



IL GIORNALE

NEWSLETTER FROM NEW ITALY MUSEUM INC.

MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

How wonderful it is to be back! I imagine you are wondering what we have been up to since the last Giornale was delivered in Autumn 2023. Yes, we have been busy!

Let's start by introducing our NIMI committee - new faces and old. We are:

- President - **Gail Williams**,
- Vice Presidents - **John Barnes** and **Leonie Lane**,
- Secretary/Membership - **Jenny Sherwin**, a Spinaze/Bazzo descendant,
- Treasurer: **Shailendra Maharaj** - on-site Tai Chi and Martial Arts teacher.

Committee Members:

- **Michele Speck** - a Bertoli descendant,
- **Vanessa Dibley** - a local, long term New Italy resident
- **Jamie Herring** - the Café manager.

It is wonderful to have some new volunteers working across the site with skills that compliment the existing team. Some bring events management experience. We look forward to developing an Events Team to manage functions within the grounds and in the Community Hall. Just imagine... garden weddings!

Bringing you up-to-date:

- In June 2023, Michele Speck opened **MyBelle Pantry**, a wholefood store in the old Driver Reviver building - a lovely welcoming face to greet the general public.
- We had our **dog park** fenced in October 2023. We want to add a shelter for supervising owners to enjoy while their pets are off-leash. Dog owners are very appreciative even though it is not finished.
- Last year our **residence** above the gift shop became vacant and we took the opportunity to upgrade it as the kitchen and bathroom were 40 years old and looked it!! These were replaced and we moved the laundry upstairs for convenience. It is now rented out once more.

Over the past two years, many wonderful and well-known folk have visited New Italy.

- April 2023: I had the pleasure of meeting playwright, **Ollie Heathwood**, whose play *'Paradiso Fantastica'* was performed in the Community Hall in 1997. It was performed over several days to packed out audiences at New Italy and in Lismore. Ollie is a resident of the North Coast and still passionate about Historic New Italy.
- October 2023: **Scott Cam** walked into our gift shop inquiring about his ancestor's land. I had the pleasure of showing him Rocco Caminiti's block. Since then, Richmond Valley Council have named the nearby bridge, 'Caminiti Bridge'. Scott would be pleased.
- February 2024: **Susan Craven** popped in. She and her sister, Helen de Stefani, wrote the book *'My Italian Heritage'*. It is now out of print. This was the catalyst for the development of the genealogy page on the New Italy website.
- October 2024: we were visited by **Her Excellency the Governor of NSW, the Hon. Margaret Beasley**, who attended an afternoon tea party in the Community Hall. She met many volunteers who were affected by the 2022 catastrophic flood. Such a lovely, dynamic woman!

You never know who you may meet while volunteering at New Italy! That's what I like about working in the gift shop.

In October 2023, we were able to host the launch of the children's book, 'Giovanni' by author **Crystal Carocher**, in the Pavilion. Crystal, based her book on her great-grandfather as a four year old. Giovanni Carocher survived the Marquis de Rays expedition to join others in their new home, the New Italy Settlement. Two lemon trees were planted to commemorate the book launch by Crystal's family and children from Woodburn Public School.

Look, there is so much more to tell, so sit back with a cuppa and read on.

Gail Williams



PROJECT UPDATES

THE NEW ITALY COMMUNITY HALL



The Community Hall was repaired during 2023-2024. The March 2022 weather event caused significant water damage. Home to our archives and collection, an events and organisational space, the hall's repairs gave an opportunity to finetune the space. External landscaping and drainage, new windows and doors made the site drier and more secure. New collection and equipment rooms sit either side of the stage with a NIMI office added to the back of the previously deep stage. This office doubles as a change room for stage plays and fashion parades. Extended roofing from the Hall kitchen forms an *al fresco* area. This was made possible through a Create NSW CLIRP Arts and Cultural Policy Needs Program grant. A big thank you to the NSW Government, conservator Christine Ianna, builder Jim Barnes and his team! While the Hall is largely complete and watertight, we need to add signage, line the ceiling and paint the floor. We are looking for extra funds to do so. Here's to holding many fun-filled events there!

Gail Williams

THE ITALIAN PAVILION



PETER DERRELL



While the exterior of the Pavilion is being renovated, the Museums group has been busy creating new displays. The theme 'Migration Stories' features a departure/arrival wharf complete with cargo net. While the building renovation is funded by a grant from Creative Capital, we are currently seeking further funds for other new displays.

Leonie Lane

Sea chest displays on the 'wharf' and cargo netmakers Cynthia McKeough, Leonie Lane, Nancy Gava and Lisa Farrington make it happen.

RETURN & EARN PROGRAM AT THE NEW ITALY MUSEUM SITE



Gift shop volunteer Fran Muggleton demonstrates R&E

A Return & Earn program is in progress giving visitors a sustainable way to dispose of used drink containers. Three lidded, clearly labeled bins encourage visitors to do so at three on-site locations:

- the Café exit area before the path to the toilet block,
- outside the Casa Vecchia Gift Shop,
- across the footpath from the toilet block.

The program enables a 'win-win' situation. Visitors have a specific place to leave their disposable drink containers. NIMI receives some cash for them. (While the income generated seems small, it does add up over time.) Less waste goes to landfill. All collected items are recycled. We encourage all visitors to use them while on site. By doing so you are helping NIMI, keeping the site and planet garbage free and reusing our Earth's limited resources.

Jennifer Sherwin

LANDSCAPING THE SITE



One of the stipulations in the DA for the back car park was to plant a visual screen along the fence to block the view of the car park. Well, it took us 6 years to do it, and it all started with two working bees in August last year. Many thanks to the helping hands and contributions we received. When the plants have grown it will provide a private entertaining site in the parkland. There is a space left for a future stage and the gentle slope of the land will provide a natural arena for outdoor concerts.

Gail Williams

TESLA CHARGING STATIONS IN THE BACK CARPARK



Tesla, in partnership with the NSW government, has built a twelve bay charging station for electric cars in our back carpark. A canopy supplies solar power and brings shade to the area. The Launch Day will be in Spring - date to be advised. We are thrilled with this alliance as the rent will form another income stream for NIMI. It will provide funds for our museum's future. As our volunteer numbers dwindle we are more and more reliant on employing contractors.

Gail Williams

A WEDDING BOWER FOR THE PARK OF PEACE



Prior to builders starting the Hall renovations, groundwork needed to be done to control stormwater. Gardens were removed and plants found a new home in the Park of Peace where large areas were mulched to encompass several trees. We got a little carried away and a large heart shaped area was mulched around the Racehorse tree. This led to us thinking about having garden weddings under this beautiful tree. Posts and rails from the heritage fence were repurposed to frame a wedding bower. Further construction, planting and time is needed for this to come to fruition.

Gail Williams

WATER SUPPLY AT NEW ITALY SITE

Few realise that the New Italy site is totally dependent upon rainfall for its water supply. This means that roof run-off is collected in tanks for garden, kitchen and toilet use. Historically this collection has been in a variety of nine tanks of varying capacity (total 200m³) on seven different levels in five different locations. That's complex! The operation of an interconnecting manually controlled *system* of pumps and a network of pipes was able to have the water in the right places as required. A need to rationalise this *system* as the site grew have been apparent for some time. Subsequently, with a \$20,000 grant, hall renovation opportunities and hard-earned New Italy money, we were able to realise an eleven tank system on three levels and in three locations (capacity 300m³). At current usage this is enough storage capacity for approx. 100 days without rain. Manual management is now much less. This system lends itself to the installation of an automated transfer and new filtration system which will cost approx. \$7,000. Donations are most welcome and are tax deductible.



John Barnes

OVERNIGHTERS

Prior to the highway upgrade, we would see six - ten vans parked in the front of the complex every night. These overnighters endured highway noise, muddy ground, poor lighting, a security risk and, apart from toilets, no amenities.

The new highway brought with it a fully compliant *front of house* car park and a bituminous 120 space car park at the rear of the complex. The rear car park serves as an overnighting site for some 25 vans daily. A relative noise-free night, ample space, lighting, our improved facilities and communal safety. We ask \$15 cash or card donation (this would be \$40 elsewhere). The relevant signage is prominent. However we estimate only 20% of the users are donating. This impedes our continued maintenance and development of the site. Costs, expectations and standards continue to rise. We would like to put in place a plan where all users pay to stay enabling proceeds to go back to NIMI for maintenance and improvements.

John Barnes

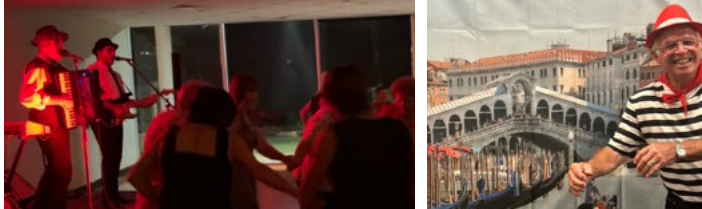
COMMUNITY CORRECTION SERVICES

Some time ago NIMI was contacted by the Casino office of Community Correction Services with the suggestion that they provide us with occasional lawn, garden and general duty workers. This idea has developed into an arrangement whereby some two - five well-equipped workers (plus supervisor) arrive on most Fridays to cut grass, maintain hedges and trim edges etc. for approx. 4 hours. Such a service has proven to be invaluable in fulfilling the gap in our volunteer workforce as it provides maintenance for our ever expanding managed area. Their services have proven to be not only invaluable but also favourably noticeable. We thank all concerned.

John Barnes

RECENT EVENTS

15/2/2025: BEYOND VENICE - Lismore Workers Club
- The Latin Mafia Band; gondolier Tony de Nardi



23/3/2025 - 2024 NIMI AGM guest speaker Dr John Davies 'Travelling photographer Joseph Check'; Chair Ros Derrett; President Gail Williams

23/3/2025: TOMÉ FAMILY VISIT

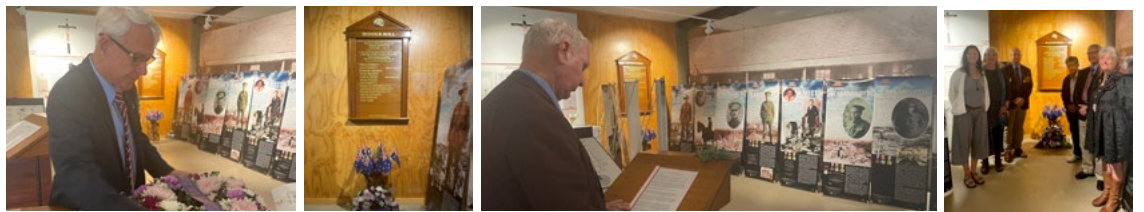


6/4/2025 - ANNIVERSARY DAY Accordionist Val Wills; Raffle extraordinaire Julie de Nardi



PHOTOS BY
PETER DERRETT

25/4/25 - ANZAC DAY -
New Italy Museum Roll of Honour - NIMI with Graham Gooding from Alstonville RSL



UPCOMING EVENTS

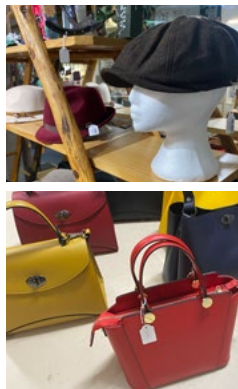
2025
LisAmore!
LOVING LISMORE... ITALIAN STYLE
10 ~ 3 SUNDAY 6 JULY
LISMORE TURF CLUB
LOOK FOR THE NIMI STALL

TAI CHI QI GONG & MEDITATION
AT NEW ITALY COMMUNITY HALL
MON 8:30AM - 9:30AM
SAT 8:30AM - 9:30AM
\$10 PER LESSON

DATE SAVER:
2025 NIMI ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Afternoon tea
2.30pm Sunday 2 November
FEATURING SURPRISE GUEST SPEAKER

SHOPPING AT HISTORIC NEW ITALY...

CASA VECCHIA GIFT SHOP



How time flies! The **Casa Vecchia Gift Shop** has been run by dedicated volunteers for 15 years! Time for a “refresh” and to increase the display area for our expanding merchandise. New shelving has been installed giving a different feel to the shop. Our newest addition is the typical Sicilian coppola, straight out of the Godfather movie! Another shipment of genuine Italian leather handbags from Florence has arrived. Get in fast - they sell quickly! We are open 4 days a week ~Thursday to Sunday due to lack of volunteers. Would you like to work here with our dynamic team? We pay travel allowance and you get 10% off on all purchases.

Gail Williams • giftshop@newitaly.org.au • 0414 348 566

MYBELLE PANTRY

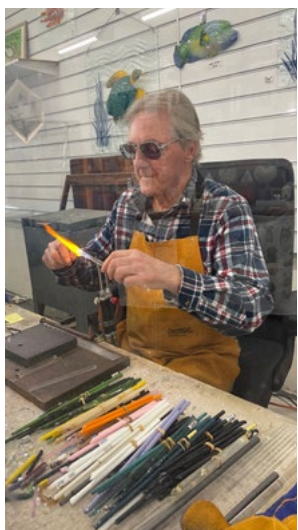


MyBelle Pantry customers love the crisp local Stanthorpe apples and delicious Tullamoor macadamias - both salted and plain. Another favourite is raw honey from Two Busy Beez from the Byron Hinterland.

Sustainability is at the heart of what we do. Around 50% of our pantry goods arrive in reusable glass jars or packaging that can go straight into your yellow recycling bin or home compost. Even our beloved Flying Fox ice blocks come in compostable wrappers - and for our customers, we offer a compost drop-off point right here in the shop to add to my own compost heap in New Italy to help close the loop. Every small choice adds up!

Michele Bertoli • masfmdcare@gmail.com • 0403 212 747

NEW ITALY GLASS ART GALLERY



New Italy Glass Art Gallery has been an attraction at the Museum Complex for 20 years. We display an extensive range of glass art from three accomplished Northern Rivers Glass Artists. The resident flame-worker is Ian O’Driscoll. He can be found at the flame Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday sculpting glass figurines and a unique range of glass jewelry. Alongside Ian’s artworks, Arnie Gaustch, a long-term Northern Rivers resident, displays his traditional glass wheel engraving and Laszlo Biro from Casino exhibits his kiln-worked glass creations.

We also support other talented local artists: wax creations of Integrity Candles by Linda Saul of Coraki, unique wood designs of Flow Form Furniture from Broadwater and Australian wildlife artwork by Katherine Castle, a display of Indigenous Art and Craft and a large range of Australian-made giftware. Our visitors tell us “it’s simply a shop full of beautiful things”! Visit during Gallery hours: Monday ~ Friday 10-4, Saturday & Sunday 10-2.

Ian & Julie O’Driscoll • ianodriscoll58@gmail.com • 0414 668 223

TASTES OF NEW ITALY CAFÉ



The Tastes of New Italy Café sits adjacent the New Italy Museum providing a welcome place to stop over and recharge for Highway travelers and locals alike. While you wait for your order, spend time in the Museum learning more about the New Italy story.

The Café serves great Merlo coffee and makes the best hamburgers! (Ask any member of the Museums group.) Staffed by locals, managed by Jamie Herring, the café is open 7am ~ 4pm 7 days/week.

Jamie Herring • newitalycafe@gmail.com • 6682 2622

JOIN / RENEW NIMI Membership <https://www.newitaly.org.au/about-us/membership/>

CASH DONATIONS <https://www.newitaly.org.au/about-us/donation/>

NIMI is registered with ATO ~ Deductible Gift Recipient

ITEM DONATIONS <https://www.newitaly.org.au/about-us/item-donation/>

‘IL GIORNALE’ Spring 2025: content 20/8/2025 - museums@newitaly.org.au

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