

# N&G NEWS

Nursery & Garden Industry NSW & ACT





- ▶ Thriving retail nursery on NSW's south coast
- ▶ Two renovated historic buildings
- ▶ Growing/display areas
- ▶ Tunnel house
- ▶ Covered potting shed
- ▶ Bulk storage
- ▶ An undeveloped land area, which includes a pond, has its own potential
- ▶ Opportunity for small cut flower/plant production area

**Looking  
for a tree/  
sea change?  
Then this  
is it!**



Mogo Nursery is a thriving retail nursery on the Princes Highway and located centrally in Mogo Village on the beautiful south coast of NSW. Two iconic renovated historic buildings front the highway.

The nursery building, with unique overhanging veranda, displays indoor plants, pots and artistry, and includes office and storage areas.

The second cottage is currently leased to Mogo Bowerbird Garage, which purveys collectibles and recycled gems. This cottage also has great potential as a residence. The rear veranda, sliding windows and trifold doors also lend themselves to a café/restaurant. The two buildings are connected via the shade cloth display area and double doors open onto this area from both buildings.


Behind the buildings are growing and display areas, tunnel house and covered potting shed, and bulk storage. Mogo Nursery has been run on organic principles for 39 years by the same owners. No glyphosates or pre/post emergent herbicides have been used.


The rear undeveloped area contains a pond and has frontage to Mogo carpark. This area has excellent potential for further retail development or landscape supplies, growing beds or veggie growing

With Mogo the hub of an \$8 million dollar mountain bike trail under construction and being a mere 8 kms from beaches and mountains, this property ticks the lifestyle, location and potential boxes, and is a great investment in a rapidly expanding south coast location.

For more information please call **0488 744 950** or send an email to **mogonursery@bigpond.com**

**Only 2.5 hours from Canberra and 3.5 hours from Sydney (and their international airports), you can find Mogo Nursery and Mogo Bowerbird Garage on Facebook and Instagram.**

 /mogonursery  
/Mogo-Bowerbird-Garage

 @mogonursery  
@mogo\_bowerbird\_garage



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**Front Cover:** Photo of Wyee Nursery taken by NGINA Director and Co-Owner of Wyee Nursery, Nichole Roberts.



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## President's Report

by Malcolm Calder, President, NGINA

As I pen this report I am reflecting on what we've all been through during 2020 with its associated challenges, highs and lows, mixed in with solid optimism that by early 2021 this pandemic would be behind us.

Fast forward to the end of June this year and what was left of eternal freedom melted away as the Delta variant of COVID made its way across the earth. So, we find ourselves again in a disruptive lockdown environment with its many issues and state government requirements.

I want to encourage us all to continue to maintain our COVID-safe workplaces and manage our businesses through to what looks like a much better 2022. Our industry enjoys resilience, relationships and rapport, which is our great strength. NGINA has continued strong communication with you, our members, through face-to-face conversations, surveys, email, our monthly member forums and many, many phone calls. This has been important as we seek the health, wealth and success of each business and individual, and our staff.

Across the nation the industry is enjoying steady results and moderate growth. Indeed, it's not running along at 2020 levels but it is remaining consistent (notwithstanding various lockdown rules for production nurseries and retail garden centres).

The recent lockdown in the ACT has enacted strong effective

lobbying direct to the Chief Minister by NGINA on behalf of our members. A huge thanks to our CEO, Anita Campbell, for the vast amount of work and effort on this!

It's on all our minds how we can effectively outmanoeuvre uncertainty as we begin the lead up to Christmas and into 2022. As we observe what's actually happening in Europe, we see a general opening up and relaxing of restrictions. My Italian industry colleagues are now enjoying their summer, eating out, going to the beach, travelling around and even flying to Spain for a holiday in Ibiza. This is possible as the percentage of a fully vaccinated population increases. Interesting to note that Italy still has just over 6,000 cases per day<sup>1</sup>.

So, the good news is, this is what we can look forward to coming into 2022. As the world, including Australia, opens up our industry is in a strategically strong position for growth.

In conclusion, it is very pleasing to see NGINA on a strong growth trajectory. We are ticking off our strategic plan KPIs one by one, we have an excellent staff mix and a well-balanced Board with complementary skill sets. This all reflects that NGINA is in good health with a dedication to providing industry leadership and benefits to you, our extremely valued members.

<sup>1</sup> Source: [ourworldindata.org/coronavirus/country/italy](https://ourworldindata.org/coronavirus/country/italy)



### NGINA Partners

### Thank you to NGINA partners for their continued support.

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# CEO's Report

by Anita Campbell, CEO, NGINA

The COVID pandemic has been the biggest challenge that many of our members have ever faced. And just when we thought the worst was behind us, NSW has been plunged into a state-wide lockdown in an attempt to stop the spread of the highly contagious Delta variant.

As businesses, we have had the burden placed upon us to keep people safe when they visit our premises. On occasion over the last few months, government restrictions have literally changed multiple times a day. Our job, as your industry association, has been to keep members up to date with all the changes to restrictions as they relate to our industry. Not only have we been sending out regular member alerts in a timely manner, we have also been interpreting specific questions on a daily basis.

I am proud to be part of an industry that cares so much about doing the right thing. I am also proud of how well NGINA has succeeded in being your knowledge centre.

We have also been fighting against the ACT public health orders, which have forced nurseries and garden centres to close.

Production horticulture and the uninterrupted supply of plants through garden centres is essential for:

- propagation and production of critical food crops for agriculture and home gardeners.
- providing supplies and products required for production horticulture.
- mental health and wellbeing of individuals, families and the greater community.
- the health of our environment.

We have made multiple submissions to government and enlisted the help of other influential organisations to assist in our lobbying efforts. I am hopeful that nurseries and garden centres will open again soon in our nation's capital.

Unfortunately, the latest outbreak of COVID and the subsequent lockdown has meant we have had to postpone

many of our physical events and training courses.

However, our online member forums, held on the fourth Wednesday of each month, continue to be a valuable way for us to regularly engage with our members, regardless of geography and lockdowns. In July we held an out-of-session forum specifically for our retail members to discuss COVID restrictions and to explain the various government assistance packages available. We then held a forum to discuss how to deploy your staff during the quieter winter months in preparation for spring and clever ways to engage with customers if they are reticent to come in to the store. We are definitely stronger together and it was fabulous to commiserate and share ideas on how best to weather the storm. Our June, July and August forums saw great participation by members and I look forward every month to seeing new faces joining us.

Don't forget about our HR/IR services. We all know that having up-to-date, relevant and compliant policies and procedures in your workplace is critical because without them your business could be exposed. We now have a library of over 200 policies, contracts and checklists, written and maintained by the Workplace Relations team at Australian Business Lawyers & Advisors (ABLA) that members can purchase at a subsidised rate. More information can be found on pages 16–17.

Nominations for the 2021 NGINA Industry Awards are open and nomination forms have been sent to all members—I encourage you all to enter. NGINA will be presenting winners and runners up with their awards at our annual gala dinner and awards night. Whether it happens in December or needs to be pushed out until early next year, it will be happening! So don't take your eyes off the prize. Keep your award nominations coming in.

Please check out what our apprentices have been up to on page 23 and have a read about our proposal to get Cert IV in Horticulture back up and running at TAFE—Richmond Campus (page 22).

As part of National Skills Week we launched our training brochure and highlighted all entries in our video competition, which showcased how awesome people think our industry is. You can see the video entries on our Facebook page.

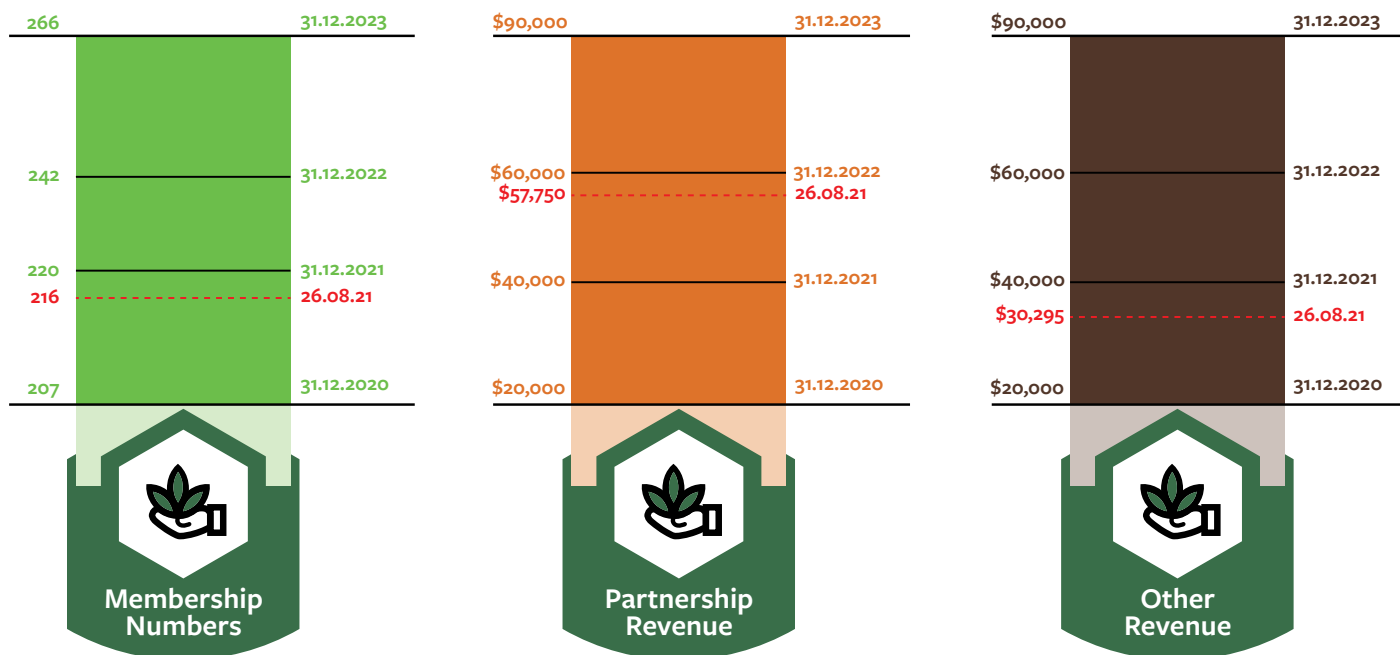
## ASSOCIATION SUSTAINABILITY

I am thrilled to announce that we have nearly reached 2021's KPIs as outlined in the NGINA Strategic Plan. We have 216 members and are well on track to achieve a target of 220 by the end of the year. We have achieved over \$57,750 in partnership this year already, which smashes our end-of-year

target of \$40,000. We have made \$30,295 in alternative revenue so far this year, which puts us well on track to make the required \$40,000 by the end of the year.

At this time of year I am reminded of a Margaret Atwood quote that was posted everywhere in Canada at the onset of spring...

“In the spring, at the end of the day, everyone should smell like dirt.”



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Nursery & Garden Industry  
NSW & ACT

## Do you get our emails?

We regularly communicate with our members via email. If you feel you could be missing out on any of our emails please contact the office on (02) 9679 1472 or email [info@ngina.com.au](mailto:info@ngina.com.au) so we can look into it for you.



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## BTSM's Report

by Craig Perring, Business & Technical Support Manager, NGINA

After a quieter than usual winter due to seasonal conditions and the dreaded COVID virus we are finally starting to see some upward movement in terms of sales. The retailers I have spoken to in the last few weeks have a 'spring' in their step that sales are moving in the right direction.

Although I've been unable to visit nurseries, lockdown has given me the opportunity to focus on two other important KPIs attached to my role as Business & Technical Support Manager—increasing both membership numbers and alternate revenue streams.

You can see exactly how NGINA is tracking against its KPIs on the previous page.

While face-to-face meetings have been cancelled and converted to Zoom or Teams meetings, there's perhaps been a loss of momentum while everyone tried to anticipate NSW Health's next move. However, I want to assure you that NGINA's involvement in various meetings continues around:

- Invited and accepted on to the Plant Breeder's Rights Consultation Group (PBR CG), which is an active group that advises and analyses the best practice around PBR and any legislative changes to the act.
- Hunter Regional Weed Committee Group.
- Greater Sydney Weed Committee Group.
- Plant Sure (see update from Aimee Freimanis on page 21).
- Co-designing a National Established Weed Priorities (NEWP) framework.
- Australian Packaging Covenant Organisation—updates on the recycling program.

As always, the magazine is a timely reminder to reach out to NGINA if you need help or have questions. Often when visiting nurseries, we hear retrospectively of issues that could have been resolved in a timelier manner with help from the office. We can schedule a site visit, help over the phone or put you in contact with resources to help address

any issue you may have as retail or production nursery or allied trader.

On a final note, this will sadly be my last BTSM update on behalf of NGINA as I have recently accepted a new role with Yates as their Product Development Team Leader.

My time at NGINA has been both fulfilling and rewarding, and the decision to move on has not been easy. My passion in this industry is working closely with growers—to learn from them and to help them be more productive and add value to their businesses, which I hope I have achieved.

Working with the current team, I believe NGINA is in a much better place than when I first started two and half years ago, and I'm confident that will continue. We have a stronger membership base, member benefits have increased, partner opportunities have expanded and we continue to be a strong advocate in keeping the industry going regardless of what's thrown at us (bushfires, drought and now COVID). Most importantly, we are listening more to our members, particularly through our annual membership survey, which is live right now and I encourage everyone to take part and have their say.

I would like to thank the members, the NGINA Board and staff at NGINA HQ for the opportunity to work with you all, and I hope that in my new role we will continue to have some form of engagement, both professionally (Yates is a member!) and personally, where I can continue the friendships that I have built working at NGINA.



# Plant Breeder's Rights Explained

by Dr Gavin Porter, CEO, Australian Nurserymen's Fruit Improvement Company

## WHAT ARE PLANT BREEDER'S RIGHTS?

Plant Breeder's Rights (PBR) are exclusive commercial rights to a registered plant variety. The PBR of a plant are a form of intellectual property (IP), like patents and copyright, and are administered under the Plant Breeder's Rights Act 1994 (the Act). The rights are applied for using application forms available from the Plant Breeder's Rights Office.

Propagating plant material of PBR registered varieties is illegal under the Act, however, people can apply for a license or sub license that allows propagation of registered plant varieties. Successful applicants have exclusive rights to:

1. produce or reproduce the material.
2. condition the material for the purpose of propagation (conditioning include cleaning, coating, sorting, packaging and grading).
3. offer the material for sale.
4. sell the material.
5. import the material.
6. export the material.
7. stock the material for any of the purposes described in 1–6 above.

In certain circumstances, principally if the breeder has not had a reasonable opportunity to exercise the right on the propagating material, PBR extends to harvested material and, subject to a similar set of qualifications, to products obtained from harvested material.

Exceptions to the breeder's right are the use of the variety privately and for non-commercial purposes, for experimental purposes, and for breeding other plant varieties. A variety can be used for these purposes irrespective of the existence of PBR. Farm saved seed is permitted, unless the crop is declared by regulation to be one to which farm saved seed does not apply. Currently no crops have been declared in this way.

## ELIGIBILITY FOR REGISTRATION

Only new or recently exploited varieties can be registered. A new variety is one which has not been commercially sold with the breeder's consent.

A recently exploited variety is one which been sold with the breeder's consent for up to 12 months in Australia and for overseas varieties this limit is up to four years (with the exception of trees and vines, in which a six-year overseas prior sale limit is permitted).

Further details of the scope of the rights can be found in the Act.

## WHAT TRIGGERS THE CLOCK TO REQUIRE FILING FOR PBR?

"The first distribution of plants or harvested material outside of a confidential testing agreement if correlated to an exchange of money, for each identified plant or variety, triggers the calculation of application filing deadlines.

To be eligible for protection the applicant must show that the new variety is **distinct, uniform** and **stable**.

## DISTINCTNESS (D), UNIFORMITY (U) AND STABILITY (S) — DUS REQUIREMENTS

### Distinctness

The basis of distinctness is an objective comparison of the variety with the most similar variety(ies) of common knowledge. Quantitative and qualitative differences between the new and existing varieties must be established and recorded.

Morphological characteristics, especially those least affected by environmental factors, are preferred. However, tests such as comparative DNA or protein profiles are acceptable as supporting evidence. Clear repeatable varietal differences must be demonstrated.

Performance attributes can also be included as distinguishing characteristics provided they are clear and consistent.

### Uniformity

Unless the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV) technical guideline on the species recommends otherwise, the required standard of uniformity for each type of propagation is as set out below.

1. In vegetatively propagated or fully self-pollinated varieties, the number of off-types (plants that do not conform to all the distinctive characteristics of the variety), must not exceed the numbers given in the table.
2. For partially self-pollinated varieties the allowable number of off-types is doubled.
3. In cross-pollinated varieties, a test of uniformity based on a comparison of variances is applied. Measured characteristics are considered uniform if their variance is less than 1.6 times the average of the variances of the varieties used for comparison. Visually assessed characteristics are considered uniform if the number of off-types is the same as or less than the average number found in the comparator varieties.



## Stability

A variety is stable if it remains true to description after repeated propagation or reproduction. Breeders of varieties propagated from seed need to demonstrate stability by including two generations in the comparative trial. (If necessary, stability can be demonstrated in a separate trial.) If the variety is to be vegetatively propagated and is uniform, a demonstration of stability is usually not required. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the variety remains true to the description.

To obtain acceptance of an application and **provisional protection** it must be established that there is a prima facie case that the variety is distinct from all other varieties of common knowledge. To obtain a grant of PBR the applicants must verify these claims normally by conducting a comparative test growing, which includes the new variety and the most similar varieties of common knowledge.

## PROVISIONAL PROTECTION

Provisional protection under Section 39 of the Act protects varieties during the period between the application being accepted and the final granting of rights. It means that if rights are eventually granted, the grantee can then take action retrospectively on infringements made in the intervening period.

Provisional protection is granted for the first 12 months if there are legitimate grounds for doing so. The Registrar may be prepared to extend provisional protection to allow an applicant time to supply additional information, etc. Requests for extensions of provisional protection should be made within 12 months of acceptance on the appropriate form available from the office, setting out:

- progress that has been made toward finalisation of the application; reason(s) for requesting the extension;
- the length of the extension that is being sought (maximum 12 months); and
- whether or not the variety has been commercialised.

For varieties lodged prior to November 1994 and now commercialised, the examination fee must be paid before a request for an extension can be considered.

## STEPS IN APPLYING FOR PBR

Below are the general steps involved in applying for PBR. An application is lodged in two main parts—Part 1 and Part 2. The initial application (Part 1) provides details of the applicant, origin of the variety and a prima facie case for eligibility. If the variety is already commercialised in Australia or overseas, then time limits apply (prior sale).



PBR growing trials need to demonstrate that your new plant variety is distinct, stable and uniform

If Application Part 1 is not received prior to expiry of the eligible prior sales period, it is not eligible for protection. Application Part 2 provides evidence in support of the claims made in Application Part 1 and provides a detailed description of the variety. Details of differences from other similar varieties are also included.

- ▶ 1. Obtain from the breeder a signed authorisation to act as their agent in Australia for the variety in question if your role is as the Australian agent of an overseas breeder. Complete form PBR00004.
- ▶ 2. Complete Application Part 1—General Information (form PBR00001).
- ▶ 3. Complete the supplementary pages to Application Part 1 (form PBR00003), if the applicant resides overseas.
- ▶ 4. Supply a photograph of the new variety.
- ▶ 5. Pay the application fee.
- ▶ 6. Engage the services of the nominated accredited qualified person (QP) PBR00005 to plan and supervise the comparative growing trial. Advise the QP to liaise with the nominated PBR examiner for a possible field inspection.
- ▶ 7. Nominate an accredited QP and check if the QP is accredited for the species.
- ▶ 8. If the variety is an Australian species, despatch an herbarium specimen as soon as possible.
- ▶ 9. Conduct a comparative growing trial to demonstrate

**distinctness, uniformity and stability (DUS).**

- ▶ **10.** The Plant Breeder's Rights Office examines the application, which may include a field examination of the comparative growing trial.
- ▶ **11.** Submit the detailed description of the variety using the Interactive Variety Description System (IVDS)—QPs will need a username and password to access the system. The description will be published in the *Plant Varieties Journal*.
- ▶ **12.** Submit a comparative photo of the variety for publication in the *Plant Varieties Journal*.
- ▶ **13.** Complete Application Part 2—Description of New Variety form PBR00002.
- ▶ **14.** Pay the examination fee.
- ▶ **15.** Deposit propagating material in a genetic resources centre and submit the form PBR00009.
- ▶ **16.** Publication of a description and photograph comparing the new variety with similar varieties in the *Plant Varieties Journal*, followed by a six-month period for objection or comment.
- ▶ **17.** Upon successful completion of all the requirements, resolution of objections (if any) and payment of the certificate fee, the applicant(s) receive a Certificate of Plant Breeder's Rights.

### WHAT IS A QP?

A QP acts as a PBR applicant's technical consultant. They accept responsibility for overseeing the comparative trial and for providing evidence that a variety is distinct, uniform and stable. This role may involve the QP consulting on choice of comparative varieties, experimental design, management regime, collection of data, statistical analysis, photography and preparation of the description of the variety.

The QP's technical role helps guarantee that applications for PBR are technically rigorous. It complements the role of Plant Breeder's Rights Office examiners in ensuring that PBR grants are legally sustainable in the event of infringement and subsequent litigation.

When first applying for PBR, an applicant must nominate a QP. This is done using the Nomination of a Qualified Person form. This form is intended to provide a guide for the applicant and their QP in determining what functions the QP will play in the preparation of the application. Once the application is complete, the QP must certify the application by completing and signing the Certification by a Qualified Person form. This form outlines exactly which functions the QP undertook or supervised in relation to the application.

### COMPARATIVE GROWING TRIAL

The applicant and the accredited QP are responsible for all aspects of the comparative growing trial including the

selection of comparator varieties for inclusion in the trial. It is absolutely essential that the most similar varieties, which are common knowledge at the time of making the application, be included. After an application is accepted the variety is regarded as existing and any varieties applied for later must be shown to be distinct from it.

In examining applications involving the first named variety within a species, we ask for a comparative trial in which the new variety is compared with one or more existing forms of the same species with similar characteristics to the new variety. The results of the trial are examined in the usual way to determine whether the new variety is distinct from the most similar existing form, as well as being uniform and stable. In selecting the comparator(s), forms which have been in commerce or are recognised by taxonomists are of greater importance than less-known forms.

The number of plants of each variety to be included in the testing is determined by the mode of propagation. The relevant UPOV technical guideline will indicate the number of plants required and may include a recommended number of replications. If the species is one for which no guideline is available, the following is offered as a guide:

- For cloned ornamental and fruit tree varieties, each plant may be treated as a replicate. Analysis should be based on at least 5, and preferably 10, plants of each variety.
- For cloned horticultural and vegetable varieties, between 30 and 60 spaced plants of each variety, arranged in two or more replicates will usually be sufficient.
- In self-pollinated, seed propagated varieties, 30 spaced plants of each variety and generation, arranged in three replicates of 10 will usually be sufficient to demonstrate distinctness. Additional plants may be required to demonstrate uniformity.
- In partly self-pollinated, seed propagated varieties, between 30 and 60 spaced plants of each variety and generation, arranged in two or more replicates will usually be sufficient to demonstrate distinctness. Additional plants may be required to demonstrate uniformity.
- In open pollinated, seed-propagated varieties, 100 spaced plants of each variety and generation, divided over an appropriate number of replicates, will usually be sufficient. Additional plants may be required to demonstrate uniformity.

For more information on PBR, please contact NGINA HQ on 02 9679 1472 or send an email to [info@ngina.com.au](mailto:info@ngina.com.au).





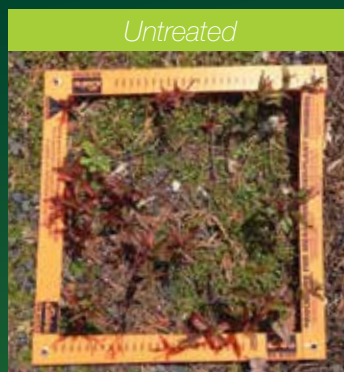
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# Nominations Now Open for NGINA's 2021 Industry Awards

The 2020 NGINA awards and gala dinner was a huge success. At the sold-out event we awarded four NGINA members and individuals with awards for being the best in the industry.

Nominations are now open for the **Nursery & Garden Industry NSW & ACT 2021 Awards**.

Just being nominated for an award—let alone winning—brings your business enormous benefits such as:

## 1. IMPROVED EMPLOYEE MOTIVATION

Awards are a fantastic way to recognise the hard work of your employees. Even if you're not shortlisted or don't quite clinch a trophy on the night, the mere act of entering will go a long way to letting your employees know you truly value their work, which can be a huge confidence boost. It's also a great way to entice new talent. Who doesn't want to work for an award-winning company?

## 2. THE CHANCE TO SHOW OFF

Awards are undoubtedly the best way to showcase the calibre of the work you're undertaking. Being shortlisted (or winning) will improve client retention and assuredly send your clients home chatting to their friends about how great you are. And, as we all know, word of mouth and personal recommendation is still the most influential factor in the B2B buying process.

## 3. AN OPPORTUNITY TO ATTRACT NEW BUSINESS

Becoming an award-winning business is a great way to set yourself apart from the competition. Aside from directly attracting new business, winning an award provides external validation—a real stamp of authority and credibility within your industry and sector.

## 4. THE OPPORTUNITY TO BENCHMARK AGAINST YOUR INDUSTRY PEERS

Writing an award application forces you to look at your business from a different perspective and compare yourself to competitors. Once you've identified your strengths you can then go on to refine your business strategy and carry out necessary process improvements.

Only by sharing stories and being open about the secrets to your success will the industry, as a whole, evolve. Awards are the perfect platform to do this, and represent an opportunity to take stock, benchmark your work and congratulate not just employees and clients, but the entire industry.

## 5. ONGOING MARKETING OPPORTUNITIES

Being associated with a business awards event provides excellent PR opportunities before, during and after the event. A blog about being nominated, live tweets during the event and a follow-up blog can all be utilised to increase brand awareness. Awards celebrate hard work and success and such an opportunity to put your business in the spotlight should be welcomed.

## 6. NETWORKING

"It's not what you know, it's who you know," and the importance of networking should not be underestimated. Consider using social channels to tag other shortlisted contacts to congratulate them, make appointments to meet contacts and prospects at the event, and think about sponsoring a relevant category to help raise awareness of your brand.

## 7. RAISING CREDIBILITY

Winning an award builds recognition for the work that you and your team have been doing, and confirms your place within the industry, especially if the award has been judged by industry-leaders and experts in the field.

### CATEGORIES

**This year we have seven award categories:**

1. NGINA Retail Nursery of the Year 2021 (trading member)
2. NGINA Retail Nursery of the Year 2021 (enterprise/corporate member)
3. NGINA Wholesale/Production Nursery of the Year 2021 (trading member)
4. NGINA Wholesale/Production Nursery of the Year 2021 (enterprise/corporate member)
5. NGINA Allied Supplier of the Year 2021 (non greenlife)
6. NGINA NextGenner of the Year 2021 (for ages 18–35)
7. NGINA Apprentice of the Year 2021 **NEW**

The award categories are aligned with our membership categories, which are determined by the number of full time EQUIVALENT employees (FTEs) you have. A trading member will have five or less and an enterprise/corporate member will have six or more.





Jon Philliponi—Industry Bloomer of the Year 2020



Robert Megier, Regional Sales Manager from ICL Specialty Fertilizers (Allied Supplier of the Year 2020)



From left to right: Glenn and Greg Scott, and Candice Towne from Scotts Tubes (Wholesale/Production Nursery of the Year 2020)



From left to right: John Cassidy, Shaen Flakelar, Scott Burns and Dean Bilby of Heritage Nursery Yarralumla (Retail Nursery of the Year 2020)

## WHAT IS A FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE) EMPLOYEE?

FTE is not just the number of full-time workers you have. It's also not just a headcount of all your workers. It is a measure of all your employees in a way that makes them comparable.

You can determine the number of FTEs you have based on how many full days a week an employee works. If an employee works five full days a week they are classed as 1 FTE.

If an employee works three full days per week they are classed as 0.6 FTE (three working days/five week days = 0.6).

So if, for example, you have five employees all working three full days a week (i.e., 5 x 0.6) you have 3 FTEs.

Casual staff and part-time staff are included in these calculations.

## THIS YEAR WE ARE GIVING NOMINEES A BIT EXTRA!

In addition to all the benefits listed above, all nominated retail nurseries will be assessed by a qualified, independent evaluator

by way of a mystery shop. The mystery shopping report will be made available to each nursery after our gala dinner and awards presentation night on Friday 3 December.

Likewise, all nominated wholesale/production nurseries will be assessed by an independent, NIASA accredited/qualified evaluator and a summary of findings will be made available to each nursery after our awards evening.

Excitingly, the NGINA NextGenner of the Year 2021 category will be judged by TV personality Costa and industry stalwart Judy Horton. Nominees will have the opportunity to meet and be interviewed by the judges.

Also NGINA will nominate the winner of the 'Apprentice of the Year' category for the NSW or ACT state training awards 2022.

Nominations for the Nursery & Garden Industry NSW & ACT 2021 Awards close on Friday 1 October 2021.

Completed nomination forms are to be emailed to [info@ngina.com.au](mailto:info@ngina.com.au) or posted to NGINA HQ and marked CONFIDENTIAL.



## NIASA — The Stamp of Professional Excellence

The Nursery Industry Accreditation Scheme Australia (NIASA) is the national nursery industry best management practice (BMP) program for production nurseries, growing media manufacturers and greenlife markets. NIASA consists of a set of guidelines detailing industry BMP for crop hygiene, crop management, water management and general site management. To gain NIASA accreditation, businesses must undergo an independent audit on an annual basis to ensure the integrity of the NIASA program is maintained. Once accredited, NIASA provides formal recognition of a business's commitment to continuous improvement underpinned by a professional system to reduce business risk.

The NIASA logo represents:

- Consistent product quality and performance
- Safe, environmentally sustainable and professional workplaces
- Improved profitability and efficiency within the workplace
- Guidance and support from an Australian Plant Production Standard (APPS) technical advisor through independent auditing and technical assistance.

The NIASA program underpins the APPS—a holistic system designed to ensure a sustainable future for the Australian nursery industry. The APPS is designed for production nurseries, growing media manufacturers and greenlife markets. It provides businesses with the capacity to critically evaluate each component of their business to identify and manage areas of concern. The APPS incorporates three key industry programs:

**NIASA**—The Nursery Industry Accreditation Scheme Australia provides guidelines detailing industry best management practices to assist businesses maintain a benchmark standard and undertake continuous improvement.

**EcoHort**—An environmental management system that offers businesses a risk assessment pathway to continually

**“Grange Growing Solutions is proud to be a part of the NIASA best management practice program. Through risk mitigation, we take comfort in the knowledge that an unbiased third party is auditing our systems and processes. This means that our customers can be confident that their growing media is being tested to meet the high rigorous standards set by the program. The growing media they buy today will be the same as the media they buy tomorrow.”**

**Ben Grange, Grange Growing Solutions, 2021**

improve and demonstrate sound environmental stewardship and natural resource management.

**BioSecure HACCP**—A plant protection and biosecurity program that helps businesses assess their current and future pest, disease and weed risks for both imported and exported plant material into the business.

Businesses can tailor the APPS to address their unique business needs on site. By using a systematic approach, businesses have a proactive plan for managing change, including technology adoption, resource efficiencies and enhanced profitability.

Additional benefits of NIASA:

- Access to the web-based audit management system (AMS)
- Mini technical skills courses—skills specific APPS training
- Nursery production support in specialised areas.

Nursery best management practice guidelines are regularly updated.

NIASA-accredited businesses have access to the web-based





**“Accreditation holds us to a standard, which we maintain, to demonstrate industry best practice.”**

**Brent Tallis, Overland Nurseries 2021**



- Non NGINA member hourly audit rate: \$315.00/hr (excl. GST)

For more information on creating a sustainable future for your business by implementing NIASA, please contact:

Emma De Landre, Plant Protection Officer New South Wales, Greenlife Industry Australia

**e:** emma.delandre@greenlifeindustry.com.au

**m:** 0409 737 801

**w:** nurseryproductionfms.com.au/

**“Ultimately, having an industry backed accreditation means that we have peace of mind that our best management practices are based on decades of mutual experiences and scientifically driven outcomes.”**

**Natasha Morocik, Lowes TC 2021**



# Workplace Drug & Alcohol Policy...

## Why Every Workplace Should Have One

The first step in combating drug and alcohol use in the workplace is to put in place a relevant comprehensive policy. Educating employees about the standards that are expected of them, what their responsibilities are and what the consequences of a breach will be, is essential. The employer is in a much better position to defend the dismissal of an employee for drug and alcohol use if the employee is aware of a company policy on the issue. It is also important to let employees know that assistance is available to them if they need it.

### **CAN I TEST MY EMPLOYEES FOR DRUGS AND ALCOHOL?**

It is an accepted principle by industrial courts and tribunals that random testing is an intrusion on the privacy of the individual that can only be justified on health and safety grounds. The employer has a legitimate right (and indeed obligation) to try and eliminate the risk that employees might come to work impaired by drugs or alcohol such that they could pose a risk to health and safety. Beyond that the employer has no right to dictate what drugs or alcohol its employees take in their own time.

Random testing for drugs and alcohol can be appropriate for workers in safety critical work. At the Commonwealth level, in 2008 regulations were approved by the Executive Council and came into force requiring random alcohol and drug testing for workers in the Australian aviation industry. Legislation also exists at State level authorising drug and alcohol testing in certain industries.

In the broader policy context, given the potentially hazardous nature of the work in a particular workplace, together with the heavy obligation imposed on an employer by State or Territory occupational health and safety legislation, the introduction of random alcohol and drug testing at such a workplace could be justified.

However, it also needs to be recognised that the introduction of any form of drug and alcohol testing should comply with the International Labour Organization (ILO) code of practice on the management of alcohol and drug related issues in the workplace. This is particularly so when the testing is random, rather than 'for cause'.

The type of testing (breath test, urine sample, oral swab, blood test, etc.) must be appropriate and suitable. Testing should be performed by skilled technicians and appropriate

consents from participants should be obtained.

You should also remember that corporations found in breach of privacy laws, such as divulging an employee's drug or alcohol test results, can face civil penalties of up to \$1.7 million.

### **HOW SHOULD I DEAL WITH AN INTOXICATED EMPLOYEE?**

Individuals considered unfit for work because they are a safety risk or because their work performance is affected should be removed from any position of risk. Transportation home should be provided and disciplinary action should be taken on their return. Details of the employee's performance and the fact that he or she was sent home should be documented.

### **CAN I DISMISS WORKERS WHO ARE UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF DRUGS/ALCOHOL?**

Employees can be dismissed as a result of drinking or drug abuse if it affects their ability to perform their job productively or safely, or results in intolerable behaviour. However, such incidents will require a thorough investigation before dismissal takes place and the employee should be given an opportunity to respond.

Certain behaviours can warrant instant dismissal, such as using or selling illicit drugs in the workplace. Again, a thorough investigation is required with the employee given an opportunity to respond.

### **WHY IT IS IMPORTANT TO HAVE A WORKPLACE DRUG & ALCOHOL POLICY**

The employer is in a much better position to defend the dismissal of an employee for drug and alcohol use if the employee is aware of a company policy on the issue. An employee who was dismissed for refusing to undergo a urine test as per the company policy (and as prescribed by the enterprise agreement) was deemed to have breached their contract of employment. The dismissal was not considered unfair by a Full Bench of the Fair Work Commission.

A Full Bench of the Fair Work Commission also found that the dismissal of an employee for breach of the employer's drug and alcohol policy, and code of conduct was deemed, on appeal, justifiable on the grounds of serious misconduct due to the employee's deliberate disobedience.





## HOW DO I COMMUNICATE THE POLICY TO MY EMPLOYEES?

Whether you've developed an employee handbook, a policy manual or some other form of documentation of your company's HR policies, it is crucial to communicate the contents of these documents to your staff. Your staff should be advised why it was created, what the purpose is and how the document will be used in the company. This also applies when updates to policies are being made.

When communicating, updating or adding new workplace policies, being upfront and straightforward about change is key. Here are five ways you can be effective in communicating a new or changed workplace policy to your employees:

### 1. BE TRANSPARENT

- Hold a staff meeting to communicate policy updates.
- Post new workplace policies in common areas.
- Hand out hard copies of new policies.
- Inform your employees of changes electronically.

### 2. PROVIDE TRAINING, WHEN NECESSARY

- More complex policies or procedural changes may require more training so employees understand how changes apply to them.
- Training may be scheduled on an ongoing or as-needed basis.
- Consider whether the policy needs to be written in multiple languages.

### 3. GET FEEDBACK

- Hold feedback sessions and incorporate employees' opinions when possible.
- Allow for anonymous or confidential feedback so all employees feel comfortable voicing their honest opinions.

### 4. TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION IS KEY

- Ensure that your staff are not only voicing concerns but that you're also addressing them openly and honestly.

### 5. HAVE EMPLOYEES SIGN OFF ON A NEW OR CHANGED WORKPLACE POLICY

- It is useful to have documentation showing that the workplace policy has been communicated.
- Place a copy of the sign off in your employees' personnel files.

### 6. HOW DO I GET A WORKPLACE DRUG & ALCOHOL POLICY?

Through our partnership with Business Australia, NGINA members can now purchase legally compliant documents for their businesses from NGINA at a significantly subsidised rate. The library contains over 200 policies, contracts, forms, checklists and general correspondence, which are all written and maintained by the Workplace Relations team at Australian Business Lawyers and Advisors (ABLA).

The Workplace Drug & Alcohol Policy can be used by all Australian employers and is one of the tools available to the employer to manage health and safety risks at work. The policy extends to all functions and places that are work-related, e.g., conferences, work lunches, Christmas parties, client functions, etc.

The policy should be used in conjunction with any alcohol testing procedure that must be compliant with Australian regulatory standards. The employer should also develop supporting documentation. This includes notification and consent forms for the workplace participant to undertake the necessary testing, and to any medical practitioner/agency/clinic for the purposes of seeking the test results.

The policy contains a number of 'disclaimer from liability' clauses. These disclaimers are general in nature and are not necessarily sufficient to avoid liability in every circumstance where a workplace participant's behaviour causes injury or damage.

To browse our library of policies, contracts, forms, checklists and general correspondence and make a purchase, simply log in to the Member Centre of our website and select HR Services.

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# New Law Regarding Definition of Casuals — Including Part-Time Staff

The Fair Work Commission has recently announced changes to casual employment conditions and arrangements. These include provision of a casual information sheet, the definition of a casual employee and the provisions regarding converting to permanent employment.

## COMPULSORY INFORMATION SHEET

All employers are required to provide casual employees with the Casual Employment Information Sheet available from their website by these deadlines:

- New employee—before commencing a role.
- Existing employees—before 27 September 2021.

## DEFINITION

The new definition is, “A person is a casual employee if they accept a job offer from an employer knowing that there is no firm advance commitment to ongoing work with an agreed pattern of work.”

## CONVERSION

There have been changes to allow casual employees a pathway to becoming a permanent employee. There are new requirements for employers and employees:

	BUSINESS (NOT SMALL BUSINESS)	SMALL BUSINESS
<b>Definition</b>	Businesses with 15 or more employees.	Businesses with less than 15 employees. Casual employees not included unless they are engaged on a regular and systematic basis.
<b>Offering casual conversion</b>	Employers are required to provide casual employees a <u>written offer</u> to convert within 21 days of the employee’s 12-month anniversary. Employers need to offer conversion to casual employees who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have worked a clear pattern of rostered hours and days for a minimum of six months; and</li> <li>• would be able to continue working these hours without significant change.</li> </ul>	Not required to offer casual conversion.
<b>Employee requesting casual conversion</b>	An employee can request to convert if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• they have been employed for 12 months and 21 days; and</li> <li>• have worked a clear pattern of rostered hours and days for a minimum of six months; and</li> <li>• would be able to continue working these hours without significant change.</li> <li>• they have not refused an offer to convert in the past six months, or had a request refused in the past six months.</li> </ul> A request can be made every six months onwards.	A small business employee can request to convert if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• they have been employed for 12 months; and</li> <li>• have worked a clear pattern of rostered hours and days for a minimum of six months; and</li> <li>• would be able to continue working these hours without significant change.</li> <li>• they have not refused an offer to convert in the past six months, or had a request refused in the past six months.</li> </ul> A request can be made every six months onwards.
<b>Important dates</b>	Employers with existing casual employees are required to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• offer the conversion; or</li> <li>• write to the employee and explain why they won’t be making an offer by 27 September 2021.</li> </ul>	Employees eligible to request casual conversion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New employee—after their 12-month anniversary.</li> <li>• Existing employee—after 27 March 2021.</li> </ul>
<b>Time to respond</b>	Employee has 21 days to provide a written response to an offer.	N/A
	The employer has 21 days to provide a written response to an employee’s request.	The employer must provide a written response within 21 days.





## RESPONDING TO AN APPLICATION/NOT OFFERING CONVERSION

- If an employee makes a request for conversion, an employer has 21 days to provide a written response.
- Employers must consult with the employee and have reasonable grounds for refusal.
- There is no definitive list, but reasonable grounds are based on facts that are known and foreseeable, and could include:
  - In the next 12 months, the employee's hours of work will significantly reduce.
  - The employee's days or times of work will significantly change and it cannot be accommodated for the employee's available days or times for work.

## FAQS

### What if the employee does not work regular hours?

No regular hours means there is no obligation to offer or accept a request for casual conversion. For instance, if an employee regularly works Monday and Tuesday, 8.30 am to 5.00 pm and occasionally on the weekends, you could offer the conversion to part-time for the Monday and Tuesday shifts, but are not under an obligation to offer the conversion for the weekend also. This is because

the weekend work does not constitute a clear pattern of rostered hours.

### What if, due to the nature of the industry, an employee works consistent hours on an irregular basis (for instance for two separate periods of three regular months)?

This would not trigger the obligation to offer a conversion to permanent as one of the requirements is that the employer would be able to continue to offer their regular hours without significant change, which would not be possible in certain circumstances such as seasonal work.

### Do we offer full-time or part-time employment?

This depends on the hours the employee is doing before offering the conversion or their request for conversion. If the employee is working the equivalent of full-time hours (38 hours per week), then you are required to offer full-time employment, any less time you would offer part-time. An employer can't reduce or change an employee's hours of work, or terminate their employment, to avoid having to offer or accept a request for casual conversion.

### Does a new probation period commence with a new employment contract?

A new probation period does not commence at the date of conversion as the minimum employment period for unfair

dismissal is attached to the employment not the position.

### How do we respond to a request?

An employer must respond in writing to a request for conversion, and you must consult with the employee if you are intending to refuse the request. If you are intending to refuse the request, you must have reasonable grounds for refusal based on facts. The reasons for refusal should be communicated to the employee (and a representative if appropriate) in a meeting and in writing.

### What if we don't offer or don't have a valid reason for refusal of a request?

Either the Fair Work Commission or the Federal Circuit Court (in some instances) are authorised to handle any disputes in relation to casual conversion. Further, as the casual conversion is part of the Fair Work Act there may be civil penalties if the act is not complied with.

It is important to note that casual employees are also protected against adverse action by an employer because they have a workplace right to convert to permanent employment, meaning they cannot be fired or have their hours reduced because they sought conversion to permanent employment.

### What should we do next?

1. Provide all existing employees with the Casual Employment Information Sheet as soon as practicable.

2. Identify all casual employees who have been employed more than one year to see if they are eligible for casual conversion (either by offer or request).
3. Consider the business factors that will impact your ability to convert (or not convert).
4. For businesses with 15 or more employees and who have any eligible employees, either:
  - a. Present the eligible employee with a written offer to convert; or
  - b. Write to the eligible employees with the reasons why you are not offering conversion.

The employee has 21 days to respond to an offer.

5. For businesses with less than 15 employees, no action is required, but it is advised to identify any eligible employees and be prepared for their request. You have 21 days to respond to any request in writing.
6. Offer or request accepted—communicate with the employee about new contract of employment. Offer or request not accepted—continue employment as before, another request cannot be made for six months.

This article was written by Sophie Williams and Matthew Sankey of Mapien ([mapien.com.au](http://mapien.com.au)) and originally appeared in Nursery & Garden Industry Queensland's *Leaflet Magazine* (May & June 2021).

## Case Study 'Maximus Nursery Ltd'

**Q. The nursery operates 12 months of the year on a regular production schedule. Many of the employees in dispatch work a regular 18 hours per week for most of the year, but this usually increases to about 30 hours per week during the peak spring period. Should they be offered (or can they apply for) permanent part-time status?**

**A.** In relation to offering casual conversion to employees who may have worked regular hours and shifts for a period of six months—the fact that the hours are required to change as part of the businesses processes, would constitute reasonable grounds for refusal. [See 11.7(g)(iv) of the Nursery Award 2020.]

Reasonable grounds for refusal include:

- 11.7(g)(iv) it is known or reasonably foreseeable that there will be a significant change in the days and/or times at which the employee's hours of work are required to be performed in the next 12 months which cannot be accommodated within the days and/or hours during which the employee is available to work.

Though the definition of 'seasonal worker' is less defined because the nursery operates year-round, the fact that operational requirements change within a 12-month period means that it would simply be too difficult to offer casual conversion for these employees. In following this logic, Nursery Maximus Ltd could rely upon reasonable grounds to either:

- a) not offer casual conversion or
- b) refuse a request for casual conversion.

*Please note, Maximus Nursery Ltd would still owe an obligation to inform the employee of the outcome of their offer/request and include the reasoning for why conversion has not occurred.*



## The Plant Sure Scheme Helps Our Pockets and the Planet

Apart from looking ugly when they get away into bushland areas, invasive weeds have a huge impact on biodiversity. The greenlife industry is more aware than most businesses that the air we breathe, the water we drink, the food we eat and our future medicines come from the ecosystem services provided by plants and animals, or more specifically biodiversity.

A new study reports that “since the 1960s Australia has spent or incurred losses totalling \$389.59 billion from the impact of invasive species. **Costs arising from invasive plant species are the highest at \$209.32 billion.**”<sup>1</sup> Considering some reports suggest that 72%<sup>2</sup> of invasive weeds were accidentally introduced from ornamental gardens, it is important that as a professional industry we demonstrate responsibility for the ornamental plants supplied to market to help protect biodiversity from the environmental damage caused by invasive weeds.

The Plant Sure Scheme provides an avenue for industry to demonstrate such corporate social responsibility.

“Corporate social responsibility is not just about managing, reducing and avoiding risks. It is about creating opportunities, generating improved performance, making money and leaving the risks far behind,” says Sunil Misser of PricewaterhouseCoopers.

Recent market trends indicate more interest in businesses that demonstrate corporate social responsibility and environmentally friendly practices. Considering millennials now make up approximately 29% of the gardening population, the fact that 76% of millennials report<sup>3</sup> interest

in environmental issues and that it impacts on how they spend their money, it becomes a marketing advantage to promote how your business is helping people and the planet.

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**“Weed prevention programs such as the Plant Sure Scheme can provide a 1:100 return on investment<sup>5</sup>.”**

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The Plant Sure Scheme’s *Ornamental Plant Decision Support Tool*, developed by Macquarie University, can be used to predict and prevent future landscape scale weed invasions. The tool uses the latest scientific evidence to determine which ornamental plant species or cultivars are more ‘environmentally friendly’ and able to be marketed under a newly developed eco-label. The Plant Sure Team is developing a new citizen science platform to house the tool on the ‘gardening responsibly’ website so that industry, government and the community can work together to protect biodiversity and promote great quality environmentally friendly ornamental plants to a broad range of consumers.

Weed prevention programs such as the Plant Sure Scheme can provide a 1:100 return on investment<sup>5</sup>.

Becoming a member of the Plant Sure Scheme not only provides a marketing advantage by making your customers and clients feel good about their garden plants, it is actually helping our pockets and the planet.

For more information visit [gardeningresponsibly.org.au](http://gardeningresponsibly.org.au) or contact Aimee Freimanis (Plant Sure Scheme Project Manager), at [aimee@ecohort.com](mailto:aimee@ecohort.com).

### DID YOU KNOW...

- Hort Innovation recently launched the Sustainability Framework for Horticulture (HA19001)<sup>4</sup>?
- three quarters of Australian businesses have metrics to measure environmental sustainability?
- 27% intend to make their supply chain more environmentally sustainable in the next one to two years?

1. Corey J.A Bradshaw et al *NeoBiota* 67: 511-590 (2021).
2. Groves RH, Boen R, Lonsdale WM (2005) ‘Jumping the garden fence: Invasive Garden Plants in Australia and their environmental and agricultural impacts’.
3. [sgaonline.org.au/gardening-trends-2018-2019/](http://sgaonline.org.au/gardening-trends-2018-2019/) and [gabionreviews.com/gardening-trends-and-statistics/](http://gabionreviews.com/gardening-trends-and-statistics/).
4. [horticulture.com.au/hort-innovation/our-work/horticulture-sustainability-framework/](http://horticulture.com.au/hort-innovation/our-work/horticulture-sustainability-framework/)
5. *NSW Weeds Action Program Report 2015–2020*, NSW Department of Primary Industries.



Student crops—flowers larger than dinner plates

# Take Your Skills to a Whole New Level

A career in the nursery and garden industry has many learning pathways that are linked to an even greater number of career pathways.

The Certificate II level qualification in either Horticulture or Production Nursery is generally considered to be the qualification to operate as an assistant in the nursery and garden industry.

The Certificate III level qualification in Production Nursery is considered to be the foundation qualification to operate as a tradesperson in the nursery and garden industry. Typically, this is completed as a three-year apprenticeship attending TAFE one day a week for 2.5 years.

## BUT WHERE TO NEXT?

You're qualified, you have experience and you have aspirations. Now it's time to look at enrolling in a Certificate IV in Horticulture.

Did you know you can roll over from an apprenticeship into a Certificate IV in Horticulture traineeship or enrol as a tradesperson?

This qualification allows individuals to develop post-trade skills and knowledge across a broad coverage of the industry prior to undertaking higher level roles in the industry, such as supervisor, manager and leader.

## DURATION

The course duration is one to two years. (Credits from Certificate III courses will reduce the course length by up to one year.)

## ATTENDANCE PATTERN

Flexible delivery: individual programs can be negotiated with the head teacher to suit client employment needs. TAFE NSW—Richmond is committed to helping you develop real

skills for real careers. TAFE NSW works closely with industry and employer groups to ensure training is focused and is exactly what you need to know to meet your goals.

## COMMENCEMENT

**When?** Expressions of interest only

**Where?** In the workplace and industry venues/TAFE NSW—Richmond

**Cost?** That depends on how many units you need to do. It is subsidised and attracts some funding and incentives for the employer.

## STUDY TOPICS

The course comprises one core module and 11 elective modules. Competencies include:

- Recommend plants and cultural practices
- Develop a soil health and plant nutrition program
- Schedule irrigations
- Plan and implement a biosecurity program
- Operate within a budget framework
- Diagnose plant health problems
- Implement and monitor environmentally sustainable work practices

And much more.

For more information, please visit [bit.ly/2Vuezm7](https://bit.ly/2Vuezm7).

To register your interest in the Certificate IV in Horticulture, please contact Stephen Rixon, Head Teacher Horticulture, TAFE NSW—Richmond

**m:** 0410 455 960 | **e:** [stephen.rixon@tafensw.edu.au](mailto:stephen.rixon@tafensw.edu.au)



# TAFE Students Create Horticultural Works of Art

On Wednesday 16 June NGINA's CEO, Anita Campbell, and BTSM, Craig Perring, attended TAFE NSW—Richmond Campus for a presentation by the students.

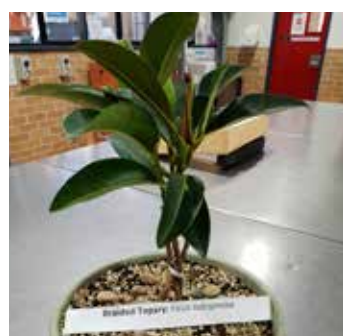
An elective unit within the Certificate III Nursery Production course, offered in the final semester at TAFE, is called Prepare Specialised Plants.

Students are required to grow two specialised crops using two different techniques. They are actively encouraged to 'think outside the box' and to be creative but practical in their approach. They must research the production requirements for propagating and growing their crops, and justify how their final product would meet the requirements of the marketplace (production standards and buyer requirements).

The students are responsible for making all the decisions about their crops in consultation with their teacher. They have to provide a production schedule from start to finish and provide a sale date (which is set in concrete).

Not only were the final products works of art, Anita and Craig were also really impressed with the originality, quality and technical aspect of the work. Many of the techniques and methods used they have developed themselves!

Here is just a selection of some of the pieces. If you would like any information on any of these please contact NGINA HQ.



# The State of Urban Forestry Management in Australia's Urban LGAs

Greener spaces make urban places better. They create places that are more appealing to work, play and relax in, and help us feel a sense of place and community within our busy lives. They are good for our health and wellbeing, cool our cities, reduce air pollutants, regulate water flow, lower carbon emissions and even increase property value.

Yet green space is often ignored when plans are drawn and concrete poured.

Originally the 2020 Vision program, Greener Spaces Better Places is a national initiative that brings together academia, business, government, community groups and the green industry to share knowledge and find new ways to work together to make sure that as our cities and towns grow, so too do our green spaces.

Where Will All The Trees Be?<sup>1</sup> found that 67% of our urban councils face significant challenges in growing and maintaining green cover for the future. Recent interviews of over 200 urban greening professionals within local governments to socialise the findings identified some critical areas of support needed to overcome these challenges.

**67% of our urban councils face significant challenges in growing and maintaining green cover**

Market research suggests that:

1. The elephant in the room is private landholder engagement. This was identified as a “critical area for improvement” in the Where Will All The Trees Be? report by RMIT University, with solutions falling into two categories:
  - Strengthening government policies and strategies that positively affect private landholder green space.
  - Community engagement and education around the benefits of trees.
2. Respondents cited most frequently the need for increased community engagement and education on the benefits of the urban forest. Of the local government respondents to the National Green Space Survey, **75% agree that their community supports greening on public land**, but that figure drops to **31% for private land greening support**.
3. More resources were needed across the board, with many innovative solutions put forward for scaling and replicating (see next section).

4. An ongoing program for building state government relationships with local councils is needed. Expert feedback has suggested that big gains are to be made in helping them discuss how to work together in this planning space.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT INSIGHTS

In addition to socialising the findings of the research, the following questions were asked of the 29 interviewees to help shape the future of this program:

1. What are the solutions we can replicate and scale?
2. What types of support do we need from other levels of government?
3. How can we collaborate better?
4. What tools might we provide to support you better?
5. What/is there a collective advocacy piece to be done?

Taking each in turn:

## 1. Solutions we can replicate and scale







“Federal or state funding for arial bundling or cable under-grounding.”

“State/federal funding of Which Plant Where? tool.”

### 3. Can we collaborate better?

**Responses varied and centred around three themes:**

- Openness to sharing collateral and partnering for tool development.
- Forums and workshops.
- Building state government relationships with local councils.



## 2. Support from government

**Key themes: collaborating better across groups | packaging research to support submissions. The following quotes exemplify the main ideas that emerged:**

“We need to push for change in public planning policy.”

“The smaller scale developers (e.g., the granny flats, townhouses, etc.) need the state governments to lead (and we need increased consumer pressure).”

“Unified national basis to lobby all the state governments to come into line.”

“We don’t know what states are going to commit to over what timeframes. No discussion on what the remit of LGAs vs State would be. GSBP are the perfect mediators of this open/transparent conversation.”

“Lack of formal commitment from all the states re planning controls. Not supporting what could be strong industry leaders.”

“Need a state government report on how the greening is going. Not about the number, is about the actual canopy cover.”

“They’re giving away money for trees by losing trees due to developments. How do we get them to do the next round better—a trajectory (e.g., like net zero by 2050). We need an agreed pathway with milestone points over next 5–10 years. Once we do that we can taper off the program—more into maintenance irrigation, etc.”

“Ongoing and consistent commitment to open data access on canopy monitoring. Need consistent data to understand where changes are happening (public land, private land, open space areas). LiDAR fly overs—can’t afford individually.”

“Regular updates needed in a suitable form for local councils and all other stakeholders.”

## 4. Tools to support them

**Many ideas are off the back of the solutions to replicate and scale (see point 1 above), however, the novel concepts are:**



## 5. Collective advocacy

There are a number of collective advocacy pieces emerging, including:

- An overarching campaign targeting private land urban greening
- Shared collection of agreed metrics to monitor canopy and vegetation data
- Councillor education
- Ministerial Advisory Committee on Green Infrastructure
- Skill gaps regarding councillor knowledge on trees and UHIE, planner skills and greenhouse installers
- Availability of stock
- UHIE in Australian Building Codes Board
- Prioritising green space outcomes in stimulus spending

- Tree maintenance assistance for residents
- “Complying development needs work”
- Funding canopy cover monitoring
- “Moon-scaping should be illegal”
- Planting out arterial roads—modifying standards

For more information contact Belinda Bean, Collective Impact Strategist, Greener Spaces Better Places ([belinda@republicofeveryone.com](mailto:belinda@republicofeveryone.com)).

1. [greenspacesbetterplaces.com.au/guides/where-will-all-the-trees-be](https://www.greenspacesbetterplaces.com.au/guides/where-will-all-the-trees-be)



## Seeking Head Grower

Interested in joining the legal cannabis industry?

Ryan Douglas Cultivation, LLC is recruiting a head grower for a new, government-licensed cannabis greenhouse near Perth, WA.

The candidate does not need previous cannabis growing experience, but at least 10 years of commercial vegetable or flower production is required.

To apply, please send CV to [ryan@douglascultivation.com](mailto:ryan@douglascultivation.com)

## New Releases

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# HydraFiber® Has Arrived in Australia

In the current climate of growing media supply where ingredient sourcing and cost is becoming an issue, a new high-quality substrate has become available from Profile Products in America.

A proven replacement for coir and perlite, HydraFiber® is manufactured with a unique Thermally Refined® process that combines wood and bark, and refines them in a pressurised vessel to create singulated, small-diameter, long, thin strands with a large surface area that can be blended at various percentages into media recipes.

The substrate has enjoyed a large take-up in America with most of the large production nurseries adding it to their media blends.

HydraFiber® arrives in Australia in wrapped, compressed 50-lb (approximately 23 kg) bales and is 'spun back out' using a dedicated machine supplied by AgriNomix in Oberlin, Ohio.

Growers using HydraFiber® blends report equal or better root structure compared to other mixes on their bedding crops, succulents, tropicals, perennials, vegetables, hemp, woodies and more. HydraFiber® delivers higher air space than other popular substrate ingredients, and creates a superior, air-rich root zone environment while providing more available water for plant uptake.

HydraFiber's® tremendous surface area makes water work more efficiently. Water is held on the surface of the fibre and is more readily accessible when the plant needs it. The pot may look dry from the top but it is worth a dig as lower down it could be found that the pot does not need watering.

HydraFiber® is imported into Australia by Transplant Systems in Melbourne and has successfully gone through production nursery trials. HydraFiber® is available in custom blends from Go Grow in Ballina on the east coast of NSW.



**“We are thrilled to bring HydraFiber® to Australia so growers can begin to experience all the benefits, from reduced operational costs to impressive plant health,” said Jennifer Neujahr, Director of Business Development for HydraFiber®. “It won’t take long for them to start seeing better margins and better plants.”**



**Bruce Beesley**

Managing Director, Go Grow

w: [gogrow.com.au](http://gogrow.com.au) | t: (02) 6686 4674



**Malcolm Calder**

Marketing Manager, Transplant Systems

w: [transplantsystems.com.au](http://transplantsystems.com.au) | m: 0458 555 944





## A NextGenner Portrait in Words

### — Olivia Wilson, Andreasens Green Wholesale Nursery (Mangrove Mountain site)

#### WHERE DO YOU CURRENTLY WORK AND HOW LONG HAVE YOU WORKED THERE?

I am currently employed at Andreasens Green, I started in 2017 so I am in my fourth year and loving it.

#### DESCRIBE WHAT A TYPICAL DAY AT WORK WOULD LOOK LIKE FOR YOU.

I am currently the Maintenance Supervisor. I stepped into this role from being a production team leader at the beginning of June this year. A typical day for me now is setting up my maintenance team with a day full of plant- or grounds-related maintenance tasks, checking on irrigation and plant health, finding new jobs to prioritise, and preparing weeding and pest programs.

#### WHAT ARE YOUR CAREER GOALS?

Being happy and healthy wherever I am working, whatever I am doing. Or branching into entomology—I like bugs!



Olivia with Ficus lyrata stock at Andreasens Green Mangrove Mountain

#### WHAT DO YOU FIND REWARDING ABOUT YOUR JOB?

I find my job most rewarding when I can share and extend my knowledge and skills with the team, and watch those skills be implemented in such a way that you can actually notice the benefit to plant health and longevity, creating uniformity and quality plants.

#### DID YOU STUDY, OR ARE YOU CURRENTLY STUDYING, HORTICULTURE?

I started studying General Horticulture at TAFE in 2017, several months before finding my way to Andreasens Green, and now I'm finishing my certificate through in-house training, hopefully by the end of 2021.

#### WHY DID YOU CHOOSE TO WORK IN THE NURSERY AND GARDEN INDUSTRY?

One day, I potted up a succulent, then another, then another until I had no more. So, I went and bought a cactus. It wasn't growing fast enough, so I learnt about propagation, and when that wasn't enough knowledge, I enrolled in General Horticulture and really started learning more about myself and my passion.

#### WHAT DO YOU LIKE/DISLIKE MOST ABOUT WORKING IN THIS INDUSTRY?

I like to see uniformity! As much as every plant has its own characteristics, they generally behave the same when given unique treatment, and seeing visual results is very rewarding.

#### IF YOU HAD ONE PIECE OF ADVICE TO SOMEONE THINKING ABOUT A CAREER IN HORTICULTURE, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

There are so many benefits of working in horticulture—you get to work outdoors; it's good for your mind, body and soul; it helps the planet, environment and ecosystem; it makes you stronger and fitter; and is a great source of vitamin D.

#### WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE PLANT/TREE/SHRUB AND WHY?

Lepismium houlletianum or 'Snowdrop Cactus', it's a tropical



jungle cactus that grows tiny white flowers along the edge of its pads. I found a small plant in my late grandfather's greenhouse, knowing that he himself picked it out at a garden centre in the last 20–30 years, and now I personally picked it from his greenhouse, hopefully I can keep it alive for even longer.

#### WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO IN YOUR SPARE TIME?

In my spare time I tend to my own mini nursery at home. I have over 500 potted plants ranging from succulents and cacti, to tropical plants and carnivores!

#### TELL US A FUN FACT ABOUT YOURSELF?

One of my feet is five sizes smaller than the other!



Olivia at the succulent garden at the Royal Botanic Garden Sydney

## A NextGenner Portrait in Words — Caitlin Desmond, Ozbreed Greenlife Pty Ltd



Caitlin



Trametes cinnabar that Caitlin found in the peacock pen at her house

#### WHERE DO YOU CURRENTLY WORK?

Ozbreed Nursery in Clarendon NSW.

#### HOW LONG HAVE YOU WORKED THERE?

I've been with Ozbreed for one year.

#### WHAT IS YOUR ROLE?

Horticulture, R&D and Plant Breeding Assistant.

#### DESCRIBE WHAT A TYPICAL DAY AT WORK WOULD LOOK LIKE FOR YOU.

I always start with a coffee and a walk around the nursery with our cheeky nursery cat Theo. My role is quite diverse, however, I usually start with breeding selections to be potted up, as well as existing selections that need propagation trials. Besides this, growing 100 or so Ozbreed varieties for our sample program, which we send out to landscape designers and influencers around Australia for marketing and trialling purposes.

#### WHAT ARE YOUR CAREER GOALS?

To have a career that combines horticulture with my other passions of supporting mental health and disability services. I have always wanted to start or be involved in a sensory garden, and I am hoping to explore this further in the future.



Velvet Sky™ Metrosideros



## WHAT DO YOU FIND REWARDING ABOUT YOUR JOB?

My role keeps me very stimulated, which is great therapy for my mental health. Having a great workplace with great people and a great culture is a rewarding place to come to everyday.

## DID YOU STUDY, OR ARE YOU CURRENTLY STUDYING, HORTICULTURE?

Yes, currently due to finish my studies in October this year.

## WHY DID YOU CHOOSE TO WORK IN THE NURSERY AND GARDEN INDUSTRY?

I have always loved plants and being outdoors growing up. This

industry can offer a diverse range of career paths which makes it a great choice.

## WHAT DO YOU LIKE/DISLIKE MOST ABOUT WORKING IN THIS INDUSTRY?

I love working with plants and seeing them grow! Not much I dislike about the industry, except maybe the lack of young people coming through.

## IF YOU HAD ONE PIECE OF ADVICE TO SOMEONE THINKING ABOUT A CAREER IN HORTICULTURE, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

Just do it!! Working outdoors with plants is highly rewarding.

## WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE PLANT/TREE/SHRUB AND WHY?

Velvet Sky™ *Metrosideros* because it has amazing inky blue stems and beautiful blue velvet foliage. It has an excellent compact form, dense growth habit and stunning red flowers that contrast beautifully with its blue foliage. I love plants that stand out and are different.

## WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO IN YOUR SPARE TIME?

Camping, exploring nature and identifying plants and fungi.

## TELL US A FUN FACT ABOUT YOURSELF?

I am currently writing a book on 'dad jokes'.



Caitlin

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# Welcome to Our New Members



**Business owners:** Jenny Tatton (and family)

**Business name:** Crystal Creek Estate

**Address:** 1004 Numinbah Road, Crystal Creek, NSW 2484

**Business phone:** 02 6679 1060

**Business email:** hello@crystalcreekestate.com.au

**Number of staff:** 4

**Website:** crystalcreekestate.com.au

**Facebook:** /CrystalCreekEstate

**Instagram:** @Crystal\_Creek\_Estate



Café dining deck overlooking Crystal Creek

Crystal Creek, which is named for the crystals that were found in the area in the 1850s, is home to Crystal Creek Estate—a family owned and run boutique nursery and café that became a member of NGINA in April of this year. Jenny and her family bought the business in December 2019 and here she shares their story over the last, nearly, two years.

“They say location is everything—Crystal Creek is a tiny rural area just 10 minutes from Murwillumbah in the Tweed Valley and only 15 kms from the Queensland border. Numinbah Road becomes Murwillumbah-Nerang Road, which is a popular weekend tourist drive from the Gold Coast. There is a little school at Crystal Creek but no shops to speak of.

Crystal Creek Estate is a collaboration between me and my partner, and my partner’s brother and his partner. We purchased the property in December 2019. Prior to that the property had been on the market for many years and was basically closed for the last five years before we bought it. There has been a nursery on this site since the early 1980s. The previous owners purchased the property back in 1993, and added mini animal tours and a café.

So, as you can imagine, the property was very run down and most of the plant and equipment had to be replaced and infrastructure upgraded. The redeeming features were the café verandah on the banks of Crystal Creek and a beautiful Banyan tree in the centre of the nursery area. The property also included two water bores with very generous water allocations.

We allocated three weeks for the clean-up and renovations, and of course they took three months, even with the help of family and friends. We chose an opening date of 13 March 2020 and, of course, COVID hit and we closed again on 30 March. 2020 was a stop-start year, however, the support and encouragement we received from our locals was truly amazing and continues to this day.

My background is in business—20 years in real estate sales on the Sunshine Coast and prior to that IT and accounting. I manage the nursery purchasing, etc., as well as all of our administration and staffing for both the café and nursery. However, I’m an avid gardener and I’ve had a love of gardening and plants since I was a child, helping my grandmother in her garden. Both my parents were also keen gardeners. (We do, however, have a qualified horticulturist



Pots in front of the large Banyan tree at Crystal Creek Estate





Outdoor casual dining at Crystal Creek Estate



Pots and plants available at Crystal Creek Estate

and florist as part of our team.)

The best advice I received before we even opened was from our Searles sales rep who told me not to rush into anything. Give it 12 months and see what the locals want, and what the market will support. And that's exactly what we did—offering a small amount of a broad range of products until we started to see trends appearing.

The café and the nursery work really well together. The café has creek-side verandah dining—as you eat your meal or relax over a coffee, you can watch the turtles, bass, mullet and eels, and catch the occasional glimpse of our resident platypus. There is also casual dining in the nursery area, under our Banyan tree. We are dog friendly and have regular four-legged guests who enjoy our outdoor dining space.

Part of our renovation of the nursery was to relocate one of the greenhouses and create a potager garden, which supplies the café with fresh herbs, leafy greens and edible flowers.

We don't propagate our own plants, our focus is retail. Luckily we have access to some great suppliers within a radius of about an hour's drive, so whatever we purchase comes from a similar climatic zone to us.

We only use organic-based products in the nursery as we have many resident wrens and honeyeaters, as well as green tree frogs. The birds do object if we don't keep the bird baths full and we have to check all outgoing pots and plants

to make sure our frogs don't end up separated from their families!

The nursery now includes a tiny gift shop, selling works by local artists and craftsmen. Our theme for the gift shop remains botanical or garden/verandah based. We also sell fresh flowers, mostly locally grown.

We host floral workshops, which are run by our resident florist and include lunch in the café. The workshops run for around three hours and have proved to be very popular and a lot of fun. We hope to expand the workshops to include watercolour, jewellery making, and other arts and crafts.

We like to inspire people with our garden layouts, potted plants and displays, and are quite often complimented on having "the most beautiful nursery". We are small and are making the best of what infrastructure we have. We may not offer a huge range but we keep our plants happy and healthy. We do try to source specific plants for our customers, which at times can be challenging. Other challenges include our supposed remoteness (sometimes we find the plants we want but can't get them delivered because we're "too far off the highway" or "too far out of town") and of course COVID!"

Crystal Creek Estate is open seven days a week, except for Christmas Day, Boxing Day, Anzac Day and Good Friday (plus days when they are flooded in!). The café is open from 7.30 am to 4.00 pm, and the nursery from 9.00 am to 4.00 pm.

## Grow Help Australia

### Plant Pest and Disease Diagnostic Service for Horticultural Businesses

Grow Help Australia provides a comprehensive plant pest and disease laboratory diagnostic service for commercial horticultural growers and consultants. Testing assists growers to manage pests and diseases to help improve productivity, quality and marketability of the crop.

Grow Help Australia (DAF QLD) have accessed nursery industry levy funds to create a program that offers:

- Six free basic/complex samples (as per the Grow Help Australia website) for each nursery. (Molecular tests and nematode extractions are still charged owing to the greater time/cost associated with the tests and outsourcing required.) Samples could be media/water tests for Phytophthora or actual plant samples.
- Discounted nursery samples for all production nurseries in the range of \$50 to \$90 per sample.

**More information is available on their website:** [bit.ly/3iSedox](https://bit.ly/3iSedox)

# Welcome to Our New Members



cedar nursery + design

**Business owner:** Olivia Schaefer

**Business name:** Cedar Nursery + Design

**Address:** 21 Kentucky Street, Armidale, NSW 2350

**Business phone:** 02 6772 7273

**Business email:** olivia@cedarnursery.com.au

**Nursery Size:** 3 acres including the growing nursery

**Number of staff:** 4 full-time staff (including Olivia) and 2 casuals

**Website:** cedarnursery.com.au

**Facebook:** /Cedarnursery

**Instagram:** @cedar\_nursery

Starting out in 2008 as a small production nursery, Cedar Nursery + Design is now a thriving retail nursery located in Armidale (NSW). They are experts in cold, hardy plants suitable for the climates of New England and love to help their customers create their own little (or large) pieces of heaven. Cedar Nursery became a member of NGINA in June of this year and we caught up with its owner, Olivia, to find out a bit more about the nursery and, of course, Olivia.

"I started in the nursery industry in 2008 when I purchased a farm tree propagation business from another local nursery in the area. At that time I had three children, the youngest being two years old, and I was living on a rural property that ran sheep and cattle. There was an empty shed on the property that I turned into a nursery, and the previous nursery owners

taught me how to identify native plants, collect seeds, propagate and plant, and the business just grew from there. The first year was a tremendous success... well I thought so anyway! I'd certainly caught the plant bug—I was obsessed with plant propagation.

I approached a friend of mine who had a natural eye for garden design and together we travelled to markets selling the plants. While we were there we advertised that we could advise customers about garden design, as well as supply and install plants. I moved the little nursery from its humble beginnings to a larger location and grew the growing nursery to an acre of plants.

From there I decided to have a try at retail, given I had all these plants to sell and no stable outlet. I leased a nursery that had closed its doors in mid 2010 for 12 months. Another local nursery came up for sale in 2011 and as our retail outlet was going well so I purchased the land and the business, which now stands at just over three acres of retail outlet and a growing nursery attached next door. Without my wonderful staff throughout my time as a nursery owner we would not be where we are today.

In terms of qualifications, I grew up on a rural property at Guyra NSW, completed a rural science degree at the University of New England, followed by a TAFE horticulture/landscaping degree. I think the best education you can have when it comes to horticulture is gardening, experimenting and growing plants in situ.

The original concept for the layout of the nursery was inspired by some nurseries in Melbourne. The idea was to create garden 'rooms' if you like, micro-climates, where plants of similar habits are displayed along with garden ornaments, such as pots and giftware, making it easier for customers to visualise the finished product.

Honestly, I never had any ambition to become a nurseryperson. It just wasn't on my radar. I fell into it totally by accident, simply looking for something to keep me busy while I had children at home. I enjoyed the challenge of starting something, growing something and seeing it develop before me. I have stumbled many times, too big too soon, brought it



Olivia (second from left) with her children (L-R) Angus, Blake and Lucy, and Dash the dog





back to just running the nursery and now I can honestly say the business is thriving. Well, I may be a little biased.

I grew up with a farming background, typical story, worked weekends and holidays. Well, dad and mum worked, us kids played. But we learnt a great work ethic, I think that's what I bring most to the business—when times get hard you knuckle down, when times are great you celebrate. In the time I've had the business I've concentrated on my children. We have travelled overseas to New Zealand and Europe, I see these as a super special adventures that I am proud of. The nursery allowed us this freedom and that will be something I am always both thankful and grateful for, especially given recent times.

The nursery has had its challenges:

- One being me!—learning the necessary business skills was difficult and I learnt the hard way. But they say you have two degrees in life—your successes and your failures. I definitely earned a doctorate in the second!

- The nursery in Armidale has always been a success... with a unique climate and a Bunnings in town, it was a challenge I loved to conquer! When I first opened the retail arm, lots of customers would come in ask, "How are you going with Bunnings just down the road?" I would just tell them that we don't know any different as Bunnings was there when we opened, if anything we are just going from strength to strength.

- Armidale's unique climate and extreme temperature variances in a single day can be very challenging. We have the luxury of enjoying, actually celebrating, the variety of cold climate plants that love our region. They give so much, from spring blossoms to summer colour to autumn bliss. The challenge was to learn when to get plants in at the most suitable time to make sure they were hardened off before selling them on to the public. In addition to this, plant placement in New England is crucial. I can only thank the many wholesalers for their sound wonderful advice and patience, and for their teachings during my career.

- Personally, rising to the challenge of being a single-parent business owner has been an experience I can't put into words. I have raised such strong, resilient children who have worked alongside me when needed—I am super proud of

each one of them in their own way.

Now, it's time to move on. I have loved the challenge of setting up the nursery. Moving it four times to its current location was, well, expensive! My children are getting older, more independent and starting to move away. I have a partner who lives out west so I'm making moves to be alongside him to start my next chapter.

The nursery industry is like none other I have ever worked in before, everyone is open to giving and receiving advice. Trade days are my favourite monthly adventure, from the banter to the more serious conversations. It has been an absolute blessing to be able to become part of this community and have a laugh with everyone.

I can only end this little brief by thanking everyone in the nursery industry for the valuable life lessons I have learnt, the friendships I have made and the continuing support through this next stage in my life."



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# Welcome to Our New Members



**Business owners:** John & Leanne Kelly

**Business name:** Sydney's Plant Market

**Address:** 184 Annangrove Road, Annangrove, NSW 2156

**Business phone:** 02 9679 2606

**Business email:** info@sydneyplantmarket.com.au

**Nursery size (acres):** 14 acres

**Number of staff:** 15

**Website:** sydneyplantmarket.com.au

**Facebook:** /SydneyPlantMarket

**Instagram:** @sydneyplantmarket

Sydney's Plant Market became a member of NGINA back in December last year. Since then they've been so busy with renovations and improvements to the nursery, a corporate rebrand, a new website and so much more, that they've only now had time to catch their breath and introduce themselves to the wider nursery and garden community.

## WHEN, WHERE AND HOW DID YOU START IN THE INDUSTRY?

We have a background in real estate and a passion for plants and high-quality service. An opportunity arose for us to transition into the nursery industry, and we grabbed it with both hands in buying Sydney's Plant Market in 2020.



Part of Sydney's Plant Market rebrand

## HOW DID YOU GET YOUR IDEA OR CONCEPT FOR THE BUSINESS?

The business is a long-established nursery with a great brand and a reputation for quality products at affordable prices. This resonated with us as we wanted to maintain a very competitive pricing environment, increase our product range and develop the infrastructure required. Our aim is to provide a nursery with a huge range at affordable prices with outstanding service.

## WHAT WAS YOUR MISSION AT THE OUTSET?

Providing customers with outstanding service and quality products at an affordable price.

## WHAT DREW YOU TO THE INDUSTRY?

At times, we feel as though we have spent more time in nurseries than we have at home. We have a real connection to the outdoors, and loved the appeal of working with a focused team and getting joy out of seeing our product change through the seasons or evolve from something small.

## WHAT ROLE(S) DO YOU CURRENTLY UNDERTAKE IN THE BUSINESS?

We have been focused from the outset to have accountability and specialisation. John runs the nursery and production aspects day to day, while Leanne leads the digital initiatives. Our business partners also assist in their areas of specialisation. We have a great team that operates the nursery seven days a week, from 7.00 am to 5.00 pm.

## WHAT SERVICE(S) OR PRODUCT(S) DO YOU OFFER/MANUFACTURE?

Our focus is to ensure we can vertically operate in the areas that make sense. Therefore, we grow a number of lines in our production facility (e.g., Buxus, etc.). We have also increased the number of suppliers as we increase our range and look to maintain prices that are at the lower end of the retail market. We have fully renovated our homewares, created a specialised large room for indoor pots and increased the range of water features we sell.

## WHAT ARE YOUR COMPANY'S GOALS?

To create a great environment for customers to enjoy and our staff to thrive, and to improve the quality of our infrastructure. Doing all of this by maintaining low prices.

## WHAT IS UNIQUE ABOUT YOUR BUSINESS?

We maintain our position as a 'plant market' offering a large range of plants, pots and homewares by using the land size to maximise the stock we can hold. We also look to go that step further on service, for example, by helping customers to their car when possible.





Sam, part of the Sydney's Plant Market team

### **CAN YOU DESCRIBE YOUR CUSTOMERS?**

A huge range of clients. From wholesale nurseries, builders, landscapers, homeowners, indoor lovers and simply browsers. They come from the likes of Orange/Mudgee, Newcastle, Wollongong, as well as the CBD. We hope customers come and enjoy the experience and pick up some bargains!

### **WHY DO YOUR CUSTOMERS SELECT YOU OVER YOUR COMPETITORS?**

Service, price and range.

### **WHAT HAVE BEEN SOME OF THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES YOU'VE FACED?**

Ensuring we have the right staff on the team who want to be part of the business for the medium- to long-term. Lifting the quality of the infrastructure and maintaining a high client service culture.

### **WHAT DID YOU LEARN FROM THESE CHALLENGES?**

Rome wasn't built in a day! Have a plan, don't waiver and don't make short-term decisions!

### **WHERE DO YOU SEE YOUR BUSINESS IN THE NEXT YEAR? IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS? THE NEXT TEN YEARS?**

We would like to lift the volume of production, increase both the foot and digital traffic, complete our digital expansion and integrate our logistics capability across multiple site locations.

### **WHAT'S YOUR PHILOSOPHY OR SAYING THAT MOTIVATES YOU IN YOUR WORKPLACE?**

It is all about customers, staff and offering a quality product.

### **WHAT DO YOU FIND REWARDING ABOUT YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN THE NURSERY AND GARDEN INDUSTRY?**

We have the opportunity to hire, educate and train some amazing people. Not only do plants grow, we also get great satisfaction in seeing our people develop. The nursery also provides a sanctuary and when a mature couple or person



Sydney's Plant Market homewares department

comes in to buy potted colour, you know that brightens their day... which makes us smile too!

### **TO WHAT DO YOU ATTRIBUTE YOUR SUCCESS?**

Please ask us in five years—we are only just getting started and have a big vision to deliver on.

### **DOES YOUR COMPANY HELP THE COMMUNITY WHERE IT IS LOCATED?**

We have a program to focus on hiring locals where possible. We have also provided working opportunities to those who have had their challenges. We are currently developing a formal community program for our nursery.

### **WHAT DO YOU LIKE/DISLIKE THE MOST ABOUT WORKING IN THE HORTICULTURE INDUSTRY?**

We love interacting with our customers and helping them buy or develop what they are after. The cold mornings can be a bit chilly... although they don't last long!

### **IF YOU HAD ONE PIECE OF ADVICE TO SOMEONE JUST STARTING OUT, WHAT WOULD IT BE?**

Roll your sleeves up, listen and grab every opportunity.

### **TELL US A FUN FACT ABOUT YOU AND/OR YOUR BUSINESS, ANYTHING AT ALL.**

I think we have had more customers with flat car batteries than any other business in the region! It is not unusual for us to be waiting past close for the NRMA to arrive or to be using the ute/tractor to jumper lead start a customer's car.



A happy customer at Sydney's Plant Market

# Herbicide Offers Up to Eight Months' Weed Protection

by Jyri Kaapro, Senior Market Development Specialist, Bayer

Weed control in ornamental production nurseries is becoming increasingly problematic due to the occurrence of difficult-to-control weeds (such as fleabane), weed resistance to common herbicides, and the high labour costs associated with frequent herbicide applications and hand weeding.

Industry is constantly looking for new weed control methods to allow the development of sustainable weed management programs that will help break the cycle of difficult-to-control weeds, across all areas of the nursery, that require constant management and compliance.

Bayer's Senior Market Development Specialist, Jyri Kaapro, and his team have been working on an innovative new herbicide that sets a new standard for pre-emergent weed control in bareground areas of ornamental plant production nurseries.

Jyri explains, "Specticle is labelled for use in maintaining bareground in outdoor ornamental nursery production areas, such as underneath and around potted plants and benches, access areas like driveways and walkways, and around infrastructure, such as buildings and fencelines.

When applied prior to weed seed germination, the active ingredient prevents establishment of a range of grass and broadleaf weeds for up to eight months, and can greatly assist nursery managers reduce labour and lower costs associated with weed control in the nursery. It offers significant advantages compared to current industry practice, which requires multiple applications of 'knockdown' herbicides or shorter-lived pre-emergent herbicides."

He concludes, "It can be tank mixed with common post-emergent 'knockdown' herbicides, such as Roundup Biactive®, to control weeds that are pre-existing in the target areas for treatment at the time of application."

Efficacy trials in the nursery sector within Australia have produced excellent long-term weed control under a number of different settings, validating the strong value that Specticle can provide for ornamental nursery managers.



## Spect*i*cle®

“We use a knockdown every two to three weeks to cover the property. In June, we applied Slasher® for knockdown and one week later sprayed Specticle. We reviewed the spray sites in September and the site was completely clean of weeds. We had another review in January and again the Specticle plots were completely clean of weeds.

Having a herbicide that lasts longer will greatly benefit our business as having to spray only one application of Specticle mixed with other knockdown products saves us time and we also save on labour costs, meaning we can focus on growing plants.”

**Mark Handy, Research Development Manager at Greenstock Nurseries in Queensland**

“We have natural bushland and farmland neighbouring the nursery, so seed can come on to the site from wind, rain and run-off. At the present time, fleabane is the problem. General herbicides haven't been knocking that. Probably once or twice a month we would go through and spray with general herbicides such as glyphosate. It's pretty well a full-time job, four days per week, making herbicide application via knapsacks or tractor. Specticle will help us cut down on labour, cut down on costs, so it is a great investment!”

**Beau Hartshorn, Nursery Operations Manager at Plants Direct Queensland**

### For further information please contact:

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