



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

Strategic Plan

Our vision and priorities
2017-2020

Warrnambool Community Garden aims to equip people from all walks of life with skills to participate in a more sustainable future. These include skills like: growing and cooking with seasonal fruit and vegetables, preserving, growing and using herbs, bush foods, composting and worm farming, keeping backyard chooks, increasing energy and water efficiency, using alternative energy, recycling, repairing and re-using.

**Annual plans for the WCG are developed from
our strategic priorities and reviewed annually**

“ Warrnambool Community garden provides fertile soil for producing food, knowledge and community.”

Our Vision:

Our community can produce its own food & has knowledge, skills & passion for sustainable living.

Our Mission:

The Warrnambool Community Garden is a place all people can come to for:

- community education and learning about organic gardening and sustainable living.
- growing and sharing food.
- community events and gatherings for networking and friendship.

Our Values:

- Inclusiveness
- Empowerment
- Ecological, Social and Economic Sustainability
- Reducing, Re-Using, Recycling, Restoring, Replenishing

Our Statement of Purpose:

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

“Never doubt that a small group of people with a dream can make the impossible become possible.”

Our History:

2005: The Warrnambool Community Garden Project started with a small group discussing the idea of creating a gathering place where members of the community could meet, grow food, share knowledge, learn and practice sustainable living.

2006: Warrnambool Community Garden Inc. formed following a public meeting attended by around 65 people.

October 2007: an old quarry site with over 2 hectares of unused land near the corner of Grieve Street & Grafton Road was secured. The site was chosen because its central location and northerly aspect provides the perfect environment for growing produce with good public access and plenty of space for infrastructure development.

2009: work on the site began – firstly with swales to control water run-off and the laying of a path to define people movement.

January 2012: pizza oven constructed

September 2012: the HUB (Healthy Urban Building) was officially opened. The HUB is an old portable classroom that has been converted through many hours of volunteer labour into a low-energy multi-purpose space for meeting, cooking and conducting a range of activities promoting organic gardening, permaculture and sustainable living. The HUB is South West Victoria’s first multi-purpose community eco-demonstration building and boasts passive-ventilation layout, solar panels, low-toxin paint, insulation made from recycled plastic bottles and a worm farm toilet.

Feb 2015: Quarry rehabilitation project starts, woody weeds are removed and planting begins around the quarry perimeter and shelterbelts along the fences. Organic weed trials begin to discover organic methods for controlling the significant weed problems on site.

October 2015: a garden shelter designed on bio-mimicry principles officially opened. It includes roof top water harvesting and a water wise panel informing us that Warrnambool’s (and the community garden’s) water almost all comes from the Gellibrand River. Increasing our water use directly impacts and threatens the sustainability of the river’s health and the native creatures and plants that depend on the river. Becky Nevin Berger's shower sculpture reinforces this message as 30% of household water use is in the shower!

March 2016: Landscaping around the HUB (including building steps from the verandah to the pizza oven area) starts.

May 2016: Indigenous recognition seat dedicated with a smoking ceremony by Rob Lowe Senior recognises that Warrnambool Community Garden is a significant place for people of the Maar (Gunditjmarra) nation. 10-year anniversary since the first public meeting to form the garden is celebrated. Work begins on the new herb garden near the HUB.

November 2016: Chook Hilton finished and our first 12 chooks move in. Launch of our bushfood garden and bushfood booklet. Completion of mosaic on the pizza oven. New roof over the HUB verandah finished with lighting upgrade. Renovations and maintenance works begin in the HUB building to improve its function and connection to the landscape.

Since 2009, Warrnambool Community Garden membership has grown with a wide diversity of people and organisations using the space for an equally wide range of reasons. These include growing produce, seeking friendship, building networks, providing a nurturing space for people with physical, mental or social/vocational disadvantage and a place to learn about organic gardening and sustainable living. There are currently around 90 individual and organisational members and 60 gardens, including communal gardens, herb and bushfood areas.

Our Strategic Priorities: 2017-2020

A: Warrnambool Community Garden Site will be beautiful, inspiring, functional, educational, peaceful, productive and welcoming. The site will flow well with connections and pathways that are easy to navigate and with a welcoming entrance and connection to the Miura Japanese Friendship garden. We will have a site manager at least two days a week on site.

1. Quarry:

Our concept plan will be finalised and we will have agreement by all stakeholders on the geotech and engineering challenges. We will have started the first stages of the quarry transformation with new sheoak and native plantings for weed suppression; a pathway in for pedestrian and vehicle access and the quarry floor will be smoothed for the grassy area for the amphitheatre.

2. Chook Hilton:

The Chook Hilton will be a healthy and productive home for our chickens and a place where people can come and interact and learn about the joy and benefits of keeping backyard chickens.

3. Herb garden:

Our herb garden will be a beautiful and productive display of herbs for the kitchen and medicine cabinet that are used at the garden for learning, cooking and sharing.

4. Communal garden areas:

The communal garden areas will continue to thrive and be enjoyed for socialising, education and growing produce.

5. Bushfood garden:

Our bushfood garden will be thriving. People will be coming to our garden to see and learn about bushfoods. We will:

- continue to learn about and grow a wide variety of bushfoods and we will be cooking and using them at the garden.
- continue to build our relationships with Indigenous people in our community for sharing stories about native plants and their uses.
- explore options and viability of establishing a nursery specialising in bushfoods and herbs for income.

6. HUB and Pizza Oven area:

This will be an area that is functioning well for a variety of uses - for workshops, gatherings, meetings, cooking, making preserves, resting. We will have shelter from the west for this area.

7. Fruit Trees:

Our fruit and nut trees will be healthy and productive. We will be using them to show people how to care for fruit and nut trees, including the best feeding, pruning and grafting methods for different trees.

8. Flowers:

We will be growing more flowers on site for attracting pollinators and for beauty and possibly for sale.

9. Composting/Worm Farms

Our composting systems will be working well. We will have explored selling worm farms and possible options for processing green waste on site for sale as compost to earn income for the garden.

10. Sheds, hothouses

Our infrastructure (hothouses, sheds) will be adequate for our needs and located together on site.

11. Entrances to garden and to Miura Friendship garden

Our gates and entrances to the HUB and garden area will be more attractive and welcoming with good site interpretation. We will have a better link from our site to the Miura Friendship garden with beautiful gates that we can open and close for access and security.

12. Artwork and Sculptures

We will have more artwork, including mosaic and sculptures on site to make our site visually interesting and beautiful. We will explore the idea of having a sculpture exhibition/festival on site.



“Guided by and inspiring the values of self sufficiency, sustainability, and food production that is friendly to animals, humans and our planet.”

B: Warrnambool Community Garden Activities and Programs will inspire and attract our members and the broader community to our garden to participate, connect, learn, create, socialise and share. We will build on our current activities and increase the range and number of events, workshops and gatherings in the next three years to provide a range of formal and informal learning opportunities at the garden. We will have a part time events/workshop and community engagement manager.

1. Workshop Program

We will have a great workshop program for our members and public for growing, storing, sharing and cooking organic food that we produce on site. Our workshop program will be guided by and inspire the values of self sufficiency, sustainability, and food production that is friendly to animals, humans and our planet. Our annual planning will review and suggest topics for our annual workshop program. Currently the list includes:

- Seed collecting and seasonal seed raising (Feb & Aug)
- Crop rotation
- Saving water in the garden
- Staggering planting for vegie garden supply
- Companion planting
- Moon planting
- Composting and worm farm management
- Grafting
- Fruit tree pruning and health
- Learning about bush foods
- Chook care
- Growing and cooking with herbs
- Straw bale wall workshop
- Beekeeping
- Fermenting
- Growing mushrooms
- Creating a backyard vegie garden – small spaces, vertical gardens (raised beds, wicking beds, no dig)
- Preserves, chutneys, pickles, jams – utilising excess produce
- Weed identification
- Visit to CERES, other community gardens, Place of Wonder, Nature’s Way Sanctuary for learning and inspiration.

2. Seasonal Celebrations and Events:

There will be regular seasonal celebrations and events at the garden that are open to the public. Suggestions to explore and build on include:

- Pumpkin Harvest festival
- Scarecrow festival
- Winter solstice/equinox events
- Spring and/or Autumn fair/open day
- Sculpture Festival

3. Weekends in the garden

- hold bi-monthly gardening workshops and working bees on the weekend to increase opportunities for our members and public who work during the week to interact, garden and help with work on site.

4. Communal Lunches

- Continue to hold monthly communal lunches and
- Share the recipes in our newsletters.

5. Library and Newsletter

- Determine what the purpose is for our small library and match reference books and subscriptions accordingly.
- Continue to produce a seasonal newsletter for members and the broader public.

6. Community Engagement

We will have increased our community engagement with a view to increasing the diversity of people and programs at the garden. This could include:

- Kids in the garden activities with links to Primary Schools.
- Increased interaction with our organisational group members.
- Building on our Indigenous acknowledgements and connections.
- Building relationships with other groups and organisations in our community.
- Continuing our Work For the Dole Program
- Expanding our seasonal newsletter mailing list.



C: Governance/Management

We will continue to be a well governed and managed, financially healthy and sustainable organisation. We will plan and budget for our strategic and annual planning priorities, review our progress.

1. Finance/grants

- undertake a research project to explore possible social enterprise and income generation for the garden. Ideas to date include: green waste recycling from local restaurants/cafes, bushfood plant nursery and tours, flower sales, worm farm and compost sales.
- continue to attract grants for our site development and program activities from donors that do not have complex or time consuming application and reporting processes. We will continue to build our relationships with local philanthropic, service clubs, Warrnambool City Council, etc for highlighting our impact, vision, plans and needs.
- continue with the Work For the Dole Program for supporting activities and projects on site while planning for when this program is no longer viable, manageable or in existence.
- be mindful of the load on our volunteer committee members for financial management of a large and complex community organisation.

2. Governance

Our committee will continue to attract members willing to serve and to give their time and expertise for the organisation. The committee will:

- represent the diversity of our members.
- have a mix of skills and experience relevant for leading a community organisation with all the complexity that entails.
- make decisions in a transparent, ethical and professional manner.
- Invite feedback and input from members at every opportunity.
- Ensure strategic and annual plans and priorities are developed to guide the work of the organisation.
- Ensure the organisation is compliant with OH&S and legal responsibilities.
- Review and update policies and rules of the organisation as needed.

3. Planning/Project management.

We will:

- build teams of people to lead and manage our projects and work.
- Conduct regular review and monitoring of our progress against annual and strategic plans.
- Conduct annual review and planning and encourage all our members to have input.