

ANNUAL REPORT

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL
IMAMS COUNCIL (ANIC)



UNITING THE IMAMS IN
AUSTRALIA AND PRESERVING
THE ISLAMIC IDENTITY

www.anic.org.au

2024

Australian National Imams Council (ANIC)

Uniting the Imams in Australia and Preserving the Islamic Identity

The Australian National Imams Council (ANIC) is the central and peak Islamic body that holds key representation from Australian-based Muslim Imams and scholars representing all states and territories in Australia.

ANIC aims to preserve mainstream understanding and teachings of Islam in accordance with the Quran and Sunnah and the traditional understanding of Muslim scholars, both past and present. It also seeks to unite the Councils of Imams of the various Australian states and territories by streamlining their activities and those of other respected scholars and Imams.

Our Vision

To be a leading national body representing mainstream Islam in Australia. ANIC aims to utilise the skills, qualifications and expertise of Imams, Islamic scholars and prominent community members to promote and contribute to the betterment of the Australian Muslim community and the broader Australian society at large.

Our Mission

To provide religious leadership, rulings and services to the Muslim community in Australia by supporting local Islamic organisations, developing educational, social and outreach programs and fostering good relations with other faith communities and the broader Australian society to promote harmony and cooperation.





ANNUAL SUMMARY REPORT

2023-2024

IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS, ANIC HAS ACCOMPLISHED MANY MILESTONES AND CONTINUES TO PROCEED TO PROSPER, EXPAND AND SERVE THE COMMUNITY.

IN SUMMARY:

1. 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.



2. Local Community Engagements

ANIC's primary driving force remains the benefit of the Australian Muslim community, and as such, has constantly liaised with key local Muslim stakeholders, 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 to ensure their needs were appropriately addressed.



3. Media and Public Statements

This year, ANIC issued over 45 public statements that voiced the views of ANIC, Imams and the Australian Muslim community. The majority of the statements centred on the ongoing genocide in Gaza, where we condemned actions and behaviours that sought to normalise the ethnic cleansing of the Palestinian people. Other statements strongly opposed many regional religious, human rights and political issues. This allowed for the preservation of Islam and our Muslim integrity within Australia, as well as reinforce ANIC's position at the forefront and its leadership of the Muslim community. ANIC continues to shift the media toward reporting on Islam and Muslims in an unbiased and religiously mindful way. ANIC has employed a full-time media monitoring officer to monitor, communicate, and engage with the media agencies, journalists, reporters and regulators and address issues of concern to the Muslim community. We have seen significant progress and development in the media's response to ANIC's concerns and correspondence. With the help of our community, we identified problematic articles that attempted to vilify Islam and Muslims and worked to have them amended/ removed. With more to be done, ANIC will continue striving towards a reality where our community is fairly represented in the media.

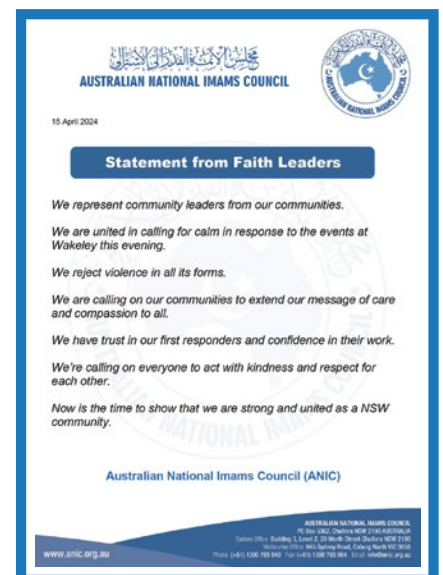


4. Political Engagements

ANIC continues to raise our communities' issues and concerns with senior political leaders from all government parties in Australia, as well as major Government agencies and religious organisations. Maintaining professional relations with government stakeholders ensures we have a solid hand to play when advocating for our Muslim community.

5. Australian Religious and Faith Communities Network

ANIC participated significantly in the Religious and Faith Communities Network of all Australia's major religious and faith groups. 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 saw 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, particularly on religious freedom and speech and ensure that all our Islamic institutions, centres, mosques, and schools continue to function and operate in implementing Islamic values and ethos, without feeling intimidated or discriminated against.



6. ANIC Halal Authority

We continue to engage with local and international authorities and major players in the industry and exert all efforts to gain credibility in the Halal Certification market and promote ANIC's name on local and international markets. ANIC aspires to regulate the Halal certification market and work on standardising the local Halal certification industry. ANIC Halal Authority has grown 100% from the previous year and has established a strong presence both locally and globally. It operates with a well-versed and experienced team, maintaining a high level of professionalism, integrity, and transparency.

Visit: www.anichalal.org.au



7. Submissions

This year, ANIC submitted a review into the NSW Law Reform Commission of section 93Z of the Crimes Act 1900 (NSW) (Act). In submitting, ANIC has conferred with various Muslim community organisations focused on providing community services and support throughout Australia. ANIC has also benefited from feedback provided by Australian Muslims to its members. Accordingly, the issues raised in the submission are reflective of the views prevalent in the Australian Muslim community, including among other Muslim organisations.

The submission aimed to:

- Provide our community legislative protection against religious discrimination under the Anti-Discrimination Act.
- Highlight the importance of considering the experience of communities in proposing legislative responses
- To balance between, on the one hand, protecting against hateful speech and conduct that incites violence and, on the other hand, not impairing existing essential freedoms, including freedom of speech, association and religion.



8. Advocacy and Activism

ANIC has been a leading organisation advocating and addressing the Muslim community's interests and concerns. Some of these activities include:

- a. Remain a strong advocate for the freedom of Palestine and the subsequent recognition of it as a nation-state. We held several meetings with government leaders to push for an immediate ceasefire and demanded that



UNWRA funding be reinstated to help support our brothers and sisters in Gaza.

- b. Pressured the government to ensure the Religious Discrimination Reform remained active in its ability to protect our community.
- c. Exposing the double standard our community is held to when tragic incidents such as the Bondi stabbing occur. When the attacker was accused of being a Muslim, it was quickly labelled a terrorist attack, and when the true identity was revealed, a white man, the narrative shifted to someone with a mental illness.
- d. The danger of Islamophobia on many fronts and aiming to ban Islamophobia and Anti-Muslim sentiment in Australia.
- e. Raising awareness of 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.
- 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



9. ANIC Islamic Finance Authority (AIFA)

ANIC established the ANIC Islamic Finance Authority (AIFA) to support the Islamic financial services industry in Australia. It offers services on Shariah compliance certificates, accreditation, industry standardisation, and advice. It also provides advocacy and research to promote Islamic finance and fulfil Australian Muslims' financial and banking needs.

AIFA is informed and guided by Shariah principles, the Australian Fatwa Council, and global industry standards. A group of subject matter experts from the finance, law, and accounting professions will assist the Shariah scholars in their certification and accreditation activities. This will ensure the delivery of contemporary advice and the highest service standards, 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 Minister for Finance, Katy Gallagher, and advocating the needs of the Australian Muslim community in this area. A report was submitted to the Minister's office to address and explore options on Islamic finance.

10. Australian Islamic Education Services

ANIC strives to ensure our children are given appropriate Islamic teaching in their primary school years. We remain an approved scripture provider for Islamic Special Religious Education for Muslim students in public schools in NSW under the Australian Islamic Education Services (AIES). AIES has held several workshops for its volunteers and has increased the number of its volunteers this past year. AIES intends to reach out to all public schools with Muslim students and provide Islamic education across Australia. This includes initiating the Friday Juma'a prayers at different schools.



Visit: www.islamiceducation.org.au

11. ANIC Women's Advisory Council (AWAC)

The Women's Advisory Council, now comprising of 22 distinguished Muslim women from various states and territories, aims to strengthen its connection with Australian Muslim women leaders and prominent community figures. This Council is dedicated to actively listening to its members' concerns, feedback, and suggestions to serve the wider Muslim community best. Its focus encompasses a range of issues pertinent to Muslim women in Australia. AWAC held its first-morning tea, inviting over 40 prominent Muslim sisters and leaders to engage, network and have an open and robust discussion addressing the affairs of the Muslim community, particularly matters pertaining to Muslim women and their role in the Muslim community.



12. ANIC and NZF Partnership

ANIC partnered with the National Zakat Foundation (NZF) as a Zakat collector partner to facilitate Australian Muslims' fulfilment of the obligation of Zakat.

Visit: www.nzf.org.au



13. Action Against Islamophobia (AAI)

The rise in Islamophobia in the last year revealed a significant gap in how our community reacts and responds to Islamophobic attacks. As a result, ANIC began developing an initiative called Action Against Islamophobia (AAI). AAI aims to provide confidential crisis support for anyone who has experienced Islamophobia, anti-Muslim hate, racism, discrimination, bias, or bigotry. Additionally, AAI delivers information on the resources available to support those affected and referrals to legal and mental health services. They held local forums for youth and adult community members in Sydney, Queensland and Melbourne that centred on directly addressing the community's needs when dealing with Islamophobia and implementing the responses to adjust their approach.



Visit: www.actionagainstislamophobia.org.au

14. ANIC Counselling Partnership

ANIC has partnered with two counselling services, Invictus Solutions and Silah Institution.

Visit: www.anic.org.au/counselling

15. 3rd National Muslim Community iftar

Together with the Alliance of Australian Muslims (AAM), ANIC held its third National Muslim Community Iftar 2024-1445H at the Orion Centre – Campsie.

The Iftar was attended by Muslim community leaders and Imams to break fast together, showcase the unity of the Muslim community in Australia and stand in solidarity with their brothers and sisters in Gaza – Palestine. Despite Ramadan being a time of spiritual elevation and happiness, this year, our hearts were filled with sorrow as the Israeli Occupation continues to strike and kill innocent Palestinians in Gaza, commit genocide, increase their illegal settlements and violate international laws and UN resolutions during this holy month.



16. ANIC Community Leaders Workshops

ANIC held numerous workshops for Imams and Muslim community leaders and organisations to raise awareness on several topics, including applying for grants and obtaining halal certifications.



17. Reflecting on Christchurch - 5 Years Later

5 March 2024 is a date that is deeply 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.

In New Zealand and around the globe, including in Australia, people continue to gather and mourn the victims and pay their respects to the families of the victims in commemoration of this tragedy.

ANIC extends its prayers and support to the brothers and sisters affected by the Christchurch terrorist attack, as well as its sincerest gratitude to the people and organisations who continue to reflect on this sad tragedy and show their support for justice and humanity.

18. Supporting the Alliance of Australian Muslims (AAM)

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. The Alliance of Australian Muslims (AAM) hosted the Australian Muslim Community Leaders Summit 2024 on Sunday, 12th May, in Campsie – Sydney and Online. Prominent Muslim organisations and community leaders from around Australia attended the Summit to discuss important issues of concern to Australian Muslims and the future of the Muslim community in Australia, particularly during the current crises and challenges faced by the Muslim community and Ummah and the war on Gaza.

The AAM aims to serve as a collaborative platform to coordinate and enhance efforts for the common benefit of the Australian Muslim community and to stand with and contribute to the broader Australian society.

The summit focused on:

- Working together during difficult times, particularly the current war on Gaza and the ongoing aggression by the Israeli occupying forces on the Palestinians,
- A Political Engagement and Advocacy Framework
- The role of media & social media.

Visit: www.australianmuslims.org.au



19. Global Imams and Scholars Council (GISC)

ANIC played a key role in founding and establishing the Global Imams and Scholars Council (GISC). This Council comprises seven leading scholars and imams from prominent Western and English-speaking countries, including the UK, North America, South Africa, New Zealand, and recently, Japan. Its mission is to continue to uphold and promote Islamic and Muslim identity in Western contexts, while working together for the collective benefit of the Muslim world and the Ummah.

GISC Members:

1. The British Board of Scholars & Imams (BBSI)
2. Australian National Imams Council (ANIC)
3. Canadian Council of Imams (CCI)
4. North American Imams Fellow (NAIF)
5. United Ulama Council of South Africa (UUCSA)
6. Ulama Council of New Zealand (UCNZ)
7. Council of Imams in Japan (CIJ)

ANIC aims to stay connected and engaged with its fellow brothers, sisters, and Imams from around the globe, particularly with like-minded organisations, councils and countries.

Visit: www.gisc.global

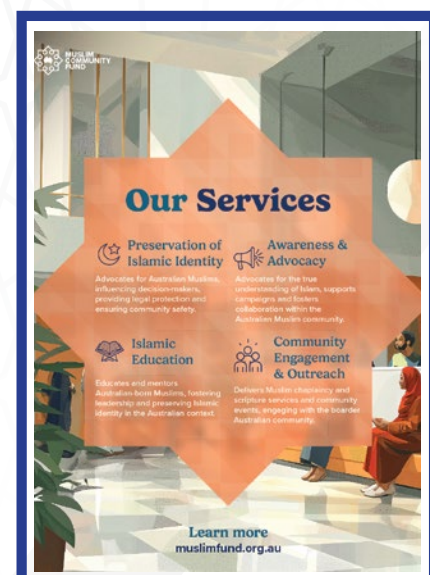


20. Launch of Muslim Community Fund

Earlier this year, the Muslim Community Fund was launched with the support and establishment of the Australian National Imams Council (ANIC) and the Alliance of Australian Muslims (AAM). Its primary purpose is to serve the community's most pressing needs and interests while supporting programs, organisations, initiatives, and other Muslim-run projects. The Muslim Community Fund is a values-driven organisation, embedding Islamic tradition and principles at the core of every project and initiative. Guided by this ethos, we are dedicated to passionately advocating for and addressing the Muslim community's most pressing priorities by:

- o Building a brighter, united future for Australian Muslims
- o Finance our community's local needs
- o Building a strong and united Muslim community with a shared vision
- o Elevating our community at a local and government level
- o Building a stronger community through a stronger identity

The Muslim Community Fund aims to support programs, organisations and initiatives that serve the diverse needs of



our local Muslim community, primarily:

1. Preserving the Islamic Identity
2. Media engagement & lobbying
3. Community outreach programs
4. Mentorship programs
5. Political engagement
6. Advocacy and legal support

More details on the Muslim Community Fund: www.muslimfund.org.au

This year has been exceptionally challenging for our community and the Ummah. We are witnessing an ongoing massacre and genocide being committed against our brothers and sisters in Palestine and, more recently, Lebanon. The Palestinian cause and the concerns of our community will always remain a primary focus for ANIC.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the outgoing ANIC Executive Committee, Advisory Committee, and all ANIC members for their unwavering commitment and dedication to serving the Muslim community.

A special thanks also goes to everyone who has supported ANIC and its members. The Australian National Imams Council (ANIC) and its initiatives will continue to work diligently to uphold and promote the Islamic identity and interests of the Australian Muslim community.

The Future Moving Forward

The Australian National Imams Council (ANIC) strives to preserve mainstream Islamic identity and the integrity of the Muslim Community and to represent the greater interests of the Australian Muslim community in all ways.





www.anic.org.au

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