



## Time for a Rebirths of our Ukrainian Community

### Branches, State and National Hromadas – Constitutions Should be Review

The **Association of Ukrainians in Victoria** (AUV) enacted their Constitution in 1954. My understanding is that there have been attempts to have the constitution changed in 1985 and 1986. However, for whatever reason, these did not come to fruition.

The **Australian Federation of Ukrainian Organisations** (AFUO) was enacted in 2002. In my opinion, it would not pass the “Democratic” test in this current day and age of democracy and fairness. There a several issues that have a lot to be desired.

#### Previous Reviews

During 2012, I reviewed and published, three articles pertaining to the Association of Ukrainians in Victoria (AUV) Constitutions.

- **Ukrainian Community Issues - June 2012**  
“Developing Hromada Constitutions - Considerations”
- **Ukrainian Community Issues - June 2012**  
"Constitutions and "Memorandum and Articles of Association"
- **Ukrainian Community Issues - June 2012**  
“Hromadas - Proposal Draft Model Rules”

#### Current Constitutions

- **Australian Federation of Ukrainian Organisations**  
(Should be reviewed to be truly Democratic)
- **Association of Ukrainians in Victoria**  
(Should be reviewed to be truly Democratic)

#### Examples of Current Successful Constitutions

- **Sunshine Hromada**  
(Note: This Hromada’s Constitution has worked very well for 16 years)
- **Kalyna Ski Club**  
(Note: Kalyna has more assets than all the individual Hromadas and has work well for 30+ years)

Copies of the above documents and this Newsletter can be viewed on the following website link: [http://www.ukrainedirectory.org/P\\_News/NewsIssues.htm](http://www.ukrainedirectory.org/P_News/NewsIssues.htm)

## Association of Ukrainians in Victoria (AUV) – Critique

The AUV Constitution, I can only describe it as: antiquated, out of date and not democratic. It promotes: gerrymandering, branch stacking, nepotism and discrimination.

It is quite clear that the current constitution is:

- Not relevant in today's democratic society,
- Lack of organisational conventions, structure and uniformity
- Very dictatorial using words like:  
“... *insubordination to the Executive Committee of the ....*” - **how antiquated!!** and
- A “Branch” has been isolated / ostracised from AUV.

### **The most offensive aspect of the constitution is its discrimination against the Branches:**

While the AUV Central, which I call “Essendon Branch” has 250 members, each of these members has a right to vote at AGM's, whilst each Branch, being Noble Park (100 members), Geelong (120 members), St. Albans (100 members) and Wodonga (30 members) have only 2 votes each.

#### **This represent:**

- Essendon Branch  
250 members has 250 votes (ratio 1:1)
- All other Branches in total with  
800 members has only 10 votes. (ratio 1:80)

[This is discrimination at its best.](#)

[It seems that this constitution had its birth in the Kremlin.](#)

[Worst still](#), I have some familiarity with the situation about Sunshine Hromada; I believe they have been ostracised by AUV Central for not handing over their property.

In my opinion, it was a wise move not to give in to a dictatorship.

[Kick out those that have a different point of view.](#)

[This tactic is well known in our community.](#)

At this point I will say, as a teenager and young adult, I heard on numerous occasions members of a several Hromadas express their animosity and total dissatisfaction with AUV Central, saying:

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

Now it is quite obvious what they meant!

It is high time that this situation was rectified in a truly democratic manner.

## Recommendations - New Constitutions

### Association of Ukrainians in Victoria

1. Discard the current Constitution in its totality.
2. Discard the Presidential Structure and introduce a Chairmanship Structure. The Chairman should be elected from the elected delegates from each of the local Hromada.
3. Create:
  - i. Essendon Branch
  - ii. New Arrivals Branch?
  - iii. Include Sunshine Branch
4. Hromada Branches forming "New AUV":
  - i. Essendon, St. Albans, Sunshine, Noble Park, Geelong and Wodonga
  - ii. Serious consultations should be had with the New Arrivals.
5. Constitution should be based on Model Rules applicable in the State of Victoria:
  - i. Should have the uniform Constitution across all Branches, with specific modification to suit their specific requirements of each Branch.  
*(but, I see no need for this).*
  - ii. Changes to the individual Branch Constitution should be approved by all branches, as changes should be beneficial to all Branches.
6. All assets held by the "Old AUV" should be returned to the Branches:
  - i. Local Ukrainians funded and build their own facilities in their localities.  
AUV Central DID NOT FUND or BUILD the individual Branch facilities.
  - ii. There have been a great deal of resentment in the past and present regarding AUV controlling their facilities. The level of resentment has been severe, as I have state on page 2.
  - iii. If each Branch owned their own facilities, land tax would be reduced considerably.
  - iv. Facilities should be maintained by the individual branches. They should have the ability to manage their own facilities without external AUV influence.
7. The new Constitution should make provision, in the event that all Branches have been dissolved and the AUV is in the process of dissolution, that the remaining assets be sold off and the proceeds be vested in charitable organisations in Ukraine.

## Association of Ukrainians in Victoria (new AUV)

### 1. State Organisational Structure

- i. Each Branch should nominate two Board Members to represent their branch at the Association of Ukrainians in Victoria (AUV).
  - a. There would be approximately 14 member AUV Board with NO “central controlling committee”.
- ii. The AUV Board would elects their own Chairman from the local Hromada delegates. No separate election for Chairman by members.
- iii. AUV no longer have elections, as it will no longer have members.
- iv. AUV Funding – User pays Functions, Hall Hire and Branch Annual Contributions based on membership etc.
- v. The AUV Board may set up Committees. Committee members need not be members of any particular Branch, as it is important to have the “Best of Breed” advising and supporting the AUV Board in their decision making.
- vi. Administration of the AUV should be undertaken as per procedures detailed on page 8.
- vii. Funding for travel and accommodation for Branches outside the Melbourne Metropolitan area, attending meetings in Melbourne, should be funded by the AUV so as not to disadvantage remote Branches (Wodonga at this stage).
- viii. Ownership of the “New Development” should be vested in all Victorian Branches through the AUV Delegates.

### 2. Ownership of current AUV property (Russell Street)

- i. It has been said that the property in Russell Street, Essendon belongs to the “Essendon” branch.
- ii. There are many of us who remember well, that these properties were originally paid for by each and every Ukrainian in Victoria in the first 20 years of our lives in Australia

I, for one, can recall, that donations were collected from all over Victoria in the same manner that donation were collected for the Cathedral right across Australia.

Ownership of Russell Street properties belongs to Victoria and not to the “Essendon Branch”

## Association of Ukrainians in Victoria – Branches

1. The Chairman is elected by the elected Board members.
  - i. No separate election for Chairman by the membership.
2. Branch Boards can create Committees for specific issues and purpose.
  - i. Committees need not be members of the Branch; as it is important to have the “Best of Breed” advising and supporting the Board in their decision making.
3. Each Branch to have an electoral boundary which may overlap with other Branches.
  - a. A person can be a member of only one branch.
  - b. If a person wishes to be a member of another branch, they can only be a non-voting Associate of another branches. This avoids members of more than one branches double (vote) dipping which is in effect Branch Stacking.
4. Branch Funding
  - i. In a paragraph below, it states that membership be free of charges. The level of funding achieved from membership fees are quite insignificant compared with overall funding of facilities and running the organisation.
    - a. Free membership would encourage greater participation from member and the rate of return on the free membership would outweigh any membership fee.
  - ii. “User Pays” principles – nothing for nothing  
Use of Facilities shall have a cost associated with this that covers all outgoing, administration, proportion of future maintenance requirements and profit margin.
  - iii. Branches that have facilities should market these facilities to the broader Community in their locality on a commercial basis. There are many example of this in our community.
5. Meeting Procedures  
Meeting and other procedures should be as detailed on page 8.
6. Branch Dissolution
  - i. Branch Constitution shall have provision, on dissolution of the Branch, to have a disposal of assets clauses that states that the proceeds shall be distributed across all other branches on a membership pro-rata basis; based on the membership numbers from two years prior to the dissolution. This will avoid branch stacking.

## Australian Federation of Ukrainian Organisations – Critique

1. I believe that this constitution has many paragraphs that have been excluded as compared with any Model Rules, which makes it too flexible to interpretation, there are a number of terms that are misleading and the Constitution is not very clear and concise.
2. As I have stated in my Newsletter of 28 March 2016, the community has been depleted to an unacceptable extent and, in my opinion, this falls fair and square on the Leadership of our community and it's Executive. Rectification of this problem should be commenced immediately. Should the community continue in it exponential spiralling decline, waiting for the next Triannual Conference to address this situation and possibly replacing the Leadership and its Executive will be far too late.
  - i. The Triannual Conference should be replaced with an Annual Conference in lieu of a non- election annual AGMs.
3. The AFUO, claims it represents 20+ organisations in Australia. I find this to be an exaggeration of the facts. For the 3 year period between Conferences, a select Executive are the Ruling Body. Many members of the AFUO have complained that don't get a say and are excluded.
4. I have attended the last two AFUO Triannual Conferences and my summation is that it just a talk-fest with no resulting action or achievements between Conferences. The failure of the AFUO is evidenced by the steep exponential decline in our community, activities and events as detailed in my Newsletter of the 28 March 2016.
5. This organisation, I believe, has not achieved anything substantial and should be restructured as outlined below.

## The Hromada – The Principle Ukrainian Organisation

Hromadas across Australia are the principle Ukrainian organisational hierarchical structure and the governing organisations in Australia.

This is where the membership through their local Hromada have an input into the policies and activities of the Ukrainian diaspora in Australia.

1. Each of the individual Hromadas, should be represented as one unified central body at State (AUV) level, having two (2) representatives from each Branch.
2. Each of the State bodies should be represented at a Federal level. This is achieved by having two (2) representatives from each State being represented at Federal level.
3. All other organisations such as Plast, CYM, Kozak Organisation, etc. including the Churches are peripheral organisations to the Hromada hierarchal structure across all three Hromada hierarchical levels in Australia.

These peripheral organisation should only be advisory organisations at Local, State and Federal Hromada levels, as they have their own hieratical structures in place.

One of the key factors having these peripheral organisations as non-voting advisory only, is that they initially should be members of their local Hromada Branch where they, as individuals, have their input just like any other ordinary member of the Ukrainian community.

## Australian Federation of Ukrainian Organisation (AFUO) – National Level

1. The AFUO at Federal level should only consist of 2 nominated person from each of the State levels of the Hromada hierarchy. Therefore there should only be a maximum of 14 members on the Board of AFUO.
  - a. Organisations such as Plast, CYM, Kozak Organisation, etc. including the Churches are peripheral organisations to the Hromada hierarchical levels.
  - b. These peripheral organisation should only be advisory organisations to the Federal Hromada Body.
    - i. It should be remembered that these peripheral organisations have their own hieratical structures in place. All as stated earlier.
2. It is absolutely essential to ensure that only one person hold only one position in the Ukrainian community hierarchy across Australia. This would allow others to participate and provide alternative points of view.
3. Equally, it is absolutely essential to ensure that 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.
  - iii. This ensures that no one person ends up dictating policy.
  - iv. It gives everyone a chance to contribute
  - v. The more people contributing, more will be achieved.
4. Meetings should be held monthly across the nation possibly using teleconferencing facilities.
  - a. Abolish the Triannual Conferences.
  - b. Annual General Meeting held in a Capital City, the travel and accommodation should be paid by AFUO, so as not to disadvantage other States delegates'.
  - c. Election of Chairman should be determined by the State Hromada Delegates.
5. All meeting and other procedures are to be in accordance with "Meeting Procedures" detailed on page 8.
6. In the event that the AFUO is required to nominate a person or persons to represent Ukrainians in Australia, whether within Australia or Internationally, the Board may select the "best of breed" person from the whole of the Ukrainian community to fulfil such roles, as it see fit.
7. In the event of the Dissolution of AFUO, the Constitution shall have provision, to have a disposal of assets clauses that states that the proceeds of any property sold together with all remaining funds be vested in charitable organisations in Ukraine.

## Meeting Procedures – All Constitutions Branch, State and Federal Hromadas

### Chairmanship Rules

A set of rules, based on the Westminster system, should be adopted that govern Meeting Procedures and Chairmanship. There are standard Rules that can be adopted.

This set of Rule shall be an Appendices of all Constitutions.

### Annual General Meetings

1. The Annual General Meeting of a Branch shall be held no later than the end of November in that year.
2. Notice of Annual General Meeting shall be advertised in the Ukrainian Newspapers.
3. Notice of Annual General Meeting shall be posted to each member and is to include and not limited to:
  - a. A list of the retiring Directors and stating that they have the right to re-nominate.
  - b. Nomination Form are to be included with an appropriate closing date,
  - c. Nominees – “Fit and Proper” form - to be read out by nominee prior to the vote\*.
  - d. The Chairman’s report,
  - e. The Agenda,
  - f. Any other relevant document and
  - g. Full financial statement.
4. Nominees for each of the Director positions shall be listed on ballot paper in alphabetical order.
5. The only proxy voting permitted is that of a member’s spouse.
6. Voting shall be by “Secret Ballot”.
7. The organisations Public Officer shall be the Electoral Officer.
8. Each nominees has the right to appoint one scrutineers to scrutinise over the vote count.

### Board Meeting procedures

1. Immediately after the AGM’s election, the Chairman shall be elected from the elected Directors by the Directors.
2. At the first Board meeting after the election, the Board shall:
  - a. Set meeting dates at minimum monthly intervals.
  - b. Allocate portfolios to each of the directors as required
  - c. Appoint an Auditor
  - d. Appoint two members of the branch as delegates to the Association of Ukrainian in Victoria.

### 3. Board Meeting

All Board Meeting shall be held by the elected Board members in Private and all matters discussed to be held in Confidence. No Minutes of Meeting or any other document used in the Board’s consideration or under deliberation shall be disclosed unless there is a unanimous decision of the Board. Any release of information should be undertaken publically as a “Press Release” to members.

The Board may hold separate meeting with the Ukrainian Peripheral Organisations as they see fit or as requested by these organisations.

## Membership

1. Branch Membership should be free to all Ukrainians or persons of Ukrainian heritage and descent whether they speak, read or write Ukrainian or not.
  - i. However, it should be a requirement that members register annually as members of their local Hromada.
  - ii. Spouses of persons who are not of Ukrainian descent should also be permitted to be members of the Branch.
2. Ensure that only one person hold only one position in the Ukrainian community hierarchy across Australia, allowing others to participate and provide alternative points of view,
3. 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.
4. Each Branch to have its own elected Board (not Committee) based on:
  - i. One Member One Vote
  - ii. First past the post Voting
  - iii. Secret Ballot
  - iv. Majority Rules
  - v. Proxy Voting to be restricted to one per person and a member can only have a proxy for their spouse.

## Committees

1. The Board has the right to create Committees for the purposes it deems necessary on topics and projects the Directors require addition or specific knowledge to make an informed decision.
2. The Board is encouraged to appoint persons to Committees who are the “best of breed” and have the knowledge and skill the Board requires to be fully informed on the topic at hand.

### \*Board Nominees - “Fit and Proper”

Each and every nominee should complete a declaration form which may include the following issues:

- Commitment to Ukrainian Traditions and Customs
- Acknowledge they have read and fully understand the Constitution.
- Acknowledge they have read and fully understand Meeting Rules.
- Commitment to attend all monthly and other designated meetings
- Willingness to be included on Committees
- Willingness to participate in Community Activities

Etc.

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**СВІЙ ДО СВОГО**  
**Ukrainian International Directory**

Ukrainian Issues

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