

NSW SLOVENIAN COMMUNITY AWARDS 2019

Slovenian Lifetime Achievement Award Club Planica Wollongong

ZVONKO GROZNIK



Zvonko je bil rojen 10. avgusta 1931 v Litiji pri Ljubljani. Po odsluženem vojaškem roku je v želji za boljšim življenjem leta 1959 pobegnil preko meje v sosednjo Avstrijo, kjer se je poročil z Dragico Čoh in koncem 1959 sta skupaj odpotovala z ladjo "Aurelia" v Avstralijo iz Italijanskega pristanišča Genova. Po pristanku v Freemantle in po dveh mesecih v kampu Bonegilla se je Zvonko zaposlil v železarni v Port Kembla in po krajšem času se jima je rodil sin Robert, pozneje pa še hčerka Silvija. Nekaj let kasneje je Zvonko našel boljše delo v Tallawarra Power Station kjer je ostal vse do upokojitve.

In 1959 Zvonko and Dragica joined the first Slovene association in Wollongong, founded under the name "Danica". In 1970, the club got a new name, "Slovenian Australian Club Planica" and the same year Zvonko took over the presidential responsibility. He held this position for ten years until 1979, and during that time the club prospered under Zvonko's leadership. We remember his leadership in the organisation of two peasant weddings similar to the model of the "Ljubljanske kmečke ohceti". The first wedding in the year 1975 was a great success and put the Slovenians on the map of the whole Wollongong area. The second wedding in 1977, involved three couples, with the participation of Slovenian compatriots from Sydney and further afield. Folk dancing, a procession through the city in national costumes and the performance by the singers of Triglav choir were highlights. The event was a great success and was reported in local and national press.

In 1979, Ivan Rudolf became president and Zvonko and Dragica were always ready to help when their health permitted. Four years later the Planica club acquired its own premises- bought the hall, the attached house and the church in Figtree, a suburb of Wollongong, where the Slovenian community could have divine services in their own church. Zvonko and Dragica contributed financially and for many years took care of the little church, making sure it was always clean and decorated. Zvonko always liked to wear a national costume for special occasions and he was always available to help whenever needed.

Zvonko's wife, Dragica, died 20 years ago, in 1999, a tragic loss for Zvonko and his extensive family. Apart from his son and daughter, he proudly boasts a number of grandchildren and great-grandchildren. They brought a great deal of comfort to him, as they were all very attached to their grandpa.

Dear Zvone, the Slovenian community in Wollongong feels, that you truly deserve the recognition for all the efforts and work that you have been doing for many years, although sadly, posthumously. We all feel a great loss now that the Almighty took you to join your beloved Dragica. We recognise your contribution to our community and thank you for your selfless work. May you rest in peace, dear friend!