

2017—2018

Members

NAME: **Pietro Dichiera**
DOB 8th February 1933
Place of Birth S. Nicola di Caulonia
Province Reggio Calabria
Date of emigration: 10th October, 1949
Date of arrival in Australia Melbourne 14th June 1951
Australian citizen: Australian Citizen



Immigration experience:

My name is Pietro Dichiera born on the 8th February, 1933 in S. Nicola di Caulonia Prov. R.V., only child of Giuseppe Dichiera (1908) and Angela Frajia (1913).

I completed my 3rd Medie of schooling in Italy which is equivalent to Year 10 in Australia, doing the last year in Rome at Istituto Gennasiale Roma.

As my father had migrated to Australia in 1939 to make a better future, even though he himself had completed 3rd Medie of schooling in Italy in the early 1920. I remember and was also told by my mother and paesani that he used to write letters for illiterate people who had family members overseas. Also he would teach some of them to read and write, enough to be able to sign important documents.

In 1949 my father requested that I join him in Australia and I left the Port of Naples with the M.V. Napoli on the 10th October with a cousin Ilario Dichiera (28 yrs.old) who acted as my Guardian as I was under-age at the time. There was another paesano from Caulonia on the boat with us by the name of Mr Pileggi.

With my cousin we left S. Nicola for the train station at Caulonia Marina to catch the train to Naples, with the usual Taxis of that era...The Donkey's Transport...that carried all the luggage. It was approximately 18 km. ride to the train station with relatives and friends following us all with donkeys.

The boat trip was not so good as I got sea-sick. The M.V. Napoli was originally a cargo ship so it had very few cabins for the passengers but plenty of Camerone Accomodation at the very lower level of the ship which was crowded.

After arriving in Melbourne, I caught the train to Adelaide. Our first address was Garden Terrace, Underdale, in a rented shed, and even though the times were harsh in a new and strange land with very primitive accommodation, I was feeling happy. Soon after my father bought 6 acres of land at Military Road, West Beach, where shortly after we built a 2 bedroom home and 17 glass-houses. After my arrival my father booked me into Rostrevor College as a boarder because he wished that I continued studying. Life at Rostrevor College at the time was not easy for me. I was 16 years of age and got placed with 12 year old boys (yr 6-7 class). That for me was not only demoralizing but so much different than the school I had left in Italy. Not coping very well with all that, soon after I left the College and went into the workforce.

In 1965 I married this beautiful girl Tina Cutri, who originated from S. Eufemia d'Aspromonte R.C., and went to Italy for our honeymoon which lasted 6 months. I was able to get time off work for all that period of absence. We made the trip to Italy by ship, the Marconi (20 days) and came back with the same ship. Back to Adelaide we started our family of 5 boys, who are now all married and have enriched our lives with 8 grandchildren.

I have been involved in the Committee of The Society of S. Hilarion for many years and I am still a Volunteer since 1975. I was one of the Guarantors to purchase the first S. Hilarion Nursing Home at Lockleys in 1987, and am an Honorary Member of S. Hilarion Society and Aged Care. I am also a member of the Italian Historical Society of S.A. Inc.

I will always love the town I was born in and all its traditions, respect and values of my origins. I am proud to be an Italo-Australian, and my greatest desire is for my children to continue the Legacy of Family Values that my parents taught me, and that I tried to pass onto my children for their families to follow.

If the Foundation is built solid, it will nor crumble very easily.