



## Success stories

# Alpine Blueberries

Finding a better way

## A labour of love

Nathan Mirt has been growing Blueberries since his teenage years, taking over the farming land his grandfather, Antonio Bonacci, once used for thriving tobacco crops. He is taking control of his own destiny by diversifying his revenue sources and improving his skills in running the business.

## Where there's a will...

Selling into the wholesale blueberry market is tough. It's price-sensitive and leaves the producer with no ability to influence price during harvest periods, rarely seeming like reward for effort.

In January 2020 these challenges were compounded by the significant physical risk and production interruptions from bushfires, after which Nathan knew something had to change.



Aiming to reduce his reliance on wholesale markets, Nathan sought assistance from the Australian Government's Entrepreneurs' Programme Strengthening Business service and worked with his facilitator, Matthew Beasley, to help identify other options for his fresh blueberries.

## Local inspiration

Inspired by other local quality agri-business tourist attractions, and the prime location of his farm, Nathan and Matthew identified a farm-gate opportunity to sell his blueberries and other quality local produce.

Nathan immediately acted, converting his farm shed into a shop-front for the upcoming harvest season. He added Gelato to their offering providing a new revenue stream and the summer trial exceeded his expectations.

## A blue future

Buoyed by the success of the trial, Nathan is planning to expand the product offering at the farm-gate and is progressing value-add opportunities for blueberry products to sell locally and further afield.

He is also working with Matthew to take advantage of cloud-based solutions to run the business more efficiently and getting a better understanding of production costs to ensure future growth is profitable.

Nathan now has the confidence to invest time and money into his business with a great vision for the future.

**'The program has given us the drive to diversify and think outside the box.'**  
**Nathan Mirt, Owner, Alpine Blueberries**