

FROM CHAIR

TO CHAIR

The Musical Game of Leading
Culturally and Linguistically
Diverse Community Groups

By Henrietta Podgorska



ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I acknowledge that we are meeting on the traditional lands of the Whadjuk Noongar people, and we pay our respects to their Elders past, present, and emerging.



ABOUT ME

- **Community Engagement:** 11 years of professional experience
- **Volunteering:** 15 years in ethnic communities
- **Leadership:** 8 years in NFP volunteer-run organisations (grants, services, renovations, events)
- **Initiatives:** Organised Perth's first President/Chair Networking
- **Conferences:** Spoke about the disappearance of ethnic clubs at FECCA 2022
- **Roles:**
 - President of the Hungarian Association of WA for 2 years
 - Chair of Multilingual Australia for a year



What do we know?

RESEARCH

444: NOT FOUND

There's a noticeable gap in research about **volunteer leaders** and **volunteer-run organisations**, especially when it comes to CaLD-run groups. Virtually **no intersectional research** exists that covers both. Although the Volunteering Strategy website offers some relevant papers, only one specifically addresses the challenges of leadership



**National Strategy
for Volunteering –
Research Hub**



THE FREE-FALL OF VOLUNTEER LEADERS IN AUSTRALIAN GRASSROOTS ASSOCIATIONS

by Christel Mex

This paper discusses declining membership in grassroots organisations and the reluctance of members to become leaders. It explores the reasons behind these trends, including negative experiences reported by committee members.



CULTURAL PERCEPTIONS OF VOLUNTEERING: ATTRACTING VOLUNTEERS IN AN INCREASINGLY MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY

By Sara Dolnicar and Melanie Randle

The study explores cultural perceptions of volunteering in NSW's Illawarra region. It finds varied motivations among different groups; for instance, Macedonians and Greeks seek socialisation within their culture, while others aim to interact with Australians and improve their English.

ABOUT CALD GROUPS

ANCESTRY

270 +

LANGUAGES SPOKEN

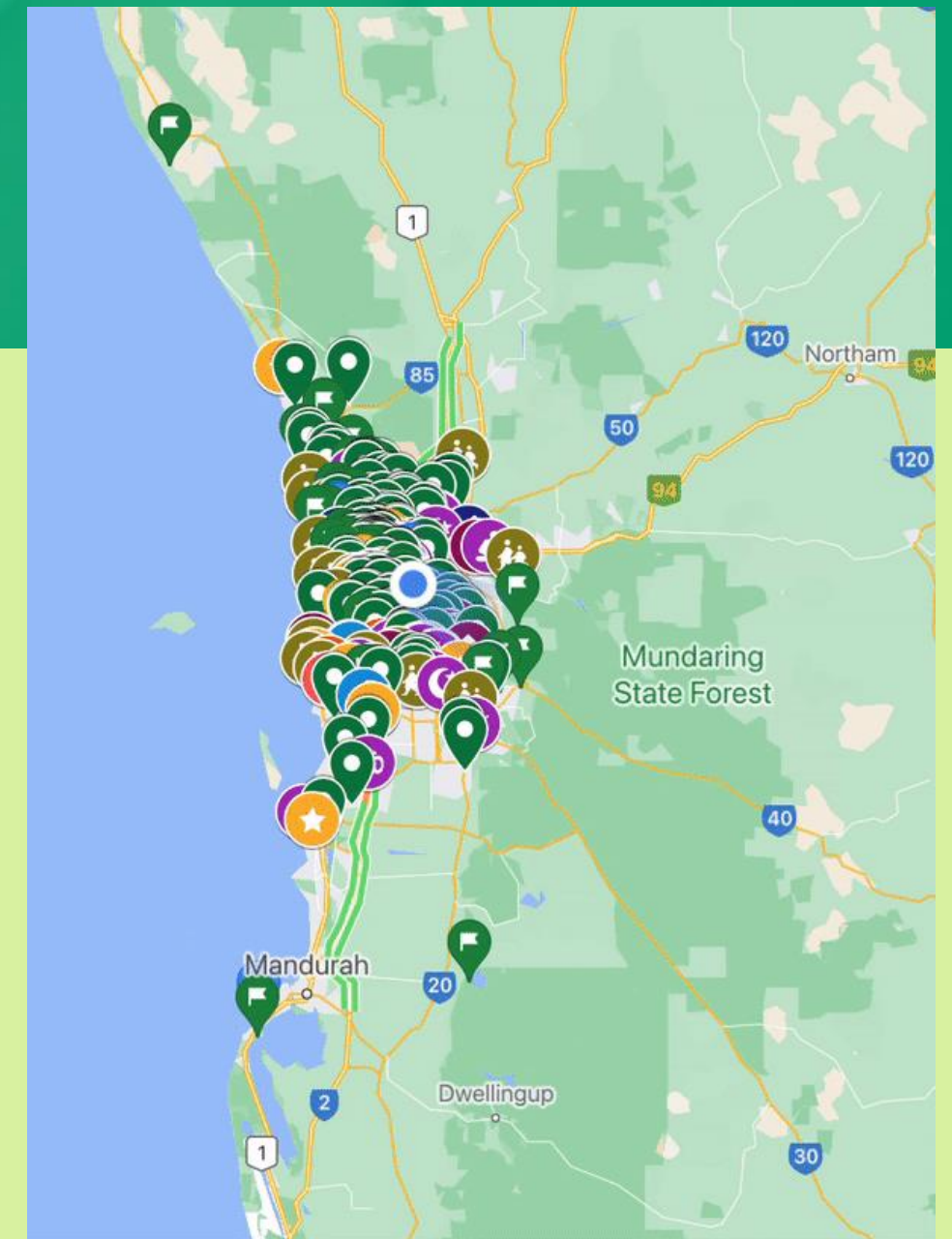
429

RELIGION (WA)

130+



CALD ASSOCIATIONS AND
VOLUNTEER GROUPS



CaLD organisations in Perth

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[VIEW MAP LEGEND](#)

TYPES OF GROUPS

it's crucial to recognise the diversity within culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD) groups. They can vary greatly in several aspects:



SIZE

Some groups might be large, organised bodies with committees, while others could be small, informal gatherings. Membership could range from just a few dozen to thousands.



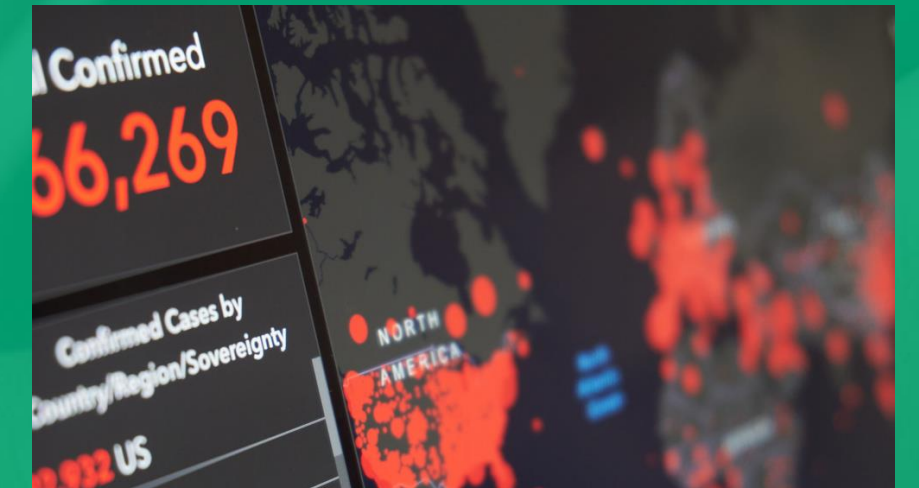
TERMINOLOGY-BASED CATEGORISATION

Groups can be emerging, newly-formed or well-established. The length of their existence often correlates with the resources they have at their disposal.



FACILITIES

The presence of a clubhouse or other large assets can dramatically affect a group's engagement with the community.



EMERGENCIES

Some groups may face unique challenges when significant events occur in their countries of origin, affecting their focus and activities here in Australia.

About the leaders

THE ROLE

Organisational Leadership:

- Preside over meetings
- Set the agenda for meetings
- Appoint committee chairs and members
- Delegate responsibilities
- Provide overall leadership and direction
- Mediate conflicts among members
- Act as the public face of the organisation

Strategic Planning:

- Develop and oversee the implementation of strategic plans
- Review and approve budgets
- Ensure organisational sustainability
- Identify fundraising opportunities
- Assess and manage risks

Governance:

- Ensure compliance with legal requirements
- Maintain accurate and complete records
- Review and update organisational policies
- Ensure ethical standards are met

Communication:

- Communicate with members regularly
- Foster relationships with external stakeholders
- Advocate for the organisation in the community
- Issue public statements and announcements

Membership:

- Promote membership growth
- Onboard and mentor new members
- Oversee member benefits and services

Programs and Events:

- Initiate and oversee community programs
- Plan and execute events
- Evaluate the effectiveness of programs and initiatives

Collaboration and Networking:

- Build partnerships with other organisations
- Engage with local government and businesses
- Represent the organisation at external events



Crisis Management:

- Prepare for and manage crises
- Make decisive actions during emergencies

Self-Improvement:

- Seek continual self-improvement
- Request and act upon feedback

**WHILST YOU ARE
A VOLUNTEER**

LEADERSHIP PRESSURES

Key challenges for Chairs, Presidents, and Community Leaders encompass financial management, regulatory compliance, and volunteer retention.



FINANCES

Fund Sourcing: Identifying and securing diverse funding streams can be a major challenge.

Treasury Management: Finding qualified volunteers to oversee financial accounts and ensuring transparency.

Cost Increases: Balancing budgets in the face of rising operational costs and living expenses.



REGULATIONS

Insurance: Meeting the insurance requirements to cover activities and events.

Certification: Ensuring the organisation and its activities meet legal and quality standards.

Legal Compliance: Adhering to charity status requirements, association acts, and other regulatory guidelines.



VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT AND RETENTION

Recruitment: Attracting capable and dedicated volunteers.

Retention: Keeping volunteers engaged and committed to the organisation.

Training: Providing appropriate orientation and ongoing training for volunteers.

WHILST YOU ARE A VOLUNTEER

CHALLENGES

In many ethnic communities, we're seeing a concerning trend:

- a decline in membership and activity,
- internal divisions,
- and the loss of valuable community assets to development.

These challenges highlight the need for proactive, unified leadership to not only preserve these communities but also to ensure their legacies are passed on to new generations and emerging migrant groups.

INTERGENERATIONAL ISSUES

Navigating the differing expectations, communication styles, and values of members from various age groups can be a major challenge. What appeals to older members might not resonate with the younger generation, and vice versa.

TECHNOLOGY GAP

As technology advances, keeping everyone on the same digital page—especially when members have varying levels of tech-savviness—can be a hurdle.

RACISM AND EXCLUSION

Older, more established groups sometimes resist engaging with newer, emerging communities, perpetuating divisions and limiting opportunities for collaboration. Including 2 and 3 generations of their own.



LOSS OF ETHNIC CLUBS

Ethnic communities are facing a decline, losing valuable assets like community centres to development. Unfortunately, these assets are not being passed on to the next generation or to new groups of migrants, compounding the sense of loss and missed opportunities.

CASE STUDY

Changed volunteering circumstances for CaLD community groups

I recently had a fascinating chat with a founding member of one of Perth's Italian clubs. She shared their journey of breaking away from a larger Italian club with over 6,000 members, as it didn't cater to family needs. Their new club was built from the ground up—quite literally—by its members. Comprising mainly blue-collar workers, they generously donated their time and materials to construct the club building. Remarkably, many of these founding members retired around the age of 55 and have been contributing nearly full-time to the club for almost 30 years.



What's next?

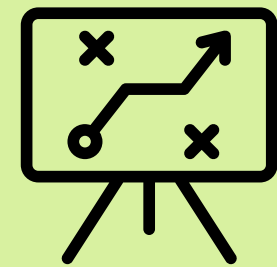
SOLUTIONS

Being a volunteer chair, president, or community leader isn't just a title—it's a role steeped in complexity. From juggling finances and navigating regulatory mazes to managing a diverse team of volunteers, the challenges are manifold. It's a journey of constant learning, adapting, and above all, leading with empathy and vision. And it's a journey no one should have to take alone. We invite all attendees and organisations here today to join us in strengthening volunteer-run CaLD groups and supporting their leadership. Together, we can pave a path towards more effective and sustainable community initiatives.



SEPERATION OF DUTIES

To enhance efficiency and accountability, it's vital to separate strategy and governance from day-to-day operations. This is particularly important for organisations that have been built around a strong personality-led leadership model. Separation allows for clearer decision-making and reduces the risk of conflicts of interest.



AUSPICING AND MERGING

For smaller groups, auspicing and merging can offer valuable opportunities for sustainability and growth. It's crucial, however, to map out these options carefully to ensure that smaller organisations are not overshadowed or exploited. This often requires specific training for the auspicing organisations to ensure a smooth transition and equitable partnership.



RESEARCH, RESEARCH, RESEARCH

The lack of targeted research is a significant gap in our understanding of community-led CaLD groups. Without proper data and insights, these organisations can't secure the help they need. Investing in comprehensive research is imperative for informed decision-making and effective support.

Call for Action

Connect and Share: If you know someone who is a chair, president, or community leader, reach out to them.

Be an Ally: Advocate for the benefits of multilingualism and cultural diversity within your own networks.

Volunteer: If you have skills in finance, governance, or community engagement, offer your services to a CaLD group in need.

Speak Up: If you see areas for improvement in how CaLD groups are supported at a systemic level, make your voice heard.

Donate: Resources are always tight. Consider donating, whether it's financial support or in-kind contributions like office supplies or event spaces.



THANK YOU

Any Questions?

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Chair

Multilingual Australia

