

News

**First Stage of Works for Fire-Resistant Demonstration Garden Underway**

29 June 2017

A garden to demonstrate fire-resistant land management and planting practices is being developed in the heart of Wye River. Colac Otway Shire Council has been working with the Flora, Fauna and Beachscape Work Group and Southern Otway Landcare Network to establish the garden, which will be alongside Morley Avenue, behind the Wye Beach Hotel.

Those who are familiar with the site will know recent conditions have led to the spread of many different weeds, including a lot of woody weeds, such as Sweet Pittosporum, and that parts of the area are very steep and difficult to manage.

It was chosen as the most suitable location for the demonstration garden, because of both its prominent location and the fact that the terrain is similar to that of many private properties in Wye River and Separation Creek. We hope it will help inspire landowners with practical solutions as they redevelop their gardens.

The first stage of works to prepare the site for the garden is now underway. This process involves removing all weeds above ground, while leaving root systems in the earth to help keep the area stabilised. Weeds will then be controlled on the site, with planting set to occur in winter 2018.

The next stage of works will be carefully designing the garden as appropriate to the specifics of the site. The Landscaping Your Coastal Garden for Bushfire booklet, which is available for download at <http://bit.ly/2u09z67>, will be the primary resource for choosing species to plant.

Rocks, sand, native grasses and succulents will all be incorporated into the design, and the different elements of the garden will be showcased through plant labelling and interpretative signage.

