

The first to take the initiative to establish this constitution was Mrs Helena Leber at a meeting of Slovenian community in the Hall of Cyril and Method in Kew on 26 November 2003. She invited to the meeting all representative members of Slovenian community. At that meeting she indicated a pressing need for welfare and strong needs for health and social help for people who do not know where to get help. Approximately 90 people attended that meeting and majority of Slovenian clubs and media supported the idea. They held a few meetings but things did not move ahead.

In 2005, the matter was taken in hand by Mr Peter Mandelj, President of Council of Slovenian Organizations of Victoria. He consulted with Slovenian Club Presidents and some other important people who supported idea about welfare for Slovenian community. On 28 January 2005 the inaugural meeting was held to establish the Slovenian Welfare Office.

The meeting were attended: Mr P.Mandelj, P.C.Bozic, Mrs S.Ceferin, Mr and Mrs S. Srnec, Mr F.Toplak, Mr and Mrs M. Ogrizek, Mr J. Caf, Mr and Mrs R. Crooks, Mr S. Penca, Mr R. Carmody, Mr L. Lenko and Mrs M. Lenarcic.

Mr P. Mandelj was elected as the Chairman. Suggested names were discussed and it was agreed it should be: Slovenian Welfare & Information Office. They set up a structure:

- Management Committee, Executive Committee with responsibility to run the constitution,
- Management Sub-Committee with responsibility to run the office and contact with people.

- Management Committee, izvršni odbor, z odgovornostjo delovanja Urada v celoti,
- Management Sub-Committee, pod-odbor z odgovornostjo za delovanje pisarne in kontakte s strankami.

The constitution was established. On the following meetings the Management Committee elected functionaries, prepared and accepted rules, started procedure about incorporation, applied for financial help, supplied office equipment, telephone line and determined working hours.

Office was open May 2005 at Slovenian language class room, Baraga house Kew, every

Tuesday from 11am until 3pm with supervision by Mrs S. Crooks, Mrs Z. Pertusio, Mrs L. Srnec and later Mrs S. Gorup.

At this social gathering people listened to Slovenian music, played cards, working craft, knitted, crocheted or just chatted. The following photos are from first gathering at our office (click to enlarge).

