



# Thanks Geelong – we couldn't have done it without you!

Josie's Transport is celebrating its 40th Anniversary and wants to mark the occasion by thanking Geelong for its support and loyalty, and pay tribute to our founder Josie, whose trailblazing can-do attitude made her a pioneer for women in business in Geelong.

Chief executive, Fred Runia, said Josie's Transport was a true Geelong success story that could only be achieved with the support of hundreds of Geelong businesses over the past 40 years.

"When my wife Josie and I began this company 40 years ago, we had no concept that Josie's Transport would be the company that it is today – and we can only thank Geelong for supporting us as we've grown. Josie would be so proud of the company we are today."

Josie's Transport founder, Josie Runia, passed away more than nine years ago but the legacy of her entrepreneurial spirit, family values and commitment to business in Geelong lives on with her family still involved in running the businesses that she began.

"We'd like to think that Josie was a bit of a pioneer for entrepreneurial women in business in Geelong (her first four contractors were all women)".

She built a significant transport company from nothing, starting with an ironing board and a card table for desks, two phones and a two-way radio system in the sunroom of her family home in Lara.

Josie's Transport came about after Josie, Ursula and her four women contractors lost their jobs when a Melbourne company bought the Messenger service they worked for and shut down the Geelong Branch.

Mr Runia said "Josie just brushed herself off, talked to the businesses and suppliers that used the messenger service and decided she'd just start a business of her own – employing Ursula and the other contractors who'd lost their jobs".

"When it came to choosing a name for the business, one of her clients from Alcoa said: 'we always say "Just ring Josie" for their urgent pickups, so why not call it that' – and that's how Josie's Transport came about," he said.

With four children underfoot, and another born after the business was established, Josie knew more than a bit about managing the demands of working and raising kids, with her days spent juggling five children and the business long before 'work-life balance' was talked about. She just got on with it.



We are grateful to all the customers and our suppliers who came on board to back us in this new venture back in 1974, Mr Runia said.

Although Josie was usually the voice behind the two-way radio, she was also well known for jumping in a vehicle to make deliveries if needed – surprising storemen by pulling up in one of the company's trucks.

After starting as a simple messenger service, Josie's reliable service saw demand grow. Josie increased her fleet to include larger, heavier vehicles, and increased her staff and eventually added more contractors.

As Josie's Transport continued to grow, Fred became more involved in the business and it moved from their home's sunroom, to a bungalow in the backyard and eventually to their current headquarters in Lara, which was purpose-built in 1994.

Over the years the bigger manufacturers like Ford, Alcoa, International Harvester and Shell were our customers, but at the same time we also stayed loyal to those salt-of-the-earth Geelong businesses that were with us from the beginning.

40 years down the track our customer base has grown to include many Melbourne, Ballarat and Western Districts clients.

"We can't thank all of our customers, our many long term staff members and contractors (past and present) enough for the loyalty and support they've given us over the 40 years. Their support and loyalty has been an important factor in our success", Mr Runia said.

Like many Geelong businesses, Josie's Transport is adjusting to Geelong's shift from its traditional manufacturing base.

"What's happened in the past few years has really made us look at the future differently. We decided from the outset that we were going to seize the opportunities as they come up, and that's what we've done. We're forming new relationships with Geelong's new industries and we've had to adjust our services to make sure we're relevant in the new Geelong marketplace," Mr Runia said.

"What hasn't changed is that we can deliver anything for anyone. Our clients are big and small, as are the items we transport using everything from Small Vans, Taut Liners, Semi-Trailers and Tray Trucks.

"After 40 years our service is still a personalised service, delivering goods for more than 2000 clients using state-of-the-art tracking systems. Our signature 'Rocket Service' is where the driver who picks up your item takes it straight to where you need it to go, no fuss – just like Josie and her ladies would have done 40 years ago."

Above right: Our dedicated team.

Below: Josie's has been operating for 40 years.