

# NURSERY PAPERS

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## Changing perceptions for a stronger future

How does the industry change its unjustified image of 'unskilled', and in turn, endeavour to increase salaries; business success; keep up with current trends and practices; make the industry attractive as a career choice; and retain valuable personnel?

In this Nursery Paper, Nursery & Garden Industry Australia (NGIA) National Training & Recognition Manager, Fiona Kelly, talks about the value of changing perceptions and the role all industry members must play to move the industry forward.



## Changing perceptions for a stronger future

How does the industry change its unjustified image of 'unskilled' and in turn, endeavour to increase salaries; business success; keep up with current trends and practices; make the industry attractive as a career choice; and retain valuable personnel?

The perception by some that personnel who work within the nursery and garden industry are not 'professionals', do not require technical education and/or lack specialised skills – is, of course, incorrect, but is damaging to the industry in its efforts to move forward.

There are a number of NGIA major projects that have been developed and are in the process of being developed to tackle this continuing problem, all working together from various angles to work on the 'big picture'. It is vital that perceptions both internal and external to the industry change in order to strengthen the industry's future. A number of priorities have been identified for our industry, according to the latest environmental scan from the Agri-Food Industry Skills Council (the latest intelligence based on real-time industry views and evidence across Australia) – two of which are gaining 'higher skills and evolving job

roles'. Also industry's reliance on an '... increasingly discerning domestic consumer necessitates that companies and their workers manage multiple factors impacting on the product and its price point in the marketplace.' These factors are driving an increased investment in the skills and knowledge of the workforce.

There is a national program that exists that aims to 'professionalise' the industry by promoting personnel who have the skills, education and experience to be recognised as industry 'professionals' and industry 'specialists'. It identifies personnel who have the skills and experience and encourages them to continue with their investment in skills and knowledge to retain their status.

This program is not only available to full-time horticulturalists – it is open to most people working within the industry who meet the required skill and experience levels – be they educators, management professionals, media or marketing specialists, landscapers etc. Promotion of personnel is done both within and outside the industry and therefore making consumers from both sides aware that

the industry is a professional career choice requiring extensive knowledge, skills, education and experience.

For example, personnel who work for a growing media company may not have a horticulture degree but they may well be experts in their field with a wealth of invaluable skills, knowledge and experience not held by many others – you would say that they were a 'specialist' in their field, and this field is specific to the Nursery & Garden industry.

**Your program, your future**  
**Our industry, our future**

Steve Day, CNP - VIC  
Ross Wilson, CNP - QLD

Working within the nursery and garden industry should be viewed as a professional career which requires extensive knowledge, skills, education and experience.

In an ever changing, competitive and often demanding environment, the industry needs to ensure that its personnel are kept up-to-date in their skills and knowledge.

Industry personnel should have available to them formal recognition for the expertise gained from years of hard work within the industry, their professional skills and qualifications.

Creating an industry that is professional, educated, highly skilled, forward thinking, rewarding AND a career of choice.

**Nursery & Garden Industry Australia**

Apply to become a Certified Nursery Professional today  
[www.ngia.com.au/cnp](http://www.ngia.com.au/cnp)

Also, in an ever changing and often demanding environment the industry needs to ensure that its personnel are kept up-to-date in their skills and knowledge – the Program also ensures that this happens.

When it comes to the increasing concern of making the industry attractive as a career choice and of retaining valuable personnel, the program also tackles this.

Many school leavers (and their parents) would like to see that there are professional programs in place for their chosen career, something to strive for, something to be proud of. Working within the horticulture industry is a profession not just a job.

By providing a formal recognition of the expertise gained from years of hard work, professional skills and qualifications it gives an additional 'reward' or 'public acknowledgement' to personnel. Employers can assist their staff in their pathway to excellence by including the program into salary packaging or incentive programs. It is a useful tool also for employers when looking for future employees – most businesses consider skilled and knowledgeable staff to be their most valuable asset.

The program that aims to assist with all these things is called the Certified Nursery Professional (CNP) program. Originally developed for the industry in 2001, it has undergone a number of major improvements to become the program it is today, it continues to grow in numbers having doubled its new member intake in the past 12 months.

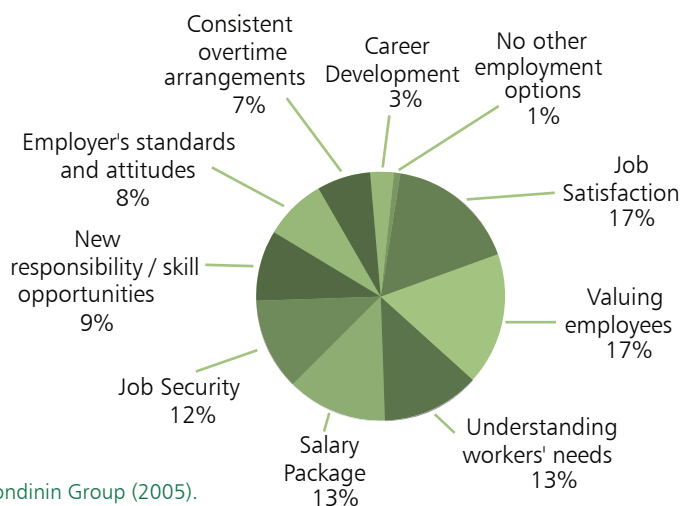
It is a win-win program – when supported by the industry - it is a winner for the individual, for the business and for the industry as a whole .

"Amenity horticulture has been among Australia's fastest growing industries due to its close ties with urban development. It includes retail and production nurseries, landscaping and maintenance of golf courses and parks and accounts for around 30% of all agriculture workers employing some 125,000 people, it turns over \$6 billion annually. Environmental issues are witnessing the job roles within these sectors relying more and more on higher level technical skills and knowledge."

AFISC – environmental scan 2008

## Agrifood employee retention – why people stay (information taken from the AFISC environmental scan 2008)

### Reasons for Staff Job Retention



Source: Kondinin Group (2005).

## Benefits of CNP recognition to employers

- Consumers recognise the business as having experienced and knowledgeable staff (these can be consumers both internal and external to the industry when looking at production and retail sectors)
- Business promoted in the Nursery Trade Register, along with the employee name
- Business promoted on the NGIA consumer and industry websites
- Consumers identify the business as providing a professional service.
- Staff retention (see 'why people stay' chart, which outlines the reasons for staff satisfaction)
- Additional media opportunities



Peter Whitehead, CNP

"Customers now recognise members by their CNP badges and know they can get informed and up-to-date information."

Tim Pickles CNP  
Tim's Garden Centre

"Being a CNP member has been good for business because it's a recognised program in the industry, growers who are qualified or have a degree in horticulture are happier dealing with someone who has an industry standard qualification."

Phil Nagle  
Van Shaiks Bio Gro

[being a CNP is a] "good thing to have under the belt" as it makes the business seem a lot stronger within the industry".  
Ross Wilson CNP  
Coastal Nursery

## Benefits of CNP recognition to the individual

- Recognition by industry and consumers of dedication to the industry and its future.
- Reinforcement to clients of the member's dedication to knowledge and skills advancement
- Identifiable to potential employers of industry status
- Access to exclusive CNP forum website/ chat-site
- Certificate recognising CNP status
- Personalised CNP badge
- Exclusive CNP networking functions
- Use of post nominals
- Promotion in the Nursery Trade Register including name and employer
- Promotion via articles and listing on the NGIA consumer and industry websites

"It has made a particular difference to the older ones [employees] who certainly had the skills and knowledge but not the formal qualifications. Finally they are being properly recognised for their experience".

Tim Pickles CNP

Tim's Garden Centre

"It's been good for my profile as well as the profile of the company as I'm able to show customers that there is a certified person on staff."

Phil Nagle

Van Shaiks Bio Gro

"Even if the customers don't know what CNP is all about, it's a sign to others in the industry that you know what you're talking about".

Ross Wilson CNP

Coastal Nursery

## Benefits of CNP program to the nursery and garden industry

- To ensure that the industry remains focused on raising standards and professionalism
- To enhance the reputation of the industry and increase consumer confidence when dealing with industry professionals
- Identifies industry personnel as educated, experienced professionals with extensive knowledge and expertise.
- To better inform the marketplace by differentiating individuals on the basis of a pre-determined criteria
- To ensure industry personnel are formally recognised for their years of hard work, professional skills and qualifications.
- To assist in retaining valuable personnel
- To ensure industry personnel are kept up to date in their skills and knowledge.
- Increase the attractiveness of the industry as a career of choice

"We have always been on the bottom of the horticultural food chain, so CNP is helping us get the recognition we deserve, and at the end of the day, we need all the help we can get to charge more."

Tim Pickles CNP

Tim's Garden Centre

"People are starting to treat us like professionals just as they would accountants and lawyers and because we are treated like professionals we're able to be paid for our services accordingly".

Sonja Cameron CNP

Cameron's Nursery

Look at the businesses that have made their mark

Join these leading businesses. Employ a CNP

Contact Keri on (02) 9876 5200 or cnp@ngia.com.au

Nursery & Garden Industry Australia

## What does an individual have to achieve prior to becoming a member of the Certified Nursery Professional program?

There are two categories with the program, which give a flexibility enabling personnel from various segments to be recognised - both are of equal standing;

The Professional level indicates a broad understanding of horticultural practice eg nursery person, the Specialist level indicates a specialisation in a particular area of the industry eg propagator, growing media specialist, educator, marketing specialist.

### Professional

To obtain Professional Recognition Status, you must have a minimum of either a Certificate III Horticulture and 5 years experience; or 10 years or more experience in the nursery and garden industry (no formal qualification required).

### Specialist

To obtain Specialist Recognition Status, you must have a minimum of either a relevant qualification at diploma level or higher AND 10 years experience; or 15 years or more experience in the nursery and garden industry (no formal qualification required).

Resumes, references and qualification documents are checked thoroughly prior to any application into the program is accepted.



## Membership Fees

To apply for the Certified Nursery Program a once only joining fee is payable along with a renewal fee every 24 months.

Bi-ennial membership fee:	\$90.00	
Joining fee:	\$75.00 *	*Discounts may apply on applications for 2 or more staff members at one time.
Total payable:	\$165.00	

## CNP Point value table

Activity	Evidence Required	Credit Points
Qualification - Must be horticulture based or relevant to a horticultural enterprise	Transcript and copy of qualification	7 points up to Certificate 4 10 points for Diploma level 15 points for Under or Post Graduate degree
NGIA National Conferences	Registration confirmation	5 points per day registration
NGI State Conferences	Registration confirmation and conference program	1 point per hour (Max 5 points per day)
Non NGI Conferences	Registration confirmation and conference program. Documentation prior to attendance (See note below)	Up to 1 point per hour (Max 5 points per day)
NGI Industry Workshop / Training Course	NGI Certificate of Attendance	1 point per hour
NextGen formal presentation	Confirmation of attendance	0.5 point per 30 mins
NGI Study Tour / Field Trip / Seminar (Excluding part of Conference program)	Registration confirmation, Agenda/Program	1 point per hour (Max 5 points per day)
Industry Publication Subscriptions Must be Industry based	Subscription confirmation	1 point per subscription
Non-NGI Training ~ (Specifically relevant to industry and position)	Documentation prior to attendance (see note below) and record of attendance	0.5 to 1 point per hour
In House Training ~	Documentation prior to attendance (see note below) and record of attendance	0.5 to 1 point per hour
Industry Training Developed *	Copy of courseware developed	1 point per hour of preparation (capped at 7 points per 12 months)
Industry Training Delivered*	Copy of confirmed training schedule	1 point per hour of delivery (capped at 10 points per 12 months)
Industry Participation	Meeting Agendas and confirmation of 12 months service	1 to 1.5 points per meeting
Non-NGI Industry Participation	Meeting Agendas and confirmation of 12 months service	0.5 point per meeting
Industry Reading Program	Synopsis	2 points per title
Other industry related activities	This area can be considered on an individual basis. Contact NGIA to discuss prior to any allocation of points or assumptions that it is relevant to the CNP Program	Allocated on an individual basis

note: approval of course content by NGIA prior to attendance is required to confirm any point value. Supply of full session details including presenter, agenda, format, content and duration is required \*If the majority of CNP points are obtained from these activities, applicants must establish a minimum of 5 CNP points from other professional development activities.

## Encouraging continuous learning

The Certified Nursery Professional program encourages continuous learning and ultimately an up-skilled and knowledgeable industry by making it a requirement for all CNP members to demonstrate ongoing professional development in order to retain their status. This requirement also ensures that the credibility of the program is maintained.

Professional development activities are recorded under a point-score system. To maintain CNP status, the member must accrue a total of 20 activity credits (CNP points) over a 24 month period. Every 24 months, members are required to submit documentation as proof of ongoing professional development. Along with one nominal up-front joining fee, a renewal fee is payable every 24 months (see information box). Employers may also be eligible for a reduction in the joining fees if they wish to apply for 2 or more employees in one application.

There are a range of activities in which CNP Professionals & CNP Specialists can participate to further develop their skills and industry knowledge not solely relying on attendance at industry workshops or conferences. Some examples would be subscriptions to industry magazines, a reading program, participation in industry committees, and developing industry training (see CNP point value table). Members also do not need to be a member of an NGI association to apply for the status.

## More Information

For further information on the Certified Nursery Professional program, call the Nursery & Garden Industry Australia (NGIA) office on (02) 9876 5200, email [cnp@ngia.com.au](mailto:cnp@ngia.com.au) or go to [www.ngia.com.au/cnp](http://www.ngia.com.au/cnp)