



Mapping Employment & Education among Muslim Australians

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Centre for Muslim Minorities & Islam Policy Studies

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AUSTRALIA

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About the Centre

The Centre for Muslim Minorities and Islam Policy Studies (CMMIPS) is dedicated to the promotion of civic harmony, social cohesion and enhanced global understanding. The CMMIPS is committed to the study of the Muslim experience in Australia and the contributions that Muslim Australians make to the future prosperity of this multicultural land.

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Executive Summary

The issue of Muslims living successfully in Western countries has come under scrutiny with events such as the London bombings in 2005. There is evidence that unfulfilled expectations—a sense of ‘blocked progress’—are a critical cause for the alienation and radicalisation of some Muslim youth. The present report is an analysis of the views and opinions of Muslims living in greater metropolitan Melbourne in regard to their social and political involvement in Australian life, with a focus on their educational and professional achievements.

A questionnaire was distributed with 501 responses from Muslims located in Melbourne. It covered the topics of: satisfaction with national wellbeing; education and training; employment and income; attitudes to living in Australia; and political and social activities.

Analysis of the data resulted in a mixed picture emerging. On the one hand, the Muslims surveyed were very optimistic about the economic and social potential of Muslims in Australia. They were keen to take up educational and professional opportunities and were relatively engaged in social and political processes. However, there was also a strong perception of the existence of prejudice and anti-Muslim bias in the Australian media and government, particularly in regard to issues of foreign policy and national security.

Consequently, frustration arising from this perception does contribute to a sense of blocked progress, which varies from individual to individual. This is a finding that requires further research and needs addressing to promote and strengthen Australia’s societal harmony.

Introduction

Background

The London bombings of 7 July 2005, the first successful suicide attack on Western European soil carried out by four British-born men, catapulted into the public spotlight questions about the capacity of Muslims to integrate into secular, liberal democracies. These questions include: Is there something intrinsic in Islam or the way Muslims practice their faith that makes it difficult for them to adapt to life in the West? To what extent do connections to ancestral homelands affect loyalty to countries of residence? Are Western nations such as Australia merely countries of residence for Muslim migrants and children of migrants, who otherwise long for a return to their true homelands? The underlying question that is being asked is no longer simply about Muslims' capacity to integrate, but whether Muslims living in Western countries, such as the United Kingdom and Australia, are a fifth column for global jihad.

A growing body of literature on the underlying causes of extremism points to unfulfilled expectations as a critical factor. From this point of view, it is not so much poverty, unemployment and deprivation themselves that causes alienation and extremism (although they may well contribute to it) but a sense that one's aspirations and expectations are not being fulfilled; a sense that the *system* does not allow an individual or a group of individuals to excel. It is this blocked progress that plays a significant role in alienating the affected group from the social and political system, which appears indifferent—or worse hostile—to them. In addition to this individual sense of alienation, is the community experience of migration, complete with all the usual migrant challenges of acclimation, which helps generate group solidarity and a sense of common purpose in the affected group, often based on a victimhood mentality.

One prominent feature of the public discourse on the future of Muslims in Australia (and to

a lesser degree the United Kingdom) is that Muslims constitute the object of analysis in an unequal power relationship. Muslim voices on pertinent issues of citizenship and multiculturalism, to name just two key policy areas, are largely absent. This unequal access to the public domain of opinion making, for whatever reason, tends to result in a gap in our understanding of 'the Muslim question'. The diversity of opinion among Muslims, as well as the many nuances manifested in cultural and religious traditions are rarely reflected in public discourse. This distorted and homogenising view presents intellectual and policy challenges. The present study, looking at the opinions and attitudes of Muslim Australians living in greater metropolitan Melbourne, is an attempt to begin meeting these challenges.

Relevant Literature

The current debate on Muslim integration and belonging has fuelled a broader debate on Australian multiculturalism, which is why it is important to take stock of the existing body of literature on multiculturalism and the way it relates to Muslim Australians. Issues regarding the appearance of Muslim women's dress in public places and Islamic education, for example, have been linked to the question of social integration and whether multicultural policy facilitates or hinders social cohesion.

A growing trend in public commentary in Australia emphasises an apparent contradiction between promoting multiculturalism on the one hand, and social integration on the other.¹ From this perspective, multiculturalism has justified the preservation, even promotion, of non-Anglo ethnic identities and has obscured the need for the integration of ethnic minorities into the broader society. This criticism of multiculturalism implicitly asserts that the right of non-Anglo ethnic groups to their own cultural identities comes at the expense of social cohesion and integrity of the national unit which has opened itself to migrating communities. For those critical of multiculturalism, issues such as support from the Muslim community given to controversial leader Sheikh Taj el Din al-Hilali; the Cronulla Riots and their aftermath; and the Sydney rape-gangs in which race and religion were factors, have all highlighted the apparent failure of multiculturalism. Multiculturalism is assumed to have failed to integrate Muslims because it has allowed the emergence of autonomous cultural enclaves that clash in character and nature with the broader host society.²

The connection between multicultural policies and the supposed failure of migrants to integrate, however, has been challenged by reports on the experience of second- and third-generation Western Muslims. The July 2005 bombings in London were a shocking

1. Patrick West, *The Poverty of Multiculturalism* (London: Civitas, Institute for the Study of Civil Society, 2005), 80.

2. Trevor Phillips, "Talk Now or Reap the Whirlwind," *Sunday Times*, 22 October 2006.

alert that the process of integration should not be taken for granted beyond the first migrant generation.

Multiculturalism itself is a contested concept. In the United Kingdom, multiculturalism was not designed to protect minority religious groups, as was dramatically demonstrated in the failure of the British courts to protect Islam against blasphemy in the Rushdie Affair of the late 1980s.³ In the context of the United Kingdom, Tariq Modood has argued that multiculturalism often falls short of the objective of mutual integration between majority and minority cultures.⁴ Reflecting on the broader European experience, Olivier Roy is less circumspect about multiculturalism, arguing that it “tends to create ghettos.”⁵

In contrast James Jupp has pointed to the initial notion of ‘cultural plurality’ as the foundation stone of the nascent policy of multiculturalism in Australia.⁶ Theoretically, multicultural policies have been formulated and implemented not to exclude ethnic minorities, but to facilitate their active involvement in the social and political framework of the nation. In Canada, for example, multiculturalism was initially concerned with the Anglo and Francophone communities, the two dominant groups which aspired for full citizenship. In Australia and the United Kingdom, the implementation of multiculturalism has come about in recognition of the growth of non-Anglo migrating communities in the post-WWII era, needing to be incorporated into the national community. Jupp argues that Australian multicultural policies have a direct link with immigration policies.⁷ Given the current public discourse on the value of multiculturalism for social inclusion, it is important to be mindful of the extent to which multiculturalism has contributed to the generation of a sense of loyalty to the national unit among Muslims in Australia.

Multicultural Australia: United in Diversity, outlines the Australian Government’s official policy of Australian multiculturalism. The statement recognises the reality of cultural diversity in Australian society, and marries this with an expectation of loyalty to the nation. The policy describes four principles of Australian multiculturalism: 1) the civic duty of all to respect the basic structures and principles ensuring and enabling freedom, equality and

3. Kylie Baxter, “From Migrants to Citizens: Muslims in Britain 1950s-1990s,” *Immigrants & Minorities* 24, no. 2 (2006): 164–192; James Piscatori, “The Rushdie Affair and the Politics of Ambiguity,” *International Affairs* 6 no.4 (1990): 767–789; and Tariq Modood, *Multicultural Politics: Racism, Ethnicity, and Muslims in Britain*, Contradictions 22 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005).

4. Tariq Modood, “Remaking Multiculturalism after 7/7,” *Open Democracy*, 29 September 2005, accessed 2 October 2007; available from http://www.opendemocracy.net/conflict-terrorism/multiculturalism_2879.jsp; Internet.

5. Olivier Roy, “Europe’s Response to Radical Islam,” *Current History* 104 no.685 (2005): 363.

6. James Jupp, *From White Australia to Woomera* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

7. *Ibid.*, 93.

diversity in Australian society; 2) reciprocal cultural respect for all Australians to express their varying cultures and beliefs, subject to the law; 3) social equity, which entitles all to equality of treatment and opportunity including freedom from discrimination against race, culture, religion, language, location, gender or birthplace; and 4) the notion that productive diversity in the population benefits Australia and her people.⁸

At this point it bears elaborating that the concepts of belonging, social integration and citizenship are not legalistic issues. Instead, they are embedded in psychological and emotional affiliations to the land. Saied R. Ameli and Azru Merali in researching British Muslims, have argued that citizenship is about an emotional connection to the state, or belonging to the homeland and civic citizenship. Without this emotional connection, “citizenship is sterile.”⁹ The existing literature suggests that Muslim attitudes to citizenship under secular rule in liberal democracies are mixed and ill-defined. Humayun Ansari,¹⁰ Modood,¹¹ as well as Ameli and Merali¹² have documented the diversity of opinion in the United Kingdom. The Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) and the radical group Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT) offer clear examples of divergent views among British Muslims. The MCB was formed in 1997 and while not universally accepted as the nation’s peak representative body,¹³ has grown to an organisation with over 350 affiliated Muslims organisations throughout the United Kingdom. The MCB effectively negotiated its way through the difficult days of the British decision to join the American invasion of Iraq and the July 2005 London bombings. These events, and others before them, intensified racial and religious tensions placing Muslims in a difficult situation, often being asked to choose between two alternatives assumed to be mutually exclusive: loyalty to Britain or to Islam. In reality, the situation is never as clear as an absolute dichotomy. The MCB has consistently condemned terrorism and called on local Muslims to co-operate with authorities to root out terrorism. However, MCB leaders such as the previous and current Secretary Generals, Sir Iqbal Sacranie and Dr Muhammad Abdul Bari, have asserted the right of Muslims to express public opinions

8. Commonwealth of Australia, *Multicultural Australia: United in Diversity, Updating the 1999 New Agenda for Multicultural Australia: Strategic Directions for 2003-2006* (Canberra: Department of Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, 2003).

9. Saied Ameli and Azru Merali, “Dual Citizenship: British, Islamic or Both? Obligation, Recognition, Respect and Belonging, Islamic Human Rights Commission, 18 November 2004, accessed 21 February 2008; available from <http://www.ihrc.org.uk/show.php?id=1284>; Internet.

10. Humayun Ansari, *The Infidel Within: Muslims in Britain Since 1800* (London: Hurst & Co., 2004), 438.

11. Tariq Modood, and Fauzia Ahmad, “British Muslim Perspectives on Multiculturalism,” *Theory, Culture & Society* 24 no.2 (2007): 187–213.

12. Ameli and Merali, “Dual Citizenship.”

13. Liat Radcliffe, “A Muslim Lobby at Whitehall? Examining the Role of the Muslim Minority in British Foreign Policy Making,” *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 15 no.3 (2004): 365–386.

on issues such as national security and foreign policy. Recently, the MCB campaigned against the British government's determination to apply legislative amendments such as the outlawing of the 'glorification of terrorism' clause, citing a concern that the amendments would negatively affect British Muslims. While asserting the right of Muslims to express dissent, the MCB is committed to an inclusive sense of citizenship stating, "we are British citizens with an Islamic heritage."¹⁴

In contrast, HT has adopted an uncompromising attitude towards citizenship in the United Kingdom and Australia. According to this fringe organisation, accepting citizenship is tantamount to betraying Islam, as it entails forgoing the sovereignty of God for that of man.¹⁵ HT, and its offshoot al-Muhajiroun in the United Kingdom as well as a number of other groups that operate on the fringes of Muslim communities, reject multicultural policies as a cover for the assimilation and dissolution of Muslim identity.¹⁶ This approach is presented as ideological and not affected by socio-economic factors.

A number of Muslim scholars have challenged the rejectionist pronouncements of fringe Islamic groups and the far-right commentary on the incompatibility of Muslim identity and loyalty to a secular state in the West. Foremost among them are Tariq Ramadan, Khaled Abou El Fadl and Abdullah A. An-Na'im. In an early publication, Abou El Fadl highlighted the importance of thinking outside the medieval Muslim division of the world into *dar al-islam* (abode of Islam) and *dar al-harb* (abode of war), and called for the intellectual acceptance that states (not traditionally perceived as belonging to the Muslim political structure) are now home to permanent Muslim populations. In his 1994 article, "Islamic Law and Muslim Minorities," Abou El Fadl argued that, by and large, Muslims have not come to grips with the ethical or legal principles that should govern their lives in their new homelands.¹⁷ Accordingly, the reality of living in the West calls for a creative approach to Islam and what it meant to be Muslim.

Tariq Ramadan has built on the above critique of the traditional division of the world between Islamic and not-Islamic, insisting that the growing presence of Muslims in Europe offers novel opportunities. Rather than seeing the phenomenon as a negative challenge,

14. Muslim Council of Britain, "MCB Urges MPs to Vote for Lords' Amendments to Terrorism Bill," *The Muslim Council of Britain*, 14 February 2006, accessed 9 October 2007; available from http://www.mcb.org.uk/article_detail.php?article=com_news-31; Internet.

15. Hasan al-Hasan, "Democracy and Islam: Twins or Opposites?" 30 July 2005, accessed 9 October 2007; available from <http://www.hizb-ut-tahrir.info/english/articles/2005/july3005.htm>; Internet.

16. Kylie Baxter, *British Muslims and the Call to Global Jihad* (Clayton, Vic.: Monash University Press, 2007).

17. Khaled Abou El Fadl, "Islamic law and Muslim Minorities: The Juristic Discourse on Muslim Minorities from the Second/Eighth to the Eleventh/Seventeenth Centuries," *Islamic Law and Society* 1, no. 2 (1994): 185.

Ramadan in his aptly titled book *To be a European Muslim*, argues that Muslims should embrace the opportunity to foster their faith in the liberal environment of Europe.¹⁸ This theme has been developed further in subsequent publications elaborating on the universality of Islamic values and principles meaning that Muslims can engage with European social and legal systems.¹⁹ From Ramadan's perspective, living in a free society where the rule of law reigns supreme, frees Muslims from the cultural and political constraints that have traditionally thwarted innovation. The novelty of this experience, Ramadan continues, has necessitated an "intellectual revolution" to move Muslims from a mindset of marginalised minority to active Muslim citizens of their new homelands.²⁰

In Australia, the Islamic Council of Victoria (ICV) has established itself as an advocate reconciling 'Muslimness' and 'Australianness'. The ICV has been the most energetic Islamic body to reject the assumed contradiction between Australian citizenship and Islamic devotion. This may be due, at least in part, to the youthful nature of the ICV leadership. Discussing a similar phenomenon in Europe, Felice Dassetto and Jørgen Nielson have argued that emerging young Muslim leaders are making a mark for themselves as they seek constructive engagement with the broader community. "They want to participate, to be recognised and respected as native citizens, but as Muslim native citizens."²¹

The academic literature in Australia on this topic is less vibrant than in Europe, perhaps reflecting the very young nature of Muslim Australian communities and the rather limited depth of research in this field. The first comprehensive empirical survey on the significance of mosques for the newly arrived Muslim migrants to Australia was conducted by Gary Bouma.²² Bilal Cleland undertook a broad survey of the history of Muslim contact with, and settlement in, Australia from before European colonisation,²³ which was followed by Nahid

18. Tariq Ramadan, *To Be a European Muslim: A Study of Islamic Sources in the European Context* (Leicester, UK: Islamic Foundation, 1999), 273.

19. Tariq Ramadan, "Europeanization of Islam or Islamization of Europe?" in *Islam, Europe's Second Religion: The New Social, Cultural, and Political Landscape*, edited by Shireen Hunter, 207–218. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2002.

20. Tariq Ramadan, *Western Muslims and the Future of Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 224.

21. Felice Dassetto and Jørgen Nielsen, Conclusions, in *Muslims in the Enlarged Europe*, edited by Brigitte Maréchal, Stefano Allievi, Felice Dassetto and Jørgen Nielsen (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 533.

22. Gary D. Bouma, *Mosques and Muslim Settlement in Australia* (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1994).

23. Bilal Cleland, *The Muslims in Australia: A Brief History* (Melbourne, Vic.: Islamic Council of Victoria, 2002).

Kabir's historical narrative of Muslims and religious and racial stereotyping in Australia.²⁴ In the new century two interpretive publications appeared both aimed at examining the Muslim experience in Australia.²⁵

Only a handful of publications have grappled with 'the Muslim question', most noteworthy are Michael Humphrey's study of the Lebanese community in Sydney against a backdrop of socio-economic challenges they face as a minority group, as well as Jock Collins' work looking at the issue of racial and religious stereotyping of the Lebanese Muslim community in relation to criminal acts in Sydney's south-western suburbs.²⁶

In 2004, the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission released the report *Isma'—Listen: National Consultations on Eliminating Prejudice against Arab and Muslim Australians*.²⁷ The report explored the rise in racial and religious vilification of Arabs and Muslims in Australia, particularly in light of global and local crisis events involving Muslims. As the above account of the existing literature demonstrates, there has not been a publication on the socio-economic experiences of Muslim Australians in relation to their social and political attitudes. The present study builds on previous research dealing with Muslim identity, loyalty to the nation-state, multiculturalism and citizenship in order to contextualise the research findings.

Research Objectives

It is the objective of the current study to examine the socio-economic standing and expectations of Muslim Australians, and test markers for integration in society. Integration is a complex, multi-dimensional process. It includes social, cultural, economic and spiritual processes of growing roots in society and developing a sense of belonging. By its very nature, this sense of belonging needs to be reciprocated by the broader society that accepts migrants into the community. This mutual understanding between the migrant community and the host society is critical for genuine integration.

As measuring integration is difficult, emphasis in the current study is placed on two

24. Nahid A. Kabir, *Muslims in Australia: Immigration, Race Relations and Cultural History*, Studies in Anthropology, Economy and Society (London: Kegan Paul, 2004).

25. Abdullah Saeed and Shahram Akbarzadeh (eds), *Muslim Communities in Australia* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2001); and Abdullah Saeed, *Islam in Australia* (Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2003).

26. Michael Humphrey and Steven Hausfeld, *Family, Work and Unemployment: A Study of Lebanese Settlement in Sydney* (Canberra: Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, 1984), 151; and Jock Collins, Greg Noble, Scott Poynting, and Paul Tabar, *Kebabs, Kids, Cops and Crime: Youth, Ethnicity and Crime* (Annandale, NSW: Pluto Press, 2000).

27. Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, *Isma' - Listen: National Consultations on Eliminating Prejudice against Arab and Muslim Australians* (Sydney: Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, 2004).

markers to indicate levels of integration: educational achievements and professional/vocational advancement. This assists in assessing the relevance and extent of (un)fulfilled expectations, critical in the process of integration, or alternatively alienation.

Key questions in this study are: What are the barriers to integration? Are they institutional and/or subjective? If Muslims have not been able to achieve the professional jobs to which they aspire, what are the obstacles preventing them? What have those experiencing obstacles done to address the problem? Have Muslim migrants taken up services available to them for professional re-training where needed? Are English language skills a problem? How have educational opportunities affected socio-economic advancement among Muslims? What impact does higher education have on social and political outlook? In all, to what extent have Muslim Australians living in Melbourne managed to integrate into the society?

Research Methodology

A questionnaire was developed (see *Appendix A*) covering basic demographic information; satisfaction with national wellbeing; education and training; employment and income; attitudes to living in Australia; and political and social activities. Data gathering around greater metropolitan Melbourne was carried out between August and November of 2007, achieving completed questionnaires from 501 participants. In particular, an online questionnaire was advertised through online Muslim networks and the particulars given to appropriate organisations to distribute amongst their networks. The second method of gathering data, which constituted the bulk of the responses, involved administering the questionnaire to small groups of Muslims with individuals completing hard-copy versions of the questionnaire.

Opinions were sought from various sectors of the Muslim community and included participants who were Sunni, Shi'i, conservative, liberal, migrant, Australian-born, older, younger, male, female, raised-Muslim and converts to Islam. To achieve this, a variety of different organisations and community leaders were contacted to solicit their participation. A meeting was arranged with key community leaders to inform them of the research and gain information as how best to survey the Muslim community in Melbourne. A list of appropriate Muslim organisations was drawn up covering the main sectors listed above, and letters, emails and phone-calls were sent and made, inviting participation. Representatives from organisations were invited to advertise either the URL of the online questionnaire to their networks, or to host a questionnaire session with fifteen to thirty of their members and advertise the details of the session amongst their members.

The data from the questionnaires were entered into a database to allow for querying and analysis, and checked for consistency. A list of basic frequencies was generated and

blocks of textual responses were subjected to analysis. More complex queries were then developed, cross-tabulating the data to develop themes, from which a report was drafted.

Where textual responses from participants are included in the report they are coded in the following manner: gender/age the participant turned in 2007/place of birth/year of migration to Australia (if applicable). So, a thirty year old female born in Turkey who migrated to Australia in 1996 would be coded as: F/30y/Turkey/1996. Some individuals chose not to give demographic information, so sometimes the coding is incomplete and the letters n.s. (not stated) are substituted.

Delimitations

The present study is limited to researching the opinions and attitudes of Muslims present in greater, metropolitan Melbourne at the time of data-collection. One possible bias is that of self-selection. Namely, only individuals interested enough to respond to the invitation to participate were included in this study. A broad demographic spread was sought, in terms of migrant status; ancestry; socio-economic status; employment status; housing-ownership status; level of education; age; and gender. This was achieved, however the study was not designed to be statistically representative. The questionnaire was written in English, although respondents were given the choice of using a language other than English for their replies. Consequently, for questions requiring longer textual answers, the present study does have a bias towards participants able to read English. Participants were assured of anonymity and that they could decline to answer any particular question if they wished. Consequently, whilst the population sample is static at 501, response rates to each question vary and this is reflected in how the results have been interpreted and written up.

The Remainder of the Report

The remainder of this report will present a demographic picture of Muslims who participated in the study, and move on to provide a nuanced account of the thoughts and opinions of Muslim Australians looking at education and employment in so far as they affect social and political attitudes; issues to do with language and culture; attitudes to government, foreign policy and national security; religious issues; discrimination in the media and the social and political activities in which Muslim Australians engage.

Demographic Picture

The last Australian census taken in 2006 puts the number of people who voluntarily nominated their religion as Islam, nationally at 340,394 or 1.7 percent of the total population.²⁸ Muslim Australians are mostly concentrated in major metropolitan centres; Sydney and Melbourne are home to significant Muslim communities, with 161,163 Muslims in Sydney (3.9 percent of Sydney's population) and 103,187 Muslims in Melbourne (2.9 percent of Melbourne's population), together constituting 78 percent of the total population of Muslims in Australia.²⁹ In some local government areas the percentage of Muslims rises to beyond 10 percent, for example: Hume 13.3 percent; Bankstown 15.3 percent; Auburn 24.8 percent.³⁰ These locations are generally characterised by low income levels and high rates of unemployment for Muslims. This research focuses on local government areas in Melbourne with a high concentration of Muslim residents.

Gender

In regard to the current study, there is a strong gender bias, with almost a 2:1 ratio in favour of men (see *Table 1*). This is explained by data-gathering methods, as males are more likely to frequent mosques and Friday prayer services, which is where the bulk of responses were gathered.

Table 1. Distribution of participants by gender.

Gender	No.	%
Male	309	61.7
Female	166	33.1
Unknown	26	5.2
Total responses	501	100

28. Australian Bureau of Statistics, "Australia (0) Basic Community Profile, 2006," accessed 2 October 2007; available from <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/2001.0>; Internet.

29. ABS, "Sydney (SD 105), Basic Community Profile, 2006"; and ABS, "Melbourne (SD 205), Basic Community Profile, 2006."

30. ABS, "Auburn (A) (LGA 10200), Basic Community Profile, 2006,"; ABS, "Hume (C) (LGA 23270), Basic Community Profile, 2006"; and ABS, "Bankstown (C) (LGA 10350), Basic Community Profile, 2006."

Further research is indicated to obtain the views of non-mosque attending Muslims, particularly women.

Age

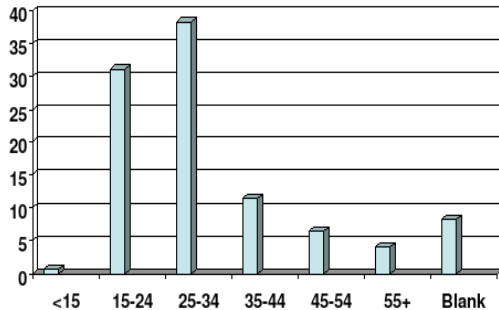


Illustration 1. Age ranges of participants.

The overwhelming majority of respondents were quite young with 69.4 percent under 34 years of age. The 25-34 age-group was the largest of the discrete categories with 38.3 percent, and was closely followed by the 15-24 age-group which tallied 31.1 percent. The next largest group was the 35-44 age-group with 11 percent. The 45-54 and 55+ age-groups totalled 6.4 percent and 4.0 percent respectively (see *Illustration 1*).

Places of Residence, Birth and Parents' Birthplace

The respondents were fairly well represented in all four corners of Melbourne. The majority of the participants responded that they reside in the Eastern and Northern suburbs (59.1 percent). The former had the strongest cluster of participants with 31.5 percent and were closely followed by the latter with 27.5 percent. Both the Southern and Western suburbs contained the bulk of the remaining respondents with 16.8 percent and 12.4 percent respectively. Only 2.4 percent answered that they actually live in the city of Melbourne. Responses were solicited from Muslims located in greater metropolitan Melbourne at the time of data gathering, so only 1.2 percent of participants live in either rural Victoria or interstate. Just under 8 percent of participants did not provide a response (see *Illustration 2*).

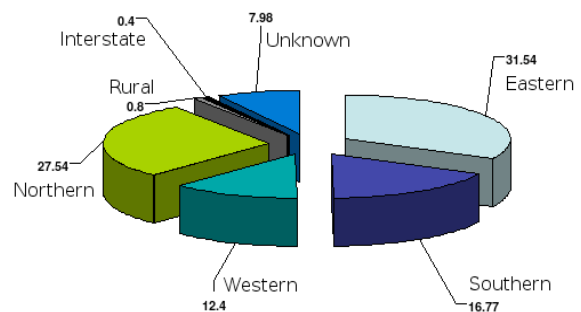


Illustration 2. Places of residence of participants by Melbourne regions.

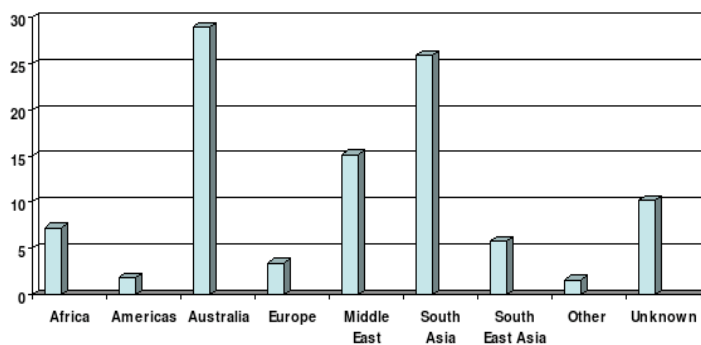


Illustration 3. Birthplaces of participants by regional blocs.

In terms of places of birth of participants, a total of fifty-three countries spanning five of the six continents were represented in the sample.

However, for ease of presentation these countries have been aggregated into regional blocs (see *Illustration 3* on page 12).³¹ For a complete breakdown see *Appendix B*.

The largest group represented were those who were born in Australia, which constituted 28.9 percent of the sample (see *Table 2*). The second most significant category was South Asia with 25.9 percent of respondents born in that region. The Middle East was the third largest category with 15.2 percent. There was a sharp decline to the next two categories, Africa and South East Asia, which totalled only 7.2 percent and 5.8 percent respectively. The remaining regional categories ranged between 1 to 3 percent. Around 10 percent of respondents did not give a birthplace and so their region of origin remains unknown.

Table 2. Top five countries of birth of participants.

Country	No.	%
Australia	145	28.9
Bangladesh	52	10.4
Pakistan	32	6.4
India	30	6.0
Egypt	15	3.0

Table 3. Migrant status of participants.

Status	No.	%
Immigrant	305	60.9
Australian-born	145	28.9
Left blank	51	10.2
Total responses	501	100

Whilst the most common place of birth was Australia, a majority of participants who answered the question on migrant status were immigrants to Australia (see *Table 3*). When it comes to the birthplace of participants' parents, the majority were born in South Asia and the Middle East. The two

categories combined to a total of 57.3 percent and 58.7 percent of the respondents' mothers and fathers respectively. In discrete terms South Asia was the largest category with 35.5 percent and 36.3 percent of mothers and fathers born in that region respectively. The Middle East was the second largest category with 21.8 percent and 22.4 percent of mothers and fathers born in that region respectively. Africa is next in line with 9.6 percent of mothers and 11 percent of fathers born in that region. South East Asia accounted for 8.2 percent and 6.6 percent of the participants' mothers and fathers respectively, while 5.8 percent of mothers and 4.2 percent of fathers were born in Europe. Less than 1 percent of the participants' mothers and fathers were born in the Americas.

31. The breakdown of the regions categories is as follows: South Asia comprises Afghanistan, India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Maldives, China and Nepal; the Middle East comprises Egypt, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen, Oman, Kuwait, Palestine, Iran, Jordan, Qatar, Syria and Iraq; the Americas comprise USA, Argentina, Colombia, Canada and Brazil; Europe contains Bosnia, England, Cyprus, Germany, Greenland, Lithuania and the Netherlands; South East Asia comprises Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam, Singapore and Vietnam; the Other category, comprises New Zealand, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Uzbekistan and Mauritius.

In contrast to the high percentage of participants that were born Australia, there were a comparatively small number of Australian-born parents. Only 6.4 percent of mothers and 7.2% of fathers of participants were born in Australia, indicating that the majority of the Australian-born participants are themselves second generation children of migrants.

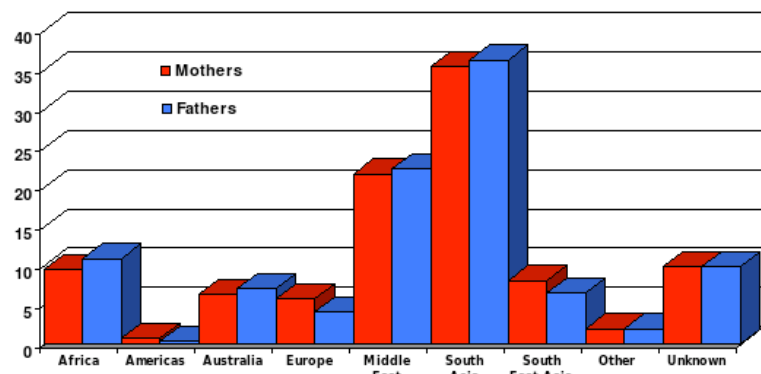


Illustration 4. Birthplaces of participants' parents by regional blocs.

Table 4. Top five countries of birth of participants' parents.

Country	Mothers %	Fathers %
Bangladesh	10.8	11
India	10.6	10.2
Pakistan	7.0	7.2
Turkey	5.2	5.4
Lebanon	5.2	4.8

Table 4 lists the top five places of birth of participants' parents. As to be expected these are a mixture of South Asian and Middle Eastern countries. Bangladesh, closely followed by India, is the most common country of origin for both mothers and fathers in this study with 10.8 percent and 11 percent respectively.

Education

The majority of the respondents indicated they are well educated with 66.9 percent possessing a Bachelor degree or higher: 41 percent of the participants have obtained a Bachelor degree; 21.4 percent have obtained a Masters degree; and 4.5 percent have gained Doctorates (see Illustration 5).

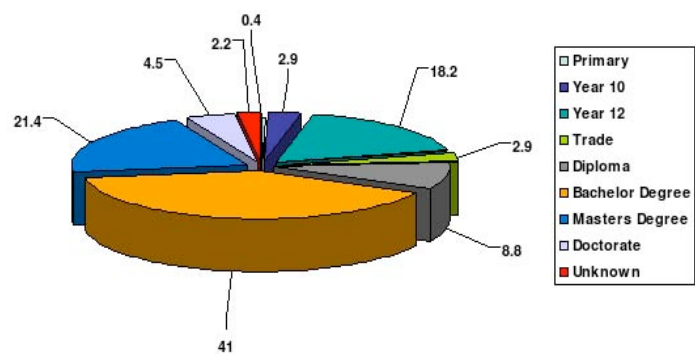


Illustration 5. Education levels of participants.

When asked to indicate whether they possessed an overseas qualification that Australia does not recognise, only 7.1 percent (33 participants) who answered the question, said they do have such a qualification. The vast majority of participants either have an Australian qualification, or their overseas certification is recognised.

Integration of Muslim Australians

This section of the report discusses the existence and extent of employment and education barriers that might impede the integration of Muslims (whether migrant or Australian-born) in society. Analysis of the data demonstrates a range of responses suggesting varying types and levels of integration barriers. This range highlights both positive attitudes toward Australian economic and social opportunities with more negative attitudes towards the political climate in Australia. *Illustration 6* on page 16 demonstrates that respondents were marginally less than satisfied with life in Australia. In particular, there are marked differences between satisfaction on issues related to the economy, environment and society and those related to government, foreign affairs and security (see *Illustration 7* and *8* on page 16).

Illustration 8 highlights a shift of overall attitudes to a more than satisfactory overall attitude toward life in Australia amongst the Muslim Australian community. This sentiment is considerably stronger in attitudes toward the economic situation and opportunities, a factor where attitudes were +15 above the mean in *Illustration 6* and +5 above the mean in *Illustration 8*. However, *Illustration 7* reveals a markedly less satisfied picture in terms of issues related to government, foreign affairs and security. Here, responses were a marked -11.5 below the overall mean and -20.5 below the mean in *Illustration 8*. Dissatisfaction was most clearly expressed vis-à-vis Australia's foreign policy and on the question of government.³²

32. It should be noted that data collection occurred just prior to the 2007 election, when the Howard Liberal government was in power but trailing badly in opinion polls behind the Rudd Labor opposition.

Mapping Employment & Education among Muslim Australians

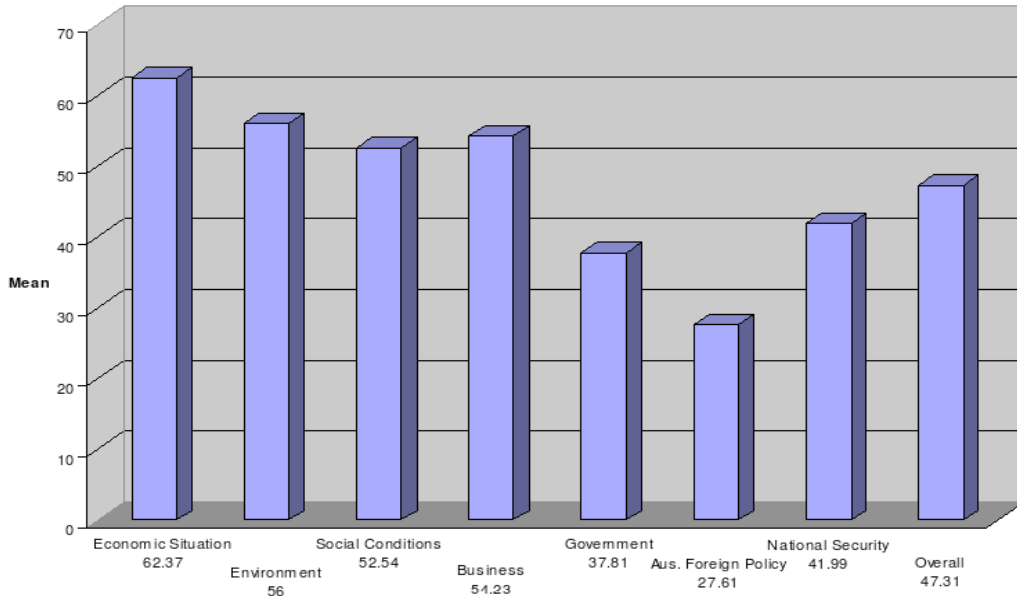


Illustration 6. Satisfaction with life in Australia.

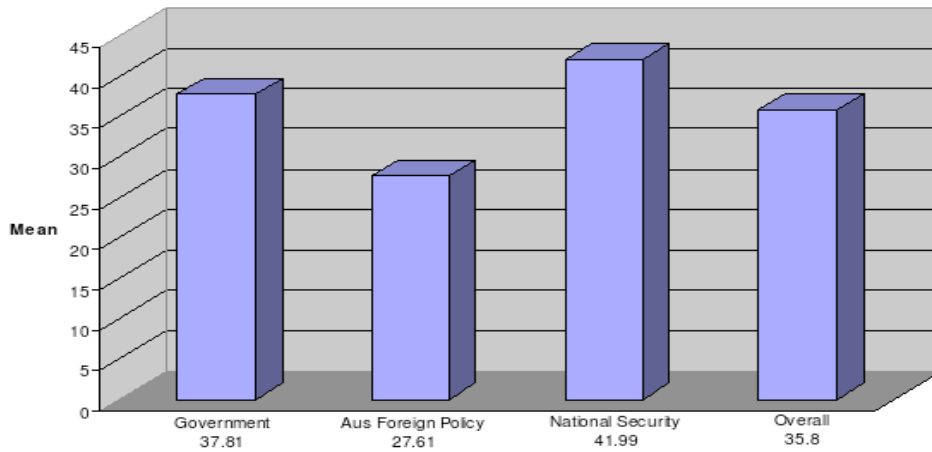


Illustration 7. Satisfaction with government, foreign policy and national security.

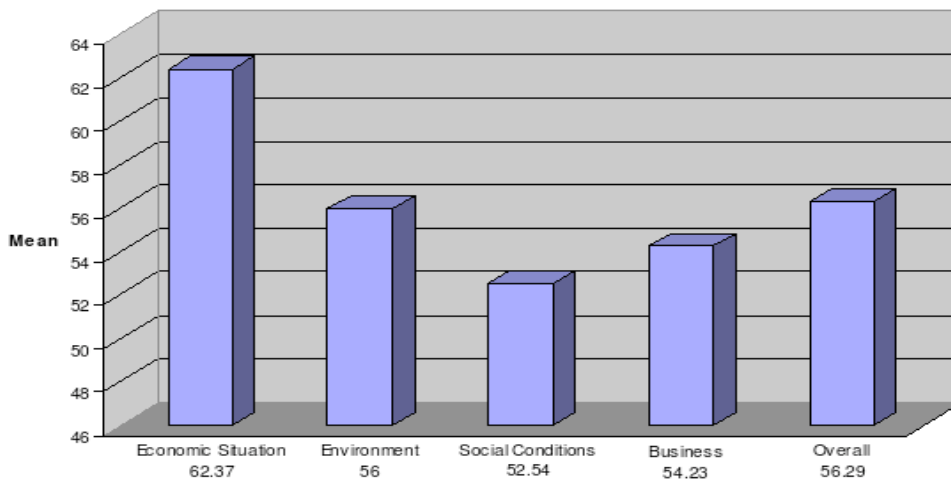


Illustration 8. Satisfaction with economy, environment and society.

Attitudes to the Economy, Employment and Education

Attitudes toward the economy and prospects for economic advancement were by and large positive. For instance, specific comments by respondents in relation to these issues revealed high levels of optimism in terms of their ability to start their own business, access funds to undertake such a venture, and for 'hard work' to be rewarded. This may account for the discrepancies between levels of income amongst the sampled group (*Illustration 9*), and the optimism displayed vis-à-vis economic opportunities.

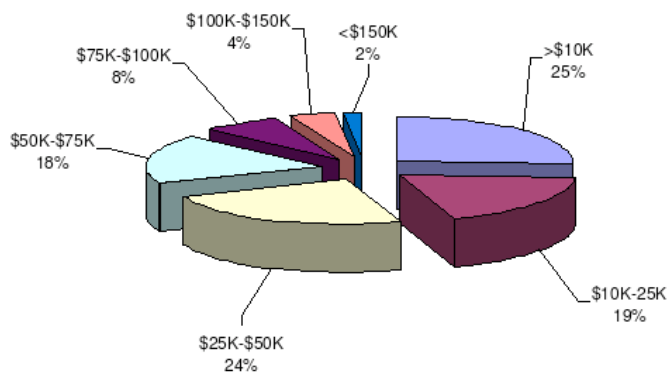


Illustration 9. Gross annual income levels of participants.

(see *Illustrations 1* on page 12 and 5 on page 14).

Whilst income levels are below the national average, this survey suggests that the Muslim Australian community have higher than average levels of educational qualifications, with 67 percent possessing at least a Bachelor degree. In addition, the income levels may be lower than average among Muslims generally, as 77 percent of the respondents were 34 years of age or younger at the time of data collection.³³ Additionally, 43 percent of respondents indicated that they were currently enrolled part-time or full-time in some educational capacity.

This largely positive picture, one of 'aspirational' views generating a satisfactory view of prospects for Muslim Australians and their integration into society is tempered by other elements related to education issues as well as broader concerns. In terms of mitigating factors relating to education, two items were apparent from the participants' responses. First, the issue of skills recognition. This was not an overwhelming concern, as only a small number of participants who answered the question (7.1 percent or 33 participants) indicated they possessed non-Australian qualifications and within this, slightly less than half (47 percent or 8 respondents) pointed to this being a barrier in advancing their careers.

33. This would need to be confirmed with quantitative research that is statistically representative.

Whether or not participants took advantage of re-training opportunities if they possessed qualifications that Australia does not recognise, reveals to some extent their level of awareness of the services which are available, and also whether they felt that such services would be accessible or useful in making them more employable. Cost was listed most frequently as a reason for not taking advantage of education and training opportunities. The next most frequent reason was a lack of course flexibility, followed by dissatisfaction with the courses offered. Lack of time was also a factor, to a lesser extent. A small number of respondents listed lack of adequate childcare and language barriers, as reasons why they had not chosen to undertake further education or training.

From these responses, it can be inferred that some Muslims may wish to undertake further training and education but are held back by certain factors that might be easily addressed. For instance, with the growth of distance and off-campus learning offerings from various universities and other institutions, issues such as cost, time, childcare and flexibility, might not be as great an issue in the future. It is possible that Muslims are not fully aware of the wide array of education and training opportunities available, something that can be addressed by targeted efforts to raise awareness.

The survey demonstrated an even spread between those who believe that their children would have a better life than themselves and those who did not. While only 11.8 percent believed the next generation would be 'much better' off than their parents, 7.9 percent believed they would be 'much worse' off. This is from a sample weighted in favour of those with higher education qualifications (66 percent).

Only a small number (9 percent) of those currently studying, believed that their study would not improve their job prospects. This number increased slightly (19.6 percent) in relation to respondents who were dissatisfied with education or training opportunities in Australia. Here, the key issue was one of cost (see *Illustration 10*).

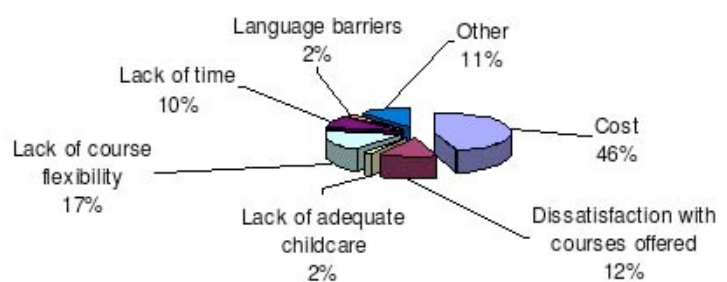


Illustration 10. Reasons for dissatisfaction with education and training opportunities.

This is echoed in many of the specific statements made by respondents that focused on the issue of costs associated with higher education. For instance, there was pronounced criticism of full-fee university degrees, criticism of the restriction of HECS places against

non-residents who pay income tax, and criticism of the lack of federal funding for higher education. This reveals a barrier that some Muslims face in accessing higher education and vocational institutions. However, this was voiced only amongst a minority of respondents, and would not indicate a significant barrier or a hindrance that is unique to the Muslim community alone.

Of a total of 501 participants, 414 responded to a question regarding whether or not they felt it would be possible to start their own business. Of these, a total of 260, or 62.8 percent, responded that they felt they would be able to start their own business, while 154, or 37.2 percent, responded that they felt unable. The most revealing part of this question were the reasons given by respondents as to why they felt able (or unable) to start their own business. Many of the respondents felt equipped with the skills and experience for running a business. Some of them cited family and other social support networks for why running a business would be possible. Types of positive reasons offered by participants can be categorised as follows:

- Possessing knowledge or experience of doing business
- Access to savings or the ability to borrow funds for start-up capital
- Support from family and other social networks
- Favourable economic conditions in Australia
- Possessing sound communication skills
- Possessing the right qualifications
- Being hard-working and enthusiastic
- Being creative and talented

Some revealingly pointed comments were made by some respondents. For instance, it was suggested that opportunities might exist for starting businesses for Muslims because “white people get the white-collar jobs and ‘ethnics’ get the jobs no one else wants” (F/25y/Australia). Another respondent simply listed “racism” as the reason for why it might be easier to start a business (F/29y/Eritrea/1991). Inferences can be made here with regard to how welcome Muslims feel in the job market. For some Muslims, it seems, running one’s own business is a much better means of securing and improving a livelihood.

The responses from those who stated that it would not be possible to start their own business were equally revealing. The most common responses related to a lack of financial means with which to start an operation. However, some also strongly suggest perceived discrimination as a result of the Muslim identity of the respondents. Types of negative reasons as to why it would not be possible for individuals to start a business can

be categorised as follows:

- Insufficient finances to start an operation
- Difficulty understanding Australian business culture
- Language difficulties
- Still studying
- Being under-qualified
- Being inexperienced
- Lacking business acumen
- Too risky
- Racism

Interestingly, one of the perceived barriers for some to start their own business came from the belief that banks and other financial institutions only provide lines of credit with interest charges, which is considered by many Muslims to be religiously prohibited. Thus, some Muslims who may desire to start a business, do not pursue the option because of religious conviction.

Asked whether they felt secure in their employment, the majority of respondents (some 69 percent) stated they did. However, a sizeable minority (31 percent) stated that they did not feel secure in their employment. Why this is so, may well have more to do with wider trends towards casualisation in the workforce, as opposed to any Muslim-specific factors.

In addition, 58 percent of working respondents indicated they felt happy in their employment (see *Illustration 11*). While 62.5 percent agreed they are adequately paid, only 54.6 percent affirmed they have enough income for their family, with 24 percent of respondents neutral on the question, and 21.4 percent disagreeing (see *Illustration 12* on page 21).



Illustration 11. Levels of job satisfaction among participants.

The generally positive responses for both job security and satisfaction are sound indicators for the healthy participation of Muslims who are in the workforce, regardless of their field of employment. However, a more troubling picture emerges in response to questions over experiences of difficulties in finding work. Here, 46 percent of respondents answered in the affirmative that they experienced difficulties either now or in the past, in terms of looking for

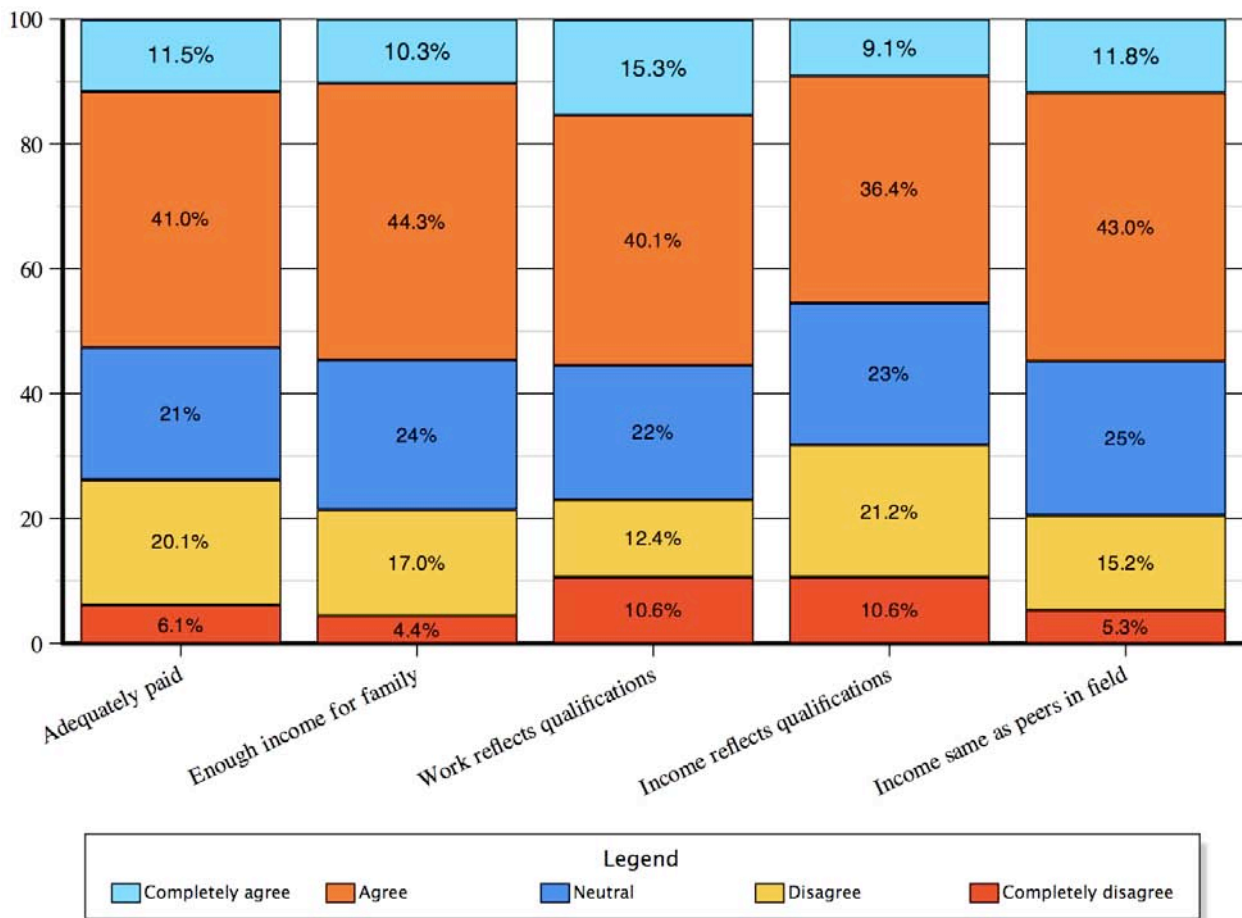


Illustration 12. Attitudes to employment and income.

work. In more detailed responses to the question, a key theme was one of cultural apprehensions they believed played a part in these difficulties.

For instance, respondents cited cultural difficulties with interviews, experiences of racism during interviews, several incidents where respondents believed they were denied a job on the basis of their name or appearance, assumptions that due to name and appearance the applicant would have trouble understanding English, as well as potential employers questioning previous work experience overseas as relevant to work in Australia. Some of the respondents simply said that they kept applying for jobs and eventually had success. Others described how employers always demand that fresh graduates be equipped with experience in their field. Many of the respondents registered with employment agencies but also complained that the agents often send out incorrect information and that they are skewed towards ‘Australian’ job applicants. One respondent claimed that the prayer cap he was wearing was a barrier to employment in his field and that once he removed it, he was able to gain employment. Another individual claimed to have been dismissed as the fasting month of Ramadan approached, on the grounds that her capacity to work would be

hindered.

How respondents went about addressing their problems in gaining employment illustrates how difficult the process must be for some. For instance, one frustrated response read: “I was either over-qualified or under-qualified, never perfect” (F/24y/Australia). For the most part, the issues are reflective of the wider currents in society and the job market, however, there is an undeniable series of factors, specific to Muslims, that is having an impact on whether Muslims feel able to address their issues in securing employment. Whilst this was not the only reason for difficulty with gaining employment (many also cited their lack of experience after they had graduated from high school or university), the perception of cultural discrimination was a prominent theme running through the comments on this issue.

Language and Culture

Many of the respondents came from non English-speaking backgrounds. In order to gauge the importance of language barriers to employment, the survey asked respondents about their English skills; whether they had experienced language difficulties; and whether they had undertaken English lessons since coming to Australia. The majority of the respondents (some 73 percent of participants who answered the language questions) described their English skills as being very good. A further 25 percent described their English skills as good. Only 2 percent of respondents described their English skills as poor or very poor. The results show that English language skills amongst respondents were sound and that perhaps they did not consider language skills to be a great barrier to employment. This is partly explained by the large number of second-generation children of migrants surveyed for whom English is their primary language. Further research is indicated to look at employment barriers among Muslims who do not possess adequate English language skills.

For those who did experience language difficulties, most of them described their problems being associated with the period immediately after their arrival to Australia. Some of them simply had low levels of skill in English, however, others whom it seems had some level of English capability, described difficulties understanding the nuances of the Australian accent, slang and dialect. The responses strongly suggest that it has been relatively easy for migrant Muslims to acquire sound English language skills over time. There was also an indication from respondents that they felt Australians to be kind, patient and willing to help new arrivals.

Given the difficulties evident upon arrival in Australia for some of the respondents, it is important to understand if new arrivals undertake studies in English to improve their

language skills. For those respondents who came to Australia from other countries, a majority of them, 57 percent, undertook English language lessons upon arrival. However, a significant minority, some 43 percent, did not undertake language lessons. The inference here could be that they did not have access to such services, were prohibited from undertaking them due to cost or other factors, or they already had sufficient English skills when they arrived in Australia.

Whilst language skills did not present a problem for the vast majority of participants, the survey data reveals that some of the respondents have felt unable to connect with Australian culture and link this with their lack of success in seeking employment. Respondents have felt that these barriers have led to a regression in their mentality or status, and perhaps, their self-esteem.

Attitudes to Government, Foreign Policy and Security

Despite an overall positive picture of the attitudes of Muslim Australians toward Australia's economic environment, there is a more ambiguous, even negative picture in terms of attitudes towards issues of government, foreign policy and security. It may not be surprising that those surveyed had a predominantly negative view of Australia's foreign policy. The war in Iraq, especially, was cited by many as a source of concern. The percentage of those critical of Australia's foreign policy rose substantially among those with higher education (see *Table 5*).

Table 5. Dissatisfaction with Australia's foreign policy, by education level.

Education level	No.	% Dissatisfied
Attained secondary level education	84	23.0
Attained vocational education	45	12.3
Attained higher education	236	64.7
Total responses	365	100

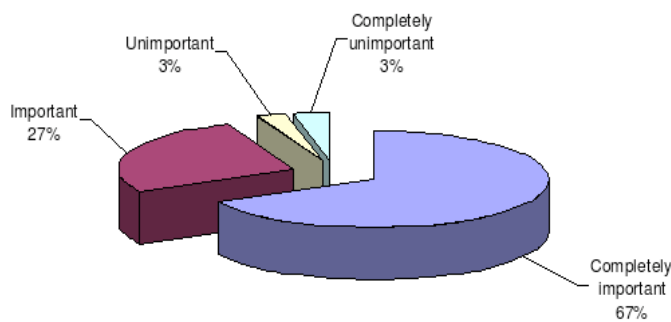
These results reflect a mixed set of attitudes toward the way Muslim Australians view their quality of life in Australia and the barriers they perceive as preventing further integration. This may also reflect broader trends in terms of the avenues pursued and barriers encountered amongst Muslim communities in the integrative process. That is, whilst integration may be proceeding in terms of economic and educational opportunities, there is a resonant theme of cultural and political apprehension felt amongst the sample group, although it should be noted that the survey was conducted during the last months of the Howard Liberal government, perceived by many to be anti-Muslim. Further research will need to be undertaken to ascertain if attitudes shift under the new Rudd Labor government.

Cultural and political apprehension has several ramifications, most notably in the areas of

employment and feelings of alienation from broader social integration. Of those surveyed, 30 percent responded as unemployed. This appears markedly high by national standards, but should be placed against the age bracket of the respondents who are overwhelmingly young, and would therefore be of secondary school or university/vocational educational age. This is reinforced by the percentage of sole-income earners (36 percent) registered on the survey, also indicative of a trend amongst participants toward being young and likely to be engaged in some form of education.

Religion

A theme of cultural apprehension also emerged when respondents were questioned on issues of language, religious observance and the relationships between religion, politics and society. Respondents, when questioned on their view of the importance of religion in their personal life responded overwhelmingly that it was 'completely important' (67 percent) or 'important' (27 percent) (see *Illustration 13*).



or 'important' (27 percent) (see *Illustration 13*). The importance of religion in the personal life of the respondents therefore highlights how issues related to it would present considerable barriers or facilitators in the process of integration.

Illustration 13. Importance of religion in participants' lives.

In regard to religious issues, two trends emerged when respondents were questioned on the place of Islam in Australia. First, there was an overwhelming positive response to questions on whether Muslim Australians felt 'comfortable' in Australian society (76 percent) and whether Muslims have the freedom to practice in Australia (88 percent). Despite this, there was an overwhelming sentiment toward feelings of discrimination against Muslims in Australian society (88 percent). In other words, whilst Muslim Australians individually feel comfortable and free to practice their religion, they also feel overwhelmingly that their community is experiencing discrimination.

A sense of *collective* victimhood appears to be very visible, if not predominant, among the sample. The experience of discrimination does not have to be felt personally, as those who indicated having experienced discrimination themselves in the last two years constituted only 56 percent of the sample data. The high proportion of those who believe they suffered discrimination and more importantly the staggering proportion of those who 'think Muslims face discrimination in Australia' points to a deep rift between Muslim Australians and the

rest of the community.

Here, specific responses to restrictions faced or perceived by some Muslim Australians in practice alongside responses to the broader place of Islam and the Muslim community in Australia are revealing. In terms of Islamic practice, key issues raised centred on the integration of religious practice with the requirements of religiously-mixed workplaces. The wearing of Islamic dress (such as women’s head covers), scheduling prayer time and access to halal food at work were cited as key issues.

More telling, however, were perspectives on broader issues related to language, culture and religion in Australian society. Here, comments reveal a range of attitudes and experiences where Muslim Australians are seeking to adapt Islamic practice and lifestyle (in varying degrees of observance) but report experiences of heightened apprehension amongst segments of the non-Muslim Australian community. Comments surrounding experiences of being treated with suspicion or open disdain were commonly expressed by a number of participants, experiences that are not defining features of the majority of Muslim Australians’ experiences but that permeate many daily encounters.

Media

In regard to perceptions of discrimination, the Australian media is singled out as a particular source of cultural apprehension that serves as a barrier for Australia’s Muslim community. *Illustration 14*

highlights how the vast majority of respondents (97 percent) identify some discrimination against Muslims in the Australian media, with over half (67 percent) pointing to ‘most’ or ‘nearly all’ media in Australia as discriminating against Muslims. The key theme running through specific responses to this question was that the media almost exclusively focuses on negative portrayals of the Muslim community in Australia and globally, with both implicit and explicit links between Islam and terrorism.

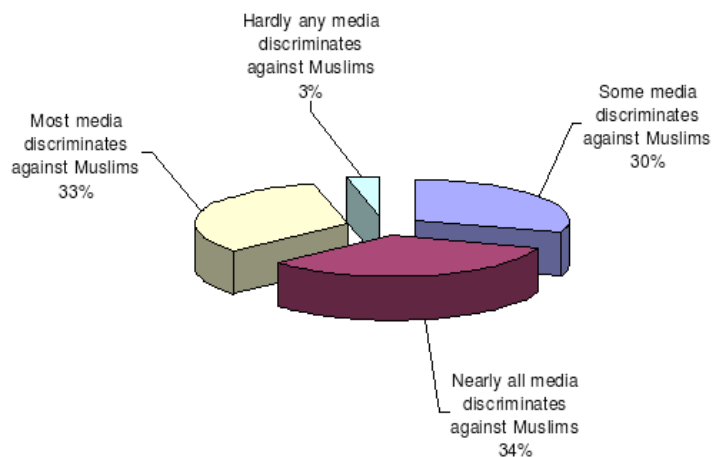


Illustration 14. Perceptions of media discrimination against Muslims.

negative portrayals of the Muslim community in Australia and globally, with both implicit and explicit links between Islam and terrorism.

Many respondents highlighted this as a key mechanism by which public attitudes towards

Muslims are shaped in Australia. This is crucial as it feeds directly into the development of informal barriers, the intangible but very real experiences of suspicion and hostility felt by Muslim Australians as revealed in this survey. Commentary from the respondents offers some insight into their frame of mind: “Australian media has most of the time portrayed negative images about Muslims. Weakness and negativity about the Muslim community are always propagated but not the positive and true face” (M/26y/Pakistan/2003). This sentiment of one-sidedness is echoed by others, for example: “I feel the media only discuss negative topics regarding Muslims and therefore cause more racism. They never talk about any of the good things Muslims are doing” (F/45y/Australia).

Amidst a torrent of criticism of the media, some respondents tried to be self-critical as well. One respondent, for example, hinted at the damage Muslims do to their own image: “There’s definitely a bias against Muslims in the media, but I don’t think that Muslims help this agenda either with our behaviour” (F/33y/Australia). However, by and large, the media is seen as serving bigotry and discrimination. Not surprisingly, the respondents view this as closely linked with the environment of counter-terrorism and a heightened sense of insecurity. That the perception of systematic discrimination and racism against Muslims in Australia is widespread contributes to a sense of victimhood, which works against Muslim integration.

There is little apparent reservation amongst the Muslim Australian community in accessing modes of political and social action as a means to address both individual and group concerns as well as engaging in modes of political and social organisation to pursue individual and community aims and aspirations and these themes are developed further below.

Social and Political Attitudes and Activity

A useful indicator of social and political integration is the level of engagement with formal and informal public initiatives concerning Australian society as a whole. Respondents were asked to identify their experiences and nature of contacts with political parties, trade unions, sports and social clubs (not exclusively Muslim groupings) as well as participation in public rallies or political lobbying. Results from this survey suggest that the proportion of those with some degree of social and political engagement is high among Muslims.

Around half or more of those surveyed indicated that they have taken an active role in social and political processes. The most popular forms of activism among Muslims are signing petitions, making donations, followed by boycotting ‘certain products for political, ethical or environmental reasons’ and taking part in public demonstrations and rallies (see also *Illustration 15* on page 27 and *Appendix C*).

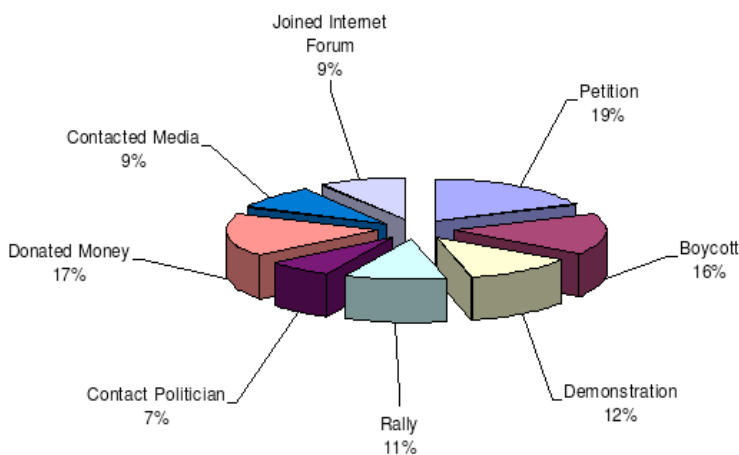


Illustration 15. Modes of political and social action undertaken in the last twelve months.

When analysing the various forms of social and political activities in which Muslim Australians participate, it is interesting to note here the clear difference between Australian-born and migrant Muslims in terms of public engagement (full tables of the data are presented in *Appendix C*).

Those belonging to the migrant community appear less prepared to take a proactive role in contacting their member of parliament or the media than those born in Australia. It is noteworthy also to point to another distinction between Australian-born and migrant Muslims as the former appear to be more committed to religious institutions than the latter. Around 56 percent of Australian-born Muslims in this survey indicated membership of a religious organisation, while only 48 percent of migrant Muslims admitted such affiliations. The same distinction is evident in terms of affiliation to ‘another type of Muslim voluntary group.’ While the proportion of Australian-born Muslims in this category stands at 52 percent, the equivalent figure for migrant Muslims stands at 44 percent.

The above distinction suggests a generational factor at play, as Australian-born Muslims seem more comfortable with their surrounding milieu and less apprehensive about raising their voice in defiance of what they regard as systematic discrimination and racism, than their overseas-born parents. A surprising finding in this survey may be that those with high education levels (possessing a university degree) do not appear to have a higher rate of public engagement than other Muslims. Higher education does not seem to have facilitated a greater sense of public assertiveness (see appendix C).

Conclusion

The present report began with an explanation that there is a growing body of research indicating that perceptions of blocked progress—that the ‘system’ prevents individuals or groups of individuals to excel—may play a contributory role in alienating Muslims living as minorities in Western countries. Furthermore, the voices of Muslims themselves are largely absent in the public discourse about Muslim settlement and integration in Western nations.

As such, the purpose of the current research was to examine the socio-economic standing and expectations of a group of Muslim Australians located in greater, metropolitan Melbourne, to test for markers of integration as against their socio-political attitudes to life in Australia. The two markers chosen in particular were educational achievements and professional/vocational advancement. The study sought to answer whether Muslims experience barriers to integration, whether institutional or subjective, and whether Muslims have been active in overcoming obstacles blocking progress and participating in various social and political activities in Australian life. Furthermore, it sought to understand what effect higher education has on attitudes and whether Muslim Australians living in Melbourne have managed to integrate into Australian society.

Emerging from the research is a picture of a community experiencing mixed feelings. On the one hand, it is very optimistic about its economic and social potential in Australia, highly active in seeking education and economic opportunities. There is a great deal of optimism within the community about the possibilities for economic and educational advancement in Australia. There appears to be near unanimity that education is the key to success and social advancement, and participants were relatively well educated. Over 90 percent of the respondents agreed that their education will improve their job prospects. And over 80 percent registered satisfaction with education and training services available. Although there is concern with the cost of education—an issue not unique to the Muslim community in Australia—these figures suggest a firm degree of confidence in the education

system as a mechanism for self-fulfilment and social advancement.

However, there is a critical issue of less formal, more intangible barriers to full integration. Specifically, feelings of discrimination based on perceived difference, suspicion and cultural apprehension cut across all areas, and is most pronounced in the day-to-day activities of Muslim Australians rather than in their formal interaction with state institutions.

Problems with culture-clashes was a strong theme that emerged from analysis of the data, with participants citing racism, discrimination and prejudice contributing to a sense of victimhood and alienation. Language issues were not prevalent, except for the period immediately following arrival for new immigrants.

There is a perception that Australia provides freedom of religion for participants, and the overwhelming majority expressed that they feel comfortable in Australian society and have the freedom to practice Islam. Nevertheless, perceptions of racism and discrimination against Muslims as a whole is palpable.

Satisfaction with the Australian government, its foreign affairs policy and national security is markedly lower than with Australia's economy. It is unsurprising that the war in Iraq and media prejudice were cited as problematic, and this was even more marked among those with higher education levels.

However, the Muslim Australian community appears to feel well equipped to engage in political and social activities, particularly signing petitions, boycotting products for political, ethical or environmental reasons, and taking part in public demonstrations and rallies. This is even more so among Australian-born Muslims than migrants, perhaps reflective of a sense of security in the former.

In conclusion, it can be said that a sense of blocked progress does exist within the Muslim Australian community—to lesser and greater degrees among particular individuals. This is the result not so much of institutional discrimination, but the less tangible perception of generalised discrimination and prejudice against Muslims as a collective in Australian society. This is perceived to be fostered by the media and pejorative government attitudes towards Muslims locally and overseas. These are areas that need to be addressed in order to promote and strengthen Australia's societal harmony.

Recommendations

Recommendations to promote and strengthen societal harmony in Australia can be divided into the following categories: promoting an inclusive sense of Australian identity; assisting in the development of Islam as an Australian religion; sensitivity training; promoting the development of networks and the acquisition of English; information and education campaigns; addressing issues to do with Australian foreign policy making.

Inclusive sense of Australian identity

As the strongest theme to emerge from interpretation of the data, was an overall sense of generalised discrimination and prejudice against Muslims as a collective in Australian society, the first recommendation revolves around the theme of promoting an inclusive sense of Australian identity: among Muslims and the wider population in general. Recognition of the reality of Australia's culturally diverse society, moving beyond a narrow concept of nationalism, provides space for migrants and their children to develop a sense of belonging and loyalty to Australia. Narrow nationalism, which asserts an Australian identity and singular culture rooted in possessing North-West European ancestry, can only serve to exclude the large numbers of migrant Australians and their children whose ancestry is drawn from myriad different nationalities and cultural patterns. This is not to reject or dismiss the important and historical role of the British and Irish contributions, in particular, to Australia, but simply to recognise other cultural contributions that have been—and continue to be—made to Australian society.

Government publications, media releases and promotional campaigns could be developed to promote an inclusive sense of Australian identity. Programs to combat racism and racial and religious vilification—whether from non-Muslims towards Muslims, or Muslims towards non-Muslims—could have important prophylactic effect in helping to avoid a repeat of the Cronulla riots, as well as hindering the marginalisation and recruitment of disaffected youth

into criminal activity and radicalising groups.

Islam as an Australian religion

Promoting an inclusive sense of Australian identity could include fostering an acceptance of Islam as an ‘Australian’ religion, rather than being a foreign and alien import. Given that the vast majority of Muslim Australians are still migrants or children of migrants, the community is clearly going through a transitional phase, still establishing roots and developing a sense of what it means to be Muslim Australian. This presents challenges, as the new community does not have the same level of infrastructure as older religious communities to fully meet the needs of their flock, a number of whom come to Australia as refugees. However, the youthful nature of the Muslim Australian community provides opportunities to develop an Australian ‘flavour’ of Muslim identity, including recognition of values shared with the other great faith traditions represented in Australia.

At a practical level, developing an ‘Australian’ Islam could include long-term government support for the education and training of home-grown imams and community leaders, including female community leaders, able to interpret the Muslim experience in a local context. Parallel to this is the need to provide training for imams migrating to Australia—as with other faith groups’ clergy new to Australia—to assist them in becoming aware of the differences (as well as the similarities) of Muslim experiences at a local level.

Sensitivity training

One of the issues raised in the body of the report in relation to employment opportunities, was the sense that prejudice and discrimination might be a factor in unemployment levels. Although there exists in Australia a legal prohibition against religious discrimination in employment and occupation, such discrimination still exists at an informal and subtle level, as was narrated by a number of the participants in the current study. Thus, sensitivity training for employers in regard to taking on Muslim employees may assist in combating discrimination where it still exists. Such training could address issues that might concern potential employers such as Muslims engaging in labour during the fasting month of Ramadan, the public visibility of Islamic dress such as women’s head scarves, the need for observant Muslims to pray during working-hours and so on.

Another area to encourage resolution of possible problems could include working with local imams and Muslim community leaders to address concerns that potential Muslim employees might have, e.g. taxi-drivers servicing passengers carrying alcoholic beverages, or accompanied by guide-dogs.

Developing networks and acquiring English

Although most of the participants in the current study had good or excellent English language skills, some of the migrants identified the period of initial settlement in Australia as a time when they felt hindered by lack of English language skills. A recommendation is for support for matching programs such as where volunteer locals are matched with new migrants to help them transition into life in Australia, develop friendship and social networks, and further their English language skills.

Information and education campaigns

Specifically targeting Muslim Australians in information campaigns on a variety of issues might assist them to become aware of services and resources available to them including solutions to issues of cost, childcare and course-flexibility etc. when it comes to education and employment.

Addressing the perception that there is widespread prejudice against Muslims in the media as well as in government rhetoric could be addressed by encouraging Muslims to think of journalism and political service (whether as elected representatives at local, state or federal levels, or in the public service) as viable career paths for themselves and their children. Having Muslims working in government and the media would go a long way to challenging prejudice where it exists, and the perception of prejudice generally.

Australian foreign policy making

Sensitivity to local Muslims' concerns when it comes to foreign policy making, particularly involving overseas Muslim populations is vitally important, particularly as it can strongly impact on local perceptions of security. There exists a strong sense—whether rightly or wrongly—that Australia has acted in an injurious fashion to fellow Muslims overseas by joining the US coalition in the war in Iraq and in other foreign policy decisions. Whilst it is outside the scope of the current report to make foreign policy recommendations, it is important to highlight the sense of injustice and concern that local Muslim Australians have in this regard. The cost of short-term political posturing at the expense of a vulnerable minority population is not conducive to long-term social harmony.

Beginning to repair this perception might include liaising with respected local Muslim leaders to make them, and the Muslim community, aware of the positive contributions that Australia is making overseas, including in areas that affect Muslim populations.

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Appendix A

The following list of questions were given to participants to answer. Some questions required textual responses, others offered a pre-determined selection of responses for participants to choose.

A1. What is the postcode of the place where you currently live?

A2. Are you male or female? (Male; female.)

A3. What year were you born?

A4. Where were you born?

A5. If you were not born in Australia, what year did you come here?

A6. Are you an Australian citizen? (Yes; no.)

A7. Where was your mother born?

A8. Where was your father born?

B1. Thinking about life in Australia, how satisfied are you with each of the following? (11-point scale where 0=completely dissatisfied, 5=neutral and 10=completely satisfied.)

- a) The economic situation
- b) The state of the natural environment
- c) The social conditions
- d) Government
- e) Business
- f) Australia's foreign affairs policies
- g) National security

B2. If you have children (or are hoping to have children) when they are the age you are now, do you think their standard of living will be better, worse, or the same as yours now?

(Much better; somewhat better; about the same; somewhat worse; much worse; n/a.)

C1. What is the highest level of education you completed? (None; primary; year 10 secondary; year 12 secondary; trade qualification or apprenticeship; certificate, diploma (TAFE or business college); bachelor degree; masters degree; doctorate; other.)

C2. Do you have qualifications that Australia does not recognise? (Yes; no.)

C3. If yes, what qualification?

C4. Has your career been negatively impacted by this non-recognition? (Yes; no.)

C5. If yes, how?

C6. If your career has been negatively impacted, have you undertaken any re-certification schemes? (Yes; no.)

C7. Are you currently studying? (Full-time; part-time; no.)

C8. What are you studying? (e.g. bachelor of science)

C9. Do you think your study will improve your job prospects? (Yes; no.)

C10. Are you satisfied with education and training opportunities in Australia? (Yes; no.)

C11. if no, why not? (Dissatisfaction with courses offered; language barriers; lack of course flexibility; lack of time; lack of adequate childcare; cost; other.)

C12. If you wish there is a space below to elaborate on any of the above questions to do with education and training.

D1. Please indicate your personal annual gross (before tax) income in the ranges provided:

- a) \$10,000 or less
- b) \$10,001 - \$25,000
- c) \$25,001 - \$50,000
- d) \$50,001 - \$75,000
- e) \$75,001 - \$100,000
- f) \$100,001 - \$125,000
- g) \$125,001 - \$150,000
- h) \$150,000 or more

D2. How are you managing on your current household income? Are you:

- a) Finding it very difficult to get by
- b) Finding it difficult to get by
- c) Coping
- d) Living comfortably
- e) Living very comfortably

f) Cannot choose

D3. Do you currently have a part-time or full-time job (e.g. paid employment or home-duties)? (Yes; no; paid; unpaid; full-time; part-time; casual; permanent; self-employed.)

D4. Are you the sole-income earner in your household? (Yes; no.)

D5. Do you feel secure in your employment? (Yes; no.)

D6. What is your occupation and what type of work do you do?

D7. Are you happy in your job? (Very happy; happy; neutral; unhappy; very unhappy.)

D8. Do you agree/disagree that you receive an adequate income to care for yourself and/or your family? (Completely agree; agree; neutral; disagree; completely disagree.)

D9. Do you agree/disagree that you are adequately paid for the work that you do? (Completely agree; agree; neutral; disagree; completely disagree.)

D10. Do you agree/disagree that your work reflects the academic qualifications, training, skills, and experience you have acquired? (Completely agree; agree; neutral; disagree; completely disagree.)

D11. Do you agree/disagree that your income reflects the academic qualifications, training, skills, and experience you have acquired? (Completely agree; agree; neutral; disagree; completely disagree.)

D12. Do you agree/disagree that your income is that of other workers in your field? (Completely agree; agree; neutral; disagree; completely disagree.)

D13. How easy is it for someone like you to start a business? (It would be possible; it would not be possible.)

D14. Why?

D15. If you have been looking for work (now or in the past), have you experienced any difficulties in trying to find work? (Yes; no.)

D16. If you have, please briefly comment on what difficulties you experienced and how you dealt with them.

D17. If you have had difficulties looking for work, have you undertaken any further training schemes? (Yes; no.)

D18. Do you wish to elaborate on any of the above questions to do with employment and careers?

E1. How would you describe your level of English? (Very good; good; poor; very poor).

E2. Have you experienced language difficulties living in Australia? (Yes; no.)

E3. If yes, please describe your experiences.

E4. Have you undergone English language lessons since coming to Australia? (Yes; no.)

E5. What is your current housing situation? (Own outright; own, paying mortgage; rent from private landlord; rent from public housing authority; other.)

E6. What is your current marital status? (Never married; married; in de-facto relationship; separated; divorced; widowed.)

E7. Do you have children? If so, how many?

E8. How important is religion in your personal life? (Completely unimportant; unimportant; important; completely important.)

E9. Did you convert/revert to Islam (Yes; no.)

E10. Are you comfortable living in Australian society and under its political system? (Yes; no.)

E11. In Australia, can you practice Islam as you wish? (Yes; no.)

E12. If not, please list any practices you cannot observe.

E13. Why can't you observe those practices?

E14. Do you think Muslims face discrimination in Australia? (Yes; no.)

E15. In the last two years, have you personally had a bad experience due to your race, ethnicity, or religion? (Yes; no.)

E16. Some people think that religious institutions should play a dominant role in governing Australian society, others prefer that religious institutions are kept separate from state institutions. How do you feel?

- a) Religious institutions should not have a role in governing society
- b) Religious institutions should have some influence in governing society, but should not be the only influence.
- c) Religious institutions should be the only force governing society

E17. Do you wish to elaborate on any of the above questions to do with language, culture and religion in society?

F1. Here are some different forms of political and social action that people can take. Please indicate for each one whether you: (have done it in the past year; have done it in the more distant past; haven't done it but might do it; haven't done it and would never do it; cannot choose.)

- a) Signed a petition
- b) Boycotted, or deliberately bought, certain products for political, ethical or environmental reasons
- c) Taken part in a demonstration
- d) Attended a political meeting or a rally

- e) Contacted, or attempted to contact, a politician or a public servant to express your views
- f) Donated money or raised funds for a social or political activity
- g) Contacted or appeared in the media to express your views
- h) Joined an internet political forum or discussion group

F2. People sometimes belong to different kinds of groups or associations. For each type of group, please indicate whether you: (belong and actively participate; belong but don't actively participate; used to belong but not any more; have never belonged; cannot choose.)

- a) A political party
- b) A trade union, business, or professional association
- c) A religious organisation
- d) A Muslim sports, leisure or cultural group
- e) A non-Muslim sports, leisure or cultural group
- f) Another type of Muslim voluntary group
- g) Another type of non-Muslim voluntary group

F3. Do you wish to elaborate on any of the above questions to do with political participation?

F4. Is it acceptable for Australian media to debate or discuss the religious principles and practices of Muslims? (Yes; no.)

F5. Do Australian media discriminate against Muslims in their coverage?

- a) Hardly any media discriminates against Muslims
- b) Some media discriminates against Muslims
- c) Most media discriminates against Muslims
- d) Nearly all media discriminates against Muslims

F6. Do you wish to elaborate on the question of Australian media discussing and reporting Muslim news?

Appendix B

Complete list of places of birth of participants in alphabetical order.

Country	No.	%
Afghanistan	4	0.8
Argentina	1	0.2
Australia	145	28.9
Bangladesh	52	10.4
Bosnia	6	1.2
Brazil	1	0.2
Brunei Darussalam	1	0.2
Canada	1	0.2
China	1	0.2
Colombia	1	0.2
Cyprus	1	0.2
Djibouti	1	0.2
Egypt	15	3.0
England	6	1.2
Eritrea	5	1.0
Ethiopia	3	0.6
Fiji	2	0.4
Germany	1	0.2
Greenland	1	0.2
India	30	6.0
Indonesia	14	2.8

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Iran	2	0.4
Iraq	1	0.2
Jordan	2	0.4
Kenya	2	0.4
Kuwait	4	0.8
Lebanon	10	2.0
Lithuania	1	0.2
Malaysia	9	1.8
Maldives	4	0.8
Mauritius	1	0.2
Morocco	1	0.2
Nepal	1	0.2
Netherlands	1	0.2
New Zealand	1	0.2
Oman	3	0.6
Pakistan	32	6.4
Palestine	3	0.6
Papua New Guinea	1	0.2
Qatar	1	0.2
Saudi Arabia	15	3.0
Singapore	4	0.8
Somalia	11	2.2
South Africa	7	1.4
Sri Lanka	6	1.2
Sudan	3	0.6
Syria	1	0.2
Tanzania	2	0.4
Turkey	12	2.4
United Arab Emirates	6	1.2
United States	5	1.0
Vietnam	1	0.2
Yemen	1	0.2
Unknown / unclear	55	11.0
Total	501	100

Appendix C

Data tables for engagement of participants in social and political life in Australia.

Table 6. Engagement in different forms of political and social action.

Responses	%							
	a)	b)	c)	d)	e)	f)	g)	h)
Have done it in the more distant past	23.8	22.6	27.3	23.7	20.4	20.9	18.7	17.0
Have done it in the past year	38.1	33.7	24.4	22.1	14.7	35.6	19.1	19.3
Haven't done it but might do it	23.1	24.1	31.7	33.9	43.3	25.4	40.0	38.5
Haven't done it and would never do it	7.8	12.3	11.2	15.1	16.1	12.0	17.8	19.0
Cannot choose	7.2	7.3	5.5	5.2	5.4	6.1	4.5	6.1
Total responses	446	439	439	443	441	441	445	441

- a) Signed a petition
- b) Boycotted, or deliberately bought, certain products for political, ethical or environmental reasons
- c) Taken part in a demonstration
- d) Attended a political meeting or a rally
- e) Contacted, or attempted to contact, a politician or a public servant to express your views
- f) Donated money or raised funds for a social or political activity
- g) Contacted or appeared in the media to express your views
- h) Joined an internet political forum or discussion group

Table 7. Engagement in different forms of political and social action, by migrant status.

Responses	%															
	a)		b)		c)		d)		e)		f)		g)		h)	
	M	A	M	A	M	A	M	A	M	A	M	A	M	A	M	A
Have done it in the more distant past	22.3	24.3	20.4	24.4	23.3	35.1	21.6	28.9	17.9	23.9	18.9	22.9	15.6	24.4	15.2	20.5
Have done it in the past year	34.6	48.5	30.9	41.5	20.3	29.9	15.7	31.1	12.7	17.2	34.8	37.4	15.9	24.4	18.6	20.5
Haven't done it but might do it	25.7	16.9	26.0	20.0	35.3	24.6	36.6	28.9	44.4	42.5	25.2	26.0	42.2	37.0	39.4	37.9
Haven't done it and would never do it	9.3	5.1	14.7	8.1	13.9	6.7	19.0	8.9	16.8	14.9	13.3	10.7	20.4	11.9	19.7	16.7
Cannot choose	8.2	5.1	7.9	5.9	7.1	3.7	7.1	2.2	8.2	1.5	7.8	3.1	5.9	2.2	7.1	4.5
Total responses	269	136	265	135	266	134	268	135	268	134	270	131	270	135	269	132

M = Migrant

A = Australian-born

- a) Signed a petition
- b) Boycotted, or deliberately bought, certain products for political, ethical or environmental reasons
- c) Taken part in a demonstration
- d) Attended a political meeting or a rally
- e) Contacted, or attempted to contact, a politician or a public servant to express your views
- f) Donated money or raised funds for a social or political activity
- g) Contacted or appeared in the media to express your views
- h) Joined an internet political forum or discussion group

Table 8. Engagement in different forms of political and social action, by education level.

Responses	%								
	a) Signed a petition			b) Boycotted/bought			c) Demonstrated		
	S	V	H	S	V	H	S	V	H
Have done it in the more distant past	24.0	16.3	24.9	23.7	16.0	22.9	28.6	22.0	28.3
Have done it in the past year	48.0	34.7	34.6	36.1	32.0	32.7	26.5	24.0	23.3
Haven't done it but might	18.0	26.5	24.6	24.7	32.0	22.9	34.7	24.0	31.8

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do it									
Haven't done it and would never do it	6.0	10.2	8.3	9.3	10.0	14.1	5.1	20.0	12.0
Cannot choose	4.0	12.2	7.6	6.2	10.0	7.4	5.1	10.0	4.6
Total responses	100	49	289	97	50	284	98	50	283

S = Attained secondary education

V = Attained vocational education

H = Attained higher education

Responses	%								
	d) Attended meeting/rally			e) Contacted politician			f) Gave money to cause		
	S	V	H	S	V	H	S	V	H
Have done it in the more distant past	24.2	14.0	25.9	16.3	20.0	21.3	17.2	26.0	21.5
Have done it in the past year	23.2	28.0	20.3	14.3	12.0	15.4	41.4	18.0	35.9
Haven't done it but might do it	38.4	32.0	32.2	49.0	40.0	42.3	27.3	32.0	23.9
Haven't done it and would never do it	10.1	18.0	16.8	17.3	20.0	15.4	10.1	14.0	12.7
Cannot choose	4.0	8.0	4.9	3.1	8.0	5.6	4.0	10.0	6.0
Total responses	99	50	296	98	50	286	99	50	284

S = Attained secondary education

V = Attained vocational education

H = Attained higher education

Responses	%					
	g) Contacted media			h) Jointed internet forum		
	S	V	H	S	V	H
Have done it in the more distant past	15.2	22.0	19.1	21.2	22.0	15.1
Have done it in the past year	22.2	10.0	18.8	24.2	12.0	17.9
Haven't done it but might do it	43.4	40.0	39.6	34.3	42.0	40.0
Haven't done it and would never do it	17.2	20.0	18.1	18.2	12.0	20.7
Cannot choose	2.0	8.0	4.5	2.0	12.0	6.3
Total responses	99	50	288	99	50	285

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S = Attained secondary education

V = Attained vocational education

H = Attained higher education

Table 9. Belonging to different political and social groups.

Responses	%						
	a)	b)	c)	d)	e)	f)	g)
Belong and actively participate	8.5	12.3	30.0	28.8	22.8	29.0	22.9
Belong but don't actively participate	12.7	17.1	20.5	17.3	16.0	16.4	15.7
Used to belong but not anymore	12.4	16.4	12.3	15.7	18.6	12.6	15.0
Have never belonged	61.5	49.5	33.3	34.4	37.2	36.5	41.1
Cannot choose	4.8	4.6	4.0	3.7	5.3	5.4	5.4
Total responses	434	432	430	427	430	427	428

- a) A political party
- b) A trade union, business, or professional association
- c) A religious organisation
- d) A Muslim sports, leisure or cultural group
- e) A non-Muslim sports, leisure or cultural group
- f) Another type of Muslim voluntary group
- g) Another type of non-Muslim voluntary group

Table 10. Belonging to different political and social groups, by migrant status.

Responses	%													
	a)		b)		c)		d)		e)		f)		g)	
	M	A	M	A	M	A	M	A	M	A	M	A	M	A
Belong and actively participate	7.6	6.9	11.8	13.2	25.2	37.7	23.8	40.3	21.5	24.8	24.2	39.2	22.9	23.1
Belong but don't actively participate	9.9	12.3	13.7	20.2	19.4	18.5	18.8	11.6	15.8	14.0	15.8	13.6	12.8	17.7
Used to belong but not anymore	11.8	13.8	16.4	15.5	9.7	16.9	12.9	17.1	14.2	28.7	11.2	14.4	9.7	23.8
Have never belonged	64.6	65.4	53.1	50.4	41.5	23.1	41.0	27.1	43.5	28.7	42.3	29.6	48.4	31.5
Cannot choose	6.1	1.5	5.0	0.8	4.3	3.8	3.5	3.9	5.0	3.9	6.5	3.2	6.2	3.8
Total responses	263	130	262	129	258	130	256	129	260	129	260	125	258	130

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M = Migrant

A = Australian-born

- a) A political party
- b) A trade union, business, or professional association
- c) A religious organisation
- d) A Muslim sports, leisure or cultural group
- e) A non-Muslim sports, leisure or cultural group
- f) Another type of Muslim voluntary group
- g) Another type of non-Muslim voluntary group

Table 11. Belonging to different political and social groups, by education level.

Responses	%								
	a) Political party			b) Trade union etc.			c) Religious organisation		
	S	V	H	S	V	H	S	V	H
Belong and actively participate	6.4	8.5	9.1	9.4	10.6	13.8	37.2	37.0	26.3
Belong but don't actively participate	13.8	14.9	11.9	11.5	21.3	18.4	25.5	13.0	19.9
Used to belong but not anymore	7.4	23.4	12.6	15.6	12.8	17.7	8.5	13.0	13.9
Have never belonged	71.3	51.1	60.0	61.5	48.9	45.0	26.6	32.6	35.9
Cannot choose	1.1	2.1	6.3	2.1	6.4	5.0	2.1	4.3	3.9
Total responses	94	47	285	96	47	282	94	46	281

S = Attained secondary education

V = Attained vocational education

H = Attained higher education

Responses	%								
	d) Muslim sports etc.			e) non-Muslim sports etc.			f) Muslim voluntary group		
	S	V	H	S	V	H	S	V	H
Belong and actively participate	40.9	21.3	25.5	31.9	13.0	21.0	35.1	29.8	26.4
Belong but don't actively participate	22.6	14.9	16.5	13.8	10.9	17.8	20.2	12.8	16.2
Used to belong but not anymore	8.6	23.4	16.9	19.1	26.1	17.1	7.4	17.0	14.1

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Have never belonged	24.7	38.3	37.1	30.9	47.8	38.4	34.0	34.0	37.9
Cannot choose	3.2	2.1	4.0	4.3	2.2	5.7	3.2	6.4	5.4
Total responses	93	47	278	94	46	281	94	47	277

S = Attained secondary education

V = Attained vocational education

H = Attained higher education

Responses	%		
	g) non-Muslim voluntary group		
	S	V	H
Belong and actively participate	28.3	23.4	21.1
Belong but don't actively participate	14.1	17.0	15.7
Used to belong but not anymore	10.9	17.0	16.1
Have never belonged	42.4	38.3	41.8
Cannot choose	4.3	4.3	5.4
Total responses	92	47	280

S = Attained secondary education

V = Attained vocational education

H = Attained higher education