

# Canberra City Farm: Jerrabomberra Education Centre

## Site Proposal



Discover a Sustainable  
Urban Lifestyle

*Growing healthy soil, food and communities*

## WHO WE ARE

The Canberra City Farm is a local not-for-profit incorporated volunteer group interested in socially and environmentally responsible food production and sustainable cities.

## WHAT WE DO

Canberra City Farm creates opportunities for people to have practical action-based education and demonstrations about growing and enjoying healthy foods, and options for sustainable living. We are also a hub for connecting local groups, farmers, food producers & urban people.

Like other projects around the world, our focus is on creating: demonstrations of sustainable food growing; showcases of sustainable building techniques; educational courses (run both on and off site); and demonstrations of renewable energy.

Canberra City Farm has collaborated and engaged with various groups around the ACT bio-region, all of whom endorse/support the Canberra City Farm project (see Appendix 1).

## WHY WE DO IT

In 2011, 78% of the population in more developed countries, like Australia, lived in urban areas. This is expected to increase to 86% by 2050. A serious implication of this urbanisation is the health of the people living in these urban environments and their access to adequate, nutritious food.

The intended outcome from the Canberra City Farm project is that people are aware of their options for healthy food and sustainable living, that we have large-scale transformation through small-scale change towards environmentally responsible food production and sustainable cities, and that we demonstrate how we can reach the ACT Government's 40% emissions reduction target, no waste policy and other sustainability policies.

Re-vitalising the Jerrabomberra Education Centre with it's existing infrastructure and space, provides the opportunity for the Canberra City Farm to educate, support and connect both up-and-coming farmers and urban dwellers, and to influence a wide range of the community, business and Government across Australia and internationally.



Images (top clockwise): First workshop; Seedling Workshop; Stall at Canberra Harvest Festival; Workshop discussion; Visit to possible sites.



## WHAT WE HAVE DONE

Since this first Canberra City Farm meeting held in 2011 with over 70 attendees, the group has met monthly and worked collaboratively to achieve the following:

- incorporation as an entity and establishment of a website;
- over 500 people on our monthly newsletter and regular food related workshops;
- engagement with Government Agencies and various farmers;
- promotion in local newspapers and on stalls at different events;
- a display and talks at Floriade 2013 and 2014; and
- establishment of the Canberra City Farm Turner Garden.

## FLORIADE AND THE TURNER GARDEN

Urban Agriculture Australia, an initiative of Canberra City Farm, successfully delivered a display and regular talks for the whole month of Floriade 2013 and 2014. After Floriade 2014 the display was moved to a site in Turner to commence the first Canberra City Farm.

To create the Floriade and Turner Garden displays and talks, volunteers secured in-kind contributions from a range of local businesses around Canberra, they developed a website with over 47 fact sheets, grew hundreds of plants and constructed the display. Both the display and talks were of a very high standard, professional, well-managed and very popular with visitors. Many visitors leaving Floriade noted they intended to recreate aspects of the Urban Agriculture Australia display in their own garden (refer to Appendix 2: Reference).

## WHAT WE WILL DO NEXT

Building upon the success of Floriade and the commencement of the Turner Garden, Canberra City Farm would like to secure a more permanent site, particularly as the Turner Garden is only permitted for two years.

The Turner site was selected due to its close proximity to the city, University students, public housing occupants, public transport, cyclists, the senior citizens centre, medium density housing and passing traffic. Although this makes it the ideal site for demonstrating inner city food production and sustainable living, Canberra City Farm is keen to demonstrate and engage the community around small-scale farming, which cannot be done in Turner.



Images: Floriade display proving popular; Minister Rattenbury visit; Costa Georgiadi's volunteering; professional signage; Minister Rattenbury launching the Canberra City Farm Turner Garden.



## WHAT WE ARE PROPOSING FOR JERRABOMBERRA

Canberra City Farm is seeking a 10 year sub-lease, with an option to renew for a further 10 years, of part of the Former Outdoor School site at Jerrabomberra located on Dairy Road. Access to the site will be required at all times.

On this site Canberra City Farm proposes to create an Education Centre that demonstrates social, environmental and economically responsible food production and sustainable living. It will engage with local farmers and education institutions like the National Environment Centre to provide a learning space for new farmers, complemented by regular practical action-based education opportunities for the community. This will help to bridge the urban-rural divide and provide a training ground for new farmers.

Projects like the Canberra City Farm have taken off all over the world, including in Melbourne (CERES Environment Park), Brisbane, Perth and the UK, to name just a few. Each of these projects has been developed in ways that suit their location and their community.

Canberra City Farm requests the site area as shown inside the red line (refer to diagram on right). As a not-for-profit volunteer organisation, Canberra City Farm proposes to maintain the grounds in lieu of payment, and reinvest income generated from the site back into the project as a community resource. Canberra City Farm agrees to pay the cost of water used on the site and it is understood TAMS will confirm the layout of the existing water infrastructure. Income will be generated by:

- having plots provided for a fee to external parties (similar to community garden allotments but at a larger scale) who are training in farming;
- selling food or plants produced on the site; and
- fees from people visiting, training or attending workshops.

In addition, Canberra City Farm request the use of the toilets, classrooms, car park and other buildings that fall within this line. Parking would be on the hard standing material at the northern end of the site within the red boundary or just within the site where the road with new gate enters the middle of the site. Access to the larger classroom within the current office block, on an ad hoc basis by arrangement with the current leaseholder, would be desirable.



## WHAT WE WOULD DO ON THE JERRABOMBERRA SITE

- Garden/Farming Showcase:** This consists of large-sized plots made available for a small fee to training farmers to use as a test-bed on a regular basis. It would include community education workshops to rejuvenate the existing orchard, vineyard and poultry sheds; creating new food-growing beds, raised garden beds and planter boxes; and establishing a polytunnel/glasshouse. All of this would be delivered in a way that demonstrates soil improvement techniques, natural food farming methods, seed propagation, and best practice water and energy management. Noting that the site is in a sensitive ecological area, the soil improvement techniques and growing methods used will be based on the use of compost and utilisation of soil biology to improve soil fertility to ensure there is no plant nutrient run off from the site into the wetlands. Agricultural fertilisers based on soluble salts will not be used. Plants with the potential to spread seed into the wetlands will not be used or will not be permitted to go to seed.
- Sustainable Building Display:** This consist of a small building structure that provides information about how to design buildings more efficiently and support those interested in building, buying and living sustainably. Recycled shipping containers would also be used to provide storage and information displays, with the containers re-clad, painted or covered in vertical garden beds to ensure they are aesthetically pleasing.
- Education:** Opportunities would be created for different types of education, run both on and off-site. These would include on-site signage and workshops that demonstrate and train others in the techniques adopted on the site, and off-site lectures and debates by visiting and local experts.
- Small Animals:** This consists of rejuvenating the poultry sheds and training farmers.
- Events:** Communal spaces would provide opportunities for the local community to come together and enjoy a range of events.
- Business:** Services would be incorporated into the garden that would benefit the community and ensure the ongoing viability of the Canberra City Farm. These may include an organic nursery that sells seedlings.
- Tours:** Opportunities for the community and visitors to be given guided tours around the site would be created.
- Renewable Energy:** This would consist of solar panels and/or a small wind turbine that showcase renewable energy options and provide information to the community, at the same time as providing renewable energy to the site.



Renewable energy



Sign-posted education gardens



Raised garden beds



Planter boxes



Garden beds on-ground with edging



Sustainable building display



Farming test-beds



Polytunnel



Nursery



## WHAT THIS PROVIDES FOR THE COMMUNITY

The Canberra City Farm project is an ideal opportunity to create a leading-edge demonstration for all Canberrans to experience how they can be sustainable with their ordinary urban block, and bridge the urban-rural divide.

The Canberra community and economy will benefit from this resource, as it will:

- demonstrate healthy sustainable food production, preparation and consumption;
- connect to local and regional food producers;
- provide options for improving the efficiency of homes and decrease energy/water use;
- demonstrate options for energy generation and water harvesting;
- connect people to the local food economy;
- provide information about soil and environmental health; and
- be a pleasant space for social gatherings.

Re-establishing the Jerrabomberra Education Centre will support the community to come together, either through training, workshops, sharing produce, or enjoying the communal space. As evidenced by the Canberra City Farm display at Floriade, our growing support and follower base, our endorsements, our growing role as a contributor in sustainability forums and healthy food, and with the positive responses received from the commencement of the Turner Garden, the Jerrabomberra Education Centre is the ideal next step of development for the Canberra City Farm to connect people to their local food economy.

As an entity focussed on engaging and linking with the community, the Canberra City Farm can also support awareness and enhance complementary activities being undertaken by other groups across Canberra, and by the ACT Government. This includes supporting the ACT's 40% emission reduction target and other ACT Government commitments to improve the viability and sustainability of food production in the ACT.

## CONTACT DETAILS

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*Turner Garden*



*Canberra City Farm workshop - engaging the community*



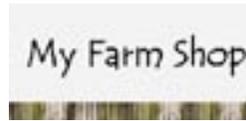
*Canberra City Farm workshop - engaging the community*



# APPENDIX 2: ENDORSEMENTS/SUPPORTERS



Bredbo Valley View Farm  
Permaculture Farmed Heritage Breeds



## APPENDIX 2: REFERENCE

Laura Raine  
Events ACT – Event Coordinator  
GPO Box 158  
Canberra City ACT 2601

13 October 2013

To whom it may concern,

It is with pleasure that I write today to provide a reference for Urban Agriculture Australia who were an integral part of Floriade this year. Urban Agriculture Australia, an initiative of Canberra City Farm, were engaged as a premier partner to the event to provide an interactive and educational permaculture garden to inspire visitors to create their own at home.

Urban Agriculture Australia successfully delivered this display as well as regular talks at the Gourmet Garden, a venue that aims to educate visitors on growing their own produce which they can then cook with.

The display delivered by Urban Agriculture Australia was of a very high standard and all those involved were extremely professional, both during the bump in period and the event. The display was aesthetically pleasing and was always kept clean and tidy. Urban Agriculture Australia had a large contingent of volunteers who provided an interactive experience for visitors for the full 30 days of Floriade and 5 nights of NightFest.

The display proved to be extremely popular with

On top of the display Urban Agriculture Australia volunteers also delivered two talks each day during the full month of Floriade. These talks were well attended and delivered in a very professional manner.

Based on our experience of working with Urban Agriculture Australia as part of the Floriade event, we consider the entire group to be extremely professional and well-organised. The concept which they

Warm Regards,  
Laura Raine

