

Alessandro “Alec” Epis

Alec Epis has never married and never fathered any children, but he’s never been lonely. That, he says, is the legacy of his Italian upbringing in what was one of Australia’s most inhospitable environments.

“They were hard days but they were happy days,” Alec says of his boyhood years on the West Australian goldfields. “Mum used to say they were the best years of her life, I’d say ‘Why?’ and she’d say ‘Because we were all together and we all needed one another.”

“I never felt isolated, but it’s probably why I’m a bit of a loner now. I learnt to occupy myself and I never really needed anyone around me.”

The Epis family’s links with Australia were first forged in 1893 when Alec’s great grandfather, Giuseppe Borlini, left the zinc mines of Gorno, 30 kilometres outside of Bergamo, in search of gold. But the move would bring tragic consequences. As Alec explains, “He [Giuseppe] came to Australia to work at Coolgardie, but he fell down a shaft and got killed, leaving 12 kids behind in Bergamo”.

“Now my mother’s father Angelo was forced to leave law and go to work to support the family. Then the 1914-’18 war came and he was forced to go to fight,” Alec says. “He was quite young, but he went off, fought, got out and then migrated to Kalgoorlie. He came for the gold, because he’d heard about it from one of the other *Bergamaschi* who had worked in the zinc mines in Italy and had come to Australia earlier . . . a bit like the duck that goes to the dam, finds water and brings back all the ducks.



Alessandro Angelo “Alec” Epis

born: Boulder, WA, August 27, 1937

height: 187cm *weight:* 88kg

recruited from: Mines Rovers

guernsey number: 28

nickname: “Kookaburra”

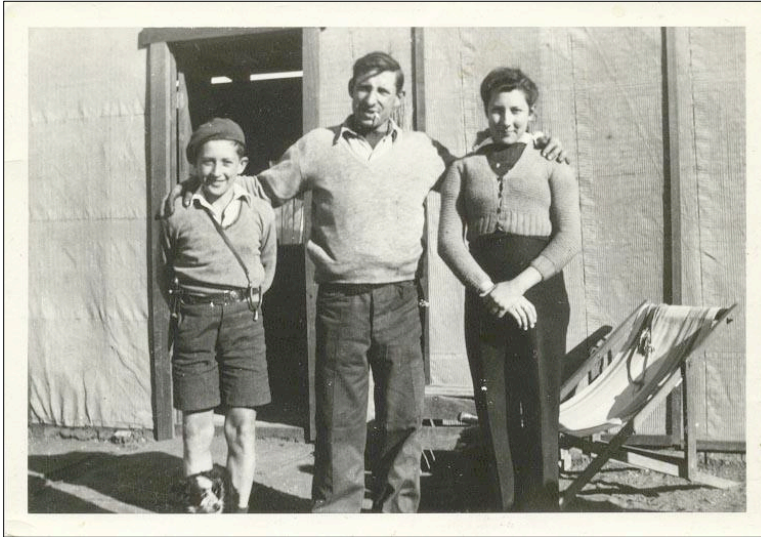
games: 180 for Essendon, 1958-68;
goals: four

honours: Essendon premiership
player 1962 & ’65; Victorian
representative 1960 & ’63

Italian origins:

Oneta, provincia di Bergamo
(*father’s birthplace*)

Gorno, provincia di Bergamo
(*mother’s birthplace*)



Alec and Ena flank their father Virgilio Epis. Trusty border collie Pippi stands guard outside the old family home with its cloth walls at Yilgangi Queen gold mine, circa 1947.

- image courtesy Alec Epis

“At the same time my father’s father, Alessandro [Epis], also migrated, because he and Angelo were best mates. After their arrival they lived in a hotel in Boulder, but they couldn’t go out together because they only had one suit and they had to take turns.

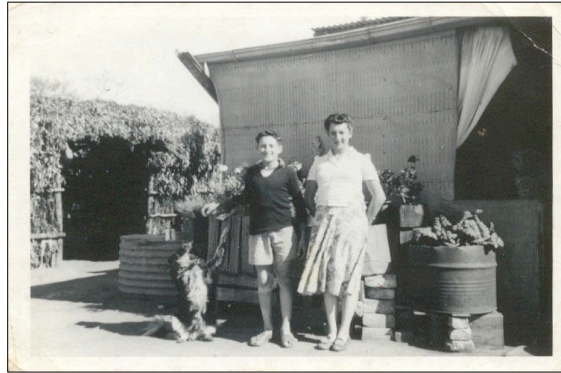
“Dad told me once that the only argument he ever had with my Mum’s dad was over this suit. One day they both needed to go out, but they only had one suit and needed another, so when they got a tip on this horse, Dad put all the wages on it and it lost. He reckons they never ate for a week and never spoke for a month.”

Alec fondly remembers a meeting with Angelo Borlini’s oldest sister, Angelina, in Bergamo a few years ago.

“When I met her she just started to cry because she hadn’t seen Angelo for 50 years and she said she saw me exactly as he was when he came to Australia. Now I can speak *Bergamascho* so I understood what she was saying and I got very emotional too,” he says.

“My Dad’s father was already here by then, and working at the mine. Dad was only 13 when he came out in 1924 and he was the only one of the children who was Italian-born. He had a younger brother Mario, and a younger sister Tessie Polinelli who still lives in Dog Swamp in Perth.

“Mario was a gold prospector who just died in Perth aged 82, and he was born here, went to Aquinas College and was educated. Virgilio, my Dad, wasn’t. Dad couldn’t speak English when he arrived as a 13 year-old and he spoke very broken English his whole life. He used to call Essendon “the Bombers” and Hawthorn “Haw-bloody-torn”.



Alec and Ena at Yilgangi Queen by the two-room house on the site of the gold mine, circa 1949. Note the boughshed, made from the boughs of a gum tree, which provided welcome respite from the oppressive daytime heat.

- image courtesy Alec Epis

In 1935, Alec’s father Virgilio married Giusefina Borlini in Collie, 203 kilometres south of Perth. Not long after, the newlyweds returned to Boulder where they lived with Virgilio’s brother Mario, sister Tessie and mother Lucia. There Virgilio and Giusefina’s father Angelo worked as gold prospectors.

During this time the Epis family was drawn into the infamous race riotsⁱ, which erupted in Boulder after two men named Claudio Mattaboni and Edward Jordan came to blows at the Home from Home Hotel on the Australia Day weekend of 1934.

“Claudio Mattaboni was a barman at the hotel in Boulder and there were a lot of hostilities towards the Italians at this time, because the Italians came out and worked long hours which they were happy to do because they couldn’t get any work back home. But the Aussies were dead set crook on it,” Alec says.

“This particular day Jordan walked into the pub and started calling Mattaboni ‘wog’ and ‘dago’. Mattaboni went ‘bang’ and hit Jordan, who fell and hit his head on the ground. Now what they didn’t know was that Jordan had a soft plate in his head and that’s what killed him when he hit the deck.

“That then sparked the riot. Mobs came from everywhere and they must have burnt down a hundred buildings. They moved in on a house in Dwyer Street where Dad’s Mum and Dad lived.

“Now they lived next door to a one-armed Irishman named Paddy Coffey and they’d been very good to him. They used to invite him over for dinner and generally look after him because he had nobody. So when the mob approached my grandparents’ house, Paddy stormed over, stood in front of the joint and said ‘You’re going to have to shoot me to get in the door. You’re not touching the house of the Epis’. And the mob backed off.

“In the end though, things were so bad that police reinforcements were brought in from Perth and after a while the Italians had to leave. They went bush, to a place called White Hope, about 20 miles out of Boulder. Some of them lived in the caves out there for up to three months. The Salvation Army used to go out to them every day with food and water, and I know that over the years my Mum and Dad always gave to the Salvation Army.”

Alessandro (Alec), the only son of Virgilio and Giusefina Epis, was born and raised in Boulder, the hub of the West Australian goldfields about 600 kilometres east of Perth. Alec and his older sister Ena later attended St Joseph’s primary school, with Alec furthering his studies at Christian Brothers’ College, Kalgoorlie, for two years from 1947.

It was a baptism of fire for the little bloke. “They [the Brothers] were a bit hard . . . they used to belt you a bit,” Alec says. “I used to come down and whinge to Mum and she’d say ‘You must have deserved it . . . if I hear it from you again you’ll get another one from me’. I got no sympathy from Mum.”

In 1949, Alec and Ena were both placed into boarding school, as Virgilio sought to stake a claim at an abandoned gold mine at Yilgangi Queen, 193 kilometres north-east of Kalgoorlie.

“The mine was located at what was once known as ‘Heppingstone’s Find’. It had been mined before and it was owned by Western Mining Corporation,” Alec says.

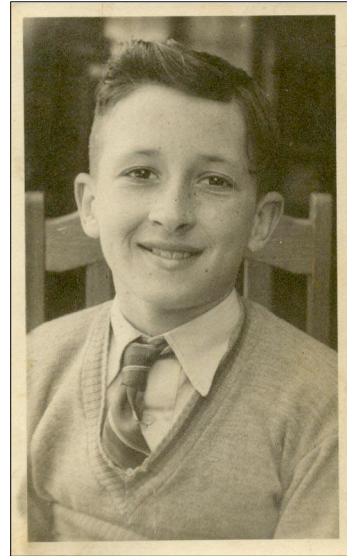
“It was abandoned, so Dad and three other men got a lease from Western Mining and went out and had a look. He found some good stone down the 300-foot shaft and gave a percentage of whatever he found back to the company.”

“Dad was there from 1954 until 1966. He and I used to go down the shaft by ladder. He’d drill all the holes into what we’d call the drive, which was the tunnel, I’d put the dynamite in the holes, then I’d put the fuse in, the caps, and regulate it all so the one in the middle went off before the outside ones to cause the cavity. We’d then light the fuse and run from the shaft to this big bucket, pull it and then be hoisted up . . . moments later you’d hear ‘boom, boom, boom’.”

It was a dream childhood for Alec to be with his father in those days, but not before he and his sister had completed their schooling at the boarding schools in New Norcia, about 140 kilometres north-east of Perth, for three years from 1949.

“At New Norcia in those days there was a Marist Brothers College and a St Joseph’s Girls College there, together with the Benedictine monks who remain a local presence,” Alec says.

“Ena and I went there and we used to meet every month. Then every three months we’d go home for holidays for two weeks at a time.



Alec at CBC Kalgoorlie, sports day, October 29, 1948.

- image courtesy Alec Epis



Alec Epis proudly sporting the New Norcia senior XVIII guernsey at a training session at Windy Hill, circa 1960.

He had represented New Norcia at under 14, under 15 and second XVIII level before returning to Boulder unable to realize his dream of representing the school's premier team.

"My greatest desire was to play senior footy for the school, but it never happened and I never got the jumper I always wanted," Alec says. "I never ever forgot it, so when I got to Melbourne I rang Brother Lucien asking if I could buy a jumper. Brother Lucien sent me one over anyway and the day it arrived was the best day of my life."

Years later, Epis returned his guernsey and his blazer to New Norcia where they remain on display in its Hall of Fame.

- image courtesy Alec Epis

"I did miss home. A lot of kids at the boarding home came from farming areas not far away and every week their parents would visit them bringing chocolate and cakes . . . I had nobody visiting me, so it was quite lonely. But then again, I got used to being lonely and that's what's got me through now because I don't need a lot of people around me."

It was at boarding school that Alec came to the realization that he was blessed with genuine athletic prowess. "I could run like a gazelle and I was fairly good at most sports," he says. "Funny thing, a lot of the Marist Brothers were from Victoria and they pushed footy, so that's what I played, along with cricket, tennis and hockey.

"I really didn't know that I was good at it. I just thought I was like everyone else having a go at sport. Boarding school was okay, but the thing I didn't like was that every Sunday morning the kids in fourth, fifth and sixth class had to go to mass twice – once as per normal and another to sing with the monks – that used to piss me off because every other day we only had to go once and in any case I had a shocking voice. Now, when I've been back to see and hear the monks, I've always thought to myself 'How lucky was I to have sung with them?'."

"I also remember playing footy against the farmers in a Sunday comp. Three of our team members were Marist Brothers and one of them was Brother Stanislaus. Now Stanislaus, who is still alive and lives down at Traralgon, was always getting into trouble on the field. He was a cheeky bastard who always caused fights.

“This all made sense to me years later when I found out that Brother Stanislaus is Ray and Tony Shaw’s uncle. Brother Stanislaus’ sister was the Shaws’ mother and his other sister was Robert Shaw’s mother.”

Alec also recalls matches against Central Mugumber, a little town near New Norcia. “The women used to supply afternoon tea there just to slow us down,” Alec says. “They’d bring in sponge cakes and scones and all the sort of stuff we kids in boarding school never got to see - which is why one of the brothers always used to say to us: ‘One piece of cake and one scone’. We’d say ‘Yes brother’ until he turned his back and then we helped ourselves. It never hurt our football.

“The footy there was terrific and I loved it. I always loved my Italian background and there were a lot of Italian kids around too like my mate Joe Fanchi. When I was going to school at St Joseph’s in Boulder, there was a State School next door and the kids there used to yell out ‘Italian dogs, jump like frogs, in and out the teachers’ gobs’. In the first year they used to belt us up, but the second year was terrific. We had a big influx of Croatians and Slavs and they were our best mates, so we won the war with the kids at the state school and they left us alone from that time on.



Alec’s maternal grandfather, Angelo Borlini. Angelo left Kalgoorlie for Collie to work on the coalfields. He later acquired a 200-acre farm there and settled with his wife and children.

“He was six foot four and as strong as an ox,” Alec says.

“He went to a pub in Collie once and a bloke there called him a ‘dago’. He said to the bloke ‘I didn’t hear what you said – I’ll come over and listen. The next minute – bang – he knocked the bloke clean out and no-one ever called him ‘dago’ again.”

In later years Angelo was stricken with gangrene which forced doctors to amputate one of his legs, but Alec says he never complained. “He always said ‘Plenty worse off’,” Alec says. “He was as smart as a whip.”

- image courtesy Alec Epis

It used to take Alec and his sister an overnight train trip to make it home from boarding school for the holidays. “We’d get into the station at six in the morning, head off to the trucking place, jump straight onto the truck and head off to the mine,” Alec says. “The truck used to stop off at other mines, as well as cattle stations, and we’d get to the family mine by one o’clock in the afternoon. Mum and Dad were that happy to see us.”

Back home, the Epis's lived off fresh meat, bread and ice cream delivered once a week.

"Every Friday at one o'clock the old truck would turn up and we could hear it coming from five miles away. So we used to run down to meet the truck and hop on it," Alec says.

"When I was living out in the bush, my job was to shoot a kangaroo and two rabbits and if I could get a goat or a wild turkey or a pigeon then that was a bonus. Back in Boulder we all used to help make the *salamis* and cheeses too. There were other Italian families around too, families named Ricurparati, Meneghini, Della Costa, Delmarco, Tarabini and Capello. In those days Boulder and Kalgoorlie was made up of people mostly from Bergamo and Sondrio and a few Venetos and a couple of Calabresi. We were all together and we used to meet every Sunday.

"One Italian friend named Mr Fracaro had a chook farm that all these families used to flock to on a Sunday. We'd get out there, kill a pig and Uncle Mario would play piano accordion, Dad would play the banjo and all the men would dance. That was normal and I can still see the men dancing now. But people moved on."

Alec adds that the family all conversed in Italian at home. "In fact we spoke the dialect," he says, "and when I went to school I couldn't speak English, but then I started to learn and later on Mum began to talk in English too".

So what was life really like? "Well, the conditions there were so hot . . . 120 degrees . . . but it never worried me because I didn't know any different," says Alec.

"We found gold there all right and then crushed it at the battery. The ore used to come in the back where these big headers would crush it. The water would then push everything out onto a plate which was coated with amalgam.

“Now any gold coated with amalgam would stick like a magnet, so every night you had to take the plate off and scrape the amalgam off with fly wire. You’d then cook the gold, and all the amalgam would rise to the top. You’d remove the amalgam and pour your bar of gold. You’d then pick it up and throw it into a tin of water and that was it. We used to go to town with six or eight bars at a time, which was about every three months.

“I remember once we went to town in a big Chev truck and I said to Dad “Why are we going in the big Chev?” He said ‘Shut up, mind your own business, get in the truck and take the guns’, which was the shotgun and the revolver, and I used to hold them.

“Anyway, we were about 200 ks from town and we had to go through these cattle runs where you had to slow down. This particular day we hit a cattle run and as we turned around a corner two cars came out and tried to hold us up. This was in the 1950s. My old



Alec’s mother Giusefina (nee Borlini) Epis and father Virgilio Alessandro Epis, photographed in Ascot Vale, circa 1958, on a visit to Melbourne to see their boy play.

- image courtesy Alec Epis

man said ‘Give me the gun’ as he planted the foot and drove straight through them. They fired a shot and it flew across the roof.

“My Dad’s truck always had a big bumper bar and I found out later that he even had the side doors lined with steel. That’s why we always took the gold in the truck.”

Today, Alec still has the gun which he also used to guard the battery where the ore was crushed. It is a constant reminder to him of another place and another time “when I used to come home for school holidays and Dad would get me to guard the gold while he had a sleep”.

Alec was a boy of 15 when he returned to Boulder from boarding school for good.

“It was 1952 and I then went to Boulder High,” he says. “Mum came into town to look after me and it was then that I joined Mines Rovers, my Dad’s football team, where all the Italians played. It was terrific.

Alec had already won a handsome reputation as a junior footballer before making his senior debut with Mines Rovers in 1955, still a few months shy of his 18th birthday.

For Alec, ’55 was a dream year. Not only did he take out the Fletcher Medal for fairest and best in what was then the Goldfields National Football League, but he also contributed to Mines Rovers’ 44-point victory over Kalgoorlie City in the Grand Final.

It was to be his only season in the GNFL.

“I played in an under 15 competition for Mines Rovers and won the best and fairest in the competition. I got 47 of 48 votes. The next year I went up to the senior competition and won the best and fairest in that.”

In 1956, Alec sought a clearance to Essendon, “but they [the WAFL] kept me out of football for two years because they said I’d been lured by Essendon”.

“I told them that I’d come over for my work, which wasn’t really the case, but what pissed me off was that the president of the WAFL was a bloke named Pat Rodriguez, who was an old boy from New Norcia where I went to school,” Alec says.

“The rule back in those days was that if you stood out of footy for three years they couldn’t stop you. I stood out for two and I then said to them ‘I don’t care now. I’m not heading back and you can’t stop me playing after next year’. In the end they gave up.”

As far as the Bombers were concerned it was well worth the wait, for Alec gave outstanding service in 180 VFL games over the next eleven seasons.

“A lot of other teams got interested initially, and in the end Essendon wrote to me and invited me to train with them. They didn’t offer me anything, they just told me to catch the train to Melbourne, second class they said, and to look for the man in grey when I got there,” Alec says.

“My father was devastated. He started crying and he said he’d buy me any car that I wanted if I wouldn’t go. But it wasn’t tempting. I’d followed the WAFL and to go to the VFL was a dream come true. I wasn’t thinking about Dad or Mum. All I was thinking about was going over there to play in the VFL. It was an adventure, the chance to do something.”



*Smelling the roses . . . Ena and
Alec together in Melbourne.
- image courtesy Alec Epis*

When Alec alighted from the train at Spencer Street station he felt genuinely intimidated. As he says, “I looked for the man in grey, but everyone wore grey”. “I remember asking a bloke ‘Are you Grey’ and him saying in a broken accent ‘What do you want?’,” Alec says. “Half of them were Italians and half were Greeks.

“The bloke directed me to another part of the platform and I finally found a welcoming committee from the club which was late getting there. Anyway I was taken to a boarding house where I lived with three other young blokes for two years. It was amazing. We ended up at 6 Fields Street, Moonee Ponds. The house was run by an old sheilah who used to give us sago for sweets every night, which I hated, on top of this stale old swede, which I’d never eaten in my life. We used to nick down to the milk bar to buy some pies before we’d go home and sleep out the back in four bunks.”

Not long after, Alec commenced his “nasho” (National Service) at Puckapunyal “and I had a lot of trouble getting out to practice games”.



*Alec back at Yilgangi Queen.
- image courtesy Alec Epis*

“One day I was telling someone at Puckapunyal that I was at Essendon and having trouble getting out there and the bloke said “‘Oh, there’s a lieutenant here who’s a mad Essendon supporter’,” Alec says. “Anyway, I went and saw the bloke, whose name I can’t remember.

“He said he’d heard of me and I told him that I couldn’t get out. He said ‘I need to go to town once a week to do things and I need you to come with me’. So every week for three weeks he took me to town and dropped me off and he would later collect me at Spencer Street Station for the return journey to Puckapunyal. But there was a cost. I was a butcher in camp and I had to give him a big eye

fillet from the butcher shop every week!

“I’d actually been a butcher in Boulder, Kalgoorlie, but I started off being an engineering draftsman because Mum had said to me ‘Your trouble is that you like sport too much . . . go away and study’. So I started working with a bloke named Charles Warman who designed these centrifugal pumps in Kalgoorlie which are now world famous. Back then I had to draw them up and measure them up. At that time I was also attending the School of Mines every day.

“But Dad said, ‘Look, you’re not going anywhere – go get a job as a butcher, which I did and I loved it. I was about 16 at the time.

“When I came across to Melbourne I worked as a butcher for Frank Capicchiano. I worked for him at Moonee Ponds until 1962 or ’63 and Donny Furness, who played for Fitzroy, worked there with me. To get to footy training I had to work at the butcher’s through my lunch hour, and I’d also work on the Saturday morning before a game.”

How well Alec remembers his senior VFL debut, against Hawthorn, when he earned the club's premiership captain Graham Arthur as his first opponent.

"I was very nervous before the game. I remember Dick Reynolds saying to me 'You've got a job to do today – just stick on him [Arthur] and don't ever leave him'," Alec says.

"I was one of those kids in those days who did as he was told, and I played okay. I got named amongst the best players and I still have photos from that game.

"I also remember lining up against Serge Silvagni and John Benetti against Carlton. I used to muck around a bit with Serge and at the centre bounce I'd say to him in Italian 'How are you going? . . . now have a look at this stupid bastard here?'. We'd turn to the field umpire and he'd say in English 'Yeah, I know you're talking about me'."

Alec says that members of Australia's vibrant Greek community have often mistaken him as a person of Greek extraction given his surname "and I know my cousin once said to me that the origins of the name can be traced back to Constantinople".

But he is both fiercely proud of his Italian heritage and his Australian homeland and is only too happy to recount how his chirpy nature earned him the nickname of one of this nation's greatest native icons.

"Kookaburra".

"In 1963 I went away with the Victorian side [pre- State-Of-Origin]. We went to Perth to play and we came back via Adelaide and played there – myself, John Nicholls, Allen Aylett and Bob Skilton amongst others," Alec says.

"We'd stayed in a motel in Adelaide and were sitting there telling jokes. I was killing myself laughing and 'Mick' Aylett and Skilton said I sounded like a kookaburra, so they christened me with that nickname and it's stuck ever since."

Alec's mother and father weren't on hand to see their boy complete his senior VFL debut against the Hawks, but used to make pilgrimages to Melbourne at two or three-monthly intervals to see him progress as a League footballer.

"They loved it. It made up for their sorrow in seeing me leave," Alec says.

Alec proudly declares that so far as his League football is concerned he achieved more than he'd ever set out to achieve. "Contrary to what a lot of people think, I never ever dreamed that I could play 180 games including four Grand Finals. It's not something I talk a lot about (although I do tell the young Essendon players how good I was!) but when you think about it, it was a great achievement for a kid from the bush, the only kid from Boulder," Alec says.

"It's one of my greatest regrets that I didn't spend more time with my father, because my Dad was a sensational person and I loved him and got on really well with him. The plusses are that he came over and people at the footy club used to look after him, particularly Bobby Woods, who's still on the door at Essendon.

"It's not so much that I couldn't get back to Boulder. It was more that the circumstances took me away and you can't have the cake and eat it too. As it happened I managed to get back to see him every year for holidays and I'd also see him in Melbourne when he came across during the year.

Alec says that while the mine brought financial reward to the family "it probably killed Dad in the end".

"We used to have a lot of water pumps there and Dad used to have to start them every morning and night," Alec says.

“He had two partners, but he used to take the lot on himself. The work put enormous stress on his heart and he died in 1964 when he was 53. Mum died in Kalgoorlie about 15 years ago (circa 1991).

“I was in Melbourne when he died suddenly on his way to Perth. It was 1963, I was playing then and I went home for the funeral. I was really upset with [the then Essendon coach John] Coleman when I returned because he dropped me to the seconds for missing the week’s training. I shouldn’t have been dropped and I told him ‘You can shove the seconds up you’re arse, I’m not playing’. I didn’t play in the seconds and the next week I got back in.

“I didn’t carry a grudge with Coleman, but I was sorry about what happened and it probably affected things later on down the track when I had a fight with Coleman.”

Alec’s sense of morality and his core value of respect later saw him serve at the now closed Pentridge Prison as a voluntary social worker for 23 years until the 1980s. “I mixed with a lot of murderers and robbers, but I met some terrific blokes there. I found that underneath it all, the bigger the crim, the bigger the human being,” Alec says.

“I helped build a boxing ring as well as a swimming pool for the crims in there. It happened through EJ [the late Ted Whitten] who used to take people over to help. I went there with him one day and thought ‘I might be able to help these blokes’ and it was through Norm Gallagher, who gave me a lot of support, that I was able to build one Olympic size swimming pool over there.



Bathtime at the bush at Yilgangi Queen and not a bubble in sight.

Alec's sister Ena initially worked as a secretary for an auditor in Kalgoorlie. "She married a fellow named Fred Phillips, who was a boilermaker, and they later raised a family in Esperance in Western Australia. There Fred and my sister ran a general store and when he died she opened up a health food shop," Alec says.

While Alec has been to Bergamo seven times, he's never been to the house where his father was born. "Next time I go I'll make a point of it," he says. "My cousin even has a bar there called the Kangaroo Bar and I'm going to take across a case of my wine, DomaineEpis."

Alec now spends his days between his Moonee Ponds home, not far from the old Windy Hill ground, and his vineyard in Woodend. "It would have been wonderful to have married and had a couple of kids, but it wasn't to be and that's the hand you're dealt in life and you just move on. You've got to cop it and run with it," he says.

"I played Australian Rules, I've got my vineyard and I still make my *salami*, my cheese, my *prosciutto* and my olives because I love the traditions. But Mum and Dad went without. Dad worked hard in the mine and Mum used to do ironing for five shillings an hour to try help get us through school, and she reckons she never bought so much as a new dress for two years. We didn't know it then, but we were poor. In the end Dad did all right, but that was in the end. Before that we were living in the desert like the Arabs, we didn't know anyone who was rich, and I realize now how good it was. We were all close, we never wanted for anything and we were never envious of anybody.

"I was given a lot of great things in my upbringing, for which I'm really appreciative, like good moral values, great family values and respect for people. I argue with a lot of people, but only with people I don't respect. I love the Italian culture, I love the Italian mentality. I'm an 'Aussie' and I love all those great Australian qualities, but I say to young Italian kids, 'Be thankful you've been given the European legacy of having respect for people, particularly the older people, because they've done all the hard work for us'.

“I’m big on custom, I’m also a traditionalist and I love the Italian side of my family. As soon as I’m with someone who’s Italian I’m at home. I know I’m only first generation, but feel as if I’m Italian-born because I grew up with so many of them. At the same time I’m very appreciative of Australia for giving my father an opportunity and as he always said, ‘Never forget what this country has done for us and never ever let this country down’.”

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ⁱ According to *The 1934 Kalgoorlie Race Riots Revisited* by Sarah Gregson, 86 people were arrested on a variety of charges in connection with the riots - 22 charges of stealing, 55 for unlawful possession, four for vagrancy, 17 for rioting (one absconded from bail) and four for possession of unlicensed firearms.

The police were able to secure 83 convictions and 14 men received gaol sentences. Eight of those charged with rioting were found guilty.

The arrest records indicate that the riot participants had a wide range of occupations and that there was a preponderance of young men among those charged. Alongside the 37 miners who were charged were listed several women domestics, a housewife, two building contractors, an upholsterer, a billiard marker, a salesman, a clerk, a gardener, a barman, a storekeeper and a 73 year old hawker named Juma Khan.

Mattaboni was charged with the manslaughter of Jordan but was subsequently acquitted.