



MCCCV denounces proposed racial discrimination law changes

On 29 March the Maltese Community Council of Victoria joined other Australian ethnic communities in strongly denouncing the changes to the Racial Discrimination Act proposed by the Federal Government. In a controversial response to a question put by Labour Senator Nova Peris in the Senate last Monday, Attorney General Senator George Brandis QC defended free speech and his government's plan to change Australia's racial discrimination laws.

In a letter sent to both the Prime Minister Tony Abbott and Senator Brandis the MCCCV expressed its support for the statements made by other ethnic and religious organisations condemning the proposed modifications in the *Racial Discrimination Act*. The MCCCV strongly urged the federal government to withdraw the intended changes and listen to the chorus of objections, which the proposed action has generated from all sectors of the Australian society.

The MCCCV firmly opposes the repeal of Section 18C of the Act. Repealing this section would send the message that it would be no longer offensive to use hate speech.

The protection of 'free speech' should not be an excuse for making such a drastic change to the Act. There is no such thing as the right to 'free speech' without the corresponding obligation to behave in a civilised manner towards other people irrespective of their racial or ethnic background.



Senator George Brandis

As other prominent Australians have pointed out, bigotry simply has no place in the Australian society and should not be potentially facilitated, if not encouraged, by the proposed changes to the race laws. The current provisions are necessary as there can be such a marked disparity in power relationships between the perpetrator of speech that is liable to "offend, insult, humiliate or intimidate", and its recipients, who are unable to defend themselves for whatever reason.

Members of minority groups are especially vulnerable to such racial attacks because of the lack of social support or even an inadequate command of the English language – the language through which racial prejudice is invariably expressed. Recipients of such an attack are not empowered to respond adequately, and therefore need the full protection of the law. ●

Federal government proposes controversial race law changes

In a controversial response to a question in the Senate on Monday 24 March, Australia's Attorney General Senator George Brandis QC defended free speech and his government's plan to change Australia's racial discrimination laws. When asked by Labour Senator Nova Peris about the government's intentions, Senator Brandis responded: "People do have a right to be bigots, you know. In a free country people do have rights to say things that other people find offensive or insulting or bigoted."

Before last election then Opposition Leader Tony Abbott promised to repeal section 18C of the Racial Discrimination Act, which makes it unlawful to publicly "offend, insult, humiliate or intimidate" a person or a group of people.

Section 18C was introduced into the *Racial Discrimination Act* in 1995, during Paul Keating's prime ministership. For the following 11 years under Prime Minister John Howard, this effective protection against hate speech remained on the statute books. The key reason for Senator Brandis' proposed major changes appears to be almost solely as a result of the successful case brought against pro Liberal journalist, Mr Andrew Bolt.

In a 2011 case, Federal Court Justice Bromberg found that Mr Bolt breached Section 18C, holding that "fair-skinned Aboriginal people" were reasonably likely,

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The President's Column

The typical second-generation Maltese

While it is true that many Maltese of the first generation (that is, born in Malta), share many characteristics recognisable as typically Maltese, it would be much harder to recognise someone from the second generation as typically Maltese. You might indeed say that there is no such thing as a typical Maltese from the second generation.

A survey carried out recently throws some light on this issue. Persons in this category are more likely to have the following characteristics:

- They are likely to be in the 40-50 age group, but a few might well be over 60 and retired by now;
- More than half of them have a tertiary qualification;
- Most would be married, often to non-Maltese, and most likely have two children, rarely more;
- The vast majority consider themselves to be Maltese-Australians, and only a small proportion consider themselves as unhyphenated 'Australian';
- About half of them are likely to be able to understand some Maltese, but very few can speak it fluently. Moreover, it is the exception to find that they speak Maltese to their children;
- They do not belong to Maltese organisations;
- A considerable number keep in touch with Maltese affairs, particularly through the internet, but not from listening to local ethnic radio. A considerable proportion would participate in voting in Maltese or European elections if facilities (like postal voting) was made available;
- About a third of them possess a Maltese passport, and about an equal number intend to apply for one; and
- The majority have visited Malta, often on several occasions, and are impressed by what they found.

This is only a brief sketch of the findings from this survey. More information may be obtained from the [MCCV website](http://www.mccv.org.au) and mauricecauchi.wordpress.com.

One can draw certain conclusions from these findings, assuming they represent the overall second-generation persons of Maltese background in Australia.

It is clear that Maltese language maintenance has become practically impossible in spite of hard efforts by the MCCV and other bodies. The high degree of intermarriage with non-Maltese speaking partners makes language maintenance so much more difficult.

However, there is still a relatively strong link with the mother country, as evinced by their emphasis on their Maltese ethnicity, the number having Maltese passports and their intention to apply for one if they do not, the high number of persons visiting Malta, and also, surprisingly, from their interest in Maltese and European political issues.

It is also clear from these results that the second generation are not contactable through Maltese organisations, or even Maltese ethnic radio, which makes communication with them so much more difficult.

In spite of these difficulties, the MCCV is committed to continue its efforts in ensuring that Maltese language and culture will continue in the future for as long as possible.

Prof. Maurice Cauchi
MCCV President

MCCV second generation Maltese survey report



Over the past few weeks MCCV President Professor Maurice Cauchi has been conducting a survey among second generation Maltese in Australia. More than 200 persons of Maltese background participated in the survey. The report of the survey results was published today.

The MCCV has long felt the need for a survey of the second-generation Maltese in Australia to get a better picture of their differences from their ascendants. Very little was known about the second-generation, their beliefs and characteristics and their connection with Maltese language and culture. In effect, they have, for a long time, been a hidden entity, not distinguishable in any way from the general Australian public. The only statistics which have been readily available relate to the Australian census statistics which gives information about those with a Maltese ethnic background.

It was, therefore, deemed appropriate to conduct a survey to study this group of persons through a questionnaire, which covered considerable ground, including personal data, family, education, links with Malta, relationships with other ethnic groups, and so on. Participants were also given an opportunity to express their views through their comments, some of which have been included in this Report.

It is hoped that this Report will fill an empty niche, and provide interested persons with empirical data which, to our knowledge, cannot be found elsewhere.

[Click here](#) to download a copy of the report. ●

Notes from MCCV Council Meetings

MARCH 2014

At the Council Meeting held on Wednesday 5 March 2014 the following items were discussed:

Sad loss to the Maltese Community. On Thursday 6th March, the Maltese community in Victoria has lost one of its prominent members, namely Mr George Cini. As President of the Malta Star of the Sea he was involved not only in significant welfare work, but also as a promoter of Maltese drama amongst the community. The Council is thankful for his work and the generous donations that he made to the Council over the years. His departure will certainly be felt for long as a loss to the community.

New staff appointed at MCCV. Over the past few months there several changes in the MCCV community services staff, with the departure of Michael Caruana and Jeff Saliba. The MCCV has been able to revitalise its delivery of community services through the invaluable assistance of Carmen Calleya-Capp, who is highly experienced in the provision of such services and staff management. The Council welcomed the new staff who will be delivering the community services to our community: Ms Janet Galea holds a full-time position of Case Manager Home Care Packages and Ms Maree Rizzo holds a part-time position of Coordinator Planned Activity Groups.

Individual membership of the MCCV. The MCCV Constitution allows for the nomination of individual volunteer membership for those persons who have shown to be interested in and helping with the work of the Council. For the first time, two persons were nominated for such membership: Mr Alfred Asciak and Mr John Pace. Both nominations were accepted and approved by the Council as individual members. Such membership gives the right for persons to attend at Council meetings on a non-voting basis.

Second Generation Maltese in Australia. The President presented a report on the current status of this survey. Several interesting findings have been established from this survey about a group of Maltese who have been practically invisible to the community. The full Report can now be accessed from the MCCV website. Bishop Joe Grech memorial Scholarship 2014. Applications for the Bishop Grech Fund from persons under the age of 40 are now open. Any person who can show an interest in being involved with the Maltese community may apply for such scholarships. Applications close on Monday 30 June 2014. For more details click here.

Celebration of Maltese National Days. It was decided that the MCCV will start celebrating two of Malta's official national days, namely, Independence Day on 21 September and Republic Day on 13 December. This is in addition to the Bambina Feast celebrations on 8 September.

Convention for Maltese Living Abroad 2015. The Council for Maltese Living Abroad (CMLA) is participating in organising the Convention for Maltese Living Abroad which is to be held in Malta on 20-23 April 2015. Prof Maurice Cauchi is acting as CMLA focal point on the Convention organising committee. More information will be made available in due course. ●

APRIL 2014

At the Council Meeting held on Wednesday 2 April 2014 the following items were discussed:

MCCV's objection to proposed changes to the Racial Discrimination Act. In the Senate Attorney General Senator George Brandis QC defended free speech and his government's plan to change Australia's racial discrimination laws. When asked by Labour Senator Nova Peris about the Coalition's intentions, Senator Brandis responded: "People do have a right to be bigots, you know. In a free country people do have rights to say things that other people find offensive or insulting or bigoted." It was agreed at the Council meeting that the MCCV should express its support for the statements made by other ethnic and religious organisations condemning the proposed modifications in the Racial Discrimination Act. The MCCV should strongly urge the federal government to withdraw the intended changes and listen to the chorus of objections, which the proposed action has generated from all sectors of the Australian society.

Continued SBS Radio funding for Maltese Program. When the new schedule was drawn up two years ago, after considerable lobbying by the MCCV and other Maltese community organisations and prominent members and friends of the Maltese community, SBS agreed to fund two additional one-hour Maltese radio programs to compensate for the drastic cuts in Maltese programs. This additional funding was subject to review after three years which will expire at the end of this year. It was agreed that the MCCV should write to SBS in relation to the review of the continued funding for the additional two hours that will be shortly undertaken seeking their assurance that the Maltese community will be given an opportunity of making a written submission before SBS makes its decision.

Bishop Joseph Grech Memorial Scholarship. The Bishop Joseph Grech Memorial Fund has accumulated enough income to be able to offer another scholarship this year. This is the third year that it is being offered. Rita Catania (2012) and Kristy Galea (2013) were the scholarship recipients so far. Any person who can show an interest in being involved with the Maltese community may apply for such scholarships. Applications close on Monday 30 June 2014.

Convention for Maltese Living Abroad 2015. The Council for Maltese Living Abroad (CMLA) is participating in organising the Convention for Maltese Living Abroad which is to be held in Malta on 20-23 April 2015. MCCV President Prof Maurice Cauchi is on the organising committee and he asked for any ideas and opinions on what topics should be included in the agenda for the Convention. Any associations and individuals who have any suggestions should pass them on to Prof Cauchi.

Survey of second generation Maltese in Australia. MCCV President Prof Cauchi reported that he is now analysing the responses from over 200 participants. One of the striking observations is how little this second generation is in contact with what is happening in the Maltese community through the normal means of communication, particularly, radio. It is, therefore, very difficult to reach them as they do not listen to the Maltese programs on SBS and other community radio stations. Some respondents have provided their email address, so we will be able to communicate with them by email.

EU Health Card. This matter was raised in the Council for Maltese Living Abroad. When we travel to Malta we are covered by the health agreement between Malta and Australia. However, when we travel to other countries in Europe, as Maltese citizens living in Australia, we are not covered for health services. The question raised at the CMLA is whether we have a right to have such cover, as Maltese citizens, when travelling to other EU countries. Enquiries will be made with other European communities in Melbourne to see whether they are affected by this issue. ●

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

Marie Louise Coleiro Preca becomes Malta's ninth President

On 5 April an emotional Marie Louise Coleiro Preca was sworn in as Malta's ninth President and the second female President, promising to stay close to the people despite taking on her new role. In her first official speech soon after being sworn in, Ms Coleiro Preca made a special mention of the importance of strengthening ties with the Maltese diaspora spread around the world and particularly with the younger generations of Maltese and Gozitans abroad.

"We should pause to think of our Maltese and Gozitan brothers and sisters scattered all over the world – those Maltese and Gozitans who for some reason or other left our country but remain Maltese. We should strengthen our ties with them. We should enhance their awareness of this nation. We should show them that they remain part of us. We should help them appreciate Maltese identity. I also wish that their children recognise the origins of their parents and feel close to us. This is their country as much as ours," she said.

The new President insisted that she will still be the person she always was – "a person with whom you can speak with and confide in. Your difficulties are my challenges. Your successes are my joys."

This is not a celebration of one person but a celebration of all the people in Malta and Gozo, Ms Coleiro Preca said. "Today I present myself to you most humbly and with a high sense of duty, commitment and determination, so that together we can build upon the good work of our forefathers. Today I feel the smallest among you."

Ms Coleiro Preca said that one of the priorities of her Presidency will be strengthening unity. "Just as we have succeeded on various occasions to show this sentiment, the same can be achieved on a daily basis. We should work to push to the forefront the virtue and value of brotherly love among the people of Malta and Gozo in order to safeguard respect, tolerance and dignity for all."

She also spoke about the need to understand the importance of diversity and multiculturalism without ignoring our national identity. Malta should strengthen its ties with expatriates as well as their descendants. Ms Coleiro Preca also vowed to strengthen the voluntary sector, just as her predecessors did.

Wider functions for the Presidency

Ms Coleiro Preca said that her Presidency will have new and wider functions. "I believe that the Presidency should serve as a shield to protect liberty, democracy and human rights. For this to take place I am using my energy to see that a culture of social justice is cultivated built on the basis of mutual respect and inclusivity, tolerance and diversity – all of which are values that should continue to make us proud that we are Maltese and Gozitans."



Speaker Dr Anglu Farrugia administering oath of office to President Coleiro Preca.

Referring to the four important anniversaries in 2014, Ms Coleiro Preca said that the country should not only honour the memory of our ancestors but also the elder members of society.

Mass at the Dar tal-Providenza

The ceremony started with Mass at the Dar tal-Providenza in Siggiewi. In his homily, Mgr Cremona said that the Mass was held at the Dar tal-Providenza at the request of Ms

Coleiro Preca, who wanted the event to be a celebration of love towards the poor. He said there were different forms of poverty, including drug and alcohol addiction and children who carried the burden of their parents' problems.

At the end of Mass, Mgr Cremona blessed two Maltese flags, one for Malta and one for Gozo, and handed them to the President-elect. The one for Malta was raised at the Palace later that day. ●

PROFILE: President Marie Louise Coleiro Preca

Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca was elected President of the Republic of Malta on the 4th April 2014. A Parliamentary resolution unanimously passed on 1 April 2014, approving her nomination as the ninth President of Malta.

At the age of 55, Coleiro Preca is the youngest serving President of Malta and only the second woman to hold the post of Head of State.

Her nomination marked another development in the constitutional history of Malta, as the President was elected with the unanimous approval of all Members of Parliament.

Coleiro Preca was born in Qormi on 7th December 1958. She was educated at St. George's Primary School in Qormi, Maria Regina Girls' Grammar School at Blata l-Bajda and at the Polytechnic, Msida. Later she graduated with a BA in Legal and Humanistic Studies (International Studies) and obtained a Diploma Notary Public from the University of Malta.

She has been active in national politics for the past forty years, since the age of sixteen. Within the Partit Laburista she has served as a member of the National Executive,

As General Secretary (1982-91), she was the only woman to have served in such a senior post of a Maltese political party.

Coleiro Preca has also been a member of the National Bureau of Socialist Youths, President of the Women Section of the Party, founder member of the Guże Ellul Mercer Foundation and publisher of the Party's weekly newspaper, *Il-Helsien*.

She served as MP in the Maltese Parliament from 1998 to 2014. In the 2008 General Election she was the first elected MP. On 13th March 2013 Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca took the oath as the Minister for the Family and Social Solidarity. ●



Photo: DOI - Reuben Piscopo

Sir Peter Cosgrove sworn in as Australia's new Governor-General

On 28 March Sir Peter Cosgrove was sworn in as Australia's 26th Governor-General, declaring it "the greatest honour" of his family's "fortunate lives". The former Defence chief is the first man to be knighted under Prime Minister Tony Abbott's revived honours system.

Sir Peter used his swearing-in address in the Senate today to pay tribute to Indigenous Australians, his predecessor Dame Quentin Bryce, and Cameron Corporal Baird – the special forces commando who was posthumously awarded a Victoria Cross in February this year. "We hail and salute Cameron Baird," he said. "He lives in the injured hearts of those he left too soon."

His Excellency General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove, as he is now known, wore his string of military medals when he arrived at Parliament House in Canberra in a motorcade.

Moments after being sworn in before Chief Justice Robert French, he told parliamentarians, diplomats and the partially filled public galleries that he was "humbled and proud" to be assuming office and came to the role "agenda free."

"To think that I will play some part in the public discourse extends to me, my wife and family the greatest honour of our fortunate lives," he said.

He said he would seek to "reflect" the community, saying his work as Australian of the Year in 2001 had prepared him for the work ahead.

"I pledge all of my energy and goodwill to all of the tasks of Australia's governor-general, not least those working within the wider community," he said.

Indicating that his spouse will play a high-profile role, the Governor-General said his wife, Lady Lynne Cosgrove, would be listening to Australians alongside him.

"My wife and I will be attentive to any and all agenda that we encounter that sit within a broad and fundamental set of Australian values," he said.

A 21-gun salute fired as the Governor-General's speech came to a close and His Excellency's Standard was unfurled.

Prime Minister Mr Tony Abbott welcomed Sir Peter at an official reception for the new Governor-General and his wife. "You will be a knight for rolling up your sleeves and getting on with things," Mr Abbott said.

"Every human being wants to be uplifted and inspired and I can think of no better man than Peter Cosgrove to maintain our national morale and to find faith in ourselves. I know, Sir Peter, you will approach this work with respect, discretion and judgment, and our government and our country will be the better for it," said Mr Abbott.

Opposition Leader Mr Bill Shorten described the Governor-General as a person who "has the ear" of Australians. "Your



H.E. Sir Peter Cosgrove in the Senate Chamber at the swearing in ceremony with Prime Minister Abbott on his right and his wife Lady Lynne Cosgrove on his left. [Picture: ABC]

Excellency, rest assured that when a Governor-General speaks, Australia will listen," he said. "We look to you as a guardian of our constitution, a representative of the values and the love of country that we all share."

Sir Peter was applauded as he walked through Federal Parliament's marble foyer shortly after receiving a general salute from a

guard of honour on the Great Veranda. He was escorted into Senate president's private suite before entering the Senate, which was packed with MPs and senators.

Parliamentarians stood as the Usher of the Black Rod led the governor-general designate into the Senate chamber. ●

PROFILE: Sir Peter Cosgrove AK MC (Retd)

Sir Peter came to national prominence in 1999, when he was appointed commander of the international peacekeeping mission in East Timor. He was appointed chief of the Army in 2000 before being appointed chief of the Defence Force in 2002. He was Australian of the Year in 2001 and retired from active service in 2005. In 2006, Sir Peter led a taskforce to rebuild communities in Queensland devastated by the category-five Cyclone Larry. Since retirement, he has worked as a non-executive director of Qantas.

Peter Cosgrove was born in Sydney in 1947. The son of a soldier, he attended Waverley College in Sydney and graduated in 1968 from the Royal Military College, Duntroon.

Early in his military career, he fought in Vietnam, commanding a rifle platoon. He was awarded the Military Cross in 1971 for his performance and leadership during an assault on enemy positions.

In 1972, he served as Aide de Camp to Governor-General Sir Paul Hasluck. He returned to regimental life as second in command of a Company, rising to Adjutant then Company Commander in the Army's 5th Battalion Royal Australian Regiment (5 RAR), then 5/7 RAR in Holsworthy, Sydney. Subsequent appointments included a period as a tactics instructor at the Army's Infantry Centre in Singleton, New South Wales; a year's study at the United States Marine Corps Staff College in Quantico,



USA; extended periods of duty in the United Kingdom and India; and command of 1 RAR. He was appointed a Member in the Military Division of the Order of Australia (AM) for his service in command in 1983-84.

Peter Cosgrove came to national attention in 1999 when, as Commander of the International Task Force East Timor (INTERFET), he was responsible for overseeing that country's transition to independence. For his leadership in this role he was promoted to Companion in the Military Division of the Order of Australia (AC).

Promoted to Lieutenant General, he was appointed Chief of Army in 2000. After further promotion to General, he served as Chief of the Defence Force from 2002-2005. He retired from the Australian Defence Force in 2005. His autobiography "My Story" was published in 2006.

He and his wife Lady Cosgrove have three adult sons and one grandson. ●

Federal government proposes controversial race law changes

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in all the circumstances, to have been offended, insulted, humiliated or intimidated by the imputations conveyed” in several articles by Bolt published in the *Herald Sun*. Mr Bolt did not appeal the decision.

As was pointed out by David Danby in an article published on the Guardian.com last Tuesday, “the whole purpose of section 18C is to promote tolerance by bringing parties together to discuss the subject of their complaint and arrive at a conciliated and agreed outcome. Between 13 October 1995 and June 2010 the Australian Human Rights Commission received 1266 complaints under the RDA. Only approximately 20 matters were decided in the courts. Fifty-three per cent of racial vilification complaints in 2012-13 were resolved at conciliation. Less than 3% of racial hatred complaints actually went to court.”

Government's Media Release

A Media Release published on the Attorney General's website, announced that “the Government Party Room this morning approved reforms to the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*, which will strengthen the Act's protections against racism, while at the same time removing provisions which unreasonably limit freedom of speech. The legislation will repeal section 18C of the Act, as well as sections 18B, 18D, and 18E.”

A new section will be inserted into the Act which will preserve the existing protection against intimidation and create a new protection from racial vilification. This will be the first time that racial vilification is proscribed in Commonwealth legislation sending a clear message that it is unacceptable in the Australian community.

In the media release, Senator Brandis goes on to say: “I have always said that freedom of speech and the need to protect people from racial vilification are not inconsistent objectives. Laws which are designed to prohibit racial vilification should not be used as a vehicle to attack legitimate freedoms of speech.”

“This is an important reform and a key part of the Government's freedom agenda. It sends a strong message about the kind of society that we want to live in where freedom of speech is able to flourish and racial vilification and intimidation are not tolerated,” concludes the media release.

The draft amendments were released for community consultation. The Government is interested in hearing from all stakeholders on the proposed reforms. Submissions can be made until 30 April 2014 at s18cconsultation@ag.gov.au. A copy of the draft amendments in the Exposure Draft is available on the [MCCV website](http://www.mccv.org.au).

Implications of proposed changes explained

In an article published on 29 March on *The Conversation* website, Professor Simon Rice OAM, Professor of Law and Director of Law Reform and Social Justice at Australian National University in Canberra, explains: “There are three essential parts to the proposed changes. First, they drop the current test for racial vilification – “conduct causing offence, insult, humiliation or intimidation” – and replace it with a test of “conduct that is reasonably likely to vilify [which means incite hatred] or to intimidate”.

Professor Rice goes on: “The second part to the proposed changes is that they switch the perspective for assessing racial vilification from the feelings of a reasonable person to whom conduct is directed, to the view of an “ordinary reasonable member of the Australian community” as to whether conduct is likely to intimidate or incite hatred.”

“The third part and perhaps most important of the proposed changes is the conduct that is explicitly permitted. Vilifying or intimidating public conduct that is done because of a person's race is prohibited, but it is allowed when it is done in the course of public discussion. There is no qualification to this exception. Every other vilification law in Australia limits exceptions to conduct that is done reasonably and in good faith.

“This throws out the baby, the bathwater and the bath. The exception is so wide to a prohibition that is so narrow that people will be able to offend, insult, humiliate and incite serious contempt or severe ridicule on the basis of race. They will be able to do so unreasonably and dishonestly, with impunity.”

“The most troubling aspect about the proposed changes – along with knowing that Australia's chief law officer is a champion of the right to bigotry – is the blithe assertion of a dominant cultural perspective,” writes Professor Rice.

“When deciding the likeliness of incitement, who will not claim for themselves the title an ‘ordinary reasonable member of the Australian community?’” asks Professor Rice. “The role will be taken by a judge, who will decide the likelihood of incitement from their perspective, and not as it might be for the actual audience of the comment.”

“This ‘objective test’ is a double whammy to a victim of vilifying conduct. Not only do the proposed changes tell them that their real and reasonable sense of offence is irrelevant, the changes say it is irrelevant to know how the intended audience of vilifying conduct might actually react,” explains Prof Rice. ●

Abbott government commissions ABC and SBS efficiency review



At the end of January the Abbott government announced a review into the efficiency of Australia's two national broadcasters, the ABC and SBS. Communications Minister Malcolm Turnbull, *pictured above*, has recruited Peter Lewis, a former chief financial officer at Seven West Media, to conduct a study into the two organisations. The study will examine costs for the day-to-day operations of programs, products and services and find savings.

“It is a routine responsibility of the minister to ensure that the ABC and SBS use public resources as efficiently as possible,” Mr Turnbull said in a statement.

But the decision follows mounting Coalition criticism of the ABC, and the threat of budget cuts. Prime Minister Abbott had accused the ABC of acting against the national interest and lacking “basic affection for the home team”.

The ABC's \$223 million Australia Network Asian broadcasting service is also likely to be scrapped in the May budget to save money and end the pursuit of “soft diplomacy” in the region.

“The objective [of the review] is to ensure ABC and SBS fulfil their charter responsibilities at least cost to the community, and keep pace with rapidly changing practices in the broadcasting sector.”

But the study would not review the terms of the national broadcasters' charters, or editorial and programming decisions, the statement said.

“In other words the study will not review the content of what is broadcast, but rather the cost of delivering that content and the operations that support it.”

Mr Turnbull said the study was being conducted with the full co-operation and assistance of ABC and SBS, which have both volunteered representatives to work with Mr Lewis.

“The ABC and SBS have welcomed the study as a useful and timely addition to their routine internal processes to identify efficiencies.”

Mr Lewis will report back to the minister in April. [Click here](#) for more details. ●

Malta's George Cross Award commemorated in Melbourne

By Edwin Borg-Manché

On Sunday 13 April on a sunny Melbourne morning at the Shrine of Remembrance and the Maltese Shelter of Peace the Maltese Australian Association held the annual commemoration of the Award of the George Cross to Malta on 15 April 1942, this year being the 72nd anniversary.

The Consul-General for Malta in Victoria, Mr Victor Grech, the British Consul-General in Victoria, Mr Gareth Keith Hoar, and representatives from the Royal Australian Navy, Army and Air Force were among the several dignitaries who attended. Maltese community organisations, including the Maltese Ex-Services Association, the Maltese Historical Association and the Maltese Literature Group were also represented.

During the march up the forecourt there were two flypasts of three RAAF Museum planes over the Shrine of Remembrance for the occasion. The army cadets formed a guard of honour on each side of the Cenotaph with the eternal flame. To the playing of sombre pipe music, the MAA President Mr Benny Soler laid a wreath at the Cenotaph accompanied by Shrine and Returned Services League representatives.

Brigadier Geoffrey John Christopherson AM (Ret.) read the Ode to the Fallen and one minute silence was observed between the Last Post and the Rouse played by the Army Bugler. The march then proceeded to the Shelter of Peace, which is located on the east side of the Shrine over Birdwood Avenue and was built 22 years ago to mark the 50th anniversary of the George Cross Award.

At the Shelter of Peace MAA President Mr Benny Soler welcomed the official party and distinguished guests to the commemoration ceremony. Ms B Lightfoot read the Prayer of Peace and Lt Commander K Ford RAN read out the Royal Warrant of the George Cross to Malta. Major Andrew Kopada read a piece titled Malta United in Defence.

British Consul-General in Victoria Mr Gareth Keith Hoar read the Citation of the George Cross signed by King George VI on 15th April 1942. The President of the Maltese Historical Association, Mr Joseph Borg, read Homage to Malta in English, while the President of the Maltese Literature Group, Dr Victor Sammut, read the same in Maltese (*Tislima lil Malta*). Dame Leonie Christopherson AM DSI, Dame Of Honour Order of St John of Jerusalem Knights Hospitaller, made a speech for the occasion.

Wreaths were then laid by the various dignitaries and Maltese community representatives. Brigadier Geoffrey John Christopherson AM (Ret.) read the Ode to the Fallen and one minute silence was observed between the Last Post and the Rouse played by the Army Bugler.



Photos: George Brimmer



Consul General Victor Grech



MHA President
Joseph Borg



MLG President
Dr Victor Sammut

Consul-General for Malta in Victoria, Mr Victor Grech, read a piece about Malta for Peace which refers to the two Sieges of Malta, the first being in 1565 and the second during World War II.

The ceremony concluded with the playing of the national anthems of Malta, the UK and Australia.

Another service to commemorate the George Cross Award to Malta was organised by the Maltese Ex Services Association and held on the previous Sunday 6 April at 2.30 pm at St Paul's Chapel next to the Maltese Community Centre in Parkville. Following mass, the congregation gathered around to lay wreaths and flowers at the George Cross monument situated between the Chapel and the Maltese Centre. ●

Council for Maltese Living Abroad holds its fourth meeting



Minister Dr George Vella (centre) and the Ministry team during the CMLA videoconference. [photo: TVM]

On Monday 24 March 2014 the Council for Maltese Living Abroad (CMLA) held its fourth meeting by means of a video conference organised by the Ministry. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs keeps contact with representatives of Maltese communities abroad through the Council which was established by Act of Parliament passed unanimously in late 2011. Its inaugural meeting was held in Malta in September 2012.

Interviewed by TVM for a news report broadcast on SBS last week, Minister for Foreign Affairs and ex officio CMLA Chairman Dr George Vella said that on the CMLA agenda are issues on which during the year members of the Council communicate electronically among themselves and with the CMLA Secretary and Directorate within the Ministry.

Dr Vella said that CMLA members discuss the various issues affecting Maltese living overseas and generate ideas and opinions on those issues and these are conveyed to the Ministry.

Also interviewed by TVM, CMLA Secretary Ms Maria Calleja said that there were a number of issues raised and discussed at the meeting held in Malta last October. These issues included the biometric passports process and how this could be made easier for Maltese living abroad, particularly those who do not live in close proximity to the capital cities of the country where they reside and where the Maltese embassies and consulates are usually located. Another issue mentioned by Ms Calleja was that of applications for Maltese citizenship.

Dr Vella said that his Ministry is working on the next Convention of Maltese Living Abroad

which usually takes place every ten years and in which Maltese from around the world are invited to participate. A decision has been made to have it held every five years, the next one being held next year.

Maltese living abroad estimated at 900,000

In its news bulletin broadcast last week, TVM reported on the estimated number of Maltese living overseas. According to statistics held by TVM the number of Maltese up to the fifth generation residing abroad around the world is estimated at about 900,000, which more than double the population living in Malta.

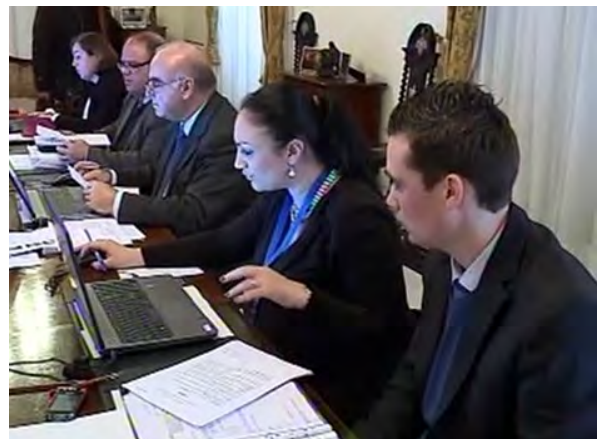
By far the largest number of Maltese descendants up to the fifth generation lives in Australia where, according to the news report, from the census they are estimated at 447,000.

The second largest group of Maltese overseas lives in the United States numbering 220,000 and England with 91,000 is the third largest.

The surprising news was that there are Maltese who reside in places that one does not expect to find them, such as, Macao, Marshall Islands, Solomon Islands, Samoa, Christmas Island, Vanuatu as well as Trinidad and Tobago. There are some, if only a few individuals, living in countries such as Iran, Iraq, Botswana and Congo.

Malta's membership of the European Union appears to have led to a substantial increase in the number of Maltese living in Belgium now numbering about 668. In continental Europe the Maltese presence includes 900 in Italy, 23 in the Vatican, 600 in France and 276 in the Netherlands.

There is also a large longstanding Maltese community on the Mediterranean island of Corfu numbering 7,000. Malta's commercial ties with the Middle East have led to an increase of Maltese presence in those countries including 733 in the United Arab Emirates and 36 in Qatar among others. ●



Left: Monitor showing some of the participating CMLA members from overseas.

Language reversion in ageing migrants can impact quality of life

By Edwin Borg-Manché

Bilingual migrants return to their first language as they grow older, which means anything from 60 years upwards, but especially 75 years and over. This linguistic phenomenon is known as *language reversion*.

Essentially, what this means for Maltese migrants in Australia is that the older they get, the more likely they will revert to speaking Maltese, their first language, in preference to English. The precise reasons for this change have not been finally determined and form the subject of ongoing research studies.

One of the more serious implications of this phenomenon is that it can lead to social isolation and even depression, if one does not live in an environment in which one can speak to others in their first language and experience the culture that goes with it.

Assistant professor of linguistics at Utrecht University in the Netherlands, Merel Keijzer, is a well-known linguistic researcher with a particular interest in the issue of language reversion among ageing migrants. In a recent study, she considered a group of bilingual Australians—people who migrated from the Netherlands who have Dutch as their first language and English as the language they learned later on—in an international research project that aims to shed more light on the language reversion issue.

Just over two years ago while visiting Australia, Professor Keijzer was interviewed about her studies as a special guest on the discontinued *Lingua Franca* program on ABC Radio National. Her studies build on those by Kees de Bot, professor of Applied Linguistics at the University of Nijmegen in the Netherlands and Australian linguist, the late Professor Michael Clyne of Monash University. In a longitudinal study these two professors tested German and Dutch immigrants in Australia and observed to their surprise that, instead of becoming worse with time in their first language (Dutch and German), at a certain point the first language proficiency of these people improved again, something that the researchers had not expected.

Professor Keijzer explains that bilingual migrants return to their first language as they grow older (from 60 years upwards, but especially 75 years and over). At the same time, they would also see the second language, English in this case, getting worse at the same time, even though they might have not used their first language for decades and actually used their second language, English, throughout their adult lives.



Through her research, Professor Keijzer has been able to apply important insights gained in how the brain works via cognitive science in order to confirm that language reversion does actually occur. She has been focusing on why language reversion occurs in older people, which she describes as “the biggest question of all”. She says that there could be all sorts of reasons for it and they could relate to each other, and that makes the task that much harder.

Language suppression mechanism

In bilingual people, rather than switching between one language and the other, both languages are actually activated in the brain all the time and, when one language is being used, the other is actively being suppressed or inhibited.

Professor Keijzer explains the implications of this phenomenon on ageing people. She says that what goes on is brain training, unconsciously, that bilingual people have done throughout their lives. One of the things that occurs in order to switch between two languages or to use one language and try to suppress the other is the use of effective inhibition mechanisms. These mechanisms are stored in the prefrontal lobes of the brain, which in early bilingual people, that is, people who grew up with two languages from birth or from a very early age onwards, tend to be very well developed.

Unfortunately one’s control over what one concentrates on and the ability to inhibit one’s response to certain things, diminishes as one gets older due to the natural biological ageing process.

Professor Keijzer explains: “White matter decreases as you get a little bit older, so your frontal lobe is actually one of the brain regions that truly deteriorates or tends to deteriorate as people age. So for bilinguals it would also mean that inhibition mechanisms suffer. That also means that they tend to find it more difficult to separate the two language systems. So whereas, in the past, they were very good

at trying to suppress one language as they were using the other, when they get a little bit old they might find that more and more problematic. And it might not even be a conscious process. For instance, anecdotally, [their] children ... might say [to them], ‘Oh, you’re speaking in this language again, your first language!’ and they hadn’t even noticed. So it does tend to just happen without people consciously being aware of it.”

Not necessarily a language issue

At face value, language reversion appears to be language issue: as one language becomes stronger, the other one becomes weaker. However, Prof Kreijzer believes that it could well be

that it is not so much a language issue but simply a matter finding it more difficult to separate one’s dual language systems. The first language would still be the stronger or dominant language because it seems to be more ingrained in the brain. The language that was first learnt seems to be most resilient to loss. So, in her view, it might well be that, if you find it more difficult to separate your two language systems, the fallback option would be to use one’s first and still stronger language.

Prof Kreijzer agrees that the characteristics of this language reversion phenomenon hold true for whatever languages are being used. The effect might be stronger or less strong for some other languages, but she thinks it is a universal thing.

Language reversion and social isolation

In her interview Professor Keijzer referred to research studies that came to the conclusion that, when migrants reach a certain age, they tend to become a little bit isolated because their greater wish is to return to, not just their mother language, but also the culture that comes with it. If these language and culture needs are not provided for in their adopted country, it could actually lead to depression. But where these needs are catered for, in the sense that these ageing migrants live in an environment where they can speak their first language again and come into contact with people who speak that first language as well, they age more happily than people who do not.

Professor Keijzer clarifies that most of these studies relate to psychology and also pathological cases, that is, people suffering from dementia or people suffering from any degenerative disease, like Alzheimer’s, who reach a certain age because sometimes one sees a lot of aggression in these people, but, if they have their own culture to hang onto it seems that these problems are not felt so much. ●

MHA Event — March 2014

Superstitions and the Maltese bogeyman

By Joseph Borg

The guest speaker, Mr Albert Agius, well-known within the Maltese community in Melbourne, started his talk by acknowledging other learned researchers, in particular Gużè Cassar Pullicino and Peter Paul Castagna before him, both of whom are strong pillars in the field of Maltese culture and folklore.

Referring to the superstitions and beliefs that our ancestors used to cherish, Mr Agius said that the Maltese are not alone in believing certain superstitions. Many people all over the world believe that some misfortune will befall somebody who breaks a mirror or walks under a ladder. Depending on the circumstances, something can be an omen of good luck as well as of bad luck. Pirates of the 19th century believed that, if a black cat walks towards you, it's a sign of bad luck, but good luck if it walks away from you. The Scottish believe that a strange black cat's arrival to the home signifies prosperity, while in the English Midlands, a black cat as a wedding present is thought to bring good luck to the bride!

Mr Agius then went on to explain many other Maltese superstitions:

- **Number 13 and Friday.** In some countries Friday the 13th brings fear in some people. This has a big financial impact. We know that many people will refuse to fly, buy a house, or act on the stock exchange on Friday the 13th. This phobia has a strong connection with religion. There were 13 people present at the Last Supper, so anything connected to the number 13 from then on was bad luck. As for Friday, not only was Christ crucified on that day, but some biblical scholars believe that Eve tempted Adam with the forbidden fruit on a Friday. Perhaps the most significant is a belief that Abel was slain by his brother Cain on Friday the 13th. Many people take great attention to not have thirteen people around a table for lunch/dinner because one of them would die within 24 hours!
- **Dreams and their meaning.** A person who goes to bed and manages to have a good sleep had better think about what he dreams. If his dream is about too much leisure and an easy life, it means that he will be unemployed for a long time and will therefore suffer hunger. If he dreams about the sea, it means that he will pass through a turbulent time. On the other hand, who dreams about fish should be glad because he would become lucky – obviously he must not dream about the fish in the sea (which means turbulence!). They say that people who dream about wheat will shed a lot of tears because of a tragedy that would befall him.



Guest Speaker Mr Albert Agius

- **Pregnancy.** A pregnant woman often opens up a strong freakish appetite when she smells or sees food. She must be given some of the food to satisfy the craving because otherwise the baby will be born with a birth-mark. Some women take at least two bites just in case they were having twins. If the pregnant woman's craving is not satisfied, they would often offer her some toasted bread or something with a very strong smell. Whoever does not offer food to a pregnant woman with such craving will have a sty (xghira) grow around his eye. A pregnant woman should not look at a dead person or the unborn child will have a tendency to swoon (tghoxa) when it cried. The same would happen if a pregnant woman sees a deformed person. When this happened they would advise her to go and look at her reflection in the water in a basin (friskatur) and then wash her face with the same water.

In Maltese we have a proverb which states: 'Sal-erbghin il-qabar miftuh', which when translated means literally, 'the coffin is open upto forty'. Nowadays this can be explained as meaning that a woman who has given birth should be careful because her health is at risk for 40 days after delivery. In the old days, this had a different meaning. Canon Agius De Soldanis (1712-1770) explains that if, during the first forty days after delivery, the woman meets another mother who has just been through the same experience, one of them would die!

Some odd proverbs

- Some people used to believe that a male who is born on the feast of the Assumption (Santa Marija which is on the 15th of August) would very likely become a horse jockey later in life : *Twelid f'Santa Marija jigi msejjah ghat-tigrija*. (Born on St Mary's Feast he is called for the racing).
- The second one is about girls. If a girl is born on a Friday, she must expect that some day she will be bitten by a dog on a Friday (*Tifla titwieled nhar ta' Gimgha fl-istess jum il-kelb jigdimha*). (A girl born on Friday will be bitten by a dog on the same day)

The Evil Eye

The evil eye is a malevolent look that many cultures believe is able to cause injury or misfortune for the person at whom it is directed for reasons of envy or dislike. Not all people have the power of inflicting injury or bad luck by such an envious or ill-wishing look. The evil eye is usually given to others who remain unaware.

Everybody in Malta has his or her own interpretation of the *Ghajn* or the evil eye - and everybody has a different experience to tell. The common belief is that a person can place a curse on you just by looking your way. As weird as it may seem the evil eye (L-Ghajn) is commonly accepted as 'a fact' – even by the Church (according to some people). The belief in the evil eye in Malta is certainly very wide spread.

Continued on page 11

Superstitions and the Maltese bogeyman

Continued from page 10

There are many different beliefs as to how to guard or protect against the evil eye. Some people believe, for example, that putting a line of salt on the floor behind your front door will prevent the evil eye from entering your house. There is a much stronger belief that a house can be cleansed of negative energies, by burning olive tree leaves while saying prayers. This is known in Maltese as '*It-Tbahhir*'.

Many houses in Malta have cow-horns hanging from walls to protect the home from the evil eye. In Malta (and in countries such as Italy) it is believed that making the sign of the *Qrun* (direct translation is "bull's horn") will deflect such evil. The *Qrun* is done when you point your index finger and your little finger, and it is considered permissible to do such a sign behind your back to ward off evil.

The funny thing is that people, especially children form this *Qrun* when wishing to curse others' good luck by invoking the *Bedudu* such as when playing marbles for example. So sometimes the *Qrun* made by the hand is made to protect against bad luck and in some other instances used to wish bad luck on others.

The Maltese Bogeyman

There are a number of names given to various 'spectres' in Maltese mythology, amongst which one finds *il-Fatat*, *il-Hares* and the *Babaw* or *Gagaw*.

The *Kaw Kaw* (or *Gaw-Gaw* or *Babaw*) is a 'slimy greyish bogey man' who strolls the streets at night. He could uncannily smell the breath of naughty boys and he would stretch his snail-like body until he reaches the windows on the first floor, and he would then infiltrate himself through any crack or fissure, ventilator or other opening. Once inside the room he would grin with his toothless gaping mouth and frighten the naughty boy out of his wits or, worse still, make him have the most horrid dreams and wake up screaming with fear and sweating cold.

Other people have a totally different understanding of the *Gaw Gaw*. For example, Peter Paul Castagna (1827-1907) said that all those who were born on Christmas Eve would, during their sleep, change and become a phantom on their birthday. They would go and roam the streets and with their baying like wild dogs, frighten everyone. Before dawn they would then return home to their beds exhausted and take back their human form as they wake up. This activity was said to be a punishment because Jesus did not wish anybody to be born at the same time as he did!

It is said that many women used to go and check on their husbands and their children to ensure that they were still asleep in their bed during the night. Some other silly people used to say that in order to get rid of this weird situation, one had to take a sieve (*gharbiel* or *passatur*) in their hands and stay up all night from eleven until the Pater Noster (6 am)

counting the number of holes in the sieve !!

Mr Agius said that he was convinced that at some stage during our childhood in Malta we were all intimidated by the *BABAW*. When we were naughty our parents often used to make us behave by mentioning this kind of goblin that would bring some evil to us. He would punish us in some way for our misbehaviour. Most children certainly became aware of, and believed in, the existence of such a being. Most probably everyone had a different image of what the *Babaw* was.

Some parents used to scare their children by telling them that if they persisted in their misdemeanour, they would be put in a sack by someone and taken away from the family. More often than not, the man in question would be '*Tal-Ħabbghazi*', one of the men of North African origin who used to roam the streets hawking their wares, mostly Oriental sweets and seeds or nuts.

Mr Agius then spoke about the '*Hares*' and the '*Fatat*'. He admitted that he was not sure whether he knew the difference between *Il-Fatat* and *Il-Hares*. To him both were some sort of phantom mentioned in old wives' tales.

Accordingly, he looked up the dictionaries in an effort to find out the difference between them. According to Erin Serracino Inglott, '*Il-Fatat*' is a shadow of a dead person, or even somebody imagined which generally appears at night. It is like a soul or a spirit which through some magic, one imagines seeing in front of him especially in a house where the spectre used to inhabit.

Regarding '*Il-Hares*' Serracino Inglott says that the old meaning referred to a phantom which used to be found in old houses to protect the tenants from trouble. It was a phantom that did not do any damage. Castagna confirms that *il-Hares* takes the form of a serpent and that he protects the house. He also brings good fortune to any babies born in the house.

It is for this reason that serpents should not be killed, because if they are they bring bad luck to the family.

Although the majority of people believe that *il-Hares* does not do any damage and does not bring harm to the family, many people still choose to not go and live in a haunted house.

After the lecture many in the audience participated in a discussion mainly in relation to the 'spectres'. There was a difference of opinion as to what a '*fatat*' was. One suggestion was a 'Fairy-like' creature to the other extreme of a 'poltergeist'. Equally an opinion was expressed that the word *babaw* originated from Venice (the word is *Bauta*, meaning the mask and cape worn by carnival revellers in Venice). Other spectres were mentioned such as the *Belliegħa* and *Wahx*. Others had their own family name for such notions. Maybe this subject should be researched in greater detail for a future talk. ●

Maltese Parliament passes Civil Unions Act



On 14 April the Maltese Parliament approved the Civil Unions Bill in its third and final reading. All government MPs present voted in favour of the bill, while all opposition MPs abstained. The bill grants same-sex couples the opportunity to enter lawful civil unions, an arrangement which is virtually equivalent to marriage in all but name.

While there was consensus between the two major parties on the introduction of civil unions, the opposition had reservations with regard to the more controversial aspect of the law allowing same-sex couples to make a joint application for the adoption of children.

The Bill was passed with 37 votes in favour – President Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca's former seat was still vacant awaiting the outcome of a casual election scheduled for today, while Foreign Minister George Vella is abroad, although government whip Carmelo Abela stressed that the minister wanted to back the bill personally – and none against, as all 30 opposition MPs abstained from voting. The voting intentions of Nationalist Party MPs were uncertain until the parliamentary group held a press conference shortly before the parliamentary sitting opened.

At the press conference, Opposition Leader Dr Simon Busuttil said that, while the opposition agreed with civil unions, it had reservations on allowing gay couples to adopt children and felt that more studies were necessary. While he acknowledged that there were divergent views within the parliamentary group, it was ultimately decided that opposition MPs should not be given a free vote so that they vote in unison.

There was an explosion of cheers in Palace Square as the vote was taken – 37 in favour and 30 abstentions. The façade of the palace was lit in the rainbow colours.

Among those present in the square was the US Ambassador, HE Gina Abercrombie-Winstanley. She said this was a historic decision and a change for Malta. ●

1950s and '60s proxy brides from Malta

By Paul Vella

In the 1950s and 1960s there was a great demand for wives among migrants in Australia. Men used to send letters to Malta to propose to their childhood friends, friends of their sisters and other young women they remembered back home. These young women were to be known as “proxy brides”.

Our friend and member of the Reskeon Seniors Group in Melbourne, Tonina Farrugia, was one of these thousands “brides”. Tonina told me how she remembered in a weird way how a different man from that she wanted to marry joined her at the altar for her wedding in Malta while her “real” husband-to-be, Ted Farrugia, was 20,000 miles away in Australia.

It was after World War II that a large number of men from Malta, Greece and Italy arrived in Australia to build a new life and future for themselves. But this created an imbalance between Maltese male and female migrants. This created the need to send for these “brides” to join them in this new homeland.

Marriage by proxy was a scheme organised by the Catholic Church and at the same time, accepted by the Australian Government.

During that time one would never imagine that a girl, unwed, would travel alone on a ship all the way to Australia. It was the right thing for these girls to be married.

The way the proxy worked was that the girl goes to her village church, a man from the village will join her for the ceremony. Then with the ring on her finger she will board a ship to Australia to be met by her “real” husband at the end of the journey, and then go through another wedding ceremony over here.

Tonina was only 16 when she accepted Ted’s proposal and she considered lucky to have come as a child bride to Australia, a country she always loved. She well remembers the day when she came off the ship at Station Pier. She also says that her union was a great success. In fact, Tonina and Ted just celebrated their 58th wedding anniversary on April 2, 2014.

In 2008, a reunion was organised by the Immigration Museum, in Melbourne, where many couples like the Tonina and Ted, who married so far from each other, shared their stories.

Tonina told me that she had known Ted from early childhood in Floriana, the suburb they both came from. After she did not see him they corresponded a little, when Ted showed his plan for marriage and migration. This was a big step to the future for a young girl who never left home, living in a small village as Floriana.

She said that her mother was very sick and died when Tonina was only 11 years old. Her father remarried. When she told her father of



Happy couple Ted and Tonina Farrugia today *above* and on their wedding day *below*

her plans, he approached the priest in the parish and organised the “wedding” where Ted’s uncle took his place at the Altar, answering all the questions on behalf of Ted. The priest even addressed him as “Ted”. As her father was too shy about this role, her uncle stood in for him.

She recalls that she did not even have a long dress for the wedding. After the ceremony they went back home where her father organised a small party, with a small cake. She said that she felt funny because after the party when everybody had gone, it was just another day for her.

Tonina said that she was married on a Monday, April 2, 1956, and the following Sunday, she boarded the Australia-bound ship, *Arosa Kulm*, for the long journey. With her she took a trunk full of sheets, clothes, towels and everything else to start the new life and make a home as a wife. She recalls that she was so upset to leave her family and loved ones behind, that she did not want to say goodbye to them.

Boarding the ship, she was hit by her decision. Tonina said that she was in a dormitory with a dozen more women and children and as she was almost sick all the time, she hardly noticed any of the countries they stopped on their journey to Melbourne. She remembers well a kind woman who used to bring her food.

On the ship she made friends with a few proxy brides. There were horrid stories among these brides and some of them married men who they never met. She said for most there



was a safety net that the marriage could be annulled before it was consummated.

Tonina and Ted told me they were never disappointed and 58 years of happy married life, two children and two grandchildren are a real testament of their happy life together. ●



GAM is a group of Aussies of Maltese background. 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 *Figolli* Baking Masterclass a big success

By Rita Catania

GAM's first *Figolli* Baking Masterclass went off with a huge bang ... or should we say ... a huge bake! In afternoon on Sunday 6 April, the Maltese Community Centre in Parkville was full of colour, all things sweet and, of course, enthusiastic AusMalts of all ages, coming together for some fun and Maltese tradition.

It was a beautiful sight to see so many gathered together with their family and friends, as the buzz of excited bakers filled the room.

When the clock struck 1pm – it was on! There was a sea of working hands and rolling pins, as sweet pastry started to form different shapes, eventually to be filled with the delicious almond filling made by our groups.

Our *figolli* mentors were hard at work, sharing their baking experience, as were our ovens that took on the volume of *figolli* that came their way. And believe me – there were heaps! We've never seen so many *figolli* being made all at the same time. The waft of the pastries baking was simply sweet!

In-between the baking, participants got to enjoy hearing about what happens at Easter time in Malta and Gozo, along with a Nespresso coffee and some delicious afternoon tea. Once the break was over, it was back to work, to dress the freshly baked *figolli* with some icing, sugar pearls, smarties and icing figurines. Once the *figolli* were decorated, it was time to wrap them up, ready for the journey home.

However, there was one last important detail that had to be covered, and that was for everybody and their *figolli* to receive a sweet blessing from Father Edwin Agius mssp, as is customary in Malta and Gozo on Easter Sunday.

Overall, a very sweet and Maltese way to spend the afternoon! Thanks to our event supporters the MCCV and Nisja ☺



Maltese Association of Hobson's Bay celebrates *Jum il-Helsien*

By Emmanuel Brincat

On 25 March the Maltese Association of Hobson's Bay held a lunch attended by over 300 people to celebrate the 35th anniversary of Malta's *Jum il-Helsien* (Freedom Day) commemorating the day when the last British forces stationed in Malta were withdrawn on 31 March 1979.

The association's President, Chev. Joe Attard welcomed a number of guests for this occasion, including Consul General for Malta in Victoria, Mr Victor Grech and Mrs. Patricia Grech, SBS Director of Corporate Affairs Strategy and Communications, Mr Peter Khalil, the Lord Mayor of City of Hobsons Bay Council, Councillor Ms Sandra Wilson, Director of Community Services Mr Peter Hunt, and advisor to Senator Conroy, Mr Hakki Suleyman.

Also in attendance were Mr Joe Axiaq from SBS radio, Mr Emmanuel Brincat representing Radio 3ZZZ and 98.9 North West FM, accompanied by his wife Mary Anne, the President of the Newport Maltese Association Mr George Saliba and his wife Lina, and Mr Joe Cutajar from Our Lady of Grace Association.

Proceedings opened with the singing of Malta's National Anthem and that of Australia.

In a brief speech for the occasion the Consul General Victor Grech thanked Chev Attard, and spoke about the historical significance of this great day for the Maltese.



Photo: Emmanuel Brincat

In his speech, which included a few words in Maltese, Mr Peter Khalil from SBS thanked Chev. Attard for his great work during the discussions with SBS to get back some of the hours that the Maltese community lost in the rescheduling of SBS Radio programs. He encouraged the Maltese community to keep its identity.

The Mayor of the City of Hobson's Bay said a few words and encouraged the Maltese Community in her city to keep supporting all that this club organizes, as it is being done to keep the Maltese Community together.

Mr Hakki Suleyman encouraged all present to lobby their local members to impress upon them that funding for SBS and

Community Radio be kept and is very important to the Maltese community.

Senior Vice President Mrs. Carmen Gauci, Assistant Secretary Mr Gregory Grima and member Mr Joe Bonello, delivered well-prepared readings about the events in the history of Malta that led to this very important day in the calendar of the National Days of Malta.

Chev. Joe Attard presented a Life Membership certificate to the Lord Mayor, Certificates of Appreciation to Mr Peter Khalil and to Mr Joe Cutajar, the latter for all the work that he does as a volunteer assisting this Association in various ways. ●

Feast of Christ the Redeemer in Melbourne

By Emmanuel Brincat

Organized by the Maltese Association of Hobson's Bay in Victoria on Sunday 30 March, the Maltese community filled the heritage-listed and historical Parish Church of St Mary Star of the Sea in West Melbourne for the feast of Christ the Redeemer.

Special guest Consul General for Malta in Victoria, Mr Victor Grech and his wife Mrs Patricia Grech were in attendance.

The chief celebrant at Mass was the Auxiliary Bishop for the Western Region of Victoria, Bishop Vincent Long OFM Conv. Assisting him were the Parish Priest of St Mary's, Fr Anthony Bernal, Fr Karm Borg, Fr Emmanuel Adami mssp, and Fr Dominic DeGorgio.

Bishop Long delivered the homily for the occasion. The Maltese Choir of Victoria was led by Mro Charles Schembri and the choir leader was Mrs Lydia Gusman.

The readings were delivered by the Consul General Mr Victor Grech and Mr Sean Micallef, while the prayers of the faithful



Statue of Christ the Redeemer



Bishop Vincent Long (centre), PP Fr Bernal (left) and Fr Karm Borg

were read by Emmanuel Brincat, the offertory gifts, were taken up by the Consul General's wife, Mrs. Patricia Grech and the Senior Vice President of the Association Mrs. Carmen Gauci and other ladies of the committee.

Several members of other Maltese Association, who brought their association standards, took part in the church service and also in the procession, making it a sight to see.

The President of the Hobson's Bay Maltese Association, Chev Joe Attard, thanked Bishop Long and the priests who assisted him and all those involved in the organisation of this celebration.

Holy Mass was followed by a Benediction. A procession with the statue of Christ the Redeemer was held through the local road outside the church grounds, with prayers being read out throughout the procession. ●

Photos: Emmanuel Brincat

Reskeon Seniors BBQ lunch at Edwardes Lake Park



Photo: Paul Vella

By Paul Vella

Over 100 members of Reskeon Seniors Group enjoyed a barbecue lunch at Edwardes Lake Park on Thursday 13 March. The weather was excellent.

Edwardes Lake Park is a 26-hectare district park and the second largest park in the Darebin municipality visited by many people each year. It is part of the Edgar's Creek catchment, which is a stream of Melbourne's Yarra River.

Offering free gas barbecues and other amenities, the park is a family park and although on this Thursday we had the place for our own, on Saturdays and Sundays hundreds of community members from different nationalities flock the park.

Edwardes Lake is an urban water body of some 85 million litres created by a concrete weir on Edgar's Creek, as part of the Merri catchment. The lake has an upstream catchment of more than 100 square kilometres and is an important part of regional stormwater management. It is the second largest urban lake in the greater Melbourne metropolitan region.

The ladies started to prepare the salads while the men were in charge of the cooking of the sausages and the meat. In no time the members started to be served with the meal. After the meal, some members enjoyed a chat in a group sharing all the goodies they brought with them. Other members enjoyed a walk

along the 2.5 km walking track around the beautiful lake. It was good to see the members enjoy the day like one happy family.

Thanks go to the organisers, Salvina and Paul Vella, Phyllis Vella, Madeleine Vella, Vera Sacco and Carmen Grech for preparing the salads and served the meals. Thanks also to Charles Sacco, Vincent Borg, Caesar Vella and Joe Pace for cooking the meat and sausages.

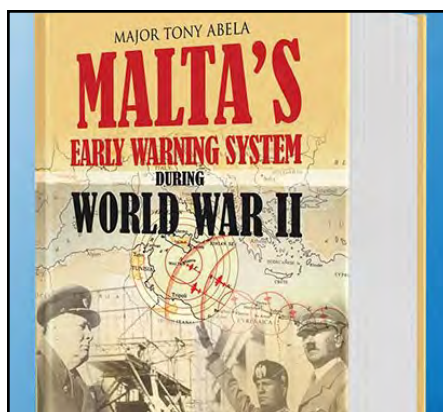
A big thank you to all members present who made the day pleasant and enjoyable. ●

New book sheds new light on Malta's early wartime experience

New documents unearthed from the British national archives, new information kept secret for over seventy years, and a new perspective about Malta's role in the discovery of radar form part of a new book set to make a little bit of history. *Malta's Early Warning Systems during WWII* tells the fascinating story of Malta's pivotal role in radar's full exploitation for the first time in history by Britain.

Fastidiously researched by Major Tony Abela, a former RAF telecommunications technician, the new publication uncovers and makes use of hundreds of secret documents which have until now been stacked away for seven decades in the National Archives of Britain.

Back in 1940 the invention of radar was pure magic; a painstaking achievement with consequences of unprecedented proportions. Far more than the atomic bomb, radar contributed to the Allied victory in the war. It was also the precursor of much modern technology. It is no overestimation to state that radar eventually changed the lives of millions,



and that Malta played a pivotal role in the development and successful use of radar by the British.

The new publication narrates a story never told before. It is packed with meticulous detail and backed up with an amazing amount of military documentation revealed for the first time in decades. Moreover, it dispels some of the myths about Malta's early wartime

experiences, and certainly makes some new bold proposals for a revision of our history books.

The book was launched on Saturday 29 March by the Prime Minister Dr Joseph Muscat at Malta Air Traffic Services (MATS) Dingli radar station. The book launch was part of the events MATS will be organising to commemorate the 35th Anniversary since the Maltese took full responsibilities of the Malta Air Traffic Services, and since then, provided a very high standard of Air Navigation Services for Malta's Flight information Region and Luqa Airport.

Malta Air Traffic Services Ltd opened to the general public its Dingli Radar Complex, including the WWII underground complex used by the first radar in Malta 75 years ago on 27 March 1939. Dingli Local Council will be organising other attraction and stalls around the MATS Dingli radar. *Malta's Early Warning Systems during WWII* (SKS Publication) is on sale at all major bookstores in Malta at the price of €20. ●

Maltese vote in European Parliament election on 24 May

On Saturday 24 May Maltese citizens eligible to vote in European Parliament elections will be electing six Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) to represent them for the next five years. At the last elections in 2009 four MEPs were elected from the Labour Party and two from the Nationalist Party.



As the European Union seeks to pull through the economic crisis and EU leaders reflect on what direction to take in future, these are the most important European elections to date.

They not only allow voters to pass judgment on EU leaders' efforts to tackle the eurozone crisis and to express their views on plans for closer economic and political integration; they are also the first elections since the Lisbon Treaty of 2009 gave the European Parliament a number of important new powers.

One major new development introduced by the Treaty is that, when the EU member states nominate the next president of the European Commission to succeed José Manuel Barroso in autumn 2014, they will - for the first time - have to take account of the European election results. The new Parliament must endorse this candidate: it 'elects' the Commission president, in the words of the Treaty. This means voters now have a clear say in who takes over at the helm of EU government.

The new political majority that emerges from the elections will also shape European legislation over the next five years in areas from the single market to civil liberties. The Parliament - the only directly elected EU institution - is now a linchpin of the European decision-making system and has an equal say with national governments on nearly all EU laws.

For more information visit <http://www.elections2014.eu/en> (in English), <http://www.elections2014.eu/mt> (in Maltese) or <http://www.facebook.com/ParlamentEwropew> (in English and Maltese).



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or email us on admin@mccv.org.au

Community Events Calendar

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

Date	Event
Wed 30 April at 6.30 PM	MCCV Executive Committee Meeting - Maltese Community Centre
Sat 3 May at 6.30 PM	Feast of the Cross & Mothers Day Function – St Helena Maltese-Australian S.C. Inc.
Sun 4 May	Mother's Day Dance – Moreland Maltese Elderly Citizens Association - 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
Sat 10 May at 7.00 PM	Feast Mass and celebration of St Gorg Preca – St Gaetan's Society
Sat 17 May at 6.00 PM	Family Get Together BYO – St Helena Maltese-Australian S.C. Inc.
Sun 18 May at 12.00 PM	Members' meeting, luncheon and theatre – St Gaetan's Society
Wed 28 May at 6.30 PM	MCCV Executive Committee Meeting - Maltese Community Centre
Wed 4 June at 7.00 PM	MCCV Council Meeting - Maltese Community Centre
Sun 15 June	Bus trip across the NSW border – St Gaetan's Society
Sat 21 June at 6.00 PM	Family Get Together BYO – St Helena Maltese-Australian S.C. Inc.
Wed 25 June at 6.30 PM	MCCV Executive Committee Meeting - Maltese Community Centre
Wed 2 July at 7.00 PM	MCCV Council Meeting - Maltese Community Centre