

# Petition: Officers' Response

**Title:** "There is increasing demand for community gardens"

**Primary Petitioner:** Andrew McLachlan, Wellington

**Total Signatures:** 155 (via ePetition)

**Presented by:**

**Contact officer:** Jenny Rains, Charlie Devenish

**Director responsible:** Wendy Walker

## Officers' recommendation:

Officers recommend that the Committee:

1. *Agree that the current need for coordination of community gardens can be met through existing mechanisms.*
2. *Agree that Officers will reassess the need for greater coordination in 12 months and any change would be picked up through the grants programme*

## Background:

The ePetition "There is increasing demand for community gardens" was initiated by Andrew McLachlan on 7 June 2011 and closed on 7 August 2011.

The purpose of the petition is to request that the Council create a community gardens coordinator role to support the volunteer hours that go into community gardens.

The petition was open to all members of the public with internet access to the Council's website. It received 155 signatures.

## Officers' response:

### Introduction

There has been steady interest from the community in regard to the Council's approach to, and support for, local food production.

Prior to this e-petition the Sustainability Trust applied for a grant to fund a position dedicated to the coordination of community gardens (March 2011), however funding was declined. The Grants Subcommittee noted the Trust already receives contract funding for the coordination of networking to support the city's community gardens and orchards and that there needed to be a clearer indication of the need for a stand alone coordination role.

### Analysis of petition

In addition to funding the Sustainability Trust a number of other community gardens and organisations participating in community gardening have been, and continue to be, supported to establish gardens and facilitate workshops on local food production through Council Grants.

Further to this, Council supports community gardens and orchards through the licensing of Council-owned land and provides in-kind support to community gardens and orchards.

City Communities provides a point of contact within the Council for community gardens, orchards and gardeners. City Communities is encouraging use of the Council's Community Directory as a place for community gardening groups to have a web presence with the aim of improving connection and collaboration within the gardening community.

Finally, officers are collating information to provide a “snap shot” of all the activities and interests that relate to the city’s food system including community gardens, sustainability and use of and impact on the city’s green spaces.

Officer discussions with different community gardening groups has found that a number of them do not see value for their group in the establishment of a community gardens coordinator role.

Although there are varying opinions on how to address ongoing coordination, there is a recognised increase in interest in these activities and officers will continue to keep informed on developments.

**Officer Recommendation**

1. Agree that the current need for coordination of community gardens can be met through existing mechanisms.
2. Officers will reassess the need for greater coordination in 12 months and any change would be picked up through the grants programme.