



# **Australian National Imams Council (ANIC)**

**14th Annual General Meeting (AGM)**

**Uniting the Imams in Australia**

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**2020-2021**

**ANNUAL SUMMARY REPORT**

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# IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS ANIC HAD ACHIEVED NUMEROUS MILESTONES

## IN SUMMARY:

1. **Imams Network:** ANIC has constantly communicated with all Imams in Australia; to maintain the bond, brotherhood and provides regular ANIC's updates and progress. We worked tirelessly to ensure the Imams are always updated and included in major ANIC matters and kept an open forum for the Imams to communicate, give their feedback and suggestions.

2. **Local Community Engagements:** ANIC was constantly engaging with key stakeholders of the Muslim community, in particular, with Imams, Dua'at, Islamic organisations and centres. We exerted all efforts to include community leaders in discussions pertaining to the Muslim community and its future.

3. **Media and Public Statements:** ANIC issued over 40 public statements in 2020-2021 reflecting the views of ANIC, Imams and the Muslim community. The multiple statements issued varied through taking a strong stance on many religious, human rights and political issues concerning to the Muslim community. ANIC has also preserved the Islamic and Muslim integrity in Australia and globally, reinforcing their position at the forefront and its leadership of the Muslim community.

4. **Public and Media Spokesperson:** ANIC spokesperson, Br Bilal Rauf made numerous public and media statements on behalf of ANIC. Significantly, Br Bilal has situated ANIC in a strong position in the media sphere with a professional and eloquent approach and manner.



ANIC had made a positive shift in the media towards Islam and Muslims and has contributed towards the establishment of the MUSLIM MEDIA WATCH. In saying this, Br Bilal has consistently monitored the media on all relevant mentioning of topics on Islam and Muslims, including the engagement with media monitoring companies.

5. ANIC Halal Authority has been exerting all efforts in gaining credibility in the Halal Certification market, whether it be at a local or international level. ANIC has engaged with local and international authorities and has interacted with major groups in the industry.

6. Political Engagements: ANIC has and continues to meet and engage with Australian senior political leaders from all political parties, major government agencies, multifaith and religious organisations to advocate Muslim community issues. ANIC has established a solid and healthy relationship through their presence in all government and non-government forums in order to address the community's concerns.

7. Australian Religious Alliance (ARA): ANIC has significantly a leading role when participating in the Australian Religious Alliance in culmination with all major religious groups in Australia. We contributed positively to the Alliance in preserving faith and bridging the gap with other faith groups in Australia.

8. Policies and Procedures: ANIC Executive Committee has and continue to focus on developing many policies and procedures in various areas including but not limited to; complaint handling policies, grievance policies, chaplaincy services policies, executive committee members and meeting policies. The ANIC Executive Committee has ensured that this is an institution for all and for many generations to come.



9. Marriage Celebrants: Registered over 30 new Imams as marriage celebrants in the past year and empowering the Imams with this recognition from all state and territories, including updating the of the ANIC marriage celebrants policies and guidelines .

10. ANIC launched the first document and guidelines on the Islamic position on foster care, adoption, and guardianship. The document serves as a guide for the Muslim community in Australia.

11. ANIC has been approved as a scripture provider for Islamic Special Religious for Muslim students in public schools in NSW, under the Australian Islamic Education Services and planning to expand to different states.

12. Submissions: ANIC have made a diverse range of submissions to the Australian Federal and State Governments raising concerns on matters pertaining to the Muslim community.

#### Submissions were made:

- a) In relation to Anti-Discrimination Amendment Bill 2020 NSW.
- b) In appearance at the Joint Parliamentary Inquiry relating to the NSW Anti-Discrimination Amendment, represented by Bilal Rauf –ANIC Advisor and Barrister.
- c) For the Education Legislation Amendment (Parental Rights) Bill 2020 on behalf of the Australian Muslim Community.
- d) To Proscribe Right-Wing White Supremacy on The Terror List in Australia.
- e) For Religious marriage celebrants and their rights to conduct marriages in accordance with their faith.
- f) For Proposed Revisions to the National Curriculum to the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) and introducing religious studies with ANIC’s input on Islam.



13. ANIC partnered with Silah Institute to provide counselling and psychological therapy services at the ANIC office in Sydney.

14. ANIC held our first community Iftaar last Ramadan with Imams and Community leaders.

15. ANIC played a vital role in the formation and contribution to the Alliance of Australian Muslims (AAM), and uniting the Muslim community and organisations from all states and territories.

16. ANIC held numerous seminars and Community Awareness Campaigns to educate and empower the community.

#### These Seminars include:

a) Held an ISLAMIC & LEGAL WILLS SERVICE seminar at the ANIC office.

b) Partnered with EDUCAID AU and delivered a Mental Health First Aid Course to the NSW Imams and community leaders at the ANIC office in CHULLORA.

c) Numerous seminars with health experts on COVID restrictions, understanding the health orders and Covid vaccine.

d) Held a Basic Guide to Online Dawah Course, to upskill Imams, community leaders and organisations across the country to advance their skills and ability to continue their Dawah, great work and connect with their community online during lockdown.

e) COMMUNITY FORUM “THE POLICE, YOU & COVID”, policing issues in Southwest Sydney, presented by legal experts and advisors.



17. **Advocacy and Activism:** ANIC has been at the forefront in advocating and addressing the Muslim community's interests and concerns.

Some of these activities include:

- a) The danger of Islamophobia on many fronts and aiming to ban islamophobia in Australia.
- b) Supported the bush fire victims and assisted in collecting over \$500,000 through the Muslim organisations
- c) Supported and signed a joint statement with other faiths communities "It's Time for Real Action Against Racism".
- d) ANIC endorsed the "Uluru Statement: From the Heart", in support of the Indigenous community.
- e) ANIC advised the Australian Muslims to complete the 2021 Census and to showcase the contribution of Muslims to this country.
- f) Launched the ANIC POLICE INCIDENT REPORT, urging the community to lodge a report in relation to any incident of concern involving the Australian Police. This was established as a form of obtaining data and to address the genuine concerns with the Police.
- g) Conveyed a strong voice in support of our brothers and sisters abroad and foreign affairs, in particular, Palestine, East Turkistan, Sri-Lanka and others.
- h) Islamic position on the Hijab and preserving the mainstream traditional understanding of Hijab in Islam.
- i) ANIC and Muslim Women Australia (MWA) signed a joint statement to prevent domestic and family violence, foster respectful relationships and access support.
- j) Promoting the importance of Clean Up Australia Day and the Islamic position on purification.



18. ANIC National Khutbah (Sermon): ANIC has been encouraging Imams, Khateebis and Islamic organisations to address pressing issues on Friday Khutbah.

Topics that were addressed in the past year:

- a) Islam, Purification and Clean Up Australia Day
- b) Islamic position on the Hijab.
- c) In support of our beloved Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him)
- d) Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month.
- e) In support of Palestine
- f) Islam Denounces Violence against Women

19. ANIC contributed to the redrafting of the NSW Funerals and Cemeteries policies to meet religious standards by ANIC Advisor of Funerals and Cemeteries, Sr Mariam Ardati. ANIC held the first national summit for Muslim Funeral and Burial Services from all Australian states and territories, attended by over 30 Muslim Funeral services. The primary focus was to engage and discuss Muslim burials and set universal standards for Muslim funeral services and providers and the publication of the burial guidelines for COVID-19 patients.

20. ANIC held the first Christchurch Massacre Commemoration in Sydney in March 2021, In attendance were Imams, community leaders, political leaders and Government, and non-Government representatives. Remembering the victims and sharing the pain of the horrific terrorist attack that took the lives of 51 Muslim worshippers in New Zealand. This was also established to send a strong message that islamophobia is real and dangerous.



## 21. COVID19 AND THE PANDEMIC:

ANIC played a significant role during the pandemic throughout the lockdown and reopening phases. ANIC was acknowledged by countless bodies for playing a leading organisation in guiding, raising awareness and protecting the wellbeing, safety and interest of the community. Accordingly, the efforts of ANIC during this unprecedented time:

- a) Raised awareness on the danger of the virus and launched numerous campaigns on preserving the wellbeing and safety of the community, dealing with the lockdown, educating and complying with the health orders, and much more.
- b) Issued Fatwas by the Australian Fatwa Council on the pressing issues and spiritual needs of the community during the pandemic. In particular, during the month of Ramadan, Eid, and Friday Prayers.
- c) Produced and issued guidelines on the different phases of the reopening of the mosques.
- d) Offered countless support to the frontline health workers during the pandemic and showcased the community's gratitude and appreciation in different ways.
- e) ANIC held numerous Muslim community national meetings and forums with community leaders, to address and deal with the pandemic as one united community.
- f) Worked closely with the Muslim Health Professionals Australia and held community leaders' seminars and forums to seek their experts advice on the health measures, the virus itself, the health orders, the vaccine etc.





g) ANIC played a vital role in consulting with the health department and raising the community's interests and concerns. This was constructed on the precautionary steps and measures in the reopening of public places of worship in all phases. Primarily including the recent 'Freedom Plan' in NSW and achieving to accommodate to all attendees on the 18th of October without any discrimination.

h) ANIC had a strong presence amongst faith groups meetings and forums representing the interest of the Muslim community.

i) ANIC and Council of Imams NSW engaged with the NSW Government and police and addressed the recent approach of the NSW Government and enforcement agencies relating to the restricted Local Government Areas (LGA), and the heavy policing presence and approach on the community. This included several meetings with the NSW Police Minister David Elliott, NSW Police Deputy Commissioner, and senior police officers, to address the concerns of the community and demand openly and directly for a change.

A special thanks to Dr Ijaz Rao - ANIC Senior Advisor on Medicine and Health - for his tireless efforts during this challenging time.

A special thanks to the entire ANIC Executive Committee Members, Advisory Committee and all ANIC members for the commitment and dedication in serving the Muslim community.

A special thanks to everyone who supported ANIC and its members during all times.



**The Australian National Imams Council (ANIC)  
will continue to tirelessly strive towards  
preserving the Islamic identity and the interest  
of the Australian Muslim community.**

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