

European Commission speaks out on right of EU citizens to vote in European elections



On 29 January 2013 the European Commission called on Malta and four other EU member states to stop disenfranchising EU citizens by not allowing them to vote in European Parliamentary elections unless they permanently reside in their home countries.

Each of the 28 member states of the European Union, including Malta, has the right to elect Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) to represent views of the population. The number of members for each country is proportional to the size of the population: Malta was initially allocated five seats which were increased to six for the 2014 election after the signing of the 2007 Lisbon Treaty.

The European Parliament comprises 751 members (MEPs). Following the joining of the latest member country, Croatia, in July 2013, some adjustments will be made to the allocation of seats, but Malta will continue to have six seats.

It is of interest to note that most members of the EU allow voting for

these seats from all their citizens, irrespective of whether they live in their own country or not. There are five exceptions to this practice, namely Denmark, Ireland, Cyprus, the United Kingdom and Malta.



EU Justice Commissioner Ms Viviane Reding

This subject has been brought to the fore recently, partly because there is a significant number of Maltese now living and working in Europe, who have long felt this practice to be discriminatory.

A couple of weeks ago the EU Justice Commissioner Viviane Reding objected

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The President's Column

Our Second Generation

This might as well be called 'the unknown generation' because we know very little about who they are, what are their aims, what they have achieved and a multitude of other factors which affect them. In comparison, census statistics tell us a lot about those who were born in Malta, but not much about those born outside Malta and living in Australia.

In a survey being carried out currently by the Maltese Community Council of Victoria, a number of interesting observations are already becoming apparent, even at this preliminary stage. This group of persons that can be included as 'second generation' consist of a very wide age group, and include children as well as those who have now reached 70 years of age. So it is not surprising that their habits and aims in life can be quite variable.

However, certain characteristics seem to appear fairly clear, even at this early stage in this study. Firstly, most of the respondents claim that they are 'Maltese-Australian' rather than 'Australian', or even 'Maltese'. This implies that while they have integrated well within the Australian society, they still believe that they belong to the larger Maltese community, even though they do not participate much in Maltese functions, or belong to Maltese organisations.

This basic ground-swell feeling of 'belonging' can be seen by the fact that many have visited Malta several times, and even have Maltese passports, or intend to apply for one.

In spite of this, however, it is remarkable, although a well-known fact, that the vast majority of these persons have lost their command of Maltese language almost completely. Some, especially the older respondents, may be able to speak the language, but most of them hardly ever use it to communicate with family or friends.

One reason of this is the fact that there is a high rate of intermarriage among second-generation Maltese. When one of the parents speaks English or a different language, it becomes patently difficult to maintain the Maltese language as the common language within the family, and much more difficult when children start school when peer group pressure to conform becomes paramount. In spite of all the efforts at teaching Maltese language, this has become a major problem within the community.

As a result of this, very few second-generation persons actually listen to Maltese radio. This compounds problems of communication with this group of Maltese within the community. Some admit to using internet for keeping in touch with Maltese news from Malta, but it explains the fact that communication with Maltese-second generation persons has become almost impossible, and the only way to contact them is through their parents who still have good contact with the Maltese community through belonging to associations or by listening to the various radio programs.

One mustn't be too pessimistic about these outcomes. While language is practically lost, there is still an interest in Maltese culture which we must do our best to maintain. In this respect one can only praise efforts by certain groups within the community which are helping to raise interest within the younger generation through various activities.

Perhaps equally important, we realise that this group of Maltese have on the whole done quite well for themselves. They have a much better standard of education than their parents ever got from Malta. They have integrated well within society, speaking English which is indistinguishable from that of other native-born Australians, which certainly helps in the process of integration within society.

One gets the impression that for a second-generation Maltese, being partly Maltese, a Maltese tradition and background is considered as a plus, of which they are proud. This is something which we should encourage in whichever way we can.

Prof. Maurice Cauchi
MCCV President

21 February 2013

MCCV Survey on Second Generation Maltese in Australia



The Maltese Community Council of Victoria is conducting a survey to obtain a picture of the Second Generation of Maltese in Australia about whom we really know very little.

The survey questionnaire is now available to complete online. If you are a second generation person of Maltese background, [click here](#) to fill out the survey questionnaire **online**. Don't forget to click the **Finished** button at the bottom of the form to submit your response.

Alternatively, if you prefer to complete the survey in MS Word format, you can download the form from the MCCV website ([click here](#) to download). Completed forms may be returned in electronic or hardcopy form.

BY EMAIL: Scan the completed form and email it to the email address of Prof Maurice Cauchi mnc25@optusnet.com.au

BY POST: Post completed form to: Prof Maurice Cauchi, MCCV President, Maltese Community Centre, 477 Royal Parade, Parkville, Victoria 3052

The information provided will be treated in the strictest confidence.

Please pass this information and request for survey participation on to your children, friends and acquaintances.

Prof Maurice Cauchi
MCCV President

Convention for Maltese Living Abroad 2015

Logo and memento design competition launched



Malta's Ministry for Foreign Affairs is planning to organise the 4th Convention for the Maltese Living Abroad in Malta during early April 2015. It is the intention of the Organising Committee of this Convention to involve to the fullest not only the Council for the Maltese Living Abroad (CMLA) who represent all Maltese Abroad, but the thousands of Maltese living around the world themselves.

With this purpose in mind, the Organising Committee within the Ministry for Foreign Affairs is launching an international *Logo and Memento Competition* open for all Maltese nationals living abroad. Both logo and memento can be the same or different design(s) and should epitomise the spirit of Malta's Diaspora and the Greater Malta concept.

Artists may opt to make submissions for either the logo or memento or both. All participating works should be forwarded to the nearest Malta High Commission, Malta Embassy or Malta Permanent Representation. The final work will be chosen by an independent team of judges in Malta.

Works must be submitted at the nearest Malta High Commission, Malta Embassy or Malta Permanent Representation by **Friday, 30 May 2014 at noon**. Works received after this date and time would not be considered.

The contact details for the Malta High Commission in Canberra, Australia are as follows:
Postal address: 38 Culgoa Circuit, O'Malley, ACT 2606
Email: highcommission.canberra@gov.mt ✉

Maltese classes in Victoria for 2014

Registration for Maltese language classes in Victoria for 2014 for children and adults is now open,

- **Classes for children** from Prep to VCE level on Saturday mornings from 9.00 am to 12.30 pm at Taylors Lakes
- **Classes for adults** on Thursday evenings from 6.00 pm to 7.00 pm at the Maltese Centre in Parkville.
- For those who wish to advance in the study of Maltese, a VCE class for adults will be held.

Young and adults, who wish to learn Maltese in other Centres in Victoria and for all other information, should call **0412 115 919** or email admin@mccv.org.au

Edwidge Borg

Maltese Language Classes Co-ordinator—MCCV

Notes from Council Meeting

FEBRUARY 2014—Council Meeting

On Wednesday 5 February 2014 at the Council Meeting the following items were discussed:

Maltese Interpreters needed. From time to time we receive requests from hospitals and other institutions that require Maltese interpreters for their patients and other clients. It would appear that the Maltese community is suffering from a dearth of interpreters. With the ageing of the population, often associated with loss of the English language, we are bound to require more and more interpreters. Anyone who is a qualified interpreter should contact the Maltese Centre (9387 8922) to make themselves available.

Membership of the MCCV. According to the Constitution, persons who help in the running of the Centre may apply to be considered as 'Volunteer members'. Anyone who wishes to be included in this category should apply to the secretary, MCCV (9387 8922) and fill in the appropriate form.

Survey of 2nd Generation Maltese. Currently the MCCV is conducting a Survey to find out more about the needs and aims of persons belonging to the second generation. Associations and individuals are asked to encourage their children and their friends to fill in a form, which can be [completed online](#), downloaded from the [MCCV website](#) or obtained from the Maltese Centre.

Maltese language classes. Classes for 2014 have started again this year at the Maltese Centre. Please contact Ms Edwidge Borg at the Maltese Centre (9387 8922).

Functions at the Centre. The problem of sound production at the Maltese is still unresolved, mainly because the Centre is not adequately insulated and it has become difficult for association to utilise the centre for dinner dances and other functions requiring a high level of music. Further assessment is being undertaken to see if a solution can be found to this problem. ✉

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

European Commission speaks out on right of EU citizens to vote in European elections

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to this practice, emphasising that the citizens of the European Union member countries should be allowed to exercise their right to free movement within the EU.

Commissioner Reding stated that “The right to vote is one of the fundamental political rights of citizenship. It is part of the very fabric of democracy. Depriving citizens of their right to vote once they move to another EU country is effectively tantamount to punishing citizens for having exercised their right to free movement. Such practices risk making them second-class citizens.”

In late January Commissioner Viviane Reding issued “guidance” to EU member states with “rules in place leading to a loss of voting rights for citizens in national elections, simply because they have exercised their right to free movement in the EU”.

Commissioner Reding noted that, “While under the existing EU Treaties, member states are competent to determine who can benefit from the right to vote in national elections, disenfranchisement practices can negatively affect EU free movement rights. Disenfranchisement practices are also at odds with the founding premise of EU citizenship which is meant to give citizens additional rights, rather than depriving them of rights.”

“We are calling on member states to show greater flexibility and are issuing proportionate guidance to the five countries concerned so that citizens can get back on the electoral roll of their home country. I hope member states will be ready to address these very concrete concerns, because disenfranchisement is a big deal for the individuals concerned,” Ms Reding said.

In effect, the EU has recommended that Malta and the other four member states should reconsider their position and allow their citizens to vote for election of EU members of parliament, irrespective of whether they live in their home country or not.

Implication for Maltese living abroad

The key implication of this recommendation for Maltese living abroad is the recognition that Maltese citizens, regardless of their country of residence, are automatically also citizens of the EU with equal rights to other EU citizens, including Maltese citizens living in Malta. It is also a fact that other EU countries (such as, Italy) allows voting rights to its citizens, wherever they reside, including voting for their members of the European Parliament.

A frequent objection to universal voting rights relates to the fact that voters should be held responsible for the parliament they elect and, living far from home, they are not likely to be affected by the results of their voting.

Such an argument may hold for elections of members of parliament of the home country, but is hardly relevant to the election of the European Parliament. Arguably, citizens of the EU should be given the right to vote, wherever they happen to be living at any one time. (Currently, one has to be living in Malta for 6 months within the previous 18 months to have the right to vote in local or European elections).

Postal voting

One major stumbling block in undertaking elections within the Maltese community living abroad is the current laborious way of distributing votes and actually voting. There is no such thing as postal voting in Malta. With every election, Maltese living abroad have to traipse back to Malta to register their vote, if they are entitled to vote – a costly and time-consuming exercise.

In order to make voting for the EU a possibility, it is essential that a less paranoid and more practical method for casting the vote (namely a postal vote or voting at Consular offices) will have to be established. ❖

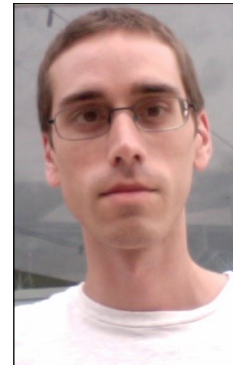
MCCV Library now more user-friendly

A considerable amount of work has been done on the MCCV library to ensure that it is more user-friendly, with books ordered and displayed according to subject matter.

We have also been working on the Archives section of the library. Archives are always an important part of any collection of books or other objects in order to ensure that the main library does not become cluttered with duplicates or material not quite suitable for display. The archive room has been set up with appropriate shelving against the walls. We thank Mr Freddie Asciak and Mr Joe Azzopardi for their hard work.

Visiting Maltese Ph.D Student uses MCCV Library for his research

Andrew Pace, a PhD student from the University of Manchester, England, is visiting Melbourne as part of his research on the evolution of Maltese *ghana* in Australia. He is particularly interested in the ways *ghana* differs between Malta and Australia, both in the music itself and the community around it.



Andrew has found the MCCV library in Parkville to be a fantastic resource of Maltese books, video and audio tapes, newspapers and magazines, whilst the Centru's staff and its visitors provided him with an endless supply of detailed local knowledge. If anyone would like to speak with him about their experiences with *ghana*, please do get in touch with me at andrewpace@btopenworld.com or on 0479127482. He will be in Melbourne until early March. ❖

Controversial Maltese 'Citizenship for Sale' Scheme finally endorsed by the European Commission

The last edition of *MCCV News* had included a detailed report on the Welcome Reception that the MCCV held at the Maltese Centre in Parkville for the Leader of the Opposition, Dr Simon Busuttil in early November 2013.

In response to a question raised by one of the attendees, Dr Busuttil had given a clear explanation of the issues that had arisen about the Individual Investor Program, better known as the Citizenship for Sale scheme proposed by the Malta government.

In mid-February 2014, following the intervention of the European Parliament through a strongly worded motion calling upon Malta "to bring its current citizenship scheme into line with the EU's values" and subsequently by the EU Commission, the government of Malta gave in to pressure from the two bodies and agreed to add a one year residency requirement as one of the conditions to the acquisition of Maltese

citizenship under the scheme.

The new regulations giving effect to this and other changes were published in Legal Notice 47 of 2014 in early February.

89% of MEPs votes against Malta selling EU citizenship


On 16 January an overwhelming majority of MEPs (89%) voted against the sale of Maltese citizenship. 560 voted in favour of adopting the resolution against the sale of citizenship, and only 22 MEPs voted against the resolution. 44 MEPs abstained from the non-binding vote in the European Parliament.

The joint motion, signed by the EPP, the socialists, the greens and the liberals, called on the Commission to "assess the various citizenship schemes in the light of European values and the letter and spirit of EU legislation and practice, and to issue recommendations in order to prevent such

schemes from undermining the values that the EU has been built upon, as well as guidelines for access to EU citizenship via national schemes."

It also called on Malta "to bring its current citizenship scheme into line with the EU's values, and on member states that have adopted national schemes which allow the direct or indirect sale of EU citizenship to third-country nationals to bring them into line with the EU's values."

MEPs were concerned about schemes established by various EU member states and in particular Malta, which result in the sale of national, and hence EU, citizenship, a European Parliament statement said.

Parliament called on the European Commission to state clearly whether these schemes respect the letter and spirit of the EU treaties and EU rules on non-discrimination. 

Petition by Maltese-Australians against citizenship scheme

On 29 January at the start of the sitting of parliament Opposition leader Dr Simon Busuttil's presented a petition against the Individual Investor Programme signed by over one thousand Maltese-Australians. The presentation led to a shouting match in parliament as Dr Busuttil accused Foreign Minister Dr George Vella of treating the petitioners with disdain.

The petition, which was signed by over 1,000 Maltese citizens living in the Australian states of Victoria and New South Wales, was organised by a committee named *Maltese Pride* led by Mr Victor Borg and Mr Joe Stafrace in their personal capacity. The Maltese Community Council of Victoria was not involved in this initiative.

On 23 January Dr Philip Manduca had delivered the petition signatures on behalf of the organising committee to Dr Busuttil at PN Headquarters in Pieta'.

The petitioners objected to the sale of Maltese citizenships and insisted that the scheme should be changed to achieve political consensus, to include proper investment requirements and a reasonable residency period. They also insisted that the due diligence process should be government's sole responsibility.

Dr Busuttil read out the petition, but he spotted Dr Vella laughing as he mentioned and praised the committee that organised the petition.

"The Foreign Affairs Minister may laugh as much as he wants at the signatories, but I can assure him," Dr Busuttil said, but stopped halfway through his sentence after being met

by uproar from the government benches.

"I inform [Dr Busuttil] that I was not even considering what he was saying: I was laughing at a joke made by my colleague," Dr Vella said.

Dr Busuttil was strongly critical of the Minister for Foreign Affairs' response, noting how the Minister had just confirmed that he was disregarding a petition signed by 1,000 Maltese expatriates.

Dr Vella raised a point of order, stating that Dr Busuttil may have been justified in his criticism had he said anything original. But he emphasised that he was already aware of the petition and what it called for.

Dr Busuttil then continued his point, amid some heckles. "I hope that the government listens to them, and does not treat them with disrespect as the minister did today," he concluded.

MCCV President's letter

In response to the inappropriate reaction by some MPs in parliament that had been raised at the February MCCV Council Meeting, MCCV President Prof Maurice Cauchi wrote a letter to the editor of *The Times of Malta*, which was published on 9 February.


In his letter, Prof Cauchi referred to "snippets of information transmitted from PBS to Australian television (SBS) [that] can, on occasion, be a cause of dismay." He wrote



Dr Manduca (left) presenting the petition to Dr Simon Busuttil

that "Such was the case last Sunday when a petition objecting to the 'sale of Maltese passport' signed by over 1,000 people was presented in Parliament by the Leader of the Opposition. This was met with derision and noisy laughter.

"At a meeting of the Maltese Community Council of Victoria (MCCV) held last Wednesday, this behaviour was roundly condemned. It showed disrespect for the views of a large number of people, not only those who actually signed the petition, but the many others who hold the same opinion.

"While the MCCV was not in any way involved in organising the petition, we down here believe everyone is entitled to their opinion, a situation which has to be respected, even by MPs. Such a blatant lack of respect simply did not go down well among the viewers and many of us feel offended by such a reaction." Prof Cauchi's letter concluded. 

MHA Event — February 2014

The Arab Years in Malta

By Joseph Borg

The first presentation event of the Maltese Historical Association of Australia for this year was delivered by Joseph Borg, the new President of the association. He spoke about *the Arab Years in Malta*.

He started the discussion by putting the following questions:

- What language was spoken in Malta prior to the Arab invasion of 870 AD?
- What happened to the Maltese during this invasion?
- Was Malta occupied during the years following the invasion?
- What about Christianity at the time? Did it flourish?
- What happened when the Normans arrived?
- What people resettled Malta and where did they come from?
- What is the origin of today's Maltese and of place-names?

It is generally accepted that the Maltese people, prior to the arrival of the Arabs, spoke a language which probably was a hybrid, with Punic, Latin and Greek being in the mix. Over the later years it was more than likely that they spoke some form of Greek or Low Latin.

Over the last few years, historians in Malta have discovered new information from various sources suggesting that the Arab take-over was catastrophic for Malta. According to some Arab sources, especially Al-Himyari, it is suggested that the fortress of Malta was demolished as were the churches. The masonry was sent to Tunis to build the palace of the Qa'id. The island was laid to waste and left unpopulated for over 170 years. Talbi suggests that this happened because the Maltese had broken their treaty with the Muslims by supporting the Byzantines in their attempt to re-conquer the island sometime before 870 AD, as recorded by Ibn al-Atir.

One can therefore read in this that the whole population of the island was either massacred or taken as slaves. So the Christian faith as we know it also disappeared from the island. Some people argue that maybe some small number of people escaped and hid in caves to escape the Arabs. This of course could have been so, but the number would have been very small and most probably over the years, when Arabs visited the island to cut timber, to fish in the waters around the island, to capture donkeys that were running wild and to collect honey, they would have come in contact with adverse results.

The argument for this can also be deduced from the Maltese language that we speak today. According to two Maltese Linguists, there are no remains of Punic in the Maltese language. In fact, modern Maltese is based

entirely on Arabic originating from Sicily (which also was under Arabic domination). Malta was resettled by Muslims and a large number of slaves, who could have been Muslim or Christian slaves, around 1040 AD. They rebuilt the City (now called Medina, *pictured above*) and settled on the island and started to re-built society. The Byzantines attacked the island again in 1048-9. The Arabs asked for a peace treaty but this was refused unless they handed all their wealth and their women to the Greeks. The defenders realised that the number of slaves was larger than that of the free men. So they asked the slaves to fight on their side and if they won the battle they would be given their freedom. The slaves sided with the Arabs and the Greeks were defeated. Hardly the action of Christian slaves who would have been released by the Greeks had they won the battle.

In 1090, Count Roger invaded Malta. He rescued the Christian slaves present on the island. They went with him to Sicily where he promised to build them a town where they could live or else they depart for their own countries. Malaterra, Roger's scribe, did not report whether any of the slaves were Maltese. He used the term 'christian slaves'. A treaty was signed between Roger and the Arab Qa'id on the following terms: the recognition of Roger as overlord by the islanders, and the payment of a tribute consisting of horses, mules, arms and 'infinita pecunia', as well as an annual tribute. However, he allowed the Arabs to stay and administer the island. He was in Malta for only a week.

After Roger's death in 1101, Malta seemed to have come under Arab influence again. Roger II, son of Count Roger, had to re-conquer Malta in 1127. According to Wettinger, Roger II left a Christian garrison on the island and reorganised the administration. Luttrell takes a much stricter position and says that the Norman Conquest did not have much influence on life in Muslim Malta. According to him 'Malta was never really Norman at all'. In 1175, Bishop Burchard of Strasbourg, who passed Malta on his way to Egypt reported that Malta was inhabited by Saracens.

Tomb stones found on the site of the Roman Domus in Rabat were of Muslim people and date to the twelfth century, suggesting that Muslim influence was alive and well even then.

The real integration of Malta with the Sicilian Kingdom must have started as late as 1220, when Frederick II of Hohenstaufen (1194-1250), the grand-son of Roger II, came to Sicily to reorganise his Sicilian Kingdom.



In 1224, he expelled many Muslims from Sicily and colonisation from the Italian mainland took place. It is possible that a number of Muslims were also expelled from Malta and that this island was repopulated with people from Celano in Abruzzi (Luttrell). This is verified by Ibn Qaldun.

Because of the abrupt nature of the Arab take-over, the language spoken at the time disappeared. Arabic became the new speech and as was stated earlier it was introduced by Muslims from Sicily. Over the years, this language has been modified, firstly by the introduction of Latin script and then, over the many years, by the introduction of Italian, Spanish, French, English and a host of other words that make the language what it is today. One only has to look at the language of Pietro Caxaro's 'Cantilena' to realise how the language has changed over a period of 350 years.

Place names in Malta all have an Arabic nomenclature. There are some places which still have a Greek origin, like Xlendi. Otherwise they are all of Arabic roots. None are of Punic origin.

After the presentation, the audience participated in many questions. Quite a few refused to believe that the events as suggested by Mr Borg could have happened. They believe that Maltese folk remained hidden on the island and that they carried their tradition as of old. Others argued that the fact that there are basically hardly any Arab archaeological artefacts suggest that they were not as hard as Mr Borg suggested. Of course, the best piece of evidence is Mdina, which was built by the Arabs. However, Mdina has seen many modifications, especially of its buildings due to earthquakes etc. Unfortunately, archaeologists cannot dig up Mdina. However, recently, when the authorities were digging trenches for infrastructure, quite a lot of Arabic pottery was found.

It seems, however, that everybody in attendance enjoyed the presentation. ✨



GAM is a group of Aussies with Maltese bloodlines. Working in conjunction with the Maltese Community Council of Victoria, GAM is about linking Australian-Maltese youth with their Maltese heritage to preserve the Maltese culture for generations to come. Like us on [Facebook.com/GenerationAusMalts](https://www.facebook.com/GenerationAusMalts) (GAM).

Generation AusMalts (GAM) Figolli Baking Masterclass

By Rita Catania

It's fair to say that when you are Maltese, or from a Maltese background, when you think of Easter time, apart from the obvious, one of the things you also associate with this period is Figolli! You know...those decorated, almond filled biscuit shapes, given out as gifts and enjoyed on Easter Sunday, often with a cup of tea or coffee!

A popular tradition on the islands, making Figolli is one of the ideal Maltese customs to pass down to the generations as the family grows. There's something about the sweet waft of a freshly baked Figolla flowing through the family home that all generations should experience - and smell! Not to mention the anticipation of decorating the naked shape as it cools down, bringing it to life with coloured icing and other sweet decorations.

In the lead up to Easter this year, Generation AusMalts (proudly supported by Nisga and the Maltese Community Council of Victoria Inc.), will be running a Figolli Baking Masterclass for those who wish to learn how to make this sweet Maltese tradition. Those involved will be guided by some of the best Figolli bakers around Melbourne, in small groups, whilst they pick up some baking tips and tricks from those who are experienced and in the know! Students will even be supplied with some wrapping and ribbon, of which they can use to be package up their Figolla when completed.

Amidst the flour, icing and rolling pins, GAM will also have a special guest who will fill the students in on the activities that occur during Holy Week in Malta and Gozo – the biggest event on the Catholic Church's calendar. After all, Figolli are just one of the many elements that make up a whole week of religious spectacles including - processions, pageants, pictures, displays, bells ringing, band marches, statue carrying and passion plays. It's certainly a time where the Maltese culture truly comes alive, which GAM feels is an equally important component for people to learn about.

As is customary in Malta, a proper Figolli blessing will also take place at the end of the Masterclass to replicate the tradition of people taking their Figolli out onto the streets or to a mass, in order to have their Figolli blessed on Easter Sunday by their local parish priest!

If successful, the Figolli Masterclass will be the first in a series of cooking classes GAM hopes to offer, designed to teach, inform, and bring those from the same

background together for some Maltese connection and fun; especially for the younger generations. Overall, it is hoped that activities like the Masterclass and various others organised by different organisations throughout the year, will inspire the younger generations (and their family), to keep the connection with their Maltese background alive, hopefully encouraging them to want to experience the culture first hand, if they haven't already. ✨

Generation AusMalts invites you to a FIGOLLI Baking Masterclass!



Learn how to make Malta's 'sweet' Easter tradition first hand!

Join GAM's Figolli experts, as they give you the culinary skills you need to make your very own Figolla. A wonderful tradition of the Maltese culture, Figolli are decorated, almond filled, biscuit shapes enjoyed at Easter time on the islands.

Have fun baking with your family, friends or children, whilst meeting others from the same background, as you connect with your Maltese roots!

Along the way, GAM will also fill you in on the festivities that take place during Holy Week (known in Maltese as 'Gimgha Mqaddsa'), the biggest feast on the Catholic Church's calendar in Malta and Gozo. Plus, enjoy a delicious Easter afternoon tea as a reward for all of your baking hard work!



Masterclass Details & Bookings

When: Sunday, 6th April

Time: 1pm – 4pm

Limited places - BOOK EARLY!

Where: Maltese Community Centre
477 Royal Parade, Parkville 3052
Public parking available around the centre.

Cost: \$10 Adults
\$15 - 1 Adult & 1 Child
\$20 - 1 Adult and 2 Children
Suitable for all ages 5 years and over!

Book ONLINE at: www.trybooking.com/77082
(Booking Fee of 30 cents applies p/ticket)

Got a question? Write to us on Facebook or email: generationausmalts@gmail.com

Phone queries to Rita C on 0422 078 581

Tickets need to be shown upon arrival

General info: Price includes - Ingredients for making & decorating your Figolla, decorative wrapping, afternoon tea & recipe sheet. *Just bring an apron & we'll look after the rest!*

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Eddie Fenech Adami's autobiography launched

On 21 February 2014 the Hilton Hotel in St Julians, Malta was the venue for the long-awaited book launch of former Maltese prime minister and President Emeritus Dr Eddie Fenech Adami's autobiography, *Eddie: My Journey*.

Among the hundreds present for the occasion were several former political adversaries. The President of Malta, Dr George Abela, Prime Minister Dr Joseph Muscat and Leader of the Opposition and PN leader Dr Simon Busuttil were among the guests in attendance. Maltese celebrity Tenor Joseph Calleja sang during the evening.

The evening recalled the life and times of a key protagonist in Malta's political history for more than half a century. Dr Fenech Adami turned 80 last week. The autobiography, which is recounted in the first person, covers all the major events in Dr Fenech Adami's long political career.

Dr Fenech Adami admitted that he had not read through the book co-authored by editor-in-chief at Times of Malta Steve Mallia prior to its publication, but having done so now, he is thoroughly pleased with the end result.

In a short introductory video traversing his long political career, Dr Fenech Adami had the 800 guests laughing when he recounted a meeting with former Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi.

"Berlusconi turned to my wife Mary and in Italian asked her: 'Tell me, how does your husband make love to you?'"

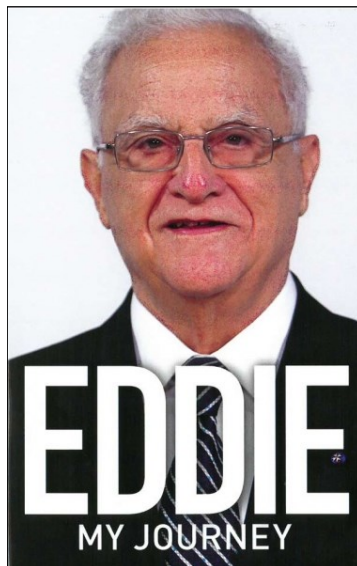
As expected, one of the highlights of his political career was Malta's accession to the EU, which Dr Fenech Adami drove to a successful conclusion as Prime Minister and leader of the Nationalist Party.

He recalled that it had been "only logical" for him to call a general election soon after winning the EU referendum in 2003, despite scepticism by then European Commission president Romano Prodi.

He recounted the moment when just after the referendum he informed Mr Prodi that he would be holding an election. Mr Prodi's reply was: "Are you mad?"

"It was only logical for me to hold an election because I believed the people would not be changing their mind in a couple of weeks and that meant I would win," he said, adding his *modus operandi* had always been based on logic.

Dr Fenech Adami was surprised by a live Skype interview with Mr Prodi, in



Bologna, who confirmed his fear at the time that Malta's situation could damage the European enlargement project.

"Anything that could put the EU enlargement project in danger was a problem. But I had great confidence in Fenech Adami and in the end everything worked out well," he said.

It was a brief exchange between the two former prime ministers and friends.

Dr Fenech Adami underlined Mr Prodi's efforts at the time to ensure Malta made it into the EU and obtain a deal that best suited the country.

The book is published by Progress Press and all proceeds from its sale will go to Dar tal-Providenza in Siggiewi, Malta, which was founded by Mons. Michael Azzopardi in 1965 with the aim of offering a home with a warm and family-like



(From left) Dr Simon Busuttil, Dr Joseph Muscat and Dr George Abela at the book launch [photo: Jonathan Borg]


environment for persons with disabilities who for some reason or another cannot stay living with their family. Since then [Id-Dar tal-Providenza](#) has supported its residents to participate in and enjoy the quality of life within the community.

At the moment, Id-Dar hosts approximately hundred persons between the ages of fourteen and eighty years. It also offers respite services on a regular basis to families of persons with disabilities, thus offering them support to enable the disabled family member to continue to live within their family.

The book may be ordered online from the following websites:

<http://www.bdlbooks.com/biographies-and-memoires/4625-eddie-my-journey.html>

<http://maltaonlinebookshop.com/product/eddie-my-journey/>

[Sources: www.timesofmalta.com; www.independent.com.mt] 

Bushfire Summer

A novel by Maltese-Australian writer Lou Drofenik

Year: 2013

ISBN: 9780646913926

Set during the 2009 Victorian Black Saturday Bushfires, this novel is a story of courage, loss and the realization that miracles can and do happen.

The fires which devastated the tiny community of Cooper Creek affected the lives of those who experienced them in ways nobody expected.

Lolly Winter, widowed after six months of marriage, buys a house in Cooper Creek and moves in. Fran Lupone who lives on the next property has come to terms with her violent past. This summer she discovers a secret her aunt kept from her when she brought her to Australia from Italy. Garth Evans lives in isolation further up the road, his life embittered by a childhood spent in an orphanage.

Over the course of this dry, hot summer culminating in a catastrophe of immense proportions, these people come to terms with their frailties, their connections to each other and to the land they love.

Bushfire Summer sweeps the reader into a summer etched in the Australian psyche. This novel is a celebration of people in rural communities, their generosity of spirit and their undeniable acts of heroism when disaster strikes.



Garth Evans in this story is one of the child migrants sent to Western Australia from Malta in the 1950's. In this novel he and his sister Molly were sent by their mother under the Government sponsored scheme to Western Australia, where Garth was taken to Bindoon and Molly to St. Joseph's Orphanage for Girls. Though both Garth and Molly are fictional characters their lives are based on stories of Maltese children sent to Australia at that time.

The author's interest in Maltese child migration started in 1993 after she watched the harrowing BBC documentary: *The Leaving of Liverpool* not realising that three hundred and ten Maltese children were also involved in this scheme. From then on she read whatever she could about this



programme which had dreadful long effects on the children involved and also listened to the stories of those involved in this scheme both in Malta and in Australia.

As for the events of Black Saturday 2009 the author lived through them and she gratefully survived thanks to her son Peter to whom she dedicated this book. The image on the front cover is a photo of the Bushfire Memorial Tree which was an initiative supported by the world's blacksmiths to forge a metal gum tree to honour the people lost in the Fires, the firefighters and the people in the bushfire affected communities. ❄

A life with a Difference: An autobiography

By Dr Victor Chircop Sullivan, Architect and Neuro-Psychologist

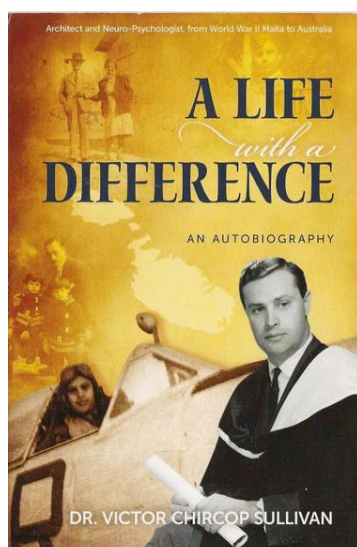
Publisher: Sid Harta Publishers

Year: 2011

ISBN: 9781921829918

What makes us what we are and do and what happens to us during our lifetime? What events, insights, achievements and hardships do we experience?

This autobiography delineates a varied and colourful life, covering the joy, adventures and hardship endured by Dr Victor Chircop Sullivan. It discussed his childhood days, migration, professional life, achievements and turbulent days during World War Two.



It also describes his travels around the world, advising foreign governments on social and psychological matters, a change in his profession, looking after and helping mentally ill people and the tribulation he endured caring for his elderly brother.

All this has given Dr Chircop Sullivan endurance and an excellent understanding as to how to cope with life and how to respond to a variety of events. ❄

Innovative ‘seniors-only’ exercise park in North Sunshine

An innovative seniors-only exercise park in North Sunshine, a western suburb of Melbourne with a large Maltese community, is helping older people stay fit and active. Victoria University PhD researcher Ms Myrle Sales said the park’s platforms, steps, bridges and bars were specifically designed to give seniors a fun workout for all the skills they need in their day-to-day lives, while incorporating extra safety features like soft, non-slip rubber surfaces and rounded edges.

“This is designed to help keep you in shape for all the skills in daily life like climbing stairs, lifting shopping bags, doing the gardening or keeping up with your pet or grandchild at the park,” Mrs Sales said.

“This is something different that has not been done before and what’s great is that it allows people to be outside in the fresh air, with their friends or making new ones and keeping up their skills to stay active.”

Researchers behind the project are now inviting over-60s to give the new facility a trial so they can measure the



benefits it has for maintaining strength, balance and other key skills in older people.

Those who sign up for the research project will be randomly assigned to one of two groups: one group will join the twice weekly exercise sessions of 1 to 1.5 hours each at the Sunshine North exercise park for 18 weeks, with guidance from an exercise physiologist. The exercises will be done in pairs and highly supervised for safety and correct technique. The other group will enjoy organised social activities including cards, checkers, chess and other board games.

All participants will also have three visits to Victoria University’s Footscray Park campus where researchers will tell you all about your muscle strength, balance skills and general health.

Both locations are easily accessed with public transport and a warm welcome, individual support and refreshments will be provided on each visit.

“As researchers we’re keen to measure how using this park helps increase strength and balance because if it has the impact we expect it to then it’s something we would like to replicate all over Australia,” Mrs Sales said.

To learn more about this research project contact Mrs Myrle Sales at Victoria University on mobile number 0447 017 820

or myrle.reissales@live.vu.edu.au . ☒

Maltese Ex-Services Association of Victoria

Malta George Cross RSL Sub Branch

New committee for 2014-15

President	Mr Emmanuel Spiteri
Secretary	Mr Joe Sammut
Treasurer	Mr Joe Stafrace
Members:	Mr Alfred Asciak
	Mr Alfred Gatt
	Mr Alfred Farrugia



Anzac Day March Friday 25 April 2014

Assembly time: **11.00 am**

Venue: **Federation Square**

Look out for Association Banner.
If in doubt seek Marshall advice.

Members participating in the ANZAC March must be dressed in proper attire. STRICTLY No Tee Shirts. We

Il-Laqgħa ta’ Jannar tal-Grupp Letteratura Maltija



Fuq wara mix-xellug għal-lemin: Joe Lofaro, Charles Attard, Alfred Xuereb, Rosemary Attard, Rose Lofaro, Michael Xuereb, Salvina Vella, Manwel Cassar, Marie Louise Anastasi u Ray Anastasi. Fuq quddiem: Fr Emmanuel Adami, mssp, Joe Camilleri, Frank Bonett, Joe Bonett, Josephine Cassar, Bernadette Cassar. Mhux fir-ritratt, Paul Vella (wara l-camera), Maria u Armando Catania, Dr Victor Sammut u Fr Dom De Giorgio.

Laqgħa tal-Grupp Letteratura Maltija tal-Victoria, saret nhar il-Gimgha, 31 ta’ Jannar, fiċ-Ċentru Malti ta’ Parkville. Madwar 20 membri attendew, u qraw xi materjal minn tagħhom jew ta’ kittieba oħra. Joe Camilleri qralna l-kitba tiegħu, “Ċensa tikteb liz-zijiet f’Malta”; Dr Victor Sammut qralna xogħol ta’ Publius Bugeja, “Kulhadd għandu salib” u “Ipokrita” kif ukoll “Meta” ta’ Jimmy Buhagiar; filwaqt li Manwel Cassar qara poeziji ta’ Andrew Sciberras “Mohh” u “Mater Dololosa”, żewġ poeziji ta’ Ġorġ

Borġ “Bħal tifel”, “Ċrieki” u “Fil-Kappella”, u tnejn minn tiegħu “Hin għaliġa” u “Parabbola”. Michael Xuereb qara’ poeziji ta’ Mary Meilak “Gejja x-xita” u l-poezija “Omm” tal-Poeta Nazzjonali Malti, Dun Karm Psaila. Għal aktar informazzjoni fuq il-Grupp jew biex issiru membri, iktbu lil Rosemary Attard, Segretarja, fuq rosemaryattard1@gmail.com u dawkl li jixtiequ jirċievu kopja tal-Folju kull xahar permezz ta’ email, għandhom jiktbu lil Paul Vella fuq paul.vella44@gmail.com ☒

Mario Sammut celebrates two great anniversaries

by Paul Vella

Mario Sammut is a well-known and respected personality within the Maltese Community in Victoria. He is celebrating 30 years in broadcasting and 25 years as Honorary Vice-Consul of Malta in the La Trobe Valley.

With his wife, Vivienne, and three children under the age of eight years, he arrived in Australia in 1983. By January 1984 he was enlisted as a possible broadcast on Radio 4EB in Brisbane by a Maltese presenter, Reno Galea. He never imagined that someday he was going to be a broadcaster in Australia.

Life in Australia was very different. They had to get used to the new way of life but, at the same time, he ventured into something totally different and never imagined that 30 years on, he would still be volunteering as a radio broadcaster.

Thirty years is a long time and if he had to document what happened during this time, I am sure that, that would be a very interesting book. He had to take a course in radio broadcasting and studio techniques. After work he had to drive about an hour to get from his home to the radio station and getting back at around 11 pm was not fun at all. But in two weeks' time, along with his wife, he ventured for the first Maltese Radio Show, on Sunday, from 4 to 5 pm. They had to get the children with them and make them sit quietly in the studio during the hour's broadcast. Soon after, the broadcasters had a meeting and he was elected Convenor of the Maltese Programs on 4EB.

Eighteen months later the family moved to Morwell, in Victoria, and the story repeated itself. No sooner they arrived that he was asked by the Maltese broadcaster on 3GCR Gippsland FM to take over the

Maltese radio program that had been going for about eight years, along with the Presidency of the Maltese Club. It was January, 1986, and today, 28 years later he is still involved with the radio station: doing the Maltese Program on Tuesdays, 5.30-7.30 pm, and for the last 15 years also presenting a Breakfast Show on Wednesdays 6.00-9.00 am. Lately he is also doing the Monday's Breakfast Show. Needless to say, the show is in English and last December he was honoured by the Station with the "Presenter of the Year Trophy".

Back in 1988, the Maltese Show on 3GCR was awarded the "Silver Logie Award" from the Walter Shauble Ethnic Broadcasting Foundation for the best Ethnic Show in Australia for non-metropolitan areas. A great honour indeed.

This year, Mario will also be celebrating 25 years broadcasting the Maltese program "Ejjeu Oqogħdu" on 3ZZZ, Australia's Biggest Ethnic Community Station. This has been a very difficult and, at the same time, rewarding experience, as the travelling to Melbourne every Saturday is quite a commitment, both timewise and financially too.

To top it all up, in March this year, he will also be celebrating 25 years as Hon. Vice-Consul of Malta in Latrobe Valley and Gippsland. A great honour and something that he cherishes all his life with the feeling of



helping your fellow Maltese migrants in their needs regarding Government affairs.

During all this time he also managed to squeeze in about 18 years as President/ Founder of the Maltese Community Centre of the Latrobe Valley, again something that he feels proud of and knowing that with his help and guidance the Maltese of the Valley have a Centre to be proud of, that actually belongs to the Maltese.

In 2004, Mario was awarded the "Victoria's Award for Excellence in Multicultural Affairs".

In 2005, he was presented with a medal from the Federation of Ethnic Communities Council of Australia for his commitment and contribution to Australia Multiculturalism.

In 2012, Mario was awarded the "Order of Australia Medal" for services to the Maltese Community of Victoria, especially through broadcasting.

Congratulations to Mario and best wishes for the future. ✨

Reskeon Seniors' first meeting for 2014

By Paul Vella, PRO

The Reskeon Seniors Group had their first meeting in 2014 on 5 February, at Merrilands Community Centre, Reservoir. As thanksgiving for last year and praying for a good new year, the Group organised a Mass on this first meeting. The Mass was celebrated by Fr Emmanuel Bonello, Parish Priest of St. Joseph the Worker Parish, North Reservoir. (See picture on Page 12.)

After Mass, the couple Margaret and Victor Tanti were presented with some flowers on the occasion of celebrating their 50th Wedding Anniversary.

Then it was time for members to play two 10-game Bingo sessions. While the men enjoyed a game of bocce outside, others preferred to stay in the spare room discussing different topics.



Visitors from Malta: (from left to right) Paul Azzilla, Lourdes Psaila, Lina Zammit, Vivian Micallef (sister of Paul and Lina) and Joe Zammit

Continued on page 12

Reskeon Seniors' first meeting for 2014

Continued from page 11

On the first meeting of Reskeon Seniors Group, we had a visit by a couple who were on a visit to Melbourne from Malta. The couple, Lina and Joe Zammit, enjoyed the day with us and promised to attend more meetings while holidaying in Melbourne. Lina is the sister of member Paul Azzilla as well as the daughter of the late Annetta Azzilla, who passed away last year after celebrating her 100th birthday with the Group.



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Please contact us on 9387 8922 or 0412 115 919
or email us on admin@mccv.org.au



Reskeon Seniors' open the new year with a mass

Community Events Calendar

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

Date	Event
Wed 5 March at 7:00 PM	MCCV Council Meeting - Maltese Community Centre
Sat 8 March at 7.30 PM	Get-Together and seafood night – St Gaetan's Society - St Martin de Porres Church, 158 Military Road, Avondale Heights
Sun 23 March	Bus trip across the NSW border – St Gaetan's Society
Wed 26 March at 6.30 PM	MCCV Executive Committee Meeting - Maltese Community Centre
Wed 2 April at 7.00 PM	MCCV Council Meeting -- Maltese Community Centre, 477 Royal Parade, Parkville
Sun 6 April	Comedy Fun Luncheon – Newport Maltese Association - Maltese Community Centre, Parkville
Sun 6 April at 1.00 PM	GAM Figolli Baking Masterclass - Maltese Community Centre, Parkville
Wed 16 April at 1.00 PM	Luncheon – Newport Maltese Seniors Group
Fri 25 April at 11.00 AM	ANZAC DAY MARCH 2014 – Maltese Ex Services Association of Victoria – Federation Square, Melbourne and Shrine of Remembrance
Sun 27 April at 12.00 PM	Mother's Day Lunch – St Gaetan's Society - St Martin de Porres Church, 158 Military Road, Avondale Heights
Wed 30 April at 6.30 PM	MCCV Executive Committee Meeting - Maltese Community Centre
Sun 4 May	Mother's Day Dance – Moreland Maltese Elderly Citizens Assn - Firenze Receptions, 134 McBryde Street, Fawkner
Sun 4 May	Bus trip across the NSW border – St Gaetan's Society
Wed 7 May at 7.00 PM	MCCV Council Meeting -- Maltese Community Centre