



MCCV News

Maltese Community Council of Victoria, Inc.

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Australian Government plan to reduce pensions in cases of overseas travel

From 1 January 2017, subject to the passage of legislation to implement 2015-16 Budget measures, the Australian Government will be adjusting certain pensions, including the Age Pension, according to the pensioner's Australian Working Life Residence (AWLR) when they have been travelling or living outside Australia after six weeks, instead of 26 weeks.

Migrant and refugee groups have severely criticised the Australian government for its plan to set a limit on the time pensioners can spend overseas before their pension is reduced, thereby discriminating against Australians who were born overseas.

Under the proposed change being debated in parliament this month, pensioners who spent less than 35 years of their working life in Australia will have their pensions reduced after six weeks of overseas travel – down from the current time limit of 26 weeks.

The new rule in the proposed legislation, which is due to start in January 2017, was announced in the last budget and is yet to pass Parliament. [It will save about \\$168 million over four years.](#)

The Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia, along with the Australian Council of Social Service, is urging the government to rethink the new rule, noting about 40 per cent of Australia's pensioners were born overseas.

"Once people [get] their pension, they've got certain rights," federation chairman Joe Caputo said.

Mr Caputo said pensioners born overseas often needed to travel overseas for extended periods to stay in touch with



family, or to care for a sick or dying relative. In some cases, they had never been back to the country of their birth and were going on "the trip of a lifetime".

In a submission to a Senate inquiry into the measure, the Refugee Council of Australia added the change would particularly hurt refugee communities.

"This is especially problematic due to the significant difficulties with family reunion [in Australia]," it says. "[This means] the only way a person can see their family is by travelling overseas."

A spokesman for Social Services Minister Christian Porter said the change was about making things "fairer for taxpayers".

"The government believes a person's retirement costs should be fairly distributed between the countries a person has spent most of their working life."

He said Australia had [30 international agreements](#) that allowed people social security from more than one country.

"It is the expectation that where a person has spent a proportion of their working life overseas, they will be eligible to receive a pension from that country."

But the Refugee Council cautioned refugees were not necessarily eligible for pensions in other countries – given they had fled to Australia because of persecution "often at the hands of the government". Or had come from countries which did not have comparable welfare systems.

The Labor Party said it will oppose the change in Parliament, with the opposition's payments spokeswoman Jenny Macklin noting it will hurt "thousands of migrant pensioners. These pensioners have worked hard their whole lives. They deserve our support in retirement."

The Senate committee looking at the measure is due to report when Parliament resumes next week.

[Source: <http://www.theage.com.au>]



President's Perspective

Malta must be vigilant against an ISIS infiltration

Reports that have been appearing in the Maltese and international press for some time, particularly the Italian newspaper *Il Giornale*, have indicated that ISIS have been threatening to strike at France, Italy, Spain and Malta. This has naturally caused considerable concern to the Maltese-Australian community.

In its annual report tabled in Parliament last December, the Maltese Security Service (MSS) expressed concerns about ISIS moving closer to Malta at a faster rate than expected because of instability in Libya. The MSS Acting Head, Joseph Bugeja, said that the MSS was aware that ISIS operatives may infiltrate migrant arrivals, but there was no evidence of any such ISIS members coming to Malta. He said that the threat posed by instability in North Africa was being monitored carefully. While instability in Libya had existed for some time, it had now facilitated the establishment of ISIS there, compounding the problems of human trafficking from Libya.

In a report under the heading of 'Malta nuova base jihadista 4 fermati nei nostri aeroporti' (Malta new jihadist base 4 arrested in our airports) published on 22 November 2015, *Il Giornale* reported the arrest of four Syrians at two airports in Italy carrying false passports and having Malta as their intended destination.

The same news report raises another possible scenario: Malta could be, or likely become, a place for ISIS to deposit or recycle funds undercover. It quotes Arturo Varvelli, an expert on terrorism and a researcher at ISPI (Institute for International Political Studies), who believes that Malta could become a "convenient financial hub" for ISIS and a "logistical and organizational support point" for obtaining false documents, an activity in which, according to *Il Giornale*, Italy unfortunately excels. The newspaper is of the view that Italy and Malta could be at this time two "transit corridors" for funds and documents.

More recently, America announced that ISIS have extended its presence and activities to Libya. To assist the locals in repelling ISIS in Libya, American forces carried out bombing raids of ISIS headquarters and other strategic locations there. Malta being some 1,100 km removed from Libya, one cannot help but feel nervous about the likelihood of ISIS carrying out its threat in Malta.

The Malta government has taken steps to strengthen its border controls, although it is obvious that Malta on its own could not deal with an invasion or despicable activities the nature of which are constantly broadcast in TV news coverage.

This brings to mind Malta's scheme introduced two years ago for the sale of Maltese and EU citizenship and passports. In these times of heightened insecurity for our beloved Malta, it would seem to be prudent and appropriate for the government to immediately suspend this scheme.

Hopefully Malta's allies, including the United States and European Union countries, will afford Malta the protection she deserves in these very difficult times.

Anticipated reform of Australia Taxation Laws

As Australia gets closer to the election of Federal Parliament in 2016, there has been considerable discussions and debates between the Government Coalition parties and the opposition Labor Party over proposals made by both sides.

The Government is said to have consulted widely to ensure that these reforms would result in an increase of income and the reduction of taxes in relation to the Australian community.

The Labor Party ran a campaign to stop an increase of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) from 10% to 15%. As a result, the Coalition Government has announced that it would not be increasing GST. Other suggestions for reform include a reduction of exemption for income from Superannuation Funds. Capital gains tax is also currently under investigation.

Recent legislation requiring a full disclosure of profits made by the large multinational corporations is expected to yield considerable income to the Australian Taxation Office.

Government announcements are expected shortly, and it appears to be likely that the government may call a Federal election at an earlier date, months before the full 3-year term is up.

The opposition's suggestion that the government should take a close look at negative gearing, a process whereby investors can offset losses against their regular income on property investments, has been dismissed by the government as it believes it would lead to a property market crisis.

Merger of the ABC and the Special Broadcasting Service

On 24 February 2016, Mr Mark Scott, the retiring ABC managing director, in an address to the National Press Club in Canberra, suggested that there should be a "grown up conversation" about merging the two public broadcasters. He further advised that this would result in an annual saving of \$40 million to the government. He said that conversations need to be refreshed and went on to propose "a friendly merger that would preserve each of the broadcasters' identity whilst delivering substantial savings".

In his interview on in the ABC's TV program *Lateline* on 24 February, Liberal Senator Eric Abetz advised that he would be supportive of the merger, stating that, in his view, SBS had done little to encourage migrants to learn the English language. He made no reference of the failings of the ABC in following its charter and broadcast to the whole of the Australian community including those for whom the English language is not their first language.

Some months ago Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull, then Minister for Communications, publically announced that it was not appropriate for the two national broadcasters to merge. His comments on Mr Scott's most recent suggestion are presently awaited by the community.

MCCV public library goes mobile

The MCCV has for some time made a number of presentations to aged care facilities where a large number of Maltese are resident. The presentation generally addresses staff members on Maltese culture, history and language. Commonly used phrases are translated into the Maltese language and staff taught how to pronounce the same. This has resulted in better communication between staff and residents.

Boasting of a well-stocked library with Maltese books and books about Malta at its community centre at Parkville, the MCCV has decided to establish a mobile library to service and meet the demand from Maltese residents for Maltese books, making available to them Maltese material, music CDs and DVDs. The project will be managed and directed by Professor Maurice Cauchi and his assistant Charlie Belli. A team of volunteers is being organised to visit aged care facilities to provide library services.

Victor Borg
MCCV President

An MCCV Survey on the third generation of Maltese-Australians

Children of the Maltese diaspora

By Prof. Maurice Cauchi

Ask anyone you meet and chances are they will confirm they have relatives overseas, and, increasingly, more and more grandchildren. It is a fact, however, that we know very little about these grandchildren, except that they are cute and fast-growing.

A recent survey conducted under the aegis of the Maltese Community Council of Victoria has delved into the lives of these Maltese-background children to investigate who they are, and to what extent they still belong to our Maltese culture.

The first thing that strikes us is that the majority (two-thirds) of these children result from mixed marriages. In just over half, only the mother has a Maltese background, and in another 17 per cent, the father.

As might be imagined, this is one of the problems in maintaining one's background culture, seeing that the non-Maltese side of the family also has an equal right to clamour to maintain their culture.

One obvious result is that these children have all but lost their Maltese language. Just three per cent of children said they spoke Maltese fluently. Another two-thirds said they could speak a little, which presumably means they can understand some words spoken by grandparents, but certainly have little ability to carry on a conversation.

Attempts by various organisations, including the community council, to organise teaching of Maltese only serve to attract a small minority of these children: just three per cent said they attended Maltese classes.

The fact that Maltese classes are only available as an extracurricular activity (in the evenings or on Saturdays), may be one reason for poor attendance. One participant actually recommended that Maltese classes be integrated in the school curriculum, a practice that used to take place when their parents were of school age.

We were also interested to see if other aspects of culture were being eroded. Among these was church attendance, which, of course, has been a pillar of Maltese culture for centuries.

As in Malta, we find that church attendance has dropped quite considerably: only one-third (35 per cent) said they

attended Mass regularly on Sundays. The other two-thirds said they attended on special occasions (weddings, baptisms, etc.). It is debatable as to how much this is due to culture loss, and how much is the result of the western trend to secularisation.

On the other hand, there is plenty of evidence that these young children still have close contact with the Maltese islands. Many of them (over one-third) have visited the island, some on several occasions.

Most children have a reasonable idea of the geography of Malta, its small size, the Grand Harbour, the city of Valletta, the Gozo ferry, the history, dating back to the Phoenicians, the Knights of Malta and particularly World War II, and the fact it was heavily bombed (including the bomb hitting the Mosta church and 'miraculously' not exploding).

They have heard of the George Cross and the bravery of the Maltese. But above all, they know Malta as a great place to visit in summer, when it is warm, has wonderful beaches and in general, a place where you can have a good time.

One said: "When I finish school I am going back with some of my Aussie friends so they can experience the culture." Another plans to "visit all the old buildings where *nannu* and *nanna* used to live". It would appear there is great scope to encourage this potential source of future young tourists.

But if there is one aspect of Maltese culture that is flourishing with undiminished vigour it is that relating to food. Every single participant extolled the quality of Maltese food. They all like *pastizzi*, ravioli, rabbit stew, and macaroni, which seem to be staple foods among Maltese-Australians, not to mention some 'exotic' foods like *stuffat tal-qarnit*, *qaqoċ mimli*, stuffed calamari and other delicacies.

So if there is some element of our culture that is guaranteed to last for several generations it is the Maltese cuisine, which seems to have a very bright future indeed.

As I have had occasion to mention in the past, the descendants of Maltese living in Australia would consider themselves to be primarily Australians, and if they grow up to be similar to their parents, they are very likely to consider themselves Maltese-Australians. It is also realistic to expect that the Maltese language will not survive after the current cohort of Malta-born Maltese has passed away.

However, I am very confident that elements of Maltese culture will remain for several generations. It is this aspect that we should particularly encourage; an aspect that is enriching to both these young citizens and to Malta itself. 💧

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.

Contributions should be forwarded to the Editor either by email at pro@mccv.org.au or alternatively by post to:

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Eddie Micallef re-elected Chair of the Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria

The Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria (ECCV) - the peak organisation representing ethnic and multicultural communities in this state - has formally announced the makeup of its new Board after recent elections.

ECCV Chairperson, Eddie Micallef, said the breadth and depth of experience in the newly elected Board would make it well placed to address the many challenges facing multiculturalism, and to continue its strong advocacy for ethnic and multicultural communities throughout Victoria.

As a result of the election, there has been minimal change to the makeup of the ECCV Board. Mr Micallef was re-elected as Chairperson. Other office bearers are Deputy Chairpersons Marion Lau OAM and Mahinda Wickramasuriya, Secretary Dr Moses Adepoju and Treasurer Helena Trinnick. The other board members are Dr Sundram Sivamalai, Parsuram Sharma-Luitl, Dr Christine Lee, Joe Caputo, Sam Afra, Dr Apollo Nsubuga-Kyobe, Bruna Pasqua, Peter Mousaferiadis and Dr Helen Olga Light.

"I would like to commend the ECCV Board members for their election to this pivotal organisation, and also say that I am deeply honoured to have been re-elected to the position of Chairman for a second term. I would also like to thank former and retiring board members for their hard work and tireless advocacy," said Mr Micallef.

"The combined depth of knowledge and experience of the ECCV Board members in all areas relating to multicultural affairs in Victoria - and in some instances throughout Australia - is formidable.

There are ECCV Board members who have held prominent positions as leaders of their communities over many years and have sat as commissioners with the Victorian Multicultural Commission. These are just some of the areas of extensive expertise and experience contained in our Board.

"As evidenced by recent reports, there has been commentary in the media that seeks to challenge the very existence of multiculturalism. There are some sections of the media and community that are trying to perpetuate the argument that multiculturalism is a mistake.

"Another important issue - which has been covered extensively in the media - is the exploitation of migrant and overseas student workers by organisations like 7-Eleven. ECCV has written policy



Mr Eddie Micallef—ECCV Chair

documents outlining how this is a serious issue that needs to be addressed across a range of businesses as a matter of urgency.

"The continued promotion of policies and programs that promote social cohesion will be an important focus for the ECCV in 2016. It has been well documented that one of the best ways to counter terrorism is through building greater social cohesion, and in particular working closely with

community leaders.

"Improvement in languages services is another important area that ECCV will continue - as it has done in the past - to be advocating strongly for. There is a critical need to improve interpreter and translation services so that many of the most vulnerable in society know what their rights are and how to access appropriate bi-lingual programs." ♦

Outgoing ABC boss Mark Scott proposes 'friendly merger' with SBS

Mark Scott, ABC's outgoing managing director, has called for a "grown-up conversation" about merging the nation's two public broadcasters, arguing it could save the Federal Government \$40 million a year.

In his last National Press Club address as ABC boss on 24 February, Mr Scott also made the case for the Government to at least maintain the ABC's current level of funding, warning that the only way the broadcaster will be "strong and relevant" in the future is with adequate financial support.

Earlier this month, Mr Scott questioned whether there was still a need for both the ABC and SBS and today he revealed he discarded the idea of merger with his now retired SBS counterpart.

"Some years ago, towards the end of his term as SBS managing director, Shaun Brown and I had a number of conversations about how a peaceful merger might work," Mr Scott said.

"One that would safeguard a distinct identity and remit for SBS and allow the public broadcasters to be more distinctive, in clearly delineated spaces - with no overlap.

"But it wasn't to be. The idea was rejected at the SBS board level and Shaun wasn't given license to pursue the conversation



further. It ended there."

Mr Brown said in a statement that he and Mr Scott had indeed had "informal discussions about the most effective model for public broadcasting in Australia".

Mr Scott told the Press Club that conversation needed to be refreshed and he proposed a kind of "friendly merger" that would preserve each broadcaster's identity while delivering substantial savings.

"By coming together, SBS and the ABC could still offer distinct brands under distinct charters," he said.

According to Mr Scott, merging the two broadcasters would save about \$40 million of the \$1.3 billion spent on public broadcasting each year.

[Source: www.abc.net.au]

Latrobe Valley Maltese Festival

By Paul Vella

On Saturday, 27 February, a Maltese Festival will be held in Kernot Hall, Morwell, between 10 am and 6 pm.

This is the brainchild of Frank Tabone born in Australia from Maltese parents from Birkirkara. His grandfather was from Nadur, Gozo. Frank told me that his nannu came to Australia in 1950. When he arrived he was told that there were scouts at the wharfs of Melbourne offering employment with the State Electricity Commission of Victoria (SECV). He travelled to Yallourn North and started working at Yallourn Mine straight away. A year later, nannu's family, including Frank's Dad, came from Malta in 1951. The family set u residence in Yallourn Nth. His grandparents had six children before they came to Australia and later they had another child in their new country.

Frank was brought up in a Maltese environment. Although he doesn't speak much Maltese, he admits he loves everything that is Maltese. He was brought up to love whatever is Maltese, being food, traditions and family life. He loves Maltese culture and he intends to visit Malta later this year.

In his own words, Frank said that he is so proud of Malta, its heritage, history and people. He grew up with Maltese grandparents and he experienced the language, the culture, the stories, the food and the way it was with family back in the 1970s and 1980s. He said that he doesn't see this much anymore. He don't see large families being together as much as back then and he doesn't see communities, friends, etc. together as much anymore. He wanted to allow a day where Maltese people could all come together as a group enjoying each other, remembering their heritage and culture, experiencing some of the old traditions and never forgetting where they came from.

Frank continued to say that the Maltese Festival of Latrobe Valley will be the revival of "Jum il-Maltin" held in Sunbury years ago and the Portarlington

Maltese Festival both of which had a natural death.

It was his idea to organise this Festival for the Maltese in Gippsland as well as those living in Melbourne. The idea was well received by the Maltese and this is shown by the amount of coaches leaving Melbourne on the day to be part of this Festival.

Frank told me that he received a lot of help from John Buhagiar, President of Latrobe Valley Maltese Club and its committee; Mario Sammut, broadcaster on Gippsland FM and on 3ZZZ Melbourne; Latrobe City Council; the Maltese Community Council of Victoria and he is sponsored by several businesses especially from the Director of Stable Engineering where incidentally Frank is Production Manager.

At the festival there will be music by Mark Andrew, Elvis Tribute Entertainer; Destiny Band; Stex Band; Maltese Brass Band and well-known singer from Portarlington, Charles Attard.

There will be market stalls, along with entertainment for the kids: Luna Moonies and Koko the Clown; Jumping Castle, Face Painting and Balloon Tying.

What's a Maltese Festival without food and drink? There will be Cisk beer and Kinnie soft drink; pastizzi; and other Maltese food will be available.



During the *Ejjeu Oqghodu* program, broadcaster Mario Sammut (left) and Frank Tabone.

MALTESE FESTIVAL

27 FEBRUARY 2016
KERNOT HALL, MORWELL
10 AM - 6 PM

**EXPERIENCE
MALTESE CULTURE**

- **MALTESE MUSIC**
 - * MARK ANDREW - ELVIS TRIBUTE ENTERTAINER
 - * DESTINY BAND
 - * MALTESE BRASS BAND AND CHARLES ATTARD
- **MARKET STALLS**
- **KIDS ENTERTAINMENT**
 - * LUNA MOONIES & KOKO THE CLOWN
 - * JUMPING CASTLE, FACE PAINTING, BALLOON TYING
- **MALTESE FOOD & DRINK**
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On Saturday, January 30, Frank Tabone was guest on Mario Sammut's 3ZZZ Maltese program *Ejjeu Oqghodu*. Frank was interviewed by Mario and myself where he gave all the information about this festival.

We hope to see a lot of the Maltese Community at this Festival.

More information can be obtained from www.latrobe.vic.gov.au/whats_on or from the Facebook page Latrobe Valley Maltese Festival. ♦

Festa ta' San Pawl Nawfragu f'Parkville

Minn Paul Vella

Is-Socjetà Missjunarja ta' San Pawl organizzat il-Festa ta' San Pawl Nawfragu fil-Kappella ta' San Pawl, hdejn iċ-Ċentru Malti, Parkville.

Din saret nhar it-Tnejn, 8 ta' Frar u nżammet ftit qabel nharha minhabba li l-10 ta' Frar, din is-sena ħabab Ras ir-Randan. Infatti, anki Malta, il-festa ta' San Pawl inżammet qabel ukoll.

Għall-okkażjoni giet iċċelebrata quddiesa minn Fr Edwin Agius, Rettur tal-MSSP, f'Parkville.

Gemgħa mhux ħazin attendew għal din il-Quddies, fost oħrajn, kien hemm il-President tal-Kunsill Malti tal-Victoria, is-Sur Victor Borg, u l-Viċi President s-Sur Joe Stafrace.

L-ewwel u t-tieni qari sar minn Miriam Belli, Superjura tal-Mużew, sezzjoni nisa, u Paul Vella. Fr Agius għamel Omelija sabiha fuq San Pawl.

Kien hemm kant liturgiku waqt il-Quddies u fl-aħħar indaqq il-marċ "Marcia San Paolo" ta' Cardenio Botti, mill-Banda La Vallette.

Fil-kappella issa hemm statwa mdaqsa artistika ta' San Pawl li għandha storja sabieħa. Fr Edwin Agius flimkien ma' Freddie Asciak tkellmu miegħi fuq kif l-istatwa waslet f'din il-kappella. Qaluli li l-istatwa oriġinalment waslet f'Melbourne minn Malta u tpoġġiet fil-Knisja ta' St. Bernadette, North Sunshine. Bi tbissima qaluli kif il-Maltin kienu ħadu gost b'din l-istatwa ta' San Pawl, filwaqt li l-parruċċani Irlandiżi kienu jaħsbuħ San Patrizju fejn gatt ma' taw każ tas-sejf u l-lifa.

Aktar tard din l-istatwa ttiehdet fil-parroċċa ta' Norlane, fl-inħawi ta' Geelong, fejn il-Kappillan ta' dak iż-żmien kien Fr Gambin. Meta sar Kappillan Fr Ray Zammit, mssp, gieh il-ħsieb li minhabba li l-parroċċa ta' Norlane ma kienetx tas-Socjetà, qal li jkun aħjar jekk din l-istatwa tittiehed fil-kappella tal-mssp, f'Parkville.

Hawn, Freddie Asciak ħa ħsieb li jirrestawra din l-istatwa u jirrangas-s-sejf u l-lifa li kellhom bżonn xi tiswijiet u żebagħ l-istatwa wkoll. Issa l-istatwa ta' San Pawl għandha postha fil-Kappella ta' San Pawl, f'Parkville.

Wara kien hemm xi rinfreskanti fil-foyer taċ-Ċentru. ♦



Il-Parruċċani jiċċelebraw għeluq snin il-Kan. Fr Manny Bonello

Minn Paul Vella

Il-Kanonku Fr Manny Bonello, Kappillan tal-Parroċċa ta' San Ġużepp Haddiem ta' North Reservoir, iċċelebra għeluq sninu nhar il-21 ta' Jannar, bl-eta' ta' 60 sena. In-nies tal-parroċċa ma ħallewx din l-okkażjoni tgħaddi mingħajr ma organizzaw affarijiet biex jiċċelebraw miegħu.

Fr Manny huwa mix-Xagħra, Għawdex u ilu f'din il-parroċċa għal ħafna snin fejn hu maħbub kemm mill-Maltin, Taljani, Filippini, Ċiniżi u nies ta' nazzjonijiet differenti.

Il-Hadd, 24 ta' Jannar giet organizzata Quddiesa speċjali għal din l-okkażjoni li kienet iċċelebrata minnu stess filwaqt li Fr Dom Degiorgio kien konċelebrant. Il-Knisja kienet imballata bin-nies, kemm membri tal-familja, ħbieb u oħrajn.

Fuq wara l-Artal ittella banner speċjali biex jikkomera dan il-jum. Il-qari u l-offerti kienu f'idejn il-familja ta' Fr Manny, fosthom ħutu Tony, Victor, Charlie, Domitilla u Grace. Infatti Grace kienet fuq btala f'Melbourne minn Għawdex.

Wara li spiċċat il-Quddiesa kellu



sorpriza oħra għax jien ħsibt biex norganizza li f'dan il-hin jindaqq l-innu "Patruna tax-Xagħrin", versi tal-Arcipriet Carmelo Refalo, muzika ta' Mro. Ray Sciberras, kantat minn John Cassar u s-soprano Rita Dimech mall-Banda "Victory" tax-Xagħra, Għawdex.

Wara l-Quddiesa sar riċeviment fis-sala tal-knisja fejn attendew ħafna nies. Fr Manny qasam il-kejk tal-okkażjoni, imdawwar minn ħutu u l-familji tagħhom

(ara ritratt fuq).

Miram Mizzi hadmet ħafna u organizzat ħafna għal din l-okkażjoni kemm għar-riċeviment, il-banner speċjali fil-knisja u għar-rigal sabiħ li tawh.

Hadna gost naraw ħafna membri tal-kumitati u l-membri ta' Reskeon Maltese Association Seniors Group u Stella Maris Maltese Association li attendew kemm għall-Quddiesa u r-riċeviment. ♦

Reskeon Seniors start the year with a Mass

By Paul Vella

Reskeon Maltese Association Seniors Group had their first meeting for the year on Wednesday, February 3, 2016.

They started the year with a Mass celebrated by Canon Fr Emmanuel Bonello, Parish Priest of St Joseph the Worker, Reservoir.

Although most members were still on holidays near the beach, a good number of members attended.

Fr Bonello, in his Homily, praised the group and their achievements throughout the years.

Secretary, Paul Vella, did the Readings during the Mass. After Mass he thanked Fr Bonello for finding the time to celebrate Mass for the Group.

After Mass there was a game of Bingo



and afterwards all members enjoyed a free sausage sizzle with soft drinks, tea and coffee and cakes.

Cooking was done by Committee members Madeleine Vella and Sylvia

Dakin, while Alfred and Tessie Cachia looked after the soft drinks and tea and coffee. Everyone enjoyed our first event of the year. ♦

Australian author brings Maltese migrant story to life

My father was born in a cave in Rabat, Malta in 1942. Lying between the battlefields of Europe and North Africa, Malta was highly prized by Hitler and remained under siege for three years, making it the most heavily bombed place of WW2.

After the war, Malta was in ruins and like many other Europeans, the Maltese migrated to countries that offered the chance of a new life. They would leave loved ones, homes and family to take a chance on an unknown future. My father, along with one million others, made the journey to Australia.

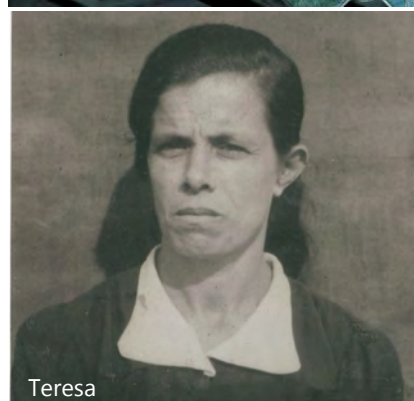
Jobs were plentiful and many migrants worked multiple jobs to earn enough to buy homes and give their kids a good education. They gave up so much to create a better future for their families.

But life was also hard and Australia wasn't always an easy place to be. The newly appointed Minister for Immigration, Arthur Calwell, knew Australia needed a bigger population to build the nation and to defend it if there was another war. With only 7 million people, he declared that the country needed to 'populate or perish', but he was also a staunch supporter of the White Australia Policy, which meant Australia wasn't always welcoming of the new arrivals. It also meant when Australian migration officials interviewed potential new migrants, there was an understanding that applicants had to be healthy and of good character, but it also it helped if you were white.

As a little girl, my father would tell me stories about Malta. His story of being born in a cave was always my favourite. I also remember sitting on our lounge room floor in the dark and watching jittery super 8 footage of Malta from trips my father made as an adult. When I first saw the golden cliffs, ornate churches and clear blue skies and sea, I knew one day I would visit. I first had that chance in 2005. The moment I first saw Malta from the plane, I could see it was beautiful and when I stepped off the plane, I cried.

When I learnt more about the bombing raids and the cavernous shelters the Maltese hid in, I knew it would make a fascinating story for your readers.

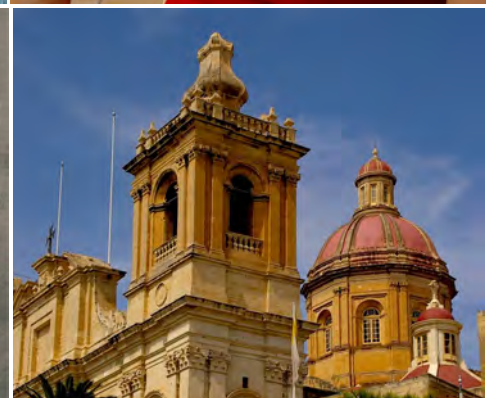
Teresa: A New Australian is the story of a young girl who was only four-years-old when the bombs began to fall. Over the next three years her island home of Malta became the most heavily bombed place of WW2. With her country destroyed and starvation rife, Teresa's father decides to leave for Australia, to its promise of jobs, wealth and a brighter future.



Teresa



Author Deborah Abela



Photos: Deborah Abela

She and her family sail to Sydney, knowing very little about the country they are about to call home. Even though Australia offers so much, everything feels strange and new. Teresa desperately misses her family and friends in Malta, especially when she is bullied and called names simply for being different. But like my Nanna Teresa, she is a fighter. This young girl survived a war and she is determined to make Australia her home.

I interviewed many Maltese for this book. There are too many to mention here, but they told me stories of the dank, earthy smell of the shelters, of the minestra handed out by the nuns at the Victory Kitchens, which sometimes had goat meat prickled with tough hair. They remembered the long, rough sea crossings with bland food, but also the parties and friendships, and they remember arriving in Australia, full of hope but also fear.

Post WW2 saw the biggest wave of migration the world had ever witnessed. People came with nothing, having left

everything behind. Today we are seeing another wave of migrants around the world, fleeing war and starvation, just like my dad and his family. There is the same amount of fear and suspicion towards them but what we have to remember is that Australia became a stronger, richer nation with the post-war migrants. We became more interesting in our food and mix of cultures. Every one of us who lives in Australia, is here because we or our ancestors travelled here. We are one of the most successful multicultural countries in the world and I think we can all be very proud of that.

Teresa: A New Australian, will be published in Australia in March and translated into Maltese in Malta and released in October, which makes me very proud. It is dedicated to my Nanna Teresa, who died before I was born, but who was a brave and courageous woman. ♦

Deborah Abela
www.deborahabela.com



Hu Hsieb Sahhtek

Professur Maurice Cauchi



'Kemmm qed ninsa daż-żmien! Tgħid għandi id-Demenzja?'

Kif nibdew nikbru u ngħaddu daww is-sittin jew sebgħin sena, hija haġa naturali li ma nibqgħux l-istess bħal meta konna għadna żgħar. Waħda mill-affarijiet li tinkwietana hi l-fatt li l-memorja tibda tonqos: nibdew ninsew ċerti kliem, u saħansitra kultant anke l-ismiet tat-tfal! U hawn tidhol il-biża' li jista' jkun li qed nbatu bid-demenzja.

Id-demenzja

L-ewwelnett ha naraw x'inhi d-demenzja. Din tigris meta l-moħħ ma jibqax jaħdem normali, u allura nibdew naraw sinjali, fosthom il-memorja tibda tonqos.

X'igib id-demenzja? Aparti minn ċerti sitwazzjoniet, per eżempju puplesija, jew ħsara gravi fir-ras, il-maġġoranża ta' demenzja ġejja minn kundizzjoni imsejha "Alzheimer's", fejn jingemgħa fil-moħħ ċertu materjal li ma jhallix lil-moħħ jaħdem normali. Però' għadna ma nafux għaliex jiġri dan, u bħalissa qed isir ħafna studju biex insibu mediċini li jistgħu inadddu l-moħħ minn dan il-materjal.

Li nafu fi sgru huwa li l-Alzheimer huwa komuni ħafna f'daww li leħqu it-tmenin sena.

Sintomi oħra

Issa, wiehed jistaqsi: kif nistgħu niddistingwu d-demenzja minn kundizzjonijiet oħra, bħal nuqqas ta' memorja, speċjalment f'daww għandhom ċerta eta? Naraw li daww li għandhom il-bidu ta' Alzheimer's għandhom sintomi oħra, per eżempju:

- meta tinsa x'qal xi hadd wara ftit tal-ħin, u terga tistaqsi l-istess mistoqsija għal bosta drabi;



Photo: <http://health.howstuffworks.com/>

- meta tibda issib diffikultà tifhem dak li taqra (per eżempju, riċetti tat-tisjir) li jibda isir aktar ta' sikwit (u mhux kultant biss);
- meta tibda issib diffikultà tagħmel xogħol mentali li soltu tagħmel (per eżempju, taħdem kontijiet sempliċi);
- meta tinsa il-ġurnata, jew il-ħin, jew anke fejn tkun, u kif ġejt mid-dar, tant li tista' tintilef u ma tkunx tista' terga' lura;
- xi nies jibdew isibu diffikultà jaqraw, jew anke jagħzlu kulur minn iehor;
- jibdew isibu diffikultà jikkellmu u xi drabi jibdlu kelma ma' oħra;
- jibdew jitolfu oġġetti għax ma jiftakrux fejn qegħduhom, forsi jibdew iwahħlu li xi hadd seraqhomlhom;
- Il-personalità tagħhom tibda timbidel: isiru aktar anzjużi u suspettusi, jibzgu mix-xejn u ibatu bid-depressjoni.

L-Alzheimer marda ereditarja?

Mistoqsija oħra li spiss tisma' hija din: *l-Alzheimer hija marda ereditarja?*

Nistgħu ngħidu li jekk għandek membri fil-familja li kellhom l-Alzheimer, hemm ftit iktar ċans li ikollok id-demenzja, però dan mhux ċans kbir.

Per eżempju, normalment hemm risku ta' 2 fil-mija (2%) li bniedem ta' 65 sena jiżvililpa l-Alzhemier: jekk għandek membri tal-familja li jbatu bl-Azheimer, dan ir-riskju jikber sa 2.6%). Daww ta' 70 sena normalment għandhom riskju ta' 5% (u ta' 6.5% jekk għandhom membri tal-familja bl-Alzheimer). Jiġifieri, aktar ma tikber fl-eta ir-riskju jibqa' jikber, imma l-eredita' mhix daqshekk importanti: l-eta' hija ħafna aktar importanti bħala kawża ta' l-Alzheimer.

Fl-aħħarnett, jekk jibqa d-dubju, wiehed għandu jagħmel viżta għand it-tabib halli jkun jista jserrah moħħu. ♦

Congratulations to our two new centenarians!**Mrs Antonia Soler**

In January 2016 a member of the Maltese community in Melbourne, Mrs Antonia Soler (née Anastasi), celebrated her 100th birthday on 3 January and joined the growing elite group of centenarians. Mrs Soler is the mother of Ben Soler, who is the long-time President of the Maltese Australian Association.

Antonia was born on 3 January 1916 in Vittoriosa (Birgu). At just under 3 years of age she lost her mother to the Spanish flu pandemic that killed over 50 million people in 1918. She had a younger brother John aged 4 months at the time.

Antonia's father re-married and had four children from his second wife, two boys and two girls. As they were growing up, Antonia, even at a young age, was always there to help looking after them and taking care of them.

Being the eldest among her cousins, Antonia's caring reputation spread around even to her extended family. Everyone loved and respected Antonia.

In 1938 Antonia married Frank Soler, whose family also hailed from Vittoriosa. Their first child, Benedict was born the following year. In 1940 they had a daughter, Rose, who died at 10 months and two years later their son, Joe, was born but he also died aged only 3 months. These Second World War days were terrible times for Antonia and her husband.

In 1944 their son, John, was born and three years later they had another son, Charles, who died when only 9 months old. Their last son, Dominic, was born in 1949.

Having decided to emigrate to Australia to give their family a better future, Frank left Malta for Melbourne in 1950 to establish himself and prepare for the arrival of Antonia and their three young sons, Ben, John and Dominic. A year later the Soler family was re-united in Melbourne.

Initially the Solers lodged in rental housing in West Melbourne and Richmond. In 1956 they purchased a house in North Coburg, where Antonia still resides to this day, 60 years later, being cared for by her family, particularly her youngest son Dominic, who has been her carer for many years.

In 1975 her husband Frank passed away. Antonia was his strongest supporter in his selfless work for the Maltese community in Melbourne. He was a prime mover in the formation of social groups and community clubs as well as scout troops. Antonia was always there to assist him in these initiatives.

Antonia's strength of character is legendary just as her strong faith in God is unquestionable. From being a loving and caring mother, Antonia also gained the respected and affectionate titles of grandmother, great grandmother, and more recently great great grandmother! She is dearly loved by all generations of her descendants.

We wish Antonia all the best and many more years to come!
Ad multos annos!💧

Mrs Carmen Micallef

Another member of the Maltese community in Melbourne who recently celebrated her 100th birthday, joining the elite group of centenarians is Mrs Carmen Micallef (née Borg), pictured above right with MCCV Welfare Director Mrs Rosemary Attard on the left). Carmen was born on 15 February 1916 in Sliema, Malta.

She also had a younger brother, the late Manwel Nicholas Borg, who for many years was a prominent member of the Maltese Literature Group in Melbourne.

Carmen married Joe Micallef in Malta and had four children before Joe migrated to Victoria, Australia and she joined him with the children in January 1951. They lived with her mother and brother in Pascoe Vale for some time.

Joe and Carmen had another two children in Australia, completing their family of four boys and two girls. Carmen and Joe later moved to Keilor East. In 1986 her husband Joe passed away.

Carmen still calls Keilor East home as she lives with her younger daughter Carol, who looks after her mother with great care and devotion.

Carmen has 14 grandchildren and 18 great grandchildren (at the last count). She also has a dog who is like a child to her and when he is not in her lap he is running around the room where she is.

Carmen enjoys good health, likes to watch TV and chat with family and friends who visit her from time to time to reminisce on old times.💧



Above: Mrs Antonia Soler with her extended family.

Promising young Maltese singer visits Melbourne

By Paul Vella

Recently, Maltese young singer Veronica Rotin, 11, was on a visit to Melbourne and NSW along with her mum, Fiona, and sister, Kelly.

Veronica Rotin was born on 4 March 2004 in Tarxien, Malta. When she was 2 years old her family moved to Melbourne, Australia. She started singing along with her older sister, Kelly, when she was 3 years old and quickly started singing to everything she heard on the radio. At 8 years of age, after the family had returned to Malta, Veronica started taking singing lessons.

Veronica has had her share of national and international achievements through music. She started taking vocal lesson at the tender age of eight from Gillian Attard at La Voix Academy, and since then has participated in numerous music events and talent competitions.

While in Melbourne, Veronica, was interviewed on Mario Sammut's Maltese program "Ejjeu Oqghodu", on Saturday, January 16. Mario invited me to be on the program as well as I had previous contact with Veronica.

During the interview, Veronica told us that her first endeavour was her participation in the prestigious Italian TV show on Canale 5, "Io Canto" with Gerry Scotti. There she was selected to be on the show after a series of audition and managed to make it to the finals. She performed on the television show on seven different occasions, getting great feedback from the judges.

Veronica also managed to win the overall prizes on several local singing competition, one of which awarded her with the participation in an international singing competition in Lake Pearl, Macedonia in July 2014. Veronica won her category as well as the overall prize, placing above other contestants including those much older than her. Naturally, this exposure presents Veronica with an opportunity to take part in the "XIII International Children Music Contest" (VITEBSK 2015) which was part of the "XXIV International Festival of Arts" (Slavianski Bazaar in Vitebsk) which took place in July 2015, in Belarus.



Above: Veronica Rotin with 3ZZZ broadcasters Paul Vella and Mario Sammut.

In September 2014, Veronica won the junior section of the popular Italian singing contest "Il Cantagiro" in Rome. Not very long after, she was chosen to be one of the interval acts in the Junior Eurovision 2014 held in Malta.

Veronica told us that in the same year, she was invited to sing in the Romanian TV Talent Show "Next Star". She performed two of her favourite numbers, namely "Mamma Knows Best" and "And I am telling you". These are two powerful songs made famous by Jessie J, and Jennifer Hudson, respectively.

In July 2015 Veronica participated in the popular Italian show "Il Tra Sogno e realta" on "La Cinque" Channel, which was transmitted in Malta from November 8, 2015.

Both broadcasters Mario and Paul were impressed by her beautiful spoken Maltese and the way she handled the interview in a very relaxed manner.

During the interview Mario mentioned to her the Maltese National Anthem and he asked her to sing part of it, which she did very beautifully.

Veronica enjoyed her visit to 3ZZZ and was presented with a Boomerang and a miniature panettone.

We wish Veronica more success in her singing career. She has a very beautiful voice. 💧

Former Maltese career diplomat sets up migration agency in Melbourne



After completing several assignments and tours of duty in the Maltese diplomatic missions in Belgium, Russia, Egypt, and Australia, **Kristian Bonnici** (pictured left) has established his own migration agency DEC (Diplomatic Envoy Consultancy) Migration (www.decmigration.com), assisting people who wish to immigrate to Australia.

Kris was born in Malta and was raised in Cospicua and Zabbar. He now lives in the Melbourne suburb of St Kilda. Before founding 'DEC Migration', he was a career diplomat in the Protocol and Consular Services Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Malta, specialising in visas and consular affairs.

Serving as Deputy Head of Mission at the Maltese Embassy in Cairo and High Commission in Canberra, his diplomatic duties included visas and consular services, protocol and etiquette, public relations, negotiation, lobbying, internal communication, public speaking, conflict resolution, event management, investment promotion, and relationship management. Kris speaks English, Italian and Maltese fluently, and has a fair knowledge of French, Arabic and Russian. ♦

Community Events Calendar

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

February

Sat 27 February @ 10 am to 6 pm	Latrobe Valley Maltese Festival	Kernot Hall, Morwell
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March

Wed 2 March @ 7.00 pm	MCCV Council Meeting	Maltese Community Centre, Parkville
Sat 12 March @ 6.30 pm	BYO Family Get Together – St Helena Maltese Aust. SC	St Martin de Porres Avondale Heights
Sun 13 March @ 6.00 pm	Newport Association Carnival Dance	TBA
Thu 17 March @ 10.00 am	Newport Seniors BBQ	Brimbank
Thu 17 March @ 6.00 pm	Pizza Night—Maltese Assoc Northern Suburbs	TBA
Fri 18 March @ 6.00 pm	Mass of Our Lady of Sorrows	St Paul's Chapel Parkville
Sat 19 (& Sun 20) March @ 8.00 am	Weekend Trip—Maltese Assoc Northern Suburbs	-
Sun 20 March	Picnic Day Outing—St Gaetan's Society	-
Thu 24 March @ 7.30 pm	Mass of the Last Supper	St Paul's Chapel Parkville
Fri 25 March @ 3.00 pm	Good Friday religious function	St Paul's Chapel Parkville
Sat 26 March @ 7.00 pm	Easter Vigil	St Paul's Chapel Parkville

April

Wed 6 April @ 7.00 pm	MCCV Council Meeting	Maltese Community Centre, Parkville
Sat 16 (& Sun 17) April @ 7.30 am	Newport Association Weekend Trip	-
Sun 17 April	Bus Trip to NSW—St Gaetan's Society	-
Thu 21 April @ 6.00 pm	Pizza Night—Maltese Assoc Northern Suburbs	TBA
Sat 30 April @ 6.00 pm	Mother's Day / Feast of the Cross Function – St Helena Maltese Aust.	Melrose Reception Centre Tullamarine



New Maltese DownUnder program on Melbourne's C31 TV channel on Sundays

Maltese DownUnder will start broadcasting a 30-minute program on C31 (Melbourne) TV channel, **Sunday, 28 February at 4.00 pm** on a weekly basis. This was announced in a press release issued by the Maltese DownUnder TV production team.

Maltese DownUnder is a new Melbourne-based community show catering for the Maltese community, showcasing Maltese cultural heritage, featuring the arts, music, food, travel, cultural events, stories of special interest and sport. Its aim is to inform and entertain our audience through stories that inspire and strengthen the pride of all Maltese Australians.

According to the press release, programs will be in both Maltese and English. It is a fact that the younger generations of Maltese in Australia don't relate to Maltese as a spoken language and hardly follow any Maltese media in Australia. So it was felt the only way to really be inclusive of all Maltese Australians was to broadcast in both languages; some segments will be in Maltese, some in English, some in both languages.

On Demand viewing

It was further announced that all program segments featured on C31 will be available on online platforms to reach a wider audience, as the demand for such a program has been very high. The team has had interest expressed from other States/Territories around Australia as well as New Zealand, Canada, the US, UK and Malta. Segments will be available on our Vimeo channel, Maltese DownUnder TV <https://vimeo.com/user48830308> and their FaceBook page www.facebook.com/MalteseDownUnder

The Team

MARLENE SCICLUNA—Director/Executive Producer/Presenter/Assistant Editor—with over 28 years of experience in broadcast media. She started in 1988 as a radio presenter in Malta and for the past 15 years until August 2015, Marlene was a Senior Producer/Broadcast Journalist with Maltese Language Programs on SBS Radio.

MARK AVELLINO—Executive Producer/Presenter/Filming—a multi award winning freelance photojournalist with 20 years of experience in photography. Represented by prestigious photo libraries Getty Images, Lonely Planet and Imagebrief his work has graced the pages of *The Age*, *The New York Times*, *Times of Malta* as well as *The Guardian*.

FULYA KANTARMACI—Editor—experience editor with Visual Production Group, a video production company with 12 years experience in the video production field. The director of Visual Production Group, Daniel Calleja, has gently offered the facilities for editing.

Maltese TV Group

The Maltese TV group, formed recently for this purpose, will evaluate the program on a regular basis. The group consists of a number of Australian professionals, of Maltese descent. ♦