

Delivery of Gateway to Small Scale Market Gardening – Consultants Brief



Introduction

Mornington Peninsula Shire Council (MPSC) is seeking quotations from consultants/individuals with the expertise and experience to develop, design, and implement a first-of-its-kind young farmer training program on the Mornington Peninsula. This project will deliver on Pillar 4 of the Shires Food Economy and Agroecology Strategy by building practical skills and capacity in the Agriculture sector and providing a vital and missing link for career pathways into Agriculture.

The Gateway to Small Scale Farming Training Pilot Program is an initiative of a small group of passionate Mornington Peninsula farms to help build the next generation of small scale farmers on Mornington Peninsula land. The program has come about as the future of our food system depends on the next generation of regenerative farmers to grow healthy, fresh produce.

The project will commence in September 2023 and aims to train 2-4 young people in all aspects of growing, harvesting, and selling produce for an initial period of 12 months.

The project is funded by Agriculture Victoria and Mornington Peninsula Shire with in-kind support and facilitation from Torello Farm, Uncommon Folk and Barragunda. The project delivery will be overseen by a working group with representatives from Mornington Peninsula Shire, Torello Farm, Uncommon Folk and Barragunda. The working group will be responsible for reporting on deliverables to Agriculture Victoria.

Profile of municipality

The region is one of Melbourne's premier holiday destinations and is known for its landscapes, coasts and beaches which attract millions of visitors. It is also known for its green wedge hinterland areas which host many agricultural businesses. It has a distinctive pattern of housing and land development which includes 44 separate townships and villages spread across the peninsula.

There are approximately 16,800 businesses on the Mornington Peninsula (MP) in a strong economy which produces \$8.2 billion in gross regional product (GRP). Major industries include health, retail, manufacturing, construction and business services. The growing agriculture, food and beverage sectors are important contributors to the local economy and is rich in diversity and quality with an estimated value of \$1.3 billion per annum. Major industries include horticulture, vineyards, livestock grazing, orchards, nurseries, and poultry. Tourism is also significant to the economy contributing 11% to GRP via wineries, restaurants, small farms, attractions and accommodation.

The Shires Food Economy and Agroecology Strategy was commissioned to drive sustainable growth in the agriculture, food and beverage sector whilst preserving and enhancing the regions ecology and biodiversity through agroecological approaches to farming and production. Pillar four of the Strategy identifies limited training opportunities for young people and a lack of career pathways for new entrants as key limitations for the growth and resilience of the sector.

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Scope of work – project structure and deliverables

The consultant/individual (**'Market Gardening Lead (Training Facilitator)'**) will be responsible for designing, implementing, and reviewing this pilot 12 month training program. Starting in September 2023, successful participants will learn the ropes of market gardening over the 12-month seasonal growing cycle under the guidance and tutelage of the Market Gardening Lead. Participants will apply through an EOI and there will be a small fee for participation. Their commitment will be on average 2 days per week.

The role requires the Market Gardening Lead to be both 'hands on' in facilitating and delivering the program and supporting participants on a daily basis, as well as allowing time for project management, planning and review:

- Propose a program structure for approval by the working group ahead of September start date
- Prepare and finalise the content for successful delivery of the program
- Motivate a small group of program participants who are beginning their farming career and are seeking hands on experience in the industry
- Support participants to plan, design and maintain a fully operational market garden including growing, harvesting and selling produce
- Bring in and work with subject matter experts and regional collaborators to deliver workshops and activities which extend knowledge of participants
- Work with other farms to provide diverse experience to participants
- Train participants in the use of basic tools and equipment
- Ensure the safety of participants on the farm is top priority in any situation
- Capture key data and measure milestones during delivery of the pilot program
- Develop learning resources and evaluations of the program to support future activities
- Regularly report back to working group on project progress
- Adhere to all relevant OH&S and COVID19 health guidelines and modify planned activities as appropriate

Working arrangements

The Gateway to Small Scale Farming working group will oversee the project and will work closely with the consultant/individual. They will be expected to liaise with the working group and attend meetings as required.

The host site for this pilot will be Torello Farm on the Mornington Peninsula with the expectation that the student's learning program will be enriched with immersions into other local farms and regional learning and networking opportunities.

The primary contact people for the consultant/individual will be Sarah Saxton, Mornington Peninsula Shires Agribusiness and Food Industry Facilitation Officer, and Sophie O'Neil, Director at Torello Farm.

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For questions regarding the Consultants Brief and to request the quotation documents for this project or please email: agrofood@mornpen.vic.gov.au

Project Budget

Proposals should include a detailed budget including planning, facilitation and evaluation. Quotes greater than \$45K may be at risk of failing evaluation. Quotes do not need to include materials, equipment, and resources but estimates of these requirements should be included.

Indicative Timing and milestones

It is expected that the Market Gardening Lead (Training Facilitator) will be appointed in August. An EOI process seeking students for the program will commence in late July with training commencing in September. The program will run for a period of 12 months from when the participants are selected.

This project will be paid in instalments, subject to project progress and key deliverables. This will be outlined in the contract and as agreed with the consultant/individual.