



Newsletter

Q2, 2023
Issue #02

News from our Community - April, May & June

INSIDE

Events

An overview of our autumn events, including a write-up of Baltic Deportation Day, and a reminder about our upcoming events.

Special Thanks

We couldn't do it without you. Thanks to members.



Autumn Events

Australian-Lithuanian News

2024 Song Festival and ALD, exchange programs, bilingualists needed.

Annual Memberships

\$5 membership fees are now due.

LT News

Lithuanian news you might have missed.

Member News

Arrival of our newest member.

Lithuanian Crossword

Test your Lithuanian knowledge with a community crossword.

We started the second quarter with a kugelis and potato blynai **BBQ hosted by the Vilkas basketball team** as a special thank you to the community for their support. Thank you Ben Katauskas, Vyt Vilkaitis and Peter Andruška for organising this event and cooking. In April we also hosted an **Easter picnic**, that that was moved to our Būstinė due to the wet weather. A special thanks to Katharine Moeder for organising an Easter egg hunt for the children and a number of traditional Lithuanian Easter games.

During May we hosted a **Mother's Day high tea**, where our mums were presented with some lovely gifts: Vida Viliunas made 'Mamytai' brooches and love heart biscuits for each mum to take home. Greta Kusta made little crochet Lithuanian love hearts which were tied around a bouquet of flowers for each mum. Thank you Vida and Greta for your contribution to make the day special for our mums! At the end of the month, we held our first casual **Polish Club dinner** where members were able to mingle in our own private room and enjoy polish dumplings and cabbage rolls - similar to Lithuanian koldūnai and balandėliai.

In June our committee worked with our Latvian, Estonian and Ukranian friends to hold a commemorative event for **Baltic Deportation Day**. Read more on page 2.

Do you know why we celebrate some of the events we do? February 16 marks the [Restoration of the State](#), otherwise known as "V16" (first independence), where in 1918 the Council of Lithuania signed the Act of Reinstating Independence from the Russian Empire. March 11 marks the [Restoration of Independence](#) (second independence day) where in 1990 Lithuania re-established it's independant state after a 50-year Soviet occupation. June 14 marks [Baltic Deportation Day](#), which is a day of mourning for the tens of thousands of Baltics who were deported by the Soviet Union in the 1940s. July 6 marks [Statehood Day](#), which celebrates the coronation of the first known Grand Duke of Lithuania, Mindaugas and was the first step of the birth of the state of Lithuania.

Baltic Deportation Day

By Algis Kusta, Community Treasurer

On 10 June, Canberra's Baltic communities joined the Ukrainian community at its regular demonstration outside the Russian embassy in Canberra to commemorate the anniversary of the forced deportations of Baltic citizens to remote regions by the Soviet Union between 1940 and 1953.

Members of the Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian communities recalled the historical detail of Josef Stalin's brutal program, a program scarcely distinguishable from genocide, that had profound impacts on the psyches of these small Baltic nations that endure to this day. The current developments in Ukraine carry a further stark reminder of this past oppression. The President of the Canberra Lithuanian Community read a speech from the Australian Lithuanian Community President, Rasa Mauragis. Rasa's speech reflected on the human toll of the deportations at the national and personal level and the need to never forget.



Photo: Peter Kabaila, Žydrė Pember, Elena Kusta, Vytautas Kabaila, Alma Quick, Sophie Kusta

Of particular poignancy were personal stories shared by members of the Canberra Lithuanian Community (pictured above) which told of the impacts of the deportations on their families. Stories of family members rounded up who were tortured and killed. Some whose fate is unknown and many who never survived the transport, privation and inhuman conditions of their exile. And perhaps most profound were the stories of those who survived the horror only to return as broken human beings, broken in spirit and in health to a Soviet system that had no capacity or desire to support them, unable to adjust and often to an early death.

The commemoration concluded with the singing of national anthems and the ceremonial joining of hands by those present to recreate the '[chain of freedom](#)' when two million people across Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia joined hands to form a human chain spanning 690 kilometres in a peaceful protest in August 1989. The appreciation of Australia as a safe haven for many of the world's displaced is implicit in events such as these. That we still commemorate these events so many years after shows the impact of these national and individual tragedies on Baltic nations.

The [Lithuanian Special Archive](#) has published the names of the people who were included on the lists of those who were to be deported in 1941 and 1945-1953. The lists are incomplete but can be searched by name.

Upcoming Events

There are a number of events coming up over the next quarter:

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

Sat 08 July | **Statehood Day** Lunch at the Polish Club (1pm) *SELLOUT*

Sat 15 July | **9th Anniversary of Downing of Flight MH17** at the Ukrainian protest (11am)

Thu 27 July | Casual Dinner at the **Polish Club** (6pm)

Sat 05 August | **Būstinė Open** – Books and Coffee Morning (10am)

Sat 02 September | **Father's Day** Pizza and Beer at the Būstinė (2pm)

Keep an eye out for invitations to RSVP – Via email and the community Facebook Group.

Special Thanks

Vida Viliunas has been busy. Recently, Vida handmade a 'welcome/sveiki atvyke' door mat for our Būstinė and 12 Vytis candle holders for our events. Thank you, Vida for your ongoing contribution to our community!



Australian-Lithuanian Community News



2024 Lithuanian Song Festival | Daina Švente

The Australian Lithuanian Community (Australijos Lietuvių Bendruomenės (ALB)) is organising an Australian-Lithuanian choir to participate in the 2024 Song Festival in Vilnius, Lithuania. If you are interested in being part of the Australian choir, please email your interest to Jomante at j.maksvytyte@yahoo.com or read more about the experience [here](#). Rehearsals will be conducted via Zoom and individuals will be required to make their own way to Lithuania for the July 2024 festival.

If you're interested in Lithuanian music, the Council for the Patronage of Ethnic Culture has created a [virtual collection of songs](#) to celebrate Joninės, which can be listened to online.

2024 Australian Lithuanian Days

In December 2024, between Christmas and New Years, the Australian Lithuanian Days (ALD) and Sporto Švente will be held in Adelaide.

Mark the date in your calendars now, and be ready to participate in Lithuanian art, culture and sport with like-minded Lithuanians from around Australia. [Last year's schedule](#) hosted an art show, youth talent night, literature afternoon and a New Year's Eve party. Sports included basketball, tennis, golf, darts and more. Anyone can participate and we welcome Canberra representation in 2024.

Contact the Committee if you, or your children, would like to get involved or have or ideas about how our community can participate.

Upcoming elections

There will be [three elections in Lithuania](#) next year.

In May 2024, citizens will be asked to vote in the Presidential election and in a mandatory [constitutional referendum](#) for multiple citizenship. In June 2024, there will be elections to the European Parliament, and in October, an election of Lithuanian Parliament (Seimas).

The ALB will work with communities around Australia to ensure locals can vote, including new arrivals and those holding citizenship. Those who have a right to vote are to register prior to the elections (details to be announced). In addition to the Embassy in Canberra, another live polling station will be available in Australia. Further details will be provided to members via email as information is received by the Committee.

Exchange Programs

Have you ever thought about an exchange to Lithuania? Below are some ideas to keep in mind for future exchanges.

The Council for the Patronage of Ethnic Culture has [prepared information](#) about **2023 summer camps** in Lithuania. These run yearly, so you have time to consider participating in 2024. [Global Lithuania recently organised](#) a **professional "Kurk Lietuvai" program**. There will be similar programs in the future. If an exchange program interests you, please let the Committee know so we can keep you in mind as we receive information about these programs.

WANTED: Note-takers

Community presidents are meeting in October this year and bilingualists are needed. The ALB and Canberra Committee are looking for 2-3 Canberra community members to assist taking minutes at an upcoming meeting of community presidents. Minute-takers must be able to speak and write in both the English and Lithuanian languages.

The meeting of community presidents will take place in **Canberra from 20-22 October**. If you are interested in minute-taking, contact Elena Kusta via [email](#) or 0411 194 083.

Annual Memberships

Annual membership fees for our community are now due for the 2023-24 financial year.

For just \$5.00 per adult per annum, members are welcome to attend a range of community events throughout the year. Please contact the Committee via email for payment instructions or to update your personal/contact details.

Expired Email?

Recently, legacy emails from iiNet and other networks have expired. If you or a family member have a new email to be updated, please let us know.

LT News

Lithuania's President, Gitanas Nausėda will [visit Australia](#) in October this year.

A [video](#) has been made by the [Vilnius700](#) organisers detailing **Vilnius' 700th birthday**.

Lithuania [spent](#) 1.4% GDP on **support for Ukraine** last year and draws up **three-year plan** to [support](#) Ukraine's army.

Vilnius supermarket, Iki, starts [two-month trial](#) delivering groceries by **driverless cars**.

Aurimas Valujavičius, a **Lithuanian traveller**, finished a [four-month journey](#) crossing the Atlantic Ocean in a single rowing boat.

A **mandatory referendum on multiple citizenships** will be [held in Lithuania](#) on May 12, 2024 ([radio documentary](#) about it in Lithuanian).

The true scale of **poverty** in Lithuania could be significantly higher, [according](#) to a new study.

Lithuania's society is getting more [involved](#) in **refugee matters**, according to the UNHCR.

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](#).

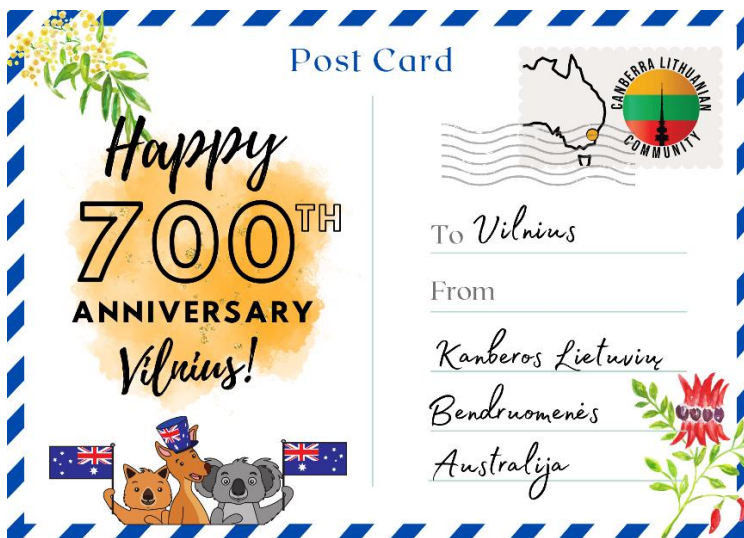
Member News



The Canberra Community welcomes a new member to the Hollings Family, with the birth of Henry Angus (pictured left). Henry is the new grandson to member, **Karin Hollings**. Henry was born on 10 June at 10.51pm, weighing 3740g and 49.5cm in length. Congratulations to Karin and the Hollings Family! We look forward to meeting little Henry!

Vilnius turns 700!

This year Vilnius celebrates its 700th anniversary and the Canberra Community sent the below **virtual postcard** to Vilnius for inclusion in its [celebration](#).

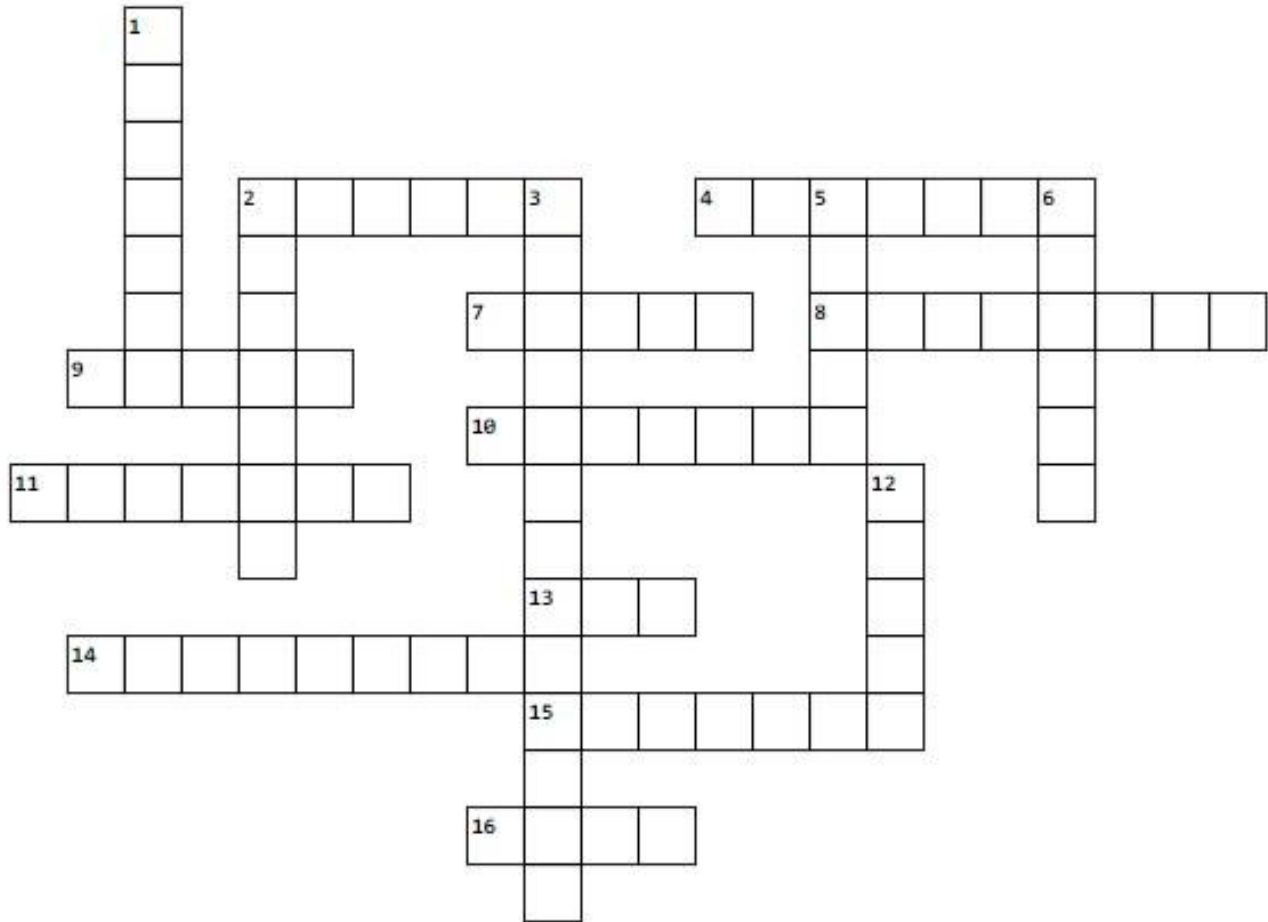


Book: A History of Lithuania

An *Illustrated History of Lithuania* is available for purchase. From the Prehistoric Balts to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Learn more [here](#). For international orders, email info@briedis.lt.

Community Crossword

Test your Lithuanian Knowledge



Across

- 2. Canberra Lithuanian Community's basketball team name
- 4. Lithuania's capital city
- 7. What Park in Canberra hosts the Egle žalčių karalienė?
- 8. _____ giesmė is name of Lithuania's National Anthem
- 9. 'Hello' in Lithuanian
- 10. First name of Lithuania's current President
- 11. Meeting place of the Canberra Lithuanian Community
- 13. Lithuania's national flower
- 14. Name of first known Grand Duke and crowned King of Lithuania

- 15. The Hill of _____ is a site of pilgrimage about 12km north of the city of Šiauliai
- 16. What Summit is Lithuania hosting in July 2023?

Down

- 1. How Lithuanians call their country
 - 2. Month of February in the Lithuanian language
 - 3. Lithuanian cold beetroot soup
 - 5. Lithuanian currency before moving to the euro
 - 6. Parliament of Lithuania
 - 12. Lithuanian coat of arms
- Answers on page 4.

Crossword Answers

Across 2. Vilkas, 4. Vilnius, 7. Glebe, 8. Tautiška, 9. Labas, 10. Gitanas, 11. Būstinė, 13. Rue, 14. Mindaugas, 15. Crosses, 16. NATO
Down 1. Lietuva, 2. Vasaris, 3. Šaltibarščiai, 5. Litas, 6. Seimas, 12. Vytis