



**Polish Museum and Archives in Australia Inc.
President's Report for Financial Year 2017/2018**

Dear Members
of the Polish Museum and Archives in Australia Inc.

In the last financial year 2017/2018 we have all worked very hard to develop our organisation.

The last AGM elected me as a President of the PMAA and Lucyna Artymiuk – Vice-President, Development Officer, Mrs Krystyna Duszniak – Secretary, Ms Maria Peszek – Treasurer, Ms Anna Zamecznik – Ass. Treasurer, Mr Stanislaw Bragiel – Membership Officer, Mrs. Julia Niziol-Nyazi – member, Mrs Barbara Capewell – member, Monica Lukas – member.

During the last financial year we had some changes in the Committee of Management due to resignations by Mrs. Krystyna Duszniak and Mr Stanislaw Bragiel. Members of the Committee decided not to accept these resignations but to give them leave from duties until the next AGM. In these circumstances the Committee co-opted Ms Maria Picyk to perform duties of Secretary as acting Secretary. Duties of Membership Officer have been transferred to Ms. Maria Peszek. Also Ms. Aniela Kociuba has been co-opted to the Committee as an extra-ordinary member.

In the last financial year we had 62 financial members. It's a great success. If we could keep our membership on this level, I can see a bright future for the PMAA. Most of members are from the second generation of Polish migrants in Australia.

Our activities concentrated on the Polish Soldier Migrants Project run by Ms Lucyna Artymiuk. Part of this project has been supported financially by the Consulate General of the Republic of Poland in Sydney.

During the Polish Festival at Federation Square in Melbourne we presented an exhibition on Polish Soldier Migrants (Nov 2017). I would like to say thank you to Miss Lucyna Artymiuk, Mrs Krystyna Duszniak and Ms Maria Picyk for their participation and help. We collected over \$1000 from sale of second-hand books and sale of the book written by Ms Lucyna Artymiuk. We also recruited new members.

Our Committee also organised stalls at the Polish Sports Festival in Albion (Feb 2018). And, again I would like to say thank you to Ms Lucyna Artymiuk, Mrs Barbara Capewell, Mr Stanislaw Bragiel and Ms Maria Picyk for their participation and help. We gathered over \$300 from sale of the second-hand books and sale of the book written by Ms Lucyna Artymiuk as well as recruited new members. Through our presence at such community events we increase our profile within the community.

During the last financial year Ms Lucyna Artymiuk organised two workshops on Polish genealogy (1 in Sydney and 1 in Melbourne). We had great feedback from the participants. A workshop in Melbourne was organised for students from Polish Saturday School in Rowville (December 2017).

Our collection of newspapers has been partially located in the John Paul II Polish House in Ardeer (at this moment we have there 4 cabinets and promised space for another 2).

Also our archives received further files to the collection of Mr Krzysztof Łańcucki (former president of the Polish Community Council of Australia/Rada Naczelna Polskich Organizacji w Australii, as well as a collection of albums of photographs after late Mrs Jadwiga Brojer (active member of the Polish Community in Melbourne, member of few dance and songs groups, theater "Ogniwo", Polish Senior Citizens Clubs of Melbourne and Mt. Waverley).

Additional collections of photographs and other items of late Mr Zdzislaw Martyszus and Mr Klemes Kaczorowski

The great achievement of our organisation in the last financial year was receiving donations from Mr Walter Kowalski (Wacław Kowalski) - \$10,000, Mrs Halina Prociuk - \$5,000 and Dr George Prociuk - \$2000.

Our Facebook account is administered by Ms Lucyna Artymiuk and has approx. 1600 members.

The website of the PMAA is administered by Mr David Walsh and we are very grateful for his help.

One of our regular activities is the Polish Australian Writers (PAW) group convened by Ms Lucyna Artymiuk and Ms Maria Picyk. This group has meetings every 2nd Saturday of the month in the Polish Sport and Recreation Centre in Albion or in Kluska Restaurant in Dandenong/Knox, or in other venues.

In Sydney, we have the genealogy support group which meets every third month at the Polish Club in Ashfield. The group was convened by Bernard Sobieszak and now Anna Grima.

The PMAA prepared an exhibition "Road to Independence" to commemorate 100th anniversary of Poland Regaining Independence. Initiative of this exhibition came from the Presidium of the Polish Community Council of Australia and its President Mrs Malgorzata Kwiatkowska. Graphic concept was designed by Mr. Vitek Skonieczny of Sydney, text was edited by me with help of Dr Joseph Poprzeczny, Mrs Krystyna Duszniak, Mr Stanisława

Bragiel. The exhibition was sponsored by the Senat of the Republic of Poland, Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Canberra, Consulate General of the Republic of Poland in Sydney, and others.

We now have a volunteer program and are actively recruiting volunteers to establish a comprehensive catalogue of our documentation and artefacts.

We established the Acquisition Sub-Committee (Lucyna Artymiuk, Barbara Capewell, Monica Lucas, Julia Nizioł-Nyazi), as well as the Oral History Sub-Committee (originally Marysua Picyk, Stanisław Bragiel, Krystyna Duszniak, Zdzisław Derwinski). Marysia Picyk and Stanisław Bragiel started a digitalisation of audiotapes. KD and ZD organised an interview with the Majdanek Concentration Camp Survivors.

The PMAA is a member of the Polish Community Council of Australia, the Permanent Conference of the Polish Museums, Archives and Libraries Abroad (MAB), the Royal Historical Society of Victoria.

Current problems to solve:

1. Exhibition space,
2. Storage space,
3. Finances,
4. Membership,
5. Publications,
6. Co-operation with other Polish museums and archives in Australia,
7. Workshops/Lectures,
8. Cataloguing.

Till the end of May, 2018, we used 2 rooms (mostly for our archival collections and Sybiraks Exhibition and had access to the 3rd room (to present there the permanent exhibition "Terra Nova").

Due to taking over ownership of the Millenium House by the Australian Multicultural Community Services (AMCS), we had to remove the "Terra Nova" Exhibition from the 3rd room.

We could not negotiate effectively with new owners to set up this exhibition on the ground floor, as well as to obtain their permission to set up temporary storage outside of the building.

I held a few conversations with Ms Elizabeth Drozd (CEO of AMCS) and Mr Joe Swiatkowski (AMCS Property Manager) regarding these matters.

The new owners are in the stage of redeveloping the Millenium House. Initial redevelopment plans had been presented to me in May 2018.

I express interest of having space for PMAA of the size of 6 rooms as the current one on the 1st floor.

It is unknown at this stage when the AMCS will start re-development of the Millenium House. For us, the exhibition and storage space is already a challenging problem.

Our collections are held at this moment in the current 2 rooms, downstairs in the Polish Weekly (compactus), in the Polish House in Ardeer and some books, exhibition materials in my private storage.

According to Mr Joe Swiatkowski redevelopment of the Millenium House should take approximately 2 years, at a cost of approximately of 2,6 -2,8 mln dollars.

Untill the re-development begins we are paying rent of \$128.70 per month (\$1544.40 per annum).

It is possible that during 2019 we will have to move to another venue for approx. 24 months.

Where it would be, we don't know yet. For us it is not only logistic but also a financial problem.

I approached initially Mr Zygmunt Bilinski, at that time the President of the Polish Association of Eastern Districts of Melbourne and Dr Marek Kijek acting President of the Polish Sport and Recreational Centre in Albion. Mr Bilinski said, that it should not be problem to obtain the associations permission to build some building for our purposes under the condition that we would obtain relevant permits from local council and finance the whole project. My hesitation at this stage is caused by the Association is approach to the ZHP building ("Kazimierówka" built at cost of \$350,000) on their ground in Rowville and how to finance this kind of project.

I have not discussed that problem in details with Dr Marek Kijek yet.

To add to the above problems, I have to mention that we have to remove part of our newspaper collection from the Polish House in Ardeer as a result of inspection held by local council's building inspector (concern of floor capacity in the storage room).

The other option, how to solve our problem with an exhibition and storage space is just try to purchase an independent venue, however our financial capacities and fundraising abilities are very limited, at this stage.

FINANCES

Regarding our finances, in the last years we have been able to cover our cost thanks to various grants for projects and organisational support. Income stream from the Eugeniusz and Nela Kałżyński Memorial Fund give us \$600 per annum, bank interest \$400, membership \$900 +. We have to consider establishing PMAA Trust as a financial vehicle to support our activities.

MEMBERSHIP

Even if we have over 1600 members on the Facebook, our financial membership in the last years fluctuates around 60-65 members.

PUBLICATIONS

We could not produce our "Rocznik" in the last 2 years due to other time consuming commitments. At this stage, we also are working on 2 other books "Polish Soldier Migrant Project" led by Lucyna Artymiuk and "Roads to Independence".

CO-OPERATIONS

At this moment in Australia we have a few active Polish organisations, which have similar profile of interest to our organisation:

1. Polish Hill River Church Museum at Sevenhill, Clare Valey, South Australia
2. Illawarra Polish Museum at the Polish Association of Woollongon, NSW, run by The Polish Australian Historical Group headed Andrew Krajewski
3. Archiwum i Muzeum Polskie (Polish Archives and Museum) in Queensland, operated by the "Polonia" Polish Association in Brisbane."
4. Kresy-Syberia led by Stefan Wisniowski
5. Polish Historical Institute in Australia led by Wanda Horky

It would be good to have some permanent or casual contacts with these organisations.

WORKSHOPS/LECTURES

It looks that we will be able to continue some workshops, lectures, and seminars in the future, mostly on invitation of other organisations and groups.

CATALOGUING

We have to continue cataloguing of our archival collections with support of the Naczelna Dyrekcja Archiwów Państwowych in Poland.

Zdzislaw A. Derwinski
President
of the Polish Museum and Archives Inc.

Melbourne, 30 June 2018