

THE WIMMERA

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## As one door closes, another opens for Laharum olive grove

LAHARUM'S Mount Zero Olives is going from strength to strength after the Grampians bushfires in 2014.

The fires forced business owners the Seymour family to close their popular Millstone Cafe, but it will soon have a new lease of life as accommodation for guests.

The business also has a new partnership with Qantas. See page 9 for more.



REFLECTION: Mount Zero Olives owner Neil Seymour at his Laharum olive grove. Picture: SAMANTHA CAMARRI

# 'I've lost my son'

BY CARLY WERNER

A HORSHAM mother whose son collapsed in front of her

son's problems started about two years ago.

"He started taking drugs through a girl he met"

sen not to name, had faced court and been bailed several times.

"He has a curfew but he's safe - that's pretty hard to believe"

no consequences. I've even tried to get my son re-manded and sent away so I know

he was or how he got home. Ms Pickering said her son

room one day and he won't wake up."

Ms Pickering said her son



Business explores new opportunities

# Grove continues to grow



**LAHARUM** business Mount Zero Olives was one of many affected by the Grampians bushfires in 2014. **CARLY WERNER** speaks to the Seymours about how things have progressed since.

**MOUNT** Zero Olives is branching into new territory. Grove owners Neil and Jane Seymour bought their little piece of paradise on the northern edge of the Grampians National Park in 1993. The family's first commercially sold olives and olive oil were produced in 1996.

The Seymours have experienced a lot in the past 20 years, including three bushfires, the most recent in January 2014.

Mr Seymour said the 2014 fire had several implications for the family's business.

"The fire damaged part of our farm, so we had to work on the affected trees, prune them and get them to recover," he said.

"Fortunately a small area was affected, and we didn't lose any infrastructure.

"But the fire did mean we had to close our Millstone Cafe after 15 years.

"All the roads and trails in the national park were closed after the fire, so the customer base wasn't there anymore.

"We were quite an iconic destination, and people have many memories of the cafe over the years.

"We continue to have visitors with the expectation that

the cafe and shop are open, more than two years after the fire.

"So we had to change direction a bit with the cafe closing. But we're pretty resilient."

As the saying goes, when one door closes, another one opens.

For the Seymours, that new door has led to establishing accommodation at the grove.

"The cafe building has been 80 per cent converted, and we'll finish that in the next two or three weeks," he

**MOVING FORWARD:** Mount Zero Olives owner Neil Seymour with one of the re-established olive trees at his Laharum grove.

quent flier points," he said. "They've just launched food to go alongside that, and we were one of the first suppliers to come on board, which we're really excited about.

"They pretty much stock our full range, including olive oil, olive leaf tea, and salt."

Mr Seymour hopes the relationship will develop further.

"We hope to supply produce for the Qantas lounges, and maybe even one day have our products on-board their aircrafts," he said.



**NEW VENTURE:** Neil Seymour in Mount Zero Olives' former cafe, which is being converted into accommodation. **Pictures: SAMANTHA CAMARRI**

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