



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

ANIC President's Report 2022-2023:

Imam Shadi Alsuleiman

All praise is due to Allah and peace be upon the Messenger of Allah.

Assalamu Alaikom Wa Rahmatu Allahe Barakatuh,,

In 2022-2023, I was blessed by Allah SWT to serve Islam, the Muslim community, the Imams and the Australian National Imams Council (ANIC) in many ways and platforms.

I recognise that my position as the President of the Australian National Imams Council (ANIC) is both a responsibility and an honour to serve my fellow Imams and community. I also complement the ANIC Executive Committee members for their confidence, trust, effort and cooperation in their support and achievements of ANIC.

On behalf of the ANIC Executive Committee, I deliver this annual report.

Areas of Focus and Achievements in 2022-2023:

- **Imams Network:** ANIC has constantly communicated with all Imams in Australia; to maintain the bond and brotherhood and provide ANIC's updates and progress with the Imams. We worked tirelessly to ensure the Imams were constantly updated and included in all significant matters and concerns of ANIC and the Muslim community and kept an open forum for the Imams to communicate, and give their feedback and suggestions freely and openly.
- **Local Community Engagements:** ANIC has constantly engaged with key stakeholders from the Muslim community, in particular, the Imams, Dua'at, leaders, Islamic organisations and centres. We exerted all efforts to include community leaders in discussions and consultations on the affairs of the Muslim community and its future.
- **Media and Public Statements:** ANIC issued over 30 public statements in 2022-2023, reflecting the views of ANIC, Imams and the Muslim community. The statements issued varied in taking a strong stance on many religious, human rights and political issues on the Muslim community, preserving the Islamic and Muslim integrity in Australia and globally, and reinforcing ANIC's position at the forefront and its leadership of the Muslim community.



ANIC had made a positive shift in the media towards Islam and Muslims; with more to be done, ANIC will continue striving towards a more dignified, positive and respectful approach by the media towards Islam and Muslims.

- **Social Media:** Advancing ANIC's presence on social media and other platforms, in particular on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn, and ultimately, resulting in a robust online presence. ANIC's social media presence on different platforms has reached over 60,000 followers and is still growing. As a result, we focused on ensuring that ANIC maintains and is up to date with any form of contemporary exposure and communication. We have also engaged with a social media company to assist with ANIC's ongoing growth and exposure.
- **Public and Media Spokesperson:** ANIC spokesperson, Br Bilal Rauf made numerous public and media statements on behalf of ANIC. Through these platforms, he succeeded in elevating ANIC to a strong position in the media space with a professional and eloquent fashion and manner. As a result, ANIC has made a positive shift in the media approach towards Islam and Muslims.
ANIC continues to engage with the media agencies, peak bodies and departments, particularly the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) and the Australia Press Council.
- **Political Engagements:** ANIC has and continues to meet and engage with senior political leaders from all political parties in Australia, major Government agencies, and religious organisations and advocate Muslim community issues and concerns. Ensuring ANIC's presence in all Government and non-government forums to address the community's concerns. ANIC has established a solid and healthy relationship through their presence in major Government and Non-Government forums in order to raise and address the community's concerns and interests.
ANIC engaged with both political parties leading to the NSW state election in March this year, and invited both parties to meet with the Muslim Community leaders and raise concerns to the Muslim community. This includes town hall meetings with both Parties, the Government and opposition, the Premier and Opposition leader, in collaboration with other faith communities.
- **Australian Religious and Faith Communities Network:** ANIC participated significantly in the Religious and Faith Communities Network of all the major religious and faith groups in Australia. We contributed positively to the Network in preserving faith and bridging the gap with other faith groups in Australia. ANIC fostered a strong relationship with like-minded religious organisations and see the common interest and mutual benefit in this relationship. This includes ANIC's contribution towards the first of its kind, the Australian Faith Council, which will advocate matters of faith to the decision-makers.
- **ANIC Halal Authority:** Exerting all efforts in gaining credibility in the Halal Certification market and getting ANIC's name out there on local and international markets. We continue to engage with local and international authorities and major players in the industry. We aspire to regulate the Halal certification market and work on standardising the local Halal certification industry.
ANIC issued a report of the poultry and CAS stunning, by engaging with the experts in this field and working towards identifying solutions for the Muslim community.



- **Amendment of the ANIC Constitution, Policies and Procedures:** The ANIC Executive Committee focused on developing many policies and procedures in various areas, ensuring that ANIC is an institution for all and for many generations to come and has strong governance and policies in place. This includes the recent amendments to the ANIC constitution and ensuring that ANIC will accommodate the needs of its members and the community, particularly female members and increasing the number of Shaykhat (*ANIC Female members*).
- **Submissions:** ANIC has made a diverse range of submissions to the Australian Federal and State Governments, raising concerns on matters pertaining to the Muslim community, primarily focused on Anti-Discrimination Bills; Religious Freedom, vilification laws, the proscription of Right-Wing White Supremacy on The Terror List in Australia, and the recognition of Palestine.

These submissions include:

- 1- Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security - Prohibited Hate Symbols and Other Measures.
 - 2- NSW Conversion Practices Consultation Paper - Faith Leaders Submission.
 - 3- Australian Universities Accord Review Panel in response to the Interim Report.
 - 4- Consultation Paper on Religious Educational Institutions and Anti-Discrimination Laws to Australian Law Reform Commission.
 - 5- Islamic finance and its implementation in Australia to accommodate the needs of Australian Muslims.
- **Marriage Celebrants:** Registered over 35 new Imams as marriage celebrants in the past year and empowered the Imams with this recognition from all states and territories.
 - **Advocacy and Activism:** ANIC has been a leading organisation 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 and Anti-Muslim sentiment in Australia.
 - b) ANIC launched the Islamophobia and Anti-Muslim register to encourage the Muslim community to report any incident, where these reports will be assessed, followed up and then take the necessary action. (<https://reportislamophobia.com.au/>)
 - c) Raising awareness on the Christchurch Massacre and the danger of Islamophobia. Including holding an online forum commemorating the Christchurch Massacre with over 10,000 views and engagements online.
 - d) ANIC has been a strong supporter and advocate for the Voice to Parliament and the recognition of the First Nations people. ANIC has held numerous workshops and meetings on the VOICE, including the attendance of the Prime Minister, MPs and other dignitaries.
 - e) Actively lobbied and engaged with the Government and the Labor party to recognise the State of Palestine.
 - f) Conveyed a strong voice in support of our brothers and sisters abroad and foreign affairs, particularly Palestine, East Turkistan, India and others.
 - g) Promoting the importance of Clean Up Australia Day and the Islamic position on purification.
 - h) ANIC continues to work closely with faith leaders and all parties to address climate change and its impact on the environment and future generations.



i) ANIC played a significant role in passing a historic legislation in the NSW Parliament yesterday to prohibit religious vilification and send a clear message that religious vilification is unacceptable. The new provision makes it unlawful to “by a public act, incite hatred towards, serious contempt for, or severe ridicule of, a person or group of persons, because of their religious belief, affiliation or activity”. It is the first time in NSW that protection has been provided against vilification on the grounds of a person’s religious belief, affiliation or activity.

- **Reflecting on Christchurch - 4 Years Later.**

ANIC held a 4th anniversary of the Christchurch mosque massacre online to solemnly reflect on the tragic events and the innocent lives lost.

The 15th of March 2019, is a date which is etched into the collective mind of Muslims around the world. It is a date on which 51 men, women and children were murdered and many more injured at two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand. It was a massacre against a people simply because of their religious beliefs and activity. The men, women and children were praying at the time in the mosques.

- **ANIC launched the first Revert Burial Rights Document.** To Safeguard that new Muslims will have a legal document to ensure an Islamic burial.

- **ANIC ISLAMIC FINANCE AUTHORITY (AIFA):** ANIC established AIFA to support Islamic financial services industry in Australia. It offers services on Shariah compliance certificate, accreditation, industry standardisation and advice. It also provides advocacy and research to promote Islamic finance for fulfilling the financial and banking needs of Australian Muslims.

AIFA is informed and guided by the Shariah principles, the Australian Fatwa Council and global industry standards. A group of subject matter experts from finance, law and accounting professions will assist the Shariah scholars in their certification and accreditation activities. This will ensure the delivery of contemporary advice, the highest standards of service, ethics, transparency and professionalism to consumers.

AIFA will certify financial products issued by entities duly licensed by the relevant Australian regulatory authorities for the products offered or duly delegated by a licensed operator.

AIFA has engaged with Islamic finance providers in the market to collaborate and empower those services in the Muslim community, including meeting the Federal finance minister and advocating the needs of the Australian Muslim community in this area, in which a report was submitted to the Minister's office to address and explore options on Islamic finance.

AIFA aims to launch to the public in early 2024.

- **ANIC is an approved scripture provider for Islamic Special Religious for Muslim students in public schools in NSW, under the Australian Islamic Education Services and has expanded in different states, starting with ACT and QLD.** AIES has held a number of workshops for its volunteers and has increased its teacher's volunteer base. AIES intends to reach out to all public schools with Muslim students and provide Islamic education. This includes initiating the Friday Juma'a prayers at different schools.



- **ANIC held the first ANIC and State Councils of Imams Executive committees to collaborate and coordinate the efforts amongst the states in addressing the current challenges facing ANIC and the Muslim community and ways to resolve them and foster a strong connection among the state Imams Councils.**
- **ANIC Women's Advisory Council (AWAC)**, with now 20 prominent Muslim women from different states and territories. The Council strives to maintain a stronger connection with the Australian Muslim Women leaders and prominent community members. The objective of this advisory Council is to proactively hear the concerns, feedback, and suggestions from the council members for what is in the best interest of the wider Muslim community. This included (but is not limited to), surrounding issues and affairs that concern Muslim women in our Australian community. The Council is working on developing a document on the ideal Australian Muslims Family that will address the Islamic values and principles in establishing a family and living an Islamic way of life in Australia.
- **ANIC had partnered with the National Zakat Foundation (NZF) as a Zakat collector partner to facilitate Australian Muslims in fulfilling the obligation of Zakat.**
- **ANIC organised the second and the largest National Muslim community Iftaar last Ramadan with Imams, Community leaders, political leaders, Government officials and other guests with a turnout of over 600 guests**, including the Prime Minister of Australia the Honourable Anthony Albanese, the NSW Premier the Hon Chirs Minns, Her Excellency the NSW Governor, the Honourable, Margaret Beazley, The Leader of the House – The Hon. Tony Burke, The Hon. Jason Clare, Minister for Education, The Hon Ed Husic, Minister for Industry and Science, The Hon. Dr. Anne Aly, Minister for Early Childhood Education, Minister for Youth, and the first Muslim NSW MP, The Hon Jihad Dib. NSW Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, Minister for Youth Justice and many other federal and state ministers and MPs, and guests.
The National Muslim Community Iftar is the largest National iftar hosted by the Muslim community to celebrate the holy month of Ramadan, the unity and collective work of the Muslim community and celebrate the rich diversity of Australia.
Key agenda items were raised on the night, including the need for federal religious vilification laws and a commitment by the Minns Labor Government to implement a NSW Religious Vilification law within 100 days of their election. The Muslim community and other faith communities welcome this commitment as a means of combating Islamophobia and religious vilification.
- **ANIC called for an ANIC National Special General Meeting on Sunday, 7th of May 2023, via ZOOM.** The meeting was resolved by the ANIC executive committee for the purpose of: To come together with the ANIC general members and reinforce ANIC member's unity. Reiterate the ANIC Code of Conduct, the working relationship of the Imams, and the importance of their unity and respectful dialogue amongst the Imams on contentious issues.
 - To engage and receive feedback and comments from the ANIC general members.
 - Launch an ANIC National Forum to discuss and debate the criteria for the beginning of the month of Ramadan and the two EIDs, Eid Al-Fitr and Eid Al-Adha, and conclude with principles and guidelines on issuing announcements.



○ To convey a positive message to the Muslim community that the Imams are and will always be united, and address issues of concern to the community by working towards an outcome that will maintain the best interest and the unity of the Imams and the Muslim community, even during times of difficulties and differences of opinions. Over 80 members of Imams and Shaykhahs from around Australia attended the meeting.

- **ANIC continues to play a significant role in the Alliance of Australian Muslims (AAM), uniting the Muslim community and organisations from all states and territories and bringing together the Muslim community on the common denominators and interests that all Muslims agree to and aspire to achieve.** ANIC aims to support the AAM to be the face of the political face and advocacy of the Muslim community.
- **Global Imams and Scholars Council (GISC):** ANIC is a co-founder and contributed to the establishment of The Global Imams and Scholars Council (GISC). Six of the world's leading scholars and Imams Councils in Western and English-speaking countries have formed the Council to preserve the Islamic and Muslim identity in the West and collaborate on the greater good of the Muslim world and Ummah.

Our objective & Vision in Moving Forward:

**To Place ANIC in the Position of Religious and Islamic Authority in Australia,
To strive to preserve the mainstream Islamic identity, the Muslim's integrity and
To represent the interests of the Muslim community in all ways and forms.**

A special thanks to the ANIC Executive Committee members for their cooperation, leadership, confidence, and ongoing support.

I also acknowledge and thank the great work and efforts of the wonderful ANIC Advisory Committee, who work tirelessly and volunteer their time in serving the Muslim community.

Thank you and we Ask Allah to continue using us in serving His religion and servants.

Regards,

Shadi Alsuleiman

President

Australian National Imams Council

Date: 8 October 2023