

**The Challenges and Opportunities of
Islam in the
West: The Case of Australia**

**3 - 5 March, 2008
Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre
Queensland, Australia**

Program

Monday, 3 March

8.00 – 9.00am Registration & Coffee

9.00 – 9.30am Opening Ceremony

Chair: Dr Mohamad Abdalla, Conference Convenor and Founding Director, Griffith Islamic Research Unit, Griffith University; Co-Director, National Centre of Excellence for Islamic Studies Australia

- **Welcome to Country: Indigenous Elder Auntie Valda Coolwell**, President of the Brisbane Council of Aboriginal Elders
- **Welcome Address: Prof Ian O'Connor**, Vice-Chancellor, Griffith University
- **Welcome Remarks: His Excellency, the Ambassador of the Royal Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Mr. Hassan Talal Nazer**, Ambassador to Australia and New Zealand
- **Introducing Key Note Speaker: The Honourable Laurie Ferguson**, Parliamentary Secretary for Multicultural Affairs and Settlement Services

9.30 – 11.00 First Session

- **Key Note Address: Prof Tariq Ramadan**, Professor of Islamic Studies, Oxford and Erasmus Universities, and President of European Muslim Network (EMN), Brussels.

Moderator: Prof Charles Sampford, Director, The Institute for Ethics, Governance and Law (a joint initiative of the UN University, Griffith and QUT in association with the ANU); Convenor, ARC Governance Research Network; President, International Institute for Public Ethics

11.00 – 11.30 Tea Break

11.30 – 1pm Second Session

Islam in the Australian Context: Past and Present

Moderator: Mrs Nora Amath, Recipient of the Australian Muslim Woman of the year 2006

- **The Muslim history of Australia**
Assoc Prof Regina Ganter, Well-Respected Historian and a Senior Lecturer in Australian History, School of Arts, Griffith University
- **Being Muslim in the West: The Normality of Living Under Non-Muslim Laws**
Prof Abdullah Saeed, Sultan of Oman Professor of Arab & Islamic Studies and Director, Asia Institute, University of Melbourne; Director, National Centre of Excellence for Islamic Studies; Co-Director, Centre for Islamic Law and Society, University of Melbourne

1pm – 2pm Lunch

2pm – 3:30pm Third Session

Islamophobia and the Muslim “Other”

Moderator: Ms Susan Booth, Queensland’s Anti-Discrimination Commissioner

- **Islamophobia – The Concept and Its Critics**
Prof Yan Islam, Professor of International Business, Department of International Business and Asian Studies, Griffith University
- **On Clerics and Terrorists – Whose Interests are served by manufacturing the Monolithic Muslim “Other”?**
Mr Irfan Yusuf, Solicitor of the Supreme Court of NSW; freelance columnist, reviewer and writer

3:30pm – 4pm Tea Break

4pm – 5:30pm Fourth Session

Overcoming the Barriers

Moderator: Mr Sandy McCutcheon, a prominent Australian author, playwright, actor, journalist and broadcaster.

- **An Investigation of the Employment Status of Muslims in Queensland**
Dr Hussein Adibi, Senior Lecture in Sociology, School of Humanities and Human Services, Queensland University of Technology
- **Knowing One Another: An Antidote for Mass Media Islam**
Dr Halim Rane, Lecturer in Islamic Studies, School of Arts, Griffith University

5:30pm – 5:45pm Concluding Remarks

- **The Responsibilities of Political Leaders to Promote Positive Change**
Senator Andrew Bartlett, Queensland Democrat Senator since 1997 and Deputy Leader of the Australian Democrats

Monday evening

6:30 – 7pm Conference Reception

7pm – 10pm Conference Dinner

MC Mr Sandy McCutcheon, a prominent Australian author, playwright, actor, journalist and broadcaster.

7:15pm – 7:30pm Pre-Dinner Address

- **The Integrity of Islam**

Ms Florence Spurling, Series Producer of Encounter, ABC Radio National

7:30pm – 7:50pm Entertainment: Traditional melodies from around the Middle East by Sheikh Ahmad Abu Ghazaleh, an award-winning poet and Qur'an reciter from Syria

Tuesday, 4 March

8.30 – 9.30 Registration & Coffee

9.30 – 10.30 First Session

Key Note Address: Challenges for Australian Muslims in a Changing Media Environment

Mr Iain Lygo, Social activist, freelance journalist and author of *News Overboard: The Tabloid Media, Race Politics and Islam*

Moderator: Professor Kevin Clements, Director, Australian Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Queensland

10.30 – 11.00 Tea Break

11.00 – 12.30 Second Session

On Australian Muslim Youth and the Indigenous Converts

Moderator: Mrs Faiza El-Higzi, Recipient of the Australian Davos Connection Emerging Leaders Award 2007, and the Economic Advisor to the National Council for Women QLD.

- **The Identity and Self-Image of Australian Muslim Youth**
Dr Nahid Kabir, Research Fellow in the School of Communications and Arts at the Edith Cowan University, Western Australia
- **Reaffirming Aboriginality through Allah: Indigenous Muslims in Australia**
Dr Peta Stephenson, ARC Postdoctoral Research Fellow in the Centre of Islamic Law & Society at the University of Melbourne and is the author of *The Outsiders Within: Telling Australia's Indigenous-Asian Story* (UNSW Press, 2007).

12.30 – 1.30pm Lunch

1.30 – 3.00pm Third Session

Inter-relationship between Christianity and Islam – The Spiritual Dimension

Moderator: Assoc Prof Julia Howell, Deputy Director, Griffith Asia Institute and Research Expert of the Sociology of Islam, Griffith University

- **As Theologians Separate so the Mystics Unite**

Mr David Burke, Founding Director, the Australian Institute for Enneagram Studies, the Australian Enneagram Community, and the Brisbane Enneagram Project

- **Islamic Spirituality and its Relevance to Australian Muslims**
Sheikh Naeem Abdul Wali, Head Instructor at the Al-Kawthar Institute, Arizona, USA

3:00 – 3.30pm Tea Break

3.30 – 5.00pm Fourth Session

Inter-relationship between Christianity and Islam – The Theological Dimension

Moderator: The Right Reverend Bishop Jonathan Holland, the Bishop of the Northern Region of the Diocese of Brisbane

- **The Search for Communities of Peace: An International Reflection on Christian-Muslim Relations**
Rev Prof James Haire, Professor of Theology and Executive Director of Australian Centre for Christianity; Culture Director, Public and Contextual Theology Strategic Research Centre, Charles Sturt University, Canberra
- **Muslims as a Minority Community: Lessons from South Africa**
Moulana Ebrahim Bham, Secretary General of the Council of Muslim Theologians, and Executive Member of the National Religious Forum in South Africa

5.00 – 5.15pm Concluding Remarks

- **The Need to Build Bridges of Understanding**

The Right Reverend Bishop Jonathan Holland, the Bishop of the Northern Region of the Diocese of Brisbane (TBC)

Wednesday, 5 March

8.30 – 9.30 Registration & Coffee

9.30 – 11.00 First Session

Political Engagement through Economic Activism

Moderator: Prof Yan Islam, Department of International Business and Asian Studies, Griffith University

- **Embracing Islamic Investment in Australia using the Malaysian Model – Challenges and Opportunities**
Mr Mahmood Nathie, PhD Scholar in Islamic Banking and Finance, Griffith Islamic Research Unit, Griffith University

- **Islamic Investment - The Opportunities in Australia**
Ms Jenny Hutson, Managing Director and Founder of Wellington Capital Limited, a Merchant and Investment bank; Queensland Business Woman of the Year 2007.

10.30 – 11.00 Tea Break

11.00 – 12.30 Second Session

Terrorism and Radicalisation among Australian Muslims: Prevalence, Causes and Possible Solutions

Moderator: Prof Charles Sampford (TBC), Director, The Institute for Ethics, Governance and Law (a joint initiative of the UN University, Griffith and QUT in association with the ANU); Convenor, ARC Governance Research Network; President, International Institute for Public Ethics

- **Exclusion, Alienation and Militancy: Does Australia Fit the Model?**
Assoc Prof Samina Yasmeen, Director, Centre for Muslim States and Societies and lectures in Political Science and International Relations, University of Western Australia
- **Radicalisation and Global Muslim Identity Politics**
Mr Waleed Aly, lecturer in the Global Terrorism Research Centre, Monash University and author of *People like Us: How arrogance is dividing Islam and the West*.

12.30 – 1.30pm Lunch

1.30 – 3.00pm Third Session

Round-Table Discussion

Moderator: Mr Sandy McCutcheon, a prominent Australian author, playwright, actor, journalist and broadcaster.

Panel: Rev James Haire, Imam Ebrahim Bham, Mr. Waleed Aly, Dr Nahid Kabir, Dr Peta Stephenson, Mr Iain Lygo

3.00 – 3.15pm Final Remarks: Where to From Here?

Dr Mohamad Abdalla, Founding Director, Griffith Islamic Research Unit, Griffith University; Co-Director, National Centre of Excellence for Islamic Studies Australia