

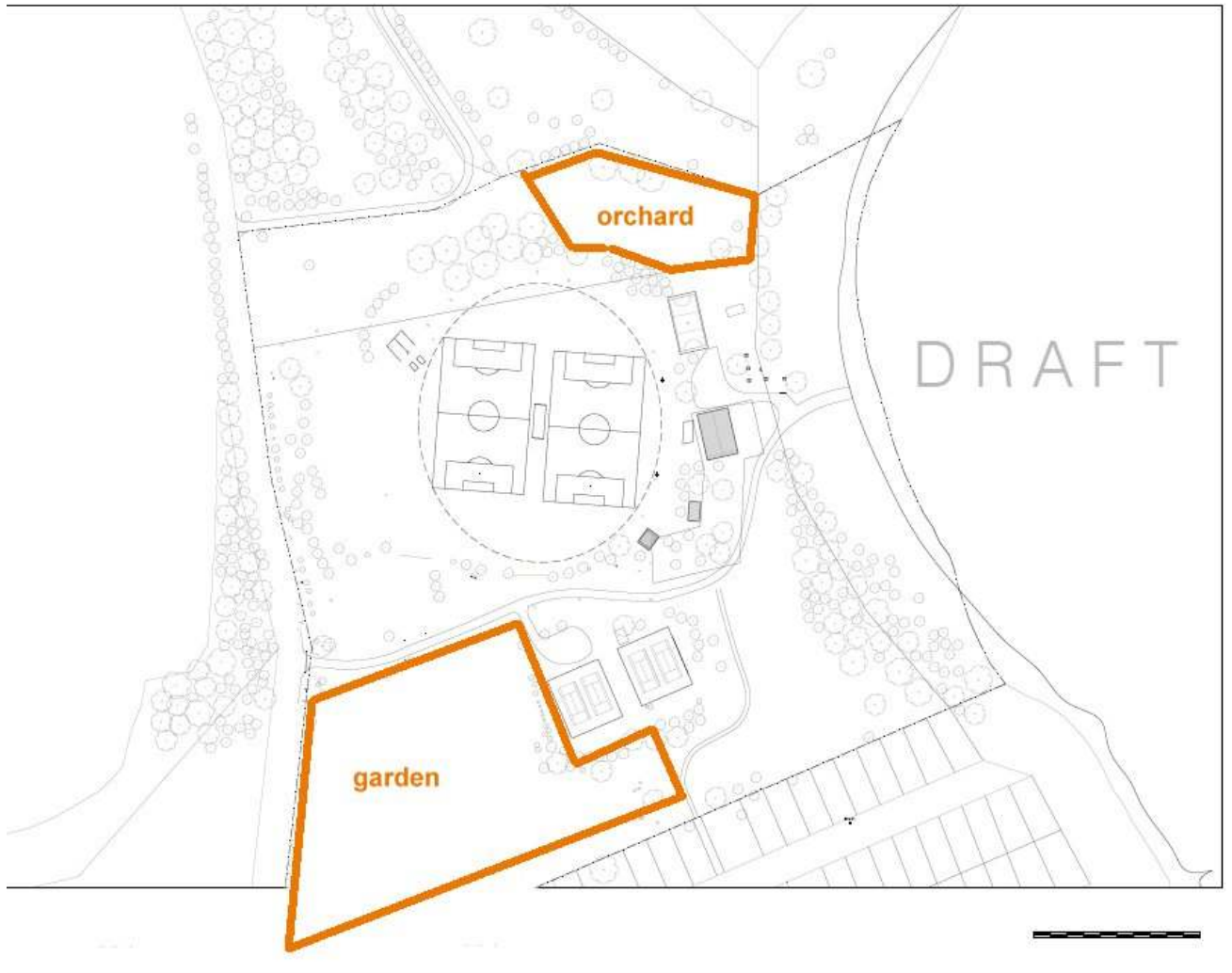
# Tuross Community Garden

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## **SUMMARY**

This document contains the Business Plan for Tuross Community Garden. Included is the Why, the Where, the Who, the What, and the How we will go about creating and maintaining this project. The finance, governance, membership, management and succession planning are all outlined.

Garden sites with the Kyla Park recreational Precinct



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# The Master plan

## The Why

### Why have a community garden here in Tuross Head?

As a member of SAGE (Sustainable Agriculture and Gardening Eurobodalla) the Tuross Community Garden, shares the same philosophies as its SAGE counterpart. The SAGE project is community driven and developed as an education and demonstration site for sustainable agricultural and horticultural practices.

It is hoped that the Tuross Community Garden will have a wide ranging community benefits such as gaining food production and preparation knowledge, enhancing the sense of community in Tuross and the surrounding area, production of good food for those in our community and the development of sound horticultural skills. The project will also help increase local food security.

The Tuross Community Garden, whilst an independent sub-group under the Tuross Head Progress Association, are eager to participate as an informal annex to the SAGE philosophy that might in time see many other Eurobodalla communities develop their own gardens.

The vision behind the SAGE and Tuross Community Garden is a physical reflection of the genuine concern that many residents in our Shire have about future of food production. Globalisation, the widespread use of pesticides, herbicides, artificial fertilizers, and genetically modified plant species, all threaten our right to access good, clean, fair food.

Tuross Community Garden will create the opportunity for people in this area to redress the loss of traditional, healthy food growing and preparation skills. Through specialised education in sustainable agriculture, organics, biodynamics, permaculture, as well as other specific skills the community intends to develop itself. All ages, backgrounds and skill levels will be welcomed and encouraged, creating a rich cross cultural mix from the community.

In addition, this Tuross Community Garden site will act as another local display area for Eurobodalla Shire Council sustainability education.

*' ... by shifting our mind-set we can actually recognise the coming post-cheap oil era as an opportunity rather than a threat, and design the future low carbon age to be thriving, resilient and abundant – somewhere much better to live than our current alienated consumer culture based on greed, war and the myth of perpetual growth.'* Graham Burnett in a review of *The Transition Handbook – From Oil Dependency To Local Resilience* by Rob Hopkins

## **The Where**

### **Where will the community garden be?**

Two areas have been identified, the first is for the main vegetable growing area and the second smaller area for an orchard, see attached map.

These are the preferred area within the Kyla Sporting Precinct land. It is hoped that the gardens will benefit from the contours to assist in water gathering and drainage, and from the adjacent access provided by the car parking of the Tennis Courts and The Tuross Community Centre, There is access from the local cycleway for pedestrians, cyclists and others who use wheels (motorized scooters) and public toilets are close by.

## **The Who**

### **Who can be a community gardener?**

#### **Volunteers**

The Tuross Community Garden welcomes anyone who would like to be involved. As well as willing hands, people with gardening or organisational skills and local knowledges as well as holiday visitors who may wish to become members.

## **GOVERNANCE**

### **Management Team and Structure**

The Tuross Community Garden will be managed by a sub-committee of the Tuross Head Progress Association. For insurance purposes all members of the Tuross Community Garden will be members of the Tuross Head Progress Association.

The Tuross Community Garden management team will be elected at the annual general meeting of the Tuross Community Garden. The make-up of the Tuross Community Garden management team will be determined by members, with roles such as garden Supervisor, Garden Secretary, Garden Treasurer and general members as well as a member of the Tuross Head Progress Association Executive.

The Tuross Community Garden will operate as an incorporated body on a not-for-profit basis. Any income generated from Tuross Community Garden activities will be re-invested in improvements or programs in line with its goals and objectives.

### **Meetings/Working Bees**

#### **Management team meetings**

These will occur throughout the year, at times to be mutually agreed upon by the management team on an 'as required' basis.

#### **Working bees**

These will occur throughout the year, at times to be mutually agreed upon by the management team. Generally these days will be decided 12 months in advance and members will be advised either by email, Tuross Community Garden website by noticeboards at the local shops, Tuross Community Centre or a noticeboard on site. While it will probably not be possible for all members to attend every working bee, it will

be expected that all members will attend some working bees in either an active or non-active role.

The management of Tuross Community Garden is based on the principles of SAGE that will be applied by the management team to the strategic and day-to-day running of Tuross Community Garden being:

- **democratic procedure** through which topics are deliberated as a means of decision making

- **participation** by all members interested in being involved - **fairness** and due process (defined as fair treatment in regard to process).

## **Partnerships**

Tuross Community Garden will establish partnerships with other groups in the area to build community capacity through cross fertilization of ideas and activities.

## **Membership**

The membership fee of Tuross Community Garden will be \$20 per year per person this will entitle member to:

- annual membership of the THPA and insurance cover
- access to garden events through the year (e.g. excursions, speakers) either for free or at a discounted rate depending on the costs to be incurred
- harvest at a members rate
- a great contributory lunch at the end of each working bee and the chance for members to exchange ideas and enjoy themselves with like-minded people

## **Harvest**

The harvest will be distributed to members in accordance with the guidelines of the management team in line with not-for-profit principles. The management team will determine to whom and at what price remaining produce is distributed.

## **The What**

**What is The Tuross Community Garden?**

## **PLANNING**

### **Goals and Objectives**

All activities carried out on the Tuross Community Garden block are to be seen as tools to achieve education of the community in the growing of food, both domestically and on a semi-commercial basis, in a sustainable manner. Ultimately Tuross Community Garden seeks to increase:

- the number of semi-commercial, sustainable farm-gate producers in our region
- the number of families growing a significant proportion of their own food sustainably in our surrounding area
- sustainable food security/resilience in our region
- a sense of community through the growing of food sustainably.
- cross generational food and health awareness

### **Sustainability Principles**

Tuross Community Garden intends to develop and operate in line with the key 'Slow Food' principles like SAGE Moruya

## **Good Clean Fair.**

Tuross Community Garden, as a member of SAGE, will always endeavor to produce good food using clean, non chemical methods that are fair to both the producer and the consumer, and encourage both the domestic and semi-commercial producer to do the same.

## **Project Priorities**

### **Year 1 – June 2011 – May 2012**

Tuross Community Garden **Proposed Site Plan**

Clear Land Mulch/compost slashing

Cultivate

Test soil

Construct fences

Plant orchard

Water access and meter

Irrigation system ESC license

Open separate bank account

Construct compost bins

Construct propagating shed

Fence service yard

Erect water tank Run

### **Year 2 – June 2011 – May 2012**

Enclose orchard

Solar power system

Treated effluent water re-use system

## **Education**

Tuross Community Gardens, in conjunction with SAGE, will offer courses, seminars, workshops and demonstration days to meet the goals and objectives of the project.

## **The How**

### **Just how can we achieve Tuross Community Gardens?**

After initial preparation by farm machinery, the maintenance and tilling of this area will be primarily done using human powered tools. Organic and biodynamic principles will be used.

A large enclosed orchard is also proposed, and will provide a demonstration area for 'chook tractor' gardens and free range egg production. A portion of this area will also be set aside for allotment gardens for the community should they be required.

Rainwater collected from the roof will be the primary source of irrigation for the garden.

## **Fundraising**

The long-term sustainability of the Tuross Community Gardens project will be achieved through a variety of income generating activities to achieve a not-for-profit status. These activities include, but are not limited to, the running of training and educational courses in conjunction with Eurobodalla Adult Education and TAFE, the hosting of sustainability events and seminars, the production of compost from restaurant, café waste, and domestic kitchen and garden waste, the production of healthy food.

Tuross Community Gardens will be applying for funding and sponsorship from different sources. Donations of materials, organic fertiliser, tools, and of course money are not the only way we can continue to build this vital project.

## **Allotment Guidelines**

Most of the Tuross Community Gardens site will be a communal garden with some area set aside for individual allotment gardens if required for special needs purposes such as for disabled members as determined by the management team. Tuross Community Gardens reserves the right to resume the land at any time with appropriate prior notice. Allotment owners will be required to become members of Tuross Community Gardens and pay the required yearly membership fee.

The management team encourages gardeners to contribute any skills they may wish to share, for composting, resource gathering, seed raising and newsletter publication.

## **Responsibilities of gardeners for plot maintenance**

If it is not possible for a gardener to maintain their plot, Tuross Community Gardens Executive asks that they contact the management team, so that arrangements can be made for other garden members to maintain the plot, until the member can resume gardening. If a gardener is unable to continue working their plot on a permanent basis, it is agreed that the plot will be assigned to another person who is either waiting to join Tuross Community Gardens, or is a current gardener who would like another plot. Costs associated with the original construction of the plot, can either be donated to Tuross Community Gardens by the member who is leaving or this member can make a private arrangement to recover costs from the new gardener, who takes over their plot. All new gardeners must be approved by the management team.

## **Plants and cultivation practices**

Types of plants—community garden plots are for growing herbs, flowers and vegetables. Trees and large permanent shrubs are not suitable for garden plots because they may block sun to other plots.

Compost areas—a 'bin' system will be used to provide a place to recycle garden refuse that can be re-used on garden plots. Instructions will indicate which materials can be placed in which bins.

Worm farm—a worm farm will be established, to enable recycling of organic waste. Instructions will indicate which materials can be placed in the worm farm and how it should be managed.

Control of garden pest—only plant-based or environmentally friendly products may be used to control pests, such as garlic or rhubarb sprays. Toxic chemicals, including organophosphates such as 'Round-Up' are not permitted on the Tuross Community Gardens site.

Snail baits—Organic solutions only should be used, such as beer baits.

Noxious weeds—noxious weeds, must be removed from the garden for safe disposal. To avoid spreading pests, gardeners must remove weeds from their plots and not allow them to 'come to seed' and contaminate other plots.

Garden tools—eventually a garden shed will be able to keep tools securely locked away. Tools that are purchased with Tuross Community Gardens funds will be for the use of Tuross Community Gardens members only. Garden hoses must remain connected to the tap and be contained so that they do not lie across pathways. If any garden tools are missing, gardeners must report this to the management team as soon as possible.

## **SITE MANAGEMENT**

### **Gardening Methods**

Tuross Community Gardens is managed according to the principles of organic gardening. Like SAGE Moruya, this decision is based on the observation that organic gardening techniques are generally safer than the use of many synthetic gardening products.

### **Reducing Risk**

Organic gardening methods reduce risk to ourselves, our garden and our environment. Organic methods: - reduce the risk to gardener health through the inappropriate use of synthetic gardening inputs such as pesticides, herbicides and fertilisers - reduce the risk of unintentionally contaminating nearby waterways with runoff - reduce the risk of contaminating garden soils with synthetic chemicals.

Some people prefer to use organic methods because synthetic pesticides and herbicides might remain on vegetables, herbs and fruit that have not been thoroughly washed.

Another reason to use organic gardening is that it is knowledge intensive. Rather than simply spraying synthetic chemicals, the use of organic techniques necessitates learning about plants, insects and soils, and improving the knowledge and skills of gardeners.

### **Use of Water**

In accordance with best practice community gardening, Tuross Community Gardens will use water conservatively so as to minimise water consumption. This is achieved through:

- the creation of soils rich in organic matter and, therefore, capable of retaining soil moisture in - the vicinity of plant roots - the harvesting and storage of rainwater on-site for use in the garden; this might include rainwater tanks, small scale earthworks and other approaches

- the use of water conserving irrigation, such as hand held hoses and watering cans - the use of mulch on garden beds to reduce the evapotranspiration of soil moisture thus reducing the need for irrigation.

### **Production of Compost and other Inputs**

Tuross Community Gardens will use compost as a garden fertiliser to provide plants with the nutrients they need to grow strong and healthy and to improve the moisture retention capacity of our garden soils. Compost is produced on-site from garden and household green wastes.

In doing this, Tuross Community Gardens will reduce the amount of waste it sends to landfill.

Compost-enriched soils also capture more carbon, enabling community gardens to play a role in ameliorating global warming.

### **Production of Planting Material**

It is recommended that Tuross Community Gardens gardeners acquire skills in plant propagation and planting out to:

- reduce their reliance on purchased seed
- improve their knowledge and skills

- increase their self-reliance. It is recommended that gardeners obtain a supply of non-hybrid seeds to enable the

development of these skills and that they grow and collect seeds and cuttings from these plants for the propagation of more plants.

## **MEMBER SAFETY**

### **Tool Use - The following are guides that will be inducted to garden members to ensure sound OHS & R is practiced at all times**

If you are taking more than one or two tools into the garden, carry them from storage into the garden in a wheelbarrow, bucket or a basket so there is a predetermined place to put them when they are not in use and at the end of the gardening session.

Before using a spade, garden fork, rake or other long handled tool, look to make sure there is nobody behind or beside you so that you don't hit them with the tool.

When you have finished using a garden tool or you put a tool aside for a moment, place it out of the way of people. Never lay a tool across a path or place it in long grass where it is hidden and where people could trip over it.

Lean a garden rake or long handled tool against something when you put it aside. If you have to lay it down, place it away from where people might walk. Place it with the pointed tangs or blade on the ground, not pointing up.

When putting a garden spade, shovel or fork aside, push it into the soil so that it remains upright and visible.

Carry tools such as spades, garden forks and rakes in your hand rather than over the shoulder. Carried on the shoulder, it is easy to hit someone accidentally if you turn around and they are close by.

### **Avoid Sunburn and Dehydration**

Wear a hat to avoid sunburn.

If you sunburn easily, consider wearing a lightweight shirt with long sleeves as well as long trousers.

Use a sunscreen cream to avoid sunburn.

If in the garden for some time, remember to drink water to avoid dehydration.

### **Care with Creatures**

Do not try to pick up bugs, spiders and other creatures you come across. They might defend themselves by biting, stinging or scratching.

Look before lifting buckets, watering cans, boxes and other things. Redback spiders sometimes nest in them and a bite can be dangerous.

If gardening near bushland, do not interfere with any snakes, goannas or echidnas you might see in the garden.

### **Lifting**

When lifting something heavy, bend your knees and crouch down, then lift it by straightening your legs.

To avoid back injury, do not bend over to pick up something that is heavy.

### **Storage**

Designate an area of the garden for storing materials.

Store materials so that they are unlikely to fall over or spill. Place heavier materials close to the ground and lighter materials on top of these. Stack and store materials neatly so that they are easily accessible and out of the way of paths and places where people walk.

Avoid storing materials that the gardeners have no plans to use. This avoids community gardens becoming eyesores.

## **Caring for Children**

If children are to visit or participate in the garden, avoid planting toxic plants and remove species (such as castor oil bush and oleander) that are toxic to children. Consider what might be a danger to children even if it is not dangerous to adults. It might be an idea to label hot-tasting plants such as chilli with visual and word warnings.

If growing water crops (such as water chestnut, arrowhead or watercress) in a container or pond, consider covering it with a barrier (weldmesh, for example) that prevents children falling in but lets the plants grow through.

Keep a watch on young children in case they wander off-site.

## **Construction**

When planning to build structures, obtain advice on design and construction, if that is unavailable among gardeners, so as the structure is sturdy and safe.

Keep paths clear and level.

Make garden bed edges strong so that they will not collapse. Avoid edging garden beds with sharp or pointed materials.

If digging a hole, make your work visible to gardeners passing by so they do not trip in it. Mark the excavation with coloured tape or a barrier if you are leaving it for a while.

## **Care with Organic Chemicals**

The manufacture of organic controls for garden pest and plant disease management (sometimes called 'botanic' controls because they are derived from plants) should be done under the guidance of a gardener or adviser who has experience and is knowledgeable of the precautions to be taken in production, handling and application. Some organic pesticides can cause injury. When making, handling and applying chilli-based insecticides such as chilli spray, wear gloves and keep hands away from your face (chilli in the eyes is painful).

Avoid getting botanic sprays and other controls in your eyes or in cuts on your hands or legs. It is best to wear gloves when applying any botanic or synthetic control.

Wash your hands after making, handling or applying organic pesticides, herbicides or other organic controls.

## **Other Protective Precautions**

If you suffer breathing difficulties or asthma, consider wearing a dust mask when making or turning compost or spreading mulch.

Consider wearing gardening gloves to protect your hands and to avoid blisters from handling garden tools, and when doing garden construction and spreading compost and mulch.

Wear enclosed shoes to protect your feet. Do not garden in sandals.

Cover standing water, such as in a pond, to reduce the incidence of mosquito breeding.

Water plants such as azolla and duckweed reduce the surface area available to mosquitoes. Species of small native fish that eat mosquito wrigglers can be introduced.

## **Succession Planning**

It is envisaged that the partnerships and community capacity building undertaken by the Tuross Community Garden will be ongoing for at least the next 20 years. If however, during this period or after it, membership and interest drops, the Tuross Community Garden management team will notify Council of the area of land considered surplus to needs. Council can then consider other community uses for the land. If there are no other community uses known of at the time, the area will be reseeded with native grasses in consultation with the Tuross Lakes Preservation Group.