



## SAFE DRIVER

WORDS & PHOTOS TAMARA WHITSED

PHOTOS DIETRICH FAMILY

LOCATION JUNEE, NSW

**J**ohn Dietrich of Junee, NSW, is accident-free after 38 years of truck driving. The 59-year-old has never had a speeding fine or lost any points.

With help from his wife Margaret and son Stuart, John operates John Dietrich Transport with three prime movers. His trailers include tippers, freezer vans, and stock crates with two, three and four decks.

He carts groceries and frozen produce, grain, hay, machinery, wool, steel, general freight and stock.



faultless

# FAULTLESS

**John Dietrich is proud of his faultless driving record. But his greatest pride comes from his family's involvement in his Junee trucking business**



John has been driving trucks for 38 years

One of John's trucks travels to Sydney once or twice a week. And John is a familiar face at farms, saleyards and abattoirs throughout the Riverina where he carts cattle and sheep.

John values his hundreds of customers. "If you treat people right they'll remember that. Without them you don't have a business."

He has maintained a contract to cart groceries to a Junee supermarket for 20 years.

John's son Stuart worked as a mechanic before he began driving for John Dietrich Transport which also employs two part-time casual drivers.

John describes his wife of 36 years, Margaret, as the backbone of the business. Margaret works full-time in Junee, but also finds time to manage John's bookkeeping and administration.

John humbly thanked *Truckin' Life* when

he was informed that he had won Driver of the Month. He was unaware that he had been nominated by his family.

During his 38 years in transport, John has driven throughout New South Wales, Victoria and Canberra, occasionally going as far as South Australia and Queensland.

He says a secret to his safe driving record is allowing plenty of time to get to his destination: "Always leave early. If you don't know where you're going, study a map before you leave."

"While you're driving, don't try to do two things at once."

"If you're tired, pull over. Pull up to eat. Take a break."

He says truck drivers should keep their vehicles well maintained and always be aware that other drivers might make a mistake.

It is inevitable that truck drivers will be pulled over by authorities, and drivers should show respect for the police and RTA, says John. "Those guys are just doing their job."

Carting pigs, cattle, sheep and goats between farms, saleyards and abattoirs takes John to locations including Wagga Wagga, Forbes, Young and Temora.

Some weeks John Dietrich Transport carts 10,000 sheep.

John grew up on a sheep, cattle and wheat farm near Junee where he learned to drive the farm's old Dodge.

He bought the farm from his parents, but needed another avenue of income to survive. He had gained experience as a truck driver and driving instructor with the Citizen Military Forces (CMF) in his 20s, so it seemed logical when he began carting sheep in the farm Dodge.

In 1984 a drought influenced John and Margaret's decision to sell the farm to focus on owner-driving.

John started with a V8 Petrol Dodge, upgraded to a Dodge 653 and later purchased an R Model Mack and S-Line Internationals. Today he runs a 1988 S-Liner, a 2004 Sterling and a 2006 Sterling.

"I used to think the old CB radio was terrific," says John who is glad for the introduction of mobile phones, truck fridges and air conditioners.

John has served as a voluntary member of the rural fire service for 40 years. He volunteers his time to drive bulk water for the fire service during bush fires, and also instructs other members.

He is proud that Stuart has become captain of the local brigade.

Junee district experienced a large bushfire in 2006, requiring John Dietrich Transport to cart over 50,000 sheep for agistment.

John doesn't measure his success by his turnover or the number of trucks he owns.

He says his greatest achievement is seeing his family expand to include Stuart's wife Robyn and their two sons, Jack, 6, and Ryley, 3.

He is thrilled to have Stuart working with him, and is excited by the possibility that his grandsons might continue the business for a third generation. 🏠