

Well-attended fundraising concert dinner a success

The Bishop Joseph Grech Memorial Fund Committee held a well-attended Fundraising Concert Dinner on Sunday 19 February at the Maltese Centre in Parkville to raise funds for the Fund. Members of the Maltese community in Victoria packed the hall for an evening of entertainment provided by special guest, the internationally acclaimed singer and songwriter of Christian music, Fr Robert Galea, supported by Manuel Casha's band of musicians known as *Girgenti*.

In attendance as guest of the Committee was Monsignor Francis Marriott, who was appointed Administrator of the Diocese of Sandhurst following the passing away of Bishop Grech. Also present were the President the Maltese Community Council of Victoria, Professor Maurice Cauchi, and other members of the Executive Committee, members of the Bishop Joe Grech Fund committee, as well as members of the family of the late Bishop Joseph Grech. MC for the evening was Mr George Saliba.

The band *Girgenti* opened the musical programme playing a number of popular tunes. The band consists of the band leader, Manuel Casha on the guitar, Laurie Armato in the mandolin, Alfie Xuereb on the guitar and keyboard, Joe Gauci on the guitar, Joe Camilleri on drums and percussion and Joe Cutajar on the guitar.

After the main course, the President of the Bishop Joseph Grech Memorial Fund Committee, Professor Maurice Cauchi, welcomed those present to the Maltese Centre and spoke about the social welfare work that the MCCV provides from there. He also explained the purpose for which the Memorial Fund was established, namely to encourage our younger generations to become more interested in maintaining



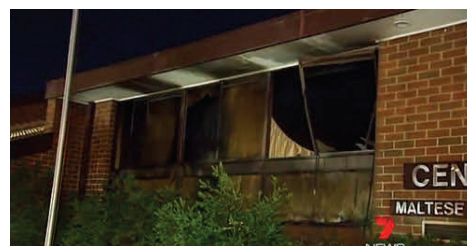
Special guest singer Fr Rob Galea

the Maltese culture. Prof. Cauchi said that the best way to get our young to maintain their interest is by assisting them to travel and spend time in Malta. It is important that the seed of Maltese culture is planted in our young early in life to give it the best change to flourish.

Prof. Cauchi said that the Fund Committee has been working for the past six months to establish the Fund and raise the money so that one or two annual scholarships can be awarded to young people of Maltese background to travel to Maltese to experience Maltese life and culture first-hand. About \$30,000 have been raised so far. The first scholarship is expected to be awarded in June 2012 and will cover part of the travel cost to Malta. The precise amount will depend on the

Continued on page 4

Fire destroys MCCV Boardroom



The Maltese community in Victoria woke up on Good Friday morning to the terrible news of an overnight fire that destroyed the boardroom in their Community Centre on Royal Parade, Parkville, an inner suburb of Melbourne. The Metropolitan Fire Brigade was called to the blaze about 1.30 am (AEST) and managed to contain the fire in the one room.

Continued on page 2

In this Edition

• The President's Column	2
• Notes from Council Meeting	3
• Book Launch: Health Issues Today by Prof. Maurice Cauchi	5
• Book Launch: Beloved Convict by Dr Lou Drofenik	
• The Maltese township of Paola	
• Time Out with Janet Buhagiar	6
• Nisga co-host World Figolli Day	7
• Sacred music of the Knights of Malta – An Australian contribution	8
• Malta participates in XV Commonwealth Fly Fishing Championships	9
• L-ewwel celebrazzjoni għall-Gimgha l-Kbira f' Mill Park	
• Festa tar-Redentur f' Melbourne	
• A Tribute to a well loved gentleman President	10
• George Cross 70th Anniversary Commemoration Programme	11
• Maltese Language Online Course launched in Australia	
• Community Calendar	12

The President's Column

The MCCV and its Affiliated Associations

A meeting was recently organised between the Executive of the MCCV and the Presidents of affiliated associations or their delegates. The aim was to discuss in a frank and open manner, any issues of relevance to the Maltese community in Victoria which are represented by these organisations.

It is clear that both the MCCV and the associations have got obligations towards the Maltese community. In the first place, the Council of the MCCV has got the duty to ensure that the Constitution of the Council is not ignored, and that it executes its duties accordingly.

These obligations fall broadly into the following three categories.

First, it has an *active welfare service* to oversee, including the supervision of the work of its welfare staff, who run programs for the benefit of the community, especially the aged and the infirm.

Second, it is *involved in general issues relating to the community*, including issues, such as, the maintenance of Maltese language and culture, as well as encouraging the transmission of knowledge through publications, talks, lectures, participation on ethnic and SBS radio and so on.

Third, the MCCV, as an umbrella organisation, is the body best suited to *represent the Maltese community* with the authorities both in Australia and in Malta. In this way, speaking with one voice makes us much more relevant than if everyone put different and even conflicting points of view.

It is to be emphasised that the MCCV can do this only with the tacit compliance of the affiliated organisations. As an umbrella organisation, the Council does not represent itself but the various members within it. It is therefore crucial for the affiliated organisations to appreciate their role within such an umbrella organisation.

The aims of the individual associations vary considerably, and this is as it should be. Some organisations were set up as a social organisation, to encourage and facilitate persons living in a relatively close proximity to come together and, through a dinner dance or an outing, maintain contact with each other and have a good time. Other organisations were originally set up to celebrate their village *fešta*, to which aim they often add social activities for their members. Still others have a more specific aim, such as the maintenance of Maltese language, culture and history. A very small number are professionally based and serve to facilitate and encourage their members having similar interests and backgrounds to network with each other.

These are all worthwhile aims, and it has always been the aim of the MCCV to encourage the setting up of such associations and to help with any issues as best it can.

However, one must stress that being affiliated with the MCCV entails certain other obligations, over and above the duties mentioned above. Affiliation with the MCCV means that the various organisations believe in a common philosophy as promulgated in the Constitution. One would hope that they share with the MCCV the need to help fellow Maltese wherever they happen to reside in Victoria; the aspiration that our culture, if not our language, will outlast us; and the need to look after our elderly and infirm and the home-bound.

It is for this reason that the Constitution stipulates that the MCCV Council should meet not less than 10 times every year to discuss issues of relevance to the Maltese community in general and not just issues relating to one's specific association. Affiliated associations should consider their wider obligations in this respect and ensure that their voices, and particularly their points of view, are heard and their ideas followed through. It is also to be hoped that they might, as far as possible, provide some assistance with the various voluntary work performed under the aegis of the MCCV, such as, the

Elderly Home Visitation Scheme that the MCCV is currently working hard on re-establishing.

The Constitution makes it clear that affiliated associations are expected to attend the monthly Council meetings. Those who do not attend are letting the side down and are urged to re-consider their position as regards their affiliation status and find a way to add value for the benefit of the whole Maltese community.

As the Maltese community rapidly ages, its needs are also changing. As the MCCV considers effective ways of serving the pressing needs of some members of our community, every affiliated association is urged to assist by contributing ideas and participating in initiatives aimed at providing a better service to our fellow Maltese living in Victoria.

Prof. Maurice Cauchi
MCCV President

Fire destroys MCCV Boardroom

Continued from page 1

The precise cause of the blaze is not known. A lit candle in the boardroom had started a small fire at around 8.30 pm on Thursday evening but this was extinguished. It would appear that some embers left from that fire may have reignited, leading to the blaze.

Four MSSP priests living in the presbytery that is adjacent to the Centre awoke to the sirens of the fire-trucks and the banging on the door of the chapel which is right next to the boardroom as the firemen thought they might get a quicker access to the fire through the chapel door. MCCV President Professor Maurice Cauchi attended the scene in the early hours to inspect the damage.

Several Maltese volunteers were able to clean up the other parts of the Centre in time for the afternoon service, ensuring that the Maltese community could continue with the Easter program of religious activities. At 3.00 pm Fr Edwin Agius MSSP conducted the Good Friday service in the main hall of the Centre attended by a number of community members, including the Consul-General Mr Charles Mifsud and Mrs Anna Mifsud. ❖

Charred remains
of the MCCV
boardroom





Notes from MCCV Council Meetings

MARCH 2012

The following items were discussed at the Council Meeting held on 7 March 2012:

Bishop Joseph Grech Memorial Fund. The fund-raising concert-dinner held at the Maltese Centre in Parkville on Sunday 19 February was a resounding success. The MCCV thanks Fr Robert Galea and Manuel Casha and his band of musicians Girgenti, for their contribution to this worthy effort. The fund has now reached the \$32,000 mark. The Fund Management Committee has decided to offer a scholarship of \$1,000 to a suitable candidate to encourage the maintenance of Maltese culture. Applications for this scholarship will close 30 June 2012. Affiliated associations were asked to encourage their members to broadcast this information so that there will be suitable applicants

Book Launch: 'Health Issues Today'. On Saturday 31 March, the MCCV will be launching a new publication: *Health Issues Today* written by Prof Maurice Cauchi. It deals with medical issues of interest to the layperson. All income from the sale of this book will go towards the Bishop Joe Grech Fund. The book will be available for purchasing from the Maltese Community Centre, Parkville for \$25 (plus postage).

Sad Loss To The Maltese Community. Condolences were expressed at the meeting regarding the passing away of Frank Bugeja, who was a long-time member and serving President of the Maltese Ex-Services Association of Victoria and a regular attendee at MCCV Council meetings.

MCCV Community Awards. The MCCV Awards scheme was discussed at the meeting. Affiliated associations were asked to nominate persons who they think deserves to be given such an award in each of the categories. The five categories are: Scholarship and Education; Culture (Literature or Art); Welfare Services; Youth (18 – 35 years); 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.

Presidents' Meeting. A meeting for Presidents of affiliated associations is scheduled to take place on Wednesday 21 March 2012 at 7.00pm at the Maltese Community Centre, Parkville. The purpose of the meeting is to provide association Presidents the opportunity to raise any issues and concerns with the MCCV Executive and to discuss matters of mutual interest.

Elderly Home Visitation Scheme. The number of persons registered for this scheme is slowly increasing. It is now time to organise a roster of persons to act as visitors. The MCCV Welfare group will start organising such a roster in the immediate future.

Nisġa - A New Maltese Organisation. The guest speaker at the meeting was Ms Sandra Mooney, formerly of Maussies, and now one of the founders of a new non-profit organisation called *Nisġa*, which has been set up to enhance and encourage cross-cultural and intergenerational story telling via the arts and social technology. *Nisġa* aims to pass the Maltese identity and culture to Australian youth via various cultural events and music festivals, thus strengthening a sense of Australian-Maltese identity amongst current and ensuing generations. ✠

APRIL 2012

The following items were discussed at the Council Meeting held on 4 April 2012:

Presidents' Meeting. A meeting for Presidents of affiliated associations was held on 21 March. Unfortunately attendance was not as high as had been hoped. The only significant issues that was raised at the meeting was the need to review the MCCV constitution and particularly in terms of the frequency of Council meetings and the voting requirements for making changes to it. MCCV President Prof Maurice Cauchi emphasised the important role that associations have to play in, and their general obligations towards the broader Maltese community, for instance, by nominating elderly Maltese who could benefit from the Elderly Home Visitation Scheme being established by the MCCV. (See *President's Column* on page 2)

Book Launch: 'Health Issues Today'. The Consul-General Mr Charles Mifsud launched a new publication: *Health Issues Today* written by Prof Maurice Cauchi at the Maltese Centre on Saturday 31 March. The launch was well attended and about \$1,000 worth of books were sold on the night. Prof Cauchi is donating all the proceeds from the sale of the book to the Bishop Joseph Grech Memorial Fund. Copies of the book are available for sale at the Maltese Centre for \$25 (plus postage).

Bishop Joseph Grech Memorial Fund. Some have verbally expressed their interest in applying for the Bishop Joseph Grech scholarship. Currently eligible candidates must be aged between 18 and 35 years. A suggestion to raised it to 40 years was discussed but it was not approved as it was felt that the intention is to attract the younger generation.

George Cross 70th Anniversary. Affiliated associations are urged to publicise among their membership the program of activities organised by the Consul-General Mr Charles Mifsud and his committee to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the award of the George Cross to the people of Malta. (See *details of the full program* on page 11).

Public talk by Lawyers from Maurice Blackburn. Representatives from the law firm of Maurice Blackburn will be giving a public talk at the Maltese Centre in Parkville covering issues of interest to the Maltese community, such as asbestos claims, other Work Safe issues and personal injuries claims. The date is yet to be confirmed. This will be publicised in due course. ✠

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:

- May-Jun 2012 Newsletter: **Friday 1 June 2012**
- Jul-Aug 2012 Newsletter: **Friday 3 August 2012**
- Sep-Oct 2012 Newsletter: **Friday 28 September 2012**

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Continued from page 1

interest income received on the capital amount in the Fund. He invited those present to encourage their children and grandchildren to show an interest in Maltese history and culture and eventually apply for the scholarship.

Prof. Cauchi thanked everyone who attended the concert-dinner and singled out for a special thanks Mrs Mary Cordina who co-ordinated and organised the attendance of many of those present. He also thanked all those who worked hard to make the evening such a success.

Introducing Fr. Rob, as he is known, MC Mr George Saliba mentioned Fr Rob's CD albums which included *Closer* (2006), *What a Day* (2008),

Divine Mercy Chaplet (July 2010) and the latest *Reach Out* (2011). Fr Rob was selected to sing in the international version of the World Youth Day song *Receive the Power*. Fr Rob believes that music is an important instrument to help God's people understand the need for intimacy with God. Whilst greatly appreciating his gift of music, Fr. Rob recognizes that before everything he is a follower of Christ, a priest and only then, a musician.

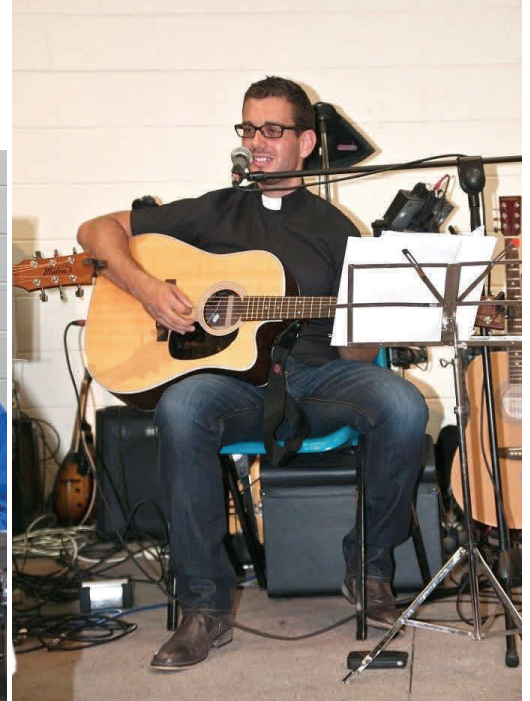
Fr Rob then took centre stage with his guitar, singing a selection from his repertoire, accompanied on the guitar by Jason Giuliani. Fr Rob said that it was honour and a privilege to be present at the concert-dinner to give honour to the late

Bishop Joe Grech, who was his Bishop and very much like a father to him. He said that he grabs every opportunity that comes his way to honour the memory of Bishop Joe.

In addition to singing several songs from his albums, Fr Rob engaged the audience in two sing-alongs. The first was the song that he wrote together with Bishop Joe at Portarlinton one summer, based on a favourite saying of Bishop Joe, *God does not make rubbish*, which he eventually recorded with him and is one of Fr Rob's most downloaded songs on the internet. The second was the Maltese popular sing-along *Lanċa Gejja u l-Ohra Sejra*. ☠



Clockwise: Prof Maurice Cauchi; the audience joining Fr Rob in the singing; special guest, Fr Rob Galea; Girgenti band of musicians led by Manuel Casha.



Book Launch

Health Issues Today by Prof. Cauchi

On Saturday 31 March, the Consul-General of Malta in Victoria, Mr Charles Mifsud, (launched Prof. Maurice Cauchi's latest book *Health Issues Today*. The book launch was held at the Maltese Community Centre in Parkville.

Praising the high quality of the publication, Mr Mifsud said that, while the book is not intended as a textbook, it is a very good medical reference book for lay people. He commended Prof. Cauchi for offering all proceeds of sale from the book to the Bishop Joseph Grech Memorial Fund to be able to offer scholarships to young people of Maltese background to experience Maltese culture and history first hand in Malta.

Prof. Cauchi said that the book's content originated from articles that he had published in the *Times of Malta* over the last few years. His main aim was to explain topical medical issues in simple language that anyone with a secondary level of education would be able to understand. He thanked the Malta Government, particularly Minister Dolores Cristina, for paying the cost for copies to be shipped to Australia.

Published by the Malta University Press, the book starts with a brief history of significant advances in medicine over the past half century. The first part of the book



Consul-General Mr Charles Mifsud



Prof. Maurice Cauchi

covers topical bio-medical issues, such as, obesity, diabetes and cancer, while the second covers bio-ethical issues, including stem cells, IVF, and organ transplants.

The book is available for [purchase](#) from the Maltese Community Centre for \$25 (plus postage) - Tel: (03) 9387-8922.

Book Launch

Beloved Convict by Dr Lou Drofenik

From left: Mrs Frances Bonnici, Dr Lou Drofenik and Prof Maurice Cauchi

On Tuesday 21 February, the Maltese Historical Association (MHA) organised the launch of this new book *Beloved Convict* by well-known author, Dr Lou Drofenik. This is the fifth of her novels which have well received by the community both in Australia as well as in Malta, where she was recently given the prize for the best book written in English by a Maltese person.

The president of the MHA, Mrs Frances Bonnici opened the meeting, giving a brief outline of Lou's background and publishing career. She stated that it was an honour for the MHA to publish this book which is based on a historical personality, based on the discovery by the author that a Maltese was condemned to 14 years hard labour in Australia, arriving in 1820.

This was followed by a talk by Prof Maurice Cauchi who launched the book. In his speech, Prof Cauchi emphasized the historical background around which this novel is built. It starts at the time when the Knights of Malta were at their lowest ebb, following by a short but dramatic upheaval created by the arrival of Napoleon and the French, and finally, the British rule which lasted over 150 years.

Dr Drofenik described her passion for writing and in particular the excitement she felt when, in her researches she came across his Maltese fellow who ended up as a convict. She described the various threads that stimulated her research and which have resulted in this historical novel.

The launch, held at the Maltese Community Centre in Parkville was very well attended. It was followed by a reception for the guests. ❖

MHA Event

The Maltese township of Paola

By Agnes Cauchi

On 20 March, the Maltese Historical Association (MHA) held their monthly meeting. Mrs Maria Catania gave an interesting presentation about the Maltese township of Paola, also known as *Raħal il-Ġdid*.

Paola has a 5000 years' history. At that time it was sparsely populated. The first inhabitants were the temple builders who built the Neolithic temples, the Hypogeum, and Hal Saflieni temples.

The Phoenicians, Carthaginians and the Romans lived there too. So did the Knights of St John. During the Great Siege of Malta in 1566, the Turks set up tents on Corradino and Tal-Borg hills, as the area provided an elevated look-out.

Four centuries ago, the township was named 'Casal Paola' after the Grand Master Antoine de Paul who hunted there.

As the British built the dockyards there, the population grew. The swampy land around Paola was cleared for health reasons. At the end of the 19th Century, a newspaper dubbed the township *Raħal il-Ġdid* - 'new village'.



Mrs Maria Catania

Paola boasts of many prominent people, among them are two previous Prime Ministers, Sir Paul Boffa and Mr Dom Mintoff. Other personalities include Mgr Frangisk Xuereb, Emilio Camilleri, who started the Cana Movement, Mr Amato who was the architect of the Paola parish church, and the author Ninu Cremona. ❖

Time out with Janet Buhagiar

Janet Buhagiar is a remarkable woman. At 30 years of age, she left her hometown of Melbourne, her family and friends and her corporate career at Coles Myer to become chief executive of the St Vincent de Paul Society in the Northern Territory. There she was responsible for 40 employees, more than 200 volunteers at five retail outlets, 65 emergency hostel beds and five outreach programs that serviced more than 300 people in need each night. Despite having no prior CEO experience, in just four years this faith-filled woman doubled the charity's income, increased services to remote communities, improved training and youth mentoring programs, won private developer support and government funding for a \$5.8 million project to build two-bedroom units to house 20 families, and raised \$60,000 through a corporate 'sleeping rough' campaign to fund white goods for the units. Janet was awarded the 2010 Telstra Marie Claire Young Business Women's Award and is now director of the social policy division of the Department of the Chief Minister in the Northern Territory. Kairos Catholic Journal's Fiona Basile caught up with Janet while she was back in Melbourne.

Why St Vincent de Paul Society, and why Darwin?

It was certainly by the grace of God; it definitely had nothing to do with planning. I also think my mum had said a few Rosaries to ensure I didn't end up overseas. I had come to a point in my life and career where I felt it was time for me to put back into the community and to transfer my skills to a business that worked primarily for people. I'd applied to volunteer overseas and, at the same time, a friend suggested the CEO position at Vinnies that was being advertised. I remember thinking, "what do I know about being a CEO of a charity?" I was a food scientist, I worked in the corporate sector—sure, I'd volunteered with Vinnies and had sat on their state council, but I didn't know how to run a business. I thought, what do I have to offer? Fortunately, my business mentor encouraged me to apply. I had a phone interview with the board of Vinnies, they invited me to attend their AGM in Darwin, and I just fell in love with the simplicity and genuine compassion of the people and the work.

Were you surprised when they offered you the position?

I have reflected on this often. I think it was very brave for the board to hire me. I was from Melbourne, had a corporate background, was an extrovert and young. So that's risky for them when you consider a lot of the volunteers and workers are more senior and there's a lot of tradition. But I was struck by the board's willingness and openness to start a new chapter in the life of Vinnies in the Northern Territory.

Was your faith a factor when considering this role?

It was a real gift to work in a Catholic organisation and to be able to really nurture my faith through action in my day-to-day job. I felt that I was being called to not just make a difference for Vinnies, but to make a difference in terms of its presence as a Catholic lay organisation in the Northern Territory, and to do that confidently and fearlessly. Vinnies is an example of the beautiful and positive aspect of the Church and the faith that we belong to.



Ms Janet Buhagiar

How did you approach the role?

It was a real journey of self-reflection and self-development and also a time of reflection and development for the team and organisation as a whole. Very early on I knew that we had a responsibility to the people we served and also to the people we weren't supporting who needed our assistance, to really know who we were. We needed to be a strong organisation and stable enough to respond with services, confident advocacy and the challenge of policy and lobbying, to ensure that the right services were being funded and supported to actually make a difference.

There must have been some challenging times?

Yes, particularly early on. There were some difficult decisions and conversations. There were some volunteers and staff who, perhaps out of fear, or lack of confidence, resisted any change or the opportunity to review what we were doing and where we were heading. Some people decided they didn't want to be part of the next phase. That was hard because I saw the pain and I felt it. I had to remain prayerful and strong, and trust that we were making the right decisions.

During the challenging times, what kept you going?

I felt so blessed to have Fr John Kelleher MSC, my spiritual director, who always gave me great support and counsel. I questioned sometimes, "am I doing this just because I think it's the right thing or am I really listening to the call?" He was really good in helping me to discern every step of the journey.

It's important to check in regularly with what's at the core and to be prayerful and courageous enough to ask, "am I still on track, am I still listening?" I also surrounded myself with supportive, positive people whom I knew would be honest with me, but who were also my consolation; because there were definitely times of desolation.

Why do you think Vinnies was so successful during your tenure?

Because we had a cohesive and empowered team. Everyone knew their role and was empowered to take risks. They were excited about what we were doing—we had a really strong profile and chose the work that we were going to do. Government and other agencies came to us for advice; we sat on the relevant boards, we influenced the way policy was developed and the way we and others in the sector responded to need. Our programs were relevant and exciting. We invested in the equity of the human spirit, which then returned so much more to the people who worked for and with us.

Is it true to say that you are grounded in your faith?

Absolutely. Everybody who knows me knows that my connection to God is my fundamental base. I'm not much of an evangelist and I'm not a Scripture scholar. For me, it's my everyday actions—through my welcome of all people into my life, into the activities that I'm involved in, all of which are grounded in my faith—that serve as a witness. And at the end of the day, it's about being joyful. When I use the gifts given to me by the Holy Spirit joyfully, it's infectious. People can't help but be touched and inspired.

Who inspires you?

My mum. She raised six children and is a quiet, humble woman. She is very understated and very grateful for the blessings she has. She always encouraged us to question what we were doing for others; how we were sharing our gifts. So, she planted that seed in me from an early age. That encouragement and nurturing really stuck. And her unconditional faith and trust that the decisions I have made are the right ones—that's a real gift.

Continued on page 7

Time Out with Jane Buhagiar

Continued from page 6

What has been the impact of winning the 2010 Telstra Marie Claire Young Business Woman of the Year award?

It has given me permission to celebrate the successes that we have achieved. And it's allowed me to share my story with such a broad spectrum of people. It's allowed me to reflect and to acknowledge what I'm thankful for, and who has made me who I am today. The past year has really made me think about how I got to this place and I certainly didn't do it on my own. I may have won the award but it's due to all who have surrounded me and influenced me. It's a wonderful privilege and opportunity to be a witness not just to the successes that are commonly promoted and recognised—the financial and business successes—but to have a platform by which I can introduce the beautiful successes of the human spirit.

What do you love the best about your work?

I love the fact that we get to make a difference. I know that term gets used a lot, but for me, making a difference is as simple as putting a smile on someone's face and giving someone a sense of purpose.

What would you say to people who don't think they can make a difference?

No matter how great or small, we all have the gifts that can make a difference to someone. We are anointed through the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation; we receive beautiful gifts of wisdom and understanding and can translate that into compassionate action. All of that makes a difference. You don't have to save the world, you don't have to be out there hours on end volunteering. It's as simple as do you cross the road instead of walking past the guy selling The Big Issue? If you don't have the \$5, do you just say, "have a great day"? It's as simple as that. You don't need a degree, you don't need money. You just have to open your eyes to the people that are around you. Everyone has this opportunity.

What's the best piece of advice you've ever received?

Listen, genuinely listen. Listen to what is nurturing within, but equally listen to what is nurturing around you and respond accordingly. If you have these two listening notions in tune, you can't go wrong. ✠

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Photos by Fiona Basile.

Nisga co-host World Figolli Day



On Saturday 24 March 2012 a fusion of ages and cultures had a ball at the Maltese Centre in Parkville learning how to make figolli – the traditional Maltese Easter sweet. Originally a virtual event organized by Gourmet Worrier (www.gourmetworrier.com) last year, World Figolli Day this year became a physical event in Melbourne with about 70 participants, ages varying from 6 months to 79 years old, being shown by Olga Ellul, an active member of the Maltese Community in Melbourne, how to make figolli.

Mr Charles Mifsud, Consul-General for Malta in Victoria made a surprise visit at the event. Mr Mifsud commended NISGA and the event and said the most satisfying thing about it all was the gathering of grandparents, passing on the

traditional Maltese culinary culture to their children and grandchildren.

This was the first official event co-hosted by new "group on the block", NISGA. An incorporated, not for profit group, NISGA aims to act as a platform to pass the Maltese identity to Australian youth via various cultural events and music festivals, thus strengthening a sense of Australian-Maltese identity amongst current and ensuing generations.

"In Maltese, *nisga* refers to a weave, and by weaving together the different colors, textures and threads that tell our stories, we hope to foster greater strength of relationship with Malta and her people."

Nisga are currently working towards the next event, a Maltese Cook Off being held in September in Melbourne. ✠



Sacred music of the Knights of Malta – An Australian contribution

By Frà Richard Divall

On their island fortress of Malta, the Knights of St John presided over a fascinating religious state. The Order of Malta, as the Knights are now known, is the third oldest of the religious orders of the Roman Catholic Church, being formally recognised as a totally exempt religious entity in a Papal Bull of 1113 AD by Pope Paschal II (*Pie postulatio voluntatis*).

The knights were patrons and benefactors of architecture and the visual arts, including their patronage of the knight painter, Caravaggio. Their Conventual Church of St John in Valletta, besides being an artistic wonder, maintained a music establishment, the size of that enjoyed by Mozart under the Prince Archbishop of Salzburg. Many composers, both Italian and Maltese, wrote hundreds of works of sacred music that supported the liturgy and religious life of the Conventual Church. Many of these manuscripts are safely preserved in church archives and libraries.

One of these Maltese musicians was Malta's own national composer, Nicolò Isouard (1773-1818). Later in life, Isouard would have an extraordinary career, enjoying the favour of the Bonaparte family, as a composer of opéra comique. His fame was so great in his lifetime that his bust now adorns the Palais Garnier, the old Paris Opéra, a tribute only accorded to the elite of French operatic composers.

Before Napoleon's invasion of Malta in 1798 that ended the rule of the knights, Isouard had been a minor member of the Order of St John, and eventually became organist at the Conventual Church. Although all of the operas from his Parisian period were published, a few years ago 33 of his manuscripts of previously unknown sacred music; masses, a *Te Deum*, *Magnificat*, *Dixit Dominus* and many antiphons, appeared in the *Bibliothèque National* in Paris. Like Mozart's sacred music, these works by Isouard were composed for soloists, choir and orchestra and the entire collection comprised some 3,000 pages of



Conductor Prof. Richard Divall



manuscript. Since then several additional works have been found.

At the request of one of Malta's finest historians, Mgr John Azzopardi, I edited all of these 36 works into print. I have previously edited into print some 150 pieces of Maltese sacred and secular music from the time of the Order on Malta.

I was invited to Malta to conduct a concert sponsored by the APS Bank. Founded as a Catholic Church entity 100 years ago, the APS Bank is now one of the real success stories in the Maltese financial sector, and is a substantial and motivated sponsor in the areas of both cultural heritage and welfare.

The concert was presented in St John's Cathedral, where these works had been originally intended to be performed, on 2 December, 2011. A capacity audience attended, including the two resident Archbishops, the Papal Nuncio, and the two emeritus Presidents of Malta. The Malta Philharmonic Orchestra, five soloists and a fine choir participated and the concert was televised by Malta TV and a CD recorded in the preceding week.

As none of this music had been performed for over 200 years it was indeed an historic occasion, and one given in a grand visual and spiritual setting. Among the works performed were a large scale *Te Deum* of 1791, an extensive *Gloria*, and a *Diffusa est Gratia*, taken from Psalm 45 and composed as a solo aria for soprano castrato.

In being invited to Malta to conduct this concert of sacred music, I was privileged to visit the Sisters of St John in Valletta, (now an Ursuline community) who still wear the cross of the Order of Malta. I also participated in a special Mass concelebrated by Fr Anthony Robbie from the Sydney Archdiocese, (currently studying at the Gregorian University in Rome) and Mgr Azzopardi in St Paul's Grotto at Rabat, the traditional site of the Saint's imprisonment after his shipwreck on Malta.

In Victoria, (as in 120 countries around the world), the Order of Malta continues its 900 year old hospitaller vocation, and is active in palliative care, through Eastern Palliative Care, providing support to a school for refugee children and assistance to refugee families and the homeless, and spiritual assistance to aged Catholic Homes. ☩

Frà Richard Divall is an Australian conductor and musicologist, Vice Chancellor's Professorial Fellow at Monash University and one of 30 Knights of Malta in Solemn Religious Profession. He is currently undertaking a higher degree in Theology at Catholic Theological College on the sacred music of Isouard. He is a member of the Senior Common Room of Newman College at The University of Melbourne.

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Photos courtesy of ASP Bank.

Malta participates in XV Commonwealth Fly Fishing Championships



Malta was represented by angler Steve Varga (above with wife Marthese) at the XV Commonwealth Fly Fishing Championships that took place in Tasmania, Australia in February. Sixteen teams from 13 countries participated, making it the largest Commonwealth Championship ever held. In the individual category, team Malta did very well placing 32 in a field of 77 anglers. This is Mr Varga's best result ever at an international event.

It was the first time Malta was invited to a Commonwealth Fly Fishing Championship. Malta has participated in three World Championships: 2008 in New Zealand, 2009 in Scotland, 2010 in Poland. In 2012 Malta will be in Slovenia for the World Fly Fishing Championships.

Mr Varga is married to Marthese nee Scerri who was born in Lija, Malta. Her father, William Scerri played soccer for Floriana in the 1950s. Her uncle George Borg was a prominent waterpolo player who represented Malta at the Commonwealth games. Mr Varga was born in Australia but has acquired Maltese citizenship through his wife. He has been fly fishing since 1970 and is a member of the Sunshine Fly Casting Club in Melbourne. He is endorsed by the National Federation of Sports Anglers in Malta and has their full support at these competitions. Malta is one of 32 countries that are members of the international fly fishing body called FIPS Mouche.

Teams from Canada, Kiribati, Australia, Singapore, South Africa, Malta, India, New Zealand, Isle of Man, England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland descended on Tasmania for the event and for a period prior to acclimatise to the Tasmanian fishing conditions. The four-day event was held at five separate inland waters to test the range of fly fishing skills involved in angling from a boat, river and lake shore.

The competition was fished in tough conditions for fly fishing but certainly not impossible. All anglers caught fish. Some of the venues were difficult, in particular Little Pine where on average, 3 of the 16 anglers at the session caught fish. Team Malta managed a third in this session.

At the opening dinner, participants were greeted by the Governor of Tasmania, Mr Peter Underwood. A book on Malta donated by Mr Charles Mifsud, Consul-General of Malta in Victoria, was presented to organiser Mr Malcolm Crosse as a thank you for the well-organised event. ✠

L-ewwel ċelebrazzjoni għall-Ġimgha l-Kbira f'Mill Park

Minn Paul Vella

L-ewwel ċelebrazzjoni għall-Ġimgha l-Kbira f'Melbourne inżammiet fil-Knisja ta' San Frangisk d'Assisi, Childs Road, Mill Park, is-Sibt 24 ta' Marzu. Il-Kumitat Pastorali Malti f'din il-Parroċċa, kull raba' Sibt tax-xahar jorganizza Quddies bil-Malti li għaliha dejjem jattendu numru sabih mill-Komunità Maltija.

Fl-4 pm bdiet il-Via Sagra bil-kant. Bejn stazzjon u iehor, il-Kor Malti, taht id-direzzjoni tas-Sur Martin Gauci, tawna siltiet mill-produzzjoni Maltija "Ikun Li Trid Int - it-Triq tas-Salib" fuq versi u mużika ta' Therese Cassar u l-Professur Manwel Mifsud. Meta tkellimt mall-Professur Mifsud u għidtlu li dan ix-xogħol qed jigi użat fil-Knejjes tagħna hawn f'Melbourne, tgħidx kemm ha gost. Dawk preżenti ukoll hadu

gost b'din il-preżentazzjoni.

Materjal iehor minn Malta li jintuża f'din il-Knisja hija l-Liturġija bil-Malti li nircievu ta' kull ġimgha mill-Katekista minn Hal Qormi, is-Sur Alfred Mallia.

Wara li spiċċat il-Via Sagra bdiet il-Quddies li giet iċċelebrata minn Fr Agius, MSSP, Rettur f'Parkville. Wara l-Quddies, bhas-soltu, kien hemm kakra te jew kafé b'xi haga tal-helu.

Quddies iehor bil-Malti f'dawn l-inhawwi jsiru fil-Knisja ta' San Guzepp Haddiem, North Reservoir (l-ewwel Sibt), fil-Knisja ta' St Luke, Lalor (it-tieni Sibt) u fil-Knisja ta' St Thomas More, Hadfield (it-tielet Sibt). Inheggu lill-Komunità Maltija biex jattendu għal dawn il-Quddies biex dawk li jorganizzawhom ma jkunux qed jahdmu għal xejn, speċjalment is-Sacerdoti tal-MSSP. ✠

Festa tar-Redentur f'Melbourne



Minn Paul Vella

Kull sena il-Maltese Association ta' Hobson's Bay jorganizzaw il-Festa tar-Redentur f'Melbourne. Din is-sena wkoll huma organizzaw din il-festa fil-Knisja ta' St. Mary Star of the Sea, West Melbourne, il-Hadd, 25 ta' Marzu.

Il-knisja kienet mimlija bin-nies bhas-soltu u hafna għaqdiet Maltin attendew bl-istandardi tagħhom. Il-mużika u l-kant waqt il-Quddies kien f'idejn il-Maltese Choir of Victoria. Organista kien is-Sur Charles Schembri. Fost dawk preżenti kien hemm il-Konslu Generali għal-Malta fil-Victoria, is-Sur Charles Mifsud u s-Sinjura tieghu, Anna Maria Mifsud.

Fis-2.30 pm is-Superjura, Sezzjoni Nisa, tas-Socjetà tal-Muzew f'Melbourne, Miriam Belli, irrecitat ir-Rużarju. Il-Quddies giet ikkoncelebrata mill-Isqof Emeritus Hilton Deakin. Jikkoncelebraw miegħu kien hemm ir-Rettur f'Parkville tas-Socjetà Missjunarja ta' San Pawl, Fr Edwin Agius, MSSP u Fr Dominic Degiorgio. L-ewwel u t-tieni qari saru mis-Sur Charles Mifsud, Konslu Generali għal Malta fil-Victoria u s-Sinjura Alison Zerafa rispettivament. It-talb tal-Fidili sar mis-Sur Charles Caruana.

Wara l-Quddies, qabel ma saret il-purċissjoni bl-istatwa artistika tar-Redentur mat-toroq ta' madwar il-Knisja, il-President tal-Maltese Association Hobsons Bay, il-Kavallier Joe Attard, irringrazzja lil dawk kollha li b'xi mod jew iehor għenu biex din il-festa tkun ta' suċċess li kienet, fosthom lis-Sur Lewis Parnis li offra l-garr tal-istatwa minghajr hlas, lis-Socjetà tal-Muzew li jżommu l-istatwa għandhom u lix-xandara tal-programmi Maltin fuq ir-radju li jgħinu bis- shiħ biex jinfurmaw lis-semmiegħa b'ċerimonji bħal dawn. Ringrazzjamenti ohra marru għal Miriam Belli tar-reċta tar-Rużarju, lir-reffigħa u tal-forċina u lill-Kappillan tal-Parroċċa ta' St Mary Star of the Sea, Fr Max Polak, li ta' kull sena jaċċetta li din il-Festa tinzamm f'din il-Knisja tant artistika.

Waqt il-purċissjoni saret il-Via Sagra mis-Sur John De Brincat, filwaqt li s-Sur Steven Azzopardi daqq il-Bugle. Fost dawk li mxew fil-purċissjoni, hadu sehem għadd ta' nisa libsin il-kostum Lhudi, biex jirrapprezentaw lil dawk in-nisa li mxew wara Gesu` fi triqtu lejn il-Golgota. Wara l-purċissjoni kulhadd rega' daħal fil-Knisja għall-Barka Sagramentali.

B'dispijagir kbir sirna nafu, għalkemm mhux ufficialment, li l-Festa tad-Dulur li kull sena ssir f'din l-istess Knisja, din is-sena ma kienetx ssir. ✠

A tribute to a well loved 'gentleman' President

On Saturday 17 March 2012 the Maltese nation paid its last respects to President Emeritus **Dr Ċensu Tabone**, who passed away peacefully at home in St Julians, Malta the previous Wednesday at about 10.30 am (local time), while having his daily nap in his favourite armchair. He would have turned 99 years in two weeks.

The Maltese community in Australia had the pleasure and good fortune to welcome Dr Tabone and his wife when they visited the southern continent during his Presidency. The Maltese Community Council of Victoria and its affiliated Maltese associations extend their sincere condolences and deepest sympathies to Mrs Tabone, her son H.E. Mr Francis Tabone, who is the High Commissioner for Malta in Australia, and their families.

The state funeral was held in Valletta this morning local time. Six army pall bearers in ceremonial dress carried the coffin, draped in the Maltese flag, out of the Presidential Palace and mounted it on a gun carriage for the cortège to St John's Co-Cathedral, where the funeral Mass was held. Many people gathered along the route to farewell their deceased former President.

Dr Tabone's wife Maria led the mourners who included members of their family, their children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. The police band played funeral marches along the route while the public who gathered clapped as a sign of respect.

On arrival at St John's, the family members were greeted by the Cathedral Chapter greeted the Tabone family and the coffin was carried inside the church.

President George Abela led the congregation, which also included Prime Minister Dr Lawrence Gonzi, Opposition leader Dr Joseph Muscat, Speaker Dr Michael Fenech, President Emeritus Dr Eddie Fenech Adami, President Emeritus Dr Guido de Marco's widow Violet and Deputy Prime Minister Dr Tonio Borg.

In his homily, Archbishop Paul Cremona, who led the Mass and was assisted by, among others, Gozo Bishop Mgr Mario Grech and Archbishop Emeritus Mgr Joseph Mercieca, said that the people's consolation for their loss was that Dr Tabone lived surrounded by Christian values. His faith was strong and made him who he was. He attended Mass daily, prayed and was devoted to Our Lady and did his utmost to live close to her. He loved the people and managed to be guided by the values of honesty, respect, love and justice throughout his distinguished political career. He combined his marriage to love,



State Funeral cortège led by President Abela following the Mass at St John's Co-Cathedral

which remained strong to this very day. Dr Tabone, the Archbishop said, lived a long life and left behind pleasant memories giving relations a new life.

The Secretary of the Apostolic Nunciature in Malta, Rev Fr Filippo Colnago, read out the Pope's blessing and condolences at the end of the Mass.



Dr Censu Tabone

After Mass, the cortège proceeded out of the Co-Cathedral and along Merchants' Street, escorted by a detachment of soldiers in ceremonial dress and the army band. Many people lined the route and applauded occasionally as the coffin mounted on the gun carriage passed by.

Walking behind the family were the President and Mrs Abela, the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition, the Chief Justice and the Speaker. A couple of soldiers carried President Tabone's decorations which were presented to Mrs Tabone in front of the War Monument in Floriana, where the first leg of the funeral terminated. The cortège then proceeded to Gozo, where Dr Tabone's body lay in state at the Banca Giuratale in Rabat for an hour to enable the locals to pay their last respects. The funeral proceedings ended at Xewkija cemetery where President Censu Tabone was laid to rest.

A True Gentleman and Family Man

Tributes for Dr Tabone poured in from several sources in Malta and overseas. The common thread of these tributes, regardless of their origin, was that Ċensu Tabone was "a true gentleman" and "a family man" who always remained down to earth.

Antoine Saliba, 80, who had lived in Australia for over 40 years, got to know Dr Tabone before he married Maria, his wife and soul mate for 70 years, when he used to go to St Julians to visit her. Last November Dr Tabone and his wife celebrated the 70th anniversary of their marriage, with their eight children, 19 grandchildren and 24 great grandchildren. Mr Saliba and remembered a time when Dr Tabone, then President, visited the Maltese community there. "It was so nice to see a childhood, familiar face. He was the President then but so happy to see us and we him. He didn't change when he became President," he said.

In comments to MaltaToday, former President, Prime Minister and PN leader Dr Eddie Fenech Adami paid tribute to Dr Tabone, describing him as a "political and social icon" and saying that the country has lost a true gentleman, who was truly dedicated to his country and family. "He was an icon in every sense, starting from his family values: He always put his family first, and then came his duty towards his country, the people and his patients," Dr Fenech Adami said. What struck him most about Ċensu Tabone was his "undying mental and physical energy" in carrying out his duties. "Ċensu Tabone enjoyed worldwide respect," and as Foreign Affairs Minister in the late 1980s he led the nation to rebuild its international image. 🇲🇹



Events Programme

- **Sunday 15th April 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 17th April at 7.30 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 (Entrance free. Contact Mrs Frances Bonnici on 9432 1335).
- **Saturday 21st April at 6.00 pm** at the Maltese Community Centre, Parkville (Entrance free but registration of attendance is required by calling 9387 8922):
 - ◊ Launch of an Exhibition of historical images of Malta during the war and the award of the George Cross to Malta (to remain open until Sunday 29th April)
 - ◊ Screening of the film *Heroes of the Sky*
 - ◊ Presentation of Competition Awards
 - ◊ Reception
- **Sunday 29th April at 2.30 pm:** 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).

Visit the website at www.maltagc.net.au for more details.

Maltese Language Online Course launched in Australia

The Maltese Language School of Adelaide has launched an online course for the study of the Maltese language for Year 12 students. The course is designed to provide more flexibility to HSC/VCE/SACE students of all ages to study the Maltese language, history, geography and culture.

According to the President of the Maltese Language School of Adelaide and Honorary Consul for Malta in South Australia, Mr Frank L Scicluna, studying online through distance learning is an excellent way to bring study direct to the student's home. This makes it possible to adjust their study and learning schedule to fit their individual requirements, allowing a high degree of flexibility for learning Maltese. Accreditation is given by the Board of South Australian Certificate of Education.

Anyone residing in any of the States and Territories of Australia may apply to do the course. There is no age limit to undertake the Year 12 course as long as the candidate has a basic knowledge of the Maltese Language. There is a nominal enrolment fee of \$30. [Click here](#) to download a registration form from the MCCV website.

The course will start in the first week of April 2012 and goes on till the end of September. There is an-going assessment for each



student based on the work submitted and attracts 70% of the total marks. The minimum requirements of the course is 6 written assignments in English/Maltese, grammar exercises and occasional electronic communication with the coordinator.

Examinations are held in October. In the first week of October the Board of Studies holds an oral examination (face-to-face in Melbourne and over the phone in other States) and a 3-hour written examination.

The exam is held at a location chosen by the Education authorities of the State/Territory where the student resides. The dates and venue will be announced in September. The oral/written exam attracts 30% of the total marks.

For further information and registration, visit <http://www.malteseonline.page4.me> which also contains material for use on the course and will be used for communication with students undertaking the course.

The contact details for the MALTESE LANGUAGE SCHOOL OF ADELAIDE are:

12 Camroc Avenue, Prospect, South Australia 5082

Tel: (08) 8269 2948 Mobile: 0422 438 288

Email: honconsul@live.com.au

Community Events Calendar

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

Date	Event	Venue	Suburb
Fri 13 Apr 10.30 am - 12.00 pm	Information Session: Well-being - Write Your Cares Away	MCCV Sunshine Office	Sunshine
Sun 15 Apr 11.00 am	George Cross Award Commemoration Ceremony organized by Maltese Australian Association	The Shrine of Remembrance	Melbourne
Tue 17 Apr 7.30 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	Exhibition, 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
Sun 29 Apr	Mother's Day Luncheon - St Gaetan's Society	St Martin de Porres Church	Avondale Heights
Sun 29 Apr 2.30 pm	George Cross Award Commemoration Ceremony organised by Maltese Ex-Services Association	Maltese Centre	Parkville
Wed 02 May 7.00 pm	MCCV Council Meeting	Maltese Centre	Parkville
Fri 04 May 6.30 pm	Santa Cruz Mass - St Helena Maltese-Australian Social Club	Maltese Centre	Parkville
Sat 05 May	Santa Cruz & Mothers Day Function - St Helena Maltese-Australian Social Club	Melrose Receptions	Tullamarine
Sun 20 May	Members Meeting - St Gaetan's Society	St Martin de Porres Church	Avondale Heights
Sun 27 May	Get Together - Reskeon Maltese Association	Maltese Centre	Parkville
Wed 30 May 6.30 pm	MCCV Executive Committee Meeting	Maltese Centre	Parkville
Sat 02 Jun	Get Together - St Helena Maltese-Australian Social Club Inc.	Maltese Centre	Parkville
Wed 06 Jun 7.00 pm	MCCV Council Meeting	Maltese Centre	Parkville
Sat 23 Jun	Get Together - St Helena Maltese-Australian Social Club Inc.	Errington Community Centre	St Albans