

# СВІЙ ДО СВОГО



Ukrainian International Directory

Ukrainian Community Issues Newsletter



## СВІЙ ДО СВОГО Ukrainian Community Issues – 28 March 2016 Growth and Decline of the Ukrainian Community in Australia Cause and Effect

On the 5<sup>th</sup> of November 2015, at the Australian Federation of Ukrainian Organisations (AFUO) triennial meeting I spoke on the expedient decline of our community in Australia.

This should be of prime concern to the Ukrainian Communities and Organisations across Australia; yet only lip service is paid to this issue.

### As Refugees

On the 28<sup>th</sup> March 1950, my parents and I arrived at Station Pier, Port Melbourne, Australia on the passenger ship Skaugum. As refugees, my parents and other refugees during this period, were contracted to work for the Australian Government on specific projects for two years.

Our family were sent to the Sale Migrant Camp, Victoria, Australia where my father was billeted to work with the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission building channels, culverts, weirs and dams in Gippsland.

After two years, my parents along with many other refugees settled across Victoria. My parents choose to settle in Geelong.

During the first twenty years, my parents had built our first home, went on and build a shop / supermarket, bought a new car in 1959 and settled into the Australian lifestyle quite comfortably as many Ukrainian and other migrants did.

Australia was good to us.

### Ukrainian Communities, first 20 years

Meanwhile, the Ukrainian communities across Australia, within the first 20 years established the complete infrastructure for the Ukrainian Diaspora community in Australia.

- The various Ukrainian Hromadas built their halls and churches, including the Cathedral in Melbourne and Plast and CYM established their country youth camps.
- Dnister, Karpary and Kalyna Credit Cooperatives were established to financially support the community with banking facilities.
- Ukrainian Language Saturday schools flourished across Australia.
- The Youth Organisation were flourishing,
- The annual Malankas were extremely well patronised. I recall, in Springvale, Essendon and Geelong Malankas were overflowing and everyone enjoyed the annual festivities.
- I recall, families went out of their way to help each other building homes for other families, sharing produce from their gardens and jar preserved foods.
- Those who arrived later were boarded out in other Ukrainians homes. On Sundays, after church, many would get together and enjoy each other's company; eating, drinking, singing and just having a good time with their fellow Ukrainian.

It was a productive and joyous times had by all.

***In the first 20 years, our parents and grandparent, acquired / built these assets, at present day value in the order of \$30 - \$40 million across Australia.***

## The next 40 years

Sadly, in the main, nothing has been done to improve, refurbish and maintain these facilities or unify our Community. Every aspect of our community was and is left to decay.

- Many of the Hromadas in New South Wales, as I am informed, have vanished together with their assets. What has happened with the proceeds, if any, from the disposal of the facilities? No one seems to know.
- The demise of the Western Australian Ukrainian facilities was, in my opinion, due to lack of professional cost planning.
- The demise of the Karparty Credit Cooperative in Sydney was a major blow to the community. Many are still questioning the need for its disposal and the method of disposal. Not to speak of the mistrust (rightly or wrongly) of its past leadership left in its wake.
- Ukrainian language Saturday schools, which were flourishing have consolidated to almost nothing, compared with the past.
- The parishioners attending the various Ukrainian Catholic and Orthodox churches, once were overflowing; now only minimal attendance with the exception during Easter and Christmas, and even then, minimal attendance compared to the past.
- Attendance and memberships of the various Churches, Hromadas, Youth Organisations and other peripheral organisations have exponentially declined to appalling levels compared to the first 20 years.

## Australian Census

The latest Australian Government Census, recorded that there were:

- 38,000 persons of Ukrainian descent in Australia. However, back
- In 2010, it was stated that there were some 1,800 members of all the Ukrainian organisations across Australia.
- In 2012 this number reduced to 1,500 and
- In 2015 reduced further to 1,200 members Australia wide.
- ***The 1,200 members represents a shocking 3% of the persons of Ukrainian descent in Australia who are members of all the Ukrainian organisations.***

At this exponential rate of decline, soon there will be no members of the Ukrainian community and there will be no parishioners attending the various Orthodox and Catholic churches, Halls and Youth Camps that our parents and grandparents painstakingly sacrificed their time, effort and money to establish.

Back in 2012, I wrote a paper titled "The Last Man Standing" in the Ukrainian community; for which I was highly criticised. The truth hurts – unfortunately such truths have to be told.

## What Happened in the last 40 years

***Let me make this very clear from the onset. I lay the blame fairly and squarely on the shoulders of the leadership of our various communities and organisation across Australia together with groupies of “Yes Men” that followed them like sheep.***

***Don't forget, the “Buck Stops with the Leadership” of any business, corporation, organisation and governance bodies.***

As I stated at the 2015 AFUO triennial meeting, if the meeting had 24 hours listening time, I have an arm's length list of example of the “Yes Men” denigrating, humiliating, belittling, labelling, ignoring, discriminating and ostracising Ukrainians who had an alternative point of view; to such an extent that whole families left the community and NEVER to returned.

Even today, their off-spring remember these incident and refuse to participate in Ukrainian activities; yet they see themselves as Ukrainians.

**The Ukrainian leadership surrounded themselves with “Yes men” instead of the “Best of Breed” to achieve the greater good for the community.**

Our Parents and Grandparents who arrived in the 1950's era had a “Vision” and wanted to leave something for their children and the community, but the “Vision” was lost to “Political Aspirations, Fame and Glory” at the expense of the greater good of the community. These aspirations, fame and glory brought down “The Roman Empire” and more recently the “The Soviet Union”; and it will bring down the Ukrainian Community in Australia very soon.

***What has happened to the high profile members of our community, who without question, supported the community to a considerable degree?***

**As one of them told me:**

- “they used me, they fleeced me, they abused me and then spat me out – I must have been naïve in my trust of them”

**I can relate to all that!**

I personally experienced:

- A boycott of the original “Ukrainian Business and Community Directory” back in the early 1990's by the leadership of a community group. I have been ostracised ever since.

***This boycott is the real reason for the cessation of the publication of the paperback version of the Directory by the Ukrainian Professional and Business Association in Australia.***

5000 copies of the directory were distributed annually across Australia during Easter, for a period of 10 years.

- As a director of Dnister, I introduced a “mini-Ukrainian Directory” on the Dnister Website. A leader of the Ukrainian community told me it was not Dnister's responsibility to have such a directory. This person told me that Dnister was competing with the AFUO in doing this – BUT 10 years later, they did the magical thing “NOTHING”.
- The same person denigrated me by telling the Chairman of Dnister that he had me “In His Pocket”. Let me assure everyone that I have never been in anyone pocket or bowed to anyone's threats, intimidation or promises.

- As a director of Dnister, at re-election. A mindless “Yes Man” stood in the foyer of Dnister Cooperative telling members, as they entered, not to vote for me saying “Він не наш”. I received a number of telephone calls from friends, saying the same mindless “Yes Man” was ringing Dnister members, telling them the same.

It was only after this mindless “Yes Man” received a lawyer’s letter; he ended up being removed from the Dnister premises by the General Manager.

That year, I lost the election by 9 votes – thank to this mindless “Yes Man”. Anecdotal evidence strongly suggests that he was under instruction from a leader of our community to demean me.

- I was heavily criticised for having the first On-Line Ukrainian Business and Community Directory by the leadership of the community. Information I sort for inclusion into the directory was very limited, as a boycott was once again in place.

Despite the first on-line directory was badly hacked by Russian, I have persisted and created a new “Ukrainian International Directory” ([www.UkrainianDirectory.org](http://www.UkrainianDirectory.org)) with a view to unifying the Ukrainian community in Australia with the Ukrainian community internationally, despite the lack of support from the community leadership and others who promised to help.

- At the 2014 AGM of the Association of Ukrainians in Victoria (AUV), during the debate about the re-development of the site next door to the Domivka; the late Oleh Bulka, in his presentation made a comment, to which I applauded. A woman, who is the wife of a prominent member of our community, was sitting directly behind me, leant over my shoulder and said “You could do better than have him as a friend”.

Yet, at Oleh Bulka’s funeral, the same woman praised him to no end, saying that he assisted the AUV on countless occasions on a pro-bono basis and provided invaluable assistance and support for decades.

I have witness, on many occasions, this type of “Pissing Poison”, which is quite prevalent in our community.

- The “Friends of Dnister” petition initiated in Adelaide, without any real reason were determined to topple the Directors of Dnister, targeting the Chairman with innuendos. Pleased to say they failed. However, recently, I experienced the venomous and unnecessary undercurrent attack on the Chairman.

- In 2014, I raised the issue of the Ukrainian New Arrivals into Australia and I asked a prominent leader of our community “what we are doing to embrace them into our community”. The answer I got was quiet profound – **“They know where we are, if they want us, they will come to us.”**

This naivety clearly demonstrated that this leader of our community did not care less about them at all. It’s the same way that they don’t care about the depletion of the Ukrainian Community to 3% as stated above.

In fact, the New Arrivals I had befriended, said that they were told, before leaving Ukraine, that there are no Ukrainians in Australian. As such, they were not aware the existence of a Community of Ukrainians in Australia. They further said I was the first Ukrainian they met from the Australian Ukrainian community; they had been in Australia for 5 - 10 years.

- My experience on the AUV Building Committee, speaks volumes of the underhanded and unethical operation of individuals. This subject will be address, in detail, at a later date.
- During my quest to building the Ukrainian International Directory ([www.UkrainianDirectory.org](http://www.UkrainianDirectory.org)), I have requested several persons in the community, who hold specific portfolios, to assist with the provision of information that should be at their fingertips. Yet, some made no response, others said they are busy and others have said they are working on it. After months, still no response.

By delaying, they are depriving the community of valuable resource and hindering communication within the Ukrainian community.

- I have personally witnessed the denigrated, humiliated, belittled, labelled, ignored, discriminated and ostracised by the spread of rumours, lies and innuendoes about a woman who has made an enormous contribution to the underprivileged people of Ukraine.

Despite, the Community Leadership knowing full well that she and another person were completely exonerated and had no case to answer of the accusation made against them; to this day they are still being treated as a Leaper in our community.

The leadership of our organisation did nothing to stop the festering of the derogatory comments; as such I will hold them to account. In fact, it is my opinion they appeared to encourage it.

This issue was address in our 24 March 2016 Newsletter.

- At the launch of the Australia-Ukraine Chamber of Commerce (AUCC), a leader of the community, criticised, by innuendo, that a certain Ukrainian organisation should have donated more from the public funds. Let me remind all and sundry, if this comment was levelled at Dnister, then I emphasise that Dnister funds are not public funds THEY ARE member funds.

The Board was elected to protect members fund and not throw caution to the wind just because some have a spark of an idea.

- While on the subject of the AUCC, I believe that if this launch was undertaken by an experienced business person, it would have cost far less and would have been more effective. Furthermore, I have attempted to contact the President, Victorian Representative, of the AUCC, on several occasions with, a view of discussion some issues, alas does not return my calls. Another case of failure to communicate.
- Several people, who are member of committees, recently discussed with me the manner that meetings have been conducted. My interpretation of these issues is that bullying tactics are being used to intimidate members of committees to follow a predetermined point of view. This is totally unacceptable. We live in a democratic country, where democratic principles apply and everyone has a right to be heard without intimidation.
- In 2012, I wrote a paper on the Association of Ukrainians in Victoria constitution describing it as antiquated, dictatorial and discriminatory against the vast majority of Ukrainians in Victoria.

In a future issues I will detail how many in our community, in the early days, viewed AUV Central:

- |                                      |                                     |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| ○ Вони брехали нам                   | They lied to us                     |
| ○ Вони обдурили нас                  | They cheated us                     |
| ○ Забирали наші права голосу         | Took away our voting rights         |
| ○ Вони обіцяли усе і нічого не дають | They promised everything, give nil. |
| ○ Вони вкрали нашу власність         | They stole our property             |

*I believe it timely to shake out the cobwebs of both the AUV and AFUO constitutions and make them truly DEMOCRATIC.*

**By now, I realised that the leadership did not want to keep the community informed, unified or encourage its growth and expansion.**

***If fact, given the above statistics, it can be argued that the Community Leaderships policies, actions or lack thereof and or attitude have been discouraging persons of Ukrainian descent from associating and interacting with our community. WHY?***

## Association of Ukrainian in Victoria – Assets

The 2015 AUV Audited Financial Statement, for the first time, brought into account the true value of assets totalling \$14,366,422. This does not include Sunshine Hromada which would be at approximately \$1,000,000; brings the grand total in the order of \$15.3 million.

My professional opinion is that these values are conservative; I believe that at sale, these assets would realise in the order \$18 million.

## Association of Ukrainian in Victoria – Membership

As advised in 2015, the membership is as follows: Essendon 250, Noble Park 100, Geelong 120, St. Albans 100, Wodonga 30 and Sunshine 90.

This is a total of approx. 700.

*Given that the membership of the Victorian Ukrainian community is diminishing at an exponential rate, who will be the last man / family standing who will reap the benefits.*

*At the end of the day, all it will take is a change of the constitution.*

*There have been many cynical comments about this statement by various people in our community.*

## Community Leaderships Failures

Over the last 40 years the Community Leadership have failed to:

- Understand that they have made themselves available to lead the community in every respect.
- Realise that they are there to serve the membership and the community and not the membership and the community to serve them.
- They have been elected to represent the community views and not their own.
- Acknowledge, work beyond the call of duty, by members who have achieved.
- Unify and consolidate the community.
- Communicate with the community.
- Work with people who have expertise and experience in specific areas. They may or may not be necessarily members of the community or affiliated with any organisation.
- Use “best of breed” professional advice in their decision making.

*The community leadership, by default have taken credit and glory for work undertaken by others.*

## Community take stock

It is incumbent on the community leader, members of the various organisations, committees, board and individual members of the Ukrainian Community to:

- Seek out the Ukrainian in our community who have strayed, for whatever reason, and bring them back into the fold,
- Become members of our Ukrainian organisations,
- Contribute to the decision making, instead of leaving it up to the few,
- Leaders, Committees and Boards should be elected from the “best of breed” in our community,

- Chairman of Boards, Committees etc. should make themselves aware of democratic meeting procedures and ensure that everyone views are respected,
- Ensure that only one person hold only one position in the Ukrainian community hierarchy, allowing others to participate and provide alternative points of view,
  - There should never be more than one member of a family or extended family, including cousins (двоюрідний брат і сестри) and godparents (хресні) on any committee or board in any organisation.
- Recognise that there are dedicated people in our community who are on peripheral and utilise their skills and expertise.
- Each and every Ukrainian organisation need to have a website dedicated to keeping their membership informed as to upcoming events, activities and scheduled committee and other meetings.
- Each and every Ukrainian organisation needs to have a Facebook page dedicated to highlighting their events and activities; avoiding issues associated with the political and others issues in Ukraine, as there are many Facebook pages across the world that keep each and every one of us informed and up to date.
- Urgently revisit the Constitution of AUV and AFUO by independent and democratic persons to create a truly DEMOCRATIC CONSTITUTION and in line with the Model Rules applicable in Victoria.
- I call on all Ukrainian Organisations across Australia to revisit and review their constitutions in line with the Model Rules applicable in their State.

***Unless these issues are addressed immediately, the Community Leadership will be considered failures and will need to be replaced immediately before our community totally falls apart.***

Michael Karaszekwycz  
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 Ukrainian International Directory