

# Lavender's variety of uses

THE benefits of lavender and the colour of the fields had for years been of significant interest to Lucy Centofanti however, it wasn't until a few years ago that her keen interest was to be shared by husband Mario.

The relaxation and medicinal qualities of lavender were instrumental in them pursuing the direction they chose.

From stress, anxiety and headache relief to assisting in the healing process of wounds, burns and scarring, lavender has many benefits.

Gathering much information from many different areas about the plants and products Lucy and Mario didn't know at the time just where it would lead them.

Travelling to seek out lavender farms from all over and chatting with the owners, some very keen to share their knowledge, Lucy and Mario's kitchen soon became the focal point as they began to experiment with the making of a variety of lavender products.

In the meantime, a few acres of land were cleared at their Winkie property and several varieties of lavender were then planted.

The property is now home to over 2500 lavender plants.

As stocks built up and were shared with family and friends, Lucy and Mario branched out and became a regular trader at the Barmera Markets, this in turn led them to the Riverland Farmers Markets in Berri.

The idea of having their own little lavender shop was growing, although fuelled by some uncertainty.

The doors of Bella Lavender Estate were officially opened by world renowned artist Garry Duncan on December 9 last year.

Throughout the Christmas festive season holidays, trade certainly exceeded Lucy and Mario's expectations.

It has been fantastic to see return visits from many local people, bringing along family, friends and out of the region visitors.

Occasional meetings have also been



■ EXCEEDED: The number of visitors to Lucy and Mario Centofanti's new business Bella Lavender Estate has so far exceeded expectations. Photos: JANE WILSON

held there.

The lavender fields portray a mass of colour, while the Centofanti's slowly harvest the outer rows to capture the oil used to make products to stock the shelves.

Distilling can be seen each day the business is open (Friday to Monday, 10am until 4pm), where Mario happily chats to all interested visitors about how the process flows

from start to finish.

The cafe, built by their own sons and apprentice, oozes Italian influence and offers a tranquil surround to sit back and enjoy a light meal, a large selection of teas and Mario's famously blended range of lattes, cappuccinos and more.

Bella Lavender Estate "where ideas become a reality".

