

# The Australian Women's Register

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**Entry type:** Person  
**Entry ID:** AWE1096

## Santospirito, Lena

(1895 - 1983)

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**Born** 4 April, 1895, Ballarat Victoria Australia

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**Died** 19 November, 1983, Melbourne Victoria Australia

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**Occupation** Community worker, Migrant community advocate

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### Summary

Lena Santospirito was one of the first Italo-Australian women to assume a leadership role in the provision of welfare and community services to Melbourne's Italian community. The Australian born daughter of Italian parents who migrated to Australia in the 1890s, Mrs Santospirito was the first woman (and layperson) to be appointed President of the Archbishop's Committee for Italian Relief. She held this position between 1946 and 1955, a period that coincided with the beginnings of mass migration from Italy to Australia. Her energy and generosity in this role, as she combined it with her responsibilities as a wife and mother, were recognised by the Italian government in 1958 when she was awarded the Italian Star of Solidarity.

After her resignation from the committee in 1955, Mrs Santospirito continued her community work for various religious and charitable organisations. She passed away in 1983 and is remembered for her tireless work, her faith and the generosity she showed to so many people in Melbourne's Italian community.

### Events

#### 2001 - 2001

Inducted into the Victorian Honour Roll of Women

### Published resources

#### Finding Aid

Guide to the Santospirito Collection, Elkner, Cate and Santospirito, Tony, 2001,  
<http://www.coasit.com.au/historical/sant/santhome.htm>

#### Journal Article

Lena Santospirito - the Person, Santospirito, Tony, 2001

#### Magazine article

The Advocate, 1967

#### Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

### Archival resources

#### Italian Historical Society

[Santospirito Collection](#)

### Author Details

Nikki Henningham

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