



AUSTRALIAN MUSLIM WOMEN'S CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS  
*Equality without Exception*

**Annual Report 2014–2015**

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# AUSTRALIAN MUSLIM WOMEN'S CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

## *Equality without Exception*

### About Us

In 1991 the Islamic Women's Welfare Council of Victoria (The Council) was established by Muslim women for Muslim women. The Council was founded on the belief that meaningful change to the status of Muslim women could be achieved through the improved situation of Muslim women individually and by building their collective capacity.

In December 2012, the Council's name was changed to the Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights to better reflect the Council's significant role as a human rights defender. This change recognises the singularity of our voice and work on Muslim women's human rights across Australia.

As advocates of Muslim women's rights, we are in chorus with a multitude of Muslims all over the world supporting a vision of Islam at its most progressive, immediate and pertinent to the challenges Muslim women face. Our work in Australia contributes to the already substantial work on Muslim women's human rights taking place across the world in Muslim and non-Muslim majority countries.

### How do we see the world?

For the most part, Muslim women who migrated to Australia did so as heirs of a rich, pluralistic tradition, but also as bearers of significant disadvantage, discrimination and, at times, violence. In the context of our history, Islam has been both a liberating and oppressive force in the lives of women, influenced by the vision and limitations of patriarchal society. Historicising how Islam was understood

and brought to bear on the status of women testifies to the diversity and plurality of tradition and practice: there has not been one Islam in which all Muslims have participated, but a multiplicity of Islamic interpretations in which many people have lived.

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

This global movement for parity is relevant to Australian Muslim women, whether immigrants or daughters of immigrants, because it brings us closer to the challenge of equality in our Australian context. We seek equality not only with Muslim men but with all Australian citizens.

### How does our world view influence our work?

We take a non-religious, non-sectarian approach to our work and adopt a social justice lens to Islam when it is used to justify any infringement against women. This allows us to work with all Muslim women. We believe that there is not one view of Islam that represents all Muslims in Australia and, further, that the diversity of Muslims in Australia is a strength.

## Our Strategic Intent

The Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights (AMWCHR) is an organisation of Muslim women working to advance the rights and status of Muslim women in Australia.

We believe Muslim women must be the impetus for change in their status as citizens.

The Australian Muslim community is characterised by diversity and hybridity, and not by a binding vision of Islam or what it means to be Muslim. We are therefore a non-religious organisation reflecting the sectarian, cultural and linguistic diversity within the Muslim community.

As an organisation committed to Muslim women and human rights, we will intervene when Islam is used to undermine the status of Muslim women with facts and informed analysis.

Our framework of understanding is the international Muslim women's movement for equality and dignity but our action and concern is focused on the local communities in Australia where Muslim women live.

We work for the rights of Muslim women by:

- empowering women's self-determination
- bringing a human rights approach to bear on issues of inequality and disadvantage
- working with individuals, the community, and government to advocate for equality within the Australian context

We aim to inspire positive action by others and aspire to continuously enhance the quality, impact and effectiveness of our work.

## What are the core areas of work we undertake?

We prioritise practical assistance for women to improve their lives in tangible and measurable ways. We work with individuals, groups and service providers in the following areas:

- case work, referrals, secondary consultation and outreach
- advocacy
- community-based programs and service delivery
- capacity building
- leadership development
- policy development
- partnership projects

We have recently established the Australian Institute for Minority Women (the Institute) to operate as the research and consultancy arm of AMWCHR. The experience of Muslim women as a minority has much in common with women's experiences from other minority groups. The Institute was created because, we believe, the expertise we formed working with Muslim women could be useful to all minority women. As well as providing an insight into the conditions and situations of minorities in Australia generally, the Institute seeks to build an alliance with other minority women in Australia as a gesture of solidarity. The Institute undertakes the following activities:

- research
- training development and delivery
- publications
- consultancy services

# Chairperson and Executive Director's Report



It is with great pleasure that we present the 2015 Annual Report for the Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights. This report reflects the complex and rewarding work performed by the AMWCHR as it continues to strive to meet the many challenges faced by Muslim women across Australia.

This year we provided over 4000 services to Muslim women and community sector professionals across Australia. Our work in support of Muslim women continues to take the traditional, woman-to-woman approach, working and speaking with women as equals. The vast majority of this work is undertaken with women in a group setting and it is within this context that we pursue our information provision, capacity building and leadership development work. Our one-to-one support of women has continued and increased this year, as a growing number of women sought support for homelessness, family violence and poverty.

Our work at the state, national and international level continues unabated and increasingly we find that state, national and international issues intersect, both for Muslims and the service providers seeking to assist them. At the state level, Bendigo

has been added to our list of regional areas that we outreach to, providing training and support. As detailed in our report, Bendigo has had to face a complex combination of national issues around racism, when planning approval was given to build a local mosque.

In addition to Bendigo, we have continued our work in Mildura, Shepparton and Geelong in addition to our regular work in metropolitan regions across Melbourne.

Nationally we continued to undertake advocacy, contribute to policy and resource development, participate in national advisory committees and undertake national representation of Muslim women and other women at risk. Additionally, this year we hosted a national roundtable on Muslim Marriage in Australia, which galvanised a wide range of Muslim community leaders on the issues facing Muslim families in Australia today.

Our newly published resources included: *A Guide For Responsible Reporting On Female Genital Cutting* and *Understanding Muslim Diversity*, which was part of a project Speaking Across the Sectarian Divide. The project was enormously successful and its evaluation was also launched this year,



*Speaking Across the Sectarian Divide: Project Evaluation Report.* This year we also made a written submission to the Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence.

International developments, most especially the convulsions in the Middle East, have continued to bear down heavily on the lives of Australian Muslims. Increasing acts of violence by the Islamic State has given rise to increasing expressions of racism, violence and vilification of Muslims. The AMWCHR has not only continued to support Muslims who have escaped terrorism and violence overseas and sought asylum in Australia, but has also worked with Australian Muslim women who have been targeted for attack, or may be fearful that they or their children will be attacked as a consequence of international events.

The capacity to protect communities from anger at international events is crucial to maintaining their human rights and to ensure their health and well-being. This allows women, young people and community leaders to engage with the complex and, at times, overwhelming challenges they need to meet in this new environment. This year, our increasing

support from religious and community male leaders has been heartening and we have greatly valued their support. We have also continued to develop a range of other partnerships, collaborations and supports, in the service system also and they too are also invaluable to us. The importance of these partnerships are reflected throughout the work documented in this annual report.

We are also grateful to the Department of Social Services, the Attorney-General's Department, the Sidney Myer Fund, the Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation, Victorian Department of Communities, the Scanlon Foundation and Victorian Multicultural Commission for funding us to undertake our work this year.

Finally, congratulations to the staff and committee on a highly successful and productive year. It is impossible to adequately reflect all the hard work undertaken by the AMWCHR, especially by its staff. So we thank them for their tireless efforts toward improving the status of Muslim women in Australia.

**Tasneem Chopra**  
Chairperson

**Joumanah El Matrah**  
Executive Director





# Major Programs

## Cornerstones – Family Support Program

Cornerstones is a parenting education program for Muslim mothers living in Victoria to support their parenting in an Australian context, by assisting them to deal with developmental and behavioural challenges and by improving their access to parenting and child-support services.

This year the program delivered 33 groupwork sessions to parents of primary-school-aged children across all regions in Melbourne and some regional areas in Victoria.

The project's key achievements included increasing the parenting skills of 300 women across Victoria. The program was provided to women who otherwise do not access services and supports and was delivered in their own community language. In addition to supporting women to develop a discrete set of skills to parent and to increase their understanding of child development, in-depth work was also undertaken with mothers to recognise their own strengths and to understand the importance of self-awareness and self-care for improving parenting outcomes.

Groupwork was performed within a participatory framework. Part of the framework involved increasing women's knowledge and learning through discussions while other learning occurred through allocated tasks that participants set as homework for themselves to try at home. One participant worked with her husband to ensure consistent messages were delivered to their son about his challenging behaviours. She worked with the group to explore what had worked, why and its impact. The groupwork resulted in new parenting skills being adopted by both the participant and her husband with a direct impact on how they parent together.

The AMWCHR has increasingly received requests from schools to facilitate groups for mothers after receiving very positive feedback from previous participants. As well as this, schools are developing an awareness of the importance of skilling up mothers for parenting, and that having events and tasks at school increases mothers' engagement with schools and their children's education.



# Major Programs

## Settlement Grants Program

### Casework Support and Advocacy

This program provides one-to-one assistance to women to address a broad range of settlement-related issues and to build their capacity to attend to their settlement needs. Support is provided to women by building their capacity through information and assisting them to navigate the Australian service system.

Our individual casework and referral activities progressed effectively and some of the issues that clients presented with included:

- Family violence
- Homelessness
- Poverty, financial and material support needs
- Immigration related legal matters
- Education and employment

This year there was an increase in the number of complex cases involving family violence, blocked migration pathways and homelessness. Increasing numbers of women also sought support for access to employment and education opportunities.

While providing information and referrals to women, we worked through support and coaching to increase their understanding, confidence and independence, skills transferable to other parts of their lives. For example, increased confidence allowed some women to resume their English language classes.

### Community Capacity Building

This stream of our settlement assistance work is designed to increase the capacity of Muslim women to contend with the wide variety of challenges that may impact their lives. Workshops and more intensive groupwork modules were delivered to assist women to exercise agency over their lives and to take the lead on independently addressing issues. Women's confidence and resilience increased and they built their knowledge base while developing specific skill sets.

This year, women were able to gain knowledge about the school system, Australian law around family violence and their rights and responsibilities, education and employment (including learning English), and racism against Muslim women and how to protect yourself and your rights. Most importantly, women were able to understand how these services work in the Australian context and how best to access them. The above topics represent an array of challenges Muslim women must learn to address in their settlement process and our training assists women to do exactly that.

The response to the training was very positive and many participants talked about the importance of the content of the sessions and skill development, but also the opportunities to build social networks among themselves while also building connections with services.

Our capacity building work with women also included delivering programs on community radio stations and SBS radio. The programs focused on the newly emerging issues of early and forced marriage and family violence. The feedback from listeners and radio presenters was very positive and we received requests from other radio presenters to appear on their programs.



# Major Programs

## Parenting Information and Groupwork Support

This parenting program is designed exclusively for newly-arrived immigrant Muslim women. Workshops and groupwork modules are designed to increase client's independence, knowledge and ability to navigate the mainstream service system as it relates to women's role as mothers. Ultimately, this program is designed to assist mothers and consequently their children, with the significant challenge of arriving and settling into a new country. This program spends considerable time supporting women and giving them the necessary information and skills for successful settlement for themselves and their children in Australia.

As part of the groupwork program, women were supported and encouraged to access a wide variety of services and supports including, English language classes, and universal services such as kindergartens, childcare, employment services, health services, legal services and services for children.

In addition to supporting women to look for supports outside the home and better access resources to improve their lives, women were also assisted to exercise greater authority over their home lives. Sometimes this included significant changes in the routine of their families while at other times it included small changes that made a difference to their own lives and to that of their children's, for example, by establishing clear sleep times and a balance between screen and study time. All of these changes have improved children's performance at their schools and led to a home life more conducive to the requirements of school. In short parents and schools were on the same page.

The effectiveness of this program is evident from the multiple requests received from schools to work with mothers at their school. This reflects the recognition from schools that working with mothers has

demonstrable benefits on the lives and performance of their children at school.

The mothers who attended sessions stated that their relationships with their children often improved as a result of the sessions.

## Young Women's Program

This program stream provides support and capacity building to young newly-arrived Muslim women in Victoria. Newly-arrived young Muslim women must contend with a variety of challenges that are common to young people but also face additional challenges related to their migration and settlement process. Some challenges can be simple like finding a school or learning a new language, others are more complex such a pre-migration trauma, intergenerational conflict or violence in the home. Young women, because of their vulnerable position in society, need support and skills to navigate social and educational challenges, some unique to their newly-arrived status in Australia.

Our program, therefore, assists young women to develop skills to negotiate these challenges; some are practical skills around managing their school and home life, and some are more complex life skills around making life choices and developing self confidence and resilience necessary to exercise self agency.

This year we provided groupwork sessions on conflict resolution with parents, developing practical skills necessary to find a part-time work, and on how to become active in the community while managing school commitments. Other groupwork modules were unique and tailored to very specific issues young women wanted addressed in their immediate environment, for example, young women wanted to respond to their personal experiences of Islamophobia. The young women wanted to educate their teachers and peers about Islamophobia in a positive way by collectively designing a large puzzle with colourful painted pictures of peace and



# Major Programs

harmony that reflected their values and human rights. The school displayed this in the school hall.

## Sector Development, Education and Training

The education and training arm of our settlement-related work seeks to increase the capacity of professionals within the service system to work with newly-arrived communities, including Muslims. Our training improves cultural competence by increasing professionals' understanding of settlement, integration and other challenges for newly-arrived communities, and also develops the cultural competence of professionals by providing one-to-one support.

This year, participants in our Islam and Muslim migration training sessions gained an understanding of the basics of Islam

and Muslims in Australia. Service providers come to our training with a wide array of questions about the challenges they face when working with Muslims. Some professionals require general cultural competence skills, while others have specific information needs about Muslims or Islam, including topics such as the status of women in Islam, or the fasting requirements during Ramadan, which is very important for schools with Muslim students.

Our training is designed to be very participatory and participants are encouraged to ask 'difficult questions'. This creates a safe environment to address misconceptions especially around complex and sometimes controversial topics such as the rights of Muslim women, jihad, the role of the Imam, halal certification and veiling in Islam.



## Bendigo

The Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights has been working with local services to facilitate cross cultural understanding and dialogue to assist with the increasingly complex social challenges developing in Bendigo over the past two years.

In June 2014 the Bendigo Islamic Association put in a planning proposal for a mosque to the Bendigo Council. Bendigo has a relatively small population of about 300 Muslims, ranging from professionals to unskilled workers. The Bendigo Islamic Association estimates that the community is growing by as much as 20 families per year. Late in 2014, the Association's planning permit for a mosque was approved by the local council.

Unfortunately, there were a growing number of objections to the building of the mosque. Due to this Bendigo Community Health, through their Settlement Grants Program, organised a series of workshops on Islam and Muslims to dispel some of the myths held by both professionals and Bendigo residents about Muslims and Islam.

These workshops were conducted by the AMWCHR from July to December 2014 and were extremely well attended, with participants voicing their issues and concerns about the building of a mosque in their town.

The Secretary of the Bendigo Islamic Association, attended several workshops to talk about the mosque and the Islamic community in Bendigo and Zahir Saberi, an Afghan worker from Bendigo Health, was also invited to present as part of the workshop and described the newly-settled Afghan community in Bendigo.

Evaluations from the workshops demonstrated the importance and power of providing factual information about the community and its cultural/religious traditions, of having the opportunity to discuss issues of concern and of allowing community members from different groups to meet each other.

When asked about what changes they intended to make as a result of attending the workshop the following comments by participants were recorded:

*“More tolerance, less judgmental, better understanding of what I didn't know.”*

*“First, I intend to get this training for my co-workers. Second, I will just have more awareness and the ability to understand more around Islam and Muslims.”*

*“Extremely insightful and will enhance my understanding of working with Islam and Muslims in Australia.”*

*“Mindful of Muslim expectations within the community and how limited some of the systems offered in Australia are.”*

Staff at Bendigo Health felt that the workshops were integral for debunking the many myths about Islam that had been circulating in the community. They felt better informed and more confident to respond to opposition to the proposed mosque and the racist incidents and voices brought in from outside Bendigo.

# Projects

## Aydill – measured and balanced decision making

The Aydill project worked with Muslim and non-Muslim youth and children to develop life skills and improve social and emotional resilience to support their social and cultural integration into Australia. The project aimed to increase young people's resilience and capacity to meet the diverse challenges associated with belonging to a minority community, settling into a new country, while being a young person facing issues that all youth confront during development.

The project's activities enabled participants to improve their capacity to develop in key areas necessary to their future. Groupwork sessions focused on building self-awareness and knowledge as well as developing specific skills to

assist participants with motivation and commitment to personal goals, and to meet challenges at school or at home.

The AMWCHR's highly interactive and participatory approach to learning aims beyond achieving the simple transfer of information to the fostering of attitudinal and behavioural change. Topics that reflect this aim and that were covered in the Aydill sessions included:

1. Self-development
2. Communication skills
3. Understanding difference and diversity
4. Psycho-emotional skill development
5. Power and Gender.

## Working for Inclusion

This project's overall goal of increasing social inclusion was primarily performed by the development of Muslim women's capacity to take leadership roles within their community. Our in-depth capacity building work focused on leadership skills development, leadership in women's health and well-being, and parenting for inclusion. We worked with 71 Muslim women (in total 22 sessions) from Iranian, Afghan, Somali and Pakistani backgrounds who lived in the cities of Greater Dandenong, Moreland and Wyndham.

Leadership workshops began with the development of self and social awareness. This was followed by skill development in specific areas based on women's priorities and needs. The project's evaluation process indicated the project increased women's self-confidence and recognition of the importance of being active within their homes and in their communities. The women saw the importance of women's leadership especially in the context of belonging to newly-arrived communities in Australia that are still navigating personal, family and community issues.

## Justice in Family: Justice in the Beginning

The *Justice in the Family: Justice at the Beginning* project was developed by the AMWCHR in response to an increasing awareness and reporting of early and forced marriage (EFM) in Australia. The project's objective was to increase the understanding and capacity of the community welfare sector to respond to EFM. The project was implemented

over a twelve-month period and made considerable achievements including the training of 122 professionals and community leaders. We also developed a model of practice for awareness-raising of early and forced marriage among young women and mothers. Fifty-five women participated in the development and pilot of this groupwork program.





# Events and Resource Development

## Muslim Marriage and Family Roundtable

Co-convened by the AMWCHR and MacKillop Family Services, through the Broadmeadows Family Relationship Centre, the roundtable was the first meeting of its kind to be convened on Muslim families in Australia. The event gathered community leaders, religious leaders and professionals who together identified significant and long-standing socio-cultural issues within the Muslim community and Muslim families. The former Minister of Social Services, the Hon Kevin Andrews, was a special guest at the forum.



## 1800RESPECT Partnership

This year we worked with 1800RESPECT, the National Sexual Assault, Family Violence Counselling Service; a national counselling, information and support helpline for women. This service has developed a website to resource affected women, their friends and family and professionals working with family violence and sexual abuse. The AMWCHR developed the resource material for 1800's website for professionals on working with culturally and linguistically diverse communities on family violence and sexual assault from a human rights framework.

For more information:

[www.1800respect.org.au/workers/cald/what-is-a-human-rights-framework](http://www.1800respect.org.au/workers/cald/what-is-a-human-rights-framework)

The screenshot shows the 1800RESPECT website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the text 'Information and support 24/7 - Call 1800 737 732' and links for '(Languages)', 'Accessibility', 'About Us', and 'Contact Us'. Below this is the 1800RESPECT logo and a search bar. A main navigation menu includes 'Home', 'Get Help', 'Family & Friends', 'Workers & Professionals', 'Counselling', and 'Quick Exit'. The breadcrumb trail reads 'Home / Workers & Professionals / Working with women and chil... / What is a human rights framework?'. On the left, a 'Topics' sidebar lists: 'Fact Sheets', 'Common Questions', 'Work Sectors', 'Supporting clients experiencing the impacts of domestic and family violence', 'Key Conference and Training Dates', and '1800RESPECT Workers Webinar'. The main content area features a social media sharing bar and a heading 'What is a human rights framework?' followed by the text: 'Implementing a human rights framework can improve service delivery to women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.'



# Events and Resource Development

## Speaking across the Sectarian Divide

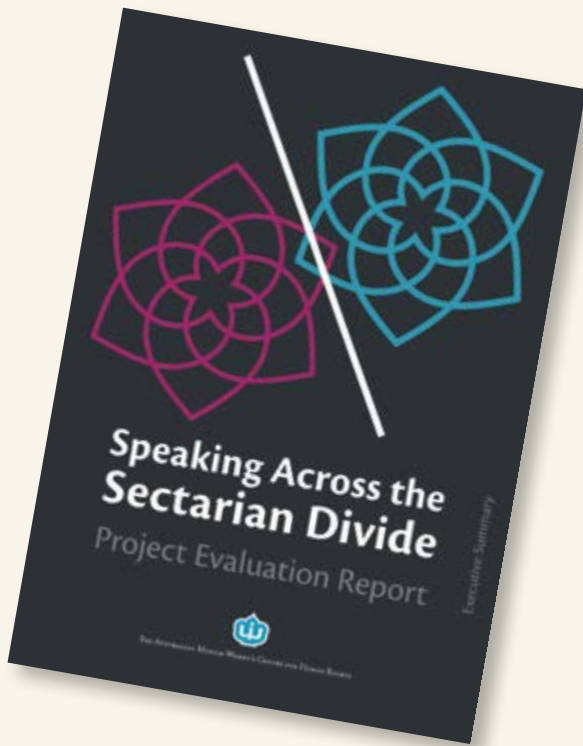
In 2013, the AMWCHR developed a program to increase the capacity of young Muslims and Muslim leaders from minority Muslim sects to engage with the majority Muslim community in Australia. The project developed in the context of the Syrian crisis and its consequent impact on Muslim sectarian relations in Australia.

Across 2013 and 2014, the project worked to develop the leadership capacity of the Muslim Alawi, Alevi and Sunni youth to contend with and take ownership of inter-sectarian relations in Australia as well as the discourse on the relationship between Syria and sectarian relations in Australia. This year, in partnership with Darebin City Council, we worked with a wide array of extraordinary and dynamic community leaders across different Muslim sects to

host two community leaders events. In the first event, the Community Leaders Forum, Muslim community leaders took part in discussions on how to work towards collectively developing community-based strategies to build a cohesive and integrated community. Our second event, Dialogue Night, was one in which youth took the lead by presenting their vision of a harmonious community which is not only respectful of sectarian diversity, but indeed values it. These presentations were made to their elders and community members, as well as to professionals in the community welfare sector and representatives from the Federal and State Governments, and Victoria Police.

The Senator, the Hon Concetta Fierravanti-Wells, was in attendance at our Dialogue





Night event, and launched the night by announcing her commitment to assisting the Muslim community in its efforts to build the capacity of its youth to contend with the increasingly complex environment in Australia.

The project also included the production of the Understanding Muslim Diversity resource guide designed to increase awareness of Muslim sectarian diversity in Australia for Muslims, the community sector and government. The guide was co-authored by Sheikh Issa Ibrahim and Hidayet Ceylan and was complimented by training for community sector professionals

working with youth who might be affected by inter-sectarian tensions.

We are enormously proud of this project and warmly thank our advisory committee members: Professor Shahram Akbarzadeh (Deakin University), Nail Aykan (Islamic Council of Victoria), Professor Linda Briskman (Swinburne University), Professor Joseph Anthony Camilleri (Pax Christi), Tasneem Chopra (Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights), Albert Fatileh (Victoria Police), Amal El-Khoury (Arabic Welfare), Sherene Hassan (Islamic Museum of Victoria), Sheikh Issa Ibrahim (Imam of Keon Park Mosque), Iman Riman (SBS Radio), and Paul Waite (Office of Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship).



# Events and Resource Development

## ISIS, Islamophobia and Sectarianism Forum with Deakin University





To celebrate the launch of *Speaking Across the Sectarian Divide: Project Evaluation Report* the AMWCHR in partnership with Deakin University held an open forum on ISIS, Islamophobia and Sectarianism. The launch was not only designed to celebrate the successful completion and positive evaluation of the project, but additionally to continue discussions on the complex socio-political phenomena that were the foundational issues for the Speaking Across the Sectarian Divide Project. Approximately 80 people attended the launch, along with the Hon Robin Scott, Minister for Multicultural Affairs, and the Senator, the Hon Concetta Fierravanti-Wells, Assistant Minister for Multicultural Affairs. The Forum had a great line-up of speakers including Dr Benjamin Isakhan and Dr Virginie Andre from Deakin University and Professor Kevin Dunn from Western Sydney University. Our afternoon session included community speakers Ghaith Krayem, from the Islamic Council of Victoria, Sara Sabbagh, from Benevolence and Albert Fatileh, from the Victoria Police.

The AMWCHR wishes to extend warm thanks and congratulations to Dr Shahram Akbarzadeh and Prof Fethi Mansouri, from Deakin University's Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation for a highly successful event. We greatly valued our partnership and look forward to future collaborations.

# Events and Resource Development

## Feedback from women

*“My son was not listening to me before but now he is.”*

*“I learnt how to parent my kids and also to be a better parent”*

*“It was difficult at the beginning to do some of the strategies that we were given..., but I learnt how to persist and now we all have a much better routine in the home”.*

*“Being a single mother of 5 boys I struggle with routine and discipline in my home. These sessions are really helping me to understand what I need to do and to become stronger with my children”.*

*“Now I know how to face conflict instead of ignoring family and being upset with everyone, because that is what I saw my mother do”.*

*“The day allowed me to learn skills to overcome personal emotional barriers I had, which helped me to be a better daughter, sister and leader that I want to be”.*

*“I am so grateful to my caseworker, I was not expecting but she found me a job”*

## Feedback from service providers

*“Can I request as many sessions as you can provide ... because our mothers really enjoyed it and we can see the benefit of every single session that has been provided to them.”*

*“[Training] was excellent along with personal stories”.*

*“More time. A whole day would be fantastic”.*

*“I feel that I can now be more respectful to students and parents in the community”.*

*“I liked the clarification of what practices are cultural versus what practices are religious”.*

*“Everything very informative. Would love to learn more”.*

*“I never attended a session like this before so I learned a lot about Islam and debunked some misconceptions”.*



# At a glance

## Services provided 2014–2015

Individual support  
to women **1045**

Secondary  
consultations **165**

Groupwork  
sessions **66**

Participants **754**

Peer support  
sessions **8**

Participants **115**

Leadership workshop  
sessions **64**

Participants **801**

Education/training/  
presentations **27**

Participants **927**

Community  
consultations **24**

Participants **273**

Information sessions **14**

Participants **215**

Study skills  
sessions **9**

Participants **103**

Community Events **4**

Participants **163**

Networking  
meetings **40**

Publications **3**

# Media

## Muslim women don't deserve this



Around Australia, Muslim women have come under attack.  
Source: News Corp Australia

AND so it begins. Around Australia, Muslim women have come under attack: one is beaten, another is sworn at, another has her hijab pulled off her head, injuring her neck.

Social media is rife with accounts of abuse as well as warnings to Muslim women to keep themselves

'Muslim women don't deserve this',  
Opinion for the *Herald Sun* published  
29<sup>th</sup> September 2014

## Islamic women's groups welcome call for imams to denounce domestic violence

President of the Australian National Imams Council had appealed to imams to speak out in their sermons



Prayers at Lalamba mosque during Eid al-Adha: the peak body for Muslim clerics has appealed for imams to speak out in their khutbah, a sermon usually delivered on Friday. Photograph: Michele Moscop/Getty Images

'Islamic women's groups welcome call for imams to denounce domestic violence',  
*The Guardian*, 27<sup>th</sup> November 2014.

theage.com.au  
THE AGE

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## Burqa debate: Tony Abbott says people need to be identifiable in secure buildings

Laila Bourke, James Messala  
Published: October 1, 2014 - 4:29PM

- [The Pulse Live: Judith Ireland begs live from Parliament](#)
- [Shorten calls on PM to 'show leadership' on social divisive issues](#)

Prime Minister Tony Abbott has appeared to back a ban on the burqa being worn in Parliament House but at the same time said no-one has ever sought to enter the building "so attired".

But that claim appears to have been directly contradicted by one of Mr Abbott's senators who has spearheaded the campaign to have the controversial Islamic garment banned in Parliament. Liberal senator Cory Bernardi says his intervention was sparked by seeing the face-covering veil being worn inside the building some years ago.

'Burqa debate: Tony Abbott says people need to be identifiable in secure buildings',  
for *The Age* published 1<sup>st</sup> October 2014

'Australian women [sic] accused of adultery faces possible prison term in Lebanon', for  
*The World Today with Eleanor Hall* on ABC Radio, aired 25<sup>th</sup> July 2014.

'Mad and sad, the falling into jihad',  
for *Sydney Morning Herald* published  
28<sup>th</sup> September 2014

'Australian Muslim women report increase in abuse, intimidation', for *AM with Chris Uhlmann* on ABC Radio aired  
10<sup>th</sup> October 2014

## Burqa Wearing Women Must Sit With Kids In Spider-Man Masks

by 2Paragraphs in Daily Edition | October 2, 2014

The Parliament House in Australia has recently made "security modifications" that require all persons with facial coverings including burqas, niqabs and Spider-Man masks to be seated in the glass enclosed galleries. The Department of Parliamentary Services explained: "This will ensure that persons with facial coverings can continue to enter the Chamber galleries [to view proceedings] without needing to be identifiable."



Hijab-by-en-shahid, Creative Commons

'Fawkner, Campbellfield Muslim abuse prompts women's rights leader to call for prosecutions', for the *Herald Sun* published 13<sup>th</sup> October 2014.



# Advisory Committees and Networks

1. Our Voices – Filling the Gap, African Women Australia
2. The National Education Toolkit for Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting in Australia, Multicultural Centre for Women’s Health
3. Rite of Passage, African Women’s Council of Australia
4. Trafficking – Communications and Awareness Working Group, Australian Attorney General’s Department
5. National Roundtable on Human Trafficking and Slavery, Australian Government
6. Advisory Committee, PNG Family and Sexual Violence Case Management Centre
7. Darebin Ethnic Communities Council
8. Department of Social Services Multicultural Action Committee
9. Goulburn Valley Settlement Planning Committee
10. Hume Multicultural Workers Network
11. Inner West Settlement Planning Committee
12. North East Region Settlement Planning Committee
13. Parenting Education Network
14. South East Region Settlement Planning Committee
15. Whittlesea Settlement Planning Committee
16. Forced Marriage Network

# Special Thanks

## Funding bodies

Department of Social Services (DSS)

Australian Attorney-General's Department

Australian Government Department of Health

Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation

Sidney Myer Fund

Scanlon Foundation

Victorian Multicultural Commission (VMC)

Victorian Department of Communities

## Our collaborating organisations

Action on Disability within  
Ethnic Communities

Adult Multicultural  
Education Service (AMES)

Afghan Program SBS Radio

Afghan Women's Association

African Women Australia (AWAU)

African Women's Council  
of Australia (AWCoA)

AMES Australia

Anti-Slavery Australia,  
University of Technology

Arabic Program SBS Radio

Arabic Welfare Inc.

Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (ASRC)

Australian Catholic Religious Against  
Trafficking in Humans (ACRATH)

Australian Federal Police (AFP)

Australian International Academy (AIA)

Bendigo Health

Benevolence Australia

CatholicCare Dandenong

Centrelink

Child FIRST (DHS)

City of Darebin

Coolaroo South Primary School

Dandenong High School

Dandenong North Primary School

Dandenong South Primary School

Dandenong West Primary School

Darebin Community Health Centre (DCH)

Deakin University

East Preston Islamic College (EPIC)

Ethnic Communities  
Council of Victoria (ECCV)

Ethnic Council of Shepparton and District

Family and Reproductive  
Rights Education Program (FARREP)

Family Day Care service  
(through Mildura Rural City Council)

Fed Uni Ballarat

Foundation House

Free Debate

Goulburn Ovens Institute of TAFE  
(GOTAFE) TAFE Shepparton

Hanover Welfare Services

Herbert Smith Freehills

Heritage Hill Dandenong

HomeGround Services

Hume Central Secondary College

Hume Interfaith Network

InTouch Multicultural Centre  
Against Family Violence

Islamic Council of Victoria (ICV)

Keilor Downs Secondary College

Kildonan Uniting Care Shepparton

Kurdish Association of Victoria

Lentara UnitingCare

Lyndale Greens Primary School

Lyndale Secondary College

Mallee Family Care (MFC)

Maternal and Child Health service  
(through Mildura Rural City Council)

Media and Communications,  
University of Wollongong

Men's Health Project Austin Hospital

Merri Community Health Services

Mildura English Language Centre

Mildura Rural City Council

Multicultural Centre for  
Women's Health (MCWH)

Myriad Consultants

Narre Warren South P-12

New Hope Foundation (NHF)

Noble Park English Language School

NSW Education Program on  
Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Children's Health Network

Roxburgh College

Settlement Council of Australia

Southern Migrant Resource Centre

Spectrum Migrant Resource Centre (MRC)

Sunraysia Community  
Health Centre (SCHS)

Sunraysia Mallee Ethnic  
Communities Council (SMECC)

Swinburne Institute for Social Research,  
Swinburne University

Uniting Care Cutting Edge Shepparton

Uniting Care Lentara

Victoria Police

Victorian Cooperative on Children's  
Services for Ethnic Groups (VICSEG)

Whittlesea Community Connections (WCC)

Whittlesea Multicultural Issues Network

Women's Legal Service Victoria

# Income and Expenditure statement for the year ended 30 June 2015

	Notes	2015 \$	2014 \$
<b>Income</b>			
Grant Income		637,151	603,482
Interest received		6,870	8,288
Membership Fees		405	54
Consultancy Fees		–	–
Donations		369	1,300
Project Management & Admin. Reimbursements		50,475	50,400
Melbourne Uni Service Fees		1,531	910
Training		1,672	–
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>698,473</b>	<b>664,434</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Salaries		370,712	370,670
Superannuation		33,968	33,817
Staff Travel		26,633	42,971
Staff Amenities		1,022	979
Other Employment Costs		1,150	1,690
Accounting and audit fees		17,897	18,755
Sessional Expenses		10,444	6,927
Bank Charges		115	194
Cleaning		59	1,103
Capital Expenditure (minor equipment)		–	–
Depreciation		380	2,306
Evaluation Expenses		13,500	19,000
Postage		100	60
Printing/Photocopy/Fax		24,924	14,526
Rent & Rates		28,494	18,690
Maintenance		2,024	1,213
Catering		6,898	4,763
Resources		–	–
Office Expenses		3,165	1,016
Sundries		–	–
Telephone		6,728	6,003

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

# Income and Expenditure statement for the year ended 30 June 2015

	Notes	2015 \$	2014 \$
A.G.M. Costs		388	2,908
Insurance		26,793	26,938
Training Costs		1,820	768
Publications/Subscriptions/Membership		362	230
Provision for Annual Leave		145	181
Provision for Long Service Leave		9,931	2,981
Office Relocation		14,906	–
Marketing & Promotions		996	548
Tutoring Fees		–	–
Conferences & Forums		–	–
Utilities Costs		1,094	2,322
Interpreting & Translation Costs		1,000	1,000
IT & Software Costs		2,656	2,033
Project Management Costs		50,832	50,400
Venue Hire		5,104	2,150
Childcare		–	450
<b>Total Expenses</b>		<b>664,240</b>	<b>637,592</b>
Profit before income tax		34,233	26,842
Income tax expense	2	–	–
Profit after income tax		34,233	26,842
Retained Profits at the beginning of the financial year		238,752	211,910
Retained Profits at the end of the financial year		272,985	238,752

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

# Assets and liabilities statement as at 30 June 2015

	Notes	2015 \$	2014 \$
<b>Current Assets</b>			
Cash	3	493,930	465,314
Trade and other receivables	4	–	–
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<b>493,930</b>	<b>465,314</b>
<b>Non Current Assets</b>			
Property, plant and equipment	5	4,231	4,611
<b>Total Non Current Assets</b>		<b>4,231</b>	<b>4,611</b>
<b>Total Assets</b>		<b>498,161</b>	<b>469,925</b>
<b>Current Liabilities</b>			
Trade and other creditors	6	22,124	34,927
Amounts received in advance	7	98,730	102,000
Provisions	8	104,322	94,246
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>		<b>225,176</b>	<b>231,173</b>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>		<b>225,176</b>	<b>231,173</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>		<b>272,985</b>	<b>238,752</b>
<b>Members' Funds</b>			
Retained profits		272,985	238,752
<b>Total Members' Funds</b>		<b>272,985</b>	<b>238,752</b>
<b>Cash Flows From Operating Activities</b>			
Receipts from Grants (Recurrent)		633,881	574,851
Receipts from customers		54,451	52,664
Payments to suppliers and employees		(723,818)	(607,572)
Interest received		6,870	8,288
<b>Net Cash provided by operating activities</b>	9	<b>28,616</b>	<b>(28,231)</b>
<b>Cash Flows From Investing Activities</b>			
Payments for purchase of property and equipment		–	–
<b>Net Cash provided by (used in) investing activities</b>		<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>
<b>Net increase (decrease) in cash held</b>		<b>28,616</b>	<b>(28,231)</b>
Cash at the beginning of the year		465,314	493,545
Cash at the end of the year		493,930	465,314

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.



# Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2015

## Note 1: Statement of Significant Accounting Policies

This financial report is special purpose financial report prepared in order to satisfy the financial reporting requirements of the Associations Incorporations Act 1981 (Vic). The committee has determined that the association is not a reporting entity.

The financial report has been prepared on an accruals basis and is based on historical costs and does not take into account changing money values or, except where specifically stated, current valuation of non-current assets.

The following significant accounting policies, which are consistent with the previous period unless otherwise stated, have been adopted in preparation of this financial report.

### a. Cash and Cash Equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents includes cash on hand, deposits held at call with banks, and other short-term highly liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less.

### b. Income Tax

The income tax expense (revenue) for the year comprises current income tax expense (income). The association does not apply deferred tax.

Current income tax expense charged to the profit and loss is the tax payable on taxable income calculated using applicable income tax rates enacted, or substantially enacted, as at the end of the reporting period. Current tax liabilities (assets) are therefore measured at the amounts expected to be paid to (recovered from) the relevant taxation authority.

The Association is exempt from paying income tax by virtue of Section 50-45 of the Income Tax Assessment Act, 1997. Accordingly, tax effect accounting has not been adopted.

### c. Property, Plant and Equipment

Leasehold improvements and office equipment are carried at cost less, where applicable, any accumulated depreciation.

The depreciable amount of all property, plant and equipment is depreciated over the useful lives of the assets to the association commencing from the time the asset is held ready for use. Leasehold Improvements are amortised over the shorter of either the unexpired period of the lease or the estimated useful lives of the improvements.

### d. Employee Entitlements

Provision is made for the Association's liability for employee benefits arising from services rendered by employees to the end of the reporting period. Employee benefits have been measured at the amounts expected to be paid when the liability is settled.

Provision is made for the Association's liability for long service leave from commencement of employment, not from the 5 year employment period normally accrued as industry practice.

#### e. Provisions

Provisions are recognised when the Association has a legal or constructive obligation, as a result of past events, for which it is probable that an outflow of economic benefits will result and that outflow can be reliably measured. Provisions are measured at the best estimate of the amounts required to settle the obligation at the end of the reporting period.

#### f. Impairment of Assets

At the end of each reporting period, the entity reviews the carrying values of its tangible and intangible assets to determine whether there is an indication that those assets have been impaired. If such an indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset, being the higher of the asset's fair value less costs to sell and value in use, is compared to the asset's carrying value. Any excess of the asset's carrying value over its recoverable amount is recognised in the income and expenditure statement.

#### g. Revenue

Revenue is brought to account when received and to the extent that it relates to the subsequent period it is disclosed as a liability.

##### Grant Income

Grant income received, other than for specific purposes, is brought to account over the period to which the grant relates.

##### Deferred Income

Unspent grant income received in relation to specific projects and events is not brought to account as revenue in the current year but deferred as a liability in the financial statements until spent for the purpose received.

#### Capital Grants

Grant income received relating to the purchase of capital items is shown as Unamortised Capital Grant and brought to account over the expected life of the asset in proportion to the related depreciation charge.

#### Interest Revenue

Interest revenue is recognised using the effective interest rate method, which for floating rate financial assets is the rate inherent in the instrument.

#### Donations

Donation income is recognised when the entity obtains control over the funds which is generally at the time of receipt.

All revenue is stated net of the amount of goods and services tax (GST).

#### h. Goods and Services Tax (GST)

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of GST, except where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the Australian Taxation Office (ATO). Receivables and payables are stated inclusive of the amount of GST receivable or payable. The net amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to, the ATO is included with other receivables or payables in the assets and liabilities statement.

# Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2015

	2015 \$	2014 \$
<b>Note 2: Income Tax Expense</b>		
Prima facie tax payable on operating profit at 30% (2014: 30%)	10,270	8,053
Less tax effect of:		
– non-taxable member income arising from principle of mutuality	(10,270)	(8,053)
– Income tax expense	–	–
<b>Note 3: Cash and cash equivalents</b>		
Cash at bank	493,930	465,314
<b>Note 4: Trade and other receivables</b>		
Trade and other receivables	–	–
<b>Note 5: Property, plant and equipment</b>		
Office equipment - at cost	13,542	13,542
Less: Accumulated depreciation	(9,311)	(8,931)
	<b>4,231</b>	<b>4,611</b>
<b>Note 6: Trade and other payables</b>		
Creditors and accruals	14,249	28,097
GST amounts payable	7,875	6,830
	<b>22,124</b>	<b>34,927</b>
<b>Note 7: Amounts received in advance</b>		
Grants in advance	98,730	102,000
<b>Note 8: Provisions</b>		
<b>Current</b>		
Provision for annual leave	39,819	39,674
Provision for long service leave	64,503	54,572
	<b>104,322</b>	<b>94,246</b>

	2015 \$	2014 \$
<b>Note 9: Reconciliation of Cash Flow from Operations with Profit from Ordinary Activities after Income Tax</b>		
Profit after income tax	34,233	26,842
<b>Cash flows excluded from operating profit attributable to operating activities</b>		
<b>Non-cash flows in profit</b>		
Depreciation	380	2,306
Changes in assets and liabilities:		
- (Increase)/decrease in trade and other receivables	-	-
- Increase/(decrease) in trade and other payables	(12,804)	(31,910)
- Increase/(decrease) in amounts received in advance	(3,270)	(28,631)
- Increase/(decrease) in project balances	-	-
- Increase/(decrease) in provisions	10,076	3,162
Net cash provided by Operating Activities	28,616	(28,231)

# Independent audit Report to the members of Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights inc.

## Report on the Financial Report

We have audited the accompanying financial report, being a special purpose financial report, of Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights Inc., which comprises the assets and liabilities statement as at 30 June 2015, statement of cash flows as at 30 June 2015, and the income and expenditure statement for the year then ended, a summary of significant accounting policies, other explanatory notes and the statement by members of the committee.

## Committee's Responsibility for the Financial Report

The committee of the association is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report and has determined that the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statement, which form part of the financial report, are appropriate to meet the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act 1981 (Vic) and are appropriate to meet the needs of the members. The committee's responsibilities also include establishing and maintaining internal control as the committee determines is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error; selecting and applying appropriate accounting policies; and making accounting estimates that are reasonable in the circumstances.

## Auditor's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on our audit. We have conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Those Auditing Standards require that we comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial report is free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about amounts and disclosures in the financial report. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error. In making those assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the association's preparation and fair presentation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view, in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by the committee, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial report.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

### Opinion

In our opinion, financial report gives a true and fair view of the financial position of Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights Victoria Inc. as at 30 June 2015 and its financial performance for the year then ended in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statements, and the Associations Incorporation Act 1981 (Vic).

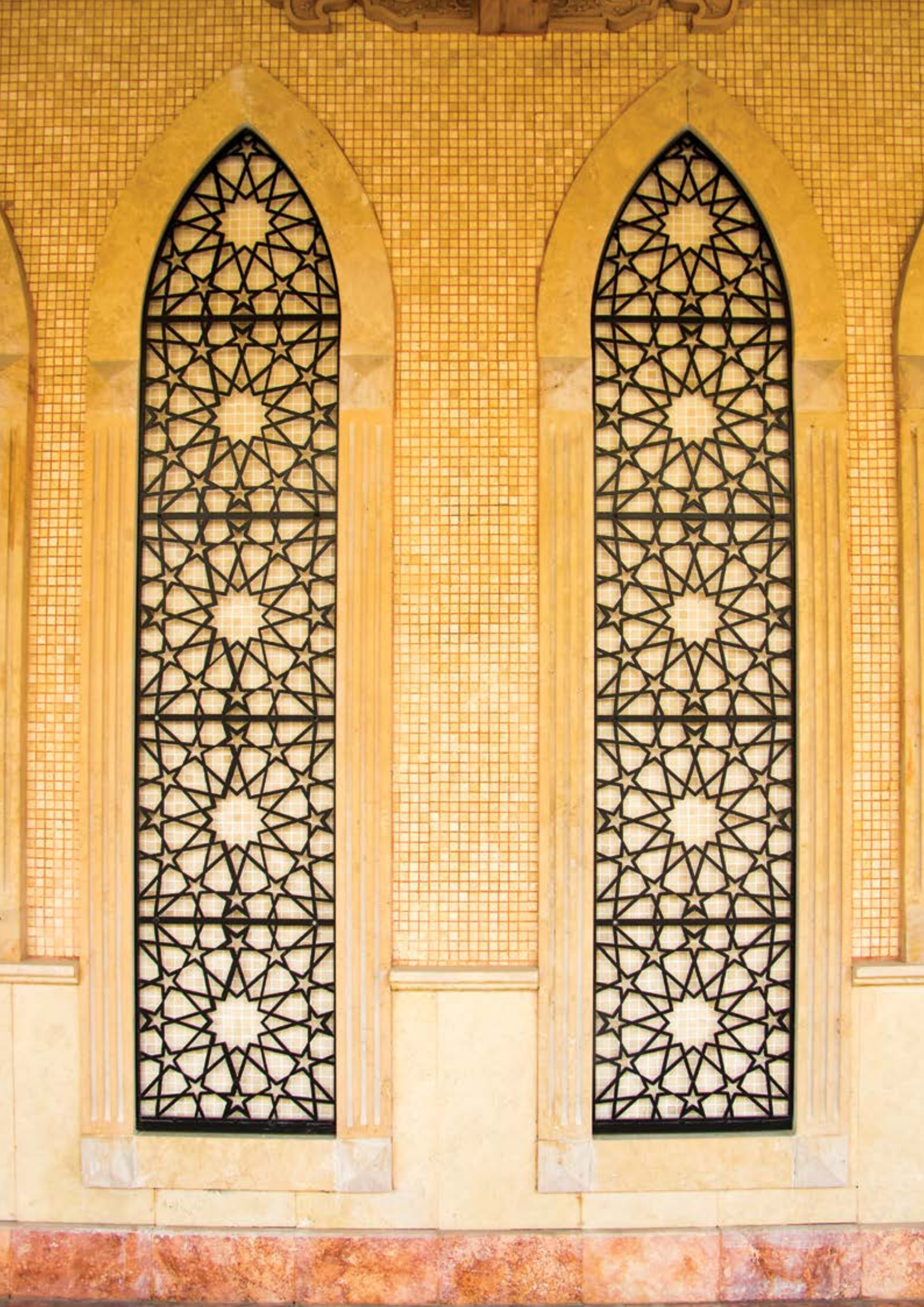
### Basis of Accounting and Restriction on Distribution

Without modifying our opinion, we draw attention to Note 1 to the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared to assist Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights Inc. to meet the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act 1981(Vic). As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose.



Rudolph Hosri  
Suite 13a ,L2, Keilor Road  
Essendon VIC 3040  
Institute of Public Accountants

Dated: 29 October 2015





AUSTRALIAN MUSLIM WOMEN'S CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS  
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