



MCCV News

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www.mccv.org.au

Council legislation ushers in new era in Maltese diaspora relations



On Tuesday 22 November 2011 Malta's Parliament approved by unanimous vote an Act that establishes the Council for Maltese Living Abroad. The passing of the Act marks a historic milestone, and ushers in a new and exciting era, in the relations between the Government of Malta and the Maltese diaspora around the world and the further strengthening of the concept of 'Greater Malta'.

The Act establishes for the first time the legal instrument that gives an effective voice to Maltese living abroad, a promise made by Prime Minister Dr Lawrence Gonzi and the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr Tonio Borg, to the Maltese communities' representatives who attended the Convention of Maltese Living Abroad held in Malta in March 2010. The Act is the result of a broad consultation process that included the Opposition as well as the Maltese communities overseas. The strong support for the Bill by the Opposition in Parliament was led by Dr George Vella, Opposition spokesperson on foreign affairs.

The publication of the Bill was announced in Australia during a visit last month by Malta's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr Tonio Borg. During separate meetings with the leaders of the Maltese community in Sydney, Melbourne and Perth, the Deputy

Malta's House of Representatives in session
[Photo: timesofmalta.com]

Prime Minister explained the principal details of the Act.

Following some minor amendments agreed at Committee Stage, the Council will be composed of fifteen members. Ten members will be resident abroad and appointed to represent the Maltese communities abroad, consisting of five from Australia (two from NSW, two from Victoria and one from any State other than NSW or Victoria), two from the USA, and one each from Canada, the UK and a member state of the European Union other than Malta and the UK. The Council will include five other persons, to be nominated by the Prime Minister, after consulting the Leader of the Opposition, from Maltese nationals who have special knowledge and experience of the needs and interests of Maltese living abroad. These five members would not be necessarily resident in Malta.

The Council will have the function to advise and be consulted on any matter or measure that impacts Maltese Living Abroad. It will be chaired by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, who will not have a

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New Committee elected for FMLA

Officers for the Federation of Maltese Living Abroad (FMLA) were elected for a two-year term beginning in January 2012.

Formed in 2010 after the Convention of Maltese Living Abroad in March that year, the FMLA has as one of its goals to keep the Maltese communities living abroad knowledgeable about their citizenship rights, culture, and heritage. It publishes a newsletter distributed electronically, *The Maltese Link*.

Voting took place in December electronically and those eligible for voting were members listed in the register of affiliated associations in accordance with the FMLA's Constitution. Three electoral officers organised and oversaw a formal voting process for the election and included Eddie Micallef (Melbourne, Australia), Louis Vella (San Francisco, USA), and Fr. Victor Camilleri (London, UK).

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The President's Column

An Elderly Visiting Program

In a world of uncertainties, one thing we can be sure of is the fact that as we grow older our need for help will increase, and in some cases, will develop into our complete dependence on others.

The Malta-born population in Victoria is ageing at a very fast rate. Currently there are just under 23,000 persons in this category, and the majority of them have already reached retiring age. Many are already in nursing homes or require nursing care.

It has always been a Maltese tradition that we look after our elders for as long as we can. This very laudable attitude, however, has become more and more impracticable in view of the almost total disintegration of the extended family, resulting from long distances between the parental home and the residence of the children. Australia is not Malta, and it is not just a matter of popping over next door to see what the oldies are up to.

It is, therefore, with increasing urgency that the MCCV feels that there is a need for establishing an elderly visiting program with the aim of organising volunteers who would be willing and committed to spend some time visiting older members of the Maltese community wherever they happen to be, in their own homes or in nursing homes, for an hour or so, just to have a chat in Maltese and reminiscing about their younger days in Malta.

One is surprised to see what a psychological difference such a visit could make to a person who is spending all day cooped up in a bedroom at home or surrounded by persons who cannot speak a word in Maltese.

It is unfortunate that many of those in need tend to "disappear" from the community with no trace. It is, therefore, the responsibility of every member of the Maltese community in Victoria, and in particular, every association affiliated with the MCCV, to inform the MCCV of any person who might benefit from such a visiting program.

The first step in this setting up this program is to develop a list of all those persons who might be requiring such a service now or in the near future, thereby getting a better idea of the real demand for such a community service. Staff in our Welfare department will establish and maintain a database to include all those who have shown an interest to participate in this project and who would like to have someone to talk to every now and again.

The next step of course will be the organising of a team of persons who agree to participate in the program by spending some of their time as volunteer visitors. Anyone who would like to be considered for this humanitarian task should contact the Maltese Centre (9387 8922) as a first step in this direction.

You who are reading this message could be in need of such a service yourself in 5-10 years time! It is by acting together that we can make this project successful. Your help would be greatly appreciated.

Prof. Maurice Cauchi
MCCV President

New Committee elected for FMLA

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As of December 2011, the FMLA had a total of 46 affiliated member associations with a combined membership of close to 9,000 made up of organizations from the following countries:

- 29 from Australia (including the Maltese Community Council of Victoria)
- 9 from Canada
- 3 from the United States
- 2 from New Zealand, and
- 1 each from Belgium, Italy, and UK

The newly elected committee for 2012-2013 consists of:

- **President:** Prof. Maurice Cauchi, Melbourne, Australia
- **Secretary:** Albert Vella, Toronto, Canada
- **Treasurer:** Emmanuel Cilia, Melbourne, Australia
- **Public Relations Officer:** Mark Caruana, Sydney, Australia
- **Editor *Maltese Link*:** Claudia Caruana, New York, USA
- **Members** (in alphabetical order):
 - Edwin Borg-Manché, Melbourne, Australia
 - Isabella Farrugia, Sicily, Italy
 - Franklin Mamo, Brussels, Belgium
 - Mona Nicholas-Vella, San Francisco, California USA
 - Bernard Scerri, London UK

For further information visit [FMLA website](http://FMLA.website) at www.malteseabroad.org.

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 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:

- Mar-Apr 2012 Newsletter: **Friday 24 February 2012**
- May-Jun 2012 Newsletter: **Friday 27 April 2012**
- Jul-Aug 2012 Newsletter: **Friday 29 June 2012**

Australian High Commission supports Malta's afforestation programme

The Australian High Commissioner in Malta, Her Excellency Ms Anne Quinane, attended a planting ceremony presided over by Parliamentary Assistant within the Ministry of Resources and Rural Affairs, the Hon. Philip Mifsud, at the Fgura B Primary School on 27 October 2011. Twenty-five endemic olive trees were planted at the school.

The Ministry of Resources and Rural Affairs, which runs the 34U program, partnered the High Commission with this school because the children there had shown a strong commitment to the government's EKOSKOLA program.

Mr Mifsud thanked Ms Quinane for her contribution towards a better environment. He praised the ecological initiatives taken by the students and the teachers at this school.

The Australian High Commission has sponsored the planting of trees as part of an initiative to support Malta's 34U afforestation program. Last year the High Commission planted 110 endemic olive trees at Ta' Qali National Park.

The 34U programme is an afforestation initiative aimed at promoting climate change awareness and reversing centuries of deforestation across the Maltese Islands. It contributed to the planting of around 100,000 trees across the Maltese Islands between 2005 and 2010. ❀

Below: Ms Anne Quinane, Australian High Commissioner, plants a tree at the Fgura B Primary School.



Notes from MCCV Council Meeting

FEBRUARY 2012

The following items were discussed at the Council Meeting held on 1 February 2012:

Council for Maltese Living Abroad. Dr Tonio Borg, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, wrote to the MCCV and its affiliated associations in order to consult with them and to invite them to propose the names of two Maltese people living in the state of Victoria who are able and willing to serve on the Council. President Maurice Cauchi reminded those associations which have not yet responded to the Minister's request that they have until 15 February 2012 to respond by sending an email to the Secretariat of the Minister, whose email address is stated in the letter.

Bishop Joseph Grech Memorial Scholarship. Since the last Council meeting held in December, the Fund has increased to almost \$29,000. The income of the Fund should be at least sufficient for one scholarship. Associations were reminded to pass on the information about the availability of this scholarship to their members and their families. The Fund Committee will be organising a fundraising concert dinner on Sunday 19 February 2012 to raise more funds. The special guest for the evening will be Fr Robert Galea, who is an internationally known singer and songwriter and will be providing the entertainment together with Manwel Casha and his team of musicians (For more details, refer to the article on page 10 of this newsletter).

MCCV Community Awards. The aim of these awards is to recognise the contribution that individuals make for the benefit of the Maltese community in Victoria. These awards are intended to be similar to the De Vilhena Awards that used to be presented in the past. The MCCV Community Awards are yet to be launched.

The Home Visitation Scheme. There is a great need to compile a list of Maltese elderly living at home and in nursing homes or even hospital. Anyone visiting elderly relatives or friends in one of these places should find out if there are any Maltese who require any assistance in the form of a visit to speak Maltese or perhaps for some company. The MCCV welfare staff have been asked to start such a list but with the help of others, the MCCV can reach more people. For such a scheme to succeed one needs volunteers, who can afford a couple of hours a week to visit these elderly. Michael Caruana is the MCCV co-ordinator of this project.

George Cross 70th Anniversary Commemoration. Mr Charles Mifsud, Consul-General of Malta for Victoria set up an organising committee to make arrangements for the commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the award of the George Cross to Malta on 15 April 1942. The committee was selected by the Consul-General himself and includes three members of the MCCV Executive (Georgina Borg, Paul Borg and Edwin Borg-Manché) who are participating on the organising committee in their personal capacity and not representing the MCCV. Edwin Borg-Manché developed a website to promote the events being organised. This was launched on 1 February 2012 and the website address is www.maltagc.net.au. There are several activities which will take place between 15 April and 29 April, including an exhibition at the Melbourne Town Hall during the last three days. For further details of the events, refer to page 11 of this newsletter.

Calendar of Community Events. Associations are requested to forward details of their community events for 2012 to the MCCV PRO, Edwin Borg-Manché, by email or by post at their earliest convenience so that they can be listed in the Community Calendar on the MCCV website. ❀

Council legislation: a new era in Maltese diaspora relations

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vote in the Council. The Government will nominate members on the Council after due consideration is given to the advice and recommendations of the Maltese community councils.

At least one of the Council meetings will be held in Malta every year. Members living overseas may participate in Council meetings via video or audio conferencing.

The Council is obliged to submit an annual report that has to be discussed by the Permanent Committee of European and Foreign Affairs and that of Social Affairs.

The Act also empowers the Minister of Foreign Affairs with the concurrence of the Minister responsible for Culture to table in Parliament for approval regulations to establish the Maltese Cultural Institute as a separate entity and structure from the Council.

Second Reading

The Second Reading of the Bill to establish a Council for Maltese Living Abroad was passed by unanimous vote.

Introducing the Bill, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr Tonio Borg, said that the powers of the Council will be purely advisory and it will provide advice to the minister on any Bill that affected the rights, entitlements or interests of Maltese living abroad, any administrative measures affecting Maltese communities abroad and on public broadcasting services relating to programs for Maltese living abroad.

The Bill also includes an amendment to the Constitution requiring the State to "facilitate the participation of Maltese citizens who live abroad in the political, social, economic and cultural life of Malta."

The Council will consist of 17 members – 12 of whom to be appointed from representatives of Maltese communities: two each from the states of Victoria and New South Wales in Australia, from the US, Canada, and EU countries (other than the UK and Malta) and one member each from among Maltese living in the UK and in any other state in Australia. The other five members of the Council, who had to have specialised knowledge on emigration and related affairs, will be appointed by the Prime Minister in consultation with the Leader of the Opposition.

The functions of the council will include monitoring the quality of life of Maltese living abroad; strengthening and cultivating ties between these communities and Malta's political, cultural, economic and social life; ensuring effective

protection of the rights of their rights and facilitating the maintenance of the cultural and linguistic identity of these communities.

Dr Borg said that to give the Council more importance, the Minister of Foreign Affairs will chair the council but would have no right to vote, not even to a casting vote. The Council is required to meet annually in Malta. A Directorate with responsibility for Maltese communities abroad will be established in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The government accepted the opposition's suggestion to set up two registers – one for NGOs established outside Malta involved in the promotion and protection of the interests of Maltese living abroad, and another for prominent Maltese nationals living abroad who had distinguished themselves.

The Bill established also contains a provision that enables the Minister of Foreign Affairs in conjunction with the Minister of Culture to set up by regulation a Malta Cultural Institute to promote Maltese culture abroad.

Dr Borg said the success and effectiveness of the Council would depend on whether it enjoyed the support of the Maltese communities abroad and whether government department, agencies and Parliament recognised that it had certain rights.

The opposition's main spokesman on foreign affairs, Dr George Vella, said there was a need to let the Maltese living abroad feel as much Maltese as those who lived here.

Dr Vella said the concept of Maltese Cultural Institute should be studied and discussed in more detail to ensure that it encompasses more than just serving to hold exhibitions or deliver lectures on Maltese cultural topics. The late Mr Frans Sammut had already been working on this idea in 1996 under the Labour government.

Dr Vella stressed that it was important that one should promote the idea of 'greater Malta' as such a concept would also be beneficial to tourism. The Council should have an organised committee to ensure continuity in day-to-day contact with Maltese communities abroad.

Referring to the importance of recording and teaching the history of migration as part of the school curriculum, Dr Vella said that this would also help Maltese children to understand the circumstances that led Maltese to emigrate particularly in the 1950s and 1960s.

Dr Vella said this Council would make the Maltese living abroad feel more a part of

Malta even though the Maltese never rejected them.

Labour MP Dr Owen Bonnici said Malta should make use of Maltese descendants' knowledge to export Maltese culture. Recently one could see the concept of a greater Malta at play when the national rugby team, made up mostly of Australians of Maltese descent, succeeded in winning a game against Latvia. It was wrong to think that sport was not a proper medium for culture.

Dr Bonnici said that even in the case of Sharon Spiteri, Malta should make use of her talent because she could also contribute greatly to Malta's musical sphere. The Maltese Cultural Institute should not be limited to the traditional arts and folklore but should also work on sport and pop culture. The biggest challenge would be to spread Maltese culture with people who were not of Maltese descent.

Dr Bonnici said that the Maltese Cultural Institute should also strive to strike deals with foreign universities which would help in bringing foreigners to study Maltese studies. Moreover, there should be no duplication of roles once other organisations established in Malta worked to spread the Maltese culture. Resources should be allocated wisely, he said.

Dr Bonnici said that one should not limit oneself by focusing on Maltese who had emigrated abroad 60 years ago, but reference to Maltese who were going abroad to work should also be made. A different perspective should be adopted with regard to the latter, he said.

Labour MP Noel Farrugia said that there were some 370,000 Maltese persons currently living abroad. However, the younger generation was again unhappy with the employment situation in Malta. Salaries did not match those of other EU countries and the cost of living was high. Many sought better opportunities in foreign countries. It was the economic situation that had prompted them to leave the country and that it was thus very important to ensure that the highest welfare state be present in Malta.

Winding up the debate, Minister Borg said that the opposition would be consulted when it came to appointing the 12 representatives of the Maltese communities abroad. ✱

Archbishop inaugurates initial phase of digital migration museum

On 23 December 2011 His Grace Mons. Paul Cremona, Archbishop of Malta, inaugurated the initial phase of the Digital Migration Museum that the Emigrants' Commission is establishing at Dar l-Emigrant in Valletta.

The first phase of the museum, being developed by the Exalta Group, features a digital collection management system that will record, consolidate and preserve all the Emigrants' Commission's vital records and artefacts relating to Maltese Emigration for future generations.

The project so far has included the completion of the extensive preparatory work in the hall being the highlight of the digital museum. The hall was converted to serve as the core of the digital museum while retaining its role as a place for activities, such as, public lectures.

The central digital information podium in the main hall, financed through a Vodafone Malta Foundation grant, has been installed. It has eight LED screens, eight touch screen interfaces and computers to drive the digital system enabling the interactive display of many items simultaneously. Visitors will be able to use the central podium to browse through digital information using natural hand movements.

Emigrants Commission Director, Fr Alfred Vella said that the Government has pledged financial support to the project. The Migration Museum Council has been informed that a donation will be effected in the coming weeks. Another main benefactor was Mr Luke Gauci. The Council hopes that more benefactors will

help the project continue to progress to completion.

The next step of the ambitious project will be the acquisition of more technological facilities for the digital information set-up in the main hall, the organisation of an archive and a library in another part of the museum, and a documentary film on migration to be shown at the already operational modern auditorium. The completion dates of these phases will depend on the funds available.

Emigrants' Commission Founder and president of the Migration Museum Council, Mons Philip Calleja, said that the purpose of the museum was to record how emigration started off and subsequently developed, as well as how the communities of Maltese emigrants integrated in the various countries where they settled and what they contributed in these places.

The museum is intended to further strengthen the migrants' sense of belonging to their Maltese origin and continue to maintain strong ties with Malta despite the geographical distance and cultural variations. Another aim of this Museum is for the Maltese in Malta and the Maltese Communities abroad to better appreciate the reality of the migration phenomenon as well as the value of social inclusion. The size of the Maltese diaspora spread around the world has been estimated to be larger than the population of the Maltese Islands.

Lawrence Dimech appointed People of Australia Ambassador



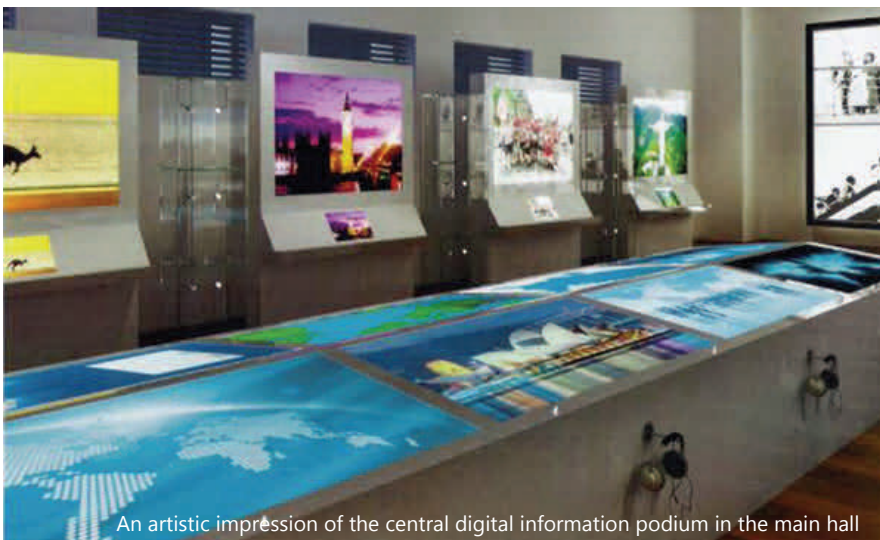
On 18 January 2012 Prime Minister Julia Gillard congratulated forty Australians who have been recognised for their outstanding work in building strong and cohesive local communities. Among them was Mr Lawrence Dimech, a prominent Maltese personality from Sydney. The MCCV congratulates Mr Dimech on his appointment.

Australians were encouraged to nominate inspirational people who have helped to build bridges, promote inclusion and strengthen ties in their communities. The forty local champions were independently selected as the new People of Australia ambassadors following hundreds of nominations from the public.

The ambassador program is a key initiative of the Gillard Labor Government's multicultural policy, The People of Australia, announced in 22 August 2011. The ambassadors have a new platform to promote their good work and share their ideas and initiatives that can help inspire others. "Those chosen are a who's who of ethnic affairs in Australia" said a spokesperson for the Dept of Immigration and Citizenship.

The Gillard Government recognises good work that is happening in our communities and that good work deserves to be championed at the national level. The new ambassadors will be able to provide advice to government and the Australian Multicultural Council if they wish. Their contributions will help assist and strengthen the government's multicultural policy.

The ambassadors have been recognised for the real impact they are having on the lives of many Australians – from bringing kids together through sport, to helping small business owners from diverse backgrounds get up and running. The 2012 ambassadors' one year term ends on 30 December 2012. 



An artistic impression of the central digital information podium in the main hall

Pope Benedict appoints Maltese Cardinal

On the Feast of the Epiphany, 6 January, after reciting the Angelus at midday, Pope Benedict XVI nominated Fr Prospero Grech OSA (right) as cardinal, nearly 200 years after the election of the first and only Maltese cardinal.

Pope Benedict also announced that a Consistory will be held to institute a number of cardinals, including Fr Grech. In a media release the Archbishop's Curia said that it is with great joy for the people of our islands, especially the Catholic Church, that amongst them is a Maltese priest, Fr Prospero Grech, a member of the Collegio Santa Monica, Rome, and of the Province of Malta. Born in Vittoriosa 86 years ago and residing in Rome, Fr Grech is an Augustinian Friar who is a highly renowned expert in Holy Scripture.

In the media release, the Maltese Bishops said they "consider this appointment as a personal tribute to Fr Grech and also a recognition of the contribution that the Church in Malta has given and continues to give to the Universal Church. It will be a great pleasure for us to welcome and celebrate this honour bestowed on Fr Grech in the near future."

Last December Fr Grech was awarded his country's highest decoration, that of the National Order of Merit in the rank of Companion of Honor, the most prestigious rank as it permits of only three members at any one time. The award (see picture below) was presented in virtue of Father Grech's many achievements, especially his contributions to society as theologian, by the President of Malta, Dr George Abela, in a ceremony held at the Presidential Palace commemorating the 37th anniversary of Malta as a republic.

The Augustinian Province of Malta, in collaboration with the Archdiocese of Malta, has prepared a programme of celebrations on the occasion of the



Episcopal Ordination of Monsignor Prospero Grech OSA. For this purpose a committee has been established to organise all aspects of this event.



Mons. Grech will be ordained bishop and given the personal title of Titular Bishop of San Leone in Basilicata (Italy). This episcopal seat was established in the 16th century (1571). Towards the end of the 14th Century and the start of the 15th century two Augustinians led this diocese (Nicola de Lorenzo O.E.S.A and Geminiano Giovanni de Sochefani O.E.S.A). Among the bishops who held this title one finds the Secretary to Blessed John Paul II, Mons. Stanislaw Dziwisz (from 7 February 1998 to 3 June 2005, when he was nominated Archbishop of Krakow).

The episcopal coat of arms (above) of Mons Grech is divided into two equal diagonal parts. On the right is a white Maltese cross on a red background, and on the left on a

blue background is the coat of arms of the Order of St Augustine. The motto chosen by Mons Grech is taken from the first words in Psalm 31: "In te Domine speravi" (In you, Lord, I find refuge). This coat of arms will be used until his appointment to Cardinal on 18 February 2012.

Fr Grech follows a fellow Augustinian, Cardinal Sebastiano Martinelli, as the second Maltese cardinal. Cardinal Martinelli (1848-1918) was made a cardinal in 1901.

"Cardinalship is ordinarily linked to the episcopate. The College of Cardinals must be the Senate of the Church and every cardinal must have the fullness of the priesthood, except if a cardinal wishes to forgo this for reasons of health. I found no reason to object," explained Father Grech in a communiqué of the Augustinian Order.

Archbishop Giuseppe Versaldi, president of the Prefecture of Economic Affairs of the Holy See, will consecrate Father Grech a bishop. He, too, will be created a cardinal in the forthcoming consistory. The other consecrating bishops will be Augustinian Archbishop Paul Cremona of Malta and Bishop Mario Grech, Bishop of Gozo.

As to why Benedict XVI selected him to become a cardinal, Father Grech attributes it to the desire of the Holy Father to honor the Augustinian Order. "Three days before the announcement I was telephoned by the cardinal secretary of state who gave me the news. It took me by surprise because I didn't expect it: I don't think I've done anything special ... but I think that the Holy Father, with whom I collaborated for close to 20 years in the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, wished also in a certain sense to make a gesture of gratitude for this service."

For many years the cardinal-elect was a teacher in the pontifical universities and formed generations of Augustinian priests and brothers: "My area was biblical and I have always continued in this area being interested particularly in the New Testament and the theology of the New Testament.

Mons. Prospero Grech OSA will be in Malta from 6 to 10 February. ☩

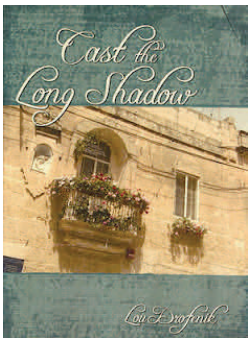
[sources: timesofmalta.com, zenith.org]



Maltese Australian Author wins National Book Prize in Malta

In December 2011 Maltese Australian author Dr Lou Drofenik won first prize of the National Book Prize in the category of novels and short stories in another language awarded by the National Book Council (Kunsill Nazzjonali tal-Ktieb www.ktieb.org.mt) for books published in 2010. She won the prize for her novel *Cast the Long Shadow* published by National Biografic.

The National Book Council was established in Malta in August 2001 to open up the world of books to everyone without exception and to foster the love of books.



In an interview published on a [blog](#) by Patrick Sammut, Dr Drofenik's agreed that her winning novel is one of initiation and emancipation.

The protagonist Charlie Scicluna

grows up during the war years in Malta, a teenager who is quite lost, confused by what's going on around him. The shock when he sees his neighbour burnt to death, the deprivations of the war years, his father's aggression, his own premonitions and his mother's death. Then there is his love for his cousin Angelina and what happens between them which wakes him up from a kind of total confusion. Another character, Edward Pisani, grows up in a foster home, away from his family, the knowledge that his parents have actually received money for him. The anger and frustration he feels on the island and then his eventual migration. For Charlie and Edward migration freed them from a past which held them in bondage, gave them a new identity - a new life almost.

Cast the Long Shadow also deals with a number of daily social problems in modern society. According to the author, we have to make so many choices in our daily lives and some of them are so difficult and their repercussions are so long lasting. George Scicluna's decision to look after Neville's stolen goods almost killed him, Pawlina's decision to be sterilised affected not only herself but the husband who loved her. Men and women have to make many hard decisions, no matter where they live and no matter what the hierarchies (be they religious or political) dictate.

In the interview Dr Drofenik talks about how she wanted to find the moral strength of the male characters. She did not want to write about male aggression, was looking beyond that. She wanted to look at goodness and to see how decent men coped with moral dilemmas. How would a man react when his



The author, Dr Lou Drofenik

wife died after a botched abortion? How would he raise his child through this heartbreak? How would another find it in his heart to forgive his wife for not telling him about her disease and what she did before she married him? How did Sam Scicluna find solace after he lost his family in one fell swoop? Each of these men found a way to cope with the situations in which they found themselves. Of course it wasn't easy, but they did it. The author really wanted to go inside their heads, find out what was inside their hearts.

Dr Drofenik found the writing of the novel very enjoyable and it only took her about six months to finish the first draft. She usually start writing at six in the morning till eleven, has a break for lunch, go for a walk and then do the dreaded housework. This book came to her when she was in Torquay (a beachside suburb) with her daughter and her husband. There was a surfing carnival on, and she heard a a competitor with a Maltese name called out. She thought she could write a book about a Maltese man coming down here, living close to the ocean. She wrote a few drafts but did not like them. Then as if he was there waiting, Charlie's name came up. There were a few stories at the back of her mind she had heard from Maltese men about their war years in Malta, about coming out here, their settlement years, their trials. She had lots of notes from her travels to Malta and Slovenia and going over them a story started to take shape. The manuscript was published when it won first prize in the Northern Region Literary Awards. ✳

PROFILE

Lou Drofenik (née Zammit) B.Ed, M.Ed., Ph. D (La Trobe) was born in Malta and lives in country Victoria. She has been involved in feminist research and is an ethnologist with special interest and expertise in the area of Maltese female migration.

Her novel *Birds of Passage*, is the first novel to be written about Maltese women's migration to Australia. This novel is now used as a text in one of the courses at the University of Malta.

Her second novel, *In Search of Carmen Caruana*, which also deals with women's migration, won

Lou Drofenik's latest book

Beloved Convict is based on the true story of a Maltese convict sent to the colony of New South Wales in 1817 arriving here in 1820. Australian convict history is very interesting, and there is an enormous amount of material to be found. Very little is known about the convicts who were sent here from countries other than Britain. I was absolutely fascinated to learn that there were seven men sent here during the convict era from Malta, for a variety of crimes.

Since Malta was under British rule, those who broke British law were convicted by a British court. Thus we see soldiers who had deserted being court martialled and sent here.

This particular convict was caught in the act of sinking his ship and punishment was hanging. He was condemned to die but was reprieved at the last minute, his sentence commuted to fourteen years in New South Wales. He arrived here on the convict ship HMSS Dromedary on the 28th of January 1820, thirty-two years after the First Fleet landed in Botany Bay. He was 34 years old when he arrived.

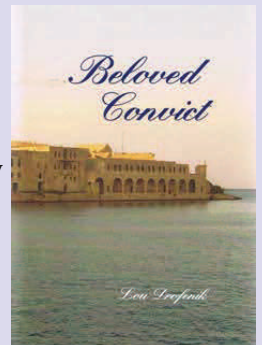
Being born in 1786 he lived through the last days of Grand Master De Rohan's reign, the turbulent years of the French Occupation and the start of the English Occupation. What amazing years these must have been! When he arrived in Australia he worked at Hannibal McArthur's granary in Parramatta, probably making him the first Maltese to live there. He was at the very foundation of Australia.

BOOK LAUNCH

Date: Tuesday 21 February 2011

Time: 7.00 pm

Venue: Maltese Community Centre
477 Royal Parade, Parkville



Il-Premju Nazzjonali tal-Ktieb in Malta for best fiction written by a Maltese writer in English. Her historical novel *Of Cloves and Bitter Almonds* was awarded the North Central Literary Award in 2007. *Cast the long Shadow*, is the winner of the 2010 North Central Literary Award and also won the 2011 *Premju Nazzjonali tal-Ktieb* for best fiction written by a Maltese writer in English. Lou has just published her fifth novel *Beloved Convict*. Her bi-lingual writing and poetry have appeared in various publications and her short stories have been heard on national radio.

Lou is married, has four children and six grandchildren.

Reskeon Maltese Association Christmas Break-up Party

By Paul Vella

On Sunday, 4th December, Reskeon Maltese Association organised the Christmas Break-up for their members at the Maltese Centre, Parkville.

Around 110 members attended. This was organised at 12 pm in consideration of those members who find it hard to drive late at night.

Music was in the hands of Mario Sammut's Moods Music who kept our members on the dance floor all day.

Father Christmas also paid us a visit, then later on in the day he came and danced with members to Christmas tunes and he even managed to pose for a group photo with them.

All members enjoyed this Christmas Break-up which was provided free of charge. ❧

Below: Break-up party at the Maltese Centre



Seniors Group Christmas Luncheon

By Paul Vella

The Reskeon Seniors Group organised a Christmas Luncheon for their members, at the Firenze Receptions, Fawkner, on Thursday, December 8. Around 170 members and friends attended.

Distinguished guests present were the Consul General of Malta in Victoria, Mr Charles Mifsud; Vice-President of the Maltese Community Council of Victoria, Mr Gejtu Deguara and Mrs Mary Deguara; the Treasurer of the Maltese Community Council of Victoria, Mr Paul Borg; Honorary Life Members, Dr Clemente Zammit and Mrs Mary Zammit; Mr Joseph Montebello, reporter and cameraman of "Waltzing Matilda" and his wife, Mary. Apologies were received from Mrs Anna Maria Mifsud; the MSSP Rector at Parkville, Fr Edwin Agius; Mrs Anne Gauci as

well as Paul and Salvina Vella.

Mr Caesar Vella, MC for the day, invited Edwin Baldacchino to lead those present in the singing of the Maltese National Anthem and Advance Australia Fair.

Mario Sammut's Moods Music provided the music entertainment. The Co-ordinator, Caesar Vella, delivered his Christmas message and also announced his resignation as Co-ordinator of the Reskeon Seniors Group and from the Committee, although he will retain his position as President of the Reskeon Maltese Association. He thanked all Committee Members, helpers and members for their support they have given him during the time he served as Co-ordinator. Then he congratulated Mario Sammut for the award he received as Best Community Program in Gippsland.

Mr Charles Mifsud, Consul General of Malta in Victoria, then gave his Christmas message mentioning how he and his wife always enjoy attending Reskeon functions while apologising for her not being able to attend. He also mentioned that they were going to spend some time in Malta for the Christmas break, where he will be attending a course whilst there.

Then, a list of birthday and anniversaries that occurred around this time was read out. Mr Edwin and Mrs Mary Baldacchino, who were celebrating their 50th Wedding Anniversary were presented with a bouquet of flowers for the occasion.

A small Christmas gift was given to all those present. The men received a bottle of wine while the ladies received a Christmas fruit cake.

It was a very good day and all those attending enjoyed themselves and many thanked members of the committee for the way it was organised.

Thanks to all those involved in organising this luncheon which as always was a great success, and thanks to the owners and waiting staff of Firenze Receptions.

Special thanks to George Topolcsanyi for taking the photos of the occasion. ❧

Left: Seniors Group members and guests at the Christmas Luncheon in Fawkner.


Newport Maltese Association Seniors Group Christmas Break Up Party

By George Saliba

Every year, the Christmas Break Up Party for the Newport Maltese Association Seniors Group brings to an end twelve months of various activities, which are thoroughly enjoyed and supported by the members. The party was held at Melrose Reception on 14 December 2011.

It is an event that we all look forward to and the Committee put in a lot of work to make sure it is always a success and a great way of saying thank you to all the members.

No doubt, the highlight of the night is when Father Christmas and his Merry Maids pay us a visit with all the goodies to hand over to each and every member in attendance as a token of appreciations for their true blue support they show during the year.

An added bonus this year was the Newport Seniors Choir singing a few Christmas carols wisely lead by Stan Azzopardi (right) on his guitar. 



Bishop Joseph Grech Memorial Fund Fundraising Concert-Dinner



The Bishop Joseph Grech Memorial Fund Committee is organising a Fundraising Concert Dinner on **Sunday 19 February 2012** at 6.00 pm at the Maltese Community Centre in Parkville. Attendance is subject to a donation of \$25 per person. Proceeds from the event will go to the Memorial Fund. Booking enquiries may be made to the MCCV on 9387 8922.

Entertainment for the event will be provided by special guest singer Fr Robert Galea (pictured right) and by Manwel Casha and team of musicians.

Priest, singer and songwriter

Fr Rob had a very strong relationship with the late Bishop Grech. In 2003 he commenced his studies for the priesthood at the Archbishop's Seminary in Malta. In accordance with his wish, in 2007, the late Bishop of Sandhurst made a request to Archbishop Cremona for Fr Galea to pursue his remaining religious studies in Australia, just as Bishop Joe had done himself 40 years ago. He pursued these studies in Australia under the special guidance of Bishop Grech.

Fr Rob was devastated by the sudden and unexpected death of Bishop Grech. He had just taken up his duties as assistant priest at St Brendan's Parish, Shepparton. "Bishop Joe was always encouraging and not only gave me pastoral and spiritual support but also urged me to continue writing songs and playing music," Fr Rob had said in an interview.

Fr. Rob is an internationally acclaimed singer and songwriter of Christian music. His recordings include three CDs: the 'Divine Mercy Chaplet' (July 2010), and the albums 'What a Day' (2008) and 'Closer' (2006). Fr. Rob's passion is to draw others to the heart of God through his music. He believes that music is an important instrument to help God's people understand the need for a relationship with God. Whilst greatly appreciating his gift, Fr. Robert recognizes that before everything he is a follower of Christ, a priest and only then, a musician.

Bishop Grech Memorial Fund

The MCCV launched the Bishop Joe Grech Memorial Fund in March 2011 in memory of the late Bishop who passed away suddenly just over a year ago. Bishop Grech left an important legacy, which many would like to celebrate and commemorate. He was known throughout his life for his exceptional personal qualities, which included leadership, achievement, and above all an enduring love for Malta.

The MCCV would like to encourage



young Australians of Maltese background to strive to follow in the late Bishop's footsteps, and for this purpose it set up the Memorial Fund.

The aim of the fund is to raise enough money to provide an annual scholarship, which would include a trip to Malta, for young people of Maltese background who best embody the qualities and values shown by Bishop Grech throughout his life.

Contributions towards the Bishop Joe Grech Memorial Fund are greatly appreciated. Donations may be sent to:

The Bishop Grech Memorial Fund
Maltese Community Council of Victoria
477 Royal Parade
Parkville VIC 3052 ☒

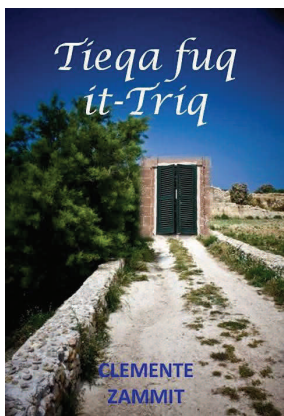
TIEQA FUQ IT-TRIQ - L-ewwel Rumanz bil-Malti ppublikat bħala eBook



Membru prominenti tal-komunita Maltija f'Melbourne, Dr Clemente Zammit (fuq il-lemin), għadu kemm ippubblika l-ewwel rumanz tiegħu, *Tieqa fuq it-Triq*, bħala ktieb elettroniku (eBook). Skond l-awtur, din hija l-ewwel darba li ktieb fl-ilsien Malti gie ppublikat

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Consulate-General in Melbourne announces George Cross 70th Anniversary Commemoration Programme

In a media release published on 3 February 2012, the Consulate-General of Malta in the State of Victoria, Australia announced a programme of special events to be held during the second half of April 2012 for the Maltese community to commemorate the 70th Anniversary of the Award of the George Cross to the people of Malta during World War II on 15 April 1942.

Programme of Events

The following is the programme of activities:

- A **Competition** for Multimedia projects, Audio Visual presentations and Essay writing on the topic *Malta and the Award of the George Cross*. Entries due by 31 March. For more details visit www.maltagc.net.au or call the Consular Offices on 03 9670 8427.
- **Sunday April 15th at 11.00 am:** George Cross Award Commemoration Ceremony organized by the Australian Maltese Association at the Shelter of Peace, Shrine of Remembrance, Melbourne (contact Ben Soler on 9336 3121).
- **Tuesday April 17th at 7.00 pm:** Public talk by Consul-General Mr Charles Mifsud about the Award of the George Cross to Malta organized by the Maltese Historical Association at Maltese Community Centre, Parkville (contact Mrs Frances Bonnici on 9432 1335).
- **Saturday April 21st at 6.00 pm:** Screening of the film *Heroes of the Sky*, Presentation of Competition Awards and Reception at the Maltese Community Centre, Parkville. (Registration of attendance is required by calling 9387 8922).

- **Friday April 27th at 6.00 pm:** Reception and launch of an Exhibition of historical images of Malta during the war and the award of the George Cross to Malta at the Melbourne Town Hall, Swanston Street, Melbourne. (Registration of attendance is required by calling 9670 8427).
- **Friday April 27th to Sunday April 29th:** Exhibition of historical images of Malta during the war and the awarding of the George Cross to Malta at the Melbourne Town Hall, Swanston Street, Melbourne.
- **Sunday April 29th at 11.00 am:** George Cross Award Commemoration Ceremony organized by the Maltese Ex-Services Association at the George Cross Monument, Maltese Community Centre, Parkville (contact Emmanuel Spiteri on 9338 3526).

Competition Details

There are three categories of entry:

1. **Multimedia:** including dioramas and projects. There will be two (2) sections in this category. One is open to juniors aged from 8 to 12 years and the other to teenagers aged from 13 to 18 years.
2. **Audio/Visual presentations:** this category is open to all ages.
3. **Essay:** an essay depicting why the people of the Maltese Islands were awarded with the George Cross. The essay should not be less than 1,500 words and not more than 2,500. This category is open to adults aged 19 years and over.

Conditions of Entry

- All entries must reach the office of the Consul General in Victoria at Level 6, 343 Little Collins Street Melbourne by 5:00pm 31st March 2012.
- The panel reserves the right not to award a prize in a section or to award additional prizes should the panel deem it appropriate.
- The judges' decision is final and legally binding and no correspondence will be entered into regarding the judges' decision.
- The copyright to the entry remains the property of the author. However, the committee reserves the right to include selected entries in any Consulate publication or exhibition. Such publications will become copyright to the Consulate.
- Participants will be asked to fill in an entry form stating basic personal details to be submitted with their entry. The entry form may be downloaded from the [Malta GC website](http://www.maltagc.net.au).
- By participating in this competition, entrants agree to be bound by these conditions of entry.

Prizes

One prize will be given to that entry judged to be the best entry by the panel in each category. Runners-up will be awarded 'Commendations'.

Malta GC website

A website at www.maltagc.net.au was launched on 1 February 2012 to promote these events. A [Facebook site](#) (Malta GC) and a [Twitter account](#) (@malta_gc_7th) have also been set up to ensure wide publicity of these commemorative events. ✂



Community Events Calendar

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

Date	Title	Venue	Suburb
Sun 05 Feb	Members Meeting - St Gaetan's Society	St Martin de Porres Church	Avondale Heights
Sun 19 Feb	Bay Trip (Queenscliff-Sorrento) - St Gaetan's Society	-	-
Sun 19 Feb 6.00 pm	Fundraising Concert Dinner for Bishop Joseph Grech Memorial Fund	Maltese Centre	Parkville
Tue 21 Feb 7.30 pm	Book Launch: Beloved Convict by Dr Lou Drofenik - Maltese Historical Assn.	Maltese Centre	Parkville
Wed 29 Feb 6.30 pm	MCCV Executive Committee Meeting	Maltese Centre	Parkville
Wed 07 Mar 7.00 pm	MCCV Council Meeting	Maltese Centre	Parkville
Sun 18 Mar	Phillip Island Trip & Barbecue Lunch - St Gaetan's Society	-	-
Sat 24 Mar	Get Together - St Helena Maltese-Australian Social Club Inc.	Errington Community Centre	St Albans
Wed 28 Mar 6.30 pm	MCCV Executive Committee Meeting	Maltese Centre	Parkville
Wed 04 Apr 7.00 pm	MCCV Council Meeting	Maltese Centre	Parkville
Sun 15 Apr 11.00 am	George Cross Award Commemoration Ceremony - Shelter of Peace	The Shrine of Remembrance	Melbourne
Tue 17 Apr 7.00 pm	Public talk about the Award of the George Cross to Malta	Maltese Centre	Parkville
Sat 21 Apr	Get Together - St Helena Maltese-Australian Social Club Inc.	Errington Community Centre	St Albans
Sat 21 Apr 6.00 pm	Film Screening, George Cross Competition Award Presentations and Reception	Maltese Centre	Parkville
Tue 24 Apr 6.30 pm	MCCV Executive Committee Meeting	Maltese Centre	Parkville
Fri 27 Apr - Sun 29 Apr 6.00 pm	Exhibition on Malta and the George Cross—Reception and Launch on 27 Apr	Melbourne Town Hall	Melbourne
Sun 29 Apr	Mother's Day Luncheon - St Gaetan's Society	St Martin de Porres Church	Avondale Heights
Sun 29 Apr 11.00 am	George Cross Award Commemoration Ceremony - George Cross Monument	Maltese Centre	Parkville