



Australian Muslim Community Leaders Summit 2024

Sunday, 12th of May 2024
Campsie - Sydney

MEETING MINUTES

1. Opening of the Australian Muslim Community Leaders Summit 2024.

- 1.1. Imam Shadi Alsuleiman officially opened the Australian Muslim Community Leaders Summit 2024 by praising Allah (SWT), thanking the participants for attending the Summit, both in person and online, followed by a reminder of the importance of unity and working together on the common good, interest and denominators that benefit everyone, particularly during these difficult times, the challenges that the Muslim Ummah is going through, and the ongoing suffering of our brothers and sisters in Gaza – Palestine.
- 1.2. He also highlighted the fruits of the Alliance of Australian Muslims, the organisation's collaboration, networking, some of its achievements in the past years, and how the AAM successfully bridges the gap between Muslim organisations in Australia and other communities.

2. Quran Recitation.

- 2.1. Imam Anas Yaghmour recited some verses from **Surah Al-Imran 102-105**.

3. Welcoming and Introduction.

- 3.1. Imam Shadi once again welcomed all attendees to the **Australian Muslim Community Leaders Summit 2024**, praising **Allah (SWT)** for our unity, and spoke about the challenges that the Community and the Ummah are facing with the Israeli occupation's aggression and attacks on our brothers and sisters in Gaza, and emphasised on the importance in working together during these times and there are no times that the Muslim community is in dire need for unity and coming together.
- 3.2. Imam Shadi also mentioned the positive impacts of the AAM on the Muslim Community, thanking participants for their contribution and support in achieving this and the AAM Board for their dedication and commitment.
- 3.3. He also expressed his gratitude to all attendees for their leadership and efforts in the community and for their cooperation in working together.
- 3.4. He also expressed gratitude to all participants who travelled from interstate, representing the different states and territories.



4. Reminder of the Etiquettes of the Summit and Meeting.

- 4.1. Khalid Mousa, AAM Secretary, reminded and read the etiquettes of the Summit to achieve the best outcome and to have the most constructive meeting and discussions.

5. The Summit's importance, Goals, Objectives, and intended outcomes.

- 5.1. The AAM's primary goal is to unite the Muslim Community leadership under agreed-upon common denominators to collaborate, engage, discuss, brainstorm, and take action on topics affecting all Muslims across Australia.
- 5.2. With the common denominators defined, the second phase of the AAM was to learn to work together, given the different backgrounds and community experiences of all the members across the country. This level of collaboration is unprecedented within the Muslim Community in Australia.
- 5.3. The Australian Muslim Community Leaders Summit 2024 was convened because of the need for the Muslim community leadership to come together during these difficult times and unite as a community in serving the best interest of the Australian Muslim community and the Palestinian cause, while our brothers and sisters are being oppressed and massacred by the Israeli occupying force.
- 5.4. To identify areas in serving these causes and what the Muslim community leadership can do and implement to achieve them.
- 5.5. The importance of preserving the mainstream understanding of Islam and empowering this understanding in all forums and platforms.
- 5.6. Despite the challenges it has faced, the Muslim community is in a better position than in previous years; its collaboration and connection with one another, including the efforts of AAM, have contributed to this, and much more is needed to progress and improve.
- 5.7. The Muslim community has accomplished great milestones and must strategise for the future to keep the progress sustainable and achievable. Therefore, it is important to identify areas the community's leadership can work on and employ full-time staff to cover these areas rather than always depending on volunteers. For this reason, at this Summit, the [Muslim Community Fund](#) will be launched.

6. Key Agenda Items

6.1. Working together during difficult times

- 6.1.1. The Muslim community has worked closely and united in recent years. Despite all the challenges the community has faced, it has always shown resilience and strong faith and emerged from these challenges stronger, wiser, and united.
- 6.1.2. Muslim community leaders have always advocated for unity because of the benefits and outcomes of working together.
- 6.1.3. There is no time when the community needs to be united more than this time.
- 6.1.4. Unity does not imply that the community leaders, organisations, or members need to change their school of thought, organisation structures or names or to have their organisations and centres under one organisation or name. Unity implies that community leaders, organisations, and members are required to identify the common and greater denominators, benefits, interests, and concerns



of the community and work together to achieve them collectively, united with one voice.

6.1.5. Key points discussed at the summit:

6.1.5.1. What unity is in for the Muslim community.

6.1.5.2. What 'the Community' implies.

6.1.5.3. Areas that unite the community to achieve.

6.1.5.4. Areas that will disunite the community to avoid.

6.1.6. Khalid Mousa delivered his speech and emphasised how the concept of unity has diverged from its true meaning over the years. The focus should be on fostering collaboration within our community and its organisations. Collaboration involves two main phases:

Agreeing on Issues: This phase includes discussions, brainstorming, and agreeing on the main issues or principles we are united on, such as Palestine, Islamophobia, and youth concerns.

Implementation: This involves sharing ideas and suggestions for addressing these issues. Each group or individual can execute their strategies independently or in collaboration with others, as long as the agreed principles are upheld.

Key points for successful collaboration include recognising that no single person or organisation can represent the entire Muslim community.

Sharing resources and knowledge and leveraging each other's strengths.

Allowing freedom in collaboration, where individuals can choose how and with whom they want to collaborate.

The community should support each other's initiatives without being hindered by divisions over representation. For example, multiple initiatives should collaborate in political advocacy and sharing data and resources. AAM provides a platform for such collaboration, focusing on common principles while allowing diverse execution strategies.

6.1.7. The definition of community doesn't limit it to a particular group, race, organisation or demographics; the community includes all Muslims. This includes those who practice and don't practice, as there are a large number of Muslims who don't attend mosques or centres or have any affiliation and must be included in the conversation.

6.1.8. To achieve a consensus from all factions in the community is impossible, and one must exert the effort to unite to the best of one's ability.

6.1.9. Community leaders must lead by example, with wisdom and sincerity, and work towards the community's best interests and Islam. This comes with a hefty price and reputation damage, so it is important that community leaders support and empower one another.

6.1.10. The Muslim youth must be the focus of the summit. In addition to including them and addressing their issues, it is important to give them a platform to discuss their issues, affairs, and matters. The Summit must create a safe space for the youth to attend and share their ideas and feedback.

6.1.11. Unity must be accomplished through trust, transparency, and open dialogue.

6.1.12. 6.1.12 At a time of crisis, the Muslim community needs to avoid internal conflicts, and the Muslim community leaders must work together on the objectives, approaches, and strategies by complementing one another and supporting the objectives.



- 6.1.13. All Muslim community leaders are striving to achieve the very same goals and objectives, but they may differ in their strategies and pathways. Different strategies and pathways are sometimes needed to achieve the same goals and objectives.
- 6.1.14. Uniting everyone and every organisation in the Muslim community is merely impossible; what is possible is exerting effort to work on the common goals and interests of the Muslim community.
- 6.1.15. As part of the unity of the Muslim community is to preserve the mainstream understanding of Islam and not compromise on the core values and principles of Islam, all mainstream Muslim organisations must empower one another and support each of these principles.
- 6.1.16. The Muslim community leaders need to work to be proactive rather than reactive and be at the forefront of serving and defending the Muslim community.

6.2. Framework for Political Engagement and Advocacy

- 6.2.1. The Australian Muslim community is part and parcel of the Australian fabric; in a country like Australia, all Australians have an equal right to voice and advocate their opinion and policy change. The Australian Muslim community has an equal stake and shared interest in policy changes of government and decision-makers and the future and direction of the country.
- 6.2.2. The Australian Muslim community must strategise and work towards influencing key decision-makers in government, media, and civil society on matters of most concern to Muslims in Australia to protect and advance the welfare of the diverse Muslim community. It is important to raise political awareness and engagement within the Muslim community, including grassroots campaigning and involvement with political parties.
- 6.2.3. **Key points to discuss at the summit:**
 - 6.2.3.1. The political alignment and mobilising of the Muslim community during future elections at local, state and federal elections to magnify the Muslim voice.
 - 6.2.3.2. How to raise political awareness and understanding in the Muslim Community.
 - 6.2.3.3. Evaluate recent events, particularly the war on Gaza and the Palestinian cause and plight.
 - 6.2.3.4. The rise of Islamophobia and anti-Muslim sentiment and how to counter them.
- 6.2.4. The Panel Framework for Political Engagement and Advocacy, Moderated by **Samir Benne Kadi**, and two Panelists, **Bilal Rauf** and **Ali Kadri**.
 - 6.2.4.1. The Moderator welcomed all attendees and introduced the panellists. He also mentioned that invitations were extended to other presenters to attend and present their views and ideas, particularly of the different views. He said it is important for different ideas and views to be presented and heard, as all brothers and sisters and community leaders strive to achieve the same goals in different ways, and it is important to have a safe space to discuss and debate the different ideas and views.



- 6.2.4.2. **Bilal Rauf** presented the importance of identifying the people we want to engage with, who they are, and what message can be conveyed to them.
- 6.2.4.2.1.1. The one-size-fits-all approach doesn't apply in political engagement. Having all or none is detrimental to the concept of engagement, and this approach can contribute to the isolation of the community and its disadvantages.
 - 6.2.4.2.1.2. It's important to ask the question, who are we engaging with, what is it about, and what is the purpose, to identify the key objectives of the outcome.
 - 6.2.4.2.1.3. You can have a number of different approaches. Therefore, it is important to collaborate and work towards the objectives and goals.
 - 6.2.4.2.1.4. When not engaging, be mindful of not creating a vacuum, as others can fill it and damage the community's interests. "When you disengage, other voices will be heard."
 - 6.2.4.2.1.5. It is important to distinguish between engagement and activism.
- 6.2.4.3. **Ali Kadri** presented the importance of differentiating between all the political parties and what they represent. You'll not identify one political party that will serve all the interests of the Muslim community, and no political party cares about one single issue or policy.
- 6.2.4.3.1.1. The Muslim community is not the only key stakeholder that political parties just care about.
 - 6.2.4.3.1.2. Political parties will always consider the major stakeholders, the larger population and those that widely impact election results and outcomes.
 - 6.2.4.3.1.3. The Muslim community is not significant in numbers to swing elections on a national level; it does in some federal seats, but it is small in the grand scheme of things.
 - 6.2.4.3.1.4. As a Muslim community, we need to think about what's best for Muslims and focus on policy changes and what can be achieved.
 - 6.2.4.3.1.5. The Muslim community will not always achieve what it wants from governments. However, working on and building on achievements is more important than walking away.
- 6.2.4.4. **Feedback and comments from the floor**
- 6.2.4.4.1. The importance of creating awareness and education on the political engagements, for Muslim leaders and youth.
 - 6.2.4.4.2. The sense of letdown and betrayal by governments and decision-makers on Gaza and Palestine.
 - 6.2.4.4.3. There is a sense of resentment towards all political parties and difficulty identifying who works in the community's best interest.
 - 6.2.4.4.4. It is important to understand the Muslim community's election process and size, and not overestimate its size and capabilities; otherwise, this can damage the community and its interests.



- 6.2.4.4.5. It is important for all Muslim community leaders to coordinate their efforts to influence their local MPs on what is best for the Muslim community.
- 6.2.4.4.6. The importance of having a robust and open discussion on this topic, leading to state and federal elections.
- 6.2.4.4.7. It was suggested that all peak bodies be the face of the community; in some cases, a bad cop and good cop scenario can be implemented, with peak bodies engaging and others disengaging or being more vocal.
- 6.2.4.4.8. It is important to have clear objectives on who your audiences are and not address the broader community with the understanding and language of the Muslim community, as the message can be misunderstood or lost.
- 6.2.4.4.9. The discussion on Islamophobia was raised, and the importance of countering the rise of Islamophobia and anti-Muslim sentiment and raising awareness, this includes the rise of hate towards pro-Palestine supporters and campaigns by groups of Hindutva ideology and movements against Muslim Indians.

6.3. Role of Media & Social Media

- 6.3.1. The Media and social media play an important role in influencing perceptions, policies, and the nation's future direction. Mainstream media often exhibit bias and unfairness in their portrayal of Islam and Muslims. This biased reporting fosters negative perceptions and misunderstandings, increasing the hostility towards Islam as a religion and Muslims as a community. Such bias poses obstacles and challenges to the advancement of Islam, Muslims and their interests and institutions.
- 6.3.2. It's imperative for the Muslim community to adopt a unified strategy in engaging with the media to counter negative portrayals and promote a positive image of Islam and Muslims.
- 6.3.3. **Key points discussed at the summit:**
- 6.3.4. To coordinate a unified Muslim voice and collaborative representation in the Australian media.
- 6.3.5. To coordinate effective engagement with mainstream Australian media agencies.
- 6.3.6. To monitor and follow up on the [MUSLIM MEDIA WATCH](#).
- 6.3.7. To coordinate educational workshops for Muslim organisations to better engage with the media.
- 6.3.8. The panel on the Role of Media & Social Media, Moderated by **Ramia Abdo Sultan** and Panelists **Rayane Tamer**, **Kamal Saleh**, **Massilia Aili**, and **Ahmed Bassal**.
 - 6.3.8.1. **Ramia Abdo Sultan**, the moderator, commenced by introducing the Panelists and spoke about the influence of the mainstream media and the change of public opinion, in particular, what we have seen in the past months on the topic of Palestine and Gaza, the influence of social media, and what it contributes to conveying the news and public opinion. The frustration of the biased reporting on Islam and the war on Gaza.



She also stressed the importance of thinking outside the box and not being limited or restricted by biased platforms or agencies. Establishing institutions and having a unified effort will strengthen the message.

- 6.3.8.2. **Massilia Aili**, expressed her concerns over the biased reporting on Palestine and post-October 7th, and how other communities can be very prompt and stay on top of matters of concern. She also noted the minimal platform that the Muslim community is given in the mainstream media compared to other communities.
- 6.3.8.3. **Rayane Tamer**, spoke about the importance of being prompt in engaging with the media and issuing statements before others fill this vacuum; otherwise, the wrong message of representation will be reported. The importance of coordination and proactive response.
- 6.3.8.4. **Ahmed Bassal**, stressed on the influence and the huge change of social media, the number of people who are getting the news from social media, in particular TIKTOK, and the importance of having a presence on these platforms. Also, the importance of amplifying Muslim voices on social media.
- 6.3.8.5. **Kamal Saleh**, the biggest frustration is the biased reporting of the mainstream media and what Muslim journalists face in their workplaces and the restrictions imposed on them. It is also frustrating the language and words used in the media when it comes to reporting on Muslims and Palestinians, the framing, and the choice of words. It is inspirational to see the strong voices of young Muslims and non-Muslims in advocating for Palestine, and it is unprecedented; it emerges with confidence, activism, and articulation. He also mentioned not underestimating the power and influence the Muslim community has, and many non-Muslims are on board and supportive.
- 6.3.8.6. **Feedback and comments from the floor**
 - 6.3.8.6.1. The importance of awareness and education in the media and social media space, especially for community leaders and youth.
 - 6.3.8.6.2. Make the message short, clear and to the point and don't get caught up with controversial discussions and topics that some journalists want to catch you out on.
 - 6.3.8.6.3. Rehearse the message beforehand and stick to it.
 - 6.3.8.6.4. To be proud of the Muslim students who are encamping at the universities and standing up for the Palestinian cause.
 - 6.3.8.6.5. It is important to note that the majority of the voices include Muslims and non-Muslims; we need to come out of the bubble of just the Muslim voice, as many non-Muslims are supportive and do as much as, if not more, for the Palestinian cause.
 - 6.3.8.6.6. The importance of forming alliances, even with those with whom we disagree on some principles; however, it is important not to compromise the values and principles of Islam during these engagements.
 - 6.3.8.6.7. To hold a public forum on media awareness and training for the public, particularly Imams, community leaders, and youth.
 - 6.3.8.6.8. The choice of words in the media statements is very important.



- 6.3.8.6.9. It is important to issue public statements and comment on emerging issues and discussions. Otherwise, others will fill the vacuum, and the inaccurate message will be reported.
- 6.3.8.6.10. Build alliances in the media and foster trust with trustworthy journalists who cooperate in the community's interest.
- 6.3.8.6.11. Do not conflate condemnation of particular incidents with ownership of the incident. Condemnation doesn't mean that you own the incidents, especially when committed by Muslims.
- 6.3.8.6.12. Having video-recorded statements are more powerful and impactful than written statements.
- 6.3.8.6.13. We are a powerful community with a lot to offer and can do so much in the media space; we must be coordinated, courageous, and well-planned.
- 6.3.8.6.14. The need and the importance of supporting Muslim journalists and reporters and sending messages of support to all of them.

7. Launch of the Muslim Community Fund

- 7.1. The Muslim community collectively strives to achieve the objectives and outcomes that require human and financial resources. Financial resource challenges can be resolved through a fund owned and managed by the community.
- 7.2. The **Muslim Community Fund** will focus on raising funds, donations, and contributions in the general interests of the Australian Muslim community in all states and territories.
- 7.3. The **Muslim Community Fund** is a fund established and owned by the Australian Muslim community.
- 7.4. The **Muslim Community Fund** has two members, ANIC and AAM, and the board members from ANIC and AAM, as well as independent members, to ensure it is managed effectively.
- 7.5. The **Muslim Community Fund** aims to preserve the Islamic identity and maintain the integrity of Australian Muslims in the present and generations to come. It also aims to advocate on all fronts and levels for the best interests of the Australian Muslim community.
- 7.6. The fund's objective is to support services, programs, and initiatives in which the benefits of those services go back to the entire community without targeting any specific ethnicity, cultural background, or people.
- 7.7. One idea was to look at monthly or annual contributions from organisations or individuals that can support the fund.
- 7.8. The Summit officially launched the **Muslim Community Fund**, Australia's first collective fund established by the Australian Muslim community to empower its most pressing strategic needs.
- 7.9. The Summit raised **\$202,500** in pledges from the generous contributions of the attendees and Muslim organisations and extends its gratitude to all who participated.
- 7.10. The summit encourages all Muslim organisations to contribute towards the Muslim community fund and what it aims to achieve.
- 7.11. **Muslim Community Fund Portfolio:** [Portfolio](#)

8. The Australian Muslim Community Leaders Summit and participants have agreed and supported the following motions and outcomes:

- 8.1. The Summit emphasises on the unity of the Muslim community and the importance of collaboration amongst Muslim organisations, leaders, and Imams.
- 8.2. The Summit acknowledges and understands that each individual and organisation may have their own views, initiatives, and objectives. However, we all believe in the importance of working for the common good and interests of the Muslim community, supporting one another, and standing in solidarity with each other. At the same time, we respect the different views and opinions of others.
- 8.3. The Summit rejects any form of division or disunity in the community and will exert all efforts to unite the community.
- 8.4. The Summit commits to supporting and advocating for the Palestinian people and their rights and urges all Muslims to continue in their advocacy for Palestine and justice for the Palestinian people.
- 8.5. The Summit calls on the international community and the Australian government to demand an immediate cessation of the Israeli offensive on Gaza, an end to the siege of Gaza and to condemn the illegal occupation in the Westbank, the aggression, the war crimes, the genocide and the massacres committed by the Israeli occupying force.
- 8.6. The Summit welcomes the recent shift and Australia's vote in favour of the UN General Assembly resolution for the change of the membership status of the State of Palestine.
- 8.7. The Summit calls on the Australian government to immediately recognise the State of Palestine before the next federal election.
- 8.8. The Summit stands firmly in solidarity with university students in Australia and around the globe who are encamping and protesting against the inhumane conditions in Gaza, and commends the brave university students who have peacefully protested in solidarity with Gaza.
- 8.9. The summit calls on all Muslims, Palestinians and human rights advocates to join their fellow Palestinian brothers and sisters, and the global community to commemorate the 76-year anniversary of the Nakbah (The Catastrophe), next Wednesday, 15 May 2024, which involved the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians and obliteration of Palestinian communities as a means of establishing the State of Israel in 1948. Over 750,000 Palestinians were either forcibly expelled or fled their homeland.
- 8.10. The Summit raises serious concerns over the rise of Islamophobia, anti-Muslim, and anti-Palestinian Sentiments and calls upon the Australian Government to recognise the danger of Islamophobia, anti-Muslim, and anti-Palestinian Sentiments and to protect the Australian Muslim and Palestinian communities and their institutions during these pressing times and high tensions.
- 8.11. The Summit calls upon community members to report any Islamophobic, anti-Muslim, and anti-Palestinian incidents and or any biased articles or reporting against Islam and Muslims.
- 8.12. The Summit acknowledges that the Australian Muslim community is part and parcel of the Australian fabric, the importance of safety and security for all Australians and that all Australians have an equal right to voice and advocate their opinion and policy change. The Australian Muslim community has an equal stake and shared interest in



policy changes of government and decision-makers and the future and direction of the country.

- 8.13. The Summit calls upon the Muslim community to voice their concerns and be politically and socially active by advocating the interests of the Muslim community and supporting those that support their interests and stand for the rights and justice of the Palestinian people, especially during state and federal elections.
- 8.14. The Summit calls for transparency and accountability of Law Enforcement Action; this includes the recent events in Sydney. The Summit rejects any racial and religious profiling and seeks justice and equitable treatment.
- 8.15. The Summit calls for a revision of Australian Terrorism Laws to eliminate the classification of "religiously motivated" terrorism.
- 8.16. The Summit launched the Muslim Community Fund, Australia's first collective fund established by the Australian Muslim community to empower its most pressing strategic needs. Owned and built for the community, the fund strives to advocate, on all fronts and levels, for the best interests of all Australian Muslims for this generation and future generations.
- 8.17. To recognise the First Nations people, work closely with them and foster a better relationship with them.
- 8.18. Finally, the Summit is committed to the unity of the community, preserving the mainstream understanding of Islam and supporting and standing for social justice and rights for Muslims in Australia.

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9. Final Words & Vote of Thanks:

- 9.1. Imam Shadi reiterated that the **Australian Muslim Community Leaders Summit 2024** is another milestone and achievement for the Australian Muslim Community, in particular during this challenging time and the witnessing suffering of our brothers and sisters in Gaza - Palestine.
- 9.2. Imam Shadi stressed the importance of working together and being united as a community, particularly amongst its leaders and organisations, more than at any other time.
- 9.3. He also expressed his appreciation and commended the Muslim community's leadership, tireless efforts and wisdom in dealing with the current challenges and the importance of supporting one another.
- 9.4. Special thanks were expressed to all the Panelists for the wonderful presentations and delivery, for their time, and to the AAM Board for their tireless efforts and hard work in serving the Muslim Community and for their outstanding leadership during this time of crisis.
- 9.5. All attendees were greatly thanked for their attendance and contribution to the success of the **Australian Muslim Community Leaders Summit 2024**. The community's unity, support, activism, and solidarity with their brothers and sisters in Palestine are noticeable, appreciated and needed.
- 9.6. The Australian Muslim Community Leaders Summit 2024 concluded with a Dua'a, by **Imam Tahar Michroui** at **1.30pm**.



10. Next AAM National Summit:

10.1. The **7th Alliance of Australian Muslims National Summit 2024**, will be held on Sunday, the **3rd of November 2024**, with the location to be confirmed.

[ADD TO CALENDAR](#)

JAZAKOM ALLAHU KHAIRAN FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION & SUPPORT

PLEASE SHARE YOUR FEEDBACK ON THE SUMMIT

[SHARE YOUR FEEDBACK](#)