

# The LMA Review

*A Biannual Newsletter, Informing Our Community*



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### *Feed the Fasting*

**Over 250 people break their fast at Lakemba Mosque.**

We invite you to share in the reward by donating towards the daily cost of feeding them. Donations can be made at the LMA office or contact us on [info@lma.org.au](mailto:info@lma.org.au), 9750 6833 or 0415 503 135.

Account Name: The Lebanese Moslem Association  
 BSB: 917 111 | Account no.: 240 151 400  
 Reference: FeedFasting

# About the LMA

The Lebanese Muslim Association (LMA) was established in 1962 by a group of Lebanese immigrants. Its aim was to provide social, religious, educational and recreational services for the Muslim Community in Australia.

## LMA History

The LMA set out to unify the community with a common place of worship and in 1972 began the construction of one of Australia's largest mosques, Masjid Ali ibn Abi Talib.

The LMA has worked with government agencies, not-for-profit organisations and individuals on small and large projects providing much needed services and awareness of Islam.

Over the last 40 years, the LMA has grown to be the leading Islamic grassroots, community-based organisation in Australia.

Currently, the LMA manages one of Australia's largest mosques and has become one of Australia's largest Islamic not-for-profit organisations.





Vision:  
An Australian  
Muslim community  
that has a positive  
and sustainable  
contribution  
globally.

## Objective

- The LMA is dedicated to assisting in the growth of solid, strong, sustainable, articulate, and effective Muslim communities. When Muslim communities are healthy and strong, the positive and uplifting impact of the Muslim presence will be felt throughout Australia.
  - The LMA works hard to meet the community's religious, educational, social, and recreational needs. It promotes community independence through the enhancement of the infrastructure and network of the Australian Muslim community.
  - The LMA's purpose is to strengthen families, empower women, encourage youth, engender a vibrant community, cultivate leadership and foster respect for all.
  - The LMA is committed to working on the national level to promote and protect the interests of Muslims in Australia. As a grassroots organisation, the LMA voices the concerns of the Muslim community and takes necessary actions to advocate and realise the religious, social, cultural, educational, economic and political rights of Muslims in Australia.
- The LMA is dedicated to reaching out to convey the message of Islam, speaking out against all injustices, advocating Islamic solutions to societal problems and becoming involved in effecting positive change in Australia.
  - The LMA has a greater vision for Australian Muslims and is committed to attaining a world-class organisation for the Muslim community.
  - The LMA is open to all Muslims, regardless of their ethnic, economic, language or racial background. In fact, Muslims of Australia form a global rainbow of backgrounds. The LMA welcomes the participation of all segments of the diverse Muslim population and encourages their voice and presence in the LMA's activities.



## Mission Statement

- To innovate and build resilient inclusive communities to help Australian Muslims achieve their full potential.
- To develop leadership to strengthen the Australian Muslim community.
- To serve and engage Muslims by promoting and advocating social harmony in a multicultural environment.
- To enhance understanding of Islam, empower Australian Muslims and build a better future for the Australian Muslim community.

# President's Message

As-salam 'alaykum wa rahmatuh Allah wa barakatuh,  
"Indeed, with hardship, there is relief." Quran, 94:6

There should be no doubt that the Muslim community is currently in a period of great hardship. The obstacles we face grow in breadth and complexity with every turn. Widespread Islamophobia amongst media and politicians have allowed for enormous bouts of fear and anxiety to take hold of the wider Australian community.

Muslims have legitimately criticised government policies that have demonised and targeted Muslim communities, adding to the growing sense of isolation we feel as a community. This feeling is only exacerbated by the harassment and abuse Muslims face online and in their day to day lives.

We have found hardship in separating ourselves from the message of extremist discourse. We have found hardship in seeking to engage in wider discourse as Australian Muslims. We have found hardship in the continuous lack of consultation on policies impacting our community.

It is essential that, as a community, we seek to come to terms with and completely identify these obstacles, to avoid simplifying the challenges we face. Many of the problems we currently face require an in-depth understanding of their root causes, the initial catalyst for their emergence. With this understanding, we can come together on the means by which we can face these challenges and focus our energies on solutions that will actively address these causes.

Nonetheless, although hardship is easy to identify and relate to, relief is integral to our vision of the future for the Muslim community. Allah tells us to have hope, and Islam is inherently an optimistic tradition. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) is reported to have said: "Verily, if Allah loves a people, He makes them go through trials. Whoever is satisfied, for him is contentment, and whoever is angry upon him is wrath." (Hadith-Tirmidhi).

We at the LMA endeavour to uphold these principles and understand that with all these challenges facing our community at the moment, there will inevitably be a time of relief. However, we also recognize that there is a process by which relief comes about, a process of building and establishment that will allow future generations of Muslims to flourish.

We continue to grow in population every day, and with that comes both added challenges, as well as a sense of permanency to our endeavors as Australian Muslims. This sense of permanency has largely been absent from the manner in which the Muslim community has responded to challenges and crises in the past. It is vital we as a community evolve and recognize there are pro-active steps that we need to take in order to continue and accelerate the building process the community is currently experiencing.

Thus, it has been an important six months for the LMA, as we work towards the implementation of the second iteration of the immensely successful ECG program, as well as expanding a majority of the wider LMA programs and projects.

We continue to strive to improve on our endeavors and aspire to present to the Muslim community with the very best programs, partnerships and projects, to continue contributing our voice and our resources to this extensive building process.

I'd like to take this opportunity to consequently thank everybody who has supported the LMA, and pay tribute to the individuals that have helped shape the organization as it is today, and provided this platform for us to continue building.

With Peace,  
**Samier Dandan**

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# Lakemba Mosque

The Imam Ali Bin Abi Taleb Mosque (also known as Lakemba Mosque) is one of the largest mosques in Australia.

It is owned and managed by the Lebanese Muslim Association. The Mosque is open for the five daily prayers and conducts weekly lectures in Arabic, English and Tajweed classes for youth and adults. Friday Jumm'ah Prayers are also held onsite.

The mosque runs mosque tours for schools and organisations in NSW. In the past few months, over 40 tours were done that included several hundred students and community members.

In order to ensure that prayers run smoothly, the LMA has made a multitude of adjustments to the mosque such as the installation of a Solar System to power the mosque and the upgrade of lighting to energy efficient lighting. The mosque has also been re-painted along with the upgrade of the air conditioning, microphone and speaker system, to ensure all visitors of the mosque can have a better and more comfortable experience.

Eid al Fitr and Eid al Adha prayers were held at Lakemba Mosque on the 6th of August and 4th of October. Over 40,000 Muslims attended the mosque to celebrate both Eids. The LMA worked in conjunction with Canterbury Council and local police officers to ensure Wangee Rd was safely closed in order to make room for worshippers to pray comfortably and in allowing for ample alternate parking spaces. As per every Eid, LMA president Samier Dandan delivered his Eid address to community members present at the morning prayers, followed by various Members of Parliament who addressed the community.

# Hajj

The LMA offers a Hajj package every year to the individuals who wish to fulfill such an intrinsic aspect of their faith and spiritual journey.



## Lakemba Mosque Lecture Series

### Series One

The Mosque held several lecture series from January to April. The biography of the Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be blessings and peace) was delivered by Shaykh Wesam Charkawi every Monday. Tafsir Juzu' Aama (Surat An Naba' and An Naziat) was taught by Shaykh Abu Bakr Zoud every Tuesday. Aqeedah and Seerah was taught by Shaykh Yahya Safi in Arabic only every Wednesday and essentials of Islam was taught every Thursday by Shaykh Yaha Safi in English and featured a Q and A session following each lesson.

### Series Two

Following the success of the first series, the LMA ran a second series of lectures from April to Ramadan. Several Shaykhs from Sydney partook in this series, delivering weekly lectures at Lakemba Mosque.

### Tahfiz and Tilawat Quran

The LMA Quran College held a memorisation programme for boys and girls ages 7-15 which covered Juz Ama and Juz Tabarak, as well as Surah Al Waqiaa, Surah Al Rahman and Surah Qaaf.

### Tahfeez, Tajweed & Tafsir Course

Delivered by Imam of Lakemba Mosque, Shaykh Yaha Safi, this course was split into three categories: beginners', intermediate and advanced. Separate classes were held for men and women.



The LMA Hajj organisers met with the attendees who received an intensive crash course on what they needed to do and what is expected of them. They were each given a Hajj Guidebook detailing all the relevant information they need in order to ensure the pilgrims' journey was as smooth and enjoyable as possible. Last year's Hajj group departed Sydney on September 11th to make their journey to fulfill the annual pilgrimage to Mecca that every able-bodied Muslim must make once in their lifetime.



# LMA Quran and Shariah College

The LMA Quran and Shariah College was designed to provide the community with access to an extensive amount of knowledge in Islamic subjects and practices to add depth and comprehension for those seeking to increase their understanding of the faith.

The school currently has three levels of student enrolment for various age groups and has three main components:

1.

## Islamic Studies:

Students learn basic Islamic creed, including morals and manners, an introduction to the five pillars of faith, with the teachings and life of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

3.

## Quran memorisation:

the aim of this programme is to memorise one chapter every term, 4 in total per year directly from a Shaykh or a qualified Quran teacher. In 2013, the LMA introduced Quran recitation and Ijaza and the provision of several forms of Quran recitation.

2.

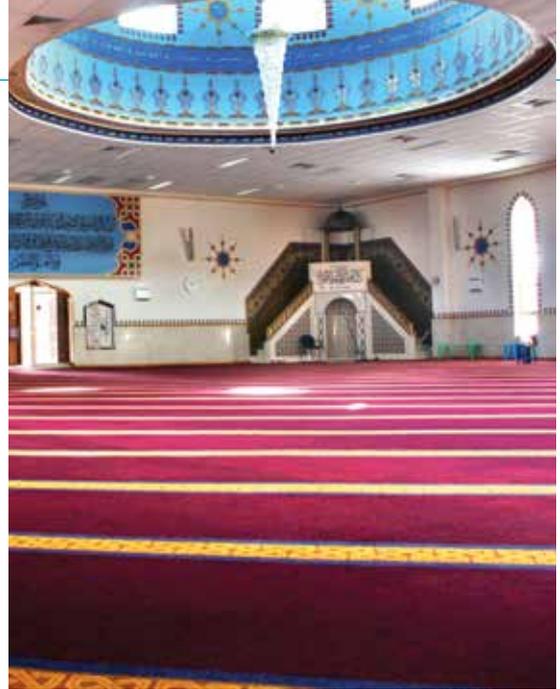
## Advanced Quran Programme:

Students memorise the whole Quran, at 1.5 hours per week where applicants must have a solid knowledge of the Quranic recitation

# An Occasion of Remembrance of the Best of Creation

▶ Saturday January 10th

The LMA held an evening to reflect on the life of the Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be blessings and peace). Featuring Ahabab Al Mustafa, Shaykh Yahya Safi and Shaykh Wesam Charkawi, this free event was held at Lakemba mosque and provided tea and sweets.



## Reconnecting with the Real

▶ Sunday January 25th

The LMA held a one-day intensive course providing Muslims with the knowledge required to re-establish and maintain their connection with the most important aspects of their life. Brothers and sisters were welcomed at this event, delivered by Shaykh Ahmed Abdo.

## Understanding Your Creed

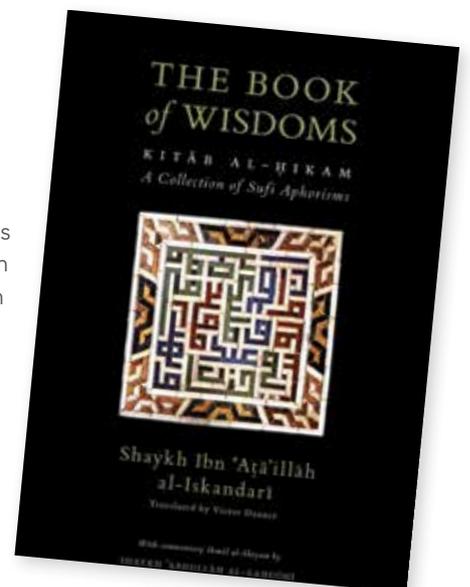
▶ 10-week course

The LMA ran a 10-week intensive programme providing Muslims with a deeper understanding of their Creed/Aqeedah covering a renowned text. This course was open to both men and women and was delivered by Shaykh Wesam Charkawi.

## The Aphorisms of Ibn 'Ata'illah

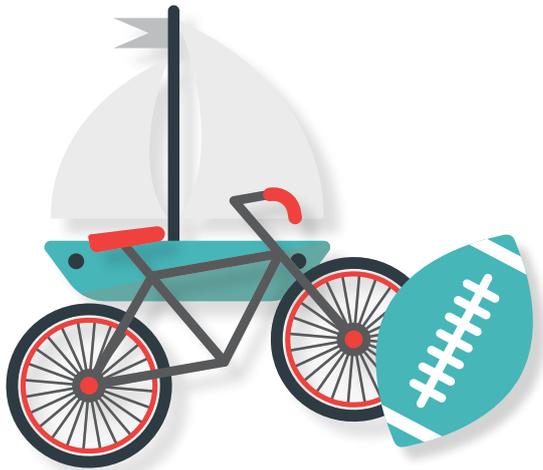
▶ 20-week course

The LMA runs weekly lessons, delivered by Shaykh Ahmed Abdo covering Ibn 'Ata'illah's classical book, 'Kitab al Hikam' (Book of Wisdoms). Brothers and sisters were welcome to this course and an ijaza will be given upon the successful completion of the course.



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# Youth Programmes

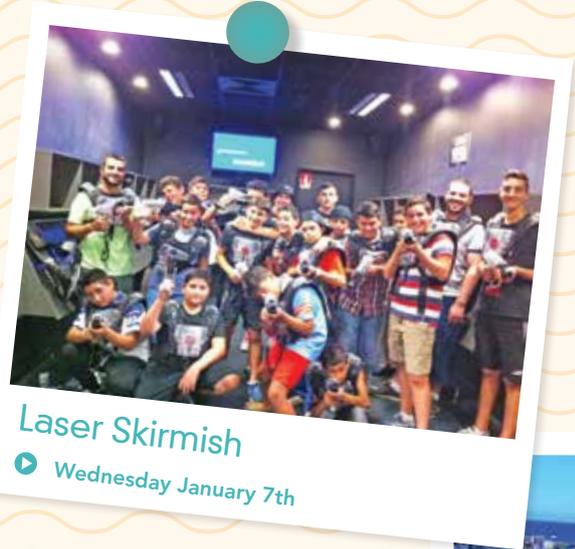


The LMA's Youth Programme aims to empower young people through a host of activities and projects. These are designed to give young people access to recreational activities and educational workshops.





# Summer School Holiday Programme





## Extreme Iron Man Circuit Training

With lunch provided, prizes and special guest: Keede from Brotherhood Boxn.

▶ Monday January 12th



## Boxing Session

With special guest Billy "The Kid" Dib.

▶ Monday January 19th



## Beach Boot camp

With special guest Osman Karolia and a free BBQ.

▶ Thursday January 8th



## Barista Training

The LMA held a two-day training course to up-skill high-school boys through awarding all attendees with a Barista Certificate.

Day 1: Safe food handling

▶ Wednesday January 21st

Day 2: Coffee Making

▶ Thursday January 22nd



## Archery

▶ Wednesday January 21st



## Youth Summer Camp

▶ Tuesday January 13th –Thursday January 15th



## Friday Night BBQ

▶ Fridays in summer

The LMA ran a camp for young male Muslims in Myuna Bay. With over 60 high-school boys in attendance, the three-day camp included sports and recreational activities such as canoeing and fishing. The camp was a physically and spiritually rejuvenating experience for all involved as role models such as Shaykh Wesam Cherkawi, Billy The Kid Dib and Jihad Dib visited.



# Autumn School Holiday Programme



Digital Video Workshop  
with Kamal Saleh

▶ Friday April 10th

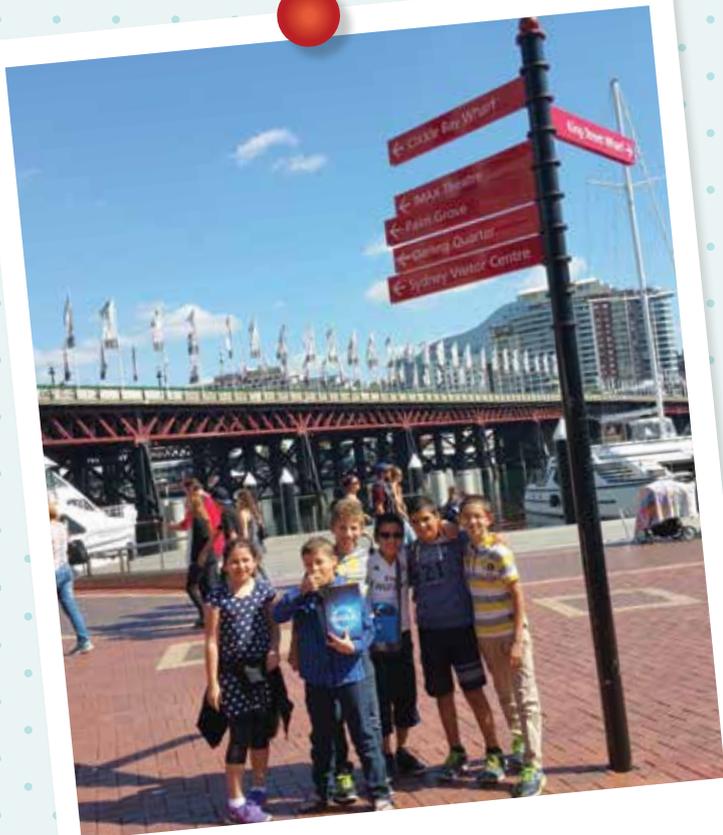




### Computer Lego Robotics

Attendees learnt how to programme a robot.

▶ Wednesday April 8th



### Imax

Attendees watched Island of Lemurs: Madagascar 3D.

▶ Tuesday April 14th



### Family Fun Day

Included activities involving whole families such as sports drills, science shows and other performances.

▶ Thursday April 16th



# Friday Night Lights



▶ **Every Friday starting May 1st**

The LMA, supported by Youth Off The Streets and Bankstown PCYC, have been holding weekly soccer tournaments at Parry Park. Aimed at boys aged 12-17, the tournament featured two divisions and awards members of the winning teams with JB Hi-Fi gift vouchers. Dinner is also provided.



# Path To Paradise

▶ **First Saturday of every month**

The LMA Women's Network holds monthly sessions for girls aged 12-18. These sessions aim to guide girls with Islamic knowledge and principles in order to help them develop characteristics that will assist them through life and its challenges. Shaykh Wesam Cherkawi delivered a lecture on Saturday June 6th and the following sessions featured arts and crafts, excursions, educational tours, Islamic and prayer classes, cooking lessons and other recreational activities.



# Engage Challenge Grow (ECG)

## What is ECG?

The Engage, Challenge, Grow (ECG) initiative is a set of projects that help promote mutual respect, fairness, inclusion and a sense of belonging. Moreover, they address some of the root causes of the problems facing the Australian Muslim community such as cultural, racial and religious intolerance.

The ECG programme contributed to many of the LMA's initiatives in 2014. Financially supported by the Department of Social Services, ECG was run by the Lebanese Muslim Association with the primary goal to promote social cohesion within the Australian Muslim community and foster mutual respect and understanding between Muslims and non-Muslims living in Australia.

ECG supports the development of various projects and programmes to encourage the growth and advancement of the Australian Muslim community via the integration of arts, sports, mentorship, education and leadership. All projects share a common denominator of exposing participants to ideas of social cohesion, engaging with and also being part of wider society. They also encourage the community to contribute to the society in which they live.

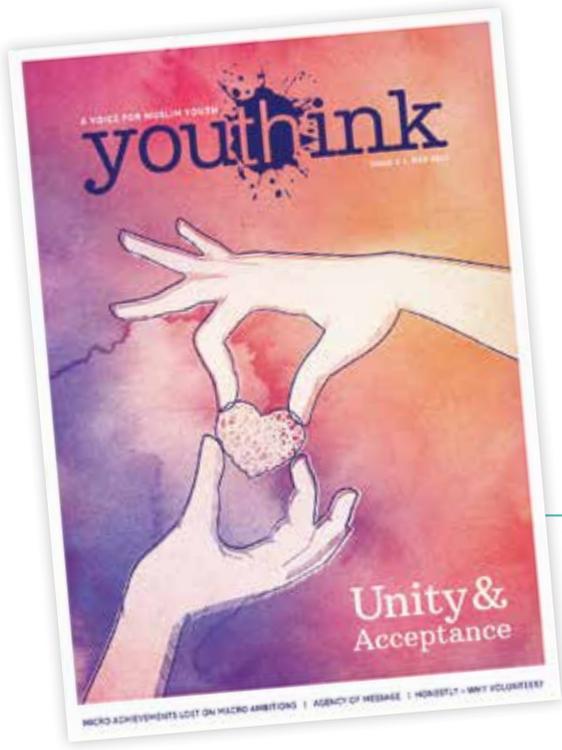
The projects focus on building resilience, addressing social exclusion and supporting vulnerable communities, with an emphasis on breaking down stereotypes and empowering those communities with tools to navigate Western societies.

### ★ WHO IS ECG? ★



### ★ THE TEAM ★





# YouThink

YouThink is an online magazine co-founded and edited by passionate members of the LMA Leadership Programme. YouThink aims to create a platform for young Australians to be heard, not herded, and to highlight the mosaic of talent, diversity and aesthetics that exist in the Australian Muslim community. The vision of its founders is to share experiences, passions, informed opinions, interests and concerns. The latest edition and all preceding it can be downloaded from the LMA website.

# Together We Are Strong (TWAS)

Australian religious leaders and workers' roles range from leading prayers to supporting communities and resolving disputes. Most religious leaders and workers in Australia are well experienced in some of these responsibilities, however there has been little training in the specific ethical, legal and professional competencies to handle psychosocial problems.

The LMA's Together We Are Strong initiative was created to fill this gap through running training sessions such as Islamic Psychosocial Skills Training.



# Toolkit4Change

## Know Your Rights: Police powers and Counter-Terrorism

Toolkit4Change collaborated with the Muslim Legal Network in administrating the first of two Know Your Rights workshops aimed to empower Australian Muslims with relevant legal knowledge of their rights and new laws. Hosted by Lydia Shelly, the panel featured criminal barristers Paul Bodisco and Wayne Flynn and a Q and A session at the end.



# Islamic Psychosocial Skills Training (IPST)

This two-day seminar provided information on how to integrate psychosocial support with Islamic spiritual care for individuals who come to religious workers for assistance. Participants were taught about the Islamic foundations for psychosocial support, counselling skills and techniques. They also learned about case studies of common issues brought to Imams, professional services for onward referrals, mandatory reporting requirements and strategies for increasing support.

Over 22 Australia-based Imams and Shaykhs attended this two-day seminar and reported an increase in knowledge regarding marriage and trauma counselling and referring individuals to the appropriate services.



“After this training I would be careful when counselling and refer those in need to the professionals in the field.”

“I will incorporate all of today’s learning in my interaction with people in our community with the knowledge of how mental health can impact individuals.”

“To take into account some important steps when dealing with a couple, and to refer them to a suitable specialist that meets their needs.”

– Participant feedback

## Go4Fun

► **Every Saturday (10am-12pm), February-April 2015?**

Go4Fun is a free programme supporting children to become fitter, healthier and happier. The interactive programme supports 7-13 year old children and their families adopt a long lasting approach to life. The programme focuses on improving eating habits, fitness, teamwork and overall health. The LMA worked in conjunction with NSW Health and the Better Health Company in facilitating weekly sessions over the span of ten weeks. These involved children’s games, interactive discussions regarding the integration of healthy lifestyle choices, practical demonstrations of portion size, nutrition and discussion on what to look for on food labels.



# Sydney Muslim Conference (SMC) 2014

The inaugural Sydney Muslim Conference (SMC) took place on Sunday, November 16th, 2014, at Rosehill Gardens in Parramatta. SMC aims to celebrate the diversity of Sydney's Muslim community and facilitate an event to enhance mutual respect and social cohesion.

The one-day conference facilitated the transition of the NSW Muslim community into becoming a unit which operates as a cohesive whole. In the spirit of inclusiveness and cooperation, this gathering engaged the community on the common narratives of Islamic history, tradition and spirituality, which formulate the backbone of our common Muslim identities.

It showcased high-profile speakers who challenged misconceptions surrounding Australian Muslim

identity and explored contemporary influences. Speakers included: Imam Afroz Ali, Alia Gabres, Peter Gould, Shaykh Soner Coruhlu, Shaykh Abdel Moez Nafti, Shaykh Hassan Elsetohy, Dr. Hass Dellal, Dr. Ghena Krayem, Dr. Jihad Dib, Saara Sabbagh, Dr. Zacharia Matthews, Shaykh Ibrahim Abdullah, Shaykh Wesam Charkawi, Yassmin Abdel-Magied and Amina El Shafei.

The conference's keynote speaker was Imam Zaid Shakir, co-founder of Zaytuna College (US). He helped develop a shared vision for a cohesive Australian Muslim community, drawing on experiences of the Muslim community in the US and elsewhere. SMC is an initiative of the LMA and a part of the Engage Challenge Grow programme. The event's major sponsor was Human Appeal Australia.

## Sydney MUSLIM CONFERENCE 2014





# Think Again

The Think Again program continues to provide an opportunity for engagement with young people seeking to express a sense of agency. This program focuses upon empowering young Muslims with information and guidance, as well as with platforms by which they can add their voices to the discussions on what it means to be Muslim in Australia. This has included a range of public events, consultations and summits, most recently culminating in the Forward Thinking Forum.

This forum featured a series of focus-group style sessions attended by a wide variety of Muslim Youth, which provided a platform for the identification of the many challenges they are currently facing. The sessions also focused upon documenting and collating their recommendations on how best to tackle these challenges, thus providing a means by which they can help shape and mold community strategies.



# Sit Down for Stand Up

The LMA hosted a comedy night with "Americas Funniest Muslim" Azhar Usman and 'The Tonight Show with Jay Leno' and 'Shaun Micallef's Mad as Hell' writer Simon Taylor. Hosted by Matuse.

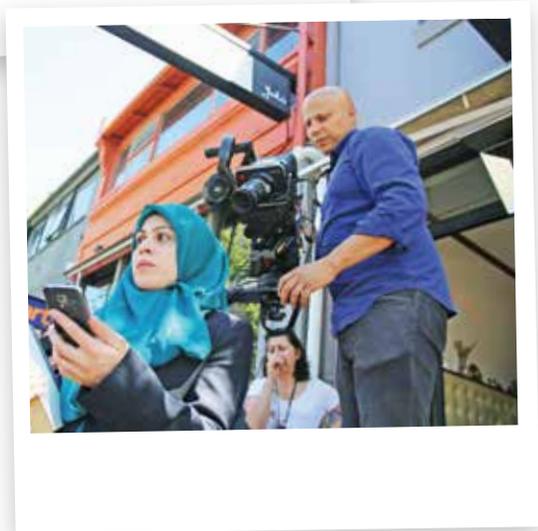




# My Name is Faten

My Name is Faten is a short film, written by Sara Saleh and May Fahmi, aiming to dispel misconceptions and stereotypes regarding Australian Muslim women. It tells the story from Faten’s perspective, a young woman from Dubbo who finds herself shouldering the responsibilities of keeping her family afloat after the unexpected death of her father and her family’s move to Sydney.

The film premiered on Saturday November 15th at Hoyts Cinema Paris and featured a panel discussion with the writers, directors and cast.



# GoActive

GoActive is the Lebanese Muslim Association's health and fitness initiative for young women from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds. Established in 2010, the project targets young Muslim women living in disadvantaged areas across Western and South Western Sydney and provides them with opportunities to be involved in sport and recreation. The GoActive initiative is the first of its kind in Australia for Muslim women specifically with the aim of establishing female-only sport teams in ongoing competitions. It encourages physical activity through its constant stream of ongoing programmes such as the Trisport tournaments and Multisport programmes for high school girls and adult women.



## ARM Camp

The GoActive Camp was run in collaboration with Aspire Role Models in December 2014. It was run as a three-day residential camp targeted at female Muslim high school girls aged 14-16 who have been previously involved in GoActive programmes and Aspire Role Model events. The camp enabled the girls to connect with female role models from various professions; prepare them physically, mentally and spiritually through sport and recreational activities, interactive workshops and confidence building activities; and engage with other girls to develop new friendships through team building activities.

The camp specifically focused on working with girls who were interested in sports and physical activity, developing their self-awareness and confidence as well as improving their physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing. The camp included nutrition workshops and an introduction to sports coaching and sports event management, team building and positive peer mentorship activities. The camp also included various sports and fitness activities such as bush walking, swimming and a small-scale trisport tournament.



# TriSport

The GoActive interschool Trisport Gala Day Tournaments aim to provide young females from CALD backgrounds with the opportunity to play sport in a safe and accommodating environment, normalising physical activity while remaining sensitive to their cultural needs. These days aim to enhance interconnectedness between females from CALD backgrounds and link them to wider communities and local organisations that support the event, as well as GoActive.

The third GoActive Girls Interschool Trisport Gala Day was a one-day event held at Bankstown Basketball Stadium on 3rd of June had over 350 high school aged females participate from 8 different schools in Sydney's West including:

- Bankstown Girls High School
- Wiley Park Girls High School
- Strathfield South High school
- Malek Fahd Islamic School
- Al Noori Muslim School
- Unity Grammar
- Al-Faisal College
- Green Valley Islamic College

The Gala Day saw friendly games of soccer, dodgeball and basketball. Prizes and awards were given to the winners and outstanding participants. The event was proudly supported by Fettayleh Smallgoods.





# OPTIMUS

HEALTH & FITNESS

Located on level 4 of the LMA building, Optimus Health and Fitness has over 400 members, trained staff, the latest equipment and specialised training facilities to cater to all fitness levels. In recent months, Optimus Health and Fitness has introduced a physiotherapy and massage service for both gym members and the general public.



## BodyPunch Boxing Gym

BodyPunch Boxing Gym offers personal, school, team and corporate training. Head trainer, Billy Hussein, assisted by his brothers Maz, Nedal and Hussain, has developed a world-class boxing programme, run by qualified professional instructors, to aid people of all skill levels and encourage a physically active and healthy lifestyle.



## Karate Optimus Gym

Karate Optimus Gym now offers karate classes for children aged 5-15. These classes are open to both girls and boys and are conducted by Bilal El Hayek, a professional Karate trainer. These classes aim to create a fun, safe environment for physical exercise, while also developing self-esteem.



# Divine Rights • IN THE • MODERN WORLD

November 29 2015

Rosehill Gardens, Grand Pavilion, Parramatta

[www.sydneymuslimconference.com.au](http://www.sydneymuslimconference.com.au)



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