



# Pocket Parks Volunteer Program Policy A03/0096

“Create open and green spaces that are clean,  
green and well maintained with improved design  
and function”

– Waverley Together Strategic Plan

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## **1. Introduction**

A number of local residents have contacted Council to indicate their interest in adopting small parks and reserves in their neighbourhoods. As part of Council's Civic Pride Program, we want to support volunteers in maintaining, enhancing and protecting pocket parks, and in making community connections with other residents.

This policy and the accompanying procedures describe how to provide training, advice and guidelines to ensure that volunteers are well supported and that all works are aligned with Council policies and objectives as well as community expectations.

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

This document sets out the policy for the participation of volunteers in helping maintain pocket parks and in generating Civic Pride in Waverley. It outlines the program's parameters and defines the rights and responsibilities of volunteers and Waverley Council. A procedures document accompanies this policy.

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

This policy applies to all pocket parks of approximately 1000 square metres situated on Waverley Council land, and to all volunteers participating in the Pocket Parks Program. It does not apply to large nature strips and the Parks and Open Space Operations (POSO) must recognise the site as a park.

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

Pocket parks cover areas of approximately 1000 square metres or less, and generally consist of grass, pathways, plantings, seats and occasionally picnic tables and play equipment. Local people tend to use them most and often travel to these parks on foot. Because they are small, pocket parks tend to invite passive recreation and often receive pedestrian through traffic. There are approximately 40 pocket parks in the Waverley area.

Pocket parks are beneficial for our community because they:

- improve the look and feel of our suburbs
- provide recreation opportunities
- increase shade for pedestrians
- support native wildlife
- provide an outdoor space for apartment dwellers
- can increase property prices for nearby residences.

Despite their benefits, small parks require more intensive maintenance relative to large parks because their small size

prevents Council from using efficient systems such as tractor mowing or automatic watering systems. Pocket parks receive minimal maintenance due to resource limitations, and larger parks command greater priority because they generally receive more use.

If Council and community volunteers work together, we can help make our pocket parks beautiful, bio-diverse areas of community space that offer tranquillity and greenery in our highly developed environment.

## **5. Policy objectives**

The main objectives of this policy are:

1. To facilitate community participation in caring for pocket parks
2. To establish a process so that volunteers can work without supervision
3. To encourage community connections and neighbourliness
4. To improve the amenity of pocket parks

## **6. Policy statement**

Council wants to generate civic pride by encouraging community participation and ownership of our green spaces. Council wishes to work with the community to improve our environment for the benefit of our residents, flora and fauna.

## **7. The benefits of the Pocket Parks Program**

This policy has been produced after consultation with various Government and not-for-profit organisations. The objectives of Council and the Community Pocket Parks Program are as follows:

- To foster civic pride and help reduce vandalism, littering and rubbish dumping, damage or removal of native vegetation and weed invasion
- To provide the opportunity for people to make community connections and contribute to decision making in their local area
- To improve the amenity of pocket parks without altering their essential character
- To encourage community participation in managing and caring for community land
- To control and eradicate weed species and control soil erosion by reducing bare ground
- To improve habitat corridors by planting native species
- To provide an opportunity for residents living in apartments and high density housing to enjoy gardening and healthy outdoor activities

- To create a complementary relationship with existing Council programs such as Greenlinks, the Tree Management Plan and Parks Management Plan

## **8. Establishment of Pocket Park groups**

People interested in joining the Pocket Parks Program must contact the Civic Pride Coordinator and fill out an application form.

Council aims to support all established pocket parks groups equally, so we need to manage new applications carefully to make sure we do not over-stretch our resources.

To ensure that resources are used most efficiently, the following criteria will determine the priority of sites:

- Whether or not there are available resources in the program at the time of application. Volunteer groups may be put on a waiting list if there is currently no vacancy for a new group
- Location and the amount of use the park receives
- Level of public interest and the number of volunteers
- Potential social benefits to the community involved
- Potential environmental benefits
- The condition of the park in question
- Contribution of the project to local and regional environmental management priorities such as Greenlinks or the creation of habitat corridors

## **9. Responsibilities of participants in the Pocket Parks Program**

Volunteer groups must write and carry out an annual Action Plan to improve and maintain the park. Groups must work unsupervised and report and communicate regularly with Council. All volunteers must adhere to the Pocket Parks Program procedures document which guides the types of work permitted within the parameters of the program.

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

Council will abide by our Principles of Volunteering and manage the Program to support volunteers without directly supervising them.

Council has the right to cancel or suspend volunteer groups if they do not comply with the policy and procedure documents.

## **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 Volunteering Strategy 2001