

Maltese  
Diaspora



**Matters**

# **MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER**

**Journal for Maltese Living Abroad**



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**NIGELLA'S MALTA EXPERIENCE**



## **PYROMANIA · EVERYBODY LOVES FIREWORKS**

**Christ the Priest Primary School  
Caroline Springs - VICTORIA**



**Audrey Buttigieg Cardona  
Visual Art Teacher**

**Social  
Wellbeing**



**Prof Andrew Azzopardi**





## The Voice Yes or No?

On October 14 Australians will decide whether to enshrine a Voice to Parliament in the constitution when they head to the polls. In the country's first referendum since 1999, they'll be asked to vote Yes or No on this question:

**A proposed law: to alter the**

**Constitution to recognise the First Peoples of Australia by establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice. Do you approve this proposed alteration?**

Unveiling that question in March, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese described the Uluru Statement from the Heart - which first called for the Voice - as a "gracious request" that would give Indigenous people input in policies that were particularly impacting them. "Every Australian wants us to close the gap. Today points the way to how we are going to do it. By consulting the people on the ground, by working with the people who live alongside these challenges. By enshrining a Voice in our Constitution, and by listening to that Voice," he said.

### Arguments for and against enshrining the Voice

Arguments against the Voice have morphed since opponents first claimed it would act as a 'third chamber' of parliament, a claim which has since disappeared. But other questions over how the body would function have emerged, with opponents both arguing the Voice would go too far or not far enough.

Here are the key arguments for and against enshrining a Voice to Parliament in the constitution:

### YES

- The Voice was recommended after a years-long engagement with Indigenous communities across Australia.
- Indigenous people should have a say in policies that affect them.
- If the government listens to Indigenous people as it creates policies about them, the policies will be better.
- It will be permanent, and future governments won't be able to remove it.
- Ensuring the Voice can speak to "executive government" means its central role is entrenched, regardless of future governments.
- It will be gender equal and include youth members, meaning more voices from Indigenous communities will be heard.
- It has been carefully devised and given the green light by legal experts.
- Fixed terms mean representatives will always be accountable.
- The Voice would be a good mechanism through which to negotiate Truth and Treaty processes with the Commonwealth.
- Parliament, and by extension the Australian people, would still hold the ultimate say over what becomes law.

### NO

- It's symbolic and fixing systemic issues facing Indigenous communities would require a body with actual power.
- Governments can ignore its advice if they don't like it.
- The Voice adds race to the constitution.
- Because the Voice will be designed by parliament, future governments could change or sideline it.
- Indigenous people already have a voice via an unprecedented level of Indigenous representation in parliament.
- Truth and Treaty should come before the Voice.

## ARE THEY GOING TO BUILD A SEVEN-STOREY APARTMENT BLOCK RIGHT ON TOP OF THIS MONUMENT???

# Għajn Razul Fountain, St Paul's Bay



**A rendering of the block in St Paul's Bay has been approved by the Planning Authority.**

**The history of this fountain is significantly linked to the tradition of St Paul's shipwreck in the Maltese islands. The Acts of the Apostles vividly describe how following the shipwreck, the locals (assumingly the Maltese) went to help the shipwrecked.**

The history of this fountain is significantly linked to the tradition of St Paul's shipwreck in the Maltese islands. The Acts of the Apostles vividly describe how following the shipwreck, the locals (assumingly the Maltese) went to help the shipwrecked. Adding to the Acts, local legend narrates that the locals took clothes, food and water with them but more water was needed.

Seeing this, St Paul took his staff, hit the ground three times and a spring started to flow and reputedly a fountain was built on the spot. The placename razul is a derivation from the Phoenician meaning apostle.

It is not certain when the fountain was first erected but one source claims that the lower part of the fountain was carved out of a single ancient block of granite of uncertain date and provenance. The upper part of the fountain consists of a statue of St Paul housed within a niche, and an inscription which bears the coat-of-arms of Grand Master de Vilhena and records that this was added in 1725.

This historical fountain seems to have been moved during road widening works in the 1900s and has since been restored at least twice.

The Għajn Razul fountain at St Paul's Bay was included in the Antiquities Protection List of 1932 and was scheduled by Mepa as a Grade 1 national monument as per Government Notice number 1082/09 in the Government Gazette dated December 22, 2009.

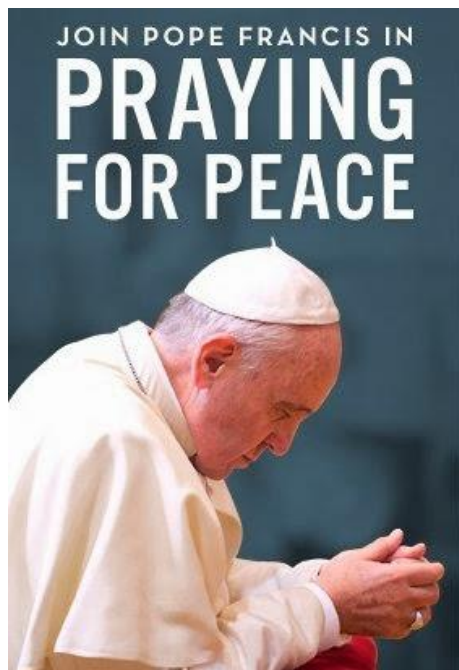
Din l-Art Helwa (DLH) restored this monument twice, once in 1989 and again in 2009.

Therefore, when our attention was drawn to the approval of PA/06472/20, a development application to build a seven-storey apartment block right on top of the monument, we were flabbergasted.

Actually the ground floor, located in the ground hollowed out behind it, is intended to accommodate car parking, while the other six floors, including a receded penthouse, rise barely 30cm above the top of the monument. So, does the public not have the right to expect that built and natural heritage assets be protected without the necessary intervention of eNGOs?

Is this not the reason for all the laws approved, and all the people employed by the authorities – to protect the legacy of the Maltese and Gozitan people? Otherwise, what is the point?





## Pope Francis receives 'It's Journalism' award for peace

(ANSA) - ROME, AUG 26 - Pope Francis on Saturday received the 'It's Journalism' prize, Vatican sources told Ansa.

The prize was presented to the Pope in the Apostolic Palace during an audience with the delegation of the prestigious award founded by veteran Italian journalists Indro Montanelli, Enzo Biagi, Giorgio Bocca and Giancarlo Aleri in 1995. "You must know that, even before I became Bishop of Rome, I used to refuse the offer of prizes," said the pope in receiving the award.

"I never received any, I didn't want them. And I have continued to do the same as Pope," he continued.

"But there is a reason that has led me to accept yours, and that is the urgent need for constructive communication, which favours the culture of encounter and not of confrontation; the

culture of peace and not of war; the culture of openness to the other and not of prejudice," said Francis.

In his message for the Catholic Church's World Day of Peace, Pope Francis appeals to the international community and every individual to foster a "culture of care" by advancing on the "path of fraternity, justice and peace between individuals, communities, peoples and nations."



## After Another Man Dies By Suicide, Andrew Azzopardi Asks If We've Really Become 'Sinjuri Żgħar'

By [Johnathan Cilia](#) – [lovinmalta.com](#)

The Dean of the Faculty of Social Wellbeing at the University of Malta took to social media to raise the alarm of one of the island's most

hidden – yet horrific – issues: the rise of suicide.

After Andrew Azzopardi heard of the latest suicide, in a Maltese male, he shared an emotional yet serious 13-minute video breaking down just how serious this plight has become... and how the state isn't doing enough to curb the tide.

"This country has lost all sense of ethics, values, priorities," Azzopardi said. "We see terrible things happening around us and we just look away, something we never did before."

With studies showing 54% of people in Malta suffer from some form of loneliness, Azzopardi urged authorities to look into what's leading to this.

"While suicide is a personal issue, and that makes it complex... there are things happening around us that make you wonder if we realise that we are closing ourselves into this trap?"



He pointed towards new studies showing the rise of mental issues – from eating disorders to anxiety – among young people, and referred to former Prime Minister Joseph Muscat's statement that everyone in Malta had become more well-off than ever.

"And no one will ever trick me into thinking that we've all become *sinjuri żgħar*... when there's people begging for food, trying to keep up with their bills, people relying on state help for food?

**He even referred to an incident where a four-year-old boy made it clear he wasn't happy and was feeling bad.... something Azzopardi said was shocking in such a young age.**

"And all this as counsellors can't keep up with what we have?"

He ended by urging that policies be put in place to ensure the situation doesn't worsen.

"What we are doing when it comes to suicide, is we are just digging a hole," he said. "And if we aren't careful, not only will be deep in the hole – because we already are – but my fear is that we can't keep digging, because we keep going deeper, we won't be able to get out of this hole."

**Almost 80% of suicides in Malta are men.**

There were 143 suicides in Malta and Gozo between 2017 and September 2022.

Of the 143, an overwhelming 114 were men, while 29 cases were women.

Worryingly, the number of suicides climbed significantly in 2021, reaching 34. In the previous years, it had not passed 25.

And as of 2023, there were 12 suicides between January and May.

**Do you think the rise of suicides is being taken seriously in Malta?**



**2023, 7.30 pm**

**Sacred  
Music  
Concert  
APOSTOLO  
DELLE  
GENTI**

**by the Società'  
Filarmonica Nazionale  
La Valette AD 1874  
St John's Co  
Cathedral, Valletta  
Friday 3 November**

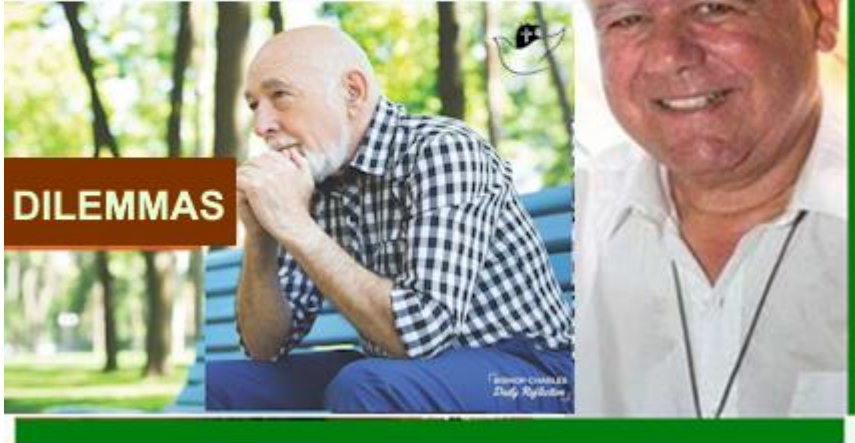
Mons Mro Marco Frisina's sacred works will be performed in a Concert for orchestra, soloists and choir, including highlights from his Oratorio - Apostolo delle Genti.

Mons Frisina is a world renowned composer of sound-tracks for films and sacred music for liturgy regularly performed in the Rome Diocese in the presence of His Holiness Pope Francis. He is as well the Choir Director of the Diocese that he founded in 1984. Soprano Rosabelle Bianchi, Tenor Charles Vincenti and the Mirabitur Choir will perform under the baton of Mro Dominic Darmanin and Mons Frisina.

Booking: Società' Filarmonica Nazionale La Valette, 297 Republic Street, Valletta

Mob: 79882828 Email: [lavaletteband1874@gmail.com](mailto:lavaletteband1874@gmail.com) Showshappening.com

## REFLECTION BY CHARLES GAUCI BISHOP OF DARWIN



**DILEMMAS**

So often, I am faced with conflicting values and responsibilities. My role as pastor wants to reach out to all as a loving father.

I always want to act with integrity and loving justice. I am not always sure what is the best decision to make.

The older I grow, the more I realise that I do not know all the answers. I need to consult and take advice. I need to prayerfully discern listening to the wisdom of the Holy Spirit.

While this is true of major decisions, it also applies to other decisions that we all have to make in our lives and

interactions.

To be integral, we need to act out of our values. We need to act out of what is the greater good. In our fast lives with so much noise around us, we need more than ever to intentionally plan and make time for us to reflect. A life without enough reflection can mean making decisions 'on the run'.

This can lead to hasty and unreflective conclusions with fewer good effects.

Lord teach me the path of Wisdom and integral Love.



## THE GOOD NEWS KEEPS ON COMING...

We have just locked in the [Cats of Malta](#) US and Canada release date, so it's very exciting to share the news here first. Our award-winning family (and feline) friendly documentary will be released via streaming platforms Amazon, Tubi and Plex on Tuesday October 3rd. The date is still

very far away, so we will be sending reminders here during the lead up. Soon our PR and media campaign will be also begin so you will start seeing interviews and reviews shared on the Cats of Malta Instagram, Twitter and Facebook pages:

Search for Cats of Malta on Social Media:

Instagram: [@CatsofMaltaFilm](#) Facebook: [@CatsofMaltaFilm](#) Twitter: [@CatsofMaltaDoco](#)

Of course, we will also share some of that here too. There will be **more platforms to come for the US & Canada, plus Australia**. But for now, if you're in the **US and Canada**, mark the date in your diary. Know someone who would enjoy receiving this email? Hit forward in your inbox to share it around. If you want to tell your friends about Cats of Malta, share this link:

<https://linktr.ee/catsofmaltafilm> Enjoy the end of your weekend!

MEOW FROM MALTA Sarah Jayne & Ivan Nexus Production Group





Audrey Buttigieg Cardona

MEDIA RELEASE

## FINAL ROUND OF 'PAINT AUSTRALIA BEAUTIFUL' SCHOOLS COMPETITION: VICTORIAN STATE WINNERS, CHRIST THE PRIEST PRIMARY SCHOOL, NEED YOUR VOTE TO WIN!

EMBARGOED UNTIL  
MONDAY AUGUST 28

facebook.com/keepaustraliabeautiful, and Haymes Paint's Facebook page, facebook.com/Haymespaint and hit 'like' on the mural of their choice. Voting will close Monday 4th September at 12pm.

The People's Choice Award winner will be announced on Keep Australia Beautiful's Facebook Page and Paint Australia Beautiful's website Wednesday 6th September.

Art teacher at Christ the Priest, Audrey Buttigieg Cardona, said: "Art Club members have worked so hard to paint the mural by giving up most of their lunchtime over the past few weeks. Their dedication and enthusiasm were transferred into a colourful palette to create the beautiful mural for their school and the community to enjoy. To win the People's Choice Award and receive \$2,000 would be the ultimate recognition for their hard work."

Haymes Paint Shop Sunshine Store Manager, Alayna Morren, said: "It has been fantastic helping Audrey and her art students select colours for their mural. Haymes Paint are proud to have worked so closely with them to bring their mural to life. We wish them all the best in the final leg of the competition."

Keep Australia Beautiful Victoria CEO, Olivia Lynch, said: "The mural not only showcases the beauty of Victoria's biodiversity and cultural heritage, but aligns with our vision for a more sustainable, resilient, and beautiful Victoria."

By nurturing artistic expression that honours our environment and heritage, we inspire a new generation committed to preserving the natural treasures that define our state's ecological and cultural richness."

For more information about Haymes Paint and Keep Australia Beautiful's national Paint Australia Beautiful competition, visit [kab.org.au/paint-australia-beautiful-schools-2023](http://kab.org.au/paint-australia-beautiful-schools-2023)

Victorian state winner, Christ the Priest Primary School, is calling on the local community to show their support in the final voting round of the Haymes Paint and Keep Australia Beautiful inaugural Paint Australia Beautiful competition.

Involving Christ the Priest students between grades three and six, the competition encouraged primary schools around Australia to get creative and design a nature-based mural, that they could bring to life at their school, for fellow students and wider community to enjoy.

<https://www.facebook.com/christthepriest>

Christ the Priest students were announced as Victorian state winners in May 2023. Using the \$750 in paint and supplies from Haymes Paint, their completed mural was proudly unveiled today. They are now national finalists in the running to be crowned overall winner of the People's Choice Award with \$2,000 in prize money for their school up for grabs. [Paint Australia Beautiful - Schools 2023 - Keep Australia Beautiful \(kab.org.au\)](https://www.facebook.com/christthepriest)

[Paint Australia Beautiful - Schools 2023 - Keep Australia Beautiful \(kab.org.au\)](https://www.facebook.com/christthepriest)

Christ the Priest's stunning mural design features a wedge-tailed eagle to honour Bunjil, the creator of the Wurundjeri people, on whose land their school stands. The mural also included a lorikeet, yellow-crusted cockatoos, and corellas, which are abundant in the area. Endangered species, the Eltham Copper Butterfly, was also featured.

Voting will open Monday 28th August at 12pm, and the students of Christ the Priest need your help to win! To vote, people must 'follow' Keep Australia Beautiful's Facebook page

## Rigoletto in Gozo

October 26 - 28 @ 7:30 pm - 10:30 pm

Teatru Astra is proud to announce that booking is now open for its upcoming production of Giuseppe Verdi's masterpiece – *Rigoletto*.

Composed during his middle period, *Rigoletto* is the first opera of Verdi's popular trilogy which comprises also *Il Trovatore* and *La Traviata*. The opera owes most of its popularity to the way the modesty and delicacy of the music engulfs the listeners' emotions through ineffably beautiful duets and a prodigality of melodic invention, exalting Verdi's sublime search for human truth through a colourful palette hidden behind the mask of *Rigoletto*, the Mantuan jester.

The loving and protective fatherly figure that is hidden behind the court jester's costume, is terrified by a curse put on him by Monterone as the latter is being led to prison after denouncing the Duke for having seduced his daughter. *Rigoletto* is also secretly protecting his daughter Gilda from the dangers presented by those surrounding her. Gilda is eventually also seduced by the Duke of Mantua, as she is taken to his bedroom. Feeling dishonoured when noticing the duke getting his share of other women as well, *Rigoletto* gets his revenge by hiring the professional assassin Sparafucile, to kill the Duke in the middle of the night. Gilda however, smitten to the end by the Duke, secretly slips into his place and falls victim to the assassin's stabbing, with the



shattered *Rigoletto* finding Gilda's body, thus fulfilling the final piece of Monterone's curse.

The brand-new production of *Rigoletto* will be staged at Teatru Astra under the artistic direction of Enrico Stinchelli, with the participation of the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra under the baton of Teatru Astra's opera conductor, Mro Dr John Galea, on the 26th and 28th October 2023. The internationally renowned cast will be announced shortly.

This production will be supported by the Gozo Cultural Programme managed by the Malta Arts Council, and the Ministry for Gozo.



## "Xoghol ta' Tlieta" – Maltese Short Movie is Receiving International Success

The short film "Ix-Xoghol ta' Tlieta" which was made by the Masters in Arts students at the University of Malta, is doing very well in international festivals. The students announced on Facebook that the film won the awards for Best Original Narrative Short and Best First Time Director at the & HalFilm Awards.

The film also received an Honorable Mention at the Athens International Monthly Film Festival and the Kiez Berlin Film Festival, was selected as a finalist at the Sweden Film Awards and nominated at the Beyond the Curve International Film Festival and the Swedish International Film Festival. film "Ix-Xoghol ta' Tlieta" was also selected for the Vesuvius International Film Festival.

The students involved in the production of the film are Emanuel Delia, Breton Gilford and Liam Carter, with the help of first year student Reuben Testa and graduates Rebecca Micallef, Kristina Pavia and Maria Vella



# Family's move from Canada to Gozo is a bureaucratic nightmare

Charles Mercieca, a man of both Maltese and Canadian descent, decided he wanted to move to Malta, seeking a new life for his family, however, the family faced a series of bewildering obstacles

by Karl Azzopardi

**maltatoday**

*Charles and Pamela with their son*

Charles Mercieca, a man of both Maltese and Canadian descent, decided he wanted to move to Malta, seeking a new life for his family. Alongside his wife, Pamela, and their young son, he envisioned a fresh start amidst the tranquil landscapes of Gozo. However, their aspirations took an unforeseen turn, as they became entangled in a bureaucratic nightmare that would put their determination to the ultimate test.

In the pursuit of a better life, Charles Mercieca encountered a series of bewildering obstacles that stemmed from the lack of crucial information given to them by several of Malta's authorities.

The journey that was meant to mark a new beginning instead became a frustrating odyssey, as authorities repeatedly omitted to provide the necessary permits, certifications, and legal documents required for a smooth transition.

It all started last year when Charles and Pamela felt Canada had become too expensive for them. "I had heard stories about Malta, I actually visited once or twice, and something inside me always told me I'd come back one day."

"We started off by speaking to the Maltese consulate in Canada to see what we needed for Pamela and the kid, as I was pretty much in the clear given I had a Maltese parent," he said. The couple decided to swap Saskatchewan, Canada for Gozo's Għajnsielem, and wanted to enroll their young son at the locality's primary school, which told them they needed proof of the father's citizenship. Their child's enrolment into Għajnsielem Primary School was seemingly settled as the school administration granted approval. Inquiring about the necessary requirements, they were simply informed that proof of the father's citizenship would suffice.

An email was sent to Komunità Malta on 13 March 2023. Their correspondence was redirected to Identity Malta, which, in April 2023, requested the father's birth certificate. The journey then led them to the public registry, where a further twist awaited them – the need to legalize the birth certificate.

Amid the maze of bureaucracy, each step seemed to open a new chapter of complications. As the birth certificate was duly registered, the family returned to Identity Malta, only to discover another hurdle: Charles Mercieca's absence from the system.

Birth registration accomplished, they went back to Identity Malta in Victoria, where the assurance was granted. A visit to the public registry followed, with an estimated three-week waiting period communicated.

"Identity Malta and Komunità Malta failed to tell me, while I was still enquiring from Canada, that my birth certificate needed to be legalized in Canada before coming over. I didn't find this out until I went to register my birth at the Public Registry, in April, when I was already here," Charles said. "It was supposed to be a three-week waiting period to have the Public Registry register my birth."

As the days edged closer to 11 May, a crucial date that marked a potential new employment opportunity for Charles, the family was faced with another problem.

The opportunity to work slipped through Charles Mercieca's fingers due to the absence of necessary documentation. It wasn't until the end of July or early August that the crucial legalized birth certificate, sent to Canada for processing, finally returned to him. After nearly four weeks had passed, he made a call to the Public Registry and was informed of issues with his certificate.

His frustration apparent, the matter was resolved within an hour. With the corrected certificate in hand, he collected it from the Public Registry and proceeded to Identity Malta, only to discover he wasn't present in their system.



The realization that it could take up to 15 days to rectify this situation sunk in. This was despite previous assurances from Identity Malta that the presentation of a registered birth certificate would facilitate the same-day issuance of a Maltese ID.

Charles found himself in a precarious situation, as the impending start date of his job loomed. The call to the Public Registry was directly related to this new job, one he risked losing if he couldn't start by 3 August, just a few days away.

This marked a period of approximately three months during which he remained unemployed while waiting for his documentation to be sorted.

"It's ridiculous. There was no turning back, and we had to go through all this, it is exhausting," he said.

When the family arrived in Malta, they brought with them belongings of sentimental value, including heirloom china dishes and cherished personal items such as their son's clothes and bicycle.

Upon notification that their items had arrived in Malta, they were informed of an 18% VAT charge on the declared value, amounting to around 885 C\$, which would be refunded after a year. Additionally, they needed to engage a courier and pay fees for the transfer of the items from the shipyard to customs, along with an extra €146.

Engaging a courier opened yet another chapter of complexities. The family found themselves seeking answers and information, which proved elusive. The passage of 15 days carried the threat of a 3% surcharge on the declared amount.

The demand for a deposit left the Mercieca family puzzled. To release their possessions, they were required to prove their prior residency in the country of origin. In response, Pamela submitted her 2022 income tax records from Canada as evidence, noting that any additional proof resided within the very items held by customs.

Further complications arose when customs demanded 12 consecutive pay slips from the last year or a written declaration. The reason behind this request remained unclear to the family.

Pamela's inquiry into the nature of a written declaration was met with uncertainty, as she lacked the requested pay slips due to a year of unemployment.

With a prospective resident permit application process taking up to six months, their financial strain would likely persist. The looming deposit requirement casts a shadow on their financial stability. Charles Mercieca's frustration echoed the sentiment of many entangled in similar bureaucratic mazes.

This week, the family was told they would get their things next week, with the price reduced from 885 C\$ to almost half.

But the family still believes they made the good decision to come to Malta, saying they are drawing a clear distinction between the country's authorities and her people.

"The people have been lovely, always trying to help us," they said. "Our boy absolutely loves Gozo and would never accept going back to Canada." The family said they want to make their story known to the rest of the country. "Maybe our ordeal will help others looking to make the move to Malta. This is not something anyone should go through, and maybe we can turn the situation a bit for the better," they said.



It is with great sadness that I announce the death of my nephew

**JOE SCICLUNA**

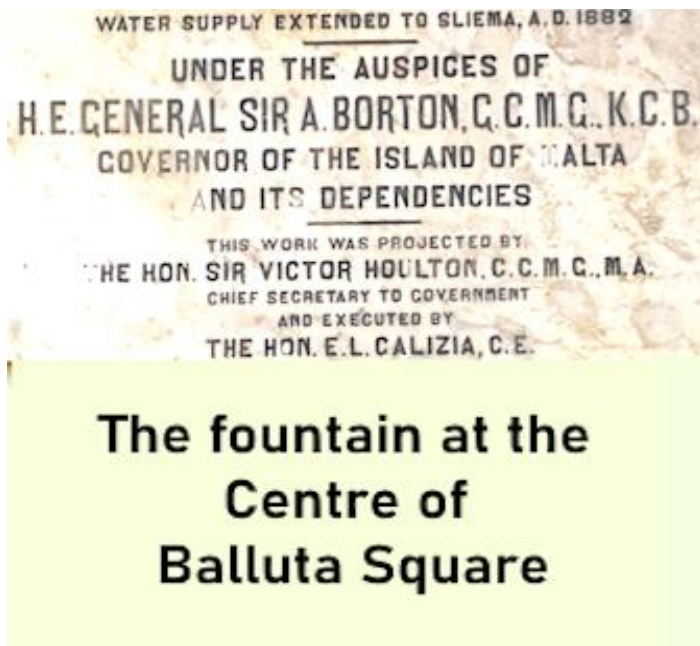
passed away on 26 August 2023.

He was a very kind, cheerful and charming gentleman and a loving husband of Marica and father of David.

He was the brother of Raymond and Mark and a devoted son of Doris and Melkis (deceased)

He will be sadly missed by his family, relatives and friends in Malta and Australia. "Joe, you left us too young but now you are in a better place"





#### Department of information FACEBOOK

Qatt innutajt il-funtana li tinsab f'nofs il-Pjazza tal-Balluta? Din inbniet fl-1882 biex tikkommemora l-estensjoni tal-provvista tal-ilma għall-akwati ta' Tas-Sliema. Orignarjament tpoġġiet fi Pjazza Sant'Anna u ġiet rilokata fi Pjazza Balluta fl-erbghinijiet (1940s).

Ever noticed the fountain at the centre of Balluta Square? This was built in 1882 to commemorate the extension of fresh water supply to Sliema area. It was originally placed in St. Anne's Square and relocated to Balluta Square in the 1940s.

## An introduction to Maltese sign language

Course starts on September 27 at Campus Hub



By the end of the course in December, the participants should be able to communicate with deaf people in Malta at a basic level. Photo: Shutterstock.com

Malta University Consulting Ltd is organising an introductory course on communicating using Maltese sign language, starting on September 27. All lectures will be held on Wednesdays from 4 to 6pm at the Campus Hub, Block 'O', Level 5, University of Malta, Msida, and the course will run until December.

Participants will learn basic vocabulary and the grammar of Maltese sign language, including dates and numbers, and how to communicate on topics related to emotions,

family, education, clothes, food, animals and so forth. By the end of the course, the participants should be able to communicate with deaf people in Malta at a basic level. The course is open to the public, and is aimed at anyone keen on learning the fundamentals of Maltese sign language.

For further information call Maria Bugeja at Malta University Consulting Ltd on 2124 0746, or e-mail: [maria.bugeja@muhc.com.mt](mailto:maria.bugeja@muhc.com.mt) or [trainingservices@muhc.com.mt](mailto:trainingservices@muhc.com.mt), or visit [this website](https://www.muhc.com.mt).



**Mainly for our young readers**

## WHAT IS A BARUMBARA? (pigeonloft)

This is another word which unfortunately is disappearing from the Maltese dictionary - Michael Muscat

Wild pigeons had been living in Malta thousands of years before the first inhabitants arrived on rafts or canoes from Sicily. These pigeons lived on cliff ledges and in holes in cliff walls, as well as in man-made buildings – a characteristic which led to them being domesticated.

Before the advent of guns, ways and means were found to catch wild birds for food because there wasn't much else available to the poor by way of protein, except for snails scavenged from fields. When guns arrived they were for the privileged few - unaffordable to those who could not even pay for a pair of shoes. So the poor people had to find ways to catch wild birds in quantity without the use of weapons. They came up with the idea of building a dovecote or *barumbara* as an integral part of the house - except that it wasn't for doves but for pigeons.

Farmers used to build ledges and holes in the walls of their farmhouses to be taken up by the domestic pigeons, which were induced to stay around the farmhouse by being fed on grains and other seeds. These man-made ledges and holes in walls came to be known as '*Barumbara*' in Maltese. This is probably a corruption of the Sicilian word '*palummara*' or the Italian word

'*columbara*' - a place where pigeons live and breed.

Each old Maltese farmhouse used to have a *barumbara* in one of its walls. There are also several areas and streets in Malta known as *//barumbara*, indicating that there must have been ancient dovecotes in the vicinity. The pigeons were encouraged to breed in the upper section of the house, where four or five rows of nesting places would be made in each of the walls. There might be up to 100 nesting places in one small room!

Nowadays you might come across some old rural dwellings with just a few nesting places for pigeons incorporated in the facade as the one I found in Zabbar.

The 18th-century *Barumbara ta' Lambert* is a unique structure with a pigeon loft of historical and architectural value, located on the corner of Triq Tax-Xerriek with Triq il-Luzzu in Marsaxlokk.

Has this unique building been preserved or we are just bulldozing every historical building including all megalithic temples and erase our heritage once for all. This will allow the us to completely destroy our heritage for the greed of the developers with the blessing of parliament.

Are there any *barumbari* built on top of the concrete boxes?





## NIGELLA LAWSON RECOUNTS HER MALTESE EXPERIENCE IN HER BLOG

(Pulpetti Tal-Makku); Clams with Saffron and Fennel (Gandoffli, Zaghfran, Buzbiez); Sautéed Greens with Anchovies and Lemon.

The fennel-seed-flecked and garlicky Maltese potatoes (Patata Fil-Forn), which are thinly sliced and roasted with oil and chicken stock so that they're both soft and crisp-edged; and a very traditional Rabbit Stew (Stuffat Tal-Fenek).

I actually couldn't love this book more! And I haven't even told you about the sweet side of things yet!

So let me give a quick shout out to the Bread Pudding (Pudina Tal-Hobz), dark with cocoa and dates; the engagingly named Sinizza (think Swiss-roll de luxe, covered in puff pastry!); and the Maltese Blood Orange Tart.

The recipe I'm bringing you today with joy in my heart is Arjoli, a Tuna Tomato Dip that I had for lunch yesterday and today, and will be making forever. I call it the TTT (Tuna Tomato Triumph)! I love this spread thickly on toast or, I must tell you, daubed generously onto a new potato or five. Your summer needs this. The book Malta: Mediterranean Recipes from the Islands can be purchased from our shop in San Gwann or ordered and delivered for free from the BDL website [www.bit.ly/MaltaMediterraneanRecipesIslands](http://www.bit.ly/MaltaMediterraneanRecipesIslands) here

Price: €27.96 instead of €32.50 for a limited time only.

I feel as if I've spent the last week vacationing gloriously in Malta, and it's been such a joy. I haven't, I should tell you, actually left my own home, but rather been immersed in Simon Bajada's beautiful book, Malta: Mediterranean Recipes from the Islands.

Of Maltese heritage, Bajada actually grew up in Australia, and this love letter of a book is the best introduction imaginable. The food in its pages is both familiar (the historic influences, Arab-Sicilian, Italian, French and English, are stamped indelibly onto its cuisine) and yet feels invigoratingly new at the same time.

Just reading the book made me happy: cooking from it has ensured bliss all round.

So where do I start in making my selection from its pages?

I think it has to be with the Anchovy Fritters (Sfineg Tal-Inċova), which are rather like little oval-shaped savoury deep-fried salty doughnuts. And then, I think, the Maltese Scrambled Egg (Barbuljata), with its mixture of onion, tomato, cumin and mint; the Baked Eggplant/Aubergine and Onion with Basil; that wonderful crusty ring of Maltese Bread (Hobz u Ftira).

Galletti, the essential water biscuits/crackers of Malta (and which we'll come to again in a mo); Ftira Ghawdxija, Pizza Bread from Gozo, topped with cheese and potato; Froga Tat-Tarja, a Vermicelli and Parmesan Pie not dissimilar to an Italian frittata.

Imquarrun il-Forn, a Baked Macaroni that is meaty, tomatoey and richly savoury; Spaghetti with Bottarga and Breadcrumbs (Spagetti Bottarga u Frak Tal-Hobz); Whitebait Fritters

Event by [Mackay Maltese Club Inc.](http://www.mackaymalteseclubinc.com)

**Our Lady of Victories Festa Dinner**

[The Metropolitan Hotel Mackay](http://www.mackaymalteseclubinc.com)

Please join us for the Festa Dinner

**Saturday 9th September at 7pm**

The Met, 17 Gordon Street, Mackay QLD

\$45 Per Person, Buffet Meal

Live Band, Raffle Prizes, Lucky Door  
& Membership Draw

RSVP by Monday 4th September

Pay at time of RSVP ☎ 0418 788 363

## SPAGHETTI WITH OCTOPUS SAUCE

Indulge in a flavor-packed experience with our Spaghetti with Octopus Sauce recipe, straight from the beautiful island of Malta. This dish is a perfect blend of Mediterranean flavors, combining juicy octopus with sweet peas and tangy black olives for a truly unique taste. Our recipe is easy to follow, with simple steps to make the perfect octopus sauce. The secret is in the slow cooking process, which allows the flavours to meld together beautifully. You'll love the aroma of the herbs and mint as they combine with the rich flavours of the red wine and tomatoes. Did you know that octopus is a popular seafood ingredient in Malta? This delicious dish is a staple of the Maltese diet and is often enjoyed at family gatherings and special occasions. It's a great way to experience the local cuisine and culture, and to impress your friends and family with your cooking skills. Pro tip: Don't overcook the spaghetti! Al dente pasta is the perfect complement to the rich and

hearty octopus sauce. And don't forget to add a sprinkle of Parmesan cheese for a burst of flavour. Try our Spaghetti with Octopus Sauce recipe today and enjoy a taste of Malta in your own home!

### Vitamins and minerals

The octopus is a good source of protein, vitamin B12, iron, and selenium. Onions contain vitamin C, fibre, and antioxidants. Peas are a good source of fiber, vitamin C, vitamin K, and folate. Tomatoes are rich in vitamin C, vitamin K, potassium, and lycopene. Black olives contain healthy fats, fibre, and iron. Spaghetti is a good source of carbohydrates and fiber. Herbs like mint provide antioxidants and lemon juice is a good source of vitamin C. Olive oil is rich in healthy fats and antioxidants. Parmesan cheese is a good source of calcium and protein. Overall, this recipe provides a good balance of nutrients.

### Ingredients

- 1 medium-sized cooked octopus
- 150g spaghetti
- 1 leek, finely chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- Basil, finely chopped
- Mint, finely chopped
- Parsley, finely chopped
- 50g whole green olives
- 60g cherry tomatoes, halved
- 200ml good quality white wine
- 1 tsp sugar
- 100ml fish stock
- Knob of butter
- Extra virgin olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste

### Method

Cut the octopus in 4cm chunks.

In a hot pan, add the butter and extra virgin olive oil. Add the leeks and garlic and cook for two minutes on medium heat.

Add the sugar and leave to melt. Add the olives and cherry tomatoes.

Put the octopus in the pan and cook over medium heat for another three minutes.

Add the fresh herbs and white wine. Cook until the alcohol evaporates.

Add the fish stock and leave to reduce by half.

In the meantime, boil the spaghetti as instructed on the packet. Leave under-cooked as it will continue to cook it in the octopus sauce. Drain and add the pasta to the sauce.

Simmer on low heat, tossing frequently till pasta is cooked to your taste. Serve immediately.







## RECIPE: PRICKLY PEAR JAM BAJTAR TAX- XEWK



Prickly pears, known as bajtar tax-xewk in Maltese, are so abundant over the late summer period that the fruit tends to fall off the cactus and is left there to rot rather than be harvested.

It is considered as pest in Australia. The highly invasive plant was first introduced to Australia

in an attempt to establish a cochineal dye industry (the cochineal insect lives on the prickly pear), and later for agricultural purposes, as fencing and drought-resistant fodder, but it quickly spread to cover some 25 million hectares in Queensland and northern New South Wales by 1920 - by then a very big problem and a noxious weed. The fabulously named *cactoblastis* moth was subsequently introduced to control the plant, and a monument in the moth's honour stands in the Queensland town of Dalby. (It is still a prohibited or, depending on the species, restricted, plant in Queensland and there are restrictions in other states too - in NSW, for example, it's been declared a "Locally Controlled Weed" in many areas, which means the plant must not be sold, propagated or knowingly distributed.) Indigenous to the Americas, the prickly pear cactus, or Indian fig, didn't find its way to the Mediterranean until Christopher Columbus made that iconic journey across the Atlantic. They made their way to Malta around the 15<sup>th</sup> century probably with the Knights of St John. Since then they have invaded the

Maltese countryside, often acting as a barrier to entry between fields.

Growing through the driest months of the summer the fruit is ready for harvest at the end of August or early September. The fruit range in colour from red, known as Aħmar-Ingliż, white, Abjad-Franciz and yellow Isfar-Malti, with slightly different flavours in each colour.

Today the prickly pear is so little harvested as people are afraid of the fine hair-like thorns that cover the fruit. With very little protection – even just one side of a cardboard box – the fruit is easily harvested by simply twisting it off the cactus plant. When left to soak in water for just 10 minutes the thorns fall off the fruit and come to the top of the water. They can then easily be peeled by slicing the tops and tails off the fruit, making a cut through one end of the skin and simply peeling the fruit away.

The waste products – the skins – are used in cosmetics offering skin improving qualities including anti-inflammatories and anti agers. Traditionally, the Maltese have used the prickly pear in jams as the fruit is abundant in September, a time of year when other fruit is limited. It can be made with prickly pear fruit alone or mixed with apple for added sweetness.

The jam is pretty easy to make and can be made from fresh fruit. Simply peel the fruit and freeze in manageable sizes and thaw before using.

### INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups prickly pears, peeled
- 2 cup apples, cored and peeled
- 1 lemon, juice only
- 3 cups sugar

### METHOD

1. Place the prickly pears and the apples into a saucepan and simmer until tender.
2. Add the lemon juice and mix well.
3. Add the sugar and allow to simmer until the jam has thickened.
4. Store in sterilised jars that have been boiled in water for 10 minutes.
5. Allow to cool undisturbed for 12 hours.



Hi Frank, once again another very informative newsletter, a few years back while traveling through Rumania, we stopped at a place called Carei and strangely enough while visiting an old mansion we came across two photos of Manuel Magri even showing the Maltese flag. NewsLetter No; 489

I would like to thank you once again for producing such a wonderful and informative newsletter. Take care.

Kind regards Godfrey Vella

**Carei** (Hungarian: Nagyvároly) is a small town in the [Crişana](#) region of [Romania](#), near the Hungarian border at the northwest. Traditionally the more famous and more urbanized nearby sister town of [Mátészalka](#) and capital of the former Szatmár county, which contained cities like Mátészalka, [Nyírbátor](#) and [Satu](#)

[Mare](#) (Szatmárnémeti), its history became significantly different in the 20th century, after it became part of Romania and received influences from Romanian culture and during communist times, experienced the heavy-industry oriented hard-line Ceauşescu-government, rather than the more liberal service-oriented Kádár-government of [Hungary](#).

Many important events in Hungarian history took place in this town or in nearby places. Like Mátészalka, this town also existed since the Middle Ages. It became an important city of Medieval Hungary, getting various rights and privileges which usually only bigger settlements received. Various population exchanges, emigration and immigration happened during the Medieval and Early Modern

periods, Hungarians, Swabians, Romanians and Jews came and went and the town became very multicultural and multireligious. It soon became the capital of the former Szatmár county.

During the 19th century various events concerning Jewish history, especially Jewish religious history happened in the town. In the 20th century the town became part of Romania as Carei, first a less important town of Sălaj county, then as a more important town of Satu Mare county. During communist times the town received many blocks of apartments, had bases in several branches of light and heavy industry and was an important place of agricultural research.

Now, Carei is a multicultural, prosperous and exciting travel destination that is best described as a more urbanized and Romanian version of Mátészalka. Both Central European and Eastern European culture is present here, with some Balkan influence. Here you will find traditional Central European architecture, a Communist-influenced cityscape in the more modern areas of the town, and a laid-back and life-enjoying mentality that is also visible in countries like [Bulgaria](#) and [Turkey](#), binding it all together to a concentrated mixture of everything Central Europe, Eastern Europe and the Balkans have to offer.

About half of the town is [Romanian](#), the other half [Hungarian](#). You have a chance in getting understood in both languages, most citizens are bilingual. Young people understand some English or [German](#), older people may speak some [French](#) or other Romance languages





## Government looking to limit non-EU nationals in Malta

*In 2011, population stood at 417,000. That figure ballooned to 542,000 by 2022*

Daniel Ellul, Mark Laurence Zammit

Malta's population was well over half a million by the end of 2022. File photo: Chris Sant Fournier

The government has embarked on a series of measures to try to limit the number of non-EU nationals living in Malta, top government ministers have said.

"We acknowledge that many non-EU workers are contributing productively to the economy. But ultimately, yes, there is a concerted effort to limit the population growth," Home Affairs minister Byron Camilleri confirmed.

Malta saw a population boom after the Labour Party took over the government 10 years ago. In 2011, Malta's population stood at 417,000. By 2022 that figure ballooned to [542,000](#).

Finance Minister Clyde Caruana has [warned](#) that if Malta wants to maintain an average economic growth rate of 4.2 per cent, the population would have to increase to 800,000 by 2040, unless a new economic model was developed.

But the explosion of migration, especially from third (non-EU) countries, has resulted in worker exploitation, and pressure on the country's infrastructure, including housing and traffic, amid vocal concerns from many Maltese citizens. A third of foreigners in Malta are EU citizens.

A further seven per cent are from other European countries that are not EU member states.

Italians are the most prevalent foreign nationality at 12 per cent, followed by British residents at just over nine per cent. Other common nationalities include Indian and Filipino, both at just under seven per cent.

Malta also has a sizeable Serbian community.

The home affairs minister said the government is mainly on a drive to stamp out abuse and increase enforcement against lawbreakers, "be it third-country nationals, landlords or employers".

A total of eight cabinet ministers and senior government officials described a general policy shift to limit or reduce the number of non-EU nationals, even if ministers have not been explicitly briefed in cabinet. Asked when this policy shift began, one minister pointed at Caruana's forecast.

"I think the government felt that something needed to be done after that," he said.

Recent surveys by Malta Today and *Times of Malta* have also accelerated the process for the economic shift, another minister said. "Overpopulation often comes up in cabinet, and the natural solution is to look at our immigration policies," one cabinet minister said.

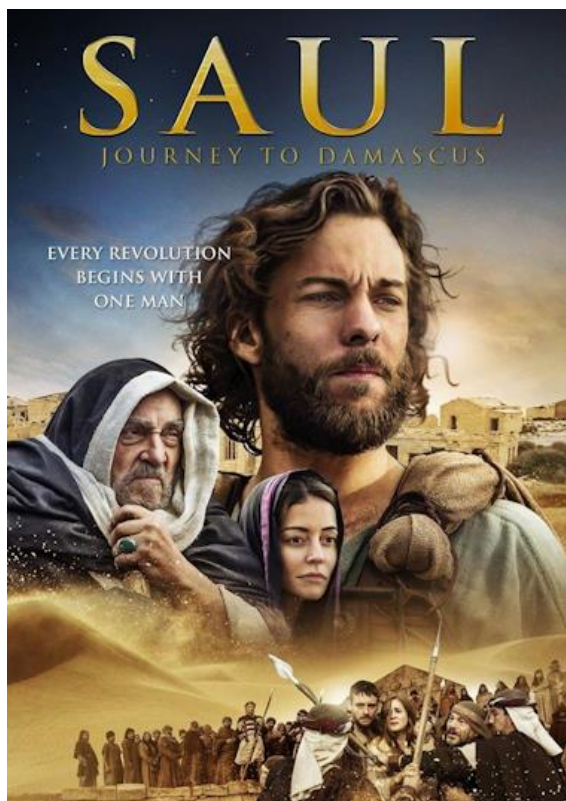
Immigration police and the Housing Authority have recently joined forces to "tackle overcrowding in rental properties". Police are also "using the opportunity" to conduct immigration checks, a home affairs spokesperson added. One government source acknowledged many are being priced out of the rental market because landlords can make more money if they rent their property to many non-EU nationals who are prepared to accept overcrowded conditions.

"A couple or a small family might be willing to pay €800 a month for a two-bedroom flat, but eight people might pay €200 each for the same property," the source said. *Times of Malta*

**I sincerely thank all those who sent a small  
towards the production of this free weekly journal**

**If you would like to help me these are my bank details:**

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### A FILM MADE IN MALTA ABOUT ST. PAUL

Saul - The Journey to Damascus of 2014 was directed by Mario Philip Azzopardi

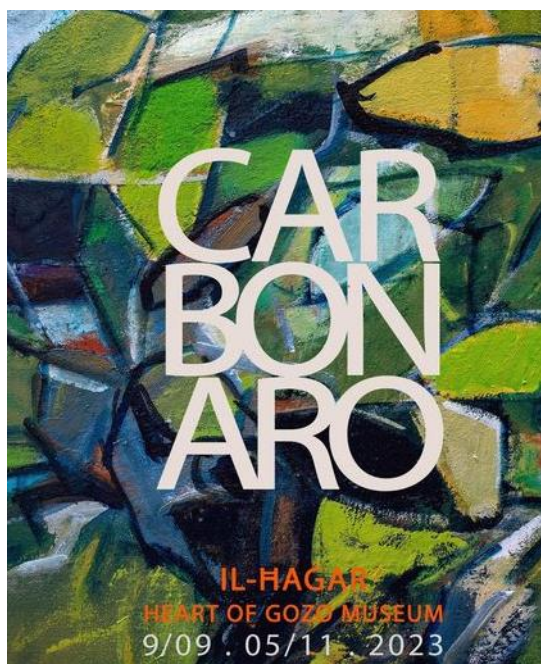
Among the actors in it we find Kyle Schmid, John Rhys-Davies, Emmanuelle Vaugier, Larissa Bonaci, Paul Portelli, Marc Cabourdin, Sean Buhagiar, John Suda, Godwin Scerri, Joe Quattromani, Jamie Cardona, Nancy Calamatta, Daniel Pace Bonello, Mikhail Basmadjian, and Malcolm Ellul.

The Biblical film that brings to life one of the most important figures of Christianity: Saul of Tarsus. As a leader dedicated to defending the beliefs he grew up in, Saul fights for his faith and traditions against those who were following the teachings of Jesus Christ.

His fanatical behaviour reaches its climax when he organizes brutal ways to rid Judea of all who follow Christ. Thus he is given the title of the Butcher of Tarsus. While he was going to continue his persecution Saul goes blind and in his heart he begins to reevaluate his beliefs after a woman forgives him.

But his conversion to the Christian faith has consequences for Saul when he has to escape from his allies who wanted him to pay the highest price for his

betrayal.



### Carbonaro Exhibition @ IL-HAĠAR

CARBONARO opens at Il-Haġar Museum (Pjazza San Ġorġ, Victoria) on Saturday 9 September, continuing in the series of outstanding temporary exhibitions during this year marking the tenth anniversary of this cultural centre. Pawl Carbonaro, born in 1948 in Sliema but now living in Gozo's Żebbuġ, has been exhibiting successfully since the sixties. Interestingly, after beginning his artistic education with his prolific father Hugo, he continued under Esprit Barthet (whose works were featured here earlier this year) and later in Italy for a diploma. A 1993 stamp featured one of his paintings.

These sixty Carbonaro works, including landscapes, abstracts and etchings, can be visited until 5 November. Thus his unique style, characterised by intense emotions, dynamic gestures and a profound exploration of space and colour, can be appreciated at leisure.

The accompanying catalogue is published as Il-Haġar GEMS 26. Support is acknowledged from numerous institutions, private and public, specifically on this

occasion the Gozo Action Group Foundation through the LEADER Programme. Il-Haġar is open 9am to 5pm seven days a week, without any entrance fee.

## 'MALTESE LIVING ABROAD' MATTERS





## ST. CATHERINE'S SOCIETY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA



### BUS TRIP TO HISTORIC HAHNDORF



On Sunday 29 October 2023  
the air-conditioned coach will depart from  
LeHunte Street, Kilburn SA

Halfway we will stop for morning cuppa and cakes.

At the Hahndorf's Old Mill Hotel, we will be served a delicious hot lunch and dessert.  
After lunch we will have a gentle walk around this beautiful German town viewing the variety of  
shops or a twinkle at the Pokies

At about 5.00pm we will return to Kilburn

A fabulous day for only \$65

Please book early, call Bernadette on 0420 944 205 or Agnes on 0422 485 059



### SUNDAY 21 SEPTEMBER 2023 MALTA INDEPENDENCE DAY

Please join the members of ST. CATHERINE'S SOCIETY as we celebrate Malta Independence Day with a two course meal. We will be having laham biz-zalza (steak with sauce), patata il-forn u haxix (roast potatoes and vegetables). This will be finished with a delicious dessert and later tea or coffee with cake. Entertainment will be by DJ Eric. Tickets are just \$25.00 each. Call Bernadette on

0420944205 or Agnes on 0422485059 to book your tickets.

### MALTESE SENIOR CITIZENS ASSC. OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

**HAPPY** members and friends  
*Father's Day* of the society are invited  
to celebrate this day  
with us



Friday 8 September 2023 at the Community Hall  
49 LeHunte Street Kilburn 10am - 3.30pm

Every Maltese migrant has a story to tell about the day they left Malta to settle in a faraway country. Send it to us and record it in the history of Maltese living abroad.

THE MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER  
Journal of Maltese Living Abroad

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We would like to thank all parishes for publishing the Maltese Festa in their bulletin. We received a great response and most likely the church of St. Francis of Assisi will be full!!! We also booked Fr. Rick Micallef residing in Wagga Wagga NSW for next year. Locals are returning from Queensland for this special Day.  
Louis Parnis - President







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