

# FOR THE FAMILY

*Multi-generational and multi-functional, this rear garden meets the needs of every family member*

The pathway is the backbone of the backyard and wraps around the lawn where the kids and the dog play.



**ABOVE** The hexagonal summerhouse is the focal point of the design and can be used in a variety of ways.  
**LEFT** The in situ Peppercorn-coloured concrete path complements the paved outdoor entertaining area.

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**W**hen you have a swimming pool you no longer need, what do you do? You call in a professional landscape designer who can come up with a cost-effective way to reclaim the space and integrate it into a new, more functional and appealing overall garden design. But what do you do if you have a family where each member has very different priorities for that redesigned garden? You call in a designer like Steve Warner of OUTHOUSE design who loves a challenge.

"This project is a great example of the changing world in which we live," says Steve, "where families come back together under the one roof for reasons such as health, companionship or convenience, yet they are still individuals seeking outdoor spaces that will meet their specific needs."

For Steve, it was like having five clients. "Client one was mum who was relocating to her daughter's house. She was coming from a large home and garden and required a place to meditate and entertain her friends. Client two was dad who wanted a productive garden where he could grow vegies; he also needed garden access that would be easy for a walker," he says.



Bollard lights were placed along the pathway to create safe passage through the garden at night.





The summerhouse, which sits in a corner of the garden, is surrounded by a diverse mix of plants.

*“A calm and inviting multi-functional rear garden in which the new summerhouse, nestled amid the plants, is the focal point”*



The vegie patch is comprised of raised timber garden beds which make tending to plants very easy.



The emphasis is on hardy plants, such as westringia and lomandra, and the interplay of textures.

Client three was the daughter, who wanted a place where she could get away from it all and client four, well, that was her young son who just wanted to be able to play football. And the fifth client? That was the family dog.

What Steve designed is a calm and inviting multi-functional rear garden in which the new summerhouse, nestled amid the plants, is the focal point. “It’s the place to get away and an essential component of the design,” he says. “It was important that it be in character with the home and didn’t look out of place within the garden. Also, the internal floor space had to be flexible so it could be used for different things, from morning tea with friends to spending a moment in contemplation.”

The pathway to the summerhouse can be accessed via a gentle slope from the rear entertaining area or, for the nimbler family members, a set of wide steps. The pathway, which was fashioned out of in situ concrete, acts as the backbone of the garden and connects the key zones such as the open lawn, summerhouse and vegie patch area.

The planting scheme comprises shrubs for structure and year-round interest, seasonal flowering plants and small feature trees to draw the eye from the home and the summerhouse. The shrubs include westringia (‘Blue Gem’ and ‘Aussie Box’), rosemary and Japanese pittosporum. Offering bursts of floral colour there is bird of paradise, clivia, agapanthus, kangaroo

paw and salvia, along with border plantings of society garlic. Groundcovers include creeping boobialla, lamb’s ear, hardenbergia and banksia.

Choosing where to place the plants wasn’t quite as straightforward a proposition as you might think. “One of the key factors was the location of the old swimming pool. Even after being broken down and infilled, it still had an impact on how we could lay out the garden. The location of the lawn and trees had to be considered with the pool outline in mind,” says Steve.

With each challenge successfully resolved, the family now has a garden that perfectly fits their needs and complements both the house and the garden’s bushland-adjacent location.