

# **ICV**

# **ANNUAL**

# **REPORT**

## **2021 -22**



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# ABOUT US

## 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.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT 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.

## 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 270,000 Muslims via 76 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:

- Advocacy and Public Relations
- Addressing Islamophobia
- Community Engagement
- Political Engagement
- Research and Policy
- Australia's First Nations Peoples
- Asylum Seekers and Refugees
- Action against Family Violence
- Social Welfare and Inclusion Programs
- Youth Leadership and Capacity Building Programs
- Women's Empowerment
- Interfaith and Multicultural Relations
- City Mosque Services

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.



**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 sure that you are all relieved, as I am, that the days of pandemic and lockdown are behind us, and that with the blessings of Allah (SWT), we can plan for the future optimist that our diverse Muslim community will continue to grow and thrive. This is not a given, and requires ongoing sincerity, vigilance, hard work, and cooperation from all of us working in the service of our community.

I would like to acknowledge my fellow Board members for their sincerity, commitment, and advice. They have helped steer the organisation through some challenging times, and I ask Allah (SWT) to bless them and their families. I must also acknowledge and thank our dedicated staff and volunteers, led by our GM Zakaria Wahid, who make the ICV what it is. Without their efforts and sacrifice, the ICV would not be able to serve our Members and the broader Muslim community. We wish those that have left the ICV over the past year every success. They leave with our deepest gratitude, and they should know that they will always be part of the ICV family.

The ICV family was deeply affected by the passing of one of its former presidents and long-time community leader, Yasser Soliman. Yasser was loved and respected by all, and we ask Allah (SWT) to grant him the highest levels of Jannah (paradise).

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.

We should be proud of the achievements of our community. Whether that be in terms of the establishment of new mosques and community centres, the individual achievements of our outstanding youth in many different fields, our collective generosity and support for those less fortunate here and overseas, and pleasingly, the increased sense of camaraderie and cooperation amongst Muslim community organisations. This has certainly been true of our seventy-six Member Societies from

across metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria best exemplified by the COVID-19 response.

The ICV is blessed to have the support of its Member Societies. You keep the ICV connected to the grassroots needs and views of our incredibly diverse and dynamic community. We hail from over one hundred different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, many of us born overseas, and a growing number that have come as refugees. We are a young community, but also have a growing segment of elders who must be cared for and honoured. We are better educated than the average. We face the same challenges as other Victorians in terms of cost of living, providing the best possible education for our children, and accessible healthcare including mental health services. But we also have some other challenges which I will discuss later in this message.

Reflecting back on the past year, it is true to say that the ICV is changing in response to the expectations of our Members and the broader Muslim community. Before discussing how the ICV is changing, let me touch on the core services that the ICV continues to provide to the community.

The ICV is honoured to manage the city mosque on behalf of all Victorians. The city mosque is relied upon by thousands on a weekly basis. It is an essential presence in the heart of Melbourne, a major world city, and one with a growing Muslim population. The reality is that we have outgrown this location. The mosque capacity is not able to cater for the demand particularly on Fridays. The ICV has conducted several renovations and repairs over the years and has just completed the latest renovations at the time of writing. However, the building itself is ageing and is in urgent need of significant and costly upgrades including disabled access, increased space for the sisters, and better office and meeting space facilities. Finding a new location in the city area that can cater for the growing needs of the community into the future is a strategic priority for the ICV. The Board has made some progress over the past year including the development of a business case and discussions with the city council, and the state and federal governments. We look forward to the support of our Members and the broader Muslim community to achieve this goal insha-Allah.

The ICV provides a number of important services to the community including hospital and prison chaplaincy, post-release transition support for Muslims exiting the corrections system, food relief, and no-interest loans to assist those in financial stress. We also provide the Islamophobia Support Service which supports the victims of Islamophobia, conducts training and education and awareness campaigns, and provides tools to organisations so that they can better support their constituents. A report is included on each of these services and other programs such as youth and women's initiatives later in this annual report, so I won't go into detail here.

I will however mention the challenge that the ICV faces in terms of being financially sustainable. Government and other grants have been a main source of funding for many years as well as community donations. This has allowed the ICV to continue providing these services and programs, as well as perform its essential advocacy work. The reality is however that grants are cyclical and are tied to the priorities of the government of the day. To support longer term planning, the ICV requires a sustainable sourcing of funding, and this is a major challenge. Achieving ongoing financial sustainability is one of the two major goals that the Board continues to work on.

Before moving onto the way that the ICV is changing in response to Member and community expectations, I wanted to briefly discuss the other major challenge that the ICV has dealt with over the past year, and that is the dispute with AFIC. As many would know, the ICV has been in dispute with AFIC for several months. This has primarily been in relation to the admission of existing AFIC societies to the ICV as members. The ICV has made it clear that it will only admit organisations that meet the requirements set out in the constitution, and the AFIC societies that applied were not able to demonstrate their compliance in this regard. AFIC has also objected to the changes that the ICV has made to its constitution with the approval of the ICV Members. In any case, AFIC sought to expel the ICV as the state council of Victoria. In response, the ICV, together with our counterpart in NSW who were similarly expelled by AFIC, commenced legal proceedings to invalidate the expulsion move. Alhamdulillah, we were successful in the court case and the expulsion was overturned.

During the Member forums conducted over the past year, a number of common challenges were raised. Youth engagement is very much top of mind for many organisations. The ICV faces the same challenge and has sought to hold events and discussions that talk to the issues of concern for young Muslims and is working to provide an ongoing platform for youth to bring their concerns to the fore. The ability to cater for the growing community has seen some Member societies seeking to

expand existing mosques and centres and establish new ones. Funding for these projects is a significant challenge, exacerbated by the financial hit that organisations experienced during lockdowns.

Advocacy has always been a part of the ICV's role as a peak umbrella body. What has changed over time is the increased expectation of Member societies and others that the ICV will advocate strongly for the Muslim community on key issues of concern. This was evident during the COVID-19 lockdowns regarding the re-opening of our mosques. This has certainly been the case in relation to addressing anti-Muslim hate and discrimination, and the serious threat posed by right wing extremism. More recently, the ICV has advocated strongly against the curtailment of the civil liberties and basic legal rights of Muslims caught up by counter-terrorism laws, and against pervasive countering violent extremism (CVE) policies that scrutinise Muslim identity and falsely conflate religiosity with the risk of violent action.

One topic that has been repeatedly raised by members of the community, Muslim community organisations, Islamic Schools, religious leaders, and anxious parents, is religious freedom. This refers to the ability for people of faith to live by their religious values, and to raise and educate their children accordingly. It also refers to the right of institutions such as schools to implement staffing and other policies that uphold their religious ethos. The ICV has been at the forefront of calls to protect religious freedom working with other faith communities who share the common concern. And we will continue to do so. More about the ICV's advocacy efforts can be found later in this annual report.

May Allah (swt) protect you and your families.



**ZAKARIA WAHID**  
GENERAL MANAGER

“ As Salam Alaikum Wa Rahmatullahi Wa Barakaatuhu,

I pray this message finds you and your families in the best of health and Imaan.

Being the peak Muslim body in the State, the Islamic Council of Victoria (ICV) continues to be a critical institute in the protection and advocacy of the local Muslim community in Victoria, and to an extent, the broader Australian Muslim population. Through the collective work of the ICV team, we continue to strive towards our vision of *'fostering and enabling a vibrant Islamic Community where Muslims enrich society through the values of Islam'*.

For many decades, the ICV has delivered welfare and community services with sufficient pace to adjust to emerging challenges in our community. Throughout this period, the ICV executed these services in a capacity and operational tempo appropriate to respond to the community's needs. Today, our community is faced with increased dynamic challenges based on the shifting political landscape throughout Australia and continually emerging issues. As such, our current team have sought to be more flexible and agile in our strategic direction and capability, to adjust to key priority areas that target and seek to better ensure the protection and prosperity of the local Muslim and broader Australian community.

By employing an approach with strategic agility, we have been able to undertake substantial reforms over the last two years at the ICV, to build and develop our organisational capability. We have undergone a comprehensive modernisation and rebranding phase, which has seen our organisation establish a stronger online presence, reenergised our digital, marketing and communication channels, enhanced organisational transparency and built stronger ties with the community. Additionally, we have worked to improve the organisations financial sustainability, through diversifying revenue streams, expanding donation systems (both physically and digitally) and the acquisition of grants. Under the direction of our President, Adel Salman, the ICV has become a powerful entity advocating for the rights and freedoms of the Muslim community.

This was achieved through the establishment and growth of our Advocacy Team that works tirelessly in numerous fields (for example the Religious Discrimination Bill, police intervention practices, returning families from Syria) and through consistent media representation to broadcast the Muslim community's voice and perspectives to the broader Australian community.

Furthermore, we have undertaken substantial upgrades to the ICV Mosque on Jeffcott Street (West Melbourne), to improve the Mosque environment and provide better services to the community. Lastly, we have dramatically increased the number of in-person and online events the ICV is running, primarily to provide better resources and education to the community, such as the International Witness Campaign webinar and Social Justice & Activism panel discussion with the Grand Mufti of Australia, Dr. Ibrahim Abu Mohamed.

Along with building internal capacity, we have overcome a plethora of considerable challenges over the past few years. During the COVID-19 pandemic, we shifted rapidly to respond to the growing crisis, by establishing key communication strategies and direct-action programs to respond to increasingly complex and dynamic challenges. To enhance the understanding of COVID-safe practices, ameliorate misinformation and improve vaccine uptake, we coordinated the establishment of state-wide culturally tailored communication campaigns, such as online information sessions, material distribution and digital content. Working collaboratively with the Department of Health and North Eastern Public Health Unit (NEPHU), the ICV team facilitated supply chains that enabled PPE and Rapid Antigen Tests distribution at various local community hubs. Additionally, we coordinated the establishment of numerous pop-up COVID-19 Vaccination Clinics to improve vaccination rates within Muslim communities. Furthermore, in collaboration with Muslim Health Professionals Australia, the ICV established 'VaxChats', a one-to-one service designed to provide direct consultative guidance to communities highly affected by COVID-19, to educate and enhance rates of vaccination.

In addition to the responsive programs and initiatives we conducted to address emerging issues, the long-standing ICV programs continue to be fundamental to our organisation. The ICV Mosque in West Melbourne continues to be the heart of the ICV, providing on-going daily and Friday prayer services. Our Food Hamper and Interest-Free Loan programs continue to provide assistance and relief to those most in need in our community. Additionally, our Prison & Youth Chaplaincy, Muslim Connect and Hospital Chaplaincy programs continue to provide critical ongoing support to vulnerable and struggling members of our community, helping to rehabilitate and reintegrate them back into society. Furthermore, our Islamophobia Support Service continues to work towards protecting the community against rising racism, specifically through the case work element of the service.

The ICV's complex operations and substantial outcomes have only been achievable through the hard work and dedication of the ICV team. Our Executive Board, led by our President, Adel Salman, has displayed strong commitment, dedication and sacrifice towards the strategic advancement of the ICV.

Additionally, the Staff and Volunteers have sacrificed considerable amounts of their personal time and exhibited strong dedication to ensure all operations are executed successfully within tight timelines. The ICV team truly embodies a commitment to improving the wellbeing of the community and clearly understands the important Amanah bestowed upon us, and I take this opportunity to thank them.

We were saddened by the loss of the former ICV President and our beloved brother Yasser Soliman this year. May Allah (SWT) Bless him for his valuable contributions to the ICV and our community. Insha'Allah we will continue the legacy of our predecessors and empower, advocate and support the local and broader Muslim community in our efforts to serve Allah (SWT).

I thank Allah (SWT) for the opportunity, privilege and honour to serve as the General Manager of the ICV, and I ask Allah (SWT) to help us fulfill our duties in a manner that is most pleasing to Him (SWT).





**THE HONOURABLE LINDA DESSAU AC**  
GOVERNOR OF VICTORIA

“ As the Governor of Victoria, I am once again proud to acknowledge the work of the Islamic Council of Victoria.

Its contribution, supporting the spiritual and cultural needs of Victoria's Muslim communities, advocating on their behalves and, importantly, promoting respect, friendship and connection in the wider community, makes our State stronger.

On behalf of all Victorians, I thank the Islamic Council of Victoria, and all who work with it and through it, for its work this past year, and for all that it does towards –in the words of our State motto – our ongoing Peace and Prosperity.



**THE HON. ANTHONY ALBANESE MP**  
PRIME MINISTER OF AUSTRALIA

“ Congratulations to the Islamic Council of Victoria for another year of representation, engagement and advocacy. Organisations like yours do such important work in bringing people together, fostering understanding and building stronger communities.

Time and again over the last 12 months, you have shown your dedication to the needs of your community. By providing essential information, advice and outreach, you have been a trusted voice.

The Muslim community in Australia is established and vibrant. I am proud of the presence in my Government of three Muslim Australians – Industry Minister Ed Husic, Minister for Early Childhood Education and Youth Dr Ann Aly and Senator Fatima Payman.

Over centuries and generations, Muslim Australians have made a significant contribution to Australia's growth and progress. The work of organisations like the ICV encourages us to celebrate our religious and cultural diversity as the source of our strength and unity. Your leadership and representation exemplify our deepening sense of who we are as a people, and our maturity as a nation. Thank you, to all at ICV, for keeping your community strong and connected.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anthony Albanese'.



**THE HON. DANIEL ANDREWS MP**  
PREMIER OF VICTORIA

“ I'd like to send my congratulations to the Islamic Council of Victoria on another successful year supporting Victoria's Muslim Community.

The ICV works tirelessly to ensure that Islamic belief, culture, and history, is respected and represented in every corner of our state.

You provide a powerful voice for your community – and you to help ensure that Muslim Victorians feels safe, happy, and fully supported.

Over the past year, the ICV have helped our most vulnerable through food hampers and welfare programs, you've advocated for women and children escaping family

violence, and you've rallied against racism and islamophobia wherever it is found.

Every day, you enable your community to grow, succeed and give back to those most in need.

And as leaders in our community, your work has helped to make our state a stronger, fairer, and more welcoming place for every Victorian family.

On behalf of our government and all Victorians, I'd like to thank you for all that you do. Congratulations once again, and my best wishes for the year ahead.



**THE HON. PETER DUTTON MP**  
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

“ Over many years, the Islamic Council of Victoria has supported its members and the wider Muslim community.

I congratulate the Islamic Council of Victoria for another year of achievement. For the work it has done to assist Victorians of Islamic faith in providing a range of religious and social welfare services. For its outreach endeavours with the wider Australian community. And for its enduring efforts in sowing the seeds of social cohesion which add to the success of our migration story.

Just as Australia is emerging from the pandemic, we are now contending with an array of resultant and new economic and security challenges. Australians are facing increasing cost of living pressures at the supermarket checkout, at the petrol bowser, in their mortgage repayments, in their insurance premiums and in their electricity bills.

In testing times, faith is a constant source of solace and resilience for the individual and the family; for the worker and those who are down and out. Faith nurtures companionship when we need it most. And faith helps us persevere through the worst days and look forward with hope and confidence to better ones.

These comforting characteristics of faith will be well appreciated by Australia's 800,000 Muslims, including the 270,000 who reside in Victoria.

Driven by their faith, Australia's Muslims continue to work hard, support their families and contribute to all fields of public life.

Through faith we focus on the things that unite us; the things which steer us through hardship: devotion to god, love of family, fellowship with our fellow Australians and loyalty to country.



## THE HON. ANDREW GILES MP

MINISTER FOR IMMIGRATION, CITIZENSHIP, MIGRANT SERVICES AND MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS

“ As the recently appointed Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs, I wish to express my gratitude to the Islamic Council of Victoria (ICV) for the important work you do for our community.

The long history of Muslim contributions to our nation have helped make Australia one of the most successful multicultural societies in the world.

Today, Australia is home to more than 800,000 people of Islamic faith, a third of whom live in Victoria. The diversity of the Islamic community enriches our nation with a multitude of ethnicities, cultures and traditions, united by a shared commitment to religion.

Our continued success as a cohesive and democratic nation is built on shared values, through which we enjoy the freedom to express ourselves, respect one another, and rally to support each other in times of need.

The publication of the ICV Annual Report gives us all an important opportunity to reflect on ICV's work over the year serving and inspiring Australia's Muslim communities. I wish you and all Australian Muslims all the best for the year ahead.



## THE HON. ROS SPENCE MP

MINISTER FOR MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS

“ For more than 50 years, the Islamic Council of Victoria (ICV) has played a key role in representing diverse Muslim voices and promoting the aspirations of the broader Islamic community.

Victoria would not be the state that it is without the selfless and unique contributions of our multicultural and multifaith communities. With more than 200,000 members and counting, the Muslim community is one of the largest culturally and linguistically diverse communities here in Victoria.

As Minister for Multicultural Affairs, it gives me great joy to know that there are organisations like yours that are fiercely committed to fostering culture, faith, diversity, and social cohesion.

I extend my warmest gratitude to all those connected to the Islamic Council of Victoria; your work in supporting and strengthening Victoria's thriving Muslim community is invaluable.

On behalf of the Andrews Labor Government, I thank you for all your magnificent work. I look forward to continuing to partner with the ICV and Victoria's broader Muslim community well into the future.



**THE HON. MATTHEW GUY MP**

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION & LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY IN VICTORIA

“ I extend my best wishes to the Islamic Council of Victoria (ICV) as it gathers for its 2022 Annual General Meeting.

As the peak body representing the Muslim community in Victoria, the Islamic Council of Victoria (ICV) is renowned for its active community engagement and productive and collaborative working relationships with government departments and service providers.

The ICV continues to deliver a wide range of programs targeting the specific needs and interests of the Muslim community, making the ICV a vital and indispensable community partner and link to Victoria’s Muslim communities.

The ICV’s contribution, energy and leadership towards interfaith endeavors are well known- building respect for religious diversity and understanding across the Victorian community to benefit our society.

I thank the Islamic Council of Victoria for your hard work and applaud your efforts in advocating for the interests and needs of Victoria’s Muslim Community.

And I extend my most sincere wishes for good fortune, good health, and happiness to the Islamic Council of Victoria (ICV) and the entire Islamic Community.



**THE HON. CRAIG ONDARCHIE**

SHADOW MINISTER FOR CITIZENSHIP AND MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS

“ I am both honoured and delighted to celebrate the wonderful work of the Islamic Council of Victoria (ICV) as it reflects on this past year.

My view is that the greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members, this is certainly the case with the Islamic Council of Victoria. The work you continue to do to unite people, despite differing languages, backgrounds and cultures, has never been more vital.

My heartfelt thanks to the ICV for helping all Victorians to build on our understanding of Victoria’s Islamic culture and to develop very important bonds amongst all of us.

This year the Islamic Council of Victoria once more welcomed may to the Victorian Open Mosque Day to “open doors, open hearts and open minds” and again, it was a great success. It is events such as this that truly

demonstrates the Islamic Council of Victoria’s strong desire to bring people together in shared beliefs and values, within our richly diverse communities.

I stand with the Islamic Council of Victoria in their efforts to call out insidious issues such as Islamophobia and for their tireless work in fostering a sense of safety, friendship and belonging for all Victorians.

I thank you for the contribution you make to our diverse, vibrant, and cohesive society.

I offer my thanks and well wishes for the years ahead as the ICV continue this important work.

Kind regards,



**VIVIENNE NGUYEN AM**

CHAIRPERSON OF THE VICTORIAN MULTICULTURAL COMMISSION

“ I express my deep appreciation to the Islamic Council of Victoria and extend my congratulations for its representation of, and advocacy for Victoria’s Muslim community in what has been a challenging year for all of us.

The ICV’s leadership in dealing with the impact of COVID-19 has been extensive and unwavering. The ICV and its member bodies have been active in providing practical and spiritual support, reaching out and providing support to those most in need.

Your active participation and collaboration in important conversations and forums as well as in multifaith and multicultural gatherings has and continues to be critically important to enhancing our social cohesion.

The ICV’s endeavours do make a difference and better enables Victorians of Muslim faith to more actively participate and contribute within all spheres of our society.

On behalf of the Victorian Multicultural Commission, I thank the ICV, its Board, the staff and the volunteers for your ongoing commitment and contribution to making Victoria one of the most successful multicultural and multifaith societies in the world.

Yours Sincerely



**SALLY CAPP**

LORD MAYOR OF MELBOURNE

“ On behalf of the City of Melbourne, I commend the Islamic Council of Victoria for their outstanding contributions to our community this year.

Thank you for helping to ensure Melbourne remains a deeply welcoming and inclusive city – a place where everyone can feel a strong sense of connection, belonging, dignity and purpose.

Melbourne shares an important connection with the Islamic Council of Victoria.

In the past year, we have worked together to distribute life-saving health and safety information, support our community’s most vulnerable through food hamper deliveries, and welcome newly-arrived refugees from Afghanistan.

We were also delighted to once again share in our city’s annual Iftar dinner.

Melbourne is thankful for and proud of its thriving Muslim community, and the ways that their perspectives, experiences and aspirations help to shape our city. We are particularly grateful for their contribution to our landmark Inclusive Melbourne Strategy.

It is through this sharing and celebration of Islamic culture, knowledge and heritage that we will create a truly cohesive city, and build empowered communities.



## CHIN TAN

RACE DISCRIMINATION COMMISSIONER

“ I would like to thank the Islamic Council of Victoria for the important work you do to serve and advocate for Muslim communities in Australia. Your commitment to supporting an empowered and engaged Muslim community through greater representation, active collaboration with the broader community, and welfare service provision has been essential in a time when we have seen heightened experiences of racism.

In consultations for the Australian Human Rights Commission's Sharing the Stories of Australian Muslims project and the initial scoping phase of the National Anti-Racism Framework project, Muslim community members shared the need and hope for a society where every person can meaningfully participate and safely draw strength in their identity, culture, and community. The Islamic Council of Victoria has played a crucial role in enabling such an environment by tailoring your services to understanding and meeting the unique needs of Muslim communities in Victoria, as well as promoting their human rights as Victoria's peak Muslim body. Your organisation's community-based advocacy provides the necessary groundwork for any effective national action against Islamophobia and racial and social inequities.

So once again, thank you, Islamic Council of Victoria, for your vision and dedication to uplifting a vibrant Muslim community based on the values of Islam and 'the foundation of a common humanity, transcending differences.' It is our shared priority that Australian Muslims can have their human rights fully realised and are enabled to thrive. I am grateful for your continued collaboration and community leadership in supporting national anti-racism action. Your contribution is vital to fostering broader racial literacy and momentum around issues facing Muslim communities.

I wish you all the best in the year ahead.

# EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The ICV held its AGM on the 24th of October, 2021. Member Societies heard from the ICV President, Treasurer, General Manager and other Board members, regarding operational outcomes of 2021/22 and ICV's continued strategic direction. 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. The next ICV AGM is scheduled for October 2022, which is an election AGM.



BOARD FOR THE TERM  
FEBRUARY 2021 TO OCTOBER 2022

**ADEL SALMAN**  
PRESIDENT

**MOHAMED MOHIDEEN**  
VICE PRESIDENT

**YUSUF ZARANI**  
SECRETARY

**MILON ISLAM (FCPA)**  
TREASURER

**ABDEL KAREEM HALABI**  
EXCO MEMBER

**INAZ JANIF**  
EXCO MEMBER

**SACIR LACEVIC**  
EXCO MEMBER

**SARAH BAARINI**  
EXCO MEMBER

**TRIS MARDIASTUTY**  
EXCO MEMBER

# TRIBUTE TO YASSER SOLIMAN

## Statement on behalf of the ICV Executive Committee

Inna lillahi wa inna illayhi raajifoon

The ICV is saddened by the passing of our former President Brother Yasser Soliman on Saturday 15 Muharram 1444 AH (13 August 2022). Brother Yasser was one of the longest serving Presidents of the ICV having held this position from 1999 to 2006. He was one of the leaders of the community who played a vital role during the period in the aftermath of 9/11 which was a very challenging time for the Muslim community. Brother Yasser's leadership helped ensure the community's safety was prioritised and that its significant contribution to society was recognised. He was one of the pioneers in interfaith dialogue, reshaping the engagement of the ICV and the Muslim community with other faith communities.

Prior to serving as President of the ICV Brother Yasser served as president of the Federation of Australian Muslim Students and Youth (FAMSY) in the early 1990s. After his term as president of the ICV, brother Yasser was appointed as a Victorian Multicultural Commissioner (2005 – 2013). Other positions he held include being a member of the Council for a Multicultural Australia (CMA) (2003–2006) and serving on the Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria (ECCV). Brother Yasser was also one of the founders of Jewish Christian Muslim Association (JCMA) and served on its board. Brother Yasser also had a strong care for young people and served as a Youth Chaplain for the ICV for a number of years.

Brother Yasser's activities are remembered by many in the Muslim and wider multicultural community. While president of the ICV he was instrumental in leading the vilification case against the Catch the Fire Ministries, which the ICV won. He actively worked in partnership with Victorian Police, local councils and Muslim youth to forge understanding and cooperation. As a VMC commissioner Bro Yasser was a member of the Parliament of the World's Religions which hosted a Melbourne program in 2009, the theme being "Make a World of Difference: hearing each other, healing the Earth". These are just some examples of the advocacy work done by Bro Yasser. He was a man who stood up for what he believed in and always acted for the interests of the Muslim community.

Respected elder and historian, Brother Bilal Cleland wrote on hearing of his passing that brother Yasser was "One of the young activists I remember most clearly when I came into the Muslim community in the 1970s. He was a tall friendly Egyptian who shared my view of what was important about our way of life. Yasser lived his faith through strong commitment to his fellow human beings, always deeply concerned to remove obstacles to understanding and to carry the message of Islam to the world. He never weakened in his efforts, and I particularly recall his strength in dealing with the VCAT case with Catch the Fire. I am very saddened."

Brother Yasser has been described as a "loving man", "an Influencer on the youth", "a kind person", "a good friend", and "a beautiful person with a beaming smile".

*"On behalf of the ICV, our Member Societies, and the Victorian Muslim community, I would like to express our deep condolences to the family of Brother Yasser Soliman, his wife and three children. During a time of immense scrutiny, antagonism, and sensationalist reporting directed towards the Muslim community, brother Yasser's strong leadership and wisdom when he was President of the ICV brought a much-needed level of calm to the situation. Brother Yasser strongly believed in the benefits of interfaith and multicultural engagement and championed many such forums. His sad passing will leave a considerable a gap in our community. May Allah grant him the highest station in Paradise (Jannatul Firdaws) and grant sabr to his family", said current ICV President Adel Salman.*



# ICV STAFF & CORE VOLUNTEERS

ZAKARIA ABDUL WAHID  
GENERAL MANAGER

SHEIK ALTAF HUSSAIN  
PRISON CHAPLAIN

RIFAT CAKIR  
MUSLIM CONNECT TEAM

BRIDGET MCKENZIE  
ADVOCACY TEAM

NADA SHIHATA  
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

SHEIK MOHAMED RAMZAN  
PRISON CHAPLAIN

LINDA YANG  
ISLAMOPHOBIA  
COMMUNITY AND CASE  
SUPPORT OFFICER

FATIMA RAMTOOLA  
ADVOCACY TEAM

ABDUL RAHMAN  
CITY MASJID  
COORDINATOR &  
CARETAKER

SHEIK MUHAMED DIDIC  
PRISON CHAPLAIN

CORNELIUS ROMEIN  
IT ADMINISTRATOR

JOSHUA NOHAN  
ADVOCACY TEAM

MUSTAQUE AHMED  
ACCOUNTS OFFICER

LINA AYOUBI  
HOSPITAL CHAPLAIN LEAD  
PROFESSOR

UMAR BUTLER  
MY VOTE MATTERS

KUBRA ZEYNEP GUNGOR  
ADVOCACY TEAM

SHEIK ABDINUR WELI  
HEAD IMAM

ALADIN ZAYEGH  
HOSPITAL CHAPLAIN LEAD

ANGUS KHALIQ MARIAN  
MARKETING TEAM

MAHDE HALLAB  
ADVOCACY TEAM

ASHRAF SHUKRI  
CITY MASJID CARETAKER

ASMA SIDDIQ  
NILS PROGRAM  
COORDINATOR

SAMMAR BASSAL  
MARKETING TEAM

YOUSSEF ELSAWI  
ADVOCACY TEAM

SHEIKH ABDUL KADIR  
JUSTICE SERVICES

MUKHTAR MOHAMMED  
MUSLIM CONNECT LEAD

AISYAH ABDUL HALID  
MARKETING TEAM

KHADIJA ELBASHIR  
PRISON CHAPLAIN

AMIRAH HAQUE  
ADVOCACY TEAM

## FAREWELL & THANK YOU

The ICV expresses its deep appreciation and gratitude to all our staff members leaving, who have contributed enormously to the organisation's success. Many of these staff members have been with the ICV for half a decade or more, and we greatly appreciate the commitment, sacrifice and hard work they have demonstrated. Once part of the ICV family, you are always part of it, even after moving on. We wish all of them the very best in their future endeavours.

LIYANA SCHROEDER  
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

ANGUS KHALIQ MARIAN  
ISLAMOPHOBIA DESIGN  
AND ENGAGEMENT  
OFFICER

MIRZA FARHAN  
MUSLIM CONNECT TEAM

IDIL ADEN  
ICV COVID-19 OUTREACH  
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT  
OFFICER

SUAAD WARSAME  
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

ADEEBA NABULSI  
ISLAMOPHOBIA  
CONSULTANT

SELCAN KURNALI  
FAMILY VIOLENCE  
EDUCATION OFFICER

MARCO LA ROCCA  
ICV COVID-19 OUTREACH  
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT  
OFFICER

HOLLY CLARIDGE  
ISLAMOPHOBIA SUPPORT  
MANAGER

# ADVOCACY

By President Adel Salman and volunteer Advocacy Team - Amirah Haque, Bridget McKenzie-Harg, Fatima Ramtoola, Joshua Raju, Kubra Gungor, Mahde Hallab & Youssef Elswawi

## “ THE ROLE OF A PEAK BODY IS TO EFFECTIVELY ADVOCATE ON BEHALF OF ITS CONSTITUENCY

The ICV's advocacy efforts were greatly expanded due to the recruitment of several outstanding young brothers and sisters to join our volunteer Advocacy Team. This allowed the ICV to address a number of important issues in addition to the ongoing focus on addressing Islamophobia. The ICV has significant concerns with the impact on the Muslim community of the vast array of counter-terrorism legislation and countering violent extremism (CVE) programs including the curtailment of civil rights and the targeting and stigmatisation of the community. Religious freedom is a fundamental human right and this means that people should be able to raise their children and teach them their faith values free from state involvement. The ICV has observed with alarm the enactment of laws that significantly impact the ability for faith communities and religious schools to teach and abide by their values and religious ethos. The ICV, along with many in the Muslim community and society in general, is deeply concerned with the plight of the Australian women and children detained against their will in camps in northern Syria. They are being held in inhumane conditions without access to basic healthcare and amenities, and their safety is at serious risk as the death of some of the inmates tragically highlighted. The ICV has supported the efforts of those leading the efforts to convince Australian authorities to bring these people home. The ICV has long advocated for the Palestinian cause. The ongoing brutal occupation and apartheid laws against its Palestinians citizens by Israel must force all of us to stand for justice for the Palestinian people.

Throughout the course of the year, the ICV made five different submissions to Federal and State inquiries covering religious freedom and discrimination, failures in police oversight structures and processes in relation to counter-terrorism cases as demonstrated by alleged serious police misconduct, fundamental concerns with CVE programs and the terrorism risk assessment tools, problems with the culture of the Victorian corrections system as it applies to Muslim inmates, and delays and hurdles with family reunion visa applications and processing. The ICV also appeared before the INSLM (Independent National Security Legislation Monitor) inquiry committee.

The ICV issued media statements on a range of state, national, and international issues including the praiseworthy response of the Muslim community to the COVID pandemic, the failure of the federal religious discrimination bill, the hugely destructive and ultimately futile “war on terror”, the selective use of sanctions to punish egregious human rights abusers (and failure to do so against Israeli government and military officials), the visit by an Indian politician and extreme Islamophobe and rising concerns about Hindu supremacist ideology, the tragic death of an Australian boy in northern Syria and the dreadful plight of Australian women and children held in these camps more generally, and the annual Mosque Open Day.

## ISLAMOPHOBIA

Online hate towards Islam and Muslims directly leads to attacks against Muslims in the real world. This was horrifically demonstrated by the Christchurch massacre committed by a mass murdering terrorist espousing the worst Islamophobic hate narratives circulating and amplified online. The ICV commissioned a report by our MyVoteMatters coordinator Umar Butler to analyse the prevalence of online Islamophobia and anti-Muslim hate. Harnessing cutting-edge machine learning techniques to automatically identify hateful content on major social media platform Twitter, our investigation revealed that millions of Islamophobic posts were made in a 24-month period, and alarmingly, only 1 in 7 tweets end up being removed. This underlines the glaring weakness of existing laws to address online hate and incitement and to hold social media platforms to account. *The Islamophobia in the Digital Age: A Study of Anti-Muslim Tweets* report has been covered by a large number of news organisations including *Middle East Eye* and *TRT World*. CJ Werleman and The Nous Network have also both produced videos discussing the report's findings. On Twitter, the report has been shared by a diverse range of figures and organisations such as co-founder of Zaytuna College Dr Hatem Bazian, leading expert on Islamophobia Dr Imran Awan, former chairman of the Delhi Minorities Commission Dr Zafarul Islam Khan, former Turkish MP Dr Talip Küçükcan, law professor Dr Khaled Beydoun, Washington Post journalist Rana Ayyub,

the Bridge Initiative (a research project by Georgetown University), the Indian American Muslim Council, CAGE and CAIR, to name a few. Finally, two Reddit posts discussing the report have been made, amassing hundreds of thousands of views. Considered together, the various pieces of content that have been produced about the report are likely to have been seen by millions of users, some of whom may very well be in a position to begin affecting change. A full copy of the **Islamophobia in the Digital Age report** can be found at the end of this Annual Report.

## CIVIL RIGHTS & IMPACTS OF CT & CVE FRAMEWORKS

For many years, the ICV has advocated against community-based Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) programs. These programs are inordinately directed towards Muslim communities, assuming that Muslims are inherently inclined towards radicalisation and violence. This year, the Advocacy Team published two important policy submissions on the issues of CVE and counterterrorism. Both submissions involved extensive research and our team was fortunate to be supported by various experts including legal practitioners, academics, and non-profit advocacy organisations from around the world.

In February 2022, the ICV made a submission to the Department of Justice and Community Safety's Systemic Review of Police Oversight, detailing the improper use of certain inducement and entrapment tactics by police in counter-terrorism investigations. We expressed serious concerns about the practice by undercover police across Australia which escalates low-level threats by encouraging unwitting individuals to commit preparatory criminal acts in order to press charges against them. The ICV expressed concern that the prosecution of unformed preparatory acts may result in grave injustices by punishing people for merely contemplating criminal acts. Moreover, the practice of inducing preparatory acts undermines public safety as authorities overlook the opportunity to divert people from future criminal activity. The submission also made several recommendations to improve the complaint mechanisms available in cases of possible police misconduct, including improving independent outcome-focused monitoring and strengthening approval and oversight of undercover operations.

In June 2022, the Advocacy Team made a written submission to the Independent National Security Legislation Monitor's (INSLM) review of Division 105A of the Criminal Code Act and appeared before the Monitor's public hearing on the issue. In these submissions, the ICV highlighted several issues with the structured professional judgement (SPJ) tools used to assess whether individuals are at risk of committing terrorism offences. The concerns highlighted in the submission include the lack of empirical evidence to support that the main SPJ tool used in Australia, VERA-2R, has predictive validity in its application, and the over-emphasis of religious factors in assessments that made Muslims more likely to be considered at risk of extremist violence than non-Muslims. In fact, the ICV's submission called for the removal of religious cause from terrorism laws and frameworks because it falsely assumes that religion and by extension, increased religiosity, promotes terrorism. The ICV also raised concerns about the implementation of CVE policies that aim to address the potential for radicalisation and terrorist activity at the earliest possible stage. These policies have manifested in security-oriented measures operating in all aspects of the lives of Muslim communities, including community events, education, healthcare, and social welfare. At the Public Hearing, INSLM's Inspector praised our submissions for highlighting these important issues in CVE strategy, and we are confident that the ICV's recommendations have been well received.

## PALESTINE ADVOCACY

The ICV has long been a staunch supporter of justice for Palestinians, and we have actively participated in movements such as protests to demonstrate our solidarity and regularly advocate with politicians. In an effort to further our support and continue advocating for the rights of Palestinians, the ICV is currently in the process of developing a formal position statement regarding our stance on the situation in Palestine.

The ICV will work with Palestinian and human rights groups in our advocacy efforts. To this end, the ICV will host a webinar in October titled, 'It's apartheid! What now? The fight for justice in Palestine' in partnership with the Australian Palestine Advocacy Network (APAN). In this panel discussion we will hear from people that have a deep understanding of the harsh realities of Palestinian life under occupation and systemic discrimination. With the new Labor government committing to recognising Palestine in its first term, this timely conversation will highlight essential considerations for the Australian Government and for those interested in justice and dignity for Palestine.

## RELIGIOUS FREEDOM ADVOCACY

The ICV has listened to concerns from the Victorian Muslim community, particularly imams, educators, lawyers, and allied health professionals about the limiting of religious freedoms brought about by changes in legislation. The ICV's ongoing response has been multi-faceted and comprehensive, beginning with presenting submissions to State and Federal governments which explain the concerns of the Muslim community.

The Advocacy team has been advising Muslim schools and other religious organisations on recent amendments to the Equal Opportunity (*Religious Exceptions*) Amendment Act 2021 and the *Change or Suppression (Conversion) Practices Prohibition Act 2021*. These amendments to law will significantly affect how schools can respond to situations in a manner which preserves their religious ethos, particularly concerning Islamic beliefs on gender identity and sexual orientation. The ICV is also working with other faith groups to negotiate with the new Federal government a Religious Discrimination Bill which protects faith groups from discrimination because of their religious identity and from hate fuelled vilification which Muslims regularly experience.

The ICV also presented to the Islamic Schools Association of Australia (ISAA) regarding the ramifications of the two new Acts and their interstate equivalents for Muslim schools in Australia, along with advice that was sought from the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission on how the Acts will operate for schools and other religious organisations in Victoria.

As an ongoing process, the ICV is engaging legal experts to provide advice for Muslim schools to protect against legal action which may arise with respect to new laws. This advice will be shared with representatives of Muslim schools.

## THE 'SAVE THE CHILDREN' CAMPAIGN

In 2021, the ICV supported the Save the Children Campaign (SCC) and activists calling for the safe return of the Australian women and children currently imprisoned in detention camps across northern Syria. The conditions in these camps, as outlined in a report by Rights and Security International, have been described as cruel and inhumane and amounting to torture. The ICV assisted the SCC in generating briefing documentation that was supported by research from Rights and Security International to provide to Labor and Liberal MPs. The ICV also generated social media traction on this issue with its #BringThemHome video campaign on our social media platforms. The ICV will continue working on this humanitarian issue, hoping that the change in Government brings progress.

## FIRST NATIONS ADVOCACY

The ICV is a leader amongst Muslim community groups in facilitating dialogue with First Nations people, being the only Islamic peak body in Australia to have an Accord with First Nations peoples. The Accord with the National Congress of Australia's First Peoples was signed in 2018 and calls upon both parties to work together to promote measures that advance stronger relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, amongst other objectives. This year, the ICV Advocacy Team has recognised the need for the ICV to collaborate with the traditional custodians of this land to galvanise the Muslim community's efforts in supporting our First Nations communities. The ICV hopes that through these initiatives, the Muslim community can be at the forefront of efforts to bring about recognition, justice, and reconciliation for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



# REGIONAL REPORT

Dr Abdel Karim Halabi

The ICV's operations, which include advocacy and social cohesion affect all Muslims whether they be residing in the regional or urban areas. In regard to regional Victoria, the ICV are very proud to support and represent the Muslim community.

There is an impressive list of towns which offer some type of prayers facilities throughout regional Victoria. This list includes Geelong; Ballarat; Bendigo; Ararat; Horsham; Shepparton; Mooroopna; Albury/Wodonga; Cobram; Yallourn North; Morwell; Traralgon; Bairnsdale; Warrnambool; Melton; Mildura, and Seymour. Warragul was added during the year. Once again the ICV issued a list of these organisations offering Jumma on Good Friday for those travelling to rural areas during Easter.

The Muslim community throughout regional Victoria continues to grow, and become an important part of the day-to-day life of towns. Some of the activities that these regional Muslim organisations offer (apart of praying facilities) include:

- Alim and Alima courses to men and women;
- Madrassah classes for children;
- Ramadan Bootcamp (see picture 1)
- COVID awareness messages in various languages of the local community;
- Lectures with invited guests (face to face and online);
- Wellness and mental health events;
- Raising money for various charities and world crisis (such as Gaza, and floods in Pakistan);
- Islamophobia awareness information sessions,
- Information sessions with Police and other emergency services and
- Qurbani provisions.

Most Muslim communities throughout the regions were able to come together to celebrate Iftars, Ramadan, and Eid Ul Adha and Eid Ul Fitr with Muslim brothers and sisters and other members of the wider communities.



Picture 1: The children of Ballarat at the Ramadan Bootcamp with Certificates

In relations to ICV-run events, on Sunday March 13, the Geelong Islamic Society and the Ararat Islamic Welfare Association participated in the ICV state-wide Mosque Open Day. Also during Ramadan, the ICV held its annual Iftaar in Geelong. 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 locals and groups within the region (see picture 2). Also during Ramadan, ICV representatives attended Iftaars held in Gippsland and Ballarat.



Picture 2: ICV annual Iftaar in Geelong

In both Bendigo and Ararat, the mosque committees continue to make advancement on building their respective Mosques. For Bendigo, the excavation of the foundations for the prayer hall, minaret, elevator and mihrab building have been completed (see picture 3).

Overall, 2022 has been a very successful year for all Muslims, in regional Victoria, particularly as we being to re-engage after COVID. The regional areas remain a key focus for the ICV, and again it has been an absolute pleasure be the ICV Regional Board member.

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 Hadiyah; 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, and we hope they all become part of the ICV family in the future.



Picture 3: Work being undertaken at the Bendigo Mosque.

# MEMBER SOCIETY ENGAGEMENT

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2021

The ICV held its 2021 Annual General Meeting on Sunday October 24 via Zoom due to ongoing COVID restrictions. Despite this being a non-election year, there was a strong showing from the Member Societies. The ICV President Adel Salman reflected on the many challenges of the past year but also emphasised the benefits including an increased sense of solidarity and cooperation amongst Member Societies which establishes a strong platform for the future. Members were provided with the key insights from the Member Forums that were conducted over the course of August to October. Pleasingly over 90% of the ICV Members, both full and affiliate, participated, giving a clear indication that there was strong support for this type of engagement.

The feedback from the Members covered challenges and priorities, suggestions and advice for the ICV itself, and discussion of the major issues and priorities for the Muslim community as a whole. Br. Adel outlined the main focus areas of the ICV's advocacy work including Islamophobia, protecting religious freedom, and the infringement on the civil rights of Muslims stemming from CT laws and CVE programs. He also discussed the longer-term strategic goals for the ICV to establish a city location to cater for current and future needs of the community and establishing financial sustainability. New ICV General Manager, Zakaria Wahid, expressed deep gratitude for the opportunity given to him to serve the Muslim community in this role, and provided an update on the key services and programs that the ICV is managing. ICV Treasurer, Milon Islam, provided a summary of the 2020-2021 financial accounts which have been signed off by the Board and the external auditor.



## MEMBER FORUMS

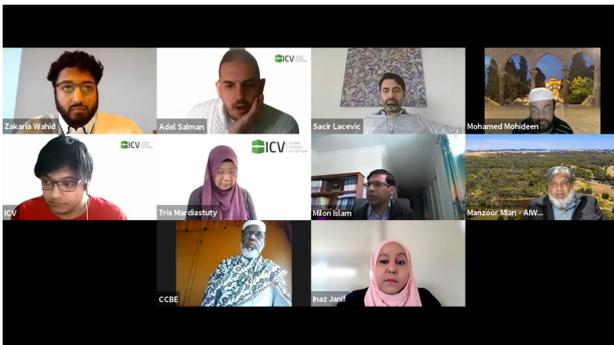
At the ICV, we understand our Member Societies face a vast array of priorities and challenges in a multitude of areas. We are constantly seeking to better understand our members and looking for opportunities to learn how we can better assist them. As such, the ICV commenced a series of Member Society consultation forums.

Seven online forums were held over ten weeks, and very pleasingly, more than 90% of our Member Societies participated. There were a number of common challenges raised including navigating COVID rules, the financial impact of lockdowns, challenge of funding for new masjids and expansions, and a major concern discussed was youth engagement.

The Member Societies also provided direct advice to the ICV including the need for strong focus on mental health and spiritual health for our community and the need to improve communication with Member Societies to make them more aware of the work the ICV is doing, particularly advocacy.

We updated the Members on the advocacy areas the ICV is focusing on including reopening masjids as soon as possible; racism and islamophobia; religious freedom and protection of Muslim identity; returning the families from Syria; impact of CT laws and CVE programs on Muslims in terms of infringement on civil rights; and police tactics used in CT cases.

Members were also updated on the ICV's longer term goals including the establishment of a new city community hub and masjid, and financial sustainability.



# VICTORIA MOSQUE OPEN DAY



- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>Albanian Australian Islamic Society (AAIS) -</b><br/>765 Drummond St, Carlton North VIC 3054</p> <p><b>Al-Taqwa Mosque</b><br/>201 Sayers Rd, Truganina VIC 3029</p> <p><b>Ararat Islamic Welfare Association -</b><br/>1 Birdwood Ave, Ararat VIC 3377</p> <p><b>Australian Bosnian Islamic Centre (ABIC) Deer Park Mosque</b><br/>285 Station Rd, Albanvale VIC 3021</p> <p><b>Australian Islamic Centre (Newport Mosque) -</b><br/>23-27 Blenheim Rd, Newport VIC 3015</p> <p><b>Benevolence Australia -</b><br/>125 George St, Doncaster East VIC 3108</p> <p><b>Brunswick Mosque (ICMG)</b><br/>660 Sydney Road Brunswick Melbourne, VIC, Australia 3056</p> <p><b>Circles of Lights Centre</b><br/>Unit 11, 5/7 Moira Ave, Reservoir VIC 3073</p> <p><b>El Sedeaq Heidelberg Mosque -</b><br/>32 Elliott St, Heidelberg Heights VIC 3087</p> <p><b>Emir Sultan Mosque Dandenong -</b><br/>139 Cleeland St, Dandenong VIC 3175</p> <p><b>Geelong Mosque (Islamic Society of Geelong) -</b><br/>45-47 Bostock Ave, Manjifield Heights VIC 3218</p> <p><b>Golden Wattle Mosque -</b><br/>700 Davis Rd, Tarnet VIC 3029</p> | <p><b>Hallam Mosque (EWAD) -</b><br/>131-133 Belgrave-Hollam Rd, Narre Warren North VIC 3804</p> <p><b>Islamic Society of Melbourne Eastern Region (ISOMER) -</b><br/>1273 Wellington Rd, Lysterfield VIC 3156</p> <p><b>Islamic Museum of Australia (IMA) -</b><br/>154 Anderson Rd, Thornbury VIC 3071</p> <p><b>Islamic Council of Victoria (City Mosque) -</b><br/>66-68 Jeffcott St, West Melbourne VIC 3003</p> <p><b>Keysborough Mosque -</b><br/>396 Greens Rd, Keysborough VIC 3173</p> <p><b>Maidstone Mosque -</b><br/>34 Studley St, Maidstone VIC 3012</p> <p><b>Meadow Heights Mosque (ICMG) -</b><br/>15-17 Hudson Cct, Meadow Heights VIC 3048</p> <p><b>Melbourne Grand Mosque -</b><br/>70 Wooten Rd, Tarnet VIC 3029</p> <p><b>Omar Farooq Mosque (AICOM) -</b><br/>14 Phoenix St, Doveton Victoria 3177</p> <p><b>Pillars of Guidance Community Centre -</b><br/>9-11 Green St, Doveton VIC 3177</p> <p><b>Thomastown Mosque -</b><br/>124/130 Station St, Thomastown VIC 3074</p> <p><b>Virgin Mary Mosque -</b><br/>143 Hagans Rd, Hoppers Crossing VIC 3029</p> |
|---|--|

This year, 24 mosques and community centres from both Metropolitan and Regional Victoria participated and welcomed people of various faiths and backgrounds. This event not only opens doors but opens minds, softens hearts and strengthen relationships with neighbours. It is a step in working toward a more cohesive and open society that not only tolerates differences but celebrates it.

Once again this year, mosques had the additional challenge of navigating the COVID-19 Pandemic and ensuring safety to all those that attended, but despite the challenges posed the event was a great success. The Mosque Open Day is an important event in working toward a more cohesive and open society that not only tolerates differences but celebrates them.

The ICV would like to thank the general public for the support and understanding they have shown by visiting and participating in the 2022 Victorian Mosque Open Day, and thank the staff and volunteers who have worked hard in preparing for the Open Day.

The ICV was proud to be able to run the Victorian Mosque Open Day 2022 on the 13th March, 2022. 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 for many years, 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.



# COVID 19 ENGAGEMENT

The ICV responded to the critical situations the community faced due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, by introducing a range of programs and initiatives to improve the safety of the community, in collaboration with Government and NGOs.

## FOOD HAMPERS

With the support of the state government, Halal Food Bank and partners, the ICV continues to provide essential food hampers of non-perishable items to families and individuals in need through a special COVID-19 relief fund. This included families, international students, single parents, people in isolation and those with little or 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 thousands of food hampers in response to the COVID-19 emergency.



## POP-UP VACCINATION CLINICS

With soaring COVID-19 cases, it was vital that vaccination rates were increased urgently amongst the broader public. Sadly, with outbreaks occurring throughout many community groups, including the Muslim community, it was vital to provide support. The ICV ran and helped establish a number of free Pop-Up Vaccination Clinics in the last 6 months of 2021, specifically catering to different Muslim community groups in the North, West and South-East. This support came at a critical stage when there were long wait times to get the COVID-19 Vaccines through general channels.

In the South-East, the ICV successfully assisted Hallam Mosque and the Department of Health with establishing a Pop-Up Vaccination Clinic at their mosque. Additionally in the North, the ICV led the creation of another Pop-Up Vaccination Clinic in the City of Hume, in collaboration with a third-party medical company and the Hume City Council. Lastly, the ICV collaborated to setup a Pop-Up Vaccination Clinic in Tarneit at the Melbourne Grand Mosque. The ICV supported these initiatives by in some cases organising and coordinating pre-planning of the clinics, setting up the online booking systems and passing on data to relevant health organisations, creating marketing content and having an available phone line for queries from the public.

## ISLAMIC COUNCIL OF VICTORIA POP-UP VACCINATION CLINIC CITY OF HUME

Starting Wednesday 6 October  
8.30AM To 4.30PM

**Craigieburn Sports Stadium**  
127 Craigieburn Rd  
Craigieburn VIC 3064

**Pfizer Available**  
Booking Required (Online) | Cost Free

Book an appointment now at  
<https://tinyurl.com/icvhumecommunity>

**ACCESS:**  
By car (parking available on site) ● Walking to site ●  
Public transport, buses 525, 529, 537 and 544 stop in front of the stadium

Family friendly environment.  
Pfizer will be available subject to age group.

## ONLINE INFORMATION SESSIONS

The Islamic Council of Victoria has run a variety of Q&A, information and wellbeing sessions on COVID-19, Vaccines and more. Many of these have 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.

**Children's mental health and wellbeing through lockdown**

**15th September 8-9pm**

Via Facebook Live and Zoom  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81244949987pwd~MFNuTltdHRRRVlJ4WWJYZUhd3dsZz09>

Meeting ID: 812 4494 9938  
 Passcode: 450796

Please join Monique Toohey and Dakhylina Madkhul to discuss the ways parents and carers can help improve their children's mental health and wellbeing through lockdown

**Monique Toohey**  
 Psychologist / Mental health & family violence advocate

**Dakhylina Madkhul**  
 Psychologist and creative therapist

**ICV**  
 ISLAMIC COUNCIL OF VICTORIA

**Rebuilding After Lockdown**  
*Online Discussion*

**Shaykh Alaa Elzokm**  
 Imam of the Elsedeq Heidelberg Mosque & Member of the Australian Fatwa Council

**Ustadha Saara Sabbagh**  
 Founder and Current CEO of Benevolence Australia

Tuesday 16th November  
 8:30pm - 9:30pm  
 Via Facebook Live and Zoom

**ICV**  
 ISLAMIC COUNCIL OF VICTORIA

## MEDICAL AID DISTRIBUTION – RAT TESTS & N95 MASKS

The ICV worked collaboratively with various external organisations, including the North Eastern Public Health Unit and the Department of Health, to improve Public Health outcomes throughout the community. This included projects to facilitate supply chains that enabled tens of thousands of medical supplies, including PPE and Rapid Antigen Tests, to be distributed at dozens of mosques and local community hubs.



# 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 was to create awareness and educate the Muslim community about the prevalence and prevention of men's violence against women.

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 had 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

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

We worked 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.

Overall, this innovative project achieved its aims, and we believe that it can be scaled up to other schools insha-Allah.

# ISLAMOPHOBIA

## ISLAMOPHOBIA SUPPORT

Islamophobia Support is a free community service that provides specialised and holistic support to the wider Victorian Muslim community. The scope and nature of our work is guided by our theory of change and outcomes framework. Our focus is to provide individual support, developing opportunities for education and empowerment, and strengthening collaboration with organisations and communities to improve the support available for Victorian Muslims.

## INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT

We continue to provide support to people who have experienced or witness Islamophobia in Victoria. We focus on providing comprehensive case management to understanding the specific needs of each person we help and aim to offer appropriate information, advice, referral and ongoing care with the different reporting and support options, as well as with pursuing pathways of action. Through this service, we have provided support to people who have experienced Islamophobia in the workplaces, in education (vocational institutions, universities and schools), on public transport, on the street and online (media and social media). Some of the outcomes we have achieved include: investigations, resolution through dispute resolution services, changes to the curriculum, procedural and institutional reforms, and apologies. Those who have access our service expressed that they feel supported, empowered and that their wellbeing was prioritised.

## PURPOSEFUL COLLABORATION

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

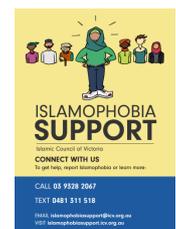
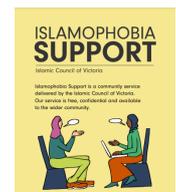
## ENGAGEMENT AND EMPOWERMENT

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

Between June 2021 – June 2022, we have co-designed and co-delivered 18 information sessions reaching over 1034 people. These sessions involved 8 sessions to communities, 8 sessions of CQ training to service providers and 2 sessions to education services. This consisted of collaborating with many different stakeholders including: community organisations, councils, schools, Muslim Legal Network, Victorian police, and the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission.

## A NEW PLATFORM

We have 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 support they require. The online platform also includes our Islamophobia Support Community Flyers, which is now available in 5 languages. We continue to update our Islamophobia Support Referral Network, which includes culturally responsive and professional practitioners and services committed to providing legal and mental health support, who can offer culturally responsive assistance. We have also launched our Islamophobia Support newsletters and our social media platform have been updated with four de-identified cases to represent the variety of cases we support.



# MY VOTE MATTERS 2022 FEDERAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN

In November 2021, My Vote Matters (MVM) commenced work to prepare for the 2022 federal election in May. MVM released an exposé on the Islamophobic Australia One Party, and published a series of political questions for MVM's Facebook and Instagram followers, such as: Should Moreland City Council change its name? Should Islamophobic parties like Pauline Hanson's One Nation Party, Katter's Australian Party and Australia One Party be banned? And do you support the Religious Discrimination Bill? In January, MVM asked its followers the provocative and topical question of whether Australia Day should be changed, which garnered significant social media engagement. The objective from these early online posts was to generate awareness and engagement about the issues that would be relevant for the upcoming Federal Election campaign.

In December, MVM published two posts summarising the results of the Scanlon Foundation's 2021 Mapping Social Cohesion Report ('Scanlon Report'). This generated an enormous social media response on FB and Twitter.

In February, MVM published social media content and a video clip calling on the federal government to bring Australian children stuck in northern Syrian detention camps home. This was in coordination with the campaign to bring home these Australian women and children held in appalling and dangerous conditions in these detention camps. The response from MVM's existing followers and new followers was powerful and underlined the level of deep concern held by Muslims and non-Muslims alike with the plight of these poor people.

In April, MVM officially commenced its federal election campaign with the release of the 2022 Australian Muslim Political Survey. The purpose of the survey was to identify the issues of importance to Muslims across Australia, and to use these insights to guide the analysis of the relative policy positions of the political parties on these matters. The ABC contacted MVM to ask what has been picked up by the survey in terms of political participation, key issues, and concerns, for Australian Muslims. The findings of the survey were released in May and not surprisingly Islamophobia and racism and the increasing threat of right-wing extremism were top of mind, and interestingly, religious freedom was a large issue of concern for the community. Other issues included healthcare and education, the rising cost of living and employment, and international issues such as Palestine.

In May, MVM released a post warning Australians not to (unwittingly) vote for Islamophobic parties such as the United Australia Party, Jacqui Lambie Network, Citizens Party, Hinch Party, Katter's Australia Party, Australian Christians, and Pauline Hanson's One Nation Party. This followed similar content published prior to the 2019 federal election that identified and Islamophobic parties and candidates and which garnered huge national and international attention.

In mid-May, MVM published the long awaited 2022 Federal Election Policy Scorecard which ranked the Liberal, Labor and Greens parties on the issues that mattered the most to respondents of the 2022 Australian Muslim Political Survey. The scorecard was published by a large number of print and online media outlets across Australia. The reception from the Australian Muslim community was overwhelming positive, but there was a general request that MVM release the scorecard earlier in the election cycle to account for the many people that cast early votes.

In the week leading up to the May 21st federal election, the ICV hosted a community "townhall" with representatives of the Australian Labor Party including Shadow Ministers. This was an opportunity for ICV members and others to directly ask questions of those seeking to form the next government of Australia. Many issues were raised, but the clear majority of questions asked related to religious freedom and international issues particularly Palestine.

The 2022 federal election was the third election campaign run by MVM, following the 2018 Victorian state election campaign and the 2019 federal election campaign. There is a clear demand from the Muslim community for this form of political awareness and advocacy, supporting the aims of MVM of encouraging Muslims to become engaged in the political process, to be informed about the issues and the policies of the parties, and to make their voice count by voting for the parties and candidates that best addressed their interests and concerns. MVM will be launching the 2022 Victorian state election campaign in October insha-Allah.

## 2022 ELECTION SCOREBOARD



### ISLAMOPHOBIA

Ban anti-Muslim vilification and hate speech	●	●	●
Combat right-wing extremism	●	●	●

### RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Outlaw religious discrimination	●	●	●
Protect right of schools to adhere to their religious ethos	●	●	●

### FIRST NATIONS

Address Indigenous disadvantage	●	●	●
Address police discrimination and deaths in custody	●	●	●

### ENVIRONMENT

Comprehensively transition to a low-carbon economy	●	●	●
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### SOCIAL WELFARE

Adopt a living wage	●	●	●
Increase social housing and support for first home buyers	●	●	●

### HEALTHCARE

Increase healthcare funding and address metro/rural gap	●	●	●
Increase accessibility of mental health services	●	●	●
Fix aged care system	●	●	●

### EDUCATION

Increase accessibility of higher education and TAFE	●	●	●
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### ECONOMY

Support small business	●	●	●
Grow real wages	●	●	●
Support fairer taxation and address wealth inequality	●	●	●

### FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Recognise Palestine and support justice for Palestinians	●	●	●
Condemn Uyghur and Rohingya genocides and sanction regimes	●	●	●

### REFUGEES

Scrap mandatory and offshore detention	●	●	●
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● addresses    ● partially addresses    ● doesn't address

# ICV YOUTH ACTIVITIES

## HUMAN APPEAL YEAR 12 ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS 2022 (ICV SPONSORED)

The ICV was proud to once again be a part of the Human Appeal Year 12 Achievement Awards in 2022, with the ICV President Adel Salman attending. 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. 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!



# ICV 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

# HOSPITAL CHAPLAINCY

Lina Ayoubi



## CORONA VIRUS & OUR VOLUNTEERS

Like previous years, Corona virus has impacted our volunteers dramatically. Hospitals to date except one, RMH, haven't allowed any volunteers including ICV's from attending the hospitals and resume their visiting duties. And hence:

### PRE APRIL 2022

Most of our patient referrals were done via remote contact, voice or video.

### PALLIATED & END OF LIFE PATIENTS:

Hospital chaplaincy coordinator and Imams, were allowed to visit but strictly by invitation.

### POST APRIL 2022

Changes started to happen!

Extensive requests to visit seriously ill patients, palliated and end of life increased drastically.

RMH opened the doors to our chaplains to resume with the strict conditions of at least two Corona Vaccines and Flu shot plus strict N95 Masking.

Other hospitals are still closed to volunteers but preparations to open doors have started, expectations are that resumption "to business as usual" may take place end of 2022 beginning of 2023.

ICV Hospital chaplaincy activities and duties were full on despite the restrictions. These included:

- Organising and Dropping off Copies of the Quran, prayer matts and prayer beads to different hospital chaplaincy departments
- 400 visits over zoom/phone/video WhatsApp
- Over 100 onsite visits
- Support patients post hospital stay
- Support international, asylum seekers and refugee hospital patients with community connections, referrals to financial support via different organisations eg. NZF and providing access to food vouchers etc
- Supporting patients who are victims of family violence with referrals to different agencies and NDIS
- Support families and help with organizing at least 20 funerals
- Support families in raising funds for funerals or organizing free burials
- Ongoing support of families post funerals
- Supporting patients in psychiatric units
- Coordinating imams to attend to end of life patients, It was very challenging for me on many levels and needs to be addressed and better access should be tabled and discussed
- In the Pipeline since beginning of 2022!  
A forum early 2023 re-palliative care and our community

We managed one Hybrid meeting (Face to face and on Zoom) with our hospital chaplain volunteers in Nov 2021 at ICV Spencer street office, discussions and reconnections over afternoon tea.

# JUSTICE SERVICES

## Chaplaincy Team



## PRISON & YOUTH CHAPLAINCY

The ICV chaplaincy services in prisons are always in high demand and this demand has increased significantly in 2021/2022, both inside prisons and outside. Chaplaincy services in prison have been a valuable link between prisons and the community, the community counts on the chaplaincy services for reassurance and support.

Post the challenging times of COVID-19 restrictions and the pandemic in 2020, the ICV chaplaincy team continued a hybrid/remote chaplaincy model due to restrictions and social distancing protocols put in place by Department of Justice.

ICV chaplains excelled in delivering services to Muslim inmates behind bars, given the multiple demands and expectations placed upon them every day. It's important to note that the ICV chaplaincy team have willingly and generously responded to the additional challenges and responsibilities placed upon them.

The support of the Correction Victoria, Prisons' Management Teams and Staff, ICV, its Board and Management Team is acknowledged and appreciated by the Muslim chaplaincy team. This support has helped us to deliver the work in best possible way.

## MUSLIM CONNECT

Muslim Connect is a community transition and reintegration program for Victorian Muslims exiting the prison system run by the Islamic Council of Victoria (ICV).

Muslim Connect focuses on reconnecting incarcerated community members with support networks within the Victorian Muslim community. We also provide mentoring, referral, and advocacy services to participants concerning mainstream services.

Our model is based on a partnership with the National Zakat Foundation, which provides financial assistance to program participants experiencing hardships such as bond/first month's rent, crisis accommodation and food vouchers.

Over the last 12 months, the program supported over 150 community members in their journey of transition and reintegration back into our community and broader Australian society. Some of the primary services the program provides include:

- Initial fortnightly face-to-face/video (COVID SAFE) catch-ups for the first three months
- Weekly welfare calls
- Informal counselling, our project officers are readily available on call to assist clients in times of distress.
- Housing establishment assistance through the NZF for furniture and other household essentials
- Financial assistance for purchasing essential items like clothes, shoes and a phone
- Referral to social/spiritual networks
- Referral to and collaboration with mainstream services to ensure culturally and religiously appropriate services are provided to them
- Liaise with DJCS/Community Corrections to assist with compliance with any release conditions.
- Assistance with enrolment into education and training
- Employment Referrals

The main highlight of the program over the past 12 months has been our work with the NZF to provide access and financial support to Muslim Connect clients needing drug and alcohol rehabilitation. With the aid of Allah (SWT) and the assistance of the NZF, we have admitted two sisters and a brother into rehabilitation in the second quarter of this year, costing the Zakat Foundation \$20,000. This is a significant milestone for Muslim Connect as it sets a great precedent, and we hope to expand our work in this critical area as we advance.

# ICV MOSQUE ACTIVITIES



## RAMADAN IFTAR & TARAWEEH PRAYERS

During Ramadan 2022, once again the ICV offered its traditional City Mosque Iftar & Taraweeh prayers. An open-house complimentary meal was provided for the breaking of fast every night for all attendees, 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.

## FRIDAY PRAYERS

The ICV has for decades provided Friday prayers at our City Mosque on Jeffcott Street, West Melbourne. We were very pleased, after a number of years during the COVID-19 pandemic, to be back to operating the Mosque normally outside of the COVID-19 pandemic. This included re-opening the mosque to the public at all times between Fajr and Isha.



## EID AL-FITR & EID AL-ADHA 2022

The ICV hosted the annual Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha prayers once again in 2022. Eid al-Fitr was hosted in Flagstaff Gardens, accommodating to the substantial turnout, with Sheik Abdinur leading the prayers. Eid al-Adha was hosted inside the mosque due to the weather, with multiple sessions being run. The ICV was very pleased to be able to hold these prayers, especially due to them being cancelled in previous years due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## MOSQUE RENOVATIONS

Throughout 2022, the ICV has undergone a massive undertaking to renovate the existing ICV Mosque. This included the entire replacement of the Mosque carpets, full renovation of the Wudu area, re-tiling, re-painting, electrical works and other miscellaneous repairs and improvements. Most of these renovations have now been completed or are being completed, and we're very glad to be able to provide mosque attendees with better facilities and services.



# ICV INTERFAITH ACTIVITIES

## ICV INTERFAITH IFTAR AT GEELONG MOSQUE

The ICV has its annual Interfaith Iftar with one of its regional member societies each year. This helps promote the Muslim community in the region and also supports interfaith dialogue. This year the Interfaith Iftar was organised in collaboration with the Islamic Society of Geelong and held in Geelong Community hub. It was lovely to see members of the Geelong Muslim community and also from the local interfaith network attend. Also attending were Bishop Philip Huggins, Murray Davies from the Baha'i community and also representatives of the Sikh Community. The ICV was represented by Adel Salman, President and other board members. Bro Ahmed, President of Islamic Society of Geelong welcomed all and spoke of the work done in Geelong. Bro Adel spoke of the importance of grassroot level engagement and importance of metro and regional communities working together to support one another and being there as one ummah. Previous years the ICV has held its annual Interfaith Iftar in Ballarat, Ararat, Gippsland and Bendigo.



## PALM SUNDAY RALLY MARCH 2022

The annual Palm Sunday Rally and Walk for Refugees was held on Sunday April 10. Hundreds of people from all faiths and walks of life attended with their banners and signs calling for justice for the hundreds of refugees held in cruel mandatory detention facilities, often for several years. Former refugees spoke to the crowd about their harrowing experiences, and faith leaders including ICV President Adel Salman, demanded action from the Federal Government to release the refugees and end this inhumane policy. With the upcoming Federal Election in mind, protesters were encouraged to make this a front-of-mind issue.



## RAMADAN AND AUSTRALIAN WORKPLACE - CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

Mohamed Mohideen, the Head of Priority Engagement for the COVID-19 Vaccination Response at the Victorian Department of Health, represented the Islamic Council of Victoria at the live webinar 'Ramadan and Australian Workplace - Challenges and Opportunities'. The webinar featured guests from different Muslim communities to learn more about Muslim culture and history, discover what Ramadan and Eid traditions mean to them, and to discuss the challenges and opportunities they've faced when observing Ramadan in the workplace.



## VICTORIAN FAITH COMMUNITY LEADERS WRITE OPEN LETTER TO THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL REGARDING EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AMENDMENT BILL

In late 2021, the ICV President Adel Salman led a group of multi-faith leaders in opposing the Equal Opportunity (Religious Exceptions) Amendment Bill 2021. This culminated in an open letter to the Victorian Attorney General, which was posted in The Age. The bill constrained religious bodies from the right to operate according to their beliefs and meant that "religious bodies and educational institutes will no longer be able to employ staff who hold the same religious beliefs and values unless they can prove that it is an 'inherent requirement' of the job".



# QARD HASSAN NILS

## No Interest Loans

For essentials you need now.

No fees. No interest. Ever.

Borrow up to \$2000. Pay back what you borrow.



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 and those who are below poverty line. ICV is committed by promoting economic, financial inclusion, and social participation in a market which has resulted in structural and financial forms of exclusion.

Loans are available via QH-NILS for essential goods and services such as fridges, washing machines, car repairs and medical procedures for up to \$1,500 till 30 June 2021, but Good Shepherd (GS-NILS) has increased loan amount to \$2,000 from 1 July 2022. At the moment, repayments are set at an affordable amount over 12 to 18 months but will be for 24 months from the new financial year onward.

During this financial year 2021/2022, a total of 115 loans were issued compared to 153 loans issued in 2020/2021 (about 25% decrease) with a total amount of \$98705 (last year \$189,217). This means, an average loan amount of \$859 was distributed per person, which is \$257 less than last years average loan of \$1116 per person. Most of the primary borrowers were single women (69%) and borrowers age ranging between 35 to 49 years. They borrowed money to purchase mostly computers, furniture and white goods including washing machine, dishwashers and fridges. This year's defaults and/or write-off rate is about 4.31% compared to 2.06% last year. This is the highest defaults since we started QH-NILS since 2009. The reasons for this may be due to changes in the issue of loans administration and loan structure during this year.

Our partner, Good Shepherd (GS), took a role in the administration of the loans, and applied a less stringent background check process. Moreover, 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 loan.

From GS central office the followings No Interest Loans product and policy changes are being done from 1st July 2022.

1. An increase to the maximum loan amount from \$1500 to \$2000
2. An increase to the loan term from 18 months to 24 months
3. A change to the income eligibility from \$57,000 gross annual income to \$70,000 gross annual income for singles and \$75,000 gross annual income to \$100,000 gross annual income for multiple person households (couples and people with dependents)
4. A widened scope for loan purposes which now includes costs associated with Household Essentials, Health & Wellbeing, Education & Employment, Housing and Transport

# CAPACITY BUILDING & NETWORKING

## LORD MAYOR OF MELBOURNE IFTAR

The Lord Mayor of Melbourne Sally Capp hosted an iftar at the Melbourne Town Hall on 21st April, 2022. Mayor Sally Capp broke new grounds when she hosted the first iftar in 2019 in the 150 years of the Melbourne City Council.

It was a lovely evening with members from the Melbourne Council, ICV board members including ICV President Adel Salman, representatives from the Flemington Towers community, newly arrived refugees from Afghanistan and other guests. There was Q&A session to discuss the experience and impact Covid has had over the last two years and a vision of hope going forward. Thank you to the staff at the Melbourne City Council for hosting the event. Guests were also given a tour of the Council chambers.



## ICV STAFF & EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE IFTAR

The Islamic Council of Victoria hosted an iftar for our executive committee, staff and volunteers on Thursday, March 22, 2022 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 members. The event provided the opportunity for attendees, including the ICV board and management, to show appreciation to all those involved in building a stronger Islamic community in Victoria.



## COMMUNITY FORUM WITH FEDERAL LABOR MPS

The ICV hosted a community forum with several Federal Labor MPs on May 17th, the Tuesday before the election. Representatives from ICV Member Societies and other invited organisations attended the 2-hour forum which was an opportunity for the Muslim community to ask questions and raise issues directly with those seeking to govern Australia. Questions asked related to a broad range of issues including religious freedom, discrimination and Islamophobia, Australia's position on justice for Palestinians, the crimes committed against the Uyghur and Rohingya minorities, the deteriorating situation in Kashmir and the treatment of India's Muslim community, and justice for the First Nations people. The Labor MPs walked away with a clear understanding of the matters of serious concern and committed to conveying specific points of follow-up to the relevant Shadow Ministers (now Ministers).



## MUSLIM SMALL/MEDIUM BUSINESS FORUM

The Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (DJPR) in partnership with the Islamic Council of Victoria and United Muslim Migrants Association conducted a Muslim small/medium business forum on Monday 22nd November 2pm. This session included important information for businesses operating during COVID-19 restrictions, including Business requirements (including COVIDSafe Plans, QR codes, and vaccine status check-in), Business support grants, Updates on the Roadmap and restrictions settings and more.

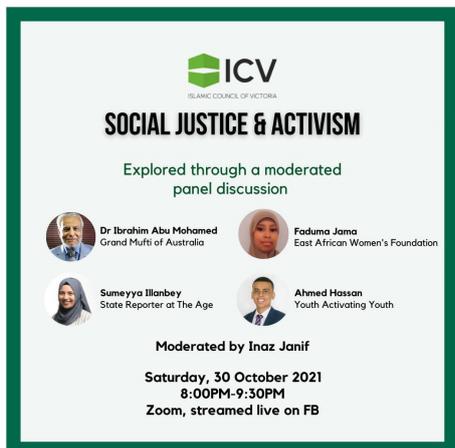
## SHE ENTREPRENEURSHIP 101

Islamic Council of Victoria in collaboration with the Muslim Professionals Association held a special one-day workshop on Saturday 18 June 2022 at the ICV Mosque. This workshop was designed for women who are considering kick-starting an initiative or have a business idea but were not sure how to get it off the ground. The leading ladies who co-founded Sistrv8 helped participants identify their passion, turned a passion into a business idea and equipped participants with the knowledge and tools to launch a business.



## SOCIAL JUSTICE & ACTIVISM

The ICV hosted a moderated panel discussion, sitting down with the Grand Mufti of Australia, Dr Ibrahim and our panel of community leaders, to discuss the topic of Social Justice and Activism. The panel was moderated by ICV Executive Member Sr. Inaz Janif, who touched upon issues impacting Muslims today, including racism within the Muslim community, marginalisation of the female voice and the experiences and the perspectives/challenges of Muslim youth today.



## INTERNATIONAL WITNESS CAMPAIGN

The ICV hosted a panel discussion with local and international experts to discuss the devastating impacts of the 'War on Terror' and who should be held accountable. The global War on Terror unleashed 20 years ago by the US and its allies, including Australia, has caused untold suffering and destruction. It has also resulted in innumerable injustices perpetuated upon Muslim citizens and the stripping away of many of our basic rights, all in the name of "national security". The ICV is a proud partner of the International Witness Campaign (CAGE).



# ICV DIGITAL MEDIA



The Islamic Council of Victoria - About Us Video



Star Weekly - Mosques to open doors to community this Sunday



SBS News - Muslim groups want a 'proper explanation' on decision to grant Katie Hopkins a visa



Katherine Times - Muslim voters with foreign policy in mind

**An open letter from Victorian faith leaders to the Attorney General regarding the Equal Opportunity (Religious Exceptions) Amendment Bill 2021**

16 November 2021  
Dear Attorney General,

We, the undersigned leaders of faith communities in Victoria, write to express our grave concerns about the *Equal Opportunity (Religious Exceptions) Amendment Bill 2021* recently introduced into the Victorian Parliament.

Our faith communities work tirelessly across all sectors of society to support fellow Victorians from diverse backgrounds, believing we have much to offer the community in the services we provide. Our religious beliefs and values underpin every aspect of the work we do, especially in our care for the most vulnerable, our commitment to educating young people and our efforts to contribute to a more just and cohesive society. Rather than allow religious bodies their natural right to operate in accordance with their beliefs, the *Equal Opportunity (Religious Exceptions) Amendment Bill 2021* seeks to go well beyond what might be considered reasonable or healthy in a pluralist society. In introducing the legislation, the Victorian Government is seeking to dictate how faith communities should run their organisations. This gross overreach could see religious organisations being forced to violate their beliefs and values in managing employment matters.

For people of faith, religious beliefs shape all aspects of life. Parents that send their children to religious schools expect that the school's environment faithfully represents the religious ethos in every respect including the conduct of all teachers and staff. With this Bill, the ability for schools to meet this legitimate expectation will be severely compromised because, in effect, the Bill erroneously disconnects religious belief from conduct that is consistent with this belief.

The Bill unfairly targets religious bodies and educational institutes. If passed, the legislation would impose restrictions on religious organisations that are not imposed upon other sectors of society, including Government bodies and political parties. If it is understood that it is advantageous for political parties and ministerial offices to hire staff who adhere to their beliefs and values, why is not the same standard being applied to religious organisations as well?

This is an unnecessary and unreasonable overreach of Government power and not appropriate in a tolerant and democratic society, where the rights of all people - including people of faith - should be respected.

We urge you and the Government to pause before pushing through such a drastic change that upsets the current balance which has proven to be fair and workable. We also urge the Government to conduct meaningful consultation with faith groups and other stakeholders which will be in the interest of all Victorians.

Yours sincerely,

Bishop Paul Barker Anglican Diocese of Melbourne	Reverend Father Daniel Ghabrial Coptic Orthodox Diocese of Melbourne
Bishop Greg Bennet Catholic Diocese of Sale	Bishop Shane Mackinlay Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst
Makarand Bhagwat Hindu Council of Australia	Gurdeep Singh Matharoo Victorian Sikh Gurdwaras Council
Bishop Paul Bird CSsR Catholic Diocese of Ballarat	Mitred Archpriest Michael Protopopov Diocese of Australia & New Zealand of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia
Reverend Father Shenouda Boutros Coptic Orthodox Diocese of Melbourne	Bishop Bosco Puthur Syro-Malabar Eparchy of St Thomas the Apostle, Melbourne
Bishop Mykola Bychok CSsR Eparchy of Saints Peter and Paul of Melbourne for Ukrainian Catholics in Australia, New Zealand and Oceania	Sheikh Muhammad Nawas Saleem Board of Imams Victoria
Archbishop Peter A. Comensoli Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne	Adel Salman Islamic Council of Victoria
Rabbi Dr Shimon Cowen Institute for Judaism and Civilization, Melbourne	Reverend Ian Smith Churches of Christ Vic/Tas
Bhakta Dasa International Society for Krishna Consciousness	Jasbir Singh Suropada Sikh Interfaith Council of Victoria
	Bishop Evmenios Vasilopoulos Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia



SBS News - Australia's Muslim communities feel 'threatened' by white supremacist groups

The Age - An open letter from Victorian faith leaders to the Attorney General regarding the Equal Opportunity (Religious Exceptions) Amendment Bill 2021



Melbourne Muslims feel 'unfairly tarnished' by reports linking them to rising COVID-19 cases



3AW - Muslim leader lauds AFLW player's 'brave' pride jumper stance, as questions about double standards emerge



SBS News - Mark joined a men's fitness club. Now it's become an armed neo-Nazi cell

# MEDIA STATEMENTS

## 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 issued media statements on a range of state, national, and international issues including the praiseworthy response of the Muslim community to the COVID-19 pandemic, the failure of the federal religious discrimination bill, the hugely destructive and ultimately futile 'war on terror', the selective use of sanctions to punish egregious human rights abusers (and failure to do so against Israeli government and

military officials), the visit by an Indian politician and extreme islamophobe and rising concerns about Hindu supremacist ideology, the tragic death of an Australian boy in northern Syria and the dreadful plight of Australian women and children held in these camps more generally, and the annual Mosque Open Day.

**Media Statement**

18 July 2022

**Overnight news of the death of Australian boy Yusuf Zuhair in Syria is a tragedy, the ICV calls upon the Australian government to prevent this scenario repeating by urgently repatriating the women and children in the camps**

The circumstances leading to Yusuf's death are not altogether clear because the Australian authorities have not tried to interview 'Who is known to him' he has been in Syria since the age of 11 and was subsequently separated from his mother and sister at 14 and sent to a men's prison without charge, a fate that regularly befalls boys in the camps.

Yusuf was seriously injured in an attack by ISIS fighters on the prison earlier this year, and despite voice recordings of him pleading to be rescued, nothing was done.

60 Australian women and children remain detained against their will in horrific conditions in camps in northeast Syria.

Other countries have successfully repatriated their citizens including our allies. The UN and human rights organisations have reported the cruel, inhumane and dangerous conditions and have repeatedly called upon Australia to repatriate its citizens. To no avail.

The heartfelt condolences of the ICV and undoubtedly the whole Muslim community and countless other Australians go to the family of Yusuf Zuhair.

*Truly to Allah we belong and Truly to Him we shall return [Quran 2:156]*

Australia has the legal system to deal with returnees. Likewise the services to assist with their transition. The families and the community are ready to show their arms around the women and children to provide them with the love, support, and connection that they will need. All the elements of a successful repatriation are there, all that is missing is the will to make it happen.

Prime Minister Albanese, you inherited this shameful situation from your predecessor, but you can do something about it now. We urge you to act as a matter of absolute priority to alleviate the suffering and hopelessness of your fellow Australians. **Prime Minister, #BringThemHome**

- End -

For further information contact ICV Media Spokesperson  
Adeel Salman 0421 059 095

**Media Statement**

31 May 2022

**Extreme islamophobe not welcome in Australia, the ICV calls upon the organisers of the Australia India Youth Dialogue to withdraw invitation to speak**

Indian MP, Tejasvi Surya, an unapologetic islamophobe has been invited to speak at the annual Australia India Youth Dialogue (AIYD) which is being held in Melbourne and Sydney between May 31 and June 4. Surya is a member of the ruling BJP party in India, known for his Hindu nationalist rhetoric and policies which often target the minority Muslim community.

Surya is known in India for his divisive public comments, and anti-Muslim sentiments. He has tweeted that "we must unapologetically opt for a Hindu nation" which is code for calling for Hindu supremacy. Indian media has reported on Surya's attempts to stoke anti-Muslim anger during the COVID pandemic, a dangerous strategy to fan communal hatred during a time of crisis when social harmony was essential.

The ICV does not believe that providing such a hateful figure with a prominent platform is consistent with the AIYD's aim of nurturing "a diverse and equitable dialogue for excelling young leaders from India and Australia which fosters strong people-to-people relationships" but will instead lead to discredit and undermining of genuine and respectful dialogue.

The ICV calls upon the AIYD to do the responsible thing and withdraw its invitation to Tejasvi Surya. The ICV also requests that sponsors and partners of this conference express their strong disapproval to the organisers and withdraw their support if necessary to make the point.

The Australian government has a role to play here as well. It is concerning that someone like Surya could be granted a visa to come to Australia in the first place, and the ICV asks for it to be revoked.

- End -

For further information contact ICV Media Spokesperson  
Adeel Salman 0421 059 095

<https://www.sbsat.com.au/mp-tejasvi-draws-fire-of-media-civ-society-for-speaking-muslim-hate-213623469>  
<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-05-31/indian-mp-surya-islamophobic/10158124>

9. Pursuant to the above, both the ICV and UNSW have sent letters to the Secretary of AFIC calling for the re-scheduling of the Federal Congress that is to be held in June 2022 but did not proceed due to the court case. In these letters, we demanded that the Federal Congress be held as soon as possible being 6 weeks from the date of the letter (as per the AFIC Constitution, 6 weeks' notice is required).

10. For too long, the Australian Muslim community has endured embarrassment caused by the outrageous and improper conduct of AFIC.

11. It is time that our community hold AFIC accountable and take a stand against this divisive, improper, and wasteful conduct which is only serving the interests of a small group of individuals.

12. Move importantly, it is time for AFIC to act in line with the purposes for which it was established, namely, to be a genuine voice for the Muslims of Australia and to serve the community's interests.

13. AFIC has substantial assets and significant revenue sources which can be directed toward the betterment of our community.

14. For this to happen, new leadership of the organisation is required, and this can only happen via the removal of the current AFIC Exec at the upcoming Federal Congress elections.

Yours sincerely,



Adeel Salman  
President ICV  
Tel: 0421 059 095  
Email: [adeel.salman@icv.org.au](mailto:adeel.salman@icv.org.au)

Page 3/3  
Islamic Council of Victoria  
46 - 48 Suffolk Street West Melbourne VIC 3003

**Media Statement**

18 February 2022

**Sharing our Faith and Cultural Heritage - ICV's Victorian Mosque Open Day 2022**

*"The best of friends in the sight of Allah (Most High) is the one who is best to his friend, and the best of neighbours in the sight of Allah (Most High) is the one who is best to his neighbour." (Prophet Muhammad as reported in al-Tirmidhi)*

Commencing in 2017, the Islamic Council of Victoria's annual Mosque Open Day is now an essential part of Victoria's multi-faith and multicultural calendar. It is truly an iconic celebration of dialogue, respect, and understanding between and amongst all the communities that comprise this state's rich mosaic.

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, henna tattoos, henna tattoos, and discussions about Islamic beliefs. Visitors have also enjoyed the tasty food on offer and the wonderful hospitality!

As Victorians welcome the end of many of the COVID restrictions, the Mosque Open Day is a great opportunity to get out and connect with neighbours and to satisfy one's curiosity about their fellow Victorians of the Islamic faith.

"Mosques are always open and always welcoming places. As well as being a sacred space for prayer and reflection, they are places where communities gather, learn from each other and share," said ICV President Adeel Salman.

The third anniversary of the Christchurch massacre will be two days after Mosque Open Day. "We must continue to reflect on the lessons of this appalling tragedy, and most importantly, we can never again show complacency in the face of intolerance and hate. There is still much for us to do," said Mr. Salman.

Mosque Open Day is a unique opportunity to be part of this collective effort.

End of Statement

Please forward all enquiries to [admin@icv.org.au](mailto:admin@icv.org.au)

**Media Statement**

The following 23 mosques and Islamic communities will open their doors on the day anytime between 10-4pm:

- Albanian Australian Islamic Society (AAIS)
- Al Taqwa Mosque
- Azrafi Islamic Welfare Association (AIWA)
- Australian Islamic Centre
- Benevolence Australia
- Brunswick Mosque (ICMG)
- Dandenong Turkish Islamic Cultural Society (Imir Sultan Mosque)
- Ebodeeg Society (Heidelberg mosque)
- Galden Warrim Mosque
- Hallam Mosque (HWAH)
- ICMG Meadow Heights Mosque
- Islamic Council of Victoria (ICV Mosque)
- Islamic Museum of Australia (IMA)
- Islamic Society of Geelong
- ISQMER - Lysterfield mosque
- Keilorborough Mosque
- Mildstone Mosque
- Melbourne Central Mosque (WIC)
- Moorabbin Mosque
- Omar Farooq Mosque (AICOM)
- Pillars of Guidance Community Centre (PGCC)
- Thomastown Mosque
- Virgin Mary Mosque

Find your nearest participating mosque and keep up to date with the Victorian Mosque Open Day here:

<https://fb.me/cv/1161V1Mta>  
<https://www.instagram.com/icvaustr>

**Statement on behalf of the ICV Executive Committee**

**Inna Billah wa Inna Ilayh Rajoon**

The ICV is saddened by the passing of our former President Brother Yasser Salman on Saturday 15 Muharram 1444 AH (13 August 2022). Brother Yasser was one of the longest serving Presidents of the ICV having held this position from 1999 to 2006. He was one of the leaders of the community who played a vital role during the period in the aftermath of 9/11 which was a very challenging time for the Muslim community. Brother Yasser's leadership helped ensure the community's safety was prioritised and that its significant contribution to society was recognised. He was one of the pioneers in interfaith dialogue, reshaping the engagement of the ICV and the Muslim community with other faith communities.

Prior to serving as President of the ICV Brother Yasser served as president of the Federation of Australian Muslim Students and Youth (FAMSY) in the early 1990s. After his term as president of the ICV, Brother Yasser was appointed as a Victorian Multicultural Commissioner (2005 - 2013). Other positions he held include being a member of the Council for a Multicultural Australia (CMA) (2009-2008) and serving on the Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria (ECCV). Brother Yasser was also one of the founders of Health Christian Muslim Association (HCMA) and served on its board. Brother Yasser also had a strong care for young people and served as a Youth Chaplain for the ICV for a number of years.

Brother Yasser's activities are remembered by many in the Muslim and wider multicultural community. While president of the ICV he was instrumental in leading the visitation case against the Cash the Fire Ministers, which the ICV won. He actively worked in partnership with Victorian Police, local councils and Muslim youth to forge understanding and cooperation. As a VCMC commissioner Bro Yasser was a member of the Parliament of the World's Religions which hosted a Melbourne program in 2005, the theme being "Make a World of Difference: hearing each other, healing the Earth". These are just some examples of the advocacy work done by Bro Yasser. He was a man who stood up for what he believed in and always acted for the interests of the Muslim community.

Respected elder and historian, Brother Hani Colaneri wrote on hearing of his passing that brother Yasser was "One of the young activists I remember most clearly when I came into the Muslim community in the 1970s. He was a tall friendly Egyptian who shared my view of what was important about our way of life. Yasser lived his faith through strong commitment to his fellow human beings, always deeply concerned to remove obstacles to understanding and to carry the message of Islam to the world. He never weakened in his efforts, and I particularly recall his strength in dealing with the VCAT case with Cash the Fire. I am very saddened."

Brother Yasser has been described as a "living man", "an influence on the youth", "a kind person", "a good friend", and "a beautiful person with a beaming smile".

"On behalf of the ICV, our Member Societies, and the Victorian Muslim community, I would like to express our deep condolences to the family of Brother Yasser Salman, his wife and three children. During a time of immense scrutiny, antagonism, and sensationalist reporting directed towards the Muslim community, Brother Yasser's strong leadership and wisdom when he was President of the ICV brought a much-needed level of calm to the situation. Brother Yasser strongly believed in the benefits of interfaith and multicultural engagement and championed many such forums. His sad passing will leave a considerable gap in our community. May Allah grant him the highest station in Paradise (Jannat Firdaws) and grant labor to his family", said current ICV President Adeel Salman.

46-48 Jeffcott Street West Melbourne VIC 3003  
Ph: (03) 9328 2007 | email: [admin@icv.org.au](mailto:admin@icv.org.au) | [www.icv.org.au](http://www.icv.org.au)

ICV Media Statement 10/09/2021 Devastating impacts of 20 years of 'War on Terror' For further information contact: Adel Salman 0421 059 095

ICV Media Statement 24 February 2022 Australian children are innocent and are not a threat. Prime Minister - BRING THEM HOME 'Their failure to repatriate these children, who should rightly be considered victims of terrorism and its children in need of protection under international law, beggars belief.'

ICV Media Statement 21 February 2022 People of faith feel let down by our politicians' failure to guarantee their right to faithfully practice their religion free from discrimination and vilification Australian law protects against many forms of discrimination. Race, gender, age, and disability are all protected attributes with their own anti-discrimination legislation.

ICV Media Statement 05 August 2021 Proactive Muslim Community Response to COVID Cases Victorians are resilient having lived through multiple lockdowns and ongoing COVID restrictions, but the ICV acknowledges the anxiety and disruption for many in the community caused by the latest COVID cases.

Islamic Council of Victoria 5th July 2022 Briefing for all ICV and AFIC Members re case against AFIC As many of you would be aware, the ICV along with our counterpart State Council in NSW, UMSNSW, took AFIC to court for its invalid expulsiion of both Councils. Our case in the NSW Supreme Court was successful alhamdulillah.

ICV Media Statement 19 August 2021 Improper purpose, because they were not good faith exercises of the power of expulsion... Following the 3-day trial in early June 2022, Justice Kirk declared that both ICV and UMSNSW were the State Councils of Victoria and New South Wales, respectively.

ICV Media Statement 01 September 2021 Campaign to shine a light on devastating impacts of 'War on Terror' The timing of the ignominious withdrawal of US and coalition forces from Afghanistan could not be more poignant given that this month is the 20th anniversary of the launch of the disastrous 'War on Terror'.

ICV Media Statement International Human Rights Groups Launch Global Campaign remembering 20 years of the failed War on Terror London. An international network of human rights organisations and advocacy groups have today launched a 5 month long campaign to commemorate twenty years since the launch of the global War on Terror [1].

ICV Media Statement I always believed peace can be achieved through dialogue and that justice can only happen if perpetrators are accounted. The international witness campaign comes at the perfect time to amplify this message on a global level.



### COVID-19 Vaccine

Information session with Mohamed Mottideen (Department of Health)

THE ISLAMIC COUNCIL OF VICTORIA WOULD LIKE TO INVITE YOU TO AN INFORMATION SESSION AROUND COVID-19 VACCINE - FOLLOWUP AND UPDATES

**WHEN**  
Tuesday 6th July at 6.00 pm

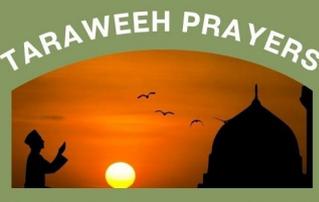
**WHERE**  
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82533220949  
Meeting ID: 825 3322 0949  
One tap mobile  
+61370182005  
+61731853730

scan here to connect to the meeting



ISLAMIC COUNCIL OF VICTORIA

## TARAWEEH PRAYERS



Join us this Ramadan for Taraweeh Prayers at the ICV City Mosque (66-68 Jeffcott St, West Melbourne VIC 3003)

The Islamic Council of Victoria

WOULD LIKE TO WISH EVERYONE A BLESSED

## Eid Mubarak

May Allah accept from us, our prayers, good deeds and sacrifices.

JOIN US FOR A KHUTBA AFTER EID SALAAT WITH SHEIKH ABDINUR WELI

WHEN: 8:00AM TUESDAY 20TH JULY, 2021  
WHERE: ICV FACEBOOK



ISLAMIC COUNCIL OF VICTORIA

The Islamic Council of Victoria wishes the Muslim community a blessed

## Eid al Adha 2021

**Tuesday, 20th July**

Eid prayers will be held at the **City Mosque**

66-68 Jeffcott Street, West Melbourne

**Session 1 - 7:45am**  
**Session 2 - 8:15am**  
**Session 3 - 8:45am**  
**Session 4 - 9:15am**

Active 15 minutes beforehand & please practice social distancing



admin@icv.org.au | 9328 2067



### SHE Entrepreneurship 101:

STARTING YOUR OWN BUSINESS

Saturday 18 June 2022 | 1pm - 5pm | \$15 + booking fee  
ICV - Jeffcott St West Melbourne | Limited places available

Sam Haouchar & Aisha Dani  
Workshops facilitated by 2021-22 founders

Registration Link | <https://bit.ly/mpa-icv>



## An open letter from Victorian faith leaders to the Attorney General

REGARDING THE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY (RELIGIOUS EXEMPTIONS) AMENDMENT BILL 2021



### ICV Food Hamper Drive

Are you in need of a food parcel?

The ICV is providing free essential food hampers with non-perishable items to families and individuals. This includes international students, single parents, people in isolation, and those with little to no access to food.

To request food support, please fill in the link below with your information to ensure we can provide the right support or scan the QR code

The hampers cater for 2 adults for 2 weeks and contain essential items such as rice, flour, pasta and long life milk etc.

If you are in need of food assistance please fill out the form below:

For further enquiries: admin@icv.org.au





### Rebuilding After Lockdown

Panel Discussion

Shaykh Alaa Elzokm  
Head of the Islamic Education Program, Director of the International Centre for Islamic Studies

Ustadha Saara Sabbagh  
Executive Director, Islamic Education, Islamic Education Centre, Islamic Education Centre

Tuesday 16th November 8:30pm - 9:30pm  
Via Facebook Live and Zoom



### SOCIAL JUSTICE & ACTIVISM

Explored through a moderated panel discussion

Dr Binyan Abu-Mahmud  
Senior Lecturer at The Age

Fadwa Jami  
Youth Activist, Women's Foundation

Sameya Shabey  
Youth Activist at The Age

Ahmed Hassan  
Youth Activist, Youth

Moderated by Inaz Jasil

Saturday, 30 October 2021 8:00PM-9:30PM  
Zoom, streamed live on FB



### Racism and Islamophobia Information Session

Thursday 7 October 8pm-9pm  
Online via Zoom



admin@icv.org.au | 9328 2067





### NAF Camp Tickets Giveaway

The ICV has sponsored a number of tickets to giveaway for the Networks Australia Foundation (NAF) Leadership Retreat

To apply, fill out the following form: <https://forms.gle/jh5ANTYF-wrwwr6s>




### CALLING FOR FOODBANK VOLUNTEERS

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING FOR THE ISLAMIC COUNCIL OF VICTORIA?

ICV has partnered with Holat Food Bank to distribute non-perishable food hampers to support those in need including people in isolation.

ICV is looking for volunteers to help deliver those boxes to individuals and families in need around Victoria.

If you're interested, register through our portal in the link provided or email [admin@icv.org.au](mailto:admin@icv.org.au) to express your interest.



### MUSLIM SMALL/MEDIUM BUSINESS FORUM

ROADMAP AND NEW COVIDSAFE SETTINGS

YOU ARE INVITED TO A FORUM WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF JOBS, PRECINCTS AND REGIONS (DJPR) ON VICTORIA'S ROADMAP AND NEW COVIDSAFE SETTINGS.

MONDAY 22ND NOVEMBER 2:00PM

THE SESSION WILL INCLUDE:

- Business requirements (including COVIDSafe Plans, QR codes, and vaccine status check-in)
- Business support grants, and health and wellbeing
- Updates on the Roadmap and restrictions settings
- CHD Directions (including the vaccination requirement for workers)
- Signage and posters
- Penalties
- An opportunity for discussion and questions.

Register online at: <https://forms.office.com/89a784987>




### Vaccine Chats

For Muslims, by Muslims

Book a free, confidential conversation about the COVID-19 vaccine\* with a Muslim health care professional at:

[vaxchats.org.au](http://vaxchats.org.au)

or scan the QR code below

\*Disclaimer: This platform does NOT provide medical consultations.





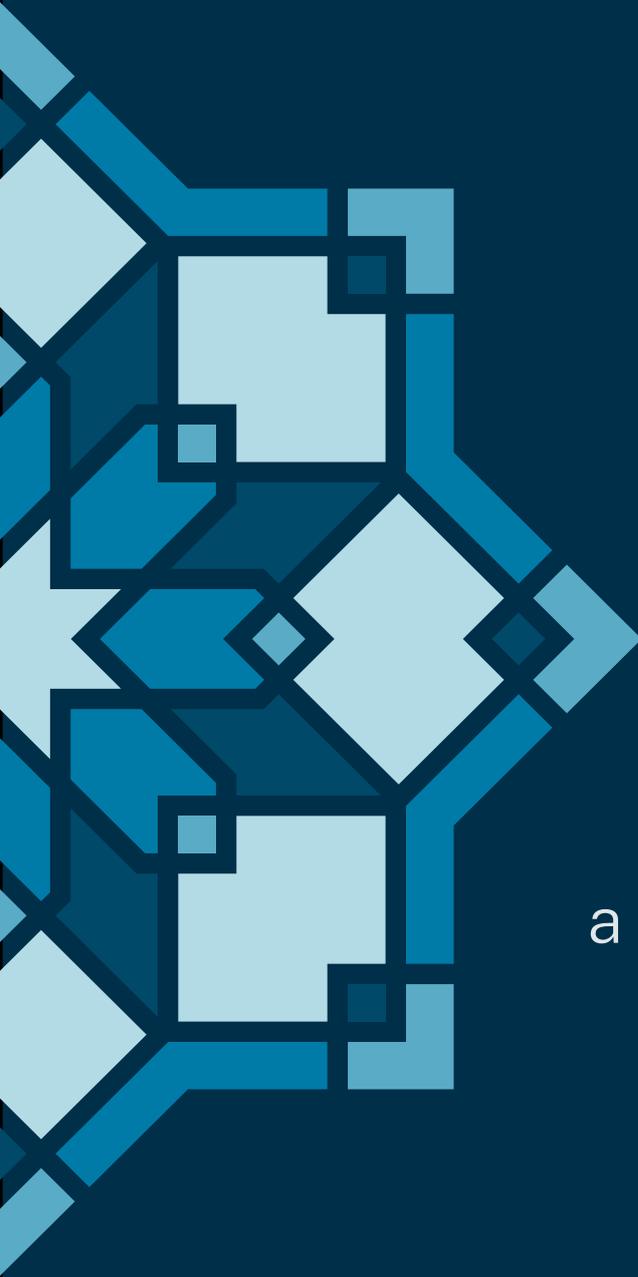
## OUR MEMBERS

- Afghan Islamic Centre & Omar Farooq Mosque (AICOM)
- Afghan Islamic Society
- 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
- Bilal Ethiopian Community Association Victoria
- Bosnia Herzegovina Islamic Society
- Cyprus Turkish Islamic Community Inc (Sunshine Mosque)
- Darubibal Education Charity & Welfare Association
- Darussalam Society
- EHSAN (Australian Islamic Affairs & Human Capital Development Association)
- El Sedeaq Islamic Society (Heidelberg Mosque)
- Emir Sultan Mosque Dandenong
- Eritrean Islamic Society of Australia
- Federation of Australian Muslim Students & Youth (FAMSY)
- Gippsland Australian Muslim Community Inc (GAMCI)
- Goulburn Valley Turkish Islamic & Cultural Society
- HIYC
- IISCA
- IMAN (Institute of Muslim Academic Network)
- Indonesian Muslim Community of Victoria (IMCV)
- Islamic Association of Australia (Tayyiba Institute)
- 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 & 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 Council of Victoria
- My Centre (IISNA)
- Newport Islamic Society (Australian Islamic Centre)
- Oromo Learning & 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

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

# SUPPLEMENTARY SECTION - ICV SPECIAL REPORT



# Islamophobia in the Digital Age

a study of anti-Muslim tweets

Umar Butler



In the spirit of reconciliation, we acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community. We pay our respect to their Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.

Authored by  
**Umar Butler**

with contributions from  
**Adel Salman**  
**Zehra Rizvi**

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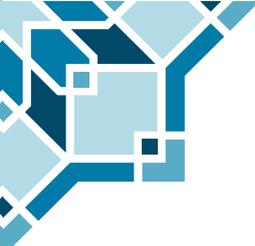
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# Introduction

For the year 2000, the FBI recorded some 29 Islamophobic hate crimes.<sup>1</sup> Two decades later, in 2020, that number had grown to 110.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, in Australia, 80% of Muslims report having experienced discrimination at some point in their lives,<sup>3</sup> and a further 88% say that Islamophobia is on the rise.<sup>4</sup> This trend is not unique to the US and Australia. As noted by UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief Ahmed Shaheed, the past twenty years have seen the worldwide escalation of anti-Muslim hatred to ‘epidemic proportions’.<sup>5</sup> And, with the rise of social media, much of that hatred has also found its way online.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, recent research indicates that Islamophobia is now more prevalent on the web than it is in real life.<sup>7</sup> According to experts, this growth in digital Islamophobia is fuelling a vicious cycle whereby online expressions of hate incite offline attacks on Muslims, which in turn provoke more online hate.<sup>8</sup> Brenton Tarrant is a prime example. Not only was it online that he was radicalised, but it was also there that he was able to livestream his massacre of 51 New Zealand Muslims, triggering an explosion in Islamophobic material and the corresponding brainwashing of countless new far-right extremists.<sup>9</sup>

Despite the apparent severity of rising digital Islamophobia, there has been relatively little research into its prevalence and causes. This report aims to change that. Harnessing cutting-edge machine learning techniques to automatically identify hateful content, our investigation reveals that there were at least 3,759,180 Islamophobic posts made on Twitter between 28 August 2019 and 27 August 2021. Even more concerning, however, is our discovery that only a mere 14.83% of anti-Muslim tweets end up being removed. We conclude from these findings that radical changes are necessary to both Twitter’s moderation policies and online safety law, without which it is all the more likely that the problem of digital Islamophobia will grow to a point of intractability.



# Key Findings

- There were at least 3,759,180 Islamophobic posts made on Twitter between 28 August 2019 and 27 August 2021.
- After close to a year, 85% of hateful tweets were still online.
- Nearly 86% of geolocated anti-Muslim posts originated in just three places: India, the US and the UK.
- Spikes in hate strongly correlated with newsworthy events related to Islam, particularly protests, terrorist attacks and eruptions of conflict in the Muslim world.
- The most common themes observed in Islamophobic tweets were, in order of prevalence:
  - The association of Islam with terrorism;
  - The depiction of Muslim men as perpetrators of sexual violence;
  - The fear that Muslims wish to impose the Sharia on others;
  - The conspiracy theory that Muslims are being sent as migrants to outreproduce non-Muslim communities (known as the ‘Great Replacement’ in the West and ‘population jihad’ in India);
  - The targeted harassment of Muslim public figures; and
  - The characterisation of halal slaughter as an inhumane practice that reflects the barbarity of Islam.



# Methodology

## Collection

We relied on community consultation, existing literature and the Hatebase lexicon<sup>10</sup> to develop a complex Boolean query comprised of 84 search terms that would allow us to capture as many Islamophobic posts as possible. Due to practical limitations, however, we were unable to survey non-English tweets, retweets, and tweets containing photos, videos and GIFs.

Using our query, we collected 6,603,114 tweets posted between 28 August 2019 and 27 August 2021 (a period of two years from when we began our investigation). Ten thousand were then randomly sampled and set aside for annotation – the largest dataset of its kind to date.

## Annotation

In annotating tweets, we employed the definition of Islamophobia provided by our *Islamophobia Position Statement*:

Islamophobia is ‘rooted in racism and is a type of racism that targets expressions of Muslimness or perceived Muslimness’. Very simply, Islamophobia ‘is anti-Muslim racism’. Islamophobia involves the ‘rejection of Islam, Muslim groups and Muslim individuals on the basis of prejudice and stereotypes. It may have emotional, cognitive, evaluative as well as action-oriented elements.’<sup>11</sup>

Included within this definition is hate speech that, although not explicitly derisive, constitutes an implicit attack on Muslims. A post stating that ‘the US is being overrun by Islamists’, for instance, would be labelled Islamophobic on the basis that the term ‘Islamists’ is being used as a codeword for Muslims. Furthermore, a tweet asserting that ‘a head chopping Muslim migrant has just brutally murdered five Christian prayer goers’ would also be classified as Islamophobic for implying a connection between the fact that the perpetrator is a ‘Muslim migrant’ and the fact that the victims are ‘Christian prayer goers’.

Out of 10,000 posts, 5,518 were found to be Islamophobic and 4,482 neutral.

# Training

ELECTRA-Small<sup>12</sup> was pretrained on our dataset of 6,603,114 tweets and then finetuned on our annotations. We tested our model with 10-fold cross-validation, resulting in an accuracy of 86.68% and an F1 score of 87.95.

Fold	Accuracy	Precision	Recall	F1 score
1	86.5%	90.25	84.89	87.49
2	85%	86.38	86.69	86.54
3	86.1%	87.79	87.32	87.56
4	86.2%	84.78	90.21	87.41
5	87.8%	88.42	89.07	88.75
6	87%	86.56	89.78	88.14
7	85.6%	86.14	88.59	87.35
8	85.7%	88.71	86.09	87.38
9	88.2%	90.07	88.79	89.43
10	88.7%	89.59	89.42	89.51
Mean	86.68%	87.87	88.09	87.95

Figure 1—Results of 10-fold cross-validation.

Our model was further applied to the only publicly available dataset of anti-Muslim posts, that of Heena Khan and Joshua L Phillips.<sup>13</sup> We achieved an accuracy of 82.12%, precision of 65.51, recall of 82.94 and F1 score of 73.2, finding such results to be satisfactory in light of the significantly imbalanced nature of their data (just 29.45% of posts were labelled as hateful).<sup>14</sup>

In manually reviewing misclassifications, we observed that the model had the most difficulty with tweets that were not written in grammatically correct English, contained sarcasm, could be misconstrued as using terms such as ‘Islamism’ and ‘radicals’ to refer to Islam and Muslims, or were contextually dependent. We were not surprised to find these weak points as they were also challenges that we had faced while annotating posts. Accordingly, we felt confident in applying our model to the totality of our dataset.

Out of 6,603,114 tweets, the model classified 3,759,180 (56.93%) as Islamophobic and 2,843,934 (43.07%) as neutral.

# Results

## Removal

After rerunning our original query on 27 June 2022, we found that 557,446 (14.83%) Islamophobic tweets were no longer online, either because they had been hidden through a change of privacy settings, taken down by users or deleted by moderators. We conclude from this that **Twitter is drastically failing at removing anti-Muslim content.**

This is unsurprising given that they do not automatically screen posts for hate, but rather only act once a report has been filed.<sup>15</sup> In practice, however, even when Islamophobia is brought to their attention, a mere 3% of flagged tweets

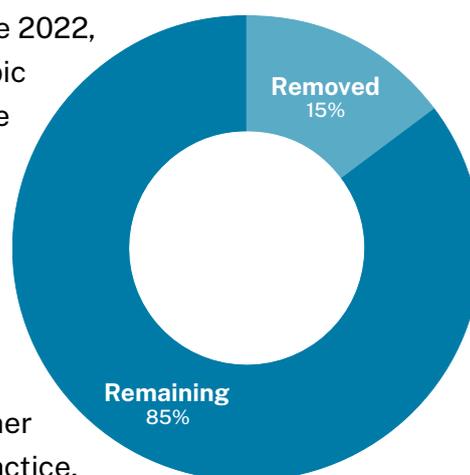


Figure 2 - Proportion of Islamophobic tweets removed (as of 27 June 2022).

end up being removed.<sup>16</sup> Change is clearly necessary, and to that end, we recommend that Twitter discontinue its policy of not screening content, and instead begin developing new capabilities for the automatic detection and deletion of hate speech. Considering that some 85% of anti-Muslim posts go by unremoved, and a further 97% of reports are ignored,<sup>17</sup> such reforms appear essential to the continued viability of Twitter's moderation policies.

## Time

In analysing the daily frequency of Islamophobic tweets, **we observed a strong correlation between spikes in hate and newsworthy events related to Islam,** particularly protests, terrorist attacks and eruptions of conflict in the Muslim world.

With regard to the relationship between Islamophobia and terrorism, we note that **attacks in the West were more likely to lead to anti-Muslim hate than those committed elsewhere.** For example, whereas we recorded 6,264 Islamophobic tweets the day after more than 50 people were beheaded by

extremists in northern Mozambique, there were 10,091 such tweets made after the London Bridge stabbing. Furthermore, a manual review of the 50 days with the highest number of anti-Muslim posts reveals that none of them were connected to attacks outside the West.

We also observe that **the response of politicians to current events connected to Islam can have a considerable impact on the prevalence of Islamophobia.** The rise in anti-Muslim tweets on 26 October 2020 stands out as a clear example of this. Most of the posts reviewed from that day were linked in some way or another to French President Emmanuel Macron’s controversial assertion that Islam ‘is in crisis all over the world’.<sup>18</sup> Likewise, the third-largest spike in Islamophobic tweets on 25 February 2020, was found to be the result of hateful remarks made by leaders of India’s ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) against Muslim protesters of the Citizenship Amendment Act.<sup>19</sup>

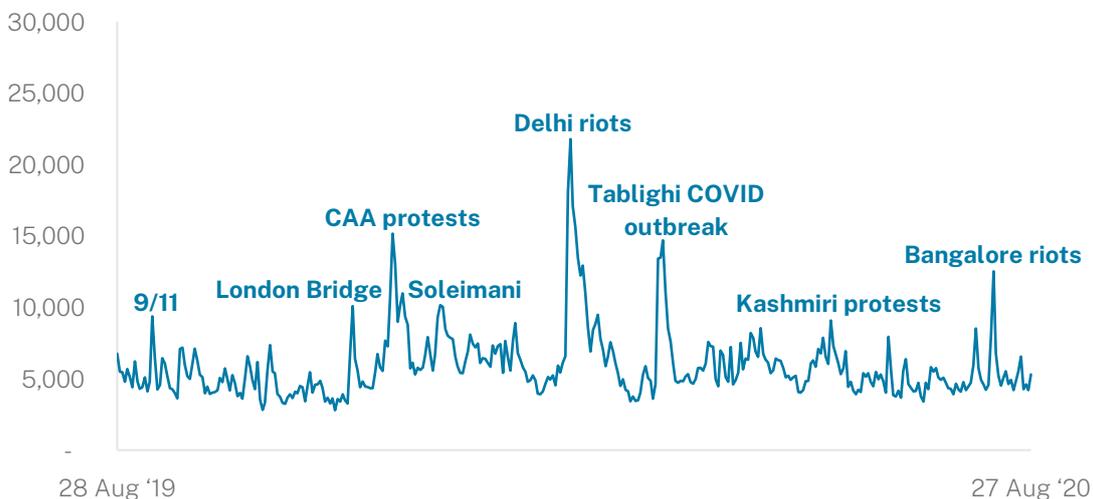


Figure 3–Daily frequency of Islamophobic tweets between 28 August 2019 and 27 August 2020.

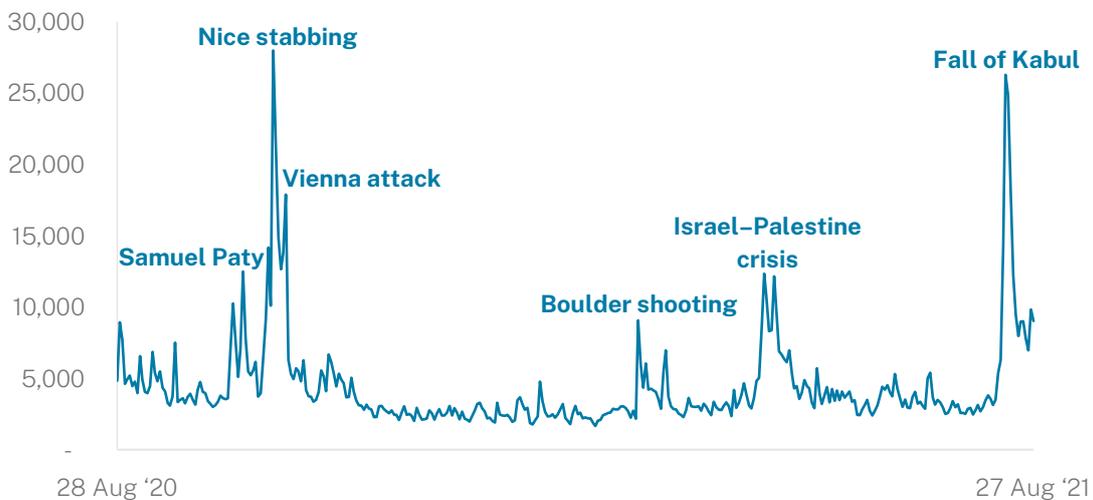


Figure 4–Daily frequency of Islamophobic tweets between 28 August 2020 and 27 August 2021.

# Geography

We geolocated 1,581,005 (42.06%) anti-Muslim posts by manually geocoding the 6,000 most popular normalised self-reported user locations, in addition to extracting geotags. This data was then used to calculate the number of Islamophobic tweets produced by individual countries.

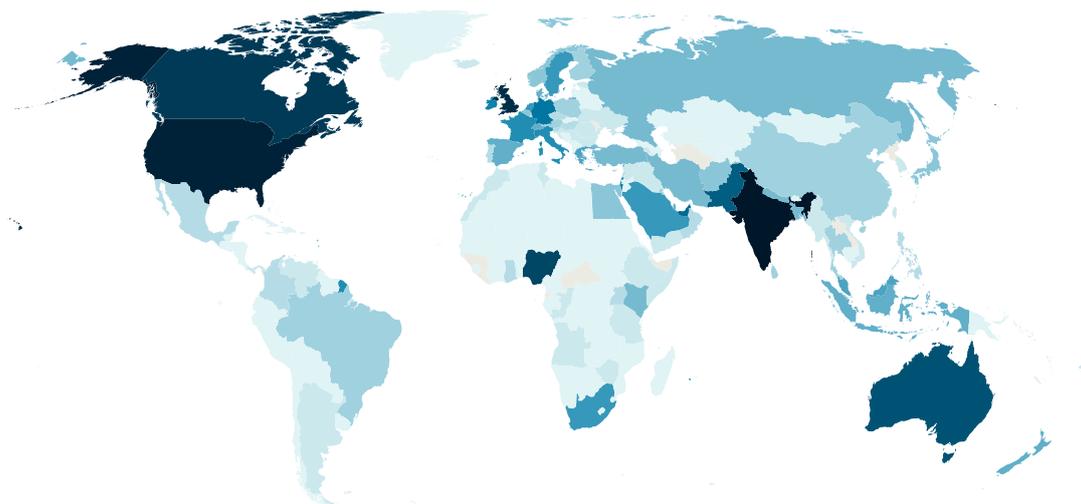


Figure 5 – Choropleth map where countries are coloured by number of geolocated Islamophobic tweets (using Jenks natural breaks interpolation).

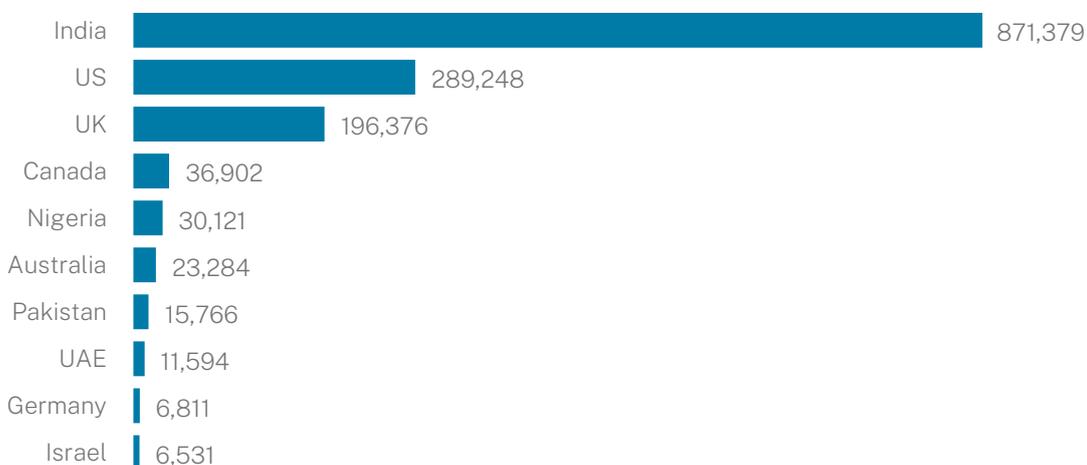


Figure 6 – The 10 countries with the largest number of geolocated Islamophobic tweets.

We found that **over 85% of all anti-Muslim posts originated in just three places: India, the US and the UK.**

With regard to India, we link the rampancy of Islamophobia to the fact that the BJP is currently in power. Indeed, from their refusal to condemn Ranjeet Bahadur Srivastava’s assertion that ‘the party will bring machines from China to shave 10–12 thousand Muslims and later force them to adopt Hindu



By analysing these results alongside observations noted during the annotation phase, we were able to identify several key themes in the content of anti-Muslim posts.

## Terrorism

### **Associations of Islam with terrorism were pervasive throughout our dataset.**

The origins of this trope can be traced in large part back to 9/11, when a myriad of ill-defined yet highly charged labels for terrorists suddenly sprung into existence.<sup>24</sup> ‘Islamofacist’, for instance, is said to have only entered common parlance after George W Bush employed it in a 2005 speech to refer to al-Qaeda.<sup>25</sup> Likewise, Google Ngram Viewer shows a 182.5% increase in uses of the phrase ‘radical Islam’ between 2000 and 2019.<sup>26</sup> The problem with these terms is that they imply that Islam is in some way connected to terrorism, or at the very least, that the Islamic faith of terrorists is relevant to their actions.<sup>27</sup> And thus, just as their use has grown amongst public officials and news media, so too has that perceived link between Islam and terrorism, leading to the present state of affairs where ‘kill’, ‘attack’ and ‘jihad’ are all some of the most frequently used terms in anti-Muslim tweets.

Its not stupidity and arrogance, its terrorism and jihadism of indian chuslims (F\*ck that pig religion)

Muslim people can't be classified as human beings, they not more than animals, even animals are better, because they always separate between terrorism and their religion, However they are both two sided similar coin.

*Figure 8 – Sample of Islamophobic tweets associating Islam with terrorism.*

Lacking any real consensus on its definition and whether it includes non-violent extremism, ‘Islamist’ illustrates yet another glaring problem with labels that imply a relationship between Islam and terrorism: they can easily be exploited by racists to discredit their critics. Indeed, on several occasions, we observed Muslim activists being defamed with baseless allegations that they were part of an Islamist conspiracy to take over non-Muslim governments, subverting local authorities by pretending to be ‘moderates’. More generally, we also witnessed the ‘Islamist’ label being employed as little more than a slur for Muslims, a trend that has certainly not been helped by the fact that Emmanuel Macron is currently leading a neo-McCarthyist ‘crackdown on Islamism’ which human rights experts say is actually targeted at Muslims.<sup>28</sup>

These Islamists breed children as either cannon fodder, or food for paedophiles! They Do Not value children or females! Adult males have no ethics, morals, compassion, honour of love! They are inferior!#ReformNeeded #CrushGlobalism #DissolveUN #ExitEU#DefendDemocracy

Islamists are hiding as liberals in India, because of being in minority. God forbidden the day they even become 1/4 of majority they will wreak such havoc in India, that no democracy can endure. But thanks to their #TablighiJamaat support, their real face is exposed now.

Figure 9 – Sample of Islamophobic tweets exploiting the ‘Islamist’ label to attack Muslims.

## Sexual Violence

Another major trope observed in Islamophobic tweets was the depiction of Muslim men as perpetrators of sexual violence. This usually occurred through the propagation of the ‘love jihad’ theory – defined by Iselin Frydenlund and Eviane Leidig as the ‘conspiratorial notion that Muslim men strategically allure and entrap [typically South Asian] non-Muslim women with the intent to marry and convert them to Islam as part of an Islamization project’.<sup>29</sup> The popularity of this theory was such that ‘lovejihad’ ranked as the most frequently used hashtag in Islamophobic tweets, a finding we largely hold the BJP responsible for. Indeed, rather than attempting to dispel the hateful myth, the BJP has effectively endorsed it by, *inter alia*, passing new ‘love jihad laws’ that criminalise forcible conversions via marriage.<sup>30</sup>

im talking bout Love Jihad where somebody hides / fakes their identity to lure girls into love and later convert them and also instances of taking them to Syria for selling as Sex slaves ! even Mughals used to have sex slaves . Legacy continued now -

There are forces active across the country that are targeting susceptible and vulnerable Hindu women, luring, brainwashing and forcefully converting them into Islam -in a Systematic, Planned Manner. Hindus MUST wake up to the perils of Love Jihad! #LoveJihadKills

Figure 10 – Sample of Islamophobic tweets propagating the ‘love jihad’ conspiracy theory.

In addition to love jihad, it was also often asserted that Muslim men were disproportionately involved in grooming gangs. The persistence of this myth is somewhat interesting given that the UK Home Office has already thoroughly

debunked it:

Research has found that group-based child sexual exploitation offenders are most commonly white. Some studies suggest an over-representation of black and Asian offenders relative to the demographics of national populations. However, it is not possible to conclude that this is representative of all group based CSE offending.<sup>31</sup>

Crock of shit headline anyway.

By dint of demographics, yes most pedophiles in the UK will be Caucasian.

But grooming gangs are a decidedly "South Asian" Muslim problem. A racially-targetted campaign against white girls to.

Coward, specifically denounce the Muslim grooming gangs.

Acknowledge the backwards culture that is being imported from the Middle East and destroying the lives of young girls. I'm sure @metpoliceuk will respect your right to free speech.

Figure 10 – Sample of Islamophobic tweets pushing the 'Muslim grooming gangs' narrative.

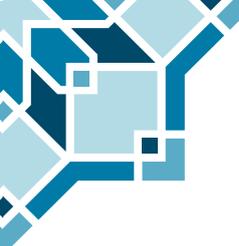
## Sharia

A recurring theme in Islamophobic content was the idea that Muslims are conspiring to impose the Sharia on other nations. We view this as an amalgamation of the Orientalist notion that Islam is a barbaric, irrational and cultish faith with the slightly more modern theory that Muslims desire total world domination. To some extent, the news media can be held responsible for their tendency to associate 'Sharia law' with perverted interpretations of Islam, ignoring the fact that the overwhelmingly majority of Muslims have absolutely no difficulties whatsoever reconciling their understandings of the Sharia with contemporary life.

UK is filled with Pakistanis already .. Now they control most of residential societies .. Already implemented sharia in those societies .. But Font is sleeping .. Bcz one's wife is Pakistani and other is Pakistani ..

What would you know about real leadership? You're muslim. Your values are not compatible with western values. You belong to a religion that's barbaric and cruel, that has made you backward. You are trying to impose your disgusting muslim values, your sharia on western society.

Figure 11 – Sample of Islamophobic tweets asserting that Muslims wish to impose the Sharia on others.



## Migration

Muslim migrants were blamed for a wide variety of social, economic and political problems, including unemployment, inequality, crime and terrorism. Of the many issues attributed to migration, however, there was one that attracted exceptional attention: overpopulation. In Europe, this grievance was expressed through the Great Replacement theory. In India, the population jihad myth was preferred. The central feature of these two conspiracy theories is that Muslims are deliberately being sent (whether by Islamists, Marxists, Jews or some other shadowy group) as migrants to outreproduce non-Muslim communities. The growth of this trope forms just one component of the broader problem of rising anti-Muslim sentiment in Europe and India.

Muslims will immigrate like this to India also before NRC, like what they are doing to UK now. Brexit for UK is same as NRC for India. These are measures taken by UK and India to stop population Jihad.

Britons are going to be outnumbered in short order by allowing jihadist bigamy in their country

Figure 12 – Sample of Islamophobic tweets attacking Muslim migrants.

## Harassment

An extraordinary amount of hate was directed towards Ilhan Omar and Rashida Tlaib. Indeed, Ilhan was the 5<sup>th</sup> most mentioned user in Islamophobic tweets, and Rashida Tlaib the 52<sup>nd</sup>. Their harassers, most of whom were found to be Trump supporters, would tend to call them ‘The Jihad Squad’ – a reference to the fact that they are the only Muslim members of the group of six Democrat politicians known as ‘The Squad’.

I’m not surprised Rep. Ilhan Omar is a whorish slut. What else would you expect from a woman who is a Sharia loving Muslim and a Democrat?

Disgusting, clueless girls. They follow Trashida & the the Jihad Squad’s Omar who hate the host country that took them in. Love it or leave it . They should go find husbands in Syria & lose their citizenship.

Figure 13 – Sample of Islamophobic tweets targeted at Ilhan Omar and Rashida Tlaib.

In addition to Ilhan and Tlaib, we also observed a considerable degree of hate being launched at Indian journalists Rana Ayyub and Arfa Khanum Sherwani, who were the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> most mentioned Twitter users, respectively. We

conclude from this that **Twitter is critically failing to protect Muslim public figures from religiously motivated harassment.**

Rana ayyub you are a terrorist under your burkha .#Islamic\_Terrorist #islam #religionofterror .All islamic countries are in shambles and now people immigrating to other secular countries and destroying them.This is your hateful plan against india too. Bigot

Hey Bitch,  
You spew Venom 24x7 against Hindus & uet u have the F\*\*king Audacity to defame Hindus.  
Hindus lost lives in Kashmir & Godhra due to Muslim Jihad, yet you call Muslims as Victims.  
Bitches lyk u are responsible, why Muslims are seen with suspicion in this Country.

Figure 14 – Sample of Islamophobic tweets targeted at Rana Ayyub and Arfa Khanum Sherwani.

## Halal

Another trend observed in Islamophobic content was the characterisation of halal slaughter as an inhumane practice, reflective of the barbarity of Islam. At times, it was also asserted that the proceeds of halal certification are used to fund terrorist groups, a theory that lacks any real factual basis and has been repeatedly debunked by researchers and public officials alike.<sup>32</sup> According to Randa Abdel Fattah, the ‘halal funds terrorism’ myth is but one expression of the broader narrative ‘that Islam and terrorism are inextricably linked’.<sup>33</sup>

Govt will never ban halal as they would lose the Muslim vote.  
Zakat tax on halal meat is funding Islamic mosques & schools in the UK essentially, the taxpayer is paying for an archaic culture to be embedded here.  
Brilliant idea Puffin regarding taking children to slaughterhouses.

We need to ban halal slaughter and also ban mosques in our country.  
Mosques are the breeding ground for terrorists & hatred towards Christians.  
Halal slaughter belongs in the dark ages.

Figure 15 – Sample of Islamophobic tweets characterising halal slaughter as an inhumane practice that reflects the barbarity of Islam.



# Recommendations

Relying on intensive community consultation as well as independent research, we have devised a series of recommendations for Twitter and policymakers. Although a great many are quite radical, we find them to be critically necessary to ensure that users are adequately protected against the rampancy of vile anti-Muslim content on social media. Indeed, in the event that no changes are made, it is all the more likely that the problem of online Islamophobia will grow to a point of intractability.

## Policymakers

- **Impose a statutory duty of care** on social media platforms to protect users from Islamophobia, as is currently being done in the UK through the Online Safety Bill;
- **Introduce penalties** for platforms that fail to act to prevent the mass dissemination of anti-Muslim content;
- **Legislate against anti-Muslim hate** by either creating new anti-vilification laws or lowering the threshold for what constitutes unlawful speech;
- **Pressure the Indian government** to work on combatting Islamophobia, understanding that anti-Muslim content produced in India is contributing to the radicalisation of far-right extremists in the West in a vicious cycle of affirmation and amplification;
- **Cease using terms for terrorists that are prone to manipulation** by Islamophobes, such as 'Islamic extremist', 'Muslim radical' and 'jihadist'; and
- **Generally, recognise that online Islamophobia breeds offline hate**, incorporating this knowledge into the design of anti-discrimination legislation as well as strategies to counter right-wing terrorism.



# Twitter

- **Discontinue the policy of not screening tweets**, and instead begin developing new capabilities for the automatic detection and removal of hateful content;
- **Establish an independent oversight body** comprised of experts in Islamophobia to continuously evaluate the effectiveness of moderation policies;
- **Prepare for spikes in anti-Muslim tweets** after terrorist attacks and other newsworthy events related to Islam by deploying more resources for content moderation;
- **Monitor changes in the nature of online hate** to prevent the spread of new, viral expressions of Islamophobia such as the love jihad and Great Replacement conspiracy theories; and
- **Overall, be proactive in fighting Islamophobia** – users should not have to do the job for you.



# Notes

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<sup>15</sup> Twitter, [About offensive content](#), Twitter website, 2021, accessed 17 July 2022.

<sup>16</sup> Center for Countering Digital Hate, [Failure to protect: social media platforms are failing to act on anti-Muslim hate](#), CCDH, 2022, p 10, accessed 3 May 2022.

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<sup>18</sup> Al Jazeera, [Macron says Islam "in crisis", prompting backlash from Muslims](#), *Al Jazeera*, 2 October 2020, accessed 11 July 2022.

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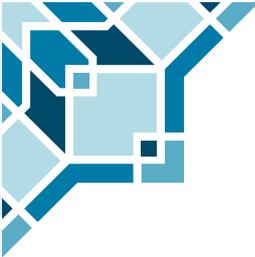
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