



Australian Muslim Women's
Centre for Human Rights
Equality without Exception

ANNUAL REPORT

2019
2020





**Australian Muslim Women's
Centre for Human Rights**
Equality without Exception

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This report recognises that gender, race and religion intersect to create multiple forms of discrimination and violence against Muslim women. It also recognises that preventing prejudice in all forms is bound to the struggles of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and before we can successfully tackle issues within our communities, we must address the ongoing impacts of colonisation, racism, and discrimination in this country.

The Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights (**AMWCHR**) acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of this nation. We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands on which our centre is located and where we conduct our work, and that sovereignty has never been ceded. We pay our respects to ancestors and Elders, past and present. AMWCHR is committed to honouring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' unique cultural and spiritual relationships to the land, waters and seas and their rich contribution to society.

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Front cover art: Amani Haydar, "Solidarity",

The solidarity series is inspired by the coming together of women across the world to share their experiences and stories through the #metoo movement and women's marches. As the title suggests, it is an exploration of the power and resilience that comes when women work together to push for change and generate healing. It can also be interpreted as a representation of the many moods, emotions and experiences we each accumulate during our lives.

Back page art: Amani Haydar, "Solitude in the Cafe".

This scene is inspired by a local cafe. When I sit in the cafe I observe women enjoying the company of their friends or even a quiet moment of peace against a backdrop of greenery and mosaic. In this work, the scene is fictionalized with an exaggerated sense of pattern and activity surrounding the figure who is immersed in her own thoughts. This artwork was painted during my Incubate Residency in early 2019. It was part of my exhibition, Malika/Queen of the Home at Bankstown Arts Centre and at 'Herland, in Search of a Female Utopia' at The Women's Library in Newtown (2019, curated by Freya Black).





BOARD OF MANAGEMENT



CHAIR

Yasmin Karaata (Appointed December 2019)
Tasneem Chopra (Resigned December 2019)

DEPUTY CHAIR

Inaz Janif (resigned April 2020)

TREASURER

Rasheeda Cooper

SECRETARY

Anisa Buckley

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Marwa Khalaf (resigned March 2020)
Faiza Yunus (resigned January 2020)
Hena Kalam (resigned August 2019)
Amani Haydar (appointed March 2020)



ABOUT US

HOW DO WE SEE THE WORLD?

For the most part, Muslim women who migrated to Australia did so as descendants of diverse pluralistic traditions, but also as bearers of significant disadvantage, discrimination and, at times, violence. In the context of our history, Islam has been both a liberating and oppressive force in the lives of women, influenced by the vision and limitations of patriarchal society. Historically, how Islam was understood impacted the status of women and is a testament to the diversity and plurality of tradition and practice: there has not been one Islam in which all Muslims have participated, but a multiplicity of Islamic interpretations in which many people have lived.

The pursuit of justice and equality for Muslim women has been present to varying degrees in all historical periods and across all cultures and societies. While this pursuit has not always resulted in structural and institutional change, it has nonetheless featured as a seminal part of Muslim women's history.

Today, all over the world, Muslim women are working as agents of resistance who are often seen leading movements demanding change. This global movement for equality resonates with Australian Muslim women, whether immigrants or daughters of immigrants, as they face similar challenges closer to home. In an Australian context our demands exist both within and external to our communities in our pursuit of equality, not only with Muslim men, but with the greater Australian society.

HOW DOES OUR WORLDVIEW INFLUENCE OUR WORK?

We take a non-religious, non-sectarian approach to our work. We resist versions of Islam used to justify any violations against women and use a social justice lens to push back against harmful narratives. We embrace the diversity of Muslims in Australia as a strength, ensuring our work is accessible and relevant to all kinds of Muslim women. This allows us to work with the diverse spectrum of Muslim women.

We use a human rights approach in all our work, supporting the rights of those marginalised within Muslim communities as well as highlighting systemic issues that exclude and marginalise Muslims in broader social contexts.

Our work, whether one to one, in group educational settings or in our research and advocacy, strives to create spaces to elevate and amplify Muslim women's voices, learnings and supporting their rights to determine the direction of their own lives.

We prioritise a client-centred and strengths-based approach to all our services and programs, working with a focus on the benefits of supporting women to create practical changes to their lives. We advocate for access and fair treatment.

OUR STRATEGIC INTENT

We work to achieve ***Equality without Exception.***

We contribute to public discourse on Muslim women's issues, advocating for the rights of Muslim women through our programs, casework, research, publications and consultancy work.

WHAT ARE THE CORE AREAS OF WORK WE UNDERTAKE?

We work with individuals, groups and service providers in the following areas:

- casework, referrals, and outreach
- advocacy
- community-based programs
- capacity building
- leadership development
- policy development
- partnership projects.

We use a human rights framework to amplify the voices of Muslim women. We acknowledge the inherent agency that Muslim women have, and our research, programs and services are designed to build capacity and raise awareness breaking down structural barriers that exist for Muslim women both within Muslim community and in broader social and political contexts.

Our consulting and training services are provided to build the capacity of sector, organisations and partners to adequately respond to Muslim communities through culturally safe awareness raising training. This work draws on our expertise formed through working with Muslim women and young Muslims over the last 30 years.





MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

The past 12 months have been marked by an enormous amount of change and transition at the Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights. The entire community sector has experienced disruption in service provision, program delivery and crisis response with the onset of the COVID-19 global pandemic since March 2020. As our Centre is primarily based in Melbourne the uncertainty of the lockdown period created a major rethink of how we continue our work, but it also posed an opportunity for us to recreate, reimagine and innovate how we support our communities. This time of immense change was managed remarkably by the entire management team and staff which is commendable, particularly given the increased demands on community sector organisations during this time.

As the new incoming Chairperson, I was appointed to the role in December 2019, and it is an honour to lead the Centre towards a more certain and sustainable future. I would like to pay a special tribute and recognise the extensive contribution of my predecessor, Tasneem Chopra OAM. Tasneem's dedication and commitment to the organisation -- where she served as Chairperson for over 18 years while being involved with the organisation for over 25 years -- has helped shape it into what it is today. Her legacy and tenacity in bringing about change to the lives of Muslim women from all backgrounds will continue to live on. On behalf of everyone who has worked at the Centre and the Board I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to Tasneem for her many years of service.

In October 2019, the Board also appointed Diana Sayed as our new CEO to lead the organisation and build upon our extensive work in the community sector. Diana took on the role with gusto and brought a unique perspective to the Centre with a deep understanding of the systemic changes required to build and sustain a specialist, trauma-informed family violence response and how capacity building programs create space for Muslim women to obtain self-determination in their own lives.

This included helping to create the Women's Support Line to meet the growing demands and needs of Muslim women navigating access to essential supports during the pandemic. The ongoing practice development, policy reform initiatives as well as the critical work of growing the Centre's capability and capacity in both response and primary prevention of violence against women, leadership, and parenting programs is commendable.



YASMIN KARAATA

Beginning a new role in a year filled with so much uncertainty has posed its own challenges – nonetheless, Diana has continued to approach all the work at the Centre with resilience and determination to bring about impact and meaningful change for all Muslim women.

The Board thanks all staff for the quality of their work across so many complex policy, program, and practice areas, notwithstanding the challenges and uncertainty they have faced during the pandemic and working from home balancing competing family demands. The accomplishments of the Centre have occurred on account of the remarkable team of staff. All the staff must be applauded for their outstanding contribution to their individual areas of practice. The result has been a high-quality service that is bringing about meaningful outcomes for our clients. The ensuing detail in this Annual Report is testimony to exactly that.

Our influence and impact continue to be amplified through partnerships alongside other peak organisations, culturally and ethno-specific service providers, philanthropic donors, and our government relationships. We thank them for their continued collaboration, commitment, and shared purpose.

Our Centre will be focusing on recovery and the rebuilding of women's engagement in our many programs in a post COVID-19 world with a focus on programs which will enhance and improve Muslim women's wellbeing and lives both socially and economically. We will continue to promote social inclusion and culturally safe practices to reduce the impacts of disadvantage and promote equity and access. We are committed to leading change to remove systemic barriers for Muslim women and their families. With each passing year the quality of our service delivery keeps improving and we aim to continue building on our achievements to date. I would like to pay my respects and personal gratitude to our Board of Directors for their oversight, experience, and tireless work throughout this past year. As we have welcomed new members this financial year and farewelled others, each and every board member has contributed to the very success, the vision, the strategic direction, and the continuous improvement of our Centre.

To our friends, partners, and communities, thank you for your continued support and the opportunity to work with us in a complex and challenging environment. While we have pivoted our work to align with the immediate and essential needs of our community during these uncertain times, it is heartening to hear that amidst the sustained and unrelenting passion and pace of our practice, we have made life better for Muslim women and their communities -- and that is the biggest reward.

On behalf of the Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights, I have the pleasure in presenting the highlights of our achievements for 2019-20 and I look forward to the next steps in progressing our vision for equality without exception for all Muslim women in Australia.



MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

DIANA SAYED



I feel incredibly honoured and humbled to have stepped into the role of Chief Executive Officer (**CEO**) at the Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights. This organisation has an outstanding reputation in the community sector which has been built by sheer tenacity and determination of incredible Muslim women over the last 30 years.

Since I took over the role, I have been conscious of protecting the legacy of the Centre and pay homage to all the women who have come before me in building a specialist organisation that centres the needs of Muslim women – using a trauma informed, client focused and intersectional feminist approach to all our capacity building work in community.

The global COVID-19 pandemic was not how I envisaged spending my first year in the role, but it most certainly changed the way the world works in 2020, the welfare sector and in turn our organisation has certainly been no exception.

Our team quickly transitioned to a working from home environment, with online delivery of all our services and programs. As we continue to reconsider our flexible working arrangements for 2021 and beyond, our staff and their resilience and adaptability must be acknowledged. The sheer commitment to ensuring our clients and all the women we work alongside in the community were always prioritised was commendable.

As the wellbeing of our staff remains paramount, we took measures to protect them during this time offering additional COVID-19 leave days, more flexible working arrangements to balance home schooling and family commitments and regular de-briefing sessions. We had serious concerns about burnout given that few of our staff members were scheduling in leave.

Due to the online delivery of all our services and programs from March onwards we noticed an

increase in engagement from our clients as accessibility and other structural barriers were removed which allowed for greater participation. Digital literacy issues were overcome in the initial rollout phase as our staff members took extra time and care to build capacity and knowledge. We do, however, very much look forward to being able to engage with our valued community in person again soon.

COVID-19 also presented many serious challenges in responding to family violence. We were conscious of the different waves of uncertainty that predicated the spikes over the lockdown period and for our clients who came from conflict and crisis countries with the heightened anxiety around service continuity, closures and scaling back of essential services and how immeasurably tough it was. We focused on ensuring we did not lose sight of the impact this pandemic had on victim-survivors and we know that the lasting trauma of family violence will continue to be felt, with a whole of system approach needed to address the shadow pandemic that is gender inequality and violence against women.

More pertinent however, was that this pandemic only magnified the structural and systemic issues faced by Muslim women and in turn specialist family violence and community services including workforce capacity, short-term funding, and the lack of organisational infrastructure to respond to crises. Addressing these issues over the medium to long-term is critical for the sustainability of our organisation and we are committed to doing that.

Our Centre made submissions to a few significant government inquiries over the past year – these included family law, modern slavery and human trafficking and the Victorian anti-vilification laws.

In addition to creating the Women's Support Line offering emotional, financial, and cultural support to Muslim women, we also launched our first ever public fundraising campaign during Ramadan and share promotional materials through our community networks.

We were fortunate enough to have successfully hired new staff members with additional funding to address the increase in need from our community. This enabled our outreach and service delivery to the most marginalised to continue uninterrupted during the height of the pandemic during lockdown.

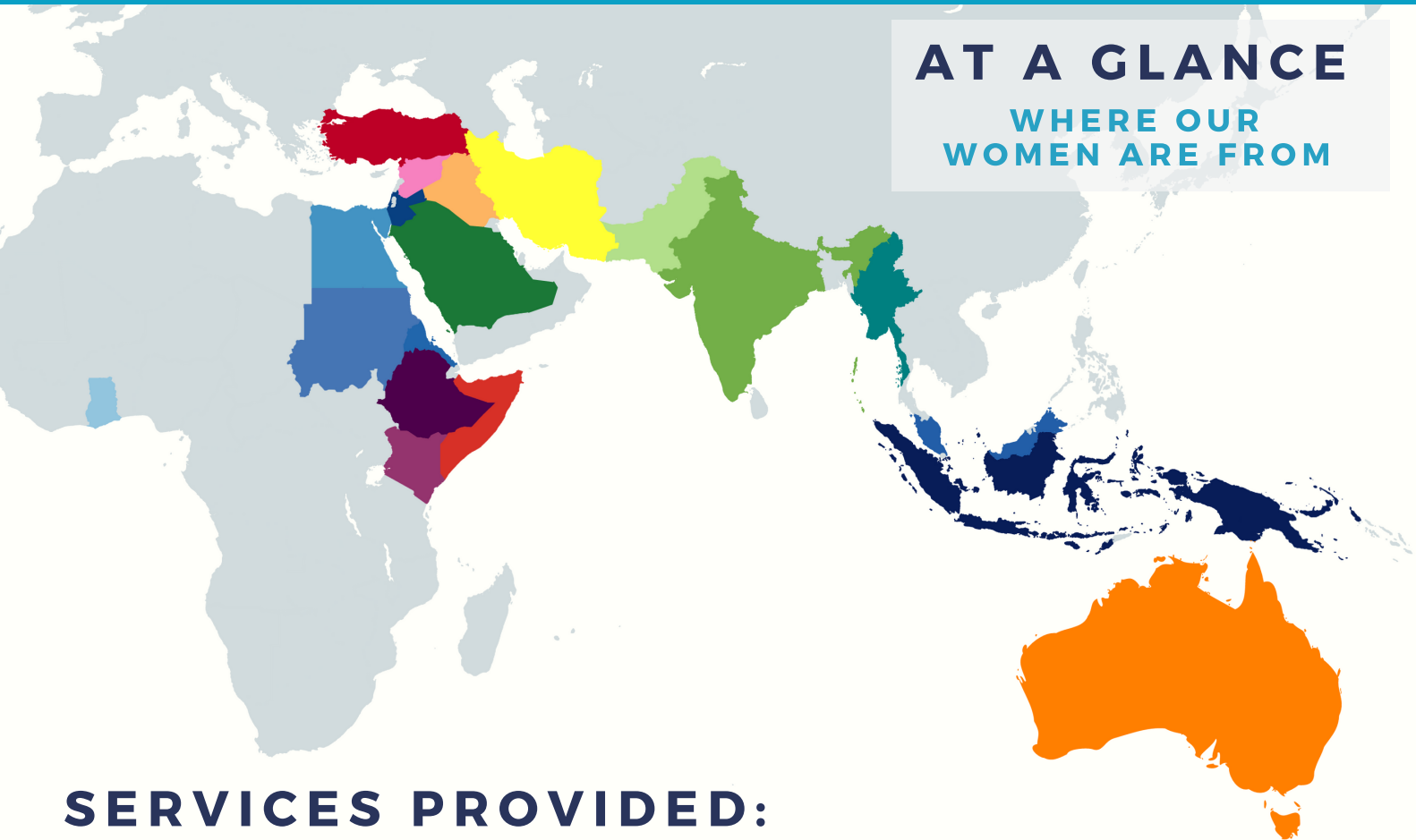
I would like to thank the management team and staff of the Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights for their tireless dedication, unwavering commitment to the women we work alongside and resilience over this past year. They welcomed a new CEO during a period filled with so much uncertainty and I am eternally grateful to them for it. Our staff have incredible expertise and dedication to improving outcomes for all Muslim women – which is truly an inspiration. I am deeply honoured to lead such an esteemed group of leaders in our community.

I would also like to recognise the Board for its continued stewardship of and support to the organisation.



OUR IMPACT

AT A GLANCE
WHERE OUR
WOMEN ARE FROM



SERVICES PROVIDED:



316

Women recieved
Casework Support



1378

Women participating
in group programs



145

Sector training and
education sessions



396

Young Muslims
participating in
group programs



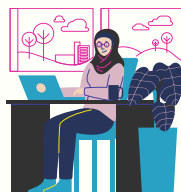
22

Community
Consultations



329

Groupwork Sessions



145

Community leaders,
school personnel
trained



15

Media, Publications &
Radio



OUR PROGRAMS

COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS

The Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights (AMWCHR) adopts a community-led model consulting closely with communities to tailor our programs and services in response to the unique needs of Muslim women and young Muslims in Australia. Through consultation with diverse communities, the AMWCHR is able to gain insight and perspectives into the issues relevant to differing communities to inform the design of programs, initiatives and services to respond to these challenges.

This year, we held **22** community consultations with Muslim women and young Muslims across Melbourne.

Common concerns and challenges presented included;

- Challenges in accessing employment and education opportunities
- Developing improved English language skills
- Combating racism and discrimination
- Safety and Muslim identity
- Understanding Australian laws systems and processes
- Access to housing
- Awareness and access to resources including social and legal services
- Building confidence and self-esteem
- Navigating personal, family and intergenerational relationships
- Mental health and wellbeing
- Disconnection and isolation
- Women's health

FOR WOMEN SUPPORTING SETTLEMENT

Our work with newly arrived women over many years continues to provide information and capacity building programs to migrant women, taking into consideration cultural and religious contexts to support settlement in Australia. We continue to deliver these services to respond to the needs identified by communities, including advocating for and supporting women to overcome barriers and challenges to engaging with Australian society and mainstream services.

Women engaging in our settlement services are often unable to access other available services, facing barriers and limitations to access including discrimination, Islamophobia, limited literacy, lack of mobility, isolation and availability of culturally sensitive services. Through this program, women develop increased understandings of the systems, processes, services and structures operating in Australia and form connections with other women from similar communities, building networks and community connections.

This year our program has tackled topics including;

- Pathways to employment
- Resume writing
- Racism and Islamophobia
- Women's preventative health
- Understanding and accessing the NDIS
- Public housing and housing support
- Visa, Migration and Citizenship
- Child and Maternal Health Services
- Home schooling and e-learning
- Stress Management
- COVID and restrictions
- Mental health and wellbeing.

These sessions contribute to women's personal capacity to manage the challenges of settlement and grow their independence, while increasing ability to navigate services and contribute to building links between local service providers and newly arrived Muslim women.

SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Through our Integrated Communities Program, supported by the Department of Home Affairs, a series of workshops were delivered to support migrant and refugee Muslim women to build confidence to realise individual goals and build connections within their communities. This program supported Muslim women to build their own capacity as well as guide their children and other Muslim women towards civic, cultural, social and economic engagement in Australia. Women who participated in the program reported an increased awareness of barriers impeding their personal development, improved confidence and sense of connection to the community as well as strengthened resolve to become agents of change in how their children are raised and supported to explore their potential.

FEEDBACK

"I trust myself and my abilities now especially from the things I've learnt from the program".

"I feel more confident now"

"I have gained confidence and now feel more in control of my choices in life"

"We have learnt to be more empathetic to others in the community"

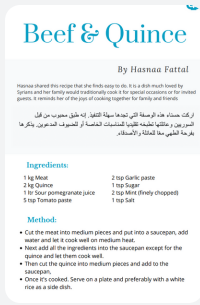
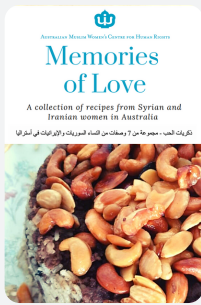
RESILIENCE AND LEADERSHIP

The leadership development group programs are designed to build the capacity of Muslim women, to support them to recognise and reach their potential through awareness raising and skill development so that they can better support themselves, their families and the broader community.

Our Women's Leadership Program, supported by the Darebin City Council, was developed to respond to specific communities of Muslim women in the Darebin area. Through this program women are supported to develop and strengthen their own leadership skills to more effectively support and advocate for other women in their communities. Our model supports women to identify their own strengths and capabilities and builds on this to support women to develop confidence and skills to become leaders within their communities and their own lives.

Our Supporting Resilient Communities program, supported by the Department of Social Services, works to build women's self-awareness and leadership skills to strengthen capacity to support themselves, as well as others within their own communities and families. Through a series of facilitated participatory workshops the program explores self-esteem and confidence and encourages women to recognise their own strengths and potential. This leadership program then explores topics including conflict resolution, effective communication, and unpacks complexities relating to power, identity and gender to support women to build improved leadership skills.

Through this program women were encouraged to explore opportunities to showcase their skills and strengths. One group of women presented their work and spoke of their Settlement experience at a local Harmony Day event. Another group developed a remarkable collaboration of personal recipes to develop a community cookbook showcasing cultural foods and stories of group members.

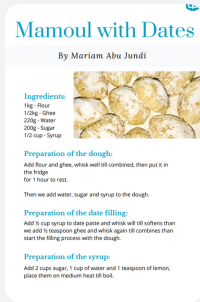
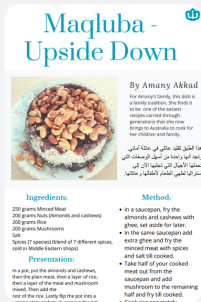


HIGHLIGHT: MEMORIES OF LOVE

In 2019, the Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights worked with a group of Syrian migrants in developing their capacities as women leaders for their family and community.

These women carry with them not only the memories of trauma and tragedy from their experiences of the war in Syria, but also a message of hope, love and aspiration for their future ahead.

This collection of recipes represents their poignant memories through a selection of food from their country and culture.



COMMUNITY EVENTS

In late 2019 the AMWCHR brought together women who participated in our various settlement programs including parenting and leadership in an event called Our Journey through Settlement. This event was held to celebrate the successes and completion of the various programs, as well as the relationships and friendships developed by women who participated. The event hosted a panel with program participants, presentations by community leaders and Q&A, concluding with traditional food, dancing and music.

The AMWCHR partnered with the Afghan Women's Organisation to host an Eid Festival and Community Services Awareness Carnival in August 2019. The event brought together women from community to celebrate Eid and join in music and festivities as well as exhibitions and information booths on health, mental health and community services.



FOR MOTHERS

PARENTING THROUGH SETTLEMENT

One of the most common concerns of newly arrived Muslim women is parenting and supporting their children's settlement in their new country. With limited awareness of support services, lack of familiarity with the English language and education and health systems, along with uncertainty in how to manage and discipline their children in ways that are different from how they had traditionally and culturally been raised, many of the women feel helpless and at a loss as to how best to parent their child in ways that are relevant to the Australian context.

This year, mothers faced the added burden of navigating parenting, settlement and isolation in the context of the COVID-19 global pandemic, including understanding and adapting to restrictions and remote learning. While many struggled to understand and adapt to the changing settings, in particular regarding children and schooling, newly arrived women faced unique challenges which required a culturally sensitive and supportive approach to navigating language barriers, digital literacy levels and access to technology in order to support their children.

Our Parenting Program for newly arrived Muslim women, funded by the Department of Home Affairs, supported women to navigate these issues by exploring a variety of parenting concerns and providing women with tools and skills to support effective parenting. In addition to supporting mothers navigate the complexities presented through the pandemic, the program equipped women with skills to better understand their children's behaviour, enhance communication, and use practical tools to manage behaviour. The program continues to encourage women to explore their cultural, traditional and intergenerational styles of parenting and its place within the Australian context, along with fostering connections with other Muslim women to develop a network of mutual support.

PARENTING SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

AMWCHR has been delivering parenting programs for Muslim women over a number of years through the Children and Parenting Support Program supported by the Department of Social Services. In recent years, there has been increasing need from communities to develop enhanced parenting skills to respond to the changing environment.

The parenting skills program focuses on supporting mothers to develop their parenting knowledge and skills covering topics in response to the needs identified by each individual community group, including;

- healthy discipline techniques
- understanding difficult behaviour in children
- understanding the school system in Australia
- understanding what constitutes child abuse and how the child protection system works
- understanding teenage and adolescent development
- setting boundaries
- developing strategies for effective communication skills
- developing positive relationships with children
- gender roles and equality
- culture and parenting
- screen time, gaming and social media
- stress management for children and mothers.



The issue of education became more pronounced during COVID-19 as mothers navigated adapting to lockdowns, restrictions and remote learning, with many women feeling overwhelmed or unsure of the expectations and requirements of them. Sessions were designed to respond to these changing circumstances and helped mothers clarify their roles in e-learning, differentiated the concept of home-schooling from remote learning in COVID-19 lockdown and supported the mothers on ways of engaging their schools' teachers and welfare coordinators in this endeavour.

FEEDBACK

'The session was really helpful as I get to present opinions, share ideas and learn from each other'

'I learnt about parenting in our culture and in Australia and the dos and donts'

'I liked what the facilitator taught. It made sense to me and helped me understand better'

SUPPORTING RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS

The AMWCHR continued its Foundations for Stronger Relationships program, supported by the Department of Premier and Cabinet. A primary prevention program aimed at enhancing gender equality and building more gender equitable social norms and practices in the community that prevent or reduce the risk of violence and improves marital and family relationship outcomes in the Australian Muslim community. The broader goal of the project was to develop the capacity of the community to live and practice confident and respectful relationships. The program included caring for emotional health and developing personal goals, gender and self-awareness, impact of harmful marriage practices and strategies to bring change within the family.

Young women who participated in the program indicated not just increased understanding of their rights to gender equality and choices in marriage but also improved self-confidence, a sense of wellbeing, ability to decide on personal goals and premarital decision making. Whereas older Muslim women demonstrated an increased understanding of the importance of their children making informed decisions in marriage and better ability to support their children in making marital decisions. The women were also more able to express their wants, assert their rights within the home and redefine the roles and expectations within the household. They began to allow and include their spouses to play a part in household and child management which eventually had a profound positive effect on their family relationships.

The program supported the prevention of early and forced marriage and the protection of rights for young Muslim women against abuses. The program was able to shift women's attitudes of gendered violence within marriages with many able to identify that gendered violence has no place in a healthy marital relationship.



FOR YOUNG MUSLIMS

YOUNG WOMENS SETTLEMENT PROGRAMS

The AMWCHR delivers a range of programs to support newly arrived young Muslim women navigate life in Australia. Supported by the Department of Home Affairs, the settlement services program offers workshops such as Living in Australia, Study Skills and Peer Support series to support young women in building self-awareness, strengthening identity, building confidence and learning ways of communicating and developing respectful relationships within the Australian environment. Topics include goal setting, understanding and succeeding within the Australian education and employment system to support increased independence, participation and wellbeing.

FEEDBACK

"The sessions have helped me identify the subjects that I wanted to study to work towards my goals"

"I felt my confidence and self-esteem increasing throughout the programs"

"the program has helped me make friends and learn about gender laws in Australia"

YOUNG WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS

The Young Women's Leadership program focuses on enhancing the leadership potential of young Muslim women through, developing confidence and skills relating to communication, conflict resolution and self-awareness. Through this program young women were supported to identify their short-term goals in education and career planning while building confidence to participate in active community engagement.

EMERGING MUSLIM VOICES

A program aimed at developing the advocacy, media and leadership skills of young Muslim women to support them to better advocate for change and address issues relevant to them and their peers.

Through the Emerging Muslim Voices program, supported by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, young women participated in a series of workshops to strengthen their leadership and engagement skills. Through our collaboration with 3CR, young women participated in media training and were supported to design and deliver an online series of workshops, engaging their peers on topics relating to mental health, gender and education.



FEEDBACK

"As a kid, I often found myself 'identifying' with characters that looked like me which happened to be Gabriella from HSM and Princess Jasmine. I would say this made me think that the importance of being desired as a woman is so problematic."

"I began to realise that gender is socially constructed and we should question the ways it influences us"

"Yesterday's education session was so amazing, thank you to everyone involved"

"Incredibly insightful! I really enjoyed it and would definitely recommend to others"

"Love love loved it! We definitely need more talks and networking like this"



OUR SERVICES

SUPPORTING WOMEN THROUGH COVID-19

The Women's Support Line, supported by the Ecstra Foundation was established in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the increased risk posed to Muslim women, in particular, those who are disadvantaged and therefore highly vulnerable in our community. Since its commencement in May 2020, the service has supported diverse Muslim women across a broader range of issues such as provision of information on NDIS, adoption, public housing and emergency relief schemes, advise on parenting challenges during COVID-19, emotional and wellbeing support for family matters and to address social isolation, referral and access to material aid and financial support services.

Women's Support Line

COVID-19 RECOVERY

The Women's Support Line is a one-on-one support and referral service offering culturally sensitive short term assistance to women across a variety of areas including:

- Confidence and capacity building of women to access services
- Social, emotional and wellbeing support
- Bilingual and culturally sensitive service
- Advocacy for women to connect with services

Support for women and families experiencing financial hardship* available under the following categories:

- Back to school fund
- Pathways to employment and education
- Urgent health and wellbeing needs
- Food and material aid

*Support will be allocated based on needs assessment

03 9481 3000

Contact the Women's Support Line
Monday to Friday, 9am - 5pm.

SETTLEMENT CASEWORK

Our Settlement casework engages with newly arrived Muslim women in their first 5 years of settlement in Australia. For most, settlement will be an ongoing process that runs well beyond 5 years but for many, this initial period will shape future growth and development for them, and their families. For Muslim women settling in Australia, there are significant barriers to access social connection, language acquisition and services during this time. The adjustments of expectation vs. reality for newly arrived residents can be deeply disappointing after long and painful migration journeys. Our goal in settlement casework is to work alongside women in a meaningful way where trust and vulnerability can be a shared load. Caseworkers advocate for equity, access to services and resources and ensure women have information on their rights and the opportunities for newly arrived migrants and refugees.

In the process of casework support, we work with women to address systemic barriers and gaps within services and society. We do this through collaborative practice with other providers and strong advocacy supports for clients. Secondary consultation enables us to contribute to sector capacity to better respond to issues for Muslim women navigating settlement and mainstream systems as well as the diverse role religion and culture can play in people's lives. Our casework team value co-case management opportunities, collaborative partnerships, and contributing to various networks and communities of practice.

In the last year housing has remained a key challenge for settlement clients, both access to public and community housing, as well as the private rental market.

Access to culturally sensitive or bilingual mental health professionals is a challenge for newly arrived Muslim women who are up against long wait times along with different understandings of mental health issues and treatment. Mental health continues to be a stigmatised issue for many Muslim women and not all will connect with talking therapies. Without supporting women to have great understanding of their mental and emotional wellbeing these issues will continue to hamper the settlement process for many. Where poverty, unemployment and a lack of English language skills were already enormous challenges for newly arrived Muslim women, the COVID-19 pandemic has compounded this, resulting in devastating impacts for those with limited digital literacy or limited access to online services. In the early phase of the pandemic we struggled under the strain of responding to the elevated risk around welfare and mental health but have managed to work alongside WSL, providing a trauma-informed approach to supporting highly vulnerable and isolated Muslim women through a time of uncertainty and stress.

The settlement support team has worked tirelessly to disseminate understandable and up-to-date information during a pandemic to communities with diverse languages. This often-required individual calls to clients to discuss changes to restrictions and health advice which was carried by our amazing multilingual staff.

Casework joined with clients to navigate the systemic and often gendered disadvantage of Covid-19 ensuring access to the most essential needs were possible for women.

FAMILY VIOLENCE CASEWORK

The specialist Family Violence service at AMWCHR has again surpassed our targets and supported almost 3 times the number of women we are funded to work with. The AMWCHR specialist family violence casework team works with women through their process from crisis response, risk assessment and management, advocacy in police, justice and welfare services, addressing challenges such as migration, legal, housing and poverty.

We provide support to women subjected to all forms of abuse, but also, we specialise in supporting women that experience unique forms of abuse using religion, culture and migration vulnerabilities against women and their children. This requires our team to hold expert knowledge and provide intensive, longer-term supports with deep sensitivities for the women in our community.

For Muslim women that experience abuse and violence from their partner and/or family members, the choice to be safe often entails far deeper challenges around identity, faith and connection to family and community. The centrality of family to religion and tradition as well as deeply gendered roles can be used to create control and abuse that can appear normative. Thus, the role of a caseworker often involves critical unpacking of both a woman's unique risk as well as her unique needs and aspirations. Caseworkers do this in safe, respectful, culturally validating ways. These kinds of relationships take time, so to ensure this quality and response to demand, our team has had to grow, incorporating a centralised intake position.

The positive outcomes for women when meaningful emotional support is provided within a casework context, includes increased confidence in naming needs and challenges, growth in self-awareness and reflection and greater capacity to engage with mental health services.

We have worked as passionate advocates alongside women engaging with police, courts and child protection, developing clients understanding of expectations in managing safety as well as working towards families having agency and control of their lives.

The specialist family violence work we do is on numerous fronts within community, religious bodies, services and sector. We work to promote greater understanding within Muslim community of what constitutes family violence and how it intersects with gender equality and broader human rights.

We have supported 120 women on issues of family violence and worked collaboratively with services and women being affected by early and forced marriage cases, including AFP, Redcross and the Lighthouse Foundation. We also work to support women through the diverse and complex issue of denial of Islamic divorce, a strategy sometime used by perpetrators to hold victim/survivors within their control and ensure stigma keeps them in isolation and unable to rebuild their lives.

COVID-19 has placed particular constraints on accessibility to the service, we are utilising different online platforms to engage with women needing support, and holding clients with far more complexity around safety, housing and most significantly mental health challenges. The pandemic has meant outreach is on hold and all contact is online or over the phone. The slowdown in court hearings also has impacted women's lives adversely, leaving them in need of longer-term emotional support. Gratefully we have received a boost in funding to respond to some of the complexities the pandemic presents, including funds for women to be supported through crisis. The Family Violence Crisis brokerage has enabled us to flexibly address housing, safety and cultural needs. This has made an enormous difference to women seeking a way out of abusive relationships, giving them choice and safety.

HIGHLIGHT: RAMADAN FUNDRAISER

In May 2020, the Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights conducted our first Ramadan Fundraiser. The aim of this fundraising campaign was to provide additional support to vulnerable women during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We recognise the ongoing impacts that the pandemic has on Muslim and migrant women, creating enormous financial pressure, limited access to services and greater controls and surveillance in the home.

The Ramadan Fundraiser campaign was targeted at existing donors and organisational contacts with limited social media promotion via Twitter. Encouraging donations to be made via our Paypal portal, to fund monthly rent, car registration, bills, groceries, school supplies and petrol for women in need.

TOTAL FUNDS RAISED:

\$17, 136.00





SECTOR SUPPORT AND ENGAGEMENT

SECTOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING

This year's training of service providers focused on bringing deeper understanding and appreciation of the diversity of the Muslim population in Australia and their varied practices and beliefs. A series of training workshops were also delivered to facilitate service provider's greater understanding of family violence and the context of early and forced marriages in the Muslim community. In addition, two specialised trainings were delivered as part of our research work, to deliver capacity building training on trauma-informed care for Muslim women affected by family violence.

Sector organisations who attended the training programs gained a deeper appreciation and understanding of how to best support Muslim migrant communities, as well as build greater awareness of some of the challenges facing Muslim women who experience family violence. Through this training, attendees reflected that they would approach their practice with a more mindful and culturally sensitive lens.

FEEDBACK

"I learnt to communicate better with my Muslim clients"

"The session has made me more aware of the culture and how I can work with Muslim clients"

"This will help me open up conversations in a sensitive and more informed way"

COLLABORATIONS

Through our established sector relationships and networks the AMWCHR continues to support mainstream services, through secondary consultations, to better engage with their Muslim clients, increase awareness of barriers and discrimination as well as support relationship development.





OUR RESEARCH

ISLAMOPHOBIA RESEARCH PROJECT

This action research project was designed to explore experiences and impacts of Islamophobia on Muslim development, assess and deliver support programs for Muslim parents and their children in dealing with experiences of Islamophobia. It navigated the effects of media reporting and public narratives about geopolitical violence by or against Muslims on their wellbeing and identity.

The project commenced with a qualitative study titled 'Islamophobia and its impact on families and children in Australia' which investigated the experiences of Islamophobia experienced by Muslim children and the support systems they rely on to deal with these experiences and questions. More importantly, the study sought to understand parent's involvement in supporting their children through these experiences and uncover parenting gaps that exist to enable these supportive conversations to take place. Findings from the study have been attached to this report in Annex 1.

The second part of the project translated the findings into an action research model by developing two pilot parenting programs for Muslim mothers. These parenting programs were aimed at building capacity in parents to support their children deal with Islamophobia and provide safe ways for them to explain terrorism and geopolitical violence by or against Muslims.

The project concludes with the publication of the research report and the development of a digital children's e-story book to share findings and support Muslim families navigate conversations around Islamophobia with their children.

FEEDBACK

I am able to have open conversations with my children now

I've discovered that little things are important, and I had missed out on addressing them with my children

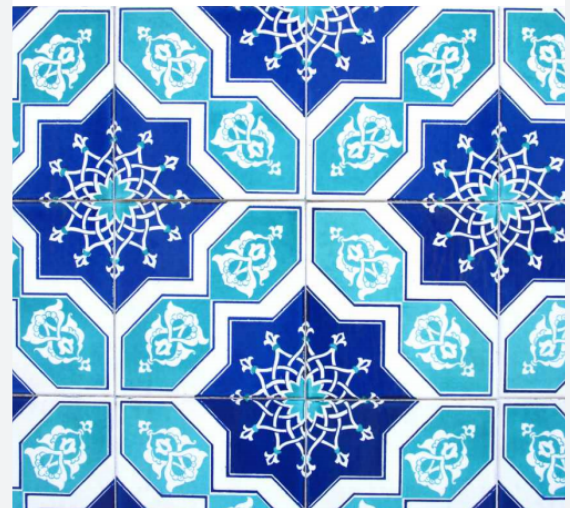
I have learnt that we must defend ourselves and not let abuse and racism happen to us or our children

The program has taught me to listen to my children more carefully

I have learnt about what Islamophobia is and what active listening is. I now know what to do to help my children

SUPPORTING MUSLIM FAMILIES AND CHILDREN IN DEALING WITH ISLAMOPHOBIA

A RESEARCH STUDY BY
THE AUSTRALIAN MUSLIM WOMEN'S
CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
ASHA BEDAR
NESREEN BOTTRIALL
&
SHAHRAM AKBARZADEH
ALFRED DEAKIN INSTITUTE
DEAKIN UNIVERSITY

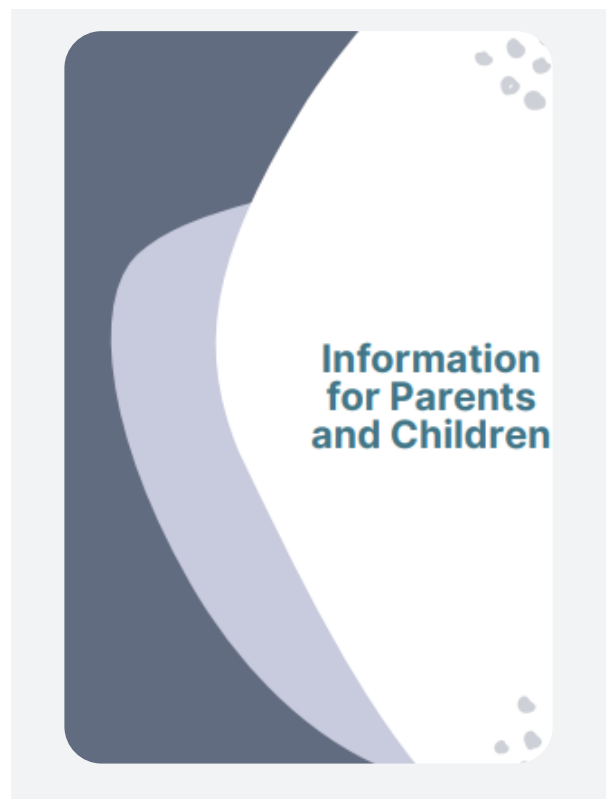
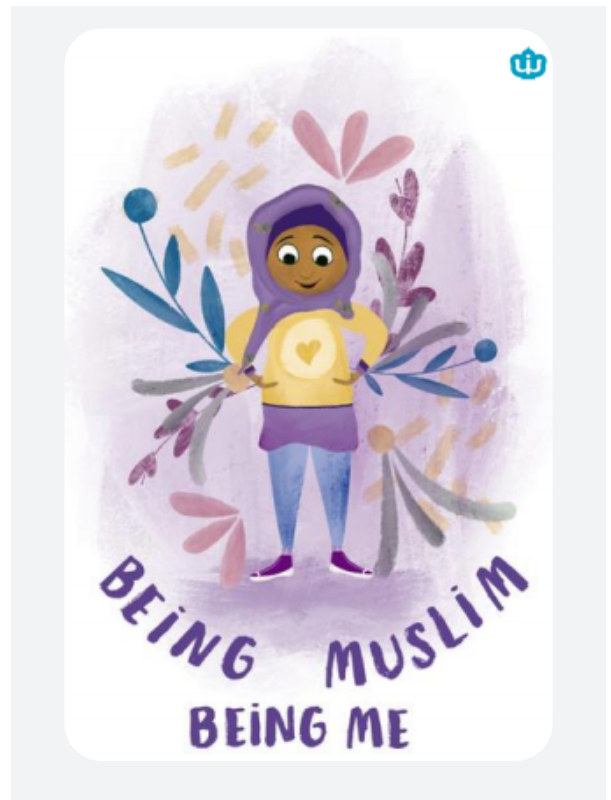


MUSLIM BOYS RESEARCH PROJECT

The Muslim Boys Project was designed as a pilot action research initiative, aiming to explore and pilot an intervention to address the violence and pro-violence attitudes exhibited primarily by young Muslim pre-adolescent boys in primary schools (10-13 year olds). The focus of the project is particularly on gender and sexuality-based violence.

The intended outcomes included a more significant understanding of the psychosocial drivers of violence in Muslim boys, and the building of values in children that reject gender inequality and challenge gender-based violence in all its forms, hence promoting more confident and respectful relationships that enable schools and communities to be safer and more inclusive.

Initial qualitative findings found boys aged 10-12 years carry strong notions of gender and limited ability to process vulnerabilities which play out in different aggressive ways in school, suggesting the early onset of socialized behaviours expected of them challenged by little room for expression of emotions other than anger and excitement. The groupwork program found positive impact on the boy's ability to embrace openness to express vulnerabilities and align with gender respectful values. The research highlights pre-adolescence as a critical stage to work with boys to shape more positive gender respectful attitudes in young minds.





OUR ADVOCACY

KEYNOTES

- Senator Mehreen Faruqi, International Women's Day brunch (SYD) - Keynote speech



PRESENTATIONS AND CONFERENCES



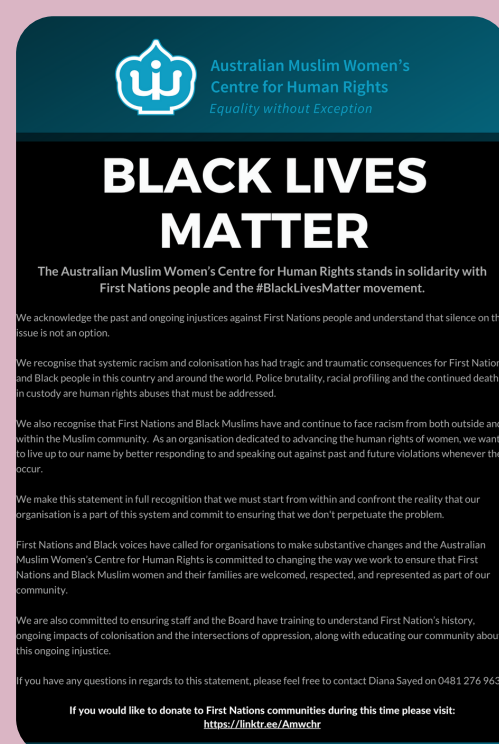
- A Community Conversation with Muslim Women- The Media Line (10th June 2020)
 - <https://themedialine.org/mideast-streets/a-community-conversation-with-muslim-women/>

INQUIRY SUBMISSIONS

- **Submission to the Victorian Government Anti-Vilification Protections Inquiry (31st Jan 2020)**
 - tinyurl.com/34z9j3gc
- **Legislative Assembly Legal and Social Issues Committee: E: Inquiry into Anti-Vilification Protections (28th May 2020)**
 - tinyurl.com/dwfv7ik7
- **Forced Marriage - Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking.**
 - tinyurl.com/12z60p6s

PRESS RELEASES

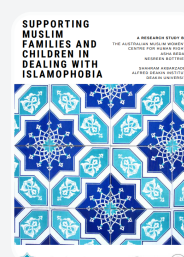
- **Black Lives Matter press release:**
 - Published via the website and sent to supporters on our mailing list, shared on Twitter.



REPORTS & PUBLICATIONS



**Policing
Research
Report**



**Islamophobia
Research
Report**



**Childrens
E-book**



MEDIA APPEARANCES

AUG
13



Discussion: The divide between Australia's richest & poorest schools, flights to Hong Kong cancelled as protests escalate and EU may ban Australian producers of Feta, Gruyere & Scotch steaks from using product names.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-08-13/the-drum-tuesday-august-13/11411300?nw=0>

DEC
2



Discussing the last sitting week of Parliament, the Murray-Darling Basin scheme, and increasing shareholder activism.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-12-08/the-drum-monday-2nd-of-december/11778180?nw=0>

MAR
5



Discussion: family violence as state and federal leaders prepare to meet to discuss a domestic violence action plan.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-03-05/the-drum-thursday-5th-of-march/12030902?nw=0>

MAR
25



The panel examines how the ongoing coronavirus pandemic is affecting the nation's most vulnerable.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-03-25/the-drum-wednesday-march-25th/12090766?nw=0>

MAY
8



The panel discusses the National Cabinet's plan to ease coronavirus restrictions, Ramadan and the COVID-19 pandemic, and alcoholic consumption in Australia.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-05-08/the-drum-friday-may-8/12230482?nw=0>

The Saturday Paper

NEWS OPINION CULTURE LIFE FOOD PUZZLES SPORT THE BRIEFING 7AM

MAY 30 - JUNE 5, 2020 | P 303

NEWS
For women living in Australia on temporary visas, the Covid-19 lockdown has placed them at greater risk of domestic violence and coercive control. By Gina Rushton.

Temporary visa holders at risk

The Saturday Paper
"Temporary Visa Holders at risk"

<https://www.thesaturdaypaper.com.au/news/law-crime/2020/05/30/temporary-visa-holders-risk/15907608009904>

MAY
30



SPECIAL THANKS

OUR DONORS



Justice
and Community
Safety



Premier
and Cabinet



Australian Government
Department of Home Affairs

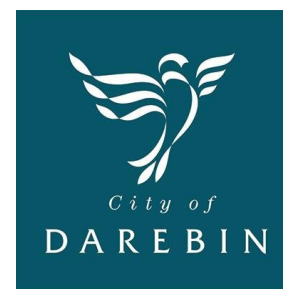


Health
and Human
Services



Australian Government
Department of Social Services

ecstra



OUR COLLABORATING ORGANISATIONS

- 3CR Community Radio
- Afghan Program SBS Radio
- Afghan Women's Organisation
- Al-Siraat College
- Arabic Welfare Inc
- Benevolence Australia
- Board of Imams of Victoria
- Catholic Care Dandenong
- Cranbourne Carlisle Primary School
- City of Darebin
- Cohealth North Melbourne
- Dandenong North Primary School
- Dandenong South Primary School
- Deakin University
- Diversitat
- East Preston Islamic College (EPIC)
- East Preston Community Centre
- Ethnic Communities Council of Shepparton (ECCV)
- Fawkner Community House
- Family Relationship Centre Broadmeadows
- Foundation House
- Fountain Gate Secondary College
- Hume Central Secondary College
- Islamic Council of Victoria (ICV)
- Islamic Museum of Australia
- Jesuit Social Services
- Kildonan Uniting Care Shepparton
- Lyndale Secondary College
- Merri Community Health Services
- Migration Council of Australia
- Mildura English Language Centre
- Multicultural Centre for Women's Health (MCWH)
- Newbury Child and Community Centre
- Noble Park English Language School
- Northern Bay College
- River Nile Learning Centre
- Rise Refugees
- Stand Up South East Community Link
- TAFE Mildura
- Thomastown Community Hub
- Whittlesea Community Connections (WCC)
- Wyndham City Council



INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

	2020 \$	2019 \$
INCOME		
Grant income	1,278,973	1,527,862
Interest received	7,461	9,903
Management fees	100,475	102,177
COVID-19 government assistance payments: Cash Flow Boost	50,000	-
COVID-19 government assistance payments: JobKeeper	123,000	-
Other income	18,400	22,763
TOTAL INCOME	1,578,309	1,662,705
EXPENDITURE		
Depreciation and amortisation	1,310	3,884
Finance, audit and accounting fees	33,439	35,212
Insurance	2,139	7,555
Office overheads	32,428	26,428
Premises expenses	79,562	104,201
Programming and planning	271,015	314,183
Staff related expenses	16,588	34,620
Staff salaries, wages and on-costs	1,065,861	1,077,893
	1,502,342	1,603,976
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	1,502,342	1,603,976
NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) ATTRIBUTABLE TO THE ASSOCIATION	75,967	58,729



STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

	2020 \$	2019 \$
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash and Cash Equivalents		
Cash at bank	461,455	538,764
Term deposit	520,471	513,756
	<u>981,926</u>	<u>1,052,520</u>
Trade and Other Receivables		
Accounts receivable	-	27,500
Other receivables	42,000	-
Prepayments	20,000	4,397
Security bonds	10,678	17,174
	<u>72,678</u>	<u>49,071</u>
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	<u>1,054,604</u>	<u>1,101,591</u>
NON-CURRENT ASSETS		
Property, Plant and Equipment		
Office equipment - at cost	32,789	27,840
Less provision for depreciation	(18,167)	(16,858)
	<u>14,622</u>	<u>10,982</u>
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS	<u>14,622</u>	<u>10,982</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>1,069,226</u>	<u>1,112,573</u>
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Trade and Other Payable		
Accounts payable	46,236	107,807
Accrued expenses	12,303	48,243
GST payable	(1,140)	(1,772)
Superannuation payable	24,613	-
	<u>82,012</u>	<u>154,278</u>
Deferred Income		
Grants received in advance	375,000	430,416
	<u>375,000</u>	<u>430,416</u>
Employment Entitlement Provisions		
Provision for annual leave	79,867	53,453
Provision for long service leave	22,602	38,437
Provision for time in lieu	4,416	6,627
	<u>106,885</u>	<u>98,517</u>
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	<u>563,897</u>	<u>683,211</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES	<u>563,897</u>	<u>683,211</u>
NET ASSETS	<u>505,329</u>	<u>429,362</u>
EQUITY		
Accumulated members funds	505,329	429,362
	<u>505,329</u>	<u>429,362</u>



STATEMENT BY MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

The Board has determined that the association is not a reporting entity and that this special purpose financial report should be prepared in accordance with the accounting policies outlined in Note 1 to the financial statements.

In the opinion of the Board the financial report as set out on pages 2 to 8:

- 1 Presents a true and fair view of the financial position of the Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights Inc. as at 30 June 2020 and its performance for the year ended on that date.
- 2 At the date of this statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights Inc. will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.

This statement is made in accordance with a resolution of the Board and is signed for and on behalf of the Board by:

Acting Chairperson

Anisa Buckley

Acting Secretary

Nafisa Yussf

Dated this 17th day of December 2020

