



Left to Right: Bradley May, Andrew Moore, John and Chris Hart and Douglas Hague.



*Situated halfway between the Queensland cities of Toowoomba and Warwick, on the fertile plains of the Darling Downs, lies the quiet township of Clifton.*

# HART TO HEART

**ONCE** a large wheat growing area the region now has a diverse range of agricultural activities supported by business enterprises like the Clifton based trucking firm of J.R. Hart & Son Transport. Managed by John Hart along with his brothers, Chris, Dennis and wife Cheryl, the firm is centered on moving freight for Ridley Agri-Products, a 100% Australian owned company producing and providing animal feed to a wide range of primary sectors. With strategically located mills and storage facilities, Ridley uses the very best raw ingredients for their feeds which they supply to the beef, dairy, dog, horse, pig, sheep, poultry and fishing industries. John and his team, who operate a fleet of semi's, B doubles and truck and dog combinations, have been servicing the Ridley group for a quarter of a century, a feat that has required a lot of effort and loyalty from both sides of the fence. "I started with an old 1418 Benz running back and forth to Sydney. When I finally traded up to a T600 Kenworth things began to pick-up and before I knew it we had a number of trucks and trailers moving Ridley's food ingredients and their finished products between Toowoomba, Townsville, Brisbane and Sydney," says John. Keeping his head above water during times when freight was scarce

meant that John and the business soon earned a reputation for being reliable. This tenacity, during the tough periods, resulted in the company hanging onto long term customers like Ridley and Walker Brothers where Hart's, since the early 90's, have carried countless loads of their Cyprus flooring and timber products to Sydney. "We've seen a lot of local transport companies come and go over the years simply because they won't go the extra distance to please their customers, especially when the pressure is on. "To become a trusted carrier you need to put in the necessary hours and work the occasional weekends to support the up's and downs of your clients' needs," stated John. To keep Ridley's freight moving, to support the mills, Hart's has continually updated and grown their fleet, introducing wherever possible the latest and best vehicle technology, like the recent addition of a drop-deck curtain sided B-double, designed and built by O'Phee Trailers. "We will now be able to haul 32 pallets of stock feed using this new O'Phee which I insisted on having BPW air suspensions and disc braked axles fitted because I've learnt over time that their running gear is the easiest to operate and maintain," said John. Currently it's all go at the Hart depot with a new office and warehouse facility going on-line to keep up to speed with the growth in freight movements. Growth, as John says, which has come from being there for clients, where and when needed, sometimes at a moment's notice. And as John says, if business does slow down, being able to pick-up the slack in order to keep the trucks rolling. It's no wonder the locals say, "If Hart's can't find a load, no one can." ■

