

Inquiry into food production and supply in NSW

City of Sydney – Question on notice

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Question

In terms of being able to produce more food in urban areas, what planning or policy changes do you think need to be a priority for government?

Response

The City of Sydney recommends the following opportunities and considerations for facilitating and encouraging urban food production in NSW.

Guidelines to enable food production in new apartment buildings

We recommend planning for urban food production in apartments be considered in future planning, legislation and guidelines.

This could include:

- Providing purpose-built spaces in apartments buildings and designs for food production, such as green roofs or walls (there are often challenges when green roofs and walls are retrofitted to existing buildings, as the buildings don't meet the specifications required)
- Floor space incentives for uses related to urban food production
- Communal facilities as part of new developments, such as space for a community garden and composting.

Ministerial Directions

There is an opportunity for the NSW Government to use a Ministerial Direction to mandate local councils to consider facilitating and enabling urban food production as part of their land use planning processes.

Greater Cities Commission - Review of Region and District Plan

It is recommended that the current review of the Greater Sydney Region Plan by the Greater Cities Commission (formerly the Greater Sydney Commission) include consideration of urban food production, including how inner-city precincts can increase food production.

Elevating food production at this level may encourage further gathering of information about global trends and how this could be applied in NSW. If urban food production is considered in the region and district plans, this could be translated to councils' Local Strategic Planning Statements.

For example, the Multi-utility hubs included in the Pyrmont Peninsula Place Strategy, under the Big Move 4 for “Low carbon, high performance precincts”¹, could include places for urban food production.

Regional and peri-urban Councils and protecting productive lands

Regional and peri-urban Councils are increasingly under pressure to rezone land for residential sub-division. Often the land being considered for re-zoning is productive land that is used for food production. We recommend the State Government support Councils in protecting productive land through appropriate planning legislation.

Community-led urban agriculture

We urge the NSW Government to consider the following factors in relation to facilitating the community’s access to land for food production and when considering state renewal projects:

- Consider site suitability for small-medium scale urban for production, e.g. access to services, such as water
- Ensure security of land tenure for community-scale urban agriculture
- Provide Government assistance (State and/or Local) for community-scale governance and administration of urban food production
- Ensuring land marked for edible production is suitable for edible production areas – for example, uncontaminated land.

Zoning and land use planning

There are opportunities within zoning and land use planning to enable greater food production e.g.:

- Ensuring the zoning of the land is appropriate for local food production – e.g. recreation or open space in the case of community activities.
- Including a zone that incorporates urban food production in the standard instruments for a Local Environment Plan under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act*. This could also be used when re-zoning land, e.g. from a development purpose to a food production purpose.
- Inclusion of food production in Plans of Management for in Crown Lands, under the *Crown Lands Act*.

Further consultation

It may be necessary to undertake further consultation to understand the barriers currently being faced by different stakeholders when attempting urban agriculture activities, or the experience of people who are undertaking these activities already, for example, Melbourne Skyfarm², as referenced in the City of Sydney’s submission.

² <https://www.melbourneskyfarm.com.au/>