

PREMIER'S SPEECH
ITALIAN NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATION
MAY 31, 1998



2/6/98

Dear Teresa,
I am enclosing for you a copy of the Premier's Italian National Day speech. I am sure you will find a part of it very interesting.

Forwarded with the Compliments of

Regards,

John Aquilina

John Aquilina, B.A., Dip.Ed., M.P.
Member for Riverstone
Minister for Education and Training
Minister Assisting the Premier on Youth Affairs

JOHN AQUILINA, M.P.
2/46 RAILWAY ROAD
P.O. BOX 138
MARAYONG NSW 2148

Phone: 9622 6190 Fax: 9831 2795

**PREMIER'S SPEECH
ITALIAN NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATION**

MAY 31, 1998.

Dr Francesco Catania, Consul General of Italy.

Mr John Caputo, President of the Italian National Day Celebration Committee.

The Hon. Phillip Ruddock, Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs
representing the Prime Minister.

The Hon. Peter Collins, Leader of the NSW Opposition.

My Parliamentary colleagues Morris Iemma and Joe Tripodi.

Other Parliamentary colleagues.

Distinguished guests.

Ladies and gentlemen,

It's 52 years since a referendum gave the people of Italy the Republic they wanted.

Fifty-two years which have seen Italy become the world's fifth industrial power and, importantly for Australia, the most important source of immigrants outside the United Kingdom.

Your community has had a profound influence on Australia.

You have added to our language, which already had about half of its words derived from that form of ancient Italian that is Latin.

Most cars on the road, whether made in Italy or Japan, have Italian sounding names.

There is no shopping centre without its distinctive Italian delicatessens, cafes and restaurants.

The world of industry and commerce would not be the same without your influence.

The shape of our cities has been forever altered by the genius of Italian builders, artisans and architects.

The Italian community is today the third largest community in NSW. The Italian language is the second most commonly spoken language in the home.

My Government takes the view that migrants have been and continue to be a social, economic and political asset to our state.

Maintaining family and business links with Italy gives our State a competitive edge in Europe.

Helping second, third and fourth generation Italians maintain their mother tongue is paramount to building our links with Italy.

Today I am announcing two measures to promote the learning of Italian in our schools:

Firstly, this year my Government will spend \$100,000 to help 65 year 11 and 12 students travel to Italy to learn Italian.

Many of these students will be of Italian origin and will get the opportunity to spend 10 to 50 days studying Italian in schools, language institutes and Universities.

The students will live with Italian families and use the Italian language in its real context.

Secondly, the Department of Education and Training is working closely with CO.AS.IT. and the Italian Government to develop an Italian language CDROM (pronounced C.D.- Rom) which will be available free of charge to Government schools.

This is an example of how the Italian community is helping to bring our two nations together for the benefit of our young people.

Italian contributions to Australia are well known.

Today I would like to pay homage to the unsung heroes of the Italian success story - the Italo-Australian women.

Today, in most hospitals you will find a woman doctor with an Italian name. It is the same in the media, in the courts, in banks, in science, the arts and industry – in all these spheres Italo-Australian women have made their mark.

They are mostly second and third generation Italo-Australian women.

They owe their success to their parents, particularly to their mothers who provided a role model of hard work and integrity.

Now, in their later years, these women have become sources of wisdom and bearers of age-old traditions for their grandchildren.

I pay tribute to the young women who came here in the 50s and 60s, with their young men.

They arrived in this country with fear and difficulty, but driven by one paramount desire - creating a better future for their children.

You have achieved your task, admirably.

I know it is dangerous to single out individuals as there are so many who should be recognised.

However, I want to acknowledge a few people who are representative of the hard working spirit of Italian women.

These women are in many ways the backbone of a large number of committees and organisations catering for the welfare, cultural and academic needs of our state's Italian Australian community.

Let me start with Mamma Lena – a true humanitarian and much loved Italian Australian woman.

Mamma Lena was the first voice of Italian women on Australian radio.

A dedicated, passionate and gentle woman – like so many of you here today.

I would also like to mention Mrs Patricia Fin, the wife of Mr Joe Fin, the President of CO.AS.IT.

Patricia has been a tireless worker behind the scenes, providing assistance to Joe and the hard working women on the committee which has raised hundreds of thousands of dollars over 30 years.

I know that Patricia would be the first to say that she does not deserve any credit.

However, her tireless efforts should be recognised as should her many accomplishments.

It is well known, for example, that Patricia is an accomplished musician, and regularly performs at public and church functions.

Congratulations Patricia.

I also pay tribute to Mrs Teresa Monzo, the President of the La Famiglia (pronounced FAMILIA) Italian Pensioners Association.

Teresa has led a band of hardworking men and women from Sydney's West for many years raising tens of thousands of dollars for hospitals and charitable organisations.

She has never requested nor acknowledged any recognition for her work, but I know that there are hundreds who would want her work to be acknowledged.

I would also like to thank the women members of the Italian National Day Celebration Committee, and all the women who serve the community behind the scenes:

Rosalie Sasta
Mena Calabria
Catherine Lucchesi
Sara Palazzolo and
Franca Di Donato.

To all these ladies, and of course, to dear Mamma Lena who will soon be celebrating her 84th birthday, I say congratulations and well done.

Congratulations and my sincere thanks also to the many other women of Italian descent who continue to work so hard on behalf of their communities.

Finally, I would like to pay tribute to the victims of the recent devastating landslides in the Campania region.

As you would all remember, we had a similar disaster in Thredbo. The whole nation was behind rescuers and victims.

The Italo-Australian community has launched an appeal which is being co-ordinated by the Australian representative of the Campania Region, Mr Antonio Bamonte.

On behalf of the people of New South Wales I offer once again our sympathy to the families of the victims and also to any relatives that may live in Australia and are present here today.

I am now very pleased to announce that the NSW Government is donating \$25,000 to the appeal. (Present the cheque to Tony Bamonte)

Best wishes to all of you and may we all be back here again soon to celebrate the birth of the Republic of Australia.

Viva l' Italia, Viva l' Australia.

Dear Anna,

Withal Day speech. I am sure you will find a part of it interesting.

Respectfully,

John Aquilina

John Aquilina, B.A., Dip Ed., M.P.

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PO BOX 124
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