

Guidelines for the establishment of

Community Gardens



KIAMA
MUNICIPAL
COUNCIL



Guidelines for the establishment of Community Gardens

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Kiama Council

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Acknowledgements: These guidelines draw heavily upon the work of the Australian City Farms and Community Gardens Network.

Disclaimer: Whilst every effort and care was taken in preparing the Guidelines for Establishing Community Gardens, Kiama Council accepts no responsibility nor any liability for any error, omission, loss or inconvenience caused through the use of this document for whatever purposes.



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About these guidelines

These guidelines provide information to assist the establishment of community gardens on Council owned or Council managed land across the local government area (LGA). They should be read in conjunction with Kiama Council's *Community Gardens Policy*.

These guidelines apply to:

- Individuals and/or groups wishing to establish additional community gardens under a formal *Community Garden User Agreement* with Council, for the exclusive use of Council controlled community land, for the purpose of community gardening.
- Individuals and/or groups wishing to carry out community garden activities in an informal manner on Council controlled community land (i.e. individuals and/or groups who do not enter into a formal *Community Garden User Agreement* with Council and therefore do not have exclusive use of land).

Our active, healthy community embraces recreational, leisure and social interaction. Community gardening is an activity that can engage us all in all these benefits.

Kiama Council recognises that community gardening is one of the significant ways that the community and Council can work together to progress health, social, cultural and environmental priorities.

In addition it encourages and supports the establishment of community gardens as a sustainable food initiative that promotes healthy food choices and food security in accordance with the *Kiama Health Plan*.

How to contact Council about community gardening

If you would like to seek more information or assistance from Kiama Council, we encourage you to read these guidelines together with the *Community Gardens Policy* and then contact us to arrange an early discussion.

Health Promotion Officer

P: (02) 4232 0444

E: council@kiama.nsw.gov.au





What is a community garden?

A community garden is land that is used by the community to grow food, to share information on gardening and environmental practices and to meet like-minded people.

Community gardening is a public, not-for-profit community activity that can have many benefits for the people involved and the environment.

Community gardening in Kiama LGA

There is increasing interest within Kiama local government area, as well as nationally and internationally, towards learning about growing food, gaining access to fresh and healthy food with known provenance and enjoying opportunities to meet others in the community who have similar interests.

Kiama Council supports these community-based health and wellbeing initiatives as defined in its Community Strategic Plan,

1.1.5 Delivery Program: *Facilitate sport and health-related facilities and programs*

Council aims to inform and assist community groups to effectively develop and sustain community gardening in the local area. The purpose of these guidelines is to promote effective community gardening for health and wellbeing on Council controlled lands.

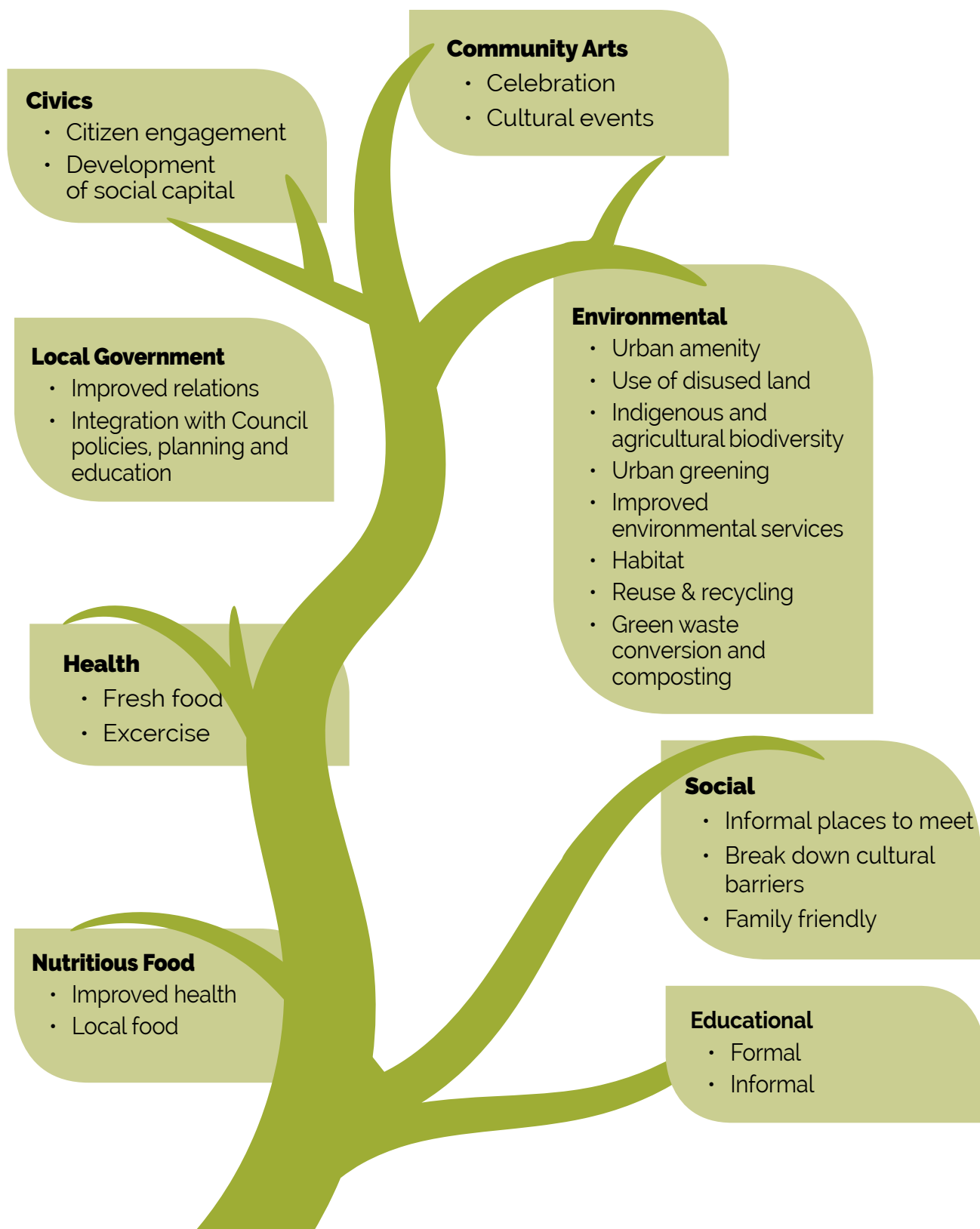
Types of community gardens

There is no single model of a community garden however the most common types are:

- A shared garden where participants share the gardening and the harvest
- An allotment garden where participants garden their own plot and share the maintenance of common areas
- A garden with both allotment and shared gardening spaces

School gardens are also a community garden where local residents participate with the school in developing and sharing the garden.

Benefits of community gardens¹



¹Grayson, R. 2008, New Policy Enables Community Gardening, Community Harvest, Australian City Farms & Community Gardens Network magazine, spring 2008, p. 13, accessed online 16th October 2008, <http://www.communitygarden.org.au/>

Role of Kiama Council

Council will:

- publicly promote community gardening as a significant strategy undertaken by the community and encouraged by Council to address health, social, cultural and environmental priorities.
- promote and encourage a network of community gardening groups throughout the municipality to maximise information, skill and resource sharing that reduces duplication and facilitates all phases of group establishment, garden planning and management.
- prioritise suitable publicly accessible sites for community garden development, assessed against specifications based on research into site priorities of community gardens nationally.
- assist incorporated community garden groups to submit applications for use of nominated sites that reflect the priorities of Council's Community Gardens Policy and the objectives of the community garden group.
- determine the outcome of community garden applications through an efficient and timely application assessment procedure.
- facilitate the development of community gardens in localities that have the strong support of a community gardening group of residents, prioritising collaborative ventures in the event of multiple applications for a nominated site.
- license successful applicant groups for up to an initial 2-year period to establish the community garden. An extension of the licence after this period will be negotiated depending on the viability of the garden and the intentions of the managing group.
- Assist new community garden groups to identify sources of establishment assistance in funding, materials or labour, for essential establishment items if justified through application.
- provide information and education to community garden groups to support their development and the environmental sustainability of their garden projects.
- maintain the right to inspect the community garden by arrangement with the licensed organisation, for the purposes of assessment of compliance with legislation and Community Garden guidelines.
- Advise groups who aren't incorporated, on how to become incorporated and enter into a formal Community Garden User Agreement with Council if they wish to do so.



Role of a Community Garden Group

An approved formal community garden group will:

- Operate within the provisions of Council's Community Garden Policy, Application Procedure, Guidelines and related requirements
- Maintain incorporated status and public liability insurance to \$20million
- Operate within the constitution of the incorporated organisation and the requirements of the Act.
- Maintain, operate and manage the site and resources to present a positive working garden environment that minimises negative impact on neighbours and the general public.
- Participate with Council and other community garden groups in community garden promotions and initiatives that promote the health, environmental, cultural, social and economic benefits of gardening.
- Establish garden and organisation management procedures to:
 - Maintain incorporated organisation status or auspice arrangements
 - Develop, maintain and implement agreed Garden Plan of Management
 - Comply with User Agreement requirements
 - Encourage broad community access to the garden
 - Manage volunteer recruitment, training, conflict resolution and work activities
 - Establish and maintain communications with neighbours and stakeholders to address questions and concerns that may arise
 - Support best practice in sustainability, environmental protection, wholesome food growing, careful resource use, health, safety and security.
 - Identify and manage any risks that may arise from their community gardening activities.

Individuals and/or community groups undertaking informal community gardening on Council Controlled Community Land will:

- Identify and manage any risks that may arise from their community gardening activities.
- Are encouraged to contact Council and inform them of their proposed community garden and community gardening activities.
- Support best practice in sustainability, environmental protection, wholesome food growing, careful resource use, health, safety and security.
- Not build or place any structures on the land including but not limited to: sheds, raised garden beds with solid material edges, water tanks, shade structures, fences, etc.
- Not Limit or stop the general public from accessing this land if they wish to do so.
- Not have exclusive use of the land being used for their community garden.
- Not store any tools and/or other equipment at the site.



Ready to start a community garden?

Starting a community garden from scratch is a major undertaking that takes time, energy, cooperation and commitment. These guidelines aim to help you understand the processes so that your time and efforts will be effective and productive. It is suggested that you:

1. Firstly form an effective and committed working group to share the load.
2. Work slowly and allow time for planning and research.
3. Look for opportunities to form relationships and build community.
4. Develop a clear and shared vision for your project early on.
5. Use planning and design processes to bring your vision to reality.

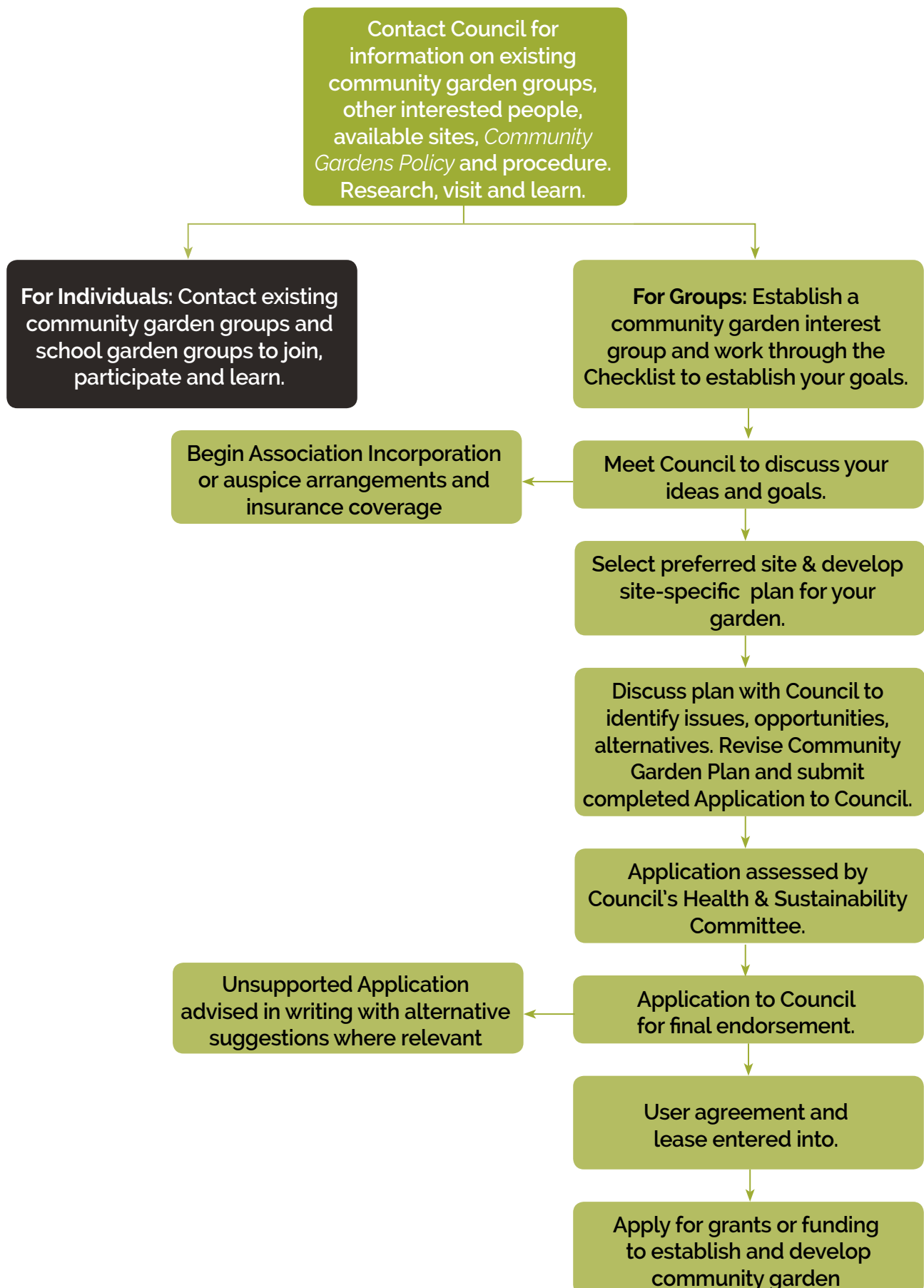
Garden site information

The Community Land site assessment used by Council is based on site specifications developed for community gardens over many years of experience by other local governments and community gardening communities throughout Australia. The Australian City Farms and Community Gardens Network is a central resource for this information and has provided significant background for the procedure undertaken which covered environmental, social and site management considerations.

Through its Community Garden program, Kiama Council has undertaken site assessments on Community Land sites to identify those potentially suitable for the establishment of additional community gardens.

For further information about potential sites, please contact the Health Promotion Officer on 4232 0444 or email: council@kiama.nsw.gov.au.

Application procedure for establishing a formal community garden



Application checklist for establishing a formal community garden

List of application forms and attachments

Document	Status Check
Form A: Community Garden Start Up Checklist	
Form B: Community Garden Management Plan Template	
Form C: Application to Establish a Community Garden	
Garden Design A3	
Copy of Public Liability Insurance of at least \$20 million or Copy of your auspice body's certificate of currency for Public Liability Insurance of at least \$20 million.	
Copy of incorporated association documentation or letter of support if group is being auspiced by a different incorporated organisation*.	
Form D: Site Assessment (if applicable)	

**Please note if your organisation is in the process of becoming an incorporated organisation, your incorporated status must be finalised before entering into a lease with Council.*

Resources for Community Garden Establishment and Operations

Council Contact Person

Health Promotion Officer Ph: 4232 0444

Community Gardens Policy, Kiama Council

<http://www.kiama.nsw.gov.au/>

This policy explains how Council will work with community groups to establish community gardens on Council controlled lands.

Australian City Farms and Community Gardens Network

<http://communitygarden.org.au>

This network organisation provides extensive information on establishment and operations of gardens as well as connections with other established garden groups around Australia. It also provides a template for a Community Garden Plan of Management that may be used as part of the Community Garden application documentation.

Farm Tree and Land Care Association

<http://www.landcarevic.net.au/ftla>

This organisation evolved to cater for groups and individuals involved in Landcare and similar land management and conservation activities. It can act as an umbrella incorporated organisation for members and also has a 3-part insurance package to assist members.

Community Centres SA

<https://www.communitycentressa.asn.au/capacitybuilding/community-gardens>

This association has a booklet 'Growing Community' that provides clear direction on all aspects from starting a garden through to sustaining an established garden. It brings together advice from experienced gardeners, research and professional sources. You can find a link to the electronic copy of the booklet on their website.

Sustainable Gardening Australia

www.sgaonline.org.au

This Victorian organisation was established in 2003. It is a not-for-profit, non-government organisation dedicated to achieving real, continually improving and easily understood environmental solutions for gardeners. Its website provides a wide range of practical advice.

Cultivating Community

<http://www.cultivatingcommunity.org.au/>

Cultivating community is an organisation all about people, communities, gardening, farming, the environment and food. Their website provides examples of community & school gardens, information on current research and links to other useful resources for community gardeners.

Environment and Heritage/Department of Education and Communities (DEC)

Sustainable Schools

<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/sustainableschools/about.htm>

Sustainable Schools NSW is a joint initiative of the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) and the Department of Education and Communities (DEC) to support schools to protect their local environment. This website provides information for schools to assist them to integrate environmental learning and awareness into all aspects of school life..

School Kitchen Gardens

http://www.kitchengardens.det.nsw.edu.au/kg/01_teachers/index.htm

Kitchen and food gardens are an increasingly popular way for schools to promote environmental and sustainability learning and to connect students with healthy food and

lifestyles. Individual schools are linking student learning outcomes with the various activities and seasonal cycles involved in managing a food garden and the preparation of fresh produce. This website provides a diversity of curriculum-related ideas, activities and information.

Garden Sites in the LGA

Kiama Community Garden

Adjacent to Kiama Leisure Centre, via Havilah Place Kiama

Contact email: kiamagardens@gmail.com

School Garden sites

Kiama Public School

Minnamurra Public School

St Peter's and St Paul's School Kiama

Jamberoo Public School

Gerringong Public School

Some Funding Sources

Name	Contact	Target
LandCare	https://landcareaustralia.org.au/funding-opportunities/	Environmental
Myer Foundation	www.myerfoundation.org.au	Sustainability & the environment and education
DPI Biodiversity	http://www.environment.gov.au/about-us/grants-funding	Environmental
Perpetual Foundation	https://www.perpetual.com.au/Advice-and-Trustee-Services	IMPACT-Philanthropy/ IMPACT-Funding Pop target groups, charities
IMB Community Foundation	www.imb.com.au/community	Supporting social, cultural, environmental, heritage, educational, tourism and economic initiatives within communities
Community Builder Partnership	http://www.communitybuildingpartnership.nsw.gov.au/	Infrastructure
Ian Potter Foundation	http://foundation.ianpotter.org.au/home	Community wellbeing, arts, education, environment & conservation.
Junior LandCare Garden	https://landcareaustralia.org.au/junior-landcare/	School gardens or community gardens involving children
Club Grants	http://www.clubsnsw.com.au/clubgrants.aspx	Local community activities

Insurance for the garden

Insurance protects both the garden and the land owner against claims made against them if a gardener or visitor is hurt or injured. Insurance can be obtained in several ways including:

- Landcare <http://landcarensw.org.au/>
- Garden Clubs <http://www.gardenclubs.org.au/>
- Auspiced by another organisation
- Other public liability insurers

Frequently Asked Questions about Community Gardens

I would like to find out about community gardening, where should I start?

Council's website www.kiama.nsw.gov.au provides information to help you get started with setting up a community garden, including site selections, garden design and construction and group governance matters. A very useful website is www.communitygarden.org.au. Council also has a list of websites and contact details for local community gardens to visit or get involved in within these guidelines

What is a community garden?

A community garden is land that is used by the community to grow food; to share information on gardening and environmental practices and to meet like-minded people. Community gardening is a public, not-for-profit community activity that can have many benefits for the people involved and the environment.

Are community gardens new?

No. There are records of community gardens going back thousands of years however their popularity is increasing rapidly around the world. In Australia there are now over 150 incorporated garden groups and others are managed by other organisations. These gardens are spread from George Town in Tasmania to Goondiwindi in NSW; from Busselton in W.A to Townsville in Queensland.

Why do community gardens exist?

People from all backgrounds meet in community gardens to work with their neighbours to create wholesome, fresh, local and reliable food while getting some good exercise and getting to know more about gardening. It is also a great place for children to get active and learn about food sources.

Aren't community gardens just for people who don't have backyards?

No. Many people get involved to learn new skills to improve their own garden or to grow things that they can't at home.

Do you have to be strong and fit to join a community garden?

No. A community garden needs people with many different skills including gardeners, planners, managers and organisers. There's always a role that will suit each person, of whatever ability.

Is there a community garden that I can have a look at?

Yes. You are very welcome to visit the Kiama Community Garden behind Blue Haven in Havilah Place Kiama. The garden is open on Saturday mornings and you can see what's growing and what's happening. Just park at the Leisure Centre and then follow the sign between the sports fields and Blue Haven, to get to the garden.

Why is Kiama Council involved in community gardens?

Kiama Council recognises the many health benefits community gardening can offer, including:

- **Health** benefits through physical exercise and relaxation that can provide personal satisfaction, social contact and access to healthy food choices.
- **Environment** benefits through waste management education, using natural pest and plant disease control and soil improvement of open space for sustainable food supply.

- **Cultural** benefits through sharing of cultural gardening practices and food types, social interactions with other cultural groups and involvement in food related events and public art activities.
- **Social** benefits through creating a new meeting space that encourages community engagement for shared productive activities and promotes the learning of new relationship skills.
- **Economic** benefits through contributing to food security locally, providing skills to assist householders to reduce their food budget and promoting savings through re-use and recycle initiatives.

What is Council's Community Gardens Policy?

Kiama Municipal Council has a *Community Gardens Policy* that explains how the Council will work with community groups to establish community gardens on Council controlled community land.

What are Council's Community Garden Guidelines?

These guidelines and resources are to help people who want to start a community garden on Council land. They help groups to apply for a garden space and to run a garden.

What support will Council provide to new community garden groups?

Refer to Kiama Council's *Community Gardens Policy* for details.

What will community garden groups have to do?

Refer to Kiama Council's *Community Gardens Policy* for details.

What community garden sites are available?

For information about potential sites, or to propose additional sites, please contact the Health Promotion Officer at Council on 4232 0444.

Can I start a verge garden on my street or footpath?

As a general rule Council does not encourage verge gardening. If you do want to establish one, please contact Council's Health Promotion Officer.

Can we start a community garden somewhere else?

These guidelines do not cover community gardens on land that is not owned or managed by Council. If your group wants to use non-Council land, you need to work with the landowner to arrange an agreement to permit you to use that land.

How do we apply for a Council community garden site?

- Talk to Council's Health Promotion Officer about your ideas and find out what sites are available.
- Read Council's policy and the guidelines.
- Begin getting incorporated and insured or establish an auspice agreement.
- Visit the available community garden site, fill in the checklist and design a garden plan.
- Talk to other community garden groups to learn from them.
- Talk to Council staff about your plan, the checklist and ideas for the garden.
- Fill in the Application Form and submit it to Council.

What happens to Our Application?

- Council has processes to assist applicants and to review all applications.
- Council considers the applications and comments from the public in the assessment process.
- The successful community garden group signs a *Community Garden User Agreement* and lease with Council.
- The successful community garden group liaise with Council staff to plan and develop the setup of the garden.

What is the timeline for decisions on Applications?

Once an application is received you should receive notification within 3 months as to whether your application has been approved or whether further information is needed about your application.

What else does our community garden group need?

There are many guides, websites and useful information to help your group get started and keep going. Information on managing your garden group and on running a community garden is available at the Library, in Council's Community Garden Guidelines or on Council's website. Also, talk to other community garden groups about their experiences and talk to Council's Health Promotion Officer for help.

For more information contact Council's Health Promotion Officer on 02 4232 0444.





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