



MCCV News

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www.mccv.org.au

MCCV establishes Bishop Joe Grech Memorial Scholarship

The Maltese Community Council of Victoria has announced the criteria that will be applied for the selection of successful applicants for scholarships to be awarded by Bishop Joe Grech Memorial Fund established last March.

The aims of the scholarship are to enable young persons of Maltese origin to continue in the footsteps of the late Bishop Joe Grech and, in particular, to encourage interest in Maltese culture.

For this purpose, the Scholarship will provide funds for one or more persons to visit Malta to participate in various cultural activities and appreciate the Maltese culture first hand.

While there are no minimum educational qualifications for applicants to apply for a scholarship, candidates should preferably be under 30 years of age. The intention is to eventually make two scholarships available, one for a male applicant and one for a female.

Candidates will be selected on the basis of their current and expected interest in Maltese history and culture. This could be demonstrated by, for instance:

- a knowledge of Maltese history and Maltese current affairs,
- participation in Maltese functions in Victoria,
- attendance at Maltese Historical Association meetings, and
- participation in activities of the wider Australian community.

Applicants will need to complete an application form and provide a CV highlighting their interests and activities by June 2012. Shortlisted candidates will be asked to attend an interview. Eligibility will be limited to residents of the State of Victoria. The decision of the selection panel will be final.



The late Bishop Joe Grech

The selection panel will consist of the following:

- a representative of the Maltese Community Council of Victoria,
- representative/s of the Bishop Joe Grech Memorial Fund,
- an eminent person of non-Maltese background, and
- other distinguished persons.

The funds available for the scholarship will be announced in due course. It will vary depending on the availability of funds, but it is not expected to be less than \$500.

Successful candidates will be expected to continue their interest on their return from Malta. In particular, they would be expected to take part in efforts to generate interest in Maltese culture among Maltese-Australian youth.

Application forms will be made available in due course from the MCCV office at the Maltese Centre in Parkville. An electronic version will also be made available for downloading from the MCCV website.

Completed applications should be posted to: The Secretary, Bishop Joe Grech Memorial Fund, c/- The Maltese Community Council of Victoria, 477 Royal Parade, Parkville 3052 or scanned and sent electronically by email to: admin@mccv.org.au. □



Shed some light on Census night

The Census of Population and Housing is conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) every five years. The next Census is on **Tuesday 9 August 2011**. The Census aims to take a 'snapshot' of Australia on Census night, collecting vital information that decision makers, government and communities use to allocate services, facilities and funding in your area. The Census asks for information about your ancestry, country of birth, religion, and primary language spoken at home, to help capture a full and accurate picture of Australia's cultural diversity.

Make sure you are counted wherever you are on Census night, so that the information collected is accurate, even if you are not an Australian citizen or resident. The information you give about yourself and your family is completely private. □

(See also President's Column on p. 2)

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The President's Column

The Census and its significance

From time to time, authorities feel that they need to find out several details relating to the population. Every country in the world needs such statistics in order to plan for the future. Unless one can project what the requirements will be, one cannot have a realistic plan to meet these ever-changing demographic patterns.

The census is in effect a snapshot of the population. It tells us the size of the population, where they live, information about households, including their size and composition, where people who constitute the Australian population have come from, what religion they practice (if any), and a multitude of other details to complete the picture.

In Australia, a census is carried out every five years. The last census was conducted in 2006 and it is due again this year. It will be held on Tuesday 9 August. On that day, every person is expected to fill in the census form and give the relevant details.

From the last census we learned that one-fifth of the population in Australia were born overseas. It would be no surprise to find that this proportion has grown considerably. As a matter of fact, we already know that the number of persons born in South-East Asia and living in Australia is now higher than that from Europe, which is, of course, no surprise, seeing that the number of persons coming from Europe, including Malta, has become a mere trickle.

What is the significance of such a census for the Maltese community? It is important to realise that we too have to promote a realistic picture of our community. We want to know not merely how many of us were born overseas, but perhaps much more importantly, how many of us have now joined the grey army and have indeed celebrated our three-score and ten milestone. It is important to know how many of us will be requiring nursing homes and other facilities health-related or otherwise in the not-too-distant future.

A well known phenomenon associated with ageing is the fact that as we grow older we tend to lose our 'acquired' English language and tend to rely more and more on the language which we learned from our mother. Many of us will be forgetting English words and find ourselves substituting words, phrases and sentences in Maltese. This highlights the need for carers, including social workers, nurses and doctors who can understand the language, and in their absence, we need interpreters that can bridge the gulf created by this problem.

It is also not so well known that Maltese welfare organisations like the Maltese Community Council of Victoria depend on government grants to enable it to

fund its welfare program. Without such grants we will have to close shop and leave these services to non-Maltese, so called 'mainstream' organisations, which have no knowledge of the language and not interest in continuing Maltese traditional ways, including food and other needs. The needs of the Maltese community as they become clear through the census, would help in enabling us to continue our services to the community.

Hence, the critical importance of giving a clear picture of who we are and what our needs might be. It is therefore crucial that on census night we emphasize those characteristics that make us Maltese. To the question "What language do you speak at home?" we have to emphasize that we all speak Maltese at home. There is no point in impressing the statisticians that we all speak English!

Likewise, in relation to questions relating to ancestry, we should make sure that our Maltese background comes out loud and clear. We should make sure that our information counts, and that everybody is included in this census.

Finally, bear in mind also that this information is entirely private. Nobody is going to know what you have written, and the information is used only for statistical purposes, that is, no names will ever appear anywhere in any publication. This information is required even if you are not an Australian citizen.

Make sure that your information makes a difference!

Further information about the Census is available on the website at www.abs.gov.au/census.

Prof. Maurice Cauchi
MCCV President

Contributions to MCCV News

The MCCV News is published by the Maltese Community Council of Victoria every two months to inform the Maltese community about activities, news and information that would be of interest to it.

Affiliated associations are encouraged to provide contributions, including notices for forthcoming community events, brief reports on recent community events that took place since the publication of the previous newsletter.

Contributions should be forwarded to the Editor either by email at pro@mccv.org.au or alternatively by post to:

The Editor—MCCV News
Maltese Community Council of Victoria
477 Royal Parade
PARKVILLE VIC 3052

Contributions must be submitted by the following dates:

- Sept-Oct 2011 Newsletter: **Friday 26 August 2011**
- Nov-Dec 2011 Newsletter: **Friday 28 October 2011**



Notes from MCCV Council Meetings

JUNE 2011 MEETING

The following items were discussed at the Council Meeting held on 1 June 2011:

Bishop of Gozo to visit Melbourne

The Bishop of Gozo, Mgr Mario Grech, will be visiting Melbourne between 16 and 23 October 2011. The MCCV is planning to hold a Welcome Reception for him at the Maltese Centre in Parkville on Thursday 20th October.

Malta's PM to attend CHOGM in Perth

Prime Minister Lawrence Gonzi will be representing Malta at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting to be held in Perth, Western Australia from the 28 to 30 October 2011. The possibility of the PM visiting the Maltese communities in the eastern states prior to CHOGM is being explored. No specific arrangements have as yet been made.

Bishop Joe Grech Memorial Fund

About \$6,500 have been donated to the Bishop Joe Grech Memorial Fund. By October 2012 enough interest may be earned to enable the award of a scholarship. The MCCV has donated \$2,000 to the Fund. Fr Robert Galea, who is well known as a singer and songwriter and was mentored by Bishop Grech, has agreed to assist with the fund raising by giving a concert some time later this year.

MCCV honours program

The MCCV is considering a proposal for the establishment of an honours program to recognise and give some credit to individuals, alive or deceased, who made a significant contribution to the Maltese community in Victoria. The rules and criteria to apply to the program are currently being drafted.

Home Visitation Scheme

The MCCV is considering joining up with a company called 'New Hope Foundation' who organise people to visit Maltese living in residential homes. Associations are encouraged to nominate any Maltese whom they are aware of and who may benefit from a Home Visitation Scheme. They are also encouraged to recruit persons who would be able to visit Maltese elderly and disabled at home or in institutions.

Census 2011

Tuesday 9 August 2011 is Census night. It is important that we state in Census responses that we speak Maltese at home. The MCCV will ask Maltese broadcasters to pass on this message to their listeners.

Donation to Malta Migration Museum

The MCCV has forwarded a cheque for \$2,700 to Mons. Philip Calleja being funds raised from donations for the Malta Migration Museum.

Affiliated Associations' use of MCCV kitchen

The MCCV Executive received some complaints that glassware items used in functions organised by affiliated associations at the Maltese Centre in Parkville were not cleaned properly after the event. As a result, the MCCV is considering increasing the hire fee for the facilities by \$50 to pay for the services of a cleaner (to those associations who do not make use of such a facility already) to ensure items are properly cleaned. It is important that proper dishwashing powder is used in every wash and the dishwasher filter is cleaned after every wash. □

JULY 2011 MEETING

The following items were discussed at the Council Meeting held on 6 July 2011:

Study on Diabetes within the Maltese community

MCCV President, Prof. Maurice Cauchi, met with Professor Helen Borland from Victoria University (VU) which is seeking a grant for VU to carry out a study on the prevalence of diabetes within the Maltese community. VU have already conducted similar studies for other communities, including the Greek, Turkish and Filipino. The outcome of the study will provide important information to the authorities for the provision of services to the Maltese community. An initial survey of the Maltese community will need to be conducted to provide information in support of the request for the study grant. A survey form has been designed and is available from the Maltese Centre and will be available for download from the MCCV website. Affiliated associations are asked to assist in circulating the survey forms among their members and to encourage them to complete it are return it to the Maltese Centre.

Bishop Joe Grech Memorial Scholarship

The Council approved the proposal recommended by the Executive Committee to establish the Bishop Joe Grech Memorial Scholarship. The eligibility criteria for the scholarship have been documented (*see front page of this newsletter for details*).

Bishop Joe Grech Memorial Fund

Further donations have been made to the Fund including \$2,000 from Newport Maltese Association, \$500 from Mr Christian Zahra, \$500 from Fr Karm Borg, \$200 from the Maltese Historical Association, \$100 from Maltese LaVallette Association, \$150 from Reskeon Maltese Association and \$150 from Reskeon Seniors Group. The total funds now exceed \$10,000. The fund raising concert by Fr Robert Galea has been delayed until November 2011.

Youth Committee

Ted Delia, who has been assisting Rita Catania and the MCCV Youth Committee to attract the younger generation, provided a progress report to the Council on the planning that has been under way. Mr Delia said that it has become clear that the only way to reach and effectively communicate with the younger generations is through the use of social networking technology, particularly Facebook. The proposed four areas of interest are: cultural, social, youth welfare and history. He requested each association to nominate at least one young person from among their members' children to participate in a half day session to be held at the Maltese Centre one Saturday and contribute their ideas on the name for the group and type of material that would attract and generate interest among young people of Maltese descent. A call for expressions of interest for this purpose will be published on a new Youth page on the MCCV website.

New colour printer

The MCCV is investing in a colour printer to be able to print official documents, such as, the Annual Report and the bi-monthly newsletter. Currently the MCCV outsources such printing and will be able to save these printing costs. □

Queen's Birthday Honour for George Saliba

A prominent member of the Maltese community in Melbourne, Mr George Saliba, was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for service to the Maltese community. Mr Saliba was among several recipients of Australian honours included in the traditional announcement that is made by the Governor General on the occasion of the Queen's Birthday (June 13). The Maltese Community Council of Victoria congratulates Mr Saliba on his well-deserved award.

For the past 40 years, Mr Saliba has worked very hard on activities aimed at developing the Maltese community in every respect with some outstanding results to his credit. George is still very active within the Maltese community and his dedication to make a better world for members of the community, especially among the elderly citizens, is as strong as ever.

Most people want to be able to leave a legacy for those who come after them. Some begin to think in these terms only later in life. George Saliba was encouraged to think about such issues at a younger age. In 1955 while still in his late teens living in Malta, he was involved in setting up the Malta Amateur Football Association (MAFA) which today is the second biggest sporting body in Malta.

In 1958 Mr Saliba carried this enthusiasm with him to Australia where he was determined to make a difference in a way that would benefit his new community. In Australia, he started work with the Victorian Railways and later with Westinghouse Brake & Signal Australia Pty Ltd. He furthered his studies at the Australian Institute of Management and



Mr George Saliba OAM

was promoted by the company to the position of Works Superintendent, Rectifier Division. In 1983 Mr Saliba went to work for the Public Transport Commission as a Senior Electoral Training Officer where he stayed until his retirement in 1995.

Serving the Maltese Community

In 1972 Mr Saliba was one of the founding members of the Newport Maltese Association (NMA) and was the first President of the Association, a position he held for 22 years. During this time, he worked tirelessly to make the NMA what it is today, one of the pillars on which the Maltese community of Victoria is built.

In 1994 Mr Saliba decided not to nominate for the President's office as he wanted others in the Association be given the opportunity to lead. So for the next 16 years, he occupied the position of Vice President of the Association. In 2010, at the request of his fellow committee members, he once again

accepted the position of President of the Association.

In 2003 Mr Saliba was also appointed Coordinator of the Association's Seniors Group. The Seniors Group, 240 in number, meet every Wednesday to socialize and join in various competitions and activities.

In 1978 Mr Saliba was also elected Senior Vice President of the Maltese Community Council of Victoria (MCCV), a position he had held for 16 years until he retired. While serving as Vice President, George also held the positions of Management Committee Chairman and Maltese Cultural Festival Coordinator.

Fund raising for major community project

Mr Saliba has been one of the Maltese community stalwarts in fund raising for the Maltese Community Centre that was built almost 30 years ago in the Melbourne suburb of Parkville. Fund raising for this major community project was always top priority for him as he believed it was imperative for the Maltese community to construct a meeting place with appropriate facilities equipped to cater for their social and welfare needs. Through his leadership and sheer determination, the Newport Maltese Association raised in excess of \$ 300,000 for the building fund, an achievement unmatched till today.

In November 2007, Mr Saliba was presented with an award for "Excellence in Multicultural Affairs" by the Governor of Victoria Prof. David De Kretser, A.O. at Government House.

Mr Saliba has been married to Lena for 53 years and they have two children and two grandchildren. □

Mother's Day Luncheon for the Seniors Group

By Paul Vella

On Wednesday, 4th May, Reskeon Seniors Group held a Mother's Day Luncheon for their members at the Firenze Reception in Fawkner. Around 160 members and friends attended.

Co-Ordinator Caesar Vella welcomed guests and members and invited them to stand for the Maltese and Australian National Anthems. After Champagne was poured into the glasses, Caesar asked all male members to be upstanding to propose a toast for all the mothers on the occasion of Mother's Day.

Mario Sammut of Moods Music provided the entertainment keeping all those present dancing on the floor most of the day.

Distinguished guests present included the Consul-General of Malta in Victoria, Mr Charles Mifsud and Mrs Anna Maria Mifsud; Honorary Life Member, Dr Clemente Zammit and Mrs Mary Zammit; MCCV Vice President, Mr Gejtu Deguara

and Mrs Mary Deguara; MCCV Honorary Treasurer, Mr Paul Borg and Mrs Nellie Borg.

Co-Ordinator Caesar Vella wished all the mothers present a Happy Mother's Day because they all deserved it. He also encouraged those members whose mother is no longer with us, to remember them in our prayers. Invited to say a few words, Mr Charles Mifsud, said that all mothers deserve a special day for what they provide to their families.

Members Lina and Victor Pulis, along with Rita and Joe Agius were celebrating their 50th Wedding Anniversary around this time, and they were called to the floor and were presented flowers to celebrate this great occasion. Another couple, Theresa and Laurie Bartolo were celebrating their 60th Wedding Anniversary during this time.



Then there was the presentation of trophies for the winner and runner-up of the Ladies' Bocce Competition which finished two weeks before this event. Caesar Vella presented the trophies to winner Cathy Gatt and runner-up Carmen Grech. □



Seniors Group isellmu lill-attriċi Maltija Vitorin Galea

Minn Paul Vella

Nhar il-Ħadd, 20 t'April, ir-Reskeon Maltese Association and Reskeon Seniors Group, iddedikaw il-*Get Together* tagħhom għat-tifkira tal-attriċi Vitorin Galea, f'għeluq il-15-il sena mill-mewt tagħha. Dan sar fis-Sala taċ-Ċentru Malti ta' Parkville.

Kien tard is-sena li għaddiet meta t-tifla ta' Vitorin Galea, Norma Cristina, ghamlet kuntatt miegħi biex tara jekk nistgħux norganizzaw xi haga bħala tifkira ta' ommha, waqt li hi (Norma) u zewgħa, Joe, ikun fuq btala f'Melbourne f'April.

Jien kont avvicijnajt lill-President tal-Għaqda tar-Reskeon, Caesar Vella, u dan mill-ewwel aċċetta li tiegħu hsieb kollox l-Għaqda. Saru l-arrangamenti mehtiega u l-Għaqda aċċettaw li jiddedikaw wiehed mill-*Get Togethers* tagħhom li jinżammu matul is-sena għal dan il-ghan.

Madwar 110 attendew għal dan il-*Get Together*, fosthom Norma Cristina u zewgħa Joe flimkien ma' membri tal-familja tagħhom.



Il-programm beda fis-2 pm, fejn il-President u l-Vici President tal-Għaqda, Caesar Vella u Joe Cutajar, taw merħba lil dawk preżenti, speċjalment lil Norma u Joe, u fisseru kif kien se jsir il-programm. Norma giet mistiedna biex titkellem f'it fuq ommha. Il-President, Caesar Vella, pprezentalha bukkett fjuri f'isem l-Għaqda.

L-ewwel parti tal-programm kien wiri tal-Bijografija tal-attriċi Vitorin Galea, fejn sirna nafu hafna fuq il-ħajja tagħha speċjalment il-karriera tagħha fuq il-palk u t-televizjoni. Hafna atturi Maltin tkellmu fuqha u anki membri tal-familja



tagħha. Fit-tieni parti ntweraw l-film "Il-Gaġġa" li kienet hadmet fih Vitorin Galea.

Kemm Norma u Joe u l-familja tagħha impressjonaw ruhhom kif gie organizzat dan il-programm u billi ltaqgħu ma' hafna Maltin.

Dan il-*Get Together*, wiehed minn tlieta li jinżammu matul is-sena, kien bla hlas għall-membri kollha, bħalma jsir is-soltu.

Prosit lill-kumitat għall-organizzazzjoni speċjalment għal dawk il-membri li hadmu bi shih fil-preparamenti u kif ukoll fil-kċina. □

Festa ta' San Ġorġ Preca f'Melbourne



Parti mill-grupp li attenda għall-Pellegrinaġġ

Minn Paul Vella

Is-Socjeta' tad-Duttrina Nisranija, jew aħjar, kif aktar nafuha aħna "Tal-Mużew", organizzaw ċelebrazzjonijiet speċjali għall-okkażjoni tal-Festa tal-Qaddis Malti San Ġorġ Preca, il-Fundatur tas-Socjeta' tagħhom.

Iċ-ċelebrazzjonijiet kienu mqassma fi granet differenti. It-Tlieta, 10 ta' Mejju, inżamm Seminar ta' Riflessjoni fil-Parroċċa ta' Queen of Peace, Laverton, fejn saret preżentazzjoni narrattiva fuq l-avvenimenti prinċipali tal-ħajja ta' San Ġorġ Preca kif ukoll diskrizzjoni tal-postijiet fejn saru.

Il-Ġimgħa, 13 ta' Mejju, giet iċċelebrata Quddiesa ta' Ringrazzjament ad unur San Ġorġ Preca fl-istess Knisja. Prim Ċelebrant kien Fr Ian Ranson, Kappillan tal-Parroċċa. Jikkonċelebraw kien hemm Fr Longinus Onyechesi u Fr Edwin Agius MSSP. Hafna attendew minn subborġi

differenti ta' Melbourne. Fost dawk preżenti kien hemm il-Konslu Generali ta' Malta fil-Victoria, is-Sur Charles Mifsud u l-Avukat Victor Borg, Vici President tal-Kunsill Malti tal-Victoria. Wara kien hemm ċena hafifa b'ikel tradizzjonali Malti.

Imbagħad is-Sibt, 14 ta' Mejju, inżamm gurnata ta' Adorazzjoni Ewkaristika u talb lil San Ġorġ Preca fiċ-Ċentru Reġjonali tas-SDC, Sunshine North. Il-gurnata ntemmet b'Siegha Qaddisa li għaliha attendew membri tas-Socjeta'.

Il-Ħadd, 15 ta' Mejju, inżamm Pellegrinaġġ lejn il-Monument ta' San Ġorġ Preca, li jinsab fil-ġenb tal-Kattidral ta' St. Patrick's, East Melbourne. Kif spicċat il-Quddiesa tal-11 am, ġemgħa ta' Liturgija ingabru hdejn il-Monument għal-Liturġija ta' Riflessjoni fuq San Ġorġ Preca li giet immexxija minn Mark

Micallef u Joseph Micallef, it-tnejn membri tal-SDC. Ir-riflessjonijiet kienu fuq San Ġorġ bħala tfajjel, bħala pijunier li qasam m'ohrajn il-Kelma t'Alla, bħala Fundatur tas-Socjeta' tad-Duttrina Nisranija, San Ġorġ Preca bħala kittieb, San Ġorġ Preca bħala Prekiratur u Għalliem, u fl-aħħar kif San Ġorġ Preca gie maghruf għall-qdusija tiegħu. Wara kull riflessjoni inqrat parti mill-Bibbja, saret talba qasira fejn dawk preżenti ħadu parti fiha. Tkantaw ukoll xi innijiet.

Hadna gost naraw numru sabieh tal-Komunita' Maltija avolja kienet gurnata xi f'it kiesha. Fost il-membri tal-SDC preżenti kien hemm Angelo Abela, Miriam u Patricia Belli, Daniel Attard, Noel Debono, San Drozdow, Joseph Farrugia, Anthony Gatt, Arthur Kilpatrick, Charles Pullicino, Michael Sammut u naturalment Mark Micallef u Joseph Micallef li mexxew il-Liturġija. □



Homelessness is a matter of justice rather than charity

On Thursday 16 June 2011, St Vincent de Paul Society held the annual Vinnies CEO Sleepout in capital cities across Australia. The event challenges business and community leaders to experience homelessness first-hand for one night, raise money, and with fresh insight go on to effect change in social opinions on this serious issue. All money raised goes directly towards the ongoing provision of Vinnies' homeless services across the country.

In an article published on the *Eureka Street* website under the title of 'Admiring the homeless', St Vincent de Paul Society National Council Chief Executive, Dr John Falzon, writes that the CEO Sleepout is all about trying to learn a little and share a little about the world of homelessness in a wealthy country. Whether we like it or not, we are all, in reality, part of that world. The CEO Sleepout is not just about raising money. It's about changing minds and hearts. It's about changing negative attitudes to people doing it tough; people who are usually demonised but who, in his view, should be deeply respected and admired for their tenacity and inventiveness.

Dr Falzon further writes that "Our problem in Australia is not the 'idleness of the poor', as perniciously proposed by welfare-bashers of all political stripes. Our problem is inequality. This is a social question, not a behavioural one. We do irreparable harm when we turn it into a question of individual behaviour, blaming people for their own poverty, as is so often the case with people who are homeless or in jail because of society's failure to



provide them with opportunities and nurture their talents.

According to Dr Falzon, "people are enclosed by massive walls built around them on the basis of race, class, gender or disability. The same people are then condemned for lacking the 'aspiration' to scale these walls. The CEO Sleepout is not about a group of privileged people explaining how to scale the walls. It is about a group of business and community leaders wanting to learn from the people who live in the guts of our greatest social problem. It's about having the humility to listen to the people who can teach us what it is that needs to change in society. It is about committing ourselves to join in the long-haul project of tearing down the walls that we have built around people."

Australia stands near the bottom of the list of relative social expenditures in comparison with OECD countries. Professor Peter Saunders of the Social Policy Research Centre at UNSW has been telling us for

nearly a decade that it would take an expenditure of 2-3 per cent of GDP to lift all people out of poverty in Australia. In his words:

In Dr Falzon's view, "We can thus pay to remove all Australians from poverty if we want to: the fact that we don't do so is a matter of choice, not affordability. It is indefensible that in a country as prosperous as ours we still have, on conservative estimates, 105,000 people experiencing homelessness, nearly half of whom are under the age of 25. It is indefensible that we continue to expect a single unemployed person to survive on \$34 a day, a daily battle that is waged from below the poverty line."

The Federal Government's homelessness strategy aims by 2020 to halve homelessness and to ensure that all rough sleepers are offered accommodation. The St Vincent de Paul Society is committed to assisting in the achievement of these concrete goals.

Dr Falzon concludes that "we must, as a nation, address the massive shortfall in social housing in order to meet these targets. We must also comprehensively address the national crisis in mental health. Our social spending relative to our wealth as a nation is the measure of our humanity. This is why we need to think of homelessness as a matter of justice rather than charity." □

Dr John Falzon PhD is a sociologist who works as an advocate on issues of social justice, especially poverty, inequality, housing, homelessness and social security. He is the St Vincent de Paul Society National Council Chief Executive and a member of the Australian Social Inclusion Board.



A Tribute to Dominic Bonello

By Joe Portelli

On Thursday 2 June 2011 the Maltese community in Victoria lost one of its well respected members with the passing away of Dominic Bonello.

Dominic was a devoted man, not only to his wife Annie & his family, but to his second great love of his life, (some would say his first), Don Bosco and the Salesian Past Pupils Association of Victoria.

Dominic was, as well as being a Past Pupil, a true Salesian, working hard & tirelessly for the Salesian cause of raising money to help the overseas Salesian Missions. He did this for almost 54 years, being involved with the then Salesian Old Boys Association from just after its formation in 1957.

Dominic was not a man to put himself out there for recognition, but

preferred to stay in the back ground and encourage others to "take the glory" while he, together with his wife Annie, worked endlessly behind the scenes.

Dominic was nominated to and accepted the position as President back in the Seventies at time when the Association had gone quiet, and waited till such a time when, in 1988, my father, (then Secretary), the Late John B. Portelli, was elected as President and Dominic stepped back to become Vice-President, a position Dominic continued to hold for almost 20 years. He also stepped in as Acting-President many times as needed.

Together, with my father and the committee, they began rebuilding the Salesian Past Pupils Assoc. of Vic.

Dominic's commitment to the cause was never ending, patiently working to make sure that any issue that arose concerning the Association were resolved.



Dominic Bonello

He not only diligently attended the monthly meetings, but for three years, attended the Don Bosco Hostel Executive Committee monthly meetings with Joe Darmanin who was President at the time. This shows how Dominic was not only keen, but dedicated to supporting the

continued on p 7.

Maltese Historical Association talk on 'Mediaeval Malta'

By Brian Zammit

The history of the Maltese islands in mediaeval times is shrouded in mystery. Much of what has traditionally been taught in schools was often based on not much more than myths.

Guest speaker Professor Maurice Cauchi delivered a lecture on *Mediaeval Malta* at the June meeting of the Maltese Historical Association held at the Maltese Centre in Parkville. With his insights he was able to shed some light on this fascinating period of our history. His talk drew on accounts written by mediaeval chroniclers, such as, al-Himyari, Ibn Hawqal and Giliberto Abbate.

Prof. Cauchi began with a brief timeline, highlighting the period of Byzantine rule (roughly 395 to 870 AD), that of Arab domination (from 870 to 1090 AD), and the arrival of the Normans and various European dynasties. Arabs based in Tunisia launched their first concerted attack on the islands in 869 but they were repulsed by the Byzantines. A second attack in 870 was, however, successful. According to al-Himyari, the islands were laid waste and remained virtually uninhabited until around 1045 when a colony was established, made up of Muslims (four hundred combatants with families) and their more numerous slaves. In 1175, a Christian visitor to Malta, Burckhardt von Strasbourg, referred to the inhabitants as Saracens.

The next phase in Maltese history begins in 1191 with the arrival of the Normans under Count Roger de Hauteville. Although the Arabs were defeated, the Normans simply imposed



taxes and returned to Sicily. It was not until a second expedition in 1127 that the Normans, led by Count Roger II, assumed more direct control of the islands.

Prof. Cauchi spoke about some key events, including an Arab uprising, an attempt by the Byzantines to regain the islands in 1144 and the final expulsion of the Arabs in 1224. He also pointed out that many Muslims converted to Christianity during the years prior to 1224, a development related to sustained efforts to re-Christianise the islands. For example, the cathedral church in Mdina, possibly a restructured mosque, is mentioned in official documents in 1299, but it may have been established decades earlier. A late thirteenth-century document, *Lo Compasso de Navegare*, refers to a church of St Mary on Comino. This would suggest that, by around 1300, similar places of worship would have been established across the islands.

Evidence also points to a dramatic increase in rural settlements in Malta, a tendency already noticeable in the Arab period. Documents of the time refer to wheat and cotton production, the latter a

particularly critical introduction, providing the islands with a cash crop. Late in the thirteenth century, Giliberto Abbate estimated that the population exceeded ten thousand, almost all of whom were dependent on agriculture. According to this source, the vast majority in Malta were Muslims; in Gozo, on the other hand, more than half the people were Christian.

After the Normans, control of the Maltese islands passed from one dynastic house to another, often as the result of major battles fought in the Maltese islands, which surprisingly have often been overlooked in our history books. For instance, the Aragonese and Angevin fleets fought a pitched battle in the Grand Harbour in 1283; according to Desclot, Angevin casualties amounted to three thousand five hundred dead and five hundred wounded (an exaggeration, perhaps?).

Prof. Cauchi also spoke about a much maligned figure in our history, Don Gonsalvo Monroy. In 1421, in a contract referred to as an *impignoratio* (pawning), Monroy paid thirty thousand florins to the King of Aragon in return for lordship over the Maltese islands. This was done through an intermediary, the Sicilian viceroy, Antonio de Cardona. The Maltese swore their loyalty towards Cardona, against the pledge that their 'rights and privileges' would be honoured by their new lord. Four weeks later, Cardona officially transferred all his rights to Monroy. Revolt against Monroy broke out in Gozo in 1425, the rebellion spreading to Malta by 1426. In 1427, forces were put together to subdue the revolt. Two Maltese clergymen then travelled to Sicily with guarantees for payment of the thirty thousand florins. Only twenty thousand florins were paid by the agreed deadline, October 1428. However, Monroy passed away early in 1429; in his will, he stipulated that, of these twenty thousand florins, ten thousand were to be paid to the Aragonese king while the remaining ten thousand florins were to be redistributed among the Maltese population!

The Knights of St John made their entrance into Maltese history in 1530. Jean Quintin d'Autun in his *Insulae Descriptio* (1536) provides this not very flattering picture of the Maltese at the time:

"The people have a Sicilian character, with a mixture of African ... they are not strong enough nor adapted to warfare ... The women are not at all ugly, but live very much as if they were uncivilized; they do not mix with other people; they go out covered in a veil, as if to see a woman is here the same as to violate her." □

A Tribute to Dominic Bonello

continued from p 6.

Salesian cause and helping our Association to bring closer relations with the Salesian Family.

Dominic's wife Annie later became Social Secretary and together they would go to the Maltese Community Centre in Parkville twice a week to try to sell tickets and encourage people to come to our functions with the aim of raising more money for the missions. Together with Annie they would also continuously donate prizes for the raffles. He always kept Don Bosco and the Associations members at heart.

I, personally, have known of Dominic, it seems for most of my life, through his contact with my father, but it is only in about the last ten years that I had the privilege of knowing Dominic personally.

I re-met him at a function that I had the chance to attend, where Dominic re-

introduced himself to me and later started encouraging me to become a committee member and then when the opportunity arose, he further strongly encouraged me to stand for the position of President, with him as Vic-President. I continually turned to Dominic for advice as I felt that he should have been President but he said that I was following in my father's footsteps and he was happy to help me as my "right hand man".

Dominic and Annie stepped down from the committee due to Dominic's failing health in late 2007. He, as well as Annie, left a great void in our Association but he continued to help and support our cause to the end.

He will be greatly missed by all those who knew him and especially the Salesian Family. He leaves behind his mark of loyalty, dedication, commitment and a great true example of the Salesian Family.

Dominic, with Don Bosco, Rest In Peace. □

WW2 CANON PRESENTATION TO MCCV



On 1 June 2011 Mr Mario Attard presented a canon to MCCV President Prof. Maurice Cauchi that was made by his late father Emmanuel Attard with ammunition shells fired from or at Malta during World War II.

Collecting Victoria's immigration & settlement material heritage

Arts Victoria is supporting an Initial Scoping Study being conducted by Dr Helen Light which will provide an overall indication of the number and scale of multicultural collections in Victoria in order to develop a methodology for assessing and scoping the collection material, stories, condition, access and ownership. It is hoped to eventually find a way to help communities preserve their material for posterity.

Many of Victoria's ethnic groups still hold collections of materials which immigrants valued enough to bring with them. The material reflects their particular experience in the settlement process and the adaptation of their original culture to their new home.

Anyone with any information regarding the existence and whereabouts of Victorian migration and settlement objects, or about communities that hold their own history, should contact Dr Helen Light on mobile number 0416 096 160 or by email to: helenlight@netspace.net.au.



Dr Helen Light AM, BA(Hons), PhD was made a Member in the Order of Australia in 2005 for service to the community as director of the Jewish Museum of Australia, particularly through support for significant cultural exhibitions and community-based programs. She served as director of the Jewish Museum between 1983 and 2010.

Community Events Calendar

For up-to-date and more detailed information, visit our website at www.mccv.org.au

| Date | Event | Location | Suburb |
|-----------------------------|---|----------------------------|-----------|
| Sat 16 July | Get Together - St Helena Maltese Australian Social Club | Maltese Centre | Parkville |
| Sat 23 July | 'Christmas in July' Dinner - Newport Maltese Assn Seniors Group | Maltese Centre | Parkville |
| Wed 27 July 6.30 pm | MCCV Executive Committee Meeting | Maltese Centre | Parkville |
| Wed 03 August 7.00 pm | MCCV Council Meeting | Maltese Centre | Parkville |
| Sun 14 August | Annual General Meeting - Newport Maltese Assn Seniors Group | - | - |
| Fri 26 August 7.30 pm | St Helena Feast - St Helena Maltese-Australian Social Club | St Leopold Croatian Church | Ardeer |
| Sat 27 August | St Helena Dinner Dance - St Helena Maltese-Australian Social Club | La Mirage | Somerton |
| Sun 28 August 3.00 pm | St Helena Feast Mass - St Helena Maltese-Australian Social Club | St Leopold Croatian Church | Ardeer |
| Wed 31 August 6.30 pm | MCCV Executive Committee Meeting | Maltese Centre | Parkville |
| Sat 3 September | Social Event - Maltese Salesians Past Pupils Association of Vic. | Maltese Centre | Parkville |
| Wed 7 September 7.00 pm | MCCV Council Meeting | Maltese Centre | Parkville |
| Thu 8 September | Feast of Maria Bambina Mass - Reskeon Maltese Association | Maltese Centre | Parkville |
| Sat 10 September 6.00 pm | Vitoria Dinner Dance - Reskeon Maltese Assn. | Firenze Receptions | Fawkner |