

Community Life

Part of the Resettlement Process

(courtesy of the Terranova exhibition
http://www.geocities.com/terranova_au)

The following milestones within community life, in the first years of Polish post war settlement, were largely identified through the *Polish Weekly* (*Tygodnik Polski*).

They provide an outline of that which was important to these migrant settlers, as well as the social and cultural needs which emerged with time.

1947-48

Arrival of 1,457 Polish servicemen, who had fought under British command. They arrive under the Ex-Servicemens Scheme. The majority of the Polish "Rats of Tobruk" went to Tasmania, while most Polish airmen settled in New South Wales and Victoria.

1949

The establishment of the "*Catholic Weekly*" (*Tygodnik Katolicki*) in the Bathurst migrant camp in New South Wales. The editor was Fr. Edmund Trzeciak. In 1954 the *Tygodnik* moved to Melbourne, where it subsequently changed its name to the ["Polish Weekly" \(Tygodnik Polski\)](#).

The commencement of the publication of "*Polish News*" (*Wiadomosci Polskie*) in Sydney under the editor Zygmunt Przybylkiewicz.

The establishment of the Association of Poles in South Australia.

In a major public ceremony in the presence of Arthur Calwell, Minister for Immigration, 194 former Polish "Rats of Tobruk" become Australian citizens, in Butlers Gorge, Tasmania.

The first Polish mass at St Vincents in Ashfield, an inner suburb of Sydney.

The establishment of the Polish Airforce Association in New South Wales. The largest concentration of Polish airmen landed initially in Sydney.

The establishment of the Association of Poles in Victoria. The organisation was initiated after two transports of Polish DPs, residing at the migrant camp at Fishermans Bend, participated in an Easter gathering. At this gathering between "new arrivals" and members of the existing fledgling prewar Polish community, Professor Stanislaw Tarczynski (the head of the Melbourne conservatorium of music) invited those present to his home. At this first meeting of over thirty new Polish migrants there was a general proposal that a Polish organisation be formed. Eventually the Association had branches throughout the suburbs of Melbourne and Victoria, wherever there was a concentration of Polish people. The Association conducted a range of activities including social and cultural gatherings, a library of books and newspapers, mutual welfare support, cultural and linguistical maintenance amongst the younger migrants, as well as fund raising.

The establishment of the [Polish scouting movement in Australia](#), which subsequently spread throughout most states. The first scouting troops were set up in migrant hostels.

The beginning of the Polish folkloric dance ensemble in Adelaide, under the auspice of the Polish Association in South Australia.

101 Polish former airmen become Australian citizens in Sydney.

The establishment of a Polish church choir in Brisbane.

At Bathurst migrant transit camp in New South Wales, a Polish midnight mass (*pasterka*) is celebrated, with the participation of over 1,500 new arrivals.

The performance of Lucjan Rydel's nativity play "*Jaselka Polskie*" is staged in Ashfield, New South Wales.

1950

The arrival in Fremantle, Western Australia of 1,179 former Polish deportees to the Soviet Union (largely women and children) on the ship *General W. C. Langfitt*. This group of Polish refugees had spent the previous five years or more in British East Africa.

The first Polish sports club in Australia to be established in Adelaide. Its name "*Polonia*" was to be replicated with other Polish soccer and sports clubs around Australia, including Melbourne and Sydney.

The first Polish dance group in Melbourne, *Krakowiacy*, is established under the auspice of the Polish Association of Victoria based at Roma House, Melbourne.

In Sydney the establishment of the [Federal Council of Polish Associations in](#)

[Australia \(Rada Naczelna Polskich Organizacji w Australii\)](#) - a federal body coordinating and overseeing Polish community life in Australia. This was an extremely forward thinking move for a community which was just beginning to establish basic structures and activities.

The sports club *Polonia* is established in Melbourne - with soccer, ping-pong, volleyball and basketball sections. Within ten years the team is to be Victoria soccer state champions.

The establishment of the Polish Drama Club in Sydney.

he establishment of a Polish club in Bathurst, New South Wales.

The establishment of a Polish community library and reading room in Brisbane, Queensland.

The performance of Krumilowski's play "*The Fisherman's Vows*" (*Sluby Rybackie*) by the Polish Drama Club in Melbourne, with the participation of a newly established choir.

The appearance of the independent weekly "*Echo*" published in Western Australia by Ludwik Tabaczynski.

The establishment of the Polish Social Welfare Bureau in Sydney, under the auspices of the *Polish Democratic Association (Polskie Towarzystwo Demokratyczne)*.

The establishment of the Polish Club in Canberra, with its first President, Mr. Trawinski.

1951

The arrival of the Polish Jesuit, Rev. Jozef Janus SJ, who becomes a major driving force in Polish community life in Melbourne.

A mass commemorating the Polish National Day (3rd of May) is celebrated in Sydney by Cardinal Thomas Gilroy, in the presence of over 2,500 Polish people.

The first meeting of the *Marian Sodality (Sodaliczja Marianska)* in Melbourne.

In Sydney, the establishment of the *Polish Australian Fund (Fundusz Wieczysty)* under the auspice of the Federal Council of Polish Associations in Australia. The aim of the Fund is to be a perpetual trust to support the activities of the Polish community.

The establishment of the first state Polish umbrella body (*Komisja Koordynacyjna w Wiktorii*) in Victoria. Its members are the Polish

Association, the Polish Scouting Movement and the Polish Catholic organisation.

The establishment of the *Polish Technical Club (Kolo Technikow)* in Melbourne. Its first president is Mr Stanislaw Blum.

The establishment of a a new drama club in Adelaide.

1952

In Western Australia, Ludwik Tabaczynski publishes a quarterly literary magazine "*Echo - Opowiadania*".

In Sydney a committee is established to build a Polish children's home, so as to meet the childcare needs of Polish families and single parents during the difficult settlement period.

The Polish Association in South Australia calls into being a committee to build a Polish Community Centre in Adelaide.

In Brisbane, Polish nuns (*Nazaretanki*) arrive and undertake activities to establish a Polish children's home.

In Melbourne, Victoria, an association of Polish journalists is formed.

In Melbourne Jerzy Grot-Kwasniewski begins publishing the monthly *Polish Voice (Glos Polski)*.

The first organisational meeting of the Melbourne branch of the Polish veterans association (*Stowarzyszenie Polskich Kombatantow - SPK*).

In Melbourne, a cooperative is founded with the aim of establishing a Polish community centre. In 1955 a property was purchased in Parkville, which became a centre for community activities until 1962, when the Centre was moved to 313 Latrobe Stree in the city centre.

The opening of the Polish children's home in Essendon, Victoria, by Cardinal Mannix. The home is run by the Resurrection Sisters (*Zmartwychstanki*), a Polish religious order from the United States. The children's home was in the form of a boarding school/orphanage housing up to 80 children at a time. They cared for children of working families, single parents as well as state wards.

The first edition of the monthly *Nasza Droga* is published in Adelaide, South Australia.

1953

Boleslaw Korpolewski publishes the weekly *Forum* in Sydney.

The opening of the a Polish Saturday language school in Geelong, Victoria. This was a common activity from the earliest years of Polish settlement - and these community run and funded schools emerged around the country from the first days of settlement.

The purchase of the premises where the *Sodality Centre (Dom Sodalityjny)* and then the Polish Jesuit Centre was established in Richmond, Victoria.

1954

The establishment of the *Polish Women's Association* in Adelaide, South Australia.

The first meeting of the *Polish Cultural-Artistic Association (Polskie Kolo Kulturalno-Artystyczne)* in Melbourne.

The first performance of the Polish cabaret "*The Happy Kookaburra*" (*Wesola Kookaburra*), initiated by [Andrzej Chciuk](#) and Barbara Schenkel. All texts were written by local writers.

First mention in the *Polish Weekly* of the annual general meeting of the Polish Association in Geelong.

The establishment of a building fund for the building of a Polish children's home in South Australia.

The Polish soccer club *Polonia* becomes state champions of South Australia.

The establishment of the *Polska Macierz Szkolna* in Adelaide - an organisation consisting of Polish community educators - focusing on language and cultural maintenance.