

# NATIVE APPEAL

An eco-friendly garden that draws on nearby natural bushland for design inspiration

Words & photos: Diane Norris



This gorgeous native garden in the leafy outer Sydney suburb of Killara is a shining example of what can be achieved with knowing and passion. Imaginative and aesthetically pleasing, the design techniques and planting employed perfectly emulate the surrounding bushland.

Credit for this stunning garden goes to Andrew Davies of Banksia Design Group, a passionate landscape designer whose designs are synonymous with creating native landscapes that bring living ecosystems to home gardens.

The owner of the property wanted a modern Australian garden that complemented the recent makeover of the house, a process that included refurbishment of the hardscaping, including retaining walls finished in cement render to match the house. To soften the angular lines of the house and retaining walls,



Andrew drew inspiration from the nearby bushland reserve to create a plant palette largely comprised of Australian native species.

At the entrance to the property, two statuesque advanced grass trees (*Xanthorrhoea media*) welcome visitors and guide your eye to

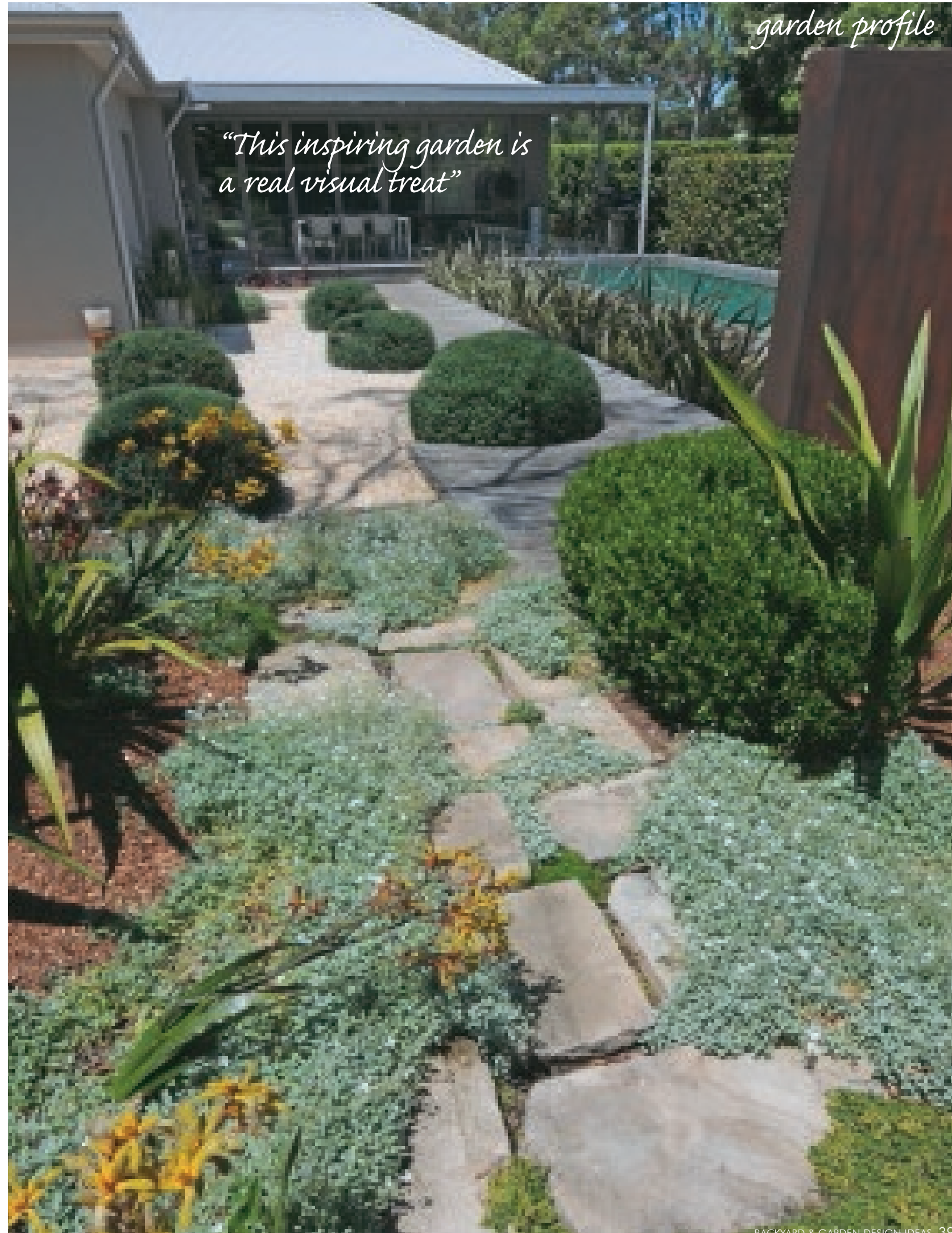
the other native delights, including a flourish of kangaroo paws. The random sandstone stepping stones that lead towards the front verandah pass through a dozen or more Silver Banksia (*Banksia marginata*). To replicate the look of the natural bushland just across the road, forest fines mulch has been used like a natural carpet between each sandstone slab and throughout the garden.

The natural theme is continued in the rear garden. A walkway beside the existing lap pool leads into an eye-catching pebble courtyard. This area, "mulched" with white pebble, is surrounded by eight mounds of topiarised mauve Coastal Rosemary (*Westringia fruticosa*). Although they look like giant green raindrops that fell randomly from the sky, great thought went into their placement. Not only does the shape of the mounds add a little formality, it showcases the versatility of Australian native plants.

The handsome walkway that runs the length of the pool is built from hardwood and looks just like the walkways that protect native vegetation in remote National Parks. This leads your eyes and feet down past the bright white pebbles into the "relaxation room" that has been divided off at the rear of the garden space. →



"This inspiring garden is a real visual treat"





This private alcove is separated from the residence and pebble courtyard by a garden filled to the brim with colourful and texturally interesting foliage native plants. More kangaroo paws are here, to tie-in with the front garden, alongside Long-leaf Wax Flowers (*Eriostemon myoporoides*), Dianella caerulea 'Cassa Blue', Sydney Boronia (*Boronia ledifolia*) and the native iris (*Patersonia glabrata*) to name just a few. Three advanced Gynea lilies (*Doryanthes excelsa*) arrived in 25-litre bags and have been planted to add drama and immediately form the living dividing panel between the distinct garden rooms.

Specialty craftsmanship in stonework construction can be seen here in the sawn sandstone edging, which gives definition to the native garden beds. Squared natural sandstone paving blocks complete the picture. Credit for the stonework construction — indeed, the construction of both front and rear gardens — goes to Brian Baker and the team from Artview Landscapes.

Instead of just soil, sand or the ever-



popular mondo grass, Andrew chose the fill the gaps between the paving stones with the herb marjoram, which releases aromatic delights into the air as your foot brushes past the leaves.

Native birds abound even in this relatively small space and they spend their days flitting busily from flower to flower. Skinks and lizards have plenty of hidey-holes, too.

Although the garden areas have a natural, somewhat random look, regular garden maintenance, provided by the Artview team, is required to ensure these lovingly planted outdoor areas retain their beauty and shape. Natives do need extra care, particularly the flowering varieties such as *Grevillea* 'Pink Midget' and the big job of deheading the loads of kangaroo paws at the end of the blooming season.

This inspiring garden is a real visual treat and a true testament to the fact that even in small spaces you can create a colourful eco-enriched replica of the Australian native bush, whether you live close to it or not. ■

