

## THE JOURNAL OF THE MALTESE DIASPORA

# MALTESE NEWSLETTER

LINKING THE MALTESE ALL OVER THE GLOBE



## GUY SEBASTIAN TO REPRESENT AUSTRALIA AT EUROVISION SONG CONTEST 2015



SBS announced that multi-talented singer and ARIA Award winner Guy Sebastian will represent Australia at the 60th anniversary of the Eurovision Song Contest to be held in Vienna, Austria and broadcast on SBS from Wednesday May 20 to Sunday May 24.

The performance will be a celebration of Australian music and culture and marks the first time in Eurovision history Australia

has been invited to compete at the contest as a wild card entry to celebrate 60 years of Eurovision.

The Eurovision Song Contest reached an Australian audience of over 3 million\* in 2014 and an international audience of over 195 million people and SBS and production partner Blink TV agreed that Guy Sebastian was the perfect artist to showcase Australian music on the world's biggest stage.



## 80.7% OF HOUSEHOLDS IN MALTA & GOZO HAD ACCESS TO INTERNET IN 2014



In 2014, 80.7 per cent of households in Malta and Gozo had access to the internet, while regular internet users reached 239,225 or 73.2 per cent of the population aged 16 to 74, the National Statistics Office said today.

Internet access in households during 2014 increased by 1.9 percentage points when compared with the previous year. Households with children were more likely to have internet access at home, while just over half the households with one adult member and without children had an internet connection.

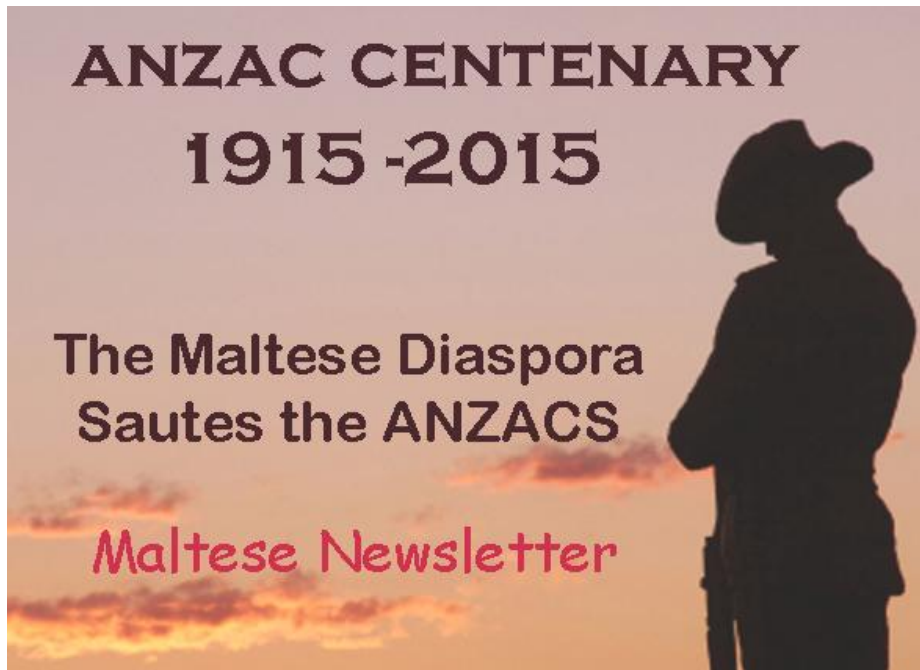
The largest percentage of internet access in households was registered in the Western District (87.5 per cent), while the smallest percentage was recorded in the Southern Harbour District (74.8 per cent).

The highest percentage of computer and internet use was registered within the 16 to 24 age cohort, while the older population aged 65 to 74 recorded the lowest internet usage level (35.0 per cent). During 2014, 69.7 per cent of internet users also made use of a mobile internet connection. The share of internet users making use of eGovernment services stood at 55.0 per cent. An increase in eGovernment usage was noted in the majority of age cohorts.

In 2014, 64.2 per cent of internet users also acquired some form of products or services online. Clothes and sports goods were the most common acquired items (42.1 per cent) followed by purchases of holiday accommodation (26.3 per cent) and other transport arrangements (24.1 per cent).

Survey results show that 82.6 per cent of computer users knew how to use the 'copy and paste tool,' while 79.4 per cent were capable of copying or moving a file or folder. In 2014, 31.6 per cent of internet users made use of cloud computing services. This was most common among persons with a tertiary level of education and younger age groups. The type of documents most commonly shared and kept on the cloud include pictures, text, spreadsheets and presentations.





## ANZAC DAY 2015

in Malta

### MALTA AND THE GALLIPOLI CONNECTION

A Commemorative Service which will mark the 100th Anniversary of the start of the Gallipoli Campaign will be held at the Pieta Military Cemetery on Saturday 25 April 2015 at 10.00am. The Service is open

to the public.

ANZAC Day has been commemorated in Malta since 1916. Since 1979 the service has been held at the Pieta Military Cemetery as it contains the highest number of ANZAC war graves in Malta.

The Cemetery is located in Triq Id-Duluri (entrance at the junction of Triq Id-Duluri and Triq Santa Monika) Pieta.



Malta played a significant role in and during the Gallipoli Campaign with many Australians and New Zealand casualties being evacuated to Malta for medical treatment. From the spring of 1915, hospitals and convalescent camps were established on the islands of Malta and Gozo, to deal with the many thousands of sick and wounded from the Gallipoli and Salonika campaigns. Despite the courageous efforts of the doctors and medical staff, some of the casualties could not be saved and they were buried on Malta. Of those

buried on Malta there were 202 Australian and 72 New Zealanders.

The Commonwealth war burials in Malta are unlike those found anywhere else. Many joint and collective burials were made as graves had to be cut into the rock underlying the island's shallow earth crust. These graves are usually marked by flat tablets that could take several inscriptions and, for the sake of uniformity; the same type of marker was used for single graves. For more information visit this website: [www.malta.highcommission.gov.au/mlta/ANZAC.html](http://www.malta.highcommission.gov.au/mlta/ANZAC.html)

## **LIST OF EVENTS IN RELATION TO THE 100<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF ANZAC AND OUR DIASPORA IN MALTA**

- 13-17 April 2015** Visit to Malta of the *STS Young Endeavour* at the Grand Harbour.
- 15 April 2015** Re-Enactment of the Awarding of The George Cross to Malta  
([www.mta.com.mt](http://www.mta.com.mt)).
- 17 April 2015** ANZAC Exhibition of Archives at the National Library of Malta at  
1830hrs. (Exhibition is open to the public)  
(For more information: [www.facebook.com/pages/National-Library-of-Malta](https://www.facebook.com/pages/National-Library-of-Malta))
- 25 April 2015** **Official Ceremony Pieta' Military Cemetery at 10am.**  
**(Service is open to the public)**
- ANZAC Concert by the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra under the direction of Mro Brian Schembri which will include in the programme Peter Sculthrope's piece *Small Town* which is a homage to the effect of war on the Australian communities (ANZAC).
- 28 April 2015** ANZAC Concert by the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra under the direction of Mro Christopher Muscat – pieces to the Gallipoli dead ([www.maltaorchestra.com](http://www.maltaorchestra.com)).
- 30 April 2015** ANZAC Concert by the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra under the direction of Mro Christopher Muscat – pieces to the Gallipoli dead ([www.maltaorchestra.com](http://www.maltaorchestra.com)).
- 11-14 May 2015** HMS ANZAC visits Malta.  
Second to visit to Malta of the *STS Young Endeavour* at the Grand Harbour.
- All Days:** ANZAC Station Hospital 0930hrs-1600hrs  
(Admission: Adults €4.50/Seniors 60+ & Students €2.90/Family €10.50/Children Under 12 €2.00)
- All Days:** ANZAC Stained Glass at St Andrew's Scots Church  
([www.saintandrewsmalta.com](http://www.saintandrewsmalta.com)).
- All Days:** Australia Botanic Garden at Argotti Gardens will display Australian plants and trees next to Malta ANZAC Memorial (Entrance is free).
- Mon-Fri:** Permanent Display St Edward's College about when this college was at the Cottonara Hospital which served as an ANZAC Hospital, [www.stedwards.ed.mt](http://www.stedwards.ed.mt)



## ARMISTICE DAY AT THE SALUTING BATTERY 2014

Despite extreme north-easterly winds blowing straight into the Saluting Battery, Fondazzjoni Wirt Artna has again this year, marked Armistice Day at the Saluting Battery in Valletta with a trans-denominational commemoration. The ceremony was led by the locum at St. Paul's Anglican Cathedral Rev. Neill Robb, the Parish Priest at the Parish of St. Dominic's in Valletta Father Michael Camilleri OP and the Greek Catholic Orthodox Reverend George-Mifsud Montanaro.

The event was well attended by representatives of the Royal British Legion (Malta), the Royal Navy Association, the Royal Marines Association, the Commando Association, the Royal Air Force Association and many ex-servicemen and members of the public. Also in attendance were the British and Australian High Commissioners to Malta. At 11.00 o'clock one of the battery guns was fired to give start to a two-minute period of silence. This was followed by a second gun which brought the period to a close. Wreaths were then laid at the foot of the temporary cenotaph by their Excellencies and attending ex-servicemen associations. FWA has re-started marking this important historic event following its restoration of the Saluting Battery in 2004.



## SENSE OF GRATITUDE TOWARDS GRANDPARENTS & THE ELDERLY – POPE FRANCIS



Grandparents were the focus of Wednesday's general audience in St. Peter's Square, Rome. Continuing his catechesis on the family, the Pope considered the difficult current situation faced by the elderly, commenting that next week he will present a more positive view of the vocation that corresponds to this stage in life.

Thanks to advances in medical care, the Holy Father observed, life expectancy has increased and there is a far greater number of elderly people, but nevertheless society has not adapted to this change, and has not responded

by creating space for them, with the respect and consideration their fragility and dignity demand.

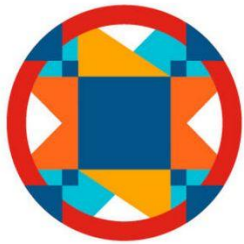
"When we are young, we are induced to ignore old age, as if it were an illness to keep at bay; however, once we become old, especially if we are poor, ill and alone, we experience the gaps in a society programmed for efficiency, which as a consequence ignores the elderly."

He recalled the words of Benedict XVI during his visit to a residential home for the elderly: "The quality of a society ... is also judged by how it treats elderly people and by the place it gives them in community life," and exclaimed, "A civilisation can sustain itself if it respects wisdom, the wisdom of the elderly. On the contrary, a civilisation in which there is no place for the elderly or in which they are discarded because they create problems ... carries the virus of death."

He continued, "in the west, scholars present the current century as 'the century of old age: there are fewer children and an increase in elderly people. This imbalance is a great challenge to contemporary society. And yet, a certain culture of profit insists on making the elderly appear to be a burden, an extra weight. They are not only unproductive; they are an encumbrance, and are to be discarded. And discarding them is sinful. We do not dare to say this openly, but it happens. There is something cowardly in this inurement to throwaway culture. We want to remove our growing fear of weakness and vulnerability, but in this way we increase in the elderly the anguish of being inadequately supported and abandoned."

Pope Francis recalled that during his ministry in Buenos Aires he had first hand experience of these problems. "The elderly are abandoned, and not only to material precariousness. They are abandoned as a result of our selfish inability to accept their limits, which reflect our own limits, in the many difficulties that they must overcome nowadays to survive in a civilisation that does not allow them to participate, to have their say, or to be referents according to a consumerist model in which 'only the young can be useful and can enjoy themselves.' The elderly should instead be, for all of society, the reserve of wisdom of our population. How easy it is for our conscience to slumber when there is no love."

## CHOGM to be held in Malta between the 27-29 November 2015



CHOGM  
Malta 2015

The next Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) will be held in Malta, from 27 to 29 November 2015. Heads welcomed the offer of Malta to host CHOGM when they met in Sri Lanka in 2013.

Meetings will take place at a number of historical venues around Malta, while the Heads of Government retreat will be held at Fort St. Angelo, situated in Vittoriosa.

This was announced in a joint statement by Prime Minister Joseph Muscat and Commonwealth Secretary-General Kamallesh Sharma.

CHOGM is held every two years and is the Commonwealth's highest consultative and policy-making body. "The Commonwealth is an institution whose strength lies in its diversity," stated Joseph Muscat, "a diversity which has always been underwritten by a subscription to a common set of values which include the promotion of democracy, human rights, good governance, free trade, inclusive global development embracing all members of the world community, and world peace."

He added, "it is time to review where we stand on these values as the Commonwealth and tackle the issues which directly affect our people. On behalf of the Maltese government and our people, I would like to express how truly honoured we are to be hosting the 2015 Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting. The theme of the CHOGM will be Adding Global Value."

Secretary-General Sharma said, 'The Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting brings together leaders of an immensely diverse yet cohesive grouping of 53 countries representing one third of humanity.

"They assemble from islands and continents at varying stages of development to work on common approaches and to plan practical action motivated by the shared values and principles of the Commonwealth Charter. Goodwill and cooperation supported by an enduring sense of affinity between the peoples of the Commonwealth pave the way to fresh approaches to collective benefit.

"When Commonwealth leaders gather, innovative solutions are found to today's global challenges for the benefit of all, particularly the vulnerable and marginalised. At the Malta CHOGM the wider world will see the Commonwealth in action, as a great global good."

The CHOGM will hear the views of the people of the Commonwealth through forums for youth, women, business, and civil society.



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## **QUEEN ELIZABETH TO VISIT MALTA FOR COMMONWEALTH HEADS OF STATE MEETING IN NOVEMBER**

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**Queen Elizabeth, accompanied by The Duke of Edinburgh, will visit Malta and attend the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) which takes place in Valletta from 27 to 29 November 2015**

### **President to call on Queen Elizabeth**

President Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca is in London where she will call on Queen Elizabeth and meet Prince Charles.



She will have talks with the Prince's Trust and visit Maltese patients in London hospitals. The President is accompanied by Mr Preca. Dolores Cristina is Acting President.

The President also met Queen Elizabeth at Buckingham Palace on February 18. The Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, due to be held in Malta in November, was discussed.





Can you spot these objects?: Kinzie, Stuffat tal-fenek, Birra Cisk, Pastizzi, Hobz biz-zejt, Helwa tat-Tork, Bebbux, Maqrut, Timpana, Pulpetti, Bigilla, Aljotta

## Maltese in RUSSIA?

Have you ever heard of the Maltese in Russia??? I was curious as to why I have some followers on my Newsletter from RUSSIA. The interesting article below explains how the Russian-Maltese Chamber of Nobility came to be. It all starts with the take over of Malta in 1798 by Napoleon Bonaparte.



### THE RUSSIAN MALTESE CHAMBER OF NOBILITY (1798-1919) AND THEREAFTER- "ALLEGED" CREATION OF TITLES IN RUSSIA

This chamber was formed on the creation of titles by Tsar Paul I of Russia 1799 to be governed under the Order of St John of Malta in Russia. This chamber was of those and their descendants with the expectation of those titled and serving as a Knight of the Russian Order of St John.

In 1798 following Napoleon's taking of Malta, the Order of Malta (Order of St John of Jerusalem) was dispersed, but with a large number of refugee Knights sheltering in St Petersburg, where they elected the Russian Emperor, Paul I as their Grand Master - a rival Grand Master to Ferdinand Hompesch then held in disgrace. Hompesch abdicated in 1799 leaving Paul as the only Grand Master.

When Tsar Paul I of Russia had succeeded as Grand Master of Malta, a group of Maltese whom closely connected to the established Nobility had travelled with Conte Litta to St Petersburg to support and unite the Order. For this the following were carried Nobility under the Russian Empire, Knights of St John of Malta and the Imperial Order of St George.



Yet, the truly momentous period in the life of the Corps des Pages dawns with the ascension to the throne of Emperor Paul I, especially from the time he assumes the dignity of Grandmaster of the Sovereign Order of Saint John of Jerusalem, the Knights of Malta. All the policy of the new Tsar is dictated by his fear and hatred of the French Revolution, to which he seeks to oppose a united Christendom ; he takes active steps to promote a Union between the Eastern and the Western Churches which - he hopes - will be joined by the Protestants as well. The Maltese Cross becomes a symbol of the planned new crusade, the Knights of Saint John of Jerusalem - the carriers « par excellence » of its ideology.

The Order is to become ecumenical - open to all Christians of noble descent ; to swell the ranks of the Western Maltese Knights who took their refuge in Russia, Paul creates 118 new Knight-Commanders, and allows the creation of Ancestral/Hereditary Commanders among the highest nobility of his Empire and - by his Ukase of 4th (15th new style) December 1797, establishes THE RULES FOR THE EDUCATION AND MILITARY UPBRINGING of these Knights' descendants : this training is to begin at the age of 15, the rank of Commissioned Officer AND KNIGHT-COMMANDER of the Order to be attained at the age of 22 ; the Graduate is to wear the White Maltese Cross.

( <http://www.maineworldnewsservice.com/caltrap/russian%20connection.htm> )

The fall of Malta enraged the Tsar who convoked a Conventual College in St. Petersburg. It consisted of knights of the Russian Grand Priory, others who had followed the Count of Provence(7) into exile at Mittau in the Russian Baltic province of Kurland, and those knights who had accompanied de Litta to Russia. At the urging of the Count of Provence, French knights who had been loyal to Hompesch had gone to Germany or Austria after leaving Malta also joined the Russian Grand Priory, as did de Litta. Many, Bosredon-Rancijat among them, had given up their vows and married. (8) In 1797, the newly instituted body had consisted of sixteen members, six of whom were non-Russian.

At the end of 1798 there were one hundred and seventeen members, ninety-seven of whom were non-Russian, and at the end of 1799, there were one hundred and eighty-four members, one hundred and sixty-six of whom were non-Russian. On 6 September 1798, members of the Russian Grand Priory and other knights of the Order residing in Russia deposed von Hompesch, declaring him "guilty of the most stupid negligence." On 7 November 1798 they elected the Protector, Paul I, Grand Master. A fortnight later, he accepted, assuming the responsibilities of the Order in keeping, as he put it, with his Imperial prerogatives.

***Reference: The Russian-Maltese Chamber of Nobility, Paris, France and St. Petersburg Russia - Personal communications with the President 2006, 2009.***

***<http://backtomalta.blogspot.com.au/>***





# Maltese Traditions: Il-Quċċija

Written by Sabine Jung on 3 March 2015



Today I'll be sharing with you one of the many interesting Maltese traditions that I have learnt about during my time in Malta, known as il-quċċija. This tradition has been practised in Malta since the 18th century, and remains as popular today as it was when it first started out. The idea behind this tradition is to predict a baby's future career or lifestyle.

Il-quċċija is normally done at the baby's first birthday party when the baby's parents invite close family and friends to their home to celebrate the occasion. When it is time for the quċċija, a number of objects are placed a

few metres away from the baby, and the baby is encouraged by all those present to crawl over to the objects and choose one. All the objects placed there for the child to pick represent a different career or lifestyle, and the first object picked up by the child is said to be predictive of their future.

Some of the objects used in the quċċija today are similar to the ones used when the tradition first started out.

However, most of the objects used nowadays reflect more modern careers, such as careers in I.T. In the past, boys used to be presented with different objects to girls, reflecting the more traditional ideas regarding gender and career. For example, boys would be presented with traditional tools, whereas girls would be presented with cooking utensils or crochet needles. Nowadays, boys and girls are generally presented with the same objects, reflecting a change in society's views of gender and career as well as a change in parents' career aspirations for their children.

Some of the objects typically used for the quċċija, together with the careers they represent are as follows:

- **Stethoscope – Doctor**
- **Geometry instrument – Architect**
- **Calculator – Accountant**
- **Bible or rosary beads – Priest or nun**
- **Computer mouse – Career in I.T.**
- **Paintbrush – Artist**
- **Book – Author or journalist**
- **Credit card – Banker**
- **Money – Successful businessperson**
- **Kitchen utensil – Chef**

Discover more about other local traditions that you can check out on your next **flight to Malta**.

Sources: <http://www.babiesmalta.com/quccija.php>, <https://www.maltababyandkids.com/articles.php?id=103&subcategory=1271&maincategory=103>, <http://www.rightly-so.com/2012/01/the-quccija/>

## REMEMBER WHEN.....



..... you got your  
windscreen cleaned, oil  
checked and petrol  
served, without asking, all  
for free, every time you  
visited a petrol station?



All male teachers wore ties  
and female teachers had their hair done every  
day and wore high heels

\*\* Kull meta nircievi li-Newsletter minn ghandek, mill-ewwel inkun irid niftaha halli nara x'hemm gdid din id-darba. vera prosit u keep up the good work. bless. fr. norbert

\*\* X'sorpriza hadt dalghodu kif xeghelt il-kompjiter u sibt li inti giba l-artikolu tiegħi dwar il-kunjomijiet! Grazzi ferm, u grazzintalli tibghatli dan il-magazin tant interessanti kull xahar. Tislijiet Lina Brockdorff

\*\* I love your work ,that front page about ST. Angelo is beautiful.Have you ever written a maltese history book I know there are hundreds of them .But yours would be special ,because of your passion for the Maltese cause. Grazzi Frank Sahha Keep up the great work Zaren Borg

\*\* I cannot agree with you more regarding your comments about that hideous mount for rubble which the government of that time referred to it as "FREEDOM MOUNT". I never liked it and its about time a bulldozer is driven through it!! Well done for your Newsletter. Not only do I like its format but also very well balanced. No politics either way.

Regards, Paul Farrugia.(Sydney)

\*\* Thanks a lot for the newsletter you are doing a fantastic job. I look forward for it, I find very interesting and a pleasure to read more than once. Keep up the good work since the Maltese Herald finished this is the only way to keep contact with the news about Malta and Autralia. I still miss Malta after 51 years over here in Sydney. Best wishes and kind regads Carmen Debono.

## Maltese-Australian artist paints Mistra Battery

Maltese-Australian artist Raymond Agius has kindly completed a unique watercolour depicting Mistra Battery at Mistra Bay Mellieha in wartime when the bay served as a seaplane base. The painting includes a Short S25 Sunderland flying boat the type of which was flown between Alexandria and Malta at the time. Ray has presented this water colour as a means to help FWA raise further funds for the restoration of the Mistra Battery. His choice of painting the battery in this way comes from his specialisation in painting historic aircraft. The original painting will be exhibited at the forthcoming: "The Santa Marija Convoy - the fate of a nation" art exhibition which FWA is hosting at its newly refurbished Garrison Church Crypt at Castille Place, Valletta. This exhibition will feature some 35 original paintings by Agius each of which will have a different ship from the Santa Marija Convoy coupled with a different type of aircraft from both sides and used in that famed battle.

As a former naval ordnance engineer and car designer with General Motors, Ray is immeasurably qualified to paint detailed and accurate historic aircraft, naval vessels and battle scenes. He is also incredibly versatile in the use of different mediums and his work comes in ink, water colours, gauche and oils.

The Mistra Battery painting will be auctioned during the upcoming exhibition to raise funds for the restoration of Mistra Battery. Twenty authenticated and numbered prints of the same will also be made available for the same purpose.



**DO YOU HAVE A STORY TO TELL?**  
**SHARE IT WITH THE OTHERS**  
**PUBLISH IT IN OUR NEWSLETTER**







**KENNETH ZAMMIT TABONA** was born in 1956 and is one of Malta's most popular artists. Working mainly in pen and ink, gouache and watercolour, his Drawing Rooms, Ecclesiastical Haute Couture, Festas, Landscapes and Seascapes and 'fuoridentros' grace many a fine and prestigious collection in Malta and overseas. His genre has been described as having the sinuous grace of Osbert Lancaster's pen and ink lines with Beryl Cook's love of vibrant colour; however his paintings, whether depicting a tea party or a desolate and windswept landscape or a view from a window, evoke a timeless and always poetic portrayal of his beloved island home.

Kenneth's paintings are emotional reflections of Malta and its people with all their quirks and idiosyncrasies, along with all their innate Mediterranean beauty and joie de vivre. His 'people' are idealised and entirely his invention, his 'fuoridentros' or interiors reflect the beauty of Maltese artisanship; showing tiles, silver and furniture married off to the Chinese porcelain Zammit Tabona adores while always having a townscape or a landscape in the background. His landscapes are something else altogether; textural semi-abstractions of windswept coastlines and rugged cliffs with gigantic boulders strewn in the water as if left behind by the Titans.

Kenneth Zammit Tabona was also a religiously followed columnist; writing mostly about art and culture, especially music and the visual arts which he reviewed for the Sunday Times for thirty years.

For several years he has been part of the management of Malta's national theatre; The Manoel Theatre, and last January organised the first international baroque festival in Valletta; the Valletta International Baroque Festival, a two week musical extravaganza that met with enormous success and which will be followed up in January 2014 with a view to increasing people's knowledge and love of the baroque idiom, creating a focal point for baroque studies in the central Mediterranean and highlighting our baroque heritage of which Valletta is a prime example while enhancing cultural tourism; all this while keeping in mind Valletta's title as European Capital of Culture in 2018 .

Mr Zammit Tabona is the festival's Artistic Director and also Operatic Director of the theatre. Mr Zammit Tabona is also Chairman of the Valletta and Floriana Rehabilitation Project and the President and Founder of the Friends of the National Museum of Fine Arts.



## Queens of the Planet visit President in December 2014



Queen of the Planet 2014 Lanosca Xuereb, centre, with first vice Queen of the Planet Allison Wood, right, and second vice Queen of the Planet Marygrace Micallef, left.

A group of 12 Russian women who took part in a friendly Queen of the Planet contest with 11 Maltese women were welcomed by President Marie-Louise Coleiro at the Russian Chapel at San Anton Palace, Attard.

The Queen of the Planet 2014 title was given to both countries, having two winners, a Maltese and a Russian, who were crowned finalists. The event was held by the Women's Planet Foundation and organised by Ekaterina Camilleri. The women gave traditional Russian presents to the President and also managed to raise €1,300 for the Ursuline Sisters from a charity auction.

President Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca with Maltese and Russian Queen of the Planet 2014 delegates.



The two winners: Zhanna Volkovich (Russia) and Lanosca Xuereb (Malta).

Organiser Ekaterina Camilleri, Mother Superior Sr Roberta, Donna Borg Leyland and Angeline Bodishtianu during the charity auction held in aid of the Ursuline Sisters.







## Visit Outback NSW by Fiona Harper



The great Australian poet Henry Lawson wrote in the 1890's 'if you know Bourke, you know Australia'. What he failed to mention is that Bourke is a heck of a long way from anywhere. Travel Writer Fiona Harper explores the great Aussie outback of NSW.

The phrase 'back o' Bourke', meaning the middle of nowhere or the back of beyond, is classic Aussie slang. So where exactly is

Bourke? And what is to be found out the back of the place once you've found it? Wide open spaces and endless blue skies, as it turns out.



About 750 km northwest of Sydney, in Outback NSW roads barely deviate from dead straight, careering across vast plains occasionally broken by cattle grazing on saltbush. Windmills lethargically pump moisture from weathered red earth. Road trains come in colossal lengths. It's hot. Real hot.

### **Bourke**

Rolling into Bourke's main street, which is mostly bereft of people, the charms of this former vital trading post are not immediately evident. Wide tree-lined streets are lined with shopfronts concealed behind security shutters. The Darling River, which once accommodated almost 100 riverboats carrying wool for

shipping overseas from Adelaide is little more than a coffee-coloured stream. A couple of historic pubs, where larger than life characters have always featured, ply travellers and locals with cold beer. Many of those characters never left town.

I receive hundreds of emails from readers of the Maltese Newsletter who show eagerness to know more about Australia, the amazing continent.

Almost every family in Malta (and overseas) have relatives and/or friends who migrated to or born in Australia.



## Referendum flights to cost €70, twice the fare for the general election



Travel arrangements are being made for eligible voters living abroad to enable them to vote in Malta at the referendum on April 11, the government said.

Air Malta will be making available return air tickets at €70, inclusive of taxes and other charges, to persons who are eligible to vote. That fare is exactly twice what it was for the last general election. Reservations may be made at the Air Malta call centre on (+356) 25991230 as from tomorrow at 8am. The centre will be open between Monday and Saturday from 8am to 9

pm and on Sunday from 8am to 5pm.

Travel to Malta is possible from April 6 to 11, 2015 and return travel is from April 11 to April 19 (dates inclusive). These travel arrangements are available for:

(a) eligible voters, including those married to foreigners, studying, working or undergoing medical treatment abroad; and

(b) their dependants. A dependant means:

1. the child or step-child of such person under the age of eighteen years;
2. the spouse of such a person.

Persons to whom this offer applies must be eligible voters whose name appears in the Electoral Register published on January 26, 2015. Source: <http://www.timesofmalta.com/>

## Works on Castille Square to start Monday



Works to revamp Castille Square will start on Monday, Transport Malta said. It said in a statement the roundabout and central strips will be removed and works on water, electricity and telecommunication services will also be carried out.

The authority said traffic will not be affected, however, since space will be limited, vehicles will not be allowed to stop to drop or pick up passengers. Tourist coaches will operate from Floriana Mall. Motorists should proceed with caution and follow signage. Works on this €1.6 million project are expected to be

completed by October, in time for the CHOGM summit set for November.

A number of trees were removed from the site last week, while preparations were made to remove the monument to George Borg Olivier, which will later be put in the square once more.



## MELBOURNE 2015 SHANE WARNE AND BOLLYWOOD STAR PALLAVI SHARDA NAMED MOOMBA MONARCHS

Shane Warne and Bollywood star Pallavi Sharda have been crowned the King and Queen of Moomba. Picture: Jason Edwards  
Source: News Corp Australia

SPIN king Shane Warne is now a monarch of a different kind. The cricket legend was today named the King of Moomba, with Melbourne-raised Bollywood star Pallavi Sharda crowned queen.

"It's a bit like giving Prince Philip a knighthood - I've made the king of spin the king of Moomba," Lord Mayor Robert Doyle said of Warne's appointment.

Cr Doyle said Warne and Sharda followed the trend of previous years by being an "odd couple", citing 2011 monarchs AFL coach Mick Malthouse and DJ and television presenter Ruby Rose, and last year's king and queen TV legend Bert Newton and stage star Lucy Durack as examples.



"But they both represent a part of Melbourne - they both grew up in Melbourne, and they're now internationally renowned," Cr Doyle said of this year's monarchs. Warne, in Melbourne for the upcoming cricket World Cup, said the Moomba crown was the "best thing I've ever worn on my head" - even better than a baggy green.

"Growing up in Melbourne, and watching all the different events that happen around Moomba, and (having) watched the way the Lord Mayor has reinvigorated ... Moomba and made this such a wonderful part of Melbourne - to be part of it is pretty special," he said. "I'm especially looking forward to the Birdman rally - I used to always get a bit of a giggle watching the guys go in that."

Cr Doyle labelled Warne a "remarkable Melburnian" for his extensive charity work through the Shane Warne Foundation. He said Sharda was a "Melbourne girl through and through" and also "no stranger to cricket" - the 26-year-old made her film debut in 2013 Australian cricketing comedy *Save Your Legs*. The up-and-coming Bollywood star said this year's Moomba would be a double celebration for her. "It always happens on my birthday weekend," she said.

"It's an honour to be part of Moomba, and to stand beside Shane who's such a magnificent Melburnian and someone that I've always watched fondly when he's on the cricket pitch. "I live in Mumbai, but I'm so proud to be a Melburnian." This year's Moomba Festival will run from March 6 to 9. Cr Doyle said a million people were expected to flock to the event. Warne and Sharda will act as ambassadors throughout the festival and participate in the much-anticipated parade on March 9. Australian bands Hoodoo Gurus, You Am I and Jebediah will headline the festival



## HOME AFFAIRS MINISTER RECOGNISES THE ROLE WOMEN PLAY IN MALTA'S DISCIPLINARY FORCES

Sunday, 8 March 2015, 13:21 Last update: about 19 hours ago



As part of celebrations to mark International Women's Day Home Affairs and National Security Minister Carmelo Abela presented bouquets of flowers to female representatives of Armed Forces of Malta, Malta Police Force, Corradino Correctional Facility and Civil Protection Department Volunteers section, as gratitude for their services offered towards the country and its citizens.

He noted that over the years the role of women in society has changed and today their participation in these forces became

essential. Statistics show that the number of women in this sector increased, however the aim to keep registering a growth in this number remains. Minister Abela urged more women to opt for a career in this sector, a profession that requires vocation but in return offers satisfaction.

He encouraged them to apply for the current open call for applications in the Malta Police Force, which will see the recruitment of 100 new recruits. Statistics show that in Malta Police Force there are currently 339 women of which two are superintendents and 26 inspectors. In Armed Forces of Malta there are currently 80 women of which 7 are in their training period. At Corradino Correctional Facility there are currently 36 female officers of which 2 serve in the positions of manager and assistant director respectively. Six members of Civil Protection Department Volunteers Section are females.

### MALTA TO HOST FIRST-EVER COMMONWEALTH WOMEN'S FORUM AS PART OF THIS YEAR'S CHOGM



The first-ever Commonwealth Women's Forum, which will be part of the Commonwealth heads of state and government meeting (CHOGM) that will take place in Malta next November, was launched this afternoon.

The forum is to be chaired by lawyer Claire Cassar, and its theme is "Women ahead: be all you can be." Speaking during the launch, President Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca observed that the forum showed the Commonwealth's commitment to the estimated 1 billion women living within it, and said that it would give recognition to the role of women in society today and the reality of their everyday lives.

She said that the participation of women made a huge difference in all sphere of life, but noted that women's potential was still largely untapped. She emphasised that the empowerment of women needed to be facilitated by all those in authority to do so. Ms Coleiro Preca also stressed that the forum needed to bring to the fore the suffering of women across the globe, noting that women and girls were still experiencing harsh realities in much of the world, including within the Commonwealth itself. [www.independent.com.mt/](http://www.independent.com.mt/)

**SEE YOU NEXT TIME – TAKE CARE**

**SAHHA U SLIEM HBIEB – GHAL DARB'OHRA**