

Message from John Aquilina MP Minister for Education and Training

Mamma Lena's caring contribution for more than 40 years has helped thousands of Italian migrants integrate more smoothly into the Australian lifestyle and culture. Her care extended beyond her own community and particularly to my community; the Maltese.

Mamma Lena played a pivotal role in setting up the first Maltese radio program in Australia. Her popular *Arrivederci Roma* program on 2CH inspired Josephine Zammit to dream of a similar program to help the Maltese community. Mamma Lena helped plan and barrack for the program, willingly sharing with Josephine her expertise, even the addresses of her advertisers, making it possible for the dream to become a reality.

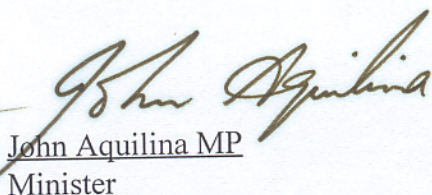
I first met Mamma Lena in 1978 when I was Mayor of City of Blacktown. I have always been impressed by the caring and practical advice she gave the Italian population on her radio program and the extra fundraising and activities she inspired and saw to fruition. Her willingness to give practical assistance by doing such things as taking people to hospitals and helping new migrants fill in complex Government forms was also impressive.

By helping Josephine Zammit produce her radio program, the Maltese community was able to access that same level of community feeling and assistance which had been prompted by Mamma Lena for the Italian community.

Even knowing her magnanimous reputation, when I first met her I was still impressed by her kind and caring spirit and her interest in the needs and experiences of all those about her. She knew not only how to listen and sympathise, but could give sound counsel on what action should be taken by both individuals and Governments to solve problems. As a State Government Minister, I am aware of the need for decision makers to have access to sensible people sensitive to the needs of various communities. Mamma Lena has been an excellent source of practical advice on migrant issues to many Governments over the years.

Age has not wearied her. Although now 83, Mamma Lena is still playing a role in the community as president of the Mamma Lena Child Care Centre in Fairfield. She continues to offer sound advice to individuals and Governments as required. Congratulations, Mamma Lena, on all you have done, and well done to your husband Dino who has supported your hard work and is now ensuring your legacy lives on through the printed word.

Yours sincerely



John Aquilina MP
Minister