



IL GIORNALE

NEWSLETTER FROM NEW ITALY MUSEUM INC.

MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Our Christmas and holiday season is now over and we are settling down to a year of strategic planning for the year ahead. It was a busy time over the holiday period. We are getting many compliments from returning travelers, who visited “years ago”, and are pleased to see the improvements. When you are there all the time you don't notice the small constant improvements made until someone like these returning travelers point it out. There is great interest in when the Pavilion will be reopened. It is nice to know our hard work is acknowledged and appreciated.

Things are ticking along and the new committee is settling in. **High on our priority list is the toilet block and septic system.** Our present toilet block is looking very tired and worn but has held up for 40 years. Can you imagine the number of people who have used them in that time? No wonder they are looking a little tired and worn! Still, it will take time to amass the amount of money needed. We have placed a donations “barometer” outside the toilet block to encourage visitor donations. Let's hope it works so we can afford a modern, easy-to-clean toilet block appropriate for the site's needs.

The Museum roof should be next in line for upgrading. Out of sight, but it is not out of mind. No doubt planning will be done this year. There is a major problem with the roof as the metal sheeting is attached to the melaleuca log purlins that are attached to the big log rafters that form the roof over the museums and Café. None of the logs are straight and the roof line followed the curves of the logs. This has produced a roof with ridges and hollows where water sits and has eventually rusted through. Our roof has developed major leaks in a couple of places. All the silicone applied over the years is now not holding. I am wondering if the Heritage Council will allow us to redesign the roof to remove these ridges and hollows, so all water drains off the roof. It is a heritage building and this would have been the way their roofs were constructed. Time will tell when we go down that path. Is there a structural engineer amongst our readers who would be able to help us with this challenge?

We have at last a **volunteer handyman, Steve**, who is helping with maintenance work around the site. At long last **Val and Kel Walker**, who do an amazing job with our



gardens, will get some garden edging constructed for them. Good things come to those who wait, and they have waited an awfully long time. The first job Steve did was to remove all the grapes (amid stings by resident wasps) from our abundant vines on site. The vines were shedding ripe grapes and making such a mess on the concrete! See photo of Steve at work with Susan from the Gift Shop enjoying the fruits of his labour!

We have had a variety of non-human visitors over the years from kangaroos and wallabies, birds, dumped cats and chooks to Paola the python and a beautiful peacock. Now we have Rhino the rhinoceros beetle who has attached himself to an outdoor table to watch the grape harvest taking place! All living creatures great and small on site are welcome - except for stinging paper wasps! On saying that, have you noticed the mud brick walls of the Museum and Café how native insects have burrowed into the bricks to make nests? There are many types. Some build elaborate trumpet-like structures at their entrance. Have a look when you next visit.

Perhaps on **Anniversary Day**? This year celebrating 145 years since the New Italy expeditioners' arrival in Sydney. Mark **Sunday 12 April** in your calendars - see page 5 for details and program. **Call 0414 348 566 or email events@newitaly.org.au to book a table**

Warm regards, **Gail Williams - President, NIMI**



INVITES YOU TO

2026 **ANNIVERSARY DAY**
CELEBRATE WITH FAMILY & FRIENDS

ENTRY BY DONATION
145 YEARS SINCE THE NEW ITALY EXPEDITIONERS ARRIVAL IN AUSTRALIA

REMEMBER DAYLIGHT SAVING ENDS 3RD 5 APRIL

10.30AM (FOR 11AM) **SUNDAY 12 APRIL**

RESERVE A TABLE 0414 348 566 / EVENTS@NEWITALY.ORG.AU
(BOOK BEFORE 2/4/26)



NEW ITALY HALL
PACIFIC HIGHWAY, SOUTH OF WOODBURN

WELCOME & BLESSING - FATHER FRANK DEVOY MUSIC BY DJ PHIL ECKERSLEY
LUNCH - PASTA, CANOLLI & MORE 'AMICI' FOOD TRUCK PLUS...
COLD REFRESHMENTS FROM THE NIMI BAR - CAFÉ & GIFT SHOP OPEN
RAFFLES - MANY PRIZES TO BE WON - MUSEUM & PAVILION TOURS

Visit us at www.newitaly.org.au Facebook New Italy / Historic New Italy Instagram HistoricNewItaly
For more information info@newitaly.org.au

MONUMENT TO THE PEOPLE WHO DIDN'T SURVIVE THE MARQUIS DE RAYS EXPEDITION



Sometime ago I wrote an article for this journal that concerned the erection of a monument to those Marquis de Rays' expeditioners who did not survive the voyage or New Ireland settlement attempt. At the time we were contemplating the erection of a structure that explained its relevant circumstances and so listed the names of the 45 persons concerned. Space was also to be provided for those whose names are unrecorded.

Unfortunately to date nothing has been done as to the site or form of the memorial. Our limited funds and general business elsewhere have been unavoidable distractions. Fortunately our ability to act is now improving and we hope to have something planned and a site chosen within two to three years. Please feel free to make a verbal response.

We feel that such a structure should be in a prominent position, reflect the gravity of the circumstances and leave a favorable impression.

Here are the names of the 45 people who did not survive the epic voyage. May they Rest in Peace. We would value input from relatives/descendants.

John Barnes

COLLABORATION: LEVI MELZER & OZZIE



Levi Meltzer is a writer, film and theatre maker originally from Sydney but now based in London. His practice in comedy is combined with non-fiction storytelling using a technical hybridity. His award-winning shows have been performed all over the world. He has held a fascination for the Marquis De Rays and his rogue attempt to colonise the South Pacific (New Ireland). Growing up not far from the Waverley Cemetary in the Eastern Suburbs of Sydney, he discovered the final resting place of Elizabeth Catalano. Her tomstone had 'Survivor of De Rays Expedition' engraved on her tombstone. It prompted further research and an enduring fascination with the story.



He aspires to create a new theatre piece that explores the history of the Marquis, his (non)colony and what followed. Levi and his collaborator **Isabelle (Ozzie)** wish to develop this project with

the museum and descendants. They see that this story is very pertinent in our contemporary world.

John Barnes and I met with these two engaging young creatives on 6 February. They were very inspired by everything and gathered much preliminary material. We look forward to seeing their project grow.

Leonie Lane

THOSE WHO DIED DURING THE VOYAGE, IN NEW IRELAND AND IN NEW CALEDONIA. They have no known grave or were buried at sea.

1. Lucietti Buoro ?
2. Gerome Tome 39 years
3. Emilia Bertoli 30 years
4. Marco Tome 44 years
5. Maria Jabretti 38 years
6. Guiseppe Battestuzzi 24 years
7. Guiseppe Brican 33 years
8. Domenico Gava 4 years
9. Battista Maffari 61 years
10. Agostino Pellizer 3 years
11. Santo Bertoli 52 years
12. Madalena Roder 73 years
13. Maffonis child #1
14. Maffonis child #2
15. Matteo Bordet 79 years
16. Giovanna Moras 57 years
17. Giovanni Gava 47 years
18. Luigi Bertolo 60 years
19. Vincent Bertod 4 years
20. Rosa Bertoli 56 years
21. Maria Mellare 32 years
22. Caterina Cappellini 37 years
23. Caterina Cappellini's infant.
24. Emile Bertoli 36 years
25. Albina Oneda 2 years
26. Maria Antonioli 32 years
27. Ludovici Bertolo 1 year
28. Antonia Pellizer 35 years
29. Maria Pellizer 1 year
30. Caterina Bazzo 9 years
31. Giovanni Roder 76 years
32. Lucia Spinaze 58 years
33. Angelo Julan 34 years
34. Pio Bellotto 35
35. Francesco Barberetto 69 years
36. Giacomo Roder 42 years
37. child #1 under 2
38. child #2 under 2
39. child #3 under 2
40. child #4 under 2
41. child #5 under 2
42. child #6 under 2
43. child #7 under 2
44. child #8 under 2
45. child #9 under 2

TOTAL = 45 persons listed

Additionally it is acknowledged that a considerable number of unrecorded deaths also occurred during the voyage and settlement attempt.

REST IN PEACE ~ REQUIESCAT IN PACE

EARLY DAYS OF NEW ITALY SETTLEMENT:

An early account of settlement and lifestyle by a New Italy settler (Part I)



In the early days of New Italy settlement bark huts were built. It is recorded in our first Bulletin of Woodburn & District Historical Society that Angelo Roder built a **bark hut** and after four and a half years went back to Liverpool (NSW) and married Maria Flurin and they returned to New Italy.

Then, homes were built of **slabs and the roof would be covered by wooden shingles**, these were put on in such a manner that they did not leak.

Wells had to be dug to get water from the roof. The first few feet of the well had to be slabbed to stop the sides from falling in. Most settlers slabbed right down to the bottom. There is only about three feet of top soil, they you arrive in clay which does not allow water to seep away. All wells were **covered with slabs for cleanliness and to reduce the danger of children being drowned**. It was good to dip a bucket full of water when the heat wave conditions were on, it was very cool. Water for cattle was obtained from drains or small gullies, but settlers soon had to build dams to provide water in drought periods.

Gardens were started but all areas had to be fenced with palings to keep out bandicoots, kangaroo rats, wallabies and kangaroos. **All boundary fences were of the two rail type**. None remain now.

Corn was planted for fowl feed but some was ground fine and made into a thick porridge, when cold it was solid and put on a table and slices were cut from it by copper wire. This took the place of bread. It was called polenta.

Later when flour was being bought, **every home had their own ovens**. Ours was about three feet square of floor space. My father built a wooden frame over the floor space and covered this with a layer of mud about six inches thick and left a hole at the back to act as a flue. When the mud dried a fire was lit inside and the wooden frame was burnt. The oven resembled a giant white ant nest.

Sweet potatoes were grown in good quantities as it was a main vegetable it was fed to the pigs. Nearly all settlers grew **grapes**, some only a row or two. Antoniulli had the biggest area, estimated six to seven acres. These settlers who had big areas sold their grapes in Woodburn and Coraki. Visitors who came to the homes to buy grapes were told they could eat as many as they could for one shilling, then they would buy what they wanted to take home. For salad lettuce was grown a vegetable called **endive**, this is slightly bitter but it has the advantage that all the leaves can be cut leaving about two inches left. This will grow again several times until it goes to seed. The endive is very popular amongst Southern European countries. (to be continued...)



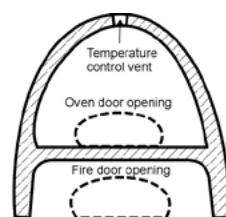
Building styles changed as the settlement developed - bark slab huts to single-tiled rooves.



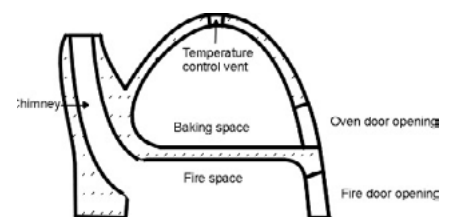
Remnants of the Mahogany Road well; the Church well lining; the more familiar Antoniulli Well at the Museum site had a structure added to cover it in the 1980s. It is the original well that was once inside the original Antoniulli house.



The two-rail slab and post fences were common on New Italy properties. The Antoniulli fence, once at the front of the Museum site, was removed as it became fragile and the highway upgrade progressed. Some of the fence has been repurposed to form the wedding bower in the Park of Peace.



Cross section of adobe oven viewed from front



Cross section of adobe oven viewed from side

Unfortunately we have no photos of these early ovens. But the description suggests a basic adobe oven.

PROJECT UPDATE

THE ITALIAN PAVILION

As described in the last 'Il Giornale', the thematic display upgrade continues! See our orientation graphic below.

We are focusing on getting the two entrances - **Entrance 1: the Piazza entrance** and **Entrance 2: the south facing front entrance** complete, all existing displays in place with their objects tied down. This will enable us to open the Pavilion to the public seven days a week aligning with the New Italy Museum and the Café hours. **With Anniversary Day coming up (remember to book your family or friends table - call Gail 0414 348 566 or email events@newitaly.org.au), it will be lovely to have our visitors spend time with and enjoy the work the Museums group are putting in place.**

Entrance 1: the Piazza entrance is to include

- bilingual name and welcome signage inc. opening hours
- the 3 window murals (currently sun damaged)
- a new wooden park bench for under the new awning
- 2 different maps of Italy: Carta Fisica and Carta Politica
- orientation panel
- Northern Rivers Italian community map

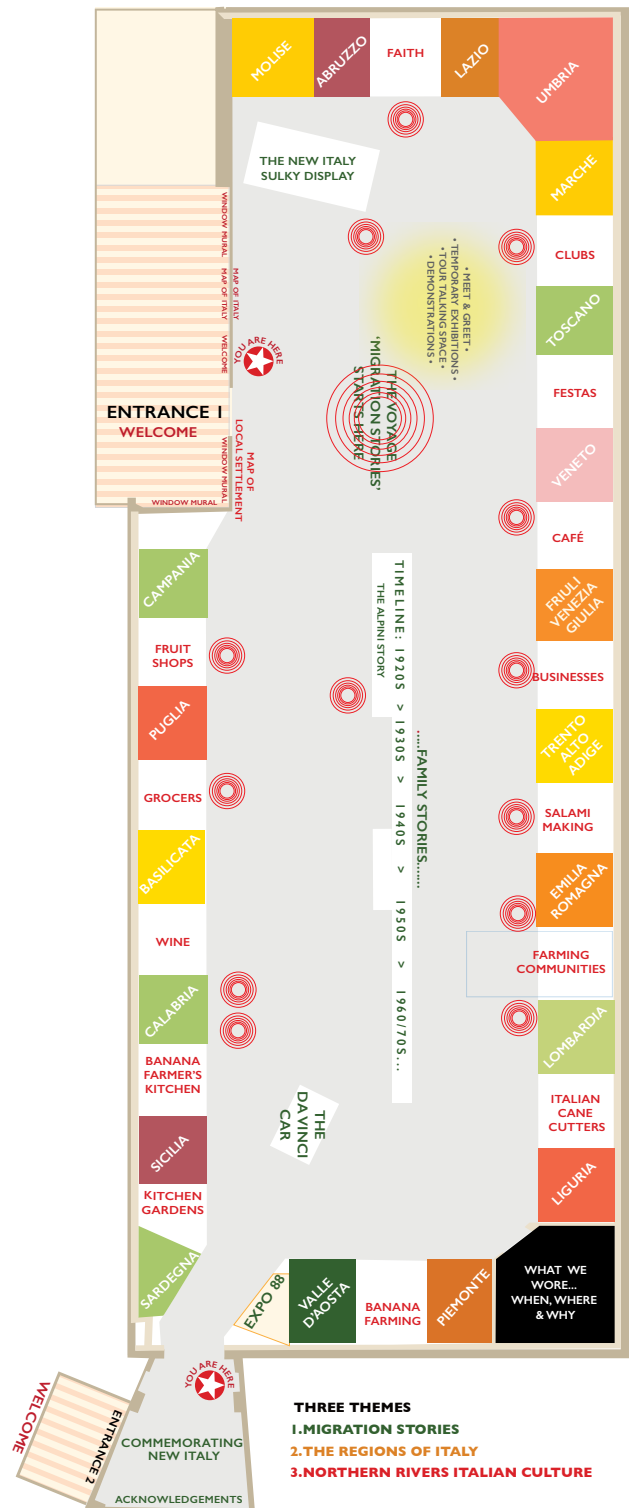
Entrance 2: the south facing front entrance

- bilingual name and welcome signage, inc. opening hours
- A/V display
- commemorating New Italy Museum site
- acknowledgement of 1990s volunteers
- acknowledgement of 2025-2026 volunteers
- orientation panel



We have also been working on themed displays about Northern Rivers Italian Culture inside the Pavilion. Look out for

- Café
- Faith
- Italian Kitchen Gardens
- Banana Farmhouse kitchen (see above)
- Banana farming
- Farming communities... and more



HOW CAN YOU HELP?

We would welcome assistance putting displays together. Do you have information that would fit any of the themes? Donations to NIMI towards the Pavilion project would be greatly appreciated. We are printing many interpretation panels in the next few months.

Contact Leonie - museums@newitaly.org.au - 0423733569

ALL WELCOME!



HISTORIC
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OR EMAIL EVENTS@NEWITALY.ORG.AU

PROGRAM

- 10.30 Welcome by Val Willis on Accordion New Italy Hall
Buy Barista Coffee New Italy Café
Tea New Italy Hall
NIMI membership join/renew
Raffle tickets buy 3 for \$5 - Prizes to be won
Salami wheel tickets - Prizes to be won
Casa Vecchia Gift Shop is open all day
YOU WILL BE SHOWN TO YOUR TABLE
- 11.00 Welcome ~ NIMI President Gail Williams
Anniversary Day blessing ~ Father Frank Devoy
- 11.15 Inaugural Italian Anniversary Day Quiz
- Prizes to be won
- 11.30 – 2.00 Buy your lunch
- Amici Food Truck
 - New Italy Cafe
 - BYO
- 12.00 Enjoy tunes by DJ/MC Phil Eckersley
- 12.30 – 2.00 Dolci
- mouthwatering Gelato ~ Gelato truck
 - authentic Cannoli ~ 'Amici'
- 1.00 Salami Wheel and Raffle draw
- 1.30 Bocce games outside
- 2.30 Special tour of the Pavilion
- 3.00 THANK YOU & CIAO!

THE NEW ITALY HALL FOR HIRE!



- WEDDINGS
- BIRTHDAY PARTIES
- CORPORATE & BUSINESS
- EVENTS
- TRAINING SEMINARS
- OFFICE PARTIES
- AUCTIONS
- FASHION PARADES
- SCHOOL FORMALS
- GRADUATIONS
- REUNIONS
- FUNDRAISER EVENTS
- CHRISTENINGS
- ANNIVERSARIES
- FAMILY REUNIONS
- SPORTS AWARDS
- COMMUNITY GATHERINGS
- FUNDRAISERS
- CONFERENCES
- DANCE CLASSES
- EXHIBITIONS

The New Italy Hall is the perfect venue for your special event or occasion.

A blank canvas, the hall seats approximately 300, or alternately, up to 120 seated at tables.

Facilities in the hall include a small bar area and a raised stage at the southern end of the building.

A covered area outside the hall offers an additional 'al fresco' option.

We offer self-catering and BYO alcohol options. Hirers are not obliged to use our own providers.





NEW ITALY HALL Historic New Italy

8275 Pacific Highway, Woodburn NSW 2472

BOOKING ENQUIRIES

@ events@newitaly.org.au

www.newitaly.org.au

  Historic New Italy





As a boy in the 1950s I (along with many of my generation) was fascinated by the exploits of the crime busting Mr Walker. This muscular comic book hero doubled in time of trouble as 'The Phantom'. As such he relentlessly pursued and punished thuggish criminals in the dead of night and then mysteriously reappeared as a peace loving Mr. Walker. His colleagues and even his girlfriend, Diana, were none the wiser as to his anonymous actions or identity.

As it happens, at New Italy we have our own version of not only Mr Walker but also Mrs Walker. This couple have for many years (almost 20) largely anonymously tendered, fertilised and watered the garden hedges, roses, pots and scrubs of the site. These volunteer deeds have been performed in a largely covert manner very early in the mornings - before interruptions by coffee anxious customers who are totally unaware of the very early morning gardening activities of the couple sitting nearby.

Val and Kel (as they are known) continue to display not only gardening skills but a cheerful disposition, an awareness of

“what’s going on”, an enduring interest in the site and a love of an early morning cuppa before disappearing home to Evans Head.

Kel Walker who hails from Parramatta started his working life as a copy boy and after several other jobs found a position at Leura in the Blue Mountains. Here he became interested in golf. After becoming a low handicap golfer he secured a position as Secretary /Manager of the Springwood Country Club.

Now a little about Val. Valerie Moore, as she was, hails from Woodburn where she grew up with many a New Italy story because her mother was a Piccoli. Therefore she is a direct descendant of the original Marquis de Rays' expeditioners. After leaving school, Val had an active sporting life and worked for a trucking company. Moving to the Blue Mountains she opened and ran a fashion boutique in Springwood for a number of years and started playing golf – where she met Kel.

After marrying in Spain, Val and Kel enjoyed several overseas trips and life in the Blue Mountains. Returning to the local area some 20 years ago to look after Val's aging mother, they started making social trips to New Italy. Enquiring as to who did the garden maintenance they received a blank look and so the rest is history.

When interviewed recently this likable couple recounted the progressive changes that have taken place, their love of the “job”, the satisfaction they get from talking to visitors and the pleasure they have derived from the gardening activities.

There you have it. Their anonymity has been blown away and so we now know who the dawn gardeners are.

P.S. Val's mother Kate Moore (Piccoli) died locally at the age of 108 in 2015.

John Barnes

VISITOR NUMBERS UPDATE



For many years NIMI has recorded the number of site visitors who use the toilets.

These figures are a very useful guide in planning maintenance, ordering supplies, staffing, growth forecasting and overall facilities planning etc. for not only NIMI but also our tenants.

To give an example: During the 60 day period 3 December 2025 - 2 February 2026 a total of 52,634 persons were recorded as having used our toilets. This is equivalent to 877 persons per day.

Now to add to the story: These visitors all found safe off-road parking, the vast majority were toileted and café refreshed. Some were educated by visiting our museum and many bought something either in our gift shop, the glass works or pantry. Many recharged their car batteries, walked their

dogs and let the children have a run. Others stayed overnight in their vans (about 1,200 vehicles in 60 days) and some even camped. Many picnicked. This was all done in a well-maintained, spacious and clean setting. I am sure that the vast majority departed our New Italy site feeling better for the experience. Why wouldn't they?

The 52,634 people left behind very little litter and we did not hear of any complaints or adverse comments. There was no vandalism, theft, graffiti or disturbances. The facilities all functioned well and there were no utilities failures (apart from some short power supply failures).

All involved in this ongoing volunteering extravaganza can be justifiably proud of the achievement.

We look forward to the future. Here we ask for suggestions regarding areas where we can improve, innovate and update etc. This said we are mindful that the toilets need a serious renovation, adequate car parking (at times) is a looming problem and a children's playground is a definite need. Feedback in all its forms is most welcome.

P.S. Although the December/January holiday period of 60 days did average 877 persons per day, the 4 day Easter period normally attracts more visitors per day. This year we expect over 1,000/day. We will keep you informed. **John Barnes**

UPCOMING EVENTS

TAVOLA LISAMORE! (ITALIAN LONG LUNCH): SATURDAY 14 MARCH



Lismore Showground - William Smith Pavilion

Get ready to pull up a chair at the most anticipated long lunch of the year. On Saturday 14 March 2026, the newly renovated William Smith Pavilion - Lismore Showground, Lismore, NSW will be transformed into a vibrant Italian piazza for the **Tavola LisAmore!**

This year, the **LisAmore! festival** is proud to announce a new event with the powerhouse of authentic Italian cooking, **Chef Daniela Maiorano**.

Daniela shares a passion for traditional flavors and “fatto a mano” (handmade) techniques which has resonated with a global audience. Her infectious energy and deep-rooted Abruzzese heritage bring a modern spark to Italian cooking. Experience Daniela’s authentic, no-nonsense approach to Italian food - <https://www.instagram.com/daniela.maiorano/>

“We are beyond excited to have Daniela joining us for 2026,” says the **Lismore Friendship Festival committee, President Maree Santarossa**. “**Tavola LisAmore!** is about community, heart, and soul - qualities Daniela shares with every dish she creates. To have a chef of her calibre celebrating with us in Lismore is a massive win for the region.”

Giving Back: We are proud to support **Women Up North** as our chosen charity for this event. A portion of the proceeds will go toward their vital work in our community. <https://wunh.org.au>

Tickets: \$125 + booking fee <https://events.humanitix.com/tavola-lisamore>

Wines: De Bortoli <https://www.debortoli.com.au/>

Italian Sodas: Fabio Sodas Kingscliff <https://www.instagram.com/fabio.soda/>

Tavola LisAmore! is more than just a meal; it is a celebration of Lismore’s resilient spirit and its rich Italian connection - an afternoon of communal dining, flowing wine, live music, and a menu that tells a story of heritage and home.

For more info: Maree Santarossa ~ President
0405448029 • lisamore2480@gmail.com

LEARN ITALIAN WITH CLAUDIA CANTORI:

Lismore Library : 10.30
Saturday mornings



The small meeting rooms ~
groups 6 students (max.)
Classes for all ages • parents and
children • children (age 8+) • adults

\$25/hour or \$20 with sibling/parent discount

Claudia Cantori, from near Bologna, Italy, has a BA Communication from University of Bologna. A teacher of languages since 2011, she understands what it takes to learn and master a foreign language as a non-native speaker. Last year, she taught Italian to Homeschoolers. Student groups have been a mix of children with their parents. Some wanting to familiarise themselves with culture and language, and others wanting to reconnect with their Italian roots.

Claudia Cantori: cantoriClaudia@gmail.com
text 0490410193

2026 ANNIVERSARY DAY

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145 YEARS SINCE THE NEW ITALY EXPEDITION'S ARRIVAL IN AUSTRALIA

NEW ITALY HALL

10.30AM (FOR 11AM) SUNDAY 12 APRIL



10^{AM} SATURDAY 25 APRIL, 2026
New Italy Museum ~ Pacific Highway, New Italy
ALL WELCOME!

2026 LisAmore!

LOVING LISMORE... ITALIAN STYLE
SUNDAY 5 JULY ~ LISMORE SHOWGROUND

...WATCH THIS SPACE ... RE-OPENING THE ITALIAN PAVILION ... 2026...

SHOPPING AT HISTORIC NEW ITALY...

CASA VECCHIA GIFT SHOP



Recently **Casa Vecchia Gift Shop** sourced a supplier of beautiful cushion covers of the Amalfi coast that would dress up anybody's living space! We also have another shipment of Paradiso Ceramics from Duruta, Italy. It has been a while since we have stocked their items. An Italian cookbook always makes a great gift and a shipment arrived last week. A local artisan jeweller of Italian descent makes the most exquisite pearl jewellery that we stock. Do come in and see our new stock. We are open Wednesday to Sunday when volunteers are available.

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

MYBELLE PANTRY



Liana Volpato and Fabia Mottini enjoying in-store recycling.

At **MyBelle Pantry**, caring for the earth is part of everyday life. We offer in-store recycling for soft plastics (via Curby), polystyrene, and household batteries through EcoBat. By partnering with trusted recycling program and local initiatives, we make it easier for our community to reduce waste thoughtfully and keep valuable materials out of landfill.

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

NEW ITALY GLASS ART GALLERY



New to the **New Italy Glass Art Gallery** is a display of art by local indigenous artist, **Rob Baker**. Rob has a selection of bright and colourful paintings, clocks and picture frames at very affordable prices. Come and have a look. We are open every day.

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

TASTES OF NEW ITALY CAFÉ



New Italy Café offers fresh meals, great coffee, the best burgers and a warm, welcoming atmosphere for everyone. Whether you're stopping in during a long drive, catching up with friends, or grabbing a quick bite, we've got something for you. Enjoy tasty breakfasts, hearty lunches, delicious treats, and drinks made just the way you like them.

Located at the New Italy Museum site, NSW - open 7 days. Open from 7am - 4pm.

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' Winter 2026: content 21/5/2026 - museums@newitaly.org.au

STAY IN TOUCH newitaly.org.au • 8275 Pacific Highway Woodburn NSW 2472

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