

□ 10 July 1994 – A DOUBLE CELEBRATION

Mamma Lena's 80th Birthday and 34th Anniversary of the "laying of the first stone" of the Apia Club

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

On behalf of the Apia Club it gives me great pleasure in welcoming you all here today on this very special occasion.

I would like to extend a very warm welcome to the following guests of honour: the Federal Leader of the Opposition The Hon. Alexander Downer and Mrs Downer, the Federal Minister for Veteran's Affairs The Hon. Con Sciacca accompanied by his advisor Mr Shane Wells, to Mamma Lena and Dino Gustin, the Hon. Jim Samios MLC who today is representing the NSW Premier John Fahey, the Hon. Phillip Ruddock MP, The Hon. Ivan Petch MP, The Hon. Dr Brian Pizzuti MLC, the Hon. Paul Zammit MLC, the Hon. Bronwyn Bishop MP.

From Monte Paschi Australia Mr and Mrs Marco Voliani and Mr Giuseppe De Giosa, from Widin and Company the Club's Administrator Mr John Mann and Ms Helen Proud. Also in attendance representing Alitalia Mr Franco and Emilio Labbozzetta of Emilio Travel Services, Mrs Josephine Cruze, President of Club Marconi Mr Tony Labbozzetta, President of Fogolar Furlan Mr and Mrs Bob Donati, from *Il Globo* newspaper Mr and Mrs Pizzagalli, from *La Fiamma* newspaper Mr Tornari, the NSW Ethnic Affairs Commissioners, the Apia Club Management



Mamma Lena, accompanied by Mr and Mrs Downer, while cutting her cake – a fine reproduction of the map of Italy and its islands.

Committee Mr and Mrs Joe Rosa, Mr and Mrs Renato Orsatti, Mr and Mrs Filippo Parisi, Mr and Mrs Tony Mazzarolo, Mr and Mrs Bruno Tava and of course members and guests of the APIA Club and friends of Mamma Lena.

Today I would like to inform you that we are having a triple celebration. First being the 80th Birthday of "Mamma Lena", a remarkable lady who has dedicated the greater part of her life assisting members of the Italian-Australian community. Mamma Lena has achieved many things in her life and has been awarded accordingly. Amongst many awards, two notable ones were the "Cross of the Knighthood" presented to her by the Italian Government in 1967 and sec-

ondly in 1968 she was awarded an MBE (Member of the British Empire) by the Queen this made her one of the first Italo-Australian women to receive this award.



The Hon. Alexander Downer and Mamma Lena surrounded by admirers.



Alexander Downer swarmed by the media.



Alexander Downer and V.I.P.'s welcomed to the Club by Tony Bonicioli.



Mr and Mrs Downer standing by the plaque that his father unveiled 34 years ago.



Tony Bonicioli presenting Alexander Downer with pictures of his father at the Apia Club site 34 years ago.



Vince Cammareri (foreground right) with friends.





Tony Bonicioli presenting Mamma Lena with her plaque.



Mr Alexander Downer and Tony Bonicioli.

The APIA Club is honoured to have this extraordinary woman as a life member of the APIA Club, and I must add that she is a very "active" member and great supporter of our Club, the Management and Staff would like to extend their congratulations to you on your 80th Birthday.

The second part of our celebration is the 34th Anniversary of the "laying of the first stone" which took place on the July 9, 1960 by the then Minister for Immigration from the Menzies Government the Hon. Alexander Downer. We are honoured and pleased that here today, attending our celebrations, accompanied by his wife Nicky is our very special guest of honour, Mr Alexander Downer, the Federal Opposition Leader and the son of Mr Alexander Downer who as I just mentioned was here 34 years ago. Since then our Club

has come a long way and today boasts over 5000 members. What a happy coincidence 34 years ago the late Alexander Downer not only wished the Italian-Australian community every success but in his generosity he wanted to personally contribute with a personal donation towards the building of this Club. I am certain that all the Italian-Australians would like to wish Mr Downer great success and hope that one day down the track you will visit the APIA

Club in a different role.

Mr and Mrs Downer please accept our best wishes.

Thirdly, today Italians all over the world are celebrating the 2-1 victory over Spain in the World Cup quarter finals and we are all optimistic that we will see the Italian "tricolore" make their way up the ladder to the finals.

Forza Italia!

Thank you all.

Tony Bonicioli
Secretary-Manager

Mamma Lena, and husband Dino Gustin, wish to THANK ALL those who participated to the celebration of her 80th birthday.



Official table: standing for both the Italian and Australian Anthem.

Tributo a Mamma Lena e 34° anniversario della fondazione dell'Apia Club

Al Club Apia, in un tripudio di tricolore, partecipazione plebiscitaria di pubblico e autorità politiche e di governo per ricordare e celebrare il 34° anniversario della posa della prima pietra dell'attuale sede del sodalizio di Frazer Street. La manifestazione si è svolta in concomitanza dell'affettuoso tributo d'omaggio organizzato dal Club in onore della "leggendaria Mamma Lena" Gustin, per festeggiare il suo ottantesimo compleanno.

A dar particolare significato storico alla celebrazione del 34.mo anniversario è stata la presenza del Capo Federale dell'Opposizione on. Alexander Downer. Fu infatti suo padre, on. A.R. Downer, all'epoca Ministro Federale per l'immigrazione, a presiedere nel lontano 1960 la cerimonia della posa della prima pietra.

Il leader dell'Opposizione, nel suo intervento, ha tenuto a ricordare e a sottolineare come tutta la sua famiglia abbia sempre nutrito un particolare sentimento d'ammirazione per l'Italia, meta preferita delle varie occasioni di vacanze quando il padre era Alto Commissario Australiano a Londra.

Fra le tante autorità e ospiti d'onore presenti: il Ministro federale on. Con Sciacca, l'on. Jim Samios in rappresentanza del Premier John Fahey, i parlamentari federali on. Bronwyn Bishop e Phillip Ruddock, gli on. Paul Zammit, Brian Pizzuti e Ivan Petch del parlamento statale del New South Wales e l'avvocato Concetta Fierravanti membro del Consiglio generale degli

Italiani all'Estero. Conclusi gli interventi ufficiali il segretario-manager Tony Bonicioli, faceva dono all'on. Downer, a nome del Club, di due storiche fotografie ricordo (riprodotte da Jolly Studio) scattate al padre in occasione della cerimonia di trentaquattro anni fa.

A Mamma Lena, applauditissima e festeggiatissima dal pubblico, l'on. Downer consegnava una targa d'onore che il Diret-

tivo dell'Apia ha voluto attribuirle a ricordo della preziosa collaborazione da lei data al sodalizio e a tutta la comunità in tanti anni di instancabile attività.

Subito dopo, Mamma Lena, affiancata dall'onorevole Downer, compiva il tradizionale taglio della torta commemorativa, un'opera veramente monumentale, riprodotte l'Italia e le sue isole.



Mamma Lena con il marito Dino Gustin.



Alexander Downer fa conoscenza con partecipanti alla festa.



Alexander Downer still swamped by the media.

Message from Alexander Downer, MP Federal Leader of the Opposition

13/7/94

Nicky and I were delighted to participate in the 34th anniversary of your great Club, and of course the 80th birthday of Mamma Lena.

Through my family – especially my father who laid the foundation stone of the Apia Club in 1960 – I am proud of a very close association with your Club. I was very pleased to speak at your Club as he did, and meet many of your members.

I appreciated the kind words from your Secretary Manager, Mr Tony Boniciolli, and was delighted to receive the two framed prints of my father unveiling the foundation stone. I can assure you they will have an honoured place in my Parliament House office.

The Apia Club is obviously a highly popular institution within the Sydney Italian community, judging by the numbers and the very happy mood at your anniversary lunch.

It was wonderful that so many people had the chance to let Mamma Lena know how much she is loved and respected for the great work she has done for so many people over such a long time. I was very proud to be able to thank her and wish her well in my own way.

The Apia Club has provided a great centre for community activities and friendship for more than three decades and am sure will continue doing so for many years to come.

I wish the Club and all its members, every success.

ALEXANDER DOWNER



Mamma Lena with the guests of honour.



Flying the flag 'Italian of course'.



Mr and Mrs A. Distefano, Alexander Downer and J. Samios.



The Hon. P. Ruddock and friends



Dr G. Di Giosa and the Hon. Con Sciacca.



Alexander Downer with A. Caputo and F. Navarra.



Alexander and Nicky Downer, Tony Boniciolli and J. Samios.



The happy crowd.



M. Cantali and friends.



"Tasmanian Gourmet Cheese" table.

Downer's Promises to his "Mamma"

It was a foundation his father laid 34 years ago, and Liberal leader Alexander Downer built on it yesterday by cementing ties with Australia's Italian community at the Apia Club in Leichhardt.

Sir Alexander Downer laid the first foundation stone of the club when he was immigration Minister in the Menzies Government.

So Mr Downer used the family link to show his commitment to the Italian community and the principles of multiculturalism.

He and his wife Nicky were helping celebrate the 80th birthday of one of the Italian community's living legends - radio and print journalist and long-time activist "Mamma Lena" Morelli.

Opposition health spokeswoman Bronwyn Bishop was also among the guests, and Prime Minister Paul Keating and NSW Premier John Fahey sent their congratulations.

Mamma Lena is known for her newspaper columns, radio shows,

political lobbying and the help she has given thousands of fellow immigrants.

She has been decorated by both the Australian and Italian governments for her services to the Italian community in Australia since arriving in 1956.

Mr Downer promised the 700 guests that a Liberal government would be committed to the principles of multiculturalism. He said: "For my Party, we very much in the years ahead want to build on our achievements in the areas of both immigration and multi cultural affairs."

"I always looked upon immigration as part of the process of nation building and developing Australia."

"Multiculturalism in Australia is really part of the great and unique diversity of this country, and it's something that we all want to cherish."

BY FRANK ZELER



Bronwyn Bishop, Mamma Lena and Nicky Downer.



Alexander Downer during his speech.





Mr and Mrs Downer.



Emilio and Franco Labbozzetta, Tony Boniciolli and Tony Maniaci.



Tony Boniciolli presenting Nicky Downer with a bouquet of flowers.



Con Sciacca greeting Tony Labbozzetta.

Tribute to Mrs Lena Gustin - "Mamma Lena"

It is a great pleasure to add my voice to all those who are gathering today tribute to you, Mamma Lena, on the celebration of your 80th birthday. Turning 80 is a significant achievement for a person, but it is a special occasion indeed when it is the birthday of one who has done as much as you have to foster the welfare and cultural life of your community.

This commemorative booklet records the details of your work for the Italian community almost from the moment of your arrival in Australia in 1956. It traces your contributions to a host of causes through *La Fiamma*, *Sorella Radio*, the *Associazione Nazionale Famiglie degli Emigranti* and other organisations. It is a record of which you yourself, and members of the community, may all feel just proud.

Through your work, Mamma Lena, you have helped not only in a very practical sense, but even more importantly through your columns and broadcasts, you have

helped change the perceptions of government and other authorities as to what it means to be an immigrant, and of the expectations and needs that new settlers bring with them. You have helped form our nation into the vibrant multi-cultural society that it is today.

I am happy to see that both the Australian and Italian governments have formally recognised your tireless work for the Italian community in Australia by conferring respectively the rank of MBE and the Croce di Cavaliere. On a more personal note, I would like to add my own congratulations.

Your friends will honour your achievements today, and I hope that this gathering will demonstrate the gratitude and thanks of all members of the community for your dedication to their welfare over so many years.

Grazie e tantissimi auguri.

P.J. Keating