

# Day One Session One

*Dr Grande Ufficiale Rino Grollo*  
Chairman of the Italian Australian Institute

*The Most Reverend George Pell*  
Archbishop of Melbourne

*H.E. The Governor of Victoria*  
The Honorable Sir James Gobbo, AC, CVO

*H.E. Cardinal Francis George, OMI*  
Archbishop of Chicago USA

*The. Hon. Phillip Ruddock MP*  
Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs

*The. Hon. Con Sciacca MP*  
Shadow Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs

*Mr. Joseph R. Cerrell*  
President of the National Italian American Foundation,  
Washington USA

## *Dr Rino Grollo – Chairman of the Italian Australian Institute*

On behalf of my fellow Directors of the Italian Australian Institute, I have much pleasure in welcoming you all to this conference. This is, in fact, our first major undertaking, so it is with some anxiety that we seek to live up to the confidence expressed in us by the President of Italy, Oscar Luigi Scalfaro, and the then Premier of Victoria, Jeffrey Kennett, at the time when they announced the foundation of the Institute some eighteen months ago.

Since then we have been working quietly to establish ourselves as a national entity. Now Australia is a country where one out of every ten people has Italian ancestry. This represents almost two million individuals. We, the Italian Australian Institute, want to underline and celebrate this reality by harnessing our talents and resources in a more deliberate and co-ordinated way for the benefit of future generations.

Who we are and where we came from is an essential part of our lives and our identity and in this multicultural society of ours it is particularly vital to Australia's future development and influence in the world. The Institute wants to further the positive contributions and achievements of Italian Australians, but at the same time we want to encourage recognition of the uniquely Italian cultural values attached to many of these achievements.

We will work towards the creation of expert committees in every area, from finance to the law, from science to the arts, from history to contemporary society and in a way that will foster greater understanding and goodwill in our great country. More formally identified, the objectives of our organisation are to represent and advance the interests of Italian Australians:

- by promoting and preserving the Italian heritage in Australia;
- by encouraging the teaching of the Italian language and culture in schools and universities throughout Australia;
- by supporting young Italian Australians in their education and careers;
- by working closely with and serving as a link between government and Italian community groups;
- by conducting or sponsoring research on issues related to the Italo-Australian community;

- by strengthening the cultural, economic, business and diplomatic relationship between Italy and Australia;
- by supporting the appointment of Italian Australians in government and providing assistance to those Italian Australians who have been appointed;
- by helping elderly and necessitous Italian Australians to obtain suitable welfare assistance and work opportunities;
- by monitoring the portrayal of Italian Australians in news and media.

Allow me also at this point to confirm that the Italian Australian Institute, a non-political, non-profit, national organisation, operates independently of any existing community-based associations but still welcomes all cooperation with groups and individuals who share its objectives. Finally, we would like to acknowledge our sister organization in the United States from which we have drawn inspiration and direction: the National Italian American Foundation which has been operating in Washington since 1975 and enjoys the support of all political parties and institutions in that nation.

It is in this cross-cultural context that I welcome you all this morning in particular His Eminence, Cardinal George, Archbishop of Chicago, who will speak briefly today, and then deliver a major address on Friday night.

## *H. E. Archbishop George Pell*

Mr Chairman, Sir James, Your Eminence, Mr Ambassador, ladies and gentlemen, my task is an important but brief one and that is to sincerely welcome you to this city of Melbourne and to ask God's blessings on your endeavours.

Christianity, Catholicism is not entirely coincidental with the history of Italy. Probably since St Paul and the first Christians arrived, Christianity has been part of Italian history, generally making contributions that in any terms have been useful and valuable. Certainly the Italian contribution to Australia runs in concert with the Catholic contribution.

The Italian Catholic community is enormously important for the Catholic Church in Australia, and the Italian Australian community is increasingly important for the wider Australian community in Australia.

It is very important in this new and changing environment that the great and wonderful strength that the Italians have brought to us is maintained and adapted and developed. Certainly one of the ways in which that will be done is through gatherings like this.

So I congratulate those, Mr Grollo and others, who have led and fostered this initiative. I wish it well. I pray that every blessing comes upon it, not just for the benefit of the Church, but for the benefit of the Italian Australian community and for the benefit of the entire Australian community. Thank you.

## *H.E. The Honourable Sir James Gobbo, AC, CVO*

It is a pleasure to be opening this Inaugural Conference in Melbourne of the Italian Australian Institute. May I begin by giving a warm welcome to Victoria to our international and interstate visitors and I hope you all have an enjoyable and intellectually stimulating stay in Melbourne. It must be especially gratifying for the Institute to have so many interstate participants as this underpins the resolve that the Institute be a genuinely national organization.

The three themes chosen for the three days of the Conference are:

Day One    The Future of Italian Australian Relations

Day Two    Educating for New Horizons

Day Three   Identity and Community Life

These are broad and ambitious themes and mirror the objectives of the Institute.

The first day has so much to stimulate and interest us. There are obvious issues such as trade and immigration policy and culture. These issues will need to be approached in a way which considers not only what is the flow in the arts and culture between Italy and Australia but also in the reverse direction. In the arts area, we tend to be perhaps over-influenced by the statistic that Italy holds more than half of the world's art patrimony. This is true enough but we must still encourage significant Australian presence in Italy – and by that I mean more than a single artist's work at the Venice Biennale every two years, valuable though that may be. We have yet to send a comprehensive Exhibition of Aboriginal Art to Italy. Whether in art, music, ballet or in modern dance, we have much to offer to the major centres in Italy and it would greatly stimulate interest in Australia and valuable linkages in trade and education.

The imagery of major cultural or like events cannot be overestimated. May I point to a recent experience. Three years ago the Treasures of San Marco were brought from the Veneto Region to Melbourne. It was an extraordinarily rich collection which told the story of the great Venetian Republic in craftsmanship and precious objects. It is a story which needed to be told to all Australians, not just those of Italian origin, for after all Venice was the longest lived republic in the history of the world, and for most of its 1,000 year history it had an extraordinary influence in commerce, culture and politics.

Another example of a more modest but very interesting exhibition was that of the work of the Futurist architect, Terragni. When this opened, the crowd overflowed onto Swanston Street and most of those present were under 30. Here was imagery of a different kind which caught the imagination of the young.

In this context, may I express the hope that the great exhibition of the carved wooden models of the work of Palladio be brought to Australia next year. When I recently visited the Palladio Institute at Vicenza, they agreed to lend this exhibition next year and it now remains for the authorities and sponsors to make this possible. It would have great appeal and again is likely to reach students and a wide section of the public.

I said earlier that we in Australia have much that we can usefully provide to Italy – and given that we have many existing linkages of family and association, we should be well placed to do so. May I refer to one area in particular, namely, our Australian experience in settlement of migrants and in our multicultural policies. We have achieved a relatively successful balance between commitment to the host country and yet retention of cultures and traditions of the land of origin. This experience has been admired in other parts of the world. It has now become increasingly relevant to Italy which is no longer a country of emigration but rather one of immigration. It is not necessarily a discussion which Italy would warmly embrace but it is clear that there are many immigrants of diverse cultures who have made their homes in Italy – and there are signs that Italy is beginning to face up to this reality and its consequences.

Another different and complementary theme relates to our encouraging Italy to see in Australia a fruitful source of study of overseas Italian settlements. Of all the Italian diasporas, it can be argued that the Italian diaspora in Australia is the most interesting and the one most worthy of study. My reasons briefly are that Italian communities in the United States have been assimilated, while those in Argentina for example are less Italian in their retention of Italian traditions and linkages.

The existence of a multicultural Australia with its progressive policies owes much to the participation, and indeed leadership on occasions, of the Italian communities in Australia and their leading organizations, of which Co.As.It. is the largest and most significant. I acknowledge the financial support over the years of the Italian and Australian Governments to these organizations. I hope and pray that this enlightened support continues.

Probably the greatest challenge for this Conference and that which will occupy much of your attention relates to education and training.

I hope this Conference is able to advance the prospects of better knowledge of the Italian language and history by a variety of ways which should include programs which bring about excellence in language, and a greater knowledge of each other's history. These will be very much advanced by Australian students studying in schools located in Italy, preferably in an Italian campus extension of an Australian school. The same should apply to overseas campuses for Australian Universities.

It is in technical training that we have most to learn from Italy. There is no doubt that Italy's extraordinary economic growth is not due to any natural advantages of resources or raw materials. It is due to the skill and technical training of its craftsmen and workers – combined with a structure of small businesses which facilitates flexible and successful trading. Like many in Italian households, I was brought up to value skill. My father often used to say to me "Impari l'arte e metti a parte" which generously translated means "Learn a skill and fill the till!" We know that Australia can only survive, much less, flourish, in the global marketplace if it becomes very much more skillful and export conscious, especially in smaller enterprises. There have been good examples of the ways in which we can enhance our skills by linkages with Italy. The Palladio Foundation and its partners in the I.S.S. enterprise have sent over a dozen Fellows to Italy for just this purpose. Much more will need to be done.

The third main part of the Conference will tackle a somewhat different area of identity and community. Part of this discussion will no doubt include a recognition of the values of the two societies. We would wish to have Italy understand and appreciate our diversity and our egalitarianism. In parallel, I would hope we would be able to identify and recognize and share with Australians those life values which are essentially Italian and which are inextricably tied to family values which are in turn tied to their Catholic faith and upbringing.

May I submit some general issues which could usefully be addressed at the time the specific items in those interesting papers and topics listed in the program, are discussed.

I refer to two sections of the community which merit particular attention, namely women and youth.

The history of Italian settlement in this country has tended to be told in terms of the achievements of the male breadwinner. It is only in recent times that we have given more attention to the great achievements of the

wives, mothers and other women in this settlement story. One organization which led the way in this regard was the Italian Historical Society of Co.As.It. through its extensive oral history interviews of women, its sponsorship of detailed studies of proxy brides and its work on the recent Immigration Museum exhibition on the Dowry.

Women in Italian family culture have always been critical in the difficult role of preserving effective family linkages. This role is still critical so we must see that both the past and the present are covered with justice and sensitivity.

An even more challenging area is that of youth. Australia, though largely enlightened in its acceptance of cultural diversity, has many conformist aspects about it. These are paradoxically sometimes at their strongest amongst young people who, though individualistic and apparently independent, are also very intent on acceptance by their peers.

It is a delusion to imagine that young Australians of Italian origin will easily and quickly embrace the programs of established Italian entities or organizations, especially if their parents or older folk are heavily involved. May I suggest that three criteria need to be satisfied before youth can be persuaded to pursue active involvement or interest in things Italian. The first is that the activity is seen as something they are doing as Australians and not as Italians once removed. It will be much easier to carry these activities with them – and their friends – if they are seen as good for Australia and Australians. These second generation Australians of Italian origin want, above all, to be accepted as good Australians.

Secondly, the activities will have to be presented as reflecting an Italy as having not only a great history but also as being modern and relevant to a creative and demanding and increasingly skilled world.

Thirdly, they will want to have substantial involvement, even autonomy, in how these activities and linkages are put together.

These criteria are worth serious consideration especially if their implementation makes it possible to mix the talents and traditions of the young people of the two countries for their mutual benefit.

I congratulate Rino Grollo, Chairman of the Institute, and all those involved in the staging of this Conference and I wish them and all participants a fruitful and stimulating Conference. I now have much pleasure in formally opening this Inaugural Conference of the Italian Australian Institute.

## *H. E. Cardinal Francis George OMI, Archbishop of Chicago USA*

Mr Chairman, Your Excellency, Sir James Gobbo, Archbishop George Pell, Mr Ambassador, ladies and gentlemen ...*grazie per l'invito a parlare a voi tutti stamattina*. I'm quite honoured that I've had this opportunity to join you as you begin a very important enterprise.

I have come to Australia, however, first of all to speak in response to an invitation from the Australian Bishops Conference to give an annual lecture in honour of Daniel de Camera and the topic this year is globalisation. So it is those thoughts that are in my mind even as I stand before you this morning.

The phenomenon of inter-relationship on a global scale has many dimensions, as you know, technological, first of all, and then communications, economic, political, but also cultural. And if there is a global culture being born, then as we look at the many influences that create that, we have to acknowledge that, for better or ill, it is western culture that is a dominant shaping influence. And when we look at western culture, we have to, when we look at our history, look at the influence of Italy.

In a certain sense, *in un certo senso siamo tutti italiani*, that is somewhat still true in Chicago, which is not quite as homogenised as a melting pot image might give you to think.

If, however, we do not want to work towards homogenisation of culture, whether globally or in a country such as Australia or America, then it is important to highlight differences and when differences are made public and when they are expressed, there is always a danger of rejection, a danger of conflict, a danger even of violence, unless the differences themselves are not presented as obstacles to be feared, but rather as gifts to be shared.

The Catholic Church, in our own sense a universal communion in Christ Jesus, is very interested in fostering these differences in such a way that they can be shared, so that the resulting unity, whether global or national, or ecclesiastical, is diverse and yet not threatening in any way.

To live one's own cultural background, or one's generational differences which Sir James mentioned, in such a way that they can be shared, demands a great generosity of spirit and

the Church is very interested in fostering and in catering that generosity of spirit.

As a churchman, I give you my best wishes and my promise of prayers as you continue these days. *Auguri a tutti.*

## *The Honorable Phillip Ruddock MP*

Well, thank you very much, firstly, Master of Ceremonies, Tony Charlton, and my colleague, Phil Barresi, who has introduced me. But can I acknowledge first His Excellency Sir James Gobbo, Governor of Victoria, His Eminence Francis Cardinal George, Archbishop of Chicago, His Excellency the Ambassador, our distinguished international visitor, Joseph Cerrell, the Chairman of the Italian Australian Institute, Rino Grollo, my Parliamentary colleague and also commentator, Con Sciacca, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

Firstly, I would like to acknowledge the Wurudjeri people, the traditional custodians of the area of Melbourne in which we are. It is appropriate at a conference like this, where we are talking about immigration, to acknowledge our first Australians and their unique culture and their role in our nation as we move forward in the process of reconciliation and as we look forward very much to a successful Corroboree 2000 in another place this weekend.

I thank the Italian Australian Institute for the opportunity to be involved in this inaugural conference. I note the very significant issues that you intend to discuss. They are very ambitious objectives that you have also set yourselves and some of them are germane, I think, to the matters which I will address today, advancing the interests of Australians of Italian origin and their culture and the strengthening of economic and business links, along with a range of issues which might have a more domestic character.

Let me just say firstly that I do very much acknowledge the very rich culture that Australians of Italian origins have brought to this nation and, of course, the very substantial base that is reflected within our Australian culture of the contribution of Italians that have settled this land over a very long period of time.

You will find that in the middle of the 19th century, Italian priests were first involved in missionary work in northern Queensland, Western Australia, and the Northern Territory, particularly in many of those places amongst our indigenous people. You had small Italian communities that were catering for the needs of miners in the goldfields of Victoria and Western Australia and, of course, that is probably one of the reasons for the Italian presence here in this state.

Again there were the fishermen who established communities along the New South Wales coast, in Port Pirie in South Australia and Fremantle in Western Australia. You had a very famous linguist,

Raffaello Carboni, who played a significant role in the Eureka Stockade in 1854. And so when you look back historically, the Italian contribution is not just something that occurred in terms of development of this country and its unique culture in the last century. It has been with us over a long period of time.

But I want today to emphasise that culture is something that evolves. Our culture in Australia has evolved. It is a derived culture, from all of the people, from the various backgrounds who have settled in Australia and made Australia their home. Every other culture evolves and one of the things that I think an organisation like yours, particularly in terms of your research and your consideration of the Italian contribution, needs to keep in mind, is that sometimes this evolutionary process is something that is not well understood.

It presents a whole lot of challenges for the old and for the young. I suspect the Italian community grappled with it long ago, but there are groups in Australia from other backgrounds who are grappling with it right now.

It is in the context of the extent to which when many who have settled in Australia and been away from their birthplace for a long period of time go back, they find that the society they knew and left behind has changed very significantly. And yet those who are here sometimes find themselves maintaining a cultural heritage which is from that particular time frame, with attitudes that do not always reflect a sufficient capacity to understand the needs of young people and the wider culture in which they are operating.

I have not seen it, but I am told that there has been a recently released film, *Looking For Alibrandi*, a contemporary film of Italian culture and heritage in modern Australia. The reviewers suggest that it is another Australian coming-of-age story that promises to be, for that industry, a much-needed hit. It is based upon a book by the same name from a young Australian author of Italian origin, and it tells the story of Josie Alibrandi, a young second generation Italian schoolgirl. It embodies some of the strengths and challenges present in the Italian Australian community. On the website that depicts her family photograph album, we find the following words penned: culture embraces the beliefs, values, ideals, customs, languages, discourses, artistic products and symbols of a group. The expression of a people's culture can be found in their traditions, memories, treasured materials, artefacts which can create a sense of personal and group identity.

The reviewer Peter Thompson judges that the story is a contemporary portrait which must drive the detractors of our

multicultural society mad. In that sense, it is a reflection of the way in which cultural diversity that exists in Australia has been inordinately successful. Cultural forms in Australia such as film, literature, the arts, often endorse the view that Italians have had a rich and vibrant influence upon the Australian life and experience. In other words, that we have benefited enormously from it.

It is in that context, acknowledging that there are difficulties that we experience, the generational problems that I've noted, that I think we can nevertheless see what has happened here in Australia with a great deal of pride and enthusiasm. It is something that I believe the world is now starting to see about Australia.

We have had a concept here of acknowledging cultural diversity, acknowledging people's roots, their heritage, of incorporating it in the totality of our value system, subject to certain wider responsibilities associated with the rule of law in parliamentary democracy. But we have always been, notwithstanding the difficulties that emerge from time to time, inclusive; and public policy has required that we respond to that, and we have responded in a way which is supportive, uniquely supportive.

I have often stood before audiences around Australia and asked people to hold up their hands if they can tell me in which other countries you find multicultural agencies, organisations like the Migrant Resource Centres, foundations like the one Sir James chaired for many years, the Australian Multicultural Foundation, a grant-in-aid scheme to assist community based organisations, a comprehensive set of programs to assist people who are tortured and traumatised, who have come through a very generous refugee resettlement program, one which is, in terms of our size and population, the most generous in the world. And you can go to countries around the world and you will not find anything comparable with what we are doing here in Australia.

We had at a conference here in Melbourne not so long ago, the Deputy Head of the American Immigration Service, who commented on our adult migrant English program. We can always talk about the adequacy of resourcing and how the moneys are dispersed and we can get down to a level of detail about those sorts of issues, but no comparable programs of that type, organised nationally, are even in place in the United States of America.

So where does that lead me in terms of cultural diversity and what we've been able to achieve as a nation? We are an example of it and, by many, quite envied. We have something like 25 per cent of our population overseas born. Something in the order of 13 or 14 per cent are

from non-English speaking backgrounds. In comparison to other countries in the world, I think only Israel gets near us in terms of comparable numbers of overseas-born settlers.

One would think, with the diversity of backgrounds, that we would have enormous social problems as a result. Yet, comparatively, we have few. They are there, but comparatively we have few.

I have recently spent a lot of time in Europe, as well as in the Middle East. I talked to European governments about the unlawful movement of people, but also talked about the concepts of citizenship and inclusiveness and looked at how you cope with the significant change that immigration brings about. Most people do not appreciate today that in countries like Italy, in Germany, Ireland, they are now talking about immigration programs. They are talking about how to settle people from different cultural backgrounds. They are faced with movements that are both lawful and unlawful. They have a need to think about how people who do come lawfully are going to be settled. You have countries where reproductive rates have fallen to 1.1 and 1.2 per fertile couple. You have situations in which the skills base of many of these countries has significantly fallen.

It is quite extraordinary to be in a place like Germany, talking about how, for the first time, you might structure a program which is going to address their skill shortages, and what the implications of that might be and what they can learn from multicultural Australia. I have to say that Australian multiculturalism is not something that I should have to endorse to an audience like this, but I want you to know that it is something which the world is vitally interested in, that ministers want to talk about and will come to see, that it is a dynamic process and a continuing process.

I want to mention here the work of the Council for a Multicultural Australia. It has been formed as a response to the Government's consideration of the recommendations made by the National Multicultural Advisory Council in its report, *Australian Multiculturalism for a New Century, Towards Inclusiveness*. And the vision there of a united and harmonious society is something that the Government very much endorses. It is something that we will be continuing to promote, but it is something that will be important for this nation and this nation's future.

It is in that context that I want to talk to you for a moment about productive diversity and business partnerships and our engagement with the rest of the world. Our inclusiveness, of course, means that we have many people, from many backgrounds, and you are talking about

particularly those of Italian origins, who help us engage with the rest of the world. That engagement is something that in a sense we take for granted and do not note in the way in which we should.

Not many people appreciate that there are large numbers of Australians who leave Australia each year. We do not just have a migration into Australia, we have an emigration from Australia. And the larger proportion of those are people, in fact, born in Australia, they are not migrants going back, disappointed. They are, in fact, Australians who are able to engage with the rest of the world and who are able to do so very effectively.

If you look at the countries to which they go, sure a few of them go to the United Kingdom and the United States of America, but large numbers are going to Europe. Many are settling in Asia.

Even in my own family, I have a cousin who started an architecture degree in Sydney, at the University of New South Wales, finished it in Venice, has now settled in Rome and has been one of the people asked, amongst distinguished architects, to submit plans for the development of the new contemporary art gallery in the Villa Borghese. He has won international awards for his unique architectural interior designs – that being the area in which he has specialised.

I think most of us would find within our own families people who have engaged with the rest of the world, notwithstanding their backgrounds. I mean, my architect cousin is – if you want to use that term – Australian, who finds himself perfectly comfortable in learning what, for him, has been a new language and settling in an environment in which he is extraordinarily comfortable and proficient. And I think it is because of our engagement that that was possible.

Looking at the people that I often talk about, the President of the World Bank, at what they call the Australian Mafia in the United States – I don't know whether Joseph wants to pick up on that, at the heads of Coca-Cola, Ford and the Philip Morris company and you see that they are all Australians who have been able to take their skills to the rest of the world. And so what we have to see is that within our cultural diversity there is an enormous opportunity, and it is important for people in business to find innovative ways of using that diversity to expand their visions and their operations.

Now I think that is happening. I have spent some time in New Zealand and they only really look at Australia, while we find we are looking at the world. For our future and for our economic engagement, that is going to be absolutely crucial. For our own economy, we can make significant gains through successfully managing our diversity and

achieving what we call a diversity dividend. And during this next year, we'll be having a major conference, where the partnerships that we have formed with business, with the tertiary sector, to assist in diversity management and education, will be expanded; where we shall give people practical ways of leveraging their cultural diversity in order to make their organisations much more effective, not only in Australia at maximising their markets, but also in building effective international linkages.

Now I know that there are other challenges that this conference will be addressing. I think one of them of course will be in the area of the most challenging new issue for the Italian community here in Australia and that is the changing demographic make up.

Ageing is a significant issue. In the 1996 Census, 31 per cent of Italian-born persons in Australia were aged over 65 years. Now compare this to the general population where persons aged over 65 years make up only 12 per cent, and it is one of the reasons that my Department has been working closely with the Department of Health and Aged Care to promote the International Year for Older Persons within our broader multicultural environment.

Our involvement has been to highlight two mainstream health and aged care providers that need to be more inclusive in the way in which they deliver their policies and programs, and, of course, to encourage communities themselves to be more flexible in their approach to aged care services.

For similar reasons, my Department also took an active role in developing a national strategy for an ageing Australia. Now community consultations were held in relation to that strategy and we contacted also the Australia Institute of Health and Welfare to examine the issues concerning the financial independence of the ethnic aged and to look at their capacity to self provide.

The report resulting from this study, *Independence in Ageing*, is due to be launched later this year. Its aim is to provide policy-relevant information that is useful for policy makers in government departments, as well as for profit and non-profit organisations. The findings of the study will be provided to the Department of Health and Aged Care for consideration in the national strategy for an ageing Australia.

Now I want to conclude my remarks today by just dealing with one or two other issues which I think are important for the Italian community. One of the areas in which I was engaged in discussions when I visited Italy in March was in relation to the way in which we can more effectively provide encouragement to the young peoples of Italy

and Australia to be linked together. I had the opportunity of talking to Senator Colombo, the then Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, about working holiday arrangements.

I have been very keen to see working holiday-maker arrangements expanded well beyond the mere eight countries with which we have such agreements now, and my desire has been to conclude an agreement with Italy in relation to these arrangements and to institutionalise them in the same way that they have done with places like Canada, the United Kingdom, Korea, Japan, Malta, Ireland, Holland. They are the countries with whom we have had these agreements over a long period of time.

I have been successful in concluding a new agreement, the first new agreement in many years. With Germany I signed with my German counterparts a working holiday-maker agreement during the course of my visit.

I have had a commitment from the Italian Government that they will be looking very positively with a view to implementing these working holiday-maker arrangements on a genuine reciprocal basis. I emphasise those words very deliberately, because there are some who would be happy to have working holiday-maker agreements without reciprocity and reciprocity means that there have to be opportunities not only for young Italian people to come to Australia for 12 months and to work and to move throughout our community, but there have to be opportunities for young Australians to be able to take work and to be able to move freely within Italy and perhaps more broadly within Europe as a result of the implementation of agreements of this sort.

When you think about people-to-people linkages, when you think about the way in which you can bring the world together and develop and enhance understandings, it needs to be an effective two-way street.

And for those young people of Italian origin who have been born in Australia, the opportunity to go back and to stay for an extended period and to be able to engage in casual employment would be a very unique and special way of being able to re-establish once again, their understanding of their roots and their culture in a way that would not otherwise be available to them.

And so my efforts, on a bilateral basis, have been directed at giving young people here in Australia, as well as young people in Italy, a unique opportunity that has existed for young people from other parts of the world and which I think is very much needed for the purposes of renewal in our relationship now.

Now, in conclusion, I just want to reaffirm that the Government is committed very much to a multicultural Australia as I have outlined.

We are committed to implementing initiatives that will build upon those strengths. I hope that you will be as positive in your discussions about what we have been able to do here in Australia over time, that you will want to showcase to the world our success in these areas.

I think under each of the headings outlined in your objectives there are very special and unique opportunities for your new organisation to work on developing our cultural diversity dividend in a very positive way, not only for your community but for Australians as a whole.

And so I do look forward to hearing from you about the outcome of your search for the Italian Australian into the new millennium.

## The 'Roots and Heritage' Project

### *The Honourable Con Sciacca MP*

Firstly, I want to thank the organising committee for inviting me to address your inaugural conference not only as Federal Shadow Minister for Immigration, but also as an Italian migrant who has made Australia his home and is passionate about finding ways of retaining ties between our two wonderful countries while at the same time trying to make a worthwhile contribution that will last long after I have gone.

Secondly, I want to congratulate Rino Grollo and his executives for their vision in establishing the Italian Australian Institute, thus realising how important such an organisation can be for both Italy and Australia in maintaining close cultural and economic links between the two countries into the new millennium.

It is my sincere wish, as I am sure it is that of those attending this conference over the next few days to witness the establishment of a strong and vibrant organisation to mirror the very successful, influential and prestigious National Italian American Foundation in the United States.

I hope that the Italian Australian Institute can act as the catalyst for a truly national organisation where every Australian state is represented according to the proportion of Italian-Australians in that state.

In this speech, I do not want to talk politics – this is not the occasion for it and certainly not the forum – nor do I want to cover ground which has already been or will be covered by some of the other eminent speakers over the course of the next few days.

Rather, I want to explore some of the challenges facing Italian-Australians today whether they are first, second, third or fourth generation – namely, all those who share at least one great grand parent who was born in Italy. Around the World, some estimate this figure to be as high as 60 Million – the same as the current total population of Italy itself.

I want to outline part of the solution to these challenges by referring to a campaign that was started some 12 years ago by the Honourable Francesco Casati, a former MP in the Italian Parliament. Casati pioneered the idea of establishing a database tracing the Italian diasporas on a global scale to ensure the link between Italy and its emigrants - wherever they may be - is not only maintained, but actively traced, fostered and updated.

In 1988, as a newly elected MP to the Australian Federal Parliament and then President of the Italian-Australian Federal Parliamentary Friendship Group, I vigorously embraced this project which Casati named 'Radici e Retaggio' or 'Roots and Heritage'.

The 'Roots and Heritage' campaign at the time was endorsed at the highest levels of Italian and Australian politics, bureaucracy and business.

Just to give you an idea of the level of interest in the project, some of its main advocates – apart from its creator Casati – included former Australian Prime Minister Bob Hawke, former Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs and sometime Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti (with whom I discussed this project at length over breakfast in his private residence, in Rome in 1989), former President of Olivetti Cesare di Benedetti and the Directors General of the relevant Italian departments, charged with developing feasibility and comparative studies.

'Roots and Heritage' was a project ahead of its times and its reliance on the establishment of advanced databases and demographic computer modelling technology which was still in its infancy in those days - let alone the absence of the Internet – meant that the project was deemed too cumbersome and expensive to implement.

Accordingly, with the unfortunate loss of Francesco Casati's seat in the Italian Parliament, the campaign lost its Italian champion and thus failed to get off the ground.

Today, with the ease of research, global communication and present-day technology this project could have a real chance of becoming a reality if it is seriously adopted by the Italian authorities.

### Objectives of 'Roots and Heritage'

Casati designed the 'Roots and Heritage' campaign as a global exercise to firstly determine the number of Italians around the World, their origins, destinations, reasons for leaving Italy and successes overseas.

Naturally part of this phase entailed a detailed census of Italians and descendants of Italians living around the World.

Tracing an accurate map and establishing the main sources and destinations of Italian Migration flows over the past 100 years, would require an exchange of information between like minded organisations in those countries that received substantial numbers of Italian migrants, such as the United States, Australia, Canada, Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, just to name a few.

With a central database, based in Italy, information would be collected, analysed and disseminated around the World, forming a detailed and fascinating picture of Italian endeavours and achievements over a century.

Casati's next goal was to motivate descendants of Italians to undertake a journey into their own lives, tracing and researching their own roots and educating their children about the importance of maintaining and passing on regional culture, folklore and anecdotes.

Casati believed and I completely agree that people have an inherent need to trace their roots and origins. I believe it is essential for people to connect with their past and learn from the experiences, mistakes and triumphs of their ancestors.

The discovery of unknown origins and ties between people in different countries, from different backgrounds and speaking different languages was another one of Casati's aims in his proposal. To give you an example, how many Sicilians living in Australia speak only the Sicilian dialect? – In Sicily, fewer and fewer people know how to speak it in its pure form.

The same applies to the original dialects of many of Italy's regions. I believe it to be a great loss that the traditional languages of Italy, derived from hundreds of years of history, wars, invasions, conquests and travels could be lost and forgotten with the passing on of older generations.

In this respect, the emigrants who left Italy in the distant '30s, '40s and '50s and who have passed on these dialects to their children and grandchildren are among the remaining guardians of an invaluable national cultural asset.

Discovering relatives from our past is just as important in maintaining our links with Italy. For example, in 1995 when I was Australia's Minister for Veterans Affairs, I led a delegation of Australian war veterans to the site of the famous battle of El Alamein in Northern Africa.

During the tour, I visited the Italian war cemetery where fallen Italian soldiers, who fought against the Australians, were buried. In this building, I found a vault belonging to one Alfio Sciacca. I was taken aback and touched to find someone who most likely was a member of my extended family. I would have loved to have been able to tap into a database and learn his story, perhaps even call his relatives. The 'Radici e Retaggio' program, had it been a reality at that time would have allowed me to do just that.

Casati also realised the tangible benefits of such a program, its benefits for business, trade and information exchange. Italy is a World leader in so many areas: heavy industry, machinery, food production, medical technology, design and the list goes on.

A shared heritage is tantamount to a ready made contact, a nexus between our two countries. This is nothing new - I am sure that present here today are successful business people that have long standing relationships with Italian companies, producers and factories. Trading with people of similar backgrounds, language and experiences creates a synergy and a bond that goes beyond a mere commercial transaction.

In 1990 I founded the Australian-Italian Lawyers' Association for this very reason. I wanted to create a link between Australian lawyers of Italian origin and their Italian colleagues. This association still exists today and I am proud to say I am its founding patron.

Associations such as these are invaluable in a World where boundaries are increasingly pushed further, distances no longer matter and we often have to rely on personal contacts to establish trust, credibility and like-minded philosophies.

Under 'Roots and Heritage', I can see similar associations in fields as varied as medicine, engineering and academia but to name a few, being brought together from all over the World, with one common denominator - their links with Italy.

For similar reasons, Casati proposed the facilitation of 're-discovery & reunion' trips to and from Italy to reunite in particular descendants of Italian emigrants, from around the World who have never returned to the country of their ancestors. In many cases, there are families living across both sides of the World claiming the same surnames, relatives, cities and villages in Italy, but not even aware of each other's existence.

The last of Casati's list of aims was the project's ability to allow for more efficient and rational planning of social, cultural, tourism and economic programs between Italy and other emigrant destination countries.

As activity and understanding would increase between these countries, a detailed demographic map would be able to be established to plan and conduct economic and cultural exchanges.

Recently Italy legislated to create a single global overseas constituency, in other words, electoral districts outside of Italy, for the purpose of extending voting rights in Italian elections to Italian citizens living abroad.

Given that the Italian Government will have to eventually establish an accurate electoral roll of eligible voters around the World, such a

register will be an invaluable tool in setting up the database as proposed in the 'Roots and Heritage' program.

### Methodology

In 1989, when this idea was mooted and preparatory work undertaken, I had the pleasure, as previously mentioned, of meeting then Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs Giulio Andreotti for an extensive meeting where essentially we discussed this project at length.

Andreotti agreed to arrange a meeting of top Italian public servants to discuss the technical feasibility of the project in collaboration with international IT centres. At the same time, he agreed to obtain a copy of a report analysing a similar project undertaken by the Irish government to trace the roots of its emigrants to Australia. A project, which it was understood, had proven to be a success and which could serve as a useful precedent.

The Casati plan called for the establishment of a Joint Parliamentary Committee in Italy to discuss, fund and establish the program.

The question now is how do we further progress this idea given that Honourable Francesco Casati is no longer a member of the Italian Parliament?

I recently had the honour to meet the current Prime Minister of Italy, Mr Amato in Canberra, at a dinner hosted by my good friend the Italian Ambassador Giovanni Castellaneta. From my observations of Mr Amato, I believe that he would support this proposal. He is a very intelligent and educated man and would quickly see its benefits to Italy.

Ambassador Castellaneta has indicated that he would be pleased to arrange a meeting with the Prime Minister and myself in Italy, to discuss this matter. Accordingly, I would be delighted on my very next trip to Italy to advocate for the re-activation of the 'Roots and Heritage' program at such a meeting.

This is a big project, make no mistake, but I believe that if it becomes a reality it could prove to be of enormous value, not only to Italy but also to those countries like Australia where Italian emigrants and their descendants have made their new home.

Many of the one million Australians who like me are proud of their Italian heritage fear that their descendants are in danger of losing their links to the country of their ancestors, unless they are encouraged to be aware of their roots. The 'Roots and Heritage' program could be the means of achieving this objective.

Australian-Italians are the largest non - Anglo-Saxon immigrant group in Australia and how we co-operate in this program will ensure its success or otherwise.

I ask for your support for this project. Let this be one of the more positive, concrete and lasting outcomes of the conference.

## The National Italian American Foundation (NIAF)

*Joseph R. Cerrell, President of NIAF, USA*

I thank this distinguished group for inviting me to talk to you today about the National Italian American Foundation, or as we say NIAF, an organization for which I have been honored to serve as President since March of last year.

You may be aware that the NIAF has evolved into one of the most prominent, respected and influential ethnic organizations in the United States. In order to understand our success, it is first necessary to understand why this organization was created and how it meets the needs of approximately 25 million Americans of Italian descent, our nation's fifth largest ethnic group.

The estimated 5 million Italians who immigrated to America, predominantly in the first decade of the last century and predominantly from the Mezzogiorno, brought a unique heritage and culture. Yet, like many immigrants, they were not readily accepted by Americans and found comfort gathering in the Little *Italies* that became a fixture of America's urban landscape. They created thousands of small organizations and clubs with the major focus on helping each other and providing a social life for people who were a world away from their homeland, living now in a country that could not pronounce their names or understand their broken English. While the Little Italy neighborhoods have shrunk over the years, many of the organizations and clubs continued to prosper because they gave friends and families opportunities to practice their traditions. This was extremely important to an ethnic group that was slow to assimilate in America.

Many of these local Italian American organizations and clubs, a good 1,600 in fact, still exist today. Besides providing opportunities to celebrate a common heritage, some have taken on activities in their communities like scholarships, and colorful festivals and parades that benefit all in the community. But despite a strong presence in virtually every major U.S. city, Italian Americans neglected to establish a unified national voice to address their larger interests and concerns. As a result, Italian Americans were under-represented in the political and economic arenas of America. They were rarely given political appointments and remained largely shut out of the highest ranks of the corporate world, (with some notable exceptions such as A. P. Giannini with the Bank of

America and Lee Iacocca of Chrysler Motors). The NIAF was created just 25 years ago to address this situation and to establish a permanent presence for Italian Americans in our nation's capital, Washington, D.C.

Our initial strategy was to involve those Italian-American business and political leaders who were among the few that had succeeded in spite of, rather than because of, their heritage. We cultivated Italian Americans elected to the U.S. Congress and organized them into a working delegation. Having the prestige of the Congressional Italian-American delegation as part of the NIAF made it easier for us to attract a handful of Italian-American corporate leaders who, candidly, may not have previously found a good reason to associate themselves with their heritage.

Only a year after our founding in 1975, the Italian-American members of Congress helped the NIAF attract President Gerald Ford and then candidate Jimmy Carter to our first national gala dinner in Washington in 1976. Since that time, every U.S. president and major presidential candidate has attended this annual event. Today, our NIAF gala attracts more than 3,100 people from across the U.S. and abroad. It is the most successful annual event in Washington. Last year we raised \$2.6 million to support the NIAF education and scholarship program as well as our national headquarters in a restored mansion in Washington. We have been fortunate to be joined by President Bill Clinton, First Lady Hillary Clinton, Italy's Foreign Minister Umberto Dini and U.S. Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia.

To ensure our growth and influence over the past 25 years, the NIAF established itself as the clearing house for Italians in America. We have created a database of Italian Americans in entertainment, medicine, law, sports, government, arts and education as well as the most comprehensive list of Italian Americans who fill the top ranks of our nation's corporations. I am proud to say that, unlike 25 years ago, today Italian Americans are rapidly assuming leadership roles in America's largest companies. Our Board of Directors includes the Chairman of the New York Stock Exchange Richard Grasso, as well as the CEOs of some of our nation's Fortune 1000 companies. Their participation in the foundation is striking evidence that the NIAF has become a magnet for America's most successful Italian Americans. They now see the value in being part of a powerful network and also want to re-connect with a heritage that many were forced to downplay during their journey up the corporate ladder.

As we continue to attract and cultivate America's most successful Italian Americans, we also recognize that unless we can encourage our

children and grandchildren to understand and cherish our great heritage, the future for the NIAF and all Italian-American organizations is in jeopardy. For this reason, the NIAF places a major emphasis on attracting young people who have become the fastest growing segment of our membership. This year we will spend more than \$1 million in scholarships and grants. We also have an ambitious White House and Congressional internship program, a mentor program, youth retreats, career and job fairs and much, much more. I encourage you here in Australia, who share our wonderful heritage, to make a serious commitment to your youth if you plan to be a viable organization into the next century.

The success of any organization also depends on its ability to assess the needs and interests of its supporters in an ever-changing environment. To address this need, one major NIAF Year 2000 project is an Italian-American national survey. It will feature a variety of Italian-American focus groups to help us learn the views of Italian Americans on leading social, cultural and political issues.

It is estimated that there are 120 to 150 million people around the world who trace their roots to Italy. There are major concentrations in North and South America, throughout Europe and certainly here in Australia, where I understand Italian-Australians represent one of the largest ethnic groups. We all share a commitment to family and the love of a heritage that has given the world Michelangelo, Dante, Galileo, Pavarotti, Toscanini, Montessori, Agnelli, Gucci, Armani, DiMaggio, Sinatra and many, many others who have offered the gift of their talent to the world.

Gaetano Cipolla delivered a lecture in 1962 at St. John's University's Italian Club. And it was written for our young people who, under daily bombardment of very offensive and false characterizations of the Italian contribution, need to be made aware of the enviable, and in many respects, unparalleled, record of achievements of Italians.

And what would the world be like today if Italy had never existed:

And without Italy and Italians, there would be no Rome. Without Rome, where would all roads lead to?

And there'd be no Venice. No Gondolas, and no Marco Polo. Shakespeare's Merchant of Venice would be homeless.

And there'd be no Naples. Contemplate for a moment, the world without pizza and Sophia Loren.

And there'd be no St. Francis, no San Francisco.

And there'd be no Leonardo da Vinci and no Mona Lisa.

And without Italy there would be no violins, no pianos, no cellos.

And without Italians there would be no Vivaldi, no opera, no Monteverdi, no Rossini.

And there'd be no Verdi, no Rigoletto, no Madama Butterfly by Puccini (who made every person feel good), no Pagliacci.

And without Italy there would be no spaghetti, no ice cream.

And there'd be no tomato sauce.

And without Italy and Cristoforo Columbo, would Italian-Americans exist or Venezuela (Little Venice) or even Columbia University.

And without Italians we would be missing two months out of our calendar, July and August named after Julius Caesar and Caesar Augustus.

And without Italians we would have to eat without a fork.

And without Italians there'd be no Cinderella, no Pinocchio, no Casanova, no Federico Fellini.

And where would political science be without Machiavelli, author of The Prince.

As we begin a new millennium, the National Italian American Foundation commits itself to working more closely with those who share our heritage no matter what country they, their parents or grandparents adopted. We will gladly share this knowledge and experience which we have developed over the years in the hope that Italian organizations throughout the world might also enjoy the prosperity that has blessed our foundation.

I extend an invitation for your leadership to join us in Washington this October as we celebrate our 25th anniversary. Our gala will include a performance by famed tenor Andrea Bocelli as well as the attendance of President Bill Clinton. We will also likely have the traditional attendance of the presumed presidential candidates, Vice President Albert Gore and Texas Governor George W. Bush.

Once again, I thank you for inviting me to address you today at this very special conference. The outstanding list of speakers and attendees is a striking example of the strides Australians of Italian descent have made in this very remarkable country.

Thank you and best wishes for a most successful conference.

# Day One Session Two

## Workshop 1 Australia Italia Trade and Commerce

*Bruno Mascitelli*  
*Sam Capuana*  
*A.A. De Fina*  
*Carolynne Bourne*

## Workshop 2 Preservation of Italian Heritage and Culture in Australia

*John Gatt-Rutter*  
*Laura Mecca & Lorenzo Iozzi*  
*John Hall*  
*Madilina Tresca*  
*Bruno Spiller*  
*Piero Genovesi*

## Workshop 3 Italian Australian Arts and Culture

*Maria Tence*  
*Cristina Motta-Fenton*  
*Diana Chessell*  
*Francesca Musico*  
*Marie Louise Catsalis*

## Workshop 4 Information Exchange and the Media

*Nino Randazzo*  
*Manuela Caluzzi*  
*Paola Niscioli*  
*Claudio Paroli*

# Australian-Italian Trade Relations

*Bruno Mascitelli*

## The Italian economy into the new millenium

The Italian economy is the 6th largest economy in the world recording a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) value of \$US 1,195 billion and is part of the G7 group of large economies. Italy contributes to world GDP around 3.7% as a country alone and according to forecasts provided by the Italian government, the Italian economy is expected to grow by about 2.5% in the year 2000-2001. One of the key drivers in the Italian economy has been its strong exports, which it is renowned for.

Beset by moments of real economic difficulty in the past, Italy is one of the founders of the European Union and is today also a member of the Euro group, monetary union of 11 nations. Italy has regained much credibility after years of crisis and difficulty both economically and politically. This regaining of credibility has been noticeable especially over the last 5-6 years as it has become a major contributor to world affairs.

But Italy continues to face economic difficulties especially through its lack of competitiveness and continual need for further market reforms. Italy ranks 30th in economic competitiveness as opposed to Australia which is 12th. To address many of Italy's economic weaknesses, Italy has in place an economic reform agenda, which continues to this very day. Areas that Italy needs to address include high public debt and high levels of unemployment especially in its southern regions. The table below highlights these changes and the results from the reforms carried out by Italian government.

### An economic balance sheet for Italy

	1997	1998	1999	2000*	2001*
Population	57.4	57.5	57.6	57.8	57.9
GDP (Trl Lira)	1,975	2,058	2,111	2,164	2,218
GDP (\$A million)	1,580	1,646	1,688	1,731	1,774
Real GDP growth (%)	1.5	1.4	1.3	2.2	2.6
Exports	404.2	476.8	478.2	501.6	528.0
Imports	352.3	451.8	459.5	475.9	495.1
Inflation (%)	1.8	1.7	1.6	2.0	2.0
Government debt (%)	120.4	118.2	116.1	111.1	108.5
Unemployment	12.2	11.9	11.1	11.0	10.8

Source: Economist Intelligence Unit, 2000, \* forecast  
Exchange rate Lit. 1,250 to \$A.

The Italian and the Australian economies are different yet share some similarities. The two markets reflect different sizes of their respective markets both in population and Gross Domestic Product (GDP) size. At a growth level Australia has been growing at a stronger level of 3.9% while the Italian economy has been growing at slower levels more comparable with its European neighbours (2.5%).

Gross Domestic Product per head of population shows that the resources and wealth of its citizens are equally spread in the Italian and Australian economies. Both economies produce approximately \$US 21,000 per capita. Inflation in the two countries share world trends in inflation with the two economies experiencing below 2% inflation while on the unemployment front Australia has a much better and lower rate of unemployment of 6.9 percent while Italy remains at European levels of around 11 percent.

#### A comparison – Australia – Italy (1999)

	Australia	Italy
Population	18.7	57.6
GDP (\$US billion)		410 1,195
Real GDP growth (%)	3.9	1.3
GDP per head (\$US ,000)	21.6	20.4
Inflation (%)	1.8	1.6
Government debt (%)	12	116.1
Unemployment %	6.9	11.1

Source: Economist Intelligence Unit, 2000

#### The Italian economic reform agenda

The Italian economic reform agenda has been dominated by the need to bring public debt down and under control, a product of a blow out in the 1970's and especially in the 1980's. This has been the priority of the Italian economy since the mid 1990's from the imposition of the Maastricht Criteria for European Monetary System entry. However, not even in the boldest of scenarios will Italy get this figure significantly down for at least two decades. Nonetheless the debt is coming down and from the figures available it would appear that the Italian government has made progress in this field. In 1997 public debt was 123% of gross domestic product while the figures provided for the end of 1999 indicate that the figure is 111% of gross domestic product. Much of this debt reduction has come from sales and privatisations of assets and traditional government owned companies. Italy has now "out privatised" even Britain since the early 1990's in terms of asset sales. The privatisations have included many traditionally held State industries including the Italian defence industry, banks, roads,

telecommunications and other areas. The privatisation of Telecom Italia in 1998 was one such example.

As a demonstration that there is confidence in many of the reforms in the Italian economy foreign investment in Italy doubled in 1999 from the amount invested in 1998. Historically Italy always had foreign investment as a barometer of its performance and how it was being perceived by the outside world. Increased foreign investment in 1999 can only be seen as sign of positive perception by foreign investors.

Many know how poor Italian banks have functioned in their operations and service provision. One of the targets of reform has been the banking industry through a series of mergers and operations efficiency drives. The number of banks in the last 5 years have more than halved in what has been the biggest shakeup in the history of the Italian banking industry. Italian banking has had to contend with not only preparing itself for foreign competition with non-Italian banks opening up operations but also the Euro challenge as well. While there is a long way to go there has also been a lot of progress.

Italy is still tainted with having an excessively rigid, regulated and bureaucratic market with too little service driven priorities. Liberalisation of the Italian market is high on the agenda of the Italian government and the rigid Italian trading practices are being dismantled piece by piece. This may well take time but that this is occurring is undeniable. Italy's pension and social security system is understood to be unsustainable and is being put under scrutiny for immediate and deep-going change. All of these reforms are however of a wrenching nature and will need time and patience for results to emerge.

For all of its weakness, Italy does not want to be left out of the on-line economy and the attention being paid to having a computer literate and on-line economy has become a priority.

### The Italian political agenda into the 21st Century

Political instability in Italy is still a continual reality and that continues to create concern. There has been much talk about political reform but results and outcomes are slow in coming. Italy has now reached its 58th government presided by new Prime Minister, but veteran politician, Giuliano Amato. The latest political crisis was provoked by very poor results which the D'Alema led centre-left coalition received in regional elections. D'Alema took the results as a referendum of his government's performance and its poor electoral performance prompted his resignation. The coalition wanted to see out

the mandate until the next elections in 2001 and saw their best hope through the Premiership of Giuliano Amato.

But irrespective of the performance of the Amato government, the next national elections in Italy will probably see a victory for the centre-right coalition led by Silvio Berlusconi. One of the changes in Italian politics of recent times has been the alternate political coalitions such that Italy will now be governed either by centre left or centre right governments. This comes after decades of rule from the now defunct Christian Democracy rule with the Italian Communist Party in permanent opposition.

Electoral reform is believed to be key to future stable governments, but only time will tell. The “Tangentopoli” anti-corruption trials brought some transparency and accountability, but many things remain unchanged.

Most importantly political conflict in Italy is no longer ideological but over the “administration of things”. The end of the “Cold War” has changed the Italian political panorama in which the turbulent periods of the 1960’s, 70’s and 80’s are a thing of the past.

#### Australian business perception of Italy

Australian businesses do not know a great deal about Italy and what they do know is generally stereotyped misinformation. By and large what represents Italy is done so through poor emblems of this country’s economy through what could be called the three “Ps” - Pisa, the pizza, & the Pope. To some extent perceptions of Italy emerge from the Italo-Australian business community which can be interesting but often incorrect.

As a business environment and economy, Italy gets very little mention in the media, is rarely seen from a European vantage point and in most cases is not recognised for what it is. Generally it is measured by the more evident aspects of its “perceived economy” consumer products, food, clothing and footwear! Yet the number one export item from Italy to Australia is building materials and Italy’s number one world export item is machinery and transport equipment!

In terms of doing business in Italy, Australian business thinks it is very hard (and too far) to export to Italy. There is often the sense that business for Australian products is best conducted from “user friendly” Britain, the “bridge-head” for Australian products and services in Europe. More often than not Italy is not even on the “radar screen” of Australian business. Yet when the dust dies down, inexplicably, Italy is

Australia's second largest export destination for Australian products in Europe.

At an institutional level Australian export assistance in Europe and Italy has declined over the last decade or so. Representation has declined, with fewer and fewer resources available and more and more payment for assistance and consultation. Australian business is more and more on its own in doing business in Europe and Italy. From a private standpoint, Australian business has neither the strength nor the presence to set up semi-permanent institutions such as the Australian Chamber of Commerce or something similar in which it could create networking and contact links.

In spite of its successes, Australian businesses remain very weak in mastering the tools for doing business in Italy. There is constant misunderstanding of Italian cultural protocol and norms, business culture and language. The idea that the English language is the all encompassing passport is not good enough when competition is so ruthless and every bit of preparation and understanding of the market is vital. On the other hand Australian niche industry specialists and experts that have conducted market research into trading conditions in Italy are often successful in their export endeavours.

As teachers of business in the Italian context, we are exposed on a daily basis to the expressions of perceptions of Italy and Italian business by our students. We assume they are a genuine and truthful representation of the community as a whole. We are certainly disturbed by what we hear primarily by its emptiness and misunderstandings. That this perception be addressed is important for the sake of the future managers and entrepreneurs who will be carrying out business in Europe and in Italy.

### Italian business perception of Australia

To the Italian, Australia is seen as the country of the clean, green and natural beauty. In any snapshot you get from the Italian businessman you will hear that Australia will have kangaroos, Ayers Rock and a view of the Sydney Harbour. In more ways Australia is better seen as a tourist mecca than a powerful economy in the South East of the globe.

The slogan of Australia as the springboard to the Asian markets has never been exploited in Italy. Italy certainly knew that Australia was a provider of primary resources, wool especially given the strong exports of Australian wool to Italy. This was well known.

It did not escape the attention of Italian business that Australia is very influenced by Britain and the US both in a political and economic sense. The results of the recent referendum on the Republic was presented in Italy as “Australia choses the Monarchy”. In a business sense Italian business believes that in tender choices, especially where the government is concerned, there is not a level playing field. The field is tilted slightly to the English speaking countries.

The Olympic Games without a doubt has provided a very public and effective profile of Australia for what it is. In some respects some of Australia’s strengths have appeared on the TV screens of Italian homes showing hi-tech and sophisticated markets worth pursuing.

Some items have grabbed the attention of the Italian market and have become household items. Some of Australia’s beverages such as Foster Lager have become popular, The “Dry as a Bone” oilskin coat became a popular garment in many of the Italian cities in the 1990’s and was immediately identified with Australia.

#### Why would Australian companies export to Italy?

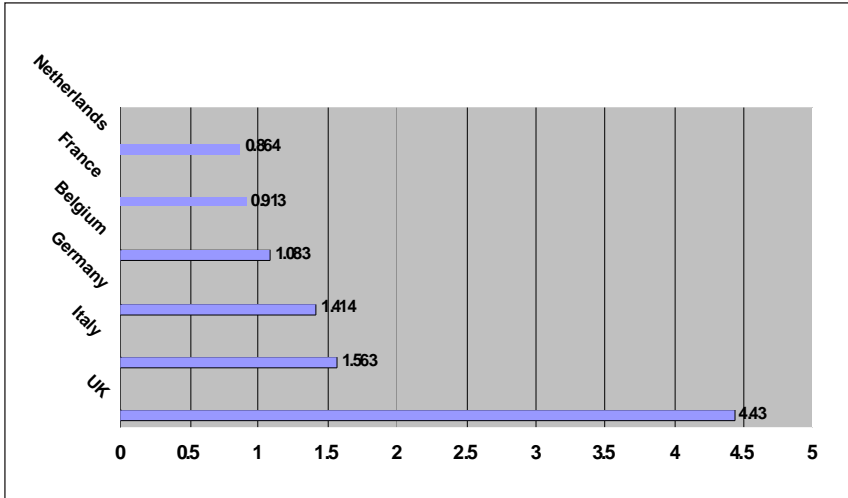
As we have said Italy is the 6th largest economy in the world and therefore has the size, sophistication and the concentrated market to be attractive for an Australian business. Moreover Italy has a strong disposable income and the will to spend it. Italy has shown itself to be open to products with quality, style and design and where Australia can meet some of these standards, then there are good omens for their success. Italy is known to have good distribution networks both nationally and throughout Europe. Most importantly Italy is a part of the European Union (Euro Group) which is providing enormous cost benefits to all companies trading in Europe.

Most importantly the Italian economy has embarked on an economic reform agenda which will improve Italy’s performance and competitiveness.

#### Australian exports to Italy

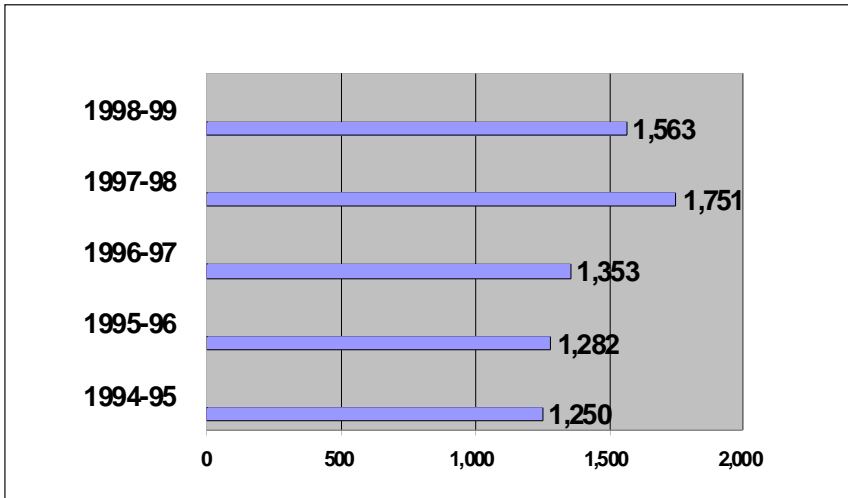
In 1998/99 Australia exported to Italy the total value of \$A156 billion in goods and services. This value was slightly down on the previous years amount of \$A175 billion. Most of this decline was recorded in lower value sales of wool as a result of lower wool prices and not as a result of lower volume sales.

European destinations for Australian exports 1998/99 (in billion SA)



Source: Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade, 1999

Australian exports to Italy 1994-99 (\$A '000's)



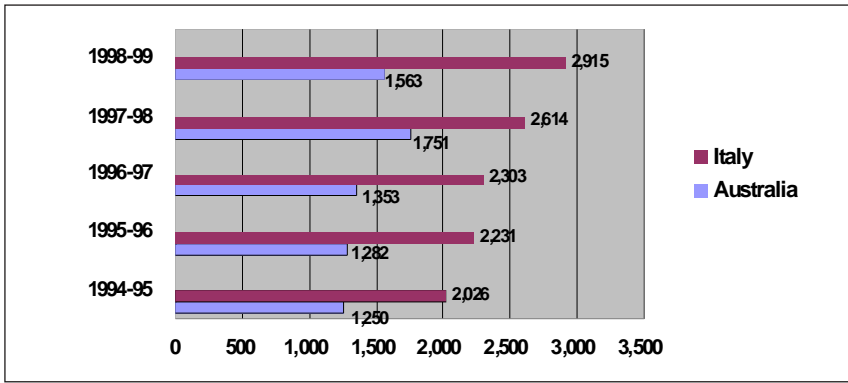
Source: Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade, 1999

Although there is too little known about the Italian market by the Australian exporter, Italy is Australia's second largest export market in Europe after the UK. This is a surprise to many. Clearly this position is largely explained by the strong wool and leather sales to textile processing Italy. After the UK and Italy, Germany, Belgium and France follow in terms of Australian exports to the European destinations.

Balance of Trade Australia-Italy

The balance of trade between the two countries has been heavily in favour of Italy with increasing over the last year 1998-99. While Australian exports to Italy have increased by around 25% between the years 1994-1999, Italian exports to Australia in the same period have increased by nearly 45%. This has created an imbalance of more than SA1 billion. This can be from the chart below.

Balance of trade Australia-Italy (\$A billion)

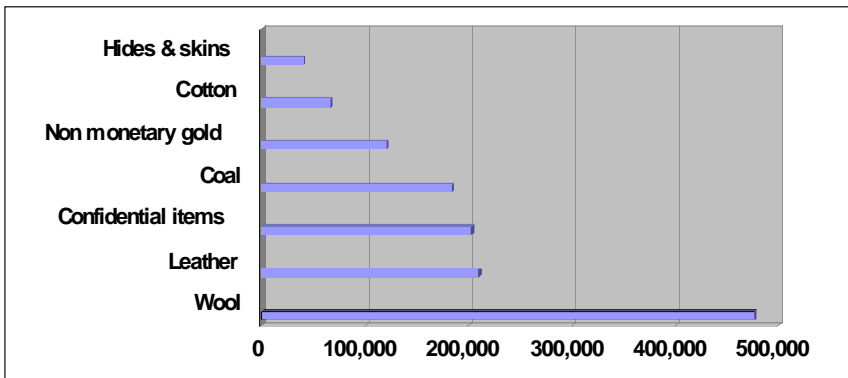


Source: Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade, 1999

Wool contributed SA476 million of the total exports to Italy in 1998-99. This equalled approximately 30% of Australia’s total exports to Italy. The top 7 export items covered 80% of all exports to Italy. The items included were:

Wool, Leather, Confidential items, Coal, Non-monetary Gold, Cotton and hides and skins.

Major Australian export items to Italy 1998-99 (\$A ‘000’s)



Source: Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade, 1999

Successful exports to Italy in the non-traditional sector

Of recent some growth export sectors have been:

- Transport equipment
- Processed food
- Pigments & paints
- Professional & scientific equipment

Australia exports respectable amounts in:

- Ships and boats
- Telecommunications
- Information Technology & software

Some of the Australian exporters success stories:

- Bradmill - stretch cotton denim
- Roma Foods - processed food
- ERG - ticketing system for local transport
- Brambles - document handling systems
- South Corp - wine
- Australian P& O - Transport services
- Orbital Engine - automotive components
- Village Road Shows - entertainment
- Plessey Australia - radar antennas
- Cash Converters - retain service
- Gold Mines of Sardinia - minerals

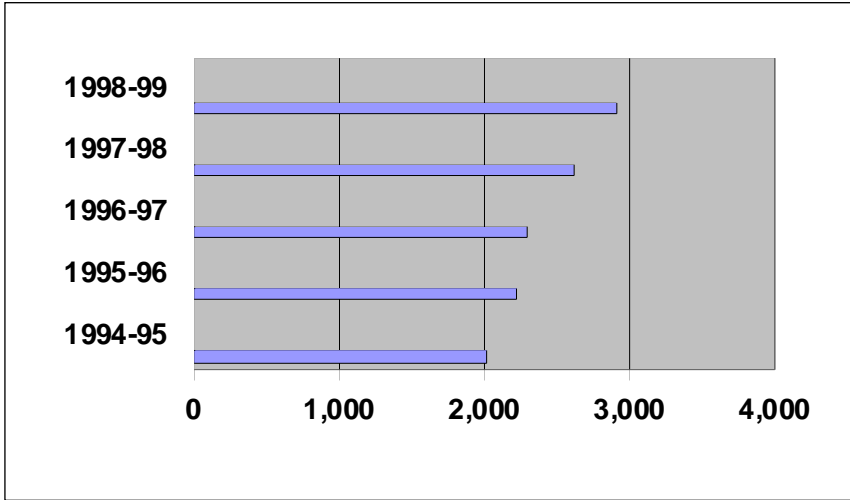
Many others of long standing including Qantas, ADI, Faulding, Fosters etc.

Italian exports to Australia

Italian exports to Australia are worth almost \$A3 billion (\$A 2,915,984). Italian exports to Australia are both highly diversified and are primarily value-added products with a high component of labour input. The key products are in building construction materials, footwear, furniture, specialised machinery and household equipment.

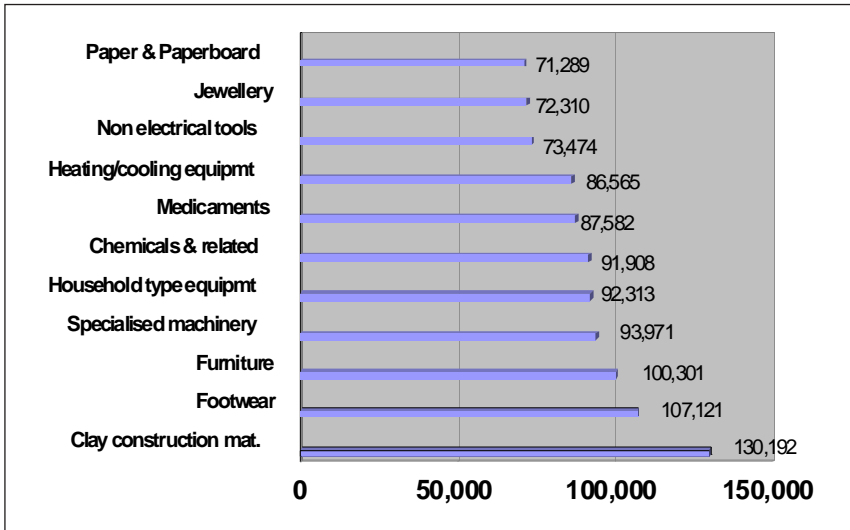
In addition many Italian exports, based on the product exported, have a high component originating from the prominent Industrial Districts that exist in Italy.

Italian exports to Australia 1994-1999 (\$A 000's)



Source: Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade, 1999

Italian Exports to Australia in \$A 000's (1998/99)



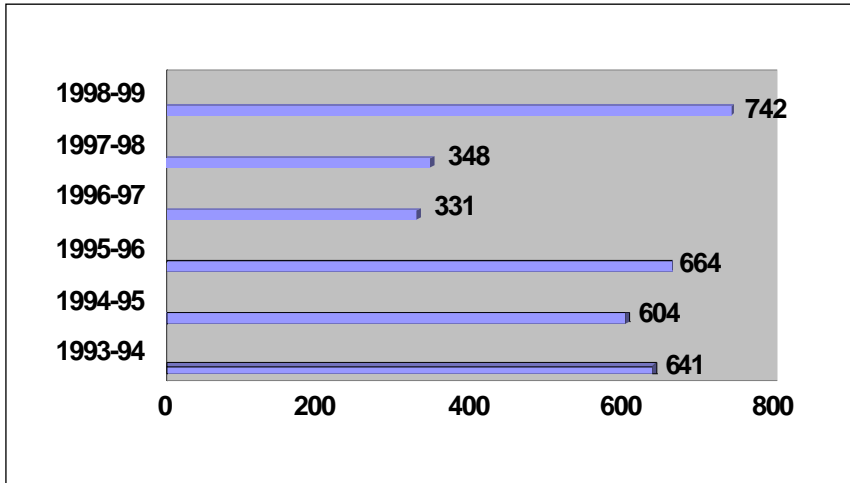
Source: Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade, 1999

The Italian investment picture

Italy has not been a major player in terms of foreign outward investment be it in the world or in Australia. In 1997 it provided around 1.6% of total world foreign investment, a very small amount compared to the share of exports its provides. In addition Italy's contribution to foreign investment has been declining.

Given the strong presence of Italian exports to Australia, it would be expected that there would be a strong investment presence. This, as we have subsequently found out, is actually untrue. Italy invested in Australia less than 0.06 of total Australian investment in 1998. In 1998 Italy's investment increased to \$A 742 million, a pittance compared to its comparable partners.

#### Italian Investment into Australia (\$A million)



Source: Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade, 1999

#### Where do Australian and Italian exporters go for assistance?

For Australian exporters:

- The Australian Trade Commission (Austrade).
- Milan - Australian Export Hotline
- State government departments.
- State government European offices
- Chambers of Commerce, eg Melbourne.

For Italian exporters:

- Italian Trade Commission (Italy & Aust)
- Chambers of Commerce - Australia
- Embassy and Consulates

#### Australia-Italian trade opportunities missed?

It is pretty much established that there have been numerous missed opportunities for both countries to have better utilised but which were not. In both cases there might have been valid reasons but the hard reality is that the possibilities for closer cooperation were not taken. Why?

Both countries have been distracted with changing world environment and regional needs. Australia has been involved in its own realignment both in the Asian region as well as re-establishing ties with so-called traditional allies. Italy with its frenetic attempts to enter and then remain in the Euro group of 11 nations has been strongly involved. In some respects both countries have been distracted from the maintenance of this bi-lateral relationship.

In many respects Italy's use of Australia as a springboard to Asia has been poorly utilised and exploited. While the slogan gained the attention of the trade media and Italian government, industry could not see the immediate abilities of accessing this policy. Italy's trading in Asia was very limited and the use of Australia for this strategy would be limited as a medium.

On the other hand Italy as a springboard into Europe for Australia was also under-exploited and in fact rarely mentioned. The only sign that this was occurring was that during the early-middle 1990's Italy overtook Germany as Australia's second largest export market in Europe.

From the Italian standpoint, the Olympic Games in Sydney could have been better exploited by Italy or so it would appear. Italy prepared no special agency, no special promotion facility, no special attention towards this event for promoting their presence in Australia. Australia, has already hired a consultant in Athens to assist Australian business to sell and promote Australian goods and services for the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens. There are also the inter Olympics of 2006 in Turin. What could this mean for Australian industry in terms of its promotion in Italy?

One of the failings from the Australian side has been the inability of Australia to lever more on its resident Italo-Australian migrant population especially for promoting itself in Italy. In a recent article entitled "Cultural cringe impedes success in Europe", the article makes this point across all the European immigrant communities in Australia: "Most agree that Australia should be doing more. Australians are not making the most of their 'non-threatening' status, or the country's diverse migrant base, which provides many cultural and language ties to Europe." (The Australian, 18 February 2000)

There needs to be a sense of relationship creation over the long term. There has been too much emphasis on short term results in terms of investment proposals and projects. Both countries have reduced trade promotion activities and resources in their respective markets.

Back in 1996 the governments of Australia and Italy established the Italian-Australian Business Leaders Forum. But this forum has not made many breakthroughs. It has produced too few initiatives in terms of common trade outcomes and created poor investment promotion proposals for both countries to become involved in.

Knowledge about each other's market and country could not be said to have made dramatic steps forward. Moreover research and studies on Australian - Italian trade have been wanting and we find ourselves today talking about issues and relations commercially which lack scientific research and analysis.

### Where to now?

What holds for the future of Australian – Italian trade relations? The relationship is in need of stimulation and serious thinking. The existing Business Leaders' Forum, an initiative of some years ago, requires new projects of common interest, which do not place tangible export outcomes as necessary successful benchmarking. There is the need for the common objective to become relationship building where both sides have something to gain.

In addition the search for common programs which strengthen language and business knowledge of each other is of importance. This has suffered enormously over the last

decade and needs to be addressed. There is a need for scientific research on how the two business communities can collaborate further, locate opportunities, joint ventures and consortiums.

Italian entrepreneurs need to be provided the positive facts about investing in Australia. This requires research and identifying opportunities which will allow Italy's synergy to fit Australia's economic strengths and weakness.

There is also a need to encourage Australian investment in Italy which is being strongly promoted in Italy at this moment. Here too what is needed is to provide Australian companies with opportunities that exist in Italy investment.

Australian trade would benefit from stronger trade facilitator representation in Italy. Where possible this would be complimented by establishing networking Chambers of Commerce in the Italian commercial centres.

# Australia / Italy Trade and Investments

*Sam Capuana*

## Preview

Australia's relations with Italy lie predominantly with migration and commerce. Whilst this relationship is mature, there remains significant growth potential, particularly in the trade and investment area.

Australia's trade with Italy began to flourish in the post-World War II era, when Italian products were imported by Italian migrants to meet the needs of Australia's fast-growing Italian community.

Australia has been enriched by the skills, crafts and style brought by Italian migrants. Industries which began to grow and flourish as a result of the new Italian migrant workforce included:

- Construction
- Food production
- Agriculture

Australians of Italian background now represent the third largest community group after the English and the Irish.

## Current Observations

From these origins, Australia's trade with Italy has grown significantly. Australia is Italy's second largest export market in the European Union and fourteenth world-wide. Conversely, Italy is Australia's third largest source of imports from the European Union, and tenth largest world-wide.

The bulk of the trade between Italy and Australia continues to lie in merchandise trade (refer to graph overleaf). During 1998/99 Australia's imports from Italy totaled \$2.196 billion, with Australia's exports to Italy amounting to \$1.562 billion.

- Major imports from Italy include:
  - Industrial Machinery Equipment & Parts
  - Electrical Machinery & Parts
  - Apparel & Clothing accessories
  - Medical & Pharmaceutical products
  - Building Materials
  - Road Vehicles
  - Footwear
  - Food Products

- Major Australian exports to Italy include:
  - Textile Fibres & Waste
  - Leather & Skins
  - Iron & Steel
  - Commodities
  - Coal, Coke & Briquettes

Australia's imports from Italy tend to be valued-added or finished goods, whilst Australia's exports to Italy tend towards raw materials or partially processed goods.

As demonstrated in the graph, Australia's merchandise trade deficit with Italy has widened considerably in the past five years. Major factors include:

- Substantial efforts by Australian importers to secure distribution rights and successfully market Italian products to the Australian market.
- Italian products now appealing to the Australian community at large, rather than being limited to Australia's Italian migrant community.

Manufacturing is the main strength of the Italian economy, accounting for approximately three-quarters of total exports worldwide.

Small and medium-sized companies are the backbone of the Italian economy. They are supported by a network of associations which lobby to promote their interests, as well as a large number of smaller financial institutions, which have historically been created with the purpose of supporting local industry.

Services traded between countries are dominated by tourism, which continues to grow strongly – especially of Italians visiting Australia. In 1998, exports of services to Italy totaled \$192 million, with imports of services reaching \$408 million.

Such has been the importance of trade between the two countries, that in February 1997 a Joint Declaration of Trade and Economy was issued, entitled "Australia & Italy in the 21st Century." Under the Declaration, a Cultural and Economic Committee was established to assist in the development of relations between the countries. Industries which were identified for potential growth in trade include:

- Telecommunications and Information Technology
- Medical and Diagnostic Equipment
- Environmental Technology
- Nautical
- Woodworking Machinery
- Construction Equipment & Building Materials

- Machine Tools
- Agroindustrial Equipment & Machinery
- Food Processing Equipment

### Foreign Direct Investment

Whilst merchandise trade continues to make up a large part of the Australia-Italy relationship, Foreign Direct Investment, especially in recent times, has played an ever-increasing role.

Italian Foreign Direct Investment in Australia now totals approximately \$1 billion. Major Italian corporates in Australia:

- |                            |                 |
|----------------------------|-----------------|
| - Fiat                     | - Parmalat      |
| - Olivetti                 | - Bertolli      |
| - Pirelli Cables Australia | - Ferrero       |
| - Finmeccanica             | - New Holland   |
| - Alenia                   | - Nuovo Pignone |

One of the largest Italian investments in Australia is from Parmalat, which since 1996 has acquired a number of major dairy producers and whose South East Asia headquarters are located in Brisbane. As a result, it is estimated that Parmalat now controls approximately 23% of the Australian milk market.

The Parmalat investment into Australia follows the current approach of “think globally, act locally.” This strategy provides for multinationals to acquire existing entities in the local marketplace which already have an established brand and market share (in the Parmalat case Pauls Limited), rather than starting up their own operation using methods which have not yet been proven in the local market. Benefits of such a strategy include:

- Having an existing market share and branding.
- Having access to local talent which has expertise and experience in dealing with the local market.
- Providing the multinational with the opportunity to discreetly introduce its own brand, giving customers an opportunity to become accustomed to such changes.

It is hoped that this strategy will provide an impetus for further investment by Italian multinationals into Australia. Whilst many Italian firms have operated successful start-up subsidiaries in Australia (especially manufacturers), it is important to note that Italian service industries have not been as successful.

A large reason for the lack of success in the service industries is the fact that Italian service firms such as banks and insurance companies have not been able to deliver and provide services which are more

acceptable to the local market – an important factor when competing with the customer service driven local firms. Adopting the “think globally, act locally approach,” a Joint Venture with or acquisition of a local institution would have possibly yielded more positive results.

Interestingly, Australian Foreign Direct Investment in Italy totaled approximately \$1.83 billion in June 1998, ranking fourteenth in terms of destinations of Australian Foreign Direct Investment. Major Australian companies with Italian investments include:

- Qantas
- Brambles
- TNT
- Woolmark

As discussed, the balance of trade between the two countries remains in Italy’s favour. Indeed, Italy is recognised for its favourable trade balance with the rest of the world, whilst Australia continues to run considerable current account deficits.

Two important factors in the Italian export drive are government assistance, as well as the support of local financial institutions.

Manufacturers are able to raise funds from Italian financial institutions against confirmed orders. The financial institution discounts the value of the order, with the net proceeds of which are then advanced to the manufacturer to produce the goods. The bank is then repaid when subsequent payment from the buyer is received. Australian financial institutions, however, have more stringent lending requirements, and are not as likely to raise funds against non-property security.

Furthermore, the Italian Government provides assistance to Italian export industries by underwriting a large proportion of exports, thus eliminating the substantial credit risk associated with selling to foreign countries.

Nevertheless, whilst the Italian private sector is considerably leaner than its Australian counterpart, it is important to note that this relationship is considerably reversed when looking at the public sectors.

As per the table below, Italy’s current account surplus ensures that its foreign debt in relative terms remains low. However the converse is true for Australia’s foreign debt, with the current account deficit placing an upward pressure on foreign borrowings. Nevertheless, public debt as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product stands at over 6 times the level of the Australian public debt.

	Italy	Australia
% of Foreign Debt on GDP	2.3%	38.6%
% of Public Debt on GDP	115.3%	17.8%

Conclusions

Statistical data confirms beyond a doubt that the level of investment by Italian manufacturing and service industries in Australia is well below an acceptable level if a number of factors are taken into account.

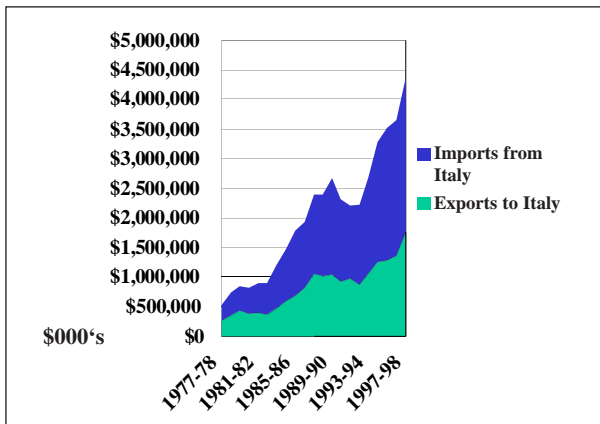
Australia with a stable financial system and government, close proximity to South East Asia, a strong Italian cultural influence and a well educated and stable labour force should be Italian companies' first choice for investments in the Asia-Pacific region.

The low level of investment can only be attributed to the following points:

1. Lack of knowledge by Italian industrialists about Australia and the local market's needs.
2. The high level of competition within the customer-service oriented Australian market.
3. The perception held by Italian business people that Australia is a holiday destination and provider of raw materials rather than a well-developed market to invest in.
4. Cultural differences between a country with a Latin background and Australia with an Anglo Saxon background.
5. Substantial differences in borrowing requirements between the two countries.

To improve this unsatisfactory situation substantial information and dialogue will need to flow between all interested parties from Governments to Chambers of Commerce to Lending Institutions

It can be done. We must remember Italy has the know how, Australia has the raw materials. We need each other.



Source: Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade, 1999

# The Italian Australian as a Commercial Dispute Resolver

## A. A. de Fina

### Introduction

Italy and Australia are among the world's leading trading nations. Agreements entered into for international trade and commerce occasionally give rise to disputes in the same way that commercial agreements within a particular country might do. Internal or domestic disputes are ordinarily resolved by courts of law applying the law of the particular nation state. Commercial entities within such a state know the law or can readily obtain legal advice and support.

In international commerce, either to gain advantage or because they see it as being appropriate, a party may seek to have their law govern the contract, and their courts be the sole determiner of any disputes that might arise. Thus, if a dispute arises, the other party which may be from a nation state with a differing legal system, culture, or language would be forced to be involved in court proceedings and law with which it is not familiar, in a location possibly far away from its residence, and in a language or culture which may not only be unfamiliar but alien to its own language and culture.

Further problems may arise from the generally limited recognition of judgements made in one country as being enforceable in a different country.

### Arbitration

For many centuries trading entities have utilised a private form of dispute resolution known as arbitration. This process is outside the court system but may adopt a particular law as the governing law of the contract and the process but may particularly, in commodity disputes, be governed by rules established by commodity organisations or may be subject to an unwritten but possibly highly developed commercial law (*law merchant*).

However in the 20th century with international trade encompassing far more than commodities and international commercial activity encompassing the widest range of transactions, for example from construction of power stations, transport systems, oil, gas and mineral exploitation, intellectual property transfer, manufactured goods sales,

and licensing agreements, a far more sophisticated system has developed.

This system known as international commercial arbitration has become part of the essential fabric of international private law.

Although subject to a number of international conventions from the beginning of the 20th century, the present fabric of international arbitration is based upon a Convention made in 1958 in New York and titled *United Nations Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards done at New York on June 10, 1958, United Nations Treaty Series (159) Vol 330 at p.38 No 4739 (The New York Convention)*.

The Convention has some 123 nation states as signatories. These include Italy and Australia.

The Convention obliges subscribing states to refer to arbitration any disputes brought before a court of a state, to refuse to deal with such a dispute if there is a valid arbitration agreement between the parties and to recognise and enforce a sustainable arbitration award.

### Arbitration rationale

It is in this overall environment that those people who act or might be suitable to act as arbitrators must be considered.

A dispute may, for example, arise between a French arms manufacturer and a Saudi Arabian purchaser. The French company will understand the Civil Code of France, the Saudi Arabian party will understand Saudi Islamic law, the native language of both parties is different. For neutrality the parties may choose English common law as the law governing the contract and select a neutral venue for the arbitration and have agreed the rules which will be the process to resolve any disputes that might arise. Ordinarily the procedural law, that is the law that governs the arbitration, will be the law of New York.

Because of the disparate cultural differences between the parties an arbitral tribunal would ordinarily be composed of an appointee of each of the parties with a President of the tribunal being other than the nationality of the parties.

The President is required to bring to the process not only the skills and knowledge to control the proceedings and formulate the award (the judgement of the tribunal) but also cultural neutrality.

### Participation of the Italian Australian

The Italian Australian, although not unique in this regard, by exposure to at least two differing cultures is likely to have a more significant level of cultural neutrality than might for example the

average Australian. However, this in itself is not sufficient to qualify the Italian Australian as an international arbitrator.

The most used language in international arbitration, particularly in major disputes, is English, either the second or first language of most Italian Australians.

Although to some extent changing, international arbitration is dominated and almost totally dictated as to its philosophy, culture, form, and conduct by practitioners in Western European countries. Italy, being among the top countries involved.

The Italian Australian can fit very easily into this environment and be accepted as much as being European as being from a country on the other side of the world which has a reputation and actuality of commercial neutrality.

On a more discrete basis, the Italian Australian is uniquely suitable to deal with disputes that might arise between Italian and Australian entities.

This applies both to formal resolution by arbitration and in an informal but positive manner in acting as a mediator or conciliator. The Italian Australian will understand the cultural and commercial differences and will more likely be able to act as an ‘honest broker’ to bring the parties together to resolve their dispute by themselves.

Italian Australians are becoming more and more influential and involved in the law. The pre-eminent example is the present Governor of Victoria, Sir James Gobbo.

### Conclusion

The Italian Australian can have a significant part to play in contributing to the overall fabric of international commercial dispute resolution. The Italian Australian community as a whole can assist this where its individuals are engaged in or can influence the manner of international trade and commerce. The benefits will go far beyond the community itself and will serve to advance both Australia and Italy consistent with the allegiance most Italian Australians have to both countries.

# Growing Business in the 21st Century: Building Global Partnerships

*Carolynne Bourne*

Founded in 1989 as an outcome of a project undertaken in the Veneto Region by the Palladio Foundation, International Specialised Skills Institute (ISS Institute) is an innovative, national organisation which provides opportunities for Australian industry and commerce to gain best-in-the-world skills and experience • traditional and leading-edge technology • management • design.

ISS Institute has a clear framework for targeting specialised skills gaps that are not currently available through accredited courses in Australian higher educational institutions. 'Skills gaps' is used as the overarching phrase to encompass skills, knowledge and attitudes and are met through the Fellowship program.

Fellowships are a key strategy encompassing market research to identify skills gaps, an international travel program and education and training activities to ensure experiences gained overseas are passed on.

The focus is on growing business through a knowledge-based economy, skills and knowledge enhancement and sustaining on-going partnerships here and overseas. The ISS Institute builds bridges across industries, occupations, government, education and the community - new ways of thinking, new ways of producing for the local and global marketplace.

As a relatively new nation Australia is still acquiring skills and knowledge in the production of goods and services. One way to achieve this is to complement existing skills and knowledge with different, leading-edge and enhanced ones; to learn from the rich and diverse global heritage accumulated over past millennia; and to transpose those skills and knowledge into an Australian context for the local and international marketplace.

## A Global Perspective

For over two centuries, immigration has been a primary source of the rich human capital needed for building Australia's unique culture. Immigration today remains a vital generator of that capital, reflecting a diversity of cultural influences that is greater than ever before. Migrants alone, however, cannot satisfy our growing demand for specialists who possess skills that are essential for breadth and depth in the

development of design and technology, and for the preservation of heritage.

If we are to build successful enterprises, then it is essential that we raise the aspirations of both organisations and individuals. In specialised skill terms, it will not be sufficient to simply meet current needs, but to anticipate future needs and allow and encourage innovation and growth in every sector of our economy. In this context, skills gaps are vital to long-term economic prospects and in the short-term sustain sectors which are at risk of disappearing, of not being developed or leaving our shores to be taken up by our overseas competitors. In this scenario the only prudent option is to achieve a high skill, high value-added economy in order to build a significant future in the local and international marketplace.

The consequences of diminishing or loss of skills have significant economic consequences - for individuals and industry - the potential exists for serious flow-on effects for businesses, industry sectors and the whole economy, as well as our community in general.

### The Beginning

Under Sir James Gobbo AC, ISS was initiated and funded by the Australian Multicultural Foundation and the Palladio Foundation. It set itself the ambitious task of gaining specialised skills and knowledge from overseas then transposing those capabilities into an Australian context.

Initial research indicated that specialised skills and knowledge related to particular areas of workplace practice were not readily available in Australia, for example a demand for specialised stonemasonry skills in marble work. On the other hand, Italy has many specialised artisans working in this area. This was shown with the construction of the new Parliament House in Canberra where Italian artisans were brought to Australia to cut and lay stone. Upon completion of the work they returned to Italy without skilling their Australian counterparts - the specialised skills gaps remain as before.

### Creating an Innovative Organisation

In establishing the ISS Institute, a Performance Model was established whereby major initiatives were instigated within an holistic approach that would be both sustainable and allow for significant growth.

The first initiative was the development of a system of identifying and organising market research that targeted specialised skill gaps -

though it should be noted that on occasions when we get overseas we find what we determine are specialised skills in Australia are really very basic - we just did not know; or as stated by De Bono, the problem is the problem we don't know we have.

The second initiative, was to establish on-going partnerships in Australia and overseas. Partners are crucial - they are the firms, government agencies, educational institutions, professional associations and individuals who generously provide the information we require to meet the identified skill gaps. Australian experts travel overseas or experts come to Australia - this is the Fellowship program that is funded by sponsorship partners. The Fellowship program is detailed later in this paper.

Thirdly, the creation of a system which would ensure those capabilities are passed on - the multiplier effect. This is effected through a report, education and training activities and consultancy services.

These activities and consultancy services are available to those who want to learn and forms part of ISS Institute's lifelong learning strategy. Firms and individuals can:

- Complement and enhance existing abilities.
- Add a new direction to their work.
- Develop personal interests or begin a new career.

A key issue was not to replicate that which is already provided by existing TAFE or university courses in Australia, but to fill the 'gaps'.

Finally, the Fellows who travel overseas are the catalysts for change in their industry. Not only do they bring specific skills to Australian businesses, they provide an attitudinal framework which promotes innovation, an ideas-based approach, problem solving without boundaries of industry or occupational constraints, networks as a means to grow business and a lifelong approach to learning. And their involvement is on-going - delivering education and training activities such as workshops and lectures, participating in conferences and as advisors to ISS Institute, government and professional associations as well as writing curriculum and teaching/lecturing in TAFE and universities.

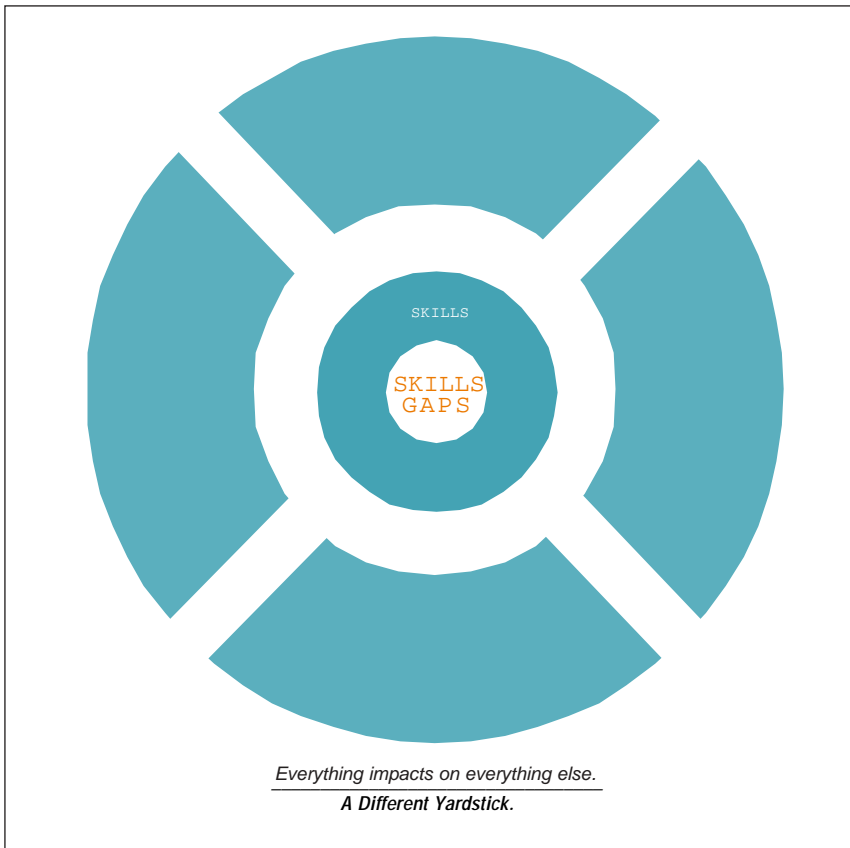
ISS Institute has established a successful Performance Model incorporating quality assurance with flexibility to be customised to meet specific projects. To date it has:

- Awarded thirty-four Fellowships - twenty-seven to Australians to undertake overseas study programs to destinations including Italy, England, France, Germany, Austria, USA and Indonesia, and

seven to experts to travel to Australia to conduct a range of activities.

- Developed and conducted education and training activities: workshops, seminars, conferences, exhibitions; produced publications and provided consultancy services.
- Established an active network across industry sectors, education, government agencies and professional associations here and overseas.

### Core Activities



### Our Vision

Under the Patron in Chief, His Excellency, The Honourable, Sir James Gobbo AC, Governor of Victoria; the Chairman, Mr Franco Fiorentini and Board members Professor David Beanland, Ms Sue Christophers, Mr Hass Dellal OAM, Mr Graham Morris, Mr Leslie Perrott AO OBE,

Lady Potter AO, Mr Ian Sapwell, Mr Loris Sartori, Mr David Wittner and the Director, Carolynne Bourne, ISS Institute’s vision is to ‘build, sustain and improve partnerships between designers, artworkers, artisans, trade and professional people, nationally and internationally towards an innovative and productive future for Australia.’

### Demand Determinants

Overall, the major factor affecting demand for specialised and advanced skills is the need for Australian businesses to be competitive in the domestic and global marketplace. The nature of work, creating and meeting market demands has changed on a global scale.

Federal and state government directives state that the following are necessary for industry to operate in a competitive marketplace. These are congruent with ISS’ aims and activities. ISS Institute has positioned itself to assist industries to meet these demands by:

- Operating within a knowledge-based economy and holistic approach across industries and occupations and along the Supply Chain.
- Developing regional and rural initiatives as well as in metropolitan areas across Australia..
- Building bridges between trade, para-professional and professionals and across occupational levels such as apprenticeship/trade/artisan/ master.
- Enhancing leading-edge and traditional technologies.
- Building on-going partnerships here and overseas.
- Opening communication for skills and knowledge exchange.
- Value-adding to Australia’s natural resources.
- Promoting innovation and quality through design and business practice.
- Providing opportunities for flexible career pathways.
- Transposing what is learnt from overseas into an Australian context for the local and international marketplace.

### Strategic Positioning

ISS Institute is a niche enterprise that seeks to differentiate itself by the type and quality of its programs and activities. This means that it develops depth in each of the projects it selects and implements. It is responding to identified specialised skill gaps, and anticipating future demands in traditional and emerging industries. Specific Australian industries are targeted, then a sector selected in consultation with key industry, government, education and professional associations.

Specialised and advanced skills gaps are identified and verified in that sector as being:

- Vital to that industry successfully competing in the domestic and/or global marketplace.
- Unavailable within current accredited education courses at university or TAFE.

### Skill Shortage and Deficiency

ISS Institute has a clear framework for what is an immensely complex area. 'Skills gaps' is used as the overarching phrase to encompass skills, knowledge and attitudes.

Labour market ratings have been assigned to each occupation assessed in line with DEET classifications. ISS Institute targets areas of minor shortage, where the demand for labour exceeds supply and the excess labour requirements are significant, and shortage, where the labour market requirements are severe. A further important category has emerged from ISS' market research, that of deficiency.

Deficiency is where a demand for labour has not been recognised and training is unavailable in Australian educational institutions. This arises where skills are acquired on-the-job, gleaned from published material or from working and/or study overseas.

### Target Industries

ISS operates across industry sectors and occupations. This enhances multiple career path opportunities and integrates areas that hitherto have operated independently, particularly in the application of design, materials and technologies.

During its first ten years (1989 to 1999), ISS Institute targeted particular industries with great success:

- Building and Construction
- Textile, Clothing and Footwear
- Conservation and Restoration
- Furniture
- Art and Design

Since 1999, ISS Institute has worked with a broader range of industry partners in industries such as:

- Science and Technology
- Management
- Manufacturing
- Agriculture and Horticulture
- Information Technology

with other industries to follow.

### The Multiplier Effect.

The achievements of ISS Institute provides benefits to industry, government and the community by:

- Maintaining specialist skills in Australia which may otherwise disappear.
- Bringing new skills developed internationally to Australia.
- Conducting market research to identify and validate specialised skills gaps
- Building on-going partnerships in Australia and overseas.
- Creating a system which ensures those capabilities gained overseas are passed on – the multiplier effect.

As ISS Institute operates globally the diversity of language, business and cultural differences adds not only to enrich ISS fellows and activities, but also adds a dimension where business opportunities may be enhanced.

Industry, as an outcome of the ISS Fellowship programs, can acquire the specialised skills to add to their existing capabilities. This is creating new opportunities for:

- Developing new products and services.
- Using leading-edge or traditional technologies.
- Integrating design as a value-added factor in market success. ISS defines design as problem solving.
- Contributing to employment opportunities.

The effect has been the creation of new enterprises and the development of existing businesses such as in manufacturing, management, textiles, architecture, furniture, casting technology, stonemasonry, plastering, as well as conservation and jewellery.

A further outcome is that ISS Institute specialised skills gaps are integrated into current university and TAFE courses. In Victoria these include glass conservation, flexible mould making (Monash University); casting technologies for jewellery manufacture (Northern Metropolitan Institute of TAFE); conservation, metalwork (University of Melbourne); stonemasonry, solid plastering (Holmesglen Institute of TAFE); design management (RMIT University).

### In Pursuit of Excellence - The Fellowship Program

*Fellowships* are an exciting and unique opportunity for Australians to enhance their capabilities. It is the means by which we access the identified skill gaps and knowledge from overseas organizations and individuals. Those selected are the catalysts for change in their industry and occupational sector.

Fellowships are a key strategy encompassing market research to identify skills gaps, an international travel program and education and training activities to ensure experiences gained overseas are passed on.

The Fellowship program may be a course of study, visits to or placement in industry, educational institutions, professional associations and/or government agencies.

Duration of the overseas program is two to three weeks. Longer programs may receive special consideration. Specialised and advanced skill gaps are identified and verified, and then matched to overseas organizations where the skills can be acquired. Individuals can apply for the Fellowship, undergo a selection process, and undertake an overseas study program. Experts in their field can travel to Australia to conduct industry-based education and training activities.

### Who can Participate?

Fellowship awards may be made to people who are self-employed or employees in public or private sector organisations.

### The Innovative edge

Importantly, no fellowship holder can keep the newly acquired skills to themselves; they are contracted to conduct education and training activities upon their return to Australia.

### The Winners

An ISS Institute Fellowship opens doors to people and places for talented and skilled individuals who win the privilege to travel abroad. They have returned more confident and knowledgeable about their field and with an expanded network of professional contacts. They have new ideas, new enthusiasms and enhanced skills and knowledge and a shift in attitude to embrace a global perspective of lasting benefit to themselves, to colleagues, to industry and to a rich and productive Australian culture.

Of the thirty-four fellowships awarded to-date, over half have been awarded to either Australians travelling to Italy or experts from Italy to Australia. Some of the Fellows are:

1991

Industries Art and Design, Manufacturing

Skill gaps Casting technologies.

Louise Skacej (Vic) Architectural ceramicist, sculptor studied *Casting and Freehand Drawing* and studied at the *European Centre for Training Craftsmen in the Architectural Heritage*, Venice, Italy.

Sponsors Palladio Foundation, Australian Multicultural Foundation, Victorian Ethnic Affairs Commission, Monash University

1993

Industries Heritage, Building and Construction

Skill gaps Stone conservation.

Helen Lardner (Vic) Architectural conservator studied Stone Technology with ICCROM in Venice, Italy.

Sponsors Historic Buildings Council, Palladio Foundation, Australian Multicultural Foundation

Industries Architecture, Mosaic

Skill gaps Translating design into mosaic - fabrication, installation, materials and techniques.

Anna Minardo (Italy) An Italian architect and mosaicist, conducted *A Month of Mosaic Workshops*; '94 *Advanced Mosaic Workshop: Pavements*; '97 *In Minardo's Studio: Large Scale Wall Mural* in Melbourne.

Sponsor Australian Multicultural Foundation, Palladio Foundation

Industries Jewellery Manufacturing

Skill gaps Contemporary casting technologies for manufacturing.

Hubert Schuster (Italy) Master jeweller working in Italy conducted *Contemporary European Casting Technology Workshops*, Melbourne; '94 *Casting Technology Workshops: Manufacturing*.

Sponsor Australian Multicultural Foundation, Palladio Foundation

1994

Industries Millinery

Skill gaps Millinery design and manufacture: equipment, materials.

Peter Jago (Vic) Milliner/designer studied *Leather, Felt and Straw Braid Manufacture; Hat, Accessories Design* in Italy and England.

Sponsors Kangan Institute of TAFE, TCF Resource Fund

1995

Industries Building and Construction, Heritage

Skill gaps Plaster decoration.

Michael Toscano (Vic) Solid plasterer studied *Plaster Decoration at European Centre for the Skills of Architectural Heritage in Venice*.

Sponsors Australian Multicultural Foundation, Palladio Foundation, Toscano Plastering.

1996

Industries Entertainment, Art and Design

Skill gaps Scenic art.

Opera Foundation Fellowship

Ross Turner (Vic) Scenic artist studied *Scenic Art at Associazione Italiana Scenografi, Costumi, Arredatori (ASC)* and studios, Rome.

Sponsors Opera Foundation

1997

Industries Building/Construction, Heritage

Skill gaps Project management and practises across occupations, standards and documentation, tourism in ecclesiastical environments.

Vincent Sicari (NSW) Conservation architect was placed with Curator, *Basilica San Marco*, Venice and other key sites in the Venetian area to investigate *Conservation Standards, Documentation, Workplace Practice, Technologies, Tourism Management*.

Sponsors Palladio Foundation, Alitalia Airlines.

Industries Footwear Design, Manufacture

Skill gaps Design and manufacture.

Simon O'Mallon (Sth Aust) Footwear designer and maker studied at *ARS Sutoria International Institute for Footwear: Design and Modelling*, Milan, Italy.

Sponsors Australia Council, Douglas Mawson Institute of TAFE.

1998 /1999

New Venture

To undertake a feasibility program for establishing a school/studio/facility at Castel Viceno Ceramic Centre, Orvieto, Italy to provide intercultural experience for those working in ceramics.

Skill gaps Approaches to design and manufacturing focusing on maiolica.

Marino Moretti (Italy) Master Italian ceramicist travelled to Melbourne to conduct maiolica workshops; exhibit at Makers Mark; promote the Centre.

Sponsor Palladio Foundation

Victor Greenaway (Vic) Master ceramicist will travel to the Centre in Orvieto to set-up the facility for education and training programs; create works for exhibition.

Sponsor Palladio Foundation

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**9th Annual ISS Fellowship Awards**  
presented at Government House,  
30 September 1999.

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**Back L-R:** Hass Dellal, AMF and ISS Board of Management member • Carolynne Bourne, Director, ISS • Fellow, Andrea McNamara • Fellow, Gary Frencham.



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- Within your organisation.
- For the benefit of the community in such areas as the arts, environment, etc.

Sponsorship partners contribute in other ways

- Provision of expert advice.
- Supply of services, materials, equipment, etc.
- Use of facilities.

### Sponsorship cost

The cost for an ISS Institute partner to sponsor an annual fellowship is in the order of \$15,000 p.a. upwards, depending on the nature and duration of the program.

### The Benefits

Leading businesses have long recognised the advantage of investing in initiatives which benefit the community on which they rely for their own business success.

- Partnering with an organisation that has demonstrated long-term commitment to, and significant achievements for the community and industry, enhances the corporate image of an organisation or business.
- ISS Institute works with sponsors to identify and target specialised skills and skills gaps vital to enable industry to successfully compete in domestic and global markets.
- Sponsors increase their networking opportunities by accessing ISS network and industry-based information from a variety of sources.
- A strategic approach enables multiple benefits through promotional events, marketing, press coverage, education and training activities, direct mail, hosting.

- Fellowships enhance employee performance skills and knowledge and personal development; improves morale and instills a sense of pride.

As well as helping to fill the ‘skills gap’, Fellowships may assist in the removal of lines of demarcation within a design, craft, trade or professional occupation.

Talent or ideas should not be constrained by rigid occupational ‘boxes’ as tends to happen in Australia. In Europe, there is more of a ‘big-picture’ attitude to skills’ development, which allows for innovative design concepts and the cross-fertilisation of ideas.

### Invitation

We invite The Italian Australian Institute and those present at this presentation to join their ranks, so as we can provide relevant programs. We ask for your ideas and experience in your capacity as a leader in your industry.

The Australian community gains economically, educationally and culturally.

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Knowledge Based Economy. Role of Industry, Science and Resources

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# Italian-Australian Futures: Language and Citizenship

*John Gatt-Rutter*

## Abstract

Geopolitically, citizenship is more than ever a fluid concept and a fluid reality, given the ever-increasing worldwide mobility of large masses of people and instantaneous low-cost communication, as well as the formal dilution of national boundaries (especially in the European Union). Holding passports of two countries is only the juridical expression of a wider societal phenomenon: participation in a society is the basis of citizenship, to which sociocultural and linguistic belonging is essential. For Australia's Italians, this must mean a serious degree of biculturalism and bilingualism, surmounting the limitations of 'double semi-culturalism' and 'double semi-lingualism' with the attendant risk of outsider status in both societies. Transgenerational language shift is the sociological rule in countries of mass promiscuous immigration, such as Australia. The availability of the language (Italian) as a school or university subject cannot appreciably arrest, let alone reverse, this shift on a societal basis, but only for a tiny percentage of individuals. Language immersion education is the one possible corrective, but poses a series of challenges which require clarity of mind and political determination to overcome. Such an outcome could be mutually beneficial both to mainstream Australia and to Australia's Italians, maximizing biculturalism and bilingualism, and such a strategy involves a two-way process. The 'marriage' between Australian and Italian social cultures implies that many Australians will also continue to achieve a degree of biculturalism and bilingualism enabling them to participate in the modern Italian society and its heritage of accumulated cultural capital which forms so important a part of the cultural capital of the western world, thus also enriching Australian citizenship.

Some of you may have read in the Saturday Age of 18th March last an article by Larry Schwartz titled "Lunar voices – a Melbourne choir gives Italian women back their songs", about the choir that poetically calls itself "la voce della luna" – the "lunar voices" of Schwartz's title. Some of you will undoubtedly have heard the choir sing, and know some of its members. And some of you will know Kavisha Mazzella, the director of the choir and an award-winning singer-songwriter. The name

Kavisha does not sound strikingly Italian, and in fact Schwartz reports her mother to be a mixture of Irish, Scottish and Burmese, though the surname Mazzella comes from her Italian father.

This ethnic mix is not uncharacteristic of our modern world in the swing from the twentieth to the twenty-first century. Blood-lines and ethnic identities now readily jet across national frontiers and across the oceans that divide the continents from one another, and with them go cultural memories. Cyberspace, satellite communications, the airwaves are all alive with intercontinental dialogue, and it would seem that, as the Italian proverb has it, the whole world is one country and that anyone can be a citizen of the world.

But that is rhetoric. Real life is a social affair, in which we carry our own frontiers with us, and within us, and the chief frontier, the deepest divide, is language. Let us hear what Larry Schwartz has to say about Kavisha Mazzella: “Her mother tried to persuade her father to speak to their children in Italian. But he feared it would disadvantage them.” And he quotes Kavisha’s own words: “‘And so I lost my language [...] My father felt I would be made fun of at school if I was too Italian.’” She goes on: “‘In some ways I still feel a stranger to Italian culture, even though I’ve done whatever I could to immerse myself, in whatever way I could.’” She talks about regaining contact with her Italian family traditions by singing together in an Italian choir: “‘It totally absorbs you and you no longer are a stranger [...] You no longer are in exile.’”<sup>1</sup>

Here we have a living instance – a fairly typical instance – of the meaning of citizenship, of being part of a society and its culture. It is implied that Kavisha has grown up Australian, fully participant in Australian society, a citizen of this country. Quite possibly, Kavisha might be present in this very audience, and might wish for an opportunity to speak for herself, and if so I very much hope she will have that opportunity. From where I stand as an academic in a department of Italian Studies at a Victorian university, her reported remarks are very interesting. Belonging to one society, Australia, she has also inherited a sense of belonging to another, Italy, but of being estranged from it, an exile. A sense of wholeness as a person, for her, requires that she access both cultures, and enjoy citizenship in both societies. Citizenship is not just a juridical matter of what passport – or what passports – you hold. It is just as much, and probably much more, a matter of social culture, and thus of language – as Kavisha’s mother had already realized and as Kavisha’s own remarks attest.

But what does migration do to a language?

What has happened to Italian in Australia is now unmistakably clear, and is typical of all similar situations in other countries, where migrants – and let us call them immigrants since, in Stephen Castles’s phrase, they have come here for good – speaking many different tongues are scattered randomly among a population which has a strongly established language in common – in this case English. Australia may have well over a million people with Italian blood in their veins, but with each passing generation there is less and less Italian on their tongues.

This fact is a tribute to Australia’s social cohesion and political wisdom, but it does entail some losses. The loss to the individuals concerned is instanced in cases like Kavisha’s. The loss to Australia as a country is one of diminished intimacy with Italy, and some confusion about the relationship between the two countries, both in terms of what they share within the heritage of western civilization, and in terms of the dealings between their respective present-day societies and economies.

Let me try to illustrate this within the limited frame of reference of the teaching of Italian in Australian schools and the pursuit of studies relating to Italy in Australian universities.

There is a play by the genius of Italian comedy, the Venetian Carlo Goldoni, which owes a lot to the funny business of the *Commedia dell’Arte*. He called it *Il servitore di due padroni* – “The servant of two masters” – in which the famished and unemployed man-servant Truffaldino, or in some stagings of the play, the even more familiar and engaging Arlecchino, whom the English-speaking world knows as Harlequin, contrives to get himself simultaneously hired by two different masters – with what hilarious consequences I will have to leave you to imagine.

In Australia, teachers of the Italian language, and of other things Italian, find themselves in a somewhat similar plight to Truffaldino or Arlecchino, having to serve simultaneously two different masters – one being Australia’s Italians and their descendants, and the other being all those Australians not of Italian descent who have been bitten by the Italian love-bug and are fascinated by Italy and Italians and their dazzling cultural heritage. Let me mention in passing that this contingent has included and still includes numerous cultured Australians, from Sir Samuel Griffith, chief architect of the constitution of the Commonwealth of Australia, who was also a translator of Dante’s *Divina Commedia*, to Gough Whitlam, a formidable cognoscente of

things Italian, not to mention such people as the poet Peter Porter, Clive James, David Malouf, who resides mostly in Italy, or Robert Dessaix who are only some of the most prominent among the leaders of Australian culture who have fully recognized the Italian heritage as part of their own heritage.

In fact, Departments of Italian at Australian universities tend to have radically different origins. Sydney and the University of Western Australia, with the charismatic figures of Frederick May and John Scott, came to Italian studies through the fascination that Italian high culture has for non-Italians. Melbourne and Flinders, with the quieter charisma of Colin McCormick and Tony Comin, and with my own predecessor Giovanni Carsaniga at La Trobe University, built up Italian studies mostly on the strength of the presence of large numbers of Italians in the local population. Both contingents, however, found themselves having to tackle two masters, and to resolve the same difficulties, of which the foremost was how to reconcile two very different profiles of identity and linguistic aptitude – Italian Australians and non-Italian Australians .

I think the year 2000 gives us the opportunity to turn a corner, to slip away from those two masters, and conceive our role as Truffaldinos or Arlecchinos a bit differently. What I have said about the progressive disappearance of Italian as a living language in Australia with each passing generation suggests that the problem is no longer so much one of having two different student profiles in the one classroom, but simply one of ensuring that all students of Italian – that is, both Italian Australians and also non-Italian Australians wishing to participate as citizens in the Italian experience also – can build up a sufficient base in the language to serve their multifarious purposes.<sup>2</sup>

A few hours per week of Italian at school or university cannot of themselves give that fluent and accurate command of the language that will serve the students in their professional or academic and social life, whatever the advances in communicative language teaching method. One thing that is needed, therefore, is extended opportunities for students to visit Italy. We can never have enough scholarships for study visits and student exchanges. Working holidays would also provide an invaluable inside experience of what it means to be Italian. I hope that the Italian Australian Institute will give all its support towards securing the best possible provision in both these respects.

On another important front, the generosity of the Cassamarca Foundation has marked the year 2000 by giving Australian universities three billion lire - nearly three million dollars – to set up eleven new lectureships so as to attract more students into various fields of Italian

studies and raise the profile of the area. The distribution of these lectureships has been interesting, to say the least, and all those concerned will be keenly watching the results, which, given such an investment, should be significant. We must hope that there will be a marked increase in both the quantity and the quality of students pursuing things Italian – language; culture in all its dimensions (including the popular and the local); history (including the history of Italian migrations); the two-way interchange of people, ideas and experiences between Italy and Australia; economics and trade.

The real solution, however, lies further back. Language immersion teaching, whereby half the school curriculum or more is taught in the target language, has been spectacularly successful with French in Canada.<sup>3</sup> The situation of Italian in Australia is not, of course, the same as that of French in Canada (much less that of English in India or Nigeria). However, the stakes are high, not only for the teaching of Italian in Australia, but for any language, and I very much hope that the resources can be found to spearhead Italian immersion teaching here.

This requires not only finding one or more schools with a strong commitment to Italian, but a carefully prepared strategy with clear objectives. Some secondary schools already exist in Australia that successfully deliver some or all of the curriculum in a language other than English. Of these, some have very well-defined constituencies and objectives - Mount Scopus for Hebrew and St John's College for Greek combine a religious with an ethnic objective. The Lycée Condorcet teaches through the medium of French as a prestigious international language.

Most interesting of all, perhaps, because they lack the special advantages of the schools I have just mentioned, are the secondary immersion programs that have sprung up in Queensland, disseminating from the French immersion program which first started at Benowa State High School on the Gold Coast.<sup>4</sup> Benowa has no Francophone ethnic community comparable to the Jewish and Greek communities which support their respective schools, nor has it the sort of cosmopolitan elite that sustains the Lycée in Sydney. The other Queensland schools – both in the State sector and in the private sector – that have now established French, German and Indonesian programs likewise have no significant special constituency. The successful development of these programs is richly documented in the volume published by Michael Berthold and his colleagues. It is a testament to the fact that the reefs can be negotiated if the will is there, even without the special factors that operate variously in Canada with French, in the multinational European Union with its

various languages, and with English and French in the former colonies of the British and French Commonwealths.

First, there is the need to persuade. If another subject – say, science, or mathematics, or social studies – is taught through a second language, will learning outcomes not be adversely affected? If a language other than English is used as the medium of instruction, will the students' proficiency in English not be affected? School principals and subject teachers, parents and students need to be reassured that the evidence points in the opposite direction, and that learning levels actually improve in subjects taught by second language immersion, and so does English proficiency.

Then there is the question of free choice as opposed to compulsion. Language immersion programs must be optional, but of course can only proceed if there is an adequate level of support – that is, enough students interested in learning through immersion to make up a class in the subjects involved.

Resources both human – in the form of subject teachers fluent in the target language – and material – especially in the form of suitable teaching and curricular materials in the target language which are compatible with Australian curriculum frameworks – must also be found.

Guidance must obviously be sought from the Queensland pioneers who have had the experience of setting up their successful programs in contexts which were favourable but which presented no unique advantages compared to other Australian contexts. Also, the scholarly experts, including Professor Michael Clyne and his team at Monash University would be obligatory interlocutors and mentors in this field, and I personally, though it is not my specialist field, would gladly give all my support, including a substantial portion of my time, to the quest to enable interested school-leavers to speak fluent, accurate and reliable Italian.

For that is the prize to be won: entire cohorts leaving school with a high level of reliable Italian language skills applicable in a wide variety of life and business situations; a high level of Italian language proficiency enabling students to embark on intellectually rewarding studies in Italy in most disciplines at tertiary level without the need for time-consuming foundation-building in language competence. This would sound like a pipe-dream to many concerned with Italian language education in Australia today (and the same would apply to other languages). And further prizes come with it: a bilingual awareness enabling the student to undertake much more readily the acquisition of

any further language required (e.g., for work overseas or with overseas visitors or immigrants, or for wider academic studies); for Italian Australians, confidence in their bilingualism and biculturalism and in their full citizenship within a multicultural Australia, building on their inherited linguistic assets; for English-speaking Australians, a positive and confident attitude to other Australians of diverse origin and a sense of multicultural citizenship; for Australia as a whole, a more effective interfacing with Italy the rest of the world, whether socially, politically, culturally or economically, and cultivating the otherwise highly perishable linguistic resources of its ethnically diverse population.<sup>5</sup> The successful introduction of an Italian immersion program in one or more secondary schools will further facilitate the revolutionizing of second language education in Australian schools already spearheaded from Benowa, so that, with no increase and a possible decrease in overall investment and running costs, the outcomes of language teaching in high schools may be immeasurably improved.

Elio Guarnuccio, in his fascinating talk at this conference, ended with a call to set up an Italian school in Australia. He made it quite clear that what he had in mind was a school in which all the teaching is conducted in Italian and which the Italian national school syllabus is taught. That is a bold proposal, which I am sure will receive the backing of many influential voices, and I think it deserves serious consideration, including some market research and a feasibility study. To have such a school in Australia would mean providing the opportunity for total immersion in the language, very much along the lines of the Lycée Français model, and with very similar objectives, but with the difference – and the advantage – that there is a much larger resident and transient population of Italian speakers in Australia than of French speakers. Those attending such a school would be very close to attaining or retaining full Italian cultural citizenship.

What I am proposing – not as an alternative, but as something that can be much more widely available and accessible – is different, and much more modest: the introduction in one or more secondary schools of an optional program whereby about half the Australian syllabus is taught in Italian for the students who wish to make that choice. This is a highly cost-effective option. An initial investment in terms of training and planning will lead to a quantum leap in the quality of the language skills acquired by school-leavers without any expansion of the teaching force. Naturally, there is the inertia of the status quo to overcome, and practical imperatives of all sorts to negotiate, and for that a small team of highly motivated individuals is required. The Italian government is

sympathetic to the enterprise, and this newborn organization can be instrumental in encouraging the formation of such a team, if it shares my enthusiasm for the project.

It should be clear from what I have said so far that setting up a serious language immersion program requires a combination of two things – a few determined individuals in a particular school and a well-thought-out and flexible strategy. A poorly prepared scheme is likely to founder on one of many reefs. I will only say a word about what seems to me the most intractable problem about introducing language immersion courses in schools, and that is that potential language learners may be frightened out of learning a language if they know that other students are learning it via immersion and therefore attaining much higher standards. The very success of immersion may prove a deterrent to students learning the language other than by immersion. In other words, the assessment system for school leavers would, in this important respect, interfere with educational objectives. There is no point in any of us pursuing the abracadabra of language immersion education unless this obstacle is cleared in advance. Educationists, if they care, will rack their brains about it.

Having posed the problem, I must offer some hope of a solution. I think this can be found by recognizing the sequential and cumulative nature of language learning and by setting the assessment of school-leavers in a language subject such as Italian not in terms of a free-for-all which compares oranges with apples and possibly persimmons and cumquats. Rather, several different stages or categories of language-learning could be defined, and results awarded not on an absolute scale, but in terms of the category of language learner to which each particular cohort belongs – that is, how they have been taught the language, and for how long. Most simply (if anything is simple in language teaching and assessment), language learning outcomes for school leavers and university should be defined in proficiency levels for the four macro-skills (aural and written comprehension and oral and written expression), rather than in a simple competitive percentage mark.

This in itself is a tricky educational issue, and the solution I have adumbrated militates against the generally competitive nature of school-leaving assessment. It would have the advantage of simultaneously addressing other problems in LOTE assessment of school-leavers. And since the problem I have mentioned already constitutes an inhibiting factor among educationists with regard to language immersion, it is not too early to engage in this debate.

I end on this somewhat technical note, rather than a resounding trumpet-blast, but, in the end, it is nuts and bolts that win the day. So let some resources be found, with the backing of the Italian Australian Foundation, to explore the most effective way of instituting immersion teaching in Italian in one or more of our secondary schools, in the sense in which I have defined immersion teaching, and to find ways of overcoming the obstacles to its implementation. The Italian government's attitude is encouraging. In Australia, at least the States of Queensland and Victoria have been supporting new initiatives of this kind. The Victorian Department of Education has an on-going Bilingual Schools Project, and has issued a "Survival Kit for Supporting Bilingual Programs," including a paper for LOTE Consultants, "Reflections and background information on the Concept of Immersion," prepared by M. Gindidis.<sup>6</sup> This "Survival Kit" is an excellent starting point for anyone in Australia wanting to know about bilingual programs or language immersion.

We all need to work together to seek or create the opportunity for Italian immersion programs to be mounted, and an initiative is needed. When I first publicly urged a move of this kind, a serious Italian language immersion program at secondary level would have been among the first in Australia. We are still in time for it still to represent a pioneering initiative, and I personally would be glad to devote time and energy and such knowledge as I possess to help promote and develop such a scheme, which I see as an indispensable element in the forging of Italian Australian citizenship as we move into this new millennium.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Schwartz, Larry, 'Lunar voices: A Melbourne choir gives Italian women back their songs,' *The Age Extra*, 18 March, 2000, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> For a theoretically informed discussion of the issue of detaching language policies (including those of language education) from purely ethnic considerations, Ozolins, Uldis, *The Politics of Language in Australia*, Cambridge, New York, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1993, esp. pp. 254-61

<sup>3</sup> A good general introduction to language immersion teaching in North America is Genesee, P., *Learning Through Two Languages: Studies of Immersion and Bilingual Education*, Cambridge, MA: Newbury House, 1987. For some information on European immersion schools, see Baetens-Beardsmore, H., 'European models of bilingual education: practice, theory and development,' *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 1993, 14.1-2: 103-20.

<sup>4</sup> See Berthold, M. (Ed.), *Rising to the Bilingual Challenge: Ten Years of Queensland Secondary School Immersion*, Canberra: NLLIA, 1995.

<sup>5</sup> See Gatt-Rutter, J. *Transgenerational language maintenance? Policy options for Australia*, Nathan (Queensland): Institute for Cultural Policy Studies, Griffith University, 1992.

<sup>6</sup> Gindidis, M. 'Reflections and background information on the Concept of Immersion,' State of Victoria Department of Education: Bilingual Schools Project – Survival Kit for Supporting Bilingual Programs (internally circulated leaflet), 1999.

## Our Story Your Heritage: the Italian Australian Experience in the Collection of the Italian Historical Society-Co.As.It.

*Laura Mecca and Lorenzo Iozzi*

Fifty years ago, in 1950, the emigration of Italians to Australia resumed in large numbers. At the outbreak of the Second World War there were less than 40,000 Italians in this country. Between 1950 and 1975 more than 250,000 Italian migrants arrived in Australia, with the majority of them establishing themselves in the State of Victoria, which according to Census data also has the largest proportion of second and third generation Italian Australians. Over the years each person would, in one way or another, make their own contribution to the history, development and culture of Australia.

Most of these immigrants came from districts and regions where seasonal or permanent migration was part of their life and history going back to the nineteenth century and possibly earlier. Their fathers and grandfathers had emigrated to other European and American countries, like France, Germany, Brazil, Argentina and the United States of America. In Australia a small but significant group of Italian pioneers, such as the street musicians from Basilicata, the fishermen from Molfetta and Capo d'Orlando, the figurine makers from Lucca and the fruiterers from the Aeolian Islands arrived at the end of the nineteenth century. Some of them had family members who had temporarily worked in Australia since the 1860s.<sup>1</sup>

What led such a large group of Italians to emigrate to Australia? For many Italians who arrived in Australia between the 1920s and 1930s, the United States was the preferred migratory destination, as many of them had relatives or *paesani* there. However, when immigration restrictions were introduced in the States in 1924, Australia became an attractive proposition.

After the Second World War, Australia was only one of the possible destinations as they could have migrated to other overseas countries such as Argentina, Venezuela or Canada. Those who arrived in Australia under the 'assisted passage' scheme are in this category, including approximately 25,000 displaced Italians from the territories of Fiume, Zara, Istria and Pola, which were ceded to Yugoslavia at the end of the war. The emigration of this group was controlled by the International

Refugees Organisation (IRO) which 'placed' them in overseas countries, according to established quotas. Friendships which developed in Italian refugee centres were often disrupted by the departure of a fellow refugee to America whilst others in the group found their way to Australia.<sup>2</sup>



What was the background of the Italians who emigrated to Australia? The writer-historian Gianfranco Cresciani described them as ‘peasants escaping the shackles of centuries-old conditions’.<sup>3</sup> This was an opinion shared by many Australian scholars until the 1970s. Was this a fair description of our immigrants? While the need to improve their personal economy was an important reason, other significant factors contributed.

Many studies of Italian migration to Australia ignore the historical, sociological and cultural differences between the regions of origin of emigration to Australia. The migration experience brought about major changes in the life of migrants, but it also led to the maintenance and continuation of traditional values, practices and customs which have helped to lessen the impact of these changes and assisted immigrants to resettle in their new country. This may have contributed to slow down the process of their integration into the wider Australian community. However, this baggage of values, customs and traditions has contributed to the establishment of a well-defined community.

The story of Italian migration to this country is very much part of the Australian story and the heritage of Italian immigrants is also the heritage of all Australians. It is important that these stories be handed down and recorded in the way the immigrants themselves want them told. The narration of personal experiences, photographs treasured by the descendants, documents stored in a drawer for many years, household items and trade tools brought out to Australia are all valuable testimonials of a migrant’s story which must be preserved. It is only by an awareness of our past that there will be a future for an Italian Australian community.

It was the need to foster pride in our Italian heritage and in an Italian-Australian identity that led to the foundation of the Italian Historical Society.

### The Italian Historical Society

Located in the heart of Italian Carlton, the Italian Historical Society was formed in 1980 at the Annual General Meeting of Co.As.It. Italian Assistance Association, the official welfare agency of the Italian community in Victoria.<sup>4</sup> The society developed through the regular work of Co.As.It., especially the aged program, as it was realised that the vast wealth of knowledge and experiences of the elderly members of the community, many of whom had settled in Australia before the Second World War, had to be recorded from the immigrants themselves, in their lifetimes.

The first project undertaken was a survey of the resources held in public libraries and archives on the Italian presence in Australia.<sup>5</sup> This study found that the main resources available were only a wide range of government records. No records on the background, migration and settlement experiences or on the various contributions of Italian immigrants in Australia were available in public repositories. Not long afterwards the Society began an oral history program of the immigrants who arrived before the Second World War. This program was conducted by young graduates of Italian background. At these interviews some important photographs, documents and manuscripts emerged. It was soon realised that unless this evidence was collected, documented and preserved, it would be lost forever. Thus the Society also began to collect paper-based documents on the history and heritage of the Italian community.



The culmination of this initial work was the exhibition *Victoria's Italians, 1900-1945*, held at the State Library of Victoria in 1985, as part of the celebrations for the 150th anniversary of the State of Victoria. Over the years, as the collection grew and the work of the Society was publicly endorsed by the Italian community and by Australian public institutions, the Society's material on the heritage and history of Italian migration to Australia became the basis for other successful and important exhibitions, including the bicentennial exhibition *Australia's Italians 1788-1988*<sup>6</sup> and *Bridging Two Worlds: Jews, Italians and Carlton* at the Museum of Victoria in 1992. Smaller in size but of similar

importance for its social and historical significance was the exhibition *La Dote: Preparing for a Family*, which inaugurated the Schiavello Access Gallery of the newly opened Melbourne's Immigration Museum in November 1998.

The great success of these exhibitions was reflected in the large number of visitors and in the abundance of material they generated not only for the Society's collection but for our mainstream repositories. The appreciation for our immigrants, the enhancement of the recognition of their contribution to the Australian society and the awareness of their past, values and traditions reflected in the photographs and objects on display, engaged the interest of the Australian born generations in preserving our heritage and transmitting aspects of our distinct culture to future generations.<sup>7</sup>

The Society which was the first such body established in Australia, encouraged and assisted in the setting up of similar but autonomous bodies elsewhere in Australia, in particular in New South Wales, Queensland and Western Australia.

In 1983 the Society established a project which has become a model for other similar organizations of non-English speaking background. Believing that the holdings of public institutions did not adequately reflect the contribution to the wider Australian community of those of non Anglo-Celtic origin, the Society instituted the policy of depositing copy prints or, when available, the originals of the material it collected in the State Library of Victoria. The Society has thus pioneered the building of a collection in a large public institution, where it is available for posterity, for Australian scholars and the public at large. This collaboration continues today.

Similarly a formal agreement for the collection of three-dimensional objects was formulated in 1993 with Museum Victoria. Many members of the Italian community who had lent objects for the Carlton exhibition felt that their heritage and migration story would in the future be better told if these objects were permanently housed in the Italian Historical Society Collection at the museum. Since then the objects collection has been further augmented with many significant items, some of which are on display at the Immigration Museum.

The collection has grown considerably since the Society's establishment twenty years ago. It now consists of 330 oral history interviews, more than 12,000 photographs, many rare documents, a unique collection of archival records and newspapers in microfilm format, memorabilia and an important specialised library with a number of rare books.

### Oral History Collection

Almost half of the oral history interviews are of immigrants who settled in Australia between 1920 and 1940. Many of them are no longer with us; thus their accounts are of special significance to both the Italian and the wider Australian community and to their descendants. It is not rare for the Society to receive requests from second and third generation Italian Australians for a copy of the interview of their parents or grandparents.

The debate as to the value of oral history as a valid form of historical narrative is still alive among historians. In most Italian country towns, the tradition of narrating stories of long lost family members or significant events that took place in the village was an effective means of handing down the history of the family and of the village, as well as values, customs and traditions to younger generations. Most Italian migrants did not have the time nor the skills to keep written records of their experiences in the new country. The letters sent home in which they wrote about daily life and experiences are a rare find. Thus, we believe that oral history is an important means in the recording process of the history of the community.

In the interviews in the collection, migrants give specific information on date and place of birth, reasons for emigrating to Australia and convey their experiences, difficulties and achievements in the new country. Some of the pre-war interviewees describe the hardship and the injustice suffered by the community during the war, with loved ones being interned or conscripted into the civil corps to assist the war effort. It was quite common for second generation Italian Australians, whose parents settled in Australia between the wars, to marry Italian migrants arrived in the 1950s and 1960s. This interaction and intermarriage between 'old' settlers and 'new' migrants renewed and strengthened the community.<sup>8</sup>

Many interviews are spoken in a mixture of dialect and English and provide excellent examples of the evolution and changes in the migrant's language from the dialect of origin to the development of a distinct language, by many called 'Italese'. The material in the Italian Historical Society collection is often used by distinguished Italian academics, such as dialectologist Dr. Patrizia Bertini Malgarini, from La Sapienza University, Rome.<sup>9</sup>

The oral histories also give valuable information on regional customs and traditions and provide excellent examples on how chain migration worked, with migrants encouraging and sponsoring other relatives or

countrymen to Australia. Many of the interviewees came from families with long traditions of emigration, having family members living in the United States, Canada or other European countries. The majority came from rural communities and lived on the land, with some continuing to do so in Australia by settling in areas such as Mildura, Werribee and Gippsland. Most of them came from poor families, but they were not destitute and often sold their property to pay for the fare to Australia

Most of the interviews are transcribed and a summary in English has been compiled for the interviews in Italian or dialect. Access to this collection is available under certain conditions and copies of the tapes are made available only to close members of the interviewee's family.

### Photographic Collection

The Italian Historical Society photographic collection consists of approximately 12,000 images illustrating many aspects of the migration and settlement process in this country. Although this figure may seem large in terms of quantity collected it is minuscule in terms of the number of lives and events it represents; and yet a single image may be sufficient to connect us to elements of the past.

One third of these images are original photographs, the other two thirds being photographic copy prints. Whilst not everybody wants to donate their treasured photographs, most do consent to their material being copied and a print and negative included in the collection. The original is returned to the donor. This does not diminish the social and historical value of the collection. On the contrary, it ensures that as much material as possible is collected and preserved, without permanently removing it from the context and history of the community.



Many of the evocative images in the collection tell the story of important events in the village of origin – a funeral, a procession of relatives and friends accompanying a proxy bride to church through a narrow and ancient street, a religious celebration of the patron saint, a bride and groom on the balcony of a Baroque palazzo in a Sicilian town ... and so on. The migration story often begins with a studio portrait of a mother with her

children usually photographed close to their departure to join the husband and father in the foreign land, whom they had not seen for years. It was quite common to send a photograph to help him recognize his family when they disembarked. The gatherings at the Cavour Club in Melbourne for social or political activities during the 1920s and 1930s illustrate the strength, political idealism and cultural maintenance of a small but important and well-established community.

In the collection there are photographs of proxy brides en route to meet spouses they hardly knew, the first home in the new homeland, an espresso bar where there had been none, a soccer match of the Juventus Club, men working on the construction of a hydro-electric dam, cutting cane in Queensland or staying at Bonegilla or Rushworth migrant centres.

The Australian-born second generation is prominently featured with many images of leisure and entertainment: groups of school children at the statue of the Madonna of Lourdes at St. George's Grotto in Carlton; engagement and wedding parties often celebrated at home with family and friends around a table full of traditional Italian food; classes of Italian language students; bocce games in the backyard of a suburban home or under the gum trees on a farm;. Sunday walks in the Carlton Gardens and religious festivities in regional costumes.



These are images that document important events and transcend language as a means of communication with the English speaking generations and the wider public. They tell of the continuities, internal migration, adaptation and changes in the life of a migrant, of the integration into local society and the evolution of migrant culture. One of the important aspects documented in the Society's collection is the contribution of Italian migrant women to the settlement process and cultural maintenance of their families in the new country

During the first ten years of operation of the Italian Historical Society, very little material was

deposited spontaneously by the community into the collection. A good degree of time and resources was spent informing and educating the community as to the importance of recording their experiences and contribution to the development of Australia. The exhibitions were the main generators of material and a time consuming way of acquiring it. In the last ten years this trend was gradually reversed. Today most of the material is collected spontaneously from members of the community, many of them Australian-born second generation persons, who call into the Society with their photo albums and documents, eager to tell and record the story of their family. This is perceived as an act of trust in the Society and recognition of the important work and role it has played for twenty years in recording and preserving the Italian migrant experience.

As a result of this change, a series of important holdings of photographs, documents and objects feature prominently in the main collection of the Society. They are the Borsari Collection, the Candela Collection, the Del Monaco Collection and the Santospirito Collection.

### Borsari Collection

Nino Borsari was a well-known figure in the Melbourne Italian community and in the Australian sporting circles of the pre- and post-war period. Two years after winning a gold medal in cycling at the Los Angeles Olympic Games of 1932, he was invited on a number of occasions to Australia to compete in state and national cycling races. At the outbreak of the Second World War Borsari was in Melbourne as a



guest of the Australian Cycling Federation. The war prevented him from going back to his country. He became an 'enemy alien', but was not interned – a fate to which so many of his fellow Italians in Australia had succumbed. Borsari decided to settle in Melbourne at the end of the war and he opened an emporium in Lygon Street, Carlton. The shop became the main source for supply of gifts, household and sporting items to the Italian community. The Borsari Emporium also became an important meeting place. Newly arrived migrants called into the shop for guidance and assistance, to find a job or accommodation in a boarding house or to buy Italian newspapers and magazines with the latest news from their country. This would make their loneliness less acute.

For over thirty years Borsari took a leading role in organising many social and sporting events. The Juventus Soccer Club received a new impetus under his leadership as president. Well-known Italian boxing champions were invited to fight in Melbourne. Borsari established an all Italian cycling team under the patronage of his business and with his wife Fanny, he lavishly entertained visiting Italian personalities for fund-raising activities.

This important period in the story of Melbourne's Italians and Borsari's contribution and involvement, is well documented in the large number of photographs and documents deposited with the Society.

### Candela Collection

This is a rare and unique holding of original letters, documents, diaries, photographs, newspapers, music sheets and memorabilia, donated to the Society by the heirs of the estate of Angelo Candela. The documents narrate the migration and settlement story of Vincenzo



Candela who arrived in Melbourne with his second wife and young son Angelo in 1920 from the town of Viggiano, in Basilicata. Many young men from this area temporarily travelled to the four corners of the world to play the harp, violin and clarinet. They were commonly known as the 'street musicians of Basilicata'. Prior to his migration to Australia, Vincenzo played the clarinet in Brazil, France and the United

States of America. He was also a skilled photographer and a good tailor, trades which he exercised during the periods spent in his home town between seasonal work as a musician abroad. In Melbourne, Vincenzo worked for many years as a tailor.

The records span the years 1890s to 1980s. The letters sent from Italy by family members for over sixty years give an insight into the life and traditions of an Italian village and on how contacts were maintained and networks established for the exchange of news and goods. Items such as a coffee grinder, Provolone cheese (a specialty of the region) and fashion magazines were sent from Viggiano to the Candela family on a regular basis. They in return sent back gifts of money or valuable presents such as a wristwatch.

The tradition of seasonal migration is well documented in the photographs that depict Vincenzo with other Viggianesi musicians in studio portraits taken in the various countries they visited. Detailed entries in small diaries list the earnings and living expenses. Religion played a very important role in the life of migrants. The devotion to the patron saint did not diminish with their departure. Entries in the diaries of Vincenzo show that many paesani living in Brazil sought the protection and blessing of the Madonna di Viggiano by commissioning and paying for masses to be celebrated upon Vincenzo's return to the village. An insight into the economy of the village at the beginning of the twentieth century is provided by the lists of wedding presents received by Vincenzo for both his first marriage to Angelarosa Paoliello and his second to Emmanuela Nigro. Angelarosa died giving birth to their second son Angelo in October 1909 and within a few months Vincenzo had remarried: the children needed a mother to look after them. Each gift is described in detail and for the most expensive ones there is also an estimate of the value. This would help to reciprocate in future occasions with presents of equal value.

A record of the music lessons given by two well-known fellow Viggianesi musicians (Briglia and Curcio) to young Angelo Candela in Melbourne show how immigrants would often rely and seek the support of members within their own community to teach their children. Vincenzo, alongside with other Italian tailors living in Australia in the 1920s and 1930s such as Del Monaco and Cavedon, introduced Italian fashion to this country, a contribution which would expand and continue with the immigration of thousands of post-war Italian women who applied their sewing skills to the development of a flourishing Australian clothing industry.

### Del Monaco Collection

This collection of over 100 photographs is a valuable addition to the Candela Collection and other records held by the Society on the story and contribution of the musicians from Basilicata, whose presence in Australia dates back to 1868.<sup>10</sup> Images covering the early history of this community include studio portraits of musicians, weddings, children, school groups, family and community gatherings. The images show that intermarriage was common amongst the Viggianesi, a trend which continued well into the 1940s, strengthening this small but important and well-established regional community.

### Santospirito Collection

Another large and important holding of original documents was donated by the daughter of Mrs Lena Santospirito. Mrs Santospirito was born in Ballarat, Victoria, in 1895 from Italian immigrants from the Aeolian Islands. As an adult she totally and unconditionally embraced the welfare of the Melbourne Italian community by volunteering twenty years of her life, from 1940 to 1960, to the welfare of the Italian community as head of the Archbishop's Italian Relief Committee. This committee was set up by Archbishop Mannix and Father Ugo Modotti during the Second World War to provide assistance to Italian POWs interned in camps in Victoria and to the families of Italian civil internees. After the war the Committee continued its welfare operation by providing assistance to newly arrived Italian immigrants. The material provides a deep insight into the magnitude of post-war mass-migration from Italy and gives accurate accounts on the experiences and the difficulties the immigrants faced in the new country.

This collection is the subject of an important collaborative agreement with the University of Melbourne. In March of this year work commenced on a unique project integrating history and archives management. An application was made to the Australian Research Council in 1999 to fund the archival arrangement and description of the Santospirito collection, and the historical research leading to a PhD thesis on the life and work of Lena Santospirito. The outcomes of this three-year project will include a definitive guide to the collection, an electronic finding aid which will enhance access to these records by researchers in the future, and a PhD thesis which brings together historical research on the collection, as well as other archival collections of great importance to Australia's Italian community, such as those held by the National Archives of Australia, the National Library and the Melbourne Diocesan Historical Commission.

Other important archival material in the Italian Historical Society Collection includes:

### Italian Diplomatic Archives Collection

The Italian Diplomatic Archives collection held in microfilm format comprises approximately 12,000 consular records, mainly correspondence and reports, between the Italian consular representatives in Australia and the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Rome from 1855 to 1940. The first part of the records trace the early history of the establishment of Italian consular representation in Australia and document the forging of links between the new nation of Italy, which had emerged from the Risorgimento, and the Australian colonies, particularly in the field of cultural relations. The second part documents the relationship and cooperation between the two countries from Federation up to the Second World War, including the rise of Fascism and its influence on Australia's Italian community.

To facilitate access and provide a guide to the collection, the Society commissioned the summarized translation of the records to Professor Louis Green and Dr Gerardo Papalia. This work is now completed and the first volume of the register for the period 1855-1870 will soon be published.

### Index of Italian Civil Internees

When Mussolini entered into the Second World War conflict in June 1940, he did not envisage the dramatic impact that his decision would make on the lives of Italian immigrants living in foreign countries allied to England. In Australia over 4,700 Italy – born immigrants were taken from their homes and sent to internment camps, many for long and painful years.

The Society has compiled an index of all the internees with individual records extracted from the Service and Casualty Forms of the Australian Military Forces. Data recorded includes: date, place and region of birth; date and place of arrest; date of release from internment and profession and name of next of kin. The region of birth in Italy provides valuable information on the regional composition of the migrant community in Australia before the Second World War.

### Ephemera and Business Records

This comprises a substantial collection of documentation in a variety of formats relating to a wide range of subjects. A few examples are: an important collection of menus from leading Italian restaurants, covering

the 1920s to the 1950s; regulations of early Italian clubs in Melbourne; copies of minutes, functions and membership records of Cavour Club and Societa' Mutuo Soccorso Isole Eolie; annual reports and



commemorative publications of Italian regional clubs active in Melbourne in the post-war years; ledgers of Italian businesses in Carlton; full sets of programs for the 'Italian Week' festival held in the 1970s and for the more recent Italian Arts Festival; . A collection of information booklets in Italian published by the Australian Immigration Department in the 1960s and 1970s for immigrants was considered rare by Australian Archives who borrowed them for a travelling exhibition in 1997.

Co.As.It. Records and Archives

Co.As.It, the parent body of the Society, was established in 1967. As well as being one of the most important Italian community organizations in Australia, it is also the largest migrant welfare body. It has comprehensive archives which record not only its own history and internal records but also many files relating to submissions on Government policies, both Italian and Australian on important issues concerning education, welfare, employment, child care and care of the aged.



### Preservation of our history and heritage

If we accept that knowledge of the present and the future presupposes knowledge of the past, it is of the utmost importance that the histories such as those handed down by Italian migrants do not fade. But fade away they might, if the custodians entrusted with the care of these records were not prepared to protect them from the ravages of time itself: from environmental changes, disasters and excessive handling.

It is for this reason that the Italian Historical Society has embarked on a program of preservation, including the creation of a computer data base, for the photographic collection. Under the cataloguing structure created by the Society, researchers can access images and information on one or more of ten fields, including date of the photograph, subject matter, family name, title or description, trades and locality. The database also has provision for viewing the image on the monitor and for producing a digital copy print in colour or black and white for research and publication purposes, subject to copyright restrictions. The program is still in its infancy and it will be some years before a comprehensive data-base is realised. In the mean time access to the collection is open and will continue on a manual basis.

A preservation program has been put in place to run parallel with the cataloguing process. Hence details of each photograph are entered on the database and the image scanned. The photograph must then be protected from the risk of damage from the environment – light, temperature, relative humidity – and handling. Copying the original onto a large format, creating an archival negative and a copyprint is an added preservation measure as well as a means of improving accessibility for researchers.

The above preservation procedures are carried out on photographs in relatively sound condition. In some cases restoration or conservation work is required to the original item. Any such fragile or damaged item is referred to the conservators at Museum Victoria and the State Library of Victoria, with whom the Society has an ongoing partnership agreement.

Discussions are being held with the State Library of Victoria for the scanning of the entire photographic collection into their general electronic cataloguing system. Under this program, which is considered a model for other Australian collecting agencies, the long-term life of the collection is ensured.

Making a commitment to create an electronic database necessitates a wider preservation strategy. An immediate question which comes to mind when we consider the extensive resources (both human and financial) required for such a project is: does the collection warrant the time, labour and money? Is the Italian Historical Society collection so important? Judging by the success of the exhibitions presented by the Society and the number of PhD students, researchers, film-makers, writers, historians and publishers who have accessed the collection in the last five years, the answer can only be a positive one.

### The Society and Schools

The Society serves schools in a whole variety of ways. This can occur directly by providing material to the Italian language classes which are conducted or serviced by Co.As.It. It also provides material to schools generally on issues such as the history of Italian migration to Australia.

Sometimes the Society can play a critical role in assisting teachers and students in relation to important cultural events. A good illustration is the great exhibition which came to Melbourne in 1997 – the Treasures of San Marco and the Veneto for which staff and members of the Society helped in providing special lectures before and during the exhibition.

### The Society and the Community

The Society enjoys credibility as a collecting body both because of its sound twenty years of good stewardship but also because it is firmly anchored in the Italian community. Being part of Co.As.It., it has easy access to many thousands of members of the largest Italian community in Australia. The Society, though it is entirely professional and values its links with academia, is essentially an Italian community organization. That is its special strength. It seeks to serve in a unique way the interests of the Italian community and the wider Australian community. Support in the past from the Italian Government has therefore been both enlightened and entirely justified. It is submitted that the Society's record and its special role merit support for its work from both the Italian Governments and the Australian Governments, Federal and State.

Illustrations

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1. IRO Camp, Aversa, 1952. Friends farewelling an Italian fellow refugee bound for the U.S.A. Others in this photograph would in turn emigrate to Australia.
2. Bonegilla Migrant Centre, c.1952. A group of Italian displaced women formed new friendships in the hostel in Australia.
3. Sir Zelman Cowen [left], Governor of Australia, and Sir James Gobbo, President of Co.As.It. and founder of the Italian Historical Society, at the opening of the exhibition Bridging Two Worlds: Jews, Italians and Carlton, at Museum Victoria, 1992.
4. Mrs Giannina Dichiera bottle feeding lambs in her farm at Irymple, near Mildura, 1951.
5. Funeral of five men who perished in an accident on a construction site at Castiglione a Casauria, Pescara, 1949.
6. Nino Borsari [left] with Italian migrant cyclists racing in the Vic Pro International Race, 1950s.
7. Important events in the Candela family, such as the death of Vincenzo in 1943, are recorded in a number of small diaries.
8. A 'diploma' awarded in 1943 to Italian civil internee Bruno Ravagnani by fellow internees for his contribution to the 'Me ne Frego' theatre group formed during internment at Loveday Camp, South Australia in the Second World War.
9. Co.As.It. Ladies Committee at a gathering in 1978. Amongst them are Lady Gobbo and Mrs. Elda Vaccari, founder and then president of Co.As.It.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Evidence of this early temporary migration is to be found in the archival records and photographs in the collection of the Italian Historical Society-CO.AS.IT (IHS), Melbourne.

<sup>2</sup>See Pino Bartolomé file in IHS Collection.

<sup>3</sup>G. Cresciani, *The Italians*, ABC Enterprises, 1985, p.45

<sup>4</sup>The proposal to found an Italian Historical Society was put forward by Sir James Gobbo. A sub-committee of second generation Italian Australians was subsequently formed comprising Maria Tence, Gaspare Sirianni, Sarina Cassino, John Bono and Adam Santilli.

<sup>5</sup>S. Cassino, *Italian Settlement in Australia*, Italian Historical Society-Co.As.It., 1982.

<sup>6</sup>This exhibition was the major contribution by Australia's Italian community to the celebrations of the Bicentenary of Australia. Between 1988 and 1992 it was presented in the major galleries and libraries of all the States and in ten country Victoria centres. An Italian version was sent to Italy in 1990 where it travelled to over fifteen major centres in the regions of origin of Australia's Italian migrants.

<sup>7</sup>I. Martinuzzi O'Brien, 'Sources for the Study of Italian Immigration in the Italian Historical Society and in Victoria', paper presented to the III *Colloquio sulle fonti per la storia dell'emigrazione: L'emigrazione italiana in Africa, Asia ed Oceania, 1870-1970*, Ministero per i Beni Culturali e Ambientali, Rome, 28-30 October 1991.

<sup>8</sup>A. Davine, *Vegnimo da Conco ma simo Veneti: A study of the immigration and settlement of the Veneti in Central and West Gippsland 1925-1970*, MA thesis, University of Melbourne 1999. This study also examines how a regional community was reinforced by the introduction of new waves of migration and intermarriage.

<sup>9</sup>P. Bertini Malgarini 1998, *Scritture di periferia: I testi dell'emigrazione nel Victoria e la ricostruzione della storia linguistico-culturale italiana*, paper presented to Convegno Internazionale 'L'italiano oltre frontiera', Catholic University of Lovanio, Belgium, 22-24 April.

<sup>10</sup>IHS microfilm collection of 'MAE Italian Diplomatic Archives, 1855-1943' – Registry of Italian Nationals residing in Melbourne, January 1868, p.1237.



# Irrefutable or Imagined?: The Legacy of Italian POWs on Australian Society During and After World War Two

*John Hall*

A mere decade and a half after the end of the Second World War, Australia had embraced a significant number of migrants from a country that it had once been at war with; migrants who chose a country which had previously pursued a vigorous restrictionist policy against non-English speaking peoples. This paper will focus upon a little-known aspect of Italian migration to Australia: the presence of Italian prisoners of war (POWs) during World War Two, and seek to determine if this involuntary influx of Italian nationals exerted any influence on attitudes and acceptance towards Italians in the postwar years.

Generally, previous examinations of Italian migration fail to mention the prisoners,<sup>1</sup> which infers that the prisoner experience was an aberration, perhaps not even true migration. Few have viewed the POWs as having any influence on postwar migration trends. One exception is Gianfranco Cresciani who is adamant that the prisoners had the shocking but psychologically therapeutic effect of making Australians less jittery about the presence ... of a sizable non-English speaking migrant component, and aware of the advantage, as well as of the necessity, of a large scale immigration program after the war.<sup>2</sup>

Others have stated that “the POW episode [...] demonstrated how useful Italian labour could be, setting the scene for large postwar intakes from Italy.”<sup>3</sup> Yet, there are some who are not as convinced, such as Rosario Lampugnani and Richard Bosworth.<sup>4</sup> Another opinion, expounded by Romano Ugolini, suggests that the wartime presence of the prisoners plus the thousands of Italian civilian internees “prepared Government and public opinion for massive post-war Italian migration”. Ugolini further believes that relations between Italians and Australians symbolised that ‘a bridge had been established between countries so distant [...] created during war and forgotten with the advent of peace [which] suddenly became useful and precious’ once it was realised that British migrants would not be forthcoming.<sup>5</sup>

Australia was an unlikely destination for the estimated 18,400 Italian POWs transported between 1941 and 1945. The society into which the Italian POWs entered was, by all indicators, British in appearance and

outlook, a result of the White Australia policy which had been enforced and embraced by Australian authorities since before 1900. There was no Australian version of the Statue of Liberty to welcome migrants to the country, nor would there ever be. The 1933 census could locate less than 26,800 Italian-born people and by the start of the war, fewer than 33,000 Italians had settled in Australia, representing less than one percent of Australia's seven million inhabitants.<sup>6</sup>

Before the Second World War, anti-Italian prejudice, fostered by harsh economic conditions and at times manifesting into violence, was conspicuous, especially in Queensland and Western Australia where large populations of Italians lived.<sup>7</sup> After Mussolini's declaration of war against Britain in June 1940, an Australia-wide outpouring of anti-Italian sentiments swept over the continent: by March 1944, Italians accounted for nearly 70 percent of approximately 7,000 "aliens" interned in Australia.<sup>8</sup> Accompanying this hysteria were numerous rumours and accusations against Italians living in Australia, often supported by nationalistic pieces in many newspapers.<sup>9</sup>

Meanwhile, the prisoners were the focal point of a labour scheme devised by the Commonwealth Government to help alleviate an acute shortage of rural workers. From June 1943 over 15,000 prisoners were placed unguarded into the care of employers who supervised the Italians with a variety of rural labour tasks. While the scheme was enthusiastically supported by farmers in all states, the presence of the prisoners attracted a sustained and bitter level of opposition, polarising many communities.

A common perception saw the wartime scheme as the first step in an insidious plan which prepared postwar Australia to be populated by former Italian prisoners whose standards of living and wages were lower than that of (white) Australians. The ready acceptance of the prisoners as labourers by many Australians was unacceptable to some individuals within the wider community, including union members and members of the Returned Sailors', Soldiers' and Airmen's Imperial League of Australia (RSSAILA). Moreover, the POWs became embroiled in the debate on the makeup of Australia's postwar population, and the suitability of Italians and others as possible future citizens. Public opinion was divided, with many arguments and questions raised.

Among the first to enter the debate was the distinguished historian, C.E.W. Bean. In September 1943 Bean wrote in response to a RSSAILA proposal to ban sales of land to enemy aliens for 30 years after the war. While respecting the organisation, Bean was aghast that the group

would “promote ideas so utterly divorced from reality.” “The problem really facing Australia,” he wrote, “is not how to keep out aliens: on the contrary it is certainly the opposite — how to bring them in and absorb them.” Bean cited examples of other countries — such as Canada and the United States — which had previously encouraged migration. Later, Bean specifically mentions Germany and Italy, and suggests that ‘whites’ from these nations could be included in any postwar migration scheme.<sup>10</sup> Such reasoning did not sit well with others.

Other correspondents urged that Italians should not be allowed to settle in Australia after the war, maintaining that: the Italian character was not suitable for “arduous pioneering work”; their “racial stamina” as soldiers was questionable; and they had a lower standard of living.<sup>11</sup> One person, however, counselled that Australians should not live “in a spirit of perpetual revenge”, and allow Germans and Italians to migrate once the war was finalised. This reasoning was immediately objected to by another, arguing that it was the “quality of the immigrant is what counts most, not the quantity”, and pointed to the “cruel and vengeful spirit” of the Italians which precluded them from being considered as potential migrants.<sup>12</sup>

During the war, rumours circulated that the prisoners may not be sent back to Italy after the war, further intensifying opposition towards the Italians. This fear was unfounded, but nevertheless was coupled with a desire to see a white Australia continue to exist. “I venture to say,” wrote a soldier’s mother, “that after the war, the prisoners [...] will not be able to emigrate quickly enough to get back where they had such a paradise for a prison [...] I say that this country is ours, and should be kept as British as possible”.<sup>13</sup> The unthinkable — Italians actually marrying Australian women — inflamed another, who pondered this scenario: “Do we want a White Australia or do we want half castes and unhappy marriages?”<sup>14</sup>

Nevertheless, supporters of the Italians came from all sections of the community, even from within the RSSAILA. A 1944 anonymous article in the Victorian RSL’s magazine *Mufti* came as a response to many League branches demanding all prisoners be immediately sent back to Italy after the war.<sup>15</sup> The author believed that Australia may have to rely upon citizens of enemy countries as future migrants, arguing that their patriotism was “hardly the less meritorious” than that of Allied servicemen. Continuing, the following thoughts must have been considered traitorous by some:

“Every Britisher in an enemy country is expected today to seize every opportunity of hampering the local war effort; in fact, we should have

little regard for a man who could have sabotaged a plant but did not do so. What is good for Australians must also be good for Germans and Italians, and the gameness of an alien trying to help his country at war is a qualification rather than otherwise for residence in this country after the war.”<sup>16</sup>

The response was swift and scathing, and one League member was particularly incensed to think that Italians might be considered possible migrants:

“The Italian is the military joke of the world. As an ally he is useless; as a foe, contemptible; as a victor he is a sadist. How shall such enemy aliens’ children, born in Australia, be any help in upholding the Australian tradition?”<sup>17</sup>

Even grassroots supporters of the Curtin Labor government voiced their objections to the possibility of Italian migrants. One Australian Labor Party branch wrote:

“We strongly oppose any attempt to bring Italian immigrants to Australia. Members considered that Italians and their descendants would not at any time become good Australians. They [Italians] always settle in communities, teach their own customs and language. Furthermore, they could not be considered a safety valve were [sic] the British Empire is concerned.”<sup>18</sup>

Fears of ‘little *Italies*’ were common: an RSSAILA conference in December 1945 passed a resolution asking the Commonwealth Government not to renew any treaties with Italy, as well as to prevent the “foundation of Italian communities in Australia”.<sup>19</sup>

However, while some considered the Italians as less than suitable, others were of a different opinion. The work ethic of many prisoners particularly impressed their employers. One noted that “the Italians I have employed are hard-working, cheerful men, who learn quickly and do not worry about hours ... in my district and other country districts [the POWs] have saved the day for the farmers.”<sup>20</sup> Others were reported as saying that they had trouble stopping the prisoners from working, while another stated that “some of the prisoners could show Australians how to swing an axe.”<sup>21</sup>

It was within rural communities that the Italians appeared to have a greater impact at a personal level for many Australians. Although the 1933 census revealed that 61 percent of Italian-born population lived in rural areas (well above the Australian average of 49 percent), the majority of these lived in concentrated settlements in northern Queensland, Victoria and southern New South Wales.<sup>22</sup> Initially, for most rural dwellers, the prisoners were an exotic novelty: their magenta-dyed

uniforms, different language and physical appearances as well as their customs and culture immediately set them apart from the ‘typical’ Australian. But the labour scheme brought a contact and a cultural experience of the Old World directly into the homes of many Australians, many of whom had never previously encountered foreigners. These experiences and encounters provided many with a means of escaping their isolation, and conceded a breadth of awareness and understanding for both the prisoner and his ‘captor’.

“We loved them [...] my brother and I just thought they were part of our family,” declared one member of a family who employed three prisoners.<sup>23</sup> Many prisoners, in fact, did become part of the family — surrogate family members — participating in typical family activities such as going to dances, parties, picture shows, even being allowed to hunt with guns and go on holidays with their new ‘family’. This aspect of interaction between the Italians and Australians cannot be underestimated: the prisoners transforming from a faceless, nameless enemy soldier into an individual with a personality and a family. Familiarity often lead to acceptance of the Italians as ‘decent’ people but in many instances this went further: some prisoners and family members formed close and lasting bonds, which endured decades after the war (and often extending to the next generation).

That many former prisoners returned to Australia, often sponsored by the farmer who once employed them as POWs, suggests that the prisoners did have some influence on postwar migration. The return of these Italians benefited both parties. The farmer knew the work ethic of the Italian, while the Italian was returning to a district and people who had accepted him as an equal during the war. For some prisoners, the decision to return to Australia was never in doubt.

“I had nothing to go back to [in Italy]”, recalled a former prisoner, “All my friends were in Australia”, while another stated: “I didn’t really want to go back [to Italy].”<sup>24</sup> They were sentiments shared by many of their compatriots. Amazingly, as repatriation drew nearer, there appears to have been more escapes from POW camps by Italians after the war than there had ever been during the war.<sup>25</sup> This large number of escapes, plus their frequency, suggests many prisoners did not want to leave Australia. This notion is supported by contemporary newspaper reports: estimates from 20 to 40 percent of prisoners were given for those wishing to remain in Australia.<sup>26</sup> There were certainly no attempts to ascertain how many POWs would prefer to return to Australia, a situation which suited many Australians who were pleased to see the prisoners gone.

Nonetheless, the ratification of a peace treaty with Italy in 1948, together with the exchange of diplomatic representatives, must have dismayed some Australians, especially after government ministers announced that this would mean former enemy nationals would be permitted to migrate.<sup>27</sup> One observer at the time believed that this situation may have repercussions, because if Australia preferred “European migrants to overseas invaders, this may well be the thin end of a substantial wedge.”<sup>28</sup> Meantime, postwar public opinion polls were not a glowing endorsement of migration by Italians: only 21 percent approved of Italians, well behind other nationalities (Germans: 36 percent; Chinese 31; Greek 26), but ahead of Jews (17 percent) and Negroes (10 percent).<sup>29</sup>

However, those who contend that the prisoners did influence postwar attitudes fail to mention that conditions in postwar Italy encouraged migration: a shattered economy and infrastructure, rampant inflation and poor employment prospects. It should not also be forgotten that many Italians wanted to leave Italy and migrate anywhere — although, to be fair, Australia and Canada were two countries that benefited the most from postwar emigration from Italy. There can be no denying that Australia was a favourite destination for Italians: in the four decades after 1945, a net figure of over 300,000 Italian-born migrants settled in Australia, the largest number arriving from 1951 to 1961, when over 170,000 arrived.<sup>30</sup>

What, then, can be made of the presence of Italian prisoners during the war? Wartime conditions certainly prompted debate over the size and racial makeup of Australia’s postwar population, a debate made more intense by the temporary increase in the Italian population. The war also ensured that the Australia that had existed up until 1939 was gone forever, washed away by changing political, social and economic factors which Australia had to embrace and that the traditional barriers to non-English migrants would have to be breached once peace was established. Wilton and Bosworth wrote that after the war “the ancient fortresses of racist Australia fell one by one, with scarcely a whimper of protest or regret from politicians, bureaucrats or public opinion.”<sup>31</sup> With this in mind, the ‘bridge’ which Ugolini mentions was almost certainly constructed during the war, at least in kind.

Further, many rural communities had been exposed to a ‘cultural invasion’, discovering that Italians were not the stereotypical ‘dagoes’ as depicted by some fellow Australians. Daily interaction with the Italians during the war meant that the term ‘enemy’ seemed inappropriate, even insulting. Further, the willingness of the Italian to express a desire to

leave his homeland and return to a country that had once labelled him the enemy was viewed as the actions of an asset rather than a liability.

It would be mistaken to believe that the prisoners had no effect on Australian society — after all, they entered the heartland of a conservative British society and had been embraced by its rural population. But it is equally inaccurate to accept that the prisoners alone paved the way for the postwar migration boom: external factors also encouraged migration to Australia, not only of Italians but a multitude of other nationalities. While the presence of Italian prisoners during the war was temporary, their presence in such numbers and localities was as probably as significant as any others in aiding in the demolition of the continent's 'racial fortresses'. While not intended, the POW scheme, initiated by harsh wartime economics, was significant in establishing postwar social links which continue to benefit Australia.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> See, for example: W.D. Borrie, *Italians and Germans in Australia*, Cheshire, Melbourne, 1954; Charles A. Price, *Southern Europeans in Australia*, Oxford University Press, London, 1963; James Jupp, *Arrivals and Departures*, Cheshire, Melbourne, 1966.

<sup>2</sup> Gianfranco Cresciani, 'Captivity in Australia: the case of the Italian prisoners of war, 1940-1947', *Studi-Emigrazione/Etudes-Migrations*, Vol. 26, No.34, June 1989, p.218; Cresciani, in another article, stated that the POWs 'paved the way for the postwar Italian mass migration' to Australia: 'Australia, Italy and Italians 1845-1945', *Studi-Emigrazione/Etudes-Migrations*, Vol. 20, No.69, March 1983, p.16.

<sup>3</sup> Claudio and Caroline Alcorso, 'Italians in Australia during World War II', in *Australia's Italians. Culture and Community in a Changing Society*, S.Castles, C.Alcorso, G.Rando & E.Vasta (eds), Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1992, p.34.

<sup>4</sup> Rosario Lampugnani, 'Postwar migration policies with particular reference to Italian migration to Australia', *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, Vol.33, No.3, 1987, pp.197-208; Richard Bosworth, *Cop What Lot? A Study of Australian Attitudes Towards Italian Mass Migration in the 1950s*: cited in Lampugnani, op.cit., p.198.

<sup>5</sup> Romano Ugolini, 'From POW to emigrant: The post-war migrant experience', in R.Bosworth & R.Ugolini (eds), *War, Internment and Mass Migration: The Italo-Australian Experience 1940-1990*, Gruppo Editoriale Internazionale, Rome, 1992, pp.130, 133.

<sup>6</sup> W.D.Borrie, *Italians and Germans in Australia*, Cheshire, Melbourne, 1954, p.51; Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, *Official Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia No. 35 (1942 & 1943)*, Commonwealth Government Printer, Canberra, 1944, p. 307.

<sup>7</sup> Gianfranco Cresciani, 'Australia, Italy and Italians 1845-1945', *Studi-Emigrazione/Etudes-Migrations*, Vol. 20, No.69, March 1983, pp. 14-18.

<sup>8</sup> Noel W.Lamidey, *Aliens Control in Australia 1939-46*, Self-published, Sydney, 1974, p.52. The next highest number interned were German (1,115) and Japanese (587).

<sup>9</sup> Chief protagonist was *Smith's Weekly*, a virulent nationalist newspaper which labelled Italians as 'human garbage', and urged the Commonwealth Government to intern all civilian Italians. Smith's stated that Australians did not 'want their [Italians] blood in the white Australia race': *Smith's Weekly*, 15 June 1940, p.10.

<sup>10</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 September 1943, p.3; 21 September 1943, p.3.

<sup>11</sup> *The Bulletin*, 15 December 1943, p.27. A tongue-in-cheek reply to this suggested that perhaps Japanese or other formidable fighters should be allowed into Australia, while the Italians' work ethic indeed rendered them 'outstanding and dangerous competitors': 12 January 1944, p.27.

<sup>12</sup> *Glen Innes Examiner*, 17 March 1945, p.2; 22 March 1945, p.4.

<sup>13</sup> *Northern Star*, 8 January 1945, p.2

<sup>14</sup> *Northern Star*, 30 January 1945, p.6.

<sup>15</sup> 'Clericus', *Mufti*, Vol.9, No.8,1 August 1944, p.18.

<sup>16</sup> 'Clericus', loc.cit.

<sup>17</sup> *Smith's Weekly*, 20 January 1945, p.5.

<sup>18</sup> NAA Canb, Series A433/1 Item 1945/2/2294:Letter, 14 April 1945.

<sup>19</sup> National Archives of Australia (NAA) Canb, Series A434/1 Item 1946/3/63: Letter, 3 December 1945.

<sup>20</sup> John Hall, "Mr Foster was noble enough to defend our rights, often getting himself into difficult situations": One man's extraordinary relationship with his Italian POWs', *Italian Historical Society Journal*, Vol.7 No.2, August-December 1999, pp. 9-15.

<sup>21</sup> *Inverell Times*, 6 March 1944, p.2.

<sup>22</sup> Helen Ware, *A Profile of the Italian Community in Australia*, Citadel Press, Melbourne, 1981, p.13; Borrie, op.cit., p.51.

<sup>23</sup> Mrs L.McCosker: Interview, 10 August 1997.

<sup>24</sup> Ann Jackson-Nakano, 'The reluctant immigrants', *Migration*, Dept of Immigration,Local Government and Ethnic Affairs, November/December 1990, No.81, p.3; Mr O.Campagner: Interview, 7 May 1997.

<sup>25</sup> The files of escapees were inevitably checked by the Army, and it was sometimes noted that the escaped prisoner had been promised employment by a former employer, resulting in discrete enquiries (and sometimes an arrest) in the district where the errant prisoner once worked: NAA Syd, Series SP1714/1 Item 38319 Part 4: ibid, Part 5.

<sup>26</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 December 1946, p.5; 25 December 1946, p.5.

<sup>27</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 March 1948, p.3; 10 April 1948, p.1.

<sup>28</sup> N.O.P.Pyke, 'An outline of Italian immigration into Australia', *Australia Quarterly*, Vol.20, No.3, 1948, pp.109.

<sup>29</sup> Janis Wilton & Richard Bosworth, *Old Worlds and New Australia*, Penguin, Ringwood, 1984 p.31. The percentage approval for Italians had increased by 1964, rising to 47 percent, although still only ahead of Chinese and Negroes.

<sup>30</sup> Ware, op.cit., pp. 16-18; Wilton & Bosworth, op.cit., p.66.

<sup>31</sup> Wilton & Bosworth, op.cit., p.17.

## Dialect Maintenance amongst First and Second Generation Italians from the Abruzzi Region in Sydney.

*Madilina Tresca*

Stories about my grandparents and life in Abruzzo dominated my thoughts as a child, more so than did fairytales. This and a curiosity to inquire in depth understanding of the Abruzzese character inspired me to focus this study on the Abruzzese dialect.

'Dialect', not known for its academic features, is a spoken language. It is acquired and learned growing up in one's family. Dialect becomes a form of communication that is unique and exists only within the family. The language of dialect gives the Abruzzese person a sense of belonging, an identity and a link to a past forever gone. Its linguistic features give insight into its geographical location on the map and also identifies the paese from which the person is from. Dialect is only understood by the locals of a paese and not others who hail from nearby "paesi". It makes no difference whether the paese is one metre or 100 metres away.

The Abruzzese dialect has been in existence for many centuries, evolving into a language with its own linguistic features through trial and error. In the 1990s the Abruzzese dialect continues to change from being totally eliminated from one's vocabulary to speaking it with touches of other languages and other Italian dialects. Modifying one's expression in daily communication does happen at the expense of the dialect.

Post World War II saw many Italians migrate to Australia, thanks to the sponsorship system. Many more arrived as proxy brides. The matrimony was celebrated with the bride in Italy and the groom in Australia. An uncle or brother would stand in for the groom and speak on his behalf. Prior to this a priest in Australia would have been consulted, papers signed and sent to a priest in Italy.

One such man to marry by proxy had migrated to Australia from Castelvechio Subequo (l'Aquila) in the 1950s. He was Francesco Tresca, my father. His proxy marriage took place in Italy in 1959. In his place stood my grandfather, Vittorio Tresca, who very proudly, on behalf of his son uttered "I do" to my father's bride, Dea Santilli, my mother. She migrated to Australia soon after.

My parents played a part in the massive Italian migration of the 1950s and like the majority of Italian migrants, were not educated. The Italians arriving in Australia spoke their local dialect that was definitely not understood by other Italians and knew very little Standard Italian. Italians also brought with them a strong sense of regional identity and possessed a strong sense of patriotism for their paese rather than for the nation-state of their birth. In a new country, two needs competed: the emotional need to be with fellow countrymen/women and the need to acquire the ability to speak and understand English in order to survive.

Regional dialects became the means of identifying Italians who had originated from one's "paesi" but those dialects soon came under pressure. The need to be understood by other Italians became just as significant as the need to be understood by fellow Australians, hence the regional dialects were challenged by both Italian and English.

I was very much aware of the dialect differences from an early age. Conversations between my father and other Abruzzesi often centred upon whose dialect sounded the best and which dialect was easier to understand.

The Abruzzese community permeates the geographical expanse of Sydney.

No research to date has been undertaken that could outline precisely where all Abruzzesi reside. Identifiable groups are evident in the community. A large number of Celanesi from Celano (l'Aquila) are located in Sydney's South Western suburbs of Merrylands, Wetherill Park and surrounding suburbs, while a second group, the Assergesi from Assergi (l'Aquila), reside in Liverpool, Moorebank and Prestons. Further out Sydney's West in the city of Blacktown is a large group from Bazzano (l'Aquila) and San Gregorio (l'Aquila). Although this has not been formally documented it is commonly reported by informants.

The research was planned and the interviews conducted in Sydney in 1997 and 1998.

**IMPORTANT:** It must be noted that the following figures represent the group I interviewed, and therefore they are not to be applied to a broader context. Very few students are included because of the difficulty in finding them and/or obtaining parental approval for an interview to take place. It is one of my regrets that I was not able to include a larger number of High School and University students. Their opinions and attitudes towards the dialect and being Abruzzese and would have been worth the while to document.

Interviewing just Abruzzesi was not sufficient. The Celanesi and the Assergesi are a large group in Sydney. Studying their dialect

maintenance would have excluded the rest of Abruzzo. I wanted to embody the whole region and not just the obvious dominate group. As this research required me to study within a framework it was decided that the main focus of my research would be solely on Abruzzese migrants who had married someone from their own Province, arrived in Sydney in the 1950s, 1960s and early 1970s and the children of such couples. To get an overview picture one member per family was interviewed.

The questionnaire was administered to 99 Sydney residents. In my statistical data only 95 interviews are recorded. One interviewee is a First Generation but a recent arrival to Australia and has since returned to Italy. The other three belong to the same families. Their keenness and enthusiasm to want to be interviewed left me with no choice but to interview them: individually. Their comments were noted in my final essay.

My First and Second Generation group of which I will be talking about consist of 80 Subjects: 20 Males and 20 Females in each Generation. (The remainder of Subjects, including both First and Second Generation fall into my Mixed Group category. In this category the First and Second Generation are not highlighted as separate groups. My Mixed Group are Abruzzese migrants whose spouses are from other Italian Regions, Australia or ethnic groups and children of such couples. These results are not included here)

My questionnaire was printed and delivered in Italian. I am indebted to Han Wang who generously gave me her time in her home. My visits often went well into the night. Her expertise with statistics was very much valued and her patient manner in teaching me was very much appreciated.

My Subjects were found through word of mouth. Some Abruzzesi gave me 1 up to 5 names while others gave me none. First contact was made on the telephone and was crucial in establishing an immediate rapport with people not known to you but only through the previous Subject. Once the date and the time for the interview had been confirmed, a copy of the research information was sent.

Attached was a handwritten letter to thank the Subject in advance for their participation, and the date and time of the interview. The letter was posted up to a week in advance before the interview, enabling the Subject to have ample time to digest the information and consider the implication of signing the consent form.

Interviews were conducted in the Subject's home. Typically, following the completion of each interview, the Subject (at his/her

agreement) gave me the telephone number of another Abruzzese. Two weeks passed before this person was contacted, giving ample time for the last interviewee to inform this next person of the interviewer's call, and to reassure this person that the questionnaire was simple and no personal questions would be asked.

The interview consisted of a questionnaire, one cassette tape and two photographs. The interview concluded with Subjects giving responses on tape about the photographs.

My large map of Abruzzo became an excellent icebreaker. The 'ooooos and aaaahs' I received from the First Generation as they set eyes upon their region was very touching. Most of them had never seen a complete map of Abruzzo. There was that slight discomfort and embarrassment when they realised they could not read the map nor quickly pinpoint where their paese was situated. The reaction was always the same. In the many variations of dialect this similar sentence was uttered:

*"Ma il paese dove vengo io è piccolo non c'è sulla mappa".*

(The town where I come from is small, it is not on the map.)

The "paesi" was always located! A majority of the First Generation were not so much dumbfounded but moved and touched that their "paesi", which they had assumed as insignificant to the rest of Italy should be important enough to be printed on a map. This was often followed by dead silence as many of the First Generation just sat and stared at their "paese's" name printed on a map. Some never asked the name of the "paesi" of origin of my parents but a few did. The ones who had passed through my parents' "paesi" at some stage in their lives had been interested in focusing on the distance between it and their "paesi". This did not last for long as their attention quickly returned to their "paesi" of birth. However, it was the Second Generation that showed more interest and enthusiasm in the geography of the whole region and not just the "paesi" of their family origin.

### The Abruzzesi of Sydney

I now make mention of only a small part of the results of my Field Research.

### Who are my Abruzzese Subjects?

#### The First Generation

47.5%	were born in Chieti
30%	were born in l'Aquila
22.5%	were born in Pescara

### The Second Generation

- 57.5% have both sets of parents from l'Aquila
- 30% have both sets of parents from Chieti
- 12.5% have both sets of parents from Pescara.

Teramo is not mentioned as I was unable to find couples where both husband and wife came from this Province nor children of such couples. [Teramo is mentioned in my Mixed Group.]

This is only speculation, however, I did get the impression that out of the four Provinces the dominant Abruzzese group come from the Province of Chieti.

It should also be noted that I received many refusals. In hindsight I could have had the majority being from Pescara. A funded National Survey is needed to document the exact numbers of not only Abruzzesi but so too the rest of the Italian community.

### What was the Educational Background of this group?

#### The First Generation

- 87.5% attended Primary School in Italy
- 7.5% attended High School in Italy
- 2.5% obtained a Teritary Education in Italy

#### The Second Generation

- 57.5% attended High School in Australia
- 25% completed Teritary Education in Australia
- 7.5% attended Primary School in Italy and High School in Australia
- 5% attended Primary School in Italy and completed a Teritary Education in Australia.
- 2.5% completed Teritary Education in both Italy and Australia.

As to be expected the results are consistent with past research that clearly states the majority of those arriving in the 1950s and 1960s had minimal or no education. Once they crossed the hardships synonymous with settling into a new country they were to provide better living conditions for their children and once again the Education results of the Second Generation are not at all surprising.

### What do they do for a living?

#### The First Generation

- 62.5% are retired
- 20% are employed in Trade/Labour work
- 7.5% work as Clerks/Shop Assistants
- 2.5% are in Professional/Administrators and Managers positions

### The Second Generation

- 32.5% are professionally employed
- 25% have clerical jobs
- 22.5% are employed as labourers
- 17.5% are housewives

### How old are they?

The age range of my subjects:15 to 84.

### What comments do they make about their dialect competency?

Each Subject was asked to evaluate his/her abruzzese competency both in understanding and speaking. The 75% majority of the First Generation were very positive about their dialect competency both in speaking and understanding contrast to 30% of the Second Generation. Many of the First Generation had also expressed their inability to speak their dialect after many years of residence in Australia even though their understanding of their dialect had not diminished. These totalled 22.5%. A minority of the First Generation, 2.5%, understood a little dialect but did not speak it.

The 42.5% majority of the Second Generation, stated their understanding of dialect despite not speaking it very often. Very close to this group were the 30% who admitted to speaking and understanding dialect very well. The third group, 12.5%, had an understanding of dialect but had difficulty speaking it. Not evident in the First Generation, were 7.5% of Subjects in the Second Generation who stated little understanding of dialect as well as not speaking it at all. The remainder of the group, also achieving a score of 7.5%, stated little understanding of dialect as well as not speaking it at all.

It can be concluded that competency levels in both understanding and speaking abruzzese remain higher amongst the First Generation than in the Second Generation. Even so competency levels are quite good within the Second Generation. A non-native Italian, whose sole language is English would not comprehend the concept that 'Italian' spoken by Italian migrants and their offspring is in fact segmented by another language, 'the dialect' and not one dialect at that. In my Field Research each First and Second Generation Male and Female commented on the diversity and difficulty with understanding other Italian dialects.

What is the language use in their family?

*How do they speak to their spouse?*

The First Generation

- 62.5% use abruzzese as the main language of communication
- 30% speak a mixture of Abruzzese, Italian and Australian
- 5% speak Italian only
- 2.6% not applicable

The Second Generation

- 62.5% use Australian as the main language of communication
- 17.5% not applicable
- 12.5% speak a mixture of Abruzzese, Italian and Australian
- 2.5% speak Italian only

*How do they speak to their eldest child?*

First Generation

- 32.5% speak only Abruzzese
- 25% speak a mixture of Abruzzese, Italian and Australian
- 25% speak Italian only.
- 12.5% speak a mixture of Italian and Australian
- 5% speak Australian only.

Second Generation

- 45% speak Australian only
- 42.5% not applicable
- 7.5% speak a mixture of Italian and Australian
- 2.5% speak a mixture of Abruzzese only
- 2.5% speak a mixture of Abruzzese, Italian and Australian.

*How do they speak to their youngest child?*

First Generation

- 30% speak Abruzzese only.
- 27.5% speak Italian only.
- 15% speak a mixture of Abruzzese, Italian and Australian.
- 7.5% speak Australian only.
- 5% speak a mixture of Italian and Australian.
- 15% not applicable. [Some of my subjects have deaf children therefore sign language is used in the family]

Second Generation

- 50% not applicable. [Many young couples have one child ]
- 37.5% speak Australian only
- 7.5% speak a mixture of Italian and Australian
- 5% speak a mixture of Abruzzese, Italian and Australian.

Language use with parents. (Second Generation only)

*How do they speak to their father?*

- 42.5% speak Abruzzese only
- 22.5% not applicable
- 17.5% speak a mixture of Abruzzese, Italian and Australian
- 7.5% speak Italian only
- 7.5% speak Australian only

*How do they speak to their mother?*

- 55% speak Abruzzese only
- 12.5% speak Italian only
- 12.5% speak Australian only
- 10% speak a mixture of Abruzzese, Italian and Australian
- 7.5% not applicable
- 2.5% speak a mixture of Italian and Australian

What were their attitudes towards the Abruzzese Dialect?

To extract this information five statements were given. Here are three of them.

*At Saturday School children should learn not only Italian but also dialect*

First Generation

- 65% agreed
- 5% were not sure
- 30% disagreed

Second Generation

- 42.5% agreed
- 10% were not sure
- 47.5% disagreed

The Second Generation were equally divided on this issue even though the First Generation had shown a strong support for the availability of such classes. The latter saw classes in dialect as a means of maintaining the Abruzzese tradition alive. The Second Generation echoed this fact as well but they also acknowledged the difficulty in learning dialect and Italian simultaneously.

*One is not a true Abruzzese if one cannot speak Abruzzese.*

First Generation

- 45% agreed
- 5% were not sure
- 17% disagreed

Second Generation

- 10% agreed
- 12.5% were not sure
- 31% disagreed

These statistics do not do justice in revealing the strong emotive reactions received from this statement. Each group of Subjects; I refer to First Generation Males, First Generation Females, Second Generation Males and Second Generation Females; reacted in almost identical fashion but each group's reaction varied from the other.

The First Generation Males, the fathers, had warmed to the statement. They thought it to be hilarious and the general consensus was positive.

The First Generation Females, the mothers', reaction was completely the opposite. The majority expressed the fact that if parents did not teach their children dialect it was not the fault of the child. The mothers all echoed the same thought: yes, it certainly would be nice if their children could speak dialect and Italian, however, if the opportunity arose to learn a new language it would be better for them to learn Italian. The mothers came across as pro-Italian/anti-dialect and the fathers as pro-dialect.

The Second Generation Females, the daughters, merely shrugged their shoulders. Most of them had never really given much thought to it and did not care one way or another. A minority did bow their heads and quietly but firmly uttered: "Questo non è vero." [This is not true.]

The strongest reaction came from the Second Generation Males. Some of the young men interviewed who could speak dialect, stated that their Abruzzese friends who could not speak dialect or Italian were adamant that they were fiercely proud to be Abruzzese. Likewise, the group of young men interviewed who could not speak dialect or Italian emphatically stressed how proud they were of their Abruzzese heritage. The small minority who had studied Italian at university level and therefore spoke fluent Italian and no dialect, theirs was a silent emotive reaction. In unison they repeated an identical body language. Upon hearing the statement, they bowed their heads, blushed profusely and sat in silence. The statement had caused a feeling of guilt within them. They did not appreciate the statement.

*The Abruzzese Dialect is awful and useless.*

The First Generation	60% disagreed	7.5% agreed
The Second Generation	87.5% disagreed	5% agreed
The Mixed Group	73.3% disagreed	13.3% agreed
Males	80.4% disagreed	7.8% agreed
Females	65.9% disagreed	6.8% agreed
The Aquilani	78.9% disagreed	5.3% agreed
The Pescaraesi	75% disagreed	12.5% agreed
The Chietini	71.4% disagreed	5.7% agreed
The Teramani	75% disagreed and the rest undecided	25% remained

The results speak for themselves. Abruzzesi are indeed fiercely patriotic for the culture of their paese. This sense of 'patriotism' for one's paese spilled over constantly during my Field Research. It was noted how a man's eyes lit up at the mention of his paese Vasto (Chieti). It was also noted how the same man 'switched off' when the province of l'Aquila was being talked about on Rete Italia.

### How did they speak during the interview?

During a segment of the interview Subjects were asked to describe in Abruzzese two photographs. The first was a religious procession in a paese and the second was a series of three photos showing two women making bread the traditional way. The questions were asked in Italian. Participants were requested to reply in dialect as far as possible. The interviewer (myself) is not a speaker of dialect.

#### First Generation

- 35% spoke in Italian
- 32.5% spoke an Italianised dialect: 'dialetto pulito'
- 30% spoke in fluent dialect which was very difficult to understand
- 2.5% responded in dialect with some difficulty

The percentage of those speaking dialect would have been considerably higher if they had had present un paesano who also spoke dialect. Many stated how much they had wanted to speak in dialect, however, a common sentiment expressed was: ...quando qualcuno mi parla in italiano il dialetto non viene...' Translation: When one speaks to me in Italian I am unable to respond in dialect.

#### Second Generation

- 30% responded in dialect
- 27.5% could not speak dialect but expressed themselves in Italian and English.
- 25% responded in Italian with a few dialect phrases/words.
- 17.5% responded in English with limited Italian/dialect words.

The results reveal a high percentage of Second Generation who speak abruzzese. The percentage is quite large compared to the minority who do not speak either Italian or dialect.

### Conclusions

The Field Research opened up new insights into the Abruzzese character. Abruzzesi are 'quiet' Italians who keep to themselves and lead lives comprising a close network of family, friends and sometimes paesani. The First Generation are always conscious of their ethnicity

each time they speak to an Abruzzese who is not from their paese or Province. The majority of the Second Generation would rather keep their Abruzzese ethnicity under wraps. Regardless of this, an Abruzzese is loyal to his/her origins and heritage, again in a ‘quiet’ fashion. Myself, I am of Abruzzese origin and am not conscious of an ‘ethnicity’ on my part when speaking to another Abruzzese. I am Second Generation Australian and ‘loud’ about my ‘Abruzzese ethnicity’. This would no doubt explain the reason why the more Abruzzesi I spoke to and/or interviewed the more Australian I felt!

### Anecdotes

One First Generation Female, a native of Rosetto (Teramo) has the word *mamoce* in her dialect. Her husband is from Sulmona (l’Aquila). In his dialect *mamoce* means ‘idiot’ or ‘stupid’. Prior to their getting engaged she and her mother travelled down to Sulmona from Teramo to meet his family. Imagine the hurt on his family’s side when she referred to a boy in his family as “*mamoce*”: in her dialect it means ‘boy child’!

A First Generation woman from the Province of Pescara arrives in Australia speaking her thick *Cepagatti* dialect. In recounting the early years she recalls the day when she had agreed to accompany her friend, who spoke no English, to the doctor. The Australian doctor had asked her from which country she and her friend had come from. My Subject replied: “Italy”. The doctor, who had studied Italian and knew the language reasonably well, did not believe her. He had been listening to the communication between the two women and the language they spoke had sounded nothing like Italian!

A man from Prezza (l’Aquila) married a woman from Ripa Teatina (Chieti). During their courtship they had had difficulty communicating, because each did not understand the other’s dialect.

One Second Generation Male, whose parents are from Aielli (l’Aquila), grew up believing that the Italian word for ‘rubbish’ was “*robiscio*”. Whilst on a trip to Italy it had puzzled him as to why his relatives had not been able to understand him, especially when he was making a conscious effort to pronounce it correctly. Needless to say he soon learned that the correct word was “*immondizia*”.



# Living and Promoting Italian Heritage & Culture in Rural Australia: An Authentic Experience

*Bruno Spiller*

*Lassu' per le montagne fra boschi e valli d'or  
Tra l'aspre rupi echeggia un cantico d'amor  
La montanara, ohe'! Si sente cantare  
Cantiam la montanara per chi non la sa....*

( Up there in the mountains among the forests and golden valleys  
A song of love echoes around the rugged cliffs.  
The mountain song is heard  
So let's sing the mountain song for those who do not know it)

The words to the song La Montanara, one of the popular, traditional songs from northern Italy, is one which my father used to sing with his paesani from the Altopiano di Asiago and expresses a sentiment that is alive and well in the Ovens valley, north-east Victoria. This Valley, with its mountains and Australian flora and fauna, has been home to many Italian migrants since the early part of the 20th century - the major groups coming from the Veneto (Vicenza / Treviso provinces), Trentino, and Calabria regions.

As a relative 'new-comer' to this area (10 years), I can say that it has given me a renewed sense of what it means to be Italian / Australian. When I look at my Italian - Australian friends of a similar age who are living in major urban areas, I see them struggling to maintain their unique identity as Italian Australians. Having lived in both urban and rural settings, it is apparent that the rural context is able to offer a unique opportunity to preserve this identity, an identity that was beginning to fade somewhat for me in the city.

The major aims of this paper, therefore, are:

1. to examine how the rural context - what I would call the "paese" phenomenon - provides quality opportunities to preserve Italian Heritage and Culture in Australia
2. ways to involve the next generation of Italian Australians in continuing the links with their Italian background and what can be done on the local, national and international levels
3. the importance of Regional Conventions and Live-in experiences in Italy as a means of strengthening our cultural ties with Italy.

The “paese” phenomenon and the role of the Circoli as preservers of Italian Heritage and Culture.

Italian Australians living in Myrtleford and surrounding districts are fortunate to have a network of well-organised and enthusiastic Circoli (or Associations) which offer numerous opportunities to experience an authentic Italian culture and heritage. What makes Myrtleford special is the fact that the various Circoli all operate from the one centre, the one paese, if you like. It is called the Savoy Club - and all are happy to support each other’s functions. Visitors from major urban areas often remark how lucky we are to have a unified Italian club.

Each Circolo has its own special event(s) - apart from annual dinner dances, the Vicentini, for example, organise a Carnevale, a President’s breakfast; the Trentini have a castagnata and this year the proposal is for all the Circoli to work together on one common Christmas party. Anyone who attends these events is assured of a warm welcome - it’s like belonging to a big family, everything is familiar. It seems difficult, if not impossible, for major urban Italian clubs to emulate this atmosphere today.

Authentic Italian cultural groups in Myrtleford and other cultural experiences:

Apart from having the usual sporting (bocce, soccer etc..) and social groups / associations (Alpini corps, elderly citizens etc..), Myrtleford has been fortunate enough to see the birth of two very distinctive cultural groups during the 1990s . They are excellent examples of the paese phenomenon at work in small rural communities.

The first group is the Trentino Folk Dance Group. Wearing authentic costumes supplied by the Trentino Province of Italy, the group has performed far and wide throughout Australia presenting traditional dances of the Province. The group consists of approx. 20 couples and their ages range from early teens through to the 60 / 70 year-age bracket. It is almost unique these days to see the younger generations involved in such cultural pursuits.

The second group is a choir called “Coro delle Montagne” (Choir of the Mountains). It was founded by Ms. Monica Claney, a lady of Irish background with no Italian heritage. Monica has lived in the district all her life and has come to love and appreciate the Italian cultural experience. The choir specialises in singing traditional Italian mountain songs as well as songs from other parts of the world. The choir is a real mix of many cultural backgrounds and is a testament once again to the power and influence of the paese phenomenon.

Another noteworthy cultural experience is the Harrietville Italian Night, which has been held each February since 1995. It began as a fundraising event for Camp Quality and provides people from the Ovens Valley and beyond with an authentic Italian cultural experience: both the above - mentioned groups, a live band and the Myrtleford Italians all contribute to make this night a memorable one. This year, the Comunita' Montana, an Italian community group from Melbourne with links to the Altopiano di Asiago, attended. In fact, there were over 150 people just from Melbourne. I see this event as providing an excellent link between urban and rural Italian Australians and, again, there is a real “‘paese’ feel“ to this “festa”.

As a teacher of Italian at a small country Catholic school, Marian College in Myrtleford, I have also been able to provide authentic cultural experiences for the younger generations in the town. As part of the College's Feast Day in August, we conduct our own version of The Palio of Siena. Students belong to a Contrada and compete in a relay race, carrying the appropriate banner of their Homeroom.

#### Involving the next generations of Italian Australians – The Magnagattini experience.

The question of how we involve our younger people in the preservation and promotion of Italian heritage and culture (and thereby maintain their unique identity as Italian Australians) seems to be a crucial one today. I became acutely aware of this when I began to attend the national conventions of the Vicentini. Following the 1st successful Convention, held in Myrtleford 1993, the Sydney Convention of 95 raised some concerns for me. It became clear that there was a distinct lack of young people in attendance. There were plenty of “veci”, as they say in the Veneto dialect, and it was great to see them reunited with their paesani from around Australia. And so there I was, at a dinner dance on the Saturday night and a BBQ luncheon on the Sunday. I had met some charming people but it seemed a long way to go just to do some dancing, eating and chatting.

The 1997 Convention in Adelaide was a similar experience. This time, however, I had the opportunity to address the Presidents and Secretaries at their meeting during the Convention and express my concerns about the purpose and content of such Conventions. My message was that these events had to be made more worthwhile and relevant to all participants; we needed to attract the younger generations of Italian Australians. Conventions needed to be more than just a dinner dance and a luncheon. They offered a wonderful opportunity for all

Australian Vicentini to celebrate the heritage and cultural aspects of the Vicenza province. I challenged them to consider ways in which we could make these Conventions more worthwhile, particularly to younger Vicentini.

The Presidents' reaction was interesting to say the least! Whilst some were supportive, others gave the impression that it was too difficult a task. They had already tried and, frankly, it was a waste of time and resources. They claimed that young Italian Australians in major urban areas like Sydney were not interested in maintaining their cultural links; these people had met people from other cultures and had therefore lost this link. I would argue, however, that sooner or later, we all wish to rediscover our origins, our roots.

In the end, there was enough support given to me by the majority of Presidents to pursue my vision. Present at this meeting was another young Italian Australian, Fabio Genero, who had taken on the role of Secretary for the Canberra / Queanbeyan Circolo. Fabio was an immediate, enthusiastic supporter of this vision and so together, we began to work on a plan to involve younger Australian Vicentini. It was resolved to hold a meeting of young Australian Vicentini early in 1998 so as to launch a movement that would promote the involvement of future generations of Vicentini in preserving their heritage and culture. Each Circolo in Australia was invited to participate in this meeting.

Sunday, 22nd February 1998 saw this first meeting come to fruition. Present were representatives from Melbourne, Myrtleford and Canberra / Queanbeyan. The results from this gathering were encouraging and gave some direction on both a national and local level:

1. The name for the movement was established - Magnagattini .
2. A Newsletter was to be produced in Myrtleford for distribution around all the Vicentini Circoli.
3. The aims of the publication were: to keep young Vicentini informed about what's happening in the various Circoli; encourage a more effective participation by young Vicentini; promote Vicentino culture via such things as food recipes, literature, dialect sayings, music, personal profiles etc...
4. The organisation of an annual gathering of young Vicentini. Ferragosto Nella Neve 98 was a result of this initiative.
5. To work towards a National Youth Convention with the purpose of promoting Italian heritage and culture.<sup>1</sup>

6. The establishment of a magnagattini group within each Circolo in order to encourage more effective participation of young Italian Australians as well as provide a setting in which young Vicentini can meet and consider ways to promote their unique heritage and culture. ( For a more detailed coverage of these initiatives, see Appendix section.)

Regional conventions and live-in experiences: a significant means of strengthening cultural ties with Italy.

The role of Regional Conventions for Italian Australians of all generations cannot be understated. When clear goals and purposes are set, such Conventions can provide us with a fantastic opportunity to celebrate our heritage and culture. At the most recent Vicentini National Convention, conducted this time by the Melbourne Circolo in October 1999, there was a definite commitment given by the Presidents and the visiting dignitaries from Italy, to support initiatives that will ensure more effective participation by younger Italian Australians. (See Appendix for details on the outcomes of this Convention).

To the credit of the Melbourne Circolo, an effort was also made to provide a cultural experience for Convention participants. It took the form of a live theatre performance by a contemporary duo from Padova, Italy. Unfortunately, it was not received enthusiastically by the majority of the audience who happened to be from the older generations. Following the show, I expressed my appreciation to the performers who were rather crestfallen. The leader made a very interesting remark, however, which highlights the ‘gap’ which exists between the generations of Italian Australians. He said that there was no way he was going to sing *Quel Mazzolin di Fiori!* (a traditional northern Italian song)

Interestingly, at the first Ferragosto Nella Neve, where 100 young Australian Italians had gathered, part of the entertainment on the Saturday evening involved the singing of numerous traditional songs, all to the accompaniment of a piano-accordion! People had been provided with song sheets and were all gathered around, drink in hand, singing the songs they had heard from their parents / grandparents.

There can be no doubt that well-organised Regional Conventions can be a very powerful way to strengthen cultural ties with Italy. The recent National Trentino Convention, held in Myrtleford during February, adopted the theme “Trentino Culture Beyond 2000”. The Convention was able to promote the Trentino regional culture in many ways:

The Valsella choir: this 37 voice male choir from Borgo Valsugana (Trentino) provided the live cultural link with Italy. Not only did they entertain the Convention participants, they also gave a concert to 300 young primary/secondary school students from Myrtleford and Wangaratta. To hear this choir 'live' was a memorable experience for the youth of our community. The songs were mainly traditional mountain songs and the meaning of each one was explained in English to the audience. The choir concluded with their rendition of the popular Australian ballad *Waltzing Matilda*. The junior students from Marian College, Myrtleford, reciprocated by singing their version of *Bella Ciao* for the choir. The excitement and mutual appreciation were evident in the experience, with the 'paese phenomenon' clearly at work.

Each convention participant was issued with a bag of products, which included an audio cassette and script of 3 Act play, entitled *Roba Del Comun*, all naturally in the Trentino dialect.

The Myrtleford Trentino Folk dance group performed for participants and gave an insight into the traditional dances from the Region.

Another effective way in which to strengthen our cultural ties with Italy is via the 'live - in' experience. I have been fortunate enough to be a beneficiary of such programmes. Today, most Regions provide an opportunity for young Italian Australians to visit the towns and cities of their ancestors.

The Vicentini Nel Mondo organisation, for example, offers a number of Courses for descendants of Vicentini migrants. These include commerce and/or architecture-based experiences. Such courses can be rather restrictive, however, in their selection criteria. Participants may need to be tertiary educated, speak fluent Italian and be under a certain age. Many Italian Australians would dearly love their children to participate in such experiences but discover that they do not meet the criteria. Indeed, at the last National Vicentini Convention, a special request was made to the Head of the International Vicentini organisation to broaden the nature of such live-in experiences by offering more general language/culture courses so that young Vicentini can rediscover their origins, their heritage.

The value of such experiences is twofold. Not only does the participant experience Italian culture in its purest, most tangible form, he/she also returns to Australia as a motivated promoter of Italian culture. At this year's AGM of the Myrtleford Circolo, a very appreciative participant, who had recently completed an architectural course on the works of Palladio, made a special presentation to the

Circolo and was an excellent example of what can be achieved through such experiences. This person has now become a major contributor to the promotion of Italian culture and is keen to assist in the preservation of our heritage.

When one stops to consider what living in a rural context has meant for me, in terms of my connection with an authentic Italian heritage and culture, there can be no doubt that I have benefited enormously from this experience. I wonder whether I would have been as involved in Italian had I have remained in the city. Naturally, this is not to say that cities do not also offer wonderful Italian cultural experiences.

It is clear that it may not be possible for all to experience the *paese* phenomenon due to such barriers as work, family and the trend to congregate in major urban centres. Yet, I would argue that it is the rural setting, the *paese*, that offers a truly authentic experience of what it means to be an Italian Australian today, what it really means to sing *la montanara per chi non la sa*, to sing the mountain song for those who do not know.

Rural Australia does indeed provide an authentic opportunity to sing that song.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> The Trentini in Australia, for example, have already begun this process by incorporating a youth meeting into the schedule of the actual Convention. This enables younger Trentini to gather and exchange ideas about how to maintain their heritage and culture. This has resulted in such initiatives as a document on the history of Trentino migrants in Australia; the writing of various papers for an international Trentino Youth Convention, held recently in Italy; the establishment of a national / international data base for Trentini in order to facilitate closer contact among Trentini when travelling; the organisation of a youth camp.



## A 'Success Story' Revisited.

*Piero Genovesi*

As we all know the so-called "Italiani che vivono il mondo", Italians living throughout the world, today number about sixty million people including first, second, third and fourth generation Italians.

About two million of them live in Australia, most of them having arrived with the wave upon wave of immigrants which reached those shores in the first twenty years following the Second World War.

They came from every corner of Italy, "from the Alps to Sicily", "dall'Alpe a Sicilia", driven by poverty, by hope, by fear, victims of historical negligence.

Almost all of them were peasants, contadini, people from the mountains. 'Valigia e passaporto', suitcase and passport: men, women and children. Mostly men, both young and old. They came first, the women and children followed.

Australia at that time was a huge continent, an under-developed country, under-populated and in desperate need of workers. So Australia advertised itself abroad starting the myth of the "lucky country".

And many came. And amongst the many, the Italians came.

No one ever waited for them on the pier 'with open arms'. The spirit of fraternity, of solidarity, of harmonious coexistence was invented fifty years later by well-informed Australian politicians and misinformed visiting Italian politicians. And that is still happening today as was recently demonstrated by the address to the Italian community of Melbourne by the most eminent Italian political personality.

The idea that Italian immigrants owe a debt of gratitude to the country which has taken them in, a belief which is constantly repeated and which has created and still risks creating today an inferiority complex in our young people, even though sometimes at a subconscious level, is even more dangerous.

To avoid that happening again I believe that the time has now come for the Italian community of Australia, now mature and even, to a certain extent in decline, to take on the responsibility of writing its own history. I see this as a duty both towards the community itself and towards the generations to come.

When I say “to write its own history” I do not mean to forget all that which has already been spoken or written about it, nor on the other hand do I mean to encourage a project undertaken by any one particular person. What I would like is for a research Institute and National Archive to be set up, an Institute which would be able to unite researchers, to establish synergy, to acquire the necessary documents for putting together a clear and documented general structure in which the enormous quantity of material bearing witness today to the infinite number of stories of Italian emigration to Australia, which alone in themselves do not make up history, would be able to have its own specific place.

This is not a small project, on the contrary, it is probably the most ambitious, articulated and expensive project which in my opinion, the Italians of Australia could consider. A project which is even more important because it is destined to close (to the extent to which it is ever possible both from the human and from the historical point of view to close) the chapter on emigration/migration and to hand it over to the research department.

Enough of compromises, enough of misunderstandings, enough of lies and partial or personal interpretations! It is time that the new generations of Italians in Australia were given their due: reliable information about their history above and beyond the particular interpretations of individual groups and persons.

Personally, and I must repeat this, I believe at this point that now is the time for our community to set up a National Research Institute which would be able to provide satisfactory answers to all the questions which have remained unanswered for such a long time. We have just seen the first and most important of these but there are still many others.

In my opinion in Victoria the academic institutions have for a long time (one could probably say since the death of the late Prof. Colin McCormick) shown themselves unable to cope with the linguistic and cultural problems facing the Italian community and the community in general in the area of Italian studies. It is time then for other institutions to consider these problems, beginning with the fact that the level of Italian reached by a great many of our Secondary School students (and even, not infrequently of our tertiary students) is deteriorating although they are convinced, and rightly so, of knowing the language well because it is thus stated in black and white on their diplomas or school reports.

As a first step towards improving this situation I believe that the time has come to request the Department of Education to reinstate the Subject

Committees which were dismantled at the beginning of the nineties. These committees analysed the content of the school programs and their results, as well as having a say in both the form and the content of assessments and exams. These same committees (one for each foreign language) were able to interact with the community and this meant that they generated material support as well as ideas.

A second step, which by now I believe is clear to everyone, is the necessity for our young people to have better linguistic-cultural specialisation either here or in Italy. Where the existing institutions cannot guarantee this specialisation through their courses, the intervention of other institutions would be advisable, institutions of a different nature but which, at the same time are fully recognised both from the academic point of view and also from the point of view of society in general.

For the last three years, as the result of an enlightened initiative undertaken by the Victorian Government Department of Education and Melbourne Co.As.It. representing the Italian government, about sixty primary and secondary teachers of Italian have attended a four week refresher course in Perugia. Several of these would otherwise never have been able to visit Italy, others have not been back for decades because of family and work commitments or because of travel and accommodation costs. It must not be forgotten that the great majority of the teaching fraternity in Australia are women who for the most part have family responsibilities.

The financial aspect also concerns almost all our young people, for whom a period of time spent in Italy is considered to be an essential part of their studies. And essential it certainly is!!!

And yet despite all that has been done over the the last thirty years in the field of the teaching of Italian and the spreading of the Italian language and culture, the creation of a success story which is recognised and envied by all the Italian communities throughout the world, we have still not succeeded in creating, not several, but not even one “Australia House” in Italy. And it would not have taken much to do so. It is not necessary to buy bricks and mortar, it is not necessary to employ staff. We need only to rent rooms for a specific number of days in one of the excellent hotels like the one in which we already stay regularly in Perugia (which costs \$Au 25.00 per day including breakfast), in Florence or in Rome.

Today something has happened which shows us how necessary and how urgent it is to do something ourselves. Following very big cuts which the Italian Government has made to the funds allotted to the Enti

Gestori (Co.As.It.), the scholarship programme which I have mentioned has been abolished, many refresher courses will also be abolished and also almost certainly, the programme of language assistants despite the enormous success which this has had from its inception in 1994 until today.

The Italian community in Australia has always manifested its vitality, its spirituality, its sense of belonging through a series of displays ranging from feast days for patron saints to religious celebrations, from the commemoration of the fallen to celebrations with music, dancing and folkloristic activities. We see traces of the past in all of this every day but until now we still do not see the future this present should lead to.

Until now no one has realised the long awaited idea of having a yearly book containing chronologically all of the functions of the Italian community or in which Italians were involved both directly and indirectly over the previous twelve months. And including photographs which would have adequate captions so as to avoid the situation from the past where we have collections of photographs of people who are nameless in places which are nameless.

In this paper I must point out how valid this is for us in Victoria where we are afraid that the archives of community life such as that put together by our friend Cav. Bergagna in the course of a life lived in the midst of the Italian community could be 'lost' once the people who are able to name the faces and places are no longer with us.

Something else which makes us consider how very important and urgent it is to form a Research Institute is the fact that there is in Australia at the moment absolutely no central organisation where Italian studies in this country and studies undertaken by researchers abroad on situations concerning Italians in Australia can be analysed.

The biennial congress of the Frederick May Foundation (Sydney) could until a few years ago be considered the occasion for a minimum of synergy. But today this Foundation no longer exists leaving instead a vacuum which must be filled.

I personally believe that one of the first tasks of this Institute which I hope will be set up is to organise a Biennial Congress where all the achievements and research activities of Italians in Australia could be noted.

Together with this Congress a biennial journal dedicated to the many 'Works in progress' in which the Italian community throughout Australia is involved should also be created. It would certainly contain articles on literature, but it would also contain partial or total publication of works we have been discussing. It would contain articles

on painting and sculpture with illustrations on CD to accompany the text. It would contain articles of scientific and technological nature as well as articles on language methodology and the proceedings of conferences.

Such a journal must be formed even if the proposal for the Congress is not successful and it must be linked to an internet site. It must be founded because it will be an important source of information and inspiration for all of us and for the new generations.

Recently I asked one of the well known Australian Association of Teachers of Italian to sponsor two young Italian Australians, Monash University students who had been selected to attend a gathering in Vienna which aimed at enhancing their skills, for a total amount of \$Au 200. This experience would be important for their future but the answer was 'no'.

Two reasons were given the first being that they were going not to Italy but to Austria. The second reason was that: granting the sponsorship could set a "dangerous precedent" because there are many young Italian Australians in the community finishing their education and looking for a sponsor. With this kind of 'precedent' the Association could face thousands of them knocking on its doors in the future.

This is not an isolated example, this is typical of what is happening at present in our community. Too many are trembling. Too few are fighting for our common good.

Well my friends, let me tell you that if tomorrow we were to find thousands of young Italian Australians knocking on the doors of our organisations I personally would retire smiling, certain of having achieved something, proud of my community, its organisations, its philosophy, its readiness to accept the challenge and to move towards a successful future.



## Reluctant Citizens: Italian Australians as Cultural Consumers

*Maria Tence, Manager, Access Gallery, Immigration Museum, A campus of Musuem Victoria*

In this paper I hope to challenge the view that Italian Australians are seen by cultural bodies to be potentially one of the largest audience groups for cultural activities. My hypothesis is that cultural consumption is associated with a number of factors: educational level, being active and participatory citizens, understanding how heritage, culture and art contribute to an individual's identity and having a sense of belonging to a 'place'. This is usually manifested through exercising one's rights and obligations as a citizen of a 'place'. In the main Italian-Australians (first and second generation) are still grappling with notions of citizenship and belonging and therefore are not fully confident of their place in Australia's history. Drawing on demographic information that is available on the community together with an understanding of the community's historical cultural background allows us to interpret and comprehend some of the barriers hindering the Italian Australian participating in arts and cultural recreational activities.

Stereotypically and generally speaking Italians are reluctant citizens. In Australia's multicultural society, the Italian community is seen as a strongly coherent group. A number of academics (Castles et al; Jupp, Foster, Vasta) have documented the community's involvement in ethnic lobbying and the influence exerted in policy formulation especially in regards to immigration policy and funding directed to ethno-specific welfare and education programs delivered by community agencies. Certainly this has been the case until recently. The Italian community has benefitted from three decades of healthy government funding, both Italian and Australian, for the delivery of ethno-specific services which was based on sheer percentage representation in the population and the perceived political push of the community.

The Italian community is seen to be a well established and integrated community which has contributed greatly to the entire spectrum of Australia's social fabric. Has this integration caused the general lack of interest and participation in public debate on more controversial issues or is apathy part of their cultural composition constraining them as

active citizens? Do Italian Australians understand the rights and obligations inextricably linked to citizenship? Or are Italian Australians simply reluctant to become full and participatory citizens of Australian society? Do Italian Australians understand their responsibilities and obligations as citizens? Are they individuals who actively participate in broader community life and contribute to the preservation of their cultural heritage - beyond the cappuccino culture? What do we know of them as cultural consumers?

To understand these issues we must first examine discussions and interpretations surrounding the definition of Australian citizenship. There is much historical and contemporary literature available on the topic. As a recently colonised country Australia has been in the fortunate position of evaluating different models of citizenship. What constructs citizenship, that is, the rights and obligations of citizens, has been in the forefront of Australian politics since federation with a number of Citizenship Conventions held over the century.

Civics and citizenship academic Alistair Davidson states that in a world that is increasingly a place of multi-ethnic states with 30% of the population coming from other societies Australia is emblematic of such multi-ethnic societies with approximately 23% of its population having been born overseas<sup>1</sup>. Citizenship cannot be defined in homogenous terms because as Davidson claims:

“[...] newcomers share a present. If they stay a long time, they may share a future. But they almost never share a past. They have no common histories or cultural memories and frequently... do not share a language or a religion. All are the products of different pasts which have somehow to be united in a collectivity or a community in the meantime”<sup>2</sup>.

The notion of citizenship in Australia's early European history was constructed from the Roman and Athenian model which proclaimed that a citizen had full and equal rights to decide what measures should be taken to attain the collective good for all citizens. The flaw in this model is that it was based on the rights of males over those of females, males who could prove ancestral pedigree (i.e. belonged to a well to do family) which in turn could prove property ownership that was in turn part of an identified city. This model excluded all other individuals who were undeniably disadvantaged.

In strong democratic modern societies this antiquated model has been superseded by a more inclusive Charter as decreed by both international councils and the constitutions of various nations. However, in more globalised societies, citizenship models have developed in order to manage various aspects of population and social

diversity. In a country of immigration, Australian citizenship legislation was concerned with newcomers demonstrating their willingness to adopt the dominant national identity by joining the national family of British subjects. In this early Australian model there was clearly confusion between what it was to be an Australian citizen as opposed to being a British subject. This confusion was based on early notions of a homogenous white Anglo-celtic community. "Citizenship was conceptualised in relation to British culture and ethnicity, not in terms of the rights and responsibilities of citizens of the state"<sup>3</sup>.

As such all non-British subjects in Australia were categorised as 'aliens' who before having been conferred the honor of citizen were to prove their adoption of British Australian ideals and norms. Central to these was the ability to speak the English language, swear allegiance to the British monarch, renounce other citizenship and uphold and defend the Australian democratic system.

As Davidson documents, the advancement of the notion of citizenship has, over the years, been debated in both the legislative forum and the public arena in Australia. In more contemporary discussions, these have included the status and obligations of newly arrived migrants, especially those who wish to hold dual citizenship. Two of the main proponents of these discussions were firstly, Dr Andrew Theophanous, who as one of the first generation of 'ethnic' members of parliament in Whitlam's Labor cabinet<sup>4</sup>, argued that migrants who did not have the prescribed 'adequate knowledge of English' should not be excluded from Australian citizenship. He claimed that with the proliferation of ethnic language newspapers and radio programs, more recent immigrants could gather relevant information in order to make informed decisions in exercising their right as citizens to vote.

Secondly was the work of George Venturini, who as Commissioner of the Trade Practices Commission during the Whitlam Government (and dismissed for his forthright views by Justice Lionel Murphy), "represented the vanguard of the ideas of Bobbio, Calamandrei and other leaders of that movement [Italian Liberal-Socialist movement] twenty years before their views on citizenship became the state of the art and the rage of Australian intellectuals"<sup>5</sup>. But as Davidson asserts, in the main, the migrant voice is silenced from contributing to this forum on citizenship simply due to their lack of representation in the political arena and in decision making positions of political machinery.

As participation in government/political systems is acknowledged as the ultimate right of citizenship, the lack of representation and the

silence in demanding political voice by migrant communities is, in my view, the first barrier to being seen as active citizens.

The strongest and most enduring assertion of citizenship is the right to participate in the political process which defines regulations and law for a community, “the basis of survival of state power is equal participation in what it does by all its members”<sup>6</sup>. What distinguishes a citizen from all others as, Aristotle posed, is “participation in giving judgment and in holding office - as soon as man becomes entitled to participate in office deliberative or judicial, we deem him to be a citizen of that state”<sup>7</sup>.

In the Australian context, the conditions for becoming a citizen have changed over the decades. The greatest changes, as discussed, occurred in the 1970s with the dawning of multiculturalism.

In a 1973 study conducted by Paul Wilson into the political participation rates of two immigrant groups - British and Italian immigrants - comparing them to the Australia-born rates, two key determining factors were established as inhibiting active participation in Australia’s political system. One is the stage of social assimilation and economic development and the other the achievement of a certain level of identification with the host society<sup>8</sup>. He concluded that:

“Immigrants of medium socio-economic status spend their early years achieving economic security and assimilating into Australian society. After a period of time in their new land, a certain level of economic and social development is reached, which helps to provide those things which increase their sensitivity to political messages as well as providing them with the ability to engage in political behaviour. These things include available time to interest oneself in politics through the achievement of economic security and in the the case of the Italians, a sufficient degree of identification with Australian society [...] Other factors also are marriage with an Australian, taking out Australian citizenship and belonging to clubs and organisations, especially to Australian clubs and organisations”<sup>9</sup>.

In France, also in the 1970s, the term ‘social exclusion’ was coined to describe the social underclasses prohibited from gaining rights. The term is now widely used to define “... people who whether living in poverty or not, are prevented from fully participating in the different systems of society. Social exclusion occurs when citizenship rights are denied or cannot be claimed by an individual or group”<sup>10</sup>.

Therefore the right to equal access to public institutions and services is imperative in a civil democratic society. This includes access to

cultural institutions, especially those deemed to be the icons of civil society and the repositories of the nation's collective past.

Therefore citizenship can be analogous with the rite of passage - from expatriate to immigrant to citizen. The passage can be testing and confusing depending on an individual's own cognitive understanding of his rights and obligations, the degree to which citizenship was experienced in the country of birth, coupled with the age and educational level of the individual. As Wilson pointed out, active citizenship comes at a time when the immigrant has surpassed initial re-settlement issues and feels an affinity with and belonging to Australian society.

As publicly funded cultural institutions, museums need to be able to facilitate this process. In order to do this one needs to understand what constitutes an individual's sense of belonging to a community, state and nation. In the case of immigrants, notions of belonging, community and individual identity are further complicated by the upheaval of immigration: the dislocation of traditional cultural identities, truncation of traditional rites of passage within a defined and known community and the re-establishment of sense of self within a new environment. Generally, it is believed that the longer established an individual/community is, the more inclined it is to contribute to and participate in collective activities.

Therefore in the light of the indicators of 'citizenship', the Italian community, which in the main is a post-world War II immigrant group, should have by now, surpassed the re-settlement problems documented in the many studies of the 1970s, and should reflect some, if not all, of the earmarks of an active and participatory community. It should be engaging in public forum and debates on issues of national significance and begin to impact on the wide spectrum of social and public domains.

In my view this is not the case. Using key indicators to examine the community's level and degree of establishment (re-settlement) in Australian society, together with reflections on the Italian Australian community's reaction to some recent important local and national issues, we will see that Italian Australians, in the main, are reluctant to become participatory citizens or become involved in issues which affect them, let alone the wider community. There are conundrums and paradoxes which exist in attempting to analyse the community which on one hand show that the Italian-Australian community reflects strong signs of acculturation and on the other hand continues to reflect a community which is still in transition.

### Citizenship rates

Citizenship rates gives an indication to a community's desire to set down roots and belong to a place. Italians made up the largest group taking up Australian citizenship at 21% in the period between 1949 and 1965 followed by the Netherlands (13%), USSR and Poland (12% respectively)<sup>11</sup>. This high rate of citizenship has not translated into the community's more profound understanding of the rights and obligations as citizens. It is interesting to note that there are still over 50,000 qualifying residents (4% of total Italy-born) who have not taken up citizenship. At a time when dual citizenship is possible and bilateral cultural agreements with Italy are in place, it is perplexing to explain this anomaly.

### Language maintenance

Language maintenance is regarded as the most significant indicator of cultural maintenance and the insertion of Italian language classes into the school curriculum was regarded as a key victory in the formulation of multicultural educational policies of the 1970s. It was also a rare moment when the Italian community was seen to have exercised political pressure. Today that situation has changed considerably. Even though it continues to be largest of the non-English speaking communities, (the 1996 Census showed that 330,000 people claim to speak Italian at home), the ABS also noted that there was a sharp fall from 380,000 in the 1991 Census<sup>12</sup> (Appendix 1 Persons Born Overseas or with an Overseas-born Parent- 1996 Census, selected groups).

Italian continues to be the most popular language studied by the largest number of primary and secondary school students. However, at tertiary level, Italian language studies have been undergoing difficulty with decreasing student numbers over a number of years. This is because the greatest number of students studying Italian at primary and secondary levels are from non-Italian backgrounds therefore there is no connection to cultural heritage and the language is not pursued at the tertiary level to the same extent as Asian languages which are perceived to be more 'commercially relevant' and more appropriate in this part of the world. The recent threats to reduce or close altogether some Italian departments at various tertiary institutions has not sparked any signs of protest from the broader Italian Australian community.

As an indication of the decreasing interest in language maintenance, the numbers and distribution sizes of Italian language newspapers

reflect that there is less need to receive information in the Italian language showing that the language is not being maintained with the second generation. Appendix 2 gives the national distribution rates of the Italian newspapers compared to other selected language newspapers together with the proportion of speakers in the general Australian population.

### Political participation

Using Davidson's measure that participation in the political system is the strongest indication of active citizenship, here too, the Italian community has shown little interest. In 1992, it was estimated that Greeks formed more than 10% of the Victorian Labor Party membership which resulted in four Greek Labor members in the Victorian Parliament compared to two Italians. The Greeks continue to hold influential positions in both major parties in Victoria whilst there is a reluctance in the Italian community to political aspirations. Jupp claims that this is because the "Greeks tend to be already fairly politicised and so inclined to be 'joiners'" whereas "the Italians are not so strongly mobilised into the structures"<sup>13</sup>. Wilson's 1973 survey still bears relevant assertions that "Italians, relative to the other groups, show an almost total indifference to Australian politics[...and] appear to have little interest in following the policies expounded by Australian political parties both during elections and between elections."<sup>14</sup> Demonstrating that of the three groups surveyed, Italian immigrants had the highest rate of non-participation<sup>15</sup>.

A current survey of politicians of Italian background or descent, reveals that there are four at Federal level and thirteen at state level (NSW - 4; Victoria - 3; South Australia - 2; Other States - 4). In proportion to the Italy-born and second generation representation in the population, it is believed that this is under-representative. This surely reflects the fact that the second generation, despite their advancement in the economic measurement stakes, continues to show a reluctance to become involved in the ultimate decision making structure - government.

In understanding the lack of involvement in the political machinery it is necessary to understand that inherent in the Italian psyche is the innate distrust and suspicion of people in power due to the long history of political corruptness they left behind. The Italian community has been unable to accept that participation in government and politics has general benefits for the broader community and that special interest lobbying is obtained through direct contact with individuals in the

political machinery. This was confirmed by Wilson (with additional supporting findings from Borrie, Gamba, Kelley and Price) who suggested “the lack of active participation by Italians in Australian politics is not surprising, given their motivation for emigrating to Australia, their drive for economic security and their general cynicism towards political institutions”<sup>16</sup>. Whereas Jupp states that some obstacles that might prevent individuals from successfully competing in the political arena are a lack of familiarity with the Australian political system, coupled with limited language resources and prejudice against ‘outsiders’. This may be the case with reference to more recent immigrant communities but it does not explain the position of the Italian community, especially with respect to the second generation. ABS data indicates that 17.6% of the second generation of Italy born parentage had obtained higher qualifications, higher than the level for all Australians (16.5%) with the employment rate being 96.1% (percentage of Total labour force estimated for 1999).

These indicators show that the second generation is considerably more socially advantaged and upwardly mobile compared to their predecessors, nevertheless this generation does not demonstrate cogent patterns of participation associated with more established and acculturated behaviour. In 1992 Castles, Rando and Vasta posed, in their analysis of the ‘Italo-Australian’ contribution in the political arena “It has yet to be seen whether this group [the second generation] will be able to create a new political identity within a changing society, or will it be indistinguishable in its political orientations from other Australians”<sup>17</sup>. Evidently there have not been any significant developments in the mean time.

Considering these indicators of population ‘affluence’ it was unfortunate during the rise of the One Nation movement leading to the 1998 Federal elections, that the Italian Australian community, in the main, took a back seat position on this very significant public issue. By and large, the community has also been almost totally detached from the Reconciliation process and issues relating to indigenous land rights. Such silence demonstrates their reluctance to be seen as and become active participatory citizens.

Writing on the second generation, Vasta explains that for Italian Australians, ethnicity “can also be a source of contradiction, especially for the upwardly mobile who absorb the ideological structures of the middle class but who, at the same time, are linked to the Italian migrant working-class identity of their parents and community”<sup>18</sup>.

### Cultural heritage

Admittedly, Australian museums and generally museums worldwide (science, history and art) have been negligent in their attempts to appropriately represent minority and marginal groups and have not inspired culturally diverse understandings of civic identities. Historically regarded as the oracles of the past, museums, as Sandell suggests

“[...]can be seen to represent institutionalised exclusion. They operate a host of mechanisms which may serve to hinder or prevent access to their services by a range of groups... viewed as institutions which reinforce exclusionary practices within the economic, political and social dimensions”<sup>19</sup>.

Mainstream cultural institutions such as museums have not taken great effort in attempting to understand the culturally diverse needs of constituent groups through museum visitor surveys which are conducted regularly and more importantly non-visitor surveys which are conducted rarely. The latter would greatly assist cultural policy makers in understanding the exclusionary dimensions of museums.

Visitor studies in the area of cultural diversity have tended to be reactive rather than proactive. The type of information gained from such studies can be instrumental in allowing institutions to incorporate the results and data into planning and programming<sup>20</sup>.

Cultural theorist, Tony Bennett, believes that more recently Australian museums “... play a highly varied and pluralised role in relation to processes of citizenship formation” and that “there is no single prevailing concept of civic self-fashioning they should help to foster and promote”<sup>21</sup>. This reflects a giant leap from his earlier study “The Reluctant Museum Visitor” in which his analysis did not even broach the topic of participation/non participation levels of culturally diverse visitors.

If civic participation by immigrant groups increases after initial re-settlement issues have been overcome, then interest in cultural activities should also be renewed. Cultural consumption is a higher measurement of active citizenship. Although there is much analysis of re-settlement patterns of immigrant groups, there are no indepth studies or analyses of cultural consumption, socio-recreational patterns of culturally diverse communities. The Australian Bureau of Statistics in recent years has published some general findings which indicate that the participation rate at cultural venues for Italy-born respondents is 6.9% for art galleries and 10.5% for museums (See Appendix 3)<sup>22</sup>. This is the second lowest participation rate of all cultural groups listed (17 in all).

Does this mean Italian Australians are merely not interested in mainstream cultural activities? It is difficult to ascertain official data on cultural consumption patterns of ethno-specific groups as such information is not gathered. However, the evidence that the Italian community is active in maintaining their own local and village identity through participation in and membership of the various regional clubs is evidenced in the fact that there are over 100 registered regional clubs (some of which have luxurious premises - although this is now mostly due to gaming licenses rather than a thriving membership or a relevant social/recreational program).

Does the Italian community support and contribute to inter-community activities? Here too, although superficially there have been a number of successful charity events and groups who support community-based organisations (such as the Assisi Homes, Vaccari Village, Co.As.It.), it is fair to say that these organisations do not enjoy widespread support from the broader Italian Australian community.

With regards to the community's support for cultural preservation, the Italian community has one of the longest established ethno-specific historical societies: the Italian Historical Society, founded in 1980. The Society has, over the years, undertaken some very important work with all the mainstream cultural institutions and has in place 'cultural agreements' with Museum Victoria and the State Library of Victoria. It is important to recognise that only since the Society's establishment has it been possible to document the Italian contribution to the history and development of this nation. The Society's dedication to collect historical evidence which has become the basis of numerous theses, historical texts, television documentaries, journal and newspaper articles is a testament to its value and need within the wider community. It would seem logical that the Society's work in encouraging and promoting research into this community's history and heritage would receive strong financial support from the Italian community, however this is not always the case.

Historical societies are often measured in terms of the support they receive from their constituent communities and number of volunteers recruited. Despite recruitment drives of the past and enthusiastic volunteers who are enlisted from time to time, the Society currently has approximately 10 volunteers, together with 350 subscribers to its bi-annual journal. In comparison, the Jewish community which has two established museums within a short distance from each other and which are both funded almost entirely by the community manages a volunteer pool of almost 3,000 reliable members. The volunteer program is so

much in demand that a lottery for annual helpers is held in order to give all volunteers an opportunity to engage in a satisfying annual program of assistance.

Even though the strength of the Italian Historical Society is in its quality of collections, authentic and scholarly interpretation, and is highly respected and recognised in the wider community (including by academics in Italy and the USA), the Society's work, in my view, is not sufficiently supported by the Italian Australian community. Its efforts to attract project-specific funding for special activities from both Australian statutory funding agencies and philanthropic groups are often thwarted by views that :

- (a) the Italian Australian community is the largest of the non-English speaking communities and therefore well established and resourceful;
- (b) that there are well known and successful Italian businesses and commercial organisations from which financial support and sponsorship could be obtained; and
- (c) that the second generation Italian Australians belong to the Australian middle class (by ABS indicators) and should be a wealthy resource from which to gather support.

Assuming that the above arguments bear some relevance, this indicates that the Italian community has not, in my view, reached a level of awareness about their cultural heritage and do not understand nor appreciate the work involved in preserving and researching cultural heritage. Heightened cultural awareness and participation is linked to higher levels of education. The Jewish community, made up of Eastern Block refugees, is a highly educated and financially resourceful community that has wide representation at all levels of the private and public sector and whose members are strong advocates of the need to preserve their cultural heritage.

### Educational levels

The 1996 Census indicated that of the Italy-born (first generation) respondents who left school before the age of 15, 49.3% were men and 53.2% were women. It also showed that 4.5% of men and 7.3% of women never attended school. When considering these statistics we must remember that this Italy-born component is an ageing population compared to the total Australian population and the total of overseas born Australians. This group of immigrants is also representative of the post-WWII Southern European mass immigration program which attracted in the main largely rural communities from lowly educated,

poor, war-torn countries. Also the involvement of these nations in WWII interrupted their schooling, this education gap was never regained after the war when rebuilding of village and farm life took precedence.

This merely reflects that the idea of cultural activities for the post-WWII immigrants is a concept alien to their understanding of recreational activity. By and large, this component of the community would not have had the opportunity to study let alone visit places of historical and cultural importance in their country of birth and it therefore does not follow that they would be interested in doing so in Australia.

Janis Wilton and Richard Bosworth noted as much in their 1984 analysis of the cultural program of associations like the Frederick May Foundation in Sydney (and similarly the Dante Alighieri Society of Melbourne).

Such cultural bodies usually remain cosy associations where romantic and safe images of Italy and Italians are imbibed...In many ways the Foundation's achievements are superficial..most ordinary [Italian] migrants remain far from impressed by cultural events. Semioticians, concrete poets and academic historians have little natural contact with ordinary Italo-Australians, who however far removed from the grandeur or glory of Michelangelo and Dante, are even further [removed] from the avante-garde of contemporary Italy<sup>23</sup>.

### Understanding museum audiences

Considering the past exclusionary nature of museums and knowing that communities of non-Anglo Celtic background are not traditional museum visitors, the Immigration Museum is determined to understand the needs and expectations of its culturally diverse audiences.

A comprehensive analysis of museum visitor surveys together with research into non-museum visitors, aims to unearth information about how culturally diverse communities engage with cultural institutions, especially visitors to the Immigration Museum (see Appendix 4). For museums to appropriately respond to its 'perceived' audiences and develop programs which are inclusive, challenging and stimulating they need to understand what are the barriers to visiting museums. This work is important as museums are charged with the preservation and scholarship of all dimensions of Australian society and are becoming reference points for tomorrow's society.

However, by unravelling who the visitors are and what they expect from the Museum and matching that information with an

understanding of the cultural barriers to museum visiting, new programs and strategies can be developed to attract new audiences, especially those communities who are seen to be potential visitors. It is clear that in these days of strict fiscal accountability and limited funding opportunities, the representation and legitimisation of communities through cultural institutions will face considerable pressure.

Cultural theorist, Sneja Gunew, suggests that levels of patronage of the arts and cultural sector strongly influences political agenda<sup>24</sup>, therefore those communities who are perceived as reluctant citizens in both the political and cultural sectors will be overlooked for stronger potential audiences. Increased attendance by Italians to arts and cultural institutions and events will obviously mean that they will be seen as a strong potential audience who will be catered for and targeted in marketing and programming initiatives by these institutions.

For example, in determining whether text and labels in museums should be translated, it would be highly unlikely, given the visitation patterns of the Italian-Australian community together with the low distribution rates of the community's language press, that museums would consider providing language translation for the Italian speakers, considering the cost involved in the provision of this service.

It must however, be noted that it is difficult to provide a comparative analysis of cultural consumption patterns of national groups as such studies are not conducted in any other country, apart from the occasional surveys conducted by Canada and Finland, as reported by the ABS.

Public cultural institutions are government funded and in order for them to continue to provide culturally relevant programs and activities they need to ascertain that there is interest in and support for their work and programs by their constituencies. Increased participation will ensure that those groups will continue to receive attention and be catered for. The challenge in the new millenium is for Italian Australians to move from being 'reluctant' citizens to 'active' citizens and enthusiastic cultural advocates.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Davidson A, *From Subject to Citizen: Australian Citizenship in the Twentieth Century*, Cambridge University Press, Australia, 1997, p6

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p6

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p46

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p121

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p177

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p14

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, p14

<sup>8</sup> Wilson PR, *Immigrants and Politics*, ANU Press, Canberra, 1973, p131

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p131

<sup>10</sup> Sandell R, *Museums as Agents of Social Inclusion in Museum Management and Curatorship*, Vol. 17 (4), Pergamon, Great Britain, 1998, p407

<sup>11</sup> Unpublished ABS data, *1996 Census of Population and Housing*

<sup>12</sup> *Community Profiles - Italy Born, 1996 Census*, Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, November 1999, p38

<sup>13</sup> Jupp J and Kabala M, *The Politics of Australian Immigration, Bureau of Immigration Research*, Canberra, 1994, pp127-138.

<sup>14</sup> Wilson P, *Immigrants and Politics*, ANU Press, Canberra, 1973, p37

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p41

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p47

<sup>17</sup> Castles S, Rand G & Vasta E, *Italo-Australians and Politics in Australia's Italians: Culture and Community in a Changing Society*, Allen & Unwin, Fondazione Giovanni Agnelli, Italy, 1992, p139

<sup>18</sup> Vasta E, *The Second Generation of Australia's Italians: Culture and Community in a Changing Society*, Allen & Unwin, Fondazione Giovanni Agnelli, Italy, 1992, p167-168.

<sup>19</sup> Sandell R, *Museums as Agents of Social Inclusion in Museum Management and Curatorship*, Vol.17(4), Pergamon, Great Britain, 1998, p407

<sup>20</sup> Robertson H, Migliorino P, *Open Up: Guidelines for Cultural Diversity Visitor Studies*, Australia Council and Powerhouse Museum, 1996, p13

<sup>21</sup> Bennett T, *The Museum and the Citizen in Museums and Citizenship: A Resource Book*, Queensland Museum, 1996, p2

<sup>22</sup> *Attendance at Selected Cultural Venues*, Australian Bureau of Statistics, March 1995, p27

<sup>23</sup> Wilton J and Bosworth R, *Old Worlds and New Australia: The Post-War Migrant Experience*, Penguin Books, 1984, Victoria, pp137-138

<sup>24</sup> Gunew S and Fazal R, *Culture, Difference and the Arts*, Allen & Unwin, NSW, 1994, pp2-5

APPENDIX 1

## Persons Born Overseas or with an Overseas-born Parent - 1996 Census

	O/s born	Aust born with 1 parent o/s	Percentage of Total Pop
United Kingdom & Ireland	1,124,100	1,539,600	14.9
Italy	238,200	333,900	3.2
Greece	126,500	153,900	1.6
China	111,000	40,200	0.8
Germany	110,300	139,300	1.4

(Source: ABS Cultural Trends in Australia: A Statistical Overview 1997)

A key to ethnic origin is data on language spoken at home. the 1996 Census found of people aged 5 years and over, the most commonly spoken languages other than English were Italian (2.2%), Greek (1.6%), Cantonese (1.1%).

APPENDIX 2

## Italian Language Paper Distribution rates compared to Other Language Papers (distribution rates of sample only)

Language	Distrib. Nos	Frequency	Prop. of language speakers	No. in population (1st & 2nd gen)
Italian (3 papers, 1 mag)			83.7%	572,601
- <i>La Fiamma</i>	44,000	tri weekly		
- <i>Il Globo</i>	23,000	tri weekly		
Greek (14 papers, 2 mags)			88.7%	280,447
- <i>Neos Kosmos</i>	29,000	bi-weekly		
- <i>Greek Herald</i>	22,289	daily		
- <i>The Greek National Vema</i>	19,800	tri-weekly		
Chinese**(17 papers, 3 mags)			95.3%	114,637 (China-born only)
- <i>Aust. Chinese</i>	23,500	daily		
- <i>Chinese Herald</i>	22,000	daily		
- <i>Independent</i>	25,000	daily		
German (3 papers)			44.3%	249,678
- <i>Australien Kurier</i>	5,000	monthly		
- <i>Die Woche in Australien</i>	6,500	weekly		

(Source: Margaret Gee's Australian Media Guide, 59th Ed, 1998-1999)

Note: \*\* Chinese newspapers are also read by Chinese speakers from Hong-Kong and Taiwan

**APPENDIX 3****Attendance at Cultural Venues by Birthplace ABS March 1995  
Persons '000 and Participation Rate (%)**

Birthplace	Art Galleries	Museums	Libraries	Gardens	Cinema
Australia born	782.8 (22.7)	955.0 (28.5)	1420.3 (38.5)	1542.2 (37.4)	6720.0 (64.9)
UK & Ireland	298.6 (25.0)	367.8 (30.8)	584.1 (49.0)	550.5 (46.1)	721.8 (60.5)
Italy born	16.9 (6.9)	25.6 (10.5)	31.3 (12.9)	51.7 (23.5)	53.42 (29.5)
Greece	8.3 (6.7)	13.4 (10.8)	16.7 (13.4)	34.0 (27.4)	32.7 (26.3)
China	12.9 (17.8)	16.0 (22.1)	30.2 (41.6)	34.2 (47.2)	33.5 (46.1)
Germany	30.5 (27.5)	36.1 (32.6)	41.8 (37.7)	45.3 (40.8)	53.4 (48.1)

(Source: ABS Attendance at Selected Cultural Venues, March 1995)

The highest rates of participation for art galleries occurred in the 45-54 year age group (26.8%) whilst for museums was for people aged between 35 and 44 years (34.%)

Australian born people attended art galleries and museums at rates of 22.7% and 28.5% respectively, compared with 21.0% and 25.7% for overseas born people.

Museums and galleries were visited by people with bachelor degrees or higher (49.8% and 48.5% respectively).

**Note:**

It is interesting to note that only Canada and Finland have conducted similar cultural participation surveys to Australia. It is therefore difficult to make any statements about cultural participation/consumption rates compared to the countries of origin of the overseas born Australians.

**APPENDIX 4****Immigration Museum Visitor Profile – 1999**

Country of Birth	Jan %	March %	April %	May %	July %	August %	Sept %
Australia	65	58	58	57	63	60	52
England/Scotland/ Wales	14	12	9	12	13	15	15
Germany	2	4	5	3	3	4	2
Greece	6	0	2	1	2	1	4
Italy	1	0	0	1	1	1	1

Country of Birth	Jan %	March %	April %	May %	July %	August %	Sept %
Australia	44	44	48	41	51	51	40
England/Scotland/ Wales	21	16	14	14	18	17	18
Germany	4	3	8	4	2	4	1
Greece	11	4	3	3	6	5	11
Italy	5	0	1	1	3	1	2

Country of Birth	Jan %	March %	April %	May %	July %	August %	Sept %
Australia	41	43	47	40	50	48	34
England/Scotland/ Wales	19	17	11	14	17	19	19
Germany	3	3	7	3	2	4	3
Greece	10	5	4	3	4	5	12
Italy	0	0	1	4	4	2	2



# The Italian Culture in a Globalising World

*Cristina Motta-Fenton*

## Introduction

In recent decades the globalisation process has accelerated, as a result of the liberalisation of trade and technological changes. Such a process has affected both production and consumption markets. As far as the former are concerned, globalisation has not been an abrupt phenomenon but rather the progressive outcome of technological changes, which have thrived thanks to the gradual liberalisation of trade, occurring since the end of World War 2 and culminating in the end of the cold war. This has spurred an almost unanimous consensus that free-market is the only viable alternative. Whereas liberalisation of trade has made globalisation of production and consumption a theoretical possibility, the advent of technology has turned it into a tangible reality. As a case in point, in capital-intensive industries such as chemicals and car-manufacturing the new technologies have encouraged companies to accrue the benefits of economies of scale, as costs and profits are determined by plant utilisation or to put it in another way: the more you produce, the less is your unit price, the more you earn. This ultimately has led companies to seek markets abroad, in order to remain competitive. As for less capital-intensive industries, although they have not been affected by scale economies, they have benefited from economies of scope, in the sense that worldwide communication and transportation networks, providing cheap and reliable links between countries, have enabled companies to reap the economies spawned by a broader scope of operations. Furthermore, the advent of new technologies has been accompanied by the need to access the cheapest sources of labour and resources and to take advantage also of shifting exchange rates and state regulations more or less favourable to business. Also Information Technology has concurred to speed the globalisation of production markets, in that it has enabled companies to collect and manage information independent of government and to implement e-commerce.

Technology has played a paramount role also in accelerating the convergence of consumers' markets. As a matter of fact, in recent decades we seem to have been living in a borderless Republic of

Technology, whose supreme law is convergence, i.e. the tendency for everything to become more like everything else. As a matter of fact technology has made previously élite services such as travel, transport, and telecommunication accessible almost to everyone. This has led to a homogenisation of information, needs, and consequently demand. We seem to have all become global consumers, who “want to buy the best and cheapest products - no matter where in the world they are produced” (*Ohmae*). The same rule seems to be valid for countries, as “to be an advanced society, a country has to be a democracy and it has to be connected to the global market-place” (*Fukuyama*).

On the other hand,

“managing in a borderless world does not mean managing by averages. It does not mean that all tastes run together into one amorphous mass of universal appeal. And it does not mean that the appeal of operating globally removes the obligation to localise products. The lure of a universal product is a false allure. The reality is a bit more subtle” (*Ohmae*).

Let us take an example to clarify this last point, a car, a product which at first glance might be regarded as global, requires a more subtle strategy. Ideally car-manufacturers should first ‘think globally’, i.e. have a global vision of the domestic and foreign markets, in order to identify the requirements of each markets. Then, the companies should not reason according to rough averages, i.e. sum all the national preferences and divide by the number of the countries. Conversely, companies have to tailor the model to the ‘lead market’ and find out what changes are required by the other markets.

Nevertheless, globalisation in consumers’ markets is still superficial. In fact, on a mere consumer level, it seems that tastes, markets and hence cultures are converging, witness for instance McDonalds, Coca-Cola and Levi jeans. On the other side, even a global product like Coca-Cola has required a long process of ‘insiderisation’, in the sense that, before Coca-Cola was established in each of its markets, the company had to build up a fairly complete local infrastructure and do the groundwork to establish local demand.

In addition, those products have different meanings to people in each culture. For instance, in the USA even the president is an enthusiastic customer of McDonalds, while in Italy it is just a place where teenagers can have a fast and cheap meal. Conversely in countries like Russia or Zimbabwe a meal at McDonalds is a luxurious display of status.

And despite the economic pressure, nobody can deny the persistent differences in purchasing power, political and legal systems, and last but

surely not least, cultures. This latter is in fact of paramount importance, up to the point of being regarded as “the single greatest barrier to business success” (Hall’).

Following from the above the purpose of this paper is two-fold:  
 to ascertain whether globalisation has affected the Italian culture  
 to determine to what extent migration leads to an alteration of the personal sense of Italian culture.

In order to achieve our goals, we will compare two different studies, the first one carried out by Hofstede in the 70s, the second one by Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner in the 90s.

### Hofstede’s analysis

As Geert Hofstede<sup>2</sup> pointed out, culture may be defined as a “collective mental programming: it is that part of our conditioning that we share with other members of our nation, region, or group, but not with other nations, regions, or groups”. From such a definition, we can infer a first feature of culture, which is its complexity. This complexity derives from the fact that every individual is a member simultaneously of several groups, such as supra-national, national, regional, social class, gender, generation groups, every one of which generates a sense of identity. As a consequence, subcultures coexist in every country, which implies that we have to understand which one is predominant. In this task we benefit from the fact that culture is not innate but acquired, in the sense that one is not born with an understanding of culture. Conversely, one ‘learns’ culture through a socialisation process. In fact culture is related to the values and beliefs shared and transmitted only by a specific group. A further feature of culture lies in its tendency to change extremely slowly. Let us take an example: in Europe, despite the efforts to achieve integration, a myriad of cultures coexist peacefully. An example is the different attitudes to food between Britain and Italy, where in the more hedonistic latter it is viewed as a pleasure of life. Last, but not least, the influence of culture on our behaviour is pervasive: for instance, people bring culture to work, and therefore culture in organisations affect their structure, their strategy, and their operations.

In order to prove the resistance of culture to change, we can refer to a famous model proposed by Hofstede, based on 166,000 surveys conducted in 64 countries. The sample was formed by IBM personnel working in different countries. As they all worked for the same corporation in similar positions, all differences in their cultural attitudes were most likely to be due to their national differences rather than to different corporate cultures. Hofstede’s research sample however did

not encompass cultural minority groups who live within country borders such as the Italian community in Australia or the Australian community in Italy. It refers therefore just to the dominating culture of each country, without taking into account the sub-cultures, which yet exist in those countries. Hofstede identified the following dimensions of national culture:

- small versus large power distance,
- weak versus strong uncertainty avoidance,
- individualism versus collectivism
- masculinity versus femininity.

We will now consider different cultures, classified on the basis of these dimensions. However we note that the results as shown in Figure 1, and also the following Figure 2 and Figure 3, simultaneously show the difference between the cultures in relation to two cultural dimensions established by Hofstede. We see that in most cases there is a tendency of the countries to fall on a line, showing that there is a correlation between the different characteristics, but that correlation is not our main concern here, and we will describe each cultural dimension separately.

### Power Distance

As far as power distance is concerned, it reveals the extent to which a society accepts the unequal distribution of power in institutions and organisations. A large power distance implies broad differences between individuals in terms of distribution of power, whereas small power distance demands a minimisation of social inequality. As demonstrated by Figure 1, Italy as well as Argentina and Spain exhibits a large power distance, while Australia, and other Anglo-Saxon countries (Great Britain, the US and Canada) feature a small power distance. Japan, which has been introduced to complete the picture, displays unsurprisingly a large power distance. The large power distance of Italy is reflected in the family, which is regarded as the pre-eminent point of reference of individuals. In fact the Italian family is similar to a hierarchical pyramid, for instance children are subordinate to their parents, who in turn are subjected to the authority of the *capofamiglia* (i.e. head of the family). On one side decisions are often shared, on the other side there is an elderly authority, to which the individuals are bound by loyalty, affection and deference. As a result, an analogous paternalistic structure is perpetuated in companies, which are in most cases small-medium family-like organisations, where decision making is centralised.

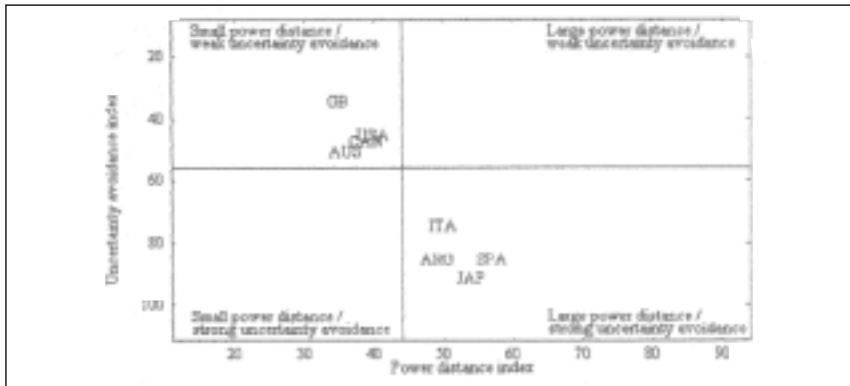


Figure 1. Power Distance and Uncertainty Avoidance, after Hofstede

### Avoidance of uncertainty

A second dimension of culture lies in the avoidance of uncertainty, which conveys to which extent the “society feels threatened by uncertain and ambiguous situations and tries to avoid these situations by providing greater career stability, establishing more formal rules, not tolerating deviant ideas and behaviours, and believing in absolute truths and the attainment of expertise”. This leads to distinguish between strong uncertainty avoidance cultures characterised by a need for formalised rules and little tolerance for ambiguity, and- on the other side- weak uncertainty avoidance cultures which feature a willingness to take risks and prefer loose control. As shown in Figure 1, and in Figure 2, which includes a Collectivist/Individualist dimension described below, Italy achieves a high score in terms of uncertainty avoidance. Such an attitude dates back to the codification of Roman Law in the 6th century. Over the centuries the Italian society became so regulated and organised that its members felt insecure if a specific situation was not contemplated by the law. Moreover, the dominion of the Catholic religion has definitively concurred to enhance the Italian uncertainty avoidance. In fact, Roman Catholicism relies on a strong dichotomy between good and evil. In order to join the former, one has to comply with a strict religious code of behaviour, which partly explains the Italian desire for formalised rules. Similar reasons are valid – mutatis mutandis – for the other Latin countries considered here, i.e. Argentina and Spain. On the contrary Australia and the Anglo-Saxon countries show a weak uncertainty avoidance. Such a disparity is also mirrored by the opposite legal systems (Civil Law and Common Law).

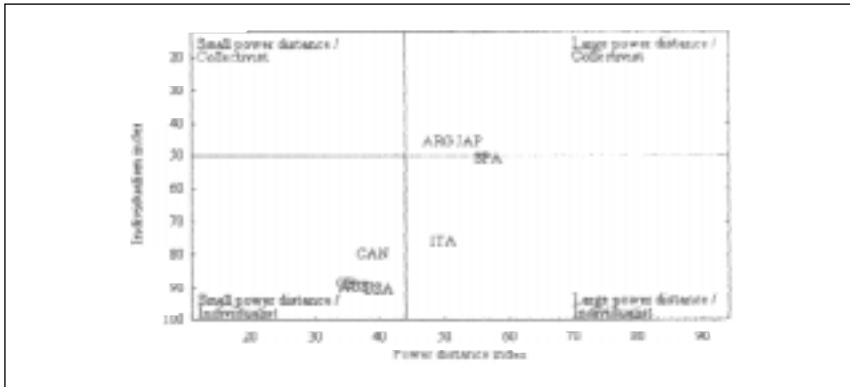


Figure 2. Individualism and Power Distance, after Hofstede

Masculinity versus Femininity

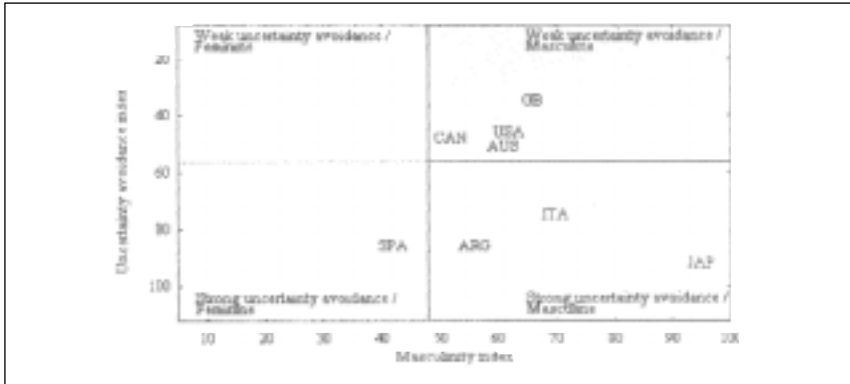


Figure 3. Uncertainty Avoidance and Masculinity, after Hofstede

A further dimension of national culture is “Masculinity versus Femininity”, for which some of Hofstede’s results are shown on Figure 3. Masculine countries pursue materialistic values such as the acquisition of money and power, assertiveness and decisiveness. Conversely feminine countries have a different attitude, in that they appraise relationships, cooperation and compromise. Furthermore, this second type of country is concerned with the quality of life. Both Italy and Australia (and the other countries under examination) display a strong masculinity. In case of Latin countries like Italy, such an attitude can be explained by the strong influence of Catholicism, in that this religion has been associated with “greed and material wealth” and supports therefore an “acquisitive society”. (Welford and Prescott) In the case of Protestant countries the answer might be found in two religious

ideas such as the calling and the predestination. The former provided individuals with a moral justification to worldly activity, while the latter justified the continuous pursuit of profits.

### Individualism versus Collectivism

A fourth dimension of culture is “Individualism versus Collectivism”. Individualistic societies display loose social ties, as the emphasis is placed on individual self-expression and initiative. Conversely collectivist societies regard group identity and loyalty as more important. Results are shown in Figure 2. Surprisingly Italy ranks among the individualistic countries, although Australia is definitively more individualistic than Italy. However, Italy’s individualism according to Hofstede is denied both by a following survey conducted by Fons Trompenaars in the 90s and by other evidence. As a matter of fact, in Italy “old boy networks”, i.e. links of kinship and acquaintances are paramount for business success. To put it another way, since business is regarded more as social than individual, the Italian culture cannot be considered individualistic *strictu sensu*.

Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner

Hofstede’s model, based on data collected in the period 1968-1972, can be integrated with the more recent research conducted by Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner in the 90s. In their words, “every culture distinguishes itself from others by the specific solutions it chooses to certain problems which reveal themselves as dilemmas” (1998). More specifically such dilemmas are related respectively to (1) human relationships, (2) the passage of time and (3) the environment.

Referring to the problems arising from human relationships, Trompenaars identifies the following cultural dimensions:

Universalism vs Particularism (rules versus relationships),

Communitarianism vs Individualism (the group versus the individual),

Neutral relationships vs Affective relationships (the range of feelings expressed),

Specific relationships vs Diffuse relationships (the range of involvement)

Achievement vs Ascription (how status is accorded).

We will now consider each of these, showing results for our cohort of countries.

Universalism vs Particularism (rules versus relationships)

Universalism and particularism represent two opposite cultural dimensions: universalism refers to the fact that rules and truths can be

precisely defined and always apply. Conversely, particularism relies on the belief that circumstances dictate how ideas and practises should be applied. Therefore, the stress lies on personal relationships rather than abstract codes, as every situation is regarded as unique. Italy tends more towards universalism than particularism, which implies the advocating of a set of rules which applies in any setting. Australia, the United Kingdom, the United States and Canada show a very high universalism, as depicted in Figure 4 below.

### Communitarianism vs Individualism

Individualism implies that people regard themselves primarily as individuals, while conversely collectivism refers to the fact that people view themselves primarily as part of a group. As demonstrated in Figure 5, Australia and the other Anglo-Saxon countries are extremely individualistic, whereas Italy – like other Catholic countries – is definitively collectivistic. This seems to suggest a Protestant-Catholic religious divide, due to the fact that Protestants address God individually, seeking justification through work, whereas Catholics have always approached God as a community of the faithful. The Australian and Italian political systems reflect such a cultural dichotomy: the Australian Prime Minister enjoys large power, whereas in Italy the Prime Minister is merely a “*primus inter pares*”.

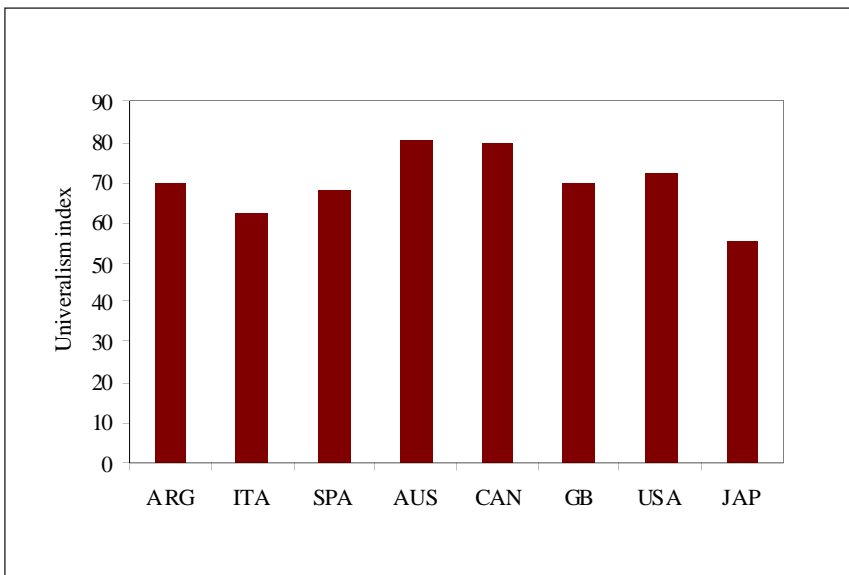


Figure 4. Universalism vs Particularism, after Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner

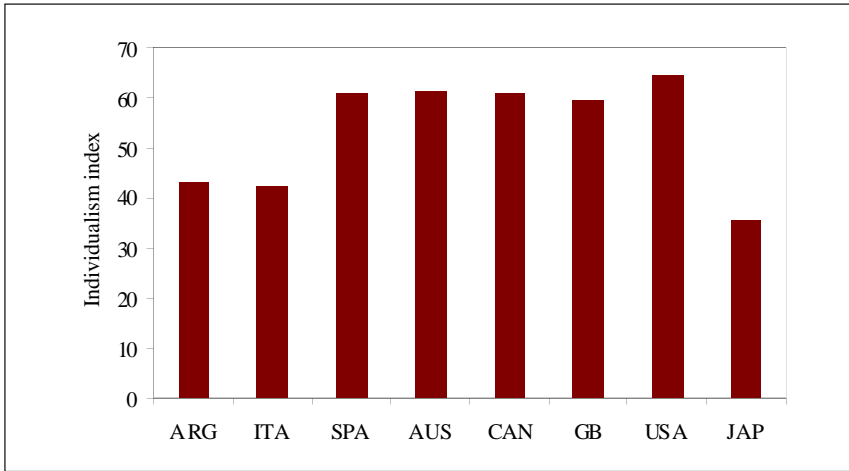


Figure 5. Communitarianism vs Individualism

### Neutral relationships vs Affective relationships

The third dimension of how we relate to other people refers to the range of feelings expressed. In neutral cultures emotions are kept under control and not openly displayed, while on the contrary in affective cultures emotions are regarded as natural and publicly conveyed. As shown in Figure 6 Italy ranks definitively among the affective countries, whereas Australia and the other Anglo-Saxon countries lean towards the neutral end of the continuum. As an Italian married to an Australian, I have often experienced the Australian neutrality, for instance when we have pictures taken I am the one who hugs my husband, but then gender characteristics intrude deeply in this sample of two!

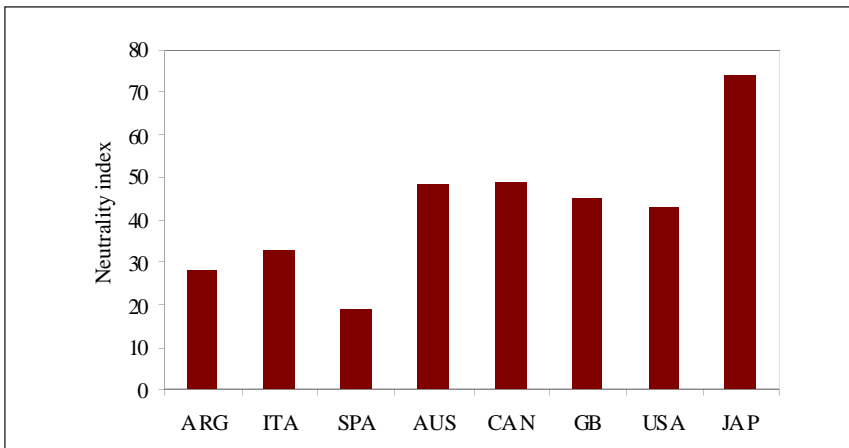


Figure 6. Neutral vs Emotional, after Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner

### Specific relationships vs Diffuse relationships

The fourth dimension refers to the degree of involvement people are comfortable with. In diffuse cultures ‘everything is connected to everything’ and thus, there is no boundary between private and public life. Whereas in specific cultures being involved in a business relationship implies simply what is prescribed by the contract, in diffuse cultures it entails also a real and personal contact. Italy leans toward the specific end of the continuum, although the Anglo-Saxon countries exhibit a much higher ‘specificity’.

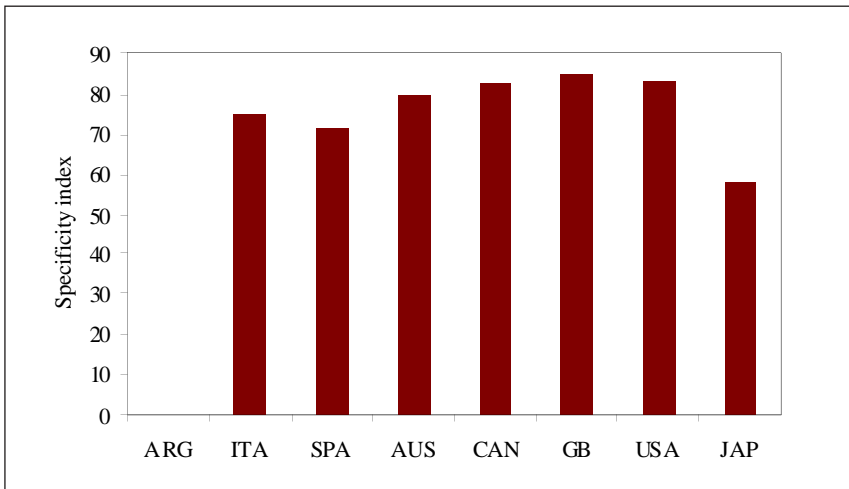


Figure 7. Diffuse vs Specific, after Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner

### Achievement vs Ascription

Finally, achievement versus ascription refers to how status is accorded: i.e. it might either be achieved through hard work and outstanding performance or ascribed by birth, age, gender, kinship and connections. Italy is an ascriptive culture, which entails that status is not achieved by doing, but ascribed by being. Conversely Australia and the other Anglo-Saxon countries are achievement societies. Such a contrast is evident in the advertisements for executive and management position in Italy, which often specify “the candidate must be over 35”. In Australia such an age or gender discrimination would breach the law.

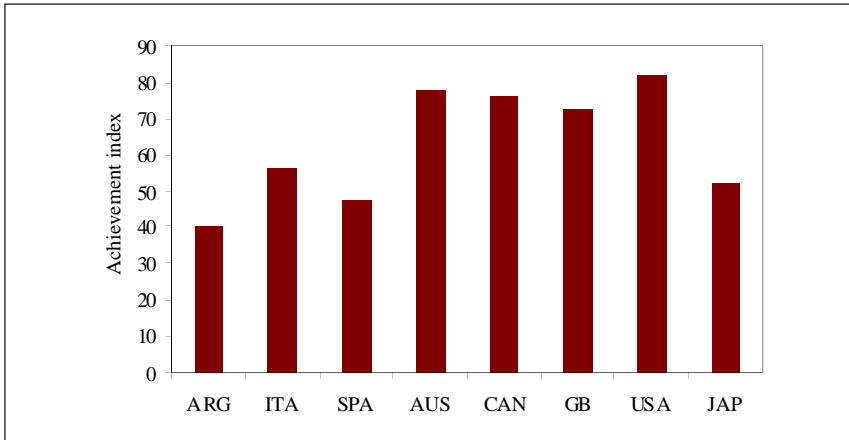


Figure 8. Achievement vs Ascription, after Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner

### Attitude to time – Sequential vs synchronic societies

As we mentioned earlier, according to Trompenaars, a second dilemma stems from the passage of time. Sequential societies view time as a linear series of passing events, whereas synchronic societies view time as a circular inter-relation of past, present and future, which concur to shape the present action. In sequential societies like the Anglo-Saxon countries people carry out one activity at a time, in synchronic ones such as Italy more than one activity at a time. In addition, synchronic societies attain strictly to deadlines, whereas in synchronic ones schedules are subordinated to relationships. As a case in point, being late in Italy is not regarded as rude, whereas in Anglo-Saxon societies it is.

### Attitude to environment – Inner vs Outer Directed

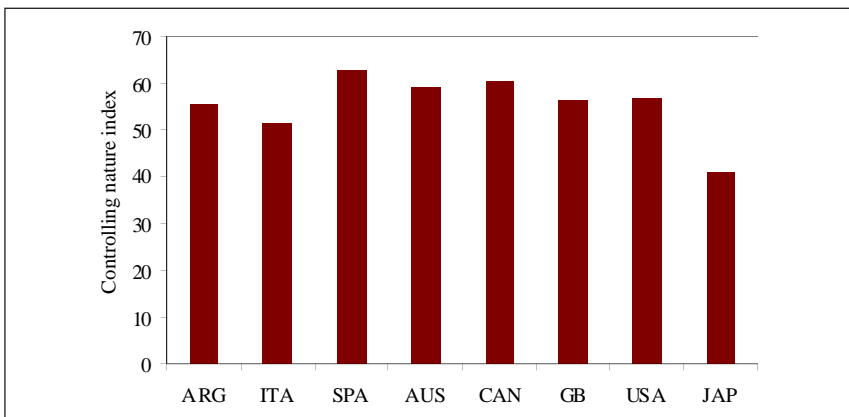


Figure 9. Inner vs Outer Directed, after Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner

Finally, cultures differ also in their attitude to environment. Inner-directed societies believe they can and should control nature, as the major focus affecting their lives lies within the person. On the contrary outer-directed cultures view nature as more powerful than the individuals. Comparisons are shown in Figure 9 above. The divide seems to be between

#### Western and Asian cultures.

From the above comparison we can infer that Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's model mirrors some of the cultural dimension identified by Hofstede, more specifically in the dilemmas "individualism versus collectivism" and "achievement versus ascription". Similarly, "universalism versus particularism" reflects Hofstede's distinction between societies concerned with certainty and adaptability and societies concerned with uncertainty.

#### Italian culture in a globalising world

We have shown, with some evidence, how Latin culture survives in Latin countries and Anglo-Saxon culture in Anglo-Saxon countries. In a conference in Australia on Italian-Australian culture an interesting further investigation would be on the survival of one in the heart of the other. We will not attempt that here, but merely reflect on visual observations just how robust and continuing the Italian culture seems to be here – and in other countries of this globalising world.

#### Conclusions

From our analysis it has emerged that:

Globalisation does not lead to an homogenisation of culture. Hofstede's and the Trompenaars/ Hampden-Turner studies conducted more than a decade apart, the first one started in 1973 and the second one completed in 1998 show very similar results, in the sense they both emphasise the cultural heterogeneity among countries.

Migration does not lead to an homogenisation of culture either, as confirmed by the striking similarities between the British culture and the cultures of its former colonies (Canada, the USA and Australia). In a similar way, Italy, country of origin and Argentina, country of destination of a multitude of Italian migrants, show very analogous cultural features.

Hofstede's research confirms thus that culture changes extremely slowly. As pointed out by Figure 1, Figure 2, and Figure 3, Great Britain and its former colonies with a predominance of British descendant

population (Australia, the US and Canada) show exactly the same cultural features. Similarly, a country of Italian migrants like Argentina presents striking similarities to Italy.

I will conclude by contradicting Prince Metternich: “Italy is not a mere geographical expression”. It boasts a strong cultural identity. For this reason, despite the attempts of assimilation and integration the Italian culture thrives in Australia. IAI, and this conference, are tangible exemplifications of this.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup>In Dawes, B. (ed.) *International Business: a European Perspective*.

<sup>2</sup>We have borrowed this definition from Dawes, Chapter 2, Page 58.

<sup>3</sup>As Hofstede explained clearly in 1991 in *Cultures and Organizations, Software of the Mind*: “Culture is learned, not inherited. It derives from one’s own environment, not from one’s genes”.

<sup>4</sup>In Hofstede, *Culture’s Consequences*.

<sup>5</sup>In Hofstede, *Motivation, Leadership and Organization: Do American Theories Apply Abroad?*.



# The Italian Influence on Australian Mainstreets: The Parade ( Norwood, South Australia ) and Lygon Street (Carlton, Victoria).

*Diana Chessell*

## Introduction

Today Norwood, the City of Norwood, Payneham and St. Peters in South Australia is a near city locale like Carlton in Melbourne whose commercial main streets operate as outdoor Mediterranean-style piazzas, attracting about five times their local resident population weekly. Pavement cafes, reproduction 1880s shops and workingmen's cottages and piazza style shopping malls crowd around the two main streets, well known as Australian cosmopolitan sites. The major focus of this paper is to explore the Italian influence on the development of these cultural sites and particularly the growing phenomenon of Australian identification or citizenship of cosmopolitan mainstreets in the new millennium.

The major feature of both The Parade and Lygon Street is that they are the commercial main streets of each state's 'Little Italy'. They both meet the criteria Pascoe established in *Bongiorno Australia, Our Italian Heritage* for the 'Little Italies' or Italian ambientes as places 'which offer a complete range of Italian goods and services [...] and the heart of Italo-Australian social life" (Pascoe 1987, p.163). Pascoe mapped the locale of Carlton in Melbourne as Victoria's 'Little Italy' Figure 1, Leichhardt in the inner western suburbs of Sydney as NSW's 'Little Italy' and two major 'Little Italies' in Perth's metropolitan area, the most prominent in the seaside locale of Fremantle. All of the remaining States either have no significant Italian population, as is the case for Tasmania and the Northern Territory, or in Queensland's case is scattered between three major towns over a vast area. My documenting of South Australia's Little Italy in Norwood completes the mapping of the major Italian centres in the Australian landscape.

The Italian contribution to the forging of Australia's urban character as the largest single non-British immigrant group has received little attention. The Adelaide metropolitan area provides the clearest social landscape in Australia to chart their influence because unlike the

experience of Melbourne and other States, most post-war British migrants in South Australia were segregated in the purpose built satellite City of Elizabeth 25 kilometres to the north of central Adelaide. This left the Italians, Greeks, Balts and other European migrants to occupy the cheap inner-urban areas then regarded as slums. The development of these areas in both physical and social terms from being rejected and 'lost' urban places in the 1950s, to their high cultural status in 2000, is rightly part of our cultural heritage. In my book 'The Italian influence on The Parade', published by Wakefield Press in December last year, I document this process incorporating migration stories, commercial vignettes and an historical overview of Italian activity in the area from the 1860s to 1990s.

The first main street to be examined is The Parade, Norwood, South Australia.

#### Italian activity in Norwood's Little Italy or Italian ambiente.

The strongest indicator of the Italian influence on The Parade is the commercial shopfront of Adelaide's 'Little Italy'. This 'Little Italy' or Italian ambiente centred on Norwood, Figure 2, is the focus of Italian and Italo-Australian activity in South Australia. It contains the co-ordinating headquarters of all statewide Italian activity, the Italian Consulate, the Italian Chamber of Commerce, Co-ordinating Italian Committee headquarters for general, social and welfare needs (CIT), and the headquarters and distribution centre for the major Italian newspaper, *Il Globo*. Also present are prominent Italian commercial premises, including major Italian food distributors, the majority of South Australia's regional and inter-regional Italian clubs and festas (over 60 per cent), major concentrations of Catholic schools with high proportions of Italian students, and significant numbers of Italian health and other professional services. In total nearly 80 per cent of the Italian places in this Little Italy are in the near city Norwood, Payneham and St. Peters Council area and on its boundary roads. Italian signage and the naming and content of commercial and business activity identify the high proportion of Italian businesses on The Parade. The extent of Italian spoken is also clear from the Italian signs and notices in local shops.

#### Continuity of Italian activity in Norwood: 1860s to 2000

It is significant that the major commercial focus of Adelaide's Little Italy is in the area which has the largest continuous concentration in place and over time of Italians in all of South Australia and metropolitan Adelaide. Italians have been residing in Norwood from the 1860s to

present day, as documented by Hugo and O'Connor(1989 and 1993). Antonio Giannoni, South Australia's first Italian settler, was a horse cab driver in Norwood's major urban village, Kensington, from 1865 to 1883. By the 1920s Norwood had approximately fifty Italian-born residents including Antonio's son, Peter Giannoni, Mayor from 1920 to 1922. They formed an Italian cluster and ran some small businesses in the area. The Giannoni family ran an undertaking business from premises in Kensington Village closely associated with St Ignatius Catholic Church where the major Italian religious Festival, San Pellegrino, is now based. The connection extended throughout the eastern metropolitan region as priests from St Ignatius also serviced the further outreaches of the parish in Magill and Campbelltown (see Figure 2). The Italians at Campbelltown were thus counted as members of a parish which had its Jesuit centre and the priest's residence at St Ignatius, Norwood, and 'had a strong regional influence extending from Kent Town to Athelstone' (Blackburn 1953, p.98) from these early days.

In the 1920s people from the southern Italian region of Campania who 'found the area north east of Adelaide was an ideal place to settle'(FAESCA p.52) concentrated around the Torrens River market growing area at Campbelltown (see Figure 2) on the outskirts of the eastern region. During the mass migration of the 1950s and 1960s, thousands more Campanians from five villages in the hills behind Naples-Altavilla Irpina, Pago Vieano, San Giorgio la Molara, Molinaro and San Marco dei Cavotti settled in the region, many staying in Norwood on arrival. These migrants, their children and their families, together with the established Italo-Australians, now constitute approximately 70 per cent of all Southern Italians in South Australia and between 20-30 per cent of all residents in the local government areas in the eastern region (Kensington & Norwood; St. Peters; Payneham and Campbelltown: ABS Figures) especially in the outer areas. This demonstrates how strongly Italians are the dominant ethnic group in the wider region. Around the Little Italy in the older part of the Norwood region, as in Carlton, there is only a 'remnant' Italian born population of three to five per cent. Many Italians and Italo Australians own substantial businesses and hold prominent public positions across the region. These include the Mayor of the City of Norwood, Payneham and St. Peters, Laurie Fioravanti, who is an Australian of Italian descent, as are Councillors Carlo Dottore, Jack Scalzi, Reno De Fazio and Robert Bria, and the Council's Chief Executive Officer Mario Barrone. An ex Mayor, Vincenzina Ciccirello, from San Giorgio la Molara in Campania, is now ALP member for a major eastern region electorate in State

Parliament. All these activities demonstrate the density of the Italian infrastructure behind the Italian shopfront on the main street at Norwood.

### Mapping Adelaide's 'Little Italy'

The most visible indicators of Norwood's Little Italy along the mainstreet are a number of Italian food distributors, notably Rio Coffee (Item 30), Grace and Francesco Vari's "alimentari" (Item 22), Italian greengrocers and several maccelleria (butchers' shops), Hairdressers called Belissimo, Arturo Taverna and Joe Romeo, and Frank and Grace Vari's 'generali alimentari'. Their individually owned shops demonstrate the pattern of the Italians' self-reliant enterprise. The Vari family exemplify the historical development of this pattern. Arriving in Australia from Soriano, Calabria via Naples, Campania in 1955, Frank first continued the family tradition of basketmaking while living in a small shop and residence with his extended family on The Parade. At night he both learnt English at the Primary School opposite and assisted other family members deliver pasta and other European goods throughout the district, most migrants having no cars. In 1959 he joined with his sister and brother-in-law in establishing a grocery store further up The Parade. At first they mainly supplied Italians living in crowded conditions in adjacent Margaret Street and nearby suburbs. Now a great range of people make special trips to purchase his traditional Italian products.

A similar story is the thriving Belissimo Hairdressers owned by the Ionno family who arrived in the late 1950s from Molinara near Benevento, Campania. Three daughters now work together with the strong support of their family in an area of The Parade dense with Italian-owned businesses. Chief among these is Cafe Buongiorno (Item 23). Situated in the heart of the commercial centre, it balances the architectural profile of the City of Kensington and Norwood Town Hall along a row of mainly 1880s shopfronts. Cafe Buongiorno, in a transformed 1920s Draper's Store, is the most visible and well-known icon of the Italian influence and displays all the common signifiers of an Italian mediterraneo lifestyle. Outside, the Italian colours and fluttering umbrellas over cafe tables are like banners against a mostly bright blue sky. Inside the insignia of Rome and Venice feature as decorative wall and counter emblems facing rows of small inlaid wooden tables. Everywhere is an abundance of Italian food and wine. Italian-owned and operated from the early 1990s, it was the first of the major cafes to take advantage of the Adelaide's mediterranean climate in public spaces

and establish the tradition of cafe tables on street pavements. It was also the first in the chain of Cafe Buongiorno's which now include a city premises and a new cafe in one of the State's largest enclosed modern shopping malls at Tea Tree Gully (see Map 2), near the Campanian Clubhouse and still within the ambit of the Eastern region. The 'commodification' of Italian lifestyle and cuisine symbolised in Cafe Buongiorno is indicative of the extensive cultural and spatial dimensions of the Italian influence.

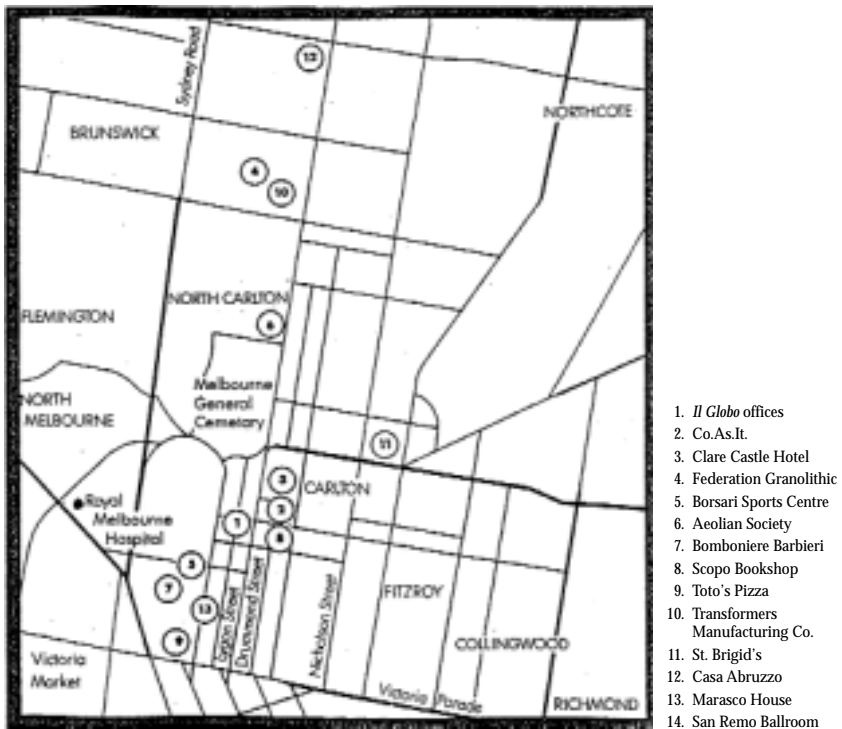


Figure 1 Melbourne's Little Italy (Pascoe 1987, p162)

Other major icons are the Italian Festivals concentrated on the Parade. The South Australian Italian Festival has been a week-long event with three days of celebration mainly focused on the Norwood Oval. As an experiment in commodifying the Italian Festival as a statewide Cultural Tourism event, it is now situated in the parklands between Norwood and the City (see Figure 2). The San Pellegrino Festival continues to be celebrated each January, commemorating the Patron Saint of the people from Altavilla Irpina in Campania, the largest Campanian group who settled in Norwood. The transformation of

Norwood's main street into a central piazza or ceremonial place during these festivals has contributed a strong spiritual dimension to both the Italian and non-Italian meaning of this place. During San Pellegrino, the trilogy of church, town hall (comune) and commercial centre are circled by several thousand chanting Italians. Yet in blessing the streets, the town hall activity, the shops, the houses and the people of Norwood, the priests, believers and followers make the place an urban theatre. The Italian activity provides a model for the use of urban public spaces as theatres for the display of spiritual, intangible and incoherent aspects of a place, such as its sense and spirit of place.

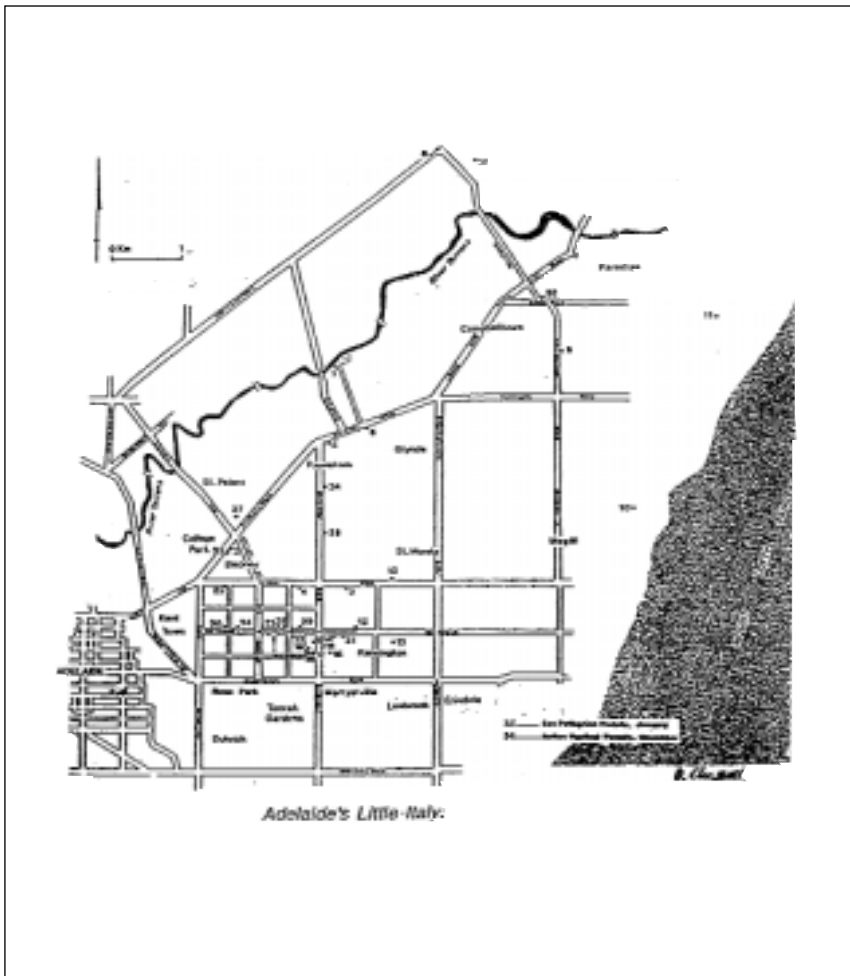


Figure 2 Adelaide's Little Italy or Italian Ambiente focused on Norwood contains all the goods and services required by Adelaide's Italians and Italo-Australians, 1990s, South Australia.

Adelaide's Little Italy or Italian Ambiente 1990s: List of figure numbers and Italian places identified for Figure 2.

1. Arena Community Club
2. Co.As.It.: Italian welfare agency
3. Il Globo, Newspaper
4. Italian Chamber of commerce and Industry in South Australia Inc
5. San Giorgio Club
6. Italian Consulate
7. Fogolar Furlan Club
8. Campania Sports and Social Club
9. St Francis of Assissi
10. Rostrevor College
11. St Ignatius College Senior School
12. La Famosa Shopping Centre
13. (ex) Juventus Soccer Club
14. Spinelli Knitting Mill
15. Altavilla Irpina Club
16. Mary Mac Killop Secondary Girls College
17. St Joseph's Infant School
18. St Joseph's Convent
19. St Ignatius College Junior School
20. St Ignatius Church
21. La Campagnola Restaurant
22. Vari's Generi Alimentari Italiani
23. Cafe Buongiorno
24. Cafe Medici
25. Inter-Italian Social Club of Adelaide
26. Italian Festival, Norwood Oval and The Parade,
27. Italian Assemblies of God
28. St Joseph's School
29. Da Libero Restaurant
30. Rio Coffee Food Distributors
31. Mensa Club (Norwood), Norwood Town Hall
32. Marche Regional Club
33. Catholic Church of the Holy Name
34. Our Lady Queen of Peace
35. San Pellegrino Parade, January
36. Italian Festival Parade. November
37. Molinara Social and Sports Club
38. South Australian Italian Association
39. Sicilienne Club

Italian dominance of ethnic commercial activity

A survey of premises on the Parade from the 1950s to the present day reveals the extent of Italian dominance of total ethnic occupancy.

Table 1: Italian activity in the commercial heart of Norwood's Parade, South Australia 1970s to 1990s

Years	Number of Premises	Proportion with Residences	Total Ethnic	% Ethnic Total Italian or Italo-Australian	% Italian Overall Total
1970/71	151	41	28	57	16
1979/80	124	35	27	67	18
1991/92	94	*	34	62	18

\* Limited details

Note 1 : The commercial heart of Norwood is identified as that portion of The Parade from Osmond Terrace to Portrush Road and the major landmark of Clayton Church.

Note 2: Occupancy in recent years is difficult to tabulate owing to records being computerised and the growth in corporate and company ownership. Source: Compiled from the City of Kensington and Norwood 1970/71, 1979/80 and 1991/92 Assessment Book.

The complex of Italian occupancy, which now includes lawyers, travel agents and dress shops took decades to be established. Overall, Italian occupancy by ownership or lease, has comprised nearly 60 per cent of all ethnic ownership, and a significant 20 per cent of all occupancy on The Parade since the 1970s. The majority of Italian premises are owned by families or in partnership with families from the Italian region of origin (City of Kensington & Norwood Assessment Books 1950s to 1990s; FAESCA 1989). There are a number of Greek premises, while Hungarians, Russians, Polish and other European clusters of mainly post-war migrants are represented by the Russian Community Centre and a variety of commercial and service activities. There are some recent Asian migrants. However, their numbers are minimal and the multicultural citizenship is still characteristically an Italian- dominated European group.

The Parade today - Norwood's main street

The presence of the Little Italy and the Italian dominance of ethnic commercial activity has contributed to The Parade's transformation from a neglected and rejected main-street into a main street noted and marketed for its cosmopolitan style in the 1990s. There are five dimensions to the Italian influence on The Parade which in themselves identify the components of a multicultural streetscape. These are the mainstreet's:

- \* commercial character
- \* marketing style
- \* small-scale, family-based commercial activity
- \* extensive use of public spaces
- \* function as a regional centre

### Italian leadership of Norwood's multicultural style

The claim that the Italian influence provides leadership to Norwood's present multicultural style is supported by the statistics of Italian occupancy of The Parade in two ways. Firstly Table 1 documents that the Italians have maintained not expanded their direct activity. Most significantly, approximately thirty outdoor eating areas and twenty-five after hours food outlets that are Italian named and a series of shops commodifying the multicultural alfresco living style are operated mainly by non-Italian people (City of Kensington & Norwood Assessment Books). It can be truly said that on The Parade, and in Lygon Street, focaccia and cappuccino in alfresco style cafes have in high proportion replaced the great Australian Deli. All provide evidence that the majority commercial activity, the 70 per cent non-ethnic mainstream culture, has adopted an Italian dominated multicultural style. The Italian influence is authenticating the mainstream activity, rather than being appropriated or manipulated by mainstream culture. This confirms the Italians' leadership role in the shaping of the Australian urban style. The Italian influence has other indicators

### The Parade: a cosmopolitan street.

Exploring the idea that Norwood's Italian dominated multicultural style has led the transformation of The Parade, and perhaps other Australian mainstreets, into cosmopolitan places, we need to consider what cosmopolitan means.

'Cosmopolitanism is first of all an orientation, a willingness to engage with the other (the stranger). Not all are willing or open, yet all are actually including aspects of diversity and contrast in their activity. It is an influential and aesthetic stance of openness towards divergent cultural experiences, a search for contrasts rather than uniformity'. (Hannerz, 1990)

There is some direct evidence of user's assessment of the cosmopolitan character of The Parade from a marketing survey of The Parade by McGregor Marketing, commissioned by the City Council and the local Mainstreet (Traders) Association. McGregor found that most people, especially regular 'citizens' identified the Italian influence.

“Norwood is more cosmopolitan, with an Italian influence”. (McGregor 1990, p.15)

Others identified diversity, a key element in cosmopolitanism. Overall the findings were that it was the cultural diversity of people found there, both shopkeepers and shoppers, that attracted participants. “The casual, multicultural atmosphere is created by the people on The Parade—young, old, and with differing cultural and ethnic origins” (McGregor, 1990).

So the cultural mapping of Norwood’s Little Italy is understood by insiders, the traders, officials and service providers, and the nature of the cosmopolitan style was interpreted as predominantly Italian by the users of commercial activity on The Parade. This supports the argument that it is the widespread adoption of the Italian style which has provided the bridge for an Anglo-Saxon based culture to move to a new cosmopolitan identity.

The Italians have acted as cultural bridges in retaining and transforming two other Australian traditions.

### Marketing style

The Italians have retained the traditional Australian urban marketing system of having collections of market bags of beans, stacks of pasta, and market stalls of fresh fruit and vegetables which match their centuries old Italian traditions. This ‘pavement market’ activity was considered radical in the 1950s when in the new outer suburbs of that time, plastic wrapped goods from modern supermarkets in purpose-built shopping centres delineated the superiority of the new over old commercial traditions. Norwood’s main street is quintessentially a mediterranean market street and the retained and transformed ‘pavement market’ activity and general style is now commodified as part of the ‘flavour of The Parade’ (McGregor 1990).

The Italians do much more than display their goods in market style. Italian market gardeners grew many of the fruit and vegetables along the Torrens River from Payneham to Campbelltown (see Map 2). The Italian owned Vari’s Central Market greengrocery chain, focused in the eastern region, which was founded in Norwood by the brother of the owner of Vari’s Alimentari, builds on this tradition. The majority of residents, visitors and shoppers know of the Italians’ direct involvement in producing the goods of this market style. It is part of the ‘collective memory’ of the place, for Italians and non-Italians alike.

### Small-scale family based commercial activity

The Italian influence also maintains the small-scale and family-based commercial activity that is marketed as part of the personalized service on The Parade. The small scale and family-oriented commercial activity was also an Australian tradition from the 1880s and 1920s. Even as recently as 1970, 40 per cent of all premises in the commercial area were houses or shops with dwellings attached and the majority were run as family businesses (see Table 1). The most prominent were Cann's Hardware and Furniture Shop, Waite's Furniture, Ward's Shoe Store and McConnochie's Drapers, which had become Demasius and is now Cafe Buongiorno. In the 1960s, the Italians moved into some of these older-style commercial premises, which had the dual advantages of low entry costs and attached residences. Yet, when the demand for attached housing later decreased, the Italians moved further out to the north-eastern region, to bungalows and later to newer housing areas, but maintained the old shops as family-run, though not lived-in, 'facades'. Their premises are still predominantly family owned, managed and staffed, often through extended Italian families. This family-style facade retained and strengthened by the Italians is strongly identified as part of the flavor of The Parade.

Yet, the present household composition of Norwood, within the original boundaries of the former City of Kensington and Norwood, is predominantly childless, with the demographic composition being approximately 90 per cent single people and childless households. Lone person households are the single highest category (41 per cent) which, taken together with couples with no children (29 per cent), related adults with no children (5.8 per cent), and group households of mainly young people (11 per cent), results in a total of 87.8 per cent of households without children (ABS figures). Only 9.6 per cent of Norwood's households are of the 'traditional' family composition- couples with children. Italians and Italo-Australians comprise approximately 50 per cent of these traditional families. This shows that the Italian family as an essential element in Norwood which is presently being 'commodified' in cafes and businesses along The Parade, mainly for a childless population.

This also demonstrates two uses of The Parade. Firstly, it provides recreational places for meeting and dining for a large number of single and childless households, perhaps living in shared or small accommodation. Secondly, the Italians and their family businesses are strongly supporting the commercial 'family-based' cosmopolitan

character of The Parade. In contrast, non-ethnic occupancy on The Parade is increasingly dominated by the chain-stores of multinational companies and corporate ownership and their inevitable less personalized, somewhat alienating corporate expression. Interestingly, the Italians and Italo-Australians in Norwood and Carlton mostly exchange ownership with each other or other ethnic groups and thereby retain 'the territory' for ethnic activity. In this way also, the Italians have retained and maintained the small scale and family traditions of the main street.

It is difficult to chart how some more ephemeral Italian traditions have had an impact on the cultural transformation of Australia's 1950s main streets to their present status. Two closely related influences are those of the cultural tradition of festivals and the Italians' democratic and festive use of public spaces.

Italian influence on the extensive use of Norwood's public spaces.

When the Italians settled in large numbers in Norwood in the 1950s and 1960s it was the era of segregated dining, six o'clock pub closing and the six o'clock swill, all factors in alienating women and children from public spaces. In addition many public areas along The Parade and in other Australian mainstreets were 'lost' to extensive public use when ripping up the tramlines and the replacement of the 1880s verandahs with small modern canopies reinforced social attitudes which militated against streetlife. Life in Australian suburbs was being intensely privatized and suburbanized and people using streets to socialize was socially prohibited. Similarly clusters of young, bike riding Italian men wearing black on street corners of The Parade were often cited as looking 'threatening' in complaints to the Norwood Council.

Forty years later, led by the ethnic mix of Australia, we are struggling to embrace divergent cultural experiences. Led by the Italian's mediterranean outdoor, piazza style traditions the 'lost' public spaces of the pavement and the streetscape are being returned to the community. The 1950s aluminum canopies and horizontal verandahs are being returned to the wide 1880s-style, bull-nosed or similar, wooden and iron verandahs with the new element of cafe tables reclaiming these lost spaces. Women and men, old and young, can gather together. Now we also recognize that The Parade's malls, footpaths, courtyards, arcades and car parks are all public spaces, and can be termed a common ground, in fact a new Australian piazza. The Parade's heritage buildings providing an authentically Australian backdrop

Norwood's new piazzas are clustered areas within the mainstreet

and are about the same size and shape as the major and minor piazzas of the small, isolated and densely populated hill towns from which Norwood's Italians came. Yet in Italy, these public spaces were garden, street and common public space in one. In Italy, the overwhelming ambience of these piazzas is their sense of being a crowded stage for the local population. The Italian tradition of "la passeggiata": a promenade or stroll, taken around or through the major piazza mostly during the evening or before dinner, is another contribution to the life of Norwood's open spaces. As an open-air centre along with two other South Australian precincts, North Adelaide and the Glenelg precinct, it offers one of the few after-hours places of association in urban Adelaide, mostly dominated by regional shopping towns, fully locked after hours.

In evaluating Norwood's transformed character or 'sense of place', there are many layers of influence of the Italians. Yet the intense and extensive use of public and open spaces is apparent to both insiders and outsiders. This common ground is used for a number of new urban functions, including the parading and celebration of urban life through sharing leisure time, leisurely food consumption and recreational shopping in a new cosmopolitan Australian form of "la passeggiata", on parade.

The Italian influence also clearly conveys messages that The Parade has features associated with a working-class place. Its market style, family ownership, extensive use of public spaces and non 'exclusive' areas could be claimed as features of an egalitarian place. The recent marketing of Norwood's mainstreet utilizes that connection and its appeal. The inclusive spatial style of The Parade, built on its small scale and familial character gives its citizens the opportunity to use outdoors areas, summer and winter, and a long open street to live in. The mainstreet provides a new style of casual strolling and together with the warmth, exuberance and inclusive approach of the local Italian traders and their mainly harmonious sharing of the street with other outside businesses, means Norwood has a reputation as a welcoming place for young, old, families and single people alike. People are also coming to use Norwood as a weekend place for urban recreation or urban tourism.

There is a relationship here to Norwood's role as a regional centre, which reveals the wider cultural role of Adelaide's 'Little Italy'.

#### Norwood as a regional centre.

Though Norwood has a clear role as the regional centre for Adelaide's 'Little Italy' and acts as a symbolic cultural centre for Italians in the region, there has been little documentation of this. The

overlapping residential, commercial, service and recreational populations of The Parade have been identified by council and market surveys as comprising 60 per cent local residents, with a further 20 per cent coming from the wider eastern region in a regional shopping and service trip pattern (Donaldson, 1990a and 1990b and McGregor, 1990). Norwood fulfills the regional role as it includes government offices, educational and health facilities and a range of service providers far beyond those of the neighbourhood and district shopping centres across the rest of the eastern metropolitan area. With increased mobility people have a vastly changed spatial base to identification than that found by Martin (1967) in the same region in the 1960s. People then had a neighbourhood block and neighbourhood level pattern of use of services and identification. The parish and the neighbourhood are two of the more intimate places of identification on the human scale, mostly lost in contemporary urban life.

Could it be this predominantly regional role and regional citizenship of Australian mainstreets are replacement activity of the parochial and local common ground 'lost' in modern urban life? Are Australia's cosmopolitan mainstreets providing a new common ground and a place of identification for regional citizens? Obviously from the research cited here the Italian population, young and old, Italian and Italo-Australian alike have many connections with Norwood. Many Italians consider that they are 'symbolic citizens' of Norwood, their place of first arrival in South Australia, and this is the foundation of Norwood's role as a functional and culturally significant Italian site.

It is apparent that the transformation led by the site of South Australia's Little Italy in Norwood, has parallels in other Australian states, in particular Carlton, Victoria.

#### Mainstreet Example 2: Lygon Street (Carlton, Victoria)

Lygon Street, Carlton, the mainstreet of Carlton, Victoria and the commercial centre of Victoria's 'Little Italy' (see Map 1), reveals a similar pattern of intense settlement and usage by Italians and transformation by 2000 into a cosmopolitan streetscape. Italians settled in Carlton predominantly in the 1920s to 1940s, with groups of both Northern and Southern Italian pioneers using it as a base for employment and sponsoring further 'chains of family and village migration'. Notable groups were the southern 'Viggianesi' who concentrated around Argyle Square and Cardigan Street, while the Friulani and Trevisani followed the northern custom and settled in a scattered pattern throughout the area. The use of Carlton's large 19th century houses for extended family

use and as boarding houses for regional compatriots; the joint purchase by two families of cheap, small terraces and shops, neglected in the Depression and war years, are similar to the Norwood pattern and are well known to those of us who are post-war migrants or who lived through that time. Throughout Australia, as in Carlton and adjacent suburbs, the building industry welcomed Italian settlers for their skills in terrazzo, plasterwork, road building, construction projects and general building work. Another area of Italian expertise, food production, processing and catering, became established around Carlton and the Victoria Market precinct. Around Lygon Street the Italian family of Valmorbida purchased King and Godfrey in 1952, Italian's established 'European style' Lygon Food Store in 1952, La Cacciatora restaurant in 1959, Giancarlo's Coffee House and its first commercial coffee grinder in 1962, the Universal Bakery and Pasta Dura Bread in 1969, Toto's Pizzeria in 1966; Brunetti's specialist cake and gelati cafe in 1979, and Casa Del Gelato in 1981. Of course this Italian style is now multiplied many times over as people of many cultures 'adopt' and emulate the Italian style in their businesses on and around Lygon Street. In fact, any cafe nowadays with a replastered, rendered wall claims it is 'Tuscan style'.

In their movement into inner city premises and in family-based small-scale business activity, Italian businesses in the main streets of Carlton and Norwood mirror each other. Also, their spatial character and social characteristics are copied over and over again by non-Italians, though not as well as the originals. The market style is perhaps more ornamental in Carlton, for Norwood still has fruit and vegetables, pasta and dried beans in bags and barrows on the pavement and many varieties of cheap food stores. In Carlton, the fruit and vegetables mostly come cooked on a plate from the plethora of mediterranean-style cafes.

There are cultural differences from an earlier Jewish settlement and the close settlement of university students in Carlton which add further complexity to the culturally diverse traditions which enable both these sites to be called cosmopolitan places. The overall operation though of Carlton, as of The Parade, is as a piazza.

### Mainstreets as Piazzas

The influence of Italian activity within both Norwood and Carlton has been shown to have a critical effect on the character and role of Lygon Street and The Parade culminating in both main streets operating as a 'piazza'. The Italian transformation of Australian working-class traditions has played a significant role in the partnership between

mainstream and Italian-led ethnic ownership of Norwood's commercial activity, to create two such cosmopolitan and egalitarian places. It is indeed a partnership rather than an issue of the dominance of power and appropriation. The Australian combination of Italian and non-Italian activity is a partnership of cultures rather than the appropriation of an exotic culture by mainstream activity as Kay Anderson (1991) noted, observing the Chinese in Vancouver. The 'adopting' rather than 'appropriating' of the Italian style is unlike what Peter Jackson (1989) called 'exclusionary closure', whereby a marginal group create their own district. In contrast the cultural agreement reflected by the Italians and non-Italian partnership in Norwood and Carlton can be termed an 'inclusive closure'. The Italians have joined with and lead the mainstream style, rather than acting as 'exotically' different. There is certainly a significant inclusive quality about the small-scale, family-oriented and market style of these new piazzas.

These two piazzas are now known and marketed as quintessential market streets with an Italian sense of place against an historic Australian urban streetscape. The idealised small scale village form, market and mediterranean lifestyle are combined to create outdoor cosmopolitan piazzas with brilliant Australian skies or the Southern Cross by night as a canopy. Both streets reflect the historical associations which are an important part of their sense of place. Carlton and Norwood's culturally diverse character, the emerging cosmopolitan style of the surrounding localities, and an increasing citizenship of these new piazzas owe much to the leadership and influence of the Italians.

### Summary

I have presented research on how the Italians have in many ways led the market, alfresco, familial and communal multicultural style in the transformation of two significant Australian mainstreets: Lygon Street, Carlton and The Parade, Norwood. The Italian influence from the 1860s to the present day has been presented as retaining and transforming key elements of street life and the use of public spaces lost in Australia's post-war locales. The Italians' vital role in the social changes accompanying gentrification, the commodification of our inner urban mainstreets and our own national search for egalitarian common grounds has been explored.

Though we may be globally connected in this new millennium, the sense and spirit of place of our urban localities is important to our identities. Our mainstreets are culturally significant places. As we replace the 'lost' neighbourhood and the 'lost' parishes, we will

increasingly celebrate the contribution of the Italians to our new Australian mainstreet piazzas where, as cosmopolitan citizens, we will be at home in the new millennium.

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# The Contribution of the History of Italian Settlement in Australia to the Formation of an Italo-Australian Identity

*Francesca Musico*

“Any young country depends for its development on the brains and the brawn of those who come themselves, or whose ancestors came from afar.”<sup>1</sup>

Franco Battistessa, 1958.

The histories of Italian settlement in Australia, written by members of the Italian community, have contributed to and continue to maintain an Italian-Australian identity. The word ‘identity’ is an ambiguous term. Identity is not stagnant, rather its definition constantly changes as the community changes. Furthermore, identity is personal and each of us identifies differently. It is also important to note that we should consider the plural ‘identities’ rather than the singular ‘identity’, as a more accurate description of the Italian community. For example, an Italian Australian may question : Where do I belong? Am I Italian? Australian? Calabrian? Venetian? Hence, this paper will show the changing nature of ‘identity’ in the context of Italian-Australian histories.

Prior to the 1970s, particularly when Pino Bosi’s books on Italian-Australian history began to appear, Italian-Australian histories were exclusively written and read solely by the Italian community. These histories were published in article form in Italian language newspapers such as *La Fiamma*. These Italian-Australian histories did not enter the mainstream Australian community. This was the period of assimilation where there was little interest in any other culture other than the prevailing Anglo-Celtic.

One of the most prolific Italian-Australian journalist and historian, was the Sydney based Franco Battistessa (1885-1978). Arriving in Australia in 1928, Battistessa became active in the Sydney Fascist movement and was later interned during the War. Battistessa was also very active in helping new arrivals in the 1950s and 1960s and had great input in the Italo-Australian Welfare Centre and the Migrant Medical Centre. His empathy with the trials and tribulations of the Italian migrant was evident throughout his journalistic career.

Battistessa and his contemporaries during the 1950s and 1960s, saw the history of Italian settlement in Australia as a history of its pioneers

and leaders. The thousands of ordinary Italian migrants, the farmers, the fishermen and the labourers were conveniently excluded from these histories. The noble men of Italian extraction, the educated and professional men who arrived in the nineteenth century, became the subjects for these histories. Names such as Rossi, Carboni, Catani, Fiaschi repeatedly appear.<sup>2</sup> These early articles display a quest to link Italians with the earliest moments in Australian history. In 1960, Battistessa wrote that Italians were “ever present in every spoc-making, shattering event of Australia’s checkered history”.<sup>3</sup> Battistessa and Antonio Giordano, for example, claimed that Mario Matra who was on the Endeavour, was in actual fact the ‘spiritual father’ of Australia. There was even a quest to document the presence of Italian convicts such as Giuseppe Tusa. Raffaello Carboni, the leading figure at the very ‘Australian’ Eureka Stockade, was given much coverage in these newspaper articles. When referring to the famous engineers Ettore Checchi and, Carlo Catani, and the astronomer Guido Baracchi, *Il Risveglio*, claimed ‘Many would say they were great Australians’.<sup>4</sup>

Why this kind of history? Why the history of noble male pioneers? What does this reveal about the construction of the ‘identity’ of Italian migrants in the 1950-1960s? Robert F. Harney, in his work on Italian Canadian history claimed that Italian Canadians had ‘manipulated’ their past by solely writing about pioneering men, i.e. the artists, the scholars and the noblemen.<sup>5</sup> Harney argued that this reflected an ‘urge’ of the Italian community to earn “a respectable North American pedigree”.<sup>6</sup> A similar pattern emerged in Italian Australian historiography. Battistessa’s reason for writing only about Italian pioneers rests in his belief that postwar Italian migrants detested being called ‘New Australians’. In Battistessa’s words the term ‘New Australian’ savoured of “discrimination with its underlying innuendo that they are not real Australians or as good”.<sup>7</sup> His argument was that Italians had the right to call themselves ‘Old Australians’ on historical grounds. The term ‘Old Australian’ echoed respectability.

The term ‘New Australian’ had connotations of the image of the uneducated Southern European peasant. This was the way in which Italians thought that the mainstream community perceived them. One can see this derogatory image of Italians by simply looking at how the Italian was portrayed by Australian newspapers during the 1950s-1960s. The Sunday Telegraph in 1955 reported that migrants were “the dregs not only of Europe but of humanity”.<sup>8</sup> Even the Vice President of the Uniting Church in 1951 claimed that “Italians are not even good defenders of their own land – so they couldn’t possibly be any use in the

defence of Australia”.<sup>9</sup> Another article reported that Italians were an inferior race and “not even the children born here of the hybrid, criminal Italian race are fit to merge in the Australian race”.<sup>10</sup> Letters to the editors of newspapers complained about how Italians did not assimilate and formed their own communities, such as those in Griffith and North Queensland. In one letter, the writer suggested that the quota of Italians should be substituted with British migrants who yearned to come to Australia.<sup>11</sup>

Thus, historians, such as Battistessa, for example, sought to inform their Italian audience that they did indeed belong and that they were legitimate Australians. This is reflected in articles which were included in the *Almanacco Cappuccino*. This was a guidebook produced by the Capuchins for newly-arrived Italian migrants. It is interesting to note that while this guidebook contained essential information such as contact details for migrants, the editors felt that articles of a historical nature should be included. For example, in the 1959 edition, Franco Battistessa wrote an article about Matra while in the 1960 edition Luigi Gigliotti wrote about the Italian soldiers who died whilst prisoners of war in Australia.<sup>12</sup>

Another example is the commemoration of the New Italy settlement at Woodburn, NSW. In 1881, 340 Italians sought refuge in Australia after being misled into a failed migration scheme to New Ireland. With the strong presence of Italians working the land, the area became known as New Italy. Like the postwar migrants, the New Italy settlers had little to begin with and by sheer hard work were able to create a successful settlement. The New Italy site became mythologised throughout the 1950s-1960s in Italian language newspapers.<sup>13</sup> Dozens of articles appeared which celebrated every jubilee and commemoration possible. As early as 1931 the Sydney newspaper *Italo-Australian* featured an article on the jubilee of the Marquis de Ray expedition.<sup>14</sup> Two years later it was followed by another commemoration of the site.<sup>15</sup> Each time an original New Italy settler died, *La Fiamma* would feature an article extolling these great pioneers.<sup>16</sup> Other articles lamented the decline of the New Italy settlement, reminiscing about a once successful example of Italian migration. And so a long tradition of celebration of the New Italy settlement began. Perhaps, the constant celebration of the New Italy site was due to its parallels with the traumatic and often difficult lives of newly settled postwar Italian migrants.

The New Italy settlement became a symbol of the migrant struggle. One article which appeared on the front page of *La Fiamma* in 1959 referred to the New Italy settlers as “martyrs”.<sup>17</sup> Further interest in the

site arose in the early 1960s, when a monument bearing the words: “They have become worthy sons of the land of their adoption (‘Sono divenuti degni figli del paese di adozione’)” was constructed.<sup>18</sup> The monument was unveiled by the Italian Consul and the few surviving pioneers who were present were bestowed with almost ‘hero-like’ status.<sup>19</sup> It was as though the New Italy settlers were the sacrifices for the rest of Italian migration to Australia.

Further to this, Italian-Australian historians saw this trajectory of history as a way of combating prejudice from the Australian community. Franco Battistessa in 1968, in the *Daily Advertiser Wagga Wagga*, wrote in response to an unfavourable report written about Griffith’s Italians. He sought to dispel the misunderstandings between Australians and Italians in the Riverina district. To refute the image of the Griffith Italians as being ‘trigger-happy dagoes’ and “Mafiosi”, Battistessa gave a long sermon on the Australianness of Italians. For example, Battistessa pointed to the many Italians who fought for Australia during World War II and to those Italian-Australians who had served in Australian politics. In other words, Battistessa used history to defend the Italians rather than other positive aspects of the Italian community, such as Italians having the lowest unemployment rate.

This ideology of looking to the past to create a present identity is also reflected in the visit by the President of Italy, Giuseppe Saragat, in 1967. Saragat was the first Italian president to visit Australia and he was greeted with much pomp by the Italian community. The articles with a historical bent at the time used the President’s visit as a time of reflection and assessment of the Italian contribution to Australia. To mark the President’s visit, a lengthy supplement by Nino Randazzo was produced in *La Fiamma* and *Il Globo* on the history of Italians in Australia.<sup>20</sup> An Italian Year Book was also published in 1967 which featured historical articles on Italian pioneers.<sup>21</sup> The visit of the Italian president was also an opportunity to ‘show the people back home’ how much they had achieved. It also perhaps reflected that the postwar migrant had come of age. The histories provided a way of connecting themselves to Australia rather than to Italy. Yet, again the history presented was one representing the community’s notables.

With the 1970s and the advent of multiculturalism, history as a form of identity underwent some changes. Italian-Australian history began to appear in book form rather than simply newspaper articles and infiltrated into the mainstream Australian community. They were also publishing during a period when multiculturalism encouraged a diversified Australia. Unlike their predecessors who created a ‘closet

Italian identity' within the Italian community, these publications created a conscious 'Italian identity' in the mainstream Australian community.

One could say that many of these histories were written with 'an axe to grind', that is, to bring into the open a once suppressed history. Even the titles of these books reflect this. Pino Bosi's book, *Blood, Sweat and Guts* published in the early 1970s, echoed the underestimated contribution of Italians to Australia. Later in 1987, Fr. Tito Cecilia, a Scalabrinian priest, published *We Didn't Arrive Yesterday (Non Siamo Arrivati Ieri)*. The title in itself was outlining to the Australian community that Italians had not simply arrived on the migrant ship yesterday, but had a long and proud history in Australia. Pino Bosi's work titled *On God's Command* featured the contribution of Italian clergy in Australia from early settlement.<sup>22</sup> His book saw the Italian clergy as an integral part of the history of the Catholic Church in Australia. Other works, such as Gianfranco Cresciani's *Fascism, Anti-Fascism and Italians in Australia 1922-1945*, reflected this pre-war notion of Italian-Australian history.<sup>23</sup> These books essentially represented the notion that the Italians were creating solid foundations on which to base their 'Italian identity' in a multicultural society. In other words, they wanted their voices to be heard in mainstream Australia.

However, these books also addressed the idea that the history of the community's pioneers was not the sole basis for Italian-Australian history. It is important to note that this becomes a general trend in Australian historiography during the 1980s. Certainly, each of the books drew strongly on the lives of these early pioneers, but unlike the earlier newspaper histories, they also began to speak about the histories of particular 'communities'. For example, Bosi wrote about the Italians living in the Riverina titling his chapter "they live on the smell of an oil rag".<sup>24</sup> When Cresciani's book *Migrants or Mates* was published, it claimed to document the 'rich contribution made by everyday Italians to Australia's history'.<sup>25</sup> Unlike the histories written before the 1970s, one no longer had to be a prominent doctor or parliamentarian to be included in Italian-Australian history. These histories claimed to be histories of all Italians. This is again seen in the histories produced around the time of the Bicentenary, such as Randazzo and Cigler's *The Italians in Australia* which was considered a "splendid contribution to our Bicentenary".<sup>26</sup> Works produced for the Bicentenary showed that Italian history was indeed part of Australia's history.

This idea of the everyday Italian being considered appropriate subject matter for Italian Australian history was also reflected in the growing interest in genealogy. Co.As.It. Victoria has played a major role

by providing the infrastructure and resources for Italian genealogy. They have promoted several publications on Italian Australian genealogy such as Bette Leone's handbooks on tracing family trees.<sup>27</sup> Co.As.It. in Sydney have also just begun an Italian genealogical group. More importantly, these associations are teaching Italians how to trace their own history.

Since the Bicentenary, there has been a massive change in the view of Italian heritage. A conscious attempt was made, and is still being made, to preserve Italian-Australian history through the conservation and collection of documents, photographs and other kinds of material. This conscious preservation of the Italian contribution to Australia reflects the idea of legitimising the Italians' role in Australia. For the first time, Italian Australian history was considered important enough by our state institutions to be preserved. Rather than being considered 'outsiders' from mainstream Australian culture, Italians were now officially included as part of Australian history. Italian Historical Societies in Melbourne and Sydney became established. These Societies also began to publish historical publications.<sup>28</sup> Source books such as Cresciani's *Migrants or Mates* provided primary historical material on the Italian presence. For Anglo-Australians, this became a further realisation that Italians were not simply postwar steerage, but that Italian settlement had occurred for decades in this country.

But even more so, it is the Italian community which is determined to preserve its own heritage. There is a justified obsession to preserve as much as possible, as so much material has already been lost. This is due to the fact that while the Italian contribution to Australia is large, the general historiography and archives do not reflect this. The Italian communities have been active to ensure that 'Italians' in general receive their due credit in Australian historiography. This again reflects a conscious 'Italian identity' at work. In Melbourne, the Italian Historical Society has been collecting and preserving material. The Society also publishes a journal which provides the forum for much of the new research being undertaken. The Society had also staged exhibitions based on this newly collected material, for example, an exhibition in the mid-eighties of archival photographs titled *Victoria's Italians 1900-45*. An exhibition in the early 1990s depicting the lives of both Jews and Italians in Carlton was also organised by the Italian Historical Society, Victoria.<sup>29</sup> The Italian Historical Society in conjunction with the University of Melbourne has recently offered a scholarship on the history of Santospirito collection. The Italian Australian Records Project was also created with the aim of collecting material relating to the Italian

presence in Australia. Its ideal is to make these documents accessible to all using the internet. In its Statement of Purposes, the IARP endeavours to encourage academic research and to promote and diffuse the Italian community's contribution to Australia. This is certainly very different to how the Italian community viewed its own history fifty years ago.

State institutions such as the State Library of Victoria staged exhibitions, one being *Australia's Italians 1788-1988* organised by Ilma Martinuzzi O'Brien and Laura Mecca.<sup>30</sup> At the Mitchell Library, Sydney, the 'The Italians in New South Wales Project' was conducted by Mr. Jim Andrighetti and sought to collect material relating to the Italian settlement of NSW.<sup>31</sup> Important personal papers of artists such as Antonio Dattilo Rubbo, the radio broadcaster Mamma Lena and the poet Luigi Strano, are some of the notable additions to the library. What is most admirable about this collection is that it collects material not only from famous people, but ordinary family papers as well. More recently, there has been a conscious effort to exhibit the history of Italians in regional areas. For example, an exhibition in 1996 was held in south-western Sydney titled *Forza e coraggio: on the Italians in the Liverpool and Fairfield areas*.<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, many of these exhibitions toured regional areas of Australia.

For the future, it is difficult to predict how Italian-Australian history will reflect Italian Australian 'identity'. In my opinion, our history will only become more and more scholarly and academic. As time passes, I believe the community's history will slowly separate itself from the Italian community at large. There perhaps will come a day in a hundred years or so when the term Italian-Australian will be redundant. Therefore, Italian-Australian history will fit perfectly under the title of Australian history, as the history of the Irish in Australia is seen today. However, by examining the types and kinds of history a community writes about itself is a tool to unlock what the community identified with. After all, isn't history what essentially unites and defines us?

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Franco Battistessa, "Australian-Italians' Big Part in Our History", *La Critica*, April, 1958,11.

<sup>2</sup> A.Giordano, "La storia del Capitano Rossi", *Il Corriere d'Australia*, 20 November, 1958. "Our Debt to Three Italians", *Il Risveglio*, 11 June, 1947,4.

Francisco Battistessa, 'I Fiaschi Guerrieri', *La Fiamma*, 18 November, 1955,7 & 25 November, 1955,9

<sup>3</sup> Franco Battistessa, "Italians' Goodwill Gifts to Queensland", *North Australian Monthly*, April, 1960,9.

<sup>4</sup> "Our Debt to Three Italians", *Il Risveglio*, 11 June, 1947,4.

<sup>5</sup> R.F.Harney, "Caboto and Other Italian Canadian Parentela", in R.F.Harney, From the *Shores of Hardship – Italians in Canada*, Centro Canadese Scuola e Cultura Italiana, Soleil Publishing, Ontario, 1993,8.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*,10.

<sup>7</sup> F.Battistessa, "Let's Talk Italian", *Daily Advertiser Wagga Wagga*, 22 November, 1968,2.

<sup>8</sup> "Migrants by Air 'Human Dregs'", *Sunday Telegraph*, 22 May, 1955, 3.

<sup>9</sup> "Italians as Migrants – Condemnation by Clergyman", *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 10 March, 1951, 5.

<sup>10</sup> Franco Battistessa, "Let's Talk Italian", *Daily Advertiser Wagga Wagga*, 22 November, 1968,2.

<sup>11</sup> "Italian Migrants", *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 August, 1950, 2.

<sup>12</sup> Franco Battistessa, "Il primo italiano in Australia...sbarco' col Capitano Cook", *Almanacco Cappuccino*,1959,42-43.

Luigi Gigliotti, "Hanno degna sepoltura I soldati morti in Australia", *Ibid.*,1960,54-55.

<sup>13</sup> Franco Battistessa, "Dall'inferno di Liki-Liki al paradiso di New Italy", *La Fiamma*, 4 July, 1958,12, 11 July, 1958,6, 18 July, 1958, 24. 25 July, 1958, 24, 1 August, 1958, 18, 8 August, 1958,16, 16 August, 1958, 9 &18.

<sup>14</sup> "Giubileo della spedizione Marchese de Ray", *Italo-Australian*, 11 April, 1931,3.

<sup>15</sup> "Da Lismore – Un'Istantanea della celebrazione del 51mo anniversario della 'New Italy'," *Giornale Italiano*, 2 August, 1933,3.

<sup>16</sup> For example see – "La morte di Mary Capelin pioniere di New Italy", *La Fiamma*, 20 June, 1958, 24.

<sup>17</sup> F.Volpato, "New Italy ricorda il martirio e l'odissea dei primi immigrati italiani in Australia", *La Fiamma*, 1 August, 1959,1.

<sup>18</sup> "Prossima la realizzazione del progetto", *La Fiamma*, 15 October, 1960,24.

<sup>19</sup> "Il monumento ai pionieri", *La Fiamma*, 18 April, 1961,25.

"Commemorato l'anniversario della fondazione di 'New Italy", *La Fiamma*, 4 May, 1965, 16.

<sup>20</sup> Supplemento, *Il Globo*, 26 September, 1967, 5-32.

<sup>21</sup> *Italian Year Book*, 1967.

<sup>22</sup> Pino Bosi, *On God's Command- Italian Missionaries in Australia*, Catholic Intercultural Research Centre, Sydney, 1989.

<sup>23</sup> Gianfranco Cresciani, *Fascism, Anti-Fascism and Italians in Australia 1922-1945*, Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1980.

<sup>24</sup> Pino Bosi, *Blood, Sweat and Guts*, Kurunda Press, Sydney, c.1973, 49

<sup>25</sup> GianfrancoCresciani, *Migrants or Mates – Italian Life in Australia*, Knockmore Enterprises, Sydney, 1988.

"L'insostenibile leggerezza dell'essere Italo-australiani", *La Fiamma*, 10 October, 1988, x.

<sup>26</sup> "The Italians in Australia", *La Fiamma*, 14 December, 1988, 29.

<sup>27</sup> Bette Leone Maiuto, *Tracing your Italian Ancestors for Victorians*, Italian Historical Society, Carlton (Vic.), c1993.

Bette Leone, *How to Trace Your Italian Ancestors for Australians and New Zealanders*, Hale & Iremonger, Sydney, 1994.

<sup>28</sup> Examples of this are the Italian Historical Society in Melbourne publishing – Susi Bella Wardrop, *By Proxy : A Study of Italian Proxy Brides in Australia*, Italian Historical Society, Melbourne, 1996.

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<sup>29</sup> *Bridging Two Worlds : Jews, Italians and Carlton*, Museum of Victoria, Melbourne, c.1993.

<sup>30</sup> Ilma Martinuzzi O'Brien, *Australia's Italians 1788-1988*, Italian Historical Society, Melbourne and State Library of Victoria, c.1986.

<sup>31</sup> J. Andrighetti, *Italians in New South Wales – A Guide to Archives in the Mitchell Library*, State Library of NSW, State Library of NSW, Sydney, 1995.

<sup>32</sup> *Forza e coraggio: the Italians of South Western Sydney*, Fairfield Regional Heritage Centre and Liverpool Bicentennial Museum, Fairfield, 1996.

# The Serenata of Eighteenth Century Italy: the Resurrection of a Traditional Italian Celebration, through the Composer Alessandro Scarlatti

*Marie Louise Catsalis*

Alessandro Scarlatti was a prolific composer in eighteenth century Italy. His important position has not been sufficiently recognised in our times. Often, if people recognise the name today it is in association with his son, Domenico, a composer noted for his keyboard sonatas. But according to the highly regarded musicologist of the twentieth century, Edward Dent, he might easily be considered the direct musical ancestor of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Others have rated his importance to vocal music equal to that of Franz Schubert. The works of this extremely important figure in the history of western music have until recently been locked away in libraries, and now musicologists are examining and editing his works for performance.

Within this paper I would like to address the genre of 'serenatas', of which Alessandro Scarlatti wrote many. I was amazed that this genre of beautiful music has not been published or hardly ever performed: Hence my current PhD topic at the University of Newcastle: to edit and perform serenatas by Alessandro Scarlatti, and to research its interesting performance practices. In this, the year 2000, when we are celebrating the works of the great composer Johann Sebastian Bach with enormous festivals, and mammoth musical recording commitments, as it is 250 years since his death, let us not forget that for some 100 years after his death, this great composer was unknown to all but a few of the musical elite. Marvellous music of centuries ago is yet to be rediscovered, and many musicians would maintain that the revival of Alessandro Scarlatti is in its early stages and must continue. Before examining the genre of the serenata, a few biographical details of Alessandro Scarlatti follow:

Alessandro Scarlatti born in 1660 in Palermo. When he was 12, Scarlatti was sent to Rome with his two sisters, to be cared for by relatives. The earliest record of him as a composer is from 1679, when he was commissioned to write an oratorio for the Arciconfraternita del SS Crocifisso. Scarlatti's first opera was performed that year in Rome and other major Italian centres. Amongst Scarlatti's patrons were Cardinals Ottoboni and Pamphilj and Queen Christina of Sweden.

In 1684, Scarlatti left Rome for Naples and enjoyed a successful career there for the next 18 years. One of the most important theatres in Naples was San Bartolomeo. It was destroyed by fire in 1681, and when rebuilt two years later, Scarlatti was named as director, with a regular nine singers, five instrumentalists and a copyist. Of all the operas performed in Naples during this period, more than half were Scarlatti's. However, Scarlatti's Neapolitan period did not prevent him from continuing his associations with Rome and his Roman patrons. He often travelled to supervise performances of his cantatas, oratorios or operas.

As a result of political unrest in Naples, Scarlatti's employment there became unstable, and so he started to seek a change to another city. In 1703 he accepted a position as assistant musical director at Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome. The patrons Cardinals Pamphilj and Ottoboni, together with Prince Ruspoli continued to support him, and in 1706 he was promoted to the position of maestro di capella at Santa Maria Maggiore.

In April of the year 1706 Scarlatti was admitted to the artistic circle, Arcadian Academy, (together with Arcangelo Corelli and Bernardo Pasquini) under the title: Maestro insigne della Musica (Pagano, 1985, p.246). In 1708 he returned to his former post and relative retirement in Naples until he died in 1725.

Alessandro Scarlatti was a prolific composer in the genres of opera, solo cantata, oratorio, and he was the leading exponent of the now relatively neglected serenata. When one initially thinks of the genre serenata, the stereotypical idea which comes to mind is that of the renaissance minstrel serenading his maiden on a balcony, but the serenata developed from this its initial stages. The serenata became a fully blown outdoor festival with large orchestras and choirs, operatic soloists, animals, torches of fire, and firework displays, cuccagne, and mountains of ice delicacies and other food extravaganzas.

The serenata, a very accessible outdoor genre related to opera and the cantata, took on a celebratory and often political nature. Some were in celebration of royal weddings or births, others the end of war or difficult times. It was a large community event — not just for the nobility, as was much of the output of cantatas and chamber music. Operas were less elitist, but the cost of tickets is always to some extent exclusive. The fact that serenatas were mostly performed out of doors with large forces meant that they could be enjoyed by anyone passing by. A festival with an inclusive atmosphere prevailed, with food, sometimes in the form of cuccagne available for everyone. I feel that the serenata could be a popular cultural event, with parallels to celebrations in Australia.

How can this form be adapted to Australia's multicultural climate? The large community celebrations (eg, Bicentennial, Millennium 2000, Olympic Ceremonies, Australia Day, Carnivale etc.) have become a recent phenomenon in this country, and have obvious parallels with this artistic genre. In many respects the ideal of a community uniting, and sharing a celebration is common to both phenomena. Add to this the fact that serenades were almost always performed on a waterway, often on sailing boats and floating stages, the connection becomes closer. If a waterway was not practical, stagecoaches were arranged as a temporary outdoor stage (Bondi Beach's temporary volleyball arena comes to mind) or the flooding of Piazza Navona was even an option. Australians' love of the water is arguably unparalleled, virtually being part of the national psyche. Does this not make the serenata a perfect festival event for multicultural Australia?

Important amongst the goals of an institute such as the Italian Australian Institute, must be the promotion of a cultural heritage, not in stereotypical terms, but in ways which present the richness of its cultural diversity. Colourful are the celebrations of Italian regional culture in the form of cooking displays, folk dancing and music etc; there is worldwide appeal in the presentation of operatic extravaganzas by the likes of the Three Tenors and Andrea Bocelli, but to name a few; the success of popular Italian artists such as Zucchero and Ramozzotti is undeniable. All these musical and cultural events have their place, but the diversity of a national culture cannot be maintained when important works and traditions are lost. This music, together with its performing traditions are now being uncovered, and are being reconstructed by artists. It is important that this work be continued, and the works uncovered be performed, heard and enjoyed.

The work that I am currently working on is *Al fragor di lieta tromba*. It was written by Alessandro Scarlatti and was first performed in Naples, in November, 1711. It was written to celebrate the election of Charles 6th as Holy Roman Emperor, in succession to Joseph 1. In order to revive the work, it is important to prepare a modern edition, using notation frequently used today. This would ensure its viability and accessibility. It also requires further research into performance practices of the day: for example, one must investigate the forces and numbers used, staging requirements, and obvious acoustical problems involved with outdoor performance, and how they were overcome. The work is in D major, a traditional joyful and exuberant key, played by a full orchestra including fanfaring trumpets. It involves three soloists in character: a soprano playing Love, an alto playing Peace; and a bass playing Providence.

Each of these characters argue about the relative importance of the parts each played in securing Charles' advancement. There is also use of antiphonal choirs (four are indicated in one of the manuscripts, although separate parts are not allocated, hence the assumption that they were placed in strategic places, for effect.) In the final chorus, they exclaim "Eviva Carlos" — Long live Charles. In light of the recent referendum result on a republic in Australia, there might be a political reason to revive this long lost work. On a more serious note, it is hoped that works such as these can be revived and be enjoyed for generations to come, and on a personal note, that they be revived here in Australia so that they may enrich our already diverse cultural experiences.

## Today's Italian Information in Australia: 'More Comprehensive than Ever'.

*Nino Randazzo*

If anyone thinks that the theme I have chosen for this short address of mine - "Today's Italian information in Australia - more comprehensive than ever" - is some sort of overstatement or a throwaway line, he or she should think again. For it is a fact as clear as a fine morning daylight that the Italian language media in this country has never enjoyed a wider acceptance, has never reached a wider readership and/or audience, has never responded better to community expectations and demands, has never been more complete in its news coverage, more updated as to technology and contents, more entertaining and more informative than at the present time.

The pace of development in this area has been so fast, the atmosphere so stimulating, that one who has lived in that environment for most of his working life and witnessed the extraordinary evolution of the Italian media in Australia has to be forgiven if he occasionally feels like bringing out the violin. Not that it is all wine and roses, but all in all it is a rather satisfying situation.

Let us just go briefly over what is available today to Italian-speaking readers, listeners and viewers and to anyone interested in things Italian, in everyday news from Italy, in Italian culture, economy and current affairs, and in the peculiar Italian viewpoint on Italian, Australian and world events.

Here is just a summary of what is available. Two newspapers - the Melbourne-based *Il Globo*, started in 1959, and the Sydney-based *La Fiamma* (date of birth 1946), each coming out three times a week, and soon, very soon, around the end of next August, having a go at daily editions.

With each of those editions of *Il Globo* and *La Fiamma*, readers are also given the current issue - i. e. the original issue of the day before, because of the time-zone difference - of one of Italy's two top dailies, the Rome-based *La Repubblica*. This represents the end result of an arrangement between newspaper publishers of two continents without a precedent not only for the so-called "ethnic media" but also for the totality of the mainstream print media in Australia.

Some five years ago the proprietors of *Il Globo* and *La Fiamma* - Italian Media Corporation - launched the radio network Rete Italia, to this day the first and only 24-hour Italian language broadcasting station in Australia, with studios in Melbourne and Sydney, now reaching most of Victoria and New South Wales, large chunks of Queensland, from the Gold Coast to the Atherton Tablelands, and South Australia, and right now planning an extension to Western Australia. A radio network with Australian, Italian and international news updates on the hour, and a host of informative and entertaining programs for all age groups, some relayed from Italy in real time by arrangement with RAI International.

Italian-speaking listeners throughout Australia are also served by SBS Radio with daily news and music segments, and by a number of local commercial broadcasters. Also available are the free Italian language SBS TV programs, including the daily RAI TG1 News segment, alongside a choice of Italy's TV Programs 24 hours a day on Pay-Television.

As anyone can see, there is a large amount of Italian language news, both in print and on air, to be digested by the Italian speaking population and by language students. Furthermore, it is to be added that at the same time pilot English language sections of both *Il Globo* and *La Fiamma* are trying to reach out to second and subsequent generations of Italian migrants and to our multicultural community at large. Another promising development in this direction is represented by the newly established English language periodical *Italy Down-Under*, a high-quality magazine published in association with the Italian Australian Institute.

The most important aspect of the Italian media in Australia consists in the fact that it provides a type of news which the mainstream media is unable or unwilling to provide. There is little or no duplication.

And this brings me to list some of the main reasons for the very existence of the Italian media in Australia:

- 1) Publication of news and general reading matter not made available by the mainstream media: Italian news in general and local news, particularly from those regions of Italy where the majority of Italo-Australians originate from.
- 2) Language and culture maintenance, promotion and transmission (No compromise and no apologies for this major continuous function of the Italian media, even if it runs against any residual assimilation policy or mentality).
- 3) Coverage of Italo-Australian social news, as evidenced by the average combined weekly total of some 30 pages devoted by

*Il Globo* and *La Fiamma* to notices and reports on the activities and functions of clubs and associations, which throughout Australia involve many thousands of Italo-Australians.

- 4) Entertainment and self-education.
- 5) Lobbying, whenever required, on behalf of the Italian ethnic group, in the direction of Governments, as well as institutions, both public and private, of Italy and Australia.
- 6) Building and keeping fully operative an enterprise which, in the case of the Italian Media Corporation, gives employment to a fairly large number of skilled people, and which must be economically viable, failing which none of the social and cultural objectives outlined could be reached.

I would like now to attach some brief annotations to some of the major functions of the Italian media, particularly the print media, I have just outlined.

#### Publication of a difference kind of news.

The need and the importance of providing the Italian ethnic group in this country with alternative and supplementary information to that which is made available by the mainstream media, are self-evident to the extent that one does not need to dwell on them any longer.

#### Language and culture maintenance, promotion and transmission.

We could go on forever on this set of topics. Simply, Italian would not be the second most widely spoken language of Australia, after English, were it not for the existence of a vibrant Italian language media.

Teaching of Italian at all levels is also closely related to the media, since Italian, like all languages, is not static, is a living everyday language which cannot be learnt from textbooks, classics and language laboratories alone. Far from it. It needs an acquired familiarity with the current common, though constantly evolving, lexicon, terminology and syntax. A convenient, flexible and affordable access to the current use of the Italian language is what is primarily required by those wanting to study the language seriously. And the type of media we are talking about is by its own nature eminently equipped to provide it. In the case of Australia, the task of helping the language student has been carried out satisfactorily for more than half a century by the locally produced Italian language print media. It could not have been otherwise, given the rather high cost of air-freighted newspapers and magazines from Italy.

Prophets of doom were telling us, as far back as twenty years ago, that by the end of the 20th century newspapers such as *Il Globo* and *La Fiamma* would have gone out of existence, due to the virtual end of Italian migration to Australia and the passing away, at a naturally accelerating rate as the pages of death notices of *Il Globo* testify, of first generation readers.

Twenty years down the track, and we are not only still alive and kicking, but we have in the meantime gone from one to two and then three editions per week, and are moving towards a daily. And we have the addition of one of Italy's, and Europe's, major newspapers, *La Repubblica*, which comes with a sort of bonus - the availability of the vast technical and news gathering resources of that leading publishing group.

And on top of all that, the birth and growth of the 24-hour-on-air Italian language radio network *Rete Italia*. So much for the heralded death of the Italian language media in Australia!

Incidentally, most of this development must be credited to the vision, single-mindedness and tenacity of one person, who is presently at the head of the Italian Media Corporation encompassing the combined operations of *Il Globo*, *La Fiamma* and *Rete Italia*: Ubaldo Larobina. No other individual has ever done so much and achieved such a degree of success in the often difficult process of bringing closer together Australia and Italy, through the print media and radio broadcasting, as Ubaldo Larobina.

How is it - one may ask - that, while first generation Italian migrants are dying out, *Il Globo* and *La Fiamma* maintain their readership, and even fractionally increase it, as it has happened with the introduction of *La Repubblica* insert? We have found out, much to our pleasant surprise, that new students of Italian at the secondary or tertiary level, and independent students of Italian, steadily growing in numbers, are replacing the shrinking portion of the readership base formed by first generation Italian migrants.

Thus, study of the Italian language and the availability of the Italian language media in Australia are strongly linked and interdependent. They are bound to prosper or languish together, to survive or fall together.

By association of ideas, this brings me to another point, firmly held by most operators in the field of the Italian language media in Australia - which is, that language and culture cannot be separated, cannot survive independently from each other; trying to preserve, promote and transmit Italian culture without teaching, using and promoting in

parallel the living Italian language can either be a fraud or a delusion, contrary to the belief and practice of misguided and misleading academics.

### Coverage of Italo-Australian Social News.

Without an Italian language media, the myriad of Italian clubs and associations from one end to the other of Australia - perhaps close to one thousand of them - would have no means of communicating, advertising, promoting and disseminating information about their activities, which in the metropolitan area of Melbourne alone draw the participation, in one way or another, of at least ten thousand people a week. An extremely dynamic social life which is reflected in, and encouraged by, the numerous local pages devoted to it by *Il Globo* and *La Fiamma*.

### Self Education.

This is an interesting, though mostly hidden and therefore unrecognised, function of the Italian language press in Australia. More than twenty years ago - let us keep in mind that the newspaper I am editing today has been in existence since 1959 - we at *Il Globo* came to notice a curious phenomenon, and started searching for a clue. The newspaper's circulation, together with the circulation of the sister publication *La Fiamma*, practically reached the whole of the Italian community in Australia. An elementary fact could not escape our attention: large sections of that community had migrated from easily identifiable rural areas of Italy where newspaper readership was so low as to be almost negligible. Once in Australia, how could they have changed their reading, or non-reading, habits so suddenly and so radically?

The reason, emerging from a survey we conducted, was that in the mass migration years - the Fifties and early Sixties - getting almost compulsively into the habit of buying an Italian newspaper and taking it home had a dual function: as an antidote to social isolation in a community speaking an incomprehensible language, and as a means of keeping in touch with a familiar world left behind. For the purpose of keeping an emotional link with a far distant reality, it was enough to read a news item where the name of the reader's home village, town, province or region appeared in relation to bad or good news. However, many of those early readers did not read, let alone understand, the front page articles which by the rules of Italian journalism deal almost exclusively with very complex political issues, either domestic or

foreign. But the then weekly issue of the newspaper remained around in the house day in day out, and the purchaser, usually the head of the family, having read the inside pages, he could not help glancing at the text and pictures of the front page which flashed some vague image of important things happening in Italy and in the world.

That was the departure for a different type of long journey to the one he or she had recently experienced, the start of a hesitant, slow, but gradual approach to the text of headlines and articles on the front page. By grasping on an average the meaning of one new word every two-three months, many of those readers were eventually to build over a period of some twenty years a vocabulary that would enable them to follow, at least approximatively, developments in such areas as Italian, Australian and international politics and economy.

People who would have rarely, if at all, picked up a newspaper in their lives had they remained in their native villages, by the fact of having migrated to Australia, have become regular newspaper readers. Being in the position of contributing in some small way to such process of self-education is one of the more rewarding aspects of Italian language journalism in Australia.

Having said all that and left out much more, I am the first one to realise that the Italian language media in Australia cannot rest on its laurels. Its buoyancy and its achievements are what they are, belong to the past and the present and do not blind its operators to the challenges and the demands of the future. An exciting future, full of great potentialities.

Among the new things the Italian language print media must try to do in the near future:

- it must go on-line with a specially tailored and carefully edited and updated Internet home page targeting Italians in Italy, for the dual purpose of presenting a veritable image of Italians in Australia and of Australia in general;

- it must move with equal determination in two distinct directions: encouraging a more active participation of Italo-Australians in Australian public life, and creating more interest and awareness of Italian politics in view of the expected introduction of an electoral division for the election of a number of parliamentary representatives of Italians abroad;

- it must focus better and accommodate more information on the valid and relevant expressions of creativity among Italo-Australians in the areas of the arts, literature, design, scientific and humanistic research, the professions, business, technology;

- it must start to act as a communication channel for the dissemination of Australian news and views in Italy.

Some of these ambitious aims may be less achievable than others in the short term. However, right at this juncture there are verified positive trends, and things which are absolutely certain, and which give the lie to the pessimists, the time wasters and the knockers. The Italian language media in Australia is healthy and forward-looking, is serving the community well, is enhancing the standing and the identity of Italo-Australians, and is not going to die in the foreseeable future.



## SBS Radio and the Italian Program in Particular.

*Manuela Caluzzi*

SBS Radio this year in June celebrates its 25th anniversary, and it seems to me particularly fitting that I should be here talking about it at this inaugural conference that sets out to find the Italian Australian in the new millennium. We too at SBS Radio, as we reflect on our history, seek to better define our evolving role and our vision for the future. SBS Radio was born as 3EA in Melbourne and 2EA in Sydney in 1975 as a three month experiment to spread the message about Medibank.

As it took roots and grew over the years, it shifted gradually from being a facilitator of integration for non-English speaking communities, as it was originally intended, to become an instrument of cultural maintenance, a promoter of diversity, the flag bearer of pluralism. In so doing it has had to contend with complex questions and challenges that are linked, on the one hand, to the evolution of the society in which it operates and specifically of the communities it set out to serve, and, on the other, to the rapid changes and expansion of means of communication and the rise of multimedia. In other words, a changing, less easily definable audience on the one hand; on the other, a numerable, ever growing, fairly accessible source of information and entertainment.

The way SBS Radio in general, the Italian language program in particular, has attempted to respond to this dual challenge can be best seen in taking a brief look at its evolution. In its first phase Ethnic Radio Australia was primarily directed to communities of migrants, people with limited proficiency in English, with strong and direct ties to their homeland, and its growing family and whose ease with the new country did not extend to calling Australia home. 2EA and 3EA were the product of the early days of multiculturalism. And multiculturalism in its infancy was aimed mainly at assisting integration. It recognised a need for specific services in various languages to help newcomers settle in more easily and it set out to provide such services.

The belief was that not just ethnic communities but society as a whole would benefit from a such a policy which, furthermore, satisfied democratic principles of social justice. Our mandate, shaped by these objectives, was relatively simple. We were to inform listeners in their own language of what was happening around them; areas such as

health, immigration, welfare and education naturally took priority. We had to raise issues directly relevant to our listeners. We talked about community activities, played a great deal of music. Our audience was large, enthusiastic, involved; it was a captive audience eager to listen and to speak its own language, to enjoy its own music, to identify and create its own icons. It was proprietorially proud of its own only radio station.

For those of us who crowded the chaotic, smoke-filled bowels of radio those were pioneering, heady years when enthusiasm and hard work counterbalanced inexperience and lack of structure, sustained experimentation and blunted criticism and occasional failures. Like all pioneering times, obviously they could not last; consolidation and redefinition was the next natural stage which we entered in the second half of the '80s with a major restructure of the workforce and the clear emergence of cultural maintenance as an integral, explicit part of our mandate.

Our new, two-pronged charter stated that radio was to remain a facilitation for integration and resettlement but was also to assist in cultural maintenance. We were to help in preserving and fostering the cultural diversity and richness of Australian society whilst promoting understanding and social cohesion. This aspect of SBS's charter has indeed remained essentially the same to the present time though couched in different terms, and with an even more pronounced emphasis within the one, harmonious society.

The aim of cultural maintenance was particularly relevant to language programs directed towards more established older communities, such as, for instance, the Italian and the Greek communities that were more organised internally and well served by many other government agencies and initiatives where their need for radio as a facilitator for resettlement was lessening with the passing of every year and the growth of the new generations.

The push to become more professional and to diversify and to enrich our program so as to reach beyond our original constituency, mainly made up of older, first generation migrants, was further strengthened in the latter part of the '80s and early '90s by the emergence within larger communities, such as the Greek and the Italian ones, of commercial radio stations that broadcast in the same language and to the same audience as SBS for virtually 24 hours a day. It was a development that had as its immediate consequence the decline of our traditional listenership. The somewhat lofty goals of cultural maintenance and pluralism acquired for us a new urgency. The future, with its inevitable

substantial loss of native Italian speakers and the concomitant changes in the Italian-Australian culture, was suddenly already with us.

So we set out to broaden the scope and appeal of our programs and to discover and capture this intangible, multifaceted ever-changing ‘Italianness’ that somehow characterised us. There was no question of not retaining the language, apart from being indispensable to the residual role of facilitator. Language, as states, I think very effectively, an old government publication, is the deepest manifestation of any culture, which alone enables the expression of futures unique to that culture.

So we continue to broadcast in Italian. As to the content of our programs, we strove to cover all fronts. Our news bulletins became gradually more comprehensive, and included Australian, homeland and international news. We strengthened our links with Italy through regular reports and the constant search for significant people and events in Italy. We looked out for Italian visitors to Australia: business people, artists, tourists, and quickly, quickly dragged them to our microphones. We searched for new arrivals to discuss aspects of expatriation and of the old and the new country.

On the other hand we looked at what was happening here within the Italian-Australian community. We spoke to its political leaders, its artists, its scientists, its writers, its academics, its people. Ideas, activities, problems, issues, everything and anything that was somehow connected to the Italians in Australian became the focus of our attention. We attempted to attract the younger generations, made room for them with mixed success. A notable success, as many of you will know, was the comedy series, BBC (the Brunswick Breakfast Club), which was written and produced entirely by young, second-generation Italians and dealt with aspects of Italian-Australian life in the way young Italian-Australians experienced it, and used their language, or languages.

We included some English – and not just through the BBC – and significantly enough, unlike our earlier listeners, the audiences of the late ‘80s and ‘90s did not seem to mind too much. It was, after all, their children and grandchildren who spoke to us in English and, provided the gist of what was said was clear, there were no problems. Our programs, by all accounts, were becoming different, more interesting and informative – as we were often told – than in the past, more comprehensive and more sophisticated. And if a new listening public was still materialising - or still materialising slowly, I should say - that was not sufficient reason to abandon the cause.

Because cultural diversity and pluralism in the meantime were beginning to resonate well beyond the confines of our broadcaster, and

were quickly becoming the rallying cry of people the world over as those people confronted the growing process of globalisation – a process that presented many indubitable benefits but had also potential for cultural homology and fostered the concomitant hegemony of the English language, and, as things still stand, of American culture.

The enormous advances in the development of means of communication, the opening up of cyberspace, on which globalisation rests, make it possible for us today to access limitless sources of information and entertainment, and lead us to question even more our role as yet another provider of such information and entertainment, which is a very localised and limited one at that; it leads us to question the role that we can have. So, where do we fit in? How can we maximise our usefulness? How do we redefine ourselves to better fulfil future needs? These are the questions that SBS Radio, now a national broadcaster, is grappling with in its present phase of development.

And on these questions I'd like to offer by way of conclusion some considerations, relating them specifically to Italian language broadcasts.

Italian speakers in Australia at present can access a number of Italian television and radio programs, films, RAI International, Italian commercial television through SBS, through Rete Italia and Pay TV. They can also listen to a growing number of Italian language programs on the world wide web. Clearly, however, none of these overseas programs can speak to them about what it is to be Italians, to be of Italian origin, in Australia. None of these programs can really be expected to meet their needs, interests, and preferences as Italian Australians in a sustained and meaningful way.

This is not to say that the services of such programs should be altogether discarded. They do have their value, they have a place in the enrichment of the lives of Italian Australians. It is simply to state what should be obvious, and that is that program makers in Australia are the only ones in a position to meet the needs and expectations of people living in this country; the only ones in a position truly to reflect and express who we are and the society we live in. It is a simple truth on which I feel we should insist if we care for the maintenance of our cultural identity and all its complex, dynamic configurations.

It is a truth that seems to be somewhat ignored by policy makers in our country of origin, in Italy - even when they set about providing programs for Italians in the world, as we are now called. There has been much talk for years now in Italy among politicians and experts about the need for "informazione di ritorno", about radio and television

programs, news services, publications originating from the various communities of Italians and their descendants in other countries and sent back to be seen and heard and read in Italy so as to give a clearer, truer picture of what the Italian diaspora is, and is achieving in the world.

No doubt, if it existed, this “informazione di ritorno” would greatly help those program makers in Italy who set out to inform and entertain the various Italian communities abroad. No doubt the material they produce for our consumption would be more relevant and more interesting, free of that lingering condescension that somehow seems to permeate so much of what is specifically directed to us. A productive dialogue between equals and a real two-way exchange of materials produced here and in Italy would further our mutual understanding and, I feel, would go a long way towards eliminating any residual problem of perception and stereotyping that might still interfere with the full enjoyment and appreciation of our culture, particularly among the younger generations. Maybe more should be done, even at community levels, to achieve this goal.

As for the means by which we should try to strengthen and extend our region – this is a vital question for us at SBS given our limited air time – the information highway offers as yet untested possibilities. We will be trying them out next year when our production centre will move to Federation Square – I am talking about the Melbourne production centre. There we will enjoy better accommodation and avail ourselves of multimedia facilities.

SBS radio programs will become available on the Internet where they will most likely be expanded beyond what goes to air in our current broadcasts. Well, I am no Luddite. Progress and new ways of doing things do not particularly worry me, but cyberspace is precisely that, at least for now – a limitless space with a limitless number of constellations.

I regard it as a potentially useful addition in spreading the message – but as an addition, not as a replacement for our radio services with their well-defined, easy-to-find position on the dial. I feel that we cannot consign to the world wide web alone the task of maintaining our cultural diversity, and within it, our Italian Australian identity, that multilayered, fragile evolving and voluntary identity. Let us not forget that to be Italian Australians will be more and more a choice for future generations, not an automatic, obligatory response to an existential situation. If we do forget it, that very identity we cherish may move a step closer to being just a virtual reality.

SBS radio and television embody in a very real and concrete way cultural pluralism and the acceptance of it at the highest level. As such they are in a privileged position to assist in the maintenance and constant legitimisation, in the support of the variety of cultures and languages that exist and evolve within our society. SBS radio and television are also there to serve the people of this country. Their strength and relevance is determined by the choice and wishes of the people of this country, not just by the hard work, resourcefulness, creativity, passion or vision of the workforce.

So to conclude, and plagiarising our very well-known slogan, 'it is your SBS'; make use of it, make it yours.

# AustraliaDonna: Women's Voices

*Paola Niscioli*

## Background Information

To begin, let me read a part of the resolutions of the 1995 Beijing Conference:

“We, the Governments participating in the Fourth World Conference on Women [...] Determined to advance the goals of equality, development and peace for all women everywhere in the interest of all humanity.

Acknowledging the voices of all women everywhere and taking note of the diversity of women and their roles and circumstances, honouring the women who paved the way and inspired by the hope present in the world's youth.

Recognize that the status of women has advanced in some important respects in the past decade but that progress has been uneven, inequalities between women and men have persisted and major obstacles remain, with serious consequences for the well-being of all people.”

These words highlight some of the issues that are at the heart of the creation of AustraliaDonna – a website for women of Italian origin in Australia.

Dr Daniela Costa, representative on the CGIE (Council General for Italians abroad), was one of the female representatives from Australia who attended the 1997 Conference in Rome on Women in Emigration. She brought back with her from this Conference the urgency to enact mentoring and networking processes for all women of Italian origin in Australia. The other important principles of mainstreaming and empowerment outlined by the Beijing Forum, and the concepts of networking and mentoring that can establish the creation of a circle of contacts that unites Italian women wheresoever they live were also discussed. Such strategies serve a dual purpose: they assist in preparing women to avail themselves of ‘best practice’ techniques and, secondly, enable women to learn from each other and share the contribution that has been made thus far by women of Italian origin all around Australia in various sectors of our society.

The 1997 Rome Conference recognised the: “historical and fundamental role of women emigrants who have not only protected the nucleus of the family from the trauma of detachment, but who have also played an essential function in favouring the adjustment to new social realities [...] The female emigrant has transmitted and continues to transmit intact the language and cultural heritage of Italy to subsequent generations, thus guaranteeing at the same time full integration into the land of adoption and maintenance of one’s origins.”

While it is true that there is, as stated at the Rome Conference, a “community of thought and life philosophy among women of Italian origin”, such a viewpoint is much more difficult to identify in the new generations of women who have attained a different social and cultural maturity through belonging to two cultures.

Keeping such differences in mind, Dr Daniela Costa and a group of women in South Australia, networking with women from the Italian community in different states, posed ourselves the question of how to put into place more formal mechanisms that specifically encourage the strategies of networking, mentoring and mainstreaming among the diversity of women of Italian origin in our community.

### The Internet as a tool

And so, the Internet was decided upon as a tool that could be used for data-collection as well as a font for disseminating information primarily because it has a wide reaching audience and a myriad of growth possibilities. AustraliaDonna was established with the aim of creating an open space that would favour the exchange of information, knowledge and topics related to the world of women through the contribution of different realities and individual experiences of all participants. AustraliaDonna is primarily a site for women of Italian origin in Australia and apart from information exchange, the site also aims to provide examples of the way in which women of Italian origin have contributed to Australian society. At the same time, given the global nature of the World Wide Web, through this medium, Italian-Australian women’s voices are no longer marginalised but become part of the many global virtual communities through a click of the mouse.

Before I move on to how the site is being used as a way of promoting networking and mentoring strategies, let me take you on a brief tour of the site: [www.australiadonna.on.net](http://www.australiadonna.on.net) the first page of the site takes us to the image created by the designer Lynne Sanderson. The site is in Italian and in English in such a way as to be accessible to the highest possible number of women of Italian origin in Australia.

The site presently contains 5 sections:

- 1) Site's origins – where there is an explanation of the genesis of the site, with links to the 1995 Beijing Conference and the resolutions of the 1997 Rome Conference.
- 2) Women and society – this section consists of profiles of women, with different interests, experiences and knowledge who have contributed/ continue to contribute to various areas of Italo-Australian society.  
This section is divided into twelve categories that reflect women's activities in Australia:  
Italian representation, Australian Institutions, Culture, Community, Education, Health/Welfare, Law, Business, Information/Media, Science/Technology, Sport, Women's voices.
- 3) What's new - This section contains articles, information and new profiles.
- 4) Links – with Italian, Australian and International sites, many are reciprocal
- 5) Contact us – This section invites women of Italian origin to contribute to the site by submitting:
  - a) information on themes that interest them and that assist in initiating networking and mentoring schemes;
  - b) information on projects or debates, suggestions or ideas for future editions of the site;
  - c) names of women who can contribute with information, articles, or personal stories;
  - d) information on community activities or initiatives.

### Mainstreaming, mentoring and networking through the Internet

Historical documentation on the cultural value of first generation women is well under way and their role has been recognised. They have transmitted the mother tongue and created cultural cohesion in the family as well as being the strong points of associations. Many women have however paid a high personal and social price as they have not had the opportunity to improve their educational level nor learn English. Their path of social adaptation has been slower than that of men and they have had fewer employment opportunities.

The new generations of Italian women in Australia, faced with questions regarding their identity, have also encountered difficulties in navigating their place in Australian society.

For such reasons, the Internet is an excellent tool in setting up an arena in which women of all generations can communicate with others

of similar backgrounds thereby going some way to establishing a network of women. At present the profiles of women present on-line are those of educated, mostly second generation women who have achieved some degree of success in their chosen role. It has always been our intention to be inclusive and ensure that all generations be represented. Consequently, our next major project is to use the website as an instrument for creating intergenerational dialogue. In our next edition in July, we will begin a new section called "Women's voices". In order to have these stories on-line we aim to pair women of the first generation, who will recount their life experiences, with women of subsequent generations who will gather, transcribe and put their words on-line. In this way women of all generations will be actively participating in gathering information and sharing life experiences.

The AustraliaDonna Committee also hopes that the site can be used to expand upon the skills base for women of Italian origin of all ages so as to empower women of the first generation to use technology to tell their story. To this end we have already begun collaborating with Italo-Australian Community Organisations in South Australia and Western Australia to spread the use of the Internet among women of the first generation as a means also of maintaining an interactive rapport with contemporary Italy. Furthermore, two community organisations in S.A., the Coordinating Italian Committee and ANFE have applied for State Government funding for computers and Internet access. These applications have been deemed important by local organisations as they form part of the broader national project of social solidarity formulated in 1999, the year of the Older Person.

We also intend for the website to engage the wider Italian-Australian Community in themes relevant to the world of women. A concrete way of doing this, which will be implemented in the July 2000 update of the site, is through an on-line discussion list. Such a forum will allow interested parties to participate in a virtual debate by submitting an electronic mail message. In this way users around the world will have the opportunity to exchange ideas and opinions on themes linked to the world of emigration and women.

### Conclusion

To conclude, the website is still at its infancy but the aims embedded within it are universal and will ensure its growth and success as a learning tool for women of Italian origin of all ages. The maintenance of a uniquely Italian identity in Australia is our responsibility. Let us ensure that, amid this, Italian-Australian women's voices continue to be heard.

## A Thousand Words in any Language

*Claudio Paroli*

Last week I was telling my 21-year old pal, Australian born of Italian parents, about this conference and a question I was tossing in my mind about second generation Italians and their culture. She said, you have got to see *Looking for Alibrandi*, it is so real. So I went to see it, and came out more confused than before with more questions. How does that relate to television? Let's start from the beginning.

### Yesterday Panorama Italiano

The beginnings of Italian language television in Australia were humble, in most cases a half-hour program in a downtime timeslot bought from a metropolitan network. Little production there, except for the hostings. The content: for the most part material produced by Italy's public network RAI specifically for "gli emigrati", the migrants. RAI had a small division called DE, Divisione Esteri or Foreign Division, whose job was to compile programs such as *Panorama Italiano* and *Azienda Italia* – some of you will remember them without nostalgia.

### Oh - something new

Then, twenty years ago, SBS TV started. Bruce Gyngell, who regrettably is not well, had this vision of a television that would show the best in the world. On the opening night, the 24th of October 1980 – United Nations Day – *the Fanfare for the Common Man* announced the birth of a new television station that would, to this day, remain unique in the world.

It was called Channel O and the schedule of that first day included a program called *Chromakey Follies*, a glitzy variety show from Italy.

Channel O News revolutionised news lineup with its world coverage. For the first time Italy did not make the news only for Mafia killings and revolving door governments. It even had an Italian born reporter with a strong accent that, as you can hear now, has not got much better with time.

SBS TV showed quality Italian movies, serials, miniseries and above all *La Piovra*, the Octopus, brave magistrates fighting the Mafia. It was a hit – for those who could get SBS, relegated on the then new UHF frequency.

### More news

Eight years later, as Australia celebrated the arrival of the white man, a quantum leap. It was called *Italia News*, on air on Sundays – half an hour of news from Italy, compiled by RAI's Foreign Division especially for SBS. The program is still on air today, and it is tired and perhaps superfluous when on all other mornings SBS shows a TG, Telegiornale live or almost live from Italy. That was the real quantum leap, the introduction of WorldWatch and of the Telegiornale from Italy in the premium timeslot of 7 o'clock in the mornings. That was only six years ago, incidentally.

### Today 24 hours

By then, though, the Italian language television scene had changed radically thanks to the initiative of the owner of a video store here in Melbourne. Tony Alessi got himself a number of MMDS licenses well before the Federal Government decided what to do with pay TV, and with them started TeleItalia, a niche TV channel in Italian.

It was a success in spite of many initial technical difficulties.

### Galaxy

In the meantime, in Sydney, former ABC radio journalist Steve Cosser had started something similar, only bigger. Its company was called Australis Media, but the name everyone got to know was *Galaxy*, Australia's first large scale pay TV. It used for transmission the same cheap technology as TeleItalia, microwaves, and later satellite. It was launched in early 1995 pipping to the post Optus Vision and, by a long country mile, Murdoch's FOXTEL.

Steve Cosser saw what Tony Alessi had done and saw that it was good. And so he bought it, and TeleItalia became a Galaxy channel.

TeleItalia's is a fascinating story of faith and blunders but this is not the place to tell it – especially because we have to deal with the next development, the entry of RAI itself on the Australian market.

### Enter RAI

Under its dynamic president Letizia Moratti RAI had realised that to be a global player the Italian public broadcaster had to step into the world of satellites. It was no longer good enough to send cassettes around the world to Italian Embassies and Consulates for them to pass on to local broadcasters.

RAI made a deal with a Saudi-owned enterprise, Dallah Albaraka, to create a satellite distribution network that would cover the entire world.

A new RAI outfit called RAI International was to provide the content, out of RAI's three domestic channels, plus some of its own productions.

In mid 1996 Dallah Albaraka started transmissions in the United States and by that year's end it was negotiating with Australia's Optus Vision and with Galaxy, which by then was nudging towards ten thousand subscribers nationwide. Eventually a deal was struck with Optus Vision, and the RAI International Channel was launched in January 1997.

### Public and private do mix

At the same time though, RAI had made a deal with Deutsche Welle, Germany's foreign broadcaster, to send a 24-hour channel into Asia, in what became known as the European bouquet. While the other channel was the expression of RAI's commercial soul, this came out of its other side, the public service soul. It was meant to promote Italian language, culture, tourism and business in Asia but could be seen also in Australia. It was not encrypted – anyone willing to buy a fairly expensive digital decoder and a dish and other bits could receive Italian programs directly from Italy, some of them live. This was something that appealed to Italians in Australia – an initial purchase, stiff that it might have been, but then no more to pay, no more bills, no monthly fees.

So the stage was set for the strange situation that still exists here in Australia: a pay TV service provided by RAI International, and a free-to-air service, also provided by RAI International.

### The real McCoy

The pay TV service was the real McCoy, though, with news, drama, game shows and above all soccer!!!, while the other service, the free to air one, was to start with, really woeful. It was, after all, meant to promote the image of Italy in Asia, it wasn't meant as generalist television as was the other one, the pay TV signal distributed by Optus Vision and, later, by FOXTEL.

RAI International has now been around for 3 and ? years – and again, it is outside the scope of this paper to chronicle its development – except to say that it is now an integral part of the Australian broadcasting scene. So is SBS TV, of course, which keeps pumping out quality Italian movies both on its free to air channel and on its pay TV channel, World Movies.

### More Arabs

And so is TeleItalia. It survived the Galaxy bankruptcy – it was sold to Galaxy's landlord Mike Boulos, a Sydney property developer who also developed a taste for television when renting his premises to

Galaxy. [Mike Boulos is Egyptian, incidentally – for some reason it seems that Italian Pay TV in Australia has to have an Arab connection.]

### The right formula

However TeleItalia, with its limited investments, offers no real competition to RAI International. This is a pity, because the formula originally devised by Mike Boulos through his pay TV operation TARBS, would have had wide appeal among Italians. Pay only for what you want – in other words a stand alone channel in Italian, no channels in English, no packages.

This formula has evolved though, and today subscribers to one of TARBS' many language channels get some other channels they may not want.

This is because the cost of distributing several channels is not that much larger than the cost of distributing one only. And this takes us to the next stage.

### Tomorrow Numero uno & Numero zero

In a world made of 1s and 0s, in a digital world, the cost of distributing a television channel is coming down, and will come down much more in the future as the gap between broadcasting and datacasting narrows. You all know you can get television on your computer, provided that you have a fast computer and the appropriate card. But what you get today is not comparable to what you will be able to get tomorrow. If I could predict what you will get tomorrow, and how, I would be able to stop working, and I could move to doing television just for kicks rather than for a living.

### How many Italian channels?

But there is no doubt that in a not-too-distant future the single Italian channel at an affordable price will be a here-and-now reality. Or a number of channels. Whether everyone will be able to access them is another story. In Australia only one household in two has a computer, and this percentage would be much, much lower in the households of RAI International subscribers. The technologically challenged are likely to have fewer choices or have to pay a higher access price – and this is something a broadcaster acting in the public interest cannot ignore.

But the real question is – what we are going to see on this Italian channel, or channels, of the future?

More Pippo Baudo? More Brazilian “telenovelas” badly dubbed into Italian? More old movies? Is this what Italians in Australia want – and

indeed, Italians all around the world? We are now talking content, which is at the core of what television is, not the box but what we see on it, not the medium but the message.

So - what about content?

### The 1st generation

First, we need to acknowledge that there will be differences, even big differences, between the needs of the first generation and those of later generations.

The first generation is by far the largest group of subscribers to pay TV in Italian. As a group it may be shrinking but it is still here, and it – we – will be here hopefully for some years to come.

A recent study by the NSW Ethnic Affairs Commission tells us that one out of three 1st generation Italians is uncomfortable with the English language. Italian is definitely the language of choice of their television.

So then: after language, content for the 1st generation. As the RAI International representative I heard many complaints about programs.

### Programs

I have not managed to lay hands on the mission statement issued a couple of weeks ago by RAI International's new director. But according to newsagency reports RAI International's priorities will shift to provide more information than it does now.

And here I am at a loss: why should a generation of Italians whose ties with Italy were loosened up decades ago want to know everything, but everything that happens in Italy, every moment.

If you look at the daily schedule of any of RAI's three domestic channels you will find that pure information takes up to 4 hours on RAI Uno, 3 on RAI 2 and up to ten hours on RAI 3 - but at night RAI 3 switch to a news-only network. RAI International's current schedule provides over 5 hours of information - a lot of it domestic Italian politics. And there is talk of increasing it?

What Italians abroad want is what we all want, what Italian domestic audiences want – movies, drama, sport, light entertainment, relevant information – why should Italians abroad be different?

### Schedule

The other common complaint focuses on the timeslots where programs are placed, early mornings, mid afternoon, middle of the night. We know why – what we see in Australia is designed with Latin

America foremost in mind. And it is quite reasonable that it should be so, after all in Latin America RAI International can count on subscribers in the hundreds of thousands rather than thousands only. Never mind that in most of Latin America the RAI International channel is part of the basic package, so there is no extra charge for the Italian channel as there is here.

RAI International looks after its largest audience, and rightly so. The Italian community in Australia though, thinks it is large enough to warrant getting its own channel, with timeslots right for its viewing habits. The good news is that RAI International may be thinking along the same lines, and a channel for Australia may now be on the drawing board. The bad news is that it has been on the drawing board for a while.

### TV guide

The last complaint is about the lack of a proper TV guide. Yes, there is a guide on the Internet. Yes, the same guide is published in the Italian papers. And yet the instances of unreliability are too common to dismiss them as the occasional mistake by technicians, or cases of force majeure. It is a lack of respect for the viewers to dismiss their need to know, to take the attitude that they will be happy to watch whatever pops on the screen because it comes from RAI and above all because there is no alternative. Should Mr Berlusconi ever land in Australia, or anywhere else, with a channel for export, so to speak, we may see a different attitude from the state broadcaster.

Incidentally Mr Berlusconi's Mediaset did participate in an initiative, called, if I remember correctly, *Ciao Italia*, in the United States. It was a failure - it was really at best a half-hearted attempt at moving onto the Italian market abroad. I understand Mediaset considered again the Italian market abroad as late as last November but decided to stay out. This decision is perhaps surprising given Mr Berlusconi's political ambitions and given that Italian citizens abroad may soon be able to vote in the consulates for the Italian Parliament. However, the relevance of that vote is somewhat limited, and Mr Berlusconi knows that.

### Other things in other languages

If the first generation complains about the Italian television it gets, what should the later generations say.

Late last month I was at a conference in Perth. Attending were the representatives of Italian communities living in English speaking countries - part of what I call the *Other Italy*, the multilingual pot pourri that lives in Montreal and in Melbourne, in Capetown and in Buenos

Aires. It is made of a shrinking first generation and a growing second, third and fourth generation.

### The Other Italy

A theme that emerged loud and clear from the conference was that there was a large section of the Other Italy that felt ignored by the peninsular Italy, the one that lives in the Italian peninsula. This section that feels ignored is made up of people who feel Italian, are children and grandchildren of Italians but speak other languages, live in a different environment, have different terms of reference, different paradigms.

When they are interested in things Italian – and not all of them are, but those who are – say they cannot access what is on offer when it is only offered in a language they have not mastered.

I realise that I am generalising. I acknowledge that there are differences between the second and later generations. Often the second generation has rejected altogether their parents' culture while later generations have rediscovered their roots, especially now that being Italian - at least in Australia – is certainly more fashionable than it was 30 years ago.

I may be generalising but I – just like the RAI International programmers – work in a vacuum here. There is no research I am aware of on the television needs and wants of the later generations. There are no studies that can tell us. A research commissioned last year by RAI International into its image abroad did not really delve into the program likes and dislikes of the later generations. Perhaps RAI should commission such a research, to look beyond the immediate future.

### What language

Without the data such a research would provide, we have got to work on anecdotal information, gut feeling and commonsense.

We can probably accept that the language of the later generations is no longer Italian – it is English, Spanish, Brazilian Portuguese, French. So a television that speaks to them only in Italian is not likely to provide what this rather large and growing slice of Other Italy wants.

### Content, content!

But what is it, that it wants?

Television mirrors – at least in part, and sometimes in a distorted way – the culture of its country at a given time. So is there a culture of these later generations, that television should mirror?

I think we can accept it as a given that these later generations produce some culture. After all, these men and women of Italian descent are part of a society, be it Canadian, Venezuelan or Australian. They share in their country's culture and some of them contribute to it. The question is whether the culture they produce can be said to relate to their roots, whether their Italian matrix plays a role in their cultural output. In other words – do Santo Cilauro's Italian roots affect what he does? Would Anna Maria dell'Oso be a different writer if her background were different?

### Looking for Alibrandi

This is where *Looking for Alibrandi* got me into trouble. It did, because it is obvious that Melina Marchetta's Italian roots play a key role in her novel, as they do in the movie now playing in cinemas everywhere. So the obvious answer is – YES, there is a culture of the second, third, fourth generation.

But what if Melina had written about another subject, unrelated to her background? What about Paola Totaro? Does her Italian make-up affect the way she edits the Sydney Morning Herald's News Review on Saturdays? What about Natalie Imbruglia's songs? And the fact that the Rocca brothers are children of Abruzzesi, does that affect the way they play for Collingwood?

I do not know – do you? My gut feeling is that yes, their Italian roots do come through somehow – but it is a gut feeling. Perhaps an answer will emerge from this conference. Perhaps it should emerge – for then one of the consequences could well be that a television that ignores them, and their culture, is not relevant to them.

And how could it be? How can a television channel produced in Italy, with peninsular sensitivities and backgrounds, how can it mirror the cultures of the Other Italy, with different backgrounds and sensitivities. Even when this channel were to use their language, and speak in English (o Spanish, or the other languages), much of what it would say would be irrelevant.

The inescapable consequence, then, is that the Other Italy has to produce its own stuff.

### How!

Inescapable though this consequence may be, it does not tell us how this can be done, where the money is coming from, which media can be used...

Technology will make it easier and cheaper to produce and distribute television, as I noted before. Perhaps it is too early to give a definitive answer to these questions.

### A role for RAI

But I cannot help thinking that, as Italy's public broadcaster, RAI should have a role here. After all, it is in the interest of both *Italies*, the one that lives in the peninsula in the Mediterranean and the Other Italy, to link up to promote trade and business opportunities. Piero Bassetti, a notable Italian, is a fierce advocate of what he calls "The world in Italian", where being Italian is a concept that is not linked to language or territory. To him the distinction between cultural world and business world is also blurred – one feeds on the other.

He tried hard to involve RAI in his vision, and for a while it looked as if he might succeed. But times changed.

### A new formula

Times can change again though, and perhaps the germs of an answer are in the venture announced early last month by RAI when it said it had linked up with a Canadian pay TV operator to apply for a licence for a new channel, in Italian, for Canada. Details are still scant but they did speak of a channel relying primarily on RAI International programming and designed to be highly attractive to the large Italian community in Canada.

We should look at doing something similar. We cannot wait, with a cargo cult mentality, for Italy to provide what we need. This country has some great entrepreneurs who have made their mark in the building industry, in civil and defence engineering, in retail, in wholesale distribution. Perhaps it is time to look also at communications and entertainment, and make a similar mark.