

Waikerie icon 'brother' to many

Cosmo John DeVito

Transporter and fruit grower

Born: June 17, 1943; Waikerie

Died: December 11, 2005; Waikerie

COSMO (Cosy) John DeVito was a successful businessman, employer and friend to everyone he knew, and always remained loyal to the town of Waikerie in the Riverland, South Australia.

As a young boy, Cosy attended the Waikerie Primary School and finished his secondary schooling at Sacred Heart College in Adelaide. He returned home to Waikerie to work with his father, Giouse (Joe), and mother, Iolanda, on the family fruit property and packing shed.

He later became a truck driver for his father, taking fresh produce from Waikerie to Melbourne in the early 1960s.

After the death of his father in 1979, Cosy's trucking empire began. From humble beginnings and operating out of a tiny office at the family property, the transport and fruit-growing business of CJ DeVito flourished. Purchasing the Hardys winery property (next door to the DeVito property) in 1990 allowed his customers better access to the depot. At the height



of his business, Cosy was operating a fleet of more than 60 trucks - mainly Ford Louisville LTS 9000s - to Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane and Perth. He had depots in Adelaide, Melbourne and Mildura. Cosy DeVito was recognised as a leader in the road transport industry. The Ford motor company considered him one of its best operators. In 1997, he placed an order for 15 Ford Louisville prime movers at a cost of more than \$4 million. These trucks were custom built for CJ DeVito.

Although trucks were his life, he was also very interested in buying and developing more vineyards in Waikerie. The two businesses went hand in hand as he was able to cart his own grapes - more than 3000 tonnes - to the various wineries at harvest time.

He had lived with diabetes for 15 years, and five years ago was diagnosed with chronic renal failure. Initially he was given six months to live, but with determination and with the help of his family and staff at Queen Elizabeth Hospital, he lived for another five years. Initially he spent months in hospital and another year living in Adelaide to monitor his dialysis. Eventually, he returned to the Riverland and was dialysed at the Berri Hospital three days a week, for five hours each day.

Cosy DeVito provided employment to so many people in the Waikerie community, and despite his success, he always treated everyone like they were his best friends and often referred to them as "brother". Cosy DeVito is survived by his 89-year-old mother, Iolanda, sisters Agnes, Anna and Rita and brother Tony and their families.