



Community Garden Guide



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Introduction to community gardening in Shellharbour City

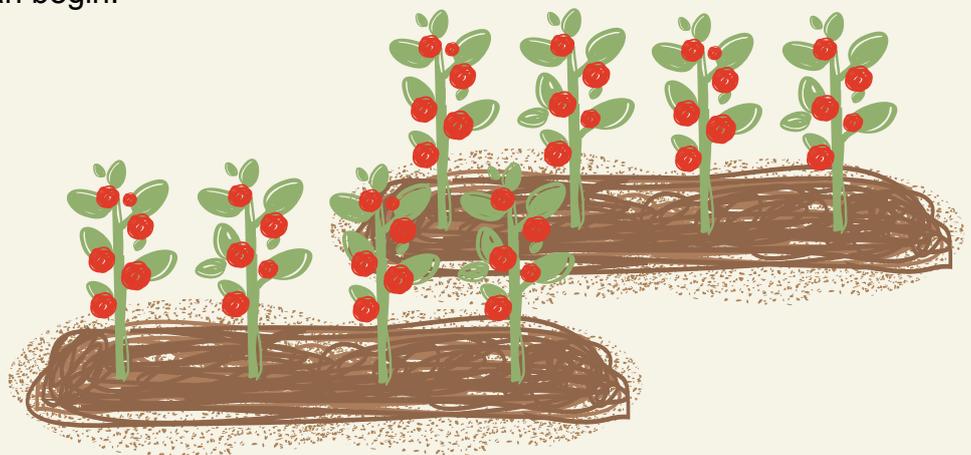


Shellharbour City Council recognises community gardening contributes to the social and cultural fabric of our community and provides educational and environmental benefits.

This Community Garden Guide (the Guide) adopted in 2023, assists Customers in site selection, organisation and planning for community gardens. Council's Shellharbour City Community Gardens Strategy (the Strategy) adopted in 2022, supports this Guide and provides a framework for managing and expanding the community gardens network across Shellharbour City.

The Strategy and Guide documents should be read and understood before the community garden group begins to undertake their community garden application.

Council supports the establishment of community gardens on approved areas of public land that is owned by Council. If a community garden application is endorsed by Council, a licence agreement will be granted in accordance with relevant Council policies. Once a licence agreement is in place, work to establish the garden can begin.

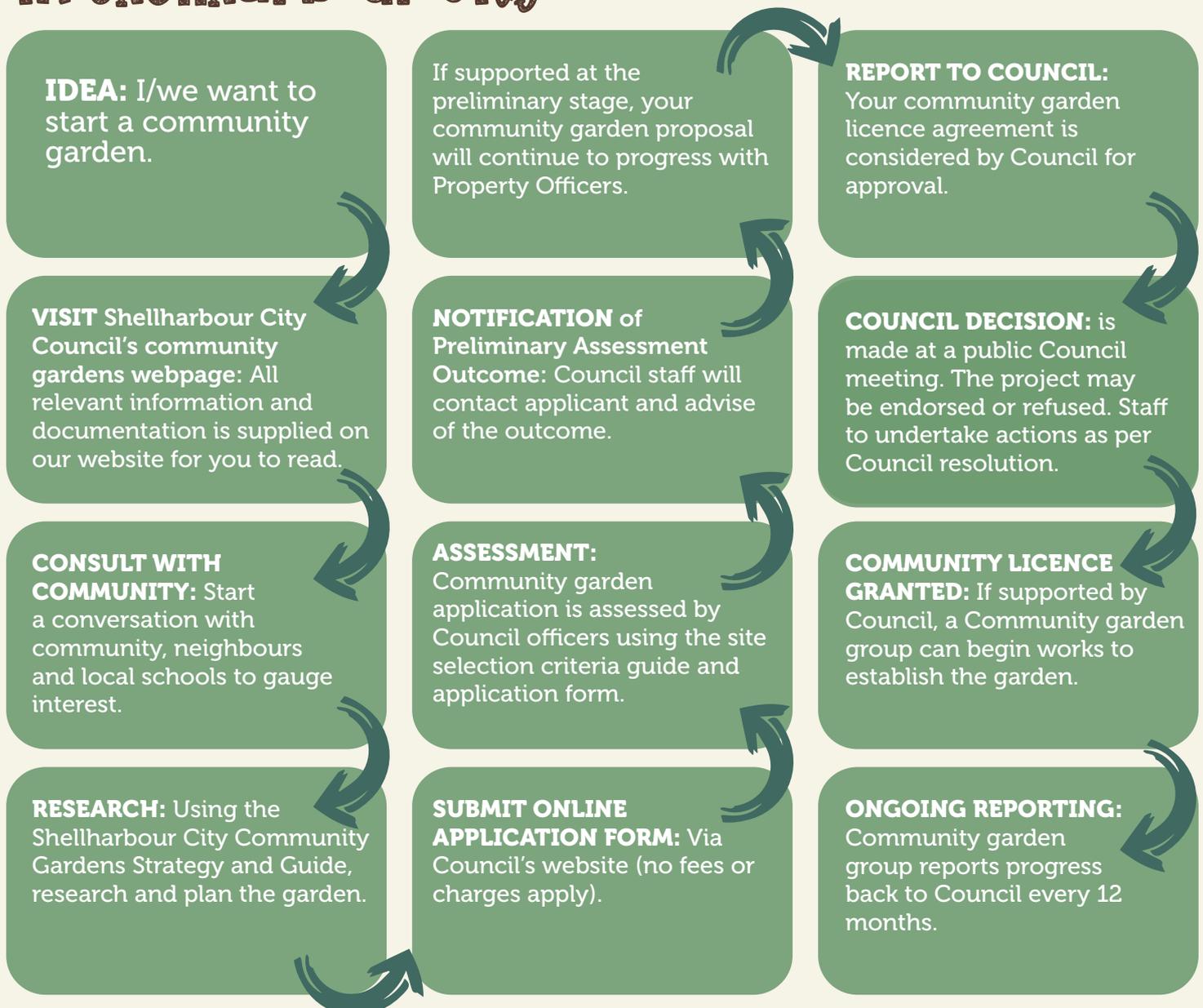


Guide to submitting a community garden application

Community members can request to establish a new community garden by using the Community Garden Application Form available on Council's website. Please see the below process to request a new community garden in Shellharbour City.

Prior to lodging an application, garden groups are encouraged to meet with Council officers to discuss the proposed community garden; this can be arranged by calling Council's Customer Services. It may be necessary for Council officers to undertake further investigations or research after the meeting. Notes will be provided to the Customer within 10 working days.

The Process - Community Gardens in Shellharbour City



Tip You can use the maps function on Council's website to determine details such as land classification, land zone, heritage and connection to the path network etc.

Site Selection Criteria

The following table outlines criteria to be considered when garden groups are preparing to establish a new community garden, the outcomes will inform the community garden application and a preferred site for the establishment of the community garden.

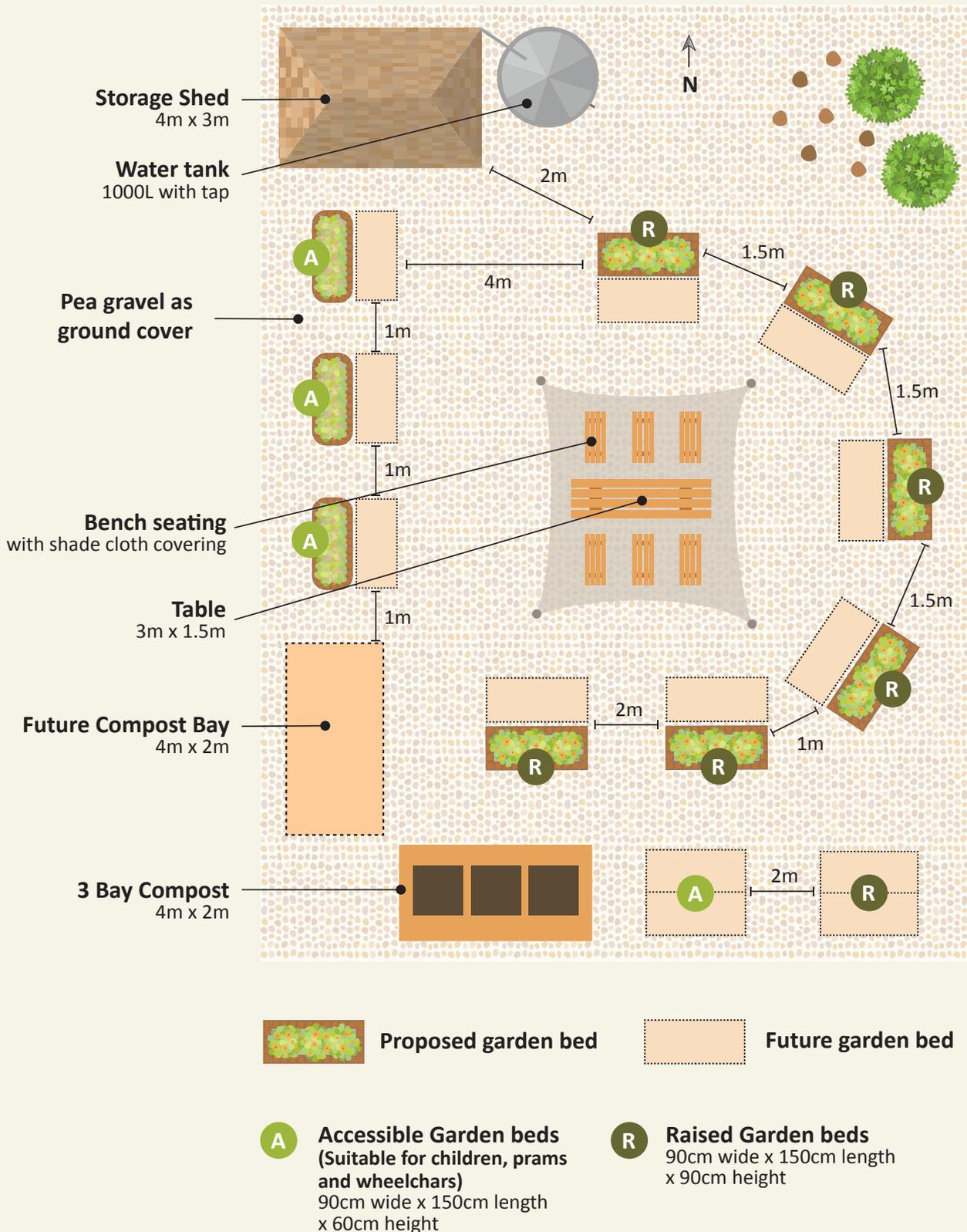
This checklist will be used by Council officers to assess proposed community gardens.

Site Consideration	
1.	Location and site characteristics
1.1	Site is owned by Council and classified as Community Land
1.2	The site connects to the path network
1.3	The site offers accessible linkages for wheelchair and pram access
1.4	Existing uses within the wider reserve will be maintained, the garden will not negatively impact on use of the reserve/facility
1.5	A buffer zone exists between neighbours and other adjoining uses/facilities
1.6	The site is zoned RE1 Public Recreation under Shellharbour Local Environmental Plan (SLEP)
1.7	The site has not been identified as Asset Protection Zone, habitat for Endangered Ecological Communities, a road reserve, of Aboriginal or European heritage significance, flood prone or a detention basin.
1.8	Site topography is suitable for establishing a garden – no need to remove trees, or undertake cut or fill
1.9	Site has adequate drainage features
1.10	Site receives adequate sunlight
1.11	Site is suitably sized to accommodate desired structures; not limited to garden beds, seating and rainwater tanks
1.12	The size does not compromise other reserve functions
2.	Safety
2.1	Site should offer natural (passive) surveillance from nearby or neighbouring uses/facilities such as residences, shops or pedestrians
2.2	Site is nearby to existing lighting
2.3	Sites and soils should be free of safety or hazardous concerns
3.	Accessibility
3.1	Site offers accessible linkages for wheelchair and pram access from paths or car parking areas into the garden
3.2	Site design and layout offers accessible movement within the garden for all ages and abilities (children, elderly, prams, wheelchairs)
3.3	Site design includes accessible garden beds
3.4	Site design includes community harvest bed
3.5	Site offers nearby area for car parking within an appropriate walking distance
3.6	Site is located nearby to amenities
3.7	Site is accessible via public transport routes
3.8	Maintenance vehicles or cars can access the site to deliver goods, if required
3.9	Interested community members live or work nearby, or can travel easily to the proposed site
4.	Garden Group Management
4.1	The group is an Incorporated Association
4.2	Demonstrated capacity to sustain a gardening group, garden maintenance and financial capacity

Garden Design

All community garden applications to Council require a design plan for the site. The design and garden layout should be sympathetic to existing local character and address the considerations outlined in the Application Form. See below for an example.

Community garden design Plan (SCC, 2020):



Aims and Objectives

Identifying aims and objectives of the community garden will assist in the planning, management and maintenance of the garden site and ensure the community garden is operating in accordance with expectations set by the group, and adhering to Council policy.

The identification of aims and objectives should be informed by garden group discussion, site considerations and Council's Community Gardens Strategy and this Guide.



Funding and Resourcing

Planning to fund and resource a community garden requires the group to identify funding sources and develop a budget. Each community garden will have varied financial goals to assist in the delivery of their garden, this will be dependent on the aims and objectives identified by the garden group. Refer to Council's website to stay up to date with other funding opportunities.

Risk mitigation and Management

The community garden group has a duty of care for members and the wider community to facilitate safe access and ensure adequate on-site training is provided to minimise personal injury and risk. Council suggests the garden group consider purchasing insurance for personal injury and materials cover.

Collaboration, clear management and participation in expectation setting will assist in the smooth operation of the community garden.



Induction for new community gardeners

Part of the duty of care for garden members and community is to ensure appropriate inductions are undertaken for all garden users. The community garden group must supply Council with evidence of appropriate work, health and safety inductions for users operating within the garden, this is to be submitted with yearly reports (as per the Community Garden Reporting Template available on Council's website).

Community garden groups have the right to develop their own internal policies, rules, procedures and plans, as long as they do not conflict with any licence requirements. Where appropriate, consultation with stakeholders and Council (as landowner) should be sought.

Induction for community gardeners should ensure individuals are aware of:

- Community garden aims and objectives
- Names, contacts and positions of other members
- Their rights and responsibilities in the garden
- Health, safety and risk management practices in the garden
- Available training and learning opportunities

Community garden groups have a responsibility to not plant weeds of national significance (WONS) or other unsuitable plant species in the garden. Please refer to Shellharbour City Development Control Plan for a comprehensive list of unsuitable plant species.



Marketing your community garden

During community consultation it was identified that greater awareness and marketing of the existing gardens network could improve. Ensuring the wider community is aware of the garden location, access times and details of how to participate is an excellent way to encourage wider participation and grow the gardening community.

Community gardens must provide easy to read signage which includes (at minimum) details of contacts, open days and how to become involved. Any external signage, including window signage must not be erected or displayed without first gaining development consent from Shellharbour City Council, unless the sign is in accordance with

the requirements of State Environmental Planning Policy (Exempt & Complying Development Codes) 2008. Additional information regarding signage can be obtained from the Applications Team at council@shellharbour.nsw.gov.au Sign designs and placement should be included in the Design



Reporting on the community garden

Incorporated Associations operating a community garden in Shellharbour City are required to produce yearly progress reports for their community garden.

On the anniversary of their licence date, the community garden group is required to provide Council with a yearly report on the community garden. A reporting template can be found on Council's website.

Reflecting on community garden aims, objectives and actions provides an opportunity for feedback and assessment of what has occurred over time. This can help to inform the ongoing development of the community garden and ensure the garden is operating in accordance with expectations of the garden group, and Council strategy and policy.





Enquiries and feedback should be made to:
The Chief Executive Officer
Shellharbour City Council
Locked Bag 155
Shellharbour City Centre NSW 2529

Telephone: (02) 4221 6111
Facsimile: (02) 4221 6016
E-mail: council@shellharbour.nsw.gov.au

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