

Gisborne Community Farm @ Glen Junor

Impact Assessment & Future Focus

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The Sustainable Landscape Company



Contents

Introduction	3
Acknowledgment of Country	3
About the Authors	3
Purpose of this Paper	3
Aims & Vision	3
Benefits of Community Gardens.....	4
Community Connection	4
Wellbeing	5
Food Security	6
Sustainability & Biodiversity	7
Education & Employment	8
Farm Description.....	10
Stage 1.....	10
Future Stages	11
Allotment Garden	11
Market Garden.....	12
Animals.....	12
Indigenous Food Garden.....	12
Nursery.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Event Space and Cafe.....	13
Market.....	13
Workshops	13
Developer Context	15
Budget, governance and staffing	15
Fees & Costs	15
Property Values.....	16
Next Steps	16
References.....	17



Introduction

Acknowledgment of Country

This project is being constructed and conducted upon the lands of the Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung peoples of the Kulin Nation.

We pay respects to the elders past, present and emerging, and acknowledge their continuing connection to land, waters, and culture. The lands within which the Glen Junor garden and community is situated are rich in history and cultural significance. First Nations people have harvested food sustainably and successfully over many millennia from these lands, and the Glen Junor Community Farm hopes to continue this tradition.

About the Authors

The Sustainable Landscape Company is a leader in delivery of community gardens and urban agriculture landscapes. We have extensive experience with urban food growing, contributing to the design of Biofilta's Foodcube, which is a staple of urban agriculture in Melbourne. Our vertically-integrated landscape offering, from planning, design and construction, to plant supply and maintenance, allow for high quality delivery across all life stages of a community garden project.

TSLC specializes in distinct yet complementary planting types—native plantings to encourage biodiversity, climate resilience and urban cooling, and food production gardens. In tandem, these landscapes are powerful tools for educating and exemplifying sustainability, by encouraging the proliferation of local plant and animal species, as well as empowering people to grow their own food and engage with the environment through fresh, seasonal produce.

Purpose of this Paper

This paper draws upon similar research and projects undertaken by The Sustainable Landscape Company and Biofilta Urban Farms, and their experience in setting up and contributing to community gardens across Melbourne. The Cape, a sustainable housing estate in Cape Paterson, has built Stage 1 of a community garden, which will be expanded upon in 2020/2021 to create a large community farm and market garden designed and constructed by The Sustainable Landscape Company. This serves as a model for Glen Junor's farm establishment and related community activities.

Stage One of the Glen Junor Community Farm has recently been constructed by TSLC, with the remaining stages to follow over the next few years. This paper serves as a guide for these stages, their operation and community engagement processes.

Aims & Vision

Glen Junor is a unique project which prioritises sustainability and biodiversity at the forefront of its development. Responding to the lack of community gardens in the Gisborne area, Glen Junor proposes to build an integrated community urban farm to assist to build urban food production capabilities and better access to nutrition, improved food security, and provide a location for community services and events for local residents. It will also serve as an interpretation and education centre to bring context to the wider Glen Junor project.

Benefits of Community Gardens

Community Connection

'Community' is the central tenet of a community farm project. The garden, centred on food production, processing and consumption, ties people together through producing the needs for any individual or family meal. The garden also acts as a 'third place', a gathering space for regular attendance that exists outside the home/work dichotomy. Third places are crucial for inspiring conversation, dialogue and ideas, and cultivating a sense of community.

There is a distinct absence of existing community gardens in the Gisborne/Macedon region, with the closest gardens according to Community Gardens Australia in neighboring cities of Daylesford, Kyneton, Goonwarra. This is surprising due to the presence of Gisborne in Melbourne's outer foodbowl, and the prominence of agriculture to the area's identity and economy. The Glen Junor Community Farm will help to fulfil the many benefits of community gardening for the residents and local community.

Community gardening for housing estates in Melbourne was inspired by the influx of Vietnamese residents in the 70s, who brought with them traditions of growing fresh greens on small plots near their homes. Modern iterations of community gardens in Australia are thus a testament to learnings of a multicultural society. This is crucial, as food is undeniably one of the places where cultural communication and exchange takes shape. Many of us encounter other cultures for the first time through tasting their cuisines, the contents of a meal telling stories about climate, culture, and more through selection of produce and spices.

Studies of community gardens have shown that they promote strong neighbourhood connections, fostering leadership and volunteerism. They are sites of encountering neighbours, sharing gardening tips and tools, swapping produce, and forging community relationships. In studies of community gardens in Melbourne, respondents indicated that the desire to meet neighbors and form connections was a key driver in their choice to join a community garden. Isolation is a problem for many Australians, particularly older citizens who are aging alone with limited community and care.

Community garden programs such as [Cultivating Community](#) have been shown to be instrumental for increasing the connectivity of gardeners of all ages, experience, and cultural background to their community. Community gardens are also an excellent place for intergenerational learning and skill sharing to occur, allowing for older folks' memories and food gardening experience to be passed on to young people starting on their food growing journey. There is also the opportunity to collaborate and share knowledge with other local community gardens, embedding the Glen Junor farm into a larger network of gardens and gardeners across Victoria and the country.

In order to encourage community leadership, the establishment and operation of the garden should be community-focused and constantly looking for ways to include the community where possible. This could be through the establishment of a Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA) produce box, volunteering in the nursery, and delivering the education program.

Wellbeing

Growing even a portion of food for oneself has a cascade of positive effects for mental and physical wellbeing. Similarly, many of the widely reporting benefits of community gardening are related to individual and community wellbeing. Some of the many reasons for this include the focus on fresh vegetables, physical exercise in the garden, and working outside as an outlet for stress and connection to nature.

Food grown in local gardens is seasonally fresh and naturally ripened, and thus can contain more nutritional value than commercially produced vegetables and fruit, which can be artificially ripened, and hit your plate days or weeks after harvest. More flavourful and fresh produce that is dictated by seasonality encourages the consumption of vegetables through creative and conscious cooking. Growing your own produce can also contribute to eating less meat, as centering meals around beautiful produce can disrupt norms around meat-centric meals that are common in Australia. There is also an increasing body of science that points to the microbial benefits of interacting with healthy soil and consuming food grown in local soils. Gut microbiomes also flourish from naturally fermented foods, which are a common offshoot of growing your own produce and dealing with excess through pickling and fermentation.

A general health recommendation is to exercise for thirty minutes to an hour per day. Many people don't enjoy or have time for concerted exercise program, but find that engaging in an activity they enjoy such as gardening can be a great avenue for getting outside and moving the body. Watering, weeding and just checking on your garden daily or a few times per week encourages you to get outside and walk around. It is a multi-sensory activity, employing all the senses to engage with the environment which can help to regulate emotions and stress. Particularly in times of eco-anxiety, gardening can feel like a tangible way to connect with nature and the seasons.

Loneliness and isolation are recognized contributors to poor health outcomes, which community gardens actively fight against by allowing for relaxed and informal contact between people with similar interests. Sharing food and common space is one of the main ways that people can connect with each other, and communal assets work to fight against the individualist elements of our culture that can lead to isolation.



Food Security

The Covid-19 crisis has been a wake-up call to everyone in Australia about the tenuous nature of our global supply chains and local food distribution. Australia is a remarkably food secure country, producing over 80% of our local food supply. However, there are gaps in the distribution of the country's plentiful food throughout the population. In the midst of this pandemic, food charities such as Foodbank have seen their demand rise by 50% due to increasing need from people losing their jobs and sources of income. Conversely, the donations received by these charities have fallen dramatically due to the closure of much of the hospitality and catering industry.

That demand for food is so outpacing supply highlights the need to diversify our food system at community-based levels. In March of this year, disruption to retailers' supply chains and staff schedules, coupled with panic-buying, saw the prices of fresh fruit and vegetables increased by 3-4 times regular prices (Dawes 2020). Unfortunately, the pressures on food supply and increasing food prices are also being exacerbated by climate change. The Columbia Earth Institute has researched this topic, indicating that continuing weather extremes due to climate change will cause food prices to continue to climb. This is due to climate change intensifying extreme weather events, such as drought, fire and flood, which make farming more difficult, impact supply chains, and increase scarcity of foods. This is something that is particularly prescient in Australia, already the driest inhabited country in the world, where drought impacts large-scale commercial farming and we are increasingly susceptible to heat and rain extremes.

As people's lives and routines have been disrupted, the one constant is the need to feed ourselves and our families. Studies show that when people's incomes are lowered, fresh produce is often the expense that they will go without. Improving food security and sovereignty means removing barriers to fresh produce access. A big component of this is empowering people to grow their own produce for themselves and their community.

Local resilience comes from local producers and knowledge. Encouraging backyard and community farming in Victoria is becoming more necessary than ever as Melbourne's foodbowl has decreased dramatically in recent years, due to development in the peri-urban fringe for housing and other amenities for a growing urban population. Setting up a community farm in Gisborne can help both the garden's members and the wider community to access fresh, local, and healthy produce. The Gisborne Foodbank have been receiving more clients than ever due to the Covid crisis, seeing weekly patronage increase by 10-15 families per week. By donating excess produce grown in the community garden, gardeners can cut back on their food waste, and contribute directly to their local community.



Sustainability & Biodiversity

Sustainability is embedded into the landscape features of this garden and throughout Glen Junor. Working with the team behind Mount Rothwell, Australia's largest feral-free native animal sanctuary, this development aims to be a model of Biodiversity-Sensitive Urban Design, creating spaces within the urban form that are dedicated to the proliferation of Australia's native animals. This devotion to wildlife diversity is also obvious in the regeneration of indigenous grasses and plants within the community farm, indigenous edible plants and the planned endangered species enclosure. Planting locally indigenous plants helps to regenerate the soils and encourage flora and fungi diversity.

The community farm is a key place to engage in and educate about sustainability practices. Gardening can help to promote carbon drawdown principles, including the use of solar power, regenerative farming, food waste reduction, recycling, composting and low food carbon miles. The design of the Foodcubes allow for rainwater to be captured within the vegetable garden units, reducing the amount of water required compared to conventional 'top-down' watering. This helps to increase resilience against drought, as well as reducing maintenance and daily watering. It is important to ensure that water containing chemicals or fertilisers from the garden is not leached offsite.

In order to ensure the garden has a negligible impact on the local landscape, care should be taken to prevent uncontrolled seed dispersal by wind, birds or animals. Likewise, weeds should be prevented from flowering and hot composted upon removal from the garden to denature their vegetative material. Planting diverse flowering plants along with productive vegies and fruits encourages many kinds of pollinators to visit the garden. Integrated pest management can be achieved through proliferating a diverse array of insects that predate upon and balance out pest species.

Communal composting facilities encourage the proliferation of sustainable home composting practices, as gardeners can share tips and get over any 'ick' factor that might be related to home-composting, particularly with visitors to the garden. Though green waste is collected by the local council, composting organic materials at home and in the garden allows for residents to reclaim an important source of nutrients that is otherwise considered 'waste'.

This farm will also include a significant nursery facility, which allows for the production of vegetable seedlings for plot holders. There is also the potential to propagate native and indigenous plants from the landscape, for use throughout the development and sale to the local community. Seedlings can be grown much less plastic and chemical than from commercial nurseries, and rely on seed-saving practices that encourage mindfulness in harvesting and composting.

Sustainability in the context of a community farm encourages minimizing waste and engaging in regenerative and self-sufficient practices. By focusing on closed-loop operations such as local cycling of resources through composting, reuse of materials, minimised plastic and artificial inputs, this farm can operate at the best practice for a community garden. This fosters a fruitful environment for teaching members and the wider community about reducing organic waste to landfill, closing nutrient loops at community and household levels, allowing for visions of circular economies and local food systems beyond the garden.

Education & Employment

Having access to a community garden can be an introduction to the worlds of growing food, engaging with nature, and volunteering in the community for many people. This space and associated functions increase literacy in the natural world, sustainability, and community development, potentially inspiring studies or employment in related areas. Interest in local and sustainable food production is increasing, particularly in the wake of Victoria's lockdown which has had more people turning to cooking and growing at home in order to make ends meet and pass time. The increase in stress afflicting young people, coupled with environmental pressures from climate change, can be addressed through community food education programs.

Growing food is a hands-on education about biological, ecological, climatic processes that govern the world. As agriculture and food production becomes more divorced from people's everyday lives, many people are unfamiliar with the botanical origins of foods as plants. The beauty of an education garden is the opportunity to plant a wide variety and diversity of food plants, in order to be able to show all kinds of growth to students.

Gisborne's population is made up of a higher percentage of children under the age of 18 than the rest of Victoria and Australia (ABS 2016). This indicates a need for education programs and other engagement opportunities for children and young people. Food education in Australian schools is inconsistently delivered, however studies show that school garden programs have positive impacts for students and the wider community from health and nutrition to broader academic outcomes. Experience in a garden helps students to understand the complex systems and associated environmental and social issues that intersect with food production and consumption.

Community gardens can also be used to host workshops and other lessons. They are often used as open-air classrooms where students are able to observe and interact with nature directly. This has been shown to be a powerful educational tool for subjects from sustainability and nutrition, to physical education and personal wellbeing. Partnering with local schools and educators can enrich the learning opportunities for students and teachers in the area. The physical space of the community garden can also be used as a venue for local practitioners and educators in specialities across the food, wellness and fitness, and environmental education disciplines to hold workshops and classes.

With a 'Jobs Plan' central to the development of Glen Junor, the community farm can act as an incubator for jobs related to agriculture, horticulture, and community development. The space of the farm and associated events can also facilitate career-oriented events, meetings, summits, workshops etc. that create opportunities for people to share information, run specialist trainings, and increasing local innovation. Participating in a community garden as a member or volunteer has positive benefits for the employability and work ethic of youth and others involved in the garden.

Community gardens are repositories and resources for communities to share knowledge and skills. As a meeting place for people of all levels of food-growing experience, people who are having trouble with specific plants, pests or other issues can engage with mentors. This facilitates collaborative learning and strengthens the community's knowledge base. Connections can also be made with other local community gardens, and urban farming and sustainability movements across the world. The Glen Junor community farm will undoubtedly strengthen and increase household scale food production across the future Glen Junor community, Gisborne township and surrounds, as people have a welcoming productive farm to visit, to access friendly expert advice and the latest in innovative food growing systems to replicate around their own homes.



Farm Description

Stage 1

Stage One of the Community Farm was recently constructed in September 2020. It features over 50 m² of growing space, contained in the self-watering Foodcube modules, along with seating areas, harvest tables, and composting facilities. This is built off an existing timber shed that will be refurbished and extended to provide cover for market stalls.

The produce grown in this stage will be donated to local food charities, prior to the establishment of the community areas of the farm. This introductory phase acts to demonstrate to the community the concept of the farm, encouraging future engagement and patronage, while also providing fresh produce for those who may need it.

Composting is an integral part of this farm operation as it closes the loop in organic waste streams and helps to build healthy soils. When organic waste goes to landfill, it is trapped under other waste products and breaks down anaerobically, which is a major source of methane and other greenhouse gases. Composting a significant amount of community and garden wastes reduces amount of waste to landfill produced. While Council does collect organic waste in Green Waste Bins, onsite composting facilities allow value to be captured and cycled through the community, increasing circularity and closing the nutrient loop at community scale. Every plant that is pulled from the garden represents a to replenishing garden soils. The final garden design allows for the larger composting areas in the farm to be situated on concreted pads, allowing for large piles of compost to be developed, creating the conditions for hot composting in which beneficial bacteria heat up the compost to over 60°C, sterilising weed seed and diseased vegetative matter. This is an important plant hygiene circuit breaker in the garden design to stop the cycle of reintroducing weed seed and disease back into garden beds via under-processed compost.



Future Stages

Nursery & Seed Bank

The onsite nursery will be a site partially dedicated to propagating and distributing native and locally indigenous plants for Gisborne and the Macedon Ranges. As development progresses throughout the region, coupled with climatic uncertainty and bushfire threatening remnant vegetation, this endeavor recognizes the importance of preserving and regenerating the genetic diversity of local plant species. The plants grown in this nursery can be used to repopulate onsite waterways by the Glen Junor landscape teams, as well as other developers in the area looking for local plant stock. This will also be a great resource for the local community looking to purchase plants for their own gardens and farms to encourage biodiversity. As such, the Glen Junor Nursery can serve as a local biodiversity centre for preserving and proliferating plants that are crucial to the ecosystems of the Macedon Ranges region, as well as educating the community and visitors about local ecosystems.

The nursery is also a crucial element of a self-sustainable community farm project. This space will allow farmers to propagate their own seedlings, reducing costs of input materials and encouraging seed-saving practices. Seed and seedling prices from wholesalers are increasing, particularly as gardening becomes more popular in Australia. Purchasing seedlings from conventional nurseries can introduce plant diseases and pesticides, and comes with a lot of plastic waste. An onsite local nursery can ensure a circular economy of seedling trays and reduce plastic waste from outside inputs.

An independent and locally focused nursery is particularly important to regenerate stocks of local and indigenous food plants that are harder to come by from commercial plant providers. Seed-saving practices can be integral to the food consumption cycle and encourage mindful use of 'waste' produce. This can also assist in preserving food diversity and proliferating heirloom varieties of produce, as well as encouraging new varieties to emerge. Observing, collecting, saving and germinating seed is also an important step in the life cycle of a plant.

The nursery can be staffed by the Farm Coordinator, assisted by skilled members of the garden. This can work to cultivate experience in the local community and create opportunities for horticultural education. Members of the garden and other visitors will be able to place orders and purchase diverse, seasonal and affordable plant seedlings in sustainable bulk formats. These can be sold at local farmer's markets or weekends onsite at the Farm.

Allotment Garden

The allotment garden will consist of individual member plots of multiple Foodcube advanced wicking beds for each gardener. These are elevated wicking beds in a row, allowing for ergonomic access, easy watering and minimal maintenance by the gardener.

Some members will already have food-growing systems set up at their individual homes. However, this may only be a few square metres of growing space, which is enough for an herb garden and growing fresh greens. Having an allotment at the community farm will allow residents to engage in more experimental, seasonal, and longer-term growing. This could mean a home garden that consists of herbs and salad greens at arms' length from the kitchen that can be easily plucked for meals, while the community farm plot allows them to grow large volumes of seasonal produce.

This area will be maintained by members, under the direction of a professional farmer/garden coordinator, ensuring the overall space is kept tidy and safe.

Market Garden

The Market Garden is run by a professional farmer/farm co-ordinator with the assistance of volunteer members and will grow produce specifically for the use of allotment members and to be supplied to general members via a general membership structure. It can also be where more long-term grows can be safely undertaken, and where indigenous food cultivars can be experimented with.

High-value specialty crops can be grown in this garden, appealing to local tastes and seasonality. These could include berries and other fruits from the orchard, as well as asparagus or other seasonal vegetables. This could also be complemented by flowers grown to encourage pollinators.

There is also the opportunity to form alliances with local cafes and restaurants, to supply them with specialty herbs and other products in season. This can generate income for the farm and help to establish the reputation of community garden.

Animals

A great garden is a collaboration between many different people, plants, and animals. The plans for the Glen Junor Community Farm include a chicken run and beekeeping as well as biodiversity interpretation centre. The incorporation of farm animals is a nod to the history of the property as a legacy racehorse training space.

A chicken run will be set up to facilitate chickens and potentially other fowl to be incorporated into the farm. Chickens are wonderful members of a garden, helping to consume food waste, produce fertilisers, and handle local bug populations. They can also be great for children and education about biological life cycles. Not to mention providing fresh and healthy eggs for farm members and customers! Urban beekeeping increases the number of beneficial pollinators in the garden, resulting in increased production of food for residents. Members who are interested in beekeeping can be responsible for the hives. The bees are kept at the bottom of the farm, separate from the main gardening areas to reduce contact with the public and members. Honey that is harvested can be sold in the Farmhouse, at farmers' markets, or distributed among members.

The biodiversity interpretation centre within the farm allows members and visitors to connect to the local biodiversity project being undertaken at Glen Junor. This will highlight the efforts of preserving native mammal species, as well as other animals and plants. Australia has the highest rate of mammal extinction in the world, and the stories of these animals, as well as those protecting their present, are important ones to tell in this space.

Indigenous Food Garden

Indigenous landscape plants will be grown throughout this garden to encourage local insect biodiversity. Additionally, an indigenous food garden will be a cornerstone of the education and outdoor classroom space. Indigenous food plants will be valuable to the garden for education and experimental opportunities, acting as a foil for learning stories of local traditional owner cultures and are important aspects of botanical biodiversity. They are also very sustainable plants to grow, requiring little water and being generally suited to the local environment. These food plants are also often medicinal and can have unique nutritional value.

Preserving and proliferating knowledge of indigenous food plants is crucial for understanding Australia's cultural history and present. They provide alternatives to conventionally cultivated food varieties, and have much room to be incorporated into diets and cuisine.

Event Space and Cafe

The many gathering spaces throughout the garden would be an inspiring spot to hold corporate events, training & strategy days, and meetings. The amenity of the garden, as well as the surround of Glen Junor and wider Gisborne area, provide the guests with the opportunity to connect with food, nature, and themselves. Hiring the space out for weddings and other celebrations are another potential source of revenue for the garden, and a lucrative one as the average spend on wedding venues in Victoria in 2019 was \$15k. Intimate and rustic weddings could be held beautifully in this space.

The building spaces can also be hired by local artists and artisans to showcase their works. Yoga teachers, Sport Groups, Book Clubs, etc. can rent spaces within the Community Garden from which to conduct their practice/ teaching/ meetings on a regular basis. These could occur in one of the gathering spaces, activating the space and providing activities for residents and members of the community. There are many local freelance yoga teachers and personal trainers in the area who would be likely to appreciate the natural amenity of the gardens to conduct their practice.

The event space and Café can be leased out to a commercial operator if required, with rental income being paid into the community farm operational budget.

Market

A farmers' market will be a highlight of this project, inviting the community into the space and providing opportunity for local producers. The entrance space and open courtyard area adjacent to the farm, Café and nursery has been planned to allow for farmers markets, with ease of access for stallholders to come in and out of the space. There is already an iconic local market, the Gisborne Olde Time market, which runs on the First Sunday of the month. This is an extremely popular market, with over 250 stalls that range from fresh produce and pre-cooked foods, to artisan crafts, jewellery, etc. The popularity and usual attendance of this market indicates an appetite for consumers and producers for this kind of retail experience. A local market can provide opportunities for garden members to sell their produce and products such as ferments, pickles, jams—potentially providing a stepping-stone to developing a small business. This is also the place where produce from the Market Garden and seedlings from the community nursery can be sold and distributed to the local community.



Workshops

The variety of workshops that can be offered onsite in the event space are endless, from ecological restoration, cooking to sustainability to health, career development, and beyond. Workshops can be held specifically to cater to the needs of the garden's members, focusing on skills or produce preserving. Additionally, Glen Junor's offering will be dependent on the skills in the local community and the appetite of residents.

On-farm cooking schools are very popular across the world. They allow for hyper-local ingredients to be utilized locally, inviting guests to learn about their production and use, while gleaned new culinary skills and techniques. Sourdough baking has seen a huge surge in popularity in lockdown, along with other rustic skills that can be taught in lengthy courses. Celebrity chefs can be huge draws for cooking courses and events, along with members of cultural groups teaching skills from their local cuisines.

Other community gardens also offer permaculture design courses and related sustainability education courses. Teaming up with educators in this field can help to create a leading and respected education and workshop program for Glen Junor.



Developer Context

Budget, governance and staffing

The Glen Junor farm has a range of income generation opportunities including leasing the event space and café to professional operators, with income directed to the annual farm maintenance and staffing budget. In addition, a monthly farmers market can raise funds through stallholders fees. Other income can come from farm memberships and a Community Supported Agriculture foodbox scheme, garden ecotourism tours, courses and events.

The suggested governance model is for the farm to be leased at peppercorn rent to the Glen Junor Community Farm Association or similar, a not for profit group comprised of members of the garden. This group has a committee who oversee memberships and governance, and hire a professional farm manager/coordinator. The farm coordinator is someone who is skilled in horticulture, landscape and maintenance. This person is tasked with managing the farm, ensuring it is maintained well at all times with the help of the gardener volunteers, and is a resource to provide advice to the gardener population and membership.

Glen Junor Community Farm as designed and contemplated promised to be a nationally significant urban agriculture asset and destination, with strong income generating capabilities to ensure the farm is financially robust and independent into the future, to ensure it is maintained well and delivering significant community benefit in perpetuity.

Fees & Costs

Plotholder fees

Operational Costs



Property Values

In terms of land tenure, The Glen Junor Community Farm is more secure than many other urban community gardens, which are usually situated on public land. These are built on land owned by the city or council, and are often the most undesirable plots of land, that are still vulnerable to development pressures. The longevity of many urban community garden projects can be cut short due to the land being sold to developers or turned into public housing or other uses. This is not a threat to the Glen Junor Farm, as the developer has backed the development of the community garden from the outset, ensures the longevity of the project as a permanent asset to the community.

The value and importance of urban farming is increasingly being noticed by the urban planning industry. Increasingly, agricultural land is being subsumed by the push of in the peri-urban fringe of cities such as Melbourne. The Planning Schemes of Western Sydney councils now prioritise agricultural space and agribusiness being incorporated into the housing overlay, to mitigate the loss of farmland, and to encourage a diverse local food community.

Similarly, there is a shift in the real estate industry to recognition of the material benefits of urban farming and community gardens. A study in New York City found that proximity to community gardens has a positive benefit to property values. Higher quality gardens—those deemed as having quality fencing and security, nonseasonal decorations, and acceptable landscaping—had the most positive impact on property values. According to members of Dudley Neighbors Incorporated (DNI) in Massachusetts, the presence of a community garden in their neighbourhood increases the marketability of homes. This is as future residents see the value in not just buying into a house, but a community that is based on fresh, locally grown food and cooperation.

The development of a thriving community garden can help shift focus from the mechanics of the sustainable individual family home, to that of a sustainable, well designed community. The community garden thus acts as a fulcrum from which deeper community connection and collaborations can be built, based on the cultural mainstays of food and work toward a common goal. This is a very healthy and inspiring model for community development and is likely to encourage new residents to enter the community, as well as existing residents, to share these values.

Next Steps

Following this initial exploratory paper, there are many steps that can ensure this farm's success.

- Community engagement and consultation process
- Completion of Community Farm infrastructure
- Assess other programs that can complement the farm, such as Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA) or bulk-food store, cafe
- Education programming & staff

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