



# History News

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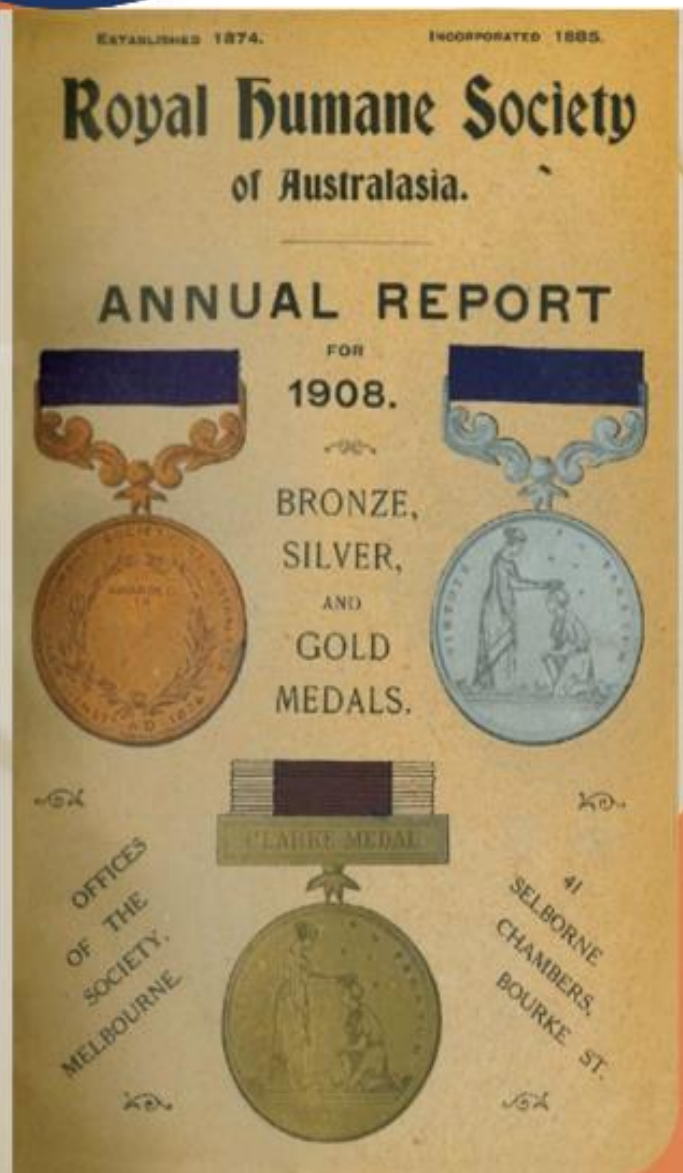
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## Ukrainian Museum of Australia

The Ukrainian Museum of Australia had its beginnings 70 years ago at the Ukrainian Catholic Parish Centre at the Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul in Melbourne Victoria. Bishop Ivan Prashko, a native of the town of Zbarazh in the Ternopil Oblast, Ukraine, a refugee of World War II (WWII) landed in Australia 1949 and founded the Ukrainian Catholic Church in Australia. He was the first Ukrainian Greek-Catholic bishop in Australia, New Zealand and Oceania and was the founder who gave his blessing for the inauguration of a Ukrainian Museum in Melbourne at the Cathedral premises.

The Ukrainian Arts Museum was founded by the late Father Zenon Chorkawyj OAM who started collecting Ukrainian artifacts as he visited Ukrainian migrant communities in Europe, Canada and America. With the support of Bishop Ivan Prasko, Father Zenon commenced Museum activities at the Cathedral Hall premises in North Melbourne and the official opening of the Ukrainian Arts Museum took place on the 3 August 1979 with an exhibition of Ukrainian folk artifacts and national costumes.

The Ukrainian Museum of Australia aims to popularise the ancient, deep and





■ Top, left to right: Ukrainian decorated eggs "pysanky", 'Hutsul dancers' - artist Edvard Kozak, 'Ukrainians', wooden sculpture by Volodymyr Lupychuk  
 Left: The Ukrainian Arts Museum founder, the late Father Zenon Chorkawyj OAM, a WWII refugee from Ukraine, who, after finishing his theological studies in Rome in 1968, settled in Melbourne Australia ministering in the Ukrainian Catholic Church.

beautiful culture and national heritage of Ukraine in Australia and the world. Over the following decades Fr. Zenon, together with key assistants Mr. Oreon Venhrynowych, Mr. Yuriy Semkiv and Mr. Michael Hanytsky, worked on collating items for the Museum collections, arranging exhibitions and setting up the first Museum card index catalogue.

Fr Zenon organised volunteer groups of artisans and craftspeople who were specialists in various fields of folk art and Ukrainian crafts, to undertake traditional craft works and create artifacts for museum exhibitions. These craft specialists worked as volunteers and produced traditional items of embroidery, pysanky writers (egg decorating with traditional motifs) and wood carvings. One famous master wood carver, Yevhen Stahiv, completed major wood carvings for the Cathedral Iconostas in Melbourne and donated many masterpieces of wood carvings with incrustations to the Museum. Many items of traditional embroidery namely blouses, shirts, cloths and runners were completed by the parish sisterhood using traditional folk embroidery motifs from various regions of Ukraine. Many valued paintings were donated to the Museum collection by renown Ukrainian artists Volodymyr Savchak, Michael Kmit and Yaryna Lachowycz.

During the period of 1970s up until 1991, when Ukraine declared its independence after the breakup of the Soviet Union, the collection of Ukrainian arts and crafts and artifacts grew through donations by families, artists, specialist craftspeople and embroiderers from Australia, Europe, Canada, USA, New Zealand and Ukraine.

In 1988 in commemoration of 1000 years of Christianity in Ukraine Fr Zenon Chorkawyj together with Ms Natalia

Moravska curated an exhibition of Ukrainian religious and cultural artifacts at the National Gallery of Victoria.

With the support from Bishop Peter Stasiuk the Museum obtained additional operational space and storage facilities at the Ukrainian Cathedral premises in 2011 and has continued to expand its activities and collection base.

In 2019 Ms Maru Jarockyj RIBA AIA took over the Directorship of the Museum and has co-ordinated a working group of volunteers who have initiated new museum activities, exhibitions and educational programs. That year the Museum was renamed 'The Ukrainian Museum of Australia' and was registered as an entity with ASIC in 2020.

The Museum houses a library, film and photographic archives, stamp and coin collections, medals and historical documents relating to Ukrainian community life in Australia. The Museum's permanent collection of over 10,000 donated items of religious historical artifacts consisting of vestments mitres, chalices, bibles, icons, Ukrainian embroidery, kelims, national costumes, ceramics, wooden carvings, paintings, pysanki, sculptures and musical instruments has been assembled over the past 40 years. The Museum has works of outstanding artists from Ukraine and known throughout the world, such as George Kruk, Edward Kozak, Ivan Marchuk and famous Ukrainian artists Volodymyr Lupychuk, Andriy Sukhorskyi and Vasyi Sidak.

Exhibitions curated by the Ukrainian Museum of Australia are housed in the parish hall named Patriarch Joseph Slipyj Hall in honour of this Ukrainian Patriarch who was exiled to Siberia for 17 years for being head of the catacomb Ukrainian

Catholic Church and who, after his release from the Siberian gulags, visited Melbourne in 1972.

During the Museum's 44-year history over 70 major exhibitions have been held around Australia, in Melbourne, Sydney, Geelong, Canberra Adelaide and Perth attracting thousands of local and international visitors, scholars, politicians and dignitaries. It continues to enjoy great success as a major cultural institution for the Ukrainian diaspora in Australia.

Today, the museum operates with a group of volunteers who are engaged in collection expansion, exhibition planning, upgrade and maintenance. Working ties have been established with museums in Ukraine supporting the expert assessment of exhibits, such as 'Castles of Ternopil region'. Zoom conferences and online meetings are held with leading historians, cultural experts and artists of Ukraine. Co-operation and support from the Ukrainian Museum of Australia for museum institutions in Ukraine are critical during these times of war and mass destruction by Russian aggression.

UNESCO has published a list of 343 cultural sites verified to have suffered damage since Russia invaded Ukraine on 24 February 2022. Preservation of Ukrainian artifacts in Australia now takes on new urgency and significance.

Being thousands of kilometers from Ukraine, we all feel a spiritual closeness and understand the integrity and unity of Ukrainians all over the world through the preservation of traditions and culture in such centers as ethnic museums of the diaspora, one of which is the Ukrainian Museum of Australia.

**Maru Jarockyj**  
 Director of the Ukrainian  
 Museum of Australia

