

PROFILE



□ Mamma Lena Gustin and Dino Gustin ... 70 years of life in two countries.

Mamma is a real dynamo

by PETER SHADBOLT

NOT even a coronary bypass operation can keep down Bankstown's "Mamma" Lena Gustin.

The 70-year-old Italian dynamo is still tirelessly working for the Italian community and after 30 years of broadcasting, she and her husband Dino have decided it's high time to chronicle her radio years and those who helped her.

During the 1960s, 60s, 70s and 80s, more than 200,000 people across Australia tuned in to her weekly family favorites program on 2CH, *Arrivederci Roma*.

A heart operation in 1984 put a stop to her radio career, but it hasn't slowed her in the task of collecting more than three decades of material for her book, *70 Years of Life in Two Countries: Italy and Australia*.

"I've got no time to stop," Mamma Lena said.

The book arranges in a scrapbook-style, photos, press clippings and letters from her life in Australia and Italy.

"Dino and I spent a long time collecting the material. It was killing work getting it all together," she said.

"What we wanted to do was describe the life of the many Italians who have done so much for Australia."

As well as the book, Lena and Dino have started a small museum of artefacts brought to Australia by Italian migrants.

The exhibition was opened by State Premier, Nick Greiner at the Apia club last month.

Included in the show are Italian musical instruments, examples of Italian manufacturing from the 1940s and 50s and an authentic Roman suit of armor.

"We had a wonderful opening for the museum.

"We never thought we could do it - the Apia club has never seen such a big reception.

"We're hoping we can find a permanent place for the museum one day," Mamma Lena said.

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