

1. Delighted to be here at the Italian Australian Club in Launceston - one of the only Italian Clubs in Australia that I haven't visited before.

Only two weeks ago I was at the Apia Club in Sydney where I always feel at home with President Jim Bayutti, a great Italian Australian who has done so much for his new country by continuing to care for his homeland. I mention in passing that he is on the board of Qantas and is the head of the new ethnic radio station in Sydney, which is serving the multi-lingual as well as multi-cultural needs of our migrant communities. He holds these positions because of his ability and because he represents the contribution being made by the 25 per cent of our Australian population who were born in another country

2. But of course here in Tasmania, there is the remarkable contribution made by Claude Alcorso - not only a most successful textile entrepreneur, but also a patron of the arts and of education - on the board of the Australian Opera, and last year appointed to the Universities Commission.

3. Then there's Sergio Guidicci from Tasmania who ten years ago was the first migrant from this State - and quite possibly the first from the whole of Australia - to win the celebrated Rhodes Scholarship which had always been regarded as a fairly Anglo Saxon institution.

4. But you know as well as I that these figureheads are only the tip of the iceberg - that there are Italian Australians, Australian Italians throughout Australia who have done wonders for this country, for this State, people who have made excellent citizens, people who have brought up families in the best blend

of old traditions and loyalties with new challenges and opportunities.

5. My Government understands your aspirations and applauds your initiatives. Clubs like this one are living examples of the interdependence of our cultures. Whether they are called Italian Australian or Australian Italian no longer matters, although I realise that there was a time - and not so many years ago - when it was considered more respectable, safer by far to include Australian somewhere in the title. I would like to think that where it does now appear in relation to ethnic clubs it is out of a feeling of affection and not of fear.

6. For my part, I feel a great love of Italy, her culture and her people. That is shared by my wife Margaret - who is in Mexico at present, in the Australian delegation to a United Nations Conference on women for International Women's Year. Also in that delegation is an Italian Australian women from Melbourne, Maria Pozos who is on the National Advisory Committee for International Women's Year in Australia. I know my wife will feel more than a tinge of regret at missing out on my visit here. Cathy my daughter will be able to tell her all about it on her return.

You know, its always struck me that politicians wives and daughters are quite properly choosy about what activities they will get involved in, and I don't blame them. But there's never an excuse produced when I mention there's a visit to an Italian Club coming up.

7. Talking of excuses, I am reminded of criticism of my visit to Europe last January. You will recall Liberal and Country Party criticism of the fact that the Prime Minister of Australia actually dared to take any time to visit those countries in Europe that have given us more than a quarter of our entire population. When I went to Italy - for a very brief period, unfortunately - it was the first visit by an Australian Prime Minister for over 15 years; 15 years during which thousands of Italians had chosen to take the great gamble on building a new life for themselves in a new Terra Australis. How wrong it would have been, had I not visited your homeland to gain some further insight into your birthplace. How wrong I would have been to let such ill-considered, even prejudiced criticism, cloud my judgment in that issue.

8. Of course it is proper, of course it is desirable, of course it matters that the Prime Minister of this country should visit those European countries who have given us so much for so long - their sons and their daughters, their labours and fortunately, their loves.

9. And that brings me to the fact that my Government - the Australian Labor Government - cares about what happens to migrants when they come here, and doesn't just see people like yourselves as another proposition in the workforce.

10. We realise the communications problems experienced by newcomers; we recognise how lonely many migrant women feel; we are aware that many migrants have been exploited because of language problems in their work situations. We know that while many migrant children are rightly described as "excellent achievers", and are highly motivated to do well at school,

because they are so encouraged by their parents, others are not so fortunate, and do need special attention.

11. This is one of the things I have been talking about to John Macrostie about while I have been down here. You know he's a teacher himself, and by all accounts a very skilled and imaginative one. He, like Lance Barnard before him, would be able to help you with any difficulties your children might experience at school. He has worked as a fitter and turner too, and knows what its like to work in a factory, and as a skilled tradesman he would listen to any problems or ideas you had about how to improve working situations for migrant men and women. He has already said that he will listen to and represent the interests of everyone in this electorate as Lance Barnard did before him. I urge you all to vote for him on Saturday.
