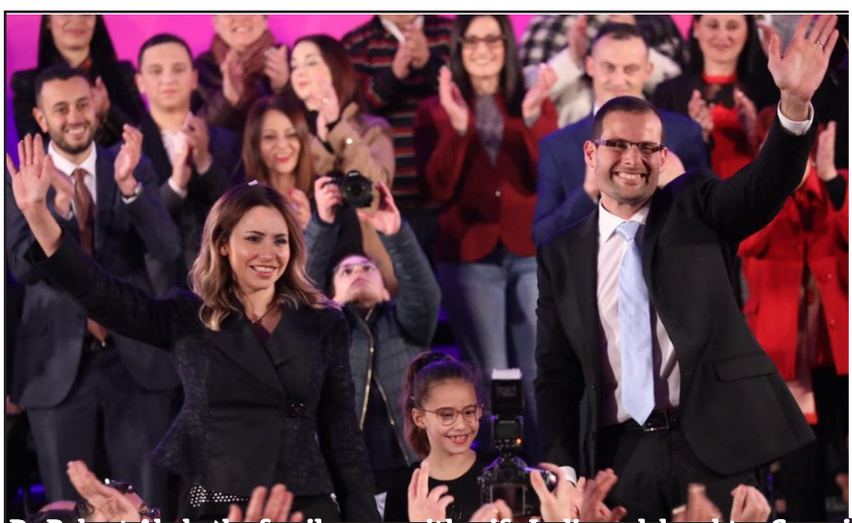
The Voice of the Maltese

(driven by the voice of its readers)

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January 14, 2020





Dr Robert Abela the family man with wife Lydia and daughter Georgia Mae (left) acknowledging the verdict of the Labour Party members that elected him as party leader, and (right) exchanging a kiss with Georgia Mae at the swearing in ceremony. *(See report page 12)*

Malta's new Prime Minister takes office



The swearing in ceremony over, Robert Abela, his wife Lydia and daughter Georgia Mae chat with President George Vella.





The walk-about from the Palace to his new PM office at Auberge de Castille, meeting the people

For the love of home ...

by ANDY BUSUTTIL



ANDY BUSUTTIL was born in Malta but left the island for Australia in 1964 as a 12-year-old. He left Malta after completing his first year at St Augustine's College which, in those days, was in Tarxien.

Andy went on to gather a number of qualifications in social sciences and education. He became best known for his music and his band *Skorba* which has presented a number of concerts about Malta.

This is his story.

What is it that makes Malta so special to me? This is a question that has gone through my mind a number of times since I first returned there in 2015 after a 52-year absence?

In many respects it is a perplexing question, in others it is one that yields a self-evident truth: it is home. However, the question about its special nature remains. A second question, a corollary to the first, also sits with me: why is it more 'home' to me than Australia after having lived here for 55 of my 68 years?

The answer, I think, in the experience of Malta that is beyond an intellectual grasping of the islands. There is a strong feeling that comes to me when I think of Malta that always seems to feature my grandmother. She was only a little woman with those strange legs that seemed to rise from the ground parallel to each other and disappear up a long and rather shapeless black dress.

She always wore black. She always had a clean smell about her that was the same smell as the big block of 'key soap' *(sapuna taċ-ċavetta)* that she always had in one of the wet areas, especially that used for washing clothes. It was a particular smell and I remember it well. In so many ways it was the smell of Malta from my childhood.

What really interests me most is the strong sense of familiarity that comes to me when this image comes to my mind, both visually and in an olfactory way. I so clearly remember my Nanna's face and her hair, lank, meticulously clean yet ironically uncared for.

She had far too many other 'important' things to worry about than her appearance when bustling around the house cleaning, tidying, cooking, washing and performing all the other tasks which kept her astonishingly busy given how tiny her upstairs semi-detached was.

I remember her lighting the primus stove: Methylated spirits, kerosene, a match and pumping until an angry blue flame roared its way into existence. On that stove she cooked miraculous meals of stewed rabbit and spaghetti. I still can't quite work out how she did it on the one burner but she did. Maybe it's my child's memory.

However, this woman was an alchemist. She could take relatively or apparently worthless or insignificant things and turn them into articles of great value. After having raised eleven children and losing two it was inevitable that miracles were an everyday event for her.

She was absolutely murderous on chickens. If they were to be food for the family there was no way that sentimentality would get in the way of her kitchen knife.

Woes betide anyone who, horrified at the sight of the execution, uttered the words: *"jaħasra!"* ("poor thing"). She would shout at them to stay quiet because the bird would not die if someone said that. Although living without a head always struck me, in my childish innocence, as both theoretically and practically impossible.

*continued on page 3



Grandma Carmena ('Mena') Borg and *Nannu* Andrea ('Indri') 'il-pulizija' from Ħamrun and then Marsa



Nanna cooked miraculous meals on her primus stove



Some of the old multicoloured buses that were so popular on Malta's roads

Memories that will never leave me, and neither do I ever want them to

I remember the honey colour of the walls that ran without break down the full length of the street in Marsa where my grands lived, *Triq San-Mikiel*. Even the name makes me yearn to walk along it again. I remember my mum sending me to the corner shop to buy stock cubes that carried either a picture of a chicken pecking or squatting. Inevitably I was told to only come home with the stock cubes *'tat-tiġieġa tnaqqar'*: the chicken pecking. For some reason '*tat-tiġieġa kokka'*, the chicken squatting would be out of favour.

I remember the interminably long evenings visiting with my parents where we sat for what seemed like hours listening to story after story, falling asleep with that 'death of sleep' that only children experience. Then having to get up with legs that felt like they were about to fall off with a huge fatigue and being forced to walk home.

Only a short walk often but sometimes we had to go home by bus. Aah, the buses! Multicoloured they were with each colour telling you where they were going. I remember in particular the yellow buses. They were among those that used to go through Marsa.

The smell and the feel of these buses that was unlike any other bus that I have ever been on, the way they rocked and if you had a driver who was a goer, the speed with which they travelled through ridiculously narrow roads so late at night.

I remember the evening strolls from Marsa to Ħamrun and on towards Valetta usually stopping at Bonaci's to buy kannoli or a local bakery to buy a dozen pastizzi to share between us. Stopping off to buy a Kinnie while the old man drank a Cisk. I remember our night-time strolls down the waterfront at Msida or Ta-Xbiex.

I remember the boats rocking gently on the black water, their lights casting a magical pathway to the shore, one that you could imagine walking on to get to the boat at the end. I remember the smell of the water and the fishermen hoping to catch a meal of vopi or sparli to take home with them.

I remember them dipping their fingers into foul smelling jars to extract the contents to mix with bread dough in the hope that some idiot fish would take a liking to it and become a part of the fisherman's family.

I remember the peculiar sound of our language being spoken everywhere on hot summer evenings when everyone sat out on woven-cane-on-wood-framed chairs.

I remember the funny little fans that looked like woven cane flags being rotated back and forth to try to bring some relief from the relentless heat of summer. I remember the kind eyes and the smiling faces of those who knew and loved me and who I knew and loved.

These are memories that, even after these many years, never leave me and neither do I want them to. These are memories that always sustain me and make me so deeply aware of the fact that you can take the boy out of Malta but you can never take Malta out of the boy.

I remember the interminably long evenings visiting with my parents where we sat for what seemed like hours listening to story after story, falling asleep with that 'death of sleep' that only children experience.

*from page 2

The other experience that will always live deeply embedded in my memory was my grandfather, after whom I (and most of my male cousins!) was named. He had a pipe. He smoked a home-grown tobacco leaf that he mixed with a leaf from a grape vine. There were times when he would celebrate the gift from my dad of a tin of 'MacBaren's Plumcake'. It smelled just like plum cake! However, much to my disgust when one day I managed to find my way into it when the tin was unattended, it tasted not at all like plum cake! Ten year olds should never be left alone with anything that smells like plum cake.

I remember the smell of the smouldering tobacco in his pipe and that scraping sound that he used to make when he was cleaning some of the ashes out of the bowl and the top part of the stem. I remember his face etched with a thousand memories, slender and kind. I remember his leathery hands and how deft they were when making me a kite always in the colours of the Vatican, yellow and white or making a 'trabokk' a trap designed to snare small birds so he could put them in his aviary.

I remember being on the roof of their home where he had a little workshop. He had a workbench in there with a selection of tools, always the right tools, that he used so skilfully, pipe in mouth, smoke curling up into his eyes, cap on his head and leathery hands.

I remember the high-pitched calls of the street vendors in the distant streets. They sold a variety of products such as *'bigilla'* a bean mash or 'peanuts and nuts'. *'Karawett u lewż'* is a call I will never forget. After many years I found I had that voice and use it when I sing, always in a high pitch.

I remember the smell of the streets and the feel of the uneven cobbles under my feet and the clip-clop of horses' hooves as they neatly trotted along always hauling a small cart of some kind. It was only in the city that they hauled people if I remember correctly.

Another service offered by The Voice of the Maltese providing legal information to our readers

Making a Will: Mental Capacity

by Paul**Sant**

In order to have a valid Will, there are a number of elements that need to be met. However, even if the Will is expertly drafted, it will not be executable if the person making the Will does not have the requisite level of mental capacity at the time that they sign the document.

If you know someone who is making a Will, or you are wondering about whether a Will should not have been made in the first place, you should pay close attention to the explanation below. But what is mental capacity?

There is no single legal definition of "mental capacity" in New South Wales. The rigour of the test is dependent upon circumstances of each case and the type of decision or transaction at hand.

This means that the criteria or level of mental capacity required will differ between areas of the law. For example, a Court or Tribunal may determine that a person is incapable of managing their own financial affairs, however they may have the requisite capacity to make a simple Will.

Further, mental capacity is fluid. It changes over time, sometimes within hours, or during different types of situations. Mental capacity does not necessarily decline if there is an issue, and can be regained, for example if a person is treating their illness with medication.

In relation to the making of a Will, it is largely accepted that the following must be present if mental capacity is present *(Carr & Homersham (2018), re-stating the principle in Banks & Goodfellow (1870):*

1. The person making a will :
   a. needs to have the ability to understand the nature of the act of making a Will and its effects;
   b. must understand the extent of the property that the Will deals with;
   and
   c. must also have the ability to understand the moral claims of potential beneficiaries (for example, spouse, child, etc.).
2. The person making the will must not be suffering from a **condition** that affects their normal decision-making.

What are the warning bells of lost capacity?

There are some common warning signs that if present, should cause any examiner to potentially get a medical expert involved for a formal assessment. These include:

1. difficulty with recall or memory loss;
2. ongoing difficulty with communications;
3. lack of mental flexibility;
4. a client is accompanied by friends, family or carers to interviews with the solicitor but is not given the chance to speak for themselves;
5. limited ability to interact with the solicitor; or
6. limited ability to repeat advice to the solicitor and ask key questions about the issues.

How can you prove capacity?

There are a number of ways that capacity can be proven. Where a will was drafted with the assistance of a solicitor, that solicitor can give evidence in the following forms:

1. By providing a recount of a conversation had with the testator prior to the singing of the will;
2. The production of a written acknowledgement by the testator;
3. Video or audio recording evidence made by the testator as at the time that the Will was made.



Evidence can also be found in statements from friends and family who interacted with the deceased at or around the time that the will was made.

If there is concern about a person's mental capacity at the time of making a Will, it is always a good idea to seek a medical report about whether the testator is suffering from a condition and how the condition impacts the testator's decision making.

If the condition is particularly precarious, you may wish to seek two independent reports, to confirm the findings and minimise the chances of a challenge of the Will.

The existence of a condition, for example dementia or bi-polar, does not automatically mean that the person is incapable of making a will. Instead, the evidence should address the question of how severe the condition is, and whether it impacts the answer to any of the questions outlined in the test in *Banks & Goodfellow* (summarised above).

Role of a Solicitor

Although solicitors do not have the medical expertise to make a definitive assessment regarding mental capacity, their role is valuable as they often:

1. Make a preliminary assessment of mental capacity. This is often carried out by way of interview with the testator.
2. If the questioning result in a cause for potential concern, a solicitor will seek a formal evaluation of the testator's mental capacity by a clinician with expertise in cognitive capacity assessment.
3. The solicitor is the person who will make a final legal judgment about mental capacity for the particular decision or transaction.

Assessing capacity is not always obvious, and can be a subtle and complex task.

If you wish to make a Will, you should always contact a solicitor to assist you.

We have provided you with an overview of the topic above but you should consult a professional for advice specific to your circumstances.

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Maltese Spoken

Claudia first Maltese ballerina to make it to YAGP finals



Come April, 11-year-old Maltese ballerina Claudia Santamaria would be participating in the classical ballet category of the Youth America Grand Prix finals (YAGP), the world's largest international student ballet competition to be held in New York.

Claudia has been shortlisted for the event and would be joining a slew of other hopefuls from around the world vying for a scholarship to one of the world's best dance schools. She is the first student from Malta to make it to the finals.

Brigitte Gauci Borda, the girl's ballet mistress has expressed great pride at her student's brilliant achievement. She described it as exciting news! She also congratulated, not just Claudia, but also Ms Tatiana for her continuous support and coaching.

Meanwhile, on a handmade card that she attached to her Facebook post, Claudia Santamaria extended her gratitude to her mentor for having seen her through to the finals. She wrote: "I thank you loads for preparing me and giving me so many opportunities to shine and do my best. After all, you, Ms Brigitte, are the one who makes all my dreams come true" she wrote.

Claudia qualified for the finals through her performance of Variation from Paquita in the YAGP2020 Paris Semifinals held November 7-10 in Paris, which she has described as "one of the best experiences" of her life.

Malta's Young Talent Fund and the Art Council's National Fund supported Claudia for Artistic Excellence.

The Cordina Family would like to wish you and your family a
Happy, Safe & Healthy 2020
We look forward to seeing you in the coming year.

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Australia Day 2020 commemorated at a tough period and a heavy heart

Each year on January 26, Australians celebrate Australia Day, the official national day that commemorates the anniversary of the 1788 arrival of the First Fleet of British ships at Port Jackson, New South Wales, and the raising of the Flag of Great Britain at Sydney Cove by Governor Arthur Phillip.



This is the only occasion that we have before the important event to focus on the day, which is a public holiday. Comme-moration is being held as the country is going through a tough period having been ravaged by bushfires, and amid calls for action on climate change.

Though the significance of the day differs amongst the nation's population, the majority of Australians consider this day with national pride. Ma-ny businesses and homes fly the Australian flag and people normally attend festivals, fireworks, community and sporting events or ga-ther for family barbecues at homes, parks or on the beach.

The main festivities for Australia Day always occur on January 26. Many people become citizens of Australia on this Day at Citizenship Ceremonies across the nation.

It is also the day that the Australian Government awards the Order of Australia to selected Australians, which is 'an Australian society of honour for according recognition to Australian citizens and other persons for achievement or meritorious service'.

However, there is also a growing movement of people that feel the holiday must change date or theme on account of the terrible impact of colonisation on indigenous people – who called Australia home for tens of thousands of years before European settlers arrived nearly 232 years ago.

Under British rule in the 18th century, Australia was initially intended as a penal colony. England considered criminals to be incapable of rehabilitation. Their method of reprimand was to segregate convicts from the general population.

In October 1786, Arthur Phillip was appointed captain of the HMS Sirius. He was assigned to transport British convicts to the continent. His mission was to establish an agricultural work camp. After an eight-month journey, the fleet made up of 11 ships and 1,500 passengers, including 700 prisoners.

On 26 January 26, 1788 the First Fleet landed in Sydney Cove. Between January 18 and 20, the First Fleet sailed into Botany Bay to set up a penal colony. The formal establishment of the colony occurred two weeks later on February 7.

In 1818, January 26 was declared a legal holiday, marking the 30th anniversary of the British settlement in Australia.

Australian of the Year Awards

Each year on this occasion, an "Australian of the Year" award ceremony takes place on the lawns of Parliament House in Canberra. The awards go to four individuals who have made outstanding achievements. The award categories are: Australian of the Year; Senior Australian of the Year; Young Australian of the Year, and Australia's Local Hero.

Other events are organised across the country, especially at Sydney Harbour Bridge where the Aboriginal and Australian flags are raised.

Other events include an aerial display by the Royal Australian Air For-ce, the Tall Ships Race, the Australia Day Harbour Parade, a Regatta, and the thrilling annual tradition of Australia Day Parade in Melbourne.

Other attractive events are normally held at The Parklands at South Bank in Brisbane, where fireworks cap off a day of music, interactive art, and swimming. While in Perth's Langley Park is the site of the state's largest annual fireworks celebration.

On behalf of the readers of *The Voice of the Maltese* magazine we wish all Australians, a splendid day that could perhaps make up somewhat for the heart-breaking events of the past months resulting from the bushfire crisis. As such, most probably, not all celebrations planned would go ahead, some might be cancelled.



Time: 4:00pm to 6:00pm
Entry & Parking Free
Light Refreshments

NSW GOVERNMENT | Multicultural NSW

Australia Day Celebration

Organised by the
Maltese Community Council of NSW

Sunday 19th January 2020
Holroyd Function Centre
Waratah Room 17 Miller Street
Merrylands NSW

All welcome to join the Maltese community celebrate Australia Day in their adopted country

Kardinal Prospero Grech, Teologu li ħalla legat


Il-Kardinal Prospero Grech (xellug) f'laqgħa mal-Papa Franġisku

Nhar il-Ħamis li għadda 9 ta' Jannar fil-Katidral Metropolitan ta' San Pawl fl-Imdina, ġiet imqaddsa quddiesa *presenta cadavere* għal ruħ il-Kardinal Malti Prospero Grech li kien magħruf ħafna bħala teologu li miet fil-Vatikan nhar it-30 ta' Diċembru li għadda, sitt ijiem biss wara li kien għadu kif għalaq l-94 sena. wara ndifen fl-oqbra tal-Provinċja Agostinjana Maltija, fiċ-Ċimiterju tal-Addolorata.

Qabel ġisem il-Kardinal inġieb Malta, fit-2 ta' Jannar kien diġá sarlu l-funeral fil-Bażilika ta' San Pietru fil-Belt tal-Vatikan li tmexxa mill-Kardinal Giovanni Battista Re. Hawnhekk, Malta kienet rappreżentata mill-President George Vella u s-sinjura tiegħu, u l-Gvern Malti mill-Ministru Carmelo Abela, filwaqt li l-Arċisqof Charles J. Scicluna u l-Isqof Mario Grech irrappreżentaw lill-Knisja Maltija, u kienu fost il-konċelebranti.

Il-quddiesa fl-Imdina ġiet iċċelebrata mill-Arċisqof Charles J. Scicluna li miegħu, fost il-konċelebranti kellu għadd ta' patrijiet mill-Ordni Agostinjan li tagħha l-Kardinal Grech kien membru.


L-Arċisqof Charles Scicluna jitlob fuq it-tebut tal-Kardinal Prospero

Il-quddiesa saret fil-preżeza tal-ogħla awtoritajiet Maltin, fosthom il-President George Vella, il-Prim Ministru Joseph Muscat, l-Ispeaker Anġlu Farrugia u għadd ta' membri parlamentari miż-żewġ naħat tal-Kamra.

Il-Gvern iddikjara l-ġurnata bħala Jum ta' Luttu, bil-bnadar nazzjonali fuq bini pubbliku jittajjar mezz'asta. F'nofsinhar indaqqet mota funebri fil-knejjes kollha f'Malta u Għawdex.

Intant, fl-omelija waqt il-quddiesa tal-funeral fil-Vatikan, il-Kardinal Giovanni Battista Re fisser lil-Kardinal Grech bħala bniedem reliġjuż, ta' spiritwalità profonda, li ħabb lill-Knisja u l-ħajja reliġjuża u li dejjem poġġa lil Alla fl-ewwel post f'ħajtu.

Imbagħad fl-omelija fil-Katid-ral tal-Imdina, l-Arċisqof qal: *"Prospero kellu l-għerf tassew ta' min jaf li biex tkun għaref trid titgħallem"*

Fl-istess jum ta' għeluq sninu Prospero Grech, it-tieni Kardinal Malti, kien ħa sehem fil-quddiesa ta' lejlet il-Milied fil-Bażilika ta' San Pietru, mal-Papa Franġisku.

Prospero, magħruf minn dawk li jafuh bħala bħala bniedem ta' għerf u ċajtier, twieled fl-1925 fil-Birgu, imma għal snin twal għex u baqa' sakemm miet, mal-komunitá Agostinjana fil-Kulleġġ Internazzjonali Agostinjan ta' Santa Monika f'Ruma.

Huwa kien inħatar Kardinal fl-etá ta' 86 sena fit-18 ta' Frar 2012 mill-Papa Benedittu XVI. Meta ħatru kien qal li

Fi Frar tas-sena l-oħra meta ltaqa' mal-professuri u l-istudenti tal-Augustinianum il-Papa Franġisku kellu laqgħa speċjali għall-Kardinal Prospero Grech u għaddielu kumpliment mill-isbaħ meta għarfu bħala wieħed mill-fundaturi tal-istitut. Imbagħad il-Papa qal dwaru: "l-omeliji tiegħu huma tassew sempliċi… Meta jaslu ċerta etá, dawk li huma għorrief, jiksbu sempliċitá grandjuża li kapaċi tagħmel tant ġid".

nnominah għax iddistingwa ruħu fl-impenn u s-servizz tiegħu lill-Knisja.

Minħabba l-etá tiegħu ma kienx fost il-kardinali eletturi li jivvutaw f'konklavi għall-ħatra ta' Papa ġdid, imma qabel beda l-aħħar konklavi ngħażel imexxi laqgħa ta' talb għall-kardinali fil-Kappella Sistina.

Il-Kardinal Prospero kien iżur Malta ta' sikwit, l-aħħar darba xahrejn ilu meta l-Uffiċċju tal-President, organizza wirja ta' ritratti bl-isem ta' *A thing of beauty is a joy forever* li l-Kardinal, li kien ukoll dilettant sew tal-fotografija u anke studjaha, kien ħa hu stess tul 70 sena.

Il-Ħadd 5 ta' Jannar kellu jerġa' jżur Malta fuq stedina tal-parroċċa ta' San Lawrenz tal-Birgu biex imexxi l-bidu taċ-ċelebrazzjonijiet b'tifkira tal-mitejn sena mindu l-parroċċa saret Kolleġġjata.

Il-Kardinal Prospero kien issieħeb mal-Ordni tal-Agostinjani fl-1943 fl-etá ta' 29 sena. Ġie ordnat saċerdot seba' snin wara fil-Bażilika ta' San Giovanni Laterano f'Ruma.

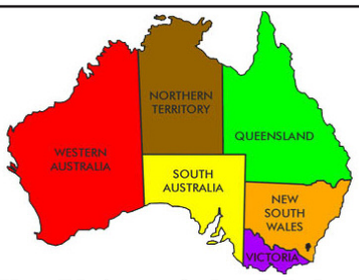
Minn kmieni wera l-għerf tiegħu. Kien baqa' jistudja kemm f'Oxford u wkoll Cambridge fl-Ingilterra. Wara mar lura Ruma fejn serva bħala espert fil-Kongregazzjoni għad-Dutrina tal-Fidi u għallem f'għadd ta' universitajiet konnessi mas-Santa Sede. Kiseb ukoll id-dottorat fit-teoloġija mill-Università Gregorjana ta' Ruma u ġie anke liċenzjat fl-Iskrittura Mqaddsa mill-Istitut Pontifiċju Bibliku ta' Ruma.

Tul ħajtu ngħata għadd ta' karigi importanti fil-knisja, fosthom professur tat-teoloġija bibblika fl-Università tal-Lateran. Fl-1984 ġie maħtur mill-Papa Gwanni Pawlu II bħala konsultur għall-Kongregazzjoni għad-Duttrina tal-Fidi.

Hu serva lill-Knisja fil-Kummissjoni Bibblika tas-Santa Sede u anke għallem f'diversi universitajiet u istituti prestiġġjuzi f'Ruma.

F'Malta għamel żmien Segretarju tal-Provinċja Maltija Agostinjana u f'Jum ir-Repubblika tal-2011, ingħata l-unur ta' Kumpann tal-Ordni Nazzjonali tal-Mertu.

Have your say/Xi trid tgħid?



The Voice of the Maltese

fortnightly magazine

This is a bi-lingual (in English and Maltese) fortnightly magazine that specifically targets all Maltese living abroad with emphasis on the Australian and Maltese scenes.

The magazine can also be read in flipbook format online. A pdf copy is also sent via email on request. If you require a printed copy we can also oblige.

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Letters for publication in The Voice magazine, either in Maltese or English should include name, e-mail address and residence of the writer, and be e-mailed to: maltesevoice@gmail.com.

Now you can also join us on facebook:
https://www.facebook.com/groups/thevoice-ofthemaltese

Your letters/ L-ittri tagħkom ...

The proof is all there

Chris Muscat from Bowen Hills, Qld. writes:

If any more proof was needed as to the weight The Voice of the Maltese carries and the credentials it has with the authorities in both Australia and Malta, then this was shown in the Special Christmas issue, the last one for 2019.

To manage to have the President of Malta, the Prime Ministers of Australia and Malta, the Foreign Minister of Malta and the Leader of the Opposition in Australia, along with those of the respective High Commissioners, was something to be proud of.

I know of no other magazine or newspaper, in particular one that looks after the interests of the Maltese Diaspora, especially in Australia that has ever been so honoured.

There are a lot of newsletters, mostly run by amateurs, flying around among the Maltese in Australia but none of them enjoys this much esteem from the people who matter.

So no wonder that most of the members of the Maltese community that I am acquainted with are readers of this magazine and regard it so highly. Even the fact that SBS listens to you and that you have so many distinguished correspondents is a feather in your cap.

So please keep it up for the sake of us readers. I really wish you the best for the New Year and hope that you continue to work for our causes.

Haters made into saints

George Farrugia from Alexandria NSW writes:

I really hate it when somebody who does so much harm to people in his lifetime is depicted as some kind of saint. Though I would never wish ill on anybody, not even my worst enemies, I believe it right that the evil that people do also lives after them.

I do not wish to name any names myself but perhaps most of the readers can find a number of such examples. Even worse than that the fact that people still living who bore the brunt of the deceased could be blamed for even mentioning the hurt they suffered from such when they had been continuously targeted throughout the years.

The only consolation would be that people with a good memory could, if they really want to, to recognise the truth from the fiction that others, for reasons of their own, want to nurture and to force down people's throats and make them forget.

How cruel that the real innocents are punished and the haters are elevated as heroes or saints!

Malta has a habit of doing that.

Fejn huma r-riżorsi?

Tony Spiteri minn Brunswick, Victoria jikteb:

Kulħadd jaf li l-Awstralja għandna temp tal-ġenn, b'għargħar fix-xitwa u nirien bla kontroll fis-sajf. Din mhix xi ħaġa ta' kultant imma regolari, ta' kull sena li tifni lilna li ngħixu hawnhekk.

Ma nistax nifhem kif l-awtoritajiet ta' dan il-kontinent vast u b'tant riżorsi mhumiex kapaċi jwieġbu għal dawn id-diżastri b'aktar effiċjenza biex itaffu kemm jista' jkun it-tbatija lilna li ngħixu hawn.

Fejn huma l-ajruplani li jistgħu jintużaw ħalli jassistu billi jitfgħu miljuni ta' ilma u mhux biss dawk li naraw bħalissa? Ghaliex il-militar ma jmurx hu jgħin ħalli itfi n-nar u mhux qisu jħalli t-tifi biss f'idejn il-voluntieri?

Dawn id-diżastri mhumiex xi ħaġa ta' kull mitt sena iżda jolqtuna kull sajf u kull xitwa. Il-poplu jitlob iktar serjetá f'dawn iż-żmienijiet ta' tbatija u dulur.



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Għall-attenzjoni tal-qarrejja

Il-qarrejja li jixtiequ juru l-fehmiet tagħhom dwar xi suġġett huma mħeġġa li ma jħallux għall-aħħar. Indirizzaw *l-emails* lil *maltesevoice@gmail.com*. L-ittri għall-pubblikazzjoni indikawhom: *Letters to the editor*.



Monument ta' żewġ realtajiet f'Għajnsielem

F'Għajnsielem, l-ewwel raħal li min iżur Għawdex jiltaqa' miegħu għad kif ġie inawgurat mill-Ministru għal Għawdex Justyne Caruana u s-sindku u kunsillieri tal-post, monument u proġett ta' tarag li jżid isebbaħ dan ir-raħal.

Minħabba l-pożizzjoni strateġika tar-raħal, il-Ministru qalet li dan jirrekjedi li jinżamm f'kundizzjoni ottimali, għalhekk il-ministeru qed jinvesti bis-sħiħ fih kemm fejn tidħol infrastruttura, u kemm fejn jidħlu attivitajiet, inizjattivi u proġetti.

Fakkret kif fil-bagit diġà ħabbret investiment ta' €122,000 biex flimkien mal-parroċċa ta' Għajnsielem il-ministeru jagħmel il-proġett tal-pjazza flimkien ma' għadd ta' toroq.

Il-proġett li għadu kif sar hu dak primarju li minnu nibtet l-idea tal-monument ispirat minn żewġ pjazez, Pjazza 10 ta' Diċembru u Pjazza Madonna Loreto.

Il-monument, b'żewġ figuri, ta' mara u raġel bil-qegħda fuq bank, jirrappreżenta żewġ realtajiet tal-ħajja soċjali; dik li għexu missirijietna għexieren ta' snin ilu, u dik li qed ngħixu llum. Fil-parti l-oħra tal-monument hemm tfajla bil-mobile f'idejha, li tirrappreżenta s- soċjeta ta' bħalissa fejn l-avvanz teknoloġiku bidel kompletament il-mod tal-komunikazzjoni.

Il- monument huwa xogħol tal-artist Għawdxi Manuel Farrugia.

L-ekonomija Maltija dgawdi b'€40m minn produzzjoni rekord ta' 21 film

Is-sena li għad kif intemmet kienet waħda rekord għall-industrija tal-films f'Malta wara li l-gzira serviet biex inħadmu 21 film barrani li bejniethom ħallew madwar €40 miljun fl-ekonomija Maltija.

Il-kummissarju tal-films Johann Grech ġie rrappurtat jgħid li dis-sena wkoll se tkun waħda tajba ħafna, l-aktar wara li l-kummissjoni se tniedi strateġija ġdida għall-għaxar snin li ġejjin.

Skont Grech, fl-2019 l-industrija lokali tal-films kienet ferm impenjata u attirat għadd ta' produzzjonjiet li għalkemm ma kinux fost dawk magħrufa bħala block busters, żammet l-industrija attiva. Dis-sena se jinħadmu aktar films f'Malta, fosthom uħud kbar ħafna.

Għall-għaxar snin li ġejjin il-kummissjoni se tissokta tibni fuq l-istrateġija ta' bħalissa, li hu mequs pass li għandu jissokta jibni u jsaħħaħ is-settur tal-industrija kreattiva. Fost it-tiswiħ se jkun hemm ir-rinovazzjoni tat-tankijiet u l-faċilitajiet fil-Malta Film Studios fir-Rinella.



Perspettiva

A version of this series in English may be found in the author's blog at: https://ivancauchi.blogspot.com

kitba ta' IVAN CAUCHI



Mallacoota

Fil-ġranet tal-Milied il-familja tiegħi kienet fir-reġjun ta' East Gippsland ta' Victoria. Għamilna jumejn ikkampjati f'Genoa, ftit 'il barra mit-triq li tagħti għall-villaġġ pittoresk ta' Mallacoota, li apparti l-isbuħija tax-xatt u l-ambjent naturali tiegħu, huwa wieħed mill-postijiet li konna moħħna mistrieħ li nistgħu nisimgħu quddiesa hemmhekk fil-jum tat-twelid ta' Sidna Ġesù Kristu.

Dan għaliex fl-inħawi, il-knejjes huma niexfin qoxqox daqs il-bqija tal-kontinent, għax trid tagħmel wegħda biex issib waħda, ta' liema denominazzjoni tkun.

Fil-fatt, f'Mallacoota hemm knisja waħda, dik ta' St Peter, li hija kooperazzjoni bejn il-*Uniting Church of Australia* u l-Knisja Anglikana. Din is-sena kellna sorpriża sabiħa, għax il-quddiesa tqaddset minn qassis mara. Biex ngħid id-dritt, il-format kien kważi identiku għal dak li mdorri bih fil-knejjes Kattoliċi, u għalhekk ma ħassejtni xejn barra minn posti.

Il-quddiesa għamlitha pjuttost informali, u kellha l-priedka, naturalment madwar it-twelid tal-Bambin, ħelwa u interessanti, bl-għajnuna ta' preżentazzjoni u animazzjoni. Wara, il-kongregazzjoni kienu mistiedna għal festin żgħir fejn kellna l-opportunità li nsiru nafu ftit dwar il-komunità żgħira ta' voluntiera t'hemmhekk.

Ġieli nsibu ruħna f'din is-sitwazzjoni, fejn li nkunu nistgħu nisimgħu quddiesa, jew nipparteċipaw f'servizz, jiddependi fuq id-denominazzjoni Nisranija li jirnexxielna nsibu fil-post imwarrab li nkunu fih. Darba minnhom snin ilu lanqas biss sibna servizz nisrani, imma servizz ekumeniku li kien miftuħ għal kull reliġjon.

Il-Knisja Kattolika għandha Liġi Kanonika 844 li tippermetti bħala eċċezzjoni taħt diversi kundizzjonijiet li Kattoliku jirċievi xi sagramenti inklużi l-ewkaristija minn ministri mhux Kattoliċi fejn is-sagramenti jkunu validi, meta ministri Kattoliċi ma jkunx possibbli li jiġu avviċinati. Madankollu l-fatt li t-tqaddis sar minn mara, li l-Knisja tagħna ma tapprovax u lanqas ma tapprova l-ordinazzjonijiet Anglikani, aktarx li jagħmel din l-eċċezzjoni mhux applikabbli.

Ikolli ngħarraf li ma tantx tlift irqad bl-għali.

Li tellifni l-irqad u tani nkwiet mhux ħażin kienet ir-riħa persistenti u ċ-ċpar ta' duħħan li kellna matul il-ġita tagħna, għalkemm nar dirett qatt ma rajna. Wara li ħallejna lil Mallacoota, komplejna nikkampjaw mal-kosta ta' East Gippsland sakemm kellna nitilqu bil-biża' ta' nirien f'kamp minnhom maġenb Lake Tayers.

Kien b'sogħba kbira nsiru nafu wara li n-nar ħebb ukoll għall-villaġġ ta' Mallacoota, u sakemm qiegħed nikteb, għad hemm ħafna nies maqbudin f'dan il-villaġġ, qrib tax-xatt biex jaħarbu min-nirien, ma jistgħux joħorġu mill-unika triq li minn Mallacoota tgħaddi għal Genoa.

Ħaġa straordinarja kienet li naqraw li bastimenti mill-flotta navali Awstraljana kellha tintuża biex tevakwa lin-nies lokali u turisti mill-post, operazzjoni li għadha għaddejja s'issa.

Nista' biss nimmaġina dik il-foresta folta int u ssuq lejn Mallacoota fuq triq dejqa ddur 'l hawn u 'l hemm, min jaf x'baqa' minnha. Qrajt dwar nies li semgħu lill-koalas iwerżqu waqt li s-siġar li kienu fuqhom ħadu n-nar u nħarqu ħajjin. Orribbli għall-aħħar.

Ta' dieqa wkoll li f'dan l-infern ta' miljuni ta' ettari f'mijiet ta' ħuġġieġi, mietu xi nies ukoll, kemm dawk involuti fit-tifi tan-nar u kemm nies tal-post, u ntilfu aktarx mijiet ta' residenzi u strutturi oħra.

Iktar ta' dieqa hu li l-istorja għadha ma spiċċatx, u huma mistennija jiem oħra ta' temperaturi għoljin u riskji ġodda jew imkabbra.

Naħseb ukoll fil-kongregazzjoni ta' Mallacoota li ltqajt magħha f'jum il-Milied dakinhar, fejn fraħna flimkien bil-miġja ta' Ġesù minkejja d-differenzi formali tad-denominazzjonijiet tagħna.

Kien hemm familji bit-tfal, nies anzjani u oħrajn, uħud minnhom kellimnihom u trejjaqna flimkien. Naħseb fihom, fil-qassis mara li mexxiet lill-komunità Nisranija hemm miġbura fit-talb, fil-knisja ċkejkna li laqgħatna dakinhar.

Nitlob għalihom ilkoll.



Nies li nqabdu f'Mallacoota qed jiġu evakwati

Breakaway Travel Blacktown

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L-Istrina fl-imgħoddi

- okkażjoni li t-tfal kienu jistennewha bil-ħerqa



Daż-żmien meta wieħed isemmi l-Istrina jiftakar f'dak li issa ilu jsir is-snin, l-okkażjoni tal-għada tal-Milied, il-ġabra li tiġi trasmessa minn fuq kull stazzjon tat-televiżjoni f'Malta b'risq il- Community Chest Fund, li kull sena ssir taħt l-awspiċi tal-President ta' Malta. Din hija tnedija ta' kampanja, mhux biss ta' ġbir, iżda wkoll ta' solidarjetà ma' dawk li jkunu jinħtieġu l-għajnuna, l-aktar dik medika, u xi ħtiġijiet oħra marbuta ma' mard serju.

Din l-okkażjoni tgħaqqad lil Malta u kull sena jsiru appelli ħerqana, mhux biss minn min ikun President, din id-darba, fis-26 ta' Diċembru li għadda għall-ewwel darba mill-E.T. Dr George Vella, imma wkoll mill-politiċi. Din l-istrina, issa magħrufa bħala Festa ta' Solidarjetá kif sirna nafuha, għaddiet u tulha nġabret is-somma sabiħa ta' €6,220,000.

Fl-imgħoddi l-Istrina ma kinetx issir b'dan il-mod … għalkemm kienet ukoll marbuta mal-ġbir tal-flus – iżda dak kien ġbir għat-tfal. L-okkazjoni kienet marbuta mal-ewwel jum tas-sena, fil-bidu ta' sena ġdida.



Xena mill-Istrina dis-sena f'Malta, Festa ta' Solidarjetá

Nimmaġina li għad hawn ħafna mill-qarrejja, fosthom dawk li għażlu li ħajjithom jgħixuha barra minn Malta, bħala emigranti, li jiftakruha l-aktar dawk ta''il fuq minn 60 sena.

Fl-imgħoddi t-tfal kollha taż-żewġ gżejjer kienu jistennew din l-istrina b'ħerqa kbira. Ir-raġuni kienet minħabba li f'dan il-jum ta' bidu ta' sena ġdida, it-tfal kienu jingħataw xi ħaġa mqar żgħira tal-flus mingħand il-ġirien, mingħand iz-zijiet, in-nanniet u mingħand dawk li forsi matul is-sena jkunu għamlulhom xi qadi.

L-istrina kienet ir-rigal fi flus tat-tfal, li kien l-għors tagħhom li jimlew il-bott (speċi t' karus) biċ-ċekċik. Ġeneralment dak iż-żmien ma tantx kien hawn flus x'jitqassmu, allura għat-tfal, il-ftit li kienu jaqilgħu kien bħal manna fid-dežert.

Id-drawwa li t-tfal jingħataw ir-rigali ta' ġugarelli u ħtiġijiet oħra għall-Milied kienet għadha 'l bogħod. Din daħlet filgżejjer tagħna bil-mod il-mod u l-okkażjoni tbiddlet. Illum il-ġurnata r-rigali jingħataw għal żmien il-Milied, u ħadu post l-Istrina ta' dari marbuta mal-Ewwel tas-Sena.

Dari t-tfal fl-Istrina kienu jqumu kmieni, imorru f'xi knisja ħalli f'dak il-jum jgħinu l-quddies kemm jista' jkun. Ir-raġuni kienet li wara l-quddies, il-qassis kien jagħtihom dik ix-xi ħaġa tal-istrina. Kien żmien li fix tassew li kull sold jgħodd.

Is-sagristani wkoll kienu jagħtu dik ix-xi ħaġa żgħira lil dawk it-tfal li jkunu jmorru jġibu l-ostji mingħand is-sorijiet, jew lil dawk li ta' kuljum kienu jmorru f'xi forn biex iġibu l-fatħam għaċ-ċensier, jew lil dawk li kienu jgħinuhom jiġbru s-siġġijiet.

Lilhom ukoll kienet tingħatalhom xi ħaġa żgħira strina, kif ukoll kienet tingħata lil dawk li jdoqqu l-qniepen, l-aktar dawk li kienu jduqquhom filgħodu kmieni.

Drawwa oħra f'xi rħula kienet tkun li ssir ġabra fil-quddies kollu tal-knisja u dak li jingabar jingħata rigal (strina) lis-sagristan. Veru li s-sagristan kien jitħallas matul is-sena imma dik tal-istrina kienet tkun bħal speċi ta' bonus.

Ħafna mill-ġirien tista' tgħid li lkoll kienu jagħtu dik ix-xi ħaġa żgħira lit-tfal tat-triq. Kien hemm min jagħti sitta u min sold (fi flus antiki) ... naturalment kulħadd kemm kien ikun jista' jew aħjar skont kemm tgħidlu qalbu.

Naturalment kont issib ukoll xi wħud b'idejhom iebsa mat-tfal anke f'dan il-jum tal-Istrina. Għalhekk, mhux darba jew tnejn it-tfal kienu jimtlew bil-buli għax wara xi sena qadi, dak li jkun ma jkunx daħħal idejh fil-but fl-Istrina. Ħafna tfal kienu jiftakruha din, u kienu jpattuhielhom fis-sena ta' wara.

Lit-tfal l-istrina kienet tingħatalhom ukoll minn tal-merċa, tal-laħam, tal-ħaxix ... insomma minn dawk is-sidien tal-ħwienet li ta' spiss it-tfal kienu jmorru jixtru mingħandhom il-ħtiġijiet tad-dar. Dawk li ma kinux jeħduha fil-jum tagħha, kienet tingħatalhom l-għada. Dawn is-sidien tal-ħwienet kienu jgħidu lit-tfal, "Hawn xi ħaġa tal-istrina għax għadni ma tajtek xejn."

Għajnejn it-tfal kienu jleqqu bil-ferħ u kienu jibqgħu obbligati s-sena kollha. Hemm kienu jagħżlu biex imorru jixtru – "għax dak tani l-istrina".

Għall-Istrina min jaf kemm it-tfal kienu jikkalkulaw minn qabel kemm se jaqilgħu u fiex kienu se jonfqu l-flus li jaħsbu li se jdaħħlu. Il-bniet jaħsbu għal xi pupa b'għajnejha jiċċaqilqu u meta taqlibha wiċċha 'l isfel tgħid mamà u jew taqlibha wiċċha 'l fuq tgħid papà.

Min-naħa tas-subien dilettanti tal-knejjes kienu jmorru jixtru affarijiet għall-knisja; min xi vara tat-tafal bħal appostli, min xi sett gandlieri, xi fjuretti bil-vażuni u oġġetti oħra marbuta mal-knejjes żgħar u ħelwin li kienu jagħmlu t-tfal tagħna fid-djar tagħhom.

Oħrajn kienu jmorru jixtru xi ballun ħalli jkollhom biex jilagħbu fit-toroq tagħna li f'dawk iż-żminijiet kienu għadhom battala mit-traffiku li tara llum, u xi mudell żgħir ta' karozza.

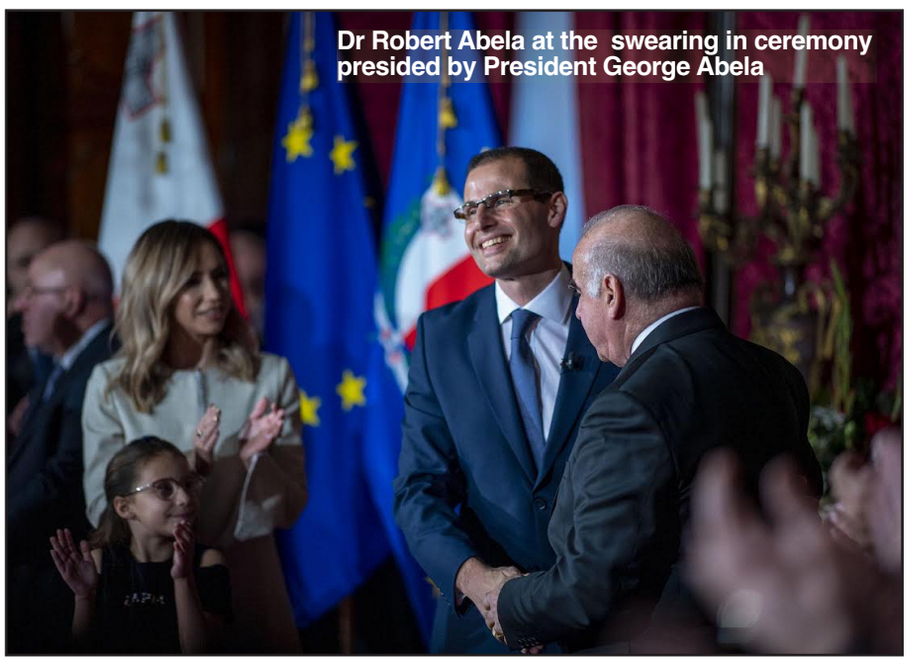
Tfal oħra li forsi kienu aktar fil-bżonn u li f'dawk iż-żminijiet konna nsejħulhom tfal foqra kienu jonfqu l-istrina f'ħelu li matul is-sena ftit li xejn kienu jduqu. Oħrajn jagħtuhom lill-ġenituri ħalli bil-flus li jingħatawlhom l-omm kienet iżżid xi ħaġa magħhom u tixtrilhom xi żarbun, jew xi ħwejjeġ x'jilbsu.

Din kienet l-istrina tat-tfal ta' dari. Filgħodu kulħadd jiġri minn hemm għal hawn, jara li l-bott qed jimtela mhux ħażin u jara li ma ħalla lil ħadd barra. F'dak il-jum kien jara li jmur jagħmel dik id-daqsxejn ta' xirja.

Roundup of News About Malta

Robert Abela is sworn in as Malta's new Prime Minister

On Monday (January 13), Robert Abela, a 42-year-old lawyer by profession, was sworn in as Malta's eighth Prime Minister since Independence in 1964 and the 14th since self-government in 1921. He claimed the position automatically after winning the election for the Leadership of the Labour Party early on Sunday morning, beating Chris Fearne in a race which he had begun as an underdog.


Dr Robert Abela at the swearing in ceremony presided by President George Abela

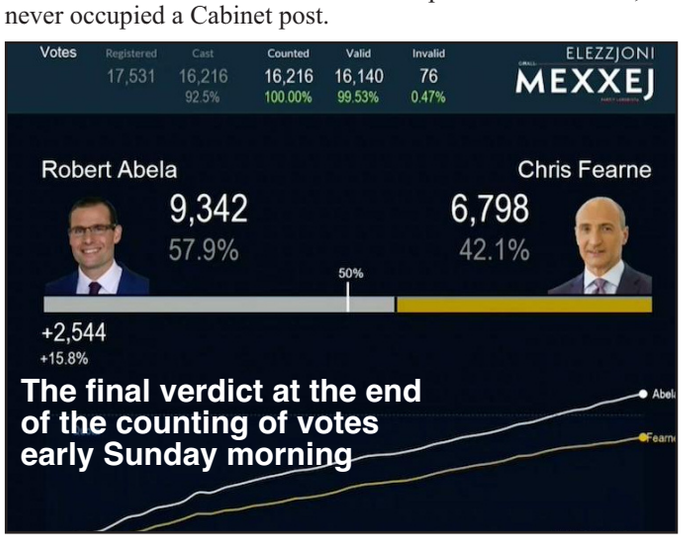
The swearing in ceremony at the palace in Valletta was presided by President George Vella, in the presence of Abela's family, cabinet ministers and friends. Afterwards he walked to his PM office in Castille amidst the greetings of the people.

He succeeds Jo-seph Muscat who announced his resignation last December and left the office as PM and LP Leader on Sunday.

Dr Abela beat his rival by securing 9.342 votes, equivalent to 57.9 per cent of the votes cast. Dr Chris Fearne obtained 6,798, or 42.1%, of the votes in what is being described as one of the biggest upsets in contemporary political history.

Robert, born June 22, 1977 is married to Lydia, the secretary of the Labour Party executive committee. They have a seven-year-old daughter, Giorgia Mae. He is the son of former President Emeritus George Abela who himself had also run for the Labour Party leadership and lost to Joseph Muscat in 2008.

Robert has been in Parliament for less than three years. He had been elected to the House of Representatives in the June 2017 General Election after contesting for the first time the sixth district, that included Siggiewi, Luqa and Qormi. He became a legal consultant to former Prime Minister Joseph Muscat's cabinet, but never occupied a Cabinet post.



On November 28 last year he had claimed that the Labour Party would need deep-rooted changes rather than superficial ones, and only announced that he would be running for the Labour Party leadership and automatic Premiership early in the New Year. His meteoric rise took less than three years to achieve.

He focussed his campaign on social housing, free medicines for the elderly, cracking down on cheap labour migrant workers and better employment conditions for blue-collar workers.

Speaking for the first time after winning the race, early Sunday morning (at about 1.45 a.m.) with wife Lydia beside him, Robert Abela said, "I am humbled. I thank my friend Chris (Fearne the other contestant) and look forward to working together for the good of the party and country.

"There is only one winner today, the Labour Party. Now we must work hard to unite the country".

Addressing the crowd, he said, "Let's get to work."

Voting among the Labour Party faithful was held on Saturday among just over 17,500 paid-up Labour Party members who were eligible to vote for either Cabinet adviser Robert Abela or Deputy Prime Minister Chris Fearne to take over from outgoing Prime Minister Joseph. There was a very high turnout of around 92.5 per cent

The party election was the second consecutive Labour Party leadership race to feature a member of the Abela family. In 2008, Joseph Muscat beat Robert's father George for the position post.

On Sunday afternoon, at the closure of the 2020 Congress at the Corradino Sports Complex that officially declared him the winner of the leadership race, Dr Abela delivered his first official speech.

He told party supporters: "From now on I do not want to hear of Chris's people, or Robert's people. We are all children of the same party." He also thanked Fearne for his role in the race. He said Dr Fearne had called him in the morning to congratulate him and to pledge his loyalty.

He stressed on continuity, suggesting he would fulfil Labour's electoral mandate. "I will continue the project started by Joseph Muscat. This will be a party open for everyone," he said.

At the end of the day, after Robert Abela's swearing in Monday, regardless of their personal preferences, the Parliamentary group has pledged to back the new leader to the hilt. "We will all be gas-down behind the new leader, because that is what the party and the country deserve," Parliamentary whip Byron Camilleri said.

In his first public statement one day after the contest, Chris Fearne pledged loyalty to the Labour Party and its values. He also thanked the "thousands" who had voted for him.

Outgoing Prime Minister Joseph Muscat said he would be "proud to be handing over the office of Prime Minister to Robert."

Roundup of News About Malta

Fitch affirms Malta's A+ rating

Fitch Agency has affirmed Malta's A+ rating with positive outlook in its credit rating report, a decision that has been welcomed by the Ministry for Finance as reflecting that Malta's institutions are considered stronger than the majority of similarly rated countries.

The positive outlook reflects Fitch's expectation of sustained high economic growth from diverse sources in the medium term. As a result, it expects Malta's per capita income to continue converging to the EU average in the coming years.

Malta also outperformed the 'A' median on the World Bank human development and governance indicators. Fitch acknowledges that the government guarantees are on a clear downward trend. It expects Malta to con-tinue upholding its fiscal rules targeting a balanced budget in structural terms and ensuring that expenditure growth does not exceed the economy's potential growth rate.

Despite the strong economic growth enjoyed by the Maltese economy, Fitch notes that there has been little evidence of overheating. Indeed, it forecasts inflation to remain below the 2% threshold this year and the next.

The agency further acknowledges recent efforts to strengthen supervisory and regulatory institutions. It commends the recent increase in the FIAU and MFSA budget, as well as the new supervisory procedures introduced in July.

The credit rating agency also notes that financial soundness indicators are strong and improving.

On the external side, the credit rating report expects Malta's current account balance to remain in surplus despite the Eurozone slowdown.

Finance Minister Edward Scicluna said, "I am pleased to note that Fitch has acknowledged our policies to sustain growth by diversifying the Maltese economy as well as our sound and prudent management of public finance.



Ministers Chris Fearne and Justyn Caruana

In favour of family businesses in Gozo

At an information session on initiatives in favour of family businesses held jointly between the Family Business Office, the Ministry for Gozo and the Gozo Business Chamber that was attended by, among others, Minister of Health Chris Fearne and the Minister for Gozo Justyne Caruana, Fearne stressed the importance of small enterprises that are family owned.

He said that the government is committed to continue to assist these business entities' progress, and highlighted their importance for the national economy, and the need to continue providing them with the required assistance, so that they are able to compete on a level playing field with larger business entities, which leads to a more sustainable economy.

Minister Justyne Caruana on her part pointed out that the opening of a branch of the Family Business Office in Gozo is only one of the initiatives being undertaken to continue to enhance the Gozitan economy.

She said that other initiatives currently in the pipeline also include incentives for companies to relocate to Gozo, initiatives to attract private companies' back office work to Gozo, and also initiatives to incentivise companies, enabling them to provide teleworking to Gozitan employees.

40 cultural events in Valletta in 2020

During this year Malta's capital, Valletta would be hosting over 40 large cultural events that would include the participation of about 300 artists. Two of the main events would be, *"Belt il-Beltin"* on Valletta Day in *Pjazza San Ġorġ* and the Valletta Pageant of The Seas on June 7.



The signing by Walter Haßmann (left) and Prof, Godfrey Pirotta

Further German investment in MEDAC

An agreement that should see further investment by Germany in the Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies has been signed in Valletta between Ambassador Walter Haßmann, on behalf of the Federal Foreign Office of Germany, and Professor Godfrey Pirotta, Chairperson of the Academy.

The agreement would also see the continuation of a German Chairperson for Peace Studies and Conflict Prevention at MEDAC, confirming Germany's interest in the Mediterranean Region.

The agreement was signed in the presence of Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade Promotion Carmelo Abela who said that in the last 30 years of the MEDAC establishment, students from 31 countries (35% from Europe, 23% from North Africa and 25% from the Middle East) have benefitted from scholarships on offer.

The Minister said that this affirms the importance of MEDAC in training diplomats, not just for Malta, but also for countries in the Mediterranean and beyond. Today, many alumni now occupy high positions in national governments and regional, as well as international, institutions.

It also shows that both Malta and Germany recognize the vital importance of the region, especially with regards to the latest political developments and the need for strong, cooperative Euro-Mediterranean relations.



Mix-xena tal-ħajja Maltija

minn Ġużè Camilleri



Joseph Muscat: *'Ma jiddispjaċini xejn li ddedikajt ħajti għall-pajjiż'*

Hekk kif temm ħidmietu bħala Prim Ministru, pożizzjoni li kien ilu jokkupa għal sitt snin u disa' xhur, u wkoll Mexxej tal-Partit Laburista għal madwar 12-il sena, Joseph Muscat għamel id-diskors tal-aħħar lill-Kungress tal-partit fejn beda biex ta ħajr lil dawk kollha li kienu miegħu tul il-vjaġġ sa minn meta ngħata l-inkarigu l-karigi.

Kif daħal fil-padiljun tal-isports ta' Kordin flimkien ma' martu Michelle u wliedu, Joseph Muscat sellem lill-kontestanti għall-kariga ta' mexxej Laburista, Robert Abela u Chris Fearne.

Imbagħad minn kmieni fid-diskors assigura lill-folla emozzjonata li ħonqot il-padiljun b'ħafna min-nies biddmugħ iġelben fuq ħaddejhom, li minkejja li rriżenja mill-karigi xorta se jibqa' mal-Partit Laburista. Għall-kumplament tal-leġislatura, għalkemm mhux se jkun fuq quddiem se jibqa' fil-Parlament. Mingħajr xkiel ta' elezzjonijiet, se jinvolvi ruħu f'żewġ oqsma li huma ferm għal qalbu, il-libertajiet ċivili u l-qasam sportiv.

Fid-diskors imqanqal tiegħu l-Prim Ministru semma kif meta ta' 34 sena ngħata l-inkarigu, kien hemm min ħasseb setax iwettaq dak li kien wieġħed. Mill-ewwel kien qal li se jirbaħ għax kien determinat. L-avversarji li llum qed jifirħu li rriżenja, ma jistgħux jgħidu li rebħulu jew li rebħu lill-partit immexxi minnu għax irnexxielu jwassal lill-pajjiż fejn wieġħed, qal.

Tkellem dwar il-kisbiet pożittivi li għamel



Joseph Muscat flimkien ma' martu Michelle u wliedu Etoile u Soleil fi tmiem l-aħħar diskors tiegħu bħala Prim Ministru u mexxej tal-Partit Laburista

Appell biex il-PL ma jħalli qatt li l-firda u l-mibgħeda jirbħu fuq l-imħabba

il-pajjiż taħt it-tmexxija tiegħu u s-sodisfazzjon li jaqsam mumenti mill-isbaħ ma' dawk li kkuntattjawh biex jgħidulu bid-differenza li kienu għamlu f'ħajjithom permezz tar-riformi introdotti fl-aħħar snin.

Qal li għandu d-dispjaċiri tiegħu u li anke jekk kellu jħallas bl-akbar prezz politiku, huwa kburi li offra ħajtu għall-poplu biex iservi f'din il-kariga.

Joseph Muscat appella biex il-Partit Laburista ma jħalli qatt li l-firda u l-mibegħda jirbħu fuq l-imħabba.

Qal li hu l-ewwel wieħed li jitlob skuża għall-iżbalji li saru għax qal li fl-aħħar mill-aħħar hu kien responsabbli ta' kollox. Joseph Muscat qal li weġġa' hu wkoll, u x'ħin beda jara li ma setax jassigura l-pożittività ddecieda li jħalli f'idejn ħaddieħor għax ma jrid lil ħadd jirkeb fuq l-għaqda.

Joseph Muscat issokta jgħid li minkejja l-appoġġ unanimu tal-grupp Parlamentari, u l-maġġoranza assoluta tal-poplu, ħa deċiżjoni li ħass li kienet fl-interess tal-pajjiż. "Iddedikajt ħajti għal dan il-pajjiż u ma jiddispjaċinix."

Joseph Muscat qal li meta' fl-2013 ngħata l-fiduċja tal-poplu kien sab Gvern b'defiċit ta' €250 miljun u 12,000 persuna tiddependi mill-assistenza soċjali. Sab ukoll familji li kellhom jaħdmu iktar u jaqilgħu inqas.

Qal li kien il-Gvern tiegħu li wara kwart ta' seklu żied il-paga minima, u anke wassal biex persuni b'diżabbilità li kienu ddar, issa qed jaħdmu. Huwa ħeġġeġ lill-Prim Ministru ta' warajh biex jibqa' jieħu ħsieb l-anzjani tal-pajjiż.

Muscat qal li riforma li beda u jiddispjacih li m'għalaqx hi r-rappreżentanza ta' iżjed nisa f'kull livell tas-soċjetà, u jrid li jitneħħa l-privileġġ parlamentari ħalli kulħadd ikun responsabbli ta' għemilu u ta' kliemu.

Fost id-dispjaċiri tiegħu hemm li kien fi żmienu li seħħ il-qtil ta' Daphne Caruana Galizia. Sostna li ħallas l-ikbar prezz politiku biex jissolva dan il-każ, imma kuntent li kien ukoll taħtu bħala Prim Ministru li nqabdu l-allegati qattiela u l-mandatarju.

Joseph Muscat temm billi irringrazzja lil martu Michelle li, qal kienet is-sinsla tiegħu speċjalment meta kien dgħajjef. Ta wkoll ħajr lill-ġenituri tiegħu li "f'dawn is-snin inkwetaw ħafna" għalih. Fuq kollox irringrazzja wkoll lit-tewmin tiegħu Etoile u Soleil li, qal, trabbew sodi ħafna.

Joseph Muscat qal li ma jiddispjaċih xejn ta' dawn is-snin kollha ta' ħidma u temm kif beda meta kien laħaq Prim Ministru, bil-kelma 'Inħobbkom'.





Mix-xena tal-ħajja Maltija

minn Ġużè Camilleri



Skont stħarriġ tal-Ewrobarometru ...

Il-Maltin b'fiduċja b'saħħitha fil-Gvern

Stħarriġ tal-Ewrobarometru wera li l-familji Maltin għandhom fiduċja b'saħħitha fil-Gvern, u ferm aktar milli għandhom ċittadini f'pajjiżi oħra tal-Unjoni Ewropea.

Dan l-istħarriġ jindika li 51% tal-poplu jafdaw fil-Gvern, kontra l-34% fil-bqija tal-Unjoni Ewropea.

Qabel il-bidla fl-amministrazzjoni fl-2013, il-fiduċja fil-Gvern kienet tlaħħaq biss l-34%. Barra minnhekk il-proporzjon ta' Maltin u Għawdxin li ma jafdawx illl-Gvern huwa t-tielet l-inqas madwar l-Unjoni Ewropea.

B'kuntrast l-Ewrobarometru jindika li l-fiduċja tal-poplu fil-gazzetti naqset għal 28% biss, li hu l-inqas livell ta' fiduċja wara dak fl-Ingilterra.

Mhux hekk biss, imma Malta hija wieħed mill-ftit pajjiżi fl-Unjoni Ewropea fejn il-maġġoranza ta' dawk intervistati jemmnu li l-pajjiż sejjer f'direzzjoni tajba. Instab li 39% ta' dawk intervistati jsostnu li l-affarijiet f'Malta sejrin fid-direzzjoni t-tajba, kuntrarju għar-rata medja ta' 31% madwar il-pajjiżi tal-Unjoni Ewropea.

Ta' min jinnota li kienu biss 29% ta' dawk intervistati li sostnew li l-pajjiż sejjer fid-direzzjoni l-ħażina. F'Novembru 2012 il-proporzjon kien ta' 46%. Madwar l-Unjoni Ewropea 56% iħossu li l-affarijiet sejrin f'direzzjoni ħażina.

Instab ukoll li filwaqt li madwar l-Unjoni Ewropea huma 47% li jħossu li l-ekonomija sejra tajjeb, f'Malta huma il 81% ta' dawk intervistati li jsostnu li l-ekonomija sejra tajjeb.

L-ottimiżmu eko-nomiku li hawn f'Malta hu kważi d-doppju ta' dak fl-istħarriġ li kien sar qabel il-bidla fil-Gvern fl-2013.

Aktar min-nofs il-Maltin intervistati dakinhar ħassew li l-ekonomija kienet sejra ħażin. Illum dan il-proporzjon naqas għal 12%. Apparagun, fl-Unjoni Ewropea bħalissa huma 50% li jħossu li l-ekonomija sejra ħażin.



Fl-istħarriġ issokta jirriżulta li l-qagħda finanzjarja ta' 82% tal-familji f'Malta hija tajba, filwaqt li 77% tal-Maltin jemmnu li l-qasam tal-impjiegi sejjer tajjeb.

Fejn għandha x'-taqsam in-negattivitá, 19% ta' dawk intervistati qalu li jistennew li fl-2020 is-sitwazzjoni ta' Malta se teħżien, imma mbagħad madwar l-Unjoni Ewropea nstab li 27% ta' dawk intervistati jaħsbu li mal-Ewropa se tkun ħażina.

Bħalissa f'Malta hawn l-inqas rata ta' biża' dwar il-qgħad fost il-familji minn fost il-pajjiżi kollha tal-Unjoni Ewropea.

Ir-riżultati tal-Ewrobarometru juru ottimiżmu u fiduċja fost il-familji f'Malta. Il-qagħda ekonomika, li tinkwieta ħafna lill-familji madwar l-Ewropa, ma hi ta' l-ebda nkwiet għall-familji Maltin u Għawdxin.

Ta' 75+ issa jivvjaġġaw bla ħlas

Mill-1 ta' Jannar ta' din is-sena l-anzjani kollha ċittadini Maltin li għandhom 75 sena jew aktar bdew jużaw it-trasport pubbliku, billi jivvjaġġaw fuq tal-linja bla ma jħallsu. Hekk bdew igawdu minn miżura li kienet ġiet imħabbra fl-aħħar baġit.

Issa l- Ministru għat-Trasport u Infrastruttura Ian Borg qal li l-iskema magħrufa bħala *Bus75+* se tingħaqad ma' dik tal-*Bus20* (żgħażagħ taħt l-20 sena) u wkoll l-iskema għat-trasport pubbliku b'xejn għal persuni b'diżabilità.

Waqt konferenza tal-aħbarijiet il-Ministru spjega kif din kienet wegħda oħra mwettqa fil-baġit għal din is-sena.

Filwaqt li qal li din il-wegħda li se tkompli tinċentiva l-pubbliku sabiex jagħmel aktar użu mis-servizzi tat-trasport pubbliku (tal-linja), il-Ministru qal li grazzi għall-iskemi Bus20 matul l-2019 kien hemm 39,000 persuna li għamlu użu minn madwar tmien miljun vjaġġ b'xejn.

Il-ħsieb aħħar hu li fi ftit tas-snin, it-trasport pubbliku f'Malta jkun b'xejn għal kulħadd.



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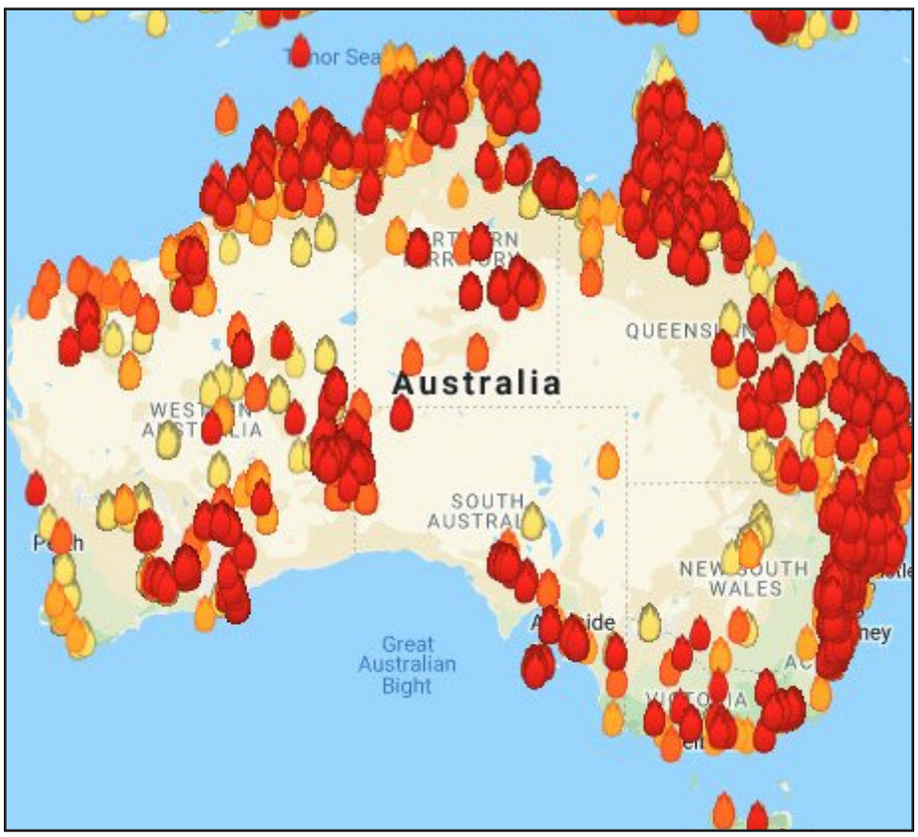
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A quick glympse at Australia

Bushfires dubbed as the biggest in history



Bushfires are regular in this vast continent but the extreme fires over the holiday period were dubbed the biggest in Australia's history with both the states of Victoria and NSW declaring a state of disaster/emergency. There were mass evacuations of country towns with hundreds of homes destroyed and loss of life.

More than five million hectares have been burnt nationwide in this bushfire season alone and there are still three months left of the fire season. That's an area greater than the country of Wales. It is also a bigger area than Belgium and Luxembourg combined, and most of the size of Ireland.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison committed $2 billion to a national bushfire recovery fund. Mr Morrison said the money would be paid out over the next two calendar years. "If further funds are required, further funds will be provided," the Prime Minister told reporters in Canberra. The government has already announced the rollout of up to 3,000 Defence Force reservists to help handle the fallout from fires.

Call for a Royal Commission

The Greens have called for a Royal Commission into the country's bushfire crisis amid weeks of political debate and calls for stronger action on the fires from the federal government. There is a need to go to the "root cause" of the bushfires.

Greens leader Senator Richard Di Natale said Prime Minister Scott Morrison had failed his "duty to keep citizens safe from harm. His inadequate response to these fires and his obstinate refusal to accept what we have known for decades: that burning climate-changing fossil fuels would lead to more frequent and intense bushfires is putting the lives of Australians at risk," he said.

Senator Di Natale also said "Australia's climate has changed and we need to make sure that our land management, disaster response and climate policies are relevant to the new reality we face." Mr Di Natale also called on the Prime Minister to convene an emergency summit to "ensure that everything is being done to address the immediate crisis".

He said the federal government and the opposition must both step up to tackle extreme weather by phasing out coal.

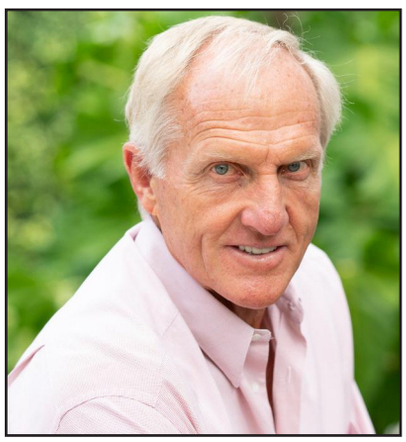


But Opposition Labor leader Anthony Albanese said while he wouldn't rule out a Royal Commission into bushfires, he wants to see action now. "I think it's immediate action that is required, not something that will report in six months, which is the minimum time for a Royal Commission normally," he said.

"They take years rather than months and what we need right now is for COAG [Council of Australian Governments] to be convened."

Meanwhile capital city Canberra's air quality has been rated the worst in the world as bushfire smoke shrouded the nation's capital. The IQAir AirVisual website, which collates air quality information globally, ranked the Australian nation's capital above the likes of Kolkata and Delhi in India.

A quick glympse at Australia



Re bushfires: Consult the aboriginal people

Aussie golf legend 64-year-old Greg Norman *(pictured left)* has posted an emotional message of heartbreak as Australia's bushfire crisis rages on even as we go to press. On his Twitter account, he wrote; "Seeing these images of death and destruction, the strength of the human spirit, the pure heartache and tragedy the people of Australia have endured cuts to my core and to be brutally honest exposes the stupidity of mankind, I am no expert, but I am a global observer, of course, there is climate change taking place. It is happening worldwide. Australia is just one example".

"To the powers to be who make decisions, wake up, open your eyes and absorb these horrific images and ask yourselves a few very simple questions, because we must learn from this cataclysmic disaster."

Norman went on to offer four strategic bushfire-combating strategies he hopes Australia's political leaders will head.

His range of strategies includes consultation with indigenous leaders.

"1) Procedures, protocols and preparations," he wrote in the 300-word post.

"What lessons have been learnt? What must be adjusted or what new should be implemented? This will happen again. Let's not kick the can down the road.

"2) Should there be a National Fire Service? Not each State being responsible for their own. Australia is on fire!

"3) Burn back. With the animal death toll approaching 1 BILLION, would control burn backs in winter months help reduce this carnage? Seek the advice of Australian Aboriginals. They have been the custodians and carers of our land for over 50,000 years.

"4) maybe a refresh to the 2006 agreement between America and Australia on bushfire/wildlife cooperation.

"Fires happen in America as well and there are approx 25 firebombers in the USA. Learn and support. We must ALL help prevent this magnitude of ugliness from returning and NOT continue to operate with the mentality of suppression vs. prevention!"

How to help

To help those on the front line of the recovery effort, a donation preferably in cash can be made to various organisations and charities. Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews has urged people to pledge money - not clothes or food - to his state's communities, saying they don't have the time, space or people to sort through items.

"I don't want to appear harsh in any way, but we don't need any more clothes, food, trucks on our roads," he said on Sunday. "I know it all comes from a place of kindness and I thank everybody who's made those donations."

The CFA, Victoria's rural fire service, echoed that call: "Experience tells us that donation of money is much more effective and provides more flexibility than the donation of material items or pre-loved goods."

Donations can be made to the state-funded rural fire services. Some states allow pledges to individual brigades: Victoria: CFA; NSW: South Australia: CFS Foundation; Queensland: RFBAQ

Visas to reduce congestion in major cities

The federal government recently introduced two new regional visas – Skilled Work Regional (subclass 491) and Skilled Employer Regional (subclass 494) – as part of its promise to reduce congestion in major cities.

Successful applicants will be required to work and stay in a regional area – considered anywhere in Australia outside of Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne – for at least three years, at which point they will be eligible for permanent residency.

While the federal government announced the regional push, it is largely up to the states to implement the reform as state sponsorship is required for the majority of the 25,000 allocated places.

States determine who is eligible for the visa based on qualifications, profession, age and time spent in the region. For successful applicants, it's a daunting road ahead to permanent residency. The new regional visas replace the subclass 489 regional visa and require visa holders to stay an extra year in the regional area, earning a minimum of $53,900 a year to qualify for permanent residency.

In the lead up to the 2019 federal election, the Coalition announced it would cut the annual permanent residency intake from 190,000 to 160,000 in a bid to ease congestion in the major cities. The change was not opposed by Labor.

Some of the places previously allocated to the Skilled Independent Visa (subclass 189), which replaced the controversial 457 visas in 2018, have now been redirected to the new regional visa stream. That's further reduced the number of permanent resident visa options for migrants.

Michelle Rowland
FEDERAL MEMBER FOR GREENWAY



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Tagħrif dwar il-kitba Maltija u dawk li matul is-sekli ħadmu għall-iżvilupp tal-ilsien Malti

Għall-ewwel darba f'din is-serje l-attenzjoni tagħna tmur fuq kittieba mara, Doreen Micallef, li meta ħalliet din id-dinja tmien snin ilu, l-Ilsien u l-Letteratura Maltija tilfu bniedma qalbiena li minkejja l-fraġilità fiżika tagħha għelbet kull ostaklu u spikkat bil-mod kif tkellmet u kitbet bla biża' u bla tidwir.

Anke jekk kitbet ukoll proża u drammi, għal Doreen Micallef il-poeżija kienet il-bidu u t-tmiem. Kienet tgħid li l-poeżija hija r-ruħ, u kull bniedem li għandu ruħ fih għandu wkoll il-poeżija.

DOREEN MICALLEF - qieset li kull bniedem bir-ruħ għandu fih ukoll il-poeżija

Il-kittieba Maltija Doreen Micallef twieldet il-Furjana, fil-31 ta' Mejju 1949 l-unika bint ta' Gerąldu u Giorgina Micallef, u mietet fl-eta ta' 52 sena fl-1 ta' Diċembru tal-2001.

L-ewwel snin tal-edukazzjoni tagħha ħadithom fl-iskola primarja u dik sekondarja tal-gvern fil-Furjana fejn għexet l-ewwel ftit snin ta' ħajjitha. Hija kompliet tavvanza l-istudji tagħha fil-Malti, fil-letteratura moderna Ewropea, fl-arti u wkoll fil-filosofija.

Doreen speċjalizzat fil-letteratura Maltija u Ingliża u anke kisbet MA fil-letteratura, diploma fir-relazzjonijiet umani u diploma oħra fit-teorija politika.

Hija għexet fi żmien li fih fid-dinja kienu nħolqu movimenti ta' żgħażagħ ribelli li kienu determinati li l-kreattività tagħhom ma tkunx maħnuqa mir-riġidità tradizzjonali u kultant diskriminatorja. Moviment bħal dan li permezz tiegħu ż-żgħażagħ riedu bidla kbira fil-ħsieb kien inħoloq ukoll f'Malta.

Ir-rinaxximent modern tal-ħsieb f'Malta wassal biex għadd ta' żgħażagħ iffurmaw il-Moviment Qawmien Letterarju li għenhom jimirħu f'metodi ħielsa ta' ħsieb u kitba.

Kien żmien li fih il-mara ftit kont issibha f'oqsma pubbliċi, imma Doreen qatt ma ddejqet tkun kontroversjali ladarba kienet konvinta mir-raġunijiet tagħha u kienet kuraġġuża biżżejjed li ssir l-unika kittieba mara tal-Moviment. Dawk li kienu jafuha mill-qrib jgħidu li Doreen kienet l-ewwel poetessa f'Malta li kitbet bil-vers ħieles.

Kienet titkellem b'ċerta konvinzjoni u tinsisti favur il-vers ħieles u sikwit kienet taffronta lil kull min ma qabilx magħha dwar dan. Kienet tisħaq li bħala nazzjon li jifforma parti mid-dinja, kif kien qed iseħħ universalment Malta wkoll kellha dritt li tgħaddi minn din il-bidla.

Minkejja li kellha xi difetti fisiċi ta' saħħa, u magħrufa bħala introverta, kienet tħobb tissoċjalizza u kapaċi tqajjem suġġetti profondi għad-diskussjoni. Kienet ukoll bniedma li tħobb tistaqsi u ma toqgħodx lura anke jekk taf li se tqajjem xi kontroversja. L-aqwa li minnha joħroġ xi element li jtejjeb il-ħsieb li trid twassal.

Inkiteb dwarha li kienet titkellem u taħseb bi stil proża-poetiku, u li s-sentimentaliżmu, ir-ribelljoni, il-qilla, ir-rabja u d-determinazzjoni kienet tinsiġhom f'versi poetiċi f'moħħha. Jekk imbagħad kienet tkun fil-burdata kienet tiktibhom, jekk le kienet tħallihom itiru.

Doreen Micallef kienet tikteb dwar il-letteratura fi 'Il-Berqa' u wara fil-gazzetti tal-Union Press, 'l-orizzont' u 'it-Torċa' tant li kienet popolari mal-edituri li kienu jagħrfu t-talent tagħha u jipprovdulha l-ispazju għall-kitbiet tagħha.



Dwar il-mewt tal-ġenituri, Doreen kitbet hekk:

u dlam u riħ u kesħa u telf u baħħ u mrar fi frar ħriġna fid-dlam
u ntlifna żewġ ombri suwed fil-lejl
il-lejl inġazzat u riefnu il-lejl mistmerr tal-kesħa ta frar ħriġna fid-dlam u ħrabna
żewġ ombri suwed fil-lejl ostaġġi tal-lejl u s-sikta fil-kesħa,
fir-reżħa tal-lejl qattret demgħa waħda…
li kitbet storja dmugħ…
il-lejla l-kwiekeb jibku
il-lejla reġa' frar

Doreen Micallef ippubblikat kemm poeżiji kif ukoll proża,. Minbarra l-ħafna drabi li poeżiji tagħha ġew ippubblikati f'ġurnali jew f'antoloġiji, irnexxielha wkoll tippubblika tliet kotba poetiċi, *'Fit-Triq ta' l-Empirew'* (1975), *'De Profundis'* (1979) u *'Kyrie'* (1980). F'kull wieħed minnhom hemm daħla analitika minn Oliver Friggieri. Xi xogħlijiet tagħha ġew ukoll ippubblikati fir-Renju Unit u fl-Istati Uniti.

Kellha wkoll xi xogħlijiet li dehru fl-antoloġiji *Linji Ġodda* (1973) u *Il-ħna Mkissra* (1992). Ippubblikat ukoll, *Il-Leġġenda tal-Lejl* (1984).

Doreen kienet tikteb ukoll id-drammi u għal tliet darbiet, fl-1969, l-1970 u l-1973 rebħet l-Istilla tad-Deheb (ir-*Redifussion Golden Star*) tar-*Rediffusion* għall-aqwa dramm tas-sena, filwaqt li fl-1984 ingħatat il-*Phoenician Cultural Award*.

Din il-kittieba tibqa' tissemma wkoll għad-damma ta' sitt drammi li ħarġet fl-1972 bl-isem ta' *'Wiċċ imb Wiċċ u Drammi Oħra'*. Għadd ta drammi tagħha ttellgħu ukoll fit-Teatru Manoel jew fuq il-mezzi tax-xandir. Kitbet ukoll *Maqam* li ġie mmużikat minn Charles Camilleri.

L-akbar ħabib u idolu li kellha fil-qasam teatrali kien Francis Ebejer.

Doreen għexet ħajja sempliċi, fqira, kwieta u umli. Fatt li nikkitha ħafna f'ħajjitha kien meta sfat iltima minn ommha u missierha li t-tnejn kienu mietu fl-istess xahar ta' Frar.

Ma kellhiex qraba u spiċċat tgħix waħedha f'appartament fi Triq Sant Andrija fil-belt Valletta. Hawnhekk l-akbar ħbieb tagħha saru l-qtates li kienu jiġru barra qrib fejn kienet tgħix. Kienet tippreferi tibqa' bil-ġuħ hi biex tixtri l-ikel għalihom.

Taħt: **Il-qoxra ta' żewġ volumi iddedikati lil konferenza li kienet saret fl-2011 f'ġieħ Doreen u ppubblikati mill-Akkademja tal-Malti**





Christmas joy provided by the Maltese in Australia



They come from far and wide to witness and enjoy the Christmas cheer and beautifully decorated houses with bright lights and messages of good hope. The festive season in Australia comes during the hot days of summer, this year somewhat spoiled by the devastation caused by the bushfires.

Maltese all over Australia proudly decorate their homes.

In Greystanes NSW along Cumberland Road, we visited the house of Joe & Doris Caruana and that of Sam & Doris Mejlak *(picture above)*.

In front of Vicky Rubnik-Borg's house in Kootingal Street, *(top picture)* carols were sung and a large gathering had a great evening of entertainment. It is becoming a must event during the festive season.

At the La Valette Centre in Blacktown, hundreds attended carols by candlelight and an interesting pageant featuring many children, *il-priedka tal-Milied* and *Nannu Santa*.

Qatt kilt biċċa presepju jew xi pastur?

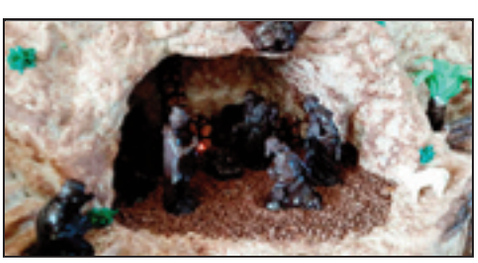
Fejn jidħol l-ikel il-Maltin ma tirbħilhomx. Il-Maltin huma wkoll artisti ċi u kull ċans li jkollhom iħobbu juru ħilithom.

Kif jafu l-qarrejja l-Maltin għadhom ukoll jgħożżu t-tradizzjoni ewlenija tal-presepju, kemm jekk jgħixu Malta inkella barra. Min jaf kemm rajtu minnhom fil-jiem tal-festi tal-Milied!

Mela, l-ikel, il-ħelu u l-artistrija! F'Malta d-dulċier Jimmy Aquilina wera dawk it-tliet ħiliet meta bena presepju kollu kemm hu taċ-ċikkulata u poġġieh fid-daħla ta' lukanda ewlenija f'Malta fejn jaħdem. Għaġġeb lil kull min rah. Sal-pasturi minn ċikkulata skura għamel *(stampa fuq)*

Jimmy ħa mal-mitt siegħa maqsuma f'għadd ta' ġimgħat biex bena l-presepju li kien magħmul minn 70 kilogramma ċikkulata.

Int qatt kilt xi biċċa presepju? Min żar il-presepju u ssapora ftit tal-jiem sakemm għaddew il-festi kien ikollu ċ-ċans li anke jduq biċċa presepju!



Please Note:

Anybody interested in advertising on *The Voice of the Maltese* magazine in order to reach the widest audience possible, partcularly among the Maltese diaspora is requested to write for details to: *Maltesevoice@gmail.com*



Lejla Mġarrija

organised by Horsley Park Community Social Group

For the Maltese Community & Friends
Saturday March 7 at Mandavilla Function Centre
Horsley Drive, Horsley Park

Entertainment provided by: Heartbeat

Cost $65.00pp: includes Maltese antipasto, 3-course meal, beer, wine, soft drinks, tea and coffee and more.

Bookings call: Theresa Quattromani 0402 178-781, Josephine Borg 0402 040 954,

Come and join us for a fun time.

The proceeds of the evening with go to The Cancer Council



Photos by David Mifsud

Below: Mrs Lea Harding, Charles Bonavia's niece, and her son being greeted by Mr Charles N. Mifsud

Maltese veterans commemorated at Canberra War Memorial ceremony

A joint last post ceremony to commemorate two Maltese veterans of the first war, private Charles Bonavia and private Waldermar Beck took place at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra on December 28.

The Ceremony is held 364 days per year at the Commemorative area of the Memorial. This time it was held to honour the two brave Maltese soldiers as inscribed in the Roll of Honour.

After the playing of the Australian national anthem followed by the piper's lament, the visitors, including the Malta's High Commissioner in Australia H.E Charles Muscat and the President of the Maltese Ex-servicemen Association of NSW, Charles N. Mifsud laid wreaths and floral tributes beside the Pool of Reflection. The ceremony ended with the sounding of the Last Post

The Maltese Ex-Servicemen from Sydney organised a bus that took the visitors to Canberra for what was described as a very respectful and dignified service.

Mrs Lea Harding, Charles Bonavia's niece, Mrs Barbara Barter, the niece of Waldemar Beck's fiancée and members of the Maltese Ex Servicemen Association of NSW who travelled to Canberra from Sydney for the occasion, were also present *(below at the ceremony)* with Mr Charles Muscat *(left)* during the ceremony.





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We get to the point, provide the right advice and get the work done at a reasonable price.



Fr Leonard Testa blessing the monument with the President, Louis Parnis behind him



Mr. Steven Jones MP (left) with Peter Micallef and George Bartolo two members of the GCFC that helped build the club

Maltese Monument inaugurated at Cringila

Last December the George Cross Falcons Club of Cringila inaugurated a monument comprising of three columns with four plaques, commemorating the 7th of June 1919 Maltese uprising and the Maltese Anzacs1914/18 on the front two columns, and the Maltese Pioneer in Illawarra (The Cassar Family) and the Maltese Bowlers on the back column.

The idea for erecting a Maltese monument in the Illawarra is to be applauded. A good crowd attended for the unveiling ceremony. It is most unfortunate that for lack of space not a better place than the back corner of the car park could be found for the monument.

Mr. Stephen Jones the Federal Member for Whitlam officiated at the inauguration of this monument.

As the occasion occurred so close to Christmas a Christmas Pageant was also held in the club building. A procession in which children dressed as shepherds and singing Christmas hymns was held while the statue of baby Christ with Mary, Joseph was carried around. The students that attend the Maltese language class at the club also took part with readings and the singing of Christmas hymns in Maltese.



Learn our beautiful language

The Maltese Language School of NSW *(Skola tal-Malti)* is a division of the Maltese Community Council of NSW. It was established exactly 21 years ago in January 1999, and is supported by the NSW Government.

The school is proud to serve the Maltese community of NSW in keeping alive the Maltese language and culture in Australia.

Photo shows students and teachers of the Maltese Language School of NSW at the End of Year Presentation that was held recently at the Horsley Park Public School.

The current principal is Mary Pace Feraud with fellow teachers, Maria De Carlo, Mark Caruana, Ivan Borg and Sandra Grech. The school employs native Maltese speaking teachers. There are presently vacancies for paid teachers.

For more information on how to enrol contact one should phone 02 9601 2189 or 0400 376 607 or email malteselanguageschool nsw@hotmail.com.

XAGĦRA ASSOCIATION OF NSW Inc

Invites you to come & celebrate:

AUSTRALIA DAY 2020

With a Dinner Dance on Saturday January 18, 2020

Time: Doors open 6:30pm for 7:00pm start

Place: Mandavilla Function Centre, 1788 The Horsley Drive, Horsley Park

Entertainer: Joe Apap

Dinner: 3-Course meal, beer, wine, soft drinks, tea, coffee, pastizzi & fruit platters

Contact: Ray & Josephine Bigeni: 627 4182, Mob: 0439 974 182

M'Ann Teuma: 4579 6771, **Vicki Micallef:** 0425 210 436

Community News

SUNNY'S CONFECTIONERY

The Maltese Confectionery Specialist

Wishes its clients a

HAPPY NEW YEAR

Please phone: (02) 9671 1863

Maltese Community Council of Victoria Inc.

L-MCCV qed jilqa' applikazzjonijiet għall-pożizzjoni ta' għalliem/a *part-time* tal-ilsien Malti fil-binja tagħhom f'14 Watt Street, Sunshine, Victoria.
L-applikanti għandu jkollhom għarfien sew tal-Malti kemm miktub kif ukoll mitkellem.
Ibgħat applikazzjoni bid-dettalji akkademiċi lill:
admin@mccv.org.au
Għal tagħrif ieħor ċempel fuq **0412 115 919**. Ħalli nnumru tat-telefon u nċemplulek lura.

L-aħbarijiet tal-PBS (Malta)

Il-PBS ta' Malta tforni lill-SBS fl-Awstralja bis-servizz tagħha, imma l-qarrejja xorta mħeġġa biex jidħlu fil-*website* tal-istazzjon Malti: *www.tvm.com.mt*. għall-aħbarijiet kemm bil-Malti u bl-Ingliż.

Community Wheels Inc.:

Connecting you with your community

Community Wheels is your local community organisation that provides door-to-door transport services to eligible people (+65 yrs old) to:

**** attend medical appointments***
**** go shopping (including assisting clients with shopping bags)***
**** meet a friend for a chat or coffee, and***
****go on bus tours etc.***

Available in the Parramatta City Council and parts of Cumberland Council areas.
For information call: *88681400*

La Valette Social Centre

La Valette Social Centre Inc. 175 Walters Road, Blacktown Tel. 96225847

Saturdays: Kitchen and Bar open from 5.00pm Traditional Maltese Cuisine. 6.00p,: Boċċi. 8.00p.m.: Live DJ and Bingo.

Last Saturday of the Month: - Għana Night with aver Bonanno and friends

Thursday January 16: Maltese Respite Care Service reopens
Mass in Maltese in the Main Hall at 10.15am.

Tuesdays: From 9am: BOĊĊI for members and friends
For more information contact the centre

MASS TIME: *Saturday*: St Francis Chapel: 5.30 p.m.
(when a priest is available)

Friends of Providence House NSW

FESTA TA' GENEROŻITA`

IN AID OF ID DAR-TAL-PROVIDENZA, MALTA
organised by The Friends of Providence House NSW

Sunday 23rd February 23 from 2.00 pm
La Valette Social Centre,175 Walters Road, Blacktown
Featuring: **Charlie Muscat & James Cassar Supported by: Martin Vella, Natasha Tatarinoff, Brittany & Katelyn Vella, and The MCA Choir**
Enjoy An Afternoon of Great Entertainment, Prizes & Family Fun!
Lucky Donor Envelope Prizes & Raffle Drawn onThe Day
Maltese food & drinks available from 12 Noon
Donation: Adults $10 Children u/15yrs: free
Bookings from: Jim Borg: 9636 7767 or Miriam 0419 476 924
PROUDLY SPONSORED BY

Breakaway Travel Blacktown
Tel: 9622 7799

La Valette Social Centre
Tel: 9622 5847

ST. NICHOLAS FESTA COMMITTEE PLUMPTON NSW

Events for 2020

Sunday March 8
Fete
Sunday July 5
Lejla fil-Buskett
Sunday October 18
Fete
Saturday November 14
Dinner Dance
Sunday December 6
Festa San Nikola

Community News

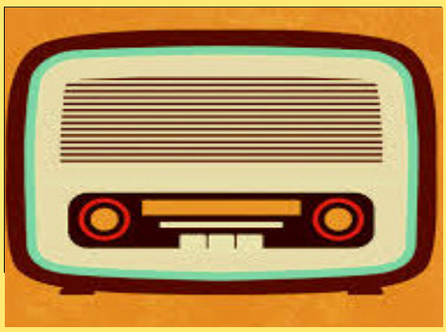
Tune in to Radio and Television

MELBOURNE: on 3ZZZ 92.3FM or on www.3zzz.com.au. Mondays 5-6 pm, Fridays 5-6 pm and Saturdays 10-11am.

MELBOURNE: on 98.9 North West FM, every Friday 6.00 - 7.00p.m. and Mondays 7.00 to 8.00pm. Presenter: Emmanuel Brincat.

MELBOURNE: STEREO 974 (93180930): 97.4FM Wed (Maltese Magazine) & Thursday (Merħba): 6.00pm to 8.00 pm Co-ordinator – Ray Anastasi

On SBS Radio
Day Time Analogue and Digital Tuesdays and Fridays: 12:00-13:00 97.7fm SBS 2.



To tune into digital radio you need a receiver or device with a DAB+ chip.
Tuning in is by station name not frequency. Digital radio can also be heard via digital TV.

SYDNEY: listen to the MCC radio programmes on 2GLF FM 89.3. Isma' l-programm tar-radju bil-Malti mill-Kunsill Malti ta' NSW minn fuq l-istazzjon 2GLF 89.3FM.
(Jista' wkoll jinstema' On Demand minn fuq l-Internet: www.893fm.com.au)

On Demand: Ethnic Maltese Council 11am)
Il-Ħadd 11.00 am: l-aħħar aħbarijiet minn Malta, mużika, tagħrif, kultura, avviżi u suġġetti ta' interess.

SBS Radio 2 on Channel 38. Programmes can be accessed online (live or catch up) at: *sbs.com.au/maltese* and via mobile phone, using the SBS Radio app.

For television news from Malta - **SBS2 TV 32** ((Viceland) on Thursdays and Sundays at 8am.

VIVA MALTA on COAST FM 96.3 Community Radio in Gosford Central Coast NSW. Aired on Thursdays every fortnight from 6 pm -7 pm.
Presenter: Nathalie Gatt.
Web streaming:
www.coastfm.org.au

SBS MALTESE NEWS: *L-Aħbarijiet* are now on SBSTV Viceland HD Channel 31 every Sunday at 8.00 a.m. and on Thursday at 8.00 a.m.

BRISBANE listen to the Maltese Programme on 4EB on Tuesdays 6.00 -8.15am; Sundays 4.15pm to 5.15pm.

Maltese Seniors Social Welfare Day Groups

Fairfield Active Maltese Seniors
Meets on the last Tuesday of the Month. Group meets in Parish Hall, cnr of Stella Street & The Boulevard, Fairfield Heights at 10 am.

Maltese Seniors Central Coast
Have to contact our Welfare Officer for an appointment. For all information and referral matters call Censina Cefai: 02 439 000 12 or 0414 267 652

Daceyville Maltese Seniors
Meets the last Wednesday of the month in the Meeting Room One, No. 3 General Bridges Crescent, Daceyville.
Note: *The Groups also arrange regular Bus Trips*
Join us and make new friends.

Merrylands Social Maltese Seniors
Meets every second Friday of the month: Miller Room, Memorial Avenue Merrylands from 10.30am to 12.30 am

Llandilo Maltese Seniors
Meets on the first Wednesday of each month at the Llandilo Community Hall, Seventh Avenue, from 11am to 1 pm.

Maltese of Bankstown
Group meets 3rd Wednesday of month in the Bankstown CBD area.
Every other 3rd Thursday an outing. Enquiries call: Sam 9534 2357

Greystanes Maltese Seniors
Meets on the second Monday of each month at the George Preca Centre of OLQP Church, 198 Old Prospect Road, Greystanes from 10 am to 12 noon

The Sutherland & St George Maltese Group
Meets every First Wednesday of the Month from 10:00am-1:00pm.

Meetings/Get Togethers are interesting, informative & entertaining, so come Join us and make new Friends
For more information contact our Co-ordinator:

Charles Mifsud J.P.Phone (02) 9501 5525 – mobile 0421 662 298.

(All Groups are co-ordinated by The Maltese Community Council of NSW) with a sponsorship from Multicultural NSW. Please contact the MCC Welfare Officer: Marisa Previtera JP on 0414 863 123. The MCC offices are at 59b Franklin Street (corner with Young St) Parramatta West NSW (next to West Parramatta Primary School).

Avviż lill-qarerjja

Tixtieq li jkollok kopja f'idejk ta' *The Voice*?

Infakkru lill-qarrejja li T*he Voice of the Maltese*, mhux biss magazine *online*, iżda wkoll l-uniku tax-xorta tiegħu fl-Awstralja li wkoll jiġi ippubblikat.

Fil-fatt huma ħafna dawk li ilhom li bdew japprofittaw ruħhom minn dan u abbonaw ħalli anke jibdew jirċevu kopja pprintjata bil-posta d-dar bi ħlas.

Minħabba l-bogħod li hawn fil-kontinent Awstraljan, il-ħlas tal-posta minn stat għall-ieħor tvarja, għalhekk dawk kollha li jixtiequ li jibdew jirċevu kopja pprintjata tal-magazine kull darba li joħroġ biex ikunu jistgħu jżommuha f'idejhom, huma mħeġġa biex jabbonaw għal sena sħiħa ħalli jagħmlu żgur li jkollhom kopja kull darba.

Biex dan isir wieħed għandu l-ewwel jikkomunika b'email ħalli jagħmel it-talba lil *maltesevoice@gmail.com* fejn jitlob tagħrif dwar il-ħlas ta' abbonament għal sena fl-istat fejn jgħix. Imbagħad jekk ikun irid jissieħeb ma' dawk kollha li mhumiex kuntenti biss li jaqraw il-magazine online, imma wkoll li jkollhom kopja tiegħu, jgħarrafna.

Sports

MFA presents Italian as new national teams' head coach



The Malta Football Association has appointed Devis Mangia, an Italian, as head coach of its national teams. The Italian has signed a four-year contract that binds him with the MFA until the end of 2023. He has taken up his new role with immediate effect.

Since starting his coaching career in 2004 Mangia, 45, who obtained his UEFA Pro licence from the Italian FA's Technical Centre in Coverciano, has coached both at club and international level. He managed a number of Serie A, B and Lega Pro clubs in Italy. His last coaching job was with Romanian top division side CS Universitatea Craiova.

Malta FA President Bjorn Vassallo said he was pleased that Devis accepted the MFA's offer to be in charge of "defining a common game philosophy for all our national team selections in line with the Association's strategy."

He described the Italian as a young and energetic coach with a wealth of experience, notably with the Italy Under-21 side whom he led to the final of the 2013 UEFA Under-21 Championship.

He went on to say that the MFA's discussions with Mangia further strengthened the association's conviction that he is the right coach to manage Malta's national team and to lead the technical overhaul that he MFA is undertaking in the coming months.

"His vision and football philosophy fit with our plans to improve the performance and results of our national teams, including the project to enter a professional club in the Italian Lega Pro. Devis's knowledge of Italian football and his coaching experience, will be an asset for us in this context," the MFA president said.

In his first comments after the signing of the agreement Mangia said he was happy for reaching the agreement, and that the project presented to him was a very ambitious one. "I am confident that with hard work and dedication, together we can significantly improve the level of Maltese football."



Malta at European Waterpolo Championships

As of January 12, Malta started participating in the 2020 European Waterpolo Championships in the Duna Arena in Budapest. The event concludes on January 26.

Malta is in Group C with Spain, Hungary and Turkey. The rest of the teams in the 34th edition of the event are:

Group A: Croatia, Montenegro, Slovakia, and Germany. **Group B**: Serbia, Russia, Romania, and Netherlands. **Group D**: Italy, Greece, Georgia, and France.

Malta's first commitment is against Spain January 14. The next is on January 16 against Turkey, and the last group match will be two days later, on the 18th, against Hungary.

After the group matches, Malta (expected to finish fourth), will play the other fourth classified teams for places 13th to 16th.

The 2nd and 3rd teams will play each other to qualify ¼ finals in cross group format, while the first team classified from each group will qualify directly for ¼ finals.

4 Eastern Europeans in Malta tournament

Four club sides from eastern Europe, three from the Czech Republic, Banik Ostrava, FK Mlada Boleslav and FC Zbrojovka Brno, and Slovakia's FC DAC Dunajska Streda will be taking part in the second edition of the Tipsport Malta Cup 2020 to be played January 25-27, at the National Stadium.

The tournament that will serve the visiting team as a training camp, is supported by the Malta Tourism Authority and sponsored by Tipsport, and is being o-ordinated by MFA SportsPlus Limited

The visiting teams will also be playing friendlies against a number of Maltese clubs

Birkirkara hand Floriana season's first defeat

Floriana's 13-match positive streak (2 wins and a draw b) in the Premier League was halted at the start of Round 1 when they were handed their first defeat of the season by Birkirkara who defeated them1-0. As a result their lead was cut down to four points - 31-27 -from Hibernians who defeated Gudja 2-0. Defending champions Valletta slip to third a point further behind after a 2-2 against Sta Lucia.

RESULTS - Day 14

Birkirkara v Floriana	1-0
Hibernians v Gudja	2-0
Valletta v Sta Lucia	2-2
Sirens v Senglea	2-2
Mosta v Tarxien	5-2
Balzan v Sliema W.	2-1

Monday: Gzira v Ħamrun

FROM DAY 13

Mosta v Gudja	1-0

Sunday was not the Greens' day. They were denied three times by the woodwork before conceding a 79th minute goal by Falcone.

Sirens also dropped points in a 2-2 draw with Senglea.

Late Monday Ħamrun played Gzira.

Parramatta Melita Eagles Annual Meet February 1

Parramatta Melita Eagles Sports Club Ltd would be holding its Annual General Meeting on Saturday February 1 at 9 am at the Club Rooms Melita Stadium Granville South NSW.

Maltese-Australian clubs for Maltese Cultural Cup

The much-awaited Australia Day tournament for the Maltese Cultural Cup organised by Caroline Springs George Cross is to be held January 23-27 at the City Vista Pavilion and Sports Field between six club teams from Victoria, namely top teams Green Gully and George Cross, Altona City and North Altona, Kellor Park and Parramatta Melita Eagles from NSW

Schedule of play

Jan 23: Altona City v Altona North
Jan 24: George Cross v Green Gully
Jan 25: Altona City v Kellor Park
Parramatta Melita Eagles v Green Gully
Jan 26: Kellor Park v Altona North
Jan. 27 is reserved for the finals