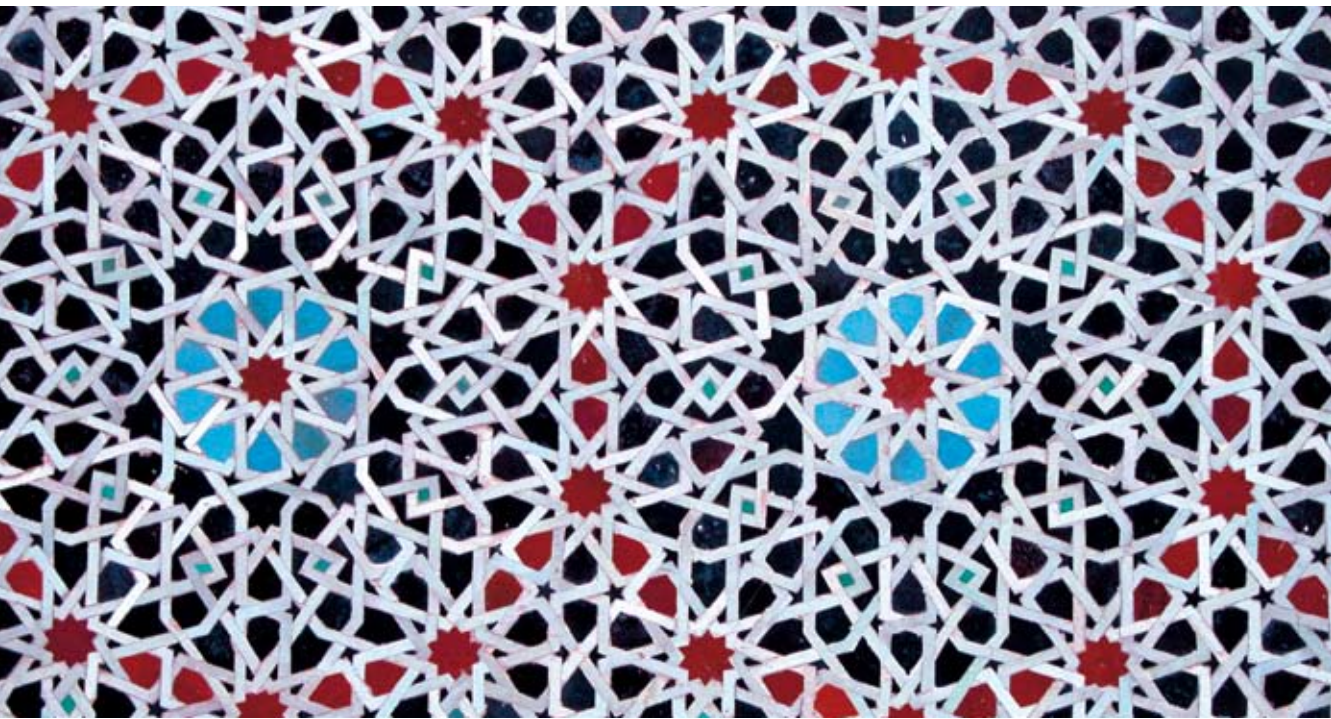


BUILDING ON SOCIAL COHESION, HARMONY AND SECURITY

AN ACTION PLAN BY THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY
REFERENCE GROUP



SEPTEMBER 2006

“AND AMONG GOD’S SIGNS ARE
THE CREATION OF THE HEAVENS AND
THE EARTH, AND THE VARIATIONS OF
YOUR LANGUAGES AND YOUR COLOURS;
TRULY IN THAT ARE SIGNS FOR THOSE
WHO KNOW.” (QURAN, SURA AL-RUM 30: 22)

“MANKIND! WE CREATED YOU FROM
A SINGLE PAIR OF A MALE AND A FEMALE,
AND MADE YOU INTO NATIONS AND
TRIBES, THAT YOU MAY KNOW ONE
ANOTHER. INDEED, THE NOBLEST AMONG
YOU IN THE SIGHT OF GOD IS THE ONE
WHO IS MORE DEEPLY CONSCIOUS OF
GOD.” (QURAN: SURA AL-HUJURAT 49: 13)

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FOREWORD

The Hon Andrew Robb AO MP
Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs

Dear Mr Robb

I am pleased to present to you the final report of the Muslim Community Reference Group (MCRG).

I would like to thank the members of the MCRG and its supporting Sub-Groups for their work over the past twelve months. Their discussions and consultations have resulted in the establishment of an open and frank dialogue with government and, importantly, with each other and the wider community.

There has never been a more crucial time for government to gain important insight on how all Australians can work together to make our society more inclusive and minimise the risk of any community facing isolation and marginalisation. The MCRG and its supporting Sub-Groups have undertaken this task with great commitment and sensitivity.

The Reference Group submitted an interim report to you in April 2006. We thank you for your positive feedback on the report. We are pleased that the report's proposals are well reflected in the projects that have been funded in 2005-06 and that will be funded through the \$35 million committed in July 2006, over four years, by the Australian Government to the National Action Plan to Build on Social Cohesion, Harmony and Security (National Action Plan).

The MCRG welcomes these initiatives as positive and constructive steps to create a more inclusive Australia in which people of all backgrounds can participate and prosper. All Australians have a responsibility to build a society that values every member. Everyone must be involved in promoting tolerance and understanding and combating isolation and marginalisation.

The MCRG has demonstrated that the federal government and the community can work closely together in a spirit of cooperation and mutual respect to develop more effective policies and programmes; this hard work has contributed towards the allocation of funding for the National Action Plan.

The MCRG acknowledges that continual work needs to be undertaken to build on the success of the past year. We also stress that dialogue between government and the community is essential to foster a peaceful, harmonious Australia and look forward to this relationship continuing in the future.

Dr Ameer Ali
Chairman
Muslim Community Reference Group

September 2006

SUMMARY OF ACHIEVEMENTS

During the last twelve months, the Muslim Community Reference Group (MCRG) and its Sub-Groups formed recommendations and proposals to the Australian Government that aim to create a more inclusive Australia in which people are less likely to be isolated and marginalised and possibly attracted to rigid and antisocial thinking that can lead to destructive activity. More than 40 projects were proposed by the MCRG and its Sub-Groups for consideration in the development and implementation of the National Action Plan to Build on Social Cohesion, Harmony and Security (the National Action Plan).

The MCRG considers that the recommendations and proposals made in the April 2006 MCRG Interim Report which were acknowledged and turned into action in the National Action Plan will go a long way to addressing many of the anxieties felt not only in Australia's Muslim community, but also among members of the wider community about the potential for unruly and/or terrorist activity in Australia.

The social isolation facing many Australian Muslims, particularly the young, both at school and in the community, will be challenged by promoting interfaith and intercultural cooperation through school education, redesigned school curricula, sport, mentoring and volunteering. Research into education and employment will examine how Australia's education and employment systems encourage integration and where they fall short. Muslim youth will be assisted into the labour market with improved access to employment service providers and government services.

Project proposals acknowledge the crucial role that women play in building positive links between Muslim and non-Muslim communities. For example, leadership skills and self esteem projects will enhance Muslim women's capacity to address issues of isolation and marginalisation in family and community environments.

While the MCRG has recognised the critical role of imams in the community as leaders and mentors and the opportunities they have to guide young Muslims, it also recognises the need to develop leadership for current and future generations of Muslims in Australia. The MCRG suggested various proposals including professional development opportunities through Australian educational institutions, and a framework for formalising the qualifications of imams.

The MCRG is pleased to acknowledge the Australian Government's funding through the National Action Plan of many of their proposals. Some projects have already been completed while others will be considered for the future funding.

The MCRG wishes to reinforce that achieving social cohesion is a continuous process. A key aspect of this final report from the MCRG is to provide information and assistance for future work. The achievements of the MCRG have established a solid foundation for an ongoing and productive partnership between government and the community in the future.

INTRODUCTION

The members of the Muslim Community Reference Group and its supporting Sub-Groups have been working for twelve months with the Australian Government to provide valuable insight and to identify ways to make Australia a more inclusive society.

The Prime Minister committed the government to continue the dialogue following his meeting with Australian Muslim leaders on 23 August 2005. This led to the formation, by the Hon John Cobb MP, former Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs, of the advisory body, the Muslim Community Reference Group (MCRG), and its seven Sub-Groups.

Seven Sub-Groups of the MCRG were established to examine specific issues under the MCRG's terms of reference. These terms of reference are an attachment to this report. The Sub-Groups examined issues relating to youth, education and training of imams and other religious teachers and leaders, women, schooling, employment, crisis management and family and community. The members of the Sub-Groups were drawn jointly from the MCRG and all parts of the community.

The Hon Andrew Robb AO MP, was appointed Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs in January 2006, and has continued working with the MCRG. The Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (DIMA) provides secretariat support to the MCRG.

The MCRG and its Sub-Groups developed this report by consulting with the Muslim community in Australia through established community groups and by holding community forums. Through this process, the MCRG has collected and discussed community views and formed a series of recommendations from each Sub-Group which address radicalisation and extremism and build a way forward for the Muslim community in Australia.

A key aspect of community consultation has been the National Muslim Youth Summit held on 3-4 December 2005 as well as state and territory specific youth summits that are being held throughout 2006. Outcomes from both the National and Victorian Summits are attachments to this report.

These youth events are bringing together a range of young Australian Muslims to discuss:

- issues of concern and possible strategies for dealing with these;
- developing local and national support networks; and
- achieving an ongoing dialogue with government on developing more responsive policies and programs for young people.



The summits are also exploring building leadership capacity among Australian Muslim youth and encouraging a greater level of civic participation and links with the wider Australian community. At summits held to date, there has been recognition by participants that many of the issues facing young Muslim Australians are faced by other young Australians. Identifying opportunities for young Muslim Australians to engage with other young Australians and discuss shared challenges and possible solutions will assist them in building a more positive future and will also address issues of isolation and marginalisation of this group.

The work of the MCRG and its Sub-Groups has constituted the community consultation component of the development of the National Action Plan to Build on Social Cohesion, Harmony and Security (National Action Plan). It has also formed a basis for continued positive communication between the government and the community.

The partnership between Muslim community leaders and the Australian Government benefits all Australians and supports our common goals of harmony and understanding.

The MCRG recognises that terrorism presents huge challenges to all communities and it is important that the government takes steps to address it. In addition, Muslims themselves, along with everyone else in the community, have a responsibility to take measures to deal constructively with the issue, while, at the same time, it is important to recognise that most Muslims are not terrorists.

The MCRG and its Sub-Groups thank members of the various Muslim community organisations, religious leaders and individual members of the community for their cooperation and participation in the community consultations across the country.

The MCRG and its Sub-Groups also wishes to acknowledge the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (DIMA) State and Territory Liaison Officer Network, and other agencies including the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST), the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA), the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR); the Attorney-General's Department (AGD); the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) and the Australian Sports Commission for their dedication, efforts and commitment.

MCRG AREAS OF FOCUS

1. ADDRESSING MARGINALISATION AND RADICALISATION

The MCRG recognised that a more inclusive Australian society is a key issue in making rigid thinking and possible involvement in terrorism less attractive to those at risk.

The MCRG Engaging with Women Sub-Group, Education and Training of Clerical and Lay Teachers and Leaders Sub-Group, Engaging with Youth Sub-Group, Crisis Management Sub-Group and Family and Community Sub-Groups all produced recommendations and proposals to the Australian Government on addressing marginalisation and radicalisation.

The proposals made in the April 2006 MCRG Interim Report use education, law enforcement personnel and the Muslim community to promote adherence to the rule of law and non-violent means of addressing grievances.

While there is much work to be done, and constant feedback required, the MCRG's proposals to address marginalisation and radicalisation will achieve a considerable enhancement of the relationship between Muslim Australian communities and the non-Muslim Australian community.

1.1 MCRG Proposals

- Volunteering and Leadership
- Muslim Community Volunteering in Emergency Management
- Helping Law Enforcement to Address Discrimination
- Helping Young People to Deal with Discrimination
- Registration of Imams and Benchmarking of Religious Leadership Skills
- Produce a Booklet Outlining the Role, Position and Rights of Muslim Women
- International Literature on Rigid Thinking
- Crisis Management Workshops
- Security in Government Conference
- Emergency Management
- Engaging with Converts to Islam

I.2 Government Response

Volunteering and Leadership

A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed with FaCSIA, Volunteering Australia and the Australian Multicultural Foundation. A literature search and possible extension to the National Survey of Australian Volunteers from Diverse Cultural and Linguistic Backgrounds will support the enhancement of the current recommendations of the National Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities Survey and include the development of a train the trainer programme, a resource kit, a best practice manual and the promotion and dissemination of project outcomes, including the development of a research bulletin.

Muslim Community Volunteering in Emergency Management

Addressed through the Emergency Management Australia (EMA) initiative to develop strategies for encouraging members of Muslim and other culturally and linguistically diverse communities to participate in volunteer emergency services activities within their communities.

Helping Law Enforcement to Address Discrimination

Addressed through the HREOC developing strategies to assist law enforcement agencies and the Muslim community to work together to address discrimination and vilification.

Helping Young People to Deal with Discrimination

Addressed through HREOC engaging with Muslim young people to develop strategies to deal with discrimination and vilification and to develop targeted educational resources and forums for young people.

Registration of Imams and Benchmarking of Religious Leadership Skills

The Conference of Australian Imams with contributions from Muslim leaders, women and youth took place in September 2006. This two-day conference in Sydney, brought together some 100 imams and other religious leaders, as well as other stakeholders, to raise awareness about the role of imams in promoting community harmony and preventing rigid thinking. A central objective of the conference was to focus on issues of training and education in Australia of imams, and other religious leaders.

Muslim community initiatives that promote and recognise the Islamic qualifications and experiences of religious leaders, teachers and other professionals will benefit from the Australian Government's action to fund the establishment of the National Centre of Excellence for Islamic Studies at an Australian university or group of universities. The Centre will offer accredited university courses that assist Muslims and non-Muslims learn more about Islam and Muslim cultures in the Australian context. The Centre is part of the National Action Plan.

Produce a Booklet Outlining the Role, Position and Rights of Muslim Women

The Australian Government, through the National Action Plan, has partially addressed this MCRG recommendation with a project themed *Building Identity and Resisting Radicalisation* which aims to correct misunderstandings about Islam and to better inform both Muslim and non-Muslim communities that Islam is against extremism.

This project will assist the Muslim community to construct an 'Australian Muslim identity', which preserves Islam as derived from multi-ethnic Islamic values. It will be based on the research and development of educational material to explain Islam's history and community-building role in civic life. It will also cover the theological and political counter-extremist material and a counter-extremist handbook, for radio, internet and print publishing.

International Literature on Rigid Thinking

The Australian Government, together with the Western Australian Government, is providing funding through the National Action Plan for a research project Understanding Muslim Australian Identities that is being undertaken by the University of Western Australia. The research project will develop an empirically tested understanding of views of Muslim Australians on citizenship, identities and relationships to the wider society and how to strengthen these. This project incorporates, as a sub-component of the first phase of the project, an international literature review. Furthermore, a small Research Unit has been established within the Multicultural Affairs Branch of DIMA whose work includes scanning international publications and policies for information on understanding rigid thinking and how to counter it.

Crisis Management Workshops

The Attorney-General's Department (AGD) has begun holding crisis management workshops. There are several national workshops to be held, aimed at improving crisis management planning for the Muslim community by focusing on education, awareness raising and understanding of national security.

The first of the workshops was held in Darwin on Wednesday 17 May 2006. Thirteen Muslim community participants, representing the Darwin, Alice Springs and Palmerston communities, discussed issues they saw as relevant in the event of a crisis or disaster.

A Sydney workshop is expected to proceed later in 2006.

Security in Government Conference

Muslim community representatives Dr Ameer Ali, Chairman of the MCRG, and Dr Waqar Ahmad, President of the Islamic Society of the Northern Territory and Chair of the MCRG's Improving Crisis Management Sub-Group, participated in a panel discussion at the Security in Government Conference hosted by AGD on 10 May 2006. The topic was 'Improving the dialogue - a Muslim community context.' A final report on the outcomes achieved by attendees is due in October 2006. Ongoing involvement by Muslim community leaders is anticipated for future Security in Government Conferences.

Emergency Management

Research and development of case studies and learning material for a training programme have taken place. Pilot workshops were held on the 4th and 5th of May and a final report on outcomes is due in September 2006.

Engaging with Converts to Islam

This proposal is under consideration.

1.3 Outstanding Issues

Members consider that:

- 1.3.1 Cross-cultural training for all service providers in our community is a key issue in achieving an inclusive society. For example, it is important that there are mental health professionals either from a Muslim background and/or aware of religious and cultural sensitivities so as to provide relevant and appropriate support. The ability to provide appropriate service delivery and understand cultural practice is also important, for example, at Muslim burials. Other examples include the provision of Halal food in hospitals and jails. Adequate translating and interpreting support is also essential.
- 1.3.2 Working with converts to Islam is a very important issue. Members' feedback is that converts to Islam can feel isolated from both Muslim and non-Muslim communities. This may increase the risk of their developing a distorted view of Islam and being vulnerable to radicalisation. Research and other strategies to support this group need to be considered for funding as soon as possible.
- 1.3.3 Promotion of community support and connections with Muslims in regional and remote areas is also vital.
- 1.3.4 Of concern is the language used by some politicians and the way they address the broader community on issues related to Islam and Muslims, which many Australians feel are derogatory and inflammatory at times.
- 1.3.5 The media continues to be a major source of misunderstanding about Muslims. This is an issue that requires ongoing attention and consideration should be given to a major media campaign promoting positive images of the contribution of Muslim Australians to our society.

2. EMPLOYMENT

The MCRG Employment Sub-Group recognised that unemployment, particularly among young people, has negative social effects and can create feelings of anger and rejection. In contrast, paid employment, whether full-time or part-time, promotes an individual's wellbeing and sense of belonging to the whole community. Interactions with work colleagues and clients enhance relationships between people of different cultures and backgrounds. Participation in the workforce is a vital element in reducing social isolation.

The proposals which were put forward by the MCRG and the Employment Sub-Group will assist in addressing the higher level of unemployment experienced by Muslims, particularly Muslim youth.

2.1 MCRG Proposals

- **Better Connections Workshops**
- **Community Employment Coordinators**
- **Promoting 'Good' Employers**

2.2 Government Response

Better Connections Workshops

A number of Better Connections Workshops are being held as part of the National Action Plan.

The workshops:

- present information on labour market demand and supply trends, current and projected employment patterns required by industry, and local employment vacancies as advised by employers;
- identify employment issues needing attention and highlighting employment opportunities such as apprenticeships, employment and employer attitudes, work-relevant skills for job seekers, need for employment service providers to work cooperatively with other organisations, parents and expectations on young job seekers; and
- form working groups to address employment issues that are identified as being of concern which connect service providers/other employment/employer stakeholders and representatives of the Muslim local communities to initiate a local action plan.

Community Employment Coordinators

The Australian Government, through the National Action Plan, has funded the appointment of two Labour Market Participation Workers, as a pilot project, in the highly disadvantaged areas of Macquarie Fields in Western Sydney, and Lakemba in South-West Sydney. Negotiations are currently underway for the appointment of a Muslim Labour Market Participation Worker, to assist Australian Muslims in Queensland, under a State Government initiative.

Promoting 'Good' Employers

The Australian Government, through the National Action Plan, funds DEWR's Better Connections Workshops, which will undertake preliminary work towards achieving this proposal.

2.3 Outstanding Issues

Members consider that:

2.3.1 The objective of the Better Connections Workshops is to facilitate community discussion and connections and this objective has been achieved. However, the MCRG considers that equally important are action plans arising from these workshops which are the responsibility of all stakeholders to implement.

Examples of some of the proposals in the action plans include:

- Implement a youth employment pilot, where unemployed youth will participate in an intensive employment preparation and placement programme.
- Investigate opportunities for career/employment expos, such as careers market, TAFE try-a-trade expo to increase the awareness and understanding of young unemployed people about employment and career options.
- Provide information on government programmes to community forum and agencies, including local community organisations.
- Promote opportunities for young people to better engage in the workforce by working with local youth programmes and community groups.
- Explore options for a local training and employment project targeting an industry with labour in demand.
- Source employers who are willing to take on apprentices.
- Explore strategies to inform and involve small businesses in the local area that don't have the capacity to attend workshops and meetings but are a large source of employment.
- Review information available to employers, particularly small businesses regarding apprenticeships in the local area.
- Develop a programme of cross-cultural training for employers in the local area.
- Examine options for improving the recognition of overseas qualifications for local job seekers.

- Develop a pre-apprenticeship programme (short duration) for school aged job seekers to improve their ability to satisfy the prerequisites for apprenticeships.
- Deliver basic literacy and numeracy and IT skills training for mature-age job seekers in the local area.
- Produce a directory of Commonwealth, State and Local Government employment and training programmes currently operating or with the potential to be implemented in the local area.
- Increase awareness of employers in the local area of the needs of these target groups, for example flexible working arrangements.

3. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Education and training increase understanding of diverse cultures and religions. Bringing together Islamic and other schools in a range of intellectual and physical activities will enhance respect and social cohesion. Similarly, Australian-based education and training of imams and Islamic scholars will provide a greater understanding of Australian society and culture.

3.1 MCRG Proposals

- **Research Project: *Encouraging Tolerance and Social Cohesion Through School Education***
- **National Showcase Seminar on the School Education Project**
- **Interaction Between Schools**
- **Stock-take of Islamic Study at Australian Universities: 2006**
- **Summary of Models for Possible Islamic Religious Training in Australia**
- **Seminar on Islamic Higher Education and Training**
- **Ensuring Muslim Women's Participation in Religious Life**
- **Non-Muslim and Muslim Women's Forums**
- **Develop Appropriate Educational Resources for Muslim Women**
- **Consultation and Relationship Strengthening with Victorian and NSW Police**
- **Curriculum Resources and Related Professional Learning for Teachers**
- **Information Booklet on Muslim Community**

3.2 Government Response

Research Project: *Encouraging Tolerance and Social Cohesion Through School Education*

The Australian Government, through the National Action Plan, provided funding for the Department of Education, Science and Training to undertake a research project entitled: *Encouraging Tolerance and Social Cohesion through School Education*. The study aimed to address issues affecting young Muslims at risk in schools and to promote interschool and intercultural cooperation between Islamic schools, other faith-based schools and non-faith schools with the view to reducing the potential isolation and alienation of students. The study also identified six good practice case studies highlighting interschool cooperation, school and community relations, and shared values among Islamic and other schools. Key findings of the study, along with the good practice case studies, were presented at a National Showcase Seminar in late May 2006 (see below).

National Showcase Seminar on the School Education Project

The Showcase Seminar: *Encouraging Tolerance and Social Cohesion through School Education* was held on 25-26 May 2006 in the Parliament House, Canberra. It aimed to present key findings and good practice case studies from the research project mentioned above, and to facilitate discussion about interfaith and intercultural cooperation within the context of the National Framework for Values

Education in Australian Schools. The Seminar was attended by 75 participants (with 50 fully-funded) including representatives of Islamic schools, government and non-government schools, teachers, principals, education authorities and students.

Interaction Between Schools

The Islamic charity I-Care was given funding to conduct a four day Youth Camp in Queensland in June 2006 to encourage interaction between Islamic schools and other faith and non-faith based schools.

The two day *Choice, Engagement, Service: What we Offer to Australian Society* symposium was held in Sydney for school and community leaders to discuss ways in which faith-based schools can produce engaged, informed and law-abiding citizens.

Research funded by the Australian Government, through the National Action Plan, addresses this proposal and includes an analysis by the Australian Catholic University of Year 11 Australian school students on specific socio-cultural factors, including the effects of Muslim integration to provide recommendations to educational, interfaith, multicultural and counselling service providers.

Stock-take of Islamic Study in Australian Universities, 2006

The Report on the Stock-take will be delivered at the *Conference of Australian Imams with contributions from Muslim leaders, women and youth* in September 2006.

Summary of Models for Possible Islamic Religious Training in Australia

The Education and Training of Clerical and Lay Teachers and Leaders Sub-Group, since it was formed in October 2005, has examined ways in which the education and training of clerical and lay teachers in Australia can be developed. The Sub-Group was supported in this work by its secretariat, the Department of Education, Science and Training.

The Sub-Group's work has been collated and will inform discussions at the *Conference of Australian Imams with contributions from Muslim leaders, women and youth*. The work of the Sub-Group will also be made available to the host university/ies of the National Centre of Excellence for Islamic Studies (once named).

A central objective of the Conference of Australian Imams referred to previously, is to focus on issues of training and education in Australia of imams and other religious workers and lay teachers.

Seminar on Islamic Higher Education and Training

The stated objectives for this recommendation are to: discuss possible models for Islamic religious education and training at university; discuss possible collaborative arrangements between the higher education sector and the Muslim community; and examine the Report on the Stock-take of Islamic Study at Australian Universities.

The objectives of this recommendation will be realised via the Conference of Australian Imams in September 2006. Conference workshops will examine professional development for new and practicing religious leaders and consider their higher education and training needs. Workshops will also examine collaborative arrangements with the proposed National Centre of Excellence for Islamic Studies that could guide the development of university courses for religious leaders and other professionals. The Stock-take report will support workshop discussions.

Ensuring Muslim Women's Participation in Religious Life

The Australian Government, through the National Action Plan, has funded a research project through the Muslim Women's National Network of Australia (MWNNA). The research, conducted in Sydney, investigates the attitudes of imams regarding gender issues and the participation of Muslim women in Islamic religious life and broader society. The research builds on MWNNA's previous research into women's access to mosques.

Non-Muslim and Muslim Women's Forums

The Australian Government, through the National Action Plan, provides funding for the Canberra Islamic Centre's *National Conference of Muslim Women – Voices of Women*. The two day conference explores ways in which Muslim women can be further empowered to participate in public life both within the Muslim community and in wider Australian society. The conference provides a mix of speakers, discussion forums and workshops.

The *Voices of Women* conference builds on the Biennial Regional Muslim Women's Forum - *Beyond Interfaith Dialogue 2006* conference which was organised by the Muslim Women's National Network of Australia and took place in February 2006.

Develop Appropriate Educational Resources for Muslim Women

The development of appropriate educational resources for Muslim Women will be undertaken as part of HREOC's *Muslim Communities and Police Forums*. There will be a series of forums to enhance cooperation between the police and the Muslim community, including the development of resources outlining legal avenues and services for incidents of racial and religious intolerance.

Consultation and Relationship Strengthening with Victorian and NSW Police

HREOC has conducted a series of forums nationally entitled *Unlocking Doors: Muslim Communities and police tackling racial and religious discrimination*. *Unlocking Doors* aimed to enhance cooperation between the police and Muslim communities, including the development of resources outlining legal avenues and services for incidents of racial and religious intolerance. A number of these forums were held specifically for women.

Curriculum Resources and Related Professional Learning for Teachers

The NSW Government (Community Relations Commission and Education Department) is holding a roundtable discussion to develop a uniform education kit for schools on Islam. This project has received funding under the National Action Plan.

Information Booklet on Muslim Community

The University of Newcastle is developing a document that provides information about Muslims, their beliefs, practices and customs for the wider Newcastle community. This document will have a section on frequently asked questions and some ideas for the mainstream community on how to build closer relationships with people from the Muslim community. The publication will be distributed to police, academics, councils and community groups.

To eliminate common misconceptions, the booklet will include (based on the Quranic teachings) Australian Muslim views on jihad, terrorism, suicide bombing, Muslim marriages, difference between Sunni and Shiite Muslims, religious practices of Muslims, Muslims views on Jesus, commonalities among Muslims, Jews and Christians, women in Islam, their dress and human rights in Islam etc.

In addition, the National Archives of Australia is developing online educational resources for the formal school sector. These initiatives have been preceded by pilot archival support seminars in Melbourne and Sydney to provide information and support to the Muslim community on recording and managing community and personal archives.

3.3 Outstanding Issues

Members consider that:

- 3.3.1 Information from the discussions that took place in the MCRG Sub-Group Education and Training of Clerical and Lay teachers and Leaders should be made available to the host university of the National Centre of Excellence for Islamic Studies.
- 3.3.2 The MCRG considers it very important that they should be involved and/or consulted in the establishment of the National Centre of Excellence for Islamic Studies.

4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Greater engagement between the Muslim and the non-Muslim community will help to strengthen interaction, foster understanding and promote better relationships. The MCRG believes in the importance of projects and initiatives flowing from the National Action Plan having clear guidelines and measures for reporting so their impact can be monitored and inform any future initiatives.

4.1 MCRG Proposals

- Mentoring
- Community Involvement and Consultation
- *My Dress My Image My Choice*
- Muslim Participation in Organised Sports, With a Particular Emphasis on Women
- Connectedness-Interdependence-Regard-Commitment-Love-Empathy (CIRCLE)
- Consultation and Relationship Strengthening with Victorian and NSW Police
- Promote the Process of Understanding and Integration Between All Australians.
- Interschool Cooperation
- Open Days and Other Activities at Islamic Centres
- Involvement of Local Government
- Community Development Workers to Support Muslim Communities
- Learning From Other Communities
- Link With All Levels of Government
- National Muslim Community Information and Help Line

4.2 Government Response

Mentoring

The Mentor Marketplace programme aims to improve the outcomes for young people aged 12 to 25 years, particularly those at greatest risk of disconnection from their family, community, education, training and the workplace. Projects funded under the Mentor Marketplace programme provide access to mentoring for a wide range of young people including, but not restricted to, those in foster care; young carers; young people with disabilities; Indigenous young people; and those from disadvantaged groups and localities.

As part of the Australian Government's commitment to the development of the National Action Plan, FaCSIA received funding for an existing Mentor Marketplace provider located in an area with a significant Muslim population.

The aim of the project is to trial a number of approaches, with national applicability, to mentoring Muslim young people in a culturally and religiously appropriate manner. The project will work in partnership with the local Muslim community in the northern Melbourne metropolitan area to consider appropriate mentoring models.

Also, as part of the National Action Plan, additional funding has been provided to FaCSIA for implementation of pilot Mentor Marketplace programmes in two locations with high levels of unemployment and social disadvantage in Western and South-Western Sydney. The Australian Government, through the National Action Plan, is also currently funding the Australian Muslims Education and Mentoring Project in South-Western Sydney. Part of this project is to produce a good practice booklet regarding refutation of radicalism and tackling identity crisis.

Community Involvement and Consultation

Community participation will be examined at the two-day Conference of Australian Imams in September 2006. The conference is expected to include discussion on:

- The role of imams in Australia
- Education and training for imams (and the planned National Centre of Excellence for Islamic Studies)
- National structures such as a Board of Imams (including additional state and territory boards).

My Dress My Image My Choice

This proposal is under consideration by DIMA.

The event *My Dress My Image My Choice* promotes greater understanding of the Islamic dress code for women and provides an opportunity for Muslim and non-Muslim women to meet over lunch, get to know each other and enjoy a parade of Muslim fashions. A panel discussion to address general questions about Islam is also a main feature, debunking myths associated with Islam.

Muslim Participation in Organised Sports, With a Particular Emphasis on Women

This proposal is under consideration by DIMA.

Connectedness-Interdependence-Regard-Commitment-Love-Empathy (CIRCLE)

The Australian Government, through the National Action Plan, funded the Islamic Women's Welfare Council of Victoria to undertake a brief research and scoping project to ensure a best practice approach to implementing a series of CIRCLE workshops.

Consultation and Relationship Strengthening with Victorian and NSW Police

Local authorities are to be involved in the Victorian Government's post-disaster crisis management development plan with emergency services and the Muslim community. This project is to support the protection of Muslims, community or business assets should a terrorist attack occur in Australia and includes community forums involving: local authorities, the Equal Opportunity Commission of Victoria; the Victorian Multicultural Commission; the Victoria Police; the Fire Brigade; risk assessors; the Victorian Department of Education; the Victorian Department of Health; Islamic Schools; Victorian School Principals; mosques; Islamic and Muslim associations; youth groups; Muslim welfare groups; and women's groups.

Promote the Process of Understanding and Integration Between All Australians

The Australian Government, through the National Action Plan, has provided funding for the Muslim Women's National Network of Australia for a series of events based on the United Nations Calendar of International days to help dispel misunderstanding of Muslim women, and to build relations between the Muslim and non-Muslim communities.

Interschool Cooperation

The Australian Government, through the National Action Plan, is funding *Project Abraham: Reaching Out To Country*, which aims to increase knowledge, awareness and understanding of the commonalities that Muslims, Jews and Christians have in the context of exploring contemporary social issues. Project Abraham seeks to do this through undertaking interfaith seminars (including around contemporary community-based issues) and facilitating the development of associated community projects, and establishing and showing an exhibition and conducting schools visits, as well as developing sustainable partnerships within and between each selected community, among educators and religious and community leaders.

The *Together for Goodness and Kindness Project*, jointly delivered by the Forum on Australian and Islamic Relations (FAIR) and Chabad House of the North Shore Ltd (Chabad House), aims to foster a feeling of belonging and acceptance of others among mainstream and marginalised youth from emerging communities as they interact with, and work together with, people different to themselves on common objectives.

Open Days and Other Activities at Islamic Centres

The Australian Government, through the National Action Plan, has funded the joint Commonwealth-ACT Government Intercultural Outreach Project. The Intercultural Outreach Programme is aimed at enhancing the understanding of Islam by members of the ACT community who do not have any (or limited) knowledge of Islam.

The Intercultural Outreach Programme is composed of three 'sub-projects,' two of which were open days. The first open day was held at the Canberra Islamic Centre on 27 May 2006.

The second open day was held at the Abu-Bahkr Al-Siddiq Mosque (Canberra Mosque) on the 24 June 2006.

DIMA also worked with the Hobart Mosque on an event held on Harmony Day 2006 to promote harmony and understanding between the Muslim community and wider community.

Involvement of Local Government

A research project is being undertaken by the Macquarie University Centre for Research on Social Inclusion and incorporates and develops data through an audit of local government best practice with a particular focus on local governments with large Muslim populations. It also provides in-depth analysis of the organisational structures that promote dialogue with Muslim communities, and local government initiatives which promote positive inter-religious and inter-ethnic engagement.

The project aims to build links between the Muslim community and government at the local level, an essential element of the community capacity building process. In determining best practice community engagement, the project will inform future strategies for building bridges of dialogue between Muslim and other ethnic communities and local government

This project builds on extensive work at the local government level already undertaken through the Living in Harmony programme.

Community Development Workers to Support Muslim Communities

This proposal is partially addressed through the appointment of a Muslim Labour Market Participation Worker to engage the Muslim community, particularly Muslim youth, by linking the community into employment services and thereby improving employment outcomes for Muslim communities in Queensland.

It is also partially addressed by the Australian Council for the Arts national leadership course for managers, project officers, administrators and practitioners in the not-for-profit arts industry. The project proposes to concentrate on building capacity of individual employees to enable them to deliver consistent high quality work with Muslim communities and thereby increase the community's involvement in mainstream arts and cultural activities.

Learning From Other Communities

This proposal is under consideration by DIMA.

Link With All Levels of Government

The Australian Government, through the National Action Plan, addresses this proposal under such initiatives as the Macquarie University Centre for Research on Social Inclusion research which incorporates and develops data through an audit of local government best practice with a particular focus on local governments with large Muslim populations.

National Muslim Community Information and Help Line

The Australian Government, through the National Action Plan, is providing funding for a volunteer staffed counselling and support help line for the Muslim community

4.3 Outstanding issues

The MCRG considers:

- 4.3.1 *My Dress My Image My Choice*, *Muslim participation in organised sports*, with a particular emphasis on women, and *Learning from other Communities* are all important proposals.
- 4.3.2 Further community development work is needed and FaCSIA's Local Answers programme offers an avenue for this to occur.
- 4.3.3 There needs to be greater ongoing focus on attracting, educating and placing volunteers.

5. LEADERSHIP

Australian Muslim communities aspire to having Australian-based Islamic study programmes that are unique and appropriate to the Australian context. There is a current lack of structured professional development options for Islamic scholars and religious leaders in Australia. The MCRG recognised the importance of ensuring that Muslim Australians are able to access existing mainstream leadership programmes, and training that is specific to their needs and that of their community.

5.1 MCRG Proposals

- National Professional Development Opportunities for Imams
- Self Esteem, Identity, Leadership and Community Workshops Project
- SILC Capacity Building and Leadership Project for Young People
- Women's Leadership and Development Programme
- Muslim Women's Conference
- Security in Government Conference
- National Security Leaders Workshop
- Restricted Access Website

5.2 Government Response

National Professional Development Opportunities for Imams

The Australian Government will provide \$8 million towards the establishment of the National Centre of Excellence for Islamic Studies at an Australian University. The Centre will offer university accredited courses that provide a knowledge and skill foundation for students aspiring to religious leadership and teaching roles in Australia (eg imams) and also support the ongoing learning of existing Australian religious leaders and teachers.

It is important to note that the Centre will offer courses to any student who has an interest in aspects of the Islamic world. Study programs could be as diverse as architecture, art and commerce. The Centre would over time become a world class facility with a specialist focus on the study of Islam and associated subjects.

The *Conference of Australian Imams with contributions from Muslim leaders, women and youth*, in September 2006, organised by the MCRG with the support of DIMA, will include discussions on postgraduate professional development. Discussions will examine the issue of establishing a professional body to:

- recognise the Islamic qualifications and experiences of religious leaders, teachers and other professionals;
- promote high standards and professionalism; and
- support religious leaders in servicing their communities.

Self Esteem, Identity, Leadership and Community (SILC) Workshops Project

The Australian Government, through the National Action Plan, is providing funding for 4-6 workshops in Victoria which will provide information and training in leadership, study skills, parenting and family issues.

SILC Capacity Building and Leadership Project for Young People

The Australian Government, through the National Action Plan, is providing funding for the extension of the SILC programme to focus on youth. A SILC Muslim youth module focussing on self-development, leadership skills, education and civic awareness will be developed and piloted in Victoria with one group of young Muslim women (10 to 14 participants) and one group of young Muslim men (10 to 14 participants). Stage one, conducted in May-June 2006, consisted of a brief research and scoping project to ensure a best practice youth leadership development model and ensure thorough adaptation to the diversity of Muslim communities.

Women's Leadership and Development Programme

This proposal is under consideration by DIMA.

Of relevance is HREOC's *Muslim Women and Human Rights Project*. The project aims to engage Australian Muslim and non-Muslim women in a dialogue about human rights and responsibilities. In doing so, it aims to increase their understanding about human rights principles and the domestic framework for promoting racial, religious and cultural and gender equality in Australia. The project will also identify further strategies to improve the capacity of individuals and communities to respond to racial and religious discrimination and vilification. A one-day forum on 21 September 2006 in Melbourne has as a focus Muslim women's human rights issues, to identify strategies to address racial and religious discrimination in particular, and to promote common goals of harmony and understanding between Muslim and non-Muslim women in Australia.

Muslim Women's Conference

The Australian Government, through the National Action Plan, provided funding for a two-day conference for Australian Muslim women held by the Canberra Islamic Centre in September 2006, to explore ways in which Muslim women can be further empowered to participate in public life both within the Muslim community and in wider Australian society. The conference provided a mix of speakers, discussion forums, and workshops on a range of issues facing Muslim women.

Security in Government Conference

To strengthen the Muslim community's ties with Australian security and law enforcement agencies, the MCRG supported the involvement of members of the Improving Crisis Management Sub-Group in a panel discussion at the Security in Government Conference in May 2006.

National Security Leaders Workshop

A national workshop will be held each year with key leaders of the Muslim community to develop their understanding of national security issues.

Restricted Access Website

A password-protected collaborative website will be developed containing an up-to-date contact database of community leaders and agency contacts, enabling protected communication (such as minutes of meetings and talking points) to be shared.

5.3 Outstanding Issues

Members consider that:

5.3.1 The Women's Leadership and Development Programme is an important proposal.

CONCLUSIONS

The work during the last 12 months, culminating in this report, goes a long way towards providing a good understanding of Muslim and non-Muslim relations in Australia.

The Muslim Community Reference Group has benefited from the multi-ethnic nature of the Muslim community and has used that as an asset in devising actions and projects to maintain social cohesion in the wider Australian community.

We also now have a better knowledge of the radicalisation process and have developed initiatives to address issues arising from this.

The Muslim community accepts its responsibility in facing the challenges of today's Australia and is therefore willing to continue working with the government.

The effectiveness of the National Action Plan depends on continuing engagement of the Muslim community.

ATTACHMENTS

RESEARCH: LITERATURE REVIEW

It should be noted that the research mentioned in this attachment is simply representative of a larger body of current research.

Input from research conducted by comparative Western democracies, academic and expert contributions (books, articles and journal and conference papers) has been crucial for developing an understanding of the specific issues facing the Muslim diaspora living in Western Liberal democracies, and an understanding of various government initiatives.

Government Research

Important public contributions to the understanding of issues facing the Muslim diaspora have been made by the Netherlands and the United Kingdom:

- The Netherlands government has produced a Memorandum on Society's Defence and the Integration Policy. The Memorandum outlines an integral approach to integration issues facing Muslim migrants, targeting the role of health clinics, school attendance officers, teachers, mentors and parents and the involvement of young people in minorities organisations and government.
- The United Kingdom's seven Working Groups set up post the 7 July London Bombings made several recommendations in the *Preventing Extremism Together* report. Amongst some of the recommendations are: the instilling of a more faithful reflection of Islam and its civilisation across the entire education system, including the National Curriculum; to improve the performance and achievement of Muslim pupils by strengthening a wide range of existing initiatives; dialogue and communication which entails deepening the relationships between Government institutions and Muslim communities; improve data collection on Muslim communities through faith monitoring and a new national advisory body/council on mosques and imams.

Non-Academic International Research

The urgent need to understand the issues facing the Muslim diaspora has produced numerous international studies. Of particular importance are a number of attitudinal surveys conducted by the Pew Global Attitude's Project which examine the relation between Muslim and non-Muslim communities.

- 'The Great Divide: How Westerners and Muslims View Each Other'. The survey was conducted across 13 countries including the United States, from March 31–May 14, 2006. In Europe the countries included special over-samples of Muslim minorities living in Great Britain, France, Germany and Spain; and Muslim countries, Turkey, Egypt, Indonesia, Jordan and Pakistan. The survey found that Europe's Muslims represent a middle ground between the oppositional way Western publics and Muslims in the Middle East and Asia view each other.
- 'Muslims in Europe: Economic Worries Top Concerns about Religious and Cultural Identity'. This survey was conducted across 13 countries including the United States, from March 3 - May 14, 2006. In Europe the countries included special over-samples of Muslim minorities living in Great Britain, France, Germany and Spain. The poll finds that Muslims are generally positive about conditions in their host nation. In fact they are more positive than the general publics. The greatest concern among Muslim minorities is unemployment, with extremism emerging as the number two concern.
- 'Extremism: Common Concern for Muslim and Western Publics'. This survey was conducted among more than 17,000 people in 17 countries in July 2005 including in the United States, Great Britain, France, Canada, Netherlands, Russia, Germany, Turkey, Pakistan and Indonesia. The survey found that while many Muslims believe that extremism poses a threat, there are differing opinions as to its causes. Sizable minorities in most predominately Muslim countries point to poverty, joblessness and lack of education as the most important cause of extremism.

Academic Research

Muslim identity is a central issue of academic research.

The Centre for the Study of Contemporary Islam at University of Melbourne, is currently the recipient of an ARC grant which is entitled 'Reconfiguring Muslim Australian Identity'. This project is supported by a large amount of qualitative research gathered in Sydney and Melbourne. The project looks at how - and whether - Muslims who have grown up in a secular Western democracy reconfigure normative Islam so as to facilitate active membership in the wider society. This project is the first to research this in Australia. It focuses on how Islam and Muslim identity are re-configured by long-term Muslim residents and local converts, in contrast to those whose Muslim identity was largely shaped outside of Australia. Understanding how Muslims reconcile Islamic identity with active membership in the wider society has important implications for the future of Australia as one of the most successful multicultural democracies.

The Centre is also undertaking a research project entitled 'Negotiating Religious Change in Australian Muslim Communities'. This project examines the challenges Islam presents its adherents in the modern world in regard both to its theological doctrines and its moral and ritual law. In particular, it investigates the degree of flexibility shown in the decision-making of Muslim religious leaders in Australia as they support their communities in adapting to the norms of the wider society while remaining faithful to the tenets of Islam. It takes into account the leaders' ethnic backgrounds, the emphases of their training, and where it was received. It will advance our understanding of their role in shaping the rapidly growing Muslim presence in Australia.

The University of Western Australia has done extensive work on the issue of Muslim identity. The research points out that Muslim identity should not be thought of as homogeneous or monolithic. In the context of Western societies, both Western and Christian Muslim identities have become personalised and to one degree or another have detached themselves from “the historically dominating civilization-based identity construction”. As a result the respective religious identities have taken on a broad spectrum of meanings. Militant forms of Islam are just one form of identity construction which just so happens to reaffirm an identity construction that is reminiscent of certain aspect of the medieval era and in its neo-fundamentalist form affirms the antagonistic construction of self and other at both the individual and civilization level.

A common claim amongst academic research is that Islamic diaspora identity is bound up and symptomatic of changes to global and regional political economies, and that it is linked, although sometimes in unexpected ways, to the reimagination of political community, culture, and religion. In this respect Islam in the diaspora is said to consist of a family of diverse and even internally contradictory social movements with a broad base beyond the peripheral radical fringes that have recently occupied the attention of the West.

OUTCOMES FROM MUSLIM YOUTH SUMMITS

NATIONAL MUSLIM YOUTH SUMMIT

Summit Communiqué

The Australian Multicultural Foundation, in collaboration with the Federal Government's Muslim Youth Sub-Group and the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, invited 66 young Australian Muslims from every state and territory, who came together to discuss those issues concerning young Australian Muslims. Most importantly, the Summit has focused on finding practical solutions to key issues such as: identity, relationships, employment/education and training, and discrimination.

These young Australians have come together in a spirit of inclusiveness to develop strategies and solutions that will also benefit the wider Australian community. We are encouraged by the many honest and positive contributions of today's Summit delegates. The young people themselves are confident in their commitment to take on the continuing role of advocating for the positive changes envisaged at the Summit.

The Summit identified the following key issues and solutions to be presented to Government for its National Action Plan:

I. The perceived conflict between Muslim and Australian identity

Solutions:

- Government sponsored education for the public on what Islam is.
- Media campaigns promoting anti-discrimination including TV ads (similar campaign to the anti domestic violence campaign).
- Grass roots communication between Muslims and non-Muslims through social groups, sporting groups, activities, and camps, etc.
- Better education for Muslims about Islam.
- Better education about the compatibility between Australian law and Islamic values.
- School and university based interfaith activities.
- A more proactive approach to promoting multiculturalism should be taken in schools.
- Programmes for Muslims to experience and understand Australia's Indigenous heritage.
- Programmes and activities that increase the self-esteem of young Australian Muslims so they feel confident about their identity.
- Identifying more successful and high profile Australian Muslims who can act as Ambassadors.

2. Inter-generational conflict between parents and children, especially when parents are migrants and children have been born in Australia

Solutions:

- Providing parent support groups.
- Educating parents about Australian laws.
- Providing activities that include both children and parents such as camps, sporting and camping activities (i.e. father/son and mother/daughter events).
- Parents to be more involved in the child's schooling by being more active in school councils and committees.
- Islamic education that clarifies the differences between religion and culture.
- Improving literacy and English skills among older Muslims so they are better able to communicate outside their immediate community.
- Mentoring programmes at schools.
- More interaction between Islamic schools and other denominational schools through school events and projects to break down barriers and misunderstanding.
- Pre-marriage counselling with marital workshops and parenting seminars.

3. Belonging versus marginalisation

Solutions:

- Improve networking among Muslims.
- Improve Muslim representation in politics, public service and community service organizations.
- Funding for Islamic friendly youth services.
- Funding for youth camps.
- Increased training for service providers in cultural/religious sensitivity.
- Increase funding and training available for current youth workers – most of them are volunteers.
- Address bullying and discrimination against Muslims in public schools.
- Building relationships with local councils and Muslim youth centres.
- Fund further programmes to prevent or break the social isolation of Muslim youth.
- Promote the duty of community service/volunteerism among young Australian Muslims so that they can continue to engage in the wider community.
- Appeal to religious leaders and Islamic organisations to improve a sense of unity among the Australian umma.

4. Unemployment

Solutions:

- Gain Government commitment to implementing legislation on non-discrimination in the work place.
- Provide an information pamphlet to employers about what Muslims require in the work place and why.
- Increase funding support for apprenticeships for Muslims.
- Increase funding for TAFE training for Muslims.
- Introduce Muslim workers in employment services.
- Fund Muslim employment services in major cities.

5. Muslims and the media

Solutions:

- Increased training of Muslims who can work in the media (including scholarships).
- Funding for documentaries on Australian Muslims.
- Awards for constructive media representations of Islam.
- A monitoring body to prevent Islamophobia in the media.
- Using media campaigns to raise awareness of the impact of discrimination against Muslims and the illegality of religious discrimination in Australia.

6. Community building

Solutions:

- Opening community centres at mosques.
- Imams to encourage connections between different groups.
- More childcare for Muslim women.
- Children play groups for Muslim women to meet with other women from diverse backgrounds.
- Addressing drug use and its impact on the community and not hiding it.
- Addressing family violence and not hiding it.
- Funding for Muslim women's support centres and extended programmes for existing centres.
- The actual contents of the Anti Terrorist laws need to be more transparent and available for young people to read and understand in simple language.
- More recruitment of Muslim police in police jurisdictions.
- More positive interaction between police and young Australian Muslims through organised meetings, social, sporting or cultural events.

VICTORIAN MUSLIM YOUTH SUMMIT

- Utilising existing resources within the Muslim community and also in the wider community to increase awareness and promote the benefits of volunteering and mentoring. Including parents in this process was seen as critical.
- Educating employers and teachers to be culturally aware.
- Implementing projects and/or services to assist with mentoring, for example involving professional Muslims in youth organisations.
- Using education to foster a positive Muslim self concept.
- Developing skills so that Muslims are job ready for example job application and interview skills.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE MCRG AND ITS SUB-GROUPS

The members of the Muslim Community Reference Group are:

- Dr Ameer Ali, (Chair)
- Mrs Aziza Abdel-Halim AM
- Sheikh Taj Aldin Alhilali, represented by Mr Samier Dandan
- Dr Mohammed Taha Alsalami
- Sheikh Fehmi Najj El-Imam
- Ms Nadia Gani
- Dr Amin Hady
- Mr Harry Hage
- Ms Iktimal Hage-Ali
- Mr Kemal Ismen
- Mr Abdul Jalal
- Mr Mustapha Kara-Ali
- Mr Yasser Soliman
- Mr Malcolm Thomas

Members of the Sub-Groups supporting the MCRG are all MCRG members listed above and:

- Ms Salam El-Merebi
- Mr Umar Batchelor
- Ms Joumanah El-Matrah
- Mr Hajji Abdul Rahman Deen
- Dr Nazre Sobhan
- Ms Sherene Hassan
- Ms Senada Softic-Telalovic
- Ms Jamila Hussain
- Mr Ali Roude
- Mr Ahmad Mokachar
- Mr Mohamed Hassan
- Mr Ghulam Abbas
- Dr Ahmed Hammoud
- Ms Nancy Aisha Novakovich
- Dr Waqar Ahmad
- Sheikh Shafiq Rahman Abdullah Khan
- Mr Hassan Bazzi
- Ms Yasmin Khan
- Imam Sabri Samson
- Mr Kaled El-Hassan

THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY REFERENCE GROUP'S TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Muslim Community Reference Group will assist the Australian Government to move forward from the Prime Minister's Summit with Muslim community leaders of 23 August 2005, by:

- i) acting as an external advisory group in relation to issues outlined in the Statement of Principles issued at the Summit, in particular to take a lead working with Muslim communities and organisations to promote harmony, mutual understanding and Australian values and to challenge violence, ignorance and rigid thinking;
- ii) facilitating strategic working relationships and communication between government, the Muslim community, and the wider community;
- iii) providing advice on specific matters referred to it by the Minister; and
- iv) reporting to the Minister on its activities and achievements.

Suggested Operation of the Reference Group

In the terms of reference, 'Minister' means the Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs.

The Reference Group is not a funding body and will not be required to make budgetary decisions or to manage projects and programmes.

Sitting fees and travel costs will be paid (in accordance with the relevant determinations of the Remuneration Tribunal) for Members' attendance at formal Reference Group meetings. (Secretariat support for the Reference Group will be provided by the Multicultural Affairs Branch, Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs.)

The Reference Group will meet as required by the Minister and, outside these meetings, communicate primarily through teleconference and e-mails.

The Reference Group may divide into small Sub-Groups to focus on particular issues, in consultation with the broader Muslim communities.

The Minister will review the Reference Group's continuation after 12 month of operation.