

**THREE GOVERNMENT MINISTERS AND 300 PEOPLE CELEBRATED THE
88TH BIRTHDAY OF THE POPULAR "MAMMA LENA"**

Sydney, Sunday 14th July 2002. In the beautiful Conca D'Oro Lounge in Riverwood, three State and Federal Ministers together with 300 well wishers sat down for a sumptuous lunch to celebrate the 88th birthday of Mamma Lena. Mamma Lena for 30 years was both a journalist and radio announcer and very well known to the Italo-Australian community. She has lived in Bankstown for the last 45 years.

To celebrate her birthday, Mamma Lena gave to all the 150 ladies who attended the lunch her special medal; "the Heart of Mamma Lena" which has the inscription "Life Passes but the good done remains".

At the happy event we had the company of the Hon. Philip Ruddock, Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, and Mrs. Ruddock; the Hon. Sandra Nori, State Minister for Tourism and John Aquilina, State Minister for Fair Trading. During their speeches the Ministers paid tribute to the valuable assistance Mamma Lena gave to migrants during her 30 years as a journalist and radio announcer on 2SM, 2CH, 2KY and 2SERFM. Mention was also made of the Mamma Lena Child Care Centre which she, together with her husband Dino, built in Fairfield. The Centre accommodates 65 children ranging from birth to pre-school.

One of the highlights of the day was the awarding of the second annual "Cultural Prize" of \$1,500 and the "Charity Prize" of \$500 by the Mamma Lena Foundation. The President of the Foundation, Mr. Michael Cantali this year awarded the "Cultural Prize" to Movimwento FM. A group of young people who, at their own expense, maintain 5 hours of radio programmes - one hour per night five days a week - on 98.5FM in which they play the latest Italian music and talk about all things Italian.....in English.

The "Charity Prize" went to Mrs. Teresa Gessa Cossa. With a small group of volunteers and "finance angels" Mrs. Cossa has taken upon herself the task of making clothing for children in poor and war or disaster effected areas of the world such as India and Cossovo. She buys the fabrics and in a room she rents from a nearby school she and her friends create the clothing which will be flown, courtesy of Qantas and Air India to the affected areas.

Surrounded by flowers and well wishers, Mamma Lena had a wonderful birthday and would like to thank all for those who made this day so special for her.

Photographs:

- Ministers with Mamma Lena
- The Mamma Lena Child Care Centre
- The Mamma Lena Foundation prize recipients
- All the ladies with Mamma Lena and their "Heart of Mamma Lena" medal