



# MCCV News

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## Council Bill published during Deputy PM's Melbourne visit

## MCCV PRO appointed Hon. Consul for Victoria



In a meeting with Maltese community leaders in Victoria held at the Maltese Centre in Parkville on Tuesday 25 October, the Deputy Prime Minister, Dr Tonio Borg, presented the Bill establishing the Council for Maltese Living Abroad, that was being published in Malta that day.

Dr Borg said that it is his intention that the Bill be approved in Parliament preferably before this year's end or, at the latest, early next year, so that the focus next year will be on the creation of structures to bring the Council to life. Dr Borg indicated that he has already sought a limited budget for the Council in the budget that will be debated in Parliament in the next few weeks.

Members of the Maltese Community Council's Executive Committee, leaders from Maltese associations as well as the High Commissioner for Malta in Australia,

*Above: Deputy Prime Minister Dr Tonio Borg (standing) addresses community Leaders.*

*From left: Prof. Maurice Cauchi, High Commissioner Mr Francis Tabone and Consul-General Mr Charles Mifsud.*

Mr Francis Tabone, and the Consul General for Malta in Victoria, Mr Charles Mifsud, attended the meeting.

Dr Borg apologised on behalf of the Prime Minister, Dr Lawrence Gonzi, who had to cancel his visit to Australia due to two very important meetings of the European Council, the highest organ of the EU made up of all heads of government of the EU countries, due to the Euro zone crisis caused by some of its members not complying with the regulations.

### Council For Maltese Living Abroad

Dr Borg said that, as he spoke, the Bill was being published in the Government Gazette in Malta. Keeping its promise given at the Convention last year, the Government is introducing the Bill for the establishment of the Council of Maltese Living Abroad and is doing so by agreement with the Opposition.

Dr Borg presented a copy of the bill to MCCV President, Professor Maurice Cauchi. A copy was also being sent to the Maltese Community Council of NSW.

On Tuesday 25 October 2011 during his address to the Maltese community at MCCV-hosted welcome reception, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr Tonio Borg, announced the appointment of MCCV PRO, Dr Edwin Borg-Manché, as the new Honorary Consul for Malta in the State of Victoria.

The Deputy Prime Minister said that, as the incumbent Hon. Consul Mr Victor Borg had expressed his wish to be replaced by someone younger, the Maltese Government decided to appoint Dr Edwin Borg-Manché as the new Honorary Consul. Dr Borg said that he has known Dr Borg-Manché well for a long time, having been in the same law course together at the University of Malta for five years. He congratulated Dr Borg-Manché on his appointment and said it was very pleasing to be appointing someone whom he knew so well.

Dr Borg presented Dr Borg-Manché with the Warrant of Honorary Consul for Malta in Victoria signed by the President of Malta and countersigned by the Deputy Prime Minister himself as well as with the Exequatur issued by the Government of Australia.

Dr Borg paid a special tribute to the outgoing Honorary Consul, Mr Victor Borg, who had served in that capacity for almost three decades.

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### Latest News

#### Council Bill Second Reading passed by unanimous vote

On Monday 7 November 2011 the Bill setting up the Council for Maltese Living Abroad was debated in Parliament and passed by the unanimous support of both sides of the House at the Second Reading stage.

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## The President's Column

### Strengthening ties with Malta

It is not often that Maltese in Victoria have so many visitors from the old country. Within the space of two weeks we had a parliamentary delegation led by the Speaker of the House of Representatives in Malta, the Hon Dr Michael Frendo with two representatives each from the government side and the opposition. We then had the Bishop of Gozo, His Grace Mons Mario Grech, and finally, a visit from the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Hon Dr Tonio Borg, who was in Australia for the CHOGM meeting in Perth.

The Parliamentary delegation had an opportunity to put their point of view on several issues, and answered questions asked by those present. One could come to the conclusion that, with respect to issues relating to Maltese migrants, there is no fundamental disparity between the views of the government and those of the opposition, something which augurs well for diaspora relations with Malta.

The visit of the Bishop of Gozo was on a quite different level. He had an opportunity to chat to several persons who happened to be taking a language class in Maltese, and asked them questions as to the reasons why they are studying Maltese language. The age of these students varied from the very young to those of a mature age. Following this, His Grace had an opportunity to talk to those gathered and to mix and talk informally to many of those present.

Finally, the Hon Dr Tonio Borg had a whirlwind tour of the eastern states and spent an evening at the Maltese Centre. He had an in-depth discussion with the Executive of the MCCV and the leaders of the Maltese community where the main topic of discussion was the Bill setting up the advisory Council for Maltese Living Abroad. The Council will consist of 17 members chosen by the government, and chaired by the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Five of these members will be selected from Australia, seven from Europe and North America and another five from Malta.

The aim of this advisory council is to provide advice to the Minister on issues raised by the members, who will be meeting in Malta at least once a year, and on any proposed laws and administrative measures impacting Maltese living abroad.

The Bill also establishes a Directorate whose aim it is to reorganise and consolidate the various offices and departments currently scattered among the various ministries. It will have a full time director who will be responsible to the various ministers.

Finally, the future establishment of the Maltese Cultural Institute is covered in a provision in the Bill enabling the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Culture to jointly set up the Institute by regulation. Such an institute might have branches around the world, providing information and material, and facilitating the maintenance of language and culture. This is one aspect on which we as an organisation have always placed high priority, and we still hope that it will be set up sooner rather than later.

These visits are very important to us as they tend to strengthen the ties between the Maltese in Malta and those overseas. We are obviously always happy to discuss issues affecting our community with such visitors and ensure that visitors have plenty of opportunities to meet with our community during their visits.

*Prof. Maurice Cauchi*  
**MCCV President**

## MCCV PRO appointed Hon. Consul for Victoria

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While acknowledging that Mr Borg was not one to be going into retirement and that he would still continue to serve and advise the community, Dr Borg thanked Mr Victor Borg for his services as Honorary Consul.

The Deputy Prime Minister said that, before he became Minister, he had heard of Victor Borg but he did not meet him until he first visited Australia in 2007. He said that he knew how hard Victor Borg has worked for the Maltese community. Since his arrival in Australia as a young boy on one of the P&O migrant ships, Victor always showed an interest in the Maltese community in Melbourne and he is rightly acknowledged as one of the foremost leaders of the community, said Dr Borg.

Dr Borg said that "of all the Maltese communities in Australia, the best organised community is that in the State of Victoria and Victor Borg deserved some credit for that." He said that in expressing this opinion he was also reflecting the opinion of many Maltese both in Victoria and in Malta.

Dr Borg-Manché was born in Malta and grew up in Gzira. He graduated as a lawyer from the University of Malta in 1979 and moved to Melbourne almost 30 years ago. He practiced as a lawyer in Australia for 13 years before joining a leading Australian firm of IT and management consultants 17 years ago. He is married to Diana and they have two daughters. □



*Above: Deputy Prime Minister Dr Tonio Borg (left) presents the warrant of appointment to Dr Edwin Borg-Manché.*

### 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.

Contributions should be forwarded to the Editor either by email at [pro@mccv.org.au](mailto: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:

- Jan-Feb 2012 Newsletter: **Friday 6 January 2012**
- Mar-Apr 2012 Newsletter: **Friday 27 April 2012**



# Notes from MCCV Council Meetings

## OCTOBER 2011 MEETING

The following items were discussed at the Council Meeting held on 5 October 2011:

**Federation Of Maltese Living Abroad.** The FMLA has issued a call for nominations for the election of President and Committee Members, with nominations to close at the end of November 2011 and elections to take place in December 2011. Candidates may nominate themselves or be nominated by affiliated associations. Only associations that are members of the FMLA may vote for candidates. MCCV affiliated associations were urged to take the nomination of candidates and voting seriously. The associations are entitled to appoint the MCCV as their proxy for voting at the FMLA elections. Under the FMLA Constitution, Australia and New Zealand as one region are entitled to elect three (3) Committee Members.

**MCCV Annual General Meeting.** The MCCV Annual General Meeting for 2011 will be held on Wednesday, 7 December 2011. Elections for the Executive Committee are not required to be held this year.

**Bishop Joseph Grech Memorial Scholarship.** The Bishop Joseph Grech Memorial Fund has now received donations exceeding \$26,000. It is expected that at least \$500 will be raised from interest for the first scholarship to be awarded by June 2012. Our grandchildren should be encouraged to take an interest in reading a book on Maltese Culture. At the meeting Mr Gejtu Deguara, on behalf of St Gaetan's Society Inc, presented a donation of \$250 towards the fund. A fund raising event featuring Fr Robert Galea is planned to be held later this year or early next year.

**MCCV Community Awards.** The criteria and rules for the MCCV Community Awards Program prepared and submitted by the Assistant Treasurer, Georgina Borg, previously endorsed by the Executive Committee, was approved by the Council. Under this program, five persons will be selected for an award, one from each category. A certificate of appreciation will be presented to the successful nominees under each category. The five categories are: Scholarship and Education; Culture (Literature or Art); Welfare Services; Youth (18 – 35 years); and General Contribution. Nominations must be supported by an affiliated association or by the MCCV Executive Committee. Awards may be made posthumously in appreciation of services rendered to the Maltese community in Victoria under any of the categories. Self-nominations will not be allowed.

**Welfare Programs.** There are some places available in the Home and Community Care (HACC) program that organizes day activities in Sunshine and Parkville. Affiliated associations are encouraged to advise MCCV if they know of anyone who is housebound and may benefit from participation in this program. Any seniors who have ceased attending seniors group can be assisted with transport to and from the activity groups on these days. The Community Aged Care Packages (CACPs) program is currently full.

**MCCV Website And Newsletter.** The three VIP visits from Maltese dignitaries visiting Melbourne during October have been highlighted on the front page of the website to encourage attendance by members of the Maltese community. Work has started on the next edition of the November-December MCCV News, due for publication at the end of the first week in November. The deadline for submitting material for publication will be the end of October.

Affiliated associations were urged to provide brief reports and photographs relating to their activities as only a handful of associations, typically the same group, have been submitting reports about their activities for publication. Affiliated associations were also reminded to submit the details regarding their upcoming activities to the PRO so that can be inserted in the Community Calendar on the MCCV website and included in the next MCCV newsletter. These must be received by the end of October. □

## NOVEMBER 2011 MEETING

The following items were discussed at the Council Meeting held on 2 November 2011:

**MCCV Functions In October.** The MCCV hosted the following functions at the Maltese Centre in Parkville:

**Tuesday, 11 October 2011** - The Hon Dr Michael Frendo, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and a Parliamentary Delegation from Malta from both sides of the House of Representatives, consisting of Hon Dr Francis Zammit Dimech and Hon Mr David Agius from the Government Nationalist Party side and Hon Dr Luciano Busuttil and Hon Mr Joe Mizzi from the Opposition Labour Party side.

**On Thursday, 20 October 2011** – Welcome Reception for His Grace Bishop Mario Grech, Bishop of Gozo.

**On Tuesday 25 October 2011** – Welcome Reception for the Hon Dr Tonio Borg, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs. Dr Lawrence Gonzi, Prime Minister of Malta, was unable to attend due to a change of schedule in EU meetings. Dr Tonio Borg met with members of the MCCV Executive and Presidents of Affiliated Associations prior to the reception.

**Issues Discussed By Deputy Prime Minister.** Dr Tonio Borg, the Deputy Prime Minister, spoke about the Bill establishing the Council of Maltese Living Abroad, that was being published in Malta that day. Dr Borg said that it is his intention that the Bill be approved in Parliament preferably before this year's end or, at the latest, early next year, so that the focus next year will be on the creation of structures to bring the Council to life. Dr Borg indicated that he has already sought a limited budget for the Council in the budget that will be debated in Parliament in the next few weeks.

**Appointment Of New Honorary Consul For Malta In Victoria.** Dr Tonio Borg, announced the appointment of Dr Edwin Borg-Manché as the new Honorary Consul for Malta in the State of Victoria. Dr Borg paid a special tribute to the outgoing Honorary Consul, Mr Victor Borg, who had served in that capacity for almost three decades. While acknowledging that Mr Borg was not one to be going into retirement and that he would still continue to serve and advise the community, Dr Borg thanked Mr Victor Borg for his services as Honorary Consul. The MCCV Council congratulated Dr Borg-Manché on his appointment as Hon Consul in Victoria and thanked Mr Victor Borg for providing a great service to the Maltese community during the years he served as Hon Consul.

**25th Anniversary Of Rosary Home.** On Sunday, 30th October 2011 the Dominican Sisters celebrated the 25th Anniversary of the blessing and official opening of the Rosary Home Aged Care Facility in Keilor Downs. Mass was celebrated by Auxiliary Bishop of the Western Region of Melbourne, His Grace Vincent Long, OFM Conv. Professor Maurice Cauchi, on behalf of the MCCV, congratulated the Sisters and presented them with a gift for the chapel.

**Annual General Meeting.** The MCCV Annual General Meeting for 2011 will be held on Wednesday, 7th December 2011. No elections for the Executive Committee are required to be held this year.

**Bishop Joseph Grech Memorial Scholarship.** Sufficient funds from the Bishop Joseph Grech Memorial Fund will be available by the middle of next year to award the first scholarship. All affiliated associations are urged to spread the word and encourage our young people to prepare for their application by becoming interested in Maltese culture and history and attending Maltese community events, eg MHA's monthly talk. A letter is to be drafted about this item and sent to associations for actioning.

**MCCV Community Awards.** The MCCV Community Awards will be in place in the new year. A sub-committee of the MCCV Executive will be formed to administer the Awards. □



## Deputy PM launches Council Bill during Melbourne visit

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*Maltese community leaders at the meeting with the Deputy Prime Minister*

Dr Borg said that, while the Bill is the product of a long consultation process with the Maltese communities abroad and with the Opposition, it is not perfect. He said that he had no doubt that it will not please everybody, but he believes it will please the vast majority of people.

Dr Borg explained that the Council will be established by law as he wanted to achieve two objectives. The first objective is that, whoever happens to be the Minister, and whichever party is in government, the Minister of Foreign Affairs will be obliged by law to establish the Council. In order to remove the Council, the Minister would need to go back to Parliament. In this way, said Dr Borg, establishing the Council by law ensures continuity and permanence.

"The second objective is to send a political message, not in a party politics sense, but in the sense that, just as Malta recognised the contribution that you gave to your communities and the love that you still show towards your country of birth by granting you dual citizenship in a series of three consecutive reforms, today we no longer speak of the emigrants of Melbourne or of Australia. Today, by virtue of your significant participation in the Conventions, we developed the concept that there is only one Maltese race, some live in Malta and other live outside Malta," Dr Borg said.

Dr Borg said that this change means that there should be no difference in treatment other than in those cases where it exists everywhere for valid reasons. "For example, in the case of the health card, an exception is made not because you live overseas but because eligibility depends on the payment of national insurance contributions in the EU. Australia does not provide a health card for people from the EU for the simple reason that the population of the EU is about 500 million and that of Australia is only 20 million. So this is not discrimination as one is not comparing like with like. However, in all other matters, the government wants that the interest of all Maltese living abroad are

safeguarded, hence the setting up of the Council," said Dr Borg.

Dr Borg said that another objective of the Council is to ensure that not only the Minister of the day responsible for the Maltese living abroad is obliged to take their interests into account but every Minister and every director of a government department must do so to ensure that their actions do not adversely impact the rights and interests of Maltese living abroad. In addition to setting up the Council, the Bill establishes a Directorate in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (instead of having just a Desk Officer) and the Director will be responsible for the safeguarding of the rights and interests of Maltese communities abroad, said Dr Borg.

On its composition, Dr Borg said that the Council will consist of 17 members, 12 representing the Maltese communities abroad and 5 appointed by the Prime Minister after consultation with the Opposition from people residing in Malta or abroad who are experienced in matters affecting Maltese communities abroad. This provision is intended as a safety valve to enable the appointment to the Council of someone who may have the relevant experience and capability to contribute but does not represent any community overseas.

Of the 12 Council members representing Maltese communities abroad, Australia will take the largest slice with five members. There will be two members appointed from the State of Victoria, two from New South Wales and one from another Australian State other than those two States. It will also be possible to have one of the five appointed by the Prime Minister resident in Australia.

On the role of the Council, Dr Borg said that it will not have executive powers as it is not part of government, but it will be an advisory and consultative body. Its role will be truly consultative because the Council must be consulted on every law and every administrative measure that impacts on the interests of Maltese abroad.

The Council will be presided over by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, who will,

however, have no vote on the Council, nor any casting vote in the event that the Council members reach a stalemate on any issue. In this way, the Minister will not interfere in issues for which Maltese living abroad are responsible, but at the same time, as the president of the Council, he will provide weight to the Council in dealing with the other Ministers and the civil service. "So just as the creation of the Directorate will provide more weight than a simple Desk Officer when dealing with other government departments on justified complaints, the Minister without having a vote but simply by presiding the Council will provide more weight. This idea is based on a similar Italian model which is on a larger scale, with the Council being presided by the Minister of Foreign Affairs," explained Dr Borg.

On Council meetings, Dr Borg said that Council members living overseas may participate in Council meetings by audio or video conferencing, by emails and other electronic means. However, the Council must meet at least once a year in Malta and those members living overseas will travel to Malta for this meeting. The government will introduce a scheme to provide some financial assistance for the overseas members' travel expenses.

Dr Borg said that the Conventions will still take place at least every 10 years, but possibly more frequently, maybe every five years. The Council will be able to track and measure progress achieved on matters dealt with at these Conventions.

Dr Borg said that one of the real satisfactions of being in politics is that when one retires from politics, as everyone has to at some time, one looks back and see that there are some things that one has implemented that were so well received that they are still there. Dr Borg said that he hoped that the introduction and extension of dual citizenship and the creation of the Council will be two of these things. "Whether the Council will be successful in its operation will depend partly on the government and more importantly on the Maltese communities abroad. Let's give it a chance," said Dr Borg.

Once a year the Council must produce a report which the Minister will table in parliament and will be discussed in two parliamentary committees: the Foreign and European Affairs Committee and the Social Affairs Committee.

Dr Borg said that the thorny question in drafting the Bill has been the method of selection of the Council members as the structures within Maltese communities abroad vary widely, making direct elections impossible. The government will select the members but the law binds the government to take into account the opinions and suggestions made by federations, community councils and Maltese organisations, where they



## Deputy PM launches Council Bill during Melbourne visit

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exist. Dr Borg said that the appointments will not be a surprise and letters will be sent out to non-government organisations (NGOs) inviting them to submit their suggestions. Appointments will be for three years with eligibility for re-appointment for only one other 3-year term.

"We have had conventions, studies and meetings, and the time has come for someone to make a decision. The Bill constitutes the decision of the government regarding the establishment of the Council. The Bill still needs to be debated in parliament, and amendments cannot be excluded. However, given the long consultation process with the Maltese communities and with the Opposition, the Bill is expected to go through without too many changes," Dr Borg said.

Consultation with the Maltese communities was carried out through the Maltese embassies and high commissions overseas. An earlier version of the draft Bill was discussed with the Opposition through their spokesperson for Foreign Affairs, Dr George Vella, who proposed some amendments which were accepted. Dr Borg said that he was pleased to report that there is agreement with the Opposition on the Bill as published, although some more fine-tuning in Parliament could not be ruled out.

Dr Borg stressed that this Council established by law will in no way whatsoever diminish the importance of each and every voluntary Maltese community federation, community council or association that exists in all the continents where Maltese reside. The intention is to build on them and not take work away from them. It is important to view the work of the Council as complementary to that of these voluntary community organisations, just as it is critical that the social services provided by government are complemented by voluntary services.

### Two Registers

The Council will be obliged to set up and maintain two registers, one of all voluntary non-government organisations involved in the promotion and protection of the interests of Maltese living abroad and any such organisation may apply to the Council to be included in the register. The second register is of any prominent Maltese nationals living abroad who have distinguished themselves in their respective profession, vocation or work outside Malta.

Dr Borg said that these would include individuals who may have distinguished themselves at their place of work, including manual workers, and professionals. These registers are important for posterity so that for historical purposes there will be a record of all Maltese communities overseas and of all Maltese nationals who distinguished themselves in their country of adoption for the honour of Malta, said Dr Borg.

### Maltese Cultural Institute

Dr Borg said that instead of passing another law on the Maltese Cultural Institute (MCI), a provision will be included in the Bill that gives the Minister of Culture and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs the power to make regulations under the Act to establish the MCI for prior approval by Parliament to ensure transparency. The intention to establish the MCI, which involves three Ministries, is not as advanced as that of the Council, but once the Bill is passed, it will be easier to set up the MCI.

Dr Borg said that the MCI should be set up because at the moment there is an inefficient use of human and financial resources. The Ministry of Culture promotes Maltese culture overseas. The Ministry of Education promotes the teaching of Maltese overseas, among other things. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs promotes both culture and language and has 25 diplomatic and consular premises around the world which can be offered free of charge to Maltese organisations who wish to promote Maltese culture and language.

Dr Borg said that the intention is to channel the human and financial resources into one institute and so, even in terms of budget, these resources will start to appear under one item, the MCI. But first we have to establish the Council which as such has nothing to do with the MCI.

Dr Borg said that the Council may decide to form regional groups, such as, one for Australia, but it is up to the Council in its absolute discretion to decide whether they should be formed and their composition.

### Migration Museum

Prof Cauchi raised the issue relating to the teaching of Maltese history, which, he understood, may be downgraded in schools in Malta. He also referred to the slow progress in setting up the migration museum in Malta. He said that he feared there may be insufficient backing from the government to enable its establishment.

Dr Borg said that at the Convention there was a commitment by Minister Cristina to include the teaching of the history of migration in the curriculum. He said that he was not aware that there were any plans to downgrade the importance of the teaching of history in Maltese schools. He said that history is very important as without it one does not know where one originates from, where one is, and where one is going. For Maltese living abroad it is even more important, as history is what binds them to Malta, their country of birth, but it is just as important for the Maltese living in Malta.

On the Migration Museum, Dr Borg said that he did not believe that the slow progress was due to a lack of government backing. Work on the project has already started and

artefacts have been gathered. There was some funding earmarked for the Migration Museum from the Good Causes Fund of the EU. However, the Church in Malta was asked to provide a guarantee for these funds and its response was that it was not in a position to guarantee such a large sum of money in the event that the project did not proceed. Dr Borg said that he hoped that the project is completed as other countries have similar museums.

### Maltese Language Teaching In Australia

MCCV Vice President, Mr Victor Borg, spoke about a recent meeting about the future of the Maltese language in Victoria organised by the MCCV in conjunction with the Victorian School of Languages (VSL), which forms part of the Victorian State Department of Education.

Mr Borg said that after the meeting he spoke with the VSL Principal, who confirmed that the Victorian Government provides assistance to foreign governments in the teaching of their foreign languages in Victoria. Under such arrangements teachers of foreign languages are brought to Victoria, the foreign government continues to pay their wages and the Victorian Government offers assistance during their stay in Victoria.

Mr Borg said that, as was mentioned at last year's convention in Malta, what is needed is for experts in the teaching of the Maltese language to be sent from Malta to Australia for one or two years to teach our volunteers how to teach Maltese to our children and to prepare a full curriculum for the teaching of the language in Australia. Such an arrangement would ensure professionalism in the teaching of Maltese in Australia which is currently missing.

Dr Borg said that he will pass on the message to Minister Cristina as it might be more convenient and more economical to send over someone to teach and instruct volunteer teachers of Maltese in Australia.

### Maltese Citizenship Applications

Melita Social Club President, Mr Edwin Bonello, thanked Dr Borg for going the extra mile to facilitate the granting of Maltese citizenship to those of Maltese descent from Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, Turkey and other countries, who faced significant difficulties in obtaining the required documentation, thereby uniting many Maltese around the world.

Mr Bonello said he would appreciate it if Dr Borg could inform all Maltese embassies and consulates of the specific arrangements that Dr Borg had put in place. Dr Borg explained that to avoid changing the law he issued a directive that producing the birth certificate of one's grandfather would not be required, if the birth certificate of the applicant's father stated that the grandfather was born in Malta. This was done as an indirect way of arriving at the same conclusion. □



# Melbourne Maltese welcome Deputy Prime Minister

By Edwin Borg-Manché

On Tuesday 25 October the MCCV hosted a welcome reception in honour of the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr Tonio Borg, at the Maltese Centre in Parkville. Dr Borg was in Australia to represent Malta at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) to be held in Perth later in the week deputising for the Prime Minister, Dr Lawrence Gonzi, who had to attend an urgent EU summit.

Dr Borg apologised on behalf of the Prime Minister, Dr Lawrence Gonzi, who had planned to visit Melbourne but unfortunately could not make the trip due to being called to attend an urgent EU summit relating to the Euro debt crisis. Dr Gonzi had to cancel his entire trip to Australia, the highlight of which would have been representing Malta at CHOGM in Perth.

MCCV President, Professor Maurice Cauchi, welcomed Dr Borg to the Maltese Centre and stressed the importance of such visits as they strengthen our ties with Malta. Prof Cauchi said that it is important that our younger generations do not forget about Maltese culture and history. As regards the language it is more difficult to get them interested in it and it would not be a surprise, if in ten or fifteen years' time the learning of the Maltese language in Australia declines significantly, he said.

In his address Dr Borg said that every time he came to Australia he tried to bring with him some good news. He recalled that on his first visit in 2007 he announced that dual nationality was being extended to the second and third generation of Maltese. This was such a success, said Dr Borg, that there is now a queue of applicants waiting for their applications to be processed. He promised that his department will do their best to process them as quickly as possible.

## On Being Maltese

Dr Borg said that all these reforms were being implemented to ensure that the interests of Maltese living overseas are not remembered only when a Minister visits them and then forgotten. He said that the aim is to keep them alive as much as possible. Today the concept has changed, and we longer speak of "migrants of Australia" but we refer to simply "Maltese", some living in Malta and some in Melbourne or Sydney or London or Detroit or San Francisco or Toronto, said Dr Borg.

Dr Borg said that dual nationality initially applied to those who were born in Malta, then it was extended to the first generation born abroad and eventually to all those who can prove that they have at



least one single drop of Maltese blood. They just need to prove a link to an ascendant who is Maltese in their family tree. This was another proof that we should not make any distinction between migrants and Maltese, as if migrants are not Maltese, said Dr Borg.

Dr Borg said that he always finds it emotional listening to the two anthems being sung and seeing Maltese living thousands of miles away from Malta, needing to catch three planes and taking about 24 hours to get to Malta, still showing such love towards the country that made us who we are – Maltese and proud to be Maltese.

Dr Borg said that being Maltese does not only mean that one was born in Malta and one's mother and father are Maltese but also that one represents certain values and traits that make one Maltese, he said. "That is why history is important. Persons without knowing their history do not know where they are coming from, neither where they are, nor where they are going. It is history that gives us the compass for our direction.

## Humanitarian Role In Libyan Crisis

Dr Borg then spoke about Malta's contribution in providing humanitarian assistance during the recent crisis in Libya. "We moved with grace and with prudence in the sense that what was bad we did not say that it was good. If a government is killing its own people and its own children, women and families, how could we say that we are neutral and we neither speak out in favour of life or in favour of death? We have to speak out in favour of life", said Dr Borg.

"Today the new Libyan government is grateful to Malta," he said. Malta was not involved in any military operation but was a hub and centre of humanitarian assistance for one of our neighbouring countries.

"It is no wonder that [US Secretary of State] Hillary Clinton two weeks ago came to Malta. The Secretaries of State never visit Malta. The last visit of a Secretary of State was in 1989 and the purpose of the visit was the Bush-Gorbachev Summit that was held in Malta and not to meet

with the Maltese government. It is also no wonder that the British Foreign Secretary William Hague also visited Malta to thank Malta for being once again 'the nurse of the Mediterranean'. We could do this because we have a sense of history. If this applies to the history of a country, it applies more forcefully to the history of migration," said Dr Borg.

## Council For Maltese Living Abroad

Turning to the issue of the establishment of the Council for Maltese Living Abroad, Dr Borg said that he would like the link between Maltese communities abroad and Malta to be not just the subject of conventions, studies and speeches. He wanted to establish by law a permanent organ to be the link between the Maltese communities and the Government of Malta.

Dr Borg presented Prof Cauchi with a memento for the occasion as well as several books for the MCCV library about the Maltese national poet, Dun Karm Psaila, whose 50th anniversary of his death is being commemorated this year. In turn, Prof Cauchi presented Dr Borg with a copy of his book *Maltese Achievers in Australia*, which he suggested would be a starting point for the register.

The Malta High Commissioner in Australia, H.E. Mr Francis Tabone, spoke briefly about the incentive scheme that the High Commission organises for students of the Maltese language to encourage more students to take up the language. He said that each of the six students who sat for the VCE exam the day before will receive the sum of \$150. Dr Borg presented the cheques to the students: Nicola Vella, Charles Buhagiar, Robert Lia, Kimberley Bonnici, Marlene Muscat and Melanie Bajada.

Also present at the reception were the Consul General for Malta in Victoria, Mr Charles Mifsud, and the Honorary Vice Consul for Malta in the La Trobe Valley, Mr Mario Sammut. □

## Bishop of Gozo greeted at the Maltese Centre

By Edwin Borg-Manché

On Thursday 20 October the MCCV hosted a welcome reception in honour of the Bishop of Gozo, Mons. Mario Grech, at the Maltese Centre in Parkville. Bishop Grech, who was on a month long pastoral visit to Australia, was greeted by members of the Maltese community. Bishop Grech, who was previously the Parish Priest at Kercem, Gozo, was appointed Bishop of Gozo five years ago.

MCCV President Professor Maurice Cauchi warmly welcomed Bishop Grech to the Maltese Centre. Putting Bishop Grech's visit into a historical perspective, Prof. Cauchi said that in the last 43 years there were five visits by Maltese Church leaders to Australia, an average of one visit every nine years.

Prof. Cauchi gave a brief history of the MCCV and the Maltese Centre. He said that the needs of the Maltese community are changing with the ageing of most of those who migrated to Australia in the 1950s and 1960s and the numbers are declining. The number of second and third generation Maltese keeps growing but no-one really knows their real number as it depends on whether these people register their Maltese ancestry in their Census response. He said that the total number of people of Maltese descent in Australia is estimated at around 200,000.

Prof. Cauchi spoke about the establishment of the Bishop Joseph Grech Memorial Fund in memory of the late Maltese Bishop that the MCCV established earlier this year aimed at encouraging the younger generations of Maltese in Victoria to take greater interest in Maltese history and culture and to travel to Malta in order to experience first-hand Maltese language, history and culture.

In his address Bishop Grech thanked Prof. Cauchi and the MCCV for giving him the opportunity to meet with the Maltese community in Melbourne. He said that he was delighted to experience this visit both as a Maltese citizen, who feels close to Maltese migrants, as well as a Christian, being a priest and a bishop.

### A world of cultural poverty

Bishop Grech praised the work of the MCCV in providing the local Maltese community with critical welfare services, particularly to the ageing members who find themselves in situations needing assistance.



*Mons. Mario Grech with members of the MCCV Executive: (from left) Dr Edwin Borg-Manché, Mr Paul Borg, Mrs Marilyn Pace, Prof. Maurice Cauchi, Mrs Rosemary Attard, Mr Gejtu Deguara, Mrs Edwina Mallia and Mr Victor Borg.*

He said that in a world that is more interested in production and has been taken over by technology, we seem to be experiencing cultural poverty. It is important that we ensure that the Maltese culture is maintained and woven into the new world reality.

He said that Maltese culture is our history and provides the platform for our future. He said that culture can make us richer as persons, such as, by taking a greater interest in art, literature and history, that reflects the fabric of human life.

Bishop Grech said that migrants from Malta and Gozo brought a store of the complete Maltese culture with them to Australia. They have an obligation towards the younger generation to open a window into Maltese culture for them to experience. He said that, since Maltese culture is what makes us Maltese, if we lose our culture we also lose our Maltese identity.

Bishop Grech said that he was pleased to meet students who were taking classes in the Maltese language at the Maltese Centre before the reception.

Bishop Grech wished the MCCV well in continuing its valuable work in the Maltese community as a way to enrich ourselves culturally. He said that Maltese culture is also developing in the Australian context and it is important that there is also enthusiasm and interest in the culture of the Australian nation. Without this interest in Australian history and culture, there is a risk that one ends up being neither Maltese nor Australian, which would be the worst possible outcome that we could pass on to our future generations.

### A Christian culture

Bishop Grech said that he is proud very comfortable that he embraced a Christian culture and the Maltese culture with which to be in dialogue with the world around us. He said that he does not understand and, in fact, he fears a culture that, in order to be seen as contemporary, must exclude God because, if it goes as far as to exclude God, it is likely

that it will also eventually go as far as to exclude man.

Bishop Grech said that, by contrast, a culture that has this sense of belief in God, even if not Christian, helps to contribute to the development of the cultures of our times, particularly, in the relationship between thought or philosophy, which are supposed to be a fundamental element of any culture, on the one hand, and

belief in God or theology on the other. Reason, which is a gift and capability of man, and belief complement each other considerably and contribute to the complete progress of man and to the development of culture. "Reason and belief are the two wings that the bird needs to be able to fly," he said.

Bishop Grech ended his address by invoking God's blessing on the Maltese community so that the Maltese presence not just in Victoria but also in Australia continues to contribute to the Maltese and Australian cultures. He hoped that the presence of Christians enriched by this Christian culture will continue to contribute now and in the future.

Fr Mario Zammit, MSSP Regional Provincial in Australia, said that the MSSP has a higher profile in Melbourne, having been present here since 1948 working in partnership with the MCCV to serve the Maltese community. He said that he wanted to thank the Maltese community in Bishop Grech's presence for accepting and following the spiritual guidance of the MSSP priests as their shepherds.

At the end of the formalities, Prof. Cauchi presented Bishop Grech with a memento for the occasion and a copy of his book *Under One Umbrella: A History of the Maltese Community Council of Victoria 1958-2008* on behalf of the MCCV and the Maltese community. MCCV Secretary, Mrs Edwina Mallia, also presented a small birthday gift to the Bishop's mother, Mrs Stella Grech, who attended the reception with her husband, Mr George Grech, and their other son, Mro. Carmel Grech.

Also present at the reception were the Consul General for Malta in Victoria, Mr Charles Mifsud, and his wife, Mrs Anna Maria Mifsud. □



## Maltese community welcomes parliamentary delegation

On Tuesday 11 October the Maltese community in Melbourne extended a warm welcome to the Hon. Dr Michael Frendo, Speaker of the Maltese House of Representatives, and his parliamentary delegation at a meeting held at the Maltese Centre in Parkville. The delegation was on a one-week visit to Australia as guests of the federal Australian government.

The delegation consisted of two members from each side of the House. The two MPs from the Government side were the Hon. Dr Francis Zammit Dimech, Chairman of the Standing Committee for Foreign and European Affairs and the Hon. Mr David Agius, Government Whip. Those from the Opposition were the Hon. Dr Luciano Busuttil, a member of the Standing Committee for Foreign and European Affairs, and the Hon. Mr Joe Mizzi, Opposition Whip and spokesperson for energy, resources and oil exploration. The visiting party also included Ambassador Gaetan Naudi, Diplomatic Counsellor to the Speaker. Among those present at the meeting was the Consul General of Malta for the State Victoria, Mr Charles Mifsud.

MCCV President, Professor Maurice Cauchi, welcomed the Speaker and the delegation to the Maltese Centre. He gave a brief history of the MCCV, an umbrella organisation of Maltese associations operating in the State of Victoria, and talked about the MCCV library housed at the Centre which is considered to be the largest collection of books in Maltese outside Malta.

Professor Cauchi said that the profile of the Maltese community in Victoria has changed significantly over the past decades. The majority of its members is now over 35 years of age. Forty-five percent of the population of Maltese in Australia reside in Victoria.

Professor Cauchi said that the challenge for the MCCV is to keep the Maltese language, culture and traditions alive in the younger generations who are more Australian than the earlier generations. He said that, judging by the way his own grandchildren responded to a recent visit to Malta, once our youth visit and experience the Maltese islands and get a taste of what is Maltese, their love for Malta increases significantly.

In his reply Dr Frendo recalled his previous two visits to Australia, the first time in 1996, when he was Minister of Telecommunications, and ten years later as Minister of Foreign Affairs. He said that the aim of the visit was to develop closer ties and relations with the federal and state parliaments in Australia. That morning the delegation had met with the state Minister



Left: Speaker Dr Michael Frendo addressing the audience;

Right: Prof. Cauchi presenting a copy of his book to the members of the delegation.



of Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship as well as with the Speakers of both houses of the Victorian State Parliament, the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council. Later in the week the Maltese delegation was scheduled to meet with the Speakers of the Federal Parliament in Canberra and with those of the NSW State Parliament in Sydney.

Dr Frendo said that the key message brought by the delegation is that, under the Constitution of Malta, the Maltese parliament is separate and distinct from the Executive arm of government and, therefore, the delegation represents the Parliament of Malta and not the government. He said that parliamentary delegations from many countries make similar visits to the parliaments of other countries in order to establish relationships and learn about the realities facing the countries that they visit. On this visit, the Maltese delegation was particularly keen to learn about the circumstances of the Maltese-Australian communities.

Dr Frendo said that the intention is to continue to maintain and strengthen the relationships being forged on this visit and, in this context, an invitation has been issued to their Australian counterparts to visit Malta. These relationships between the Maltese and Australian parliaments would be beneficial to the Maltese community in Australia, he said.

With regard to the involvement of the younger generation of Maltese-Australians in Maltese community life, Dr Frendo said that an important initiative, in which he had played a key role as Minister of Foreign Affairs, was the extension of Maltese citizenship to several generations of Maltese descendants born overseas. He said that this step was part of the important recognition of the more inclusive concept of Maltese nation that goes beyond that of the State. The Maltese nation extends beyond the Maltese shores and it is in everyone's interest that we keep it alive and united.

Dr Frendo said that he hoped that, during their brief visit, the members of the delegation will be able to learn about the nature of the place, the needs of the community and the ways

in which the relationship with Australia can continue to improve for the benefit of the Maltese communities.

Dr Francis Zammit Dimech spoke about the visit that the delegation had made to the Victorian Minister of Multicultural Policy and Citizenship, Mr Nick Kotsiras that morning.

Dr Zammit Dimech said that, when Malta was mentioned to the Minister, his immediate reaction was one that made them feel really proud as he described the Maltese community as a truly exemplary community and a live example of "integration" in the best sense of the term. He said that the Minister spoke about the achievements of the Maltese community that was able to achieve a lot on its own initiative without asking for too much assistance.

Dr Zammit Dimech said that hearing such words of praise for the Maltese community from someone like the Minister, who is himself of Greek origin, naturally always makes one proud. He said that, while he had heard about this before he came to Australia, it really hit him when he came to Australia to witness and feel the reality of a community that has made such a great impact with its hard work, commitment and success at the level of Maltese families residing here.

Various issues were raised by those present, including assistance for young Maltese Australians visiting Malta; the need for more resources in Maltese; and the Council of Maltese Living Abroad. The MPs took turns to address the audience.

Dr Frendo presented Professor Cauchi with copies of his speech he delivered earlier this year on the occasion of the 'Sette Giugno' Commemoration, two in Maltese and one in English. He also presented a book in English on the history of the Maltese Parliament.

Professor Cauchi presented each member of the delegation with a copy of his book *Under One Umbrella: A History of the Maltese Community Council of Victoria 1958-2008*. □





## Dominican Sisters celebrate Rosary Home's 25th Anniversary

By Edwin Borg-Manché

On Sunday 30 October the Dominican Sisters of Malta celebrated the 25th Anniversary of the blessing and official opening of the Rosary Home Aged Care Facility in Keilor Downs. A Eucharistic Celebration led by Auxiliary Bishop of the Western Region of Melbourne, His Grace Vincent Long, OFM Conv., was held in the chapel of the Home which was packed.

The concelebrants at the Mass, who included several Maltese priests, were: Fr Charles Portelli, Parish Priest at St Mary of the Assumption in Keilor Downs; Fr Joseph Amal, Assistant Parish Priest; Fr Karm Borg; Dominican Fathers from Camberwell: Fr Dominic Murphy OP and Fr Anthony Walsh OP; members of Missionary Society of St Paul: Fr Denis Carabott MSSP, Fr Emanuel Adami MSSP, Fr Paul Kierce MSSP, and Fr Noel Bianco MSSP (who was also present 25 years ago at the opening of the Home).

Rosary Home Administrator, Sr Doris Falzon, welcomed the distinguished guests to the special celebration, including: the Hon. Natalie Hutchins MLA, State Member for Keilor; the Superior General of the Dominican Sisters of Malta, Sr Carmelita Borg OP and Sr Dorothy Mizzi OP, Vicar General, both of whom travelled from Malta for the occasion; Sr Georgina Sultana OP and Sr Pauline Balbi OP from the Dominican community in NSW; the Consul General of Malta, Mr Charles Mifsud; the Honorary Consul of Malta, Dr Edwin Borg-Manché and Mrs Borg-Manché; members of the Rosary Home Board of Management: Chairman, Mr Victor Borg; Dr Marie Pirota, Prof. Maurice Cauchi, and Financial Controller, Mr Paul Borg; and Chairman of the Board at St Dominic's Hostel in NSW, Prof. Stephen Gatt and Mrs Gatt.

In his sermon Bishop Long said that he was honoured to be part of the celebrations at the Rosary Home. "I believe it one of the places where the best of Christianity is on display, where the best of the Catholic traditions is kept alive," he said.

"At the Rosary Home the aged and the infirm are the presence and the love of the suffering Christ in our midst. And you sisters by your care and by your companionship with them, you make the Gospel come very much alive in a tangible and edifying way," said Bishop Long. "Here we can see what radical



Bishop Vincent Long (left) assisted by Fr Portelli.



Mr Paul Borg and Sr Doris Falzon

discipleship means and what serving leadership is all about. Here all the trappings of honour, status and distinction have no place. Here the vulnerable are loved and cared for simply because they bear the image and likeness of the living God and they represent the crucified Christ among us."

"We want to thank the residents for being who you are, for bearing the wounds of Christ on your bodies and your spirits, for suffering in silence and patience. We want to thank the staff for embodying the spirit of Christian service, for collaborating with the sisters in creating a sense of community here. And finally we want to thank you, sisters, for being the ambassadors of Christ in this place and in the words of St Paul, quite fitting for you today, that 'you are heeding not just the Gospel message for the people who have been entrusted to you but their own lives as well for the benefits of the infirm and the aged'," said Bishop Long.

### History of Rosary Home

In a speech for the occasion, Sr Doris Falzon thanked Bishop Long and the concelebrating priests for celebrating mass for this special occasion. "We celebrate our humble beginnings and the many significant people that became part of the fabric woven during this quarter of a century," she said.

"It all started in 1982, when Sr Virginia Ellul OP, the newly elected Superior General, assigned Sr Theresita Bianco OP to Melbourne, to see what were the possibilities of our apostolate in this state to be altered from teaching to aged care. Providence had it that in a short time the land that we stand on to-day, was purchased, plans were drawn up and in 10 months' time, a 36-bed hostel was built. Mr Douglas Cooms Engineer and project Manager was engaged to ensure that the building was as per plans drawn by Mr Ivan Anderson architect," said Sr Falzon.

"Things moved very quickly under the leadership of Sr Theresita and on Sunday, 28th September 1986, Bishop Joseph O'Connell blessed the hostel, while Mr Victor Borg, the Chairman of the Board of Management, officially declared Rosary Home open for the first 36 residents," recalled Sr Falzon.

### Spirit Of Christian Love

In her address, the Superior General of the Dominican Sisters, Sr Carmelita Borg, OP, said that there are scores of homes for senior citizens and the distinctive mark of Rosary Home "lies in the mission statement which can trace its origin to the teaching of Jesus, the Christ: Love one another as I have loved you. It is this spirit of Christian love that serves as the backbone of this home."

In his address, the Chairman of the Board of Management, Mr Borg congratulated the sisters on their efforts and what they have done among our elderly citizens. He said that there are currently some 15 nationalities represented among residents in Rosary Home and since its opening, some 350 residents have been through this Home. "People who are lucky to get into Rosary Home get a new lease of life. We only recently lost a resident who was 102 years of age and people tend to live longer. What a blessing it is to know that your mother, father, relative can spend their last years in comfort, security and such a lovely atmosphere," he said.

Mr Borg thanked the members of the Board of Management who have been of great assistance to the sisters for the last 25 years to provide an aged care facility considered to be the best facility, if not in Australia, at least in the State of Victoria. "The Board and the sisters will not compromise standards, we aim for the best and, I believe, we deliver the best," he said.

Mr Borg paid a special tribute to Mr Paul Borg, the Honorary Financial Controller for Rosary Home in Keilor Downs, and St Dominic's Hostel run by the sisters in Blacktown, NSW, for his contribution. "Paul gives us confidence with his competence, his exactness and the various reports that he regularly provides," he said.

Mr Borg thanked all staff who have made this possible and devoted their life to help the residents. "It is tremendous to walk around and see how they relate to the residents. It has been a great godsend for them to live their Christian life here and to be able to give the residents so much to enable them to live a full life," he said.

Following the Eucharistic celebration, Bishop Long blessed the relief of Our Lady Queen of the Holy Rosary, a gift for the occasion from the Rosary Home residents, placed opposite the entrance to the chapel. □



The Dominican Sisters before the cutting of the cake.

## Help save the Maltese language in Australia

By Edwin Borg-Manché

The call to save the Maltese language in Australia was issued to the Maltese community some years ago but not much progress seems to have been achieved to secure the future of the language in this country. The current regulations require that a language subject at the university entry level must have a minimum average Year 12 enrolment of 15 students over three years.

Several languages, such as, Czech, Latvian, Lithuanian and Slovenian had their accreditation suspended in 2006 due to low enrolment numbers and several more languages, such as, Dutch and Hungarian, Yiddish and Ukrainian, are potentially at risk. Maltese has remained in the latter group of languages that are at risk.

The statistics relating to the number of students sitting for the Year 12 Maltese exam over the past five years are not terribly encouraging. Only 12 students across Australia sat for the Maltese exam in 2006, 14 in 2007, 18 in 2008, only 5 in 2009, and only 4 in 2010.

Fortunately, this year the number of enrolments rose to at least 15 students and possibly as high as 20, consisting of 6 in Victoria, 3 in NSW and possibly up to 11 in South Australia (the last figure yet to be officially confirmed). It is, therefore, highly likely that Maltese will earn a reprieve from suspension for another three years, assuming that at least 15 of them actually sit for the exam this year.

In the 2006 National Census over 85,000 people stated that they were of Maltese origin or heritage living in Victoria. The vast majority lives in the Brimbank City Council area of Melbourne. However, the VSL is able to run only three classes due to the very low enrolment numbers. The VSL would like to grow the Maltese language program.

As a community we cannot afford to allow this happen to our great language. If this were to happen it would be virtually impossible to reverse the decision. It would deprive future generations of Maltese descent from the opportunity to study Maltese and to have it contribute to their tertiary education entrance (ATAR) score.

The help of members of the Maltese community in Australia is required to attract more young people of Maltese descent in Australia to become interested in learning Maltese and take advantage of gaining bonus ATAR points from taking the subject at Year 12 level, which extra points may make the difference between gaining entry into a tertiary course of their preference and missing out.

On 17 October 2011 a public forum was held at Taylors Lakes Secondary College about "Saving the teaching and learning of Maltese in Victoria" organised by the Victorian School of Languages (VSL) in conjunction with the Maltese Community Council of Victoria (MCCV) to bring the plight of the language in Victoria to the attention of the Maltese community.



The guest speakers were (above from left): Ms Edwidge Borg, Federation of Maltese Language Schools Vice President; Mr Charles Mifsud, Consul-General for Malta in Victoria; Mr Frank Merlino, VSL Principal; Ms Maree Dellora, LOTE Manager - Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA); and Mr Victor Borg, MCCV Vice President. Mr Joe Tosic, Acting Assistant Principal of VSL, was the moderator.

In his address at the public forum, Consul General Mr Charles Mifsud said that at the Convention of Maltese Living Abroad held in Malta last year a number of outcomes related to the teaching of Maltese in communities outside Malta and he went through each of them.

Mr Mifsud said that, as regards the advantages of learning the language, apart from being able to speak Maltese when visiting Malta, employment in EU institutions requires the individual to have an EU passport and be able to speak one language other than English. Maltese is recognised as one of the official languages of the EU. One area is in the translating and interpreting services where there is a shortage of Maltese staff in both fields.

Mr Mifsud appealed to those present to encourage young people of Maltese origin and others to take up the language to ensure that the Maltese language and culture are kept alive in Australia.

VSL Principal Mr Frank Merlino said that the precarious status of the Maltese language is of concern to the VSL, which has been teaching the language since the 1970s. The language has been accredited in Victoria as a Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) for a long time. If it loses this status, then it would be a disincentive to students to learn the language at the junior level.

Mr Merlino said that this year the VSL provided Maltese classes at only one centre, being Taylors Lakes Secondary College. However, as part of its commitment, the VSL is prepared to fund classes in 2012 at four centres in areas where there are the highest number of Maltese background residents, i.e. at Taylors Lakes Secondary College in the Brimbank municipality; Bayside Secondary College in Altona North in Hobson's Bay municipality; Brunswick Secondary College in Moreland municipality; and Thomastown Secondary College in Whittlesea municipality.

Mr Merlino said that the VSL will work together with the MCCV and other Maltese organisations to promote the Maltese language classes. However, this requires a strong volunteer

effort if it is to succeed. It needs to personal touch from schools, teachers, clubs of a social, sporting, and cultural nature, businesses, Maltese newspapers and individuals.

Mr Merlino said that the Maltese Ministry of Education should be requested to consider allocating a Maltese teacher assistant to come to Australia to work with our teachers of Maltese. Moreover, if there were sufficient teachers of Maltese, a Maltese Teachers Association of Victoria could be set up.

Mr Merlino said the VSL has a distance education section and having a distance education course in Maltese would also help, particularly for those students living in areas where no classes are held or it is not physically possible for them to attend, such as, those living in country Victoria.

Federation of Maltese Language Schools Vice President Ms Edwidge Borg said there is a range of needs for which students attend language classes. Some students, second and third generation Maltese, may have missed out on learning the language at primary level or at secondary, or maybe were unaware of the classes or had other family commitments. Some students are married to Maltese and they want to be able to better connect with the Maltese side of their family.

The next speaker was LOTE Manager VCAA Ms Maree Dellora, who said that Victoria has a tremendous commitment to the teaching of languages and the largest and most diverse language offering of all States and Territories in Australia. In 2010 out of 43,000 students sat for Year 12 exams, 10,542 students studied a language other than English, which is the highest percentage in any State. There are 46 languages accredited at VCE level and Maltese is one of the small candidature languages that VCAA is keen to support and maintain.

Ms Dellora explained that Maltese is on the national project which means that the same Maltese exam sat in Victoria is also sat nationally. The national project is referred to as the Collaborative Curriculum and Assessment Framework for Languages (CCAFL). The smaller candidature languages are divided up into different States (in the case of Maltese, Victoria, NSW and South Australia) and they share the exams and their assessment.

With regard to resources, Ms Dellora said that the Languages and Multicultural Education Resource Centre in Carlton has a huge range of resources on how to teach languages, several books and videos on teaching English as a second language which can easily be adapted for teaching any language. They also have a small section on how to teach Maltese. Teachers can join as members and borrow resources from them.

Ms Dellora referred to another source of resources, the Modern Languages Teachers Association of Victoria, which is an association of teachers of a huge range of languages and have a good website. They run sessions, for example, on how to teach any language using technology assisted learning devices, eg iPads.

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## Help save the Maltese language in Australia

Continued from page 10

Ms Dellora said that the Ministry of Education financially supports teachers associations, such as, the Spanish Teachers Association, to assist in teaching of the relevant language. "Sadly, there is no Maltese Teachers Association and it is, therefore, worth considering forming such an association in order to access such funding," she said.

### Professionally Trained Teachers of Maltese

Premising that he was putting forward his personal views and not those of the MCCV, Mr Victor Borg spoke about the reasons, as he saw them, behind the current precarious state of the Maltese language in Australia. The first reason comes from within the Maltese families themselves in that parents do not seem to grasp the benefit of learning a second language.

Mr Borg said that the Education Department must bear some responsibility for the state that the community finds itself regarding our language. The Department should consider the ethnic origin of students in a school and provide facilities to enable them to learn the language of their or their parents' origin. He said that the Department has an obligation to the students, their parents and the community to provide the facility to teach their language at the school. The community needs to approach the Department and make demands to provide facilities in schools for students of Maltese background to learn the language of their or their parents' birth.

On the shortage of Maltese teachers, Mr Borg said that, even if one is able to enrol a hundred students, the question would be whether we would have enough professional teachers for them. The MCCV has raised on several occasions with the government in Malta the possibility of sending teachers to Australia, even on a teachers' exchange basis. "Unless we have this sort of professionalism and sophistication, we are always going to be in strife," he said.

Mr Borg said that he is very much appreciative of the Maltese teachers that we have today. They are committed and doing their best, but unfortunately, while some may be qualified teachers, they do not have the professional background in the teaching of the Maltese language, he said.

Referring to the scholarships offered by the Maltese government following the Convention last year, Mr Borg said that the problem with them is that it requires candidates to take 12 months or two years out of their Australian contacts, home and background to take up the scholarship. It would be much better, if teachers were brought out here to teach our teachers or to run a professional adult course for people who aspire to become teachers of the Maltese language, he said.

Regarding the role of Maltese associations, Mr Borg said that when it comes to basic educational concepts they miss out on them completely. It is important that we get it into their minds that they have an obligation to their community to see how they could help with generating interest on the Maltese language among the younger generations. □

## Il-Festa ta' Marija Bambina f'Melbourne



Minn Paul Vella

Għal darb'ohra l-Festa ta' Marija Bambina giet iċċelebrata f'Melbourne. Ir-Reskeon Maltese Association organizzat il-quddies ta' Marija Bambina, nhar il-Ħamis, 8 ta' Settembru, fis-Sala taċ-Ċentru Malti, Parkville, fejn attendew madwar 120 ruh mill-komunità Maltija. Is-Sala giet imzejna għall-okkażjoni mis-Sur Freddie Asciak.

Il-quddies giet iċċelebrata minn Fr Noel Bianco, tas-Socjetà Missjunarja ta' San Pawl. Il-kant waqt il-quddies kien f'idejn is-Sur Emmanuel Farrugia li kien akkumpanjat fuq l-orgni mis-Sinjura tiegħu, Margaret Farrugia. Il-qari sar mis-Sur Laurie Armato u s-Sur Gejtu Deguara. It-talba tal-Fidili saret mis-Sur Sam Caruana.

Wara l-quddies kien hemm kuncert ta' marċi brijjużi mis-St Albans Melita Band.

### Il-Ballu tal-Festa

Is-Sibt kien hemm il-ballu tal-Bambina (Vitorja) f'Firenze Receptions, Fawknar fejn attendew madwar 250 ruh. Kien hemm ikla ta' hames passati u x-xorb ta' ma' l-ikel. Mużika kienet f'idejn Mario Sammut bil-"Moods Music". Kien hemm ukoll daqq ta' marċi brijjużi mill-Malta Gozo City of Brimbank Brass Band. Din il-banda holqot atmosfera ta' festi bhal ma niftakruhom Malta.

### Il-Festa l-Kbira

Imma l-Festa l-Kbira ta' Marija Bambina giet iċċelebrata l-Ħadd, 11 ta' Settembru, fil-Knisja ta' St Mary Star of the Sea, West Melbourne, il-knisja li gġib magħha l-isem ta' "l-Knisja tal-Maltin".

Din il-Festa, bhal kull sena ohra, tiġi organizzata mir-Reskeon Maltese Association għan-nom tal-patrijiet tas-Socjetà Missjunarja ta' San Pawl. Għalkemm il-gurnata kienet wahda msahħba u xi ftit tar-rih, dan ma żammx li numru kbir mill-komunità Maltija li jimlew din il-knisja sabiha li għadha kemm giet restawrata. L-għaqda li torganizza din il-festa hadet hsieb biex iggib aktar siggijiet biex hadd ma joqgħod bil-wieqfa minhabba li l-komunità qiegħda aktar ma tmur tikber fl-eta'.

Fis-2.30 pm beda r-Rużarju mis-Sur Emmanuel Farrugia. Il-quddies giet iċċelebrata minn Fr Dr Victor Shields MSSP u jikkonċelebraw miegħu kien hemm Fr Edwin Agius, MSSP (Rettur f'Parkville); Fr Denis Carabott, MSSP; Fr Noel Bianco, MSSP; Fr Emmanuel Bonello u Fr Karm Borg.



Il-panegierku sar minn Fr Dr Victor Shields, MSSP. Ceremonjier kien is-Sur Emmanuel Farrugia. Il-mużika u l-kant matul il-quddies kien f'idejn il-Wyndham Maltese Choir, taht id-direzzjoni tas-Sinjura Kathleen Borg.

Il-qari sar mis-Sur Charles Mifsud, Konslu Generali ta' Malta fil-Victoria u s-Sinjura Agnes Cauchi. It-Talb tal-Fidili sar mis-Sinjura Antoinette Bajada (Xagħra Association of Australia) u mis-Sinjura Yvonne Caruana (Reskeon Maltese Association). L-Offerti ttellghu mis-Sinjuri Richard u Mary Killeen, Caesar u Phyllis Vella u Jim u Jane Cutajar.

Fost dawk li attendew kien hemm il-Konslu Generali ta' Malta fil-Victoria, is-Sur Charles Mifsud; il-President tal-Kunsill tal-Komunità Maltija tal-Victoria, il-Prof. Maurice Cauchi u s-Sinjura tiegħu, Agnes Cauchi u membri ohra tal-Ezekuttiv ta' l-istess Kunsill; Dr Clemente Zammit (ex Konslu Generali ta' Malta fil-Victoria) u s-Sinjura tiegħu, Mary Zammit; Membri tas-Sovereign Military Hospitalier Order of St John of Jerusalem, of Rhodes and of Malta; sorijiet Maltin u membri tal-Maltese Ex-Services Association of Victoria, bil-midalji tagħhom.

Għadd ta' membri ta' għaqdiet Maltin attendew bl-istandardi tagħhom u offrew bukketti tal-fjuri lill-Madonna. Bhas-soltu, barra l-istandardi tal-għaqdiet kien hemm il-Bandalori tal-erba' lokalitajiet Maltin fejn tiġi iċċelebrata l-Festa tal-Bambina: Mellieħa, l-Isla, in-Naxxar u x-Xagħra, Għawdex.

Il-media Maltija kienet rappreżentata minn The Maltese Herald, u r-radjiijiet komunitarji 3ZZZ, 98.9 FM u 97.4 FM.

Saru żewġ ġabriet waqt il-quddies, wahda għas-Socjeta' Missjunarja ta' San Pawl u l-ohra għall-Knisja ta' St. Mary Star of the Sea.

Wara l-quddies Fr Edwin Agius għamel xi ringrazzjamenti għal dawk prezenti u l-għaqda tar-Reskeon li organizzat din il-festa. Ringrazzjament speċjali kien għall-Kappillan tal-Knisja ta' St. Mary Star of the Sea, Rev. Max Polak, li dejjem ta l-għajjnuna tiegħu lill-organizzaturi u l-patrijiet tal-MSSP.

Minhabba li t-temp ma tantx kien hanin, il-purċissjoni ma hargitx mill-Knisja, imma saret gewwa madwar il-Knisja. Il-Maltese Own Band Philharmonic Society daqqet marċi għall-okkażjoni fil-Knisja stess. Wara li l-purċissjoni, inghatat il-Barka Sagramentali. □

## Community Events Calendar

For up-to-date and more detailed information,  
please visit our website at [www.mccv.org.au](http://www.mccv.org.au)

Date	Title	Venue	Location
<b>Fri 18 Nov</b> 10.30 am	<b><i>Fit &amp; Fed from the Centre of the Med: Diabetes &amp; Maltese Cuisine</i></b>	Maltese Centre	Parkville
<b>Sat 19 Nov</b> 6.30 pm - 11.30 pm	<b><i>Get Together - St Helena Maltese-Australian Social Club Inc.</i></b>	Errington Community Centre	St Albans
<b>Tue 22 Nov</b> 7.30 pm	<b><i>Annual General Meeting 2011 - St Andrew's Luqa Social Club</i></b>	Keilor Downs Community Hall	St Albans
<b>Sat 26 Nov</b>	<b><i>Social Event - Maltese Salesians Past Pupils Association of Victoria</i></b>	Maltese Centre	Parkville
<b>Sun 27 Nov</b>	<b><i>Annual General Meeting 2011 - Maltese Ex-Services Association Vic</i></b>	Maltese Centre	Parkville
<b>Wed 30 Nov</b> 6.30 pm	<b><i>MCCV Executive Committee Meeting</i></b>	Maltese Centre	Parkville
<b>Sat 03 Dec</b>	<b><i>Christmas Party - Newport Maltese Association</i></b>	Maltese Centre	Parkville
<b>Sun 04 Dec</b>	<b><i>Social Event - Reskeon Maltese Association</i></b>	Maltese Centre	Parkville
<b>Wed 07 Dec</b> 7.00 pm	<b><i>MCCV Annual General Meeting</i></b>	Maltese Centre	Parkville
<b>Sat 10 Dec</b> 2.00 pm - 5.00 pm	<b><i>MCCV Children's Christmas Party</i></b>	Maltese Centre	Parkville
<b>Sun 11 Dec</b> 1.30 pm - 6.00 pm	<b><i>Christmas Family Lunch - St Andrew's Luqa Social Club</i></b>	St Martin de Porres Church	Avondale Heights
<b>Sat 17 Dec</b>	<b><i>Christmas Get Together - St Gaetan Society Inc.</i></b>	St Martin de Porres Church	Avondale Heights
<b>Sat 17 Dec</b> 6.30 pm - 11.30 pm	<b><i>Christmas Get Together - St Helena Maltese-Australian Social Club Inc.</i></b>	St Bernadette's Parish	Sunshine North
<b>Sun 18 Dec</b>	<b><i>Christmas Carols at the MCCV</i></b>	Maltese Centre	Parkville
<b>Sun 18 Dec</b> 5.00 pm	<b><i>Christmas Carols Evening</i></b>	Maltese Centre	Parkville
<b>Sat 24 Dec</b> 11.30 pm	<b><i>Christmas Midnight Mass</i></b>	Maltese Centre	Parkville
<b>Sat 31 Dec</b>	<b><i>New Year's Eve Dance - Newport Maltese Association</i></b>	Lakeside Reception Centre	Taylors Lakes



***The President and Executive Committee  
of the Maltese Community Council of Victoria  
wish you and your loved ones  
a Merry Christmas — Milied Hieni — and  
a Safe, Peaceful and Prosperous New Year 2012  
— Is-Sena t-Tajba!***