

COMMITTEE 2017—2018

CO OPTED

Cultural Co-ordinator

NAME: **Rosa Matto**
DOB 25th April 1954
Place of Birth Adelaide
Province
Date of emigration:
Date of arrival in Australia
Australian citizen: Yes



Immigration experience:

My parents, Alberico Matto and Elvira Bosco came from Altavilla Irpina, prov. Avellino.

Like so many young men at the time, my father and his two brothers saved enough money to embark on the journey to Australia. My father and uncles arrived in Melbourne on the Hellenic Prince on the 8th August, 1951 just 6 months after the birth of my brother, Armando.

My mother and brother finally joined my father, arriving in Melbourne on the *Surriento, Flotta Lauro* on the 6th July 1953. My father and his brothers had already bought a house in George Street, Thebarton but very soon the arrival of my uncles' families meant it was too small. So, my father bought a larger house in Prospect where they all lived together for a time. The closeness between the three families remains to this day.

My father worked two shifts at British Tube Mills and later the Islington Railyards while my uncles worked hard cutting cane in Queensland. I remember many stories recounted about the early years which, undoubtedly, were very difficult. As soon as I started school, my mother went to work as a cleaner in various hospitals in Adelaide.

Although the times were harsh in a strange new land, there was also much fun. Every weekend, I remember, there were parties – for new arrivals, for weddings (sometimes two on one night), christenings and birthdays. And, of course, there was singing and a lot of dancing. We have grown up and grown old with people who shared a very special bond and a very special history.

I am very proud of my heritage and of my parents who gave me every opportunity to succeed. I am grateful, especially, for the intelligence and humanity both my parents had in treating my brother and I equally, with love and respect for our different abilities.

I am also proud to belong to the Italo Australian community in Adelaide.