



Warrnambool Community Garden is a common ground where all are welcome to come together to grow, learn, produce & share.

Warrnambool Community Garden

Policies and Guidelines

October 2023

This document outlines the garden's internal rules that members are expected to follow. These policies and guidelines are reviewed periodically.

Our vision

Our community will produce its own food and have knowledge, skills and passion for sustainable living.

Our mission

Warrnambool Community Garden offers:

- A community education & resource centre for organic gardening & sustainable living
- Garden space for growing and sharing organic food
- Social & community activities for networking & friendship.

Our values

- Inclusiveness
- Empowerment
- Ecological, social and economic sustainability
- Reducing, re-using, recycling, restoring, replenishing.

Our purpose

The purposes of the association are:

- Develop and maintain a community garden and promote sustainable living in Warrnambool.
- Cultivate a productive, beautiful and financially sustainable community garden.
- Support other community gardens in the region.
- Use organic and sustainable gardening techniques, based on permaculture principles.
- Strive to include all members of the community in activities, including people of diverse ethnic or cultural backgrounds, religion, age, ability or economic circumstances.
- Welcome all members and visitors into the garden, providing them with opportunities to use and enjoy the garden.
- Make the garden available as a place for community feasts, events and celebrations.
- Foster opportunities for different generations and cultures to work together, support and learn from each other.
- Introduce children to the joy of gardening and community.
- Integrate the arts and foster creativity.
- Promote gardening as a means of achieving good health and wellbeing.
- Create opportunities for research, formal and informal learning about gardening, sustainability, healthy foods and co-operative endeavours.
- Contribute to the preservation and improvement of Warrnambool's natural environment.
- Respect and work in harmony with each other and nature.
- Preserve and enhance the biodiversity of indigenous habitat and species.
- Protect and enhance the genetic diversity of our food.
- Advocate for the values expressed in this statement of purpose.

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1. Governance & management

1.1 Committee

Warrnambool Community Garden Incorporated (WCG) is a not-for-profit community organisation and registered charity incorporated in 2007. The instrument of incorporation is the “Constitution” or the “Association Rules Warrnambool Community Garden Inc.” Within this framework the governance structure is defined and authority for this governance is invested in the committee.

The committee meets monthly (on each second Tuesday at 7.00pm) at the HUB building on site. The quorum for committee meetings is 5. All members are warmly invited to attend these meetings. A call for agenda items for the committee meeting is made prior to each meeting and the agenda circulated via email to committee members prior to the meeting. The minutes of each meeting are emailed to all members.

A list of committee members and relevant contact details is available on the noticeboard in the HUB and on the garden website. <https://www.wcg3280.org.au>

1.2 Strategic plan

The strategic plan is available on the website under the resources section. Annual plans for the garden are developed from strategic priorities and reviewed annually. All members are encouraged to participate in strategic and annual planning.

1.3 Insurance

As a club affiliated with the Royal Horticultural Society of Victoria (RHSV) the garden is covered by the RHSV’s Public/Products Liability and Volunteer Workers Insurance, provided annual fees based on membership numbers have been paid. Members are covered by insurance up to the age of 100 and names of members working on site need to be recorded to be covered.

In addition, the garden is covered for Work Cover Insurance and Building and Tools independently from the RHSV.

1.4 Sale of garden produce

Funds are raised by selling produce, seeds and seedlings from the communal garden plots and hothouses. Individual and organisational plot holders are encouraged to contribute when they can. Spending of funds raised through these sales is based on the priorities identified by members through the annual and strategic planning processes and approved by the committee.

Barter and exchange of produce, seeds, seedlings and garden tips between members is wholeheartedly encouraged.

1.5 Drugs and alcohol

The consumption or possession of alcohol is prohibited except under specific permission from the committee or under the control of the committee.

Illegal drugs are prohibited and must not be brought onto or used on site.

Smoking is prohibited anywhere on site and in the HUB building.

If people are smoking outside the site fence, they should consider others and smoke well away from entrances. The person must take their butts away.

1.6 Conflict resolution

Warrnambool Community Garden aims to promote a tolerant, accepting, and inclusive environment. Members should behave in a manner according to the association rules and these policies and guidelines. The association rules describe the grievance dispute process used by members should conflict arise.

Any membership, plot or site related problem or concern that cannot be resolved privately may be dealt with in consultation with the committee in accordance with the grievance dispute process.

1.7 Bullying and harassment

All members have a responsibility to behave in a manner consistent with the purposes of the garden and any requirements specified in the association rules and policies and guidelines.

Any allegations of bullying or sexual harassment are reported to the convenor and investigated promptly. The person against whom the allegation is made has the right to natural justice covering:

- The right to know what is alleged against them,
- the right to put their case in reply, and
- the right for the decision to be made by an impartial decision-maker.

Members can get help from a relevant legal authority to resolve any claims.

2. Members

2.1 Application and joining process

Individuals, groups and organisations wanting to become a member are required to fill out the membership application form. The committee considers the application and, if successful, the applicant is contacted and becomes a member by paying the appropriate fee for their membership type. Members can apply for a private plot, choose to work in the communal plots and shared spaces, including the herb garden, bush food area and Chook Hilton.

Once a person joins, they will be taken through an induction process. Members and potential members are provided a welcome/induction pack, (available in the HUB) that includes the association rules and the policies and guidelines document, so they can understand the conditions, rights and responsibilities of membership.

2.2 Membership fees

Membership and plot fees are reviewed at the November Annual General Meeting (AGM) and all members will be notified via the AGM minutes each year of any changes to fees. Renewal notices will be sent to members annually and payment is due within one month of being invoiced.

New members who join during the year will be charged a 50% pro-rata membership fee if they join in the latter half of the membership year. If they acquire a plot, plot fees are charged pro-rata in the same manner as membership fees until the start of the next membership cycle where the full fee applies.

Members forfeit their membership and garden plot (if applicable) if they do not pay their annual membership and garden plot fees by the due date.

3. Responsibilities and expectations of members

All members are expected to comply with the association rules, policies and guidelines which exist to enable the garden to operate smoothly for the benefit of all and to meet any legal requirements. A copy of the documents is provided on the [website](#). The policies and guidelines will be reviewed and updated as needed and members notified of any changes.

Members are required to advise the secretary of any change of address, phone number or email from what was provided in their application form.

As a voluntary community organisation, members are encouraged to give about an hour a week on average over the year as their community contribution according to their interests, skills and experience. Examples of community contributions include:

- Working in the communal plots and shared spaces
- Attending scheduled working bees for site maintenance with an expectation of at least two attendances per year
- Participating in seasonal celebrations, events and open days
- Attending or leading gardening workshops
- Providing articles for the monthly newsletter
- Becoming a member of a work team e.g. chook crew, herb garden, project team
- Providing a specialised skill such as communications support, fundraising and grant writing, photography, or anything else relating to our purposes.

3.1 Communication

Clear, respectful and regular two-way communication between members and the committee is essential for the successful operation of the garden. Members are encouraged to attend the AGM each year and are invited to attend monthly committee meetings. They can provide feedback and suggestions by talking to any committee members, in writing by emailing or messaging, the contact form provided on the website or via a suggestion box.

Formal communication channels include emails from and to the convenor, treasurer and secretary.

Informal communication channels include:

- The newsletter
- Committee and team meetings
- Noticeboards in the HUB
- On-site signage
- Pockets in the HUB to provide information to members with specific roles.

The following documents, project reports and gardening related material are on our website, <https://www.wcg3280.org.au>:

- Incorporation rules
- Policies and guidelines
- Application form
- Strategic plan
- Annual reports
- Guidelines for different garden groups.

4. Private plot fees and information

4.1 Plot fees

Only financial members are eligible to apply for a garden plot or to be placed on a waiting list if all plots are taken. Garden plots are limited in space and number so will be allocated as and when they are available subject to confirmation from a committee person nominated as a plot coordinator.

Application for a plot is via the plot coordinator who works with the Site Manager. Generally, a member has access to one plot although the committee retains the right to approve multiple sites up to two full size plots.

A standard plot is approximately 4m x 4m, with some variability. All plots are the same price.

Plots are leased on an annual basis with fees due at the annual membership renewal each year. Plot fees are reviewed at the November AGM and are not refundable.

Plot holders will be automatically offered a renewal of their lease unless the committee deems their use of the plot doesn't meet guidelines.

4.2 Plot use

Plots are for the growing of vegetables, small fruits, herbs and flowers.

Trees, permanent shrubs, plants that have weed potential like mint or raspberries that are hard to control are not allowed.

The committee reserves the right to ban any plants that are illegal, considered weeds or have weed potential.

4.3 Keys

All members can apply for a key for site access. The key opens the gate padlocks, the HUB building, the Chook Hilton, and the tool shed. If you have been allocated a key, you must lock any buildings and gates you have unlocked if you are the last to leave the garden.

The plot coordinator will issue a key to members. A deposit of \$22.00 is required for a key, which is refundable upon ceasing to be a member. Lost keys must be reported to the plot coordinator with replacement cost incurred by the member. Members must not give their key to another person.

4.4 Transfer of plots

If a member no longer wants their plot, they must advise the plot coordinator. Plots are not transferable to another member.

4.5 Forfeiture of plots

Members will forfeit their plot if they have not paid their annual membership fee and garden plot fee within one month of being invoiced.

If a gardener is deemed by the committee to have acted in a manner contrary to the association rules or policies and guidelines, they may be asked to forfeit their membership and plot.

If a plot is not regularly maintained the committee may choose to not offer a renewal for that plot for the following year.

4.6 Care and maintenance of plots

All members and visitors are expected to be considerate and respectful of all plots and the gardening techniques of others. Private plot holders should follow the following guidelines:

- Use your plot intensively over the whole year and harvest produce in a timely manner.
- When considering borders around plots be mindful they are done in a mutually acceptable way with neighbours.
- Don't enter or remove produce or equipment from the plot of another member unless the plot holder has granted permission.
- Be responsible for the care and maintenance of your plot and ensure it's kept free of rubbish and any items that might obstruct pathways.
- Don't drag a hose over other gardeners' plots. Leave hoses neatly coiled on posts, ensuring taps are turned off firmly.
- Remove weeds, diseased plants and pests to prevent the spread of problems to other plots.
- Familiarise yourself with the various composting systems. Keep these systems effective by chopping soft green garden waste, separating 'wicked weeds' and woody materials and depositing them in the appropriate marked bins or bays.

- Permanent structures should not be built on individual plots. Raised garden beds are an exception to this.
- Plant supports, such as garden stakes and mesh, may be used, but with care and consideration of the impact on neighbouring plots.

Members are responsible for the ongoing improvement of their plot soil through addition of compost, green manure crops, animal manures and mulch. Soil must not be removed from other garden plots.

It is expected that plots don't become overgrown and covered with weeds. Plot holders are to advise the plot coordinator or other members if they can't tend their plot for an extended period of time.

5. Site management practices

Everyone involved in the community garden from members to visitors should demonstrate respectful, inclusive behavior and communication. Members of the public are welcome to visit the garden and HUB.

Pets are not allowed. All rubbish and litter must be taken home or composted. Members can report pest plants and animals to the committee.

5.1 Vehicles inside the gate

Vehicle traffic inside the gates is to be kept to a minimum. Vehicles are only permitted on the internal road of the garden to deliver or collect large or heavy objects, move materials or people with physical limitations.

Generally, all vehicles should be parked outside the gates.

5.2 Water management

Subject to any prevailing water restrictions specified by government agencies or water authorities, gardeners should use water carefully at all times and avoid overwatering. No sprinklers should be left unattended on private plots. To conserve water, garden beds should be well mulched.

5.3 Using chemicals

The use of non-organic compounds (e.g. herbicide, insecticides and fungicides) is strictly forbidden in food growing areas. Organic gardening principles are encouraged and supported.

5.4 Mulch, compost and manure

Mulch, compost and manure are usually available on site to anyone unless indicated otherwise on signage. Packed materials (straw bales, bags) are for purchase. Purchases are recorded in the marked folder in the HUB, with the payment instructions followed.

Loose materials are free to be used on site.

Members can purchase hay and sheep manure (if available) and worm tea. Money should be placed in the moneybox located next to blackboard at the garden main entrance.

5.5 Tools and equipment

The garden has a range of manual tools and equipment available for use by all members, stored in the garden shed. Tools and equipment must always be cleaned and returned to the shed after use and must not be removed from the site.

The garden trailer is available for approved garden activities but should not be taken off site without the knowledge and approval of the site manager.

Any damage such as tools damage or incidents, such as vandalism, should be reported to a committee member or via email to the secretary: warrnamboolcommunity@yahoo.com.au

6. The HUB

The HUB is an integral part of our site. It can be booked for occasions that relate to our purposes, for example, workshops. Members and non- members alike will be expected to pay a hire fee for bookings. During bookings the bathroom and tea and coffee facilities must remain available to members.

Bookings may be sought by emailing the secretary: warrnamboolcommunity@yahoo.com.au.

Members have priority access to the HUB. It can be booked for group usage by members for activities related to the garden e.g., the HUB is used by communal plot workers every Tuesday morning. Organisations that are members may also book the HUB, via the secretary, for committee approved activities.

If groups are using the HUB, bathroom facilities are still available to members.

6.1 Conditions of use

Conditions of use for the HUB are outlined in the Hire of Garden Facilities policy.

6.2 Equipment and appliances

New users of the kitchen in the HUB will be given an induction by a trained member.

The oven, stovetop, BBQ and pizza oven can only be used by members or under instruction from members who have undertaken appropriate training in:

- Suitable cookware for use on the induction stovetop.
- Cleaning procedures and fire prevention measures when using stovetop
- Safe use of sharp knives, kitchen appliances and powered utensils
- Use of the fire extinguisher.

Cords should be kept from dangling and power should be turned off when not in use.

6.3 Cleaning and maintenance

When cleaning the HUB please ensure that the eco-friendly cleaning products under the sink are used and that **only vinegar** is used to clean the toilet.

6.4 Use of the library

The library is in the HUB for member reference. If members wish to borrow any of the library resources for a short period they should speak to the site manager.

7. The Shelter

The garden shelter is a flexible space within the garden. It's a place to shelter from the sun and rain, to rest or meet. Workshops are sometimes run in this space.

- Please leave the shelter in a clean & tidy condition and put away any toys used.
- Notify a committee member or the site manager of any damage or items requiring maintenance.
- The tap water at the sink is not suitable for drinking, but can be used for other purposes, such as rinsing produce or washing hands.

8. Occupational Health & Safety (OH&S)

Everyone has a personal responsibility to always work safely in the garden. Members and partners are encouraged to recognise that no task is so important that time cannot be taken to find a safe and healthy way to complete it.

The Occupational Health & Safety manual can be found in the HUB.

Any incident, injury or near miss should be recorded in the personal accident/incident book located in the first aid kit on the fridge in the HUB.

The committee takes seriously the responsibility to make sure the site is, as far as is practicable, safe for our members, partners and the public. While OH&S is a management responsibility, members and partner organisations have a key role to play in achieving a safe and healthy garden environment, including reporting any hazards or potential hazards to the committee.

Partner organisations have a responsibility to ensure their members and employees follow both their own OH&S policies and guidelines and the rules and guidelines.

The committee implements strategies and actions informed by state OH&S legislation aimed at continuously managing and improving the health and safety of the garden environment. Information, instruction and training are available to ensure members carry out their OH&S responsibilities.

The convenor must be notified as soon as possible whenever there is a major health, safety or security incident. The committee will investigate all incidents and take appropriate action as required.

8.1 Children in the garden

Children are welcome in the garden. All children must always be supervised by an adult.

8.2 Being safe in the garden

It is important to follow good practices in the garden to maximize your safety. These include:

- Wearing appropriate footwear on site at all times. Sturdy shoes or boots are recommended. Thongs and high heels are unsuitable
- Taking preventative measures (sunscreen, hat, water bottle) to avoid sunburn and dehydration
- Wearing gloves to protect your hands
- Wearing a dust mask when making or turning compost or spreading mulch particularly if you suffer from breathing difficulties or asthma
- Informing the committee and/or your neighbouring plot holders if you have a specific medical condition or allergy for which you may need assistance if you have a medical emergency at the garden
- Use safe manual handling practices
- Keeping pathways in the garden free from any obstacles to avoid trips and falls and not leaving forks and rakes lying face up on the ground

8.3 Using power tools & equipment

Only people approved by the site manager may use power tools and equipment. Those using power tools and equipment must first have done an induction on safe handling of power tools and should always wear personal protective equipment (PPE) when operating.

8.4 Dealing with a major incident or an emergency

In response to a major incident that requires immediate attention or emergency services, members are to call 000 and advise the convenor.

Incident and injury reporting

Reporting any injuries and incidents on site is a legal requirement. A accident/incident book is in the first aid kit next to the fridge in the HUB and must be filled in even for minor incidents.

Emergency procedures and fire prevention

- In an emergency requiring **ambulance, fire or Police, call 000**, remain on the phone and follow operator instructions. The address is: Corner Grieve Street and Grafton Road, Warrnambool.
- For **poisons** information call **13 11 26**.
- Other emergency contact numbers such as **plumbing, electricity, gas**, are listed in the HUB and the main shed.
- The **Emergency Assembly Area** is the grassed area outside the gates. Ensure the road to the gate is clear for emergency vehicle access.
- The **fire extinguisher** and fire blanket are **in the HUB and the container**. The CFA approved fire extinguisher is checked and tagged six-monthly.
- A **first aid kit and manual** are **in the HUB and the container**. A small first aid kit is in the tool shed.
- A defibrillator is in the HUB.

9. Conflict of interest

This should be read in conjunction with the [Managing Conflicts of Interest Guide](#) from Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission.

The purpose of this policy is to help effectively identify, disclose and manage any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest in order to protect the integrity of the garden and manage risk.

This policy applies to the committee members, members who may receive remuneration (e.g. for running workshops) and employees.

The committee aims to ensure that committee members are aware of their obligations to disclose any conflicts of interest that they may have, and to comply with this policy to ensure they effectively manage those conflicts of interest as representatives of Warrnambool Community Garden.

9.1 Definition of conflict of interests

A conflict of interest occurs when a person's personal interests conflict with their responsibility to act in the best interests of the garden. Personal interests include direct interests as well as those of family, friends, or other organisations a person may be involved with or have an interest in (for example, as a shareholder).

It also includes a conflict between a committee member's duty to the garden and another duty that the committee member has (for example, to another charity). A conflict of interest may be actual, potential or perceived and may be financial or non-financial.

These situations present the risk that a person will make a decision based on, or affected by, these influences, rather than in the best interests of WCG and must be managed accordingly.

9.2 Policy

Conflicts of interest commonly arise, and do not need to present a problem if they are openly and effectively managed. It is the policy, as well as the responsibility of the committee, that ethical, legal, financial or other conflicts of interest be avoided and that any such conflicts (where they do arise) do not conflict with the obligations to the garden.

Warrnambool Community Garden will manage conflicts of interest by requiring committee members, managers and employees to:

- avoid conflicts of interest where possible
- identify and disclose any conflicts of interest
- carefully manage any conflicts of interest, and
- follow this policy and respond to any breaches.

Responsibility of the committee

The committee is responsible for:

- establishing a system for identifying, disclosing and managing conflicts of interest
- monitoring compliance with this policy, and
- reviewing this policy periodically to ensure that the policy is operating effectively.

Warrnambool Community Garden must ensure that its committee members are aware of the governance standards for not-for-profit organisations and that they disclose any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interests.

Identification and disclosure of conflicts of interest

Once an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest is identified, it must be entered into a Warrnambool Community Garden's register of interests, as well as being raised with the committee. The register of interests must be maintained by the secretary and record information related to a conflict of interest (including the nature and extent of the conflict of interest and any steps taken to address it). Committee members will have access to the information on the register of interests.

If any concerns arise about conflict of interest the committee must seek advice from appropriate organisations (e.g. Justice Connect).

9.3 Action required for management of conflicts of interest

Conflicts of interest of committee members

Once the conflict of interest has been appropriately disclosed, the committee (excluding the committee member disclosing and any other conflicted committee member) must decide whether or not those conflicted committee members should:

- vote on the matter (this is a minimum),
- participate in any debate, or
- be present in the room during the debate and the voting.

In exceptional circumstances, such as where a conflict is very significant or likely to prevent a committee member from regularly participating in discussions, it may be worth the committee considering whether it is appropriate for the person conflicted to resign from the committee.

What should be considered when deciding what action to take

In deciding what approach to take, the committee will consider:

- whether the conflict needs to be avoided or simply documented
- whether the conflict will realistically impair the disclosing person's capacity to impartially participate in decision-making
- alternative options to avoid the conflict
- the garden's objectives and resources, and
- the possibility of creating an appearance of improper conduct that might impair confidence in, or the reputation of, the garden.

The approval of any action requires the agreement of at least a majority of the committee (excluding any conflicted committee members) who are present and voting at the meeting.

The action and result of the voting will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting and in the register of interests.

9.4 Compliance with this policy

If the committee has a reason to believe that a person subject to the policy has failed to comply with it, it will investigate the circumstances. If it is found that this person has failed to disclose a conflict of interest, the committee may take action against them. This may include seeking to terminate their relationship with the association.

If a person suspects that a committee member has failed to disclose a conflict of interest, they must in the first instance discuss with the person in question to ensure the person is aware of their obligations to disclose and then notify the committee and the person responsible for maintaining the register of interests.

For questions about this policy, contact the committee via the secretary warrnamboolcommunity@yahoo.com.au