Community Gardens:
A place for cultivating social and community development

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The University of New South Wales
Undergraduate Thesis
October, 2009
Preface

My decision to study community gardens is largely influenced by my personal experiences with community gardens built on public housing estates. I grew up living near a prominent garden; the Riverwood Community Garden. During visitations to my aunt’s home; located in the Riverwood Public Housing Estate, I would pass by and spend countless hours watching the tenants serenely gardening. Part of me felt connected to the Garden as several of the gardeners were friends of my aunt, who I was introduced to during several occasions.

Over the years, I grew to admire the Garden and visited it in my spare time and when I had troubles on my mind. It offered me immediate respite and change from my routine and at times, hectic lifestyle. I would sit and watch how the tenants would socialise with each other over gardening. Their plants and herbs would attract anybody's attention, being overly colourful and vibrant. Just walking past the Garden caused my smelling senses to become instantly overwhelmed by an alluring mix of fragrances. Overtime, I noticed how the gardeners’ ability to socialise with each other developed, while their confidence grew, allowing them to easily communicate with non-gardening tenants and public visitors to the Garden. The Garden gradually changed in physical form, effortlessly changing the lives of the tenants on the Estate.

I stopped visiting the Riverwood Community Garden for a few years as my family and I relocated to a new suburb, but I later revisited to the area after enrolling in school holiday activities run by the adjoining Riverwood Community Centre. At first sight of the Garden I was simply glad to see it had doubled in size and looked amazingly beautiful. On entering the Garden I was quickly overwhelmed by the high level of social interaction that was unfolding before my eyes. Gardeners planted their seedlings together. Some sat around tables playing card games, while others simply sat in groups and talked over eating their fresh produce. It was an incredibly beautiful scene. I was bombarded by the gardeners’ eagerness to find out who I was and why I was attracted to the Garden. I was amazed at how developed their social skills and confidence had become. My aunt’s social skills and outlook on life had also changed as a direct outcome from frequently visiting the Garden and socialising with the gardeners, other tenants of the Estate and members of the public.

I was intrigued by community gardens after witnessing first-hand how they effortlessly allow individuals who may have initially felt isolated and disconnected from the community to live fulfilling lives. To this day I regard community gardens as places where a person’s life could be completely changed and enhanced. For this reason, I decided to study community gardens built on public housing estates with the personal desire to delve into the vast array of benefits they offer and to investigate what could be done to promote the establishment of more gardens. It is hoped that my research and recommendations are taken onboard to further encourage social harmony and community spirit within public housing estates.
Acknowledgments

Carrying out this study has presented itself as an extremely demanding and worthwhile undertaking. I have wholeheartedly dedicated the last three months to completing this thesis, made possible because of the education and support provided to us by the academic staff from the Planning Program at UNSW, throughout the past five years.

To my parents and three sisters, thank you for the continual support and advice you have provided over the past five years, especially the last three months. It is thanks to you that I initially discovered community gardens.

To my brother Charbel, who has continued to encourage me throughout the entire research process, thank you for your companionship especially during those long nights when I needed a friend to support me.

To Dr. Christine Steinmetz, thank you for your continual mentoring, helpful feedback and your patience. I truthfully could not have asked for a superior advisor.

To Prof Rob Freestone, thank you for your on-going ideas and advice which helped to direct the focus of the thesis.

To my university colleagues – George, Marearna and Rhonda, as well as the remainder of my planning class, thank you all for your continual support and humor during this hectic time.

To the Housing NSW Community Greening Coordinator, thank you for supporting my research and providing me with the informative knowledge required to formulate my social planning and practical recommendations.

To the community coordinators of the UNSW Community Development Program and the Riverwood Community Centre, thank you for taking out some time from your busy schedules to support my research.

Last but not least, I would like to thank all the gardeners of the Poet’s Corner and Riverwood Community Gardens who so charitably gave up their time to assist me during my research. Without your insights and ideas, I could not have gained a deep understanding of the many benefits community gardens offer.
Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of Jacob Kannan.

His eagerness for, and dedication to promoting community gardens was influential in the establishment of the Riverwood Community Garden. He envisioned the countless benefits community gardens had to offer to his fellow public housing tenants.

Source: Mobayed 2009
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<tr>
<td>ABS</td>
<td>Australian Bureau of Statistics</td>
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<td>ACFCGN</td>
<td>Australian City Farms &amp; Community Gardens Network</td>
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<td>BC</td>
<td>Before Christ</td>
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<tr>
<td>BGT</td>
<td>Botanical Gardens Trust</td>
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<td>CCC</td>
<td>Canterbury City Council</td>
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<td>CGP</td>
<td>Community Greening Program</td>
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<td>CoSC</td>
<td>City of Sydney Council</td>
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<td>DoH</td>
<td>NSW Department of Housing</td>
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<td>FBE</td>
<td>Faculty of the Built Environment</td>
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<td>HCAP</td>
<td>Housing and Communities Assistance Program</td>
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<td>LGA</td>
<td>Local Government Area</td>
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<td>NFCFCG</td>
<td>National Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens</td>
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<td>NSW</td>
<td>New South Wales</td>
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<td>RCC</td>
<td>Riverwood Community Centre</td>
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<td>UK</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
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<td>UNSW</td>
<td>University of New South Wales</td>
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<td>UNSWCDP</td>
<td>University of New South Wales Community Development Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>United States of America</td>
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<td>USSGA</td>
<td>United States School Garden Army</td>
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Abstract

A community garden is a collective venture that entails the formation of a social network. It voluntarily brings together people who might otherwise find little in common. The potential benefits delivered by community gardens are countless. They can not only foster social networking amongst gardeners but contribute to broader community development. For this reason, community gardens have been highlighted as a means to unite communities and build confidence and social interaction amongst public housing tenants, who have been shown in studies to be lacking in social interaction and community involvement.

This thesis reviews and studies how community gardens help facilitate social and community development amongst public housing tenants. The methodology involves an analysis of community renewal policy in New South Wales and local council social planning initiatives, in-depth qualitative interviews with key public community workers and a public housing authority, and the facilitation of focus groups in two case study public housing community gardens: the Poet’s Corner (Redfern) and Riverwood Community Gardens. The gardeners’ experiences and ideas are analysed to identify how community gardening directly encourages social and community development. The thesis makes recommendations for public housing authorities and local councils to enhance social and community development amongst public housing tenants.
Chapter One
Community Gardens: A Place for Cultivating Social and Community Development

Chapter Two: Background
Chapter Three: Case Studies: Poet's Corner and Riverwood Community Gardens
Chapter Four: Analysis: Social and Community Development
Chapter Five: Final Thoughts
1.1 Introduction

In the effort to maintain equality and justice throughout the nation, the Australian Government has continued to support its people through financial and social security. One way this is achieved is through the provision of affordable housing, more commonly known as public housing. These universally acknowledged public housing estates have shown to foster and emit a multitude of negative social effects (Bayliss 2003). The more common of these are crime, antisocial behavior, social isolation, psychological disorders and subsequent high suicide rates. The prevalence of these effects is a direct result of poor social planning policy within the estates. Significant studies have exposed a direct correlation between social planning policy, the level of social harmony and community spirit, and the level of negative social effects (Pope 2006; Urbis 2004).

With demand for social housing set to rise considerably in the years ahead, and as a result so to the percentage of the Australian population residing in public housing, the need for the implementation of effective social planning policy in the public housing estate context, is extremely important (AHURI 2009). Well-structured and proven social planning strategies and initiatives could assist in ensuring and maintaining social and community development. This will subsequently reduce the incidence of negative social effects within public housing estates. One initiative regarded as cost-effective and simple to set up, while also being outstandingly effective in ensuring social interaction and increasing community development, is ‘community gardens’ (Glover, Parry & Shinew 2004).

The history and development of community gardens in Australia and abroad has shown to be fairly elaborate, originating in the early nineteenth century (Hatherly 2003). The present circumstances surrounding community gardening reiterates the escalating aspiration for such peaceful places. Community gardens are considered to be grand contributors to social and community development, while also offering a collection of other benefits including but not limited to the access to nutritious food, food security, waste minimisation, education on sustainable living practices, physical exercise and passive recreation, crime reduction and public places reclamation (Grayson 2007).

Community gardens are acknowledged as exerting great benefits for highly disadvantaged areas which encompass high-density public housing. The potential individual benefits community gardens could offer towards social and community development are endless. They may present the opportunity for gardeners to socially interact with each other and other non-gardening tenants, whilst also encouraging the appreciation of cultural difference. This would allow gardeners to involve themselves in cross-cultural events, sustaining social and cultural harmony and breaking down existing cultural barriers. Community gardens may also provide a way whereby public housing tenants could directly network with the public in a non-threatening way.

Community gardening may present itself as a crucial scheme in allowing participants to feel part of the community, equipping them with a strengthened sense of belonging. Community gardens may act as a vehicle for directing gardeners out into the public community life, opening up a plethora of opportunities for them to associate with community organisations and involve themselves in communal events.

It was been acknowledged that community gardens are only able to exist through the continual support of State and local governments alongside that provided by community-based organizations (Grayson 2007). State public housing authorities need to be actively effective in
restoring social harmony and community spirit amongst public housing tenants through the implementation of community renewal projects. This could be achieved through the provision of on-going support to community gardens. The on-going support and assistance of local councils may be required at the local level to help run the day-to-day operation of community gardens. This emphasises the suggestion that public housing authorities and local councils need to develop further social planning initiatives to aid and maintain social and community development within community gardens.

Community gardens should not be considered as the definitive answer for resolving the mass of negative social issues that are present within public housing estates. Together with other State and local government directed community renewal programs and initiatives, community gardens could be utilised to successfully cultivate social and community development (Bartolomei et al. 2003).

The next section of this introductory chapter summarises the importance and scope of the research and the methodology utilised in the research. A background to the problem setting is provided followed by an outline of the thesis statement and listing of the thesis research questions. An explanation of the theoretical framework precedes a quick explanation of the significance of the research. A detailed explanation of the employed methodology in the research is provided before the chapter concludes with a brief description of the content of each chapter contained in this thesis.

1.2 Problem setting

Increasing sole-parent households, the aging population, decreasing housing affordability and rising unemployment are driving demand for, additional public housing dwellings in Australia. Projections forecast this immediate need to continue to rise during the next decade (AHURI 2009). This highlights the need for effective government social planning policy to maintain social harmony between public housing tenants and sustain community spirit in areas of dense public housing.

Significant studies (Bayliss 2003; Mees 2007; Pope 2006; Urbis 2004) reveal levels of social interaction and community spirit within public housing estates to be substantially low. This has the subsidiary effects of increased crime, antisocial behavior, social isolation, psychological disorders and subsequent high suicide rates (Urbis 2004; Pope 2006). It has been revealed that the social housing tenants are more prone to social isolation and anxiety than people not living on public housing estates, resulting in significantly higher rates of juvenile and adult suicide (Mees 2007).

State governments require a thorough review of their existing social planning policy to help reduce this crisis. This needs to be acted on immediately as the rate of public housing estate construction is rapidly increasing. There are a range of techniques for ensuring social harmony and community spirit are maintained within public housing estates. These techniques need to be studied and suited to the public housing context. One initiative, regarded as exceptionally effective in ensuring social interaction and increasing community development is community gardens. They are widely acknowledged as a place where people are able to effortlessly interact with each other and the wider community in a non-threatening way (Linn 1999; Moncrief & Langsenkamp 1976; Schrieber 1998).
A profusion of literature has revealed the many benefits community gardens offer for public housing tenants (Bartolomei et al. 2003; Bayliss 2003; Mees 2007; Pope 2006). Few studies have investigated community gardening’s specific contribution to social and community development. Furthermore, no studies have researched how social planning policies directly affect the level of social and community development within public housing estate community gardens. Community gardens need to be acknowledged as a successful means for effortless tenant interaction and therefore need to be efficiently utilised to take advantage of the numerous benefits they offer to social and community development in public housing estates.

1.3 Thesis statement and research questions

This thesis recognises the increasing pressures on public housing authorities to successfully devise and implement strategies aimed at ensuring social harmony and strong community spirit within public housing estates. It also reveals a deficiency in planning literature aimed at investigating the social planning policies employed by public housing authorities to maximise social and community development within and through community gardens. Community gardens are a simple and cost-effective initiative to implement on public housing estates to act as a mechanism for encouraging social interaction between tenants. They need to be taken advantage of by public housing authorities in their struggle in removing the many negative knock-on effects of poor levels of social interaction and community spirit amongst public housing tenants.

This thesis primarily aims to present community gardens as an extremely positive initiative in restoring social harmony and community spirit within public housing estates. This is achieved by the execution of the following core objectives:

1. Review the literature on the history, development and current situation of community gardening in Australia and abroad whilst also exploring current government direction and role in community garden establishment and support.

2. Analyse the significant contribution community gardens make to social and community development.

3. Explore the history, development and features of the Poet’s Corner and Riverwood Community Gardens, whilst also investigating the background of Redfern and Riverwood together with their highly concentrated public housing estates.

4. Explore the real-life contributions community gardens make to social and community development for gardeners of the Poet’s Corner and Riverwood Community Gardens through the analysis of the findings from the in-depth interviews, focus group interviews and onsite observations.

5. Examine the various ways public housing authorities and local government help support community garden establishment and contribute to social and community development within and through community gardens.
6. Devise feasible social planning strategies and practical recommendations for public housing authorities and local councils to maximise social and community development within and through public housing estate community gardens.

### 1.4 Theoretical frameworks

There are several key works which have informed the direction of this thesis. While there have been a profusion of studies analysing the multiple benefits community gardens offer (Armstrong 2004; Grayson 2007; Holland 2004; Kowala-Stamm 2006; Larson 2006), the lack of resourceful literature on their specific contribution to social and community development within the public housing estate context, has limited the analysis of theory. This dilemma has also been observed in the research of how social planning policies directly affect the level of social and community development within public housing estate community gardens. Nevertheless, this thesis is grounded by renowned theories behind community gardens and their significant contribution to social and community development, as identified below. The theories provide the initial basis for the qualitative research which supports the literature.

**Community gardens**

According to Grayson (2007), the term ‘community garden’ is regarded as an inclusive term for different types of activities that involve practices such as horticulture of foods, community involvement, and government support and participation. Community gardens are believed to be multifunctional places with a vast assortment of spaces, plants, environments and opportunities which draw people from a wide cross section of the community and help to satisfy a vast array of interests and needs (Leichhardt Municipal Council 2004). The literature suggests community gardens are grassroots initiatives aimed at revitalising low-to-moderate income neighborhoods in urban settings (Landman 1993; Linn 1999; Pottharst 1995). They are regarded as being facilitated by social service agencies, housing authorities, local councils, or grassroots associations (Glover 2003).

**Social development**

There is a general consensus that community gardens can act as a means whereby relationships could become forged across the cultural divide allowing tenants of various ethnic backgrounds to become acquainted with each other on a personal basis (Bartolomei et al. 2003). Community gardens are considered to lead to further socialising outside of the garden space through the relationships built in the garden (Glover, Parry & Shinew 2005). They are perceived as not only promoting social interaction amongst participant gardeners, but also providing participants with the skills and confidence to network with people not associated with the community garden, outside of the garden walls. Strong theory further suggests community gardens help facilitate improved social networks, allow residents to meet each other and learn about other organisations and activities in their local community (Armstrong 2000).

**Community development**

Community development is identified as being the “art of connecting, the power of telling stories and having conversations locally” (Montgomery 2005, p. 5). Jenson (1998) suggests that a community is made of a combination of five dimensions. These dimensions include belonging, inclusion, participation, recognition, and legitimacy. For a community to exist and operate at its best, existence of these five dimensions must be strongly evident. It is suggested that community gardening creates the opportunity for culturally diverse groups and people of different ages to...
interact and develop a sense of community and belonging (Henderson-Wilson, Kingsley & Townsend 2009). They are considered to greater assist in strengthening the sense of community both in and out of the garden (Provençal 2007). This theory has been reinforced with the consideration that gardens promote a sense a belonging to a community and a sentiment of wanting to contribute back to the community (Pope 2006).

1.5 Significance of the research

There is a wealth of literature aimed at analysing the numerous advantages community gardens offer for public housing tenants (Bartolomei et al. 2003; Bayliss 2003; Grayson 2007; Mees 2007; Urbis 2004). Of these, only a relative number have investigated their contribution to social and community development. In addition, no studies have researched how social planning policies directly affect the level of social and community development within public housing estate community gardens.

Community gardens need to be recognised as a valuable means for effortless tenant interaction and as a result, need to be resourcefully exploited by public housing authorities to take advantage of the many benefits they offer to social and community development in public housing estates. The thesis therefore seeks to make a contribution to the small body of existing literature analysing the contribution community gardens make to social and community development and attempts to fill the gap in the literature on the social planning policies employed by public housing authorities to maximise social and community development within and through public housing community gardens. It is anticipated that the establishment of community gardens on public housing estates will gradually increase over the next few years with the boost in the development of public housing estates. The provision of multiple achievable social planning strategies and practical recommendations in this thesis, are aimed at jumpstarting the development of policies by public housing authorities and local councils, aimed at maximising social and community development within and through public housing estate community gardens.

1.6 Methodology

The methodology for this thesis was executed using a triangulated research strategy consisting of three principle elements: analysis of international and Australian literature on the history and multiple benefits of community gardens, as well as the effect government social policy and direction has on them; comprehensive qualitative methods in the form of in-depth interviews and focus group interviews with community garden participants and community development program coordinators, and site visits of community gardens built within public housing estates.

Literature analysis

The basis of this thesis is a review of Australian and international academic literature focusing on the history, development and current situation of community gardening in Australia and aboard. This literature is also used to analyse how community gardens contribute to social and community development. Literature and data from a range of sources including academic studies and articles, State public housing authority social planning evaluations reports, State government and local council policy direction plans, community garden polices and statistical data from the Australia Bureau of Statistics (ABS) has been undertaken to investigate the current direction and role of Australian State and local governments on community gardening.
Through a rigorous analysis of these sources, it has been identified that much of the existing research relating to community gardens is focused upon identifying the general benefits community gardens have to offer. An abundance of literature have analysed the multiple benefits community gardens offer for public housing tenants (Bartolomei et al. 2003; Bayliss 2003; Mees 2007; Pope 2006). There is relatively little data relating to their specific contribution to social and community development and no information on how social planning policies directly affect the level of social and community development within public housing estate community gardens. Therefore, the focus of this thesis is on identifying the benefits of community gardens to social and community development and how social planning policies directly affect the level of social and community development within public housing estate community gardens through a range of other research methods.

Qualitative methodology

For this study, qualitative methodology was used to collect data because it offers the opportunity for superior insight into individuals' understanding and lived experiences (Denzin & Lincoln 1998; Adler, Altschuler, & Somkin 2004). Qualitative research ‘is very often seen as having a more fluid and exploratory character’ (Mason 1996, p. 9) allowing an ‘emphasis on discovering novel or unanticipated findings (Bryman 1984, pp. 77–78). The lack of literature made it desirable to use an exploratory approach to this research. In exploratory research such as this there is a need to adopt qualitative methodology which selects ‘information rich cases’ to gain a better understanding of the research area (Rice & Ezzy 1999; Henderson-Wilson, Kingsley & Townsend 2009).

In-depth interviews

I lodged an ethics application through the UNSW Faculty of the Built Environment Human Research Ethics Advisor Panel to undertake multiple in-depth interviews, and was granted successful approval to execute my research (Approval No. 95036, See Appendix A). A structured interview technique was used during the in-depth interviews and the focus group interviews, consisting of open-ended questions, chosen to draw out descriptive responses on the interviewees’ perceptions of community gardening benefits to social and community development and the social planning contributions made by public housing authorities and local councils within the community garden context. The questions were separated in various sections by topic, remaining consistent in structure across all interviews (See Appendix F, G, H and I).

The questions focused on issues such as the policy directions and contributions of public housing authorities and local councils, the background of the area and Garden establishment, witnessed examples of social and community development within the case study community gardens and negatives of community gardening. I also engaged in discussion by ‘funnelling’ questions. This provided me with more information about specific aspects of the interviewees' answers. Thematic analysis was undertaken to expose themes emerging from the data. The data was then coded to get an insight into the interviewees' perceptions.

There are a total of seven interviewees, each chosen using a snowballing technique. Of these, three are professionals, selected for their direct part in the establishment of the Poet’s Corner and Riverwood Community Gardens and in community gardens in general. The Coordinator for Community Greening, Housing NSW, the Coordinator of the University of New South Wales Community Development Program (UNSWCDP) and the Manager of Family, Children, Youth and Social Housing Services, Riverwood Community Centre were selected for interviewing. Public housing tenants who are experts in community gardening were also involved in the research. In-depth interviews were individually undertaken with two members of the Poet’s
Corner Community Garden, while two members of the Riverwood Community Garden were also interviewed in a focus group. The details, background and role of the each of the interviewed professionals and gardeners are outlined in Appendix D). The interview process was explained to each participant followed by a brief description of the research project before each participant was provided with a Project Information Statement (Appendix B) and Project Consent Form (Appendix C).

Site selection
There are various personal and professional reasons that directed my decision to select the Poet’s Corner and Riverwood Community Gardens as my case study sites. One personal reason is that I am quite familiar with the Riverwood Community Garden as I used to live near it, witnessing its establishment and growth. Secondly, my Arabic background and ability to speak fluent Arabic would allow me to communicate with a large number of the gardeners and ultimately win their trust. Lastly, I have studied the Poet’s Corner Community Garden during an earlier assignment, providing me with the advantage of already being knowledgeable about the garden. One professional reason is that I wanted to study two gardens that were different in physical size and participant numbers. The Poet’s Corner Community Garden is quite small compared to the Riverwood garden and has just over one quarter of the number of participants gardening at Riverwood. Secondly, I needed to select an inner-city garden and a suburban garden so that the results of the research would not be skewed (refer to Figure 1.1). Lastly, there are a number of literatures which focus on the fame and success of the Riverwood Community Garden in bringing people together. They have provided me with a mass of meaningful information.

Figure 1.1: Map of case study community gardens
Source: Google Maps 2009, adapted by Mobayed 2009
Process of the fieldwork
Participant observation was undertaken in concurrence with the in-depth interviews to further enrich the data that I needed. This was undertaken during my fieldwork. The first part of my fieldwork involved site visits to both community gardens. Having read about the various ways community gardening contributes to social and community development in multiple literatures, I decided to experience the real environment in person and capture such development in action by camera. A fieldwork approval was obtained from the Head of Program to conduct the site visit. I developed a pro forma which would guide my site actions at the site visits (See Appendix D). I took a wide selection of photographs at each of the case study community gardens of the gardeners actively involved in gardening and socialising with each other, while also socialising with members of the public as well as myself. The second part of my fieldwork involved face to face questioning of random gardeners. During my time in the community gardens, I was an active participant in physical gardening activities and spoke with the gardeners during gardening. The questions I asked aimed to provide me with a quick insight into the gardeners’ experiences in the garden; specifically how they felt the gardens allowed them to interact with other people, while also contributing to them being more involved in the community. Combined with in-depth interviews and a focus group of gardeners, I was able to gather the required data needed to validate my theories which I could then devise potential solutions from.

1.7 Thesis structure and outline

In order to achieve each objective respectively, the thesis is structured into the following chapters:

Chapter One – Community Gardens: A Place for Cultivating Social and Community Development
This chapter of the thesis summarises the importance, scope and methodology utilised in the research. A background to the problem setting is provided followed by an outline of the thesis statement and listing of the thesis research questions. An explanation of the theoretical framework precedes a quick explanation of the significance of the research. A detailed explanation of the employed methodology in the research is provided before the chapter concludes with a brief description of the content of each chapter contained in this thesis.

Chapter Two - Background
This chapter is the thesis literature review. It begins by introducing and explaining the practice of community gardening. The background context of community gardens including the definition, history, development and current situation of community gardening in Australia and abroad are outlined through the review of Australian and international literature. The current direction and role of Australian state and local governments on community gardening is also discussed. The chapter concludes with an analysis of the many benefits community gardens have to offer with an in-depth look into their contribution to social and community development.

Chapter Three - Case Studies: Poet’s Corner and Riverwood Community Gardens
This chapter introduces the two case studies; Poet’s Corner and Riverwood Community Gardens. A demographic snapshot of Redfern and Riverwood is provided with a look into the background of their respective highly dense public housing estates. The establishment process, level of government intervention, garden features and gardener demographics of the Poet’s
Corner and Riverwood Community Gardens are investigated. The chapter concludes with a quick analysis of the findings of the case study background investigation.

**Chapter Four – Analysis: Social and Community Development**

The chapter attempts to fill the gap in the literature on the social planning policies employed by public housing authorities to maximise social and community development within and through public housing community gardens through the analysis of the two case studies; Poet’s Corner and Riverwood Community Gardens. The real-life contributions community gardens make to social and community development for a particular section of the community; tenants of public housing estates, are analysed by drawing from the informative interview material in the form of quotes from the focus group and interviews. The chapter concludes with a thorough investigation into the various ways Australian public housing authorities and local councils help support community garden establishment, provide on-going support and contribute to social and community development within and through community gardens.

**Chapter Five – Final Thoughts**

This final chapter of the thesis summarises the research findings from the previous chapter, revealing the most significant results. My perceived limitations of the research are explored, while a reflection on required future research is provided. The chapter continues with the provision of an elaborate list of specific social planning initiatives and practical recommendations, devised for public housing authorities and local councils to maximise social and community development within and through public housing estate community gardens. The chapter concludes with a brief reflection on the entire thesis.

A representation of the above outline is presented in Figure 1.2.
Problem Setting

Community Gardens

Social Development

Community Development

History and Development

Government Contributions

Fieldwork Case Study Analysis

Recommendations

Figure 1.2: Structure of thesis
Source: Mobayed 2009
2.1 Introduction

Since originating in Europe and Great Britain during the early nineteenth century, community gardening has continued to exist in one form or another (Hatherly 2003). Community gardens were highly praised as a means of allowing for the economical provision of one’s own food supply. The reasoning behind community garden practice has changed through the years and currently perceived as possessing a multitude of social, economic and environmental benefits (Grayson 2008).

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce and explain the practice of community gardening. The background context of community gardens including the definition, history, development and current situation of community gardening in Australia and abroad are outlined through the review of Australian and international literature. The current direction of Australian state and local governments on community gardening is also discussed. This chapter concludes with an analysis of the many benefits community gardens have to offer with an in-depth look into their contribution to social and community development.

2.2 What is a community garden?

A community garden means many things to many people and therefore, there are several ways to define it. For some, a community garden is a place to grow food, flowers and herbs in the company of friends and neighbours, while for others, it’s a place to reconnect with nature or get physical exercise. Some people take part in community gardening to build or revitalise a sense of community among neighbours (Glover, Parry & Shinew 2004).

I have accepted the following definition:

“Community gardens are places where people come together to grow fresh food, to learn, relax and make new friends” (ACFCGN 2009 p. 1).

Grayson (2007) considers a community garden to be an area of shared land in which members of a community participate in the cultivation of food and other plants. He suggests that the term ‘community garden’ is an inclusive term for different types of activities that involve practices such horticulture of foods, community involvement, and government support and participation. Community gardens are multifunctional places with a great diversity of spaces, plants, environments and opportunities. They attract people from a wide cross section of the community, satisfying an enormous variety of interests and needs (Leichhardt Municipal Council 2004).

Domestic and international literatures identify two types of community gardens – communal and allotment. Communal gardens involve participants sharing maintenance of an entire garden and dividing the harvest among all gardeners, while allotment gardens are based on members having a defined area of land for which they are responsible and have exclusive rights to grow and harvest produce (Grayson, 2000). This thesis focuses on communal gardens. Figures 2.1 and 2.2 show the varying layouts of the two types of community gardens.
Figure 2.1: Allotment Garden  
Source: Grayson 2007

Figure 2.2: Communal Garden  
Source: Grayson 2007
Community gardens are often grassroots initiatives aimed at revitalising low-to-moderate income neighborhoods in urban settings (Landman 1993; Linn 1999; Pottharst 1995). Glover (2003, pp. 264-265) identifies community gardens as being communal projects facilitated by social service agencies, housing authorities, local councils, or grassroots associations, implying that community gardens are widely supported. They are less about gardening than they are about community, offering non-commercial places outside of work and home where people can gather, network, and identify together as residents of a neighborhood (Linn 1999; Moncrief & Langsenkamp 1976; Schriever 1998).

2.3 The history of community gardens

Origin
Foreign community gardens have an extensive history beginning with allotment gardening in 100BC in the small Celtic fields of Lands End, Cornwall, (still in operation this day) (Humphreys 1996). By the “early 1800s in the United Kingdom (UK) and by the 1830s in Western Europe, urban allotments were being set aside as places where people could supplement their food supply” (Grayson 2007, p. 20). They were considered as a means for cost-effective living.

The literature reveals that the practice of community gardening has been firmly recognised as being predominantly practiced in the UK and the United States of America (USA). During the 1890s, the USA saw the appearance of its first community garden, established in Detroit. During the initial phase of community gardening, a mixture of groups, including social and educational reformers, together with those who were directly a part of the civic beautification movement, were responsible for encouraging community gardening. The gardens originated as a means to providing land and technical assistance to unemployed workers in large cities and to teach civics and good work behavior to youth (McKelvey 2009).

Educational benefit
During the early 1900s, American educational reformer, John Dewey, actively encouraged gardens in schools. He influenced teachers in presenting learning opportunities in their classes that would unite academic subjects with practical experiences. This encouraged students to establish gardens, allowing them to discover fundamental principles and skills through their hands-on efforts. Approximately 80,000 school gardens across the USA were in operation by 1910, established to offer experiential learning and creating strong-bodied, competent and satisfied citizens (Bartolomei et al. 2003; Fang 1995).

Wartime Gardens
While World War I was in progress, the US government endorsed community gardens to supplement and increase the domestic food supply. The federal government began an extraordinary effort to integrate agricultural education and food production into the public school curriculum through a Bureau of Education program called the United States School Garden Army (USSGA). According to the USSGA, millions of children enrolled in the program, 50,000 teachers received curriculum materials and several thousand volunteers helped direct or aid garden projects (McKelvey 2009).

Although community gardens existed in the UK before World War I, it was this conflict and World War II that firmly established the practice of community gardening in the cities of combatant countries. In the UK and the USA, these wartime gardens were known as Victory Gardens.
(Figure 2.3) and were popularised as sources of dietary nutrition for civilian populations (Grayson 2008). The National War Garden Committee, an affiliate of the American Forestry Association, led the movement to encourage the re-cultivation of the plots used during World War I. It is estimated that 20 million gardeners across the USA produced 44 per cent of the vegetables in the country throughout the war years (Bartolomei et al. 2003; Warner 1987).

**Figure 2.3: Victory Garden**

Source: McKelvey 2009

The revival

With the growing wealth and the opening of markets to make use of the industrial capacity developed during the Second World War, the cheap mass production of food became possible. This contributed to a resulting decline in allotment or community gardening. In the UK, allotments were abandoned and their land more than often developed (Grayson 2007). The revival of community gardening in the 1970s was a response to urban abandonment, environmental concerns, rising inflation, and a desire to build community spirit. Established organisations aided people with acquiring land, building gardens and creating educational programming. Local residents, facing a myriad of urban problems, used gardens to rebuild neighborhoods and expand green spaces. Even though food production, recreation, income generation, and beautification still provided a strong justification for gardening, the new focus of rebuilding social networks and the infrastructure of shattered urban communities was imposed (McKevley 2009).
2.4 Australian community gardens

**Victoria**

Victoria and New South Wales (NSW) boast an elaborate history of community garden development, with a large number of gardens functioning across the two states. The remaining Australian states still possess community gardens but not the extent of Victoria and NSW. In light of this, the history of community garden development within Victoria and NSW is focused upon.

Reflecting concerns with community and ecology as part of a wider environmental movement in the 1970s, community gardens began to appear. The first community garden, the Nunawading Community Garden, opened in Australia in 1977 on local government land. This community garden initiated the development of a plethora of community gardens throughout Australia, with the Collingwood Children’s Farm and Brunswick City Farm developed soon after in Melbourne neighbourhoods (Grayson 2007). In Melbourne, most community gardens are on Department of Human Services public housing estates and accessed by public housing tenants. Community gardens which are not built on the estates are commonly found on local government land (Grayson 2008).

**New South Wales**

Phillips (1996) believes that virtually all of the Australian community gardens aim to practice organic growing methods, provide some form of environmental education, and hope to rekindle a sense of community. Bearing these three aims, community gardens were established in Sydney during the mid 1980s, with Sydney’s first community garden opening in 1986 on the grounds of Callam Park Hospital in Rozelle by people associated with a nearby community centre. Similar to many other community gardens, Glovers Community Garden has seen irregular involvement since its establishment.

Glovers Community Garden inspired further practice in Sydney with the establishment of the Angel Street Permaculture Garden in 1991 on Education Department land. Soon after, the Waterloo Community Garden was opened on the grounds of the Uniting Church in Raglan Street, while after a few years, the Randwick Community Organic Garden was built on Randwick City Council public open space at the Randwick Community Centre together with the University of New South Wales (UNSW) Permaculture Community Garden on off-campus university land (Grayson 2007).

Community gardens were also set up on public housing estate grounds in Sydney on land owned by each state’s government housing departments. In most cases in NSW, the Department of Housing, at present named Housing NSW, supplied the land and further assistance such as garden design and construction. This policy direction was a result of years of neighbourhood activism, where the gardeners themselves initiated and continued community gardening without approval by the respective authorities (Bartolomei et al. 2003).

**Other Australian states**

Perceived by other Australian states as an opportunity for social interaction and community development, community gardens were beginning to appear in other Australia states, with Brisbane’s first city farm set up in 1994 on Brisbane City Council public open space in Windsor. Soon after, City Farm Perth (Figure 2.4) was established on an old scrap metal yard and battery recycling facility, running weekly organic farmers' markets and providing educational services on
environmental and social issues. During this time, a number of community gardens were established in Adelaide and Tasmania. The practice was also seen in regional Australia with community gardens developed in Wollongong, Lismore, Wauchope, Newcastle, Bendigo and Cairns (Grayson 2007).

Figure 2.4: City Farm Perth
Source: Grayson 2007
2.5 Community gardens today

Foreign community gardens
At present, community gardening primarily for the production of food for the immediate consumption of the gardeners and their families together with a means to resorting community spirit, is undergoing a worldwide surge of popularity following a period of decline during the 1960s through to the early 1990s. Estimate figures put the number of community gardens in New York City at 600 with over 100 owned as land trusts or managed by either the Trust for Public Land or the New York Restoration Project (Grayson 2008).

In the UK, there has been a surge in popularity of traditional allotment gardening over the past decade. Local government is still predominantly the main provider of land for allotment gardening. At this current time, it is believed that there are over one million allotments in existence. The Civic Trust has revealed that there is an extended waiting list for allotments, with that in Greater London believed to be around 10,000. In the UK as a whole, the waiting list was reported to be around 100,000. The USA and the UK are not the only countries where community gardens are highly regarded. Germany has more than 500,000 allotments, with around 35,000 each in Switzerland and Sweden (Grayson 2007).

Well developed and cohesive city farm and community garden movements are at current active in the UK, Western Europe and the USA. In the UK, community gardens and city farms are supported by the National Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens (NFCFCG) which receives direct funding from the UK Department of the Environment. The organisation offers valuable support and advisory services to groups seeking to secure access to land for community gardening (Grayson 2007).

Australian community gardens
Public housing estate community gardens
Since 1994 Housing NSW has implemented a program of community renewal on its major estates with community gardens forming part of the program. The initiative aims at uniting communities and building confidence and social interaction amongst social housing tenants (Housing NSW 2008). The Community Greening Program (CGP), set up to assist in the facilitation of community garden development at public housing estates, was established as a formal partnership between Housing NSW and the Botanic Gardens Trust (BGT) in late 2002. At current, there are over 130 gardening communities actively involved in gardening projects, “with 95 community gardens on or near social housing areas from Toongabbie to Taree” (Urbis 2004).

In Victoria, the Department of Human Services works in cooperation with ‘Cultivating Community’; a not-for-profit organisation that has developed out of support for community garden projects in inner-city public housing estates. It has progressed into an organisation to encourage and support the establishment and progress of community garden projects across the whole community. Cultivating Community is in charge of the management of a total of 17 community gardens built on public housing estates across Melbourne, with a total of 624 plots available for use by public housing residents. “Cultivating Community is committed to grass roots community development; working alongside public housing residents and members of the public to attain long-term goals of tenant empowerment and self management for the community garden projects” (Cultivating Community 2009) (refer to Figure 2.5).
Local community gardens

Local government intervention in initiating community gardens has been the recent influence in the development of the practice in Australia. Most local councils have now come to recognise the inherent benefits in providing land for community gardens. They acknowledge the fact that gardens provide the opportunity for social interaction and that this can increase a sense of community amongst local government area residents (Bartolomei et al. 2003). In NSW, Randwick and Woollahra Councils have assisted in initiating the development of community gardens, as has City of Sydney Council with the development of community gardening policies and community gardeners’ guides. Marrickville Council has initiated a process to facilitate community gardens and, in 2007, commissioned the first local government policy directions document on community gardening (Grayson 2008).

To date, there are estimated to be 23 community gardens throughout the Sydney metropolitan area, varying in size from one or two square metres to over 60 square metres. The bulk of these gardens are ‘shared gardens’ where gardeners split the garden work and divide the harvest amongst each other. This is different to the community gardens in Melbourne which are predominantly ‘allotment gardens’ (Bartolomei et al. 2003).

**Figure 2.5:** School children invited by Cultivating Community to assist in garden development

*Source: Cultivating Community 2009*

2.6 The benefits of community gardens

“Community gardens are more than places to grow food. They are places of significance in the urban landscape where individuals, friends and families can gather. They are special places that combine many different activities” (Grayson 2008). Community gardens possess a multitude of benefits. Some of their benefits include, access to nutritious food, food security, waste
minimisation and conservation, education on sustainable living practices, physical exercise, recreation, crime reduction and reclamation of public spaces (Bartolomei et al. 2003; Grayson 2007). Community gardens also contribute to social and community development. They do this by allowing friendship formation, social interaction, social skills development, the breaking down of cultural barriers, community involvement, the development of a sense of belonging and community spirit and interaction with strangers. Figure 2.6 outlines these benefits.

**Figure 2.6: Benefits of Community Gardens**
Source: Mobayed 2009

![Diagram of Community Garden Benefits]

**Social development**
Several studies have been undertaken to understand how community gardens help to encourage social interaction amongst participant gardeners (Bartolomei et al. 2003; Glover, Parry & Shinew 2005; Mees 2007; Padup 2008; Urbis 2004). While some studies have focused on social development in publicly accessed community gardens, others have narrowly analysed social development within gardens built on public housing estates land for use restricted to social housing tenants. A study undertaken by the UNSW, analysing the benefits of community gardens through the experiences of public housing tenants actively gardening the Waterloo Community Gardens, reveals that “Some tenants knew each other by sight, but it was not until they started to share a love of gardening that the barriers of shyness and suspicion melted and friendships began to develop”. The researches noted that “as the plants grew, so did Friendship” (Bartolomei et al. 2003, p. 34). The gardens acted as a means for relationships to become forged across the cultural divide with tenants from various ethnic backgrounds becoming acquainted with each other on a personal basis (Bartolomei et al. 2003). This notion is further emphasised by a Sydney council where a community garden used by public housing tenants helped foster new friendships by providing neighbours with the opportunity to socialise and interact with each other (Canterbury Council 2009).
Gardeners willingly develop social connections through their participation in the shared act of gardening with garden friendships more than often becoming year-round social ties. A study analysing the development of relationships through community gardens reveals “relationships built in the garden space led to further socialising outside of the garden space (Glover, Parry & Shinew 2005, p. 465). This finding suggests that community gardens not only encourage social interaction amongst participant gardeners, but also equip participants with the skills and confidence to interact with people not associated with the community garden, outside of the garden walls.

An evaluation of the CGP; a community renewal strategy implemented by Housing NSW and the BGT, verifies that community gardens provide social housing tenants with social skills and confidence to “avoid social isolation and increase interaction with different cultures and members of the public” (Urbis 2004, p. ii). The program’s aim of uniting communities and building confidence and social interaction amongst social housing tenants through the establishment of community gardens on public housing estate grounds has proven to be effective. This notion is reiterated by the Coordinator of the Housing NSW CGP:

“Tenant involvement in community gardens has encouraged greater interaction and stronger communication between tenants of diverse ages and backgrounds”
(CGP Coordinator).

A study of the wellbeing of participants of community gardens in upstate New York found that many of the community gardens helped to “facilitate improved social networks allowing residents to meet each other, socialise and learn about other organisations and activities/issues in their local community” (Armstrong 2000, p. 7). This notion is again expressed with community gardens considered to act as “neighbourhood commons that encourage neighbours to work together and socialise” (Glover, Parry & Shinew 2004, p. 339).

**Community development**

To understand what community development means, the definition of ‘community’ must be made clear first. The Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thoughts (1981, p. 117) defines ‘community’ as:

“A group of people living together in sympathetic association, more usually in a village, town or suburb.”

Community development is identified as being the “art of connecting, the power of telling stories and having conversations locally” (Montgomery 2005, p. 5). These elements are naturally expressed through the activity of community gardening. Jenson (1998) suggests that a community is made of a combination of five dimensions. These dimensions include, belonging, inclusion, participation, recognition, and legitimacy (refer to Figure 2.7). In the struggle to strengthen communities, these five dimensions must be targeted and individually improved.

**Figure 2.7: Dimensions of social cohesion**
Source: Jenson 1998, p. 15
As its name suggests, a community garden is intended to encourage a sense of community amongst the residents of the neighbourhood in which it is located (Glover, 2003). They are meant to serve as potential sites for community building (Putnam 2000; Gittell & Vidal 1998). The University of Missouri (2009) validates this notion suggesting that community gardens encourage a sense of community identity, ownership and stewardship. They provide a place for people of various backgrounds to intermingle and share cultural traditions. The notion is again expressed with community gardening identified as creating the opportunity for culturally diverse groups and people of different ages to interact and develop a sense of community and belonging (Henderson-Wilson, Kingsley & Townsend 2009).

In analysing how community gardens encourage community development, a clarification of whether gardens successfully equip participants with the capabilities to interact with people outside of the garden walls, must be undertaken. In the context of community gardens on public housing grounds, external interaction may be with non-garden participant housing tenants, or in the instance of publicly accessed community gardens, external interaction may be with strangers. Community gardens have proven to achieve such external interaction as expressed through research undertaken by the UNSW on the benefits of community gardens through analysis of the Waterloo Community Gardens. Community gardens are said to not only facilitate social interaction between gardeners themselves, but also open up opportunities for connecting with other public housing estate residents. The Gardens were found to “act as a catalyst for conversation, breaking down social barriers. This allowed the gardeners to speak to strangers” (Bartolomei et al. 2003, p. 36). Further studies revealed that community gardens successfully and freely strengthen the sense of community both in and out of the garden (Provence 2007).

Community gardens have also increased public housing tenant community involvement which has branched from community gardening’s ability to improve an individual’s confidence, skills and interest in the community (Urbis 2004). Research into Neighbourhood Houses and Learning Centres in Victoria has revealed that participation in social and recreational programs such as community gardening produced networks that promoted a sense a belonging to a community and a sentiment of wanting to contribute back to the community. The research revealed that a number of participants went on to become involved in volunteering, management committees and decision-making activities in the broader neighbourhood (Pope 2006). This study showed that social and recreational programs such as community gardening act as vehicles for developing a sense of community spirit amongst participants, equipping them with the urge to be more involved in the community. The five dimensions of a community suggested by Jensen (1998) are considered to be effortlessly achievable through participation in community gardening.

2.7 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to introduce and explain the practice and history of community gardening. While the present-day model of community gardening has been shaped during the
last century, the practice has been in use since 100BC. The purpose of community gardens has changed over time, but at current they are making several significant and positive contributions to social and community development. They do this by allowing friendship formation, social interaction, social skills development, the breaking down of cultural barriers, community involvement, the development of a sense of belonging and community spirit and interaction with strangers. Over the years, community gardens have presented a multitude of benefits to the daily life of participants and to the environment. These benefits have been acknowledged by state and local governments, as too has the need for the support for further community garden establishment.

The thesis’ objective to review the literature on the history, development and current situation of community gardening in Australia and abroad whilst also exploring current government direction, has been addressed in this chapter. So too has the objective to analyse the significant contribution community gardens make to social and community development. To understand how community gardens help facilitate social and community development amongst public housing tenants, the real-life experiences of community gardeners must be studied. An introduction to two case study public housing community gardens will be presented in Chapter Three to provide a useful background of the gardens’ surrounding context, establishment process and features, together with a snapshot of the gardeners’ demographics.
Chapter Three
Case Studies: Poet’s Corner and Riverwood Community Gardens
3.1 Introduction

In Chapter 2, I outlined the large multitude of benefits associated with community gardens, with a specific focus on their contribution to social and community development. I also outlined the part played by public housing authorities and local government in community garden support and establishment. Much literature focusing on community gardens reveal the multiple benefits of community gardening in general but fail to analyse how public housing authorities and local government help support garden establishment and growth of social and community development within and through community gardens. This chapter attempts to fill this gap through the analysis of two case studies, namely the Poet’s Corner and Riverwood Community Gardens. This chapter introduces the two case studies, setting the stage for Chapter 3 to reveal the informative findings.

3.2 Background of Redfern

Demographic snapshot

Redfern, located within the City of Sydney LGA, has a very high concentration of high-rise public housing in Australia (DoH 2000). According to a report on the Redfern public housing estate by the Redfern-Waterloo Authority (2006), 29% of all housing in Redfern is public housing, while in its bordering suburb; Waterloo, the percentage of public housing stands at an astounding 79%.

Redfern has been described in studies such as the Australian Bureau of Statistics’ (ABS) Socio Economic Indicators for Areas index, to be among the most ethnically diverse in NSW (ABS 2006). According to the 2006 Census and as graphed in Figure 3.1, 44% of residents spoke a language other than English at home. Of these, 3% spoke Cantonese, 2.4% Russian, 2.4% Greek, 2.2% Mandarin and 1.7% Arabic (ABS 2006). Redfern is home to a large number of residents (57.9%), aged between 25 and 54 years (compared to just 42% for NSW as a whole) (ABS 2006). The area comprises of a high number of lone person households, with 34.7% of residents declaring they live by themselves (compared to just 22.8% for NSW as a whole) (ABS 2006).

![Figure 3.1: Languages spoken at home, Redfern](image)

Source: ABS 2006, adapted by Mobayed 2009
The demographic profile of Redfern is forecast to change dramatically over the next decade. Redfern is currently entering a period of great change and transition thus becoming more gentrified. There is a current influx of development and warehouse and factory conversion in the area. There is concern of the effects such development will have on the large number of existing Redfern and Waterloo public housing tenants (Rheuben 2009).

Public housing estate
The Redfern public housing estate is quite large and is spread over several streets (see Figure 3.2). The estate predominantly comprises of three storey apartment blocks although there are also four connected 10 storey apartment buildings and three 17 storey apartment high-rises. The apartments house thousands of public housing tenants.

The Poet’s Corner housing complex is the name given to the three 17 storey apartment high-rises. These towers are named after three renowned Australian Poets; namely, Gilmore, Kendall and Lawson, thus the name Poet’s Corner. The buildings are positioned in a straight line and situated on one street block, bordered by Morehead Street, Phillip Street, Redfern Street and Young Street.

Figure 3.2: Context of Redfern Public Housing Estate
Source: Google Maps 2009, adapted by Mobayed 2009
3.3 Case Study One - Poet’s Corner Community Garden, Redfern NSW, Australia

Establishment process
The process of establishing the Poet’s Corner Community Garden was a lengthy endeavor, involving many organisations. The idea of a garden was initially recognised and presented by Redfern public housing tenants to Housing NSW during a community consultation forum. Tenants also presented the idea to the City of Sydney Council (CoSC), specifically Lord Mayor Clover Moore and several local councilors. CoSC supported the idea and cooperatively consulted with Housing NSW to establish a community garden in Redfern.

Housing NSW acknowledged the idea and approached the UNSW School of Social Work through the UNSWCDP. The UNSWCDP is a community development project based on strong relationships between UNSW, public housing tenants, and Housing NSW and identifies community development projects and resources, effectively assisting in their coordination. The UNSW School of Social Work collaborated with the UNSW Faculty of the Built Environment which allowed students undertaking the Bachelor of Landscape Architecture degree to design the Poet’s Corner Community Garden for their studio project. The designs were drafted after consultation with the Redfern public housing tenants and given to Housing NSW for professional surveying and drafting to be undertaken by Resitech (a service agency and internal service provider within Housing NSW). Construction of the Garden commenced in late 2006 with the completed Garden opened in late 2007. The garden plots were gradually occupied during late 2007 and early 2008.

Garden features

Table 3.1: Poet’s Corner Community Garden profile
Source: Mobayed 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Name of Garden</th>
<th>Garden Location</th>
<th>Type of Garden</th>
<th>Garden Size</th>
<th>No. of Plots</th>
<th>Public Access</th>
<th>Agencies Involved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Redfern</td>
<td>Poet’s Corner Community Garden</td>
<td>Adjacent to west boundary of Poet’s Corner Public Housing Estate Complex</td>
<td>A mix of both allotment and communal</td>
<td>Approx. 250sqm</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>- BGT - CoSC - Housing NSW - UNSW - UNSWCDP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As identified in Table 3.1, the Poet’s Corner Community Garden has a total area of approximately 250 square metres. The Garden is of an irregular shape with a width which tappers from approximately 15 metres to 3 metres and a length of approximately 28 metres. It is situated in a central location on sloping land owned by Housing NSW. It is bordered by Morehead Street and the Poet’s Corner housing complex. The Garden is situated near a busy...
pedestrian mall, allowing it to have great casual surveillance. The Garden is also in close proximity to several other public housing apartment buildings.

As shown in Figure 3.3, Poet’s Corner Community Garden has multiple sufficiently wide pathways that are formed by the layout of the plots. Considered to be the centre of the Garden, an awning, table and seating is provided for the gardeners to gather for meetings, socialise or relax. This area is surrounded by seven rectangular brick garden beds which are raised from the ground. Each bed is divided into two, forming 14 gardening plots, each measuring 2 metres by 2 metres. The boundary of the Garden is outlined with a fence with a locked gate, for which the gardeners have a key, thus restricting access to just the public housing tenant gardeners.

There is a storage compartment at the centre of the garden, used for storing water hoses, gardening tools and seedlings. There are also composting bins positioned around the Garden. Gardeners are able to water their plants with the availability of a water tap and hose. The Garden has one large native Australian tree positioned on one corner, providing sufficient shade for the gardeners as well as four smaller trees used to partition the Garden from the adjoining Poet’s Corner housing complex. A wide variety of plants are planted in the plots, including vegetables, fruits, herbs and spices.

**Figure 3.3:** Aerial view of Poet’s Corner Community Garden
Source: Google Maps 2009, adapted by Mobayed 2009
Gardener demographics

Table 3.2: Poet’s Corner Community Garden participant profile
Source: Mobayed 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of Gardeners</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age (years)</th>
<th>Spoken Languages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>English 60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Chinese 20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Italian 10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Other 10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the time of this research, there was a total of 14 tenants who were active gardeners at the Poet’s Corner Community Garden, as identified in Table 3.2. The ages of the gardeners’ range from mid 40s to over 60 years, with the majority aged above 45 years. There is an in-balance in the gender profile of the gardeners. The research revealed that there are more female gardeners than male. The majority of the gardeners are Anglo-Australian, although several nationalities are presented in the Garden. These are: Chinese, Italian and Pacific Islander. Surprisingly, the research exposed that there were no gardeners who identified themselves as Indigenous Australians. The research revealed that the majority of Garden members are English speakers (60 per cent). The second largest group is Chinese speakers (20 per cent) and Italian speakers (10 per cent). These figures reflect the demographic results of the 2006 ABS Census.

3.4 Background of Riverwood

Demographic snapshot
Riverwood, located within the Canterbury LGA, has a very high concentration of public housing in Australia (Housing NSW 2000). According to a report on the Riverwood public housing estate by Housing NSW (1999), such a high concentration has caused high crime rates, vandalism, significant unemployment and poverty, low levels of residential and neighbourhood amenity and a sense of alienation amongst the residents.

Riverwood has been described, in studies such as the ABS Socio Economic Indicators for Areas index, to be among the most disadvantaged in NSW (ABS 2006). According to the 2006 Census the area has an unemployment rate of 9.7% (compared to 5.9% for NSW as a whole). As outlined in Figure 3.4, the area is ethnically diverse with 59% of residents speaking a language other than English at home. Of these, 12% spoke Cantonese, 10% Arabic, 7% Mandarin and 4% Greek (ABS 2006). Riverwood is home to a large number of elderly residents with 17.4% aged 65 years or more (compared to just 13.8% for NSW as a whole) (ABS 2006). The area comprises of high number of lone person households, with 30.5% of residents declaring they live by themselves (compared to just 22.8% for NSW as a whole) (ABS 2006).
Public housing estate
The Riverwood Public Housing Estate was gradually built between 1950 and 1970. It is bounded by Kentucky Road, Roosevelt Avenue and Truman Avenue. The estate predominantly comprises of three storey apartment buildings and two nine storey apartment towers (see Figure 3.5). There are over 1300 apartments housing over 2700 public housing tenants (Riverwood Community Centre 2004).

In 1994, Housing NSW implemented a Community Renewal Strategy to improve the stability of the community, increase tenant satisfaction and improve the value of the housing assets on the Estate. This resulted in the building of additional public housing apartments and the updating of existing apartment buildings (Housing NSW 1999).
3.5 Case Study Two – Riverwood Community Garden, Riverwood, NSW, Australia

Establishment process

The implementation of Housing NSW’s Community Renewal Strategy in 1994 involved the building of apartments with private gardens and courtyards on the Riverwood public housing estate. This initiated a desire for a communal garden by public housing tenants who lacked their own private gardens. The group of tenants approached Riverwood Community Centre (RCC) (a non-profit organisation which assists the residents of the Riverwood community with their daily needs) which sought to develop a community garden. RCC’s Housing Communities Assistance
Program (HCAP) worker commenced negotiations with Canterbury City Council (CCC) and Housing NSW to support the project. CCC provided a parcel of land close to the public housing estate as well as funds to help build the garden. Housing NSW acknowledged the idea of a community garden and offered to supply and fund water to the Garden.

The Garden was built by RCC and the interested public housing tenants and officially opened in late November 1999. Old fences, provided by Housing NSW, were used to develop a boundary for the Garden. A government grant of $10,000 was provided by the Federal Member to fund the purchase of garden bed sleepers. The original garden was an allotment garden, consisting of 24 plots. In 2000, a land extension was granted by CCC allowing the development of a further 12 plots.

In 2006, CCC funded the rebuilding of the Garden closer to the public housing estate. This was undertaken so the garden could blend in with the Council’s recent parks and community facilities improvements which surrounded the original community garden. The new garden was larger, providing a total of 54 plots.

**Garden features**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Name of Garden</th>
<th>Garden Location</th>
<th>Type of Garden</th>
<th>Garden Size</th>
<th>No. of Plots</th>
<th>Public Access</th>
<th>Agencies Involved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Riverwood</td>
<td>Riverwood Community Garden</td>
<td>Adjacent to north boundary of Riverwood Public Housing Estate</td>
<td>A mix of both allotment and communal</td>
<td>Approx. 1000sqm</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>- BGT - CCC - HCAP workers - Housing NSW - RCC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As identified in Table 3.3, The Riverwood Community Garden has a total area of approximately 1000 square metres. The Garden is of an irregular shape and has a width of approximately 30 metres and a length of 120 metres (see Figure 3.6). It is situated on leveled land owned by CCC and sandwiched between the Riverwood public housing estate and the Salt Pan Creek Wetlands (see Figure 3.5). This allows the Garden to have great casual surveillance and can be enjoyed by other residents of the Estate or families visiting the Wetlands. The Garden has multiple sufficiently wide pathways that merge to form a circle at the centre; considered to be the heart of the Garden. This area is covered with a shade cloth, is open in form with available seating and is used as an area for the gardeners and members of the public to gather, socialise or relax.

The 54 rectangular plots are restricted to public housing tenant use. The plots align each other and measure approximately 4 by 4.5 metres. The boundary of the Garden is outlined with a fence, with each plot also fenced in its own unique way. Each plot has a locked gate, for which the gardeners have a key, thus allowing the public to access the garden as a whole. The plots
are positioned at ground level, abolishing the need for sleepers and filler soil. There is a garden shed, used to house garden tools and seedlings positioned at the centre of the Garden. There are also more than 20 composting bins positioned around the Garden. They have been used by CCC to educate the gardeners and the public on waste minimisation and reuse. There are also several water taps and hoses spread out across the length of the Garden, allowing the gardeners to water their plants simultaneously. A range of plants are planted in the plots, including vegetables, fruits, herbs and spices.

**Figure 3.6:** Aerial view of Poet’s Corner Community Garden and close-up images
Source: Google Maps 2009, adapted by Mobayed 2009
Gardener demographics

Table 3.4: Riverwood Community Garden participant profile
Source: Mobayed 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of Gardeners</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age (years)</th>
<th>Spoken Languages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Arabic 40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Chinese 30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>40 – 80</td>
<td>Vietnamese 10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Other 20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the time of this research, there was a total of 54 tenants who were gardeners at the Riverwood Community Garden as indicated in Table 3.4. The ages of the gardeners’ range from mid 40s to over 70 years, with the majority aged above 60 years. The gender balance is almost equal. The research revealed that several couples gardened with each partner having his or her own plot. Several nationalities are presented in the Garden. These are: Chinese, Egyptian, Greek, Italian, Lebanese, Macedonian, Pacific Islander, Palestinian and Vietnamese. Surprisingly, the research exposed that there were no Anglo-Australian gardeners. The research revealed that the majority of Garden members are Arabic speakers (40 per cent). The second largest group is Chinese speakers from China (30 per cent) and Vietnamese speakers (10 per cent). These figures reflect the demographic results of the 2006 ABS Census.

3.6 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to introduce the two community garden case studies. A justification of the site selection and summary of the fieldwork is presented followed by backgrounds of Redfern and Riverwood which reveal these areas as being highly disadvantaged with high concentrations of public housing and amongst the most ethnically diverse in NSW. To set the stage for the analysis of the data gathered from the case study research, the establishment history, features and gardener demographics of the two case study gardens are explored.

While present day Housing NSW is supportive of the social and community development of public housing tenants through the establishment of community gardens, the history of the Riverwood Community Garden reveals otherwise, with a complete turn around in policy direction. A thorough look into the gardens’ establishment process reveals many organisations have contributed to form their existence and current shape and form. The gardens offer varying designs and features, each being unique in its own way, though both successfully providing accessible, easy, and comfortable gardening. While the type of buildings housing tenants in both the Redfern and Riverwood public housing estates are similar, those in Redfern are much taller and numerous. A look into the demographics of the gardeners at the respective community gardeners reveals a wide mix of nationalities working side-by-side. Although the gender balance varies across the two gardens, the age range seems to be consistent.
The thesis’ objective to explore the history, development and features of the Poet’s Corner and Riverwood Community Gardens and to identify the gardeners’ demographics has been achieved in this chapter. So too has the objective to understand the background of Redfern and Riverwood together with their highly concentrated public housing estates. To understand the real-life contributions community gardens make to social and community development for a particular section of the community, namely; tenants of public housing estates, the information gathered from the fieldwork, in-depth interviews and focus groups must be analysed. Chapter 4 presents these findings while simultaneously revealing how public housing authorities and local government help support community garden establishment and the growth of social and community development within and through community gardens.
Chapter Four
Analysis: Social and Community Development
4.1 Introduction

Countless literatures focusing on community gardens expose the numerous benefits of community gardening in general, but fall short of exploring how public housing authorities and local government help support garden establishment and the growth of social and community development within and through community gardens. This chapter attempts to fill this gap through the analysis of two case studies; the Poet’s Corner and Riverwood Community Gardens.

The real-life contributions community gardens make to social and community development for a particular section of the community; tenants of public housing estates, are analysed by drawing from the informative interview material in the form of quotes from the focus group and interviews. Investigated are the various ways public housing authorities and local government help support community garden establishment and the growth of social and community development within and through community gardens.

4.2 Social development

The development of new friendships

There is a high degree of friendship formation in the Gardens. The qualitative process of in-depth interviews, focus groups and site visitation, reveals how gardeners can easily acknowledge the Poet’s and Riverwood Community Gardens as the main reason behind their new group of friends. The Gardens act as an attractant; pulling tenants out of their homes and into the public. One of the gardeners supports Bayliss’ (2003) belief that community gardens provide gardeners with the chance to experience change by stating “I was a bit of a computer nerd back then and I spent a lot of time on the computer at home, but now I spend more time in the Garden talking with other gardeners and tenants” (Gardener). Another gardener reiterates this notion suggesting “the Garden truly acts as a place where public housing tenants like me could socialise with others. I believe it does have positive social development effects. I have become friends with a lot of the gardeners” (Gardener).

My findings support Glover, Parry and Shinew’ (2004) belief that tenants can relate to each other in community gardens, effortlessly initiating discussion (Figure 4.1), with a gardener pointing out “because of the Garden, the tenants have become friendly to each other. They relate to each through sharing their plants and recipes and make friendship bonds. I have developed new friendships since I started at the Garden” (Gardener). Bayliss’ (2003) suggestion that community gardens act as a place where previously isolated tenants are encouraged to socially interact with each other; naturally building their social skills and confidence and untimely strengthening their social development, is validated by my findings. The UNSWCDP Coordinator points out “the gardeners are certainly more sociable with each other. It brings them out of their shells. It causes interaction with people, particularly people who may have been socially isolated before. It improves your social skills. It encourages people to become more sociable and socially interactive. I’ve seen people develop and seen some of the gardeners at Poet’s coming out of their shell, you know, and allowing them to form new friendships and bonds. They’re interacting more whereas they may have originally been quiet” (UNSWCDP Coordinator). As Mees (2007) suggests, the formation of friendships has the added benefit of allowing tenants to form strong relationships built upon trust, helping to build their self-esteem.
The breaking down of cultural barriers

The community gardeners come from an assortment of cultural backgrounds. These include Anglo-Saxon, Chinese, Egyptian, Greek, Italian, Lebanese, Macedonian, Pacific Islands, Palestinian and Vietnamese. Supporting Gough’s (2007) belief that a multicultural garden facilitates cross-cultural interaction between gardeners, in turn breaking down cultural barriers, the UNSWCDP Coordinator emphasises, “the Garden is really multicultural. It’s culturally diverse. It’s breaking down language and cultural barriers. People communicate via gardening which brings the gardeners together. I believe it’s allowing people who would otherwise not talk to each other because of the difference in culture, communicate with each other. It’s also helping them learn English and communicate better” (UNSWCDP Coordinator). Gough’s (2007) further suggestion that community gardens encourage the interaction of tenants of varying backgrounds who may have otherwise never talked to each other, is echoed by one of the gardeners (see Figure 4.2), “I have met a couple of people here from other nationalities that I wouldn’t have met normally. I speak more to many people now from other nationalities. It is good to see the good side of some nationalities. It’s easier now for me to communicate with other nationalities that I did not know about. We can walk around the garden together and talk about our different plants and recipes. Even though there’s different languages, we still understand other gardeners and communicate, which has allowed us to make friends” (Gardener).

My findings support Larson’s (2006) belief that community gardens are avenues for understanding cultural difference through the action of gardeners involving themselves in cross-cultural events. The RCC Manager affirms this, identifying “even though the tenants don’t have a
common language, community gardening promotes another form of communication amongst them, and so has helped us work around social harmony and get the cultures of Chinese and Arabic that virtually have no understanding of one another to come together and learn about one another’s cultures. Chinese people now go to functions the Arabic Association runs. It’s magical to see this happening” (RCC Manager). This supports social and cultural harmony; breaking down existing cultural barriers.

**Figure 4.2:** Gardeners at the Riverwood Community Garden interacting each other  
Source: Mobayed 2009

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**Communication with the public**

Reaffirming Risbeth’s (2004) belief that community gardens offer an opportune medium for tenants to get to know strangers, the RCC Manager reveals “the Garden has gotten the tenants out of their flats and into the healthy Garden, doing something they like to do and taking them further to interact with the people in the garden, around the estate and out in the community. A lot of people have told me that” (RCC Manager). One of the gardeners reiterates this same notion stating “the Garden allows me to see other tenants every afternoon where we can discuss our day. I say ‘hello’ to all the other tenants that work in the Garden and the other people that live around me, when before I never used to say ‘hello’ to anyone. I’m out in the community now. Not only have I met people from my own building, but now I’m meeting people from the other buildings around me which I wouldn’t normally do. I also now know more people in the community when I go to the corner shop. More people walk passed and say ‘hi’ to me now; knowing who I am. It feels good that they know me” (Gardener).
Many gardeners have identified how the Gardens allow them to socialise with tenants who are not part of the Gardens as well as people from the community as could be seen as occurring in Figure 4.3. Reflecting Glover, Parry and Shinew’s (2004) study, the research reveals that some tenants originally found it extremely difficult to communicate with non-gardening tenants and the public, but now have the confidence to communicate with members of the public. This has allowed tenants to be recognised and trusted in public, helping to strengthen their self-esteem and self-image.

Figure 4.3: Gardeners at the Riverwood Community Garden and me interacting with each other through gardening
Source: Mobayed 2009

While conducting my site observations, I was continually bombarded with questions from several gardeners at both Community Gardens. I was asked to reveal what my cultural background was, why I was fascinated with community gardens, if I used to be a resident of the area and what fruits and vegetables I liked the most. The fact that the gardeners were able to freely communicate with me; a member of the public, reaffirms Corp, Dawson & Voluntad’s (2004) belief that community gardens act as places whereby tenants are able to interact with the public in a non-threatening way, helping to strengthen their social skills. This also reveals how sociable the gardeners are and the high level of confidence they possess to be easily able to ask such personal questions to strangers. Further testimony to the high level of friendship development skills the gardeners possess, are the multiple times I was offered fruits and vegetables to take home to my family (Figures 4.4 and 4.5). I was also invited to the Gardens to play card games on
weekends with the older gardeners. I truly felt as if I had effortlessly become part of small social group consisting of participants who yearned to make new friends.

**Figure 4.4:** White radish given to me by a gardener at the Riverwood Community Garden
Source: Mobayed 2009

![White radish](image1.png)

**Figure 4.5:** A strawberry provided to me by a gardener at the Poet’s Corner Community Garden
Source: Mobayed 2009

![Strawberry](image2.png)
4.3 Community Development

A sense of belonging to the community
Supporting Provence’s (2007) belief that community Gardens are a door into the community, allowing participants to gradually develop a sense of belonging through gardening, my findings reiterate this notion, with the RCC Manager revealing “community gardens open a whole lot of doors. Our Garden has a lot of kudos. The gardeners meet politicians there, they meet department of housing there. It’s won prizes and been on television. They meet important people and have been to many community events and so they’re whole self-esteem has developed around the Garden and been renewed because of it, and so it’s had a really big impact on them feeling part of the community” (RCC Manager). This notion is further reaffirmed by a gardener who expresses that his sense of belonging developed from gardening, “I feel that I am more part of the community now because I am part of the Garden. I am now a member of two associations and we do some community events and the public come. I speak more to other people outside of the Garden and my home now. I can go to the local take-away shop and have a cuppa and sit with the people from the church community and chat with them. I feel I belong here in the community now” (Gardener).

The Gardens are seen as naturally equipping tenants with the confidence they need to fit in with the rest of the community, prompting them to involve themselves in community life, as is supported in Figure 4.6 where a gardener at the Riverwood Community Garden asks to take a photo with me to be involved in my thesis, after overhearing me explain my reason for taking photographs of the Garden. This supports Larson’s (2006) belief, with the RCC Manager explaining, “we had a dance the other night and a lot of the gardeners came and danced. They came because it was a community event and because they now know a lot of people in the community because of the Garden and are comfortable enough to participate in this event and a whole range of community events. It has allowed them to feel they are part of and belong to the community” (RCC Manager).

Figure 4.6: A gardener at the Riverwood Community Garden wanting to be part of my study
Source: Mobayed 2009
Involvement in the community
The research data clarifies that the Gardens are quite beneficial for community development. My findings support Padup’s (2008) belief that community gardens allow parts of the community to be involved in community gardens through public interest, in turn increasing the likelihood of tenant gardeners associating with community organisations or in events. The UNSWCDP Coordinator identifies how this is achieved, stating, “simply by activating people and allowing them to engage with people in the Gardens through a soft entry point, where it’s non-threatening, sociable and recreational, it’s more likely to increase gardeners’ likelihood of becoming involved and engaged in other projects. It’s not a dry way to enter the community” (UNSWCDP Coordinator).

Further validating Padup’s (2008) belief, the RCC Manager describes a true example of how community gardens drive tenants into public community life, stating, “one gardener told me that before the Garden she sat in her flat feeling sick and depressed and would often go to the doctor. Once the Garden happened, she came out of her house and into the Garden and became well again because of the fresh air and her interest in gardening. Once she was in the Garden she started to do things in the community and became part of it. The Garden is the catalyst; it’s the driving force to get people into the community” (RCC Manager).

My findings reaffirm Mees’ (2007) belief that community gardening offers gardeners the chance to make real changes in their own lives and in the broader community (Figure 4.7). One of the gardeners reiterates this belief, revealing “because of the Garden, I am now part of the tenants group where we can express our concerns with the Garden, the buildings and the things happening in the community. I definitely feel that community gardens really do promote community development” (Gardener).

Figure 4.7: Two gardeners at the Poet’s Corner Community Garden involving themselves in community projects – community gardens
Source: Mobayed 2009
4.4 Social planning and community gardens

Public housing authority contributions
Community gardens have in recent times been widely recognised as a great initiative for activating public housing tenants, allowing them to interact with each other and become more involved in the community (Padup 2008). The research data reveals the establishment of community gardens and their continual support is a priority for NSW’s public housing authority; Housing NSW, in restoring and maintaining social interaction and community spirit within public housing estates.

My findings reveal that the NSW State Government has a well-structured system for dealing with community garden establishment and social planning support. Regional staff provide advice and support to local staff to work with social housing communities in identifying suitable communal gardening project locations. Regional and local staff can also provide what support networks are locally available to the community to assist them with developing community gardens. The CGP incorporates a coherent manner of delivering various forms of support to community gardens. Direct contact with garden participants is considered a core part of the CGP, having several advantages. The administration of group activities, workshops and field trips are pivotal for encouraging social interaction between gardeners, other tenants and the public.

Supporting Grayson’s (2007) belief that public housing authorities are the principle source of support to community gardens, the interview data has identified Housing NSW as one of the main sources of funding for community garden establishment and continual support. As the Housing NSW CGP Coordinator identifies, this is undertaken through the offering of “grants that can be used for the development of communal gardening projects. Housing NSW staff will also actively promote any other gardening related grants that the Department becomes aware of such as grants from local councils to community groups and encourage them to apply to get assistance in the establishment of their community gardens. A modest annual budget of $10,000 that is used to assist, on a per need basis, communal gardening projects that are at risk of faltering and/or have stalled due to lack of resources” (Housing NSW CGP Coordinator).

Further reaffirming Grayson’s (2007) suggestion that public housing authorities are the lifeblood of community gardens, my findings identify that without the continual provision of funds and grants from Housing NSW, community gardens may cease to function and exist. This would be detrimental to ensuring and maintaining social harmony and strong community spirit within public housing estates. The UNSWCDP Coordinator outlines the value of Housing NSW’s continual support, stating, “Housing NSW has community development grants available which gardeners could apply for through a non-government organisation. They are beneficial for the Garden to function. They also provide the gardens with tools when needed” (UNSWCDP Coordinator).

My findings reveal the CGP to be successful in restoring social interaction and community spirit amongst public housing tenants by assisting in the establishment of community gardens and supporting gardeners, as suggested by Urbis (2004). The Program continues to publicise the success of community gardening and their associated benefits. This publicity could gather tenant and public support for community garden participation and development, in turn reducing the incidence of social isolation and associated diseases within existing and future public housing estates.
Local council contributions
Not only has state government played a key part in the development of community gardens, but so too has local government, continually supporting social interaction and community spirit within community gardens. Local councils have recognised the ability of community gardens to contribute to social and community development and are therefore actively involved in community garden initiation. Supporting Glover’s (2003) belief that local councils are quite beneficial in facilitating a link between public housing tenants and state governments, and key in making the difference in the decision of garden establishment approval and location, the UNSWCDP Coordinator identifies “City of Sydney Council was one of the driving forces behind the establishment of the Garden, and strengthened the voice of the public housing tenants that wanted a garden, prompting Housing to consider establishing a garden” (UNSWCDP Coordinator).

Local councils are regarded as being quite supportive of community gardening (Grayson 2008). A prime example of such strong support is obvious in the establishment of the Riverwood Community Garden where CCC provided the land and paid for the complete relocation and rebuild of the Garden (Figure 4.8). The Garden was accepted by CCC as being a key program planned by the RCC to encourage social interaction amongst the public housing tenants. The RCC Manager explains “after asking for extra land, Council provided the Garden with more land to allow the Garden to be extended to 36 plots. The also dismantled the old Garden and rebuilt a better Garden with a total of 54 plots in a new location and paid for it” (RCC Manager). Further reaffirming Grayson’s (2008) belief, my findings have revealed local councils have been crucial in providing on-going support through resource provision, the availability of funds and the administration of education programs which collectively permit the on-going function of the garden; providing a place for the tenants to socialise and develop a sense of belonging. The UNSWCDP Coordinator explains how CoSC achieves this, stating, “Council is pretty supportive of community gardens. They provide resourcing upon request. They provided compost bins for nothing and they run free composting workshops and worm farming. They’re happy to come along to the Garden. They have also provided signs for the Garden” (UNSWCDP Coordinator). This notion is further reiterated and explained by the RCC Manager who states “Canterbury City Council built us composting bins and provided education on composting. We have an ongoing relationship with Council where they constantly work with us on training, education and composting” (RCC Manager).

Local councils foster increased social and community development through community gardening. They act as a link between gardeners and the community, offering opportunities for new relationship development, by attracting gardeners to community events and community members to community gardens. In addition, local councils assist by providing comfortable places where gardening tenants can interact with each other, other tenants living on the public housing estates and the general public. Supporting this notion which is suggested by Grayson (2008), one of the gardeners expresses one way local councils support social interaction within their community garden, stating, “the Council has built a good and big shade cloth in the middle of the Garden for us to sit under and spend time together. It is really good. I talk to everyone there and I meet new people everyday” (Gardener).
4.5 Conclusion

The thesis’ objective is to explore the real-life contributions community gardens make to social and community development for tenants of public housing estates, in particular those who are participants of the Poet’s Corner and Riverwood Community Gardens, has been carried out in this chapter. This is accomplished by drawing from the informative interview material in the form of quotes from the focus group and interviews. The thesis’ objective to examine the various ways public housing authorities and local government help support community garden establishment and the growth of social and community development within and through community gardens, has also been accomplished.

The findings reveal that the Gardens definitely contribute to social and community development within the two public housing estates in a multitude of ways. State and local government contribute a great deal to social and community development within public housing estates through the continual support of community gardening.

The research has provided me with sufficient primary information to devise valid conclusions from, hence, helping to determine the direction to take when forming solutions. This sets the context for the final chapter of this thesis, which proposes recommendations for public housing authorities, local councils and community workers to sustain and further develop the level of social and community development resulting from participation in public housing estate community gardens.
5.1 Introduction

The thesis presents the history and development of community gardens in Australia and abroad and describes the current situation of community gardening. A look into community garden policy direction at the State and local level is also undertaken, while an investigation of how community gardens contribute to social and community development is also carried out. The thesis explores the real-life contributions community gardens make to social and community development for tenants of public housing estates. This is achieved through the analysis of collected interview and focus group material. This material is also examined to reveal the various ways public housing authorities and local government help support community garden establishment and the growth of social and community development within and through community gardens.

In this final chapter, I summarise the research findings, identify of my perceived limitations of the research and reflect on future research that is required. The chapter is concluded with specific social planning and practical recommendations I have devised. They are intended for public housing authorities and local councils to better plan for social and community development through public housing estate community gardens.

5.2 Summary of findings

The research reveals that the Gardens definitely contribute to social development within the two Public Housing Estates. Supporting Bayliss’ (2003) belief, the gardeners; tenants of both the Riverwood and Redfern Public Housing Estates, have reported that gardening has allowed them to socially interact with each other, naturally building their social skills and confidence and ultimately strengthening their social development. They have been able to develop new friendships with other gardeners and non-gardening tenants as seen in Figure 5.1. The Gardens have encouraged the recognition of cultural difference, allowing the gardeners to involve themselves in cross-cultural events. This has supported social and cultural harmony and broken down existing cultural barriers, supporting Gough’s (2007) belief. The gardeners acknowledge the Gardens as an excellent opportunity to directly interact with the public in a non-threatening way. This has allowed them to gradually build their social confidence and be recognised and trusted by tenants and members of the public. This has helped to strengthen their self-esteem and self-image, inline with Risbeth’s (2004) ideas.

The Gardens have also contributed to community development. The gardeners and community workers have revealed the Gardens as pivotal in allowing them to feel part of the community. Their sense of belonging has been strengthened, as suggested by Larson (2006) as being a direct result of participating in community gardens. My findings have exposed that the Gardens naturally equip tenants with the confidence they need to fit in with the rest of the community, prompting them to involve themselves in community life. Padup’s (2008) belief that tenant community involvement increases through community garden participation, was reaffirmed by my findings, with the Gardens opening up a raft of opportunities for the gardeners to associate with community organisations and events. The individuals reported that the Gardens provide them with the chance to make real changes in their own lives and the broader community.
My findings reveal how State and local government contribute to social and community development within public housing estates. They are able to accomplish this through the continual support of community gardening on public housing estates. Public housing authorities such as Housing NSW have a well-organised system and set of procedures for community garden establishment and provision of on-going support. Reaffirming Urbis’ (2004) evaluation on the Housing NSW’s CGP, my findings reveal the CGP to be effective in restoring social harmony and community spirit amongst public housing tenants. Housing NSW offers grants that can be used for the development of communal gardening projects.

**Figure 5.1:** A gardener at the Riverwood Community Garden socially interacting  
Source: Mobayed 2009

Local councils, such as City of Sydney and Canterbury City Councils are key in providing on-going support to community gardening. They achieve this by providing resources when needed, funding garden establishment and necessities and administering educational programs (Figure 5.2). This is inline with Grayson’s (2008) belief. Combined, these initiatives allow community gardens to operate, providing a place for gardening tenants to socialise; helping to strengthen their sense of belonging. The community workers have revealed that local councils are quite beneficial in facilitating a link between public housing tenants and State government public housing authorities, as believed by Grayson (2008). They strengthen the voice of tenants to gain support from State governments to establish community gardens alongside public housing estates.
My research also examined how State government public housing authorities and local councils are lacking in social planning initiatives to help encourage social harmony and uphold community spirit amongst public housing tenants. Glover’s (2003) suggestion that State governments need to strengthen their social planning initiatives was reverberated by many of the Redfern and Riverwood Public Housing Estates tenants. The gardeners saw the Gardens and the on-going support provided to them to help foster social and community harmony, as the only successful social planning initiative undertaken by Housing NSW during the time as public housing tenants.

Figure 5.2: Garden requirements provided by Canterbury City Council to the Riverwood Community Garden
Source: Mobayed 2009

There are mixed feelings about public housing authority involvement in community garden establishment, although most of the interviewed gardeners admitted that Housing NSW needs to play a greater role in the establishment of community gardens. The research reveals that Housing NSW was not the driving force behind the establishment of the Poet’s Corner and Riverwood Community Gardens, with the tenants being the initiators of the community garden concept. The gardeners identify that the Housing NSW was slow in supporting the idea of the development of the Gardens. My findings support Grayson’s (2008) suggestion for public housing authorities to play a greater initiating role in the development of community gardens and develop social planning policies to assist gardeners in their on-going social development.
My findings also reveal that local councils are not lacking in their on-going support for community garden establishment, reiterating Grayson's (2008) belief. In some ways, local councils have been more supportive to the Gardens than Housing NSW. A suburban and an inner-city community garden were chosen to reduce bias in the collected data and to expose any differences and similarities between gardener insights. Surprisingly, the ideas and personal views of the gardeners and community workers were consistent across the two Gardens.

5.3 Limitations of the research

There were several limitations to the research. The provided duration to undertake all parts involved in the thesis, was limited to only 12 weeks. Together with such a short period and being employed on a full-time basis as a planner, I was still able to successfully seek ethics approval, complete all in-depth interviews and focus groups as well as onsite fieldwork. I was able to review various international and Australian literatures, analyse and report my findings and suggest recommendations for public housing authorities and local councils, although the short period of time limited the number of case studies I could investigate. I was able to successfully complete all of these tasks in such a short period time by organising my time effectively and focusing all weekends and time after work during the week, on completing my planned thesis tasks.

The results from studying more than two community gardens could have been more precise, containing more ideas and gardener insights. The set thesis completion period also limited my study to just community gardens in NSW. Investigating interstate community gardens and multiple public housing authorities’ and local councils’ contributions to community gardens would have allowed me to compare and contrast different initiatives, revealing where and how public housing authorities and local councils were lacking. This would have resulted in the suggestion of greater recommendations. I was able to overcome this setback by analysing foreign and interstate community gardens through the review of international and Australian literature, although the search for renowned literature revealed low levels of related information. This is because my study analyses how State public housing authorities support social and community development within and through community gardens. The majority of already undertaken studies are primarily concerned with the range of positives community gardens offer in general, rather than just their benefits to social and community development for public housing tenants. I was still able to overcome this dilemma through the qualitative research and findings analysis of two heavily State and local government supported community gardens.

My initial research also revealed there were not many community gardens established solely for tenants of public housing estates in Sydney. To add to this, almost all public housing estate community gardens had already been studied. This considerably limited the community gardens I could investigate. Another limitation revealed itself during the undertaking of my onsite fieldwork at both the Poet’s Corner and Riverwood Community Gardens. I was limited by the number of gardeners I could talk to, socialise with and ask questions to as there existed a language barrier. The majority of the gardeners were born overseas and struggled to speak fluent English; therefore not being able to respond to my questions.

Access to an onsite interpreter from either Housing NSW or the respective local councils would have been quite useful during this time. I was successfully able to overcome this impediment by...
asking public visitors to the Gardens to assist in translating my questions to the gardeners who struggled to understand and speak English.

### 5.4 Future research

The thesis has studied two main aspects. The first aspect is the contributions community gardens make to social and community development for tenants of public housing estates. The second aspect is the various ways public housing authorities and local government assist in supporting community garden establishment and the growth of social and community development within and through community gardens. More research is required in the form of qualitative data gathering through the case study of more community gardens. Further study will reveal greater findings, and above all provide greater insights into gardener experiences. The study of non-gardening public housing tenants to investigate whether they are more socially interactive and involved in the community than gardening tenants will help to further reveal whether community gardens really do play quite a key part in the social development of public housing tenants as suggested in the thesis. If future research reveals this to be true, large community gardens may need be established on all public housing estates, providing all public housing tenants with such a unique and non-threatening avenue to strengthening their social development and community involvement. Further research would also need to reveal if there is sufficient tenant demand for individual gardening plots before community gardens are actually established.

More research is required to investigate whether community gardens set up by local councils or community-based organisations for all public access, provide greater contribution to social and community development. If this research results in such community gardens being more effective than those established by public housing authorities solely for public housing tenant use, then the reasons for this must be studied, with the resulting outcomes being incorporated into public housing community gardens. Further research may also need to be undertaken to reveal whether or not local councils or community-based organisations are accomplishing a superior job in their community gardens than public housing authorities for their community gardens.

Considering the lack of available literature analysing the contribution state government public housing authorities and local councils make to community garden establishment and the growth of social and community development, more research is required in this field. Future research may also be required to be undertaken over the next 10 years to investigate whether Housing NSW’s Community Greening Program has been effective in the establishment of tenant-administered and managed community gardens across NSW. The social planning policies of Housing NSW’s Community Renewal Program will also need to be reviewed to evaluate if they has been effective in increasing social and community development within public housing estates. A similar qualitative approach to that carried out in the thesis may need to be undertaken to gather the richest information.

### 5.5 Recommendations

The personal insights of the gardeners and the community workers of how Housing NSW and to a lesser extant, local councils, could better plan for social and community development through
public housing estate community gardens, have equipped me with the knowledge needed to propose a list of feasible recommendations. Both social planning and practical recommendations for public housing authorities and local councils are provided below.

**Public housing authorities**

**Social planning recommendations**

- Partnerships should be developed with local agencies and community-based organisations, such as local councils, schools, TAFE colleges, non-for profit organisations and businesses to provide for opportunities for community involvement.

- Strategies should be further developed to encourage participation by non-gardening tenants in community gardens to allow gardeners to interact with other tenants. This could involve cooperation between public housing authorities and individual local councils.

- Programs and activities associated with gardens should be provided to capitalise on chances for social interaction, participation and community development.

- Local involvement in community gardens by sensitive groups such as children, youth, the aged and people with disabilities should be targeted to encourage social interaction and community spirit.

- Frequent social activities associated with gardening, should be organised so that gardeners can get to know each other, allowing them to develop trust and new relationships. This will strengthen the social harmony and community spirit within the community gardens and public housing estates.

- Community gardens should be designed as multiple-use public spaces where passive recreation by non-gardening tenants, nearby residents or visitors should be undertaken. Having public access through the garden grounds will help facilitate social interaction between gardeners and strangers.

- Sufficient sheltered seating and picnic areas should be included on the grounds of community gardens to encourage families, youth and passersby to visit and use the garden facilities, helping to encourage social interaction between gardeners and the public.

- Tenants of all public housing estates should be notified of the opportunity of community garden establishment alongside their homes. This will empower tenants to move forward in requesting for the establishment of individual community gardens.

- Gardeners should be provided with the opportunity to take on greater responsibility in the daily function of community gardens to provide them with the opportunity of developing a sense of self-worth which will help to build their self-esteem.
Practical recommendations

- A network consisting of all gardens built for public housing authority tenants should be set up via a frequently updated website, allowing tenants and gardeners to know what is unfolding in other community gardens and of upcoming communal gardening events.

- Relationships with media at both local and state levels should be developed and continually strengthened to publicise the multiple benefits of community gardens. Reference to renowned examples of gardens such as the Riverwood Community Garden could be made.

- Support from a variety of sources including local councils, schools, environment and sustainability groups, nurseries and community groups should be secured to provide personal support to gardeners and ongoing assistance for the day-to-day operations of community gardens through funding and material provision.

- Partnerships with individual local councils should be formed to allow local councils to assist public housing authorities in their ongoing administration of community gardens and in organising community events.

- Greater opportunities for tenant and community input and review during the design and planning stages of community gardens should be provided. This will ensure that tenants are provided with a garden suited to their needs and desires.

- A team with the specific task of studying the best locations for community garden establishment should be set up. This will help to accelerate the process of garden establishment on public housing estates.

- An organisation with the core role of maintaining an ongoing relationship and communication link between the gardeners and public housing authorities should be set up. This will help public housing authorities to swiftly respond to gardeners' concerns.

- A team with the particular role of administering the process of community garden development from start to finish should be employed. This will help to avoid any potential problems or delays in the process.

- Clear actions for the establishment and daily administration of a garden should be further developed to ensure that changes in personnel will not affect the progress of a garden.

Local councils

Social planning recommendations

- The linking of community gardens with local community programs should be undertaken to allow gardeners to effortlessly be more involved in their local community.

- Local cultural activities should be organised in and around community gardens to encourage and help unite the local community through the understanding of cultural differences. This will help to break down any existing cultural barriers and provide a means for gardeners to interact with the public in a non-threatening way.
- Positive aspects and the locations of community gardens should be publicised in local community media to help promote community gardens. This will allow locals to visit community gardens, in turn providing gardeners with the opportunity to socialise with members of their local community.

- The efforts of individual gardeners should be publicised in local community media to empower the gardeners. This will help in building their self-esteem and confidence. It will also allow them to be easily recognised in their local communities.

- Gardeners and non-gardening public housing tenants should frequently be notified of upcoming community events and invited to attend. Being involved in such community events provides gardeners with the opportunity to socialise with the public; helping to further strengthen their social skills.

- Interpreters should be employed to visit individual community gardens to assist in resolving any language disputes between gardeners and allow the non-English speaking gardeners to voice their concerns, needs and ideas.

- The labour of TAFE apprentice students or unemployed youth should be utilised to build community gardens. This would improve community spirit and allow further social development between the youth and public housing tenants.

Practical recommendations

- Support should be gathered from local organisations and businesses by local councils to provide necessities for community gardens in their establishment and daily operation. This will allow gardeners to continue gardening and socialising.

- Local councils should support public housing tenants in their efforts for community garden establishment. They could assist by consulting with public housing authorities and strengthening the voice of the tenants.

- Grants should be provided to community gardens through local council community grants programs to assist in the purchasing of garden necessities. This will establish a harmonious relationship between public housing tenants and their respective local councils.

- In cases where there is a desire for a community garden by public housing tenants but there is insufficient state government-owned land for a garden, nearby and accessible local government-owned land should be provided by local councils for community garden establishment for use by public housing tenants.

- Gardeners should be provided with ongoing education and training in gardening, waste minimisation and recycling and possible garden management which will equip gardeners with the knowledge they need to maintain an effective and working community garden.
• Local councils could provide more funds to community groups who could assist with garden initiation. Such groups could do all the initial consultation with public housing tenants about garden issues, freeing up public housing authorities’ resources to focus on other community renewal projects.

• When required, resources and materials should be provided to gardeners to allow them to continue their day-to-day gardening activities. Local council services such as garbage collection and green waste removal should also be undertaken at community garden sites.

5.6 Concluding remarks

The history and development of community gardens in Australia and abroad has shown to be quite extensive, originating in the early nineteenth century (Hatherly, 2003). The current situation of community gardening reaffirms the increasing desire for such peaceful places. The investigation reveals that community gardens contribute a great deal to social and community development. They also offer a basket of other benefits including providing access to nutritious food, ensuring food security, minimising waste, educating on sustainable living practices, offering physical exercise and passive recreation, reducing crime and reclaiming public places.

The research explores the history, development and features of the Poet’s Corner and Riverwood Community Gardens. The Gardens are located within two of the most highly disadvantaged areas, but have stood out as places where gardeners can enjoy fulfilling lives. The research reveals that the Gardens have, and are continuing to play a principle part in enhancing the lives of gardeners at the Redfern and Riverwood Public Housing Estates. The individual benefits that community gardens offer towards social and community development are endless; with the analysis revealing the Gardens presented the opportunity for gardeners to socially interact with each other and other non-gardening tenants. They have encouraged the recognition of cultural difference, allowing the gardeners to involve themselves in cross-cultural events; directly supporting social and cultural harmony and breaking down existing cultural barriers. The Gardens have provided a means whereby public housing tenants could directly interact with the public in a non-threatening way.

The research has revealed the Gardens as a pivotal scheme in allowing participants to feel part of the community, equipping them with a strengthened sense of belonging. The Gardens are the vehicle for directing gardeners out into the public community life, opening up a raft of opportunities for gardeners to associate with community organisations and in communal events. They have proven to be effective in social skills and confidence building.

Community gardens are only able to exist through the continual support of State and local governments alongside that provided by community-based organisations. State public housing authorities have proven to be effective in restoring social harmony and community spirit amongst public housing tenants through the implementation of community renewal projects. The on-going support provided to community gardens is one key initiative to achieving this. The research has revealed the on-going support and assistance of local councils are required at the local level to help run the day-to-day operation of community gardens. The research suggests that public housing authorities and local councils need to develop further social planning initiatives to aid and maintain social and community development within community gardens.
Moreover, community gardens should not be considered as the ultimate solution for resolving the multitude of issues that exist within public housing estates. They must be used together with other State and local government directed community renewal programs and initiatives to achieve social harmony and community spirit within public housing estates. My research has proven community gardens are places that offer fruitful benefits to social and community development in the public housing estate context. They require continual support through effective social planning initiatives by State and local governments in concert with community groups. This will allow community gardens to successfully carry on cultivating social and community development.

**Figure 5.3:** Community gardening allows people to grow and develop together just as a plant allows its flowers to flourish together.

Source: Mobayed 2009


Appendices

Appendix A  Faculty of the Built Environment HREAP letter of approval
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Appendix A
Faculty of the Built Environment HREAP letter of approval

THE UNIVERSITY OF
NEW SOUTH WALES

FACULTY OF THE
BUILT ENVIRONMENT
HUMAN RESEARCH
ETHICS ADVISORY PANEL

23 July 2009

Application No: 95036
Project Title: Thesis: Community Gardens: A Place for Cultivating Social and Community Development

Attention: Christine Steinmetz

Dear George Mobayen,

Thank you for your application requesting approval to conduct research involving humans. The Panel has evaluated your application and upon their recommendation, has attached the decision below.

Please be aware that approval is for a period of twelve months from the date of this letter, unless otherwise stated below.

All further information/documentation (if any) is to be submitted to FBE HREAP via Student Centre. Please submit originals plus four copies. Email submission will not be recognised.

Decision
Approved with conditions

Your application is approved; however, there are certain things you must do, before you may conduct your research. Please see below for details, and your responses will assist us in completing your file.

Advisory comments:

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<th>Item</th>
<th>Advisory comments:</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Your application indicates that you may need to obtain one or more Letters of Support before you conduct your research. Letters of Support are required whenever you involve any organisation (other than UNSW) or any individual (other than an employee of UNSW) in your research, whereby: (a) you intend to interview, survey or include employees in a focus group; or (b) your research is wholly or partly funded by any organisation (other than UNSW) or individual (other than an employee of UNSW). Please contact your Supervisor for further direction (if applicable). A Letter of Support must conform to one of the formats indicated in Form 6. Please forward all Letters of Support to HREAP to complete your file.</td>
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| 2    | Should you or your participants be making photographic, video or audio recordings that include people, please be aware that: 
- Recordings in public places do not generally require the permission of the people who are in those public places.
- However, this will depend upon the sensitivity of the subject matter and the situation.
- If you will be specifically identifying any person in photos or videos which you intend to publish, you will require their consent to do so. Photographs or videos of identifiable people on private property should not be made without their consent, even when taken from public property. |
Your application indicates that you may require some or all of your participants to complete a Project Consent Form. A completed Project Consent Form is required whenever you (a) undertake interviews; (b) require a person to participate in a focus group; or (c) use records or database information from sources not on the public record. Please note that you are required to retain each and every completed Project Consent Form as evidence of the participant’s consent. Please discuss this with your Supervisor (if applicable).

Applicants must use the current approved FORM 4 “Project Consent Form” template, which may be downloaded from the FBE HREAP website.

Your application indicates that you may require your research participants to be issued with Project Information Statement. The purpose of the Project Information Statement is to provide information about your research to participants before they make a decision to participate. It is required whenever you undertake interviews or focus groups collect data using questionnaires, or use records or database information from sources not on the public record.

Applicants must use the current FORM 3 “Project Information Statement” template, which may be downloaded from the FBE HREAP website.

Please provide a copy of the HREAP approved Project Information Statement to each participant.

The HREA Panel is not the authority to approve Fieldwork Applications. Please have your Fieldwork Application approved by your Head of Program or Head of School.

Approval is granted to the applicant for a twelve month period from the date of this letter. Any approval to conduct research given to the applicant is done so on the condition that the applicant is at the date of approval: (a) a Student undertaking an approved course of study in the FBE; or (b) a member of Academic Staff in the FBE. If, at any time subsequent to the date of approval and prior to completion of the research project the applicant ceases to be either of (a) and (b) above, then any prior approval given to the applicant to conduct will be deemed to be revoked forthwith. The applicant must inform the FBE HREA Panel immediately upon any change, or possible change, to the applicant’s status that may affect any prior approval given by the Panel to the applicant to conduct research.

Evaluation Authority:

Michael Brand (Convenor)
FBE HREA Panel

Approving Authority:

Jim Plum
Head of School
Faculty of the Built Environment
Appendix B
Project Information Statement

PROJECT INFORMATION STATEMENT

Date: 1 July 2009
Project Title: Community Gardens: A Place for Cultivating Social and Community Development
Approval No.: 95036

Participant selection and purpose of study
You are invited to participate in a study of identifying how community gardens encourage and support social and community development. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you have been identified as the most suitable candidate to source information about the positive social effects of community gardens.

Description of study
If you decide to participate, we will have an interview, whereby I will ask you to respond to a short list of questions aimed at identifying your perspective on the positive social effects of community gardens and how you feel the establishment of community gardens could be enhanced. There will be only one (1) interview which will take approximately one (1) hour. We cannot and do not guarantee or promise that you will receive any benefits from this study.

Confidentiality and disclosure of information
Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission, or except as required by law. If you give us your permission, we plan to discuss the results. The results will be included in a thesis which will be located at the University of New South Wales.

Recompense to participants
You will not receive any remuneration. There is no evident participation cost to you.

Your consent
Your decision whether or not to participate will not prejudice your future relations with The University of New South Wales or other participating organisations. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and to discontinue participation at any time without prejudice by completing the statement below and returning this entire form to George Mobayed at the University of New South Wales Faculty of the Built Environment, Sydney NSW 2052, AUSTRALIA.

If you have any questions, please feel free to ask George Mobayed who can be contacted on 0405266055 or george_mobayed@hotmail.com. If you have any additional questions later, Christine Steinmetz who can be contacted at c.steinmetz@unsw.edu.au, will be happy to answer them.

George Mobayed

REVOCATION OF CONSENT. Project Title: Community Gardens: A Place for Cultivating Social and Community Development
(Please send this entire form to the above address.)
I hereby wish to withdraw my consent to participate in this research project. I understand that such withdrawal will not jeopardise my relationship with The University of New South Wales, other participating organisations or other professionals.

…………………………… ……………………………………………..….…. …………………..…………
Signature Please Name
Date
Appendix C
Project Consent Form

PROJECT CONSENT FORM

Project Title: Community Gardens: A Place for Cultivating Social and Community Development

You are making a decision whether or not to participate in a research project. This PROJECT CONSENT FORM enables you to indicate your preparedness to participate in the project. By signing this form, your signature indicates that you have decided to participate.

You will be given a PROJECT INFORMATION STATEMENT that explains the project in detail, and that statement includes a revocation clause for you to use if you decide to withdraw your consent at some later stage. The PROJECT INFORMATION STATEMENT is your record of participation in the project.

This PROJECT CONSENT FORM will be retained by the researcher as evidence of your agreement to participate in this project.

Please complete the information in this box.

Please indicate which of the following options you agree to by ticking one or more of the following options:

☐ I consent to being quoted and identified
☐ I do not want to be quoted or identified but am prepared to participate anonymously
☐ I consent to being photographed and identified
☐ I consent to being photographed but not identified

........................................................................................................
Signature of Research Participant

........................................................................................................
Please PRINT name

........................................................................................................
Date

Name of researcher: George Mobayed
Appendix D
Fieldwork Pro-forma

Photography
Take photos of the:

- Surrounding public housing estate buildings
- Surrounds of the community garden
- Pedestrian access to the community garden from the public housing estate and publically used surrounds
- The full length of the community garden
- The pathways throughout the community garden
- The communal gardening plots
- The cultivated plants
- Tenants actively gardening
- Tenants interacting with other tenants
- Tenants interacting with the public
- Places of social group activity
- Gardening tools and equipment

Interaction with gardeners

- Introduce myself to the gardener
- Ask the gardener questions about:
  - Their name, age, cultural background and garden participation duration
  - What fruits, vegetables or herbs they are planting
  - How long they have been members of the community garden
  - How the community gardens benefited them
  - How they feel the community garden has allowed them to develop their social skills
  - How they feel the community garden has allowed them to become more involved in the community
  - How Housing NSW and the local council have helped them while gardening (social and practical assistance)
- Take a photo with the gardener in front of their plot
- Farewell the gardener
Appendix E
Research interviewee Information

Angelli Meza, Coordinator for Community Greening, Housing NSW.

Ms Meza is the central point of contact for the Botanic Gardens Trust Community Greening staff. She provides planning, reporting, funding and advice to regional Housing NSW staff and assists the public with general enquiries about the Community Greening Program and community gardens.

Prue Rheuben, Coordinator of the University of New South Wales Community Development Program (UNSWCDP).

Ms Rheuben is responsible for the overarching control and daily function of the UNSWCDP, providing resources and support for a range of initiatives designed to build the capacity of the local community of Redfern and Waterloo. She has a great part in the conception and establishment of pubic housing estate community gardens in the Redfern and Waterloo areas.

Greta Vallance, Manager of Family, Children, Youth and Social Housing Services, Riverwood Community Centre (Ex-HCAP worker who established the Riverwood Community Garden).

Ms Vallance controls all the staff of the Riverwood Community Centre and has the specific role of setting direction and maintaining policy in respect to family, children and youth of the Riverwood Community Centre. She also administers and supervises all social housing staff in Riverwood. This includes the Riverwood Community Garden workers and gardeners. Ms Vallance also administers the daily function of the Riverwood Community Garden through cooperation with the gardeners.

Gardeners of the Poet’s Corner Community Garden, Redfern.

An individual in-depth interview was taken with two members of the Poet’s Corner Community Garden. These gardeners are also tenants of the Redfern Public Housing Estate. Both interviewees were male. One of the gardeners is Anglo-Australian and aged 40 years old, while the other is Eastern European and in his 60s. Both gardeners have been members of the Garden since its establishment in 2007.

Gardeners of the Riverwood Community Garden, Riverwood.

Two members of the Riverwood Community Garden were interviewed in a focus group. These gardeners are also tenants of the Riverwood Public Housing Estate. One of the gardeners is a Lebanese male aged in his 60s, while the other is a Polynesian female aged in her 40s. Both gardeners have been members of the Garden since its establishment in 1999.
Appendix F
Questions for Housing NSW Community Greening Coordinator

Introduction

Can you please introduce yourself and explain your role within the Department of Housing (DOH) whilst also stating how your job is affected by community gardens on DOH land?

Could you please describe the structure of the team within the DOH that deals with issues concerning community gardens? Could you also please identify what they do?

Contribution

Could you please describe the DOH’s perspective on establishing community gardens on DOH land as a means of encouraging social and community development amongst public housing tenants?

Could you please explain how the DOH assists in the initiation and development of community gardens?

Do you feel that the DOH needs to play a greater role in the initiation and development process of community gardens on DOH land? If so, what else could they do?

Policy and direction

Does the DOH have developed polices or strategic plans which guide the establishment of community gardens on DOH land? If so, please describe them?

How else do you feel the DOH could encourage and support the establishment of community gardens of DOH land?

Benefits

Do you feel community gardens successfully encourage social and community development amongst public housing tenants? If so, what proof is there that this is true?

Do you feel public housing tenants who actively garden in community gardens established on DOH land are more socially active with other tenants and feel more part of the community than those that don’t involve themselves in community gardening? If so, please explain how, supporting your response with specific examples?
Appendix G
Questions for UNSW Community Development Program Coordinator

Introduction

Could you please introduce yourself and explain your role within your organisation and how your job is affected by community gardens?

Could you please explain your or your organisation’s part in the establishment and development of the Poet’s Corner Community Garden?

Do you feel you will be able to continue your facilitating and coordinating role in the Poet’s Corner Community Garden? If you cannot, what do you feel should be done to resolve this?

Could you please provide me with a brief history of the initiation and development of the Poet’s Corner Community Garden whilst also listing the persons, groups or agencies that played a part in the garden’s initiation and development?

Funding and support

Do you feel that the Department of Housing (DOH) and local councils should play a greater part in encouraging, supporting and facilitating the establishment, development and continual maintenance of community gardens on DOH land? If yes, what could both bodies do to achieve this?

Background of Redfern

Could you please provide me with a quick background of the local area and the people, groups and various nationalities that actively use the community garden?

Benefits

Do you think the Poet’s Corner Community Garden is successfully encouraging social and community development amongst the public housing tenants? If so, please describe how, whilst identifying specific examples?

Do you consider the gardeners feel that they are more sociable and more part of the community because of their involvement in the Poet’s Corner Community Garden? If so, please describe how whilst identifying examples.

From your extensive experience with community gardens, what other benefits besides encouraging and supporting social and community development do you regard community gardens as having?

Negatives

Do you feel community gardens have any negative effects? If you do, please outline them.
Appendix H
Questions for Riverwood Community Centre Manager

Introduction

Could you please introduce yourself and explain your role within your organisation and how your job is affected by community gardens?

Could you please explain your or your organisation’s part in the establishment and development of the Riverwood Community Garden?

Do you feel you will be able to continue your facilitating and coordinating role in the Riverwood Community Garden? If you cannot, what do you feel should be done to resolve this?

Could you please provide me with a brief history of the initiation and development of the Riverwood Community Garden whilst also listing the persons, groups or agencies that played a part in the garden’s initiation and development?

Funding and support

Do you feel that the Department of Housing (DOH) and local councils should play a greater part in encouraging, supporting and facilitating the establishment, development and continual maintenance of community gardens on DOH land? If yes, what could both bodies do to achieve this?

Background of Riverwood

Could you please provide me with a quick background of the local area and the people, groups and various nationalities that actively use the community garden?

Benefits

Do you think the Riverwood Community Garden is successfully encouraging social and community development amongst the public housing tenants? If so, please describe how, whilst identifying specific examples?

Do you consider the gardeners feel that they are more sociable and more part of the community because of their involvement in the Riverwood Community Garden? If so, please describe how whilst identifying examples.

From your extensive experience with community gardens, what other benefits besides encouraging and supporting social and community development do you regard community gardens as having?

Negatives

Do you feel community gardens have any negative effects? If you do, please outline them.
Appendix I
Questions for Gardener Focus Group and In-depth Interviews

Introduction

Could you please introduce yourself and explain your role and experience in this community garden?

How long have you been a public housing tenant and a gardener at this community garden and have you lived in other public housing estates before this?

Social development

Have you developed new friendships since starting in the community garden? Explain.

How has gardening in the community garden allowed you to develop/enhance your social skills?

In what ways do you interact with people of other nationalities more now?

Do you communicate more freely with strangers now?

Community development

Explain your sense of belonging to the community garden/group?

How do you interact more with members of the community?

In what ways are you more a part of and involved in the community?

Do you consider the community garden a community group for you? Why?

General Questions

Have you noticed any negative effects caused by community gardens in public housing estates whilst gardening in the garden? If yes, please list and describe them.

From your experience as a community gardener, what other benefits besides possibly encouraging social and community development do you feel community gardens have?

Do you feel that you will continue to use the garden for the entire duration of your residence at this housing estate? If yes, is one of the reasons for this decision you actually feel community gardens are the most advantageous initiative available at your public housing estate that supports you and allows you to socialise with others whilst also allowing you to feel more part of the community?
Funding and support

Do you feel that this community garden is functioning effectively and with sufficient resources? If no, who do you consider to be responsible in amending this and what do you feel should be done to be better this?

Do you feel that the Department of Housing and local councils could assist further with the day to day functioning of the community garden? If yes, please briefly identify how.

Planning and design

What are your comments on the following aspects of your community garden?

- Location
- Position
- Design
- Accessibility
- Recreational facilities
Appendix J
Supportive Imagery Montage

A montage of photographs taken during the onsite fieldwork at the Poet’s Corner and Riverwood Community Gardens is presented. The montage is a form of supplementary information supporting the findings of the thesis. A range of issues and ideas are reflected from these photographs. These include gardening practices, community garden features, public housing estates features and social and community development. The photographs have been grouped by their contents and respective garden.

Riverwood Community Garden

Garden features

Source: Mobayed 2009
Gardening practice

Source: Mobayed 2009
The Riverwood Public Housing Estate

Source: Mobayed 2009
Poet's Corner Community Garden

Garden features
Gardening practice

Source: Mobayed 2009
The Poet’s Corner Public Housing Estate, Redfern

Source: Mobayed 2009
Source: Mobayed 2009
Source: Mobayed 2009