ERINDALE NEIGHBOURHOOD GARDEN

PLAN OF MANAGEMENT

2019

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## 1. Vision

Vision: to build a healthy and sustainable community.

Mission: growing food and sharing experiences.

### 1.1 Purpose of our community garden

The Erindale Neighbourhood Garden Project (the "Garden") has a vision of community gardening as a place for local residents and community groups to share*.* The project is targeted toward all people in our community who are happy to come together in an environment that is free from prejudice. We foresee that this garden will bring individuals together with diverse approaches to life, and require them to cooperate to achieve common goals*.* The Garden will provide a forum for interaction between young and old residents, facilitating a sharing of knowledge and strengthening community cohesion. We believe it is important not to underestimate the physical and mental health benefits associated with such a project.

The Garden will be managed under the auspices of the Tuggeranong Uniting Church, Erindale (TUC). TUC manages the Erindale Neighbourhood Centre, and the Garden is proposed to form an extension to the community outreach of that centre. It is stressed however that this is a garden for everyone.

The Garden will be situated on a vacant block zoned for community use at Comrie Street, Wanniassa (Block 16, Section 130 Wanniassa).

The Garden will be managed by a volunteer group of community gardeners, formalised as a committee that represents each community group. The responsibilities of this group will include physical works, maintenance and administration of the site, and reporting to TUC Council as parent organisation.

Public liability insurance will be held through TUC.

### 1.2 Objectives of our community garden

Our garden will be a safe place for the community to share. We will grow vegetables, provide a welcoming space to enable social interaction, and develop a small garden for people to enjoy.

Our particular focus will be children not yet of school age (ie aged approximately two to five years); teenagers; and the elderly.

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## 2. Management of site

### 2.1 Managing waste on site - organic and non-organic waste

Organic waste will be composted as feasible. Non-organic waste will be removed on departure.

### 2.2 Our garden will utilise sustainable gardening practices

The Garden will encourage the use of organic gardening techniques to avoid or minimise the use of synthetic chemical fertilisers, pesticides and herbicides because they require precautions in their application such as wearing protective clothing, applying withholding periods before crops can be eaten, and care to avoid spray drift and contamination of rainwater runoff.

Organic, botanical chemicals also require care in their application but are considered to pose less danger to gardener and visitor health and safety and to environmental contamination.

### 2.3 Proposed organic gardening practices

Building healthy soil to reduce pest and diseases, use of organic practices such as crop rotation, companion planting, mulching, watering, and no-dig raised garden beds.

### 2.4 Water management

Water will be managed through hand held hoses with trigger heads, and taps at appropriate places eg. the Utilities Area, the Pergola, the Native Garden and the Vegetable Gardens.

Runoff from the Garden will flow into the stormwater drain system on Comrie Street immediately next to the garden.

### 2.5 Use of sustainable materials on site

The building materials used in the garden will be predominantly timber, for both raised garden beds and structures such as children's cubby, pergola, table and seating, compost bins, and workbench. Paths will be crushed granite. The exception to the use of these sustainable materials is the secure storage shed, which will most likely be made from aluminium. It will be sited on concrete pavers (to enable the structure to be removed at the end of the life of the garden).

### 2.6 Garden tools and storage

Garden tools will be kept when not in use in the secure storage shed. Some tools will be available for communal use (eg spades, shovels, a wheelbarrow). Tools should be cleaned before being returned to the shed after use.

Community groups are able to keep their own tools in the locked shed, provided they are clearly labelled and well maintained.

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### 2.7 Site safety

#### Keeping the garden safe

Our community garden must be maintained in a condition conducive to its safe use by gardeners and to visits by non-gardeners.

One way to ensure that new gardeners acquire this information may be for it to be included as an introductory workshop.

Garden safety is very much about common sense and thinking about what we do.

#### Garden safety is simple

##### Tool Use

1. If you are taking more than one or two tools into the garden, carry them from storage into the garden in a wheelbarrow, bucket or a basket so there is a predetermined place to put them when they are not in use and at the end of the gardening session.

2. Before using a spade, garden fork, rake or other long handled tool, look to make sure there is nobody behind or beside you so that you don’t hit them with the tool.

3. When you have finished using a garden tool or you put a tool aside for a moment, place it out of the way of people.

4. Never lay a tool across a path or place it in long grass where it is hidden and where people could trip over it.

5. Lean a garden rake or long handled tool against something when you put it aside. If you have to lie it down, place it away from where people might walk. Place it with the pointed tines or blade on the ground, not pointing up.

6. When putting a garden spade, shovel or fork aside, push it into the soil so that it remains upright and visible.

7. Carry tools such as spades, garden forks and rakes in your hand rather than over the shoulder. Carried on the shoulder, it is easy to hit someone accidentally if you turn around and they are close by.

##### Avoid sunburn and dehydration

1. Wear a hat to avoid sunburn.

2. If you sunburn easily, consider wearing a lightweight shirt with long sleeves as well as long trousers.

3. Use a sunscreen cream to avoid sunburn.

4. If in the garden for some time, remember to drink water to avoid dehydration.

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##### Care with creatures

1. Do not try to pick up bugs, spiders and other creatures you come across. They might defend themselves by biting, stinging or scratching.

2. Look before lifting buckets, watering cans, boxes and other things. Redback spiders sometimes nest in them and a bite can be dangerous.

3. Do not interfere with any snakes you see in the garden.

##### Lifting

1. When lifting something heavy, bend your knees and crouch down, then lift it by straightening your legs.

2. To avoid back injury, do not bend over to pick up something that is heavy.

##### Storage

1. Designate an area of the garden for storing materials.

2. Store materials so that they are unlikely to fall over or spill.

Place heavier materials close to the ground and lighter materials on top of these.

3. Stack and store materials neatly so that they are easily accessible and out of the way of paths and places where people walk.

4. Avoid storing materials that the gardeners have no plans to use. This avoids community gardens becoming eyesores.

##### Caring for children

1. If children are to visit or participate in the garden, avoid planting toxic plants and remove species (such as castor oil bush and oleander) that are toxic to children. Consider what might be a danger to children even if it is not dangerous to adults. It might be an idea to label hot-tasting plants such as chilli with visual and word warnings.

2. Keep a watch on young children in case they wander off-site.

##### Construction

1. When planning to build structures, obtain advice on design and construction, if that is unavailable among gardeners, so as the structure is sturdy and safe.

2. Keep paths clear and level.

3. Make garden bed edges strong so that they will not collapse. Avoid edging garden beds with sharp or pointed materials.

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4. If digging a hole, make your work visible to gardeners passing by so they do not trip in it. Mark the excavation with coloured tape or a barrier if you are leaving it for a while.

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##### Care with organic chemicals

1. The manufacture of organic controls for garden pest and plant disease management (sometimes called ‘botanic’ controls because they are derived from plants) should be done under the guidance of a gardener or adviser who has experience and is knowledgeable of the precautions to be taken in production, handling and application.

2. Some organic pesticides can cause injury. When making, handing and applying chillibased insecticides such as chilli spray, wear gloves and keep hands away from your face (chilli in the eyes is painful).

3. Avoid getting botanic sprays and other controls in your eyes or in cuts on your hands or legs. It is best to wear gloves when applying any botanic or synthetic control.

4. Wash your hands after making, handling or applying organic pesticides, herbicides or other organic controls.

##### Other protective precautions

1. If you suffer breathing difficulties or asthma, consider wearing a dust mask when making or turning compost or spreading mulch.

2. Consider wearing gardening gloves to protect your hands and to avoid blisters from handling garden tools, and when doing garden construction and spreading compost and mulch.

3. Wear enclosed shoes to protect your feet. Do not garden in sandals.

4. Cover standing water, such as in a pond, to reduce the incidence of mosquito breeding.

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### 2.8 Allocation of plots

Vegetable plots will be allocated to community groups. For example, a childcare centre will be responsible for one raised garden bed. The childcare centre will decide which children come to tend the plot.

If garden plots are not being maintained or worked in accordance with the spirit and guidelines of the Garden, plots if left in that neglected state for two months will result in a written warning being issued to the plot holder. Failure to rectify the condition in a timely manner will result in the garden plot being forfeited.

If neglected plots contain seeding weeds the Garden coordinator has the authority to have the weeds removed.

As this is a community garden, plot holders need to be involved in the maintenance of shared garden areas and infrastructure at working bees arranged from time to time.

If plot demand exceeds supply, a waiting list will be set up. However, it is intended to maximise the number of people able to participate in the Garden, by having plots tended by community groups. In that way, a range of individual members of those community groups will be able to tend the community plot, and participate in the Garden.

### 2.9 Management of shared areas

Shared areas for example the native garden, shelter, paths, structures and compost area, will be managed and maintained by community group plot holders on a roster basis. Those community groups holding more than one plot will have a greater share of the management of the shared areas.

Working bees will be arranged on a needs basis. But for every working bee, clear objectives will be identified when the notice advising of a working bee is circulated to Garden members. In general people assisting at working bees would not be expected to attend for more than two hours. It would not be expected that individuals would attend more than two working bees annually.

### 2.10 Dealing with common objections to new community gardens

A public consultation phase will be undertaken before starting the Garden construction.

The Garden design and an inclusive community ethos are deliberate initiatives to engage as many interested community members as possible.

As the Garden is to be constructed on a vacant block of land that has never been used, it is not anticipated that there will be any objection to the Garden on the grounds that it interferes with public open space.

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How we will deal with:

**Odours**—compost will be properly managed. Rubbish will be removed regularly. Although some organic fertilisers such as blood and bone emit an odour, such fertilisers will be used infrequently. The properties adjoining the Garden are a road, with a carpark on the other side (western border); a church wall (northern border); a two storey air conditioned commercial building (southern border, ten metres away); and another community garden (eastern border). The residential gardens beyond these structures are also likely to use organic fertilisers.

**Noise** - apart from the construction phase of the Garden in which it is anticipated that light earth moving equipment such as a "Bob Cat", and some power tools, will be used, the noise produced by ongoing gardening and small social gatherings is anticipated to be small, and will be less than the noise generated by passing buses and traffic.

**Attraction of vandals and undesirables** - the intention of the Garden is that it function as part of the local community. However, in order to deter vandals, and exclude vertebrate pests such as rabbits, foxes and kangaroos that might damage Garden crops, the Garden will be fenced as unobtrusively as possible. A chain mesh fence is envisaged, with a low hedge planted on its internal perimeter. Gates will be secured with a combination lock, so that the Garden cannot be accessed at night.

**Loss of parking space for local people -** there is no loss of parking space for local people as the block was not used for public parking.

**Poor aesthetics and unsightly or messy gardens**— the Garden is intended to enhance the streetscape from both a practical and an aesthetic viewpoint. It will be a considerable improvement over the current bare and eroded "no man's land" that has characterised the block for thirty years. One section of the Garden is to be an attractive native garden. A roster will be put in place to ensure shared areas of the Garden are kept tidy; and plot holders will be given clear guidelines on how to manage their plot.

**Vermin** – rats and mice – will be controlled by closely monitoring composting procedures.

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## 3. Management structure

### 3.1 Roles in the community garden

#### Management Committee

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **ROLE** | **FUNCTIONS** |
| General coordinator (elected position) | Responsible for the coordination of the agreed development of the community garden and its effective operation.  Maintains register of members and other membership business. Assists with internal communication between members.  Media liaison; liaison with government and stakeholders. |
| Secretary | Responsible for the recording and distribution of incoming and outgoing garden correspondence. Records minutes of Community Garden Management Group meetings and distributes them to the management group; the parent entity committee; and the garden membership. Calls for agenda items for upcoming meetings and prepares all meeting agendas. Ensures that agendas and minutes are distributed in a timely fashion. |
| Financial Officer | Manages community garden funds; banking and payments; management of grant funds. Produces financial reports for meetings, and for main committee (TUC Council). |
| Member of TUC Council | Liaison between TUC Council and Garden committee. |
| *Other possible roles:* |  |
| Shared garden working bee coordinator | Organises working bees and makes sure the shared areas and garden infrastructure are well maintained. Also organises roster for food for working bees eg sausage sizzle. |
| Gardening coordinator | Suggest plantings for shared areas; and assist in monitoring structures and water management. Will help skill people up and monitor compost. This is also a training role. |
| Equipment coordinator | The person responsible for managing equipment belonging to the garden. Manages the garden shed and maintains an up-to-date equipment register. Ensures that tools are fit for their purpose, in good working order and are hygienic. |

For Code of Conduct for Management Committee Meetings, see Appendix A.

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### 3.2 Code of conduct for gardeners

For Code of Conduct for Garden Users, see Appendix B.

### 3.3 Decision making process

The management committee will meet once per quarter.

One weeks' notice will be given by email prior to a meeting.

All who use the garden are able to attend meetings.

Any person in the neighbourhood is able to attend meetings as an observer.

The quorum required for meetings of the garden management group will be three office bearers.

Decisions will be made by majority vote of garden members. Each community group has one vote.

Minor decisions will be made by the co-ordinator, after consultation with community group representatives.

### 3.4 Resolving disagreement

The best way to manage disputes is to prevent them from occurring in the first place.

If the dispute relates to a breach of any Garden Code of Conduct, then it should be easy to determine where the problem arose and take steps to remedy the transgression, quickly and easily. Where people attempt to cooperate in some endeavour such as community gardening, interpersonal conflict is possible because people’s differing life experiences, beliefs, attitudes and learnings influence how they think and react to things.

The purpose of the gardener’s agreement or charter, which is a separate document to this community gardening guidebook, is to suggest ways to minimise conflict and permit constructive decisions to be negotiated in the interest of all gardeners.

It sets out standards of conduct expected of gardeners so that the experience of gardening is personally fulfilling and so that the shared experience is harmonious.

It is recommended that the agreement or charter be shown to prospective gardeners before they sign on as members, so that they have time to consider whether they are prepared to comply with its requirements.

### 3.5 Communication

**Internal —** Communication will normally be by email to ensure clarity, and to provide a record.

**External —** We will communicate on regular basis with stakeholders, via email. The communication method used for the public will depend on the reason; for example, an open garden might be communicated by flyer at the local shopping centre; by an announcement on community radio, and/or by a poster on the garden fence.

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## 4. Policies

### 4.1 Access and acceptance

Garden opening times will be decided on a seasonal basis by the Management Committee in consultation with Garden members.

The Garden will be locked at night.

Interested people can enquire about joining the Garden through the contact information provided adjacent to the gate.

The Garden is designed to be inclusive, and open to any community member who would like to join. It will be accessible for a wide range of people, from young children through to the elderly. Access for disabled people is one of the design features of the Garden.

#### 1. Who can obtain a plot?

Community groups and individuals who become a member of the Garden are eligible to be allocated a plot. Individuals becoming garden members will be encouraged to join an existing group. In general plots will not be allocated to inviduals.

Preference will be given to community groups and individuals who do not have a private garden. Other individuals or organisations may also be eligible for a garden plot at the discretion of the Management Committee.

#### 2. Fees

There is an annual fee for a garden plot. Fees will be determined by the Garden Management Committee and will be collected annually.

#### 3. How to apply for a garden plot

Community groups and individuals wishing to apply for a garden plot will complete an application form prepared by the Garden Management Committee.

#### 4. Allocation of plots

If no plots are available at the time of application, the applicant’s name will be placed on a waiting list and will be advised when a plot becomes available.

#### 5. Lock Codes and Right of Entry

All gardeners will be provided with a combination code to the Garden locks at the time of plot allocation. Gardeners must not pass on the code to other people without prior consent of the Garden Management Committee.

#### 6. Forfeiting of Garden Plots

Plots are allocated to a community group or (possibly) an individual and are not transferable without the permission of the Garden Management Committee. If a community no longer wishes to maintain its plot it must advise the Garden Management Committee. The plot will then be allocated to the next community group on the waiting list.

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#### 7. Plot Ownership

Each of the foundation community groups (TUC; ENC; PCYC; Appletree/Illoura Day Care; Kimberley Gardens) are entitled to the number of allotments as agreed at initial Garden Committee meetings. If there are vacant allotments, they may be allocated to other communities. Plots will be leased on a 12 month basis.

#### 8. Responsibilities of gardeners for their own plots

Community groups are responsible for the maintenance of their allotment and the area immediately around their allotment throughout the year. This includes maintaining the area in a weed-free state and the removal of rubbish and any items that may obstruct pathways. If a community group is unable to tend their allotment for any reason, they need to discuss the situation with the Garden Management Committee.

#### 9. General Conduct in the Garden

Gardeners and visitors are to respect all gardens as community spaces. Removal of produce, plants or equipment from another gardener’s allotment without that gardener’s permission is not permitted. Each gardener has the right of quiet enjoyment of the community garden. Threats or abuse towards other gardeners is not permitted. The consumption of alcohol or any form of substance abuse is not acceptable in the community garden.

#### 10. Maintenance of Common Areas

All gardeners take responsibility for cleanliness of common areas and are expected to participate in working bees from time to time.

#### 11. Waste Management

Community gardens are strongly encouraged to use compost bins and worm farms as a means of reducing waste. Recycling of used products and materials onsite is encouraged. All other rubbish is to be removed offsite.

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#### 12. Water Management

##### Use of water

In accordance with best practice community gardening, we will use water conservatively so as to minimise its consumption. This will be achieved through:

* **the creation of soils rich in organic matter** and, therefore, capable of retaining soil moisture in the vicinity of plant roots;
* **the use of water conserving irrigation**, such as hand held hoses and watering cans;
* **the use of mulch** on garden beds to reduce the evapotranspiration of soil moisture and reduce the need for irrigation;
* if feasible, **the harvesting and storage of rainwater** on-site for use in the garden. This might include rainwater tanks, small scale earthworks and other approaches.

#### 13. Garden Tools

Gardeners will provide their own tools; but there will be some basic tools made available for communal use.

#### 14. Change of Circumstances

Gardeners need to advise the Community gardening group of:

* Change of address or contact details,
* If they no longer wish to retain their allotment; and
* If they are unable to tend their plot for any reason.

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## 5. Funding

The continued operation of the Garden will be funded by the collection of a one-off joining fee; an annual membership fee; and fundraising initiatives from time to time eg sausage sizzles.

### 5.1 Membership fees

Membership fees will be determined annually in accordance with the need to cover the cost of water use, and general garden maintenance for the coming year.

### 5.2 Other

#### Structures

Constructions on site, such as a shelter pergola, shelter for the plant propagation area and possibly a water tank, are necessary to the effective functioning of the community garden. From time to time, the need for additional minor structures may become apparent. Where the knowledge does not exist within the garden membership, gardeners will seek technical advice as to the design, construction and safety of structures.

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## 6. Training

### 6.1 Recruiting and induction of new gardeners

#### Gardener training

The aim of training is to ensure gardeners have a minimum set of skills that are compatible with the approach to gardening adopted for the Garden. Workshops need be of only short duration and may be scheduled at times determined as appropriate by the gardeners. An introductory workshop series might include:

• **gardening safety** — this is a basic skill that all gardeners should acquire within reasonable time of joining the community garden

• **introduction to the design of the community garden** —

this explains the logic of the garden design in relation to site conditions such as soils, sun and shade patterns, winds and water supply; the reasons for the requirement for allotment holders to assist in the shared garden areas also forms a part of this training

• **making compost** — if compost is to be the main fertiliser used in the community garden, then learning a simple method to make it is a basic skill that is best acquired soon after people join the community garden

• **making and maintaining a no-dig, mulched garden** — this is another basic skill that is needed by new gardeners soon after joining so that they can start to garden effectively

• **propagating plants from seeds and cuttings**— this is not necessarily a skill that is needed immediately upon joining the community garden; it can be acquired later.

These skills may be passed on via informal workshops, through the formation of gardening teams that include an experienced gardener or through working with experienced gardeners.

## 7. Partnerships and community engagement

Local community involvement will be sought actively, not only for garden membership, but also to develop networks between the Garden and other community groups and individuals. For example, it is anticipated that the local supermarket may supply fresh vegetable waste for composting; and that a nearby farm will supply manure.

## 8. Contacts

For the public / for council / internal / coordinators of teams:

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**APPENDIX A**

# Erindale Neighbourhood Garden Management Group Code of Conduct

Participants at Garden Management Group meetings agree to support the ongoing vision and mission of the garden.

1. All members of the management group have a right to be listened to in a respectful manner.
2. All members of the management group have a right to be spoken to in a respectful manner.
3. All management group meetings are minuted and minutes are available to all members.
4. Agendas for management group meetings are issued five days before the meeting date together with the minutes of the previous meeting.
5. Contributions to Agenda items should be submitted to the management group Secretary seven days before a meeting. Items not received in time can be dealt with under ‘Other Business’.
6. Management group meetings start and finish on time in accordance with the Agenda.
7. Meetings should have a chairperson. This role can be associated with an existing position e.g. the Garden Coordinator, or as otherwise decided by the management group.
8. Decisions are made by group consensus. If consensus is not reached then a vote may be taken. A simple majority will determine the outcome.
9. In the event of a tied vote, then the chairperson will have the deciding vote.
10. Unresolved matters that have not been voted on may be deferred to a future meeting.
11. Items requiring follow-on action after management group meetings will be allocated to a specific person(s) and noted in the minutes.

APPENDIX B

# Erindale Neighbourhood Garden General Code of Conduct

This community garden is a shared community space, managed by the Erindale Neighbourhood Garden Management Group. We welcome participation in the garden by all community members, groups and associations as well as visitors to the area. When participating in the garden activities, or if simply enjoying a visit to our garden, please abide by the Garden Code of Conduct set out below.

1. Participants in the garden are asked to be respectful of other gardeners and not to act in a way that could spoil the enjoyment of this place for others.
2. Any gardening activities undertaken in the community garden should done in consultation with the garden Coordinator. This includes activities at garden workshops, garden working bees, garden events and other activities.
3. For safety reasons gardeners working alone should only undertake light gardening tasks appropriate to their abilities.
4. All garden tools and equipment should be used only for the job they are designed and returned to the shed clean and in good condition at the end of the gardening activities.
5. Pests and diseases in the garden are managed in line with Integrated Pest Management principles i.e. natural, environmental and biological controls are the preferred methods used. The use of harmful chemicals in the garden is not encouraged.
6. Gardeners will not introduce prohibited, restricted or diseased plants to the garden.
7. Visitors and non-gardening members of our community are welcome to spend time in the garden enjoying this space.
8. Organised public gatherings are permitted in the garden. Please contact the garden Coordinator beforehand to make a booking and arrange access.
9. Local school groups are invited to utilise the garden as an outdoor classroom. A dedicated garden space can be made available for a period of time if required. Please contact the garden Coordinator to make arrangements.
10. All activities in the garden must be conducted in a safe manner and in daylight hours.
11. Garden activities are structured to be accessible to persons of limited abilities. Pathways and access routes should be kept clear to ensure there are no physical barriers to participation.
12. General rubbish bins are not provided and visitors and members need to take out their own non-organic refuse as they leave. Organic refuse can be included in the garden compost materials bay (no dairy or meat).

*Contact numbers*

Coordinator: ...................................................