

WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY NUNZIO MONDIA

COVID CONVERSATIONS

Book 6 - 6

*Interviews with the City of Vincent locals,
Mount Hawthorn primary school teacher,
CEO of the East Perth Soccer Club,
President of Italo-Australian Welfare and
Culture Centre and Janet McCullum
former resident of Mount Hawthorn.*



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Covid Conversations Documentary Official Youtube Video Link:

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1 Aureliana & Fabrizio Di Rollo

Fabrizio Di Rollo, I live here in Mount Hawthorn with my wife. I'm a mechanical engineer and the father of two kids.

Aureliana Di Rollo, I am Aureliana and I'm a teacher and we have two children. We moved here over 10 years ago. And what I like about it here is that the pace of life is quite slow which suits young families really well.

Fabrizio Di Rollo, We moved here because of the schools, we moved to Mount Hawthorn because of the school, City of Vincent, because we wanted our kids to attend public schools. And that's how we chose the place where we live. I used to work in the city, so it was convenient for me to cycle to the CBD. Probably 15 minutes cycling. And the place is great. Mount Hawthorn Primary is a great school. I think it is an excellent school as well, so everyone's happy around here.

I think our story about COVID it affected both of us. Because when everything started, my father was here visiting and I had to travel first to the North West Shelf and then to New Zealand. It was mid-February, I came back to Perth, spent a week in Perth and then I had to go to Singapore, ready to sail to Myanmar.

We spent a month loading the boats. And then once the boat was loaded, as I expected, the job got cancelled. So, we managed to grab the last flight. Me and my team, the last flight. It was a British Airways flight coming from London, transiting through Singapore and going to Sydney. In Sydney, we were quarantined for 14 days in a government facility, and when we got released, we only had tickets with Virgin, which went bankrupt. We had to wait three or four days to get a Qantas flight. It took five hours of flying and four hours at the airport, clearing the COVID checks, and we got sentenced to another 14 days of quarantine, this time at home. In the meantime, when I was travelling around and doing the rounds with the offshore jobs, Aureliana, poor thing, was an essential worker. So she had to go to school and the kids had to go to school. So, you can tell what happened with the kids.

Aureliana Di Rollo It was a strange time because, unlike the rest of the world, [unclear] I was in close contact with our family in Italy. I knew that the first thing to shut down was schools, basically. I found myself in this very strange position of being an essential worker. And so while gradually everything shut down and there was no one going around, no one in the streets, no one in the shops. Most shops were not open. Me and the kids. We kept doing the usual thing, which was really, really strange. I remember walking down these streets, which normally at eight a.m. in the morning are really busy with plenty of kids, there was no one in sight. It felt apocalyptic. And especially the last few days, at the end of week eight. Even here, kids were basically home-schooled, except for the children of essential workers. So my kids went to school and they were like 20 kids in a school of over 800. So that was really strange. It was stressful to a point because of just the fact that we wouldn't fit in. [Laughter]

Fabrizio Di Rollo The kids felt the situation, even if they were not capable of verbalising it. When I came back and finally got to spend time with them. When I was in quarantine here, I was quite convinced that I was safe because I was on a boat in Singapore and had no contact with anyone. The Danish crew were clear because of more than 30 days at sea. Then I came back, I was in Sydney in quarantine and then here.

Nunzio Mondia So how many weeks did you spend in quarantine?

Fabrizio Di Rollo Four weeks and I had the police knocking at the door every three days, and everyone was very interested in what was going on.

Aureliana Di Rollo At that point that I defined myself as a single parent on two incomes. I was relieved when sports were cancelled because at least after school, I didn't have to travel back and forth. But I think it was harsh on the kids. They are used to a lot of interaction and seeing friends. They couldn't understand why they couldn't go across the street [and play] on the trampoline because that's what they normally do.

Aureliana Di Rollo Although having a garden, having outside areas helped.

Fabrizio Di Rollo Yeah, I would say compared with the rest of the world, we are so incredibly lucky, especially..

Nunzio Mondia What would it be like living in close proximity, in apartment style living? [In Italy?]

Aureliana Di Rollo Well, everyone lives, you know, not everyone, but nearly everyone,.

Fabrizio Di Rollo 90 percent. .

Aureliana Di Rollo And it's the different type of spaces because here I found it's much safer because we have more space. So even walking down the street or you don't take an elevator to leave your house, which, reduces the chances of infection. And even in the streets, even when it's very crowded, there are three people. It's not the same as a very big, crowded city. So, I think here, it's safer. That's my perception.

Aureliana Di Rollo My family, live 20 kilometres southwest of Rome. So it is supposed to be a medium-sized village, but actually, it is 30000 people. My parents have a house with a big garden. My sister lives in an apartment 500 metres from my parent's house and my brother lives in a house, 300 metres from where my parents live. So, it's not that bad.

Aureliana Di Rollo But they were affected because in mid-April it was my parents' 50th wedding anniversary and we were planning to travel to Italy to celebrate with them. They ended up celebrating just the two of them. I have this really interesting picture of the two of them and my brother wearing a mask. That was it. That was the celebration because they were not allowed out. They were not the worst affected because my parents still have a garden. So it's not as bad, but just the fact that they couldn't go anywhere. They had to stay at home. They are quite old. So, my siblings had to do all the shopping. They had to wait for three hours in line before they could get into the shop, not because of the lack of supply. [Unclear] But because they only allowed a certain number of people in the shop.

Fabrizio Di Rollo So you just had to wait.

Aureliana Di Rollo Yeah, you have to wait for people to leave [the shop].

Nunzio Mondia They grow their own vegetables and have supplies, and..

Fabrizio Di Rollo Her mother..[Unclear]

Aureliana Di Rollo Late April, early May, so broad beans, tomatoes, all sorts of salads and greens. And probably towards the end of May, maybe figs as well. And pears, pears everywhere. My dad is 83, turning 84 soon and he's always been a law-abiding citizen. But I think that the lockdown got to him. He couldn't stay in the house even if they have a garden and he couldn't sit there and do nothing. So he kept going for a walk, even if it was really, really, really forbidden.

Fabrizio Di Rollo It was forbidden.

Aureliana Di Rollo So one day the police stopped him and they walked him home.

Fabrizio Di Rollo They had him walk in the front of the car because they wouldn't touch him, of course. [Laughter]

Aureliana Di Rollo But that's not the end of the story. They walked him home and said, "Now you go inside and you stay there because that's what you have to do." My mum was furious and she said something along these lines, "If COVID doesn't kill you, I will." But in the afternoon off he went again. And the police caught him again. And I think that they made the wrong decision. They decided not to fine him. And that was a big mistake because the only thing he would have understood was money. But they probably thought that he was not in his right mind. He must have been lost. He's OK. Actually, he would have understood the money, but they didn't. It was very hard for us to tell him. "You stay home and you do what you're being told to do." But in the end, I think he behaved.

Aureliana Di Rollo I went to work every day in a very safe environment, it didn't really change my routine. It was pretty much the same. And since I had worked in a very new school [in Italy?] and we only used 20 percent of the whole building, it was empty no matter what. So, for me, it wasn't very different.

The difference was to see other people, get back to normal and be able to have people over, catch up with a friend and have dinner. We went to a beautiful restaurant, and they were doing their very best to make it a safe environment. So we ordered a very expensive wine, which was served in plastic cups. [Laughter] And 'OK, if this is the price, we have to pay for dinner out in the COVID-19 era, we will do it.' But now you can have a proper glass.

Nunzio Mondia, Fabrizio, talk about your work, because it changed for you.

Fabrizio Di Rollo I never actually experienced the lockdown because I've always been locked in, so I've never been outside having to queue for a shop because I'd never been allowed to go outside. On the last day of my quarantine, the police came and they told me, 'Well, apparently you're out tomorrow.' And I said, 'Yes, my last day today, I'm going surfing, that's for sure. You can bet it.' So that's what I did. Immediately I went to the beach and had a surf.

Then gradually I started to go back to the office, bringing the boys, and my team, back to the office. And our big corporation to thank us for all the great job that we had done. They made us all redundant. So thank you big corporation for that, and I decided to put together my own consultancy in the same field. And since then, I've started my own company. I've been working from home and so far, it's been great. If there's something positive about this, it brought people together in a different sense of community. I work with many, many

people all around Western Australia and Australia. I work with ship owners and ship operators, boat operators, barge people, and marinas. Everyone is pretty keen to help local businesses, and local people working for Australia, for Western Australia. So I found a very, very big sense of trying to keep things local and to help each other. It makes me feel good. I'm very happy.

Aureliana Di Rollo The first week of March Fabrizio's dad was still here and this was when the toilet roll thing started. In the beginning, I was just making jokes about it. I couldn't believe it because we didn't know that COVID also created diarrhoea because that's the joke. Like, why would you hoard? And we kept waiting until it was too late because I'd just refused to buy toilet rolls just because it didn't make any sense to me.

Aureliana Di Rollo And when I finally realised that everything was empty, there was no flour in the shops. It was like war. My sister sent me pictures from Italy and all the supermarkets were full and they were in a real lockdown. While here the restrictions were much lighter and it just didn't make any sense to me.

Aureliana Di Rollo But anyway, the funny story is that one day I told Fabrizio's dad, "Listen, I'm starting to get concerned about toilet paper." He said, "You shouldn't because you know that you have a thing with toilet paper." I've always been a hoarder of toilet paper. [Laughter] I always buy two big packets. I don't know why, just toilet paper and shampoo. And I think I finished my supply in mid-July without even, you know? Yeah, that was silly.

Fabrizio Di Rollo When I came back home to Australia. I said, "What's going on here?" Because we had flour, we had kilos and kilos of pasta, we had biscuits and everything else. [Laughter]

Aureliana Di Rollo But I didn't want to hoard. But at some point when you got to the shop and you look, it looks like, you know, I've been..

Fabrizio Di Rollo You're starting to panic.

Aureliana Di Rollo No I've been there before. During the late 90s, I spent time working in the former Yugoslavia. I've seen a country that has nothing and what the shops look like. And it started looking like that, except that this is one of the richest countries in the world. It didn't make any sense to me. I have been there when you go to the shops for three weeks in a row to find one bottle of soap because that's what it was like.

But I was on my own with two kids and I didn't want to spend hours [running around?]. So when I found 10 kilograms of flour.. Yeah, I am a bit ashamed of that. [Laughter]

I don't think that anything has happened that was as remotely as harsh as the fact that we can't travel. And not because I want to travel just for pleasure, but because for us, it means not being able to see family and our parents are getting older. This is really the toughest part. Everything else I think it was manageable because we live in one of the richest countries in the world, so we really didn't suffer that much. But that bit is very real. And we can't go and see them. We always spend Christmas with them and for them, it is very important. We're not even religious. We don't care but they do and not being able to see them for Christmas. And it's a concern in the future because I wonder if this virus will have a serious impact on our ability to travel. Because we came here under the impression that we would be able to just go, provided that we had money on the credit card. And now money can't buy you that anymore. This is a massive change that I find really, really challenging to accept.

Fabrizio Di Rollo Hopefully this is going to teach us a lesson. Maybe we were going a little bit too crazy. People going to Melbourne just for a morning meeting and then coming back in the afternoon and things like that. I think we can do without it. A lot of us learnt that we can work from home. I don't travel any more to the city using petrol. I was cycling. I think there are some positives to be learnt if we manage to learn them and then apply them to the future. So hopefully we learn to be a bit more sustainable. It's okay to travel, but maybe you can minimise it. It's OK to use resources, but maybe you can minimise the use of them. So hopefully this is going to teach us, and it's going to have a bit of a legacy if you want to see a positive.

2 Dean Turner East Perth Football

Dean Turner Firstly, thank you for the opportunity to be involved. My name's Dean Turner, I'm the CEO of East Perth Football Club. East Perth is involved in the WAFL competition which is the state's [Western Australia] premier league competition. I've been the CEO for eight years, how time flies. It has been a very, very different year and I am happy to answer any questions you have about COVID and how that's impacted [the club.]

Nunzio Mondia How did Covid affect you Dean?

Dean Turner When it first happened, we'd finished second last back in the year prior. The players started training the day after the WAFL grand final. They'd been training all the way through to Christmas. They had two weeks off, and then they trained up to early March. The players had been training for four or five months waiting for a football season. Wanting to improve after the disappointing performance the year before. And then COVID came, and all the restrictions came in and everything got shut down.

In that late March, April period, we just went around in circles because every day we'd get a different instruction. Every day we'd have to come up with a new plan. It was probably unlikely we'd get a season away. So that was sort of the feedback that we were working with. What did we do with the players that had already done five months of training? Well, they were just sent away from the club so that everyone was shut down.

Everyone loves certainty and being the CEO, everyone kept coming to me daily, weekly, "what's happening? When are we going to get a start? Are we going to get crowds?" We could answer none of those questions. As a CEO, in my lifetime, it's the most helpless I have felt. People look for direction from the CEO and look for the strategy. But we couldn't answer any of that.

And we went back to the players. We set them individual programmes and they had to train away from the club in a maximum of two, they couldn't train any more than two. I know it changed later and they could train with five or six. Then in July, we were able to come back to Leederville Oval which was fantastic. I think that was the real turning point, all the players got excited and, "Yes, we're going to have a football season again."

At that point, we had no crowds, so it wasn't going to be that exciting. I think the message was how difficult everyone else was doing with COVID. So yes, it was difficult at a footy club, but all of Australia had to shut down, and all of Western Australia shut down. So, we kept that in context with the players.

It was sad for two or three players because 2020 was going to be their last year. I speak of Kyle Anderson who, after the COVID shutdown, decided he wasn't going to play on. So, he was one that retired and we never saw him play again. Sharrod Wellingham was another player who was going to play in 2020 but given that we weren't going to play at least July, he decided to retire as well. Two of our players, we never saw play again and that was disappointing.

I think it was a problem for every person in Western Australia because, instead of a handshake, we were touching elbows. The players had been clearly instructed under the COVID restrictions that they couldn't hug each other, and they weren't to shake hands. They had to come into the club on a special pathway into the changerooms, everything had to be sterilised and bring their own water bottles. The complexity that came with COVID was significant.

I think they were over the moon when they finally got back to Leederville because they were back together. But we still couldn't give them dates. It was a difficult time for the footy club because before JobKeeper came in and before the players agreed to take a reduction, our salary cap went from \$280,000 down to \$50,000. We went from a playing season of 18 games to 8. We didn't know when the start date was, and we didn't know whether we'd have crowds.

The best part about it all was that we did eventually get a start. And because WA was doing so well, we were able to get a limited crowd. It ended well in the sense that the players got eight games away. For a long period, it looked like that there'd be no season which would've been the first time ever.

In every season we always plan to play West Perth because there is a bit of a rivalry, obviously. If people were honest, they don't like each other, either club doesn't like the other. [Laughter] Without being ridiculous that's the way it is. But as a club, you really bank on these games, we always have a great crowd and with the reduction to eight games, we only got to play them once. And we never got to play them at Leederville we had to play up at Joondalup. The Polly Farmer Shield was played up at Joondalup. It's probably the only game that we didn't play well all year as a club, West Perth dominated and was very good.

It was disappointing selfishly from a club point of view because we love playing West Perth here. I haven't got the stats in front of me, but nine times out of 10, we lose when we play up there [Joondalup] and when we play here [Leederville], we win. We've made Leederville Oval our home and we're well entrenched and we like nothing more than beating them on their old ground. [Laughter]

COVID certainly personally impacted me. I had a very unfortunate task, I had to stand all my staff down. We stood coaches down. Like the hospitality industry, every source of revenue we had, we lost, and we had to pass it on. The staff that we had were stood down. Bless JobKeeper because that gave some of them something. It meant a 50%, well it was over 50%, reduction for me, our football manager and our marketing commercial manager. We never thought that we weren't going to get back, but just not know when. I'm a bit older but I felt for a lot of the other staff because they have a lot of commitments. It was hard to front up to your staff and say, "Look, don't come in."

Then everyone then went to Zoom and Skype meetings and we never came into the office or there wasn't a need to come into the office. We still had one or two of us in one or two days a week, but it was a very, very different way we operated. We were happy to be at home because of the health concern. I mean, everyone was quite alarmed, this was killing people, this virus and especially older people.[Laughter] So I'm not young.

Nunzio Mondia What did you do at home?

Dean Turner It was so funny because the list that the wife gave me, [for] the veggie garden, you go to [buy potting mix] and you had to queue up and you had to be there at a certain time and as everyone knows, it all changed. There was nothing on the shelf. I suppose the toilet roll always comes up, doesn't it and I laugh about it. If you had run out, you would have been in trouble.[Laughter]

All the traditional clubs started as part of the community. West Perth was a community club, all the garlic munchers, God love 'em. East Perth had a lot of First Nations people. The great Graham Farmer, the Syd Jacksons, and the traditional clubs were part of the community and the AFL it's gone to another level.

Just seeing the young players wrapping around each other and enjoying that moment was special. I think that sport and we're not at the elite level, our job is to help players get to that elite level. But our job is also to make certain we keep players on a pathway and keep them involved in sports. I always say no sport is bad, and no football club is bad, except West Perth.

We underplay the value of sport [to the players] because it teaches them discipline, it teaches them to be part of a team, and they're the real values that you take away from your time in sport. It doesn't matter whether it's football, whether it's soccer or hockey, it doesn't matter. It's fantastic for people's development. Confidence is amazing, you see it on the footy field, all of a sudden guys have a light bulb moment, and they do something really well and then they never look back.

But some of them, have got to go through that struggle and become more resilient. And as you said whether it's music or whether it's sport. Confidence gives them meaning and a purpose. We had a bad incident with Beau Chatley breaking his neck at the footy club. Before we got Beau back on track, we tried to give him purpose again because he didn't know what he was going to do. That's just an example. Fortunately, he's back in his hometown of Manjimup with a job and is doing well.

Nunzio Mondia I suppose that link to the club remains.

Dean Turner Oh yeah. Manjimup raised over \$100,000, East Perth raised over \$300,000 to support this kid and still to this very day we try and help Beau in any way we can. Yeah.

Nunzio Mondia Fantastic.

Dean Turner One of the things that came out of COVID was how well people come together, you know how we all supported each other. And I think that COVID has done that like nothing else in my lifetime. I haven't had a war, my father went to war. I suppose the message is, I think we're fortunate. If this ever happens again, WA is one of the best places to be. So, if you're only a young fellow and you hear this well,

WA is the best place. They say we're the best place in the world. With a disease like COVID, it certainly was the best place to be in the world.

I came across so many people being positive. There were people that couldn't go and see their mums and dads because of the border restrictions. There were so many things that were so difficult, but everyone seems to find a way. I think that is a great characteristic of Western Australians and all Australians. That we find a way. It gives me confidence with my children and grandchildren, their life will be very different. Technology is becoming such a big thing. It wasn't much when I was growing up.

I hope that we continue to get young people and kids playing sports because of the health benefits and mental health benefits. I hope they never stop playing sports a major focus. People come to me, the father and son rule in football, and say, "He's going to go and play soccer." I say, 'That's fantastic because he's playing sport!'

Here we are now, it's the first of November soon and they're talking about things that can address COVID like vaccines. It just shows how the world has moved forward. They said it could take 12 months to find a vaccine, it's looking more like, nine months. That's how well we all adapt. And anyone that was doing it tough we all looked out for. We're in a great place and never, ever think that we can't overcome anything because we can.

East Perth is 115 years old and next year West Perth will celebrate its 130th year. So that gives you an understanding of how old these club clubs are. They love their heroes. We bring back some of the Premiership players. Just in my time, Jack Sheedy or Mal Brown won premierships here and people flock back to the club. I suppose that's what makes it great. I talk to Dennis Cometti regularly. He always felt the best era for football in WA was in the 70s because not as many people were lost to Victoria in those days, it was the VFL.

Nunzio Mondia How do you view the players of that era versus the modern footballer of today? What are the differences?

Dean Turner If you look at Barry Cable, Phil Kelly, and Wayne Otway all these players went to the VFL. With North Melbourne, a lot of East Perth players (Ross Glendinning, Kevin Bryant) went to North Melbourne. Ross Glendinning and Graham Moss won Brownlow Medals. So, our very best was as good as any in the country.

Nunzio Mondia Including yourself.

Dean Turner Yeah, I was lucky enough to get over and play for Fitzroy and then come back and play with West Coast, which was a fantastic experience.

Nunzio Mondia Tell us about that experience for you, being part of the inaugural West Coast football team.

Dean Turner Yeah, that was '87 we started off. There were only four of us that came back. There was me, Phil Narkle, Ross Glendinning and John Annear.

Nunzio Mondia Wow! What a team.

Dean Turner Other players that formed part of the squad, it was like a state team, really.

Nunzio Mondia Yes. Who were some of the other players in the team?

Dean Turner John Worsfold, Chris Lewis, all these young guys. I'll always remember, the four returning players, we were all in our late 20s and all the young local players were 18, 19, 20, 21. We used to go to Melbourne, and we'd be in the game for a half. And then because of the bigger bodies, and the weather conditions, some of our younger players struggled in the second half and we did not win. In '87 and '88, we made it into the final series. WA people excel in sports.

Nunzio Mondia Why do you think that is? Does the isolation have anything to do with this? It certainly happened in the music industry, particularly with bands such as INXS and ACDC.

Dean Turner Yeah fewer distractions, I think, I'm from the country WA myself, and country footballers seem to adapt quicker to league football than our metro footballers. I think that is because country players start playing against men at a very early age. I think when I came through, there were fewer distractions. I wanted to play footy and just worked hard. I think it's hard for young players these days. If they don't have success, they tend to think, "Oh, I don't want to play anymore." Being successful won't change, you must be dedicated. You still got to do more than the next person to be successful. And it's hard work

Nunzio Mondia Talk about performance change with regards to physical build of today's football players.

Dean Turner Well, that's a good point to start with, the build, most players are over six foot. In our day, six foot two, six foot three was a key position or a ruckman. These days [laughter] they are six foot seven, six foot eight and the guys playing the midfield they're all over six foot. Nat Fyfe and all those players. So yes, their build has changed.

I always laugh sometimes when you see Barry Cable and people say, "Cables would you still dominate?" Of course, he would because of how dedicated and skillful he was.

I think what is interesting now, is that the AFL is desperately trying to find a way to get teams to score more goals. Because the coaches have worked out game plans that make it hard to score. They play one back and it crowds the team's forward lines. When we played, coaches never went to that level. And you'd see more one on one contests. But that's why it's a different game. It's not that it's any worse, or any better but the coaches put more time into opposition and into defensive strategies which makes it hard to score. Because I think spectators like to see goals kicked, it's a good challenge to the AFL and the WAFL administrators to come up with rules which allow more goals to be scored. People love basketball because there are a lot of goals scored, and we've got to get back to that. I mean, we've got to get back to, instead of 10 or 12 goals, we've got to get back to 16 goals.

When we played there were only 20 in a team. Now you've got 22. So the more players you have means that you can probably keep up the defensive pressure for longer. This season was unique because they went from 25 minutes plus time to 16 minutes plus time on. So, it means that players don't get as tired as quickly. And when players are tired, that's when you do score against them. A lot of players at the higher levels, all have roles. And so sometimes it's not about the kicks and the handballs, it's how they defend, how they cover and block. And that's where the game has moved to. I don't think it's better from a spectacle point of view. I don't want to show my age here, but back in the 70s, you had a one-on-one contest.

Nunzio Mondia Yes so on that point and yourself personally, share with us some West Perth verses East Perth favourite memories.

Dean Turner Peter Menaglio was a player I played a lot of games against and he's a very popular player at West Perth. I remember when I played with East Perth, our ruckman was Ian McCulloch and their ruckman was John Duckworth. They were best mates off the field, literally best mates, and they worked in pubs together. But as soon as they crossed the line playing footy, they just wanted to fight each other. What makes some of these games, what made them so great is that people used to love to and come and watch them and they'd have stoushes. And then off the field, they were best mates again. So, yeah, work that one out. [Laughter]

Our instruction was to get the ball and get it to the full forward square. We had a great full forward in Paul Arnold and Archie Duda. And we had some of the best full forwards and it wasn't about going to the sides or switching play, it was how quickly could we get the ball to that forward square. So that was always my direction and I used to love that because your eyes would light up, you'd see the goals, and you wouldn't worry sometimes about the full forward, you'd be trying to go for goal [laughter]. But if it fell short, of course, I was passing it to the full forward.

Nunzio Mondia When did you commence your current role at East Perth?

Dean Turner I started with East Perth in February 2013 and in October 2012 they made the decision to partner with West Coast. So when I was offered the job, I already knew that we were going to be a partner with West Coast and of course I'd played there. I had great friends there and Trevor Nisbet, we played together at East Perth. So, we had good relationships. And I think if anyone was going to make it work, we were certainly up for it. And 2014 was the first year of the full alignment and we played the grand final and got beaten by Subiaco.

It was good for a period in the sense that, clubs do financially struggle in the WAFL, not having to pay players and not having to pay coaches. It was a good time for us because we were trying to get back on our feet financially. I think the hard part was for a lot of our young developing players. When you've got two masters, it's difficult trying to match their needs. They want certain players to play certain positions and have certain game times, which comes at a cost.

I think the positive, when we finished the alignment, was that the timing was great because they actually want to have their own team. They always wanted to have their own team. We always wanted to get back to being the traditional club that we were. And so when we parted, it was actually just like it was meant to be because they brought a team in. It became a 10-team competition and we've steadily rebuilt. We finished second last, last year. This year, we finished sixth ahead of Subi. I got to put that one in because Subi has been so good! [Laughter].

But the difficult part is, I think that you want to be a football club and it's pretty hard trying to accommodate two different needs. Because the West Coast have its needs. And had we not had COVID, they would have kept their team in. I think hopefully in 2021, we'll get back to normal. I think West Coast will have its own team. We'll know that by the 1st of November. So, we're only days away from knowing that. I'm pretty confident, they'll have their own team back in.

East Perth wasn't very financial and to remain at Perth Oval, they had to come up with half a million dollars to do maintenance and rebuild. And that was probably going to be a stretch too far. At that time West Perth decided they wanted to move to Joondalup. Everything in life is about timing, isn't it? The great people, the great Jack Marks, who was the Labor leader then at the time, and guys like Nick Catania, who's been a mayor etc. of the City of Vincent. They were the two people who helped orchestrate the move.

It certainly paid off [for us] in the first few years because we moved here in 2000 and they won premierships in 2000, 2001, 2002. We haven't won one since. [Laughter] I think that the opportunity was available when West Perth moved to Joondalup. I only ever played at Perth Oval and I have so many members come up to me and they always go, "I wish we were still at Perth Oval." We're all creatures of habit because that's where we started, we think that's where we like to be.

I think our future is here, there are a lot of people moving into the City of Vincent and it has been a really difficult time for the City of Vincent. They were helping us with reducing some of our rental costs and some of our variable costs. To do everything they could to help us and Subiaco and other sporting clubs, they were just fantastic. The move for us to be more community orientated, I think, is going to set us up. When we talk about history in the future, it'll be a very proud part of the City Vincent's history that both the clubs, both Subiaco and East Perth are here and here for hopefully a long time.

Nunzio Mondia Sam Foti is a mad West Perth supporter. Is there anything you would like to say to him as the president of the East Perth football club? He'll love this. [Laughter]

Dean Turner What's his name?

Nunzio Mondia Sam Foti.

Dean Turner Sam Foti. I'm just been made aware that you're a mad West Perth supporter. Take it from me you were very, very lucky. We've pinched a couple of your players and they've said, how bad you are. And we look forward to beating you in 2021. And hopefully, I do get to meet you. And if you do come to the ground, please make yourself known to me and I'll make certain I'll give you a hard time!

3 Enzo Sirna

Enzo Sirna My name is Enzo Sirna. I'm the president of the Italo-Australian Welfare and Cultural Centre, a privilege that I take with great honour. An organisation that next year will celebrate in 2021, its 65th anniversary year. And we have a wonderful team, a wonderful group of volunteers and so many people past and present that continue to give so much for the benefit of not just the Italian community, but the wider community as a whole.

The Italo-Australian Welfare and Cultural Centre is on Fitzgerald Street, which is opposite the Robertson Park tennis courts and next door to the WA Italian Club. And it's a wonderful precinct and so significant for the Italian community, which for so many years has been very involved in the area, including a base St Brigid's Church, which is in West Perth at the corner of Aberdeen and Fitzgerald streets. So having the Italian community focused in an area they recognise so well, has made it so much easier for us to offer our services.

The advent of the COVID-19 period, the restrictions, the follow-through, and the awareness programmes, was very interesting. Both at a personal level and at a community level. From a personal perspective, trying to organise the work here at the Italo-Australian Welfare and Cultural Centre to maintain the services. Especially those aimed towards our elderly and the aged care services were very important for us, being able to maintain that continuity. To translate and explain to our community what it meant and try to take that fear aspect out of the equation. And how wonderful to see the community and especially the aged, following their instructions. We had to simplify in layman's terms exactly what was required, and it was wonderful to see the support, the follow through and the adherence to the requirements. And even today the restrictions have lessened, and we still have the hard border, and we recognise, respect and are grateful for that. A lot of people are still asking what they can and cannot do. And that's meant so much at so many levels. But for us, it meant that we could continue our services with confidence and the confidence of the community.

I think the whole saga about toilet paper would have caused confusion and caused a little bit of mirth in some of the moments. The panic set in and especially for those at home that were not able to access opportunities to go to the shops, to purchase toilet paper and other requirements at the time. It was very, very important to be able to assure people and for them to know that we would be able to find supplies to assist. But surely, they were not going to need hundreds of rolls of toilet paper in one week. It was an interesting moment, but I think within an appropriate period and within perspective, that seemed to calm down quite significantly.

And beyond that, what was more difficult was trying to make the elderly understand what the requirements were and their family members and the younger people who were still wanting to visit. But the understanding of physical social distancing took a little while. For Italians, it was very, very difficult to understand. The instant reaction not to embrace, kiss, or shake hands probably took a little bit longer than most of the other people. And I think some are still crossing the boundaries now. But we had some wonderful moments, and fortunately, I don't think there are any examples within our community, that would have been detrimental or created a worse impact because of COVID-19.

Enzo Sirna With reference to the education programmes that we run through our organisation. We also have a very important Italian Australian childcare centre and we adhered to the requirements. It was important to give confidence to parents to bring their children.

The media would have taken things to a different level and there would have been some fear and some reticence. But we were very fortunate that the confidence that was present, allowed us to continue to run the centre as normal. Our education programmes in mainstream schools offer the teaching of Italian throughout primary schools, in the metropolitan area and in regional and remote areas. Most of our programmes were transferred online and it was wonderful to see teachers adapting to the requirements and producing programmes modified so that they could be online live. We have been able to continue our full term of programmes without any change to the curriculum. Any change to our requirements with a magnificent response backed by both the schools and the students and wonderfully supported by the parents.

Our Italian Australian Childcare Centre is in Barnet Street, North Perth. It has been there for over 45 years and has a great reputation. We take a lot of care, a lot of pride in what we do, and the parents know that their children are well looked after. In the initial stages of COVID-19, there was some reticence, because of what we were reading and seeing and the restrictions, and there was an initial period of holding back. But I think that was overcome. And when parents saw that their children were still wanting to have that opportunity. And to know that they had the comfort and the absolute assurance of those wonderful people and carers that look after the children made it so much easier for parents.

And for us, it was important to also have that confidence not only with the parents but above all with the grandparents who are asking a lot of questions and wanting to make sure that their little ones were well and truly looked after. It was a very good opportunity to give that continuity. It allowed those parents that could not work from home and were still required to go to work, to have that opportunity to leave the children knowing with full confidence that there would be no issues.

Some of the parents that worked from home decided they would keep their children at home, and that was fine. But we found as the restrictions gradually changed, that the majority came back quickly. There was additional support with the funding that the federal government provided. By giving free childcare opportunities, I think that assisted in providing confidence to the community, and to the parents. And we were very happy to see that.

While our programmes, and especially within aged care, offer this support for a lot of the elderly homes. One of the most difficult things for the Italian community and I would say for a lot of other communities was for those that were in aged care homes. I think the difficulty of the isolation probably impacted not only those who were in the homes but even the families wanting to visit.

Enzo Sirna I felt that it was incredibly difficult for a lot of the elderly that are in homes that are suffering from dementia. It would have been difficult for them because they are used to routines. All of a sudden, they were no longer able to see their loved ones as frequently or had to wave from their window from a distance. It would have been very awkward and difficult. And if there was a difficult and emotional moment throughout the COVID-19 period, that would have been one of the most difficult for people to cope with.

I think once the restrictions were lessened and there were opportunities for people to socialise again. It was interesting to see there was still a bit of reticence to know how far they could go. You would see people out and about but keeping their distance. Confusion about whether they should keep two metres apart or 1.5 metres apart. Difficulty knowing whether to shake hands or how to communicate or how to greet people. Difficult for people not used to paying for things with their credit cards and still reaching into their wallets,

handing over a \$10 note to pay for their two coffees. And the people behind the counters say, "No, we cannot accept the notes. We have to have a credit card." The difficulty is even for me at a personal level. I would enjoy having a coffee in the morning and reading the paper. Not being able to go to a cafe and find a paper to read on the weekend, probably took a little bit of getting used to.

But when you put it in the perspective of how lucky we are in Western Australia with what we've had, I think it became more palatable. With the lessening of restrictions and if we were to look at what we have today. Were there any lessons learnt through this whole episode? And what was it throughout COVID-19 that perhaps made us better people? Made this organisation even more effective? I think there are lessons to be learnt from this.

One of the most important things has been the awareness of self-hygiene, and washing hands, aspects that I think will become a permanent part of our routine. Perhaps we were taking things for granted. To see that still being enacted and followed through diligently by people in the community. And leading by example are, our elderly who are wonderful. Who are following through with everything and who are adhering to all the requirements. Who have seen for themselves that they have been fewer colds in the family and fewer symptoms of the flu.

The opportunity to access a healthier lifestyle has been important for me. Also, service-wise, one of the very important aspects was the opportunity and ability to communicate immediately, effectively and in simple language. That has also taught us a fair bit.

Enzo Sirna And a quirky personal moment that I found delightful and created a bit of mirth. I was at the intersection of Scarborough Beach Road and Flinders Street, where the Mezz Shopping Centre is one day seeing literally.. While I was at the lights waiting for the traffic lights to turn green so that I could turn into Flinders Street. Seeing what seemed like a trolley full of toilet paper rolls on its own, cutting across the intersection. I had to look carefully to see a tiny, very frail lady pushing the trolley with honestly what might have been about eight to 10 packs of toilet paper. I think it was before they put restrictions on toilet paper, it was quite a sight. Perhaps we should have had someone filming that rather than interviewing me.

In looking to the future. If I were to have a magic wand to provide a wish list of what, A: we have learnt from this whole episode and, B: what would be important for the future. I think, firstly, never take anything for granted. Secondly, understand that health is paramount. The third thing that is important, is to ensure that you have an opportunity to genuinely care for people, to look after your loved ones and to understand if there are moments when they may not be feeling 100 percent, to act on it immediately. And provide that genuine follow-through.

The day that we have a genuine vaccine to overcome the COVID-19 issues, I think will be important. But we also need to understand that there are aspects and other issues that may arise and will require attention. And let's not forget that we have a lot of medical and scientific research that we need to support, for other illnesses. That includes cancer, heart awareness and diabetes. We still need to provide opportunities in the future to find a cure, which is so important right across the board.

It was interesting to see, coming from an Italian family and having Italian origins, the wonderful shelves that would normally be full of pasta were quite empty. I think, with a smile on my face, and many other people's faces, the recognition of how wonderful our parents were in being able to make everything themselves by hand. So instead of going for the packaged pasta, we went for the flour to prepare the pasta. And found a delightful store on Oxford Street that made homemade pasta. We were able to quietly purchase homemade pasta as well when we did not have time to make our own. But at the same time, how wonderful a recognition of the influence of Italian culture and food because people were upset that they were running out of pasta.

3 Janet McCallum

Janet McCallum When it came to the war. I think it was all new to everybody of our generation. We didn't know what war was. We had no idea. And the real concept of war that I got was the flying boats down at Crawley Bay. And you could hear those flying boats taking off in the morning and you knew that they were going out to fight. We didn't know whether they were going to come back or not. But that was my concept of war because at that time I was only nine years of age. And I don't think we were as literate at the age of nine as the children are today. I think children are a lot better educated and they have a different outlook on life than what I had then.

Nunzio Mondia Tell us a little bit of what you can remember. With such a large family, many of the males would have been commissioned to war. And you were at home with Mum, what was that like?

Janet McCallum Well, fortunately, my family, I was the eldest and none of my immediate family went to war, but my cousins went to war. And one cousin I have just written his history and put it into the library at the Town of Vincent, Frank Johnson. And I've just written about his history, which is very interesting. I lost a couple of relatives during the war. I was just saying a while ago, we used to hear the planes going over, and it wasn't until a couple of years ago when I was in Darwin. And they were having war games up there and several planes were up in the air. And it affected me and brought back that fright that I had because as a child it was frightening to hear all those planes. Also, to hear the sirens. That was very, very frightening as a young child.

Nunzio Mondia What was the drill when the air raid sirens went off?

Janet McCallum Get under your bed [laughter] Crawl under your bed and hide. Unless you were a stickybeak like I was and look out the window to see what was going on. [Laughter]

Nunzio Mondia So that was the version of the COVID app of today. [Laughter]

Janet McCallum That's right. That's exactly, yeah.

Nunzio Mondia What were the kind of things you would do at home with your family to cope? These days people rush out to buying toilet paper.

Janet McCallum We never had toilet paper in those days [laughter]. We had bits of paper behind the door. That's all there was in those days. It wasn't toilet paper so there was no rush. I think it was the food that made people realise what was really happening. [Unclear] When they brought out the ration tickets and you could only have so much sugar or so much butter and people were starting to grow their own vegetables. I think as a family, we were very, very lucky because my father used to go to Wanneroo to get the wood for his woodyard. And of course, in Wanneroo, all the Italians out there were growing vegetables. They had all the market gardens. Dad got to know them very well. And I don't think Mum ever bought any vegetables. Dad always came home with fresh veggies. And I think we were luckier than a lot of children because we always had fresh vegetables. And Mum was a good cook.

Nunzio Mondia You were born on Newcastle Street, let's talk about the move from Newcastle Street to Mount Hawthorn.

Janet McCallum I was born in Newcastle Street and then Mum and Dad lived in a couple of different places in Leederville and that was when he bought the two blocks of land in Mount Hawthorn. Fortunately, they were just around the corner from the school, so we didn't have far to go to school. But all through this, when I'm looking back on photos, we were never neglected even though we were in a large family. We were always well dressed, and always seemed to have everything. Mum and Dad were good providers. Yeah, but I know other people weren't, we were just graced with a very lucky family.

Nunzio Mondia What was it like growing up around Mount Hawthorn?

Janet McCallum Oh, it was gorgeous.

Nunzio Mondia Your neighbours, you got an opportunity to mix with people from diverse cultures.

Janet McCallum Everybody knew everybody. When my brothers got to the age of eight and nine, they used to take off and Mum would never see them until they were hungry. Wherever they went they usually got fed and Mum used to feed the kids. You never knew who belonged to who at the table because she just fed whoever was there at the time. And I think that companionship today is gone, unfortunately.

Nunzio Mondia You are talking about experiencing a 'real' sense of community.

Janet McCallum Yeah. And if you came home and said that you got into trouble at somebody's place, they were upset with you and got a hiding for upsetting them. [Laughter]

Nunzio Mondia and not just 'go sit in the naughty corner'...

Janet McCallum Oh, God, no such thing as a naughty corner or putting into your bedroom with the TV set and the computer and let you.. no that's not on.

Nunzio Mondia [Discussion about discipline]

Janet McCallum Mum had a leather boot lace that came out of the men's work boots, and you only got it once you didn't need it the second time. [Laughter] I think I got it once. We didn't have separate rooms or anything. We all slept on the front verandah, and six of us slept on the front verandah. In the wintertime in particular it was so cold that you'd find two kids in one bed cuddling up to keep warm up because there were no electric blankets or anything like they've got today. We survived.

Nunzio Mondia Exactly. And the closeness of family. Having the possibility of sharing with your siblings brought you closer together. It's a bit different these days.

Nunzio Mondia Yeah. So that experience was very much a positive one.

Janet McCallum Out of my siblings, I've only got four left, no five left, but we're still very close. And we let everybody know what's going on around the place. And also, as far as relations go, we're still very close to cousins.

Nunzio Mondia Tell us about how COVID affected you.

Janet McCallum My first contact with COVID was on March 25th. I turned ninety on the twenty-sixth and planned to have a party on Sunday. And that was cut, that was my first contact. I wasn't very impressed. And from there on, I was quite prepared to stay home. That didn't worry me. I cleaned up all my cupboards and got rid of a lot of stuff.

Nunzio Mondia What did you do as an alternative to your 90th birthday party?

Janet McCallum My daughter came around and she said, 'Well, we can't. I haven't made you a cake or anything.' Because we were going to have a party. And she said, 'What are we going to do?' So, I looked in the cupboard and I had a small Christmas pudding from Coles from December. So we heated that up and cut it in half and put ice cream on it and that was my cake. [Laughter] But we survived. Well, as far as supplies go, I was still allowed out once a week to shop, but you can come to my place now and look in my cupboards. I could live and not go to the shops for a month. I have so much stuff. And this comes about from the war because Mum always had so much stuff in the cupboards and your saved pieces of soap. You put it all together and boil it up and make another piece of soap.

Janet McCallum Yeah, back to the war, you learnt to save during the war. We never had as many clothes as we've got today. My two sisters and I had one wardrobe between us. And now I've got three units in the house, and I've got clothes in every room and I don't really need them.

My closest girlfriend. She passed away a couple of years before and I never really, as a child, had a lot of friends. I had good close friends. And they say, if you got two good close friends, you've got everything. And my last friend passed away in June. She'd been very ill all year. But I did speak to her on the phone even though she was in the nursing home. So, I was lucky enough that I could go up and see her once before she passed away. But I spoke to her regularly on the phone.

Nunzio Mondia Can you please offer advice to our current and future generations?

Janet McCallum I don't know, I wouldn't like to, these young kids, 'Get off your backside and do some work.' That would be my advice [laughter] because that would have been the story that I would have been given. I think we've got too much today. We don't appreciate what we've got. Uh, I think we were happier when we had nothing. But when we had nothing, nobody else had anything during the war. That was what brought people together more because everybody was on the same level. Today there are so many levels. I think that's where the problem is. And I think a lot of people are trying to outdo each other with a bigger house or bigger car. And that's where the problem lies, Money and greed.

Nunzio Mondia OK, um, so contrary to that, rather than thinking about. Money, money, money, money, and material things. What should they think about?

Janet McCallum Well, there are so many people..

Nunzio Mondia What can they do to change? What should they be doing?

Janet McCallum Oh, how could you explain that? Uh, it's an individual thing, really, isn't it? They've got to be able to want to do it. I think too much emphasis is put on certain things that shouldn't be. I mean, today, the CEO in an office, in my day, they were just secretaries. [Unclear] Status has got a lot to do with it today.

Nunzio Mondia So really the idea of family and community.

Janet McCallum Yeah, nobody goes out as a family anymore. Everybody goes out single. I think that's a shame. Every Boxing Day. As kids, Dad used to take us down to Crawley for the day, that would be a day out and we'd really look forward to that day. Mum would cook up the day before and we'd all jump on the back of the truck and go to Crawley for the day and sit there amongst all the flies and everything, but we enjoyed that day. And the other thing is, as kids, we were never taken very far. You know, not like these kids that go away, they've already been to Bali by the time they are six months old. We went nowhere and I think the war had a lot to do with that.

On Labor Day we used to go to the march in Perth. They used to have this huge march in Perth put on by the Labor Party, and they used to borrow Dad's truck to put the great big banners on, these beautiful banners that were painted or embroidered. We were allowed to go to watch that.

Janet McCallum My father was one of the founders of the Young Australia League and he was in a band and he [set?] up the band. My boys were in the band and everyone in the family belonged to the band at some stage. So, on Labor Day we went to watch that, and we were taken out at Easter. At Christmas time, we would go to [unclear] a Christmas tree. And then on Boxing Day and they were the four days that we went out as a family. We really enjoyed it, but today. So different. I don't know if they are as happy as we were, I think we were a lot happier.

This area is Leederville. In Oxford Street there used to be a chemist shop, Hutchison's Chemist, my aunty used to live behind it, and we used to go there. And then on a Saturday afternoon, we used to go up to the Luna, which was then the Oxford Pictures and when there was no football on, we were allowed to go to the pictures on Saturday afternoon. And we were given sixpence and that was a penny each way down on the tram thru pence to go in and a penny to spend. Or could walk home and you used to go up to Davies, which is a shop just up from the Oxford Theatre. And they used to have these ice blocks. One half of them was cream and the other half was fruit salad. And I can still taste them today, they were beautiful. And we'd walk home all the way to Mount Hawthorn. Yeah. Because you wanted this ice block. [Laughter]

Nunzio Mondia One or the other you couldn't afford both.

Janet McCallum You couldn't have both. And then, when the football was on, my dad was on the West Perth committee, so we had to wait back, we'd get a ride back on the back of the truck, but we had to wait for him. So, we used to go over to. We'd get sixpence and we'd go over to Panegyres fish shop. And he used to give us all the bits that come off the fish when they cooked it, the batter. And he used to sell that to us for a penny and he'd wrap it up in newspaper mind you and give it to us and we would have that and then we would walk back to West Perth and wait for Dad and go home on the back of the truck.

Nunzio Mondia I'm sure the chips cooked in fat tasted so good back then.

Janet McCallum Oh They were better. I spoke to Professor Panegyres recently and I mentioned this to him. He said, well, they were greasier. [Laughter] He said they were all right.

Nunzio Mondia So what's your favourite tune? Sing us a couple of lines.

Janet McCallum Oh, you know, you wouldn't want...I can't since I've been taking medication for asthma. I used to sing in the choir at St Andrews in Perth and also at the Presbyterian church in Mount Hawthorn. But since I've been taking this medication and the sprays, I've lost my voice completely. I watch Soul of Praise on Sunday and I'm home by myself so I can sing.

Nunzio Mondia What is your favourite song? I'm interested to know.

Janet McCallum, I was just playing Pavarotti yesterday. I love opera.] [Discussion about opera]