



# COOLUM COMMON

COOLUM COMMUNITY  
GARDEN REPORT  
JUNE 2021

CELEBRATING 12 MONTHS OF  
COMMUNITY LED ACHIEVEMENTS

# PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Coolum Common is a collaborative community led project to develop a community garden and sustainability hub in Jack Morgan Park in Coolum Beach.

The project started as a community campaign to establish a Community Garden but it quickly became clear that the community vision for the site was so much more. Locals want it to be an outdoor meeting place where all people feel welcome, happy, inspired and connected to their local community.

**A place to grow food, learn about gardening and sustainable living. A place to play in nature for all ages and abilities. A place to connect to country. A place to relax your mind. A place to make new friends. A welcoming outdoor meeting place.**



# PROJECT NEED

Coolum Beach has no central free community meeting space, there is a space allocation in the civic heart of the town in Jack Morgan Park for a community garden but for 5 years there has been no progress towards its establishment.

The advice from Sunshine Coast Regional Council is that it needs to be a community led initiative with a sustainable framework for it's ongoing management. Thus this project was born.

People need connection as a part of their general wellbeing and with a high percentage of the young families in the community. A free space where all people in the community feel welcome to come and participate in healthy activities and learn to live more sustainable lives will help people come together and make new friends.

# PROJECT IMPACT

- A free positive space for all people in the community to gather, share, learn and connect
- A new place for a community playgroup to form
- Improved mental health outcomes across the community
- Reduced depression and community loneliness
- New community connections
- Community capacity building through the establishment and management of the space
- A chance for the community to come together to enhance civic pride by being involved in a project that enhances community wellbeing
- Reinvigorate a sense of civic pride
- Raise awareness that passionate local community members can drive great outcomes and inspire other local projects



# JOURNEY SO FAR

LOTS OF ENTHUSIASM, IDEAS & HARD WORK  
HAVE DRIVEN THE PAST 12 MONTHS  
ACHIEVEMENTS

## MARCH 2020

- Project started out as a subset of The Coolum Project (on hold - the ideas have been amalgamated into other projects)
- Led by Claire Baker from Urbankind and an informal group of local mothers with young children interested in a Community Garden space to have a local Veggie Play Group (previously members of the Peregian one)

## COVID-19 PAUSED PROJECT – RE-ESTABLISHED

## JUNE 2020

- Advocate for community garden to be included in Coolum Economic Action Plan
- Connect with Council’s Sustainability Officer who advised next step would be a community Survey
- Community Interest Survey gains overwhelming support
- Liaise with local Councillor for support who helps mobilise Council staff

## JULY - SEPTEMBER 2020

- Council advise on pathway to approval + help distribute survey
- Meet with community members to drive establishment of working group + committee for garden + grant applications
- Investigate Auspice options for funding – CBT + Coast Care + Women’s Shed

## SEPTEMBER - DECEMBER

- Approval for Children's Garden to be established on Jones Parade site (generously supported by Coolum Community Kindy & Urbankind ) - local children had planted sunflower seeds & grown at home & now plant them together in the garden
- Children bring seedlings from home to plant in the garden and new friendships are formed between the families
- Families start meeting up for play dates and tending to the garden together and individually
- Design & Approval of new pop up garden beds in Jack Morgan Park & discuss construction with Men's Shed
- Secured recycled materials for the project
- Secured \$1,375 in Council funding for project

## COOLUM... WE CAN MAKE THIS HAPPEN.

## SUMMER BREAK JAN- FEB

## MARCH

- Reconnect & establish priorities & regain momentum & create new community connections



# PROJECT GOALS

**Create a place for the Coolum community to share, learn, grow, play and connect by:**

Growing food locally and promoting healthy living & food security

Creating an open outdoor meeting place for shared community activities

Educating community members and local businesses in a variety of sustainable activities

Invigorating underutilised public open space in Jack Morgan Park

**WELCOMING.  
INCLUSIVE.  
PLAYFUL.  
SUSTAINABLE.  
MEANINGFUL.**



# OBJECTIVES

IT IS CLEAR THIS IS NO ORDINARY COMMUNITY GARDEN PROJECT, OUR COMMUNITY WANT IT TO BE SO MUCH MORE THAN THAT. A MULTI FUNCTIONAL OUTDOOR MEETING SPACE COLLABORATIVELY DESIGNED AS A SPACE THAT MEETS THE UNIQUE NEEDS & DREAMS OF OUR LOCAL COMMUNITY.

1. Creating the garden from locally sourced, recycled or salvaged building materials (where possible)
2. Including sustainable infrastructure such as rainwater tanks, compost bays, solar power etc.
3. Ensuring the garden does not threaten natural areas by the spread of weeds
4. Ensuring the design of the garden contributes positively to the amenity of Jack Morgan Park
5. Ensuring disability access and optimal design for all abilities
6. Establishing wide, even paths, raised garden beds, integrated playing spaces
7. Providing for space for small gatherings with outdoor shelters, outdoor ovens, seating, garden art
8. Providing a sustainability hub for community education and a platform for the circular economy, living a more sustainable life and wellbeing in Coolum

Vision is the art  
of seeing the  
invisible



# DESIRED OUTCOMES

- Increased community connections and reduced social isolation, loneliness and depression
- Activation of Jack Morgan Park with a new space for people in the community to gather, share, learn and connect
- Opportunities for newcomers to engage with long-time residents
- Multi-generational involvement in community garden events
- Increased knowledge of sustainable living and home gardening
- Potential for micro-economic activities such as Farmers' Markets, local food swaps, seed banks
- Community capacity building through the establishment and management of the space



A space where  
everyone feels  
welcome.

# TOP 10 KEY CHALLENGES

1. Securing the permit for the site (lots of red tape) and securing enough funding to kickstart project
2. Establishing representative community priorities for the site and ensuring the design integrates the uses most suitable for the site
3. Ensuring a high level of ongoing community participation to manage and maintain the garden once built
4. Raising ongoing funds to cover insurances, maintenance of assets, utilities.
5. Developing a governance structure, membership charter, garden code of conduct, conflict resolution policy as well as other policies
6. Finding a space to store the materials we gather for the project
7. Consistent participation in meetings & projects
8. Having the right expertise in the group
9. Ensuring we don't burn out our volunteers
10. Time versus enthusiasm, passion & interest in the project as it's a volunteer led project progress is slow and the barrier to speeding it up is lack of resources - \$, people & expertise.



You can do hard things...



# VOLUNTEER COMMITTEE

A passionate and dedicated group of 14 members have been meeting regularly since September 2020 to:

- map out the process
- review the survey results
- prepare to apply for the permit through Council to use the site for a community garden
- prepare a funding strategy
- plan for more community engagement to hear what people think are the priorities for the space and design concepts for the garden
- set priorities for the group

## Achievements to date:

- Applied for 6 grants -
- Successful with securing \$1,375 grant from SCRC
- \$1,000 Cr Maria Suarez Discretionary Funding for Grow Happy project
- Secured an Auspice for our grant applications (Coolum Business + Tourism)
- Prepared Terms of Reference for the Committee
- Prepared Project Proposal
- Engaged the community in developing a vision for the site, analysed responses
- Developed strong community connections with local community organisations (Coast Care, Men's Shed, Peregian Veggie Village, NDIS, CBT, Friends of Yaroomba)
- Formed a reliable committee
- Established a pop up children's garden
- Designed an accessible garden bed pop up for Jack Morgan Park
- Secured approval for Pop Up garden in Jack Morgan Park
- Created link with USC for students to help on project, secured volunteer student

**"We may run, walk, stumble, drive or fly, but let us never lose sight of the reason for the journey."**

# COMMUNITY SURVEY

Our Survey was open from June – September and received 151 responses. Here is a sneak peek at the results (see photos attached!)

We emailed everyone who responded to the survey an update and included an Expression of Interest to be part of the Working Group for the establishment phase.

We also individually emailed the 38 people who expressed interest in a Committee or Relief Committee Role to see if they were interested in the establishment phase too and to clarify their skills and interest to our skills mapping (people, money, time, expertise, resources etc)





# WHAT PEOPLE WANT

“

## WE ASKED OUR LOCALS

In your own words, ideally, what would you like to see in the community garden?

THEY SAID....

“

## I'd like to see

A covered area to hold workshops, shelter from sun/rain or have a cuppa and meet people. Maybe an area for people to pass by and buy, swap or sell produce

RORY

## I'd love

Seasonal planting information. Indigenous perspectives. Learning about Native trees and their uses /seasonal indicators. Play groups for all ages Urban farming / backyard or urban permaculture. Retrosurbia information days Cross cultural/ international food day celebrations

*Ben*

## I'd love

Horticulture, education about native plants and how to cook with indigenous plants. Free sports for locals (kids and adults). A place where local groups can teach i.e the men's shed teaching how to change a tyre or build something etc. It would also be a great place for local 'Coolum business' to showcase what they make and educate our community about what is available :)

*Sarah*

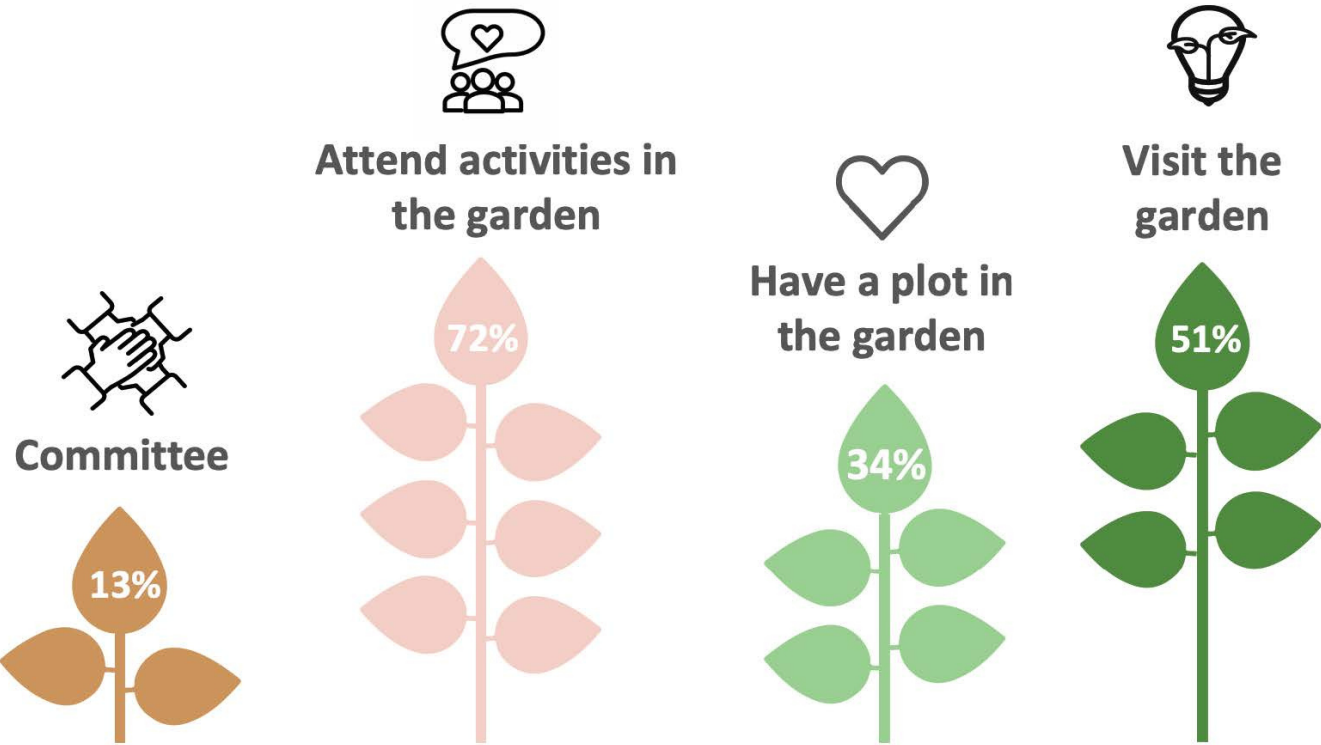
## I'd love

Horticulture permaculture, mixed groups where us older people can pass on our knowledge to others.

*Don*

# COMMUNITY SURVEY

## How people want to be involved



\*Additional 32 people interested in Relief Committee Role

# COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

We have worked hard to make connections with a many local community groups as we want this to be a truly integrated and inclusive community project the key organisations we have already connected with or attempted to connect with include:

- Peregrian Veggie Village (very helpful in guiding our journey & generous in sharing their knowledge)
- Coolum Community Kindy (funded pop up children's garden)
- Coolum Women's Shed (interested in following our journey - no capacity to collaborate at the moment)
- Coolum Men's Shed (very supportive and preferred partner to build the pop up garden beds and neighbourhood seed library/book library)
- Coast Care (initial Auspice request - unable to assist with Auspice but supportive of project & keen to be involved with Bush Tucker Garden

- University of the Sunshine Coast - Planning & Urban Design supportive of project & in discussions for studios and student help with community engagement.
- Carers Qld - NDIS (Community Development team very supportive & engaged in project)
- Friends of Yaroomba
- C & K Daycare Centre
- Sparrow Early Learning
- Coolum Bowls Club

## Recommendations for next connections:

- Coolum Hearts
- Coolum Surf Club
- Lions Club
- Other Local Businesses

## PROUDLY SUPPORTED BY AMAZING PEOPLE FROM THE FOLLOWING LOCAL BUSINESSES:



THE  
SHADE  
SOURCE

THE  
CAF

Urbankind

THIS PROGRESS WOULDN'T BE POSSIBLE WITHOUT YOUR ENDLESS SUPPORT WITH TIME, ENERGY & GETTING IT DONE!

# HERE'S HOW YOU CAN BE INVOLVED:

1. Tell your friends & family about it
2. Follow our journey on Facebook & Instagram
3. Join the Coolum Common Committee - monthly meetings & sub groups
4. Help us fundraise for new projects
5. Join the Children's garden group
6. Share your idea, skills knowledge and enthusiasm with us
7. Hang out with us at social events
8. Help us grow the Pop Up Gardens trail - we can help you get started in your local park.



COOLUM COMMON

Say hello:

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@coolumcommon