



Urban Agriculture in Yarra

GROWING AND SHARING FOOD WHERE YOU LIVE

DRAFT

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REF 14099

Contents

INTRODUCTION	4
THE PURPOSE OF URBAN AGRICULTURE	4
COUNCIL'S ROLE IN URBAN AGRICULTURE	4
THE BENEFITS OF URBAN AGRICULTURE	5
WHERE WE ARE NOW –URBAN AGRICULTURE CONTEXT	6
WHERE THE STRATEGY CAME FROM	6
POLICY CONTEXT	7
INDUSTRY CONTEXT - STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT	12
WHERE WE WANT TO BE – OUR VISION/ OUR DIRECTION	13
VISION / DIRECTION	13
HOW WE WILL GET THERE	14
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	14
ACTIONS	16
WHAT WILL SUCCESS LOOK LIKE	24
APPENDIX 1	25
URBAN AGRICULTURE IN YARRA	25
THE LAY OF THE LAND	26
WHERE WE ARE NOW	27
EMERGING IDEAS: CASE STUDIES	29
USEFUL DEFINITIONS	31
BIBLIOGRAPHY	33

Introduction

THE PURPOSE OF URBAN AGRICULTURE

Urban agriculture provides our community with an exciting opportunity to grow our food where we live, share in its preparation and distribute this food amongst our family, friends and communities, ensuring good fresh food is available to all equally. There are many benefits associated with Urban Agriculture including fresher tastier food; improved health; stronger, more cohesive communities that are safe and enjoyable to live in; and lower environmental costs from reduced food transportation. Whether it be growing a few herbs on a balcony or working in a thriving community garden, Urban Agriculture is becoming increasingly popular both internationally and in the City of Yarra.

COUNCIL'S ROLE IN URBAN AGRICULTURE

This Strategy provides framework for Urban Agriculture in the City of Yarra. The Strategy will be used by the community and Council to shape Council policy and further develop Council services and programs to embed urban agriculture. It will guide and aid the community in advancing the development of urban agriculture in their city.

More specifically, the Strategy will:

- strengthen and facilitate education and training in the area of Urban Agriculture;
- foster community leaders in developing Urban Agriculture in their local communities;
- cultivate relationships and partnerships between council, community and external agencies and groups in support of Urban Agriculture;
- facilitate opportunities for the inclusion of urban agriculture into the community; and
- raise awareness for Urban Agriculture within Council, through the Yarra community and beyond.

THE BENEFITS OF URBAN AGRICULTURE

The cumulative approach of urban agriculture activities has a number of community benefits. That is, over time with further urban agriculture activities and the progressive take up by the community, benefits will begin to occur.

The following is a brief description of those benefits of Urban Agriculture which the local community of Yarra considered critical to their community and the people of Yarra.

Education / community strengthening	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• the communities of Yarra value the sharing of stories, food and knowledge• urban agriculture builds social connectedness• urban agriculture builds an understanding of food, where it comes from, its seasonality
Security / equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• food equality, sustainability• access to healthy food options• opportunity for all to grow their own food
Safer neighbourhoods	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More people using public spaces and left over spaces, creating more eyes on the street• A stronger understanding of who lives in the street and who they are will develop
Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Culture of food in Yarra
Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Closing the food loop by limiting food miles, chemicals, packaging, transportation, storage and disposal• Introduction of green space to the environment, assisting in the reduction of the “heat island” effect
Recreation / Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Equitable access to healthy food, grown locally• The physical and psychological health benefits of working a garden and developing a strong community• Reduction of obesity levels with physical exercise

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Where we are now

WHERE THE STRATEGY CAME FROM

Community

The Yarra community's interest in growing its own food has steadily grown over the past 30 years, from the initial development of the Collingwood Children's Farm in 1979 to the creation of community gardens in Collingwood and Fitzroy as well as gardens dedicated to the City's housing estates. Regular fruit and vegetable exchanges, farmers' markets, guerrilla gardening and planter boxes have sprung up within the Yarra city reflecting the community's desire to grow and share food close to home.

In 2012 the Yarra Urban Agriculture Advisory Committee (YUAAC) was initiated to support the community in the growth of Urban Agriculture, assist in the development of Urban Agriculture guidelines and raise awareness for growing food in the city.

Over the last few years the community has been engaged in the conversation of Urban Agriculture both directly and indirectly. The results of all these engagement activities have been reviewed and the elements related to Urban Agriculture included in this report.

What you told us

- "There are a lot of people in Melbourne and they are less and less connected with the regional communities and food growing." Melbourne Farmers Markets
- "We build community, we promote health" Growing Spaces
- "Healthy eating is more than nutrition: it's also about the cultural and social significance of growing, cooking and sharing food. " Vic Health
- "In Vietnam many people grow food in planter boxes" Community member
- "Reminding us where food comes from" Community member
- "Good things for everyone on lots of levels" Community member
- "Better tasting food" Community member

POLICY CONTEXT – YARRA

The community has made clear its desire to recognise Urban Agriculture as an important consideration in council business. The following strategic documents reflect this desire through the inclusion of Urban Agriculture and gardening within Council policy.

Council Plan

The Council Plan 2013-17 is a strategic document that puts forward a medium to long term vision for how Council will respond to the opportunities and challenges facing Yarra over the next four years.

It provides guidance on how Council will work to improve the amenity of residents, manage the challenges presented by population growth, provide support to vulnerable community members, protect and enhance Yarra's heritage and culture and continue to reduce the city's environmental footprint.

While the Council Plan refers to Urban Agriculture directly in the strategic objective "Ensuring a sustainable Yarra", encouraging a focus on Urban Agriculture over the next 4 years, this plan touches all five strategic Council objectives:

1. celebrating Yarra's uniqueness
2. supporting Yarra's community
3. making Yarra more liveable
4. ensuring a sustainable Yarra
5. leading Local Government.

The plan states:

"Community gardens have long been an important part of neighbourhoods, particularly in the inner city, offering people a place to meet, to socialise and to share a knowledge and interest in gardening. Guidelines for supporting urban agriculture have been developed, which simplify the process for community groups to identify new community garden sites. Urban agriculture offers a means to reducing the amount of food required to be produced outside of Yarra and transported here. Whilst in some parts of the City residents have backyards or community gardens and can grow their own fruit and vegetables, an increasing number of residents live in apartments with no, or limited, garden space.

Creating new garden plots or planter boxes can provide people with this opportunity to reduce their environmental impact by growing some of their own food." (Council Plan 2013 – 17, p. 25)

Yarra Environment Strategy (YES) 2013 – 2017

The Yarra Environment Strategy (YES) outlines a four year vision in which “Yarra is a resilient and sustainable city where current and future populations enjoy a high quality of life within our fair share of the earth's resources, whilst ensuring we co-exist harmoniously with the natural environment.” (YES 2013–17, p. 9)

The YES includes the following references to Urban Agriculture:

Action 1.2.2 - Strengthen Urban Agriculture program

Yarra is a national leader in supporting local food growing activities through our Urban Agriculture program. However, a holistic Urban Agriculture Strategy and Implementation Plan is required to tie the many elements together and ensure a clear and unified set of actions and direction that meet the needs of all sectors of the community.

Year 1:

- continue and strengthen existing Urban Agriculture program,
- develop Urban Agriculture Strategy and Implementation Plan

Year 2-4

- implement Urban Agriculture Strategy and Implementation Plan
- develop Urban Agriculture Toolkit for how to set up local urban agriculture projects

(For a full listing of the actions outlined above refer to the YES 2013-17, p. 16)

Yarra Health and Wellbeing Plan (2013 – 2017)

The Yarra Health and Wellbeing Plan 2013-2017 (Health Plan) is a strategic document which sets the health priorities for the municipality and informs Council actions to improve the health and wellbeing of residents.

The guiding principles of this report direct efforts towards:

- strengthening community inclusion, participation and connection;
- acting early to reduce health and well-being; and
- promoting mental health and wellbeing by creating opportunities for people to be involved in and connect with their community.

Yarra Health Status Report (April 2010)

A Health Status Report was undertaken for the City of Yarra in 2010 as part of the planning process for the development of Yarra City Council's Municipal Public Health Plan (MPHP) 2009-2013. This document is now known as the Health Plan 2009-2013.

Key findings from this document note:

“Yarra has a pattern of death and disease in which avoidable conditions such as heart and lung disease, diabetes and suicide dominate, and in which people’s health is profoundly affected by social inequality. This pattern highlights the following health priorities for Yarra:

- the prevention of leading causes of chronic disease, through healthy eating and physical activity;
- the high health impact of alcohol, smoking and use of other drugs;
- a range of mental health problems; and
- health inequalities in key risk groups, especially Indigenous Australians, in Yarra. (Yarra’s Health Status Report, 2010 P.3)

Draft Yarra Waste Strategy (2014 - 2018)

The 2014-2018 Yarra Waste Strategy (YWS) is a strategic document which will help us to redefine how we use our resources in a way that profoundly changes the City of Yarra’s approach to resources and the production of waste.

The new YWS builds on previous work in the area of waste recovery with the aim to redefine our current understanding of ‘Waste’. This will be achieved not only by recycling and diverting materials from landfills, but also advocating for better product design and stewardship, which will help us to rethink consumption behaviour and prevent waste from being produced in the first place.

With particular relevance to the Yarra Urban Agriculture Strategy is the “Food Know How” program. This program emphasises the importance of closing the loop on food waste by turning this waste into compost for use in gardens allowing gardeners the opportunity to reduce the amount of organic material sent to landfills. This material will then create a product as a nutrient source for community and private food gardening.

POLICY CONTEXT – STATE

Over the last decade a number of guidelines and recommendations have been developed through various State departments. These guidelines promote the development of Urban Agriculture and the growing of food in our urban environments.

The following guides reflect and support the establishment of Urban Agriculture in our urban environments:

Planning for food: *Towards a prosperous, resilient and healthy food system through Victoria's Metropolitan Planning Strategy*

(National Heart Foundation, Food Alliance and Vic Health, Oct 2012)

"Planning for food: Towards a prosperous, resilient and healthy food system through Victoria's Metropolitan Planning Strategy" is a background briefing paper developed by the Heart Foundation in partnership with the Food Alliance and Vic Health. It aims to generate discussion and inform stakeholders about opportunities to include food systems in the Victorian Metropolitan Planning Strategy. Recommendations are given with direct links to relevant Principles from the Victorian Metropolitan Planning Strategy Discussion Paper.

Food-sensitive planning and urban design (FSPUD)

(National Heart Foundation – Victoria) June 2011

FSPUD is a conceptual framework for achieving a sustainable and healthy food system, providing ideas and issues for consideration by all parties involved in the development and planning of our cities and towns.

"Food-sensitive planning and urban design does not simply assert that we have a problem in our cities, but sets out to identify new ways of tackling issues, providing a suite of ideas and innovations that cities should now embrace. It tackles a topic that has little precedent as an agenda for the planning of cities in Australia. It also sets out a host of reasons why we should add food to the core elements of the planning and design of our urban areas.." (FSPUD 2011, p.1)

Food for All

Information Sheet Series: Ten ways local government can act on food security (Vic Health) 2005–2010

Vic Health's "Food for All" program was developed to help the community regularly access and consume a variety of nutritious foods, particularly fruit and vegetables. The program ran for a period of five years from 2005 – 10, in partnership with local government and concentrated on priority populations.

Food for All encouraged local government authorities to implement the integrated planning of key factors influencing access to food. These factors include: transportation, housing, economic development and land use.

While the City of Yarra was not a participant in the program, the program did provide valuable information used in the preparation of this strategy.

Growing Green Guide

A guide to green roofs, walls and facades in Melbourne and Victoria, Australia

(State of Victoria through the Dept. of Environment and Primary Industries)
Feb 2014

The Growing Green Guide was developed with advice from industry experts and academia and supported by four Inner Melbourne local Government Authorities, including the City of Yarra. The guide is written for professionals involved in the design, construction and maintenance of green roofs, walls and / or facades.

The guide highlights urban food production, promoting the opportunity for food growing on a local scale, for community gardens, school gardens and social enterprise.

Food Alliance

The Food Alliance is a group of community members and organisations dedicated to food security advocacy and research. The group, founded in 2009, works within Deakin University primarily as a 'food think tank', conducting research into strategic issues such as planning and food access, and making submissions on food-related government policy development processes. The project works through the leadership and support of the Victorian Foundation for Health Promotion (Vic Health).

Their vision is: *"To make our food system better – better for our health, better for the planet and fairer for farmers".*

POLICY CONTEXT – AUSTRALIA

Healthy Places and Spaces

Healthy Spaces and Places is a collaboration between the Australian Local Government Association, the National Heart Foundation of Australia and the Planning Institute of Australia. It was originally funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing. The report highlights the need to reduce health costs through preventive measures and promotes the benefits of physical and mental health through active, healthy living.

Urban food security, urban resilience and climate change

(Burton, P, Lyons, K, Richards, C, Amati, M, Rose, N, Des Fours, L, Pires, V & Barclay, R 2013, National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility, Gold Coast)

This report provides up-to-date information on the extent of current urban agriculture practices in Australia. It is a critical review of good practice urban agriculture and provides an analysis of the opportunities and barriers for

extending and expanding upon these practices. Data was collected through the analysis of two Australian cities and had three main aims:

1. to increase our knowledge of the current extent of urban agriculture in Australian cities;
2. to review its capacity to play a more prominent role in enhancing urban food security and urban resilience and;
3. to assess the impacts of climate change on the capacity of urban agriculture to enhance food security and urban resilience.

INDUSTRY CONTEXT-STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Other Local Government areas

Communities across Metropolitan Melbourne have made it clear that Urban Agriculture, or growing food where you live, is important to their well-being. This has resulted in the development of a myriad of programs and initiatives run through the local government authorities.

For examples of the programs initiated through other Councils refer to Appendix– Case Studies.

Local Government Urban Agriculture Network (LGUIAN)

In November of 2012 The Food Alliance formed a group of local government professionals dedicated to growing and supporting knowledge and understanding in the field of urban agriculture, its best practice, how it has developed in other local government agencies and how to support one another in the developing Victorian context.

The goal of the group is to:

“...bring together local government professionals for the purpose of sharing, discussing and creating common best practice in the field of Urban Agriculture, policy and protocol that is achievable, strategic and appropriate.”

Where we want to be

VISION / DIRECTION

THE CITY OF YARRA IS A SUSTAINABLE CITY WHERE A ROBUST AND RICH MULTI-CULTURAL COMMUNITY GROWS, PRODUCES AND SHARES ITS FOOD.

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How we will get there

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

1. CULTIVATE A CULTURE

COUNCIL WILL PROMOTE AND FOSTER ITS RICH CULTURE OF FOOD, FOOD GROWING AND FOOD SHARING AS A WAY OF GROWING A HEALTHY COMMUNITY.

2. BUILD CONNECTIONS

COUNCIL WILL CULTIVATE MORE ROBUST COMMUNITIES, BUILDING STRONG CONNECTIONS AND SUPPORTING ITS LEADERS THROUGH URBAN AGRICULTURE.

3. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

THE GROWING AND SHARING OF FOOD, SKILLS AND STORIES IS INTEGRAL TO EMBEDDING URBAN AGRICULTURE IN YARRA. COUNCIL WILL FOSTER THE BUILDING AND IMPARTING OF KNOWLEDGE THROUGH TRAINING, SKILL DEVELOPMENT AND CONNECTIONS.

4. CONNECT PEOPLE TO THE LAND

COUNCIL WILL LINK PEOPLE AND LAND, CREATING MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE GROWING, SHARING AND CONSUMING OF FOOD IN THE CITY OF YARRA.

5. IMPROVE POLICY

COUNCIL POLICY WILL SUPPORT URBAN AGRICULTURE AND PROMOTE THE GROWING OF FOOD SUSTAINABLY IN THE CITY OF YARRA.

Legend

An assessment based priority matrix was developed to assess the actions using the objectives of the strategy:

1. Build and strengthen community (0 – no, 1 – Yes)
2. Engage with multiple community members / groups (0 – no, 1 – Yes)
3. Increase opportunity for food growing in Yarra (0 – no, 1 – Yes)
4. Increase knowledge of food growing / food cycle (0 – no, 1 – Yes)
5. Support existing Yarra Strategies (0 – no, 1 – Yes)
6. Build on existing programs (0 – no, 1 – Yes)

If the action scored:

Low – 1, 2 (Year 4)

Medium – 3, 4 (Year 2 – 3)

High – 5, 6 (Year 1 – 4)

High actions will take priority and be delivered first

ACTIONS

1. CULTIVATE A CULTURE

COUNCIL WILL PROMOTE AND FOSTER ITS RICH CULTURE OF FOOD, FOOD GROWING AND FOOD SHARING AS A WAY OF GROWING A HEALTHY COMMUNITY.

Action A – Celebration and Promotion

No	Deliverables, Activities	Measure	Timing	Lead and Support Units / Resources
		PRIORITY		
1	Using current network and agencies, promote existing Urban Agriculture projects / guidelines, celebrating their unique appeal and benefit for the community at large	HIGH	Year 1 - 4	Lead: Urban Agriculture Support: Communications/ Current Resources
2	Promote the use of locally grown food to local businesses in Yarra utilising established networks and programs such as "Food Know How", Lunch box sessions, etc	MEDIUM	Year 2 - 4	Lead: Urban Ag Support: Eco Dev Waste Min (Food Know How) / Current Resources
3	Promote vegetable tourism - Urban Agriculture tours around Yarra by linking with programs such as Open Gardens Victoria, the Food and Wine festival and other similar events	MEDIUM	Year 3 - 4	Lead: Eco Dev Support: Urban Ag / Current Resources +
4	Promote Urban Agriculture and community gardening as healthy and social activities	MEDIUM	Year 2 - 4	Lead: Social Policy Support: Urban Ag / Current Resources
5	Assess, evaluate and report on the progress of Urban Agriculture activities in Yarra	LOW	Year 2 & 4	Lead: Urban Ag / Current Resources

Action B – Celebration and Promotion

No	Deliverables, Activities	Measure	Timing	Lead and Support Units / Resources
		PRIORITY		
6	Increase the number of Urban Agriculture activities in Yarra, including urban orchards, planter boxes and community gardens	HIGH	Year 1 - 4	Lead: Urban Ag Support: Open Space, Arboriculture and Streetscapes, Urban Design / Current Resources
7	Promote and enhance Urban Agriculture in Yarra through the development of an accessible website and tools	MEDIUM	Year 2 - 4	Lead: Communications / Current Resources Support: Urban Ag

2. BUILD CONNECTIONS

COUNCIL WILL CULTIVATE MORE ROBUST COMMUNITIES, BUILDING STRONG CONNECTIONS AND SUPPORTING ITS LEADERS THROUGH URBAN AGRICULTURE.

Action C – Leading the community in its development of Urban Agriculture

No	Deliverables, Activities	Measure	Timing	Lead and Support Units / Resources
		PRIORITY		
8	Establish local community networks for Urban Agriculture in Yarra	MEDIUM	Year 2	Lead: Urban Ag Support: Environ Mgt, Eco Dev / Current Resources
9	Assist the community in the identification of funding sources and financial support	MEDIUM	Year 2	Lead: Urban Ag Support: Comm Grants, Env Mgt / Current Resources

Action D – Connecting and Building Relationships

No	Deliverables, Activities	Measure	Timing	Lead and Support Units / Resources
		PRIORITY		
10	Work with existing networks and agencies to build an online inventory of growers, producers and eaters	MEDIUM	Year 3	Lead: Urban Ag Support: Env Mgt, GIS, Eco Dev / Current Resources
11	Work with other community garden and agriculture groups, sharing knowledge and stories of growing food.	HIGH	Year 1 - 4	Lead: Urban Ag Support: Env Mgt, Youth Services, Social Services / Current Resources
12	Participate in and promote Urban Agriculture events and activities	HIGH	Year 1	Lead: Urban Ag, Support: One Yarra, Cross Council / Current Resources
13	Work with local business and industry networks to establish their requirements with regard to local food opportunities, requirements and production.	MEDIUM	Year 3	Lead: Urban Ag, Support Eco Development / Current Resources

Action E – Crossing Boundaries

No	Deliverables, Activities	Measure	Timing	Lead and Support Units / Resources
		PRIORITY		
14	Identify opportunities for sharing and collaborating in Urban Agriculture	HIGH	Year 1	Lead: Urban Ag Support: One Yarra, Cross Council / Current Resources

3. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

THE GROWING AND SHARING OF FOOD, SKILLS AND STORIES IS INTEGRAL TO EMBEDDING URBAN AGRICULTURE IN YARRA. COUNCIL WILL FOSTER THE BUILDING AND IMPARTING OF KNOWLEDGE THROUGH TRAINING, SKILL DEVELOPMENT AND CONNECTIONS.

Action F – Strengthen Education and Training

No	Deliverables, Activities	Measure	Timing	Lead and Support Units / Resources
		PRIORITY		
15	Coordinate information about urban food production. Information such as soil testing, biosecurity (pests and diseases protocols), cultivation, composting, food waste etc.	MEDIUM	Year 2	Lead: Urban Ag Support: Env Mgt, Arboriculture and Streetscape, Health protection, Urban Design / Current Resources
16	Facilitate workshops on the growing of food in urban settings, focusing on hard to reach communities	MEDIUM	Year 2	Lead: Urban Ag Support: / Current resources
17	Support and expand existing Yarra gardening networks to celebrate and share local skills and knowledge.	HIGH	Year 1	Lead: Urban Ag/ Current Resources

Action G – Build Community Capacity

No	Deliverables, Activities	Measure	Timing	Lead and Support Units / Resources
		PRIORITY		
18	Develop events and approaches for sharing knowledge, experiences and locally grown produce	HIGH	Year 1 - 4	Lead: Urban Ag Support: Consultation and Research / Current Resources
19	Resource communities with horticultural advice, equipment, soil, etc.	LOW	Year 4	Lead: Urban Ag Support: Env Operations / Current Resources
20	Encourage and support the community through education and tools in the maintenance and care of edible food (including vegetables, fruit, bees, chickens, etc.)	HIGH	Year 1-4	Lead: Urban Ag Support: Env Mgt Programs / Current Resources
21	Establish a library of tools, resources and guidelines for gardeners use in the production of edible food (including vegetables, fruit, bees, chickens, etc.)	LOW	Year 1-4	Lead: Urban Ag Support: Env Operations / Current Resources
22	Work in collaboration with external groups and agencies in the delivery of joint objectives e.g. 3000 acres etc.	HIGH	Year 1	Lead: Urban Ag Support: Coord. Council Property, Open Space P&D, Open Space Mgt / Current Resources

4. CONNECT PEOPLE TO THE LAND

COUNCIL WILL LINK PEOPLE AND LAND, CREATING MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE GROWING, SHARING AND CONSUMING OF FOOD IN THE CITY OF YARRA.

Action H – Link Gardeners to Land and Space

No	Deliverables, Activities	Measure	Timing	Lead and Support Units / Resources
		PRIORITY		
23	Compile an online inventory of potential growing opportunities to connect those offering and those seeking gardening space (e.g. backyard sharing opportunities)	MEDIUM	Year 2	Lead: Urban Ag Support: Stat Planning, GIS / Current Resources
24	Facilitate gardeners in negotiations with landowners, supporting short and long term gardening opportunities (e.g. pop up gardens)	MEDIUM	Year 2	Lead: Urban Ag Support: Eco Dev, Comm Grants / Current Resources

Action I – Grow Partnerships

No	Deliverables, Activities	Measure	Timing	Lead and Support Units / Resources
		PRIORITY		
25	Investigate public / private partnerships to assist with practical help, funding, training and support for Urban Agriculture activities	MEDIUM	Year 3	Lead: Urban Ag Support: Eco Dev / Current Resources

5. IMPROVE POLICY

COUNCIL POLICY WILL SUPPORT URBAN AGRICULTURE AND PROMOTE THE GROWING OF FOOD SUSTAINABLY IN THE CITY OF YARRA.

Action J – Remove Barriers and Develop Supportive Policies and Practices

	Deliverables, Activities	Measure	Timing	Lead and Support Units / Resources
		PRIORITY		
26	Review policies and local laws to enable, encourage and facilitate Urban Agriculture in under utilized land the City of Yarra (including but not limited to laneways, traffic treatments, Vic Track land)	MEDIUM	Year 1	Lead: Urban Ag Support: Local Laws, Strat Planning, Traffic, Open Space maintenance, Stat Planning / Current Resources
27	Review and update Urban Agriculture guidelines and identify policy barriers in the growing edible food in under utilized land the City of Yarra (including but not limited to laneways, traffic treatments, Vic Track land)	LOW	Year 1	Lead: Urban Ag Support: Compliance, Parking Services, Eng Operations, Open Space, Infrast and Special Proj, Risk Mgt / Current Resources

Action K – Recognize Urban Agriculture as a Legitimate Land Use

	Deliverables, Activities	Measure	Timing	Lead and Support Units / Resources
		PRIORITY		
28	Investigate the potential of density bonuses for developers who incorporate Urban Agriculture within their developments	MEDIUM	Year 4	Lead: Urban Ag Support: Stat Planning, Open Spcae Design, Open Space Mgt, Urban Design / Current Resources

What will success look like?

Many of the strategic objectives and actions outlined in this Strategy will be measurable and form the groundwork from which the community can grow and develop as a sustainable city, growing, producing and sharing its own food.

We will also know success by the stories our community members and our visitors tell. Do our residents have equitable access to fresh healthy food, grown in a sustainable manner? Will our children have a strong understanding of where their food comes from and an appreciation for what makes a healthy diet? Will our community be working alongside our regional farmers growing, sharing and cultivating food? Will the rich culture of Yarra be reflected in the food we grow, share and buy every day?

These are the questions we will ask to know what success looks like.

Appendix 1

URBAN AGRICULTURE IN YARRA

Prior to European settlement the land, now known as the City of Yarra, was inhabited by the Aboriginal people. The people did not live in permanent settlements but camped for periods of time defined mainly by the availability and seasonality of food, water and shelter. They had a deep understanding for the land, how to manage it and how to sustain their people from it. (from <http://aboriginalhistoryofyarra.com.au>)

With the arrival of the European community, Melbourne developed into a major industrial and commercial centre, taking advantage of the river system and easy access to the sea. In its early history Melbourne fed its community largely through imported food. Agriculture tending to be more specialized, usually of high value.

The City of Yarra, one of Melbourne's first suburbs, serviced this growing city, providing a centre for industry and housing. The agricultural growing areas of Coburg, Keilor and Moonee Ponds provided the community with fresh locally grown food giving Melbourne the reputation as a centre for market gardens and fresh produce. With food grown in suburban backyards alongside a rich culture of market gardens the community's connection to its food was strong.

As the population grew, land along Melbourne's fringe was developed into housing for Melbourne's growing population, pushing the farms further out into the regional areas. Transportation of food from greater distances became the norm. The scale of residential dwellings decreased with the population growth resulting in limited space for private food growing. People became increasingly detached from the process of growing food and had lower appreciation for the land, where their food comes from and its seasonality. A reliance on large-scale farming, transportation, packaging and distribution to larger supermarkets evolved. These supermarkets offered a great variety of foods from across Australia and internationally throughout the year without acknowledgment of seasonality or local availability.

Post war immigration brought new arrivals to the City of Yarra. People from southern Europe and South East Asia arrived with rich new cultures, and introduced new traditions and new foods to the city dwellers. A culture of food developed in the city and continues to develop with each new influx of residents. Yarra has now become known for its unique and individual sense of food. (from <http://www.emelbourne.net.au>)

Urban Agriculture in Yarra continues to grow with the development of community gardens at Rushall Station, Mater St. and the Collingwood Children's Farm, as well as those dedicated to the communities of the high-

rise housing estates. Fruit and vegetable exchanges and farmers markets are conducted regularly, with fresh local produce available for purchase or swapping. Planter boxes have been established along the city streets growing fruit and vegetables. Guerrilla gardens continue to pop up.

This consistent groundswell of food growing in Yarra resulted in the establishment of the role of Urban Agriculture facilitator in 2011 and the development of a community advisory board in 2012. The main purpose of this group was to assist in the development of Urban Agriculture guidelines reflecting the Council's growing need to provide parameters around the implementation of gardening within the streetscape and to make it more accessible to the community. The group continues to meet regularly assisting in the development of this strategy in addition to promoting the development of Urban Agriculture in the City of Yarra.

The community has made clear their desire to re kindle their relationship with the land, growing their own food, preparing and sharing this food with their friends, family and community and sharing the stories of food and its significance in their lives.

THE LAY OF THE LAND

Yarra is today a vibrant inner-city municipality in close proximity to the Melbourne Central Business District. Bordered by the Yarra River along its eastern and southern boundaries, Melbourne's sport and entertainment precinct, Burnley gardens and park district, world heritage-listed buildings, parks and gardens and Princes Park to the north, the City of Yarra is rich in history, culture and activity.

Yarra is currently experiencing population growth over that of the Victorian average. With over 1,000 additional people moving into the community per annum, including an influx of younger people with higher income and capital in addition to a large number of low-income, disadvantaged residents the city is developing a unique demographic make-up. Many of its population live at the very lowest end of the socio-economic scale and many at the highest end of the scale.

Yarra's population in 2012 was over 80,000 and this number is expected to grow to 100, 000, over the next 15 years (Council Plan 2013–17) creating further pressure on Yarra's facilities, resources and environment. Additionally, the City of Yarra holds the highest number of public housing estates in Victoria with many of these residents older and/or from a CALD background.

Yarra is a socially and economically diverse community with significant pockets of disadvantage when compared to the rest of Victoria. 10% of Yarra's residents surveyed for the Community Indicators Victoria Survey ran out of food, and could not afford more, in the 12 months prior to the survey,

compared to 6% in Melbourne City Council area (Yarra Health Status Report 2010, p21)

WHERE WE ARE NOW

The City of Yarra is emerging as a leader in the global movement for sustainable food and Urban Agriculture. A wealth of innovative projects of all scales and sizes attest to Yarra's diverse agriculture and food culture.

The following "snapshots" represent some of the wide array of activities already taking place in the City of Yarra, activities which through the support of this strategy and a community of leaders in the area will grow and develop into the future.

Planter Boxes / Nature Strips / Productive Trees / Guerilla gardens

The first city planter box was located on an inner urban residential street in 2012. Since this first tenuous step over 50 planter boxes have been placed in the neighborhoods of Yarra in addition to the authorization of a number of guerrilla gardens planted by private individuals prior to the implementation of the Urban Agriculture Guidelines.

A number of nature strip plantings, both formal and informal have been implemented within the City limits providing the community with an opportunity to grow their own healthy food as well as the providing the opportunity to come together in an informal setting.

Community Gardens

There are currently three public community gardens located in Clifton Hill, Collingwood and the Collingwood Children's Farm with planning for further gardens now underway. There is a waiting list for each garden as well as keen interest in gardens in other areas.

The development of site assessment criteria and a matrix for the selection of suitable sites has been developed to assist in the implementation of further community gardens.

In partnership with Cultivating Community the City of Yarra offers support and involvement in a number of community gardens located in the high-rise estates within the City of Yarra.

In response to community concern over the type of facility offered for community gardens research is now being undertaken around alternative, more innovative approaches to community gardening.

Urban Agriculture guidelines / facilitation

To assist in the ongoing sustainability of Urban Agriculture in the City of Yarra the development and subsequent endorsement of Urban Ag guidelines (June 2011) was undertaken to facilitate the implementation of ongoing Urban Agriculture in the city.

In September of 2011 an Urban Agriculture facilitator was appointed, this role was to provide advice to the community, facilitate partnerships and coordinate training and education.

Yarra Urban Agriculture Action Committee

In April of 2012 the Yarra Urban Agriculture Committee, a committee of representative community members, area experts, Council officers, and Councillors was initiated. The aim of the group was to help resolve the conflict between Council regulatory approach to guerrilla gardening constructively, assist in the development of the Urban Agriculture guidelines and facilitate the implementation of Urban Agriculture in the community. The draft guidelines underwent a community consultation process and attracted a considerable community response both in favour of and opposition to the proposal.

Academic and Cross Council Research and Collaboration

Since the creation of the Urban Agriculture position considerable work has been undertaken in raising awareness of Urban Agriculture both within Council and in the community. A brief outline of this work is highlighted below:

- Education sessions have been developed to up skill the community in all facets of Urban Agriculture;
- Cross Council discussions have commenced within internal Council divisions to embed Urban Agriculture into the community;
- Partnerships established with major Victorian universities in the discussion and development of urban agriculture in our cities, universities including University of Melbourne, RMIT, Monash University, La Trobe University and, Griffith University;
- Collaboration with other local Government Authorities in the development and growth of urban agriculture;
- Support and involvement of community groups and non-profits, including: Cultivating Community, Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance, Transition Yarra;
- Participation in the 2nd Australian National Sustainable Food Summit and presentation at the 2012 Health Cities Conference in Geelong.

EMERGING IDEAS: CASE STUDIES

Urban Agriculture Case Studies

The following brief case studies provide a taste of successful Urban Agriculture initiatives from around Melbourne and the world. The case studies show how Urban Agriculture can be community or government led and how it has the potential to provide food for urban dwellers but also to improve amenity and safety as well as build community connections.

Edible Bus Stops – London UK

Edible Bus Stops is a community led project. The aim is to transform unused land around bus stops into productive growing land. People catching public transport or walking past are encouraged to pick food to eat or take home to cook.

The aim is not only to provide food but also to improve the amenity of the area and in doing so make the place safer and more pleasant. The project brings the community together in working bees also improves connections and leads to community strengthening.

There is an umbrella organisation which helps to share skills and resources and an installations arm which creates pop up installations for corporate events and public festivals.

A number of DVD's and other resources are available on the Edible Bus Stop website

www.theediblebusstop.org

Urban Orchard – integrated into a new development Melbourne Australia

In one new housing development in Melbourne's south fruiting trees have been planted as street trees. The urban orchard is integrated within a pedestrian and bicycle friendly shared zone, this includes a watering system.

The street and public open space orchard is managed and maintained by the homeowners association, which is funded through a quarterly levy on each homeowner's rates notice.

Homeowners automatically become a member of the homeowners association when they purchase a housing lot – active participation is not compulsory but is encouraged.

More details can be found in the Food Sensitive Planning and Urban Design (FSPUD) case studies at <http://www.heartfoundation.org.au/driving-change/current-campaigns/local-campaigns/Pages/food-sensitive-planning.aspx>

Urban Agriculture as Public Policy – Havana – Cuba

In Havana the Provisional Planning Directorate have identified areas of unused land and set guidelines for the establishment of urban agriculture.

This includes the right to use vacant land for cultivation, providing the land is not damaged. In addition research is being undertaken into intensive methods of farming in small spaces. Produce can be sold at farmers markets and stalls.

140,000 jobs have been created in urban agriculture and it is producing 50% of the fresh fruit and vegetables for Havana.

In the year 2000 small patio's produced 326.9 million eggs and 7.7 tons of poultry meat.

All this food is produced from small family based plots to larger state run enterprises with professional employees.

This example indicates that urban agriculture can be a genuine food production method when given the support and resources.

More details can be found in the Food Sensitive Planning and Urban Design (FSPUD) case studies at <http://www.heartfoundation.org.au/driving-change/current-campaigns/local-campaigns/Pages/food-sensitive-planning.aspx>

Darebin Fruit Squad – Darebin - Australia

The Darebin fruit squad are a team of volunteers who harvest excess fruit from peoples' fruit trees as well as provide advice on tree maintenance. The harvest is shared between the tree owners and a variety of charities. Anyone in Darebin or surrounding suburbs can call in the fruit squad when they have a tree that needs harvesting. This avoids fruit being wasted and also assists homeowners who may have otherwise ended up with a mess of fallen fruit causing a nuisance and possibly encouraging disease.

The fruit squad also provides advice and expertise on pruning trees and dealing with basic tree problems and disease. The outcome is an urban orchard in people's back yards that are healthy and productive. In addition the fresh fruit is used and enjoyed by a range of people. The fruit squad also provides people an opportunity to meet neighbors and build their networks.

For more information, contact liz@jikajika.org.au or 9482 5100.

3000 Acres – Melbourne - Australia

3000 Acres is a project that aims to connect people who want to grow food to land that is not currently being used. 3000 acres recognises that many people living in cities want to grow food but lack the space required. Conversely there are vast amounts of underutilised land within the urban setting that is simply lying dormant.

3000 Acres is a grassroots organisation that uses a team of planners, designers and gardeners to assist individuals and groups to contact landowners and negotiate usage of land. In addition 3000 Acres can put people in touch with other gardeners to build groups who can work together. From a landowners' perspective it provides an opportunity to get unused land cleaned up and maintained.

3000 Acres has a website which has a range of resources including a map of available land the 3000 acres has identified.

More information from www.3000acres.org

USEFUL DEFINITIONS

Urban Agriculture

Urban agriculture is an inclusive term that describes a myriad of activities connected with the growing, processing and distribution of food and food-related products in and around cities. Although vegetables and fruit are generally the most common foods which come to mind, the term also includes animal husbandry, such as urban hens for eggs, beekeeping for honey and aquaculture for fish. (City of Toronto Grow To policy p5)

Healthy and Sustainable food

VicHealth recognises three broad determinants of healthy eating:

- secure and sufficient supply of healthy foods
 - access to healthy foods
 - a culture that supports healthy food consumption.
- (Vic Health)

Food security

Healthy eating was identified as one of the strategic priorities of the Yarra Health Plan 2009-2013. Healthy eating, in the context of public health, is considered to be the consumption of a diet that provides sufficient energy and nutrition for desired daily activities and good health, but not so much as to result in overweight or obesity. In terms of food insecurity, 10% of the population of Yarra reported food insecurity. This indicator measured the percentage of people who ran out of food in the past twelve month period and did not have the financial resources to buy more. Self-reported food insecurity was higher for residents of Yarra than for Victoria overall (6.0%).

“Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. The four pillars of food security are availability, access, utilization and stability.” Source: Food and Agriculture Organization, World Summit on Food Security 2009

The Food System

The American Planning Association defines food systems as “the chain of activities beginning with the production of food and moving on to include the processing, distributing, wholesaling, retailing and consumption of food and eventually the disposal of waste” (FSPUD, March 2011)

Nutritious Diet

The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating (AGTHE) defines a nutritious diet as one that meets the key nutrition reference standards. The aim of the AGTHE is to “Encourage the consumption of a variety of foods from each of the five food groups every day in proportions that are consistent with the Dietary \Guidelines for Australians” (Commonwealth Department of Health and Aging 1998).

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