

Mary Fabris with her gondoller, Achille Molinaro, winners of the best float for the Venetian Carnival held on the Main Canal at Griffith in 1958. The event was part of the Inaugural Water Wheel Festival, established to raise money for a town hall. **DANNY MOLINARO**

**INSET IMAGES FROM TOP:**  
Custom made tokens used by members of the unlicensed Italo-Australian Club in the late 1930s to purchase beer. They were part of a system devised to circumvent the restrictive liquor laws. **GINO CECCATO**

The Ceccato family placing prunes on wooden trays for sun drying in 1941. Every family member worked on the Italian farm. Given the labour intensive nature of horticultural farming this was central to their success. **GINO CECCATO**

Tony and Julia Colla posing next to their new Holden car in 1955. **TONY COLLA**



# GRiFFiTH

italian heritage trail



## GRiFFiTH italian heritage trail

One of the striking features of the town of Griffith is its 'Italianness'. Some sixty per cent of its population can claim an Italian heritage. Griffith was established in 1916 as part of the new Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area (MIA). The largest town in the Riverina, it was designed by Walter Burley Griffin (architect of Australia's capital city, Canberra).

Returned servicemen and assisted British migrants were encouraged to take up irrigation blocks after the First World War when the MIA failed to

attract settlers. By the late 1920s most had relinquished their holdings, due to a lack of farming experience, depressed economic conditions and numerous other problems associated with the new scheme.

The Italian settlers, on the other hand, proved to be central to the scheme's success. Italians had been arriving in Australia since the 1880s, escaping poverty and lack of opportunity that characterised rural Italy and in search of *benessere* (prosperity). Most of the early settlers in Griffith were from the Veneto

region. During the 1930s the number of Italians from Calabria, Sicily and other regions settled in growing numbers. Their farming success attracted a further wave of Italian migration to Griffith in the postwar period.

This heritage trail takes you on a tour of places that tell the story of Italian settlement in Griffith. Some of these places no longer exist, while others have changed little. Collectively, they document the enduring legacy of Italian migration in Griffith's landscape.



Social gathering on the farm of Antonio Ceccato at Hanwood on New Years Day in 1927. **GINO CECCATO**

**TOP INSET IMAGE:** The 'far il porcel' (killing of the pig) in 1965 for the making of salami, pancetta and other cured meats. This winter tradition survives in Griffith today as an annual event. Unlike their *paesani* in the city, Italians in Griffith were able to produce their own foods. **GRIFFITH CITY LIBRARY**

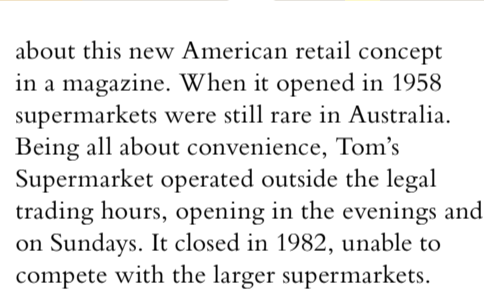


Dethridge wheel on a farm in Lake Wyangan, 1922. **GRIFFITH CITY LIBRARY**

### 1 Dethridge Wheel

Jondaryan Avenue (Kidman Way), Griffith

Invented in Australia in 1910, the dethridge wheel measured the volume of water drawn from the irrigation supply channels. This dethridge wheel serves as a memorial to the pioneers of the MIA, including the many Italian settlers. The new irrigation scheme was plagued with problems in the early years. Life for the farmer and his family was one of hardship and struggle. Today, water conservation poses another major challenge in the region.



Frank Miranda and Madalena and Peter Mogliotti, owners of the Broadway Store, standing behind the counter in May 1939. **GRIFFITH GENERATIONAL AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

### 3 The Broadway Store

47 Kooyoo Street, Griffith

One of the earliest small businesses which catered for the growing Italian community in Griffith was the Broadway Store. Opened in the mid-1930s, it is believed to be the first continental grocery store in Griffith, selling olive oil, pasta and other food and household goods imported from Italy. It meant that Italians no longer had to travel to Sydney to obtain such items. The store closed in the late 1950s.

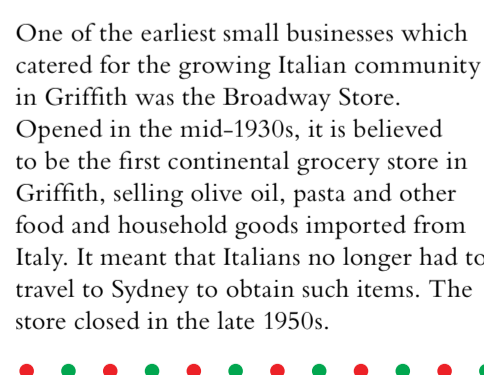


Tom's Supermarket, c1959. **GRIFFITH CITY LIBRARY**

### 2 Tom's Supermarket

166 Banna Avenue, Griffith

In the mid-1950s Tom Apolloni, one of Griffith's most enterprising citizens, decided to transform his Italian grocery shop and milk bar into a supermarket after reading



Peter Callipari at work in his shoe repair shop, c1955. **CALLIPARI FAMILY**

### 4 P & C Callipari Boot Repairs

430 Banna Avenue, Griffith

Peter Callipari arrived in Griffith in 1951 and opened a small shoe repair shop. Like most of the Calabresi who settled in Griffith, he was from the village of Plati. Callipari was an intelligent man of great



The Colla Brothers blacksmith shop in July 1954. **TONY COLLA**

### 6 Colla Bros, General Blacksmiths

100 Beneremba Street, Griffith

Tony Colla arrived in Griffith in December 1949 from the village of Casteluccio in the Veneto province of Treviso. In 1951 he bought the blacksmith shop from his employer, Blue Hams. It was one of many Italian-owned farming businesses in the Griffith area. Tony's father and brothers joined him from Italy and it became a family concern. The business still exists today, specialising in steel fabrication, although the workshop has been rebuilt.



Onorato ('Ciccio') Vico making 'pizza pie' at the Belvedere Pizza and Gelati Restaurant in about 1972. **SAM VICO**

### 5 Belvedere Pizza and Gelati Restaurant

494 Banna Avenue, Griffith

The Belvedere was the first Italian eatery in Griffith and among the earliest pizzerias in Australia. Onorato ('Ciccio') Vico opened it in 1969, naming it after his father's home town in the Veneto province of Treviso. This new 'ethnic' type of food was originally sold as 'pizza pie' to make it more acceptable to Australians. The pizzeria became a late night weekend haunt. It is now one of many Italian cafes and restaurants in Griffith.

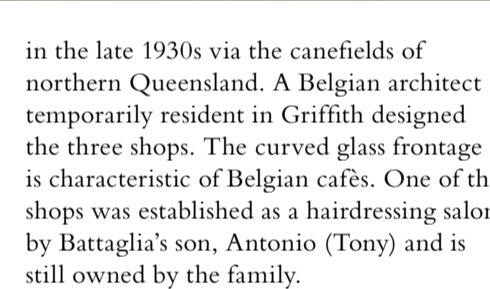


The Battaglia group of shops, 2009. **PETER KABALLA**

### 7 Salone Battaglia

451 Banna Avenue, Griffith

This distinctive group of Art Deco style shops was built by Francesco (Frank) Battaglia in 1957. He was one of many southern Italians who settled in Griffith



Coronation Hall (left) and the Italo-Australian Club (right) in 1937. **GINO CECCATO**

### 9 Coronation Hall and the Italo-Australian Club

Edon Street, Yoogali

In 1937 Coronation Hall was built to serve as a venue for social functions held by the Italian community. Located on the adjoining land was the Italo-Australian Club. Started in the same year, the club performed the role of a village *osteria* where men gathered to talk, drink, play cards and bocce. The club closed after Italy entered the war as an ally of Germany in June 1940. Coronation Hall is now a Sikh Temple.



Members of the Continental Music Club committee and program announcers at Radio 2RG, c1960s. **GINO CECCATO**

### 8 Continental Music Club

Radio 2RG, corner Ulong & Olympic Streets, Griffith

The Continental Music Club was formed in 1951 with the aim of promoting integration and fostering greater cohesion amongst the highly segregated Italian population and the wider Griffith community. It broadcast a weekly program on the regional radio station 2RG in the Italian and Spanish language which included music, community news and farming advice. The club also organised a number of social and cultural activities. An initiative of Al Grassby (better known as the Federal Minister for Immigration under the Whitlam Labor Government between 1972 and 1974), it forged a new *campanilismo* (sense of community) in the Griffith area. The club provided the model for multilingual radio in Australia.



The official opening and blessing of Our Lady of Pompeii at Yoogali on 28 April 1940. **GINO CECCATO**

### 10 Our Lady of Pompeii Church

Edon Street, Yoogali

The Italian community built a church in the late 1930s so they could practice the Catholic religion in their own cultural form. Modelled on a church in the village

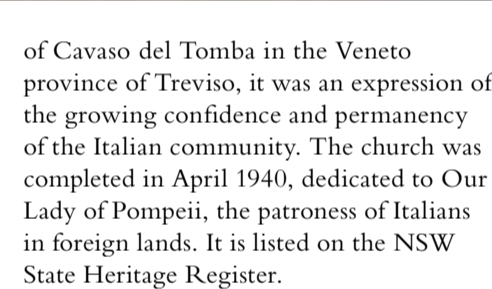


Bill poster promoting the appearance of Italian pop star Peppino Di Capri at the Yoogali Club in 1963. **GINO CECCATO**

### 11 Yoogali Club

647 Mackay Avenue, Yoogali

In the postwar years licensed clubs formed the basis of Italian social life in Griffith. The Yoogali Club was one of the earliest, formed in 1946. It was also the largest of these. Although most of its foundation members were Italian, it was never intended to be an 'Italian' club or associated with any particular province or region. Many 'top recording' Italian artists touring Australia performed at the Yoogali Club during the 1950s and 1960s.



Griffith Soccer Club, official team, 1951. **GERRY VIO**

### 12 Site of first soccer game, 1950

Corner Hanwood Road and Wattle Street, Hanwood

Soccer became established as a major football code in Griffith in the 1950s. It started with an impromptu game played by a group of young Italian men one Sunday afternoon. The game took place in what was then a paddock behind the present Hanwood Post Office. From this came the formation of the Griffith Soccer Club. The club's first official game was played in May 1950. Its culturally diverse membership reflected the different migrant groups that settled in Griffith in the postwar period.



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This brochure was prepared by the Griffith City Council with the assistance of the NSW Department of Planning, the Heritage Council of NSW and the Migration Heritage Centre NSW.

To learn more about the history of Italian settlement in Griffith visit the Griffith Italian Museum located within the Pioneer Park Museum, Remembrance Drive, Griffith. Information about Griffith can be found at the Griffith City Council website [www.griffith.nsw.gov.au](http://www.griffith.nsw.gov.au) or visit the Griffith Visitors' Information Centre located at the corner of Jondaryan and Banna Avenues.

