

**LatrobeCity**

# Community Gardens Guidelines 2023



*Latrobe City Council acknowledges  
that it operates on the traditional land  
of the Brayakaulung people of the  
Gunaikurnai nation and pays respect  
to their Elders past and present.*



## Our Community Vision

In 2031 Latrobe City will be known for being **smart, creative, healthy, sustainable and connected**. It will be the most liveable regional city and at the forefront of innovation.

Working together we are a diverse, connected and resilient community, supporting the equitable diversification of our economic base and transition towards a low emissions future.

We are known as a community that is equitable, liveable and sustainable, with a continued focus on healthy lifestyles supported by high quality recreational and cultural facilities and a natural environment that is nurtured and respected.

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# Vision for Community Gardens

Community Gardens are valuable assets as they provide multiple benefits for the health and wellbeing of community including improved social connections, physical activity, healthy eating, environmental education and positive mental wellbeing outcomes.

Community Gardens play an important role in making Latrobe City creative, healthy, sustainable and connected.

These guidelines respond to the Council Plan Strategic Directions and in particular - Healthy - the vision for abundant green spaces that are accessible, inclusive and safe, and promote positive health outcomes for all.

These guidelines address the following strategies:

- Ensure health and wellbeing planning is at the centre of council planning in promoting safe communities, positive mental and physical health programs, resilience and connection to natural and built environments
- Support community groups and sporting clubs to increase engagement, participation and volunteerism, leading to increased social connections within the community



Moe Community Pollinator Garden, Moe

# Introduction

## Purpose

These guidelines have been developed to support and guide the establishment of Community Gardens within Latrobe City.

Latrobe City Council has taken a community development approach to these community assets / programs to build effective partnerships between community groups and organisations in their local community to facilitate community ownership and support long-term and sustainable success.

Council recognises the value that Community Gardens provide, however it is important to ensure that they are sustainable, safe and broadly accessible to all.

Council acknowledges that establishing a successful Community Garden requires strong and sustained commitment from community members to undertake considerable planning, collaboration and engagement for a sustained length of time.

These guidelines assist community groups to understand the parameters of siting Community Gardens and the responsibilities of all stakeholders involved when establishing and managing gardens on Council owned or managed land.

## Definitions and scope

Community Gardens are places where the community comes together to grow food, improve our health, green our environments, develop core life skills and cultivate vibrant communities.

Although gardening is the focus, Community Gardens are often community hubs for a range of activities – learning and education, playgroups, arts and creative activities, preparing and sharing food and community events. The produce grown in Community Gardens is predominantly for personal or shared use, however, some models may rely on sales (i.e. at markets) to help fund ongoing maintenance.

Community Gardens are largely planned, designed, built and maintained by community members for the use and enjoyment of the community. Community Gardens may be located on Council owned or managed land, or on privately owned land. Often Community Garden groups enter into a lease or licence to formalise the use of the land.

**Note:** Council approval is only required for Council owned or managed land however these guidelines may be useful for groups looking to set up a garden on private land to ensure success and sustainability.



Churchill Community Gardens, Churchill



Churchill Community Gardens, Churchill

## Community Garden Models

There are various models for the set up and management of Community Gardens. These guidelines apply to the following models:

- A. Communally Run Community Gardens
- B. Individual Plot Community Gardens
- C. A combination of A and B

Smaller street or neighbourhood gardens are considered a subset of a Communally Run Community Gardens.



Yinnar Community Garden, Yinnar

### A. Communally Run Community Gardens

This model is the preferred model for Community Gardens in Latrobe City as it provides greater opportunity for accessible participation and social connection. These gardens generally have large plots that are managed communally. Some plots may also be allocated to specific groups for activities such as:

- Kindergarten or school gardening activities
- Health services, who want to run seminars on health and nutrition
- Gardeners, who want to meet and share skills and knowledge
- Community groups, who want to grow fresh food for their community kitchen and soup vans

#### STREET OR NEIGHBOURHOOD GARDENS

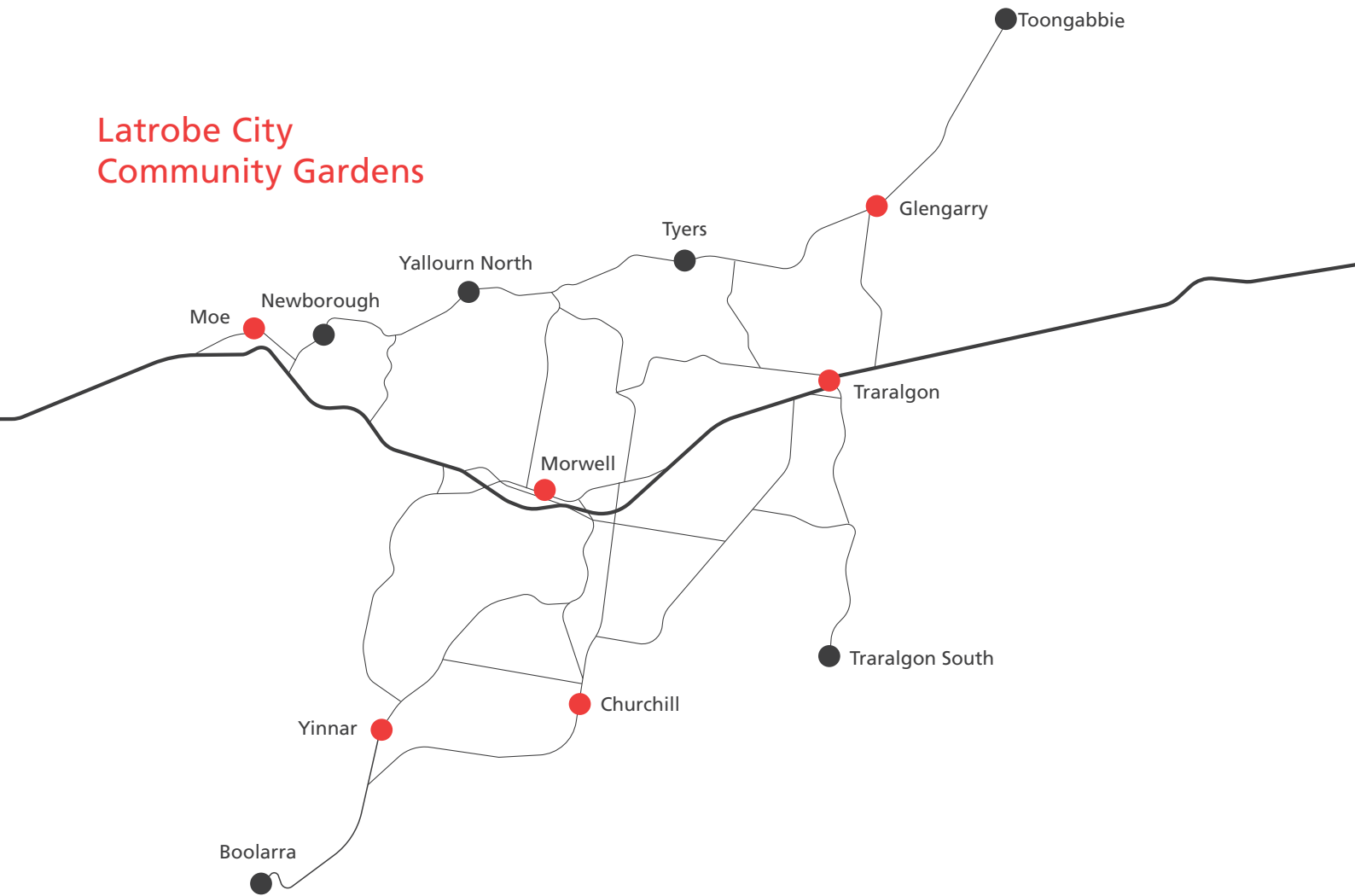
These gardens are communally run but on a smaller scale and for a defined smaller group i.e. the local residents.

### B. Individual Plot Community Gardens

These Community Gardens are divided up into small plots with each plot allocated to an individual gardener. It is usual for an annual fee to be charged to cover expenses such as insurances and the maintenance of common areas i.e., fences and sheds. Plot holders cultivate their own plots autonomously but may also be required to participate in communal activities that maintain common areas. Management of the garden is overseen by a committee drawn from plot holders.

Note: This model will be considered under these guidelines if it meets the criteria identified, including multiple opportunities for community building, low fees and inclusive of all interested community members.

## Latrobe City Community Gardens



NAME	ADDRESS	MODEL
<b>Moe</b> GEST Community Garden	Old Sale Road	Land owned by Gippsland Water. Gippsland Employment Skills Training (GEST) Garden. Open to volunteers.
Moe Community Pollinator Garden	99 Saviges Road	Land owned by Council and leased by Latrobe Valley Beekeepers Association. All community welcome.
<b>Traralgon</b> VRI Community Gardens	18/20 Queens Parade	VicTrack owned land. Leased by Traralgon Neighbourhood Learning House (TNLH). TNLH employ coordinator. Communal plots – all community welcome.
<b>Traralgon</b> ADRA Community Gardens	50 Stuart Street	Land owned by Seventh-day Adventist Church. Communal plots – all community welcome.
<b>Churchill</b> Churchill Community Garden	Community Centre, 9-11 Philip Parade	Churchill Neighbourhood Centre. Council owned land, run by a community group. Communal plots – all community welcome.
<b>Yinnar</b> Yinnar Community Gardens	19 Main Street	Land owned by Council and leased by Artist Resource Collective. Communal plots – all community welcome.
<b>Glengarry</b> Glengarry Community Garden	1 Railway Avenue	Located behind community hall on Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action land. Run by a community group – all welcome.
<b>Morwell</b> Morwell Centenary Rose Garden	Corner of Commercial Road and Maryvale Crescent	Committee run rose garden with 'Friends of the Garden' volunteers given opportunities to plant and maintain the garden and meet socially. Council owned land.
Latrobe Youth Space	97B Princes Drive	All community welcome.

## Roles And Responsibilities

Council recognises that the most successful Community Gardens are driven by a strong and committed community group with assistance from land managers/ partner organisations when required. The following diagrams outline the respective responsibilities when establishing and managing a Community Garden in Latrobe City.

## Community Group Responsibilities



### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Provide information and attract community members to join the group



### SECURE FUNDING

Apply and secure grant funding, establish and operate Community Gardens



### SITE SELECTION

In partnership with Council use these guideline (score sheet) to measure site suitability



### PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Coordinate Community Garden programs



### FACILITATE PARTNERSHIPS

Facilitate partnerships to strengthen support



### LICENCE OPERATOR

Manage the site in line with licence conditions



### MAINTENANCE

Maintain facilities to ensure safety and longevity



### PLANNING

Strategic and business planning to ensure financial and long term success



### GOVERNANCE

Establish and manage Community Gardens Committee in line with regulations

- Acquire appropriate insurance
- Manage membership fees



### CONSTRUCTION

Build or project manage construction in line with planning and building regulations



### HEALTHY AND SAFETY

Follow appropriate health and safety procedures in line with regulations



Morwell Centenary Rose Garden, Morwell



*Moe Community Pollinator Garden, Moe*

## Latrobe City Responsibilities

Council is not responsible for maintaining Community Gardens. Council reserves the right to terminate the agreed use of the land, and return the land to its previous state if a Community Garden established on Council owned or managed land:

- Fails to comply with the terms of the lease/license agreement and conditions
- Is not maintained
- If Council requires the land for another purpose
- Becomes unsafe or unsightly
- Ceases to be insured

Additionally, both the Community Garden group and Council have the right to terminate the occupancy agreement if the group ceases to function.



### INFORMATION AND ADVICE

Provide information and advice to help community groups establish a sustainable facility and program



### COMMUNITY GRANTS

Administer Community Grants program with opportunities for Community Gardens groups



### SITE SELECTION

Establish Community Garden guidelines (score sheet) to measure site suitability and guide community groups



### ENCOURAGE PARTNERSHIPS

Encourage partnership between community groups and like minded organisations



### LAND MANGER

Administer approvals and lease/licence conditions where gardens are developed on Council managed land



### ADVOCATE

Promote the benefits to attract external support

# Weighing it up

## Opportunities

### HEALTH & WELLBEING

- Encourage gardening as a hobby to improve health and wellbeing through physical activity, social interaction and education
- Participants have a stronger connection with nature and sustainable practices

### SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

- Participation builds social networks
- Partnerships strengthen like-minded organisations

### EDUCATION

- Greater awareness of nutrition and cost-effective ways to achieve a healthy diet
- Targeted programs can enrich outcomes and assist with building stronger relationships and improving life skills for more vulnerable community groups including people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, Traditional Owners, people with disabilities and people from low socio-economic backgrounds

### FOOD SECURITY

- A greater variety of different fruits and vegetables is grown and consumed in the community
- Excess food from the garden can be shared in a regular and frequent Produce Exchange or at markets
- Produce can be offered to community members who need assistance

## Challenges

### ATTRACTING VOLUNTEERS

Attracting and keeping sufficient volunteers to fulfil roles on the committee, and to undertake all activities required such as:

- Governance (to ensure legal responsibilities are met and operations are efficient and inclusive)
- Strategic planning
- Education/programs
- Growing/harvesting
- Selling/distributing
- Organising events
- Securing grants

### ATTRACTING PARTICIPANTS

Community Gardens need to attract enough participants to:

- Keep them vibrant and dynamic
- Support volunteers
- Sustain programs

### FUNDING

The establishment of a Community Garden is typically community led and therefore funding options need to be explored and secured by the Community Garden organisation. Funding required depends on the site, infrastructure available, volunteer numbers and skills as well as philanthropic support.

- Establishment \$0 - \$200,000 or more
- Ongoing funding \$0 - \$50,000 annually (maintenance and a supervisor/ program coordinator)

### FINDING A SITE

Finding a site can be challenging as successful sites require a combination of the following characteristics

- Co-location with a like-minded organisation
- Accessible to a large proportion of the community (ideally walking distance via accessible pathways and footpaths)
- Good surveillance to ensure participants feel safe and reduce vandalism
- Access to services
- Access to complimentary infrastructure i.e. car parks/ toilets
- Appropriate gardening conditions i.e. sunlight/shelter

# Key ingredients for success

Community Gardens that meet best practice typically have four key ingredients as identified.



## CO-LOCATION

Co-location with a like minded organisation such as:

- Community/Neighbourhood House
- School/TAFE
- Community group - Artist Society/ Gardening Club/Men's shed



## ACCESS TO \$

- Experience applying for grants
- Knowledge of the not-for-profit sector
- Awareness of philanthropic opportunities for Community Gardens
- Networking skills to partner with other groups to share budgets and enrich outcomes



## COLLABORATIVE PROGRAMS

Partner with community groups/ organisations to enrich/sustain such as:

- Partner with a cooking program to extend program from gardening to cooking
- Partner with a school/kindergarten/ TAFE to encourage education across all generations



## STRONG IDENTITY

- A well organised community group structure with adequate volunteers
- Skills and resources to promote the program, attract participants and respond to the needs/desires of a local community

## Your Community Garden Plan

To ensure these ingredients come together to inspire your community to create a flourishing Community Garden, it is essential that your group develops a comprehensive project plan including:

- The need for the Community Garden
- Governance structure including succession planning
- Site & Layout Plan (raised garden beds preferred)
- Construction logistics & Maintenance Plan
- Operational logistics (long-term to ensure the project is sustainable)
- Programming Plan
- Risk Register
- Processes for fair and transparent plot allocation and garden/plot membership (if relevant)
- Plans to encourage broader community engagement and social connection
- Associated licences and permits
- Itemised budget for establishment and operations

The following resource has been developed to assist individuals and groups planning to set up a Community Garden. The material included, and suggestions made are based upon the experiences of 11 regional Victorian communities who have each been involved in a Community Based Gardening Project.

<https://hmstrust.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Community-Gardens-Manual.pdf>

## The Score Sheet

Latrobe City is committed to supporting grass roots projects that improve the health and wellbeing of the community by providing advice and guidance based on these guidelines and the criteria below.

CRITERIA	CONSIDERATIONS
<b>Community Partnerships*</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has the group partnered with a like-minded organisation such as, community centre/neighbourhood house, school, kindergarten, TAFE, gardening club etc?</li> <li>Are there identified opportunities for programming partnerships such as, growing food and cooking programs?</li> <li>Are there identified opportunities to provide partnership opportunities for diverse user groups including Traditional Owners, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, people with disabilities?</li> <li>Are there identified opportunities to educate the community to improve food growing skills and improve health?</li> <li>Is there evidence that the establishment of a Community Garden has broader community support?</li> </ul>
<b>Governance and Planning*</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the group have an established governance structure with core governance roles allocated including President etc?</li> <li>Does the core group have skills required to plan, secure funding, and establish a Community Garden?</li> <li>Does the group have experience in the Not-for-Profit sector?</li> <li>Does the group have a comprehensive Community Garden Plan including a Site and Layout Plan, Risk Register and Budget?</li> </ul>
<b>Connectivity^</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the proposed site in a high-profile location?</li> <li>Does the site currently have high levels of visitation?</li> <li>Can a significant proportion of the town population walk or cycle to the proposed site?</li> <li>Is the site close to public transport?</li> <li>Does the site have good passive surveillance? i.e. People can see and be seen through casual observation?</li> <li>Is the site accessible? i.e. Does it have accessible pathways from car park/footpath and through the site?</li> </ul>

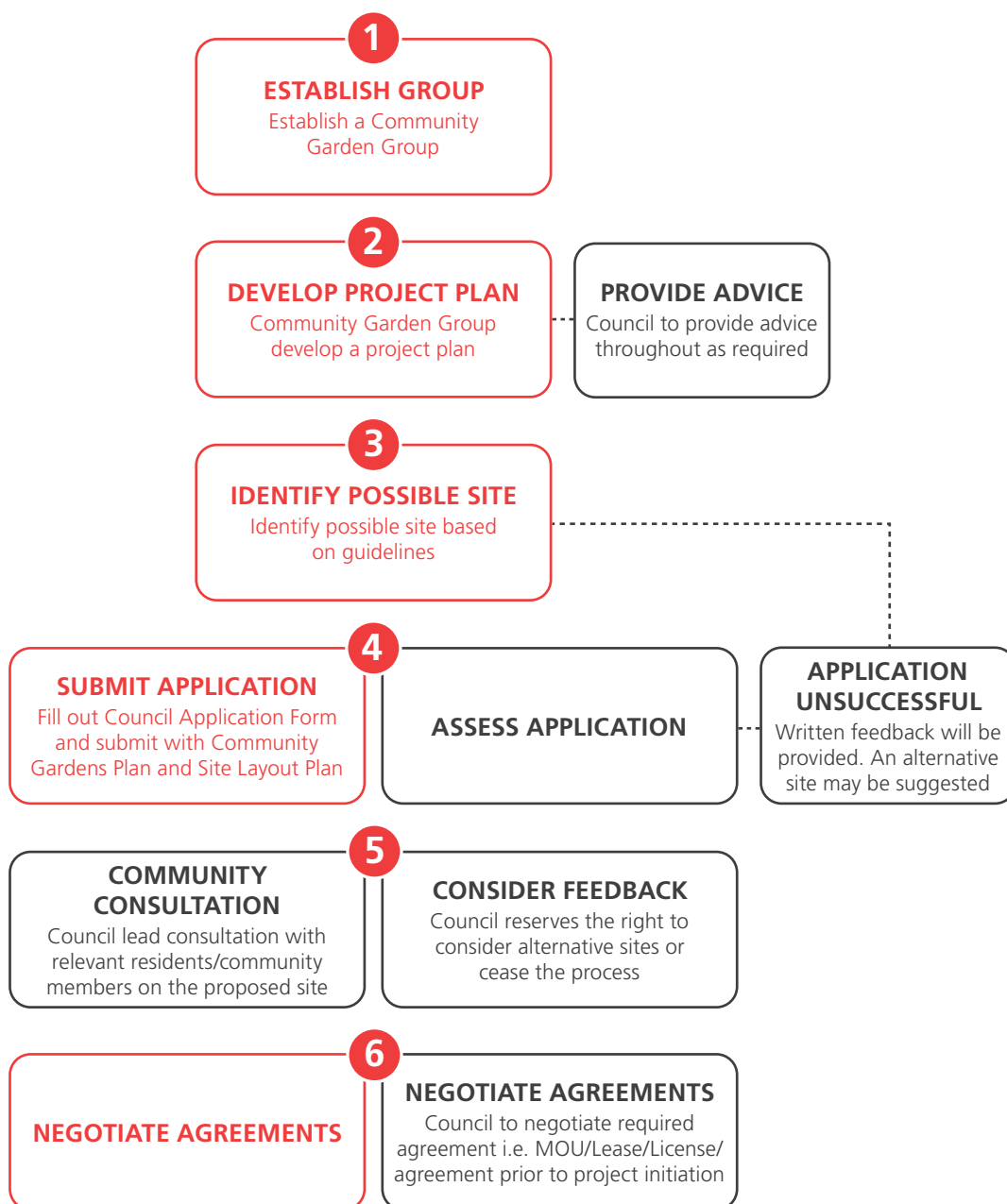
CRITERIA	CONSIDERATIONS
<b>Site location and ownership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the land owned or managed by Latrobe City? And are there licensing options for the subject land?</li> <li>• Will this be the only Community Gardens located within this town?</li> <li>• The site is earmarked for community use and would support a Community Garden?</li> <li>• The site is NOT earmarked for a purpose that is NOT a complimentary use?</li> <li>• Is there a Layout Plan that shows that the site is large enough to host the Community Garden for up to 10 years?</li> <li>• Is the site an appropriate distance from sensitive zones? i.e. residential dwellings?</li> <li>• Does the site have good passive surveillance such as, people can see and be seen through casual observation?</li> <li>• Does the site have adequate sunlight for vegetable growing?</li> </ul>
<b>Complimentary Services/Facilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the site have access to existing services that a Community Garden requires – water, electricity?</li> <li>• Does the site have access to an existing carpark with more than 10 spaces available, including an accessible car space?</li> <li>• Does the site have access to accessible public toilets?</li> <li>• Does the site have access to existing facilities such as a meeting room / kitchen? Are they accessible? i.e. ramped entry/wide doorways</li> <li>• Does the site have access to shelter and seating?</li> <li>• Does the site have access to storage area for equipment? i.e. workshop?</li> </ul>
<b>Funding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the Community Gardens Plan identify an accurate and affordable establishment cost including all requirements as above? i.e. toilet, storage, shelter, carpark, water connection?</li> <li>• Has the community group sourced funding options to cover the establishment?</li> <li>• Does the Project Plan identify a funding model for the garden to sustain operations including lease and insurance?</li> <li>• The annual operations funding model does NOT rely on securing grants every year?</li> </ul>

## Establishment Process

The following flowchart outlines the key stages required to set up a Community Garden in Latrobe City.

**COMMUNITY LEAD**

**COUNCIL LEAD**





*Morwell Centenary Rose Garden, Morwell*

## Partner Documents

- [Community Gardens Assessment Tool](#)
- [Community Gardens Application Form](#)
- [Community Gardens Manual](#)

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*To obtain this information in languages other than English, or in other formats, please contact Latrobe City Council on 1300 367 700.*