





## Level best

A sloping sandstone block has been turned into an inviting, family-friendly outdoor haven



**FROM THE WELL-APPOINTED REAR DECK TO THE** level terraces of lush lawn, this is a landscape that suits family living right down to the ground. It's also a testament to the design expertise of Tobie Collier and the skill of the Mayflower Landscapes construction team.

Tobie took a concept design that the owners had drawn up by a local landscape designer to submit to council when seeking home building approval and honed it. This was a process that involved close collaboration with the owners and while the design underwent a number of changes, the end result is a beautiful, well-balanced rear garden and an elegant, somewhat formal front garden complete with driveway.

"The brief from the owners was to create a backyard with specific areas where their two young daughters could play and a separate space where the adults could entertain," explains Tobie. "Practical considerations also came into play. For example, we needed to find an aesthetically pleasing way to screen off the view of the amenities area where the existing water tank, hot water system and air conditioning unit were situated.

"And, of course, maximising the amount of usable space was critically important given the sloping nature of the site, so great thought went into the layout of the retaining walls, both front and back."

As the site was a sloping block on sandstone, the Mayflower Landscapes' construction team had to cut and excavate the rear garden to create flat, usable levels. Sandstone from the excavation was saved and reused to create a feature boulder wall in one corner. The size and slope of the site also



necessitated extensive sub-drainage work.

The retaining walls were built of besser blocks reinforced with steel and concrete. They were then waterproofed, rendered and painted to complement the colour of the house.

Bluestone 500mm x 500mm steppers lead around the rear garden and are matched by the bluestone capping on the retaining walls and the cut-down bluestone pavers used for the steps and risers on the stairs that link each level.

Blackbutt hardwood has been used extensively in the backyard. The rear deck is constructed of 140mm-wide blackbutt boards and is protected by a privacy screen constructed from 90mm-wide

blackbutt decking boards. The same decking boards were used for the side gates.

The planting is a mix of native and drought-tolerant exotic plants. Fast-growing lilly pilly (*Acmena smithii*) was used for screening around the perimeter of property, French lavender to create a formal hedge around the rear retaining wall, gardenias, star jasmine, a liriopie (*Liriopie muscari* 'Monroe White') with crisp white flowers and agapanthus as filler and groundcover. At the front, shrubs of mock orange (*Murrayata paniculata*) were used for a formal hedge. As the plants mature they will wrap the front and rear gardens in an embrace of green, punctuated with bursts of seasonal colour.



### Project details

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