



Think Globally. Act Locally!

## Householders' Options to Protect the Environment Inc.

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## MEDIA RELEASE

Saturday, 1 April 2023

To whom it may concern,

### Re: Potential vegetable gardening opportunities for the socially disadvantaged

Householders' Options to Protect the Environment (HOPE) Inc. is founded on the vision of a society which is **sustainable ecologically, economically and socially**. [H.O.P.E](#) has long supported organic and sustainable gardening.

In recent years, HOPE has been investigating opportunities for people to access under-utilised suburban backyards, especially for those who are unable to garden in rental properties. There are many people who own their own homes but who do not or cannot use the space they have for gardening. It is our hope that with your support we will be able to offer space to people who wish to produce food for their own tables.

There is a history of such use of spaces. For example, the Mulberry Project where refugees were given access to some farming land to grow their traditional food crops - mainly vegetables. Louise Noble (mob: 0415 974 313 (from Nobby)), the instigator of this project, is now looking for residents with backyard citrus trees that need some nurturing and care – on the proviso that the harvested produce can be utilised by the refugees.

- See: <https://www.facebook.com/themulberryproject.qld> or
- <https://www.themulberryproject.org.au/>

HOPE's first thought was to establish a series of 'community gardens' on vacant land owned by Toowoomba Regional Council (TRC). These new community gardens would need to be managed by community groups. However, environment colleagues that we consulted thought that it might be easier to work through churches and their congregations/parishioners.

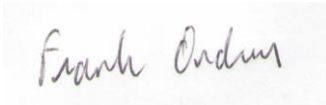
Asking parishioners to make available their backyard spaces raises issues of trust, and care for the space made available. Issues of insurance, access times, use of facilities like the toilet and kitchen for smokos and/or lunch, as well as water would certainly need to be considered.

Householders would not be expected to provide seed or seedlings. The gardening would be totally the responsibility of the gardeners involved. But if the space were made available to refugees and migrants, who may be strapped for cash to buy, then grants could be available to purchase equipment and seed/seedlings.

HOPE's (Householders' Options to Protect the Environment – [www.hopeaustralia.org.au](http://www.hopeaustralia.org.au) ) proposal is very basic in concept, but we acknowledge it could be quite involved to implement on a house-by-house basis. However, the simpler we can make it, the easier it will be to sustain.

That's why I would like to meet with church people to discuss the draft proposal and endeavour to "flesh out" the details.

If you are interested in following through with this idea then please contact me so that we can discuss it further.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Frank Ondrus". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored, slightly textured background.

Frank Ondrus, President – HOPE Inc., ph. 07 4639 2135