THE MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER

Journal for Maltese Living Abroad

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JACQUELINE ABELA DE GIOVANNI

WOW!

Next Edition 600th Time to Celebrate

MULTICULTURAL MALTA

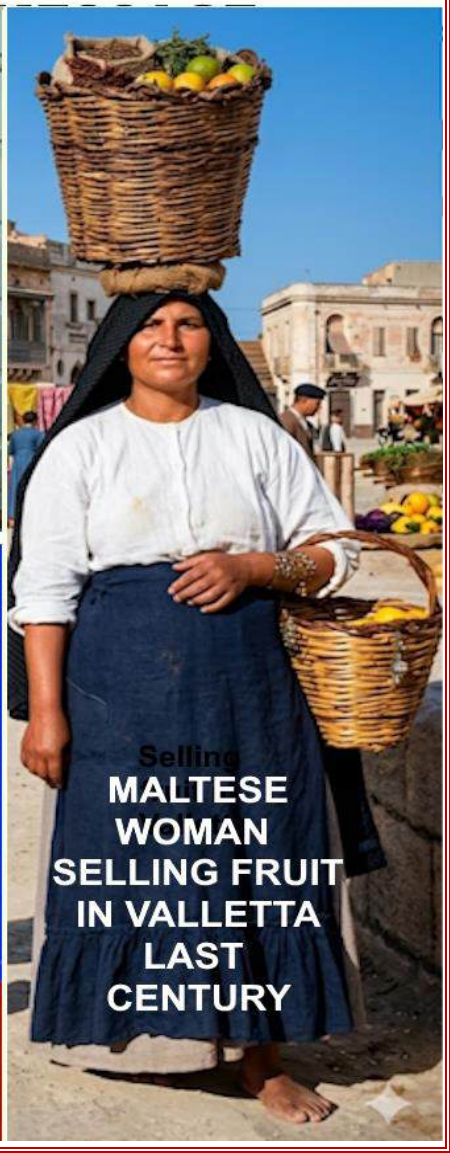
Culture
Achievements
Devotion
Dedication
Challenges
Commitment

MALTESE QUEEN OF VICTORIES BAND S.A. Inc.

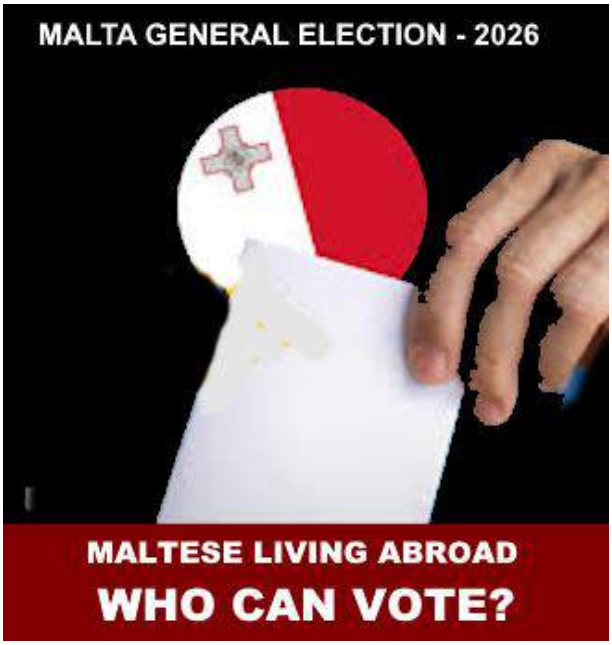
1981 2026

MALTESE QUEEN OF VICTORIES BAND OF S.A. INC

45th Anniversary



Selling MALTESE WOMAN SELLING FRUIT IN VALLETTA LAST CENTURY



According to the law, Maltese citizens residing abroad are only permitted to vote in Malta's elections, provided they have spent a minimum of six months within the last 18 months in Malta.

However, in practice, this requirement is often overlooked, as the government continues to offer subsidized flights for Maltese citizens living overseas, irrespective of the duration of their stay abroad.

Similar to EU nationals residing in Malta, Maltese citizens living in other EU nations also have the option to vote in the European Parliament elections of that country. Nevertheless, they must first relinquish their right to vote in Malta's elections. We advocate for Maltese citizens living abroad to be granted the opportunity to vote in elections through established embassies. The issue of whether Maltese citizens living abroad should be compelled to return to Malta in order to exercise their voting rights should be addressed and acted upon following this month's general election. Currently, all eligible Maltese citizens residing abroad must return to the Maltese islands if they wish to participate in the upcoming general election on 30 May. In contrast, some foreign nationals living in Malta can exercise their democratic right to vote by simply visiting their respective embassy in the country, thus avoiding the considerable inconvenience of arranging flights and logistics. If they have the right to vote, the process should be simplified, allowing them to cast their votes electronically or at an embassy or high commission. This practice is already implemented by various countries worldwide.

NEXT EDITION – THE SPECIAL 600TH ISSUE

MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER
KEEPING THE MALTESE LIVING ABROAD ON THE MAP

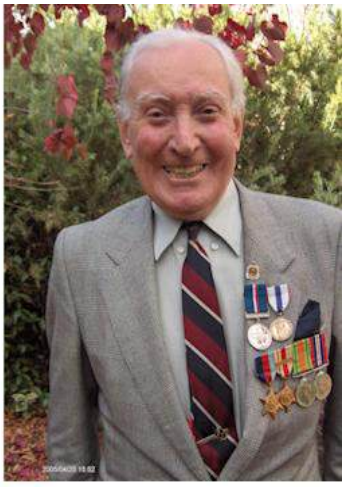
I invite you to provide your feedback on the ONLY MALTESE JOURNAL FOR MALTESE LIVING ABROAD by responding to the following questions.

1. **What significance does the Journal hold for you?**
2. **Which topics are you interested in reading about?**
3. **Do you believe the journal fosters a connection between Maltese citizens living abroad and Malta and Gozo.?**
4. **Do you share the journal with your family and friends?**
5. **What are your hopes for the future of the Journal?**

Thank you for your loyalty, support and cooperation – Frank Scicluna - Editor

Vera Lynn's Postcard

Loreto Meilak in Army Uniform

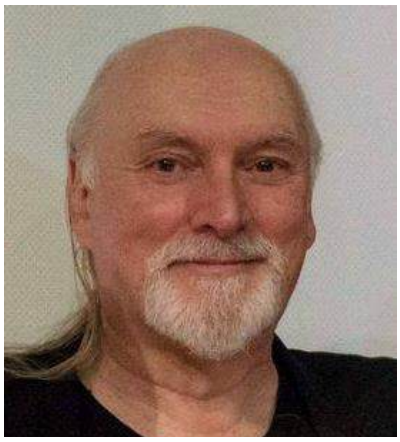

Loreto York (Meilak)

MY DAD, LORETO, SANG WITH VERA LYNN IN WW2

by Loreto's son Dr. Barry York

This autographed photograph was sent to him by Vera Lynn in 2009, during the final stage of his life. I had written to her hoping that a personal message from someone connected to such an important memory would lift his spirits and bring him some comfort.

After the Second World War, my father was among a group of RAF airmen and soldiers in London who provided the backing voices for Vera Lynn's recording of "Auf Wiederseh'n, Sweetheart," the song that became an international hit.


Dr. Barry York

They were not a formal singing group at all, just servicemen who volunteered when Decca Records, at Broadhurst Gardens in London, wanted the sound of ordinary men singing together - something warm, rough-edged and authentic, like a crowd gathered around a piano in a pub after the war.

Dad always remembered the recording session with amusement. He said the men sang so well on the first take that the musical director stopped them and told them to do it again, this time sounding less polished and more like ordinary servicemen having a singalong over a few drinks. The whole point was to capture the spirit of camaraderie and relief that people felt at the end of the war.

Whenever I hear that song now, I think not only of the courage and endurance of the British people and their allies in the struggle against fascism, but also of my father and his small part in that moment of history. For their contribution, the men were rewarded with tea, biscuits and a few shillings - modest payment for something that would live on for generations.

Sadly, the signed photograph never reached him. My father died before it arrived.

It's incredible to think that my father's voice is somewhere there, in the backing group, on the record.

Loreto was born as Loreto Meilak in Sliema in 1918. He volunteered for active service in Malta in 1940 and served overseas, ending up in London after the War. Then he changed his surname to York.

MY JOURNEY SO FAR - JACQUELINE ABELA DE GIOVANNI

DipEd, MA(Education), PGDip(Play Therapy), MScABA, PGCert(Leadership & Strategy)
Board Certified Behaviour Analyst (BCBA), Certified Behaviour Analyst (CBA)

I was born and raised in Malta, growing up in Birkirkara alongside my two younger brothers in a close-knit family environment. From a young age, my life was strongly influenced by discipline, community, and determination, values that have continued to shape both my personal life and career.

During my childhood and teenage years, I immersed myself in both sport and the performing arts. I trained in ballet, participated in athletics, and eventually found my greatest passion in badminton. What began as a hobby quickly developed into a highly competitive journey. I represented Malta locally and internationally, winning national titles across multiple age categories and later becoming Malta's National Champion for four consecutive years. Being part of the Maltese National Team taught me perseverance, resilience, and the importance of teamwork, lessons that stayed with me far beyond the badminton court.

Even after moving overseas, sport has remained an important part of my life. In 2018, I represented Malta at the World Company Sports Games in France, where our team earned a silver medal in the 40+ category. Since settling in Australia, I have continued competing in Masters badminton competitions, winning medals at national level events. More recently, I have also discovered a love for pickleball, which has brought a new sense of fun and connection into my life. I am currently training to compete in Pickleball Singles and Mixed Doubles at the South Australian State Championships, embracing the challenge of continuing to grow within a new sport.

Alongside sport, I was also deeply involved in music and dance. I performed with the Alicia Joy Dance Group in various television programmes and events throughout Malta. These experiences gave me a strong appreciation for creativity, culture, and belonging, qualities that still hold an important place in my life today.

Professionally, my path led me into the disability and education sectors, where I have now worked for almost three decades. My studies took me across several countries and academic disciplines, including education, play therapy, behavioural science, and leadership. Over the years, I have had the privilege of supporting children with autism and developmental disabilities, as well as their families, in Malta, Ireland, the Netherlands, and Australia.

One of the milestones I remain most proud of was establishing the first Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) centre in Malta. At the time, access to evidence-based autism intervention services on the island was very limited. Building a multidisciplinary service that supported children and families was both professionally rewarding and personally meaningful.

My life, however, has been shaped not only by career achievements, but also by family, faith, and personal experiences. I met my husband Carlo in 2002 and we married in 2007. Together we are raising three

beautiful children who continue to be my greatest source of purpose and strength. We also recently welcomed two beautiful cavoodles into our family, who have quickly filled our home with even more energy and joy.

Life has also brought significant challenges. We experienced the heartbreaking loss of our first-born daughter shortly after the birth of our second daughter, an experience that profoundly changed my perspective on life, faith, and resilience. While grief leaves a permanent mark, it also deepened my compassion and strengthened my commitment to supporting others through difficult times.

In 2019, our family relocated to South Australia, where we have built a new chapter of our lives. I currently serve as Head of Regional Services across multiple Australian states within an award-winning disability organisation. Australia has truly become home for us, and becoming Australian citizens in 2024 was a proud milestone for our family.

Despite living far from Malta, I have always remained strongly connected to my Maltese roots. Towards the end of 2025, I joined the Maltese Queen of Victories Band in Australia and have greatly enjoyed becoming more involved within the Maltese community abroad. I love participating in the various Maltese events and celebrations held throughout the year, and value the strong sense of connection, culture, and tradition that continues to bring the community together, no matter where life leads us.

As I reflect on my journey so far, I remain deeply grateful for the experiences, challenges, and people who have shaped it. Every chapter, whether joyful or difficult, has contributed to the person I am today.

You find Maltese people everywhere in the world

Maltese in Broken Hill NSW

Charlie said that when they left Malta, they had so much bad weather between Malta and France, they almost drowned three times...

Broken Hill is an isolated mining city in the far west of outback New South Wales, Australia. The "BH" is the world's largest mining company, BHP Billiton, refers to "Broken Hill" and its early operations in the city. Broken Hill is located near the border with South Australia on the crossing of the Barrier Highway and the Silver City Highway , in the Barrier Range. It is 315 m (1,033 ft) above sea level, with a hot desert climate. The closest major city is Adelaide, the capital of South Australia, which is more than 500 km to the southwest. Broken Hill has been referred to as "The Silver City", the "Oasis of the West", and the "Capital of the Outback" Although over 1,100 km (684 mi) west of Sydney and surrounded by semi-desert, the town has prominent park and garden displays and offers a number of From Afghan cameleers to Filipino book-keepers and Maltese miners, this is the story of Broken Hill's non-English speaking migrants; people who arrived in a harsh and alien outback mining town and chose to call it home

. It was really difficult in Malta. I had an uncle who had migrated to Broken Hill fifty years previously. He was really happy, so when I was seventeen, I decided to leave Malta and join him in Broken Hill. *Rosina (Rose) Micallef*

Dad had a house ready for us in Crystal Street Broken Hill. There were two or three houses with one big yard. No fences between us and we were all Maltese. *Emily Tonna*

We chose Broken Hill because there was work available on the mines; we brought our families out to join us and helped them become part of the Broken Hill community.
We had the Maltese Club. It was next door to where the Duke of Cornwall is now. The Club was for Maltese only. We used to gamble at baccarat. *Paul Sultana*
We travelled by ship or airplane to reach this country. Often the trip was long and uncomfortable. We were apprehensive about the new life that awaited us.

I realised I didn't want to leave here. My home may not be as beautiful as other homes but to me it is beautiful. *Dina Spagnol*
Ten of us left school together; a few decided to go to Australia and we were like sheep; we followed one another. *Paul Sultana*
We left on the "Orsova" on the 22nd of May, 1961. The trip out wasn't very easy or pleasant. The first few days were really sad, because we left our family. It was an English ship so we couldn't talk to anybody because we didn't know the language. *Marija Zammit*
Although over 1,100 km (684 mi) west of Sydney and surrounded by semi-desert, the town has prominent park and garden displays and offers a number of From Afghan cameleers to Filipino book-keepers and Maltese miners, this is the story of Broken Hill's non-English speaking migrants; people who arrived in a harsh and alien outback mining town and chose to call it home
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Dad had a house ready for us in Crystal Street Broken Hill. There were two or three
I can remember my grandmother dressed in black, waving her hanky at us. Many arrived and knew no-one. We were apprehensive, lonely and confused in a land about which we knew so little. Some were greeted by family and friends. We shared tears, laughter and a wonderful sense of relief that we had finally arrived. We experienced language difficulties, isolation and loneliness. We shared extreme weather conditions with our neighbours. Dust storms water restrictions were part of life

Life was not easy for the early Maltese migrants in Australia

BE PART OF THE HISTORY OF MALTESE EMIGRATION

SEND YOUR STORY FOR PUBLICATION IN THIS ONLY MALTESE JOURNAL

foreign affairs - MALTA
Directorate General, Support Services
fwww.foreign.gov.mt/public-bodies/directorate-general-support-services/

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The Directorate General Support Services in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Tourism (MFT) is accountable to the Permanent Secretary. The role of this Directorate General is to act as focal point for the Permanent Secretary on all areas falling under its remit and to ensure the implementation of the Ministry's programmes, projects and initiatives in a timely, efficient and effective manner Maltese Living Abroad Unit.

This Unit is specifically dedicated to safeguarding the interests of Maltese citizens living abroad. The Directorate also takes care of the gathering of information related to the Maltese diaspora; the regular monitoring of local legislations and EU regulations potentially affecting Maltese living abroad; the provision of consultation and advice to Government on matters affecting the Maltese diaspora; keeping close contact with and assisting the Secretary of the Council of Maltese Living Abroad as per Act XX of 2011 (CAP 515) with the continuation and implementation of decisions made from time to time and with the organization of the annual CMLA Meeting in Malta, as well as other meetings; assisting in the preparation for the Convention for the Maltese Living Abroad; maintaining a register of NGOs and Associations of Maltese living abroad; maintaining a register of successful Maltese citizens living abroad; and, promoting and encouraging the voluntary registration of Maltese citizens living abroad, known as Notification D.

Therefore, any member of the Maltese Diaspora or any group or association including schools, museum, band clubs etc should contact the Directorate TO SEEK assistance and support in their effort to keep alive the history, culture and heritage of the Maltese islands for future generations

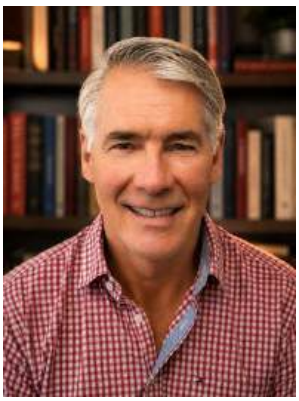
The Maltese government **assists** individuals and associations abroad through the Council for Maltese Living Abroad, regional committees, and diplomatic missions. This support includes consular aid, cultural promotion, and digital initiatives, such as providing Maltese citizens abroad with access to national AI literacy programs and premium AI software.

Support for the diaspora is structured and administered through several key channels:

- **Official Representation & Councils:** The Council for Maltese Living Abroad works to protect and promote the interests of the diaspora, while regional committees act as a direct liaison between local associations (like Maltese welfare and cultural groups) and the Maltese government.

ARE WE, THE MALTESE LIVING ABROAD, BEING LOOKED AFTER, ACKNOWLEGED, APPRECIATED AND REWARDED ENOUGH???

IS MALTA PART OF MIDDLE-EARTH?



By Our Correspondent Sean Richardson

Malta sits at the heart of the Mediterranean, a sun-soaked island known for its honey-coloured stone, ancient harbours, layered history and 300 days of sunshine each year. It is far removed from the mountains and mist-covered worlds imagined by J.R.R Tolkien. But a connection with Tolkien caught me by surprise.

With Tolkien-themed talks and events hosted by Malta's local Tolkien society it prompted me to take a closer look at what connection could Malta possibly have with Tolkien and the legacy of his books, *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit*?

Tolkien himself never visited the island, although he did exchange letters with a Maltese student, Charles Calleja. A small detail, but with Tolkien, a small thread can lead to somewhere interesting.

In Tolkien's invented language systems, the word "malta" is associated with gold. Whether accidental or intentional, it creates a fascinating overlap with Malta's own identity. Historically, the island has long been linked to honey, a commodity so valued that Malta was sometimes described as a land of *liquid gold*.

It points to an intriguing historical connection and is a curious parallel with Malta's role in film to represent another setting, in time and place. The island has appeared in productions ranging from Game of Thrones to Gladiator, and it rarely plays itself. Instead, Malta becomes an ancient kingdom, a biblical setting, or a forgotten port city. Wander through the narrow streets of Mdina and it is easy to imagine stepping into another era. Explore the fortified walls of Valletta and history unfolds layer by layer. Malta often feels like a place standing between realities.

It is another example that once you scratch the surface of Malta, a deeper story is uncovered which unexpectedly leads to surprises in real and imaginary worlds.

Perhaps that is why Malta resonates so strongly with storytellers and travellers alike, it is a small island with stories far bigger than itself. It is not Middle-earth, but its power lies in becoming somewhere else

CHINESE EMBASSY CLOSE TO AUSTRALIA HALL

The Chinese Embassy in Malta is located on Suffolk Road in Pembroke, right behind St. Catherine's School and directly adjacent to the historic Australia Hall.The new sprawling 19,000-square-meter embassy compound is still under development in this Pembroke location. The current, active diplomatic and consular operations for the Chinese Embassy operate out of St. Julian's.

Broken Hill City Council honours Gauci sisters with bus shelter

Josh Mercer and Andrew Schmidt

Inspecting the shelter are (back, from left) Tim Gauci and Tom Kennedy with (front, from left) Tina-Marie Biasio, Roslyn Gauci and Barbara Gauci. (ABC Broken Hill: Josh Mercer)

The Gauci sisters, Roslyn and Barbara, are at Jubilee Oval to cheer every time their beloved West Robins play.

And everyone knows them.

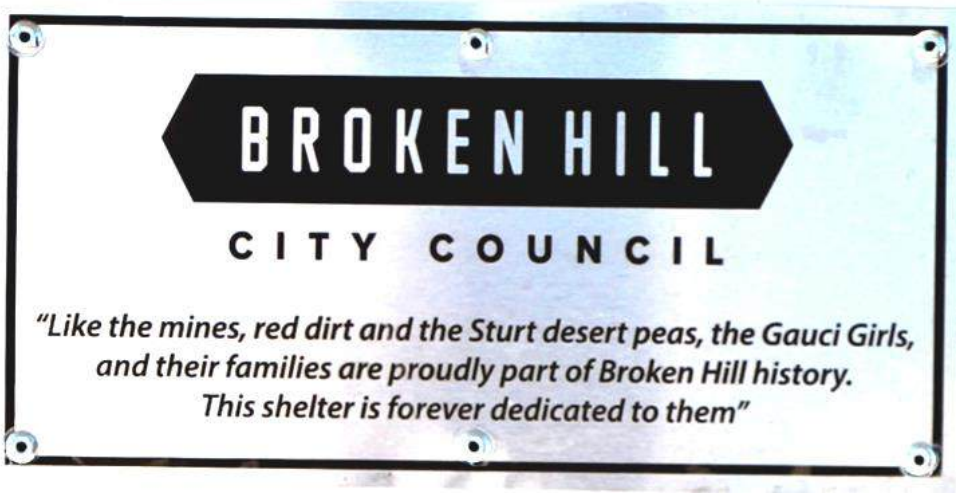
That's why their Broken Hill community has supported the creation of a bus shelter in their name on Gypsum Street. It comes after 50 years of the sisters braving the elements as they waited for their bus. Broken Hill City Council Mayor Tom Kennedy joined the Gauci's family and friends to officially open the new bus stop.

"It's been pushed for quite a while, but Wayne Pavlich from the bus company said how good and great it would be to get that," Cr Kennedy said. "They come out and wait for the bus in all kinds of weather."

The project took 18 months due to delays with supplies.

Cr Kennedy said he was happy to finally get it finished for the sisters to have somewhere to sit.

The sisters were grateful for the community support and were proud the shelter was dedicated to them.



"My sister Roslyn, myself, and our family, especially Vince, would like to thank Wayne Pavlich, Tom Kennedy, and the Broken Hill City Council for getting this bus shelter," Barbara said.

"If it wasn't for them, we would never have got it, and we really appreciate it."

A plaque at the shelter acknowledges the family's legacy.*(ABC Broken Hill: Josh Mercer)*

The unveiling of the bus stop coincided with the one-year anniversary of the death of Patricia Gauci. "We know our sister Pat will be up there looking down on us and saying well done girls, you got it at last," Barbara said.

Cr Kennedy said he was grateful the council could recognise the sisters.

"I'm just so thankful that we can honour people that contribute to the community, I think there should be a lot more of this," he said. "To honour them while they're still alive, instead of doing it after they've passed away because, you know you can see how proud they are."

A Report by Joseph Chetcuti – MQVB PRO

The Maltese Queen of Victories Band celebrated 45 years of service on 2nd May 2026 at the British Working Men's Club at Wingfield, with approximately 175 attendees, who enjoyed an evening filled with savoured good food, beverages, dancing and wonderful company, creating lasting memories and new acquaintance. Among the attendees it was good to see so many young members of the Maltese community and ex musicians.

The Live entertainment was provided by DJ Jesmond who kept the audience engaged. The Maltese Queen of Victories Band presented a musical tribute, showcasing it's rich history. The association president Lily Zerene delivered a welcome speech extending a warm welcome to all our guests. A comprehensive display of memorabilia, comprising photographs, write-ups, trophies and banners, was exhibited around the hall.

During the evening the hosts, Marthese Kehoe secretary and Joe Chetcuti PRO delivered a concise presentation unveiling new information of under closed facts, that they have not been disclosed before.

These are some of facts disclosed

This band has had approximately 175 members from diverse cultures and backgrounds include Maltese, Australians, English, Italians, Chinese and Indians individual who throughout our journey played a musical instrument for this band and together shares a common bond through music.

Furthermore the band has proudly participated in 47 distinct religious feasts across various communities, including notable repeat performances, including 44 appearances at Our Lady Queen of Victories at Lockleys, 43 at Mnarja and St Paul feasts also at Lockleys, 21 shows at St. Catherine in Kilburn and St. Ilario feasts in Seaton and performances at St Eufemia and Christ the King at Hindmarsh and Hectorcville.

We also participated with pride in 82 community events, including; Carnivals, Jubilees, Fates, State Government Events. Notably performances included the State visit of Pope John Paul 11 to Adelaide. As well Archbishops and bishops from Malta and the Adelaide Diocesan

State visits of Maltese Presidents.

State visits of Maltese Prime Ministers and members of the Maltese parliament and also on Anzac Day Parade in the City. The band has also travelled interstate to Victoria on 14 occasions including; St. Paul's feast in Sunshine on 9 occasions
Queen of Victories Feast in North Melbourne twice. Good Friday celebrations in St. Albans twice
Feast of St. Cajetan in Essendon twice. These visits have allowed the MQVB to share its music with new audiences and gel as a family, as we spent many days together.
They have also given younger generations the opportunity to experience Maltese culture and traditions—particularly the Good Friday procession in St Albans—
And led to lasting friendships with our sister bands, The Maltese Own Band and the St. Albans Melita Band now known as the MMC Concert Band of Victoria.
Immediately after the conclusion of the band concert an anniversary cake was presented and subsequently cut and served among all the guests.
The function was a resounding success, thanks to the hard-working committee and numerous volunteers, as evident with many positive comments and compliments received in person and on our Facebook pages.
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A BLAST FROM THE PAST 1986

A special occasion for the Maltese community of South Australia was the visit by the then President of Malta, Agatha Barbara in 1986.
The Adelaide Maltese community gave her a welcoming reception at the Maltese Cultural Centre, Beverley on the 11th February 1986, where the Maltese Queen of Victories band performed in a packed Hall for the President and other distinguished guests. It was quite an auspicious occasion. Here is a photo of one of our Band's player, John Chetcuti being congratulated by Ms Agatha Barbara on stage for his achievement of having written and composed an excellent Maltese March aptly named, "To My Band". Together with the Maltese High Commissioner, Mr Bonello, Ms Barbara offered our young talented musician a hearty "Prosit!" for his dedicated achievement.
Photo above - From left to right are; *Joe Vella (President of the Maltese Guild) Agatha Barbara (President of Malta) Mr Nicholas Bonello (Malta High Commission in Australia) John Chetcuti (MQVB Bandplayer) Joe Monsigneur (MQVB President) Catherine Caruana (MQVB) Secretary*

MALTESE MIGRATION TO CANADA

Members of the Maltese-Canadian Society of Toronto members dressed for Toronto's centennial celebration in 1934, the society won first prize in the float competition.

In the 19th century, most Maltese emigration was to North Africa and the Middle East, with large diaspora communities in Algeria, Tunisia, and Egypt. Historically and geographically, this doesn't come as a huge surprise. Very few Maltese emigrated to Turtle Island (which many now refer to as North America) at this time, but there are a few notable examples of it happening. Canada was then known to the Maltese as the large country on top of the USA—it was big and cold, but also rich, stable, and part of the British Empire, which did make it very appealing. Louis Shickluna was one of the earliest migrants to Canada from Malta, and one of the most significant shipbuilders on the Great Lakes. His early legacy paved the path for Maltese achievements in Canada. With the British Empire beginning to neglect Malta as a colony in the 20th century, they slowly began encouraging emigration. During the largest wave after the Second World War to the 1980s, over 100,000 Maltese migrated to Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States—that was over a third of total the Maltese population at the time.

Many of the migrants came to Canada as a place to find new work after being laid-off, fear of being laid-off, or being unable to find employment. Many others simply followed their family members.

There is a street in Toronto where you can still walk into a bakery and order pastizzi. Where the church on the corner was built by Maltese hands, paid for with Maltese money, and has been hearing confession in Maltese since 1930. Where a small park is named after the island. Where the street signs, in two languages, announce that you have arrived somewhere specific: Little Malta.

There are today over 40,000 Canadians of Maltese ancestry. The community has been in Toronto since the early 20th century. It sent money home to Malta during the Blitz. It built a church before the post-war wave even arrived. And when the ships did come, the community was already there, waiting.

If you have a Maltese heritage and lives in Canadayou are part of this story, if your grandparents or great-grandparents came through the Junction, attended St. Paul's, worked in the Toronto factories or the Windsor border, or settled in London or Hamilton, tell us about them. These are the stories that deserve to be told, shared and archived for future generations.

OPERA NOVA PROJECT STAGES EVENING OF PUCCINI AND LAUNCHES NOVA

Opera Nova Project marks the close of its second year with Puccini Triptych and the launch of NOVA, a new initiative to demystify the world of opera

Three of Puccini's best-loved operas will soon take the stage in a single evening at Teatru Salesjan, as Opera Nova Project marks the close of its second year and launches NOVA, an initiative that introduces opera to a new generation of audiences in Malta.

Performing on 29 May, 2026 Puccini Triptych features the emerging talent of Opera Nova Project. Extended highlights from three of Puccini's most beloved masterpieces – Suor Angelica, La Rondine and La Bohème – will be presented, fully staged.

Each opera is helmed by a different director. Suor Angelica, Puccini's one-act work on redemption and faith, is directed by Karl Cassar. Denise Mulholland directs La Rondine, one of his lesser-known works, with themes of exploitation, reputation and survival at its core. Puccini's much-loved tale of love, youth and resilience, La Bohème, is directed by Chris Gatt. Gillian Zammit provides musical direction across all three productions, while three pianists will also support the cast throughout the evening.

The performance also closes Opera Nova Project's second academic year and showcases the singers who have come through the programme. Over the past two years, Opera Nova Project students have studied with international and local tutors and performed across oratorio, lieder and operatic repertoire from Verdi to Puccini.

"This second year has seen both our singers and the project go from strength to strength," says Gillian Zammit, Artistic Director of Opera Nova Project. "Puccini Triptych is a chance for audiences to see what these young artists are capable of, and for our directors to bring three very different sides of Puccini to one stage in one evening."

This month also marks the launch of NOVA, Opera Nova Project's new initiative in collaboration with the Archbishop's Delegate for Culture and Teatru Salesjan. It aims to break down the barriers of traditional opera for audiences who have never attended a live opera, or who have always wanted to know more about the form. NOVA's programme will include open masterclasses, lecture recitals and meet-the-artists events, all set in a relaxed, social environment.

"With NOVA, we want to make opera feel approachable," Zammit adds. "It's about giving people a way in, whether that's their first night at the opera or simply time spent with the artists and the music."

Tickets for Puccini Triptych are available at www.showshappening.com/opera-nova-project/puccini-triptych. For more information about Opera Nova Project and NOVA, visit www.operanovaproject.com or email info@operanovaproject.com. Opera Nova Project is supported by Archbishop's Delegate for Culture, Teatru Salesjan and the BOV Joseph Calleja Foundation. MALTATODAY.COM.MT

Spagetti biz-zalza tal-Qarnit (Spaghetti with Octopus Sauce)

Spagetti biz-zalza tal-Qarnit (Spaghetti with Octopus Sauce) is a traditional Maltese recipe for a classic dish of spaghetti paste served with octopus and a tomato-based sauce with peas, onions, olives, red wine and herbs. The full recipe is presented here and I hope you enjoy this classic Maltese version of: Spaghetti with Octopus Sauce (Spagetti biz-zalza tal-Qarnit).

Ingredients: 1kg prepared octopus, sliced into even-sized pieces 225g onions, sliced 170g peas 225g tomatoes, blanched, peeled and chopped 115g black olives, pitted and sliced 250ml red wine 675g spaghetti 90g tomato purée 4 strips of lemon zest, finely shredded 1 tbsp mint, shredded 1 tsp dried oregano, crumbled 2 tsp thyme, chopped salt and freshly-ground black pepper, to taste olive oil

Method: Add about 60ml oil and 60ml water to a pan. When hot stir in the octopus and fry for 5 minutes then stir in the tomato purée and the herbs. Bring to a simmer, cover and cook for 20 minutes. Strain the octopus (reserve the liquid) and set aside to keep warm. Add oil to a pan and use to fry the onions for 5 minutes then stir in the tomato, olives and lemon zest. Cook for 3 minutes then add the remaining ingredients. Bring to a simmer then add the octopus liquid and cook for 15 minutes. In the meantime, add the pasta to a pan of lightly-salted water and cook for about 8 minutes, or until al dente. Drain the pasta, combine with the sauce then arrange in a bowl, top with the octopus pieces and serve.

PRICKLY PEAR – BAJTAR TAX-XEWK

The prickly pear reigns supreme in Malta's landscape. At this time of year, its fruits ripen and are harvested by hardy folk as a food for free. In the more rural villages, you'll find veggie vans and shops selling the pears, spines removed thank goodness. Often, my village neighbours arrive at my door with a plastic bowl full of the fruit, peeled to reveal their jewel-like, ruby-coloured succulent flesh. I accept graciously, though I have never really got to grips with munching or spitting out the abundant seeds. Apparently, there are seedless varieties around, just not in the wild of course!

Although not a native of the Malta, or the Mediterreanean (its origins lie in South America), the *Opuntia ficus-indica* (Indian fig) certainly thrives here. Were it not for farmers lopping off bits from time to time it might well take over. Farmers of old would use it as a boundary between fields; it's definitely a good deterrent to intruders or straying livestock and is cheaper for villa owners to install than a security system! The fruit can be red, deep wine-red, green or yellow-orange and is perfectly edible (fussiness over seeds aside). It is sweet and moist with a flavour similar to sub-tropical fruits like watermelon, honeydew melon, strawberries and figs. And is a fraction of the price of these, or free if you pick your own.

Prickly Pear culinary delights - Malta doesn't really make much use of its abundant prickly pear supply. Our Sicilian neighbours treat it far more adventurously making candies, granita (slushy ices), ice creams, and jellies from it, as well as serving it up as dessert in restaurants ranging from casual trattorie to those listed in the esteemed *Michelin* Guides.The prickly pear is however on the increase on menus in Malta as we are beginning to see chefs value this humble, poor-man's food. Its presence on the menu can add local flair to what is often a bland list of internationally available desserts. The prickly pear is also versatile, and equally at home in savoury dishes. Most people I know simply eat it unadulterated; or they juice it. It can make a refreshing drink, and it certainly

makes an interesting, pink-coloured Maltese liqueur under the Zeppi brand, called *Bajtra*. You'll find it in most grocers and at the airport, alongside Maltese honey and biscuits, being sold as a souvenir.

Health benefits - It has an impressive list of healthly properties: it is rich in anti-oxidents and contains a good dose of vitamin C. Some say its juice can help cure a hangover. The *ficus indica* is being looked at closely for its health benefits: A Maltese company, along with a French partner, has been researching prickly pear properties since 1996. It has found its extracts can help alleviate symptoms of extreme fatigue experienced after performing strenuous exercise – we're talking about scuba divers and racing drivers here.

Do you know where the Maltese phrase **'wiċċ laskri'** comes from? It's a tale of knights and Carnival!

If someone's looking particularly grumpy, the Maltese have a habit of saying 'qisek wiċċ laskri', which literally translates to 'you look like Lascaris'. But who was this Lascaris, and why was he frowning?

The Grand Master was rather unpopular among the knights owing to his severe methods of discipline. The knights also resented the influence that the Jesuits had over him.

During the Maltese Carnival in 1639, several knights disguised themselves as religious of St. Ignatius Loyola and were imprisoned for this on the request of the Jesuits. This harsh measure by the Grand Master sparked a revolt in the Convent by the younger knights which led to the expulsion of eleven Jesuits from the island.

Despite this, the following years of Lascaris's reign saw a number of successful construction projects, including the Lazzaretto at Marsamxett and a hospital in Valletta for women suffering from incurable diseases.

The Grand Master Jean-Paul de Lascaris Castellar, and his infamous frown was brought on by the happenings of one particular Carnival in 1639.

That year, acting on the advice of his Jesuit confessor, Lascaris banned women from wearing masks and restricted their participation in Carnival festivities. This decision did not sit well with the young knights, who saw it as an attack on the spirit of the celebration. Protests erupted, and when one knight was arrested for mocking the Jesuits, tensions spiralled out of control.

Rather than backing down, Lascaris stood firm, but the knights had other plans. Riots broke out, with enraged knights storming the Jesuit College, raiding food and wine supplies, and throwing valuables into the streets as cheering Maltese citizens watched. Fearing for their lives, the Jesuits were forced to go into hiding.

In the end, Lascaris was forced to concede – the ban was lifted, the imprisoned knight was released, and the Jesuits were expelled from Malta. What started as a festive event turned into one of the most chaotic Carnival uprisings in Maltese history, and Lascaris became forever remembered for his stern, disapproving scowl and his grinch-like approach to Carnival.

Delta Goodrem, this year's Australian representative at the Eurovision Song Contest 2026, has a surprisingly strong connection to Malta.

Delta Goodrem has a deep, meaningful connection to Malta. She married musician Matthew Copley there in 2025, returning to the island where they originally got engaged. Today, she frequently collaborates with Maltese-Australian musicians and serves as a prominent cultural link between the two countries.

The Malta Wedding

The Proposal & The Ceremony: Matthew Copley proposed to Delta Goodrem in Malta, and the couple returned in June 2025 to marry.

The Venue: The magical ceremony took place at the historic St Paul's Cathedral in the fortified city of Mdina.

The Gowns: Delta wore multiple spectacular dresses designed by Australian labels, including a fairytale ballgown by Paolo Sebastian and two dresses by Con Ilio.

Shared Cultural Ties - The Band & Collaborators: Delta's longstanding musical collaborators—the sister duo Christine and Sharon Muscat (known as Sister2Sister)—are of Maltese heritage and maintain strong ties to the island. **Performances:** Delta previously performed in Malta at the Isle of MTV, which cemented her connection to the country.

While Australia's Eurovision representative Delta Goodrem has recently been making headlines in Malta due to her wedding connection to the island, another interesting Malta link has come to light, this time through the sisters who have been closely involved in her career for years.

Christine and Sharon Muscat, the duo behind Sister2Sister, have reportedly worked alongside Goodrem for more than a decade, often supporting her as collaborators and backup singers throughout her musical journey.

The sisters are the daughters of Maltese immigrants and continue to maintain strong family ties to Malta, with relatives still living on the island.

Beyond their work with Goodrem, Christine and Sharon built their own successful music career in Australia. They first rose to fame as Sister2Sister and have remained active in the industry, also running a well-regarded singing school that has helped train and inspire new performers.

Their ongoing collaboration with one of Australia's most prominent artists further highlights a strong Maltese connection making its mark on the international music scene.

MALTESE ASSOCIATION NORTHERN SUBURBS (MANSI) MOTHER'S DAY LUNCH – FERRARO RECEPTIONS

By our correspondent Emmanuel Brincat – Victoria

The Maltese Association Northern Suburbs (MANSI) once again brought together members, families and friends for a very successful Mother's Day Lunch held at Ferraro Receptions on Sunday 17 May.

Despite Melbourne's wet and miserable weather, the atmosphere inside the reception hall was warm, vibrant and welcoming, with a large gathering of members and supporters from across Melbourne and surrounding suburbs enjoying a wonderful afternoon together. It was also a special opportunity for many to reconnect with relatives and friends not seen for quite some time.

As this is the first occasion I am writing about this very active Maltese association in Melbourne's northern suburbs, it is fitting to briefly acknowledge the history and foundations of MANSI.

The Association traces its origins back to 1975, following significant changes within the local Maltese community connected to St Thomas More Parish in Hadfield. When the Dominican Sisters of Malta departed from the parish, dedicated community members recognised the importance of preserving Maltese culture, friendship and social connections within the area.

Through discussions with the Parish Priest and church community members, the late Emmanuel Debattista and Lewis Debono, together with other Maltese community leaders, proposed the establishment of a committee which became the foundation of today's organisation.

Over the years, the Association experienced both challenges and growth, yet committed members continued working tirelessly to preserve and promote Maltese traditions and community spirit through cultural and social activities.

On 28 March 1986, the organisation was officially incorporated under the name *The Hadfield Maltese Association Incorporated*. As membership expanded and the Association evolved, the current name — *Maltese Association Northern Suburbs (MANSI)* — was adopted to better reflect the wider community it represented.

Special recognition must always be given to the many individuals who contributed to the success of the Association throughout the years, particularly the late President Mr Tony Abela and the many other dedicated members who laid the foundations for what MANSI proudly represents today.

The first Committee consisted of: President: the late Emmanuel Debattista, Vice President: the late Joe Saliba, Secretary: Lewis Debono, Treasurer: the late George Bugeja, Social Secretary: the late Joe Abela Committee Members: Stan Cauchi, Jane Debattista and Rita Saliba

Returning to the Mother's Day celebration, the afternoon officially commenced with the singing of the National Anthems, followed by welcoming addresses from President Giancinto Cassar and Vice President Mrs Rita Pullicino. Guests enjoyed an excellent menu thoughtfully prepared to cater for various dietary requirements, while the staff at Ferraro Receptions once again provided outstanding service throughout the function.Entertainment was provided by DJ Dominic, who kept the dance floor active for the entire afternoon with music enjoyed by all generations present.

One of the highlights of the afternoon came when all ladies were invited onto the dance floor during the playing of "Simply The Best", and the Association Anthem written by Vice President/Treasurer Mrs Rita Pullicino and performed by Maltese singer Stephen Mizzi. In recognition of Mother's Day, all lady members received a gift voucher, while non-member ladies were presented with a box of chocolates. The ever-popular raffle also proved to be another successful highlight of the occasion.

The afternoon once again demonstrated the strong community spirit that continues to keep MANSI active and united after so many years.

THE MALTESE CONCERT BAND ON ITS 50TH ANNIVERSARY

The pure spirit of Malta's ancient culture
Was brought to Australia by our pioneers
Who were determined to nurture
The old tradition to share with their peers
And music as the language of all nations
Appealed to all and all with zest embraced
And in Malta all the celebrations
The village band is always above all appraised
So did from Malta/s blood to Australia's pleasure
The first Maltese Concert Band was born to grow
Into an icon so praised beyond measure
Since its first performance fifty years ago
Our band's birthday was the fruit of few men
Its years to come in the hand of FutureGen

FRANK ZAMMIT - NSW

On the Golden Anniversary of the Maltese Concert Band of NSW AUSTRALIA - 24 May 2026

The Maltese Concert Band NSW – formerly Our Lady Queen of Peace Maltese Band NSW – is the first Maltese concert band in Australia, and the only one in NSW. They play at numerous events and feasts throughout the year, celebrated by the Maltese and wider communities. Established at Greystanes 50 years ago in 976 the Concert Band players are proud of their contribution to Sydney's rich cultural diversity by maintaining the tradition of Maltese and Gozitan bands. New members are always welcome. AD MULTOS ANNOS

Malta – a Multicultural Country

Malta is a multicultural country, with a diverse population made up of people from all over the world. This makes it an excellent place for international students to study, as they can experience different cultures and make new friends from all over the world. The country is also known for its hospitality, making it easy for international students to adapt to a new environment.

Malta's official languages are Maltese and English. Both languages are widely spoken throughout the country. Many Maltese people are bilingual or even trilingual, speaking Italian or another European language. Such linguistic diversity adds to the country's multicultural character, creating a rich tapestry of cultures and identities.

Malta's multicultural environment is also reflected in its cuisine, music, art, and festivals. Maltese cuisine is a blend of Mediterranean, Italian, and Arabic influences, with dishes such as pastizzi, and rabbit stew. The country's music scene is also diverse, featuring traditional Maltese folk music, as well as modern pop and rock music from local and international artists. Malta also hosts a range of cultural festivals throughout the year, including the Malta International Arts Festival, the Malta Jazz Festival, and the Valletta Film Festival, among others.

Job Opportunities

Malta is an excellent place for students to work while studying. The country's economy is growing rapidly, and there are plenty of job opportunities available for students. The government also offers a post-study work visa, which allows international students to work in Malta for up to two years after completing their studies.

Malta has a growing economy and is known for having a diverse range of job opportunities. Some of the major industries in Malta include iGaming, financial services, tourism, manufacturing, medicine, law, and IT.

Tourism is another important industry in Malta, and there are plenty of job opportunities in hotels, restaurants, and other tourism-related businesses. These jobs include hotel staff, tour guides, and customer service representatives. International students with a higher education degree or young persons who wants to pursue it at Maltese universities have the option of working in the Tourism industry. It helps students to get a new working experience and create a foundation for a future career.

Other industries in Malta, such as Manufacturing and Healthcare, also offer job opportunities. Malta has a growing economy with a diverse range of job opportunities, making it an attractive destination for those seeking employment opportunities in a variety of fields.

Higher education in Malta is an excellent opportunity for students who want to study in a multicultural environment, enjoy a beautiful climate and scenery, and access affordable education. The country's work-life balance is an attractive factor, making it a great place for students to study and live. The country's high-quality education, combined with its low cost of living and job opportunities, make it an excellent choice for students from all over the world.

By Myra McKinney

Are there Asians in Malta? Yes, there is a significant Asian population in Malta. Asians from various countries, including India, Pakistan, Nepal, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, and China, are living in Malta.

Who are the most immigrants in Malta? A third of foreigners in Malta are EU citizens. A further seven per cent are from other European countries that are not EU member states. Italians are the most prevalent foreign nationality at 12 per cent, followed by British residents at just over nine per cent.

The National Archives of Australia, in partnership with the Maltese Community Council of Victoria (MCCV) Incorporated, celebrated the successful completion of the project to digitise the paper records of Maltese immigrants.

To mark this significant milestone, the event was attended by His Excellency Clifford Borg-Marks, High Commissioner of Malta; Dr Gioconda Schembri, Consul General of Malta; Madam Antonia Camilleri, President of the Maltese Community Council of Victoria; Mr Patrick Ferry, National Archives Collection Manager; MCCV Executive Members Joseph Matina and Rosemary Attard; as well as the dedicated Maltese volunteers who contributed to this project.

During the visit, His Excellency reviewed several historical documents on display and commended all those involved, noting that the preservation of these records represents a valuable legacy for future generations.

Madam President Antonia Camilleri and Mr Patrick Ferry also extended their congratulations to the volunteers. Mrs Camilleri expressed her pride in contributing to a project of such historical importance.

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The Auberge de Castille (Maltese: *Berġa ta' Kastilja*) is located at Castile Place, close to Saint James Cavalier, the Malta Stock Exchange, and the Upper Barrakka Gardens. It sits at the highest point of Valletta and overlooks Floriana and the Grand Harbour area.

Built in the Baroque style under the magistracy of Portuguese Grand Master Manuel Pinto da Fonseca in the 1740s.

Hospitaller rule Auberge de Castille was built in 1573–74 to designs of the architect Girolamo Cassar.[2] The original auberge, which took over the role of an earlier Auberge de Castille et Portugal in the former capital Birgu, was built in the Mannerist style, and it was regarded as Cassar's most innovative design. The auberge had a single storey, and its façade had panelled pilasters dividing it into 11 bays. The design of the auberge is known from a late 17th-century painting and an early 18th-century drawing.

The original Auberge de Castille was dismantled and completely rebuilt in the Spanish Baroque style between 1741 and 1744, during the magistracy of Grand Master Manuel Pinto da Fonseca. The new building was built to designs of Andrea Belli, and construction was supervised by *capomastro* Domenico Cachia. Some alterations, including the enlargement of the main door, were made in 1791.

French occupation and British rule The Order of St. John was expelled from Malta with the French invasion and occupation in 1798. The auberge subsequently became a headquarters for the French forces and later housed a Commission for National Property.] The building suffered some damage during the blockade of 1798–1800.

In 1800, the British occupied Malta, creating the Malta Protectorate in September of that year. This protectorate was officially ruled by the Kingdom of Sicily, but was in reality part of the British Empire. In 1805, the auberge became the headquarters of the British Armed Forces in Malta. In 1813, Malta officially came under British rule as the Crown Colony of Malta within the British Empire. The auberge was then also used as a residence for British officers. In 1814, a group of crippled soldiers from the army of Egypt was accommodated in the auberge. A Protestant chapel was opened on the first floor in 1840. A signalling station with a large aerial was installed on the roof in 1889 to liaise with

warships of the Mediterranean Fleet moored in the Grand Harbour.[8] It was known as the Castille Tower. The then-Princess Elizabeth, later Queen Elizabeth II, worked with the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen Families Association (SSAFA) when it was housed at Auberge de Castile.

In 1942, during the Second World War, the right side of the building was damaged by aerial bombardment.[6] The damaged parts were later repaired, and the aerial removed. The auberge was also used as the General Headquarters of the Army for Malta and Libya, and also for Cyprus after 1954.[8]

Independent Malta Cabinet Meeting Room at first floor; the non-aligned chair (left) is where the Prime Minister sits explanation sign on the building

Malta became an independent country as the State of Malta, with Queen Elizabeth II reigning as Queen of Malta, in September 1964. The country became a republic, as the Republic of Malta, in December 1974. In 1972, the Office of the Prime Minister of Malta moved from Auberge d'Aragon to Auberge de Castille.[7] The Prime Minister leads the business of the government from the auberge, and the name *Castille* (or *Kastilja* in Maltese) is often used as a metonym to refer to the Prime Minister and his office.[11]

Over the years, some of the stonework began to crumble and the façades were blackened. The building was restored between 2009 and 2014. The building was included on the Antiquities List of 1925 together with the other auberges in Valletta.[13] It is now scheduled as a Grade 1 national monument by the Malta Environment and Planning Authority, and it is also listed on the National Inventory of the Cultural Property of the Maltese Islands.

It will be pleasing to see the hard-working first generation of Maltese migrants passing on the baton to younger community members to consolidate the preservation of the Maltese culture and heritage.

The devastation after the direct hit by the Luftwaffe on April 7, 1942. This event was a major blow to the Maltese people, as the theatre was considered one of the most beautiful and culturally significant buildings in the Mediterranean.