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MINI GOLF**
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JAMIE**
EVICTED FROM BIG BROTHER

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Looking 'fore-ward' to a very bright future

By Marcus Power

JUST nine months after it was destroyed by fire, Ballarat's latest tourist attraction is open for business. The Gold Rush Golf Shed was destroyed by the blaze in October last year, only weeks away from its planned opening. But yesterday, with the golf shed enjoying a steady school holiday trade, co-owner Cathy Parker was all smiles.

"It's finally open. It has just been exhausting trying to frantically get it finished, (but) we're finally up and running," Ms Parker said.

She said the fire had given the owners the opportunity to add to the original design of the course, which was constructed by sculptors from the Gold Coast's Movie World theme park. "We incorporated the blacklight mini-golf into this one which we didn't have in the last one and it's been a huge hit with the kids," she said.

Other highlights of the course include its themed sections, featuring pirates, a King Kong sculpture and the odd angry dinosaur in the "Jurassic" section.

Ms Parker said the main feeling now was one of relief to be fully operational. At the time of the blaze last year, project director Wayne Johnston described the loss as "devastating".

"It took 3½ years to get to this point and it just goes in two hours," Mr Johnston said.

An outdoor golf course on the site was undamaged, allowing the business to trade since Boxing Day last year. But the reconstruction of the site's main attraction could not start until January.

Ms Parker said the last additions to the golf shed would arrive in the coming months, including regional Victoria's only AFL simulator.

PLAYING A ROUND: Tanner Jordan, 11, takes in the sights and sounds of the new indoor mini golf course at The Gold Rush Golf Shed. Picture: Lachlan Bence

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