

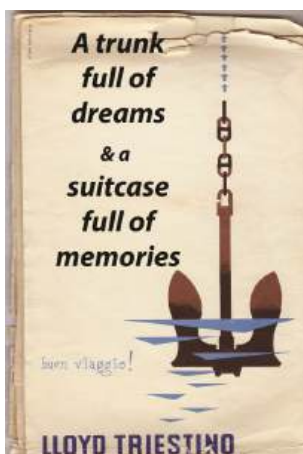
Italian Historical Society of SA, Inc.



2024 - 2025

# Annual Report

Editor G Geracitano



**ITALIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA INC.**

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# Un Omaggio Agli Emigranti

## A Tribute to the Emigrants

By: Franco Bava

### Un Omaggio Agli Emigranti

Macchè 'Hello...Hello...'  
Non vedi che sono Italiano, come te?  
Parla pure la nostra lingua,  
così cara e tanto bella,  
non aver nessuna vergogna,  
di trovarti in questa terra:

Sono anch'io un emigrante,  
che lasciai la mia gente,  
per venire a lavorare, qui distante;  
ma cosa vuoi... siamo emigranti, siamo  
emigranti:

Ma il cuor di un'Italiano,  
pur ramingo per il mondo,  
è sempre un grande, galant'uomo:

Chiamami pure Francesco,  
piacere mio, caro Vincenzo,  
vieni a casa mia se vuoi,  
ci sta pure per te un letto,  
puoi restare finchè vuoi,  
come fosse casa tua,  
anche se in realtà, neanche è mia,  
ma cosa vuoi...  
siamo emigranti, siamo emigranti

Grazie all'Australia,  
che ci ospita, e grazie alla nostra Italia,  
che ci vuole bene.

Di F. Bava

### A Tribute to the Emigrants

What do you mean, 'Hello... Hello...'  
Don't you see that I am Italian, just like you?  
Go ahead, speak our language,  
so dear and so beautiful,  
don't feel any shame  
for finding yourself in this land:

I am also an emigrant,  
I too left my people,  
to come work here, far away;  
but what can you do... we are emigrants, we are  
emigrants:

But the heart of an Italian,  
even if wandering around the world,  
is always a great, noble man:

Call me Francesco,  
pleased to meet you, dear Vincenzo,  
come to my house if you wish,  
there's even a bed for you,  
you can stay as long as you like,  
as if it were your home,  
even if, in reality, it isn't even mine,  
but what can you do...  
we are emigrants, we are emigrants.

Thanks to Australia,  
that welcomes us, and thanks to our Italy,  
that loves us.

By F. Bava

Translation by Giuseppe (Joe) Geracitano



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# President Introduction



It is with great pleasure that I present the Annual Report of the Italian Historical Society of South Australia Inc. for the year 2024–2025. This year has been both a celebration of our achievements over the past decade and a time of renewal and expansion for our Society.

The highlight of the year was undoubtedly our **10th Anniversary Gala Dinner**, a truly memorable occasion that brought together members, supporters, and representatives of the wider community to celebrate a decade of preserving and promoting the Italian heritage of South Australia. The event also launched our **Publication Fund**, an initiative designed to ensure that the stories and history of Italian migration continue to be researched, recorded, and shared with future generations.

Another major milestone this year was the **launch of *La Partenza: Voyage to a New Beginning***, a landmark exhibition and publication that captures the courage, resilience, and hopes of Italian migrants who made South Australia their home. Its unveiling attracted widespread interest from both the Italian and broader South Australian communities, receiving extensive media coverage and academic attention. The project has not only deepened public understanding of the migration journey but also reconnected families with their ancestral stories, inspiring pride among younger generations. The impact of *La Partenza* continues to resonate, affirming the Society's role as a vital custodian of our shared cultural heritage.

During the year, our Committee *expanded*, bringing fresh perspectives and energy to our work. We continued to build strong relationships within the community through participation in cultural events, collaboration with other Italian and multicultural organisations, and our ongoing presence on social media, where our following has grown significantly. These connections have strengthened our visibility and engagement across South Australia's Italian community and beyond.

Our dedicated volunteers, members, and the Editorial Committee deserve special acknowledgment for their tireless efforts in supporting our exhibitions, archival work, and publications. Their contribution ensures that the experiences and legacies of Italian migrants remain a living and accessible part of South Australia's cultural history.

As we look ahead, the Society remains committed to advancing research, encouraging intergenerational storytelling, and fostering a deeper understanding of the Italian contribution to our State's development. Together, we will continue to honour our past while building for the future.

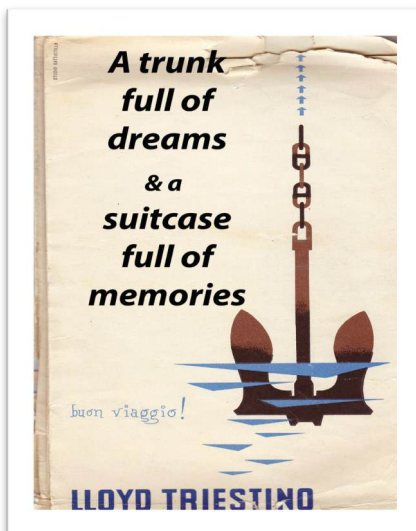
Giuseppe (Joe) Geracitano  
President  
November 2025

# Mission Statement



To collect, preserve, interpret and promote the history of Italians  
and document their contribution  
in South Australia.

## Project



## Oral History

Oral History

Is a picture of the past in people's own words.

## History

“To be ignorant of what occurred before you were born is to remain always a child. For what is the worth of human life, unless it is woven into the life of our ancestors by the records of history?”

— **Marcus Tullius Cicero**

# History of Project



## **Preserving Heritage: The Italian Historical Society's Flagship Oral History Project**

### **A Trunk Full of Dreams, A Suitcase Full of Memories: Stories of Italian Immigrants in South Australia**

Migration is not merely a journey of distance; it is a voyage of resilience, dreams, and the forging of new identities. Italian migration to South Australia is part of a global story—one shaped by struggle, opportunity, and transformation. From the late 19th century to the mid-20th century, Italians left behind rural villages and ancestral homes seeking a better life abroad. While many settled in the Americas and across Europe, thousands found a new beginning on Australian soil.

#### **Waves of Migration and Transformation**

Italy's unification in 1861 triggered waves of migration fuelled by poverty and limited prospects. Between 1876 and the late 1980s, nearly 27 million Italians emigrated. While the Americas took the lion's share, countries like Germany, Switzerland, and eventually Australia also saw an influx of Italian immigrants. From World War II to 1970 alone, seven million left Italy—90% of them from the South.

By the time mass migration slowed in the 1970s, the Italian population in Australia had risen from 26,000 in 1933 to nearly 290,000 by 1971. South Australia saw its numbers grow from just under 1,500 to more than 32,000, with Italian heritage becoming a strong cultural thread in the state's fabric. According to the 2021 census, approximately 104,000 South Australians—6.1% of the population—claimed Italian heritage.

This shift redefined South Australia, transforming it from a predominantly Anglo-Celtic society into a vibrant, multicultural landscape. However, the lived experiences and contributions of Italian immigrants remain underrepresented in historical records, particularly within national and state archives.



## Redressing the Historical Silence

Founded in 2015, the Italian Historical Society of South Australia Inc. was established to capture and honour these overlooked stories. Under the leadership of President Giuseppe (Joe) Geracitano, the Society focuses on the South Australian experience, employing oral history methodology to preserve the voices, photographs, letters, and documents of Italian immigrants.

**Mr. Giuseppe (Joe) Geracitano** brings decades of expertise in education and community leadership. His teaching career spans secondary school instruction in Economics, Accounting, and History; university tutoring in Sociology of Education with published work on multicultural education; and lecturing in the Diploma of Interpreters and Translators at the Adelaide College of Advanced Education.



In Victoria, he was recruited by the Catholic Education Office to develop the Community Languages programme for primary schools and to establish a Research and Development unit focused on students from non-English-speaking backgrounds.

As a passionate advocate for cultural heritage, Mr. Geracitano has played a pivotal role in shaping the Italian community across South Australia and Victoria. He helped found and develop numerous key institutions, including the **Dante Alighieri Society of South Australia**, **South Australian Association of Teachers of Italian**, **Italian community radio**, **Italian Festival**, and the **Coordinating Italian Committee**.

His contributions to public policy are equally significant. He advised on the formation of the **South Australian Ethnic Affairs and Multicultural Commission** and the **Migration Museum**, offering strategic guidance to the Minister Assisting the Premier in Ethnic Affairs. He also served as a board member of the **State Library of South Australia**, reinforcing his lifelong commitment to education, cultural preservation, and public service.

The Society's work is grounded in the belief that the spoken word—especially from those with limited formal education—can offer the most authentic and emotionally resonant accounts of migration. Each interview follows a whole-of-life approach, recounting memories from childhood in Italy, reasons for migration, settlement experiences, and contributions to South Australia. Transcripts are prepared in accordance with Oral History Australia guidelines and shared with appropriate cultural institutions.

## A Trunk Full of Dreams: The Flagship Project

Central to the Society's mission is the project titled *A Trunk Full of Dreams and a Suitcase Full of Memories*. This initiative categorizes migrant stories under themes such as Life Achievement, Business, Sport, Women in Business, Community



Organisations, Cultural Contributions, and Italian influence on Australian food culture. The project serves three key purposes:

- To connect Australian descendants with their heritage.
- To inform Italians about the lives of those who migrated.
- To enrich Australia's broader immigration narrative.



These stories will form a publicly accessible database, reinforce the legacy of Italian immigrants and encourage cross-cultural understanding.

### Pioneers, Narratives, and Community Impact

The project's inaugural interview featured *Sebastian Galipo*, who emigrated in 1952 at age four and later founded the Galipo Food Company. Overcoming language barriers and educational challenges, his story exemplifies the entrepreneurial spirit of post-war immigrants. The transcript and accompanying documents were released at a 2019 fundraiser with over 300 attendees, marking a turning point for the Society's community engagement.

#### Sebastiano Galipo



From Capo D'Orlando  
to  
Adelaide  
Edited by G. Geronzi



Italian Historical Society of SA Inc.  
2020

Another notable story is *Rita Bianca Palumbo*, who immigrated at age ten and became the first Italian

secretary of the Good Neighbour Council at sixteen. Her enduring leadership of the Sicilia Social and Sports Club and early role as a community interpreter highlight the vital role of women in shaping Italo-Australian civic life.

These stories—intimate yet historically rich—are helping to reshape the way South Australians remember and honour their multicultural past.



### A Tavola: Shaping South Australian Food Culture

Perhaps the most visible legacy of Italian immigration is the transformation of Australian food culture. The Society launched the theme *A Tavola: The Influence of Italian Immigration on South Australian Food Culture* in 2023 to explore this impact in depth.

#### A Tavola



The Influence of  
Italian  
immigration on  
South  
Australian  
food culture

A Project of The  
Italian Historical Society of SA Inc.

From restaurants and cafés to wine production and market gardens, the Italian culinary footprint is woven into South Australia's daily life. In the 1950s, olive oil was a pharmaceutical item sold primarily in pharmacies. Today, it's a staple ingredient found in pantries across the nation—thanks to Italian producers and importers.

Prominent manufacturers such as:

- **Avanti Pasticceria** (est. 1964) and **St George Cakes and Gelati** (1971)
- **Casa Della Formaggio** (1988) and **La Vera** (1984)
- **San Remo Macaroni Company** (1936)
- **Rio Coffee** (1964)
- **Bovalina Olive Oil Group** (2002)

have collectively reshaped tastes and expectations. Meanwhile, market gardeners introduced vegetables like zucchini, broccoli, and melanzane, expanding the region's agricultural diversity.

The wine industry, too, experienced a paradigm shift. Italian migrants demanded table wines rather than fortified varieties. Wineries like *Serafino in McLaren Vale* now produce Italian grapes such as Nebbiolo and Sangiovese, reflecting traditions from the old country.

Interviews with sector pioneers—including restaurateur *Enzo Clappis*, who opened Buonasera Restaurant in Glenunga in 1966 and *Ilario Nesci* who has been managing the restaurant for 56 years—are uncovering the interplay between hospitality, supply chains, and food innovation.

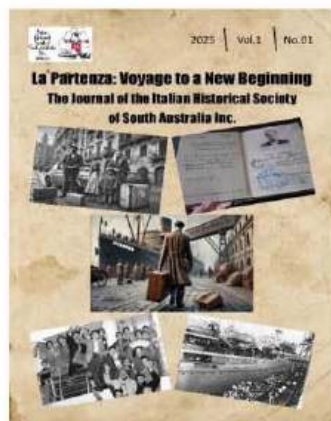


These accounts document the evolution of both

small-scale family businesses and large-scale distributors.

### **La Partenza: Voyage To A New Beginnings**

In 2025, the Society marked a major milestone with the release of its inaugural journal, *La Partenza: Voyage to a New Beginning*. Launched on **13 April 2025** at the Migration Museum of South Australia, the journal features articles on the history of Italy focusing on factors that led to mass emigration, history of Italian emigration, an analysis of Australian immigration policy and history, history of Italian immigration to South Australia, and eight written stories submitted in response to a public call for papers on the theme "Bound for South Australia: The Italian Experience."





This publication represents a new chapter in the Society's mission—offering a curated, literary platform for storytelling alongside oral histories. *La Partenza* deepens the emotional and historical resonance of the project, inviting reflection, dialogue, and pride in the Italo-Australian journey.

### Preserving Cultural Media and Female Voices

In marking the 50th anniversary of Italian-language radio in South Australia, the Society produced a report titled *Radio Paesani: The Beginning of Community Radio in South Australia*, featuring interviews with key broadcasters including Keith Conlon, Rosa Colanero, and Lino Cardone.



The Society is also preserving voices from the fashion and textile industry, including plans to interview *Elena Spinelli* and *Giovanna Mercuri*—1950s pioneers whose knitwear companies shaped women's fashion and in the case of *Mercuri Knitwear* later transitioned into the global manufacturing sector via *Ennio International*.

These interviews are especially time-sensitive, as they ensure that fading memories are captured and honoured before they are lost.

### Community Engagement and Legacy

All interviews are conducted voluntarily, led by Mr. Geracitano using industry-standard recording equipment and oral history protocols. The Society's early efforts were funded through community generosity and grassroots fundraising. Interviewees receive audio recordings, full transcripts, and any supporting materials, creating a lasting personal archive.

Digital versions of the reports are available on request from the Society, and selected materials have already been submitted to the State Library of South Australia—though ongoing negotiations continue to ensure long-term archival preservation.

As the project continues, the Society remains deeply committed to cultivating pride, understanding, and cross-generational storytelling. Its work ensures the Italian migrant experience is not only remembered but actively celebrated, contributing to the multicultural narrative of South Australia and offering future generations a foundation built on heritage, courage, and community spirit.

Giuseppe (Joe) Geracitano  
President  
November 2025  
©



# Committee 2024 - 2025



**Patron**  
**Ernesto Pianelli**  
**Consul of Italy**



**Patron**  
**Grd.Uff. Dr Carmine**  
**De Pasquale AM**



**Ambassador**  
**Cav**  
**Sebastian Galipo**



**Ambassador**  
**Rita Bianca**  
**Palumbo**



**President**  
**Giuseppe (Joe)**  
**Geracitano**



**Vice President**  
**Cllr. Dr Rachele**  
**Tullio**



**Secretary**  
**Giovanna (Jenny)**  
**Geracitano**



**Treasurer**  
**Tina**  
**Dichiera**

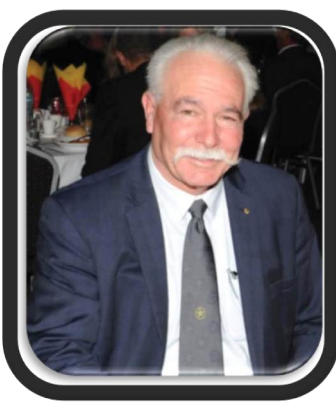


**Assistant**  
**Secretary**  
**Rosina Peryk**





**Social Media /  
Editorial  
Rosie Geracitano**



**Committee  
Joe  
Ienco OAM**



**Committee  
Silvana  
Zerella**



**Committee  
Nella  
Santo**



**Committee  
Lorenzo  
Circosta**



**Committee  
Franca  
Circosta**



**Committee  
Angela  
Cutri**



**Committee  
Cav Teresa  
Dall'Acqua  
Leonardi OAM**



**Committee  
Anna  
Farrugia**

# Editorial Committee 2024 - 2025



**Editorial  
Committee**  
**Cav Associate**  
**Prof Angela  
Scarino**



**Editorial  
Committee**  
**Laura**  
**Di Martino -  
Kempt**



**Editorial  
Committee**  
**Mario**  
**Russo**

# President's Report

**2024-2025**

## **OVERVIEW**

The period November 2024 to October 2025 has been one of the most active and productive years in the history of the Italian Historical Society of South Australia (IHSSA). It has been marked by significant milestones, community engagement, national recognition, and strong progress in achieving the Society's mission to document, preserve, and promote the Italian heritage of South Australia.

## **MAJOR EVENTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS**

### **Launch of the Journal—La Partenza: Voyage to a New Beginning**

The year was highlighted by the highly successful launch of the Society's inaugural journal, *La Partenza: Voyage to a New Beginning*, held on 13 April 2025 at the Migration Museum of South Australia. The event attracted a distinguished audience, including the Hon. Blair Boyer MP (Minister for Education), Hon. Heidi Girolamo MLC (Shadow Minister for Education), Hon. Jing Lee MLC, and Ms. Elizabeth Ho OAM, Chair of the History Trust of SA, who officially launched the publication.

The journal, which documents the migration experiences of Italians in South Australia, was acclaimed for its quality, research depth, and contribution to preserving Italian community heritage. Media coverage followed in *Il Globo*, *Word of Mouth* (Oral History Australia SA/NT), and across Italian radio and television outlets, including SBS in Australia and Telemia (a television channel that transmits regionally in Italy).

### **10th Anniversary Gala Dinner**

The Society's 10th Anniversary Gala Dinner, held on 11 October 2025 at the Carrington Function Centre, was an outstanding success—socially, culturally, and financially. With 184 guests in attendance, including parliamentarians, dignitaries, and community leaders, the event raised \$10,000 in support of the newly established Publication Fund.

The evening also saw the launch of the **10th Anniversary Commemorative Book**, reflecting on the Society's first decade of achievements, and the launch of the **Publication Fund**, which aims to source funds to increase the Society's capacity to record, prepare, and print more stories. and the release of whole-of-life stories of Gaudenzio (Enzo) Clappis (*The King of Offal*), Ilario Nesci (*From Caulonia Shores to Buonasera's Doors*), and Andrew (Andy) Clappis (*Crust to Creation*). Warm appreciation is extended to the event sponsors, including Platinum Sponsor Blackwell Funerals; Silver Sponsors Virgara Family Estate and Zerella Wines; and Bronze Sponsors Hi-Tech Fresh, Buonasera Restaurant, Galipo Food Company, Our Place at Willunga Hill, and Steve Cavallo.



Members who have not yet received a copy of the **10th Anniversary Commemorative Book**, are invited to contact the secretary to request one or collect their copy at the upcoming Annual General Meeting.

The event provided the Society with a meaningful opportunity to honour our esteemed Foundation Members and Foundation Sponsors, whose vision and dedication laid the groundwork for our journey. It was also a privilege to present Certificates of Appreciation to our valued Event Sponsors, in heartfelt recognition of their generous support.

A heartfelt thank you to all who contributed their talents to make the evening truly special:

- To **Rocco Carpentieri**, our gracious Master of Ceremonies, for presenting the night with poise and charm.
- To **Luigi Vella**, for his exceptional photographic work that captured the spirit of the event.
- To **Franca Circosta**, for her dedication in videoing the evening's memorable moments.
- To **Rose Senesi and her band No Two Ways**, for providing vibrant and joyful entertainment.
- To **Vespa Catering**, for serving a delicious meal that delighted every guest.
- To **Silvana Zerella**, for organizing the commemorative cake from St. George's Cakes and Gelati.
- To **Rosemarie Geracitano and Giovanna (Jenny) Geracitano**, for crafting the PowerPoint presentation with elegance and care.
- To **Giovanna (Jenny) Geracitano and Rosina Peryk**, for their seamless coordination of ticket allocation and table arrangements.
- To **all committee members** who sold tickets, sourced or donated lottery prizes, and assisted on the night.

## **EXPANSION OF THE COMMITTEE AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

In 2025, the committee was expanded to strengthen operational capacity and succession planning. The inclusion of a new member with expertise in event planning will enhance the society's reach and efficiency.

The Society experienced a change in its Executive following the resignation of Cav. Nick Fazzalari OAM, who stepped down due to ill health. We extend our deepest gratitude for his dedicated service and enduring contributions. The vacant position of vice-president



has since been filled by Cllr. Dr. Rachele Tullio, whose appointment brings renewed energy and commitment to the society's leadership.

Our thanks are extended to the Executive Committee, Editorial Committee, and all volunteers whose tireless work, enthusiasm, and professionalism have underpinned the Society's success throughout the year.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND REPRESENTATION

The president, often accompanied by the secretary, represented the society at numerous community and cultural events, fostering collaboration and promoting IHSSA's mission. These included:

- **Reception at Government House** celebrating the 50th anniversary of Bene Aged Care
- **Festa della Liberazione** commemoration at Payneham Cemetery and Fogolar Furlan Club
- **Festa della Repubblica** commemorating the foundation of the Republic of Italy.
- **70th Anniversary Gala Ball** of the Society of Saint Hilarion
- **50th Anniversary Gala Ball** of the Sicilia Social and Sports Club
- **Lions Club of Adelaide Italian** presentation evening, where the Society received a \$500 donation
- **Multicultural SA Community Forum** advocating for a Heritage Grant Category
- **Launch of the Adelaide Italian Festival 2025** poster
- **Launch of the Adelaide Italian Festival 2025** program
- **50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Foundation of Italian Radio**, at which the Society was credited with the first documentation of the establishment of Italian community radio in South Australia.
- Attended a **parliamentary reception** accompanied by the secretary (**Giovanna (Jenny) Geracitano**), treasurer (**Tina Dichiera**), and assistant secretary (**Rosina Peryk**), hosted by the Hon. Jing Lee MLC to commemorate community organizations that had reached a milestone.
- Participated in the community event **Il Ritorno Alle Radici con Pino Carella**, a night celebrating Italian immigration with journalist Pino Carella, presenter of the program *Radice* telecasted by Telemia television in Italy. The Society contributed to the exhibition of posters celebrating the migration experience of Italian immigrants in South Australia.
- Meetings with Italian **community organisations** to document milestone anniversaries, including Casa D'Abruzzo and Molise Club, Com.It.Es., and the Coordinating Italian Committee.

These engagements reinforced the Society's presence and partnerships across South Australia's multicultural landscape.

## **MEDIA AND DIGITAL PRESENCE**

The Society's profile continued to grow through media coverage on SBS World News, SBS Radio, Telemia (Italy), Radio Italia Uno, Radio Italiana 531, and SALIFE Magazine.

The Society's Facebook page saw a marked increase in followers—rising by over 40% during the year—reflecting growing community interest in IHSSA's activities, publications, and heritage storytelling. Posts highlighting the launch of *La Partenza* and the 10th Anniversary Gala Dinner achieved record engagement and were shared by both the Embassy of Italy in Australia and the Consulate of Italy in South Australia.

## **ORAL HISTORY AND RESEARCH PROJECTS**

The Society continued to strengthen its Oral History Program, recording stories under *A Tavola: The Influence of Italians on Australian Food Culture* and *A Trunk Full of Dreams, A Suitcase Full of Memories*. Interviews completed this year include Andrew (Andy) Clappis, Ilario Nesci, Domenic Cocci, Francesco Zuzolo, Giovanni Marcucci, Simeone Di Francesco, and members of Casa D'Abruzzo and Molise Club.

Archival donations included an oral recording of Bruno Crotti, preserving another family legacy for future generations.

## **INFRASTRUCTURE AND FUNDING**

- New Computer Grant – \$4,978 from Multicultural SA (IHSSA contributed the \$242 balance)
- Website Redevelopment Grant – \$2,900 from City of Charles Sturt (upgraded website launched)
- Printer Replacement – Brother MFC-J6940DW acquired
- Publication Fund – Established with Commonwealth Bank to sustain ongoing research and publication initiatives.

These achievements enhance IHSSA's digital infrastructure, supporting greater efficiency and long-term archival capacity.

## PUBLICATIONS AND COLLABORATIONS

The Society contributed articles to *Word of Mouth*, *Il Globo*, and the Family & Local History SA Directory 2025–26. Community organisations marking significant anniversaries were invited to contribute to the 2025 Annual Report, with submissions received from Madonna di Montevergine, SAATI, and Veneto Club.

With deep pride and heartfelt reverence, the Society has published a series of Whole-of-Life stories that illuminate the lives of extraordinary individuals and the vibrant heritage they helped shape:

- **Gaudenzio (Enzo) Clappis**—The *King of Offal*, whose journey reflects resilience, flavour, and community spirit.
- **Ilario Nesci**—From *Caulonia Shores* to *Buonasera's Doors*, a tale of migration, hospitality, and enduring warmth.
- **Andrew (Andy) Clappis** – *Crust to Creation*, a tribute to innovation, tradition, and the art of nourishment.
- And Radio Paesani: **The Beginning of Community Radio in South Australia**, a celebration of voices that stitched together generations and stories across the airwaves.

These cherished publications have been lovingly submitted to the Public Library of South Australia, the Migration Museum of South Australia, and other cultural institutions, ensuring they remain accessible to all who seek connection, memory, and meaning. They have also been uploaded to the Society's website, allowing their legacy to reach hearts and minds across the globe.

Collaborations continue with the State Library of South Australia and the History Trust of SA regarding the archiving of oral histories and the redevelopment of the Migration Museum.

## PUBLIC RECOGNITION

The Society has been publicly recognised for its outstanding contributions to preserving the legacy of Italian immigration to South Australia, receiving accolades such as the '**Award of Excellence**' and a '**Certificate of Recognition**' presented by the Hon. Jing Lee MLC.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Sincere thanks are extended to:

- The Executive Committee for its leadership and commitment,
- The Editorial Committee for their outstanding work on *La Partenza*,
- Our sponsors and supporters,
- The members and volunteers whose dedication ensures the success of every project and event.

Your contributions have enabled the Society to grow, modernise, and maintain its position as a leading custodian of Italian-Australian heritage in South Australia.

## CONCLUSION

The 2024–2025 year has been transformative for the Italian Historical Society of South Australia Inc. With the expansion of our committee, strong community partnerships, new funding opportunities, and record growth in public engagement, the society is poised for a vibrant second decade.

We look forward with optimism to 2026, with the publication of *La Partenza: Voyage to a New Beginning*, Volume II, assisting Casa D'Abruzzo and Molise Club and the Coordinating Italian Committee to record their history, and continued preservation of the stories that define our shared Italian-Australian history.

Giuseppe (Joe) Geracitano  
President  
November 2025





# Treasurer's Report



## Statement of RECEIPTS & EXPENDITURE

2024 - 2025

### RECEIPTS

Membership Fees			
2024 – 2025	\$1100.00		
2025 – 2026*	\$325.00	\$1425.00	

Donations			
Fundraiser 6 <sup>th</sup> July 2024*	\$300.00		
Miscellaneous	\$100.00	\$400.00	
Sponsorship La Partenza Journal		\$1400.00	

Events			
Fundraiser 6 <sup>th</sup> July 2024*	\$10760.00		
10 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala Dinner	\$285.	\$11045.00	
Journal Sale La Partenza		\$465.00	
Sale of Whole Of Life Books		\$560.00	

Total Receipts			\$15295.00
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### EXPENDITURE

Oral History Australia Memberships	\$65.00	
Catering Fundraiser 6 <sup>th</sup> July 2024*	\$8800.00	
Bank Charges	\$84.41	
Web Hosting	\$400.30	
Domain Name Registration Renewal	\$47.89	
Reference Books	\$31.90	
Stationary	\$833.71	
Flowers (Fundraiser 6 <sup>th</sup> July 2024)*	\$38.00	
USB Sticks	\$71.96	
Money Bags	\$10.00	
Transcripts	\$2145.00	
Printing	\$3651.47	
Postage	\$4.50	
Petrol Reimbursement	\$675.00	
Oral History Workshop	\$80.00	
Refreshments	\$329.0	

Total Payments		\$17269.25
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## Statement of RECEIPTS & EXPENDITURE

### PETTY CASH RECONCILIATION

Opening Balance			\$69.00
Petty Cash Input	\$0.00		

Less Expenditure			
Meeting Expenses	\$20.75		
Postage	\$18.65		
Total Expenditure		\$39.40	

Closing Balance			\$29.70
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### BANK RECONCILIATION

Opening Balance 1 <sup>ST</sup> July 2024			\$28602.59
Plus, Receipts	\$15295.00		
Less Expenditure	\$17269.25		

Closing Balance 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2025			\$26628.34
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DECREASE IN FUNDS			\$1974.25
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Notes:

#### \* Fundraiser – 6 July 2024

The Statement of Receipts and Payments for the 2024–2025 financial year reflects only a portion of the transactions associated with the Fundraiser held on 6 July 2024. This is due to several payments for the event being processed prior to the close of the 2023–2024 financial year. The total amount raised for the event was **\$6,062.00**.

#### °Membership – 2025–2026

This section reports on membership payments for the 2025–2026 period that were received prior to the close of the 2024–2025 financial year.

Tina Dichiera  
Treasurer  
November 2025



# Media Liason Report



**Reporting Period:** 1 October 2024 – 31 October 2025

**Prepared by:** Rosemarie Geracitano – Media Liaison / Social Media Director

**Date:** 1<sup>st</sup> November 2025

## 1. Executive Summary

In 2025, the Italian Historical Society of South Australia Inc. (IHSSA) issued a series of significant media releases highlighting the organisation's cultural leadership, historical preservation efforts, and community achievements.

These communications focused on three major milestones:

1. The recognition of **President Giuseppe (Joe) Geracitano** as *Senior Citizen of the Year 2025* (City of Charles Sturt, January 24, 2025).
2. His subsequent *Award for Active Citizenship Commendation 2025* (Government House Adelaide, February 27, 2025).
3. The successful **launch of IHSSA's inaugural journal, *La Partenza: Voyage to a New Beginning*** (Migration Museum, April 22, 2025).

Together, these releases illustrate the IHSSA's growing influence in cultural advocacy, community education, and heritage documentation, solidifying its role as a cornerstone of Italian-Australian identity in South Australia

## 2. Background

Founded in **2014**, the IHSSA's mission is to **preserve, document, and celebrate the legacy of Italian migration** in South Australia. The Society operates through educational outreach, oral history projects, cultural exhibitions, and academic collaborations.

Under the leadership of **President Giuseppe Geracitano** and **Media Liaison Director Rosemarie Geracitano**, the organisation has become a respected voice for multicultural heritage, aligning with state and national priorities on diversity and inclusion.

## 3. Media Release Summaries

### 3.1. Senior Citizen of the Year Award: 5 February 2025

**Title:** *Giuseppe (Joe) Geracitano honoured as 2025 Senior Citizen of the Year*

**Release Date:** 5 February 2025

**Issued by:** Italian Historical Society of South Australia Inc.

**Media Contact:** Rosemarie Geracitano – Media Liaison / Social Media Director

#### **Overview:**

This media release celebrated the recognition of IHSSA President Giuseppe (Joe) Geracitano as **Senior Citizen of the Year 2025**, awarded during the *Australia Day Awards Ceremony* at Woodville Town Hall on 24 January 2025.

### Highlights of Achievements:

- Founder of the **Italian Historical Society of South Australia**, preserving immigrant oral histories, photographs, and records.
- Revitalisation of the **Italian Festival**, later known as the **Carnevale Festival**, a central event in Adelaide's multicultural calendar.
- Pioneering **Italian language programs** in schools across South Australia and Victoria.
- Establishment of key community and cultural bodies:
  - *Coordinating Italian Committee (CIC)*
  - *Italian Didactic Centre*
  - *South Australian Association of Teachers of Italian (SAATI)*
  - *Migration Museum of South Australia*
  - *Ethnic Broadcasters Inc.* and *Radio Paesani* for multicultural media representation.

### Thematic Focus:

The release positioned Geracitano's achievements within the broader narrative of **multicultural advocacy, education, and community leadership**, reflecting the IHSSA's long-term commitment to inclusivity.

### Quote:

*'This recognition is not just for me but for all the individuals and organisations who have worked tirelessly to preserve our culture and foster understanding.'*

— *Giuseppe Geracitano*

### 3.2. Award for Active Citizen Commendation: 17 March 2025

**Title:** *Giuseppe Geracitano Honoured with South Australia's Award for Active Citizenship Commendation 2025*

**Release Date:** 17 March 2025

**Issued by:** Italian Historical Society of South Australia Inc.

**Media Contact:** Rosemarie Geracitano

### Overview:

Following his earlier honour, Giuseppe Geracitano was presented with the **Award for Active Citizenship Commendation 2025** at Government House Adelaide on 27 February 2025, by the **Australia Day Council of South Australia**.

### Key Contributions Recognised:

- Over **five decades of voluntary service** to education, multiculturalism, and community development.
- Co-founder of the **South Australian Teachers of Italian (SAATI)** and a pivotal figure in **bilingual education reform**.

- Instrumental in re-establishing the **Italian Festival** which later developed into the enduring **Carnevale Festival**.
- Leadership roles in community welfare, earthquake relief, and establishment of a **lending library** and **community newspaper**.
- Founder of the **Italian History Society of South Australia**, preserving migration archives for future generations.
- Continued involvement with the **Dante Alighieri Society of South Australia**, promoting Italian culture and language.

#### Event Details:

The recognition ceremony was attended by community leaders, government officials, and multicultural representatives, reinforcing the significance of Geracitano's lifelong work.

#### Quote:

'Our stories, our languages, and our traditions are what make us stronger together, and I am proud to have played a part in ensuring they are remembered and celebrated.'

— *Giuseppe Geracitano*

#### Impact:

This release elevated IHSSA's public visibility and strengthened its alignment with state-led multicultural initiatives. It underscored the Society's role as both a **custodian of heritage** and a **contributor to contemporary social cohesion**.

### 3.3. Journal Launch – *La Partenza: Voyage to a New Beginning* – 22 April 2025

**Title:** *Celebrating Italian Heritage: Launch of La Partenza: Voyage to a New Beginning*

**Release Date:** 22 April 2025

**Issued by:** Italian Historical Society of South Australia Inc.

**Event Venue:** Migration Museum of South Australia, Adelaide

#### Purpose:

To announce the official launch of IHSSA's first-ever publication, *La Partenza: Voyage to a New Beginning*, which documents the stories, memories, and contributions of Italian migrants to South Australia.

#### Key Details:

- Editorial Committee:
  - *Cav. Associate Professor Angela Scarino*
  - *Laura Di Martino-Kempt*
  - *Mario Russo*
  - *Rosemarie Geracitano*
- Launched by **Ms Elizabeth Ho OAM FUniSA**, Chair of the History Trust of SA.
- Attended by prominent dignitaries:
  - *Hon Blair Boyer MP*, Minister for Education, Training and Skills
  - *Hon Heidi Girolamo MLC*, Shadow Minister for Education
  - *Hon Jing Lee MLC*, sponsor and guest speaker
- Supported by **History Trust of South Australia**, **Galipo Foods**, and community sponsors.

### **Content & Vision:**

The journal compiles **migration stories from eight Italian families**, offering historical analysis and personal reflections. It fills a cultural and academic gap by providing educational resources on Italian-Australian history for future generations.

### **Quotes:**

*‘This journal is a celebration of courage, resilience, and identity. Through these stories, we honour our ancestors and pass their legacy on to future generations.’*

— Giuseppe (Joe) Geracitano, IHSSA President

*‘La Partenza is more than a publication—it’s a powerful bridge between generations, cultures, and histories.’*

— Ms Elizabeth Ho OAM

### **Significance:**

The journal’s launch signified a major milestone in IHSSA’s mission, transforming years of oral history work into a permanent and educationally valuable resource. It also demonstrated effective partnerships between IHSSA, state institutions, and community members.

## **4. Thematic Analysis**

The 2025 media releases collectively highlight four major themes:

- 1. Cultural Preservation and Education** – Reinforcing Italian heritage through documentation, academic engagement, and youth education initiatives.
- 2. Leadership and Recognition** – Acknowledging the enduring contributions of Giuseppe Geracitano as a community leader and heritage advocate.
- 3. Multicultural Collaboration** – Demonstrating partnerships between IHSSA, government agencies, and cultural organisations.
- 4. Community Engagement and Legacy Building** – Showcasing IHSSA’s sustained efforts to connect generations through shared cultural identity

## **5. Public Relations and Organizational Impact**

- **Reputation Strengthening:** These releases positioned IHSSA as a leading voice in South Australia’s multicultural and educational sectors.
- **Government and Institutional Alignment:** The inclusion of ministers, MLCs, and History Trust representatives reinforced IHSSA’s credibility.
- **Community Outreach:** Each event fostered engagement among Italian-Australian families and the broader public, encouraging new memberships and story contributions.
- **Media Presence:** Consistent professional communications enhanced IHSSA’s visibility across traditional and social media platforms.



## 6. Conclusion

The 2025 media communications by the Italian Historical Society of South Australia Inc. effectively demonstrate the organisation's **strategic use of storytelling, recognition, and heritage publication** to strengthen its public profile.

The dual recognition of President Giuseppe Geracitano, followed by the *La Partenza* journal launch, exemplifies IHSSA's ongoing legacy of leadership, scholarship, and cultural preservation.

Through these initiatives, IHSSA continues to champion **heritage, identity, and intercultural understanding**—ensuring the Italian community's rich history remains an integral part of South Australia's multicultural narrative.

Rosemarie Geracitano  
Media Liaison Director



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italian historical society of sa inc



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# Social Media Report



**Reporting Period:** 1 October 2024 – 31 October 2025

**Prepared by:** Rosemarie Geracitano – Media Liaison / Social Media Director

**Date:** 1<sup>st</sup> November 2025

## 1. Introduction

This report provides a comprehensive overview of the Italian Historical Society of South Australia Inc.'s (IHSSA) Facebook page performance over a twelve-month period from October 2024 to October 2025. The analysis highlights audience engagement, reach, content performance, and overall growth trends. Data has been drawn from Facebook Insights exports, complemented by page-level metrics recorded through Meta Business Suite.

The purpose of this report is to inform the Committee of the page's impact in promoting the Society's mission — to preserve, celebrate, and share the Italian heritage of South Australia — and to guide strategies for future content planning and audience engagement.

## 2. Overall Page Performance

Between October 2024 and October 2025, the IHSSA Facebook page continued to grow as a key communication platform, connecting members, the broader Italian community, and the public with the Society's cultural initiatives and events.

### Summary of Page Metrics

Metric	Total Average per Post	
Posts Published	41	—
Views	95,068	≈ 2,502
Reach	51,690	≈ 1,360
Reactions + Comments + Shares	2,492	≈ 66
Reactions	1,860	≈ 45
Comments	402	≈ 10
Shares	217	≈ 5
Link Clicks	—	—

### Overall Page Growth (Meta Business Suite)

- 198K Total Views
- 25.5K Reach
- 4K Interactions
- 4.6K Page Visits
- 186 New Follows



These results reflect steady organic growth in both engagement and visibility, supported by a consistent stream of high-quality posts celebrating cultural events, publications, and milestones.

### 3. Content Performance

The page published a total of 41 posts during the reporting period. Content included heritage celebrations, event recaps, community recognitions, and cultural education posts.

#### Top 5 Posts by Engagement

Rank	Post Title / Theme	Views	Reach	Engagements
1	Celebrating 86 Years of Gnocchi-Making – Honouring the Contributions of Australia’s Italian Community	17,063	10,716	659
2	Giuseppe Geracitano – Senior Citizen of the Year 2025	10,008	4,196	235
3	Giuseppe Geracitano – Active Citizenship Award (State Commendation)	4,542	2,685	154
4	Launch of “La Partenza: Journey to a New Beginning” Journal	3,524	1,677	152
5	50 Years of SAATI (South Australian Association of Teachers of Italian)	9,165	5,974	145

#### Observation:

Posts that feature community achievements, cultural milestones, and visual storytelling performed exceptionally well. These posts resonated strongly with audiences due to their emotional and cultural significance, reaffirming the value of narrative-driven content.

### 4. Key Insights

1. **Community Engagement:** Engagement peaked for posts celebrating Italian heritage, community achievements, and project launches. Visual and emotional content continues to attract the highest response rates.
2. **Content Consistency:** The consistent publication schedule maintained audience interest, achieving an average of 66 engagements per post — a strong performance for an organic, community-based page.
3. **Audience Reach vs Views:** Each post reached approximately 1,360 people and averaged 2,500 views, indicating content re-watching and sharing among followers.

4. **Audience Growth:** The page's addition of 186 followers and 4.6K visits demonstrates continued interest from both existing members and new community members discovering the Society.

## 5. Last Four Months: July – October 2025 Performance Summary

To supplement the twelve-month analysis, this section incorporates the most recent Facebook Insights data exported for the period **July to October 2025**. These figures demonstrate the continuing success of the IHSSA Facebook page in sustaining community engagement and expanding digital visibility.

### Summary of Post Metrics (July – October 2025)

Metric	Total Average per Post	
Unique Users Reached	88	44
Reactions, Comments & Shares	656	31
Reactions	459	22
Comments	71	3
Shares	120	6
Link Clicks	215	24
Total Clicks	4,642	221

### Key Observations:

- Engagement remained strong across both the third quarter and October, particularly for posts linked to cultural milestones and gala events.
- Visual content and storytelling continued to attract the highest engagement rates, reinforcing prior annual trends.
- A notable total of **4,642 clicks** across posts indicates increased curiosity and deeper interaction with the Society's online materials, particularly event and announcement posts.
- Audience reactions (459) and shares (120) highlight positive resonance with the community.

### Conclusion:

The quarterly and October metrics reaffirm the IHSSA Facebook page's role as a vibrant hub for community connection and heritage storytelling. The steady engagement and consistent reach during this period underscore the effectiveness of the Society's content strategy and provide a strong foundation for future growth and collaboration initiatives.

## 6. Recommendations

To build upon this successful year, the following recommendations are proposed:

- **Continue Heritage Storytelling:** Focus on posts that celebrate Italian migration stories, anniversaries, and personal narratives. These consistently generate high engagement.
- **Highlight Events and Achievements:** Use photos and video recaps to document Society events, launches, and award presentations. These create strong emotional connections.
- **Increase Tagging and Collaboration:** Tag partner organisations, sponsors, and individuals to enhance post reach and foster cross-community visibility.
- **Maintain Regular Posting Cadence:** Aim for two to three quality posts per month to sustain consistent engagement and visibility.
- **Encourage Follower Interaction:** Invite followers to comment, share memories, or submit their own heritage stories to increase organic engagement.
- **Leverage Anniversaries and Milestones:** Continue to align posts with key IHSSA events, community awards, and publication releases.

## 7. Conclusion

The Italian Historical Society of South Australia Inc. has maintained a strong and growing online presence throughout 2024 – 2025. The Facebook page continues to serve as an effective medium for promoting the Society's work, celebrating cultural heritage, and engaging both long-standing members and newer generations of the Italian community.

By continuing to focus on authentic storytelling, community recognition, and consistent content delivery, the IHSSA is well-positioned to expand its digital influence and further its mission of preserving and sharing Italian heritage across South Australia.

Rosemarie Geracitano  
Social Media Director

# Enzo Clappis Story



## FROM VENEZIA GIULIA TO SOUTH AUSTRALIA: A JOURNEY OF DISPLACEMENT AND RENEWAL

The story of Venezia Giulia, a borderland at the crossroads of Italy and the Balkans, is one marked by shifting borders, war, and human displacement. Before the outbreak of the Second World War, this region, encompassing Trieste, Istria, and parts of Dalmatia, was home to a complex mosaic of ethnic Italians, Slovenes, Croats, and other minority communities. Italian rule, cemented after World War I with the Treaty of Rapallo (1920), brought tensions between the Italian administration and Slavic populations, but Venezia Giulia remained deeply Italian in its cultural and civic life.

### The Road to Yugoslavia Annexation

World War II fractured this delicate balance. After Mussolini's fall in 1943 and the German occupation of northern Italy, Venezia Giulia became a contested territory. In May 1945, Tito's Partisans entered Trieste before Allied troops, asserting Yugoslav claims over the region. The Paris Peace Treaty of 1947 formally ceded Istria, Dalmatia, and parts of Venezia Giulia to Yugoslavia, while the Free Territory of Trieste was established under divided Allied and Yugoslav administration until its later partition in 1954.

The outcome was devastating for the Italian population. Between 250,000 and 350,000 Italians, known as the *esuli istriani* (Istrian exiles), were forced to leave or fled voluntarily amid persecution, intimidation, and episodes of violence such as the *Foibe* massacres. Families left ancestral homes behind, often carrying little more than suitcases, becoming refugees in their own country and beyond. The majority of these refugees were initially settled in camps across various regions of Italy. Many encountered profound challenges, particularly in areas with strong communist affiliations, such as Bologna, where they were often stigmatized and mischaracterized as fascists.

### Resettlement and Global Migration

Italy itself struggled to absorb such large numbers of displaced people. Refugee camps such as those in Trieste and later at Latina and *Padriciano* [Trieste's Refugee Camp in *Padriciano* from 1954 to mid-1970s was mainly for Istrian refugees] overflowed. To ease the humanitarian crisis, international agreements were struck to resettle Italians abroad. Many were allocated to countries like the United States, Canada, Argentina, and Australia under assisted migration schemes.

Australia, in particular, emerged as a key destination. Post-war Australia was eager for new workers to fuel its ambitious "populate or perish" immigration policy. Between the late 1940s and early 1960s, thousands of Italians, including Istrian exiles, arrived by ship, often after long voyages from Naples or Genoa. It is estimated that in the early 1950s Australia received some 6,000 refugees from this source of which some 1,500 settled in South Australia.



## **Reception in Australia**

### **Migrant Hostels and First Impressions**

On arrival, many Italian families were sent to migrant hostels scattered across the country. In South Australia, hostels such as those at Woodside, Pennington, and Glenelg became temporary homes. The hostels were basic, rows of Nissen huts or ex-military barracks with limited privacy, communal kitchens, and shared facilities. For families who had left behind established homes in Istria or Trieste, the conditions were a shock. Yet, despite overcrowding and discomfort, these hostels became the first place where new arrivals learned English, built friendships, and began adapting to Australian society.

### **Work Programs and Labour Demands**

The Australian government directed many migrants into work programs essential to the nation's post-war reconstruction. Italians were employed in railway construction, sugarcane fields in Queensland, and large infrastructure projects like the Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Scheme. In South Australia, men found work in manufacturing plants, construction, and agriculture, particularly in vineyards and market gardening, while women often contributed through textile factories, domestic service, or food processing. The occupational background of these refugees included professionals, clerical workers, and a high proportion of skilled workers.

Though the work was physically demanding, it provided stability and wages that allowed families to eventually leave the hostels and buy homes. Over time, Italians established small businesses, fruit shops, delicatessens, cafés, and restaurants, that became stepping stones to financial independence.

### **Overcoming Prejudice**

Despite their contributions, Italians faced prejudice in the early years. They were often referred to disparagingly as “dagos” or “wogs,” and their accents, food, and Catholic traditions set them apart in what was still a strongly Anglo-Celtic society. Children were sometimes bullied at school, and adults struggled with limited English and unfamiliar customs.

Yet resilience, work ethic, and community solidarity helped Italians overcome these barriers. Churches, Italian clubs, and cultural associations provided networks of support. Food also played a vital role in softening prejudice, what was once viewed with suspicion (garlic, olive oil, pasta) gradually won over Australian palates. By the 1960s and 70s, Italian cafés and restaurants had become fashionable, and Italian migrants were increasingly respected for their hard work and contributions to Australia's prosperity.

In South Australia the impact on the Italian population of an influx of 1,500 Giuliani refugees where in 1947 there were only 2,428 Italians in the state was considerable. Their economic integration appears to be rapid and some even went into business. Thus, *Roberto Masi* and his partners at one stage employed 50 people in a tow-truck and repair business on Port Road. *Carlo Rosenberg* ran a repair shop, a petrol station, then with another refugee, *Roberto Corradini*, repaired cars and boats. *Mario Flego* had the Italian Video Centre and HiLo, and *Guido Voivodich* established Alfa Emporium in the Italian corner in Hindley Street [southwest corner of Hindley and Morphett streets] which sold Italian papers, periodicals, books, and records. These refugees also played a pivotal role in popularizing Italian cuisine



beyond its regional roots. In this context, three Istriani refugees stand out for their notable contributions.

### **Pioneers of Hospitality: Clappis, Benuzzi, Fornarino**

Among those who left an indelible mark were individuals such as Gaudenzio (Enzo) Clappis, Ettore Benuzzi, and Clemente Fornarino, all of whom carried with them the resilience of exile and the creativity of Italian tradition.

- **Gaudenzio (Enzo) Clappis** arrived as part of the refugee wave and quickly became a figure in South Australia's culinary circles. Through his work as a chef, Clappis introduced authentic Italian flavours and techniques, bringing sophistication and flair to Adelaide's dining scene at a time when Australian cuisine remained largely Anglo-Celtic. His restaurants and hotel became cultural bridges where Italians and Australians alike discovered the power of food to connect communities.
- **Ettore Benuzzi**, another refugee turned restaurateur, played a pioneering role in broadening South Australia's hospitality industry. By blending Italian hospitality with local produce, Benuzzi's establishments helped shape a more cosmopolitan dining culture and paved the way for the Mediterranean culinary boom that swept the country in later decades.
- **Clemente Fornarino** similarly embodied the migrant spirit of reinvention. He contributed not only as a skilled professional in hospitality but also as a mentor to younger Italians entering the field, ensuring that traditions were passed down while adapting to the tastes of the broader Australian public.

These men, and many like them, not only rebuilt their lives after forced displacement but also enriched the cultural identity of South Australia. Their contributions illustrate how the trauma of exile was transformed into creativity, resilience, and community-building in a new land.

### **Legacy**

Today, the story of the *esuli* from Venezia Giulia is commemorated as both a tragedy of forced migration and a testament to survival. In South Australia, their legacy is visible in the vibrant Italo-Australian community, from wine regions influenced by Mediterranean viticulture to bustling cafés and trattorias that remain central to Adelaide's identity.

What began as displacement and loss ultimately gave rise to cultural renewal, an enduring reminder that even in exile, communities can find ways to flourish and profoundly shape the societies that welcome them.



**CLAPPIS FAMILY** - Family Clappis , some friends minus Ottaviano who drowned at 12 and Claudio.



**Enzo (17) and Aldo in Padova on 12th February 1950**



**Enzo and Zofka (Sonia) on their wedding day 23rd March 1952.**



**"The front entrance of Buonasera Restaurant, once known as Chef Fontana, stands on Glen Osmond Road in Glenunga. It was here that Enzo Clappis first lent his hands to the art of hospitality. In 1966, alongside travel agent Ilario Lamberto, Enzo purchased one of Adelaide's earliest dining establishments and gave it a new name—Buonasera—a place where tradition and taste found a home.**



**Enzo and Zofka (Sonia) embrace their guests in a spirit of joy and celebration, making every visit feel like a cherished gathering.**



**Enzo and Zofka (Sonia) Clappis, together with their children Fred, Vivien, Suzi, and Andrew (Andy), form a close-knit family whose legacy is deeply rooted in hospitality and heartfelt connection.**



**Enzo's preparing his famous gnocchi**



**Enzo and Zofka (Sonia)**



**Enzo, poised with quiet charm at Our Place Willunga Hill, in front of the bar—where rustic elegance meets the warmth of local hospitality.**



# Ilario Nesci Story



## From Scissors to Saucepans: The Life and Legacy of Ilario Nesci

### Early Life in Caulonia, Italy

Born on 21 February 1943 in Caulonia, a town in the province of Reggio Calabria, Ilario Nesci grew up in a large, close-knit family. His father, Luigi, was a construction supervisor, and his mother, Rosa, managed the household. Caulonia, with its twenty-four *frazioni* and two *località* (subdivisions) and vibrant artisan culture, shaped Ilario's early years. At age twelve, he began apprenticing as a hairdresser under his uncle, while also helping in his father's wine shop.

### Migration to Australia

In 1959, at age sixteen, Ilario migrated to Australia with his family, joining two older brothers already settled in Australia. The journey aboard the *Roma* was memorable, especially for Ilario, who was seasick for most of the voyage. Upon arrival in Adelaide, he was immediately immersed in work. On his very first day, he was invited to help out in a local barber shop, marking the career as a Hairdresser.

Ilario quickly proved himself in the hairdressing trade. He worked first for an Italian barber, then for an Australian one, where his dedication earned him rapid promotions and increased wages. By age 20, he had purchased his own salon, Larry's Hairdresser, in Market Street, Adelaide. His clientele included judges, bishops, politicians, and media personalities, reflecting his growing reputation and charisma.

### Transition to Restaurateur

In early 1969, Ilario made a bold career shift. When restaurateur *Enzo Clappis* moved on from *Buonasera Restaurant*, Ilario was invited by his cousin, *Ilario Lamberto*, to manage it. Though he had no formal culinary training, his people skills and business acumen translated seamlessly to hospitality. He took over the front-of-house operations and gradually shaped *Buonasera* into one of Adelaide's most beloved Italian restaurants. For nearly six decades, the restaurant has stood as testament to resilience and community spirit, remaining in continuous operations since its founding. In all that time, it's remained a place where stories are shared, friendships are forged, and the community gathers.

### Building Buonasera: A Culinary Institution

Under Ilario's stewardship, *Buonasera* became a beacon of Calabrian cuisine and Italian hospitality. He expanded the restaurant multiple times, eventually adding a function centre that hosted weddings, fundraisers, and community events. Signature dishes like



*Bauletti di Granchio*, *Bauletti*, *Panzerotti Alla Romana*, and Breast Cassata (a cheeky dessert with a humorous origin) became local legends.

He also introduced rare ingredients like *stocco* (dehydrated cod) and created innovative pasta dishes using beetroot, chestnuts, and crab. His commitment to handmade pasta and authentic flavours earned *Buonasera* a place in the prestigious *Ciao Italia* culinary registry in 1995, recognizing it as one of the few restaurants globally preserving traditional Italian cuisine.

### **Family and Cultural Legacy**

Ilario's personal life mirrored his professional values: warmth, tradition, and community. He married Helen Martin, an Australian woman who embraced Calabrian culture so deeply she became fluent in the dialect and was beloved by Ilario's family. Together, they raised three children, Rosa, Luigi, and Mark, instilling in them a strong sense of Italian identity.

His restaurant became a cultural hub, frequented by politicians, celebrities, and members of the Italian diaspora. He hosted fundraisers for causes like Hands On South Australia and Riding for the Disabled, often donating food and staff time.

### **Honouring Heritage**

Ilario's devotion to Caulonia remained strong. He preserved his childhood home there and visits annually. At *Buonasera*, he embedded cultural symbols into the décor, including a mosaic of Sant'Ilarione, Caulonia's patron saint, and historical photographs of the town. These gestures reflected his desire to keep his roots alive in his adopted homeland.

### **A Living Legacy**

Now in his eighties, Ilario continues to operate *Buonasera* part-time, maintaining its reputation for excellence. His story is one of resilience, adaptation, and cultural pride, a testament to the immigrant spirit and the power of food to bridge worlds.

We pay tribute not only to a migrant whose journey reflects triumph over cultural and linguistic challenges, but also to a culinary institution that has become part of South Australia's evolving gastronomic heritage.

Giuseppe (Joe) Geracitano  
President  
Italian Historical Society of South Australia Inc.  
2025



**Ilario Nesci 1957**



**13th June 1959.  
The day the family left Caulonia, Italy  
for Australia.**



**Siblings: Ilario, Teresa and  
Giuseppe Nesci.**



**Bauletti  
Homemade pillows  
of pasta filled with  
crab meat and  
prawn in rose sauce**



**Framed by the timeless gaze  
of their father's sculptured  
bust, Giuseppe and Ilario  
Nesci honour a heritage  
etched in memory and  
marble.**



**Ilario and Giuseppe, with special  
guest His Excellency the  
Honourable Hieu Van Le AC, at  
the 50th Anniversary  
Celebrations at Buonasera  
Restaurant.**





# Andy Clappis Story



## A Legacy of Taste and Tradition: The Clappis Family's Journey from Refugees to Culinary Icons

By the time guests arrive at Our Place at Willunga Hill, they are greeted not only by sweeping views of the Fleurieu Peninsula but also by the unmistakable aroma of freshly baked bread. Behind every loaf, every dish, and every glass of wine served at this unique dining destination lies a story that stretches across oceans and generations, a story of survival, migration, and an unwavering commitment to heritage.

At the heart of this story is Andrew (Andy) Clappis, a chef, baker, and storyteller whose life mirrors the broader history of Italian migration to South Australia. His journey from a boy growing up in a migrant household to a celebrated figure in the state's culinary scene is a tale of family resilience, cultural fusion, and the transformative power of food.

### **Fleeing the Shadows of War**

The Clappis family history begins in Pola, a picturesque port city that once belonged to Italy. Andrew's father, Gaudenzio (Enzo) Clappis, was born there in 1933. But after World War II, the region of Istria was ceded to Yugoslavia, and life changed dramatically. Enzo's parents owned a knitting factory and were Singer sewing machine distributors, a mark of success that drew the ire of the incoming communist regime. His mother was imprisoned briefly, accused of being a capitalist, while the family business was dismantled.

Andrew's mother, Zofka, faced a similar fate in her homeland of Gradac, Slovenia. She spent nine long years as a political refugee in Mantova, Italy, separated from her family during a time of fear and uncertainty. It was in Mantova that she absorbed the rich culinary traditions of northern Italy, learning the secrets of Mantovan dishes, recipes that would later flavour the Clappis family table in Australia.

In 1951, fate brought Enzo and Zofka together aboard the migrant ship *Fairsea*, bound for Australia. Like thousands of displaced Europeans, they were seeking refuge and opportunity. They landed in a country still unfamiliar with their customs and food, but they carried with them a deep desire to rebuild their lives, and a trunk full of memories and dreams.

### **Hectorville: A New Beginning**

The couple settled in Hectorville with their four Australian born children, a suburb that became a hub for Italian migrants. Their home was filled with the comforting cadence of



Italian conversation, the clinking of cutlery at mealtime, and the earthy aromas of slow-cooked sauces and fresh bread.

For Andrew, the youngest of four children, Hectorville was a place of warmth and abundance. Sundays began with Mass at St. Mark's Church, followed by a traditional Italian lunch: pasta or risotto to start, then a hearty roast sourced from the family's own backyard chickens or rabbits. Sometimes, Andrew would discover that his beloved pet pigeon had become part of the meal, a testament to the family's self-sufficiency in their early years.

The neighbourhood was a mosaic of cultures. Andrew grew up playing with children from both Italian and Australian backgrounds, forging friendships that would last decades. Hectorville's vineyards and market gardens were a constant reminder of the migrant communities who were literally and figuratively planting their roots in South Australian soil.

### **Schoolyard Sandwiches and Cultural Exchange**

At Rostrevor College, Andrew carried his culture with pride, even in his school lunches. While other migrant children hid their salami or anchovy sandwiches, Andrew embraced them. In fact, he often bartered them for classic Australian meat pies, turning lunchtime into a mini marketplace of cultural exchange.

"I never felt embarrassed about my food," Andrew recalls with a laugh. "My mum's sandwiches were so good that even my teachers wanted them. One teacher loved her crumbed eggplant so much she'd trade me potato crisps just to get a piece."

These simple exchanges mirrored a broader societal shift. During the 1970s, Australians were beginning to embrace the flavours of multiculturalism. Italian food, once confined to migrant households, was slowly entering the mainstream, setting the stage for a culinary revolution.

### **The Clappis Restaurant Legacy**

The Clappis family's true influence on South Australia's dining culture began with Buonasera Restaurant, one of Adelaide's first authentic Italian restaurants. Opened by Enzo Clappis, it quickly became a beloved institution, introducing diners to pasta al dente, slow-simmered sauces, and fresh seafood prepared with Mediterranean flair. It was a bold venture at a time when Italian food was still considered exotic by many Australians.

Over the years, the family expanded their culinary empire, owning and managing several well-known establishments including Enzo's Burnside Village, Enzo's Kent Town, the

Maylands Hotel, and later, Our Place at Willunga Hill. Each venue reflected their commitment to authenticity and innovation. Buonasera offered the classic Italian dining experience, while Enzo's brought a contemporary edge to traditional dishes. The Maylands Hotel became a neighbourhood favourite, known for its welcoming atmosphere and exceptional menu.

For young Andrew, these restaurants were both playground and classroom. At just seven years old, he stood on a banana crate to reach the sink at Buonasera, washing dishes by hand. As he grew older, he learned every aspect of the business, from making espresso to managing front-of-house operations. These early experiences shaped his understanding of hospitality and instilled in him a lifelong passion for food and service.

### **Training Abroad: A Young Man in Switzerland**

Recognizing his potential, family friends and political leaders encouraged Andrew to seek formal training overseas. With the support of Linden Prowse, a senior figure in Premier Don Dunstan's government, Andrew travelled to Switzerland in 1976. There, at the prestigious Park Hotel in Gstaad, he mastered the art of silver service.

The experience was nothing short of transformative. Andrew served royalty, film stars like Elizabeth Taylor and Audrey Hepburn, and global elites who flocked to the Swiss Alps. He learned precision, elegance, and the importance of storytelling in hospitality, lessons that would shape his career for decades to come.

### **The Maylands Hotel: Where Family and Food Flourished**

Upon returning to Australia, Andrew joined his family in their next venture: the Maylands Hotel. This historic venue became a hub of innovation, blending Italian culinary traditions with South Australian produce. It was here that Andrew's three daughters were raised, often seen proudly delivering baskets of freshly baked bread to dinners. It became the first hotel to serve restaurant quality food at pub prices and had the first espresso coffee machine in a hotel in South Australia.

The Maylands Hotel was also where Andrew's passion for breadmaking truly took root. Inspired by techniques he had observed in Sicily, Switzerland, and Slovenia; he began experimenting with artisanal loaves. The bread quickly became a signature feature of the restaurant, symbolizing both heritage and hospitality. A stint working in the Tip Top bakery taught Andrew the technique of mass production.

### **The Path to Breadmaking**

Andrew's fascination with bread began during his travels in Sicily, where he watched local bakers use centuries-old techniques. He was captivated by the artistry and

patience required to create loaves that were not only nourishing but deeply symbolic of community and tradition. His fascination with bread making deepened during a visit to his aunty Ivanka in Slovenia, who baked bread every second day using traditional methods.

At the Maylands Hotel, Andrew began to experiment with these methods, using local South Australian ingredients to craft breads that reflected both his heritage and his surroundings. Through trial and error, he perfected recipes that emphasized slow fermentation, natural flavours, and rustic presentation. His breads became renowned for their texture and depth of flavour, earning a loyal following among diners. For Andrew, breadmaking was more than a culinary pursuit, it was a spiritual practice. 'Bread is life,' he often says. 'It's the first thing you offer a guest, a gesture of welcome. Every loaf I bake is a connection to my family's history and to the people who share it at the table.'

### **Our Place at Willunga Hill: A Culinary Destination**

In later years, Andrew realized his dream with Our Place at Willunga Hill, a venue that blends fine dining with storytelling. Perched atop the Fleurieu Peninsula, the restaurant offers guests an immersive journey through Italian traditions and South Australian landscapes.

Every meal begins with Andrew's signature bread, baked onsite using techniques passed down through generations. The menu celebrates local produce while honouring the dishes Andrew learned from his mother and grandmother. Diners don't just eat; they become part of a narrative that stretches back to post-war Europe and the migrant experience.

### **A Legacy in Every Loaf**

Today, as Andrew kneads dough in the kitchen at Our Place, he reflects on the journey that brought him here. His hands carry the memories of his parents' struggles, his childhood in Hectorville, his adventures in Switzerland, and decades spent shaping South Australian dining.

In this way, the Clappis legacy continues, rising like a perfectly proofed loaf, nourishing both body and soul. Through their journey, we are reminded that food is never just food. It is history, love, and the most delicious form of resilience.

Giuseppe (Joe) Geracitano  
President  
Italian Historical Society of South Australia Inc.  
2025





**Andrew working at Park Hotel Gstaad  
Switzerland, Christmas 1976.**



**Andy introduces the day's main course with enthusiasm, drawing special attention to the rich, house-made jus — the sole gravy crafted to complement the dish. In the background, his father, Enzo, renowned for his legendary gnocchi, can be seen quietly observing, adding a touch of family tradition to the scene.**



**The final flourish on the cannoli—filled with velvety fresh ricotta—is a moment of pure indulgence, echoing the sweet mastery of Sicilian pastry traditions. Each bite is a mouthwatering tribute to centuries of culinary artistry.**

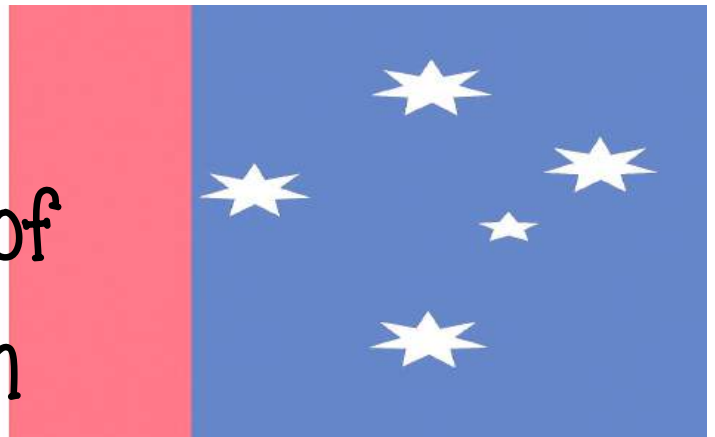


**Crusty home-baked bread, a bottle of bold South Australian wine, and hearty homemade fare—crafted with the finest local ingredients. It's a table that celebrates the soil, soul, and flavours of the region. What more could you ask for?**



**Preparing to bake 6,000 loaves a week is no small feat—it echoes the legendary kitchens of Versailles, where grandeur met precision. Amid the whirlwind of flour and fire, Enzo joins Andy like a seasoned maître boulanger, ready to conquer the ovens and orchestrate a bake worthy of kings.**

# The 1970's The Emergence of Multiculturalism



## **From Assimilation to Multiculturalism: The Italian Community's Journey in South Australia**

The 1970s marked a turning point in Australia's national identity, as the policy of assimilation gave way to the philosophy of multiculturalism. This shift not only redefined what it meant to be Australian but empowered ethnic communities, particularly South Australia's vibrant Italian population, to establish institutions that preserved heritage, promoted cultural pride, and strengthened social cohesion.

### **The Dunstan Decade: A Visionary Embrace of Diversity**

South Australia's journey towards multiculturalism began earlier than most, guided by the visionary leadership of Premier Donald Allan Dunstan AC QC (1926–1999). Serving from 1967 to 1968 and again from 1970 to 1979, Dunstan championed reforms that celebrated cultural diversity and laid the groundwork for an inclusive society. His government supported ethnic broadcasting, language education, cultural festivals, and the arts, policies that recognised migrant communities as integral to the state's identity.

A landmark achievement came in 1976 with the establishment of the Ethnic Affairs Branch (later Department of Ethnic Affairs), the first of its kind in Australia. This pioneering government body created formal channels for migrant voices to be heard in policymaking. It became a model for national reform and prefigured the federal multicultural framework introduced through the 1978 Galbally Report, which led to the formation of state-based ethnic and multicultural commissions.

Dunstan's engagement with the Italian community was both personal and political. He learned Italian, attended community events, and supported the establishment of Italian organisations. His presence at festivals such as the inaugural First National Italian Festival and the Sagra celebration in Rundle Mall in 1976, a precursor to Carnevale di Adelaide, gave official legitimacy to Italian cultural life. His reforms prefigured the 1978 Galbally Report and made South Australia a testing ground for national multicultural policy.

### **Chain Migration and the Rebuilding of Village Life**

The post-war migration boom saw thousands of Italians settle in South Australia, many arriving through chain migration, where family and friends from the same towns in Italy followed one another to the same suburbs and regions. This pattern led to the formation of tight-knit enclaves in areas like Norwood, Campbelltown, Payneham, Seaton, the Riverland, Port Pirie, and Mount Gambier. Within these communities, migrants sought not



only economic security but also cultural familiarity. The desire to recreate the social fabric of their hometowns, complete with dialects, festivals, religious traditions, and regional cuisines, became a powerful force behind the emergence of Italian community organisations.

Many of these regional clubs were founded by working-class migrants who, despite limited formal education or resources, brought with them a deep sense of civic responsibility and cultural pride. Their focus was on building spaces for connection, celebration, and mutual support. As a result, the early development of these organisations was often undocumented; few written records, minutes, or founding charters were kept. Much of their history lives on through oral accounts, photographs, and the memories of those who built them from the ground up. This absence of formal documentation underscores the importance of initiatives like the Italian Historical Society of SA Inc., which seeks to recover, preserve, and honour these grassroots legacies before they are lost to time.

### **Economic Settlement and Community Building**

As Italian immigrants became economically secure and their children progressed through the education system, gaining fluency in English and confidence in their new homeland, they began to establish organisations to meet their social, cultural, and religious needs. A wave of newly graduated professionals from Italian backgrounds – lawyers, educators, and public servants – emerged during this time. These individuals not only benefited from the new social climate but actively advocated for reform, helping to reshape public perception and promote policies that acknowledged the richness of migrant contributions.

### **The Italian Education Movement and Cultural Infrastructure**

Central to this awakening was the Italian Education Movement, which advanced bilingual education, cultural pride, and community engagement. Figures such as Alex Gardini, Romano Rubichi, and Joe Geracitano were instrumental in championing Italian language programmes in schools, mentoring young educators, and fostering cross-cultural understanding. Their work helped embed Italian heritage into South Australia's educational landscape and empowered generations of students to embrace their identity with confidence.

From this foundation arose enduring institutions such as Italian Community Radio and the South Australian Association of Teachers of Italian (SAATI). Regional clubs like the Campania Club, Veneto Club, and Sicilia Social and Sports Club preserved dialects, regional cuisines, and traditions. Religious societies, including the Madonna di Montevergine and the Society of Saint Hilarion, which had been established in 1955,



hosted processions and festivals that brought Italian Catholic spirituality into the public sphere.

Ethnic welfare services also expanded. A.N.F.E. provided family support and legal aid, while the Co-ordinating Italian Committee (CIC), founded in 1976, united numerous associations under one representative body, coordinating efforts across culture, welfare, education, and civic advocacy.

### **Media, Representation, and Legacy**

Multicultural policies spurred the growth of ethnic media. The founding of 5EBI-FM offered Italian-language programming and created space for voices previously unheard in mainstream media. Pioneers like Rita Palumbo trained new broadcasters and produced programmes on health, education, and social issues, preserving language and strengthening identity.

This era also transformed public perception. Italian South Australians were no longer viewed as outsiders but as integral contributors to the state's economy, cuisine, arts, and political life. Figures like Mario Feleppa, the first Italian-born Member of Parliament in South Australia, embodied this transition from migrant to civic leader.

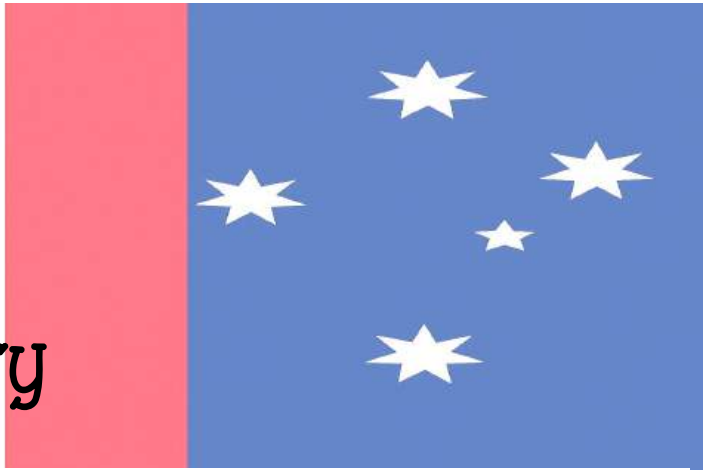
### **Conclusion: Preserving the Legacy**

The journey from assimilation to multiculturalism empowered South Australia's Italian community to build vibrant institutions rooted in heritage, resilience, and civic pride. Yet many of these organisations, especially those founded by working-class migrants, were established with little formal documentation. Their histories live on through memories, photographs, and oral accounts but risk being lost without deliberate preservation.

That is why the Italian Historical Society of South Australia Inc. has invited Italian community organisations that have celebrated significant milestones to submit their stories for inclusion in this Annual Report. By documenting these legacies, we honour the vision and labour of those who came before us and ensure that future generations can understand, celebrate, and build upon the foundations they laid. This is not just a record; it is a tribute to the enduring spirit of community and the richness of Italo-Australian identity.

Giuseppe (Joe) Geracitano  
President  
November 2025

# Madonna di Montevergine 70th Anniversary



## **The Madonna di Montevergine: A Commemorative Celebration of Seventy Years in Adelaide**

My name is Domenico Zollo, and I was born in a small township called Squillani in the Avellino Province of the Campania Region of Italy in the now long-ago year of 1948.

Back in 1955, as I was about to commence my primary schooling in Italy, the Festa della Madonna di Montevergine was being held in Adelaide for the first time.

The devotion to the Madonna di Montevergine is one of the most popular amongst all Italians, but in particular those coming from the Campania region of Italy, and we have a very large number of Campani in Adelaide and indeed throughout South Australia.

This devotion was born with a small group of like-minded men led by two of the founders, Mr Corrado Catalano and Mr Orlando Saccone, who, having met several times, decided to bring the Icon of Our Lady of Montevergine to Adelaide, first asking permission from the Capuchin Friars at St Francis of Assisi Church, Newton. The Icon arrived in Adelaide, and the first Festa was celebrated in 1955 with its first president Mr. Corrado Catalano in charge of proceedings.

My dad Antonio Zollo who had emigrated in 1954, soon became a member of this group of devotees to our Madonna and helped with organizing the Festa.

I, my mum Maria Giuseppa and my brother Nicola emigrated to Australia in 1957, and we took up residence in Hectorville where Dad had built a house and every Sunday, we attended Mass at St. Francis of Assisi Church where both my brother and I became Altar Servers.

Having completed my schooling and having found myself a job, I maintained my connection with the church and the Italian community and attended all the festas held at St Francis of Assisi Church.

It was at one of the Madonna di Montevergine Festa that I met my future wife, Immacolata. It was while I was courting Immacolata that I was called up to do National Service, which I did between 1969 and 1971, serving 12 months in Vietnam. When I was discharged, Immacolata and I got married.

By now Mum and Dad were well entrenched as members/volunteers of the Festa della Madonna di Montevergine.

My dad always kept asking me to become a member of the Madonna di Montevergine Association, but I kept coming up with excuses not to join.

Finally, in 1985, I gave in to Dad's insistence and went along to one of their meetings, whereupon they immediately elected me as vice secretary.

At the passing of Mr Corrado Catalano a few years later, a new president was elected; his name was Mr Fiore Antonio Pallotta, who in turn decided to step down from his role as president (he has since passed away). I was duly elected as the association's third president, a role I hold to this day.



It has now been well over 35 years that I have held this role as president, and not a day goes by that somehow, I am not reminded of the humble beginnings of this great Festa and the great attraction the devotees from all over Australia have and show for our Madonna.

I am truly humbled but proud to be a part of such devotion.

All the festivities are held on the last Sunday in September every year at St Francis of Assisi Church in Newton, beginning with a procession around the vicinity of the church reciting the Holy Rosary and singing hymns to our Madonna and then making our way back into the church, where Solemn High Mass is concelebrated.

At the end of Mass there is a huge marquee set up in the St Francis of Assisi School grounds for the social part of the day/evening with entertainment and lots of food stalls selling homemade pasta, authentic Italian-style trippa, porchetta, and various BBQ foods, including full bar service, cake, coffee, and, not forgetting, a nice gelato. All this while we're being entertained by first-class local and interstate artists and occasionally artists from overseas.

We end the day's festivities by holding hands and all together singing one final hymn to our Madonna.

"O Maronna di Montevergine"

With great emotion we all sing.

'Statti bona, Maronna mia, ca' l'ann che vene turnamma a veni.'

(Goodbye, my Madonna; next year we will come again.)

The Devotion to the Madonna di Montevergine has now become the largest religious festival not only in Adelaide, South Australia, but indeed Australia-wide, bringing together hundreds of devotees from other states as well. They come not only by organised bus tours but by private means as well.

Our Association is made up of approximately 100 people between members and volunteers that still go door knocking, bringing the Festa's Programme/Booklet to mostly families of Italian origins. All these volunteers are dedicated to continuing this long tradition for many more years to come.

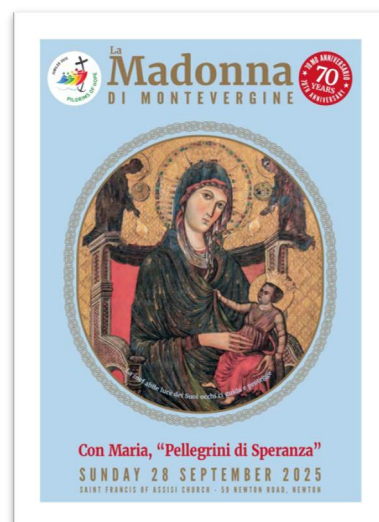
It is with a profound emotion and a sense of pride that I say that the dream of a few men in the now long-ago 1955 has become a sweet reality and has reached this great milestone of its 70th anniversary.

'EVVIVA LA MADONNA DI MONTEVERGINE'

Cav. Domenico Zollo OAM

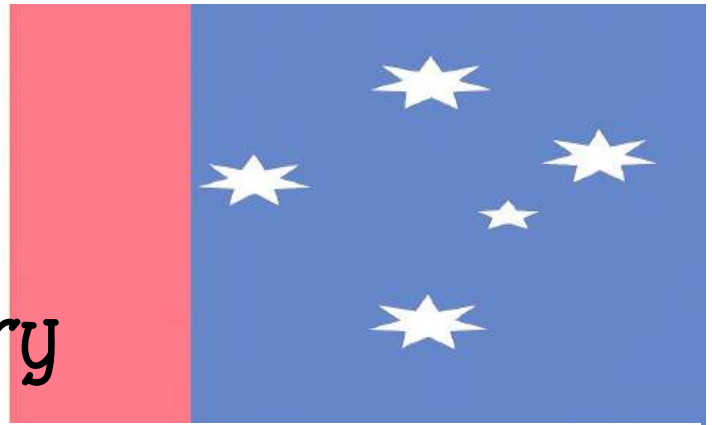
President

Holy Mary of Montevergine Association





# Society of St Hilarion 70th Anniversary



## **From Caulonia to Adelaide: The Society of St Hilarion's 70-Year Legacy of Faith, Culture, and Care**

Seventy years ago, four men from Caulonia, Calabria, Giuseppe Ciccarello, Ilario Fazzalari, Ilario Lamberto, and John A. Costa, planted the seeds of a legacy that would flourish across generations and continents. Their vision: to honour Sant'Ilarione, the patron saint of their hometown, and to nurture a sense of belonging among Italian migrants in Adelaide. What began as a modest religious celebration has grown into a vibrant cultural institution, known today as the Society of St Hilarion.

### **The Founding Fathers: Migration and Vision**

Each founding father brought with him not only faith but also a deep commitment to community. Ilario Fazzalari arrived in Australia in 1927 at age 16, working in glasshouses before purchasing the historic Hardys Wines Homestead in Underdale. He became a pillar of support for fellow migrants, offering shelter and helping them find work. Giuseppe Ciccarello carried a miniature statue of St Hilarion with him when he emigrated, which became the centrepiece of the first Feast. Ilario Lamberto and John A. Costa were equally instrumental, organising meetings and laying the groundwork for what would become a formal society.

In 1955, the first Feast of St Hilarion was held at St Joseph's Church in Flinders Park. The following year, a life-sized statue was imported from Bologna, Italy, and the celebration moved to St Francis of Assisi Church in Newton. Thus began a tradition that would evolve in scale, location, and meaning.

### **The Feast Evolves: A Journey Through Time and Place**

Over the decades, the Feast of St Hilarion adapted to the changing needs of the community. From 1957 to 1965, Newton remained the central venue, culminating in the 10th Anniversary celebration. In 1973, the Feast shifted to Campbelltown Memorial Oval, where Rev. Don Mimmo Lamberto from Caulonia presided over Mass. By 1977, the event had moved west to Mater Christi Church in Seaton, reflecting the demographic spread of Italian migrants.

From 1979 to 1989, the feast and procession began at Mater Christi Parish and concluded at St Michael's College Oval in Henley Beach. The 40th Anniversary in 1995 featured the play *Saint Ilarion*, and the 60th Anniversary in 2015 included a commemorative book launch and Mass by Rev. Don Giovanni Coniglio.

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic forced a scaled-down celebration. But resilience prevailed: in 2022, the Feast was relocated to Gleneagles Reserve in Seaton, supported by the first government grant. Archbishop Charles Balvo presided, and Progetto Tarantella performed. The 70th Anniversary in 2025 was marked by a grand Gala Dinner and Feast attended by Mayor Francesco Cagliuso of Caulonia and other dignitaries.

### **Nick Fazzalari: Architect of Expansion**

No figure has shaped the Society's growth more than Nick Fazzalari, son of founding father Ilario. At age 10, Nick attended every committee meeting and managed the soft drink stall at the first Feast. His passion never waned. He served as president for 20 consecutive years, stepped down briefly, and returned for another six.

Under his leadership, the Society expanded beyond religious celebration to include aged care, infrastructure development, and international cultural exchange. Nick pioneered fundraising events, including Adelaide's first Italian dinner dance at the Latvian Hall in Wayville, and oversaw the Society's participation in Carnevale and other multicultural festivals.

### **Securing Funding and Establishing Aged Care**

In the late 1980s, a member of the Society discovered that the Australian government offered funding for aged care services tailored to immigrant communities. Recognising the urgent need to care for elderly Italian migrants, the Society acted swiftly.

They secured a federal grant of approximately one million dollars and added \$400,000 in savings from Feast events and community support. In 1987, they purchased the Weerona Nursing Home in Lockleys, renamed it the St Hilarion Nursing Home, and began offering culturally sensitive care. The facility was administered by a board of Italo-Australian professionals, including Dr Frank Chitti (Chairman), Dr Ben Barbera (Vice Chairman), and Nick Fazzalari (Chief Executive Officer).

The success of this initiative led to further expansion: Villa St Hilarion in Fulham was built to provide low-care accommodation, followed by a 50-bed nursing home in Findon. These facilities became sanctuaries of dignity, language, and tradition for ageing migrants.

### **Infrastructure and Cultural Flourishing**

Nick's dream of a community hub came to life with the Riverbank Function Centre in Welland, built by the River Torrens. It hosted countless events, including a visit from Prime Minister John Howard and Immigration Minister Philip Ruddock. Though later sold, the Centre remains a symbol of the Society's ambition and reach.



### International Recognition and Visits

The Society welcomed numerous dignitaries from Italy, including Bishop Gilliberti and folk singer Otello Profazio in 1991, and Bishop Bregantini and Mayor Nicola Franmartino with a 64-person delegation in 1997. These visits reinforced ties with Caulonia and elevated the Feast's profile. The 2024 feast featured performances by Mimmo Cavallaro and Progetto Tarantella, blending tradition with contemporary flair.

In 2025, Mayor Francesco Cagliuso attended the 70th Anniversary Gala Dinner, celebrating decades of service and cultural preservation.

### The Arm of St Hilarion: A Sacred Symbol

Inspired by Caulonia's tradition of carrying a silver arm relic in procession, Nick Fazzalari sought to replicate this in Adelaide. With help from Don Mimmo Lamberto, a replica arm was carved from olive wood by Vigliarollo, a Caulonian artisan. Bishop Gilliberti secured a bone relic of St Hilarion, which was embedded in the arm. Today, it is carried by procurators during the feast, embodying spiritual continuity between homeland and diaspora.

### A Living Legacy

From its founding fathers to its modern stewards, the Society of St Hilarion has woven a tapestry of devotion, service, and cultural pride. It honours the past while embracing the future through care for the elderly, celebration of heritage, and the enduring spirit of Sant'Ilarione.

Giuseppe (Joe) Geracitano  
November 2025





# Italian Community Radio 50th Anniversary



## **Echoes of Identity: The Italian Education Movement and the Birth of Radio Paesani**

### **Celebrating 50 years of Italian Community Radio**

In the vibrant tapestry of South Australia's multicultural evolution, few threads are as resonant as the story of Italian community radio. At its heart lies the Italian Education Movement, a visionary force that not only championed the preservation of Italian language and culture but also catalysed the creation of Radio Paesani, Australia's first ethnic community radio programme.

#### **Seeds of Cultural Advocacy**

Emerging from the Italian Tertiary Students Association in the early 1970s, the Italian Education Movement responded to a growing concern: the erosion of the Italian language among second-generation immigrants. With many young Italo-Australians focused on mastering English and succeeding academically, their connection to heritage language and culture was at risk.

Led by a dynamic committee, Alex Gardini, Romano Rubichi, Rosa Matto, Rosa Colanero, and Sara Kitto, and supported by a dedicated cohort of educationists including Joe Geracitano, Nives Zancanaro, Tony Mercurio, and Nick Cavuoto, the Italian Education Movement became a driving force for cultural and linguistic reform. United by a shared commitment to heritage and inclusion, the Movement championed the introduction of Italian language programmes in South Australian schools and the establishment of formal teacher training pathways. These efforts culminated in two landmark achievements: the founding of the South Australian Association of Teachers of Italian (SAATI) in 1975 and the successful integration of Italian into selected primary school curricula across the state.

#### **A New Voice for the Community**

Simultaneously, the University of Adelaide's Department of Continuing Education was pioneering community radio through its station 5UV. With the 1974 amendment to the Broadcasting Act allowing non-English languages on air, the opportunity arose for ethnic communities to broadcast in their own languages.

Rosa Colanero, an executive member of the Italian Education Movement and a volunteer at 5UV, played a pivotal role in connecting the university's initiative with the Italian community. Her discussions with Keith Conlon, 5UV's producer/manager, led to the movement's involvement in establishing an Italian-language radio programme.

On 3 March 1975, Radio Paesani aired its first programme, likely the first non-English community radio broadcast in Australia. The name “Paesani” reflected its regional focus, with episodes featuring music, recipes, and stories from Italian regions. The programme also included a segment called “Aiuto” (Help), offering practical information for Italian immigrants.

### **Immediate Impact on the Italian Community**

The launch of Radio Paesani marked a turning point in the cultural life of Italian South Australians. For the first time, the community had a dedicated voice on the airwaves, one that spoke their language, celebrated their heritage, and addressed their everyday needs. The radio became a vital conduit for information, connection, and pride. Italian clubs and associations used it to promote events, share announcements, and foster unity. Reports of concerts, festivals, and community initiatives, such as the Italian Choral and Arts Society’s performance at Woodville Town Hall and the First National Italian Festival in 1976, reached wider audiences thanks to Radio Paesani’s coverage.

The “Aiuto” segment offered practical guidance to new arrivals, while interviews and cultural programming helped bridge generational gaps and reinforce identity. Sponsorships from clubs like the Inter-Italian Social Club of Adelaide Inc. provided financial support, and regular guests such as Guido Cavalin, a bilingual officer with Woodville Council, offered social assistance and advocacy. Within just two years, Radio Paesani had become a cornerstone of community life, informing, entertaining, and empowering Italo-Australians across South Australia.

Yet, despite its growing success, the radio’s leadership faced resistance. Rosa Colanero, a young woman and the driving force behind the programme’s coordination, encountered opposition from segments of the male-dominated Italian community. In one telling incident, the president of a prominent social club arrived at her home for a scheduled meeting, looked around, and upon realising she was the sole host, left without discussion. Such dismissals reflected lingering attitudes about gender roles in leadership. Even within the radio group, some members resisted the idea of a woman heading the initiative.

This persistent opposition contributed to Rosa’s eventual departure from the radio. In late 1976, she accepted a scholarship to study Italian language and culture at La Sapienza University in Rome. While the opportunity was prestigious and aligned with her passion for education, it also offered a dignified exit from an environment where her leadership was not universally respected. Her departure marked the end of an era for Radio Paesani, and in 1977, Sergio Ubaldi was elected to lead the programme.

With the achievement of most of its foundational goals, including the establishment of SAATI, the creation of the Ethnic Affairs Unit within the Department of the Premier, and

the initiation of a course to train Italian teachers at the Adelaide College of Advanced Education, the executive team that had guided the Italian Education Movement gradually disbanded. Leadership was taken up in 1977 by Joe Geracitano as chairman and dr. Massimo Buonaiuto, who steered the movement into its next phase. Their focus shifted towards broader structural reforms: advocating for the certification of interpreters and translators, pushing for recognition of overseas qualifications, and guiding both the development of Italian community radio and the formal establishment of Ethnic Broadcasters Inc. Their efforts helped institutionalise multicultural advocacy and ensured that the Italian community's voice remained strong and respected in South Australia's evolving media and policy landscape.

### **A Fractured Transition**

While the Italian Education Movement provided the initial structure and legitimacy for Radio Paesani, tensions emerged as the radio gained popularity. In 1977, a proposal was made by Giovanni Di Sessa to separate the radio from the Italian Education Movement and establish it as an independent entity. Despite ongoing discussions, the separation occurred unilaterally and without consensus, a move widely regarded as a hostile takeover.

This transition marked a clear break: the newly formed organisation in 1978 with Luigi Penna as president, Radio Italiana, operated entirely independently from the Italian Education Movement. Although the Movement had always intended to eventually grant autonomy to the radio, the manner in which the separation occurred, without transparent consultation or inclusive decision-making, left a legacy of division.

### **Flourishing Despite Fracture**

Despite the turbulent transition, Italian community radio continued to thrive. Radio Italiana became a cornerstone of cultural expression, offering a platform for music, news, and community engagement. It amplified the voices of Italo-Australians, celebrated heritage, and supported countless community initiatives.

In 2014, another chapter unfolded. Due to internal personnel conflicts, the station split into two distinct entities: Radio Italiana 531 and Radio Italia Uno. Each station carried forward the legacy of Italian broadcasting in South Australia, offering diverse programming and serving different segments of the community.



## Legacy and Recognition

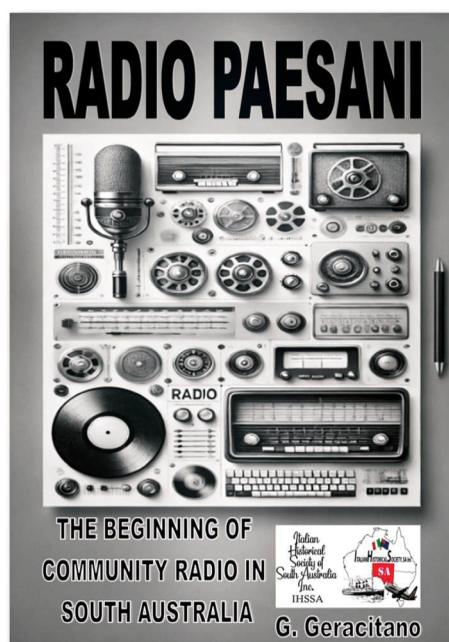
The Italian Education Movement's role in founding Radio Paesani remains foundational. It provided the vision, structure, and community engagement necessary to launch a platform that gave Italo-Australians a public voice. Through Radio Paesani, the community celebrated its heritage, shared its stories, and strengthened its identity.

As we reflect on this legacy, it is essential to honour the contributions of all involved, especially those whose efforts have been overlooked or simplified in historical retellings. The Movement's commitment to education, inclusion, and cultural pride continues to inspire, reminding us that language is not merely a tool of communication but a vessel of memory, belonging, and resilience.

Giuseppe (Joe) Geracitano  
November 2025



Gianni Morandi At Radio Paesani



**SUV FOR ITALIAN RADIO**

**RADIO  
ITALIANA**

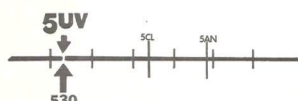
**OGNI LUNEDI 6 PM**

Presentiamo il primo programma

LUNEDI 3 MARZO

Un programma musicale e informativo

**ASCOLTATECI OGNI LUNEDI  
ALLE 6-00**



# SAATI 50th Anniversary



## FROM VISION TO VOICE: FIFTY YEARS OF SAATI SUPPORTING TEACHERS OF ITALIAN IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

SAATI, the South Australian Association of Teachers of Italian, was established on **4<sup>th</sup> October 1975** by a pioneering group of teachers of Italian who felt the need to come together as an association to promote and advance the teaching of Italian in South Australia. The first General Meeting was held on **22<sup>nd</sup> October 1975**. It took place at the **South Australian Italian Association** premises in Carrington Street, Adelaide. During that meeting, the constitution was approved, and the following inaugural committee was elected:

- **President:** Ennio Ferraretto (*deceased Nov 11, 2018*)
- **Vice-President:** Prof. G. A. A. Comin
- **Secretary:** Laura Pieraccini
- **Treasurer:** Gary Ruggiero
- **Editor of Newsletter:** Lia Tedesco
- **Committee Members:** Nick Cavuoto, Nives Zancanaro, Antonietta Cocchiaro, Romano Rubichi, John Pereira

The first newsletter, distributed in November 1975, included the approved constitution, details of the elected committee, and a list of schools known to be teaching Italian at the time. In the early 1980s meetings were held at the premises of il Centro Didattico on Portrush Road.

At that time, Italian was being taught in the following South Australian schools:

- 11 state high schools
- 8 state primary schools
- 13 Catholic secondary schools
- 1 Catholic primary school

During that era of multiculturalism, Italian language programmes were growing in schools. A chair had been established for the first time in SA, at Flinders University for **Prof. Antonio Comin**, and one was soon established at the South Australian College of Advanced Education, under the leadership of **Romano Rubichi**. At the time, teachers were developing programmes, but without curricula or resources. All they had were themselves, their students and their families, and each other. SAATI filled a crucial gap.

SAATI began with a handful of members. Over the years the association increased its membership whilst seeking to forge and strengthen links and collaborate with the Italian community. SAATI is also a proud member of Educators SA, formerly known as the Council of Education Associations of South Australia (CEASA).

The association's mission is and has always been to be the **only** voice for all teachers of Italian across all sectors across South Australia. SAATI is committed to promoting the teaching and learning of Italian, in addition to representing and supporting teachers of

Italian to run rich programmes. SAATI has always sought to lead with a contemporary vision of language learning to develop the communication skills of students, bolstered by the development of intercultural capabilities and metacognitive understanding of the practice of communication and what it entails.

SAATI has nurtured and will continue to nurture strong connections across levels of education (primary, secondary and tertiary) and across government and non-government sectors. The association has also maintained strong relationships with various Italian organisations in SA, inviting their support for various initiatives, as well as with other professional associations in SA and nationally. The relationship that SAATI has with the Consulate is particularly helpful.

### **Early Key Initiatives**

Some committee members and supporters worked on the first Italian radio programme for SA, *Radio Paesani*, from the mid-1970s, broadcasting an hour a week of Italian language and culture from its base at the University of Adelaide.

Other initiatives undertaken by SAATI included the preparation and printing of ***La Bancarella*** in the 1980s and 1990s. Each issue was full of resources and teaching ideas and was posted to members several times a year.

A major project undertaken during the 1980s was the *South Australia Intercultural Student Exchange Programme* with Italy. Organised by a joint committee from SAATI and the *Associazione Italia-Australia*, in collaboration with the exchange organisation *Intercultura Roma*, the programme allowed students to spend some time immersed in Italian life, enhancing language skills and cultural understanding. This initiative also encouraged the growing number of Italian students in South Australia to keep studying the language.

At the time SAATI also supported initiatives to promote bilingual programmes in selected Adelaide primary schools which offered Italian. Additionally, in 1984 the Education Department released the long-awaited curriculum resource *Pane e Fantasia*, which many members began to use in their primary classes.

### **Past Presidents:**

Prof. Antonio Comin – Honorary President  
Ennio Ferraretto OAM, JP  
Margot Ludbrook  
Nives Mercurio (Zancanaro)  
Gianna Zybert  
Lucia Baldino  
Caroline Bamford  
Rosetta Moffa  
Helen Tooulou  
Kathy Bernardi  
Gianna De Leo  
Julie Tarzia / Matthew Absalom (co-presidents)



Belinda Barrile (D'Agostino)  
Gianna De Leo / Antonella Macchia (co-presidents)  
Antonella Macchia  
AnnaRita Hoskin  
Maria Kitching  
Maria Kitching/Antonella Macchia (co-presidents)  
Silvia De Cesare

### **Celebrating 50 Years**

SAATI marked its 50th anniversary at the SAIA premises in Carrington Street on March 14, 2025. The event was attended by many past and present members, past presidents and past committee members and representatives from various organisations.

As the only organisation representing teachers of Italian across all sectors in South Australia, SAATI remains committed to supporting Italian teachers and students. SAATI offers:

- financial assistance for senior SACE students to attend revision programmes at the School of Languages.
- the opportunity for schools to participate in state language competitions.
- high-quality professional learning opportunities for teachers.
- opportunities for Italian Film Festival movie previews and other cultural events.
- mentoring of early career teachers or teachers new to Italian.
- networking opportunities.

### **Current Committee 2025–2026**

- **President:** Silvia De Cesare
- **Vice President:** Elena Guastella
- **Secretary:** Lizzy Trasente
- **Treasurer:** Livia D'Aloia
- **Communications Officer:** Lydia D'Ambrosio
- **Committee Members:** David Lepore, Imma De Masi, Stefania Chiro, Maria Lucia Di Palo, Catrina Tridente, Antonia Mastropasqua, Maria Catalano



We currently have a total of 186 members across all sectors:

4 honorary members – Margot Ludbrook, Antonella Macchia, Maria Kitching, Cav. Angela Scarino

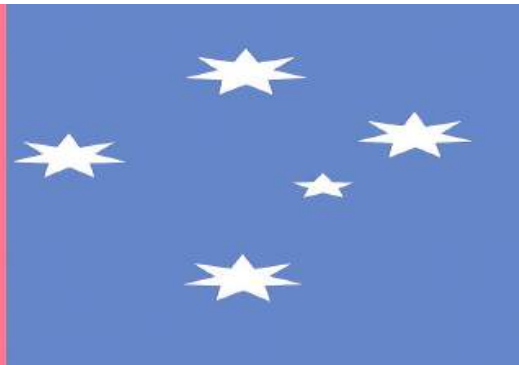
26 corporate member schools, covering 138 members.

37 individual members

7 student members/friends of SAATI.

SAATI stands as a testament to the dedication of teachers of Italian in South Australia. The association has played a key role in promoting the Italian language and culture, supporting educators and students, and fostering a collaborative community. With a 50-year legacy of achievements and a commitment to innovation, SAATI looks forward to working with its members to continue its mission for many years to come.

# Veneto Club 50th Anniversary



## **VENETO CLUB ADELAIDE: 50 YEARS OF CULTURE, COMMUNITY AND CELEBRATION**

The Veneto Club (the Club) at Toogood Avenue, Beverley, was officially registered in South Australia in September 1972 as an incorporated entity, which was one year from the day of inception, September 1971, and officially opened on 25<sup>th</sup> May 1974.

The origins of the Veneto Club began in 1970, instigated by a group of visionary young *Veneti* who frequented the Fogolar Furlan Club in the 1960s. These visionaries brought together many friends and families to form this great club. The focus was on preserving its origins and celebrating the language and traditions unique to the Veneto region of northern Italy. The Veneto Club has played a vital role in keeping the Veneto culture alive and has made invaluable contributions to the Italian community in Adelaide. The Club at Beverley was well known for its presence in the community, great hospitality, social gatherings, cultural events, sports, etc., and providing a home for generations of *Veneti* living in South Australia.

The construction of the Veneto Club began in 1972, and over the course of 84 weeks (mostly weekends), dedicated members volunteered their time and donated resources, enabling the Club to be inaugurated and opened on 25th May 1974 with grand celebrations.

The first General Meeting was held in October 1972. The meeting place was the Oberdan Hall in Findon, at which 298 out of 300 members were present. The first Veneto Club Management Committee was elected, with Arturo Pagliaro as president, Francesco Battistello and Gino Torressan as vice presidents, Frank Farina as secretary, and Mario Borghetto, Leo Conci, Ampelio Bendo, Gino Innocente, Carlo Boin and Giorgio Busato as councillors. The names of subsequent committees are listed in the club's publication 'History of the Veneto Club Inc., Adelaide 1974-2024'.

In 1973 the Veneto Club held a Christmas picnic at Uraidla. It was an event without precedent and one which will always be remembered by its members. The picnic site looked enormous; by evening it was estimated that 6000 people had attended. The food consumed was amazing: 10,000 panini, a tonne of meat and salads, and 26 barrels of beer, not to mention the amount of wine, soft drinks and gelato consumed. But the highlight of the day was seeing Father Christmas arrive in a helicopter; it took everybody by surprise, especially the hundreds of children who were bombarded with presents. A highlight of what was to come over the next 25 years with events held at the Veneto Club.





The Veneto Club has a strong culture of volunteers who gave their time to organise a wide range of events, especially when we were at Toogood Avenue, with special recognition to the Management, Social Ladies, Youth, Bocce, Billiards/8 Ball, Netball and Soccer Committees. Every volunteer played an integral part in shaping the club into what it is today.

The celebration of the first 25 years in 1999 was highlighted by the sense of joy and achievements shared by members, families and friends of the club, with celebrations continuing for a week. The Club's publication "Veneto Club Inc., 25th Anniversary 1974-1999", with details of the history and achievements in its first 25 years, was produced.

The next 25 years of the Club, from 1999 to 2024, brought with it several highlights and challenges. One of the highlights of 2007 was an event during the World Police and Fire Games held in Adelaide in March. The Veneto Club hosted a social event for eighty-six Italian athletes which was attended by the Italian Consulate and representatives of seventeen Adelaide Italian clubs and associations and three hundred guests.

The ongoing challenges, both in the decline of membership, building maintenance and legislative requirements, were put to the club members at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) in August 2013. Important decisions were discussed about the future, and a very emotional decision was made to sell the club. The Veneto Club property was sold in November 2013, and the search for a new home commenced. As the Management



Committee investigated a new home for the Club, events were held for members and their families at the Festival Function Centre, in Findon.

In 2015 a new home for now came from discussions with the owners of the Woodville West Torrens Football Club Inc. The Eagles Function Centre at Oval Avenue, Woodville South, has provided the opportunity for the Veneto Club to negotiate an agreement to occupy an area of the building for use as an office and space for memorabilia. As well as use of the casual dining and bar facilities for playing cards, 8-ball competitions and a casual meeting space for its members. Members started coming back, and events started to grow again. From our traditional ones being the Anniversary Ball, Radicchio Festa and New Year's Ball. With our most popular now being monthly luncheons and sausage and panino nights, plus another 6 functions throughout the year.

The Veneto Club has been able to purchase two investment properties since the sale of the grounds at Beverley and is now able to give back to its members in a positive way. Holding many events at a discounted rate for all its members.

The celebration of the “50 Year Anniversary of the Veneto Club” was held on the 25th of May 2024 at the Entertainment Centre, Hindmarsh. The Anniversary Ball was by invitation only and attended by 600 people, comprising members, families and friends of the club, along with government members and presidents from other Italian clubs and associations of Adelaide. The event was one to remember, with musicians, acrobats, jugglers, magicians and more performing throughout the night. The anniversary cake was cut by the three members of the first Management Committee, Giorgio Busato, Gino Innocente and Rinaldo Stecca, and was a highlight of this wonderful celebration.





Membership of the Veneto Club has grown over the past couple of years, and as of September 2025, our financial membership stands at 445 members. The Club has seen an increase in second- and third-generation families becoming members and enjoying the events put on by the Management and Next Generation Committees of the Club.

In 2017/2018 the Management Committee started researching the possibility of setting up a “Veneto Charity” to protect its investment properties should membership of the Club decrease dramatically over the coming years.

A Special General Meeting was held on 31st August 2025, resulting in significant changes to the Veneto Club Inc. Constitution, 2015, now referred to as Veneto Club Inc., Association Rules, 2025, and a key role was established to implement a Veneto Club charity should membership fall below 150.

With the current strong membership, the Management Committee, together with the Next Generation Committee, will continue to support all of its members, being Foundation members, wives of Foundation members, and ordinary and new members, and continue to look at ways the Club can continue moving forward as a united Veneto Club and provide a place the Veneti can call home.

In closing, the following photo of the Veneto Club at Beverley honours the foundation members' commitment and vision it established in 84 weeks and what was in 1974 one of the largest and well-recognised Italian clubs in Adelaide.



**References** used for this report include the following Veneto Club Incorporated publications:

*“In 84 Domeniche Nasce il Veneto Club Dal 1971 al 1974”*

(Recollections, notes and reflections of events from 1971 to 1974)

- *“Veneto Club Incorporated – First 25 Years of Its History”*

*“History of the Veneto Club Incorporated, Adelaide 1974-2024”*

Piero Fioretti

President

November 2025





# Italian Benevolent Foundation 50th Anniversary



## **Honouring 50 Years of Benevolence: The Legacy of the Italian Benevolent Foundation and Bene Aged Care**

In 2025, the Italian Benevolent Foundation of South Australia Inc. (IBF) and its service arm, Bene Aged Care, celebrated a remarkable milestone: 50 years of continuous service to the ageing Italian and multicultural communities of South Australia. This golden anniversary marks not only the longevity of the organisation but also its enduring commitment to culturally sensitive care, community connection, and visionary leadership.

### **Origins Rooted in Community**

Founded in 1974 by a passionate group of Italo-Australian doctors, business owners, and community leaders, the Foundation emerged in response to a pressing need: aged care services that honoured the language, traditions, and values of Italian elders. At a time when mainstream facilities lacked cultural nuance, the founders—led by Mr Tony Novello and inaugural Chairman Judge Pasquale Pirone—envisioned a village where ageing could be met with dignity, familiarity, and familial warmth.

The first facility, developed in St Agnes, was made possible through extraordinary personal sacrifice. Some board members offered their own homes as collateral to secure funding, a testament to the depth of their commitment. From these humble beginnings, the Foundation grew steadily, adding sites in Campbelltown, Burton, St Clair, Magill, Woodville North, and Hahndorf.

### **A Strategic Evolution: Bene Aged Care**

In 2014, the organisation underwent a transformative rebranding. While the Italian Benevolent Foundation SA Inc. retained its role as the charitable and fundraising arm, all aged care services were unified under the new brand: Bene Aged Care – Aged Care, Italian Style. The name “Bene”, meaning “good” or “well” in Italian, reflects the organisation’s ethos of holistic wellness, respect, and cultural pride.

This strategic split allowed for clearer governance, enhanced marketing, and a refreshed identity that honoured tradition while embracing modernity. The new logo, incorporating the Foundation’s historic bell and healthcare-associated blue tones, symbolised continuity and renewal.

### **Leadership and Legacy**

The Foundation’s journey has been shaped by visionary leaders. Dr Carmine De Pasquale, chairman from 1976 to 2010, oversaw its expansion from 40 places to over 400, with assets exceeding \$46 million. A psychiatrist, author, and recipient of multiple honours—including the Order of Australia Medal and *Grande Ufficiale Ordine della Stella della Solidarietà Italiana*—Dr De Pasquale’s legacy is woven into every facet of Bene’s philosophy.

Marie Alvino, solicitor and long-serving vice chair, succeeded Dr De Pasquale and steered the organisation through its rebranding and strategic acquisitions, including the purchase of Bene St Clair and the divestment of *Domus Operosa*.

Today, Bene thrives under the stewardship of Chairman Cavaliere Dr Antonio Cocchiari AM, Vice Chairman Mr Silvio Iadarola, and CEO Andrew McFarlane. Dr Cocchiari, a respected GP and advocate for multiculturalism, brings decades of experience and community leadership to the role.

### **Innovation and Impact**

Over the years, Bene has pioneered numerous initiatives:

- Establishment of the IBF Healthcare College of South Australia
- Introduction of electronic documentation systems and governance committees
- Expansion into retirement living, with 70 independent units housing over 80 residents
- Strategic partnerships with UniSA, Carer Gateway, and the SA Innovation Hub
- Outreach to Chinese, Indian, Muslim, and Aboriginal communities, reflecting Bene's evolving multicultural mission

Despite sector-wide financial pressures, Bene remains fiscally robust—one of the few aged care providers in South Australia operating in surplus.

### **A Living Legacy**

From its inception, the Italian Benevolent Foundation has embodied the spirit of community, sacrifice, and cultural pride. Its transformation into Bene Aged Care has not diluted its heritage but rather amplified its reach and relevance. As Bene enters its sixth decade, it continues to honour its founders' vision: to bring joy, dignity, and holistic care to older people from all walks of life.

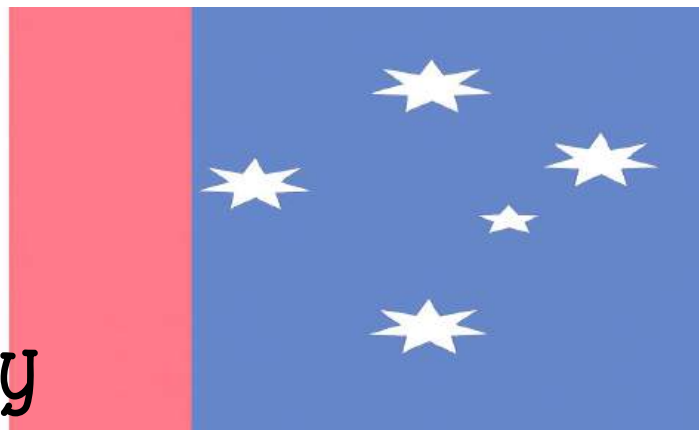
For the Italian Historical Society of South Australia Inc., Bene's story is more than an institutional history—it is a living testament to the power of community, the resilience of migrants, and the enduring value of culturally grounded care.

Giuseppe (Joe) Geracitano  
November 2025





# Sicilia Social & Sports Club 50th Anniversary



## **Celebrating a Cultural Legacy: 50 Years of the Sicilia Social and Sports Club's Community Impact**

Honouring the vision of a group of paesani who dared to dream big.

It was a sweltering New Year's Day in 1973 when Gino Carubia, a gentle soul deeply passionate about his Sicilian heritage, sat on the porch of his home in Unley, drinking a beer and reminiscing about his beloved hometown, the culture, the food, and, most importantly, the family traditions. In that moment, an idea was born: to create a space for the Adelaide-Sicilian community to come together, share their culture, and exchange stories. Recognising that he could not achieve this alone, Gino reached out to his friend Frank Augello to share his vision of a gathering place for all Sicilians.

Frank embraced the idea, and together they engaged a few fellow paesani who enthusiastically supported the vision. Initially, it was their collective passion for bocce that united them, but as their gatherings progressed, they realised the necessity of including their families in the celebrations. After an animated brainstorming session, they decided to create an event that combined dancing with exquisite food, a perfect encapsulation of Sicilian joy and community spirit.

Planning for a memorable evening of dining and dancing proved challenging. They needed to secure a hall and obtain essential equipment, yet where there is a will, there is a way. By the end of 1973, the first dinner dance was held, and its resounding success led to the baton being passed to Leonardo Carubia and Biagio Barbaro the following year. The triumph of this inaugural event demonstrated that much more could be accomplished.

Discussions among the men and their families highlighted how to maximise their achievements. In 1975, a pivotal meeting convened at Gino's home, resulting in the decision to establish an official committee and club, which was subsequently named the Siculo Club. Although a strategic plan was devised, the journey was fraught with challenges, including acquiring necessary plates, cutlery, and storage solutions.

After three very successful years, in 1978 a decision was made to change the club's name. Under the leadership of Angelo Dilella during the AGM, a motion was passed to adopt the new name, and so, the Siculo Club became the Sicilia Social Club. With the club solidifying its identity, the next crucial steps involved drafting a constitution and formally incorporating the club. Angelo enlisted the assistance of Roberto Chiro, a paesano and skilled lawyer, to draft the constitution, a move that significantly propelled the club forward. By 1979, the club achieved incorporated status.

As momentum continued to build and possibilities expanded, the quest for suitable venues for gatherings presented additional challenges. Each event brought forth new logistical hurdles, particularly concerning the transportation of equipment and supplies. Nevertheless, the group's determination remained resolute. In response, they devised a clever plan: each family would store items at home, but the cost of these essentials posed another challenge. The question remained, how could they make it all work?

Support was essential, which led to the formation of the first official ladies' sub-committee in 1980. Their mission was to raise funds through various events, including fashion parades, picnics, and other activities. Gino and Leonardo also took on the responsibility of soliciting donations, no matter how small, from their paesani to cover expenses. Their determined, community-driven approach laid the groundwork for sustained success.



After years of renting venues, the committee recognised that owning premises would be crucial for attracting more Sicilians to the club. The search began, and fortune smiled upon them when a property became available at Camden Park. Through collective efforts, funds were raised, which allowed them to purchase the property, granting the club a true identity and a sense of permanence.

In 1981, a folk dancing group was formed, remaining active until 1995, alongside the establishment of a youth group. Recognising the importance of cultural symbols, the importance of the famous *carrettino siciliano* was apparent. A sub-committee was formed so that the obvious could be made possible. The sub-committee sourced a cart and horse from a local farmer and embarked on its restoration. It was imperative to make it as authentic as possible, and therefore the importing of ornaments from Sicily was imperative, and so what was once a cart and horse was now a traditional *carrettino siciliano*. With the help of Mr Alessandro Barrocchi, the *carrettino* was beautifully crafted, and it is now displayed in the stable at the entrance of the hall.

Over the years, the Sicilia Club and *carrettino* have played an integral role in promoting Sicilian culture and traditions within the South Australian community through participation in festivals and parades, including the Berri Festival, Italian Festival, Glenelg & Norwood Pageant Parades, and the Australian Formula One Grand Prix.

As the club's reputation grew, so did the need for a larger space. The existing clubrooms became uncomfortably crowded, making a new venue necessary. Fortunately, an opportunity arose when vacant land became available at Klemzig. Thus began negotiations for its purchase, ushering in a promising future for our community.

In 1990, after navigating the inevitable challenges of bureaucracy, construction commenced under the expert guidance of Ralph Brianni Constructions. And what better way to inaugurate the new premises than with a joyful celebration? The inaugural function held at the new clubrooms was a wedding, marking a perfect beginning to this new chapter.

We take immense pride in the rich heritage of the Metro Stars soccer team, whose roots trace back to the Sicilia Club. From those humble beginnings, the team has grown and now calls TK Shuttle Reserve its home—a testament to the enduring spirit and vision of our community.

It was during this transformative period that the club embraced a broader identity, incorporating "Sports" into its name to reflect its evolving mission. Thus, The Sicilia Social and Sports Club Inc. was born. However, it wasn't until 2013 that the committee of the time discovered the new name had not been formally registered. In response, Matteo Cali stepped forward with dedication and perseverance, navigating considerable bureaucratic hurdles to ensure the name was officially recognised.

His efforts not only safeguarded the club's legacy but also reinforced the values of commitment and community that define us to this day.

Tonight, as we celebrate, we pay tribute to the visionary spirit of Gino & Frank, whose foresight made all of this possible. We honour our forefathers who left their beloved Sicily in search of a better life for their families. We also acknowledge the steadfast dedication of past and present committees, whose tireless efforts have benefited not only the Sicilian community but the broader community as well. We take pride in our diverse membership, which unites people from various cultures, making tonight's celebration truly unforgettable.

In closing, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to our sponsors, particularly our major sponsor, Galipo Food Company, for their unwavering support over these 50 remarkable years. To our volunteers, families, friends, past and present, the directive committees, past and present, kitchen staff, waiters, and attendees, thank you for your dedication and hard work. Special thanks to Michael Liapis for the fantastic meal we are enjoying tonight. Last but not least, to each and every one of you gathered here this evening, thank you for being part of this momentous celebration. Your presence has made it truly unforgettable.

Rita Bianca Palumbo  
President





# Dante Alighieri Society



## **The Dante Alighieri Society of South Australia: Promoting Italian Language and Culture**

Founded in 1889 by renowned Italian poet and Nobel Laureate Giosuè Carducci, the Dante Alighieri Society was established to promote the Italian language and culture across the world. Over time, it has grown into a global network of cultural associations, with its headquarters in Rome.

In 1964, the Dante Alighieri Society of South Australia was formed by a group of passionate volunteers led by Dr Giorgio Masero, sharing the same mission of fostering Italian culture and language within the South Australian community. Since its inception, the Society has relied on the dedication of countless volunteers who have generously contributed their time and expertise to ensure the preservation and promotion of Italian heritage for future generations.

Throughout its history, the Society has played a key role in enhancing the cultural and educational landscape of South Australia. In the late 1960s, it contributed to the establishment of Italian language courses and a degree programme at Flinders University, laying the groundwork for Italian studies within tertiary education.

Today, the Dante Alighieri Society remains a vibrant centre for Italian culture, offering a range of activities including language courses for adults and children, film screenings, lectures, and cultural events that celebrate Italy's artistic and intellectual achievements. As an accredited centre for the PLIDA (Progetto Lingua Italiana Dante Alighieri) examinations, the Society provides an official pathway for learners to gain internationally recognised Italian language certification.

Beyond language and literature, the Society's diverse programming showcases the contributions of Italian poets, artists, scientists, and writers, illuminating Italy's influence on global culture. Importantly, in recent years the Society has also championed social awareness and advocacy, particularly focusing on ending violence against women. Its initiatives highlight the often-overlooked contributions of Italian women throughout history, those who have shaped culture, science, and the arts while overcoming adversity in a male-dominated world.

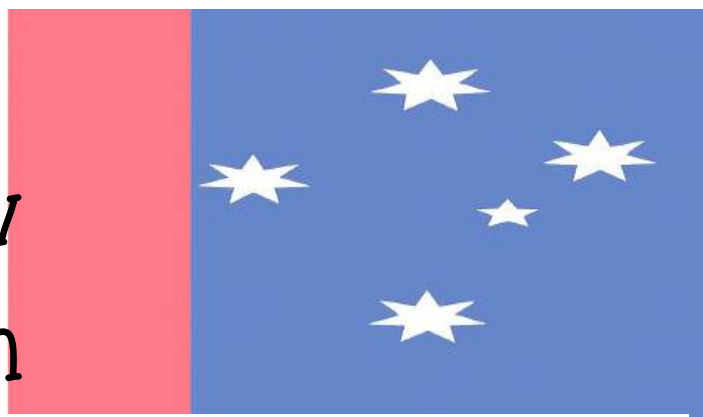
Under the leadership of its current president, Edmondo Palombo, the Dante Alighieri Society of South Australia continues to serve as a vital bridge between Italy and the local community. With steadfast commitment, it upholds its founding mission to preserve, teach, and celebrate the richness of Italian language and culture for generations to come.

**Edmondo Palombo**  
President





# La Partenza Voyage to a New Beginning Launch



## ***Migration Museum of South Australia – Sunday, 13 April 2025***

The Italian Historical Society of South Australia Inc. proudly launched its commemorative publication, *La Partenza: Voyage to a New Beginning*, on Sunday, 13 April 2025, at the Migration Museum of South Australia.

This special occasion was a moving celebration of the Italian migration experience in South Australia, honouring the courage, resilience, and enduring legacy of Italian migrants and their families.

The launch was attended by approximately sixty guests, including members of the State and Federal Parliaments, representatives of the History Trust of South Australia, the History Council of South Australia, Oral History Australia, Com.It.Es., and the South Australian Association of Teachers of Italian, together with members of the Italian community, contributors, and media representatives.

Cav. Associate Professor Angela Scarino served as Master of Ceremonies, guiding an engaging and heartfelt programme.

Mr Giuseppe (Joe) Geracitano, President of the Italian Historical Society of South Australia, opened the event with a welcome address and an overview of the journal's development, acknowledging the many challenges overcome in bringing it to fruition. He highlighted the publication's role in preserving migration stories and called for their inclusion in educational programmes to inspire future generations.

The Hon. Blair Boyer MP, Minister for Education, Training and Skills, spoke about the importance of *La Partenza* as an educational and historical resource. He commended the Society's work in capturing the voices of migrants and advocated for integrating migration stories into the South Australian school curriculum.

The Hon. Heidi Girolamo MLC and the Hon. Jing Lee MLC shared personal reflections on migration and multiculturalism, while Ms Elizabeth Ho OAM FUnISA, Chair of the History Trust of South Australia, delivered a profound address officially launching the publication. She praised the journal as a "beautifully crafted work" that preserves the experiences of Italian migrants and contributes meaningfully to the state's collective memory.

Contributors and family representatives, including Cav. Dr Philip Donato OAM and Councillor Dr Rachele Tullio, shared poignant stories of migration, resilience, and renewal, stories that reflect the determination and sacrifices of those who journeyed to South Australia in search of a better life.

Throughout the afternoon, recurring themes of resilience, community, and the preservation of memory were powerfully conveyed. Speakers and contributors alike stressed the urgency of recording migration stories to ensure that the voices of the past continue to inform and inspire the present.

The event concluded with warm applause and heartfelt appreciation for all who contributed to the creation of *La Partenza: Voyage to a New Beginning*, a lasting tribute to the Italian migrants whose courage and perseverance helped shape South Australia.

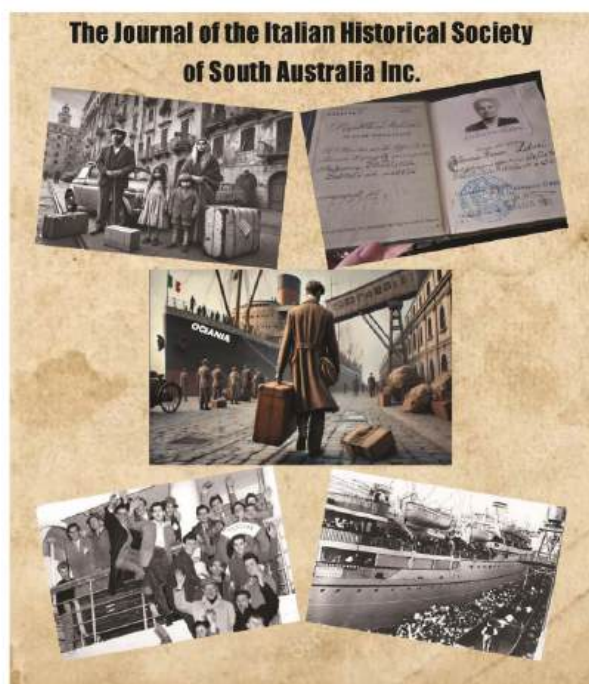
The Society extends sincere thanks to the Editorial Committee: Cav. Associate Professor Angela Scarino, Laura Di Martino-Kempt, Mario Russo, and Rosemarie Geracitano, and to designers Giovanna (Jenny) Geracitano and Rosemarie Geracitano for their outstanding artistic work.

Gratitude is also expressed to sponsors Galipo Food Company and The Hon. Jing Lee MLC for their generous financial support, to Rosina Peryk for event photography, and to all volunteers whose efforts contributed to the event's success.

La Partenza stands as both a celebration of the past and a beacon for the future, ensuring that the migration journey of Italian South Australians continues to inspire generations to come.

Giuseppe (Joe) Geracitano  
President  
November 2025

**La Partenza: Voyage to a New Beginning.  
The Journal of the IHSSA**



**La Partenza Voyage to a New Beginning  
Journal 2025**





**Giuseppe Geracitano PRESIDENT**



**Master of Ceremonies:  
Cav Associate Professor Angela Scarino  
(Editorial Committee)**



**Ms Elizabeth Ho OAM FUniSA Chair History  
Trust of SA. The official Launcher of La  
Partenza : Voyage to a New Beginning**



**Rosemarie Geracitano Media Liaison  
Director/ Editorial Committee  
Gives a brief background history on the  
Caruso, De Marco, Di Martino, Donato,  
Fogliano, Racioppi, Santo and Scalzi  
families.**



**IHSSA Editorial Committee  
(From Left) Rosemarie Geracitano, Cav Associate  
Professor Angela Scarino, Laura Di  
Martino-Kempt, Mario Russo and President  
Giuseppe (Joe) Geracitano**



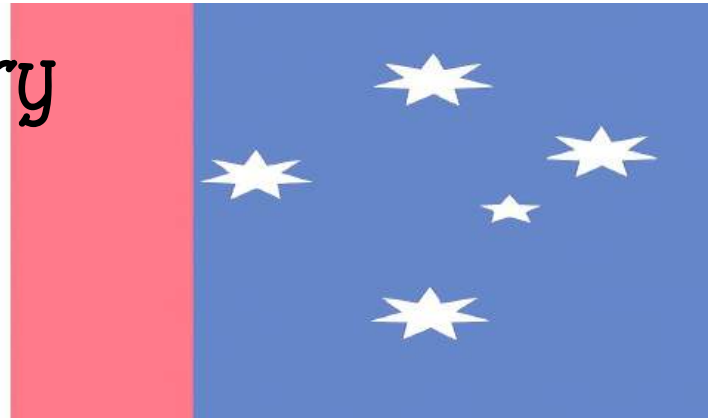
**President Giuseppe (Joe) Geracitano and  
Hon Jing Lee MLC.**



**Guests Attending the Journal Launch**



# 10th Anniversary Gala Dinner Report



## ***A Celebration of Heritage, Community, and Milestone Achievement***

### **Overview**

The Italian Historical Society of South Australia Inc. celebrated its 10th Anniversary Gala Dinner on Saturday, 11<sup>th</sup> of October 2025, with great success, marking a decade dedicated to preserving and promoting the rich history and heritage of the Italian community in South Australia. The occasion brought together members, dignitaries, sponsors, and friends of the Society for an evening filled with reflection, recognition, and festivity.

### **Attendance**

The Gala Dinner welcomed a total of 184 guests, comprising 163 paying attendees and 21 complimentary guests. Complimentary invitations were extended to distinguished guests in appreciation of their support and contribution to the Society. Distinguished guests included state politicians and local government representatives, members of Multicultural SA, the Italian-speaking press, and the platinum sponsor.

The dinner was also attended by representatives from Italian community organisations, as well as members and supporters of the society.

This strong attendance reflected the high regard in which the Society is held and the deep community interest in its ongoing work.

### **PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHTS**

#### **Opening and Welcome**

The evening commenced with a formal welcome from the President of the Society, who reflected on ten years of growth, achievements, and community engagement. The address highlighted the Society's central role in documenting and celebrating the Italian contribution to South Australia's cultural and social fabric.

#### **Launch of the Publication Fund**

A highlight of the evening was the launch of the Italian Historical Society's Publication Fund, an initiative designed to support the development and publication of historical research, oral histories, and community narratives. This fund will ensure that the stories of Italian migration and settlement in South Australia continue to be documented and shared with future generations. The announcement was warmly received, and it was announced that proceeds of the event will be channelled to this fund.

### **Honouring Foundation Members and Sponsors**

A special moment of the night was dedicated to honouring the foundation members whose vision and commitment led to the creation of the Society in 2015. Their dedication and volunteer service have shaped the Society into the respected institution it is today.

The Society also recognised and thanked event sponsors and long-term supporters, in particular the Platinum Sponsor, Blackwell Funerals, for their continued generosity and belief in the Society's mission.

### **Recognition of Interviewees**

The evening also acknowledged three significant community members, Enzo Clappis, Ilarion Nesci, and Andy Clappis, whose oral history interviews have become part of the Society's invaluable archival collection. Each was recognised for sharing their life stories, which embody the courage, perseverance, and contribution of Italian migrants in South Australia. Their experiences stand as a testament to the enduring spirit of the Italian community.

### **Entertainment and Celebration**

Guests were treated to a night of excellent food, lively music, and warm companionship. The atmosphere was enhanced by elegant table settings, decorations, and the symbolic 10th Anniversary cake. A raffle and auction added excitement to the evening while also contributing vital funds to support the Society's ongoing projects.

### **Acknowledgement**

We extend our heartfelt thanks to all who contributed to the success of the 10th Anniversary Gala Dinner — a milestone event that marked a decade of preserving and sharing the stories of Italian migration in South Australia.

To our dedicated committee: your tireless efforts, thoughtful planning, and unwavering commitment brought this evening to life. Your work continues to shape the legacy of our society with care, integrity, and pride.

Special thanks to our gracious MC, Rocco Carpentieri, whose warmth and professionalism guided the evening with elegance, and to our photographer, Luigi Vella, and videographer, Franca Circosta, for capturing the spirit and emotion of the night so beautifully.

We also gratefully acknowledge the invaluable contributions of our volunteers, venue staff, performers, and supporters—each of whom played a vital role in creating a welcoming and memorable celebration.

Together, we honoured the past, celebrated the present, and laid a strong foundation for the future. *Grazie di cuore.*

### **Impact of the Dinner**

The Gala Dinner's success extended beyond financial achievement. It:

- Strengthened relationships with government representatives, community leaders, and sponsors.
- Reinforced the Society's position as a custodian of Italian cultural heritage.
- Inspired greater community engagement, volunteer involvement, and membership growth.
- Enhanced the Society's public profile through positive coverage and post-event goodwill.

The event captured the unity, pride, and vitality of the Italian community, celebrating both heritage and the shared journey ahead.

### **Financial Success**

Although the dinner was not held with fundraising in mind, it became a moving testament to our shared heritage and generosity, raising \$10,083.74 to support the Society's vital work in preserving and publishing the oral histories of Italian immigrants in South Australia, stories that honour our roots and enrich the cultural tapestry of future generations.

### **Conclusion**

The 10th Anniversary Gala Dinner stands as a memorable milestone in the history of the Italian Historical Society of South Australia Inc. It celebrated not only the achievements of the past decade but also the promise of continued growth and cultural preservation.

Through the generosity of members, sponsors, dignitaries, and volunteers, the Society looks confidently to the future, committed to documenting, preserving, and honouring the enduring legacy of Italian migration in South Australia.

Giuseppe (Joe) Geracitano  
President  
November 2025

























# CONGRATULATIONS

## *Certificate of Recognition*

*presented to*

### **Italian Historical Society of South Australia (IHSSA)**

Established on 13 Jan 2015 for its

## **10th Anniversary Celebration in 2025**

Heartfelt congratulations to the founding members, President Mr Giuseppe (Joe) Geracitano, Committee Members, Staff and Volunteers of IHSSA for celebrating its 10 years of accomplishments in South Australia and hosting a spectacular 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala Dinner on 11 October 2025. I commend your dedication to cultural heritage and storytelling, and wish you continued success in the years ahead.


*Thank You for Building a Better Community and  
Strengthening Multicultural South Australia!*

**The Honourable Jing Lee MLC**

Member of the Legislative Council  
Leader of Jing Lee - Better Community

 (08) 8237 9408

 [www.jinglee.com.au](http://www.jinglee.com.au)

 [Jing.Lee@parliament.sa.gov.au](mailto:Jing.Lee@parliament.sa.gov.au)

Parliament House, North Terrace Adelaide SA 5000







# AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

## *Congratulations*

### **Italian Historical Society SA 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

A Parliamentary motion successfully introduced by the Honourable Jing Lee MLC  
in the South Australian Parliament Legislative Council to honour the  
Italian Historical Society of SA for their significant milestone anniversary.

- I. *Congratulates the Italian Historical Society of South Australia (IHSSA) for celebrating the special milestone of its 10th Anniversary in 2025;*
- II. *Acknowledges the founding members, President, Committee Members and volunteers of IHSSA for their dedication and contribution to preserving and promoting the history of Italian immigration to South Australia, through traditional oral history and collecting original documents and photographs;*
- III. *Congratulates IHSSA on the publication of the first edition of La Partenza: Voyage to a New Beginning, generously supported by the History Trust of South Australia and launched at the Migration Museum of South Australia in April 2025; and*
- IV. *Commends IHSSA for presenting the rich and enduring history of Italian immigration into South Australia, and fostering awareness of the significant social, cultural and economic contributions Italian migrants have made to the development of our diverse multicultural state;*

  
**The Honourable Jing Lee MLC**

Member of Parliament in the Legislative Council  
Leader of Jing Lee - Better Community



Hansard Daily

Legislative Council: Wednesday, October 29, 2025

## ITALIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

**The Hon. J.S. LEE (16:24):** I move:

That this council—

1. Congratulates the Italian Historical Society of South Australia (IHSSA) for celebrating the special milestone of its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2025;
2. Acknowledges the founding members, president, committee members and volunteers of the IHSSA for their dedication and contribution to preserving and promoting the history of Italian immigration to South Australia through traditional oral history and collecting original documents and photographs;
3. Congratulates the IHSSA on the publication of the first edition of *La Partenza: Voyage to a New Beginning*, generously supported by the History Trust of South Australia and launched at the Migration Museum of South Australia in April 2025; and
4. Commends the IHSSA for presenting the rich and enduring history of Italian immigration into South Australia and fostering awareness of the significant social, cultural and economic contributions Italian migrants have made to the development of our diverse multicultural state.

It is a great honour to rise today to congratulate the Italian Historical Society of South Australia on the special occasion of its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2025. The society's important work has captured the enduring legacy of Italian migration and the profound contributions of Italian Australians to the fabric of our society.

Over the past decades the society has grown from a passionate community initiative into a vital cultural institution, relying on generous sponsors and volunteers, without government funding. Its mission is clear and compelling—to preserve and promote the history of Italian immigration to South Australia through oral histories, original documents, photographs and community engagement.



The society's flagship project, *A Trunk Full of Dreams, a Suitcase Full of Memories*, is a powerful reflection of this mission. It captures the lived experience of Italian migrants, stories of courage, resilience and transformation. These stories are not just historical records, they are windows into the hearts and souls of our multicultural state.

I wish to acknowledge the founding members: the President, Mr Giuseppe 'Joe' Geracitano, the dedicated committee members and the many volunteers who have given their time, energy and expertise to this cause. Mr Geracitano's leadership has been nothing short of inspiring. He graduated from the University of Adelaide, majoring in economics, history, sociology and education. Throughout his career he has devoted himself to multicultural education and community development. His work spans decades, from founding the Dante Alighieri Society of South Australia and Italian community radio to advising on the establishment of the South Australian Ethnic Affairs and Multicultural Commission and the Migration Museum.

Under his guidance the IHSSA has conducted dozens of interviews, collected hundreds of documents and created a repository of stories that would otherwise be lost to time. These oral histories follow a whole-of-life approach, covering childhood in Italy, the reasons for emigrating, the journey to South Australia and the challenges and triumphs of building a new life in Australia. They are especially poignant because many of the migrants came from rural backgrounds with little formal education. The spoken word in these cases becomes a powerful tool of remembrance and recognition.

In addition to recognising the president (Joe), I would like to pay tribute to the co-patrons: Ernesto Pianelli, Consul of Italy in South Australia, and Cavaliere Dr Carmine De Pasquale AM. The executive members, in addition to Joe Geracitano, are Cavaliere Nick Fazzalari OAM, vice president (resigned); Councillor Dr Rachele Tullio, vice president; Giovanna 'Jenny' Geracitano (Joe's beautiful wife), secretary; and Tina Dichiera, treasurer.

The committee also work really hard behind the scenes. They are Rosina Peryk, Rosemarie Geracitano, Lorenzo Circosta, Franca Circosta, Angela Cutri, Anna Farrugia, Teresa Dall'Acqua Leonardi OAM, Nella Santo, Giuseppe 'Joe' Ienco OAM and Silvana Zerella. A lot of the historical content could not have been done without the editorial committee working really hard behind the scenes: Laura Di Martino-Kempt, Mario Russo and Cavaliere Associate Professor Angela Scarino. They are all beautiful people who work really hard and contribute their talents and time and efforts into helping the society. There are two wonderful ambassadors who are known to many in this chamber: Cavaliere Sebastian Galipo, from Galipo Foods, and Rita Bianca Palumbo, who is the President of the Sicilia Club on OG Road.



I want to take this opportunity to congratulate the Italian Historical Society on the publication of their inaugural edition of *La Partenza: Voyage to a New Beginning* launched at the Migration Museum in April earlier this year. It was an honour to attend to support the work of the society. This journal brings together written stories submitted during the COVID-19 pandemic when in-person interviews were paused, but research continued remotely. Supported generously by the History Trust of South Australia, this publication is a landmark achievement.

This journal not only preserves the voices of Italian migrants in academic and public memory but also provides a critical platform for ongoing scholarly exploration of Italian migration and its impact on South Australia, filling the gap left by the diminished academic focus on this subject. A special expression of gratitude is owed to the eight families who generously shared their remarkable migration stories in this first edition: Fulvia Caruso, Raffaele De Marco and family, the Di Martino family, Michele Donato and family, Francesco Fogliano and family, the Raffaele Racioppi family, Nella Santo and family, and the Giovanni Scalzi family.

Their willingness to share their own profound personal experiences have greatly enriched the collective understanding and deepened our appreciation of the Italian migration journey to South Australia. A major sponsor of the society has always been Sebastian Galipo, who arrived in Australia as a child in 1952, and went on to found Galipo Foods, a company which is now a multimillion dollar enterprise. I also paid tribute to Galipo Foods and the Galipo family in my other contributions in 2023.

Mr Galipo was the first major interviewee for the society in 2018 and his story was published in 2019 at a fundraising event attended by over 300 people. The society also honours women like Rita Bianca Palumbo, who immigrated at age 10 and, at just 16, became the first Italian secretary of the Good Neighbour Council in Woodville. Her leadership of the Sicilia Social and Sports Club for nearly two decades exemplifies the role of women in shaping community life. I will also be congratulating the Sicilia Social and Sports Club for their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary under the great leadership of Rita.

Finally, I commend the Italian Historical Society for its unwavering commitment to presenting the rich and enduring history of Italian migration into South Australia. Their work fosters awareness of the significant social, cultural and economic contributions that Italian migrants have made to our state. One of the most visible impacts has been on South Australia's food culture. Italian migrants introduced new ingredients, new tastes and new ways of dining. From olive oil, once sold only in pharmacies as a laxative, to the rise of Italian restaurants, cafes and gelati, the transformation has been profound. The society's recent theme 'A Tavola: The Influence of Italian Immigration on Australian Food Culture' explores this evolution in depth.



The wine industry, too, has been reshaped. Italian migrants brought with them a love of table wines and introduced varieties such as nebbiolo and sangiovese. Wineries like Serafino in McLaren Vale are part of this legacy. The society also documented the history of Italian community radio, marking its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2025 with interviews and a report titled *Radio Paesani*. They continue to record stories from pioneers from all walks of life, in business and agriculture, ensuring that the contributions of Italian-Australians are recognised across all sectors.

The Italian Historical Society of South Australia exemplifies the spirit of community, resilience and cultural pride. Their work enriches our understanding of South Australia's multicultural heritage and ensures that future generations can embrace the legacy of migration with knowledge and respect. It is a great honour to move this motion. I wholeheartedly commend the motion and, once again, congratulations to the Italian Historical Society.





## L'Italian Historical Society di Adelaide festeggia i 10 anni di attività e celebra gli emigrati nello Stato “Raccontare la storia del nostro cammino”

ADELAIDE – Sabato 11 ottobre, presso l'Italian Centre in Carrington Street, si è tenuta una cena di gala per celebrare i primi 10 anni di attività dell'Italian Historical Society.

Alla serata, che ha registrato il tutto esaurito, hanno partecipato numerosi rappresentanti della comunità italiana. La serata è stata organizzata nei minimi dettagli, dal fotografo ufficiale all'ingresso, fino al menù e all'intrattenimento musicale, con la bravissima Rose Senesi e la band No Two Ways. Rocco Carpentieri ha fatto da MC. Il presidente Joe Geracitano, nel suo discorso di benvenuto, ha affermato: “È per me un grande piacere darvi il benvenuto alla cena di gala per il decimo anniversario dell'Italian Historical Society. Grazie per il vostro sostegno e per aver condiviso il nostro sogno: quello di raccontare la storia del nostro viaggio da una terra che tutti amiamo e che porteremo sempre nel cuore, a questa terra adottiva che abbiamo abbracciato e che abbiamo fatto la nostra casa”.

Ha poi dato il benvenuto anche alle numerose autorità, tra cui l'onorevole Dana Wortley, in rappresentanza del premier Malinauskas, l'onorevole John Gardner, in rappresentanza del leader dell'opposizione Vincent Tarzia, gli onorevoli Jing Lee e Russell Wortley, la sindaca di Charles Sturt, Angela Evans, la consigliera Rachele Tullio, la presidente SAMEAC, Luisa Greco, il copatrono di IHSSA, Carmine De Pasquale, l'ambasciatore dell'associazione, Sebastiano Galipo, il presidente del Com.It.Es., Marinella Marmo, e altri presidenti di club e associazioni. Ha poi continuato spiegando che, oltre a celebrare gli straordinari risultati raggiunti nell'ultimo decennio, l'obiettivo della serata era di lanciare una raccolta fondi per continuare il prezioso lavoro dell'associazione.

Durante la cena, Geracitano ha poi ancora parlato ai presenti in maniera sentita e ap-



In foto, da sinistra: Teresa Dall'Acqua Leonardi, Marinella Marmo, Joe Geracitano, Luisa Greco e il fotografo Luigi Vella

passionata: “È un privilegio essere qui stasera per riflettere su un viaggio straordinario: il viaggio dell'Italian Historical Society. Stasera celebriamo non solo un'organizzazione, ma le storie, i ricordi e i sogni di migliaia di migranti italiani il cui coraggio e la cui resilienza hanno contribuito a plasmare questo grande Stato. La storia del South Australia è stata arricchita da numerose ondate migratorie, ma poche comunità hanno lasciato un'eredità profonda come quella degli italiani. Dai vigneti ondulati di McLaren Vale alla vivace cucina di Adelaide, l'impronta della cultura italiana è ovunque. Oggi, quasi 104mila locali – circa il 6,1% della nostra popolazione – rivendicano con orgoglio le proprie origini italiane. Eppure, per decenni, le storie di questi migranti sono rimaste in gran parte invisibili. Le loro lotte, i loro sacrifici e i loro trionfi rischiano di andare perduti con l'invecchiamento della prima generazione. Questo silenzio ha ispirato un gruppo di persone appassionate ad

agire, e così è nata l'IHSSA”.

Il viaggio dell'associazione è infatti iniziato alla fine del 2014, con la sua apertura ufficiale nel 2015: “Alla luce del mio percorso migratorio e della mia ricerca accademica, mi sono reso conto che, sebbene la Biblioteca di Stato contenesse molte storie orali, pochissime provenivano da migranti italiani”, ha proseguito Geracitano.

“Senza un intervento, un'intera biblioteca di esperienze vissute sarebbe scomparsa per sempre. Fin dall'inizio, l'IHSSA ha infatti adottato la storia orale come metodologia chiave. Molti migranti italiani arrivarono con poca istruzione formale e le memorie scritte sono rare. Le storie orali catturano così le loro voci – tutte le speranze, le paure e i trionfi – con le loro parole. Ogni intervista ripercorre un intero percorso di vita: dall'infanzia in Italia, al viaggio, alle sfide del reinsediamento e al loro contributo finale alla nuova patria”.

Ha poi ripercorso le storie dei primi mi-

granti intervistati: Sebastian Galipo, arrivato a quattro anni nel 1952, da un'infanzia trascorsa in una piantagione di tabacco alla creazione di un'attività multimilionaria; Rita Bianca Palumbo, pioniera e interprete per la comunità italiana, Enzo Clappis, che ha introdotto Adelaide all'autentica cucina italiana, Ilario Nesci, che ha trasformato Buonasera in un'icona intramontabile per 59 anni, Andy Clappis, maestro del pane che porta avanti l'eredità del padre, e Domenic Cocci, la cui famiglia ha contribuito a trasformare la Virginia nella culla del cibo del South Australia.

Geracitano ha infine ringraziato il suo comitato, fatto da volontari che “mettono a disposizione il loro tempo e le loro competenze, motivati non da una ricompensa economica, ma dall'amore per la nostra tradizione. Il loro lavoro garantisce che ogni storia venga trattata con cura, sensibilità e integrità”.

Ha poi concluso rivolgendosi uno sguardo al futuro: “Mentre celebriamo il nostro decimo anniversario, guardiamo al prossimo capitolo. I nostri obiettivi includono la digitalizzazione del nostro archivio per un accesso globale, ampliandolo per raccogliere storie di moda, politica e arte” e infine una richiesta a Multicultural SA, affinché possa istituire un canale di finanziamento dedicato al patrimonio culturale, che consenta alle comunità CALD di salvaguardare la propria storia. Per questo durante la serata è stata lanciata la raccolta fondi per la realizzazione delle pubblicazioni delle varie storie, con l'obiettivo di raccogliere 20mila dollari all'anno. Enzo Clappis, Giuseppe Nesci per il fratello Ilario, e Andy Clappis hanno poi ricevuto le pubblicazioni delle loro storie.

EMMA LUXARDO





**28 States – IL GLOBO – Monday, October 20, 2025**

**The Italian Historical Society of Adelaide celebrates 10 years of activity and honours migrants in the state.**

**“Telling the story of our journey”**

**ADELAIDE** – On Saturday, October 11, at the Italian Centre on Carrington Street, a gala dinner was held to celebrate the first 10 years of activity of the Italian Historical Society.

The event, which was sold out, saw the participation of numerous representatives of the Italian community.

The evening was meticulously organised, from the official photographer at the entrance to the menu and musical entertainment, featuring the talented Rose Senesi and the band No Two Ways. Rocco Carpentieri served as MC. President Joe Geracitano, in his welcome speech, stated:

“It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you to the gala dinner for the tenth anniversary of the Italian Historical Society. Thank you for your support and for sharing our dream: to tell the story of our journey from a land we all love and will always carry in our hearts to this adopted land that we have embraced and made our home.”

He also welcomed the many dignitaries, including the Hon. Dana Wortley representing Premier Malinauskas, the Hon. John Gardner representing opposition leader Vincent Tarzia, the Hon. Jing Lee and the Hon. Russell Wortley, Mayor of Charles Sturt Angela Evans, Councillor Rachele Tullio, SAMEAC President Luisa Greco, IHSSA co-patron Carmine De Pasquale, association ambassador Sebastiano Galipo, Com.It.Es. President Marinella Marmo, and other club and association presidents.

He continued by explaining that, beyond celebrating the extraordinary achievements of the past decade, the evening aimed to launch a fundraising campaign to continue the association's valuable work.

During the dinner, Geracitano spoke again with heartfelt passion:

“It is a privilege to be here tonight to reflect on an extraordinary journey: the journey of the Italian Historical Society. Tonight, we celebrate not just an organisation, but the stories, memories, and dreams of thousands of Italian migrants whose courage and resilience helped shape this great state. The history of South Australia has been enriched by many waves of migration, but few communities have left as deep a legacy as the Italians. From the rolling vineyards of McLaren Vale to the vibrant cuisine of Adelaide, the imprint of Italian culture is everywhere.”

Today, nearly 104,000 locals – about 6.1% of the population – proudly claim Italian heritage. Yet for decades, the stories of these migrants remained largely invisible. Their struggles, sacrifices, and triumphs risk being lost as the first generation ages. This silence inspired a passionate group of people to act, and thus IHSSA was born.

The association's journey began at the end of 2014, with its official opening in 2015:

“In light of my migration journey and academic research, I realised that although the State Library contained many oral histories, very few came from Italian migrants,” Geracitano continued. “Without intervention, an entire library of lived experiences would have disappeared forever. From the beginning, IHSSA adopted oral history as a key methodology. Many Italian migrants arrived with little formal education, and written memories are rare. Oral histories capture their voices – all the hopes, fears, and triumphs in their own words. Each interview retraces an entire

life journey: from childhood in Italy, to the voyage, to the challenges of resettlement, and their final contribution to their new homeland.”

He then recounted the stories of the first migrants interviewed:

- **Sebastian Galipo**, who arrived at age four in 1952, went from a childhood on a tobacco plantation to building a multimillion-dollar business.
- **Rita Bianca Palumbo**, a pioneer and interpreter for the Italian community;
- **Enzo Clappis**, who introduced Adelaide to authentic Italian cuisine;
- **Ilario Nesci**, who turned *Buonasera* into an enduring icon for 59 years;
- **Andy Clappis**, master baker continuing his father’s legacy;
- **Domenic Cocci**, whose family helped transform Virginia into South Australia’s food cradle.

Geracitano finally thanked his committee, made up of volunteers who:

“Offer their time and skills, motivated not by financial reward, but by love for our tradition. Their work ensures that every story is treated with care, sensitivity, and integrity.”

He concluded with a look to the future:

“As we celebrate our tenth anniversary, we look to the next chapter. Our goals include digitising our archive for global access and expanding it to collect stories of fashion, politics, and art.”

He also made a request to **Multicultural SA** to establish a dedicated funding channel for cultural heritage, enabling CALD communities to safeguard their history. During the evening, a fundraising campaign was launched to support the publication of various stories, with a goal of raising \$20,000 annually. Enzo Clappis, Giuseppe Nesci (for his brother Ilario), and Andy Clappis received the publications of their stories.

**EMMA LUXARDO**





# Financial Members



Angela Casarin  
 Angela Cutri  
 Angelo Calisto  
 Anna Farrugia  
 Attilio Carbone (HONORARY member)  
 Carla Sangregoria  
 Cicilia Virgara  
 Denni Conci  
 Domenic Cocci  
 Dr Carmine DePasquale  
 Dr Phillip Donato  
 Dr Rachelle Tullio  
 Erasmo Palumbo  
 Franca Circosta  
 Francesco Sangregorio  
 Fulvia Caruso  
 Gabby Tullio  
 Gerald Covino  
 Gino Santo  
 Giovanna (Jenny) Geracitano  
 Giuseppe Geracitano  
 Grace Cocci  
 Jesse Keene  
 Joe Ienco OAM  
 John Gardner

Laura Di Martino-Kempt  
 Lino Cardone  
 Lorenzo Circosta  
 Luisa De Blasio Knapp  
 Mario Russo  
 Marisa Albanese  
 Nella Santo  
 Rita Bianca Palumbo  
 Rita Verdiglione  
 Rosemarie Geracitano  
 Rosie D'Aloia  
 Rosina Peryk  
 Roy Fazzalari  
 Sandra Conci  
 Silvana Zerella  
 Sofia Delfino  
 Teresa Ameduri  
 CavTeresa Dall'Acqua Leonardi OAM  
 Tina Dichiera  
 Tony Delfino  
 Tony Verdiglione  
 Tony Virgara  
 Umberto Maurici  
 Wladimira (Mira) Sangregorio

# Memories



In Loving Memory of  
*Carolina Panfilo*

Born in Naples, Italy  
 on 25 December 1932.

Passed away peacefully in  
 Adelaide, South Australia  
 on 12 June 2025.

In her 93rd year.

Riposi in Pace.

# Committee Investiture



## **City of Charles Sturt – Senior Citizen of the Year 2025**

Congratulations to Giuseppe Geracitano –

We extend our heartfelt congratulations to Giuseppe Geracitano on receiving the Senior Citizen of the Year award for 2025. This honour is a testament to Giuseppe's extraordinary contributions to the Italian and multicultural communities in South Australia.

From pioneering Italian language education in schools to founding the Italian History Society of South Australia, Giuseppe has dedicated over 45 years to preserving cultural heritage, promoting education, and fostering multicultural understanding. His leadership in revitalising the Italian Festival and being a foundation member of the Dante Alighieri Society of South Australia underscores his commitment to community connection and cultural enrichment.

Giuseppe's work in documenting the stories of Italian migrants through projects like "A Trunk Full of Dreams and a Suitcase Full of Memories" ensures that future generations understand and celebrate the legacy of these communities. His recognition with the Governor's Multicultural Award for Volunteering in 2019 was just one of many milestones in his illustrious career.

As an inspirational role model and a leader who has tirelessly worked to enhance the lives of others, Giuseppe truly embodies the spirit of this prestigious award. Congratulations, Giuseppe, on this well-deserved recognition of your remarkable achievements.

24<sup>th</sup> January 2025

## **South Australian Award for Active Citizenship - State Commendation!**

We are thrilled to announce that Giuseppe Geracitano has been awarded the South Australian Award for Active Citizenship State Commendation!, recognising his outstanding contributions to our community! 🇦🇺🏆

With a remarkable 50 years of dedicated service, Giuseppe has played a pivotal role in shaping multicultural education, preserving Italian heritage, and advocating for inclusivity. From founding community organizations to advancing language programs and cultural initiatives, his leadership, commitment, and impact have enriched not only the Italian-Australian community but the broader South Australian society.

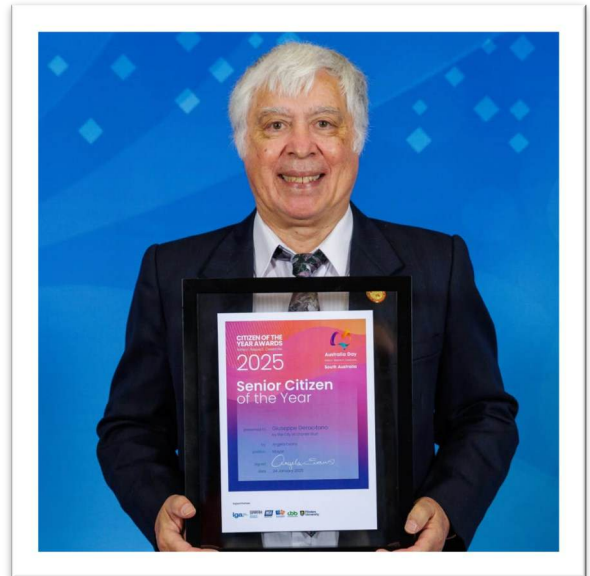
This award is a testament to his tireless efforts in ensuring that diversity is celebrated and that every voice is heard. Congratulations, Giuseppe – Your legacy continues to inspire!

1<sup>st</sup> March 2025





**26th January**  
**Charles Sturt**  
**Senior Citizen Award**



**March**  
**Australia Day**  
**Active Citizenship State**  
**Commendation**



# Congratulations to Cavaliere Teresa Dall'Acqua Leonardi OAM

On behalf of President Giuseppe (Joe) Geracitano and the Committee of the Italian Historical Society of South Australia Inc., we offer our warmest congratulations to Cavaliere Teresa Dall'Acqua Leonardi OAM on receiving this prestigious honour from the Italian Government.

To witness Teresa's investiture was to stand in the presence of living heritage—where lifelong dedication is met with recognition, and cultural legacy is crowned with dignity. Her title, conferred with ceremony and reverence, reflects a journey of service, stewardship, and unwavering devotion to community.

We were honoured to share in this moment—a radiant thread woven into the rich tapestry of Italian-Australian history.

A nome del Presidente Giuseppe (Joe) Geracitano e del Comitato della Italian Historical Society of South Australia Inc., porgiamo le nostre più sincere congratulazioni alla Cavaliere Teresa Dall'Acqua Leonardi OAM per aver ricevuto questo prestigioso riconoscimento dal Governo Italiano.

Essere testimoni della sua investitura è stato come trovarsi di fronte alla storia vivente—dove la dedizione di una vita incontra il riconoscimento, e l'eredità culturale viene incoronata con dignità. Il titolo, conferito con solennità e rispetto, riflette un percorso di servizio, custodia e incrollabile impegno verso la comunità.

È stato per noi un onore condividere questo momento—un filo luminoso intrecciato nel ricco arazzo della storia italo-australiana.



**Cavaliere dell'Ordine  
al  
merito  
della Repubblica  
Italiana**



**Sunday 9th November**

**2025**

**Nonna Cucina**



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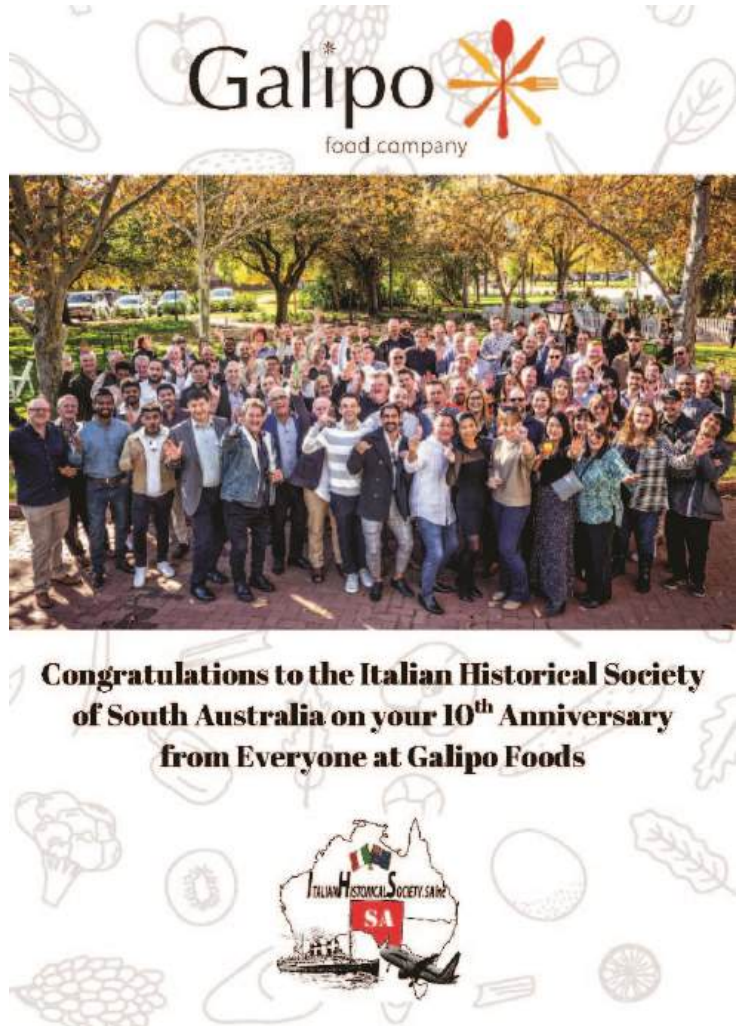
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***Together, we can ensure the voices of Italian  
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**To donate or learn more, contact:**

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