

The future of the Croatian community and identity in Australia

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Summary

The Croatian community in Australia is in a state of demographic transition because it is adjusting to the establishment of Croatian sovereignty. The Croatian-born population in Australia is ageing and, consequently, during the next decade the number of Croatian-born in Australia will dramatically decrease. Previously, the Croatian community effort in Australia was focused on achieving Croatian independence, as well as establishing clubs, sporting venues and Catholic parishes throughout Australia. The focus now is on preserving the Croatian community and identity in Australia. There are also efforts at building links with Croatian institutions in Croatia.

This article analyses the current status of the Croatian community in Australia and investigates what can be learnt from the experience of other Croatian communities in the diaspora. It argues that to ensure a strong Croatian community in Australia in the future the second and subsequent generations of Croatians will need to take a more active role in preserving the Croatian community and identity in Australia. This has already begun through second-generation Croatians taking a more active role in club activities. This article also recommends strategies to help preserve the Croatian community and identity in Australia beyond this generational transition.

Key words: *Australian-Croatian, Croatian community, Australia, immigrants, identity, diaspora*

Current status of the Croatian community in Australia

The Croatian community has well-established clubs, sporting venues and Catholic parishes throughout Australia. In recent years, several Croatian halls and soccer clubs have celebrated their 50th anniversary (Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney, Geelong, Brisbane, Hobart, and Wodonga).¹ There is strong community support at soccer tournaments,

¹ Ivan Nimac, Šime Dušević, Leonard Lozina, and Tony Nimac (2008). *More Than The Game, 50 years of Sydney United*, Sydney United Football Club, Edensor Park, NSW; Marina Brkic (2007). *The History of the*

folkloric events and festivals. Australian-Croatians are making important contributions in Australian society in sports, arts, business and politics.²

According to the 2006 Australian Census there are 50,993 Croatian-born in Australia and another 3,870 people of Croatian ancestry born in Bosnia and Herzegovina in Australia. There are in total 118,046 people of Croatian ancestry in Australia.³ When compared to other Croatian communities in English-speaking countries this is a significant number, and especially so when the Croatian-born populations are compared worldwide. Although the United States has 401,208 people of Croatian ancestry, only 42,216 of these are born in Europe.⁴ Canada has 110,880 people of Croatian ancestry and New Zealand has 2,555.⁵ The United States has an older Croatian community than Australia and much can be learnt from the American-Croatian experience.

The main demographic trend is the Croatian-born population in Australia is ageing, with the 2006 Australian Census indicating that 43% of the Croatian-born population are aged 60 years or older.⁶ The Croatian-born population will dramatically decrease in the next decade. There are four Croatian residential aged care facilities in Australia.⁷ Surprisingly, Victoria with 35.7% of the Croatian-born population in Australia has none. There are initiatives to build a Croatian residential aged care facility in Geelong, but the plans for one in Melbourne have been abandoned due to lack of funding.⁸

Some of the current community concerns are lower numbers of students at primary and secondary Croatian language schools, the financial viability of some Croatian halls

Glenorchy Knights Soccer Club 1957-2007, Tasmania.; Jozo, Pavlović (2007). *AHD [Australsko Hrvatsko Društvo (Australian Croatian Association)] "Kardinal A. Stepinac" Geelong Australia 50, 1957.-2007.*, AHD "Kardinal A. Stepinac", Geelong.

² Ilija Šutalo (2004). *Croatians in Australia: Pioneers, Settlers and their Descendants*, Wakefield Press, Kent House, South Australia..

³ According to the 2006 Australian Census, 13.75% (7,010) of the Croatian-born population in Australia is of Eastern Orthodox faith and tends not to contribute to the Croatian community life in Australia. The overwhelming majority of these immigrants arrived after Croatian independence was recognised in 1992. In the 1996 Australian Census only 204 of the Croatian-born population in Australia were Serbian Orthodox.

2006 Australian Census Statistics, Australian Bureau of Statistics; 1996 Australian Census Statistics, Australian Bureau of Statistics.

⁴ According to the 2000 United States Census there are 374,241 people of Croatian ancestry in the United States. The United States Census Bureau for 2005 estimates that there are 401,208 people of Croatian ancestry in the United States.

U.S. Census Bureau, 2005 American Community Survey; U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 US Census.

⁵ 2006 Canadian Census; 2006 New Zealand Census.

⁶ 2006 Australian Census Statistics.

⁷ The Croatian residential aged care facilities in Australia include Cardinal Stepinac Village in Sydney, Adria Village in Canberra, Villa Dalmacia Aged Care facility in Western Australia, and St Anna's Hostel (Croatian, Ukrainian and Belarusian Aged Care) in Adelaide.

⁸ Unless otherwise stated all notes from the interviews referred to in this article are in the author's possession. Interview in September 2009 with Jozo Pavlović, a member of Geelong's Croatian residential aged care facility committee and former Victorian Multicultural Commissioner; Interview in September 2009 with Rev Mate Križanac, the Catholic priest at the Croatian parish in Clifton Hill, Melbourne.

The Australian Croatian Community Services provide some government funded aged care assistance to Croatians in Melbourne and Geelong, but the number receiving this assistance is very low. In the early 1990s when ethno-specific government funding for residential aged care facilities was more readily available Croatians in Melbourne missed an opportunity for ethno-specific government funding assistance for a Croatian residential aged. The government policy on financial assistance for residential aged care facilities has since changed making it very difficult to obtain funding.

Interview on 2 October 2009 with Michael Parner – Australian Croatian Community Services.

and other venues and the low number of second generation Croatian attendees at some Croatian Catholic parishes in Australia.

Croatian language in Australia

In 2009 the Croatian community celebrated the 30th anniversary of the recognition of the Croatian language in Australia. The 2006 Australian Census revealed there are 63,611 Croatian-speakers in Australia and Croatian is the eleventh most widely spoken language other than English in Australia. However the number of Croatian-speakers is decreasing.⁹ There are Croatian language studies at Macquarie University (Sydney) and Holy Family primary school in Geelong teaches Croatian as part of its normal curriculum.

Croatian was introduced at tertiary level at Macquarie University in Sydney in 1983. The number of Croatian language students at Macquarie University is still strong at 132 students in 2009, while some other Slavic languages are no longer taught there or are being phased out. The continued success of the Croatian language at Macquarie University is partly due to the recent financial assistance from the Croatian Government and support from the Croatian Studies Foundation in Australia which is based in Sydney.¹⁰ Prizes, scholarships and exchange programs (including the possibility of a semester in Croatia during the degree) are added incentives for students to study Croatian at Macquarie University.¹¹ Croatian language studies at the Department of International Studies, Faculty of Arts at Macquarie University has strong ties with Croatian universities of Zagreb, Split, and Zadar. Croatian Studies at Macquarie University have ties with the University of Waterloo in Canada which also began teaching Croatian language prior to Croatian independence.¹² Maintaining Croatian at Macquarie University is important to help preserve the Croatian language in Australia and one of the important symbols of Croatian language recognition in Australia.

The number of primary and secondary Croatian language students in Australia is decreasing, partly due to the demographic shift with most students now being third generation Australian-Croatians. The Association of Croatian Language Teachers of

⁹ According to the 2006 Australian Census the most common languages in Australia other than English in rank order are Italian (316,894), Greek (252,216), Cantonese (244,557), Arabic (243,672), Mandarin (220,597), Vietnamese (194,863), Spanish (97,996), German (75,625), Hindi (70,005), Macedonian (67,833) and Croatian (63,611). Between the 2001 and 2006 Australian Census there was a 6% decrease in Croatian-speakers in Australia. 2006 Australian Census Statistics; 2001 Australian Census Statistics.

¹⁰ Of the seven Slavic languages (Croatian, Polish, Serbian, Macedonian, Slovenian, Ukrainian and Russian) introduced to the Department of International Studies, Faculty of Arts at Macquarie University in the early and mid-1980s most have been discontinued or are being phased out due to low enrolments, lack of financing and lack of community support. Only the Croatian, Polish and Russian Departments are still doing well.

Interview in September 2009 with Luka Budak – Head, Croatian Studies Centre, Macquarie University. The Croatian Studies Foundation is perceived as Sydney-centric.

¹¹ The 'Narona/Family M & A Vidovic Prize' is awarded for proficiency in Croatian in the degree of Bachelor or the Diploma of Languages at Macquarie University. Narona Homes, official website <http://www.naronahomes.com.au/company.html> accessed September 2009.

¹² Ana Ganza (1994). *Croatian School in Southern Ontario, Unknown Journey, A History of Croatians i Canada*, (ed. Marin Sopta and Gabriele Scardellato) *Polyphony*, Vol. 14, Multicultural History Society of Ontario, Ontario, pp. 107-115. (113 p.).

Victoria puts considerable effort to counter this decrease to preserve the Croatian language through writing competitions (at both primary and secondary levels), poetry competitions, top score awards and ceremonies, and Year 12 graduation ceremonies. For example, the Association organises the annual 'Tomislav Starčević' Croatian writing competition which is sponsored by the *Croatian Herald (Hrvatski Vjesnik)*.¹³ However, this writing competition is only open to Victoria-based students.

Holy Family Primary School in Bell Park in Geelong remains the only primary school in Australia that has Croatian as part of its normal curriculum. It is imperative that Croatian is maintained at this school, especially since half the students at Holy Family Primary School have Croatian ancestry and 16.1% of the population in Bell Park are Croatian-speakers, which is one of the highest concentrations of Croatian-speakers in Australia.¹⁴ To maintain Croatian at Holy Family Primary School in Bell Park will require continued representations and lobbying to the school principal and local parliamentarians to ensure the school principal does not replace Croatian with another language at this primary school as was done in the other two primary schools in Geelong where Croatian was previously taught as part of the normal curriculum.

Recognising the need to publicise their concerns and obtain assistance for teaching Croatian, in 2007 a five-member delegation (comprising two principals, two Croatian language teachers and a parish priest) from Victoria funded their own visit to Croatia to establish links with the Croatian Ministry of Science, Education and Sport.¹⁵ As a result of this visit the Croatian Government has approved the appointment of a full-time Croatian language teacher from Croatia to Victoria for 2010.¹⁶ In 2009 the Croatian Government also sent books and teaching materials to Victoria; Croatian language workshops by the Croatian Heritage Foundation were well received throughout Australia. These Croatian language workshops are novel in that they are organised through Croatian Government funding and some outcomes from the workshops include increased interest from both

¹³ The Tomislav Starcevic Croatian writing competition is named in honour of the deceased former editor of the *Croatian Herald*. Some clubs in Australia have sponsored Croatian language school prizes, for example, the Australian Croatian Association National Hall Kardinal Stepinac in Geelong.

¹⁴ At Holy Family primary school 158 of the 297 students learn Croatian. Previously there were two other primary schools (Norlane West Primary School and Bell Park North Primary School) in Geelong that taught Croatian as part of their normal curriculum. Bell Park North Primary School only ceased teaching Croatian in 2008.

Several years ago there were steps to establish a Croatian primary school in Melbourne adjacent to the Croatian Catholic church in Sunshine along the lines of existing private Greek and Jewish primary schools in Australia, but this failed due to the land being contaminated and so it was unsuitable for a school. The costs of removing the contaminated land made the project prohibitive.

2006 Australian Census Statistics; Interview in September 2009 with Katica Perinac, the President of the Association of Croatian Language Teachers of Victoria.

¹⁵ Members of the delegation to Croatia included the principal of Holy Family Primary School, Brian Everett, the parish priest at Holy Family, Rev. Gerard Keith, the President of the Association of Croatian Teachers of Victoria and Croatian teacher, Katica Perinac, the Principal of the Victorian School of Languages, Frank Merlino, and teacher of Croatian Lili Cvetkovic. Their goal was the appointment of a Croatian teacher to assist in schools in Victoria, to provide professional development for teachers of Croatian and to make available appropriate Croatian textbooks.

Interview in September 2009 with Katica Perinac.

¹⁶ The Croatian language teacher will spend 40% of his/her time at Holy Family primary school, 40% at the Victorian School of Languages, and 20% developing a correspondence course for Year 12.

Interview in September 2009 with Katica Perinac.

students and teachers, and the improved quality of Croatian language teaching. Examples such as these show that the Croatian community in Australia would greatly benefit from continued support from the Croatian Government to ensure quality of service delivery and to preserve the Croatian language in Australia.

Croatian language enrolments in Year 12 in Australia have dramatically decreased in recent years, from 153 in 2004 to 50 in 2008.¹⁷ Victoria is clearly the leader in terms of students graduating in the Croatian language at Year 12 in Australia, with 80% of the total coming from Victoria. Table 1 shows the enrolments of Croatian in Year 12 in Victorian schools and its rank when compared to other languages taught in Year 12. The low number of Croatian enrolments in Year 12 in New South Wales (NSW) may be attributed to the complacency of the Croatian community in that state. It is not due to a decline in community numbers since the folkloric groups in NSW are thriving with over 500 folklore performers.¹⁸ There is an opportunity for the NSW Croatian teachers and Croatian community in NSW to learn and share experiences from the active Association of Croatian Language Teachers of Victoria to address this decline in enrolments. The proximity the Croatian Studies Foundation should also assist in initiatives to increase the number of Croatian enrolments in Year 12 in NSW as these are potential future students of Croatian at Macquarie University.

Table 1: Enrolments of Croatian language in Year 12 in Victorian schools and its rank when compared to other languages taught in Year 12.¹⁹

Year	Enrolments	Rank (compared to other languages)	Year	Enrolments	Rank (compared to other languages)
1984	77	9 th	1997	126	13 th
1985	86	7 th	1998	130	14 th
1986	113	9 th	1999	120	15 th
1987	124	9 th	2000	111	17 th
1988	135	9 th	2001	94	18 th
1989	133	10 th	2002	102	19 th
1990	125	10 th	2003	91	19 th
1991	140	7 th	2004	117	17 th
1992	128	10 th	2005	79	22 nd
1993	119	9 th	2006	63	23 rd
1994	130	12 th	2007	42	23 rd
1995	99	13 th	2008	40	25 th
1996	136	13 th			

According to the Association of Croatian Language Teachers of Victoria currently the exams for Croatian at Year 12 are too difficult for third generation Croatians and this is a disincentive to potential students. The Croatian language teachers who set the exams have not taken account of the demographic shift and that Croatian should now be taught

¹⁷ *Victorian School of Languages*, 2009. Information supplied by Frank Merlino the Principal of the Victorian School of Languages on 24 August 2009.

¹⁸ Interview in December 2009 with Ivica Karamatić, the President of the Association of Croatian Folkloric Groups in NSW

¹⁹ From 1975 to 1983, Croatian was not recognised as a separate language at Year 12 in Victoria. Students wanting to study Croatian at Year 12 were thus forced to study Serbo-Croatian. Over two-thirds of students studying Serbo-Croatian at Year 12 prior to 1984 were in fact of Croatian background. Croatian Language and Culture was first introduced at Year 12 in Victorian schools in 1984 and continued until 1992 when it became known as Croatian. In 2006 Bosnian was introduced into Year 12 which consequently decreased 8

as a second or foreign language. The Croatian exams should be at the same standard as all the other languages taught in Australia (for example, Italian, French, and Japanese) to encourage students to continue to study Croatian at Year 12. This problem can be rectified by the Association of Croatian Language Teachers of Victoria and Croatian community representatives working more closely with the Croatian language teachers setting the exams to determine an appropriate standard.²⁰

In the United States the Croatian Fraternal Union of America, which was established in 1894, has been providing scholarships for 51 years to assist students of Croatian ancestry in North America to study. The individual scholarships are named after the donor or association.²¹ There exist other similar scholarships in North America including the Croatian Scholarship Fund and the United Croats of Canada, King Tomislav Branch, Scholarship and Bursary Fund.²² These examples suggest that with the ageing Croatian population in Australia there is an opportunity for scholarships and endowment funds to assist students of Croatian ancestry in Australia to study, especially to study Croatian. Scholarships have already begun in Australia with the Australian Croatian Sporting and Social Club of Launceston Scholarship at the University of Tasmania, for example.²³ However, there is a clear opportunity to increase the number of scholarships in Australia.

From the example of the Association of Croatian Language Teachers of Victoria it is evident that there should also be more promotion of the vocational advantages of learning Croatian. Students should be encouraged to study Croatian, and parents should be encouraged to send their children to Croatian schools. This could be achieved through more advertising and better Web presence detailing the advantages of learning Croatian, more Croatian language prizes, scholarships, and exchange programs.

Croatian clubs, associations and venues

Croatian clubs and venues are more than just meeting places. They are venues where one can enjoy Croatian food, language, culture, music, and sports. These venues

²⁰ The conference 'Croatia and Croatian language in the Year 2020' held at Macquarie University in Sydney in February 2009 highlighted a lack of collaboration between Croatian school teachers in different states. However, during the conference networks were formed to address this. The issue of Year 12 exams of Croatian being too difficult for third generation Australian-Croatians was also raised. Interview in September 2009 with Katica Perinac.

In January 2010 a meeting of 17 Croatian languages teachers from primary and secondary schools in Melbourne, Sydney, Canberra and Adelaide was held in Adelaide to improve collaboration to help maintain the Croatian language in Australia.

²¹ In 2008 the Croatian Fraternal Union awarded 272 scholarships.

110th Anniversary Celebration of the Croatian Fraternal Union of America 1894 to 2004, Croatian Fraternal Union of America, Pittsburgh, 2004, pp. 15, 20; Ivan Čizmić, *History of the Croatian Fraternal Union of America 1894-1994*, Golden Marketing, Zagreb, 1994; The Croatian Fraternal Union, official website <http://www.croatianfraternalunion.org/> assessed 20 July 2009.

²² Croatian Scholarship Fund, official website, <http://www.croatianscholarship.org/> accessed 28 September 2009; United Croats of Canada, King Tomislav Branch, Scholarship and Bursary Fund (Croatian Cultural Centre), official website, <http://www.croatiancentre.com/sholarships.htm> accessed 17 February 2009.

²³ The Australian Croatian Sporting and Social Club of Launceston Scholarship funds were made available by the Croatian Club committee when the club closed in 2004. It is available to a student of Croatian origin and who is preferably a Tasmanian resident.

University of Tasmania, official website

<http://www.studentcentre.utas.edu.au/scholarships/AwardDetails.aspx?AwardId=166> accessed 4 September 2009.

are also community assets, with the community having spent considerable time and money building Croatian halls. Currently, the Croatian community in Australia owns 43 halls and sporting venues.²⁴

Since the late 1990s some clubs and associations have found the transition to become less politically orientated difficult and must now compete with mainstream Australian recreational facilities. The achievement of the goal of Croatian independence and recognition in 1992 promoted the need for this transition. The Australian-born generations are also less interested in Croatian politics now that Croatia is independent and democratic. The issue of boycotting by some members of clubs when images of Croatian politicians (for example, Dr Ante Pavelić) were moved from halls to more private rooms in established clubs has been problematic.²⁵

Most clubs have been renovated to satisfy the expectations of higher quality facilities. Croatian clubs and venues are not just 'buildings' but 'symbols'. In future there will be consolidation of clubs where necessary. However, efforts must be made to preserve club venues, as they can become self-sufficient. Some Croatian clubs in the United States only have a Croatian event every few months, but still remain symbols highlighting a continuous Croatian presence over many years. Provided there are no threats on Croatia's sovereignty, Croatian clubs will become less politically orientated as was the case in the United States.

The current merger of the King Tomislav Croatian club and Jadran Hajduk club is truly a historic event in the process of preserving the Croatian community in Sydney. The combined membership of these two clubs and the approximately \$5.5 million expected in revenue from the sale of the Jadran Hajduk club facilities in St Johns Park should help upgrade facilities at King Tomislav and ensure the financial stability of the enlarged club. These two clubs, which are only 2.2 kilometres apart, were politically opposed before Croatian independence. The merging of the clubs shows that there is a great potential for co-operation and consolidation on a wider scale in future to preserve the community.²⁶ On a smaller scale the Australian Croatian Association clubs in Melbourne and Geelong have supported Australian Croatian Association clubs in Morwell and Canberra by attending their anniversary celebrations. Victorian clubs have also financially assisted struggling Croatian clubs interstate, for example, the Australian Croatian Association club in Melbourne has financially assisted the Croatian Sports Centre in the Gold Coast.²⁷

²⁴ Ilija Šutalo (2004). *Croatians in Australia*, pp. 267-268.

²⁵ Dr Ante Pavelić was the leader of the Ustasha (Ustaša) and the Independent State of Croatia (which collaborated with Germany and Italy) during Second World War. The issue of boycotting is problematic as it takes away business from the Croatian clubs and is a source of tension within the community. Many within the Croatian community in Australia would prefer if the images of Dr Pavelić were moved to more private rooms in the remaining clubs. Drapač further discusses how the issue of the presence of images of Dr Ante Pavelić in Croatian clubs is a source of tension among its members.

Vesna Drapač (2004/2005). *Perceptions of Post-World II Croatian Immigrants: The South Australian Case*, *Croatian Studies Review*, Macquarie University, Sydney, Vol. 3-4, pp. 27-39 (31, 38).

²⁶ The Hajduk Wanderers soccer team from the beginning of the 2010 season will also be at King Tomislav Croatian club.

²⁷ When the Australian Croatian Association club in Morningside Brisbane sold its premises for approximately \$700,000 half of the proceeds were donated to the Croatian Sports Centre in the Gold Coast and the remaining half were donated to the Croatian Community Centre in Rocklea Brisbane.

The Catholic Church

The Catholic Church within the Croatian community has promoted and preserved the Croatian identity in Australia. It has provided for the spiritual needs, while also maintaining Croatian language, culture and welfare. There are 14 Croatian Catholic parishes or centres in Australia, while the United States has 33 and Canada has 19.²⁸ Croatian priests have been in Australia from the 1950s: the first parish was established in 1963 and the first Catholic Church was built by the Croatian community in Australia in 1983. Croatian nuns still actively serve Croatian communities in Sydney and Adelaide. Croatian parishes were established earlier in other English speaking countries such as the United States, Canada and New Zealand. The first Catholic Church was built by the Croatian community in the United States in 1894, in Canada in 1950, and in New Zealand in the 1930s.²⁹ This comparison is meaningful in that it highlights that the Croatian parishes in Australia can learn from the experience of the older and more numerous Croatian parishes in North America.

Today, the Croatian Catholic parishes throughout Australia greatly vary in the number of attendees they attract. Some Croatian parishes have dwindling numbers of Australian-born attendees. However, this follows the general trend among many churches in Australia of a decrease in attendance. This is not a specific Croatian problem, but the key difference is Croatian parishes are important in preserving the Croatian identity in Australia.

Croatian parishes in the United States and Canada celebrate anniversaries of each parish's establishment and produce accompanying Church anniversary booklets.³⁰ In Australia most Croatian parishes already celebrate parish name days. St Anne's (Sv. Ana) in Perth and St Anthony's (Sv. Ante) in Geelong are just two examples.³¹ Based on the proven success of longevity of Croatian parishes in North America and multiple generations attending the Croatian parish anniversary celebrations, it would seem that celebrating church anniversaries is an opportunity to attract multiple generations as well as non-Croatians to anniversary masses and other celebratory events. Pre-marriage classes have been a way to attract second generation Australian-Croatian couples into the Croatian parishes. It is important that associated halls and buildings continue to be used by the Croatian community. In the United States the Croatian Franciscans established the Croatian Ethnic Institute which collects and preserves Croatian heritage in North America. It has a library, an archive, a museum, an educational centre and a bookstore. Taking this example, Croatian parishes in Australia could work together to establish better archives and gather materials documenting local Church history and websites preserving and celebrating the past.³²

Interview in 31 December 2009 with Ante Jurić, the President of the Australian Croatian Association club in Melbourne.

²⁸ Ilija Šutalo (2004). *Croatians in Australia*, pp. 80-81, 219.

²⁹ Ante Klarić (2004). *History of the Croatian Catholic Mission in Auckland, New Zealand (1904-2004)*, The Croatian Catholic Mission, Auckland,.

³⁰ *oming Home 2: Dream and Reality, Croatian Almanac 2006, Vračanje Kući 2: San i Stvarnost, Hrvatski kalendar 2006*, Croatian Franciscan Publications and Croatian Ethnic Institute, Chicago, 2006.

³¹ Sv Ante is the name used by the Croatian community for Holy Family Catholic Church in Bell Park, Geelong.

³² Some Croatian parishes in Australia have their own libraries but with limited access.

Mass in English is common in Croatian parishes in the United States and Canada. They either produce their weekly parish bulletins in both English and Croatian or just in English.³³ This example would suggest that to survive into the future and to get the second and third generations involved, Croatian parishes in Australia may need to have mass in English as well as in Croatian. It would also be beneficial to summarise Croatian saints and festivals in bilingual brochures. To cater to the second and third generation Australian-Croatians, recent books on the Croatian parish Church history and building have been bilingual.³⁴

Croatian priests in Australia anticipate that replacement priests will no longer be sent from Croatia due to a shortage of priests.³⁵ Hence, the Croatian parishes need to plan for what will happen when the current Croatian priests within the Croatian parishes in Australia die. Some strategies include nurturing future priests or laypeople from within the Croatian community or attracting existing priests of Croatian ancestry who work in non-Croatian parishes in Australia. However, due to a general shortage of Catholic priests in Australia, attracting existing priests of Croatian ancestry who work in non-Croatian parishes (for example, in Melbourne there are two and another two studying to become priests in seminaries)³⁶ will require considerable lobbying to the Catholic Church in Australia to attain their permission.

Sport

The Croatian community in Australia is renowned for its sporting success. Sport was previously the chief means of promoting the 'Croatian' name in Australia. From the 1950s to 1992 there have been over 50 soccer clubs in Australia with Croatian names or with the clubs often being called 'Croatia'. Croats in Australia have been highly successful in soccer at the national and international levels. Melbourne Knights (formerly Melbourne Croatia) won two National Soccer League grand finals in the 1990s. Sydney United (formerly Sydney Croatia) has also enjoyed success in the National Soccer League. These two Croatian community-backed clubs were in seven of the ten National Soccer League grand finals in the 1990s.³⁷ Croats in Australia have had more success in soccer than Croats in United States, Canada or New Zealand.³⁸

Croatian Ethnic Institute, official website, <http://www.croatian-institute.org/> accessed 6 December 2009; *Coming Home 2: Dream and Reality*.

³³ Having mass in only English may make the Croatian Catholic parishes in Australia more prone to mergers with nearby Catholic churches as they would no longer be differentiated.

Interview in September 2009 with Rev Mate Križanac; *Coming Home 2: Dream and Reality*.

³⁴ Ivo Tadić (2008). *Hrvatski Katolički Centar, Wollongong, Marija Kraljica Hrvata, Priča o hrvatskim ljudima, jednoj crkvi i čuvanju baštine, Croatian Catholic Centre, Wollongong, Mary Queen of Croats, A story about the Croatian people, one church and protection of heritage*, Wollongong-Zagreb, 2007; *An Oasis of Sanctity and Light, Oaza svetosti i svjetlosti*, (editorial board Kruno Martinac, Petar Barišić, Ante Barišić, Fedor Vučemilović, Željko Marić), Croatian Catholic Mission, Hrvatska katolička misija. Zagreb: Školska knjiga.

³⁵ Interview in September 2009 with Rev Mate Križanac.

³⁶ Interview in September 2009 with Rev Mate Križanac.

³⁷ Ilija Šutalo (2004). *Croats in Australia*, pp. 224-226.

The naming of soccer clubs as 'Croatia' has occurred throughout the Croatian diaspora. Sopta showed there are at least 68 cities outside Croatia and Bosnia Herzegovina where there were soccer clubs named 'Croatia' of which 12 of these were in Australia.

Marin Sopta, *Sveto Ime Croatia [Holy Name Croatia]*, Hrvatske matice iseljenika, Udruga "Hrvatska Dijaspóra" i Institut društvenih znanosti "Ivo Pilar", Zagreb, 2008.

³⁸ However, Toronto Metro-Croatia won the North American Soccer Championship in 1976.

The 35th Annual Australian and New Zealand Croatian soccer tournament held in Adelaide in 2009 had 39 club teams registered. North American Croatians have been running similar soccer tournaments since 1964 but have fewer clubs registered in their tournaments.³⁹ A highlight of the Annual Australian and New Zealand Croatian soccer tournaments is the Miss Croatia Australia Gala Ball and pageant where Miss Croatia is selected from all the Miss Croatians from all the Croatian community soccer clubs in Australia. Miss Croatia is important in that it focuses on female involvement, but it is also important from a fundraising perspective. Female Croatian community soccer teams are increasing in number in Australia. Based on the proven success of these tournaments, the Croatian community should continue the annual soccer tournaments in the future as they help form and maintain ties between Croatian communities across Australia.

The annual 'Fešta' or Croatian Food and Wine Festival in Adelaide has been extremely successful and attracts non-Croatian attendees. Additional promotion comes from having sporting stars (Australian Rules football and soccer) of Croatian ancestry at the festival and Croatian folkloric groups performing. Croatian communities in other states could hold similar events. It is reasonable to suggest they would benefit from asking the Fešta organisers to mentor them and share their experience and knowledge on how to hold such a successful event.⁴⁰ Similarly, North Geelong Soccer Club offered to share with other smaller Croatian community soccer clubs their knowledge and experience in running a financially profitable and highly successful Australian and New Zealand Croatian soccer tournament in 2008.

Success on the field by the Croatian national soccer team and players of Croatian ancestry in the Australian national soccer team (the Socceroos) helps draw supporters and players to Croatian community clubs in Australia. In the 2006 World Cup seven of the players in the Socceroos team were of Croatian ancestry.⁴¹ Interestingly, three of the players on the Croatian National side were Croatians from Australia who grew up playing in Croatian community soccer clubs in Australia.⁴² Croatian soccer success (and the

Marin Sopta, 'History of Toronto Metros Croatia', *Unknown Journey, A History of Croatians in Canada*, (ed. Marin Sopta and Gabriele Scardellato) *Polyphony*, Vol. 14, Multicultural History Society of Ontario, Ontario, 1994, pp. 135-144.

³⁹ Ivan Čizmić, Marin Sopta, and Vlado Šakić, *Iseljena Hrvatska [Emigration Croatia]*, Golden Marketing - Tehnička knjiga, Zagreb, 2005. p. 114; *35th Croatian Soccer Tournament Adelaide 2009 Souvenir Program*, 2009, Adelaide Croatia Soccer Club, 2009.

⁴⁰ The Fešta is held at the Croatian Sports Centre SA, Gepps Cross, Adelaide. Some well-known sporting personalities whose attendance was used to promote the event include Australian Rules footballers Ivan Marić, Steven Salopek and Alan Didak, and A-League soccer players Eugene Galeković and Mark Rudan. Fešta, official website, <http://www.croatianfesta.org.au/about-festa.php> accessed 20 November 2009.

In Melbourne there is the annual 'Croktoberfest' which hosts bands and DJs, folkloric groups, and children's activities. The organisers the Melbourne Croatian Social Club donate part of the Croktoberfest proceeds to the Starlight Children's Foundation assisting improving the quality of life for children suffering chronic or life threatening illness.

Croktoberfest, official website: <http://www.croktoberfest.com.au/> accessed 6 October 2009; *The Croatian Herald (New Generation Supplement)*, 29 Oct. 2009 p. 1.

⁴¹ The seven players of Croatian ancestry who played for the Socceroos in the 2006 World Cup were Marco Bresciano, Ante Čović, Jason Čulina, Željko Kalac, Tony Popović, Josip Skoko, and Mark Viduka.

⁴² The three players who played for the Croatian National team in the 2006 World Cup from Australia were Josip (Joey) Didulica, Ante (Anthony) Šerić and Josip Šimunić. Dinamo Zagreb has been establishing nation wide soccer clinics called 'Dinamo academy' in Australia with coaching expertise from Croatia. In 2009 they were held in Melbourne, but in 2010 the Dinamo academy will be held in Sydney, Canberra, Hobart and Geelong.

success of Croatians in other sports such as tennis and basketball) promotes the idea that Croatia is also a sporting nation to mainstream Australia.

The two major Croatian soccer clubs in Australia (Melbourne Knights and Sydney United) have survived for over half a century, but there is growing concern about the decrease in the number of their supporters at matches in recent years. The decrease in number of supporters is partly due to the Australian Soccer Federation ban in 1992 on using ethnic names such as 'Croatia' at all levels of soccer which was a deterrent for some within the Croatian community to continue to support the clubs. Hooliganism and crowd violence may deter family-orientated supporters from attending and may deter non-Croatians from supporting these otherwise successful clubs. In 2009 the Annual Australian and New Zealand Croatian soccer tournament introduced a player and spectator code of behaviour to stamp out hooliganism. The Croatian Soccer Federation of Australia and New Zealand that oversees the annual soccer tournaments are committed to punish unacceptable behaviour, and the code of behaviour eliminated hooliganism from the tournament. The success of this strategy indicates that similar codes should be implemented by other Croatian community soccer clubs.

Notwithstanding their love of soccer, Croatians in Australia are passionate about other sports. The 12th Annual Auscro golf tournament is thriving and uniting Australian-Croatian golfers throughout Australia, and is following the United States trend where Croatians have had their 56th annual golf tournament.⁴³ Croatians in Australia also have lawn bowls, bocce, volleyball, basketball, netball and football teams which help maintain ties with other Croatians and the Croatian community. Croatian individuals are also having success in Australian Rules football, cricket, and rugby.

The Croatian community has an opportunity to capitalise on the success of current and former sportsmen and women to keep descendants coming to Croatian clubs and halls. Former stars can give back to clubs through assistance and attendance at club events. Visits from Croatian players from Croatia (for example water-polo players in 2008) to the Croatian clubs in Australia also attract the descendants to these events.

Women

The contribution of women to the Croatian community cannot be overlooked. As we saw earlier, the Miss Croatia Australia Gala Ball pageant and female soccer teams are highlights of the annual Australian and New Zealand Croatian soccer tournaments but do not reflect the density and range of women's contributions to the success of Croatian community structures. Women have been instrumental in fundraising and aid projects (especially during Croatia's War for Independence), fundraising for local charities, and volunteering in Croatian organisations and clubs. They are also leaders in many areas including the management of Croatian language schools and folkloric groups.⁴⁴ The

⁴³ 110th Anniversary Celebration of the Croatian Fraternal Union of America 1894 to 2004, p. 51.

⁴⁴ There were eight Croatian female soccer teams competing at the 35th Annual Australian and New Zealand Croatian soccer tournament in 2009.

Vesna Drapač, 'Active citizenship in multicultural Australia: The Croatian experience', *Humanities Research* Vol XV. No. 1. 2009, pp. 59-73. (65-66); Šutalo, *Croatians in Australia*, pp. 217-218; 35th Croatian Soccer

annual 'Croatian Fashion Parade' charity fundraising event at the Croatian hall 'Kardinal Štepinac' in Geelong shows another aspect of Croatian community life in Australia. The 2009 event featured former Miss Universe Australia Laura Dundović as well as a number of fashion designers of Croatian ancestry from across Australia. All proceeds of the event were donated to a charity assisting youth with cancer.⁴⁵

Folkloric groups

There is a long history of Croatian folkloric groups in Australia: Sydney-based 'Koleda' has celebrated 41 years and Geelong-based 'Lado' has celebrated 37 years of continuous activity. There are currently 24 Croatian community folkloric groups in Australia.⁴⁶ Some folkloric groups will merge in future because of changing demographics. For example, Sydney currently has eight folkloric groups and it is expected that certain groups will merge in future, especially considering some share the same halls. The visits of folkloric groups to and from Croatia are highly beneficial in improving the quality of folkloric groups in Australia and should continue where possible. Croatian folkloric groups from Australia have toured Croatia and periodically perform at the *Đakovački Vezovi* folkloric festival. In 2005 the renowned 'Lado' professional folkloric group from Croatia toured Australia as have others. Folkloric dance and music are clearly appealing to Croatians and non-Croatians. Croatian folkloric groups in Australia perform at mainstream festivals and multicultural events, as well as at Croatian community festivals and events. They show another aspect of Croatian culture and should be encouraged wherever possible given their popularity.

In 2008 there was a generational shift in the leadership of the Croatian folkloric groups in NSW and the Association of Croatian Folkloric Groups in NSW (which represents 9 folkloric groups from NSW and one from Canberra) where the average age of the leadership dropped dramatically. Accompanying the generational shift is an injection of new energy and enthusiasm. For example, in 2008 the Association of Croatian Folkloric Groups in NSW organised their first Croatian Children's Folkloric festival for 5 to 11 year olds.⁴⁷ In April 2010 there will be Croatian folkloric seminars in Sydney organised by the Association of Croatian Folkloric Groups in NSW in collaboration with the Croatian Consul General in Sydney where folkloric instructors from Croatia will come to give seminars and lessons to some students and teachers from all the Croatian folkloric groups across Australia and New Zealand. The Association of Croatian Folkloric Groups in NSW future focus will be on improving the quality of teachers locally and across Australia.⁴⁸

Although there are some combined Croatian folkloric events in Australia there is no annual national festival that includes most of the Croatian folkloric groups in Australia.

Tournament Adelaide 2009 Souvenir Program.

⁴⁵ The 'Croatian Fashion Parade' was organised by the Croatian Cultural Association.

The Croatian Herald (New Generation Supplement), 15 Oct. 2009 p. 1; *CroExpress*, 15 Oct. 2009 p. 3.

⁴⁶ Ilija Šutalo (2004). *Croatians in Australia*, p. 217.

⁴⁷ Interview in September 2009 with Ivica Karamatić.

⁴⁸ There already have been confirmed 60 folkloric performers and 30 musicians from 20 Croatian folkloric groups in Australia and New Zealand for the Croatian folkloric seminars to be held in Sydney in April 2010. Interview in September and December 2009 with Ivica Karamatić

The Association of Croatian Folkloric Groups in NSW currently has a biannual festival. In Victoria there was the annual Victorian Folklore Festival from 2005 to 2007 organised by the Croatian Democratic Union Youth, but now Croatian folkloric groups in Victoria organise some combined events. Another example includes the 2009 Croatian folkloric festival in Brisbane that attracted folkloric groups from Brisbane, the Gold Coast, Sydney and Melbourne.⁴⁹ Annual or biannual national folkloric festivals should be introduced, or at least considered, as they have been highly successful overseas in helping maintain Croatian identity and Croatian folkloric quality. For example, in 2009 in the United States the Croatian community had its 43rd annual Junior Tamburitza Festival organised by the Croatian Fraternal Union. In 2009 in the 35th Canadian-Croatian Folklore Festival for Eastern Canada took place in Brompton and the 32nd Canadian-Croatian Folklore Festival for Western Canada took place in Calgary. Accompanying these events booklets are produced with each folkloric group's photographs and history to help preserve memories.⁵⁰

Croatian independence and recognition

Croatian independence and recognition has brought with it more opportunities to establish links between Australia and Croatia. Visits to Croatia by sporting and folkloric groups are now positively encouraged. Prior to Croatian independence such exchanges were viewed negatively as examples of implied acceptance of the Yugoslav regime. Hence, Croats in Australia previously missed out on the benefits, such as collaborations and improved sporting and folkloric quality, associated with these visits. Similarly, prior to Croatian independence the overwhelming majority of Croats in Australia also missed out on having collaboration opportunities, support and formal ties with government-funded institutions in Croatia. There are now stronger ties with the Croatian Government and institutions in Croatia. People of Croatian ancestry living in Australia have the right to apply for Croatian citizenship and subsequently have the right to vote in Croatian elections and apply for a Croatian passport.

The Croatian Heritage Foundation (Hrvatska Matica Iseljenika) helps form ties between Australia and Croatia through language schools, folkloric schools, Eco-Heritage Taskforce projects in Croatia, a monthly magazine and an annual almanac. The Croatian Heritage Foundation is also establishing Croatian language courses via the internet which will specifically give people another means of learning Croatian in Australia.

Universities in Croatia (Zagreb and Split) run Croatian language schools targeting the Croatian diaspora. For example, the University of Zagreb and the Croatian Heritage Foundation run the annual University School of Croatian Language and Culture. Similarly, the Croatian International Studies Centre based at the University of Split has the annual Summer School of Croatian Language and Culture. Students from Australia typically attend either of these schools.

⁴⁹ *The Croatian Herald (New Generation Supplement)*, 5 Nov. 2009 p. 3.

⁵⁰ Željka, Lešić, 'Svetkovina hrvatske riječi i folkloru', *Matica*, June 2009, pp. 8-9.

Mirela Garma-Sumera, 'Folkloru fešta u Calgaryju', *Matica*, June 2009, p. 49.

Croatian Fraternal Union, official website, <http://www.croatianfraternalunion.org/jrsites.htm> accessed 21 December 2009; Croatian Canadian Folklore Federation West, official website, <http://www.ccfww.com/> accessed 21 December 2009.

There are links with sporting activities in Croatia. An initiative since Croatian independence organised by the Croatian World Congress is the Croatian World Games in Zadar which gives an opportunity for Croatians from Australia to compete with Croatians from around the world in Croatia. The forming of teams, qualifiers and fundraising events in Australia also helps establish ties within the Croatian community in Australia. Interestingly, Dean Lukin the Australian 1984 Olympic weightlifting gold medallist is promoting the Croatian World Games qualifying tournaments in Australia by being the face of the Croatian World Games in Australia.⁵¹ Cricket and Australian Rules football teams are now established in Croatia. They were primarily started by Australian-Croatian returnees who left Australia once Croatia attained its independence. There are now four cricket teams and two Australian Rules football teams in Croatia. The Croatian national Australian Rules football team is Croatian Knights and Croatia hosted the 2009 Australian Rules football EU Cup in Samobor near Zagreb.⁵² The establishment of Croatian national teams in these sports gives some Australian-Croatians the opportunity to play sport at an international level for Croatia.

Before Croatian independence, the Croatian community in Australia generally missed out on ethno-specific government funding because Croatians were not recorded separately as Croatian-born or Croatian-speakers in the Australian Census. Many government departments used the Australian Census as a guide when allocating funding to individual migrant groups. Croatians are now officially recognised as a separate group and have Australian Census figures to confirm their numbers. The Croatian community in Australia has an opportunity to capitalise on ethno-specific and general government funding opportunities in Australia while they still have reasonably high Croatian-born and Croatian-speaker populations.

Independence has also brought with it unexpected assimilation. Some key members of the Croatian community have returned to Croatia. However, the number of returnees was low and certainly not as high as expected. Some of the older members of the Croatian community in Australia were drained by their humanitarian aid efforts during the recent war. Complacency has also set in since Croatia has been recognised. There seems to be less urgency about preserving Croatian identity now that Croatia is independent. Anecdotal evidence suggests a common sentiment is 'why learn Croatian in Australia when our children can learn Croatian, if desired, when they visit Croatia?' Many post-1991 Croatian immigrants to Australia are not active in Croatian community groups, the exception being some Croatian refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina. Drapač (2009) argues that one of the reasons these recent Croatian arrivals are less likely to be involved in Croatian community activities is that they have not been schooled in a culture of active citizenship and voluntarism and equate voluntarism with 'unpaid work'.⁵³

⁵¹ Interview in September 2009 with Branimir Šprajcer, Executive Committee Member, Croatian Community Council of SA Inc and on the Croatian World Games (Australia) National Organising Committee; Croatian World Games, official website, <http://www.zadar2010.com> accessed 16 December 2009.

⁵² Croatian Cricket Board, official website, <http://www.croatiacricket.4t.com/> accessed 4 August 2009; Wikipedia, official website, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Croatia_national_cricket_team accessed 4 August 2009; Worldfootynews.com, official website, <http://www.worldfootynews.com> accessed 4 August 2009.

⁵³ Drapač (2009). *Active citizenship in multicultural Australia*, pp. 65-66.

Croatian organisations from Croatia are always asking for financial support of their cause and this fundraising is draining community enthusiasm. Now Croatia is an independent country and has a democratically elected government there is less interest in Croatian politics. There is a corresponding sense that local Croatian community initiatives in Australia need also to benefit the local Croatian community population rather than focusing only on Croatia. While understandable, this attitude is also regrettable because it does not create an atmosphere conducive to (potentially mutually beneficial) collaborative community initiatives.

Croatian diplomatic missions

Currently there is a Croatian Embassy in Canberra, and Croatian consulates in Melbourne, Sydney and Perth. There are often misaligned expectations between the Croatian community in Australia and Croatian diplomatic missions. The Croatian diplomatic staff are employed by the Croatian Government to conduct diplomatic duties and so the Croatian community in Australia cannot expect them to be community leaders in the Croatian community in Australia. Croatian organisations and clubs also do not want the diplomatic staff attempting to control their organisations. However, the Croatian community can expect the Croatian diplomatic staff to assist in promoting Australian-Croatian links and exchanges and in promoting the Croatian language and culture in Australia. A cultural attaché in the Croatian diplomatic missions could greatly assist establishing cultural links.

The Croatian diplomatic staff are here for fixed terms so some of their initiatives lose momentum. Rightly or wrongly, some members of the consular staff have been perceived as being 'out of touch' of the local population needs. There was also a transition period for the Croatian community in Australia where they had to adjust from being essentially isolated from the Yugoslav diplomatic missions prior to Croatian independence to developing links and working with the Croatian diplomatic missions.

The community perception of the Croatian diplomatic staff has gradually improved over time. The 2009 inaugural 'Croatian Film Festival' at Melbourne's Australian Centre for the Moving Image was organised by second generation Croatians to show another aspect of Croatian culture. However, they were greatly assisted by the Melbourne Consular staff to form the appropriate links with institutions in Croatia in the planning of the festival.⁵⁴ Croatian diplomatic staff should continue to build on such positives and promote Australian-Croatian links and exchanges. It has been a positive move appointing in December 2008 Croatian Consul Generals in Melbourne and Sydney who previously lived the migrant experience themselves and as a result better understand the needs of the Croatian community in Australia. They have motivated their staff to better understand and serve the Croatian community in Australia.⁵⁵ In 2006 the Eric

⁵⁴ Croatian Film Festival, official website, <http://www.croatianfilmfestival.com.au/> accessed 5 November 2009.

⁵⁵ The Croatian Consul General in Melbourne Antun Babić lived in Australia for 22 years before returning to Croatia. The Croatian Consul General in Sydney Mirjana Piskulić was born in South Africa where she lived for nine years, she has also lived one year in Italy and she also worked for 15 years at the Croatian Heritage

Bana event at the Melbourne Consulate was a huge success in terms of attracting a large number of second and third generation Croatians at the event and it showed that the Croatian diplomatic missions can draw famous Australians of Croatian ancestry. Future Croatian Embassy and Consulate events, such as Croatian National Day celebrations, may be able to link Australian-born Croatian professionals, with Generation Y and recent Croatian migrant professionals.

Croatian Government initiatives

Croatian Government initiatives have the capacity to assist greatly in preserving and enriching Croatian identity in Australia. As we have already seen, the Croatian Government is financially supporting the Croatian language program at Macquarie University and has approved the appointment of a Croatian language teacher from Croatia to Victoria in 2010. Similarly, the Croatian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration is offering two scholarships for Australian-Croatians to study information studies at the University of Zagreb where upon their return they will volunteer a few hours per week at the Croatian Archive Association of Australia in Sydney.⁵⁶

Almost 30% of Croatia's tertiary-educated workforce has emigrated and so a major focus of the Croatian Government strategy on the Croatian diaspora is on Croatian returnees. Since 2004 the Croatian Government has funded the return of 79 Croatian scientists from outside Croatia to work at Croatian universities and institutes, of whom six were returnees from Australia. The Croatian Government also funded the return of another 41 Croatian scientists to Croatia to work in industry.⁵⁷ However, the money spent on their return, job placement and subsidised salary, as compared to their community impact, is yet to be analysed. The Croatian Government has also established the 'Unity through Knowledge Fund' to finance collaborative projects between Croatian expatriate scientists (academics) and scientists in Croatia.⁵⁸

On 8 July 2009 the Croatian parliamentary committee on Croatians outside Croatia held a session on 'Croatians outside the Republic of Croatia – Cooperation and Obligations' which outlined their strategy towards Croatian emigration. The attendance of the Prime Minister of the Government of the Republic of Croatia, Jadranka Kosor, signifies the importance of the Croatian diaspora to the Croatian Government. Croatia contributes about \$50 million Australian dollars on projects on Croatians outside Croatia.

Foundation in Zagreb.

⁵⁶ The information studies course (which also has specialisations available in archival studies, library studies, museum studies and general information studies) is at the Department of Information Science which is part of the Faculty of Arts at the University of Zagreb.

The Croatian Herald (New Generation Supplement), 10 Dec. 2009 p. 3.

⁵⁷ The academics returnees from Australia to Croatia funded by the Croatian Government were Ivo Orlić (Sydney), Mladen Petravić (Canberra), Viktor Sučić (Brisbane), Ivica Grković (Melbourne), Boris Škvorc (Sydney) and Nevenko Bartulin (Sydney).

Republic of Croatia, Ministry of Science, Education and Sport, official website, <http://public.mzos.hr/Default.aspx?sec=2191> accessed 30 July 2009; *Ministry of Science, Education and Sport, Republic of Croatia*, 2009. Information supplied by Staša Skenžić the senior advisor for the Directorate for International Cooperation and European Integration, Ministry of Science, Education and Sport on 20 November 2009.

⁵⁸ Unity through Knowledge Fund, official website, <http://www.ukf.hr/> accessed 30 July 2009.

Most of this is spent on projects in Bosnia and Herzegovina which is strategically important to Croatia.⁵⁹ There is also a Croatian-Australian Friendship Association (Hrvatsko-australsko društvo prijateljstva) which includes a member from this committee. The Croatian-Australian Friendship Association was formed by Australian-Croatian returnees to Croatia and their main role is assisting Australian-Croatian returnees in Croatia.⁶⁰

English language in Croatia

English as a second language has been growing in Croatia. Today most multinational companies use English as their business language in the region. There are now more opportunities to teach English at various English language schools throughout Croatia, and many Croatians from Australia have taught at these schools.

Since Croatian independence there have been several higher education courses in English established in Croatia. They include Medical Studies in English at the University of Zagreb, Medical School.⁶¹ Service management and economics programs are provided at the American College of Management and Technology (ACMT) in Dubrovnik.⁶² The ACMT has sponsored Croatian community events in Australia such as the Croatian Younger Generations' conference annually from 2006 to 2008. There are institutions in Zagreb that offer MBA and economics programs in English, and these include the Economics and Business International Program, University of Zagreb, Zagreb School of Economics and Management and the International Graduate Business School Zagreb.⁶³

The increased presence of English in Croatia suggests that it is now easier for third generation Australian-Croatians to work or study in Croatia. Spending time in Croatia helps these Australian-Croatians develop stronger ties with Croatia, but it may also inspire them to become more active in the Croatian community in Australia upon their return.

Generational transition

There are many examples showing successful adaptation to generational change though there is still room for progress on this score. The generational transition in the Croatian community has already begun. The second generation is involved in running halls,

⁵⁹ Vesna Kukavica (2009). *Nova strategija prema iseljeništvu*, Matica. p. 15.

⁶⁰ The Croatian-Australian Friendship Association also aspires to form collaborations with the Croatian community in Australia and Croatian Government institutions.

⁶¹ University of Zagreb, Medical School, official website, <http://www.mef.hr/> accessed 28 September 2009.

⁶² The American College of Management and Technology is a partner with Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester New York. The American College of Management and Technology, official website, <http://www.acmt.hr/> accessed 28 September 2009.

⁶³ The Bachelor degree in Business at the Economics and Business International Program, University of Zagreb is the only economic and business study program taught fully in English in Croatia. Economics and Business International Program, University of Zagreb, official website, <http://www.efzg.hr/> accessed 28 September 2009.

Zagreb School of Economics and Management is a partner with John Carroll University School of Business. Zagreb School of Economics and Management, official website, <http://www.zsem.hr/> accessed 28 September 2009. The International Graduate Business School Zagreb is a partner with Kelley School of Business, Indiana University. The International Graduate Business School Zagreb, official website, <http://www.igbs.hr> accessed 28 September 2009.

sporting clubs and folkloric groups. Some committees are comprised of entirely second generation Croatians. But it remains difficult to attract professionals and 'Generation Y' to act as executive members of various committees. Some of the conservative leaders in the Croatian community are often not open to new ideas and promotions like minded people within the Croatian organisations. The second generation has been successfully involved in committees that provide an environment that encourages their participation. As we have seen above, Croatian halls and sporting clubs are offering better facilities to satisfy the Australian-born expectations and to compete with mainstream recreational facilities. For example, they are now more family focused providing play areas and facilities for children. Cultural activities and sports are being adapted to the interest of the youth. For example, Sydney United has netball teams to be aligned with the interests of younger women.

The three Croatian newspapers in Australia have English sections to attract and inform second and third generation Croatians. The *Croatian Herald* has 8 pages in English, *CroExpress* has 13 pages in English and *New Croatia (Nova Hrvatska)* has some English content. This trend of using English has extended to other media, with youth radio segments on Croatian radio programs in Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide having segments in English.

The Croatian clubs and associations in Australia would benefit greatly from attracting and retaining more second and third generation professionals in leadership roles. In particular, professionals who were previously associated with Croatian student and university Croatian clubs in Australia, which have since ceased to function, are an untapped source of experience. Former community activists can appreciate the benefits of Croatian community involvement and have diverse experiences including fundraising for humanitarian aid during Croatia's War for Independence.⁶⁴ Possible strategies include reunions and networking events at the Croatian clubs. An example of a successful networking event was organised by the Western Australian Croatian Chamber of Commerce in 2009 where guests included current Australian parliamentarians Ljiljana Ravlich and Tony Krsticevic (both Croatian-born), former Australian Rules football star Glen Jakovich and former basketball star Andrew Vlahov.⁶⁵

The Croatian community can focus on the younger 'Generation Y' by promoting the advantages of community participation. By addressing the 'Generation Y' attitude and cynicism, the 'what is in it for me?' syndrome, networking events can show younger people that being involved may help them to enhance their career networks. Further, they will find being involved in club committees will teach them skills valuable for their jobs and their curriculum vitae.

⁶⁴ The Croatian Students' Association and all Croatian clubs that were at several Australian universities have ceased operating. The Croatian Students' Association held six conferences from 1986 to 1993 and published its own magazine *Klokan (Kangaroo)*. In 2008, the annual 'Croatian Younger Generation's Network Conference' (having been held annually for seven years) did not take place. The Sydney Croatian Youth and the Croatian Democratic Union Youth organisations are still active. There are now more opportunities for improving communication channels within the Croatian Community in Australia (including teleconference calls and Skype). Šutalo (2004). *Croatians in Australia*, pp. 213-214, 235, 304.

⁶⁵ *The Croatian Herald (New Generation Supplement)*, 24 Sept. 2009 p. 1.

The Western Australian Croatian Chamber of Commerce, official website, <http://www.croatiacommercewa.asn.au/accc/index.html> accessed 8 September 2009.

The Croatian community should promote its contributions to Australian society at large and make their successes known. For example, when the Croatian community contributed to the bushfire appeal, tsunami appeal, and cancer fundraising it received highly positive media coverage.

Identity

There is a spectrum of Australian-Croatian identity that is changing over time. The identity ranges from 'Croatian' (who fluently speak the Croatian language, attend Croatian Church, clubs, food, soccer, music, and folkloric groups) to 'Australian' (rare attendance at a wedding, at a Croatian parish or an annual festival). Being brought up in Croatia affects one's identity and ties to Croatia compared to a third generation Australian-Croatian. Social standing (economic success or professional status) may also affect an individual's Australian-Croatian identity and the extent of one's community involvement. A professional may weigh-up being involved in Croatian community activities against focusing on attaining success in their career. Over time the Croatian identity of many individuals will evolve and change.

Some academics focus on superficial stereotypes to place Croatian migrants into groups. For example, 'Ethnic' has been used to describe earlier Croatian arrivals of the 1950s to 1970s, considered working class and more involved in Croatian community life in Australia than later arrivals. On the other hand, the word 'Cosmopolitan' has been used to describe later Croatian arrivals of the 1980s and 1990s, that is those considered professionals. These labels are insufficient to explain the full dimensions of people's identity, their contribution to Australian society and the Croatian community life in Australia.⁶⁶

Without the earlier Croatian arrivals of 1950s to 1970s there would be no Croatian language schools, Croatian halls and sporting venues in Australia today. Australia desperately wanted workers to develop the country in the 1950s and 1960s. Hence came the Italians, Greeks, Croatians, Poles and so on to meet a labour shortage. The overwhelming majority of current Croatian-born in Australia arrived in the 1950s to 1970s and 70% arrived before 1981.⁶⁷ They have been more involved in Croatian community activities than later arrivals. But they have also enriched Australian cultural life through food and sport. They have contributed to the economic development of Australia, especially the fishing and building industries. Many of their descendants are professionals and highly successful. We must celebrate the achievements and contributions of all sections of the Croatian community and individuals of Croatian ancestry.

⁶⁶ A clear limitation of this study was the small sample size of the later arrivals and the lack of representation of the non-professional refugees from Croatia that arrived in Australia in the 1990s. Furthermore the 'Ethnic' and 'Cosmopolitan' categories are not mutually exclusive.

Val Colic-Peisker (2008). *Migration, Class, and Transnational Identities: Croatians in Australia and America*, (Studies of World Migrations). Illinois: University of Illinois Press, Champaign.

⁶⁷ 2006 Australian Census Statistics.

Strategic planning

Currently there is no clear umbrella organisation representing the Croatian community in Australia, which sometimes causes confusion. The 'Australian Croatian Congress' (which is part of the 'Croatian World Congress') has tried to assume this role, and although they have made a positive contribution they are viewed differently in different cities and their influence on Croatian clubs and sporting venues varies greatly throughout Australia. The Australian Croatian Congress has strong ties with Croatia and the Croatian diaspora.⁶⁸ The newly established 'United Croatian Clubs and Associations of Australia and New Zealand', which is perceived as being better aligned to the Croatian clubs in Australia than the Australian Croatian Congress, is now attempting to assume the role of leadership but it does not have the established performance history credentials acting as an umbrella organisation. The Croatian community in Australia has no parallel to the powerful Croatian Fraternal Union in the United States with its 75,000 members. The Croatian Community Credit Union was flagged as a potentially powerful Croatian community body in Australia but failed.⁶⁹ In the United States along with the powerful Croatian Fraternal Union there are other important Croatian organisations, for example the Croatian American Association.⁷⁰ This would suggest that the Croatian community in Australia does not need to be limited to one umbrella organisation. Possibly there is room for both the Australian Croatian Congress and the United Croatian Clubs and Associations of Australia and New Zealand to contribute to the Croatian community in Australia provided they focus on different initiatives.

Some strategic planning in the Croatian community in Australia is underway. The South Australian Croatian Community Strategic Plan is still being finalised. The South Australian strategic planning processes included consultation meetings at both the Croatian clubs in Adelaide. The two main problems identified from their strategic planning process are, first, how to involve young people in the Croatian community activities and second, aged care issues.⁷¹

The United Croatian Clubs and Associations of Australia and New Zealand is starting to develop its own strategic plan. Some focus areas include maintaining the existing Croatian clubs and associations, co-operation between various clubs and communities, attracting more members of the second and third generation, and maintaining the Croatian identity in Australia. They also plan to introduce a Croatian community coordinator to improve communication between Croatian organisations in Australia and keep them informed of future directions.⁷² Recently, a related Croatian Youth Conference was held in Sydney. Here it was agreed that the main communication for the Australian Croatian community

⁶⁸ Two delegates from the Croatian World Congress also attended the Croatian Government session on 'Croats Outside the Republic of Croatia – Cooperation and Obligations'.

⁶⁹ The Croatian Community Credit Union failed due to management approving loans to high risk customers who defaulted. The Croatian Community Credit Union was taken over by Community First Credit Union. Other important umbrella organisations include the Croatian Community Councils in NSW, South Australia and Western Australia, the Croatian Studies Foundation, the Croatian Democratic Union of Australia and New Zealand and Croatian Catholic parishes in Australia.

⁷⁰ The Croatian American Association, <http://www.caausa.org/> accessed 21 December 2009.

⁷¹ The Croatian Younger Generation's Network has also carried out some strategic planning. Interview in September 2009 with Branimir Šprajcer.

⁷² *The Croatian Herald (New Generation Supplement)*, 29 May 2009 p. 1; *CroExpress*, 8 Oct. 2009 p. 10.

(outside the Croatian community media) would be a United Croatian Club website and media liaison officer.⁷³ There is an opportunity for the United Croatian Clubs and Associations of Australia and New Zealand to learn from the South Australian Croatian Community Strategic Plan and the excellent website developed by the South Australian Croatian Community Council.⁷⁴ Australian Croatian Congress future focus areas include lobbying the Croatian and Australian Governments, youth affairs (through the Croatian World Games), and promotion of Croatian culture and identity.⁷⁵

Some vital points to consider in future strategic planning are focusing on more opportunities for second and third generation in leadership roles and ensuring that there is club involvement in succession and strategic planning.

Conclusion

Some strategies identified for preserving and developing the Croatian community and identity in Australia include: promotion and lobbying to ensure Croatian language teaching is maintained at Macquarie University and in the mainstream primary school in Geelong as well as at primary and secondary Saturday language schools. This includes making representations to school principals and politicians, and convincing parents to send their children to Croatian school. With an ageing population there is an opportunity to increase the number of scholarships/endowments to assist students of Croatian ancestry in Australia.

Greater national integration and the sharing of experiences (on for example the annual soccer tournament and Fešta (or Croatian Food and Wine Festival) would greatly benefit the Croatian community. Based on the North American Croatian experience, to survive into the future and attract back the second and third generations, the Croatian Catholic parishes may need to offer masses in English as well as in Croatian. Celebrating anniversaries of each parish's establishment can also attract second and third generation involvement. The annual soccer and golf tournaments should continue in the future as they help form and maintain ties between Croatian communities across Australia. Similarly, annual or biannual national folkloric festivals should be introduced, or at least considered, as they have been highly successful overseas in helping maintain Croatian identity and in improving the quality of Croatian folkloric performance.

The Croatian community must focus on applying for ethno-specific and general Australian Government funding opportunities while they still have reasonably high

⁷³ The Croatian Youth Conference conference was organised by the Croatian Australian Community Council in NSW in cooperation with the United Croatian Clubs and Associations of Australia and New Zealand. The next Croatian Youth Conference is planned for 2010.

The Croatian Herald (New Generation Supplement), 3 Sept. 2009 p. 1.

⁷⁴ Both the South Australian Community strategic planning and Croatian Youth Conference received Australian Government funding.

Croatian Information Centre for South Australia, Croatian Community Council of South Australia, official website, <http://www.croatiasa.com/> accessed 6 October 2009.

The Australian Croatian Congress had a website a several years ago with a community calendar, however, it no longer exists. The Cronet website has a Croatian community events section but no new information has been added for a number of years.

Cronet, official website, <http://www.cronet.com.au/> accessed 6 October 2009.

⁷⁵ Australian Croatian Congress Conference, Adelaide, 21-22 November 2009.

Croatian-born and Croatian-speaker populations. Similarly, building links with Croatian institutions and the Croatian Government is highly beneficial as has been evident with its recent pledge to support financially Croatian language teaching in Australia.

To ensure a strong and vibrant Croatian community in Australia in the future the second and subsequent generations of Croatians will need to take a more active role in sustaining the Croatian community and identity in Australia. This has already begun through second-generation Croatians taking charge of club activities, the generational shift in the executive of the Association of Croatian Folkloric groups in NSW, and events such the Croatian Film Festival. Networking events may be a way to promote interactions between second and third generation professionals and recently arrived Croatian-born professionals. The Croatian community should provide more opportunities for second and third generation in leadership roles in Croatian clubs and associations. Succession and strategic planning with club involvement is vital on this score.

A key principle is the Croatian community in Australia must be inclusive, non-judgemental and encourage participation in Croatian community life at different levels with ranging degrees of engagement. The Croatian community should also celebrate and appreciate the contributions of all Australians of Croatian ancestry in order to provide a firm foundation for future growth.

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Budućnost hrvatske zajednice i hrvatskog identiteta u Australiji

Sažetak

Hrvatska zajednica u Australiji u stanju je demografske tranzicije jer se prilagođava uspostavljanju hrvatske državnosti. Australaska populacija Hrvata rođenih u Hrvatskoj starije je životne dobi pa će shodno tome tijekom sljedećeg desetljeća njihov broj biti u dramatičnom opadanju. Ranija su nastojanja hrvatske zajednice u Australiji bila usredotočena na postizanje hrvatske nezavisnosti, kao i na osnivanje klubova, sportskih objekata i katoličkih župa diljem Australije. Današnja su nastojanja usmjerena ka očuvanju hrvatske zajednice i identiteta u Australiji. Trud se također ulaže u izgradnju veza s hrvatskim institucijama u Hrvatskoj.

Ovaj članak razmatra trenutni status hrvatske zajednice u Australiji te istražuje što se može naučiti iz iskustava drugih hrvatskih zajednica dijaspora. Sugerira da će u svrhu održanja čvrste hrvatske zajednice u Australiji i u budućnosti, druga i sljedeće generacije Hrvata morati preuzeti aktivniju ulogu u očuvanju hrvatske zajednice i identiteta u Australiji. Taj je proces već započeo od strane druge generacije Hrvata koji su aktivniji u klupskim programima. Ovaj članak također preporuča strategije koje bi pomogle očuvanju hrvatske zajednice i identiteta u Australiji, bez obzira na ovu generacijsku tranziciju.

Ključne riječi: *Hrvati, australski Hrvati, hrvatska zajednica, Australija, imigranti, identitet, dijaspora*