

2 cavallieri di Vittorio Veneto, Milledio, Pella

ADDRESS BY THE PRIME MINISTER

THE HON. E.G. WHITLAM, O.C., M.P.

TO THE APIA CLUB, SYDNEY

SUNDAY 1 JUNE 1975

*Alfred Rodwell  
Comandatore  
al Granby  
Maestro Linnelli*

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IT IS JUST OVER A YEAR SINCE I ATTENDED A GALA DINNER IN SYDNEY OF THE APIA CLUB. IN AGAIN PAYING TRIBUTE TO APIA, I AGAIN PAY TRIBUTE TO THE ENTIRE ITALIAN COMMUNITY, TO THE ENTIRE MIGRANT COMMUNITY, TO ITALY HERSELF, TO EUROPE AND OUR EUROPEAN CONNECTION. NOT ONLY DOES APIA PROVIDE A VITAL FOCUS FOR THE ITALIAN COMMUNITY - THE LARGEST SINGLE GROUP OF NON-BRITISH MIGRANTS IN AUSTRALIA - IT PROVIDES A LIVING SYMBOL OF AUSTRALIA'S LINKS WITH EUROPE. MORE THAN ANY OTHER SINGLE ORGANISATION YOUR CLUB HAS COME TO REFLECT THE STRENGTH, THE IMPORTANCE, THE DURABILITY OF AUSTRALIA'S RELATIONSHIP WITH ITALY, HER MAINFOLD LINKS WITH THE OLD WORLD AND ALL THOSE WHO HAVE COME TO US FROM THE OLD WORLD.

I REJOICE ON THE PARTICULAR OCCASION THAT BRINGS US TOGETHER TODAY. IT IS AN HONOUR TO BE WITH YOU TO OBSERVE THE 29TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PROCLAMATION OF THE ITALIAN REPUBLIC. 2 JUNE 1946 SAW THE FINAL STEPS IN THE RESTORATION OF ITALIAN DEMOCRACY. ITALIANS VOTED IN A REFERENDUM FOR A REPUBLIC; AT THE SAME TIME THEY HELD THE FIRST ELECTIONS FOR A CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY. WITH THE OVERTHROW OF FASCISM ITALY REBUILT HER DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS WITH SPEED AND VIGOUR.

FOR ALL THE DIFFICULTIES THE WESTERN NATIONS HAVE FACED SINCE THE SECOND WORLD WAR - FOR ALL THE GREAT ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND MILITARY CRISES THE CONTINENT HAS ENDURED - THE FOUNDATIONS OF MODERN ITALIAN DEMOCRACY HAVE SURVIVED. ON THOSE FOUNDATIONS WAS BUILT THE GREAT POST-WAR MIGRATION PROGRAM TO AUSTRALIA - ONE OF THE BIGGEST PLANNED MOVEMENTS OF POPULATION IN ALL HISTORY.

THE ~~HI~~STORY OF ITALIAN MIGRATION TO AUSTRALIA IS FAMILIAR TO ALL OF US. THERE ARE FEW COUNTRIES WITH WHICH AUSTRALIA HAS HAD A LONGER CONTACT. THESE CONTACTS GO BACK MUCH FURTHER THAN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE MODERN REPUBLIC; FURTHER EVEN THAN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF APIA. WE KNOW THERE WAS AN ITALIAN ON THE ENDEAVOUR WHEN CAPTAIN COOK CAME TO AUSTRALIA; WE KNOW THERE WAS AN ITALIAN IN THE FIRST FLEET. DURING THE 19TH CENTURY MIGRANTS ARRIVED IN AUSTRALIA IN SMALL BUT GROWING NUMBERS, PARTICULARLY AFTER THE IMPETUS OF THE GOLD DISCOVERIES OF THE 1850'S. RAFFAELLO CARBONI WAS ONE OF THE MINERS' LEADERS AT THE EUREKA STOCKADE IN 1854. GIUSEPPE GARIBALDI, THE GREAT FIGHTER FOR ITALIAN UNIFICATION, ONE OF THE BUILDERS OF THE MODERN ITALIAN DEMOCRACY WHOSE ANNIVERSARY WE OBSERVE TODAY, WEIGHED ANCHOR IN THE BRIG CARMEN OFF TASMANIA IN 1852. SINCE THOSE EARLY BEGINNINGS THE ITALIAN COMMUNITY HAS GROWN TO BE THE BIGGEST, THE MOST VIGOROUS, THE MOST VALUABLE OF ALL NON-BRITISH NATIONAL GROUPS IN THIS COUNTRY.

MORE THAN 320,000 AUSTRALIAN RESIDENTS WERE BORN IN ITALY. ACCORDING TO THE BEST ESTIMATES, THERE ARE MORE THAN A MILLION AUSTRALIANS OF ITALIAN DESCENT. IT IS EASILY FORGOTTEN THAT AUSTRALIA IS ONE OF THE WORLD'S GREAT MULTI-NATIONAL COMMUNITIES.

WE HAVE HAD ENORMOUS BENEFITS FROM THE INFLOW OF EUROPEAN MIGRANTS. NOT THE LEAST OF THOSE BENEFITS IS THE REMINDER OF OUR LINKS WITH OTHER NATIONS AND THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF ALL NATIONS IN SOLVING OUR COMMON PROBLEMS. AUSTRALIA'S GEOGRAPHIC ISOLATION HAS PLACED US FAR FROM THE ANCIENT CENTRES OF POWER AND IDEAS. IT WAS NEVER MORE ESSENTIAL THAN IT IS TODAY FOR AUSTRALIANS TO STRENGTHEN THEIR CONTACTS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES AND DEVELOP CLOSER RELATIONS WITH THE NATIONS OF THE OLD WORLD - THE NATIONS OF EUROPE. THAT WAS THE ESSENTIAL PURPOSE OF MY VISIT TO EUROPE LAST DECEMBER AND JANUARY. YOU WILL REMEMBER THERE WAS SOME MILD CRITICISM OF THAT MISSION IN AUSTRALIA AT THE TIME. THIS IS NOT THE OCCASION FOR POLITICAL SELF-JUSTIFICATION, BUT I AM CERTAIN THAT NO ONE IN THIS ROOM, NO ONE WITH ANY AWARENESS OF AUSTRALIA'S PROPER ROLE IN THE WORLD, NO ONE WITH ANY FEELING FOR THE DEPTH AND RANGE OF OUR CONTACTS WITH THE NATIONS OF PEOPLES OF EUROPE, COULD DOUBT THE IMPORTANCE OF THAT MISSION, AND, IF I MAY SAY SO, THE IMPORTANCE OF WHAT IT ACHIEVED.

I HAD THE VERY GREAT PLEASURE OF VISITING ITALY, NOT FOR THE FIRST TIME AS PRIME MINISTER, BUT THE SECOND. I AM PROUD TO SAY THAT ROME IS THE ONLY CAPITAL ON THE EUROPEAN CONTINENT WHICH I HAVE VISITED TWICE SINCE MY GOVERNMENT WAS ELECTED. IN JANUARY I MET PRESIDENT LEONE AND HAD TALKS WITH SENIOR MINISTERS INCLUDING PRIME MINISTER MORO AND FOREIGN MINISTER RUMOR.

WE REVIEWED THE BUOYANT TRADE RELATIONS BETWEEN ITALY AND AUSTRALIA. ITALY IS ONE OF AUSTRALIA'S MAJOR TRADING PARTNERS - OUR TWELFTH MOST IMPORTANT EXPORT MARKET AND OUR EIGHTH MOST IMPORTANT SOURCE OF IMPORTS. MY GOVERNMENT HAS MOVED TO ENSURE THAT THERE IS A CONTINUING AND HEALTHY TRADE BETWEEN US. LAST YEAR THE THEN MINISTER FOR OVERSEAS TRADE ANNOUNCED THE FORMATION OF THE ITALO-AUSTRALIAN TRADE ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMERCIAL RELATIONS BETWEEN ITALY AND AUSTRALIA. THE COMMITTEE WAS FORMED BY A GROUP OF ITALIAN AND AUSTRALIAN BUSINESSMEN TO PROMOTE COOPERATION AND STREAMLINE PROCESSES BETWEEN THE BUSINESS COMMUNITIES OF BOTH COUNTRIES.

*My govt has similarly established the small Business Bureau. By supporting the inclination of wages before industrial tribunals & ~~improving~~ <sup>increasing</sup> the ~~and~~ purchasing power of age pensions & welfare payments, my govt has guaranteed that the people have money in their pockets. Our international trade is healthy & businesses at home incl. small businesses should be prosperous too.*

AGAIN, WHILE IN ROME, I SIGNED A CULTURAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN ITALY AND AUSTRALIA AS A TANGIBLE EXPRESSION OF THE CULTURAL AND HUMAN CONTACTS BUILT UP OVER A QUARTER OF A CENTURY. THE AGREEMENT SPECIFICALLY RECOGNISES THE CONTRIBUTION WHICH THE ITALIAN COMMUNITY HAS MADE TO THE QUALITY AND DIVERSITY OF LIFE IN AUSTRALIA, AND SEEKS TO PROMOTE THE DEVELOPMENT OF BILATERAL RELATIONS IN THE SOCIAL, CULTURAL, ARTISTIC, SCIENTIFIC AND SPORTING FIELDS. I GIVE ONE EXAMPLE OF THE SORT OF COOPERATION WE CAN EXPECT. THE AGREEMENT PROVIDES THAT AUSTRALIA AND ITALY WILL EXCHANGE TEACHERS TO FACILITATE THE INTEGRATION OF ITALIAN CHILDREN INTO THE AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITY, WHILE MAINTAINING THEIR CULTURAL TIES WITH THEIR BIRTHPLACE.

SIGNIFICANT AND SYMBOLIC AS THESE THINGS ARE, THE REAL IMPORTANCE OF MY VISIT TO ITALY AND OTHER NATIONS OF EUROPE WAS IN THE OPPORTUNITY WE HAD TO EXCHANGE VIEWS ON COMMON PROBLEMS, ON WORLD PROBLEMS. IN A SPEECH I GAVE IN ROME ON 8 JANUARY 1975 I SAID THIS:

"I DOUBT IF THERE HAS EVER BEEN A TIME WHEN CONSULTATION AND CO-OPERATION BETWEEN NATIONAL LEADERS WAS MORE URGENT OR IMPORTANT. AUSTRALIA AND ITALY HAVE GREAT CULTURAL AND SOCIAL TRADITIONS IN COMMON: MORE SIGNIFICANTLY, WE SHARE WITH ALL COUNTRIES OF THE WESTERN WORLD GREAT SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS. INFLATION AND UNEMPLOYMENT POSE A GRAVE AND GROWING THREAT TO DEMOCRATIC VALUES AND SOCIAL ORDER AND COHESION. IF WESTERN NATIONS ARE TO SOLVE THESE PROBLEMS WITHOUT A RECOURSE TO AUTHORITARIANISM OR A RELAPSE INTO ANARCHY, THEY WILL DO SO ONLY BY RESTORING FAITH IN THE DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM. IT IS TIME FOR GOVERNMENTS, FOR POLITICIANS, FOR ALL FREE POLITICAL PARTIES TO RENEW THEIR COMMITMENT TO THE FORMS AND VALUES OF A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY. THERE IS NO MORE URGENT TASK FOR MODERN STATESMEN THAN TO LEAD, TO INSPIRE, TO NOURISH THIS COMMITMENT. THE BREAKDOWN OF DEMOCRACY IN ONE COUNTRY, ATTACKS ON DEMOCRACY IN ONE COUNTRY, MUST BE RECOGNISED AS AN ATTACK ON DEMOCRACY EVERYWHERE. I BELIEVE THE LEADERS AND PEOPLES OF ITALY AND AUSTRALIA, TWO NATIONS WITH DEMOCRATIC SYSTEMS, CAN PLAY A PART IN REBUILDING THE WORLD'S FAITH IN THE FLEXIBILITY AND STRENGTH OF DEMOCRACY."

THAT IS OUR URGENT TASK. THAT WAS THE RELEVANCE OF MY MISSION TO EUROPE. THAT IS THE LESSON TO BE KEPT IN MIND WHEN WE CELEBRATE THE ANNIVERSARY OF POST-WAR DEMOCRACY IN ITALY.

DEMOCRACY IS STRONGEST WHEN IT PROVIDES ITS CITIZENS WITH THE MEANS TO A FULL LIFE AND A MEASURE OF MATERIAL SECURITY AND SPIRITUAL FULFILMENT. FOR TOO LONG IN AUSTRALIA MIGRANTS LACKED THESE ESSENTIAL THINGS. THE LABOR PARTY WAS THE FIRST TO IDENTIFY MIGRANTS AS ONE OF THE PRIME DISADVANTAGED GROUPS IN AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY. OUR POLICY SINCE WE CAME TO GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN TO RECTIFY A LONG TRADITION OF INJUSTICE AND DEPRIVATION, TO GIVE MIGRANTS THE SAME REWARDS AND OPPORTUNITIES AS OTHER AUSTRALIANS.

WE NO LONGER CONCENTRATE ON BRINGING VAST NUMBERS OF NEW SETTLERS TO AUSTRALIA. WE ARE NOT INTERESTED IN NUMBERS FOR THEIR OWN SAKE. THE BEST INVESTMENT WE CAN MAKE IN OUR FUTURE IS TO ENSURE THAT MIGRANTS ALREADY IN AUSTRALIA LEAD SECURE AND HAPPY LIVES. AUSTRALIA'S MIGRANT INTAKE IS NOW LARGELY DETERMINED BY MIGRANTS THEMSELVES. THIS IS BECAUSE WE HAVE GIVEN PRIORITY IN THE SELECTION OF MIGRANTS TO THE REUNION OF FAMILIES. NO TESTS OF ACCEPTABILITY BEYOND THOSE OF SOUND HEALTH AND GOOD CHARACTER ARE APPLIED TO THOSE WHO WISH TO JOIN THEIR FAMILIES IN AUSTRALIA.

WE BELIEVE THE PEOPLE MOST LIKELY TO SETTLE HAPPILY IN AUSTRALIA ARE THOSE WHO COME HERE TO JOIN MEMBERS OF THEIR OWN FAMILY. OUR SOCIAL SECURITY AND WELFARE PROGRAMS HAVE VASTLY IMPROVED THE LIVING STANDARDS OF MIGRANT PEOPLE, AND JUST AS IMPORTANT, HAVE HELPED TO INVOLVE THEM MORE CLOSELY IN COMMUNITY DECISIONS AND PLANNING. PROGRAMS SUCH AS THE AUSTRALIAN ASSISTANCE PLAN, COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRES AND REDS - IMPORTANT AS THEY ARE FOR ALL AUSTRALIANS - ARE OF PARTICULAR BENEFIT TO MIGRANTS BECAUSE OF THE ENCOURAGEMENT THEY GIVE FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT ACTION.

IT IS TIME GOVERNMENTS GAVE MORE TANGIBLE RECOGNITION TO THOSE WHO HAVE DONE MUCH TO BUILD AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY. THE ITALIANS WHO CAME TO AUSTRALIA CONTRIBUTED GREATLY TO OUR WAY OF LIFE. AUSTRALIANS OWE A LASTING DEBT TO THE ITALIAN CANEGROWERS IN NORTH QUEENSLAND, THE ITALIAN GOLDMINERS IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA, THE ITALIAN TOBACCO GROWERS IN VICTORIA AND WESTERN AUSTRALIA, THE FRUIT AND VEGETABLE GROWERS OF VICTORIA AND NEW SOUTH WALES. THE SNOWY MOUNTAINS SCHEME WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE WITHOUT THE WORK OF ITALIAN RIGGERS AND ENGINEERS. THE ITALIAN COMMUNITY HAS HAD A REAL INFLUENCE IN THE SMALL BUSINESS FIELD AS WELL AS IN LARGER ENTERPRISES SUCH AS THE TRANSFIELD CORPORATION. MY GOVERNMENT HAS SOUGHT TO RECOGNISE THIS CONTRIBUTION TO AUSTRALIAN LIFE AND PROSPERITY BY THE APPOINTMENT OF



DR. EVASIO COSTANZO TO THE AUSTRALIA COUNCIL, MR. CLAUDE ALCORSO  
 TO THE UNIVERSITIES COMMISSION, AND NOT LEAST, YOUR CLUB PRESIDENT, *Gas Gilcom*  
~~MR. JIM BAYUTTI~~, TO THE BOARD OF QANTAS.

ONE OF THE GREAT REWARDS OF MY 23 YEARS IN PUBLIC  
 LIFE HAS BEEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO MEET AND MIX WITH MEMBERS OF THE  
 AUSTRALIAN ITALIAN COMMUNITY. I HAVE MADE MANY DEEP AND LASTING  
 FRIENDSHIPS; I HAVE SPENT MANY HOURS IN HOSPITABLE SURROUNDINGS  
 AMONG ITALIAN PEOPLE. I HOPE THE TIME WILL COME WHEN OUR GREAT  
 MIGRANT COMMUNITIES WILL NO LONGER SEEM SEPARATE OR DISTINCT GROUPS  
 BUT INTEGRAL PARTS OF SOCIETY; WHEN HAVING AN ITALIAN NAME WILL  
 SEEM NO MORE REMARKABLE THAN HAVING AN ENGLISH OR AN IRISH NAME. WE  
 HAVE OF COURSE MOVED A LONG WAY IN GENERAL SOCIAL ATTITUDES -  
 IN THE SPIRIT OF TOLERANCE AND ACCEPTANCE - SINCE THAT GREAT MASS  
 MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE BEGAN WITH THE PROCLAMATION OF AN ITALIAN  
 REPUBLIC 29 YEARS AGO. WE STILL HAVE FURTHER TO MOVE. FOR MY  
 PART I NEVER FORGET - AND I SAID AS MUCH IN ROME - THAT ALMOST  
 EVERYTHING THAT IS BASIC TO AUSTRALIAN LIFE - THE ORIGINS OF OUR  
 CULTURE AND CIVILISATION, OUR ART, OUR SOCIAL AND SPIRITUAL VALUES,  
 MUCH OF OUR LANGUAGE - CAME TO US FROM ITALY. IT IS A LONG HISTORIC  
 PROCESS. IT IS STILL CONTINUING. IT IS NOURISHED BY ORGANISATIONS  
 SUCH AS APIA AND BY THE VIGOUR, THE CHARM, THE INDUSTRIOUS SPIRIT,  
 THE GREATNESS OF THE ITALIAN PEOPLE.