

The *A.P.I.A.* Club Ladies Committee

38-42 FRAZER STREET, LEICHHARDT, 2040  
TELEPHONE: 82 0187

The Hon. J. Dawkins  
Minister for Employment Education & Training  
Parliament House Canberra  
ACT 2600

P.O. BOX 46  
LEICHHARDT, N.S.W., 2040

17th December 1990

My Dear Minister,

Re: Teaching of the Italian Language

I Mamma Lena on behalf of the Italian Community, and the various Italo/Australian Associations in Australia, would like to present to you several thousand signatures in the form of a PETITION protesting against the intention by the Federal Government to lower the priority given to the teaching of the Italian language in Australian schools.

This our protest is the first phase in the light of the release of the "Green Paper". Should the green paper make unfavourable recommendations or to lower the current status of the teaching of Italian the collection of more signatures to our petition and our protestation will continue to, and beyond the release of the "White Paper".

The Australians of Italian background are well aware as I am sure you are also well aware of their contribution to the development of this great Country. We are therefore requesting the highest priority for the teaching of our language in our schools. We are indignant that our language should be relegated to a lower priority that it currently enjoys to behind that of the German and French, or any other languages.

We therefore appeal against earlier indications by the Minister and any future decision which may be taken by the Federal Government to lower the status of the teaching of the Italian language in our schools. And we pray you can help us maintain the rights of about one million Australians of Italian background maintain their language and their culture which is spread and appreciated throughout the world. The Government should not forget those who have done so much for their new, adopted homeland.

In anticipation of your support I would like to thank you on behalf of the Ladies Committee of the APIA Club, the various Italo/Australian Associations, and the "Italian" Community at large who have collaborated in the compilation of the petition and pray you hear our plea. I wish to take this opportunity to wish you and your colleagues a Merry Xmas and a prosperous New Year.

Yours respectfully

Cav. Lena Gustin, M.B.E.  
President Ladies Committee