

United Sri Lanka Muslim Association Secretary's Report for the year 2008/2009

It is with pleasure that I present the Secretary's report for the year 2008/2009, which has been an eventful and rewarding year. The year was filled with a diverse range of events ranging from religious to social catering to the different age groups and enhancing interaction in the community.

Committee for the year 2008/2009

The committee for the year 2008/2009 was appointed at the AGM held on 19th July 2009

The committee appointed was as follows:

President : Dr Aqa Tokhi
V President : Mr Fahme Abulhassen
Treasurer : Mr Nizar Haniffa
Asst Treasurer : Mr Mohamed Najeeb
Secretary : Ms Parveen Muhammed
Asst Secretary : Ms Nizra Haniffa
Editor : Dr Fahmi Haniffa

Committee Members :

Mr Hussain Nizar
Mr Zabeed Bin Hamid
Mr Nuwaiz Amirdeen
Mr Fouz Ameen
Mr Mohamed Salahudeen
Ms Ziada Tokhi
Ms Dianne Mehrudeen
Ms Azeeka Hussain (Resigned)
Ms Zainab Fouz (Resigned)

Webmaster : Mr Hamzi Muhammed
Auditor : Mr Fazlun Haris

Management Committee Meetings

This year the committee met on 7 occasions for a maximum of 2 hours duration each to plan and execute activities.

Funding

The activities of the association have been largely funded by the membership fees and donations paid by members. We encourage all members to assist the committee by ensuring that fees are up to date for the year.

Grants Received

We have been successful in getting an Organizational Support Grant from the Victorian Multicultural Commission for financial years 2008/2009 and 2009/2010 to the value of \$1500.00 per year.

We also received from the Monash Council a grant In kind to the value of \$ 3,768.00 to cover the cost of hall hire for all our activities for 2009

Achievements of Members

§ Victorian Multicultural Awards for Excellence

USMAA is proud to place on record that 2 of our members received awards under the category 'Meritorious Service to the Community - Individuals'. They received the awards at a special ceremony at Government House in December 2008

- Mrs Sithy Marikar, for her outstanding voluntary contribution to the Sri Lankan community of Victoria.
- Dr Mohamed Firdausy Mohideen, for his outstanding voluntary contribution to the Sri Lankan community of Melbourne.

§ Muslim Youth of the Year award 2008

Nazeem Hussain was nominated for and won the 2008 Youth of the Year award.

§ Prestigious E. V. Peiris Memorial Oration

Dr. Omar Farouque was invited by the Ceylon College of Physicians to deliver the prestigious E. V. Peiris Memorial Oration at the 41st Annual Academic Sessions of the college in Colombo from the 2nd to the 4th of October 2008

Activities for the year

Social Activities

§ USMAA members night – 23rd August 2008

The first event for the year was the USMAA members' night. It was an opportunity for the membership to meet and greet the new committee and discuss plans and issues for the new year.

§ Ladies' night – 21st February 2009

The 5th USMAA Annual Ladies Night fundraising dinner "Red Carpet Fashions" was held with all the glitz and glamour of a red carpet event at the Glen Waverley Community Centre on Saturday, Feb 21st, 2009 from 7pm onwards. The night was filled with fun, fashion, auctions, entertainment, prizes and surprises. Door tickets were priced at \$27 each and attracted over 225 sisters from various communities in Melbourne. The highlight of the evening was a fashion parade by Sister Saara Sabbagh titled "Revive". The event was held as a fundraiser for the victims of the recent Gaza massacre. Masha Allah the night raised a total of \$7000 and this was donated through Muslim Aid Australia.

§ Trivia night –16th May 2009

The annual USMAA Trivia night was successfully organized by the USMAA youth wing on the 16th of May 2009. There was much interest among the members for this annual event and the evening was keenly contested. There were 13 rounds of questions on a variety of topics such as current news, sports, history, geography, music, religion, medicine etc. The 'A Team' emerged the champions for the 2nd consecutive year. The delicious and grand dinner was cooked onsite by the men of USMAA.

§ Janaza sports day – 22nd March

The USMAA sports day to raise funds for the Janaza Sub Committee was held on 22nd March 2009 at the Templestowe Reserve from 9.30am onwards. The day included the 2009 USMAA Six a Side Cricket tournament, games and activities for the ladies and children and a raffle. There was much interest in the cricket and a large number of teams played off for the USMAA trophy. The 2009 USMAA Six a Side Cricket tournament was won by 'Jazah Champs' and the runner up was 'Cool Bananas'. Congratulations to the winning team 'Jazah Champs'. Congratulations to all the teams that participated to make the event a success. There were separate games organized for the women and children and an enjoyable time was had by all.

The Sports Day is a fund raising event for the USMAA Janaza Scheme. The total collection from the cricket tournament and ladies games and activities was \$1,673.

Religious Activities

As per the organization's objective to promote and uphold religious values, activities were organized to increase community participation in religious activities. There was good member participation at all events and many volunteered and contributed to the organizing of events.

§ Ifthars during the month of Ramadhan– 13th and 20th September 2008

The committee organized 2 Ifthars during the month of Ramadhan. There was excellent community participation at these. The evening's events also included congregational prayers of Maghrib, Isha and Taraweeh and also a sermon.

§ Lailathul Qadr – 26th September 2008

Lailathul Qadr night prayers were organized on 26th September 2008 at 125 George Street, Doncaster East. The night's events included a talk on Islam by Bro Belal Asad, Qiyamul Lail prayers, Supplication (Towba) and Dhikr. Sahur meal was provided.

§ Fitra donation

Fitra contributions of members was collected at the 2 Ifthar events. A total of \$855 was collected and sent to Muslim Aid in Sri Lanka for distribution.

§ Eid Ul Fitr Celebrations

Prayers

USMAA together with the Monash University Mosque, Islamic Information Centre - Al Furqaan, Malay Association of Victoria and the Monash University Islamic

Society (MUIS) conducted Eid-Ul-Fitr prayers at the Monash University northside car park on the 1st of October 2008.

Eid celebratory breakfast

Following Eid prayers at Monash University, USMAA members were invited to participate in the Eid celebratory breakfast at the Monash Community Inn. Members contributed traditional Sri Lankan breakfast dishes and a lovely spread was available which was enjoyed by all.

Eid-ul-fitr celebratory dinner

Eid-ul-fitr celebratory dinner was held on 11 October 2008 at the Mulgrave Community Centre. The event included a short talk by the Lysterfield mosque Imam and a one off concert performance by Ustad Khalil Gudaz and Co. Khalil Gudaz is an award winning musician of Afghani descent from Melbourne. The festivities were enjoyed by all.

§ Eid ul Adha Celebrations

Eid Prayers

Eid-ul-Adha was celebrated on the 8th of December 2009. As per usual practice, USMAA together with the Monash University Mosque, Islamic Information Centre - Al Furqaan, Malay Association of Victoria and the Monash University Islamic Society (MUIS) conducted Eid-Ul-Adha prayers at the Monash University premises. Due to bad weather conditions the prayers were held within the sports complex.

Eid Breakfast

Following Eid prayers USMAA members were invited to participate in the Eid celebratory breakfast at the Mulgrave Neighbourhood House, 36 - 42 Mackie Road Mulgrave. Members contributed dishes to the traditional Eid breakfast menu and the gathering was enjoyed by all. The Eid breakfast has now become a USMAA tradition and will Insha Allah be continued in the future years

Eid Celebratory Dinner

The USMAA Eid-ul-Adha dinner was held on Saturday 13 Dec 2008 at 7:30 PM at the Mulgrave Community Centre, 355 Wellington Road, Mulgrave. The programme for the night included a Quran recitation and a talk by Dr Nazeeruddin Mohammad on the topic 'What is Birr?'.

§ Qiraath Competition and Meelad celebrations –14th March 2009

The annual Qiraath competition for the children of USMAA members was held in conjunction with Meelad on Saturday 14th March 2009 at the Mulgrave community Centre. The contest was held separately for boys and girls and was also divided under 3 age groups – below 8 years, 8 to 12 years and 12 to 16 years. There was much interest among the children and it was a good opportunity for them to memorise Suras from the Quran. The night's events also included talks on the life of Prophet Muhammed and readings of celebratory poems about the Prophet.

Donations made by USMAA

§ Gaza Appeal

\$7000 raised from the USMAA Ladies' Night was handed over to Muslim Aid Australia to assist those affected in the recent Gaza massacre.

§ Bushfire Appeal

In the immediate aftermath of the devastating fires that swept through Victoria on "Black Saturday", killing more than 210 people and incinerating over 2,000 homes, USMAA made an appeal to all its members to contribute towards the RedCross Victorian Bushfire Appeal. A global email was sent out to all the members and a link to the RedCross appeal was placed on the USMAA home page www.usmaa.org.au. We thank everyone who made contributions.

§ Khalid Bin Waleed Mosque, Albion

Members were invited to contribute to the pledge made by USMAA to assist the completion of the Khalid Bin Waleed Mosque, Albion, Sunshine. The pledged amount of \$1000 was collected and handed over to the mosque officials.

§ Central Tennekumbura Young Men's Muslim Association

A donation of Rs 7500 was made to the Central Tennekumbura Young Men's Muslim Association in response to their Ramadhan Zakath/Sadaqa appeal.

§ Sri Lanka Sumithrayo

A donation of Rs 7500 was made to Sri Lanka Sumithrayo, a government approved charity since 1986 to assist their scheme of helping students with emotional scars from difficult family backgrounds

Interaction with other Organizations

We have at all times attempted to maintain regular contact with other organization around Melbourne and have accepted invitations to attend events organised by them. Events attended this year are as follows:

- Islamic Council of Victoria AGM
- Interfaith Council Meeting

Media, Publications and Publicity

§ USMAA website

The USMAA website was redesigned and relaunched at the start of this year. Our aim is to make it a comprehensive and interactive site that will provide members with all information on USMAA activities and other useful information and links as well as be an interactive link between the committee and the membership.

In line with these objectives, all notices of events organised are posted on the home page and archived in the Announcements page, well in advance of the day so that all members and those interested are aware of it. In addition the site also includes the

USMAA constitution and all names and contact details of committee members and trustees giving the community easy access to them when needed. Membership applications can be submitted via the online form or downloaded in PDF format.

The USMAA online feedback form via the website is available for any one visiting the website to fill in and this is then automatically emailed to the nominated person(s) in the committee. A resource section is available and updated regularly for the benefit of the membership. This was very popular during Ramadhan as there were many relevant articles uploaded. The USMAA picture gallery has also been a recent addition and includes photographs from all recent USMAA events. The links to the relevant quarter's events are provided in the newsletter. The USMAA website also has the prayer times for Melbourne updated daily on its home page. We hope this is an incentive to visit the USMAA website more often and check for updates. Members can also place advertisements in the USMAA website and eNewsletter. We charge a nominal fee which will go towards the cost of administration and hosting the website.

§ Email communication

Together with the website, this year has also seen an improvement in our communication with members to keep them informed about upcoming events, Janaza notices as well as other important events around Melbourne. All USMAA communications go out to members via email as info@usmaa.org.au providing uniformity to the notices. The email list is maintained and regularly updated via the webmaster. We hope that in future all communication with our members will be via email and thereby ensure that information is communicated effectively. We encourage all members to provide us with a contact email address and to update any changes to it asap. This can be done online via the website.

§ Newsletter

We are also happy to place on record that this year saw the launch of the USMAA quarterly newsletter in e-format. In keeping in pace with today's trends of communication, we feel this format would help us to keep in touch with members, the wider Muslim community and friends on a more regular, convenient and interactive way. The new format includes information on current community news, announcements and reports of events together with pictures coupled with links to other relevant Internet sites. We have also started a column entitled "Community Announcements" making it a place where the achievements of community members are applauded and a place where community information both happy and sad is shared. The newsletter is emailed to all members, published on the website and archived online via the website. The newsletter will no longer be sent out in hard copy by email and thereby reduce the use of paper and save on postage costs. However if any members wish to still have a hard copy mailed to you in the future please let us know and we will accommodate your need.

Conclusion

Masha Allah USMAA has had a successful year and Insha Allah the achievements this year will be continued in the years to come. A warm thank you to all the committee for their commitment and hard work throughout the year to ensure that all

events are executed with precision. All the very best to the new committee taking over office for the new year.

Thank you

Wassalaam

Parveen Muhammed
Secretary