

# THE LANDSCAPE EDITION

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Issue #59 Outdoor Special



Garden Editor Will Dangar In Conversation with Sam Cox · The Names To Know in Australian Residential Landscape Architecture and Design · A Monolithic Take on an English Countryside Home  
Design Collaborations Bring a Fresh Lens to Outdoor Furniture

# ON HOME GROUND

**The Studios Shaping Modern Australian Gardens**

**WORDS** Megan Rawson



## Nelson Thomas

New South Wales, Australia

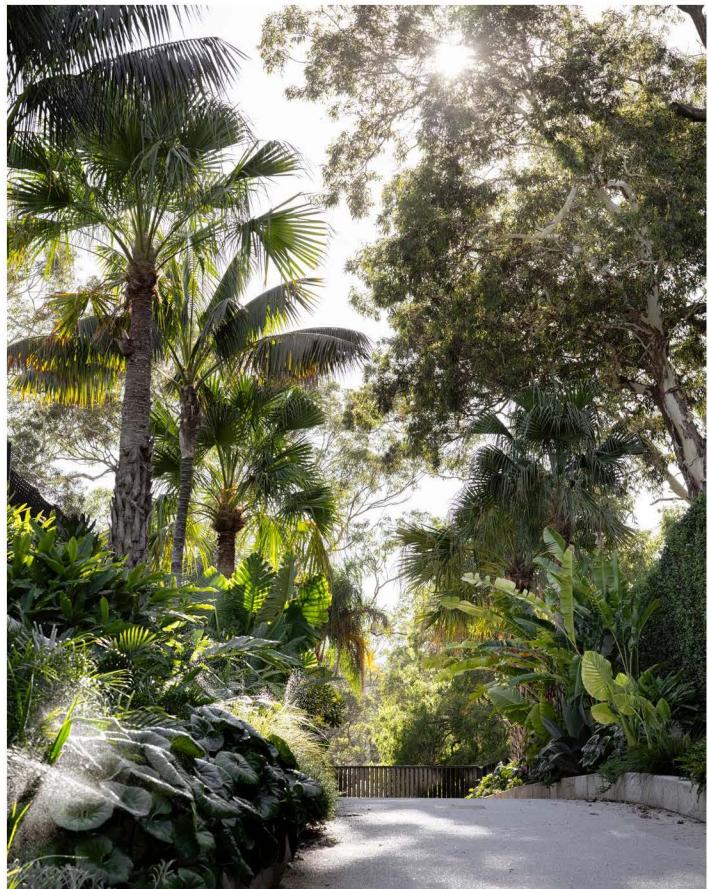
At Nelson Thomas, landscape design begins with attentiveness to life as it is lived, to movement, to seasons, and to the quiet exchanges between people and place. Gardens are conceived not as static compositions, but as responsive environments shaped by use, time and ecology. A landscape, the practice believes, is an extension of both the home and those who inhabit it.

Guided by Nelson Thomas founder and director Julia Levitt, this attention to lived experience is matched by horticultural insight. The studio's work is directed by a close understanding of plants; how they grow, mature and relate to one another. Planting is layered rather than prescriptive and textures, forms and colours are chosen not for their immediate effect, but for how they will settle and evolve. "We're always thinking about how plants come together as a tapestry," Levitt reflects, "one that feels effortless, but is carefully considered."

Each project unfolds through a collaborative process, beginning with close site observation and detailed briefing before concepts are refined as a team. From there, the work moves into detailed drawings and is realised alongside trusted collaborators. The studio remains involved on site, particularly during planting, where placement is as important as selection.

Environmental responsiveness sits at the centre of Nelson Thomas' approach. As climate patterns shift, so too does the understanding of what will thrive. Conversations with nurseries and industry specialists, alongside observation of locally indigenous plant communities, inform plant palettes that are resilient and grounded in place.

Gardens are increasingly expected to do more to support work, retreat, reflection and restoration. Areas for wellness, quiet solitude, or working from home allow gardens to become part of everyday life. Working across projects of varying scale, from family homes and estates to commercial and hospitality settings, Nelson Thomas brings the same measured sensibility to each brief. The result is enduring landscapes shaped by climate, context and care, fostering connection to nature, to place and to one another.



**"We carefully consider site conditions, existing vegetation and natural elements, while giving equal attention to our clients' needs and lifestyles."**

Project: The Pavillion  
 Landscaping & Maintenance: Reflective  
 Gardens  
 Photography: Brigid Arnott