



18 September 2009

Italian Women tell their story

Last week local women with an Italian cultural background told the stories of their lives in Australia as part of the Gawler Significant Women Project sponsored by the Gawler Branch of Zonta.

The women, in their 70s and 80s told of the families they left behind in their villages in Italy and their first impressions of their new country.

The gathering was arranged by local MP Mr Tony Piccolo who has spoken in State Parliament about the project.

Mr Piccolo said they found the landscape very different and the language a great challenge.

Many of the women came to South Australia because they had other family already here and who sponsored their migration to Australia.

Most of the women came with their families, some with young children, while others came to be re-united with their fiancé or husband.

The women talked about some of the prejudice they experienced, but were pleased that their choice to migrate had given their children better educational and employment opportunities than they would have had in Italy.

While somewhat reticent to talk about themselves, they spoke with great pride about the achievements of their children and grand children.

“Their life has been defined by their commitment to their families” said Mr Piccolo.

While appreciative of the opportunities Australia has given them and their families the women strongly believe that they have themselves made a positive contribution to Australian society through their “sound family values” and strong work ethic.

The project has been undertaken in close cooperation with the Town of Gawler Public Library, which has set up a special public access archive for all the stories collected.

The discussion was led by local resident Ms Judy Gillett-Ferguson while Ms Marylisa Beltrame from Australia Donna helped with interpreting their stories into English.

The women’s stories will be published later this year.

State Member for Light
Member, Economics & Finance Committee
National Convenor, Australia – Italia MP Forum

148 Murray Street, Gawler, S.A., 5118.
Phone (08) 85 222 878 Fax: (08) 85 231 392