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## Panel Discussion: Global Reality

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*Mr. Antonino Iaccarino*  
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## PANEL DISCUSSION ON GLOBAL REALITY

Panel *John Goddard* (Chair)  
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*Lucio Mafessanti*  
*Rocco Perna*

TONY CHARLTON: Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the third session of what's been an auspicious day. It's been quite a day; the Governor, the Archbishop of Melbourne, the Archbishop of Chicago, the Ambassador, the Consul General, the Minister for Immigration and his shadow, a personal letter of good wishes and commendation from the Australian Prime Minister, university luminaries, workshops and now, as I say, session three. If it's true that everybody lives for something better to come, then what picture does global reality present? We'll have a good ear to the ground for what now transpires. To chair this panel I'm introducing here the chief executive officer from Cassa Commerciale, a subsidiary of Bendigo Bank – six years with the World Bank in Washington before that, John Goddard.

And from your right to left, my left to right, I'll introduce the panel and then John will take over: Dr Gianni Bardini, the Consul General of Italy in Melbourne with jurisdiction throughout Victoria and Tasmania. Born in Siena and educated at the University of Siena, he was the first vice consul in Toronto, and he was the First Secretary in Tunis.

Born in Calabria, emigrated to Australia in '51 – and so many of course have come here from the south of Italy – Nat Bonacci. He has practiced as a consulting engineer for 32 years now. He was a member of the Mercy Private Hospital Board and chairman of its building committee. He's been a member of Newman College Council since 1977 and a member of the Xavier College Council.

And a face we all know because the television exposures have been extremely successful: Santo Cilauro directs and produces excellent films and television programs. A writer and presenter on *The Panel*, for example, which has been so successful. The television series

*Frontline* comes to mind – it was successful enough to run for three series. And that marvellous film called *The Castle* with Bud Tingwell. And I understand now that it's just made its premier in South America. And Rocco Perna. He started his working career with Fiat, one of Italy's great companies. In 1996 he was promoted to managing director of Ferrero Australia, and I say good evening to him.

Lucio Mafessanti: mechanical engineering and mechanical design have been his qualifications, and he got those in Italy. Managing director of Permasteelisa. He has also been employed as a managing director and technical manager in South Africa.

And another face well known to most Italians of that I'm sure: Antonio Iaccarino. Works for Qantas now as a consultant for their southern European and their Italy route. He was educated at the University of Naples. Then he worked with P&O Australia, and with Alitalia Australia from 1976 to 1985. And he was Alitalia general manager in Australia. He was also president of the Italian Chamber of Commerce and Industry in New South Wales from 1996 to 1997.

Global Reality. Looking forward to this. Your chairman is John Goddard.

JOHN GODDARD: Thank you Andrew. It's a great honour to be chairperson of this august group here. And look, just based on this first day I certainly want to congratulate Rino Grollo and all of the organisers of this very important and very significant event. And I think if today is a guide in terms of the quality of the debate and discussion, I think it's going to achieve some very important things.

Our mix of panellists... When you consider our topic today, our mix of panellists I'm sure are going to present a fairly wide range of views and different thoughts about this. When one talks about global reality it gives us a fairly broad scope in terms of what we're going to talk about. Perhaps to some the big reality at this time of night is getting to the bar. But that aside, what I'm going to suggest is that each of us have just a few brief comments for a couple of minutes, and then what we'll do is open up the floor to some discussion.

And perhaps I might kick off first and tell you a little bit about our experience. I actually run an Italian banking business, which is, in fact, owned by an Australian company. Our challenge three years ago was that we actually bought that business from an Italian bank, the Monte dei Paschi di Siena. And that certainly presented some significant challenges for us. There were certainly some risks involved. And we had to make it a great success. And I must say thanks to the wonders of the Italian banking system I think we've achieved that success quite well.

I say nothing negative about the Monte dei Paschi because they're great friends of ours and we enjoy a warm and wonderful relationship. But for those who deal with the Italian banking system in Italy I'm sure you'll relate to some of the challenges that occur there.

And I guess that what we've been able to achieve by this adopting, I guess, the old philosophy of when in Rome do as Rome does, of adopting the standards and needs and desires of our clients here. I think that's helped us in building our business. And we certainly did have some challenges over this period of time.

It was just a finance company. Although it was owned by the bank it had no retail operation. And so we've been able to add a number of products. But I think importantly we've been able to empower our local staff.

I'm one of the very few non ethnic Italians in this business. And, indeed, I realised it was a problem when I came on board here because the local Italians were referring to some of the expats as the Italians. And I thought 'now hang on, there's something wrong here.' This doesn't make sense.

Now indeed I don't think they were so much casting aspersions on the expats but I guess on the fact that they were trying to transport their Italian banking here, which indeed didn't work. We found indeed that it took us many, many months to get loan approvals, large loan approvals and things like that. We had to go through a committee process around the world. So what we've done very successfully is empowered some of our local people here. And we've gone through some other challenges too, I guess, interesting ones which have come out in some of the discussions here. Indeed I mentioned the fact that most of our staff are Italian. One of our biggest challenges with our first and second generation Italians in our business is that very few of them speak good Italian.

And I think many of them are, I suppose, mid 30s to mid 40s, and they came from an environment where perhaps it wasn't as fashionable to have an ethnic origin in this country as it is today. And, you know, their fathers and families and parents said to them 'look sons or daughters, what you must do to integrate into this country is you must become an Aussie.' And along the way, sadly, language was forgotten. They were encouraged to speak English at home. And we've been faced over the last three years with the ludicrous situation of working with our friends at Co.As.It. and elsewhere paying quite significant sums of money to teach our Italian staff how to speak Italian. And that's an interesting one in itself. But I think we've certainly made big advances. And I think the

other thing we've done very strongly is focused on the community, building sponsorships and those sorts of things that in fact make us a good community citizen. Indeed, supporting events like this is very important to us. The results are that three years later we have a balance sheet that's twice the size. It is profitable now. It wasn't before. And I guess I suppose I'd have to say that we are successful because we've got successful clients and we're there for them.

So that's just a little bit about our story, and there are others I guess that will come out. But I think the big lesson that we get out of this is that in fact when you do business in a country you need to be able to be prepared I guess to use the local way of doing business and to be able to adopt that local way, making people responsible and accountable. And that's what we've learnt out of that. And certainly it's been very successful for us. And I might just move along the panellists and have them make a few comments. I've had a request from *The Panel* man to go last for a particular reason. I'm a bit suspicious about that. But we might just start with Antonio.

ANTONIO IACCARINO: Thank you very much John. I would just very briefly like to thank the board of directors of the Italian Australian Institute for inviting Qantas, whom I'm representing tonight, as one of the major sponsors of the conference. And I certainly wish the conference the great success that it deserves. Now I'm here in a bit of a quandary and a bit of a difficult position because I am merely a consultant for Qantas, and therefore I cannot express any judgment or pass any judgment on behalf of Qantas because it would not be correct of me to do so. I am here representing Mr John Borghetti who's the group's general manager for Australia Sales. And had John been here he probably would have been able to reflect more on some of the company's philosophies as far as global reality and globalisation is concerned. Again I find myself in a very difficult position having just left Alitalia as GM in this country last February. I'm in the unfortunate position of not being able to talk about the global reality of Alitalia either. But what I can do, I am after all an individual, and I have had extensive experience in the travel industry, I can talk about what has been my personal experience in an industry which basically and foremost reflects what global reality is really all about.

There is nothing more obvious than an aeroplane, or an airline company, to represent what globalisation is all about. It's basically flying around the world and showing the face of the company, the face of the product which it is trying to sell, and trying to promote worldwide. Whether the

companies that I've been representing before, and the one that I'm representing now, do it properly, do it correctly or otherwise I'll leave it to others to judge. But one of the biggest challenges that a manager is faced with when moved around the world representing the company, is trying to pass on the philosophies of the company into the new realities into which he moves. And again part of the biggest process of globalisation is trying to perpetrate the main philosophies of the companies, adapting them to the realities of the countries in which they move.

I started my very brief intervention by saying that I've been in this country for about 24 years on and off. With the exception of nine years from '85 to '93 I've spent the greater part of the last 24 years in this country. It has been an extremely rewarding experience as an Italian coming to Australia for the first time. I was not representing Alitalia when I came to this country, but I came, like the majority of the Italians who have come to this country, as a migrant. I was married to an Australian girl whom I met during my days in the merchant navy with Flotta Lauro. She was a passenger. I was one of the pursers. It was one of those things. I met her in Buenos Aires, so there you go. We met in Italy and we got married.

But having decided to make Australia my country I was faced with all sorts of different realities for which I was not really prepared. I had experiences during my years in the merchant navy. A lot of passengers were originally migrants to Australia who could then afford to go back to their country. And we were exchanging all sorts of different experiences. And some of them were extremely happy; others were a little bit more – how should I say? – more reserved about the experience that they had had when they first decided to come to Australia. Well let me tell you my experience has been one of the happiest experiences of my life. I'm not that old but I'm not that young either, so 24 years of Australia has represented for me an incredible experience.

And here I am today after having had the good fortune of representing an international company, Alitalia, at the highest level possible in this country, as a local boy given the opportunity to reflect on what my experience has been, to really be able to say in no uncertain terms that I wish that many more people would have the fortune that I've had of interacting with such a diverse and great society.

I would have liked to say more about the company or the companies that I've represented but unfortunately I can't. I hope that I've been somewhat interesting in passing on my experience and thank you very much for your attention.

LUCIO MAFESSANTI: Good evening ladies and gentlemen. Of course we are all proud to be able to be here today and we need to thank the board of the Italian Australian Institute for having given us the opportunity to be here. Of course I'm here representing Permasteelisa Group, and I apologise for the impossibility for the group chairman Mr Massimo Colomban, to be here. It's a pleasure to be here with those that have had similar experiences, and to share involvement in these activities, which have given us the opportunity to have satisfaction around the world.

I suppose that when we start with a certain type of business we have to think very deeply about the sense of global reality and anything relating to how to approach and how to involve and how to expand and how to go on with our business in more than one country.

I need to say that I was born in Italy, and I studied Italy. I travelled the world when I was 22, 23. I spent eleven years in Germany, always in the type of business that we are doing now. I spent two years in Saudi Arabia, and two and a half in South Africa. And then in '85, or the beginning of '86 I arrived in Sydney. But I was not a boy anymore, I was 55. And I need to say that there was a choice, there was the idea to come to Australia to do something in a rather more stable way than I had ever done before.

The solution was in Sydney. This was a different place where everything was quite attractive and quite normal. And then after a few years we find out that whatever we tried to do is good for the moment but you need to do something better.

And I need to thank one of the members of our board who gave us the opportunity to be involved in a project in Melbourne at the time – And that was, I think, back in '87 or at the beginning of '88.

During the year I myself and even Massimo Colomban go through differing experiences and we have more challenges and we push ourselves towards being involved in a lot of different countries.

This has been necessary to create continuity in our business. And recently we realised that this sort of global involvement, this sort of global participation in different countries, in different environments, is sometimes really very difficult as well.

Sydney and Melbourne are very nice places to live in, nice places to do business in, but when we approach different countries and we arrive in China or any other different country, then things start to change.

So challenges arise. Risks arise. Sometimes you're successful, sometimes something goes wrong, and that is the moment when you begin to think even more deeply about global reality. Yes, I'm of Italian origin. I don't



know if we can say that our company has an Italian background. I don't know. I believe we are so much involved in a lot of different countries and we use and support people of so many different nationalities so much, that very little is of Italian background.

Even though we originally were. Even though, we do try very hard to have a continuous relationship with Italy. But I do think, that this was just a spark, just the beginning of this venture that we have tried to achieve and put into place. Yes, now we have companies operating everywhere around Europe. We operate everywhere around Asia. We operate in the United States. And now we operate in a more global reality. I think in the beginning there was a necessity to do something and create continuity. But I think, we need to try very hard to keep this global reality a reason to live and the necessity to participate everyday, more in any event which is happening now.

A lot of time people don't appreciate and don't understand the problems that exist in different countries. It's just because sometimes we don't have the time to involve ourselves, to understand what is behind them. Sometimes it's very easy. We take the newspaper and read through it and we barely understand it. Unfortunately it isn't only the newspaper. It would be great if everyone of us had the opportunity eventually to have a little bit more time and see really what the reality is. And everybody complains that this globe is too small. We fly very easily from one country to another. I think I have a lot of frequent flier points. But at the end of the day we still have a lot to learn. To be global is really a big challenge. And I hope that we have the opportunity, the possibility to learn a little bit more over the years.

**GODDARD:** Rocco, would you like to come up and give us your perceptions?

**ROCCO PERNA:** Thank you John. Ladies and gentlemen, I thank you sincerely for giving me the opportunity today to talk to you about the Ferrero experience in the Australian market. And before I begin just allow me to give you a very general picture of our company, particularly for those who may not know much about Ferrero.

Pietro and Giovannini Ferrero started the company in 1946 in Alba, which is a small town 50 kilometres from Torino, in the north west of Italy. Everything starts from necessity, which is often the mother of invention – and this is true also for Ferrero. Soon after the second world war cocoa products were very expensive and very difficult to find. The Ferrero brothers managed to combine a mixture of roasted hazelnuts,

which were widely available locally in that area and not very much used, sugar, vegetable oils, milk and only a touch of that expensive cocoa. And they transformed it into a paste that looked and tasted even better than the traditional chocolates. The company was essentially built on this very product, which later on was named Nutella, which is still our most successful brand. Now for generations of Italians, French, Germans and indeed people throughout Europe, Nutella, this product, was a faithful companion of their adolescence, and still is a sweet treat now in their adult years.

So this is how the history of the company began, and today Ferrero has an annual turnover in excess of eight billion Australian dollars, and it is physically present in every continent. The size of this company makes Ferrero the third largest confectionary company in the world – it could be fourth depending on the latest acquisition, but that will not really change much. We have manufacturing facilities in 14 different countries, and marketing and distribution companies in 32 nations – so a real global reality.

Ferrero has been in Australia for more than a quarter of a century, to be exact, since 1974. We have a manufacturing facility in Lithgow in New South Wales, a commercial office in Sydney, and we have a national sales network. We are also a local manufacturer and two of our four core brands are locally manufactured and they are also exported. They are locally manufactured for the neighbouring markets of South East Asia, Japan and New Zealand. So we bring a modest maybe, but in principle, significant contribution to the Australian economy. And we all know how much Australia is in need of export. And for doing all of this we employ over 250 people generating a turnover of 100 million dollars.

So what model can be used to enter international markets? I cannot say exactly what to do in this environment because it would be difficult. I can only share with you some of the principles that have inspired Ferrero. First of all I have to say that the Ferrero model stems from the unique talents and the personality of Mr Ferrero. He is of course a very successful entrepreneur. But in essence he's a creator of products that are the most innovative in the confectionary industry, products with a very strong, unique selling proposition that have created new consumption habits, and therefore created new markets, or niches, in existing market segments, products with an extremely high technological content in terms of the way of processing some of the key ingredients in order to deliver a unique consumption experience. And there is the question of having developed within the company, equipment and machinery for the manufacturing process, and, of course, of having generated a very

regional marketing positioning for those products and advertising strategies.

So, in essence, had Mr. Ferrero behaved as more of a traditional kind of entrepreneur, the company today could probably be at least five times bigger than what it is. Because with the cash on hand Mr Ferrero could have easily acquired several other confectionary companies in Italy and elsewhere in Europe. He refused to do that because something which is not exclusively his, not his own personal creation does not motivate him. Therefore the growth of the company, the model that Ferrero has adopted, is to grow not through acquisition.

Now, what kind of advice can we give to other Italian companies wishing to establish a base in Australia or indeed in other international markets? I'm going to list very few things. Of course in our opinion concentrate on doing what you know that you can do best. Do it at the highest possible level without distraction. But it is extremely important that we study ... that you study and understand very carefully the market, your market, before launching or releasing a product. This means basically to understand the local consumer culture and the local competition, to understand the trade, the distribution channels. Possibly test, test and test in one area the mix of activities in support of the product before it is launched or released on a national level. Then follow up your products or your services once they are in the market.

In a nutshell, do not move out, do not have the mentality of shipping a few containers and then forgetting about it. So another important point that we can share with you is to be focused. For example, our experience is that it's much better to be successful and recognised as a leader with few but very, very distinctive products, rather than having 50 different ones around in the market place with no character. And then do not try to be an expert in everything. For example, try to outsource activities in which you are not a specialist, or in which you cannot have a very clear, unique position.

I realise that what I've just said might be perceived as generic statements out of a textbook, but with the limited time available I cannot be more specific. There is certainly little that is new in the world today, and therefore if you are looking to become established in a new market you must presume that there are already many products similar to yours. In our experience the difference between failure and success is nearly never the price, it is, instead, the quality of the products, the dedication of your staff and your team, and the understanding of your customer. Again in the case of Ferrero: Ferrero never tried to be a French company in France, a German company in Germany, or an American company in the

United States of America. The Italian flair, the imagination and the genius of Mr Ferrero certainly helped, but again the secret of our success has always been the single minded pursuit of excellence in our products and the highest respect for our customers.

GODDARD: Santo, would you like to come up and have a few words?

SANTO CILAURO: Thank you very much. For those of you who are thinking that I'm actually at the wrong session you're quite right. I was supposed to be at an arts and culture session tomorrow but unfortunately I've got to go away and film something in the morning. And on top of that I heard that Rocco was giving away chocolates tonight so that made it a bit easier. The reason I asked John if I could possibly speak last is that I was just trying to gather some concept of what global reality was before I spoke and I think I'm getting the gist. So, let me just speak from my point of view. I can only talk about the world of the film and television industry.

And just as a bit of background I've been working with a group of people for about 15 years. We've produced television shows and radio shows and we've made a couple of films - one which was quite surprisingly successful here in Australia and picked up by a major distributor in the United States and has gone quite well. And we've just finished making another movie which we should release later this year. And I was just listening to the other speakers talk about the global reality in various industries. It might be a bit different for me. When you're producing steel, there's an absolute value for steel: you can only use it for certain things, and you can only produce it in a certain way. Same with chocolates, I guess: you can only consume them in a certain way. And so it allows you to penetrate markets and be creative in that way. So it sounds like there's quite a level playing field regarding the global reality at the moment in most industries. Unfortunately in the world of entertainment that level playing field does not exist for a couple of reasons. It doesn't exist first of all because America just dominates in a way that is a little worrying, especially for countries like Australia that are English speaking. I guess it's more relative in countries like Italy and France which can still make films for themselves because they can do them in their own language, and unless the Americans want to remake them, then they can keep making films for their own culture.

Unfortunately, in the United States the average size of a budget for a movie is between 60 and 80 million dollars US, and therefore, any film

that you make here for less than a 10th of that... to compete with films that have got gladiators and tigers flying around and it's very difficult in that sense. Just pure money makes it hard for local industries.

The other thing is that the celebrity culture is huge. The main story, I know in the British news overnight, was that Hugh Grant and Elizabeth Hurley have separated. That's the main story. I know it's sad. He had it coming, I think. A long time. So unless you have any kind of star power here the American film and television industry is going to dominate.

There's also a fixation on Americans remaking films. I think they can spend that amount of money because there's such a huge market in America. A reasonably successful film can make 20 million dollars in its first weekend in the United States, whereas for anything to make anywhere near that amount of money in Australia, it needs to be a super blockbuster. I remember one particular instance, and I can talk about this because it's the same distributors that picked up our film, *The Castle*, in America a couple of years. The two brothers that run this distribution company called Miramax, they were sitting around with Roberto Benigni and *Life is Beautiful* had just opened in Los Angeles and no one was going to see it. They were just sitting around twiddling their thumbs. There were no interviews. There was nothing happening. And one of the brothers, one of the Weinstein brothers, Harvey, just said to Benigni 'we have to make this film work.' And they just basically made the film work by forcing him to go onto television shows and turning on that Benigni comedy tap which they knew works and works very well. And it's strange. Well... the rest is history. The film was huge in the United States. But, we probably wouldn't have seen the film in Australia, and a lot of other countries wouldn't have seen it, had it not been a success in the United States, because even films that are not made on huge budgets in the United States come here as arthouse movies ... and so our arthouse cinemas are being filled with films like *American Beauty* as well. So in many ways anything which isn't a huge American film finds it difficult to achieve any form of success.

So, Lucio was talking about the challenge that lies ahead to achieve global reality. I think that challenge is huge in the world of entertainment outside the United States.

There are various steps being taken in countries like Britain which maybe we should look at here in Australia and possibly in Italy. I know that all the money spent in Australia on films and television comes directly from taxpayers' money so it's a very unpopular form of trying to raise money for films. In the United Kingdom they have lotteries. They actually have a big lottery and all the money goes to the film

industry. In the year 1999 I think there were a 100 films made in the United Kingdom, and that was all made by either private investment or money raised from these lotteries. And that has enabled the United Kingdom to actually stop United States filmmakers coming into the country like they do in Australia with the pretence of saying 'yes, this is a great country. You've got the world's best technicians. You've got great actors. We're going to work with you.' And that's not the case. It's because of our dollar. It's a lot easier to build something in Australia. It's a lot cheaper. *Titanic*: they built a big boat in Mexico and it was a lot cheaper. *Gladiator* shot basically everything in Malta. So, the United Kingdom – I don't know for what purpose, maybe it's just pure national pride – have actually said 'no' to that, and have looked at different ways to encourage their own industry.

It's a weird thing because once you start looking after your own industry then I think you can actually achieve globalisation in film and television.

But I do think I'm a bit pessimistic about it. I still think it's a long way off. I hope I haven't brought the mood down. I'm off to have a bit more chocolate with Rocco. Thank you.

GODDARD: What was Benigni's budget for *Life is Beautiful*?

CILAURO: I don't know the budget, but I'd say in Australian dollars it would be about \$10 million perhaps.

GODDARD: A great film. Well, we might get Nat Bonacci up to have a few words.

NAT BONACCI: Well, I'd like to thank Rino and Diana for organising this three day conference. If today is any indication, it's absolutely fantastic. It makes you proud to have an Italian background. I asked what was I to talk about on global reality and it was from the point of view of being associated with a structural engineering company that started 19 years ago, from somebody who left St Mary's Primary School at Myrtleford aged 14 and was told by the nun there who thought I would become an engineer or something. And I thought an engineer was a train driver at that stage.

The Bonacci Group currently has just over 102, people, I think, of whom 50 are here in Melbourne, where we started. In Sydney, there are about 33, with the company we merged with. We've only been there four years. In Queensland, there are about 12 or 13. In Malaysia there are 10.

And we did have an office in Dubai that we had open for four years and was fairly successful and helped us a lot, but we've since closed it. And we were in London for about two years and that was a disaster. So that's a bit of a range on how we've been involved in different things. But the offices overseas were good at the start of the '90s, when there was a downturn here, in that we were able to keep most of our staff here working on projects that we got in Dubai and Malaysia. In Dubai, we did the Dubai Golf Club initially, which is similar to the Sydney Opera House, but has a golf club inside it, but it's a similar shaped building. And one of my partners went there and lived there for 18 months, but we did all the drawings here, they were e-mailed over, sent over. While we were there, we ended up doing three or four office buildings and even a St Mary's Catholic High School in Dubai, a Bonacci Winward job. In Malaysia we've done a lot of work that we sent back here. We've never made much money out of it, but it kept our people here occupied at a critical time and that includes the Malaysian Airlines domestic cargo building, which is a fairly large building over there. So with two or three people from Melbourne over there, we were able to feed back work, sending it over.

Now global reality, well, you can work in our field, and we are not behind in Australia, we are quite well advanced in any engineering aspects of building. This was a Bonacci Winward building. The other Hyatt was a Bonacci Winward building, the Shell building, in Sydney, the Martin Place GPO building. But one of the interesting parts about what you can do and how we're not so far from the rest of the world is during the bidding for the design and construction of the Colonial Stadium, I was part of a team of seven people that, in Grollo's jet, went over. We left here on a Sunday and came back on a Sunday, spent two days in the office of one of the world's leading sports architects in Kansas City and then we visited eight cities and 16 stadiums and were back here the following Sunday. You can do all that.

As well as that, when you come back, you hit the ground running and you can actually get a turnover of work that is faster than dealing with somebody down the road here. We would work 10, 12 hours here. At the end of the day, you'd send all your drawings, email them over, and they would – 12 hours difference – work overnight, so you'd come in the next morning and the answers would be there and, you know, you couldn't say, 'I've got to hear from the architect, his response to our solution'. They've already modified it and said, 'well, now check this and check that'.

Last week, there was a conference here in Melbourne called Destination Melbourne and there was a term used, 'the 24 hour clock' and 'follow the sun capability' and that was in the motor car industry where it takes three to four years to develop the design of a new car and it takes a long time and there's work and there are big teams of people working on it.

They have a team in Chicago. They've now got one in Melbourne and one in Germany. So at the end of the day, in Chicago, they download it, email it across to Melbourne, the team in Melbourne keep going. At the end of their day here, they email it across to Germany and it's like an around the world relay. You actually can catch up and get ahead of where you otherwise would be if you were working from the one area. So you can actually use this follow the sun technology. I mean, mind you, after two weeks of doing that on the Docklands Stadium, I was dizzy and my wife said I was going mad. So trying to do it for three years in a row would not be the best thing to do. And then again one of the realities was that our bid for the Stadium missed out because the television group that was part of the other bid was putting in more money and we lost it because of that, even though it was a better designed stadium, in our opinion.

It is a small world, you can work in any area you like, the Internet, just your website, I came in after Christmas last year and there was a note on my email: hello, my name is John Bonacci. I am Professor of Civil Engineering at the University of Toronto. My main interest is the earthquake resistant design of concrete buildings. I find it quite amazing that the Bonacci name is associated with several civil engineering applications. He'd just picked it up by browsing the website, saw the name, it was his name and he just sent an email.

So I suppose global reality, from our point of view, is that you can work anywhere in the world. One of the negatives is being paid for your efforts in an overseas environment that you don't know. There are some pitfalls. Luckily, most of our initial ventures overseas were at the request and invitation of overseas branches of Australian companies, to rebuild or redesign a building for them, to make it more buildable so that you've at least got the security of dealing with somebody you know. There's also the culture behind making that change. We looked at a building in Bangkok, an 80 storey building that had obvious room for improvement, but the design engineer was the local university professor and he was related to the head of the bank through which it was being built. And because of oriental face saving, there was no way it could be changed.



AUDIENCE: We know all that.

BONACCI: So we never considered being involved in Italy, I suppose, because I think that trying to teach engineering to the Italians might be like taking coals to Newcastle.

I'll leave it at that, I suppose.

GODDARD: Last but very definitely not least, Dr Bardini.

GIANNI BARDINI: Thank you, Mr Chairman, ladies and gentlemen. Globalisation, the global village, the global economy is certainly a very complex and difficult issue to take on, but I would like to try to make some very general comments and to be controversial possibly and provocative. I would like to look at it from two different perspectives, the economic one and the cultural one. The cultural one in particular affects my profession profoundly because it has a direct impact on the Italian community, on all communities abroad and on the Italian community in Australia. I would like to start by saying that I am optimistic and I do believe that globalisation is a good thing. Everyone seems to share this opinion and I am confident that humanity will be able to manage this process and to make the most of it. So I don't think that we should fear globalism, but we should be aware of the dangers which I perceive are looming regarding globalisation. And the point that I would like to make is that we should be able to better rule, better govern this process.

This process of globalisation in all fields, in economy, in the cultural field, is in fact happening at a very fast pace and we are probably not yet equipped with the ethical framework needed to prevent the negative effect that can stem from it. Now from an economic point of view – and these are very simple, very basic reflections of mine, of course I'm certainly not claiming to say anything new, or particularly intelligent, but, as a matter of fact, in economy, concerning barriers, trade barriers and, more generally, the flow of labour, capital and goods; the freer the barrier the better, is sort of commonplace in economic theories. Since the 18th century all economies have stated that the more free the market is, the better it is; that all economies eventually will benefit from a free market.

And it is certainly so and we see these days that more companies in fact compete, at least in the industrialised world, on the global market and that means probably better quality goods and lower prices, so there is certainly a direct benefit at least for the consumer. And in the long run,

even though it is probably not immediately visible, which is a combination of the technological advancement and of the deliberate political will for this dismantling of barriers to free trade, is in the long run, going to reduce and narrow discrepancies and disparities among economies, which is certainly highly desirable.

We all want, of course, for countries which are very behind, to be able to catch up. This is going to happen. If the market is really made free, as has happened in the European Union, for instance, where we have experienced some countries which joined the European Union in the '70s, like Portugal, for instance, Portugal with an economy which was relatively behind and which has been able to catch up because in a free market you have this free movement of labour, of capital, of goods, which results in movement to wherever the opportunities are.

So if opportunities are better in one country, they move to that country, if of course there are no barriers to this movement.

So, eventually, in a free economy, the poorest economy should benefit. Not immediately, but in the long run that should happen. So all this is very positive.

What I fear though and what is a matter of concern for me, also as the father of small children, is that the economic model which is prevailing, which is in fact the dominant one, on the global scale is very much the capitalistic – I'm not saying it in the negative sense, it's the model based on production and especially consumption. And it is clear that this kind of model has already caused serious damage to the environment, to our planet. This is something which unfortunately we are experiencing every day. And I find it hard to believe that with the acceleration that globalisation is bringing to the economy and the fact that other countries – and they're entitled of course to hope for a better life, for a better living – all the African countries, many Asian countries, many under-developed countries will be able to adopt the same economic model, also because capital will go where opportunities are, well I find it hard to believe that our planet will be able to survive and to last 10 or 20 more years from now. So we must somehow be able to find the ethical framework which will allow us to redistribute wealth on a global scale, in a much better way, ... but slowing down the economic development in the way that we are experiencing it.

There are already some episodes which we have seen on TV, like the riots in Seattle, or the protests in other countries, in other cities in the world where they've held major international conferences on trade, which are already saying that this sense of discomfort is, in fact, spreading around and I think that it's very important we don't have to

oppose globalisation. That's the main point that I would like to make, but certainly we should be able to guide it and not let it happen because it's going too fast. But on the cultural side and this is the second consideration that I would like to make, dangers are even more evident to me.

Globalisation is good again in this case and no one can deny that the fact that we have the Web, that we can use the Internet, in fact brings about more democracy, a better access to information, which is an important patrimony. I mean, two or three years ago, not many people had this possibility of having easy and cheap access to all information. This is a reality. This is a great accomplishment. It is definitely extremely important and valuable. But there is, I find, a drawback here also, first of all, in the way culture is being perceived in our society. We can think of culture in basically many different ways and I'm sure that many people would disagree on the definition of culture. It's a very vague concept that we ordinarily use, but we do not always mean the same thing when we talk about culture.

Culture is in fact increasingly regarded as the information that we need in order to foster economic development. When young people go to the university and this is something which is happening under our eyes, they increasingly choose those subjects like economy, like science, like engineering, which they think are better for their future, which will give them more opportunity. We see in Victoria, but I presume in most countries, that the humanistic faculties in the universities find it very hard to survive, they have to strive in order to go ahead. And this is a measure, because culture is not only that, it is not only and it should not be conceived as simply a means, an instrument, a tool for economic development.

Culture should in fact be conceived in a much broader sense as our set values, our beliefs, ... the old questions, basically why we are here, where we come from. These are the questions that the humanities always asked for many centuries, but they're still very central, they're still at the core of the human being. And these questions still need to be answered. So when we talk about culture, we have to think that culture is also all the processes that lead to our attempt, sometimes unsuccessful, to answer this basic question why we are here, what we believe, what is valuable for us, how we relate to other people.

The way we live is in fact our culture and this is another meaning that we often use when we speak generally about Italian culture, or any culture. We often refer to it as the way of living, the way we live and behave and it is, again, very important that we don't lose sight of the fact

that culture is also the inner search concerning the profound questions that we all carry with us.

So this is kind of forgotten. We tend to believe that human status are no longer necessary because they don't serve directly the economic development, when I tend to believe that the economic development – at least in the past – should serve to free us from the material needs in order to concentrate on these major issues, in order to decide how we want to live and to enjoy our life. So it should be, I think vice-versa. Economic development should be instrumental to culture.

And the second aspect, the second concern of mine is the fact that information is very accessible to every one in real time, from all corners of the world. The fact that we can travel so easily, so fast and so cheaply to all corners of the world, the fact that the world is what it is, I mean, we have explored it all. We have chartered every single corner of this planet. This brings about another negative consequence which is the loss of cultural diversity. The tendency that at the moment no country is any longer insulated against other cultures and other countries entails that one cultural model is becoming dominant, it's devouring all the others. And this is a real danger. As in biology, we tend to believe that the loss of biological diversity is negative to the planet, so I think that we should firmly believe that the loss of cultural diversity is very negative and this is happening. Wherever we go, we tend to find more and more similarities at least among the industrialised countries.

This is something also that we should fight, because the moment that we have only one cultural model in front of us, the moment that everyone in the world behaves and lives in the same way, we lose options. We lose the possibility of comparing this model of living, this culture with any other and we will assume that this culture is the only one, is the best one, as any culture usually assumes, before it is confronted with a better model. So this is again a negative, probably a drawback which can derive from globalisation.

Now having said that, I repeat, I am personally optimistic. I think that humanity, all society will be able to come to terms with this process, but I think that we have to make a special effort in order to dominate it and not to be dominated by it. Thank you very much for your attention.

GODDARD: Some very interesting thoughts and perhaps some warnings there in terms of what we do.

Look, I'd like to open this up to questioning now. I might perhaps kick this off while you think of all of those questions and perhaps I'd like to just come back to Rocco's discussion.

And we're talking here about global reality. The topic of today's session, or today's debate has been the future of Italian/Australian relations, I mean, are they really linked or aren't they and is the global reality a set of time, on rules of doing business?

Now it's interesting to look at us as a group of people, I guess you could say broadly three of us are involved in pursuits or businesses that deal directly with the Italian community principally.

The Consul General obviously... I've got little doubt that that will be a bit of your focus with your new position...

BARDINI: It is.

GODDARD: You've just answered the question. And obviously it is with our business. The rest of you – and it was interesting to hear Rocco, because indeed his is a highly successful international Italian company. But I guess I come back to what he said, in fact, and that is they don't aim to be a Ferrero, Germany, or Italy, or France, or wherever, and what you seem to be applying as an organisation is a set of time honoured principles. You talked about this concept of the simple minded pursuit of excellence and the things that made it up, were having the right products, doing what you do best, following up to make sure everything works and I think the underlying message – I think – was you can't be all things to all people in what you do. Although I think you do a pretty good job of it in your area. And you were also talking about outsourcing of core activities. Now it strikes me as a fact these are all time honoured rules, that if you benchmark successful companies around the world and whatever they do, the very best seem to be following those sorts of principles.

So maybe I might begin by putting it back to the panel. Other than the Consul General, we're all in – oh, and Santo, of course – we're all in, I guess, operating businesses of some sort and perhaps one of the things we did was focus very much on our businesses in the global economy. But I might just perhaps put this back to the panel and say, is this the reality of doing business in a global economy and is this a global reality that, in fact, it's simply following a set of rules that work? Does anyone?

MAFESSANTI: You have a lot of examples in front of you. McDonald's for instance; they have an idea they try to pursue and make sure that the people appreciate what has been done. I think Ferrero is one of the most successful Italian companies. I was surprised, I was positively impressed before, when Rocco talked about Mr Ferrero wanting to do

only what they really liked, never trying to do anything slightly different. Well, I think it is a little bit different in the construction industry. We always need to do what others want.

BONACCI: We've also got to do it differently and show that it is a different and better way of doing it.

MAFESSANTI: But sometimes we are never able to convince them.

BONACCI: Well, that's just one of the biggest problems. The example I spoke about is just simply one of the things we do as a company. We all get asked by a lot of builders when they're tendering jobs, Federation Square is one of them, the ANZ Bank is another one, where our design was actually substituted for the original design. So we've actually done that several times in Melbourne and in Sydney as well and we've also done it overseas. But, you know, you do get people, particularly teams that have worked at a project for three or four years, to then admit there is a better way to do it, at no cost, no change to the appearance of the building.

GODDARD: Hard to convince people.

MAFESSANTI: You find sensible clients and you find sensible people, like you find somebody who doesn't care and sometime it's just a question of face, don't change them because otherwise...

BONACCI: They lose their face, yes.

MAFESSANTI: ...they won't recognise us.

GODDARD: Anyone else want to add to that? Are there any questions from the floor? Yes?

AUDIENCE: I have a great deal of sympathy with what the Consul said, despite in fact that I'm not as pessimistic as he is. A couple of weeks ago, I was at a conference in New York on precisely the question of globalisation and the answer of this conference, or the gist of the conference was that the answer to globalisation must be basically a cultural answer. But I have some misgivings because of two things. I mean, is the free market actually free? And is the information exchange also free? I think that we are witnessing a kind of McDonaldisation of

the globe, rather than a globalisation. A few days ago, there was a letter in the Sydney Morning Herald, by a lady from Wahroonga, who had just spent some time in a little town on the Andean slopes of Venezuela. And there were four movie houses in this town and they were giving American Dream, The Talented Mr Ripley, Stuart Little and Cider House Rules. So we have here a situation in which the level field ... the playing field is not actually level. About 60 per cent of the multinational that are globalising the world are based in the United States of America and also the information may be accessible to lots of people like me, around the world, I mean, if I travel and carry my MacIntosh, I can plug it in anywhere and communicate with all sorts of people. But I doubt whether the Campesinos of Brazil, or the people in Sierra Leone or Sudan have the same access to the Internet as I have. And perhaps I would like the panel to comment on this. I think that the ray of hope may lie in the fact that anything which becomes too global eventually fragments itself into a lot of particularities. Look at what happened to the Roman Empire. Look at what happened to the British Empire. Look at what happened to the Latin language. Look at what is happening now to the various Englishes that are spoken around the world. And I think that we can globalise successfully if we keep in mind that one of the complementary aspects of globalisation is particularisation and therefore we ought to have the interest of the particular, of the little people down there in mind.

GODDARD: I think there's a statement as much as a question there and I think we'd all have some sympathy with that.

IACCARINO: That's a heck of a question. I mean, we could possibly throw in a bit of light in terms of I totally agree with you and I really couldn't, on a personal level, go further than that. The type of things that you talked about can hardly be summarised in a few words in half an hour, or in one hour. But I think we could be debating and there would be very little debate anyway, because I cannot see how anybody in this room and outside of this room could not but agree with what you've just said.

GODDARD: Santo?

CILAURO: I was just going to say that America dominates because advertising dominates the print media. So it's very difficult to apply the rules of supply and demand to culture, because as Brodski and many

people have said, you can't say, 'well, we shouldn't give Dante to people because they don't want him, because the consumer can't imagine what Dante actually has written until Dante is presented to the consumer. And in a far less grand way, it is the same thing that happened with *Life Is Beautiful* in the United States. Until it was forced on the American people, no one would have gone to see it. Why would anyone want to go to see a comedy about the Holocaust, by a guy who's not a star? So until these guys actually said, 'go on all the shows that are influential and be crazy and just make a noise and just be in it', only then will people start to write about the good points of the movie. So I think whilst supply and demand applies to the world of cardboard, or, fashion, or something, it's much more difficult in the intangible world of culture.

BONACCI: But before it could go on to all those programs, there had to be some vested interest that could actually promote that for him, otherwise he wouldn't have had a hope.

CILAURO: No, that's right.

IACCARINO: But it's also a matter of relevance and which country, which market, other than the United States can actually be relevant. They are, extremely so. And why are they relevant? Because they've got the infrastructure in terms of people. They've got a public. They've got the finance to make things relevant. And so we go back in the same vicious circle where culture, economy, economy of scale, big bucks, it all sort of plays, it's got a major role into all of it, into the equation. So, you know... you're correct, McDonalds. But the only country on earth that has got the biggest pool in terms of relevance and resources, that is the United States.

GODDARD: Coming back to Rino Grollo's challenge to us this morning. If the proposition as put is that globalisation – indeed, you're saying Americanisation, in a sense, too – is going to lead to a loss of cultural diversity, what can we do to combat that? And I'm sure we can do it certainly with organisations like this. But one of the aims is to come out with a set of operating resolutions and to try and do something about it. So what are the solutions?

BARDINI: I think that we have to make an effort, to preserve it. Years ago, cultural diversity was a matter of fact, it exists, it was something



which we could take for granted. Now we have to fight. We have to realise that it is viable, that it is important, that we have to maintain it and to preserve it, we have to make an effort in order to preserve it. And I would like to go back to something that Professor Carsaniga was saying, he touched upon the problem of the language. I think that this is very significant. Sometimes there are young people from our community who ask the question, 'why should I learn Italian? I go to Italy, everyone can speak English, so why should I bother? Why should I make that effort to learn a language which is no longer necessary?' This, I think, is very significant of what we are saying. That is if you consider a language as simply an instrument to communicate, there is no doubt that English now is the lingua franca, the official language, the international language, so you certainly don't need all the many languages which are spoken, and let alone the dialects. But if you assume that the language is also the shrine of our culture, then in reality much of the culture is hidden behind the words, that by learning a language in depth, you come to know how the people have lived for many centuries, how they felt. It takes many years to learn a language well, but the moment that you master it and grasp it in depth, you are aware of a whole world which discloses itself to you. And that's why I think that young people should learn Italian, because if they want to remember, to know what Italian culture is, and especially to remember what Italian culture has been, then I think that the language is the main door to access it.

GODDARD: Anything else, any other questions? Yes?

AUDIENCE: I'd like to say something about perceptions of globalisation and with some reference to perceptions not just here but in Italy. I listen to the Italian radio to improve my Italian at night and one of my favourites is *Prima Pagina*, which consists of editorial comment from the Italian newspapers, followed up by *linea aperta*, where people ring in with the same sort of fears that are being expressed here, political realities. It wasn't for nothing that Mr Latham was dropped from the Shadow Cabinet here because he dared to talk about the benefits of globalisation. Now on this program, a lady rang in and said, "look, I've always voted for the Left and, I get a pension, I'm all right. But when I look around Italy today, I see so many unemployed and I see our industrialists having their heavy industry overseas and I'd be quite prepared to pay a few extra lire out of my pension to buy things made in Italy". Now the very scholarly man who was handling the program,

an academic of some kind, said, “look, Signora, I understand your views and your apprehensions perfectly, but globalisation is a reality that we have to confront. If, for example, our industrialists were to bring their heavy industry back into Italy, you would find that the people who would be working would be the illegal immigrants, because they were the ones that do the jobs the Italians wouldn’t want to do and you would find that none of the things that you were expecting would happen.” Now I’ve got to thank the people here tonight for explaining to us, notwithstanding the very important points that Professor Carsaniga made, of course, and for allowing us to see some of the small details. I mean, I was tremendously impressed by the 24 hour clock. They are practical things that no one could argue with. There are a couple of other things, I can’t remember now and I won’t delay, but the important thing is, on the other hand, we must thank the Consul General for that extremely important point of the analogy with biodiversity, because cultural diversity is the most precious thing, that we have to maintain. But I’m sure there must be ways and means and the only thing we can do is to confront it and, once again, I thank these people who are at the cutting edge. We ordinary mortals don’t know about how these things function. But, once again, thank you very much for showing us how it does work at the cutting edge. Thanks a lot.

GODDARD: Yes. The lady down the back there.

AUDIENCE: I would hope that we could be more optimistic about globalisation. I think globalisation has existed since time began. I think what’s happening now is that we are changing very, very quickly and we are thinking that it’s something of the 20th and the 21st century, but there has always been change. There will always be change. We do not speak Italian the way they did in Dante’s time. We do not speak English the way they did in Chaucer’s time. I think we should be more optimistic and know that people in all your areas of work are making some contribution, that over time we will all make a contribution. I think we’re being very negative about people at the grass roots level, all the people in this room who, in their own way, will make a contribution to society and that even though cultural diversity as we know it now will change, there will still be diversity. It doesn’t matter. What we’re worried about is that there won’t be cultural diversity. But what we’re assuming is that everyone will blindly follow the American film industry, or McDonald’s. We won’t. Hopefully, we will take what we have in our own society and our own country. I come from a Sicilian

background and if it hadn't been for my parents migrating and giving me the desire to learn and to improve myself, I would not be where I am now. And I have taken from my Italian background many qualities and I have taken many qualities from the country in which I was born and I have grown up in. And I would like to think that people have the common sense to stand up for what they believe in and they won't follow blindly... we aren't sheep. I think the assumption here tonight is that society is generally sheep. We're not. And I would like to think that we, in our own way, will make our own contribution. That in the film industry, the films that you make will in some way educate people about what Australians are really like and that's really what I mean. Benigni was talking about love, he wasn't talking about the Holocaust.

CILAURO: Yes. I agree with that and I have total faith in the fact that people will stand up for their own rights. But I do think that in that particular example, we may not actually have seen the film, (I mean, we may have seen it in an obscure cinema somewhere), had it not been for the fact that the Americans said it's okay for us to see it. It sounds like it's us versus the Americans, it's not really. It's just, again, that's the way things have evolved. But I think there is a difference between natural evolution and actually being railroaded into believing that that is the currency, that's the way things are to be seen. And what I was saying before is that there are places like the United Kingdom that have said, we're not going to take money away from the taxpayers, we'll create finances in a different way, so that we can keep trying to develop an independent industry that can evolve within itself. But I don't think that that's underestimating people standing up for their rights. I think that that is just asking to compete. It's like being in a race and saying, 'well, you start 10 yards back and I bet you I'll beat you'.

AUDIENCE: I don't think that's ever going to change. You're always going to have someone who is stronger for some reason. But that doesn't mean that we, as individuals, can't continue to do what we're doing.

CILAURO: Absolutely not. But that also doesn't mean that we as a society just lay down to that and say...

AUDIENCE: I'm not saying that we do. What I'm saying is that that's going to be there and we, as individuals, can only keep doing what we're doing to further integrity ... because that's what I think Mr Perna was talking about, the integrity of his company. And Dr Bardini brought

that up, the questions about why we're all here. But integrity is a very important virtue that we need to continue to support.

GODDARD: What you're saying and I think what the panel is saying without necessarily being negative about this, is that we have to guard against loss of identity. And the reality I think with *Life Is Beautiful* is that it wouldn't have had the international distribution even here if it hadn't had that push on there.

CILAURO: I don't believe so, no.

GODDARD: And that's unfortunately a reality. So what we've got to do is be vigilant in what we do.

CILAURO: Just on that, I don't want to go on too much about Benigni films, but his other films in Italy have been as successful as *Life Is Beautiful*, yet it's much harder to see those films here in Australia

IACCARINO: What you say is absolutely correct. People would not lie down as it were, and die and accept whatever. But what has been, I hope, the result of this evening, this intervention of the Consul tonight, is to raise the level of awareness and to make everybody aware that the dangers are definitely there and it's only too easy to fall prey to those dangers. The message is that everybody has got to do their part to make sure that these dangers are fought and counteracted, if need be.

GODDARD: Vito?

AUDIENCE: Thanks, John. In the context of the overall theme of In Search of the Italian Australians of the new Millennium, the question I'd like to put to the panel is – I'll come to it in a few minutes, but if I could just explain. Being the son of an immigrant who came to this country, and was referred to earlier as factory fodder, and having received an education in this country, what disturbs me, is when I see a film come out in Australia like *Wog Boy*, which perpetuates the stereotype of what the son of an immigrant may or may not be. So my question is directed at Santo on the panel, in pragmatic terms, as you're describing, are there groups out there brave enough to actually try and attempt to change the stereotype so as to influence what the image of the new Italian Australian may be in the future?

IACCARINO: Just a very quick comment on the *Wog Boy*. I thought it was a fantastic movie and like everything else in life, there are always two ways to look at the glass. It can be half empty, but it can also be half full. And on a very, very light note, whilst I do agree with you that from a negative point of view, it was stereotyping the boy, particularly at the very beginning, but I thought it was fantastic because the boy was having this fantastic pane with prosciutto and everything else and everybody else was jealous about it. And that is the type of positive side which we all have made to this country.

CILAURO: I personally didn't enjoy the film. But I can understand it being a successful film because comedy is based on generalisation. All jokes basically are predicated by the fact that you presume that there is a certain type of behaviour and then you go against that behaviour, hence there's the punch line and then you laugh at it, it necessitates a laugh. So all jokes and all comedy will sort of be based on a stereotype. I think that's what it relies on. What I found objectionable about the film is just the whole concept of the film. There's nothing wrong with doing a film which is just full of jokes, but then to go out and actually say that you're doing a service to society is being a bit hypocritical. You may as well just make the jokes, make them as crass as you want them, and then don't pretend that it's more than what it is. So there are different kinds of objections there. I think that it depends on how you view it ... understanding what it's like as a son of a migrant growing up in this country and I think that there's a lot of scope and it's not being particularly brave to tell the story like that, it's just that it's hard to actually get a film up and do that. And good luck to Nick Giannopoulos, who actually spent a lot of time trying to raise money to make the film he wanted to make. So there is a bit of bravery involved, but it's putting in the time to try and raise money and such. And I think it will happen, I think ... I haven't seen the film, but *Looking For Alibrandi*, I believe is popular and people have gone to see it and it's a gentler form of the same kind of experience.

GODDARD: This lady down here.

AUDIENCE: What I'm trying to find out is, from you, Mr Cilauro, and Mr Perna, don't you think, nowadays, because of the globalisation, people who have an idea, or have a product should shout very loudly to be heard, not being able, like Mr Ferrero did in 1947, to make a product and have it marketed because it's good. But if you don't, like you said

with Benigni, make people really stick their necks out, it's very hard to be heard, unless you really shout very loudly.

MAFESSANTI: I want just to make a very quick comment on the previous question. Yes, we talk about film, we talk about experience, but let's try very briefly to go back to 1970, '71, '72, I was an enthusiastic young Italian engineer, with a clear idea that I didn't want to work in Italy because I wanted to very quickly build up some experience. My father did have a business, but I said no to him. Then, working with an Italian company, I went to Germany and I worked for 11 years in Germany, in different cities, always for the same company. But I need to admit that it was not very easy at the very beginning, a young, enthusiastic, 22, 23 years old, engineer, and trying to prove myself in the very organised and very efficient world that is Germany, particularly because I come from Italy and in Europe it is not very simple to mix the north and the south anyway. So whatever was a negative experience and whatever you believed that the film is, a film is something in which they always show every aspect to the extreme and that is obvious. But there is everyone's way of living. We are a little bit older now, and more mature and we see things differently, but everyone who wants to do something and eventually achieve something needs just to believe it and say it loudly. It doesn't matter which way we start. If it is chocolate, if it is our way of intending, or pretending that we are right, even though sometimes we are wrong, but that is what we believe and we need to try to achieve it. And say it loudly.

AUDIENCE: But this is an new era, unfortunately, because if you have a good idea, unless you really shout it, nobody is going to hear.

MAFESSANTI: Well, you know yourself, communication now is very easy. We have every system of communication and say whatever we like. Unfortunately, everyone has the same sort of opportunity, so we need to scream even louder.

PERNA: Yes. It's true what you said, that communication, advertising, screaming loudly helps. However, that's not always enough. You still need to have something to talk about, something to offer. The cultural event is a product, a service, which, in real terms, answers needs that really exist, that fulfils a need in our human nature. So that's why the excellence in what you offer is important. In the end, *Life Is Beautiful*, works. Of course because of the advertising, but also because it deeply touched our hearts and we enjoyed it and we liked it.

But let me say it seems, and forgive me if I might have misunderstood something, that globalisation is an expression of today's changes and because of the pace that these changes are taking place, very rapidly, too rapidly sometimes, it creates uncertainties. But I don't think ... because we are naturally afraid of changes, that it is necessarily a negative thing, because anyway the world has always changed and only through the changes which have taken place and which will take place both positive and negative ones. What is important is that the total balance has got to be positive. In some areas, we will lose, but in many other areas we will end up gaining. The changes over the last century, though certainly not for everyone in the world, have certainly helped overall with ups and downs, but the trend has always been up and has increased our standard of living, has increased also our knowledge of things. When I was a young Italian boy, my dream was to be able to speak English, to be able to understand it, to be understood outside my small territory, because I knew that around the world there was a lot more available, a lot more which was worth knowing and to benefit from it. Yes, maybe being able to communicate today much better than previously, has its risks. The price we have to pay is to lose a little bit of our identity. But let's also think positively, how much more we are gaining through this opportunity. So I would be a touch more optimistic.

GODDARD: Good on you. This gentleman at the back here. Oh, sorry?

AUDIENCE: The Italian Australian identity or culture won't ever continue, I don't think, unless we recognise what is being done in schools. I have been in primary and secondary schools and at present I teach Italian. And I can see that there is only lip service being paid to our teachers of Italian. They work under very, very poor conditions and probably some people in here don't know how difficult it is for them. Some of them even work in two schools, or even three schools within the one week. And they are considered fill-in teachers, rather than the professional teacher. And they have studied for many years and some of them have even been overseas to develop their studies even further. And I'm just wondering what is going to happen in our schools about this culture and this language that we do want to develop and take further, so that our students, who are the future of this country, and also involved in the globalisation issue, will keep it alive. What are we going to do about it? We're talking about industry and so forth, but what about our schools and our students? I think they're very, very important.

GODDARD: Dr Bardini, would you like to...?

BARDINI: Absolutely. I have the most profound sympathy for all the teachers and I realise and I know because, of course, I have had many opportunities to visit schools and to talk to many of them, how difficult it is for them to teach. And it is very commendable what they are doing. On our part, I think we have to do whatever we can and we are doing more and more in that regard, in order to try to motivate the teachers, to offer them opportunities, to improve their skills with courses in Italy and there is a renewed effort – not this year actually, but just by coincidence, this year is not a good year – but anyway, from a political perspective, there is a renewed drive of the Italian authorities towards promotion of the Italian language and a deep sense of gratitude for the teachers who, here in Victoria, work in very difficult conditions. What you were saying is very right, even though of course it is not the responsibility of the Italian Government, but of the Victorian school system, which is an excellent one. But as far as language is concerned, they, in fact, tend to be taught too little, the average contact time of a foreign language in primary schools and in secondary school is probably less than one hour a week and that has, of course, obvious consequences. And, secondly, the language which is learned in one grade is not necessarily continued in the following grade, because sometimes children have to change schools and they don't have the opportunity to continue because the school which they've moved to doesn't offer Italian. So the learning of the language is very often discontinued. So in practical terms, very little is taught and these children will never be able to master the language. And for the teacher, it is very stressful, because they have to teach to an incredible amount of children and, of course, it is very right what you are saying and have experienced, very often in several different schools. So it's not the best possible scenario. But I would like to say that, even though the impact at the linguistic level may not be very satisfactory, it is however very important that even a few hours, even less than one hour a week, Italian, or by the same token any foreign language, is taught because exposure to the language and an exposure to the culture makes it possible for the children to retain an interest towards the country because this interest has been stimulated, even if for a very short time. And it happens very often that these children want to resume the interest for the language later on as adults on their own and this maybe would not happen if they had not learned a little bit of Italian, maybe a children's song, or basic words, when they were very young. So I understand the difficulties of



the teachers, but I am still very grateful to the Victorian authorities because I think what they are doing with the foreign languages is very good. They are doing their best, even though I think that probably an effort should be made in order to have more hours, and smaller classes probably. Now we have, at least with the Italian language, an enormous amount of children who learn Italian unsatisfactorily and who would probably be better in a different situation, where there are fewer children who are able to learn it a little bit better. But having said that, I think that the scenario is good and that as far as the teacher is concerned, they have all my sympathy and I can assure you that the Italian Government is very sympathetic towards your requests, which are very legitimate, to be able to teach better and to be helped to be better trained.

CILAURO: I also think there is an enormous amount of pressure on teachers when there's not the same amount of effort put in by families. I think that if it all began just a couple of years earlier inside the home and that the parents wouldn't just assume that kids somehow will learn Italian from their grandparents, or through some magic book, or something like that, then I think it would be an easy task for you.

BONACCI: I think the parents have got to help. I'd like to thank Dr Bardini for his help. I'm speaking now as a member of the Xavier College Council, where they're introducing Italian more and with an Italian trained teacher and trying to introduce it back into the primary school. But, again, the parents were asked to kick it off. The other thing is that somebody said earlier about when you have an opportunity to be heard, if you want something you should shout. We have the opportunity of having the Consul General here. What Ambassador Castellaneta said this morning about the future of Italian Australian relations resting with the second, third, fourth generation Italians seeking recognition of their roots, is one anomaly that I happen to fit into. I was born in Italy, but I missed the window of opportunity, and didn't avail myself of the opportunity of getting an Italian passport, so my elder children, who would love to spend more time in Italy can't. Yet my younger siblings, who happen to be born in Australia and therefore didn't have to get naturalised in their own right, can actually get Italian citizenship, even though their wife perhaps might be Anglo-Saxon and their kids can get the Australian citizenship through that. So it is an anomaly that there are not too many of us left that didn't avail ourselves, that anybody born in Italy perhaps could get an Italian passport and therefore open the door for their children.

GODDARD: Interesting. I don't know whether you picked up Minister Ruddock's comments this morning, but he's been working very hard on a, sort of, working holiday exchange.

BONACCI: That's a working holiday. I think what he also said this morning was it's not an Italian passport that makes you Italian but what's in your heart.

GODDARD: No, that's right.

AUDIENCE: But I think explaining to my kids that they can't have an Italian passport makes them a little bit apprehensive.

GODDARD: It's a bit hard, isn't it?

AUDIENCE: Well, eat your heart out, I was born in Australia and I've got one.

GODDARD: Look, we've got time just for a couple more questions. The gentleman just back here.

AUDIENCE: Thank you very much. I'm very glad the discussion has got round to the question of the resourcing of the teaching of language and culture, which of course is very close to the heart of an institute like this, in its infancy, and I'd like some advice from the panel about what to do about this problem. And it also relates to the question of globalisation and economic determinism and whether we can resist it and whether we should resist it or not. And we've all said that our hearts are in the right places, but we're not quite sure what we can actually do about it. It seems to me that there are two different roads which can perhaps be undertaken simultaneously. One is to resist, to say, no, there are other values. And this means that individuals stand up for themselves, they get together in groups, they do Seattle things together and so on. And I think that's not particularly the business of this conference and particularly of this session. But there's the other route of saying, 'right, let us accept economic rationality and apply it as rationally as possible and some of the things the speakers have said from the panel have been quite interesting, with respect. For instance, John Goddard mentioned that he had to train Italians to speak Italian. And Rocca Perna mentioned Ferrero having a base in Australia to perform this fabled role of Australia acting as a bridge, an economic bridge

between Europe, or Italy in our case, and Asia. And these are the things we hear quite a lot about. And both of them suggest that there is an important role perhaps for languages, for linguistic interaction, in connection with economic activity, business activity. Now you would think that this would mean that Departments of Commerce at universities would have quite a strong commitment to promoting the learning of languages of different kinds, including Italian. In fact, this rarely happens. As long as I have been in Italian Studies, which is a long time, particularly as long as I've held the Vaccari Chair of Italian Studies at La Trobe, I've tried to push Italian for professional, economic purposes, on the School of Commerce and so on, and they don't listen very hard. That is not the whole story and I don't want to put the blame just in one particular area, but it's also the case and this follows on with what one of the speakers talking about the resourcing of Italian teaching in schools, it extends that far, that governments are more and more reluctant to pay the price. Language teaching is relatively expensive. Universities are not funded proportionately to the cost of the teaching, so universities get more and more reluctant to support language departments and we are all feeling the pinch, feeling the pressure. What can we do about this? I would have thought that the business world, if it sees globalisation as important and languages as having a role and particularly the link between Italy and Australia as being important in an economically rational sense, should also raise their voices and perhaps influence governments and stress the need for a solution to be found, either better financing or smarter ways of delivering language teaching. I wonder what the panel would have to say about this?

GODDARD: Well, I think many of us provide support to Co.As.It. and other such organisations. We might throw this to the panel. But I wonder who we've got from universities here tonight ...

UNIDENTIFIED: Before we go to the panel, somebody from the floor would just like to add to that short comment?

AUDIENCE: I am also from another university ...and mine is a comment which is directly linked to John's previous comment. My comment is that the process of globalisation is mainly the agenda which is being run by business. My concern is that most of our business courses which actually train our present and our future business leaders have very little consideration for linguistic or cultural issues. If any, it's the Asian issue. So our business people are mostly not sensitive to

cultural and language issues, therefore there is not only an issue of loss of cultural identity that we're talking about, but also the issue of lack of sensitivity, or lack of respect towards other cultures and languages by the very people who are running the globalisation issues.

GODDARD: Good point.

BONACCI: One comment about how to fund some of these things, it becomes cultural and philanthropical. Being also at Newman College, where I've been involved quite a bit, about two years ago there was a donation made of \$3 million to set up a Chair of Irish Studies, made by a family here in Melbourne. They've donated it to foster and Newman College sort of administers it. They've probably got a bigger base, but that's just somebody out of the blue making a donation to set up a Chair of Irish Studies at Melbourne University. And, until somebody comes along and does that, it's very hard just to bankroll it. There's much more of that in America, as our friends were saying this morning, there's much more a history of people putting back into society a little bit of what they've gained.

GODDARD: But I think for all of us, also in business too, one of the things, one of the ways in which we do business is by providing sponsorship support. I've always had a bit of a view that every dollar we spend on sponsorship is probably worth 50 or 100 on advertising, because it's doing something for the community. You get endorsement and appreciation back and, in fact, to be quite materialistic about it, if you do it the right way, you also write some business through that endorsement too. But I think one of the ways, in answer to both of your questions, that business can help is to provide the right sort of sponsorship support for these programs. I know my organisation provides some support, for example, to Co.As.It.. I'm not sure that we do anything for any of the universities. But have any of the other panel got a view on that?

IACCARINO: I think this is a very good reason why everybody in the Italian community and everybody who has got some sort of association with the Italian community should make absolutely sure that this experiment works. Because this could be used as a vehicle to concentrate more on areas such as teaching Italian. The Italian Australian Institute could very well be one of the very important vehicles to propagate the Italian language.

BARDINI: Yes. If I may comment on that, I would like to say that of course I would be extremely pleased to see the private sector more involved with promotion of language and of culture and of the humanistic subjects. I hope that this is somehow happening these days and I would like to mention the case, for instance, which concerns Australia and the teaching of the Italian language here in Australia, of the Cassamarca. The Cassamarca is a major bank in Italy which has been active for a few years in promotion of all humanistic subjects. And as far as Australia is concerned, the Cassamarca last year in fact gave a considerable amount of money in order to have 11 lectureships set up in 11 Australian universities. So there is already a positive sign. I can see that in major companies like, Fiat, to name one in Italy, they tend to create a foundation and the aim of the foundations that are associated with these big companies is usually directed towards the humanistic field of human knowledge. So I hope that this is happening. I see signs of it. Of course, I would like this process to happen as fast as possible.

GODDARD: I think there also needs to be a very strong lobby to those who fund the education programs, to look at all of these issues. I think that's your point, isn't it?

IACCARINO: Very true, but as we heard this morning, through the intervention of the two North American gentlemen, in NIAF the passing on in cultural terms of the knowledge of the Italian language is one of the most followed up cultural events within NIAF. Now if they do it, this is the vehicle, this is definitely the vehicle and this is the reason why I encouraged everybody to make sure that this experiment does not remain at the stage of an experiment but progresses further and as quickly as possible, because the sooner the better.

GODDARD: One more brief question. Brief, please.

AUDIENCE: I have the impression in Europe that the predominance of the US in the entertainment industry has made people realise that America is no longer a model to follow. I think in the '50s, the US was a land of opportunities for Italians, while now I have the impression it is just a land lacking values and who would like to be like the US nowadays Do you agree?

CILAURO: Well, I hope that's the case. I haven't been to Italy for a few years, so I can't tell. I certainly hope that that's the case, because I think

that's the way a lot of people feel. I know that it's true in countries like the United Kingdom and I know that there's been a big revival in France as well in the entertainment industry...

AUDIENCE: Plus one here.

CILAURO: ... but maybe we're a little bit isolated here from the Italian experience, just in this country. So I don't know about that. I'm sorry.

GODDARD: Last question.

AUDIENCE: This question is very simple. Is there any peculiar Italian Australian response to globalisation? And let me explain just for a moment the background. We were talking about television today at one of the workshops, the media workshop, and the issue is - is there a peculiar culture of second generation Italians here and third generation and so on. And this is a question that I was going to put to Santo tomorrow, so I will turn it into something else now. But I think it fits very much into what the panel has been talking about and the general discussion about globalisation and culture. What I'm really asking is when Nat speaks about following the sun, or when he talks about dealing with other cultures, with other companies around the world, is there a peculiar way that he deals with them because he's got Italian roots, because he was born in Italy in this particular case. I think Rocco told us of the particular response to the globalisation of Pietro and Giovanni Ferrero: we don't want to know about globalisation, we do certain things and we do them well and we are sticking to doing those things. So this is the question, is there a peculiarly Italian Australian response to it?

BONACCI: Well, our international work really does not dwell, or build on the fact that I'm Italian and probably a third of our staff are Italian. What it does mean though, is that if I go on to a building site and I can talk to the foreman, I can understand him whether he's from Reggio Calabria or Naples or Treviso, Milano even I can understand occasionally. But it's good, you know, you just explain something to them in Italian, you make yourself understood. My Italian certainly isn't perfect, but I certainly am not going to not open my mouth because I feel my Italian is not perfect. When you go to Italy, it's probably pointed out to you. But that part of it, the Italian component of our company is being really here and in Sydney and to a lesser extent in

Brisbane. Just because of the large proportion of Italians in the building industry. And even with the Portuguese I can make myself understood and there are a lot of them as well.

GODDARD: Lucio, have you...?

MAFESSANTI: I think we are already part of a society that is multinational, because, we are Italian and we are Australian and that is our advantage. It is not because we are Australian or because we are Italian, it is because we are both and because we are already open-minded enough to be able to understand and communicate better with other people. There's no question that we are better because we are Italian, I don't believe that is the issue. I shall confirm this with an example I have in my family. I have a brother, who has never been out of Italy and never done anything out of Italy and doesn't speak any languages and he's happy. That is nothing to do with globalisation. I mean, we are lucky to be Italian and Australian at the same time, because we are already open-minded. We already have an advantage. We are able eventually to speak English, so this gives us the opportunity to communicate with at least three quarters of the world. Think if we had been one of the Sierra Leone, or one of Tanzania, or anywhere else, even Beijing or China, to be globalised would not be that easy. So because we have this multicultural something in us, it gives us the opportunity to communicate and integrate better with other people. It is not important if you are Australian French, or Australian Chinese, or Australian German, it is this sort of multinational something that you have... that gives you sounds to communicate with others.

CILAURO: I was just going to add to that, the key – as far as I see it – is just being relaxed about it. I was born here and I have a son who's two years old and he only speaks Italian. I don't want him to wear his nationality like a hair shirt. It's enjoy yourself. I've got that background, my parents have got that background. It opens up doors. You know, if you don't want to talk it, don't talk it. If you don't feel like behaving like an Italian, don't. I think the more relaxed one is about it, I think the louder one can actually speak up, when you were talking about, you know, I've got to speak up loudly. It's easy to speak loudly when you're relaxed about what you're speaking about and believe it. So I think that can sometimes enter into the equation.

PERNA: I've heard that lots of emphasis, and for all the right reasons, has been put on the importance of the language. But maintaining the language, the Italian language in Australia and our unique cultural identity is, important, but it's only one of the important aspects of being Italian in Australia. And let me elaborate a little bit more on that. I really welcomed the initiative of the Italian Australian Institute, particularly if it is going to finally give us as a community, an Italian community in Australia, the opportunity of lifting the profile of Italy. Italy, yes, it's the history that we know, it's the beautiful language, it's all that we know about it. But someone says that our students here in Australia are shocked when they learn that Italy is probably the fifth largest economy in the world. Let's talk a bit more about it locally. Yes, through our language, but let's lift our profile, otherwise the risk of us being downgraded is extremely high. The world will keep on globalising, despite our concern about the chance of losing our identity and we, as Italians in Australia and the fifth largest economy, and what is more ... Italy today, is totally under-represented in a place like Australia, as probably in many other parts of the world.

GODDARD: Okay. I think that's just about it. I know there are some other questions there, but we're running tight on time. Certainly a viewpoint from these discussions here that globalisation, at least in a business sense and probably regarding aspects of a cultural life is certainly a reality, but we need to guard against the risk of these leading to a loss of cultural diversity and our individuality that goes with that. That we need to be vigilant in all aspects of what we do to preserve what is unique about our cultures. And certainly there seems to be a very strong theme or view here that in fact the promotion of Italian language skills at the right sort of level are a very important window to promoting that culture. Indeed, they're not the only thing. The sorts of activities involved with the Institute here are very important, too. That certainly the issue of teaching resourcing, both in schools and universities needs to be addressed and we probably also need to go into that lady's last point, that we need to be able to get to those who fund the education programs at both levels. The only other thing I would add actually is the fact that there needs to be a much stronger linkage between the educators and business. I think sometimes we try to stay apart from each other and, indeed, it's quite possible and likely that we could find ourselves with some very common interests and we probably will create a much stronger result if we build a bond and, indeed, work together. So I think it's been a very fruitful couple



of hours actually and I thank the panellists for their... Someone wants a last word.

MAFESSANTI: No. It's not so much the last word, it's just a question of very simply trying to understand how to facilitate this sort of integration of globalisation. I think universities try very hard. Exchange of students between different countries and trying to do all this sort of thing. And, of course, business wise, I don't know if a lot of companies do it, but I think they do it. We do it ourselves. We have companies everywhere around the world, but every time that we have a peak project, for example, in a specific country, we take it into consideration because if the project is in Singapore, eventually we've got the design team in Sydney, or Melbourne, as has happened a lot of times. We pick two or three people from Singapore, we select the ones that are more suitable, we bring them to Melbourne, they stay in Melbourne together with our own team during the design stage of the project. And later you send it back. And that is the way that you begin to make people a little bit more aware of the way the company operates. And, at the same time, you even integrate the people, you globalise. Unfortunately language is a problem and we need to be selective and unfortunately there is a necessity to be selective otherwise you can't communicate. But that is the way that we are pushing ourselves. Anywhere you go, try to have a few people that you will be able to pass something on to and try to bring it close to you and see how you will be able to pass on that something.

GODDARD: Okay. Thank you. Thank you, ladies and gentlemen.

CHARLTON: Ladies and gentlemen, would you just remain seated for 1½ minutes, I would ask you to do that, because that gives us the opportunity of paying a salutation to the panellists. But I would also like to commend you for some excellent contributions during Question Time. So I would like to say to Dr Gianni Bardini, the Consul General; to Nat Bonacci, who I see worked on the St Patrick's Cathedral Restoration Appeal with John Ralph, with whom I am associated; Santo Cilauro, I guess he never expected to end up on another panel, did he? And he's going to one on television in just an hour's time. Two panels in one night, well done, Santo. To Rocco Perna, Managing Director of Ferrero, what a good story about the development of that company. And Lucio Mafessanti, Managing Director of Permasteelisa; and Antonino Iaccarino, former Alitalia General Manager, now as a consultant with Qantas. And, of course, to Cassa Commerciale in John Goddard for

steering the panel. Would you recognise what they have done. I thought it was an excellent two hours.

We would like, in your presence, to recognise those who have helped this Conference get away to just a terrific start. The Bonacci Group, thank you. Cassa Commerciale, Fondazione Cassamarca, Grollo Australia, of course, and *Il Globo* and James L. Williams, and the Park Hyatt Hotel, excellent – well, the Grollos build it – Permasteelisa thank you to them, and the Pratt Foundation, Richard Pratt has done so much for this community, and Qantas, and the Government of Italy, we acknowledge them.