

The Polish Way

Information Kit

© Australian-Polish Community Services
77 Droop Street
Footscray VIC 3011
Phone: (03) 9689 9170
Fax: (03) 9687 7446
Email: info@apcs.org.au
Website: www.apcs.org.au



Australian-Polish
Community
Services

2004

Information Kit

The purpose of this information kit is to provide professionals working with people of Polish background with practical, up-to-date, accurate information, while its main aim is to assist both the worker and the client. Most problems encountered in daily life are due to miscommunication and we hope that this short guide will facilitate clearer understanding between various service providers and the 20,400 strong Polish community in Victoria.

Steering clear of stereotypes, we hope to have dispelled some common myths and misconceptions. We believe that the information provided within this kit will give you an overview of the Polish history, customs and various resources which should form a basis for developing better relationships with your clients.

Please also remember that, just like in any other ethnic group, each Polish person is an individual and what might be appropriate for one, will not be for another. The best line of action is to always ask questions of the person concerned to find out why they do what they do.

We hope you find this information kit useful, your feedback and comments are always welcome.

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Demographics

There are more than 20,400 Polish people in Victoria, 8,275 of whom are over the age of 65. Polish speaking seniors form the fourth largest elderly group, after the Italians, Greeks and Germans, among all ethnic communities in Australia. The majority of Polish elderly in Australia are over 70 years of age. The five Local Government Areas with the highest population of Polish people over 65 years of age are: Glen Eira, Brimbank, Port Phillip, Stonnington and Greater Geelong.

Statistical snapshot

- 1/3 of Polish older people live in Victoria, with females outnumbering males.
- 49% of Polish people over the age of 65 live at home alone.
- 86.3% of Polish elders in Australia are over 70 years of age.
- 26% of Polish elderly in Victoria speak English "not well or not at all".
- Majority of Poles in Australia are Roman Catholics (75%), other religions include Judaism, Lutheran, Russian Orthodox, Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses.

Source: 1996 - 2001 Census Data and *Projections of Older Immigrants*, 2001, by AIHW

Victorian Local Government Areas with the highest 65+ and total Polish population

Region	Total number of Poland born persons 65+	Total number of Poland born	Polish speakers who speak English not well or not at all
Western Metro:			
Brimbank	755	2092	435
Hobsons Bay	227	523	105
Maribyrnong	209	411	94
Northern Metro:			
Moreland	370	696	137
Banyule	128	347	20
Eastern Metro:			
Boroondara	305	628	50
Monash	294	1092	142
Southern Metro:			
Glen Eira	1781	2651	194
Port Phillip	430	995	151
Stonnington	423	711	39
Greater Dandenong	340	1366	316
TOTAL VICTORIA	8,275	20,409	2828

Rural Victorian Cities and Shires with highest total Polish population

LGA	Total Polish Population (incl. 65+)
Greater Geelong	751
La Trobe	200
Mornington Peninsula	178
Ballarat	98
Wellington	85
Nillumbik	72
Wodonga	59
Baw Baw	52
Delatite	48
Michell	48
Total for Victoria	20,409

Source: Australian Census 2001



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Culture and Customs

Poles as a group tend to share thoughts and ideas freely and are very friendly. A guest in a Polish home is warmly welcomed and may be overwhelmed by the outpouring of generosity. Most Poles enjoy a robust conversation and have a keen sense of humour. Poles talk of their jobs, politics, health problems and misfortunes as an Australian would of footy. They are very fond of music and joke telling.

Touch as a form of caring is common among family members and friends, but Poles may be quite formal with strangers. In formal situations a handshake is considered polite. For some Poles, alcohol can serve a culturally important function, particularly during social occasions, such as name day or birthday celebrations. The amount and strength of drinks consumed at such occasions may be seen as excessive by non-Poles.

Punctuality is important to Poles. To be late is a sign of bad manners. Depending on the status of the person for whom they are waiting, Poles may be intolerant of lateness in others. Even in social situations, people are expected to arrive on time.

Traditional family values and loyalty are strong in most Polish households. The elderly play an active role in helping grandchildren learn Polish customs and in helping adult children in their daily routine with families. Extended family, consisting of aunts, uncles, and godparents, is very important to Poles.

Some Polish people believe in the special properties of prayer books, rosary beads and medals. Pictures of the Pope John Paul II, Virgin Mary, Jesus and various saints can be found in many Polish homes, some people carry them in their wallets.

Many Polish people enjoy taking part in senior citizens club activities which allow the Polish elderly to communicate their thoughts, feelings and ideas on a deeper level. The Polish community in Victoria has 24 elderly groups which meet regularly – usually on a weekly basis – and provide a very valuable social support service to approximately 4000 Polish older persons, the majority of whom are in their mid 70's and 80's.

Many Polish elderly people have lost their ability to speak English due to dementia, and a significant number have never learned to communicate in this language. The Polish elderly are very practically minded. They would not take part in activities just for the sake of 'killing time'. They want to be involved in creating something useful, slightly challenging and with a defined purpose.

Burial and rituals associated with death

Funeral customs are determined by the Church and wishes of the family. For Polish Catholics, religious rituals include the administration of Holy Communion and the Last Rites. After the burial, mourners are invited for a wake, or *stypa*, where drinks and food are served in memory of the person. Most Poles have a stoic acceptance of death as part of the life process, and a strong sense of loyalty and respect for their loved ones. Family and friends stay with the dying person so that the dying do not feel abandoned. Graves of loved ones are visited for years to come, particularly on All Souls Day (1st November), when flowers and candles are placed on the graves.



Food and Diet

Polish cuisine is rich and very filling, consisting of thick soups, sauces and savoury meats which can be relatively high in fat. Favoured ingredients which give Polish food a distinct taste include dill, marjoram, flat leaf parsley, juniper berries, caraway seeds and wild mushrooms. Many Polish households prefer traditional Polish or similar cuisine but some foods popular in Australia may also be enjoyable, eg pizza, spaghetti, common Chinese takeaways and fried or charcoal chicken and chips.

It's worth keeping in mind that traditional Polish meal times differ from the Australian, with breakfast often consisting of bread and savouries (sausage, ham, soft-boiled eggs, cheese or cottage cheese) rather than toast and cereal. The main meal of the day is served around 2-3 p.m. and supper (often sandwiches with cold meats) in the evening. This tradition has most likely evolved from different working hours in Poland which were 7 a.m. – 3 p.m. and may still be preferred by some Polish people.

Some popular Polish foods include Polish sausage, smoked ham or bacon, cottage cheese, pickled cucumbers, sauerkraut, potatoes, pork or chicken schnitzels, scrambled eggs (with chives, tomatoes and onion but no milk).

Beef, chicken and pork are strongly preferred over lamb dishes. Curries and hot foods are generally not popular but salt and black pepper are used liberally.

Widely popular condiments are mustard, horseradish, grated cooked beetroot with or without horseradish in preference to tomato sauce and chutneys. Polish people like their vegetables well cooked.

Typical Polish salads are tomatoes with finely sliced onions or chives, radishes, pickled cucumbers, potato salad, Russian salad, lettuce with cream, lemon and sugar dressing, sauerkraut with chopped apple, onion and carrot.

Pumpkin, raw mushrooms, sprouts and Asian greens are not widely used. Neither are vegemite, salted butter, peanut butter, pies, rice. Crusty continental rye bread is preferred over soft Australian sliced bread.

Some traditional Polish dishes include *bigos* (a rich sauerkraut and meat based dish), *gołąbki* literally 'little pigeons' (cabbage rolls with rice and mince meat), *barszcz* (beetroot soup), *flaczki* (tripe soup), *pierogi* (dumplings made with a variety of sweet or savoury fillings), dried or stewed fruit compote, a variety of yeast cakes and pastries, for example *babka*, *kopytka* (similar to gnocchi), *mizeria* (cucumber, dill and cream salad) and *naleśniki* (pancakes). Most of these are available in a majority of Polish delicatessens.

The above food preferences are to be regarded as a guideline only, and it is always advisable to ask about personal preferences. As it is the case in most communities, Polish people have varied tastes, likes and dislikes, and one must not assume that we are an homogenous group.

A variety of Polish recipes can be found by typing the phrase "Polish food" in any of the internet search engines.

Smacznego! (May your food be tasty!)



History of Poland

Polish history began in the early 9th century when the tribe of Polians ('dwellers of the field') obtained hegemony over other local tribes. Their principal dynasty of Piast accepted Christianity in 966. Polish borders underwent changes over the years, as parts of countries such as Ukraine and Lithuania formed part of the Kingdom. With the main line of the Piast dynasty ending in the 14th century, a number of royal alliances with Lithuania, Hungary and Sweden were forged. No dynasty maintained itself for long due to civil wars and unrest.

In 1655 Charles X of Sweden overran Poland, while Tsar Alexis of Russia attacked from the east. John III Sobieski temporarily restored Polish greatness, but with his death Poland virtually ceased to be an independent country. Three partitions in the 18th century resulted in the disappearance of Poland from the map for 123 years. Poland was declared an independent republic in 1918, when the First World War ended. Polish administration was established and Józef Piłsudski became the chief of state. Reconstruction of the economy and society began.

In September 1939 Poland was invaded by Nazi Germany from the west and by the USSR from the east. Great masses of people fled to the eastern border, many were deported later by the Soviets to Siberia and other distant republics. Concentration and labour camps were set up by German authorities on the Polish territory and were used to exterminate millions of people from all over Europe. Polish people with labouring skills were deported to Germany, often to die of exhaustion and malnourishment; others were subject to methodical extermination. The invaders didn't restrict their eradication to people - more than 90% of the pre-war industrial installations were destroyed. The capital city, Warsaw, had to be built totally anew. Polish prisoners of war in the USSR were allowed to form military units and fought with distinction alongside the Allies. Early in 1945 the last German troops were expelled from Poland. Poland's population was reduced from 27 million before the war to just over 19 million.

After the Second World War, some of the former German territories came under Polish sovereignty. Poland's frontier with the USSR was also shifted westward. A number of Polish-background people living in Australia speak several languages, i.e. Russian, German, Ukrainian, Yiddish or Lithuanian and are of diverse cultural and religious persuasions. Not all people born in Poland consider themselves Polish and many Poles were born outside the current Polish borders. It is recommended that issues of religion, cultural and national identities be treated with sensitivity – it is best not to assume but ask the person concerned instead.

Poland became a "people's democracy" based on the Soviet model. Land reform, nationalisation of industry and enthusiastic work of Polish people gradually improved living conditions. The People's Republic was established in 1947. The government's strict control was eased with the death of the Soviet leader, Stalin, in 1953.

In December 1970 an outbreak of strikes and demonstrations led to a wave of civil unrest. In 1981 the country was paralysed by a number of national strikes caused by the worsening shortages of food. Self-governing unions were formed under the guidance of *Solidarność* (Solidarity), led by Lech Wałęsa. Martial law was imposed in 1981.

In 1989 the country became the Republic of Poland, when the National Assembly approved the change of name. The elections of May 1990 were the first fully free and democratic elections for more than 50 years.



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Interpreters and Bilingual Staff

Although people with moderate English skills may appear to understand discussions, use of professional interpreters to communicate complex information is advisable. For many professionals the need to work with interpreters may seem awkward and time consuming, but effective use of interpreting services leads to successful communication. The role of bilingual staff is distinctly different from that of an interpreter or translator. The fact that a worker speaks Polish does not mean that he/she is able to accurately convey messages of complex nature between clients and service providers. Although very valuable on a daily basis, the language assistance of a bilingual worker should be limited to simple matters, in order to avoid possible misunderstandings and complications of a legal nature.

Service providers are encouraged to deal only with accredited interpreters and translators. The National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) tests and accredits translators and interpreters, at different levels and in most languages. These professionals may work in interpreting and translating assignments as independent (freelance) specialists, or under contract to a commercial or government agency.

Work of Translators and Interpreters is codified by the AUSIT Code of Ethics which obliges members to:

- respect their clients' rights to privacy and confidentiality;
- decline to undertake work beyond their competence or accreditation levels;
- decline to mix promotional activity for clients with interpreting or translation work;
- maintain professional detachment, impartiality and objectivity.

Information shared in interpreting and translating assignments is strictly confidential. Disclosure of information may be permissible with clients' agreement or when disclosure is mandated by law. Interpreters are required to observe impartiality in all professional contracts, disclose any possible conflict of interest and take all reasonable care to be accurate.

Interpreters and translators are not responsible for what clients say or write, they cannot voice an opinion, solicited or unsolicited, on any matter or person in relation to an assignment. For example, it is wrong to ask of an interpreter: "Does this person seem depressed to you?" because this kind of assessment would be outside of their area of expertise. In order to ensure the same access to all that is said by all parties involved in a meeting, interpreters relay accurately and completely everything that is said. They convey the whole message, including derogatory or vulgar remarks, as well as non-verbal clues and they cannot alter, make additions to, or omit anything from their assigned work.

In general, interpreters are not allowed to accept gifts and tips. However, some discretionary latitude may be exercised in accepting a gift such a small box of chocolates as a token of gratitude.



Poland at a Glance

Background

Following the WWII, Poland became a Soviet satellite country, but one that was comparatively liberal. In 1989 the country became the Republic of Poland, with its first free elections held in 1990. A strict economic reform program during the early 1990s enabled Poland to transform its economy into one of the most thriving in Central Europe. In 1999 Poland joined the NATO alliance to further sustain its links with the developed world of the Western democracy and on 1 May 2004 it became a member of the European Union. Regardless of historical or economical circumstances, Polish people are known for their patriotism, love of the Polish language and their active interest in art, science, education and politics.

Location: Central Europe, between the former USSR and Germany

Languages: Polish

Area: 312,685 sq km

Population: 38.6 million

Capital: Warszawa (Warsaw)

National holiday: Constitution Day - 3 May, Independence Day – 11 November

Neighbours: Germany, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Ukraine, Belarus, Lithuania, Russia,

Climate: temperate with cold winters and mild summers

Natural resources: coal, sulphur, copper, natural gas, silver, lead, salt, amber

Ethnic groups: Polish 97.4%, German 1.2%, Ukrainian 0.7%, Belarussian 0.7%

Religions: Roman Catholic 95%, Eastern Orthodox, Protestant, and other 5%

Famous people: Mikołaj Kopernik (Copernicus), Fryderyk Chopin, Marie Curie-Skłodowska, Agnieszka Holland, Pope John Paul II, Krzysztof Kieślowski, Józef Korzeniowski (Joseph Conrad), Tadeusz Kościuszko, Czesław Miłosz, Krzysztof Penderecki, Henryk Sienkiewicz, Paweł Edmund Strzelecki, Wisława Szymborska, Lech Wałęsa.



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Polish Language - 1

The main language of Polish born people is Polish. Polish belongs to a Slavic group of languages, as do Czech, Slovak, Russian, Ukrainian, Belarussian, Serbo-Croatian, Slovenian, Macedonian and Bulgarian. Although there are some similarities between these languages, they are quite different, often using different alphabets and linguistic concepts. The analogy could be made with Aboriginal languages.

The Polish alphabet and pronunciation differ from English, as does the grammar and context of some common phrases.

Polish is a richly inflected language with feminine, masculine and neuter nouns. The spelling is to a great extent phonetic, i.e.: one writes what one hears. W is pronounced as V (eg. surname such as Krakowski is pronounced Krakovski), J is pronounced as Y (eg. first name Joanna is pronounced Yoanna), I like E (eg. Iwona is pronounced Evonah).

Socially appropriate phrases such as "How are you?" could be viewed by some Poles as artificial, as use of such phrases is uncommon in the Polish language, and it could be regarded as a genuine enquiry of one's state of health or being. Generally, the subtleties of English can be often misunderstood by an inexperienced English speaker, as the communication in Polish is commonly quite direct, eg.: to say "Would you like to close the door!" could be taken to mean an enquiry and could be answered with a "No", meaning "No, I would prefer it to remain open, thank you for asking". So, one can easily see how a perception of arrogance could be formed in the speaker's mind. As opposed to the Anglo-Saxon rule of 'not asking personal questions', the Polish community is, generally speaking, comfortable with directness, and may pose these sorts of questions as a form of affection, genuine interest and/or being hospitable.

Whilst most Polish born people speak reasonable English, many may have problems with written English, particularly with filling out forms.

"Sto lat" ("May you live a hundred years") – one of the most popular Polish songs, sang during birthday parties etc, similar in meaning to "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow".

The image shows a musical score for the Polish song "Sto lat". It consists of three staves of music on a treble clef with a 4/4 time signature. The lyrics are written below the notes in both Polish and English. The first staff has the lyrics: "Sto lat, sto lat niech ży-je, ży-je nam, sto lat, sto lat" and "Good luck, good cheer may you live a hundred years, good luck, good cheer". The second staff has: "niech ży-je, ży-je nam. Jeszcze raz, jeszcze raz" and "may you live - a hundred years. Good luck, good cheer". The third staff has: "niech ży-je, ży - je nam! Niech ży - je nam!" and "may you live a - hundred years! One - hundred - years!".



Polish Language - 2

Some commonly used expressions

Yes – Tak (*Taak*)

No – Nie (*Nyeh*)

Please – Proszę (*Pro-sha*)

I don't understand – Nie rozumiem (*Nyeh ro-zoo-mee-em*)

I understand – Rozumiem – (*Ro-zoo-mee-em*)

How are you feeling? – Jak się czujesz? (*Yuk shi choo-yesh*)

Do you understand? – Czy rozumiesz? (*Tshy ro-zoo-mee-esh*)

I don't know – Nie wiem (*Nyeh vee-em*)

Thank you – Dziękuję (*Jin-coo-yeah*)

I know – Wiem (*Vee-em*)

Today – Dzisiaj (*Ji-shai*)

Tomorrow – Jutro (*Yoot-roh*)

Yesterday – Wczoraj (*Vtcho-ray*)

Good morning – Dzień dobry (*Jen dobry*)

How are you – Jak się masz? (*Yuk shi mash*)

Hello – Cześć (*Che-shtch*)

Good bye – Do widzenia (*Do vee-dzen-ya*)

Breakfast – Śniadanie (*Shna-da-nee-h*)

Dinner – Obiad (*Oh-byad*)

Supper – Kolacja (*Koh-lah-sya*)

Meal – Posiłek (*Po-shee-wek*)

Eat – Jeść (*Yeshtch*)

Sleep – Spać (*Spaatch*)

Wash – Myć (*Mitch*)

Drink – Pić (*Pitch*)

Lie down – Leżeć (*Le-zhetch*)

Get up – Wstać (*Vstatch*)

Water – Woda (*Voda*)

Tea – Herbata (*Herbata*)

Bread – Chleb (*Hleb*)

Coffee – Kawa (*Kava*)

Juice – Sok (*Sok*)

Meat – Mięso (*Myen-so*)

Chicken – Kurczak (*Koor-chaak*)

Soup – Zupa (*Zoopa*)

Cake – Ciasto (*Cha-sto*)

Milk – Mleko (*Mleko*)

Sugar – Cukier (*Tsoo-kier*)

Salt – Sól (*Sool*)

Cold – Zimno (*Zim-noh*)

Hot – Gorąco (*Goron-tzoh*)

Warm – Ciepło (*Chepwo*)

Pain – Ból (*Bool*)

Sick – Chory (*Ho-ri*) for Male
Chora (*Ho-ra*) for Female

Good – Dobry (*Dob-ri*) M
Dobra (*Dob-ra*) F

Bad – Zły (*Zwi*) M

Zła (*Zwa*) F

Nice – Ładny (*Wad-ni*) M

ładna (*Wad-na*) F

Happy – Wesoły (*Ve-sowi*) M

Wesoła (*Ve-sowa*) F

Hungry – Głodny (*Gwodni*) M

Głodna (*Gwodna*) F

Thirsty – Spragniony (*Spragnioni*) M

Spragniona (*Spragniona*) F

Arm – Ramię (*Ra-mien*)

Leg – Noga (*Noga*)

Head – Głowa (*Gwova*)

Stomach – Brzuch (*Bzoo-h*)

Teeth – Zęby (*Zembi*)

Foot – Stopa (*Stopa*)

Hand – Ręka (*Renka*)

Eyes – Oczy (*Ochee*)

Ears – Uszy (*Oo-shi*)

Book – Książka (*Ksheonshka*)

Newspaper – Gazeta (*Gazeta*)

Music – Muzyka (*Moozika*)

TV – Telewizja (*Tele-vizya*)

Door – Drzwi (*Jvee*)

Window – Okno (*Okno*)

Room – Pokój (*Pokooy*)

Toilet – Toaleta (*Tow-aleta*)

Chair – Krzesło (*Ksheswo*)

Bed – Łóżko (*Wooshko*)

Table – Stół (*St-oo-w*)

Plate – Talerz (*Ta-lesh*)

Cup – Kubek (*Coo-bek*)

Spoon – Łyżka (*Wi-shka*)

Knife – Nóż (*Noosh*)

Family – Rodzina (*Roh-zhina*)

Husband – Mąż (*Monsh*)

Wife – Żona (*Zhona*)

Grandchild – Wnuk (*Vnook*) M

Syn – Syn (*Sin*)

Daughter – Córka (*Tsoorka*)

Wnuczka (*Vnoochka*) F



Religion and Traditions - 1

The majority of Poles in Victoria are of Roman Catholic faith (around 68%), followed by Judaism (around 15%). There are also Polish religious minorities such as Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh-Day Adventists and Orthodox.

The Polish Catholic faith is strongly maintained in Australia. There are eleven Polish priests closely involved in the Polish community in Victoria. Sunday mass is, for many Polish elderly, a strict ritual. Priests and nuns maintain close links with the Polish community. The Catholic Church calendar is marked by two major cycles, these being Christmas and Easter.

For Catholic Poles, the most important traditional festival of the year is **Christmas (*Boże Narodzenie*)**. The festivities begin on Christmas Eve, which is a time of family gathering and reconciliation. It is customary to share a church-blessed wafer – *opłatek*, and wishes of happiness and prosperity before the evening meal.

The traditional Christmas Eve supper consists of non-meat and fish dishes, usually herring and carp. For Christmas Eve supper *pierogi* (dumplings with a wide variety of fillings) are made. Traditional cakes, such as *pierniki* (gingerbread) and *makowiec* (poppy seed cake), are also served. Other traditional dishes appearing on the table during the Christmas period include *barszcz* (beetroot soup), mushroom or fish soup, *bigos* (sauerkraut with field mushrooms), and dried fruit compote. Polish Christmas carols, with a specific national character, almost all have anonymous composers, and many originated from traditional folk carols. A Polish version of "Silent Night" ("Cicha noc") is also popular.

Quickly On To Bethlehem (*Przybieżeli do Betlejem*)

Giving their respects in all humility,
To the Infant Jesus from hearts lovingly,
Glory to God on Highest
Glory to God on Highest
And on earth, peace to men.

Oddawali swe ukłony w pokorze,
Tobie z serca ochotnego, o Boże!
Chwała na wysokościach,
Chwała na wysokościach,
A pokój na ziemi.

The Easter (*Wielkanoc*) tradition of colouring eggs is still alive in Polish homes. But these days, eggs are rarely decorated in the exquisite patterns that were used in the past. They are usually dyed while being cooked in water with commercial dyes or onion peels.

Good Friday (*Wielki Piątek*) is observed by many Polish people as a day of fasting. For observant Polish Catholics, confession and communion are extremely important on Good Friday.

On Easter Saturday, the traditional *święconka* (sh-vee-en-tson-kah), a little basket of food, is taken to church to be blessed. Easter Sunday is celebrated by attending mass and then by a large feast at home with family; before the meal begins, each person is given a piece of the blessed food.

The traditional Easter symbols include a small lamb made of sugar, butter, pastry or chocolate, a chocolate easter bunny, coloured hard-boiled eggs, and small pieces of the green box plant.

These traditions are observed by most Polish people, even those who would not consider themselves religious.



Religion and Traditions - 2

The Australian **Jewish** community traces its foundation to the arrival of the first European settlers in 1788. There are about 4,000 Jewish people of Polish origin in Victoria. Life cycle events, family, and culture are all shaped by the holidays contained in the Jewish calendar. Once a week Jews celebrate the Sabbath, and every month of the Jewish year except one is marked by holidays, festivals, and observances. During Pesach* families and friends gather together for Seder meals. The Jewish New Year marks the beginning of a period known as Ten Days of Repentance*. During the festivities of Rosh Hashanah*, which commemorates the anniversary of the creation of mankind, Jews traditionally eat many symbolic foods, such as apples dipped in honey for a sweet year. Yom Kippur* (Day of Atonement) is the holiest day of the year, dedicated to mercy and forgiveness. It is a day of fasting and prayer, when Jews are commanded to abstain from eating, drinking, and intimate relations. Jewish people light the Chanukah* candles for eight days to commemorate the miracle of the Temple in Jerusalem.

Seventh-day Adventists acknowledge the Bible as their only creed. The church was officially established in 1863 in USA. Adventists' church life is administered by a church board, consisting of congregation leaders. They usually have an ordained pastor whose responsibility might include two or three congregations and who attends to duties such as conducting funerals, weddings and baptism. Meeting every Saturday, Seventh-day Adventists focus their activities on fellowship, worship and social interaction. Adventists abstain from alcohol, tobacco, and drugs, many are vegetarians. The Church has a variety of counselling programs and provides community service workshops and youth camps. Seventh-day Adventists do not partake in Christmas or Easter festivities believing that these are traditions not articulated in the Bible. No images are used in worship. There are three Polish Adventist congregations in Melbourne, with approximately 500 members.

The Russian Orthodox Church is more than one thousand years old and has over 150 million adherents throughout the world. The doctrine of seven sacraments (Eucharist, baptism, confirmation, penance, Holy Orders, marriage and anointment of the sick) is one of its major characteristics. Hymns and religious art (icons) feature heavily in the daily life of church followers. Feast days and fast days are regulated according to the ecclesiastical calendar which is divided between movable and fixed holy days. The movable holy days are determined by the date of Easter. Next in importance to Easter are the "twelve great feasts". Fasting, as practiced in the Orthodox Church means abstinence from meat, fish, dairy products, olive oil, and wine.

Jehovah's Witnesses accept the Bible to be their only creed. Their modern history shaped up just over 130 years ago in the USA. Jehovah's Witnesses do not use images in worship and do not take part in interfaith movements. They meet at their congregation halls and consider clergy class and special titles improper. The Baptism ceremony is performed through complete immersion. Jehovah's Witnesses believe that taking blood into the body through mouth or veins violates God's laws and may refuse medical treatment necessitating blood transfusions. One of the main purposes of Jehovah's Witnesses is door to door preaching. It is difficult to ascertain the exact number of Jehovah's Witnesses of Polish background because they do not usually meet in language groups. There is a small Polish congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses in Sunshine.

* Denotes names of Jewish festivals



Polish Services

Bookshops

Polonia Bookshop

94 Elizabeth Street, Floor 5 – Suite 2,
Melbourne 3000
Phone: 9650 7733

Verbum

Suite 5, 277 Flinders Lane
Melbourne 3000
Phone: 9650 1322

Priests and Nuns

Fr Wieslaw Slowik

Polish Jesuit Pastoral Centre
23 Clifton Street, Richmond 3121
Phone: 9428 1200

Fr Dominik Jalocha, OP

36 Couper Angus Drive
Sunshine 3020
Phone: 9312 1289

Ks Jozef Migacz

1 Milton Street, Bell Park 3215
Phone: 5278 5723

Ks Tomasz Zaremba

185 William Street, St. Albans 3021
Phone: 9367 1119

Ks Henry Nikel

3 Lyones Street, South Ballarat 3350
Phone: 5331 2933

Ks Kazimierz Bojda

Polish Catholic Centre
337-343 Greens Rd, Keysborough 3173
Phone: 9701 6071

Sr Paula Szejder

Missionary Sister of Christ the King

9 Wadham Court, Endeavour Hills 3802
Phone: 9700 3046
Mobile: 0421 370 183

Pastor Marek Ignasiak

Polish 7th Day Adventists Church

Dandenong 3175
Phone: 9503 8840

Polish language radio stations

SBS – AM 1224

Broadcasting Mon-Sun 1-2 pm, Tue 10-11

3ZZZ – FM 92.3

Broadcasting Tue 11-12 pm, Wed 10-11 pm,
Sat 7-8 pm

3CR – AM 855

Broadcasting 2am – 6 am Wednesday

“WYN” – FM 88.9

Broadcasting Thursdays 3-6pm

Shops and delis

Roli Poli Deli

1 City Place
Sunshine 3020

Wisła

26 Walker St
Dandenong 3175

Uncle's Deli

123 Thomas Street
Dandenong 3175

Europa Cake Shop

81 Ackland Street
St. Kilda 3182

Baltic Deli

Shop 1, 4 Neville Ave
Laverton 3028

MITKO Deli

Anderson Street
Sunshine 3021

Welfare organisations

Australian-Polish Community Services

77 Droop Street
Footscray 3011
Phone: 9689 9170

Polish Community Council of Victoria

Level 2, 51 Queen Street
Melbourne 3000
Phone: 9629 8277

To obtain a copy of Polish Services Directory Victoria, which contains a more comprehensive listing of Polish services, please contact the Australian-Polish Community Services on 03 9689 9170 or e-mail: info@apcs.org.au



**Australian-Polish
Community
Services**

Attitude to Medical Care

The role of the family in caring is very important to Polish people, however many elderly Polish people do not have extended family and live alone. Families often consider it a moral obligation to care for their loved ones at home and often are reluctant to place them in a residential care facility. The research conducted as part of the 10 Year Polish Aged Care Plan (2001 – 2011) confirms that most Polish elderly prefer to stay in their own homes for as long as possible, regardless of their health status and financial circumstances. Statistics show that older people from Polish background often resist seeking help until crisis point is reached. This is a result of unwillingness to lose their independence and self-sufficiency as well as a notion of embarrassment connected to the necessity of seeking help from outsiders.

Medical practitioners and medication

Traditionally, doctors and other health professionals are given great authority in various aspects of life and are well respected in the Polish community. Poles are polite to authority figures and, not wanting to offend a doctor, may not ask for clarification on questionable issues. Poles typically follow medical orders carefully and submit to various kinds of medical treatment, including tests, operations and medication. On the other hand, alternative ways of treatment are also sought alongside mainstream medical advice, often without informing the medical practitioner. Herbal medicine and pharmaceuticals are sometimes privately imported from Poland. Due to the language barrier, older Polish people usually seek out Polish speaking medical practitioners but may change physicians if they believe they are not getting better fast enough.

Attitude to pain

Polish people can at times display stoicism towards pain and may 'suffer' in silence, however others will seek treatment as soon as symptoms develop. Some Polish people may use inadequate pain relieving medication and choose distraction as a means of coping with pain, while others are comfortable with taking medication when needed.

Attitude to terminal illness

Traditionally, the diagnosis of a terminal illness would not be communicated to the person concerned but rather to their families who then decide when and how, if at all, to convey it to the patient. Occasionally families, relatives and friends may wish to 'protect' the patient from diagnosis and prognosis of a terminal illness. Some may believe that if the prognosis is communicated to the patient he or she may lose the will to live and therefore would not appreciate such a direct approach. Some patients prefer not to know that they have a terminal illness.



Key Issues for the Polish Community

Most Polish people in Australia lead a very fulfilling life. Many can speak English, work, study or enjoy their retirement and feel part of the Australian fabric. While maintaining strong links with the Polish community in Australia and their families in Poland, they feel that Australia is their home. The elderly of Polish background however, have a range of un-met needs. Service needs of the Polish community have increased dramatically in recent years as it is one of the most rapidly ageing communities, with the fourth largest number of older people from all ethnic groups in Victoria.

Research and statistical information to date indicate a very low level of usage of support services such as Home and Community Care (HACC) services by Polish people. Above average incidence of cancer and mental health problems is prevalent in Polish elderly. A high number of Polish people live in lone households (42%).

Polish community-specific issues

- fear of authority and reluctance to seek assistance until crisis point is reached;
- cases of social isolation and limited English;
- service system disorientation;
- refusal to accept help due to cultural expectations that the family's role is to provide the necessary support;
- refusal to accept help from outsiders;
- experiencing embarrassment or even shame of having to deal with one's personal problems in public.

Many Polish elderly people can speak and understand English. However, some of them cannot read or write and may have problems with filling out forms. Some of those who say that they can speak English can often understand and respond to simple sentences and situations and are able to express their needs in a limited manner.

Key issues for service providers

- The need for appropriate dementia care support services for the Polish elderly and their carers.
- The need for in-home support services that are culturally and linguistically relevant to potential Polish consumers.
- More strategic focus on the primary importance of carers.
- Work on the eradication of under-utilisation of mainstream services, such as HACC and Residential Care.
- The need for increased support for rural and regional Polish elderly in Victoria.
- The need for culturally appropriate grief and death counseling.



Migration Trends

The Beginning

The presence of Polish people on the Australian continent dates back to Captain Cook's voyages of exploration in 1772-75, through two Polish born naturalists who were part of the expedition. The first known Polish settler to arrive to Australia was a convict named Joseph Potaski (originally Potowski) who was sentenced to seven years transportation and arrived in Port Phillip in October 1803. Potaski went on to be one of the earliest and most successful wheat farmers in Tasmania where he finally settled down. Throughout the 1800s small numbers of Poles settled first in South Australia and Queensland and later in Melbourne and Sydney.

Immigrants from Poland were first enumerated separately in the 1921 Census, when they numbered 1,780 persons, the majority of whom are believed to have been Jewish.

After the Second World War

There was a substantial expansion in immigration of Poles to Australia after the end of the Second World War, with the bulk of these immigrants being Displaced Persons (currently referred to as refugees). The 60,000 Polish refugees who were accepted in Australia between 1947 and 1954 constituted the largest group of refugees to have ever been admitted to this country at any one time to this day. Due to the fact that many of them were single men, the Polish community in Australia today has an unbalanced and atypical age profile in the older age range.

The decades that followed were characterized by only small numbers of Polish immigrants arriving to Australia, a fact that resulted in a decrease of the Polish-born population.

Solidarity Movement Wave

The second major wave of Polish immigrants, sometimes referred to as the Solidarity Movement wave due to the political changes taking place in Poland at the time of their arrival, started coming to Australia at the beginning of the 1980s. As a result of this wave of migration, in the decade between 1981 and 1991, over 25,000 Polish immigrants settled in Australia. The 1986 Census recorded almost 68,000 Polish-born persons resident in Australia, the highest number ever.

Since then only small numbers of Poles have been settling in Australia largely through the Family Reunion, Independent, Fiancée and Spouse Categories. The most recent migrations from Poland have been very sporadic, however, migration has been an ongoing part of Poland's history and its people.

21st Century

In 2001 there were more than 20,400 Polish people living in Victoria, 40.6% of whom were over the age of 65. The increase in numbers of aged Poles places particular demand on governments, service providers and relevant migrant organizations to develop appropriate strategies of response. The aim of such strategies is to aid in dealing with issues that are fundamental to this age group, such as the need for culturally and linguistically appropriate service responses, to best meet the requirements of this group.

