

## Findings of the *Muslim Youth Forums: Making our Future* Report

### Summary of Report Findings

Participants discussed a range of issues with two overarching themes:

- Internal issues to the Islamic community; and
- Other factors external to the community that have a significant impact on their lives.

All Youth Forum participants identified issues that were specific to their own circumstances, such as age and gender issues. However some common generic themes and issues emerged that cut across the diverse range of participants.

These overarching issues will require attention from community leaders, community organisations and policy makers.

Key findings of the *Muslim Youth Forums: Making our Future* Report focus on the need to provide more opportunities for young Muslim people to:

- interact with other young Muslims in a safe and religiously appropriate environment. For this to happen there is a need to further develop a unified community;
- develop life skills through more interaction with the community and its leaders;
- develop a social identity that is part of the Australian community through active engagement with the wider community
- learn about Islam in a contextualised framework to help them understand the dilemmas young people face and construct their Islamic identity
- provide services or enable young people to access relevant services in areas such as employment, counselling and child minding
- develop young people's skills to enable them to positively respond to incidents of discrimination at school and in the workplace
- enable young people to become engaged and active participants in the Muslim and Australian communities through volunteerism, sport and other avenues of creative engagements
- provide opportunities for young people to engage in social, cultural and recreational opportunities that are religiously appropriate

Women recognised that there is a need for them and for the community in general to understand the position of women in Islam and the respect that Islam has awarded women. They also acknowledged the need for them to be given opportunities to become active participants in their Islamic education in particular for those who are 18 years and over to assist them in constructing their Australian Muslim identity.

Concerns at the often-negative way the media portrays Muslims are strongly-felt throughout all levels of the community. Young people also emphasised the need for the community to build its leadership capacity to address the current lack of appropriate role models.

Married young people highlighted the need for services in areas like pre-marital education, counselling, conflict resolution, access to employment, financial management and child minding support in addition to social and recreational initiatives.

### **Outcomes**

The findings of the Youth Summit initiative will be used to inform the work program of two Muslim Youth Workers funded by the Queensland Government for a period of 2 years to 2009.

The two Muslim Youth Workers will be operating in the Greater Brisbane Region. This report will be made available to members of the Muslim community, other community organisations and government agencies to encourage service providers to broker partnerships and collaborations to address some of the issues that can be addressed through existing programs.

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