



Newsletter

Q4, 2023
Issue #04

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Spring Events

In October, starting the last quarter of the year, we had a **visit from the Lithuanian President** and First Lady. Read more on page 2.

The Community welcomed summer with a community **picnic at Glebe Park** to celebrate the 35th anniversary of the sculpture Eglė Žalčių Karalienė (pictured above). The sculpture was gifted to Australia for Bicentennial celebrations in 1988 by the Australian Lithuanian Community. Eglė, Queen of Serpents, is a bronze sculpture created by Ieva Pocienė. Ieva was an Adelaide-Lithuanian sculptor and well known for her works in exhibitions around Australia. It was a wonderful opportunity for the Canberra Community to get together outdoors, share food and mingle. The event also provided an opportunity for member, Rimas Kabaila, to set up his 'pop-up' memorial for Ukraine.

The Community also held its **Annual General Meeting (AGM)** in November, where a new committee was elected, and members discussed important aspects of our Community. Read more on page 3.

The last event for the quarter, and year, was the **Community Christmas party**, which was held at the Woden Southern Cross Club. Members enjoyed a two-course lunch, were audience to an address by the Ambassador, live music by Ron and Nate Cameron and a visit from Santa. Children were excited to receive an individual gift from Santa and a number of members going home with lucky door prizes. Thank you to Sophie Kusta, the Community Events Coordinator for organising our biggest event of the year.

Welcoming the President!

By Sophie Kusta, Committee Member and Events Coordinator

On Friday 20 October 2023, myself and my sister Elena Kusta had the privilege and honour of meeting the President of the Republic of Lithuania, Gitanas Nausėda, and first lady Diana Nausėdienė at an Embassy event in Canberra.



Photo: Elena and Sophie Kusta welcome the President and First Lady.

The President and First Lady arrived at the Lithuanian Embassy and were greeted by us. We wore traditional Lithuanian folk dancing outfits and presented them with black rye bread and salt as a welcome gift. They ate the bread and proceeded to talk with us about our family history, where our parents and grandparents were born and about our traditional outfits and where they were from. The First Lady was impressed that the outfits were of Lithuanian fabric, passed down from a member of our community, Vida Howe, and were kept in such good condition. President Nausėda then thanked us for upholding the culture and tradition of Lithuania here in Canberra.

The Embassy event was attended by the Canberra Committee, who were invited to represent the Canberra community. Later, the President posted multiple pictures of his visit to Canberra and our interaction on his social media platforms and official website. It was an overall positive and memorable experience, and we are so grateful to have the opportunity to meet and greet the President and First Lady.

A big thank you to Vida Howe for the gift of traditional costume, and to our mother Greta Kusta who took the time to revamp our outfits to fit us for this event.

Roundtable of Community Leaders

Following the President's visit, Krašto Valdyba hosted a weekend-long roundtable in Canberra with community leaders from cities around Australia. The roundtable was organised to discuss the future of the Australian Lithuanian Days (ALD) with Canberra represented by Elena Kusta.

The group discussed ideas to enhance future ALDs, including ways to work through challenges, looking at what currently works and what changes are needed. Deliberations sought ideas from the group on timing, location and new events to attract a wide range of Lithuanians from around the country. The group considered modern elements, whilst maintaining the essence of the traditional ALD. Outcomes from this meeting will be provided to the Federal Council for consideration.

The roundtable provided a great opportunity for leaders to network over several days, getting to know each other and discussing community event ideas.

2024 Events

Below is a schedule of events for 2024. Further details, including dates, will be emailed to members in January.

Every Sat 10am | **Ukrainian Protest** outside the Russian Embassy

Sat 13 January | Walk around Lake Burley Griffin to commemorate **Freedom Defenders Day**

Mon 05 February | **Restoration of the State of Lithuania (V16) at Embassy**

Tue 13 February | **Chinese New Year Dinner**

March | **Restoration of Independence (K11)**

April | **Easter**

May | **Mother's Day**

Mid-Year | **CLCA's 75th Anniversary**

June | **Baltic Deportations Day**

July | **Statehood Day**

September | **Father's Day**

Annual General Meeting Overview

The Community's Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held on Sunday 12 November 2023 at our Būstinė and attended by 35 members. The Community discussed a number of items, and a draft copy of the minutes will be distributed in due course. Below is an outline of a number of topics that were discussed and where motions were accepted.

There was discussion around the **format of celebrations** for Restoration of the State of Lithuania (V16) in February and the Restoration of Independence of Lithuania (K11) in March. A comment was raised by one member that one of these events should be celebrated by a formal sit-down lunch, rather than as more casual events in our Būstinė or picnics. It was noted by the President that for 2023, the Committee experimented with different formats for events in order to cater for a wider group of people and in response to feedback from members, whilst also trying to reduce spending until the Community sees a sufficient source of income. Those in attendance agreed that a co-contribution by members for more costly events would be suitable, and the Committee agreed to consider a more formal format for V16 or K11.

With regard to **Vilkas representation of Canberra at Sporto Švente**, Ben Katauskas (Vilkas player) said the team would like to participate. However, there are specific Lithuanian heritage restrictions in place for team membership when playing at the Švente, to which Vilkas is currently unable to comply. The President said participation in this event was a growing problem for all Lithuanian regional teams, especially during the Australian Lithuanian Days which occur between Christmas and New Years, and a matter that was noted at the recent meeting of community Presidents for ALB to examine.

A paper titled "**CLCA Investment Statement for 2023 AGM**" had been circulated to members prior to the meeting. John Andruska (Vice President), who drafted the paper, addressed the meeting and outlined the history of the CLCA's investment strategy since 2000 and proposals for the future. A discussion ensued between members addressing risks, past decisions, grant funding and mixed approaches to investments. A motion was raised and accepted by a show of hands for the Committee to examine the suggestions put forward in the paper and recommendations expressed at the meeting with a view to taking an alternative investment strategy to either the next AGM or a Special Meeting to be called during the year.

There was a general consensus that **membership fees** could be raised to \$10 per annum (currently \$5). Accordingly, a motion was made that the incoming Committee consider and bring forward at the Special Meeting.

The **Community's annual Award to the Dux of Generolo Jono Žemaičio Karo Akademija** (Military Academy of Lithuania) was raised. This matter had been discussed at the 2022 AGM, in particular, whether the CLCA should continue giving the award, which is a AUD\$3,000 donation. Members noted that any decision to terminate the annual award should be made by an AGM. Some noted that the award should continue as it had good standing in Lithuania, to the benefit of Canberra's reputation, and had been going for over twenty years. Others noted that the Community's money could be better spent within the local community and that granting of the award raises issues for some in regard to government employment and the granting of security clearances. A motion was raised to terminate the award. The motion was accepted through the process of voting for or against by raising hands. The result of counting of hands was 24 for the motion and 6 against; with 5 abstentions.

Consular Consultations

The Embassy in Australia has set up an additional phone service through which, at specified times, embassy officers will provide consular consultation. Telephone consultations with embassy officers concerning consular questions are available on +61 474 906 328: Mondays 13:00 to 17:00; Wednesdays 13:00 to 17:00; Fridays 13:00 to 15:45.

LT News

Lithuania becomes [repair hub](#) for **German tanks** damaged on battlefield in Ukraine.

Vilnius makes world's [Top 100 cities](#) list for the first time.

Christmas in Lithuania:

- Vilnius Christmas tree over the years in [photos](#).
- Lithuanian cities and towns [spruce up](#) for Christmas.
- Lithuanian Railways launches four '[Christmas trains](#)'.

Incomes in Lithuania [grew 10.7%](#) in 2023.

Looking back: **Winters in Lithuania** are often generous with snow. Here's how Lithuania's Mažeikiai [battled a blizzard in 1994](#).

Returning to Lithuania? [Visit Department of Global Lithuania](#) for a one-stop-shop.

[Žemaicai Art Museum](#) includes a virtual **museum tour**.

Learn more through [Vytautas the Great University](#).

[Sodo Spalvos \(Garden Colours\)](#) includes everything plants and a newsletter.

Online Language Class

Interested in learning the Lithuanian language online? Teenager and adult classes are available for beginners, intermediate and advanced via Zoom through Mano Kalba Lithuanian Language School. For more information email mano.kalba@yahoo.com.

Ačiū for taking the time to read our community newsletter. Regards, Elena Kusta, President.

Contact us via [email](#) and connect with the Community's [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), [Website](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

Wine and Lithuanian Cuisine

By James Faulds, Friend of the Canberra Lithuanian Community

A running joke between my Lithuanian friends and I is “no beetroot, no potato, not Lithuanian” and to a certain extent this joke is true in Lithuanian cuisine, almost every dish has or is accompanied by them.

Lithuanian cuisine is more than that though, at its core it is warm hearty food, simple yet satisfying. Wine is not a common accompaniment to a traditional Lithuanian meal and I got thinking...what if it could be?

Focusing on main tenets of Lithuanian cuisine we have: Creamy sauces; Big earthy flavours; Pork and bacon; Seafood in some regions (pickled or smoked herring are favourites)

For dishes with creamy sauces a wine requires acidity to cut the fat in the sauce and carry the structure and body of the wine, we can think of a dry Riesling: Kabinett from the Rheingau or Pfalz in Germany or closer to home maybe something from Orange. The same Rieslings can be used on the pork dishes as we all know Riesling and pork are a perfect match. If Riesling isn't your thing how about the racy minerality of a Chablis?

Earthy flavours in dishes such as perennial favourite barščai (beetroot soup) can be enhanced by a joven Rioja, a French Mouvedere or a cool climate Shiraz.

For the seafood let's go with classics. Champagne or Chablis for shellfish and creamy seafood salads (silke pataluose), Albariño or Muscadet Sevre et Maine sur Lie for pan fried or smoked fish dishes.

Let's not forget dessert! Medutis is a delightful honey cake layered and creamy, this would go excellently with any botrytised wine but my mind goes straight to Sauternes, or for a little more acidity and minerality its neighbouring appellation Barsac, Tokaji aszu of around 3 to 4 puttonyos in sweetness would be another option offering marmaladey flavours with the honey of the cake. Auslese, Beerenauslese or Trockenbeerenauslese (TBA) Rieslings would also be an excellent pairing to Lithuanian cakes and desserts.

So, in summary Lithuanian food with wine? Why not! Try something new and explore Skanaus!