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.

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Let's have any feedback about your experience in using the Plan of Management template and information about how you adapt it so that we can improve it for all to use.

Topics:

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 Community Garden Australia's information 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 Community Gardens Australia information sheet — *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 graffitied 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	❑ yes ❑ no	Responsible for the coordination of the agreed development of the community garden and its effective operation.	
Secretary	❑ yes ❑ no	Organises meetings; keeps records; correspondence.	
Treasurer	❑ yes ❑ 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.	
Public officer	❑ yes ❑ no	A role called for when incorporating, the public officer is a signatory for the association and a contact for official business.	
Committee members	❑ yes ❑ no	Elected members that attend management team meetings.	
OTHER ROLES			
Membership coordinator	❑ yes ❑ no	Maintains register of members, organises member inductions and other membership business. This role helps with internal communication between members.	
Media liaison	❑ yes ❑ 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	❑ yes ❑ no	Communication and negotiation. Passing information back and forth between the community garden team and the council/ landholder.	
Social organiser	❑ yes ❑ no	Plans and implements social activities such as shared meals in garden and celebrations.	
Compost coordinator	❑ yes ❑ 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	❑ yes ❑ no	Someone who organises working bees and makes sure the shared areas and garden infrastructure are well maintained.	
Education coordinator	❑ yes ❑ 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	❑ yes ❑ 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 excude 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