

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE POLISH COMMUNITY COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA

57. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Sydney, 30 May – 1 June 2025

This year's 57th Congress of Delegates of the Polish Community Council in Australia (PCCA), which took place on 31 May 2025 in Sydney, was accompanied by celebrations of the 75th anniversary of PCCA.

PCCA Executive Board marked these anniversaries with a jubilee concert and the opening of historical exhibition *75 Years for Australian Polish Community* by Malgorzata Kwiatkowska, Ita Szymanska, Dr Włodzimirz Wnuk and Mariusz Pawlowski at the Polish Club in Ashfield on Friday, 30 May. The exhibition will then be presented at the Polish Festival at Federation Square in Melbourne on 16 November 2025 and during the PolArt Festival 2025 in Adelaide at the end of the year. An online version will be published on PCCA's website soon.

The anniversary celebrations in Ashfield were attended by the Consul General of the Republic of Poland Piotr Rakowski, Consul Mariusz Stus and his wife, the President of the Polish Club in Ashfield Ryszard Borysiewicz, delegates of the Annual General Meeting and the local Polish community. The anniversary was commemorated with performances by four folkloric dance groups based in Sydney ("Kujawy", "Lajkonik", "Podhale" and "Syrenka") and a classical music concert performed by soprano Marta Nowicka and pianist Konrad Olszewski, who travelled from Melbourne especially for the occasion. The President of PCCA, Henryk Kurylewski thanked all dancers and artists for their participation. The Prime Minister of Australia, Anthony Albanese sent special wishes to all volunteers and member organizations of PCCA, wishing them further productive work and many successes.



Sydney-based Folkloric Ensembles: Kujawy, Lajkonik, Syrenka, and Podhale; in the centre, left to right: President Henryk Kurylewski, Consul General Piotr Rakowski, and President Ryszard Borysiewicz.

Photo: Henry Igliński



Konrad Olszewski and Marta Nowicka.
Photo. Edward Dudziński



Małgorzata Kwiatkowska and Ita Szymańska.
Photo. Elżbieta Cesarska



Exhibition panels: "75 Years for the Polish Community in Australia". Photo. Ita Szymańska

The AGM was held at the Polish Club in Ashfield. The meeting was attended by 47 delegates representing 24 PCCA member organizations holding 88 voting mandates with the following distribution: organizations from New South Wales - 34, Queensland - 9, Victoria - 18, South Australia - 5, Tasmania - 3, Australian Capital Territory - 3, Western Australia - 4. National organizations were awarded a total of 12 mandates. In accordance with the statute, 4 mandates were given to members of the presidium who did not have a mandate of a PCCA member organization.

The meeting was attended by observers Anna Zamecznik from the Polish Museum and Archives in Australia and Paweł Rozpara, president of the Eastern Districts Polish Association (Melbourne), and his wife.

By decision of the delegates, the AGM was chaired by Dr. Robert Czernkowski (NSW). After a short prayer led by Fr. Artur Botur SChr, a minute of silence was observed in honor of Polish activists who had passed away in previous year.

In the first part of the meeting, delegates voted to admit two organizations – the Polish Association in Melbourne and the Polish Teachers' Association in Australia. Both organizations were granted two mandates each.

The delegates accepted reports submitted by PCCA Executive Board, the Treasurer, the Audit Committee, the chair of the Advisory Committee of PCCA Perpetual Fund, discharged the outgoing Executive Board and approved proposed budget for next year.

President Henryk Kurylewski announced that three RNPA medals were awarded this year by the PCCA Medal Chapter to Halina Borysiewicz (NSW), posthumously to Dr Ernestyna Skurjat-Kozek (NSW) and to the Polish Women's Association in Adelaide.

During a secret ballot, new authorities of the Council were elected. The candidates for the position of the president were Malgorzata Kwiatkowska and Henryk Kurylewski, and for the position of vice-president – Malgorzata Kwiatkowska, Bozena Iwanowski and Henryk Kurylewski. B. Iwanowski withdrew her candidacy after the result of the vote for the position of president was announced. The composition of the Executive Board for the 2025-2027 term is as follows:

President: Malgorzata Kwiatkowska (NSW)

Vice-president: Henryk Kurylewski (QLD)

Secretary: Joanna Merwart (VIC)

Treasurer: dr Robert Czernkowski (NSW)

Members: Anna Cietrzewska (VIC), Edward Dudzinski (SA), Adam Grabek (AS), Grzegorz Machnacki (VIC), Anna Niedzwiadek (WA), Ita Szymanska (QLD), Anna Waldon-Rodzios (ACT).

The members of the Presidium are also "ex officio": Elzbieta Cesarska - chair of the Polish Education Commission in Australia (KOPA) and Fr. Tadeusz Przybylak SChr - coordinator of the Polish Catholic Mission in Australia and New Zealand.

The AGM approved the membership of the following committees:

Audit Committee: Joanna Fenik (NSW), Janina Kloda (QLD), Bogdan Platek (VIC), Jan Tkaczyk (QLD) and Helena Zebrowska (NSW).

Arbitration Committee: Adam Biziuk (NSW), Barbara Czech (VIC), Anna Doloto (NSW), Marzena Mazurek (NSW), Agata Satala (NSW), Gosia Vella (NSW) and Stefan Wisniowski (NSW).

Statutory Committee: Andrzej Alwast (ACT), Adam Biziuk (NSW), Daniel Bolkunowicz (NSW), Anna Cietrzewska (VIC), Joanna Fenik (NSW), Adam Grabek (TAS), Dr. Andrzej Kozek (NSW), Henryk Kurylewski (QLD), Grzegorz Machnacki (VIC), Dr. Wlodzimierz Wnuk (VIC), Summer Zielak-Bartczak (VIC).

The PCCA Medal Chapter: Andrzej Alwast (ACT), Ryszard Borysiewicz (NSW), Fr. Tomasz Bujakowski OFM (WA), Elzbieta Dziedzic (VIC), Adam Grabek (TAS), Elzbieta Krukowska-Alterman (QLD), Gosia Skalban (SA).



Delegates of the 57th Congress of the Polish Community Council of Australia.
Photo: Bogumita Filip

During the free motions and discussion time, various topics were raised, including communications from Executive Board meetings, statutory matters and consultations with member organisations, the future of archival resources collected at the Polish Museum and Archives in Australia and the coordination of Polish community events in a central calendar.

Delegates informed the meeting about upcoming events, including PolArt Adelaide 2025 (T. Dudzinski); teachers' conference and youth forum plan (B. Iwanowski); PolMusica concerts (G. Machnacki); a music event *Nasze Polskie Kwiaty* (S. Zielak-Bartczak) and Polonia Camp 2025 (M. Kwiatkowska).

All matters and proposals were noted, and the Executive Board will discuss them during upcoming meetings.

The AGM lasted for 6 hours, with a break for lunch. The Chair of the AGM, Dr. Robert Czernkowski, supervised the discipline of the debates, while Grzegorz Machnacki and Edward Dudzinski were responsible for the technical support of the meeting. Minutes of the 57th AGM were taken by Anna Cietrzewska (VIC), Anna Waldon-Rodzios (ACT) and Malgorzata Wray (WA).

PCCA's outgoing president, Henryk Kurylewski, thanked the participants and the chair for their involvement. Newly elected president, Malgorzata Kwiatkowska, who had presented her vision and proposed program for the 2025-2027 term, thanked for entrusting her with the Council leadership in the next term. The AGM concluded with the Polish national anthem sung by the delegates.

After the official end of the meeting, Daniel Gadd (PolArt Inc.) outlined the preparations for the 15th edition of the largest festival of Polish culture and art outside the country – PolArt Festival, which will take place at the turn of the year in Adelaide (27.12.2025-5.01.2026). Next, Anna Niedzwiadek facilitated a discussion during which the delegates had the opportunity to share the experiences of their organizations, successes and problems, and discuss possible solutions.

On Sunday, 1 June delegates attended a holy mass celebrated by Fr. Artur Botur SChr, at St. Vincent's Church in Ashfield.

The PCCA Executive Board expresses its sincere thanks to the participants of the AGM for their active and substantive participation, and to the Polish Club in Ashfield for their cooperation and support in organizing the meeting, provision of rooms for the AGM and accompanying events, efficient management and hospitality.

The 58th PCCA Annual General Meeting, by unanimous decision of the delegates, will be held in Perth in May/June 2026.

Further information: Polish Community Council of Australia website: www.polishcouncil.org.au.

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9 June 2025