

## COUNCIL REPORT

2nd Ordinary Council Meeting

<b>AGENDA ITEM:</b>	13.2.5
<b>REPORT TITLE:</b>	Edible Pocket Gardens Policy
<b>MEETING DATE:</b>	Tuesday 18 October 2022
<b>AUTHOR:</b>	Community Services Manager, Melanie Tighe
<b>APPROVER:</b>	General Manager of Community and Culture, Anna Ingram

### COMMUNITY PLAN

Governance: Council is trusted by the community and invests in things that the public value.

### PURPOSE

This Report reviews Council Policy Edible Pocket Gardens with no changes being recommended to the Policy.

### KEY MESSAGES

- Cyclic review of Council Policies ensures transparent and good governance practices, aligning with the *Local Government Act 2019*.
- A review has been undertaken of Council Policy Edible Pocket Gardens which encourages the community to nominate a small section of a Palmerston park and plant edible plants.
- There has been limited uptake from the community for the Edible Pocket Garden initiative with no complete applications received to date.
- Along with the introduction of Edible Pocket Gardens in 2018, Council have introduced several greening and sustainability initiatives in line with the Community Plan.
- Officers will endeavour to increase community awareness of the Edible Pocket Gardens initiative via improved social media campaigns, advertising and community development engagement.
- Officers are reviewing and will update the Edible Pocket Garden Guidelines to ensure they are user friendly and easy to understand for the community.
- The Edible Pocket Garden initiative continues to be relevant to our Community Plan objectives and there are no changes being recommended to the Policy other than minor administrative changes that are within the delegation of the Chief Executive Officer as per **Attachment 13.2.5.2**.

### RECOMMENDATION

THAT Report entitled Edible Pocket Gardens Policy be received and noted.

### BACKGROUND

After a 21-day consultation in 2018 Council adopted the current Edible Pocket Garden Policy **Attachment 13.2.5.1** at its 2<sup>nd</sup> Ordinary Council Meeting held on 18 September 2018.

## 13.2.6 Edible Pocket Gardens – Consultation Review

1. THAT Report Number 9/0082 entitled Edible Pocket Gardens – Consultation Review be received and noted.
2. THAT Council approve City of Palmerston Policy COMM04 Edible Pocket Gardens being Attachment A to Report Number 9/0082 entitled Edible Pocket Gardens – Consultation Review.

CARRIED 9/0277 – 18/09/2018

Community Consultation on the draft policy was released online through Council’s website and promoted through local media outlets and Facebook from 14 August to 4 September 2018.

The intention of the Policy is to create greater sense of community through sharing of produce, encouraging healthier, active lifestyles and creating an initiative that is completely led by the community and has very minimal involvement from the Council. This policy encourages the community to get involved in environmental sustainability and increasing green spaces throughout Palmerston.

### DISCUSSION

The City of Palmerston Community Plan prioritises Environmental Sustainability as an outcome and Objective 5.2 ‘Palmerston is a cool, shaded, green city’, clearly identifies strategies to engage our community in implementing greening and cooling initiatives.

The Edible Pocket Garden was introduced in 2018 by City of Palmerston to encourage residents to plant and maintain small gardens of edible plants in approved Council parks. This initiative was intended to encourage investment in public spaces by the community and would also promote greening and sustainability initiatives by Council. It is currently advertised on City of Palmerston’s website. (<https://palmerston.nt.gov.au/community/participation/community-gardens/edible-pocket-gardens>)

Initially there were several City of Palmerston social media posts about the program however the Edible Pocket Garden initiative has not been recently promoted. There has been limited demand for this initiative received from the community to date. City of Palmerston has not received a completed Edible Pocket Garden application since its inception in 2018.

City of Palmerston have been supportive of two small plantings which appeared at Strawbridge and Lindsay Park in Moulden, containing lemongrass, banana, and cassava. To support this initiative and encourage the community to manage and maintain these, officers installed a tap and planted tropical fruit trees in the same area.

Council have introduced other supportive environmentally sustainable measures to green Palmerston including:

- Planting trees on request from property owner as part of annual revegetation program. (<https://palmerston.nt.gov.au/operations/streets-and-roads/trees>)
- Introduction of Preserving Our Urban Forest Policy
- Annual verge assistance program which provides topsoil and grass seeds to residents for free to encourage verge beautification.
- Native tree giveaways at Council events and the Palmerston Markets.
- Home Composting Rebate initiative provides eligible Palmerston residents a rebate off the purchase of eligible composting equipment. (<https://palmerston.nt.gov.au/homecomposting>)

- Community Benefit Scheme - Environmental Initiatives which support renewable and sustainable projects.

Officers recommend continuing Edible Pocket Gardens and commits to increasing community awareness and engagement of the initiative via:

- City of Palmerston social media campaign
- Promotion of the program at events such as Brekkie in the Park, Lake Information Sessions
- Greater community engagement with facility visitors
- Promotion via local environmental and Landcare organisations

Officers are also reviewing the Edible Pocket Garden Guidelines, which advise residents of the commitments to ongoing maintenance including watering, personal liability for injury, approved planting types and planting areas, to ensure they continue to be relevant and are not prohibitive. The Guidelines will also be updated to ensure they are simple to understand, easy to access and widely promoted to receive greater community attention and engagement with the Edible Pocket Garden initiative.

This Policy has been reviewed in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2019* and no changes are being recommended to the Policy other than minor administrative changes which are within the delegation of the CEO as per **Attachment 13.2.5.2**.

## **CONSULTATION PROCESS**

The following City of Palmerston staff were consulted in preparing this Report:

- City Sustainability Manager supplied information regarding CoP Sustainability Strategy and context of Edible Pocket Gardens.
- Open Spaces Team Lead provided detailed information about current open space/greening strategies, challenges and successes, and suggestions for greater community engagement regarding the edible Pocket Garden initiative.
- Communications Manager provided information regarding previous social media/website engagement by community with Edible Pocket Garden content and has suggested ideas for future promotion.

As there are no recommended changes to the Policy further community consultation is not recommended at this time.

## **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

Review dates of the Policy have been amended.

## **BUDGET AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

The resources required to increase community awareness of this initiative via City of Palmerston social media and community engagement will be incorporated into existing operational funding.

## **RISK, LEGAL AND LEGISLATIVE IMPLICATIONS**

It is considered good governance for City of Palmerston to review policies at least once during the Council's term to ensure they are consistent, compliant and continue to reflect the community's interest.

Should City of Palmerston not regularly review policies and procedures as per legislative requirements there is a risk of losing the trust of the community.

This Report addresses the following City of Palmerston Strategic Risks:

- 1 Fails to be trusted as a Council

Context: Achieving credibility & trust with majority of those within and external to the City.

4 Fails to effectively design and implement contemporary governance practices

Context: Strong foundations to hold the City and Administration to account.

## **ENVIRONMENT SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

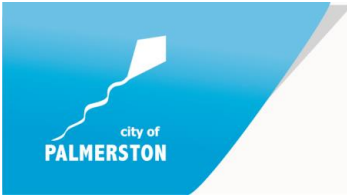
Council have committed to implementing strategies that achieve the objectives of the Community Plan. Failure to implement policies that address Environmental Sustainability could be perceived negatively by the community.

## **COUNCIL OFFICER CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION**

We the author and approving officer declare that we do not have a conflict of interest in relation to this matter.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Council Policy Edible Pocket Gardens Original [13.2.5.1 - 2 pages]
2. Council Policy Edible Pocket Gardens Track Changes [13.2.5.2 - 2 pages]
3. Council Policy Edible Pocket Gardens Final [13.2.5.3 - 2 pages]



# POLICY

## COMM004

Name:	Edible Pocket Gardens		
Type:	Council Policy		
Owner:	Chief Executive Officer		
Responsible Officer:	Director Lifestyle and Community		
Approval Date:	18/09/2018	Next Review Date:	18/09/2022
Records Number:	366496	Council Decision:	9/0277

### 1 PURPOSE

To promote greening and sustainability initiatives throughout Palmerston by allowing residents to grow edible plants in sections of their local parks.

### 2 PRINCIPLES

Edible Pocket Gardens are a great way of creating a sense of community and a sense of space within a community. Edible Pocket Gardens are a free-range style of garden where residents can nominate to use a small section of their local park or reserve to plant edible plants. These plants are to be tended to by the resident or interested parties and Council must approve any works before they commence. The produce from the garden is accessible by the whole community and is not owned by the resident/group who tends to it. City of Palmerston reserves the right to make changes to the space at any time.

### 3 DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this Policy, the following definitions apply:

Term	Definition
Edible pocket garden	A green space on Council owned land, managed by member/s of the local community, that is used to grow edible species of plants for consumption by the general public.
The City	Refers to the City of Palmerston.

### 4 POLICY STATEMENT

#### 4.1 Conditions

The City of Palmerston will support the growing of appropriate edible plants on Council land and reserves if the following conditions are met:

- 4.1.1 A location is identified by residents and approved by City of Palmers.
- 4.1.2 Approval is gained before any edible pocket garden work is commenced.
- 4.1.3 The edible plants must not interfere with or change normal operation or function of the park space.
- 4.1.4 The site is prepared and maintained by the community members involved, to the satisfaction of the City of Palmerston.
- 4.1.5 If the edible plants within the park are considered to pose a safety risk or aren't being maintained to a suitable standard, the City can request that work is undertaken by the responsible party to bring it up to the standard required. If this fails to occur, the City can remove the garden.
- 4.1.6 Residents are required to meet the Edible Pocket Gardens Guidelines, which may be modified from time to time.



## POLICY

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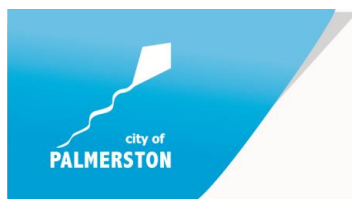
### 5 ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

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5.1 City of Palmerston Edible Pocket Garden Guidelines

### 6 REFERENCES AND RELATED LEGISLATION

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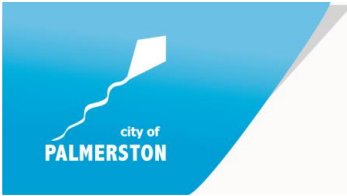
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