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## **Al-Nisa reaches finals at the Australian Muslim Achievement Awards thanks to its winning “MYServices” Program**

Al-Nisa Youth Group has ranked top two in the Australian Muslim Achievement Awards in the “Community / Humanitarian Organisation of the Year” category.

Announced last week, Al-Nisa beat entries from across Australia to reach the finals and God willing, the overall award. Al-Nisa President, Aliyah Deen said, “Al-Nisa was honoured to reach the finals of the prestigious award even if we didn’t win”.

Kholoud Abdulla, supervisor of MYServices said, “We are pleased to be recognised as the leaders in the country. Since Al-Nisa established the Muslim Youth (MY) Services program in April 2007 as part of the *Queensland Government’s Muslim Community Engagement Strategy* we have been a source of support for hundreds of young women and men through innovative initiatives and services, making an immense contribution to the development of Muslim youth and their families.”

The Awards are hosted by Mission of Hope and provide a forum for the Muslim community to celebrate excellence in community contribution and development.

Established in 2005, Al-Nisa has proved a fantastic model for all subsequent Muslim youth development programs. It represents a real and tangible way of diversifying and strengthening cross cultural community development strategies. MYServices program was developed in 2007 to engage Queensland communities with Queensland’s Muslim youth and community and to build bridges of mutual understanding and respect for a harmonious and pluralistic Australian society. Given the relatively short existence of MYServices program, it has engaged approximately 300 youth through its programs, individual support and referrals in the 13 months of direct service delivery.

A key service is the promotion of acceptance of Muslim youth by mainstream society through the encouragement and sponsorship of talented Muslim youths determined to positively portray the beauty of Islam. This included Omar Issadeen, 23, sponsored for the YMCA Queensland Youth Parliament and Hamdi Aden, 20, for the Asia-Pacific Model United Nations Conference. As a result of this service young Muslims have reported a sense of pride on seeing their peers represented as role models contributing to the Australian society and building strong futures through Al-Nisa’s MY Services program.

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