The purpose of this information sheet is to provide you with information before you attend the Kensington Community Garden workshop discussions which will assist you to have a conversation during the workshop sessions.

During the two workshops you will explore and discuss ways to open up the community garden to more people, in a way that takes into consideration the work, energy and commitment of plot holders and the patience and understanding of people on the waiting list.

1. **Key Facts** **about the Kensington Community Garden**

* Kensington Community Garden is located on Westbourne St and is 1 of 10 community gardens supported by City of Melbourne
* The Community Garden has 52 plots available for residents of Kensington for personal use
* The community garden is a locked garden, where plot holders are allocated a key to access and provides security for produce
* There are no communal or shared garden beds available at the community garden
* There is an annual plot fee of $82.00
* There are 150 residents on a waiting list to be allocated a plot at the community garden
* 188 people want to use the community garden
* Many of the plots have been allocated to the same people for many years
* Some people have been on the waiting list for as long as 10 years
* There is a need for many garden beds to be rebuilt in the short term
* YMCA Victoria manage the day to day management of the garden on behalf of City of Melbourne
* Communal areas at the community garden include a shed and seating area, there are no communal or shared plots available

1. **How does the Kensington Community Garden currently operate**

The City of Melbourne has partnered with the YMCA to manage the community garden. The YMCA is  responsible for the day-to-day management of the gardens; including but not limited to: waiting lists, garden maintenance, allocation of plots, communications with plot holders and those on wait lists, and the general garden environment.

Residents living in the Kensington area are eligible to be allocated a plot. Plot holders are required to pay an annual fee which contributes to the overall maintenance of the garden including payment of water bills, minor repairs to garden beds and waste removal, however plot holders are responsible for maintaining their plot throughout the year.

There are various sizes of garden beds in the garden which allow plot holders to grow anything from herbs and flowers to larger vegetables. There are 3 main types of plots available – small, medium and large size plots. Some of the plot sizes are substantially larger at Kensington Community Garden compared to other gardens across council.

There is a fence around the Kensington Community Garden, plot holders are allocated given a key to access the garden.

As there are 52 plots available, if no plots are available at the time of applying, the applicants name will be added to a waiting list. Plots are not transferable and plot holders cannot give their plot to another person. If a plot holder is no longer using their plot for any reason, the plot will be reallocated to the next eligible person on the waiting list.

Kensington Community Garden Rules & Guidelines are attached for you to read.

1. **Different models of community gardens within the City of Melbourne**

Community gardens are generally local spaces that operate on designated land for residents and volunteers to grow fresh food, participate in sustainable urban practices, learn skills, and build community connections through shared activities. Community gardens within the City of Melbourne are generally organised and overseen by local residents via a committee or group of people.

Successful community gardens generally involve community participation in their planning, management and daily activities. They are typically established by a committed group of residents and volunteers who may be sponsored by a community organisation or supported by community grants.

There are two main types of community type gardens within the City of Melbourne.

Community gardens provide an opportunity to grow food and plants, learn new skills and meet new people. Most City of Melbourne community gardens are public gardens with shared communal garden plots which allow for larger numbers of community members to enjoy and access the gardens. There are very few community gardens in the City of Melbourne that operate on an individual plot basis where one person is allocated a whole plot for their own.

For more information about community gardens, please click [here](https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/residents/home-neighbourhood/gardens-and-green-spaces/Pages/community-gardens-compost-hubs.aspx).

Street gardens are located on green areas on public land such as nature strips or median strips. They are planted and maintained by community members for food or ornamental purposes.

For more information about street gardens please click [here](https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/residents/home-neighbourhood/gardens-and-green-spaces/Pages/street-garden-guidelines.aspx).

1. **City of Melbourne Community Gardens**

There are many different types of opportunities for gardening and growing local food in Kensington. For more information about gardening opportunities in Kensington please see the document attached.

There are a number of nearby community gardens in the City of Melbourne you may be interested to visit to help you understand how other gardens work.

**Drill Hall Community Garden** is located on the corner of Therry Street and Victoria Street, and along Victoria Street pavement, CBD. This is a publicly open garden / urban park used by local residents, workers and visitors and can be accessed at any time. The garden has 8 large planter boxes at varying heights and sizes, to cater for people with mobility difficulties and 2 additional planter boxes in alcoves of the building. All planter boxes are communal and there are no individual garden plots.

The garden has a committee with representatives from local agencies including CoHealth, Multicultural Hub, Housing Choices Australia and City of Melbourne and meet on a quarterly basis. There are also sub-committees and working groups which meet more regularly in the garden.

The responsibility of the committee includes general maintenance of the planter boxes. This garden has a worm farm, seasonal planting days and artwork days which are organised by the committees.

There is no annual cost to participate in the garden. The committee has applied for a City of Melbourne Connected Communities grant which helps support the day to day management of the garden as well as provide project funding for events like artwork days etc.

**Docklands Community Garden** is located on Geographe Street, Docklands 3008. This is a public garden and has 31 shared garden plots, there are no individual plots. They have 230 people using the garden on a regular basis.

This garden does not have a committee of management, but do have a core membership group of 10 residents who manage the watering, weeding and fertilizer roster and ensure regular communication is provided to the registered volunteers.

This garden is currently self-funded and managed with limited support from council.

**North West Patch**, is situated next to the Meat Market art centre, 36-54 Courtney St North Melbourne. The community garden has been set up by local residents of West Melbourne and North Melbourne, with the support of City of Melbourne. This is a fenced garden where residents access via a key code. The garden has 10 planter boxes each with a combination of flowers, fruit, vegetables and the garden has organic approach to gardening. All plots are communal and produce is shared among members.

There are two annual memberships available: $30 for a ‘harvest’ membership and $25.00 for the ‘Friend of the patch’ membership. Memberships for concession card holders costs $2.00. This garden has a wait list and it takes approximately 1 year to become a member.

North West Patch is managed by a committee of management and derives its funding from member fees, annual subscriptions, donations, fund-raising activities, and grants. They have also hosted a number of working bees.

**Southbank Community Garden at Boyd Hub** is located at [207 City Road, Southbank, 3006](https://www.bing.com/local?lid=YN3724x14156157724833797260&id=YN3724x14156157724833797260&q=Boyd+Community+Hub&name=Boyd+Community+Hub&cp=-37.82574462890625%7e144.96115112304688&ppois=-37.82574462890625_144.96115112304688_Boyd+Community+Hub).This garden is to open to the public at all times and has no locked fence. The garden has 23 planter boxes, 10 long plant beds and 2 small plant beds which are all communal**.** Residents come and harvest what they need at any time.

Volunteers from Southbank Sustainability Group help to maintain the garden. There is no formal committee, but local members of the group are involved in different aspects of the gardens management.

City of Melbourne has provided planter boxes and water supply. This group is auspiced by The Southbank residents association which has allowed them to apply for community grants and they support fundraising activities to assist with purchasing seeds, soil etc.

1. **Grant opportunities**

There are a number of grant opportunities provided by the City of Melbourne to support the day to day management of community gardens or new projects. This includes [Connected Community grants](https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/community/strong-communities/funding-grants/pages/community-grants.aspx) and [neighbourhood grants.](https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/community/strong-communities/funding-grants/pages/connected-neighbourhoods-small-grants.aspx)

1. **Kensington Community Garden Survey Results**

From 3 October to 21 October, we engaged with Kensington Community garden plot holders and people on the waiting list and asked them how we could make the garden more open for more members of the community. In particular, we wanted to learn

* how current plot holders use the garden and why they like to use the garden, and
* asked people on the waiting list how they would like to participate in the gardens and how the garden could be run in the future to best benefit local communities.

Over the three week consultation period, we visited the Kensington Community Garden three times and spoke to 10 plot holders. We sent a survey to all plots holders and people on the waiting list and had 67 respondents including 20 plots holders and 47 people from the waiting list.

**Key themes**

Over 85% of respondents recognised that participating in a community garden has a positive impact on their health and wellbeing.

Plot holder respondents believe the community garden is accessible and nothing needs to change.

Respondents from the waiting list indicted the garden is not accessible as the plots have been allocated to the same people for many years and it is difficult to obtain a plot.

Both plot holders and waitlist members are unhappy about the current condition of the community garden. Respondents stated that some plots look unkempt, neglected and many plots are not being used.

**Key findings**

* 92% of respondents currently use or would like to use the community garden to grow food to eat.
* Tomatoes were the most popular crop to grow. 76% of respondents indicated they grow or would like to grow tomatoes at the garden.
* Over 75% respondents stated that participating in the garden would help keep them active.
* 79% of respondents said participating in the garden will allow them to meet their neighbours and other community members.
* 60% of respondents reported they visit or would likely visit the garden a couple of times per week.
* Only 1 respondent indicated they would like to grow flowers at the community garden.
* Over 57% respondents stated they would most likely visit the gardens on weekday afternoons.
* Three (3) comments were made from respondents on the waiting list mentioned that accessibility issues were due to the size of the current large plots. Two (2) respondents suggested sharing plots and two (2) respondents indicated they would be happy with a smaller plot to give more people the opportunity to participate.

20% of plot holder respondents stated they would like a dedicated place to leave excess produce for the local community to take.

1. **Council Strategies and Plans**

Community Gardens are highly valued among community members and relate to various council strategies and plans including;

* [Inclusive Melbourne Strategy 22-32](https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/inclusive-melbourne-strategy.pdf) outlines how the City of Melbourne will embrace the diversity of cultures, ages, genders, sexualities, backgrounds, religions, and abilities of the people who live, work, study and visit the city.
* [Food City – City of Melbourne Food Policy 2012](https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/sitecollectiondocuments/com-food-policy.pdf) vision and framework to guide coordinated action and decision-making to ensure sufficient access to good food for all, now and into the future.
* Active Melbourne Plan 2021-2025. Outlines how City of Melbourne will provide inclusive places, facilities, services and programs that connect our communities and support them to lead a healthier, more active life. The four key outcomes of this plan include managing growth, inclusion and access, leadership and positive customer experience.
* [Urban Forest Strategy and Urban Forest Precinct Plans](https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/community/greening-the-city/urban-forest/Pages/urban-forest-strategy.aspx). A strategy to create resilient landscapes, community health and wellbeing and a liveable, sustainable city. The strategy aims to increase canopy cover, urban forest diversity, improve vegetation health, soil moisture and water quality, urban ecology and ensure that the community have an understanding of the importance of our urban forest.

During 2022, local neighbourhood priorities have been developed with community across the City of Melbourne. Many of the neighborhood priorities identified relate to fostering community connection, environmental sustainability or food security initiatives that point towards community, rooftop and street gardening, edible tree planting and composting.

The full list of Kensington neighbourhood priorities can be found on the [Kensington Neighbourhood Portal](https://participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au/kensington-neighbourhood-portal)