

ICV ANNUAL REPORT

2020-21



ISLAMIC COUNCIL OF VICTORIA



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ABOUT US



Our vision

The Islamic Council of Victoria (ICV) strives “to foster and enable a vibrant Islamic Community where Muslims enrich society through the values of Islam.”

The ICV is the peak Muslim body in the state of Victoria representing over 200,000 Muslims via 75 member societies representing over 100 diverse ethnic communities. ICV offers both advocacy and social welfare services while leading state and national initiatives on social cohesion through community consultation and advice to all forms of lead agencies.

ICV aims to represent the interests and concerns of the community and is experienced in developing meaningful engagements, building strategic partnerships and aligning the delivery of our services to the Victorian Muslim communities.

ICV's vision and purpose as a community sector leader is built on the foundation of a common humanity, transcending differences. Its commitment to creating a strong sense of belonging has led to an increasing respect for shared beliefs and values resulting in deeper connections within diverse communities.

The ICV operates on two key platforms:

Advocacy

On matters of interest and concern to Muslims through advocacy, consultation and cooperation with governments, other peak bodies, faith communities, service providers, the media and the general public.

Welfare Services

Running over a dozen community programs, helping improve the welfare of disadvantaged and vulnerable groups within the Muslim community.

The ICV's core objective is to faithfully represent and advocate for the Victorian Muslim community and by doing so, promote harmony, respect and understanding between all elements of society, thereby ensuring that the integrity of each person's beliefs, cultures and traditions are respected. Our commitment to active engagement and consultative processes has led to a deep

understanding of stakeholder needs and priorities which are incorporated into our programs and policy focus areas.

Key ICV focus areas can be summarised as:

1. Advocacy and Public Relations
2. Islamophobia
3. Community Engagement
4. Political Engagement
5. Research and Policy
6. Australia's First Nations Peoples
7. Asylum Seekers and Refugees
8. Action against Family Violence
9. Social Welfare and Inclusion Programs
10. Youth Leadership and Capacity Building Programs
11. Women's Empowerment
12. Interfaith and Multicultural Relations
13. City Mosque Services
14. Interfaith and Multicultural Relations

The ICV's sustained efforts significantly contribute to the strengthening of social bonds between and amongst the numerous diverse communities making up modern-day Australia.

Our Member communities are at the centre of what we do. What we learn from them helps us develop stronger communities, support other service providers and lead positive change at local, state and national levels.

The ICV aims to support all Victorian Muslims to have a strong sense of belonging, through strong relationships with key stakeholders leading to increased understanding and respect for all. As Muslims we strive for harmonious living as we celebrate our diversity and build the bonds of humanity.



Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the ancestors, elders and families of the Wurundjeri and Boonwurrung tribes of the Kulin Nation, as the traditional owners and custodians of the land.

Recognition of the First Peoples

The ICV recognises the unique place the First Peoples hold in Australia's history and future and we are fully committed to advocating for their rights and working with their leaders in fostering better understanding and relationships.





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Adel Salman

ICV President

Assalaamu alaikum wa rahmatullahi wa barakaatuhu Dear Brothers, Sisters, and Respected Community Leaders.

I pray that you and your families are in the best of health and good spirits insha-Allah.

I am genuinely honoured and privileged to be serving as President of the ICV, and I am humbled by the trust and support shown by our Member societies. I ask Allah (swt) to grant me the sincerity, wisdom, and steadfastness to fulfill the responsibilities of this role.

I could find no better example to look to than my predecessor and dear brother Mohamed Mohideen. Not only does he care deeply about the community and selflessly serves it to the best of his ability, but he is a true role model for community engagement and is widely loved and respected. Whilst Mohamed is no longer President, he remains a leader in every sense, and we are fortunate that he continues to serve the ICV as Vice President alhamdulillah.

I would like to acknowledge the outgoing General Manager Ayman Islam and thank him for his many years of dedicated service to the ICV and the broader community. We welcome our new General Manager Zakaria Wahid and wish him every success. Zakaria has a track record of community work and brings passion and valuable skills that the ICV will benefit from.

Some of the current Board members are serving their second term and others are new to the ICV but are by no means new to community work. This a sincere and harmonious group of brothers and sisters and they collectively represent the wonderful diversity of our community. The staff and volunteers are the ones that make it all happen. The ICV is truly fortunate to have such a wonderful and hardworking team, may Allah (swt) reward them for their efforts.

The ICV is a member based representative body, and it is because of the grassroots links with our network of Member Societies that we can do the work that we do. I would like to acknowledge these inspirational brothers and sisters that work so selflessly for our community.

I would also like to acknowledge and thank the many friends of the ICV from across the multifaith and multicultural communities, the Victorian government, and our partner organisations for their support.

The last year has been an incredibly challenging time for the Victorian Muslim community. As I write today, the COVID-19 pandemic is particularly afflicting the diverse Muslim communities in the northern and western suburbs who sadly make up many of those very sick in hospital. We must acknowledge the frustration, emotional and mental health toll that the prolonged lockdowns are taking, and the sadness and sense of loss because we are not able to attend our mosques - the spiritual toll. We know that this pandemic has also taken a financial toll on families and small businesses. Our community is generally younger, and many are required to leave home because of the nature of their work. Many are working in essential services including our health system in which they regularly come into contact with others. May Allah (swt) keep them safe.

The strain on parents of prolonged remote learning for their children cannot be underestimated, as well as the impact on students' education. Islamic schools should be congratulated for the way that they have managed the ramifications of COVID cases and the intense and often sensationalist media scrutiny.

The closure of mosques and centres has also financially impacted our Member societies who rely on donations and contributions from the community. The ICV has been similarly impacted. The ICV will continue to provide

support and assistance to Muslims directly impacted by this pandemic including food hampers and access to emergency interest-free loans. This is a tough time for all, but I am sure that we will support one another and come out of this stronger and more connected than we have ever been insha-Allah.

We now have a 'roadmap' from the Victorian government outlining the plan for the easing of restrictions linked to community vaccination rates. Whilst we acknowledge that as at the time of writing, vaccination rates are increasing rapidly in those areas that had been lagging, we do feel that a concerted campaign collaborating with community organisations to drive up vaccination rates in the most affected LGAs should have been prioritised earlier before the case numbers rapidly increased in this way.

The ICV has advocated since the beginning of the pandemic for the government to recognise the unique and fundamental role that mosques play in the lives of Muslims, and that there should be absolute consistency in the application of COVID-safe restrictions across public spaces such as retail, sporting venues and places of worship. We will now be calling for practical and flexible guidelines for places of worship once we start reopening and the return to normal conditions including spatial distancing and density limits at the absolute earliest opportunity.

The ICV continues to advocate against Islamophobia and racism in all its manifestations including the online domain. The increasing threat of RWE (rightwing extremism) is finally being recognised by the authorities, but we remain concerned that double standards are applied when dealing with these groups and individuals that openly declare hatred for Islam and Muslims. We remain focused on our calls for the protection of religious freedom which is being challenged by laws that limit the rights of faith communities to faithfully teach their religious principles. More about the ICV's advocacy efforts can be found later in this annual report.

The ICV has two major strategic goals in addition to the ongoing COVID response program; the delivery of social services (Islamophobia Support, hospital and prison chaplaincy, pre- and post-release services, family violence education, NILS financial support, food relief); community empowerment programs (training and awareness session for Members, and youth and women leadership programs); management of the Jeffcott Street mosque; and advocacy on behalf of the diverse Muslim community.

The city mosque is used not only by Muslims living and working in the city and surrounding areas, but by large numbers of worshippers that are traversing through the city. We have outgrown this location. The office on Spencer Street provides the ICV with the space and facilities lacking in the Jeffcott Street building. And it is also a location that our Members and broader community can access to hold their events and to lease office space. We would ideally want to bring these together in the one location. As such, one of our strategic goals is to establish a new centre in the city that will cater for our growing needs and serve as an icon for the Muslim community and the city of Melbourne. The ICV will need the support of our Members and the broader Muslim community to realise this vision, and you can expect to hear more about our plans in the coming months insha-Allah.

The ICV, like many community organisations, is heavily reliant on government grants and community donations. Whilst we will continue to apply for government grants that align with the ICV's objectives and that will benefit the Muslim community, we must find a way to become less reliant and to diversify our income streams. Not only does this protect the ICV, but it also means that we can do more for the community and can plan with confidence beyond the next few weeks and months. This is why achieving long-term financial sustainability is the other major strategic goal.

May Allah (swt) protect you and your families.



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Zakaria Wahid

General Manager

As Salam Alaikum Wa Rahmatullahi Wa Barakaatuhu dear reader,

Starting as General Manager at the Islamic Council of Victoria this year, I feel very privileged and honoured to be appointed to this position. To have a career where you can directly serve the Muslim community for the sake of Allah (SWT) is very much a dream come true. I thank Allah (SWT) for providing me this opportunity to serve Him (SWT), and ask Him (SWT) to help me fulfill my duties in a manner that is most pleasing to Him (SWT).

I'd also like to thank the ICV family for being so welcoming to my appointment here, and I feel very blessed to be part of this wonderful team. I would like to firstly thank my predecessor, Ayman Islam, who did a spectacular job at the ICV. Ayman made my transition into ICV very smooth and simple, and has been a constant source of aid in my new position, which I'm very grateful for. I'd also like to thank the staff for their excellent work ethic and commitment to serving the community, as well as accepting me as their new GM. Lastly, I'd like to thank the President and Board Members for their continued support and expertise, which is vital in helping ICV complete the critical work it undertakes.

I'd also like to extend my gratitude and thanks to all our partners, donors and grantors. Without your continued support and assistance, the ICV would not be able to conduct the extensive work we are undertaking, and you have played a significant role in the continued growth, harmonisation and protection of the Muslim community and broader Victorian society.

Today, our community faces a plethora of challenges; from COVID-19's devastating impact, the threat of rising right-wing extremism, ever-present Islamophobia and much more. The Islamic Council of Victoria is committed to the protection of the Muslim community, seeking to advocate

for its rights at every level of Government, while providing a variety of services to the community. These services the ICV provides make up the core of the work we undertake on a daily basis.

Our Food Hamper and Interest Free Loan programs have provided assistance and relief to those in our community most in need. This has been especially prevalent during COVID-19, where we have had a surge in demand for these services. Additionally, our Prison & Youth Chaplaincy, Muslim Connect and Hospital Chaplaincy programs provide ongoing critical support to vulnerable and struggling members of our community, to help rehabilitate and reintegrate them back into society. Furthermore, our Islamophobia and Family Violence programs continue to provide much needed support in areas of serious concern in our community. Lastly, our Mosque on Jeffcott Street (West Melbourne) continues to act as the heart of the ICV, being able to provide ongoing prayer services outside of the COVID-19 lockdowns.

Moving forward, the ICV will continue to look towards the expansion of its capabilities in assisting the community and responding swiftly to new challenges. During COVID-19, the ICV has started a variety of in-depth initiatives, from online information sessions and mosque safety plans, all the way to massive collaborations such as the 'Working For Victoria' program. Additionally, the ICV is looking towards expanding its reach in marketing, social media, advocacy and other fields.

The Muslim community has faced many challenges over the various decades ICV has operated. We at the ICV seek to continue to face these challenges in the protection of our community, just as our past predecessors have done so. We will continue to strive towards ICV's vision of "fostering and enabling a vibrant Islamic Community where Muslims enrich society through the values of Islam", and I ask Allah (SWT) to grant us success in this endeavour.



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The Honourable Linda Dessau AC

Governor of Victoria

I welcome the opportunity to acknowledge the work of the Islamic Council of Victoria over this past year. Its work in strengthening our multiculturalism, and in advocating on behalf of approximately 200,000 Muslims in our State, goes towards the strengthening of the entire Victorian community.

Ours is a proud, multicultural State. Our strength lies in our diversity, and the respect that we hold for pluralism. While COVID-19 and the challenges we have faced have tested us, they have similarly shown that we are stronger when we work together, when we support each other, and when we all commit to continuing respect and understanding.

The ICV's ongoing leadership in upholding these values, and its overall contribution to our State's multicultural harmony, is significant.

On behalf of all Victorians, I wish to thank the Islamic Council of Victoria for all that it contributes towards – in the words of our State motto – Victoria's continuing Peace and Prosperity.



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The Hon. Daniel Andrews MP

Premier of Victoria

Since the start of the pandemic, we have all faced immense challenges in unprecedented times.

Many in the Muslim community in Melbourne have been heavily impacted by recent outbreaks, with schools, families and children bearing much of the burden of getting tested, staying at home and isolating from others.

I know many of you are tired, and frustrated – this has been so hard for so many reasons.

But we must continue to find the strength within ourselves to protect our community and our health system.

Right now, we need all Victorians to come forward and get vaccinated.

Vaccines are safe and effective at protecting you and your family from COVID-19. If you've got any questions about getting vaccinated, please talk to your doctor or a pharmacist.

I'd also like to acknowledge the leadership and hard work of the Islamic Council of Victoria throughout this pandemic. You have raised the issues that have mattered most to your community and in doing so have helped so many Victorians. Your efforts are deeply appreciated by this Government.

To everyone reading, thank you for the sacrifices you are making to protect each other and our healthcare system – stay safe and take care.

Best wishes



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The Hon. Scott Morrison MP

Prime Minister of Australia

Congratulations to all whose work is represented in this annual report of the Islamic Council of Victoria (ICV). It is an impressive record of achievement.

Throughout 2020–21 the ICV has lived out its faith: creating community, caring for those who need a helping hand, and extending friendship through multi-faith engagement.

As Australians, we have worked together through some of the most difficult times, supporting and encouraging one another. It has been a time for practical solutions to practical problems, driven by a commitment to our shared humanity.

I am grateful for your response to the challenges of the past year.

From providing practical and financial support to victims of the bushfires, you turned to disseminating information and guidance on COVID-19. As the impact of the pandemic became more severe, particularly in Victoria, you led your community by observing the necessary restrictions with sensitivity and understanding.

It has been a difficult period for Australia and for your community who have sacrificed so much – but you have played your part and I am grateful for your efforts.

ICV's mission of 'love, compassion and respect' is a commitment to building the social cohesion that will carry

us through this crisis. Your work helps to sustain Australia's successful multicultural and multi-faith society, of which we can all be proud.

Thank you for the work during 2020–21, and best wishes for the coming twelve months.

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Throughout 2020–21 the ICV has lived out its faith: creating community, caring for those who need a helping hand, and extending friendship through multi-faith engagement.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Scott Morrison".



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The Hon. Anthony Albanese MP

Leader of the Australian Labor Party

On behalf of the Australian Labor Party, I wish to express my gratitude to the Islamic Council of Victoria for the important work you do. As a nation, we draw so much of our strength in our diversity, but the continued health of that diversity does not simply happen on its own. It depends on the hard work of all the members and generous volunteers who make up organisations such as yours.

More broadly, you represent, guide and advocate for a community that is a valued part of the great success of Australian multiculturalism. People of Islamic faith have been a part of the Australian story for so long. But as is the case in so much of the world, that story has taken a twist this year – especially in Victoria.

To the 200,000 Muslim Victorians, I know so many of you will be feeling cut off from your community – but, I hope, cut off only physically, not emotionally. May your faith and your sense of family

and community bring you comfort, a comfort suffused with the knowledge that this pandemic will end, and that we will emerge better and closer than we went into it.

I hope that by this time next year, you are all back to practising and celebrating your faith in the time-honoured ways – and that we all look back on 2021 as a tough test that we all passed together.

With warmest wishes,



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The Hon. Alex Hawke MP

Minister for Immigration, Citizenship,
Migrant Services and Multicultural Affairs

I extend my congratulations to the Islamic Council of Victoria on your outstanding achievements and I thank you for the support you have provided to so many Muslim Australians over the past year.

In the midst of considerable challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, I commend the Council for its commitment to service, and for the compassion and dedication displayed by your members and volunteers.

I would like to express my appreciation for the Council's invaluable work in community dialogue, chaplaincy, charity, and ongoing engagement with government. You have helped promote harmony, respect and understanding across Victoria and Australia.

Additionally, your commitment to keeping your community safe by encouraging vaccination and COVID safe practices; as well as your focus on actively supporting your community members to look after their physical and mental wellbeing during times of lockdown.

Muslim Australians are an integral part of the Australian community, and our diverse nation continues to be enriched by your economic, social and cultural contributions.

With over thirty percent of Muslim Australians calling the state of Victoria home, the Islamic Council of Victoria has significantly contributed to our vibrant Muslim community that has enhanced the lives of not only Muslim Australians, but the wider Victorian community.

I wish you all the best in the year ahead.



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The Hon. Ros Spence MP

Minister for Multicultural Affairs

As Victoria's Minister for Multicultural Affairs, I am pleased to acknowledge the work of the Islamic Council of Victoria in supporting and strengthening Victoria's Muslim community.

Our Muslim community and all culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse communities make an invaluable contribution to the success of our state. These contributions do not go unnoticed and are greatly appreciated.

The leadership provided by the Islamic Council of Victoria is an invaluable support to many within our diverse community – particularly in these challenging times. You are a shining example of the strength, resilience and compassion that Victoria prides itself on.

Our diversity is one of our state's greatest strengths, and your ongoing efforts in supporting that diversity ensures that it will thrive into the future.

On behalf of the Andrews Labor Government, I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to the Islamic Council of Victoria and its extended network. I look forward to working closely with you over the coming year.

With warmest wishes,



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The Hon. Michael O'Brien MP

Leader of the Opposition

I am delighted to extend my warmest regards to the Islamic Council of Victoria (ICV) as it reflects on its highlights and achievements over the past year.

This years' annual Islamic Council of Victoria (ICV) Magazine comes to us during an uncertain and challenging time for humanity where the onset of COVID-19 has transformed the world and our lives.

We are in a time of adjustment, consideration and understanding and our collective responsibility is to foster a spirit of friendship, compassion and belonging; celebrating our shared values of the common good.

During this unsettling COVID-19 period, the ICV has continued to show strength, leadership and support to those in need, especially to our most vulnerable members of our community.

We recognise the exceptional work the ICV does, through its numerous services and programs within our State's Islamic and the broader Victorian community, and through its partnerships with government, business, and other faith groups.

I thank and congratulate the Islamic Council of Victoria (ICV) for the remarkable work that you do, the strength and guidance you have shown and continue to show, in building upon our harmonious and cohesive Victoria.

I wish you all the best in the year ahead.



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Neil Angus MP

Shadow Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs

I am delighted to extend my warmest regards to the Islamic Council of Victoria (ICV) as it reflects on its highlights and achievements over the past year.

The ICV continues to support and engage its members through its numerous services and programs. No doubt, these achievements and others will be highlighted in this year's Annual Report. In addition, the ICV contributes to the development of our multicultural State.

Our incredible diversity of cultures, languages, and beliefs enriches our way of life here in Victoria. Community organisations such as the ICV help foster greater understanding and acceptance of this I congratulate the Islamic Council of Victoria on its continued

commitment to supporting its members and extend my best wishes for its future endeavours.

diversity. Together with other Victorian culturally and linguistically diverse organisations, the ICV helps to promote Victoria's reputation as a model of multicultural harmony.



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Vivienne Nguyen

Message from the Chairperson, Victorian Multicultural Commission

I extend my congratulations to the Islamic Council of Victoria (ICV) on another year of exemplary service to our state's Muslim communities.

The ICV has been a vital source of guidance and support to many Victorians, especially in these most challenging times.

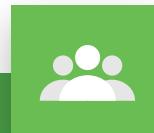
Since the pandemic reached Australia in early 2020, the ICV has led its community through every challenge. Through its social media platforms, bulletins and direct outreach work, the Council has provided education on COVID-19 tests, vaccinations and changes to restrictions. It has encouraged people to isolate and get tested when displaying symptoms and developed guidance for social distancing when attending mosque. ICV leaders have supported the VMC and government departments when there have been local outbreaks. This work has saved lives.

Throughout all this, the ICV has continued to promote causes close to the VMC's heart. These include anti-racism, the Consortium Report, mental health wellbeing and the improvement of interfaith dialogue.

I give my heartfelt thanks to the ICV for all your work over their last year. We are grateful to have you as an ally and look forward to continuing our collaboration.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The ICV held its 2020 AGM on Sunday the 28th of February 2021. It was held in 2021 due to COVID-19 restrictions. Sarah Barini was elected as the new Youth Portfolio Lead, as well as Inaz Janif as the Women's Portfolio lead. Adel Salman was elected as the new President of ICV, replacing Mohamed Mohideen who was finishing his 4-year tenure. The new President thanked Mohamed Mohideen for his excellent service and commitment to the community. The ICV would like to thank all of the member societies that attended the AGM and for their continued support and engagement in supporting the Muslim community.



Board for the term February 2021 to September 2022:

Adel Salman
President

Inaz Janif
Exco Member

Mohamed Mohideen
Vice President

Sacir Lacevic
Exco Member

Yusuf Zarani
Secretary

Sarah Baarini
Exco Member

Milon Islam
Treasurer

Tris Mardiastuty
Exco Member

Abdel Kareem Halabi
Exco Member



ICV STAFF



Farewell & Thank You

It's with great sadness that the ICV bids farewell to our General Manager, Ayman Islam. Ayman was an incredibly talented and caring leader, who worked tirelessly in aiding the community through his position at ICV. Ayman served at the ICV for many years, first starting out as a volunteer, and then progressing to General Manager afterwards. Ayman showed great resolve as a leader, ensuring the many ICV programs ran smoothly, while also

working closely with the executive committee to continue the growth and sustainability of the organisation. His contributions to the ICV and to the community at large are invaluable, and we were very blessed to have him. We wish Ayman the very best with his future carer, may Allah (swt) grant him happiness, fulfillment and success.

Ayman Islam
General Manager (former)

Zakaria Abdul Wahid
General Manager (current)

Sheik Abdinur Weli
Head Imam

Selcan Kurnali
Family Violence Officer

Sheik Mohamed Ramzan
Prison Chaplain

Sheik Abdul Kadir
Justice Services

Sheik Altaf Hussain
Prison Chaplain

Asma Siddiq
NILS Program

Cornelius Romein
IT Administrator

Sheik Muhamed Didic
Prison Chaplain

Holly Claridge
Islamophobia
Program Lead

Khadija Elbashir
Prison Chaplain

Lina Ayoubi
Hospital Chaplain

Ashraf Shukri
City Mosque Caretaker

Liyana Schroeder
Executive Assistant

Mohammed Mirza
Muslim Connect

Mohamud Kurkcu
Youth Justice

Mukhtar Mohammed
Muslim Connect

Selma Cook
Prison Chaplain

Suaad Warsame
Executive Assistant

Mustaque Ahmed
Accounts Officer

Umar Butler
My Vote Matters

Ismael Cosic
City Mosque Caretaker

Idil Aden
ICV COVID-19
Outreach Community
Engagement Officer

Marco La Rocca
ICV COVID-19
Outreach Community
Engagement Officer

ADVOCACY

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The role of a peak body is to effectively advocate on behalf of its constituency

Adel Salman

President

The ICV's advocacy work has several elements. Evidence to inform the positions can make the difference between stating an opinion and effectively arguing for a change in policy, approach, or attitude. The ICV has been able to build a **network of universities, academics, and researchers** to support our efforts in this area, and this was fully demonstrated during the development of the Islamophobia position statement which we released last year.

Documenting and persuasively arguing not only your position on a particular issue but also outlining specific recommendations for government, NGOs, media, police, and other stakeholders is essential if you want your voice to have an impact. Conscious of this reality, the ICV is investing time and effort to develop **public position statements** on a range of issues that matter to the Muslim community. These include the devastating impact on Muslim communities of oppressive counter-terrorism laws, police tactics and flawed CVE (countering violent extremism) programs that target, problematise and marginalise Muslims and Muslim identity. This is why the ICV has joined the International Witness Campaign (IWC) as one of fifty-five partner organisations from across the world to bring attention to the devastating impacts of the twenty-year global war on terror.

Sometimes it is more effective to advocate for a position as part of a coalition to strengthen and magnify your voice. There are issues of common concern with other faith groups, and the ICV has worked with various faith communities on several issues including the recently

legislated Change or Suppression Practices Act where we jointly advocated for the rights of faith leaders and parents to provide advice and guidance to their constituents. Whilst the bill is now law, there is an opportunity for faith groups to input on the regulations that will set out how the law will be implemented.

The advocacy work that the ICV has been doing and will continue to do in relation to the closure of places of worship due to COVID is another example of where we have been working with other faith groups who share similar concerns. More detail about this can be found in the President's message.

A key element of the ICV's advocacy work is consistent and authentic public messaging. As much as some media can be negative, sensationalist, exclusionary, and simply untrue when it comes to reporting on Muslims and the Muslim community, the reality is that the media is a permanent feature of everyday life, and it can be an effective platform when journalists and media organisations faithfully adhere to media standards. As Muslims, we don't ask for any favours from the media, but we do expect accuracy and balance, and the opportunity to tell our story in our own words. We have consistently heard from Member societies that they look to the ICV to be their voice. This is a big responsibility, and we try our best to represent the broad community view where appropriate insha-Allah. Not all in the community will agree with our **media statements or media comments**, and we welcome feedback.

To be viewed as a legitimate peak body, the audience for your advocacy work must believe that you are **representative of your constituency**. Alhamdulillah, the ICV is a member-based umbrella organisation and is accountable to its Member societies. We have invested significant time and effort to establish genuine two-way communication with our Member societies and we will continue to improve in this area insha-Allah. Like the caveat on media communications, we don't claim to represent all views in this wonderfully diverse Victorian Muslim community, but we aim to consult widely.

Islamophobia

This remains our main area for advocacy. Alhamdulillah, the Islamophobia Support Service is now better known in the community as evidenced by the number of referrals that the ICV receives and the number of cases that we are supporting. This is a mixed blessing. We would much rather receive no incident referrals because Islamophobia is not an issue, but we know this is not the case. In fact, the opposite is true, fuelled by RWE sympathisers that poison social media platforms and public narratives that demonise and dehumanise Muslims often spread by politicians and irresponsible media outlets.

Submissions

It is a key responsibility of peak representative bodies to make formal submissions to government and parliamentary enquiries on matters of concern to its constituency. This is an essential element of our advocacy efforts. The ICV made two key submissions in the past year, one in response to the Commonwealth Joint Standing Committee Inquiry into extremist movements and radicalism in Australia 2021. The other was in response to a Commonwealth Inquiry into the Family Re-Union Visa Program. Pleasingly, both the Federal and State Governments directly seek the ICV's input via formal submissions or consultations.

As always, the ICV seeks and welcomes community feedback on its advocacy work and suggestions for other priority advocacy areas.



Inquiry into extremist movements and radicalism in Australia

The Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security (PJCIS).

Terms of Reference

The Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security (the Committee) will inquire into and report on matters relating to extremist movements and radicalism in Australia.

The Committee will consider the following terms of reference in conducting this inquiry:

1) The nature and extent of, and threat posed by, extremist movements and persons holding extremist views in Australia, with a particular focus on:

- a) the motivations, objectives and capacity for violence of extremist groups including, but not limited to, Islamist and far-right-wing extremist groups, and how these have changed during the COVID-19 pandemic; and **Yes**
- b) the risk to the community of high risk terrorist offenders; **Yes**

2) The geographic spread of these extremist movements and persons in Australia, and their links to international extremist organisations; **Yes**

3) Without limiting the other matters that the Committee may consider, issues for specific inquiry are:

- a) changes that could be made to the Commonwealth's terrorist organisation listing laws to ensure they are fit for purpose, address current and emerging terrorist threats, reflect international best practice, and provide a barrier to those who may seek to promote an extremist ideology in Australia; **Yes**
- b) changes that could be made to Australia's Counter-Terrorism Strategy in relation to preventing radicalisation to extremist views, including the capacity for further partnership approaches with state, territory and local governments; **Yes**
- c) the role and influence of radical and extremist groups, which currently fall short of the threshold for terrorist organisation listing, in creating disharmony in Australia and as a conduit to persons on a pathway to extremism;
- d) further steps that the Commonwealth could take to disrupt and deter hate speech and establish thresholds to regulate the use of symbols and insignia associated with terrorism and extremism, including online, giving consideration to the experience of other countries; **Yes**
- e) further steps the Commonwealth could take to reinforce social cohesion, counter violent extremism and address the growing diversification of extremist ideology in Australia.

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ICV Submission to the Inquiry into extremist movements and radicalism in Australia
The Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security (PJCIS)

ICV view:

- Right-wing extremism (RWE) is the biggest terrorist/extremist threat to Australia, and more so than so-called 'Islamist extremism'.
- The government at all levels, and security agencies, have only recently understood this very real threat. Their response does not reflect the scale and urgency of the threat.
- For example, the government and security agencies have yet to proscribe a single RWE organisation.
- RWE ideology is shared internationally. It is a global problem and requires global coordination.
- What unifies all RWE groups is open hatred of Islam and Muslims. Some will talk about the 'other': Asians, Jews, migrants, refugees, LGBTQ+ people. Many are however eschewing open hatred for these groups because of community backlash:
 - o Publicly attacking Islam and Muslims is fair game and carries little or no risk of ramifications
 - o Often these groups will say that they will focus on Muslims to recruit members before they are being proscribed and say that they will come to these other groups at a later time.
- Saying that "I hate Islam" or "Islam is a barbaric" or "evil" there is an "Islamic conspiracy" in the West is now a euphemism for saying "I hate Muslims"; "Muslims are the enemy"; etc. This allows the user to bypass hate laws and racism laws, because they can say they are attacking an ideology or a culture, and do not have to attack individuals. They will say in a free society they should be able to express these views.
- Online radicalisation is a very serious problem. There is alarming inaction against Muslims that has been compounded by the lack of moderation on social media, especially Facebook. Twitter and YouTube have been very weak.
- There are disclosure standards at play. One applied to Muslim extremist content and another applied to anti-Semitic and anti-Muslim hatred.
- This disclosure standard is born in terms of the resources they have looking for RWE content and the algorithms they have developed to automatically detect. In terms of their response when community members report this hateful content and these RWE groups, it is best characterised as slow and often dismissive.

INTRODUCTION

The Islamic Council of Victoria (ICV) welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security's Inquiry into Extremist Movements and Radicalism in Australia.

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REPORT FROM THE REGIONS VICTORIA

Due to ongoing COVID restrictions, the activities of Muslims in Rural Victoria have again been slightly hampered. However, the Muslim population in Rural Victoria continues to be an important focus of ICV's operations, and the ICV have been supporting many organisations and activities throughout the year. A summary of some activities are presented below.

On January 24 the ICV attended the Open day of the Bendigo Islamic Community Centre to view the early stages of the new Bendigo Mosque. The ICV also held its monthly meeting Board meeting during this day while based in Bendigo.

On Sunday March 14 members of the ICV Board visited the Geelong Islamic Society as part of the ICV state-wide Mosque open day.

During Ramadan, the ICV held its annual Iftaar in Bendigo. Every year this moves to various towns as part of the ICV's commitment to the regional areas. These events are always well received by the local communities, particularly as this event was unable to be held in 2020. Up to 200 people from Bendigo and Melbourne attended, and the event received much publicity throughout central Victoria, via the local media and the ABC.

Also during Ramadan, ICV representatives attended Iftaars held in Gippsland by the Gippsland Australian Muslim Community Inc, and United Muslim Sisters of the Latrobe Valley. Finally, on May 9 the Islamic Society of Geelong held a fundraiser which involved the local interfaith community (see picture).

There are many Jumma facilities available to the Muslim community throughout regional Victoria. The list of Rural towns offering some prayer facilities include Geelong; Ballarat; Bendigo; Ararat; Horsham; Shepparton; Mooroopna; Albury-Wodonga; Cobram, Yallourn North; Morwell; Traralgon; Bairnsdale; Warrnambool; Melton; Mildura, and Seymour. For those attending the Rural areas during the Easter break the ICV issued a list of these organisations offering Jumma on Good Friday.

Mosques continue to be built in regional Victoria including Bendigo and Ararat. The beginning of Ramadan 2021 saw the Islamic Society of Albury / Wodonga opening their new Mosque at 494 Wagga Road Lavington, NSW.

Muslims in Victoria certainly have an extensive network in the regional areas. The societies in regional Victoria include the Islamic Society of Geelong; the Islamic Society of Ballarat; Bendigo Islamic Community Centre; Ararat Islamic Welfare Association; Horsham Islamic Welfare Association; Shepparton Albanian Moslem Society Inc; Turkish Islamic And Cultural Centre and Mosque, Mooroopna; Afghani Community Centre Shepparton; Islamic Society of Albury / Wodonga; Gippsland Australian Muslim Community Inc; United Muslim Sisters of the Latrobe Valley; the Light of Hidiyah; Melton Madina Musalla; Turkish Islamic Society Mildura; Majid al Sahaba, Seymour and the Warrnambool Islamic Society. Many of these societies are members of the ICV. Each group is well established in their local areas and connect well with their communities through interfaith activities and interact through their social media and other outlets.

Due to the continued pandemic, many of the regional groups offered online services for Eid and Jumma due to the restricted access to the Mosques and prayer places. The ICV also held online sessions specifically for those in the regional areas regarding the COVID pandemic.

While 2021 has been another challenging year for all Muslims, the Muslims in regional Victoria remain a key focus for the ICV. Again, it has been a pleasure to be the ICV Regional Board member.



AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

The Victorian Multicultural Awards for Excellence acknowledge the outstanding achievements of people, groups and organisations that foster cross-cultural understanding, build social cohesion and support people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to participate in all aspects of life.

This year, 71 Victorians were acknowledged for their outstanding achievements in strengthening

multiculturalism through either professional or volunteer service to the community.

At an online ceremony hosted by the Victorian Multicultural Commission, the ICV was awarded The Multicultural Award for Excellence in Community Response and Recovery.



VICTORIAN **MULTICULTURAL**
AWARDS FOR **EXCELLENCE** 2020



Community Response
and Recovery
AWARD

VICTORIAN
multicultural
commission
strengthening our community

VICTORIA
State
Government

MOSQUE OPEN DAY

ICV's Victorian Mosque Open Day project launched in 2017 and has become an annual hit since. Thousands of Victorians have flocked to a local Mosque near them to get to know their Muslim neighbours, partaking in guided Mosque tours, hijab tutorials, henna tattoo art, jumping castles, sausage sizzles and discussions about Islamic beliefs.

Supported by the State Government and the Victorian Multicultural Commission, the ICV has approached Mosques across Victoria, asking them to open their doors and hearts to the public of all beliefs to strengthen community spirit, build better relationships with neighbours and breakdown misconceptions about Islam. This has helped the wider Victorian public to look beyond the negative reports they are faced with through the media, helping combat Islamophobia and hate speech, through kindness and hospitality.

This year, our Mosque Open Day which included 15 participating Mosques from Geelong to Dandenong to Deer Park and Newport and the CBD and many more areas, had the additional challenges of navigating the COVID-19 Pandemic and ensuring safety to all those that attended. Despite the challenges posed the event was a great success with participating mosques reporting good attendance, interaction and bright smiles to match the beautiful weather on the day. Australian Bosnian Islamic Community, Deer Park Secretary, Alen Havic said "this event is about building bridges, it's about combating those negative stereotypes". An event like this builds a strong and cohesive multicultural community by combating racism and hatred.

The 2nd year anniversary of the Christchurch Massacre also coincided with the mosque open day to remind us that understanding one another is vital. ICV President Adel Salman, stated that "we need to always be vigilant and never let hatred and racism win. By our love and respect for one another we can overcome such evil. We can try to make a better world for us, our children and generations to come."

The ICV would like to thank the general public for the support and understanding they have shown by visiting and participating in the 2021 Victorian Mosque Open Day.



Afghan Islamic Centre & Omar Farooq Mosque (AICOM)
Albanian Mosque - Albanian Australian Islamic Society (AAIS)
Australian Bosnian Islamic Centre (Deer Park)
Australian Islamic Centre (Newport Mosque)
Benevolence Australia
Doncaster Mosque - UMMA Centre
El Sedaq Heidelberg Mosque
Emir Sultan Mosque Dandenong
Geelong Mosque - Islamic Society of Geelong
Golden Wattle Mosque
Islamic Museum of Australia (IMA)
Islamic Council of Victoria (City Mosque)
Maidstone Mosque
Virgin Mary Mosque
ISOMER (Islamic Society of Melbourne Eastern Region)

14 Photinia St, Doveton VIC 3177
765 Drummond St, Carlton North VIC 3054
29-31 St Kilda Rd, Southbank VIC 3006
23-27 Blenheim Rd, Newport VIC 3015
125 George St, Doncaster East VIC 3108
72 George St, Doncaster East VIC 3109
32 Elliott St, Heidelberg Heights VIC 3081
139 Cleveland St, Dandenong VIC 3175
45-47 Bostock Ave, Manifold Heights VIC 3218
700 Davis Rd, Tarneit VIC 3029
15A Anderson Rd, Thornbury VIC 3071
66-68 Jeffcott St, West Melbourne VIC 3003
34 Studley St, Maidstone VIC 3012
143 Hogans Rd, Hoppers Crossing VIC 3029
1273 Wellington Rd, Lysterfield VIC 3156

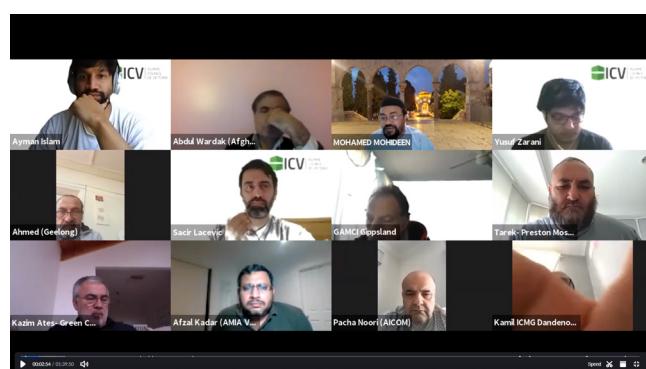
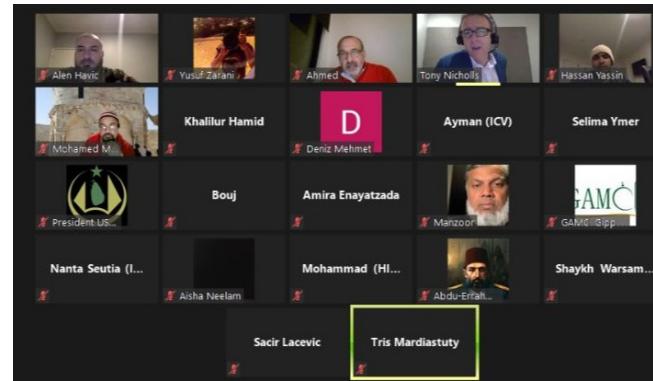
Sunday 14th March | 2021
Between 10am - 4pm

ICV ISLAMIC COUNCIL OF VICTORIA
VICTORIAN multicultural commission strengthening our community
VIC TORIA

MEMBER SOCIETY ENGAGEMENT

ICV's Special General Meetings (SGM)

The ICV held a Special General Meeting (SGM) on Sunday 27th September 2020, with Member Societies to vote and approve changes to the ICV Constitution. Conducted over zoom due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, a total of 18 resolutions were unanimously passed, most being minor changes in keeping with ACNC and Consumer Affairs requirements. It was also an opportunity for the executive committee to update the membership on some of the project work and advocacy initiatives in the current phase of the pandemic.



ICV Crisis Media Management Workshop

The ICV hosted a Crisis Media Management workshop for its member societies in August 2020 via Zoom. The workshop hosted by Tony Nicholls from Good Talent Media focused on how to implement a good crisis media strategy and opportunities and challenges posed by the current media landscape. The one-hour webinar also touched on the importance of media management messaging and an effective social media strategy. Attending members were also afforded an opportunity for a Q&A which addressed some of the challenges and concerns around general media reporting and the focus on Muslims and the multicultural community.

Governance Workshop

The ICV conducted a workshop on Governance, ACNC and DGR applications in October 2020. This workshop was run to support member societies in better understanding the rules and requirements regarding their registration with Consumer Affairs Victoria and Australian Charities and Not for Profit Commission (ACNC).

This workshop was run using the zoom and was attended by over 20 member societies. Mohamed Mohideen, then-President of the ICV conducted the workshop. The initial aspects of the workshop were for the members to understand the new rules with regard to running meetings, SGMS and AGMs during the COVID restriction period. The forum also discussed DGR status and how societies could apply and the benefits of acquiring DGR status.



COVID-19 ENGAGEMENT

COVID-19 & Vaccination Information Sessions and Q&A's

The Islamic Council of Victoria has run a variety of Q&A and information sessions on COVID-19 and the Vaccine. These have primarily been led by our Vice-President, Br. Mohamed Mohideen, who works at the Department of Health, and is well suited to educate the community on these pertinent topics. This has allowed the community to develop a greater understanding of the dangers of COVID-19, and help combat misinformation surrounding vaccinations.



Ramadan During COVID Times Planning Session (with all Mosques) (18th March 2021)

In March 2021, the Islamic Council of Victoria held a planning session with all the Mosques to discuss and plan on how to celebrate Ramadan in a COVID-safe environment. This was necessary as even though restrictions had eased at the time, there was still the looming danger of an outbreak that could occur. Guest speakers included Professor John Catford, Principal Health Advisor, COVID Pandemic Response at the Department of Justice and Community Safety.

ICV
ISLAMIC COUNCIL OF VICTORIA (ICV) WOULD LIKE TO
INVITE YOU TO
**Ramadan During COVID Times
Planning Session**
MARCH 18, 2021
WHERE: ZOOM

The ICV will be hosting a planning session with all the Mosques to discuss and plan on how to celebrate Ramadan in a COVID-safe environment.

Guest: Prof. John Catford – Principal Health Advisor, COVID Pandemic Response, Department of Justice and Community Safety

Date: 18 March 6:30pm

Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81569304601>

Meeting ID: 815 6930 4601
One tap mobile
+61871501149,,81569304601# Australia
+61280156011,,81569304601# Australia

Food Hampers

With the support of the state government, Halal Food Bank and partners, ICV provides essential food hampers of non-perishable items to families and individuals in need through a special COVID-19 relief fund. This includes international students, single parents, people in isolation and those with little to no access to food.

Thanks to the support of our wonderful volunteers and collaboration with local mosques and community organisations, we have been able to distribute over 2000 food hampers in response to the COVID-19 emergency.

Community Responses:

- “Asalamoalikum thank you so much. Appreciate it. Really means a lot during these difficult times. May Allah grant you all a place in Jannat and reward everyone involved in this drive.” - Family from the City of Melbourne

- “Wa jazakallah Khayr for delivering the Halal Boxes. May Allah reward you.” – Family from the City of Moreland
- “Good Morning, thank you for organising the hampers and everyone has received their hamper. Thanks and enjoy your day!!” – On behalf of families from Ballarat



Stories Beyond COVID

The ICV invited diverse communities across Victoria to share their experiences during the time of COVID-19 in various online sessions. Through times of hardship, the community have stood in solidarity, and people have often found unique ways of coping. Through storytelling we connect, unite and heal. This event provided the opportunity for various individuals to tell their story, whether it be one of adversity, resilience, rest, restoration, connection or isolation. This event helped bring understanding into the wider community of the struggles many people are facing silently.

Prayer For Healing and Hope

The ICV conducted a special online prayer event for the people of Victoria on Friday the 7th of August. In the Prayer for Healing and Hope, the Muslim community reached out to all Victorians in support, love and solidarity.

The evening's event began with an opening prayer by Sheikh Abdinur Weli, Imam of the ICV Mosque. Several Imams from mosques around Melbourne representing the various Muslim communities conducted supplications and prayers for the welfare of their fellow Victorians, Australian society, and people around the world. All spoke of hope and love and the role of faith in overcoming adversity. The speakers acknowledged the tragic events of the past week at the time in Beirut and made special prayers for the healing and recovery of the Lebanese people. It was an evening of love, compassion and healing and everyone who attended felt a sense of comfort that all Victorians were together in facing this adversity and that there was genuine support for all. The former ICV President Mohamed Mohideen, summed it up when he said that this Prayer of Healing and Hope is one way in which we can give comfort and courage to all Victorians and that we should never give up hope or lose faith.

COVID Safety Plan Project

The COVID-19 Safety Plan Project aimed to assist mosques in formulating and implement plans and strategies to minimise the risk of spreading the virus. It further provided continuous support and updates on the current situation ensuring that mosques could remain open.

The main objectives of this Project were to formulate recommendations and guidelines specifically related to mosques. These recommendations were based on Victorian Government requirements. The plans helped each mosque create their own COVID-19 safety plan that reflected their specific needs. The ICV with this initiative also aimed to establish a platform and facilitated conversations with mosques management across Victoria and provided technical support, by involving experts from the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and doctors.

CULTURAL CONNECTIONS VICTORIA (CCV)

Cultural Connections Victoria (CCV) is a consortium of nine community service organisations from the multicultural sector formed to respond to the unique challenges the COVID-19 pandemic has posed for culturally, religiously and linguistically diverse communities across Victoria. The organisations that make up CCV include Islamic Council of Victoria (ICV), Wellsprings for Women, Jewishcare, Indiancare, Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights (AMWCHR), PRONIA, Springvale Indo-Chinese Mutual Assistance Association (SICMAA), African Family Services (AFS) and Sikh Australian Support for Family Violence (SASFV).

The focus of this alliance is providing culturally, linguistically and religiously appropriate responses and support using **grassroots** community connection. The concept was founded on community development principles, utilising the existing work of member organisations as a platform to address community challenges, getting to the heart of problems quickly to provide genuinely meaningful and effective responses to the pandemic. Each organisation has existing networks and relationships with the communities that they serve. Many of the staff recruited were members of those communities and possessed language and cultural insights that others would not, with an innate understanding of how to respond to the unique challenges these communities faced during these unprecedented times.

We conducted outreach to older isolated people with few or no English language skills and/or limited technological literacy. Additionally, we provided material aid for international students who found themselves without government support and no way to return to their country of origin. Food hamper and medical supply distribution; language support; culturally appropriate COVID messaging around restrictions, the availability of government support, and vaccine rollout; family support; advocacy casework; COVID safe planning; has all featured in the work of the Consortium. Issues of family violence, deterioration of mental health, job loss/loss of income/unemployment, substance misuse and addiction, educational challenges and youth disenfranchisement are just some of the social challenges staff have been working through with the community

since August of 2020. A lot of the work done by the Consortium was performed remotely to comply with ongoing restrictions, although some staff who required face to face contact with clients were able to provide outreach services under the essential worker category. The project reached its conclusion at the end of June 2021.

For this project, ICV was the lead agency in the Cultural Connections Consortium, with overarching responsibility for the COVID-19 Outreach Project; providing support and guidance to the nine member organisations, coordination of training and supervision across the entire program and ensuring program effectiveness within the communities it served. ICV was also responsible for all liaison with government, reporting and compliance. As part of the overall complement of 54 staff across the Consortium, ICV ran a support team of four to provide guidance, information and support to staff and management across the Consortium, plus two teams of five COVID Outreach staff; including the Flemington and North Melbourne public housing estates.

The structure of the Final Report for the Working for Victoria scheme both overviews the Consortium project as well as cover the programs run by the Islamic Council of Victoria as a Consortium member organisation and lead agency. Each member organisation of the Consortium has also provided a Final Report which will be included in our submission to have all voices heard in the final sum up of the Project.

Consortium Support Team

The Support Team was engaged to pull the entire project together and provide project and administrative support to the nine member organisations. The team consisted of a Project Coordinator, two Project Supervisors and a HR and Finance Officer.

The **Project Coordinator** provided governance support to the Committee of Management (comprising of CEOs or delegates from each member organisation plus the Chairperson from the Victorian Multicultural

Commission) and the Advisory Group (comprising the same membership plus delegates from DJPR, VCOSS and CPSU). The Project Coordinator had ultimate responsibility for the 54 staff recruited across the consortium, all reporting and compliance, and liaison and negotiations with the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions. In addition, the Project Coordinator was the direct line manager for the five bi-cultural workers employed by ICV to work in the North Melbourne and Flemington public housing estates, or the 'Towers Team' as they were affectionately known. This included project design, community consultation, event management and staff coaching and mentoring.

Two Project Supervisors were engaged as second in charge to assist the Co-ordinator in keeping the Project on track and running smoothly. They covered off on direct day to day support of member organisation staff, coordinating the training calendar, organising and co-facilitating all in staff meetings across the consortium, providing day to day supervision of the Towers Team for ICV. They also had carriage of the IT support for the consortium staff that included a Sharepoint information hub and set up and moderation of a closed Facebook group for staff communication and collaboration, as well as communications design and production.

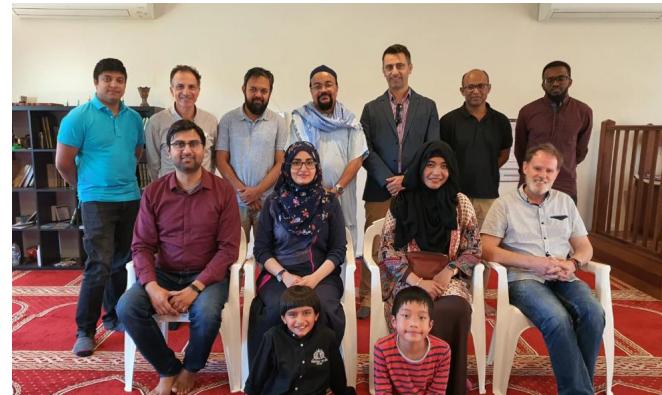
The committee of management also requested a data collection project which was delegated to the Project Supervisors to design and manage. This included one survey for community members that were accessing the services of member organisations and another set of surveys for staff to complete, one on commencement (or close to) of contract and one on completion (or close to) of contract.

A **HR and Finance Officer** was engaged to assist with reporting (fortnightly, financial and milestone), member organisation liaison in relation to all financial and human resource management, as well as other administrative tasks.

Community and religious leadership

Flemington and North Melbourne Public Housing Estates

This team was formed in response to hard lockdowns in the public housing towers in Flemington and North Melbourne at the height of the second COVID wave in Melbourne. As one of the first responders to this snap lockdown, ICV along with AMSAA Mosque, saw first-hand the impact this experience had on residents and the need for ongoing trauma-informed responses. It became increasingly evident that by the very nature of how the hard lockdown occurred, residents were deeply impacted, highlighting and exacerbating long term issues, such as unemployment, education, isolation, poor mental health, family violence and the continual rise of substance misuse amongst young people. It also acted to retraumatise communities that were already suffering from post-settlement and other unaddressed traumas. To begin to address some of these issues, ICV deployed a dedicated team of bi-cultural community engagement and family support advocates to work with communities and families to provide support, in the form of advocacy casework, material aid, community engagement and social cohesion activities, forums, educational resources and government liaison.



ISLAMOPHOBIA

Islamophobia Support

Islamophobia Support is a specialised and holistic service available to the wider Victorian Muslim community. The scope and nature of our work is guided by our theory of change and outcomes framework. This focuses on providing individual support, developing opportunities for education and empowerment, and strengthening collaboration with other organisations to improve the supports available to Victorian Muslims.

Individual Support

We have continued to provide information, advice, referrals and ongoing care to people who have experienced or witnessed Islamophobia in Victoria. Responsive to the specific needs of each person, we have aimed to offer help with the different reporting and support options, as well as with pursuing pathways of action. Through this service we have supported people who have experienced Islamophobia in their workplaces, in education (vocational institutes, universities and schools), on public transport, on the street and online (media and social media). Some of the outcomes achieved have included: investigations, resolution through dispute resolution services, changes to the curriculum, procedural and institutional reforms, and apologies. Those who have accessed our service shared that they felt continually supported, closer to closure, empowered, and that their wellbeing was prioritised.

Purposeful Collaboration

We have continued to purposefully collaborate with a suite of services and organisations, including our partners the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Humans Rights Commission, Victoria Police and the Islamophobia Register Australia. Together, we are committed to addressing the barriers faced by Muslim communities. Our efforts have particularly focused on improving awareness about how and where to get help; building trust and confidence in the services that offer help (focusing on issues related to procedural injustice and secondary victimisation); and improving the visibility and accessibility of services, including those that offer culturally responsive help.

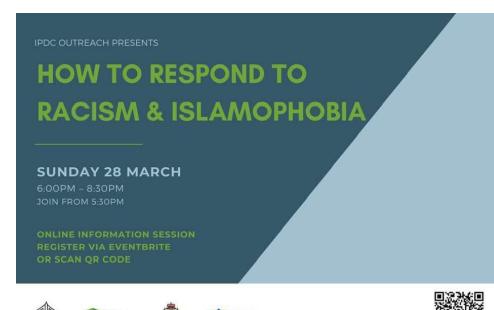
Engagement and Empowerment

A core part of our service is focused on capacity building through the provision of education and information.

Between July 2020 and June 2021, we co-developed and co-delivered 12 information sessions to over 300 people, including to: communities, schools, service providers, Councils and the private sector. This involved collaborating with many different stakeholders, including: community organisations, councils, schools, Leadership Victoria, Muslim Legal Network, Victoria Police, the Victorian Multicultural Commission and the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission.

A New Platform

We also redeveloped our Islamophobia Support online platform, which includes information, community resources and a reporting tool for people to report Islamophobic incidents and specify the type of help they are looking for. The platform also lists our Islamophobia Support Referral Network, which includes culturally responsive and professional practitioners and services committed to providing legal and mental health support.



FAMILY VIOLENCE

In 2019, ICV embarked on a two-year pilot project in partnership with Jesuit Social Services (JSS). JSS is an organisation who has an existing track record and an understanding of cultural and faith contexts. They have over 44 years' experience working closely with people and communities on the margins.

The project aim is to create awareness and educate the Muslim community about the prevalence and prevention of men's violence against women and includes two key target groups within the Muslim community:

- i. young boys and girls from one Victorian public secondary school and one Victorian Islamic School; and
- ii. Imams/Community Leaders, both men and women who hold leadership roles or have significant influence in their communities.

The project has prevention at its core, with an emphasis on educating the community to change attitudes and behaviours that have allowed violence against women and their children to continue. The project proposes two separate but parallel initiatives;

1. Research
2. Education and Engagement Programs

In the last year a lot of progress has been made on both aspects of the project.

We have been working very closely with Roxburgh College who had more than 70% of their students complete the 'Adolescent Man Box Survey'. 'Adolescent Man Box' is the first study that focuses on the attitudes to manhood and the association between these attitudes and the mental health, wellbeing, risk behaviours and sexist attitudes and behaviours of Australian adolescent boys and girls aged 11 to 18. We then hosted a number of Focus Group sessions with the students to further understand the results and findings of the survey to deliver the most suitable and appropriate resources and training for the school.

With key stakeholders who were part of the Project Advisory Group we were able to work on each phase of the Imam/Community leader project with confidence and understanding of community needs. We hosted a number of Focus Group sessions online with both men and women, young and elderly in the community. They were organised to provide input into the content of the community education workshops for the Muslim community and a number of key themes emerged as a result of the focus groups as well as recommendations for the next steps. The focus groups sought to understand unique perspectives of Muslim men and women regarding men's violence against women. It also aimed to explore their understanding, interpretation and awareness of the problem, as well as discuss existing resources and referral pathways for those in need of support. We are now working closely with a number of Imams and Community leaders to co-design the education workshop.





ICV

YOUTH ACTIVITIES

2020 Emerging Young Muslims Leadership Program

Starting in late 2020, the ICV and Leadership Victoria began the Emerging Young Muslims Leadership Program. With a focus on community leadership, empowerment and advocacy for positive change, the program focused on young members of the Victorian Islamic Community aged 18 – 28 who demonstrated an interest in community engagement and the potential to emerge as community leaders, but who were not necessarily currently in leadership positions.

The program helped participants to:

- Explore the idea of collective leadership
- Learn from advocates and decision makers
- Develop skills to influence the agenda and mobilise change in community
- Develop community leadership projects



Human Appeal Year 12 Achievement Awards 2020 (ICV Sponsored)

To congratulate the highest academic achievers of our community, the Islamic Council of Victoria contributed towards recognising students with awards for those who achieved an ATAR of over

90.0. The annual awards have been organised by Human Appeal International (HAI) for the last 15 years. This year, HAI hosted an event with over 81 students recognised as high achievers. As the new ICV President, Adel Salman presented an award on the night saying “Each year, we are blown away by the talent, wisdom and capabilities of the emerging leaders of our community and this is great recognition of that, particularly in light of the disruption caused by the COVID-19 Pandemic”. Thank you to Human Appeal International for supporting local students. A special recognition to the families, support networks, and schools of the award recipients, who work tirelessly to enable these students to achieve their dreams. Congratulations to the award recipients and all students who completed Year 12 in 2020!



HOSPITAL CHAPLAINCY

The Hospital Chaplaincy at the ICV, as its current model, has reached the ten year milestone this August (2021), a very worthy reason to celebrate! But with the limitations dictated by COVID-19 lockdowns in Victoria, the celebration has been stuck in the planning stage!

Like many fields and areas of work and living, the Hospital Chaplaincy team of volunteers have been affected drastically, our volunteers haven't been able to attend to our Muslim community at hospitals since March 2020.

This limitation of face-to-face access to our patients was compensated with reaching them via different mediums; be it via zoom meetings, phone or video. Many thanks are due to numerous Imams such as Sheikh Abdi Nur Weli, Sheikh Khalilu-Rahman Hamid and Prof Aladdin Zayegh, who were always ready to be at hand for patients especially at end of life or Palliated stages.

Despite the shackles caused by COVID-19 we managed to achieve many activities:

1. Supporting hospital projects and activities in a multifaith multicultural context
2. Cultural Diversity Week at RMH Feb 2021
3. Meeting with volunteers online and in-person
4. Good Friday Appeal 2021

Cultural Diversity Week at RMH

Sr Lina Ayoubi was invited by RMH Cultural Diversity Coordinator to be one of the panelists in the production of a series of Q&A style video segments where staff have been asked to pop any questions they feel they need to ask to the panelists! "The idea was to put these short videos out on workplace which seeks to inform and create discussion about cultural diversity within our health service." As Kerrie Dunn | Cultural Diversity Coordinator put it!

On Zoom during Lockdown

Titled "Covid-19 and Covid Normal" the Hospital Chaplaincy volunteers were invited via zoom to meet with Hospital Chaplaincy management, br Ayman Islam, Sister Lina Ayoubi, Prof Aladdin Zayegh, with Guest Speaker Prof John Catford Public Health Specialist Adviser, COVID-19 Pandemic Response at Victorian Government. The volunteers had the opportunity to ask questions and have their say especially about how they felt deprived of visiting the Muslim patients!

Wider Community Presence

The Islamic Council of Victoria (ICV), alongside ICV's Hospital Chaplaincy Program, will be leading this initiative which showcases the generous contributions of the Muslim community to supporting the needs of our society and particularly the wonderful work done by staff and volunteers at the Royal Children's Hospital. The Good Friday Appeal is a way for the Muslim community to further showcase our support to the Royal Children's Hospital, and this will allow them to deliver the best possible care to patients and their families.

The ICV would like to see this support from the Muslim community transcend across all major organisations within the community, particularly those focused around humanitarian work. Every year hundreds of young Muslim children get admitted to the RCH and are provided with world-class medical services. The ICV proudly supports the work of the Royal Children's Hospital and prays for better health of all young people stricken by illness.

JUSTICE SERVICES

Prison And Youth Justice Chaplaincy

Following the onset of COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the ICV Chaplaincy team was called upon to go on a Hybrid/Remote chaplaincy approach due to restrictions and social distancing protocols put in place by the Department of Justice. While work-prioritisation is a professional skill which Chaplains excel at given the multiple demands and expectations placed on them every day, it is important to note that the ICV chaplaincy team have willingly and generously responded to the additional challenges and responsibilities placed upon them.

Remote-Chaplaincy was a new system developed as a response to the COVID-19 restrictions. The COVID restrictions allowed little or no access to Chaplaincy through the more traditional model of approaching a Chaplain on the landing, in the exercise yard or in other locations throughout the entire prison. Remote-Chaplaincy was beneficial as it gave a designated avenue for prisoners to access a Chaplain.

The ICV chaplaincy services in prisons are always in high demand and this demand has increased significantly in 2020/2021. People both inside prisons and outside in the community looked to Chaplaincy throughout 2020/2021 for reassurance and support. Chaplaincy has been that valuable link between the prison and the community throughout the upheaval that the international pandemic has caused. Chaplaincy has served on the front line during the COVID-19 pandemic and played its part as an essential support during this pandemic.

Muslim Connect

The Muslim Connect program has been run by the ICV for over a decade. Muslim Connect is a pre/post-release community reintegration support program for exiting

Muslim prisoners and is funded by the Department of Justice and Community Safety (DJCS) via its PIP Wisdom grant scheme. Muslim Connect offers mainstream prisoner reintegration support programs, cultural brokerage as well as providing clients who aren't eligible for support from mainstream programs a host of services to cover gaps in their overall support plans.

The program operates in all Victorian prisons and the contract for Muslim Connect is managed by the Transition and Reintegration Unit at DJCS. Some of the services offered by the program include mentoring, advocacy and referrals to any service or institution clients need to engage in their journey to re-establish themselves and reintegrate back into society.

We work with National Zakat Foundation to financially support our clients. This model is used to cover costs of items such as, but not limited to, housing establishment, medical, education, counselling, transport and other necessities clients require.

Over the last 12 months, we supported almost 120 community members who were either released from prison or at the end of their imprisonment terms. One of the biggest challenges faced over this period was the shortage of housing and the ending of the federal government's COVID-19 financial support schemes such as Job Seeker and Job Keeper.

We worked with housing access points such as Launch Housing, Unison and Haven Safe Homes to support clients in accessing temporary housing, as well as access to the Victorian government's From Homelessness to Home Program (H2H). Our most notable support contribution to clients that were granted medium term accommodation through the H2H program was to facilitate access to housing establishment funds through the NZF. We also assisted clients in the purchase and delivery of household goods to their new homes.

ICV

MOSQUE ACTIVITIES



Friday Prayers

The ICV has for decades provided Friday prayers at our City Mosque on Jeffcott Street, West Melbourne. Due to the ongoing pandemic, like all mosques, sadly the City Mosque was closed for a prolonged period of time. However, in late 2020 the Mosque was re-opened as restrictions eased. Many COVID-19 safety rules were put in place to keep our congregation safe, and the mosque had to be run in this unique way.



Eid Al Fitr

The ICV City Mosque hosted its annual Eid al-Fitr 2021 prayers to a large congregation at Jeffcott St West Melbourne & at the ICV Office – Level 1, 372 Spencer Street, West Melbourne on Thursday the 13th of May.

Sheikh Abdinur and Sheikh Ibrahim led the prayers with the brothers and Sheikh Abdul Kadir lead at the adjacent premises with the sisters.

The ICV was very pleased to be able to hold these prayers, especially due to them being cancelled last year because of COVID-19.

Ramadan Iftar & Taraweeh prayers

The ICV offered its traditional City Mosque Iftar & Taraweeh prayers during Ramadan 2021. An open-house complimentary meal was provided for the breaking of fast every night for an average of 100 guests, throughout the month of Ramadan.

We thank and ask Allah (swt) to reward all the volunteers for their dedication and sacrifices. May Allah (swt) reward all those who financially sponsored and made these services possible.





ICV

INTERFAITH ACTIVITIES

JCMA 'Understanding & Interpreting Sacred Texts' Perspectives From The Three Abrahamic Faiths

In October 2020, the Jewish Christian Muslim Association of Australia (JCMA) hosted a series of online events titled: 'Understanding and Interpreting Sacred Texts - Perspectives From The Three Abrahamic Faiths' featuring Rabbi Fred Morgan, Associate Prof. Adam Cooper and Sheikh Alaa El Zokm.

Each session in the series focused on one faith tradition, with the speaker offering an approach to reading and interpreting their sacred texts followed by Q&A. The aim was to help viewers gain a deeper knowledge and appreciation of the Jewish, Christian and Muslim texts, and to help understand the connection with people from the Abrahamic faiths, allowing better interfaith engagement and productive dialogues between faith groups.



ICV Annual Interfaith Iftar 2021

The ICV in partnership with Bendigo Islamic Association (BIA) hosted their Interfaith iftar in April 2021 at Bendigo Neighbourhood house. In one of the Bendigo Muslim community's first major festivities since last year's lockdown, Muslim, Buddhist, Christians, Baha'i, Jewish and Hindu faiths gathered together in breaking the fast along with the local community. Sheikh Atalla Khawaladeh opened the festivities with a recitation of the third chapter of the Quran – with themes of forgiveness — before Dja Dja Wurrung chief executive Rodney Carter welcomed guests to country.

ICV president, Adel Salman said the Bendigo community faced difficult battles in the Mosque project and thanked the community for their perseverance as stage two of the project commenced. "I'd like to thank everyone who worked on the Bendigo project, despite the significant challenges, despite those who did not want this project to go ahead," he said. "Look where we are today. The project will be an icon for Bendigo and Victoria."

The annual interfaith iftar promotes one of ICV's goals in fostering social cohesion and celebrating regional communities across Victoria. We look forward to many more to come.



SHAPING PEACE TOGETHER - YOUR PEACE AND OUR PEACE

The ICV attended the UN International Day of Peace, which is observed around the world on September 21st every year by the General Assembly of the United Nations, to the ideals of peace, both within and among all nations and peoples. Millions around the world take part in observing this day. In Victoria, it is organised by Calm in the City - a not-for-profit venture which engages with the city communities to bring calm into the heart of the city.

The event was a celebration of all faiths coming together to promote a message of peace and harmony. The Governor of Victoria opened the event with a beautiful reflection of the Victorian Community and things of both past and present which celebrated the rich diversity of Multicultural Victoria and Multifaith aspect. This was followed by words of profound wisdom by Bishop Phillip Huggins, President of the Australian Churches Council. We also had an international speaker all the way from London, Sis Jayanti, who spoke of peace in these troubled times.

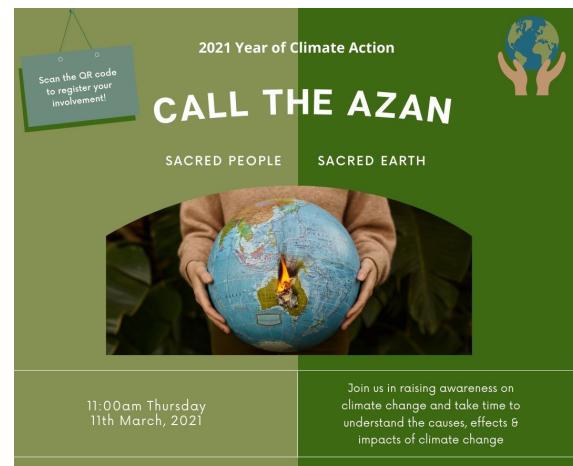
The ICV President Mohamed Mohideen represented the Muslim Community of Victoria at this event. The closing reflections were given by Lord Mayor Sally Capp, who spoke of what Melbourne is to all Victorians and the vision of hope and prosperity moving forward. There were over 500 participants who joined online for this event.



Multi-Faith Day of Climate Action

Over one hundred local faith communities across Australia from diverse traditions held events on the 11th of March, 2021, as part of a major global Multi- Faith Day of Action to 'sound the alarm' for the climate. Churches in more than fifteen countries rang their bells, Rabbis sounded the shofar, Imams called the Azan and some groups held silent Vigils to draw attention to a series of demands for climate justice. Sheikh Mohamed Ramzan led the call to prayer at the ICV City Mosque and said "It is a symbolic gesture and reminder that we all need to take responsibility and action toward minimising our carbon footprint and slowing down global warming "

The Day of Action is in support of a Statement called Sacred People, Sacred Earth, signed by globally recognised religious leaders. The signatories demand net zero emissions for wealthy countries by 2030, which is much more ambitious than most nations to date which aim for net zero by 2050, and well ahead of the current Government. The Statement also calls for economic recovery money to be spent on low carbon industries including renewables rather than fossil fuels.



11:00 am Thursday
11th March, 2021

Join us in raising awareness on
climate change and take time to
understand the causes, effects &
impacts of climate change

ICV ISLAMIC COUNCIL OF VICTORIA

ARRCC
Australian Religious Response to Climate Change



Palm Sunday Rally

The Palm Sunday Rally was held on the 28th of March, 2021 in Melbourne and attracted thousands of people from all walks of life.

The rally provided an important opportunity to raise awareness of the continuing injustice and cruelty experienced by refugees and people who are seeking asylum. This year Palm Sunday actions are calling for:

- Permanent visas for all refugees
- Basic income support for people in the community while their refugee status is assessed (if they are unable to find work to support themselves)
- Release of ALL Refugees from detention
- An end to offshore processing

The rally was well attended by different multicultural and multifaith leaders across Victoria, including the ICV President.

ICV President, Adel Salman addressed the rally and called on the government to show compassion and act humanely and to live by the highest principles and treaties they have signed on to. "Muslims in Australia stand with all of you in standing for the rights of refugees".



NILS QARD HASSAN

The Qard Hassan No Interest Loans Scheme (QH NILS) at Islamic Council of Victoria (ICV) is committed to achieving a more just and equitable society for people living on low income by promoting economic and financial inclusion, and social participation in a market which has resulted in structural and financial forms of exclusion.

Loans are available for essential goods and services such as fridges, washing machines, car repairs and medical procedures for up to \$1,500. Repayments are set at an affordable amount over 12 to 18 months.

During this financial year 2020/2021, a total of 153 loans were issued with a total amount of \$189,217. This means, average loan amount per person was \$1237. This year's defaults or write-off rate was about 2.06%. Single women are the primary borrowers (41%). Most of the borrower age ranges between 35 to 44 years who borrowed money to purchase mostly computers, furniture, white goods including washing machine, dishwasher and fridges.

The pandemic has brought its own challenge to the program but it has not hindered the ability of the service to continue to provide essential items and services through the provision of safe and affordable loans.

Training, development and increased accessibility to clients through technology are some of the major innovations across the period and the QH-NILS program has also recently been a part of a national advertising campaign which will be appearing online and across traditional media in 2022.

INTEREST-FREE LOANS FOR THE THINGS YOU NEED NOW

No Fees. No Charges. Ever.

WHAT IS A QARD HASSAN?

In Islamic terms, a Qard Hassan is a 'benevolent loan' or 'good loan' where the borrower is only required to repay the amount borrowed.

WHAT IS NILS?

NILS®, or No Interest Loan Scheme, offers small, interest-free loans of up to \$1,500 to people on low incomes for the purchase of essential household goods and services. There are absolutely no fees, service charges or any other costs for the borrower.

NILS IS APPROVED FOR

- Household appliances and furniture
- Educational costs such as some course fees, laptops, school camps and textbooks
- Some medical equipment
- Car repairs

TO APPLY, HEAD TO:
<https://tinyurl.com/icv-nils>

 ICV
ISLAMIC COUNCIL OF VICTORIA



CAPACITY BUILDING AND NETWORKING

Human Trafficking & Forced Marriage As A Modern-Day Slavery

The ICV held an online session exploring human trafficking, forced marriage and modern-day slavery on the 28th of March, 2021. The session specifically looked at what forced marriage is, what the indicators are, where we may see it and most importantly what to do if we suspect a forced marriage is happening. The session was presented in conjunction with senior members of the Victorian Police and Australian Federal Police.



ICV Iftar with the Governor

The Governor of Victoria, H.E. Hon Linda Dessau, AC joined community members, volunteers, first responders from the North Melbourne and Flemington Public Housing Estate, the ICV board and interfaith leaders for a special iftar at the Mandina Kitchen on Lygon street. Since hosting the first ever Multi-Faith Youth Iftar at Government House in 2017, the Governor has continued the long tradition of hosting or attending iftars each year to build upon and strengthen the existing relationship with Muslim communities. In her address to the room, the Governor remarked that one of the functions of the Office of Governor was community engagement and this was one

of her favourite aspects of the role, as it allowed her to build a relationship with diverse communities across Victoria. She also spoke about community leadership and the important role volunteers play in supporting social cohesion and the need to see more diverse communities recognised in government awards. The Governor extended her best wishes to all members of the Muslim community and wished them all a Ramadan Mubarak.



ICV-Bubup Wilam Aboriginal Child and Family Centre Iftar

The ICV in partnership with the Bubup Wilam early learning centre hosted an Iftar on Wednesday 28th May 2021. The Iftar now in its 4th year has become an annual part of the Ramadan calendar and continues to grow year upon year. The family event accommodated hosts both big and small from Bubup Wilam, Muslim and the wider communities. Sheikh Abdinur, Imam of ICV Mosque opened the evening with a beautiful recitation from the Holy Quran which was followed by Andrew Gardner, an Aboriginal Muslim Elder who gave the Welcome to Country which in turn was responded to by the children of the centre.



ICV Staff and Executive Committee Iftar

The Islamic Council of Victoria hosted an executive committee, staff and volunteers Iftar on Thursday, March 22 at the ICV. More than 30 staff, volunteers and executive committee members attended the function which reflected on the successes of projects and community initiatives over the year as well as an opportunity to get to know new staff and executive members. ICV president Adel Salman said the event provided the opportunity for attendees, including the ICV board, to show appreciation to all those involved in building a stronger Islamic community in Victoria.

Lord Mayor's Iftar

On Monday, 26 May, the Lord Mayor of Melbourne Sally Capp hosted the ICV and members of the Muslim community to an iftar at the City Town Hall. The evening began with Imam Dr Bekim Hasani, calling the azan and reciting verses of the Quran. Lord Mayor Sally Capp welcomed all and spoke of the warm relationship between the Muslim community and the council. She spoke of Melbourne's pride in being inclusive and supportive of all communities. ICV President, Adel Salman, thanked the Mayor and spoke of the role that the Mayor and her office plays in advocating and supporting the community. Yusuf Liban, gave the keynote address which touched on community leadership and fashion.



MY VOTE MATTERS

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My Vote Matters is a grassroots campaign intended to advocate for, and encourage, greater political participation amongst the Australian Muslim community.

Following the successful Victorian and Federal Election campaigns, MVM continues to raise issues and to advocate for increased political awareness and engagement by the Muslim community.

MY VOTE MATTERS

 ICV
ISLAMIC COUNCIL OF VICTORIA

NEWS OF THE WEEK

Weekly updates on events, findings and general news relevant to Australian Muslims.

1 CORONAVIRUS TRAVEL BAN EXTENDED AS DEATH TOLL CONTINUES TO RISE
The Australian government's travel ban of flights to and from mainland China has been extended until the 7th of March. The ban is expected to be extended again with the death toll continuing to rise at a dramatic pace. The ban has, however, been temporarily lifted for year 11 and 12 students returning to Australia for study.

2 FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCES A ROYAL COMMISSION INTO BUSH FIRES
In response to the devastating impact of the 2019-2020 Australian bush fire season, the federal government has announced a new royal commission. Prime Minister Scott Morrison has said that the commission will 'acknowledge climate change' and look into 'practical action' to prevent future fires. The commission is set to release its report by the 31st of August.

3 PRIME MINISTER SCOTT MORRISON LAMENTS THE FAILURE OF AUSTRALIA'S DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PREVENTION SYSTEM
Speaking on the death of Hannah Clarke and her children, Prime Minister Scott Morrison has lamented the state of Australia's domestic violence prevention system. Morrison stated that Ms Clarke's family had 'every right to be angry.' Morrison's acknowledgement has called into question the efficacy of our domestic violence system, re-igniting calls for a royal commission into domestic violence, on the federal level.

4 FAR RIGHT TERROR ATTACKS ON THE RISE
In the wake of a string of far right terror attacks in Germany, the worst of which involved the killing of 9, the head of ASIO, Mike Burgess, has warned that 'the extreme right-wing threat is real' and is 'growing.' In one incident, ASIO advice led to the travel blacklisting of an Australian hoping to fight with a foreign far-right group. The growing threat has left Muslim community leaders wondering what can be done to protect Muslims and another vulnerable minorities.

LEARN MORE AT MYVOTEMATTERS.COM.AU

WORLD ISLAMOPHOBIA SCORECARD

Countries ranked by restrictions on Islamic practices.

	PRAYER*	HIJAB	NIQAB	HALAL MEAT
SWEDEN	⚠	⚠	⚠	⚠
FRANCE	✓	⚠	🚫	⚠
AUSTRIA	✓	⚠	🚫	⚠
KOSOVO	⚠	⚠	⚠	✓
NETHERLANDS	✓	✓	🚫	⚠
DENMARK	✓	✓	🚫	⚠
SWITZERLAND	✓	✓	⚠	⚠
CANADA	✓	⚠	⚠	✓
NEW ZEALAND	✓	✓	✓	⚠
USA	✓	✓	✓	✓
UK	✓	✓	✓	✓
AUSTRALIA	✓	✓	✓	✓

🚫 Completely banned.

⚠ Partially or regionally restricted.

✓ No restrictions nor bans.

myvotematters.com.au

*Prayer refers to worship in public and/or the workplace.



ICV DIGITAL MEDIA

State Government (Minister Spence) Eid al-Adha Message



who contribute so richly to our state each and every day.

Victorian mosques open their doors to educate and 'remove hatred'



'A lot of uncertainty': imams fighting Covid misinformation in Australia's Muslim community



Palestinian Rallies May 2021



How community leaders in Melbourne's north helped drive down coronavirus outbreaks



Staying well throughout lockdown and supporting our children webinar



Stories Beyond Covid: A Celebration of Life



zoom

SCHOLARSHIPS

Muslim Women's Leadership Initiative Scholarship

The ICV in collaboration with Leadership Victoria has for the past many years offered the Muslim Women's Leadership Initiative Scholarship. This is a unique, immersive year long program designed to transform the way candidates think about the purpose of leadership. The Muslim Women's Leadership Initiative offers a package of programs and activities designed to foster leadership in Muslim women in Victoria, through building connections with people currently exercising leadership, and to establish connections and understanding within and between faith, ethnic and other demographic communities in Victoria. The aim through offering these programs and activities is to empower Muslim women to develop their capability and confidence, represent those within their faith, and to challenge the stereotypes for Muslim women.

The program is built on the premise of experimentation. It is designed to push candidates to continually challenge how and why they lead. Candidates get to expand the way they see the world and change the way they exercise leadership. This includes engaging with different voices and learning to mobilise and empower others in organisations and communities. Strategic analysis, systems thinking, sense making, and critically examining are all relevant skills taught through the program.



MUSLIM WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP INITIATIVE

APPLICATIONS FOR 2021 WILLIAMSON SCHOLARSHIPS ARE NOW OPEN

APPLY NOW

LEADERSHIP VICTORIA

ICV ISLAMIC COUNCIL OF VICTORIA

This advertisement is for the Muslim Women's Leadership Initiative Scholarships. It features a blue background with three overlapping circles in orange, pink, and light blue. The text is white or yellow. At the bottom, there are logos for Leadership Victoria and the Islamic Council of Victoria (ICV).

MEDIA STATEMENTS

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The ICV continues to actively engage the media on issues of community interest across a number of platforms that encompass traditional media and the emerging digital media landscape.

The ICV continued its active media engagement strategy, making public statements on a range of issues including Islamophobia, the Christchurch attacks and their aftermath, the ongoing oppression and brutalisation of the Palestinian people, and misleading and sensationalist reporting of the COVID pandemic. The ICV was interviewed by a range of media organisations across the different platforms including TV, radio, print, and online.



06-08 Jeffcott Street,
West Melbourne,
VIC 3003

ICV.org.au/media

Media Statement

10 May 2021

Courageous people of Palestine, we are with you.

There is nothing new about the brutal Israeli repression of the Palestinian people. This has been going on for decades and across all the occupied territories.

To be clear, Israel is a brutal occupier and flagrant human rights abuser. Israel is an apartheid state. The Palestinians suffer daily humiliations, theft and destruction of homes and businesses, torture, and killings.

The Palestinians protesting are exercising their right to stand up against the threat of forced evictions of Palestinian families from the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood in east Jerusalem. They are being met with rubber bullets and tear gas by Israeli forces. The Israeli actions have been savage, with hundreds injured, many seriously.

Palestinians are being prevented from worshipping at Al-Aqsa Mosque during the holy month of Ramadan. This egregious attack on religious freedom cannot be justified.

The Israeli occupying forces well know the religious significance, and in all likelihood, are seeking to provoke a response so that they can inflict yet more violence, pain, and suffering on the Palestinian people. This textbook strategy is straight out of this brutal occupier's playbook, honed over many bloody years.

It is not enough for the UN, the EU, and the Americans to call for calm and restraint. This is the same old meaningless response we get every time Israel commits these crimes. And the less said about the disingenuous statements coming from Arab capitals the better.

Enough! It is time for action, it is time for sanctions, it is time to end this charade of a "peace process". It is past time to end the occupation.

Muslims and all those who believe in justice stand in resolute solidarity with the brave Palestinian people. The least the Australian government can do is show some moral courage by condemning the Israeli actions in the strongest possible terms.

- End -

For further information contact ICV Media Spokesperson

Adel Salman 0421 059 095



06-08 Jeffcott Street,
West Melbourne,
VIC 3003

ICV.org.au/media

Media Statement

24 November 2020

Justice must be served for the people of Afghanistan

ICV welcomes the release of the long-awaited Brereton Report and urges timely prosecution of the alleged perpetrators.

It has taken many years to get to this point, a watershed moment no doubt in Australia's military history, but justice for the families of the victims will only be fulfilled when those accused of these heinous crimes are prosecuted.

The ICV has consulted the leaders of its Afghan member societies and whilst having confidence in the Australian justice system, they were anxious that every effort must be made, and no expense spared, to bring the accused to trial in the shortest possible timeframe.

Sharing those concerns, ICV President Mohamed Mohideen said "It is true that justice delayed is justice denied. The victims have families that have lost their son, husband or father. They are still grieving."

Beyond the horrific findings of the 39 alleged murders at the hands of Australian soldiers, we must ask why the warning signs were ignored. We must ask how the culture of covering up such behaviour was allowed to fester, where was the accountability? How did the chain of command break down so badly?

"How can we be sure that other abuses have not taken place in Afghanistan or other locations where Australian forces have served?" asks Mr Mohideen. "The Australian Government has an obligation to ensure that there are mechanisms to properly handle and investigate complaints and adequate protection is provided for whistle-blowers" continued Mohideen.

The leaders of the Afghan member societies believe that the families of the victims should be consulted regarding compensation, and that this process should commence immediately. And like many in the community, they are angered that some of the accused have been allowed to continue serving.

When compared with the callous refusal by the Americans and British and others to investigate potential war crimes committed by their forces in Afghanistan, Australia's response stands out.

The Australian Government should strongly encourage our allies to do as we have done. This will go some way to repairing Australia's international reputation.

- End -

For further information contact ICV Media Spokesperson

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66-68 Jeffcott Street,
West Melbourne
VIC 3003

ICV.org.au/media

Media Statement

27 August 2020

A evil man is condemned but the hatred that spurred him lives on

ICV calls for immediate and ongoing actions to reduce the risk of more attacks.

Today in a Christchurch court, the man responsible for the worst act of evil imaginable, the slaughter of fifty-one Muslim worshippers last year at two Christchurch mosques, has been condemned to life behind bars with no possibility of ever being freed.

This is the harshest sentence that NZ law allows, the first time that it has been imposed, and no one will shed a tear for this cowardly mass murdering white supremacist.

For the victims and their families, this no doubt brings some sense of closure, but it can never make up for the loss and trauma that they have suffered. Or diminish the genuine fear and anxiety that continues to haunt the NZ Muslim community.

Faith right / white supremacist / neo Nazi groups unashamedly celebrate and glorify the evil deeds of this Australian terrorist and others of his ilk. The fact is that the lies, conspiracy theories, and twisted ideologies that connect these groups find fertile ground on the internet and a growing following.

These narratives radicalise and embolden. They demonise and de-humanise. And they directly lead to violence. In NZ, Australia, and around the world.

Based on data by the respected Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), the "most significant threat (to the United States) likely comes from white supremacists". ASIO boss Mike Burgess recently said that the threat of right-wing extremism was "real and growing".

"Governments in Australia and elsewhere must do more to combat the threat of white supremacism", says ICV President Mohamed Mohideen. "Laws to stamp out vilification and hatred must be passed, and social media companies must be forced to regulate content on their platforms and be held to account if they don't", continued Mr Mohideen.

We continue to mourn the horrific events of March last year. And we stand in solidarity with our Kiwi cousins and with all those demanding change.

To honour the victims, we cannot let this happen again.

- End -

For further information contact ICV Media Spokesperson

Adel Salman 0421 059 095



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West Melbourne
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Media Statement

30 July 2020

Eid ul-Adha message resonates during these challenging times

Eid ul-Adha is a time normally spent worshipping in our mosques in congregation, visiting loved ones, and celebrating with community. The experience will be very different this year, as the Victorian Muslim community complies with Stage 3 restrictions.

During these anxious times, it is worthwhile remembering the essential message of Eid ul-Adha which is about the willingness to sacrifice for the sake of, and in obedience to God. The willingness to support others and to make sacrifices for the greater good is a lesson that we draw from this.

Over the past months, members of the Muslim community have had to deal with particularly tough circumstances and have risen to that challenge.

The hard lockdown that was imposed on the residents of the public housing towers in North Melbourne and Flemington caused significant hardship for many Muslim families but the response from them, their fellow residents, and all the community groups that pulled together to ease the burden was nothing short of magnificent.

The teachers, students and families of Al Taqwa College in Truganina have also responded with stoicism in the face of unwarranted public criticism of the way the Covid-19 outbreak was managed, and the care and diligence shown by staff should be recognised. Ongoing references to the "Al Taqwa cluster" are misleading, unhelpful, and unfairly tarnish the school.

Says ICV President Mohamed Mohideen, "The Muslim community has shown strength and patience during these times of adversity, and like all Victorians, we stand ready to do what is need to get on top of this pandemic".

Eid Mubarak to all.

- End -

For further information contact ICV Media Spokesperson

Adel Salman 0421 059 095

Media Statement

3rd March 2021



"It is about celebrating the benefits of our multicultural society which has come about as a result of the successful integration of migrants into the Australian community. Victorian Muslims are proud members of this rich multicultural and multifaith fabric".

As we approach the second anniversary of the Christchurch massacre, we reflect on the progress that has been made to prevent something like this ever happening again. The ICV's Victorian Mosque Open Day is an opportunity for all people of good will to come together and break down the barriers that divide us.."

End of Statement

Please forward all enquiries to admin@icv.org.au or contact the office on (03) 9328 2067

ICV's Victorian Mosque Open Day project launched in 2017 and has grown over that time becoming an annual feature that many look forward to with great anticipation. Thousands of Victorians have flocked to a local Mosque near them not only to get to know their Muslim neighbours, but also to learn about the Islamic faith and the diverse Muslim cultural norms. They participate in a range of activities including guided Mosque tours, hijab tutorials, henna tattoo art, and discussions about Islamic beliefs etc. Visitors have also enjoyed the warm hospitality, tasty food, and fun activities like children's jumping castles. .

The state-wide annual event, supported by the Victorian Multicultural Commission and Victorian Government (Office of Multicultural Affairs and Social Cohesion,) celebrates the community spirit of Cultural Diversity Week and Harmony Day.

ICV would also like to emphasise that the event will run in a COVID-safe environment. All the Mosques taking part in the event have developed COVID Safety Plans specifically for the event and follow the Victorian Government Health Department guidelines. COVID-Safety Officers will be on hand to ensure that everyone respects these requirements and that the community can enjoy the event safely.

ICV President Adel Salman said the Victorian Muslim community was proud of its successful multicultural society, "sharing our cultural heritage is part of celebrating what it means to be truly Australian."

66-68 Jeffcott Street West Melbourne VIC 3003
Ph. (03) 9328 2067 | email: admin@icv.org.au | www.icv.org.au

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ISLAMIC COUNCIL OF VICTORIA

The following 15 mosques and Islamic communities will open their doors on the day anytime between 10-4pm:

- * Afghan Islamic Centre & Omar Farooq Mosque –AICOM
- * Australian Bosnian Islamic Centre
- * Albanian Mosque - Albanian Australian Islamic Society
- * Australian Islamic Centre –Newport Mosque
- * Benevolence Australia
- * Doncaster Mosque - UMMA Centre
- * El Sedaq Heidelberg Mosque
- * Emir Sultan Mosque Dandenong
- * Geelong Mosque - Islamic Society of Geelong
- * Golden Wattle Mosque
- * ICV City Mosque
- * Islamic Museum of Australia -IMA
- * Islamic Society of Melbourne Eastern Region- ISOMER
- *Maidstone Mosque
- *Virgin Mary Mosque

Find your nearest participating mosque and keep up to date with the Victorian Mosque Open Day here <https://www.facebook.com/events/249094666807875>

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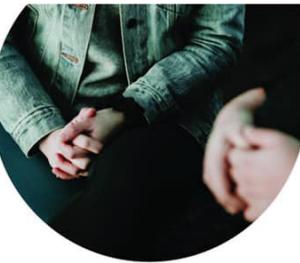
The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier of Victoria
Parliament House
Spring St
East Melbourne VIC 3002

Dear Premier

We write on behalf of the Muslim and Catholic communities in Victoria in solidarity with other people of faith, expressing profound concern over the Change or Suppression (Conversion) Practices Prohibition Bill 2020.

Every day we are working alongside our fellow Victorians to celebrate our diversity, care for the vulnerable and serve one another. We value our freedom to do so responsibly, by supporting and caring for people in their searching and questioning, with honesty, attentiveness, and compassion.

Unfortunately, this Bill doesn't just ban out-dated and inappropriate practices, it also criminalises what we firmly believe. The bill also criminalises communication between children and parents, interferes with sound professional advice, and silences ministers of religion from providing pastoral care for individuals freely seeking pastoral care for complex personal situations. In most cases, it creates conflicts of faith and convention, vague definitions, and scientifically and medically flawed approaches. It places arbitrary limitations on parents, families and people of faith. People change for all kinds of reasons, and should feel free to do so, whether it be through personal identity, gender, sexuality, family association, or religion. Contrary to its intent, the Bill obstructs people's freedom by limiting, restricting and removing options for their good, thereby creating undesirable possibilities of harm.



If a simpler, clearer bill had been tabled, with adequate consultation, then we would be able to give full support to a focused and practical way to protect people from harm.

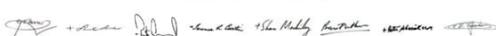
Other faith communities, religious representatives and organisations have contacted you and the Attorney General to seek resolution to these difficulties. With this letter we stand with them and look for respectful engagement.

At present the Bill appears to target people of faith in an unprecedented way, puts limits on ordinary conversations in families, and legislates for what people believe. We believe that appropriate amendments can be made to rescue the Bill from taking Victoria into strange new territory, in which prayerful advice and guidance, freely sought by one adult from another, is criminalised. We are working together as faith leaders to offer a constructive opportunity to prevent such a step from taking place, and seek your active support.

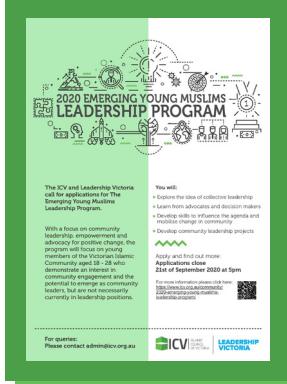
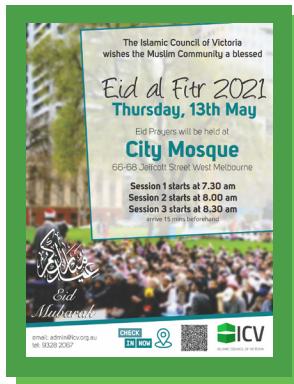
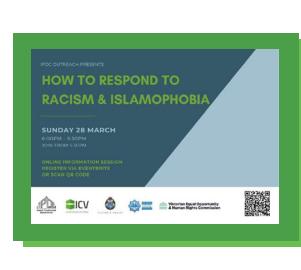
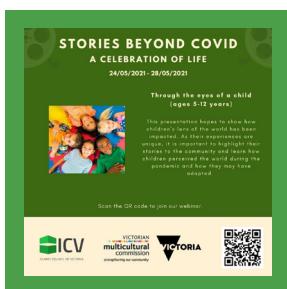
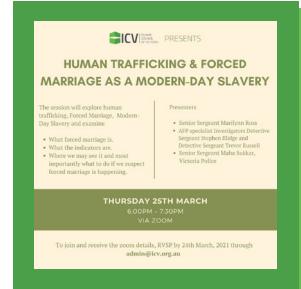
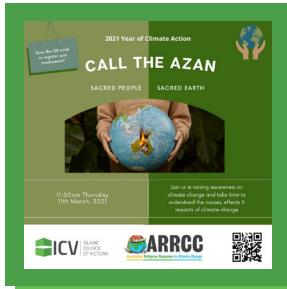
Specifically, we seek an urgent 'pause' on the Bill and a meeting between you, the Attorney General and us for transparent and comprehensive consultation. We make this request publicly and respectfully, always open to dialogue and to finding a constructive resolution.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Mohamed Mohideen,
President, on behalf of the Islamic Council of Victoria


Most Reverends: Greg Bennet, Paul Bird CSSR, Peter A Comensoli, Terence Curtin, Shane Mackinlay, Bosco Putturi, Peter Stasiuk CSSR, Antoine-Charbel Tarabay,
on behalf of Catholic Dioceses and Eparchies of Victoria

ACTIVITIES



MEMBERS

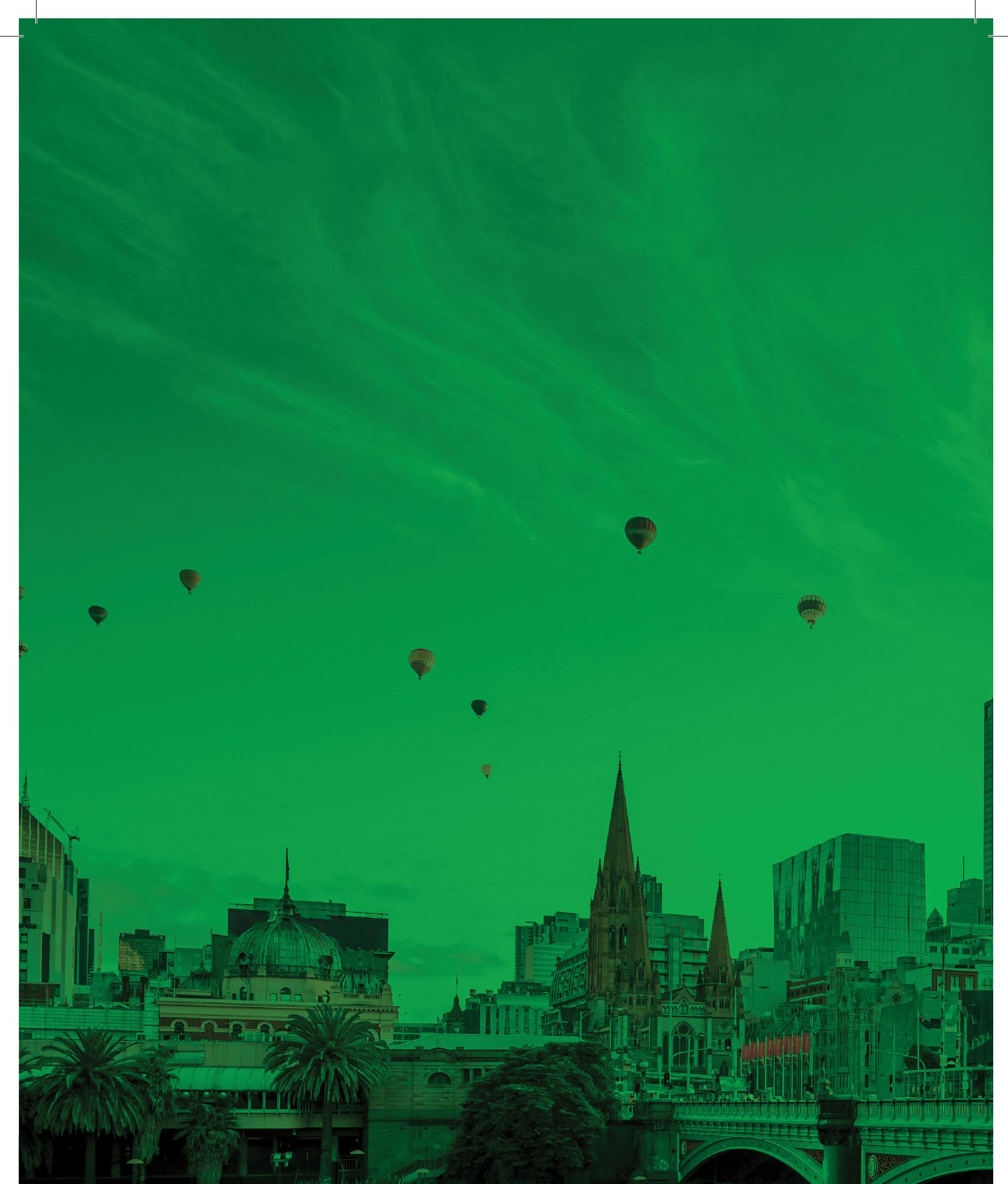
Our Members

- Afghan Islamic Society
- Afghan Islamic Centre and Omar Farooq Mosque
- Albanian Australian Islamic Society
- Albanian Muslim Society of Shepparton
- Albanian Sakie Islamic Society of Dandenong
- Al-Ehsan Centre
- Ararat Islamic Welfare Association
- ASWJ South East Melbourne
- Australia Bangladesh Islamic Council Inc.
- Australian Bosnian Islamic Centre Deer Park
- Australian Burmese Rohingya Organisation (ABRO)
- Australian Islamic Mission
- Australian Malayalee Islamic Association (AMIA) Inc.
- Australian Muslim Media
- Australian Muslim Social Services Agency (AMSSA)
- Bendigo Islamic Association Inc
- Benevolence Australia
- Bilale Ethiopian Community Association Victoria
- Bosnia Hercegovina Islamic Society
- Cyprus Turkish Islamic Community Inc.
(Sunshine mosque).
- Dandenong Turkish Islamic Cultural Society
(Emir Sultan Mosque)
- Darubilal Education Charity and Welfare Association
- Darussalam Society
- EHSAN (Aust Islamic Affairs & Human Capital Development Assoc)
- El Sedeaq Islamic Society (heidelberg mosque)
- Eritrean Islamic Society of Australia
- Federation of Australian Muslim Students and Youth (FAMSY)
- Gippsland Australian Muslim Community Inc (GAMCI)
- Goulburn Valley Turkish Islamic & Cultural Society
- HIYC
- IMAN (Institute of Muslim Academic Network)
- Indonesian Muslim Community of Victoria (IMCV)
- Islamic Association of Australia - (Tayyiba Institue)
- Islamic Association of Monash Mosque Inc.
- Islamic Call Society of Australia
- Islamic Community Milli Gorus Australia (Milli Gorus)
- Islamic Education & Awareness of Casey Association (IEACA).
- Islamic Education and Welfare Assoc
of Dandenong (IEAWAD)

- Islamic Guidance Society of Australia
- Islamic Society of Albury-Wodonga
- Islamic Society of Ballarat
- Islamic Society of Geelong
- Islamic Society of Melbourne Eastern Region
- Islamic Society of Victoria - Preston Mosque
- Light of Hidayah Organization Inc
- Maarefa Group
- Mano River Association of Victoria
- Melbourne Islamic Cultural Society Inc (MICS)
- Muslim Women's Council of Victoria
- MyCentre (IISNA)
- Newport Islamic Society (Australian Islamic Centre)
- Oromo Learning and Guidance Centre
- The Light Foundation
- United Muslim Migrant Association
- United Sri Lankan Muslim Association
in Australia (USMAA)
- Uyghur Association of Victoria Inc.
- Werribee Islamic Centre - WIC Ltd

Our Affiliate Members

- Al Kaareem
- Arkan Toledo
- Kindness Foundation
- Care With Me
- Green Crescent Australia
- Islamic Practice and Dawah Circle In
- Islamic Relief Australia
- Islamic Weekend School
- MCCA
- Minhaj Ul Quran Victoria
- Muhammadiyah Community Development Association Inc.
- Muslim Aid Australia
- MuslimCare Victoria
- Muslim Health Professional Australia
- Muslim Legal Network
- Muslim Professional Associations
- Nurul Huda Academy Inc.
- Sanad Foundation
- Victorian Police Muslim Association



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