



DANTE ALIGHIERI SOCIETY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA INC.

Annual General Meeting

Monday 21th September, 2015

c/o WEA, 223 Angas Street, Adelaide

President's Report

The Dante Alighieri Society has completed a very busy and exciting year celebrating the 750th anniversary of our namesake's birth. The Society has continued to operate in three distinct areas: we are now in the third year of our educational role as Managing Institution (Ente Gestore) for Italian Government funds destined to the support of teaching of Italian Language and Culture in South Australian schools; the delivery of Italian Language courses leading to the PLIDA certification; and the cultural, social and convivial occasions that have been ongoing now for the past few years. This year we have also added a course for volunteers, carers and professionals dealing with Italian seniors. Following, I will illustrate the different areas of operation of the Society and our many achievements.

Language and Culture Project in Schools

This is the third year that we have been successful in obtaining funds from the Italian Government to support the teaching of Italian Language and Culture in South Australian Schools. We took 6 mothertongue assistants to 12 State and Catholic schools and supported the teaching of well over 1,000 students. The 2014 activities received very positive feedback from the schools, the teachers, our assistants and the students and all the funds were spent by 31 December, as required.

Our 2015 application for funding from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Collaboration (MAECI) of the Italian Government was again successful and this year we were again granted 60,000 Euros, in two tranches released in May and September which, once the second tranche will be paid, should work out around \$85,000. These projects have been managed since April 2014 by Alessandro Vecchiarelli, our Language Assistants Program Coordinator hired at the time by Dr Giancarlo Chiro (his compensation has risen from \$6,000 per year to \$6,500 per year in May 2015). Beatrice Barbieri also received at the same time a casual contract to cover secretarial skills for around 4 hours per week (her compensation has risen from \$25 per hour to \$27 also in May 2015). Alessandro and Beatrice's schools related stipends are paid with the funds received by the Italian Government (that entail a 25% to be spent on administration).

Once news of the funds' approval were received this year, Alessandro was able to start negotiating with both the State Education Department and the Catholic Schools Office to identify the schools and the mothertongue Language Assistants. Teaching support started in twelve schools, 7 State and 5 Catholic primary and secondary schools, in Term 3 with the help of a wonderful group of young teacher, they are Beatrice Barbieri, John Ciarfuglia, Chiara Falcinelli Ottavi, Fabio Monaca, Rita Scialanga and Alessandro Vecchiarelli. The feedback from all the schools has been very positive with the assistants themselves and with the contribution they are making. A full evaluation of the first iteration of the program will be once again conducted before the end of the current school year. Next year we hope to continue our work and our project was submitted in June.

Last year, to celebrate the 750th anniversary of Dante Alighieri's birth we created the primary and secondary schools competition "Buon compleanno Dante" to mark the occasion. To pay homage to Dante's memory we asked the students to unleash their creativity and enter this competition with a class project with a project (a poster, a recording, a sculpture, paintings, photographs or even a photograph of a dedicated pizza or cake). The winners were Goodwood Primary (Excellence in Creativity \$500 and a 2-4 week course of Italian at the Campus L'Infinito in Recanati for Silvana Barbon, their teacher), St Michael's College and Cabra Dominican College (ex-aequo first prize \$500), School of Languages (second prize \$300), St Gabriel School (third prize \$200), special mention went to a second entry by the School of Languages. This year we have created a similar competition called "Leonardo Da Vinci Decoded" and we look forward to receiving the entries by mid-November. The prizes, in books or money vouchers, for the winning schools are to be used for the improvement of the Italian discipline.

Over the last three years we supported the creation of a Bilingual Immersion Project at the Norwood Morialta Secondary School, in the measure and terms requested by the Italian Government. This year we have continued to give the project support by seconding Beatrice Barbieri to the school, who is creating teaching materials, and by giving the school \$5,000 in support of their much appreciated work. In the requested further funding for 2016, funds for this activity have also been included.

Following 5-6 September 2014, when I attended the Italians Down Under Conference in Canberra, I have been invited in April to join the "Italian Language and Culture Working Group", representing all the Managing Institutions (Enti Gestori) in Australia. I will be going to Canberra for the "Settimana della lingua" celebrations that will be followed by a meeting of the workgroup to work on how best to support Italian language and culture in Australia.

Dante Alighieri Language Courses

This year we teamed up with WEA to offer co-branded courses. The latter yield an Attestato ADA certificate of completion and lead to the PLIDA certification. The Beginners course ran for 15 weeks in semester 1 and is at the moment in the middle of semester 2. Many thanks to our teacher Anna Mazzone. My thanks go to Silvia De Cesare, who has taken up the role of organiser of our PLIDA courses (paid \$500 per year), and to Beatrice Barbieri for helping organize the logistics and the forthcoming PLIDA exams. I would also like to thank Stefano Bona and Beatrice Barbieri their examiner role in the PLIDA exams, that this year will be sat by over a dozen students in November. We wish our students the best of luck!

The PLIDA (Progetto Lingua Italiana Dante Alighieri) certificate is an official diploma issued by the Società Dante Alighieri under an agreement with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Collaboration and the University of Rome. The PLIDA is also recognised by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies and by the Ministry of University and Research as a qualification for the university entry of foreign students. The PLIDA Certificate can:

- satisfy Professional Learning requirements for renewal of Teacher Registration;
- clearly show a person's level of Italian
- allow enrolment in an Italian University without taking the mandatory Italian language exam;
- satisfy the requirements for long-stay Residence Permit in Italy.

The Dante Alighieri Society of S.A. is the only institution in the State, and one of the few in Australia, qualified to award the ADA and PLIDA certifications.

Courses for volunteers, carers and professionals dealing with Italian seniors

This year the Italian Benevolent Foundation of SA Inc., who have generously supported us in the past, contacted us for a new venture. They had identified a need for a cultural sensitisation course for volunteers, carers and professionals dealing with Italian seniors. The

Italian Benevolent Foundation of SA Inc. donated \$1,000 towards this project and Fabio Monaca and Rita Scialanga, both with nursing and disability training, designed the course that is being delivered at the moment. The course has received great feedback so far and will cover a number of issues (Italian language, customs, feasts, food, geography, Catholic religion, caring for Italians, etc.).

Cultural Events

On the cultural front we have often been supported by the Italian Consulate in Adelaide and by the Istituto Italiano di Cultura in Melbourne, for which we thank Ms. Orietta Borgia, Acting Consul, and dottoressa Carmela Panetta.

Our events have covered:

- After the 2014 AGM, on Friday 3rd October we joined forces with Flinders University to launch the book “Sicily and Scotland. Where Extremes Meet” by Tulloch, Agutter and d’Arcangeli at Cinqueterre Eatalian Cafè. The DA invited life-members only as an exclusive event.
- Monday 13 of October we teamed up with the Italian Centre (262 Carrington Street) for an “Evening with the Stars” to present Giuseppe Verdi’s *Otello*. We invited Maestro Dr Joseph Talia OAM to talk to our members and all interested parties. The evening was a great success so we joined forces again to present Mozart’s *Don Giovanni* on 4th May and again on 17th August to present Verdi’s *Requiem*.
- On 15th November we joined forces with the Fogolar Furlan to co-host the 2nd Italo-Australian Quiz Challenge. The night was a great success, especially since our members won two of the best prizes!
- 2014 finished with the greatest celebrations as the Dante Alighieri Society of S.A. held it’s **50th anniversary** in the Balcony Room of Parliament House, guests of the Hon Zoe Bettison MP, Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Minister for Communities and Social Inclusion, Minister for Social Housing, Minister for Ageing, Minister for Youth, Minister for Volunteers for hosting this evening together with the Hon Tony Piccolo, Minister for Disabilities, Minister for Police, Minister for Correctional Services, Minister for Emergency Services, Minister for Road Safety. Also present Mr Vincent Tarzia MP, Member for Hartley, representing the Leader of the Opposition, and Ms Orietta Borgia, Acting Consul of Italy in South Australia as well as a large number of honourable guests and the DA Committee. We had the chance to showcase the Society’s numerous activities, listen to the baritone Mario Bellanova sing some wonderful Neapolitan songs accompanied by Maestro Jeff Kong, and delight in the graciously offered buffet. We also presented gifts to our hosts and to the Honorary Consul for Italy and various awards as follows:

Certificates of Appreciation for promoting Italian culture went to: Maestro Mario Bellanova (opera), Ms Gyllian Godfrey (DECD Languages), Maestro Jeffrey Kong (music), Mr Eugene Raghianti (Carnevale), Maestro Timothy Sexton (opera), Ms Anne Spencer (Languages in Catholic Education);

Certificates of Recognition: ex DA Committee member Cavalier Joseph Baldino (Italian culture), Emeritus Professor of Italian Antonio Comin (Italian language and culture in Higher Education, Flinders University), Prof. Diana Glenn (Italian language and culture in Higher Education, Flinders University), Ms Grace Portolesi (services to the Italian community), Associate Professor Angela Scarino (Italian language and culture in Higher Education, UniSA);

Certificate of Recognition for life-long services: ex-President of the DA Grand’Ufficiale Dr Carmine De Pasquale (Italian culture and services to the Italian community).

- As usual the DA had a stand at the Carnevale Festival where we met new and old members. In 2015 we also contributed to the Official Program with articles on Dante and Spaghetti Westerns. During the festival we run storytelling sessions in Italian for children, and Alessandro Vecchiarelli and I hosted the forum “An Italian’s Story: Alberto Sordi in Australia. The Italian view of migration to Australia in *Bello, onesto, emigrato Australia sposerebbe compaesana illibata*, aka *A Girl in Australia* (L. Zampa, 1971) between irony and tragedy”.
- The theme for Cineforum this year, that runs from March to November, was “*Pane, amore e... cinema italiano! Bread, Love and... Italian Cinema*”, in collaboration with Flinders University’s School of Humanities and Creative Arts at Flinders in the City, 182 Victoria Square. As in previous years the program and technical issues were managed by myself and Natasha Marona, who also took care of front of house in her usual efficient way. I would like to thank Natasha for her wonderful work and also our Secretary, Beatrice Barbieri and Giuliana Otmarich for stepping in during Natasha’s wedding preparations and honeymoon. This year we also hosted on opening night the launch of my co-edited book “Un nuovo cinema italiano” volume 2 (Hope, Serra, d’Arcangeli), for which I am very thankful to our Committee members. Don’t forget we still have two films to go in the season: on 7 October – *Gli equilibristi* and 4 November – *Una famiglia perfetta*.
- I would like to thank Alessandro Vecchiarelli who continues to prepare and present radio programs on 5RTI 531AM. His Wednesday drive-time 2-hour program “I soliti sospetti” is a much loved cultural program covering Italian and Hollywood cinema. Also Alessandro has been collaborating with SBS Radio Italian on the Friday morning cinema review program “La febbre del sabato sera”. I have also been speaking, on much lighter scale, to radio listeners on the 4th Tuesday morning of the month to advertise our activities. Our co-opted Committee member Silvia De Cesare and her husband Luca Orru have been speaking to listeners of Radio Italia 1 on Saturday mornings on their “Pronto qui canta Italia”, delighting them with songs and good news from Italy. I would like to sincerely thank them all for their work.
- The Circolo Divina Commedia study group, organized by our Vice president Ciro Pipolo, together with former committee members Anna Mazzone and Donata Galluccio, with the help of Marina Berton. The group has met regularly once a month under the guidance of Luciana d’Arcangeli, with a guest appearance from Dr Irene Belperio. The group promises to stay a regular fixture on the Dante cultural events calendar.
- Our new Committee member Giuliana Otmarich started in May the *Caffè Italiano* conversation group. The members meet late afternoon about twice per month in a caffè to talk and read in Italian (intermediate level). The group cannot accept any more members at the moment but has a waiting list for anyone who is interested. We would like to thank Antonella Masia and Roberto Vezzosi for their gracious hospitality at the Cinqueterre Eatalian Café (now sold) - on this as well as other occasions - and for their much appreciated catering, beautiful as well as delicious.
- Emy Ceravolo, a newly arrived Italian, volunteered to host a number of *Pizza e parole* evenings, a similar conversation group to the above, this time for young people and students of Italian. We are finding it hard to involve young people in large numbers but we keep trying.
- On Sunday 24th May to commemorate the start of the first world war we enjoyed a very well attended lunch at the San Giorgio La Molara Club and then a screening of the film *La grande guerra* (Monicelli), introduced by Alessandro Vecchiarelli.
- On 13th June we held a medieval banquet at the Associazione Toscana in Enfield to celebrate the 750th anniversary of the birth of Dante Alighieri. Many members and

friends of the DA came dressed in medieval garb to enjoy the fayre. We were honoured to enjoy readings by Prof. Diana Glenn and the actress Minie Minarelli, who also sung for us accompanied by Maestro Ermanno Brignolo. We had invited similar initiatives from the Dante Alighieri Societies across Australia at the national Dante Alighieri Societies of Australia conference, held in Melbourne on 10-12 October 2014. On the night we enjoyed using digital media to see and talk to DA members from Brisbane, Gold Coast, Melbourne and Mildura and we would like to thank their Committees for creating an event that has resonated throughout Australia.

- On 6th July we joined forces with the Australasian Centre for Italian Studies and Flinders University's School of Humanities and Creative Arts to bring to you, at Flinders in the City, Prof. Luca Somigli (University of Toronto). The lecture "The Futurist Contagion: Newspaper Cartoons and the Reception of Futurism in England in 1912".
- On 11th August Professor Marcello Costa (Flinders University) started a new series of lectures on Italy in the Arts and Sciences with the lesson entitled "The conquest of space in the Renaissance: from painting to geometry" held in collaboration with Flinders University's School of Humanities and Creative Arts at Flinders in the City, 182 Victoria Square. The lecture was extremely well attended even though Adelaide had received a severe weather warning. On 27th October, at 7p.m. it will be followed by the lecture "Galileo Galilei's times and the birth of science", presented by Marcello Costa and Romano Rubichi, in the same venue.

Events to come:

- I would like to thank Talis Evans, one of the members of I Giovani della Dante (formerly ITSA), for his help in organising a group screening of the 2015 comedy "**The Legendary Giulia**" (Edoardo Leo) at the Lavazza Italian Film Festival on Friday 25th October at 8.45p.m. This year we are no longer cultural sponsors of the Lavazza Italian Film Festival but I would still like to invite you to mention that you are DAMembers when you go this year.
- Our concert "**A Dante Celebration in Music**", the largest event we have ever planned, is also coming up on Wednesday 30th September at 7p.m. Piano stars Konstantin Shamray and Mekhla Kumar will be playing two and four hands pieces by Liszt and Tchaikovsky inspired by Dante's poetry, while Prof. Diana Glenn will read two short pieces from the poet's works. This hopes to be our main fundraiser for the year, welcoming everyone at the beautiful University of Adelaide's Elder Hall on North Terrace. This event has been organised with the collaboration of Carnevale and Flinders University. Tickets are \$25 adults / \$20 seniors and concessions / \$15 students. We hope to see you there.

Social Events

As mentioned, this year we have had two social events, one to commemorate "la grande guerra", WWI, on 24th May and a second one in honour of Dante on 13th June. It was a great way to meet our members over wonderful food and spend time together. I would like to thank everyone who came and made it a special evening. Our thanks also go to all our sponsors who donated raffle and silent auction prizes, and in particular to Steve Maglieri of Serafino Wines for donating his much appreciated wine for ALL our events. Please let him know just how much you appreciate his generosity. Grazie!

Memberships

The membership numbers this year are up, thanks to the good offices of Beatrice Barbieri and Giuliana Otmarich. We now at 134 members, about 30% more than last year. We are continuously working on getting past and new members to join, we have also created a membership/sponsorship for companies and associations that we hope to launch soon.

Premises

Our premises at the WEA have worked well for us, allowing us to save while at the same time hold meetings, classes and events. This lease is certainly more convenient than any previous arrangements, however we are looking for a space accessible to the public

Auditor

The volunteer services of Teresa Fogliano came to an end last year. Our newly appointed auditors are PKF Kennedy (level 9, 81 Flinders Street, Adelaide SA5000) that will now audit our finances. Thanks to the good offices of Dom Cosentino, the DA has also received a \$500 donation from the Kennedy & Co. Foundation, chaired by Antoinette Tatarelli, that will go a long way toward paying the fee of \$2,000.

Conclusions

The Society continues to work at its main objectives of supporting Italian Language and Culture in South Australia in collaboration with other associations and institutions, at all levels. In recognition of our commitment, on 26th of August I was invited to officially witness the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between Italy and South Australia for the continuing support of the teaching of Italian Language and Culture in South Australia and especially for the support of bilingual projects. The DA signed an addendum in which we declared we read and understood the agreement and agreed to participate in meetings between the above mentioned parties on these issues. The event was held in the Balcony Room of Parliament House and I would like to thank Ms Orietta Borgia, Acting Consul for Italy and the Hon. Susan Close Minister for Education and Child Development for including our Society in this very important matter.

As always, I would like to stress, in conclusion, that all the work of the Dante Alighieri Society of S.A. would not be possible without the commitment and dedication of a group of hardworking individuals. As mentioned last year, the Society now has two "souls", one made of volunteers who give generously of their time to help the Society achieve its objectives, and others who receive a funds-linked stipend to carry out the schools related work or teaching of our language courses.

Thanks go, as always, to our Vice President Natasha Marona for her great work on the Cineforum and our social events this year. Special thanks go to our Treasurer Ciro Pipolo, who took on this role with great enthusiasm, attending courses and generally keeping all of us on our toes. My personal special thanks go to our Secretary Beatrice Barbieri for effortlessly running our operations with a smile. I would also like to thank Giuliana Otmarich and Luigi Masciantonio who, on their first year on the Committee, made some great innovations, found valuable sponsors and gave some very useful advice. Thanks also go to all our committee members: Maria Russo for her hands on help on every occasion; Giovanni Cusano for his often unseen work and Kate Henderson-Wilson for organising the link with the State Opera of S.A. This year we had two co-opted members, Silvia De Cesare and Annarita Capurso (who left us for personal reasons earlier in the year); I would like to thank them for taking part from day one to the running of our Society. I would also like to thank Stefano Bona for being our very valid webmaster and Anna Mazzone for being our

wonderful teacher. This wonderful team has allowed me to take on a greater number of smooth-running events that I hope more of you will attend in the future.

My formal and very personal thanks go to my husband Alessandro Vecchiarelli for taking on what sometimes seems like more than we can handle, and our son Duncan Rosso Vecchiarelli, the youngest DA volunteer who is often seen opening the door at the Cineforum and setting up our meeting rooms like tonight or singing at our events. I could not do it without you. Grazie.

What next?

Now that our role in the State has been consolidated, the Society is seeking to increase the level of funding it receives from the Italian government in order to strengthen our Italian teaching support program. In our last application for 2016 funding, we asked for increased funding to offer more projects, for example teacher training. It is important to have good people working for us, so if you know of any Italian native speaker graduates in Adelaide, please ask them to send us their CVs.

We have a great reputation in the State and beyond but we need your ongoing help. Please advertise our events and courses, share our posts on Facebook, speak well to others of our activities, remember that word-of-mouth can do wonders. If you cannot answer questions please redirect them to us in person, our website or our Facebook page. Remember that we can always use diverse skills and the extra help, so don't be shy and put your hand up to become part of our Committee. I know that some of our members would be happy to train newcomers and the more we are, well, the more we can do! If you think you can help only on single occasions, this kind of help is also very welcome so just come and talk to us.

In conclusion, I would like to say thank you to you, it is a privilege to have been voted President of our Society. It is important for me to ensure the future of the Dante Alighieri Society of South Australia and I thank you for the support you have given me and the Society this year.

Dr Luciana d'Arcangeli
The President