

COMMUNIQUE
AUSTRALIAN FEDERATION OF UKRAINIAN ORGANISATIONS
STATE HRONADA (ASSOCIATIONS) PRESIDENTS' FORUM
ADELAIDE AUGUST 4, 2018

INTRODUCTION

Australia's Ukrainian community is celebrating 70 years of settlement in Australia. Although, history shows that the first Ukrainians actually hit Australian shores 100 years prior.

In our 70 years of community life in Australia, Ukrainians have built community structures, assets and spirit. It is a highly structured and organised community that has integrated into the Australian way of life and made a significant contribution to Australia's development: economically, socially and culturally.

STRUCTURES AND COMMUNITY

The community and its structures have endeavoured to be relevant, responsive and, when required, refocused its priorities to meet the needs of the time. It has maintained its values.

It is an inclusive and tolerant community which has had many waves of migration. All have been accepted. The doors have been and continue to be open to all.

The community has supported Ukraine in its struggle to obtain independence and sovereignty. Since 1991 it has worked diligently to advocate and support Ukraine in its development and road to Europe.

Australia's Ukrainian community was active in its involvement in Ukraine's Orange Revolution in 2004-05 and Revolution of Dignity in 2013-14. It continues to support Ukraine in its struggle with Russian aggression in Eastern Ukraine and its demand to return Crimea, annexed by the Russian Federation.

Australia's Ukrainian community has been a strong advocate working with Federal and State Governments and Opposition Parties, and has a bipartisan approach.

It has been noted that politically the community punches well above its weight.

Our community has also been recognised by Governments of Ukraine for its advocacy and support of Ukraine.

It has been instrumental in the opening of the Embassy of Ukraine in Australia and the Australian Embassy in Kyiv.

AN EXAMPLE OF HOW THE COMMUNITY IS VIEWED AND RESPECTED

In December 2014, President Petro Poroshenko became the first Ukrainian President to visit Australia.

The Ukrainian community successfully lobbied for a community event during his visit. The event, A Prayer for Peace, was attended by President Poroshenko and his wife Maryna, the then Prime Minister of Australia Tony Abbott, Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews, Federal and State Leaders of the Opposition, Speaker of the Parliament, a large number of Members of the Consular Corp, many other dignitaries and a huge part of the community. This list is testament to the respect of Ukraine, its leadership and to the Australian diaspora.

THE FOUNDATIONS ARE SOLID AND BUILDINGS STAND STRONG

The founders of our community laid strong foundations. Today our Churches, State Hromady (State Associations,) women's, youth, education and financial organisations, and others provide opportunities to maintain one's faith and Ukrainian identity.

ACTIVITY

The Australian Federation of Ukrainian Organisations (AFUO) and internationally the Ukrainian World Congress (UWC), have provided strong leadership to the Ukrainian community in Australia. These umbrella organisations continue to coordinate and represent our interests at a national and global level.

Having strong vertical, elected and inclusive structures provides the basis for a coordinated and effective community.

At this time, we see strong activity in most State Hromady, which should be applauded.

On a national level the AFUO is currently coordinating the following activities:

- Celebration of 70 Years of Ukrainian Settlement in Australia
- Welcoming and supporting Team Ukraine at the Invictus Games
- 85th Anniversary of the Holodomor
- Promoting the activities of the Australia-Ukraine Parliamentary Friendship Group
- Lobbying the Australian Government for ongoing support for Ukraine against Russian aggression
- Being active participants in Ukraine's road to democracy and nation building
- Continuing to monitor the outcomes of the MH17 findings and international court cases
- Ongoing support through U-HELP to assist the Patriot Defence Project
- Campaigning for health, anti-corruption and other reforms in Ukraine
- Supporting the STOP Revanche Campaign – opposing Russian propaganda in Ukraine
- Involvement in the international Red Card for Putin Campaign
- Exploring Asian investment in Ukraine
- Lobbying the Australian Government regarding anomalies in visa processes
- Working with the Embassy of Ukraine in Australia to create a coordinated and effective strategy in developing Australia-Ukraine Relations
- Continuing to ensure all waves of migration feel part of the community, have their issues heard and bring new ideas and approaches
- Encouraging and supporting seamless integration into the community
- Showcasing Ukrainian culture, arts and cuisine

STATE HROMADY

The AFUO has placed a strong emphasis on supporting State Hromady at this time.

Our State Hromady (Associations) have been a vital component in driving community life. Their vibrant activity and leadership provide opportunities on a State level to coordinate, advocate and showcase Ukrainian life and interests. We call on the community to support our Hromady. Become members.

We are witnessing increased activity such as:

- Membership drives
- Management of assets and policies for sustainability
- Engagement with State Government instrumentalities
- Building, rebuilding and refurbishing community buildings
- Coordinating cultural events
- Refocusing activity to meet demands
- Enhancing club facilities and activities
- Undertaking heritage projects

- Enhancing communication methods
- Reviewing constitutions

OUTCOMES AND POLICIES

The AFUO initiated a State Hromada Presidents Forum in Adelaide on August 4, 2018. The event addressed a range of issues that will enhance our work on a state and national level.

Some of the outcomes included developing coordinated policies on:

- Hromady as incubators and coordinators of activity on a state basis with support of all organisations in the state
- Support for youth and schools
- Seniors and elderly support and wellbeing programs
- Showcasing Ukrainian culture to the broader Australian community
- Ongoing support for Ukraine – political, economic and social
- Language: highlighting the aspiration for members to learn, retain and use the Ukrainian language as part of their identity as many have lost it or, as with some newer Russian-speaking arrivals, have not had the opportunity to learn it
- Inclusion of all members in public forums.

Our churches play a major role in our community. Those who are members are encouraged to be active within their parishes and promote spiritual life to others by identifying a relevant Ministry in their Church.

GOVERNANCE AND COMPLIANCE

Financial transparency and corporate governance are key to maintaining trust and building a strong and effective organisation.

AGMs must be held according to the rules of the association.

Community assets must remain within the community. All member organisations of the AFUO and those affiliated with them should be not-for-profit organisations, registered as an Association by Incorporation or Companies limited by Guarantee. Constitutions must be periodically reviewed to bring them up to date. The wind-up clauses of each of the above legal structures state that no person can benefit and that all assets at wind up must go to a like organisation.

An assets and resource policy needs to be developed to ensure community assets are maintained and used in the most effective way to generate income to support the purpose of the organisation.

No revenue from selling community assets should be divided amongst members.

COMMUNITY STRUCTURES, REPRESENTATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All the above has or will be achieved thanks to a highly structured, inclusive, tolerant and focused community.

The UWC, AFUO, State Hromady and 22-member organisations of the AFUO have been duly elected, report to their members, are transparent and responsible to members and other structures they belong to nationally or internationally.

They are proven entities. They are custodians, not owners. They are easily identifiable: they have a constitution, a postal address, clear contact details listed.

We also reiterate the Statement regarding Elder Abuse which was issued previously. Our elderly must be protected for those who set out to abuse, pressure our elderly on matters of wills finances and assets.

THE FACELESS ELEMENT

In any community there will be a disruptive element. Today disinformation, the Fifth Column element – a group of people who undermine a larger group from within, usually in favour of an enemy group or nation – is prevalent in many spheres of life in Australia and internationally.

Our community needs to be vigilant and not allow the disruptive element to impact.

In the past, and unfortunately the present, there are people who try to divide and conquer, who slur leadership and organisations and purport to represent the community.

The community structures and individuals dismiss these attempts for what they are and provide absolutely no support.

Our community has a structure and processes, and regularly reports to members and Government. At any time, a member has the power to seek explanations, provide advice, hold leadership to account and, according to constitutions, remove a committee. This is called democracy and democratic rights.

Those who have no structure, no members, hide behind social media and claim to speak on behalf of our community are irresponsible, report to no one and should be avoided and not given oxygen.

The community remains silent and provides no support to those whose sole agenda is to create division among us. Basic rules of respect, tolerance and truth are the recipe for strong community engagement.

Putin and the Russian Federation are experts in disinformation, fake news and attempting to undermine democracies. In recent times, individuals have tried to do the same in our community. The message is simple – we will not allow this attempted interference to destabilise us.

The community has shown its maturity in identifying these attempts for what they are and ignoring them.

CONCLUSION

The AFUO and heads of our state associations call on the community to continue being a beacon for others. Continue to be focused on the issues at hand, be active or in some cases reconnect.

There is room for all. For diverse ideas and plans. For structural modifications to remain relevant in today's climate.

Our values, beliefs and commitment must not waiver. The Ukrainian community, Australia and Ukraine all rely on our actions, support and understanding.

Signed and supported

Stefan Romaniw OAM

Chairman Australian Federation of Ukrainian Organisations

Frank Fursenko

Slawko Kohut

**President Association of Ukrainians in South Australia
Ukrainians in Victoria**

Stephen Chomyn

**Ukrainian Community of Queensland
Ukrainian in Tasmania**

Mykola Mowczan

**President Ukrainian Association of Western Australia
NSW**

President Association of

Marina Ladaniwskyj

President Association of

Marko Shumsky

President Ukrainian Council of

SUPPORTED BY AFUO Members