestions only, and may not be approved for the site, depending on Council requirements.

Accessing Funds

There are many ways community gardeners can fund their project, depending on its scale and focus. Plan your fund-raising efforts carefully, ensuring that the money raised is worth the time and energy expended. Successful ways that community gardeners have raised funds include:

- **Events** – open days, celebrations, festivals and markets can all attract a donation for entry as well as income from the sale of plants and other products. You may also attract new members this way.
- **Annual plot and membership fees** – a consistent income stream that is enhanced by incentives such as a library, newsletter or free workshops.
- **Visitor donation box** – decorate it to attract attention.
- **Educational tours** – community groups, schools, TAFE and university courses may pay to visit a well-developed site that demonstrates key sustainability principles.
- **Courses and workshops** – this can be a significant source of income in a well designed and developed garden with appropriate facilities.
- **Sausage sizzle or café** – on market days and events, food and drinks always sell well.
- **Products** – recipe books, jams and preserves, craft items, heritage seeds, guidebooks... there are many options here.
- **Grant funding** – Community gardens provide a diverse range of social and environmental benefits, so they are eligible for a wide variety of local, state and federal government grants. Visit ourcommunity.com.au, nsw.gov.au/grants-and-funding and Council's Grant Hub grantguru.com/au/maitland for further information on obtaining grants. Council also administers a **Biannual Community Grants Program** which provides financial support on a yearly basis to local not for profit community groups to provide initiatives that benefit Maitland residents.

Ensure your working group has adequate policies and processes in place for raising funds and managing funds appropriately.

Please note, approval for some of the above (such as sausage sizzles) may be subject to Council discretion.

Reuse and in-kind support

Community gardeners are traditionally very skilful at turning waste into resources, as using recycled materials makes both financial and environmental sense. Your working group might investigate the following:

- Lawn clipping for composting from local mowers and landscapers
- Animal manure from a local racetrack or horse stables
- Food waste from restaurants, fruit and vegetable shops and residents
- Woodchips donations from a local street tree lopping contractor
- Plant cuttings and heritage seed varieties from other community gardens or neighbours. Once your project is up and running you can reciprocate
- Contact the local Men's Shed to see if they can assist with construction of garden furniture
- Out of date or root bound plant stock from local nurseries and
- Recycled building materials from local demolition businesses.

Local businesses may be happy to negotiate ongoing discounts, donations, or sponsorship of the project in exchange for publicity in your newsletter, project signage or promotional material.



f) Community Garden Checklist

The following community garden checklist has been developed to highlight some of the considerations in establishing a community garden and your group's vision. It will also assist in the completion of your community garden management plan.

What is the purpose of the community garden?

- ☐ To build stronger communities through community connection
- ☐ To learn and share knowledge and skills
- ☐ To provide food security through increasing access to fresh food
- ☐ To promote sustainable living
- ☐ To increase neighbourhood pride
- ☐ To build connection with nature

How many gardeners can participate?

- ☐ 5
- ☐ 10 or under
- ☐ 15 or under
- ☐ 20 or under
- ☐ 25 or under
- ☐ 30 or under
- ☐ 30+

Will the gardeners offer public workshops? E.g. composting workshops

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure yet

Will the garden be open to use and/or visit by community colleges, schools, childcare, and other educational bodies?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure yet

What type of soil will be used and where does it come from?

*Virgin excavated natural material or ENM is required, so ensure no waste products or soil of questionable origin and quality is introduced into the environment.

What types of plants will be grown?

- ☐ Vegetables
- ☐ Herbs
- ☐ Native or Indigenous plants (native = originating in Australia, Indigenous = originating in region)
- ☐ Berry fruit shrubs
- ☐ Flowers
- ☐ Bush food/bush tucker
- ☐ Water crops
- ☐ Various fruits
- ☐ Fruit or nut trees

**What features will the garden have? Note:
no shipping containers will be permissible**

- ☐ Raised Garden Beds
- ☐ Accessible Pathways
- ☐ Public Art
- ☐ Nursery or greenhouse for plant propagation
- ☐ Water taps
- ☐ Wheelchair accessible garden beds
- ☐ Open water with a depth of 30cm or greater
- ☐ Rainwater tanks
- ☐ Compost
- ☐ Barbeque area for food preparation
- ☐ Shaded seating areas
- ☐ Lockable tool shed
- ☐ Worm farm
- ☐ Educational signage

What training will the group need?

- ☐ Seed saving
- ☐ Composting
- ☐ Pest management
- ☐ Worm farming
- ☐ Applying for grants
- ☐ Native habitation
- ☐ Developing a planting calendar
- ☐ Irrigation
- ☐ Construction
- ☐ Crop rotation
- ☐ Conflict resolution
- ☐ Group management



g) Council's role

Council is responsible for approving the development of community gardens on Council owned land or Crown Land under Council management. Maitland City Council aims to make the community garden process simple, and we have kickstarted the process by pre-identifying sites across the region. However, there are still steps a community working group needs to take to have a successful community garden. Council aims to support community members establishing community gardens through:

- Providing clear expectations and requirements surrounding the establishment and ongoing maintenance of community gardens by community working groups.
- Pre-identifying potential sites for community gardens.
- Providing support to community members working through the application process including the Development Application (DA) process (where a DA is required, should it be identified after a Review of Environmental Factors, (REF), has been completed).
- Providing access to resources and educational workshops or demonstrations related to community garden activities such as planting, composting and other environmental topics.
- Promoting community gardens on our website and social media.
- Encouraging community garden working groups to apply for grants and providing grant writing tips.
- Council is not able to include a community garden function into its existing insurance program and will be unable to provide insurance for individual community gardens.

Consultation Meeting

After you have found a garden site and established your working group, you will be invited to participate in a consultation meeting. During this meeting, a Council officer will support you through the application process and review the following documents before submission:

- Community Garden Application Form
- Community Garden Management Plan
- Any additional planning instruments such as a Review of Environmental Factors (REF) or a Development Application (DA), if required
- Community Gardens Risk Assessment

We will explain in detail our internal assessment and public consultation process.

To book a consultation meeting with us, please phone 02 4934 9700 or email community.team@maitland.nsw.gov.au





2. MANAGING A COMMUNITY GARDEN

a) Managing garden infrastructure

Use of organic pesticides

Community gardens should be chemical free. This can be achieved through various methods including:

- Growing seasonal crops
- Crop rotation
- Companion planting for pest management e.g. marjoram and oregano to reduce white cabbage butterflies.

Pesticides and chemicals are not to be used on community gardens on Council land unless written Council approval for the use of organic pesticides, herbicides or fungicides has been granted.

Communal Area

One way of ensuring communal areas are maintained is to stipulate all members attend a monthly working day or participate in a working group. Maintaining the garden in an attractive, safe and functional state is an important aspect of being a responsible neighbour. It will also make the garden appealing to visitors, attracting new members, and highlighting the aesthetic and practical aspects of sustainable gardening.

Several tools can assist in the smooth functioning of garden maintenance systems including:

- Rosters for specific tasks, e.g. turning compost
- Logbook for recording specific tasks undertaken – this shows clearly who is doing the work
- Allocation of specific roles and responsibilities with corresponding incentives where appropriate, e.g. green waste coordinator

- Workgroups for specific tasks, e.g. communal area maintenance and
- Regular workdays accompanied by social activities and shared meals.



b) Garden administration

The development of systems for the management of each aspect of your project is essential. These systems include developing policies and procedures for managing community participation, maintenance, administration, ongoing infrastructure development and garden safety. Although this takes time, it can be instrumental in the success or failure of your project.

Administrative systems

Unfortunately, community garden projects aren't just about gardening. There are a few crucial administrative matters that will need to be attended to. These include:

- **Keeping records** – Maintain records of member numbers, volunteer hours, the demographics of those involved, contact details (this could be done with a notebook or on a spreadsheet). A daily sign-in sheet is required to keep a record of who is on site at any given time. Keep service records for all mechanical and power tools, as well as training records for any equipment. Regularly take photographs of the project's progress and noteworthy events for use in promotional material and grant applications.
- **Handling money** – Community Garden projects must abide by many of the same laws regarding management of money as a small business. If you are selling a product, acquire an Australian Business Number (ABN) through the Australian Taxation Office. Always include your ABN on receipts you issue, e.g. for membership fees or plant sales. Conversely, always obtain a receipt for anything you purchase. This is especially important if you are spending money from a grant that will need to be reported to a funding body. Keep careful records of all income and expenditure to avoid confusion later.

c) Health, safety and risk management

On-site safety should include a first aid kit, documented health and safety procedures, and inductions to the garden. Conduct a thorough risk assessment with considerations to:

- Poisonous or potentially allergenic plants
- Trip hazards
- Sharp or dangerous edges
- Personal Protective Equipment (e.g. sunscreen, gardening gloves, enclosed shoes, hats)
- Manual handling and heavy loads including the use of wheelbarrows
- Safe Work Method Statements (SWMS)
- Evacuation plans
- Access to water
- Use of sharp or dangerous tools
- Storage and use of materials, soils, and manures
- Dangerous materials, (e.g. barbed wire) and
- Poisons and pesticides (and safe handling of these)

Other Insurances

You may also want to consider other insurances that cannot be covered by Public Liability Insurance. These include:

- Personal Accident (Volunteer) Insurance for group members (not covered by Public Liability Insurance)
- Motor vehicle Insurance. This will vary depending on your site, but you will need to keep a record of motor vehicle insurances for any vehicle which enters the boundaries of your approved site. This may include group members, other volunteers or contractors. An example

could be keeping a record of motor vehicle insurances if using a group member's vehicle to transport bulky materials onto the site.

- Property insurance for any structures (e.g. toolsheds, water tanks) and tools or equipment (e.g. power tools, lawn mower)

Engaging with Contractors

If you engage contractors during the set-up of your garden, you will also need to obtain and keep records of their insurances, including the contractor's public liability insurance and motor vehicle insurance. You should consider if you need to engage contractors during the development of your concept design and include any contracted services in your Risk Assessment.



c) Management Plan

Developing a management plan for your garden will help clarify the practical procedures by which the garden will be developed and organised. A management plan also demonstrates to Council and to funding bodies that an appropriate level of thought and research has been undertaken before implementing the project.

The management plan should include the following:

- Statement of purpose, aims and objectives, and long term vision for the garden
- Proposed management structure
- Proposed induction process for volunteers
- Proposed risk management framework and completed risk management plan
- Provision for public liability insurance
- Proposed decision making framework and conflict resolution processes
- Proposed policy regarding sustainable land management including management of soil, water, energy, organic and non-organic waste, biodiversity and building materials
- Proposed policy regarding access, equity and membership
- Proposed policy for the allocation and management of plot gardens
- Proposed funding model, e.g. membership fees, fundraising, grants
- Proposed policy regarding drugs and alcohol, including smoking onsite
- Any potential partnerships the group envisages, e.g. with local schools
- Contact details for project coordinators
- Considerations of accessibility including proximity to public transport and amenities.

Please note, this is not a 'Plan of Management'.

d) Your ongoing relationship with Council

Licence agreement

The licence agreement is an agreement between the community garden working group and Maitland City Council which outlines agreements regarding payment of bills, maintenance of land and boundaries, what infrastructure is not permissible as well as other considerations. The licence agreement will be different for each group as sites will differ (e.g. site boundaries, structures that will be allowed on site, etc.) and as such the agreement will be negotiated between Council and the community garden group during the application process.

Public liability insurance

Community gardens must be covered by public liability insurance (\$20 million minimum), either by obtaining a policy of their own or through becoming auspiced by another organisation who holds adequate public liability insurance. Insurance protects both the garden and the landowner against charges made against them if a visitor or volunteer is hurt or injured.

It's a good idea to talk to other community gardens about insurance. Ask them what kind of cover they have, how much it costs and what level of service the company provides. Community gardens are a unique land use that does not fit easily into established insurance categories. This can lead to significant variations in the cost of premiums, so shop around.

Make sure you review your insurance every year, as progress and changes to your project, such as employment of staff, increasing numbers of volunteers, changes to activities and investment in equipment, could change your requirements and/or premium costs.

You will need to provide your Certificate of Currency to the Council each time you renew or update your Public Liability Insurance (typically annually).

Educational Workshops

Council regularly runs Greening events including periodic educational workshops on living a more environmentally sustainable life, covering topics such as backyard gardening, waste management, stormwater management, energy and water use, and planting native vegetation. Council will work with established garden groups to circulate information about relevant educational workshops.

Grant Opportunities

The Community Planning team at Council will continue to advise established garden groups of relevant grant opportunities as they arise. We may also be able to provide a letter of support (where appropriate) to assist groups in pursuing external funding sources.

3. READY TO APPLY?

a) Preparing for your consultation meeting

Fantastic! After you have found a garden site and established your working group, you will be invited to participate in a consultation meeting with Council staff. During this meeting, a Council officer will support you through the application process and provide preliminary guidance on your application.

We suggest you come to the consultation meeting prepared with the documentation listed below. The more details you can provide during the consultation meeting, the better Council staff will be able to guide you through the application process.

Please come to your consultation meeting with well-developed drafts of the following:

- Your Community Garden Application Form
- Your Community Garden Management Plan
- Your Community Gardens Risk Assessment
- A basic concept plan of the proposed garden design showing entry points, pathways, and garden areas (this can be hand drawn). Your plan should also include any proposed structures such as fences or toolsheds to help us determine if a DA is required.
- If you are enquiring about a site that is not pre-identified by Council, you will need to complete a site assessment (found in APPENDIX A).

b) Lodging your application

Following your consultation meeting address any feedback given by Council staff. Once completed you can lodge your application and supporting documentation via:

- Email
community.team@maitland.nsw.gov.au
- Post to Manager Community and Recreation Planning, Maitland City Council, PO Box 220, Maitland, NSW 2320
- In person at Maitland Administration Centre offices, 263 High Street, Maitland NSW 2320

Application Checklist

- ☐ Have a consultation meeting with Council
- ☐ Complete Community Gardens Application Form
- ☐ Complete Management Plan
- ☐ Attach a copy of Incorporation Certification, or letter of support from auspicing association
- ☐ Attach a copy of Public Liability Insurance
- ☐ Attach a Risk Assessment
- ☐ Attach any letters of support (optional)
- ☐ Attach a basic concept plan of the proposed garden design showing entry points, pathways, garden areas and structures (this can be hand drawn). If your Community Garden requires a development application, then a final landscape plan will need to be submitted with your application
- ☐ If you are enquiring about a site that is not pre-identified by Council, you will need to complete a site assessment (found in APPENDIX A).

c) Application Assessment

Applications are assessed each quarter. If your application goes to a Council meeting as part of Development Application, a formal public exhibition period of 28 days may be required. If a Development Application is not required, Maitland City Council will make elements of your proposal available to the public for feedback/comment as part of the application review process. During this period, residents and businesses surrounding the proposed site can submit feedback to be considered by Council.

You will receive notification from Council as to the status of your application. The status types are:

- **Approved** – Hooray! Your application has been tentatively approved. The final step required before your shovel can hit the soil will be to complete a licence agreement. We will be in touch to organise these next steps.
- **Information Required** - Almost there. Council requires additional information or requires amendments to your application to progress it. You will receive clear communication from Council regarding what amendments need to be made to your application for it to progress and Council will, within reason, support you with these amendments.
- **DA Required** - You're a step closer to digging into your community garden but due to the site chosen or the features you have proposed to include, a Development Application (DA) is required. Council will provide you with more information upon responding to your initial application, as to what is required from you to submit a DA. Council will, within reason, support you with this process.
- **Site not viable** - Unfortunately, due to various reasons, some sites may not be suitable for a community garden. Please know that Council is in full support of community gardens being established

across Maitland and we will work with groups who have selected an unsuitable site, to find one that is viable.

d) Who to contact

For all enquiries please contact the Community Planning team at **community.team@maitland.nsw.gov.au** or phone 02 4934 9700.



APPENDIX A

Site Assessment Criteria

Site Address	
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COMMUNITY GARDEN SITE ASSESSMENT (PLEASE COMPLETE IF REQUIRED)			
CRITERIA	DESCRIPTION	CRITERIA MET? Yes/No	COMMENTS
Location	The site of the proposed community garden should be reasonably flat and located on Council owned land or Crown land under Council management. These sites are usually established for community use such as parks, open spaces, and community centres.		
Safety	Sites should have no major safety or health concerns and have good passive surveillance of the site and pedestrians		
Accessibility	Sites should be accessible for a range of user groups including for people with a disability. Sites should also be easily accessible for maintenance and delivery of materials. Where a DA is required, specific accessibility considerations must be addressed as identified in the DA documentation		
Solar Access	Sites need to be suitable for growing food and receive full sunlight ideally for at least. 5 - 6 hours per day throughout the year.		
Size	There are no set size stipulations for community gardens. However, sites will need to accommodate basic garden facilities. Sites will be assessed on a site by site basis and size limits may be required depending on the location.		

Water	Sites with easy access to water or buildings nearby from which rainwater can be collected are preferred.		
Soil Contamination	<p>Sites may need to be checked to ensure there is no soil contamination.</p> <p>*Check with Council prior to undertaking soil testing to see if known soil testing has been completed on this site previously.</p>		
Other	Community garden sites will need to ensure they do not compromise public space accessibility and any of the current or planned functional requirements / uses of public land or have a significant detrimental impact on neighbouring land uses.		



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maitland
CITY COUNCIL