

## Community Gardens

Community Gardens are where communities can utilise an area of land for growing vegetables, fruit or flowers. Community gardening is a fulfilling and satisfying experience, where people can learn about growing plants, fresh food, composting and recycling as well as providing a space where people can come together to socialise, solve problems and get to know each other.



### What should be considered before applying for a community garden?

It is important to establish a strong foundation for your community garden, by ensuring sufficient thought is put into the planning design and organisational structure that your community garden will have.

- Is there sufficient space in your complex to support a community garden?
- Will there be enough interest from other residents in the complex to share the work involved to maintain a community garden?
- Are you willing to work with other residents in the complex to create and maintain a garden?
- Are you willing to commit enough of your time to tend to a community garden?
- Do you agree with Churches of Christ Housing Services' conditions for implementing a community garden (outlined below)?

### How do I apply for a community garden?

1. Complete a Community Garden Application and return it to our office. The application must be completed in full and include the following information:
  - Contact details of the nominated lead tenant/resident (spokesperson of the group to be the main point of contact) for processing the application.
  - Names and signatures of other members of the group
  - Details of the proposed garden – i.e. location, infrastructure and ongoing maintenance, dispute resolution

2. We will then assess your application in consideration of the:
  - Suitability of the property to have a community garden
  - Impact on the property and any impact it may have on the neighbours
  - Future implications of the community garden, including ongoing maintenance and capacity to maintain the garden
  - Response from the owner of the property (if not Churches of Christ Housing Services)
3. An outcome will be provided in writing once all required documentation has been received and your application has been assessed. Tenants are not permitted to commence any work on the garden until written approval is provided.
4. If your application is declined, you have the right to lodge an appeal, as detailed in our 'Feedback, Complaints and Appeals Brochure' provided in your Tenant Start up Pack.

## What other conditions do I need to know?

Once approved all tenants/residents participating in the community garden must abide by the following conditions:

- The Community Garden Group will be responsible for all establishment and ongoing maintenance costs, as well as associated expenditure and financial accountabilities of grant or donation funds received.
- Future improvements or redevelopment of the community garden must be done in consultation with the service and be approved in writing.
- An organic model of gardening must be adopted to control soil fertility and pests, with no chemicals or insecticides to be used at any time.
- All building materials used for the construction of or near garden beds must be free of poisons and toxic substances. E.g. treated pine must not be used.
- All plants and organic material must be legal and not classed as an "exotic weed" as defined by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.
- The use of motorised digging equipment is not permitted for use in gardening activities.
- Structures and fixtures including garden beds, potting benches and shade structures, must be robust, safe and fit to withstand severe weather conditions. All structures and fixtures must be approved by the service by completing a Property Alterations Application.
- Work Health and Safety practices must be adhered to at all times, and in all activities related to the community garden and group members must take responsibility for these requirements and ensure that they have sound knowledge of the legislation.
- Members must make a commitment to work cooperatively and respectfully with each other in developing and maintaining the garden.
- Members must take responsibility for the day-to-day organisation and management of garden activities including associated costs.

- Approved community gardens are regarded as common areas, to which all residents of the unit complex have the right to access and benefit from.
- Members acknowledge and accept that residents, who have not contributed to its cultivation, may take produce from time to time. In such cases, although it may seem unfair, members must agree not to take action against the persons and always foster an inclusive environment.
- Churches of Christ Housing Services will not be responsible for, nor become involved in, disputes arising from the community garden unless intervention is required under the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008.
- In the event of unresolved conflict surrounding Community Garden activities, or failure to comply with the prescribed conditions, permitted use of the area for the Community Garden may be withdrawn.

For further information, or to obtain a Community Garden Application form, please contact your Housing Officer or nearest Regional Housing Office, or email us at [housingservices@cofcqld.com.au](mailto:housingservices@cofcqld.com.au).