



Centre *for* Dialogue



**LA TROBE**  
UNIVERSITY

# Leadership Training Program for Young Muslims

2007-2008 REPORT

In Partnership with



ISLAMIC COUNCIL  
of Victoria



Victorian State  
Government

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## **LEADERSHIP TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR YOUNG MUSLIMS**

This two-year project was run by the Centre for Dialogue, La Trobe University in collaboration with the Islamic Council of Victoria and the support of the Institute for Advancing Community Engagement, Australian Catholic University. It was funded by the State Government of Victoria. The participation of young Muslims from Southeast Asia who took part in the 2008 programme was funded by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

As the original application to the Victorian Government explained, this was to be a two-year project to mount a Leadership Training programme for young Muslims aged between 18 and 30. The programme was meant to have 20 participants each year and to be mounted in 2007 and again in 2008.

This project was built on the longstanding association of the La Trobe Centre for Dialogue and in particular its founding Director, Professor Joseph Camilleri, with the Islamic Council of Victoria (ICV).

The project would not have been possible without the active support of the Victorian Government, and in particular Victorian Premier Steve Bracks and his successor Premier John Brumby.

The project was supervised by Professor Camilleri, but coordination and delivery of the Programme was the responsibility of Mr Larry Marshall, Project Coordinator, Centre for Dialogue. They both served on the Coordinating Committee for the project, which also included Dr Michalis S. Michael from the Centre for Dialogue, and Mr Ahmed Imam, Ms Tasneem Chopra, Mr Malcolm Thomas and Mr Nail Aykan from the Islamic Council of Victoria.

## ORGANISATION

### Selecting participants

#### Promotion

In close consultation with the Islamic Council of Victoria (ICV) and other Muslim organisations, the Centre for Dialogue (CfD) produced a range of materials (brochures, posters) and addressed a number of meetings to promote the programme and ensure effective access to the many Muslim communities in Victoria. Particular attention was directed to cultural and religious sensitivities in this aspect as well as in all subsequent stages of the project.

A draft brochure and poster advertising the course was developed with the assistance of leaders of the Islamic Council of Victoria. For each of the two years 7000 copies of the brochure were printed and distributed through the community and a range of networks with access to the community. (See Appendix 1).

#### Selection process

Applications were invited from interested young Muslims who were asked to produce a resume of their background, interests and qualifications, and a short essay outlining their reasons for wanting to undertake the training programme. In 2007 nearly 70 applications were received and in 2008 close to 60. In each case, the selection committee shortlisted the 30 best applicants, each of whom was interviewed by a panel of three made up of ICV and CfD representatives. It was made clear from the outset to all applicants that this was a highly intensive programme, and that their application would not be successful unless they were able to give a firm undertaking to attend all elements of the programme.

#### Participants Profile

*The Muslim Community is extremely diverse* and has its older elements (Turkish and Lebanese) as well as newer cultural groupings (Somali, Eritrean). The applications for this course came from young men and women from a wide range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

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**2007:** The group of twenty young leaders reflected the diversity of the Australian Muslim community. It included university students of 18 to 23 and early career people in their mid to late 20s. The final mix comprised 12 different cultural backgrounds – about half were Australian born and half born overseas, in the Middle East, Asia-Pacific, South Asia, and Africa. The gender balance was: 12 women and 8 men. Most were still at university, but the group also included a teacher, a freelance journalist and a conciliator working with the water Ombudsman. Six of the women wore *hijabs* and six did not – there were significant differences in how participants practised their religion, which in itself proved a significant part of the learning experience.

**2008:** The diversity of cultural backgrounds was again evident in 2008 with 8 participants from countries in the middle east (Lebanon, Egypt, Iraq and Turkey) 6 from Asia (India, Bangladesh Indonesia, Malaysia) and five from Africa (Somalia, Eritrea, Kenya). There was also one Anglo-Australian who had become a Muslim three years ago. There were 10 men and ten women in the group this year, 8 were under 20, and 7 were between 20 and 25 and 5 were over 25. We had a psych nurse, a men's counsellor and an IT designer as well

For list of names of participants for 2007 and 2008 see Appendix 10

## WHAT WAS THE APPROACH?

Over three months the young leaders were exposed to a wide range of learning opportunities, each carefully integrated with the others. Participants were challenged intellectually, culturally and psychologically. A conscious attempt was made to develop their knowledge and other skills through lectures, workshops, debates, role play, interviews, assignments. To this was added an extensive programme of meetings with leaders drawn from most facets of Australian society: business, media, religion, politics, law.

The aim was to provide participants with a carefully blend of theory and practice, of academic, training and skills based activities.

- **Workshops and Seminars:** These were these were designed to:
  - a) give the participants a clearer sense of the aims, ethos and content of the programme;
  - b) enable participants to get to know each other as well set the foundations for a creative relationship with the staff, and in particular the project Coordinator, Mr Larry Marshall;
  - c) canvas a number of the key themes that would run through the programme and establish how these resonated with the prior knowledge, experience and interests of the participants
- **An intensive ten-week course** – *Our World in Crisis: Interpretations and Responses* – that challenged participants to consider the framework, or the lenses, through which they interpret local, national and international issues, including poverty, development, climate change, terrorism, security and Australia's place in the region.
- **Developing leadership skills:** Varied methods of teaching and learning were used to further develop nascent leadership skills amongst these young leaders. They were given opportunities to question expert guest lecturers, speak out in debates and small group workshops, learn to write for publication and take part in role plays and seminars. Ethical conundrums were commonplace and elicited vigorous debate within the group.

Various techniques were used to develop media, writing, public speaking, organisational and most importantly conflict resolution skills.

- **Meetings with community leaders:** The group engaged in many formal and informal meetings with leaders from varied cultural backgrounds and different levels of society. These included; politicians (at local, state and federal levels), lawyers and judges, journalists, academics, business leaders and community representatives. Religious leaders of all persuasions dialogued with the group.

## **PROGRAMME: MAIN ACTIVITIES**

### **Introductory Workshops**

These were run by CfD and ICV and aimed at building a group identity for the task at hand across the diversity of cultures that represents Australia's Muslim community. They also used senior academics, including Professor Robert Manne (Australian Public Intellectual of the Year 2005) and Professor Joseph Camilleri, to give all participants a clear grounding in Australia's social and political history over the past century. Islamic thought and practice, and its relevance to Australia's situation were also addressed at an early stage.

### **Ten-Week Course**

This was the single most important academic component of the programme. The young Muslims participated in an intensive 10-week course *Our World in Crisis? Interpretations and Responses*. The course brought this new group of leaders into contact with some 40 to 60 other course participants drawn from different religious, cultural and philosophical backgrounds. Course participants included teachers, students, people working in business, media, other professions, community organisations active around issues of local government, peace, security, human rights, environment and development. The course, which is run by Professor Camilleri and Mr Marshall, is sponsored by: Asia Education Foundation, Australian Education Union, Australian Volunteers International, Centre for Dialogue (La Trobe University), Uniting Church (Commission for Mission), Islamic Council of Victoria, Liberty Victoria, Medical Association for Prevention of War, Oxfam Australia, Pax Christi Australia (Vic), Psychologists for the Promotion of World Peace, Victorian Council of Social Service, Victorian Local Governance Association.

The course was run every Tuesday evening from 5pm to 9pm at the Offices of Australian Volunteers International. It included: lectures, including extensive use of audio-visual materials, question and answer sessions, workshop discussions, debates, simulation exercises, interviews with guests, and information sharing sessions.

Participants were issued with extensive reading materials, including a Resource workbook, and given a number of small assignments.

[For further details of the course, see Appendix 2](#)

### **Study Tours**

The study tours in Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne were carefully planned with local knowledge and an overall concept of introducing the young Muslims to people of influence across different layers of Australian Society. It made use of the Centre's extensive contacts and networks in Victoria and around Australia.

These linkages and contacts came from members of the Centre's board of Management and Advisory Board, partner organisations, 'friends' and supporters of the '*Centre for Dialogue*', its staff, and the introductions made possible by Centre Director, Professor Camilleri. The project itself was highly regarded, and business, religious, political, media and others key figures were only too pleased to open their doors as soon as the objectives and approach of the project were explained to them and their staff.

For the visits to Sydney and Canberra, the group of young Muslims was accompanied by two centre staff and two senior members of the ICV's Executive Committee. the Project coordinator, Larry Marshall, was with the group for the entirety of the three study tours (and all other activities), thereby giving the programme the necessary stability and sense of continuity and development.

The Sydney experience had an inter-faith focus, given that it was a collaborative effort involving the Australian Catholic University and local Muslim organisations. In Canberra, the focus was on the Federal Parliament, the bureaucracy and other national institutions, including the High Court of Australia. In Melbourne, the study tour was extended over a longer period, and so could cover a more varied programme that included local government, media, cultural institutions, business organisations, places of worship, and religious and community organisations.

### **Sydney:**

The Sydney component was hosted by the Institute for Advancing Community Engagement Australian Catholic University (ACU) with the support of Affinity Intercultural Foundation (a NSW Muslim organisation). A full programme of carefully chosen activities was developed between the Centre for Dialogue and the ACU staff.

The twenty Young Muslim Leaders were hosted by the local Catholic community in their own homes each evening. This 'homestay' accommodation was quite deliberate and formed part of the inter-faith dialogue which added much richness to the Sydney visit.

A series of community workshops involved Muslim participants engaging with Catholic students, Aboriginal community leaders, artists and a panel of distinguished guests from the media, business, sporting and public life. A highly informative visit was arranged to the headquarters of Soka Gakkai an international lay Buddhist organisation, included a dinner and dialogue.

[See Nesrine Mojadad's detailed account of the Sydney programme in Appendix 5.](#)



ACU Professor Jude Butcher, Faiza Rehman, Nesrin Mojadad and guest speaker Nada Roude from the Islamic Council of NSW

## Canberra

The Canberra programme was timed to coincide with the sitting dates in Federal Parliament. A key objective was to create opportunities where young Muslim leaders could meet with people in senior positions in government departments, in the parliament itself, in the High Court of Australia and in the cultural and educational institutions in the national capital. The group was met by Federal parliamentarians from across the political spectrum who took time to discuss and debate issues of relevance to the group.

In 2007 meetings were arranged with both the Minister for Immigration Kevin Andrews and his shadow at the time Mr Tony Bourke. They were hosted by Ms Maria Vamvakinou from the electorate of Calwell in Victoria (one of the most multicultural, multifaith electorates in Australia) and her staff arranged meetings with Greens Senator Kerry Nettle, Independent Peter Andren, and Senator Lyn Allison the Leader of the Democrats.

The group also met with leading members of the Canberra Press Gallery, Andrew Fraser and Jack Waterford from the *Canberra Times* and then sat through question time in parliament where they saw the Prime Minister Mr John Howard in action (an important moment for many of these young Australians).

The group was addressed by Justice Michael Kirby at the High Court, spoke with a number of academics over lunch at the Australian National University and was briefed by the Ambassador for Counter-Terrorism, Mr Mike Smith at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).

The Young Muslims was also hosted at a lavish dinner by the Syrian Ambassador Mr Tammam Suleiman who had gathered together representatives from the embassies of Egypt, the UAE, Palestine and Morocco.

In 2008 a similar programme was put together. The group saw the new Prime Minister, Mr Kevin Rudd, and his cabinet colleagues, and met with the Minister for immigration Mr Chris Evans.

النص

### السفارة السورية تستضيف لقاءً أكاديمياً لمركز الحوار التابع لجامعة لاتروب في مدينة ملبورن



استضافت السفارة السورية في العاصمة كانبيرا لقاءً أكاديمياً نظمه (مركز الحوار) Centre for Dialogue التابع لجامعة (لاتروب) في مدينة ملبورن بمشاركة السفراء العرب، ويضم اللقاء اثنين وعشرين طالباً مع ثلاثة مشرفين من الجامعة جاؤوا إلى العاصمة كانبيرا للقاء أعضاء في البرلمان الأسترالي وزيارة السفارة السورية. ومجموعة الطلاب هذه مؤلفة من مختلف الاختصاصات الجامعية تحت اسم (لقاءات سلسلة شبابية) Young Muslim Leaders برعاية جامعة (لاتروب) لتكون نخبة قيادية أكاديمية من الجالية المسلمة في أستراليا لتوضيح الدور الحقيقي للإسلام وتمييزه عن الأعمال التي ترتكب باسمه. ورحب السفير السوري تمام سليمان باسم السفراء العرب بمدير البرنامج وأعضاء المجموعة، وأثنى على هذه المبادرة لتعريف الأستراليين، وخاصة من قبل مؤسسة أكاديمية هامة مثل جامعة (لاتروب)، بإسلام

الصحيح لا علاقة له بكل ما يحدث باسمه من أعمال إرهابية. وتحدث السفير سليمان حول الدور السلمي الذي يؤديه الإعلام في تشويه الحقائق ونسبته الأعمال الإرهابية إلى الإسلام وخاصة بعد أحداث 11 أيلول. كما قال السفير إن الاحتلال هو الذي يولد جميع المشاكل التي تؤدي بدورها إلى الإرهاب.

وتحدث سفير مصر محمد توفيق، عميد السلك الدبلوماسي العربي، حول دور مجلس السفراء العرب في التواصل مع الحكومة

الاستراتيجية وشرح القضايا العربية والإسلامية والدور البناء الذي قام به العرب. ووجه أعضاء المجموعة أسئلة إلى السفراء العرب تمحورت حول كيفية إيجاد آليات تضامن عربي إسلامي لتسوية الصراع العربي الإسرائيلي وإنهاء حالة الفوضى تحت مسميات دينية وغيرها.

د. جميل بغدادي - كانبيرا



Report in Arabic  
on visit to the Syrian Embassy

Visiting Federal Parliament



At the High Court of Australia the group is hosted by **Justice Michael Kirby**



At the Syrian Embassy in Canberra  
hosted for dinner and dialogue by Ambassador Tammam Suleiman

## **Melbourne**

The Centre's extensive networks of support in Melbourne enabled the Project Coordinator to build a broad and varied programme of important networking opportunities for its participants. Judges, politicians, business leaders, journalists, the police, faith leaders and the Aboriginal community all gave generously of their time and the opportunity to dialogue and learn from their leadership experiences.

- ANZ Bank Head Office – Economists and business analysts provided a briefing
- NAB - a private dialogue over lunch with CEO Ahmed Fahour – an influential Muslim businessman
- Media Forum at Newman College Melbourne University hosted by Professor Morag Fraser - Guests: Ray Cassin (the Age) and Peter Mares (ABC). Analysis of the media's role in reporting controversial issues affecting the Muslim community.
- State Parliament – lunch and discussions with Muslim members and other MLCs.
- Multicultural Advisory Unit of the Victoria Police, and the Islamic Liaison Team from the Federal Police - briefing and discussion
- Jewish Museum and Temple in St Kilda – inter-faith discussions
- The Koori Heritage Trust which educated the young leaders about Aboriginal culture and spirituality and the long Koori history of Melbourne.
- Moreland City Council - meeting with the Mayor and local Councillors
- Erskine Rodan & Associates Law Firm – interviewing Justice Harper of the Supreme Court of Victoria
- Australian Multicultural Foundation – a dialogue with CEO, Has Delal

### **Media Workshop at SBS Radio**

The Melbourne programme included an all day media workshop at the SBS studios in Federation Square.

A panel of journalists and producers provided a penetrating analysis of how the media approaches such controversial issues as the place of Australian Muslims in the community during the era of a 'War on Terror'. There was also an opportunity for participants to engage in the making of an immediate 'vox-pop' radio documentary on how they feel as young Muslims in Victoria today.

In 2008 the presenters of the Arabic language programme and the Filipino programme interviewed some of the Young Muslims from Egypt, Lebanon and the Philippines for their respective programmes.



At the Koorie Heritage Trust in Melbourne learning Aboriginal Culture

### **International Conference**

*Globalisation for the Common Good: An Interfaith Perspective – From the Middle East to Asia Pacific: Arc of Conflict or Dialogue of Cultures and Religions?*

*Trinity College University of Melbourne University 30 June - 3 July 2008*

All participants were invited to attend this special international conference in 2008 organised by the Centre for Dialogue in collaboration with Trinity College and the Melbourne College of divinity, and the generous support of the Victorian Multicultural commission.

This international conference brought together scholars and community leaders from across the world and across several disciplines. All of the Young Leaders had free access to the full conference programme over four days.

For details of the themes of the conference see Appendix 3.

### **Concluding Workshops**

A two day residential workshop (in Tullamarine) was organised in 2007 to help set the entire programme in its proper context and bring together the threads of numerous discussions. The other purpose was to evaluate what had been learned in this exciting journey

- Three senior academics were invited to assist with the group's deliberations. Prof Robert Manne, Prof Diane Bretherton and Prof Joseph Camilleri were each assigned different tasks in helping the participants to reflect productively on their experiences.

- Leaders from the Islamic Community (Mr. Waleedd Ali, Mr. Ahmed Imam and Ms Sherene Hassan) amongst others, facilitated small group discussions.

The evaluation sessions almost unanimously expressed that this had been an extraordinary learning experience. Several participants described it as 'life changing'. Most felt that they were now much better equipped to exercise leadership in their respective communities as well as in the wider community.

In 2008 the South East Asian participants made presentations about their leadership roles in their own communities in Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines, and reflected positively on the potential for greater interaction and collaboration between young Muslims in the region.

### **Graduation Ceremony**

In October of 2007 the participants gathered in the Victorian State Parliament where Premier John Brumby and the Vice Chancellor of La Trobe University Professor Paul Johnson awarded Certificates of Achievement to each one in turn, in the presence of family, friends and invited guests.



Premier Brumby and Vice Chancellor Johnson with the graduates

## PROJECT EVALUATION

### What were the concrete outcomes of the project?

- The young participants were empowered and inspired by the opportunities presented to them via this course. One took up a research position with the Victorian Multicultural Foundation, another joined the Federal Police Islamic Liaison Unit.
- Many of the young leaders became involved in inter-faith issues as a result of their learning during the programme. One began working on the committee organising the 'World Parliament of Religions', two others joined the Multicultural Multi-faith Youth Network (MMYN).
- The group has constituted itself into a solid network of young people still working together and supporting each other as a batch of young leaders in the making. Group meetings have continued over the past year since the first programme ended.
- The Project Coordinator continues to meet with the group for dinner regularly – An Iftar dinner has been arranged for the 2007 group and partners.
- Individuals gained or further honed their leadership skills and the confidence to speak out: at a conference in Sydney; interviews on *ABC Radio*; presentation of reports to work colleagues; letters and articles for *The Age* and other newspapers, joining of boards and committees of a range of religious, community and other organisations, decision to stand for political office.

See Appendix 7 for a short list of what YMLs have been doing since the 2007 programme and what the 2008 group hope to do in the future.

### Opportunities Created by the Programme

1. Scholarships to Malaysian International Workshop in Kuala Lumpur – Inter-Civilizational Youth Engagement Programme (IYEP), coordinated by Just Malaysia

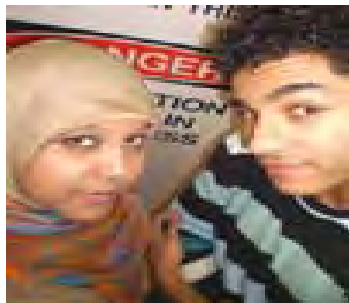
Two Young Muslim Leaders (one from 2007 and one from 2008) have been selected by the Programme to attend the Workshop (which will focus on the challenges posed by the environment) in November 2008.

2. Two participants from 2007 organised an Interfaith Youth Pilgrimage as part of World Youth Day. This was held in Federation Square – a third participants acted as MC.
3. Meeting with European Union students studying at La Trobe University

EU students and the young Muslims met to share perspectives on how Islam is faring in Europe and Australia – the Danish cartoons and stereotyping were discussed in a rich exchange of ideas.

4. Rye Interfaith Festival Workshop 22-23 November 2008: two participants from the 2007 group are hosting this workshop.

5. ***Have you had your Muslim Today?*** with Khaled Khalafalla & Inaz Janif



In this workshop, participants will have the unique opportunity to explore many undiscussed aspects of Islam, such as: Does Islam promote violence & terrorism? Are Muslim women oppressed? Why do Muslim women cover up? Do Muslims try to convert everyone to their faith? Khaled Khalafalla and Inaz Janif will be your hosts to explore these and other questions in a fun, safe and engaging way.

For a sample of media output by participants in the project, see Appendix 6.

## **WHAT WAS ACHIEVED BY THIS PROJECT?**

The project partners were able to design, plan and implement a very successful Leadership Training Programme in each of the two years for 40 (20 +20) Young Victorian Muslims from diverse cultural backgrounds. In addition the programme grew to include young Muslims from SEA in the second year.

The full effect of this programme will be felt over the months and years to come as the young leaders begin to have an even greater impact on their communities and assume positions of authority and influence across a range community organisations, as well as in government, business and the media. The impact the training programme has had on individual participants is already evident as they make use of the skills they developed in the programme to take on new responsibilities and build on the ideas, concepts, insights and experiences to which they became exposed.

A few additional observations

- The forty young Muslims were given unparalleled access to decision makers at many levels of Australian Society via carefully planned learning programmes in three cities (Canberra, Sydney and Melbourne).
- In lectures, seminars, workshops, discussions (formal and informal) the young Muslims were able to express issues of deep concern to theme. They were also able on several occasions to challenge stereotypes of what it means to be a Muslim in contemporary Australian society. In turn they became aware of the dynamic debates which animate Australian society, and will vitally affect Australia's future.
- The institutions and individuals involved in engaging with this group of emerging Muslim leaders were often challenged to re-think their own assumptions about the perceptions, attitudes and aspirations of the 'Muslim Community' in Australia.

- Networking opportunities were taken up by individuals and organisations as the meetings and debates progressed. Many of the young leaders were 'recruited' on to committees and all of them built up a portfolio of vital community contacts
- Media and publicity surrounding the achievements of the participants allowed the programme to have a stronger impact both amongst Australian Muslims and in the broader Australian community
- Participants were empowered to see themselves as having new opportunities to engage in community politics; to bring about change within the political system and take action by lobbying decision makers on behalf of their constituents
- Inter-faith and Inter-cultural networks were further developed as the group engaged with Aboriginal leaders, Jewish students, Catholic clergy, Buddhist teachers and secular humanists.

### **ISSUES FOR THE FUTURE:**

The programme has now built a core of forty young Muslims who are leaders in their own communities and have grown in self-confidence, are psychologically stronger, with experience in debate and dialogue, and with a growing network of contacts that reach across Australia's three major cities.



This is a solid foundation on which to build in the coming years

There is a sense that we can work with the evident difference in the Muslim community between Melbourne and Sydney by engaging participants from both cities so that they can share stories, challenge each other and learn from the journey.

We have experimented with bringing young Muslims from Southeast Asia to this programme and the response has been very positive. However, we can improve on this short programme trialled in 2008. As the feedback suggests, the programme needs to be extended to about six weeks and we should take the Southeast Asians to Canberra and Sydney as well.

Furthermore the exchange has to go deeper and this would mean that we prepare the Australian contingent with lectures and material on these countries and the issues that Muslims face in each case, before they meet their counterparts from Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines. Similarly, the contingent from southeast Asia or any other country (New Zealand seems an obvious possibility) will themselves need to be better prepared intellectually and psychologically before arriving in Melbourne

## APPENDIX 1 – Poster Advertising the Course

# LEADERSHIP TRAINING PROGRAMME

## for Young Muslims, May - July 2007

Organised by the Centre for Dialogue, La Trobe University and the Islamic Council of Victoria  
With the support of the Government of Victoria

### "BECOME AN EFFECTIVE VOICE FOR YOUR COMMUNITY"

#### Why such a Course?

Australia, like much of the world, is at a critical moment in its history.

Of the many challenges that we face none is more important than that of making this society one which values and nurtures its rich cultural and religious diversity.

In this, Australia's Muslim communities, representing one of the world's great religious traditions, have much to contribute. Muslims have been integral to Australia's development since early settlement.

In recent years much has been said about a looming 'clash of civilisations' between Islam and the West. The 'war on terror' is being fought mainly in nations where Islam is the majority religion. Australian Muslims have themselves been subjected to powerful pressures and often less than flattering media attention.

There is a need for young Muslim leaders to emerge who can speak clearly and confidently about the various issues which confront people of Islamic faith in Australia today, and who can participate fully in shaping Australia's future.

#### What will this Course do?

- It will empower young Muslim men and women and help them to reach their full potential as citizens and future leaders
- It will develop the skills that young Muslims need to engage confidently and creatively with all levels of government, business, academia, the professional world, the media, and religious and community organisations
- It will give course members the opportunity to meet and talk with decision makers in Canberra, Sydney and Melbourne - this will include visits to the state and federal parliaments, universities, the courts, media networks, churches, temples and synagogues
- It will encourage new thinking about Australia and its place in the world and the contribution Muslims can make to help meet the challenges of the future.

Would you like to speak effectively and be heard by opinion leaders in our community?

Would you like to gain access to decision makers in Canberra, Melbourne and Sydney?

Are you between 18 and 30 years old - studying or at work?

Would you like to learn from and network with journalists, politicians and academics across the country?

### If so, then this intensive 3-month course in LEADERSHIP TRAINING is FOR YOU



Applications close April 16th 2007. Please contact the Islamic Council of Victoria: (03) 9328 2067 or the Centre For Dialogue's web site below



#### Dates for the Course

The Leadership Training Course will be spread over 6 Tuesday evening sessions, two study tours, one to Canberra (three days) and one to Sydney (also three days) and five days in Melbourne plus a weekend workshop to wrap up the course.

16 May	La Trobe Uni. City Campus (Queen St)	Introductory Session: (3 hour)
Six Tuesday Evenings (22 May - 26 June)	Australian Volunteers International (88 Kerr St. Fitzroy)	Workshops: 5.15pm to 9.15pm. 'Our World In Crisis' a training course in skills and information on Global Issues
7 - 9 June (Thurs/Fri/Sat)	Sydney	3 Day Field Trip: Visits to the Australian Catholic University, Stock Exchange, Muslim Council of NSW, Aboriginal Community
13 - 15 June (Wed/Thurs/Fri)	Canberra	3 Day Field Trip: Visits to the Federal Parliament, Australian National University, High Court, an Embassy
2 - 5 July (Mon/Tues/Wed/ Thurs)	Melbourne	4 Day Study Tour: Visits to the State Government, AFL Club, ANZ bank, Lawyers Group, Local Council, JCMA
26 June 9am to 5pm	Melbourne	Media Workshop: At SBS Radio and Television
21 - 22 July (Sat/Sun)	Melbourne	Intensive Two Day Workshop: Consolidating Learning

\*\*\*No Cost to Participants\*\*\*

[www.latrobe.edu.au/dialogue](http://www.latrobe.edu.au/dialogue)

## Appendix 2

### *Ten-week course: Our World in Crisis?' Interpretations and Responses*

#### Key Themes covered

**Climate of Change:** Who are the main protagonists in the globalisation debate? Is 'globalisation' old or new? Is it a key to future prosperity or another name for Global Apartheid? Can we imagine a different kind of globalisation?

**World Economy, Bordered or Borderless?:** What is the WTO? Who makes the key decisions? Liberalisation or protection in agriculture? What of intellectual property rights or genetically modified foods? What are the key ethical issues? What can we make of the Australia-US Free Trade Agreement? How do we explain the Third World's foreign debt or major financial crises?

**Poverty or Development?:** Can the world feed its hungry? Are UN targets a pipe dream? WTO, IMF, World Bank, Western governments, UNDP - are they part of the solution or part of the problem? Is poverty reduction in the poorest countries compatible with current forms of globalisation? What of the role of NGOs generally, and aid and development agencies in particular?

**National or Human Security?:** Is the nature of conflict changing? Why the recent explosion of internal conflicts? What are the problems posed by military intervention? Who has the right and the competence to intervene? When, how, and with what objectives? Do weapons of mass destruction deliver security or insecurity?

**Energy and Climate Change:** Why is the world so reliant on fossil fuels? What are the global politics and economics of oil? How does all this impact on the Middle East? Who are the main protagonists in the current world energy debate? What are the implications of the Kyoto Protocol? Is there a role for nuclear power? Are there other alternatives?

**Iraq, Iran, Lebanon and Afghanistan:** What lies behind terrorism? Is terrorism a new phenomenon? If not, does it have new features? What lies behind the 'war on terror'? Who is pushing for what, how and why?

**Clash or Dialogue of Civilisations?:** Are the world's major civilisations on a collision course? Is Western dominance threatened by the rise of Islam or China? Can collision be avoided? What are the prospects for dialogue? How can dialogue be approached internationally? In Australia?

**Human Rights, Democracy & UN reform:** How important are human rights? How seriously do we take them in Australia? What is an acceptable trade off between security and civil liberties? Can a globalising world be democratic? Are democracy and the rule of law a help or a hindrance in addressing the major challenges facing Australia and the world? Does the UN have a future?

**Race and Culture in Australia:** How well are Australians coping with racial and cultural differences at home and in our relations with Asia and the Pacific? Can we do better? How? Does multiculturalism have a future? What are the options facing Australia over the next decade and beyond?

**Australia and the World:** What is Australia's view of the world? Has it changed over time? How do we approach our relations with the United States? With China, India and Japan? With Indonesia and Malaysia? What is our role in the South Pacific? How do Australians imagine the future? Is it something we can shape or influence? If so, how?

For details see Course Brochure:

<http://www.josephcamilleri.com/doc/owicCORPbrochure08.pdf>

## Appendix 3

**From the Middle East to Asia Pacific:  
Arc of Conflict or Dialogue of Cultures and Religions  
Globalisation for the Common Good Australia 2008 Conference  
30 June – 3 July 2008  
Trinity College University of Melbourne**

### **OVERVIEW**

The Conference will link the various conflicts in the Middle East (religious and political) and the complex and increasingly contentious relationship between Islam and the West with a range of issues that have assumed increasing prominence in Asia Pacific (especially since September 11, although many of these links have a much older history). Issues to be considered by the Conference include:

- a) **The relationship between the three Abrahamic faiths**, its implications for conflict resolution in the Middle East, and the prospects for inter-faith and intercultural dialogue in the Asia-Pacific region generally, and in particular for multi-faith, multi-ethnic societies;
- b) **Islam and the West (global and regional dimensions)**, especially the impact of conflicts involving Iraq, Palestine, Lebanon, Iran, Afghanistan and the 'war on terror' on international relations generally, and the Asia-Pacific region in particular);
- c) **The attitudes of Muslims in Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Philippines, Pakistan, India** to events and issues in the Middle East and the way in which those events impact on their own countries;
- d) **Handling of tensions since September 11**, with particular reference to Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand (including civil conflicts in Mindanao, South Thailand and Indonesia) – how have the major religious and ethical traditions handled these tensions?
- e) **Debates within the Muslim world in relation to Islam's self-understanding**, relationship with the state, relations with other religions, and role in the international community;
- f) **The implications of these developments for Australia's relations with the region**, as well as for community relations inside Australia (in particular for multiculturalism: past, present and future – and for Muslim and Indigenous communities in Australia).

## Appendix 4 – Speech by Mohammed El-leissy

*Speech made by Mohammed El-leissy at the Graduation Ceremony in Parliament House where the Young Muslim Leaders were awarded their Certificates by the Premier of Victoria Mr. John Brumby and the Vice-Chancellor of La Trobe University Professor Paul Johnson*

“Respected parents, Premier Brumby, Vice-Chancellor, distinguished guests, fellow leadership participants

I have a little confession to make...When I first heard about the Muslim Leadership programme; I was reluctant to sign up. I had heard of these types of programmes before. And to be quite honest the first thing that came to my head was ‘what would this programme achieve?’ how would I benefit from this?’ and ‘what good would this serve the Muslim community?’

When the deadline for applications drew near, my belief in the programme was still wavering. In the end I decided to abstain from applying – that was without a shred of doubt, one of the biggest mistakes I could have made. Thankfully Br Nail from the ICV called me and encouraged me to apply. I did and was the 63<sup>rd</sup> and last person to be interviewed. I had heard the interviews were tough and many of my friends that applied had been rejected in droves. The next day I received a call saying I had been accepted. I was grateful but still the skepticisms remained.

June 6 2007 – We flew to Sydney and were placed at the Australian Catholic University – was this some sort of conversion attempt? As the three days passed, I learnt to understand my own identity as a Muslim more, while learning about others and their religion. They embraced us as us to them. Discussion ensued throughout the night and friendships developed.

On June the 9<sup>th</sup>, we got to meet the former Mufti of Australia (not a stranger to controversy) at a dinner we were invited to in Sydney. While many people paid their respects to him at the dinner, we (in our own polite way informed him of our views on his miss-representation of the Muslim community)...the next day he resigned. (I’m not saying we did it).

June the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> are dates that (in my personal journey) I feel were life changing in their own way. Never has my world view been altered so fast... It was on those two days we were given private audience with Minister of Immigration Kevin Andrews, Lyn Allison (Leader of the Democrats), Robert McClellan (Shadow Foreign Minister), Justice Kirby (of the High Court of Australia), 5 Arab Ambassadors, the Archbishop of Canberra and the Editor in Chief of the Canberra times. All of them were willing to give us a little insight into their worlds – worlds that I had too many false assumptions about. During Question Time in Parliament House John Howard swiveled his chair around, looked at the gallery, and stared me in the eyes – I have never been so terrified!

While having private conversations with MPs in the corridors of Parliament House, I learnt a little about the game called politics. Watching Question time was the most disappointing moment in my understanding of democracy as our politicians dodged the big issues in favor of sending out sound bites that only praised themselves and their party. In the end, despite my aversion to many of our federal politicians, this trip humanized them – once I had seen the system and the people in it first hand, a lot changed in the way I would relate to it. Since then, I’ve joined a party. For the first time I’ve become active in politics and hope to run in council elections next year. I’ve learnt

that it's easy for some people to say the world is "us and them" – however the quagmire of politics tells me that things are much more complex than that.

On another level, before this trip, I had a serious hatred for the media – who I deemed as responsible for a lot of the hate directed at Muslims (due to unnecessary hyping up "the Muslim issue"). Sensationalist headlines about Muslim terrorism and how Muslims were failing to integrate only deepened my mistrust for the media machine. After meeting a few media men, I learnt how "it's just business" – I learnt that if Muslims have a problem with the false way they are portrayed, they will need to learn to engage with it. Since then, I have begun writing opinion pieces and had my first published this week. We also have a few budding journalists and freelancers in our group and they have been equally active.

Programmes like these are crucial in helping those who do not have access to the powers that be, have an opportunity to see how it works. It may not change their views, but it will show them how to work within the paradigm of the system that governs Australia.

While programmes like these may seem tokenistic to some people I cannot stress enough that if the aim of this Programme was to create potential future leaders it has succeeded. I see our future Kevin Rudds and John Brumbys in the audience. However I also see our future Gandhis and Nelson Mandelas amongst them. Regardless of what paths the participants take in the long run, this programme has given them unwavering insight into the world.

At the end this programme empowered us, gave us a wide network of contacts across a range of decision makers at all levels of Australian society. I DO believe that is crucial for the sake of our community that this continues. I remember there were many times during the programme that I sincerely wished that every young Muslim in Australia had the chance to participate in this programme.

I would like to thank the other 19 in the group. I have learnt so much from you all. We all have different viewpoints on things and worldviews, but that is what made it so educational and fun. You have also restored my faith in the future of the Muslim community in Australia, as the knowledge, insight and goodwill that you all possess will be an asset for now and for the future.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the State Government, the Islamic Council of Victoria and the Centre for Dialogue at La Trobe University for funding and organising this. I know we were your guinea pigs (being the first group) but for once I sincerely didn't mind. I am so very thankful that I didn't turn this opportunity down – an opportunity that who would have thought would have changed my life. I am forever indebted to you for helping me overcome many barriers I had previously placed before myself before the trip and for allowing me to realise that we can all participate in the betterment of the world – if only we try.

Thank you

*Mohammed El-leissy – One of the youngest Imams in Melbourne. A stand up comic of some reputation, with a successful show called 'Fear of a Brown Planet' which won the recent Melbourne Fringe Festival, Mohammed is also a radio presenter with a weekly programme on Muslim Community issues on 3CR. Since the programme he has become active in politics and is standing for Local Council.*

## Appendix 5

### A workshop paper delivered at the University of Western Sydney Conference by Nesrine Mojaled – September 2007

The conference was entitled: *Muslim Students – Access, Inclusion and Success*

Nesrine made the presentation with two other participants just a few weeks after the programme had concluded.

#### Developing Young Muslim Leaders

**Keywords: Diversity, Listening, Dialogue and Interfaith/ Intra-faith issues**

The Sydney component of the Young Muslim Leadership Training Programme was hosted by the Australian Catholic University (ACU) and the Affinity Intercultural Foundation. A series of workshops were held over three days as part of the 'Beyond today leadership programme'.

The workshops involved interfaith dialogue, listening and engaging with Aboriginal community leaders, a visit to St Patrick's Cathedral, an art and culture workshop which encouraged us to look at different layers, group discussions with ACU National graduates regarding leadership today and discussion about Muslim Leadership.

Sydney provided us with the opportunity to immerse ourselves in other cultures, religions and traditions. Active listening was emphasised throughout the programme.

Brother Jude Butcher from ACU facilitated many of the Sydney sessions. Brother Jude Butcher taught the importance of active listening. He also left us with the 'go fishing' method which aims to be well informed and to deeper inform others. 'Go fishing' is how you inform others by providing them with suggestions but leaving them with questions to get your audience to think and wonder about what you discussed, after you have gone. Go fishing is when you don't give answers when you meet someone but instead leave them thinking.

We had an opportunity to listen and talk with the Aboriginal community leaders. Diversity was the key point that stood out from our discussions with Aboriginal community leaders. We discussed how you should not lump all Aboriginals together as you wouldn't lump all Muslims together as the Aboriginal community are also communities within a broader community which we as, Muslims were able to agree with:

- You can not take action to fix things until there is an acknowledgement of the past.
- There is never a clear answer but through discussion you gain an understanding and are in a better position to find an answer.
- Education is an important key.

Sydney provided the discussions around leadership. We had passionate discussions about what leadership meant to us all. As a group we discussed the struggle with:

- Myself as a leader
- Myself as a Muslim
- Myself as a Muslim leader

Interfaith was a key component of our Sydney programme and was tied up with leadership. A true leader is able to engage not only with their own community as well as others effectively. The dinner with Affinity allowed us to see how interfaith projects in Sydney were a positive contribution. The discussions around interfaith were:

- Interfaith dialogue is important as it provides an opportunity for people of different faiths to talk openly to one another.
- Interfaith dialogue works when you are actively listening to the views and perspectives of people of different faiths.
- Interfaith dialogue involves discussion of similarities and differences openly with respect.
- When you are sharing similarities and differences you are able to gain a greater understanding and respect of each others faiths.
- We are all people of different faiths rather than Muslims and non-Muslims or Catholics and non-Catholics.
- There is a need for intra faith dialogue as well as interfaith dialogue.
- There seems to be a focus only on "to build bridges" but there is also a need to learn how to cross these bridges.
- The diversity of the Muslim community as opposed to a 'monolithic community'.

In Sydney the group participants stayed with home stays. We stayed in convents with nuns, with priests and local Catholic families. At first we were very anxious about not knowing who we were staying with and many of us were concerned about the cultural differences. The home stays were a great opportunity for many of us to have deep interfaith discussions. We engaged in dialogue with our home stays and were able to gain an understanding of one another beliefs. Not only did we discuss the similarities that our faiths have in common we were also able to discussed the differences in an open and respectful manner.

The Sydney programme highlighted that prejudice and discrimination could be overcome by engaging and listening to other first, through building a measure of dialogue and understanding with respect.

*Nesrine Mojaled Graduate of Latrobe University who worked as a conciliator at the Victorian Water and Energy ombudsman's office. Since the programme she has spoken at the University of Western Sydney conference and was interviewed on ABC radio. Also spoke to dignitaries at the Eid festival in Broadmeadows. Nesrine has since joined the Federal Police Islamic Liaison Unit*

## Appendix 6

### Sample of media output by participants in the project

Published in *The Australian* 31 July 2007

#### Changing the Muslim Narrative

Contrary to popular perceptions, it is the vast majority of Australia's Muslims that suffer the most from the views of Muslim extremists. The latter have taken a leaf out of the current government's book for they also specialise in driving wedges between Muslim communities to suit their own agendas. Further similarities can also be found in their use of the media, as they also promote the adversarial 'Us versus Them' approach that most politicians and newsrooms relish. Hence, it is always the same 'Muslim spokesmen', the same political reactions and the same newspaper stories.

With this narrative so entrenched within the political and media climate, it is extremely difficult for any fresh perspectives to emerge – unless you are the odd Muslim AFL player or hijab wearing police officer.

Recently, Mustapha Karra Ali, member of the now defunct Muslim Reference Group, continued this pervasive narrative. Ali claimed that up to 3,000 young Muslims are at risk of becoming radicalised by hardliners, a figure that even Australian Federal Police chief Mick Kelty was cautious in supporting. The ill effect of Ali's claims is that it casts suspicion on all young Australian Muslims and undermines their continuous efforts in building bridges with the mainstream.

While the media and politicians predictably fed on this news, they neglected the many powerful stories of how Australia's young Muslims are breaking stereotypes to contribute to Australian society. Recently, the 65<sup>th</sup> annual International Council of Christian and Jews took the brave step of inviting a delegation of Australian Muslim youth to attend the conference in Sydney. These young Muslims played an important role in laying down the framework for a dialogue which has long been branded as taboo by a majority of Muslim elders.

Recently, twenty Australian Muslim youth were engaged in Latrobe University's Muslim Leadership Programme which had them visit Parliament House, the High Court and the Australian Catholic University for some robust discussions with the Federal Minister of Immigration, Kevin Andrews, Chief Justice Kirby and numerous other political and civic leaders.

The youth involved in this programme come from diverse backgrounds such as Faza Fauzi, who works for a Catholic not for profit organisation caring for the elderly and children with special needs. There is also Sumeya Koc, who was the Victorian delegate for the United Nations Youth Association and Mohammed El-leissy, who touches hearts and minds as a Muslim cleric and stand up comedian.

It is understandable if some choose to view these as token stories, but the majority of Australia's young Muslims are working hard to ensure that their contributions are never viewed other than being part and parcel of being an Aussie. We all must stand behind and empower these youth in order to counter the pessimistic overtures of the extremist fringe. The fact that their stories are seldom told illustrates how all sectors of Australian society have a role to play in fighting against all types of extremism, no matter how politically and religiously inconvenient this narrative is to some.

**Saeed Saeed** is of Eritrean background. A freelance journalist and youth worker, published in many papers and journals. Since the programme: Saeed has written for the *Age*, the *Australian* and *Herald Sun* and *Eureka Street* about Muslim & youth issues. He has also coordinated workshops on challenges facing the Horn of Africa and Sudanese communities when settling in Australia.

***Other Media:***

*The Age* also ran an article by Sushi Das (with photos) . There were interviews with participants at the UWS conference aired on ABC radio JJJ. There were also interviews at SBS radio with the five South Asian Muslims. Community radio, local newspapers and various newsletters of Muslim groups also reported on the project.

## Participants 2008

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Ethnic Background</b>
F	19	Iraqi
M	18	Malay/Indian
M	30	East African/Indian
F	19	Bangladeshi
M	26	Yemeni/Indonesian
F	27	Somali
M	33	Lebanese
F	24	Somali
F	18	Yemeni/Indonesian
F	19	Anglo/Egyptian
F	18	Eritrean
M	22	Turkish
M	22	Lebanese
F	23	Lebanese
M	25	Bangladeshi
M	22	Iraqi
F	19	Indian
M	21	Anglo-Australian
F	18	Egyptian
M	27	Somali

## Participants 2007

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Ethnic Background</b>
M	Somali
F	Pakistani
F	Singapore
F	Egyptian
F	Fijian/Indian
M	Somali
F	Tunisian
F	Australian /Lebanese
M	Egyptian
M	Egyptian
F	Lebanese
F	Kenyan
M	Bangladesh
F	Lebanese
M	Eritrean
F	Eritrean
F	Turkish
M	Lebanese
M	Egypt/England
F	Lebanese