



## Australian Muslim Advocates for the Rights of All Humanity

### Message from the President

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With so many of our most active members engaged in tertiary studies, the period between the last newsletter and this one has been overwhelming for AMARAH. Still, we have organised a number of events to raise awareness and understanding about the situation in Palestine, including documentary showings, workshops, and a benefit-concert featuring our long-time friend and comrade Phil Monsour. Salam El-Merebi, chairperson for the Human Rights sub-committee, must be congratulated for coordinating these events. Shajaroh Amath has done an excellent job of furthering AMARAH's efforts to promote environmental responsibility through her arranging of our involvement in tree-planting initiatives and the like.

AMARAH has also been consistent in its efforts to support Islamic Awareness, regularly invited to present talks on Islam to schools, churches, service clubs and other community groups. Our book, *Reflections*, was recently included in the *Voices on the Coast* youth writers' festival held at the Sunshine Coast University. Our three sessions were all well-attended and were enriched by positive and lively discussions about Islam and Islamic civilisation.

With the change of government, AMARAH has had less work to do on the civil-rights front. Although there are positive signs for an Australian charter of human rights, the job is far from done and more effort is needed on this issue. This provides an excellent opportunity for AMARAH to continue to work with and learn from more experienced organisations like Amnesty International.

There is also considerable work to do in terms of social reform with continuing public concern over alcoholism, drug addiction, smoking, obesity, gambling, rising debt, the housing crisis and so forth. I call on members to contemplate these issues and how AMARAH might contribute to their mitigation. I look forward to catching up with you at the next AMARAH community forum on Sunday 6 July at 7pm at the Garden City Library meeting room. Our friend Dave Andrews has just returned from Burma and will share with us what is happening on the ground there. As usual, seats are limited so please RSVP to Nora on 0422 349 786 or email [info@amarah.org](mailto:info@amarah.org)

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**Tickets are still available to the Family Fundraising Dinner for Afghanistan and Qalqilya, Palestine on Saturday, 5<sup>th</sup> July 2008 at Darra Mosque, 219 Douglas Street, Oxley. For tickets please contact Susan on 0433 182 520 or email us at [info@amarah.org](mailto:info@amarah.org)**

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*Halim Rane, President*

## Recent Events: May: Commemorating al-Nakba in Brisbane

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While most Palestinian supporters around the world earmarked the 15<sup>th</sup> of May to commemorate 60 years of al-Nakba (the Catastrophe), here in Brisbane the whole month of May was dedicated to this event. Different organisations, Muslim and non-Muslim got together to plan and organise public forums, documentary screenings, international speakers, peaceful speak outs and a fundraising concert for Gaza.

AMARAH kicked off the month long commemoration by hosting a community forum on the origins of the Israel-Palestine conflict. Dr Halim Rane of the Griffith Islamic Research Unit addressed the full capacity crowd; one audience member drove 2 hours from the Sunshine Coast to listen to Dr Rane, who is known to be one of the few experts on this issue here in Australia.

The Brisbane Activist group organised for Israeli peace activist Isaac Suisha to speak at a few public forums at various university campuses as well as in the Valley.

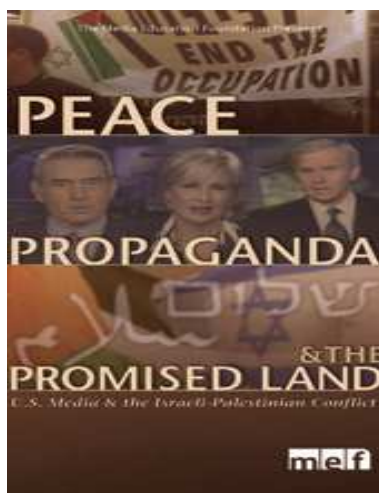
Fair Go for Palestine organised the documentary showing of *Peace, Propaganda and the Promised Land*, screened twice during the month. *Peace, Propaganda and the Promised Land* provides an insight into the workings of the media and its coverage of the conflict. The documentary clearly shows that there is a huge disparity in the reporting of the Israel-Palestine conflict and that indeed the American stance of this issue is highly dependent on the American elites with oil interest as well as the influential Israeli lobby team.

The screening at Griffith University was followed by a presentation by Anas Abdalla, a Brisbane-based Palestinian, who spent a few months there 6 months ago. He spoke about his personal experiences there and drew people's attention to the harsh reality of Palestinian everyday life such as checkpoints, curfews, poverty, unemployment, Israeli incursion and Israeli harassment.

The Brisbane Activist group organised the screening of another documentary, *Occupation 101*, narrated by Alison Weir, an American journalist and founder of If Americans Knew. This powerful, award-winning documentary dispels the misconception surrounding this issue and presented expert opinions from Israeli historians, Israeli academics and peace activist, former Western ambassadors to Israeli, journalists, UN officials, Palestinian officials, non government organisation representatives, to name a few.

On the 15<sup>th</sup> of May itself, many peace organisations gathered at Brisbane Square to have a peaceful speak out. Information stalls, street theatre and speakers all highlighted and called for a just peace for Palestine. Black and white al-Nakba ribbons were handed out to people passing by.

The month long commemoration ended with a benefit concert and Middle Eastern dinner featuring Phil Monsour and Band. The very talented Monsour launched his new CD, *The empires' new clothes* to a crowd of 150 people at Ahimsa House. The proceeds of the dinner and CD launch went to the relief efforts in the besieged Gaza strip through Union Aid Abroad-APHEDA's Gaza Emergency Appeal.



## **World Environmental Day in Kuraby- Saturday, 31 May 2008, Wally Tate Park, Kuraby**

It was a wet and cold morning- a perfect day to stay in our warm beds. But for some committed AMARAH members and friends from the community, there was work to be done. With gardening gloves and raincoats (for those sensible people) securely on, nearly 700 little trees, shrubs and grasses were planted to re-vegetate some sparse area in the Wally Tate Park, behind the Kuraby Mosque. The tree planting was organised by the Kuraby Lions and the Bulimba Creek Catchment, with participants from AMARAH and the Islamic College of Brisbane as well as other community organisations. When all the hard work was done, volunteers were treated to a halal sausage sizzle cooked by Crescents of Brisbane members.



**The tree planting to commemorate World Environmental Day replaced AMARAH's usual monthly community forum. Our next community forum will be on Sunday, 6 July 2008 at the Meeting Room, Garden City Library. For more information please contact Nora on 0422 349 786 or email [info@amarah.org](mailto:info@amarah.org)**

### **AMARAH presents at *Voices on the Coast*, a Youth Literary Festival Monday, 2 June-Tuesday, 3 June, University of Sunshine Coast**

AMARAH's first publication, *Reflections: Young Muslims on the Contributions of Islamic Civilisation to Humanity* was featured in another literary festival in Queensland; this time it was at a Youth Literary Festival held at the University of Sunshine Coast. This year's festival attracted a record number of young readers and included famous names such as Wendy Orr, celebrated author of *Nim's Island* and broadcaster Caroline Jones OA.

AMARAH representatives, Halim Rane and Nora Amath, spoke about *Reflections* and presented three workshops on Islam and Islamic civilisation. While both presenters spoke briefly about the basics of Islam, Islamic history and the contributions of Islamic civilisation, the real highlight for both presenters and audience members were the lively and frank question and answer session.

Halim and Nora assured the audience to ask any question they'd like, that no questions should be held back. In fact, the presenters encouraged the asking of the more controversial questions. Organisers of the festival advised that they have received very positive feedback from those who attending the AMARAH workshops.

AMARAH is currently working on another publication.

## Upcoming Events

AMARAH is organising, co-sponsoring and/or endorsing some very exciting events coming up. For more information about any of these events, please contact Nora, Managing Director on 0422 349 786 or info@amarah.org

<b>Sound of Light Concert 2008</b>	<b>Friday, 27 June</b>
<b>Human Appeal/ Hope for Happiness</b>	<b>6:30 pm</b>
<b>Fundraiser</b>	<b>QPAC, South Bank</b>
	<b>\$40/\$80</b>
<b>Senator Andrew Bartlett Office</b>	<b>Monday, 30 June</b>
<b>Closure/Farewell Party</b>	<b>3pm-8 pm</b>
	<b>421 Brunswick St</b>
	<b>Fortitude Valley</b>
<b>Family Fundraising Dinner</b>	<b>Saturday, 5 July</b>
<b>For Afghanistan and Qalqilya, Palestine</b>	<b>6 pm</b>
	<b>Darra Mosque</b>
	<b>219 Douglas St, Oxley</b>
<b>Lecture on the Baha'i Faith</b>	<b>Tuesday, 3 July</b>
	<b>7:15-9:15 pm</b>
	<b>Multi-Faith Centre,</b>
	<b>Griffith University</b>
<b>AMARAH Community Forum:</b>	<b>Sunday, 6 July</b>
<b>An Eyewitness Account to the Situation</b>	<b>7-8:30 pm</b>
<b>In Burma</b>	<b>Meeting Room,</b>
<b>Guest Speaker: Dave Andrews</b>	<b>Garden City Library</b>
<b>Tear Australia</b>	
<b>AMARAH Community Forum:</b>	<b>Sunday, 3 April</b>
<b>Social Reform</b>	<b>7-8:30 pm</b>
	<b>Meeting Room,</b>
	<b>Garden City Library</b>

## The AMARAH Team

### The Executive Team

President:	Halim Rane
Vice President:	Shahedah Sabdia
Treasurer:	Nora Amath
Secretary:	TBA
Assistant Secretary:	Shajarah Amath

### The Service Team

Managing Director:	Nora Amath
Asst MD:	Shahedah Sabdia
Events Coordinator:	TBA
Ass Events Coordinator:	Susan Al-Maani
PR Coordinator:	Ahmad Ghanem
IT Coordinator:	Jaaved Khatree
Asst IT Coordinators:	Shajarah Amath/ Nadeem Malik

### Subgroup Chairs

Human Rights:	Salam El-Merebi
Civil Rights:	Salma Mousali
Social Reform:	Ahmad Ghanem
Environmental Responsibility:	Shajarah Amath
Islamic Awareness:	Halim Rane

### Committee Members

Jasmine Khan, Ana Miletic, Molly Johnson, Riffat Gurdezi