

3 February 1998

COPY

Mr. Chris Wynton  
Welcome Wall Manager  
Australian National Maritime Museum  
GPO Box 5131  
Sydney NSW 1042

Dear Mr. Wynton,

I'm happy to have received your letter of the 27th January confirming that the name "**Mamma Lena e Dino GUSTIN and family**" will be included on the wall. I would only ask that Mamma Lena's award - **MBE** - be included after her name.

I was also delighted to read that you are organizing the "**Tears, Fears and Cheers - stories of migration 1788-1998**" exhibition.

I too, since our arrival in 1956, have written many books and articles on the life of Italian migrants here in Australia. I have organized many exhibitions on the subject. My last book (714 pages) was launched in 1988 by the then NSW Premier Nick Greiner. The launch was at the Apia Club in Leichhardt and the function was attended by over 700 guests. For that occasion I also arranged an exhibition on the story of Leichhardt, the Apia Club and Italo-Australian migration up to that time.

Mamma Lena was in fact a central player of Italian immigration. With her radio programmes on 2CH and 2KY and her newspapers columns appearing on "La Fiamma" and "Settegiorni", she helped thousands settle in Australia. In those years there were no welfare offices or Ethnic affairs commissioners to whom migrants could turn. Everyone turned to Mamma Lena for assistance. Her assistance, moved ministers, Prime Ministers and entire bureaucracies and she did it all voluntarily. We also built a Child Care Centre in Fairfield and which now bears her name.

In recognition of her work, in 1968 Mamma Lena was awarded the MBE and a year later the Italian government awarded her the "Croce di Cavaliere".

I take the liberty of enclosing just some of the messages she has received from Ministers and Members of Parliament about her work.

I will be at your disposal to provide you with documentation and photographs that you may wish to use for the exhibition.

As you can see, Mamma Lena is part of the history of immigration to Australia. She has lived the problems of migrants during those difficult years. The title she is most proud of is that which the Italian community itself bestowed upon her - "**Mamma Lena**", Mother of Italians.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Dino Gustin