

# Nursery grows reputation

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FOR Jamberoo Native Nursery owner Geoff Bailey, working with plants is not a job, but a lifestyle.

“People ask me when I’m going to retire, but I don’t want to,” he said.

“We travel 18 weeks of the year and I work on the business rather than in the business, so it continues to run if I’m not here.”

The nursery recently nabbed its fourth win in the annual Nursery and Garden Industry State awards, winning the Best Medium Production Nursery category.

Mr Bailey believes the nursery’s progressive nature has established it as a pace setter in the industry.

“We’ve been the nursery to do a lot of things first in the State and I think it’s made us well-respected and well-known,” he said.

Mr Bailey and his partner, Kate, (who has now retired from the business) set up the nursery nearly 13 years ago with no knowledge or experience in the industry.

“I had been working at the University of Wollongong and Kate was in the sport and recreation industry working in Sydney,” he said.

“We bought a property in Jamberoo and spent nearly two years looking for the right block of land, only to find one right next door.”

Wanting to match their rural property’s rainforest landscape, Mr



• Jamberoo Native Nursery owner Geoff Bailey.

Bailey found that many plants weren’t available and he set out to grow them himself.

“Friends soon started to ask me for plants and it just grew from there,” he said. “Now we do wholesale stocking for Bunnings, councils and the RTA.”

The pair decided to enter the awards as a way of recognising

their staff’s contributions.

“It’s a good motivational tool for everyone involved in the nursery,” Mr Bailey said.

“We couldn’t win these awards without the efforts of our staff ... the staff is the nursery.”

Mr Bailey said he would continue to enter the competition until the nursery won a national accolade.

Picture: ELENOR TEDENBORG

“The man who won it last year had won the State award seven times before the national one, so it is competitive at that level,” he said.

“We would like to be seen and known as the best medium-size production nursery in Australia.”

Judging for the national awards will be held in January and awards will be announced in Darwin in April.

## Broadband upgraded in Illawarra

TELSTRA has announced it now has 38 exchanges delivering ADSL2+ high-speed broadband services to customers across the Illawarra.

The telco upgraded an additional 448 exchanges nationally to ADSL2+ standards since March this year, taking the total to 1856.

Telstra Country Wide area general manager for Illawarra Pat Nolan said ADSL2+ provided the speed and bandwidth that families and businesses needed to simultaneously use several devices more effectively at home or in the office.

The 38 exchanges delivering ADSL2+ high-speed broadband services to customers across the Illawarra include Albion Park, Berry, Bowral, Cambewarra, Dapto, Gerringong, Helensburgh, Huskisson, Jamberoo, Kangaroo Valley, Kiama, Minnamurra, Mittagong, Moss Vale, Nowra, Picton, Penrose, Port Kembla, Sanctuary Point, Shoalhaven Heads, Sussex Inlet, Tahmoor, Thirroul, Tomerong, Tabourie Lake, Ulladulla, Wilton, Wollongong and Warilla.

“Existing BigPond® customers connected to these exchanges can change their plan online and upgrade to higher speed ADSL2+ plans subject to service qualification checks,” Mr Nolan said.

## Art in park stimulating for disabled

KIAMA Community Centre was a hub of art activity last Thursday as volunteers and participants came together to mark International Day of People with a Disability.

Nearly 30 people with a range of disabilities gathered at the centre for an art in the park day, where they had the chance to work with artist and volunteer Nadia Balatti.

A University of Wollongong graduate, Ms Balatti has a Bachelor of Graphic Design and said she wanted to devise an art project that all the participants could enjoy.

“Not everyone has a hand for

painting, so I wanted to co-ordinate an activity that everyone could have a go at and that was tactile and hands-on,” she said.

The group spent the morning working on creating a glass jar filled with grated chalk salt and decorated with a variety of embellishments including shells, pot pourri, spray-painted pasta and coloured rocks.

Participants then had the chance to paint the jar with glass paint to give it a personal touch.

Centre-based daycare co-ordinator Margaret Helmer said the project aimed to be interactive and encourage individuality.

“Every creation is different and we encourage that,” she said.

Ms Balatti agreed, stating that all participants had really taken to the project.

This year’s theme for the day was “Don’t DIS my ABILITY” and events were held across the country to celebrate the day.

In the Illawarra, other events included a sailing day at Illawarra Yacht Club, worm farming and no dig gardening at Dapto Ribbonwood Centre and an active and able sport day, held at Beaton Park Leisure Centre.



• Redtendo DeCresci, Pam McCallum and Elizabeth King with artist and volunteer Nadia Balatti.

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