



# MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER

## Journal for Maltese Living Abroad

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### IL- PROFESSUR OLIVER FRIGGIERI



### HISTORY OF MALTESE EMIGRATION You are part of the Story



The  
United  
States of  
America  
Ambassador  
to Malta  
Somers Farkas



### CHILDREN DESERVE PEACE

Cooperation, Communication, Connection



THE MALTESE JOURNAL

THE COUNCIL

of Maltese Living Abroad



OUR JOURNAL IS ARCHIVED AT THE MALTA FOREIGN AFFAIRS MINISTRY WEBSITE

## MORE THAN JUST A JOURNAL.....

**Dr Jacqueline Zammit B.Ed.(Hons)(Melit.), M.A., Ph.D.**

*I thank you so much for sharing this. It truly touched me. Your dedication over these twelve remarkable years shines through every line you write. What you've built is more than just a journal. It is a living archive of stories, voices, and memories. It's no wonder so many readers have reached out with thanks. Your work has accompanied people across continents and across time.*

*Rest assured, I do keep your journals. They are treasures, and you're right, they form a legacy for future generations. I admire your curiosity about the future and the way you hold all of this with such care and vision. In fact, I would like to conduct a study about how do the Maltese people who emigrated to Australia preserve their Maltese language and thus their collective identity. Thank you for everything you give, and for keeping this community alive with your consistency and generosity of spirit. Best regards*



Dr. Jacqueline Zammit is a senior lecturer in the Department of Languages and Humanities Education at the University of Malta, specializing in the pedagogy of Maltese. With over 15 years of experience, she has a PhD and a First Class B.Ed (Hons) degree, and her work focuses on teaching Maltese as both a first and foreign language, often using innovative approaches like visual art and music. Her research also explores the integration of virtual reality in education and the challenges faced by foreigners learning Maltese in a multicultural context. Dr. Zammit has published work on topics such as cultural integration in second language acquisition, the use of visual arts and music in adult language learning, and the role of

research in applied linguistics. She also contributes to discussions about preserving the Maltese language and identity.

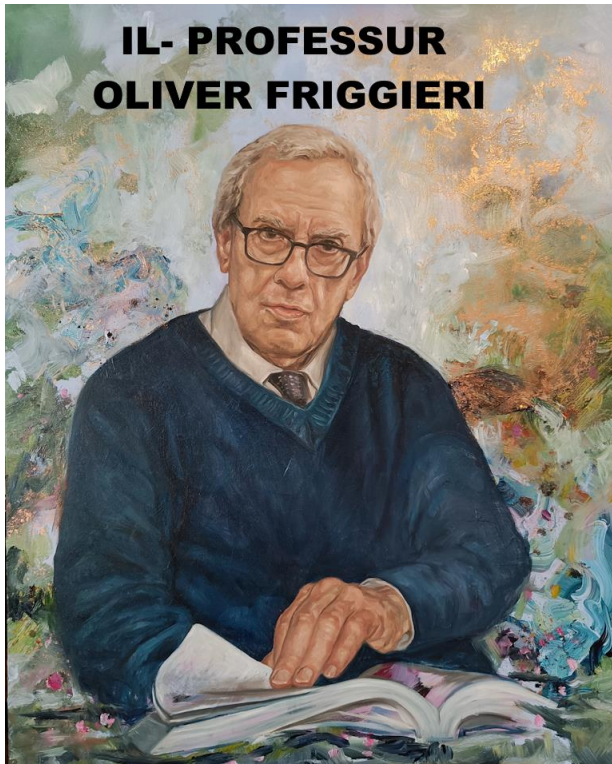
She has extensive experience teaching Maltese as both a first and a foreign language and has also taught in professional doctoral programs. Dr. Zammit is an active participant in international education conferences and is a noted ambassador for the Maltese language.

Dan l-ahhar Dr. Jaqueline Zammit harget il-ktieb tagħha "**Minn Ghajnejn Differenti 1**", b'illustrazzjonijiet ta' Sue Flask. Il-ktieb ġie ppubblikat minn Horizons b'kollaborazzjoni mal-Aġenzija Nazzjonali tal-Litteriżmu.

### **Hu gost aqra u tgħallem il-Malti bla sforz...**

L-ewwel ktieb ta' din is-serje, Minn Ghajnejn Differenti 1 hu maħsub għal dawk li qed jibdeu jitgħallmu l-Malti (Livell A1) u jinkludi hames stejjer li jintroduċu sitwazzjonijiet ta' kuljum b'lingwaġġ sempliċi u ċar. Kull storja tkompli mal-oħra, u hemm kontinwità matul il-ktieb kolli minhabba li l-istess karattri ewlenin jidhru f'kull storja. Il-qarrej isegwi l-avventuri ta' grupp ta' hbieb mill-Amerka u mill-Messiku li jżuru Malta għall-ewwel darba, u b'hekk jagħmel l-ewwel pass fil-fehim tal-lingwa u l-kultura Maltija. Dan il-ktieb jgħin biex wieħed jitgħallem vokabularju ġdid, isir jaf aktar dwar il-ħajja f'Malta u jgawdi ktieb addattat għalih fil-bidu tal-vjaġġ lingwistiku tiegħu. Il-ktieb jinkludi wkoll illustrazzjonijiet sbieħ, glossarju mill-Malti għall-Ingliż, Taljan u Russu, kif ukoll taħriġiet biex jikkonsolidaw it-tagħlim tal-Malti b'mod pjaċevoli u effettiv.





**IL- PROFESSUR  
OLIVER FRIGGIERI**

STQARRIJA GHALL-ISTAMPA

## **INAWGURATA PITTURA B'TIFKIRA TAL-PROFESSUR OLIVER FRIGGIERI**

Pittura bir-ritratt tal-Prof. Oliver Friggieri giet inawgurata fit-Taqsima Melitensia nhar il-Ġimgħa 21 ta' Novembru 2025 fil-ħames anniversarju minn mewtu.

Il-pittura hi xogħol l-artist Darren Tanti u giet kummissjonata mill-Għaqda tal-Malti – Università flimkien mad-Dipartiment tal-Malti tal-Università u l-Akkademja tal-Malti.

Is-Sur Darren Tanti huwa magħruf bħala artist li spiss jesplora temi kurenti, filosofiċi u spiritwali. Ghalkemm ġej mill-qasam pittoriku u lperrealista, tul iż-żmien Tanti estenda l-prattika tiegħu għal materjali u lingwaġġi viżivi varjati, li jinkludu esplorazzjoni tat-tekniki akkadeimiċi tal-arti flimkien ma' dawk aktar kontemporanji u sperimentali.

F'kumment li għamel dwar il-pittura tiegħu huwa stqarr li “ħaġa li kienet tolqotni fil-Professur Friggieri kienet il-ħarsa t'għajnejh waqt li kien jintilef fil-kontenut tal-lezzjoni, ħarsa li tippenetra u tmur lil hinn mill-individwu li qed jintlaqat minnha. Dik l-intensità qawwija ta' harstu kienet tati biss ħjiel żgħir tal-profondità u għarfien kbir tiegħu, però kienet biżżejjed biex twaħħalna mal-imwejjed u nifthu widnejna.”

Matul is-serata tal-inawgurazzjoni saru kelmtajn mis-Sur Kevin J. Ellul, il-Biblijotekarju tal-Università ta' Malta u diskors minn Beverly Agius – “Il-Professur Oliver Friggieri – Kwintessenza tal-Umanita(jiet)” b'sekwenzi mużikali minn Doriana Vella. Is-Sur Darren Tanti u s-Sinjura Sara Brincat Friggieri wkoll esprimew il-ħsibijiet tagħhom dwar il-pittura u nqraw poeziji ta' Oliver Friggieri minn Rita Saliba u Elena Vella.

It-Taqsima tal-Melitensia tispeċjalizza dwar l-aspetti kollha tal-istorja u l-kultura Maltija, kif ukoll tal-Ordni ta' San Ġwann, minbarra firxa wiesgħa ta' dissertazzjonijiet ta' studenti. Il-kollezzjoni tħaddan aktar minn 10,000 xogħol u x'aktarx hija l-akbar kollezzjoni tax-xorta tagħha fid-dinja, wara dik tal-Librerija Nazzjonali ta' Malta.

Il-prestigju tal-kollezzjoni jinsab fil-firxa kbira ta' materjal rari u barra mill-istampar, edizzjonijiet originali, u stampi siewja, inkluż materjal kartografiku li ngabar matul is-snin permezz ta' donazzjonijiet, xiri — fosthom mis-suq antikwarju — u mill-2011 permezz ta' depożitu legali magħżul. Il-kollezzjoni tinkludi wkoll sensiliet ta' rivisti, gazzetti u letteratura rari. Il-Melitensia hi sors mill-aktar importanti għar-riċerkaturi fuq studji lokali. Joe Borg Segretarju - - Lehen il-Malti 21.11.2025



***New US ambassador Somers Farkas, centre, praying at Basilica of St Paul in Rabat with Fr Joseph Mizzi, archpriest of St Paul's parish in Rabat (left), and Fr Karl Andrew Schembri, a priest serving at the Rabat parish Photo: US Embassy***

The U.S. ambassador to Malta, Somers Farkas, presented her credentials to President Malta Myriam Spiteri Debono.

Ms Farkas expressed her enthusiasm for the deepening of the partnership between the United States and Malta. She was nominated by President Donald Trump in December 2024.

A Virginia-born philanthropist, entrepreneur, and marketing executive, Ambassador Farkas is a dedicated advocate for first responders and public safety, and has supported organizations like the Alzheimer's Association, ASPCA, the Police Athletic League, and military service clubs. She served as a trustee for the New York City Police Foundation, Honorary Battalion Chief for the New York City Fire Department, and advisor to the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office. A U.S. embassy statement said that as U.S. Ambassador, she will focus on deepening cooperation in key areas of mutual interest, including expanding trade and investment, enhancing security and law enforcement collaboration, strengthening the common energy interests, and ensuring the safety and welfare of U.S. citizens in Malta.

The U.S. embassy statement quoted Ambassador Farkas saying: "It is an honor to represent our great President, Donald J. Trump, and the American people, in Malta. The Maltese people and the Knights of the Order of St. John played a notable role in America's fight for independence; America was the first country to recognize Malta's independence. We are proud of our centuries long friendship and shared democratic values. With our outstanding U.S. Embassy team, we will continue to strengthen our alliance by showcasing American and Maltese excellence, fostering economic opportunities, cultural exchanges, and diplomatic collaborations. I look forward to working with the government and people of Malta and Gozo to achieve our shared vision for the future. On a personal note, I acknowledge my deep Faith and am eager for the opportunity to hear mass with the Maltese Catholic community."

Ambassador Farkas's appointment underscores the United States' ongoing commitment to its close relationship with Malta, a valued partner in the Mediterranean.

## MALTA AND THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION (NATO)



Malta is not a member of NATO, but it has a close relationship with the alliance as a partner country through the Partnership for Peace (PfP) program, which it rejoined in 2008. Malta's neutrality is a constitutional commitment, and the country's political parties and a majority of the public support this policy, which is fully respected by NATO.

NATO and partner Malta are working together to build political dialogue and practical cooperation in promoting and maintaining international and regional peace, stability and security.

All cooperation between NATO and Malta is conducted in full respect of the country's neutrality and national decision-making processes.

- Malta first joined the Partnership for Peace (PfP) programme in 1995. It suspended participation in 1996 but reactivated its PfP membership in 2008. Malta recognises that it can help address emerging security challenges and contribute to international and regional peace, security and stability through the PfP framework.
- Malta is a member of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC), a forum for dialogue that brings together all Allies and partner countries in the Euro-Atlantic area.
- Participation in the PfP programme is fully compatible with Malta's commitment to the principle of neutrality.
- In February 2024, Malta and NATO agreed a new framework of cooperation – the Individually Tailored Partnership Programme (ITPP) – marking the beginning of an even closer partnership. This programme covers areas for enhanced cooperation with NATO, such as human security, countering hybrid threats, cyber defence, and defence reform and transformation. The ITPP replaces the previously agreed Individual Partnership and Cooperation Programme for Malta.

### Key areas of cooperation

Malta's cooperation with NATO is mutually beneficial and includes:

### Building capabilities and interoperability

- Malta joined the Planning and Review Process (PARP) in December 2023. This process forms the basis for supporting Maltese efforts to increase the effectiveness and interoperability of selected elements of its armed forces, allowing them to better serve national needs, and helping them to prepare for multinational peace-support operations, should Malta wish to contribute to such efforts.
- NATO and Malta are interested in working together to promote security, mutual understanding and situational awareness in the Mediterranean region.
- Malta has much to offer the Alliance as its partnership with NATO develops. The country has special expertise in international maritime law, diplomatic studies and search and rescue, as well as in Arabic culture and language training.

### Wider cooperation

- Malta participates in NATO's Science for Peace and Security (SPS) Programme, and has played a leading role in activities in the fields of advanced technology and cyber defence. Maltese scientists have been actively involved in research and development projects focusing on quantum communications and computing, among other topics.





Dear Subscribers,  
Get into the holiday spirit with our Christmas crafting session!

Participants aged 7 and above will have the opportunity to create beautiful handmade baubles to decorate their homes. Alongside crafting, we'll prepare and savour 'imbuljuta' – a rich, comforting hot chocolate drink made with chestnuts, perfect for the winter season.

This activity combines creativity with a touch of

tradition, offering a festive experience for all ages.

Join us on 20th December at the Inquisitor's Palace for two sessions: 12:00pm (in English) and 2:30pm (in Maltese). A small gift will be given to those attending.

Tickets (each including admission for one accompanying adult) are available [here](#) and from all Heritage Malta museums and sites.

*Please bring your own mug with a lid!* **HERITAGE MALTA**

The Maltese community in Australia can never adequately express its gratitude for the tireless and committed contributions you have made over many years of voluntary and unpaid service to Maltese Diaspora as a teacher of Maltese, Honorary Consul, Justice of the Peace and Editor of this Maltese Journal. Thank you, Frank. - Joe Calleja – Australia 25/11/2025

**MALTESE COMMUNITY COUNCIL OF NSW INC**  
The Maltese Community Council  
of New South Wales held its Annual General Meeting  
on Thursday 20 November 2025

The elected committee members are as follows:

President: Miriam Friggieri

Vice President: Antoine Mangion

Treasurer: Michael Zammit

Secretary: Sandra Grech

Asst Treasurer: Neville Zammit

Public Relations Officer / Asst Secretary:

Marisa Previtera OAM

Congratulations to the new committee.

**DO YOU HAVE  
A STORY TO TELL?**

**Share it with others  
and be part of the  
History of  
Maltese  
Emigration**

## THE FIRST MALTESE DOCTOR GRADUATED IN AUSTRALIA



Angelo and Marija Baldacchino with the baby Charles at their Adelaide house



Dr Baldacchino on his graduation Day in 1951

### DR CHARLES BALDACCHINO ADELAIDE

The Baldacchino family has a story that's part of the Maltese migration history. Dr. Charles Baldacchino and his wife Margaret lived in Brighton, South Australia for many years.

His parents, Angelo and Marija Baldacchino (whose maiden name was Bonnici), were among the very first Maltese folks to settle in South Australia. They both came from Zejtun, Malta, and back home, people

knew them by the nickname 'Tas-Somm'. Angelo was born in April 1898 and worked as a fireman for quite a few years. He left Malta in March 1925 and landed here on April 28, 1925. Angelo had been a sailor in the Merchant Navy, so he'd been to loads of places worldwide, like Egypt, Tunis, Colombo, New York, Le Havre, Naples, and Sydney.

He ended up settling in Adelaide and worked at the Brighton cement factory for a long time. He also worked on building the Power House, Osmond, and even helped construct Edinburgh Airport back in the early 1940s.

Angelo passed away at 79 in 1977, in the very house he built himself on Grange Road in Flinders Park. He's buried at St. Jude's Cemetery in Brighton.

Angelo's only child, Charles, was born in 1929. However, he was sent back to Malta during the Great Depression when he was just two years old and came back to Adelaide when he was seven.

He went on to become the first Maltese doctor to graduate from an Australian university. When he was a school kid, Charles used to sell newspapers to help his parents cover his school expenses.

He studied at St. Mary's Dominican College and Christian Brothers College in Adelaide. His usual spot for selling papers was at the corner of North Terrace and Victoria Street.

He impressively won a Returned Soldiers Scholarship, but he still kept selling newspapers. He secured this scholarship after the qualifying exam in 1940, scoring a remarkable 642 out of a possible 700 marks. He would start selling THE NEWS, the only afternoon paper in Adelaide, right after school and work until 7:00 pm every weekday. Despite all this, he passed his leaving exam with flying colors and later enrolled at Adelaide University to study medicine. To achieve this Charles gave all his money to his mother for safe keeping.

Dr. Baldacchino was graduated in medicine from Adelaide University in 1951. He passed away peacefully on Monday September 3, 2018 aged 91 years.



## WE LOST A FRIEND AND AN ICON OF THE MALTESE-AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITY OF WOLLONGONG NSW

### Tribute by his nephew Frank Testa

Dear Frank, I am writing to inform you and your readers of the passing of Fr. Leonard Testa OFM Conv on the 21st November 2025 aged 85 years. Fr Leonard, an Australian/Maltese priest, had many chronic health conditions which took their toll on his physical health in recent times, but despite this he remained mentally very active in his retirement from the priesthood writing two books - on his family history since migrating from post

war Malta to Wollongong Australia, and on his history of the parish of Warrawong, south of Wollongong.

He was parish priest and assistant priest at Warrawong for many years spending a good part of his priestly ministry in this parish. He was also placed by his Franciscan Order in the USA, Turkey, Rome, Malta and Assisi. He especially enjoyed his time in Assisi at the home of his beloved St. Francis, where he got to meet many dignitaries in his time there including a young Prince Charles. Fr. Leonard was a pillar for the Maltese community in Warrawong and Port Kembla, helping many Maltese (and other) migrants settle in this new country Australia in the late 1960s and beyond. Besides Maltese and English, he spoke fluent Italian, Latin, and enough Portuguese to help him get by. This endeared him to his multicultural parishioners who he loved and cared for.

He was always jovial and never let the problems of this world worry or frustrate him. He lived his faith and put his trust in the Lord that he loved.

He came from a large family of 10 other siblings and cared dearly for his parents in their later years. He also loved his many nephews and nieces who he spoiled with love and attention at every opportunity. His passing leaves a hole in the Maltese Community of the Illawarra that won't easily be filled, and we will always remember the contribution that he made to our community in Warrawong. Sadly missed by the many people whose lives he also touched in Springvale Victoria, and Kellyville Sydney.

### Another tribute by Lawrence Scerri

Earlier today, 21 November 2025, the death was announced of our Brother Father Leonard Testa OFMConv. He was born in Ħal Qormi on 4 November 1940 and was baptised in the Parish of St George in Ħal Qormi. The son of Frank and Carmen Testa, he was the third of 13 siblings. At the age of 10, he emigrated with his family to Australia on 16 December 1950, where they settled in an area near the regional city of Wollongong, about 80 kilometres southeast of the capital city of Sydney, in the State of New South Wales, in the Parish of Port Kembla. Thousands of Maltese settled there during the 1950s and 60s. They found work in the large steel and iron factory known as BHP, which at the time employed around 20,000 people. At that time, there was a growing need for a Maltese priest.

In 1956, from the Parish of Port Kembla, the Parish of Warrawong was established, covering parts of the suburbs of Lake Heights and Cringila, and it was entrusted to the Conventual Franciscan Friars. The first parish priest was the late Father Vitor Bonello OFMConv., from Xagħra, Gozo. Following him came a number of friars from the Conventual Franciscan Order, among them the late Father Manwel Gatt OFMConv.



Father Leonard, at 16 years of age, entered as a postulant with the Conventual Franciscan Order, spending his first months in the convents of Valletta and Rabat, Gozo. He completed his novitiate in Assisi in 1959 and made his simple profession in the Basilica of St Francis in Assisi. On returning to Malta, he began his initial priestly studies and formation, later continuing at the International College of St Theodore and at the Seraphicum in Rome. In 1966 he was ordained a priest in the Church of the Immaculate Conception in EUR, Rome, by the Conventual Franciscan Archbishop Monsignor Radossi OFMConv., Archbishop of the Diocese of Spoleto, Italy.

After his priestly ordination, he returned to Australia—first to his childhood parish of Warrawong, then became a pioneer with Father Sebastjan Scicluna OFMConv., in Kellyville, a suburb in the northwest of Sydney, where in 1969 he became the first parish priest of the Kellyville Parish.

Among his activities, he was twice chosen to lead the Franciscan community in Australia, and was appointed parish priest of the new Parish of Kellyville as well as St Joseph Parish in Springvale, Victoria. He also offered his service in Assisi at the Basilica of St Francis, as well as in Turkey in the cities of Istanbul and Karşıyaka, Izmir, and for many years in the Parish of Warrawong, NSW, Australia. In 2016 he spent a sabbatical year in Malta, specifically in the Parish of St Paul's Bay, where he celebrated the 50th Anniversary of his Priestly Ordination. Condolences to the Conventual Franciscan Friars and to his family both in Australia and in Malta.

***Kemm iddispjacieni Frank fuq il-mewt ta' Patri (Ir-Raheb kif kien jindirizza ruhu mieghi dejjem) Testa! Ghamel hafna hafna gid fi zmienu u kien tabilhaqq mahbub minn kull min kien isir jafu socjalment u religjozament. Jidhirli li ghad ghandu wiehed minn hutu joqghod x'imkien hawn go Sydney imma la naf fejn u lanqas x'jismu. Qatt ma ltqajt mieghu jien. Il-Maltin ta' Wollongong u l-inhawi kif ukoll dawk ta' Springvale fil-Victoria u ohrajn minn Kellyville u t-Turkija wkoll jisghob bihom ghat-telfa tieghu. Insellimlek habib u kompli fil-missjoni tant siewja tieghek li inti qieghed taqdi permezz ta' dan il-gurnal. Sahha dejjem! Rigu (Roderick Bovingdon) NSW Australia***

## Vale...MARK CARUANA. OAM



ark passed away on 24 November 2025 in NSW Australia.

Mark Caruana, born in Sliema, Malta in 1946, migrated to Australia during the 1970s and commenced his career as a case worker, assisting individuals from Malta, Vietnam, and the Middle East in their settlement into the country. He was an exceptional individual who played a significant role in refugee resettlement, making substantial contributions to the Australian community.

Caruana never sought public attention; instead, he focused on performing acts of kindness to meet the needs of others. As a migrant himself, Caruana quickly established himself as a notable figure in his Sydney suburb of Marayong, as well as throughout the city, including at the Blacktown Migrant Resource Centre, the Maltese Community Council of NSW, and the Mt Druitt Ethnic Communities Centre. For many years, Mark participated at the committee level with the Maltese Welfare NSW, the Maltese Cultural Association of NSW, and the Salesian Past Pupils & Friends of Don Bosco NSW, serving as a co-founder and member. For several years Mark held the position of President of the Don Bosco Association.

Additionally, he has authored articles on the oral history of migrants in Australia and has conducted over 120 oral history interviews on cassette and video, in both English and Maltese, primarily focusing on early settlers from the Maltese Islands who made Australia their home. May he rest in peace.



**28 November 2025.**

**Mrs. Lina Parnis from the George Cross Falcons Community Centre of Cringila NSW is teaching the Lake Illawarra High School students how to cook the Maltese Traditional dish IMQARRUN IL-FORN (Baked Pasta). This function was organised by the MULTICULTURAL COMMUNITIES COUNCIL OF ILLAWARRA INC**





**Afghan students Mumtaz Islamzay (left) and Roya Ahmadi (right) said they were grateful for the chance to study in Malta. Photos: Jonathan Borg**

Afghan student Mumtaz Islamzay is haunted by her memories of four years ago when she raced across the border to Pakistan to escape the clutches of the Taliban.

“The day we crossed the border I couldn’t say goodbye to my brother. I left him with nothing and

he said, ‘Run and do not look back; if you look back, the Taliban will notice that you’re alone and they will take you,’ Islamzay said.

“It’s a flashback coming to my mind when I think about how I came through this difficult journey,” she said. Islamzay was speaking to *Times of Malta* from a classroom at Cospicua’s American University of Malta (AUM), where for the last four months she has been studying for a master’s degree in artificial intelligence. AUM students and their rector discuss the journey that brought them from Afghanistan to Malta. She is among a group of Afghan students who recently relocated to Malta following the Trump administration’s sweeping cuts to the US Agency for International Development.

Islamzay was a scholarship student at Afghanistan’s Bakhtar University, but when the Taliban returned to power, her studies ended. “It’s like you’re a beautiful flower enjoying the heat of the sun, and suddenly they [the Taliban] took you and put you in a dark room.”

“My mom said: ‘You have to get an education... you have to go, you have to fight for yourself’. So, I took this strength and I said goodbye to my mom, gathered all my courage and left Afghanistan to continue my education.” Islamzay travelled to Qatar, where she continued her studies at the American University of Afghanistan (AUAF).

The institution had been forced to leave Afghanistan when the Taliban resurged to power, relocating its around 600 students to Kyrgyzstan, US, Iraq and Doha in Qatar, where it opened a temporary campus.

AUAF continued operating from Qatar and running online classes for students based abroad until January, when Trump’s cuts to USAID ended funding for the university.

Former AUAF vice president of academic affairs, now American University of Malta rector, Victoria Fontan, said the cuts meant the institution “literally went dark overnight”, leaving her with no choice but to relocate.

The Afghan students have found a new life at the American University of Malta (AUM) in Cospicua. “I looked at many different destinations that could both accommodate my own career progression and my students with me, because we’ve stayed together since 2021,” she said.

Fontan explained she had already entered into discussions with AUM when an alternative line of US government funding – boosted by some private backing – opened up, securing her students’ path to Malta, the destination she described as the “best opportunity”, having also considered institutions in Albania, Oman and Azerbaijan.

“Malta is an English-speaking country, a welcoming society and has a long-standing tradition of humanitarian action and upholding human rights – and especially the rights of women. It was just a perfect combination.” ‘Amazing neighbours’ Fontan said a “sizeable” number of Afghan students were now studying at AUM, and that they had “adapted really well”.

“The weather is fantastic. They’re all lodged in the same dormitory in Tarxien and the neighbours have been amazing to them... so far, I think it’s been a success.”

The rector said the Afghan students' studies in Malta ranged from business, accounting and management to graphic design, engineering and computer science – “niche programmes that would have them employed right after graduation”.

“The idea is not just to educate them for the sake of it, otherwise they can take a sewing class and go back and make dresses in Afghanistan; it's about contributing to technology and the future of any society that they might choose to live in.”

AUM rector Victoria Fontan called Malta the ‘best opportunity’ for her students.

Fontan said her students now make up a sizeable part of AUM's student population, without going into further detail. And while AUM has faced questions in the past over low student numbers, the new rector is aiming to beef up those numbers.

“We have a cohort of study-abroad students that are going to arrive from North America and we're establishing agreements with other American institutions,” she said.

“I came as a package with my cohort, and within our own network we had other partnerships that now are going to be coming to AUM and growing our student body... So, this is just the start.”

Responding to possible concerns about her students' country of origin, she noted that all the Afghan students had been vetted by America's FBI and CIA intelligence agencies.

‘Worst nightmare’ The French peace and conflict studies scholar spent more than two years teaching in Afghanistan and was in Kabul when the city fell.

Recalling the shocking events of 2021, she described the speed of the Taliban takeover as “defying logic for many people on the ground” and spreading fear among the population.

“For many Afghans, and especially women, it was their worst nightmare coming true; they had been told about the 1990s by their grandmothers, and then all of a sudden, after growing up with total freedom, they were faced with this new reality they had been dreading.”

The Taliban rule in Afghanistan collapsed in late 2001 in the face of a US-led invasion of the country following the September 11 attacks in New York. Almost exactly 20 years later, the militant group retook the country in a lightning offensive.

Staff and students were forced to flee Afghanistan when the Taliban resurged to power. Photo: Victoria Fontan. Fontan's harrowing departure from Kabul included burning files to protect student and staff identities, being searched by the Taliban and being held for days before being allowed to leave.

But even before the Taliban retook the country, it had remained a threat; a 2016 attack on the AUAF campus by the militant group left 15 staff and students dead and others abducted.

“Since the attack, students risked their lives to come to university every day. The university was like a maximum-security prison; we had enormous walls and nine ballistic towers with armed personnel – sponsored by USAID at the time – defending us,” she said.

“Just for teaching basic subjects such as gender studies, human rights, climate change, we were facing the wrath of the Taliban,” said Fontan.

‘Really grateful’ Like Islamzay, fellow student Roya Ahmadi also left Afghanistan to continue her studies after the Taliban retook the country, travelling first to the AUAF campus in Qatar and then to Malta.

She is grateful to be studying in Malta and all too aware of the fate that would await her back home: “My friends in Afghanistan are hopeless; even if they have food, shelter and family, they have no hope in their heart.”

Stressing that she remains driven by her hopes for her future, Ahmadi said she “couldn't survive” if she were forced to return to her home country.

“The girls cannot even live their life; they can't even go to the park... [to] sit somewhere and enjoy nature. So, if I don't have that kind of right, how about my education? My work? My future?”



Emphasising she would “never, ever” go back to Afghanistan while the Taliban remained in power, Ahmadi said that should the regime change, she hopes to one day return and “serve my people” by working in the government.

And she believes such dreams should be open to all Afghans: “It’s not only about girls and women; all people of Afghanistan want to have that right – to live their life the way they want,”

Reflecting on her new life, Ahmadi said she was “really grateful” to Malta, “because today I have this chance and it changed my whole life”. Does she have a message for her people back in Afghanistan? “Don’t lose your hope, and I hope that you have the chance that I have today.”



## JOSEPHINE ZAMMIT CORDINA OAM MQR TURNS 90

We, the editors and readers of the Journal for Maltese living abroad congratulate the presenter and actress Josephine Zammit Cordina, who celebrated her 90th birthday this month.

Josephine was born in Hamrun on 20 November 1935. She completed her secondary education in Sliema, attended the British School in Suez, Egypt, and studied at Secretariat College in Reading, United Kingdom.

Josephine commenced her broadcasting career at the age of 29, producing programs aimed at schools. Throughout her career, Josephine Zammit Cordina has both presented and directed numerous radio and television programs, including *Waltzing Matilda* and *Boomerang*, which focused on the Maltese community in Australia. In 1987, Zammit Cordina traveled to Canada,



*Frank Scicluna with Josephine  
Zammit Cordina in Malta*

where she participated in a ten-hour telethon for cable TV in Ontario, raising funds for Dar tal-Providenza in Siggiewi.

The following year, in 1988, she produced a series for SBS Radio Australia titled *Minn L-Isle Adam sa Hompesh*, which comprised 28 episodes about the Grand Masters of the Order of St John in Malta. She served on the Film and Stage Censorship Board from 1988 to 1991 and was a member of the Commission for Maltese Abroad from 1991 to 1994, eventually being appointed president in 1995. In 1993, Zammit Cordina received the Manoel de Vilhena Award from the Harmonic 65 Culture Centre in Melbourne, Australia, in recognition of her significant

contributions to the promotion of Maltese arts and culture in that nation. In 1995, Josephine Zammit Cordina was honoured with the Medal for the Ministry of the Republic (MQR).

On Australia Day, 26 January 2004, the Australian Government recognized Josephine with the Medal of Australia as an Honorary Member (AM) in the General Division of the Order of Australia. Josephine Zammit Cordina has also appeared as an actress in series such as *Undercover*, *Dejjem Tiegħek Becky*, *Triq Waħda*, *Wirt*, and *K.C.*, and was part of the original cast of *F’Baħar Wieħed*. Additionally, Josephine contributed to the first Maltese film, *Il-Ġagħa*, directed by Mario Philip Azzopardi. Josephine concluded her broadcasting career in 2015, after dedicating 51 years to the profession. On 25 August 1957, she married Harry Zammit Cordina, who sadly passed away on 7 February 2022.



## HERITAGE MALTA UNVEILS ITS 'E - MUSEUM'

Heritage Malta has launched eMuseum, a new online platform granting unprecedented public access to Malta's national collection. The launch also kicks off the agency's Careers Fair weekend, setting the tone for two days dedicated to showcasing the many professions and opportunities within Malta's cultural heritage sector.

After four years of dedicated work by curators, conservators, and digitisation specialists, eMuseum now makes nearly 3,000 artefacts from Heritage Malta's museums and reserve collections accessible online, with more being added regularly. The collection features items from MUŻA – The National Community Art Museum, the Malta Maritime Museum, and the Gozo Museum of Archaeology, among others. Users can browse by title, date, exhibition history, or museum location, and curate their own personal collections of favourite items.

Beyond simple access, the platform – accessible on [emuseum.heritagemalta.mt](https://emuseum.heritagemalta.mt) – is designed as a dynamic environment for exploration and learning. Developed in line with Europeana – the European Union's digital cultural heritage platform for which Heritage Malta is the certified National Aggregator – and international digitisation standards, eMuseum enables virtual exhibitions, immersive storytelling, and future integration of virtual and augmented reality experiences.

During the launch at the agency's headquarters in Bighi, Kalkara, Dr Owen Bonnici, Minister for Culture, Lands and Local Government, commented that: "This initiative represents another important step in the digitisation of our cultural heritage, putting Malta in the forefront of this sector." He also stated that: "through eMuseum, the public will not only be able to appreciate better the national collection, but also have the opportunity to explore, study and interact with it in an innovative way, from anywhere in the world."

Noel Zammit, Heritage Malta's Chief Executive Officer, remarked: "This initiative further strengthens Heritage Malta's standing as a forward-looking agency, that anticipates future changes, embraces and employs them. The portal opens the doors wide open for education, new partnerships that transcend borders and new cultural diplomacy opportunities, and more transparency in how Heritage Malta safeguards and interprets our country's cultural assets. This launch is not the end of the road, but the start of new and exciting journeys in Heritage Malta's adventure in the digitisation sector."

Whilst thanking heartily the staff of the Technology and Experience Development (TED) Unit for their work, dedication and professionalism, Anthony Cassar, who heads the Unit, commented that: "The eMuseum platform is a promise that we will continue to preserve, share and promote our cultural heritage in an inclusive, innovative and sustainable way. This forms part of a larger chain of initiatives, including the Memory Twin concept, a more advanced method of digitising than the Digital Twin, being developed in unison with the UNESCO Chair for Digital Cultural Heritage, which ensures that what we digitally collect represents our cultural heritage fully, not only its visual form."

Complementing this digital milestone, the Heritage Malta Careers Fair, taking place at the agency's Head Office in Bighi, Kalkara, throughout this weekend, from 09:00 to 17:00, invites the public to explore the many professional pathways that help shape the future of Malta's heritage.

Visitors will meet the experts who safeguard Malta's cultural legacy – including curators, archaeologists, conservators, scientists, architects, masons, carpenters, and boat builders, enjoy interesting talks and hands-on demonstrations, and get information on the agency's volunteering opportunities. For the full programme click here: <https://heritagemalta.mt/heritage-malta-careers-fair-2025/>.





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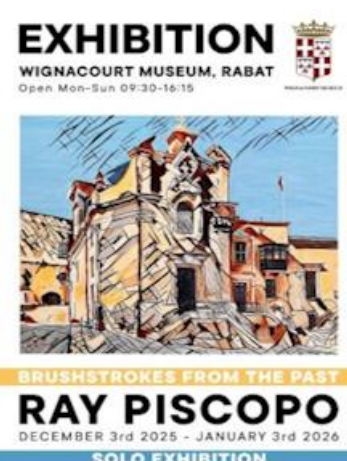
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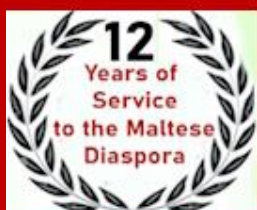


The beautiful Wignacourt Museum in Rabat will present a solo exhibition by the distinguished Maltese artist Ray Piscopo, titled *Brushstrokes from the Past /Pinzellati mill-Passat*, scheduled to take place from 3 December 2025 to 3 January 2026.

This poignant exhibition features 27 oil paintings on canvas that honour Malta's historical and architectural legacy through a modern perspective. Piscopo's artistic style, which merges realism with abstraction, delves into the essence of Maltese identity, showcasing iconic structures, sacred sites, and symbols that resonate with the collective memory of the Maltese populace.

"Where memory meets colour: paintings that capture the silent beauty of Maltese heritage." Set within the historic confines of the Wignacourt Museum – a treasure of Maltese Baroque architecture – the exhibition provides a distinctive experience where the past converges with the present, both on and off the canvas.

Entry to the exhibition is free, and it is accessible daily, from Monday to Sunday, between 09:30 and 16:15. Whether you are a resident art enthusiast or a tourist visiting Malta during the holiday season, this exhibition promises.



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# VICTORIA OR RABAT

Ir-Rabat (Victoria) is the capital city of the island of Gozo. The name Victoria was given to the town in 1887 in honour of the famous British Queen's Golden Jubilee. At the same time, the town was raised to the status of a city becoming officially known as Citta' ir-Rabat (Victoria).

Ir-Rabat (Victoria) embraces both the Citadel, the ancient fortified city at the centre of the Island, and the surrounding town old Rabat (meaning suburb in Arabic and Archaic Maltese) and its modern additions. There are many places of historical and cultural interest in ir-Rabat (Victoria). A visit to the Citadel is a must. Its towering fortifications afford superb views over the whole Island and within the Citadel are many of the main historical sites of ir-Rabat (Victoria) including The Interpretation Centre, The Cathedral Museum, the Museum of Archaeology, the Folklore Museum, the Gozo Nature Museum, the Old Prison, the Old Gunpowder Magazine, the Grain Silos, the Battery and the World War II Shelter.

The centre of ir-Rabat (Victoria) is Pjazza Indipendenza (Independence Square), known as It-Tokk. The square is dominated by the Banca Giuratale, built between 1733 and 1738, formerly the seat of the municipal government of Gozo and presently of the ir-Rabat (Victoria) Local Council. The square is filled with numerous open-air cafes. In the mornings, an open market takes place at Savina Square, just a short walk up from It-Tokk.

The magnificent St. George's Basilica stands in a smaller square just behind It-Tokk in the heart of the old town. The web of narrow streets around St. George's are the oldest in town and well worth a walk around. Here you can also find Il-Haġar Museum, a cultural center featuring exhibits on Gozo's religious and cultural heritage, including artifacts from St. George's Basilica and the Joseph Vella Music Archive. It regularly hosts temporary exhibitions and events, making it a lively spot for both locals and visitors.

Two main feasts are celebrated in ir-Rabat (Victoria): St. George's during the week preceding the third Sunday of July, and the Feast of the Assumption of Our Lady during the week preceding August 15th. In Triq ir-Repubblika (Republic Street), ir-Rabat (Victoria)'s main street, there are all kinds of shops, a couple of shopping arcades, pharmacies, banks, the Police Headquarters, and the Bishop's Chancery, as well as La Stella and Leone Band Clubs in their respective homes, the



Astra and Aurora opera theatres. In lower Republic Street (a little further from It-Tokk) is Villa Rundle Public Gardens, laid out by the British in 1910 and recently refurbished.

With a variety of local and imported trees and a cooling fountain, the gardens are an oasis of peace. Just off Republic Street to the south is Ir-Rabat (Victoria)'s main car park and the Bus Terminus. Other smaller parking areas can be found in St George's Square, Savina Square, St Francis Square and St Augustine Square.



## THE MALTESE SENIOR CITIZENS ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

We are pleased to inform you that the Maltese Seniors Citizens Association welcomes everyone to our club every Friday at the Community Hall located at 49 Lehunt Street, Kilburn, SA. Our doors are open from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM, and we invite you to join us for a fun and engaging time. The entrance fee is just \$1.00, which includes complimentary tea and coffee. For lunch, we offer a delicious choice of either a ham or tuna roll served with chips for only \$5. Additionally, our bar provides a selection of drinks at reasonable prices,

ensuring a pleasant experience for all.

Mark your calendars! On **November 28th**, we will host our annual Christmas lunch at the Bridgeway Hotel, starting at **12 PM**. This special event is exclusively for our members and is priced at just \$20 per person. To secure your spot, you can make reservations at the hall on Fridays, or you can contact Godwin Gauci at 0414 964 690 or Charlie Mifsud at 0409 504 327.

Furthermore, we are excited to announce another upcoming event on **December 5th**, where we will celebrate the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady. This celebration will begin with a Mass at **11 AM** at St. Brigid Church, conveniently located across from the hall at Kilburn. Following the service, we will host a delightful lunch featuring quarter chicken and chips, available for just \$5 per person. All proceeds from this event will go to the Heart Kids Foundation charity. We also encourage anyone who wishes to contribute further to the cause to make a donation.

Please take note that on **December 12th**, we will hold a festive Christmas BBQ lunch, which will be free for all members. This will be our last gathering for the year, and we look forward to reopening the club on **Friday, January 16th, 2026**.

As a friendly reminder, it is crucial to make advance reservations for our free lunch events. This allows the committee to plan accordingly and ensure that enough food is prepared. If you do not reserve your spot, please be aware that you may only receive what is available if we run out of food. To book your place, visit us at the hall on Fridays or call Godwin Gauci at 0414 964 690 or Charlie Mifsud at 0409 504 327.

Thank you for your continued support, and we look forward to seeing you at our events!

**Charles Mifsud – Secretary**



## MALTESE QUEEN OF VICTORIES BAND OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA 1986



**FRONT ROW (SEATED) LEFT TO RIGHT:** J. Chetcuti, C. Caviuolo, C. Chircop, M. Axisa, M. Camilleri, A Mifsud, A Borg, S. Pace, O. Farrugia, R. Saliba, M. Chetcuti

**SECOND ROW:** R. Borg, J. Axisa, C. Borg, C. Baldacchino, R. Grima, M. Mifsud, T. Borg, C. Chetcuti, R. Saliba, M. Carabott, R. Saliba, P. Cremona, A Caruana, J. Vella, S. Carabott, E. Camilleri, T. Cassar, R. Borg, M. Mifsud, M. Follet, J. Camilleri, A Borg, S. Carabott

**THIRD ROW:** M. Camilleri, P. Camilleri, C. Bezzina, J. Mallia J. Borg, J. Fenech, J. Chetcuti, O. Farrugia, C. Caruana, L. Mifsud, C. Borg, M. Farrugia, A Chetcuti,

**FOURTH ROW:** S Axisa, G. Pace, R. Saliba, R. DeBono, R. Spiteri, D. Debono, A Margheritte, R. Farrugia, G. Bugeja, P. Cortis, J. Chetcuti



This photograph was taken during the official visit of the late President of Malta H.E. Censu Tabour to South Australia. The great welcome ceremony was organised by the Maltese Community Council of South Australia at the Maltese Cultural Centre, 6 Jeanes Street Beverley. on the 15 June 1993.

Photo - L to R Mr T Mahoney, Australian High Commissioner, Mrs V Busuttil, Mr George Busuttil Malta High Commissioner, Mrs M Tabone, Mr Frank Scicluna (President MCC), Dr Censu Tabone (President of Malta), Mrs. J. Scicluna, Prof Guido DeMarco, Gaetano Grech.





### **MALTESE COMMUNITY COUNCIL OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA 2004**

Back row - John Debono (dec), Madeliene Scicluna, Victor Mansueto, Tessie Mansueto(dec), Charlie Vidal (dec), Connie Vidal (dec) , Tom Borg, Jimmy Cassar and Joe Vella (dec). Front - Fr. Gabriel Micallef OFM, Carmen Debono (dec), John Debono (President), Bernadette Buhagiar (Secretary), Frank Scicluna (Hon Consul) and John Mangion



### **MALTESE IN ADELAIDE GREETES HON A CACHIA ZAMMIT**

Dr. A Cachia Zammit. Malta's Minister for Emigration visited South Australia on 30 August 1963. The Maltese Guild organised a welcome Dinner at Seaton Hotel. Back row (L to It) T Mahoney, L. Mifsud, . Hili, V. Mifsud, D. Canuana, J Barbara. Alex Cachia Zamnit. Father Leopold Farrugia OFM. J DeFelice. M Zammit, A Zammit, M Sgarbossa, Captain G. Stivala (Commissioner). T Mahoney  
Sitting T Caruana, C Hill. C. Barbara, M. Mallia and J Sgarbossa





## MALTESE COMMUNITY COUNCIL OF VICTORIA. CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PARTY 2025

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