

# South Australian Croatian Community Profile



Community  
Council



Sports  
Centre



Soccer  
Club



Adelaide Chamber  
Club



## Australian Croatian Chambers of Commerce and Industry

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## **Background**

The Croatian Community in South Australia is some 10,000 strong with members active in a number of organisations including:

Community Council

The Croatian Club Adelaide est. June 1961, Located in Brompton

The Croatian Soccer Club Est. 1952, Located in Pooraka

The Croatian Sports Centre Est. 1998, State Sports Park, Pooraka

Croatian Catholic Centre Est. 1956

Croatian Sporting Club Pt. Lincoln Est. 1984

Australian Croatian Chamber of Commerce Est.1993

### **Croatian Community Council of South Australia**

The Croatian Community Council of South Australia established in November 1997, is an umbrella body representing South Australian Croatian organizations and Croatian South Australians. The Council's vision is for a "united, effective, and prosperous community working for the common good of all Croatians and Australians of Croatian heritage in South Australia".

The Council has been successful in bringing together the various Croatian Community organizations for projects such as:

- The Community Business directory published in 1997.
- The set up and maintenance of the Croatia SA web site and information center.
- The promotion and organization of both State and National "Youth" conferences.
- Harmony Day celebrations
- Participation in the Adelaide Fringe Festival & Croatian Food Festival

### **Adelaide Croatian Club**

On ANZAC day 1950 a group of 25 Croats assembled in Hyde Park and established the first Croatian Club in Australia. The new Club started to function immediately, co-coordinating cultural and social events, including dances, concerts and exhibitions.

After dreaming of their own premises for many years, the Croats in 1960 decided to buy a building. Foundation members donated 25 pounds each and the original club founder and patriarch Mr. Filipi donated 1000.00 pounds. The former Salvation Army Citadel in Chief Street was purchased and opened in June 1961 making it the first "Croatian Club" in Australia.

In 1966 the Croatian school was established and in 1974 the dancing group Lenek. It soon became apparent with the growth of the community that they had out grown the modest clubrooms. In 1976 the old clubrooms were sold and land purchased in nearby Ridleyton for a new Club. Over the next four years Croatian tradesmen donated their time and the community the materials to build the current Club, which was opened by the Governor of South Australia in May 1980.

The Club continues to the "Cultural Centre" of the community a place to meet and enjoy Croatian Culture and language and promote the Croatian identity to the descendants of the original founders and the South Australian Community.

## **Adelaide Croatia Soccer Club**

The Adelaide Croatia Soccer Club was founded in the early 1950s by a small group of young Croats to promote the Croatian name locally, nationally and internationally. They registered the club in 1952 and played their first game against a team from the Phillips Factory at Hendon.

The club affiliated itself with the SA Soccer Federation and played for 5 years in the metropolitan division. Its first home ground was at the South parklands on Greenhill Rd.

In 1958 Adelaide Croatia entered into the second division and narrowly missed being promoted into the first division. That same year, the late Charles Perkins, now remembered as a leading Aboriginal activist, joined the team and later represented Australia. Charles Perkins was one of the most well known individuals to come out of Adelaide Croatia Soccer Club. In his autobiography he reflected with fondness on his friendships with Adelaide Croats and other immigrants he met through the club. Soccer was a truly multicultural sport and Adelaide Croatia reflected this.

In 1959 the club convincingly won the second division championship and secured a place in the first division for the first time. Once in the first division, Adelaide Croatia's fixtures and results were listed in the international soccer pools. This was historically significant as Adelaide Croatia was the only Croatian team from Australia in the pools and its progress was thus followed by Croats all over the world. The following year, that is in 1960, the club also made a move to its new headquarters at Hanson Reserve. There it remained until the year 2000.

The club's first major milestone was in 1961 when Croatia downed Cumberland 4-nil to win the Ampol Cup. In 1980 that Croatia won the coveted first place in the first division. This, of course, was considered the ultimate achievement for a State League side. Since then Croatia has won the league on another four occasions: in 1984, 1988, 1997, and 2002.

In 1990 some members of the Croatian Community were putting the wheels in motion to build a sporting complex to accommodate its successful team. The vision has become a reality some 12 years later.

## **Sports Centre**

The Croatian Sports Centre (CSC) continues to grow at an impressive rate, reaching milestone after milestone. This year is no exception to the amount of achievements made.

The Adelaide Croatia Soccer Club after a 49-year history finally established itself at its long awaited new home. Years of talking and planning finally came to fruition and now Adelaide Croatia has home of it's own, a goal which was long overdue.

The CSC and Adelaide Croatia have been praised and recognised in soccer and sporting circles for building what will certainly become one of the State's best facilities.

It is pleasing to finally have all our Croatian teams training and playing at one venue especially when it belongs to us! In financial terms it is extremely beneficial and vital to the economic stability of the CSC to have all our teams at the one location.

The government in its commitment has completed all necessary service works by providing roads, water and electricity to the CSC site. As a result we have been able to move more rapidly by developing the grounds, providing power to the ground lights and commencing the long awaited Stage 2 project (Main Building and change rooms). We have estimated completion for the change rooms to be March 2004 and the Main Building which will house the Soccer Club Rooms the following year.

## **Croatian Community Credit Union**

It is now been over 4 years since the historic day of 31st May 2000 when the premises of the very first Croatian Community Credit Union office was opened by the Minister for Financial Services and Regulation, the Honorable Joe Hockey M.P. On that day we gave our vision of financial freedom for the Croatian Community and the progress that we have made toward achieving that goal should make everyone proud.

Whilst the number of members and amount of lending we have made may not seem large compared to the big banks, it has had a huge impact already on our Community, especially when loans are being used by the new arrivals from our homeland who have survived the war but lost most or all of their possessions. Since their arrival in Australia, Croats from Croatia and Bosnia have worked hard in the same way we did, and are now starting to save in order to build a home for themselves and/or their families. Who better to turn to than the Croatian Community Credit Union!

As the Sydney office is firmly established, it is time for the Croatian Community Credit Union to continue to grow with new foundations in South Australia and Victoria, where we have commenced branch and agency operations to provide services to the local communities.

The Croatian Credit Union is probably the most sophisticated and ambitious project ever undertaken by the Croatian community in Australia. It is the culmination of an enormous and ongoing effort by a dedicated group of individuals. Considering this was the first new Credit Union to be registered in Australia for 13 years, it is a proud achievement for the community.

## **Australian Croatian Chamber of Commerce & Industry S.A. Inc.**

The Australian Croatian Chamber of Commerce & Industry Inc. was officially launched in June 1993 at the Croatian Club Adelaide. The goal of the Chamber, stimulating trade between South Australia and Croatia, has since expanded to assist its local members with seminars and training along with liaising with South Australian and Croatian Government Departments.

Members of the Croatian community can be found in all professions & trades however the greatest contributions have been made in the South Australian Fishing, Construction Industry & Ship Building industries.

### **Fishing:**

Members of the Croatian Community in South Australia control over 70% of the States Tuna industry and 60% of its prawn industry. In both cases our members have pioneered the fisheries in South Australia. The industry employs over 400 people and adds AUD \$300 Mil to the economy.

### **Construction:**

Although difficult to quantify, the Community's contribution to the Construction Industry in South Australia has been substantial. A sample taken from the Community Business Directory shows over 300 employed contributing over AUD\$60 Mil to the economy.

### **Ship Building:**

Croatian immigrants can be credited for pioneering the North Arm Ship Building Precinct. The companies located on Moore House Rd. account for the majority of the commercial ship building in the State (excluding Submarine Corp). Croatian-Australians control 75% of the market. The community's substantial contribution in this industry goes hand in hand with its involvement with the Fishing Industry. The industry employs over 200 contributing AUD \$30Mil to the States economy.