



SUSTAINABLE CITIES 2025

Sustainable Gardening Australia (SGA) is a project that would assist the Federal Government in addressing some of the issues expressed in the discussion paper Sustainable Cities 2025.

SGA identifies the environmental impacts of gardening with regard to water usage, water quality, biodiversity, environmental weeds, green waste and purchase of non-renewable resources. SGA provides the home gardener with a system to easily adopt low environmental damage gardening practices.

It is a marketing system for garden businesses (nurseries, garden centers, hardware chains, supermarkets, landscape designers, garden construction and maintenance operators) that is based on an accreditation system that requires member garden centers and landscapers to comply to a sustainability code of practice that reduces the environmental impact of their internal practices and promotes sustainable gardening to their customers through the distribution of education material.

Home gardeners have the opportunity to undertake workshops on practical solutions of how to garden more sustainably and professionals undergo formal training on issues of sustainable gardening to ensure creditable and consistent advice is being provided to customers.

Garden businesses are independently audited to ensure the credibility of the project and to encourage continual improvement. The home gardener receives the same message on sustainable gardening from their local nursery and their garden maintenance operator.

Sustainable Gardening Australia received seeding funding from Melbourne Water and Parks Victoria and has been developed the accreditation systems in collaboration with Burnley College, Holmesglen TAFE, local government and representatives of the nursery industry.

SGA has enormous potential to influence the home gardener to conserve water, reduce the amount of harmful chemicals in stormwater runoff, plant indigenous plants rather than environmental weeds, compost and mulch green waste to reduce landfill and purchase renewable resources as opposed to non-renewable.

These outcomes would greatly assist the state government in implementing the priority actions of Australia 2025.

To encourage garden businesses to progress down the path of sustainability, SGA and the federal government would be greatly assisted in achieving their environmental objectives if the federal government was to introduce legislation requiring nursery and landscape businesses to comply to a set of basic sustainability principles in their practices, particularly in regard to providing environmental information to customers. This could be achieved by the:

1. Development of a compulsory self audit for nurseries and landscapers indicating environmental sustainability practices and formal education material (posters, handouts, workshops) provided to customers.
2. Acknowledgement of gardening businesses identified as addressing sustainability and encouragement of them to progress to become SGA accredited. Many nurseries have been developing their own education material on certain aspects of sustainability ie water conservation. The attraction of SGA is that it is an industry relevant marketing system that has combined the experience and knowledge of a broad range of individuals to address all aspects of environmental sustainability related to gardening.
3. For gardening businesses not addressing sustainability, subsidised staff training on the impacts of gardening on the environment. Undertaking basic training would be an invaluable first step to encourage businesses to develop awareness of sustainable gardening practices and modify their practices.

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