

Executive Summary

**Polish Community Council of Australia (PCCA)
Reporting Period: 16 June 2024 – 31 May 2025
Presented at the Annual General Meeting**

Esteemed Delegates, Members, and Friends of the Polish Community in Australia,

On behalf of the Executive Committee of the Polish Community Council of Australia (PCCA), I am pleased to present this Executive Summary of our activities and accomplishments during the reporting period from 16 June 2024 to 31 May 2025. This period was marked by a reinvigoration of our community life post-pandemic, increased digital engagement, and a growing recognition of the importance of Polish heritage within the multicultural fabric of Australia.

Introduction

Incorporated associations must have a governing document called a 'constitution' or 'rules' that sets out the roadmap for how the association will operate. It is a legal requirement that an association and its members follow the rules of the association.

Part IV of our Constitution (see Appendix) clearly outlines 14 aims and objectives of the Polish Community Council of Australia, which dictate the focus of the Executive Committee in executing its fiduciary responsibility to member organisations, which are also bound by the same aims and objectives.

For the purposes of this Executive Report, work of the Executive Committee of the Polish Community Council of Australia, guided by the stated aims and objectives, can be succinctly condensed into a fourfold role:

1. Coordination
2. Advocacy
3. Information
4. Community Engagement & Welfare

Through these pillars, we continued to champion the cultural legacy, values, and contributions of Polish Australians while fostering unity and effective cooperation among member organizations.

1. Coordination

The Executive Committee upheld the principles of transparency, integrity, and good governance. Central to this effort was the development and maintenance of organizational systems that ensured informed decision-making and consistent communication.

- SharePoint Centralized File Management: The Executive Committee implemented a cloud-based file-sharing and records management system (Microsoft SharePoint). This enabled secure, centralized, and searchable document storage, enhancing collaboration among executive members across state and territory boundaries. By consolidating meeting minutes,

President Henryk Kurylewski, QLD
Vice President Małgorzata Kwiatkowska, NSW
Secretary Małgorzata Wray, WA
Treasurer Dr Robert Czernkowski, NSW
Public Officer Mark Stawski, ACT
Website Andrzej Gołkowski, QLD

Members
Anna Cietrzewska, VIC
Edward Dudziński, SA
Adam Grabek, TAS
Grzegorz Machnacki, VIC
Anna Niedźwiadek, WA
Ita Szymańska, QLD
Anna Waldon-Rodzoń, ACT

Coordinator of Polish Catholic Mission in AU/NZ
Fr Tadeusz Przybylak SChr, NSW
Polish Education Commission in Australia
Elizabeth Cesarski, NSW
Honorary Chairman ✝ Krzysztof Łańcucki AM, VIC
Honorary Chairman Dr Janusz Rygielski, QLD

correspondence, and procedural guidelines in a shared space, the committee improved operational efficiency and institutional continuity.

- Website Updates and Infrastructure: The PCCA website ([Rada Naczelna Polonii Australijskiej](#)) was regularly updated to reflect current initiatives, executive announcements, community event listings and communiqués. The PCCA website stores archives of past media releases and AGM reports. Public access to information is hampered by the aging technology of the current website which needs to be modernised.
- Ethical Framework and Decision-Making Standards: A workshop reviewing decision-making protocols was conducted in September 2024 to ensure compliance with current legislation applicable to incorporated associations. A summary of discussions was generated and shared with member organisations.
- Improved Internal Communication: Monthly Executive Committee Zoom meetings continued to provide consistent communication and collaboration. Meeting agendas and decisions are circulated through centralized digital platforms, enabling better record-keeping and faster resolution of issues affecting the Polish diaspora.

2. Advocacy

Advocacy is a cornerstone of the Council's activities as it represents the Interests of the Polish Diaspora in Australia. The PCCA Executive Committee voiced concerns, responded to misrepresentations, and forged partnerships to elevate the profile of Polish Australians.

- Official Representations and Letters of Protest: In November 2024, the Council issued a formal letter to a major Australian media outlet protesting a published article that inaccurately portrayed Poland's World War II history. This action was widely supported by Polish organizations across the country. The Council reaffirmed its responsibility to safeguard the good name of Poland and Polish Australians through respectful and fact-based engagement with the media.
- Participation in State, National, and International Forums: The Executive Committee was represented at the Australian Multicultural Council's Roundtable in Sydney (March 2025), the National Ethnic and Multicultural Broadcasters' Conference in Melbourne (October 2024), and international diaspora events hosted by Rada Polonii Świata via Zoom. These forums allowed the Executive Committee to share the Polish experience, advocate for inclusive multicultural policy, and maintain a direct line of communication with representatives of the Polish Senate.
- Engagement with Polish Government Bodies: PCCA Executive Committee members participated in several consultations with sub-committees of the Polish Senate, including those focusing on culture, education, and international relations. Topics discussed included the promotion of Polish language education in Australia and funding pathways for community projects.
- Media Visibility: Over the past 12 months, the PCCA's presence on Facebook and LinkedIn increased significantly. Strategic posts highlighted national days of significance, community achievements, and calls for collaboration. One widely circulated Facebook post in April 2025 marked the anniversary of the Katyn Massacre, reaching over 6,000 people and receiving support from Polish community pages worldwide.
- Public Policy Advocacy: In collaboration with other ethnic councils, the PCCA supported a campaign urging the Australian Government to recognize historical events such as the Soviet deportations of Poles during and after WWII. This collaborative advocacy strengthens the Council's role as both a custodian of memory and a voice of conscience in Australia's multicultural narrative.

3. Information Exchange

Communication is a core organisational function of the Executive Committee's role as a conduit of reliable, timely, and relevant information which was more important than ever during this past year.

- Volume of Correspondence: Between June 2024 and April 2025, the PCCA Executive Committee received 1,012 emails and issued 424 formal replies. This correspondence included inquiries about event coordination, funding opportunities, consular matters, and inter-organizational collaboration.
- Communiqués: The Executive Committee issued 84 official communiqués over the year, each distributed to 250+ recipients across Australia. These bulletins informed member organizations of upcoming deadlines, funding news, cultural opportunities, and changes to migration or civic procedures relevant to Polish Australians.
- Social Media as Information Hubs: The PCCA's Facebook page became a real-time information center, broadcasting details about the Polish language initiatives, funding

announcements from the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and local cultural events. For instance, the February 2025 post promoting the Polish Festival @ Federation Square was shared 130 times and contributed to the record number of festival attendees.

- Promotion of Polish Language and Culture: Working closely with teachers, Saturday schools, and parents' associations, the Executive Committee supported initiatives promoting the Polish language. This included a national online consultation held in October 2024, co-hosted with the Polish Consulate, regarding the future of Polish-language exams and VCE/HSC curriculum integration.

4. Community Engagement and Cultural Promotion

The Executive Committee celebrates cultural identity and building belonging through efforts focused on preserving Polish identity, building intergenerational connections, and promoting cultural excellence.

- Cultural Festivals and Events: The Executive Committee supported and promoted several major cultural events across Australia:
 - Polish Festival @ Federation Square (Melbourne) – Held in November 2024, this flagship event drew over 30,000 visitors and featured Polish music, cuisine, and art. The Council helped coordinate logistics and sponsored performances by young Polish-Australian artists.
 - Polska Wiosna (Brisbane) – A springtime cultural event celebrating modern Polish creativity including a youth-led art competition.
 - PolMusica – A musical showcase hosted in Sydney in March 2025 featuring Polish classical composers and modern interpretations. The event strengthened connections between Polish-Australian musicians and their European counterparts.
- Patriotic Commemorations: Executive Committee representatives attended and helped organize Anzac Day wreath-laying ceremonies (highlighting Polish-Australian veterans), the 11 November Independence Day celebrations and remembrance events. Through these efforts, the PCCA strengthened ties with both Polish and Australian civic institutions.
- Youth Engagement and Development: Recognizing the strategic importance of the younger generation, the Executive Committee facilitated:
 - A national Polish Youth Forum held online in April 2024, with over 60 participants aged 18–50+ from every Australian state. The forum addressed identity, leadership, and community service.
 - A mentorship program linking young Polish professionals with experienced community leaders, piloted in NSW and Victoria.
- Professional Development: A networking event held in Canberra (September 2024) brought together Polish-Australian entrepreneurs, professionals, and community organizers. Speakers from academia, business, and government shared insights on leadership and heritage-based advocacy.
- Support for Religious and Spiritual Life: The PCCA maintained a close relationship with the Polish Catholic Mission in Australia and New Zealand. With the support of Father Tadeusz Przybylak, Executive Committee representatives attended community Masses, reinforcing the Council's role in upholding Christian ethics and values.

Conclusion

The 2024–2025 period marked a significant consolidation of the Executive Committee's strategic direction, underpinned by values of service, representation, and cultural integrity. Each initiative undertaken by the Executive Committee was rooted in our constitutional objectives and a deep sense of duty to preserve, promote, and develop Polish community life in Australia.

As President, I extend heartfelt gratitude to all those who have contributed to this year's successes:

- Mr. Marcin Kawałowski, Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Republic of Poland in Canberra
- Mr. Piotr Rakowski, Consul General of the Republic of Poland in Sydney
- Mr Mariusz Stus, Consul of the Republic of Poland in Sydney
- Staff at the Polish Embassy and Consulate
- Member organizations and their leadership teams
- Our committees: Audit, Arbitration, Statutory, Verification, RNPA Medal Chapter, and the Perpetual Fund Advisory Committee
- Polish clergy, sisters, media personnel, and supporters, and
- the outstanding members of the Executive Committee: Elżbieta Cesarska, Ania Cietrzewska, Robert Czernkowski, Edward Dudziński, Adam Grabek, Małgorzata

Kwiatkowska, Grzegorz Machnacki, Ania Niedźwiadek, Ita Szymańska, Ania Waldon-Rodzoś, and Małgosia Wray

Special thanks to Father Tadeusz Przybylak for his pastoral support and continued collaboration.

The PCCA remains committed to excellence in service. We encourage the incoming Executive Committee to continue this legacy and build a vibrant, united, and dynamic Polish community in Australia.



Henryk Kurylewski
President, Polish Community Council of Australia
26 May 2025

Appendix:

Part I – Aim and Objectives of the Council

§ 1 The aim and objectives of the Council shall be:

- a) To represent the Polish community in Australia, defend its rights, promote its interests and provide support to Polish organisational activities within Australia; and
- b) To liaise and co-operate with people, institutions and organisations in Poland; and
- c) To promote the Polish language, traditions and culture in Australia; and
- d) To raise awareness of Poland, its culture, history and current position in Australian society by promoting Polish literature, music and all forms of the arts; and
- e) To raise awareness of the contribution of Polish migrants to the wellbeing of Australia and of Polish cultural heritage in Australia; and
- f) To co-operate with organisations from outside the Polish community in Australia and abroad, whose aims are consistent with the principles, aims and objectives of the Council; and
- g) To promote loyalty to Australia within the Polish community; and
- h) To encourage and assist Australians of Polish origin to actively participate in all spheres of Australian political and social life; and
- i) To uphold Christian ethics and values in the Polish Australian community; and
- j) To support Polish youth developmental and educational activities; and
- k) To act as a forum for the development of Polish community activities in Australia; and
- l) To raise funds and establish funds and foundations, and to make gifts, donations, and loans for any purpose that is consistent with the aims of the Council; and
- m) To invest any income not immediately required for fulfilling any of its objectives; and
- n) To do all such other acts and things as may appear incidental or conducive to the attainment of the above objectives.