

## THE AUSTRALIAN

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### Anthony Albanese produces the citizenship goods

Labor MP Anthony Albanese.

ROSIE LEWIS, DENNIS SHANAHAN THE AUSTRALIAN 12:00AM August 22, 2017

Veteran Labor MP Anthony Albanese says his citizenship status is clear: he is solely Australian and was never eligible to become an Italian by descent.

Mr Albanese's circumstances are unique among the 226 federal parliamentarians — he was born to a single Australian mother, Maryanne Ellery, and no father was listed on his birth certificate.

*The Australian* has sighted the document, which has no name or description in the space for “father” and confirms that, legally at least, Mr Albanese never had an Italian dad.

“My only legal parent on my birth certificate is my mother,” he told ABC radio yesterday. “I was due to be adopted out and I was told indeed that my father was deceased and my mother, as a young Catholic woman in 1963, as was pretty common at the time, was due to have me adopted out. She chose to keep me. She made that courageous decision.”

The spotlight has been shone on MPs with foreign-born parents and grandparents after former Nationals minister Matt Canavan revealed he was a dual national because his mother signed him up to Italian citizenship, apparently without his knowledge.

Mr Albanese grew up believing his father, Carlo Albanese, was killed in a car accident. When he was 14, his mother told him they met on an overseas trip.

He thought his father lived in Naples, but did not go searching for Carlo until some years following his mother's death in 2002.

Documented in journalist Karren Middleton's book *Albanese: Telling It Straight*, he talks about the lengths he took to track down Carlo, through shipping line employment records, staff at the Australian embassy in Rome — including former Howard government minister Amanda Vanstone — Italian lawyers and a maritime historian. Father and son met for the first time in 2009, in the southern Italian coastal city of Barletta.

“After a couple of minutes the buzzer went and in they came — Carlo, his son, and a third person, his daughter. Anthony had two siblings,” Middleton writes.

“Carlo was slight but quite tall, clean-shaven and well dressed. He seemed fit, if a little hard of hearing ... He walked in and, without speaking, opened his arms for an embrace. ‘I was in tears,’ Anthony says.”

According to the Italian consulate in Sydney, Italian citizenship can be acquired by descent at the time of a person's birth, as long as one parent is an Italian citizen.

Claims for Italian citizenship must also be supported by documentary evidence, including the applicant's birth certificate.

“My sole citizenship of Australia is absolutely clear,” Mr Albanese told *The Australian*.

Citizenship law expert Barbara Cova, who is admitted to the Milan Bar Association, confirmed a person must “legally” be a child of an Italian citizen to obtain citizenship.

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