

TIMELINE

Many young Slovenians arrived in Australia after the Second World War. They stayed in touch with each other to communicate in their beloved Slovenian language, to reminisce about their homeland, to be towers of strength in times of despair, and to dream and celebrate together in their new country. Before the club was formed, Slovenians in Melbourne were already meeting unofficially at church services and at dances. The very first dance was arranged privately and held at Kensington in March 1954, followed by another in July at Prahran Town Hall. It became apparent there was a need to gather together in an organised way.

1954 – The Birth of a Slovenian Organisation

December 5 - First meeting of the Preparatory Committee was held at 36 Prentice Street, East St Kilda with 26 in attendance. The group prepared a list of regulations and decided on the *Slovenski Klub Melbourne* – Slovenian Club Melbourne (SCM).

The first Minutes of Meeting announced the Statement of Purpose of the club

- To assist integration into the Australian way of life
- To help Slovenian migrants in every possible way, including financially
- To help Slovenian refugees in Europe, providing support when migrating to Australia
- To offer members and their friends, healthy intellectual and physical activities in the cultural, social and sport arenas
- To promote, develop and preserve the Slovenian Cultural Heritage, while making contributions to the Australian community

December 19 - Inaugural General Meeting held at the Catholic Church hall at Theodore Street, St Albans. The 52 attendees were enthused at the prospect of developing closer ties, and the First Committee was formed, its first task being to organise the next dance.

This humble beginning laid the groundwork for the establishment of the first Slovenian organisation in Melbourne, Victoria.

1955 – The Birth of Vestnik

May 29 - First Annual General Meeting of SCM.

While recognising the importance of cultural and social life, it was stressed that the existence and continuity of the Club depended on the Members' dedication and voluntary work, with emphasis on the preservation of Language and Culture.

July 16 – English version of Club regulations lodged with Department of Immigration

September 1 – First issue of *Vestnik* was published, in a newsletter format.

This enabled more efficient communication to Members and the broader community, about Club activities, events and social and cultural interests, as Slovenians were living all over Victoria and Public Transport was the only option for most and home telephones were rare.

The money from *Vestnik* Subscriptions funded

- First Slovenian Library in Australia
- Purchase of Slovenian National Costumes, for Club and Multicultural events

The First Year Highlights

- Registered Financial Members: 53

- Social Welfare sector was founded.
Information leaflets were distributed to Migrants newly arrived on ships.
This was the beginning of the register of migrant details, which enabled better organising and co-ordination of support and assistance
- Regular dances were held and special outings such as excursion Maroondah Dam
- Drama Group and Choir were formed
- Ladies Section was established to provide Function Catering
- Initiated Planning for the purchase of a Club Premises
- First (of many) participation in Moomba Parade
This was an important of integration into and show of appreciation of “New Homeland”

1956 – Olympics held in Melbourne

- The Club was officially represented as an organization at the Good Neighbour Council. Invited to and participated in the Olympic Games Parade
- The choir held its first performance.
- First draft of Constitution prepared

1957 – We had a Dream – ‘Slovenski dom’

- Sub-Committee formed to investigate purchase of Crown land and draw up building plans. Application was denied
- Initiated proceedings to create Committee of Trustees, to oversee fund raising for club premises, *Slovenski Dom*
- Drama Group held its first performance
- Club attained its official seal

1958 – Drama Group Performs in Sydney

- Drama Group performed *Stari Grehi* (Old Sins) in Sydney
- Choir performed on Australian Television show
- Social Welfare sector provided
 - Housing and Employment assistance
 - Financial assistance with funerals
 - Gifts for children on St Nicholas Day

1959 – The Royal Melbourne Show

- Exhibition at the Royal Melbourne Show
- *Slovenski Dom* funding raising commence in earnest
- Fully Legal Trust established for purpose of *Slovenski Dom* purchase
- Profits from a Function were donated to a person injured in car accident

1960 – Realisation of a Dream

May 1 – Purchase of *Slovenski Dom* as 371a Park Street, Princess Hill (North Carlton)

August – Enrolment of the first students for Slovenian school *Slomsek šola*

September 4 – Grand Opening held

October – First Youth Dance

1961 – So Much Combined Enthusiasm

Cultural and Social Calendar Highlights

- Folk dancing on televised *St Vincent’s Variety Show*
- Moomba Procession and Children’s performance at Alexandra Gardens
- Appearance on the *Happy Hammond Show* displaying traditional Easter Eggs
- Performance of first Melbourne Slovenian Band, *Bled*

1962 – First Slovenian Book Published in Australia

- *Bronasti Tolkač* – The Bronze Doorknocker by Bert Pribac. Proceeds were donated to *Slovenski Dom*
- The Library at *Slovenski Dom* was opened
- First Art Exhibition held

July 8 – Annual General Meeting (AGM) accepted name change to *Slovensko društvo Melbourne* – Slovenian Association Melbourne (SAM)

October - First *Miss Slovenia* dance

1963 – Bowlers Preparing the ‘Balinci’ – Bocce Alleys

- Request made for construction of Bocce Alleys
- Acknowledgement that *Slovenski Dom* is no longer serving the needs of SAM. Larger premises with a hall was required

1964 – Ten Years of Enthusiastic Effort

- *Vestnik* proposed a Slovenian radio program
- Bocce alleys were officially opened

1965 – Turbulent Times – A Call for Re-Commitment

July 17 – AGM – Fears that SAM could collapse due to lack of interest.

1966 – The Club Survives

Members lend money to SAM so that bills and *Dom* mortgage could be paid

1967 – The Glamour of the Annual Ball

First Annual Ball incorporating *Miss Slovenia* held at Broadmeadows Town Hall

1968 – The ‘Slovenski Dom’ is Ours

- Mortgage on *Slovenski Dom* is paid off.
- SAM is in better financial position due to good management high attendance at functions

1969 – 15th Anniversary – A Successful Year

- *Vestnik* is registered as a periodical
- Special fund created to help people in need

1970 – The Soccer Club was Born

- First Slovenian Soccer Team registered
- National Library of Australia request 2 copies of each *Vestnik* issue
- Demand on Social Welfare section increased; fund raising for the needy and for medical treatment stepped up; visits to Williamstown Migrant Hostel. Meeting between Immigration Department and SAM organised to provide more help to new arrivals
- Sketch of proposed new *Slovenski Dom* to be built in Carlton was lodged eventually not approved

1971 – The Beginning of the Youth Group

- First Youth Group Leader elected and copy Group Regulations lodged with Management Committee for review and acceptance
- Further discussions and research regarding new larger *Slovenski Dom* continues

- The Administration Board of Migrant Hostels recognises dedicated work of volunteers with migrants in the Williamstown Hostel and created a permanent position
- First gathering of Pensioners at a Tea Party

1972 – The ‘Hrib’ was Bought

- Melbourne City Council advised that a large building could not be built on the Carlton land due to easement restrictions
- After extensive search, 16 acres was purchased at 82 Ingrams Road, Research (Eltham)
- Building Committee was formed to organise plans and permits

1973 – Visions for the new *Slovenski Dom*

March 13 – Settlement of *Hrib* purchase

- Land was being prepared for foundations of building
- Existing building, the Chicken Shed, was converted into a suitable area for ladies to prepare meals for workers
- Then the *Kočča* (The Cottage) was built as temporary building as Kitchen, dining and meeting room
- Building plans for Hall were approved

1974 – 20 Years – Foundations Laid for a New ‘Dom’

June 23 – Building Site was measured and pegged out

June 29 – Digging commenced; 136 gelignite sticks were required to blast rock

September 5 – Foundation was poured

- The Carlton *Slovenski Dom* was sold

1975 – Slovenian Radio Program is Born

May 13 – Radio 3EA broadcasted Slovenian programs hosted by SAM members

November 9 – First Stage of Building achieved – Ground Floor walls celebrated with ‘*Likof*’ – Gratuity with presentation of huge iron key to symbolically ‘open the door’

- A new Folk Dancing Group at SAM was formed
- Youth Section was formed and had representative on Management Committee
- Permission was granted by Shire of Eltham to erect “Slovenian Centre” sign at intersection of Main and Ingrams Roads
- Participated in Eltham Festival

1976 – *Balinarska Zveza Viktorije* – Bocce Association of Victoria Established

- First President of Bocce Association of Victoria is a SAM member
- Ladies section catered for over 6,300 meals at functions and also fed the Building workers. All in all, the ladies worked 52 weekends of the year
- The new Dining Room became available for function use and for hire to members
- Youth Section held its first AGM in November; created the SDM Youth Club T-Shirts for its members; which was copied by other clubs
- Trees planted all around property
- Pensioners held regular meeting and celebrations
- The new Soccer Section competed in the Cosmopolitan Soccer League under the name of *Melbourne – Slovene*
- The first Slovenian Language classes held at Eltham

1977 – Slovenian Language at Secondary Schools

- The Hunters & Anglers group was formed
- The Junior Club was formed with a nominated leader. This was all achieved by the Juniors themselves!
- Juniors lobbied for Playground to be improved. Two trampolines and several other items were organised by the Committee Youth Representative. very quickly
- Ladies Section implemented a roster system

1978 – The Official Opening

October 15 – Official Opening of the Slovenian Cultural & Recreational Centre was celebrated as a Festival

- A huge gate in the shape of a '*Kozolec*' was constructed at street entrance of property.
Kozolec is a typical Slovenian structure used for drying and storing hay.
- The '*Kurnik*' (The Chicken Shed) was converted into a School Room where the Slovenian Language and Culture classes were held.
- At end of School Year, The *Kurnik* was demolished and building of the new Youth Facility commenced

1979 – International Year of the Child and the 25th Anniversary

November 24-25 – Celebration of 25th Anniversary over two days, including the official opening of the new Youth Facility

- Dedication of *Kapelica* – Shrine in honour of deceased members
- Publication of Children's Book *Svet Naših Otrok – The World of Our Children*

1980 – Rebirth of Library

- Library established in new premises
- Shooting Alleys built for Air Rifle shooting competitions
- Float built in shape of Typical Slovenian House, for the Moomba Procession; won "Best New Entry" prize
- Commencement of annual All Souls Day prayers at *Kapelica*
- Youth Section organised and assisted with several functions, including Country & Western dance, Pyjama Party and car rally

1981 – More Support for the Youth

August 16 – AGM – Youth Club President asked "What will happen in the Future?" The Youth Sector was already aware that SAM had to make itself and the Centre as attractive to the Youth as outside attractions.

- Roof constructed over Bocce Alleys
- Dining Room furnished with wooden tables and chairs

1982 – Slovenian Hunters Federation Established

- SAM along with two other associations establish the Slovenian Hunters Federation, holding interclub competition
- Chess and snooker competitions took place against other associations
- Officially opening of Bocce Alleys with completed roof

1983 – Upgrading the Facilities

- Concerns raised about getting enough volunteers to help out in all areas
- Although much was still achieved and major work project started
 - Downstairs the kitchen was enlarged
 - Upstairs a bar and servery were built

- Lift added to service both levels of building
- Wishing Well and Picnic Area built at the top of the hill – *Hrib*
- Official opening of the library
- Ladies joined the men in the choir

1984 – The colourful 30th Anniversary

November 10-11– Celebration of 30th Anniversary over two days

1985 – A Vision for the Future

March 24 Official opening of Hunters Lodge with Air Rifle Range built

- Major works started earlier were being completed, with more projects started

1986 – Visitors from Ljubljana and America

- Legal advice was obtained regarding the Association's incorporated status
- The Next Generation fill executive positions in the Committee

1988 – The first Slovenian 'Tabor' later known as Slovenian festival

March 12-13 SAM being a member of Council of Slovenian Organisations Victoria participated in first 'Tabor' held at Slovenian Association – *Planica*

1989 – 35th Anniversary

August 27 - First female President elected

November 11-12– Celebration of 35th Anniversary over two days

- The *Koča* (The Cottage) renovated to allow for caretaker accommodation

1990 – 'Tabor' at Slovenian Association Melbourne

March 10-11 SAM hosted the 2nd 'Tabor' encouraging the Next Generation to participate

August 5 – AGM – it was suggested that SAM become incorporated and a sub-committee was formed

1991 – Slovenia declares Independence on June 25th

1992 – SAM becomes incorporated

February - New Constitution presented to members at extraordinary meeting.

July 18 – The first Mr Slovenia Quest was held

October 19 – SAM was to be legally known as Slovenian Association Melbourne Incorporated. Land title was transferred from Trustees to Incorporation.

- Next Generation mothers form the SDM Playgroup

1994 – 40th Anniversary

November 12-13– Celebration of 40th Anniversary over two days “40 Years through the looking glass”

1995 – Future directions

Steering Committee reported the idea of hiring premises out to non-members. Some refurbishment and meeting local council requirements needed to be completed.

1996 – “Gremo na hrib” –“Going to the hill”

December – *Vestnik* Issue, included SAM's anthem “*Gremo na hrib*” –“Going to the hill” written by Zmago Rafolt

1999 – Realising 45 Years

November 20-21 – Celebration of 45th Anniversary over two days

- The Historical Archives of Slovenians in Australia (HASA) was established and registered with the Victoria State Library

2000 – Olympics held in Sydney

August 13 – AGM – Suggested changes to the Constitution were presented along with suggested change to the legal name to Australia –Slovenian Social and Sporting Association Melbourne Incorporated

- SAM participated in an Exhibition with other organisations at the Immigration Museum
- Pensioners won 3rd prize for their stall at Victoria Market

2002 – Change in the Air

August 11 – AGM – The new Constitution was accepted

- New furnishings purchased for both upstairs and downstairs

2004 – 50 Years ‘The Golden Harvest’

Celebrations were held all year, concluding with a two day celebration November 20-21. A dinner dance was held on the Saturday with minimal members being asked to work as a show of appreciation of all the hard work done in the past.

2006 – Commonwealth Games arrive in Melbourne

To celebrate, some ladies created a traditional doyley embroidered with red carnations and edged with lace work to form part of a display in the foyer of Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT).

2009 – 55 Years Spirit of the Peace

February 7 – Black Bushfire in Victoria occurred

November 20-21 – 55th Anniversary celebrations were held outside under three marquees built by members.

2010 – The Beginning of Change

July 25 – AGM – Although a Committee was elected the role President along with other Executive roles were not filled. The outgoing Committee Members stayed in a caretaker capacity.

2011 – Still Going

March 2011 – President role filled to next AGM

July 24 – AGM – Full Committee elected

- Works begin on converting the upstairs servery into commercial kitchen
- Meetings held with members and non-members seeking ideas for the future of SAM
- Membership drive starts

2012 – Great things Happen

February 11 – Slovenian Summer Celebration

October 27 – First Slov-tober Festival held

Two great celebrations reminiscent of *Veselica* organised by the 3rd generation

- Membership increased by 100 plus
- Part of downstairs office converted to Disable Toilet

2013 – Future Planning begins

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