



2012 annual report



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

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

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AUSTRALIAN MUSLIM WOMEN'S CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

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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.

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

As an organisation committed to Muslim women and human rights, we will not remain silent when Islam is used to undermine the status of Muslim women but will intervene in these instances with facts and informed analysis.

Our intent is to challenge cultural hierarchies or any system of monopolization or exclusion that result in reducing the rights and status of Muslim women.

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.

Our Principles

The one foundational principle that informs our approach to our work is that Muslim women's equality is:

- without exception
- without qualification
- without threat

Our Work

Who are we?

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 been not 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.

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

What are the core areas of work we undertake?

We prioritise very practical work for women that 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's Report

It is with great pleasure that I present to you the 2012 Annual Report for the Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights (AMWCHR).

This year's report demonstrates AMWCHR's ongoing contribution to the welfare of Muslim women across Victoria. It also demonstrates the benefits of Muslim women taking ownership of their issues and advocating for themselves. Others too readily subsume the discourse about Muslim women, and this inevitably misrepresents who Muslim women are and the challenges they encounter. This remains an ongoing challenge that is core to the AMWCHR's objective of protecting and enhancing Muslim women's status in Australian society.

We have continued to advocate strongly to all levels of government on matters of importance to Muslim women: family violence, racism, religious vilification, inaccessibility of services, declining education and employment participation. These are all issues which government must take a better stance on. The Government's response, however, especially when it pertains to violence against Muslim women, could be significantly better than it has been.

As always, our accomplished staff have continued to place the needs of clients at the center of

everything they do. This honoring of Muslim women's experience in service delivery cannot be overstated. Our Executive Director, Joumanah El Matrah, has always set a compelling vision, but she also keeps us creative, strong and focused amidst the uncertainty that increasingly defines the community welfare sector.

Important also to our strength and professionalism are the able and brilliant women that comprise the Committee of Management. Through our diverse professional backgrounds, we pull together to resource AMWCHR under the stewardship of Joumanah, sharing a common vision for the betterment of Muslim women across this state and country.

And, finally, a big thank you to our funding bodies from both the government and philanthropic sectors. Your ongoing support is testimony to the valuable work AMWCHR delivers, and reflects a broader acknowledgement that Muslim women are best placed to empower other Muslim women, when afforded the resources and opportunity to do so.

Congratulations all on a stellar year.

Tasneem Chopra



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Executive Director's Report

It has been another productive and important year for the Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights as demonstrated by the great many highlights in this year's annual report.

During the year, AMWCHR has worked collaboratively with sister organisations and mainstream services at the state, national and international level.

At the state level, staff have been incredibly productive, providing 6301 services to women by providing information sessions, group work and one-to-one assistance. We have also provided support and training to over 503 service providers and collaborated with colleagues on many projects and activities. This year, we are grateful to the Department of Immigration and Citizenship for providing another three years of funding to the AMWCHR, assisting us to extend our work to Mildura and Swan Hill.

At the national level, we made a number of presentations to the Joint Standing Committee on Migration's inquiry into the economic, social and cultural impacts of migration in Australia. AMWCHR greatly valued the opportunity to contribute to this important inquiry. We also participated in a consultation hosted by the Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission for the current UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women. The consultation was part of Ms Rashida Manjoo's study tour of Australia. Alongside our migrant and refugee sister organisations across the country, we provided input on the manifestations of violence against migrant and refugee women.

On the international level we joined our international networks in Jordan and Istanbul last year to work on human rights issues for Muslim

women internationally, most notably, on Muslim women's rights within the family by the key international umbrella group *Musawah*.

Finally, our own research efforts on issues unique to Muslim women have continued. In the past twelve months our work has focused on the extent to which religious beliefs impact on the consideration of divorce by Muslim women. In a similar vein we have continued our specialised training on Islam and family violence to build the sector's capacity to contend with the complexity of dealing with the intersections of culture, gender, faith and violence.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our primary funding bodies for this past year, the Department of Immigration and Citizenship, Department of Families, Housing and Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and the Attorney General's Department, for their ongoing support. These core funding streams make our work with Muslim women possible over the long term, providing the stability necessary for organisations seeking to improve the status of Muslim women and families in Australia. Also I would like to express a special thanks to the Victorian Women's Trust, R.E Ross Trust, Ian Potter Foundation and the Legal Services Board for their support in the past year to undertake work that would otherwise not have been possible. To the R.E Ross Trust, particularly, we are deeply grateful. They supported our efforts to increase Muslim women's understanding of their rights over a three-year period.

Finally thank you to our exceptional staff, and to an amazing Committee of Management; all of whom make our success possible – we have completed another year to be proud of!

Joumanah El Matrah

PROJECT REPORTS

The Aman Project

In the last decade, Muslim children in Australia have had to face a rather complex social environment. In addition to the highs and lows of childhood and adolescence, Muslim children are regularly exposed to religious vilification, racial discrimination, and are fighting daily battles to defend their Australian and Muslim identities. The AMWCHR is convinced that it is essential to work with young Muslims to build their confidence and leadership skills, and to provide a space where they can freely explore their identities as Australian Muslims.

In 2011, in partnership with the Federal Attorney General's Department, AMWCHR launched the Aman Project. The word '*aman*' is used in many of our community languages to mean faith, peace, trust and safety, and as such it perfectly illustrates the goal of the project: to enhance positive attitudes towards peace, equality and safety of young Muslims in Victoria through fun, interaction, learning and meaningful action.

The Aman project was carried out in partnership with three Islamic Schools: Mt. Hira College, Australian International Academy, and East Preston Islamic College. Each school chose students from years six to 11 who had demonstrated leadership skills and potential to build on their existing talents. A total of 48 students across the three schools participated in this 18-month project. Weekly sessions at each school were conducted over 10 months which covered self-awareness, identity, youth leadership, human rights, justice and peace-building, and focused on skills such as assertive communication, public speaking, writing, artistic expression, theatre, critical analysis, and debating. The students also submitted individual assignments which included sharing their present and future goals, personal examples of assertive behaviour

and effective communication, and reflections on their development as young Muslim leaders.

Some of the Aman sessions were held jointly with all the three schools together and were facilitated by external facilitators and included sessions on Art for Social Change, Exploring Identity through Theatre, and Debating. The sessions used interactive methodologies to engage the young participants in thinking critically and developing self-awareness and life skills as well as addressing personal attitudes and perceptions towards self, community, diversity and human rights. They designed campaigns and participated in discussions on issues they felt strongly about such as religious vilification, peace and tolerance, bullying, and caring for the environment.

Students enjoyed meeting and interacting with other young Muslim leaders and making new friends. Contrary to popular opinion, Muslim students have limited opportunities to meet students from other Islamic schools. This was an important part of the project, as each school is diverse and unique in its own right, reflecting the diversity and range of Muslims in Australia.

At the end of the project, a closing ceremony was held. Students were given a certificate and two students were chosen from each school for outstanding participation. A Teacher's Conference was also held with teachers and principals from the participating Aman schools as well as other schools and organizations working with Muslim youth. The conference focused on learnings from the Aman Project as well as other strategies and initiatives that can be used when providing human rights and peace education to Muslim students.

PROJECT REPORTS

Comments from students:

"Everything was great and unlike anything I've ever participated in."

"I liked the activities that really challenged global and universal issues and that 'gave light' to issues left stagnant [unaddressed]."

"I enjoyed the debating session the most because it helped me overcome my fears."

"The joint sessions [involving all three schools together] were awesome. So was discussing controversial topics. It was nice to finally get some answers."

Comments from teachers:

"The Aman project is very valuable. It helped students to see 'outside' themselves and to develop more empathy. It provided students with a wide variety of experiences and challenged them to think of new ways of seeing themselves, others and the world."

"[I saw] a lot more confidence in some of the students, I think they developed confidence and became assertive in my opinion. They stepped out of their comfort zone. I know one of our boys in particular who's terrified of getting up to speak in front of others eventually managed to do it. And that's a very positive thing."

"[The Aman project] helped their self esteem. We chose them for the program, and a few of the kids were quite quiet but we knew they had leadership skills and I think they've really blossomed."



Aman closing session



Aman debating skills session



Art for Social Change session

PROJECT REPORTS

Aydill – Arabic word for measured and balanced decision making

The mothers that we have worked with over the years have expressed a strong need for us to work with Muslim children so that they are able to learn to understand others, manage and communicate feelings, value differences and understand the cultural differences that exist between the home and their wider environment.

We feel it is important to note, however, that Muslim children currently face a range of challenges that are directly relevant to some of the objectives of the peace education work undertaken overseas in countries experiencing civil strife. Muslim children are being reared in a country in which there is, at times, significant unease and anxiety, and sometimes even anger and racism and violence directed towards Muslims. And, within the Muslim community itself, there is a growing movement towards isolationism and unhealthy forms of religious traditionalism that is negatively impacting on young people's capacity to grow and find a place for themselves in this country.

Through our own research on the relationship between isolation and radicalisation, we have come to understand that young Muslims have turned to fringe groups to find a coherent sense of identity and self worth.

We believe that skills development will assist young people to counter these psychological and emotional factors. There is also need among many young people (and the seeds of this can be laid early in

childhood) for an acceptance that personal identity is a constantly changing phenomenon: what it means to be Muslim or what it means to be Australian will change over time and that this is not a terrible reality to be avoided.

It was based on this complex understanding of reality that the Aydill project was designed as a three-year programme and based on learnings from peace – education models undertaken by the UNHCR internationally. The project aimed to provide a groupwork programme for primary and high school children, staff and parents and was innovative in its broad-based approach to working at these three levels of intervention.

This year was also the third and final year of the Aydill project funded by the Ian Potter Foundation. The project culminated with a young people's conference held at the Northcote Town Hall attended by 66 students from Fawkner Primary School, Carlton Primary School and East Preston Islamic College. The day began with a keynote speech by Tasneem Chopra, the AMWCHR's Chairperson, followed by a magic show. Four concurrent workshops were then held on self-esteem, healthy relationships and communication.

The project led to the development of AMWCHR's module for working with children at the primary and secondary school levels with schools in which there is a diverse student population.

PROJECT REPORTS

Parenting Resettlement Project



Parenting occupies a central place in the lives of Muslim women either as mothers or daughters. It is a site of significant socialisation where the potential exists for positive development or significant impairment. Parenting is also the central process by which young Muslims develop their views of settlement and this has important impacts on how they manage this process. Hence, the Parenting Resettlement Project for newly-arrived Muslim women supports Muslim women to meet the challenges of settling into Australia by providing individual casework support and groupwork education. Priority is given to Muslim women who are sole parents and women who have many children or children with challenging behaviours. This program focuses on the very practical aspects of settlement and integration.

Our groupwork programs were delivered widely across Melbourne and rural Victoria. We worked with humanitarian and newly-arrived Muslim women who have migrated from conflict affected and politically precarious zones such as Afghanistan, Burma, Iraq and Sudan.

Despite the considerable challenges women face when coming from a conflict zone, as well as the process of migration and settlement in a new country, they are usually concerned first and foremost about

the welfare and wellbeing of their children. Hence our groupwork program teaches women to parent effectively in their new country of residence. Our groupwork program provides information on a wide array of topics including: child development, Australian law as it relates to children, the Victorian education system and support for mothers. In addition to building their skills, abilities and confidence, women are supported to use mainstream services available to them.

One of the greatest hurdles women face when settling their children into Australia is dealing with the schooling system. Women often complain that they do not understand the schooling system and often feel they have no choice but to avoid it. This presents numerous challenges around supporting their children with schooling requirements such as homework but also in assisting their children if they encounter other difficulties such as racial harassment. It can also pose significant difficulties when their children lose interest in schooling as teenagers. Therefore, we have been working to improve the relationship between women and schools.

Our participants generally provide us with a great deal of positive feedback about the services we provide to them.

PROJECT REPORTS

Cornerstones Project

Cornerstones aims to work towards building healthy family relationships within the Muslim community by providing group work programs to Muslim women that are focused on self development and parenting support.

This year the Centre was delighted to build partnerships with Afghan community leaders to facilitate a self-development and parenting group for Afghan women in Dandenong. In Roxburgh College, a leadership in parenting group was held for Turkish mothers.

The groups supported women to improve their parenting, communication, conflict resolution and relationship skills and to facilitate their integration into their local community. Group sessions focused on parenting capacity development, self-development, and the promotion of emotional well-being for themselves, their children and their families.

The groups proved beneficial for women on a number of levels. Firstly, they assisted them to develop self-awareness and confidence in their identities and roles as women and mothers, caregivers and partners. Secondly, this enhanced confidence allowed them to improve their relationships at home with their families and children and to tackle issues that they ordinarily may have avoided or would have felt a lack of confidence to tackle, preventing more severe problems from developing. Finally, these workshops have a preventative function by enabling women to balance their own needs with their responsibilities for children.



Women also made suggestions for future work around their areas of need. These recommendations generally pertained to working with their husbands to increase their involvement and skills in parenting their children. This is something we would certainly like to support women in, because as with most societies, women carry a far greater share of the responsibility of parenting.

PROJECT REPORTS

Young Women's Project

The Young Women's Project has completed another successful year of work with Muslim students in a variety of Victorian schools. The Project's group programs and information sessions gave participants the opportunity to engage with a number of themes all designed to build self resilience and independence.

These themes included the experience of settlement into Australian society and schooling; the importance of healthy relationships; and how participants might best fulfill their future aspirations.

This year saw a number of different workers contribute to the project delivering sessions across Melbourne. Participants included young women from a diverse range of backgrounds but we predominantly worked with women from Afghanistan, Iraq, and Africa.

The generosity, humor and enthusiasm that young women brought to sessions was inspiring, as was the generosity with which they shared their life experiences and lessons learnt. The young women demonstrated an increasingly sophisticated understanding of human rights and gender equality, which we hope will support their development into young adulthood.

Participants expressed that they faced many challenges. The most common theme identified by young women was a range of limitations they felt in their lives. They described experiences of gendered cultural restrictions, widespread racism and prejudice both within Muslim communities and the broader Australian society, to a lack of confidence in their personal capacity.

Young women also spoke of intergenerational conflict, family violence and early or forced marriage. These momentous challenges along with the difficulty of settling in a new country and facing adolescence, illustrates the vital importance of providing young women with meaningful support.

Our programs have focused on building the confidence and resilience of young women as well as their capacity to access educational opportunities and mainstream services. We received overwhelmingly positive feedback from all sessions. The most confirming feedback was the openness and appreciation expressed by participants themselves and the schools we worked with.

There were a number of highlights from this year. We held a seminar for a visiting group of young women from Shepparton that focused on personal goal setting and study skills. We also collaborated with a diverse range of schools as well as community organisations such as RISE and The River Nile Learning Centre. These collaborations are greatly valued, adding breadth to our services and improving our capacity to meet the needs of young Muslim women. We will continue to build on all these relationships in the coming year.

Our annual Young Women's Conference was combined this year with our Education and Employment Expo. Young women from four different schools participated in a day that focused strongly on their future. The conference provided a combination of workshops with informative guests from a range of local councils and universities, including RMIT, Monash, Deakin, and Swinburne, as well as organisations such as Foundation House. Young women experienced an enriching day that highlighted the importance of social participation, activism and education for women. Participants also enjoyed the opportunity to meet other young Muslim women from different areas and schools that are faced with similar challenges, helping to develop their social networks and reduce their isolation.

The Young Women's Project looks forward to the coming year and to working with new and existing partners to deliver an exciting program that includes some innovative pilot projects.

AMWCHR extends services to Mildura

This is the first year that the AMWCHR extended its services to Muslim women in Mildura. Melbourne is host to the second largest Afghan population in Australia, the first being Sydney. As the number of Afghans, Hazara asylum seekers in particular, arrive in Australia, they have moved to small country towns such as Mildura, Shepparton and Swan Hill.

Refugee families, particularly women and children, face many challenges as part of the settlement process and the AMWCHR began working this year in Mildura with both the Afghan community and mainstream service providers.

We worked with the Sunraysia Mallee Ethnic Communities Council (SMECC) to run an information session on Islam for service providers. Both our organisations were overwhelmed with the response to this first session. We had 40 participants (room capacity) plus 30 participants on a waiting list. Participants genuinely wanted to know more about the needs of Muslim women and about their religion, Islam.

Evaluations from the workshop were extremely positive with workers stating that the two hour session were simply not long enough. Comments included:

“I was surprised about their beliefs. They are so diverse and not what I perceived.”

“The session increased my understanding. I now feel I know a little more of their needs and how we can offer more of ourselves to help.”

“I really had a poor understanding but the more educated you are the more compassionate and tolerant you become.”

As well as our workshop and consultations with relevant service providers, particularly the Director and staff at the SMECC, we were also able to consult with a group of Afghan women in their homes. Many of the women told us about their issues of resettlement including the difficulties of finding housing for their large families, the isolation they feel as new settlers with limited or no English language skills, and the difficulties of understanding the different systems in Australia such as schooling, health, and of course the ongoing tension and stress in their lives.

The ugly issue of racism also raised its head in these discussions. The women reported stories of racial taunts, usually about their headscarves and religion, other women actually abusing them in local shopping centres and children being bullied at school because of their religious background.

After this initial foray into Mildura, a further 3 workshops on Islam were delivered to workers. Each workshop went for up to 4 hours and was filled to capacity.

We also held a consultation with Afghan women at SMECC. The thirteen women who participated discussed many issues, including women not having the time to attend English classes which led to them being concerned that they do not have enough English to pass the citizenship test when the time came. They also raised the issue of doctors not using interpreters and having to travel to Adelaide to see specialists, which is quite common in Mildura. Family reunion is a big problem with many women particularly distressed about their family still in refugee camps in Pakistan and other places.

This year's work has formed the foundation for ongoing work into the future. We look forward to forming partnerships in the region and continuing with the great relationships we have built.

Casework Program

The Casework program this year provided much needed support to a diverse group of Muslim women across a broad range of issues.

The Casework program supported Muslim women to navigate and access mainstream support services, which has resulted in increased independence, confidence and improved personal capacity, improved health and wellbeing, community participation, integration and connectedness. The integral support provided by the Casework program also assisted Muslim women to contribute their unique skills and talents to the Australian community.

Women reported that the service they had received from the AMWCHR was professional and supportive, and that they felt heard and not judged. The information they received was crucial when making, at times, life changing decisions. The women reported feeling more empowered to build a life in Australia and to achieve their goals, dreams and aspirations.

Caseworkers continue to experience a number of challenges in the work. In particular difficulties such as assisting women who have no income and therefore no means of supporting themselves, and assisting women who have no access to Medicare and therefore difficulties in accessing the health system. Other challenges include trying to find suitable accommodation options for women, and difficulties in accessing some mainstream services.

Issues addressed by the Casework program

Women contacted us experiencing a range of settlement issues and personal difficulties. AMWCHR received queries about women's eligibility to apply for citizenship and requested orientation support and information about Australian culture and systems.

Many women were at risk of homelessness or experiencing housing issues. Some women requested information about accessing private rental accommodation and assistance to apply for public housing.

Women requested immigration advice regarding sponsoring loved ones to Australia, and legal advice, due to separation and divorce, around property settlement and custody of children.

Women required referrals to specialist health services including the refugee health nurse program, and referrals to ethno-specific or specialist counselling due to personal struggles, mental health issues and trauma.

Many women presented in financial hardship and debt, having difficulty meeting basic needs or needing assistance to access financial counsellors and material aid, such as food aid and household goods. There were many requests for assistance in dealing with Centrelink.

Women also required assistance for themselves or their children to enrol and pay for education. Some women contacted us simply because they felt alone and isolated, and were seeking to connect with others.

A significant number of women contacted us seeking support due to domestic violence, and a few of these women also reported sexual violence in marriage. They required information about legal

services, intervention orders, refuge accommodation and referral information for immigrant women's domestic violence support agencies.

A small number of women also disclosed that they were being controlled or abused by their families. They were facing the tough decision about whether to leave and walk into a society they knew little about and lose their families forever, or stay and endure unbearable circumstances.

Many women contacted AMWCHR seeking support with difficulties in obtaining an Islamic divorce. Some women reported waiting a couple of years to obtain a divorce while others were unsuccessful. A number of women stated that without an Islamic divorce they were not able to move on with their lives. A small number of young women contacted around the issue of early marriage, forced marriage and arranged marriage.

Who the Casework program supported

The Casework program supported Muslim women primarily on refugee and humanitarian visas. Work with these women was often intense due their multiple and high needs, as they came from war-torn countries and refugee camps. The program also assisted women on temporary and permanent spouse visas.

Women across Victoria were assisted, with the main areas being Roxburgh Park and Dandenong, followed by Hoppers Crossing, Broadmeadows and Reservoir.

The main ethnic groups AMWCHR assisted included Lebanese and Somali, followed by Afghan, Ethiopian, Indian and Iraqi.

Case example 1 – Sabah

Sabah contacted AMWCHR in a desperate state. In Australia for less than 2 years, she left her husband due to domestic violence and was staying temporarily with friends. At 36 weeks pregnant with her first child, she was unwell with a brain tumour. Due to Sabah's low income, it was difficult for her to access the private rental market and Sabah is fearful of being placed in a refuge where she knows no one and may be the only Muslim woman. AMWCHR continues to work hard to find Sabah suitable accommodation and to coordinate health, parenting and welfare supports with hospitals and welfare services.

Case example 2 – Anisa

Anisa was living in a rural area and had been in Australia for less than 1 year when she fled from her husband due to domestic violence. She obtained an intervention order which her husband breached. This led Anisa to find refuge accommodation. The refuge referred her to the AMWCHR, and after a short while she was referred to transitional housing in the CBD. Completely alone and estranged from her community, Anisa started a new life for herself. She learnt to speak English and is currently undertaking a Diploma in Youth work, working part-time. She has made new friends and feels like she is starting to recover from her experience. The AMWCHR has assisted Anisa to apply for public housing and she is waiting for an offer to be made. Anisa is most grateful for the support she has received in her time of need, and desires to give back to the community as a youth worker.

AMWCHR's focus on Leadership

Muslim women in Australia face a number of barriers and disadvantages on a daily basis. From a lack of access to a variety of services, to homelessness, racial discrimination, religious vilification, cultural and gender-based violence, to trauma, depression and isolation. The AMWCHR strongly believes that the pathway for sustainable personal and socio-political change for Muslim women in Australia requires the empowerment of Muslim women, and the strengthening of their self-agency and wellbeing. The AMWCHR believes that no community can coherently and healthily change without leaders that understand the strong link between individual well-being and collective community well-being. This forms the basis of AMWCHR's focus on building women's leadership potential, which is a foundational principle of all our work.

AMWCHR sees empowerment of women as a process rather than an outcome that brings about meaningful change to assist Muslim women to develop as leaders within their own personal lives as well as in their community. Building leadership potential requires a number of empowerment strategies, beginning with personal empowerment, skill enhancement, self-awareness, self-esteem and self-confidence, sense of identity, as well as a greater awareness of rights. This in turn leads to increased participation in the community, increased independence and greater access to resources and increased leadership capacities, whether in their individual lives or within their communities, thus contributing to a meaningful improvement in the socio-political status and empowerment of Muslim women.



Self-esteem, Identity, Leadership and Community (SILC)

Muslim women face a range of barriers. These include lack of education, limited English language skills, poverty and high levels of responsibilities due to early marriage and having a greater burden for caring of children. This prevents them from participating actively in the Australian society making them a highly disadvantaged and isolated group.

This disadvantage means that they are high users of crisis services, whereas their access to preventative services such as counselling or community development initiatives is quite low.

In view of this cycle of disadvantage, the Self-esteem, Identity, Leadership and Community Development (SILC) project was developed on the findings of well-established research and our own community work. It takes a capacity-development approach to building on the common heritage and belief shared by all Muslim communities that individuals bear a significant responsibility for their community.

While evidence demonstrates women are more disadvantaged in their community, women are also better able to transfer their learning

to benefit themselves, their families and the community. This is the underlying principle of the SILC project, which seeks to enhance and strengthen this individual and community capacity.

The project was funded by the R.E. Ross Foundation and aimed to continue our work to develop the capacities of Muslim women to take on leadership roles within the community. The project was designed to run a series of workshops with groups of Muslim women from diverse backgrounds with a focus on building self-confidence and self-esteem as well as considering the role that they can play within their communities to improve their own and the community's well-being.

This year was the final one of the three-year project. The type of benefits that the leadership program can provide cannot be overstated. Through these groupwork modules we have seen women change and most importantly we have seen them teach their children a new set of values which sees young boys and young girls as equal.

Residential Workshop with Afghan Women

While working with Afghan women from migrant and refugee backgrounds, it became apparent to the AMWCHR that Afghan women face recurring challenges in attending to their self-care and their personal wellbeing and that this significantly impacted on their capacity to care for their children. Not only were these women busy in their traditional roles as wives, mothers and caretakers, they were also quite dependant on men when accessing services which might assist them. In our workshop, many shared feelings of being overwhelmed and burnt out by their responsibilities for caring for children.

In order to provide more opportunities for Afghan women to see Victoria and model the idea of independent self-care the AMWCHR organized a residential workshop on healthy relationships in partnership with the Afghan Women's Organization in November 2011. The workshop was held over three days in Balnarring, Victoria and was attended by a total of 26 women.

The workshop's focus on healthy relationships, particularly on building self-esteem, improving communication with partners and families, as well as providing basic parenting and leadership skills was modified as many women began sharing their stories of the trauma they suffered from experiencing war conflict, witnessing the death of loved ones and the challenges of their journey as refugees.

The workshop facilitators, psychologists with considerable experience in trauma work, shifted the focus of the workshop to facilitate a deeper sharing and processing of the women's traumatic experiences. Due to their limited mobility and language skills, most women rarely had a chance to process and share their experiences with one another, let alone with a mental health professional. The facilitators

also provided information and tools for managing stress and trauma as well as providing a space to talk about their cultural practices and the cross cultural differences of living in Australia.

Aside from providing support on trauma and grief, the sessions also provided a space where the women could interact with other women from their community. Hailing from traditional Afghan backgrounds, it is not common for women to engage socially without their husbands and leave home responsibilities to take time out for themselves, so this was a rare and welcomed opportunity for them. In fact more women wanted to attend the camp but due to limited space and funding we had to turn a number of women away.

The participation of the women and their willingness to be involved was very encouraging. As a model this intensive workshop worked well, where the women were available for three days in a relaxing setting which contributed to learning and reflecting. The workshops enhanced their emotional awareness and allowed them to focus on their feelings. As a result the women were less stressed, felt heard and supported, and were more aware of the importance of managing stress and its impact on their wellbeing. This has led to them making many changes in their lives to cope better with their past traumatic experiences and current psychological health issues, such as depression and anxiety.

The women also had the opportunity to reflect on their lives away from the daily stressors and more importantly enjoyed time with each other until late at night, cooking, singing and talking. This was paramount for the women who are often not in control of creating opportunities for self-care for themselves.

Services provided

Individual support to women	2718
Secondary consultations	151
Groupwork sessions	130
Participants	1994
Children's groupwork sessions	6
Participants	78
Education/training/presentations	14
Number of education/training/presentations/participants	287
Individual consultations	9
Community consultations	23
Number of consultation participants	329
Homework group sessions	12
Number of homework group participants	101
Workshops for Muslim women	25
Participants	298
Muslim youth group sessions	35
Participants	475
Conferences/Events organised	5
Participants	305
Radio programs (including community languages)	20
Network meetings	65

Presentations

1. Judicial College of Victoria: [Justice and Diversity](#).
2. AIJA Criminal Justice in Australia and New Zealand – Issues and Challenges for Judicial Administration Conference: [Niqab in the Court Room – Cross Examination and the Muslim Witness](#).
3. Multicultural Centre for Women’s Health: [Muslim Women’s leadership](#).
4. Victorian Women Lawyers’ Justice Committee inaugural event on Religion and the Law: [Where to from here?](#)
5. Committee for Geelong: [Muslim Leaders Dispelling the Myths](#).
6. Pearsons Lawyers and the National Centre of Excellence for Islamic Studies: [Family Law and Domestic Violence in the Muslim Community](#).
7. Hume City Council and Hume Interfaith Network: [One Community, Many Faiths Forum Presentation on Islam](#).
8. Islamic Council of Victoria and Moreland City Council: [Stories in the Park](#).
9. OZ MADE: [Annual Team Meeting](#).
10. Fitzroy Legal Service, Activists Website Launch: [Muslim Women and Activism](#).
11. VICSEG: [Training Childcare Workers](#).
12. Relationships Australia, Adelaide: [Muslim Community in Australia](#).
13. Foundation House: [Shining Stars Conference](#).
14. Australian Human Rights Commission: [Activism for Young Muslims](#).

Media Interviews/Articles

1. ABC Radio: [Hijab interview](#).
2. SBS Radio: [Muslim Women Australia](#).
3. The Age: [Responding to Terror, conservative faith seeps into the corridors of power](#).
4. Herald Sun: [Why we don’t need burqa identity laws](#).
5. SBS Insight Program: [Arranged Marriage appearance](#).
6. 4BC Radio: [Arranged Marriage](#).
7. 2GB Radio: [Forced Marriage](#).
8. La Trobe University Journal Interview: [Fighting Hislam: Muslimahs fighting sexism in their traditions and communities](#).
9. Sultana’s Dream: [Why The Fairer Sex Cries ‘Unfair’](#).
10. Sultana’s Dream: [Community Education and the Law](#).
11. National Centre of Excellence in Islamic Studies: [video interview for usage in public media](#).
12. Crikey.com.au: [Forced Marriage: Muslim Women Treated Like Entertainment Fodder](#).
13. Sydney Morning Herald: [‘Minorities fear their cultures smeared by reports of domestic violence](#).
14. ABC, the Wire Program: [Forced marriages in Australia](#).
15. Channel 7: [Burqa ban](#).

Feedback from Muslim women

*"I have got a lot of self esteem,
I'm fearless"*



*"I loved the program, we will miss
you guys heaps, please come back
next year."*



*"The program was really helpful
and fun lessons."*



*"It was wonderful to learn different
things which I never knew."*



*"I learnt that it's ok to be
who you are"*



*"My daughter says ... wants to
come meet you women. She wants
to see who has changed me
so much."*



*"I have really learned so much,
and my relationship with my
children has really changed for
the better."*

*"I have learnt that accepting others
is very important. This program
has allowed me to recognise how
large the world/community is and
to find our similarities and not the
differences."*



*"Before attending this workshop,
I would always yell and boss my
daughter around. It was her
birthday and I just went into her
room and asked her to clean it
up. She cried because it was her
birthday and I didn't make her
feel special. This time I hugged her,
I made her favourite food and she
was so happy."*



*"We know now how to control our
stress and know where can we go
for help."*



*"Whether we have big roles in
society or small ones, all the
knowledge and skills we benefited
will come in handy."*

*"W'Allah ... I can never forget
you, you helped me so much, you
changed my life, you are always
there for me ..."*



*"Thank you sister, you are a good
sister, I feel so much better after
talking to you"*



*"Thank you so much for
everything, I pray for you ..."*



*"... was very helping in finding
social groups, money and
referring to services. Worker went
above and beyond ..."*



*"... offered a lot of advice and
was always available to call and
prompt to call back. Highly
recommend the AMWCHR
because of the caseworker."*

Feedback from our community sector colleagues

"The Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights is a great place where needs are being met for those who are under serviced."



"Thanks so much! Such a big need for these sessions in our community."



"Great presentation, very isolated in Mildura, when working with Refugees, please comes back."



"The Aman project is very valuable. It helped students to see "outside" themselves and to develop more empathy. It provided students with a wide variety of experiences and challenged them to think of new ways of seeing themselves, others and the world."



The program should also focus on developing Muslim Youth Leadership to deal with the popular stereotypes about the Muslim community & Islam."

"I highly regard the specialised support that the AMWCHR is providing to young women in schools across Victoria ... the staff have all been highly professional and innovative in their work. I am really looking forward to working collaboratively with the team next year to ensure our young Muslim women are provided with an abundance of opportunities to experience success in their lives."



"I feel that the work that the Centre is doing in building the capacity of Muslim youth to develop positive attitudes and to acquire academic and leadership skills is meeting a real need to provide Muslim youth with the confidence and skills that they can use to become productive members of society both in the academic and the employment spheres."



"I have seen a positive change among the Afghan women, they now speak openly about their issues and take action to the feedback they are given to better themselves and their family."

"I knock back interpreting jobs with other organisations to make myself available for jobs with the Muslim Women's Centre ... I have a strong belief in the wonderful work of this organisation, assisting Muslim women."



"I'd be delighted to speak again at future conferences. It's good to know that there are people/organisations around who are able/willing to offer opportunities, such as the conference to newly arrived women. Congratulations on delivering a successful conference."



"The women's leadership program was a new thing. For newly arrived young women to get some self-confidence and to learn some skills and ability to manage their lives as Muslim women was a very good experience. They want more sessions."

Special thanks to our donors

Department of Immigration and
Citizenship

Department of Families, Housing,
Community Services and Indigenous
Affairs (FAHCSIA)

Australian Government Attorney-
General's Department

The R E ROSS Trust
Ian Potter Foundation

Helen Macpherson Smith Trust

The Victorian Women's Trust

The Legal Services Board

Victorian Multicultural Commission

Special thanks to our collaborating organisations

Action on Disability in Ethnic
Communities

Afghan Women's Organisation

Afghan Program SBS Radio

Alevi Community Council of Australia
Inc.

AMES

Anglicare

Ansaar Project

Arabic Program SBS Radio

Australian Arabic Welfare

Australian International Academy

Banyule Community Health Centre

Banyule Nillumbik Local Learning &
Employment Network

Benevolence

Broadmeadows Community Legal
Centre

Broadmeadows Uniting Care

Brotherhood of St Laurance

Burmese Muslim Association

Café Burma

Caroline Chisholm Pregnancy Support
Service

Catholic Care Family Services

Centre for Multicultural Youth

Centrelink

City of Greater Dandenong

City of Whittlesea

Court Network

Cutting Edge Shepparton

Dandenong North Primary School

Dandenong South Primary School

Dandenong West Primary School

Darebin Community Health Centre

Darebin Council

Department of Housing

Department of Justice

Doutta galla Community Health

East Preston Islamic College

Egyptian Radio Program

EMC

Ethnic Communities Council of
Victoria

Fitzroy Learning Network

Flemington Neighbourhood Renewal
Foundation House

Free Debate

Hanover Housing

Homeground Housing

In Touch

Islamic Council of Victoria

Keysborough Secondary College

Kildonan Uniting Care

Learning Beyond the Bell CMY

Link Community Transport

Loyola College

Lyndale Greens Primary School

Melbourne City Mission

Melbourne Youth Support

Mercy Mission

Merri Community Health Services
Limited

Mildura Rural City Council

Mildura Rural City Council for

Maternal and Child Health Nurses and
Family Day Care

Monash Legal Aid

Money Smart

Mount Hira College

Multicultural Centre for Women's
Health

Narre Warren South P-12

Nasihah Consulting

National Centre of Excellence for
Islamic Studies (NCEIS)

New Hope Foundation

NMIT Epping

NMIT Preston

North East Housing

North Yarra Community Health

Olympic Education

Out Doors Inc.

Parent Line

Pragmatic Training Dandenong

Presentation Family Centre

Reservoir Neighbourhood House

RISE

River Nile Learning Centre

Roxburgh College

Salvation Army Social Housing Service

Sunshine

Somali Women's Group

South East Local Learning and
Employment Network (SELLEN)

South Eastern Migrant Resource Centre

Southern Ethnic Advisory and Advocacy
Council SEAAC

Spectrum Migrant Resource Centre
Preston

Spectrum Migrant Resource Centre
Broadmeadows

St Vincent De Paul Housing Services
Sunraysia Mallee Ethnic Communities
Council

Sunraysia Community Health Centre
Victorian Foundation for Survivors of
Torture

Victorian Legal Aid

Virgin Mary Mosque, Hoppers Crossing

Volunteering Victoria

Whittlesea Community Connections

Windermere Child and Family Services

Women's Domestic Violence Crisis
Service Victoria

Women's Health West

Women's Legal Service

Victoria Communicare Inc

Yarra Community Housing

Young African Project – VICSEG

Youth Services – Darebin City Council

Income statement for the year ended 30 June 2012

Income	Note	2012 \$	2011 \$
Grant Income		701,989	646,707
Interest received		11,864	9,976
Membership Fees		19	150
Consultancy Fees		448	–
Donations		4,430	3,742
Project Management & Admin. Reimbursements		59,830	55,230
Melbourne Uni Service Fees		6,475	11,482
Training Income		–	1,826
		785,055	729,113
Expenditure			
Salaries		454,741	415,786
Superannuation		40,836	39,217
Staff Travel		27,863	22,022
Staff Amenities		1,312	1,075
Other Employment Costs		1,948	1,891
Accounting and audit fees		20,874	18,864
Audio Expenses		13,076	9,375
Bank Charges		302	371
Cleaning		2,040	2,100
Capital Expenditure (minor equipment)		57	964
Depreciation		2,174	1,739
Evaluation Expenses		340	–
Postage		211	223
Printing/Photocopy/Fax		10,621	34,192
Rent & Rates		29,421	22,094
Maintenance		4,482	3,366
Catering		10,628	2,769

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Income statement for the year ended 30 June 2012

Expenditure	Note	2012 \$	2011 \$
Resources		965	6,169
Office Expenses		4,331	2,349
Sundries		168	272
Telephone		5,311	6,046
A.G.M. Costs		3,032	6,504
Insurance		26,341	19,058
Training Costs		10,232	5,311
Publications/Subscriptions/Membership		1,262	696
Provision for Annual Leave		(24,949)	8,510
Provision for Long Service Leave		12,122	8,764
Consultancy / Professional Fees		2,319	16,408
Marketing & Promotions		3,557	1,879
Tutoring Fees		—	—
Conferences & Forums		422	6,044
Utilities Costs		1,005	1,781
Interpreting & Translation Costs		5,307	8,132
IT & Software Costs		7,448	5,513
Project Management Costs		59,830	20,833
Venue Hire		4,334	500
Childcare		4,435	1,994
		748,398	702,811
Profit before income tax		36,657	26,302
Income tax expense	2	—	—
Profit after income tax		36,657	26,302
Retained Profits at the beginning of the financial year		133,410	107,108
Retained Profits at the end of the financial year		170,067	133,410

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Balance sheet as at 30 June 2012

	Note	2012 \$	2011 \$
Current assets			
Cash	3	386,143	477,354
Trade and other receivables	4	—	1,643
Total Current Assets		386,143	478,997
Non current assets			
Property, plant and equipment	5	9,309	5,495
Total non current assets		9,309	5,495
Total assets		395,452	484,492
Current liabilities			
Trade and other creditors	6	74,255	36,616
Amounts received in advance	7	64,911	215,734
Provisions	8	86,219	98,732
Total current liabilities		225,385	351,082
Total liabilities		225,385	351,082
Net assets		170,067	133,410
Members' funds			
Retained profits		170,067	133,410
Total members' funds		170,067	133,410
Cash flows from operating activities			
Receipts from Grants (Recurrent)		486,255	743,981
Receipts from customers		62,132	93,151
Payments to suppliers and employees		(645,555)	(703,295)
Interest received		11,864	9,976
Net Cash provided by operating activities	9	(85,304)	143,813
Cash flows from investing activities			
Payments for purchase of property and equipment		(5,907)	—
Net Cash provided by (used in) investing activities		(5,907)	—
Net increase (decrease) in cash held		(91,211)	143,813
Cash at the beginning of the year		477,354	333,541
Cash at the end of the year		386,143	477,354

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2012

Note I: 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.

Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2012

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.

	2012 \$	2011 \$
Note 2: Income Tax Expense		
Prima facie tax payable on operating profit at 30% (2011: 30%)	10,997	7,891
Less tax effect of:		
non-taxable member income arising from principle of mutuality	(10,997)	(7,891)
Income tax expense	—	—
Note 3: Cash and cash equivalents		
Cash at bank	386,143	477,354
Note 4: Trade and other receivables		
Trade and other receivables	—	1,643
Note 5: Property, plant and equipment		
Office equipment – at cost	13,542	7,562
Less: Accumulated depreciation (2,067) (328)	(4,234)	(2,067)
	9,308	5,495
Note 6: Trade and other payables		
Creditors and accruals	59,216	40,494
GST amounts payable	15,039	(3,878)
	74,255	36,616
Note 7: Amounts received in advance		
Grants in advance	64,911	215,734

	2012 \$	2011 \$
Note 8: Provisions		
Current		
Provision for annual leave	39,284	63,919
Provision for long service leave	46,935	34,813
	86,219	98,732

Note 9: Reconciliation of Cash Flow from Operations with Profit from Ordinary Activities after Income Tax

Profit after income tax	36,657	26,302
Cash flows excluded from operating profit attributable to operating activities		
Non-cash flows in profit		
Depreciation	2,174	1,739
Changes in assets and liabilities;		
(Increase)/decrease in trade and other receivables	1,643	19,080
Increase/(decrease) in trade and other payables	(15,331)	(17,855)
Increase/(decrease) in amounts received in advance	(150,823)	97,274
Increase/(decrease) in project balances	-	-
Increase/(decrease) in provisions	40,377	17,273
Net cash provided by Operating Activities	(85,304)	143,813

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 2012, statement of cash flows as at 30 June 2012, 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 2012 and its financial performance for the year then ended in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note I 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 I 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
Hosri Accountants
Dated: 26 September 2012
IPA
89 High Street Kew VIC 3101



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

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