

# Australian Lithuanian Community Federal Executive

## ~ MINUTES OF MEETING 11: 20 APRIL 2008 ~

**PRESENT:** Andrius Vaitiekunas, Birute Prasmutaite, Dennis Gaylard, Lilija Kozlovskiene and Loreta Cizauskaite-Tigani.

**Birute assumed the chair and opened the meeting at 12.35 PM.**

**AGENDA:**

- Distributed by Birute and adopted with some additions.

**APOLOGIES:**

- Audrius Skeivys, Edvina Utemiseva and Vytautas Krivickas.

**GUEST:**

- Henrikas Antanaitis.

**Birute assumed the chair.**

**CULTURE REPORT:**

Lilija reported that:

- The Arts and Culture Register has been published on the TMID website and includes entries relating to a number of Australian Lithuanian culture groups, though there are no individual artists, photographers or musicians profiled.  
Birute to send notices to MP, TA and SBS.
- She has met with the ALD Committee in Sydney and explained that the KV is not a funding source. Festival funding applications should be made to FONDAS after being endorsed by the KV President. It was noted the FONDAS will not approve funding applications that do not include a detailed budget.
- 1,000 Year commemoration activities are underway:
  - Tomas Vaisietu to tour in April-May 2009 (subject to TMID funding).
  - Budget proposal being prepared for a modern-folkloric group to tour in September-October 2009 (also subject to TMID funding).  
Loretta to investigate possibility of Festivals Australia funding.
  - Flag design competition has started with ads in MP and TA. Closing date for entries is 15 August.  
Dennis to contact Vytautas about including on website.
  - Individual communities are to be encouraged to develop their own commemorative activities, particularly activities that showcase their own achievements. Examples have been provided to the communities.  
To be included on Agenda for ALD business sessions.
  - Lilija is also trying to establish whether PLB is putting together an exposition of diaspora communities as part of the 2009 program.  
Birute to discuss their 2009 programs with Honorary Consuls.

**Birute invited Henrikas to address the meeting.**

Henrikas outlined a project to attract Lithuanians from other diaspora communities to relocate to Australia. Key elements of his proposal are:

- Australian communities are becoming less viable as a result of declining numbers of older members and low participation rates among younger members. Increased migration of Lithuanians from overseas is one way to address the decline.

- It is inappropriate to recruit young people directly from Lithuania.
- Recent estimates suggest that there could be as many as 200,000 Lithuanians living in Great Britain and a further 120,000 in Ireland.
- Recent surveys indicate that the adult Lithuanians living in Ireland are approximately evenly split between 'staying' in Ireland, 'returning' to live in Lithuania and 'undecided' about their future place of residence.
- It was noted that if one per cent of the undecided Irish-Lithuanians could be convinced to relocate to Australia, that would represent 400 new adult community members. If the ratio of undecided was similar in Great Britain as in Ireland, one per cent of those would represent an additional 700 new adult community members.
- Advantages of targeting British and Irish-Lithuanians include:
  - They are likely to already have adequate English language skills.
  - British and Irish professional qualifications are usually transferable to Australia.
  - The wider Australian community is culturally similar to those in Britain and Ireland.
- The strategy is dependant upon public forums in Great Britain and Ireland, supported by:
  - Local community radio and newspaper advertising.
  - Lithuanian language printed materials.
  - Internet based information.
  - Giveaway DVDs on 'life in Australia' and 'the Australian-Lithuanian community'.
- It was noted that the minimum qualification for a Migration Agent can be undertaken at Victoria University. Duration is 16 days across 5 months. Fees are in excess of \$8,300 and that application and registration fees for a Migration Agent are in excess of \$2,000.
- At least two presenters for the forums will need to be identified and recruited:
  - Accomplished public speakers.
  - Knowledgeable about the Australian communities.
  - From 'younger' generation.
  - Qualified (and registered) Migration Agent.
- It was noted that while there are a range of business and skilled migration programs run through the Department of Immigration, no guarantee of accommodation work or access to services could be made either at forums or to individuals on behalf of the Australian communities.
- Sustained success will also require welcome or integration committees in each community that attracts new migrants.

There was considerable discussion of the proposal. Issues noted included:

- Validity of the assumption that immigrant Lithuanians would become active community members in the short or medium-term.
- Validity of the assumption that the level of community support for the proposal is sufficient and sustainable.
- Capacity of the community to adequately fund the proposal.

It was agreed to include the proposal on the Agenda for the Presidents' meeting in June.

**Birute thanked Henrikas for bringing his proposal to the KV.**

#### **PREVIOUS MINUTES:**

- Draft minutes of Meeting 10, 28 March 2008, as distributed by Dennis were adopted with minor amendment (moved Dennis, seconded Andrius).

#### **BUSINESS ARISING:**

- Community Presidents meeting, 9-10 June 2008.
  - Gold Coast is the only community so far to respond that they are not coming.
  - Geelong and Canberra are only communities so far who have said they are.
- ALD, Sydney 2008:

- Birute has contacted Sydney Community and confirmed business session arrangements (venue, catering, equipment).
- Loreta has contacted ALD Committee and confirmed that there is only one teachers' meeting scheduled.
- TALKA annual disbursements:
  - Andrius has written requesting annual disbursement to KV.
- Lithuanian Road Safety project:
  - Dennis has emailed RTA with Lt contact, awaiting reply.
- Lithuanian Papers:
  - TA and MP articles being coordinated by Edvima on behalf of KV.
- SBS Radio:
  - Response to programming and management changes being coordinated by Dennis on behalf of KV.
- Teviskės Aidai:
  - Dennis and Birute advised that the short-term future is apparently secure.  
To be included on Agenda for ALD business sessions.
- Further business arising was referred to respective Reports and General Business.

#### **CORRESPONDENCE:**

- As per emails and discussions above.
- Articles and notices prepared and sent to MP and TA.
- Email from Jonas Mockunas about the formation of a Parliamentary Group to establish, maintain and improve relationships with the Baltic States. James Bridgood MP is Chair.  
Dennis to contact on behalf of KV.

#### **FINANCIAL REPORT:**

- Andrius reported that both accounts remain in positive balance.
  - Noted that \$205 was raised at the mineimas.
  - Noted with thanks that Sydney solidarity payment has been received (\$198).

#### **RESOURCES UPDATE:**

- Loreta reported that distribution of previous educational materials to Communities had been done.
- There was discussion of a range of resources available from international sources.  
Loreta to write to PLB for copies of cdrom.  
Loreta to give details of books to Andrius to collect in Lt.  
Dennis to order dvd and books from Spindulys.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS:**

- Website:
  - Noted that the development and maintenance is a significant piece of work and that despite the slow progress, the site so far is a considerable improvement on the previous one.
  - Priority development work to be undertaken:
    - Spotlight or news feature.
    - Community calendar pages.
    - Photo gallery.

#### **NEXT MEETING:**

- 12.00 PM, 25 May at the Lithuanian Club, North Melbourne.