



# Footpath Gardens Policy A08/0004

“Improve the quality of public areas and the urban environment and promote social cohesion by ensuring they are clean, green and well maintained with improved design and functionality”

– Waverley Together Strategic Plan

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## **1. Introduction**

Footpath gardens are plantings on the nature strip designed to bring beauty to Waverley's streetscapes. Council wants to encourage these gardens because they make the area more welcoming, increase the amount of greenery in Waverley and foster a sense of local civic pride.

## **2. Purpose of this policy**

This document sets out the policy for the construction and approval of footpath gardens. It outlines how Council can support residents in planting a garden and increasing Civic Pride in Waverley.

The footpath garden application form outlines the procedures for this program.

## **3. Scope of this policy**

Residents may construct a garden on Council land between the owner's property line and the kerb, provided that it adheres to this policy and relevant procedures. Street trees are addressed by the Tree Management Plan and are not covered by this policy.

## **4. Background of this policy**

There is currently a process in place to allow residents to plant a footpath garden, however a revised policy is required to encourage suitable planting, limit the development of unsafe gardens and simplify the approval process.

## **5. Policy objectives**

The main objectives of this policy are:

1. To create beautiful, safe streetscapes
2. To improve Council support for residents in designing and planting footpath gardens
3. To increase civic pride and create a sense of place
4. To provide more greenery and habitat for native animals and birds

## **6. Policy statement**

Council wants to generate civic pride and help residents get involved in making Waverley a more beautiful, appealing place. Council also wants to encourage residents to plant more greenery in the space available to them and above all to ensure that footpath gardens are safe for residents, pedestrians and motorists.

## **7. The benefits of footpath gardens**

Beautiful footpath gardens increase civic pride, make walking more appealing and provide a gardening experience for residents with little or no garden. With the right selection of plants, footpath gardens can also offer food and habitat for native animals.

In addition, footpath gardens can replace grass nature strips which are often unmown as many residents living on small blocks do not own a lawn mower.

## **8. The challenges involved with footpath gardens**

There are a number of challenges with footpath gardens. These include:

- Ensuring that sightlines for motorists and pedestrians are retained
- Preventing the creation of trip hazards in the form of inappropriate edging, plants growing over the footpath and so forth
- Risk of damaging underground utilities
- Reducing the risk of poorly maintained footpath gardens because residents change circumstances or move house
- Addressing the varying types of footpath across the LGA, including large grassed nature strips, fully concrete pavements, narrow or sloping nature strips and so forth
- Effective communication across relevant Council departments, such as Parks and Open Space Operations and Technical Services to ensure that footpath gardens are promoted correctly and consistently
- Managing the Development Application (DA) process to better inform developers and renovators about footpath gardens as an alternative to a turfed nature strip. The Footpath Garden guidelines and application forms are to be included in the DA pack to better inform developers of this option.

## **9. Responsibilities of residents regarding footpath gardens**

Residents are responsible for:

- Correctly applying for a footpath garden
- Providing all plants, materials and labour
- Ensuring plants from their footpath garden do not grow over the footpath or road
- Allowing enough space for their own and their neighbour's rubbish bins
- Allowing enough room for car passengers to alight

- Removal of all rubbish and excess soil
- Maintaining the garden in a neat and tidy manner and making sure that it does not grow higher than one metre, thereby ensuring clear sightlines for motorists and pedestrians.

## **10. Responsibilities of Waverley Council**

Council is responsible for:

- Assessing footpath garden applications in a timely manner and to a safe standard
- Providing free horticultural advice on one occasion, and providing a suggested native planting list

Council is not responsible for maintaining footpath gardens or providing any materials, however we can supply mulch if we have a surplus and enough time to deliver.

If plants such as herbs are in the public domain, Council cannot prevent people from harvesting them

Council has the right to remove a footpath garden if it is not reasonably maintained or poses a safety issue

## **11. Policy review date**

This policy should be reviewed every two years from the date of adoption or whenever there are changes to any of our relevant legislation or policies.

## **12. Related documents**

Waverley Council Management Plan  
Waverley Together Strategic Plan  
Tree Management Plan