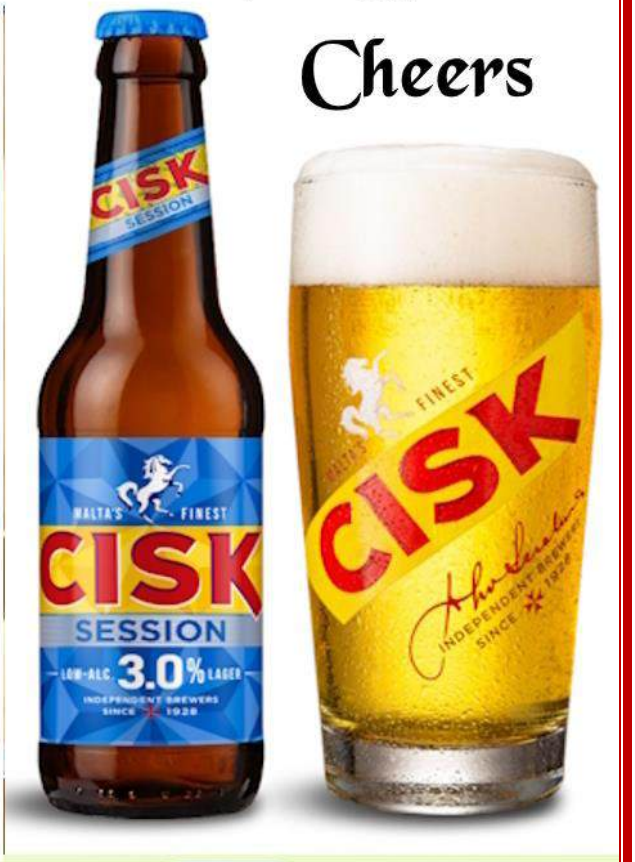
MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER

Journal for Maltese Living Abroad

Editor: Frank L Scicluna OAM MQR JP Email: maltesejournal@gmail.com

Rita Saliba Becomes First Maltese Woman To Reach Denali Summit



Charles Buttigieg Baritone

Carmelo Abela Speaker Malta's House of Representatives

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE CONSUL-ON-THE-MOVE PROGRAM?

A challenge currently confronting the Maltese community in Adelaide is the lack of continuity and the impending closure of certain associations.

This issue is not limited to South Australia; it is also prevalent among other Maltese associations in Sydney, Melbourne, Queensland, and Western Australia. The only viable solution to this dilemma is amalgamation, meaning that the remaining clubs should unite, collaborate, and support one another.

In South Australia, the same individuals are members of all the clubs. Regrettably, we have never established a vision for the future. We have lacked a contingency plan in the event of unforeseen circumstances.

Our community has diminished to such an extent that we struggle to find replacements for retired members and those on the committee who are either too elderly to continue or have passed away.

ACKNOWLEDGES Furthermore, we remain fragmented and fail to recognize the necessity of convening to discuss and address this issue before it becomes too late.

HON CHRIS FEARNE

ACKNOWLEDGES OUR MALTESE JOURNAL

In the most recent edition of our Maltese Journal, I, the editor, on behalf of the newsletter's readers and all Maltese residing abroad, extended my congratulations to Hon Chris Fearne for his recent appointment as Minister of Foreign and European Affairs and Chairman of the Council of Maltese Living Abroad. We expressed our willingness to foster friendship, collaboration, and support. We proposed to work together for the benefit of Maltese individuals worldwide. We are pleased to inform you that Mr Fearne was pleased to receive the journal and the email. The minister commends us for the valuable work we are carrying out to maintain strong links between Maltese communities overseas. He said, "I look forward to continued cooperation and to the opportunity of meeting you in the near future."

Did you know that thousands of Maltese Australians living in regional areas — including Cairns, Mackay, Adelaide, Perth and New Zealand — currently have no access to Maltese consular services without travelling hundreds, sometimes thousands, of kilometres to Melbourne, Sydney or Canberra?

While most of our community is fortunate to live close to a Maltese consular office, many of our fellow Maltese — in regional Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and beyond — are left without the services they are entitled to as Maltese citizens. Something as simple as renewing a passport or registering a document requires an expensive, often impossible, journey.

We are calling on the Government of Malta to reinstate the 'Consul on the Move' programme and restore signatory authority to Honorary Consuls who serve these regional communities — so that every member of the Maltese diaspora, regardless of where they live, can access the services that are rightfully theirs.

This petition belongs to all of us. Whether you live in Melbourne, Mackay or Mandurah — please add your name. The strength of this petition rests on the breadth of our community's support.

Signatures close 30 June 2026.

Sign here:

https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/malteseinaustralia-consular-services?clear_id=true&source=direct_link

If you ever wondered where all the Maltese live in Australia - you can check out this interactive map https://alexandramicallef-star.github.io/malteseaustralian/maltese_lga_australia_map.html

Every signature matters. Our strength as a community is in our numbers, and this petition is most powerful when it reflects the breadth of the Maltese community across every state and territory.

Thank you for your continued dedication to this community and for the unanimous support you gave this initiative at our last meeting. I look forward to presenting a strong result to the Government of Malta on behalf of us all.

With warm regards,

Sandra Micallef *Honorary Consul of Malta —President, Queensland Maltese Australian Community (QMAC) Council of Maltese Living Abroad — Australia Section (CMLA)*

We invite the readers of the JOURNAL FOR MALTESE LIVING ABROAD to participate in and endorse this significant petition, which will be advantageous to us. This journal has been promoting the importance of streamlining the processes for acquiring citizenship and a Maltese passport for many years. Frank Scicluna - Adelaide

CONSUL OF THE MOVE PROGRAM

https//foreign.gov.mt

THIS IS A COPY OF THE PETITION

It is with the greatest respect for the Government of Malta and its diplomatic representatives that we bring to your attention a matter of significant concern to our community — the absence of accessible consular services across much of Australia. The suspension of the "Consul on the Move" programme, combined with the withdrawal of Honorary Consul authority to certify documents, has left Maltese nationals in Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and New Zealand, without a practical means of accessing the consular services to which they are entitled.

We recognise and appreciate the consular presence maintained in Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra. We ask simply that the same consideration be extended to those who live beyond these cities. Our Malta-born population has a median age of 72 years. For many, travel of several hundred kilometres to reach a consular office is not a matter of inconvenience — it is genuinely beyond their means.

This petition is submitted with respect, with evidence, and with the sincere hope that the Government of Malta will give favourable consideration to reinstating the "Consul on the Move" programme and restoring Honorary Consul authority. We ask you to add your name in support of a community that remains proud of its Maltese heritage and deeply committed to its relationship with Malta.

Consul on the move program 2026

As of 2026, the global Consul on the Move (COTM) program has not been permanently scrapped, but its operational status and availability can vary. Originally piloted in 2016 to reach communities far from permanent diplomatic hubs, the program has faced temporary suspensions in the past due to shifting global circumstances.

Because consular visits and operations are managed directly by the Ministry for Foreign and European Affairs, checking the live schedule for mobile outreach remains difficult without direct confirmation.

Where to Verify and Get Assistance

For the most accurate status of mobile consular visits in your specific area, you should reach out directly to your nearest permanent diplomatic mission:

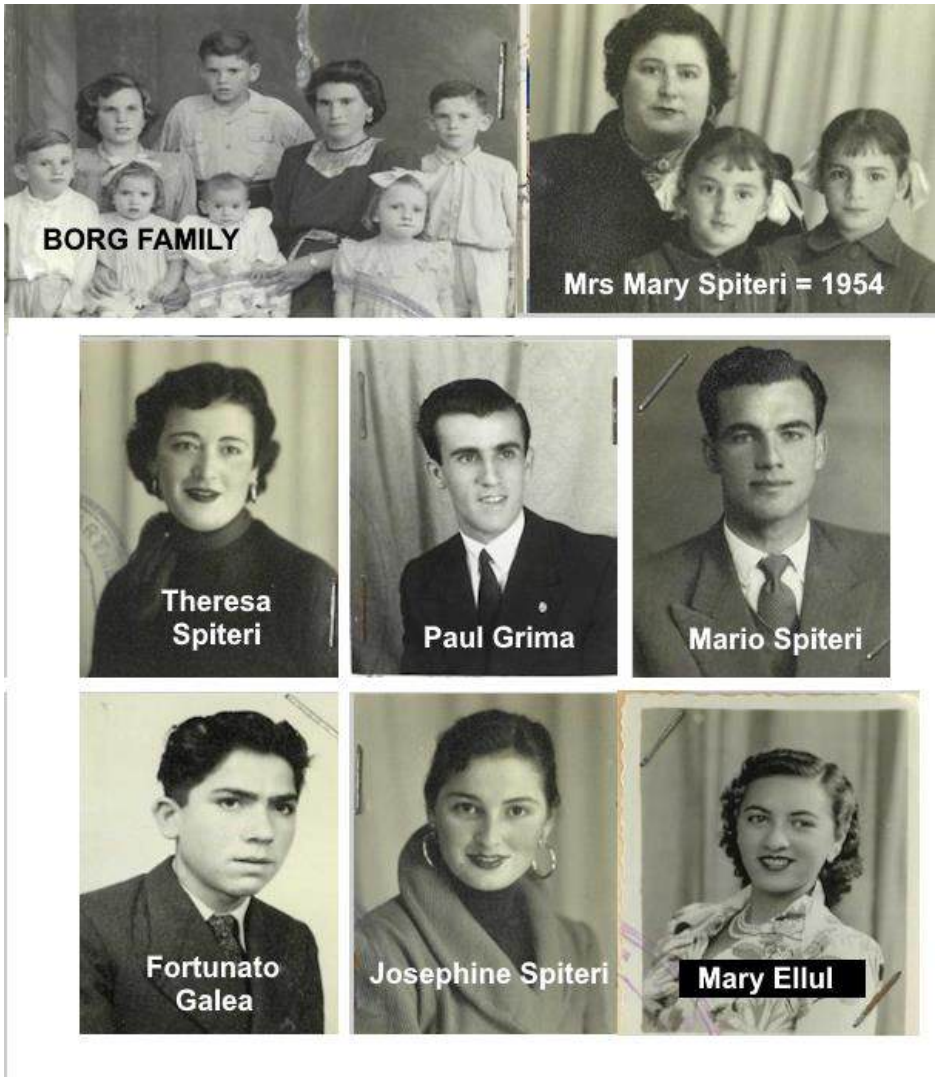
- ***In Australia (Serving users near Adelaide): Contact the Consulate-General of Malta in Sydney (Phone: +61 02 9262 9500) or the Malta High Commission in Canberra. They can confirm if a mobile consul is scheduled to visit South Australia.***
- ***Global Network: If you reside elsewhere, consult the full directory on the Ministry for Foreign and European Affairs portal for your region's assigned diplomatic mission.***

UNITED AND CONNECTED WE GAIN STRENGTH

Council for Maltese Living Abroad and the Maltese eNewsletter Journal for Maltese Diaspora – Embassies and High Commissions, Consulates-General and Honorary Consuls.

MORE THAN MUG SHOTS

Patrick Ferry, Nicholas Hams and Kathryn Graham



Maltese migration records from 1948 to 1955 bring to light amazing photographs which are much more than passport mugshots. They convey the spirit and character of the Maltese migrants themselves. National Archives' Victoria Office is making these records accessible to all.

A'win-win' agreement

One of Australia's first assisted migration agreements after the Second World War was with Malta. Signed in May 1948, this was a 'win-win' for both countries. Concerned that it had to 'populate or perish', Australia was seeking to rapidly increase its population. As prospective migrants, the Maltese had the advantage of already being British subjects. And importantly, they were European, which was still the key consideration under the White Australia Policy. Meanwhile, Malta was looking for migration opportunities for its people as it was seriously overpopulated and still devastated from sustained German and Italian attacks during the War.

Maltese spirit and character The Maltese migration records being catalogued in Victoria generally consist of application forms, police clearances and health checks. Many also have photographs attached. These show the spirit and character of the Maltese migrants themselves.

There are young labourers, mechanics, farmers and clerks in their best suits, hoping to 'get ahead' in Australia through hard work. Older men – husbands and fathers – display pride at being able to give their families a better start in life. Young women are 'dressed to the nines', with fashionable hairstyles. Since their wonderful dresses were often sewn at home, these photographs not only highlight their beauty, but also their resourcefulness. Mothers and their children are immaculately dressed in their 'Sunday best', without a single hair out of place. Such images powerfully attest to the central role women played in Maltese family life. The large size of many families also points to the important role the Catholic faith played in Maltese society.

Good impressions but lingering prejudices Most Maltese probably hoped their photographs would maximise their chances of being accepted for migration. The Maltese Government was also very conscious of the importance of migrants making a good impression. This was because Australia had not always welcomed them.

Maltese migration to Australia had been heavily restricted before the War. In the notorious 'Gange' incident of 1916, the Australian Government even used the infamous 'Dictation Test' (usually applied to exclude non-Europeans) to prevent a group of Maltese migrants from landing. To ensure that they would fail the test, it was administered in Dutch!

Pre-war hostility to Maltese migration was partially fuelled by perceptions that the Maltese were 'cheap labour', thereby threatening Australian wages and living standards. Racial prejudices were also strong. Although Maltese were British subjects, they were not regarded as being of 'good British stock'. Instead, like other Southern European migrants, they were widely disparaged as 'dagoes', with nasty racialised connotations of being lazy, dirty, hot tempered, superstitious and generally inferior to migrants from the British Isles and Northern Europe.

Although Australia's official attitude towards Maltese migration after the War quickly changed from restriction to assistance, racial prejudices and stereotypes were more difficult to shift. These unfortunately were part of the migration experience of many post-war Maltese migrants.

Developing the next generation of archivists So far, the Victoria Office has added nearly 8,000 Maltese migration records from series MP80/2 and MP210/3 to RecordSearch, meaning they can now be searched for by name. There are many more still to be added.

As well as making these records more discoverable, this work is providing 'hands on' archival training to information management students undertaking placements with the National Archives as part of their university studies.

Friends of Valletta

City of Chichester - Valletta, Capital of Malta

friendsofvalletta.org

CHICHESTER'S FOUR CITIES

Talk: Normans and Romans Playing in the Park

Monday 22 June - 7.30pm

Assembly Rooms, Chichester City Council, North St

Price £12 per ticket

For several years, Chichester City Archaeologist, Dr James Kenny, has organised digs in Priory Park. A considerable amount of the city's history, including evidence of Norman, Roman and Mediaeval occupation has been uncovered. In his talk we will hear about those discoveries.

To follow, there will be refreshments from France, Italy, Germany and Malta, reflecting Chichester's four linked city-twinning associations: Chartres, Ravenna, Speyer and Valletta

HOW TO PAY FOR THE FOUR CITIES EVENING

Please pay by making a BACS transfer (£12) to the **Friends of Chartres** Account (Sort code 20-20-62 Account 90403822) at Barclays Bank. Please put '**4 Cities**' in the reference area when you make the payment. Use of this account is because the co-treasurer of all the twinning societies, Stephen Northdale, is running 4-Cities expenses through the Friends of Chartres bank.

Maltese climber Rita Saliba has etched her name in history by becoming the first Maltese woman to reach the summit of Denali, the tallest mountain in North America. This remarkable accomplishment follows closely on the heels of Saliba's successful ascent of Aconcagua, the highest peak in South America, further enhancing her impressive list of mountaineering achievements.

In the last two years, Saliba has also triumphed over Mount Kilimanjaro in Africa and Mount Elbrus in Europe, consistently tackling some of the globe's most renowned mountains. Nevertheless, Denali presented her with the most formidable challenge to date. Saliba characterized the expedition as the most strenuous experience she has encountered, pushing her physically, mentally, and emotionally beyond her previous limits. The climb was exacerbated by harsh weather conditions, which left her team stranded for six days.

Despite this obstacle, the group was able to recover lost time and successfully reached the summit on June 3rd. In addition to her personal success, Saliba is leveraging her expedition to advocate for two significant causes. She is currently gathering donations through her Revolut (@ritanf2p) account for the Association for Abandoned Animals and Puttinu Cares. Her historic climb is being hailed as another moment of pride for Maltese sports and adventure, demonstrating that determination and resilience can lead one to the pinnacle of the world.

CHARLES BUTTIGIEG – BARITONE MALTESE ACHIEVER

Charles Buttigieg, 25-year-old baritone from Gozo, Malta, began his singing journey at 11 by joining a local choir. He studied voice under Maltese soprano Juliette Bisazza and received support from the BOV Joseph Calleja Foundation. Charles has performed in various operatic productions, sharing the stage with world-renowned opera singers.

He trained at the Mediterranean Opera Studio & Festival, where he performed the roles of Marcello in La Bohème and Enrico in Lucia di Lammermoor. In 2018, Charles was invited to study at The Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, graduating with honours. During his time there, he made his debut in roles of Masetto in Don Giovanni and Figaro in The Barber of Seville.

Charles has won multiple awards, including an Encouragement Award from the Metropolitan Opera. He has performed with tenor Joseph Calleja at Opera Naples, with Andrea Bocelli in Malta, and headlined his own concert in Gozo for three consecutive years. In 2023, he was selected to compete in Placido Domingo's prestigious Operalia competition and performed at a 9/11 Memorial Concert in Houston, Texas.

MALTA SHOULD ERECT A MONUMENT for Child Abuse Survivors

The history of sexual abuse in Maltese orphanages is a deeply troubling chapter that has come to light through the courageous testimonies of survivors and subsequent investigations.

A sculpture should be commissioned to honour the courage and resilience of survivors of childhood sexual and physical abuse that occurred under the supervision of the Catholic Church in orphanages across Malta. This monument could replace an existing venerated figure, such as the legendary Saint George and the Dragon, a largely mythical character whose historical existence remains unproven.

Malta already hosts the Child Migrants' Memorial at the Valletta Waterfront. This commemorates the 310 Maltese child migrants who were sent to Australia between 1950 and 1965. The bronze statue, life-sized, depicts a young boy and girl each carrying a small suitcase—their few belongings—symbolising the journey of nearly 3,000 unaccompanied children from Britain and Malta to Western Australia over more than five decades.

In contrast, the dark history of abuse within Maltese orphanages, such as St. Joseph's Home in Santa Venera and St. Patrick's Salesian School in Sliema, remains largely unacknowledged. I, like many others, was a victim of sexual and physical abuse at the hands of Catholic brothers and priests at St. Patrick's. Shame and fear kept many of us from reporting these crimes to the authorities, and the silence that followed left us without justice or support.

Tragically, there are no official government statistics open to the public documenting the number of victims abused by Catholic clergy in Malta. As a result, the scale of this abuse remains unknown. Survivors like me and many of my peers are invisible. Even those recorded in official statistics are often overlooked; society sees only the orphanage walls, not the suffering within.

As of April 2010, eighty-four allegations had been reported. One alleged victim, Lawrence Grech, spoke out about his abuse in an orphanage, criticising the Catholic Church for conducting seven years of investigations without taking effective action.

A Maltese court eventually found Charles Pulis and Godwin Scerri guilty of sexually abusing children in their care. In 2011, Pulis (aged 69) and Scerri (aged 78) were sentenced to six and five years in prison, respectively, for abusing ten boys during the 1980s. The Church later expressed regret over the delays in its investigation and committed to removing Pulis from the priesthood.

One of the most harrowing cases emerged from the Lourdes Home in Għajnsielem, Gozo. Survivors, including Rosanne Saliba and Carmen Muscat, recounted severe physical and sexual abuse during the 1970s and 1980s. They described being beaten with wooden sticks, forced into humiliating chores, and subjected to sexual abuse by clergy members. In 2008, the Gozo Diocese initiated an inquiry, leading to a public apology from then-Bishop Mario Grech.

To the outside world, the walls of these orphanages may have appeared to offer protection and care. In reality, they concealed horrific acts of abuse. The trauma inflicted on these children is profound and often permanent. Their confidence shattered, burdened by shame, and betrayed by those meant to protect them, many survivors suffer in silence, too afraid or ashamed to

seek the support and justice they deserve.To an unsuspecting person, these orphanage walls represented protection and care, but over the years, abuses have shown that these walls are a façade, hiding despicable acts of abuse against children.

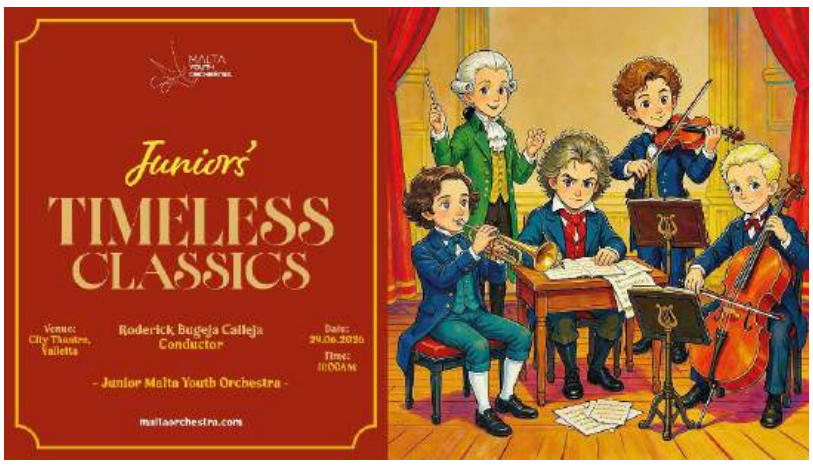
Institutional Response and Reforms The Maltese Association of Social Workers (MASW) has emphasised the need for stringent regulations and professional standards in children's homes. They highlighted systemic issues such as underfunding and over-reliance on voluntary institutions, which have contributed to inadequate care and oversight

A national monument would serve not only as a tribute to these survivors but as a public acknowledgement of their suffering and resilience. It would ensure that their voices are no longer hidden behind walls or lost in silence.

Wara Sekli ta' Gideb – fl-Aħħar il-Verità

Carmelo Abela has conveyed his appreciation for the confidence the government has placed in him through his appointment as the speaker of the House of Representatives of Malta. He noted that relinquishing his parliamentary seat was a challenging choice, but it was necessary to honor the will of the majority of the electorate. Abela expressed his gratitude to all those who supported him and those who placed their trust in him during the last general election, assuring them of his continued presence and support. He concluded by stating his dedication to serving the people and the nation with experience, enthusiasm, and integrity, while also recognizing Dr. Anglu Farrugia for his years of service as the parliament speaker.

JUNIORS' TIMELESS CLASSICS



The Junior Malta Youth Orchestra presents a vibrant programme of orchestral favourites and cinematic highlights with Roderick Bugeja Calleja at the helm, featuring arrangements by Richard Meyer, Michael Story, and Roderick Bugeja Calleja. Including Haydn's *Surprise Symphony*, Beethoven's *Symphony No. 7* and *Egmont Overture*, Mendelssohn's *Nocturne from A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Strauss' *Blue Danube Waltz*, and Tchaikovsky's *Romeo and Juliet* and *Capriccio Italien*, alongside music from Harry Potter and Godzilla, and a Disney Medley, this concert promises energy, drama and unforgettable musical storytelling for all.

DATE: Mon 29 June, 2026 TIME: 11:00AM LOCATION: City Theatre, Valletta

Tickets are available from Showshappening.com

FARSONS LAUNCHES CISK SESSION, A NEW LOW-ALCOHOL LAGER

Farsons Brewery, brewer of the award-winning range of Cisk beers, is proud to introduce the latest addition to its portfolio.

Cisk Session is a low-alcohol lager that delivers the same distinctive character and refreshment that consumers associate with classic Cisk. With 3.0% ABV, Cisk Session is a crisp, light and refreshingly smooth lager designed to meet growing consumer demand for moderation and more balanced lifestyle choices while continuing to deliver the quality and taste associated with the Cisk brand.

"Innovation has always been at the heart of our brewery," commented Mr Karl Bondin, Head of Marketing at Simonds Farsons Cisk plc. "The successful launch of Cisk 0.0 in 2021 clearly demonstrated the growing demand for no- and low-alcohol beer, reflecting consumers' changing attitudes towards alcohol consumption. Cisk Session is designed for those who want to enjoy a high-quality beer experience while choosing to reduce their alcohol consumption."

Cisk Lager, originally launched in 1929, has grown into a diverse, award-winning portfolio of beers. The range includes Cisk Excel, a low-carbohydrate beer with half the carbs of the original but the same great taste; Cisk Pilsner, a pilsner of exceptional quality; Cisk Premium, available primarily in Italy; Cisk Strong, a 9.0% ABV lager; the Cisk Chill variants, available in lemon and melon mix flavours; and Cisk 0.0, an alcohol-free lager that has enjoyed strong growth within the non-alcoholic beer segment.

Mr Michael Farrugia, Chief Executive Officer, commented: "Cisk Session is one of several innovations we are bringing to market this year. Innovation is an integral part of our strategy, and we remain committed to evolving our portfolio in line with changing consumer preferences and emerging market opportunities, while continuing to strengthen the Cisk brand."

The Cisk range of beers is brewed, marketed and distributed by Simonds Farsons Cisk plc. For more information, visit www.cisk.com.

L-IMNARJA

Celebrating One of the Oldest Feasts in Malta

Imnarja was revered even before the Knights of St. John arrived in Malta in 1530. The Maltese name "Imnarja" derives from a pagan festival called luminaria that was celebrated long ago by the Romans.

L-Imnarja is one of the oldest feasts celebrated in the Maltese islands, underlining Malta's rich cultural identity while depicting its long-standing traditions. Primarily, the Maltese Catholic tradition honours St. Peter and St. Paul, two significant Saints, albeit this feast is now laced with a plethora of different traditions not associated with the aforementioned apostles. On the evening of June 29, Buskett Garden hosts a distinct form of celebration that differs much from the usual "festa" style observance. The liturgical services are held in the Mdina Cathedral. In the late afternoon, several horse and donkey races are held on a country road below close to Mdina. The Palju, which is now up for grabs, was once given by none other than the Grand Master of the Order to the winners of several different racing categories. Today, a traditional banner known as the Palju is utilised as a trophy.

Imnarja was revered even before the Knights of St. John arrived in Malta in 1530. The Maltese name "Imnarja" derives from a pagan festival called luminaria that was celebrated long ago by the Romans. Luminaria (lights) originated from the custom of lighting fires on the roof and bastion walls of the Mdina Cathedral on the night of the solemn feast of St. Peter and St. Paul, who represents the light of the church. Imnarja is referred to as the farmer's feast since it occurs right after the harvest when farmers would unwind from their arduous labour.

The celebration of Imnarja is also linked to weddings, in which a marriage contract would be drawn out by a notary and the groom would pay the bride's father a certain amount of money in line with their agreement. Since there weren't many opportunities for newlyweds to have fun in the past, this arrangement would also obligate the groom to take his future bride to the feasts of St. Gregory, St. John, and Imnarja. The spouse would wear her bridal gown during the feast. The bride would consume a beverage known as 'ċomnota," which was a concoction of fragrant herbs pounded in a mortar with honey, a symbol of fertility. A lace handkerchief was also occasionally common. The two families would then exchange priceless goods or garments.

AWARD-WINNING MALTESE-LED FILM DECODE ME COMES FULL CIRCLE WITH MALTA PREMIERE

Sharon Sibyl Gatt and co-producer Yorgo Glynatsis

Maltese writer, director and producer Sharon Sibyl Gatt is bringing her short film *Decode Me* home for its Maltese premiere at the Mediterrane Film Festival on Friday 26 June at 6:00pm.

After a strong run across festivals in the US, UK and Europe, the screening marks a kind of homecoming for the film, which will be shown as part of the festival's *Local Short Films 2* programme. Gatt will be there in person, joined by international co-producer and mentor Yorgo Glynatsis, for a Q&A with the audience straight after the screening.

Decode Me has picked up steady international attention since its release, with 12 official festival selections, four award nominations, and one win, including the Woman Filmmaker Award at the Utah International Film Festival.

At its core, the film is a psychological drama about an autistic programmer navigating identity, masking, and self-acceptance. It draws directly from Gatt's own experience as a late-diagnosed neurodivergent woman, which gives the story its personal edge.

The project is very much a Maltese-led effort. Alongside Gatt's direction, writing and production, the film features cinematography by Maltese-British DoP Kris Brady. The visual design was created by Mattia Scicluna (whose work has also appeared on *Drag Race UK*), with hair and make-up by Sandra De Gaetano, known for her work on *Napoleon* and *Vogue*. Behind-the-scenes photography comes from Andrew Mizzi, who has worked with brands like Google and Meta.

It's a Maltese/British co-production supported by Arts Council Malta and Aki Studio London, and brings together both local and international collaborators — including BAFTA-qualified filmmaker Yorgo Glynatsis, producer Arnaldo Stafa, and the team at Aki Studio London.

The cast includes Mia Foo (*Baldur's Gate 3*) and Megan Placito, winner of Best Actress at the National Film Awards in the UK.

For the team, the Mediterrane Film Festival screening feels like a meaningful milestone: the first time the film is being shown to a Maltese audience after its international journey.

And as a final touch, the post-screening Q&A will include a small teaser about the movie.

Sandra Alexandra Micallef - Spotlight on QMAC members

MARLENE SCICLUNA

Today's post features one of my dear friends **Marlene Scicluna**. Marlene's life story is nothing short of amazing, and I am sure it will leave many of our readers, inspired
I identify greatly with my Maltese upbringing and always say that I'm an Aboriginal soul with a Maltese heart
Born to an Aboriginal mother and American father of German and Irish descent, Marlene was adopted at birth by Maltese parents and taken to Malta (Gozo) at the age of 3, where she lived for 25 years. Her involvement in the Gozitan performing arts scene from a young age led to her taking on choreography roles for local stage productions and competitions.
Her Maltese cultural foundation was cemented in 1987 on Malta's Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) radio program *Mill-Gżira ta' Calypso* (formerly *Mit-Tokk t'Għawdex*), which she presented until her return to Australia in 1998. Settling in Melbourne with her young family, Marlene worked at the *Maltese Community Council of Victoria* as the Administrative Assistant to the Executive, choreographed the *Young Maltese Australian Dancers (YMAD)*, co-founded community group *Maussies* and was the co-founder and Vice President of *nisġa*, the group behind *The Maltese Cook Off*. In 2010 and 2015 Marlene was invited by the Maltese Government to be a keynote speaker at the *Conventions for Maltese Living Abroad* on the subject of Maltese Australian youth engagement.
A Charles Sturt University journalism and communications graduate, Marlene's professional career in broadcast media spans 35 years, incorporating radio and tv production, reporting, script writing, public speaking, and voice overs. During her 18 years as a broadcast journalist with *SBS Radio* and the Senior Producer with Maltese Language Programs, she interviewed Presidents and Prime Ministers of Malta, Australian politicians and a vast cross section of individuals.
Marlene co-founded, directed, produced and hosted five seasons of @**Maltese DownUnder**, an independent community TV show on *C31 Melbourne and Geelong*, for which she was a nominee at the *2019 Antenna Awards*. She has also written for First Nation Foundation's *Tomorrow Money*.
Marlene is a contributing author to *Researching Migration on Indigenous Lands: Reflections, Challenges, Pathways* (Springer IMISCOE Research Series, 2025) and in the forthcoming publication *Mobs and Wogs: Stories of Survival, Suitcases and Strength (*Wakefield, 2026); she is currently working on her first multi-perspective memoir and co-authoring a Maltese cookbook.
Following their 2021 move to the Gold Coast, Marlene and her husband connected with the Maltese Australian community and in 2025 became founding committee members of QMAC. Marlene embraced the prospect of playing a role in strengthening Maltese pride and connections in QLD, particularly for future generations. Despite their recent move back to Victoria, Marlene and her husband remain paid members and take great interest in the future of QMAC.

Donate - Please, help us to keep this Journal alive

Bank - Commonwealth (Australia) BSB - 065106
Account No. - 00502597 Name - Frank Scicluna

FR. NOEL BIANCO MSSP

I am writing this letter to you this Saturday morning, the feast of St Anthony of Padua, the saint whom most people employ to find things that are missing. This is a beautiful devotion and St Anthony always seems to oblige. I think it is time to ask this saint to find our lost children who are living very unhappy lives and sometimes they are destroying themselves and cannot be reached because they lost touch with GOD!

I want to inform you that this week has been a painful, traumatic sleepless, joyful week for me. Last Saturday I had to be taken to hospital with a massive bacterial pneumonia infection at about 7.00pm in an ambulance. The pain was a so terrible and severe that I felt that my insides were being torn apart. The feeling I can describe it as being having burned lungs and that a stiff brush is going over sore lungs constantly. By Sunday night there was a concern that I was not going to survive this and they asked me whether if I have a cardiac or pulmonary arrest, whether I wanted to be revived. The Oxygen level which is supposed to be around 95 went down to 70 and there was a danger of brain and vital organs damage. I was stabilized at about 11.00pm and it was quite an experience. The care and tenderness and the concern of the doctors, the beautiful nurses, from so many different countries, was something to behold. They had about 8 doctors from the emergency team around me all giving their opinion of what could be done! I was in a bit of a haze but this went on I say for 2 or 3 hours!

The working together to save me was a good example for me of how a community should work. We need to employ their methods in the church to have a greater MISSIONARY OUTREACH. After being stabilized they took me to the respiratory ward where there were there three types of masks ready for me and I spent a tranquil night in which I reflected a lot between short sleeps on my life and my mission. The first thing I wanted to do in the morning was to thank the staff of Sunshine Hospital for saving my life and I felt so precious. The next 4 days I was tied down to a room with constant oxygen being pumped in my system and by Wednesday it started to hold and soon Thursday I came home exhausted, sore, scared but happy! Every cough brings back the same excruciating pain for a few minutes but slowly it is reducing!

It is interesting to note that when you are a priest people are not usually neutral to you-they either like you or “detest you”. When the medical staff came to attend to me they mostly engaged me or I engaged them in very fruitful conversation so I used this time to reach out to as many people as possible and God gave me a lot of joy in doing this in the midst of the physical pain. I could not pray except short prayers and with people on the phone. I asked one person whether she was a Christian and she said that if I ask her mother in Ireland, she would say that she is Catholic but in fact she said that she wasn’t. A bit earlier I was giving a handout to the nurses, of Words of Wisdom that I collect over 55 years from many different people, and there was a folder on the bed and I invited her to take one and she did. She told me that I might bring her back to the church and I assured her that we do not need her, I said the less the better-she was surprized. The next day she came again and I asked her whether she read any of the text and she said that she did and left this handout on the desk for everyone to see! So I told her that she is already evangelizing!

.I believe that God used this time- which was horribly physically painful- to work with me something beautiful which will remain a permanent memorial in my life.

So I stop here and I pray to St Anthony to bring people back to find themselves where they find God. I am not out of the woods as yet health wise, so I need further treatment but I take it as it comes knowing that God is with me in my pain. I will reflect further on this episode in my life in future mailouts. God bless you and pray for me!

CRINGILA MULTICULTURAL HUB CELEBRATES 75 YEARS OF COMMUNITY

By Keeli Dyson - REGION – ILLAWARRA NSW

The Maltese community in 1953 were visited by Archbishop Michael Gonzi, but they still didn't have a centre to congregate in. Photos: Supplied.

A Cringila community centre founded on the need for connection within the newly migrated Maltese residents who called the Illawarra home in the 1950s is celebrating 75 years since its committee was first formed, creating the foundations for the vital hub it is today.

In 1951, in the outskirts of the employment hub that was Port Kembla Steelworks, migrants from Malta were making Cringila their home after coming from across the seas to start their lives in the Illawarra.

"They all lived here and built their own houses, they were allowed to build extensions in those days much easier and they would host two or three families until they got on their feet where they would then purchase land and then build a house," George Cross Falcons Community Centre president Louis Parnis said. "A lot of people would've felt that they were uncomfortable, leaving their mum and dad, sisters – they were getting a bit homesick.

"But where do you go? You can't fly 24 hours and there would be no ships going, so you only come, you don't go. They had to make the most of it."

With no communal place to call their own, a small group set out to create a hub for the Maltese community, officially forming a committee on 10 June 1951, setting in motion steps for fundraising and logistics to buy a block of land and create the space they needed using their very own hands.

Peter Micallef came to Australia at 18 in 1958 and by 1959 he was part of the movement.

"I was told by the others that we intend to build this club, we used to call it a club then, and I said, 'Well, I want to be a part of it,'" Peter said. "Those days to get a dollar for these sort of things was hard, even if you go and ask people to make an effort it was like squeezing blood out of a stone." Not long after he joined, they broke ground on the site, building the centre brick by brick without machinery or professional help.

"It was all volunteer, nobody ever got a cent for it; we did it from our own heart," Peter said.

"I used to go to work ... when we finished work – those days used to be from seven o'clock to half past three – come here, put a brick or do a bit of concrete or this or that and come seven o'clock you go home. "Unless we dirty our hands it wasn't going to happen because there was no money."

They soon had a bunker-like structure where they could gather, but a bigger vision saw the centre take shape. "Next minute you've got a little room where they can have coffee, and that's actually how the club originated," Louis said.

"And then as time evolved, they started to build what the club looks like today, but the club was built in about five sections because there was no commodity of two or three million dollars; it was like, 'How much money have we got? Thirty pounds – let's buy a door."

Peter Micallef, pictured with his family, has been a part of the centre for more than seven decades.

Those hard-earned foundations now form much of the George Cross Falcons Community Centre today, hosting hundreds of people for lunch every Monday as well as events and community groups who need the space.

"It's still a part of my heart," Peter said. "I've been here 70 years; there's hardly ever been a week that I'm not here. "I reckon it's beautiful; I go to a lot of other clubs but when I come here it's different, it's a family.

"You appreciate it because you did it with your own hands, that's what I'm proud of."

More than 100 people gather at the centre every week, with inclusivity at the core of its culture.

Maltese presidents, prime ministers, archbishops, clergymen and other dignitaries have walked through the doors of the hub which has continued to thrive and play an important role for not only the Maltese community but other cultures who share the space.

A large part of its ongoing success in the modern day has been due to the centre's president Louis Parnis, who has been at the helm for more than two decades.

But his involvement actually came by accident, when he was nominated to join the committee after merely coming along to a meeting to help transport his father-in-law.

"I did not know that the club was on its way down to be sold if no-one took it over," Louis said.

"I went to the first meeting and I could tell they weren't going anywhere and they were in big trouble.

"They thought in their heads because all the Maltese had left Cringila by now, they're all in Dapto or Shellharbour and Kiama, they thought because they left the club's not needed – but it was needed more."

He helped bring it into the modern age while still honouring its purpose and origins with two men's sheds, a community garden, a memorial for the Maltese soldiers who fought in World War I, murals and a museum with artifacts and items connecting Cringila back to Malta.

"A lot of the elderly are never going to be able to go back, so what we try to do is we bring back what they can't visit and see," Louis said.

Importantly, he helped improve the financial sustainability and longevity to ensure it can continue to be used for years to come, and although the centre benefits from grants from all levels, it's not out to make money. "That gives us incentive to work harder, not less – so the more we get the harder we work," Louis said.

"Why be greedy? Why do you want $1.20 when $1 is enough? And that's a policy I work on. "What's important is that we are giving more than we take."

To find out more or to contact the centre visit the George Cross Falcons Community Centre website.

SETTE GIUGNO – Malta's National Day

Victor V. Vella NSW

I do not intend to go over the facts and details of what happened on the Sette Guigno , and beofre and after as they are well known. Il'll be putting the event in a historical setting and the interpretations of the event without the post facttum and partisan interpretations of the event.

On the Island of Malta the post-war problems resulted in a lower standard of living. The British garrison in Malta was reduced, fewer troop ships called, so that bars , restaurants and souvenir shops did decreasing business. As naval forces were reduced activity at the naval dockyard slowed down and the workforce declined in number. As one historian commented, ..economically the islands rapidly became distressed especially when one considers that the war itself did not inflict great damage on the island. The war was more centred in France and the surrounding countries. Malta was well protected by the British navy which was a vital force and it could not be reached by planes as flying was still in its experimental stage. As was clearly seen in the bombardment of the Spanish town Guernica by a German plane to be recorded and lamented in Picasso's famous panel of the same name.

So during the war Malta felt safe and..... prospering. However the real effect of the war was felt after and reached its peak a year after the peace treaty of Versailles. Since Malta relied on imports , overseas supplies were hard to get after the war. As a result they became scarce and expensive. Flour a staple food of the island in the form of bread, had to be mixed with cheaper barley as the usual import of wheat from Russia stopped as ..... Russia was starving too. This was already being felt towards the end of the war. In-1917 a month before the 7th of June the Dockyard workers went out on strike to protest against the rising cost of living. They marched in their thousands along the main street of Valletta. There were already rumours of a major rebellion.,

What about the formal political organisation of the time in Malta during the built- up to Sette Giugno. Nearly 3

months before the Sette Giugno demonstration, there was a meeting of the National Assembly on the 25 of February, under the leadership of Dr. Philip Sciberras who was elected President. The assembly showed a high standard of political maturity as well as some degree of national unity. One may well say that party political organisation was in its infancy. In the Assembly 3 major parties were represented. i.e The patriotic party, or Comitato Patriottico, the Giovine Malta , a group of young university students and a nationalist Party. There were also representatives of the Imperial Govt. Workers Union and the Unione Cattolica San Giuzeppe . On that day i.e. on the 25 th. of February, the crowds were united behind the General assembly.

One could well say .....that was a show of strength and of some maturity. That could be well seen during the meeting of the Assembly. However this show of unity and maturity did not have the means to improve the standard of living on the Island. No wonder outside, the general public had other ideas, as one commentator put it: the situation only required a final match to set it all ablaze.

And the 7th of June.....the Sette Giugno struck the match..

A DELIGHTFUL AFTERNOON WITH THE NEWPORT MALTESE ASSOCIATION & SENIORS GROUP

President Toni Scicluna

Emmanuel Brincat

Following a busy weekend of community activities, my wife Mary Anne and I had the pleasure of attending a luncheon organised by the Newport Maltese Association & Seniors Group, held at the Centru Malti in Parkville, Victoria.

Although proudly bearing the name of Newport, the Association conducts its activities from the Maltese Centre and remains one of the founding organisations that helped establish this important gathering place for Melbourne's Maltese community.

The function attracted a full house of members and guests who enjoyed an afternoon of friendship, entertainment and social interaction. The atmosphere throughout the hall reflected the strong community spirit that continues to characterise Maltese organisations across Australia. A particular highlight of the day was the return of respected musician Stan Azzopardi of The Premiers Music Group and Stex Music Group. Coming out of retirement for the occasion, Stan delighted guests with a memorable selection of songs from the 1960s and 1970s. His performance was warmly received and rekindled many fond memories among those present. Adding to the musical entertainment was young guitarist James Pridham, who joined Stan during the afternoon, while vocalist John Vella also impressed guests with his singing talents. Together they provided an enjoyable and varied musical programme that encouraged many attendees onto the dance floor.

The luncheon itself was professionally catered, while committee members and volunteers worked diligently serving meals, desserts, you could also help yourself to wine, tea and coffee throughout the afternoon. Their efforts ensured that all guests felt welcome and well cared for. The strong attendance also contributed to the success of the raffle and bingo sessions, which added further enjoyment to an already memorable occasion.

Special thanks are extended to President Toni Scicluna, Social Secretary Carmen Casa and the dedicated committee members and volunteers whose commitment and hard work made the event possible. Their ongoing efforts continue to strengthen friendships, promote Maltese culture and provide valuable opportunities for social engagement within our community. Mary Anne and I thoroughly enjoyed the afternoon and look forward to attending future functions organised by the Newport Maltese Association & Seniors Group.

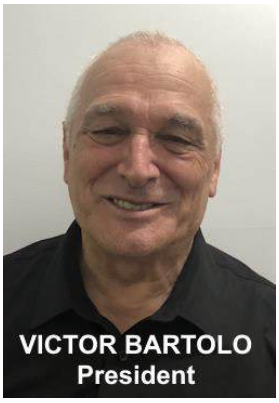
Viva l-Newport Maltese Association & Seniors Group! May you continue to make our Maltese Community proud through your dedication, friendship and commitment to preserving our Maltese heritage and traditions for future generations.

Josuel As Elvis (Josuel Grech) is a talented singer and Elvis Presley Tribute Artist from Malta. His love for Elvis started when he was just five years old and watched the movie 'G.I. Blues' with his grandmother. From then on, the young prodigy began honing his vocal and performance skills with remarkable dedication and focus, a testament to his natural talent and burning passion for music.

Josuel's exceptional tribute to Elvis has garnered international acclaim, with victories at the highly esteemed 'Parkes Elvis Festival 2025 and 2026 in Australia, 'Harbor Lights 2024' in the United Kingdom, and more.

Additionally, he secured an impressive 4th place in the prestigious Images of the King World Championship 2024 in Memphis, Tennessee, USA — the city that shaped Elvis's rise to stardom. His electrifying performances have captivated both audiences and judges alike, including Elvis Presley's ex-girlfriend Mindi Miller, who praised Josuel for his authentic 1950s Elvis look and remarked how his movements and stage presence strongly reminded her of the King himself through the way he moved and used the stage. Josuel understands that being an Elvis tribute artist is more than just studying the King's voice and moves. It requires capturing the essence of Elvis's live performances, his charisma, and his stage presence. That's why he has taken his tribute to the next level by assembling a live band to enhance his performances and recreate the energy and excitement of Elvis's live shows. Josuel works closely with his band members to ensure they capture the nuances and dynamics of Elvis's music, engaging the audience and creating a memorable experience.

The Parish of the Nativity of Our Lady in Senglea celebrated the Feast of Christ the Redeemer on Sunday, 14 June 2026, with a solemn event that honors a devotion cherished by generations of Senglea residents and many faithful from Malta and Gozo.
The celebrations commenced at 6:00 p.m. with a Solemn Mass held in the Basilica, during which the faithful were invited to express their gratitude to God for the gift of Redemption bestowed upon humanity through His Son, Jesus Christ. After the Mass, a devotional procession featuring the Miraculous Effigy of Christ the Redeemer made its way through the streets of Senglea. This revered effigy, held in high esteem for centuries, is considered one of the most significant devotional and artistic treasures of the Maltese Islands, drawing thousands of devotees from Malta and Gozo each year. For generations, it has served as a beacon of hope, consolation, and trust in the merciful love of Christ, standing as a living testament to the profound faith of the Maltese people in the Redeemer. The procession traversed the main streets of the city, providing a public demonstration of faith and devotion to Christ the Redeemer. This occasion also offered a moment to pray for peace in the world, for families, and for all those enduring suffering, illness, or hardship. Parish of the Nativity of Our Lady, Senglea



ST HELENA MALTESE AUSTRALIAN SOCIAL CLUB & SENIORS GROUP HOSTS SUCCESSFUL FANCY DRESS SOCIAL

The St Helena Maltese Australian Social Club & Seniors Group once again demonstrated the strength of community spirit within Melbourne's Maltese community when it hosted its popular Fancy Dress Social on Saturday, 13 June.

The well-attended event brought together members, families and friends for an evening filled with entertainment, laughter and fellowship. By invitation of President Victor Bartolo, I had the pleasure of serving as Master of Ceremonies and witnessing firsthand the tremendous effort invested in making the occasion such a success.

A special acknowledgement is due to Hall Manager Christina, President Victor, committee members and volunteers who worked tirelessly behind the scenes. Their dedication was reflected in every aspect of the evening and contributed greatly to the warm and welcoming atmosphere enjoyed by all present.

Entertainment was provided by DJs Jo Jo and King Charlie, whose excellent music selection kept the dance floor busy throughout the night. Guests enthusiastically embraced the fancy dress theme, with a colourful parade of costumes adding fun and excitement to the celebrations. One of the evening's highlights was the official unveiling of the Club's new logo, which will proudly represent the Association at future functions. Congratulations were extended to Samantha Mallia, whose creativity and artistic talent produced the attractive handcrafted design.

The Fancy Dress Parade proved particularly popular, with participants proudly displaying their costumes before judges selected the Best Dressed Female, Best Dressed Male and Best Dressed Couple. Congratulations to all winners and participants for entering into the true spirit of the occasion.

As is customary at many community gatherings, the raffle was also enthusiastically supported and served as an important fundraiser for the Association's ongoing activities.

For my wife Mary Anne and me, this was undoubtedly one of the most enjoyable Fancy Dress Socials we have attended. The friendship, laughter and sense of belonging shared by everyone present highlighted the important role that organisations such as the St Helena Maltese Australian Social Club & Seniors Group continue to play in preserving our Maltese heritage and strengthening community bonds.

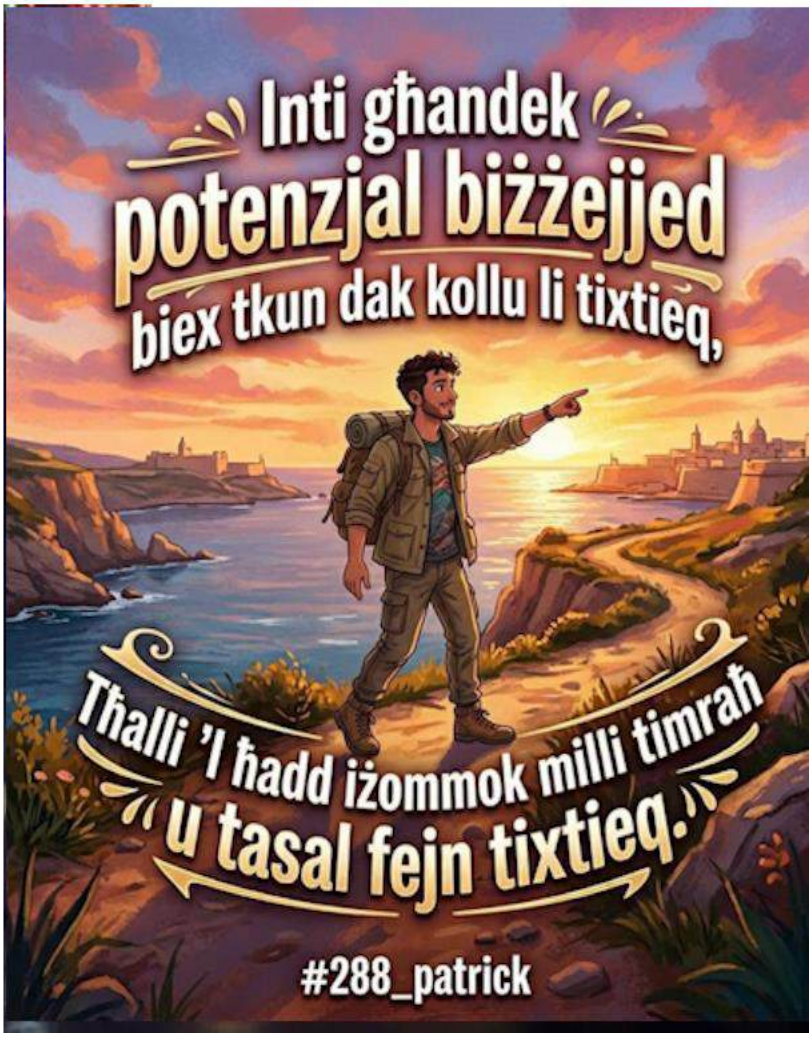
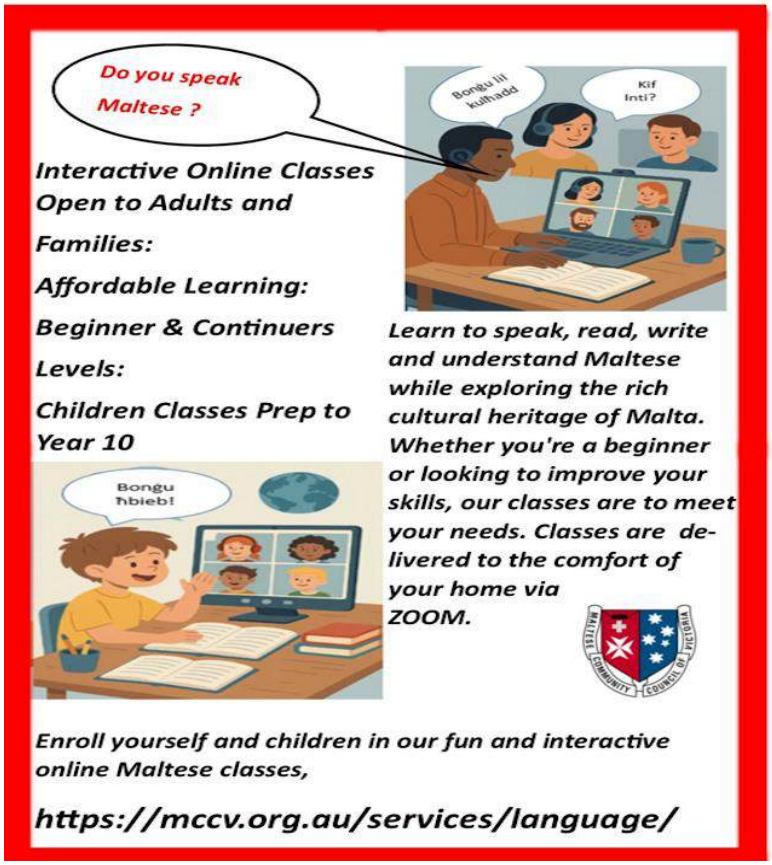
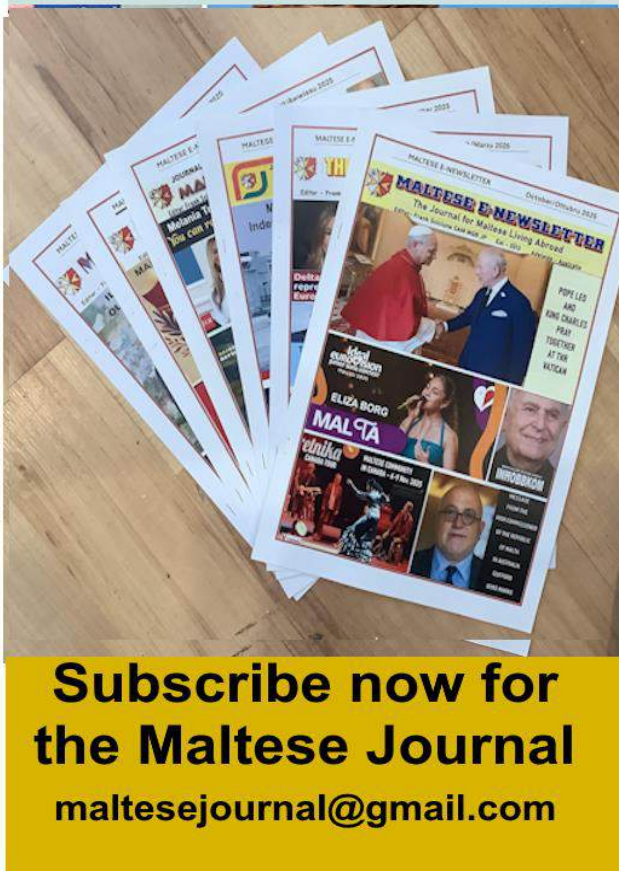
Congratulations to President Victor Bartolo, his committee and volunteers for another outstanding event.

By our correspondent
Emmanuel Brincat
Victoria, Australia

Toninu

Waqt li Toninu, kien qiegħed jaqra,
b'qattus ma ġenbu, u kelb daqs naqra,
daħlet in-nanna, inkiss inkiss
u tatu bewsa, kif kien imiss!

Not my picture, but would be interested if anyone knows about the young boy, the medals he is wearing and the location and reference to M Dimech.



Saturday June 27th | 7:00pm San Gwann Feast, L-imnarja, Majjalata & America's 250th Birthday BBQ Celebration | $35 per person |All are welcome | Book your ticket online or contact Pauline, Rita, Eddie, or Leanda MALTESE CENTER – NEW YORK CITY, USA