



Joe Nowak **Sales Manager** **Premier Fruits Brisbane**

Former school teacher and now Premier Fruits Sales Manager Joe Nowak began dabbling in the fruit and vegetable industry in the mid 1990s as a university student, finding part time work as a picker and packer at the Brisbane Produce Market.

By 1997 he had received his Bachelor Education, had a wad of cash in his pocket from his part time work and he moved on with his career dabbling in education and then working in sales in the family's haberdashery business.

However Brisbane Markets wasn't finished with Joe and four years later he was enticed back to the fast moving pace of fruit and vegetables, and joined the Carter and Spencer warehouse picking and packing again.

"I had a taste for what the market life was like," said Joe.

"I was starting a family and needed more time to be home. I knew what it was like from my university days and that the rewards were there for anyone who put the hard work in."

For an ambitious young man, this was a stepping stone. Just a month later, his next stone came from a notice board advertisement asking for a quality assurance and assistant salesman at the Carter and Spencer section, in the heart of the Brisbane Produce Market, and he got the job.

He received full training in Quality Assurance (QA), Workplace Health and Safety (WPH&S) and was even sent to Queensland Department of Primary Industry consignment courses so he knew how to manage stock.

When the Carter and Spencer section closed, Joe was quickly picked up by wholesaling firm John Potter Pty Ltd where he honed his sales and QA skills, until this section was sold and merged.

It was at this point Joe made a decision. In his out-of-work life, he had built a successful fireworks business, having worked on it in the afternoons and evenings. He had to decide to pursue his own business further or make fruit and vegetables his career – and he chose the Brisbane Produce Market.

Joe offered his services to wholesaler Premier Fruits five years ago and his fruit and vegetable sales career sailed.

Over the years he has taken on the WPH&S and QA roles, stock rotation, warehouse and floor manager roles and is now the firm's sales manager.

"This is a healthy life that keeps me challenged every day," Joe said.

"There are some great people and many of the growers and customers have become my closest friends.

"The industry becomes part of you and part of your life. It's a privilege to have people put their trust in you and although some days have their ups and downs, it's a great industry to be in."