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Celebrating 40 years
1968-2008

MEDIA RELEASE

Italian ancestry records now available in Australia

Interest in family history research continues to grow, particularly since the recent screening on SBS-TV of the Australian version of "Who Do You Think You Are?".

However those tracing their family tree are often faced with the problem of how to access overseas records.

The Co.As.It. Italian Family History Group has announced that arrangements have now been completed which will enable those of Italian ancestry living in Sydney to undertake research into tracing their Italian ancestors here instead of overseas.

"After eight years of negotiations I am very pleased to say it will now be possible to order copies of microfilm reels which contain images of the actual entries in official Italian registers, both civil and church," said Dominic Arrivolo, Chairman of the Co.As.It. Italian Family History Group.

"The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints has agreed to supply reels as ordered.

"They have now recognised Co.As.It. as an appropriate Italian organisation to hold such research material on their behalf for the Italian community in Sydney," said Mr Arrivolo.

"This new arrangement will remove the problem which the group has experienced in the past of obtaining Italian authorisations from Italy."

The microfilm reels are stored in the USA at the Latter Day Saints' repository in Utah. The Church will arrange for orders to be sent to Co.As.It. in Sydney with delivery expected to take six weeks. A catalogue listing reels presently available appears on the Church's website, and reels from most regions in Italy have been photographed and are now available.

A microfilm reading machine on which these films can be viewed is located in the Multimedia Resource Centre in the library at Casa d'Italia, 67 Norton Street, Leichhardt.

Currently 48 reels containing the registers of the Aeolian Islands (in the Province of Messina) are available in the Co.As.It. library. These reels contain information going back almost 500 years.

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Mr. Arrivolo expressed his thanks to Latter Day Saints church authorities for allowing the group to participate in this special arrangement, and also to the Co.As.It organisation for its work in sponsoring and assisting Italian descendants.

Co.As.It. Italian Association of Assistance is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year. The initial aim of the voluntary organisation was to assist the large numbers of Italian migrants who came to Australia in the Post World War II era. Co.As.It. was formed with two distinct aims – to assist migrants through a coordinated settlement welfare program, and to preserve and promote an awareness of the Italian language and culture in Australia.

Today Co.As.It. NSW is one of the major and most active community voluntary agencies, offering a wide range of services and programs focused on community services, educational and cultural activities.

For further information contact Linda Nellor, Co.As.It's Heritage Project Officer on (02) 9564-0744 or Dominic Arrivolo, chairman of the group on (02) 9789-1787 or dominic1926@yahoo.com.

Ends

Pictured: Dominic Arrivolo, Chairman of the Co.As.It Italian Family History Group with the reading machine in the Co.As.It library where researchers will have access to Italian records.

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