

**Report to General Manager**

Attachment: Plan of garden bed and fence layout

**SUBJECT:** Progress of Milson Park Community Garden Project**AUTHOR:** Ralph Forinash, Streets Alive Coordinator, 3 September 2009**SUMMARY:**

Following a report to the 2 February 2009 Council meeting, Council resolved to adopt the recommendation to commit land for a community vegetable garden. It also resolved that a progress report be submitted in six months' time. This report outlines the process of the garden after the initial 6 months of the project.

**RECOMMENDATION:****THAT** this information be received.**Financial Implications**

There are no additional financial implications.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

**ORIGINAL SIGNED**Endorsed by \_\_\_\_\_  
Director of Open Space & Environmental Services

## DETAIL

Council's Open Space Division was approached by members of the Kirribilli community late in 2008 to commit to construction of a community vegetable garden at Milson Park, Kirribilli. The most suitable site was identified, and a large community survey was undertaken to gauge local resident attitudes. Since the survey showed strong support, it was recommended and resolved that the garden be built.

### Preliminary Work

The first meeting between interested residents and the Streets Alive Coordinator took place at Kirribilli Neighbourhood Centre on 4 March 2009. Monthly meetings have been held since, and at the park as required. At the first meeting, a committee was formed: Chair (Gordon Howlett), Operations Coordinator (Carole Baker), Construction Coordinator (Denny Linker) and a Council Representative (Streets Alive Coordinator, Ralph Forinash). The garden was to be called Milson Community Garden or MCG for short.



The garden beds were to be made of hardwood, and filled with organic growing media. The hardwood was sourced from a mill in the Blue Mountains by the Construction Coordinator. The Operations Coordinator sourced the soil from a manufacturer in Yass. The main consideration throughout was cost and that the materials be as natural as possible. Enthusiasm for the project and anticipation by the community has been, and remains, strong.

### Garden Bed Construction

During much of the preliminary work, there had been considerable rain. Delivery of timber was delayed until the surface of Milson Park could accommodate the heavy vehicles. The timber was delivered on 2 June.

At a series of working bees in early June, the timber was cut on a table saw in the park, within a compound made with hired fencing (see photo). Most of the 760 lineal metres of 50 mm by 200 mm hardwood was cut to a plan provided by the Construction Coordinator (see attached plan). After the cap was constructed, another series of working weekends resulted in the construction of the garden beds being completed by mid-July.



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The adjacent gardener's shed was given over to the community for its use as a storage facility. The shed is ideal as it is secure and is served with electricity and water.

The following weekend the insides of the beds were painted with an organic wood preservative. Although Council provided help during working bees, most of the construction was completed with the generous support of local residents.

### **Soil Delivery**

Consideration was given to how the soil was to be installed in the gardens. It could be delivered directly to the park and put in by volunteers or could be installed mechanically by a contractor. A total of 42 cubic metres of soil had to be delivered, and to minimise delivery costs it was all brought to Sydney in one truck – far too heavy for Milson Park.

In the end the soil was delivered to Hills Bark Blower, dried to suitable moisture content at their premises, and blown into the beds using their pump system.

### **Seeds and Plants**

A complete planting set-out was put together by the Operations Coordinator and a large order was sent to Digger's Seeds. Not all of the plants ordered were available because they were out of season or out of stock, though they are being sourced elsewhere. The Sydney Flying Yacht Squadron has donated a stainless steel table for seedling growing.

### **Final Construction Element – Fencing**

A fence surrounding the garden is necessary to exclude dogs and casual intrusion. It will be the same design and colour as the adjacent fence next to the canal. Installation of the fence is due to begin this week (note date of report), so should be constructed by the time this report reaches Council.

### **Future Considerations**

Early in community deliberations it was decided that the garden would be entirely communal – there are no individual allotments. There is a sense that the committee will ensure the best use of the garden, with a very large email list in use and the regular meetings being open to the community. It is the desire of the group that Milson Community Garden become a community asset, with plans to make it available for school groups.

### **CONCLUSION**

The proponents of a community garden in Milson Park had a very strong vision of what it would look like and how it would be constructed and operated. With Council funds and support, the garden was constructed by residents and will be planted out by the end of September.

The Milson Community Garden committee would like Council to give consideration to a formal opening of the garden this spring or summer.

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