

## **Euroa Community Action Group**

20 September 2021

### **Background**

Euroa has a vibrant environment with a range of green spaces. There is an opportunity to extend this attractive green space by revitalising an underutilised space into an area that promotes local wildlife and enables people from all over Euroa to connect, grow food and learn about local flora and fauna.

Over the past 5 months, the Euroa Community Action Group (ECAG) has been working with a range of groups to learn about what the key needs are in Euroa. ECAG conducted a survey which received 45 responses and found the main needs/interest areas were to have ECAG deliver community building initiatives that bring diverse ages together to encourage active living. The priority focus areas mentioned were:

- social inclusion and wellbeing
- community infrastructure
- supporting vulnerable community members.

Majority of people were interested in supporting projects and coming along to working bees.

This aligns to similar themes from the recent Strathbogie Shire Council Engagement Report for the Council Plan (2021). The community's top service priorities in Euroa included Environment (2nd), climate change (4th) and parks and gardens (5th). Establishing a revitalised green space will support Council and community's objectives by enabling more green spaces for community building activities.

From these insights, the next ECAG project is to partner with local organisations including Design Euroa, Friends of the Sevens, the Arboretum, and local schools to revitalise a space that encourages connections with others and the local environment.

### **Vision**

The vision is to create a vibrant community gathering place that highlights Euroa's unique natural beauty in a way that inspires sustainable living and community connection.

### **Goals**

- Create an open space for shared community activities that promote equality, inclusion and connection
- Grow, gather and learn about growing food that promotes healthy, sustainable living

- Educate and connect community members with the local natural environment and inspire curiosity about native planting and biodiversity.

## Objectives

- To increase the opportunities for building intergenerational relationships through the practice of growing food leading to stronger health and wellbeing outcomes
- To develop local food production skills that can be shared between people to increase knowledge and wisdom about food and nature
- To build the garden in a way that is environmentally sustainable and provides approaches to inspire locals to be more sustainable in their homes

## Principles

These principles guide how we make decisions and ultimately decide what is important when planning and implementing the revitalisation project:

1. **Accessible:** Make the space accessible for all ages and use the space to encourage interactions between people and the natural environment
2. **Nature first:** The focus is to regenerate the space with native plants that are low maintenance, drought tolerant and primarily local to the region
3. **Educational:** The space tells a story and builds curiosity and excitement about taking care of the natural environment and sustainable activities like growing vegetables at home.
4. **Fun:** The space is vibrant, interesting and welcoming to everyone.
5. **Respectful:** Everyone is welcome and partners are all valued members who have shared accountability and interest in the space.
6. **Sustainable design:** The space boasts reused materials, local materials and innovative use of space to inspire sustainable living in Euroa and beyond.

## Project Outline

The scope of the project is to revitalise an underutilised space in Euroa to enable greater community connection and opportunities to learn about growing food and plants. This will be a multi year approach to revitalising the area.

### Inclusions of the area:

- Community gathering place (Rotunda style)
- Community garden with mini orchard and wicking beds growing seasonal vegetables
- Bush tucker trail with edible indigenous food including signage to promote education
- Nature play zone for all ages to explore the natural surrounds
- Exploration area with a cubby house and sensory garden for people to explore and play

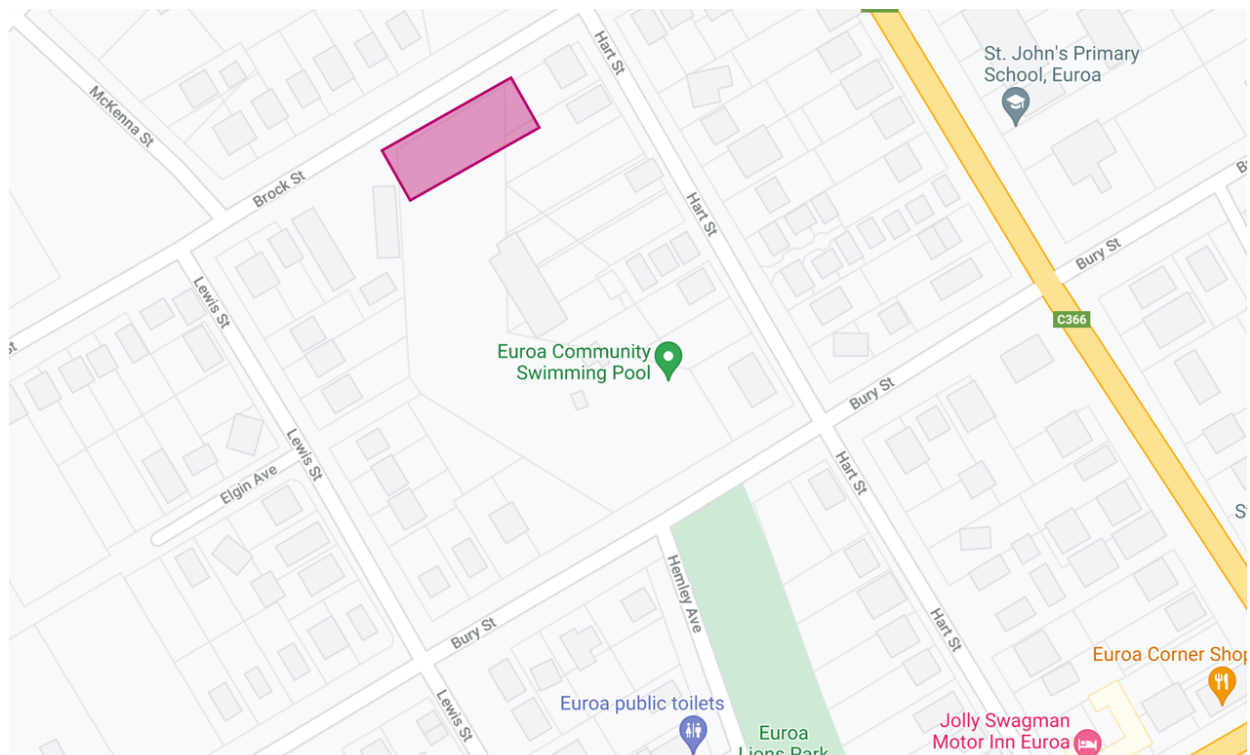
- A biodiversity zone to attract insects near the community garden to promote companion planting
- Tool shed and composting area
- BBQ and/or woodfire pizza oven near the community gathering place.

Key attributes of the space needed include:

- At least 500 square metres.
- Well lit, safe and accessible by roads and footpaths
- Ground available for planting
- Access to water mains
- Close to main street and local community facilities

The Council owned block on Brock Street which was previously a skate park and backs onto the Euroa Pool was identified as a prime location for the Community garden (see pink block for proposed site). This is pending conversations with Council and approval.

Brock Street connects into Binney Street and Kirkland Avenue which are key community and tourist hubs. As the site develops, there will be some activities to connect the site to key business and tourist zones in Euroa.



## Desired Outcomes

- Increased community connections and reduced social isolation
- Multi-generational involvement in events and activities
- Increase in sustainable living and local native knowledge
- Help community members access fresh food and learn about local food production

## Next Steps

1. Draft plans (Sep 2021)
  - a. Draft plans for the space that has a clear vision and goals
  - b. Finalise the space with Council and organise handover and management plan
  - c. Finalise plans for community consultation
2. Conduct community consultation (Oct 2021)
  - a. Conduct community consultation and launch a Share Strathbogie page
  - b. Do a flyer drop with the local residents
  - c. Hold a drop in session at the site (late October)
  - d. Create partnership network and obtain sponsors/funding
3. Hold a community event (Nov 2021)
  - a. Continue with community consultation
  - b. Hold a picnic at the site and get community input
4. Finalise plans and start initial development (Nov-Dec 2021)
  - a. Get sign off from Councillors
  - b. Create roadmap of activities
5. Regular working bees (Jan 2022 onwards)
  - a. Have a phased approach to upgrading the space aligning to the vision and plans.