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# The development of ethnic community capital in Sydney: Creation of a multicultural city

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## **ABSTRACT**

Over the past fifty years migrants have shaped the public face and public space in Sydney and other Australian cities. This crucial development and exciting contribution to the urban space over the last fifty years helps to define Sydney as a dynamic multicultural global city. Various ethnic collectivities have established their own communal places of worship, social and sports clubs, schools, childcare and aged care facilities mobilising their limited resources. Through their own initiatives, commitment and investment of money and good will various ethnic community organisations have established places for community use on over 410 localities throughout the Sydney metropolitan area. In many instances they acquired existing public places, saving precious urban public space, but more often they built new culturally defined public buildings. As a consequence they have shaped social, economic and urban development in Sydney. The origin and functions of this contribution are found in cultural differences and preferences, settler needs, economic capability, availability of locations and the time of arrival. These collectively developed community public places are markers of the settlement of new cultures in Sydney and Australia, and have become key landmarks in many suburbs. Using the concept of “ethnic community capital” that informs on functional, spatial, material, financial, social and phenomenological aspects this development, this paper provides information on this important social development on the basis of data provided by 344 ethnic communal organisations. It outlines major social, economic, and spatial aspects of this development that has helped establish Sydney as a multicultural capital on the Pacific.

**Keywords:** ethnic community capital, communal public places, ethnic resources, multicultural city

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