

Museo Nazionale Emigrazione Italiana



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PASSIONATE PEOPLE. GREAT IDEAS.
A BETTER SKILLED AUSTRALIA.

THE FUTURE In Their Past

Archimede Fusillo

2013 Italian Services Institute of Australia

An ISS Institute Fellowship sponsored by

Italian Services Institute of Australia



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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In late August and September of 2014, the Fellow travelled to various regions of Italy, including Basilicata, Lazio, Tuscany and Umbria, to seek out and interview people who had at one stage in their lives migrated to Australia and subsequently returned permanently to Italy - though not necessarily to their place of birth or origin.

In the course of this undertaking, the Fellow was astounded to discover that none of the 35 people interviewed, most of them elderly now, had ever been approached to tell their particular stories. Further, that there was little if any anecdotal or primary source material on such persons to be found in any of the museums visited in Italy during the period of the Fellowship related to migration.

The Fellow was made all the more conscious of the need to speak with and gather the stories of these returned migrants when on returning to Australia he discovered that one of the participants, a man in his late 70s, had since passed away. It made the task suddenly more poignant and significant as a point of reference not only about migration from Italy to Australia, but in this instance, of the reasons for the return journeys.

It was a humbling personal experience for the Fellow, Archimede Fusillo, to be invited into the lives of these people and to be made cognisant of their sacrifices, struggles and sometimes compelling journey from exuberant and hopeful immigrant, to at times becoming a dislocated outsider in their own native country.

The Fellow was deeply surprised by the lack of raw and primary material on display in the various migration museums visited with any direct reference to the Italian-Australian experience of this human phenomenon. He was even more convinced of the need for the collating of material from people such as those he spoke with in an organised and accessible manner in keeping with the sociological, cultural and anthropological significance of migration as a story. This was not just about an individual but more so about the place of departure and that of arrival.

The stories gathered, the tacit implications in the voices telling those stories, suggested to Fusillo that this was a research project already challenged by the impending loss of the memories of those concerned. It was also pertinent by the very real fact that these people were in the twilight years of their lives. The Fellow was often reduced to silence by the dignity, the pathos and the tenacity of the people speaking. He became acutely aware that this was for many the first and maybe the last chance to express what migration had meant for them and how it had shaped their lives and that of their family, both immediate and extended.

As a writer, the Fellow now sees these stories as the fabric for trying to understand the human drive to improve one's standing in both an economic and political sense, while at the same time being conscious of the fracture that migration brings to the individual, their families and in due course their native and adopted countries.

Fusillo went to Italy with many anecdotal reasons explaining why Italians had flocked back to Italy after various periods of time in Australia. The most common, and as it turned out, the least accurate and least quoted, was that Australia was a racist country that failed to give them "a fair go". While many of those interviewed made mention of the fact that there were instances of being made to feel unwelcome, very few mentioned any overt racism. Even then it was more a case of language barrier problems than prejudice along racial lines.

It is the Fellow's genuine belief that scholars of migration, writers dealing with migration and the generations of those born in Australia of Italian heritage, would do well to take on board the actualities of the lives of the returned Italian migrants. This would assist to better understand why those who didn't return should be admired for their tenacity and grit in seeing through what to all accounts was a difficult time for Italians migrating to Australia in the 1950s and 1960s in particular.

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Fusillo is keen to see a greater cooperation between museums of migration in Italy with their counterparts in Australia. This cooperation would lead to a long-term view of gathering, collating and preserving both raw material attributable to the influx of Italians to Australia in the post-WWII period and of those who subsequently returned to Italy for good.

As a result of this enlightening and at times emotional Fellowship Fusillo believes there is scope for exchange of knowledge between museums across the waters, through institutions such as the Centro Studi Emigrazione Roma (CSEER) and migration museums like the Paolo Cresci Centre in Lucca, as well as regional federations dedicated to issues of migration like the Federazione Lucchesi Nel Mondo.

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II. ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS

CSER	Centro Studi Emigrazione Roma
FILEF	Federazione Italiana Lavoratori Emigrati e Famiglie, (Italian Federation for Italian Emigrant Workers and their Families)
ISIA	Italian Services Institute of Australia
ISS Institute	International Specialised Skills Institute
MEI	Museo (Nazionale) Emigrazione Italiana. (Italian National migration Museum)

1. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archimede Fusillo thanks the following organisations and individuals who gave generously of their time and their expertise to assist, advise and guide him throughout the Fellowship program.

The Awarding Body, International Specialised Skills Institute (ISS Institute), is an independent, national organisation that for over two decades has worked with Australian governments, industry and education institutions to enable individuals to gain enhanced skills and experience in traditional trades, professions and leading edge technologies.

At the heart of the ISS Institute are our Fellows. Under the Overseas Applied Research Fellowship Program the Fellows travel overseas. Upon their return, they are required to pass on what they have learnt by:

1. Preparing a detailed report for distribution to government departments, industry and educational institutions
2. Delivering training activities including workshops, conferences and forums.
3. Where appropriate, recommending improvements to accredited educational courses

During the past 25 years, over 300 Australians have received Fellowships, across many industry sectors. In addition, recognised experts from overseas conduct training activities and events. To date, 30 leaders in their field have shared their expertise in Australia.

According to Skills Australia's 'Australian Workforce Futures: A National Workforce Development Strategy 2010':

Australia requires a highly skilled population to maintain and improve our economic position in the face of increasing global competition, and to have the skills to adapt to the introduction of new technology and rapid change.

International and Australian research indicates we need a deeper level of skills than currently exists in the Australian labour market to lift productivity. We need a workforce in which more people have skills, but also multiple and higher level skills and qualifications. Deepening skills across all occupations is crucial to achieving long-term productivity growth. It also reflects the recent trend for jobs to become more complex and the consequent increased demand for higher level skills. This trend is projected to continue regardless of whether we experience strong or weak economic growth in the future. Future environmental challenges will also create demand for more sustainability related skills across a range of industries and occupations.

In this context, the ISS Institute works with Fellows, industry and government to identify specific skills in Australia that requires enhancing, where accredited courses are not available through Australian higher education institutions or other Registered Training Organisations. The Fellows' overseas experience sees them broadening and deepening their own professional practice, which they then share with their peers, industry and government upon their return. This is the focus of the ISS Institute's work.

In particular, the Fusillo wishes to thank Sir James Gobbo SC CVO, Bella Irlight AM (CEO), Ken Greenhill and Paul Sumner of ISS Institute for their assistance and commitment to this international project.

1. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Our Board of Management members are:

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For further information on our Fellows and our work see the following web site:

<http://www.issinstitute.org.au>.

The Sponsor, Italian Services institute, Inc. was set up, inter alia, to advance the education of Australian residents who are of Italian descent and who need the support of a Fellowship to enable them to advance or enhance their skills.

The Italian Services Institute and ISS Institute will work with the successful recipients upon their return to share and publicise the learnings and recommendations from their fellowship investigation.

The International Specialised Skills Institute (ISS Institute), and the Italian Services Institute of Australia (ISIA) together with the people at Melbourne Library Services, Melbourne Immigration Museum, the Federazione Lucania Club, the Italian Cultural Institute (Melbourne), Penguin Books Australia, Museo Italiano Melbourne, SBS Radio Melbourne, Victorian School Of Languages and Swinburne Education were all invaluable in defining and developing the scope of this Fellowship.

Meetings held prior to International Experience

The Fellow held meetings with the following people, either in person or via email, to establish contact links in Italy, ask questions based on their professional status, or interview them with regards to establishing a back-story for the focus of this Fellowship.

Fusillo is greatly appreciative of the following individuals for their time and support. Without their generous support much of the Fellowship would not have been possible.

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- Mr John Persico, Executive Director, Professional Services Champions League, Melbourne
- Mr Frank Merlino, Principal, Victorian School Of Languages, Melbourne
- Lauris Pandolfini, Director, Booked Out Speakers Agency, Melbourne

2. ABOUT THE FELLOW

For the past 12 years the Fellow has run writing workshops in schools, at universities, at Conferences and at Teacher professional development sessions all over Australia. Testimonials are available if required. He is a qualified Secondary Teacher with a Psychology Major / Honours Degree, with a thesis published in the *British Journal of Psychology and Psychiatry*.

He developed and ran the 2012 Writing for Children & Young Adults Course at the Victorian Writers Centre and is a frequent guest at the Melbourne Writers Festival. He also appeared at other national writer's festivals including Sydney and the Northern Territory and is a regular guest presenter at the prestigious Fremantle Literature Centre, Western Australia.

Fusillo's novels and short stories deal with life in and around Melbourne, with the city as a character in itself, a pivotal point around which the lives of the human characters in each story evolve, develop and grow. As a writer, Fusillo aims to bring his city to the world through his stories. Winning the 2012 International Globo Tricolore Literature Category (Italy) was recognition of this passion.

Fusillo was Editor and Associate Writer for the Melton Library and Caroline Springs Community Books, 2013.

Profile:

Fusillo's profile has appeared in such publications as Italianicious, Italy Down Under, Il Globo Italian Language newspaper, The Age newspaper, The Herald-Sun newspaper, The Canberra Times and various local newspapers.

He has also been interviewed extensively on Radio 3AW Melbourne, 3LO Melbourne-ABC National Radio, SBS Radio and RetelItalia.

Writing Awards include:

- The Alan Marshall Award, The Mary Grant Bruce Award (twice), The Canberra Times Short Story Award, the Henry Savery Short Story Award and the FAW Playwrights Award.
- Short stories published widely, including in the following:
- The Canberra Times, The Age, Island, Webbers, Australian Short stories, Imago, Redoubt.
- Anthologies include:
- Hunger and Other Stories, Picture This, Viewpoint, Kids Night In, When We Were Young,
- A Bundle Of Yarns, Trust Me Too, Ten Best Australian Short Stories. The Fellow's work has been published overseas, including the USA and China.

Novels:

- *The Dons*, Book Of The Year, Penguin Books
- *Sparring With Shadows, Italy In The World*, Literature Category Finalist, Penguin Books
- *Bruises: Boys Don't Cry*, Penguin Books, Notable CBC Book.
- *Last Of The Braves*, Penguin Books, Notable CBC Book
- *On The Mat*, Lothian Books
- *An Earful Of Static*, Lothian Books
- *Dead Dog In The Still Of The Night*, Ford Street Publishing.
- *Veiled Secrets*, Solstice Publishing USA (with Josie Montano).

2. ABOUT THE FELLOW

Award winning author of the following picture book:

- *Grandad's Phase*, Lothian Books

Award winning author of the following Aussie Bites:

- *Let it Rip: Bragging Reggie*, Penguin Books
- *Game Or Not, The Great Switcheroo*, Penguin Books.

Award winning author of the following text books published by Oxford University Press:

- Short Stories: Reading To Write, A guide to writing short stories
- Network Media, Understanding and writing for the media in Australia
- Imaginative Writer. Lessons on writing for the classroom.

Winner:

- Globo Tricolore International Award, Italy, Body of Writings on Italian Migration, including novels and magazine articles, 2012.

Feature Writer for the following International Magazines:

- Magazines that Fusillo acts as senior writer for are, *Vive La Vie*, *Vive Cuisine* and *Quattrifoglio*. The Fellow has also written for the Australian based magazine *Italy Down Under*.

Current Award:

- International Specialised Skills Institute / Italian Services Institute of Australia Fellowship, 2013.

3. AIMS OF THE FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

This Fellowship aims to broaden understanding of the impact of migration stories to the native country and to broaden ability to relate the stories the Fellow tells of the particular migrant experience in Australia, to those of families left behind.

Link experiences of being a migrant's son with experiences of those of the offspring of people who selected not to migrate from the same area.

Experience first-hand the cultural background of the stories that have resonated in the Fellow's previous novels of being a migrant's son.

Develop empathy for migrants of my parents' generation through the telling of stories to an audience that may not know the reality of their struggles and triumphs.

Bring back to Australia a greater sense of honesty in regards the emotional dislocation experienced by those like my parents who left everything familiar for virtual anonymity.

Enhance my reputation as a trustworthy and reliable witness to the stories of the Italian migrant to Australia while that generation is still amongst us.

Enhance my role as an ambassador for the Italian community in Australia and specifically for first and second generation Italo-Australians.

Bring to my presentations to groups all over Australia, including Italian Community Groups, a common thread of understanding about what impact their lives have had on their adopted homeland-and what impact their leaving had on their native villages and towns.



4. THE AUSTRALIAN CONTEXT

While a great deal has been written about the experience of Italian migrants in Australia, much of it has been satirical and comical, tending toward the stereotypical. A plethora of theatrical plays and stand-up routines have often very brilliantly reflected the overt consequences of being the 'new face' in Australia, with all its inherent social and cultural idiosyncrasies. Television and film are rife with characters and situations drawn from the slightly skewed view of Italian migrants and their subsequent generations as farce. Scholarly studies have attempted to give an insight into the plight of Italian migrants to Australia, focusing on topics as diverse as Internment, commercial and social successes, and even the impact of expat voting on Italy. But what is lacking is the human element of the individual story, the grass-roots life blood of the man or woman for whom Australia was either a welcome refuge, a foreign landscape of cultural bewilderment, or a haven for making dreams come true.

With more and more of that first influx of post WWII migrants now either passing on or reaching the twilight years of their lives, a great many of their real stories are yet to be collected and secured for a time when they will no longer have a voice amongst us. Tantamount to this is the two-fold need to both collect the stories in Australia where possible, but also to share these stories with Italians in Italy who by and large have either no knowledge of life for their compatriots after they left Italy, or at best a very general sense of the struggles, triumphs and life shaping experiences of these same people. There exists too, a pressing need to unearth the stories of those Italians who came out to Australia as migrants, then for one reason or other returned to their native land, some with children born in Australia.

As a widely travelled and published author, whose works have ranged from short stories, plays and novels, looking at the Italian migrant and the subsequent generations, with some considerable profile in this same community, Fusillo saw a need for generating discussion about the changing expectations of and on, this group within Australian society. Questions about the shifting perceptions regarding contact with and understanding of Italian culture and heritage as it fits in or otherwise for the next generations. Questions about the legacy of those elderly Italian migrants, apart from their much valued roles in such high-profile areas as cuisine, fashion and construction.

His work has alerted him to the demand for stories from and of, Italian migrants to Australia, their families back in Italy and their generational offspring that are more than gloss and easy stereotype. He had always been humbled by the stories told on the spur of the moment by those in various audiences- of varying ages, about their papa, their nonna, their zio, or themselves. Stories they have kept cherished within families, between generations, but stories they know resonate far wider than that.

Fusillo suspected that while there had been much anecdotal material regarding the reasons behind why so many Italians who had migrated to Australia had subsequently returned to Italy, no one seemed to have actually interviewed any of these same individuals to actually get their first-hand recollections. This Fellowship enabled him to confirm that these long held suspicions were proven to be grounded in fact.

5. IDENTIFYING THE SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE ENHANCEMENTS REQUIRED

There are examples of areas in Australian industries and communities where there are weaknesses in innovation, skills, knowledge, experience, policies and/or formal organisational structures and relationships to support the ongoing successful development and recognition of individuals.

The focus of all ISS Institute Fellowships is on applied research and investigation overseas by Australians. The main objective for this fellowship was the dissemination and sharing of this acquired knowledge throughout the relevant Australian community, education, government bodies and industry, with recommendations to address the identified weaknesses.

The areas of applied research for this Fellowship are therefore defined as follows:

5.1 Engage in structured conversation in Italian.

Enhance the ability to both speak with people and draw from them the stories that otherwise go missing from our shared history.

Identify areas in Italian language that are lacking and in need of refinement.

Outcome: Bring language skills back to the Italo-Australian community and engage more fully with them in discovering and sharing our common stories.

5.2 Record the experiences of people whose family members have migrated to Australia.

Put into perspective the stories that have shaped our view of who we are as the children of Italian migrants.

Share the broader familial experiences of migration from the point of view of those left behind.

Outcome: Create a common ground of understanding about the struggles and achievements between the migrant and those who never left their homeland. Recognise and define who and what may have been lost and gained ?

5.3 Share personal stories of growing up in Australia as the son of Italian migrants with those for whom these stories are largely unknown, or at best, assumed.

Move our understanding of the Italian migrant's role in Australian culture beyond that of the stereotype.

Outcome: Expose those who have never been to Australia and seen first-hand what their compatriots have gone through-and achieved, to the narratives of those lives.

5.4 Perfect the Fellow's story telling ability.

Bring greater veracity to the stories by being able to anchor them in the bedrock of their past.

Enliven the retelling of stories of our shared past by relating them directly to the present as lived both in Australia and in Italy (e.g. What changes have been rendered since the stories first began finding a voice?).

Outcome: Give relevance to the current, second, third and fourth generations by linking their lives to those they possibly don't even know dwell in their ancestry.

6. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Part 1 Basilicata Region

The Fellow's first stop was in the Basilicata Region of Italy. Basing himself in the village of Viggiano, he was given access to residents of Viggiano itself and the nearby towns of Villa D'Agri, Tramutola, Grumento and Montemurro, who had at some stage in their lives decided to migrate to Australia and then at a later date decided, or as it turned out in some cases, been compelled by circumstance, to return to Italy for good.

All interviews were conducted using a tape-recorder and were in Italian - in most cases the individual's dialect. In one case the bulk of the interview was conducted in English as the interviewee felt at ease using this language since she had spent the larger part of her childhood and teenage years in Australia before returning to Italy, and was delighted to use the language again.

While in the Basilicata region it was the Fellow's pleasure to meet and spend time with the following individuals: Ernesto Berardone, Giuseppina Liuzi, Gaetano Deluisi, Tomasso Angerami, Rocco Aietta, Domenic De Mase, Domenico D'Arago, Luciano Marchiona, Giuseppe Gargaro, Ester D'Elia, Dora Loconsolo, Vincenzino Marsicovetere, Giuseppe Rocco, Giuseppina Sico, Savino Francesco, Gino Milano, Angelo Savino, Michelle Marinelli, Signora Maria Fedele Sarapo, Teresa Angellotti, Margherita Dicolo, Francesca Mazzitelli (she wanted interview conducted in English) and Maria Sansobrinò.

As the interviews transpired, several key factors became apparent. Where appropriate a brief out-take from selected interviews is provided below, in order to give an authentic voice to the Fellow's impressions.

6.1 Reactions to leaving Italy.

6.1.1 None of these people had ever formally or otherwise been asked to tell their stories of migration and all without exception, expressed genuine gratitude that anyone would take an active interest in what they had to say.

"Nessuno ha mai chiesto di sapere la mia storia. Forse era una cosa troppo strana, perche uno lascia la casa sua e va lontano, molto lontano e poi dopo anni e anni, ritorna... Come si spiega a qualcuno che non l'ha visto?"... *No one has ever asked to know my story. Perhaps they saw it as odd, one leaves one's home and goes far away, far away, and then after many years, he returns... How do you explain this to someone who hasn't experienced it?* Ernesto Berardone

"Non ho parlato della mia vita in Australia...Che scopo?... Io so che per me l'Australia e stata una



6. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

benedizione"... *I haven't spoken about my life in Australia...To what end?... I know that, for me, Australia has been a Godsend.* Maria Fedele Sarapo

"Che piacere parlare un po di questa piccola ma importante aspetto della mia vita. Grazie per l'opportunità"... *What a pleasure to talk a little about this brief but important time in my life. Thank you for the opportunity.*" Domenico De Mase

6.1.2 The people interviewed did not need to be compelled into talking. Information was volunteered, often without even pose a question. Many commented that the experience of being able to talk freely about their migration and return was one they welcomed because they realised that they were in the twilight of their lives and much of what they were now telling Fusillo they had not even shared with their immediate family.

"Non ne parlo spesso (della vita in Australia) Una parole qua e la. Tanto, e nel passato"... *I don't talk often about my life in Australia. A word here and there. After all, it's in the past.* Tomasso Angerami

"Adesso sapranno un po della vita nostra in Australia. Siamo vecchi purtroppo e la memoria ci confonde, ma alcune cose non si dimenticano mai"... *Now they will know a little of our lives in Australia. We're old now, and our memories are somewhat confused, but some things one never forgets.* Guiseppe Gargaro.



6. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

6.1.3 With few exceptions those interviewed agreed to be photographed. Yet all declined to be videotaped. In all cases the participants saw a video camera as intrusive and an impediment to their thoughts.

6.1.4 The passing of years, many decades in some cases, failed to dent the recall of painful passages in their migration experiences, yet overtly invigorated the positive. It seemed to the Fellow that the participants were mindful, even reluctant, to paint Australia simply in a bad light to explain away why they had left it, preferring to focus on the many benefits Australia gave them by way of opportunities to better their economic situation in particular.

“Non riuscivo a fare amicizia... neanche con i vicini di casa... Sentivo solitudine, forse perche non avevo la lingua, pero gli Australiani sono stati gentilissimi verso di me e mio marito”... *I found it hard to make friends... even with neighbours... I felt lonely, perhaps because I didn't have the language, but the Australians were very nice toward my husband and I.* Estelle D'Elia

“Mi avevano detto che cera tanto lavoro (in Australia), ma invece non era cosi. La gente mandava bellissimi fotografie ma la realta era diversa. La gente la faceva pui di quanto lo era questa vita di possibilita in austraglia”... *They had told me that there was abundant work in Australia, but that wasn't the case. People sent beautiful photos but the reality was different. They made Australia appear more than it was in terms of opportunity.* Vincenzina Marsicovetere

6.1.5 None of those interviewed in this group could recall keeping any of the raw documentation referencing their migration to Australia and subsequent return to Italy. Letters from sponsors, medical check-up records, passports, travel documents and even travel items such as luggage, had been discarded long ago. For the very few who still did have some items in their possession, they had not thought them important enough to bring along with them to the interview, or to turn over to a local historical society or group. (Viggiano for instance has a relatively new and active Cultural Centre keen to gather such material, yet the curators struggle to convince people to donate them.)

“I don't know what became of all that stuff, the papers and passports...all the material we had to get together so we could go to Australia...and then again when we came back. I guess you don't really think to keep it.” Francesca Mazzitelli

“Documenti?... Perche? A che servono dopo il fato?”... *Documents?... Why? What purpose do they serve after the event?* Ernesto Berardone

“Non cera tempo per conservare documenti...E fotografie? Che ne sapeva di fotografie”... *There wasn't any time for conserving documents... And as to photos? What did we know about photos.* Rocco Aietta

6.1.6 In all but a few cases, those interviewed reported that the reason for deciding to migrate was purely economic. They all cited the lack of work and future prospects as driving them to leave their villages. In all cases the participants said they would not have left but for the realisation that their villages offered no tangible future. (This made their decisions to return to Italy even more engaging to the Fellow.)

Of the women interviewed, two went to Australia many years after their father had left Italy to finally join him, one to join up with her husband who had gone ahead to start a new life on their behalf, another alongside her husband, and still another because her husband had been born and raised in Australia

6. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

of Italian parents and had gone to Italy on a holiday where they had met by chance and fallen in love. In these instances the women were aged between three and 19 years, with the eldest woman interviewed leaving for Australia aged 25 with her husband.

“A quei tempi, fuori, in campagna, non c'era lavoro. Mi marito si chiese perché stare in Italia” At that time in Italia, work was scarce on the farms. My husband asked himself what point there was in staying in Italy. Giuseppina Sico

“Ho lasciato per lavoro”... I left to seek work. Luciano Marchionna

“Qua non c'era lavoro... A me la campagna non dava niente... Perciò siamo andati in Australia. A trovare lavoro”... There was no work here (in Italy)... The countryside offered me nothing at all... That's why we left for Australia. To seek work! Maria Fedele Sarapo

“La ritenevo una nazione giovane, dove c'era la possibilità di lavoro... Per un avvenire”..I saw (Australia) as a young nation, one where there was the possibility of work... I saw it as offering a future. Giuseppe Rocco

“C'era la miseria in quei tempi. Dopo la guerra non c'era lavoro. Non c'era scopo per un avvenire. Allora uno cercava opportunità dove si presentava... Per me era il fatto che avevo una sorella già in Australia, allora” ... There was misery in that time. There was no work after the war (WWII). There was no possibility for a better future. So one looked for whatever opportunity presented itself. For me it was the fact that I had a sister in Australia already (Since 1952)...so. Domenico De Mase



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6.1.7 The following comments struck Fusillo as indicative of the underlying challenges and sacrifices many of these people underwent, which are not widely known.

“Sono andata perche ero fidanzata, e il mio futuro marito le sorelle lo avevano fatto l'atto di richiamo... Fatto tutto questo noi ci siamo sposati e lui e partito. Ma io sono uscita incinta e non ho potuto viaggiare. Quando il bambino aveva sei mesi noi siamo partiti” ... *I went (to Australia) because I was engaged, and my future husband's sisters had sponsored him out... With all this done (the sponsorship papers) we decided to wed and then he left. As it happened I fell pregnant was unable to travel. When our son was six months old my son and I then left.* Margherita Dicolo

“When we finally arrived in Australia to join dad in 1954, I didn't know my father. He'd left Italy in 1951 just after I was born, so initially I couldn't accept him...I saw my father really for the first time when I was three years old. I didn't know who my father was...N either did my sister Connie...Dad cried. He said, 'Sono sfortunato'...(I am unlucky)...” Francesca Mazzitelli

6.1.8 In every instance the interviewees went to Australia having someone there ahead of them - even when that someone was a husband for instance whom they had chanced to meet while he was holidaying in Italy. In most instances this other was an immediate family member such as a brother, sister, uncle or aunt, who acted as the sponsor, or someone from their village who had been inclined to take on the role of sponsor; in every case with the responsibility of helping the newly arrived find a place to live and work. In one instance the sponsor required workers for a new endeavour he was undertaking and so the arrangement was mutually beneficial.

“Le sorelle di mama fecero l'atto di richiamo” ... *My mother's sister's sponsored me out.* Maria Fedele Sarapo

“Papa ci chiamo in Australia... Lui si trovava benissimo li ... lo avevo 16 anni” ... *Dad called us out to Australia. He was well settled... I was 16 years old.* Maria Sansobrinio



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“Cerano gia mia sorella, mio cognato, e un fratello li and mi sembrava un opportunita di migliorare la nostra vita economica and l’avenire dei figli” ... *My sister, brother-in-law, and one brother were already in Australia and it seemed to me an opportunity to better our economic and future prospects.* Ernesto Berardone

“Siamo andati ad incontrare Papa. *We went to meet dad who had been there three years or so already by then.*” Francesca Mazzitelli

“Avevo una sorella li dal 1957... tanti cugini... lo sono andato nel 1961 perche mi avevano detto che cera lavoro... E l’ho trovato subito il lavoro”... *I already had a sister there (in Australia) since 1957... many cousins... And I went in 1961 because they had told me there was work... And I did find work, quickly.* Domenico De Mase

“Siamo andati nel 1967 a trovare Papa che era la da due anni...”... *We went in 1967 to join Dad who was there already two years.* Maria Sansobrino

6.1.9 Without fail all those interviewed cited language as the primary challenge faced in Australia. In every case the lack of English, the inability to communicate with employers and English speaking work colleagues, impeded their chances of securing work other than the menial, that to which someone known to them, usually someone from their village, had referred them, or into which migrants-men in particular, seemed to be channelled-most frequently the sugar canes in Queensland and the automotive industry in Victoria.

One particularly poignant comment was the following, from a woman who had opened a store specialising in merchandise for Italians:

“Quando ho aperto il negozio cera una famiglia (Italiana) che aveva lo stesso negozio in un’altra parte (di Melbourne), e me scriveva in Inglese gli ordini (per me)”... *Another Italian family who owned a store like mine in a different part of Melbourne would write out my orders for me in English.* Maria Fedele Saparo



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“Era brutto senza la lingua. Eravamo persi”... *It was terrible without the language. We were lost.* Luciano Marchionna

“Quando non capivo rispondevo sempre ‘Yes’”... *Whenever I didn't understand I answered 'Yes'.* Savino Francesco

“Me la sono cavata... La lingua Australiana non era semplice”... *I got by. The Australian language wasn't easy (to learn).* Angelo Savino

“L'estero è bello... ma devi sempre sapere leggere e scrivere la lingua. Se sei inalfabete non fai bene... Sei sempre maltrattato”... *A new country is always beautiful... but one must know to read and write the language. If you are illiterate you don't prosper... You are always treated badly.* Gaetano Deluigi

“Marsicavo un po' l'inglese... Ho fatto un po' con i libri, ma anche perché ero ragazzina allora mi davano da fare”... *I mangled English somewhat... I got by with books, but perhaps because I was a young girl I just got on with it.* Maria Sansobrinò

6.1.10 All the participants expressed the same fervent comment that the lack of English impeded what they might have otherwise achieved. They all wished that they had mastered the English language beyond the meagre necessities of day-to-day conversation. All made reference to the lack of time and opportunity to take part in formal English language classes because of their need to work as much as possible so as to pay back debts accrued due to their passage out to Australia, or to raise funds to bring out loved ones from Italy to Australia as quickly as possible.

Many made reference to the fact that in much of the work they did – most of it in factories and related industries such as construction and textiles, the English language wasn't a pressing requirement particularly as they tended to work with other Italian migrants and kept pretty much to themselves.

“Ma chi aveva tempo di andare a scuola d'inglese? Dovevamo guadagnare per pagare i debiti, per mettere d'aparte qualcosa per i figli in Italia. Per la moglie, i genitori. Che tempo per imparare l'inglese!”... *Who had time to go to English classes? We had to earn enough to pay back our debts (passage), put*



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aside something for our children back in Italy. For our wives, our parents. What time to learn English!
Ernesto Berardone

“Gli Australiani erano socevole... ma cera sempre questa differenza della lingua. La lingua era una difficolta per tutti noi italiani perche ci andava sempre sotto i piedi”... *The Australians were sociable... but the language difference was a problem. The language (lack of English) was always under our feet (catching us up).* Francesco Savino

“La lingua al inizio era difficile e Australiani ci prendiavano in giro, ci facevamo le battute per questa mancanza d'inglese”... *The language was very difficult initially and the Australians made fun of us, of our lack of the language.* Luciano Marchionna

“Se andavo a scuola cosa mi mangiavo?”... *If I went to (English) school how was I going to eat?*
Gaetano Deluisi

“Mi piaceva la lingua tanto. Non l'ho trovata difficile perche guardava la televisione e quando non capivo chiedevo e me lo scrivevo... Ero ragazza, appena 17 anni allora per me lo era pui facile”... *I liked the language (English). I didn't find it difficult because I use to watch television, and when I didn't understand something I asked about it and write it down. I was a young girl after all, just 17 years old, so for me it was easier.* Guiseppina Sico

6.1.11 Related to the above was the interesting admission that these people tended on the whole to search out housing amongst their own, thus further reducing the need for mixing with Australians and therefore reducing the need to have English as a priority language. The development of Italian themed shops-selling Italian goods and merchandise further eroded this need. Ironically though, those who ran the shops were themselves Italian migrants whose grasp of English was superior and which allowed them to get into business in the first instance and provide a service to other Italian migrants.

“Era bello avere qualcuno nei negozi che parlava l'Italiano e che vendeva roba che tu conoscevi; pane, pasta..non so, verdura nostra che gli Australiani non usavano”... *It was wonderful to have people who spoke Italian in the shops and who sold merchandise you recognised; bread, pasta... I don't know, vegetables that Australians didn't use.* Ernesto Berardone

“Il mio negozio era pieno di italiani che cercavano altri Italiani, per parlare, per aver scelta di prodotti Italiani”... *My shop was always filled with Italians seeking out other Italians, to chat, to have choices of Italian products.* Maria Fedele Sarapo

“Abbiamo praticati pochi Australiani-perche non facevano questi lavori che facevamo noi...Non vivevano fra noi”... *We had little to do with Australians-because they didn't do the jobs we did... They didn't live amongst us.* Angelo Savino

“For us, living amongst other Italians was the norm. We just got on with it because we didn't know any other way. We did our shopping at Italian shops, bought Italian produce... Went to Italian functions. Looking back it was as though Italians gathered in certain areas just so they could feel like they were back in Italy.” Francesca Mazzitelli

6.1.12 The vast majority of the men interviewed lamented that they had had to leave behind pregnant wives and/ or young children, in order to go to Australia. Many berated the fact that when reunited with their children in Italy on their return - or joined by them in Australia, after the passage of years, they were largely strangers to each other. This melancholy presented itself as frustration and sometimes anger toward their adopted country and to their native country for having obliged them to seek a future elsewhere.

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“Sono partito solo... lasciando mia moglie e due bambini di 4 e 2 anni... Non gli ho visti per tre anni... Immagina questo ”... *I left alone... leaving behind my wife and children aged 4 and 2... I didn't see them again for three years... Imagine that.* Angelo Savino

“Sono stato quasi sette anni in Australia. Sette anni con l'intensione di chiamare mia moglie e mia figlia... Non ho visto mia figlia... Sono i sacrifice che si facevano” ... *I spent almost seven years in Australia. Seven years with the intention of bringing my wife and daughter out... I didn't see my daughter... These are the sacrifices one made.* Savino Francesco

“Quattro anni lontano dalla mia famiglia... molto dura... Molto dura... Avevo la moglie e quattro figli in Italia”... *Four years far from my family... very hard... Very hard... I had a wife and four children in Italy.* Giuseppe Gargano

“Era una vita bestiale. Non ci avessi mai andato” ... *It was a beastly life. I wished I'd never gone.* Tomasso Angerami

“Sono partito per l'Australia due giorni dopo che e nato mio figlio”... *I left for Australia two days after the birth of my son.* Guiseppe Gargaro



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6.1.13 None of the female participants expressed feeling any pressure to work and set aside monies to bring other family to Australia. In each instance the woman concerned was either very young when she had been brought to Australia as part of a family migration, already married and had followed her husband out to Australia, or had family already in Australia. Yet, in every case they were keen to make clear that debts regarding their passage to Australia were a priority challenge that had to be met.

“Bisognava pagare i debiti. Prima di pensare a portare fuori la famiglia dall’Italia uno si doveva togliere i debiti del viaggio”... *One had to pay one’s debts. Before thinking about bringing one’s family out (to Australia) the debt of the passage had to be paid off.* Dora Loconsol, speaking about many of her fellow migrants.

6.1.14 With regard to what the participants felt they had gained from their sojourn in Australia, all but three said it was a question of financial security. Australia afforded them the money to live comfortable lives in Australia and then ultimately, to start a new life in Italy, providing the means for purchasing land, farm machinery and in two cases, a wedding celebration. Of the remaining three, one, a woman in her 90s, reported Australia provided her with the financial security to see out her days in peace and wellbeing in a nursing home by way of an Australian pension. It also gave her children with what she thought the Australian positiveness toward the most dire circumstances and the third felt this time in Australia had been little more than a distracting holiday.

“Benedica l’Australia. E per il contributo che io e mio marito abbiamo fatto mentre avevamo il negozio e lui lavorava in Australia che io vivo qui, tranquilla”... *God Bless Australia. It’s because of the contributions (toward their pension) that my husband and I made while we had the shop and he worked in Australia that I can live here (in a nursing home close to her native village in Basilicata).* Maria Fedele Sarapo

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“Con il frutto del lavoro in austraglia mi sono potuto sposare qui in Italia, crescere la mia famiglia e sestimarmi”... *It's as a result of the fruits of my labour in Australia that i was able to return and marry here in Italy, raise a family and set myself up.* Domenico D'Arango

“L'Australia ci ha dato a noi emigranti l'opportunita di farci una casa, comprare terreno, attressi... In somma, ci siamo potuti migliorare le nostre circostanze”... *Australia allowed we migrants the opportunity to build a home, buy land, equipment... In essence, we were able to better our prospects.* Ernesto Berardone

“Mi e piaciutto tanto l'Australia. In fatti ho dato nomi inglesi ai miei figli. Alan and William... L'Australia e un paese di grandi spazzi, di possibilita... Questo mi e rimasto nel cuore. Questo e l'opportunita di avere un avvenire che non era possibile in Italia a quel tempo”... *I liked Australia very much. In fact I gave my two sons English names. Alan and William... Australia is a country of open spaces of possibilities... This has remained in my heart. This and the opportunity to make a future that wasn't possible at that time in Italy.* Domenico De Mase

“Mi sono comprato il trattore, un pezzo di terra e ho messo a posto una cassetta che avevo”... *I bought a tractor, a plot of land, and fixed up an old house that I had.* Michele Marinelli

6.1.15 The Fellow was rather surprised by the finding that more than half of those interviewed had left Italy with the clear intention of returning. The others, in all cases, had foreseen bringing their wives, and in many cases, their children, out to Australia to live. That the latter then changed their minds was fascinating, particularly given that none of those who had intentions of returning from the outset changed their minds and stayed put in Australia.

“Al (sic) primo tempo pensavo di chaimare mia moglie, ma poi me sono reso conto che la vita era dura anche in Australia”... *At first I had thoughts of bringing my wife out (to Australia), but then I realised that life was just as hard in Australia (as in Italy).* Angelo Savino

“Siamo partiti per un scopo stupido mi sembra a me... Siamo partiti perche mio marito aveva due sorelle in Australia. Loro li avvano fatto i documenti, allora”... *We left for what I consider a rather silly reason. My husband had two sisters in Australia, and they had gone ahead and done the paperwork for him to go there, so.* Teresa Angellotti

“Avevo sempre l'idea di fare una vita in Australia. Questo era l'intensione, di sestimarmi e poi trasferire la famiglia la ma non lo e stato possibile”... *I always had the intention of spending my life in Australia. This was my intention, to establish myself there and then bring my family out. But it wasn't to be.* Ernesto Berardone

“Pensavo di stare in Australia. Non si pensava al ritorno, non in quei primi giorni, no”... *I thought I'd stay in Australia. There was no thought given to returning (to Italy) in those early days, no.* Gino Milano

“Quando sono partito ho ditto 'Addio Viggiano'... ma purtroppo non era cosi”... *When I left I bid a final farewell to Viggiano... but as it turned out this wasn't to be.* Donenico De Mase

“Non avevo intensione di rimanere in Australia. Sono andato per lavoro e basta, ma ci sono rimasto 10 anni... e ho abbiamo avuto due figli la”... *I had no intention of living in Australia. I went purely for work, but stayed 10 years... and we [he and his wife were engaged and married in Australia] had two children there.* Luciano Marchionna

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6.1.16 In every case the Fellow was amazed at the dignity with which these participants presented their stories. There was no indignation toward Australia or Australians, rather a kind of nostalgia that times were such that people on both sides of the migration fence simply had to get on with life.

6.2 Return to Italy

Of real interest to the Fellow was the overlap of reasons why these people decided to return to Italy, some after almost a decade.

The time spent in Australia ranged from a mere three months with several of the more elderly of those interviewed unable to give precise times, to the longest being 25 years, with most in the five to seven year range.

Fusillo avoided asking loaded questions such as, “Were you the victim of racist taunts?” or “Can you explain in what ways you were made to feel uncomfortable in Australia?” because he did not wish to steer or influence the responses. Rather, the interview led by degrees to the question: “Can you tell me about your returning to Italy and the reason or reasons behind this decision?” This approach allowed those being interviewed to simply tell of their experiences.

The following is a summary of the responses, along with direct quotes where appropriate.

6.2.1 The participant never had any intention of staying in Australia after such time as they had made sufficient money to return to their home town and make a life for themselves and their family there.

“Sono ritornato a casa mia... dopo sette anni... Se io non andavo in Australia avevo la salute... La sono rimasto fregato di salute e soldi”... I came back “home”... after seven years... Had I not gone to Australia I would still have my health and money... As it is I lost my health and my money. Gaetano Deluisi

6.2.2 In some cases the return “home” was difficult, some reporting that they faced suspicion from those they had left behind regarding how they now saw themselves; perhaps as being a little more important because they had the financial means to purchase a home, farm equipment and the like.

“Forse, se non avessi venduto la casa avrei tornato in Australia... L’Italia era già diversa... Non so, abbiamo dovuto cominciare da capo in un certo senso. Abbiamo dovuto riconoscere il paese”... Maybe, if I hadn’t sold the house (in Australia I would have returned... Italy was already different... I don’t know, in some ways we had to start over again. We had to get to know the village anew. Luciano Marchionna

“Era difficile trovare una casa per la famiglia in Italia. Cera gente qua per lavoro alla diga, allora le case erano scarse... Ho dovuto comprare una casa malandata e ricominciare un’altra volta dopo anni in Australia... Mia moglie è rimasta quattro anni in Australia mentre io trovavo di risestimarmi in Italia!”... It was difficult to find a home for my family in Italy. There were people here working at the new dam, so housing was scarce... I had to buy a rundown place and start all over again after all those years in Australia... my wife stayed behind a further 4 years while I re-established myself in Italy. Tomasso Angerami

One comment in particular the Fellow found very poignant. It was from a woman whose husband decided that they would return to Italy, but return to live in his native village in northern Italy where Italian was not the primary language, but rather an Austrian dialect was.

“Quando sono tornato in Italia, loro non parlavano una parola d’italiano... Parlavano il loro dialetto Austriaco... Loro sapevano l’italiano ma non lo volevano parlare. Mi sono trovata sola, persa”... When

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we returned to Italy, they [her husband's family] did not speak a word of Italian. They spoke an Australian dialect... They knew Italian but refused to speak it. I found myself alone, lost. Vincenzina Marsicovetere

6.2.3 A number of those interviewed made the admission that they had returned to Italy under duress, either because they had had no say in the decision, or that the decision to return was largely out of their control, mainly because of changing family fortunes and circumstances in their native town.

“Mio marito ha deciso di tornare in Italia, e così abbiamo fatto. La scelta non era la mia. Infatti io non ne sapevo niente affinché lui me la detto”... My husband decided to return to Italy, and that's what we did. The choice wasn't mine. In fact I didn't know anything about it until he told me. Vincenzina Marsicovetere

“Sono venuto qua (in Italia) nel 1969, dopo la morte di mio fratello in Australia, e ho conosciuto mia moglie... però lei mi ha detto che non voleva andare in Australia-anche se aveva quattro fratelli là”... I came back (to Italy) in 1969, after the death of my brother in Australia, and I met my wife... however she told me she didn't want to go to Australia, despite the fact she had four brothers there. Domenico De Mase

“Abbiamo lasciato l'Australia-come ho detto prima, perché mia moglie aveva la mamma che non stava bene qui in Italia... E siccome mia moglie era figlia unica, lei a volute tornare”... As I explained earlier, we left Australia because my wife's mother in Italy was ill... And since my wife was the only daughter she wanted to come back. Luciano Marchionna

6.2.4 A small number (two), made it clear that their returning to Italy was predicated by concerns for their health and an inability to adjust to the climate; in one case the inability to get a housing loan.

“Non mi hanno voluto fare il mutuo per la casa, forse perché ce n'erano quattro bambini e pensavano che non ci avrei riuscito a pagare... In fatti, ora che ci penso, ero soltanto io a lavorare, eravamo sette persone (se mia moglie e i figli avrebbero venuti in Australia)... come dovevo fare? Chi lo sa?”...They (the bank) wouldn't give me a housing loan, perhaps because I had four little children and they didn't think I could repay it... In fact, now that I think about it, I was the only one working, we were seven people (had my wife and children joined me in Australia)... what was I going to do? Who knows? Giuseppe Gargano

“Io volevo stare in Australia ma non riuscivo a dormire... Sette mesi di andare al medico, niente da fare. Forse era il clima, non so esattamente. Ma non potevo continuare quella vita”... I wanted to stay in Australia but I couldn't sleep... Seven months of consulting doctors, to no avail. Perhaps it was the climate, I don't know exactly. But I couldn't continue to live like that. Rocco Aietta

6.2.5 Interestingly, few of those interviewed made any direct reference to their facing or felt under any kind of racist or cultural attack. To the contrary, most of those interviewed found the majority of Australians, those of Anglo-Saxon background, to be friendly and helpful. It was only in a few rare responses that the individual made any reference to facing hostility of the kind sufficient to warrant their deciding to leave the country and return to Italy.

“Non posso parlare male dell'Australia... Abbiamo lasciato l'Australia perché mia suocera non stava bene in Italia... e mia moglie era figlia unica. Lei mi disse che se tornava in Italia non veniva più in Australia, allora siamo tornati tutti, anche i figli, uno di 4 anni, l'altro 13 mesi”... I cannot speak bad of Australia... We left Australia because my mother-in-law in Italy was ill... and my wife was an only

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daughter. She told me that if she returned to Italy she would not come back to Australia, so we all left, including the kids, one aged 4 years, the other 13 months. Luciano Marchionna

"Gli Australiani li ho trovati gentile per lo meno. Avevano il modo loro da fare, un po' strano per noi Italiani, ma a me non mi hanno mai dato fastidio"... I found Australians to be basically nice people. They had their own ways of doing things, which were a bit odd to we Italians, but they never gave me any bother. Ernesto Berardone

"Tanto amici di mio marito errano Australiani, ed erano gentilissimi"... Many of my husband's friends were Australian, and they were very nice. Estelle D'Elia



6.2.6 The Fellow found, however, that there were also some negative interactions between the migrant Italians and the Anglo-Saxons, including those who were British migrants. The usual complaint was about the difference in attitudes and general way of life, with many reflecting that day-to-day life in Australia was just too different to what they had known and in some cases, expected.

"Non mi trovavo la mentalita degli Australiani... In particolare mi ricordo quando la figlia di un amico, la ragazza aveva 14 anni a quel tempo, ha chiesto a tavola, 'Papa, quando ti devo pagare per abbordo?'... Mio amico e rimasto e ha chiesto perche questa domanda. La figlia ha risposto, 'Sono maggiore adesso e devo pagare'... Per dire una cosa il papa ha detto, 'Va bene, due sterline'... Lei sa cosa mi ha risposto?' ... Be allora io entro la settimana me ne vado, ho trovato un posto dove si paga meno'... A quel momento ho deciso che l'Australia non era per me. Non imaginavo che io dovevo crescere figli, fare sacrifici e poi essere trattato cosi da loro, no"... I couldn't adjust to the mentality of the Australians... In particular I remember the daughter of a friend of mine, she was 14 at the time, asked her father at dinner, "Dad, how much do I owe you for board?"... My friend was dumbfounded and

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asked why she had even asked such a question. Her response was, "Well, I'm of age now and have to pay board."... Flippantly he answered, "Okay then, two sterling"... Do you know what she replied? "Well then, I will be out of here by week's end, I've found a place that's cheaper."... At that moment I decided that Australia was not for me. I couldn't imagine having children, making sacrifices, and then being treated like that, no. Rocco Guiseppe

"Lo mi sono reso conto delle scuole, il lavoro, e non mi sono piaciuti... Tante famiglie erano disperati, anche perché l'ambiente dell'Australia non ci andava... Tanto ci chiudevano la porta in faccia... Il problema è, penso io, che ci erano tante nazioni lì ed era troppo difficile integrarsi... La vita era pesante per noi emigranti"... I realised that I didn't like the school system, and the work. There were a lot of desperate families, mainly because they didn't like the Australian way of life. Many slammed doors in our faces... The problem, I think, was that there were too many different nationalities there, and it was too difficult to integrate... Life was hard for we migrants. Margherita Dicilo

"We got called wogs and dagos. I remember it clearly as a little girl going to school there. We were different. We didn't have the bikes and the freedoms of most of the Australian kids. My parents were from a village. Melbourne was a strange city. Mum and Dad kept up the old ways. All their friends did too, so it wasn't unusual for us kids, but that didn't make it any easier." Francesca Mazzitelli

"Ci trattavano bene fino a un punto. Ma c'erano anche delle battute. 'Go away, you eat spaghetti too much!'... E poi tanti Australiani si lamentavano che noi Italiani lavoravamo troppo!"...We were treated well up to a certain point. But there was always some comment. Go away you spaghetti eaters!

And then many Australians complained that we Italians worked too hard! Rocco Aietta

"C'era spesso quella cosa che gli Australiani pensavano che noi Italiani ci predeavamo il lavoro loro. Ma noi poveracci avevamo debiti pesanti da pagare, famiglie da campare dall'Italia. Questo non si fa senza lavoro. Ma tanto non lo capivano"...There was often the case where Australians thought we Italians were taking their jobs. But we miserable creatures had heavy debts to pay, families to bring out from Italy. You can't do that without working. But many didn't understand this. Ernesto Berardone

6.2.7 The Fellow was a little surprised to find that when asked what the participant thought they had brought back to Italy with them after their time there, only two (one the elderly lady now residing in a nursing home and the other the woman who had moved to Australia as a three year old, gone to school there and then returned to Italy to be with her husband who didn't want to live in Australia) made reference to any attitudinal or psychological aspects.

"The attitude of working hard and not giving in easily. I think these are aspects of Australia that stay with me even now. And that great sense of waiting your turn and having to earn merit, irrespective of your job or position." Francesca Mazzitelli

"Se ti tocca a toccare in Australia. Questo mi piace tanto, anche adesso, dopo tanti anni che ci siamo. E l'educazione che ce in Australia, su tutto"... If it's your right, it's your right in Australia. I like this very much, even now, all these years later. And the politeness that exists in Australia, in all areas. Maria Fedele Sarapo

6.2.8 For the other participants the focus was mainly on the economic privileges Australia had afforded them and this was no real surprise given the fact that the over-riding reason given by participants as to why they had gone to Australia in the first place was to seek work and opportunity to secure their futures.

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“Mi sono portato i soldi per comprarmi terreno”... *I brought back funds to buy land.* Rocco Aieta

“Soldi per sposarmi, per comprare la masseria... E ricordi belli di una terra grande”... *(Enough) Money to get married, to buy a farm... And memories of a big land.* Domenico D'Arango

“Quello che non era possibile in Italia in quei tempi. Soldi per sestimarmi nella campagna”... *That which wasn't possible in Italy at that time. Money to set myself up on the farm.* Gaetano Deluisi

“Mi sono tolta il dubbio della vita fuori l'Italia. Mi sono reso conta che si stava bene anche in Italia... La vita è uguale in tutti i posti”... *I was able to get rid of any doubts I had about what life was like outside of Italy. I realised that life was good in Italy too... That life is the same everywhere.* Margherita Dicilio

One participant, whose children were born in Australia but who returned as nine and three year olds with their parents to Italy, made the comment that when she sent her by then adult daughter back to Australia to see if she liked it better there the daughter responded,

“Mama, Papa... avete fatto bene a tornare... Non li è piaciuto il modo di vivere in Australia”... *Mum and Dad, you made the right choice to return to Italy (they said)... They (the children) didn't like the lifestyle in Australia.* Teresa Angellotti

6.2.9 The Fellow was not in the least surprised that those interviewed had gone to Australia rather than the USA or Argentina, or even Brazil. In the first instance for most they had someone in Australia who sponsored them out; and second, it was a period of migration where Australia was actively inviting migration. And of course the focus of the research project was on those individuals who had gone to Australia rather than elsewhere.

6.2.10 The Fellow was interested to know if the participants had any regrets about having left Australia, especially with the hindsight of many years to reflect upon. In all but a few cases the answer was no, although almost all mentioned some nostalgia for the open spaces, wide streets and orderliness of the Australian way of life.

“L'Australia è bella ma è troppo lontana”... *Australia is beautiful but it is too far away.* Michele Marinelli

“Funny isn't it really. My parents went out to Australia, and here I am back where they started, sort of... Obviously I miss my sister and nephews... But oddly enough I don't miss Australia. We've made our lives here now. I'd only live in Australia if I had to.” Francesca Mazzitelli

“Pentito? Mai... Ho vissuto abbastanza bene in Australia. Sono tornato per i figli, prima che loro fossero troppo grandi e non si trovavano ne qua e ne là... E poi, si sa che in Australia per pagarti una casa devi buttare sangue... Ma bisogna dire che ce il buono e il male dovunque vai”... *Regrets? Never... I lived well in Australia. I came back for my children, before they were too old and would have fitted in neither here nor there... And then, we know that in Australia one has to spill blood in order to pay off a house... let's be honest though, there's good and bad everywhere.* Gino Milano

“Pentita?... No, io sto bene qua... Uno non ci si può dimenticare la terra nativa”... *Regrets?... No, I live well here... One can never forget one's homeland.* Maria Sansobrinò

Concluding remarks after the visit to the Basilicata area

People's stories are endlessly fascinating and those encountered by the Fellow in Basilicata reinforced this point. The above is a glimpse into the largely untapped resource of the returned migrant, the one who goes back, is called back, or is pulled back by circumstance to where he or she started their life journey.

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It was the Fellow's privilege to be taken into people's confidence, to be told stories of people going out to Australia for a myriad of reasons, with varying levels of success and struggle and returning to Italy for any number of reasons. Some returned because they had never thought not to. Others returned because a partner made the decision on their behalf. Still others because circumstance dictated it. Young women in particular going to Italy to visit and falling in love with someone who had no desire to go to Australia; men who decided they didn't like Australian values, or found their spouses would not follow them out as arranged.

A hundred people a hundred stories. A thousand people a thousand stories. This Fellow has only unearthed a handful, yet each one of them is a rare gem, a challenge to dig deeper into Australia's migration links to Italy and to harvest not just the stories of those who crossed the waters and settled in Australia, but also of those who crossed and recrossed the waters and who, for whatever reasons, decided to put roots in their motherland rather than the land they might have adopted.

6.3 Rome and Prato

The Fellow wanted to get a broad scope of interviewees and to this end was fortunate to be able to secure interviews in Rome and Prato with individuals with quite different stories about their time in Australia, their reasons for returning to Italy and indeed, the outcomes of these decisions.

One participant agreed to the interview under the understanding that while the Fellow use the material generated, direct quotes and references to them, their profession or identity not be made. The Fellow agreed because the interviewee's views were fascinating and the work undertaken to secure the interview demanded it.

It was the Fellow's lingering impression that the interviews conducted in Rome and Prato were decidedly different in what they generated to those conducted elsewhere and it was the Fellow's considered opinion that four factors played a role in this outcome.

First was the education level of those interviewed in this second group. All were at the very least graduates at the upper levels of secondary school, two in Australia, one in Italy and one was highly university educated.

Second was the age difference of two of those interviewed compared to the previous group. Both were several decades younger than those in the previous group, both had been educated in Australian schools: one from primary, the other from secondary.

Third, these participants had all managed to travel widely before resettling in Italy, one after being born in Australia and travelling back and forth to Italy for many years.

Fourth, all the interviews reported below were conducted in both Italian and English, the participant's fluent enough in both languages to move between them as the conversation proceeded.

While most of those in the previous group, Basilicata, had left Italy and gone to Australia in the hope of making and securing a financial future, that pragmatic reason was not the major factor any of those in this next group.

What transpired were very human stories, told best with reference to actual quotes and observations of the interviewees themselves wherever possible.

6.3.1 Signor Enzo Vivarelli. Of particular fascination to the Fellow was the story of one Signor Enzo Vivarelli whom the Fellow interviewed in Prato. Vivarelli left Italy as a man in his twenties, after having already been to the USA to study as part of his career, because of an idea that occurred to him while reading Mark Twain's novel, *Tom Sawyer*.

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"I was taken by the passage in the book where the young boy tells the railwayman that he is returning home, to which the reply is something along the lines of, 'You are going back to what you know. What is not new or novel'. In essence to what is repetitious and boring.

It was like a revelation to me, and it was there that I decided I needed to see the world, and what better place than one as far away as Australia," Vivarelli told the Fellow.

He was twenty-four years old, had no family or friends in Australia and when pressed about the merit of this his reply was sanguine.

"Non volevo sapere nessuno. Volevo andare all'avventura"... *I didn't want to know anyone. I wanted to go on an adventure.*

But soon enough reality set in because Vivarelli volunteered the comment,

"Mi sono trovato male. Noi Italiani eravamo ancora considerate nemici. Era il 1960, la guerra non era ancora una cosa di lungo passato... Cera questo pensiero che noi rubbavamo il lavoro agli Australiani" ... *I found myself in a bad place. We Italians were still considered enemies. It was 1960 and the war was still relatively recent... There was this view too that we were taking jobs away from the Australians.*

It was perhaps a twist of fate, or mere coincidence (he doesn't speculate) other than to say that within two weeks he met his future wife and his immediate future was sealed. In fact he would spend 42 years in Australia, some of it battling what he saw as narrow-mindedness and lack of understanding of the migrant's situation; his included since he wasn't differentiated, even though he had come to Australia with his passage paid for partly by the Australian and partly by the Italian government, on a scheme that bound him to work there for at least two years.

"Cera tensione nella societa all'ora"... *There was much tension in society back then, he told the Fellow.*

He spoke of stabbings and brutal bashings of Italian men by jealous and misguided Australians. "They were difficult days, but despite the hostility I decided I wanted to make a go of it. Australia was, and is, a place of vast opportunities. It has enormous spaces and great natural beauty. My wife and I knew we could make it work to our advantage." And they did.

Vivarelli recalled how a chance encounter with a friend from the Trieste region of Italy resulted in his getting a job as an encyclopedia salesman, going door-to-door amongst the Italian community in Melbourne for a year.

"I sold encyclopedias to people who were largely illiterate, through no fault of their own. But there was an irony in this and after a year I moved on. You have to remember that I had had no expectation that I would stay in Australia for very long at all," Vivarelli recalled. "I had thought that perhaps because I had been to America and understood some English that I might be able to follow on my career in electronics. But as it turned out this wasn't the situation. I ended up selling encyclopedias. There was still so much suspicion about us migrants that I am not really surprised we mainly got very menial jobs."

Despite the challenges, Mr Vivarelli excelled at his job and was soon confident enough to take on a role as an Insurance salesman, moving up the ranks very quickly, again focusing on Italian migrants as clients. Moving between Victoria and NSW, he soon moved into specialised work in Private Trusts and by the late 1960s had established himself and his family, which by then included a daughter Francesca, firmly into the Australian way of life.

"I like Australia because there is less bull... there," Mr Vivarelli told the Fellow. "Italians love to hear themselves talk. We talk and talk. It's like a theatre of comedy here in Italy. Life is an improvisation." When pressed to explain Mr Vivarelli suggested that in Italy the lack of privacy because of the congestion of housing creates an atmosphere where people live their lives largely in public spaces. Australia he

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contrasted was a place of open spaces, and one of the aspects of Australia he most misses are these vast tracks of open land and the easy nature of the people.

“Non avevo intensione di tornare in Italia” ... *I had no intention of returning to Italy.*

But his daughter returned from a sojourn in Italy to visit relatives and announced that she had met someone there and would be returning to Italy to be with him.

“Siamo come i salmon,” he further ventured. “Nel profondo ce sempre quella volonta di tornare alla patria” ... *We are like salmon. Deep down there is always that desire to go back to one's homeland.*

And so it was that with his only daughter deciding to go back to where he had started his journey many years previously, Mr Vivarelli and his wife returned to Italy permanently in December of 2002, 42 years after arriving in Australia for an adventure.

“I live well here in Italy. I even still read *The Age* and the *Financial Review* online,” Mr Vivarelli told the Fellow. “There are days when I truly miss Australia. I miss its empty spaces and the serenity. It's difficult to find those things in Italy. But overall I don't have any regrets about moving back here.”

“Da lontano l'Australia e un paradiso,” he continued. “Da lontano... Perche il mare e un filtro” ... *From a distance Australia is a paradise. From afar... Because the ocean acts as a filter.*

When pressed to explain further Mr Vivarelli added, “I spent a lifetime in Australia. I saw it for what it was. If someone were to ask me, a young man in Italy today for example, whether he should go to Australia, I would say without any hesitation, yes... Go!”

6.3.2 The experience of Stefania Pieri. Born in Italy, a resident of Rome until the age of fourteen when her mother decided that the family would should try their luck in Australia, is one the Fellow found to be intriguing because of the passion with which Stefania recalled the Australian segment of her teenage and early adult years. In October of 1974 the family of five were on the last ship taking the last group of Italian emigrants to their new homeland on an Australian government assisted passage.

A respected member of the staff of a prominent Italian senator, living once again in her beloved Rome, Stefania spoke with genuine fondness and appreciation of her years in Australia. It was only when she came to talk about her secondary school life that Stefania found cause to reflect on some of the more negative aspects of her time growing up in Australia.

“The school I went to [name provided] didn't cater well for we children of migrants, whether born in Australia, or like me, born elsewhere,” Stefania told the Fellow. Stefania went on to point out that the challenge for students like her, in their teenage years, was that there was an expectation that they did not aspire to university study. “And so we were obliged to do subjects such as cooking and woodwork,” she explained. “When it then came time for us to sit those HSC (Year 12 High School Certificate) exams we were not at the level of those who had been facilitated studies in maths and science and even literature. So when I did sit my HSC, and I passed, it was an anti-climax for me because I knew deep down that I had not been given the chance to reach my potential.”

Stefania was adamant that one of the primary challenges that faced the children of migrants, Italians and others, was the perception in many spheres that they were content to simply get through school and move into jobs that mirrored what many of their parents were doing.

It was, she maintained, a kind of discrimination that went largely unrecognised and therefore for the most part unchallenged.

“La scuola aveva tanti problemi sociali,” Stefania explained. “Nessuno ti dava consiglio. I nostri genitori-

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noi figli di emigranti, non ci potevano aiutare, allora eravamo a disagio” ... My school had many social problems... *No one offered any advice. Our parents, those who were migrants, couldn't help us. We were at a disadvantage.*

Stefania recalled the situation being rather dire for children such as she was then, mainly due to the parental expectations that school would give their children a future, while in reality the lack of language, the lack of any real understanding of what was required to move from secondary school to tertiary, the lack of information about scholarship opportunities, meant that many people of her generation and background never reached their potential.

The Fellow was intrigued by Stefania's openness regarding the family's arrival in Australia. Being sent to the Maribyrnong Migrant Hostel in outer Melbourne to be housed in small apartments that didn't have a kitchen so that new arrivals had to eat their meals together in the communal mess hall.

“It was one of those situations where we had to eat whatever was prepared for us,” she told the Fellow. “Too often it was food we couldn't digest as we were not accustomed to it. Very sweet desserts for instance. People put on weight. People became frustrated. It was, I think, a way of getting us to integrate.”

“Nel cibo ce un senso di identita, ed anche un senso di benessere. Per noi ceranno crisi di disperazione” ... *Food provides a means of identity, of wellbeing. For us there was a real crisis, a depression.*

But it was not all bad. For instance, Stefania told the Fellow of the euphoria experienced by all those on board their ship on first sighting Australia.

“Una mattina. All'alba si vedeva l'Australia da lontano. Una striscia di terra piatta. Il cielo azzuro, e di sopra una cortina di nuvole, bassissime... Sembrasse che schiacciavano la terra” ... *One dawn we saw Australia in the distance. A strip of flat land. The sky above it was blue with low clouds... It was as though they were squashing the land.*

The Fellow was impressed by Stefania's willingness to speak openly about the reasons behind her family's move to Australia, at a time when emigration from Italy to Australia was tapering off considerably with respect to the previous two decades.

“It was my mother who decided we should go to Australia,” she told the Fellow. “My mother read something in a Rome newspaper that proposed Australia as place where parents could raise their children under a bright sun.”

So decided, the family left extended members of the family behind and went to a country where they knew no one, hedging their fortune on the promise made by government advertising and propaganda that Australia was a land of vast possibilities.

As it turned out the family was able to take advantage of the parents' enthusiasm to find work quickly through the hostel's network of opportunities and within six months of arriving in the country were able to move into a home of their own in Brunswick, an inner suburb of Melbourne.

Interestingly enough though Stefania reported that despite being good at school studies, her mother finding suitable work as a high-end seamstress and her father eventually going into business as a butcher with a fellow Italian emigrant and doing well through the clientele of other Italian emigrants. Life for her,

“Ero ne carne e ne pesce” ... *I was neither meat nor fish*, Stefania admitted at one point, and went on to tell the Fellow of her sense of dislocation as a young woman who had finished school and become disillusioned with the lack of political awareness amongst so many her own age. She reported becoming acutely aware of the need to actively find ways to help fellow emigrants.

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“It was a time of great political movement in Australia,’ Stefania commented. “There was a push for bilingualism in curriculum.”

“Il problema era che tra noi emigranti i nostril genitori non sapeva interpretare i bisogni dei ragazzi. Per gli italiani bastassi che i figli lavorassero e guadagnassero i soldi. Non hanno visto l’istruzione come un meta per farsi strada” ... *The problem was that amongst we emigrants our parents did not know how to interpret their child’s needs. For Italians it was sufficient that their children worked and earned money. They did not see (higher) education as a means for creating a future.*

“The Italian migrants were so busy making a living that they had no time to understand the intricacies of what was needed to have their children fully integrate, to learn the language, to have private tuition, to see about scholarships and so forth.”

This sentiment resonated with the Fellow in light of the comments of the earlier interviews in Basilicata wherein many made reference to the need to have a job, to earn money, to find some financial security impeding so many other areas of their lives-including having the time and opportunity to learn English.

At age 19 Stefania joined Federazione Italiana Lavoratori Emigrati e Famiglie (*Italian Federation for Italian Emigrant Workers and their Families* - FILEF) concerned with looking after the interest of Italian migrants. It was her association with this organisation that led her back to Italy in the early 1980s and wherein for many years she began a quest to provide a point of reference for Italian migrants between their adopted country of Australia and their homeland.

The Fellow was impressed at the resilience of people such as Stefania and her cohorts, themselves migrants on the whole, to put their personal experiences as migrants to practical use by way of improving the lot of others who followed them and indeed the lot of the older Italian migrant. Ironically, it was Stefania’s work with FILEF that led to not only her permanent move back to Italy but that of her family.

“Sotto, sotto mama sentiva la mancanza della famiglia in Italia. Non si e mia sentita che l’Australia potrebbe essere come la sua terra native”... *Deep down Mum missed her family very much. She never really felt that Australia could be anything like her native country.*

While her sister and she spent time in Italy, Stefania remembered that their mother became more and more convinced that neither daughter would return to Australia.

“Noi, io e mia sorella, volevamo fare soltanto una esperienza. Ci siamo sentiti responsabile che nostra mama decise di tornare in Italia. In un giro di un anno della nostra partenza (mama) ha fatto quello che aveva fatto anni prima. Ha venduto la casa in Australia, ha fatto le valige, e sono tornati in Italia” ... *My sister and I had simply set out to have an experience. We felt responsible that our mother decided to return to Italy. In the space of a year of our departure from Australia, Mum did what she had done years before. She sold the house, packed the bags, and they all returned to Italy.*

The Fellow was not overly surprised at hearing yet again at how the lives of many who had set out for Australia with the intention of starting a whole new life there, either by design or circumstance, found themselves back in their native land or indeed, in the land of their parents. Migration it appeared was as prone to the verisimilitudes of daily life as every other human endeavour.

The Fellow was once again struck by the myriad human situations and experiences that gave rise to the need or desire to leave one’s homeland and set out on a journey across waters that too often did not bridge the two countries culturally, socially or even emotionally.

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6.3.3 The Museums. The Fellow had intended to visit more Emigration museums than was the final reality. Unforeseen last minute changes in plans on the part of key curators and administrative people meant the Fellow's scheduled visits were not able to proceed. Delays with trains and public transport between Italian cities also impacted on visits, yet the good grace of many individuals including Sauro Antonelli of the Italian Services Institute in Melbourne, himself on formal business in Italy at the time, allowed for much of the proposed visit to Lucca to go ahead. The Fellow is indebted to those like Mr Antonelli who co-operated to find alternative avenues for the Fellow to explore, including a visit to the Lucchesi Nel Mondo Gold Medal presentation in Lucca to acknowledge Lucca ex-patriots who had been deemed to have contributed to the profile of Lucca through their work and expertise overseas. It was the Fellow's pleasure to see first-hand the esteem in which Lucca holds its sons and daughters who live far from her Medieval walls.



6.4 Impressions of the Mei and Other Emigration Museums Visited in Italy

Museo (Nazionale) Emigrazione Roma, MEI

The National Museum of Emigration in Rome is located in the magnificent Victor Emmanuel Monument by the Piazza del Campidoglio. The museum is a tribute to the history of emigration to which Italy has been subjected since the very first Italians left their homelands in the late 1700s, chasing the dreams of economic stability and long-term social security. The location of the museum there is not accidental as the Vittoriano Monument, as it is known to the Italians, is a symbol of the unity of the Italian community world-wide.

To this end the museum is a repository of both government and public documents, artefacts, photographs and filmstock dealing with the many and varied waves of Italian movement into other countries, including select commentaries on the contribution of these same waves upon the fabric-social and cultural of the countries they journeyed to.

The Fellow was accompanied to the museum by Stefania Pieri from the office of the Italian senator Marco Fedi and Professor Norberto Lombardi, a highly respected lecturer and accomplished writer on migration issues-particularly those dealing with the Italian diaspora.

While certainly impressive with its open space and clearly categorised displays, the contents of the MEI were interesting to this Fellow for one overriding reason, in light of the focus of the Fellowship: that was the lack in any substantial form of material directly or otherwise related to Italian emigration to Australia.

It was the Fellow's observation that the focus was largely on Italian emigration to the United States, with a myriad of documents, artefacts and assorted ephemera dealing with this. Ellis Island justifiably loomed large in the consciousness of the museum, as reflected in the abundance of anthropological and sociological material at hand. From postcards loud with propaganda supporting the US view of itself as being migrant-friendly, to passports and personal material from past emigrants, the museum was a treasure-trove of important primary and secondary material - but not in reference to Australia.

The Fellow was rather disheartened to find that apart from the odd book published in times past to spruik the natural beauty of Australia, or to form a guide as to how the new emigrant might best go about trying to assimilate into the English-speaking culture of Australia, there was significant room for development of a more concrete and thorough exhibition of the Italy-Australia emigration link. This was particularly true in light of the apparent large numbers of people in Australia who either are themselves native Italians now living in Australia, or the children of same.

In talking off-the-record to people who had wandered into the museum, the Fellow was repeatedly struck by the void in understanding and appreciation of what the Italian emigrant to Australia underwent, or of the enormous contribution these people made to the fledgling country, particularly in the 1950s and 1960s.

This is not a criticism of the museum, but a challenge to those curating such museums to be conscious of the breadth and scope of Italian emigration beyond the romance and idealism so often associated with the giant cauldron of migration - the United States Of America, and to lesser degree Brazil, Argentina and Canada, all of which seemed to this Fellow to have a much more significant footprint in the MEI than Australia did.

This same challenge, to better gather, collate and represent and indeed acknowledge the Italy-Australia migratory link, occurs when referencing the other emigration museums visited by the Fellow. The Museo Paolo Cresci per la Storia Dell'Emigrazione Italiana (the Paolo Cresci Museum for the stories of Italian Emigration) in Lucca for instance, while decidedly impressive in its showcasing of the Italian emigration experience throughout the centuries, also falls well short of representing the Australian experience in anything but a rudimentary fashion.

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In talking to those connected with both museums mentioned above the Fellow drew the following conclusions:

1. The United States has a monopoly on the consciousness of Italians because of the prevalence and lingering power of the notion that it remains the place where anything is possible.
2. There is a very poor collective awareness amongst Italian emigrants to Australia about the need to preserve and gather together the particulars of their journeys as emigrants to Australia. The Fellow saw direct evidence of this when trying to have the participants in the interview portion of the Fellowship provide raw primary material directly associated with their experiences. If the people who form the fabric of the migration story themselves see little intrinsic value in their personal belongings, then the challenge to find and store, and in turn display the same becomes not one just for the museum curators, but one for anyone remotely interested in preserving this very important cross-cultural phenomenon of migration.

The Centro Studi Emigrazione Roma – The Centre for Emigration Studies Rome (CSER)

The Fellow was delighted to be a guest of Mr Rene Manenti at the CSER, where a tour of the facility (dedicated since 1963 when it was established as part of the humane charter of the Scalabrini Order to find practical means for helping migrants) revealed yet again a largely United States emphasis on the Italian emigration story.

With several thousand books in its library dedicated to issues surrounding the political, legal and social implications at work around migrants, particularly those incoming to Italy over the past 150 years, the Centre is a repository of material reflecting the changing landscape of Italy in light of emigration and migration.

While it was not within the scope of this Fellowship to address the legal and political characteristics of emigration, it seemed clear to the Fellow that within the fabric of the stories unearthed through the many interviews, there were indeed political and legal situations at play in Italy at the time the people in question decided to leave. It became evident to the Fellow that some future study should focus attention more directly on identifying these issues more precisely than simply as umbrella comments that made reference to the lack of work and lack of future prospects as reasons behind emigrating to Australia.



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Manenti spoke of, “the need to understand what is behind the phenomenon of migration. What is it that made people migrate? The issues of politics within families, within communities... all these things have a bearing on what people decide to do with their lives. And this is no different for those who elect to leave Italy-or anywhere for that matter”.

“We (the Centre and students of migration in general) need to gather knowledge. We need to harness statistics, laws... changes in political structures, to understand the patterns of migration. We need to bridge the scientific and the academic, legal and political worlds, if we are to understand the moral, ethical world forces at work on and around migration... here and elsewhere.”

During the course of the meeting several key things became apparent to the Fellow.

6.4.1 Manenti reiterated the significance of language in helping migrants find their place in their new environs. He was of the firm opinion, based on years of working both in Italy and abroad on issues related to migration that for many of the people interviewed for this Fellowship, illiteracy added a layer of burden to their ordeals. Given that many would have found it difficult enough to articulate their fears, frustrations and needs in Italian, the foreign English language would have compounded these intrinsic concerns.

The responses of those interviewed by the Fellow would seem to support this contention.

6.4.2 The difficulty of communication between the two countries - Italy and Australia - in the period of those interviewed in Part 1 of the Fellow’s research would have resulted in a dislocation between the reality of life back in Italy and the idealised or static view these people had when living in Australia. As Italy changed in their absence, the fact that communication between the individual and family back in Italy, between the countries themselves was often fraught with delays and breakdowns, these same people would have had no reason to change their perception of their homeland to any great degree.

The Fellow had this notion affirmed repeatedly by interviewees who reflected on the fact that they heard very little about current issues in Italy while in Australia, and that when they questioned new arrivals they often had preconceived ideas about what life was like in their homeland. In essence they asked themselves why anyone would leave their homeland unless it was absolutely necessary to do so.

That Italy remained, “the Italy of their youth” according to Mr Manenti, meant that when many went back there was every reason to assume there would have been a second sense of dislocation for some. Once again, the responses of many of those interviewed by the Fellow bore this out.

6.4.3. The time between leaving Italy and returning influenced the degree to which the individual sensed change, and in turn impacted on the degree to which they felt dislocated.

Not surprisingly, this was borne out by the anecdotal responses of the interviewees. For those who returned to Italy after many years, some (upwards of seven), there was a real sense that things had changed in their village and towns. There was a reckoning of change that time and distance had brought into focus. The Fellow’s own late father, on returning to his native village of Viggiano for the first time after more than 20 years, made the comment that he didn’t recognise the village any longer and not just physically, but more interestingly, in the changed mores of the place. It was one step to his comment, still lingering in the mind of the Fellow, that, “I’m not sure I belong here any longer. But then I’m not Australian either”. (This echoes Stefania Pieri’s comment that she felt like neither fish nor meat when living in Australia.)

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In her seminal study, *Australia Through Italian Eyes*, Stefanie Lindsay Thompson ¹, reports many cases of Italians returning to Italy only to find that their once quaint villages had been over run by cars, that houses had been torn down and industries had sprung up where once there had been farm lands.

Loretta Baldassar's essay 'Italian Australians in Italy' printed in *Australians in Italy: Contemporary Lives and Impressions* ² reported that for many of those she studied, the return to Italy was fraught with the very real possibility that they were being identified as Australians by those who had never left. This was to the Fellow one of the between-the-lines nuances of many of those spoken to, an awareness that time away from one's native land distances one from those who remain behind. The greater the absence the greater seemed to be the degree of having to reintegrate, almost prove oneself as Italian.

The next observation was all the more interesting in light of the above.

6.4.4. Echoing comments by many of those interviewed was the observation that for many Italians who migrated to Australia, there was a dual loss of identity. In Italy they had identified as from a particular village or town and then from a particular region, and only then as Italians in terms of a broader identity.

In Australia, as elsewhere where Italians emigrated, the umbrella term Italian was used to identify these people. In this sense Italian emigrants were obliged to abandon exact specificity in identity in favour of a broad racial marker. (The Fellow believes a future study to look at the impact of such sociological markers on the creation and growth in Australia of Italian clubs identified by very specific regional and even village groupings, would be worthwhile.)

Once again, the Italo-Australian anthropologist Loretta Baldassar, makes reference to this phenomenon by suggesting that when they arrived in Australia the emigrants lost much of the sense of self because their dialects are no longer relevant. That they spoke dialect counted for little in Australia especially because, apart from those directly from their region or indeed village, no one understood them. Not even other 'Italians'.

The Fellow could only imagine the alienation that must have been felt by these emigrants when they had not even their own 'language' to rely upon. This reinforced the struggles evident in the stories of those interviewed in the Basilicata region when they discussed the lack of language as a major hurdle to their being able to assimilate. It was suddenly apparent that English alone was not the only barrier, though none of those interviewed made direct reference to it.

1 Australia Through Italian Eyes, Stefanie Lindsay Thompson, 1995, Page 234

2 Australians in Italy: Contemporary Lives and Impressions, Loretta Baldassar, 1995, Page 234

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6.5 The Monash University Centre, Prato and The Liceo Copernico

Under the auspices of Sir James Gobbo AC CVO Patron and Cecilia Hewlett, Director of the Monash University Centre Prato, the Fellow was a guest of the Liceo Copernicus in Prato, Italy, arranged by Loredana D'Elio on behalf of the Centre.

It was the Fellow's pleasure to present a talk on the experiences of first and second generation Italians in Australia to two classes of secondary students who are currently studying English. The students and teachers attended a two hour session at the school in which the Fellow gave personal and anecdotal accounts of the life experiences of emigrants to Australia post Second World War. The talk was in both Italian and English, with a slideshow to emphasis key points from the stories being told.

Fusillo also presented extracts from several of his published novels written on the topic of Italian migrants and their offspring in Australia and then took questions from the floor.

The students and teachers were very attentive and inquisitive, with questions ranging from those probing the time of the Fellow's family's arrival in Australia, to those wanting to know more about the actual experiences of second generation Italians in Australia; their use of or other the Italian language, the continuance of traditions and customs from Italy in Australia, and the extent to which identity was an issue for both generations mentioned.



It was the Fellow's conclusion that:

6.5.1. There is a lack of primary knowledge amongst Italians as to the reality of life for those who emigrated to Australia from Italy. There was even less known about the extent or reasons behind the return of Italians from Australia to Italy. In fact the Fellow was surprised that for many the Fellow's recounting of some of the stories unearthed during the interviews prior to visiting Prato, were revelations.

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A quote from the school website following the encounter illustrated this clearly, “E stato un incontro molto interessante che ci ha permesso di conoscere realita a noi sconosciute come per esempio la vita di un Italiano all'estero” ... *It was a very interesting meeting that gave us the chance to get an insight into the reality of life for Italians abroad.* Liceo Copernico, Prato, Italy

6.5.2. Stories of emigration are universal, with many students at the school themselves foreigners in Italy. Interestingly, the Monash University Centre Prato, which has very large population of students who are second generation Italian's, with families from such diverse backgrounds Chinese, Albanian, French and Middle Eastern runs a competition encouraging these students to write in Italian about their life experiences of living in Italy and Prato in particular, with collected stories published in two anthologies thus far.

The aim of the publication of stories written by these foreign students is in an effort to have them explore and tell their personal stories. This fact reinforced for the Fellow the importance of the research being undertaken as part of the Fellowship. Stories are indeed the DNA of our humanity.

From a letter to the Fellow written in English by students of the school, “*With your own moving story we entered in your shoes and we could finally understand the difficulties that second generation children have to face during their childhood.*”

More telling perhaps was the following, taken from a story entitled ‘Con Occhi Stranieri’ (Through Foreign Eyes), by Mariglina Melasi in volume one of the aforementioned publications, “So bene

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quando e difficile cambiare vita, e cominciare tutto da capo, ma ormai ci siamo riusciti, ora basta dare il meglio di noi perche non e carino essere visti male dalle persone con le quali condividi una bellissima citta"... *I know well the difficulties of changing one's life, and starting from scratch, but we have somehow managed to do this, and now it is time to give of our best because it isn't right that we be seen in a bad light by those same people with whom we share this beautiful city.* Mariglena Melasi (Prato)

6.5.3 For the young people the Fellow met, Australia remains a remote and rather exotic place where possibilities for prosperity and career success still are held to be high. They exhibited a keen desire to want to travel to Australia as soon as suitable opportunities presented themselves. Told some of the stories the Fellow had collected from returned emigrants and their struggles to assimilate and form a sense of attachment to their new land, these same students voiced the opinion that greater and easier access to information and communication between the two countries would alleviate much of the problems of homesickness and alienation. The Fellow thinks a close reading of the stories written by these and past students of the Liceo Copernico would shed some insight into the actuality of their individual experiences as foreigners in Italy.

The Fellow was gratified to receive a standing invitation to return to the school and address more students, run writing workshops to help students find their own stories about migration and the experiences of trying to assimilate into a different culture, and more significantly, to lecture on the experiences of Italian migrants in Australia from a second generation perspective.

In his preface to the inaugural collection of stories by students at the Monash University Centre Prato, celebrated Italian writer Sandro Veronesi sums up much of the sentiment the Fellow felt underpinned the findings of the Fellow, when he wrote in part:

'Per gli altri, noi siamo gli altri.

Quando gli altri scrivono di noi, noi siamo gli altri.

Quando a scrivere sono persone di altra madrelingua,

La nostra e l'altra lingua.

Se noi siamo gli altri, e la nostra e l'altra lingua, e

Bene averne nozione.

Averne cognizione.'

'For those others, we are the others.

When others write about us, we are those others.

When those who write do so in their mother tongue

Ours is the other language

If we are the others, and ours is the other language,

It is best to have some awareness of this.

Best to have some understanding.'

7. KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER: APPLYING THE OUTCOMES

Fusillo was excited by the possibilities inherent in the scope of the Fellowship outcomes. Listed below are initiatives currently underway and being developed by the Fellow in conjunction with various individuals, community groups and organisations.

7.1 The development of a sister-school relationship between the school the Fellow visited in Prato-Liceo Copernico and St Monica's College, a Catholic secondary school in Melbourne where Italian is a curriculum subject and where there are many students of Italian heritage. Such a relationship would allow the transfer of real-time, real-life stories between the two cultures, promote both Italian and English as languages in their own right, stimulate a greater appreciation of the Italo-Australian migrant experience and provide the students and teachers of both schools. It will offer the opportunity to visit and be immersed in the culture of each country, as well as providing Professional Development opportunities for the respective teachers. This to be brought about through the Fellow's personal dealings with both schools, the Monash University Centre Prato and the office of the Italian Consul General, Victoria. This is a long-term project already in development.

7.2 The development of a public Exhibition framed around the interviews conducted by the Fellow, with photographs and vignettes providing a real-life insight in to their stories. Such an exhibition to be initiated by the Fellow in conjunction with The Italian Historical Society Victoria and Melbourne Library Services in 2015. The Immigration Museum has shown preliminary interest in developing a longer-term exhibition or similar to showcase the material.

7.3 A series of magazine style articles written by the Fellow that draw on the primary material provided by the interviews, showcasing the stories of those interviewed for a wide audience of readers of *Segmento* magazine, beginning with Issue 3 in early 2015.

7.4. A one-off feature article written by the Fellow and published in 2015 by a leading Italian-themed magazine *Italianicious*, which focuses on the Fellowship's intent, execution and outcomes.

7.5. A series of public lectures/ forums by the Fellow structured around the material gathered from the interviews and utilising the Fellow's existing contacts with libraries, schools and community groups, including but not exclusive to, the Immigration Museum Victoria, Melbourne Library Services, the Federazione Luccana, The Italian Historical Society and the Italian Services Institute.

7.6 Through the auspices of the Monash University Centre Prato, its Director and affiliated bodies, the augmentation of a Writer-in-Residence program designed around the aim of the Fellowship to source, gather and provide a means for writing stories on migration and assimilation.

7.7 In the longer term there is interest from the Immigration Museum in Melbourne and Jan Molloy, the Program Coordinator of Humanities at the museum, to examine the feasibility of a travelling exhibition of the Fellow's photographic and recorded material, along with the development of an educational focused lecture series aimed at secondary students, looking at story of Italian migration to Australia and Victoria in particular and the untold back-stories of those who chose to return to Italy.

7.8 Given the Fellow's background and literary record, there is the possibility of a creative piece which might include, but not be limited to, a collection of short stories, a novel, or a play based around the findings from the Fellowship.

7.9 There is interest in Western Australia for the Fellow to take the findings of the Fellowship and present them to interested parties via the auspices of Dr Nonja Peters at Curtin University.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

Fusillo was staggered at the potential broad implications of the fellowship's findings. With scope across education as well as community activity, there is the possibility for dramatic change in both the manner in which material relating to migration is gathered and collated, and the degree to which the history of migration is taught, made public and at the very least, made more accessible to the general public.

8.1 The Fellow would be happy to work with the Italian Consul General, the Monash University Centre Prato, the Liceo Copernicus and the secondary school in Melbourne, to get the sister-school initiative established. This would involve initial meetings between teachers of the two schools, an outline of the immediate, short-term and long-term aims and goals of such an undertaking, and a commitment by all parties to fostering a positive experience for all concerned.

8.2 The Fellow would like to see a greater cooperation and exchange of primary and secondary material related to Italian emigration to Australia and in light of this Fellowship, the return back to Italy of many Italians, between museums of migration in Italy and immigration museums such as the Immigration museum of Victoria, in Australia.

The gathering of primary material such as passports, letters and documents pertaining to sponsorship of Italian's to Australia, letters from family in Italy, banking details referring to loans, lines of credit, receipts and photographs, old posters promoting Australia as the country to migrate to, all of this material is sadly lacking and may well be festering in dark corners of wardrobes, old steam trunks and attics all over Australia and Italy.

In this regard the Italian Historical Society, the Italian Services Institute, Italian language newspapers and radio stations, the Immigration Museums and the many Italian Clubs scattered throughout the country, could work to increase the awareness amongst their members of the need to gather this material sooner rather than latter, particularly given the advancing years of those concerned.

8.3 The Fellow would like to see the invitation for the Fellow to present to interested parties at sessions conducted at the CSER-Centro Studi Emigrazione Roma realised. This would require sponsorship and funding by interested parties which might include the Italian Services Institute, the International Specialised Skills Institute, the Italian Historical Society and the CSER itself.

The Fellow believes that such an undertaking would help lift the profile of the Italian-Australian migration story toward that currently enjoyed by the Italian-USA link. It would also open avenues of exchange between the CSER and its vast resources, with similar ventures in Australia where migration lies at the heart of the nation's identity.

8.4 The Fellow believes a coordinated gathering of the oral histories of those Italians in Italy who had spent time in Australia, with a view to perhaps moving there, would be an invaluable resource for both anthropological and sociological reasons. This would require funding and cooperative dialogue between the Australian government through organisations such as the various immigration museums, the Italian Services Institute and the Italian Historical Society, and their counterparts in Italy.

8.5 The establishment of a series of perpetual Fellowships or similar across the disciplines of teaching and literature/ writing, with a view to reciprocal residencies in Italian and Australian schools, educational facilities such as the Monash University Centre Prato and Perugia's L'universita Degli Stranieri, to better foster an understanding of the reality behind migration between the two countries. There is a need for direct interaction between the education systems of both countries to tap into this broad and rich history that is currently largely ignored.

8.6 The establishment of a Chair of Migration Studies, with the specific objective to develop a comprehensive and on-going centre for the study of migration to Australia, perhaps along the lines of the CSER. The focus of the Chair would be to oversee the collection of legal, political and social documentation directly related to and impacting on migration in Australia from its inception.

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8.7 The integration over time of the material collected by the Fellow into the existing Immigration Museum Victoria program that aims to introduce Australian school students to the Australian migration experience via its substantial collection already on public display. This might be achievable through the education sector of the museum and Jan Molloy.

8.8 The Fellow sees merit in a study to look at the impact of loss of regional identity under implementation of the umbrella term 'Italians' imposed on Italian emigrants to Australia in the 1950s and 1960s particularly. The Fellow suggests that organisations such as the Italian Australian Institute Research Centre and the Italian Services Institute, might help shape and fund such research. Any such research must take into account the ageing of the sample pool, and the loss of some as many approach old age, therefore making it imperative that such undertakings require fairly swift actioning.

8.9 The Fellow would like to see organisations such as Writers Victoria, the Melbourne Writers Festival and related writers organisations consider the prospect of inviting young writers such as those second generation students from Prato, with real-life stories to relate, take part in readings and panel sessions in Australia, particularly those events aimed at schools and students. The exchange of real-life stories dealing with current issues of migration can only add to a more universal and considered discussion about migration, the role of migrants in their adopted homelands, and foster greater tolerance.

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The above material was referenced by the Fellow during his research. Where a direct quotation or data has been used, it has been attributed to the source within the body of the report.