



Dear Mamma Lena

I am sure that, as you celebrate the occasion of your 83rd birthday, you derive great satisfaction from your achievements over many years, secure in the knowledge that they have been of enduring benefit to both the Italian community and wider Australia.

It would be impossible in the space of this letter to list the many achievements for which you have been honoured; however I have no doubt that many Italian migrants can recall the assistance they derived from your radio program, *Arrivederci Roma*. It not only met their information and entertainment needs, but also made them feel more at home in Australia and thus reduced their sense of isolation.

As a migrant you understood your listeners' needs and aspirations. Importantly, your advice never wavered from being unstintingly positive, encouraging them to participate fully in Australian society. With your encouragement they persevered, joining the many thousands of other migrants who built a future in Australia for themselves and their descendants and made a substantial and generous contribution to the economic, social and cultural life of this nation.

As you look back over four decades of service to Italian Australians, you can reflect on the strong and enduring family ties between Australia and Italy. Ties with Australia are being continuously nurtured through migration, tourism, family visits, student and teacher exchanges and a growing number of cultural and trade agreements.

You have also witnessed the contribution which migration and cultural diversity have made to Australia, in our present tolerant and inclusive society. Our accomplishments together reflect the capacity of people, to understand and accept cultural differences. They also reflect the opportunities which exist to develop services of benefit to the community.

In this respect, it must be of great satisfaction to you that the Sorella Radio Child Care Centre, which you inaugurated thirteen years ago, has recently been re-named The Mamma Lena Child Care Centre and is being expanded to cater for a larger intake of children. This important achievement thus becomes another part of your proud legacy.

Thank you, Mamma Lena, and happy birthday!



Philip Ruddock