On 22\textsuperscript{nd} May 1918, twenty armed military and South Australian state police converged on the small Australian town of Broken Hill and arrested in excess of forty Italian men of military age living and working in the mining town. These men were escorted to Adelaide for processing and deportation to Italy to serve with the Italian Army.\textsuperscript{1} As Mr. Finlayson, the Federal Member for Brisbane who witnessed the armed escort, later reported to the Australian Federal Parliament, this was “a sight that might be expected in Prussia”\textsuperscript{2}. But this was not Prussia; it was Australia, and these Italians, though allies in the war against Germany had proven reluctant to answer their country’s ‘call to arms’\textsuperscript{3}. The ensuing forced repatriation by the Australian Government of over five hundred Italian men in the last months of the War was a significant event for a country that had eschewed the conscription of its own citizens. By contrast, in Canada, from the time of Italy’s declaration of war, Italians volunteered in their hundreds to either return to Italy or to fight in the Canadian Expeditionary Forces (CEF). As early as August 1915, over five hundred had come forward in Ontario alone and they would continue to do so at the rate of thirty to thirty five a day.\textsuperscript{4} This paper analyses why Italian immigrants, living either in Australia or British speaking Canada during World War One, responded so differently to their country’s calls to arms, and why the respective governments treated their allies in such a contrasting manner.

In the lead up to World War One, Australia and British Canada were remarkably similar nations with similar histories, cultures and attitudes. Both were white settler colonies with suppressed indigenous populations and strong links to the British Empire. Both countries had large land masses and relatively small populations and were looking to suitable migrants for expansion and growth. Early immigrants arriving in each country found economies based predominantly on primary production with opportunities for employment mainly in mining, forestry, fishing and in the new infrastructure of roads and railways that had been developing since the late 1800s. From the 1890s, the number of Italians migrating to both countries began to increase significantly and by the 1911 censuses there were, officially, more than
6,500 Italians in Australia and over 45,000 in Canada with both of these official figures considered to be significant underestimates as many Italians working in remote areas or with limited command of the English language failed to register. More importantly, the 1911 censuses pre-dated the peak pre-war years of Italian immigration which occurred in 1912-13.\(^5\)

As with the White Australia policy, the comparable Canadian restrictions on immigration had their origins in the 19th century where they were initially directed at Asian migrants who arrived with the gold rushes. However, in both countries these policies were soon used to control migration of other ‘undesirables’; in this case, to distinguish between northern Europeans, who were considered stronger, more easily assimilated and potentially better citizens, and those from the south who were portrayed as poor, illiterate, having low morals and often linked to crime.\(^6\) This pre-war period was the height of imperialism in both Canada and Australia where a belief in white Anglo-Saxon superiority ruled and ethnic stereotypes abounded.\(^7\)

In Australia, the influx of Italian migrants settling and working in the sugar industry in Queensland and the mining and fishing industries in other regions caused alarm in a population generally wanting to preserve Australian white racial purity. The Australian press, feeding on these anxieties, described the Italian immigrants as “crass, dirty dago pests, a greasy flood of Mediterranean scum that seems to defile our country”.\(^8\) Italians were stereotypically portrayed as knife wielding Mafia agents and illiterate organ grinders, littering street corners, living in slums and taking the bread and jobs from the mouths of their Anglo-Saxon hosts. The Southern European migrant was considered as one of the least desirable as his dark features and lack of assimilation diverged markedly from the accepted cultural norms and physical attributes of White Australia. In Canada, Italians were similarly stereotyped with their hurdy-gurdy organs and their stilettos that they would willingly use at the slightest provocation. The outbreak of World War One, and the initial uncertainty of Italy’s position, only exacerbated this pre-war racism and xenophobia.\(^9\)

Given the degree of similarity between the situations of Italian immigrants in the two countries, it is surprising that the response of the respective immigrant populations and that of the host countries to the 1915 declaration of war by Italy on the side of the Allies was quite different. Whilst it is known that approximately 150 Italians living in Australia volunteered for service in the Australian Imperial Forces (AIF),\(^10\) there is little evidence of a
general rush by Italians to enlist or to return to Italy to contribute to the allied war effort. Indeed, the general response of the thousands of Italians living in Australia seems to have been one of indifference. Unlike their allied counterparts (French, Russians and Servians [sic]) resident in Australia, Italians were not permitted to join the AIF and some of those that did manage to enlist were discharged or transferred to the Italian forces from France. Furthermore it appears that the Italians joining the allied effort against Germany had little effect on the general attitude of Australians to Italian immigrants.

As previously indicated, the response in Canada was quite different. Within hours of Italy’s declaration of war, many Italians living in Canada volunteered for service. The departure of Italian reservists was celebrated and reported with tremendous enthusiasm. Italians marched through the streets waving Union Jacks and Italian tri-colour flags to the music of (Canadian) Grenadier bands. They attended civic receptions, listened to farewell speeches, were given gifts and cheered on their way. At the same time, across Canada, in small towns and large cities, the Canadian view of Italians changed, from undesirable aliens to heroic partners in the fight for freedom. This paper considers two broad factors, namely social differences and political imperatives, which may contribute to understanding the divergent responses of the respective Italian communities.

The principal social differences between Italians in Australia and Canada in 1915 relate to the differing population sizes and the development, or not, of an Italian national identity or Italianità amongst the emigrant populations. The definition of national identity is difficult and much debated. Historians and other scholars have, for many years, disagreed as to what constitutes the nation and the resultant national identity of its citizens at home and abroad. For some, the nation is solely a political entity, for others a geographical one. For the purpose of this paper the definition of a nation and the identity of its citizens are considered more broadly to include the cultural aspects – the language, the iconography, the literature, etc. National identity is not merely a label but an awareness of self and of others, of values, beliefs and customs; a means of providing a perspective on the world and how it is relevant at a particular time. It is therefore possible in this context, to have more than one identity at any one time as will be seen of Italian immigrants in Canada.

Comparatively, the number of Italians in Australia during this period was small and, partly because of their relatively small numbers and their geographic dispersion in isolated rural
National Identity Explored– Karen Agutter

communities, significant social infrastructure - clubs and societies, Italian language press, the celebration of festas - was not well developed. The absence of social institutions was a significant contributor to the lack of development of Italianità in Australia in the pre World War One period and requires further explanation.

A handful of Italian elites in Australia did make attempts to foster a sense of Italian national identity and to improve the well being of immigrants but generally their attempts were met with indifference and sometimes even hostility. Italian language schools and clubs and societies such as the Dante Aligheri Society and even welfare/mutual aid societies more often than not closed as quickly as they opened. Rare exceptions include the Circola Italiano Cardorna, established in 1917 in Melbourne, whose 79 members took an active role in petitioning the Italian Consul and Australian Government against the forced repatriation of Italians late in the War, and who were the target of raids and intelligence surveillance during that period. Other formal institutions failed to play a part in the lives of Italians living in Australia. Italians who had been active in trade unions at home often avoided contact with the Australian unions because of the latter’s xenophobic attitudes. The lack of consular representation in Australia also contributed to a lack of cohesion amongst immigrants. Whereas in Canada the Consul General was ably assisted by numerous vice-consuls and consular representatives, generally of Italian origin, in even the more remote centres, in Australia, contact between the Consul and his subjects was extremely limited right up to the time when he initiated the forced repatriation to Italy to fight!

Italians also found it difficult to integrate into the predominantly Irish led Australian Catholic Church. The emphasis on regular Sunday attendance at mass and an attitude of “reverence and obedience to the hierarchy and the priest as a prominent leader” was very different to their experience in Italy. In Australia, people attended church and went home; there was none of the social chat and lingering interaction that was common in Italian communities. The Australian emphasis on direct financial contribution to the parish and its correlation with piety was also alien to the Italian immigrant and many found the ‘pay at the door’ mentality scandalous and often beyond their means. Moreover, in Italy, church attendance was a primarily a female role with men taking part only in particular religious observances such as baptisms and in the church based festas and thus in Australia, where the Italian population was predominantly male, there was even less incentive to try to enter into the foreign/alien church. The way of life of many of the Italian immigrants to Australia was also not
conducive to a Sunday church attendance. Large numbers were employed in the mining towns, on railway construction or in cane farming and the heavy work and long hours made Sunday, when possible, a day of leisure rather than piety. And so, in general, Italians in Australia in this period turned their backs on the Church and as a consequence were not exposed to the same potentially nationalising influence as were their Canadian counterparts.

The dominance of a chain migration system of Italian settlement in Australia and the lack of padroni\textsuperscript{23} influence - the dominant form of Italian migration to Canada - contributed to a pattern of isolation by fostering regional settlements based around strong kinship and home township groupings without significant inter mixing of Italians from different regions. This pattern of settlement reflected the regional isolationism of pre-war Italy where regional differences, especially in the south, meant that even forty years after unification Italians saw themselves in terms of paese (town), provincia (province) and regione (region) before ever thinking of themselves as Italiani.\textsuperscript{24} All of these factors led to the retention of the well documented Italian regional identity and a lack of an Italian nationalistic feeling. Italian immigrants had “little community leadership and…did not relate to one another as a community or in a national sense”.\textsuperscript{25} In 1915, Italians in Australia considered themselves more as Calabrese, Siciliani and Molfettese than a coherent emigrant Italian population.

Furthermore the distance between Italy and Australia combined with the severe war censorship, of both news and personal mail, meant that Italians living in Australia were not immediately aware of the severity of the situation in Italy and the immediacy of the problems confronting the Italian Army. The isolation of Italians in Australia was further exacerbated by the absence of an Italian language press. Those few Italian language newspapers that had existed in Australia were published only in Sydney and were not well supported either as a result of the low levels of literacy among Italian immigrants\textsuperscript{26}, the lack of access through distance, financial factors or most likely by the smaller numbers of Italian immigrants in Australia making them non viable. The Italian language press in Australia in the years prior to the War consisted of Uniamoci (1903-4), L’Italo-Australiano (1905-1909) and Oceania (July 1913-February 1915) with all except Oceania ceasing publication before Italy entered the War. Although Oceania was still in print, it actually condemned the conflict and encouraged Italians in Australia to ‘stay out of it’\textsuperscript{27}, a position that Italians in Australia seemed to enthusiastically endorse and continue to hold throughout the War.
These many factors led to an active avoidance of call-up in Australia with reports of Italians going into hiding, changing their claimed citizenship and even taking legal action and petitioning the Australian parliament to avoid what amounted to discriminatory conscription. This avoidance would eventually lead, in 1918, to the round up and enforced repatriation of more than 500 Italians to serve in the Italian army. By contrast, in Canada, Italians more willingly took up arms. Italian citizens even offered to enlist fellow countrymen to form distinct Italian battalions for service within the CEF. For example, Ontario engineer Michael Fragrasso tried to organise a Railway Construction and Engineering Unit to be comprised solely of Italian volunteers.28

One of the principal reasons for this enthusiasm was that, compared with Australia, there was a much greater Italian nationalistic feeling in Canada. Furthermore, there was a developing Italian-Canadian identity that would be enhanced enormously by the common cause of the two allies during the War. The reasons for this greater sense of Italianità are in direct contrast to the situation of Italian immigrants in Australia. Firstly, up to and including the period of the War, there were regular steamships operating between Canada and Italy and the cost of passage had decreased to the extent that it was cheaper for Italians to travel to Canada for work than to some areas of Western Europe.29 This meant that Italians were able to maintain closer links with home with many being sojourner workers, frequently returning to Italy in the off-season and thereby regularly exposing themselves to Italian cultural norms and carrying news between Canada and Italy and Italy and Canada. This would have made the distance mentally much shorter and provided a mechanism for re-injecting their Italianness back into the migrant populations in Canada. As well, unlike the Australian experience, where chain migration was the norm, the padroni system in Canada facilitated the mixing of Italians from differing regions such that being Italian became as significant as being Calabrese, Sicilian and so forth. In the words of Robert Harney, “Lumped together as Italians...drawn together by mutual need and taste, immigrants overcame some, if not all, of the crippling affects of traditional Italian localism”.30

The larger population of Italians in Canada compared to Australia and their higher concentration in urban areas and larger regional centres led also to the formation of Italian enclaves (‘little Italie’s’). These enclaves helped to nurture the nascent sense of Italianità and establish a social cohesion amongst immigrants from different regions. Not only were immigrants able to support each other as a group but their localization gave them visibility
and recognition as a national group within their adopted country. Because of the larger population, negative stereotyping and discrimination unified Italians in Canada in the years leading to World War One and produced a concern for each other, which in turn fostered the development of Italian institutions and a feeling of Italianness. In his study on the Italians of Hamilton, Enrico Cumbo found that, along with the regional identity, there was “an emergent sense of trans-regional identity and Italianness”, which was fostered not only by the activities and leadership of Italian social institutions but also by the social ostracism inflicted on them by the pre war Canadian society. Already by the outbreak of war, Italians in Canada were seeing themselves in terms of regional affiliations, national Italian affiliation and even beginning to think of themselves in terms of a Canadian affiliation.

By 1915 in Toronto alone there were three Italian Catholic churches, a Methodist meeting centre, a number of Italian mutual aid societies, Italian grocery stores, Italian language newspapers, Italian real-estate agencies and many other specialist businesses servicing mainly Italians. This was mirrored in other centres such as Vancouver, Cooper Cliff, Fort William and Port Arthur which could also support their own churches, societies and other institutions.

Churches in particular gave Italians a sense of continuity of lifestyle and helped adjustment. Church provided both a point of orientation, maintaining a link with their former life in small town Italy and a bridge between the old rural society and the new urban world. As Harney noted, “very often the associations in and around the church brought people a larger sense of their nationality than they had ever had in the narrowly circumscribed society they had left behind”. The establishment of Italian parishes within towns was made possible by the weight of numbers of Italians, the larger number of family groups and the demand for their own form of Catholicism, a situation that was not possible in Australia. Often the process of actually raising money, petitioning for an Italian priest and the physical effort of church building brought Italians of different regions together in a common cause and highlighted the common denominator – being Italian.

Although these Italian churches in Canada were based upon those the immigrants had left behind, and to British and French Canadians appeared to be very foreign, they were in fact already evolving and adapting to suit not only an Italian national rather than regional identity but also an emerging Italian-Canadian identity. This is particularly evident in the festas and
celebrations of patron saints’ days, which became a *mélange* of differing regional customs tempered by uniquely Canadian overtones. For example, at the 1911 St. Antony Festa in Hamilton, both Italian and Canadian anthems and songs were played and British and Italian flags were prominently displayed together. As the Italian parish churches were established, schools were set up alongside them to educate Italian immigrant children. This education used the Italian culture and language that was common to all rather than the regional dialects and beliefs thereby further aiding not only the development of *Italianità* but eventually Italo-Canadian identity.

Unlike in Australia, clubs and mutual aid societies in Canada were well patronised and to be found all across Canada wherever Italians worked and settled. Although initially created for practical purposes, such as disability insurance and financial support, they soon developed into associations that served the Italian community in a more general manner, spreading the Italian language and culture at educational lectures, evening classes and so forth. They also organised picnics and dances, celebrated important historical and political events and reinforced the idea of a broader Italian community in Canada.

In contrast to the situation in Australia, the Italian language press in Canada, from small town to large city, was well established and well patronised by World War One. Newspapers in large towns, such as *La Tribuna* (1907-30), published in Toronto, and *L’Araldo del Canada* of Montreal, and those in small cities covered the War and the Italian and Canadian responses to it in depth. Death and capture of Italian soldiers were reported not only in the Italian language press

*Con dispiacere annunziamo la morte d’un nostro amico e connazionale Sig. L. Grittani...Durante quattro anni di Guerra aveva preso parte a molte gloriose battaglie distinguendosi sempre per valore e coraggio...*  

but also in the Canadian newspapers

Frank Graziano...has received word that his brother V Graziano...has been taken prisoner by the Austrians. He lived in Port Arthur...He was an Italian Reservist and went to the front...a year or so ago.
Tragedies, such as the fire aboard the *Santa Anna* carrying sixteen hundred Italian reservists, were reported in great detail and with concern in the Canadian press. Similarly calls for knitting yarns and donations for the newly formed Canadian and Italian women’s clubs making garments for the front were publicised.

The women of Italy…Through the kindness of Mrs GA Graham [et al] …making comforts for the Italian soldiers…The fingers usually busy making lace to supplement the meagre income of these hard times, soon adapted themselves to the use of knitting needles and …are knitting for their own blood who have gone to fight for the cause of freedom.

News of the Italian front was carried in Canadian papers in English and often with the main points also reproduced in Italian so war news was far more accessible to Italians in Canada than to their counterparts in Australia. Hence, as Italians in their enclaves mixed with others from different regions they encountered a variety of accents, dialects, customs and beliefs and sought a common ground on which to engage. They banded together for the common good and they began to think of themselves as Italian as well as in terms of a particular family, kinship, village or regional group. This change of attitude was also evident in the Canadian born population whose stance towards the Italian immigrants changed during the War as “prejudice subsided and a friendly disposition towards Italians replaced it in Canadian minds”. Italians and Canadians joined in partnership at home and abroad. Organisations such as the Italian Canadian Soldiers Aid Society of Toronto worked towards helping Italian soldiers and their families. Special ‘Tag Days’ not only raised significant amounts of money but, more importantly, they brought Italians of all regions and classes together with Canadians and sowed the seed of Italians as Canadian citizens. This co-operation and change in attitude reinforced the positiveness of Italian national identity and further enhanced it.

Against this strongly patriotic front there were odd Italian voices of dissent in Canada. Hard core radicals spoke on street corners and occasionally distributed anti-war leaflets such as that reproduced from the *Cronaca Sovversiva* (produced in New York but distributed in the eastern cities of Canada) which pleaded *Figli, non tornate! – Sons, do not return!* It is hard to evaluate what impact these protests had, but as literally thousands of Italians in Canada fought in Europe the evidence is that it was weak. Certainly ‘as the war progressed, the
growing patriotic fervour in the community isolated the dissenting Radicals more and more’ and even their leaders such as Giovanni Colombo in Toronto joined the patriotic activities.\textsuperscript{50} 

Although the emerging sense of national identity in Canada and its absence in Australia provides a strong argument for the differences in behaviour of Italian reservists to their call up in each country, there were also political and administrative reasons that influenced the observed differences in the levels of volunteerism and the need for coercion. As the War progressed and the number of Italian reservists coming forward in Canada slowed, the Italian Consul General Zunini began correspondence with Prime Minister Borden looking for a military agreement between Italy and Canada. Despite the thousands that had already left, he believed that a further eight to ten thousand Italians of military age could be called up to provide two much-needed additional brigades. Borden however saw the legal ramifications of applying the law of another country, that is Italian compulsory military service, to a person living in Canada.\textsuperscript{51} Both Borden and his Australian counterpart, Prime Minister Hughes, had announced early in the War that there would be no compulsion of men to fight in the expeditionary forces. However by 1916, in both Canada and Australia, the respective governments were forced to reconsider conscription. The Australian Government chose to put the conscription question to the people only to have it twice fail to gain the required support, therefore maintaining a completely volunteer force. The Canadian Government by contrast unilaterally introduced conscription via the Military Services Bill in June 1917.

Meanwhile in November of the same year, the Secretary for British Colonies informed the Canadian Government that, in the absence of suitable treaties, Italians and French citizens resident in Canada would have to be conscripted, if necessary without the permission of their countries of origin.\textsuperscript{52} The final agreement of September 1918 allowed for all Italian men between the ages of 19 and 45 years to be conscripted to join the Italian army or, if not complying within 60 days, to then be liable to serve in the Canadian army.\textsuperscript{53} Because of the lateness of this agreement, there was not actually much opportunity for it to take effect. However, the conscription of Italians with effectively a choice as to country of service at least paralleled the conscription of Canadian citizens and indeed perhaps highlights the degree to which Italian immigrants were regarded as equal. In contrast, the Italian Consul in Australia would not countenance the idea of Italians serving in the Australian forces, thus denying them the same choice as their Canadian counterparts. In the absence of general conscription in Australia, this created a situation where discriminatory repatriation was the
only recourse to force emigrant Italians to serve their country. To understand the complicity of the Australian Government in this repatriation one needs to look at the political situation that existed in the lead up to it.

As the War progressed, the problem of Italian men resident in Australia had become more and more of an issue. Following the early patriotic fever and rush to enlist and the renewed determination that appeared immediately following the Gallipoli landings, sustaining recruitment numbers in Australia had become difficult and by 1916 the number of enlisting soldiers was falling. As a result of the substantial Australian and Allied losses at the battle of the Somme, Britain increased its demands on Australia, calling for the immediate dispatch of 32,500 troops and a further monthly quota of 16,500 for the next three months. At this time, enlistments were averaging closer to 5,000 per month. Despite a number of Government and private initiatives, recruiting became and remained one of the primary concerns for the Australian Government for the duration of the War and prompted sustained and often heated discussion of what was perceived to be the ‘Italian problem’. Simply stated, it was claimed that Italians, especially those living in larger numbers in certain regions, were inhibiting recruiting in those regions and were taking the jobs of those Australians doing their patriotic duty.

Italians in Australia, despite a published call to arms, did not come forth voluntarily to return to Italy and, even if it had have been possible to serve in the Australian forces, it is difficult, given the prevailing attitudes, to believe that the response would have been significantly greater. A Department of Defence paper, dated 18 January 1918, claimed that some Italians were treating the matter of compulsory deportation “as a joke, believing no compulsion can be exercised”. The paper concluded that more threatening notification would be required, maintaining that arrest and deportation should occur if Italian subjects failed to comply. Accordingly, on 1 February 1918, Consul General Eles issued a second formal call up notice, this time threatening that those not presenting would be ‘considered guilty of desertion and coercitive [sic] measures prescribed by law, [would] be taken against them’.

The Australian Government, working to facilitate the call up of Italians, published their own ‘call to arms’ notices in newspapers around Australia, and went on to pass an amendment to the War Precautions Act making Italian reservists who refused to render service, and those
who induced them not to comply, guilty of an offence. Notification of this amendment was duly published in state newspapers in the period 6 to 8 March 1918. The notices in *The West Australian* and the *Adelaide Register* of 8 March 1918 read:

A regulation under the War Precautions Act dealing with the call up of Italian Reservists was gazetted today. It provides that any reservist who fails to comply with the notice issued by the Consul or other representative of the King of Italy calling upon him to return to Italian territory or submit himself to a medical examination shall be guilty of an offence. It will also be an offence for any person to advise or endeavour to persuade a reservist not to comply with the notice.

Further to this declaration Italians remained non compliant and soon became the victims of a roundup and forcible repatriation. Letters written by Italians to friends and relatives in the west of Australia indicated the lack of control, discontent and despair that Italians in the eastern states (those first to be rounded up) were feeling. Some, obviously aware of the risk of interception by censors, wrote in code. Others talked openly of pretending to change their address to put the Consul off the scent and of going into hiding to prevent arrest: “I have got to be a ‘bird in the bush’ so that I will not have to go to war”. A group of Italian women from Melbourne and Sydney highlighted the level of physical intimidation when they spoke of the harsh treatment they had received with military police searching their homes and distressing their children. Those Italians who owned businesses in Australia were, as a result of the immediacy of the roundup, given little or no notice of their deportation allowing no time to satisfactorily sell or wind up business affairs. In April 1918, Mr Considine reported to the House that many Italians were selling shops and hurriedly taking whatever they could. He proceeded to give numerous examples of Italian men being forced to sell up for a fraction of their business’s worth. It is therefore not surprising that by 1918 men who had previously registered as Italians under the Alien Registration Regulations of 1916 began to come forward to re-register, preferring to be interned as Austrians rather than be forcibly repatriated as Italians. Consequently, in spite of the fact that Italy was Australia’s ally in this conflict, and in contrast to the situation in Canada, between May 1918 and the armistice in November, over 500 Italian men were forcibly separated from their families in Australia, collected in temporary holding facilities and deported to Italy. But for the lack of shipping
and the intervention of the armistice there is no doubt that these deportations would have continued and that this figure would have been much higher.

**Conclusion**

The above discussion has shown that, despite similar pre-war attitudes and conditions, two very different scenarios evolved for Italians living in Australia and Canada when Italy joined the allied nations in World War One. The response to war by the Italians living in these two countries was based not only on the prevailing political conditions but more importantly on the state of identity that existed among Italians. The concept of identity can be multi-faceted and reflective of and influenced by a number of factors. In Canada, this is evidenced in the ability of Italians to simultaneously exhibit regional, national and emerging Italian-Canadian identities, displaying the appropriate face as circumstances dictate. As we have seen discrimination and prejudice, geographical proximity to Italy and associated sojourning, a *padroni* system of migration, and the settlement of larger numbers of Italians, especially in urban environments in Canada, encouraged a mutual dependence and set up important institutions. These factors, in combination with the War, made Italians in Canada more aware of their *Italianità* and made Canadians rethink their attitudes towards Italian immigrants. Thus the War played an important part in the maturing of the Italian community in Canada, promoting a sense of national pride, national contribution to the war effort and national identity between Italians in Canada. In World War One “one could be Italian, Italo-Canadian, or Canadian of Italian descent…service to the Italian ally was an accepted form of Canadianism” and this Italian Canadian identity would remain strong until World War Two. During the war and after it “Italo-Canadians were proud of their Italian heritage…they proudly boasted of their Italian patriotism”.

The smaller number of Italians in Australia settled predominantly in rural isolation around kinship groups promoted by the system of chain migration, with greater distances, longer time between return visits and isolation from home. Together with the absence of specific social institutions to promote a sense of an Italian national identity this resulted in a prolongation of regional identity amongst Italians in Australia. This sense of being Calabrese, Siciliani, Molfettesse and so forth would not be overcome in Australia until the years of increased migration, initially in the 1920s, but more particularly with the post World War Two era of mass migration.
Notes

1 Report from Sergeant Reiley, Adelaide City Watch House, to Inspector Beare, Adelaide, 27 May 1918, in South Australian State Records (SASR), GRG 24/6/1918/475. Given the size of the police contingent sent from South Australia, which then met with New South Wales military and state police at Broken Hill, there was obviously an expectation that a larger number of Italians would be rounded up. Alien registration records for the period show that there were in excess of 180 Italian men of military age in Broken Hill.

2 Finlayson was en route to Adelaide when he witnessed these events at Broken Hill. House of Representatives, Finlayson (Member for Brisbane), 30 May 1918, in Commonwealth of Australia Parliamentary Debates, 16 May – 26 September 1918, IX George V, Volume LX XXV, p. 5312.

3 Note that Italy had a system of compulsory military service and that all Italian men of military age were considered to be ‘reservists’ and eligible for call up in times of war.

Toronto Globe, Friday 6 August 1915, p. 7.

5 In Australia, some historians believe that as a result of the Italian-Turkish war in Libya this figure may have been as large as 10,000 by 1914. See for example Pascoe, R., ‘Italian Settlement until 1914’ in Jupp, J. (Editor), The Australian People: An Encyclopedia of the Nation, Its People and their Origins, 2nd edition, Australia: Cambridge University Press 2001, p. 488. As well as the 1912-13 influx many Italians did not register on the census as they were settled in outlying regions or as a result of language inadequacies they were not aware of the census or its purpose. See Cresciani, Gianfrancio, ‘Italian Immigrants in Australia, 1900-22’, Labour History, Vol. 43, November 1982, pp. 37-8. Similarly, Zucchi indicates that there was a correspondingly large increase in the number of Italians in Canada in the immediate pre war years. See Zucchi, John E., ‘Italian Hometown Settlements and the Development of an Italian Community in Toronto, 1875-1935’ in Polyphony, Vol. 7, No. 2, 1985, p 20.


9 Principe, Angelo, The Concept of Italy in Canada and in Italian Writings from the Eve of Confederation until the Second World War, Unpublished PhD Thesis, Italian Studies Department, University of Toronto, 1989, p. 35.

10 My own ongoing work on Italians in the AIF shows that there were approximately 140 Italian born soldiers who enlisted between August 1914 and August 1918. See National Archives Australia (NAA): B2455, WWI attestation papers. Reports of those trying to enlist are also mentioned in Department of Defence Precis, Italians – Enlistment in the AIF, in NAA: MP367/1, 592/4/1116.

11 Of those discharged in Australia for being ‘not eligible’ as not naturalised see for example attestation papers of Cipolla, Giuseppe, Gariglio Luigi, and Marzupio Jack, NAA: B2455. For those that were discharged at the front at the request of the Italian Consul see for example attestation papers of Cunial Germano and Genoni Ernesto, NAA: B2455.


14 Cresciani, Gianfranco, ‘Italian Immigrants in Australia, 1900-22’, p. 41.


18 Pittarello, Adrian, Soup Without Salt: The Australian Catholic Church and the Italian Migrant, Sydney: Centre for Migration Studies 1980, p. 32.

19 Pittarello Adrian, ‘Understanding Italian Religiousness’ in Rando, Gaetano, and Arrighi, Michael, (Editors), Italians in Australia Historical and Social Perspectives, Wollongong: Department of Modern Languages 1993, p. 181.


1911 censuses states that there were 5543 Italian males in Australia and 2683 females See Pyke, N.O.P., ‘An Outline History of Italian Immigration into Australia’ The Australian Quarterly, Vol. XX, No. 3, September 1948, p. 104.

The padroni were the labour recruitment agents who acted as brokers by recruiting and hiring Italians usually on behalf of an employer such as the Canadian National Railway Company. They generally collected a fee from the recruits and received a commission from the hiring company. See Fortier, Anne-Marie, Migrant Belongings Memory, Space, Identity, Oxford: Berg. 2000, p. 28. The padroni brought Italians from all over Italy to live and work together and thereby facilitated the mixing of regional groups. See Zucchi, John E., Italians in Toronto: Development of a National Identity 1875-1935 Canada: McGill Queens University Press,1988, p. 35.

Fanella, Antonella, With Heart and Soul Calgary’s Italian Community, Canada: University of Calgary Press 1999, p. 9.


In 1913 only 38% of the Italian population was literate and there is no reason to suppose that this would be any higher amongst Italian immigrants in Australia. See Cunsolo, Ronald S, Italian Nationalism form its Origins to WWII Malabar: Krieger 1990, p. 85.


Canadian National Archives, (CNA) Department of Defence, RG 24, Formation of no. 19 Canadian Railway Draft amongst Italians in M.D's 3,4 and 5, Volume 490, HQ54-21-4-109, 1917.


Mangieri Di Carlo, D., ‘The Italian Festa in the United States as an Expression of Ethnic Pride’, in Tomasi, Lydio F., Gastaldo, Piero and Row, Thomas (Editors), The Columbus People: Perspectives in Italian Immigration to the Americas and Australia, New York: Centre For Migration Studies 1994, p. 84.


Cumbo, 'Italians in Hamilton’ p. 32.

Principe, The Concept of Italy in Canada , p. 169.


Ross, In the Company of Other Italians, p. 56.


It is with sorrow that we announce the death of our friend and fellow countryman Mr L Grittani who during four years of war has taken part in the most glorious of battles always distinguishing himself with valour and courage. La Tribuna Canadiana, Toronto, August 31 1918 Reproduced in Principe, The Concept of Italy in Canada, p. 177.


Numerous articles such as those in The Daily Times Journal, Fort William, Ontario, September 13-18, 1915.


See for example the Sault Daily Star (Saulte Ste Marie) articles such as ‘Italia fa Progresso Lungho Tutta la Frontiera’, June 5 1915, p. 1.

Principe, The Concept of Italy in Canada, p. 86.

Principe, The Concept of Italy in Canada, p. 90.

Principe, The Concept of Italy in Canada, p. 93.

This pamphlet was reproduced from the July 24 1915 issue in Ventresco, Fiorello B., ‘Loyalty and Dissent; Italian Reservists in America During World War I’, Italian Americana, Vol. 4, No. 1 1978, p. 97.

Principe, The Concept of Italy in Canada, p. 180.

53 CNA, RG2, vol 1209, pc2560.
55 From the Government side these included the appointment of a Director-General of Recruiting in November 1916, the formation of recruiting committees in each state and the appointment of local recruiting officers who collectively employed a variety of methods to stimulate recruiting. See Scott, Ernest, The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914 – 1918, Vol XI, Australia During the War, 4th Edition, Sydney: Angus & Robertson 1938, pp. 294, 400-3 and 871-2. Similarly, a variety of private recruitment campaigns, which had been occurring throughout Australia, from as early as 1915, failed to provide sufficient numbers of recruits. These private recruitment drives began under the initiative of either a single individual, such as WT Hitchen’s Gilgandra Snowball or by collective groups like the Sportsmen of Victoria or the Tramway Employees of Sydney. See Scott, The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914 – 1918, pp. 314-5. Despite these measures total enlistments per month declined and never again reached 5,000.
56 Each of the 36 recruitment areas, into which Australia had been divided, had a quota of recruits to fulfil and, in those areas in which Italians were prevalent, meeting this quota was considered to be even more difficult.
57 The call to arms was published in English and sometimes in Italian in the major newspapers around Australia from December 1917 eg Sydney Morning Herald and Daily Telegraph 19 December 1917. For example see ‘Call to Arms of Italians in Australia’ 12 February 1918, West Australian. See copy in NAA: PP14/1, 4/7/507.
58 Reported in Department of Defence Precis, Italians – Enlistment in the AIF in NAA: MP367/1, 592/4/1116.
59 Via newspaper advertisements and pamphlets distributed throughout Australia.
60 Translation of Call to Arms and Repatriation of Military Men Born in the Years from 1874 – 1899 in NAA: MP367/1, 592/4/295.
61 Notices such as that published 12 February 1918 in the West Australian ‘Call to Arms of Italians in Australia’. See copy in NAA: PP14/1, 4/7/507.
62 These additional regulations 17 E.A were made on 6 March 1918 under the War Precautions Act. Notice of gazetting of new regulation in NAA: MP367/1, 592/4/295.
63 West Australian article in NAA: PP14/1, 4/7/507 and The Register, 8 March 1918, p. 7.
64 Letter from M Morelini, to T Morelini, in NAA: PP14/1, 417/507.
65 Report on the Deputation of ladies who called upon the Acting Prime Minister, 20 April, 1918, in NAA: A1, 1918/6398.
66 Examples included an Italian at Nhill who was paid £700 for a business estimated to be worth £2,500. Another Italian sold a shop in Melbourne worth £250 for £87. See House of Representatives, Considine (Member for Barrier), 19 April 1918, in Commonwealth of Australia Parliamentary Debates, Volume LXXXIV, p. 4090.
67 See for example NAA: PP14/1, 4/2/1 Pezzie, Benedetto, NAA: 14/1, 4/3/569 Colleselli Luigi and NAA: 14/1, 5/1/75, Chezzali Giovanni Batiati. The latter also lists the names of other Italians seeking to be interned as Austrians and prompted enquiries from Italian Consul Eles in Melbourne.
68 Principe, The Concept of Italy in Canada, p. 311.
70 Principe, The Concept of Italy in Canada, p. 181.