

SOCIAL LIFE

Friends would come on weekends to play bocce and have a beer or wine. Children would play in the yard and the women would sit and talk over a coffee.

Noris Braes



Italian Club, c.1954.



Italian Club celebrates Christmas, c. 1960s.

Italo International Club

Italians living in Broken Hill during the 1940s socialised within their homes. Dances and social gatherings were held in Rossetti's boarding house and the Dalla'Valle homes. Italian friends from South Broken Hill played accordions and guitars. Migrants, including the Toigo, Miani, Tiziani and Piasente families, built bocce pitches in their backyards.

The number of Italians in Broken Hill increased after the Second World War, particularly in the 1950s. Social gatherings were still held in private homes, and community halls were hired for regular dances.

John Licosi was a foundation member and inaugural President of the Italian Club which opened its club premises in Crystal Street in February, 1960. John was president for eight years. He was succeeded as president by Antonio Berenatto who served the Italian community from 1964 to 1968.

On the weekends they would all come down home. We'd all sit under the grapevines and have lunch and dinner together.

Evangelina (Liby) Chrisakis



Bartulovich families were very close in the 1950s. *Vinka Bartulovich*
Top: bocce was played in Italian backyards.



Australian-born Italian girls, 1950: Dianna Sfredo, Colleen Galea, Roma D'Etorre, Silvana Martini, Dolores Tonello, Ida Carapollotti, Clara Dal Santo, Norma Rigoni, ?

Support for the Italian Club waned in the late 1970s, and the Italian Club ceased operating. John De Franceschi became caretaker president at that time.

Interest in and enthusiasm for an active club was again evident in 1988. It was decided to incorporate the Club, and change its name to the Broken Hill Italo International Club Incorporated. The objective behind this was to broaden the membership base and cultural background to embrace families of Italian descent and their friends and anyone that would like to participate in our traditional culture.

The present club was opened on the 28th March 1992. John De Franceschi presided over the Italian Club during the years of rebuilding and is the current presiding member.

Our social life at the club was wonderful. The club used to go for a picnic every year at Penrose Park or Silverton. We'd have a pig on the spit, and it was great because there were a lot of Slavs in Broken Hill.

Vinka Bartulovich

The men always used to play cards. The women would just come and have a dance and do that sort of thing; play lots of music and eat lots of food; generally have a good time.

Kathy Skindas

We get together for parties but we talk our own language most of the time and the men chat together and have a beer.

Merita Nicholas

Dad was a member of the Demo Club. We went on their outings — picnics out at Silverton. They'd pick us up in buses.

Anna Murphy

We celebrated Norwegian National Day. We rented a hall and had Norwegian and Australian flags side by side. One of the Norwegians played the piano-accordion and we danced.

Dagnair Kanck

We had the Maltese Club. It was next door to where the Duke of Cornwall is now. The Club was for Maltese only. We used to gamble at baccarat.

Paul Sultana

LANGUAGE

We held our language in our hearts as we struggled to learn the language of our new country. It was easier for the young than for their parents. Some of us found it was just too difficult.

Mrs McQueen introduced my mother to the Australian culture. I asked Mrs McQueen how they communicated and she said she used the Italian language. I had never heard her but she meant she used her hands! Filomena Tormena

In the early days, when I went shopping, I would point to things even if I had to go behind the counter, 'I want this, I want that.' There was a problem trying to buy the eggs one day. I finished telling him 'chook' in Yugoslav and flapping the wings and soon, and eventually he came up with half a dozen eggs! Margarita Sulicich

Mum settled well in Broken Hill. She used to come home with comics. She looked at the pictures and then she learnt the words. Mum told me that's how she learned English. Amazing isn't it? She spoke better Australian than dad did. You could understand him, but mum could be understood quite easily. Louis (Lou) Forner



School tug-of-war — no language barrier in this event! c.1935.

I was in fights every day. While I couldn't speak English, I had no friends and I really had trouble at school... so then I started fighting. Italo Martini



Greek children at the Greek Club.
Back row: Nick Masoni, Jim Lakes, Nick Coombas, Spiro Gonos, Angeloniteis, Angelo Kersakis, Olea Masotti, Kathy Coombas, Con Lakes, Helen Ziros, Maria Mitchell. Middle row: Tina Nitsis, Mathew Niros, Kate Tolias, John Coombas, Elizabeth Sperou, Cindy Diamantes, Effie Mitchell, Margaret Zikos, Pam Beskalopolous. Front back: Joanne Zolos, Heather Bobos, Mark Masohi, Sandra Drosos, Nicky Savas, Chris Niarros, Angie Tokias. Front: Pam Gonos, Kathy Lakes, Jamies Petros, Nicky Lakes, Kathryn Diamantes, Kathy Skiadas.



East School, c.1946.
Back row: Gloria Lawn, Doug Bagnall, Harold Burns, Gino Vuaran, Millie Battnich, Guido Vuaran, Frank Zupanovich, Geoff Quinn, Fay Hermansson, Romeo Morosin. Front row: Margaret Semmens, Bruno Sinicco, Ruth Morris, Noris Toigo, Alan Srzich, Marie Battnich, Helen Storey, Bill Edgcombe, Graham Matthews. Seated: Valeria Zaina, Fay Semmens, Marlene Srzich, Barbara Keenan.

We took the plane to Adelaide and the hostess offered a coffee and I didn't know how to say thank you. My husband said to me 'Can you say thank you?' The first word I used was 'thank you'. Anna Caon

I spoke only Italian while I was at Wilcannia. When I came back to Broken Hill, I went to classes at the Pig and Whistle Hotel. I was supposed to go a second year but I got a job in the bush and I forgot about the classes. When I came back here, I was too far behind the others and I didn't go back. Now, I realise that was a mistake but at that time, I needed the money. Luigi Zanette

I said to myself once I was here 'If you want to live in this country, you have to start to learn the language.' It is very hard if you don't, and especially hard if you want to go to the doctor. You have to all the time take someone with you. 'No' I said, 'I have to start learning'. So I did. Rozalia (Rose) Cetinich

At first I had difficulty in understanding what people were saying. That was particularly frustrating because I could speak the language, but in the Philippines we are taught American-English and Australian slang was confusing. Marta Nicholas

When dad arrived in Australia, he noticed that outside of shops were many signs, which said 'Sale'. He thought to himself that Australians must use a lot of salt as 'sale' in Italian means salt! Noris Brax

The migrant's friend

Many migrants who arrived in the fifties attended government-funded English classes at the Broken Hill High School. They were taught by Patrick (Pat) Hackett who is remembered by many with affection and gratitude.

I needed to learn a lot more, so I went to English classes two nights a week — Monday night from seven to nine and Friday nights from seven to nine. This was a most important time for me. My teacher was Mr Pat Hackett. He was a very good teacher and a gentleman. Con Frangonasopoulos

I attended English lessons at the High School. People were so nice. We had a fantastic teacher — he was a very nice fellow. He encouraged me all the time. He wanted me to lecture because of my previous qualifications but I said no, because one had to be fluent in a language to teach others. Vera Sulicich

I asked Mrs Bosnich for the correct English words to go and buy certain types of meat from the butcher's. I repeated it all the way to the shop but by the time I got there I had forgotten! The butcher asked me what I wanted so I patted my behind and said 'That's what I want, but pork!' You can laugh about it now but it was hard. Kate Andrich



I went to English classes at the Broken Hill High School and was taught by Mr Pat Hackett — a man with a big heart and lots of patience. Ivan Bosnich

There was a little shop up the road and once Dida sent me to buy carrots. He said to me, 'Ask the lady for caro'. So I asked for caro and she gave me kerosene. I said to the lady 'No, no — that is not right' with my hands and I had to go back and ask Dida again and he said carrots properly. I went back and she gave me carrots. Jagoda Vlado

WHY BROKEN HILL?

We chose Broken Hill because there was work available on the mines; we brought our families out to join us and helped them become part of the Broken Hill community.

I decided to come to Broken Hill because I had a friend there. I stayed with him one night. He introduced me to an Italian, Mr Ottowa, who offered me a job in Wilcannia.

Luigi Zanette

We spent four years in the Arabian Desert in that place called Sinai. Our daughter, Sinai, was born during that time and named accordingly. After four years, the Great Britain government paid the travelling expenses for us to come to Broken Hill. We came to this country to start a new life.

Luka Oreb

It was really difficult in Malta. I had an uncle who had migrated to Broken Hill fifty years previously. He was really happy, so when I was seventeen I decided to leave Malta and join him in Broken Hill.

Rosina (Rose) Micallef

We came to Broken Hill to see my step-father's friend Tony Dunkert and his wife Anna. They had met in the army in Germany. You had to have a guarantor for somewhere to live and somewhere to work. My uncle's friend was guarantor for all three of us.

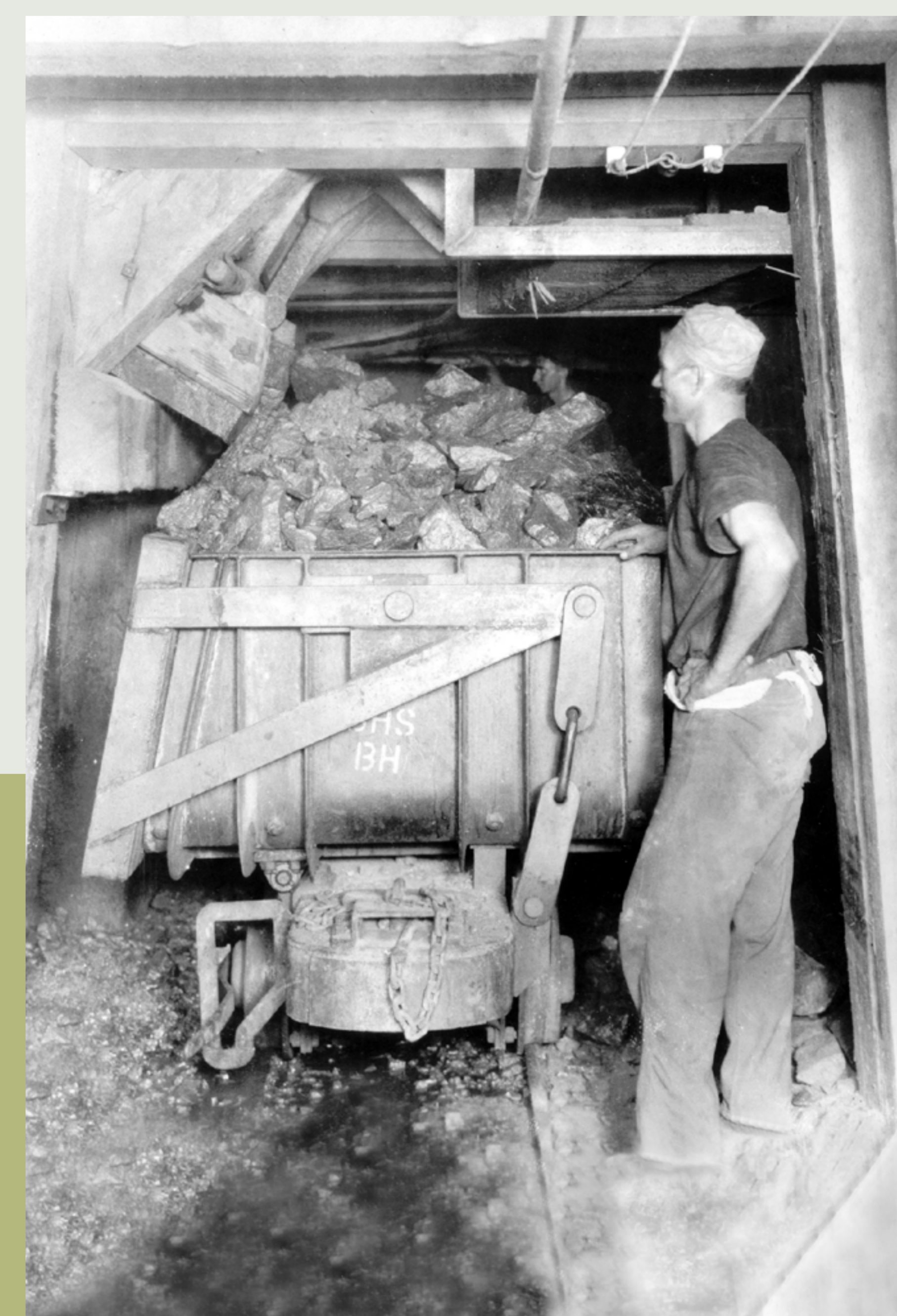
Karl Karthäuser



Many migrants left the cane fields in Queensland to come to Broken Hill. Olga De Franceschi

Spiros was so lonely his mother told him she would send him a good girl from Greece. They spoke to my father and he asked me if I wanted to go to Australia.

Vasiliki (Vickie) Niarros



Vic Viskovich, Broken Hill South Ltd 1935.



Hadad family. My father was happy to raise his family here. Anita Mazuran

Three of dad's brothers and his brother-in-law migrated to Australia and worked in the mines at Broken Hill. Two of the brothers returned to Italy in 1926 and dad decided that he too would emigrate to Australia and go to Broken Hill.

Noris Braes

My father was a farmer whose crops failed, so when Franko Farcich suggested he join him in Broken Hill, my dad saw this as an opportunity to provide for his family.

Ivan Vlatko

I came to Broken Hill because my dad was living there. I had never seen him. The first time I saw my dad I was twenty two and a half years old and I felt I had come home.

Ivan Vlatko

When I married Ivan in 1957, I knew his wish was to join his father in Broken Hill. I was sad to leave my family, but I was happy to be joining my husband.

Jagoda Vlatko



My father, Camillo, first came out to Broken Hill in about 1920. He returned to Italy until after the children were born. He came back to Australia in about 1927 because there was not enough work in Italy to feed everyone.

Dina Spagnol



Eventually there were four brothers in Broken Hill: Rige, Dusan, Tony and Steve. It started with two that came before us, my husband followed and then his other brother followed a few years later.

Margaret Salicich



Mum and my brothers joined dad in Broken Hill.

Vinka Bartulovich



My parents, Ante and Manda (Begovich) Ravlich were immigrants from the village of Korzica in Dalmatia, the former Yugoslavia. My mother was one of the first women from the former Yugoslavia to settle in Broken Hill.

Millie Alagich

Dad first heard about Broken Hill from Italian friends already living here: D'Ettorre, Rossetti and Cunico men. They wrote and suggested he would earn more money in Broken Hill than he could in Italy.

Dina Spagnol

Dad didn't know anyone in Broken Hill at all, but he knew there was work here. Being a stonemason, he didn't know much about mining but he got a job straight away.

Lou (Louie) Forner

I came to Broken Hill in 1963 to marry my husband Nicholas Drosos. He had seen a photo of me and he wrote and asked me to come. My father said, 'You go. He's a good man. You will have a good life because he is very honest'.

Veatrkie (Vickie) Drosos

We stayed in Bathurst camp when we first arrived. Tom Juric was visiting the camp from Broken Hill and he said he would give me a job if I came to the city; so we came and we stayed.

Igor Caplygin

I came to a second family when I came to Australia. One 'uncle' was settled in Adelaide and another 'uncle' in Broken Hill. I was destined to be in Adelaide, but because of family dissension I left Adelaide and I came to Broken Hill.

John De Franceschi

WINE FOOD & GARDEN

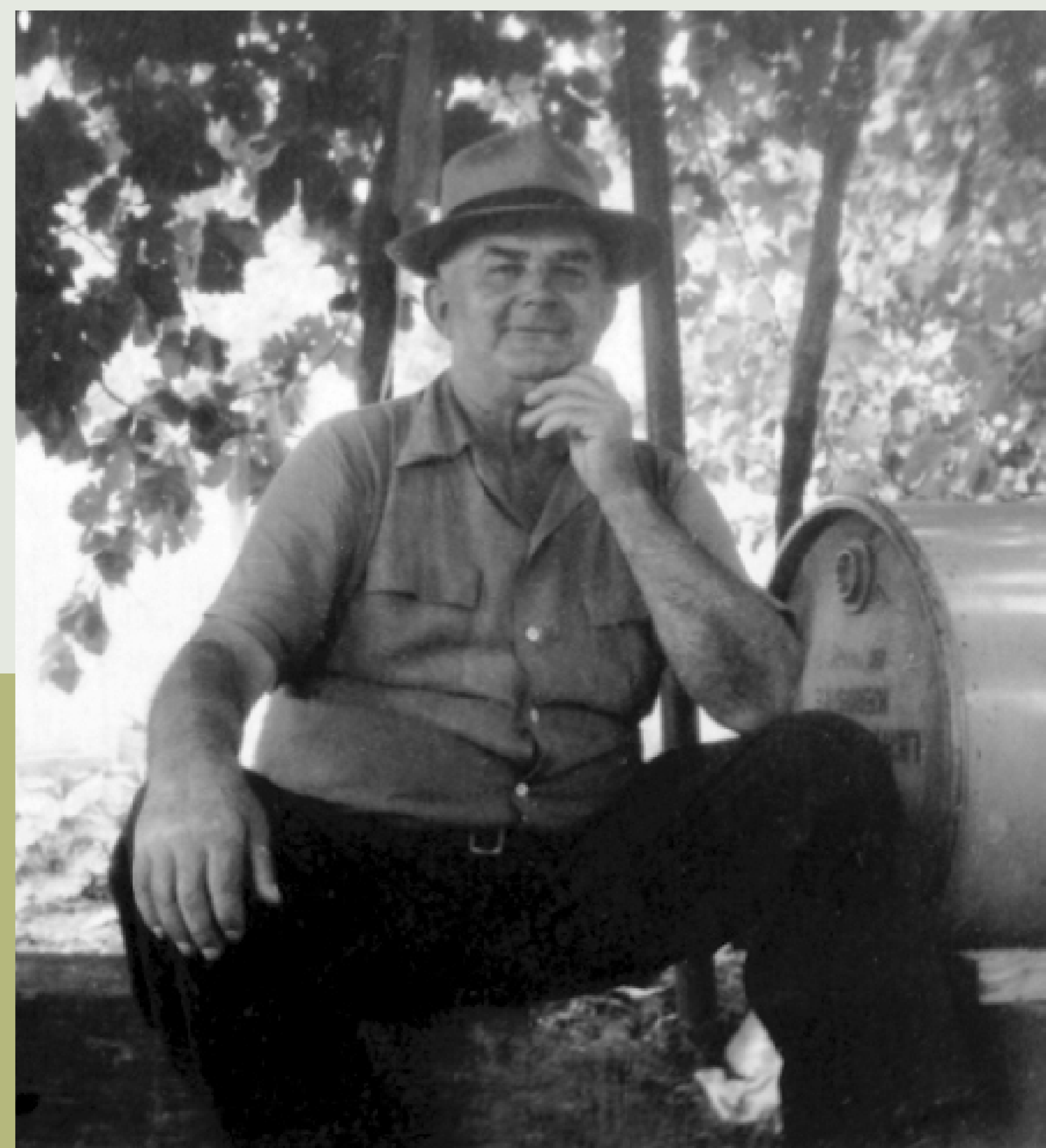
We love our food and wine and enjoy sharing the fruits of our labour.

People often ask what our national food is and I would say it is Indian food because we just adopted it; that is the food we grew up with. Adelaide De Main

There was not much fish in Broken Hill when we first came so we had to change and eat more meat but I still cook some meals the Norwegian way. Dagmar Kanck

I cook Italian food all the time! I learnt to cook in Italy because my mother said, 'You have to be able to cook this and this'. I copied her and I love to cook — carry on in the way I learnt: gnocchi, polenta, a lot of Italian stuff. I don't know how to cook English food. Anna Caon

People often said they were having chooks or turkeys at Christmas time — we had them all the time. We raised chooks, turkeys, ducks, and grew veggies in our big yard at the back. Louis (Lou) Forner



Luka Bartulovich seated beneath his grapevines.



Giacomo and granddaughter Hanna tend the crops!

The new Australians taught the Australians to cook properly. If we hadn't come, they'd still be on pies and pasties! They wouldn't eat garlic and they didn't even know what eggplant was. Now they love it! Lily Chrisakis

Backyards were not only productive, but became a work of art.



I planted vines, a few stone trees, a fig tree, an olive tree and a few others. I still have a vegetable garden every year. Con Frangonasopoulos

I like to cook. I cook Greek food always and have catered for special occasions. I've got Greek recipes and I have my mother's recipes. I often say my mother is cooking the meal when I use her recipes! Veatrike (Vickie) Drosos

We used to dry the figs and take the olives to Adelaide and have olive oil made out of them. Lily Chrisakis

I carry on with the traditional Filipino food. The Filipinos get together for parties where we talk our own language most of the time and the men chat together and have a beer. Merita Nicholas

We tend to cook our food mainly in the Croatian tradition. We have a mixture really because we like both sides of the coin so to speak. Maria Petkovich

Australian food is alright; I love steak and eggs — it is my favourite. Australian food is multicultural. I didn't like the green peas that were served on the plate but now I prefer Australian food because it is healthier. Spiros Niarros

Mum would think nothing of spending a morning making four hundred ravioli, which contained a filling of meat and spinach. She also made gnocchi, polenta and pasta with tasty sauces. Nirca Brazas

We grew up with a permanent garden with everything in it because we couldn't go out and buy things until we got to learn the language. We had our own fruit and veg. Lily Chrisakis

I made goulash the way we make it: slow cooking, then I made a pasta suta which is pasta in a clear soup with red kidney beans added. She would tell me to cut the garlic, hammer it in (bacon fat) and then add it to the soup. It was a beautiful soup. Millie Alagich

All the vegetables were home-grown. Mum looked after the garden and then she'd cook the food the Yugoslav way. She made stuffed capsicum, cabbage rolls from the cabbages in the garden. Vinka Bartulovich

We had a garden. We grew the Yugoslav cabbage which is traditional, and spinach and grapevines. Dad made his own wine and crushed the grapes with his feet. Olga De Franceschi

They used to get the wine sent by rail from Griffith but that wasn't a success. It sat on the station in the sun for two or three weeks before they'd let you know it was there. Lorenzo (Laurie) Cester

Every year in February the grape-picking and wine-making happened. We had about forty six vines all round our house, which were my father's pride and joy! Clara Dal Santo



The Slav cabbage is a very strong, green, leafy cabbage that was very popular with mum when she was back home and we love it; even today we have it growing in the garden. Millie Alagich



Jack De Franceschi, salami maker.



Antonia Corsini cooking polenta.

I have always had very nice wine — beautiful wine until my doctor told me to stop drinking because I had a trace of sugar in the blood. I am sorry I stopped drinking my wine because soon after I destroyed the barrels, a specialist from the United States said on television that three glasses of red wine a day was good for you. And I started to cry. I said, 'It is too bloody late for me!' I had no barrels! Luka Orab

OUR HOME...

We chose Broken Hill as our home. Our children were born here. Our parents are buried here. We are where we belong.

I don't think we would have settled as well in any other Australian town. I don't think you could meet better people than Broken Hill people. Ivan Vlatko

I like it here now. I like the quiet existence; slow pace of life. Merita Nicholas

I feel Broken Hill is my birth city because I lived there for twenty three years and I was happy. I went there when I was young and three of our four kids were born there. I feel like it is my home. Jagoda Vlatko

The kids look forward to seeing us but then we come home to our own place. Broken Hill is as good a place as any to live. Petar Petkovich

I'm settled in Broken Hill now and I am really glad that I live here. It is where I fit in, where I belong. The people have made a difference. Adelaide De Main

I'm happy to be Australian. Broken Hill is where my heart is. Linda McCubbin



Panoramic view of Broken Hill: photo by Boris Hlavica, 2005.

People ask me why I am still in Broken Hill. I say, 'Because this is home — you raise the children. It's a home and if I stayed with anyone else, wherever they may be, it would be just a room; it would mean nothing to me. Here is my home.' Igor Caplygin

My parents became Australian citizens in 1946 and always regarded Broken Hill as their home. When asked about visiting her homeland, mum would say, 'Why do I want to go to Italy? I have lovely memories of Italy, but Broken Hill is my home now!' Noris Braes

I wouldn't choose to live anywhere else. I wouldn't say we're the prettiest town in Australia but the way of life is simple and the people are so friendly. You are never lonely in Broken Hill. Jenny Cattanar

I'm very happy with my children and my grandchildren. I'll enjoy my life for however long. I'm eighty now. Bruna Genua

When you've run your own semi-trailers for more than fifty years, you get sort of used to being alone. It is more pleasant to be that way than be in the rush of the cities and as you get older you find you can't stand all the heavy traffic and all the people — you prefer to live in a quieter area; that's why I'm here. Joe Attard

We thought of moving to Adelaide. For me it is okay to visit but as I get older, what am I going to do? Here in Broken Hill, I've had lots of work and friends so I'm staying here! Luigi Zanette

It was the right decision for me to leave Italy and settle in Broken Hill. It has given me a family and a place to be; to be something, to belong. Today, at this stage you can't want anything else. Jack De Franceschi

When you have lived to eighty there are not many left around you. I do get lonely but as long as I can look after myself I will stay here. I love this house, we built it ourselves! Dagmar Kanck

Everyone you asked said they were only in Australia for five years but the five years have become forty and fifty years. I have to tell you I love Australia; I love this country. Vickie Drosos

My husband Rigor went holidaying but he never wanted to move permanently to the big smoke. He liked it here in Broken Hill. Margarita Silicich

I love Broken Hill. I could retire tomorrow and live in my units in Manly but I love Broken Hill. It has been good to me. Rudolph Alagich OAM

It was very easy to become part of Broken Hill. I can go out and lie under the stars in a

Karl Karthausser



News from home.



De Franceschi Brothers went our separate ways in 1987. My sons and I became De Franceschi and Sons. John De Franceschi

OUR HOME

*I was happy
when I came here;
I'm still happy!*

Nick Drosos

As children you don't question what's happening about the move and we were sad I guess, to leave the family over there, but it's been great and Broken Hill has been wonderful to us. I wouldn't want to be anywhere else. I think we've been very lucky. I think we've been very blessed.

Katie Maxwell

Life is very good. I'll stay in Broken Hill as long as they keep the golf course going!

Dino De Franceschi

I still am able to look after and cook for myself. This is my home, I wouldn't leave.

Kata Andrich

I don't want to leave here. It's more relaxed in Broken Hill.

Nicholas (Nick) Chrisakis

Whenever I see anything about Australia, I cry; more than I do for Greece.

Vasiliki (Vickie) Niarros

Today the children are grown up and live away, but I am still very happy here.

Saverina Dall'Armi

*Hill — I love the bush, the freedom and the space;
swag. It is beautiful. When I die, bury me out there.*

I wouldn't want to live anywhere else.

Gabriella (Gay) De Franceschi

Forty years now I have lived in Australia. I love it in this country. I love it in South Broken Hill because it's a very quiet suburb, very nice suburb.

Ivan Pippin

People have often asked me why I don't move. I always reply, 'Broken Hill is where I'll be'. It's a nice place.

Louis (Lou) Forner

I am happy here, after all I've been here for forty eight years. I will return to Greece in the future. I don't know when this future will come but eventually I will. That was my intention in the beginning.

Con Frangonasopoulos

I love to go back to see my family but to live in Italy? No, because I married here in Broken Hill and my family is here now. That's it.

Anna Caon

My husband has retired but we've decided to stay here in Broken Hill. We're involved with the community; we love the people, it's a very friendly place.

Filomena Tormena

Dad loved Broken Hill and he loved the bush. A lot of his friends moved away but he would never think of leaving.

Anita Mazuran

I realised I didn't want to leave here. My home may not be as beautiful as other homes but to me it is beautiful.

Dina Spagnol

When I drive from Melbourne to Broken Hill, the car knows its way — even the car loves Broken Hill! It is the best place in Australia for me. I can't speak for other people.

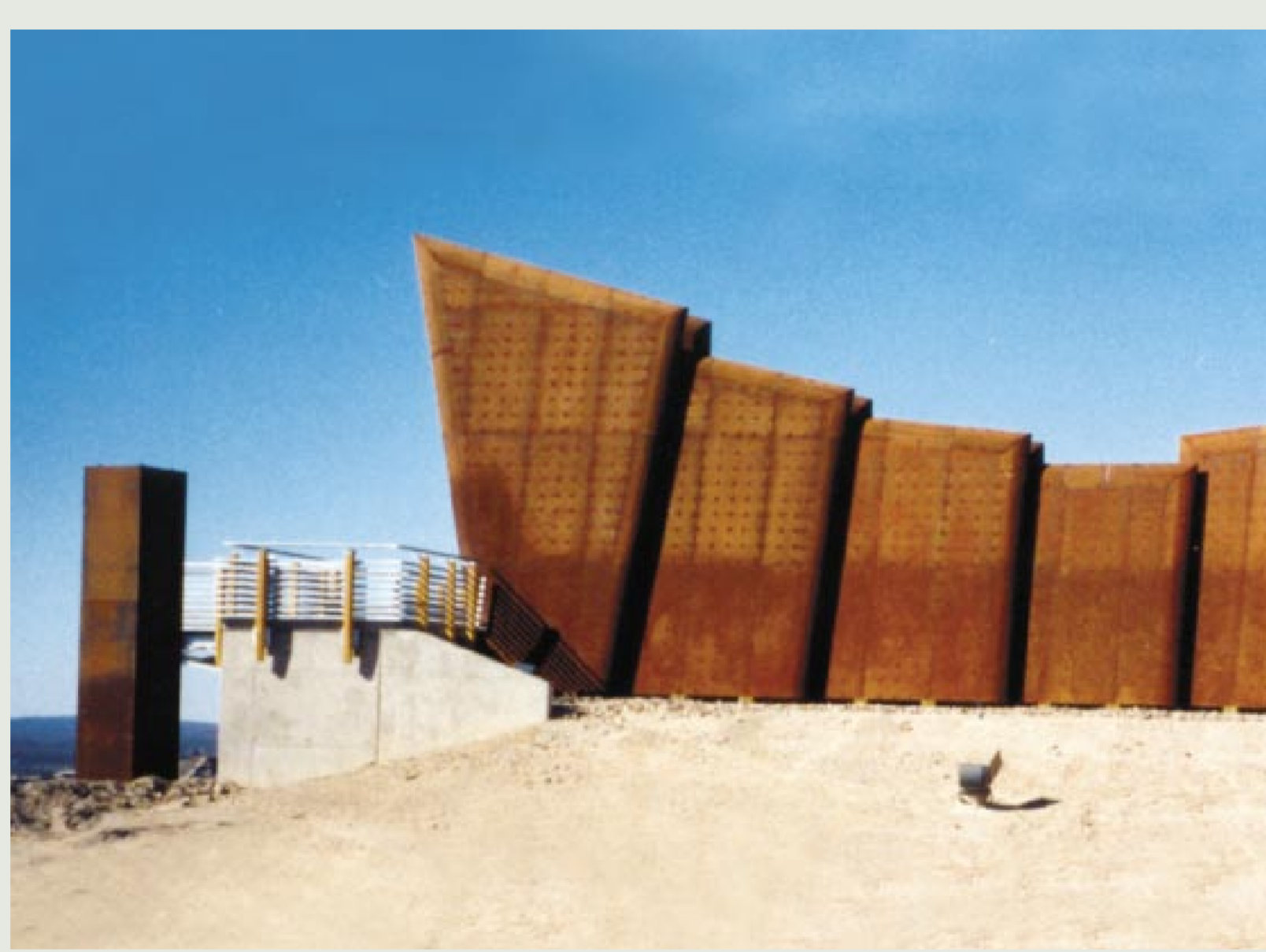
Spiros Niarros

Broken Hill has given me forty seven years. My family's here. My life is here. That's it isn't it? It says everything. If I didn't like it I would have left a long time ago.

Lorenzo Cester



Line of the Lode Information Centre, built in 2000 by De Franceschi and Sons.



Miner's Memorial built in 2000 by De Franceschi and Sons.

One of the greatest gifts I have received in coming to Broken Hill is satisfaction — the satisfaction of being able to participate.

John De Franceschi

It's beautiful in Italy but it is different from when I grew up. It is not like it used to be. It's not as friendly as Broken Hill.

Giuseppe (Joe) Frange

So Biagio and Carlottina came to Broken Hill, settled there and continued to live there all their lives. They are also buried there, and are quite a memorial to the pioneer Italian migrant. I feel proud of them for what they gave to this country and I am proud to be an Australian.

Clara Dal Santo

TIMELINE & CONTRIBUTORS

Sharing the Lode: Broken Hill Migrant Museum is the result of an exciting and vibrant project which aimed to promote an understanding of the experiences and contributions of migrants in the development of Broken Hill.

It was a rich and rewarding journey.

- 2000 Broken Hill Migrant Heritage Committee convenes to oversee the Broken Hill Migrant Heritage Project.
- 2002 Community Relations Commission for a Multicultural NSW (CRC) approves funding for project.
- 2003 Collated and bound report of 80 oral histories from participating migrants is presented to CRC.
Sharing the Lode opens as a temporary exhibition at the Albert Kersten GeoCentre.
Project wins NSW Cultural Heritage Conservation Award, Country Energy Tidy Towns Award.
- 2004 Sharing the Lode: The Broken Hill Migrant Story book is launched by NSW Premier the Hon. Bob Carr MP.
Assistance provided by the Migration Heritage Centre NSW.
- 2005 Board of Sulphide Street Railway Museum generously offers permanent home for exhibition.

2006 Sharing the Lode: Broken Hill Migrant Museum officially opens with assistance from the Migration Heritage Centre NSW and the Powerhouse Museum, Sydney.



Left to right: Back row: Maria Petkovich, Katie Maxwell, Pam McRae, Cliff Braes and Bobby Shamroze. Front Row: Anita Mazuran, Fran McKinnon, Merita Nicholas, Barbara De Franceschi OAM and Christine Adams.

Broken Hill Migrant Heritage Committee Members
 Barbara De Franceschi OAM (Chairperson)
 Pam McRae (Secretary)
 Maria Petkovich (Treasurer)
 Christine Adams (Project Officer)
 Cliff Braes
 Anita Mazuran
 Fran McKinnon
 Katie Maxwell
 Merita Nicholas
 Bobby Shamroze

The Committee acknowledges with gratitude the migrants who shared their stories:

