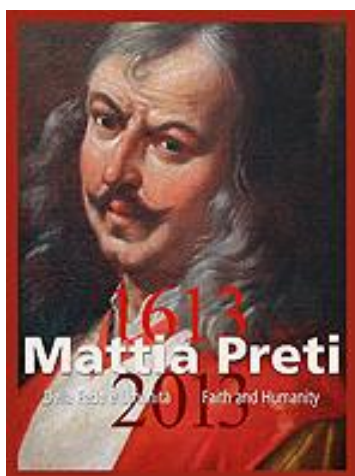


CONSULATE OF MALTA IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA NEWSLETTER

June 2013 FRANK L SCICLUNA - HON CONSUL

MATTIA PRETI –1613 – 2013 - FAITH AND HUMANITY



Heritage Malta's National Museum of Fine Arts and Italy's Museo Civico di Taverna have come together to mount a major international exhibition about famous baroque artist Mattia Preti. The exhibition marks the 400 years of the artist's birth and will be held in Taverna - his birth city - and later on in Malta where he spent almost 40 years of his life. Preti transformed the interior of St John's Co-Cathedral in Valletta with a series of paintings on the life and martyrdom of St. John the Baptist. Many paintings by Preti can also be found in private collections and in parish churches.

The project is the result of the close collaboration that existed between the Museo Civico di Taverna and the National Museum of Fine Arts over the past 25 years. The two museums signed a protocol in 2010 providing for knowledge sharing, joint conservation projects on works of art, publications and other initiatives.

THE MALTESE FESTAS



The festa season in Malta is made up of a long series of extended weekends, starting from the end of May right through the entire summer and well into September. During this period, there is hardly any weekend when a town or a village is not celebrating the feast of its **patron saint** or other saints revered in different churches. Banners, papier maché statues raised on wooden columns and festoons decorate the main streets of the locality where the feast is taking place. The inhabitants of the town or village then add to this festive mood by decorating their own balconies and rooftops with **lit up coloured festoons** - blue, red, green - according to the feast they are supporting. Flags are also hoisted on public places and private residences as a sign of participation. A typical Maltese 'festa' lasts three days or longer. On any one of these

evenings, you are bound to see hundreds of people in festive mood. Traditional and fast food stands vie with each other to sell their wares to the crowds of merry-makers. Typical products are **Maltese type nougat** and other sweet delicacies.

Homes are looking their absolute best, often benefitting from **a fresh coat of paint** a few weeks before, in preparation for the feast. The interiors may be glimpsed through the open doors and windows, unless your curiosity gets rewarded by an invitation from the family to come inside for a closer look... and a drink! The evenings often end with spectacular ground and aerial **fireworks displays** in an explosion of colour, firecrackers and loud petards.

MALTA EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURAL 2018

The Council of the European Union is the only institution that can award the title of European Capital of Culture. Started in 1985, the initiative has become one of the most prestigious and high profile cultural events in Europe. Each year, cities chosen as European Capitals of Culture – in 2011 Tallinn (Estonia) and Turku (Finland) - provide living proof of the richness and diversity of European cultures. More than 40 cities have been designated European Capitals of Culture so far, from Stockholm to Genoa, Athens to Glasgow, and Kraków to Porto.

The European Capitals of Culture initiative was set up to highlight the richness and diversity of European cultures and celebrate the cultural ties that link Europeans together.



Council of Ministers declares Valletta EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE

Valletta has been declared European Capital of Culture for the year 2018 by the Council of Ministers of the European Union on Friday 17 May 2013, during a meeting of the same Council of Ministers responsible for Culture, which took place in Brussels. The meeting was attended by the Hon José Herrera

Parliamentary Secretary for Culture and Local Government who led the Maltese delegation. He was accompanied by Valletta 2018 Foundation chairman Mr. Jason Micallef.

The declaration follows the unanimous decision by the international jury of cultural experts who named Valletta European Capital of Culture in October of 2012 following the city's final selection meeting.

The value of a Maltese passport to a Maltese living abroad



There is no doubt that many persons of Maltese background have had to wait a long time to obtain a Maltese passport for which they hankered for years if not generations.

While a passport is not essential to prove citizenship, it is usually taken as its best indicator. Having a passport in your hand is something which can be flashed at an instant and generally goes unchallenged.

Some travellers owning a Maltese passport make sure that they take it with them whenever they leave the country where they live, together with their local passport indicating their country of residence, to avoid any re-entry visa problems when they return home. While sometimes this could cause confusion at customs, it generally works well.

What is the significance of a Maltese passport to this category of persons? I have been asked this question on several occasions. Many of us go to Malta every few years and carry with us both our Maltese passport as well as a passport of our country of residence – this makes re-entry much smoother. In reality, we do not need the Maltese passport to visit Malta or Europe for several weeks, but we take it with us anyway as an extra bit of insurance and ease of entry into EU countries.

While a Maltese passport is not essential, it is certainly a certificate that is proof of membership of the larger Maltese community of which we are proud. Some travellers coming back from Malta complain that there should not be any distinction whatsoever between Maltese living in Malta and those living overseas. It has to be made clear, however, that residents have rights which are not applicable to non-resident Maltese citizens. This is an issue which can be very confusing to the average person and needs to be clarified so that expectations are appropriately set and not raised above what can be delivered.

I would like to bring to your attention an issue, which is affecting the members of the community of South Australia. Since the introduction of the biometric passport, to obtain Maltese passport is not as easy as it used to be. I have been told that the number of passports issued in Adelaide, Perth, Queensland, Tasmania and Northern Territory has decreased significantly. The reason is that to apply for a Maltese/European passport Maltese citizens from the above States/Territories need to travel to Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales or Victoria to undertake facial recognition, **fingerprint** recognition, and **iris recognition**.

Firstly, the cost of travelling, accommodation and other expenses is a problem for some people.

Secondly, the handicapped, senior citizens and those who are unable to travel, families find it difficult to travel.

I am sure that a solution to this problem could be found and all the Maltese living overseas being treated like the Maltese living in Malta. PTB



MALTESE ISLANDS – FACTS AND FIGURES

Capital: Valletta

Timezone: GMT+1

Area: 316 sq km (spread over 3 quaint islands)

Malta - Length: 27.359 kms

Width: 14.480 kms

Gozo - Length : 14.484 kms

Width: 7.242 kms

Malta - Shoreline: 196.80 kms

Gozo - Shoreline: 56.01 kms

Population: 417,000 **Climate:** Mediterranean climate with mild, rainy winters and hot dry summers. Sunny climate with a daily average of 6 hours sunshine in mid-winter to more than 12 hours in summer.

Descendants: Maltese are descendants of ancient Phoenicians and Carthaginians. The islands' 7000 year history has seen a succession of foreign conquerors ruling the island until independence in 1964.

Official languages: Maltese and English

EU European Union member since May 2004

Currency: Euro (2008)

GDP per Capita (€): 15,300 (2011)

Economic Sectors: Tourism, electronics, high value added manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, ICT, financial services, education and training, creative arts.

Main trading partners: Italy, Uk, France, German, Singapore, and US

Labour force: 165,000

Unemployment: 6%

Principal Religion: Roman Catholic

Other religious denominations are also represented with places of worship.

Head of State: President –His Excellency George Abela

Head of Government: Prime Minister - Dr Joseph Muscat

Ruling Party: Labour Party

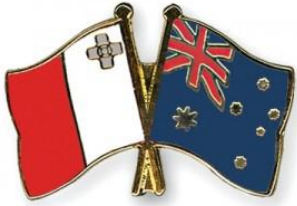
International dialling code: +356

Internet: Domain suffix for Malta is .mt

Weights & Measures: Metric

Electricity Supply: Conforms to UK standards (230 volts AC, 50 Hz). (UK style three-pin plugs and sockets are used).

Social Security Agreement between Australia and Malta



When did the Agreement start?

The current Agreement started on 1 July 2005. This replaced the original Agreement which started on 1 July 1991.

What does the Agreement do?

Under the Agreement, Australia and Malta share the responsibility for paying pensions to people who would not otherwise be entitled because they do not have enough residence in Australia or sufficient periods of insurance in Malta. It also helps people who could not otherwise claim because they are living abroad.

What payments are covered by the Agreement?

The social security payments covered by the Agreement are as follows:

Australia:

- age pension
- disability support pension for the severely disabled
- pensions payable to widows
- bereavement allowance
- widow B pension (no new grants since 20 March 1997)
- parenting payment (single) (previously sole parent pension)

Malta:

Contributory pensions in respect of:

- retirement
- invalidity
- widowhood

Malta also pays non-contributory pensions and assistance under the Agreement but these are usually only paid in Malta.

Where and how can people lodge claims for social security pensions?

In Australia

People living in Australia can lodge claims for Australian and Maltese pension with any Centrelink office.

In Malta

People living in Malta can lodge claims with any office of the Maltese Department of Social Security.

When does payment start?

In Australia's case, payment starts from the date the claim is lodged, or if the claim is lodged early, the date the person qualifies for payment. Age pension claims can be lodged up to three months in advance of qualification.

How do I find out more?

For information on claim procedures and payments, please contact [Centrelink International Services](#) Link to external website or call Centrelink International Services on **13 1673**. You can write to:

Centrelink International Services
GPO Box 273
HOBART TASMANIA 7000



ANZAC WAR MEMORIAL INAUGURATED IN MALTA ON 25 MAY 2013



On Saturday 25th May 2013, the ANZAC Memorial was inaugurated at the Argotti Botanical Gardens which is situated in Floriana-Malta. It was a bright Spring morning which saw over 200 guests attending.

The Msida Sea Scouts band opened the ceremony with a march starting at the garden gates and ending beyond the Memorial, after which MC Mr Charles Coleiro called on The Hon. Dr George W. Vella, Malta's Minister for Foreign Affairs, and on Mr Nicholas Bonello OAM, Chairman ANZAC Memorial Committee-Malta to deliver their inauguration speeches. Before delivering his speech, Dr George W Vella read a message from the Hon Dr Joseph Muscat, Prime Minister of Malta, who due to pressing commitments was unable to attend.

Dr Vella and N. Bonello then read their inauguration speeches.

These were followed by the blessing of the memorial by Monsignor Philip Calleja OAM who also recited a prayer for the wars victims and their families.

The Msida Sea scouts rendered a Short music program

Next on the program were reading of their messages by H E Jane Lambert, High Commissioner of Australia and Ms Jill Camilleri, Hon Consul for New Zealand.

Her Excellency Ms Jane Lambert read a message of congratulations from the Hon Bob Carr, Australia's Minister for Foreign Affairs.

They were followed by Mrs Mary Bonello and Miss Claire Bonello who between them read the messages received for the occasion.

The singing of the national Anthems was to follow and these were sung in this order.

The National Anthem of Australia sung by the full choir,

The National Anthem of New Zealand , sung in Maori and in English by two solo girls.

The Innu Malti , sung by the full choir.

MC, Mr Charles Coleiro thanked those present and declared the Inauguration Ceremony complete.

The Msida Sea Scouts closed the inauguration Ceremony by marching back to the Argotti Garden gates.



Your (South Australian Maltese Community and other donors) cooperation and donations have helped us to succeed in our venture, that of creating a permanent single Memorial to WW1 ANZAC's buried in different cemeteries in Malta.

Our thanks and gratitude.

Nicholas Bonello OAM



***The blessing by
Mons. Philip Calleja***



***Hon Dr G. Vella, Minister of Foreign
Affairs, and Mr Nick Bonello reading their
inauguration messages.***



**Official inauguration of the ANZAC
Monument 25 May 2013 at the Argotti Gardens,
Floriana Malta**