

Community Garden

Nyah West

Rational

The Community Garden Nyah West, led by the Nyah District Action Group Inc was established in response to a shared community vision to revitalise public space, strengthen social connection, and promote health and wellbeing through accessible, nature-based activity contributing to local healthy food systems.

Community gardens are well documented to deliver physical, mental, and social benefits including improving diet and physical activity, reducing stress, and fostering a strong sense of belonging and collective purpose.

Objectives

The Community Garden Nyah West was established with several key objectives: to create an inclusive and welcoming space that fosters social connection across all ages; to promote physical and mental wellbeing through hands on engagement in gardening and nature-based activities; and to strengthen community pride and ownership of local public spaces.

The garden aims to encourage healthy lifestyles by increasing access to fresh produce and opportunities for physical activity, while also serving as a platform for informal learning, intergenerational exchange, and environmental sustainability.

By activating an underutilised space within the Nyah West Community Park precinct, in the centre of the township, the garden contributes to the town's broader landscape and health goals, supporting local cohesion, resilience, and long-term community-led development.

What We Did

Loddon Mallee Public Health Unit has played a pivotal role in supporting the Nyah West Community Garden by embedding the initiative within its broader vision for place-based prevention and population health and aligning this project with our priority areas of healthy food systems and mental wellbeing.

Together with the support of other partner organisations, Swan Hill Rural City Council, Mallee Family Care and the Nyah District Action Group Inc, Loddon Mallee Public Health unit supported this project with commissioning funds of \$10,000.

The commissioning funds were utilised towards establishment projects including earthworks, purpose built garden beds and equipment and foundational plantings.

Loddon Mallee Public Health Unit and the other partner organisations have; beyond funding, contributed through capacity-building, community outreach, and ensuring that the garden aligns with regional public health goals of improved wellbeing and social inclusion.



At a Glance

Partners

- Mallee Family Care
- Swan Hill Rural City Council
- Nyah District Action Group
- Loddon Mallee Public Health Unit

Benefits

- Community sense of belonging
- Social wellbeing & engagement
- Access to locally grown fresh, healthy plant-based food

Potential Outcome/Impact

Since its official opening in October 2024 the Nyah West Community Garden is already demonstrating its strong potential to generate lasting community impacts. By providing a shared, inclusive space, the garden fosters social connection, encourages healthy lifestyles, and promotes mental wellbeing through hands-on engagement with nature.

Importantly, Nyah District Primary School and other community groups are actively accessing the garden, using it as an outdoor learning environment that supports health education, sustainability, and intergenerational connection. Over time, the garden is expected to strengthen local food security, build community pride, and contribute to a more resilient and connected Nyah West.

Lessons Learned

Community ownership drives success

The project benefited from strong grassroots involvement, particularly through the Nyah District Action Group and local volunteers. Early and genuine community engagement ensured the garden reflected local values and needs, fostering a sense of ownership and pride.

Partnerships enhance impact

Collaboration between regional partnerships, local groups, council and schools created a shared investment in the garden's success.

Small, achievable steps build momentum

Starting with flower and herb beds and opening event allowed the project to build excitement and early wins. Further community days and working bees have continue to drive the project forward.

Spaces thrive when they serve multiple purposes

The garden's use by Nyah District Primary School illustrates the value of designing spaces that support learning, recreation, and community gathering. A flexible design has allowed the space to grow with the needs of the community.

Visibility and celebration matters

Hosting a community launch with interactive activities brought people together and reinforced the objectives of the project. These events not only raised awareness but also strengthened community connection. commitment to ongoing maintenance of the space. The gardens positioning in the heart of the township also ensures that the community remains committed to the ongoing maintenance of the garden.

Next steps

With the initial development and community launch of the Nyah West Community Garden complete, the focus now shifts to sustaining and growing its impact.

Regular working bees and activity-based events have been held in the garden space.

Signage for the garden was completed in May 2025.

The Nyah District Action Group has further plans to develop the as yet unused spaces within the garden as further funds and grant opportunities present themselves.

