

Community Garden Procedures: Guidance for establishing community gardens in City of Kingston

1 Document Control

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2 Purpose

The purpose of the Community Garden Procedures (**Procedures**) is to outline the application process and the assessment criteria for *community groups* wishing to establish a new *community garden* on *Council land* in the municipality of Kingston.

3 Scope

These Procedures support the Community Garden Policy (**Policy**) by providing more detail on the actions *community groups* and Council officers need to take when establishing a *community garden*.

The Procedures apply to new and existing *community groups* and organisations who wish to establish a *community garden* on *Council land*.

The Procedures apply to employees and volunteers of Kingston City Council, existing *community groups* and future *community groups* in relation to roles and responsibilities for *community gardens*.

4 Community Gardens in Kingston

Council recognises that *community gardens* are places where individuals can be part of a community that grows food and other plants such as pollinator species.

Community gardens promote sustainable practices, build new skills, expand community networks and enable individuals to feel part of their local community. They support healthy lifestyles and reduce food insecurity.

Beyond food production, non-members can participate in activities such as community education and workshops, open days and fundraising.

Within the municipality of Kingston there are several well-established *community gardens*.

In 2025, Kingston's existing *community gardens* are located at:

- Mentone Community Garden Club, 9 Venice Street, Mentone
- Chelsea Heights Community Garden, 160 Thames Promenade, Chelsea Heights
- Pine Street Community Garden, Chesterville Road, Cheltenham
- Patterson Lakes Community Centre Garden, 54-70 Thompson Road, Patterson Lakes

In addition, there are a number of gardens operated by charity organisations in Kingston. These charity gardens engage volunteers from the community and food is used by the charity organisations.

- Fareshare – Moorabbin, Second Avenue, Moorabbin Airport
- Fareshare – Baguley Farm, 7000 Clayton Road, Clayton South

This information may change over time. Up to date information can be found on the City of Kingston website. [Community gardens - City of Kingston](#).

5 Procedure

All applicants wishing to utilise *Council land* to develop a *community garden* must provide adequate information for Council to assess the application. The information may vary depending on situational requirements.

The application process is represented in **Figure 1: Process to establish a community garden**

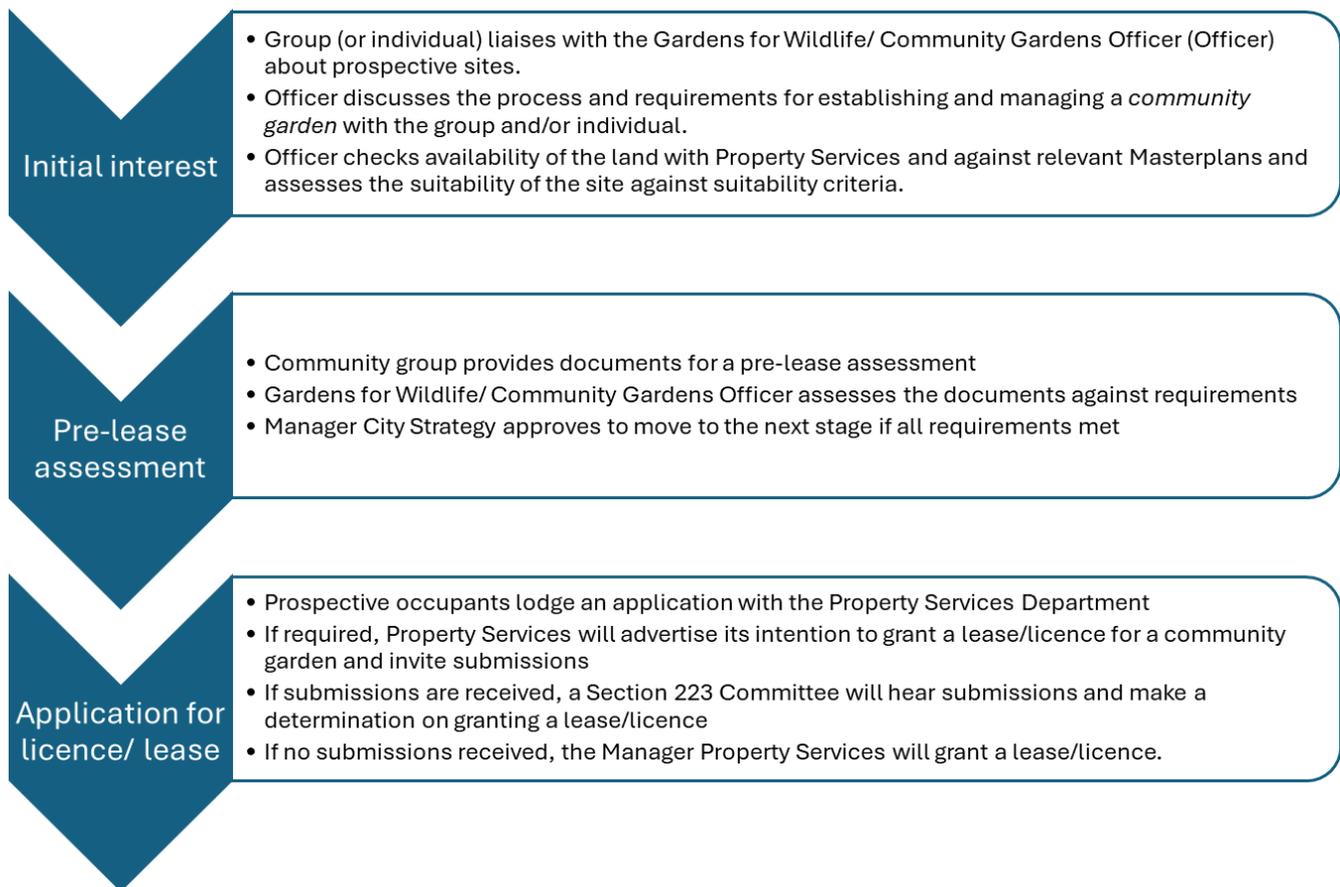


Figure 1: Process to establish a community garden

Step 1: Initial interest

- *Community group* or individual liaises with the Gardens for Wildlife/Community Gardens Officer (the Officer) about prospective sites and opportunities.
- The Officer discusses the process and requirements for establishing and managing a *community garden* with the group and/or individual.
- Officer checks the availability of the *Council land* with the Property Services Department and against relevant Masterplans and assesses the suitability of the site against relevant assessment criteria set out in Appendix 1.

Step 2: Pre-lease assessment

- *Community group* compiles relevant information. Documents must include:
 - Documents proving incorporation or auspice arrangements.
 - Rules of Association (if an incorporated association).
 - Documents proving public liability insurance appropriate to the activity/program.
 - Audited financial statements (last two years if the group is an established group).
 - A site layout plan showing garden bed layout, storage, water access, fencing (if required), access for deliveries and carparking.
 - A garden membership plan outlining how members will be attracted and retained.
 - A conflict resolution process.
 - Details of all child safe requirements.

- Any other information reasonably required by Council to make an appropriate assessment.
- The Officer assesses the information provided (in consultation with relevant Council departments).
- The Manager City Strategy approves to move to the next stage if all requirements are met.

Step 3: Lease/Licence application

- If approved with steps 1 and 2, *community group* lodges a written application with the Property Services Department.
- If the *community garden* represents change of use of the land, the Property Services Department will publish notice of its intention to grant a *lease/licence* for a *community garden* and invite submissions in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020* and Council's Community Engagement Policy.
- In response to any submissions, a Section 223 Committee will be formed to hear submissions (in accordance with Section 223 of the *Local Government Act 2020*) and determine whether to grant a *lease/licence*.
- In the event no submissions are received, the Manager Property Services will grant a *lease/licence* to the *community group*.

6 Responsibility

The following table lists the teams in Council responsible for defined tasks in implementing these Procedures.

Team	Responsibility
City Strategy/ Environmental Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage <i>community garden</i> enquiries as the first point of contact, liaising with relevant departments • Liaise with applicants and assess applications for establishing new <i>community gardens</i> • Approve progression to <i>lease/licence</i> application if all requirements met • Promote and connect the community with existing <i>community gardens</i>
Inclusive Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information and advice to existing not-for-profit community groups with incorporation requirements • Support new <i>community garden</i> groups to obtain a <i>lease/licence</i> and for the use of <i>Council land</i> where land is available • Provide updates regarding inclusive and safe community standards that may impact such <i>community groups</i>
Property Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue and manage <i>lease/licence</i> agreements, including advertising intention to grant a <i>lease/licence</i> if required • Receive and process capital works <i>Approval in Principal</i> requests
Kingston Hubs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate <i>community garden</i> programs (located at Kingston's Community Hubs)
Grants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide advice to <i>community groups</i> regarding funding opportunities provided by Kingston City Council

7 Related Documents and Resources

7.1 Legislation

- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic).
- [Kingston Planning Scheme](#)
- *Local Government Act 1989* and 2020 (Vic)
- *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (Vic)
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* (Vic)
- *Road Management Act 2004* (Vic)
- Kingston City Council Community Local Law

7.2 Council Policies

- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Fencing Policy
- Kingston Grants Program Policy
- Lease and Licence Policy

7.3 Resources

1. [Community Gardens Australia](#)
2. [Consumers Affairs Victoria](#)
3. [Sustainable Gardening Australia](#)

8 Definitions

Term	Definition
<i>Approval in Principle</i>	The process for receiving consent to undertake works on Council properties.
<i>community garden</i>	A communal space used for growing food and learning about gardening
<i>community group</i>	A recognised not-for-profit organisation or group of people who are linked by social ties or share common perspectives who engage in joint action that is of altruistic motivation intended to advance the community
Council	Kingston City Council
<i>Council land</i>	Council owned or managed land
<i>food insecurity</i>	Insufficient access to affordable and nutritional food
<i>lease</i>	A deed under which the lessor (Council), grants exclusive possession of land to a tenant (group or organisation) for a specified purpose and term
<i>licence</i>	A contract under which the licensor (Council), grants non-exclusive use of land to a licensee (group or organisation) for a specified use and period

APPENDIX 1

SITE SUITABILITY ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Potential sites for *community gardens* will be assessed by Council for their suitability against the following criteria:

1. Location

- a) The site is owned or managed by Council and located in close proximity to the community which has expressed an interest and there is sufficient demonstrated need.
- b) As a first preference, a site should be within the grounds of or adjacent to an existing community facility (such as community centre, neighbourhood house, tennis courts etc).
- c) Where the site is in a park or reserve, it is preferred that unused or underutilised portions of the park or reserve are considered, for example the corner of a park or other urban open space.
- d) The site must be capable of accommodating the *community garden* without compromising public accessibility and any current or planned functional requirements of *Council land*.
- e) The site should be capable of accommodating the *community garden* without having a significant detrimental impact on neighbouring land uses.

2. Land Characteristics

- a) The majority of the site should receive full sunlight for a least 5 -6 hours per day.
- b) The site should have adequate drainage.
- c) Topography should be suitable for the layout of a garden without the need for cut and fill.
- d) The site should be able to accommodate the establishment of a *community garden* without the need for tree or vegetation removal, including indigenous and native vegetation.

3. Safety

- a) The site has no major safety or health concerns.
- b) The site should have good natural surveillance from nearby residences, businesses or passing pedestrians, cyclists, or vehicle traffic. To enable this, good sight lines are required.

4. Accessibility

- a) The site should be accessible and inclusive for a broad range of users, including people with disabilities, culturally diverse or elderly people.
- b) Appropriate car parking should be available on site or within a reasonable walking distance.
- c) The site should be located close to public amenities such as toilets.

- d) The site should be located close to walking or cycling paths and public transport to encourage active travel.
- e) The site should provide bike racks or similar bike storage facilities.
- f) The site should have street frontage (or access within the garden) wide enough to allow maintenance vehicles and occasional deliveries (e.g. mulch).

5. Size

- a) The site should be large enough to accommodate the following:
 - i. raised garden plots with adequate clearance to accommodate users with mobility issues;
 - ii. composting systems;
 - iii. rainwater tanks (with preferably a non-potable water supply); and
 - iv. seating areas and shelter for gardeners.
- b) Minimum (and maximum) garden size will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. As a guide a garden containing individual plots for 20 people would be approx. 2500m².

6. Water

- a) Consider the availability of potable water for drinking purposes.
- b) Access to non-potable water for garden irrigation is an advantage provided it is of a quality suitable for the growing of food.

7. Soil Quality

- a) Previous land use and the potential for previous use to restrict food growing ability.
- b) Depending on any levels of contamination detected, advice will be required from recognised experts on whether the land is suitable for growing food.

8. Fencing

- a) The site may need to be fenced to protect the garden from vandalism and theft and prevent invasion by pest animals such as foxes and rabbits.
- b) Where an unfenced site is proposed for use as a *community garden* Council will work with the *community group* or individual to explore cost effective ways to ensure security.