

NSW SLOVENIAN COMMUNITY AWARDS 2019

Slovenian Outstanding Senior Citizen for 2018 St Raphael's Slovenian Mission Merrylands

JERICA GRŽELJ



Jerica Grželj je bila rojena 9.marca 1941 v Godoviču, kot tretja od petih otrok v družini Franca in Ivanke Žakelj. Med vojno jim je bila hiša požgana in vsi so se morali zelo truditi in delati, da so si ponovno uredili dom. Družina je bila zelo verna; doma so redno molili in obiskovali domačo cerkev v Godoviču. Leta 1965 je Jerica emigrirala v Avstralijo in se kmalu poročila z Alojzom -Ginotom Grželj, rojakom iz domače Primorske. Skupaj sta imela dve hčerki, Danico in Margaret in vsi skupaj so se že zgodaj vključili v Slovensko skupnost, posebno v Verskem Središču Merrylands, kjer sta hčerki obiskovali Slomškovo šolo slovenskega jezika, cela družina se je močno vključila v vse aktivnosti v Verskem Središču.

Jerica and Gino were actively involved in the life of the St. Raphael Church in Merrylands. They attended Church each Sunday and became heavily involved in the community with Father Valerijan and the Slovenian sisters, particularly Sr Hilarija,

Sr Marija and Sr Miriam. They were involved in all aspects of the Church. Jerica was busy with a fulltime job and raising her family, but she always found time to cook for the picnics, dances and dinners that the Church organised. She helped with the Church garage sales, baked cakes, helped in Church clean-ups and any events that needed assistance.

Their daughters, Danica and Margaret, went to the Slovenian school at Merrylands and both daughters were also in the Youth choir. Her daughter Danica continued her education at the Saturday School of Community Languages in Bankstown and successfully completed Slovenian to HSC level in 1984. Danica then gave up her Saturday afternoons for seven years to teach Slovenian at St Raphael's Church, Merrylands and at the Bankstown Saturday School of Community Languages for many years. It was mainly due to Jerica's and Gino's influence, that the daughters found their great love for the Slovenian heritage and language.

Jerica also loves singing in the church choir and it makes her very happy, that her daughter Danica and grandson Jordan followed in her footsteps by joining the young church choir 'Južne Zvezde'.

Jerica lost her beloved Gino in the year 2008. After such a loss, she put even more energy into her family, daughters and grandchildren and into her church community. Presently, at the age of 78, Jerica is still in a group with two other ladies who bake cakes to serve with tea and coffee after Church. Jerica still attends mass each Sunday. She is a regular mass reader and still sings in the mixed choir.

When it comes to service in the St Raphael Slovenian community, Jerica lives the essence of the words of our St Mary of the Cross MacKillop, "Never see a need without doing something about it."

Thank you, Jerica, for your wholehearted contribution to the St Raphael Slovenian community, that you still generously continue to serve today.