



FUNDING YOUR COMMUNITY GARDEN





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Produced as part of the Growing Communities WA project (2008 – 2010) with funding support from Lotterywest, City of Swan and Town of Cambridge.

This resource was informed by action research carried out for the Growing Communities WA project with Busselton Community Garden from July 2009 to June 2010. Special thanks to the garden and to the Action Research Worker, Rachel Kemp, for her reflections and insights. Busselton Community Garden is located at the corner of Strelly Street and Roe Terrace, Busselton (www.busseltoncommunitygarden.org.au).

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Citation: Goodall, A. (2010). *Funding Your Community Garden*. Perth: Growing Communities WA.

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INTRODUCTION

Community gardens cost money to construct and maintain. The amount required varies dramatically across gardens according to their size, scale of activities and the skill base and volunteer time of their members. Whatever the nature of your garden, at some point you will need to consider how to raise the funds required to get it up and running and keep it thriving. This resource offers some tips to assist you in successfully funding your garden.

This resource was informed by action research carried out for the Growing Communities WA project with Busselton Community Garden. It aims to complement existing resources relevant to funding community gardens (see References section). It is designed specifically for community self-managed gardens, but may also be relevant to agency-managed and Local Council-managed. Whilst it draws on the experience of community gardens in Western Australia in particular, most of the information and tips provided will be relevant for community gardens anywhere.

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST TO GROW A COMMUNITY GARDEN?

The short answer to this question is: it depends. Some gardens in Australia have been set up for \$150; others have spent over \$150,000 in initial establishment costs. There are gardens with minimal on-going expenses and others that have an annual turnover of around \$4 million. Community gardens come in all shapes and sizes and consequently the costs associated with 'growing' them successfully (including initial construction, ongoing maintenance and further development costs) are just as varied.

Key factors in determining garden costs:

- **Size** of the garden
- Scale of the **vision** for the garden, in terms of infrastructure / buildings, activities on offer and whether there is a need for paid staff
- **Site** for the garden, in terms of how much work needs to be done to make it suitable for food gardening
- Amount and type of **free resources and assistance** able to be accessed by the garden (such as free construction labour in the form of volunteers; donated goods; reusable materials; and professional expertise provided on a pro bono basis).

CHECKLIST OF POSSIBLE GARDEN COSTS

The following lists of possible garden design and construction costs, other set-up costs and maintenance costs will provide a useful starting point in building a budget for your garden. You can begin by working out which of these items your garden needs and then move on to identifying whether you need to pay for them or instead can do the work yourselves or 'find it for free'.

DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION COSTS

- Soil testing
- Site works
- Connecting to services such as electricity, mains water
- Energy generation infrastructure e.g. solar panels, windmill
- Rainwater tank / bore water connection
- Reticulation / irrigation system
- Toilet facilities
- Garden beds, including raised beds for accessibility
- Soil / soil conditioners
- Waste management systems e.g. composting areas, worm farms
- Seeds, seedlings
- Fruit trees
- Garden tools
- Lockable shed for storing tools, etc.
- Shelter / covered areas
- Seating / tables
- Accessible paths
- Garden signage e.g. entry sign, educational signs within garden
- Notice board
- Nursery for plant propagation
- Food preparation area / BBQ / pizza oven
- Sink for washing produce and hand washing
- Play area for children e.g. sandpit, climbing frames
- Animals e.g. chickens, bees, ducks
- Animal enclosures
- Fencing, security
- Garden artwork, sensory garden elements
- Professional expertise e.g. garden design, community consultation
- Construction labour

OTHER SET-UP COSTS

- Fees to become an incorporated entity
- Advertising / promotion
- Logo design
- Web site design and hosting

MAINTENANCE COSTS

- Water use
- Electricity use
- Soil conditioners
- Infrastructure maintenance e.g. paths, reticulation, plots, sheds
- Insurance e.g. public liability, volunteers
- Administration e.g. postage, PO box rental
- Financial administration e.g. financial management software, independent auditing
- Communication and promotion e.g. web site hosting
- Staff salaries and associated costs

REDUCE YOUR NEED FOR MONEY

There are simple things you can do to help reduce your garden's need for money¹:

- Tap into the existing **skills and knowledge of your members and supporters**. For example, one member of the West Leederville Community Garden is a reticulation expert. The garden saved on reticulation costs because he was able to organise and supervise the installation of reticulation onsite for free. A simple way to tap into the skills of your membership base is to include a question on people's skills in your garden membership form.
- Access **in-kind support and donated materials**. For example, when the organising group for the Victoria Park Community Garden advertised their plans for a new garden in their local area, local businesses offered them free legal advice to assist with incorporation, as well as free use of a bobcat to help with site works. West Leederville residents donated a garden shed and garden furniture to their local garden when it was getting off the ground. The garden also had permaculture design students develop the design for their garden as part of the students' course, rather than paying fees for a designer.
- **Choose materials for the construction** of your garden that don't have ongoing maintenance costs. The West Leederville Community Garden has mulched pathways between allotments. The pathways require regular re-mulching and new Local Council rules for preventing dieback mean the garden has to purchase mulch from guaranteed dieback-free suppliers. The garden is investigating re-constructing the paths using a material (such as crushed rock) that won't have ongoing maintenance costs.
- **Reuse 'waste' resources** in the construction of your garden. Community gardens are great places to demonstrate the reuse of materials considered to be waste. A common example is using decommissioned fridges to make worm farms.



Worm farm made from a fridge

¹ For more ideas, see Claire Nettle, *Growing Community: Starting and nurturing community gardens*.

MAKE A FINANCIAL PLAN FOR YOUR GARDEN

Financial sustainability is one of the critical elements in maintaining a vibrant and viable community garden. Good financial planning will help to provide more stability and security for your garden and ensure you get maximum value from any time and energy your garden group puts into fundraising activities.

Don't let the idea of a 'financial plan' put you off; it doesn't need to be a long and complex document. The amount of forward thinking and planning you need to do in relation to funding your garden should match the scale of your community gardening initiative. If your garden costs are low or membership fees cover all of your outgoings, then a basic plan will suffice. On the other hand, if the costs of maintaining your garden are relatively high and your group has grand plans for further developing the garden, then you will need a more comprehensive plan.

ELEMENTS OF A FINANCIAL PLAN

Key elements to include in a financial plan for your garden are:

- All garden **costs** clearly identified. It is useful to list costs associated with initial construction, ongoing maintenance and further development of the garden separately. Your total costs will dictate the funds that need to be raised to ensure the sustainability of your garden.
- Any strategies you have identified to further **minimise your costs**.
- A **fundraising plan** for how you intend to generate sufficient income to cover your total costs (see Diverse Income Streams section for ideas). A good plan will identify a specific income goal for each fundraising activity and have people nominated to take responsibility for your various fundraising efforts.

CASE STUDY

Busselton Community Garden recently identified a shortfall between the regular income they receive through garden memberships and the ongoing costs associated with maintaining the garden. The garden has also begun moving ahead with Stage 2 of its development, including building 16 additional allotments, retrofitting an old house onsite to create a demonstration sustainable home, opening a Saturday café and enhancing areas at the garden provided for young skaters and BMX riders. It is clear to committee members that in order to ensure the garden remains financially viable and their goals for Stage 2 development can be achieved, additional funds need to be raised.

As a first step to keeping their finances on track, Busselton garden compiled and reviewed available information about current garden costs and income, to build a clearer picture of their financial situation. Initially this was difficult as the garden bookkeeping records had been kept in a fairly ad hoc fashion while the garden was developing. The garden has set up new financial administration systems and processes to ensure accurate information is readily available and to make the task of managing the budget easier (see Set Up Financial Administration Systems section for tips). A considerable amount of volunteer time went into setting up these systems and learning how to use them; but committee members believe the benefits have outweighed any costs.

With all their costs clearly identified, Busselton garden have been able to identify and implement some cost reduction strategies. The garden developed a fundraising plan for how to meet their remaining costs that includes strategies for diversifying and building up garden income streams (see Develop Diverse Income Streams section for more details). The plan also incorporates a fundraising calendar, which aims to spread out activities evenly across the year (ensuring there is some downtime for volunteers!) and locks in some reliable fundraising activities (e.g. sausage sizzles at Bunnings). Garden committee members feel this is an improvement on the ad hoc planning of activities in previous years; it is less stressful for volunteers when they can look ahead and know what is coming up, check who is available to contribute and know there are periods of rest between activities.

As new funding initiatives are tried and tested, the Busselton Community Garden fundraising plan continues to evolve. It is helping to bring a clear focus to garden fundraising efforts, raise additional funds for the garden and build confidence among committee members that time spent on fundraising activities is generating value.

SET UP FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION SYSTEMS²

Effective financial administration systems will help keep your garden's finances on track. Once again, the scale and complexity of these systems should match the scale of your garden. The more money your garden needs to manage, the more care needs to be taken to manage it effectively and the better systems you will want to have in place to support your efforts in this area. Systems you will commonly need include a record of incomings and outgoings, bank account/s and access to internet banking services and a petty cash system. Consider whether it would be worthwhile your garden investing in some dedicated accounting software to assist with financial administration tasks. If your garden becomes an incorporated organisation, you will also need to organise annual auditing of your finances.

Be sure to identify clear roles and responsibilities in relation to managing garden funds and assign people to these roles. You might find it helpful to separate an administration role (e.g. Treasurer) from a fundraising role (e.g. Fundraising Coordinator). It might be necessary for people to learn new skills in order to fulfill these roles effectively; factor the time taken for getting up to speed with systems into your planning and ensure you have a back-up person for key tasks.

DEVELOP DIVERSE INCOME STREAMS

The best way that you can ensure your garden has sufficient income to cover your costs is to develop diverse income streams to support the garden. By not relying on one or two sources of income, you are more likely to be able to achieve financial self-sufficiency.

The following list of six potential income streams for community gardens is based on **Our Community's** 'six pillars of fundraising'. For general tips about each funding area, check out:

Our Community (2007). *The Complete Community Fundraising Handbook: How to make the most money ever for your community organisation*. Melbourne: Our Community Pty Ltd. (www.ourcommunity.com.au)

² For more tips on financial administration and management systems, see Claire Nettle (2010).

MEMBERSHIPS

Membership fees can be a reliable source of income for community gardens. In allotment-style gardens, members pay a fee for exclusive use of a small plot of land in the garden. Even in communal or shared gardens, people sometimes pay a fee (normally lower) to be able to garden in communal areas and to have a say in the running of the garden.

SETTING MEMBERSHIP FEES³

It is a good idea to set your fees in relation to your garden costs. Set yourselves a goal for the proportion of the gardening running costs that your membership fees will meet. It is not recommended that you set your membership fees so low that no-one is barred from joining. Instead, it is a good idea to set them at a realistic level so you get some income from those who are prepared and able to pay, and offer assistance to those in real hardship. Some alternatives to fixed fees are:

- Offering a range of ways to pay, e.g. a monthly rate
- Offering discounts if members provide agreed volunteering services
- Have different rates for families, individuals and pensioners
- Consider a 'Friends of the Garden' group, for supporters not directly involved in the garden

WAYS TO INCREASE MEMBERSHIP INCOME

Here are some suggestions for ways to increase your membership income:

- **Review fees** annually to determine whether they need to be increased to better reflect your ongoing costs
- **Recruit** new members to existing membership categories
- Develop **new membership categories** to cater for regular users or supporters of the garden who do not fit into existing categories

Remember that time is required to chase up and process memberships. It might be helpful for one or two people to take responsibility for this task.

CASE STUDY

The Busselton Community Garden has 84 allotments as well as communal areas and currently has five membership categories to cater for different garden users: plot holders (both standard and concession) and non-plot holders (general, family and senior). Fees range from between \$15 to \$55 and membership income currently covers approximately sixty per cent of ongoing garden costs (not including plot and infrastructure maintenance). The garden committee recently reviewed fees and decided to raise them slightly, but is focusing mainly on increasing membership income by recruiting new members.

³ Reproduced from Cultivating Community (2002).

At recent garden events, a dedicated memberships table has been set up at the gate to sign-up new members. In the longer term, the garden plans to construct 16 additional allotments, which will increase the number of plot holder memberships available. The garden committee has also begun asking all people and groups using the garden regularly to become members of the garden. They believe that it makes sense for regular users of the garden to 'give something back' to help sustain the garden financially as this contributes to ensuring the community continues to have access to such a great facility. For example, participants in a 'Mums, Bubs and Grubs' playgroup held weekly at the garden previously at no cost are now being asked to become garden members. The response has been positive; suggesting that regular garden users are happy to make a financial contribution.



Membership stall sign



Advertising plot memberships

DONATIONS

Donations, both large and small, can be an important income stream for community gardens. Aside from government support, “most funding for community organisations comes from individuals. (Government figures suggest that 68% of the money donated to the not-for-profit sector in Australia comes from individuals, compared with 24% from the corporate sector, and about 8% from trusts and foundations”⁴.

MAKING REQUESTS OF MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS

Your current members and supporters have already made some kind of commitment to your garden and will therefore want to see it continue to thrive. Why not make an appeal to your existing supporter base for donations at least once a year?

CASE STUDY

The Busselton Community Garden has come up with a novel idea to attract donations from their supporters. The 'POST-sterity Project' asks people to show their support for the garden by sponsoring a post in the fence around the children's playground – for a \$10 donation you can have your name (or your family's or your garden group's name) recorded on a post for future generations to see.

⁴ Our Community (2007), p. 26.

COLLECTION POINTS FOR DONATIONS

At the Garden

Do you have people visiting and touring your garden? Perhaps you host events where you invite the general public into your garden? Many of these people would be happy to chip in a few dollars in support of your garden; why not set up a collection point for donations at your garden so you won't miss these great opportunities to generate additional funds to support your garden's ongoing maintenance and development?

At Other Locations

An easy way that local businesses and organisations can show their support for your garden is to be a collection point for donations for your group. Why not ask your supporters if they would be willing to have a collection tin for your garden at their reception desk or point of sale?



CASE STUDY

A member of the Busselton Community Garden has constructed a 'wishing well' to collect donations on regular days at the garden and during special events. The wishing well adds an element of fun to the process of collecting donations and, as it's portable, can easily be moved around the garden to wherever there is the most activity.

Busselton Community Garden wishing well

ONLINE DONATIONS

If your garden is an incorporated entity, there is an easy way for you to collect online donations. Our Community offers a free online donation facility for Australian not-for-profit groups through GiveNow.com.au. Registering for this service would mean your garden could take credit card donations seven days a week, 24 hours a day. Our Community does not take a commission or fees for this service. The set-up process is relatively simple; to find out more, check out the Our Community website (www.ourcommunity.com.au/receivedonations).

If your garden does set up an online donations facility, don't forget to promote it at any opportunity. For instance, include a link to the donations site on the home page of your website, add it to your email signature when sending garden-related emails and promote it in your e-newsletter (with a hyperlink directly to the donations site).

TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATIONS

In order for your supporters to be able to claim income tax deductions for donations to your garden, the garden needs to be endorsed as a deductible gift recipient (DGR). Your garden (or the auspicing organisation for your garden, if you have one) would need to apply to the Australian Taxation Office to receive this endorsement. Tax deductibility can make your garden a more attractive prospect for potential donors; however there are strict pre-requisites for DGR endorsement that mean it can be difficult to obtain. For information on eligibility requirements, visit the Australian Taxation Office website (www.ato.gov.au).

SAYING THANK YOU⁵

Don't forget to find ways to say thank you to your donors! Consider sending letters, notes or emails, including acknowledgements in your newsletters or on your website, or inviting donors to your events.

GRANTS

One of the main ways that governments, community and philanthropic organisations and sometimes businesses distribute funds to support community initiatives is through grant funding. Grants are made available via a competitive application process and are generally provided as one-off, time-limited funding tied to the delivery of specific activities and outcomes.

Attracting grant funding for your garden can be another useful way of covering costs, particularly those associated with the initial construction of the garden, the expansion and development of the garden over time and running one-off projects and initiatives that expand the range of activities on offer in your garden or engage new groups from your community.

More and more communities and organisations across Western Australia are recognising the enormous potential for community gardens to be sustainable venues for local community development. In this climate of growing interest, community gardens in WA are experiencing more success in attracting grant funding. In recent years, gardens have pulled in amounts ranging from \$500 to \$500,000.

GRANTS AVAILABLE FOR COMMUNITY GARDENS IN WA

Community gardens provide productive, high quality, creative and accessible open spaces in local communities and deliver a range of benefits in physical and nutritional health, mental health and wellbeing, environmental sustainability, food security, social inclusion, education and training, economic development, cultural vitality and community resilience. Whilst gardening is a focus, community gardens are generally multi-purpose community hubs for a range of activities including education and training, playgroups, arts and creative activities, preparing and sharing food, community events and celebrations, and social enterprise.

The diverse range of activities and potential benefits on offer in community gardens, means that gardens potentially 'fit' into many grant categories – from waterwise gardening to positive ageing, waste management to unemployment training, tackling obesity to community art. This can be both a blessing and a challenge for your garden; it means you will need to spend some time identifying which grant opportunities might be relevant to community gardening, as well as weighing up the potential benefits of different grants versus the 'costs' in terms of time and energy associated with applying for them. To give you a taste of the diversity of grants you could apply for, here is a selection of those that community gardens in WA have been successful in obtaining in recent years:

Local Councils

- City of Swan – Swan Community Funding Scheme (Collaborative Grant)
- City of Subiaco – Community Development Grants

⁵ Our Community (2007), p. 40

State Government

- Lotterywest – Project Grants and other categories
- Department of Environment – Community Grants Scheme (waste-related projects)
- South West Development Commission – Regional Development Schemes and Royalties for Regions

Federal Government

- Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) – Investing in Community Education and Training (ICET)
- Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs – Volunteers Grants Program

Community Organisations

- Australian Open Garden Scheme – Community Gardens Grants
- Community Arts Network WA (CAN WA) – Catalyst Community Arts Fund (Create category)
- Council on the Ageing WA (COTA) in partnership with Lotterywest and Department of Communities – Seniors Week Community Grants Program

Philanthropic Organisations

- Ian Potter Foundation

The WA Department of Local Government produces a useful online directory of grants for communities and local governments in regional and metropolitan WA (visit www.grantsdirectory.dlg.wa.gov.au). Our Community's monthly EasyGrants e-newsletter is another good source of up-to-date information on current grant opportunities. For a low annual subscription fee, you can have someone else do the work of finding out what grants are available to WA gardens. For more information on EasyGrants, visit the Our Community website (www.ourcommunity.com.au).

TIPS FOR OBTAINING GRANT FUNDING

The crucial first step in obtaining grant funding is to check that your garden meets the eligibility criteria for the grant. Some funders for instance will only grant money to organisations that are incorporated. Philanthropic organisations such as the Ian Potter Foundation require that organisations have both Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) and Tax Concession Charity (TCC) status. If in any doubt, ask! Make sure your valuable time is not wasted on grants your garden is not eligible for.

For other useful tips on obtaining grant funding, see:

claire nettle (2010). *Growing Community: Starting and nurturing community gardens*. Adelaide: Health SA, Government of South Australia and Community and Neighbourhood Houses and Centres Association Inc. (www.canh.asn.au/projects/community-gardens.aspx)

Our Community (2007). *The Complete Community Fundraising Handbook: How to make the most money ever for your community organisation*. Melbourne: Our Community Pty Ltd. (www.ourcommunity.com.au)

PARTNERSHIPS

Community gardens can enter into partnerships to help meet their funding needs (note that whilst the focus here is on financial benefits, partnerships can also generate many other benefits for gardens). The wide appeal of community gardens means a growing number of governments, community organisations and businesses in WA are actively seeking out opportunities to partner with gardens. There has really been no better time for community gardens to secure productive partnerships to help them survive and thrive.

In this favourable climate, it's important to remember that it takes a fair amount of time and a strong commitment to make partnerships work. Before your garden rushes into the first partnership opportunity that comes along, make sure you check that the conditions for an effective partnership are in place (see Conditions for Effective Partnerships section for details) and that your garden committee and/or membership are willing and able to invest the necessary time and energy into making the partnership work. It's a good idea to have some agreed processes in place for how your garden will weigh up and make decisions about potential partnership opportunities. You might find it helpful to come up with your own checklist for assessing opportunities, e.g. must help achieve the goals of the garden; must bring in income or at least not leave the garden 'out of pocket'; must engage groups that the garden wants to engage and so on. Be prepared to say no to potential partnerships that won't work well or won't deliver sufficient benefits to your garden and your community.

Community gardens have a lot to offer potential partners; be careful not to sell yourself short in any partnership arrangement. You should expect in a partnership that both parties will contribute and both parties will benefit⁶. Make sure that your garden is on an equal footing with any partners and that your contribution is sufficiently valued. Historically, many community gardens in WA have opened their gates to any worthy organisations or groups who want to make use of the space, without asking for much in return. Whilst this approach is generous and inclusive, it can undermine the ongoing viability of the garden. Your garden will serve your community best if it survives and flourishes and therefore it is important to identify the contributions that partnering organisations or groups can make to the garden (e.g. through financial support, volunteer labour, pro bono expertise, useful connections and so on).

CONDITIONS FOR EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS⁷

- Partners have a **shared interest or concern**
- The partnership has a **clear purpose**; partners have a **common understanding** of what the partnership is about
- Partners are interested in and able to work together; there is a **good relationship** between one or more key people
- Partners believe the **partnership brings benefit and real value** to their existing activities
- There is **recognition and acknowledgement of any differences** in the contexts that the partners work within (i.e. if partners come from the government or private sectors there is likely to be differences between them and gardens in terms of areas of skills and knowledge, resources, priorities, timelines and so on)
- There are **agreed and effective communication processes** put in place for the partnership

⁶ Our Community, p. 53.

⁷ This list of conditions has been compiled from Frank and Smith (2006), VicHealth (n.d.) and Mitchell and Goodall (2010).

- There is **regular feedback** between partners about the progress, glitches, achievements and next steps for the partnership

PARTNERING WITH LOCAL COUNCILS

Community gardens can help Local Councils to achieve their strategic aims and Councils can play a key role in ensuring community gardens are viable, so there is a natural fit between them. Community gardens benefit from developing strong, positive relationships with both Local Councillors and relevant Council staff. Alongside grant funding opportunities, a number of Local Councils in WA have provided funds to support the establishment of community gardens through their normal budgetary processes. Councils are increasingly looking for ways to standardise processes for deciding how to support gardens in their local area and for formalising partnership arrangements with gardens through Memoranda of Understanding and licensing agreements.

PARTNERING WITH STATE AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The interest and willingness of government agencies to partner with community gardens in WA is growing, as it becomes increasingly evident that gardens can assist governments to meet their goals in various policy and program areas. The unique, versatile, inclusive and therapeutic nature of garden environments makes them well-suited to being used by:

- **Social and public housing providers** as hubs to foster a sense of community in social and public housing areas;
- **Education providers** as learning spaces;
- **Employment support / training providers** as sites for practical projects to build job skills; and
- **Disability and health services** as relaxing, community-based settings where people with disabilities or mental health issues can engage in meaningful activities.

If your garden is considering partnering with government agencies, make sure you explore whether it is appropriate for them to make a financial contribution towards the garden. Some community gardens in the UK for example have set up service agreements (or contracts) with government health agencies which mean the agencies pay a fee per person for each of their clients that attend gardens for therapeutic benefits.

For more tips and examples specifically on community gardens partnering effectively with education providers, see the *Growing Education: Community gardens building effective partnerships with education providers* resource that is available to download from the Community Gardens WA website (www.communitygardenswa.org.au).

CASE STUDY

The local TAFE runs horticulture classes at the Busselton Community Garden. To date, the benefits of this partnership for the garden have come from the fact that it brings new people to the garden (increasing the garden's supporter base) and that students work in the garden as part of the classes, including pruning fruit trees and doing general maintenance and repairs. In recognition of the need for additional funds to cover ongoing costs to maintain the garden and hence ensure it is available for use by learning organisations, the garden has begun discussions with TAFE about paying a fee for use of the garden as a venue for future horticulture courses.

PARTNERING WITH BUSINESSES

Sponsorship

One model for partnering with businesses is through sponsorship⁸. Your garden could seek sponsorship funds from businesses, to support the garden generally or specific garden initiatives and events. Perhaps businesses could advertise on your garden website or sponsor the running of a relevant event at the garden (e.g. a water tank supply business could sponsor a waterwise gardening workshop).

It is important to remember that any funding your garden obtains through business sponsorship is not 'money for nothing'. What you are bringing to the partnership is the value of your garden's 'brand'. The image and reputation of your garden is important because it is closely connected to the level of support your garden currently enjoys from the community and other partners. When considering entering into sponsorship arrangements, be careful not to underestimate the value of your brand and choose business partnerships that will preserve or enhance your garden's good image.

CASE STUDY

Busselton Community Garden has recently had success with a new sponsorship initiative. The garden has approached local businesses to sponsor a page in a recipe book (local/seasonal) that the garden is producing for sale. The recipe book offers the opportunity for businesses and community organisations to have their logo and details featured on a page for \$50 each. The aim is for the sponsorship to cover the cost of producing the recipe books so that any income generated from sales will be returned to the garden as profit. Whilst an initial email-based sponsorship campaign did not generate a lot of interest, going door to door to local businesses in the main street has been effective in securing sponsors. Local children drew pictures to be included in the recipe book at a recent school holiday activity held at the garden. It's hoped that this will encourage their parents to buy copies of the recipe book once it's launched.



Cook book sponsorship proposal

⁸ Our Community (2007), p. 53.

Corporate Social Responsibility

Another model for partnering with business is Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)⁹. Some businesses (particularly larger ones) might be interested in developing a partnership with your garden that involves providing longer-term support rather than contributing specific funds. For example, businesses could offer your garden their expertise (e.g. legal advice) on a pro bono basis, loan you resources (e.g. marquees for use at your events), encourage donations (e.g. by including your garden in their employee donations scheme) or provide volunteer labour (e.g. organising for employees to volunteer in the garden for a day as part as a corporate team building / wellness exercise).

Property Developers

Property developers in WA have begun showing an interest in supporting community gardens in urban development areas. If there are developers working in your local area they may be interested in providing funding or other assistance to support your community gardening initiative.

PARTNERING WITH COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

Community organisations that are funded by governments to provide education, employment and training and disability and health services might also be interested in partnering with your garden to assist them with meeting the needs of their clients. For example, Nulsen Haven (an organisation that provides support to people with a range of disabilities which includes intellectual, physical and acquired brain injuries) host a weekly art-based program at Perth City Farm for some of their clients. For these types of potential partnerships too, it would be appropriate to explore whether there needs to be a financial contribution made towards meeting the ongoing costs of sustaining the garden. One way that this commonly occurs in allotment-style gardens, is that community organisations take out a plot membership for use by their clients.

EARNED INCOME

There are three ways¹⁰ that your garden can earn income directly, to help meet garden costs.

CHARGING FOR WHAT YOU DO

The first possibility is charging for what you do. If your garden is offering activities to the community alongside making space available to garden (for example running community education workshops or conducting tours of the garden for school and other groups), you might want to consider charging a fee to participants. As a minimum, it is a good idea to ensure you at least cover any costs associated with running activities; otherwise you will need to fundraise in some other way to cover these costs. Examples of workshops run by community gardens include worm farming, organic vegetable gardening, permaculture, bee keeping, chook care and healthy seasonal cooking.

⁹ Our Community (2007), p. 53.

¹⁰ Our Community (2007), 82-83.

CASE STUDY

Busselton Community Garden runs a wide range of workshops and events in the garden. They have found that kid-based school holiday activities are the most successful in terms of participant numbers and that people are happy to pay for the workshops. A recent 'Art in the Garden' workshop attracted 43 children and, after expenses, raised \$135 of additional funds to go towards covering the ongoing costs of the garden.

CHARGING FOR WHAT YOU HAVE

The second opportunity for earning income directly is charging for what you have. Take a look around your community garden – are there things on offer that people might be willing to pay to make use of? Some gardens in WA make spaces and facilities available for hire, including buildings, outdoor gathering spaces and community kitchens. Perhaps your garden would make a great setting for a sustainable-themed wedding or the set for a new local film? When considering a policy of making spaces and facilities at your garden available for hire, make sure you assess the potential impact this might have on access to your garden by members.



CASE STUDY

The Busselton Community Garden has recently installed a wood-fired pizza oven adjoining their pergola area. The garden committee is looking at the possibility of making the pizza oven space available for hire for events or parties.

Busselton Community Garden pizza oven

SALES TO THE PUBLIC

The third possibility for earning income is making sales to the public.

Products Related to Your Garden

Many community gardens have successfully raised funds by selling goods produced within the garden. Some common garden products include worm juice, worms, seedlings, garden produce, seeds, eggs, honey and preserves. In choosing to sell products from your garden, it is a good idea to consider whether you will be going into direct competition with other businesses in your local area and how this might impact on levels of community support for the garden (this becomes more pertinent the higher the volume of your expected sales).

Unrelated Products

Your garden could raise money by selling products not related to the garden (e.g. traditional fundraising initiatives like cake stalls, lamington drives, chocolate sales, sausage sizzles). Lockridge Community Garden, for example, fires up their pizza oven during events and sells delicious wood-fired pizzas to an appreciative public. Holding raffles can also be a low-effort way of raising funds for your garden. For some raffles you will need a permit, so make sure you investigate permit requirements.

CASE STUDY

Busselton Community Garden has recently had fundraising success with a raffle. One of the members donated a cookbook for the first prize and the second and third prizes came from the garden – a growing tub of herbs and a basket of honey and relishes. The group found out that they could run an ongoing raffle (as opposed to a 'drawn the same day' raffle) without a permit, as long as the total value of the prizes is less than \$200. One of the members created a template to print raffle tickets and some of the tickets were able to be printed for free at the office of the local member of parliament. The garden was able to raise almost \$600 through the raffle, with minimal upfront costs.

Social Enterprises

Some larger-scale community gardens establish social enterprises to help build financial sustainability. Social enterprises are commercial initiatives that have social aims (for example a cleaning company that employs people with a disability or an op shop staffed by volunteers that directs all profits to supporting charitable work). In a garden setting, some common social enterprises include plant nurseries, markets, cafes and education and garden consultancy services.

Launching and running a successful social enterprise is challenging work. Social enterprises are neither social programs nor enterprises in the normal sense; they are a hybrid of these two, very different, initiatives. Managing social enterprises therefore requires expertise in both areas – social programs and business – as well as the ability to balance the often competing social and business aims. If your garden is interested in setting up a social enterprise as a way of funding ongoing garden costs, make sure you research your idea well before diving in. As with any fundraising idea, it is important to weigh up the income potential of your social enterprise initiative with a realistic assessment of the work involved in making it happen; make sure the benefits outweigh the costs and that the garden will get a good return on any time and energy invested into the initiative. For some useful information on what's involved in running social enterprises, check out www.socialtraders.com.au and www.torontoenterprisefund.ca.



CASE STUDY

Busselton Community Garden is currently exploring opportunities to establish social enterprises, to contribute to raising funds to meet other social goals. One opportunity is to run a fortnightly local produce market at the garden. The initial idea came from the Economic Development Officer of the local shire

who sees the market as a way for local growers and producers to build their businesses. Up to 20 stallholders pay \$10 fortnightly for a stall and the community garden is also able to sell garden products at the market. The shire is providing some support through sourcing possible stallholders and assisting with advertising (including the logo).

SPECIAL EVENTS

Gardens hold events for a number of reasons – to celebrate successes, to engage the broader community in the garden, to promote the garden and to offer activities of value to the community (e.g. educational workshops and arts activities). Special events at your garden can also offer a good opportunity for fundraising through a variety of methods, including charging attendance fees, collecting donations, selling products during the event and signing up new members. If your garden runs a social enterprise (such as a plant nursery, market or café), hosting special events such as festivals can also help to generate additional business for these enterprises.



The types of events you could hold in your garden are really only limited by your imagination. Some events that have been held in WA community gardens include: annual open days; festivals; garden busy bees; equinox and solstice celebrations; harvest feasts; car boot sales; art exhibitions; theatre, dance and music performances; twilight markets; and full moon drumming sessions.

Fairtrade Fiesta event held at Perth City Farm

CASE STUDY

Busselton Community Garden recently developed an events planner that maps out the events to be held by the garden throughout the year. Highlighted in the planner is a clear indication of the goal/s for each event (e.g. community participation, fundraising, membership drive, volunteer drive, social event). In addition, a specific fundraising target is established for any events designed to raise funds. The planner makes it easier for the garden committee to identify which events bring the most benefits (including financial benefits). This can be helpful when deciding where to invest the most volunteer time and energy.

Here's an example of what an events planner could look like:

DATE	ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	PROMOTION DETAILS	GOALS
Saturday 20 th March	Autumn Equinox 6pm – 9pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plot holders busy bee Bonfire Pizza making Live music and fire twirling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusion in local school newsletters Media release to local papers Advert in community notices of local papers Poster in community locations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage members Engage community Social event for members Raise profile Raise funds (Target: \$150)

DATE	ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	PROMOTION DETAILS	GOALS
Thursday 8 th April	Art in the garden workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School holiday activity for children and families Children drawing pictures for fundraising cookbook Pizza making with kids 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Media release to local papers Email invitation to members and supporters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fun garden activity for children Drawings for fundraising cookbook Engage community Raise profile Raise funds (Target: \$100)
Saturday 18 th April	Taste of Harvest 6pm – 7.30pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cooking and tasting of pumpkin soup and wood fired bread 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Email invitation to members and plot holders only 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social event for garden members
Sunday 1 st August	Sausage Sizzle at Bunnings 9am-2pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sell hot dogs outside Bunnings store 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise funds (Target: \$600)
Wednesday 22 nd September	Spring Equinox 9am-1pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plant and seed swap and sell 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advertise to members & community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage community Raise funds (Target: \$150)

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