Muslims in Australia: The Building of a Community

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Introduction

Never had I participated in an Eid gathering as big as the Lakemba celebration. I was stunned by the size of the crowd, the sounds, the buzz in the air. The scene tapped many buried memories. I had an awkward rush of nostalgia as thoughts of my youth rose up. I savoured the ritual of prayer and the emotional charge that always lingered from its strange blend of vulnerability, submission and solidarity. People had been gathering since dawn. . . . By 7 a.m. Wangee Road was jammed with an excited, happy throng. People spilled into front gardens and on to balconies or perched on walls. All wanted to be together for Eid ul-Adha. The next day, newspapers reported that more than 7,000 people had attended the Lakemba mosque. . . . I was spellbound. From my vantage point opposite the mosque, I could see over people's heads. The scene was far different from anything I had imagined. Inside the mosque, the religious and political aspects of Lakemba life were unfolding. Dignitaries, community leaders and politicians were paying their respects (and being seen paying them), and there were dignified prayers and speeches. But outside it was a festival—an unofficial youth festival with wave after wave of laughing, chattering young people. The allure and sheer magnetism of the occasion were irresistible.1

THIS VIVID DESCRIPTION OF THE 'ID AL-ADHA CELEBRATION in Lakemba in 1994 gives an idea of the vitality of the Muslim community in Australia and the role of one of its best known Australian mosques. The community, however, is not large, nor has its establishment as one of the viable religions of the continent been easy. Like that of coreligionists who have immigrated to many other parts of the non-Muslim world, the transition has often been fraught with difficulties, not the least being the suspicion and lack of welcome with which they have been greeted by native citizens.

Muslims in Australia in the year 2000 were a network of cohesive groups forming a distinctive community in a diverse population. In 1996 over 200,000 Muslims were resident in Australia, comprising 1.1 percent of the population.2 The accuracy of the figure is uncertain, in part due to the reluctance of immigrants from particular parts of the world to provide more personal information about themselves than is required by law. Figures on
mosque attendance and membership in Islamic organizations suggest that 400,000 may be a more realistic figure. But even 200,000 would make Islam the largest religion in Australia after Christianity, though fewer in number than the nearly three million persons who claim no religious allegiance, over 16 percent of the population. Numbers alone, however, give little information about or insight into the human dimension of Muslim communities in Australia, the challenges they face, the pains and joys they experience. This needs to be seen in the context of the background and history of Muslim migration, the structure of Australia as a nation-state, and the distribution of Muslims within it.

Australia comprises six vast states and two territories. The population is largely urban, and loyalties are expressed in the rivalries between the capital cities of these states and territories: Adelaide, Brisbane, Canberra (the Federal Capital), Darwin, Hobart, Perth, Melbourne, and Sydney. Each state has a large number of smaller towns, villages, and settlements in country areas. Sydney and Melbourne account for almost a third of the Australian population and are on the verge of becoming megacities with their own corporate pride and character. They are also composite entities consisting of subsets of identification and loyalty, often distinguished by the ethnicity, social class, professions, employment patterns, and social status of their inhabitants. It is within the interstices of this structure that the Muslim 1.1 percent has its place.

Although not large, the figure is significant when compared with census figures for 1947, for which no Muslims were indicated, and only 0.5 percent of the population was listed as not belonging to a Christian denomination. (At that time, Aboriginals were not included in the census). It is not until 1971 that Muslim residents were recorded, when they constituted 0.2 percent of the population. The 1996 figure of 1.1 percent reflects a steady and continuing growth curve. Equally important, the individuals the statistic represents are not evenly distributed, and it is in this respect that the breakdown of Australia into states and cities is significant. Half of Australia’s Muslims are in Sydney, 32 percent in Melbourne, and only 4.3 percent live outside the major cities.

Compared with the rest of the population, Muslims comprise 2.1 percent of the population of Sydney and 1.6 percent of that of Melbourne. Yet in some Sydney suburbs, Muslims are 5 percent of the population, and, in a few, up to 10 percent, sufficient in number for a Muslim community to be visible and identifiable as such. In fact they have established a critical mass, a visibility, a demographic, social and industrial importance, and the capacity to make an individual and distinctive contribution to the shaping of Australia. This, however, does not take into account the number of Muslims in Australia holding strategic positions as professionals. For many of these Muslims, primary contacts are with their professional peers, their relationships with other Muslims perhaps marginal or even incidental to their ethnicity or religious commitment.

According to the 1996 census, 72,161 or 35.9 percent of the Australian Muslim community was born in the country, the largest single group. Of those born abroad, the biggest group is those born in Lebanon, 27,125 (13.5 percent) followed by Turks at 22,270 (11.1 percent). In descending order of size are 6,939 from Indonesia, 6,651 from Bosnia-Herzegovina, and 5,221 from Iran, followed by Muslims born in Fiji, Cyprus, Malaysia, Egypt, Macedonia, India, and Singapore, down to the United States, represented by 242! Those born in Australia largely remain in the ethnic communities of their parents.
Not all are children of first generation migrants: there are a few old established Muslim families, as well as a number of Australian converts. But the characteristics of Australian-born Muslims—relative youthfulness, stability of family life, number of children, and the lowest rate of religious out-marriage in Australia—are indicators of a strong and continuing growth of the Muslim community in Australia, and of the indigenization of Islam as a religion in Australia. At the same time, it must be stressed that the Australian Muslim community is very diverse. Media headlines, stereotypes, and popular cliches about Islam suggest that there is a single Muslim entity, when in fact there are many communities of Muslims making up the fabric of Australian Islam.

**Migration and Muslim Settlement**

There are indications that Macassar fishermen from the southern Celebes sailed on a regular basis to Northern Australia in search of *teerang* (*beche le mer*) from as early as the sixteenth century. Some may have settled in parts of Northern Australia, intermarrying with local Aboriginal communities and possibly introducing Islam to them. Muslim graveyards from an early period can be found even today in Arnhem Land.

It was, however, the Afghan camel drivers brought to Australia between 1860 and 1910 who were the earliest of the many ethnic groups that have come to constitute a Muslim presence in today’s Australia; they have become part of Australian history and folklore. The story began when Thomas Elder and Samuel Stuckey became aware of the feasibility of using camels for transport across and exploration of the interior of Australia, and in 1866 imported 124 camels and thirty-four Afghan attendants. Commenting on the importance of these Afghan camel drivers, Christine Stevens writes:

> For nearly fifty years these Muslim men and their animals crisscrossed three-quarters of the Australian continent to service and sustain life and industry in the harsh interior. Without the exceptional skills and perseverance of these hardy Muslims—among the first Muslims to become part of the cultural mix of contemporary Australian society—much of Australia’s traditional wealth would have remained undeveloped for many decades.

The first teams were settled at Beltana sheep station in the Flinders Ranges. Reports indicate that, during this period (1860–1910), between 2,000 and 4,000 men were brought to Australia to work in this camel-based transportation industry. These Afghans worked in the desert inland sections of the then separate colonies of South Australia (including Northern Territory), Western Australia, Queensland New South Wales, and Victoria, providing a vital lifeline between the developing settlements scattered across the continent and the major settlements of the south and east coastal regions.

The Afghans formed tight but isolated communities on the edges of outback towns. They were viewed as temporary sojourners only (and indeed most of them planned to stay only a few years before taking their earnings back home) and so were not accompanied by their families. At first, due to prejudice against outsiders, they were denied access to either Aboriginal or European women. Later, however, some of them were to find wives among marginalised groups of women: deserted wives or Aboriginal women who had been dis-owned by their cultural groups or were landless.
Hanifa Deen, a descendant of one of these original Afghan Muslims, tells of what she heard from her father about the fortunes of these Afghans in her book *Caravansari—Journey Among Australian Muslims*. When they returned home after a few years in Australia, some to the northern Punjab, where they had been recruited, they told stories of life in the great Southland. They were a source of inspiration for others who were suffering economic hardship to go to seek their fortunes there. New workers made their way to Australia via Singapore and Hong Kong. Eventually, in the 1880s, they began to settle in Perth, Sydney, and Melbourne, congregating in particular suburbs, including Redfern in Sydney. Many of them worked as hawkers. As they traveled, supplying goods needed outside the main centers of population, they established a mutual credit system among farmers in the outback. While, in Stevens’ account, they were despised in some areas, Hanifa Deen relates that they were regarded with affection and respect for their honesty as well as the role they played. Having arrived before the introduction of the White Australia policy, they were also able to establish themselves in rural areas, such as the La Trobe valley, as farm laborers; some of them tended banana plantations in Queensland. On a small scale, this interaction was an early instance of mutually beneficial interaction between Muslim immigrants and the Christian settlers in Australia who had preceded them.

The introduction of mechanized transport in the late nineteenth century led to the collapse of the camel trains. When, in 1901, a Federation was created out of the former colonies into which the Australian continent had been partitioned, its early commitment to the White Australia Policy excluded most non-Europeans from the right to apply for naturalization and further marginalized the Afghans. Denied citizenship, and with employment opportunities becoming fewer, many of those still remaining chose to return to their homelands. Some, however, lived out their lives in places such as Wyndham, on Australia’s northwestern coast. This reduction in numbers made it all the more difficult for those who remained to retain their Islamic identity. By 1921 there were fewer than three thousand Muslims resident in Australia. Alienated both religiously and racially from the dominant white Anglo-Celtic society, many of this generation of Muslims lost their Islamic faith.

They did not, however, vanish without a trace. The camels they left behind in the Australian outback flourished and have regularly been exported to Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States for racing. More importantly, some of the mosques they built have survived. One of the oldest, built in 1889 and still in use, is in Adelaide; another, built in 1891 at Broken Hill in New South Wales, is now a museum maintained by the Broken Hill Historical Society. The remains of a number of the mosques can be seen on the old route to the northwest between Adelaide and Brisbane. The camel traders left their mark on the Australian landscape in other ways: today, in Alice Springs, there are still Mahomet and Khalick Streets, as well as the Charlie Sadadeen School. The popular name for the Trans-Australian Railway is the Ghan, so named after the Afghan cameleers who helped establish the first transport system across arid central Australia in 1879. Indeed, one original Afghan, who came in 1885, lived on until his death in 1962 at the age of 106.

Nevertheless, a minor tributary of Muslims from the Indian subcontinent continued even during the years of the White Australia policy. In 1920 there was a slight relaxation in the application of the Immigration Act, allowing a number of limited family reunions.
With the independence of the Indian subcontinent and the creation of Pakistan, a number of these Muslims or their descendants returned to their former or ancestral homelands, while others remained in Australia.16

Generally speaking, federation in 1901 marked an end to Muslim entry to Australia. Most immigrants were from Britain and Europe; religiously, they represented the Judeo-Christian tradition and thus contributed to the development of a homogenous Australia. One exception was the small number of Albanians, former citizens of the Ottoman Empire, who made their way to Australia throughout the 1920s and 1930s. As Europeans, they were not subjected to the restrictions imposed on earlier Muslims by the White Australia policy.17 They were a trickle rather than a stream. Between 1930 and 1939 only some four hundred of them arrived in Australia, predominantly single and male, some as young as fifteen. They worked as casual laborers in Western Australia, and Queensland as well as Victoria. A small number settled in Melbourne. The best known Albanian mosque is on Drummond Street in the Melbourne suburb of Carlton.18 A new and larger stream began to flow in the 1940s, namely the immigration on a small scale of Turkish-Cypriot Muslims, facilitated by the fact that they had British passports.

There was, however, no significant increase in the immigration of Muslims until the late 1960s, although the ground was prepared for it soon after the end of World War II. A need to rebuild the Australian economy led to the development of a vigorous new immigration policy, with the slogan “populate or perish.” Immigration Minister Arthur Calwell, overcoming the suspicions of the trade unions, pioneered a policy that brought thousands of immigrants to Australia. They came first from Britain, which was economically prostrate after the war. A British immigrant could travel by ship to Australia for £10. Immigrants were actively recruited from Italy and other areas of Europe. The launching of the “Snowy Mountains” scheme brought thousands of immigrants to the country, including displaced persons from Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Poland, Hungary, and Russia.19 These may well have included European Muslims, who would not have been excluded by the White Australia Policy, but the range of ethnic backgrounds went far beyond the traditional Anglo-Celtic mix that was the backbone of the Australian population.

At the same time, there were various factors at work leading to a modification in practical terms of the White Australia Policy. Foremost among them was the emergence of the new Asian nations of Indonesia, India, and Pakistan to Australia’s north and northwest, the move towards self-government and independence of Malaya and Singapore, the Communist Revolution in China, and the economic emergence of Japan as a major trading partner. Australia’s geographical position on the rim of Southeast Asia was crucial, as was a positive engagement with its Asian neighbors. At a political level, this engagement began in response to the struggle for Indonesian Independence from 1945 on, continued through the Indonesian campaign for West New Guinea, and, then, Indonesian confrontation of Malaysia. Finally, there was participation in the Vietnam war.

This engagement with Asia, however, was to be much more than political. It soon became clear that educational needs in Australia could not adequately be served by the tradition of the humanities derived from Europe and that it was educationally, politically, and, in the longer term, even economically prudent to include the study of the languages and cultures of Asia in the curricula of the various levels of the Australian educational
system. This provided an opportunity for reciprocal human relationships between Australia and its neighbors and served to prepare the ground for the social acceptance and welcome of individuals from different backgrounds.

The Colombo Plan brought significant numbers of Asian students to study in Australia and, in some cases, facilitated Asian scholars teaching in Australian institutions. Closer contacts of this kind at a personal and official level, and the increasing number of Asian nations with diplomatic representation in Canberra, gradually made clear that the White Australia Policy was incompatible with positive relations between Australia and its neighbors. Thus, even before it was formally abandoned, there were transient Muslims in the diplomatic corps in Canberra and at consulates in the state capitals as newly recognized nations established missions in Australia, and as Australia founded its own Department of Foreign Affairs, independent of Britain. Significant numbers of students who came to Australia for technical training and university study from 1951 under the Colombo Plan acquired skills that could later be practiced in Australia, and, alongside them, numbers of professional people were granted “Certificates of Exemption.”

Scholars appointed to Australian universities to teach the languages and cultures of Asian nations found a place in the Australian educational system. Some became members of the academic elite, with the capacity to introduce Australians to higher levels of Islamic culture. There was considerable diversity of social class, level of education, skills, and training in the various Muslim groups that were being established in Australia. Thus, by the early 1960s, although the White Australia Policy was officially still in place, selection criteria had been relaxed to enable the entry of refugees, professional and skilled workers, and family members into the country, irrespective of race.

Another factor contributed to the demise of the White Australia Policy. The Australian economy in the 1960s was booming and needed workers. But with the recovery of the European economies, the supply of European immigrants began to dry up. New sources of immigrant labor were essential. One response to this need was the signing of an immigration agreement between Australia and Turkey in 1968. Turkish Muslims represented the first wave of large-scale Muslim immigration to Australia and laid the foundations for the growth of significant Muslim communities in both Melbourne and Sydney. The first planeload of 186 Turks arrived at Sydney airport in November that year and were dispersed to automotive assembly lines and clothing and textile factories, in Victoria. Between 1967 and 1971, over ten thousand Turks were to emigrate from Turkey. Older Muslim settlers in Australia recognized a historical significance in their arrival, seeing in it continuity with the immigration of Muslims over a hundred years before. A number gave them a ceremonial welcome at Sydney airport, including Shaikh Fahmi el-Imam, who had arrived in the 1950s, a pioneer of interfaith dialogue, who is still imam at the Preston mosque in Melbourne. Others were reminded of the Anzacs at Gallipoli in 1915, when an expeditionary force composed largely of Australian and New Zealand military attempted to invade Turkey, and was defeated. No grudges followed that defeat, and the welcome of Turks as new Australians had an almost poetic irony. There is an additional irony in that it was an Australian need that brought an earlier generation of Muslims to Australia, the Afghans, as it opened the door to the Turks in 1968. With their arrival, the door was also opened for the entry of non-European and non-Christian immigrants into Aus-
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Australian economic, political, and social life; the official abolition of the White Australia Policy in 1972 was an inevitable consequence.

In the early 1970s, a large number of Muslims began to arrive from the Middle East, some as a result of war and civil unrest. In the wake of the Arab-Israeli war in 1967 and the continuing Palestinian tragedy, the war in Cyprus in 1974, the outbreak of civil strife in Lebanon in 1975, and the breakup of Pakistan, leading to the establishment of Bangladesh, Muslim immigration to Australia increased dramatically. By 1981 Australia had received about 16,500 Lebanese-born Muslims, who today form the largest group within the Australian Muslim community. More recent immigrants include refugees from Somalia, Afghanistan, and Bosnia; between 1991 and 1995 Australia accepted 14,000 Bosnian refugees. Since 1998, significant numbers of Muslim boat people from the Middle East have been reaching Australia. Many of them are currently detained, waiting for a decision on their refugee status. Some are highly qualified professionals. Of course, not all Muslims came as a result of war. Immigration programs were structured according to an annual quota, and filled according to a mix of criteria which might vary from year to year but generally included professional skills, knowledge of English, sponsorship, family reunions, refugee status, and age.

As a corollary to the new immigration policy, there was a change in the concepts of "social engineering" that governed the acceptance of new immigrants. The assimilationist model was replaced by a policy of multiculturalism, in large part due to the representations of an emerging vocal immigrant community. It recognized the value of diverse cultural traditions living in harmony, and so provided opportunities for giving a voice to various ethnic, linguistic, cultural, and religious minorities within an Australian context. In the 1970s, new publicly funded institutions arose that were designed to support the multicultural idea: a government Department of Multicultural Affairs, government-funded research projects on settlement in Australia, the Special Broadcasting Service (the SBS) with radio and television programs in the languages of all the major ethnic communities, and the Adult Migrant Education Program. Translation services and classes in English were established.

Thanks to this policy of multiculturalism, Muslim Australians have gained a voice and an identity. It is natural to speak of the Muslim "community," but it does not mean that Islam should be understood in a unitary sense. There are a number of Muslim communities, and to appreciate the potential and reality of their contribution to Australia, it is necessary to stress their richness and diversity. Muslims are distributed across the whole range of professions and fields of employment, with varying levels of education, opportunities, and drive for upward mobility. Ethnic loyalties are still preserved, as is characteristic of the Islamic tradition. Thus, there is always a fusion of the universal forms and doctrines of Islam with local beliefs and lifestyles, with ethnicity remaining an important element in the composition of the Muslim umma in Australia.

Australian Muslims brought with them a range of cultural richness and diversity of background, and this diversity was also expressed in their different responses to the new environment. Many felt uprooted and traumatized at finding themselves in the unfamiliar situation of being a religious minority and were forced to adopt different kinds of strategies for survival. Initially, neither state nor local community could give them any support, let alone offer recognition of their faith or of the rituals that identified them as a community.
They brought a faith expressed through cultures with deep historical roots, a variety of kin and associated supportive networks, and a consciousness, however vaguely formulated, of being bearers of a great tradition of learning, art and culture. Yet, as newcomers, they found themselves counting for little, and facing disregard, if not hostility. Culture shock, bewilderment, and disorientation were the common response at arriving in a land where the local way of life seemed sterile, boring, and empty, and family relationships attenuated and underdeveloped. Over and against such personal concerns, of course, loomed broader issues: the challenge of survival and the establishment of institutions that would give a corporate presence to Muslim life in the new country.

Muslim Community Building, Post-1970

Until the end of the 1960s, there were not enough Muslims in Australia to establish the kinds of institutions that serve as the cornerstone of Islamic life. Nevertheless, the potential was always there. Muslim communities in Australia had little to start with other than these inner resources and needed to establish a place for themselves among other communities with differing ways of life and spiritual priorities. The effort to establish themselves, and define their own identity, often had to be carried out in the face of open hostility on the part of other Australians.

There were two sources of support in facing this challenge. One was the aforementioned shift from “assimilationism” to “multiculturalism.” The second was the support made available to Muslim communities from overseas for building mosques and prayer facilities, providing imams, and establishing educational facilities for Muslim children. Fortuitously, this coincided with the time when there was an explosion of oil prices, and so-called petro-dollars for charitable projects were plentiful; the various Muslim communities took full advantage of these opportunities.

The mosque has a central role in the life of a Muslim community in both its social and its prayer life. It serves as a center for worship and for the expression, interpretation, inculcation, and celebration of Muslim belief and practice. Thus it is a community reference point and provides the means for self-identification in the new homeland. Gary Bouma gives a lucid and sympathetic account of mosques in Australia, although, since his book was published in 1994, much of his information is now somewhat outdated. He notes that at the time of writing, there were fifty-seven mosques in the country. The first was probably that built outside Adelaide in 1889 by the Afghans; another came to New South Wales about 1891 in Broken Hill. A number of Australian mosques are over a hundred years old. One was constructed in the national capital of Canberra during the 1950s to serve the diplomatic staff of the embassies of Muslim countries and Muslim students from overseas. The first mosque in Sydney was built in the late 1960s; in Sydney and New South Wales there are more than twenty mosques, the majority of them built since 1968. Of these, the largest, and for some the most beautiful, is the Imam Ali Mosque at Lakemba. Another is the King Faisal Mosque, built by the Islamic Society of New South Wales.

The city of Melbourne has more than twenty-five mosques. The largest, in Preston, Victoria, was opened in 1976 by the Assistant Secretary General of the World Muslim League in the presence of a personal representative of the Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser,
the then Leader of the Opposition Gough Whitlam, and religious leaders, including the
Roman Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne. Thus, the event was regarded as significant in
the development of Australia as a nation and was welcomed by the government and com-
munity, as well as by the older established religions in Australia.27 There are now mosques
in all the other capital cities, each with its story to tell, and others being built.28 These
mosques are largely the result of support by local communities, although, in some cases,
assistance comes from the governments of Muslim states. (See table 11.1 for mosque dis-
tribution in Australia.)

Approval for the building of mosques has not always been easy to obtain. Some
people have complained to local authorities about the traffic jams during worship
times or the disturbance of the early morning tranquillity by the dawn call to prayer.
In 1995 an abandoned Presbyterian church in the Sydney suburb of Bankstown was
bought by the Bangladesh Islamic Centre. The Bankstown Council, which had given
permission for the church to be built in 1954, opposed its use as a mosque. In 1998
the matter went to the Land and Environment Court, which supported that opposi-
tion, ruling that a mosque, while a place of worship, is not a church, which it defined
as a place of worship in the Christian tradition. This ruling was successfully challenged
on the grounds that the judge failed to consider broader dictionary definitions, some
of which include a mosque or a temple in their meanings of the word “church, and,
therefore, insofar as “church” refers to a place of worship rather than a physical struc-
ture, a mosque would fit this description. The announcement that the original decision
was overturned coincided with 'Id al-Adha, a timing particularly pleasing to the Aus-
tralian Federation of Islamic Councils.29

During the 1970s and 1980s, the new immigrants, divided both by residence and by
state (Australia being a federation), set to work to consolidate their position. Islamic so-
cieties mushroomed, each located at a mosque or prayer facility and structured to meet the
needs and concerns of communities. Such societies by definition were pioneering in na-
ture and uncertain in their organization. But by the 1980s they became well-established
and effective. In each state, the various societies established state Islamic councils to work
on such concerns as welfare, educational and religious facilities, and coordination of
statewide community-related functions. The Islamic Council of Victoria, for example, has
a board of imams, mechanisms for representing Muslims at the level of state government,
and a range of activities including interfaith dialogue.

The Islamic councils of all the states have been represented at the federal level since the
1970s by the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils (AFIC), an umbrella organization

Table 11.1 An estimate of the current distribution of mosques in Australia.30

| Australian Capital Territory | 1 |
| New South Wales               | 28 |
| Queensland                    | 10 |
| South Australia               | 4  |
| Tasmania                      | 1  |
| Victoria                      | 29 |
| Western Australia             | 7  |
| TOTAL (2000)                  | 80 |
for all Australian Muslims. It has been funded by support from the local communities, from oil-rich Muslim countries, from revenue generated by the issuing of *halal* certificates, and, as its capital resources increased, from its own investments. Utilizing these funds, AFIC was able to provide sufficient monies to support the varied activities of the Muslim community, both at local and national levels, and to make contributions toward the further building of mosques and prayer facilities, the provision of imams, and the establishment of educational facilities for Muslim children. The organization survived the decline in world oil prices of the late 1980s and the subsequent reduction in petrol dollars available for the "propagation of Islam" worldwide thanks to the generous support provided in the previous decade. In maintaining all the organization's activities, the Saudi Kingdom played a special role.

**Religious Leadership**

The effectiveness of the mosque as an institution depends on the qualifications and quality of leadership that the imam serving it can provide. The 1980s saw, among those entering Australia, a significant number of graduates in Islamic disciplines, mainly from Islamic universities in the Middle East and the Indian subcontinent. Formally, they were qualified to serve as religious professionals, although often they were not familiar with Australian conditions. A number of them were sponsored in their move to Australia by the governments of countries such as Turkey and Saudi Arabia. Indeed, from the beginning of large-scale Turkish migration in the late 1960s, there was official Turkish interest in the religious life of the expatriate community in Australia. The Turkish government expressed this interest by sending imams to a number of Turkish mosques and by providing funding for mosque building. Saudi Arabia has also been extremely active in funding similar projects. Even with the decline in world oil prices, significant funds were provided to the community in the late 1980s and 1990s to establish this infrastructure.

The relatively large-scale immigration of Muslims in the 1980s, and well into the 1990s, meant that religious leaders were arriving from a variety of communities and cultures. The policy of multiculturalism made it relatively easy for religious leaders who had the support of their respective communities to gain visas, and the governments of countries such as Egypt and Turkey supported Imams serving societies comprised of their nationals.31

Effective religious leadership is essential for a sense of religious identity. If it cannot be homegrown, it must be imported. Although these "imported" leaders have generally provided excellent leadership,32 others who are unfamiliar with conditions in Australia, including local culture and the demands placed on the local community within a secular environment, have been controversial.33 Such unfamiliarity at times has led to difficulties with the religious community as well as with some segments of the wider society.

In fact, a continuing problem for the Muslim communities in Australia is that of the evolution of a professional religious leadership that is knowledgeable about both Islamic and Australian culture. Some well-established imams have spent a considerable amount of time in Australia and understand the tension between preservation of identity and adaptation to the wider culture. These established religious leaders use their local knowledge
and their fluency in English to be active at local, state, and federal levels in promoting the needs of Muslims and in playing a significant mediating and facilitating role between the wider society, the government, and the Muslim communities. Imams more recently arrived and not yet familiar with the local culture are somewhat handicapped in this regard. Though there are signs of the emergence of a small number of younger religious leaders born and educated in Australia, it may take some time before a homegrown professional religious leadership emerges.

Educational Facilities
As early as the 1950s, there were moves among the older generation of Muslims, few as they were, towards establishing an organizational framework for the maintenance of Islam in Australia. The setting up of "Sunday Schools" signified the recognition by parents of the need to provide for their children's Islamic education. One of the earliest schools opened in Melbourne in 1957 with fifteen children. It was, however, in the early 1980s that the first regular Islamic schools were established. Australian government (commonwealth and state) support for community-based schooling provided a strong incentive for Muslims to establish their own Islamic schools. Unlike other Western countries such as the United States, where there is no taxpayer-funded Islamic school system, and Britain, where there had been none until recently, Australia gives substantial support to private schools, provided that they meet certain conditions. As a result of this support, which was first won for the Catholic school system in the 1960s, private schools of various kinds have multiplied. They include elite secular schools, schools with an ethnic base, and a number of fundamentalist Christian schools. The number of children in such schools grew by more than 50 percent between 1986 and 1994. This level of enrollment can be expected to grow even more since the federal government ended the minimum and maximum enrollment limits on private schools, adjusting the education funding formula in their favor.

It was in this context that, from the early 1980s, Muslims were able to begin the establishment of primary and secondary schools to teach the core curriculum areas of the state in which they were located, along with Arabic and Islamic religious instruction. In other words, they were providing a secular education within an Islamic environment. With the initial infrastructure for the schools coming largely from outside sources, the subsequent funding from the commonwealth and state governments was used to expand the Islamic education system considerably.

A number of these schools serve as the final two years of secondary education, and some of them are able to include languages such as Turkish in their curriculum. Despite initial difficulties, standards have gradually improved, and the well-established ones, such as the King Khalid Islamic College in Melbourne, the Malik Fahd Islamic School in Sydney, and the Islamic College of Perth, compete with other established prestige schools to provide a high quality education. At the King Khalid Islamic College of Victoria, for instance, all students who graduated in 1998 obtained university places, a success rate far above the average for Victoria and a striking example of upward social mobility in the new generation of Muslim immigrants. Today there are twenty-three Islamic schools, with a
student population of around 10,000 (See table 11.2). In addition, many weekend Islamic schools and Qur'an classes are held at most mosques and Islamic schools.

One would expect Sufi orders to play a role in Islamic education in Australia, but it is difficult to find detailed information about them. An Australian Centre for Sufism was established in Sydney in 1999, with the mission "to promote the message and the beauty of Sufism and Islam in Australia through raising the awareness of God in day to day life using the teachings of Sufism to define the journey of life."

Many other organizations, some of them ad hoc, meet various needs in the community and are an expression of its vitality. There are committees to discuss and formulate policy on issues of importance, such as announcing the beginning and ending of Ramadan or ensuring that halal food is available. Brunswick, for example, an inner-city, working-class suburb of Melbourne, features halal Turkish clubs, restaurants, coffee houses, and bakeries. There are also committees formed to discuss issues of dress and whether it is obligatory for women to wear a headscarf. There are friendship organizations, such as the El Sadeaq Society, based in Melbourne. It has a community center and small mosque for its mainly Egyptian members, and functions as a surrogate family, embracing Egyptians of all ages, dedicated to serving their religious, educational, recreational, and social needs that neither state nor society provide. Other groups, such as the Arabic Speaking Welfare Workers Association and the Arab Women's Solidarity Foundation, are dedicated to social welfare, community support, and matters of community concern.

Of particular significance, because it is based in the national capital, is the Canberra Islamic Centre. It was incorporated in December 1993 to epitomize Islamic culture and lifestyle, provide social and cultural facilities, and be a liaison with the Australian government and countries of Muslim embassies in Canberra on behalf of Muslims. Because the Islamic Centre does not depend on any of the Muslim embassies for financial support but aims to be self-funding, it is registered as a charity to which donations are tax deductible. It is not a member of AFIC, although it has contacts with it. Its constitution ensures that no particular ethnic group can dominate it. It has been granted a prime site by the ACT (Australian Capital Territory) government, plans are approved, and building construction has begun. It will house an Australian National Islamic Library, for which a thousand books have already been collected, as well as recreational facilities such as a swimming pool

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 11.2 Islamic Schools38</th>
<th>1982–89</th>
<th>1990–95</th>
<th>1996–2000</th>
<th>% primary</th>
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Muslims Living in Australia

Despite the fact that Australia is ostensibly a Christian nation, it shares the social permissiveness associated with "post-Christian" Europe. It is secularized to a far greater degree than statistics of religious affiliation would suggest, with widespread evidence of family breakdown, sexual license, violence, and a general lack of interest in the practice of religion. It is not often, except on special occasions, that Anglo-Celtic or Euro-Australians meet Muslims as Muslims. They meet individuals whom they may identify as "Asian," meaning Indonesian, Pakistani, Philippine, or Chinese. Religious denomination at such a level of acquaintance is not often relevant. The public ethos is overwhelmingly secular. To refer to God in public is seen as embarrassing. Religious allegiance is excluded from all application forms for jobs and need not be indicated on national census forms. (Religious affiliation may be indicated for admission to a hospital so that religiously acceptable services may be provided or appropriate funeral rites performed.) In Australia the practice of religion is a private matter, apart from occasional rituals such as the recitation of the Lord's prayer at the opening of Parliament, and may even be regarded as evidence of a certain social and intellectual backwardness.

Some Muslims are totally at home within the mainstream secular Australian community, relating to their fellow religionists through their ethnic communities at Friday prayers or during the religious observations during Ramadan or Hajj. Active participation may vary from simply personal identification as a Muslim to full participation in the social and religious activities of the community. Some simply drop out, while others, in the face of these challenges, rediscover a Muslim identity that had lain dormant. For many Muslims, the experience of living and working in what is publicly a secular society presents real problems. Islam is a religion with a ritual law that requires visible, outward signs
of commitment. Thus, issues of religious observance inevitably arise, including prayer, fasting, dress, and regulations relating to food and drink. Islam has its own twelve-month lunar calendar marked by its own sacral points and celebrations, all of which identify Muslims as "a people set apart." To the secular world, or even to religious traditions that do not have such a ritual law, this may command respect or it may arouse resentment.

The five daily ritual prayers, fasting, and the role of festivals in Muslim community life have implications for the workplace. Through interviews with Muslim respondents, Bouma reports that often employers and coworkers respond to these religious concerns with increased respect for the Muslim workers and for Islam, though it is difficult to be sure how representative these are. Without a proper recognition in the workplace of the Muslim way of life, Muslims are likely to feel members of a fringe group in Australia. The traditional Christian festivals of Christmas and Easter marked by public holidays are so familiar to traditional Australians as to be religiously neutral. But this does not help Muslims who have their own religious celebrations. Interrupting the working day for prayer times is a new problem for employers. It is not only a question of time, but also of the need to provide a private space in which to pray, as well as facilities to perform the required ablutions for males and females, which may require special plumbing.

The fast presents greater difficulties. It imposes a heavy burden, especially during the summer months when the long days mean up to seventeen hours of fasting, made more difficult by high temperatures. This requires some concessions or at least recognition on the part of management. Although the rules of fiqh (jurisprudence) in regard to the fast have a realistic flexibility, for most Muslims, the fast is to be accepted, no matter how severe the difficulties. The ending of the fast is one of the great festivals of the Muslim year. It and the festival marking the climax of the pilgrimage ceremonies in Mecca are part of the lifeblood of the Muslim community, and inability to take part in the celebrations, whatever the reason, is disruptive of family life and causes a loss of psychological well-being. Muslim workers need to be able to participate in these rituals and festivals without experiencing financial loss.

Food requirements are likewise a problem. Not every work canteen can provide halal meat, and although fish, egg, and vegetarian dishes may be available, for some, even the proximity of pork dishes to those lawful for them to eat is a problem. Alcohol plays a major role in social life for many Australians during recreation and relaxation after work. Taking a turn to shout a round of drinks is an important part of social bonding. While non-alcoholic drinks are available, the general atmosphere of a hotel, the air heavy with the smell of beer, and the heightened gregariousness due to the effects of alcohol, are difficult for Muslims to cope with.

Then, there is the matter of dress. In general, this affects women more than men. For some women, a total covering of the body apart from the face or hands is regarded as a sign of commitment to Islam and is a matter of conscience. This style of dress may appear intolerably ostentatious, potentially alienating prospective employers either out of prejudice or through concern that members of the public may find it disconcerting.

The situation is duplicated when children go to school. Parents are concerned that their children have the opportunity to pray with facilities for ablutions, and that halal food be available. Some of the most popular sandwich fillers for Australian children include pork
problems. Problems may arise with participation in social activities such as visits to McDonald’s, excursions, or barbecues, or sleeping over with friends. For girls who have reached the age of adolescence, problems may become acute: whether they should “cover” or be in mixed classes, what clothing they should wear for physical education, or if they should swim or be in mixed company. Members of the Muslim community are more concerned about such matters for their children than for themselves, since children need support and protection in their faith and are vulnerable in ways that adults are not. A number of schools do provide the necessary facilities. Some teachers ask for guidance as to how Muslim children may be integrated in schools and help students know where prayers can be performed.

There are no instant solutions to such issues, particularly since Muslims as a minority are finding their way and there are differences in Muslim communities themselves as to how they should be accommodated. Some prefer to be closely associated with the wider Australian community and have an open, confident attitude to the outside world. Others feel the need for an Islamic space in a community of their own, where they can be themselves. Some prefer to interpret broadly, some more conservatively, the norms of conduct set out in particular traditions of Islam. All, in one way or another, have to find ways to respond to new situations, and yet maintain what is of the essence of the transcendent values of Islam. Particularly painful are issues of interfaith marriage, especially the marriage of a Muslim girl to a non-Muslim, when there is the risk of an irretrievable family breakdown.

This engagement of Muslims with non-Muslim Australia is a continuing process. Much of what passes as documentation of its progress or lack of progress is either based on interviews, which may or may not be representative, or is anecdotal. Yet, in some cases, there is a legal base for the protection of religious minorities. The New South Wales Public Service, for example, has issued a circular to heads of departments to make sure no one is denied time for religious obligations. Many private employers take the same view.

**Australian Attitudes to Islam**

There is a pecking order in the popular assessment of religions in Australia. Buddhism is intellectually chic, and there is a broad appreciation in educated circles of the sacred sites and spirits and reverence for land and nature of Aboriginal spirituality. Islam, on the other hand, is widely viewed through stereotypical lenses, and conversion to Islam (as opposed to Buddhism, for example) is regarded as an aberration. There is a degree of sympathy for certain aspects of Sufism. But the Sufism that is admired is often not that of the spiritual giants of Islam growing out of the Qur’an and the Islamic tradition, with its spiritual discipline of prayer, meditation, and ascetic practice, but out of an aesthetic appreciation of the poetry and theosophy of the Ibn ‘Arabi tradition, productive of a warm inner glow. Islam, in such circles, is regarded as a kind of optional extra to Sufism.

There are other reasons for this attitude to Islam. Islam as a politically loaded stereotype based on media images dominates the public consciousness. It is not widely realized that Islam means submission to the will of God in all things, a Muslim being one who makes this act of submission, and who works to realize the moral values and social virtues epitomized in the Qur’an. This is not to suggest that there is necessarily any widespread personal animosity to individual Muslims in Australia, but there is enough
latent resentment for concern. There have been objections voiced to the growth of Islamic education in Australia, partly, of course, on the grounds that increased funding of private schools would inevitably be at the expense of the public school system. Those with misgivings about multiculturalism in general are also unhappy with state-supported religious schools being established. Some feel that criticism of Muslims and Islamic schools could be part of a latent racist discourse, creating a less tolerant society by accusing those who are culturally different.45

Hanifa Deen gives a number of instances of such resentment at a personal level. She tells of a couple she met at a cafe in Sydney who, learning that she was writing about Muslims in Australia, began to denounce the arrogance of Muslim women wearing the veil. “Just who do they think they are? Where do they think they are living?”46 She tells of the experience of a Lebanese woman, who regularly wore the veil, enrolling in a community development course at her local college. She had expected to be able to meet and talk with non-Muslim women. But each time she attended classes, she was asked such questions as, “What’s it like wearing that bag?” “Won’t your husband take a second wife, then a third as you get older?” or “Do you wear it in bed?” In a discussion class on gay relationships and adoption, she said that she could envisage a lesbian couple adopting children, but had difficulties with a male couple doing the same thing. A lesbian classmate walked out, reported the view she had expressed to the college administration, and the lecturer instructed her to read the rules concerning respect for the beliefs of others.47

On the one hand, Muslims are often dismissed as a minority fringe sect, with all the connotations that such an association implies, without a history, culture, or civilization; on the other, they may be seen as potential members of a menacing international conspiracy. The values that Muslim living exemplifies pass unnoticed. Muslims also suffer from quite widespread, subconscious, atavistic Australian distrust of things not Anglo/Celtic/North European, which, in times of tension, may unexpectedly erupt. The Gulf War was one such occasion. It was a special case, but it provoked irrational behavior in odd pockets of Australian society, including some Sydney suburbs, when individuals of possibly Arab appearance were harassed in the streets.

No account of such difficulties would be complete without reference to sections of the Australian media, whether print or electronic, and their tendency to reduce complex issues to stereotypes and to delight in presenting images people love to hate. Among these images is Islam as an abstract noun, used as a portmanteau term to elicit reactions of distrust and fear, with no reference to Islam as signifying a commitment and dedication to divine and human values. This is not to deny that there are a number of exclusivist Muslim groups with an ideological hostility to Australian (and Christian) society who, on various occasions, express their views. But that is no more than to say that there are Muslim counterparts to Australian rednecks. Appeals to ethnicity and religion unfortunately are a ready standby for the power-hungry no matter what their affiliation.

Positive Attitudes to Islam and Muslims
As far as the mainstream churches in Australia are concerned, the sectarianism of the first half of the twentieth century has largely been replaced by an awareness of each other as
on complementary, rather than competing, journeys of faith. Warmth and friendship has largely replaced old rivalries and resentments. This change in attitude has extended to religious traditions outside the Christian fold. For many, it encompasses Judaism, and equally, with important and growing communities of immigrants from outside Europe, religions such as Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, and the like—fa...s new to what used to be mainstream Australia. This is a counterpart to developments in Europe, where, on church doors in Luxembourg and Belgium, one may see posters announcing lectures on Islam: “Get to know your new neighbours.” In many cases this goes beyond tolerance and takes the form of an outstretched hand of welcome and support to these communities of faith in a new environment. It is then no accident that Gary D. Bouma, the author of *Mosques and Muslim Settlement in Australia*, is an Anglican priest. His book, which has been a valuable source for the preparation of this chapter, presents Muslim settlement as an enrichment of Australian life and society.48

Many Christian communities, in fact, make it a matter of concern to understand and appreciate the theology, moral values, and social discipline of Islamic teaching. They refer to Muslims as members of the broader monotheistic community, recognizing Muslims as among the people of God in the so-called bidding prayers of a Sunday liturgy as communities on whom God’s blessing is invoked. And where there have been Muslim guests at functions attended by mixed faith communities such as weddings, baptisms, and funerals, passages from the Qur’an are now sometimes read.

A variety of organizations are dedicated to the goal of mutual religious understanding, giving Muslims a sense of belonging in Australia. Among them is the World Conference on Religion and Peace (WCRP), which has a pioneering role in stimulating support groups for new immigrants. It has arranged a number of conferences and issued various booklets laying the groundwork for interreligious understanding and mutual respect in practical matters, for example, assisting the settlement of people, and examining the adequacy of government provision for newcomers. The titles of their publications are an indication of their goals: *With Other Faiths—A Guide to Living with Other Religions, Religious Pluralism in a Liberal Society, Faith to Faith—Belief in a Pluralist Society and Guidelines on Dialogue with People of Living Faiths.*49 The first booklet gives an account of two local initiatives, one of them having to do with community relations in the city of Springvale, near Melbourne. A gathering of faith leaders organized a number of meetings, one for a day of prayer, and another to coincide with the annual mayoral induction. These initiatives led to regular monthly meetings. The other was a series of discussion programs hosted at the Preston mosque in Melbourne. One, led by a Muslim and a Christian, was on the theme “Religious Understandings of Human Dignity.” The mosque leadership and local clergy and members of their congregations together made a commitment to support these meetings.50

In New South Wales and Victoria, the heads of faith communities hold biennial meetings to discuss local issues such as racism and racial vilification, and in Victoria, a group works on a common approach to euthanasia. Interfaith units, on behalf of UNICEF, are addressing issues relating to children in the Pacific and Southeast Asia. About three years ago, the WCRP invited Malaysian Professor Chandra Muzaffar to Australia to address a meeting on “Religious and Human Dignity: Rights and Responsibilities.” Up to the present, however, there have been few meetings dedicated to theological dialogue, due in part...
to the fact that Muslim communities in Australia at this stage are concerned principally with issues of survival, and also because they do not have the same proportion of middle-class intelligentsia as Muslim communities in Europe.51

Although the numbers are still small, there is a growing awareness in Australia of the values and religious insights in the theology of minority religious traditions, and of the human and social values expressed in their cultural traditions. One indication of this is the way in which some of the themes and motifs of Islamic literary culture are finding their way into Australian literature in English. Such an understanding of common elements in diverse traditions has to be inculcated through the education system, and teachers of religious studies have a special responsibility, along with the authors of textbooks, for such courses at various levels.52 It is necessary to go beyond tolerance of areas of diversity to a sense of realization that there are elements that can be shared.

Conclusion
The general picture of Muslims in Australia is of a predominantly urban, intricate mosaic of communities and relationships at various stages of development. Islam is represented in all its principal traditions, Sunni as well as Shi'a, and smaller communities such as the Ismaelis and the Ahmadis, both Lahore and Qadiani. They vary in the style and intensity of their religious observance, and in their social interaction with non-Muslim communities. All these communities are proceeding in various ways and different speeds in a process of indigenization and vernacularization. Overall, it is a success story, a remarkable achievement. In less than forty years, Muslim communities have established themselves and created social and community structures to support an Islamic way of life. Mosques, many of them of real architectural beauty, are no longer an exotic feature of the Australian landscape, and behind one or two of them, there is a century or more of history. They are genuinely places of prayer and the celebration of a Muslim identity.

Islamic Schools have had significant successes measured against the standards of the wider community, despite problems in the development of an appropriate Arabic language curriculum and teaching materials, and recruitment of competent teachers familiar with modern methods of instruction. They have provided for many Muslims a way of retaining and strengthening their religious and cultural traditions within an Australian context, seeing it as part of their mission to nurture the generation of Muslims who are at home with Australian society as well as with Islamic tradition.

While Islam may not be well understood, or its relationship as a monotheistic faith to Judaism and Christianity appreciated, Muslims are recognized as part of the religious landscape, a far cry from the Afghan pioneers who, despite the services they gave, were often considered aliens.53 Even though pockets of intolerance still exist, the wider Australian community is not simply tolerant, but fully accepting of Muslims as persons, as it largely is now of individuals of any ethnic background or skin color. This acceptance is backed by a number of laws and institutions that protect ethnic minorities. Among the Commonwealth Acts in this regard are the Equal Employment Opportunity (Commonwealth Authorities) Act 1987, the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986, the Racial Discrimination Act 1975, the Racial Hatred Act 1995.
A significant proportion of Muslims is middle class, and well represented in the professions. According to the 1996 census, 27 percent of families fully owned their homes, and 20 percent were purchasing their homes, a significant index of commitment to Australia. The statistics do not indicate how many of them have taken out Australian citizenship; whether to do so or not appears more a matter of ethnicity than religious commitment. It is also a matter of generation, the second generation taking advantage of a simple and straightforward ceremony of naturalization. It is not possible to estimate accurately the number of Muslim immigrants and their families who are naturalized or to determine whether one ethnicity is more likely to accept Australian citizenship than another.

There are a number of advantages to holding an Australian passport, although citizenship also carries responsibilities. Voting in national and state elections is compulsory, and failure to vote is punished by a fine. The major Australian political parties take into account the so-called ethnic vote—which, by definition, includes Muslims—in their campaigning, particularly in fringe electorates. Among Muslims, there seems no discernible movement to support one political party rather than another. Social class, need, and the relevance of electoral policies to their circumstances are the crucial factors. Even an issue such as that of Palestine does not have a defining role, since the position of the two major parties, Liberal and Labor, on this issue is so close. Certainly, AFIC does not sponsor any party political agenda. There is currently no study of the role of individual Muslims in particular parties or of Muslims in prominent positions in the bureaucracy or public life. But the communities are still young.

The numerous Islamic organizations show a variety of interests and concerns, all directed in different ways to establishing a network of valid Islamic responses to life in a new world without the weight of tradition that plays such a role in British and European life. One aspect of this is a gradual opening out of ethnic communities, most directly through marriage. If an Australian male converts to Islam and marries a woman of a particular ethnic group, he may well be accepted as a member of that ethnicity. At the same time, to some degree, he may carry his wife and in-laws into his own family circle and widen the horizons of all concerned. There is increasing intermarriage between Muslim ethnic groups, partly attributable to the spontaneous encounters between these subcommunities that occur at the mosque on the great festivals. It should not be overlooked that there are conversions to Islam in the wider community among those searching for, or reassessing, a previously held religious faith. Among such converts, women significantly outnumber men. Converts will make a notable contribution to the indigenization of Islam in the country.

Ideological orientation in some groups is taking the place of ethnic alignment, as individuals devise various approaches to living in the new country. There are lively debates in the various communities, and these have been carried onto the university. This has been particularly noticeable since the late 1980s and early 1990s, most major Australian universities having their own Muslim students' associations. Generalization in this area is difficult. A distinction has been drawn between so-called salafi and non-salafi Muslims, between imams reflecting a Saudi stance, and those sent out by the diwanet bureaucracy in Turkey. That there is a salafi movement is true, and it is propagated through organizations such as the Islamic Information and Services Network of Australasia. It is, however, not limited to Saudi Muslims. There are salafi among Jordanian, Indian, and Lebanese Muslims, as well
as among Australian-born Muslims, and locally trained imams. But they represent one
trend among many, and it is probably misleading to single out particular groupings and ten-
dencies in a pluralistic situation that ranges from the radical and conservative to the highly
eirenic and adaptive. Despite these differences, however, across the entire spectrum there is
a sense of belonging to the Islamic umma.

The life and activities of these Muslim communities shows how Australia has changed
since the end of World War II. In 1945 it was a monochromatic, monolingual country
with a population of less than nine million. Politically, it had hardly escaped from the tute-
lage of Britain; racially, it was largely Anglo-Celtic, its skin pigmentation protected by the
White Australia Policy (the Aboriginal population had been pushed to the fringes, and
was not even counted in national censuses); religiously, it was dominated by three largely
competing traditions of Christianity: Roman Catholic, Anglican, and the Free Churches;
educationally, the fields of study that could be pursued were limited, and students with
their eyes set on higher degrees had to go overseas. In the year 2000 Australia had more
than doubled in population to more than eighteen million. The White Australia Policy has
been abolished, and the country is home to a remarkable range of ethnicities, languages,
and religious traditions whose rights and traditions are recognized under an umbrella pol-
icy with the admittedly ungainly title of multiculturalism. It has a sophisticated immigra-
tion policy—the 2000 target was 80,000 new immigrants per year. In addition, it has its
own role in the community of nations, as well as its own pattern of engagement with Eu-
rope. The mother country, Britain, is now only a part of Australian identity, along with
the Americas and the diverse nation states of postcolonial Africa, Asia, and Oceania, es-
pecially those that are its near neighbors. This is the Australia to which Muslims con-
tribute as equal partners and in which they find a stimulus to develop and extend their eth-
nic traditions in their own way.

All in all, the picture is one of great vitality on the part of Muslims, who, from many
quarters, are welcomed by an older established citizenry. There are grounds for hope that
the multiple convergences among peoples of different backgrounds who now share a com-
mon homeland will continue to lead to a clearer perception of common core values be-
hind variegated cultural forms. People need to make the effort to reach out and across tra-
ditional cultural divisions and recognize the values and ideals they share. Then, it will
become possible to see how diverse religious traditions provide an ultimate, transcendent
authority for such values and provide the means by which they can offer principles of or-
der in social life.

Notes
1. Hanifa Deen, Caravaneri: Journey among Australian Muslims, (St. Leonards, New South
Wales, Australia: Allen & Unwin, 1995), 121.
2. Census of Population and Housing conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.
3. Gary D. Bouma, Mosques and Muslim Settlement in Australia (BIPR: Commonwealth of Aus-
tralia, 1995), 27.
4. Ibid.
5. Bouma, Mosques, 37.

14. Ibid.
18. Deen, Caravanserai, 36.
20. Among them was Dr. Abdul Khaliq Kazi who came from Pakistan in 1961 to teach Arabic and Islamic Studies at Melbourne University. In 1961 Dr. S. Soebardi (an Indonesian), the first tenured Muslim academic in Australia, was appointed to the Australian National University in Canberra to teach the Indonesian language and Islamic culture in Indonesia. In 1968 the first Muslim academic was appointed in Perth.
23. Deen, Caravanserai, 15.
27. The current imam is Shaykh Fahmi. Mosque facilities include an administrative section, classrooms, library, and catering area.
28. Bouma tells of a new mosque currently being built at Auburn to accommodate 5,000 worshippers, designed along classical lines with pillars, domes, and two 39-metre minarets. Bouma, Mosques, 56–57.
30. This table is based on personal communications of Abdullah Saeed with imams of the various states.
31. Deen, Caravanserai, 73.
32. Sheikh Fahmi, for example, is highly respected among religious leaders of all faiths.
33. One such example is Taj al-Din al-Hilalyy.
36. Deen, Caravanserai, 63.
37. Deen, Caravanserai, 15.
38. Based on Dr. Saeed’s communications with imams of the various states.
39. An inclusive price for the Hajj with three weeks in the Holy Land is under Aus$4,000.
41. The Australian, 7 April 2000, 34.
42. Bouma, Mosques, 46–49. The author also documents a number of negative experiences.
43. Deen, Caravanserai, 160.
44. Bouma, Mosques, 49.
46. Deen, Caravanserai, 125.
47. Deen, Caravanserai, 165–66.
48. Bouma, Mosques, 88. He notes that the opposite is the case: “The more religious people were, the less likely they were to object to foreigners, immigrants, or members of minority religious groups as neighbours.”
51. Hanifa Deen, personal communication to Anthony H. Johns.
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