



Yarra Ranges Community Garden Guidelines

Acknowledgment of Country

We respectfully acknowledge the Traditional Owners, The Wurundjeri People as the Custodians of this land. We also pay respect to all Aboriginal community Elders, past and present, who have resided in the area and have been an integral part of the history of this region. We gratefully acknowledge the privilege of living on this land of Hills, Valleys and Rivers. We are thankful for the winds that blow through majestic trees, the sun that fills the large open sky's, the plants that grow from the bountiful earth and the animals that fly, walk and swim around us.

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Contents

- Introduction 5
- Exploring Opportunities for Community Gardening 6
- Starting a New Community Garden Group 7
- Determining Your Land Needs and Location 12
- Applying for Approval 13
- Running your Community Garden..... 17
- Appendix 1: Application process 24
- Appendix 2: Community garden site map..... 25
- Appendix 3: Strategic plan template..... 26
- Appendix 4: Application checklist 28
- Appendix 5: Resources and references 29
- Appendix 6: Sexual harassment..... 30
- Appendix 7: Child safe standards for volunteer groups..... 31
- Appendix 8: Example safe work practices and procedures..... 33





Introduction

Yarra Ranges Council fosters community connections, encourages inclusion in recreation opportunities and leads by example in environmental sustainability. In this context Council supports the establishment of community gardens by community groups within the municipality.

Yarra Ranges Council recognises that community gardens can play an important role in community development. Community gardens provide a valuable recreation activity that contributes to health and wellbeing, social connectedness and interaction, environmental education and sustainable living practices. Gardening as a form of recreation is viewed as being positive to a community's sense of wellbeing, its sense of pride, identity and involvement in local initiatives.

The Yarra Ranges Community Garden Guidelines has been developed to outline Yarra Ranges Council's stance on the establishment, use and management of community gardens on Council-owned or managed land within the municipality.



Exploring Opportunities for Community Gardening

If you're considering establishing a community garden contact Yarra Ranges Council on 1300 368 333 and ask to speak to a Community Development Officer for the Upper Yarra, Yarra Valley, Hills or Urban region. Council Officers can discuss your ideas and steer you through the process to establish a viable and successful community garden.

The following needs to be considered:

- What do I want to achieve by setting up a new community garden?
- Do I have enough people to establish a group to run the community garden?
- Is there enough interest and energy to sustain the community garden in the long term?
- Would joining an established community garden be a better way to achieve my aims, while also strengthening and enhancing that garden?
- To be successful in obtaining an occupancy agreement my community group will need to be incorporated or auspiced by an incorporated association. Is my community group prepared to do this?
- Is a community garden the most effective way to address my community's needs, e.g. social opportunities, improving health, environmental improvement or learning about sustainability?
- Would another form of 'gardening in community' be more appropriate, e.g. gardening collectively in backyards or starting a specialised gardening group?



Refer to Appendix 1 for a flow chart which details the procedure to follow when starting a new community garden application.





Starting a New Community Garden Group

When starting a new community garden group, consider the following.

Speak to, and learn from, other community garden groups

Talking to other community garden groups will give you insight into what your goals, objectives and challenges may be. A list of current community garden groups and contact details can be found on the Yarra Ranges Council website; we recommend you reach out to these groups for advice and support. You can also refer to the “Running a community garden” section of this document for more community garden group planning information.

Gather support and members for your community garden

Consider who you would like to join your group, who lives in the area and who potential members might be. Do you know somebody with a horticultural background or qualification? Create a list of people who are interested and talk to local groups and schools about how they could be involved.

How to establish your community garden group

Community garden groups take many forms, however, to be approved by Council to establish a garden on Council-owned, proposed Council-owned, or Council-managed land your group must be incorporated or auspiced by an incorporated association. Refer to the information on the following pages or talk to one of Council’s Community Development Officers for advice on establishing a community garden group.





Aerial view of Tecoma Community Garden plots

Community Garden Models

When planning a community garden group you need to determine the garden model. There are many different adaptations, however, community gardens are generally described as collaborative or plot style.

Collaborative

Where everyone works together to care for the entire garden, sharing the produce amongst all members and the community.

Plot

Members pay a fee for a plot which they care for, keeping all the produce from their plot for themselves.

Group Structure

Although a committee is not required it is seen as good practice. The best way to determine leadership and appoint a committee to ensure proper governance is to hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM) in which volunteers can be elected for positions. If you elect not to have a committee, you will still need to designate a leader that will be the primary point of contact for the group.

Committee positions may include:

- president
- chairperson
- secretary
- treasurer

Note

Determining the garden model is critical when planning a community garden group. Considering group size, objectives and income when planning will help decide the right garden model for your group.



The President

Ultimately responsible for overseeing and ensuring the smooth operation of the group, the president is usually the person who:

- is the spokesperson and contact person for the group
- provides leadership
- oversees the day-to-day running of the group
- ensures the group members are aware of OH&S and other safety requirements.

The Chairperson

Responsible for managing the smooth running of committee meetings. The President can also act as Chairperson.

The Secretary

Acts as a support to the President, responsibilities may include:

- deals with correspondence
- takes and distributes meeting agendas and minutes
- books facilities such as meeting rooms if required
- assists the President in the smooth running of the group.

The Treasurer

Responsible for all financial activities and maintains all financial records and bank accounts.



Yarra Glen community garden





Managing Members and Committee

As a committee you have a responsibility to manage and take care of your members, including several legal obligations. This includes:

- members safety
- ensure members understand behaviour expectations and safety/risk factors
- conflict management and dealing with grievances
- ensuring proper conduct when acting on behalf of the group
- avoiding trading while insolvent (which applies to nonprofits as well as businesses). This means making sure you are able to pay your debts.
- avoiding conflicts of interest and acting in the best interest of the group
- lawful and responsible governance
- safe storage of dangerous goods and machinery
- a zero tolerance policy to discrimination and sexual harassment.

All members have the right to raise any dissatisfaction, complaint or other grievance with the committee. If adequate action is not taken, volunteers have the right to seek legal advice and action if deemed necessary. Your group's dedicated Council liaison can offer advice on appropriate referral bodies if required. See the Legal Responsibilities section of the guidelines for further information.

Group Incorporation

Incorporation is a form of registration that gives an association or community group certain legal advantages in return for accepting certain legal responsibilities. Incorporation of an association means that the group becomes a legal entity in its own right, separate from the individual members. Incorporation can be considered once a group has become well established.





Benefits of becoming incorporated are to:

- create a legal entity separate from the individual members that provides a level of legal protection
- continue to exist regardless of changes in membership
- enter into enforceable contracts including buying and selling property
- attract and apply for grant funding more easily
- apply for status as a charity or formally register as an environmental organisation.

In becoming incorporated the group must satisfy the ongoing reporting and procedural requirements of an Incorporated Association. There is a requirement to lodge an annual return.

When a group has incorporated status this protects the personal assets of the committee members in the event an incorporated volunteer group is sued. The incorporated group can only be sued for the value of the incorporated body's assets (e.g. property, cash in bank, tools, equipment and other assets).

How to become incorporated

Incorporated Association status is achieved by following the procedures set out in the Associations Incorporations Act 1981. If a group has insurance with another organisation (FTLA) the group needs to meet the requirement of that insurance also. Contact Consumer Affairs Victoria for further information or assistance with becoming incorporated on 1300 558 181 or visit consumer.vic.gov.au

Grants

It's important to note that for a group to be eligible to receive grants, it typically must be incorporated or be able to make arrangements with another incorporated association to auspice their application.





Entrance to Warburton Edible Community Garden

Determining Your Land Needs and Location

There are a number of factors to consider for your community garden's location. To find out if the land you have chosen is Council-owned, proposed Council-owned, or Council-managed land, please contact Yarra Ranges Council on 1300 368 333 and ask to speak to a Community Development Officer for the Upper Yarra, Yarra Valley, Hills or Urban region.

Yarra Ranges Council recommends the following considerations for chosen locations:

- centrally located with plenty of parking or near public transport and trails
- convenient to public toilets
- securely fenced
- handy to water, electricity and equipment storage facilities
- accessible for those with limited mobility.

Council-owned, Proposed Council-owned or Council-managed Land

The most sustainable community gardens are usually linked to a community facility to help support their promotion, maintenance and security. Is there a local Neighbourhood House and Community Learning Centre, school or church that would support a community garden? Details can be found in the community directory at yarraranges.vic.gov.au

If you wish to establish a community garden on Council-owned, proposed Council-



owned, or Council-managed land, please refer to Applying for Approval section of this guide, for a detailed outline of the application process and requirements.

Privately Owned land

If your proposed community garden location is privately owned, speak to the landowner. It is recommended that you obtain a written document clarifying your agreement to use the land (e.g. letter, contract, or lease), including required operating terms.

Applying for Approval

You must apply for approval to establish a community garden on council-owned, proposed-council-owned or council-managed land.

All groups must submit an application via Yarra Ranges Council website. Council will then make a decision whether it's appropriate to approve the development of a community garden at the proposed location.

The following points should be considered before submitting an application form online.

Finalise Your Community Garden Group

The application form requires your incorporation details, or if the group is auspiced a letter of support from the organisation which is auspicing your group. The application requires the number of members in your group and will be viewed more favourably if your group includes at least 10 residents who are keen to actively contribute to the community garden. Remember, interest in your group will vary from time to time, so it's important to establish a sustainable core of members to maintain the momentum of your proposal. Consequently, Council requires some information regarding how you plan to maintain the numbers in your community group.

Strategic Plan

Applicants should develop a community group strategic plan to be included in your application. A strategic plan example template can be found in Appendix 3.

Consider some of the following questions when developing your plan:

- What model of community garden will you be developing?
- What will be the group structure/allocated responsibilities?
- How often will you hold group meetings?
- How will you promote the group to other residents?
- Will you have celebrations for the milestones you achieve?
- How will you financially manage the garden?
- What will be the groups focus/objectives?





Aerial view of Healesville Community Garden

Location Details and Site Map

Provide a map with information about your proposed location and a site map of the actual garden layout by attaching them to the application form. See Appendix 2 for an example.

Yarra Ranges Council requires you to detail the following features on your map:

- access to water and/or water tanks
- how and where you will store equipment
- composting facilities and waste management plan
- distance to toilet amenities
- proposed fencing and other security measures.

Community Garden Requirements

When planning what you will plant in your garden, consider the following:

- a mix of raised garden beds and in-ground garden beds for accessibility and cultural inclusiveness
- the availability of sunlight for at least five to six hours a day
- organic gardening principles, especially in relation to composting, pest and weed control
- all produce grown is for the use of community group members only, not for sale for profit
- safe food and soil handling and fertiliser practices must be followed
- gardens are not permitted to grow species listed as a weed on this website: weeds.org.au



Appropriateness of Site

You may need to meet with a Council Officer for site inspection(s) of the proposed site. The site will need to be checked to ensure consideration is given to all the factors listed in this guideline. The proximity of your proposed garden to other community gardens will also be taken into account.

To check the soil is suitable for growing food for human consumption, Yarra Ranges Council will assist the community group in guiding them through a soil test of the proposed site. Community garden groups will be required to cover the costs of soil testing by a NATA (National Association of Testing Authorities Australia) accredited analyst for gardens that they propose to build. Soil testing is important to ensure your fruit and vegetables are safe and delicious to eat.

Costs

In addition to the initial expense of building your community garden, you will need to consider ongoing running costs. Water and electricity will not be subsidised by Council, so ongoing income to cover running costs is critical. If your community garden is co-located with a Neighbourhood House or Community Learning Centre, your group may be able to organise a cost sharing arrangement.

Leasing fees are variable to each location and will be discussed as part of the application process to ensure the Community Garden Group are aware of the financial commitments for the site.

Grant opportunities can be found at yarraranges.vic.gov.au/community/grants

Occupancy Agreement

If the group's application to establish a community garden on Council-owned, proposed Council-owned, or Council-managed land is successful, your dedicated Council liaison will be in contact to discuss an occupancy agreement. Some of the items included in the occupancy agreement will be:

- any applicable fees for the agreement



- the length and terms of the agreement, which will be an initial two years, with a review six months prior to the end of term, and the option to extend if the conditions of the agreement are met and there is continued support for the community garden
- terms for cancellation of the agreement if the community garden is not operated in accordance with the terms and conditions of the agreement.

Insurance - Public Liability

Yarra Ranges Council requires community groups to have a minimum of \$10 million Public Liability Insurance to meet the duty of care to the community who access the garden. If you are under the auspice of an existing incorporated organisation, their insurance coverage may be extended to include the community garden.

Council is able to cover insurance for groups that are under our Community Garden Network Umbrella — please contact us for more information.

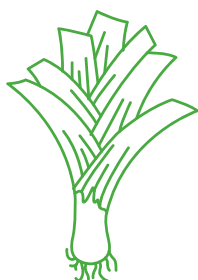
Planning and Building Permits

In most cases, a planning permit to establish a community garden on Council-owned, proposed Council-owned, or Council-managed land will not be required. However, this will depend on the site zoning and proposed cost of your garden. Information is available on Council's website. A building permit may be needed if a structure is to be established at the garden site, e.g. an equipment storage shed.

Community Consultation

It is important to talk to the local community surrounding your proposed community garden. Residents not involved in your group may have legitimate concerns about a new community garden being established in their area. It is best to take some time to work with them and get their support, rather than automatically assuming all community members will be happy about your garden proposal.

Make contact with the community members, hold a meeting or promote online. If your community garden is to be co-located with a community facility (such as a Neighbourhood House and Community Learning Centre), you will need to ensure the Committee of Management is supportive of your proposal. Including a letter of support in your application is beneficial.





Running your Community Garden

Raising initial and ongoing funds to manage the community garden

Running a community garden can be costly. There are a number of ways you can financially support your garden, including applying for community grants. In addition to those offered by Council, the Federal and State Governments distribute grants, as do many philanthropic and community foundations.

Council can offer advice and support in preparing grant applications. Visit yarraranges.vic.gov.au/community/grants to find out more or talk to your dedicated Council liaison.

You may also consider other options for income including membership fees or leasing plots.

Managing the site

The community garden group are responsible for maintaining your community garden and must ensure it is safe for public access at all times. It is recommended that community groups write up a strategic plan for the group's use, to outline how you intend to maintain your community garden. See Appendix 3 for an example.

Accessing training for your community garden members

Some community garden group members may have plenty of enthusiasm but not much experience in gardening or other aspects of running a group. Council can provide assistance through a variety of training programs. If you'd like to know more contact the Sustainability Team on 1300 368 333 or via sustainability@yarraranges.vic.gov.au





Relocation or Closure of a Community Garden

Council is not responsible for maintaining community gardens. Both parties reserve the right to terminate the agreed use of the land if a community garden established on Council-owned, proposed Council-owned, or Council-managed land:

- fails to comply with the terms of the occupancy agreement
- is not maintained
- if Council requires the land for another purpose
- becomes unsafe or unsightly
- ceases to be insured.

In addition, Council reserves the right to terminate the agreed use of the land if the community garden group ceases to function as an incorporated group or is no longer auspiced by an incorporated organisation.

Safety Management Planning

To ensure the community garden is safe you need to assess the possible hazards and safety issues that may arise as a result of running the garden. Yarra Ranges Council requires you to provide information on how you propose to manage these risks. See Appendix 8 for an example.

You should take into consideration the following:

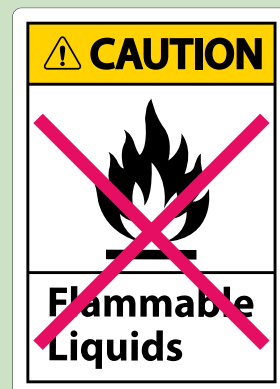
- Will you be using heavy or large equipment such as rotary hoes or wood chippers? If so, do you have the required qualifications, skills and procedures in place to do this work safely?

Worksafe's Safe Work Method Statements (SWMS)

Worksafe's Safe Work Method Statements (SWMS) will assist you in planning a safe environment for the garden. For further information please refer to the Safe Work Method Statements guide on the Worksafe Victoria website worksafe.vic.gov.au/resources/safe-work-method-statements-swms

Liquid Storage

Flammable or dangerous liquids are not to be stored on the site.



- How will you manage any vermin issues?
- Will you be using small power tools such as chainsaws?
- How will you manage any traffic or parking risks?
- Are there going to be any manual handling issues (e.g. sustained bending over while weeding garden beds)?

If you are still unclear about the best safety management planning for the community garden, please contact Council for advice.

Legal Responsibilities

Several legal obligations affect community groups working on public land (Council land).

For volunteers and the committees of community garden groups, the relevant Victorian Acts are:

- The Associations Incorporation Act 1981
- The Dangerous Goods Act 1985
- The Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004
- Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2014
- The Equal Opportunity Act 2010
- Victorian Child Wellbeing and Safety Act (2005)

The Associations Incorporation Act

The Associations Incorporation Act 1981 identifies the responsibilities and requirements of the committee of any incorporated association. Non-incorporated groups can also follow these guides to ensure sound, successful governance. The Act mostly addresses the responsibilities of the managing committee including:

- All members in the committee to take care and be diligent when making decisions, in the best interests of the association and its vision, and not to act for self-interest
- All members in the group to work with good faith and proper purpose
- Avoidance of trading while insolvent
- The committee to give adequate information to members on their rights and other documentation, and a grievance procedure to address complaints
- The committee to maintain a register of members for the association





The Occupational Health and Safety

The Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 requires Yarra Ranges Council and volunteer groups to provide:

- a safe working environment and conditions
- safe systems of work as identified in Appendix 8
- provide instruction and training as set out in these guidelines

The Equal Opportunity Act

The Equal Opportunity Act 2010 addresses discrimination and sexual harassment within volunteer groups. Volunteers now have rights and responsibilities under this Act. This Act states that:

- All group members understand actions which constitute sexual harassment
 - Sexual harassment in any form is not tolerated
 - All volunteers understand how to report incidents of sexual harassment
 - All volunteers understand that appropriate legal action will follow any incidents
- Sexual harassment and the law Changes to the Equal Opportunity Act 2010 mean that sexual harassment law now applies to volunteers and employees. All groups now have a legal responsibility to inform their volunteers that sexual harassment is never acceptable, in any form. If you turn a blind eye, and sexual harassment does occur within your group, your organisation and the people in it may be liable. Every volunteer, staff member and supervisor has a responsibility to ensure that sexual



harassment does not occur. Anyone found to have sexually harassed another person will be subject to disciplinary action. This information has been adopted from Volunteering Victoria's 'Volunteers and the Equal Opportunity Act, 2010 Information Pack'. To access this document visit volunteeringvictoria.com.au

[For more information on defining Sexual Harassment and the complaints process see Appendix 6.](#)

Child Safe Standards

The State Government has recently implemented compulsory minimum Child Safe Standards for all organisations and groups that engage with children and young people under the age of 18.

In some circumstances, failure to report or protect children is now a criminal offence. The standards are designed to drive cultural change in organisations, so that protecting children from abuse is embedded in the everyday thinking and practice of leaders, staff and volunteers. This will assist organisations to:

- promote the safety of children
- prevent child abuse
- ensure effective processes are in place to respond to and report allegations of child abuse.

All groups are strongly encouraged to include a Statement of Commitment to Child Safe Standards as part of their Group Governance. Yarra Ranges Council are committed to keeping all children and young people safe and protecting them from abuse. Child safety is everyone's business.

[For more information see an example of a Statement of Commitment \(Appendix 7\).](#)



Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

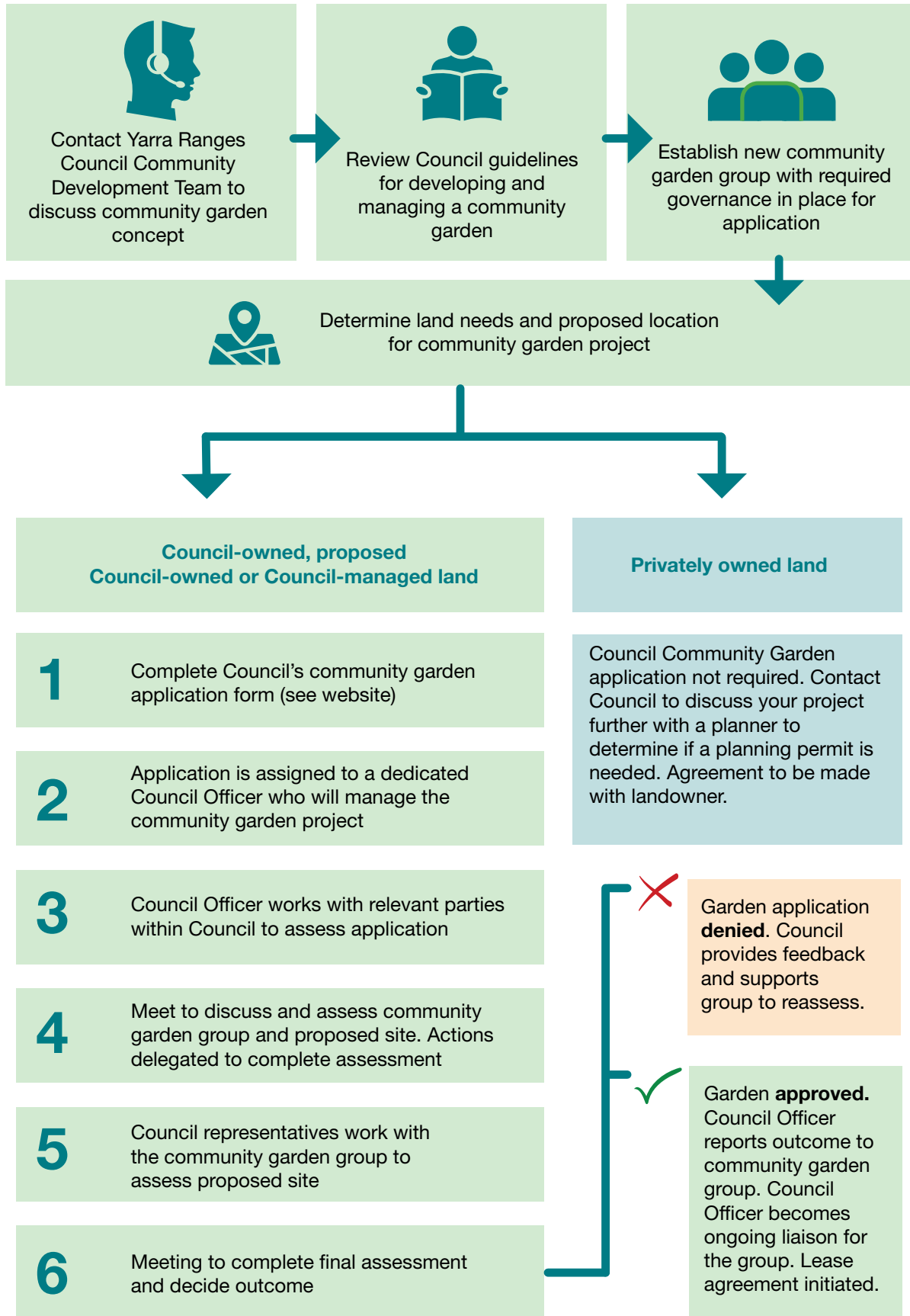
To be part of Yarra Ranges Community Gardens you'll need to provide evidence of Statement of Commitment to Child Safety along with your group's policies and procedures.





Appendix 1

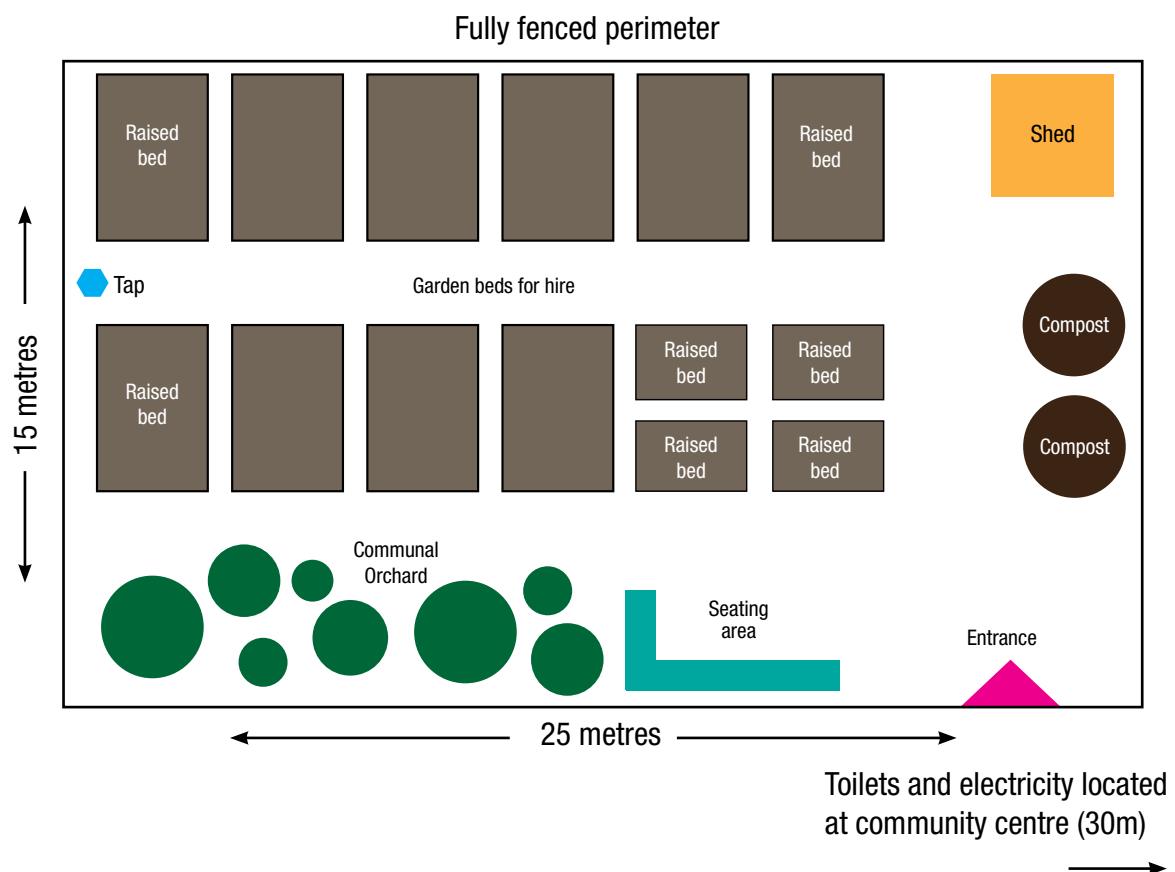
Application Process



Appendix 2

Community Garden Site Map

As part of the Council application for a community garden you will be required to submit a site map. Below is an example of how you may present this. (this image has been obtained from Google maps). It is important to include all site and garden dimensions. Please note the map below is not to scale.



Appendix 3

Strategic Plan Template

Statement of Purpose	
<p>This community garden group has been established for the following purposes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide local people with the opportunity to grow fresh vegetables • To provide locals with the opportunity to meet whilst participating in a shared activity • To provide management of the community garden
Membership	
<p>All community members are welcome to nominate themselves to be part of the group. A minimum of (insert number) members is required to be in the group. There is no upper limit.</p>	<p>Group members agree to support the objectives of the Community Garden Project. The group will elect the following roles with specified responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A facilitator to lead the group (this can be a shared role between two people) • A secretary to keep minutes, prepare agendas and to send and receive correspondence • A treasurer to keep an account of monies received and expended by the working group, if applicable.
Protocols	
<p>Membership is open to all Yarra Ranges residents and group meetings are open to all community garden group members.</p> <p>Group meetings will be run under the following protocols:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All members of the group have a right to be listened to in a respectful manner. • All members of the group have a right to be spoken to in a respectful manner. • All meetings are minuted and minutes are public documents. • Agendas for group meetings are issued seven days before the meeting date together with the minutes of the previous meeting. • Contributions to agenda items must be submitted to the group secretary in a timely manner or be dealt with under 'Other Business'. • Group meetings start and finish on time in accordance with the agenda. • Meetings should have a Chairperson. This role can be associated with an existing position e.g. the facilitator, or as otherwise decided by the working group. • Decisions are made by group consensus. If consensus is not reached then a vote may be taken. A simple majority will determine the outcome • In the event of a tied vote, the Chairperson will have the deciding vote • Unresolved matters that have not been voted upon may be deferred to a future meeting • Items requiring follow-on action after the group meeting will be allocated to a specific person(s) and noted in the minutes.



Participation in the Group	
The group is made up of individuals from the community who are committed to the project objectives and adhere to the following:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New members who wish to support the project can join the group at any time • Group members will be explained the objectives and operating terms of the group • Group members will be explained their health and safety obligations
Communication	
Outline commitment to communication with the group, for example:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication among the group will be primarily via email sent by the secretary • A printed copy of the agenda and minutes will also be available at (insert location)
Meeting Dates	
Outline commitment to Group meetings, for example:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group meetings are held on the (insert dates or days) • Date and time of the next meeting are to be provided at the end of each group meeting and included in the minutes.



Appendix 4

Community Garden Application Check List

Community Garden Checklist		
	Yes	No
Do you have access to resources to establish and maintain a community garden group?		
Is your community garden group an incorporated association, or has it been auspiced by one?		
Is the proposed location close to any community facilities such as a community centre, school or aged care facilities?		
Will the garden be accessible for all members of the community including those with a disability?		
Does the community garden have access to the following? Water, toilet facilities, electricity, storage for equipment		
Have you considered how far the site is from public transport, bicycle tracks and footpaths?		
Have you thought of security measures for the garden?		
Have you considered composting on site and how you will manage it?		
Do you have a plan for the disposal of rubbish at the site?		
Does your community garden have at least \$10 million Public Liability Insurance? (Provide certificate of currency with application). If not, speak to Yarra Ranges Council Community Gardens Officer about obtaining insurance coverage through YRC Community Gardens Network.		
Have you developed a plan to consult the community, in particular surrounding neighbours? Please provide your plan with the application form.		
Will the community garden be fenced?		
Have you developed a site map?		
If auspiced, do you have a letter of support?		



Appendix 5

Resources and References

Council does not necessarily endorse the views presented on this page or the subsequent websites.

[Australian Community Gardens](#)

communitygarden.org.au

The Australian Community Gardens Network is an informal, community-based organisation. Its website has a great range of resources for setting up a community garden and can help new groups think through issues such as water and power supply, shed/storage, security and fencing, establishing rules for users and setting criteria about who can use the garden.

[Transition Towns](#)

transitionnetwork.org

Transition Towns encourages local communities to work together to create a resilient town, where people know each other, support each other, and work together. Learning from each other, growing food and learning lost skills is paramount to its success. A Transition Town (suburb/island/city) is a locally based response to the issues facing the world from climate change, shrinking supplies and increasing costs of energy, and economic contraction.

[Permaculture Yarra Valley](#)

permacultureyarravalley.org

Permaculture Yarra Valley is a member based non-profit association that has a bio-regional focus on the Yarra Valley and adjoining areas.

[Greater South East Permaculture](#)

facebook.com/groups/permacasey

Greater South East Permaculture is part of Permaculture Melbourne and works to promote the sustainable development of the greater south eastern suburbs.

[Sustainable Gardening Australia](#)

sgaonline.org.au

Sustainable Gardening Australia is a not-for-profit, non-government organisation dedicated to changing the way Australians garden. You can find a range of gardening fact sheets for the home gardener at their website.

[Sustain Australia](#)

sustain.org.au

Sustain is a “think and do” network, specialising in designing and building sustainable and healthy food systems. They work for the transition to a food system that supports flourishing communities, individuals and ecosystems.



Appendix 6

Sexual Harassment

What is sexual harassment?

Sexual harassment can take various forms. It can involve conduct such as:

- Unwelcome touching, hugging or kissing
- Staring or leering
- Suggestive comments or jokes
- Sexually explicit pictures, screen savers or posters
- Sexual harassment is judged not by what was intended but by how it was received.

What to do if sexual harassment occurs?

Making a complaint

If you are a volunteer or paid staff member who believes they have been harassed, you should make a note of the date, time and location of the incident/s. If you are comfortable doing so, tell the alleged harasser that the behaviour is offensive, unwelcome, against the organisation's policy and should stop.

If you're not comfortable confronting the alleged harasser or if unwelcome behaviour continues, report it to a responsible member of the committee. (It is a good idea for the committee to nominate a committee member who can deal with any such complaints) If this is inappropriate, speak to another senior member of the group or contact Yarra Ranges Council on 1300 368 333.. The person dealing with the complaint (the Investigating Officer) will follow the procedures set out below. At any time

you may discontinue this process.

Complaints process

When a complaint is received, the Investigating Officer will:

- Obtain and record a full, step-by-step account of the incident/s
 - Ensure the organisation's process for handling the complaint is understood
 - Ascertain your preferred outcome (e.g. an apology, the behaviour to cease, a change in working arrangements)
 - Agree on the next step: informal resolution or formal investigation
 - Keep a confidential record of all details of this discussion and subsequent steps in the process
- You may also choose to take your complaint to the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission (HRC). More information can be found at humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au

Key resources

Volunteering Victoria, 2011, Volunteers and the Equal Opportunity Act, 2010 Information Pack, volunteeringvictoria.com.au

Effectively preventing and responding to sexual harassment: a Code of Practice for employers by the Australian HRC.



Appendix 7

Child Safe Standards for Volunteer Groups

Implementing the Victorian Child Safe Standards may appear challenging. The standards are not intended to be onerous; they are designed to keep children safe from child abuse. They are also flexible, allowing you to tailor them to your organisation. Building a culture of child safety in your organisation will not happen overnight – this is the case for all organisations, regardless of their size. Keeping children safe from abuse requires long-term, genuine dedication, along with a commitment to continuous learning and improvement.

What is child abuse?

Physical Abuse

Non-accidental infliction of physical violence, which injures or harms a child

Sexual Abuse

When an adult uses force or power to involve a child in sexual activity

Emotional/Psychological Abuse

Rejecting, isolating, excluding, threatening, verbal abuse, coldness

Neglect

Failing to meet a child's basic needs; food, drink, clothing, hygiene, medical attention, supervision.

Family Violence

Any violent, threatening, coercive or controlling behaviour in a domestic setting.

Grooming

When an adult communicates and/or attempts to establish a relationship to prepare a child for sexual activity at a later time.

What to do

If there's a disclosure, allegation or observation made and you have reasonable belief that a child needs protection, you must act.

If the concern relates to immediate physical danger or to child sexual abuse you must report it to Victoria Police on 000

If the concern relates to a child at risk of harm and abuse report to DHHS Child Protection on Tel: 1300 360 391 or 13 12 87 (after hours).

If the concern relates to a child's ongoing health and wellbeing (not immediate danger) report to Orange Door (Outer East) Tel: 1800 271 150

Please inform the Yarra Ranges Council Environmental Volunteer Support Officer or the leader of your group either before or after reporting to authorities.

The Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) is the oversight authority for the standards, for more information visit ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safety.

Example Community Garden Public Commitment to Child Safety

[Insert group name] is committed to safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. This will be the primary focus of our care and decision-making.

[Insert group name] has zero tolerance for child abuse.

[Group name] is committed to providing a child safe environment where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and their voices are heard about





decisions that affect their lives. Particular attention will be paid to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as the safety of children with a disability.

Every person involved in [Insert group name] has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role he/she plays individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

All children who participate in our activities have a right to feel and be safe. We encourage children to express their views and we listen to their suggestions, especially on matters that directly affect them.

A great idea could be for your group to add above statement to your Membership Form/Code of Conduct for sign off by each of your members.



Appendix 8

Example Safe Work Practices and Procedures

LOW		
	Potential Risk	Management of Risk
Volunteer Activities on/in Public Spaces	<p>Injury to others using public spaces.</p> <p>Distraction and subsequent injury.</p> <p>Property damage by volunteers.</p> <p>Threats to personal safety and belongings.</p> <p>Potential contact with contaminants such as sharps or toxins.</p> <p>Abuse from members of the public.</p>	<p>Assess designated work area for hazards and risks.</p> <p>Use signage when working in a public area to notify general public that works are occurring (e.g. 'Work in progress' signs). Block off an area using road cones or tape.</p> <p>When operating machinery (e.g. mower) always ensure a second person is present to watch out for and warn the general public.</p> <p>Remain vigilant and aware at all times.</p> <p>Keep belongings in a safe place at all times.</p>
Volunteer Activities on/in rough terrain	<p>Sprains and strains.</p> <p>Broken limbs.</p> <p>Impact injuries (hands, knees, back, head)</p> <p>Trips, slips and falls</p>	<p>Identify any danger zones and notify all participants of the associated hazards.</p> <p>Wear appropriate PPE - including sturdy footwear.</p> <p>Clear paths and remove hazards where possible (e.g. fill in holes, move branches,).</p> <p>Cordon off or flag immovable hazards.</p> <p>Do not carry awkward or heavy objects while navigating rough terrain.</p> <p>Do not run, jump or climb for access to work areas.</p>
Volunteer Activities on/in hot conditions	<p>Dehydration or heat stroke.</p> <p>Headaches and cramps.</p> <p>Heat exhaustion.</p> <p>Sun burn, and longer-term, skin cancer. Injuries or damage as a result of fatigue</p>	<p>Ensure volunteers have adequate access to water to maintain hydration.</p> <p>Work in shaded areas as much as possible.</p> <p>Have regular breaks.</p> <p>Ensure all participants are adequately protected from the sun/heat by wearing PPE.</p> <p>Avoid hottest parts of the day by working in early morning or late afternoon.</p> <p>Council discourages working on High Fire Danger or Total Fire Ban days.</p> <p>If the temperature is over 35° c or humidity levels reach 80% consider rescheduling.</p>



LOW

	Potential Risk	Management of Risk
Volunteer Activities on/in cold conditions	<p>Hypothermia.</p> <p>Loss of dexterity and fine motor control and subsequent injuries due to reduced tool handling ability.</p> <p>Colds and flu or other illness.</p> <p>Dehydration.</p> <p>Increased risk of slipping.</p>	<p>Warm up before activity.</p> <p>Wear appropriate PPE - including warm clothing and rain gear.</p> <p>Ensure plenty of food and drink are available (include warm options like tea and coffee).</p> <p>Work in sheltered areas where possible, and ensure cover is available when taking breaks.</p> <p>Avoid working in extreme weather conditions.</p>
Bites, stings and threats from wildlife	<p>Insect bites and stings</p> <p>Spider or snake bites</p> <p>Injury from wildlife in distress</p>	<p>Identify & avoid risky areas (e.g. nests or hives).</p> <p>Wear PPE (long trousers/ gaiters, long sleeves and gloves).</p> <p>Walk heavily and work/walk along a single line through snake habitat (prevents snake from being trapped).</p> <p>Avoid lifting objects which may conceal a snake. If required use an aid (e.g. crowbar).</p> <p>If you see a snake, avoid the area and notify all participants as well.</p> <p>If an injured animal is found on site, don't handle it. Call Wildlife Rescue.</p>
General activities: litter collection, mulching, weeding and planting	<p>Manual handling</p> <p>General injuries</p> <p>Pathogens from infected soils</p> <p>Disease (e.g. needle stick injuries –hepatitis A & B, tetanus)</p> <p>Bites, stings and threats from wildlife</p>	<p>Demonstrate proper manual handling techniques (safely lifting objects, working with awareness of others, staying with the group).</p> <p>Rotate tasks between personnel to avoid repetitive strain injuries.</p> <p>Be aware of all potential risks (e.g. handling soil with glass, falling branches).</p> <p>Allow plenty of breaks and encourage regular stretching.</p> <p>Ensure hand washing facilities are available (especially if handling rubbish, soil, chemicals, etc.).</p> <p>Be aware of sharps and syringes and dispose of safely and correctly (into a 'sharps' container provided at a Yarra Ranges Community Link).</p> <p>If you come across hazardous material (e.g. asbestos) do not handle it. Report it to your site coordinator immediately</p>



	Potential Risk	Management of Risk
Manual Handling	<p>Injuries due to overexertion, such as Strains, muscle ache or other discomfort, Especially in back, neck, torso and shoulders</p> <p>Hernia</p>	<p>Warm up and stretch throughout the day.</p> <p>Lifting aids should be used if possible.</p> <p>Ensure no one lifts beyond their limits, and do a team lift where possible.</p> <p>Sufficient space should be available to achieve the correct lifting techniques.</p> <p>Plan the path before making the move.</p> <p>Ensure there are no obstructions or other risks when moving the load.</p> <p>Demonstrate proper lifting techniques (load should be close to the body, the back should not be twisted, avoid carrying with one hand, always bend knees, lift slowly & smoothly).</p> <p>Rotate tasks between participants.</p> <p>Grip object securely – use the whole hand.</p> <p>Heavy items should not be lifted alone – work in pairs/ group (use lifting aids).</p>
Using Small Tools	<p>Injuries to self, other volunteers or property due to tool misuse</p> <p>Overexertion and strain injuries</p>	<p>Ensure equipment is in safe, working order.</p> <p>Ensure space around the operator is clear.</p> <p>Be aware of all other workers/public space users in your vicinity.</p> <p>Always ensure the right tool is used for the job.</p> <p>Seek advice from team leader</p> <p>Ensure correct, tight grip on object and wear gloves if necessary.</p> <p>Use tools when in a stable, comfortable position.</p> <p>Rotate tasks between volunteers.</p> <p>After use, tools should be cleaned as required.</p> <p>All tools should be stored in a safe, lockable place when not in use.</p>
Working near water	<p>Drowning</p> <p>Threatening organisms (snakes, mosquitoes, water-borne disease, etc.)</p> <p>Exposure to cold</p>	<p>Identify dangerous areas (assess things like depth, current, murkiness, turbulence, difficulty to escape, underwater snags, etc.)</p> <p>Ensure all volunteers are aware of and remain a safe distance from all identified danger areas.</p> <p>Ensure that all volunteers work with a partner.</p> <p>Avoid unstable, slippery or steep banks.</p> <p>Flag or fence off any high-risk areas.</p> <p>Provide washing facilities.</p>



MEDIUM

	Potential Risk	Management of Risk
Tools in the field		
Cordless drill	<p>Cuts and abrasions from sharp drill-bits</p> <p>Clothing caught up in drill</p> <p>Wrist injury from drill backlash</p>	<p>Be aware of what you are drilling into, check for wires, nails etc.</p> <p>Wear dust mask if necessary.</p> <p>Always wear eye protection (goggles).</p> <p>Never point a drill towards another person or yourself.</p> <p>Ensure drill clutch is engaged when drilling.</p> <p>Don't force the drill. Let it do the work.</p> <p>If in doubt, ask for assistance.</p>
Hammer & Mash Hammer	<p>Muscle/joint injury from swing and impact</p> <p>Hand injury from collision</p>	<p>Ensure fingers don't get in the way.</p> <p>Don't rush. Take your time.</p> <p>Only use a hammer when appropriate (would a mallet be more suited to this task?).</p> <p>Your thumb should be extended along hilt of the hammer for accurate direction.</p> <p>Ensure working space is clear of objects and people.</p> <p>Watch out for fingers.</p> <p>Maintain a firm grip when using.</p>
Hamilton Planters	<p>Slips and falls</p> <p>Injury to feet and legs</p>	<p>Hold the hand grips firmly.</p> <p>Step up onto the footstep and apply body weight until desired depth is achieved.</p> <p>Do not jump onto footsteps.</p>
Hand mattock	<p>Muscle/joint injury from swing and impact</p> <p>Hand injury from collision</p> <p>Injury to bystanders</p> <p>Flying material</p>	<p>Watch out for feet and other body parts.</p> <p>Don't throw when swinging. Ensure your grip is tight and secure.</p> <p>Ensure working space is clear of objects and other people.</p> <p>Wear eye protection during the activity.</p> <p>Never leave a mattock lying on the ground (if someone stands on it can fly up and hit them in the face).</p> <p>Secure the object being cut, and cut it at an appropriate height (hip level: torso, mid-range).</p>



MEDIUM

	Potential Risk	Management of Risk
Handsaw or bow saw	Cuts and abrasions Muscle/joint injury from motion	Beware of the sharp blade. Ensure fingers, limbs, and clothing are well out of the way. Before use, ensure the blade teeth are sharp to avoid excessive strain.
Knife	Cuts from blades Muscle/joint injury from motion Injury to bystanders	Be careful when using a knife and ensure all body parts stay out the way. Transport the knife in a case. Keep a safe distance away from others. Never point a knife at another person. Always point the blade towards the ground and away from body.
Loppers	Cuts from blades Muscle/joint injury from straining Injury to bystanders	Always carry by the handles, with blades facing the ground. Do not overreach while using. Do not climb while carrying loppers. Be careful if climbing while carrying loppers.
Rake	Impact from flicking up Muscle/joint injury from motion Flying debris	Always be aware of those around you and ensure you don't accidentally hit them with the end of the rake. Do not leave the rake lying on the ground where it may be stood on. Do not use the rake as a digging tool.
Secateurs	Cuts from blades Muscle/joint injury from motion Injury to others	Always carry by the handle, with blades facing the ground. Be cautious of blades. Don't run fingers along the edges. Keep fingers clear when cutting materials. Ensure safety lock is fastened when not in use. Be careful when cleaning and sharpening.
Shovel	Muscle/joint injury from motion Foot injury	Always be aware of the blade. Make sure your digging technique does not put others at risk. Manual handling risk: use the right size of shovel. Be aware of other peoples feet.



MEDIUM

	Potential Risk	Management of Risk
Wheelbarrow	Muscle/joint injury from motion	<p>Don't overload barrow, and evenly distribute the weight in the barrow.</p> <p>Take care on uneven ground and consider alternate path or wooden planks to assist movement.</p> <p>Never allow someone to walk alongside the barrow (in case of tipping).</p> <p>Wheel the barrow on a safe, clear path.</p> <p>Avoid excessive inclines and slippery surfaces.</p>
Brush-cutters and push mowers (only household 'handy-person' low power equipment will be allowed)	<p>Burns</p> <p>Hand, foot, limb injuries</p> <p>Overexertion and strain injuries</p> <p>Eye injuries (from flying materials)</p> <p>Ear damage or headaches (from loud, excessive noise)</p> <p>Dust inhalation</p> <p>Manual handling strain</p> <p>Flying debris</p> <p>Ignition sources</p>	<p>Warm up and stretch before starting work.</p> <p>Assess site before starting work.</p> <p>Ensure appropriate PPE (high vis, long trousers, steel cap boots, eye and ear protection, gloves and when using a brush-cutter a face shield with safety glasses) and other equipment is used and available.</p> <p>Place 'Work in progress' signage appropriately before beginning work.</p> <p>Avoid working within 20 metres of vehicles and public users of the area.</p> <p>When decanting fuel ensure fully covered clothing and gloves are worn.</p> <p>Abide by the Dangerous Goods Act 1985 which governs the use and storage of fuel by groups.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That storage areas are safely designed. • Equipment is properly maintained & operates safely. • Appropriate PPE is provided. • There are no ignition sources in hazardous areas. • That safety instructions to visitors are provided. • That personnel are equipped in the handling of chemicals and dangerous substances.



MEDIUM

	Potential Risk	Management of Risk
Dabber bottles containing Herbicide	<p>Poisoning</p> <p>Skin or eye irritation or burning</p> <p>Respiratory impairment or damage</p> <p>Risk of fire explosion</p>	<p>Only the use of Herbicide in dabber bottles is approved by Council for volunteers. Any spraying required should be directed to the Bushland Management Officers (1300 368 333).</p> <p>No spraying is permitted by volunteers.</p> <p>Consider the location & sensitivity of any flora & fauna.</p> <p>Do not carry out any herbicide use in wet weather.</p> <p>Check all relevant equipment to ensure everything is in working order before use.</p> <p>Ensure appropriate PPE and other equipment is used.</p> <p>Ensure use of chemicals in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.</p>
Child abuse/harm	<p>Failure to report child abuse / harm incident.</p> <p>Failure to protect child where there is exposure to illegal, unsafe, abusive or harmful behaviour.</p>	<p>All volunteers and participants are aware and agree to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Child Safe Public Statement • Take all reasonable steps to protect children from harm and abuse • Take complaints/ allegations seriously and report all incidents of child abuse/ harm • Hold a valid WWCC (esp. involving child specific activities/ programs).

HIGH

	Potential Risk	Management of Risk
Working near roadsides	<p>Respiratory and eye irritation (from exhaust fumes or dust)</p> <p>Ear damage or difficulty communicating (due to excessive noise)</p> <p>Collision or impact injuries</p>	<p>Volunteers are not to work within 10 metres of the roadside.</p> <p>Maintain direct and continual supervision and ensure volunteers remain vigilant of their surroundings.</p> <p>Decide upon non-verbal signals which can be used to communicate with your team. Make sure everyone understands the signals, and that they are clear and unambiguous.</p> <p>Avoid dust or fumes and work upwind where possible.</p>



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