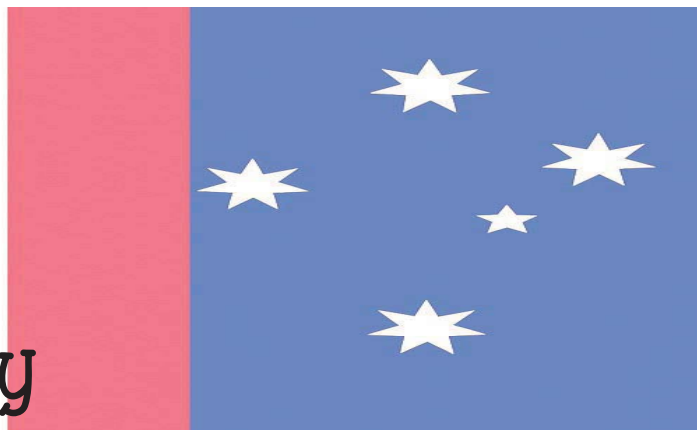


# Sicilia Social & Sports Club 50th Anniversary



## **Celebrating a Cultural Legacy: 50 Years of the Sicilia Social and Sports Club's Community Impact**

Honouring the vision of a group of paesani who dared to dream big.

It was a sweltering New Year's Day in 1973 when Gino Carubia, a gentle soul deeply passionate about his Sicilian heritage, sat on the porch of his home in Unley, drinking a beer and reminiscing about his beloved hometown, the culture, the food, and, most importantly, the family traditions. In that moment, an idea was born: to create a space for the Adelaide-Sicilian community to come together, share their culture, and exchange stories. Recognising that he could not achieve this alone, Gino reached out to his friend Frank Augello to share his vision of a gathering place for all Sicilians.

Frank embraced the idea, and together they engaged a few fellow paesani who enthusiastically supported the vision. Initially, it was their collective passion for bocce that united them, but as their gatherings progressed, they realised the necessity of including their families in the celebrations. After an animated brainstorming session, they decided to create an event that combined dancing with exquisite food, a perfect encapsulation of Sicilian joy and community spirit.

Planning for a memorable evening of dining and dancing proved challenging. They needed to secure a hall and obtain essential equipment, yet where there is a will, there is a way. By the end of 1973, the first dinner dance was held, and its resounding success led to the baton being passed to Leonardo Carubia and Biagio Barbaro the following year. The triumph of this inaugural event demonstrated that much more could be accomplished.

Discussions among the men and their families highlighted how to maximise their achievements. In 1975, a pivotal meeting convened at Gino's home, resulting in the decision to establish an official committee and club, which was subsequently named the Siculo Club. Although a strategic plan was devised, the journey was fraught with challenges, including acquiring necessary plates, cutlery, and storage solutions.

After three very successful years, in 1978 a decision was made to change the club's name. Under the leadership of Angelo Dilella during the AGM, a motion was passed to adopt the new name, and so, the Siculo Club became the Sicilia Social Club. With the club solidifying its identity, the next crucial steps involved drafting a constitution and formally incorporating the club. Angelo enlisted the assistance of Roberto Chiro, a paesano and skilled lawyer, to draft the constitution, a move that significantly propelled the club forward. By 1979, the club achieved incorporated status.

As momentum continued to build and possibilities expanded, the quest for suitable venues for gatherings presented additional challenges. Each event brought forth new logistical hurdles, particularly concerning the transportation of equipment and supplies. Nevertheless, the group's determination remained resolute. In response, they devised a clever plan: each family would store items at home, but the cost of these essentials posed another challenge. The question remained, how could they make it all work?

Support was essential, which led to the formation of the first official ladies' sub-committee in 1980. Their mission was to raise funds through various events, including fashion parades, picnics, and other activities. Gino and Leonardo also took on the responsibility of soliciting donations, no matter how small, from their paesani to cover expenses. Their determined, community-driven approach laid the groundwork for sustained success.



After years of renting venues, the committee recognised that owning premises would be crucial for attracting more Sicilians to the club. The search began, and fortune smiled upon them when a property became available at Camden Park. Through collective efforts, funds were raised, which allowed them to purchase the property, granting the club a true identity and a sense of permanence.

In 1981, a folk dancing group was formed, remaining active until 1995, alongside the establishment of a youth group. Recognising the importance of cultural symbols, the importance of the famous *carrettino siciliano* was apparent. A sub-committee was formed so that the obvious could be made possible. The sub-committee sourced a cart and horse from a local farmer and embarked on its restoration. It was imperative to make it as authentic as possible, and therefore the importing of ornaments from Sicily was imperative, and so what was once a cart and horse was now a traditional *carrettino siciliano*. With the help of Mr Alessandro Barrocchi, the *carrettino* was beautifully crafted, and it is now displayed in the stable at the entrance of the hall.

Over the years, the Sicilia Club and *carrettino* have played an integral role in promoting Sicilian culture and traditions within the South Australian community through participation in festivals and parades, including the Berri Festival, Italian Festival, Glenelg & Norwood Pageant Parades, and the Australian Formula One Grand Prix.

As the club's reputation grew, so did the need for a larger space. The existing clubrooms became uncomfortably crowded, making a new venue necessary. Fortunately, an opportunity arose when vacant land became available at Klemzig. Thus began negotiations for its purchase, ushering in a promising future for our community.

In 1990, after navigating the inevitable challenges of bureaucracy, construction commenced under the expert guidance of Ralph Brianni Constructions. And what better way to inaugurate the new premises than with a joyful celebration? The inaugural function held at the new clubrooms was a wedding, marking a perfect beginning to this new chapter.

We take immense pride in the rich heritage of the Metro Stars soccer team, whose roots trace back to the Sicilia Club. From those humble beginnings, the team has grown and now calls TK Shuttle Reserve its home—a testament to the enduring spirit and vision of our community.

It was during this transformative period that the club embraced a broader identity, incorporating "Sports" into its name to reflect its evolving mission. Thus, The Sicilia Social and Sports Club Inc. was born. However, it wasn't until 2013 that the committee of the time discovered the new name had not been formally registered. In response, Matteo Cali stepped forward with dedication and perseverance, navigating considerable bureaucratic hurdles to ensure the name was officially recognised.

His efforts not only safeguarded the club's legacy but also reinforced the values of commitment and community that define us to this day.

Tonight, as we celebrate, we pay tribute to the visionary spirit of Gino & Frank, whose foresight made all of this possible. We honour our forefathers who left their beloved Sicily in search of a better life for their families. We also acknowledge the steadfast dedication of past and present committees, whose tireless efforts have benefited not only the Sicilian community but the broader community as well. We take pride in our diverse membership, which unites people from various cultures, making tonight's celebration truly unforgettable.



In closing, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to our sponsors, particularly our major sponsor, Galipo Food Company, for their unwavering support over these 50 remarkable years. To our volunteers, families, friends, past and present, the directive committees, past and present, kitchen staff, waiters, and attendees, thank you for your dedication and hard work. Special thanks to Michael Liapis for the fantastic meal we are enjoying tonight. Last but not least, to each and every one of you gathered here this evening, thank you for being part of this momentous celebration. Your presence has made it truly unforgettable.

Rita Bianca Palumbo  
President

