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MARKET



Dennis Schwarze in front of the iconic Schwarze Seafoods stall in 2016.

Tributes flow for Market's much-loved seafood king

By Cam Lucadou-Wells

Dandenong Market fishmonger Dennis Schwarze thought nothing of getting up at 3am to travel from Gippsland to Kensington Market to hand-pick the choicest freshly-caught seafood.

Described as "Market royalty", the Tynong grandfather died on 10 May after a 14-year arduous fight with cancer.

He kept up the early-bird trawling of wholesale fish markets for 45 years, and kept going to the family stall until only a few months ago.

The familiarly warm, beaming face of Schwarze Seafood was the third generation of the 90-year family business at the market.

He worked alongside and took over from his father Merv, who had the same dawn-defying work ethic.

They inherited the business from Dennis's grandmother Alice.

His daughter Jessica, who has taken the reins in recent years, said her doting, outgoing father just "worked and worked and worked" even while ill.

"He's a very well known and very loved man. He loved what he did and loved the Dandenong Market community.

"Everyone says he was just a generous, kind guy. He'd talk the ear off anyone.

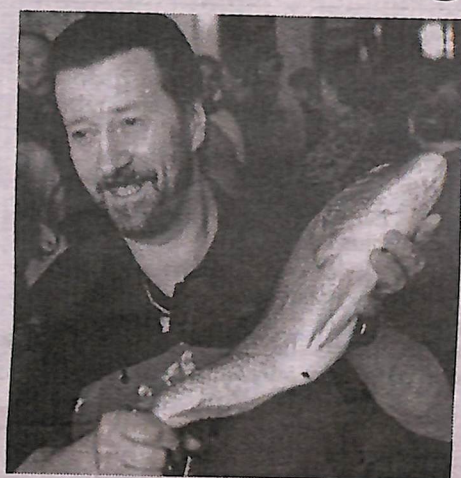
"His positivity was what gave him those last 14 years.

"He should have been home resting for many years but he had to see everyone at the market."

Mr Schwarze was an avid seafood cook – especially keen on cold trout, flathead tails and a stir-fry medley including scallops and mussels.

"Whenever we went out to restaurants, he would always order seafood," Jessica says.

He was also a keen fly-fisherman, who would make his own flies and lures before trekking to Corryong by the Murray River.



Dennis Schwarze in his early days as a fishmonger.

A loyal Western Bulldogs fan, he scored a ticket to the 2016 AFL Grand Final to see his team win its second-ever premiership. Ever since, he'd talk about that fantastical day.

The family business was built on quality – only fresh, local seafood, and none of the frozen, imported stuff.

It grew from a small fish-and-chippery to a commanding corner stall in the meat, fish and deli hall.

"He was Market royalty and we will miss him dearly," says Dandenong Market general manager Jennifer Hibbs.

"He would arrive at Dandenong Market before dawn on Market days delivering fresh Australian seafood to his customers.

"He was always happy to offer advice on not only what to cook, but how."

Greater Dandenong mayor Jim Memeti paid tribute to a "gentleman" with an "iconic business".

"He made sure he got the best fish, looked after his customers – that was the key to their longevity."

Mr Schwarze's funeral is at Bunurong Memorial Park on Wednesday 25 May.



Jessica and Dennis Schwarze in 2019.

Picture: NORMAN OORLOF