

Showing their native nous

DAVID HALL

AFTER starting their native nursery from scratch 14 years ago, Jamberoo Native Nursery has now reached the pinnacle of their industry, winning the national Nursery and Garden Industry of Australia (NGIA) award.

Owner Geoff Bailey and his partner Kate Malfroy bought a five-acre block of land in Curramore Rd.

Neither had a nursery background, but shared common goals - a passion for the environment and a need to express it.

"The (NGIA) in those days had very little to offer budding nurseries and it was very much a backyard industry, but today it's very professional," Mr Bailey said.

"Each state now has its own fully staffed office, including industry development officers."

Mr Bailey admitted they made lots of mistakes through their lack of experience, but they had a vision which drove the business.

Their business initially included the pair and one other, but now boasted 15 staff.

"Six years ago we entered the awards in the medium production nursery category and we have won this award and each state award since," Mr Bailey said. "Winning the state award entitles you to enter the national award where you are competing against winners from each state."



- Jamberoo Native Nursery Sales and Marketing Manager Sarah Peacock, owners Geoff Bailey and Kate Malfroy and Production Manager Nathan Sparkes with their national award.

Last Friday night, in a glittering awards ceremony on the Gold Coast, Jamberoo Native Nursery won the national award for the first time.

"I guess you could say Jamberoo Native Nursery had come of age," Mr Bailey said.

"You could probably say winning the award was a great relief after reaching this level before."

There was a touch of poignancy on the night as a few months ago Ms Malfroy left the business to pursue her other love in life; fabric

and upholstery. She has started her own business, Rapt Upholstery.

"The timing for winning the national award seemed very appropriate as it brings to end a wonderful period in our lives," Mr Bailey said.

However they aren't about to sit back and rest of their laurels.

"While it was a relief we won't be resting - we have set the bar and have to maintain the standard," Mr Bailey said.