



AUSTRALIAN MUSLIM ACHIEVEMENT AWARD (AMAA) WINNERS 2009

Australian Muslim Lifetime Achiever Award

- Ibrahim Din (NSW)

Ibrahim Din is one of the earliest Turkish migrants who immigrated to Australia after the end of the White Australian Policy and the introduction of the multicultural policy. He has migrated to Australia with his family in 1969 in the third group.

Ibrahim was one of the founders of Auburn Qur'an and Islamic Cultural Centre in 1977. This also marks to beginning of the Auburn Gallipoli Mosque. They first purchased a house and converted it into a mosque by removing the walls. He became the president of the association in 1982.

The committee dreamed of having a mosque similar to the majestic mosques in Istanbul. The present mosque construction started in 1987. He had to give a few years of break in management towards the end of the 80s.

He was reelected as the president in 1991. At the time, only the coarse building was standing and with 8,000 in the bank and 630,000 debt to various places. Ibrahim Din and his team managed to raise the funds and complete the construction of the mosque by 1999. In many instances they had to work as labourers to cut costs. Sometimes they became tilers, sometimes painters and other times metal workers. Not only they donated many thousands of dollars themselves, they also worked almost full time to finish the mosque.

From 2000 onwards, Ibrahim Din worked to bring in younger members of the community to assist in the management and development of the mosque. He was open to new ideas to attract non-Muslim visitors to the mosque. In 2001, the first mosque open day in Australia was conducted in Auburn Gallipoli Mosque. Today about 10,000 Australians visit the mosque every year.

Since 1992, Ibrahim Din also served as the deputy president of the Supreme Islamic Council of Halal Meat that regulates, controls and monitors halal meat production in Australia for exports and consumption for Australian Muslims.

Ibrahim Din continues to serve full-time at the Auburn Gallipoli Mosque without receiving any pay what-so-ever. The mosque has become one of the landmark monuments for Islam in Australia.

Australian Muslim Man of the Year 2009

Australian Muslim Professional of the Year 2009

– Dr Jamal Rifi (NSW)

In 1984, Dr Jamal Rifi migrated to Australia from Lebanon to study. Despite initially facing challenges with the English language, he successfully completed his studies and qualified as a medical practitioner from the University of Sydney in 1990. Dr Rifi's generous nature and desire to give back to this country led him to become involved in serving the community, particularly in the areas of youth, family and community development. He was a founding member of Muslim Doctors Against Violence and the Christian Muslim Friendship Society. His efforts to build harmony between the Muslim and non-Muslim communities have been recognised with a Human Rights Medal. He is a former member of the NSW Medical Advisory Board and a community representative for the Youth Partnership with Arabic Speaking Communities.

As the President of the Lakemba Sports Club, he has used sport as a social tool to build bridges between communities and channel young people's physical energies into positive activities. He trained the first group of youth from south-western Sydney to become volunteer pool guards, and was instrumental in establishing a program, called On the Same Wave, to recruit and train Muslim youth as lifesavers at the Cronulla beaches. He also encourages young people to join the State Emergency Service, and in every way helps them to take positive career paths. Dr Rifi was also involved in supporting a group of youth to trek the strenuous Kokda trail. With all of his dedication to serve his community, Dr Jamal Rifi is also a dedicated husband and father to five.

For more information on Dr Jamal Rifi see www.australianoftheyear.org.au/recipient/?m=jamal-rifi

Australian Muslim Woman of the Year 2009

– Senior Constable Maha Sukkar (VIC)

Senior Constable Maha Sukkar is encouraging people of all religious and cultural backgrounds to follow their dreams, after realising her own dream of joining the Victorian Police. Senior Constable Sukkar is a former graphic designer originating from Beirut, Lebanon who always had a passion to serve her community.

In 2004, Senior Constable Sukkar became the first policewoman in Australia to wear a hijab as part of her official police uniform. The navy, lightweight hijab, specifically designed for Senior Constable Sukkar, has Velcro to enable its release should she get caught in a physical scuffle.

Since graduating, Senior Constable Sukkar has dedicated much of her work and personal time to promoting understanding between Australians and the Muslim community, while encouraging young people of all backgrounds to pursue their goals and ambitions. Senior Constable Sukkar was presented with a Department of Families, Community and Indigenous Affairs (FACSIA) Award in

recognition of her positive contribution to Australian Muslims regarding social integration.

Aside from her operational police work, Senior Constable Sukkar regularly gives motivational speeches to students at local and Muslim schools and has also addressed other community organisations, such as the Rotary Club of Narre Warren, about the need for more cultural and religious understanding in the community.

Senior Constable Sukkar also hopes to attract more women and more recruits to the Victorian Police from culturally diverse backgrounds that reflected the community.

For more information about Constable Maha Sukkar see [www.youtube.com/watch?v= bVZp4dN9n4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bVZp4dN9n4)

Australian Muslim Role Model of the Year 2009

– Yasir A. Mahmud (VIC)

Yasir Mahmud is a hardworking and dedicated professional who strives to be an excellent role model for his community in everything that he does.

In August 2009 He achieved the Campbell Page Business Excellence Award and in 2008 the Campbell Page Golden Frog Award for his outstanding success in supporting unemployed job seekers to find suitable work and his continuous focus on customer satisfaction.

He is a devoted family man and also volunteers much of his time to help refugee families and youth to settle into Australia. Yasir is passionate about supporting fundraising projects and motivating the youth in his community. His volunteer work has also included developing a community website, founding an innovative youth career pathway service, assisting the Sunday Arabic classes and assisting not for profit organizations to improve their services.

Yasir is also a registered member with the following organizations:

- Refugee Council of Australia
- The Eritrean Community in Australian
- Eritrean Islamic Society in Australia – ERIS
- Engineers Australia
- The Victorian University Alumni
- The RMIT Alumni
- HMYCC Network

Volunteer of the year 2009

– Ahmed Youssef (ACT)

Ahmed Youssef is a founding member and former President of the Canberra Islamic Centre (CIC) . The CIC is a resource centre for both Muslims and the general public who want to know more about Islam. Ahmed has been a greatly respected member of the Executive Committee since the inception of the Centre and has worked tirelessly as a volunteer Imam running regular Islamic classes, dawah, Islamic marriages and Islamic funerals.

Ahmed is active in Canberra civic and Islamic community affairs meeting with government officials and overseas visitors. He is highly regarded for his dedication as a Muslim scholar and in promoting harmony and mutual understanding among Muslims and people of different faiths. He is a knowledgeable and humble man and is widely noted for his gracious manners and demeanor.

Ahmed has put together an extraordinary collection of works which will contribute towards his dream of an Australian National Islamic Library (ANIL). The aim of the ANIL is to become the largest repository of material on Islam and Muslims in the Southern Hemisphere and to be made available internationally, nationally and locally for research into Islam and Muslims.

Ahmed also attends functions as an Islamic representative. He has attended multi-faith pastoral counseling courses and is a member of the Australian Capital Territory Pastoral Care Board. Ahmed also visits prisons regularly to provide chaplaincy services to prisoners. Ahmed provides hours of voluntary telephone translation each week for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

To find out more about Ahmed Youssef's work see <http://www.islam-australia.org/>

Australian Muslim Sportsperson of the Year 2009

– Hazem El-Masri (NSW)

Hazem El-Masri is a well loved Australian former professional rugby league footballer. Hazem emigrated to Australia with his family from Tripoli, Lebanon in 1988 when he was 12 years old. In 1994, he was spotted by Bulldogs development officers while playing for Belmore Boys High School.

Hazem played for the Bulldogs in the National Rugby League. He was also an Australia and Lebanon international, and New South Wales State of Origin representative winger. He has played his entire club football career at the Bulldogs, with whom he won the 2004 Premiership. An accurate goal-kicker, in 2009 Hazem took the record for the highest-ever point scorer in premiership history and for a record sixth time was the League's top point scorer for the season.

Hazem is widely respected for his community work with young people, winning the NRL's Ken Stephen Award in 2002. The award recognises players who contribute to the betterment of their community away from rugby league.

In June, 2009, Hazem announced that he would retire from the NRL at the end of the season. Hazem played his last game on 25 September 2009 against the Parramatta Eels in the preliminary final.

Hazem is married with three children. Hazem is an exemplary sporting role model on and off the playing field. He has been recognized as an excellent ambassador for his community, religion, club, sport and country. In 2007, Bill Woods published an authorised biography, *El Magic: the life of Hazem El Masri*.

For more information on Hazem El-Masri see

<http://thebulldogs.com.au/sportal.php?page=player&id=605>

Australian Muslim Academic of the Year 2009

- Professor Abdullah Saeed (VIC)

Professor Abdullah Saeed was born in the Maldives and holds degrees from Australia and overseas. He has a BA in Arab/Islamic Studies from Saudi Arabia, MA in Applied Linguistics and PhD in Islamic Studies from the University of Melbourne, Australia. In 1993, he joined the then Department of Asian Languages and Anthropology at the University of Melbourne as a Lecturer, rising to Senior Lecturer in 1996 and Associate Professor in 2000. He was appointed Sultan of Oman Professor of Arab and Islamic Studies in 2003.

Prof Saeed has taught Arabic and Islamic Studies at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Among the subjects he teaches are: Great Texts of Islam: Qur'an; Muslim Intellectuals and Modernity; Great Empires of Islamic Civilization; Islamic Banking and Finance; Qur'anic Hermeneutics; Methodologies of Hadith; Methods of Islamic Law; Religious Freedom in Asia; Islam and Human Rights; and Islam and Muslims in Australia.

He is involved in interfaith dialogue between Christians, Jews and Muslims. He travels regularly to countries in North America, Europe, Middle East, South Asia and Southeast Asia. He has a wide range of professional and research relationships around the world.

His Islamic research has a focus on the negotiation of text and context, ijtihād and interpretation. His publications cover Islamic finance, Muslim communities in Australia, Islamic law and freedom of religion, Christian–Muslim relations, Islamic thought in Indonesia, Qur'anic hermeneutics, Islam and human rights, and Islamic law reform. He writes for both scholarly and general audiences.

For more information on Professor Abdullah Saeed see <http://www.abdullahsaeed.org/>

Australian Muslim Creative Artist of the Year 2009

– Peter Gould (NSW)

Sydney-born designer & digital artist Peter Gould founded *Azaan* to explore his passion for contemporary graphic design, art, photography and the rich visual & spiritual traditions of Islam.

Since embracing Islam in 2002 his travels and studies throughout the Muslim world have inspired a unique cultural fusion that is reactive to a world of misunderstanding. Peter's work has reached many audiences locally and abroad through exhibitions, appearances, graphic design projects and collaborations with other artists

Peter's portfolio includes his photography, artwork, and his graphic and design web design studio, which services a broad range of clients locally and internationally. He also owns and runs the award-winning commercial design studio Creative Cubed.

Highlights include exhibitions in the United States, Malaysia, Australia and Singapore as well as events in Europe and the Middle East. He has won several design awards such as the ISNA 2009 branding competition. He has collaborated with many prominent Muslim Creatives and houses a permanent collection of his photography at Zaytuna Institute in Berkeley, California. He leads a design studio developing branding, identity, marketing material and websites for a broad range of clients worldwide.

Peter is also honoured to have been included in the Australian Government's publication '***The Australian Journey: Muslim communities.***

"For many centuries Islamic art has captivated and inspired hearts. It is important to continue this tradition within a contemporary context and embrace the digital canvas. I believe it can be a catalyst for positive change in a time of confusion and misunderstanding." Peter Gould

More information on Peter Gould see www.azaan.com.au

Australian Muslim Best Community Organisation 2009

– Human Appeal International

Human Appeal International (HAI) is a charitable, humanitarian, non-governmental organization (NGO) established in 1984 which works in the fields of charity, development - specializing in Social and Educational Development - Health Care and Emergency Relief. In addition to this, HAI holds consultative status (Category II) in the United Nations Social and Economic Council, maintains an observer capacity in IFAD (International Fund for Agriculture Development), and is a member of the International Council for Voluntary Associations (ICVA).

HAI has also carried out joint ventures with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for the Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA), the United Nations

High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and has reached several memorandums of understanding with UNICEF and the AGFUND.

Human Appeal International has 12 offices worldwide serving more than 10 million people in countries including: Sudan, Senegal, Mauritania, Bosnia, Kashmir, Sri Lanka, Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, Kosovo, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Indonesia, Eritrea, Somalia and Palestine. Of those individuals served, 80% are women and children. HAI has also sponsored 48,000 orphans providing them with food, supplies, safe shelters, education and medical care through Complete Assistance Projects that ensured them secure and decent lives.

HAI is credited with 20 years of humanitarian work and will continue to address humanitarian needs internationally. Human Appeal International Australia has been established in Sydney since 1991, seeking funds from generous supporters to assist us in providing services to thousands of poor and needy people through our various programs.

For more information about HAI see <http://www.humanappeal.org.au/default.aspx>

Australian Muslim Event of the Year 2009

– Australian Federal Police Ramadan Iftar – Sydney (NSW)

The Australian Federal Police (AFP) Ramadan Iftar was held on Tuesday 8th September in Bankstown NSW. The AFP has great respect for the traditions of Islam and in particular hosting the 2nd Sydney AFP Ramadan Iftar dinner. The AFP Iftar is a wonderful opportunity for the community to gather and break fast together. It fosters Muslims and people of all faiths to build stronger ties and networks as well as celebrate Ramadan with Halal food and entertainment.

The goal after last year's Iftar was to engage more widely across Islamic communities in Sydney, this continues to drive the AFP's Community Liaison Teams (CLT). The Sydney CLT was created in 2008. Through the hard work of the CLT, engagement continues to grow as a core component of AFP business. The AFP works hard to contribute to social cohesion to encourage mutual understanding within both the wider community and the AFP.

The AFP iftar is attended by over 400 guests comprised of a cross section of Islamic communities, religious leaders, business representatives, charity organizations and members of the government. This event has been a great way to commence meaningful engagement between the AFP and the wider Islamic communities of Sydney. The Iftar celebrates not only the breaking of the Ramadan fast, but a stronger community engagement by the AFP which strives to build bridges toward positive and successful partnerships. Most importantly, it provides an occasion in which everyone can reflect on mutual achievements in creating a united community.

For more information on the AFP see www.afp.gov.au

Australian Muslim Best Media Outlet 2009

– Crescent Times (WA)

Established in Perth in October 2008, Crescent Times is Western Australia's first Independent local Muslim community newspaper. The newspaper is published by a national company, Crescent Press Pty Ltd, with the aim of serving the Muslim community through various publications and general publishing services.

Since its beginnings in 2008, the newspaper expanded to be distributed in Melbourne, Sydney and then Adelaide. The number of the copies published each month is between 5000 to 8000 copies nationally, with an estimate readership of 15000 to 20000. Crescent Times is distributed national wide free of charge each month and can be considered the first national Australian Muslim newspaper.

The newspaper aims to inform the community by publishing news of interest to Muslims, including reports of events locally, nationally and internationally. In addition Crescent Times hopes to provide details about information and services available to the Muslim community as well as providing an outlet for Muslim owned or operated businesses to advertise their services.

They work to support Muslims through providing advertising, promotion and referral to services that may assist them. The classified section enables placement of free advertising for individuals who have items to sell or give away as well as space for employment opportunities to be advertised.

The Crescent Times team hope that the newspaper will bring the community closer together and strengthen relationships. In the last 12 months of operations the newspaper proved that is a real bridge between all sections of Muslim community as well as with the wider Australian communities.

For more information on Crescent Times see www.crescenttimes.com.au/

Australian Muslim Best New Community Project 2009

- Believe Achieve Inspire Leadership Program (FAMSY) VIC

The Believe Achieve Inspire Leadership Program is a unique initiative of the Federation of Australian Muslim Students and Youth (FAMSY) in collaboration with Victoria University, providing a comprehensive leadership development course for future community leaders.

Launched in 2009, the Believe Achieve Inspire Leadership Program is a world-first initiative in the provision of multi-streamed and tertiary accredited professional and Islamic based leadership development, designed to develop and inspire the leaders of tomorrow.

Successful participants will be awarded a *Graduate Certificate of Management* from Victoria University, this combined with the rich Islamic content will enable effective, capable leaders and contributors to the community.

For more information please visit <http://www.believe-achieve-inspire.org/>

Australian Muslim Business of the Year 2009

- Baraka Women (NSW)

Baraka women is designed and made in Australia with love by Kath Fry and Eisha Saleh. The business was launched in August 2008 with a fresh innovative approach. Fry and Saleh teamed up after meeting at Daar Aisha Shariah College in Sydney where both women had been taking weekly classes on Islamic law. After both having experienced the challenge of finding modest yet stylish clothing for women, the Baraka women decided to solve the fashion gap problem themselves.

The result is a label that makes you feel beautiful and confident every day. Their clothing label, Baraka, which translates to “blessing” in Arabic, understands that style is your personal signature and creates pieces that are simple and easy to wear, beautiful and comfortable giving you the freedom to add your distinctive personality.

Baraka’s no fuss designs use natural fabrics that breath, ensuring you feel cool, comfortable and relaxed on the go. The collections draw inspiration from international trends and fashion forecasters alongside the need to coordinate with your existing wardrobe saving you time and money.

The Baraka tagline, “beautiful clothes for beautiful women,” is accompanied by the goal to provide quality Australian made clothing that will last. The label is committed to empowering women to make a difference in their world wherever they live. 5% of each sale goes back to ‘project women’. A project that works with different organisations that promote the advancement of women through donations, upskilling or mentoring.

For more information about Baraka visit www.barakawomen.com

Australian Abyssinian Award 2009

- Leader Newspaper (VIC)

The Victorian state government last year (2008) initiated a new program to address perceived problems in the media coverage of Australian Muslims. As part of this program, freelance journalists or final year journalism students of Muslim background or who had familiarity with Muslim culture were encouraged to apply for internships – temporary paid placements at media organisations who volunteered to host the interns. Leader Community News was one such organisation. The company is part of News Limited and operates 33 local papers in the Melbourne metro region.

The two 2008 interns hosted at Leader were given practical and valuable experience, and contributed to the success of the program.

- Shayma Al Shaksir, a journalism student from Victoria University, scored a front page scoop, working with the guidance of a more senior journalist at the Wyndham Leader on a story about a Muslim teaching student denied a work placement at a Christian college. Her story was picked up by the Melbourne metropolitan newspapers and won an highly commended, at the Australian Council of the Deans of Education awards.
- Saeed Saeed, a freelance journalist, was the first reporter on the scene at the town of Kinglake, devastated by the Black Saturday bushfires. He has since scored ongoing part time work as a journalist with the Moreland Leader.

Leader Newspapers has again offered to host successful applicants this year and two further interns are in the process of being offered placements at the organisation's local newspapers. Leader Newspaper is giving young Muslim journalism students valuable experience and a chance to make a difference in the media.

For more information about Leader Newspapers see

<http://leader-news.whereilive.com.au/>

