



The Uniting Church in Australia  
QUEENSLAND SYNOD



# Transforming Communities - Taking action locally

A Community Engagement Toolkit –  
Community Gardens

# A Community Engagement Toolkit

## – Community Gardens

**This guide is designed to assist and support local engagement in developing a local community garden, as people from across the Synod work together to transform communities.**

The Uniting Church's advocacy for social justice issues is grounded in the affirmation that all people are of equal worth and dignity in Christ. God intends for the whole of creation to flourish, and it is part of our mission as the church to identify and work against the inequalities and injustices that result from flawed humanity and broken systems.

Through (project) Plenty we echoed this commitment to Transforming Communities and to supporting: Wellbeing and Mental Health, Environment and Sustainability, and First Peoples.

The foundational document for the Uniting Church in Australia, the Basis of Union, highlights our call to be a fellowship of reconciliation, a foretaste of the new creation in Christ. We answer this call by loving and serving our communities, particularly those among us who are most vulnerable.

**If you are planning a local community garden, the Uniting Church Queensland Synod would love to hear from you. If we can support you to engage in these priority issues, please contact us on 07 3377 9777 or at [projectplenty@ucaqld.com.au](mailto:projectplenty@ucaqld.com.au)**

### Why garden?

- Community gardens are an example of a place-based approach to social action that local communities can initiate. Community gardens can offer a positive social influence within local communities by building social connections amongst local community members who otherwise might never engage with each other. Community gardens provide a wide range of benefits including:
  - Social and health benefits – builds and strengthens community networks; increases physical activity; improves nutrition; increases social connections; and improves mental health.
  - Environmental benefits – greens local landscapes; increases reuse of organic wastes; stores carbon; reduces fossil fuel use; and supports environmental education.

### Tips

- Forming a working group of local community members with a range of skills and experience is the first step in starting the project. Holding a public meeting is one way to recruit local community members.
- Maintain enthusiasm through activities that foster both personal and group development with social events such as BBQs, skill-sharing workshops and planning days.
- Many successful community gardens have developed supportive partnerships with other community groups, businesses and organisations in their local community. This can be a source of valuable resources, collaborative projects and ideas.
- Seek assistance from relevant authorities such as your Local Council or Landcare group.

### Fundraising for Community Gardens

Brisbane City Council's Cultivating Community Gardens Grants. Funding amounts range from \$1000 to \$2500. <https://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/community-and-safety/grants-awards-and-sponsorships/environment-and-sustainability/cultivating-community-gardens-grants>

The Gambling Community Benefit Fund offers not-for-profit groups operating in Queensland grants from \$500 to \$35,000. <https://www.justice.qld.gov.au/initiatives/community-grants>

The ANZ Community Foundation aims to support projects run by charitable organisations which offer a direct and tangible benefit to local communities. <https://www.eqt.com.au/philanthropy/grant-funding/folder-other-grants/anz-community-foundation>

The Australian Ethical Foundation offers community grants to support grassroots organisations who contribute to humanitarian, environmental and animal welfare efforts. <https://www.australianethical.com.au/about/foundation/community-grants/>

Townsville City Council Environmental Grants and Partnerships provide funding and in-kind support to help build a vibrant, liveable city for everyone. <https://www.townsville.qld.gov.au/community-support/grants-and-partnerships/environmental-grants>

Toowoomba Regional Council Grants of up to \$5,000 are available through the environment grants program. <https://www.tr.qld.gov.au/community-business/grants-funding/apply-by-category/6465-environment-grants>

## **References and further reading**

Community Gardens Australia resources

<https://www.communitygarden.org.au/resource-explorer>

Community garden guide

[https://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/sites/default/files/community\\_garden\\_guide\\_aug\\_2013.pdf](https://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/sites/default/files/community_garden_guide_aug_2013.pdf)

Community gardens manual

<https://www.sgaonline.org.au/pdfs/factsheets/HMST%20manual.pdf>

Setting up a community garden

<https://www.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/learn/community-greening/setup-a-community-garden>

Starting a community garden, a ten step process

<https://www.communitygarden.org.au/sites/default/files/resource-files/start%20a%20garden.pdf>

Sustainable Gardening Australia resources

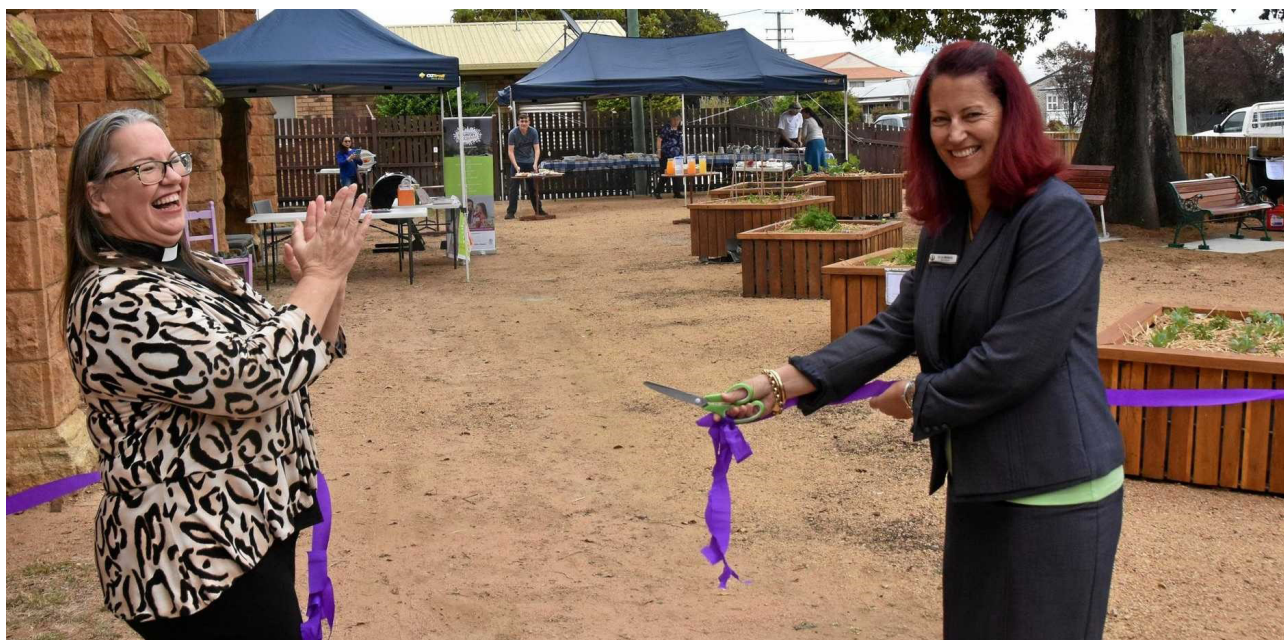
<https://www.sgaonline.org.au/how-to-fact-sheets/>

## Case study - Warwick Killarney Uniting Church “God’s Garden, Growing Us Together”

Warwick Killarney Uniting Church has created a community garden called “God’s Garden, Growing Us Together”. The Garden has been designed as a hub for learning skills, disadvantaged youth and re-engagement with society, as well as a gathering place for those wanting a small garden to grow their own produce. Through working with the youth justice system, garden committee member Sue Fox said God’s Garden was an opportunity to show struggling kids a better path. “Learning to grow things with your own hands, helping life to develop, will give them a perspective on what matters,” Mrs Fox said.

For Mrs Liebenberg, the garden is the logical progression for the assets the Uniting Church had at its disposal. “We had all these retired home ex teachers and these kids on detention from Scots PGC, then this empty space next to the church,” Mrs Liebenberg said. “We have simply utilised what God has given us.”

Warwick Killarney Uniting Church opened their new community garden in May 2019 after 17 months of development. Redcliffe Uniting Church started the project with a rainwater tank and Southern Downs Regional Council provided funding that helped to pay for plumbing and fencing as well as drought proofing. Fundraisers and donations have also contributed to the cost of establishing the garden.



Rev Ansie Liebenberg and Cr Jo McNally open up God’s Garden to the community. Chris Lines

### References

<https://ucaqlld.com.au/events/community-garden-opening/>

<https://www.warwickdailynews.com.au/news/last-wishes-and-new-hope-sprouts-in-gods-garden/3738430/>

<https://wkuc.org.au/community-garden/>