

15 March 2002

The Hon. Bob Carr  
Premier of NSW  
Parliament House  
Sydney

Bozza

**RE: ASSISTANCE FOR AN HISTORIC BOOK ON THE LIFE OF THE  
LEGENDARY MAMMA LENA**

Dear Mr. Carr,

I wish to inform you that I am writing a 500 page book on the life of Mamma Lena Gustin, my wife of 61 years. **I would be honoured if you would write the introduction to the book.**

This book will continue on from the 714 page volume I published in 1988: **"70 Years of Memories in Two Worlds"** which was officially launched by Nick Greiner at one of his first appearances, as Premier, with the Italian community.

The purpose of this new book is to cover the years 1988 up to 2001 in the life of Mamma Lena emphasising her involvement with Italo-Australians in NSW. History is the core of the project and the volume will be full of stories, pictures and important facts and events that need to be remembered for posterity.

The Mitchell Library already boasts a full section on Mamma Lena as seen in the attached catalogue. Francesca Musico, a university student as part of her Thesis has researched the life of Mamma Lena spending more than seven months at the Mitchell sorting through all the material available on Mamma Lena.

Among some of Mamma Lena's notable achievements are the construction of the Mamma Lena Child Care Centre in Fairfield. A non profit kindergarten which looks after 65 children. Please listen to what the Hon. Janice Crosio said on the CD which I enclose. Another kindergarten for 100 children was built in 1969 in the Sicilian city of Poggioreale after a devastating earthquake. The funds were raised by Mamma Lena through her radio programmes at the time.

On Mamma Lena there are already three books, hundreds of articles and hopefully - when we can raise the money to finish it, a documentary on her life. We are grateful and thank you for the grant of \$10,000 you gave to the Mamma Lena Foundation Inc. towards the film project last year. However, this next book is a necessary and fitting tribute to an extraordinary woman who has devoted her life to others. This is also a book that I'm personally publishing and as I am a pensioner I lack the financial ability to do it all myself. I need help and a contribution from the State Government would be more than welcome. It is estimated that the cost of preparing and printing the 500 page book would be between \$30-40,000.

Dear Premier, I ask you to help me with the project while Mamma Lena is still alive. As a matter of fact, she will be 88 on the 9th July and on Sunday 14th July at the Conca D'Oro in Riverwood, there will be a gala luncheon in her honour among the hundreds who still love her. **Your presence, together with your wife, as our guest would be more than welcome and a wonderful surprise for Mamma Lena.** Should there also be good news on funding for the book that would be a double surprise.

I thank you for your kind attention and look forward to some good news from your office. In the meantime myself and Mamma Lena wish you all the very best and trust that you will be at the helm of NSW for more years to come.

Very best regards,

Dino Gustin

Encl:

- 1) 10 year anniversary at radio station 2CH - Arrivederci Roma
- 2) The Mamma Lena Story 1975
- 3) "70 Anni di Ricordi in Due Mondi" ("70 Years of Memories....")
- 4) Mitchell Library catalogue on material held on Mamma Lena
- 5) Part of the Francesca Musico Thesis
- 6) Gough Whitlam telegram
- 7) Article: "Mamma Lena, Mother of Italians"
- 8) Assorted articles
- 9) CD on the life of Mamma Lena