

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Assalaamu Alaikum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuh

I am writing to you about AFIC – Muslims Australia's projects and initiatives that we have undertaken over the past several months. Alhamdulillah, our work and efforts have been directed to many areas of interest to Muslims and community.

One of the foremost projects we have been focussing on, as I outlined when taking on the Presidency of AFIC is to form partnerships to actively engage with Islamic countries through their embassies in Canberra, to form a vital link in the chain of Muslim unity and brotherhood, and also to participate in various exchange programs and initiatives with the aim of enhancing an understanding of Islam, promoting human rights and justice, and empowering Muslims of Australia. Alhamdulillah, we have managed to engage with the embassies by having a dinner, at which most of the Ambassadors showed their support and showed their willingness to form partnerships and engage with the community. The Ambassadors' support and attendance at the 2009 Iftar Dinner organised by AFIC and Canberra Islamic School is noteworthy.



AFIC President, ISC Board Chairman with Ambassador of Egypt, Iran, Charge De Affaires of UAE and other guests

We have also been in discussions exploring opportunities and possible partnerships with the Muslim Age Care Facility – Curie Nursing Home, located in Oatlands in NSW. Our discussions are ongoing and we will keep you informed of any progress and the outcomes.

Also, in addressing our aim to provide assistance and support to grassroots organisation, AFIC has provided letters of support and is publicising events and projects through its networks in response to requests from Mosques, societies and individuals who need assistance.

Some Community Projects are listed:

- Support & Appeal for donations to Newport Islamic Society's Mosque Construction in Victoria
- Appeal for Quaker Hill Masjid in NSW
- Appeal for Granville Mosque in NSW
- Sponsorship of 2nd Annual Year 12 Muslim Achievement Award and Sounds of Light Concert 2009 by Human Appeal Australia
- Human Appeal International - Year 12 Awards ceremony held in Melbourne

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- Sponsorship of Islamic Council of Queensland Quran Competition
- Sponsorship of FAMSU Young Leadership Program
- Sponsorship of newspaper project of ERIS in Victoria
- Providing financial assistance to needy families through Dandenong Turkish Islamic Cultural Society
- Assisting in the facilitation, for the second year running, of the Ramadan Food Parcel Project of Khalifa Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan Foundation of UAE with Charge De Affaires of UAE Br Hamad H Al Hasbi ,with distribution networks through Islamic Societies in NSW, Victoria and Queensland.



Great news to the Muslim Community in Hobsons Bay and Melbourne, Australia



Ramadan Foods Parcels in Melbourne



Ramadan Foods Parcels in Sydney

- Providing support and cooperation to community advocacy groups such as Australian Multicultural Commission, for their efforts in promoting harmony within diversity in many of their projects and initiatives.
- Supporting the Victorian Arabic Social Services (VASS) application for funding to enable VASS to provide targeted programs and services aimed at supporting the social, economic and cultural integration and inclusion of ASB Australians.
- Promoting and encouraging participation in academic Programs, such as The University of Brunei Darussalam (UBD) prestigious Scholarship Programme. The UBD Doctoral Scholarship Programme is designed to attract world class doctoral students with academically outstanding achievements.
- Promoting and encouraging scholarship programs - Western Australian School of Mines (WASM) Scholarships available for students wishing to pursue careers and education in Mining and Science.
- Promoting Academic Post Vacancies at Sultan Sharif Ali Islamic University in Brunei.

AFIC – Muslims Australia, organised a major fundraiser for the recent earthquake, and the tragic loss of many lives of our brothers and sisters in Padang, Indonesia. This was held at the AFIC school in Brisbane and raised over \$60,000.

AFIC – Muslims Australia, also organised fundraising efforts through its mosques and personal appeals for the people of Swat Valley in Pakistan during the devastating earthquake earlier this year.



Fundraising for Indonesia & Samoa earthquake - Islamic College of Brisbane

AFIC's goal in the pursuit of excellence in education is continued, and we have experienced strong progress on our major initiatives. We are working on developing a second Islamic School in Sydney's Hoxton Park, to meet the growing demand and extremely long waiting list of students wishing to enter AFIC's prestigious Malek Fahd Islamic School, which has certainly set a standard of academic excellence for all of our schools to exemplify.

AFIC is also proceeding well with its school project in Melbourne, and we are also considering establishing, InshaAllah an Islamic School in Darwin.

We are particularly pleased to announce a permanent home and premises for the Islamic School of Canberra. AFIC welcomes the decision of the ACT Government to allocate the former CIT School of Horticulture site in Weston as permanent premises for the Islamic School of Canberra.

We acknowledge the role of the Chief Minister Jon Stanhope for his inclusive vision and recognition of community needs and contribution in ACT.

AFIC's aim of engaging with the community includes participation in many and varied events and invitations from different societies and organisations.



Dr Iman Ali Principal of Islamic School of Canberra with Chief Minister Mr Jon Stanhope and Br Ikebal Patel

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AFIC hosted visits to Malek Fahd Islamic School by Prof. Dr. Fathurrahman Djamil, MA (Deputy Chair of Fatwa Committee of MUI) and also hosted his visit during Ramadan to do da'wah for the Indonesian Muslim community in Australia.



Prof Djamil with President, Vice President, Board members and community leaders

We also hosted the following events and delegations:

- AFIC welcomed community leaders and interfaith colleagues at Iftar Dinners at the Islamic College of Brisbane, Langford Islamic School in Perth and the Islamic College of South Australia.

We participated in Interfaith Dialogue at the University of Sydney with Christian, Jewish, and Buddhist faiths.



Interfaith dialogue Dinner held at the University of NSW

- Another proud event we participated in was the investiture of Sr Mariam Kawi, our former AFIC Vice President and current AFIC Executive member, as an OAM in Perth.



Investiture of Siti Mariam Kawi OAM in Perth with Br Mohammed Kawi and AFIC President

- Additionally, we joined in at the Islamic Centre Open Day in Toowoomba at The University of Queensland. This event promoted understanding and religious harmony.

Afic visited Papua New Guinea with the President of the Islamic Council Queensland, Br Mohammed Yusuf, who was the President of the Islamic Society of Papua New Guinea for several years in the 90's and who was also influential in acquiring the land on which the first mosque was built in Port Moresby. There is a considerable interest and a rapid growth in the number of indigenous people entering Islam. AFIC is collecting books and clothes, as well as other essentials, to assist the community. AFIC is also seeking to assist in Halal certification there.



Dawah in PNG

The Minister for Climate Change, Penny Wong, held an important and very timely meeting with leaders from six different religious traditions, who advocated that Australia adopt a courageous, ambitious emissions target for the sake of the world's future generations.



Faith leaders, including Ikebal Patel, President of AFIC, outside parliament house.

AFIC president Ikebal Patel attended a range of events over the past few weeks, one of which was a three day seminar of the Development of the Muslim community: Challenges and Opportunities organised by Islamic Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (ISESCO) in Cooperation with Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, State of Kuwait and in coordination with Muslim Missionary Society Singapore (Jamiyah Singapore) and AFIC. The venue for the seminar was University of Western Sydney, Bankstown Campus, Bullecourt Avenue, Milperra. The Seminar started on the 4th and concluded on the 6th of November 2009. Amongst invited guests were leaders from Muslim NGO's, Academic and Research Institutions locally and from the Asia Pacific region.

Another seminar was organised by NEXUS in Adelaide. Mr Patel's presentation covered 'The Australian Muslim Experience', and discussed the unique journey of Muslims through the ages, and the contribution of Islam and Muslims to civilization. Mr Patel also discussed the diverse and changing face of Muslims in Australia and their social, cultural, linguistic and educational impact on the Australian landscape since the first settlement. He highlighted the Muslim community's contribution as educators and facilitators of opportunities that help to equip both the young and old to reach their full potential, as active, valued and productive members of this beautiful country.

Following the NEXUS seminar, Mr Patel represented AFIC and Muslims Australia, at the FECCA Conference in Shepparton, addressing issues relating to Islam and Muslims in Australia. Mr Patel also participated in the Halal Conference in China and The Hague in November 2009, returning to attend the RISEAP meeting in Auckland from 26 to 2 December 2009. And just a few days ago, he participated as a panellist for two sessions at the Parliament of World Religions, in Melbourne from the 3rd to the 9th of December, again reflecting the stand point of Muslims in Australia. As the Parliament of World Religions was held in Melbourne, AFIC was one of the sponsors of a Muslims Dinner organised by AIS and ICV to show our hospitality to visiting participants at the PWR. It was a highly successful event, which brought together the community in a historic milestone for Melbourne as hosts of the PWR.



Quran Competition – Islamic College of Brisbane

AFIC was approached to meet some of the dignitaries attending the Convention. We did this gladly and at very short notice organised a dinner which was attended by our Imams, the Iranian Ambassador, the Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia, Anwar Ibrahim and Victorian community leaders. Alhamdulillah, it was a very successful event. We are now into the ninth edition of the Muslims Australia publication, and thus far, feedback has been very positive. We encourage you to play a more direct role by forwarding your contributions relating to your society, Council or neighbourhood for publication.

Our schools are a valued achievement, Alhamdulillah, all our schools have yet again achieved excellence in their end of year results. These schools include Malek Fahd Islamic School in Greenacre, the Islamic College of Brisbane, the Islamic College of South Australia, Canberra Islamic School and Langford Islamic School in Perth. Congratulations and well done to all our students. We also thank the teachers, support staff, parents and friends for their support and cooperation.

*Interfaith Dialogue:
Pictures of historic Rome Istanbul Pilgrimage*





Students at Langford Islamic College



Dr Salah bin Abdullah bin Hamid, President of the Majlis Al Shura of the Royal Kingdom of Saudi Arabia at Malek Fahd Islamic College

We also seek your input in relation to the next issue of Muslims Australia Directory of Mosques, Halal Eateries and Services. As you are part of the community at a grassroots level, you are aware of musallah, Mosques and Halal eateries in your locality. Please assist us to assist the Muslim community by forwarding details of the above to our Melbourne office. Email: aficmelb@bigpond.com.

We also welcome your input, suggestions and recommendations in terms of service provision and advocacy on behalf of Australian Muslims.

In conclusion, I thank Allah SWT for allowing me this opportunity to serve the community and Insha Allah with your continued support and encouragement our work and efforts to serve the community will be rewarded.

May Allah accept our humble efforts and May Allah guide us to what pleases Him and shun what displeases Him.

Assalaamu Alaikum

Ikebal Adam Patel
President.
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