

MACEDONIAN SCHOOL COUNCIL OF **NSW**

BY LILJANA MITRESKA

2017 RON RATHBONE COMPETITION

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Introduction

With the influx of Macedonian speaking immigrants in the early 1970's from Yugoslavia, there was a common feeling amongst Macedonians for their children and grandchildren to learn the Macedonian language. There were no Macedonian classes available . The first step was the decision that Macedonian classes would be incorporated as part of Yugoslav Ethnic School along with the Croatian, Slovenian and Serbia languages . The Yugoslav Ethnic School was established in 1977 on the grounds of Newtown Public School with the help of Serbian Jovanka Noussair and the school principal Doug Merkin and Tode Kabrovski over a cup of coffee. It is important to note that at that time Macedonia was still part of Yugoslavia and any decision would have the support of the Federal Yugoslav government. That was the politics of the time. Macedonian classes were held at various levels. There were initially some four hundred and fifty Macedonian students in attendance. In first class, Tode had fifty students who did not have enough chairs to sit on and sat on cushions on the floor! NSW Saturday mornings. Early teachers included Tode Kabrovski, Risto Langov, Zora Belokozovska ,Nikolce ,Pando Kondovski , Tatjana Nikolic and Lubica Seljanovski and Branko Naumovski. .Gorgi Gorgiev and Pero Kikirekov. These teachers all had teaching qualifications from Yugoslavia.

Lubica Seljanovski recalls that was she teaching a number of Macedonian classes to her Macedonian students at Newtown It was a lot of hard work .She was also performing much of the administrative work for the school .

By early 1978 there was growing sentiment amongst the ever expanding Macedonian community in Rockdale to conduct its own Macedonian classes , rather than have classes as part of a wider Yugoslav ethnic school. This was part of the growing Macedonian nationalist sentiment of the time.

Formation of Macedonian School Council of NSW

In November 1978 , after a number of public meetings held at various locations and it was decided to establish a Macedonian School Council that would act as an umbrella organisation to promote the study of the Macedonian language at all levels of education. This would include Macedonian Ethnic Schools that were held usually on Saturdays on the premises of a nominated public school. Also, Macedonian would be studied as a second language at a local primary school during regular school hours by a full or part time Macedonian language teacher . Finally, it was hoped to promote the study of Macedonian at tertiary level.

Lubica Seljanovski was active in the formation of the first Macedonian School Council of NSW. She recalls the tireless hard work in liaising with the other community organisations ,with parents and approaching many primary schools to ascertain whether they were interested in conducting Macedonian classes at their school either as part of main stream studies or as a separate Ethnic Saturday School. She performed a lot of administrative work for the Macedonian School Council due to fluency in English and her position as migrant liaison officer with the Federal Immigration Department.

It is important to note that the first Macedonian School Council could not exist without the hard work of its founding members, who all contributed in different ways, according to their capacities. Later presidents such as Tode Kabrovski recall that the Council had no resources to provide education materials and Tode frequently used his employment with Telstra to type, photocopy and print teaching materials for his students, as typing , copying and printing were expensive at that time .Other committee members and teachers all made their own contributions in different ways.

The first president of the Macedonian School Council was accredited Macedonian interpreter Pero Kikirekov(deceased) for one year . Thereafter, teacher Gorgi Gorgiev held the position for one year and in 1980 Tode Kabrovski became president. The short term early presidentships were due to personality clashes and differences as to the direction to be taken by the Macedonian School Council.

It is important to stress that the Macedonian School Council of NSW was at the outset a nonpolitical , non denominational , non profit organisation. A constitution was drafted that set out the rules and regulations governing the conduct of the school council. Members of the founding council included Dr Vasil Tulevski, Tode Kabrovski, Pando Kondovski, Pero Kikirekov, Ilija Veljanovski Chorba ,Ivan Trposki,Dusan Ristevski , Kiro Pasovski and Lubica Seljanovski. That is , the Council was comprised of both working and non working Macedonian language teachers, but also lay members of the Macedonian community and any other individuals that expressed interest in joining the Council. The result was a School Council that represented a broad cross section of the community and various different interests.

Monthly meetings were initially held on premises at the Seven Way Rockdale for a short period of time and then at St Petka Church Rockdale .The Council then for many years conducted meetings at the premises of St George Migrant Services(now Diversity Inc.) on Princes Highway Rockdale .A nominal annual rental fee was paid for the monthly use of the premises to conduct meetings and for other cultural and literary purposes.

List of Presidents

1978-1979 Pero Kikirekov

1979-1980 Gorgi Gorgiev

1981-2010 Tode Kabrovski

2010-2012 Zora Janeva

2012 to present Jaklina Mihailova

List of Past and Present teachers at all levels

Tode Kabrovski
Pero Kikirekov
Pando Kondovski
Mrs Isailovska
Ratko Ivanovski
Zora Belokozovska
Trajanka Damcevska
Tatjana Nikolic
Nikolce
Pero Kikirekov
Gorgi Gorgiev
Dr Ilija Casule
Irena Casule
Aleksandra Gorgievska
Natasha Kocavska
Maria Kocavska
Suzana Stojanovska

Branko Naumovski
Jaklina Mihailova
Bobby Blagojce Josifovski
Zoran Markovski
Slavica Ristevska
Zora Janeva
Cveta Chumkovska
Menka
Silvana Trajkovski
Levko
Roza Petrovska
Vera Bosevska
Ljubica Seljanovski
Zora Belokozovska
Pero Vrtovski
Biljana Bozinovska
Dragan Bozinovska
Jadranka
Apologies for any omissions.

The School Council under the governance of Tode Kabrovski

Tode Kabrovski was born in the village of Orevo, Bitola Macedonia and completed his teacher qualifications in Macedonia. Upon his arrival in Australia on 9th May 1969, he joined his parents and sister and commenced employment as a technician with Telecom, where he remained until his retirement.

After the establishment of the Macedonian School Council, it was evident that the committee had no materials or resources with which to teach the Macedonian language. Thus it was necessary to liaise with the Yugoslav Ministry for Overseas Matica to assist with the provision of learning materials such as books and teachers to assist with the preparation of syllabuses at varying levels. The Matica sent Dr Gorgi Stalev from Macedonia and Dr Shumovska. Dr Stalev was responsible for devising readers for Macedonian language students from grades one to six as well as devising the HSC curriculum for the study of Macedonian as a community language. Dr Stalev had the assistance of Apostol Apostolovski, Branko Naumovski and Roza Petkovska to assist him with the preparation of the relevant materials under grants from the NSW education department. Later Dr Liljana Mitkovska also arrived from Macedonia to assist with the preparation of Macedonian resource materials. This involved endless photocopying and the use of video records and the golf ball machine. There were no computers or the internet at that time. Most materials were prepared manually and this is a credit to the determination and tenacity of not only Tode but all the other teachers involved who achieved so much with very little resources at hand!

Tode taught initially at Newtown Ethnic School. Later he taught at Canley Vale Macedonian school for four years and a short period at Richmond. Perhaps his greatest achievement was teaching Macedonian for eight years to HSC students at Kogarah High School with Dr Ilija Casule of Macquarie University, Dr Gorgi Stalev, Branko Naumovski and Vera Bosevski. In later years, he was solely responsible for the smooth running of the Macedonian School Council.

In 1978 Tode commenced his tireless work as an unpaid volunteer president of the Macedonian school council. All members of the school council are volunteers hours spent attending meetings, liaising with parents, students . In a sense Tode was not only the founding father of the school council but embodied it in its very existence. He worked tirelessly to promote the Macedonian language and its history at every possible opportunity. Through his hard work and personality, Tode gained the trust of many parents and the wider community in expressing the need for their children to learn their mother language: Macedonian.

This enabled him to open Macedonian Saturday Ethnic schools initially at Rockdale public school, "Kiril and Metodi" Arncliffe, Athelstane, Bexley "Goce Delcev" and Yagoona "11 Oktomvri". Subsequently ethnic schools were opened to meet increased demand at Canley Vale "St Kiril and Metodi", Bonnyrigg "Nikola Karev", Minto "Aleksandar Makedonski" and Alfreds Point "Koco Racin". Later ethnic schools were established at Wollongong, Cringila, Broadmeadow, Quenbeyan to meet the growing Macedonian population.. These Saturday morning or afternoon schools were established in areas where demand existed from local parents. They took children from five to twelve years of age. A syllabus was prepared with appropriate work books and other materials. Parents paid nominal school fees that were determined by the parents' committee at each school and teachers were paid from the childrens' fees and the nominal grant received from the NSW Education Department. The parent committee at each Saturday School determined the fees to be paid to each individual teacher. In addition, each ethnic school annually obtained a nominal grant from the NSW education after meeting its criteria based on student numbers and financial need. Over the years, the size of the grant has varied. Where appropriate, teachers were employed with qualifications, both local and obtained overseas, as recognised by the NSW Education department

Over time, the success of each Saturday school varied as local demand changed. This resulted in a number of schools closing at Bexley and Arncliffe and new schools were later opened at Bonnyrigg and Menai.

Since its inception, although no data has been kept by the School Council, it is estimated that thousands of children have attended these classes at local primary schools and weekend ethnic schools held in a local primary school.

The Macedonian School Council also lobbied the NSW education department for the study of Macedonian as a second language and part of multi cultural government policy, in regular primary schools. In 1978 Macedonian classes commenced at Rockdale Public school with Roza Petrovska continuously teaching the subject. The appointment of Vera Bosevska as principal at Rockdale Public School also held to promote and continue the study of the Macedonian language at Rockdale Public School during the regular school curriculum and as a Saturday community language ethnic school. Similar classes were commenced at Arncliffe, Yagoona, Quenbeyan and Cringila with moderate success, depending on student numbers. The most successful school in terms of numbers is that at Carlton Public school, conducted by Jaklina Mihailova since 1992. Each school has a curriculum that is established by the NSW department of education and its respective teacher must satisfy the departments'

requirements and establish and use source appropriate teaching materials to an acceptable standard. Each of these schools studies the Macedonian language, culture, history and religious days as they fall due.

Following growing pressure from the parents and the wider community, it was decided to seek the study of the Macedonian language as a community language for the NSW Higher School Certificate. In 1978 it was part of state and federal government policy to encourage the study of community languages as part of a wider multicultural policy that had started under Labour leader Gough Whitlams' leadership in 1972. Tode liaised with local officials to find suitable high school premises. It was decided to commence the study of Macedonian at Kogarah High School from years seven to twelve. The school opened in 1978 and some three hundred and seventy students enrolled at all levels. Early teachers included Tode Kabrovski, Dr Ilija Casule, Irena Casule, and Vera Bosevski. Where practicable it was deemed appropriate to employ teachers that had qualifications recognised by the NSW Department of Education.

Following the establishment of the Kogarah High school, Macedonian language courses for the HSC were also commenced at Bankstown Girls High, Liverpool Girls High, Smiths Hill High Wollongong and Merewether High School Newcastle. Records are unavailable as to the precise date of commencement of operation of each school. Numbers of students at these schools has been consistently lower than at Kogarah High School. However, the greatest surprise has been the steady increase in students enrolled at Bankstown Girls for unknown reasons. Early teachers at Bankstown included Zoran Markovski, Jadranka and Biljana Bozinovska. Cveta Chumkovska has consistently taught at Smiths Hill High since the inception of the course and yearly some three to five students sit for the Higher School Certificate.

Students enrolled to study Macedonian at secondary school paid no fees as the education was deemed to be part of the responsibility of the NSW Education department. Macedonian teachers at high school level are paid by the NSW Education department and each school has a co-ordinator. Angela Lyris has been the co-ordinator at Kogarah High for many years. Biljana Bozinovska has also performed this role at Bankstown Girls High over ten years. At Kogarah High School, the year twelve HSC Macedonian candidates participate in a graduation ceremony held in November to commemorate their achievement.

Tode liaised with the wider Macedonian community to promote the study of Macedonian at Macquarie University. The course commenced in 1982 under the direction of Dr Ilija Casule. A Macedonian Studies Foundation was established to promote and fundraise for the course. Tode and the Macedonian School Council of NSW liaised in the early years with the Macedonian Studies Foundation but in later years the relationship deteriorated for unknown reasons. With sadness, the course at Macquarie University was discontinued in 2012 due to lack of financial support from the wider Macedonian community, despite high student numbers.

From time to time, Macedonian language classes for adults were arranged that were part of a mixed marriage or simply for those that grew up in Australia with a poor command of the

Macedonian language. Classes were initially held at St Petka Church Rockdale and early teachers who taught on a voluntary basis included Lubica Seljanovski. The success of these classes was limited due the participants' extra curricular and family obligations.

The promotion of the Macedonian language by the school council was many faceted and intense. Tode regularly gave interviews on local stations, wrote newspaper articles and attended many community events. More importantly, he liaised with local groups such as St Petka Church Rockdale and the Ilinden Soccer Club for moral and financial support. He was an active member of these associations for many years both in a personal and professional capacity.

Tode widened community awareness as to the work done by the school Council by organising social events. This included the celebration of International Womans' Day 8th March with a dinner held at such venues such as Chuck Wagon, Rockdale, Dresden lounge Rockdale and at other venues. Also, St Kiril and Metodi day on 25th May was celebrated in honour of the founders of the Macedonian alphabet, by holding concerts for all attendees at Macedonian Primary schools in NSW at various venues in the Rockdale area. In addition, Tode arranged social events at the need arose.

Also, Tode and the Macedonian School Council were involved in promoting the study of the Macedonian language by establishing days of Macedonian culture in 1986, 1988 and 1990. This involved hosting prominent Macedonian writers and historians to give talks in Australia on the Macedonian language. The most prominent guest was the historian Dr Blaze Ristevski. This cultural event was also sponsored by the then Yugoslav government and the Matica for Macedonian settlers "Iselenici" abroad.

Tode's achievements included the organisation of an annual Macedonian primary schools' concert held in December of each year at various venues within the Rockdale electorate. Following the singing of songs and recital of poems, students would be awarded a participation certificate and a nominal Christmas present such as a Christmas stocking. In some years, Santa Claus has arrived to entertain the children.

Perhaps the main event for high school graduates in Macedonian was the Macedonian School Council organising a graduation dinner for HSC candidates in the Macedonian language, held at various venues. Proud parents, friends and teachers attended this happy event. Students wore a graduation gown and received a graduation certificate. Official guests included those from the Macedonian Embassy, NSW Education Department and the NSW Ethnic Schools Council.

Tode had the foresight and vision to realise that for the study of Macedonian to continue in the future, he required the support of the NSW Education Department and the NSW Ethnic Schools Committee. To that effect, he regularly liaised with the department and arranged for many of the Macedonian teachers to attend paid training days where they learned new trends and methods. Tode also liaised with the NSW Ethnic Schools Federation by becoming a paid member and regularly attending meetings to exchange valuable information and to also provide and receive moral support from the long serving president Albert Vella.

Also, it was important to Tode to foster close relationships with other ethnic groups in NSW to ensure adequate and fair representation for the Macedonian community and to also promote the Macedonian language and its study. This was achieved by being a long standing paid member of the NSW Ethnic Communities Council and the NSW Federation of Community Language Schools.

More importantly, Tode and the Macedonian School Council were distinctly aware that closer ties with Australian organisations would ensure acceptance of the Macedonian community and its language in NSW in a multicultural NSW. To that end, Tode arranged for many of his primary school students to participate in ethnic school concerts organisation by the NSW Ethnic Teachers Federation in local halls and at Martin Place in the Sydney CBD and displays during NSW Education Week in local schools where ethnic languages such as Macedonian were taught. These activities combined saw the continued promotion of the Macedonian language in the NSW school curriculum.

Tode had the foresight to realise that the Macedonian language was changing and growing as all languages grow. He realised the importance of liaising with the Matica for Iselenici (Director for Macedonians abroad) in both Yugoslavia and its successor Macedonia, to ensure that the language taught in NSW schools was of an acceptable standard for Macedonia. This involved regular teacher exchanges with teachers from Ohrid and Skopje teaching at Kogarah High and Rockdale Public School. Visiting teachers from Macedonia included Pavlina Chingova and Lubenka from Ohrid. Many teachers from the Macedonian ethnic schools in Sydney were also offered the opportunity to attend exchange programmes in Macedonia at the summer Macedonian language school held every July in Ohrid. These exchange programmes offered the participating teachers the opportunity to exchange new methods and ideas.

The Macedonian School Council had limited financial resources and relied on fundraising from social events and donations from local business people and St Petka Church to fund its activities. Its limited annual budget of less than \$3000 was supplemented by the tireless work of its members to miraculously achieve their goals.

In 2010 Tode Kabrovski had retired from his full time employment to devote time to his family life with his wife and two daughters. To this end, he retired as president of the Macedonian School Council to allow Zora Janeva, a younger teacher, to take over the presidency. Tode will be fondly remembered for his tireless work to promote the study of the Macedonian language at all levels. For his concern for the well being of his students. Most importantly for his love of his second home Australia and trying to accommodate the needs of his students to their new life in Australia. All of this is blended with Macedonian pride that this wonderful country can offer each child the opportunity to feel proud to learn their mother language. Tode was a much loved high profile character that will be a very hard act to follow.

The school council embraced the concept that learning a mother language such as Macedonian, encourages the students' mental well being, with increased self esteem, the ability to understand other cultures and relate to other children. Most importantly, learning

a language such as Macedonian improved the students' academic performance. The product was a young Macedonian Australian that would embrace all the values of both cultures and become a good Australian citizen. Tode embraced all of this and many Macedonian language students' have continued further tertiary studies at varying levels. His successors continued to promote this concept of study and general well being.

Leadership under Zora Janeva

Zora was born in Veles Macedonia, where she worked as a french and geography teacher. She arrived with her family in about 1996.

She presently works as a librarian for Charles Sturt University, Sydney campus.

Under her governance of the School Council as president, Zora has continued the work of her predecessor, Tode Kabrovski.

Her retiring, reserved nature meant that she was not as visible as Tode in the wider community. Nevertheless, she worked hard and had a long standing passion for the School Council and its values. Her love of the students was reflected in her teaching Macedonian at Rockdale Saturday afternoon school for many years concurrently with teaching Macedonian to HSC students at Kogarah on the same Saturday morning. Presently, she remains solely a Macedonian teacher of grades eleven and twelve at Kogarah High.

Zora stood down from the presidency in 2012 citing family reasons. She remains a member of the Macedonian School Council and continues to support it in its various activities.

Leadership under Jaklina Mihailova

Jaklina Mihailova was born in Skopje and finished her education there, qualifying as a teacher. Her deceased father was also a high school principal.

She married Gorgi Mihailov, a professional engineer from Bitola and immigrated to Australia in 1990. She arranged for the recognition of her overseas qualifications and initially worked as a casual teacher and also taught HSC Macedonian students at Kogarah High School. In 1992 she commenced employment as a full time teacher at Carlton public school, teaching the large Macedonian students the Macedonian language as a second language from kindergarten to year six. She continued the work of Alex Bozinovski who in the early 1980's established a Saturday Macedonian Ethnic School where he taught children of varying levels. Alex's retirement in 1990 due to other work and family commitments paved the way for the Carlton primary school principal to be aware that there was a growing demand from local Macedonian parents for their children to continue to learn Macedonian at that school. This need was met with the employment of Jaklina Mihailova on a full time basis.

Jaklina has continuously taught at Carlton primary school since 1990. Her program includes the study of the language, its history, culture and religious observances. For example, on 1st March, the first official day of spring in Macedonia, the children make "martinici" red and white hand braided or woven bracelets on a tree for good luck. Alternatively, the children make red and white paper or material badges to wear to school on that day. The children also celebrate the Orthodox Easter by having a religious class on the meaning of the Macedonian Orthodox Easter and follow this by partaking of traditional Macedonian food served at Easter such as kolaci biscuits or had boiled red Easter eggs.

In addition, Jaklina has endeavoured to arrange the teaching of Macedonian scripture classes for her children and the success of this program is determined by the availability of suitable qualified Macedonian orthodox scripture teachers.

Her teaching at Carlton Primary school has expanded the teaching of the Macedonian language , with large numbers of students coming to the school from other catchment areas, as their parents have heard about Jaklinas' enthusiasm and ever expanding program. Such has been the success of her appointment, that Macedonian student number have progressively increased with over one hundred and sixty students in her classes out of a total school enrolment of about five hundred students.

Macedonian continues to be taught at Rockdale primary school by Roza Petrovska. However, due to changing local demographics , course numbers have dropped to between fifty to sixty students ,with Roza only teaching three days per week. Contrast this with the position in early 1978 when the school was established and there were some two hundred and fifty Macedonian students taught by Roza five days per week.

Macedonian continues to be taught at Yagoona Primary School , Cringila and Shellharbour Primary School. Precise details on teachers and student numbers are not available as the teachers in question are not members of the Macedonian School Council and have not provided any appropriate details.

Attempts were made to establish Macedonian language classes in local primary schools in Newcastle and Quenbeyan with limited success, due to the lack of interest from local Macedonian parents and their children.

Jaklina was elected as president in 2012. Her current committee includes secretary Blagojce Bobby Josifovski, treasurer Silvana Trajkovski , vice president Slavica Ristevska and Vesna Trajkovska as public officer. Lay members include Father Naum Despotoski formerly of St Petka Church Rockdale. Presently there are few lay members of the community on the school council, and the direction appears to be the consensus that the council should be comprised of active working teachers . Membership for teachers is voluntarily and it has been frequently difficult to force teachers to become members of the Council. Compare this with past councils under the governance of Tode Kabrovski where the school council was comprise of a mix of teachers , parents and interested lay people.

With her appointment as Macedonian School Council President in 2011 Jaklina has continued the foundation work laid by Tode Kabrovski and has also had the vision to expand upon his work. She has fostered close ties with the current Macedonian ambassador , a fluent English speaker, to have a global initiative to learn a language learn Macedonian during March 2017. This involved newspaper advertisements to learn the language , announcements on local and ethnic radios promoting the language and by visiting local community organisations

Jaklina has also fostered close ties with the NSW Education department and NSW Ethnic Schools Federation , to ensure the Macedonian teachers exchange of ideas via attending seminars and teacher training courses. Many of the Macedonian students have participated during education week programs on ethnic language teaching by reciting poems in the Macedonian language at Rockdale and Carlton Public Schools. Other students have also participated in recitals for students during Harmony Day on 23rd March each year at their local school . Local Macedonian students from Rockdale Public School and its Saturday

ethnic School counterpart have frequently participated in the singing of songs and recitals in Rockdale Mall for special events such as Anzac Day, Orthodox Easter, 2nd August Ilinden and Macedonian National day on 18th October. Also, many Macedonian language school students have participated in multicultural concerts organised by the Ethnic Teachers Federation as part of multicultural education week.

Acutely aware of the need to improve the teaching skills of her teachers, Jaklina arranges free annual seminars for Macedonian teachers and local Macedonian school presidents. The seminar was held this year on Sunday 26th March 2017.

Macedonian is taught as part of the HSC curriculum at Kogarah High, Smiths Hill Wollongong and Bankstown Girls. In 2016 there were twenty five candidates from these three schools. Numbers appear to be steadily declining from past figures where there were about three hundred candidates in the early 1980s. Falling numbers appear to be part of a national trend in declining interest in the study of ethnic languages.

Current teachers at Kogarah High include year twelve Slavica Ristevska and Zora Janeva. Grade seven to eight are taught by Suzana and grades nine and ten by Zoran Markovski. From grade seven student numbers progressively decline for a variety of reasons. This pattern continues also at Bankstown Girls and Smiths High Girls. Teachers at Bankstown include Levko, Jadranka and Blajojce Josifovski. Cveta Cumkovska has continuously taught at Smiths Hill High since the inception of the programme there in 1998.

Under Jaklina's presidency, her hard work and enthusiasm has been reflected in the opening of new ethnic schools at Peakhurst West, Manly, Menai and Bonnyrigg, in order to meet growing demand. Classes at these schools are all held on a Saturday morning, except for Peakhurst West, where classes are held on a Monday afternoon.

At Bonnyrigg, "Nikola Karev" Macedonian ethnic classes are held in the grounds of Bonnyrigg Primary school on Saturday morning classes held by Diana and Meri. Numbers float between thirty and forty five students. The general trend is for an increase in student numbers that reflects the growing demographic presence of ethnic Macedonians in this Sydney outer western suburb.

Classes at Many Public School were previously taught by Katerina Cipuseva but are now taught by Violeta. She has some fifteen students. The growth of the school and its continued existence is largely due to the support of active parents including Gordana Klisurova. The school is known as "Braka Miladinovci".

At Peakhurst West ethnic classes are held on Monday afternoon by teachers Alexandra, Natasha and Lidija, all professionally qualified teachers in Macedonia and attending further course in NSW to upgrade and obtain recognition of their qualifications. Presently there are between fifty and fifty five students, due to the large population in this catchment area.

At Rockdale Public School ethnic school "Kliment Ohridski" classes are held on Saturday afternoon by Silvana Trajkovska and Vesna Trajkovska. There are about thirty students at present, with numbers falling due to the changing demographics of the area and that some

parents prefer their children to attend Macedonian classes conducted by Roza Petrovska during regular school hours.

Afternoon classes are held at Yagoona Primary ethnic school "11th Oktomvri" by Bonnyrigg teachers Diana and Meri. There are some forty students at present and it is one of the oldest Macedonian ethnic schools continuously in operation in NSW. Rockdale ethnic school is the oldest.

On the South coast, Macedonian Ethnic schools are held in primary schools at Cringila, Shellharbour, Barrack Heights, and Wollongong. The Wollongong ethnic school is known as "Dame Gruev". Precise details as to student numbers and teachers are not known as the respective teachers have been invited to become members of the Macedonian School Council but to date have expressed no interest in joining. This makes it difficult for the Council to plan and act on behalf of the Macedonian schools that are not members.

Jaklina has continued to encourage the study of the Macedonian language as a community language in the high school syllabus. At present classes are conducted at Kogarah High from years seven to twelve with teachers being Suzana, Zoran Markovski, Zora Janeva and Slavica Ristevska. In any given year, the largest number of HSC candidates is usually from Kogarah High and is consistently between twenty to thirty students annually.

HSC classes are also held on the premises of Bankstown Girls from years seven to twelve. Present teachers include Bobby Blagojce Josifovski, Danica Markovska, Darko and Jadranka. Numbers are growing every year with some fifteen HSC candidates in 2016 from Bankstown High.

At Smiths Hill Girls High Macedonian classes from years seven to twelve are held by teachers Trajanka and Cveta Chumkovska. Cveta usually teaches the year twelve students, of whom there were three last year. Numbers are consistently low at this centre due to the low interest from both parents and their children.

In past years, the study of the Macedonian language as a community language for the HSC has been available to candidates from local Public Schools as well as private schools such as Marist Bros, Trinity Grammar Summer Hill, Newington College Stanmore, SCEGGS Darlinghurst and International Grammar School (IGS) at Ultimo. The study of Macedonian as a community language for private school students reflects the innovation and progressive nature of both the NSW education system and the Macedonian School Council. The writers two daughters were Macedonian HSC candidates in years 2010 and 2012 at Kogarah High.

To promote the study of the language and to give each HSC Macedonian candidate recognition for their work, a graduation ball dinner is held for parents, friends and graduating students in October every year at different venues. The graduating students attend gratis and are provided with an academic graduation gown and awarded a certificate of completion. Each graduate is enlisted in the lottery to win a free return ticket to Macedonia, funded by the Macedonian School from donations and fundraising. Last years' winner was an orphan previously caring for two terminally parents. The award of a return ticket to Macedonia was an innovative idea of Jaklina's to give students some form of

incentive to study the language and it seems to have had a positive effect on student numbers and their morale. At this dinner, the Yugoslav Ambassador as well as official guests from the NSW Ethnic Schools Federation and a representative of the Macedonian School Council of Victoria are in attendance.

The 2016 graduation dinner was held at Emporium Lounge Bankstown. Guests included the Macedonian ambassador Vele Trpevski and Albert Vella, president of the ethnic schools' federation of NSW. Parents and friends attended this happy event. Twenty students were graduating in Macedonian for the HSC. From Bankstown candidates were: Joshua Bogdanovski, Victoria Ivanovska, Stefaniya Joseska, Kristina Jovcevska, Stefan Jurukovski, Aleksandra Kiseloska, and Nikola Nicoski.

From Kogarah High candidates were: Simona Bojcevska, Emilija Gosarevska, Filip Gorgioski, Mikaela Kumanovska, Anactazija Nedelkovska, Angelika Mitrova, Gabriela Stavreska, Kristina Trpcevska, Keti Naumovska, Natasha Stefanova, Petar Pavlovski, Kristofer Todoroski, Glorija Veleska, Aleksandar Petkovski and Jane Zvezdakovski.

From Smiths Hill candidates were: Talija Popcevska, Angela Stojcevska and Nikol Jovanovska.

The winner of the lottery trip return ticket to Macedonia was Kristofer Todoroski.

The study of Macedonian has enabled the HSC candidates to obtain a higher entry level that will enable them to pursue further studies at university.

To promote the study of the language, the School Council has in some years held a dinner to honour the saints Kiril and Metodi as the founders of the Macedonian language. In recent years this has been celebrated by the conduct of a ceremony at St Kiril and Metodi Rosebery with recitals by students and the award of participation certificates to the selected students.

Other activities of the Council to promote the study of the Macedonian language include conducting a recital competition open to all students of the Macedonian language in NSW. This competition is held on the first Saturday of August on the premises of Carlton Public School. After judging, prizes are awarded for first, second and third place winners.

The final activity for the year is the annual end of year Christmas concert held at different venues in the Rockdale area. All Macedonian ethnic schools are invited to attend and participating students recite Macedonian poetry and songs. Participation certificates are handed out to students, and in some years Father Christmas has also handed out Christmas presents to the participating students.

Jaklina has attempted to expand the study of the Macedonian language at all levels in Newcastle and Quenbeyan, with varying success due to lack of interest from local parents and their children. In past years HSC Macedonian lessons were conducted at Merewether Girls High by Joshua Sherman and have ceased with his relocation to Sydney. Jaklina will offer the Macedonian language classes if there is adequate local demand.

Finally following demand from adult Macedonians keen to learn the Macedonian language, adult Macedonian classes commenced in 2015 at St Petka church Rockdale. These lessons were taught by Jaklina and Blagojce Josifovski for some months and were discontinued due

to meddling and interference of Father Mitko Mitrev. At present there are no Macedonian classes for adults but it is planned to recommence these classes when an adequate number of adult students express interest in attending classes.

The School Council formally met on the first Monday of the month at the premises of Advanced Diversity Inc.(former St George Migrant Resource Centre) on Princes Highway Rockdale. Since 2014 meetings have been conducted on the premises of St Petka church Rockdale. All interested parties are welcome to attend.

Fundraising activities are limited to donations and the proceeds from the sale of hot food outside Bunnings Rockdale. Consequently , the Council's budget is minimal, with some three thousand dollars raised annually. There is no real financial support from parents, the Macedonian government or the wider community to encourage the study of the Macedonian language. Wider financial support would enable the award of monetary scholarships to Macedonian graduates that enrol in university studies. This would act as a stimulus for the study of the Macedonian language and has been successfully undertaken by St Spiridons' Greek College at Kingsford and some of the Armenian and Coptic high schools in Sydney..

Jaklina's legacy will be to continue the foundation work tirelessly established by Tode Kabrovski. The Macedonian School Council and its operation is now a role model as to how other languages such as Serbian, Greek and Croatian conduct their ethnic language education programmes. The very fact that thousands of students have studied Macedonian at various venues and levels in the past thirty nine years suggests that the current model is successful ,viable and operational. Most importantly, it has the support of the wider Macedonian community and many parents.

Jaklina's legacy is one of hard work and co operation with all sectors of the community to ensure that the study of the Macedonian language continues to thrive. Her successor will have a very hard act to follow.

Bobby Blagojce Josifovski

Bobby is a thirty year old public servant that holds teaching and legal qualifications from Sydney University and University of New South Wales.. He was born in Kicevo Macedonia.

In 2012 Bobby commenced teaching years seven and eight Macedonian at Bankstown High and in 2015 he taught adult Macedonian classes at St Petka church Rockdale for a period of time. He continues his teaching position at Bankstown High.

In 2012 he was appointed as secretary of the Macedonian School Council and in 2016 was elected as secretary of the NSW Federation of Community languages of NSW. This organisation represents the interests of the twenty five thousand students of community languages in NSW. It is evident that Bobby has displayed a flair for administration and organisation to not only promote and lobby for the interests of the Macedonian School Council but also the wider interests of all community language groups in NSW.

The role of secretary is to ensure the smooth operation and administration of the Macedonian School Council. It is an extremely difficult role to fulfil having to liaise with parents, the wider community and various government bodies. It requires high administrative skills coupled with the diplomacy of a diplomat. The writer experienced this when she was secretary in 2012. Bobby's ability to fulfil this role for over five arduous years is testimony to his character and unique abilities.

Bobby not only teaches Macedonian language but is also required to attend to attend meetings and liaise with NSW government to promote the interests of the Macedonian School Council and the wider Federation. He attended on 20th May 2017 a dinner at Rose Hill where premier Gladys Berjiklian, herself was guest and as a former student of Armenian, she promised to continue the study of Macedonian as a community language. Also, she announced that ten million nine hundred thousand dollars would be available over the next four years for the study of Macedonian and other community languages. This is a

great achievement for community languages and is possibly the first time that a NSW premier has so openly and actively encouraged the study of community languages.

With regards to the Macedonian School Council, Bobby decided that the council would save seven hundred dollars in annual rent by moving the venue for all meetings to St Petka Church Rockdale. The church has kindly allowed the use of church premises rent free to not only conduct the monthly Monday night meetings, but to also conduct adult classes and the annual Christmas concert in December. This demonstrates his fiscal abilities to ensure the School Council utilises its limited financial resources to the maximum and also shows that education has returned to be a part of St Petka Church once again..

Bobby also devises the annual program for the council which include the following:

1. Macedonian teachers professional development program held in March
2. Bunnings Rockdale sausage sizzle , where all teachers work on a roster .This recent event raised one thousand dollars to be utilised to pay for the winning graduation airplane ticket to Macedonia.
3. Sale of chocolates by students to assist with payment of plane ticket graduation prize. This was undertaken for many years and was discontinued recently due to its unpopularity amongst participating students.
4. Each Macedonian Ethnic School is to pay the Macedonian School Council the sum of \$500 which is used for education materials and resources that are shared by all the Macedonian ethnic Schools.
5. Attendance at Rosehill Gardens in May of NSW premiers' harmony dinner that is part of Harmony week promoting multi culturalism in NSW.
6. Kiril and Metodi recital /presentation held on Sunday 28th May at Kiril and Metodi church Rosebery to celebrate the patron saints of the Macedonian alphabet, Kiril and Metodi. Participating students recite poems and the like in Macedonian and achievement awards are then presented to the students.
7. Attendance at annual NSW Community languages federation dinner held at either Cyprian club or Croatian Club Punchbowl
8. Graduation dinner for HSC Macedonian candidates. The only other community language group to hold such a graduation dinner is the Polish community
9. Annual December Christmas concert for all Macedonian ethnic schools in NSW. This is held for free on the premises of St Petka Church Rockdale.
10. Preparation of forty year birthday celebration of Macedonian School Council in 2018. A formal dinner is planned together with the publication of a book commemorating the history of the Council.

The use of St Petka's premises by the Macedonian School Council indicates that once again, after many years, education has returned to St Petka.

Since his assumption of office, the largest school to conduct Macedonian HSC classes is at Bankstown High, where there are between twenty five to thirty students studying Macedonian. This is due in part to the hard work of teachers at Bonnyrigg and Yagoona ethnic school to encourage the study of Macedonian.

Generally, numbers of students studying Macedonian are growing at all levels and this is largely due to the young, mostly female teachers who use new methodology and display a keen work ethic. The aim of these young teachers, like the Macedonian school Council is to instill the ethos that the study of a community language such as Macedonian not only strengthens the child's Macedonian identity but ensures that he or she also equally has a strong Australian identity that will make them good Australian citizens.

The aim of the School council is to streamline and provide professional delivery of education services. To this end, each Macedonian teacher is allocated to devise a lesson and this is shared by all the teachers at the various schools. This exchange of resources ensures continuity and that all Macedonian language students are taught the same. Textbooks and other learning materials are also exchanged with the other teachers.

New Macedonian ethnic schools were established this year. The main school was at Coniston, Wollongong where teacher Dragica Miteva teaches some thirty students on Monday afternoons. It has been difficult to open other schools in Wollongong and Newcastle due to the lack of interest from parents. NSW Education department requires between twenty five to thirty students before an ethnic school can be opened.

The largest and most successful Macedonian ethnic school in NSW is Phillip 11 conducted on the premises of Peakhurst Primary School on Monday afternoon. This school opened in 2014 and presently has between fifty and fifty five students that are taught by the eager and hardworking Aleksandra Gorgievska, Natasha Kocavska and Suzana Stojanovska. They are largely responsible for the success of this new school.

Conclusion

For nearly forty years the Macedonian School Council has professionally delivered Macedonian language classes at all levels of primary and secondary education to a variety of students with limited financial and other resources, whilst at the same time satisfying the curriculum requirements of the NSW Education Department. This is no mean feat and is a credit to the hard work of the teachers and the members of the School Council.

One cannot underestimate that many individuals, community groups, and governments both local and overseas have all equally contributed to the long standing success of the Macedonian School Council. The longevity of the work of the Council is largely due to the solid foundations established by its founders, primarily Tode Kabrovski. Without Pero Kikirekov, Gorgi and Tode in the early years, there would have been no Macedonian School Council. Credit must also be given to the tireless hard work and enthusiasm of the many members of successive NSW Macedonian School Councils that supported and put in action the ideals of the School Council. Equally, parents and the members of the wider Macedonian community played key roles by providing moral support and encouragement.. One must also acknowledge the ongoing support of successive NSW governments of various political persuasions in acknowledging the importance of studying a community language such as Macedonian. Finally, it cannot be forgotten that without the support of the Yugoslav government in the early years to provide material resources and intellectual property, the Macedonian School Council would not have survived and flourished in its present entirety.

Thus, the Macedonian School Council of NSW is on solid foundations to continue its work to teach Macedonian at all education levels into the twenty first century and beyond whilst there is a community demand to learn the Macedonian language.

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Interview with Bobby Blagojce Josifovski 29th May 2017 Sydney

Interview Lubica Seljanovski 10th November 2016 and 19th June 2017

Macedonian Telephone Directory 2017 24th edition published by Mactel(Aust) Pty Ltd PO Box 6598 Business Centre Baulkham Hills NSW 2153

SBS Macedonian Radio Interview Radica Bojkovska and Tode Kabrovski 17th May 2017 at 7.40pm

LIST OF PHOTOS

- 1.1977 Yugoslav Ethnic School Newtown Open Day(author on left)
- 2.Dr Ilija Casule 1987
- 3.1996 Macedonian Ethnic School students with Bishop Timotej Sydney.
- 4.1998 HSC candidates /Maturanti graduation dinner
- 5.Students from "Kiril and Metodi" Ethnic School Arncliffe. Date unknown
- 6.Macedonian School Council Sydney. Date unknown
- 7.2016 Promotion brochure /pamphlet from Macedonian School Council.
8. 2016 HSC graduates
- 9.Cristofer Todorovski winner return trip to Macedonia.

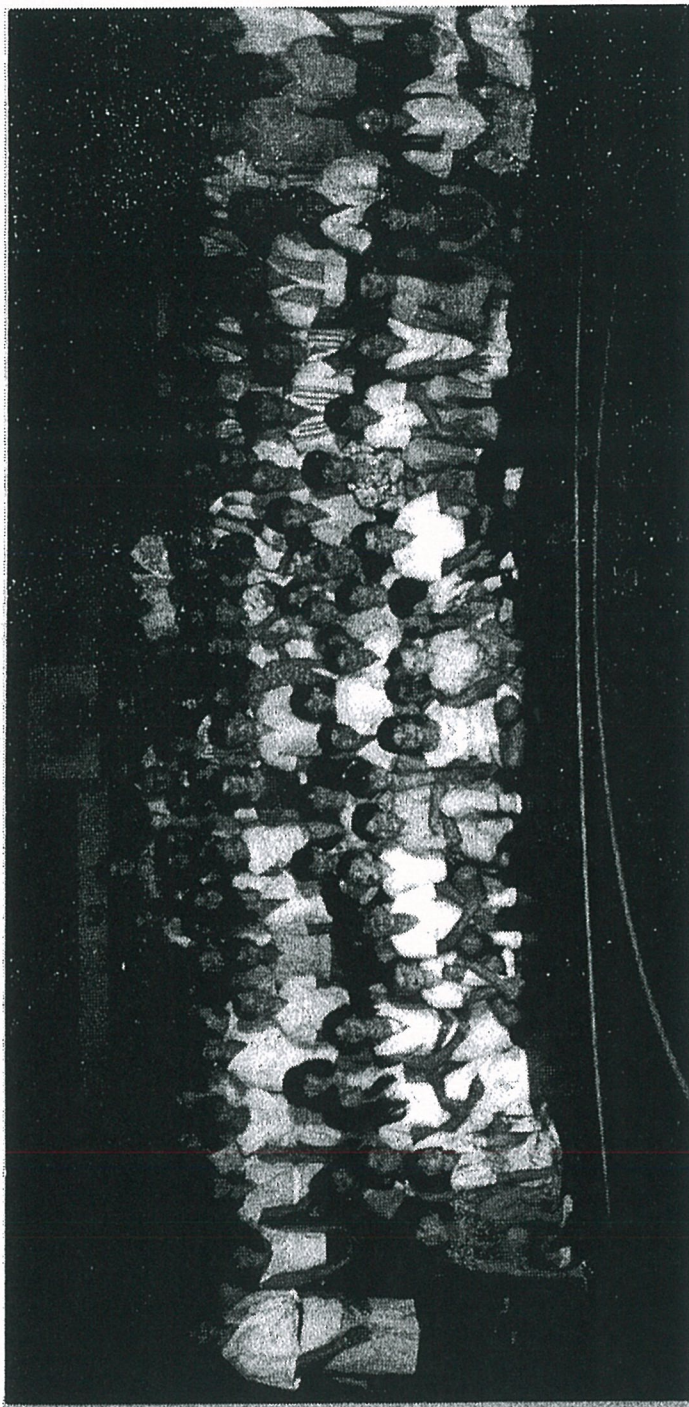


1977 Yugoslav Ethnic School New Town
Author on left.



Проф. Др. Илија Чашуле – шеф на катедрата за македонски јазик
на Македони Универзитетот говори на собирот одржан во МКОЦ
“Илинден”

Dr Ilija Časule
1987 2



Дел од учесниците на еден од традиционалните црковно народни
собири организирани од Австралиско-македонската Епархија на
МПЦ со Митрополитот Тимотеј

408

1996 Ethnic School Students
w Bishop Timotej 3.



Матуранти од 1998 год. заедно со претседателот на просветно училишниот одбор Тоде Кабровски и претседателот на Матица на иселениците од Македонија г. Горги Тхоновски

4.
1998 Graduation Dinner
for maturants / graduates



Дел од членовите на Македонскиот просветно учивлишен одбор

Macedonian School Council
6. year class



НАСТАВА ПО МАКЕДОНСКИ ЈАЗИК НА ОСНОВНО НИВО

ЗОШТО? Изучувањето на македонскиот јазик е важен за културниот идентитет на нашите деца. Истражувањата покажуваат дека учениците кои учат втор јазик се поинтелигентни.

ШТО? Во училиштата се учи македонски јазик, граматика, култура и традиција преку интересни, модерни и комуникативни активности.

КАДЕ? Во Македонските етнички училишта во населбите: Rockdale, Yagoona, Bonnyrigg, Peakhurst West, Manly, Wollongong, Shellharbour, Caringla, Newcastle и Queanbeyan.

КОГА? Во сабота (наутро или попладне) во сите училишта, освен во Peakhurst West, каде наставата се изведува во понеделник попладне.



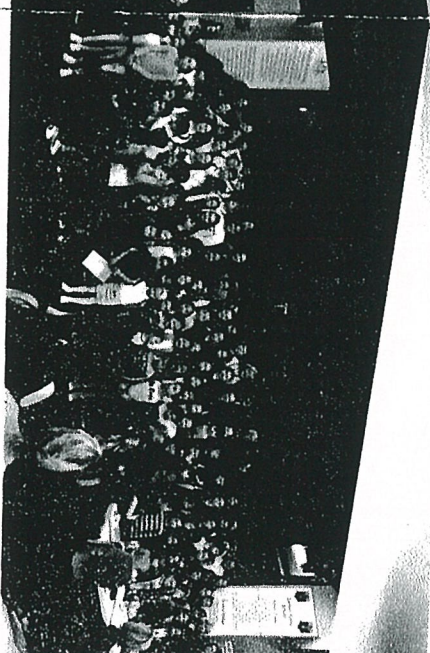
MACEDONIAN LANGUAGE CLASSES AT PRIMARY SCHOOL LEVEL

WHY? Learning Macedonian is important for our children's cultural identity. Studies show that second language study significantly improves a child's intellectual development.

WHAT? Children learn Macedonian language, grammar, culture and traditions through interesting and communicative activities.

WHERE? At the Macedonian ethnic schools in the following suburbs: Rockdale, Yagoona, Bonnyrigg, Peakhurst West, Manly, Wollongong, Shellharbour, Caringla, Newcastle and Queanbeyan.

WHEN? Every Saturday (morning or afternoon) in all schools except at Peakhurst West, where is on Mondays.



Win a trip to Macedonia!*

HOW?

Keep reading to find out!

Did you know that your child can continue studying Macedonian up to the HSC level can count towards a higher ATAR score

Classes that focus on speaking, writing grammar and culture are available on Saturdays during school terms at the following high school centres:

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- Bankstown Girls High (Bankstown)
- Smiths Hill High (Wollongong)
- Merewether High (Newcastle)

*To enter the draw, a minimum of FIVE years of Macedonian language study at high school level is required.

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BSB:	032057
Bank:	Westpac
Account Number:	601 946
Branch:	Rockdale

Please ensure your surname and initial(s) are
on your transaction description

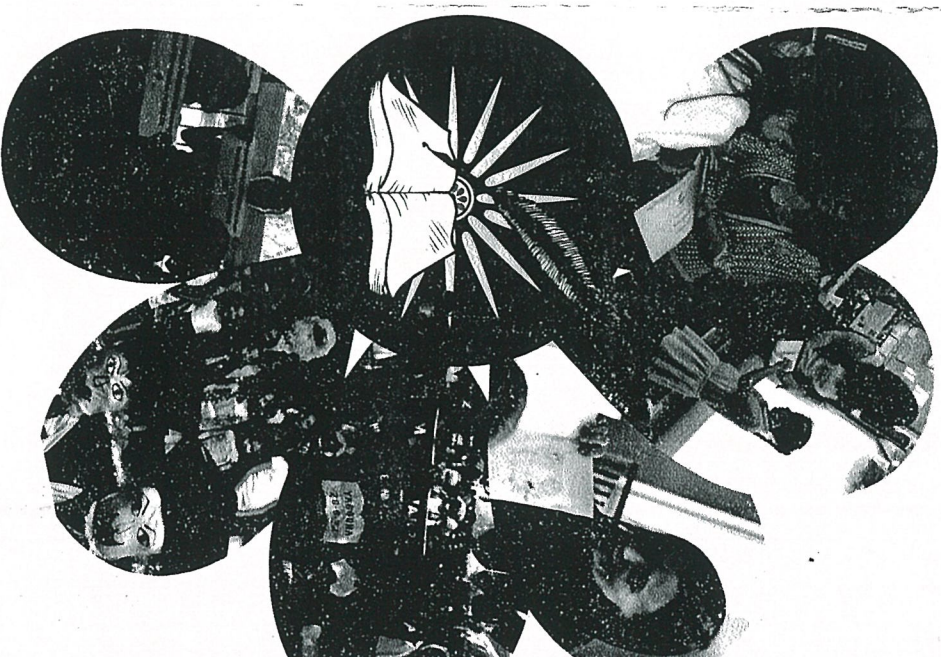
CHEQUE

Payable to **Macedonian School Council** and posted to:
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Macedonian School Council of NSW is a non-political,
non-denominational, non-profit organisation which
serves as an umbrella for all ethnic, primary and
secondary schools in NSW where the
Macedonian language program is taught.



MACEDONIAN SCHOOL COUNCIL OF NSW



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8.



Кристофер Тодор

9.