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**BOURKE STREET COMMUNITY GARDEN
MANAGEMENT PLAN**

BOURKE STREET COMMUNITY GARDEN

Management plan



March 2016

Our vision

Our community garden is a not for profit organisation and a place for people to gather and garden in a peaceful environment. We are a group of local residents, of varying gardening skills, wanting to grow organic vegetables, herbs and fruit. As a group we come together to exchange skills and share knowledge. We hope the garden will be able to increase in size and membership over the coming years and that it will become self-sustaining and self-managed. All are welcome to join us.

Objectives of the garden;

- A place to grow organic herbs, vegetables, fruit and edible & medicinal flowers
- A place to develop and build a strong healthy community
- A place of learning and increasing new skills
- A place where nature meets the concrete
- A friendly place where knowledge and produce are shared

The broader community can benefit from our garden by becoming a member and participating in growing produce. They can also support the group by attending our monthly gatherings and by becoming a Facebook friend.

The City of Sydney has completed stage 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the garden design. We are proposing to extend the garden, which will include the installation of a chicken coop and extension of the garden facilities to the north side of the entrance path.

Our objectives will be achieved through communication with existing members, by increasing garden membership and by communicating with our neighbours and local community. Our group will follow and update our management plan and apply for additional funding through grants to fund projects.

Garden site

The Bourke St Community Garden was initiated as a part of the Bourke St Park landscape upgrade by the City of Sydney in 2011. This consisted of the construction of a high surrounding fence, picnic tables, an entrance pathway, pergola, toilet and storage shed.

Our garden started in March 2012 with an onsite community workshop which local residents and staff from the City of Sydney attended. This provided an opportunity for local residents to suggest ideas and to get involved in the design of the garden.

The existing garden is 235m² in size and is located at 109 – 115 Bourke St Woolloomooloo on Roads and Maritime Services land. The City of Sydney leases this land and is responsible for maintaining a current Public Liability Certificate for the Garden site. The Bourke St Park and Garden are bordered by Bourke St on the eastern side and the Eastern Distributor on the western side. The train line viaduct passes overhead.

The area is surrounded by residential properties, cafes, hotels, art galleries, back packer accommodation and businesses and two new apartment blocks are currently under construction in Bourke St.

The Community Garden is surrounded by a 1.8m high fence with two locked gates, one for pedestrian access and the other, a double gate, allows access for vehicle deliveries. Both padlocks have combination codes which are given to all members after Induction, to the City of Sydney and to the Police.

The garden is a joint venture between the Bourke St Community Garden and the City of Sydney Council, who gave approval for use of the space, donated materials and constructed the garden beds. Without the generosity of the City of Sydney we would not have had access to this land and we are very grateful for this opportunity and for

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their ongoing support. Our contact at the City of Sydney is the Community Gardens and Volunteer Coordinator Raewyn Broadfoot.

Our group received a grant through the City of Sydney 2012/2013 Local Action Plan Grants programme 4th allocation. This Grant enabled our group to establish the garden and to purchase materials and equipment.

Our garden is an ideal site for a community garden with the following site selection criteria:

Landowners' consent

Our group has the approval of the City to garden on Council owned land and land leased from RMS.

Location

Our garden is located in a park between Bourke St and the western distributor in Woolloomooloo. The Park has a train overpass viaduct.

Community capacity

Currently our garden has 16 financial members, 12 non financial members and one prospective member participating in the garden. We also enjoy excellent support from the local community. We have developed partnerships with TAFE outreach and Oznam learning centre and are actively encouraging more residents to participate while also developing further partnerships with local businesses in the area.

Safety

The site has 1.8 high fence and local community surveillance which reduces vandalism and antisocial behaviour in the garden. The gardeners monitor the site on a daily basis for risks or hazards which could cause injuries or harm to gardeners or visitors.

Accessibility

The garden provides access to everyone in the community ensuring all have the option of participating in the group or experiencing the joy of walking through the garden. Our group has provided access to a garden bed for people in wheelchairs or those with walking frames. The site has two gates at the northern end of the main entrance for large deliveries of soil or mulch.

Solar access

The site is north facing and has trees and residential properties on the southern side which protect it from the cooler southerly weather. The site is lined with trees on the western side which help protect the garden from dry westerly winds.

Size

The garden was developed in stages 1 to 4 on the southern side of the entrance pathway and is 240m² in size. The proposed garden extension on the northern side of the entrance path is 417m² in size. The total size will be 657m² in size.

Water

The site has a combination of mains town water and rainwater, which is harvested from the overhead viaduct into 3 x large water tanks.

Soil contamination

The group grows produce plants in raised garden beds a minimum of 450mm in height above ground to reduce the likelihood of soil contamination

Multiple uses

Bourke St Park is divided into two sections by a high fence. At the front of the park there is a grassed area, fitness station, public toilet and bench seating. Behind the fence is the Bourke St Community Garden which comprises of a shed, bench and water basin, garden beds, compost bins, worm farms and picnic tables.

Existing features

The site is neighboured by residential properties and local businesses and has a train viaduct which passes overhead. The sandstone herb garden was built from pieces of sandstone from a property in the local area.

Land suitability

The site is reasonably flat with a slight slope towards the North West side of the site. This will assist with drainage of any excess rainfall.

Site Management

Our group planned a community garden with garden beds, composting system including worm farms and an herb garden. The theme of our garden is where the Country meets the City to include, timber, metal and greenery to soften the concrete viaduct and to decrease the noise of the traffic on the eastern distributor.

The City of Sydney Council redeveloped this area through a parks upgrade in 2011. This included the installation of the 1.8 m surrounding fence, a public toilet and a shed for storage of garden tools and materials. The Park electricity meter is also housed in the shed.

Garden beds

The construction of the garden beds was completed in stages. Stage one was the relocation of the sandstone blocks to the southern end of the site. After the landscape design was completed stage two commenced with installation of pre made galvanised corrugated planters. These are for individual plots and shared gardens.

Stage one – contractor relocates sandstone blocks and constructs a square herb garden in July 2012

Stage two - installed pre-fabricated planters in September 2012

4 x oval galvanised planters 2400mm x 1000mm x 450mm

4 x round galvanised planters 1000mm x 450mm

Stage three - in January 2013 contractor builds four garden planter beds. Using a combination of eco timber and corrugated iron, these are 3800mm length x 650mm height x 1200mm wide in size.

Stage four - constructed in August 2013

4 x round galvanised planters 1000mm x 450mm

Garden extension – proposal to install:

4 x combination of eco timber and corrugated iron, these are 3800mm length x 650mm height x 1200mm wide in size.

6 x oval galvanised planters 2400mm x 1000mm x 450mm

12 x round galvanised planters 1000mm x 450mm

6 x planter tubs 800mm x 500mm

3 x compost soil bays

1 x metal shed

Native bees & hives and a Chicken coop with live chickens – *proposal as per 2015/16 Matching Grant Application.*

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Any additional garden beds, plots or structures will need to be approved by the committee and the City of Sydney

Sustainable materials – The sandstone was excavated from a local property in the area. The Eco timber is ACQ Arsenic free timber.

Garden tools and storage - As a part of the park upgrade the City of Sydney constructed a lock up shed to house the electricity meter and our garden tools and materials. Proposal of additional shed as a part of the garden extension to store the materials.

Accessibility - The provision of the timber/corrugated garden beds at 650mm in height is ideal for people who prefer to garden standing. It is recommended to have access to at least one garden bed for those members who are in a wheelchair or use a walking frame. Our designated plot is located just off the decomposed granite entrance path.

The garden has a 1.8m high fence along its western/Bourke St side and two padlocked gates. The storage shed also has a code lock. All new members are provided the codes to the locks. Various City of Sydney staff and local Police also have these codes. These codes can be changed at any time at the discretion of the Committee. Members, City of Sydney and the Police will be notified of any code changes.

We have monthly Garden Gatherings, advertised on the external blackboard, when the public are welcome to visit and participate.

Managing organic waste – Members are encouraged to bring their green waste from home. This is added to garden clippings (no weeds, seeds or diseased pieces) in one of our compost bins or worm farms. The compost bins are aerated weekly and the organic material used on the garden beds. The compost bins and worm farms are located on the southern side of the garden, under the Casuarina trees.

Garden maintenance - All gardeners are expected to keep the area clean and tidy. All rubbish is collected by members and removed from site. If a gardener is on holidays or sick they are asked to please organise another member to take over any designated responsibilities.

If a gardener does not maintain their garden plot then they will be notified of this and given the opportunity to address the issue. If they do not respond in 3 weeks, or correct the issue their plot may be reallocated to another member. If you have a change of circumstances and cannot attend the garden for a period of time, please advise the Group Coordinator so your plot can be reassigned temporarily or permanently, depending on circumstances. If a plot is abandoned for more than 4 weeks the group Coordinator will contact the member to find out if they are still interested in retaining their garden plot.

All members are encouraged to attend the monthly Garden Gatherings, 4 per year are mandatory.

It is important to register every visit to the garden as this is an integral part of reporting to the City of Sydney as well as to any future sponsor or funding bodies. Every hour of your time is valued at \$25 and showcases the use of the garden.

Needles – All members are instructed on the safe method of removal of needles found in the garden. Equipment to remove and store these needles are placed in the storage shed. Alternatively members can contact the needle **clean up hotline on 1800 633 353**, the phone number is on the noticeboard in the garden shed.

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Garden methods and resources - Our garden group is comprised of a diverse mix of local community residents who are passionate about growing organic produce. The garden beds comprise of 50% allocated allotment style and 50% communal plots. There is a communal herb garden for everyone to harvest produce. These garden beds are sufficient for the existing members, but we would like to have the opportunity to expand to adjoining land which is currently vacant.

Our members have varying levels of gardening expertise. All are encouraged to share their skills so that we can all benefit from new ideas, knowledge and methods.

Garden tools and materials – Our group is happy to loan tools and materials amongst our gardeners on an honour system - items borrowed must be returned within a considerate timeframe. Any tools broken or lost whilst on loan must be reported to the Group Coordinator. Materials purchased by the City of Sydney are for the Community Garden only and must remain onsite.

Organic gardening – It is a priority for the garden to be organic and to only use organic products. TAFE outreach has carried out a number of workshops on site to educate members in the process of organic gardening techniques and how to use natural methods to achieve the best sustainable results.

Garden planting. - At the monthly gathering, members will discuss suitable crops to be planted each season. Crops are harvested at any time by members from their own allocated plots. When harvesting from communal plots please remember this produce is for everyone and is shared amongst all.

Garden Crops - the main crops grown are easily maintained and are quick growing, such as salad leaves. The site does not allow for crops such as pumpkin, which requires a large area in a communal plot thus sacrificing the plot for other general produce. We grow only organic vegetables, fruit and herbs; medicinal and edible flowers and bush tucker.

Watering roster - this has been drawn up to ensure that the entire garden is watered. Three allocated people are given a day each week that they will water all plots, including individual plots (unless advised otherwise) on a needs basis. Three water tanks for rainwater collection, located at the northern end of the park, provide water to the garden in addition to mains water.

Composting system – a roster has been drawn up to ensure that the compost containers and worm farms are correctly maintained. A workshop has been carried out on site to ensure that this occurs. New members are encouraged to attend a composting workshop with the City to learn more about composting.

Odours, noise and vermin – all members are to ensure the garden is kept free of any material that could cause odours or vermin. We have established good contact with neighbours, many of whom are Garden members. Garden noise is minimal & not a concern.

Structures - At present we have a shed to store tools and materials, three fixed outdoor picnic tables, landscaped edging that can be used as seating and a pergola with lighting along the entrance path. All have been provided by City of Sydney.

Children – We welcome children to visit and be involved in our garden. We require any child under the age of 18 years of age to be supervised by a parent or guardian.

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Animals and native bees – We are considering the proposal of chickens and native bees in our garden. We hope all members will be involved in the care of the chickens and will have a designated person who will be responsible for them. We hope to have native bees on site soon. The placement of the chicken coop and native bee hives have been indicated on the updated site plan.

Communication and promotion

Communication is very important to our group and is why we have chosen to meet monthly - to encourage open discussion of any issues or concerns that may arise. Meeting minutes will be forwarded to all members who have email and copies will be kept onsite.

Any promotional information and/or onsite visits by the City of Sydney Community Garden Volunteer Coordinator will be documented by her and forwarded to the Garden Coordinator who will forward same to garden members.

Social media is available to any members who wish to participate, but will not be relied on as the only method of communication.

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Bourke-Street-Community-Garden/194166477430692>

Media and sponsorship - Engaging with the media will be determined on a case by case by the basic by committee Sponsorship and Grant applications will be made when suitable. The Garden will be available to the City of Sydney for promotional purposes and the Garden group or individual members upon request.

Training workshops and education

The garden has hosted a couple of educational workshops for the members and local residents which included a TAFE outreach course about organic garden methods and a City of Sydney composting workshop. Gardeners can make suggestions on future workshops to the committee.

The garden shares knowledge, ideas and successes during their regular monthly gatherings and working bees. Community education continues and is an ongoing conversation. The garden showcases the benefits of organic sustainable gardening and composting and encourages people to engage by joining us as Garden members.

The Garden and members participate in City of Sydney Community Garden bus tours, a great way to share gardening tips and ideas between the various groups. We encourage and welcome community groups to visit us and in the future would like to include Open Days with tours, talks and afternoon teas.

Working bees - These are normally carried out at our monthly gatherings but can occur at other times if necessary. All community and garden members are welcome to assist with working bees.

Corporation groups or unemployment schemes – Our garden will be and is available for organisations and interested groups of people to participate as volunteers on application. Applications will be discussed at monthly Gatherings and a decision made dependent on supervision and responsibility requirements being accepted by the group or organisation.

Alcohol and smoking onsite – as a general rule alcohol will not be permitted on the garden site unless for a Committee or City of Sydney approved event. Smoking is not permitted on site.

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Pets – will be allowed in the garden under supervision of the owner/member with the approval of other members on site. Owners are responsible for cleaning up after their pets, who should be on a leash at all times.

Demonstration/Open days/Bus tours – Both the group and the City of Sydney have organised educational workshops onsite, these have provided members with information about organic gardening, composting, worm farms, native bees and companion planting. Members of the public are welcome to attend our monthly gatherings and Open Days when they occur. Gardeners have participating in the City of Sydney's bus tours visiting other Community Gardens around the City and are encouraged to visit other gardeners in the future.

Committee - a Committee has been elected and will be re-elected every 12 months at the Annual General Meeting. Many positions will be shared between two people.

Committee structure

Group coordinator - liaise person between the Garden Group and City of Sydney and any other outside organisations. Responsible for the coordination of the agreed development of the Community Garden and its effective operation.

Secretary – responsible for record keeping and administration and sends out minutes and information to the group.

Treasurer – maintains financial records & pays bills.

Other positions include:

Induction – Inducts new volunteers ensuring they are familiar with site safety and responsibilities.

Photographer/social media – documents the garden growth changes and projects with photography and Facebook.

Compost and Worms – general maintenance and aeration of compost bins.

Grants and Sponsorship – applies for grants and sponsorship, as per garden needs, for ongoing projects.

Art Consultant - development of ideas and applications

Garden gathering

It is important for the ongoing future of the garden for members to come together on a monthly basis. Garden Gatherings are important for social interaction, discussion, decision making and of course to share ideas and knowledge about gardening. The general public are welcome to drop in and to participate in garden activities at this time. If interested in joining their contact details can be taken for follow-up.

Any issues or concerns can be raised and put to the group for discussion. Topics include: crop selection and suitability, wish lists for future grants and sponsorship; discussion on watering rosters, plant rotation, overall maintenance such as weeding, raking, worm farm and compost cleaning; garden BLOG, social events and educational workshops; plot allocation; garden needs and purchases.

Group decisions are made by majority rule by financial members in attendance on the day.

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Members must attend at least 4 (out of 12) monthly Garden Gatherings per year, failure to do so may result in forfeiture of membership. Attendance of all Garden Gatherings is encouraged and greatly welcomed.

Decision making – This will be addressed at the monthly gatherings, when issues or concerns will be put to members for discussion and a majority vote. Only those financial members present on the day are entitled to vote. If the group is unable to reach a majority vote the unresolved issues will go to the Committee for a majority vote, only financial Committee members present on the day will be entitled to vote. A quorum will consist of 5 members.

A special meeting may be called by the Coordinator/s at the request of at least three members

Meetings and minutes - The group members meet on a monthly basis to discuss items. This is on the first Sunday of the month at 12.30pm except during summer when it is held at 5pm. Minutes from these discussions are documented and sent out to all members and the City of Sydney Community Garden Volunteer Coordinator.

An Annual General Meeting is held when all positions on the Committee are up for re-election, this usually occurs in November. Only current financial members will be invited to participate in Committee re-election.

Gardener's agreement – The Gardener's Agreement is incorporated into this Management Plan and is to be signed by all garden members. If a member disobeys the rules and the group is unable to resolve the issue to their liking, then the issue will go to the Committee for a vote, by majority rule on the day. The Committee has the final say on a member's membership.

Garden membership

Membership is open to all residents.

Prospective members will 'buddy up' with a member for 4 weeks, which includes attending one Garden Gathering. During the buddy period the prospective member will be given: site orientation, introduction to other members, explanation of H&S requirements and of the Gardeners Agreement and general discussion on rosters, maintenance and our garden vision. After the 4 weeks Prospective Members are Inducted, given Garden access codes and if requested placed on the plot waiting list.

Membership Fee (currently at) \$24 per year, or \$2 per calendar month, is due and signing of the Gardeners Agreement also occurs at this time. Membership Fee may be reduced or waived in cases of financial hardship upon application to the Treasurer.

An Associate membership (no fee) will be offered to partners of fully paid members and community members who would like to donate organic waste or their time but have no desire to participate in garden activities on a regular basis. Associate membership will be offered at the discretion of the Committee who will also determine whether the code will be given to these Associate Members.

The Committee has the final say on a member's membership. The Committee can rescind membership at its discretion.

Local organisations, schools, cafes and businesses are welcome to apply to the Garden Coordinator if they wish to participate in garden activities They will be required to adhere to the rules of the garden and by signing our Gardener's Agreement indicate a willingness to comply with the principals and conditions of our garden.

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Health and Safety

All new community garden members are orientated to the site and made aware of possible risks.

All members are instructed on the safe method of removal of needles found in the garden.

It is the responsibility of all members to ensure they wear suitable covered shoes and clothing onsite. Personal protective equipment is provided by the group in the form of gloves. All members should take care to ensure their own safety when onsite.

A medical First Aid Kit has been purchased and is stored in the shed.

Garden relations

We expect gardeners to be respectful of each other at all times and to promote a harmonious social environment. An important part of the garden philosophy is to work together and share responsibilities.

Depending on availability you can have your own plot or share a plot or participate in the communal garden. In the event you have your own plot, you are expected to participate in general garden maintenance when attending monthly gatherings.

Bourke Street Community Garden encourages an environment free from discrimination, harassment or bullying. We are trying to make this space a friendly, peaceful and relaxing place that encourages community participation and interaction.

Complaints – Gardeners will attempt to resolve any disputes or disagreements by meeting as a group to discuss the issue and possible solutions. Unresolved issues will be addressed by the elected Committee, who may consult with the City of Sydney if necessary. The Committee, by majority vote on the day, has the final say on issues brought before it.

The Garden Coordinator's contact details are given to all new members and her email address is also available on the City of Sydney website. The City of Sydney's phone number is displayed on the Parks external notice board. Alternatively if local residents have any issues they can contact us directly when we are in the Garden. We will liaise with the City of Sydney to resolve any complaints or issues quickly.

Garden Beds – New members have the choice between allotment garden beds and shared communal gardens. If there are no allotment garden beds available, they can participate in the communal garden beds until an allocated bed is available. Forfeiture of beds by members will be at the discretion of the Committee.

Conditions for garden members

- Only use approved organic gardening techniques.
- The gates are to be kept closed, whoever opens the gate is responsible for locking it.
- Guests and visitors are very welcome in the garden, but must be supervised by a member.
- Gardeners are welcomed and encouraged to attend garden gatherings and meetings.
- Do not pick produce, weed or spray an individual's plot without their prior consent.
- Potted plants are only permitted when contained within the confines of a plot.
- The Garden will not be used for individual commercial gain or storage.
- Decisions relating to the communal plots will be discussed and decided on by the group.

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Garden safety

All members must attend an onsite induction which includes being made aware of onsite risks and how to reduce the likelihood of getting injured. Gardeners are asked to :

- Wear covered shoes and gloves when gardening.
- Check the garden for syringes, glass and other sharp or dangerous objects before you begin a gardening session. Dispose of syringes in the sharps container provided. All other rubbish should be taken offsite and disposed of in a rubbish bin.
- Be careful when carrying tools - make sure that there is no-one behind or beside you who could be hit
- Put unused tools away.
- Do not lay tools across paths or in long grass or other vegetation where they cannot be seen,
- Place pointed forks or rakes with blades down, facing the earth,
- Carry tools in your hands rather than over the shoulder to avoid hitting people.
- Avoid sunburn and dehydration by wearing a hat, protective clothing and sunscreen, and drinking water during the day.
- Be aware before lifting tools or pots that there are no spiders underneath.
- Do not try to pick up bugs, spiders or other creatures you find in the garden.
- Store materials neatly and safely in the designated area so that they do not leak, encourage rats or cockroaches, create a trip hazard, or fall on people from a height.
- Children under 18 years of age are to be supervised by a parent or guardian at all times.
- Keep pathways clear of trip hazards and level
- Only prepare approved organic controls. Read the appropriate Fact Sheet and sign same before application.
- Be careful when preparing or using organic pesticides which may cause injury e.g. when using chilli spray wear gloves and sunglasses.
- All produce should be washed before eating or cooking

Vandalism and undesirables – The City has a large population of diverse people and cultures. The area in the front of the park is known as a gathering place for rough sleepers. Any anti-social behaviour, vandalism or illegal activity should be reported to the **Kings Cross Police on 8356 0099**. The garden is locked 24 hours 7 days a week and only current members, Police and Council staff have the code to access the garden. Any damage or repairs to the garden will be carried out in consultation with the City of Sydney. Please ensure the gates and shed are locked before leaving.

Policies / guidelines.

Copies of any policies, guidelines, procedures or fact sheets that may be of interest will be kept in the garden shed.

Budget

An annual budget will be prepared by the Committee, who will discuss funding allocation and distribution for projects. We have received a Second Matching Grant from City of Sydney, for which we are very thankful. This Grant will, we hope, see the Garden extended to the northern, vacant end of the site. At present sponsorship has not been implemented, but will be considered.

The introduction of a Membership Fee in 2015, has enabled the group to purchase ongoing miscellaneous items such as seeds for the garden.

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Reporting

- Report twice yearly to the City on the following;
- Measures of success e.g. good news stories on Facebook, media promotions
- How many active members, how many friends of the garden
- How many hours do the volunteers participate (if required)
- How much waste has been composted i.e. a full compost bin equals 220 litres
- How much funding has been received and how e.g. by which grant
- How many eggs from the chickens

Each month the minutes of the garden gathering are forwarded to the City's Community Gardens and Volunteer Coordinator and to all garden members. If any issues, such as vandalism or illegal dumping, arise then our group Coordinator will contact the City.

The ongoing success of the garden will be assessed and discussed each year at the AGM.

Festivals/events/displays – This can be addressed in future and applied to the City of Sydney for assistance

Emergency	000
Kings Cross Police	8356 0099
Poisons Hot Line	131 126
Needle Clean-up	1800 633 353
City of Sydney 24hour	9265 9333

Trolley tracker - If you spot an abandoned shopping trolley you can report it to Trolley tracker call 1800 641 497 or visit the web site <http://www.trolleytracker.com.au/>

Tree pruning – The group can forward any requests for pruning to the City of Sydney for approval.

See attached appendix:

- Chickens project proposal
- Gardener's Agreement



Diagram 1: Showing the garden design layout

This is an agreement of the Bourke Street Community Garden group.

Date.....

Date.....

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Signature of authorised person

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Signature of authorised person

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Full name & position of signatory
Community Garden Group

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Full name & position of signatory
City of Sydney