Community Greening Framework

Purpose

The City of Sydney (the City) Greening Sydney Strategy outlines the City's vision to increase greening and urban canopy for a cool, calm, beautiful and resilient city. Under this strategy the Community Greening Framework outlines how the City will support community participation in greening activities, including community initiatives and City Volunteer programs.

The Community Greening Framework fosters a greener, more resilient city by:

- supporting a range of initiatives across the local area that respond to diverse community needs and interests
- encouraging community participation and social connection
- responding to community needs to access locally grown fresh food
- supporting community greening volunteering.

Scope

The Community Greening Framework applies to people interested in or currently participating in Community Greening supported by the City.

This framework is supported by the:

- Community Gardens Guidelines
- Community Greening Volunteer Guidelines

This framework also operates in alignment with the City's Footpath and Laneway Gardens Local Approvals Policy and the Footpath and Laneway Gardens Guidelines.

Definitions

Term	Meaning
Bushcare/Landcare Volunteer Groups	Bushcare/Landcare Volunteer Groups work to improve the condition of bush restoration areas by engaging in activities like removing weeds, planting native species and enhancing wildlife habitat.
City of Sydney Coordinator	Employee who liaises with Community Garden Groups, Bushcare/Landcare volunteer groups and other community greening volunteer groups in the City's local area.
City of Sydney Volunteer	A person who gives their time to the City, without financial remuneration and for the benefit of the community.
Community Garden Groups	Manage Community Gardens. For Community Gardens on land owned or managed by the City, Community Garden Groups must be incorporated as a legal entity (for example, an incorporated association) able to enter into a legal agreement with the City.

Term	Meaning
Community Gardens	Community Gardens are self-managed by Community Garden Groups to grow plants, create fertile soil, compost, harvest crops, save seeds and share organic gardening knowledge. Some gardens also have plantings for wildlife, pollinators, craft and cultural activities. Community Gardens are open and accessible to everyone and everyone can participate.
Community Greening participants	Community Greening participants work in Public Spaces to enhance and expand biodiversity, green cover and/or local food production.
Employees	All City of Sydney permanent (full-time and part-time) and temporary staff, agency contractors (labour hire), work experience students, apprentices and contractor facilitators / supervisors
Footpath	The section of a Road Reserve from a property boundary to the kerb and gutter designed and intended for pedestrian access, separating them from vehicles and other hazards.
Footpath Garden	A garden created by a resident or business on the Footpath. It includes either in-ground garden beds, Pots or Raised Garden Beds.
Laneway Garden	A section of Road Reserve in a laneway where a resident or business has placed Pots, usually along a property line.
Parkcare	Parkcare programs provide volunteer greening activities in Public Spaces under the supervision of a City Employee.
Pot	A container where plants could be grown. A container suitable for growing plants with properties that meet the criteria in this framework, the Footpath and Laneway Gardens Local Approvals Policy and the Footpath and Laneway Gardens Guidelines.
Public Space	Places that are accessible to and intended for use by the public that the City owns or manages, such as parks and open space, squares, streets, Footpaths, Road Reserves, road closures, leisure and community centres.
Raised Garden Bed	A garden bed elevated above ground level comprising soil contained by a structure for growing plants.
Risk Assessment	A process to identify possible sources of harm and document how risks will be mitigated and managed.
Road Closure Garden	A garden created on an existing road closure. This may include in-ground garden beds and Pots or Raised Garden Beds.
Road Reserve	The area between property boundaries, including roads, verges, laneways, cycle lanes and Footpaths built for public travel.

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Policy Statement

This framework outlines opportunities to participate in Community Greening through:

- Footpath, Laneway Gardens and Road Closure Gardens
- Community Gardens
- The City's Volunteer Community Greening programs including Bushcare/Landcare, Parkcare, Sydney City Farm and Community Greening events.

Community Greening Principles

Community Greening supported by the City of Sydney will:

- engage the community to nurture urban greening and grow fresh food
- be welcoming and open to all the community and free of discrimination or vilification
- enable community participation by reducing barriers to access and inclusion
- maintain a safe and healthy environment
- encourage sustainable use of materials and resources
- provide opportunities for nature connection and appreciation.

Community Greening

Footpath Gardens

Footpath Gardens are created on the Road Reserve between a property boundary and the kerb, comprising either an in-ground garden or gardening in Pots or a Raised Garden Bed.

Footpath Gardens include:

- verge gardens – creating a garden in an existing landscaped footpath garden bed, verge or nature strip outside a property, and/or installing Pots or Raised Garden Beds on the Footpath, verge or nature strip outside a property
- Laneway Gardens – installing Pots usually along a property line in laneways wider than 3.2m
- Road Closure Gardens – gardens created in existing road closure spaces.

The City encourages residents and businesses to participate in Community Greening by maintaining Footpath Gardens. Footpath gardeners take responsibility for establishing and maintaining Footpath Garden initiatives, funding all plants and materials, disposing of waste and taking actions as requested when notice of any non-compliance is given by the City.

The City will donate a limited supply of plants, materials, Pots or Raised Garden Beds to establish Road Closure Gardens, subject to community need, City priority and available funding.

The Footpath and Laneway Gardens Local Approvals Policy sets out the circumstances and conditions where the City will allow residents and businesses to carry out gardening on the Road Reserve between the property boundary and the kerb, without seeking formal approval. The policy details steps the City will take to respond to complaints, address issues of non-compliance and enforce any actions required to maintain public access and safety.

The City's Footpath and Laneway Gardens Guidelines include further guidance for getting started with Footpath Gardens, safety and accessibility considerations and responsibilities in setting up and maintaining Footpath Gardens.

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Community Gardens

Community Gardens are self-managed by community groups to grow edible plants, create fertile soil, compost, harvest crops, save seeds and share organic gardening knowledge. Some gardens also have plantings for wildlife, pollinators, craft and cultural activities.

Community Garden Groups located on land owned or managed by the City are required to be incorporated as a not-for-profit legal entity (for example, an incorporated association) and enter into a legal agreement for use of City land as a Community Garden.

Existing Community Garden Groups on land owned or managed by the City are required to transition to these requirements within 2 years of approval by Council of this Community Greening Framework.

Community Gardens on land owned or managed by the City are a long-term initiative for the benefit of the community, providing community infrastructure supported and maintained by the City.

City support for Community Garden groups located on land owned or managed by the City includes:

- designing and building new Community Gardens
- donating some gardening materials and plants from City suppliers
- maintaining and repairing assets including garden beds and fixed infrastructure
- expanding and upgrading existing Community Garden infrastructure based on asset condition, community need, City priorities and available funding
- facilitating networking and education opportunities for Community Garden Groups
- providing advice, guidance and support
- promoting Community Garden Groups on the City's website
- organising illegal dumping removal, green waste removal, rodent control and graffiti removal
- providing public liability insurance coverage for Community Garden groups operating on City land where groups are operating in line with the requirements of the City's Community Garden Guidelines.

Different levels of support are available for groups operating Community Gardens on land owned and managed by other organisations in the City of Sydney local area (for example, churches and NSW Government organisations).

All Community Garden Groups supported by the City are required to:

- follow the City's Community Greening principles
- be within the City of Sydney local area
- allow the general community to participate
- include locals who participate in and support the garden
- demonstrate landowner consent for the Community Garden
- nominate a group convenor to liaise with the City
- submit an annual update to the City
- work safely and demonstrate a commitment to health and safety of garden users and group members.

In addition, Community Garden Groups operating on land owned or managed by the City are required to:

- be incorporated as a not-for-profit legal entity (for example, an incorporated association)

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- have the skills to responsibly and safely organise, manage and maintain a Community Garden
- enter into a legal agreement with the City and comply with the obligations set out in the agreement for use of City land as a Community Garden
- be self-managed, with members organising and maintaining their groups and gardening activities
- manage the group by consulting and informing group members and garden users about activities or changes to the Community Garden
- use organic gardening methods and an integrated pest management approach to manage specific pests and weeds, in line with the City's Pesticide Notification Plan
- share knowledge, skills, experience and produce with garden group members and the local community
- use new ideas and problem solving to create productive and well managed gardens
- address any issues of non-compliance raised by the City.

The Community Gardens Guidelines detail how the City will support new and existing Community Garden Groups, the steps for entering into an agreement with the City, requirements for running a Community Garden and site selection requirements for potential new Community Gardens.

City of Sydney Volunteer Community Greening programs

City of Sydney Volunteers in Community Greening programs contribute their time, effort, knowledge and skills to to foster a greener, more sustainable city for future generations. City employees guide and oversee City of Sydney Volunteer activities.

City of Sydney Volunteer programs include:

- **Bushcare/Landcare** – Bushcare/Landcare groups work to improve the condition of bush restoration areas. The City's bush restoration program is guided by the City's Urban Ecology Strategic Action Plan and advice of the City's urban ecologist. Some groups are self-coordinated, and City employees may assist with guidance and maintenance.

  The City will coordinate new Bushcare/Landcare groups provided there is strong community interest in volunteering, a group does not already exist nearby, there is a suitable site available, and there is a high level of local community commitment to the site.
- **Parkcare** – Parkcare volunteers participate in gardening activities and enhance Public Spaces under the supervision of City employees. The City will provide materials, equipment, a safety briefing, guidance and supervision to volunteers in Parkcare programs.
- **Sydney City Farm** – City of Sydney Volunteers may participate in supervised volunteer working bees, as farmhand volunteers in small self-managed teams or as education and event volunteers. These roles support community programs and activities under the supervision of City employees.

  The City provides materials, equipment, a safety briefing and guidance to volunteers at Sydney City Farm and associated education and event volunteer activities.

  In addition, the City provides specialised guidance to support Sydney City Farm farmhand volunteer activities.
- **Community Greening events** – Community Greening events are one-off events organised by the City for the wider community to participate, under the supervision of City employees.

  The City provides materials, equipment, a safety briefing and guidance to volunteers participating in Community Greening events (for example, National Tree Day community planting events).

The City supports volunteers in Community Greening programs by:

- providing initial and ongoing advice and support
- promoting a safe and healthy work environment
- providing public liability insurance for Community Greening activities on land we own or manage
- providing personal accident insurance coverage for City of Sydney Volunteers aged 18 years or older for Community Greening activities on land we own or manage (noting coverage and benefits are reduced for volunteers over 85 years old)
- producing and providing access to educational workshops and events
- providing maintenance, renewal and upgrades of our assets
- promoting Community Greening programs on the City's website and in other media, publications and at events
- fostering partnerships and collaboration between groups involved in Community Greening.

City of Sydney Volunteers in Community Greening programs are required to:

- follow the City's Community Greening principles
- foster an inclusive environment and productive relationships with other City of Sydney Volunteers, neighbours and the local community
- be aged 18 years or over, or supervised by their parents or carers if under 18
- sign an attendance record each time they volunteer
- attend inductions, safety briefings and participate in learning activities
- follow the directions of City Employees or the Bushcare/Landcare Volunteer Group convenor
- follow safe work practices, safety recommendations and wear or use personal protective equipment
- determine if their experience, skills and physical ability or health is suitable for the nature of the volunteer work being carried out and the equipment used
- promptly report to City Employees or the Bushcare/Landcare Volunteer Group convenor any issues that might impact on capability to effectively perform in a volunteer role
- follow risk mitigation controls, for example, stop work or postpone activities in the event of extreme heat, lightning storms, strong winds, heavy rain or when hazardous air quality is predicted
- report any hazards observed to supervising City Employees or the Bushcare/Landcare group convenor
- report any injuries or incidents that occur during volunteer sessions to supervising City employees or Bushcare/Landcare group convenor
- comply with relevant laws and regulations about the collection, storage and use of all personal and health information and not disclose, either while engaged as a volunteer or afterwards, any confidential, personal or health information gained while working as a City of Sydney Volunteer
- have a current NSW Working With Children Check where it is identified as a requirement for an event or activity (this currently only applies to Sydney City Farm education and event volunteers).

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Self-coordinated Bushcare/ Landcare Volunteer Groups

The City provides self-coordinated Bushcare/Landcare Volunteer Groups with:

- approval to carry out Community Greening activities on land owned or managed by the City
- assistance from our urban ecologist to develop local site plans
- support with removing litter and debris collected during volunteer activities
- supply of native tubestock plants, selected from species listed in approved site plans, for planting on land owned or managed by the City
- limited donation of native tubestock plants to support volunteer activities on land in the local area not owned or managed by the City
- information about local ecology and enhancing local biodiversity
- group support including meetings with the City of Sydney Coordinator
- onsite bush restoration supervision, guidance and education as requested or required by the group
- maintenance of our assets including fences, tool storage sheds/storage cages and native bee hives
- First Aid training for a group representative and a basic First Aid kit
- signs for some Bushcare/Landcare sites
- guidance for best practice volunteer record keeping including maintaining privacy, confidentiality, and security of information collected.

In addition to the general requirements for City of Sydney Volunteers in Community Greening programs listed above, self-coordinated Bushcare/Landcare Volunteer Groups are required to:

- request permission to carry out volunteer activities on land we own or manage
- nominate a volunteer group convenor to liaise with the City of Sydney coordinator, manage records, oversee site inductions and ensure participation in required learning/training
- maintain volunteer attendance records for each volunteer activity
- carry out activities in line with our Urban Ecology Strategic Action Plan, Bush Restoration Management Plan and local site plans
- ensure Risk Assessments are developed for volunteer activities on approved sites on land we own or manage
- coordinate sessions/activities and manage internal group communication
- complete site inductions for new volunteers and safety briefings at sessions/activities
- nominate a representative to attend First Aid training and provide First Aid to volunteers in the group if requested or required
- submit a brief annual update to us about City of Sydney Volunteer activities.

The City cannot give approval, or take responsibility, or provide insurance coverage for Bushcare/Landcare Volunteer Group activities on land we don't own or manage.

The Community Greening Volunteer Guidelines set out the City's Volunteer Community Greening programs to support urban greening, urban ecology, biodiversity and food production on land we own or manage. The guidelines include descriptions of activities under each program and information about how to get involved.

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Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the City and participants in Community Greening are detailed in the City's Footpath and Laneway Gardens Local Approvals Policy, Footpath and Laneway Gardens Guidelines, Community Gardens Guidelines and Community Greening Volunteer Guidelines.

The City's role in Community Greening

The City will support Community Greening by:

- providing a dedicated Coordinator to provide information, advice, guidance and support to individuals and groups participating in Community Greening
- overseeing compliance and addressing non-compliance and responding to complaints about this framework, the Footpath and Laneway Gardens Local Approvals Policy and associated guidelines
- reviewing and updating this framework, the Footpath and Laneway Gardens Local Approvals Policy and associated guidelines
- providing maintenance and renewal of assets owned or managed by the City
- promoting Community Greening on the City's website, in other media, publications and at events
- linking community members to Community Greening opportunities to suit their interests, availability and abilities
- donating some plants and materials to support City of Sydney Volunteer activities, Community Garden Groups and Road Closure Gardens
- providing access to educational workshops and events
- providing public liability insurance for Community Greening activities on land we own or manage
- providing personal accident insurance coverage for City of Sydney Volunteers aged18 years or older for Community Greening activities on land we own or manage (noting coverage and benefits are reduced for volunteers over 85 years old)
- providing public liability insurance coverage for Community Garden groups operating on land owned or managed by the City where groups are operating in accordance with the requirements of the City's Community Garden Guidelines.

The role of participants in Community Greening

Footpath gardeners, Community Garden Group members and City of Sydney Volunteers in Community Greening programs in the City of Sydney local area are required to:

- follow the City's Community Greening principles
- comply with criteria set out in this framework, and other relevant policies, plans, guidelines or agreements under this framework
- comply with relevant City policies and procedures detailed in relevant program guidelines
- address any non-compliance raised by the City
- follow safe work practices, safety recommendations and use appropriate Personal Protective Equipment
- foster productive relationships with neighbours and the local community.

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Consultation

This framework has been informed by insights gained from community engagement including the City's 2023 community wellbeing survey, Community Gardens policy review and the Sydney City Farm business plan consultation.

References

Laws and Standards
• Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012
• Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002
• Local Government Act 1993
• Pesticides Act 1999
• Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998
• Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997
• Public Spaces (Unattended Property) Act 2021 No 38
• Roads Act 1993
• Work Health and Safety Act 2011

Policies and Procedures
• Child Safety Policy
• Community Gardens Guidelines
• Community Greening Volunteer Guidelines
• Code of Conduct
• Footpath and Laneway Gardens Guidelines
• Footpath and Laneway Gardens Local Approvals Policy
• Greening Sydney Strategy
• Inclusive and Accessible Public Domain Policy
• Inclusion (Disability) Action Plan 2025–2029
• Privacy Management Plan
• Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050 Continuing the Vision
• Urban Ecology Strategic Action Plan
• Volunteer Policy
• Work, Health and Safety Policy

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Review period

This framework will be formally reviewed 4 years from date of adoption or as required.

Approval Status

Council approved this policy on [DD MONTH YYYY].

Approval History

Stage	Date	Comment	TRIM Reference
Original Policy	(Date, month, year)	Approved by Council	20XX/XXXXXX
Reviewed	(Date, month, year of when it was approved by CEO or Council)	Briefly summarise key changes	20XX/XXXXXX (Governance to populate)
Commence Review Date	(Date, month, year – should be 9 months prior to the end of the next review period)		
Approval Due Date	(Date, month, year of when the next review of the policy is due to be finalised/ approved)		

Ownership and approval

Responsibility	Role
Author	Community Greening, Gardens and Volunteer Coordinator
Owner	Executive Manager City Greening and Leisure
Endorser	City of Sydney Executive
Approver	City of Sydney Council

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