



Macarthur Polish Saturday School Annual Report 2021

The year 2021 was another challenging yet exciting year for Macarthur Polish Saturday School with many highlights both socially and academically for the organisation. The school continued to enjoy pleasing enrolment rates that positively reflect the high quality teaching program being conducted by the school. Macarthur Polish Saturday School continues to grow both in student number and parental involvement. Throughout the last two years, the support of parents and carers has been greatly appreciated by all of our teachers and staff. This is a difficult time for our entire school community, and we thank you again for your ongoing patience, understanding and encouragement. For parents and carers who are new to our school community in 2022, please be assured we will do everything we can to provide you and your child with a smooth transition.

Our school aims to teach students to become proficient in the Polish language - both written and verbal. The curriculum includes elements of Polish history, geography and literature. Through our teachings, our students are exposed to the rich Polish culture and its traditions. The students are exposed both to traditional classroom learning as well as concerts and performances. A number of concerts were organised in 2021 for the following events:

- ✓ Easter performance;
- ✓ Mother's Day;
- ✓ Children's Day - a school disco was held to celebrate International Children's Day;
- ✓ A series of events celebrating the 103rd anniversary of Poland regaining its independence;
- ✓ End of School Year celebrations.

Involvement in concerts and extra curriculum activities has significant benefits for children. Not only does it showcase their talents as they sing, recite poetry and are involved in dramatic play, it also promotes confidence and encourages students to learn, participate and be creative. Most importantly, such opportunities enhance a child's cultural identity, and build a sense of community based on a love of the Polish culture and its traditions.

Key achievements for our school during 2021 include:

- Scoutmaster's Szupryczyński Award for Isla Budge (Year 4) and Sebastian Bocian (Year 5)

On Saturday May 1st, 2021, during the Academy commemorating the 230th anniversary of the May 3rd Constitution, two students of our school received the Scoutmaster's Witold Szupryczynski Award. For the year 2020, this award was received by Sebastian Bocian (Grade 5), and for 2021 - Isla Budge (Grade 4). The Academy was organised by the Polish Educational Society in NSW, which has been involved in shaping this beautiful, patriotic celebration for over 60 years. For 31 years, the Scoutmaster's Witold Szupryczynski Award has been given to children and young people of the Polish community who proudly affirm their Polish roots by conscientiously learning the Polish language and participating in various celebrations and academies promoting Poland on Australian soil.

Congratulations to Isla and Sebastian and their proud parents and grandparents! We warmly and wholeheartedly congratulate both of you on this very prestigious and well deserved award! You are the pride and joy of our school community! We wish you every success in the next years of learning Polish!



- Minister's Award & Award of the Consul General

With great pride and joy, we would like to make an announcement that a student of our school - Paulina Miziniak from grade 6, received the 2021 Minister's Award for Excellence in student achievement for outstanding results in learning the Polish language. Her school friend Mikolaj Koscianski was presented with the Consul General's award for the best Saturday school students in the last school year. We sincerely and warmly congratulate Paulinka and Mikolaj as well as their parents who are proud of their children's

achievements. It is also a very special day for us teachers - especially those of us who have had the pleasure of teaching Paulina and Mikołaj over the last few years. They both started studying at a Polish school at the age of four. I still remember the day when these two kids came to a Polish school for the first time. Today it has been 8 years since that moment. Both Paulinka and Mikolaj are growing up to be wise, ambitious young people who are not afraid of challenges. Always willing to help, with impeccable manners, courage and a kind heart. I am sure that with such an attitude towards learning and work as they represent, they will be able to achieve all their goals in the future. Once again, congratulations to our graduates and their parents. The fact that both of them are fluent in Polish is undoubtedly a credit to you.

Dear children - you are the pride and joy of our school community and we are all very happy with your well-deserved success!



➤ Polish National Celebrations - May 2nd & May 3rd



On Saturday, May 1st, the students of the Macarthur Polish Saturday School proudly celebrated two national May holidays with a short program. The first is the 230th anniversary of the May 3rd Constitution, and the second is the Flag Day traditionally celebrated in Poland on May 2nd. During class time, children made white and red flags, which they then proudly waved while singing the song titled "Mazurek on May 3rd". Ah! With what pride and joy we all sang "Wiwat Maj, Piękny Maj! U Polaków blogi raj!". On the occasion of these beautiful May days, the entire community of the Macarthur Polish Saturday School dedicates this short video report to all of you, wishing that we would always be proud of our roots Poles and that we teach young generations of Poles in Australia to love and remember their homeland.



➤ Celebrating the 103rd anniversary of Poland's regaining independence by students of the Polish Saturday School in Macarthur



"On November 11, 1918, the dreams of generations of Poles came true - the Polish State was born again: after the partitions and 123 years of captivity, Russification and Germanization, after large uprisings, free Poland returned to the world map" - reads in the resolution of the Polish Parliament establishing the year 2018 the Jubilee Year of the 100th anniversary of Poland's regaining her Independence. As emphasized in the document, thanks to those who remained relentless, our Nation emerged victorious from the historical test. "Regaining independence took place through a fight full of dedication and heroism, not only on the battlefields, but also on everyday struggles for the preservation of the spiritual and material national substance and in the daily survival of Polish families," proclaims the resolution. [text source]

We too - the Macarthur Polish Saturday School community - would like to actively participate in the national celebration of this special day. It is an extraordinary day in the history of our nation - for

Poles living in Poland and for those scattered all over the world. We hope that, following the example of the Fathers of Independence - Jozef Pilsudski, Roman Dmowski, Ignacy Paderewski, Wincenty Witos, Wojciech Korfanty and Ignacy Daszynski - Poles will abandon their disputes to celebrate this joyful anniversary in unity and peace.

➤ Easter Assembly



On Saturday, March 27, 2021, an Easter assembly was held at the Macarthur Polish Saturday School the purpose of which was to present the extremely rich and colourful Polish Easter traditions and customs.

The official celebration started at 11:30 AM. This time the Assembly was held outdoors. The weather was perfect. In the morning we were greeted by a beautiful, warm, autumn Sun. Mr. Adam Gajkowski - the President of the NSW Federation of Polish Organizations and Mrs. Jolanta Zurawski - a long-term manager of the Polish Song and Dance Ensemble "Kujawy" have joined our celebrations. With huge pride and joy, I was looking at a group of almost fifty beautifully and festively dressed up students on one side - and on the other - the gathered in large numbers - parents, grandparents and guests who came to see and admire their children and grandchildren perform. All students were dressed in national costumes bought in Poland at the end of last year. These costumes were purchased in part from the "Stronger Communities" Grant and in part from our own resources. The children looked really spectacular in their new outfits. I am sure that we will have many more occasions to show off ourselves to the public - during assemblies and other events.

After a short welcome, it was time for the children's performances. We started with the singing of our

school song, which in itself gives both performers and listeners a lot of positive energy each time. Then, students from the 5th and 6th class presented Polish Easter traditions and customs. Using words they painted pictures of Easter palms, Easter baskets, a Sunday breakfast and a Smingus-Dyngus on Easter Monday. These verbal images were intertwined with songs. The first of them was entitled "Skacze droga zaj?c" and the second "Ida dzieci ze swieconym". The next performers were class II and III students who used their gigantic Easter egg-shaped cardboard, which they prepared themselves. The main character of their performance was of course ... an Easter egg. Then we sang together another song titled „Pisanki”. After class II & III, class "0" & "I" students appeared on the stage. Little performers were reciting a happy rhyme titled "I tell you, I tell you - what I have with this hare". The children delighted the listeners not only with the fact that they learned their texts beautifully but also with their children's joy and smiles painted on their small faces. After that students from Class "0" & 1 danced to the rhythm of the lively and cheerful song "Kaczuszki (Duckings)." I don't think I will be alone in saying that this dance became the highlight of the whole show. Ah - how much joy was there! It was an extremely colourful and energetic dance that gave everyone a lot of positive energy and joy.

The last and I think the sweetest point of the Easter Assembly was the performance of our Preschoolers. The children, together with Mrs. Ela, presented a dance to the song "They call me Poleczka". Ah, how much charm, grace and sweetness there is in these little ones! You can look and admire them endlessly ?

At this point, I cannot omit a very important element, which was a beautifully decorated Easter table. It was an extremely important component and at the same time the background for all performances. For the third time, Mrs. Krysia Morawski agreed to prepare it for us. The beautifully decorated Easter table was for children and all of us gathered this day a lesson in itself: a lesson of rich Polish traditions and customs associated with the celebration of Easter. I am deeply convinced that the memories and images of the Easter table will be deeply remembered by our pupils.

After the children's performances, it was time for a snack prepared for us by our amazing mothers from the Parents' Committee. There was of course coffee, tea and lots of delicious cake. I am very grateful to Dominika Smutek, Hania Beshai and Ania Nowicka for their great attitude, help and support. It was also a time for a friendly chat - time for Easter greetings. The atmosphere of the meeting was filled with warmth and kindness. While the guests gathered at the assembly were spending their time talking, the students of our school went in search of chocolate eggs and bunnies. There was so much joy and laughter during the egg hunt. This part of the day was supervised by Mrs. Hania Beshai, who bought these eggs and organized the egg hunt. Hania - thank you very much for the joy you gave all children with your initiative. I would also like to thank our dear sponsors: Marysia and Marek Strzemkowski and Lucyna and Wies?aw Pazdzior for funding the lottery prizes.

Summing up, after my favourite poet—Father Jan Twardowski I would like to wish "each and every one in turn Easter joy, which may last despite suffering, truly Christian joy, which lasts even when they are overwhelmed - whether small or big - only human nights."

➤ Mother's & Grandmother's Day

Sandwich fantasies as a gift for Mums and Grandmas

On Saturday, May 8, students of the Macarthur Polish Saturday School as a gift for their beloved mothers and grandmothers prepared an extremely tasty and healthy snack, which were appetizing and colorful-looking sandwiches. The atmosphere in each classroom that day was very energetic and cheerful. Each of the children without exception, put their heart, soul and a large dose of fantasy into preparing that yummy sandwich for their Mum. We started with a thorough washing of those little hands, after which we prepared all the necessary sandwich ingredients. These included: bread, butter, ham, cheese, lettuce, tomatoes, cucumbers, radishes, corn and other products. Now all it needed was a large dose of imagination, which the students of our school certainly do not lack of, and the sandwich fantasies for Mums and Grandmas came out of the children's' hands like "spick and span". When the work on preparing sandwiches for mothers and grandmothers was successfully completed, all that was left to do was to feed ourselves. This time the students created sandwiches for themselves and ate them with great appetite. How much uproar and joy there was when at the end of the day the children left the classroom holding in their hands a plate with a tasty looking sandwich prepared as a gift for their Mums and Grandmas. Throughout the school, shouts of appreciation and pride were heard admiring the work of little hands. Dear Mums and Grandmas - we are very happy that, together with your children, we have managed to make your faces smile and thus make a tiny contribution to the celebration of this special day ?



➤ International Children's Day

"Project co-financed within the framework of Polonia funds of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland"

June 1 is definitely the most beautiful and joyful day of the year - a day when in a special way we realize and appreciate what a great joy and hope for the world our children are. Could you imagine a world without children? What would it be like? I definitely would not want to live in such a world.

I am glad that I was raised and grew up in a country where "Children's Day" was celebrated each year. It is a very special day during which we, adults looking at our own children, are trying to discover the child within us.

On Saturday 29th of May we celebrated "Children's Day" at our school. Instead of the usual routine, students had the opportunity to take part in various activities organized for them by the Parent Committee. "Children's Day" project was co-financed within the framework of Polonia funds of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland. We would like to thank the Consul General Monika Konczyk and other employees of the Consulate General in Sydney for their support of this special initiative.

At 9:30 am, the children met Pierog Wlodek and his cookie friend - the main characters of Mrs. Ania Nassif's book titled "His secret powers". These two brave, bilingual characters were played by the author of the book - Mrs. Anna Nassif and the actor - Mr. Michal Macioch. This interactive performance with Pierog Wlodek was very well received especially by our younger students, who stared with bated breath at the huge puppets visible at the stage.

At eleven o'clock, (of course, out of nowhere) Paul the Magician appeared and entertained not only our little ones, but also some parents and teachers who could not refuse to meet this mysterious visitor. Paul - the Magician absolutely charmed, or rather I should use the word "enchanted" everyone watching his amazing, magical performance. With what joy did I look at the laughing and happy faces of our children?! It was joy and happiness in the purest form ... Moments like this give life its true meaning. After the show, both children and adults thanked the Magician for his performance with thunderous applause, and I allowed myself to notice that the work he is doing is one of the most joyful jobs you can imagine - because constant laughter and joy of children are always present while he works.

The last part of the day the children spent playing various games and physical activities under the watchful eye of Mr. Michal Macioch. From 11:00 to 12:00, the school yard was full of childish uproar, laughter and shouts of joy, all mixed up with cheerful music. Michal began with a musical warm-up. Children were stretching and jumping and doing all other physical activities which, by their very nature, define being a child. Children are very often tireless in their need for physical activity and movement. After the warm-up, the time came for the sports competition. The participants were divided into two groups that rushed to the goal on the races, ran with the ball back and forth, put the ball over their head and between their legs and performed many other fun and happy sport activities. It was really happy, healthy and noisy time - just as it should be during the event such as "Children's Day".

After this highlight of the day, it was the time for a well-deserved meal prepared by our wonderful parents. But wait a minute... I almost forgot to mention that at the end of the day the kids did not go home empty handed. Each of them was given a gift prepared by one of our mums - Mrs. Dominika Smutek - the President of the Parental Committee. Awww - how much fun the kids had while they were opening their packages!

It is impossible to mention here all those people who supported me in the work on the organization of this event. However, I am tempted to mention and honour several people. I would very much like to thank the Consul General Monika Konczyk and Vice-Consul Joanna Splocharska for their help expressed through "co-financing the project" Children's Day".

Thank you to Lucyna and Wieslaw Pazdzior, whose generous hearts have opened up for us once again. Thank you very much on behalf of myself and the whole school for delicious sausages that you fed our children, parents and us teachers last Saturday. There were enough sausages for everyone. None left and no one missing on them either. I regret that you could not see what taste and appetite that the kids had eating your sausages. Once again from the bottom of my heart, A HUGE THANK YOU!

In conclusion - thank you all for everything! It is difficult to express and describe in a few clumsy words how grateful I am to You Dear Parents for your support and work on the preparation of this day. Let the payment be the smile and joy of children who have benefited from all the attractions of this special day. To sum it up I would like to quote after Pope John Paul II that *"children are the spring of the family and society, the hope that is still flourishing and the future that is constantly opening"*.



➤ "Finding Winter in Australia" Competition

It would seem that nothing special has happened in our school during those 3 difficult COVID months when all of us experienced the sadness of isolation and the inability to spend time with family and friends. It was during this special time that one of our teachers inspired the idea of looking for visible signs of winter in Australia. Did the children from the Polish Saturday School in Macarthur find it? Where were they looking for it? How could you recognise that it is here? You will find the answer to these and other questions by watching the attached video.

Congratulations to everyone who took part in this cool project! Thank you very much for the artwork and photos sent to us illustrating the search for visible

signs of winter in Australia. I must humbly admit that your response to the invitation to participate in this competition exceeded our wildest expectations. We have received many fantastic and original works and photos! The rainbow of colours awakened in our hearts hope for the quick end of the lockdown and a

return to normal life. Awards for all participants of the winter competition will be presented upon their return to school.

And after winter, spring comes to us, just like every year? This special season has the characteristic that it always brings with it hope and I wish all of us this hope for an imminent meeting at school!



➤ Traditional Japanese Ikebanas for Fathers and Grandfathers

At the end of term three, our students were involved in one more project, inspired by the recent Olympic Games in Japan. In connection with "Father's Day" celebrated in Australia on the first Sunday of September - students were asked to make traditional Japanese IKEBANA's and cards with wishes for Dad written in Polish, English and Japanese. Ikebana is a traditional Japanese art of flower arrangement known for a very long time. IKEBANAS symbolize balance, harmony and beauty. Twigs and flowers symbolise heaven, people and earth. It is an art full of mystery and spirituality, in which man unites with nature by paying tribute to it.

There are different styles and names for this art:

- Rikka - standing flowers, tall vases.
- Seika - a form of a triangle, usually three flowers or plants.
- Moribana - a pile of flowers arranged at different angles.

In their compositions, the children used various types of plants, flowers, twigs, strings and other decorations. I hope you will like the photos and the short video that is a photo report of this project.

Congratulations, to those who participated in this project, for your creativity and great ideas! Your IKEBANAS are real works of art. I am also convinced that you had a lot of fun doing them. Your smiling faces are the best proof of this.



➤ End of the 2021 School Year Celebrations

On Saturday, December 11, the celebration of the end of the 2021 school year took place at Macarthur Polish Saturday School. This time due to COVID restrictions, the ceremony was held in the park near Robert Townson Public School.

The end of the school year is always an opportunity to look at and summarise the year-long work of teachers and students. So there was a moment when each student was awarded his or hers school certificate. Special prizes and distinctions for the best students were also given out. Paulina Miziniak (6th grade) received the Minister of Education's award for achievements in learning Polish Language, and her colleague Mikolaj Koscianski (6th grade) received the Consul General's award for the best Saturday school students. We would like to thank Consul General Mrs Monika Konczyk, Vice-Consul Mrs Joanna Splocharska and all employees of the Consulate for funding these awards.

Another item on the agenda was thanks to the ladies from the Parent Committee and all teachers working at the school. In a special way, with tears in our eyes, but also with undoubted pride, we said goodbye to the students of Grade 6. Here is the list of our graduates this year: Paulina Miziniak, Mikolaj Koscianski, Olivia Gogacz, Ethan Gogacz and Paul Klusek. We wish our dear graduates every success in the next years of learning the Polish language.

We would like to thank Mr. Adam Gajkowski - President of the NSW Federation of Polish Organizations for a pleasant visit. Mr. Gajkowski, who has been supporting our school for many years, presented a number of students from grade 6 with ceremonial medals commemorating our great explorer and traveller, Count Pawel Edmund Strzelecki, who named the highest peak in Australia. Our graduates proudly presented themselves holding medals with the image of Edmund Strzelecki on their chests.

The background for our assembly consisted of a beautiful Christmas decoration prepared by Mrs. Krysia Morawski, which traditionally enriched our special day. It included Christmas-themed items that evoke memories of a white, snowy Christmas. It was a visual lesson of Polish traditions and customs related to the celebration of Christmas.

At the end of the day we were paid a surprise visit by Santa. How much joy this extraordinary and long-awaited guest brought with him! The gifts he brought this year were really rich and wonderful. These were: a ticket to Early Start Discovery Space in Wollongong for each of our students, a book from the series "Franklin" for younger children. The older kids, on the other hand, received educational games developing the language and knowledge of the history and geography of Poland. The gifts also included a toy appropriate to the child's age and something sweet for our little ones.

2021 was a year of intense classroom work. It was also a very challenging and difficult year, with many obstacles along the way. Both teachers, students and parents have earned a well-deserved holiday. Dear All, have a good and restful break and come back to us with a supply of fresh strength and energy for the 2022 school year.



➤ Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting was held on the 27th February 2021 and elections for 2021 were conducted. Achievements, planned events, grants applications and financials were also presented to the families.

Below is the full composition of the School Committee for 2021, the body that oversees the activities of our school:

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|-----------------------------|------------------|
| • President | Dominika Herdzik |
| • Vice President | Kinga Pacione |
| • Public Officer | Anna Nowicka |
| • School Coordinator | Bernadeta Kawa |
| • Treasurer | Hanna Beshai |
| • Secretary | Jolanta Rybus |

➤ Funding grants

We received our annual per capita grants from the Community Languages Schools Program – a unit of NSW Education and Communities. This grant was received in December 2021 and is used to purchase much needed teaching and organisational resources. We gratefully acknowledge and thank the Community Languages Schools Program for their ongoing financial assistance and support.

The School has also received additional funding to support the school's organisational needs. We extend our gratitude to the Consulate General of Republic of Poland for its assistance throughout the year.

At the beginning of 2021, the school applied for a grant from "Freedom and Democracy Foundation" at the Senate of the Republic of Poland supporting "Polish education abroad". It was with great excitement that funds were received in July 2021. This is the first time that the school has applied for this grant and we are very thankful to receive this support.

➤ Fundraiser raffle and our sponsors

A big "thank you" to our generous sponsors, who enabled the school to hold a Fundraiser Raffle, with many attractive prizes, which were drawn during the End of School Christmas performance. The proceeds of this raffle raised in excess of \$200 for the school. We also take this opportunity to thank all our other major sponsors for their ongoing support and commitment to our organisation and its aims. This includes:

- Copernicus Café
- Polonez Smallgoods
- Consulate General of the Polish Republic, Sydney
- Narel Wholesale Meats (Narel Smallgoods and Delicatessen)
- NSW Federation of Polish Associations
- Godden Lawyers
- Freedom and Democracy Foundation
- NSW Community Languages Schools Program.
- "Polish Community" Association
- OfficeWorks
- "Our Polonia" Association
- ADS Group Pty Ltd
- Krakus – Lawson Bros.

➤ Other key achievements for 2021

2021 was an extremely busy and fruitful year for the school. The school became a more active member of the NSW Federation of Community Languages as well as developed partnerships with the Polish Schools in Ashfield and Randwick. The committee was very productive in developing many documents for the school. The following lists only some of the achievements:

- Development of School Constitution, School Policies, Student Code of Conduct, Enrolment package and Accident/Incident forms and protocol;
- Completed all "Working with Children" declaration forms for volunteers;

- Actively sought sponsors to assist with purchasing school resources;
- The organisational internet site was upgraded as well as the Facebook page;
- Established a school email;
- A Student Safety Program was developed and sessions conducted;
- Design & purchase of school brochure & banners;
- Established contacts with other Polish Schools in Sydney with plans for further collaboration;
- Affiliation with "Kujawy" Polish Song and Dance Ensemble & Polish Scouts was established.

Macarthur Polish Saturday School is a vibrant community. Our teachers are passionate to ensure that our students receive a high level of Polish language learning. Our parents are active participants and our students have a thirst to learn and appreciate their rich Polish heritage.

We would like to express our sincere thanks to all of our students, parents and families who comprise our unique Polish school community. Through their constant support, dedication and commitment we can be assured of the successful continuation of the Macarthur Polish Saturday School which will continue to thrive and embrace the future.

Macarthur Polish Saturday School acknowledges the ongoing funding and support provided by the NSW Community Languages Schools Program.