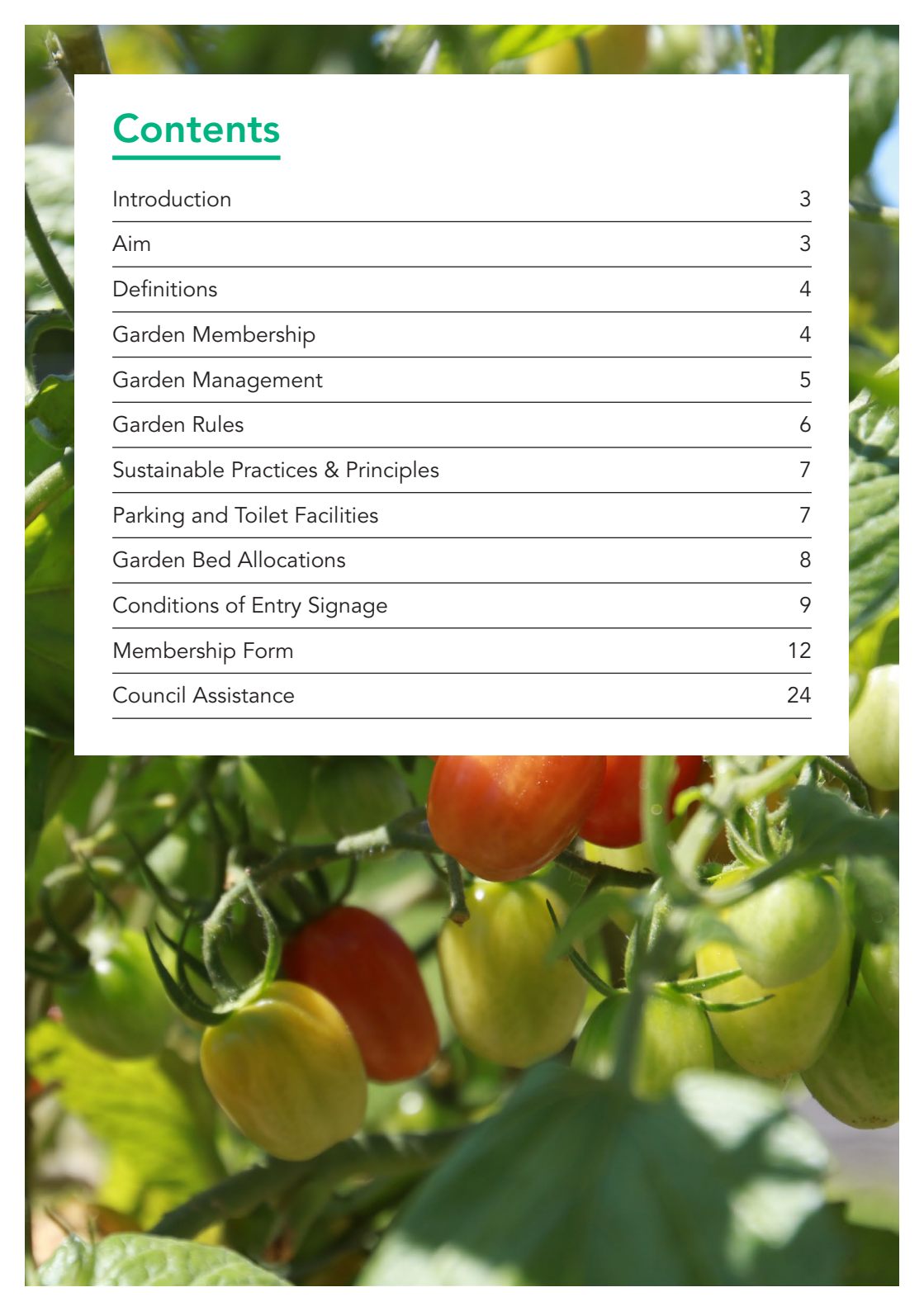


Merrylands Community Garden

Gardener's Handbook
July 2025



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Introduction

A community garden is a type of community open space area that provides a shared, semi-public space where people in the surrounding neighbourhoods and local community members can participate, share the work, maintain, grow and harvest non-commercial produce of a garden space.

Community gardens facilitate community-wide engagement in an outdoor, sustainable, recreational activity and contribute to health and wellbeing, building healthy and sustainable communities.

Community Gardens can provide the following benefits and opportunities:

- Contribute to health a wellbeing in providing a source of fresh food, physical activity and social interaction
- Promote sustainable practices e.g. Composting, limiting waste
- Provide a sense of community
- Contribute to cross-cultural relations
- Educational Benefits and Outdoor Learning Experiences

Aim

Merrylands Community Garden (referred to hereafter as the 'MCG') was established by former Holroyd City Council to create a space where community members and groups can come together to garden and to participate in other activities that encourage harmony, cooperation, and a sense of belonging amongst those involved.

The Community Garden Handbook provides the framework for Cumberland City Council to support the development and management of the MCG. This handbook outlines how the community can become involved in the Community Garden, how the garden operates and the roles of responsibilities of those involved in the management and care of the garden.

Definitions

- *Council* – Refers to Cumberland City Council
- *Garden Bed* – Means a garden bed used by a Garden Member or Group.
- *Garden Group Membership* – Is available at the discretion of Council to Community groups or individuals.
- *Garden Handbook* – Means this handbook detailing the day-to-day regulations of the Garden.
- *Garden Member* – Means a registered member, of the Garden who is at least 18 years old.
- *MCG* – Refers to Merrylands Community Garden

Garden Membership

1. The MCG is open to residents and ratepayers within Council. Applications from residents and community groups outside the Council area may be considered at the discretion of Council.
2. New memberships will be approved by Council.
3. Garden Beds will be allocated on a 'first come first serve' basis and will be allocated based on one garden bed per household. A second garden bed will only be considered when there is no wait list.
4. A waiting list of garden beds is maintained by Council. A garden bed will be allocated to those on the waiting list when it becomes available.
5. Membership to the MCG is arranged by contacting the Open Space Liaison and Technical Officer at Council and agreeing to abide by the Garden Rules in this Handbook.
6. If any garden member is unable to tend to their garden bed for a short or specified period of time but wish to retain it, they are to notify Council with details of the nominated replacement garden member selected to look after the garden until they return (e.g. illness or holidays).
7. Notwithstanding the previous point, any garden beds not tended to for one (1) month will be forfeited following written notice by Council to the Garden Member. The Member must return to tender to their garden bed on an ongoing basis within two (2) weeks of the written notification being sent or forfeit the garden bed.
8. Lost Keys will incur a lost key fee for Members as per the Fees and Charges.
9. There are no membership fees for the garden. Membership is based as per the above.

Garden Management

1. The MCG is managed by Council.
2. Opening Hours will vary depending on the season and be determined by Council.
3. Council manages a budget that provides materials to the Garden and provides public liability for individual gardeners (organisations provide their own).
4. The Open Space Liaison and Technical Officer will attend sessions as work schedules allow, providing any support that may be required.
5. The Open Space Liaison and Technical Officer is the main contact from CCC (details at end of document).
6. Members should contact the Open Space Liaison and Technical Officer to have any items of concern raised with Council.
7. Garden facilities is the responsibility of ALL members. Lock the gate behind you when entering or leaving the garden for security purposes. Also lock the shed before leaving the garden.
8. CCC retains capacity to use the garden as a demonstration site for community education activities such as tours and workshops. CCC will work with the MCG Members to ensure that organised activities do not conflict.

Garden Rules

1. Individual garden beds must be reasonably maintained in a neat and tidy fashion by the designated garden member.
2. All members are to contribute to the weeding, watering, compost turning and general maintenance of the Garden as far as they are reasonably able to. Council will remove waste and mow the grass.
3. Members are encouraged to share their garden knowledge and experience.
4. Garden tools and supplies are for use by all Members. All equipment should be used safely, cleaned after use, and returned to the appropriate place in the shed. Any damaged or faulty tools or equipment are to be reported to Council.
5. Safe Manual Handling practices are to be applied (in pairs where possible) when moving heavy items such as soil throughout the Garden. Wheelbarrows are available to assist with moving heavy items.
6. Gardeners must take action to remedy hazards as they become apparent and report them to Council.
7. Any injuries must be reported to Council. A First Aid Kit is in the shed. In emergencies, please call Triple 000 and then contact Council immediately.
8. Children must always be supervised by parent(s) or carer(s).
9. Personal property is not to be left at the garden. Council and other Members are not responsible for loss or damage of any personal property.
10. Members must not plant anything outside their allocated Garden Bed nor construct any extensions to their plot. Previous Garden Management arrangements will not apply.
11. To ensure the MCG remains a well-structured, pleasant, and safe environment, nonstandard garden material require the approval of Council first.
12. Garden Members must endeavour to use water efficient gardening techniques and organic gardening methods. Sanctioned pesticides only are permitted, and no chemicals are allowed.
13. Sydney Water restrictions must be always adhered to.
14. Garden Members must be 18 years of age or older and must contact Council first to become a Garden Member.
15. No smoking is permitted in the garden or within 10 meters of the playground.
16. Opening Hours will vary depending on the season and be determined by Council.
17. Enclosed shoes, gloves, hat, sunscreen, water, and hand sanitiser are mandatory.
18. Gardening is to be undertaken without discrimination, bullying or harassment and in accordance with [Council's Code of Conduct](#).

Sustainable Practices & Principles

Sustainability Features

The MCG displays various feature gardens and elements to enhance and provide educational resources to garden members and the community. There features consist of:

- A native Australian Garden to attract pollinators such as insects and small birds
- Insect Hotels to provide homes for native insect pollinators
- Native Stingless Beehive
- Bird Bath

These features are maintained and managed by Council staff, and garden members.

Waste Management

The MCG promotes sustainable gardening practices and to cater to these principles provides composting and worm farm facilities on site available to all garden members for the purpose of disposing of organic materials, green garden and produce waste. In addition, General Waste and Green Waste bins are provided for all other waste items.

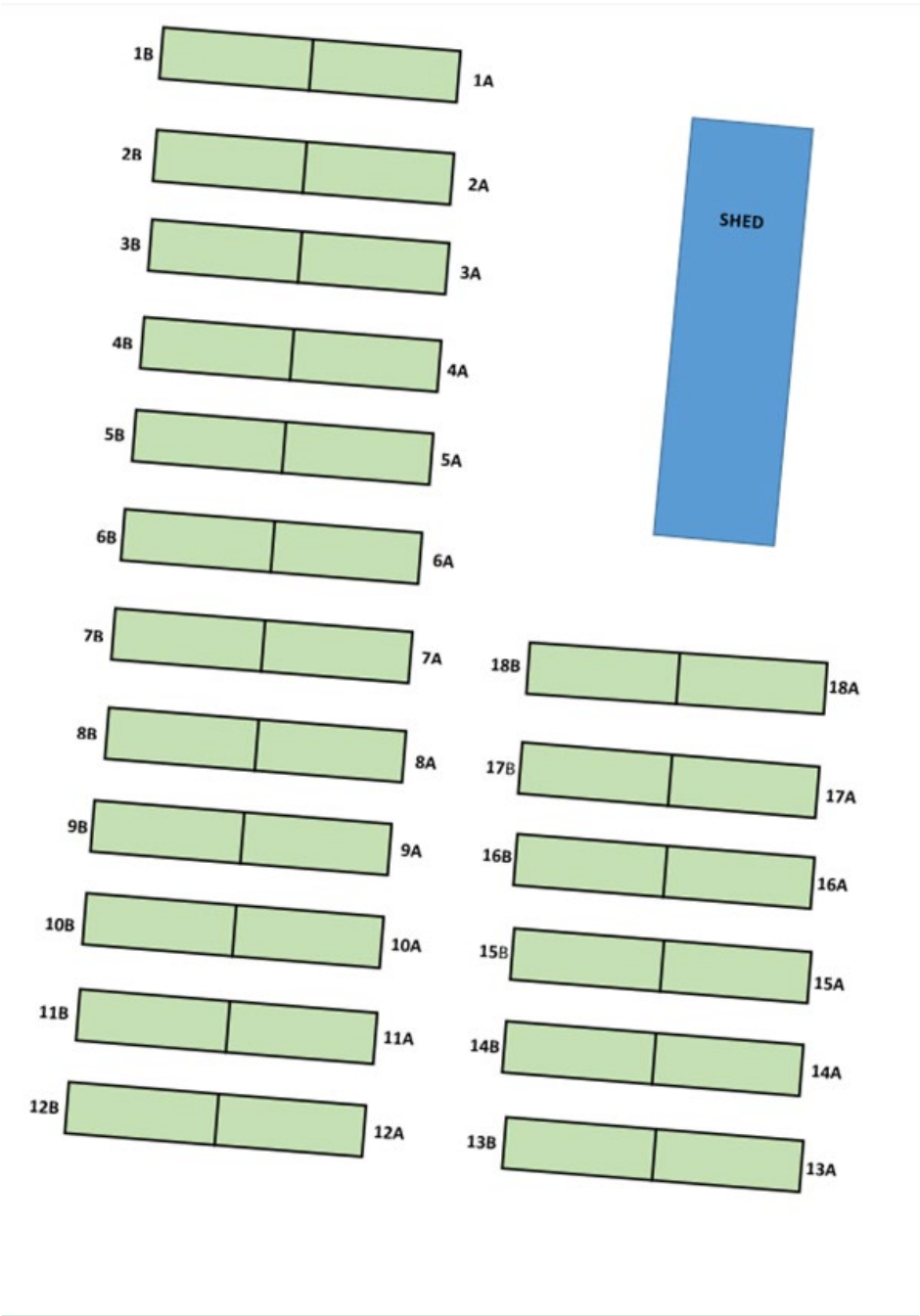
Water Use and Management

- Garden Members must endeavour to use water efficient gardening techniques and organic gardening methods. Sanctioned pesticides only are permitted, and no chemicals are allowed.
- [Sydney Water Wise Guidelines](#) must be always adhered to.
- [Sydney Water Restrictions](#) must be followed when in place.

Parking and Toilet Facilities

1. Public Toilets are available at the Merrylands Library, Miller Street Merrylands. Opening hours are available on the website: [CCC: Merrylands Library](#)
2. Parking is available on the street in St Ann Street and Newman Street.

Garden Bed Allocations



Conditions of Entry Signage

Risk and Responsibility

- Garden members enter the community garden at their own risk.
- Garden Members must be 18 years of age or older and must contact Council first to become a Garden Member
- Children must always be supervised by parent(s) or carer(s) over the age of 18 years old.
- Council and other Members are not responsible for loss or damage of any personal property.
- No smoking is permitted in the Garden.
- Opening Hours will vary depending on the season and be determined by Council.
- Gardening is to be undertaken without discrimination, bullying or harassment and in accordance with Council's Code of Conduct.

Personal Protective Equipment

- Mandatory - All patrons must ensure that they have enclosed shoes, gloves, hat, sunscreen, and drinking water prior to entering the community gardens.

Safety & Other Requirements

- Individual garden beds must be reasonably maintained in a neat and tidy fashion.
- No waste is to be brought on site.
- Sanctioned pesticides only are permitted, and no chemicals are allowed.
- All injuries must be reported to Council.
- First aid box is available in the shed for minor injuries. In the case of an emergency, please call **000** and then contact Council immediately.

Tools and Other Equipment

- No electrical or power operated tools to be used in the garden.
- All equipment must be used safely, cleaned after use, and returned to shed.
- Any damaged or faulty tools or equipment are to be reported to Council.
- Garden Members must endeavour to use water efficient gardening techniques and organic gardening methods.

Security

- All gates and shed must be locked after the end of opening day.





Membership Form

First Name		Last Name	
Preferred Name			
Organisation			
Phone		Mobile	
Email			
Address			
By signing this Membership form, you or your organisation are agreeing to the rules of the Community Garden. Noncompliance will result in Membership being revoked.			
Signature		Date	
Submit Membership	Option 1: Emma Higgins Open Space Liaison and Technical Officer 8757 9621 0447 929 155 Emma.higgins@cumberland.nsw.gov.au 8am to 4.30pm Monday to Friday		
	Option 2: Cumberland City Council 8757 9000 council@cumberland.nsw.gov.au 24 hours a day / 7 days a week		



Risk Assessment

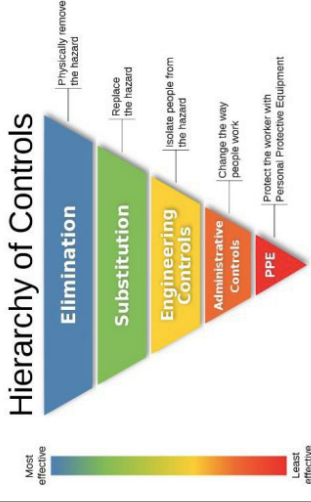
Think Safe. Act Safe.
Home Safe.

• Activity or Event Assessed: (include site/location)	Merrylands Community Garden	Assessment Date:	7 th April 2025
Completed by:	Emma Higgins	Staff/ SMEs consulted:	1. Puthy Nun
Signature:	<i>E.K. Higgins</i>		2. Sam Gambin
			3. Brad Horn

Approval			
WHS Business Partner: Andrew Dennelly	Signature: <i>AJ Dennelly</i>	Date: 19/05/2025	Comments:
Supervisor: Sam Gambin	Signature: <u>Sam Gambin</u> Sam Gambin (Ref: A. 2025 0718 DMF-08)	Date: 14/05/2025	Comments:
Manager: Brad Horn	Signature: <i>[Signature]</i>	Date: 21/05/2025	Comments:
Executive Manager: Warrick Hay	Signature: <u>Warrick Hay</u> Warrick Hay (Ref: A. 2025 1118 DMF-08)	Date: 22/05/2025	Comments:
Toolbox talk Completed & Uploaded to Vault:	WHS Team Verified by: Patrick Abou-azar	Date: 23/05/2025	ECM ID: 11642224

What are the Corrective Actions	Who is responsible for implementing the corrective action?	When will the corrective actions be completed?

Risk	Required action
Extreme	Activity must not proceed until steps are taken to reduce the risk. Report to senior management and require detailed action plan to reduce the risk to Low or Medium
High	Requires senior management attention
Medium	Specify management responsibility
Low	Manage by routine procedures



Consequence						Likelihood
People	Physical or psychological injuries not requiring medical treatment.	Minor physical or psychological injury resulting in first aid treatment.	Serious physical injury causing hospitalisation or multiple medical treatment.	Life threatening physical injury or multiple serious injuries causing hospitalisation.	Death, disabling physical injury or multiple life-threatening injuries.	
			Psychological injury requiring additional mental health support or intervention.	Sever psychological injury requiring immediate attention and specialised mental health support.	Acute psychological breakdown, requiring urgent and intensive mental health intervention and ongoing care.	
	Internal review	Scrutiny required by external committees or internal audit to prevent escalation.	Scrutiny required by external committees or Auditor General's Office, or Inquest, etc.	Intense public, political and media scrutiny. E.g. front page headlines, TV, etc.	Assembly Inquiry or Commission of Inquiry or adverse national media.	
Reputation						
Financial	1% of Budget or < \$5K	2.5% of Budget or < \$50K	> 5% of Budget or < \$500K	> 10% of Budget or < \$5M	> 25% of Budget or > \$5M	
Probability > 1 in 10 1 in 10 – 100 1 in 100 – 1,000 1 in 1,000 – 10,000 1 in 10,000 – 100,000	Almost Certain	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic	
	Likely	High	High	Extreme	Extreme	Extreme
	Possible	Medium	Medium	High	High	Extreme
	Unlikely	Medium	Medium	Medium	High	High
	Rare	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium	High
		Low	Low	Low	Medium	High

Job Steps / Task	Hazards <i>Identify the hazard and describe how it could cause harm</i>	Raw Risk	Controls <i>List the current controls in place to reduce risk</i>	Residual Risk
Providing information to Community Garden Members	Lack of Communication / Barrier of non-English speaking members	Consequence: Minor Likelihood: Almost Certain Rating: High	- Community Gardens Handbook - Community Gardens Site Induction - Assistance provided by Google Translate or family members that do not speak English. - Council contact information posted on notice board.	Consequence: Minor Likelihood: Possible Rating: Medium
	Injuries & Emergencies - tools - Trips and falls around garden - Insect bites - Personal health medical emergencies	Consequence: Moderate Likelihood: Possible Rating: Medium	- Community Gardens Handbook - Community Gardens Site Specific Induction – ensure all users know where the first aid kit is located. - Epi Pen available on site. - ensure users know what to do in a fire/evacuation. - Clear communication of site rules via conditions of Entry signage installed. - Council contact information posted on notice board. - What to do in the event of an injury posted on notice board. - Group emails with information sent to key members. 2x service gates available - Follow EMP plan	Consequence: Moderate Likelihood: Unlikely Rating: Medium

Job Steps / Task	Hazards <i>Identify the hazard and describe how it could cause harm</i>	Raw Risk	Controls <i>List the current controls in place to reduce risk</i>	Residual Risk
Opening and Closing of Garden	- Personal safety- Gate left open - Anti-social or aggressive behaviour	Consequence: Moderate Likelihood: Possible Rating: Medium	- Lock gate behind you when entering or leaving. - Only members names as listed on the allocation sheet should be entering the garden. - All members and visitors to sign in and out of the garden on the sign in sheet. - In the instance of anti-social or aggressive behaviour, participants will be removed or asked not to return to the garden. Police will be called if required. - All incidents to be reported to Council immediately, 8757 9000.	Consequence: Moderate Likelihood: Unlikely Rating: Medium
	Theft of equipment and damage to Gardens.	Consequence: Minor Likelihood: Possible Rating: Medium	- Ensure everything is locked away in shed before leaving - Place council name or logo of council on equipment. - No theft signs placed around garden - Clear communication of site rules via conditions of Entry signage installed. - Daily inventory or sign out sheet for tools - Council contact information posted on notice board to be notified of incidents of theft or vandalism.	Consequence: Minor Likelihood: Possible Rating: Medium

Job Steps / Task	Hazards <i>Identify the hazard and describe how it could cause harm</i>	Raw Risk	Controls <i>List the current controls in place to reduce risk</i>	Residual Risk
Opening and Closing of Garden (Cont.)	Theft of equipment and damage to Gardens. (Cont.)		- Group text message set up to update Community Garden members. - Contact Council when theft or damage is noticed.	
Use of Garden Tools & Materials	- Personal Injury – Cuts and abrasions, - Pinching or crushing of fingers when inspecting tools with moving parts (e.g., loppers, secateurs, shears) - Tools being out and not being packed away prior to children entering the garden. - Garden has unsure objects or loose nails lying around - Participants attending with inappropriate shoes, no gloves and no sun hats - Children being left without an adult supervising	Consequence: Moderate Likelihood: Possible Rating: Medium	- All pathways to be clear of equipment, soil, plants, hoses every day. - Provide gloves and ensure volunteers are trained in correct use of tools - Ensure volunteers are told to wear closed toe shoes when in the garden. - Thoroughly inspect tools for any visible damage (e.g., cracks, rust, worn parts) and ensure all components are securely attached. - Remove and tag any defective tools for repair or disposal. - Any defective equipment should be reported to Council. - Ensure volunteers have signed the participant form and are aware of Terms and Conditions.	Consequence: Moderate Likelihood: Unlikely Rating: Medium

Job Steps / Task	Hazards <i>Identify the hazard and describe how it could cause harm</i>	Raw Risk	Controls <i>List the current controls in place to reduce risk</i>	Residual Risk
Use of Garden Tools & Materials (cont.)	Vermisn • Snakes • Insects • Spiders • Bees	Consequence: Catastrophic Likelihood: Possible Rating: Extreme	• Stingless Bees located in Beehive. • Signage near Beehive • Inform Council of any known insect allergies. • Community Gardens Site induction completed by all volunteers • Volunteer to have spatial awareness and aware of insects in proximity • Inspect items in the garden for insects prior to lifting • Ensure PPE (gloves & closed toe shoes) worn while working • Keep First Aid Kit clearly labelled and displayed in communal area visible to all participants and regularly replenished. • EpiPen located in first aid kit.	Consequence: Catastrophic Likelihood: Unlikely Rating: High
	• Incorrect Lifting, carrying, and moving materials and soil/fertilizer bags causing, - back injuries - neck injuries - knee injuries	Consequence: Moderate Likelihood: Possible Rating: Medium	• Ensure volunteers are training in correct lifting technique. • Avoid heavy lifting where possible or use a 2-person lift or mechanical aides. • Correct manual handling techniques must be always followed e.g.: ☐ Position yourself close to the load ☐ Keep back straight when lifting ☐ Bend your knees and lift with your legs and not your back	Consequence: Moderate Likelihood: Unlikely Rating: Medium

Job Steps / Task	Hazards Identify the hazard and describe how it could cause harm	Raw Risk	Controls <i>List the current controls in place to reduce risk</i>	Residual Risk
Use of Garden Tools & Materials (cont.)	- Incorrect Lifting, carrying, and moving materials and soil/fertilizer bags causing, - back injuries - neck injuries - knee injuries	Consequence: Moderate Likelihood: Possible Rating: Medium	☐ Keep the load close to your body ☐ Avoid awkward bending over, twisting and overreaching - Do not lift beyond your physical ability - Use mechanical aids as much as is practicable - Ascertain weight prior to lifting. - Council staff to arrange delivery of bags of soil/ fertilizer to be off loaded and moved around the garden.	Consequence: Moderate Likelihood: Unlikely Rating: Medium
Spraying / spreading of Chemical and Fertilizers	Chemical exposure resulting in, - Allergies - Breathing difficulties - Skin reactions - Irritable eyes	Consequence: Major Likelihood: Possible Rating: High	- Council to provide product to use. No outside products. - Users to fill out chemical application sheets provided to them in the shed. - Safety Data Sheet to be made available on site. - Use chemical as per SDS and manufacturers specifications - Maintain appropriate hygiene do not eat whilst handling chemicals - Volunteers to wash hands thoroughly after using chemicals - Wear appropriate PPE	Consequence: Major Likelihood: Rare Rating: Medium

Job Steps / Task	Hazards <i>Identify the hazard and describe how it could cause harm</i>	Raw Risk	Controls <i>List the current controls in place to reduce risk</i>	Residual Risk
Working Outdoors	- Extreme Weather Conditions - Sun / Heat Exposure – Exposure to heat can lead to dehydration, heat exhaustion heatstroke, sunburn and physical and mental exhaustion. - UV Rays – Prolonged exposure to ultraviolet (UV) rays can cause skin damage and increase the risk of skin cancer.	Consequence: Major Likelihood: Likely Rating: High	- Volunteers encouraged to wear protective clothing and equipment – Sunscreen, Hat, long sleeve shirt, enclosed shoes, water bottle, gloves. - Schedule activities during cooler parts of the day, avoid working during peak UV times (usually between 10 am and 4 pm). - Encourage regular breaks in the shade. - Rotate tasks between shaded and non-shaded areas where possible to minimize continuous sun exposure. - Garden is not manned by Council staff; volunteers are responsible for themselves to ensure they keep hydrated - Provide chairs for people to be able to sit in the shade if required. - Provide bottled water in the shed to be used by volunteers. - Sunscreen available in the shed for communal use.	Consequence: Major Likelihood: Unlikely Rating: High 

Job Steps / Task	Hazards <i>Identify the hazard and describe how it could cause harm</i>	Raw Risk	Controls <i>List the current controls in place to reduce risk</i>	Residual Risk
Working Outdoors (Cont.)	Extreme Weather Conditions Wet Weather, causing slippery ground and increasing risk of slipping	Consequence: Major Likelihood: Likely Rating: High	- Identify areas that are unsafe – - Create an exclusion zone, - Ensure set up is away from hazardous areas, e.g., muddy/wet. - Advise Members / Staff and report to Council same day. If it occurs afterwards or on a weekend, report to Council using the Afterhours line. - In the event of moderate - extreme rain weather or excessive heat, the garden will be closed and cannot be used.	Consequence: Major Likelihood: Unlikely Rating: High
	Vermin - Snakes - Insects - Spiders - Bees	Consequence: Catastrophic Likelihood: Possible Rating: Extreme	- Stingless Bees located in Beehive. - Signage near Beehive - Inform Council of any known insect allergies. - Community Gardens Site induction completed by all volunteers - Volunteer to have spatial awareness and aware of insects in proximity - Inspect items in the garden for insects prior to lifting - Ensure PPE (gloves & closed toe shoes) worn while working - Keep First Aid Kit clearly labelled and displayed in communal area visible to	Consequence: Catastrophic Likelihood: Unlikely Rating: High

Job Steps / Task	Hazards <i>Identify the hazard and describe how it could cause harm</i>	Raw Risk	Controls <i>List the current controls in place to reduce risk</i>	Residual Risk
Working Outdoors (Cont.)	Vermin • Snakes • Insects • Spiders • Bees	Consequence: Catastrophic Likelihood: Possible Rating: Extreme	all participants and regularly replenished. • EpiPen located in first aid kit.	Consequence: Catastrophic Likelihood: Unlikely Rating: High
Amenities & Hygiene	• No Toilets on site	Consequence: Minor Likelihood: Possible Rating: Medium	• Undercover area • Closest toilets are located within Merrylands Library • Three (3) water taps located on site • Hand sanitizer and paper towel available in garden shed.	Consequence: Minor Likelihood: Unlikely Rating: Medium

Merrylands Community Garden Risk Assessment April 2025 v1-Updated

Final Audit Report

2025-05-22

Created:	2025-05-22
By:	Patrick Abou-Azar (patrick.abou-azar@cumberland.nsw.gov.au)
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Council Assistance

Emma Higgins

Open Space Liaison and Technical Officer

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Monday to Friday

8am to 4:30pm



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