



The District Council of  
Mount Barker



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Cover image: Andrew Rammell

Bottom photo: Residents celebrate the harvest at the Chapman Cres community orchard, Mount Barker

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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In 2011 the District Council of Mount Barker resolved to investigate the feasibility and practical implementation of community gardens on public land, as well as the Council's role in food security more broadly.

This report is the first of two that propose policy directions for Council's consideration. This report examines the proposal for establishing community gardens on publicly owned land under Council's 'care and control'.

A second report will make recommendations regarding Council's role in addressing food, and will be completed in 2013.

The investigation has found the following:

### ***Community gardens***

The proposal to establish community gardens on public land in the District Council of Mount Barker has been found to be practical, feasible and consistent with a range of policies and Council's strategic objectives.

Community gardens are growing in popularity and are a valuable recreational activity that requires shared space. As the main manager of the public land resources in the District, Council has a key role to play in fostering and enabling this activity.

The evidence that community gardens make a positive contribution to the health, vibrancy and cohesion of communities is strong and well documented. Whilst community gardens can also contribute to food security through assisting people to grow a portion of their own food, they are better understood as a recreational and cultural activity that builds social capital.

The main value of community gardens in the Mount Barker context is their ability to engage people from different generations and backgrounds, and the opportunity they provide for social connection between the new residents and existing communities. This accords with Council's objectives and Strategic Plan 2012-16.

Community gardens can be effectively managed using existing governance processes such as licence agreements for land in Council's care and control. These will need to be adapted to the purpose of managing community gardens.

There is significant support and enthusiasm amongst a range of stakeholders for the establishment of additional opportunities for community gardening in the District. Some of these stakeholders are willing to contribute resources to partnerships with Council and community organisations for the establishment of new community gardens.

Partnering opportunities currently exist with the Bendigo Bank, Walker Corp, Callington Primary School, Adelaide Hills Community Health Service and TAFESA. Each of these organisations has expressed interest in contributing resources to projects in the District.

In order to ensure that community gardens on public or community land meet the appropriate standards for safety and aesthetics in the public realm, it may also be necessary for Council to contribute to the establishment of community gardens.

There is a great deal of non-financial support that Council can provide, and assistance from Council staff will be essential to the success of any community gardening initiatives.

There is a significant opportunity to incorporate food production into place-making for the new development areas of Mount Barker. This would contribute to establishing a special character and build community connections. Council can promote this, but cannot mandate it under the current development policy and regulation regime.

Council has in effect been piloting community garden initiatives for several years in Meadows and Mount Barker. This report recommends that these initiatives now be developed further through a consistent policy and management framework.

### ***Food Security***

Food security is a complex issue, with many contributing elements, and varying definitions.

Food security is influenced strongly by decisions made by other levels of government, business and households, but Local Government can contribute to improving food security, principally through its planning regulation, policy setting and economic development roles.

In addition to supporting community gardens, there are other opportunities for addressing food security in the District through strengthening the local food system.

These include:

- Increasing the amount of food grown and consumed from home gardens.

Home food production can have a significant impact on household budgets. A good model is the Magic Harvest program. Council is supporting a Magic Harvest pilot project in 2012, through a partnership with the Adelaide Hills Community Health Centre, the Mount Barker Community Centre and Bluestone Mt Barker.

- Reduce regulatory barriers to people accessing fresh food outlets within walking distance of their homes.

Examples of regulatory barriers include planning policies that prevent the development of grocery stores in residential neighbourhoods, or sets minimum lot sizes that encourage very low

density development where local stores would not have enough customers to be commercially viable.

- Support initiatives which increase the commercial viability of primary production in the District and region.

An example of this is the Adelaide Hills Farmers Market. Council also plays an important role through its rating policy for rural land and land use policy settings (the Mount Barker Development Plan). Council has commenced a Rural (Primary Production) DPA to improve the policy settings that impact on agriculture in the District.

These topics and other aspects of food security will be discussed in more detail in a future report on food security.

## **SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

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### **Recommendation 1**

**That Council resolves to support and resource the establishment of a small number of new community garden projects on public or community land during 2012/13 - 2014/15 financial years.**

### **Recommendation 2**

**That Council adopt the policy position of enabling and supporting community initiatives in community gardens.**

### **Recommendation 3**

**That Council develop a practical guideline document (or Fact Sheets) for the establishment of local level 'neighbourhood gardens' such as community orchards, productive street trees and verge gardens. This should describe the minimum design requirements to ensure public safety, the recommended (and any prohibited) species for fruit and nut tree selection, and provide a point of contact at Council.**

### **Recommendation 4**

**That Council develop a practical guideline document (or Fact Sheets) for the establishment of community gardens on public or community land.**

**That Council develop a standard licence agreement for the management of public or community land by an Incorporated Association, for the purpose of developing a "community –controlled community garden".**

### **Recommendation 5**

**That Council establish a clear process for gaining approval for gardening on public or community land.**

### **Recommendation 6**

**That licence agreements for community gardens on public or community land should be for an initial establishment period of two years, with a requirement that the agreement be reviewed after one year of operation.**

**That exist clauses be included in licence agreements to allow Council to close unsuccessful community gardens on public or community land in certain circumstances.**

**After an initial establishment period, ongoing licence agreements for community gardens should be for up to 4 year periods to ensure there is adequate security of tenure for the activity.**

#### **Recommendation 7**

**That Council requires a Plan of Management as condition of granting a licence agreement for a community garden on public or community land.**

#### **Recommendation 8**

**That Council staff actively seek opportunities for formal partnerships and collaboration regarding community gardens.**

**That groups seeking to establish community gardens on public or community land be requested to provide letters of support and indications of partnerships and sponsorship from organisations and/or businesses as part of their Expression of Interest.**

#### **Recommendation 9**

**That Council adopt site criteria described in this report, but that it not adopt a distribution or provision rate for community gardens.**

#### **Recommendation 10**

**That the General Manager, Council Services, ensures that a staff member is allocated to be the contact point and coordinator of Council responsibilities for the community gardens initiatives, and that this staff member is given the responsibility and sufficient time to undertake this role.**

**That Council reviews its staffing, in kind support and financial, assistance to community gardens annually, and evaluates the outcomes of the initiative after 2 years.**

## **PART 1 CONTEXT**

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### ***Background***

During 2010 a large area of rural land near Mount Barker and Nairne was rezoned for housing and other urban land uses by the South Australian Government.

In the community consultation prior to rezoning, the ongoing impact of urbanisation on food growing areas in the District emerged as a key issue. The loss of productive farmland and resulting impacts on food security was the second most commonly raised concern in public and community organisation submissions on the Mount Barker Urban Growth DPA. Other concerns were raised in these submissions regarding the impact of climate change, drought, peak oil and rising energy costs on the availability and affordability of food.

In regard to the rezoning proposal, Council advocated for the protection of the most productive agricultural lands around the growth towns of Mount Barker, Littlehampton and Nairne, and the minimisation of rezoning of rural land.

In February 2011 a deputation by a small group of residents called on Council to support community gardens and other initiatives designed to address future food security in the District.

In its presentation to Council and supporting materials, the deputation proposed the following:

- That Council resolve to investigate and report on the demand, cost, benefit, risk and opportunities for the development of a community garden project in Mount Barker;
- That Council allow the establishment of community gardens on existing Council owned reserves, where there is sufficient interest among the local residents;
- That Council require that developers of the Ministerial DPA growth areas provide land for the purpose of food production in community gardens. (The amount proposed was 1 ha of land per 100 ha of residential development.)
- That Council provide resources and funding in 11/12 budget for a pilot community garden project;
- That Council seek funding and regional partnerships for an ongoing community garden program.
- That Council support such an ongoing program by appointing a part-time Development Officer/ Caretaker for community garden projects.

On May 2, 2011 Council resolved the following:

That Council:

1. acknowledges community gardening is a valuable recreational activity that contributes to the health and well-being of the wider community and provides a wide range of environmental, social, economic and educational benefits;
2. notes that a further agenda item will be prepared for consideration at a future council meeting following investigation of
  - incorporation of community gardens and urban agriculture into plans of management for public open space in the District,
  - potential establishment of a community garden program in the District, and
  - Council's role in improving food security in the District.
3. provides an update to the members of the deputation on the progress of their proposal for community gardens.

This is the report regarding these proposals and requests.

## **Definitions**

This report uses the following definitions of key terms.

### **Community Garden**

A community garden is a type of urban agriculture. Community gardens are essentially about growing food and other produce in a social setting.

A community garden has been described as

A parcel of public open space operated by the community where the site is used for:

- the production of produce for the personal use of its members through allotments or shared plots; and
- demonstration gardening or where other environmental activities are undertaken to bring together people from diverse backgrounds and different abilities, ages, and cultures (City of Burnside, 2010)

Community gardens can be run on land that is not considered to be public open space, but which is managed for community benefit by an organisation or agency, for example, on school or church owned land.

Community gardens are organised as not-for-profit community facilities, where individuals do not derive a private financial gain or profit from the garden. Any commercial activity in a community garden (eg sale of seedlings) is generally for the benefit of re-investment in the garden.

### **Community Supported Agriculture**

This is a business model for a private enterprise farm where the farmer or farmers sell directly to consumers who commit to a regular purchase from the farm. This commonly takes the form of a 'farm box' scheme.

### **Guerrilla gardening**

Gardening on land that the gardeners do not have legal right to use (often an abandoned site or area not cared for by anyone) is called guerrilla gardening. It is not limited to food producing gardens, but can include native vegetation and ornamental verge gardens too.

### **Food desert**

The term 'food deserts' describes neighbourhoods and communities that have limited access to affordable and nutritious foods. They tend to be located in urban and rural low-income neighbourhoods where residents are less likely to have access to supermarkets or grocery stores that provide healthy food choices (Whiteacre et al 2009, p.5).

There are a variety of definitions regarding the distance to a source of fresh food that would indicate there is a 'food desert'. Most sources indicate a distance between 500 m and 1 km should be considered the maximum acceptable distance to a fresh food source.

Food deserts have become an important public policy issue in the USA, but are less recognised in Australia.

### **Food miles**

Food Miles is a term used to measure the transport distance travelled by food products between production and consumption (CERES, 2010).

### **Food security**

According to the Commonwealth Government, food security exists “when populations have access on an ongoing basis to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life” (Australian Government, 2011).

The literature about food security has a strong focus on the capacity of households to meet their food needs. Food security can also be understood as the nations’ or regions’ capacity to provide a secure and sustainable supply of healthy food for its population.

### **Food-sensitive planning and urban design (FSPUD)**

This is a new urban planning approach with the intention of recognising that access to healthy, sustainable and equitable food is an essential part of achieving liveable communities (Victorian Eco-Innovation Lab 2011).

### **Meanwhile Leases**

‘Meanwhile Gardening’ is the temporary use of land for gardening and food growing. For example where a piece of land earmarked for development that has been temporarily suspended is leased to a community group who use the site for cultivation. The advantage is that land that would otherwise lay empty and unused can be put to good use by community groups in a way that brings benefits and opportunities for local people. The obvious disadvantage is that much hard work could go into establishing and maintaining a site, only for that work to be disrupted if the land then reverts to its original purpose (Hunter, 2011).

### **Public land**

For the purposes of this report, public land includes all Council owned land and Crown Land under Council’s care control and management.

The term Public Open Space also refers to land in public ownership and land categorised as Community Land under the Local Government Act. Sometimes this land has been gifted to the community through a Trust, and in other cases it has been transferred into the ownership of Council as a requirement of the Development Act for 12.5 % open space in new residential development.

Public and Community land is managed by Council for a wide range of purposes including biodiversity conservation, stormwater management, active and passive recreation.

### **Social enterprise**

A social or community enterprise is a business run to make a profit for the benefit of a social cause. Well known examples include 'op shops' run by charities.

An urban agriculture project that is principally aimed at making a profit, is better considered as a private or social enterprise, rather than a community garden.

### **Urban agriculture**

Urban Agriculture has been described as

The growing of plants and the raising of animals within and around cities. It can take the form of backyard, roof-top and balcony gardening, community gardening in vacant lots and parks, roadside urban fringe agriculture and livestock grazing in open space (Resource Centres on Urban Agriculture and Food Security,2011).

There is often a commercial approach and large scale and to activities described as urban agriculture, including private enterprise and co-operative farms which operate in urban and peri-urban settings.

### **Verge gardening**

This is the activity of transforming nature strip areas from "left over space" into useful and productive gardens maintained by local residents .

## ***Methodology***

The investigation methodology consisted of an environmental scan and stakeholder engagement.

### *Environmental scan*

This included

1. Literature Review

Selected Local Government policy documents and academic literature about community gardens, food security and related topics were reviewed to understand current practices and the evidence about these topics.

2. Staff consultation

Discussion with Council staff with responsibility for community development, open space planning, policy planning, field services – parks and gardens maintenance, governance, contracts and asset management.

3. Case studies and site visits

Several SA and interstate Councils were contacted for information about the way community gardens have developed and Council involvement with them. A site visit was also undertaken to community gardens in the City of Onkaparinga. There is a diverse range of examples exhibiting a number of different approaches by Councils in terms of the management of gardens, allocations of water, and licence agreements.

4. Audit of existing activity in the District

Local food projects, community gardens, school kitchen gardens and commercial sources of fresh produce were identified and mapped to understand current activity around this topic and also whether there are food deserts in the District.

5. Policy workshops and conferences

Staff attended relevant workshops to learn about best practice policy responses to community gardens and food security. These informed the development of the recommendations of this report.

### *Stakeholder consultation*

A consultation process was held with a small group of local residents with demonstrated experience of, and leadership regarding, local food initiatives.

The invited community participants were Michael Bails, Chris Banks, Maggie Hine, Lolo Houbein, Simon Martin, Tess Minett, and Sophie Thomson.

Mayor Ann Ferguson and staff members Penny Worland, Peter McGinn and David Cooney also participated.

The group met 5 times between May and October 2011. The purpose of the consultation was to ensure that Council would benefit from the practical experience of knowledgeable residents.

Other potential stakeholders were contacted by telephone in order to understand who else would be interested in the establishment of community gardens in the District. This included regional health and education agencies, school principals and relevant community organisations.

The key findings from the stakeholder engagement have been considered in the development of the report and recommendations.

These findings include

- Support for Council contributing toward a more sustainable and healthy local food system
- High levels of commitment and enthusiasm for local food initiatives across a wide range of stakeholders
- Support for development of additional community gardens on public land, within a community development framework
- Very high support for education and skills development programs and initiatives that encourage more food production in home gardens (such as Magic Harvest)
- Support for Council providing assistance to existing and new local food initiatives (eg the existing Adelaide Hills Farmer's Market, the potential for a Community Kitchen)
- Very strong desire to see productive agricultural land in the District better protected from urban development
- Desire to see Council demonstrate leadership and innovation regarding 'productive landscape' initiatives such as fruit and nut trees in streetscapes and public parks
- Desire to see an increase in community, school and VET education programs in horticulture and agriculture in the District
- Desire to see the local food system strengthened and diversified in ways that enhance
  - equity and accessibility
  - community empowerment, initiative and capacity
  - institutional partnerships
  - intergenerational relationships, and
  - meaningful social connections

## **Strategic Context**

A review of selective strategic policy documents has found that community gardens can assist with achieving identified priorities and targets.

### **1. National Policies and Plans**

The Australian Government has commenced work toward a first “National Food Plan”.

The aim of the national food plan is to foster a sustainable, globally competitive, resilient food supply that supports access to nutritious and affordable food. To achieve this outcome the government proposes to focus on the following objectives, helping the government better integrate what it already does and help identify if and where a better approach might be needed.

- Identify and mitigate potential risks to Australia's food security
- Contribute to global food security
- Reduce barriers to a safe and nutritious food supply that responds to the evolving preferences and needs of all Australians and supports population health
- Maintain and improve the natural resource base underpinning food production in Australia
- Support the global competitiveness and productivity growth of the food supply chain, including through research, science and innovation
- Reduce barriers faced by food businesses to access international and domestic markets
- Contribute to economic prosperity, employment and community wellbeing in regional Australia.

Public consultation for the development of a Green Paper toward a National Food Plan is occurring in 2012.

The implications for Council of a National Food Plan will be considered in detailed for the second part of this investigation – a report into Council’s role in food security.

### **2. State Government Policies and Plans**

#### *South Australia’s Strategic Plan*

The Strategic Plan promotes a healthy lifestyle, environmental sustainability and strong communities, amongst other things.

The SA Strategic Plan includes the following goals and targets which are relevant to the proposal for community gardens on public land:

Goals	Targets
We are committed to our towns and cities being well designed, generating great experiences and a sense of belonging	1: Increase the use of public spaces by the community  23: Social participation

We have a sense of place, identity, belonging and purpose	24: Volunteering
We make healthy choices in how we live We are physically active We educate young people about healthy living We assist people to deal with all forms of illness and to live a satisfying life where they can contribute to their community	78: Healthy South Australians 82: Healthy Weight 85: Chronic Disease 86: Psychological wellbeing
We reduce our greenhouse gas emissions We aim for zero waste – recycling, reusing and reducing consumption all we can	59: Greenhouse gas emissions reduction 67: Zero waste

### *Planning Strategy*

The *30 Year Plan for Greater Adelaide* seeks to promote active, healthy communities and lifestyles with an increased access to high-quality, useable open space. Access to social and recreational infrastructure and engaging spaces in a positive setting is also a priority to give people the opportunity to participate in social and economic activities in their community.

The plan describes how development that supports healthy lifestyles can improve both physical health and mental wellbeing. It promotes the development of community gardens for social interaction and physical wellbeing (pp100-101).

### *SA Greenhouse Strategy 2007-2020*

The food we consume accounts for quite a high proportion of a household’s energy consumption. Promoting resource efficiency includes consumption of more local food.

This is recognised in “*Tackling Climate Change*”, the State’s Greenhouse Strategy:

Everyday resources such as food, water, manufactured items, and other goods and services, all have a greenhouse cost in their embodied energy, that is greenhouse gases have been created in pumping the water, or growing and transporting the food. Processing the wastes we generate also has a greenhouse impact (p22).

The Strategy includes the following:

Objective 3.2 To improve the efficient use of resources by households and communities

- Strategy 4 Improve community understanding of the greenhouse impacts of food production and consumption
  - Supporting action: Develop a fund for supporting community initiatives that encourage the production and consumption of local food, including community gardens and farmers markets

### **3. District Council of Mount Barker policies and plans**

*Strategic Plan (2009-2019)*

The following goal areas are relevant to the discussion of community gardens and food security.

Goal Area 1 (People, Communities and Culture) supports healthy lifestyles and active and passive social interaction.

Goal Area 3 (Enterprise, Business and Industry) supports local food production and a viable and sustainable primary production sector.

*Strategic Plan (2012 -2017)*

In 2012 Council undertook a review of its Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan 2012 – 2016 highlights the need to develop appropriate community facilities and programs. The following are relevant to the establishment of community gardens:

Outcome 10 – Community facilities and programs to meet community need

Objective 10.2 Conduct feasibility studies and facility planning for establishing key community facilities, precincts and programs.

Outcome 13 – The District’s communities are welcoming and connected and new residents are integrated into the community.

Objective 13.2 Design and implement new community development initiatives and partnerships to assist new residents to make effective connections with each other and with existing communities.

The Strategic Plan also identifies the need to support the local food industry through the following;

Objective 1.8 Promote and enhance the capacity of producers, regional stakeholders and industry groups to grow, showcase and add value to local food, wine and associated industries.

*Draft Structure Plan for Mount Barker, Littlehampton and Nairne*

The Draft Structure Plan for Mount Barker, Littlehampton and Nairne has been developed by Council in order to shape and influence the development outcomes around the high growth towns of the District.

Council developed this plan to spatially represent the outcomes it is seeking. The Plan includes a description of the design principles that should be applied. In regard to community gardens, the following excerpt from pp7 – 8 is relevant:

“Liveability, community and sense of place

The Structure Plan area will be designed to attract residents and businesses and create a sense of place, connectedness and safety (for example, by fostering crime prevention through environmental design principles).

Regard has been given to the following design principles in the sector plans:

- Providing opportunities for people at different stages of life to be physically active, by ensuring neighbourhoods are, where possible, within a walkable distance of community parks, town squares and public spaces
- Creating well-designed, multi-functional open spaces
- Promoting the development of community gardens for social interaction and physical well being
- Developing urban environments that celebrate local culture and encourage participation in their development
- Developing major community and sports hubs to provide important community facilities, and promote community development and the multiple benefits of active living”

## **Summary**

This review of relevant policy and plans at Federal, State and Local Government level demonstrates that community gardening and food security initiatives are consistent with a range of relevant policies and Council’s strategic objectives.

## PART 2 ABOUT COMMUNITY GARDENS

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### ***What is driving the interest in community gardens?***

Community gardening is an activity that has steadily increased in popularity in Australia and other developed nations during the last 20 or more years. There are currently more than 50 community gardens in South Australia.

In recent times there has been increasing support from Governments (including Local Government) for community gardens in recognition of the potential value and benefits of using gardens as a cost effective tool for sustainability education and community building (RMIT, 2004).

Community gardening appears to be a cultural response to a range of interrelated issues, including

- desire for social connection through sharing food and recreational gardening
- concern to foster more sustainable lifestyles and be self sufficient,
- desire of city dwellers to 'reconnect' with natural processes and the production of their food
- smaller lot sizes in cities, and hence reduced areas and opportunities for food production in private gardens
- desire to retain traditional skills and the cultural traditions of market gardening
- desire to grow and preserve traditional and heirloom plant and livestock varieties
- desire to save money in context of rising living costs
- new recreational pursuits resulting from social change and diversity

These social, environmental and economic factors are also driving demands for different uses of public resources, including public open space.

Community gardening is probably best understood as a *contemporary social and recreational activity that requires a shared space*. Community gardening cannot exist properly without some form of organisation and agreements about the use of public or private land.

In this regard an analogy can be made to how sport is organised in society. Whilst one can hit or kick a ball in a private back yard, it is not possible to fully participate in team sport, or gain the benefits of organised competitive sport, without the management of *dedicated, shared spaces* for sport.

Similarly, one can grow food in a private garden, but the additional benefits of community gardening (building social connection, sharing of knowledge and resources, collaboration on projects) are not likely

to be achieved through individual gardening in private space. Community gardens foster a special kind of cultural activity and require a space that is managed for this purpose.

Community gardens are also good at encouraging more sustainable behaviours. They function as “demonstration” gardens and spaces that support more local sustainability.

The Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources (DEWNR) currently employs a project officer to support the establishment and operation of community gardens in Adelaide. Based at the Botanic Gardens, this officer has been coordinating workshops and supporting the establishment of networks. This has resulted in a renewed impetus for community gardens and this may also be a factor in the current high level of community interest. The DEWNR project is anticipated to continue to mid 2013.

### ***What evidence is there regarding the benefits of community gardens?***

Proponents of community gardens have summarised their benefits as:

They assist in the growth of food, foster good health, green urban environments, support lifelong learning, and cultivate vibrant communities (Nettle, 2010)

A 2011 City of Charles Sturt Discussion Paper regarding community gardens outlines some of the reasons why community gardens have enduring appeal:

*As well as edible plantings, community gardens often include native gardens and decorative and therapeutic elements. Whilst gardening is a focus, community gardens are generally multi-purpose community hubs for a range of activities including education and training, playgroups, arts and creative activities, preparing and sharing food, community events and celebrations, and social enterprise.*

*The range of skill levels catered for and activities on offer, together with the ‘hands on’ nature of gardening and the universal language of food, mean that community gardens provide fabulous opportunities for cross-cultural connections and for social participation by people who find it difficult to access traditional recreation and leisure options in the community. Community gardens are also one of the few types of community facilities where you’ll commonly see people of all ages coming together and intergenerational exchange taking place (Hunter, 2011).*

There is now a substantial body of research evidence that substantiates these claims regarding the benefits of community gardens.

A comprehensive review of the research regarding health and the built environment conducted by University of NSW concluded that the evidence shows that participation in community gardens does

produce health benefits for individual participants, through increased physical activity, social interaction and increased consumption of fresh food (Kent et al, 2011).

A 2004 evaluation of the Gillies Plains Community Garden by RMIT for a Commonwealth Government department funding initiative called the “Stronger Families and Communities Strategy” found evidence of the following outcomes:

#### Social

- Sense of working together to accomplish something
- Sense of belonging
- Shared recreation with family

#### Economic

- Development of skills and knowledge related to gardening and plants

#### Environmental

- Improved attractiveness of physical environment
- Increased awareness of water conservation, waste management, organic gardening, composting.

#### Psychological

- Sense of well-being and satisfaction
- Calming atmosphere

#### Health

- Improved mental health

The Gillies Plain Community Garden was also found to have built capacity for further projects and development. It contributed to the development of:

#### Human capital

- Secondary and TAFE students’ knowledge of history and culture of the area, biology and science of plant growth, food production and preparation
- Horticulture skills development of volunteers

#### Economic (including environmental) capital

- Physical infrastructure of the garden which allows further developments

#### Social capital

- Co-operation between individuals
- Encouraging participation in organisations

#### Institutional capital

- Development of working group membership, processes and principles.
- Co-operation between organisations

It is worth noting, however, that the literature regarding community gardens does not strongly suggest that they are a successful strategy for addressing *food security*. According to a 1995 evaluation of community gardens in Sydney,

The value of the gardens as social venues surpasses their role in reducing family expenditure on food or providing access to food for their families. Although these roles have been proposed by people concerned for the wellbeing of citizens on social welfare, the comparative abundance and cheapness of food in Australia reduces the potential for such roles (Grayson, 1995)

The evaluation claims that Sydney's community gardens achieved a variable effectiveness as food production systems, and they made a minor contribution to family dietary needs, some more so than others. Horticultural know-how and previous gardening experience was found to be critical to productivity.

The author concluded that the comparative cheapness of foods in supermarkets and the availability of social security income is most likely responsible for community food production in Australia having a lower profile than urban gardening has in some developing countries, and contributing less to household food supply.

Since the time of that evaluation (mid 1990s) there have been significant increases in the price of food and the rise of food as a significant public concern. This is due to concern regarding the possible impacts of climate change and 'peak oil' on agriculture, which may result in higher food prices and supply uncertainties.

Shared food production in community gardens could potentially play a role in the resilience of a local food system if food shortages were to occur in the future. This should not, however, be considered to be the most important reason for supporting or starting community gardens.

### ***Is the proposal for community gardens relevant to other identified needs and priorities?***

The review of relevant policy and plans above identifies the relevant strategic objectives that community gardens can contribute to, including

- Community health, wellbeing and social connection
- Vibrant, active communities
- Well maintained and used public open space
- Reduced greenhouse gas emissions

A key principle of open space planning is that public open space should meet a range of community needs and interests, and respond to changes in these needs and interests over time. Public open space can provide for diverse recreational pursuits such as space for gathering and events, trails, passive

relaxation areas, play and sport, as well as environmental management outcomes in water management and biodiversity protection.

Community gardens are consistent with this principle of providing diverse opportunities for community activity in the public realm. A well-established community garden can provide new opportunities and space for community cultural activities in the arts (eg concerts and public art), space for educational events and new opportunities for intergenerational recreation.

In this sense a community garden is a type of “third place”, that is, a place that is neither home nor work, but where social interaction is facilitated.

In DCMB, requests for ‘third places’ of this kind have been documented in the Hills Positive Aging Strategy 2020, the consultation report and Master Plan for the Mount Barker Town Centre Strategy, and the consultations for the Open Space and Public Realm Strategy 2012.

The benefits of community gardens for individuals and communities are discussed above, but there may well be benefits for Council as well. Figure 1 shows how community gardens can assist Councils to achieve their aims in the areas of policy and planning, public perception and meeting local needs.

No potential negative impacts on other community needs and requests have been identified by this investigation.



Figure 1: A thoughtful approach to community gardens by councils can make constructive links with council practice and policy

Source: Kogarah Municipal Council Community Gardens Policy Directions (2008)

### ***Are there different types of community gardens?***

Community gardens can look very different to each other, and be organised in a variety of ways. Each community garden project develops according to its circumstances, the resources available and the needs, interests and skills of the participants.

The following examples demonstrate the diversity that the term ‘community garden’ can encompass.

In the District Council of Mount Barker there are several types of community gardening initiatives.

**Duck Flat Community Garden** is a large garden run by the Adelaide Hills Community Health Centre with assistance from volunteers. It has a strong focus on the garden as a setting for occupational therapy and other health oriented programming. Whilst located on land managed by the health service, there are no fences and the garden can be enjoyed by the general public, as well as volunteers and patients. The garden beds and fruit trees are shared, and there are no individual plots. The garden also features many examples of art and creative play elements, many of which have been developed as collaborations with schools and the TAFE.



**Duck Flat Community Garden fosters creative expression and play.**

There are around nine **kitchen gardens** located at schools in the District. The oldest and largest productive garden is at the Mount Barker Waldorf School, and there have recently been two new gardens established with assistance from the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden program at Littlehampton and Macclesfield Primary Schools. Other schools with kitchen garden projects include Echunga, Meadows, Mount Barker, St Mark’s Lutheran and Nairne primary schools and the Mount Barker High School.

These are ‘educational gardens’, designed to teach children about growing food and encourage healthy eating. Each school determines the degree to which participation by the general public is possible, and these are only considered to be community gardens if there is an active and regular role for participants from outside the school.

The kitchen garden adjacent to the **Meadows Kindergarten** was initially established with funding from DCMB in 2006/07, and operates on community land adjacent to the Kindergarten building. The project has recently been resumed by a group of volunteers associated with the Meadows Community Association.



**Garden beds adjacent the Meadows Kindergarten and Battunga Park**

The **Baptist Church in Mount Barker** has recently started a small community garden on its land on Victoria St. This is designed to be used by both the Baptist church community and residents of the surrounding neighbourhood.

Between Dumas St and Chapman Cres, Mount Barker there is a small '**community orchard**' and bush tucker garden in a public reserve. This was established with assistance from the Field Services staff of Council in response to requests from residents surrounding the reserve, and the fruit and nut trees are tended to by residents. The fruit can be harvested freely by any person as there are no fences. There are also no garden beds or individual plots as such.



**The small community orchard in a Mount Barker reserve off Chapman Cres.**

In the City of Onkaparinga, other examples of community gardens can be found.

**Elizabeth House** is a Positive Aging Centre run by the City of Onkaparinga. The Centre includes a large kitchen garden and uses the produce for the programs it runs. There is a large fruit orchard and vegetable garden, greenhouse and chicken coop. All of the produce is used in the Centre's kitchen to provide affordable meals to the community. There is no individual harvesting, or individual garden plots, in this garden. The gardening volunteers contribute to the centre's operations in a similar way to volunteers in the kitchen or the various programs run at the Community Centre.



**These two community gardens at the City of Onkaparinga have been developed as projects of existing Community Centres. The extensive gardens shown on the right provide produce exclusively for the programs offered at Elizabeth House.**

At the **Aldinga Community Garden** a set of disused tennis courts have been transformed into a community garden with the use of numerous raised garden beds that sit on top of the old tennis court surfaces. The tennis court fences remain in place and provide security for a garden that is otherwise at some distance from the surveillance provided by houses and streets. It is located near a Community Centre and 'Men's Shed', and there have been a number of shared projects with the Shed volunteers. The Garden has helped to reinvigorate the local area. This garden does have individual plots that are rented from the Association.



**The Aldinga Community Garden is located adjacent to a Recreation Centre and 'Men's Shed', which are visible in the background. Co-location can provide opportunities for shared projects.**

**Malmo Court garden** has been created in a small laneway that runs along the side of the public housing estate. The laneway has been fitted out with raised garden beds for the tenants, art works and a rainwater tank. In this example a dingy (and potentially dangerous) alleyway has been transformed through gardening into a place that is tended and regularly used – a real community asset. This is a small-scale concept that has the potential for integration in other residential areas, where increased activity would improve actual or perceived safety of laneways and trails.



**Malmo Court Garden enlivens an otherwise disused laneway.**

These examples show how varied community gardens can be in practice. Some use fences, some do not. Some have individual plots, some only shared plots and some have a combination of the two.

## ***How are community gardens governed?***

There are essentially two governance approaches to community gardens – ‘agency controlled gardens’, and ‘community controlled gardens’.

### 1. Agency controlled gardens

These are projects that are established by an organisation or agency, usually for the benefit of user or target groups. The agency maintains a role in the ongoing management of the community garden, and the user groups do not own, or have formal responsibility for the site or infrastructure of the garden.

Users may still be involved in the design, development, maintenance and day to day operations by agreement with the agency. The degree of formalisation of this arrangement can vary.

These gardens may be managed by a committee or steering group, or by an employee of the agency.

Examples of gardens with this type of governance described above include: Duck Flat Garden, Baptist Church garden, school kitchen gardens, Elizabeth House garden and Malmo Court garden.

These projects are managed and resourced by the agency that owns the land. Therefore, Local Government has little role in these types of community gardens, unless it is the manager of the garden itself. Council could contribute in kind support or a community grant (as was the case of the Meadows Kindergarten kitchen garden). At the City of Onkaparinga the Community Development Officers assist groups who want to start a community garden to gain agreement for use of a site. This is how the Council helped in the establishment of Malmo Court, a community garden on a Housing SA site.

This governance approach could also apply to the establishment of community orchards (such as the Chapman Cres reserve orchard), and to ‘verge gardens’ on public street verges.

In these examples residents may *be involved* in the development and maintenance of a public space through gardening, *but not have formalised management responsibilities* or control access to the garden site. This approach is suitable where there is a small number of people who wish to collaborate on a food growing project in the neighbourhood, and so there is no need to establish a membership based incorporated association.

This is public gardening through permission of the land owner (in this case Council). The land owner keeps ultimate control over the site, but permits certain types of use by the public, including the cultivation of food plants.

For these circumstances it would be helpful to have a simple guiding document which describes the process for gaining permission to garden on public or community land, the expected standards of design/construction for maintaining public safety, appropriate species selection, and Council’s maintenance expectations.

### 2. Community controlled gardens

These are gardens where the site is in the ownership, or formal control, of the community group running the garden. This includes a licence for the use of public or private land. The community gardening group is usually an incorporated association, or is auspiced by an incorporated association, and it therefore can enter into contracts and take responsibility for management of the space and supporting infrastructure through a formal agreement with the owner of the site.

These gardens are usually managed by a Committee, and may also have a volunteer or paid coordinator.

Examples include the Aldinga Community Garden and a number of well known community gardens around Adelaide such as Fern Avenue Community Garden in Unley.

This approach is suitable when the residents exhibit the capacity to self organise, and they desire a very high degree of participation in the development and maintenance of the public space. They may wish to install supporting infrastructure, invest in equipment that is permanently on site, charge rental fees for garden plots and exercise some control over access to the space through setting opening times.

In these circumstances more detailed guiding documents, management agreements and licences are used to clarify roles and responsibilities, licence periods, expectations regarding maintenance service levels, insurance cover, and aspects of the garden maintenance.

This is what is usually meant when residents call for the establishment of a community garden. There is currently one modest community garden of this type in the District, at Meadows. It is community interest in establishing more of these that has led to this investigation and report.

### ***How are community gardens managed?***

There are a number of day-to-day organisational and operational matters that need to be considered by any group seeking to establish a new community-controlled community garden.

The Australian City Farms and Community Gardens Network has developed a template for writing a Plan of Management for community gardens, available at the following site.

<http://communitygarden.org.au/blog/2011/03/08/management-plan-template/>

The template document covers the topics of vision, objectives, governance, site management, policies, waste and water management, safety, decision-making, funding, training, partnerships and community engagement.

The Plan of Management is quite different to a *site plan*, as it primarily focuses on how the Community Garden will be organised and managed, rather than how the design of the space.

Preparing a Plan of Management helps a community group to sort out its approach to a number of issues, prior to commencing the community garden. Clarification of these is likely to assist the garden to run smoothly and be sustainable.

A *Plan of Management* should be required for any community garden project that involves a licence over public or community land in the District.

### ***How are community gardens resourced?***

Community gardens are typically built with an opportunistic mix of volunteer labour, donated and purchased materials, grant funding, sponsorship, in kind support and fundraising.

Some Councils provide one off community grants to community gardens for specific infrastructure, others treat them as a kind of “outdoor Community Centre” and assist with the ongoing operational costs, including staffing and volunteer coordination.

Community gardens that are developed as a project of a Community Centre or another institution benefit from a more consistent level of support and resourcing than a ‘stand-alone’ community controlled community gardens.

It is important that Council considers the balance between providing *enough* support to ensure the project is viable and attractive to participants, and ensuring that there are opportunities for the community building and sense of ownership that results from developing the garden together. If everything is ‘provided on a plate’, this may result in a group not having a strong sense of ownership of the project, and thus could be somewhat counterproductive.

On the other hand, if there are nil or insufficient resources available to support the establishment of the community garden, participants may find the fundraising too onerous and the project may fail.

A useful comparison can be made again to organised sport, where the user pays principle applies, and the participants are expected to pay membership fees and support the clubs. However, this alone would be unlikely to raise enough funds to build the sporting facilities. A public funding contribution (or a significant benefactor) was probably required to establish the facility in the first place.

Agreeing on an approach to financial responsibility and viability will be important to any new community garden initiatives. This means that community groups will need to think about the opportunities they have for fundraising, forming partnerships, gaining donations, in kind support and volunteer labour. During the process of seeking Council’s support and contribution to any projects, community groups should be required to show what resources they will contribute. This can be outlined in the Plan of Management.

There is an opportunity to establish practical collaborations between community garden initiatives and other community projects such as the Clover Men’s Shed, Mount Barker Community Centre (the Family House), school kitchen gardens, VET horticulture training. These opportunities can be explored and evolve as community gardens become established.

Partnering opportunities currently exist with the Bendigo Bank, Walker Corp, Callington Primary School and the Adelaide Hills Community Health Service. Each of these organisations has expressed interest in

contributing resources to projects in the District. Letters from these organisations are attached to the report in Appendix A.

Other potential partners include

- Health, welfare and disability services
- Local businesses
- Corporate social responsibility programs
- Government employment programs or community corrections programs
  - Work-exchange programs such as Willing
- Workers on Organic Farms (WWOOF) and Willing Workers in Appropriate Technology.
- Other community gardens
- Local community groups who could use spaces in the garden for non-garden activities – eg. play groups
- Service Clubs
- University internship programs
- Schools



### ***How do community gardens address the issue of water use and management?***

A key issue regarding resourcing is likely to be access to a sustainable and affordable water supply.

Demonstrating water conservation practices in the garden is one area where community gardens can contribute significantly to community education and a more sustainable lifestyle. To this end, Council should seek to ensure that community gardens have good infrastructure for the management of water, and this might be one of the main areas for which Council provides financial assistance.

Some Councils have contributed to the establishment of sustainable infrastructure and systems including

- rainwater tanks to groups as part of their support to new gardens
- water meters to manage the supply of water to the garden
- A special water rate subsidy to ensure supply in their gardens.
- composting toilets (Fern Ave Community Garden and Wynnvale Community Garden both have composting toilets)

In the case of establishing new community gardens in the District Council of Mount Barker, access to a recycled water source could be considered to be an important criteria for locating community gardens.

It is considered appropriate, however, that the community garden group contributes to the ongoing costs of water.

A possible approach would be for Council to allocate a 'water budget' equivalent to that used in a park. Any water use above that allocation would then need to be paid by the gardeners. This approach has been successful in the City of Unley, where over time the water allocation to the Fern Avenue Community Garden has been reduced from 760 KL per year to 500 KL per year through the promotion of careful water management by the gardeners themselves.

A relevant comparison can be made to water allocation for the maintenance of ovals and other sporting fields. These are generally maintained by not-for profit community and recreation Associations. Most of the District's playing fields are irrigated with bore water, for which the responsible Association pays the associated power bills. At Callington Oval, mains water used for irrigation purposes has recently been replaced with recycled water from Council's Community Waste Management System (CWMS). Council is currently paying for this water use.

### ***Do community gardens need Development Approval?***

Under the SA Development Act and Regulations, and Council's Development Plan, the use of land for a community garden does not require development approval. Development approval *may* be required, however, for associated structures such as a fence, large sheds or a toilet in the community garden.

Wherever possible, community gardens should be located to maximise the use of existing public infrastructure such as toilets and car parks. This will then minimise the amount of new infrastructure needing Council consent or development approval for the community gardens.

### ***Do community gardens affect Community Land Management Plans?***

Under the Local Government Act, Council is required to have Management Plans for Community Land. These are currently fairly generic, and there are few existing management plans which would be an impediment to the development of a community garden.

If Community Land is licenced to a group for the purpose of establishing a community garden, however, it is necessary that this be incorporated into the Community Land Management Plans. This is relatively straight forward but would require a public meeting and community consultation period.

### ***Can Council mandate the provision of land for community gardens?***

A provision rate of 1 ha of community garden per 100 ha of residential development has been proposed by Ms Lolo Houbein, a gardening writer and keen advocate for community gardens. Ms Houbein is a member of the group who made a deputation to Council in 2011 that has resulted in this report.

At the current housing density of 10 dwellings per hectare (gross density), and an average household size of 2.63 people per dwelling, this provision rate would result in 1 ha of community garden per 2630 people. For the projected population of Mount Barker, Littlehampton and Nairne of around 50 000 -55 000, achieving this provision rate would require 19 community gardens of 1 ha each. If the provision rate was only applied to the growth areas rezoned by the Ministerial Mount Barker Urban Growth DPA, then 12 community gardens of 1 ha each would be the required provision.

The idea of dedicating a minimum amount of land for community food production has appeal if the primary purpose of community gardens is achieving food security, and the setting is an urban area with little private land suitable for food growing (ie a highly urbanised area with large number of people living in apartments). It is the recommendation of this report, however, that community gardens in the District Council of Mount Barker be seen primarily as *social and recreational spaces*, and be developed with primarily social objectives.

There is also no statutory mechanism available that Council could use to make the allocation of land for food production mandatory.

The Development Act requires that 12.5% of a development site be allocated to public open space for the benefit of the community. This requirement provides the opportunity for Council to seek identification of sites suitable for future community gardens during the process of development assessment. This would result in negotiated outcomes, in the same way that open space development is negotiated by Council for the provision of parks, trails, playgrounds, water management areas and sporting fields.

It is also considered that requiring provision of land for community gardens within a statutory framework might result in land being allocated for community gardens, but remaining unused. Instead, it is preferable to respond to requests for public gardening within a community development framework in recognition of community gardens as primarily recreational and social spaces.

Until such time as it is clear that there is sufficient demand and community interest in maintaining community gardens, it is not recommended that open space be dedicated or put aside for food production at a minimum provision rate.

It is important, however, that new open space is developed with sufficient flexibility so that if there is community interest in the future, additional areas of public open space can be identified and managed for food production. This requires some open space in new developments to be 'unallocated' – that is, not formally developed for a use such as water management, playground, sporting facility etc.

### ***Is there a role for residential land developers?***

Residential land developers play a very important role in the development of public open space as described above. Council often conducts detailed negotiations with developers regarding the areas to be allocated for open space and the facilities, plantings and equipment that will be provided by the developer.

Some residential land developers may have a particular interest in encouraging local food production in their developments and see this as a point of difference that contributes to developing a sense of place in the neighbourhood. In these cases Council can assist with the identification of appropriate sites for community gardens, basic infrastructure provision and species selection (for productive street trees, public orchards and 'edible landscapes').



Community gardens can make a valuable contribution to the public realm. This productive garden bed is located outside of City Hall in Oregon, Portland (photo courtesy of Mayor Ann Ferguson).

There is a significant opportunity to build the character and sense of place in the new development areas of Mount Barker through incorporating food growing areas. Council could promote this to developers, but is not able to mandate it under the current policy and regulation regime.

An ambitious example of integrating food production into a greenfields residential development has been established at Dandenong South, Melbourne. Called "Meridian", this is believed to be the first public residential neighbourhood in Australia to integrate fruiting trees and shrubs into public spaces on a large scale:

More than 330 fruit trees such as apples, apricots, lemons, pomegranates, pears, mulberries, plums, figs, guavas, olives and almonds will be planted in the swales throughout Meridian, which will be harvested and shared among the community.

A special charge scheme, collected by the City of Greater Dandenong and distributed back to the Meridian Homeowners Association, is proposed for the maintenance and harvesting of the orchard (VicUrban, 2011)

It is important to recognise that where the land developer provides a fully developed community garden, however, then one of the main outcomes - community building - could be missed. It is preferable that community members build the garden together, with the developer providing basic infrastructure and/or materials once the group has decided on its design and is ready to commence.

In the Mount Barker context, Walker Corp have indicated an interest in supporting a community garden at Bluestone and have incorporated this proposal into their landscaping plans for public open space. In the future this area will be gifted to Council to manage, so it is important that Council has developed a clear position regarding the future governance and maintenance of community gardens on public or community land.

### ***What are the implications of community gardens for Asset Management?***

The day to day operational management and maintenance of structures in a community garden should rest with the responsible incorporated association.

The main issues related to Asset Management from Council's perspective are:

- community gardens should not impact on the efficient and cost effectiveness of asset maintenance in the surrounding public open space.
- Access to utilities and services should not be impeded by the community garden or verge garden.
- Establishment of clear responsibility for asset maintenance, and a process if responsibilities are not being met by the responsible parties.
- Approval by Council of any permanent structures to be installed on public or community land, even if these do not require Development Approval. A timely process for gaining approval will be required.
- Development Approval may be also required for structures as per Development Act and Regulations.
- Ownership of assets installed for community gardens on public or community land will need to be agreed between Council and the Incorporated Association. The main issue is what will happen to the assets and structures funded by Council if the community garden is not viable and closes. Any assets built on public (Community) land that has been dedicated by the Crown to Council under its care and control, even if built by the Incorporated Association, are owned by the Council and if the community garden closes ownership of the assets would revert to Council.
- Fixed infrastructure on reserves needs to be carefully considered, and ideally should be transportable, so if interest and participation on community garden project wanes, the infrastructure can be relocated and the abandoned site returned to general reserve.

Most of these matters can be addressed in the licence agreement for use of public and community land.

It is important to recognise that community gardens have the potential to enhance Council's existing assets, not just present a problem to be managed.

*Community Gardens can provide an opportunity for maximal asset utilisation, both directly in terms of land use, and indirectly through doing the work of building, educating and enhancing community.*

*A well planned garden is an enhancement to the physical environment and can help to provide a human 'hub' in an otherwise undifferentiated park, drawing in people and encouraging peripheral activities. A garden offering a range of 'extra-garden' resources and activities adds a further level of amenity and value to the community (Hunter, 2011)*

**Are there any risks involved with establishing community gardens on public and community land?**

Community gardens have been shown to be successful in other Australian municipalities that share the characteristics of the District Council of Mount Barker, and the risks associated with them are considered to be fairly low.

Council should, however, consider risk management when assessing new proposals for community gardens and Neighbourhood Gardening Projects as part of exercising due diligence.



**Examples of infrastructure in community gardens that will need appropriate design for the public realm**

The following risks and risk management strategies have been identified.

Risk	Management Strategies
Negative human health impacts caused by unsafe use or storage of gardening equipment, chemicals or materials.	<p>Require that the Plan of Management outlines policies regarding chemical use in the community garden.</p> <p>Include requirements for safe equipment, chemical and materials storage and handling in the</p>

	<p>licence agreement.</p> <p>Ensure licence agreements have exit clauses that Council can use to close community gardens that repeatedly breach safety expectations.</p>
<p>Community gardens are targeted for graffiti, vandalism or become risks to public safety through poor design, lack of lighting etc</p>	<p>Apply Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles to ensure community gardens sites are safe, with good visibility and passive surveillance</p> <p>In instances where vandalism and theft do occur in gardens, various strategies can be adopted to reduce crime. One way is for the community garden group to engage community residents and visitors around the site and focus on building community relations (Hunter, 2011).</p>
<p>Community gardens are not well maintained and attract complaints.</p> <p>There may also be aspects of community gardens that some people perceive as 'untidy' in the context of a public reserve, including plants left to produce seed that will be saved, composting and propagation areas, and structures under construction.</p>	<p>Specify Council's site maintenance expectations in licence agreements.</p> <p>Provide information to community members about the objectives of community gardens, and explaining that they are not maintained principally as ornamental gardens but productive food gardens.</p> <p>Contribute funding to ensure materials and structures are of good quality and visual appeal.</p> <p>Ensure licence agreements have exit clauses that Council can use to close poorly maintained community gardens.</p>
<p>There is conflict between Council's maintenance practices for public reserves, and the objectives of the community garden group.</p> <p>For example, where a community garden group seeks to apply organic management practices, the group may object to spraying of weeds in the reserve around the Garden.</p>	<p>Conflict resolution process should be outlined in the licence agreement, and negotiated solutions be sought.</p> <p>In the case of the example given, Council staff could agree to minimising chemical use in the vicinity of the community garden, and in return the community garden group could agree to assist with the manual control of weeds around the community garden site.</p>

	Community garden groups will not, however, be able to control the land management practices of private land owners in the vicinity of the community garden.
A volunteer or member of the public is injured at the community garden and seeks to hold Council responsible as the land owner.	<p>Incorporated associations seeking to operate community gardens through a licence over public and community land must show evidence that they hold an adequate and current public liability insurance policy.</p> <p>Personal accident for association members and volunteers &amp; Association liability insurance would also be required.</p> <p>Insurance is currently available at minimal cost through NRM Boards and a national umbrella group for community gardens.</p>

***What are the important factors in the choice of a site and the design of a community garden?***

An evaluation of Sydney’s community gardens recommended the following regarding site choice and design:

- Where space permits and where the uses are compatible, community gardens should be designed as multiple-use public spaces.
- The choice of site and design of the garden should facilitate the development of a range of activities such as community education, community arts, events, passive recreation (eg picnics) and children’s play, in addition to food production. Multifunctional elements enhance the sustainability of a community garden because the number of stakeholders – people with a direct interest in the wellbeing of the garden – is increased
- The choice of site should allow a gradual expansion if the Garden is successful. Initially projects should start small and remain compact, and expand in ‘manageable chunks’.

The City of Charles Sturt’s Community Gardens Discussion Paper (Hunter, 2011) identifies the following points regarding site choice and garden design:

Access to the site	Successful community gardens are located in areas where people already tend to gather and that are well serviced by public transport, or they are close enough for people to walk or ride their bike. Maintaining a local focus for membership will also minimise the need for extensive car-parking space.
Access within the site	Planning and physical design for community gardens should consider accessibility for a variety of groups such as seniors, youth or people with diverse cultural backgrounds. The needs of people with restricted mobility in particular should be part of design considerations.
Appearance	A good design will need to address the existing streetscape in a harmonious fashion and not detract from the neighbourhood. Compost bins, stores of plant pots, fertilisers etc will need to be located inconspicuously, and a welcoming frontage or entranceway should invite inspection.
Functionality	The balance between maximising the number of plots for gardeners with the importance of aesthetics and welcoming shade needs careful consideration.
Participation	All members of the garden group should be encouraged to participate in the design phase, including children.
Safety and security	Safety is of primary concern, particularly if an area has multiple uses and multiple activities, and, the relevant safety standards should be adhered to.  Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) provides design suggestions such as low hedging, lighting and passive surveillance.
Information	A small information board would help visitors understand the site.
Site conditions	Protection from strong winds, and access to enough sunlight are important to growing plants

## **PART 3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COUNCIL**

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### ***Capacity of community to support community garden initiatives***

There are a number of indications that community gardening is an activity of enduring and wide spread interest in the District, including:

- the ongoing operation of the very successful Duck Flat Community Garden,
- many schools are now running or establishing kitchen gardens, and some allow public participation
- the residents around Chapman Cres have established and are maintaining a small orchard in a public reserve,
- the Meadows Community Association are maintaining the garden established at the Meadows Kindergarten on Council land, and
- the community of the Baptist Church in Mount Barker has recently started a community garden on private land.

The initiatives at Chapman Cres and in Meadows could be considered to be small scale 'pilot projects' that Council has actively supported in recent years with both in kind support and a financial grant.

Council staff have also had recent enquiries about verge gardening, and related initiatives such as home produce swaps (in Macclesfield) and the Magic Harvest project (in Mount Barker and Nairne) have recently commenced. There are also existing examples of guerrilla gardening on public land in the District.

Since commencing this investigation staff have been made aware that there are residents and organisations with an interest in the establishment of new community gardens in the towns of Mount Barker, Nairne, Littlehampton, Hahndorf, Macclesfield and Callington. In some cases this is interest in a small public orchard project, in other cases interest has been expressed in a more ambitious, community-controlled community garden.

Several requests for community gardens were made at consultations during May 2012 for the District Wide Open Space and Public Realm Strategy.

The District has a number of active Residents Associations and Recreation Committees that have the capacity to auspice a community garden project, and a number of very capable and experienced residents who could assist groups to establish new incorporated Associations and manage projects.

Other organisations and businesses are expressing interest in partnering with Council to support establishment of community gardens.

Together this indicates that there is likely to be both sufficient ongoing interest and organisational capacity to establish new community gardens in the District, and specifically to establish community – controlled gardens.

There remains some uncertainty as to the numbers of people who will actually commit their time to building, developing and maintaining community gardens on public land. Most dwellings in the District do have sufficient land for a private garden, and there are few people living in apartments. This means that those who have an interest in producing some of their own food may already be doing so in home gardens. Some residents who live in rental housing, however, may be unwilling to invest in establishing home gardens without secure, long term tenure. In addition, some residents may prefer gardening as a social activity or use it to build their confidence and skills.

The true extent of community interest in community gardens cannot be assessed without a supportive framework being in place to enable new initiatives to be allocated space. It is the recommendation of this investigation that Council proceeds with the development of additional community gardens, and specifically the establishment of the community controlled community gardens on public or community land.

#### **Recommendation**

**That Council resolves to support the establishment of a small number of new community garden projects on public or community land during 2012/13 - 2014/15 financial years.**

#### ***Need for a formal policy on community gardens***

The purpose of making a policy statement regarding community gardens is to have a consistent approach to the use of public land in various localities and over time.

A number of modest community gardening initiatives on public land are already operating successfully in the District. These have been established through the initiative of community members, with the encouragement, assistance and support of Council staff.

- The Meadows community garden adjacent Battunga Park was established by the Meadows Kindergarten with funds from Council in 2006/07. This garden is now being managed by volunteers from the Community Association.
- In the Dumas St/Chapman Cres reserve adjacent the Mount Barker Primary School a group of residents has established a community orchard and bush-tucker garden with assistance from Council.
- Council Officers have also experimented with fruit bearing trees in a Hahndorf Park and a Mount Barker street tree planting scheme.

Through these initiatives, Council has been effectively ‘piloting’ community gardens in a number of sites during the last 5 years.

It is recommended to continue this ‘enabling’ approach of providing practical support for community initiatives. A simple policy statement to this effect would provide a degree of certainty and consistency regarding Council’s position and approach to community gardens.

In addition, there are existing examples of ‘guerilla gardening’ in the District where members of the community are already gardening on public land, but with no formal permission to do so, or adequate guidelines around this activity. It is recommended to formalise this activity through providing an appropriate policy framework and guideline.



**Two existing examples of guerrilla gardening in the District, one a food garden in an undeveloped reserve, the other an ornamental verge garden.**

This investigation recommends that to support the further development of community gardens in the District, the following will be required:

1. A **brief policy statement** that outlines Council’s position regarding community gardens on public or community land. This should outline
  - a. the importance of community leadership and active involvement in community gardens,
  - b. the key objectives Council seeks to achieve, such as
    - i. positive health and wellbeing outcomes for the District’s residents, such as community capacity development and social inclusion
    - ii. diversity of recreation and cultural activity in the District,
    - iii. good management of public resources, including public open space, through due diligence and accountable processes, and

- iv. sustainable and viable community facilities
  - v. efficient and effective management processes for community gardens established on public land
- c. Council's responsibilities and the potential mechanisms for Council to support community gardens.
2. **Practical guideline documents** that outline the roles and responsibilities of Council and the community in more detail than the policy statement. This should cover various forms of public gardening, including community gardens, verge gardens, public orchards and productive street trees.

These should include a clear process for obtaining consent to establish a community garden on public or community land. It is important that the process provides contact points, a timeframe for granting approval and indicates what information will be required from the applicants.

Guideline documents can be easily amended to respond to any unforeseen issues that may arise in the future. The appropriate format could be a set of Fact Sheets or a web page with information about Frequently Asked Questions.

The Guideline could include information about

- the content of the Community Gardens Policy
  - the relevant content of related policies, legislation and regulations
  - the process for gaining Council approval for a Community or Neighbourhood garden
  - the requirements for establishing an Incorporated Association and a Licence Agreement for operating a community garden on public or community land
  - relevant Council policies and plans that should be considered
  - recommended site selection criteria
  - Council's endorsed open space hierarchy
  - Council's minimum requirements to maintain access and public safety for verge gardens
  - recommended (and prohibited) fruit and nut tree species for community gardens, public orchards and productive street tree plantings
  - contact details and information about assistance that Council can provide
  - other relevant matters.
3. A **standard licence** for agreement between an incorporated association and Council for the operation of a community garden on public or community land.

The purpose of the proposed policy, guidelines and licence agreement is to provide a framework that facilitates the responsible management of public or community land whilst encouraging greater public participation, use and creativity in public open space through community gardens.

These are described in more detail in the following sections.

### **Recommendation**

**That Council adopt and articulate a policy position of enabling and supporting community initiatives through community gardens.**

### ***Community garden models***

Two models for community gardens are recommended for public and community land in Council's care and control:

#### *1. "Neighbourhood Gardens"*

These are local neighbourhood-level food and other gardening projects such as community orchards and verge gardens. They provide a simple model of public and recreational gardening, on a small scale and primarily for the benefit of residents immediately surrounding the park, or the residents on the street.

The model is considered similar to the role of bush care volunteers who care for native vegetation on public land, and participate in revegetation and weed control activities which complement Council's role as a land manager.

This model could also extend to Council formally recognising 'Friends of the Park' groups for local parks in suburban settings. There may be a need for the participating individuals and 'Friends Groups' to be registered with Hills Volunteering.

The neighbourhood gardens would not be fenced for exclusive use of particular residents or groups. There would also be no need for special infrastructure or maintenance outside of Council's normal park development and maintenance program. That is, there should be no expectation that Council will install toilets or shelters for these projects. A seat and water connection point may be appropriate in some circumstances.

Neighbourhood gardens in public parks and reserves will require Council's ongoing involvement and Council would retain the ultimate decision making and maintenance role. This should be managed by the Open Space Policy Officer and Field Services staff.

Verge gardens would benefit from a standard 'design guide' and should not require Council's intervention unless the design guide is not to be followed or there is a risk to public safety (eg blocking of safe access route or lines of sight for traffic).

Street trees could be a logical way to introduce productive landscape plantings, with an "adopt a tree" program to assist with specific pruning requirements.

**Recommendation:**

**That Council develop a practical guideline document (or Fact Sheets) for the establishment of local level 'neighbourhood gardens' such as community orchards, productive street trees and verge gardens. This should describe the minimum design requirements to ensure public safety, the recommended (and any prohibited) species for fruit and nut tree selection, and provide a point of contact at Council.**

## *2. Community Gardens*

Community gardens will be understood as public gardening projects which have a broader catchment area, level of formalisation and infrastructure development than "Neighbourhood Gardening Projects".

The establishment of a community garden on public or community land will require a formal licence between Council and Community Groups for the use of land in Council's care and control for the purposes of operating a community garden.

This governance model is similar to sporting clubs which have responsibility for aspects of management and maintenance of public land which are established through formal user agreements, lease and licence agreements with Council.

An Incorporated Association will be required to manage the community garden (or the project will be auspiced by an Incorporated Association) and enter into legal agreements with Council for management of public or community land.

Without this licence, many aspects of community gardening are likely to contravene *the Local Government Land By Law 2010*.

The licence agreements may include the following:

- the responsibilities of the Association in relation to the project and the site
- the responsibilities of Council in relation to the project and the site
- the licence period
- the licence fees
- insurance
- the requirement for a Plan of Management
- key performance indicators

- the parameters for control over access to the site (fencing, hours of operation, general public access times)
- a dispute resolution process
- asset management requirements, including ownership of structures
- exit clauses
- other relevant matters

A higher level of development and infrastructure investment is envisaged for community gardens and this could include fencing, toilets, water tanks, shelters, storage facilities and art works. Community groups should be encouraged to fundraise and seek sponsorship to contribute to this infrastructure.

Private financial benefit should not be generated from community gardens on public land, but fundraising for the benefit of the garden would be acceptable (for example through the sale of seedlings and crops) to encourage community gardens to be financially self supporting.

#### **Recommendation**

**That Council develop a practical guideline document (or Fact Sheets) for the establishment of community gardens on public or community land.**

**That Council develop a standard licence agreement for the management of public or community land by an Incorporated Association, for the purpose of developing a “community –controlled community garden”.**

#### ***Process for establishing community gardens on public or community land.***

It is important that a straightforward and transparent process for gaining Council permission to establish a community garden is an outcome of this investigation. Without this there will be ongoing confusion regarding how to proceed. This will lead to poor community relationship outcomes for Council.

The following steps and timelines are recommended:

Step 1	Council endorses recommendations of this report and instructs staff to prepare supporting documentation (policy, licence agreement and guidelines)	Nov 2012
Step 2	Council advertises for Expressions of Interest to establish community garden projects on public or community land (This to be a brief outline of proposed project)	Dec
Step 3	Project proposals are assessed and recommendations made to Council, including future resourcing implications	Feb 2013

Step 4	More detailed Plans of Management to be prepared for recommended projects	March
Step 5	Public meetings regarding use of specific parcels of public or community land for community gardens (if required)	April
Step 6	Council endorses project proposals based on merit	May
Step 7	Licence agreements finalised and projects commence	July/Aug

In future years, it would not be necessary to undertake all of these steps. Instead the process would start at step 2 with an annual Expression of Interest process in September for new projects to commence in the following financial year. This would allow Council to respond to requests for community gardens on public land in a systematic and transparent way, allocate resources in the budget cycle and monitor the level of demand for this use of public land.

#### **Recommendation**

**That Council establish a clear process for gaining approval for gardening on public or community land.**

#### ***Establishment period for new community gardens***

A two year establishment period should be built into the initial licence agreements to ensure that there is sufficient time for a community garden to be established. It is desirable that a review be undertaken after one year of operations to ensure any issues regarding viability and management can be identified and solutions found in collaboration with the Association.

The ideal period of agreement for community gardens is three - four years. If a garden is successfully established in the first 2 years, a longer licence period should be offered.

There may be circumstances where a community garden does not prove to have sufficient support and participation to be viable, or to meet Council's expectation for the safety and maintenance of public land. In these circumstances Council should do what it can to assist the group to meet the requirements in the first instance.

If this does not result in the desired outcomes, it may be necessary in some cases for Council to resume management of the site and close the community garden.

Licence agreements for community gardens should include exit clauses that would allow Council to appropriately manage the risk of poor utilisation or management of public land.

### **Recommendation**

**That licence agreement for community gardens on public or community land should be for an initial establishment period of two years, with a requirement that the agreement be reviewed after one year of operation.**

**That exist clauses be included in licence agreements to allow Council to close unsuccessful or abandoned community gardens on public or community land in certain circumstances.**

**After an initial establishment period, ongoing licence agreements for community gardens should be for up to 4 year periods to ensure there is adequate security of tenure for the activity.**

### ***Plans of Management***

An important requirement of a community group seeking to establish a new community garden on public or community land will be the preparation of a Plan of Management.

This document will ensure Council has sufficient information about the management structure, operating policies, approach to financial viability, insurance, preferred sites and resource requirements to be able to assess the viability and sustainability of a proposal for the use of public land.

Plans of Management will also inform Council's risk management approach, and any conditions to be attached to the licence agreement regarding the project.

In the first instance these could be relatively brief, with more detail to be provided if the proposal gains Council support.

Detailed Plans of Management should include information regarding the objectives, governance, site management, waste and water management, safety, decision-making approach, partnerships, community contribution and public access to the community garden.

### **Recommendation**

**That Council require a Plan of Management as condition of granting a licence agreement for a community garden on public or community land.**

### ***Partnerships and collaboration***

A willingness to assist or provide resources for the establishment of community gardens has already been expressed by one developer (Walker Corporation), a School Principal (at Callington Primary), the Adelaide Hills Community Health Service and the Bendigo Bank. Letters indicating this support are attached to this report in Appendix A.

There are a range of other organisations and businesses that are potential partners and sponsors. See the list of potential partners developed by the stakeholder group at Appendix B.

It is desirable that proposals for community gardens demonstrate evidence of sponsorship or other sources of support in the Expression of Interest process. Letters of support indicating potential partnerships to sustain the initiative and contribute to costs should be supplied. This will indicate viability and capacity.

#### **Recommendation**

**That Council staff actively seek opportunities for formal partnerships and collaboration regarding community gardens.**

**That groups seeking to establish community gardens on public or community land be requested to provide letters of support and indications of partnerships and sponsorship from organisations and/or businesses as part of their Expression of Interest.**

### ***Provision rate, distribution, open space hierarchy and site selection***

#### *Provision Rate:*

The proposal to adopt a provision rate for community gardens is discussed above on pages 30-31.

Applying a provision rate for community gardens is not recommended at this point in time. Responding to community interest is considered to be a more suitable approach, as Council should apply a Community Development framework to this initiative, rather than seek to mandate an outcome.

#### *Distribution:*

It is important that the opportunity for commencing new community gardens and neighbourhood garden projects is balanced between the growth townships of Mount Barker, Littlehampton and Nairne and the smaller townships in the District.

It would be ideal that for every one project initiated in the growth towns, there be one in the other townships. This will depend, however, on the locations of expressed interest.

It is considered highly desirable to support initiatives that help new residents of the growth areas to make connections with each other and with existing communities of interest. In this way community gardens would contribute to building social capital and cohesion in new development areas.

#### *Open Space Hierarchy:*

It is desirable that public open space is developed in a fairly consistent way across the District. When choosing a site for a community garden, the level of development proposed should be consistent with Council's open space hierarchy and strategic Open Space Management Plans. This will ensure that the

appropriate level of care and maintenance is in place for the site and project. The location of a community garden may also lead to a change in the hierarchy, or reclassification, of an open space area.

*Site Criteria:*

It is appropriate to adopt site criteria which can be used to ensure that the sites suggested by proponents of community gardens are likely to be accessible and appropriate for the proposed activities.

Whilst as many of these criteria should be met as possible, it is not likely that many sites will meet them all. Therefore the site criteria will provide a guide to the selection of suitable sites and should not be applied in a rigid way.

The investigation recommends that the following be considered suitable site criteria.

Site criteria for community gardens:

1. There is good passive surveillance from surrounding streets, dwellings or businesses
2. The site has good solar access, protection from strong winds and is not steep
3. The site is not known to be contaminated
4. The site is not known to be intended for another use that would exclude, or conflict with, the use for community gardens
5. There is safe car parking nearby for gardeners and safe vehicle access for delivery of materials
6. Water and power connections are available or can be made without excessive cost
7. There is access to public toilets (or the site is suitable for installation of toilets in future)
8. The site is public transport accessible
9. There are opportunities for collaboration with nearby organisations and facilities
10. The site is in a 'High Level Neighbourhood Park' location, or the project is considered to be otherwise consistent with the open space hierarchy adopted by Council

Site criteria for neighbourhood garden projects:

1. Criteria 1-4 of the above list will also apply to Neighbourhood Garden Projects
2. Additional criteria for community orchards: a minimum of 2 local residents indicates willingness to develop and maintain a project within proposed Council guidelines

3. Additional criteria for verge gardens: local residents indicate willingness to develop and maintain a project within proposed Council guidelines

### **Recommendation**

**That Council adopt site criteria described in this report, but that it not adopt a distribution or provision rate for community gardens.**

### ***Council resources and funding***

The review of case study evidence suggests that community gardens can be established with a very small amount of direct funding support, however, institutional and financial support is vital for their success and sustainability.

Most of the labour and materials are usually supplied by the community members that volunteer in the garden. Some materials and infrastructure can also be accessed through collaboration with a service club, donations, or through in kind support from Council. This could include soil, mulch, plants, frames for raised garden beds, seating, paving, composting bays and shade structures.

There are some aspects of a community garden's infrastructure, however, that may need to be purchased or installed professionally. These could include power, fencing, gates, storage sheds, rain water tanks, toilets and watering systems.

Sponsorship, donations and fundraising by the Association, may reduce the direct funding requirements for this infrastructure, and this should be encouraged. The investigation has found that community gardens are likely to require a small investment of funds by Council (or another agency) as well, if they are to be successful.

It is important to recognise that due to the location of community gardens in public open space and reserves, Council will have an interest in seeing a reasonably high quality of appearance and safety standard maintained for community garden infrastructure.

For this reason it is anticipated that some financial support from Council may be required to ensure community gardens are visually attractive and protect public safety. This expectation should be managed in a way that allows for creative expression at the same time.

The experience of other Councils has been that community gardens require between \$5,000 - \$15,000 of funding for their development, depending on the size of the project. Some of this can be provided by in-kind support. If installation of a toilet is required then the costs may be high, but conversely, if the garden is located with an existing community facility such as a hall or recreation ground, the costs could be quite modest. These funds can also be provided over time as the garden develops.

Council should consider allocation of funds from annual budgets on the basis of project proposals. Much like other recreation and sport projects, community groups will need to demonstrate the value of their proposals.

It is anticipated that Council could be asked to contribute to larger infrastructure items such rain water tanks, storage sheds, shelter structures, greenhouses and fencing.

In the first instance Neighbourhood Gardening Projects such as community orchards should generally be developed so that they do not impact significantly on park maintenance budgets. A future budget allocation to Neighbourhood Gardening Projects could be required if community interest proves to be very high, or a management impact is identified by Field Services staff.

The development of both Neighbourhood Gardening Projects and community gardens will also require Council staff resources. It is recommended that a Community Development Officer be assigned the responsibility for being Council's first point of contact and coordinating Council's contribution to future projects. An important part of this role would be to help community groups navigate Council requirements and ensure they liaise with someone who is familiar with relevant Council policy and information.

Involvement will also be required from staff with responsibility for open space planning, parks maintenance, governance, asset management, contract management and administration.

This staff support is considered essential to ensure the viability and success of the projects.

Staff roles could include:

- liaison with community groups,
- liaison with partner organisations,
- the development of guidelines and other documentation,
- assessment of project proposals,
- community engagement and public meetings,
- preparation of Council reports,
- negotiation of licence agreements,
- strategic planning in regard to asset maintenance,
- assistance with site assessment and development applications (if required),
- coordinating in kind support
- assisting with funding applications to external agencies,

- administration of grant funds (Council and external),
- annual review of community garden projects
- evaluation of community gardens initiatives

Ideally, a single point of contact at Council will be established, so that community members can easily access the information and processes they need to establish and operate community gardens with the minimum of 'red tape'. This role would be best undertaken by a Community Development Officer or Recreation Officer.

Reporting on Council's financial and in kind contribution to community gardens and neighbourhood gardening projects should occur annually, with a more extensive review of the initiative, including outcomes and ongoing role of Council after 2 years from the commencement of licence agreements for new community gardens.

The appropriateness of Council contributing financially to community garden projects on private land (eg church sponsored projects, school kitchen gardens etc) will need to be considered carefully. In some circumstances this could enable an agency controlled community garden project to be more accessible to a wider group and represent an opportunity for successful partnership and collaboration.

#### **Recommendation**

**That the General Manager, Council Services, ensures that a staff member is allocated to be the contact point and coordinator of Council responsibilities for the community gardens initiatives, and that this staff member is given the responsibility and sufficient time to undertake this role.**

**That Council reviews its staffing, in kind support and financial, assistance to community gardens annually, and evaluates the outcomes of the initiative after 2 years.**

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## APPENDIX A - LETTERS OF SUPPORT

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Ms Ann Ferguson  
Mayor  
District Council of Mount Barker  
P.O. Box 54  
MT BARKER 5251 SA

16 January 2012

Dear Ms Ferguson

I am writing on behalf of Walker Corporation to lend our support to the establishment of community gardens throughout the District Council of Mount Barker.

As a major developer of land in Mount Barker we support sustainable development of the area and understand that part of this picture means encouraging communities to establish community garden areas where they can grow their own food and/or share an area of land where residents can be encouraged to grow fruits and vegetables.

The Bluestone Development Manager, Chris Buttignol and I met with Lolo Houbein on 27<sup>th</sup> October 2011 to discuss the concept of community gardens and how they may be incorporated into the land development at Bluestone. Lolo advised Chris and I of how a community garden is established with the support of Council, and with a core group of local residents who take responsibility for the garden.

In planning the development and release of our next stage (Stage 2B) at Bluestone, provision has been made for a community garden and orchard area. The area is located at the end of a court and is surrounded by walking access trails adjacent to the creek, and steam ranger railway reserve. We propose to allocate an area for use as a community garden. We will undertake as part of this stage to plant the orchard trees in this area at our cost.

We look forward to the Council establishing some community garden guidelines for the district and also working with the District Council of Mt Barker to ensure that this area is developed sustainably and there is provision made for community garden programs throughout the area.

If I can assist you at all please do not hesitate to contact me on 0417 137 912.

Yours sincerely

Stephney Sproull  
Community Development Officer  
Bluestone Mt Barker



Government of  
South Australia

**tafesa**

6 November 2012

Letter of support for a Community Based Garden in Mt Barker Area

This letter supports the establishment of a community based garden in Mt Barker. TAFE SA is keen to support the establishment of a garden as this will fit in with the re- introduction of Certificate II in Horticulture and Conservation and Land Management courses that will be delivered at the Mt Barker TAFE campus in 2013.

Assistance in setting up and developing the garden could be undertaken as part of the 'Skill for All' initiative within the Certificate II in Horticulture course. **Certificate II in Horticulture is a free course within Skills for All.** Participants may be eligible to study Certificate II in Horticulture for free. Students will need to check their eligibility criteria. This could provide a unique opportunity for people who want to learn horticulture and establish a garden. The involvement of students at the ground level could be a unique learning experience.

TAFE SA is also aware of the intended establishment of an educational facility to be developed at the Laratinga wetland in the future. We would again support such a proposal as this could be beneficial as a learning resource for the Conservation and Land Management Course.

TAFE SA welcome both these initiatives and wish you well in your endeavours in there establishment, any assistance we can provide we would be happy to discuss with you at a later meeting

Yours sincerely

Bob Reid  
Training Manager  
Primary & Allied Industries



**1st August 2012**

**To Whom It May Concern,**

The Adelaide Hills Community Health Service supports the District Council of Mount Barker's initiatives in establishing community gardens within the Mount Barker area.

We acknowledge the importance of working in partnership to support better health outcomes for the local community and commend the council in pursuing opportunities to work together on this issue.

The predicted population growth for the Mount Barker area necessitates a planned approach to enabling this community to have better access to healthy lifestyle resources, education, supports and activities. Community gardens provide a way for communities to develop greater connectedness, have access to physical activity and support healthy eating.

The Duck Flat Community Garden, located on site at the Mount Barker DSM Hospital and Adelaide Hills Community Health Service, provides an excellent model for collaborative work with council in supporting learning opportunities for the local community. Currently, the Duck Flat Garden supports many groups within the community to access opportunities for physical and nutritional activities and offers a range of volunteering options. The Garden is well suited to being an active partner in supporting any new community garden initiatives within the local community.

The Adelaide Hills Community Health Service looks forward to continuing our collaboration with the District Council of Mount Barker in supporting the local community to achieve better health outcomes and we strongly support the initiatives to establish community gardens and the support systems to enable their sustainability.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Thomas'.

**Jolie Thomas**  
**Program Manager, Healthy Communities, including Duck Flat Community Garden**  
**Hills Southern Fleurieu Kangaroo Island Cluster**  
**Country Health SA**



Mayor Ann Ferguson  
District Council of Mount Barker

03/09/12

Attention Penny Worland

Proposed Community Garden Project – Mt Barker

I am writing this letter to confirm that Bendigo Bank - Mt Barker Branch, are piloting an initiative supporting a project identified by the local Community. The Bank's role in this will be to assist in the raising of funds to be funnelled to the nominated project, (I have included some information on how the Bank purposes to do this).

After consultation with Community Groups and local Not for Profit organisations earlier in the year, the overwhelming request was to have a Community Garden in the Mt Barker vicinity.

To this end I have now spoken with Penny Worland and discussed the work that she is completing on the same topic and thought it appropriate to put this letter forward so that it make be tabled as a, partnered project when taken to the next level.

If you would like to discuss this further please feel free to contact me on 08 8225 2275.

Yours truly,

Deirdre Hume  
Branch Manager  
Mt Barker Branch  
4 Gawler St  
Mt Barker SA 5251  
Ph 08 8225 2275  
Fax 08 8225 2276

Bendigo and Adelaide Bank Limited ABN 11 068 049 178 AFSL 237879.  
The Bendigo Centre, Bendigo VIC 3550 Phone 1300 361 911 Fax 03 5485 7000

BEN30MID25 (524485)

# Callington Primary School



*'Preparing Children for the Future'*  
**North Terrace CALLINGTON SA 5254**  
Phone: (08) 85385046 Fax: (08) 85385108  
E-mail – [info@callingsps.sa.edu.au](mailto:info@callingsps.sa.edu.au)

SCANNED  
10/8/11



August 8 2011

Dear Mayor Ferguson.

DC Mt Barker File No. 321070 Rec 10 AUG 2011 Doc. No. _____
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I would like to make enquiries regarding community gardens and the position of the Mt Barker Council with respect to releasing land etc for such endeavours.

As you would be aware many schools in our state are developing kitchen gardens and are partially funded by Stephanie Alexander. To establish a Stephanie Alexander garden requires considerable resources and for many small schools a commitment of a school support officer to maintain the project is not feasible (I have been quoted a minimum of twenty three thousand dollars per annum) Schools do fund raise and find creative ways to maintain the momentum of such an initiative but as you can imagine it is exceedingly difficult for a small staff and community to do so.

Notwithstanding these challenges, Callington Primary has been looking into how we could provide our students with the marvellous learning experiences of a school garden. To this end, we have had discussions with the Callington Community and Districts Group Inc as well as our School's Governing Council. One plan was to fund the garden with support from a grant given some years ago by Hillgrove to purchase raised garden beds. A number of parents have already approached local hardware stores to see if they are willing to make donations of items. You may not be aware that our school grounds are contaminated with arsenic and as such we are not allowed to dig into the soil at Callington Primary, hence raised garden beds are our only option.

The Callington Community and Districts Group Inc has informed us that they will pursue a grant for a community kitchen in the Callington Hall. This could be used for demonstration cooking lessons with the students once the produce had been grown. If this was to occur, we would be working with a dedicated group of parents in our local community.

It is clearly evident, in light of the above, that as a school community we are being proactive in our pursuit of a school garden. In addition to this, I have recently had contact with local community members who have asked for my support regarding a proposal to the Mt. Barker Council to establish a community garden.

As a school community I believe that a community garden would be a powerful response to the notion of sustainable communities. As a school we would be prepared to donate raised garden beds. Our staff and students would provide, during term time, the labour that would be required to look after the garden. Moreover, it would strengthen community relationships and would offer opportunities for the older generations to work with young people, sharing their knowledge, skills and understandings of the importance of self-sufficiency. For example children would learn that corn does not come out of a can!

Further to this, I believe that due to the rapid growth of this region and the inevitable loss of food-producing land it is imperative that communities in this area do not lose sight of the importance of the skills and knowledge of food production.

I would be most interested in your response to this enquiry and would be prepared to come and speak to appropriate personnel about our willingness and commitment to the establishment of community gardens.

Yours sincerely,



Marie-Louise Adams

Principal.

## APPENDIX B

### POTENTIAL PARTNERS AND RESOURCES: COMMUNITY GARDENS AND FOOD SECURITY

PEOPLE & ORGANISATIONS	PROGRAMS, RESOURCES, PLACES
Farmers and hobby farmers	Council owned land, reserves
Farmer's Market	Opal program
Health service, SA Health	Duck Flat Community Garden
Renewal SA	Glandore Community Garden
Council's Field Services staff	Food Sensitive Urban Design resources
Schools/TAFE/Uni	Other Council's programs
Harry Harrison (re community education, outreach)	Existing orchards – TAFE & Nairne
Community-residents	Magic Harvest (project at City of Onkaparinga)
Regional Development Australia – policy, regional work	RDA for funding , enterprise and training
Volunteers SA	Growing Community – community gardens book
Township based organisations eg Community and Recreation Associations	Community Supported Agriculture
Resident's Associations	Recycled water – purple pipe
Service Clubs	Species selection guideline
Men's Shed group (labour)	Venues for meetings
Housing SA	Housing SA for grants funding
CentreLink	
Gardening Centres & wholesale nurseries	Gardening centres for info, sponsorship
Developers (eg Bluestone)	Developers for land, materials and funds/sponsorship
Disability SA	
Disability employment services – HCA, FWS	
Businesses	Corporate sponsorship, Socially responsible business benefits
Botanic Garden – Jo Staniforth (DEWNR)	
MDB NRM Board for insurance	
PIRSA	