
**DEPARTMENT OF IMMIGRATION AND
CITIZENSHIP**

**SOCIAL & CIVIC PARTICIPATION OF
AUSTRALIAN MUSLIM MEN**

FINAL REPORT



**CULTURAL & INDIGENOUS RESEARCH
CENTRE AUSTRALIA**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The overall aim of this research was to analyse the range of civic, social and support services available to Muslim men and assess the effectiveness of these services, particularly for young Muslim men. This research emerged from a need identified by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship to build a knowledge base of the issues facing Australia's Muslim communities. The research will help inform relevant government policies and programs.

The research focused on marginalised young men within a range of Muslim communities, including both recent arrivals and second- and third-generation young men.

HOW THE RESEARCH WAS CONDUCTED

Five phases of research were conducted in order to collect information from a wide range of sources:

1. A literature review
2. Ten interviews with stakeholders who have direct experience with and/or knowledge of Muslim communities
3. Ten focus groups with the primary target audience of this project, young Muslim men
4. Five forums with stakeholders representing organisations that have a role in supporting civic and social participation
5. Eight good practice case studies on service provision supporting social and civic participation.

KEY INSIGHTS FROM THE LITERATURE

The following issues emerged as key findings from the literature review (Chapter 3):

- The population of Australian Muslim males is increasing at a higher rate than the rest of the population in the 15-29 age cohort.
- Muslim males are more likely to be socially excluded and to experience low levels of participation. Educationally they are high achievers but they still experience socioeconomic disadvantage.
- Several factors emphasise differences between Muslim and non-Muslim Australians, including incidents such as 9/11, the Cronulla riots and the 'gang rapes'.
- Barriers to civic participation include perceptions of marginalisation, economic and structural disadvantage, and lack of support, resources and skills for effective participation.
- A number of factors enable effective participation of young Muslim men, including good formal and informal support networks, local initiatives, volunteering, mentoring, music and sport, spiritual and religious factors, and access to employment opportunities.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The research findings are divided into six topics over two chapters:

- 'Living in Australia' (Chapter 4) – general attitudes of young Muslim men about Australia, their sense of identity and belonging, and their current social and civic activities and spaces
- 'Participation barriers and enablers' (Chapter 5) – barriers to and enablers of participation in individual young Muslim men, Muslim communities, and the mainstream Australian community.

General attitudes about Australia

The focus groups involving young Australian Muslim men revealed a range of both positive and negative attitudes towards Australia. On the positive side there was:

- A strong perception of individual freedom and personal respect
- A general perception of Australia as a fair, multicultural, open and safe society where the law works
- An acknowledgement of the high level of assistance available to individuals and families
- A perception of Australia as a clean country with good weather and a beautiful natural environment.

On the negative side there was:

- Concern about the media propagating negative coverage of Muslims
- Frequent use of the term 'racism' in reference to attitudes in the Australian community; there was however an acknowledgement that it was not the entire community that was 'racist' and that there was a variety of different people and groups that composed Australia.

Identity and belonging

The majority of the young Muslim participants in the focus groups placed themselves almost totally within communities defined by ethnicity and religion, and tended to categorise their ethnic group in the context of Islam, e.g. 'Afghan' or 'Lebanese' Muslims. A strong sense of pride was expressed about their cultural/religious background, and the support, sense of belonging and moral framework it provided. However, they also perceived the Islamic community in Australia as divided on cultural, racial and linguistic difference; for many newly arrived young men this ran counter to their expectations.

The research indicated very little crossover between the 'Australian community' and 'Islamic community'. It also found that young Muslim men do transit from one identity to another, but not necessarily without conflict. It was suggested by stakeholders that this is a common situation for migrants, but that it is more keenly experienced by Muslim communities in Australia because of local and global Islamic issues.

Current social and civic activities and spaces

Participants described a wide range of recreational activities, mostly sport (social and competitive) and social interaction with peers. Younger participants (15-18) reported that they spent a lot of time just 'hanging around' with other young Muslim men. Social networking sites were also considered 'social time'. Although mosques were referred to as places for religious and social activity, they were not frequently mentioned, with many participants identifying these as spaces for 'older men'.

There was very little demonstration among the participants of civic involvement, either within or outside their communities. The 2006 ABS Census indicates that Muslim Australians are less likely to volunteer than other Australians. Some attributed this to the fact that community service is one of the pillars of Islam, so a Muslim person serves the community as an expression of their faith and may not view this as 'volunteering'.

Other stakeholders held a different view and suggested that lower levels of civic involvement were a function of internal and external barriers, and until these barriers are addressed this understanding of participation is unlikely to extend from social to civic participation.

Individual Muslim men's capacity for participation – barriers and enablers

The research suggests that many young Muslim men in Australia do not have highly developed social and civic participation skills. Barriers to participation include:

- Settlement challenges, particularly in the context of larger families and long work hours
- Language and literacy issues, and lower levels of educational attainment among some segments
- Socioeconomic disadvantage
- Limited access to peer support, positive role models and mentors.

Strategies identified for addressing these barriers include:

- Education and mentoring programs designed to enhance skills, provide a link to employment opportunities, provide aspirational role models for community involvement, and help young Muslim men navigate 'the system' in Australian society
- Introducing young Muslim men to experiences beyond their individual communities.

Muslim communities' capacity to support participation – barriers and enablers

In discussing the Muslim communities within which they lived, the participants identified three areas of concern in which barriers to participation were evident:

- *Intergenerational conflict* – There was a difference identified between what many young Muslims in Australia want for themselves from Australian society and what their parents and community want for

them. This was expressed as the older generation being fearful of their children moving away from their culture and religion.

- *Community leadership* – Many participants expressed frustration with ‘self-appointed’ leaders of their Islamic communities who had neither the skills nor commitment to strengthen their communities. It was strongly felt there needed to be a distinction between *religious* leaders and *community* leaders, and that leadership should come from community infrastructure, not religious infrastructure.
- *Lack of links to mainstream society* – Participants suggested that not all activities geared towards them needed to be culturally or religiously based, and many expressed a desire to be able to spend more time with others from outside their immediate community groups.

Strategies identified to enable greater participation through Muslim communities included:

- Having open dialogue between generations, creating opportunities for collaborative projects to build trust between the generations, and actively reaching out to parents so they can learn more about mainstream Australian society
- Increasing the focus of Muslim community concerns to encompass more than politics and religion, developing community activities that more actively engage young people, and allowing young people more involvement in planning and decision-making with a view to developing future ‘home grown’ community leaders
- Creating opportunities for cross-cultural exchange, encouraging mainstream organisations to reach out to Muslim communities, and developing partnerships between mainstream and Muslim community organisations.

Mainstream society’s capacity to support participation – barriers and enablers

The participants identified a number of factors in mainstream Australian society that contribute to Muslims’ sense of exclusion, including:

- Negative portrayals by media and politicians
- Lack of knowledge about, and negative attitudes to, Muslim communities among non-Muslims
- Systemic discrimination, particularly relating to employment, policing and the justice system.

To enable greater participation by Muslims, it was felt that people, organisations and employers in mainstream Australian society need to:

- Consult and engage with Muslim communities about their cultural, religious and community needs
- Accommodate cultural and religious needs (e.g. halal food), particularly at work
- Initiate contact with Muslim communities, as fear often prevents them making the first move

- Create information and resources to balance negative representations and increase knowledge and awareness about Muslim communities
- Help equip young Muslim Australians with the tools to respond to racism and discrimination
- Provide long-term funding of programs that support civic participation. (The research identified eight case studies of excellent work being done to support participation by young Australian Muslims, but too often funding of such programs is short-lived).

CONCLUSIONS

The research clearly demonstrates that there needs to be considerable investment in programs and initiatives that address the three different capacities required for participation (individual, Muslim community and mainstream community). Without an understanding of how these capacities affect each other, mechanisms for addressing barriers to social and civic participation will have limited impact. It is also clear that emphasis placed solely on building individual capacity without addressing community and societal issues may serve to further marginalise young Muslim men.

Despite the issues around capacity identified, the research also indicated a desire by many young Muslim men to enhance their social and civic involvement both within and beyond their individual communities. This report provides a number of principles and activity guidelines for programs and projects supporting greater social and civic participation among young Muslim men aimed at: enhancing self-esteem and personal resilience by building personal capacity and skills; strengthening personal identities and making connections to broader society; supporting young people within an inter-generational context; promoting systemic inclusion and acceptance; and sustainability.

DEFINITIONS

Young Muslim men: Muslim Australian males between the ages of 15 and 30 years.

Mainstream service providers: Larger organisations that provide services to a diverse range of clients, including government organisations (e.g. Centrelink), private organisations (e.g. recruitment agencies), not-for-profit charitable organisations (e.g. Anglicare) and local government.

Non-mainstream service providers: Smaller community-based organisations, such as community grassroots organisations that specifically cater for the needs of community members of the same faith.

Formal support mechanisms: Support mechanisms delivered through both mainstream service providers and non-mainstream service providers.

Informal support mechanisms: Support mechanisms that are not delivered through formal means, such as support through friends, family and religious teachers.

Definitions for 'social participation' and 'civic participation' are discussed in the Literature Review (see Chapter 3 and Appendix 2).

1. RESEARCH OUTLINE

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH

The overall aim of this research was to analyse the range of civic, social and support services available to Muslim men and assess the effectiveness of these services, particularly for young Muslim men.

The need for this research emerged in light of key work by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC), which involved conducting consultation and research to inform the direction of future activity and policy development.

DIAC's research program will help build a knowledge base of the issues facing Australia's diverse communities, and will also support the development of new projects to strengthen common bonds between Muslim and non-Muslim Australians.

This research focused on marginalised young people within a range of Muslim communities, including both recent arrivals and second- and third-generation young Muslim men.

1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the research were to:

1. Document current knowledge:

- Identify at least 20 broad demographic/social characteristics of Muslim men, focusing on young Muslim men
- Compare characteristics of those in the broader Australian male population with those of young Muslim men
- Explore real/perceived barriers to civic/social participation of Muslim men, with a focus on younger Muslim men
- Examine the actual/potential economic, social and other consequences of low levels of participation of Muslim men (especially young Muslim men).

2. Identify types of support mechanisms for civic participation:

- Identify formal/informal support mechanisms currently available to assist young Muslim men (in particular) to participate in civic/social life
- Identify the types of service providers who deliver formal support mechanisms
- Identify the availability/accessibility of information within communities about the formal support mechanisms available

- Understand the degree to which formal/informal support mechanisms are used by Muslim men (especially young Muslim men) to support participation in civic/social life
- Explore whether there are consistent gaps in support mechanisms for communities with sizable Muslim populations
- Recommend any changes that should be implemented to address deficiencies identified.

3. Participation in social spaces and activities:

- Identify types of social spaces/activities used by Muslim men (especially young Muslim men) and whether they are formal/informal, real/virtual, intra- or inter-community oriented, etc
- Identify the relative degree to which different types of social spaces are seen as useful by Muslim men, especially young Muslim men
- Examine the ways that social spaces/activities are currently used (or could be used) by Muslim men (particularly young Muslim men) to access appropriate service providers to support civic participation.

4. Identify a range of good practice case studies of:

- the provision of formal social spaces, including cases where young men from diverse cultural/religious groups are included in planning/management processes for existing/new social spaces
- effective service provision to support both social civic participation to communities with large Muslim populations.

1.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Five distinct phases of research were conducted to allow for the collection of information from a wide range of sources:

1. A literature review, which was critical for ensuring the research took into account existing knowledge related to participation and engagement of young Muslim men. It also provided a detailed demographic understanding of the characteristics of this target group compared to young Australian men generally.
2. Ten stakeholder interviews, which allowed the research to be informed by representatives from organisations that have broad perspectives about participation of Muslim men (especially young Muslim men), and provided an informed viewpoint based on recent experience, social trends and policy directions.

3. Ten focus groups with the primary target audience of this project, that is, Muslim men. This component of the research provided information on the range of social and support services available to Muslim men and identified barriers and enablers (perceived and actual) to participation.
4. Five forums with stakeholders representing organisations that have a role in supporting civic and social participation. These provided a practical analysis of the range of social and support services available to Muslim men and identified barriers and enablers to participation.
5. Eight good practice case studies on service provision to support civic and social participation. These provided examples of how to successfully apply good practice principles.

Literature review and data analysis

The literature review aimed to:

- Identify broad demographic and social characteristics of Muslim men, with a focus on young Muslim men
- Make comparisons between these characteristics and those of the broader Australian male population
- Assess the barriers, both real and perceived, to the civic and social participation of Muslim men, focusing on young Muslim men
- Analyse the actual and potential economic, social and other consequences of low levels of participation of Muslim men in the broader Australian community.

Literature sourced included grey literature, statistical and community consultation data from DIAC (and other related organisations), data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, as well as data gained from searching publicly available literature in the relevant areas of enquiry. While most literature in this review was Australian, relevant literature from countries with a similar migration history to Australia, such as Canada, the United Kingdom, New Zealand and the USA, was also reviewed.

Stakeholder interviews

The objectives of the stakeholder interviews was to gain an overall understanding of the barriers and enablers to social and civic participation as experienced by Muslim men (particularly young Muslim men) and to gather information on formal support mechanisms and informal support mechanisms available to young Muslim men.

Ten in-depth interviews were conducted with stakeholders who have direct experience with and/or knowledge of Muslim communities. Following is the list of organisations that were represented through these consultations:

- Auburn Migrant Resource Centre

- Australian Multicultural Foundation
- Australian Human Rights Commission
- Bankstown Multicultural Youth Service
- Centre for Multicultural Youth
- Islamic Council of NSW
- Islamic Council of Victoria
- Mission of Hope
- Monash University
- Victorian Equal Opportunity & Human Rights Commission.

These interviews were conducted by telephone. Where relevant, several representatives from the individual organisations were included in order to broaden the scope of the research.

Research with young Muslim men

Feedback from Muslim men was critical to informing the research and to cross-referencing the findings from the key informant and service provider consultations. The objectives of the research with young Muslim men were to:

- Understand the barriers and enablers to social and civic participation as experienced by Muslim men
- Identify the formal and informal support mechanisms currently available to help Muslim men participate in civic and social life, and the accessibility of information about these within communities
- Understand the types, and use of, social spaces used by Muslim men, and the perceived usefulness of these spaces
- Identify ways in which these social spaces were or could be used to access appropriate service providers to support civic participation.

Ten discussion groups were conducted with Muslim men, with the majority being conducted with young Muslim men. The variables used for segmentation of the group discussions were cultural background, age, location, and generation (i.e. first-, second- or third-generation Australians).

The focus groups in with young Muslim men were comprised as follows:

Cultural group	Age group	State	Location	Number of participants
Turkish	15-18	NSW	Auburn	7
Turkish	19-30	VIC	Moreland	6
Somali	15-18	VIC	Moonee Valley	8
Afghan	15-18	VIC	Dandenong	7
Afghan	20-34	NSW	Blacktown	6
Pakistani	21-34	NSW	Western Sydney	8
Lebanese	15-18	NSW	Canterbury/Bankstown	5
Lebanese	30+	NSW	Canterbury/Bankstown	9
Lebanese	19-30	VIC	Hume	7
Lebanese	30+	VIC	Hume	7

The cultural groups included in the focus groups represented those with the largest populations of Muslim Australians. A range of first-, second- and third-generation migrants were represented across the groups. In the Pakistani group, all participants were first generation arriving on either student or skilled migration visas. The participants in the Afghan and Somali groups were much more recently arrived and more likely to have arrived as humanitarian entrants than those from the Turkish and Lebanese groups, which is consistent with the migration profile of the communities themselves, with the Lebanese and Turkish communities more established and serviced by greater ethnic-specific infrastructure and resources.

The groups were separated by age (15-18 years and 19-30 years), given the benefits of narrow age ranges in enhancing group dynamics. Two group discussions with older Muslim men were included to broaden the scope of the research.

Population data shows that the majority of young Australian Muslim men live in Sydney and Melbourne, so focus groups were limited to these locations.

Participants were sourced through CIRCA networks in each of the cultural/language community groups. Recruitment was conducted through a range of community organisations. Care was taken to ensure that a range of organisations was accessed, to limit bias.

Discussions took place in the participants' language of choice and were facilitated by bilingual researchers. Bilingual researchers helped to facilitate free, open and uninhibited discussion between participants, and were attuned to cultural nuances.

Stakeholder/service provider forums

The research had a strong focus on stakeholders/service providers, given their role in shaping opportunities and enabling participation of Muslim men, especially young Muslim men. The forums sought to:

- Gather feedback on practical experiences of service areas across civic and social sectors
- Assess perceived usefulness and accessibility of services in assisting social and civic participation of Muslim men, particularly young Muslim men
- Understand the experiences of service providers, and identify the most effective mechanisms used by service providers to provide support to communities with large Muslim populations
- Explore the barriers to social and civic engagement of Muslim men
- Identify characteristics and examples of good practice.

Five service provider forums were conducted in NSW and Victoria. Locations were selected based on their large Muslim populations. These were: Campsie (NSW), Bankstown (NSW), Auburn (NSW), Dandenong (VIC) and Shepparton (VIC). Shepparton also provided a regional perspective.

Service providers represented education, employment, community and grassroots organisations. Education and employment is crucial to enabling participation; therefore, organisations representing these sectors were an important focus. Community and grassroots organisations provided perspectives on participation and engagement within a local framework.

Education and employment organisations included schools, vocational education and training providers, universities, job network providers and employment counsellors (from mainstream and non-mainstream providers). Community/grassroots organisations included migrant resource centres, social and welfare organisations, police, youth services, charitable organisations, local councils, neighbourhood centres, mosques, and arts and sports organisations.

The questions discussed in these forums reflected the project objectives identified above. Namely, the discussion focused on experiences, barriers and enablers, and characteristics of good practice when engaging young Muslim men. Forums provided specific feedback on the research objectives, and identified important insights based on the discussion and the ability of the groups to reach consensus on relevant topics.

The forums were conducted over two to three hours, with up to 15 stakeholders present at each forum. Invitations were issued well in advance outlining the purpose of the research and an agenda for discussion.

Case studies on service provision to support social and civic participation

Eight case studies were developed to demonstrate effective practices used by service providers working with communities with large Muslim populations and formal social spaces (both mainstream and non-mainstream). Each case study detailed the program/initiative, including the history of the initiative and its aims and objectives, activities, outcomes in terms of participation by young Muslim men, achievements and challenges.

The case studies were identified from the feedback of the stakeholders and the young men participating in the research. They were developed using information gained through in-depth interviews with representatives from the relevant organisations, as well as analysis of documents and reports.

2. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF AUSTRALIAN MUSLIM MALES

Following is a brief profile of Australian Muslim men, with special attention given to young Australian Muslim men between the ages of 15 & 29. All data was derived from the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006 Census of Population and Housing and was sourced from tables available on the ABS website, tables constructed using data from C-DATA, tables purchased directly from ABS, or adapted from the DIAC publication *Muslims In Australia* (2007), from Hassan's 2009's *Social and Economic Conditions of Australian Muslims: Implications for Social Inclusion* or DIAC Settlement trend statistics for 2007, utilising data of all states of Australia. See Appendix 3 for a more detailed demographic profile.

Category	Demographic profile: Australian Muslim males
<i>Population size</i>	The total population of Muslim males in 2006 was 177,759, representing 1.81% of all Australian males.
<i>Population increase</i>	The Muslim male population is growing, with the Muslim male population growing by 19.7% from 2001 to 2006 compared with 5.7% for all Australian males (including Muslim males).
<i>Age</i>	Muslim males are younger compared to the overall male population, e.g. 47.9% are 24 years or under compared to 34.7% of the overall population.
<i>Country of birth</i>	63.1% of Muslim males were born outside Australia, with Lebanon, Turkey and Afghanistan leading the list of countries where Muslim males were born. However, Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Lebanon are the top three countries where Muslim males aged between 15 and 29 were born.
<i>Main language spoken at home</i>	Arabic, Turkish and Urdu were the top three languages which Muslim males spoke at home (when respondents were asked if they spoke a language other than English at home), while for Muslim males aged between 15 and 29 the top three languages (other than English) spoken at home were Arabic, Turkish and Bengali.
<i>English language proficiency</i>	The majority of Muslim males, 70.2%, reported speaking English very well or well, with only 13.6% reporting not speaking English well or at all. Among Muslim males aged between 15 and 29, an even higher figure of 81.2% reported speaking English very well or well, with a smaller figure of 4.9% reporting not speaking English well or at all.
<i>Citizenship</i>	Muslim males are less likely to be citizens, with 76.0% of Muslim males being Australian citizens compared to 85.6% for Australian males overall. The figures are even lower for younger Muslim men, with only 65.6% of Muslim males aged between 15 and 29 being Australian citizens, compared to 82.9% of all Australian males in the same age category.
<i>Year of arrival</i>	Overseas-born Muslim males are more likely to have arrived more recently, compared to all overseas-born Australians counted in the 2006 Census – 33.9% of overseas-born Muslim males arrived between 2001 and 2006, compared to 18.1% of all overseas-born Australian males. For the 15-29 age group, 76.1% of Muslim males arrived within a decade of the Census, compared to 60.8% of all overseas-born males.
<i>Humanitarian entrants</i>	Overall, Muslim entrants to Australia arriving between 2002/2003 and 2006/2007 are more likely to be under a 'humanitarian' classification (i.e. 27% of the total humanitarian intake) than under a 'non-humanitarian' classification (i.e. 8% of the total non-humanitarian intake).
<i>Geographical distribution – by state & city</i>	Muslim males are overrepresented in NSW and VIC and underrepresented in the rest of the States and Territories, with the majority residing in Sydney and Melbourne.
<i>Geographical distribution – LGA</i>	Bankstown NSW, Hume VIC and Canterbury NSW were the three LGAs with the highest number of Muslim male residents. These three LGAs accounted for 18.3% of the Muslim male population and 17.1% of the 15-29 year old Muslim male population.

Category	Demographic profile: Australian Muslim males
<i>Marital status</i>	A higher proportion of Muslim males are married (56.1%) compared to all Australian males (50.7%), and a lower proportion (3.8%) of Muslim males are divorced compared to all Australian males (7.3%).
<i>Education</i>	A higher proportion of Muslim males (57.6%) completed Year 12 or equivalent than did Australian males overall (41.6%). However, a higher proportion of Muslim males did not go to school (3.9%) compared to Australian males overall (0.8%). Of the Muslim males currently studying, a higher proportion are in technical or further educational institutions (10.2% vs. 6.7%), and also in university or other tertiary institutions (17.1% vs. 10.5%).
<i>Unemployment</i>	The Muslim male unemployment rate (12.6%) is more than twice that of Australian males overall (5.2%). The year of arrival substantially altered the unemployment rate, with those having arrived earlier less likely to be unemployed than those who arrived more recently.
<i>Weekly income</i>	Muslim males earn less income compared to all males. They are underrepresented in the higher weekly income categories of '\$1000-\$1599' per week (8.6% vs. 15.8%) and '\$1600 or more' per week (4.2% vs. 9.4%) than all males, and are overrepresented in the 'Nil or negative income' (11.2% vs. 5.9%) and '\$1-\$399' per week (38.2% vs. 26.1%) categories.
<i>Children in poverty</i>	40% of Muslim households were living in poverty, compared to 19% of non-Muslim households.
<i>Occupation</i>	Muslim males were less likely than Australian males overall to work as Managers (10.2% vs. 16.1%) or Professionals (15.7% vs. 17.3%) and were overrepresented in Machinery Operators & Drivers (15.6% vs. 11.0%) and Labourers (15.5% vs. 12.3%) occupational categories.
<i>Volunteering</i>	Muslim males participated less in volunteer work than males overall, as 8.1% of Muslim males reported volunteer work compared to 15.7% of males overall. The patterns by age were somewhat similar, though, for those who did volunteer, Muslim males tended to do so at younger ages than males overall.
<i>Unpaid domestic work</i>	Muslim males (8.3%) provided unpaid domestic assistance at a slightly higher rate than males overall (7.9%) and tended to do so more often at a younger age, with 43.7% of Muslim males who provided unpaid assistance being 34 years or younger, compared to 19.8% of all Australian males of the same age.

3. KEY DEFINITIONS AND INSIGHTS FROM THE LITERATURE REVIEW

A literature review was conducted prior to the fieldwork component of the research. The following represents a summary of the major findings from the literature review. The complete literature review can be found as Appendix 2 to this report.

This literature review provides an overall framework for consideration in relation to the social and civic participation of Australian Muslim men. In particular it documents the scope and definition of social/civic participation and inclusion/exclusion. The literature review also documents a range of issues associated with identity and belonging, the actual and potential consequences of low or non-participation, and a number of barriers and enablers to participation. A population profile of Australian Muslim males is also provided.

3.1 DEFINITIONS AND SCOPE

Australian researcher Helen McCue (2008:25) defines civil and social life in Australian society as “participation in education, the workforce, business, social and family life, sport and government relations”. This presents a broad and encompassing working definition for participation.

The literature presents a range of definitions of social participation and civic participation, with much of the research merging the two concepts (with the term ‘participation’ or ‘social participation’ often used to include more formal civic forms of engagement).

Social participation

Denise Helly (1997:1) defines social participation as “all types of voluntary, active affiliation with groups outside the family and all types of group activity unrelated to political organizations, voting and lobbying”. Social participation may encompass both informal and formal types of activities. Informal participation may occur either in an ad hoc fashion (e.g. giving donations, attending irregular meetings) or in more stable manner (e.g. attending regular meetings for a music group). More formal participation includes membership of registered groups, clubs and associations.

In regard to the effects and consequences of social participation, the World Health Organization (2009) envisions that social participation as a practice, particularly in vulnerable and excluded groups, can serve to empower communities, with improved overall health and quality of life outcomes. The literature provides evidence of the frustration, stress and mental health implications of continued feelings of isolation, which can intensify antisocial behaviour and the marginalisation of young people.

Civic participation

Adler and Goggin (2005) examine different definitions of civic participation and conclude that there are many perspectives used to define the term. They state that scholars define this concept according to their “perspective and interest” (2005:237). Therefore, they suggest four categories of civic participation: as

community service, as collective actions, as political involvement, and as social change. Finally, they suggest that civic participation “describes how an active citizen participates in the life of a community in order to improve conditions for others or to help shape the community’s future” (2005:241). This definition appears to be comprehensive because it emphasises the important role of citizens in remaking their society’s future.

Frideres (1997) provides a specific list of variables (based on empirical results) which attest to the benefits of civic involvement. These ‘effects’ include such things as greater social cohesion and integration, higher levels of efficacy, lower levels of alienation and helplessness, a higher sense of security and citizen duty, reduced crime, higher rates of friendships and neighbourliness, increased levels of personal satisfaction and higher perception of social issues.

Another important enabler of social and civic participation is volunteering. The numerous benefits of volunteering have been documented by Thoits and Hewitt (2001), who state that it enhances all six aspects of wellbeing: happiness, life satisfaction, self-esteem, sense of control over life, physical and mental health. Conversely, people who have greater wellbeing invest more time in volunteer service. While the direction of causation is unclear, what is clear is that healthy people volunteer and that people who volunteer are healthier.

Civic participation has been linked with the maintenance of democracy and increased social capital. Low levels of participation are often present in the context of a ‘moral crisis’ (Edwards 2008).

Raymond Breton (1997) outlines two key factors affecting participation, namely opportunity to participate and access to activities. The extent to which Australian Muslim males have the necessary skills, knowledge and access to enable social and civic participation will be a key focus of this research.

The relationship between ‘participation’ and ‘social inclusion’

The literature indicates that ‘social inclusion’, ‘social exclusion’, ‘social cohesions’ and ‘participation’ are inextricably linked. To be socially included means one is able to have access and opportunity to participate in the economic, social, psychological and political life of a nation (Gillard & Wong 2007).

The current Federal Government’s concept of a socially cohesive society is based on a social inclusion policy framework, with the establishment of the Australian Social Inclusion Board and many Social Inclusion Units in various government departments. The Board’s principles can generally be described as aiming to create a socially inclusive society on the basis of reducing disadvantage, increasing social, civic and economic participation, and promoting active and responsible citizenship.

There is debate in the literature about whether the social inclusion framework will actually result in greater participation for young people in the Australian policy context. Edwards (2008), for example, raises several concerns. The first revolves around whether low or non-participation among young people risks being portrayed as representing a moral crisis in which young people will become burdens on the state. For already marginalised youth such as young Muslim men, this may further compound experiences of social exclusion and marginalisation. There is an assumption that marginalisation, if left unchecked, may lead to radicalisation in young Australian Muslims (DIAC 2008). While such projections have not been adequately

tested, these claims are made repeatedly within the public sphere. The psychological effect of young Australian Muslim men being branded as potential future deviants is problematic, questionable and damaging. Hassan (2009:12) states, “we need to interrogate public policies implying a nexus between Islam, radicalism and deviant values”. He further states that Australian Muslims, most of whom are Australian born, “represent an educated segment of Australian society but experience significant economic disadvantage in the labour market. This is pushing many into poverty, which has the potential to become endemic. Their economic disadvantage creates barriers to achieving aspirational social and cultural goals, thus impeding their social inclusion in Australian society” (2009:12). Hassan calls for urgent attention, more focused research and appropriate public policies.

Edwards (2008) raises other concerns about whether social inclusion policy is simply “new rhetoric for old problems” (2008:16); that is, there may be a disconnect between what social inclusion seeks to achieve and what is delivered from the top down. It is important for young people to define what they want to participate in, rather than fitting into existing structures that may not be accessible, may not be relevant to their needs, and are therefore unlikely to result in increased participation. Edwards stresses the need for young people to participate in defining exclusion and inclusion as they see it, and in setting the social inclusion agenda.

3.2 PARTICIPATION AND BELONGING

Outside of the policy context, but within the realm of migration, integration and cultural diversity and its effect over the generations, Skribis, Baldassar and Poynting (2007) deal with the issue of ‘belonging’. The idea of ‘conditional citizenship’ is highlighted by Humphrey (2007) and Chafic (2009) in regard to Australian Muslims, their values and their ‘Australianness’ in the citizenship debate. Noble (2005) tackles the issue of incivility – racism, discrimination, violence, and the feelings of discomfort experienced by young Australian Muslims in what otherwise should be considered their home and nation.

Skribis et al (2007) highlight the importance of considering the variability of experience of second-generation migrants in a given country. There has been much research interest in Muslim young people’s adaptation, particularly since 9/11. Skribis et al review European and Australian literature on Muslim young people, revealing a complex set of dynamics. These include local attachments for young people who have had no experience of home or homeland; the experience of young Muslims dealing with ‘Islamophobia’, marginalisation, aggressive forms of nationalist rhetoric, class and structural disadvantage; young people’s mistrust of local authorities; and more positive forms of positive adaptation, such as the accumulation of social and cultural capital and respectability (Mason; Abbas; Ecchaibi; Scheibelhofer; Noble; Wessendorf – cited in Skribis et al 2007).

Overt and public demarcations of ‘culture conflict’ serve to heighten barriers. Grewal (2007) shows how two incidents in particular, the 2005 ‘Cronulla riots’ and the 2000 ‘Sydney gang rapes’, became emblematic of Muslim culture and values being purportedly antithetical to ‘Australian’ ones. Such representation received widespread dissemination via populist posturings by radio talkback hosts, along with politicians, and then recursively in media reporting and editorials. Young Australian Muslims involved in the Muslim Youth Summits (DIAC 2008) were concerned in particular with the role of the media in propagating negative coverage of Muslims, serving to emphasise difference.

3.3 BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION

Barriers to social and civic participation among Muslims, particularly young Australian Muslim men, encompass several broad areas. These factors are not 'stand alone' – they cannot be neatly separated and in fact can often appear in combination.

Experiences and perceptions of marginalisation and social exclusion

A range of studies point to the incidence of isolation and a lack of social networking, both of which are connected to health issues, especially as they relate to refugee experiences of anxiety, depression, torture and trauma (e.g. Pittaway & Muli 2009; Chafic 2008). Participants in the Muslim Youth Summits spoke of "frustration, stress and mental health implications of continued feelings of isolation. This can further intensify anti-social behaviour and the marginalisation of young people" (DIAC 2008:6). A newspaper article in *The Australian* (27/02/07, cited in Gross 2007) claimed, "Australia's disadvantaged young Muslims are so directionless and fearful of being excluded by the broader community many are turning to drugs and contemplating suicide". The study found 8 out of 10 young Muslims aged between 12 and 25 considered the education system of no assistance "in making lifetime choices", and 94 per cent lacked a clear goal in life.

A number of Australian researchers deal with the importance and dynamics of community engagement and social inclusion and/or exclusion, either perceived or actual. Yasmeen (2008) employs a definition of social exclusion which considers whether individuals feel they cannot participate as citizens because they perceive that social conditions and institutions are limiting and that social and governmental agencies portray them as outsiders. Muslim respondents indicated many factors that contribute to this sense of exclusion: the role of the media in representing Muslims and Islam; the role of the Australian government; the lack of knowledge about Islam among non-Muslims; and insular and negative attitudes among some Muslims (Yasmeen 2008:iv). Yasmeen points out that the perception of exclusion may be at variance with the reality of exclusion. This incongruence cannot be ignored as it impacts on the way an individual and/or community interacts in their environment, and on strategies which can promote social inclusion and, ultimately, belonging.

Economic exclusion

Hassan (2009) states that educationally Australian Muslims are high achievers, but in terms of socio-economic wellbeing they fall into a 'disadvantaged' category: "the cultural capital embodied in their education profile does not materialise in the same level as returns as it does in the case of non-Muslims Australians" (2009:10), increasing the probability of alienation in mainstream Australian society.

Muslim families in Australia are more than twice as likely than all Australians to live under the poverty line, and, while Muslim men are a relatively well-educated segment of the Australian population, unemployment rates are unusually high in both overseas-born and Australian-born Muslim men. This may be due to poor English language proficiency or lack of recognition of prior learning or overseas skills and qualifications. This may also be due to discrimination within the workforce. The literature points to Muslim men experiencing a closed 'glass door' when trying to enter the labour market (see Hassan 2009; DIAC 2008; Chafic 2008; HREOC 2004).

Language issues

An Australian Bureau of Statistics investigation, by Stratton et al (2005), on sport and related physical activities among Australians found that poor English proficiency had “very significant association with a low rate of participation. This group is likely to include recent migrants as well older or long-term migrants whose first language may not be English” (2005:12). By extension, this may be part of a pattern among Muslim men who are recent arrivals with poor English language skills.

Butcher (2008), on the other hand, examines the link between the use of language and navigating difference and belonging in culturally diverse Sydney. Butcher surveys the use of language by second-generation migrant youth, concluding that “language is used as a symbolic resource in acts of both demarcating difference and belonging, at times defining new social spaces, as well as defying points of authority within dominant fields of power” (2008:371).

Lack of support and resources

A recent study has found that “projects aimed at building bridges between Muslim and non-Muslim-Australians are often short lived with no designed long term prospects” and that “working class men of both Muslim and non-Muslim-Australian background were dramatically under-represented” in such activities (Wise & Ali 2008:5).

Community initiatives in the development of institutions, such as schools, community centres, places of worship and charitable societies, are signalled as manifestations of civic and social participation. Australian Muslim communities aiming to do this have often been met with obstruction, objection or challenge (in municipal council sittings, courts of law, media reporting and commentary, etc) and have therefore become a focus for concern about barriers to Muslim Australian civic and social participation. The NSW Ethnic Affairs Commission’s report *Planning for Religious Development* (EACNSW 1990) recognises the chronic problems of minority religious communities (especially Muslims) in successfully obtaining development application approval from municipal councils.

Lack of skills and knowledge

Stratton (2005), in describing social barriers in sport, captures the essence of how such barriers operate. The following factors may well be transferable to a range of participation modes outside of sport. Stratton et al state (2005:13):

Social barriers may be a constraint on participation and may be difficult to overcome, particularly for those who feel isolated, for those who lack confidence, do not feel safe and for those who lack of a sense of belonging in the community. The literature on barriers provides some evidence that one of the reasons offered for non-participation in sport is that a person does not know anyone to participate with, lives alone or has no support. Other reasons include feelings of social isolation, due to poor access to transport or limited contact with family or friends. Such reasons can represent real barriers to participation and the data from this analysis suggest that social contact and access to transport are important barriers, whereas living alone is not.

A range of socio-economic and socio-demographic factors are related to participation in sport and physical activity, eg family type, occupation, educational status and household income. With the latter, this may be due to costs associated with sports equipment, clothing and club membership fees. Lower levels of awareness and knowledge ... may also be factors associated with some socio-economic factors, eg educational achievement.

Chafic (2008) found that young Australian Muslim men felt that they had limited resources by way of skills and social, religious and political knowledge to deal with the new role and responsibility, forced on them by circumstance, of being 'new spokesmen' for the community in times of crisis. Both younger and older Muslim men felt that the Australian Muslim community structures at large were not proactive enough in combating the poor public image of Islam and dissociating 'Muslim' from 'terrorist'.

Food and gender customs

On a social level, Wise and Ali (2008) identified that alcohol, food and gender customs can limit mixing and friendship circles beyond the Muslim community. They also identified that local councils were not active enough in sponsoring or fostering relationship-building activities in the community. However, the role of councils can also limit social and civic participation of Muslims in other ways, for example obstruction or objection in relation to the approval of development applications from Australian Muslim communities wanting to pursue community development initiatives.

3.4 ENABLERS TO PARTICIPATION

The World Health Organization (2009) employs a model of social participation which incorporates a number of key strategies (based on principles of consultation and collaboration, ongoing dialogue and community empowerment) in order to increase a disadvantaged community's "effective control over decisions that influence their ... life quality and their access and use of ... services".

A survey of the literature reveals a number of key factors which contribute to effective participation, with a particular focus on young Muslim men. These may include good formal and informal supports and networks, including friendship and family networks; activities which build common ground and intercultural/collaborative approaches; local initiatives; bicultural skills; volunteering; mentoring; antiracism practices; music and sport; dialogue with stakeholders and message makers; the role of governments and NGOs; spiritual and religious factors; access to skills acquisition and support; and access to employment opportunities. As with barriers, enablers may overlap and/or act in combination.

Good formal and informal supports and networks

Good formal and informal supports and networks, including family and friendship ties, are integral to supporting young people. Harris, Wyn and Younes (2007) address the civic and political engagement in 'pre-citizens' – young Australians aged 15-17. They found that for young Australians family and friendship networks "connect them to community and [provide] them with support and a space within which to express

their concerns. Friendship is thus perhaps an important but unrecognised resource for young people, which needs to be fostered" (2007:26).

Support mechanisms for young Muslim men may include family, extended family support networks, neighbourhood friends, friendship networks, local community organisations, ethno-specific and/or ethno-religious community organisations, the local mosque, school friends and teachers, school counsellors, health professionals, youth workers, after-school homework programs or private tutorials, football or other sports clubs, youth groups, online groups and student groups.

By extension, informal and formal social spaces and activities may include homes (of own family, friends, extended family, etc), mosques, prayer rooms, Qur'an schools, libraries, cafes, gyms, sports clubs, PCYCs, youth clubs, parks, beaches, schools, shopping centres, train stations, malls and other 'hang out' places, the internet (msn, chat rooms, online gaming, Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, YouTube, etc), mobile phones, texting, and music performance and participation (Vromen 2008; Soysal 1997; Cameron & Grant-Smith 2005; Phillips 2004).

Activities that build common ground and collaboration

Activities that build common ground and collaboration have also been referred to in various studies. These may include opportunities for mentoring and training and for opening lines of communication between young Muslims and community leaders, political figures, journalists and other 'message makers'. Raising awareness of the Islamic faith, culture and practices among such message makers will help to demystify and correct public misconceptions of Muslims, with the aim of working towards more harmonious, wider community relations (see DIAC 2008; Dreher 2006a; HREOC 1991, 2004; Chafic 2008).

A report addressing the debates about citizenship, participation and belonging of British Pakistani men in Bradford (Gill 2008) highlights the importance of neighbourhood life and local communities in building social capital, developing active citizenship and encouraging participation. The report also addresses issues of sustainable practice and flexibility in engaging young Muslim men and stresses the importance of capitalising on local talent and networks for community needs and of using creative arts in project work (Gill 2008).

Opportunities for building trust are integral to community relations and belonging. Porter and Brown (2004) refer to research indicating that the ability to trust strangers, especially those who are different from oneself, promotes civic engagement and community building, both of which have been associated with social and economic benefits for communities. Those with a high degree of 'generalised trust' are more active in the community, are more cooperative, and are more likely to engage and get along with people from different backgrounds.

Mentoring and training

Participants in the Muslim Youth Summits (DIAC 2008) regarded mentoring as a positive way of receiving guidance and overcoming social barriers without compromising personal Islamic values. Mentors or third parties could also be utilised to assist young people with intergenerational conflict with parents and others, as well as 'community capacity building' strategies which allow skills acquisition and transfer.

Participants also pointed to the importance of training in responding effectively to incidents of racism, discrimination and harassment, the need for strategies to build resilience and self-worth, and the value of awareness of one's rights (DIAC 2008).

Volunteering

Another important enabler of social and civic participation is volunteering. The numerous benefits of volunteering have been documented by Thoits and Hewitt (2001), who show that people who have greater wellbeing are more likely to spend time volunteering, and that people who volunteer have greater health and well-being.

Fostering biculturalism

Kabir and Rickards (2006) discuss the effects of hope and hopefulness, bicultural skills and interest in music as enablers for 'at risk' Australian students aged 15-17. They state that "those who didn't have a high social density network may have remained hopeful with the help of their bicultural practices and fondness of music" (2006:23). Other researchers have also touched on the importance of creative engagements such as music and comedy (e.g. Stephenson 2008). Kabir and Rickards (2006) also recommend support for bicultural education in schools (considering and valuing diversity, as well as home and local practices). They discuss the development of 'safe spaces' and the use of acculturation or biculturalism (rather than assimilation) as a method of avoiding alienation and strengthening hopefulness as an outlook on life: "a sense of bicultural identity would enhance their sense of belonging and confidence in both milieus" (2006:23).

3.5 KEY POINTS FROM THE LITERATURE REVIEW

The following issues emerged as key findings from the literature review:

- The population of Australian Muslim males is increasing at a higher rate than the rest of the population, with a higher than average proportion in the 15-29 age cohort.
- Muslim males are more likely to be socially excluded and to experience low levels of social and civic participation.
- Educationally Australian Muslims are high achievers, but in terms of socioeconomic wellbeing they fall into a disadvantaged category: 40% of children of Australian Muslim families live in poverty, more than twice the figure for non-Muslim families (19%), and the Muslim male unemployment rate (12.6%) is more than twice that of Australian males overall (5.2%). This suggests the cultural capital embodied in their education profile does not produce the same returns as it does for non-Muslim Australians.
- The relationship between social/civic participation and social inclusion/exclusion is highlighted. There is debate in the literature about whether there is a disconnect between what social inclusion policy seeks to achieve and what is delivered from the top down. The importance of young people defining exclusion and inclusion as they see it, and in setting the social inclusion agenda, is stressed – rather

than fitting into existing structures that may not be accessible, may not be relevant to their needs, and are therefore unlikely to result in increased participation.

- Several factors have been identified that emphasise difference between Muslim and non-Muslim Australians, or 'culture conflicts', which contribute to young Muslims' feelings of isolation and alienation. These include incidents such as 9/11, the 2005 'Cronulla riots' and the 2000 'Sydney gang rapes', which were presented as emblematic of Muslim culture and values being antithetical to 'Australian' ones.
- Social participation, particularly in vulnerable or excluded groups, is viewed as a mechanism for community empowerment, with positive health and quality of life outcomes. The literature provides evidence of the frustration, stress and mental health implications of continued feelings of isolation, which can intensify antisocial behaviour and the marginalisation of young people.
- Civic involvement has been linked to greater social cohesion and integration, higher levels of efficacy, lower levels of alienation and helplessness, a higher sense of security and citizen duty, reduced crime, higher rates of friendships and neighbourliness, increased levels of personal satisfaction and higher perception of social issues.
- Volunteering, cited as an important enabler of social and civic participation, is reported to greatly enhance wellbeing. Conversely, people who have greater wellbeing invest more time in volunteer service.
- Civic participation has been linked with increased social capital. Barriers to social and civic participation among Muslims, and in particular young Australian Muslim men, encompass several broad areas: experiences and perceptions of marginalisation and social, economic and structural disadvantage; lack of support and resources for effective participation; and lack of the skills and knowledge required for effective participation.
- The literature reveals a number of key factors which contribute to effective participation, with particular focus on young Muslim men. These include good supports and networks; activities which foster intercultural/collaborative approaches; local initiatives; bicultural skills; volunteering; mentoring; antiracism practices; music and sport; access to skills acquisition and support; and access to employment opportunities. As with barriers, enablers may act in combination with each other.

4. RESEARCH FINDINGS – LIVING IN AUSTRALIA

This chapter and the next present an analysis of the qualitative research conducted through depth interviews with stakeholders, focus groups with young Muslim men, and stakeholder forums held in NSW and VIC.

This chapter discusses the perceptions of young Muslim men about Australia generally and about being a young Muslim man in Australia. Within this, issues around identity and belonging are discussed, as well as Muslim men's participation in social and civic activities.

As the demographic profile demonstrates, the Muslim community in Australia is characterised by considerable cultural diversity and large variations in community infrastructure and socioeconomic and migration experience. Despite this, the research found clear themes emerging from discussions relating to the social and civic participation of young Muslim men in Australia, and the research findings in chapters 4 and 5 have been structured around these themes. Where marked differences were evident, these are highlighted. For example, if an issue is more likely to be experienced by communities that are more recently arrived, or by communities characterised by higher rates of unemployment, this would be identified.

4.1 GENERAL ATTITUDES ABOUT AUSTRALIA

The research sought to explore the sentiments of young Muslim men towards Australia generally, as well as experiences of being young and Muslim in Australia.

As a means of opening up discussion, the young men in the focus groups were asked to discuss the stimulus words 'Australia' and 'Australian community'. As would be expected, responses were varied, but the most common response to the word Australia was 'home'. Other common responses can be broadly categorised as reflecting the iconic and material aspects of Australia (Bondi/Cronulla/beaches, beer/alcohol, kangaroos, barbecues, blonde hair and blue eyes, Holden utes, sausages, etc) or perceived Australian values and attributes.

Overall, a range of positive attributes about Australia was identified by the participants, including:

- A strong perception of freedom for individuals – both freedom of speech and freedom to be what you want to be
- A view that there is greater personal respect and fewer threatening behaviours than one might experience in other countries
- A general perception of Australia as a fair, multicultural and open society. There is a perception of coexistence between traditional 'blue eyed' Australia and multicultural Australia. In fact both manifestations seemed to be accommodated in modern Australia.
- A sense that Australia is a safe and peaceful country where the law works.

- An acknowledgement of the high level of assistance available to individuals and families who experience problems, with Centrelink being identified specifically and government assistance more generically, as well as high-quality health, education and public transport systems.
- A perception of Australia as a clean country with good weather and a beautiful natural environment, particularly beaches.

The discussion around negative aspects of living in Australia was much narrower and tended to focus on the areas of racism, cultural stereotyping (particularly by the media), discrimination and intercultural/religious ignorance:

- Similar to that which has been documented extensively in the literature, concern was expressed about the media propagating negative coverage of Muslims, which served to emphasise difference. This was identified as a significant issue for participants, and many felt that Muslims were misrepresented and misunderstood by the mainstream Australian community.

The media and how they make us out to be the bad guys all the time. They never stop. I don't listen anymore. (Somali, 15-18 age group, VIC)

- Racism is a term which was readily used in reference to 'Australia' or the 'Australian community', though it was rarely defined.
- It was also acknowledged that it was not the entire community that was 'racist' or 'judgemental' and that there was a variety of different people and groups that composed Australia, which was generally considered open minded and accepting.

When asked to consider 'being a young Muslim man in Australia', participants across the research spoke of their Islamic identity being a source of pride, providing a strong sense of solidarity and belonging within a community, as well as a moral framework for how to live their lives. The younger participants in particular talked about enjoying the celebratory aspects of religious rituals such as Ramadan and fasting, and took pleasure in belonging to a group they saw as 'unique' or 'different' to the mainstream. Feelings of 'responsibility' and the necessity of 'submission' were also reported. Some identified being a young Islamic man in Australia as involving being 'different from other people here', while others associated it with being 'excluded from social groups', 'victimised' and 'discriminated against'.

In discussions around being a young Islamic man in Australia, there was a clear perception of difference between how these young men view their own religious practice/communities and how they perceive that 'others' from outside their community view their religion and religious practice. In virtually all focus groups, participants felt that Islam and Islamic communities in Australia were both misunderstood by the non-Muslim community and misrepresented by the media. This was expressed across the research, with no discernable differences between different age or ethnic groups.

Islam is a religion with morals, I don't like explaining Islam to others ... many [people] are brainwashed about what Islam really is about. (Lebanese, 30+, VIC)

As a result of this, being a young Muslim man in Australia for many participants was simultaneously a 'burden' or a 'headache' and a source of moral strength.

You have to watch what you say because it will be portrayed to represent the whole community. We have to think before we act. (Lebanese, 19-30, VIC)

The environment does not make it easy for you, puts you under pressure, badly. You get ridiculed for following a belief ... everyone attacked me at my Christmas party for not having a beer. (Lebanese, 30+, NSW)

A number of the young men, predominantly those in the 15-18 age group, felt very 'restricted' because of the intracultural behavioural expectations they experienced as a young Islamic man in Australia. This was commonly expressed in terms of not drinking alcohol or going to clubs/pubs, and not mixing freely with females, although the subtext of this discussion seemed to be a perception that one was not free to fully experience all the opportunities available to a young non-Muslim person in Australia.

There is also an indication that these young people were aware of their responsibilities as well as their wants as young people, both having fun and behaving responsibly. This notion of acceptable behaviours and the difference between good and bad people was consistent throughout the focus groups.

A number of young men expressed feeling caught between two worlds, trying to manage multiple identities and conflicting desires. This conflict was multifaceted and related to a desire for freedom yet also a personal sense of being true to faith and meeting community and familial expectations about what it is to be a 'good' Muslim.

You are one thing outside the house and another when you are at home. At one stage you'll have to choose one, depending on your stage of life. In one way you want to keep your family, and the community where you grow up. But at the same time you want to make yourself happy. (Afghan, 19-30, NSW)

These findings highlight that, while Australia is generally seen as a land of freedom and opportunity, many young men perceived they had neither the freedom nor the ability to fully exploit or enjoy the opportunities available. Among young men themselves, this was generally articulated as a manifestation of 'racism'. However, further discussion with young men and feedback from stakeholders indicate that the reasons for this are complex and intertwined; they include the prevailing climate of negativity around Islam and Islamic communities, structural discrimination, a lack of capacity and commitment to be inclusive at a wider societal level, a lack of skills and capacity for participation at an individual level, self-esteem and resilience issues, socioeconomic disadvantage, settlement and language issues, and issues relating to Muslim communities such as disunity, intergenerational conflict and leadership struggles. (These issues are discussed in more detail in Chapter 5 in the context of an individual's capacity for participation, Muslim community capacity to support participation, and wider societal capacity to support participation.)

Underlying any discussion about barriers and enablers to participation in relation to young Muslim men is the issue of *identity*. The literature clearly links the social and civic participation with feelings of connectedness

and belonging, and the following section considers these issues in the context of young Muslim men in Australia.

4.2 IDENTITY AND BELONGING

For the young men participating in this research, the term ‘community’ was generally associated with a supportive network of close friends/family and other people with shared values. Community provided a sense of belonging for its members, as well as friendship and a network of people and resources that could be drawn on in times of need.

Many participants showed that one individual can belong to a multitude of communities, such as an ethnic community, a religious community, a geographic community (e.g. ‘Auburn’), a sporting community (e.g. ‘Carlton’), a student community or an online community.

However, in this research the majority of participants almost totally placed themselves within communities defined by ethnicity and religion, and young Muslim men tended to categorise their ethnic group in the context of Islam, e.g. being ‘Afghan’, ‘Lebanese’, ‘Pakistani’, ‘Somali’ or ‘Turkish’ Muslims. There was very little crossover between ‘Australian community’ and ‘Ethno-Islamic community’, which were perceived as two distinct entities.

Ethno-religious identity

A strong sense of pride was expressed by the participants about their cultural/religious background, and the support, sense of belonging and moral framework it provided.

There is support, especially for our parent’s age. They love the community events and I suppose we go to most of them. Some are OK. (Afghan, VIC, 15-18)

Young people identify really strongly along ethnic lines. It doesn’t mean they are exclusive in the friendships or they won’t work with other people, but it gives them a sense of pride and belonging. (Stakeholder)

This strong ethno-religious identification appeared to be independent of cultural background, migration experience or being born in Australia or overseas – manifesting just as strongly in the first generation as in the second and third generations.

Ethno-religious identification also appeared to be independent of how committed the participants were to their religious practice. There were mixed opinions across the research about how devout different segments of Islamic communities in Australia were. Some stakeholders had observed that young first-generation Muslims from more newly arrived communities (e.g. Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia) were more devout, and the second and third generation of more established communities (e.g. Turkish, Lebanese) were more secular in their practice of Islam. On the other hand, others believed that the second and third generations of more established communities had greater commitment to faith and were more strident in their ethno-religious identity than their parents.

While it is beyond the scope of this research to explore issues of devoutness and secularism, what this demonstrates is that identification was specific to their ethnic Islamic community, regardless of the nature of their religious practice.

The Islamic community in Australia was overwhelmingly perceived as divided on cultural, racial and linguistic difference.

Even amongst Muslims there are different sects. When Lebanese [Muslims] say Muslims they think only Arabs, so [I guess I belong to] the Pakistani Indian Muslim community. (Pakistani, 15-18, NSW)

We don't interact much with other similar communities, like Pakistani communities, because back home we are thought to be 'better than them'. So we don't really listen to their religious leaders and that way we don't have interaction with them. (Afghan, 19-30, NSW)

Do you know what I find as a Muslim Australian of Anglo background, each ethnic group sticks together and they don't want to talk to other ethnic groups because the way they do it is right and the others don't do it the right way. (Stakeholder)

A number of participants felt that this situation was in conflict with their understanding that under Islam all Muslims are brothers, and Islam transcends race, colour, etc. Young men from more recently arrived cultural groups in particular expressed most concern about the perceived divisions and lack of unity within the wider Islamic community in the Australian context.

Lebanese groups are very active, inviting people from overseas, speakers, etc, but only limited to themselves as Lebanese Muslims. (Pakistani, 21-34, NSW)

I also hear they assist each other financially when someone needs help they get together and raise funds. But again, just for their own groups. (Pakistani, 21-34, NSW)

For those participants who were relatively more recently arrived, this lack of unity ran counter to their expectations of what their community life was going to be like in Australia. Among these young Muslim men (predominantly those from Somalia, Pakistan and Afghanistan) many felt very isolated and were less likely to feel a sense of belonging and connection to an established, supportive and resourced 'community', given the relatively limited ethnic-community infrastructure available to them.

An 'identity in response'

The research results suggest that in the first generation people tended to gather around their ethnic/religious groups because of language and settlement support needs. However, in the second and third generations, while they also gathered in their ethnic/religious groups, there is a suggestion that this was more often done as a response to the prevailing mainstream and media discourse (over the past 10 years) and to provide comfort and aid self-preservation.

People make us see ourselves as not Australian. (Lebanese, 15-18, NSW)

The initial response from second-generation young people is “I want to be Australian, where can I go to be Australian?”, search for affirmation that they are Australian. There is a sense of rejection from the mainstream thrust upon them in the past 10 years, so they search for a secondary identity, i.e. “If I can’t be accepted by Australia in a general sense, then I will search for my Turkish roots, or Lebanese roots, and reconnect with those”. (Stakeholder)

Fundamentally people, and especially young people, want to belong to something. Overall because a lot of Muslim men have been antagonised by the media, by what happened after 9/11, some are becoming more defensive, are a bit more sticking in a group for protection, for self-preservation. (Stakeholder)

This idea of an ‘identity in response’ emerged in discussions about why many Muslim young men do not feel ‘Australian’. This was also viewed very strongly as related to the socioeconomic profile of many young Muslim men, and that these issues are more prominent in Muslim communities because of their relative socioeconomic disadvantage.

I know many people who when you ask, “How do you identify yourself?”, they say “Australian – this is where I was born, this is where I am going to stay for the rest, this is my home.” But these people are very well off economically, have successfully integrated, broken that barrier, are accepted by the mainstream. The younger kids who are coming from broken families, or are struggling economically, don’t have the luxury to break into the mainstream. (Stakeholder)

This raised the question of whether young people, because they have a perception that they don’t belong or don’t feel accepted, exclude themselves. A lot of their capacity is based on their own background, socioeconomic status and level of confidence. Stakeholders strongly felt that the answer to this lay in strategies to increase the confidence of young people so that they feel comfortable enough to define themselves as being both Australian and from a different background.

Geographic identification

The research found that a lot of young men also identify themselves in terms of their postcode or suburb. Stories emerged of people tattooing their postcode on their body, displaying their postcodes on school jackets, etc. This observation was believed to be a relatively new phenomenon (evolving over the past 10 years). Some people surmised that this was a response to the Cronulla riots and conflicts in Maroubra, where postcode branding is common, while others felt it was another manifestation of social exclusion.

There are very close family ties in a number of ethnic groups, especially Lebanese and Turkish. They are very supportive and often result in generations staying in the same suburb for a long time. They get married, and live close to their parents because they need help with kids, etc. So those identifications with suburb become a very strong link to their identity. So as they grow up the Bankstown boys all hang around together, they go to the same malls, they all hang out in the same parks, drive around the same areas – they still go cruising around Maroubra and the beaches and stuff, but always congregate back to where they come from, be that Auburn,

Bankstown, Guildford, etc. I believe this more a socioeconomic or demographic factor, rather than a cultural or religious one. (Stakeholder)

Navigating multiple identities and transiting between identities

There has been considerable community debate about the Muslim community's ability to integrate with mainstream Australia. There was a perception among most participants that, with time, all migrating communities inevitably do this. What was viewed as impacting the ease and timeframe for this integration was mainstream society's attitude and ability to accept new migrants – the more there is a negative environment, the more entrenched a person's perception of exclusion becomes. It is well documented in the literature, and is clearly supported by this research, that the climate of negativity facing Muslim communities in Australia is particularly difficult and exacerbates their feelings of exclusion. A strong perception articulated throughout the research was that if a person feels accepted they are able to more easily navigate multiple identities and transit between identities.

A recent English migrant can come to Australia and feel at home straight away. A Lebanese person can be here for three generations and still feel that they are different. Even for Filipinos, for example, it is easier – being Christian gives you such an advantage. (Stakeholder)

The research indicated very little crossover between the 'Australian community' and the 'Islamic community', which were generally perceived as two distinct entities. The research also found that young Muslim men do transit from one identity to another depending on the situation, but not necessarily without conflict. Many young men expressed a feeling that one's ethnic/religious community and the mainstream community were mutually exclusive, with many of the view that belonging to one community generally had to be at the expense of the other. This created internal conflict, confusion and feelings of alienation for many young Muslim men, irrespective of whether they were born here – with both overseas-born and Australian-born second- and third-generation migrant young men strongly expressing these views.

Some stakeholders believed that these issues – feeling caught somewhere between two communities, not really belonging to either, and simultaneously feeling excluded by the wider mainstream community – are common to the migration experience, part of any community's settlement experience, and largely addressed with time. However, stakeholders also hastened to add that these issues are much more keenly experienced by Muslim communities in Australia because of a local and global climate of linking Islam with violence and crime, racial vilification, structural discrimination, economic exclusion and socioeconomic disadvantage.

Another issue of importance generated from the research was the idea that very often when a young Muslim man tries to move out of his ethno-religious grouping two things happen: he doesn't necessarily feel comfortable, and his own cultural/ethnic group threatens to exclude him. This issue is explored in detail in Chapter 5 (in the context of Muslim communities' participation), but a brief discussion of this in the context of identity and belonging follows.

Many participants perceived that if a young Muslim person steps outside of his ethno/religious grouping he risks losing (or risks being perceived by others in their community as losing) his Islamic values. This was usually articulated in the context of drug and alcohol consumption, relationships outside marriage, and

customs relating to food, dress and prayer. The perceived restrictive nature of the community, coupled with a desire to conform to community expectations about behaviour, caused a lot of internal conflict or identity confusion for many participants, and many spoke of having multiple identities and of the difficulties navigating and transiting between them.

I feel confused. I want to be part of both communities but find it hard sometimes. I am Afghan and I am Australian now. It can be difficult sometimes. (Afghan, 15-18, VIC)

My parents say I am too Australian, not Lebanese enough, but at uni I am a Leb. (Lebanese, 19-30, NSW)

In one way you want to keep your family, and the community where you grew up. But at the same time you want to make yourself happy. (Afghan, 19-30, NSW)

A key challenge is helping young people to find a happy acceptance between school norms and home culture, rather than seeing school and home in opposition to each other, and their own identity and that of the school as being in contradiction with each other. [They] need to feel happy about themselves as 'Arabs' or 'Muslims' as well as Australians. (Stakeholder)

'Acting the stereotype'

The framework of racism and stereotyped association of Islam with antisocial behaviour is a significant issue and reoccurring theme in the research, with many of the participants feeling deeply misrepresented and misunderstood by the mainstream Australian community. Stakeholders, in particular, felt this had a significant impact on the self-esteem of young Muslim men, and in some cases this was manifested through 'acting the stereotype' – colouring many interactions between young men and authority figures with the potential to both escalate and reinforce mutual stereotypes.

But some of these young Muslim kids, I don't [know] what it is, but they just think everyone is there to get them. And then I say might snap out of it, you giving the people permission to fire at you, you are wearing your hair like that, cutting your hair in that stupid fashion, that your parents don't like, the school doesn't like it, and you are hanging with the same guys who are doing it, the hair, etc, and you are putting a target at your back. When something happens they say "oh that guy with that ponytail, that is what the bad boy looks like". So you are going to be a target ... I tell the kids all the time, you know we all walked the streets at night, we were kids, and cops stopped us. Let me say this, if a cop stops you and you say "hello sir", "hello officer", they won't stop you again, but these young ones they continue to want to engage, and the cops say he gave me an attitude, and I stopped him. (Stakeholder)

Allegedly discriminating behaviour and the considered racism of authority figures, particularly police, transit police and school teachers, was identified passionately by many of the participants in the 15-18 year cohort. Among these younger participants the discussion involved the retelling of personal anecdotes and stories involving brushes with authorities.

I was approached by the transit police and I gave them a false name. They ran a check of the name and found it was false and gave me a fine. (Turkish, 15-18, NSW)

I hate being stereotyped. Always we are seen as black and Muslim and we are proud of it, but others, white Aussies, don't like it. (Somali, 15-18, VIC)

This and other stories were related under the banner of racist actions, yet there was a degree of culpability in many of them, such as riding on a train without a ticket and providing a false name. There is a sense that these young people test 'the system' as many young people do (travel without tickets, ride pushbikes without helmets, gather in large numbers in public spaces), but when approached by authority figures or caught doing something wrong, their perception and reasoning is that the authority action is based on racism and stereotyping.

This theme was echoed in the views of a number of the stakeholders and service providers, who discussed these issues in the context of a 'vicious cycle' where the existing structural discrimination and marginalisation, and stigmatisation of Islam, impacts on the way many individuals interact with their environment and community, which in turn attracts negative community attention.

They hang around in large groups, on the street, causing suspicion, the police ask questions and then they get defensive and feel picked on, harassed ... many of these kids have a victim mentality. (Stakeholder)

Their families expect them to be bad, and the [mainstream] community expects them to be bad, so they start behaving that way. (Stakeholder)

Let us be realistic. We talk about yes, you are right, everybody is right, obviously, but this is the problem [with racism]. But a lot of the kids that are from our background that are apprehended by the police, or asked by the police, they are the ones that bring up the religion, the nationality, they are the ones that play the race game as well. (Stakeholder)

4.3 CURRENT SOCIAL AND CIVIC ACTIVITIES AND SPACES

This section details findings from discussions of current social and civic activities and spaces, or spaces that could potentially be used for social and civic activities.

Across all groups, not surprisingly, many participants simply identified a lack of time or resources to commit to activities outside of their work, study and family obligations. Participants who were relatively more recently arrived (within the last five years) also spoke of having to meet their settlement needs before being able to focus on social and civic participation.

While participants from all groups described a wide range of recreational activities, the majority of these involved either sport (social and competitive) or social interaction with peers. Sport was identified as the prime space through which many of the participants spent time with 'Aussie' friends. When asked to

associate words with the stimulus word 'sport', respondents referred mostly to types of sport, e.g. 'soccer', 'football', 'cricket' and 'swimming'.

[I] play soccer, indoor soccer at stadium. All different friends from all cultures, even some Aussies. (Somali, 15-18, VIC)

In the younger groups (15-18 years), most reported that they spent a lot of time 'hanging around' with other young Muslim men (often from the same cultural groups as themselves), either at shopping malls, beaches or 'just around'. While these times were not structured, or involving any particular activities, they were opportunities for participants to socialise with their peers in comfortable settings.

Although many of the younger participants did report spending a portion of their recreation time at home, either watching TV or using their computer, all suggested that this too was 'social time', as they were often using social networking sites such as Facebook to talk with friends. From these comments it was evident that the younger groups (regardless of the area they were living in) used social spaces that were convenient and close by for recreational activities, such as shopping malls or sports fields. They did not report using community spaces such as halls or mosques for such activities (such spaces being for 'older men'), and felt that their options were limited by lack of transport, particularly if they did not have a car.

While sport and spending time with friends were still listed as part of the recreation time for many of the participants aged 30+, more emphasis was placed upon involvement in 'community groups', particularly for the groups based in the Canterbury (NSW), Blacktown (NSW) and Western Sydney (NSW) areas (all from different cultural backgrounds). Older groups were also more likely to report spending time with family as one of their major recreation activities. Many participants aged 25 or older reported using spaces such as pubs as forums through which they could socialise with others, but it was made very clear that this did not involve the consumption of alcohol. Participants in the older groups were more likely to make light of the fact that they did not drink while their non-Muslim peers did, and they appeared to feel more comfortable with this fact and were less likely to report pressure from others to take part in this activity than those in the 15-18 age groups. This is most likely a function of maturity and normal teenage peer dynamics. A few of the older participants had put mechanisms in place to minimise attention in relation to their not drinking alcohol (e.g. labelling oneself the 'designated driver' for the night).

Yes I go to the pub, but I don't drink. I go with work colleagues. (Lebanese, 30+, NSW)

Although mosques were referred to as places for both religious and social activity (a space to meet others, talk and catch up on the latest gossip), they were not frequently mentioned, with many participants identifying them as spaces for 'older men arguing about politics and religion', not for people within their age range.

A number of participants felt they did not experience barriers to community involvement in their communities of choice, which were defined by the local area (e.g. Auburn), their ethnic group (e.g. Turkish) and their religion (Islamic).

Well, we are involved. We play soccer, we go to school, we hang out with some friends. (Afghan, 15-18, VIC)

We do want to be involved and I think we are. Nobody is stopping us from being involved. We do want we want to do. (Afghan, 15-18, VIC)

Significantly, though, in this research the participants' understanding of participation was generally limited to social participation, and there was very little demonstration of civic involvement, both within and external to their individual communities. Data from the 2006 Census indicates that Muslim Australians are less likely to volunteer than other Australians. Some attributed this to the fact that community service is one of the pillars of Islam, so a Muslim person serves the community as an expression of their faith and may not view this as 'volunteering'.

This is supported by research conducted by Volunteering Australia and the Australian Multicultural Foundation¹ in which the idea of volunteering in Muslim communities was considered part of being a good community member and a common cultural norm, but Muslim youth did not always identify their community work as volunteering, in part because they felt that volunteering in Australia is a more formal experience than in their cultures of origin. The research identified critical success factors that can be incorporated by organisations who wish to include more young people who are Muslims.

Other stakeholders held a different view and suggested that lower levels of civic involvement were a function of internal and external barriers, and until these barriers are addressed (as discussed in Chapter 5) this understanding of participation is unlikely to extend from social to civic participation.

A few participants equated participation in a civic setting with having to defend their faith, which was something they felt burdened by, preferring to focus on their own family's needs.

You are expected to be that community's advocate. [You are] expected to answer on behalf of the community or association. I just want to be. (Lebanese, 30+, NSW)

We basically feel why do we feel we have to defend ourselves? And that is an issue as well. It is like we just want to be a part of the community. We are always picked up on. "Your community is an issue. You have to defend it. You are role model you have to do this." It is like, leave us alone, we just want to go on with life. (Stakeholder)

¹ "Research Bulletin: Muslim youth and volunteering", Australian Multicultural Foundation and Volunteering Australia, 2007
<http://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/files/KYFGMBZ29C/VA%20AMF%20Research%20Bulletin%20-%20Muslim%20Youth.pdf>
 "Supporting volunteering activities in Australian Muslim communities, particularly youth: A literature review building on the findings from the National Survey of Australian Volunteers from Diverse Cultural and Linguistic Backgrounds", Volunteering Australia and the Australian Multicultural Foundation, June 2007
<http://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/files/8FF8XEMEEG/AMF%20Muslim%20Youth%20Volunteer-final%20with%20cover.pdf>

Importantly, very few participants expressed a desire to actively distance themselves from the mainstream Australian community, and in fact the following discussion between two Lebanese participants highlights the opposite:

- Participant 1:* *We need to stop being the image painted for us by the media.*
- Participant 2:* *But they make that picture.*
- Participant 1:* *Yeah, but we have to show them we are not like that and behave differently and better.*
- Participant 2:* *But when there are groups and people trying to change that image, it's not televised or publicised.*
- Participant 1:* *We should at least try because they can hold it against us ... things like Clean up Australia, or what about the hijab girls doing surf lifesavers?*

These two participants showed that, while they felt the need to maintain their own cultural and religious identity, becoming involved in traditionally mainstream community activities was seen as a way to improve the understanding the media (and consequently the mainstream Australian population) had of Muslim individuals and communities.

Involvement in mainstream activities

The research also sought to explore young Muslim men's participation in non-religious or non-culturally-specific activities. As mentioned previously in this report, many of the young men consulted spoke of the restrictive nature of their community and the impact this had on their overall participation, particularly in the mainstream, non-Muslim community. It seemed for a lot of these young men it was easier to stay within the comfort of their cultural group, because to step beyond it made them vulnerable to criticism from within their community about 'not being a good Muslim' or 'not being Afghan (etc) enough', even if they were not engaging in any 'unacceptable' behaviours such as consuming drugs or alcohol, eating non-halal food or having relationships outside of marriage.

The younger participants particularly were aware of, and concerned about, how their behaviour would affect how people 'talked' about them.

We can't do some things because we don't want people talking about us. That upsets our parents and us too. (Somali, 15-18, VIC)

There was some evidence that some mainstream cultural practices were seen as incongruous with Islamic cultural practices, most notably alcohol consumption, illegal drugs and relationships outside marriage. This certainly impacted on these young men in terms of types of social spaces they inhabited, or chose to avoid (pubs, clubs, casinos, etc).

It should be noted, however, that many of these activities were often discussed in these younger groups as activities they did not enjoy taking part in and often actively tried to avoid. Parental pressure was also listed

as a perceived barrier stopping these participants from partaking in certain social activities. While most of these activities were not seen as appealing to most participants, a sizeable minority also spoke of, or alluded to, leading 'secret lives' or struggling with 'outside influences' and 'temptation'.

They've have a real identity crisis because they're trying to move and grow along doing what the Aussie kids do but then the barriers have been created by the parents to not want them to do that sort of thing. Parents fear that the kids won't do what is acceptable. Family units are breaking down because these young kids are angry because they want to go out and have fun but their parents are fearful. (Stakeholder)

Many of the young men who participated in the research, although not really participating in wider community activities, did not feel excluded – they simply preferred to participate in a religious/ethnic setting comfortable to them.

You need to be able to identify with the activity. If people don't talk like you, or act like you, or look like you, you don't want to be part of it. (Lebanese, 30+, NSW)

While this issue is largely a matter of choice, to varying degrees depending on the individual, it speaks of resilience and confidence issues among some Muslim men. Many stakeholders were of the opinion that, because young people have a perception that they do not belong, or do not feel accepted, they exclude themselves. Among some Muslim men this manifests as an oppositional identity, sometimes demonstrated by deviant behaviours, where they regard certain forms of behaviours, events and activities as not appropriate for them because they are not 'Anglo'.

A number of anecdotes were provided about the difficulties service providers faced in encouraging young Muslim people from disadvantaged backgrounds to experience new places and activities.

I've known young people that just won't go into the city because they don't feel it's actually their place and they don't feel that they're actually welcome here. (Stakeholder)

Stakeholders accepted that a young person from an affluent North Shore suburb would probably feel uncomfortable in a disadvantaged area of the Western Suburbs of Sydney, and vice versa. However, given the city centre is supposed to be a public space for all community members, this example speaks of the extent to which these young people feel excluded.

The following chapter considers a range of barriers and enablers to social and civic participation in Australian community life in the context of an individual's capacity to participate, Muslim communities' impact on and capacity to support participation, and mainstream society's capacity to support participation.

5. RESEARCH FINDINGS – PARTICIPATION BARRIERS AND ENABLERS

The previous chapter demonstrated the extent to which many young Muslim men in Australia struggle with issues of identity and belonging. This chapter explores how the issues relating to social exclusion as experienced by young Muslim men in Australia manifest in a range of related barriers to social and civic participation and community engagement. It discusses how these barriers interconnect in the context of three different capacities required for participation:

- An individual's capacity for participation
- Muslim communities' capacity to support participation, and
- Mainstream community's capacity to support participation.

Strategies emerging from the research for addressing these barriers are discussed in relation to increasing the capacity of all three of these to support participation. Within this, a number of case studies are used to illustrate good practice in addressing a range of barriers identified through the research. Finally, the role of government in improving young Muslim men's social and civic participation is also considered.

5.1 INDIVIDUAL CAPACITY FOR PARTICIPATION

Barriers affecting an individual's capacity for participation

The literature clearly shows that for an individual to actively participate in community they need to have base level skills in presentation, communication, language and intercultural knowledge. The research suggests that many young Muslim men in Australia do not have these skills, and this impacts their self-esteem, resilience and motivation to set goals. As a reaction it is not uncommon for people to brand themselves with an oppositional identity, further inhibiting participation. These issues emerged repeatedly as being a significant barrier to participation for many young Muslim men in Australia resulting from:

- Settlement challenges, particularly in the context of larger families and long work hours, impacting on motivation, encouragement to succeed, and the skills and knowledge to 'navigate the system'
- Language and literacy issues, and lower levels of educational attainment among some segments of the community, particularly where education has been disrupted due to refugee camp history, etc
- Socioeconomic disadvantage
- Limited access to peer support, positive role models and mentors.

It is difficult to ascertain to what extent these issues are representative of young Muslim men in Australia generally, although it is fair to say that these issues are experienced in Islamic communities to a greater extent than in the mainstream Australian community. While these are issues experienced by all migrating

communities, the environment of increased intolerance toward Muslim communities post-2001, the fact that many of the Islamic communities are recently arrived, and the fact that many recently arrived Muslims in Australia have arrived as humanitarian entrants (particularly those from Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia and Sudan) suggest that these issues are felt more keenly by the Muslim community in Australia. The stakeholders indicated that the issues faced by Muslim communities, while similar to those of previous migrant groups, are accentuated by the constant reference to Islamic issues in the media and constant refocusing on Islam as a result of international incidents. It was also viewed very strongly as relating to the socioeconomic profile of many young Muslim men, and it was felt that these issues are more prominent in Muslim communities because of their relative socioeconomic disadvantage.

Settlement challenges

Across all groups, many participants identified a lack of time or resources to commit to activities outside of their work, study and family obligations. Participants who were relatively more recently arrived also spoke of having to meet their settlement needs before being able to focus on social and civic participation.

Other issues were raised in relation to young Muslim men and the impact of the refugee experience.

I work with a lot of Muslim people in the Liverpool area who are of Sudanese background. They come to Australia as refugees and the troubles they went through, whether they went through Ethiopia or Congo, Syria or Cairo, were that they were already victimised, harassed and attacked and so forth. They are coming here with that. Their issue now is that they are fighting the stigma of being a refugee, being a 'queue jumper', an 'illegal'. Then they are fighting the stigma of the Lebanese Muslims. They are saying we are not like that, we are different, we have a different culture, a different community, a different way of living, different standards. They are actually fighting three stigmas – the refugee stigma, the stigma of what has been already been built by the Lebanese community as Muslims, and the stigma of being a Muslim. (Stakeholder)

Another issue identified through the research is the economic conditions in Australia at the time of migration and the impact this has on finding employment and Muslim communities' integration experiences post-settlement.

When my grandparents first got here, the economy was different in Australia, we were considered factory fodder and all the people Greek, Italian, Lebanese, Yugoslavian, and Macedonian descent were all in these factories. And my grandparents told me we all worked together, that is how we learned to speak English and understand one another. Australia is changed now. Since the late 70s and early 80s the economy has changed, the factories have gone overseas and those newly arrived migrants, especially Lebanese Muslims and Islander populations, [have] missed the boat. Whole generations of kids have grown up, their parents especially, without employment. And when they do seek work it is within their own group. There is a whole generation of parents who have not had interaction with other cultures. It is not negative but they have not had interaction with other cultures. (Stakeholder)

Being able to speak English is an obvious advantage to social and civic participation beyond one's ethno/religious group. Poor English language proficiency among the migrating generation therefore serves to heighten barriers to social and civic participation among Australian Muslims.

Self-esteem, resilience and personal goals

A number of stakeholders working with young Muslim men identified issues such as lack of hope, lack of ambition, and difficulties setting and working towards goals as a significant issue for young Muslim men. On this point, parents were often identified as lacking education, lacking English and not having integrated well into the mainstream because of unemployment and other forms of socioeconomic disadvantage. This has led to them being very fearful about the mainstream Australian community, and to wanting to cocoon their children from influences beyond their local and cultural community that they do not understand or feel part of (this discussed in more detail in relation to intergenerational conflict in 5.2 below). There was a perception that young people lacked aspirational role models and that there were not sufficient community resources directed to providing those role models.

Peer groups are very powerful. A young person needs an enormous wellspring of courage in order to break out and do something different. Young people need to be encouraged to do things outside the normal range of activities. (Stakeholder)

We need mentors to help them bust out, help them spread their tentacles wider. They need windows into another world, and this needs to be tied to employment. But [they] need to start with basic life skills, presentation and communication first. (Stakeholder)

There needs to be a lot of work done. Teachers don't have energy anymore to provide that window into another world, unless someone is a very bright shining star. (Stakeholder)

There was much discussion about a proportion of young Muslim men who, as a result of their socioeconomic disadvantage, experienced low levels of literacy, poor school retention, and less encouragement for educational attainment. Stakeholders were also very clear that these issues were largely present among the more disadvantaged segments of Muslim communities, and that there were countless examples of Muslim people for whom the opposite was true (and this is also reflected in the demographic profile of Muslim Australians).

A number of stakeholders felt there were unacceptably high levels of young Muslim people who had significant literacy issues. It was felt that insufficient effort was directed to early intervention, that schools in areas of high levels of socioeconomic disadvantage were not sufficiently resourced to identify and respond to these issues, and that many young people were simply 'falling through the net'.

Beyond the issues faced by more recently arrived migrants with poor English language proficiency, a number of stakeholders identified (as also observed in the focus groups with Lebanese and Turkish young Muslim men) that among second- and third-generation Australian-born Muslims, many young men spoke a hybrid form of heavily accented English which would largely not be comprehensible outside their specific ethnic group. A number of stakeholders felt that the 'language' of certain segments of Australian-born Muslim

communities, again related very specifically to socioeconomic disadvantage, has evolved in the past 10 years into more of pidgin 'street-talk' form of English. This was seen to perpetuate the cycle of socioeconomic disadvantage and to act as a barrier to social integration.

Lebanese people have accents. It brands them. It stops people from getting a job – actually inhibits a range of opportunities. As a positive aspect it defines group membership, but potentially it is negative in terms of their ability to interact with other groups, participate in employment, etc. And now I have noticed a new lingo that Lebanese kids have started speaking – like their own code. But what is their capacity to move into other frameworks? (Stakeholder)

These kids have their own form of communication. (Stakeholder)

[Their communication] makes them functionally illiterate. (Stakeholder)

Stakeholders believed that there was a real lack of support for Muslim young men in terms of providing them with the necessary knowledge and skills for participation. Many stakeholders spoke of a lack of knowledge among many young Muslim men about how to apply for a job, the application process, how to prepare a résumé, how to present themselves, etc, and that this severely limited their ability to participate any more widely than 'a very narrow stereotyped existence'. A number of stakeholders also felt that many young people were not encouraged to set goals outside of this framework.

Stakeholders felt that people with strong personal resilience who are very comfortable with their ethnicity are more able to enter the mainstream with that comfort and are likely to have greater skills and knowledge about how to negotiate the external environment. If they are challenged they are more likely to see it as something they can overcome. For others, when they feel that challenge, rather than having the confidence to deal with it, they retreat back into their ethno-religious group or identity.

We should be looking at ways and means to make them feel comfortable about their background. If then you can get kids to feel proud about their background they are more able to go and mix with an external society, rather than feeling threatened because of their background. (Stakeholder)

We should be saying to these kids: "Be proud of being Arabic, Muslim Lebanese, Christian Lebanese, Sudanese, whatever, be proud of that. And use that pride to better the society – add to the picture rather than segregating yourself and becoming this cut-off puzzle". (Stakeholder)

Socioeconomic status

The demographic profile of Muslim Australians shows that, while there is a high level of educational attainment among many Muslims in Australia, this is not reflected in the employment statistics. The Muslim male unemployment rate is more than twice as high as that of overall Australian males, and even higher among newly arrived migrants. This may be due to poor English language proficiency or to lack of recognition of prior learning or overseas skills and qualifications. This was also identified as due to discrimination in the workforce, an assertion which is supported by the literature.

Significantly, the benchmark for poverty among Australian households is \$650 or less per week, and more than 40% of children in Australian Muslim households are in this situation – twice as much as for non-Muslim Australians. This conveys a picture of battling families, reflective of the high unemployment rate for Muslim males in the Australian community. Some literature is starting to find evidence of intergenerational unemployment in some Muslim communities in Australia.

Stakeholders in this research felt that economic exclusion (irrespective of, but impacted by, religion or culture) significantly affects how accepted and integrated into society an individual is and/or feels. This in turn impacts on their capacity and willingness to participate both within their individual community and the wider society. It was identified that people who are socioeconomically advantaged are more likely to:

- Have the time and money for social and civic involvement
- Feel a sense of connectedness to community
- Have the requisite awareness, knowledge and skills for how to participate
- Have the confidence and self-esteem to encourage social and civic involvement
- Have appropriate role models and sufficient community infrastructure available to them to support participation.

The research suggests that these are issues relating more to class and socioeconomic disadvantage than Islam or culture. However, in terms of the demographic profile of Muslim Australians it is clear that certain Muslim communities in particular experience these disadvantage-related obstacles and challenges to a greater extent than the general Australian community. The research findings identified that this is felt more strongly by Lebanese Muslim communities. It is also evident that Australian Muslims' experiences are exacerbated by, and in many ways a product of, the backdrop of racial vilification and negativity towards Islam.

Strategies for addressing barriers

This section details a number of strategies for addressing the barriers relating to an individual's capacity for participation.

Education and mentoring programs

The research identified that there is a need for early intervention programs to more effectively respond to language and literacy issues in Australian-born Muslims. This could most effectively be achieved through school programs. Stakeholders identified that schools in areas of high levels of socioeconomic disadvantage are not sufficiently resourced to identify and respond to these issues.

Stakeholders identified homework programs and arts-based programs – such as scriptwriting workshops, theatre productions, music performances and songwriting – as positively impacting on language and communication skills.

Good Practice Case Study 1: DigiDiaries – Information and Cultural Exchange (ICE)²

Like sport, creative arts was identified as a key enabler to engaging young Muslim men, and a useful tool for the development of individual skills. DigiDiaries is a good practice example of an arts-based project that not only develops individual skills but provides young Muslim people with a forum in which to have a voice, tell their stories, and express their feelings and concerns. DigiDiaries is a digital storytelling project that engages young people from Muslim communities throughout Western Sydney. The project empowers participants with skills such as scriptwriting, filmmaking, editing, photography and online film preparation.

The DigiDiaries project commenced with a ‘train-the-trainer’ program which involved a diverse group of creative and cultural leaders in Western Sydney being trained and certified to run their own workshops to pass on their knowledge and equip young Muslim Australians with digital storytelling techniques. Workshops are now being run throughout Muslim communities, with a particular focus on minority communities.

The stories act as a source of inspiration for young people. In one of the digital stories, a young man’s friends had put his name down as a joke for an acting role in a play. After attending a preliminary meeting and learning that the organiser and all the actors (a group of young Muslim Australians) were only amateur actors, he agreed to direct the play (which was based on an Islamic historical event), despite having no theatre experience. He rewrote the script and read up on the art of directing. After weeks of hard work rehearsing and making props and costumes, the performance day arrived. An unexpected audience of over a thousand attended, and the production was a huge success. This man is continuing to pursue his interest in the arts.

One stakeholder reported that a lot of the more recently arrived young participants originally had difficulty expressing where they had come from and how they had arrived in Australia. Trust was developed throughout the course of the project, and these participants became more involved and more confident in expressing themselves: “*they feel like there is a weight lifted off their shoulders*”. The storytelling also provides the young people with an opportunity to connect with both their individual community and the mainstream Australian community – to demystify and correct public misconceptions.

In developing the individual skills of the participants and providing opportunities for self-expression, the project builds self-esteem. The project is seen as an ‘entry point’, and through it ICE fosters and encourages continued participation in its projects and training, with young people also being given opportunities to be involved in the design and implementation of future programs.

² Further information is provided at Appendix 1.

Good Practice Case Study 2: The Navigator Program – MTC Work Solutions³

The research findings highlight the need for life skills, presentation skills, careers advice and goal-setting for young Muslim men in order to address the barriers relating to individual capacity and a lack of self-esteem and confidence.

The Navigator Program directly addresses these barriers. It is a good practice example of a mainstream organisation (MTC Work Solutions, a not-for-profit employment services organisation) increasing individual and community capacity, facilitating introductions and links to the mainstream community, and providing outreach services to young people. It primarily involves an intensive workshop program (in addition to one-on-one case management) that develops participants' communication, résumé-writing and goal-setting skills and prepares young jobseekers for interviews and employment.

The workshops were developed as a result of a pilot program that targeted young Muslims in the Canterbury/Bankstown and Macquarie Fields areas of Western Sydney. The workshops adopt an interactive approach predominantly based on role play, but also using visual aids and creative arts (including drawing, painting and sculpture). There is also a peer-assessment component, which one stakeholder reported encourages increased engagement.

One stakeholder explained that key to the success of the program within the Muslim community is the empathy and understanding of the program coordinators, who are from similar cultural backgrounds to the jobseekers and have a complex understanding of the multiple barriers to employment they face.

The success of the Navigator Program is exemplified in the story of a young man who had fallen out of employment as a youth worker with a local religious organisation (where he conducted workshops in rebuilding and programming computers, a self-taught skill he passed onto other young people). Under the Navigator Program he was successful in securing an entry-level technician position with Telstra. He is happy with this career choice, which makes use of his skills and abilities in computer hardware and software technology. The work incentives and options for career development have encouraged the young man immensely, and he is 'on his way'.

Another example of the program's success is four young people who as a result of attending the program have now entered a Green Jobs Program coordinated by a local Registered Training Organisation through the Department of Employment, Education and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) and the City of Canterbury Council (CCC). The young people are currently completing the course and will be offered employment with the CCC, where they will work under more experienced gardeners and landscapers completing a range of green jobs in parks and streetscapes.

³ Further information is provided at Appendix 1.

Stakeholders consistently spoke of the need for, and value of, mentoring programs targeting young Muslim men. These programs were discussed in terms of the need for life skills, careers advice, presentation skills, conflict resolution, anger management, goal-setting, leadership and access to positive role models. Stakeholders consistently argued that a sense of belonging and self-esteem will directly impact on propensity to civic involvement.

Mentoring was seen as having a number of potential benefits:

- Enhancing skills
- Providing a link to specific employment opportunities
- Providing aspirational role models for community involvement and realising individual potential
- Navigating 'the system' and providing pathways to wider society.

Broadening life experiences

In order to increase their capacity, an individual needs to have experiences beyond their individual communities so they can increase their knowledge. The research identified that it was not uncommon for second- and third-generation young Muslim people (usually from disadvantaged backgrounds) to have very little experience beyond their individual community in a fairly small geographic location.

Many of the stakeholders involved in this research conduct programs that are aimed at introducing people to new experiences in geographical and cultural contexts that may take people out of their 'comfort zone'. Stakeholders reported that the increased knowledge gained from these experiences had positive effects on individuals' confidence and self-esteem. These could be as simple as small excursions to the beach, facilitating opportunities to play park sports with young people from different cultural and geographic communities. Strategies linking young people to 'buddies' were also identified as ways of facilitating introduction to broader life experiences.

While it is obviously essential to enable individuals with skills and tools for participation, young Muslim men also face external barriers which inhibit their capacity for social and civic involvement. Issues relating to the capacity for Muslim communities in Australia to support young people's social and civic participation are discussed in the following section.

Good Practice Case Study 3: Kar Kulture – South Eastern Region Migrant Resource Centre Inc. (SERMRC)⁴

Kar Kulture is a good practice example of a program that increases young people's individual capacity and teamwork skills while also providing a forum for social interaction beyond immediate community groups. The program also helps to break down barriers between young people from diverse backgrounds and increases cultural knowledge, awareness and understanding (particularly among Anglo-Australian participants).

Kar Kulture brings together at-risk young people from different cultural backgrounds to work collaboratively on restoring a second-hand vehicle. The program provides an opportunity for participants to learn mechanical, panel-beating and design skills. Participants also take part in driver education activities with local police and are given the opportunity to obtain their learner or provisional driver's licence. Once the car is restored, participants have the opportunity to use it to obtain driving practice, with volunteer driving instructors being recruited and trained (with accreditation) to provide driving lessons. For most of these participants these opportunities would not otherwise be available. Participants are also involved in the decision-making process from the outset of the project. Planning and brainstorming sessions are conducted to determine what can be afforded in the budget, and participants make decisions about the design and colour scheme of the restored car.

Sessions are conducted on a weekly basis and restoration of the car takes place over six months, culminating in an official launch of the car in the local plaza. During the sessions participants freely share information about their cultural and religious backgrounds, and it is reported that this has contributed to increased cultural knowledge and understanding among local youth. Excursions are organised throughout the course of the project, and these joint experiences add to this relationship-building; it is reported that some participants have formed long-lasting friendships beyond their ethno/cultural community group. The local police officer from the Multicultural Liaison Unit attends the sessions, serving to enhance the relationship between the youth and local police.

Interest in the project is strong and participants demonstrate a high level of commitment. Some participants attend to observe subsequent restorations after the completion of their own program. Participants' interest in motor mechanics is fostered throughout the program – one participant is undertaking a motor mechanic apprenticeship and another has arranged interviews for employment with local mechanics.

5.2 MUSLIM COMMUNITY CAPACITY TO SUPPORT PARTICIPATION

Issues of socioeconomic status, poor educational attainment, lack of knowledge and skills for participation, and settlement and language difficulties have an effect on the self-esteem and resilience of Muslim Australians. However, it is not just a young Muslim person's individual circumstances that have an impact – the self-esteem and resilience of young Muslim men is also influenced by external factors relating to the influence of the Muslim community.

⁴ Further information is provided at Appendix 1.

Barriers affecting participation

Many participants perceived that if a young Muslim person steps outside of their ethno/religious grouping they risk losing (or risk being perceived by others in their community as losing) their Islamic values. This was usually articulated in the context of drug and alcohol consumption, relationships outside marriage, and customs relating to food, dress and prayer. The perceived restrictive nature of their community, coupled with a desire to conform to community expectations about behaviour, serves to discourage many young Muslims from seeking opportunities for social and civic participation beyond their ethno/religious community. Further, a lack of aspirational role models within communities was seen to impact on knowledge, skills and motivation regarding participation generally.

Importantly, a number of issues were raised in relation to community leadership and lack of opportunities for youth participation and decision-making in community structures, and these were seen to significantly impact both social and civic involvement. These issues are discussed in turn below.

Intergenerational conflict

Raised repeatedly in research was the perceived conflict between what many young Muslims in Australia want for themselves from Australian society and what their parents and community want for them.

This was expressed as the older or parent generation being fearful of their children moving away from their culture and religion. A number of stakeholders felt that this fear is a result of there being a significant proportion of Muslim parents who, as a result of the circumstances of their migration and settlement, had not integrated as well as other community members with mainstream society. This situation has meant that many parents lack information, or have misinformation, about mainstream structures, how to navigate them, and what 'mainstream values' are. This was believed to significantly limit their ability to foster civic responsibility in their children.

Parents don't know what is going, they lack the information, so they are unable to effectively parent their children. They need information to be able to do it. (Stakeholder)

While the kids were moving forward, the parents were still where they were, they have not moved forward. And a lot of these parents depend on their kids for interpretation and being informed.

What we felt was that education has to go through parents. But how you access the parent is another barrier, particularly the mums are at home watching Arabic day television. And we are having that with a lot of the community's first generation accessing the television back home. You ask them anything that is happening on the television back home they will tell you, politically, everything. But they do not know what is happening here. They don't understand civic responsibilities of people here, because they don't understand local politics and so that is where the biggest gap is, the parents. (Stakeholder)

Many felt that communication and connection between parents and children were breaking down in many families, with social media and technology exacerbating the 'information gap'. As a result of poorly informed

parents, many young men are excluded from participating in 'non-Muslim' activities for fear that inclusion will prevent them from meeting their faith-based commitments and will challenge the traditions of the home. It was felt that some parents encourage separateness as a result, fostering isolationism and perpetuating insular and negative attitudes with respect to mainstream community involvement.

Our generation is doing OK getting involved in the wider community. But we are restricted because of their insulation and lack of involvement. If they get out a bit more, it will become easier for us. (Afghan, 19-30, NSW)

Most of my friends are non-Muslims, but I'm only able to socialise with them at uni. There is no way my mum will let me go see them or attend their birthday party even if they were across the road. (Afghan, 19-30, NSW)

If there are any camps with the public school, I will not send my kids. Because I don't know the people running them ... You need to build trust. What will they eat? What will they do? [It might be] opposite to the values I teach at home ... [they] need to understand what my expectations and requirements are. [The staff on the camp] might be Muslim, but not necessarily practising. (Stakeholder)

These examples highlight the need for outreach to families to provide information and help allay fears and concerns about activities outside a Muslim setting. It was strongly felt that, once a few families start permitting their sons or daughters to participate in activities they were previously hesitant about, this will help to pave the way for other families. In doing this, it is important to recognise and accept individuals who are more restrictive in relation to mainstream activities, and strategies need to be established with a long-term commitment to building bridges. Strategies for how this can be accomplished are discussed below under 'Outreach model for parents'.

One stakeholder, a youth worker, while identifying with these issues, expressed caution about equipping young people and at the same time leaving the parents behind. They felt that these circumstances may give rise to a situation where the intergenerational conflict is heightened, risking isolating young people from their primary support network. This highlights the need for strategies to target both parents and children. Examples of this are also discussed below under 'Outreach model for parents'.

The research clearly showed that parents' aspirations for their children, as well as their own education levels, impact on educational achievement and ambition in their children. Stakeholders spoke extensively of parents' tendencies to want to cocoon their children from influences beyond their local and cultural community that they neither understand nor feel part of. A consequence of this was a perception that young people lacked inspirational role models.

These kids have hardly anyone (in the community) that they can shine a light on and look up to. (Stakeholder)

The school is about 96% Muslim. None of the boys are getting out into the community to mingle or learn ... when they start working they just go and work for a cousin, brother, family friend, or uncle

*... they never have a chance to grow beyond their own cousins, brothers, family and community.
(Stakeholder)*

The research indicates that essential to addressing issues of poor participation are strategies to assist families and Muslim communities to foster a sense of advancement and achievement among young people. This then becomes the entry point into wider society, so that contributing to society instils a sense of pride. Contribution to all levels of society needs to be repositioned as another way of interpreting being Australian, being Islamic and being contributory.

A stakeholder provided an example of how a segment of the Somali community in Melbourne is dealing with just these issues. This community established a community initiative to address an issue where migrants (especially those arriving as refugees) may come to Australia with the belief that one day they will return to their home country, and therefore do not put down 'roots', given they are not sure whether they are going to make Australia their permanent home.

They identified this, and this particular Somali community said 'No' we are going to make this our country and change this mindset. They addressed issues where dad might be a taxi driver and son says "maybe one day I'll get married and be a taxi driver too". They set up homework programs within families on the premise that in Islam it says you must educate yourself, read and learn – so get out there. So they are actually using religious precept as a way of motivating young people – that education and advancement does not work against Islam.

Community leadership issues

While participants did report that their individual ethno/religious communities as generally supportive and connected, the Muslim community in Australia as a whole was often described as 'unorganised', 'confused', 'lacking in direction' and made up of divided groups working for their own narrow agendas. Many young men felt constrained by the perceived factionalism within Muslim communities, which was seen to represent specific sectoral interests. As well, the hierarchical nature of community leadership in Muslim communities was felt to inhibit opportunities for healthy debate and dialogue within the community, and has resulted in community activities that are not reflective of the needs of young people.

We want a sense of community, but we don't have the leadership.(Stakeholder)

Multiple comments during discussions also reflected a frustration that many participants have with the so-called 'community leaders' of their Islamic communities, associating them with words such as 'arrogant', 'aggressive' and 'unwilling to let go of power'. These comments were made irrespective of the ethno/religious groups with which participant identified.

There was much discussion across the research about 'inappropriate', 'self-appointed' leaders who had neither the skills nor commitment to promote community strengthening.

Our leaders are inappropriate. They often had to leave their own countries because of their political ideology. In Australia this ideology is in the mosques, sometimes in the schools, and sometimes gets support from government through funding. They are the small minority of Muslim

community in Australia, but unfortunately these are the ones that are in front of the media, they are the people's whose opinions are sought. They don't represent the ordinary non-politicised Muslim community member who just wants to raise their kids and pay the mortgage. (Stakeholder)

You will have people speaking in the name of Muslims but when they speak you wished they have never spoken, because they bring more grief on to us than it should have been in the first place. But who really cares about the community and who is really about themselves? (Stakeholder)

It was strongly felt that there needed to be a distinction between religious and community leaders. While imams, for example, were viewed as having a very important role in the community in terms of advising on matters of religion, they were seen to have inadequate skills and training to appropriately develop the community and promote acceptance and civic involvement.

Unfortunately my experience with some imams is they give the wrong advice. They are great people and their intentions are good. I think sometimes they can aggravate the situation – not all imams, but let's call them the more extreme, devout, literal interpretations of Islam – what they do is teach you to be more isolationist. They say don't even shake hands with them, don't even do this, don't look at them, don't meet with them. If you have non-Muslim friends then you might fall into the trap of becoming like them. There's a problem with that. They are not preaching integration as a message. (Stakeholder)

Leadership imbedded in the religious rather than community infrastructure

It was strongly felt that leadership should come from community infrastructure, not religious infrastructure, and that identified 'Muslim community leaders' were in many cases not seen to be representing the needs and views of their community. Concerns were raised about government funds being directed to 'inappropriate' leaders.

Appropriate leaders were identified as people who interact with community and have skills, training and experience in community development, and are able to be the figureheads for change.

[The Islamic community in Australia] is still in the embryonic stage of mature community development. The younger generations are not happy with the older structures anymore, which are much more political – we are not seeing the social services on the ground, and we need a more strategic vision for the future. (Stakeholder)

As a result of leadership embedded in the religious rather than community infrastructure, Muslim community leadership is not only failing to facilitate participation in the mainstream community, it is also an inhibitor to participation within individual communities. Across a range of ethnic groups, young men spoke about community activities being centred on politics or religion, which generally had limited appeal for them. Community activities/groups were associated with being neither entertaining nor interactive; being targeted at 'older' people; being focused on 'arguing', 'politics' and/or 'religion'; and having "limited agendas that appeal to the limited few".

If there was actually something provided by the community that I enjoyed, I would join in ... I would like to help little kids play footy. (Lebanese, 15-18, NSW)

It would be easy to say I'm going to an Afghan club, instead I have to lie and say I'm going to a friend's place in order to just go and play some pool. (Afghan, 19-30, NSW)

I'd like to go camping but no one in the community organises anything and we don't have the money unless someone gets us funding to go away. (Somali, 15-18, VIC)

Stakeholders also discussed opportunities for mosques and prayer areas to play more of a recreational role, beyond faith-based engagement, as well as providing opportunities for inter-faith relations. These comments should be considered in light of what constitutes culturally appropriate, safe or acceptable recreation or leisure activities, which varies widely among communities. These views vary in particular between generations due to the pre-migration experiences of parents and their exposure to these activities, compared to their children's experience through school, friends and other networks. It has been identified that the development of ethno-specific teams in organised team competitions, such as soccer, were seen by some parents as a means of cultural maintenance and something that these parents felt more comfortable with. This allowed participants and supporters (mainly parents) to feel a sense of belonging because they shared in the same language and culture with others involved in similar physical activity initiatives.⁵

Across the research it was felt that not enough effort was being directed at a community level towards developing activities that are engaging, yet not in conflict with their religious or cultural obligations. However, many felt these opportunities would not be realised until their community leaders allowed them more involvement in planning and decision-making at a community level. The following section provides more detail on this.

Lack of youth leadership opportunities and leadership tensions

In this research the Pakistani, Somali and Afghan young men in particular identified limited community infrastructure to support social and civic participation as a barrier, given these communities are generally less established than the Lebanese and Turkish communities. These groups also highlighted a lack of support services as being a major barrier to wider community involvement and volunteering. While many of these participants expressed the desire to volunteer in a range of areas (e.g. Islamic teaching, helping and caring for the elderly, sports mentoring), they argued that there was currently a lack of guidance and services which could help them get involved in these activities.

Many young men, irrespective of cultural background, spoke of frustration about a perceived lack of youth participation in decision-making and planning in community organisations. As already mentioned, participants often saw leaders as lacking in skill or education beyond religious matters, particularly in the area of community development, and this view was supported by stakeholders. Generational conflict further

⁵ "Active Sisters! Enhancing the community capacity for physical activity of isolated Islamic women pilot project", Multicultural Affairs Queensland, 2003

deepened this issue for participants, who perceived the older generation as unwilling to relinquish any power to younger generations.

The older generations are saying you don't do anything that takes leadership unless I say so, and there is a really terrible tense battle between the two groups. I think the older generations unfortunately don't want to let go, they won't let go. (Stakeholder)

One thing with this culture people don't understand, is that it's not your education and status, [it's] simply how old you are, you can be a leader and sit at the top. You don't put up your hands and give ideas as a young Afghan. If you don't obey these rules you'll be seen as an outsider. (Afghan, 19-30, NSW)

I'm involved in Afghan community radio – even though I cannot get to speak ... I just take my dad and elders there. I wish I had a chance to be more involved. (Afghan, 19-30, NSW)

Current leaders were seen to lack a vision for the next generation, and were seen to be neither promoting nor nurturing youth leadership, which was seen to be struggling. Stakeholders repeatedly identified the need for transition strategies to be put in place, with effort put into developing 'home grown' leadership.

They are just afraid because they've been there for a long time, they think if they leave their organisation is going to crumble, because it's all sitting on their shoulders, they think nobody else is capable of doing their role. (Stakeholder)

And they don't have trust in who's going to come next. (Stakeholder)

There is also the mid-level of young potential leaders who are quite professional and are challenging the older generation. But there is also the young ones left out, totally marginalised. (Stakeholder)

Strategies for addressing barriers

Opening dialogue between generations

The barriers discussed above relating to intergenerational conflict point to the need for strategies to open dialogue and increase mutual understanding between the older and younger generations of Muslim men.

Key features of these strategies are providing a neutral environment and facilitating interaction. By opening dialogue and creating opportunities for collaborative projects, participants are able to recognise each others' perspectives and capacity, leading to increased confidence and trust between the generations.

Good Practice Case Study 4: Bridging the Gap – Australian Multicultural Foundation (AMF)⁶

The research findings highlight the need to address the intergenerational issues that form a barrier to civic and social participation for young Muslim men. The Bridging the Gap project provides a good practice example of strategies to address these issues by facilitating dialogue between younger and older Muslim men with the aim of reducing marginalisation by empowering young men and elders within their communities and within the mainstream community.

The project brought together younger and older Muslim men from three communities with diverse cultural backgrounds in three separate forums to discuss issues they face as Muslim men living in Australia. The issues identified in the sessions were then discussed at a community forum, with participants from all three communities travelling to a farm in rural Victoria – a new and neutral setting which fostered an environment of coming together to talk as equals.

By providing a safe, non-threatening, independent environment, the program was able to encourage a dialogue (through facilitators and coordinators from within the communities) between younger and older Muslim men from diverse cultural backgrounds about the key challenges faced by the different generations.

During the course of the program, participants initiated a photographic exhibition which enabled the younger and older men to work collaboratively on a joint project. The men took photographs which communicated the messages they wished to convey around trust, developing relationships, and engaging with family, community and wider society, as well as achieving goals and leadership positions. This element of the program gave the dialogue more meaning and longevity by creating a shared space in which participants could contribute to the successful outcomes of a joint project. The shared project provided an opportunity for the older men to see the younger men's capacity and was also a project that engaged the mainstream community.

Bridging the Gap acted as a catalyst for change and empowered the communities to act. One stakeholder reported that feedback from participants indicated that there has been increased engagement, addressing some of the issues relating to feelings of disconnectedness, and that communities are developing leadership programs. Communities have shown interest in continuing the dialogue between the generations. Coordinators are hoping to develop a longer-lasting project and are looking to develop a national model.

The evidence is clear that genuine discourse between younger and older Muslim men is essential if Muslim communities are to address the intergenerational conflict and leadership issues they face, and encourage civic and social participation by younger Australian Muslim men. Bridging the Gap is an example of a community capacity-building strategy that effectively opened this dialogue and facilitated the relationship between the generations. The photographic exhibition is also a good practice example of a collaborative community activity that is relevant and appealing.

⁶ Further information is provided at Appendix 1.

Outreach model for parents

Another important mechanism for addressing intergenerational issues with respect to Muslim men is engaging in outreach with older generations. The research results detail the impact of older generations' lack of information about how to navigate mainstream structures, resulting in a hesitancy to encourage or support younger generations. This points to the need for parallel strategies that provide a supported framework which takes the community along with the younger generations, and a recognition that with any program there needs to be dialogue with parents.

Within this there is a need to look for opportunities to highlight shared values and engage in shared experiences. Initiatives to promote increased involvement of parents in schools was seen as integral to this, given schools are a primary link to mainstream society. Multicultural liaison officers were identified as key to facilitating this increased involvement.

As with any program, keeping parents informed and encouraging their involvement serves to empower them and make them feel more comfortable that young people are involved in safe and accommodating activities.

An example of this is a program called Busting the Myth Habibi,⁷ run as part of the Community Policing Partnership Project (outlined further in Good Practice Case Study 7 in 5.3 below). Its aim was to break down the barriers between Muslim youth, their families and police. Approximately 120 people of varying ages and cultural backgrounds attended the launch at Punchbowl Park. The main activity of the launch was an Oz Tag game between NSW Police and Muslim youth. It was reported by one of the stakeholders that this program resulted in young people moving forward from their perceptions of the police, yet their "parents had still not moved on". The initiative responded to this by targeting the parents through local schools.

What we started doing, we started working with the schools' liaison officers and just having parents workshops at the schools. Parents drop off their kids and then join the police for a workshop on what policing is, who the police are and what the police do. We just started off to familiarise the community with who police are, because even though people have been here for so long, they do not know, because people assume that if somebody has been here for 30, 40 years they know, but they do not know. (Stakeholder)

Youth involvement in decision-making

It was recognised that encouraging youth leadership needs to be done with respect and an acknowledgement of the contribution the established leaders have made, rather than creating an impression that leaders are being ousted because they are 'past their use-by date'. It was felt that leaders do not need to let go entirely, but they do need to allow the voice of young people to be heard and understood.

⁷ This project was launched on 14 July 2009 and is the result of a joint partnership between Metro Migrant Resource Centre, Campsie Local Area Command and Riverwood Community Centre.

Participants articulated a need to work with elders to encourage them to work more collaboratively with younger community members and accept the involvement of young people in community development so that community activities are more relevant and appealing to younger people. Many saw the facilitation of this relationship as the responsibility of government, perhaps because they felt unable to impact the status quo themselves.

Need to have a gateway open to our elders to communicate with the government. (Afghan, 19-30, NSW)

There is a need for community consultation throughout any program development process to assure members of the specific community that these are suitable and appealing activities. Within this there also needs to be a forum through which such elders could liaise with the youth that these programs are targeted towards, as a major issue consistently discussed by participants was a lack of consultation between young people and community elders concerning the programs they were supposed to use.

We have an issue at the moment in the Liverpool area where the young Sudanese Muslim kids are trying to speak out but older community is starting to see challenging power and they don't want to let go of that challenge so they keep crushing it. So the kids have actually come to me and said we want to do this and this. So I went to the adults, because I am very close to them, and I said would you authorise me to take these kids on a journey and give them some responsibility? And we have actually established a youth centre at one of the local sports clubs that is managed by the youth. They have their own executive council, their own treasurer, the president and they report on a monthly basis to the governing body, which is the central local committee. And the parents were surprised by what these kids have achieved and how much they have spoken out. (Stakeholder)

Good Practice Case Study 5: Leadership Australia – A New Generation – Australian Multicultural Foundation (AMF)⁸

The research findings highlight the need for and value of mentoring programs, and the need to foster leadership skills in young Muslim Australians. Leadership Australia – A New Generation is a good practice example of a program that trains young Australian Muslims as leaders and mentors, able to represent the views of young Australian Muslims to the mainstream community while at the same time being available to young Muslims within their community as mentors and leaders.

The program involved an initial three-day intensive training course. The course covered topics such as leadership skills in mentoring, public speaking, communications, working with the media, community networking, innovation and entrepreneurship, conflict resolution and team-building.

⁸ Further information is provided at Appendix 1.

Following the course, participants were required to complete several tasks, applying the knowledge and skills gained in the course. These tasks were undertaken in consultation with steering committee members and involved identifying and contacting a mentor to support them; initiating and undertaking two public speaking engagements (one to a school and one to a broader community forum) about issues relating to Islam that would educate, engage, and increase the understanding of the audience; and arranging a personal media interview; arranging and participating in a meeting with either the Premier, the Multicultural Affairs Minister or the Parliamentary Secretary for Multicultural Affairs and Settlement Services with a view to introducing themselves as a young person interested in being engaged within the community.

The alumni of 34 students/participants demonstrate a broad array of talent and experience. Many are actively involved in volunteering in Muslim community organisations and many are working in youth development and education. The AMF has made use of the expertise of the alumni in its own work, and encourages government agencies and community organisations to tap into the talents and resources of the alumni to cultivate their leadership qualities and develop their networks and contacts.

By enhancing and fostering the skills and talents of this group of young people and providing ongoing guidance and support, Leadership Australia – A New Generation provides Australian Muslim communities with young people who are able to represent and support young Muslim Australians and provide positive role models and mentorship. Programs such as this increase community confidence and encourage community leaders to allow young Muslim Australians greater involvement in planning and decision-making at a community level.

Creating Muslim community links to mainstream activities

An important aspect of increasing community engagement of young Muslim men is fostering a genuine partnership between the Islamic and wider Australian communities. Participants suggested that not all activities geared towards them needed to be culturally or religiously based, and many expressed a desire to be able to spend more time with others from outside their immediate community groups. While these participants expressed a desire to become involved in community programs, they were unsure as to where they should begin in order to facilitate this involvement.

The research identified a lack of Muslim community capacity to create its own links into the mainstream for Muslim youth. This stems from a lack of knowledge about mainstream structures and how to access them. A number of young men expressed the need to be ‘introduced’ to activities not specifically targeted at people from their religious/cultural background – “we wait until invited, and don’t just barge in”.

The research also identified that initiatives such as Harmony Day and mosque open days help to facilitate links between Muslim and non-Muslim communities. While some stakeholders felt that the reach of these does not extend beyond ‘preaching to the converted’, nevertheless they are an opportunity for Muslim communities to reach out and engage in cross-cultural exchange.

Good Practice Case Study 6: Mizaan, Ecology Awareness Program – Cooks River Regeneration Project – al-Ghazzali Centre for Islamic Sciences and Human Development⁹

The research findings indicate that Muslim communities need to increase their capacity to facilitate introduction into, and linkages with, the broader Australian community. Fostering a higher level of volunteering and creating partnerships with government and mainstream organisations is seen as a way of facilitating these linkages and increasing the civic participation of Muslim Australian men. The Mizaan Cooks River Regeneration Project is a good practice example of how Muslim communities can form these partnerships and create links with the mainstream Australian community while at the same time providing a social forum and facilitating and stimulating skills enhancement among community members.

To initiate the project, the al-Ghazzali Centre approached the City of Canterbury Council (CCC) to undertake a project that would connect the community with the environment. A partnership was formed with the CCC and the Sydney Metropolitan Catchment Management Authority (SMCMA) which led to the Mizaan Cooks River Regeneration Project. As part of the project, the al-Ghazzali Centre coordinates a group of young volunteers who undertake work on a monthly basis to regenerate a stretch of the Cooks River to increase biodiversity and habitat for native fauna. The CCC and SMCMA provide plants and tools, and present volunteer training days in biodiversity, fauna and bushcare. Reinforcing the links with the broader Australian community, regular progress reports are delivered and video clips are posted on YouTube.

It is reported that the project has been hugely successful. The volunteers have expressed great satisfaction from their involvement in making a valuable contribution to the wellbeing of the local environment and the community; this highlights the value of programs such as these that facilitate effective participation. The social aspect of the project was also highlighted as a key benefit, with young people working with and getting to know people beyond their community.

The group's commitment to the project inspired the CCC and the SMCMA to film a short documentary to be used as a promotional tool to encourage local community organisations to become involved in similar volunteering projects. It is reported that the strength of the partnerships that have been formed with the al-Ghazzali Centre, the CCC and the SMCMA as a result of the project will extend to future projects following completion. The project has also motivated similar ventures in other Muslim communities in Australia and New Zealand.

⁹ Further information is provided at Appendix 1.

5.3 MAINSTREAM SOCIETAL CAPACITY TO SUPPORT PARTICIPATION

The third factor affecting social and civic participation by young Muslim men in mainstream Australian society is mainstream society itself. While individual actions and Muslim community practices will have a strong impact on young Muslim men's participation, significant advances can only be made if communication and participation is a 'two-way street'.

Barriers affecting participation

In the literature Yasmeen (2008) considers how individuals feel they cannot participate as citizens because they *perceive* social conditions and institutions as limiting, and that social and governmental agencies portray them as outsiders. Yasmeen identified many factors that contribute to a sense of exclusion, including the role of the media in representing Muslims and Islam, the role of the Australian government (e.g. 'border protection' policies), the lack of knowledge about Islam among non-Muslims, and insular and negative attitudes among some Muslims. These findings are completely supported by the feedback gained from both the young participants and the stakeholders consulted for this research.

Yasmeen points out that the perception of exclusion may be at variance with the reality of exclusion. This incongruence cannot be ignored as it impacts on the way an individual and/or community interacts in their environment. Mainstream organisations need to be cognisant of these perceptions and need to respond to them by engaging in positive strategies to actively promote inclusion to overcome the significant barriers they create.

This section explores the range of barriers identified through the research that relate to mainstream society's capacity to support social and civic participation.

Negative representation in media and politics

There is a significant range of literature (e.g. see Yasmeen 2008; Chafic 2008, Pittaway & Muli 2009, DIAC 2008) indicating that Muslim men regard that the Australian media and Australian political leaders have a social responsibility to prevent sensationalising the image of Muslims and Islam, and to give the public a clear and unambiguous message upholding community harmony and social inclusion, especially in the light of recent anti-terrorism laws and the 'alert but not alarmed' anti-terrorism advertising campaign – officially known as 'Let's Look Out for Australia' (Australian Government 2008).

Much of the discussion with young Muslim men and stakeholders in this research around wider society's capacity to support social and civic participation for young Muslim men centred on the impact of racial and religious vilification toward and negative stereotyping of Muslim communities in Australia within a social inclusion framework. The literature review (see Chapter 3 and Appendix 2) provides a detailed analysis of the impact of this on identity, belonging and ability to participate.

Participants felt that wider society needs to look at itself critically and reflect on practices whereby media and politicians openly use racialised language for political gain, such as 'queue jumpers' and 'illegals'. The impact of talkback radio perpetuating these negative stereotypes was raised throughout discussions.

When people say all Muslims are terrorists and that we are all the same, we are not ... whenever there is a problem it is blamed on Muslims. (Somali, 15-18, VIC)

I don't like being associated with criminal elements who claim they are Muslims ... our religion is on trial ... the media is uninformed about what Islam is. (Turkish, 19-30, VIC)

Participants discussed issues such as the need for words like 'tolerance' to be replaced with others such as 'accommodate', the need to dissociate 'Islam' from 'terrorist', and the perceived negative messages of 'border protection' campaigns such as 'be alert not alarmed'. Discussions around harassment included stories of women having their hijabs pulled, name-calling, and more subtle harassment such as feelings that the Australian flag is used in a threatening way, on Australia Day for example.

All those external factors ... the media as well as politics play pretty heavily on people's perceptions. (Stakeholder)

Systemic discrimination

Issues associated with systemic discrimination are identified in the literature and were discussed by both stakeholders and the young men participating in the research in relation to the barriers affecting an individual's capacity for social and civic participation.

A number of stakeholders referred to a belief that Muslim people, especially those from Middle Eastern countries or with names that clearly identified them as Muslim (e.g. Mohammed), experienced more difficulty gaining employment, and these assertions are supported in the literature. A few participants relayed anecdotes of people known to them who, unable to find employment, had changed their name and subsequently received call-backs almost immediately.

Participants articulated a perceived bias that police had against groups of young Muslim men (particularly from African countries) gathering together. Participants reported feeling hassled by the police and believed that when they were seen with friends it was automatically assumed that they were a 'gang'. This was discussed in 4.2 above in relation to the impact that perceived racism and stereotyped association of Islam with antisocial behaviour has on the self-esteem of young Muslim men.

As noted in the literature review (see Chapter 3 and Appendix 2), the role of government can also limit social and civic participation of Muslim Australians. There are cases referred to in the literature where Australian Muslim communities wanted to pursue community development initiatives but were met with obstruction, objection or challenges – such as difficulties obtaining development application (DA) approval from councils.

The capacity of mainstream structures to be inclusive

The research indicates that Muslim men perceive that negative representations of Islam and systemic discrimination affect mainstream community's ability to understand and connect with Muslim people, with a lot of discussion being about the perception and misconceptions of non-Muslims towards Muslim people and Islam.

No one understands you because of your culture. (Afghan, 15-18, VIC)

It was felt that these misconceptions impact on the willingness and ability of mainstream organisations to welcome and accommodate Muslim Australians.

Muslim men are not welcomed in structures out there in society, in councils, government, they are not consulted. (Lebanese, 20-30, NSW)

Research participants' articulated a number of issues that indicate a lack of capacity of mainstream organisations to support participation by Muslim Australians. These are summarised as follows:

- A lack of consultation and engagement with Muslim communities about their cultural, religious and community needs
- A lack of accommodation of cultural and religious needs (e.g. halal food, prayer facilities), particularly in employment
- Mainstream organisations failing to understand the fears of community members about their faith-based values not being observed in mainstream activities
- Not understanding that many Muslim Australians fear they will be pigeonholed or discriminated against in mainstream structures
- Not understanding that this lack of knowledge and fear will impact on Muslim communities' ability to seek out organisations/activities out that are unfamiliar to them
- Mainstream organisations failing to understand the need for active outreach and promotion that demonstrates an understanding of people's varying backgrounds and experiences and cultural values, and that structures are in place to protect these.

This research found that it was absolutely crucial that mainstream organisations engage in active outreach to communicate to Muslim communities and make them feel included. The research shows that there are very strong perceptions among many Muslims Australians that they are not welcome in wider society, and that wider society cannot accommodate their specific cultural and religious needs. Having the capacity to accommodate cultural and religious needs in and of itself cannot overcome these barriers, because perceptions of exclusion can impact on an individual's confidence to seek out mainstream community activities. Therefore, for mainstream organisations to be considered inclusive, they need to *demonstrate* that inclusiveness to Muslim communities and individuals by putting strategies in place to communicate that willingness and capacity, such as active outreach.

Specific good practice examples of how to do this are detailed below.

Strategies for addressing barriers

Perceptions about mainstream society's capacity to be inclusive create barriers to both civic and social participation by Muslim men, and strategies are required that enable mainstream organisations to be more inclusive. The types of interventions that can be implemented are discussed below.

Addressing negative stereotypes and improving perceptions

The research highlights the community's lack of knowledge and awareness of Muslims and a lack of confidence to work cross-culturally. Strategies need to be put in place to address the negative stereotypes identified throughout the research and in the literature, and to make people aware that mainstream and Islamic values are not incongruent. What is required is information and resources to balance these negative representations and increase knowledge and awareness about Muslim communities and the Islamic faith.

In order to overcome these strong perceptions and depict Muslim communities in a positive light, information and resources need to cut across a range of media. Strategies could include:

- Actively generating positive media stories, highlighting the achievements of Muslim Australians in all sectors of wider Australian society
- Generating resources that depict Muslims positively engage in Australian society,¹⁰ with strategies to promote these to wide Muslim and non-Muslim audiences.
- Addressing the lack of Muslim representation in mainstream media by promoting and funding specific content on television – placing Muslim Australians in positive roles and everyday roles
- Guidelines on how to approach Islamic communities, i.e. information that will increase the confidence and ability of mainstream sectors to reach and to accommodate the needs of Muslim Australians.

The DigiDiaries project has been outlined in Good Practice Case Study 1 (at 5.1 above). Programs like this provide a wealth of material and are an important resource for depicting Muslim Australians in a positive way. Encouraging Muslim Australians to tell their stories is an effective way of disseminating cultural information about the diverse backgrounds and experiences of Muslim Australians. Opportunities such as these should be supported and seen as a source of information and content for implementing some of the strategies outlined above.

Incentives for appropriate journalism and fostering more balanced, less sensational stories could also be considered as a way of counter-balancing the negative portrayal of Muslim communities in the media. An example of this strategy being used with another highly stigmatised issue – the reporting of suicide – is the

¹⁰ For an example of this see *The Australian Journey – Muslim communities*
http://www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/multicultural/pdf_doc/australian-journey-muslim-communities.pdf

Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing's Mindframe National Media Initiative,¹¹ which aims to influence media coverage of issues related to mental illness and suicide by encouraging responsible, accurate and sensitive portrayals.

Guarding against systemic discrimination

The research highlights a number of systemic issues that are seen by young Muslim men to amount to discrimination. To address these, Muslim Australians need to be equipped with knowledge and understanding of their rights, and clear and accessible pathways to appropriate complaint mechanisms. This could be achieved, for example, through popular media, such as a short film which provides young Muslim Australians with information about their rights in certain situations (e.g. seeking employment, interacting with the justice system).

This research and the literature also identified the need to equip young Muslim Australians with the tools to respond to perceived racism and discrimination, so that, rather than retreating back into their ethno-religious group or identity, they are able to confidently negotiate the mainstream environment.

Opportunities for cross-cultural exchange

Building trust and opening dialogue

The literature demonstrates that opportunities for building trust and confidence are integral to community relations and belonging. The literature review provides details of research that indicates that the ability to trust strangers, especially those who are from different backgrounds, promotes civic engagement and community building, which have been associated with social and economic benefits for communities. Those with a high degree of 'generalised trust' are more active in the community, are more cooperative, and are more likely to engage and get along with people from different backgrounds.

Trust needs to be built in a number of ways:

- Mainstream organisations need to trust that they will not be adversely affected by accommodating the needs of Muslim communities
- Muslim communities need to trust that their participation in mainstream organisations will not compromise their religious values
- Muslim communities need to trust that they will not be vilified or discriminated against.

Creating opportunities for cross-cultural exchange and facilitating dialogue is key to building trust and confidence between Muslim and non-Muslim Australians, and is necessary to overcoming the barriers (both perceived and real) preventing Muslim Australian men from feeling welcome in the mainstream community,

¹¹ For further information see www.mindframe-media.info.

thereby impacting on their social and civic participation. The need for opening dialogue and building trust was identified by stakeholders, who spoke of the need for mutual understanding between Muslim and non-Muslim Australians and noted that 'both sides' need to work towards this.

There is a difference between being heard and being understood, okay? People can be heard. There is a difference. I can hear someone and understand and try to twist it in my own way and really understanding what they are saying, there is a big difference. Muslim people do speak, Muslim communities do speak but the perception out there is not allowing the true words to be heard with the true meaning. The perception changes things and to change perception is very hard, okay? So there is difference between heard and being understood, very big difference.
(Stakeholder)

Schools were seen as a prime location for strategies to encourage cross-cultural exchange and increased knowledge and awareness among Muslim and non-Muslim Australians. An example of one such strategy is Learning from One Another: Bringing Muslim Perspectives into Australian Schools, a workshop and teacher resource initiative developed by the National Centre of Excellence for Islamic Studies (NCEIS) Australia in collaboration with the Australian Curriculum Studies Association.¹²

This resource provides teachers with lesson plans, worksheets and information on the cultural practices and attitudes of Muslims, as well as details about the Islamic world's contributions to mathematics, philosophy and architecture. It also offers teachers practical suggestions about how to respect Muslim cultural beliefs while still engaging students in school activities.

Partnerships and collaboration

Integral to the notion of building trust is the need for mainstream organisations to reach out to Muslim communities, and for partnerships and collaborations to be formed between mainstream and community organisations. Stakeholders identified the importance of the role of police in this kind of outreach, and the benefit of programs in partnership with police. Multicultural liaison officers in mainstream organisations, such as schools and police services, play an important role in this.

Good Practice Case Study 7: Community Policing Partnership Project (CPPP) – Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) and AMF¹³

The research findings indicate that there are structural barriers to the participation of Muslim men in broader Australian society, and there is a need for key mainstream structures to engage in active outreach to Muslim communities, and create links with the mainstream Australian community. The Community Policing Partnership Project (CPPP) is a good practice example of this whereby mainstream services (police services) effectively

¹² This initiative is funded by the Myer Foundation and is supported by the Departments of Education in QLD, SA, WA, ACT and TAS <http://www.nceis.unimelb.edu.au/school-education/learning-one-another>

¹³ Further information is provided at Appendix 1.

engage in a 'whole of community' approach to address the individual needs of a community while at the same time addressing a broader societal/community issue.

The CPPP is a national initiative that provides funding to individual community initiatives/programs in multiple locations around Australia that are collaborative projects between local police services and the local community aimed at building relationships and a sense of trust between community groups and police. Applications for funding under the CPPP are only considered if partnerships have been formed between police and community groups that are aimed at addressing issues identified as relevant to the individual community. Priority is also given to those projects that demonstrate a capacity to expand the partnership to include other relevant sectors, including government, community and business. In this way, the CPPP aims to create successful pathways and foster a genuine partnership between Muslim communities and the mainstream community. To date, 38 programs nationally have received funding under the CPPP.

It was reported that feedback in relation to all the projects funded under the CPPP has been overwhelmingly positive, with some stakeholders reporting 'huge successes' in relation to the establishment of sustainable relationships between police and local Muslim communities, and in some instances the lessons from the projects have been incorporated into local police operations. Some specific examples are outlined below.

A Day in the Life is a collaborative project between the Auburn Youth Centre (AYC), Auburn Police Flemington Local Area Command (LAC) and Auburn Council, funded under the CPPP. The project involved the making of a short film, *A Day in the Life*, which was developed and produced collaboratively by a group of local male youths (the majority of whom identify as Muslim), youth workers from AYC, and local police officers. The three groups star in the film which depicts the story of two boys, one of whom attends school and does well, and the other who does not attend school and finds himself involved in a crime. The film follows this boy's experience of being interviewed and charged by police and his eventual link-up with programs through the AYC.

It was reported that the project enhanced relationships and increased trust between local Muslim youth and local police. One stakeholder reported that some of the boys were initially reluctant to participate in a project with police on account of previous experiences, yet the parties were able to work through these issues and work collaboratively on the project. At the same time as building relationships, the project educated the young people about law and order issues, created an educational tool for use in the community, and equipped the young people with communication, negotiation, writing and acting skills.

The film is in the final stages of post-production, and once the final version is complete it will be shown to parents and families and will be showcased at a launch. Copies will be made available at libraries, schools and community organisations.

The Muslim and African Police in Harmony Project (M.a.A.P) is a collaborative project between the Granville Multicultural Community Centre and Granville Police Rosehill LAC, funded under the CPPP. The project involved a monthly event comprising games of football (soccer) between police and local youth (the majority of whom identified as Muslim), a barbecue, and workshops covering issues of concern to the community (two workshops focused on parents and community leaders), police and young people.

It was reported that the football was the key to engaging the young men in the events, the barbecues provided an opportunity for them to socialise with the police, and the workshops provided the young people with a forum to voice their concerns, including being racially profiled and targeted by police. Engagement in the project by the young men is not only evidenced by their attendance at the events but also by reports that they are constantly asking youth workers about when the next event is to happen. One stakeholder reported that this engagement,

along with a strong commitment by local police, has led to an enhanced and sustainable relationship between police and the local African and Muslim community, particularly young men.

All parties are committed to sustaining the project long term, and the Rosehill LAC has promoted the program to the NSW Police Force as a best practice approach to community policing. Building on the enthusiasm for football and the ensuing engagement of the young participants in events, community organisations have applied for funding to send young participants to refereeing and coaching training as a way of engaging and connecting them with casual employment that is appealing and that would create links to the mainstream Australian community.

Sport as an enabler

The CCCP case study highlights that sport, seen as a key feature of Australian culture, is an important avenue for breaking down barriers between Muslim and non-Muslim Australians. Barriers to participation in mainstream structures has prevented many young Muslim men from accessing mainstream sport, which is highlighted by stakeholders as a key avenue for enabling young Muslim men's participation in mainstream structures.

To address these issues, the Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY) is undertaking the Multicultural Sport and Recreation Program,¹⁴ which aims to create a more responsive sports sector attuned to the needs of refugee and migrant young people, as well as increasing their access and participation in sport and recreation. As part of the program, the CMY has developed a set of resources that includes 'tip sheets' and best practice models containing practical strategies to encourage greater participation in sport and recreation activities.¹⁵

The following case study is a demonstration of how to address some of the barriers to participation in the context of sport.

Good Practice Case Study 8: Football United – Refugee Youth Soccer Development Program – University of New South Wales (UNSW) School of Public Health and Community Medicine¹⁶

Football United is a good practice example of a program that uses organised sport as a pathway for reaching out to refugee and migrant communities, helping to overcome barriers and assisting transition into Australian society.

Football United uses a football (soccer) development program as a mechanism for promoting wellbeing and fostering social inclusion and respect for cultural, ethnic and religious differences. Its participants include many

¹⁴ The Program receives its funding from VicHealth and the Department of Planning and Community Development: <http://www.cmy.net.au/MulticulturalSport/AbouttheProgram>

¹⁵ <http://www.cmy.net.au/MulticulturalSport/PublicationsandResources#ResourceKits>

¹⁶ Further information is provided at Appendix 1.

Afghan, Iraqi and African Muslim youth, and it has created extensive partnerships with stakeholders such as local, state and national football organisations, government agencies, local councils and businesses, community groups and other not-for-profit organisations.

Programs include but are not limited to 'football in the park', a weekly weekend coaching and playing program for refugees and local residents providing a bridge to participation in organised mainstream football clubs, organisations and competitions; weekly in-school and after-school programs in partnership with local schools and Intensive English Language Centres; inter-school football tournaments; gala days; school holiday camps incorporating football activities and leadership and mentoring workshops; futsal (indoor football) programs; taking participants to special events such as Soccerroos and Sydney FC matches; leadership programs; and coaching courses and referee training, with participants gaining certification.

Through its training programs, Football United also enables participants to engage in coaching or refereeing opportunities with Football United. For those who are certified as referees, it also provides employment opportunities with mainstream football clubs and associations. Experienced coaches and referees mentor the participants, improving self-esteem and confidence.

Broad community consultation was undertaken at the program development stage. This identified, among other things, that, although a large number of refugee and young people participate in informal, unstructured football games, the fact that refugee and migrant young people are under-represented in structured or formalised sport is well documented. In addition to inhibitors such as cost and transport, it was found that mainstream community sport also lacked the ability to accommodate the needs of refugee and migrant participants.

By providing a range of opportunities for participation in football activities, Football United has provided a safe and accessible environment for newly arrived migrant youth to participate in football activities. By fostering relationships with mainstream football organisations and clubs, Football United has also provided opportunities for inclusion into mainstream football. At the same time, it has increased the ability of mainstream football organisations to be inclusive. For example, extra sessions were added to coaching courses run by Football NSW to cater for refugee and migrant youth's different experiences of the sport, and fees for coaching and refereeing courses are waived for Football United participants.

In addition, the program recognises and understands the concerns of parents. It keeps them informed about when activities are organised, and encourages parental involvement. For example, parents participate in coaching on a weekly basis. In this way, the program recognises that sports can engage the entire community and can be used to address intergenerational and cross-cultural issues.

The success of the leadership development and community capacity-building aspects of the Football United programs is exemplified by a group of young male participants from Sierra Leone and Sudan who obtained their own grant through the Foundation for Young Australians' Spark Fund to develop and manage drop-in futsal programs and to participate as a team in local futsal competitions. These men have emerged as leaders and respected mentors in their community. By not just participating but by creating opportunities for themselves and their communities, they have developed a sense of belonging and contributing.

To sustain the running of its programs, Football United also runs a volunteer development program which creates bridges between refugee participants and broader community volunteers. The program provides opportunities for volunteers to mentor, coach, assist administratively and participate in Football United events. Volunteers undertake training on working with refugee communities and young people. Soccerroos and Matildas players have also participated in Football United activities and events; for example, Sydney FC player and Soccerroo Alex

Brosque and Central Coast Mariners player Ahmed Elrich are Football United ambassadors.

Football United will be sending one of the 32 teams participating in the 2010 Football for Hope Festival, an official event of the FIFA World Cup™ in South Africa, having formed a national partnership with the Football Federation Australia (FFA).

Football United events and news are promoted on Twitter and Facebook.

The importance of long-term funding

Long-term funding of programs to support community development and individual capacity-building was cited by a number of stakeholders as key to addressing the barriers to civic and social participation experienced by Muslim men. Numerous examples were cited of programs and services ceasing to continue because of a lack of funding and a lack of resources to support and motivate volunteers. Stakeholders noted that, rather than funding a series of pilot programs and short-term initiatives, longer-term commitment to programs is needed. The requirement that new funding be linked to new initiatives, rather than building on existing programs, was also cited as wasteful and likely to perpetuate the resource problem, as was a view that programs are unlikely to have an impact in the short term.

Empower the communities to do the work that they are already doing ... there is a lot of really great programs being conducted already – however, the scope is small because of their budget. (Stakeholder)

The need for funding support for community organisations was also discussed, as these organisations were consistently identified as integral to enabling participation among young Muslim Australians.

It is happening, there are Muslim groups that are trying, like Mission of Hope, Affinity, and for example I know one Afghan organisation called Lighthouse and they have got mentoring groups that do a mentorship programme and they have little courses just to empower them, so it is happening, but as I said they are not well organised – it is a funding issue – but [there are] little projects around. There are about 23 Muslim organisations at least in Sydney and I think at least 20 would be completely unfunded so they are doing tremendous work, but they could do a lot more if they had particularly infrastructure funding. You can get funding to do projects here and there but you cannot get funding to run an office and have someone answer the phone and things like that. So funding is really important. There would be a lot more work done if there was a bit more funding available. (Stakeholder)

Long-term funding of programs that develop individual capacity and support community capacity-building is necessary in order to address the barriers to civic and social participation faced by Muslim Australian men. Many programs exist (often small scale) that attempt to do just this, and a number of these have been cited as case studies in this chapter. These existing programs should be identified with a view to assessing the value of supporting their growth and development.

Investment in other strategies to increase the mainstream community's capacity for social inclusion is also necessary, particularly to address negative community perceptions and media portrayal of Islam and the mainstream community's lack of knowledge, awareness and confidence to engage with Muslims.

6. KEY CONSIDERATIONS FROM THE RESEARCH

This research demonstrates the extent to which many young Muslim men in Australia, particularly those who are socioeconomically disadvantaged, struggle with issues of identity and belonging, both within their ethno/religious community and in the wider mainstream community. The link between belonging and participation is consistently raised in the literature on Muslim young people. The issues relating to social exclusion as experienced by young Muslim men in Australia manifest in a range of barriers to social and civic participation and community engagement. These barriers interconnect in the context of three different capacities required for participation: an individual's capacity for participation; the Muslim communities' capacity to support participation; and the mainstream community's capacity to support participation.

For an individual to actively participate in community they need to have base-level skills in presentation, communication, language and intercultural knowledge. The research suggests that many young Muslim men in Australia do not have these skills, and this impacts on their self-esteem, resilience and motivation to set goals. In the context of young Muslim men in Australia, this situation is a result of settlement challenges; language and literacy issues; lower levels of educational attainment among some segments of the community; socioeconomic disadvantage; and limited access to peer support, positive role models and mentors.

The self-esteem and resilience of young Muslim men are also influenced by external factors relating to the influence of the Muslim community itself and the wider community. Intergenerational conflict, community leadership concerns and lack of opportunities for youth participation and decision-making in community structures have resulted in Muslim communities in Australia failing to broker young Muslim men's access to opportunities for social and civic participation beyond their ethno/religious community.

Contributing to a sense of exclusion are issues relating to mainstream society's capacity to support social and civic participation, including the role of the media in representing Islam, lack of knowledge about Muslim communities amongst non-Muslims, media and politicians openly using racialised language for political gain, systemic discrimination, and a lack of capacity of mainstream structures to be inclusive.

The research clearly demonstrates that there needs to be considerable investment in programs and initiatives that address the three different capacities required for participation (individual, Muslim community and mainstream community). Without an understanding of how these capacities affect each other, mechanisms for addressing barriers to social and civic participation will have limited impact. It is also clear that emphasis placed solely on building individual capacity, without addressing community and societal issues, may serve to further marginalise young Muslim men.

7. RECOMMENDED ACTIVITY GUIDELINES

This chapter of the report outlines a number of broad activity guidelines which act as suggestions of good practice for programs and projects supporting social and civic participation for Australian Muslim men. These guidelines draw on information from the various data sources that informed the research findings for this project. These are:

- Existing literature, research and data review
- Young Muslim men - the primary target audience of this project
- Key stakeholders and representatives of organisations with a role in supporting civic and social participation
- Case-studies of good practice

While the guidelines provide a set of evidence-based 'good practice' principles for consideration in the development of programs and projects supporting social and civic participation for Australian Muslim men, there may also potential for wider application, for example supporting participation for a large number of individuals in a group context beyond a Muslim setting.

It should be noted that these guidelines are only guides, can change over time, and have been formed on the basis of the methodology of this report alone.

7.1 ENHANCING SELF-ESTEEM AND RESILIENCE BY BUILDING PERSONAL CAPACITY AND SKILLS

Background

The demographic profile of Muslim Australians shows that while there is a high level of educational attainment among many Muslims in Australia, this is not reflected in employment statistics. The Muslim male unemployment rate is more than twice as high as overall Australian males, and even higher among newly arrived migrants. Economic exclusion significantly affects how accepted and integrated into society an individual feels, which impacts on their capacity and willingness for participation both within their individual community and wider society.

Socio-economic disadvantage among some segments of the Muslim community contributes to poor literacy, poor school retention, lack of hope, lack of ambition and difficulties settling and working toward goals. The research identified a lack of aspirational role models for young Muslim people and insufficient community resources directed to providing those role models.

People with strong personal resilience who are very comfortable with their ethnicity are more able to enter the mainstream with that comfort and are likely to have greater skills and knowledge about how to negotiate the external environment. If they are challenged they are more likely to see it as something they can overcome. For others, when they feel that challenge, rather than having the confidence to deal with it, they retreat back into their ethno-religious group or identity. The research pointed to the link between a strong sense of belonging and self-esteem and propensity to social and civic involvement.

Principle

Activities aiming to improve the wellbeing and participation for Muslim men need to understand the multiple barriers to engagement faced by many young Muslim people, and the impact of these on self-esteem, resilience and skill and capacity for participation.

Suggested ways to achieve this principle

Following are suggested strategies for achieving this principle:

- Programs that aim to enhance life skills, presentation skills, careers advice, and goal-setting for young Muslim men help to address the barriers relating to individual capacity and a lack of self-esteem and confidence, that affect the civic and social participation of young Muslim men, and exacerbate the situation of economic exclusion and marginalisation.

Examples: Kar Kulture (Case study 3, page 49) and The Navigator Program (Case study 2, page 47).

- Mentoring programs targeting young people are able to provide life skills, careers advice, presentation skills, conflict resolution, anger management, goal setting, leadership and access to positive role models.

Examples: Leadership Australia – A New Generation (Case study 5, page 58) and Football United (Case study 8, page 68).

- Like sport, creative arts was identified as a key enabler to engaging young Muslim men, and a useful tool for the development of individual skills. They can also provide social opportunities and can be a mechanism to support career and employment opportunities, and are often an entry-point to the broader Australian community.

Examples: DigiDiaries (Case study 1, page 46) and Football United (Case study 8, page 68).

- In order to address the systemic issues that are seen by young Muslim men to amount to discrimination, Muslim Australians need to be equipped with knowledge and understanding of their rights, together with clear and accessible pathways to appropriate complaint mechanisms. The research also highlighted the need to equip young Muslim Australians with the tools to respond to perceived racism and discrimination, so that, rather than retreating back into their ethno-religious group or identity, they are able to confidently negotiate the mainstream environment. This may be achieved through the production of popular media, for example a short film which provides young Muslim Australians with the requisite information about their rights in certain situations, for example, seeking employment or contact with the justice system.

7.2 ‘THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS’ – STRENGTHENING PERSONAL IDENTITIES AND MAKING CONNECTIONS TO BROADER SOCIETY

Background

Access to many communities and the capacity to participate within them provide people with greater opportunities to advance in society. In Australia, for people who belong to smaller ethnic and religious groups (e.g. Afghan Muslims, Somali Muslims), belonging to communities outside of their ethno-religious communities is important for increasing opportunities for social and civic participation.

At the same time, a supportive network of close friends, family and other people with shared values, are important for promoting a sense of belonging, as well as friendship, and a network of people and resources that can be drawn upon in times of need.

In this study, the majority of participants almost totally placed themselves within communities defined by ethnicity and religion. Participants expressed pride about their cultural/religious background, and the support, sense of belonging and moral framework it provided. However, the research also indicated very little cross over between the ‘Australian community’ and ‘Islamic community’, and found young Muslim men face conflict in moving from one community to another, with sometimes serious social consequences for the individual.

Principle

Activities aiming to best improve wellbeing and participation for Muslim men need to address two issues at the same time: supporting a strong personal identity within an individual's ethno-religious community, while keeping and building links to other communities.

Suggested ways to achieve this principle

Following are suggested strategies for achieving this principle:

- Promoting and facilitating opportunities for bicultural capacity building (e.g. looking at how specific elements of ethno-religious culture such as honesty and volunteering, might be tools in promoting access to other communities).

Examples: Mizaan, Ecology Awareness Program – Cooks River Regeneration Project (Case study 6, page 60) and 'Active Sisters! Enhancing the community capacity for physical activity of isolated women pilot project' (page 54).

- Starting with a culturally safe environment. This includes consultation and engagement with Muslim communities about their cultural, religious and community needs.

Examples: Community Policing Partnership Project (Case study 7, page 66), Football United (Case study 8, page 68), and the Centre for Multicultural Youth Multicultural Sport and Recreation Program (page 68).

- It is important for organisations to engage in active outreach to communicate to Muslim communities their capacity for inclusion. Having capacity to accommodate cultural and religious needs in and of itself cannot overcome perceptions of exclusion. In order to be considered inclusive, mainstream organisations need to *demonstrate* that inclusiveness to Muslim communities and individuals by putting strategies in place to communicate that willingness and capacity - for example engaging in active outreach to 'introduce' young men and facilitate their access to social and civic activities beyond their ethno/religious community.

Examples: Community Policing Partnership Project (Case study 7, page 66) and Football United (Case study 8, page 68).

7.3 SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE WITHIN AN INTER-GENERATIONAL CONTEXT

Background

A perceived conflict between what many young Muslims in Australia want for themselves from Australian society and what their parents and community want for them was raised repeatedly in research.

This was expressed as the older or parent generation being fearful of their children moving away from their culture and religion. The research suggests that this fear is a result of a significant proportion of Muslim parents who, as a result of the circumstances of their migration and settlement, have not integrated as well as other community members with mainstream Australian society. This situation has meant that many parents lack information, or have misinformation about mainstream structures and how to navigate them, and about what 'mainstream values' are. This limits the extent to which they foster and encourage mainstream social and civic involvement in their children.

Further, the research indicated that not enough effort is directed at a community level toward developing activities that are engaging for young people, yet not in conflict with their religious and cultural obligations. This was largely attributed to Muslim community leadership being imbedded in the religious rather than the community infrastructure. Many Muslim community 'leaders' were seen as having neither the skills nor training to appropriately deal with issues relating to community development and promoting social and civic involvement outside of a Muslim setting.

Current leaders were seen to lack a vision for the next generation, and were not seen to be promoting or nurturing youth leadership.

Principle

Muslim communities in Australia need to foster a strategic vision for the future, and help broker young people's access to a wider range of opportunities for social and civic participation through increased trust, understanding and collaboration between the generations.

Suggested ways to achieve this principle:

Following are suggested strategies for achieving this principle:

- Promoting and facilitating interaction between older and younger generations of Muslim men. Opening dialogue and creating opportunities for collaborative projects facilitates greater understanding of each others' perspectives and capacity, which leads to increased confidence and trust between the generations.

Example: Bridging the Gap (Case study 4, page 56).

- Organisations need to understand the need for outreach to families to provide information and help allay fears and concerns about activities outside of a Muslim setting. Keeping parents informed and encouraging their involvement serves to empower parents and make people feel more comfortable that young people are involved in safe and accommodating activities.

Examples: Community Policing Partnership Project (Case study 7, page 66) and "Busting the Myth Habibi" (page 57).

- Community consultation throughout the development of any program targeting youth to ensure and assure community members that program activities are suitable and appealing. Within this, it is

important to promote and facilitate opportunities to work with elders to encourage them to work more collaboratively with younger community members and accept the involvement of young people in community development so that community activities are more relevant and appealing to younger people.

Examples: Bridging the Gap (Case study 4, page 56) and Leadership Australia – A New Generation (Case study 5, page 58).

7.4 PROMOTING SYSTEMIC INCLUSION AND ACCEPTANCE

Background

The research found that a number of factors contribute to many young Muslim people feeling excluded by mainstream Australia. These include the role of the media in representing Islam (and particularly the impact of significant talk-back radio time devoted to perpetuating negative stereotypes and association of Islam with anti-social behaviour); the role of the Australian government (for example use of racialised language in border protection and anti-terrorism strategies); and a perceived lack of knowledge about Islam among non-Muslims.

Systemic discrimination was evidenced by a perception that Muslim people experience more difficulty gaining employment or having development applications approved without obstruction, objection or challenge.

Irrespective of whether these perceptions of exclusion are incongruent with the reality of exclusion, the perceptions impact on the extent to which young people interact with, or seek out, social and civic activities outside of a Muslim setting.

Principle

Mainstream organisations need to understand that many Muslim Australians feel excluded by the mainstream community and need to engage in positive strategies to actively promote inclusion to overcome the significant barriers created by these perceptions.

Suggested ways to achieve this principle:

Following are suggested strategies for achieving this principle:

- Strategies need to be put in place to address negative stereotypes and highlight that mainstream and Islamic values are not incongruent. In order to overcome these strong perceptions and provide strong positive imaging and countervailing statistics and points of view, information and resources need to cut across a range of media in order to ensure maximum reach. Strategies could include:
 - Actively generating positive media stories highlighting the achievements of Muslim Australians in all sectors of wider Australian society

- Generating resources that depict Muslims positively engage in Australian society¹⁷, with strategies to promote these widely to Muslim and non-Muslim audiences.
- Addressing the lack of Muslim representation in mainstream media by promoting and funding specific content on television depicting Muslim Australians in positive roles and everyday roles
- Guidelines on how to approach and invite Islamic communities, i.e. information to increase the confidence and ability of mainstream sectors to accommodate the needs of Muslim Australians and equip them with the capacity to reach Muslim Australians.

Example: DigiDiaries (Case study 1, page 45). Programs like this provide a wealth of material and are an important resource to assist in promoting Muslim Australians in a positive way. Centre for Multicultural Youth Multicultural Sport and Recreation Program (page 68).

- Promoting and facilitating strategies to encourage cross-cultural exchange and increased knowledge and awareness between Muslim and non-Muslim Australians.

Examples: DigiDiaries (Case study 1, page 45) and Learning From One Another: Bringing Muslim Perspectives into Australian Schools (page 66).

- Incentives for appropriate journalism and fostering more balanced, less sensational stories could also be considered as a way of counter-balancing the negative portrayal of Muslim communities in the media. An existing example of this strategy being used with another highly stigmatised issue – the reporting of suicide – is the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing's Mindframe National Media Initiative¹⁸, which aims to influence media coverage of issues related to mental illness and suicide by encouraging responsible, accurate and sensitive portrayals.

7.5 SUSTAINABILITY

Background

Long-term funding of programs to support community development and individual capacity building was seen as key to addressing the barriers to civic and social participation experienced by Muslim men.

Many programs exist (often small scale) that attempt to address the barriers to civic and social participation faced by Muslim Australian men, and a number of these have been cited as case studies throughout the

¹⁷ For an example of this see *The Australian Journey – Muslim communities*
http://www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/multicultural/pdf_doc/australian-journey-muslim-communities.pdf

¹⁸ For further information see www.mindframe-media.info.

report. However numerous examples were cited of programs and services ceasing to continue because of a lack of funding, and a lack of resources to support and motivate volunteers.

Principle

Investment decisions about programs that develop individual capacity and support community capacity building need to take into account the limited impact of programs in the short term.

Suggested ways to achieve this principle

Following are suggested strategies for achieving this principle:

- Longer-term commitment to programs, rather than funding a series of pilot programs and short-term initiatives.
- Identification of existing programs that attempt to address the barriers to civic and social participation faced by Muslim Australian men with a view to assessing the value of investing and supporting their growth and development.
- Further investment in other strategies to increase the mainstream community's capacity for social inclusion may help to address negative community perceptions and media portrayal of Islam and mainstream community's lack of knowledge, awareness and confidence to deal cross-culturally.

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APPENDIX 1 – CASE STUDY SUMMARY INFORMATION

Case studies – background information

Organisation/s	Project partners	Project aims/overview	Project target	Location	Inception date	Funding	Web reference
<i>Bridging the Gap</i>							
AMF		To address intergenerational issues and barriers between community elders and young Muslim men	Muslim men	VIC Shepparton Flemington Dandenong	Mar 2009	NAP	http://amf.net.au/gallery/bridging-the-gap-online-photo-exhibition/
<i>Community Policing Partnership Project</i>							
AHRC AMF	Australian policing services Australian Muslim communities	To promote social cohesion and counteract discriminatory views and intolerance towards Muslim Australians To build trust, respect, inclusion and participation To build relationships and a sense of trust between Australian Muslim communities and police	Muslim communities across Australia, police services, and wider Australian community	Multiple locations around Australia	Mar 2008	NAP under the CPHR	http://www.hreoc.gov.au/partnerships/projects/community_policing.html
Comments: The CPPP involves three rounds of funding. The first two rounds saw 38 projects funded Australia-wide. The final round of funding will consider the best projects and put them forward as a national model. Griffith University is currently undertaking an evaluation of the CPPP.							

DigiDiaries							
ICE	The project utilises the facilities of Switch Digital Arts Centre, a partnership between ICE and Parramatta Council.	To empower participants with skills such as script writing, filmmaking, editing, photography and online film preparation, and to teach participants to make and tell their own stories and provide them with the opportunity to share their digital stories with the broader Australian community	Young people from Muslim communities	NSW Western Sydney	Sep 2009	NAP Plus core funding from Arts NSW, Australia Council for the Arts and Screen NSW	http://www.ice.org.au/projects/digidiaries/
Football United - Refugee Youth Soccer Development Program							
UNSW - School of Public Health and Community Medicine	*see separate table below for partners and funding	To use football to support the integration of refugee children, young people and their families into urban communities throughout Sydney and Australia To encourage education, employability, social integration, and youth leadership	Male and female refugees between 4 and thirty years of age	Western and south western regions of Sydney	Aug 2006	*see separate table below for partners and funding	http://www.footballunited.org.au/
<p>Comments: The Football United program started out as an initiative of its Director, Anne Bunde-Birouste from the School of Public Health and Community Medicine at UNSW and has grown to include numerous stakeholders. Recently, the Australia Research Council awarded Football United a three year grant to conduct a research project on the impact of football and sport on social inclusion and community participation of refugee populations in urban areas. .</p>							
Kar Kulture							
SERMRC	Mission Australia Vic Police	To bring together young people from migrant communities and the broader community and	Young people from diverse cultural	VIC Dandenong Narre	Mar 2007	VicHealth Building Bridges program	http://www.sermrc.org.au/uploads/mrc_resources/SERMRC%20Newsletter%2019%20New.pdf http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v

	Handbrake Turn (Concern Australia) RACV Chisholm TAFE AMES Education	promote intercultural contact and harmony through a collaborative project To reduce barriers to participation	backgrounds	Warren			KQpSk51gV4
Leadership Australia – A New Generation							
AMF		To develop a group of confident and well-connected young Australian Muslims to present/represent the views of young Australian Muslims to the mainstream community through participating in activities such as volunteerism and provide a resource for other young Muslims who seek mentorship and leadership within the community	Young Muslim Australians	VIC - participants from across Australia		NAP	http://amf.net.au/training/leadership-australia-a-new-generation/
Comments: A resource guide was also produced as part of the program. The guide included information about training programs, useful resources and publications, and also provided contact details for various networks and services.							
Mizaan Cooks River Regeneration Project							
al-Ghazzali Centre	CCC SMCMA	To regenerate fauna and flora along a stretch of the Cooks River within the Canterbury Local	Muslim Australians	NSW – Canterbury LGA	Feb 2007	CCC SMCMA	http://alghazzali.org/events/cooks_river http://www.youtube.com/user/Mizaa

		Government Area (LGA)					nAustralia
<p>Comments: The Cooks River Regeneration Project has approximately 200 volunteers registered to participate in the project at different times. The project is just one of the <i>Mizaan</i> ecology awareness programs run by the al-Ghazzali Centre. A similar project, the Kooragang Island Rehabilitation Project, is being undertaken with the Hunter-Central Rivers CMA. Other programs include awareness workshops, bushwalking and kayaking activities.</p>							
<p><i>The Navigator Program</i></p>							
MTC Work Solutions		To increase employment opportunities and workforce participation for young Muslim job seekers	Young job seekers – Muslim, CALD and Indigenous	NSW Sydney	Jul 2009	MTC Work Solutions	
<p>Comments: The Navigator Program grew from the Community Employment Coordinator (CEC) program, a three year pilot program funded by DEEWR under the NAP. The CEC program funded two CEC positions in Sydney, one based in Lakemba and one in Macquarie Fields, and was implemented by MTC Work Solutions in 2007. Under the auspices of MTC Work Solutions, the Navigator Program has extended the reach of the CEC program to suburbs including Redfern, Liverpool, Fairfield, Auburn, Minto, Campbelltown, Marrickville, Belmore and Bankstown.</p>							

Acronyms/Abbreviations

Al-Ghazzali Centre for Islamic Science and Human Development (al-Ghazzali Centre)

Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC)

Australian Multicultural Foundation (AMF)

City of Canterbury Council (CCC)

Community Partnerships for Human Rights (CPHR)

Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC)

Department of Employment, Education and Workplace Relations (DEEWR)

Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA)

Football Federation Australia (FFA)

Information Cultural Exchange (ICE)

National Action Plan to Build on Social Cohesion, Harmony and Security (NAP)

New South Wales (NSW)

South Eastern Region Migrant Resource Centre Inc. (SERMRC)

Sydney Metropolitan Catchment Management Authority (SMCMA)

University of New South Wales (UNSW)

Victoria (VIC)

Football United - Refugee Youth Soccer Development Program	
Project partners	Funding
<p>Foundation Partners</p> <p>Long term investors that support Football United across a range of areas including finance, strategic development and program delivery:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNSW • FFA • FIFA • JP Morgan • Street football world • Gilbert + Tobin Lawyers • Yoga Aid • Save the Children 	
<p>Partners in Football</p> <p>Football organisations that provide support in-kind, through program delivery and promotion support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sydney FC • Blacktown District Soccer Football Association • Football NSW • Golden Goal • UNSW Football • Football Queensland • Waverly Old Boys Club • Ku-ring-gai District Football Association 	<p>Government Support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSW Government • DIAC (NAP funding) • Community Relations Commission • Queensland Department of Communities

<p>Community Partners</p> <p>Long term investors, working with Football United across strategic development and program delivery:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SydWest Multicultural Services Inc. • Evans, Miller, Lurnea and Granville South High Schools • Ashfield Leagues • Blacktown PCYC • Youth off the Streets <p>In addition, a number of organisations were instrumental in the early development of Football United:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mary MacKillop Foundation • STARRTS • AMRC • Sisters of Charity • Fairfield Mounties 	<p>Program Partners</p> <p>Organisations that provide program specific support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St George Foundation • Dalkia • Australiance
<p>Partners in Research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SydWest Multicultural Services Inc. • Community Relations Commission • NSW Health • Australian Research Council • Transcultural Mental Health Centre • Sydney South West Area Health Services • Western Sydney Area Health Services 	<p>Corporate Supporters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff Community Fund (part of the Commonwealth Bank Group) • Investec • Macquarie Bank

APPENDIX 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review deals with the question of social and civic participation of young Australian Muslim men. A profile of young Muslim men based on the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006 Census data is included at Appendix 3. The literature review draws on contemporary research which deals with the concept of social and civic participation, what this means and how it is manifested by young people with particular focus on young Muslim men. It also deals with the key issues of belonging and social inclusion as central factors in enabling participation, as well as highlighting the barriers and enablers of participation and the consequences of such.

DEFINITIONS AND SCOPE

In this section, different conceptions and working definitions of 'participation' are presented, in order to explicate a range of associated behaviours, knowledge, skills, and attitudes. These descriptions will draw on studies from Australia, Canada and North America, and Europe.

Australian researcher Helen McCue (2008:25) defines civil and social life in Australian society as "participation in education, the workforce, business, social and family life, sport and government relations, participation in Muslim and non-Muslim organisations". This presents a broad and encompassing working definition for participation.

It is interesting to note that much of the research on "social participation" and "civic participation" merge the distinction between the two concepts. Raymond Breton (1997) for example conflates the distinction between social and civic participation. He prefers to use the general terms "participation" or "social participation" to also include more formal civic forms of engagement. As such he states "...Participation is not limited to communities with a set of political, social or cultural organisations and associations. It may occur via activities and social networks that are not based on a geographical community, such as a neighbourhood". For Breton, building and maintaining social networks of personal contacts, creates social capital, mutual obligation and trust within communities. Indeed more recent research concurs with this (for "social capital" see Putnam 2000; Onyx, Wood, Bullen, and Osburn, 2005; Smith 1999; for "social trust" see: Rothstein & Uslaner 2009; Kelly 2009). Breton makes the valid point that membership of certain groups does not guarantee participation, for example church or union membership can be passive forms of affiliation. He identifies two key factors affecting social participation, namely opportunity to participate and access to activities and that these may be more important than individual characteristics. He makes the argument that participation beyond ethnic or racial boundaries for immigrants, "is partially a function of the openness" of various mainstream host society institutions, networks and structures. Similarly, Castles refers in his work on transitions in a context of globalisation, to the idea of 'substantial citizenship', which is based on "equal chances for participation in various areas of society, such as politics, work and social security" (2000:192).

It must be noted that in addition to the relationship between participation or engagement with social capital, social trust, mutual obligation, equality of access and opportunities for involvement, whether as manifestations of active, substantial, equal (Hassan 2008), or honourable (Hage 2002) forms of citizenship, it cannot be separated from the discourse on social cohesion, social inclusion and social exclusion. Within the

current global context, particularly in Western democratic nations such as Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the EU, social cohesion, and social inclusion and exclusion are key overarching concerns and policy frameworks that governments seek to address. Literature dealing specifically with these areas refers to citizen belonging and participation as key determinants to effective and productive citizenship and societies. See section 1.2 on Participation and Belonging.

Social participation

Denise Helly (1997) defines social participation as “all types of voluntary, active affiliation with groups outside the family and all types of group activity unrelated to political organizations, voting and lobbying”. Social participation may encompass both informal and formal types of activities. Informal participation may occur either in an ad hoc fashion (e.g. giving donations, attending irregular meetings) or in more stable manner (attending regular meetings e.g. music group). More formal participation includes membership of registered groups, clubs and associations.

Helly’s work is particularly informative on the issue of what level of social participation and integration is required from immigrants. She describes three schools of thought on this issue. The first school requires a minimal amount of “integration” through to recognising and adopting codes of social behaviours that assist the individual to exercise those rights. The second school advocates two types of participation, namely affiliations with networks and institutions, and the other, “inclusion” in the “majority group in civil society”. The third school of thought states that such inclusion and participation are inadequate and that immigrants must “...share the reference points that give it its identity: its history, the “majority culture,” and even its political aims” (1997).

This is not dissimilar to Hedetoft’s analysis of calls for immigrants to conform or integrate into Danish society (Hedetoft 2007). He explains that there are three underlying notions, which govern conformity to Danish-ness and the associated national values, sometimes used interchangeably by key political figures. The first is what he describes as the normative notion, which demands that immigrants “totally accept and internalize ‘Danish norms and values’ ...” (2007: 6). The second notion, the functional modality, requires ‘active citizenship and civic participation, as markers of socially beneficial behaviour, practical efforts and solidarity, rather than values-based belonging. The third notion is the pragmatic/minimalist mode which expects immigrants to be self reliant and contributing to the national economy and not be burdens on the state. (2007:6).

These interpretations are particularly relevant to current debates in Western democratic nations about the integration and social inclusion of immigrants (see Vinson 2009). Arguably therefore, Australia’s case under the previous Liberal Coalition Government typifies this third school of thought, identified by Helly (1997). Then citizenship debates ostensibly centred on conformity to Australian values and the public discussions about immigration took on conservative pronouncements about immigration, border control and queue-jumpers, Asian or Muslim immigration and settlement. (Humphrey 2007; Chafic 2009).

In regards to the effects and consequences of social participation, The World Health Organization (2009) envision that social participation as a practice, particularly in vulnerable and excluded groups, can serve to empower communities, and improve overall health and quality of life outcomes. Social participation can take on several forms in specific communities, including: informing people, consulting, involving or working

directly with communities, collaborating by partnering, identification of solutions, and empowering communities with ultimate control over decisions.

Social participation indicators taken from the 2002 General Social Survey, based on Australian Bureau of Statistics Census data, included recreational or cultural group activities; community or special interest group activities; church or religious group activities; visiting restaurant, café or bar; attending/watching sport/physical activities; visiting library, museum or art gallery; attended movies, theatre or concert; visiting park/gardens, zoo or theme park. (ABS 2006: 2).

Civic participation

It is argued that civic involvement or participation “represents a tangle of human connections, past and future”, and the “patterning of how we share common space, common resources, and common opportunities and manage interdependence” essentially, amongst strangers (Frideres 1997). It therefore becomes imperative for nations to know how these dynamics operate, to define citizen entitlements and responsibilities, in a desire to plan for socially inclusive and cohesive communities.

Adler and Goggin (2005) examine different definitions of this concept and conclude that there are many perspective used to define the term civic participation. They state that scholars define this concept according to their ‘perspective and interest’ (p.237). Therefore, they suggest four categories of civic participation namely: as community service, as collective actions, as political involvement as social change. Finally, they suggest that civic participation “*describes how an active citizen participates in the life of a community in order to improve conditions for others or to help shape the community’s future*” (p.241). This definition appears to be comprehensive because it emphasises the important role of citizens to remake their society’s future.

Frideres (1997) defines the different dimensions of *citizen participation* and *civic involvement*. Civic involvement has a number of subsets, and includes “participation, awareness, skills and knowledge”. As can be seen from this definition civic involvement is not limited to participation per se. He makes reference to research findings, which identify four different types of organisations that influence civic participation in individuals. These organisations fall into the categories of being “institution directed (committed to the welfare of the institution), volunteer group-directed (committed to the organization itself), problem directed (committed to the mission of the organization), and social change directed (committed to certain social ideals and a particular vision of the future)”. He reviews the research on citizen participation and concludes that it has an overall positive impact on the community as a whole, organizations as well as the individuals in a society. He provides a specific list of variables (based on empirical results), which attest to the benefits of civic involvement. These ‘effects’ include such things as greater social cohesion and integration, higher levels of efficacy, lower levels of alienation and helplessness, a higher sense of security and citizen duty, reduced crime, higher rates of friendships and neighbourliness, increased levels of personal satisfaction and higher perception of social issues.

Indeed more recent research studies examine either directly or indirectly, the relationship of social and or civic engagement with: increased health and well-being (Veenstra 2000; Perlstadt, Jackson-Elmoore, Freddolino, Reed 2009; Thoitts & Hewitt 2001; Eckersley, Wierenga & Wyn 2005); the growth of local economic power and globalisation (e.g. Blanchard & Matthew, 2006); rates and dynamics of juvenile crime

(Lee, 2004, Collins, Noble, Poynting, Tabar 2000; Collins 2003); an increased interest in environmentalism (Barkan 2004); the development of *thirdspaces*, spaces of difference, alternative spaces, marginality (Vadeboncoeur 2009; Savelsberg, Martin-Giles 2008), the public space or spheres, spatial planning, (Vromen 2008; Soysal 1997; Cameron, Grant-Smith 2005; Phillips 2004) 'voice' and people building (Smith 2001; Bessant 2004); race and/or religion and: friendship ties, volunteering and/or other forms of participation (Porter & Brown 2008; De Souza & Rymarz 2003; Lott 2006; Musick, Wilson, Bynum Jr 2000; Small 2007; Ecklund & Park 2007; Ecklund & Park 2005; Jones-Correa & Leal 2001; Loveland, Sikkink, Myers & Radcliff 2005; Becker & Dhingra 2001; Uslander 2002; Davie 2002).

Also a growing research area in Australia and internationally is the concern with *participatory practices*, namely social and civic participation through the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs), particularly as it relates to young people. Research deals with areas such as social networking and community engagement, virtual *spaces*, social capital, political expression, activism/protest and charitable endeavours (Vromen 2008; Ward 2008; Vromen 2007; Perry 2005, Quan-Haase, Wellman, Witte & Hampton 2002; Gillan & Pickerill 2008). In this emerging field of youth engagement, civics and electronic practices, the study on Youth as E-citizens (Montgomery et al, 2004) suggests that young people need to be introduced to the areas of civic engagement, that they pass through a "pre-engagement phase" as a prerequisite to active engagement and full-blown participation. It is contended that for young people to be motivated towards civic involvement, their attention must be engaged and they need to be convinced that they have a *stake* and a *voice* in the civic realm, which instils a sense of *civic attachment*. However young people cannot act in the civic arena or have such attachments without information or *civic literacy* and appropriate behaviours and capabilities or *civic skills*, which must be acquired in the pre-engagement phase. (Montgomery et al, 2004:18). Ten categories of youth participation were mapped in the online sphere, these were related to *Volunteering, Voting, Youth Philanthropy, Engagement with the Local Community, Global Issues and International Understanding, Online Youth Journalism and Media Production, Access and Equity, Tolerance and Diversity, Positive Youth Development and Youth Activism*. (Montgomery et al 2004: 18-50).

Another example of social and civic performative behaviour in young people, Marcelo, Lopez and Kirby (2007) in their study on the US Civic and Political Health of the Nation Survey (CPHS), measured three forms of civic engagement amongst 15-25 year olds. The first measured civic attitudes, namely engagement in community problem solving, regular volunteering, active membership of groups or associations, and various forms of fund-raising for charities. The second measured electoral activities, specifically regular voting, persuading others in an election, displaying buttons, signs and stickers, making campaign contributions, and volunteering for a candidate or political organisation. The third form of civic engagement measured political voice activities, which was defined as having contact with public official, contact with print/broadcast media, participating in protests, signing e-mail petitions, engaging in boycotts, 'buycotts' and canvassing. Marcelo et al, (2007) also refer to a *civic typology* which profiles *disengaged, civic specialists, electoral specialists* and *dual activists* amongst 15-25 year olds.

Within the Australian context, Vromen (2003:92) in a survey of 18-34 year olds refers to four scales in a typology of participatory citizenship. These are the *activist, communitarian, party* and *individualistic* forms of participatory practices. She treats participatory acts as "the product of individual agency" choosing not to argue for a "hierarchy of participatory types but to ... elaborate on the diversity of participatory

experiences...” in Australians of this age group (2003:95). The concept of ‘active’ citizenship marks a shift from the rights an individual has in a given nation/state, to the obligations of the individual towards the society as a whole, which unsurprisingly gives way to the notion of “civics or democratic deficits” in the discussion of young people and politics (Fyfe 2009). “Active” forms of citizenship, “social citizenship”, civics education and participation, democratic practice and civil disobedience may be regarded as forms of participation necessary to keep democracy in check. (Owen, 1996; Bessant 2004, Vromen 2003, Frideres 1997).

Lifespan or life course transitions (Wilson, Harlow-Rosentraub, Manning, Simon & Steele 2006; Morrow-Howell 2006; Vromen 2003; Oserterle, Johnson, Mortimer, 2004; Smith 1999) and more specifically “time” as an important mediating variable for social and civic participation has also been identified. Individuals and social structures mature and evolve over time, influencing and changing “participation, knowledge skills and awareness in civic activities”. These “contextual variables form an important envelope in which individuals operate” (Frideres 1997).

In any discussion on civic engagement, the variability within levels of participation becomes a focal point for researchers and governments alike. Kymlicka describes the range of participation as “on the minimal view, citizenship for most people primarily involves passive respect for laws, not the active exercise of political rights. By contrast, maximal conceptions of democracy insist that a true democracy, or that political justice, must aim for more widespread participation” (Kymlicka, 1995, cited in Page 1997). This maximal conception is not far removed from de Tocqueville’s (Frideres 1997) nor that from Putnam’s (2000) notion that increased citizen participation in the different level of society from family, to neighbourhood, to clubs and associations (e.g. voluntary/community based, professional and political etc) and the egalitarian institutions, help to maintain and protect democratic societies and increase social capital. This position sets up the idea that “non participation” threatens the very core of democratic societies and contributes to their disintegration. It is therefore not surprising that low levels of youth participation in the Australian context have been presented in terms of “moral crisis” (Edwards, 2008:1).

PARTICIPATION AND BELONGING

Within the discourse on participation and belonging, much of the discussion seems to centre on the idea that these two factors contribute in a meaningful and substantive manner to producing socially cohesive and inclusive societies. The New Zealand concept of a socially cohesive society, for example, is based on a framework of five intermediate outcomes for migrants and host communities. These outcomes are belonging, participation, inclusion, recognition and legitimacy (Spoonley & Peace, 2007). While these concepts appear intertwined, Hedetoft (2007) suggests that social cohesion is not necessarily related to belonging even though they are “wrapped up in the same cultural and historical package”. He concedes however, that they often define each other and merge as concepts especially in relation to “collective and individual dimensions, participation and attachment, society and community, citizenship and identity” (2007:5).

Within the European context however the discussion has centered on concepts of social exclusion and poverty as separate factors, with exclusion being defined as a “relational process of declining participation, solidarity and access” (Silver and Miller, 2002 cited in Vinson 2009). Since the 2007 federal election in

Australia, the Labor Government has established the Australian Social Inclusion Board and many Social Inclusion Units have been set up in various government departments. The Board's principles can generally be described as aiming to create a socially inclusive society on the basis of reducing disadvantage, increasing social, civic and economic participation and promoting active and responsible citizenship. The Board's priorities centre on specific groups within the Australian community. These are: children at risk of long-term disadvantage, jobless families with children, members of the community who are homeless, suffer disability or mental illness and the 'vulnerable unemployed', namely the long term unemployed, the recently unemployed and low skilled adults. Indigenous groups, vulnerable new arrivals and refugees, as socially excluded groups will be given particular attention in this new framework (ASIB, a & b).

Some have questioned whether social inclusion will actually mean greater participation for young people in the Australian context. Edwards (2008) for example raises three concerns. The first revolves around the question of whether social inclusion policy is simply "new rhetoric for old problems". The second issue is that even though there is an apparent focus on the "social", it is not opposed to 'individualism' or coerced participation". Thirdly Edwards states "where 'inclusion' becomes an uncontested and unquestioned good, the potential exists for it to function much like the discourse of youth participation, setting the terms of the debate, while protecting both itself and the structures behind it from scrutiny" (2008:16). She stresses the need for young people to participate in defining exclusion and inclusion as they see it, and to be included in setting the social inclusion agenda.

Outside of the policy context, but within the realm of migration, integration and cultural diversity and its effect over the generations Skrbis, Baldassar and Poynting (2007), deal with the "soft" issue of 'belonging'. They believe that the issue of belonging can "mobilise individuals, communities and nations, emotionally and politically" especially as it relates to questions of citizenship and ethnic and religious diversity after 9/11 (2007:261-2). They identify that there is a spectrum of *doing belonging*, which includes at various ends the seeking of, and the granting of belonging. It is a variable phenomenon, which changes, in different situations, contexts, time and space, with two conditions common. One is the *affirmation* of belonging versus *retraction* of the right to belong, where the "aggressive assertion of belonging by one group can simultaneously powerfully exclude another" (Skrbis et al, 2007: 262). This is not dissimilar to the idea of "conditional citizenship" highlighted by Humphrey (2007) and Chafic (in print, 2009) in regards to Australian Muslims, their values and their Australianness in the citizenship debate, during the Howard Coalition Government 2006-2008. Noble (2005) tackles the issue of incivility – racism, discrimination and violence, and the *feelings* of discomfort experienced by young Australian Muslims in what otherwise should be considered their home and nation.

Skrbis et al (2007) also highlight the importance of considering the variability of experience of second-generation migrants in a given country. The generation question, related to exilic or marginalised youth within Western democratic nations, is complex and specific. There has been much research interest in Muslim young people's adaptation, particularly since the 9/11 and the so-called War on Terror. They review European and Australian literature on Muslim young people to reveal a complex set of dynamics. These include in the case of Palestinian children, the "richness of exilic experience" and local attachments for young people who have had no experience of home or homeland; the experience of British, Australian, French, Austrian and Italian Muslims dealing with Islamophobia, marginalisation, aggressive forms of nationalist

rhetoric, class and structural disadvantage, together with young people's responses of mistrust of local authorities, or more positive forms of positive adaptation which include the accumulation of social and cultural capital and respectability. (Mason; Abbas; Ecchaibi; Scheibelhofer; Noble; Wessendorf: cited in Skribis et al 2007).

The link between participation and belonging are consistently reported in the literature on Muslim young people. A number of Australian researchers deal with the importance and dynamics of community engagement and social inclusion and/or exclusion, either perceived or actual. Yasmeen's (2008) work reveals that Muslims have a "perception of relative exclusion" within mainstream Australian society. Yasmeen employs a definition of social exclusion, which considers how individuals *feel* they cannot participate as citizens because they *perceive* social conditions and institutions as limiting, and that social and governmental agencies portray them as outsiders. Muslim respondents include many factors that contribute to this sense of exclusion. These are: the role of the media in representing Muslim and Islam; the role of the Australian government; the lack of knowledge about Islam amongst non-Muslims and the insular and negative attitudes amongst some Muslims (Yasmeen, 2008:iv). She points out that the perception of exclusion may be at variance with the reality of exclusion. This incongruence cannot be ignored as it impacts on the way an individual and/or community interacts in their environment, as well as strategies which can promote social inclusion and ultimately belonging. Exclusion is not *unidirectional* nor *unidimensional* and can work upon minorities as well as the other way around.

The experiences of incivility- namely of discrimination, racism and/or violence, undoubtedly affect young people's participation and sense of belonging. Numerous reports over the years have listed examples of these negative experiences in public spaces, education, employment and in the media (HREOC 1991 & 2004; Poynting & Noble 2004; Noble, 2005; Dreher 2006a & b; Poynting & Mason, 2007; Chafic 2008). The Muslim Youth Summits Report (DIAC: 2008), documents the feelings of marginalisation and discrimination amongst young Australians of Muslim background. The Summit process ensured Australian Muslim young people were given a chance to come up with and give voice to a range of solutions to their everyday concerns. They contributed solution ideas on such areas as: the perceived conflict between Muslim and Australian identity; inter-generational conflict between parents and children, especially when parents are migrants and children have been born in Australia; belonging versus marginalization; unemployment; Muslims and the media; and community building strategies. These suggested strategies are collaborative in nature and reflect an ethos of wanting to participate and belong in a socially inclusive society.

The importance of giving "voice" to young people has particular import for socially excluded groups. This however can be experienced in two ways. It is not unfamiliar for agencies or governments to *consult* with such groups as a way to ameliorate such problems. However as Edwards (2008) and Pittaway & Muli (2009), in their respective works, point out, consultation doesn't automatically add up to effective participation. Consultations result in members giving valuable time, considered ideas and heartfelt contributions. In some cases consultations appear to bring no tangible change, and may result in feelings of discouragement or overall cynicism.

Butcher (2008) on the other hand, examines the link between the use of language and navigating difference and belonging in culturally diverse Sydney. She surveys second generation migrant youth use of language

and argues that “language is used as a symbolic resource in acts of both demarcating difference and belonging, at times defining new social spaces, as well as defying points of authority within dominant fields of power. Social context is at times more important than language in determining feelings of affiliation or difference” (2008:371). The depth of field involves notions of belonging and alienation, the power of language, the importance of social contexts and spaces, defiance and assertion of identity, that are all part and parcel of generational journeying.

As for measures of belonging, Hassan (2009), in his work on Australian Muslims talks about ‘equality of citizenship’ as a significant yardstick on which to measure social inclusion. This is defined as “equality of opportunity and equality of outcomes afforded to all citizens irrespective of their race, gender, religion...” (2009:1). Hage (2002) in his work on Australians of Arabic background engages the concept of ‘honourable citizenship’. This concept seeks “ethical valorisation of dignity and autonomy in inter-personal and inter-cultural relations”. By extension this concept allows for recognition of self worth and the affective dimensions of human experience, and a greater sense of belonging in any given society for individuals who experience marginalisation. While participation takes on collective manifestations, it cannot be separated from the very significant impact upon the individual and their quality of life, which in turn, no doubt, affects the motivation towards social and civic engagement.

PARTICIPATION OF AUSTRALIAN MUSLIM MEN

As we can see from the earlier discussion, social inclusion and participation are inextricably linked. To be socially included means one is able to have access and opportunity to participate in the economic, social, psychological and political life of a nation (Gillard & Wong 2007).

This section reviews some of the evidence and literature on the Economic, Social and Civic Participation of Australian Muslim Men.

Socio-economic participation

Employment and labour force participation

Hassan (2009) states that the employment/unemployment rates of Australian Muslims indicate that “...the cultural capital embodied in their education profile does not materialise in the same level of returns as it does in the case of non-Muslims Australians”, increasing the probability of alienation in mainstream Australian society (2009:10). The Muslim male unemployment rate (12.6%) is higher than overall Australian males (5.2%). The year of arrival substantially altered the unemployment rate with those having arrived earlier less likely to be unemployed than those who arrived more recently. Muslim male 15-34 year olds were also more often unemployed with 9.4% reporting looking for work compared to 5.5% for overall Australian males. See Appendix 1, Tables 28-29.

Muslim males have a slightly lower labour force participation rate (65.5%) than all Australian males (71.5%). For males in the 15-34 year age range, there were higher full-time employment rates for overall Australian males than for Muslim males, with 48.3% vs. 33.4% employed full-time respectively however Muslim males aged 15-29 have a higher part-time employment rate of 16.2% vs. 14.9%. See Appendix 1, Tables 27-29.

The highest percentage of employed Muslim males work in Technician & Trade Worker jobs (19.6%), Professionals (15.7%), Machinery Operators & Drivers (15.5%) and Labourers (15.5%). Muslim males were less likely than all Australian males to work as Managers (10.2% vs. 16.1%) or Professionals (15.7% vs. 17.3%) and were overrepresented in Machinery Operators & Drivers (15.6% vs. 11.0%) and Labourers (15.5% vs. 12.3%) occupational categories. See Appendix 1, Table 33.

Muslim males are most employed in Manufacturing, Transport, Postal & Warehousing, and Retail Trade industries, while overall Australian males are most employed in Manufacturing, Construction, and Retail Trade. While just slight differences between the two populations, Muslim males are more represented in Transport, Postal & Warehousing and in Accommodation & Food Service compared to Australian males, while Muslim males are underrepresented in Construction and Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing. See Appendix 1, Table 34.

Income and poverty

The benchmark of poverty amongst Australian households is equivalent to \$650 or less per week. Based on this criteria Hassan (2009) reports that 40% of children in Australian Muslim households live in poverty, twice more likely than non-Muslim Australians (19%). This conveys a picture of battling families, reflective of the high unemployment rate for Muslim males in the Australian community. See Appendix 1, Table 32.

In terms of weekly income Muslim males earn less income compared to all males. They are underrepresented in the higher weekly income categories of '\$1000-\$1599' per week and '\$1600 or more' per week than all males, and are overrepresented in the 'Nil or negative income' and '\$1-\$399' per week categories. See Appendix 1, Tables 30-31.

Education

Educationally Australian Muslims are high achievers, but in terms of socio-economic wellbeing they fall into a 'disadvantaged category' (Hassan 2009). While 40% of Australian men earned certificates compared to 23% of Muslim men, a higher proportion of Muslim men held an Advanced Diploma/Diploma (13.3% to 10.9), a Bachelors degree (27.3% to 18.7%), or Postgraduate degree (14.4% to 5.4%) than Australian men in general. Based on 2006 ABS Census data, a higher proportion of Muslim men (3.9%) did not complete school compared to all Australian men (0.8%). A higher proportion completed Year 12 than all Australian men, with a higher proportion also in TAFE or University or other institutions. It is interesting that more younger Australian Muslim men (16.4%) still in high school attend Government schools than do Australian men (12.5%). See Appendix 1, Tables 24-26.

Social and civic participation

Social participation indicators taken from the 2002 General Social Survey, based on Australian Bureau of Statistics data, included recreational or cultural group activities; community or special interest group activities; church or religious group activities; went to a restaurant, café or bar; took part in or attended/watched sport/physical activities; visiting library, museum or art gallery; attended movies, theatre or concert; visited park/gardens, zoo or theme park (ABS 2006: 2). The 2006 General Social Survey findings

were not available by religious affiliation at the time of this report. This section will include information about health, social connections, and creative engagements. It will also include information on citizenship; civic values in Australian Muslim men, projects and consultations; and volunteering & charitable acts.

Health

Many researchers deal with the link between civic and social engagement and health. A study of Muslim men in South Western Sydney of refugee and asylum seeking backgrounds, reported on the incidence of depression and anxiety, grief and loss, and isolation amongst Australian Muslim men (Chafic 2008). This is similar to findings on Horn of Africa Refugees (Pittaway & Muli 2009). Muslim Youth Summits 2007 participants spoke of “frustration, stress and mental health implications of continued feelings of isolation. This can further intensify anti-social behaviour and the marginalisation of young people”. (2008:6). Young Australian Muslims also stressed how “mentally draining” the process of seeking acceptance, in difficult and negative societal conditions can be. This is particularly so in the light of pervasive Muslim stereotyping and ‘othering’ within the mainstream Australian community. The Muslim Youth Summits Report (DIAC 2008) infers, a resulting mental health deficit which “can result in anti-social behaviour (including drug and alcohol abuse and criminal activities) and further marginalisation of young people” (DIAC 2008:22).

A newspaper article in *The Australian* (27/02/07) (cited also in Gross, 2007) claimed, “Australia’s disadvantaged young Muslims are so directionless and fearful of being excluded by the broader community many are turning to drugs and contemplating suicide”. These claims were apparently based on a study called “All Eyes on Youth” which surveyed 150 Sydney-based young Muslims, 98% of whom had “considered suicide as a ‘way out’ of the conflicts in their life as a Muslim in a non-Muslim society”. The study found eight out of 10 young Muslims aged between 12 and 25 considered the education system of no assistance “in making lifetime choices”, and 94 per cent lacked a clear goal in life. No clear aspirations and lack of hope were mentioned as important factors. The newspaper report quoted a young man who had “contemplated suicide and turned to drugs and alcohol to block out the pressures he felt from being a Muslim. “I feel like I’m being kicked out of my own country that I’m born and raised in,” said the 17 year old. “And I’ve thought about it (suicide) a couple of times -- you feel that way.”

Further studies on the incidence of depression, anxiety and suicidal ideation would clarify the issue of prevalence. Consideration must also be given to suicide rates within the mainstream Australian context. Cantor and Neulinger’s (2000) study on the epidemiology of suicide and attempted suicide among young Australians reveals a much higher rate of suicide amongst young Australian men than women of the same age.

Social connections

A survey of 700 Victorian teenagers between the age of 14-16 examining youth citizenship and social connection. The ARC research survey found that young people actively participate in their local community, formally and informally, with more than half belonging to sport clubs, one-quarter belonged to online groups and one fifth belonged to youth groups or student groups. Young people generally had a high level of community involvement. Nearly one third worked an average of 10 hours per week. They “hang around” at

somebody's house; go to the beach or park. "Hanging around", along with computer-related activities and shopping, emerged as a strong theme. (The Age, [30/04/07] cited in Gross 2007). This survey did not account for religious affiliation.

An investigation by the Australian Bureau of Statistics on sport and related physical activities amongst Australians, found that poor English proficiency had "very significant association with a low rate of participation. This group is likely to include recent migrants as well older or long-term migrants whose first language may not be English". (Stratton, 2005:12). By extension this may be a pattern in Muslim men who are recent arrivals with poor English language skills.

Wise and Ali (2008), in their work on Muslim Australians and local government reported that non-government organisations regarded sport as a "key way to engage disengaged men". The Muslim Youth Summits Report (DIAC 2008) documents sports programs, which specifically engaged Muslim youth. These were run by various sporting, government and community organisations since 2005. These include the Royal Lifesaving Society Aquatic Recreation project after the Cronulla Riots, basket ball programs, "good sports" programs amongst others.

Australia has a number of leading Muslim male sporting figures such as Anthony Mundine (football and boxing) and Hazim el-Masri (rugby league). Areas of further investigation could be to examine the importance or impact of such role models on younger men, as well as to investigate sports club membership and their rates of participation in a variety of sports. There are numerous sporting activities targeting young people in areas with high populations of Australian Muslims, and these could be audited to give a more accurate reflection of this type of participation. In the Sydney area there is at least one soccer club, which is, made up of young Australian Muslim males of Lebanese ancestry (National Sports Club-Lakemba).

The ABS 2002 General Social Survey revealed that on all indicators except "church or religious activities", people born in main English speaking countries had higher levels of participation. (ABS 2006: 2). This point suggests that people of non-English speaking background were most likely to participate in religious activities than in any other area (e.g. participation in recreational or cultural group activities; community or special interest group activities; visiting restaurant, café or bar; attending/watching sport/physical activities; visiting library, museum or art gallery; attended movies, theatre or concert; visiting park/gardens, zoo or theme park, ABS 2006: 2). As a subset of non-English speaking background communities in Australia, there are no statistics on level of participation in religious/mosque events for Australian Muslim men. However, four indicators that may shed light on this area are: (a) the level of participation in compulsory attendance of Friday congregational prayers for Muslim men, (b) attendance of Eid prayers at local mosques or other venues (e.g. parks or halls) marking the end of Ramadan and the Pilgrimage to Mecca, (c) participation in Eid festivals such as the Multicultural Eid Festival and Fair held in Sydney after Ramadan, and similar events in other states, and (d) applications to build mosques and schools. In exercising their right to establish places of worship or independent schools, a number of Council development applications have met with rejections in the recent past. Many of these rejections have come after lobbying by groups opposed to Muslims moving into their locality, the most recent being an application to build a mosque in Camden, NSW and an application to build an Islamic school in Liverpool, NSW. There have also been incidents of vandalism,

defiling and/or racist graffiti at Australian mosques e.g. Annangrove Mosque in NSW and the most recent incident, taking place in Western Australia. (see abc.net.au News Stories).

As with many of their peers, young Australian men would no doubt be acquainted with various information and communication technologies within the Australian context. This area could be further investigated. A recent article on the digital market in the Muslim world states that marketing agencies are just becoming aware of how large the potential is. Companies like Nokia, and Stardoll, as well as financial organisations are all advertising on a range of sites which cater to Muslim audiences (Digital Islam, 2009).

Creative engagement (music and other forms of performance)

Peta Stephenson (2008) reports on the growing trend amongst young Australian Muslims who are creatively and actively using humour and or music as mediums from which to be heard. Many of the skits for example on the TV program “Salam Café” and from the comedy theatre show “Fear of a Brown Planet”, engage and negotiate negative stereotypes about Muslims and their identity as Australian Muslims. Muslim hip-hop groups such as ‘The Brotherhood’ use rap to help young people take pride in their religion and identity. Many of these participatory practices involve young Australian Muslim men. As public figures they invite praise and criticism from Muslim and non-Muslim communities in Australia.

Kabir and Rickards’ (2006) study on “students at-risk” emphasize the importance of music, and the celebration of cultural celebrations as being possible contributors to mental health in such students. The study cites students of Muslim background and stories of their appreciation of music.

Citizenship

Muslim males rates of Australian citizenship are relatively strong at 76%. However they are less likely to be citizens compared to Australian males overall at 85.6%. Only 65.6% of Muslim males aged between 15 & 29, are Australian citizens, compared to 82.9% of all Australian males in the same age category. This may have to do with the recency of arrival amongst Australian Muslim men.

Civic values

A survey of Australian Muslim men’s most important principles revealed that in addition to values of “religion and faith”; the importance of “family”; and the importance of “truthfulness”, “civic values” featured prominently. Responses relating to “civic values” encompassed three distinctions. The first distinction related to the society and community at large citing such notions as “services to society,” “neighbourly help,” “contributing to humanity,” “community harmony,” “good citizen,” and “multiculturalism.” The second distinction related to the institutional basis of civic society such as “democracy,” “freedom,” “human rights,” “government honesty,” and “law and order.” The third distinction related to values of equality and justice citing “equality of people,” “respecting all difference,” “fair go for all,” “equity,” “peaceful society” and “justice.” (Chafic 2008)

Projects and consultations

A recent study has found that “projects aimed at building bridges between Muslim and non-Muslim-Australians are often short lived with no designed long term prospects” and that “working class men of both Muslim and non-Muslim-Australian background were dramatically under-represented” in harmony type activities. (Wise and Ali, 2008:5). Non-government organisations were seen to be at the forefront of such bridge building exercises. By extension these organisations may have a substantial role to play in enabling social and civic participation for Muslim men.

As such it may be useful to investigate participation of Australian Muslim men in ethno-religious organisations. Anecdotal evidence reveals that Australian Muslim men are involved in establishing organisations, taking on office bearing positions or project roles. Indeed recently arrived Muslim men have expressed the desire to establish such community-based organisations in an attempt to meet community needs and to alleviate problems (Chafic 2008). Australian Muslim community organisations exist in each state, many of which have received government and community funding over the years to run projects directly for their constituents or the mainstream community. These may range from welfare, charitable, interfaith, youth, cultural, education, and employment to arts programs. An audit of community projects and activities in the Muslim community may shed further light on such participation.

Men from the Horn of Africa talked of being consulted, but feared that their investments in consultations did not amount to any changes on the ground. (Pittaway & Muli, 2009). Recently arrived Muslim men from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds spoke of their desire to work collaboratively with government and non-government organisations in an attempt to resolve difficult issues within their communities (Chafic 2008).

The report on Muslim-Australians and Local Government (Wise & Ali, 2008) documents a large number of projects specifically targeted at Australian Muslims and developed or supported by local government and non-government organisations. The Muslim Youth Summits report 2007 (DIAC 2008) documents projects that specifically target Australian Muslim young people. Descriptions are included for projects tackling issues of employment, education, mentoring, volunteering, those addressing marginalisation and radicalisation, intergenerational conflict, discrimination, mental health, and sport.

Times of crisis

The Muslim community, particularly since 9/11 era, has been the subject of much public attention. This attention is particularly intensified in the aftermath of tragic national or international events. This has warranted community responses of various kinds, especially those that may be regarded in the broadest sense of the word, antiracism strategies (Dreher, 2006b). Community strategies are often poorly resourced, needing all hands on deck, and are reinvented each time there is a crisis. For example, young Australian Muslim men of refugee background regarded themselves as new “spokesmen” by virtue of needing to answer many questions about Islam and Muslims from the general public especially after international events. They regarded this as a serious responsibility, one for which they required further skills in cross cultural communication and leadership (Chafic 2008).

Australian Muslim men have in the past also been involved in such community responses as assisting fire-fighters in bushfires (e.g. Islamic Charitable Projects relief work in bushfires around Sydney around 1997). Muslim community responses to the latest bout of Victorian Bushfires in 2009, included raising funds for the Red Cross Bushfire Appeal. Local Muslim community organisations such as, Muslim Aid Australia, Islamic Council of NSW, many Victorian and Queensland organisations, contributed to this mainstream effort.

Volunteering and charity

Despite Islamic teachings in regards to the importance of being of service to others and giving charity (charity is one of the five pillars of Islam known as *zakaat*), Muslim males (8.1%) participated less in volunteer work than Australian males overall (15.7%). What is surprising however is that for those who did volunteer, Muslim males tended to do so at younger ages than males overall. See Appendix 1, Tables 35-36.

A report on supporting volunteers from Muslim communities (Madkhul 2007), states that young Muslim volunteers are likely to contribute to more than one voluntary group, similar to volunteers from a variety of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds. Young people are more likely to be involved in short-term one off events, and are able to participate in several events. Muslim volunteers tend to contribute within their own communities, but express a desire to branch into the mainstream community. Participants in the Muslim Youth Summits indicated a desire to be involved in volunteering activities, as a way to socially connect with the mainstream community (DIAC 2008).

There have been no studies on Muslim charitable aid organisations and levels of participation both financial and voluntary.

Actual and potential consequences of low or non-participation

Julia Gillard, Deputy Prime Minister, describes “to be socially included is to be able, both through developed personal capacity and through access to employment and services, to play a full role in Australian life, in economic, social, psychological and political terms” (Gillard 2007:6, cited in Edwards 2008:16).

There is no doubt that there is a strong economic driving force behind the Australian Governments’ social inclusion policy. On the eve of the last federal election Julia Gillard outlined to the ACOSS National Conference, “our social inclusion initiatives will not be about welfare – they will be an investment strategy to join social policy to economic policy to the benefit of both. For this reason, our Social Inclusion Unit and Board will be made up of serious economic and social thinkers, not just welfare representatives. This won’t be a memorial to good intentions – it will be about action and hard-headed economics”.

Low or non-participation in young people therefore risks being portrayed as representing a moral crisis, where young people will become burdens on the state (Edwards 2008). For already marginalised youth such as young Muslim men, this may further compound experiences of social exclusion and marginalisation. There is an assumption that marginalisation if left unchecked may lead to radicalisation in young Australian Muslims (DIAC: 2008, Muslim Youth Summits). While such projections have not been adequately tested, these claims are made repeatedly within the public sphere. The psychological effect of such on young Australian Muslim men as potentially future oriented deviants is problematic, questionable and damaging.

Hassan (2009:12) states, “we need to interrogate public policies implying a nexus between Islam, radicalism and deviant values”. He further states Australian Muslims, most of whom are Australian born, “represent an educated segment of Australian society but experience significant economic disadvantage in the labour market. This is pushing many into poverty, which has the potential to become endemic. Their economic disadvantage creates barriers to achieving aspirational social and cultural goals, thus impeding their social inclusion in Australian society.” Hassan calls for urgent attention, more focused research and appropriate public policies (Hassan 2009:12).

The mental drain reported by young Australian Muslims at the Muslim Youth Summits indicate the extent with which messages of stigmatisation are taken seriously in this age group. The authors of the Summits report make a link between mental health issues and anti-social behaviour (including drug and alcohol abuse and criminal activities) leading to further marginalisation of young people. (DIAC 2008:22).

It is interesting to extend this idea of stigmatisation to antisocial and criminal behaviour further. In reviewing court cases of young men of Muslim background accused of rape, Humphrey (2007) describes dynamics which purport Muslims as “culturally abject” within the Australian context. ‘Criminalisation’ as a sociological dynamic has also extended to vulnerable groups such as refugees. Humphrey (2003) in another article talks about the ‘criminalisation of refugees’ especially in the wake of the Tampa and the Children Overboard Affair. This has particular relevance given that most recent arrivals from the Muslim faith, fall into the humanitarian entrant category (see Appendix 3, Table 8).

In regards to actual rates of criminal activity, an article by Aziz Cooper, a senior Muslim Chaplain in Victorian prisons, states that “... Muslims make up about 2% of the population of the state of Victoria. Muslim prisoners represent 6% of the prison population. The vast majority of these Muslim prisoners are young men who are first generation Australians. This over-representation, while not abnormal amongst emerging communities, suggests a deficient level of social inclusion and integration of this demographic in Australian society”. (Cooper, 2008:3).

Much of the risk for low participation rates amongst young Muslims seems to centre on issues of stigmatisation and discrimination. The economic costs cannot be adequately accounted without due consideration to the very real affective and experiential dimensions encountered by young Australian Muslims and especially young men. The social constructions of ‘otherness’ or ‘marginalisation’ create negative social, economic, political and psychological potentials, which may or may not be calculable in an empirical sense. Further research is required.

BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION

Barriers to social and civic participation amongst Muslims and in particular young Australian Muslim men encompass several broad areas. These are: experiences and perceptions of marginalisation and social exclusion; economic exclusion; the impact and role of message makers; lack of support and resources, or skills and knowledge; poor English proficiency and recognition of prior learning to name a few. These factors are not “stand alone factors”, they cannot be neatly separated out from each other and in fact they can often appear in combination.

Stratton (2005), in describing social barriers in sport, encompasses the essence of what and how barriers operate. The following factors may well be transferable to a range of participation modes outside of sport. He states:

Social barriers may be a constraint on participation and may be difficult to overcome, particularly for those who feel isolated, for those who lack confidence, do not feel safe and for those who lack of a sense of belonging in the community. The literature on barriers provides some evidence that one of the reasons offered for non-participation in sport is that a person does not know anyone to participate with, lives alone or has no support. Other reasons include feelings of social isolation, due to poor access to transport or limited contact with family or friends. Such reasons can represent real barriers to participation and the data from this analysis suggest that social contact and access to transport are important barriers, whereas living alone is not.

A range of socio-economic and socio-demographic factors are related to participation in sport and physical activity, eg family type, occupation, educational status and household income. With the latter, this may be due to costs associated with sports equipment, clothing and club membership fees. Lower levels of awareness and knowledge ... may also be factors associated with some socio-economic factors, eg educational achievement. (Stratton et al, 2005:13)

Australian Muslim men experience a range of socially exclusionary barriers. These include experiences of prejudice, discrimination and harassment in public spaces, education, employment and media, violence in times of crisis, perceived and actual social exclusion and marginalisation have been documented since the 1990s (HREOC 1991 & 2004; Poynting & Noble 2004; Noble 2005; Dreher 2006a & 2006b; Poynting & Mason 2007; Chafic 2008; Hassan 2009).

Lack of recognition of overseas qualifications and skills were raised as problems encountered by young Australian Muslims, as well as by Australian Muslim men (DIAC, 2007; Chafic, 2008). The impact of discrimination as an exclusionary and marginalising force can be widespread and debilitating, affecting many aspects of social and economic life (Gillard & Wong 2007).

A range of studies point to the incidence of isolation, and a lack of social networking, which tie together with health issues especially as they relate to refugee experiences of anxiety, depression, and torture and trauma (Pittaway & Muli 2009; Chafic 2008). Young Muslims report incidence of frustration, stress and mental health issues leading to drug dependency, marginalisation or antisocial behaviour (DIAC 2008; The Aust, 27.2.07).

In regards to economic exclusion, 40% of families live under the poverty line, and while Muslim men are a relatively well-educated segment of the Australian population, unemployment rates are unusually high, in both overseas born and Australian born Muslim men. This may be due to poor English language proficiency or lack of recognition of prior learning or overseas skills and qualifications. This may also be due to discrimination within the workforce. Muslim men experience a closed “glass door” in terms of entry into the labour market. (See Hassan 2009; DIAC 2008; Chafic 2008).

Young Muslim people reported that potential employers regarded employing Muslims as ‘bad for business’ due to negative stereotyping of Muslims, or felt that religious observance would interfere with productivity.

Some young Muslims anglicise their names for this reason (See HREOC 2004 & DIAC 2008). In an audit discrimination study in which over 4000 fictional applications were randomly submitted for entry-level jobs, varying only the name as an indicator of ethnicity, Booth, Leigh and Varganova (2009) found clear evidence of discrimination in selection for interviews for entry-level jobs in Australia. The study looked at differences across five ethnic groups: Anglo-Saxon, Indigenous, Chinese, Italian, and Middle Eastern. The study found that in order to get as many interviews as an Anglo applicant, a Middle Eastern person must submit 64 percent more applications (Booth, Leigh and Varganova 2009:9).

African men report a fear of talking about settlement problems and issues relating to the police. Other issues related to “voice”, where Muslims recount many consultations but they report not seeing apparent outcomes, (see Chafic 2008, and Pittaway & Muli 2009). On a social level, Wise and Ali (2008) identify that alcohol, food and gender customs can limit mixing and friendship circles beyond the Muslim community. They also identified that local councils were not active enough in sponsoring or fostering relationship-building activities in the community. However the role of councils can also limit social and civic participation of Muslims in other ways.

Community initiatives in institution development, such as schools, community centres, places of worship, charitable societies are signalled as manifestations of civic and social participation. Recent and past events where such initiatives emanating from Australian Muslim communities have often been met with obstruction, objection, or challenge (in Municipal Council sittings, courts of law, and in heated media reporting and commentary), therefore become a focal point of concern with respect to gauging barriers to Muslim Australian civic and social participation. Recent literature focusing on this is scant, the only poignant public document dealing with the matter being the NSW Ethnic Affairs Commission’s Planning for Religious Development (EACNSW 1990). The document recognises the chronic problems of minority religious communities (especially Muslims) in successfully obtaining development application (DA) approval from Municipal Councils, on account of complexities in the planning laws on the one hand, but on the other (and not least), being the populist politicisation of such DAs coupled to a racist and vilifying public discourse advancing its agenda.

Overt and public demarcations of “culture conflict” serve to heighten barriers. Grewal (2007) shows how two incidents in particular, the 2005 “Cronulla riots” and the 2000 “Sydney gang rapes” were made to be emblematic of a purported antithetical essence of Muslim culture and values to Australian ones. Such representation received widespread dissemination through populist posturings on the part of radio talk-back hosts along with politicians, and then recursively in media reporting and editorials. Young Australian Muslims involved in the Muslim Youth Summits 2007 were concerned in particular with the role of the media in propagating negative coverage related to Muslims, which served to emphasise difference (DIAC: 2008). Indeed, the Summit makes direct reference to the same pivot points of the “Cronulla riots” and the “gang rapes” as contributing to a heightened sense of isolation through its racially and religiously vilifying discourse, on the one hand; and, on the other, the lack of support from leaders in the public domain. Indeed, Muslim men also regard that the Australian media and Australian political leaders have a social responsibility to prevent sensationalising the image of Muslims and Islam, and to give the public a clear and unambiguous message upholding community harmony and social inclusion, especially in the light of recent anti-terrorism laws and the ‘alert but not alarmed’ anti-terrorism advertising campaign – officially known as Let’s Look Out

for Australia (Australian Government 2008) (Yasmeen 2008; Chafic 2008; see also Pittaway & Muli 2009; DIAC 2008).

Dreher (2006 b) addresses the idea that most responses to crisis lead to community organisations having to reinvent the wheel, at each disaster. This drains already stretched community structures, making such work unsustainable in the long run.

In regards to political and media discourse on Islam and Muslims in the post 9/11 context, Australian Muslim men report a fear of the possibility of bullying and harassment of their younger Muslim male counterparts in Australian society. Young Australian Muslim men regarded that they had limited resources by way of skills, social, religious and political knowledge to deal with the new role and responsibility, forced upon them by circumstance, of being “new spokesmen” for the community in times of crisis. Both younger and older Muslim men regarded that the Australian Muslim community structures at large were not proactive enough in combating the poor public image of Islam and dissociating “Islam” from “terrorist” (Chafic 2008).

On the particular point of ant-terrorism laws post 9/11, these constitute its own impact on barriers to participation. Chong (2006) observes that “religious motivations ... appear to be a central concept in defining terrorism” in the various legislation, for which serious consequences result. The inclusion of religion in the legal definition of “terrorist act” is seen as too encompassing, extending into a whole range of other legitimate activities. Such definition therefore increases the prospect that religious motivations in general are suspect or should at least be seen as suspect. Thus an unprecedented scrutiny and focus on the actions and speech of members of the Muslim community is normalised. The proscription of persons and entities regime, legitimises the scrutiny of all aspects of religious organisations, curtailing people’s right to congregate, to speak, to pray, to give charity, or to provide support to their congregation. These, coupled with extra powers of “preventative detention”, “control orders”, and “stop, question and search” which in themselves are broad in scope, make the dubious practice of racial or religious profiling all too likely. Further, the new sedition offences introduced in the counter-terrorism context reinforce prevailing intolerance of other religious ideas and thoughts, particularly along the lines of un-Australian or unpatriotic. Chong (2006) concludes that essentially we are seeing the institutionalisation of religious intolerance taking hold. Indeed, she notes that on the one hand vigorous debate certainly ensues regarding what the right balance is for Australian citizenry between the loss of civil liberties and the institution of counter-terrorism legislation. However, there is little attention paid on how all this impacts on the Australian Muslim community and its members.

ENABLERS TO PARTICIPATION

The World Health Organization (2009) employs a model of social participation which incorporates a number of key strategies. Working with disadvantaged communities and minority groups, the WHO model may have particular relevance to our target group. In this model:

Social participation can take on a number of different forms including: informing people with balanced, objective information; consulting, whereby the affected community provides feedback; involving, or working directly with communities; collaborating by partnering with affected communities in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives; identification of solutions;

and empowering, by ensuring that communities retain ultimate control over the key decisions that affect their wellbeing. ... Social participation involving vulnerable and excluded groups should seek the empowerment of those groups, increasing their effective control over decisions that influence their health and life quality and their access and use of health services. (WHO 2009)

This model seeks to ensure consultations and collaborations, on-going dialogue, and community empowerment.

A survey of the literature reveals a number of key factors, which contribute to effective participation, with particular focus on young Muslim men. These may include: good formal and informal supports and networks including friendship and family networks; activities which build common ground/ intercultural/collaborative approaches; local initiatives; bicultural skills; volunteering; mentoring; anti racism practices; music and sport; dialogue with stake holders and message makers; the role of governments, NGOs; spiritual and religious factors; access to skills acquisition and support, and access to employment opportunities. As with barriers, enablers may act in combination with each other.

Good formal and informal supports and networks, including family and friendship ties are integral to supporting young people. Harris, Wyn & Younes 2007 address the civic and political engagement in young Australians aged 15-17 year old “pre-citizens”. They found that for young Australians it is family and friendship networks which “connect them to community and provides them with support and a space within which to express their concerns. Friendship is thus perhaps an important but unrecognised resource for young people, which needs to be fostered” (2007:26). Friendship ties, volunteering and/or other forms of participation have also been studied by a large number of researchers (Porter & Brown 2008; De Souza & Rymarz 2003; Lott 2006; Musick, Wilson, Bynum Jr 2000; Small 2007; Ecklund & Park 2007; Ecklund & Park 2005; Jones-Correa & Leal 2001; Loveland, Sikkink, Myers & Radcliff 2005; Becker & Dhingra 2001; Uslander 2002; Davie 2002).

Support mechanisms for young Muslim men may include family, extended family support networks, neighbourhood friends, friendship networks, local community organisations, ethno-specific and/or ethno-religious community organisations, local mosques, school friends and teachers, school counsellors, health professionals, youth workers, after school homework programs or private tutorials, football/soccer or other sports clubs, youth groups, online groups, and student groups.

By extension, informal and formal social spaces and activities may include: homes (own, friends, extended family), mosques, prayer rooms, Quran schools, libraries, cafes, gyms, sports clubs, PCYC, youth clubs, parks, beaches, schools, shopping centres, train stations, malls, other “hang out” places, the internet: msn, chatting rooms, online gaming, Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, YouTube, mobile phones, texting, music – performance and participation...the public space or spheres (Vromen 2008; Soysal 1997; Cameron, Grant-Smith 2005; Phillips 2004)

Activities that build common ground and collaboration have also been referred to in various studies. This may include opportunities for mentoring and training, and opening lines of communication between community leaders, political figures, and journalists, with young Muslims. Raising awareness of the Islamic faith, culture and practices, amongst such message makers, will help to demystify and correct public

misconceptions of Muslims, with the aim of working towards more harmonious, wider community relations. (see DIAC 2008; Dreher 2006a; HREOC 1991, 2004; Chafic 2008).

Similarly, Chafic (2008) refers to support offered through mentoring and training programs, or from political and media leaders and message makers. In that study, Australian Muslim men identified a number of community initiatives that were 'collaborative' in approach, seeking partnerships and connections beyond the Muslim community. Finding and working with 'common ground' was important to Australian Muslim men. They regarded religious values as 'common ground' within the mainstream community (i.e. that Australian values and Islamic values were largely the same), and that ought to create currency and agility for functioning as contributing members of society.

Young people who participated in the Muslim Youth Summits (DIAC, 2008) regarded the idea of mentoring as being a positive way of receiving guidance and overcoming social barriers, without compromising personal Islamic values. Mentors or third parties could also be utilised to assist young people with intergenerational conflict with parents and others. Participants also pointed to the importance of training in responding effectively to incidents of racism, discrimination and harassment, the need for strategies to build resilience and self-worth, and the value of awareness of one's rights (DIAC 2008).

Opportunities for building trust are integral to community relations and belonging. Porter & Brown (2004) refer to research whereby the ability to trust strangers, especially those that are different from oneself, promotes civic engagement and community building, which have been associated with several social and economic benefits for communities. Those with a high degree of "generalised trust" are more active in the community, are more cooperative, and are more likely to engage and get along with people from different backgrounds.

Another important enabler of social and civic participation is volunteering. The numerous benefits of volunteering have been documented by Thoits and Hewitt (2001), who state that it enhances all 6 aspects of wellbeing, namely happiness, life satisfaction, self esteem, sense of control over life, physical and mental health. Conversely, people who have greater wellbeing invest more time in volunteer service. While the direction of causation is unclear, what is clear is that healthy people volunteer and that people who volunteer are healthier. In the Muslim Youth Summits (DIAC 2008), young Muslims welcomed the opportunity to volunteer and saw this as possibly 'boosting morale'. They indicated that linking volunteering to educational and employment opportunities would be ideal.

Local initiatives and the role of non-Government organisations are also regarded as factors that contribute to more effective participation. Wise and Ali (2008), in their report on Muslim Australians and local government highlighted grassroots strategies in relations between Muslim and non-Muslim Australians, stating that "it is non-government organisations who are the leaders in building relations between Muslims and non-Muslim Australians". By extension these organisations may have a substantial role to play in enabling social and civic participation for Muslim men. They regarded sport as a "key way to engage disengaged men". They also regarded that "contact based initiatives were most successful but needed to engage a broader cross-section of society" (2008:5). The emphasis on the local interaction context or the so called 'micro-foundations of civil society', small groups may be regarded as a cause, context, and consequence of civic engagement.

Fine (2004) suggests that the growing number of small groups is a healthy indicator within democratic societies, creating crosscutting networks of affiliation.

Ethnic and religious organisations by virtue of dealing with grassroots communities can and do invest resources into community based projects and intercultural/interfaith activities. These activities, which are essentially enablers for wider participation, range from welfare and charitable types of work (meeting disadvantage) through to intercultural endeavours. Intercultural/interfaith activities which serve to raise awareness and familiarity between Muslims and the mainstream community include: Mosque Open Days once or twice a year (e.g. Lakemba and Auburn Mosques in Sydney and many others), Eid Festivals (e.g. MEFF- Multicultural Eid Festival and Fair in Sydney, and other such celebrations in other states), FAIR and Affinity events, conferences and forums; Working together For Humanity school visits, WCRP projects, and such publications as the "Christian-Muslim Relations" guidelines for Catholics living in the Parramatta Diocese (Roborgh & Keely 2008) to name a few.

A report which addresses the debates about citizenship, participation and belonging of British Pakistani men in Bradford, highlights the importance of neighbourhood life and local communities in building social capital, developing active citizenship and encouraging participation. The report also addresses issues of sustainable practice and flexibility in engaging young Muslim men and it stresses the importance of capitalising on local talent and networks for community needs together with the potential of using creative arts in project work. (Gill, 2008).

Dreher (2006) identifies three anti-racism practices in relation to her work with Australian Muslims post 9/11. These are firstly the creation of "sustainable" practice as opposed to responses which overload Arab and Muslim communities in times of crisis. Secondly she recommends "partnerships" across communities and with government and thirdly, "community capacity building" strategies which allow skills acquisition and transfer.

Kabir & Rickards 2006 discuss the effects of hope and hopefulness, bicultural skills, interest in music as enablers for 'at risk' Australian students aged 15-17 years. They state "those who didn't have a high social density network may have remained hopeful with the help of their bicultural practices and fondness of music" (2006:23). Others have also touched on the importance of creative engagements such as music, and comedy (Stephenson, 2008). Kabir and Rickards (2006) also recommend support for bicultural education in schools (considering and valuing diversity, and home & local practices). The authors discuss safe spaces development, acculturation or biculturalism rather than assimilation as a method of avoiding alienation and strengthening hopefulness as an outlook on life, stating, "a sense of bicultural identity would enhance their sense of belonging and confidence in both milieus" (2006:23). They also recommend the provision of sport and team building activities and "an interagency model of support [which] would offer a multimode supportive structure of communication between support agencies" (2006:23).

In an article on 'success and well being' in young Australians, Eckersley (2006) highlights the protective factors of spiritual traditions as offering "powerful storylines about wellbeing: wholeness, the purpose and the nature of "success", values and the nature and state of community. Because of this, questions about spirituality sit at the heart of understanding how individuals negotiate life, and how collectively as

communities we negotiate uncertainty.” He puts forward the idea that “spirituality is an important element in discussions about young people’s success and wellbeing”.

This is consistent with ‘social participation indicators’ taken from the 2002 General Social Survey, based on Australian Bureau of Statistics data, ‘church and religious activities’ were rated highest by people born in non-English speaking countries (ABS 2006:2). Religious activity then may be regarded as an enabler of participation.

Australian Muslim young people repeatedly suggested intercultural, interfaith, intercommunity dialogue, community education about Islam in the mainstream society, education or training for employers, educators, journalists etc, about the Islamic faith in order to correct damaging misconceptions about Muslims. They also wanted training in how to respond to incidents of racism, discrimination and harassment, strategies to build resilience and self worth, and awareness of their rights. They wanted the opportunity/space to develop an ‘Australian social identity’ through an active engagement with the mainstream community. (DIAC 2008, Muslim Youth Summits). Other recommendations included the need to address marginalisation and radicalisation by way of youth camp initiatives, working with media, ongoing dialogue with government amongst many others.

Participation in the workforce is greatly enhanced by access to appropriate education, training and skills acquisition. Within the Australian context, eight central ‘employability skills’ have been identified as enhancing job prospects and have been endorsed by the National Quality Council. These “non-technical skills and competencies” are regarded as important for “effective and successful participation in the workplace” (DSET 2006:5). They are identified as: communication; teamwork; problem solving; initiative and enterprise; planning and organisation; self-management; learning and technology.

The Dusseldorp Skills Forum (2007) highlights the importance of school completion or its equivalent as significantly improving employability and overcoming possible long-term disadvantages in the labour market, for Australian young people. A report evaluating vocational education and training for youth of Arabic background in NSW (TAFE NSW 2008) highlights the importance of a “targeted transition coordinator model of service provision” for a broad range of ethnic minority groups who do not achieve comparable participation rates in education and training. Within this model, the “transition coordinator” assists disengaged young people to achieve educational and employment outcomes, by helping them to make connections, informed decisions, and to progress their goals in an effective and supportive manner. The report also recommended pre-vocational and pre-apprenticeship programs focusing on learning difficulties, literacy and numeracy skills, as well as vocational education and training programs for people with overseas qualifications.

Indeed for those of immigrant backgrounds, recognition of overseas skills and qualifications greatly assists in integrating into the Australian workforce and opens doors for further pathways (Joint Standing Committee on Migration 2006). The Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria (2008) argues that access to meaningful employment for refugee and immigrant communities, contributes to a positive identity, a sense of belonging and economic self sufficiency.

CONCLUSION

Many studies, Australian and international, deal with one or another of various manifestations of civic and social participation as empowering acts equipping agency, namely through such things as political expression including the right to protest, resist and advocate change, forms of active citizenship, civics education within the school system, college or university, participation in volunteering and community based organisations including charities and religious organisations, memberships in sports clubs, educational attainment and labour force participation etc. It is clear that participation therefore is essential in the protection of democracy and includes platforms for change advocates.

The issue of participation by its very nature deals with complexity, not just in terms of the variation in the levels of participation, whether low, moderate or high. If we agree with Frideres' (1997) definition that dealing with participation we are dealing with the web of human interaction, connectivity, interdependence of strangers, from past to future governments, some governments may seek to manage and plan socially cohesive bridges amongst host societies and immigrants. This no doubt represents controversial ground in terms of the ethics of social engineering and the related consequences and is perhaps difficult to achieve with diverse groups (Duncan 2007). Some have posed the question; will the social inclusion policy within the Australian context lead to youth participation? (Edwards, 2008). The question then becomes, how do governments seek social inclusion on the basis of equality of citizenship that is both substantial and honourable?

These concepts are particularly important in the context of young Australian Muslim men and their experiences of stigmatisation, targeting, and social exclusion, whether it be by way of social, or institutional structures, and disadvantage. The 'doing' of 'belonging' is integral to a healthy sense of being part of a whole community, integral to one's sense of self worth, mental health and resilience. So much of Australian Muslim men's experience operates on contested ground of whether one is 'Australian' enough or whether one holds the right value systems. While being very well educated, the disproportionately high levels of unemployment suggest a complex set of factors operating, which young Australian Muslims attribute to misunderstandings and misconceptions of what Islam and Muslims are. The literature reviewed evidenced a large amount of good will, energy and enthusiasm amongst young Australian Muslims to tackle the very questions of active and productive forms of citizenship and of 'doing belonging'. Models, which effectively tap into, respect, value and nurture such good will, are essential to the social inclusion of marginalised groups.

APPENDIX 3 – DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF AUSTRALIAN MUSLIM MEN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The following Section presents a statistical profile of Muslim males in Australia, with a particular focus on people aged 15-29 years. All data was derived from the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006 Census of Population and Housing and was sourced from tables available on the ABS website, tables constructed using data from C-DATA, tables purchased directly from ABS, or adapted from the DIAC publication *Muslims In Australia* (2007) (the ideas and data for several tables in this section are credited to this publication), from Hassan, 2009's *Social and Economic Conditions of Australian Muslims: Implications for Social Inclusion* or DIAC Settlement trend statistics for 2007 utilising data of all states of Australia. Throughout this Section, the term 'Muslim males' refers to male Census respondents who identified Islam as their religion. References to 'Overall Australian males' refers to all men who participated in the Census, and does not imply citizenship or country of origin. In addition, for Census variables related to dwelling (household and family composition), the data is provided based on a reference person and thus does not cover the overall population but only the reference person population. Data for these variables still gives a summary of the landscape, and provides a basis for comparison to overall Australian males.

SUMMARY OF CENSUS DATA

Population increase

The total population of Muslim males in 2006 was 177,759, compared to the overall male population of 9,799,250. The total percent increase has been higher for Muslim males (19.7%) than for overall Australian males (5.7%) from 2001 to 2006. See Table 1.

Age

Muslim males comprise 1.81% of the overall Australian male population and Muslim males aged 15-29 comprise 2.5% of the overall 15-29 year old population. Muslim males are younger compared to the overall male population, for example 47.9% are 24 years or under compared to 34.7% of the overall population. See Figure 1.

Geographical distribution – by state & city

Muslim males are overrepresented in New South Wales (NSW) and Victoria (VIC) and under-represented in the rest of the States and Territories. Within States, Muslim males are overrepresented in Sydney and Melbourne, but under-represented in the rest of New South Wales, Victoria, and in the rest of the major cities, demonstrating an urban residential tendency. See Tables 2 & 3.

Geographical distribution – LGA

Bankstown NSW, Hume VIC and Canterbury NSW were the three LGAs with the highest number of Muslim male residents, and these three LGAs accounted for 18.3% of the Muslim male population and 17.1% of the 15-29 year old Muslim male population. See Table 4.

Country of birth

63.1% of Muslim males were born outside Australia, with Lebanon, Turkey and Afghanistan leading the list of countries where Muslim males were born. However, Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Lebanon are the top three countries where Muslim males aged between 15 and 29 were born. See Table 9.

Main language spoken at home

Arabic, Turkish and Urdu were the top three languages which Muslim males spoke at home (when respondents were asked if they spoke a language other than English at home), while for Muslim males aged between 15 & 29, their top three languages (other than English) spoken at home were Arabic, Turkish and Bengali. See Tables 11-13.

English language proficiency

The majority of Muslim males, 70.2%, reported speaking English very well or well, with only 13.6% reporting not speaking English well or at all. Among Muslim males aged between 15 & 29, an even higher figure of 81.2% reported speaking English very well or well, with a smaller figure of 4.9% reporting not speaking English well or at all. See Table 14-17.

Citizenship

Muslim males are less likely to be citizens than all males as 76.0% of Muslim males are Australian citizens compared to 85.6% of overall Australian males. However, only 65.6% of Muslim males aged between 15 and 29 are Australian citizens, compared to 82.9% of all Australian males in the same age category. See Table 18.

Year of arrival

Overseas born Muslim males are more likely to have arrived more recently compared to all overseas born Australians counted in the Census - 33.9% of overseas born Muslim males arrived between 2001-2006 compared to 18.1% of all overseas born Australian males. For the 15-29 year old age range, 76.1% of Muslim males arrived within a decade of the Census compared to 60.8% of all overseas born males. See Table 7.

Humanitarian entrants

Overall, Muslim entrants to Australia arriving between 2002/2003 and 2006/2007 are more likely to be under a 'humanitarian' classification (i.e. 27% of the total humanitarian intake), than under a 'non-humanitarian' classification (i.e. 8% of the total 'non-humanitarian' intake). See Table 8.

Marital status

A higher proportion of Muslim males are married (56.1%) compared to all Australian males (50.7%) and a lower proportion (3.8%) of Muslim males are divorced compared to all Australian males (7.3%). The proportion of Muslim males never married is on par with all Australian males (36.5% vs. 36.7%) as is the proportion separated (3.0% versus 2.9%). See Tables 21-23.

Relationship in household/family composition

A smaller proportion of Muslim males are in de facto marriages and are the lone person in the household compared to overall Australian males. A higher proportion of Muslim males are under 15 or are dependant students aged 15-24 compared to overall Australian males. See Tables 19-20.

Education

A higher proportion of Muslim males completed Year 12 or equivalent than did overall Australian males. The cumulative percentage of Muslim males who completed Year 10 or equivalent or higher was 77.1% for Muslim males and 74.9% for all Australian males. However, a higher proportion of Muslim males did not go to school (3.9%) compared to all Australian males (0.8%). Of the Muslim males currently in school, a higher proportion are in Technical or further educational institutions (10.2% vs. 6.7%), and also in University or other Tertiary institutions (17.1% vs. 10.5%). See Tables 24-26.

Unemployment

The Muslim male unemployment rate (12.6%) is higher than overall Australian males (5.2%). The year of arrival substantially altered the unemployment rate with those having arrived earlier less likely to be unemployed than those who arrived more recently. Muslim male 15-34 year olds were also more often unemployed than overall 15-34 year olds with 9.4% reporting looking for work compared to 5.5% for overall Australian males. See Tables 27-28.

Labour force participation

Muslim males have a slightly lower labour force participation rate (65.5%) than all Australian males (71.5%). For males in the 15-34 year age range, there was a higher full-time employment rate for overall Australian males than for Muslim males, with 48.3% vs. 33.4% employed full-time respectively, however, Muslim males aged 15-29 had a slightly higher part-time employment rate of 16.2% vs. 14.9%. See Tables 28-29.

Weekly income

Muslim males earn less income compared to all males. They are underrepresented in the higher weekly income categories of '\$1000-\$1599' per week (8.6% vs. 15.8%) and '\$1600 or more' per week (4.2% vs. 9.4%) than all males, and are overrepresented in the 'Nil or negative income' (11.2% vs. 5.9%) and '\$1-\$399' per week (38.2% vs. 26.1%) categories. See Tables 30-31.

Children in poverty

40% of Muslim households (thus, 40% of Muslim children) were living in poverty compared to 19% of non-Muslim households. See Table 32.

Occupation

The highest percentage of employed Muslim males work in Technician & Trade Worker jobs (19.6%), Professionals (15.7%), Machinery Operators & Drivers (15.5%) and Labourers (15.5%). Muslim males were less likely than all Australian males to work as Managers (10.2% vs. 16.1%) or Professionals (15.7% vs. 17.3%) and were overrepresented in Machinery Operators & Drivers (15.6% vs. 11.0%) and Labourers (15.5% vs. 12.3%) occupational categories. See Table 33.

Industry

Muslim males are most employed in Manufacturing (14.7%), Transport, Postal & Warehousing (11.5%), and Retail Trade industries (11.2%), while overall Australian males are most employed in Manufacturing (14.4%), Construction (12.5%), and Retail Trade (9.0%). There are slight differences between the two populations: Muslim males are more represented in Transport, Postal & Warehousing (11.5% vs. 6.7%) and in Accommodation & Food Service (8.3% vs. 5.0%) compared to Australian males, while Muslim males are underrepresented in Construction (9.4% vs. 12.5%) and Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing (1.0% vs. 4.0%). See Table 34.

Volunteering

Muslim males participated in less volunteer work than males overall, as 8.1% of Muslim males reported volunteer work compared to 15.7% of overall males. The patterns by age were somewhat similar, though for those who did volunteer, Muslim males tended to do so at younger ages than males overall. See Tables 35-36.

Unpaid domestic work

Muslim males (8.3%) provided unpaid domestic assistance at a slightly higher proportion than overall males (7.9%) and tended to do so more often at a younger age, with 43.7% of Muslim males who provided unpaid assistance being 34 years or younger compared to 19.8% of Australian males who provided unpaid assistance being 34 years or younger. See Tables 37-38.

POPULATION, AGE AND GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION

Based on the 2006 Census data, the total number of Muslim males in Australia was 177,759, or 1.81% of the total Australian male population. With respect to Muslim males between the ages of 15-29, they number 50,482, which is 2.5% of 2,013,244 Australian males aged 15-29. The age of Muslim males is noticeably younger than overall Australian males. Nearly half of Muslim males are 24 years or younger compared to 34.7% for overall Australian males and over 80% of Muslim males are 44 years or younger compared to 63% of overall Australian males.

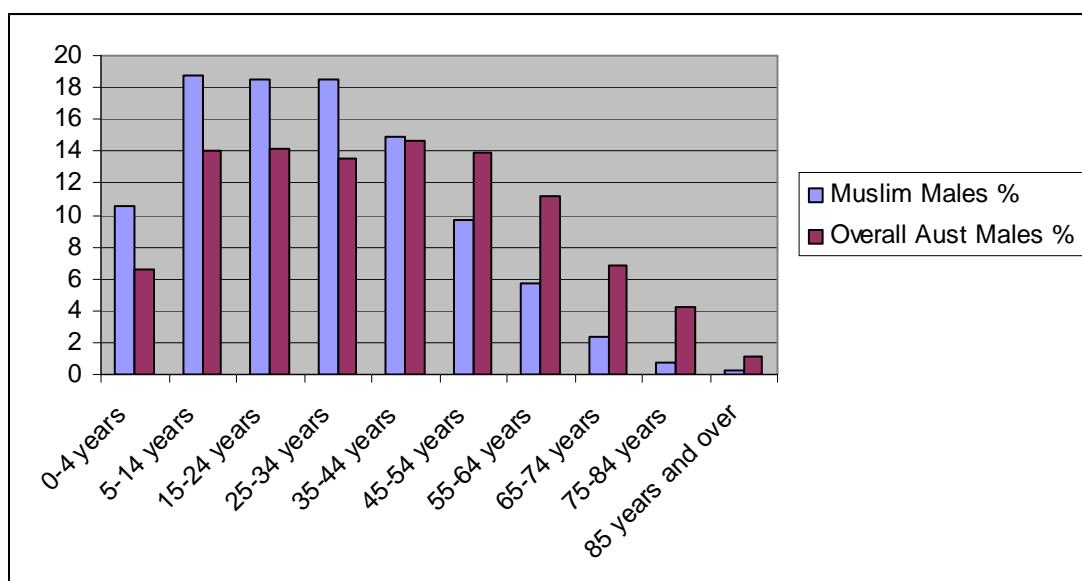
Table 1 – Age range of Muslim and overall Australian males

	MUSLIM MALES			OVERALL AUST MALES		
	No.	%	Cumulative %	No.	%	Cumulative %
0-4 years	18,856	10.6	10.6	647,411	6.6	6.6
5-14 years	33,489	18.8	29.4	1,373,925	14.0	20.6
15-24 years	32,941	18.5	48.0	1,377,448	14.1	34.7
25-34 years	32,938	18.5	66.5	1,321,058	13.5	48.2
35-44 years	26,567	14.9	81.5	1,437,243	14.7	62.8
45-54 years	17,254	9.7	91.2	1,360,083	13.9	76.7
55-64 years	10,182	5.7	96.9	1,096,133	11.2	87.9
65-74 years	4,025	2.3	99.2	668,450	6.8	94.7
75-84 years	1,229	0.7	99.8	412,457	4.2	98.9
85 years and over	278	0.2	100.0	105,039	1.1	100.0
Total	177,759			9,799,247		

Source: ABS 2006 Census data.

The age distribution of the Muslim male population is characteristic of a young population with a low percentage of older people and the bulk being children, adolescents or young adults.

Figure 1 – Age distribution



Source: ABS 2006 Census data.

The 2006 population figure of 177,759 is a 19.7 percent increase from the 2001 Census Muslim male population figure of 148,446. This percent increase is substantially higher than the 5.7 percent increase for all Australian males (the 2006 Australian male population was 9,799,250 up from 9,270,466 in 2001). For major urban locations, the biggest percent increase between 2001 and 2006 for Muslim males was in Adelaide (42.4%), followed by Brisbane (38.5%), both with percentage increases much higher than the overall Australian male population increase in those cities (3.1% and 9.8% respectively).

Table 2 – State, major city distribution and percent change of Muslim and overall Australian(*) male population from the 2001 to 2006 Census ‡

	Muslim males *(Overall Australian Males)				
	2001		2006		% change
	No.	%	No.	%	
Sydney	70,674 *(1,951,516)	47.6 *(21.1)	83,023 *(2,028,730)	46.7 *(20.7)	17.5 *(4.0)
Remainder NSW	3,751 *(1,172,152)	2.5 *(12.6)	5,145 *(1,199,721)	2.9 *(12.2)	37.2 *(2.4)
Total NSW	74,425 *(3,123,668)	50.1 *(33.7)	88,168 *(3,228,451)	49.6 *(32.9)	18.5 *(3.4)
Melbourne	45,591 *(1,648,969)	30.7 *(17.8)	52,869 *(1,760,907)	29.7 *(18.0)	16.0 *(6.8)
Remainder Vic	2,801 *(638,973)	1.9 *(6.9)	3,795 *(659,510)	2.1 *(6.7)	35.5 *(3.2)
Total Vic	48,392 *(2,287,942)	32.6 *(24.7)	56,664 *(2,420,417)	31.9 *(24.7)	17.1 *(5.8)
Brisbane	5,494 *(789,245)	3.7 *(8.5)	7,610 *(866,431)	4.3 *(8.8)	38.5 *(9.8)
Remainder Qld	2,434 *(956,137)	1.6 *(10.3)	3,189 *(1,068,950)	1.8 *(10.9)	31.0 *(11.8)
Total Qld	7,928 *(1,745,382)	5.3 *(18.8)	10,799 *(1,935,381)	6.1 *(19.8)	36.2 *(10.9)
Adelaide	3,650 *(523,505)	2.5 *(5.6)	5,198 *(539,869)	2.9 *(5.5)	42.4 *(3.1)
Remainder SA	519 *(200,642)	0.3 *(2.2)	554 *(205,339)	0.3 *(2.1)	6.7 *(2.3)
Total SA	4,169 *(724,147)	2.8 *(7.8)	5,752 *(745,208)	3.2 *(7.6)	38.0 *(2.9)
Perth	9,223 *(658,289)	6.2 *(7.1)	11,178 *(713,917)	6.3 *(7.3)	21.2 *(8.5)
Remainder WA	1,121 *(253,414)	0.8 *(2.7)	1,422 *(262,203)	0.8 *(2.7)	26.9 *(3.5)
Total WA	10,344 *(911,703)	7.0 *(9.8)	12,600 *(976,120)	7.1 *(10.0)	21.8 *(7.1)
Total Tas	498 *(225,904)	0.3 *(2.4)	553 *(223,380)	0.3 *(2.4)	11.0 *(3.3)
Total NT	480 *(97,919)	0.3 *(1.1)	571 *(99,370)	0.3 *(1.0)	19.0 *(1.5)
Total ACT	1,835 *(152,453)	1.2 *(1.6)	2,305 *(159,655)	1.3 *(1.6)	25.6 *(4.7)
Total Australia	148,446 *(9,270,466)		177,759 *(9,799,250)		19.7 *(5.7)

Source: ABS 2001 and 2006 Census data (based on place of usual residence).

In 2006, the distribution of the number of Muslim males per State was distinct from the distribution of overall Australian males - Muslim males are overrepresented in New South Wales (NSW) and Victoria (VIC) and under-represented in the rest of the States and Territories.

Table 3 – State population distribution for Muslim and overall Australian males

	Muslim males		Overall Aust Males	
	No.	%	No.	%
New South Wales	88,168	49.6	3,228,451	32.9
Victoria	56,664	31.9	2,420,417	24.7
Queensland	10,799	6.1	1,935,381	19.8
South Australia	5,752	3.2	745,208	7.6
Western Australia	12,600	7.1	976,120	10.0
Tasmania	553	0.3	233,380	2.4
Northern Territory	571	0.3	99,370	1.0
ACT	2,305	1.3	159,655	1.6
Total	177,759		9,799,250	

Source: ABS 2006 Census data.

Bankstown (NSW), Hume (VIC) and Canterbury (NSW) were the three LGAs with the highest number of Muslim male residents, and these three LGAs accounted for 18.3% of the Muslim male population. Muslim males aged between 15 & 29, in these same LGAs accounted for 4.9% of the total Muslim male population. Significantly, Muslim males comprised more than 10% of the overall LGA male population in the top 4 LGAs, and they comprised 25.1% of Auburn's total male population. Muslim males aged between 15 & 29, comprised around or over 20% of the overall LGA male population aged between 15 & 29 in Bankstown, Canterbury, and Auburn.

Table 4 – LGAs with the highest Muslim male population

	Muslim males *(Muslim males aged between 15 & 29)		% of total male LGA population	Overall Aust males **(overall males aged between 15 & 29)	
	#	%		#	% of all Australian Men
Bankstown (C) (NSW)	13,220 *(3,486)	7.4 *(6.9)	15.7 *(19.9)	84,094 **(17,538)	0.86 **(0.87)
Hume (C)	9,900 *(2,569)	5.6 *(5.1)	13.5 *(16.1)	73,140 **(15,993)	0.75 **(0.79)
Canterbury (C) (NSW)	9,421 *(2,569)	5.3 *(5.1)	14.6 *(19.6)	64,565 **(13,079)	0.66 **(0.65)
Auburn (A) (NSW)	8,502 *(2,498)	4.8 *(4.9)	25.1 *(27.6)	33,837 **(9,057)	0.35 **(0.45)
Liverpool (C) (NSW)	7,020 *(1,726)	4.0 *(3.4)	8.6 *(9.7)	81,876 **(17,783)	0.84 **(0.88)
Parramatta (C) (NSW)	6,284 *(1,814)	3.5 *(3.6)	8.5 *(10.1)	74,281 **(17,963)	0.76 **(0.89)
Blacktown (C) (NSW)	6,244 *(1,53.8)	3.5 *(3.0)	4.6 *(5.2)	134,874 **(29,791)	1.4 **(1.5)
Brisbane (C) (QLD)	5,723 *(1,847)	3.2 *(3.7)	1.2 *(1.6)	467,341 **(113,306)	4.8 **(5.6)
Moreland (C) (VIC)	5,554 *(1,632)	3.1 *(3.2)	8.4 *(11.0)	65,928 **(14,867)	0.67 **(0.74)
Greater Dandenong (C) (VIC)	5,249 *(1,458)	3.0 *(2.9)	8.4 *(10.5)	62,814 **(13,829)	0.64 **(0.69)

A=Area, C=City. Source: ABS 2006 Census data.

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN, LANGUAGE, SETTLEMENT AND CITIZENSHIP

The number of Muslims has been steadily growing in Australia both in total number and as a percent of the total Australian population in the past quarter decade especially. Wise and Ali (2008) report that the growth of large numbers is a recent phenomena mostly in the post World War II migration expansion, starting most significantly with Turkish Cypriots and Turkish in the 1950s and 60s, followed shortly by a large settlement of Lebanese in the 1970s.

Table 5 – Muslim population over time

YEAR OF CENSUS/DATA	TOTAL MUSLIM POPULATION	% OF TOTAL AUSTRALIAN POPULATION
1971	22,311	0.20
1991	148,096	0.90
1996	200,902	1.10
2001	281,578	1.50
2006	340,389	1.70

Source: ABS 2006 Census data and from DIAC, 2007.

Data from the DIAC settlement database indicate a similar pattern as the percent of migrants who are Muslim has increased from the mid-nineties to the present time. Table 6 below shows the percent of migrants during the indicated time period who were Muslim.

Table 6 – Percent of settlers reporting Islam as their religion

FROM	TO	MALE	ALL
1-Jul-96	1-Jan-00	13.4	12.9
1-Jan-00	1-Jan-05	16.9	15.0
1-Jan-05	1-Jul-09	18.0	16.9

Source: DIAC settlement database accessed 24 July 2009.

Overseas born Muslim males are more likely to have arrived more recently compared to all overseas born Australians counted in the Census - 33.9% of overseas born Muslim males arrived between 2001-2006 compared to 18.1% of all overseas born Australian males, and 53.9% of Muslim males arrived within a decade of the Census compared to 28.6% of all overseas born males. With regards to overseas born Muslim males aged between 15 & 29, the percents are higher and the proportional difference between the two is narrowed (by 10%, approximately), whereby 76.1% of them arrived within a decade of the Census compared to 60.8% of all overseas born males aged between 15 & 29.

Table 7 – Year of arrival for Muslim males and all overseas born males

Year of Arrival	Muslim Males *(Muslim males aged between 15 & 29)		All overseas born males **(all males aged between 15 & 29)	
	No.	% ¹	No.	% ¹
Before 1981	18,151 *(231)	18.1 *(0.8)	920,289 **(7,049)	44.7 **(2.1)
1981-1990	16,006 *(3,200)	15.9 *(11.5)	385,044 **(76,338)	18.7 **(23.1)
1991-1995	12,175 *(3,214)	12.1 *(11.6)	163,662 **(46,077)	8.0 **(14.0)
1996-2000	20,066 *(5,640)	20.0 *(20.3)	215,968 **(57,033)	10.5 **(17.3)
2001-2006	34,002 *(15,493)	33.9 *(55.8)	371,703 **(143,580)	18.1 **(43.5)
Total	100,400 *(50,480)		2,056,666 **(330,077)	
Not stated	5387 *(1,440)		106668 **(22,762)	
Not applicable	71973 *(21,262)		7635913 **(1,660,404)	

¹Percent does not include not stated or not applicable responses.

Source: ABS 2006 Census data.

Among the 56,322 humanitarian entrants arriving between 2002/2003 and 2006/2007, 27% of them (15,018) indicated they were Muslim. Of the 91,133 non-humanitarian entrants arriving in the same period, however, only 8% of them (7,631) indicated they were Muslim. Muslims made up 15% of all entrants (humanitarian and non-humanitarian). Muslim humanitarian entrants were 10% of total entrants and Muslim non-humanitarian entrants were 5% of total entrants, during the 2002/2003 – 2006/2007 period.

Table 8 – Muslim & total, Humanitarian & non-Humanitarian entrants 2002-2003 to 2006-2007

	2002- 2003	2003- 2004	2004- 2005	2005- 2006	2006- 2007	TOTAL
All Humanitarian entrants	9591	10261	13158	11951	11361	56322
Muslim Humanitarian entrants	2911	2808	2586	3478	3235	15018
	30%	27%	20%	29%	28%	27%
All non-Humanitarian entrants	18184	16713	18117	19329	18790	91133
Muslim non-Humanitarian entrants	1700	1576	1568	1588	1199	7631
	9%	9%	9%	8%	6%	8%
All entrants						147,455
All Muslim entrants						22,649
						15%

Source: DIAC, *Settlement Trends & Needs of New Arrivals 2007 (NSW, VIC, ACT, TAS, SA, WA, NT, QLD)*.

Compared to the overall Australian male population, a smaller percentage of Muslim males were born in Australia: 36.9% of Muslim males were born in Australia compared with 70.7% of overall Australian males.

For Muslim males aged between 15 & 29, 39% were born in Australia compared to 75% of all Australian males aged between 15 & 29.

Lebanon, Turkey and Afghanistan top the list of non-Australian countries of birth for Muslim males. However, Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Lebanon are the top three countries of birth for Muslim males aged between 15 & 29.

Table 9 – Top 10 countries of birth of Muslim and overall Australian males and Muslim and overall Australian males between 15 & 29 years (* & **)

Muslim males *(Muslim males aged between 15&29)			Overall Aust males **(overall Aust. males aged between 15 & 29)		
	No.	%		No.	%
Australia	65,547 *(19,672)	36.9 *(39.0)	Australia	6,931,757 **(1,513,080)	70.7 **(75.2)
Lebanon	15,893 *(2,861)	8.9 *(7.2)	England	429,482 **(28,379)	4.4 **(1.4)
Turkey	11,734 *(1,594)	6.6 *(3.2)	New Zealand	196,448 **(38,936)	2.0 **(1.9)
Afghanistan	8,587 *(3,297)	4.8 *(6.5)	Italy	103,028 **(1,282)	1.1 **(0.1)
Bangladesh	8,186 *(3,627)	4.6 *(7.2)	China (excludes SARs and Taiwan Province)	93,280 **(30,462)	1.0 **(1.5)
Pakistan	8,096 *(2,581)	4.6 *(5.1)	India	81,190 **(27,531)	0.8 **(1.4)
Iraq	5,639 *(1,385)	3.2 *(2.7)	Viet Nam	75,287 **(13,577)	0.8 **(0.7)
Iran	3,823 *(1,088)	2.2 *(2.2)	Scotland	64,795 **(3,629)	0.7 **(0.2)
Bosnia and Herzegovina	3,803 *(1,038)	2.1 *(2.1)	Greece	54,515 **(1,274)	0.6 **(0.1)
Indonesia	3,797 *(1,082)	2.1 *(2.1)	South Africa	51,037 **(10,671)	0.5 **(0.5)
India	2,982 *(1,230)	1.7 *(2.4)	Germany	50,995 **(2,924)	0.5 **(0.1)
Not stated	6,429 *(1,600)	3.6 *(3.2)	Not stated	704,155 **(147,329)	7.2 **(7.3)

Source: ABS 2006 Census data.

The distribution of Muslim immigrants' country of origin has changed over time. As seen in Table 15 below, a large percent of Muslim immigrants from Lebanon and Turkey arrived in the 1970s and 1980s while larger percentages of Muslim immigrants from Iran, Iraq, Indonesia, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Afghanistan have arrived more recently – the majority for each of these latter countries arriving in the decade before the 2006 Census.

Table 10 – Percent (within country of origin) of Muslim male immigrants for the most numerous ten countries of origin, by year range of arrival

	BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA	IRAN	IRAQ	LEBANON	TURKEY	INDONESIA	BANGLADESH	INDIA	PAKISTAN	AFGHANISTAN
1960 and before	1.5	0.1	0.0	0.7	0.1	0.5	0.0	0.4	0.1	0.0
1961-1970	7.4	0.4	0.2	9.3	14.9	1.4	0.1	1.8	0.5	0.1
1971-1980	4.3	2.5	0.5	27.9	30.2	10.3	1.4	4.8	2.6	0.8
1981-1990	4.3	20.6	1.8	23.3	20.1	13.1	7.6	9.3	16.4	10.2
1991-1995	30.3	15.4	17.2	7.8	8.8	8.0	11.5	6.9	10.1	13.8
1996-2000	34.2	18.0	43.7	9.9	9.3	15.9	21.1	19.9	23.9	26.9
2001-2006	16.0	38.7	32.7	14.1	11.5	45.3	54.6	53.2	42.4	43.6
Total counted in 2006 Census	3,802	3,822	5,638	15,894	11,732	3,798	8,183	2,980	8,095	8,589

Source: ABS 2006 Census data.

While nearly one-third of Muslim males were born in Australia, 13.3% of Muslim males reported English as the main language spoken at home compared to 78.3% of all Australian men. Arabic, Turkish and Urdu were the top three languages which Muslim males spoke at home. With regard to Muslim males aged between 15 & 29, their top three languages (other than English) spoken at home were Arabic, Turkish and Bengali. It is important to note that just under half (47.5%) of all Arabic speaking males in Australia are Muslim.

Table 11 – Top languages spoken at home for Muslim and overall Australian males.

MUSLIM MALES			OVERALL AUST MALES		
	No.	%		No.	%
Arabic	59,416	33.4	English	7,671,502	78.3
English	23,638	13.3	Italian	153,976	1.6
Turkish	23,534	13.2	Arabic	124,973	1.3
Urdu	10,108	5.7	Greek	124,258	1.3
Bengali	9,005	5.1	Cantonese	115,709	1.2
Dari	7,325	4.1	Mandarin	103,318	1.1
Persian (excluding Dari)	5,119	2.9	Vietnamese	94,332	1.0
Bosnian	4,888	2.7	Spanish	46,614	0.5
Indonesian	4,317	2.4	Hindi	36,415	0.4
Malay	3,797	2.1	German	34,727	0.4
Not stated	4,102	2.3	Not stated	605,005	6.2

Source: ABS 2006 Census data.

Table 12 – Top languages spoken at home for Muslim males in the 15-19, 20-24 and 25-29 age ranges.

	15-19 YEARS		20-24 YEARS		25-29 YEARS		TOTAL 15-29 YEARS	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Arabic	5,670	35.9	5,544	32.3	5,576	31.8	16,858	33.4
English	2,167	13.7	2,125	12.4	2,035	11.6	6,353	12.6
Turkish	2,228	14.1	1,892	11.0	1,997	11.4	6,142	12.2
Bengali	481	3.0	1,374	8.0	1,744	9.9	3,610	7.2
Urdu	576	3.7	1,055	6.1	1,382	7.9	3,023	6.0
Dari	954	6.0	795	4.6	800	4.6	2,560	5.1
Persian (excluding Dari)	499	3.2	507	3.0	545	3.1	1,557	3.1
Malay	400	2.5	769	4.5	296	1.7	1,472	2.9
Bosnian	492	3.1	425	2.5	353	2.0	1,276	2.5
Indonesian	334	2.1	432	2.5	461	2.6	1,232	2.4
Hindi	240	1.5	416	2.4	518	3.0	1,178	2.3

Source: ABS 2006 Census data.

Table 13 – Top languages spoken at home for overall Australian males in the 15-19, 20-24 and 25-29 age ranges.

	15-19 YEARS		20-24 YEARS		25-29 YEARS		TOTAL 15-29 YEARS	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
English	559,288	80.4	499,543	73.3	462,232	72.7	1,521,217	75.6
Not stated	36,873	5.3	53,472	7.8	50,754	8.0	141,112	7.0
Mandarin	9,288	1.3	17,783	2.6	10,795	1.7	37,870	1.9
Arabic	11,099	1.6	11,173	1.6	11,138	1.8	33,413	1.7
Cantonese	9,673	1.4	13,430	2.0	8,966	1.4	32,072	1.6
Vietnamese	7,096	1.0	7,468	1.1	7,148	1.1	21,714	1.1
Greek	5,127	0.7	5,221	0.8	7,063	1.1	17,413	0.9
Italian	3,965	0.6	5,213	0.8	6,702	1.1	15,881	0.8
Hindi	2,177	0.3	4,406	0.6	5,599	0.9	12,183	0.6
Spanish	2,841	0.4	3,576	0.5	4,077	0.6	10,495	0.5
Korean	2,482	0.4	2,820	0.4	3,072	0.5	8,375	0.4
Indonesian	2,044	0.3	3,353	0.5	2,611	0.4	8,009	0.4

Source: ABS 2006 Census data.

The majority of Muslim males, 70.2%, reported speaking English very well or well, with only 13.6% reporting not speaking English well or at all. Among Muslim males aged between 15 & 29, an even higher figure of 81.2% reported speaking English very well or well, with a smaller figure of 4.9% reporting not speaking English well or at all.

Table 14 – English language proficiency for Muslim and Australian males

	MUSLIM MALES		OVERALL AUST MALES	
	No.	%	No.	%
Very well	84,368	47.5	865,714	8.8
Well	40,440	22.7	419,570	4.3
Not well	18,296	10.3	192,696	2.0
Not at all	5,886	3.3	47,640	0.5
Not stated - both language (LANP) and proficiency (ENGP) not stated	2,368	1.3	574,219	5.9
Not stated - language (LANP) stated, proficiency (ENGP) not stated	2,763	1.6	27,909	0.3
Not applicable	23,638	13.3	7,671,501	78.3
Total	177,759		9,799,249	

Source: ABS 2006 Census data.

Table 15 – English language proficiency for Muslim and overall Australian males (*) in the 15-19, 20-24 and 25-29 year age ranges

	15-19 YEARS		20-24 YEARS		25-29 YEARS		TOTAL 15-29 YEARS	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Very well	10,997 *(77,209)	69.7 *(11.1)	10,771 *(87,526)	62.7 *(12.8)	9,881 *(86,488)	56.3 *(13.6)	31,649 *(251,223)	62.7 *(12.5)
Well	1,883 *(17,739)	11.9 *(2.5)	3,316 *(33,975)	19.3 *(5.0)	4,151 *(29,063)	23.7 *(4.6)	9,350 *(80,777)	18.5 *(4.0)
Not well	407 *(5,040)	2.6 *(0.7)	644 *(6,614)	3.7 *(1.0)	1,125 *(6,526)	6.4 *(1.0)	2,176 *(18,180)	4.3 *(0.9)
Not at all	80 *(593)	0.5 *(0.1)	98 *(786)	0.6 *(0.1)	150 *(824)	0.9 *(0.1)	328 *(2,203)	0.6 *(0.1)
Not stated - both language (LANP) and proficiency (ENGP) not stated	45 *(34,641)	0.3 *(5.0)	50 *(51,590)	0.3 *(7.6)	39 *(49,227)	0.2 *(7.7)	134 *(135,458)	0.3 *(6.7)
Not stated - language (LANP) stated, proficiency (ENGP) not stated	188 *(1,285)	1.2 *(0.2)	171 *(1,619)	1.0 *(0.2)	157 *(1,436)	0.9 *(0.2)	516 *(4,340)	1.0 *(0.2)
Not applicable	2,168 *(559,288)	13.7 *(80.4)	2,124 *(499,543)	12.4 *(73.3)	2,035 *(462,232)	11.6 *(72.7)	6,327 *(1,521,063)	12.5 *(75.6)
	15,768 *(695,795)		17,174 *(681,653)		17,538 *(635,796)		50,480 *(2,013,244)	

Source: ABS 2006 Census data.

When only those who stated English language proficiency responses (answered 'Very well' to 'Not at all') are considered, Muslim males match up almost exactly to overall Australian males (the assumption of this quasi-sample is that it reflects only those whose primary language is other than English for both population groups). The same pattern is apparent for comparison of Muslim males and overall Australian males in the 15 to 29 year age range, as 94.3% and 94.2% of Muslim males aged 15-29 and overall Australian males aged 15-29 respectively reporting speaking English 'Very well' or 'Well'.

Table 16 – Muslim and Australian males' English language proficiency excluding not-stated and not-applicable responses

	MUSLIM MALES		OVERALL AUST MALES	
	No.	%	No.	%
Very well	84,368	56.6	865,714	56.7
Well	40,440	27.1	419,570	27.5
Not well	18,296	12.3	192,696	12.6
Not at all	5,886	4.0	47,640	3.1
	148,990		1,525,620	

Source: ABS 2006 Census data.

Table 17 – Muslim and Australian males' (*) in the 15-19, 20-24 and 25-29 year age range English language proficiency excluding not-stated and not-applicable responses

	15-19 YEARS		20-24 YEARS		25-29 YEARS		TOTAL 15-29 YEARS	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Very well	10,997 *(77,209)	82.3 *(76.8)	10,771 *(87,526)	72.6 *(67.9)	9,881 *(86,488)	64.6 *(70.4)	31,649 *(251,223)	72.8 *(71.3)
Well	1,883 *(17,739)	14.1 *(17.6)	3,316 *(33,975)	22.4 *(26.4)	4,151 *(29,063)	27.1 *(23.6)	9,350 *(80,777)	21.5 *(22.9)
Not well	407 *(5,040)	3.0 *(5.0)	644 *(6,614)	4.3 *(5.1)	1,125 *(6,526)	7.3 *(5.3)	2,176 *(18,180)	5.0 *(5.2)
Not at all	80 *(593)	0.6 *(0.6)	98 *(786)	0.7 *(0.6)	150 *(824)	1.0 *(0.7)	328 *(2,203)	0.8 *(0.6)
	13,367 *(100,581)		14,829 *(128,901)		15,307 *(122,901)		43,503 *(352,383)	

Source: ABS 2006 Census data.

Muslim males are less likely to be citizens than all males: 76.0% of Muslim males are Australian citizens compared to 85.6% of all Australian males. However, only 65.6% of Muslim males aged between 15 & 29, are Australian citizens, compared to 82.9% of all Australian males in the same age category. This reflects that there are a significant number of Muslim males aged between 15 & 29 who are overseas born and recently arrived to Australia.

Table 18 – Citizenship status for Muslim and overall Australian males.

	MUSLIM MALES *(15-29 YEAR MUSLIM MALES)		OVERALL AUST MALES **(15-29 YEAR OVERALL AUST MALES)	
	No.	%	No.	%
Australian	135,132 *(33,129)	76.0 *(65.6)	8,386,591 **(1,669,074)	85.6 **(82.9)
Not Australian	35,371 *(15,405)	19.9 *(30.5)	706,766 **(181,129)	7.2 **(9.0)
Not Stated	7,258 *(1,948)	4.1 *(3.9)	705,890 **(163,041)	7.2 **(8.1)
Total	177,761 *(50,482)		9,799,247 **(2,013,244)	

RELATIONSHIP AND FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS

A smaller proportion of Muslim males are in de facto marriages and are the lone person in the household compared to overall Australian males. A higher proportion of Muslim males are under 15 or are dependant students aged 15-24 compared to overall Australian males.

Table 19 – Relationship in household for Muslim and Australian males

	MUSLIM MALES		OVERALL AUST MALES	
	No.	%	No.	%
Husband in a registered marriage	65,493	37.5	3,547,328	39.7
Partner in de facto marriage(b)	2,603	1.5	616,024	6.9
Lone parent	1,707	1.0	139,392	1.6
Child under 15	51,563	29.5	1,891,444	21.1
Dependent student (Aged 15-24 years)	12,183	7.0	444,019	5.0
Non-dependent child	14,824	8.5	716,766	8.0
Other related individual	5,439	3.1	179,532	2.0
Unrelated individual living in family household	1,653	0.9	92,378	1.0
Group household member	8,680	5.0	322,566	3.6
Lone person	7,814	4.5	805,638	9.0
Visitor (from within Australia)(c)	2,636	1.5	189,323	2.1
Total	174,595		8,944,410	

(b) Includes same-sex couples. (c) Comprises persons who were not at home on Census Night and stated their relationship in another household as 'Visitor'. Source: ABS 2006 Census data.

The proportion of Muslim males who are in a single parent family composition (2.9%) is lower than all Australian males (11.3%). Muslim males are also much less likely to be in a couple with no children with 10.5% reporting this as their family composition compared to 25.4% of all Australian males. A higher proportion of Muslim men are in families with children under 15, with 69.0% reporting this as their family situation compared to 44.7% for all Australian men.

Table 20 – Muslim and Australian male family composition

	MUSLIM MALES		OVERALL AUST MALES	
	No.	%	No.	%
Couple family with no children	12,566	10.5	1,914,684	25.4
Couple family with:				
children under 15 and:				
dependent students and non-dependent children	5,886	4.9	126,123	1.7
dependent students and no non-dependent children	16,352	13.6	552,326	7.3
no dependent students and non-dependent children	6,078	5.1	198,126	2.6
no dependent students and no non-dependent children	54,386	45.4	2,490,317	33.1
Total	82,702	69.0	3,366,892	44.7
no children under 15 and:				
dependent students and non-dependent children	5,369	4.5	257,863	3.4
dependent students and no non-dependent children	4,360	3.6	300,696	4.0
no dependent students and non-dependent children	9,240	7.7	745,557	9.9
Total	18,969	15.8	1,304,116	17.3
Total	101,671	84.8	4,671,008	62.0
One parent family with:				
children under 15 and:				
dependent students and non-dependent children	114	0.1	20,945	0.3
dependent students and no non-dependent children	324	0.3	79,262	1.1
no dependent students and non-dependent children	175	0.1	52,788	0.7
no dependent students and no non-dependent children	1,387	1.2	350,881	4.7
Total	2,000	1.7	503,876	6.7
no children under 15 and:				
dependent students and non-dependent children	216	0.2	39,288	0.5
dependent students and no non-dependent children	350	0.3	60,641	0.8
no dependent students and non-dependent children	898	0.7	246,613	3.3
Total	1,464	1.2	346,542	4.6
Total	3,464	2.9	850,418	11.3
Other family	2,215	1.8	98,400	1.3
Total	119,916		7,534,510	

Source: ABS 2006 Census data.

A higher proportion of Muslim males are married (56.1%) compared to all Australian males (50.7%) and a lower proportion (3.8%) of Muslim males are divorced compared to all Australian males (7.3%). The proportion of Muslim males never married is on par with all Australian males (36.5% vs. 36.7%) as is the proportion separated (3.0% versus 2.9%). Some additional differences are apparent when examining the breakdown of marital status by age, such as:

- Marriage occurs at a younger age for Muslim males, for example, for 25-34 year old Muslim males, 58% are married and 36.5% have never married compared to 36.6% and 59.3% for all Australian males. In addition, 61.0% of 44 years and under Muslim males reporting being married compared to 35.3% of Australian males.
- A similar pattern holds for divorce – Muslim males while overall have a lower rate of divorce, they do so at a younger age (i.e. 52.3% of those reporting divorce are 44 years or younger for Muslim males vs. 26.2% for overall males).
- Separation begins earlier for Muslim males, but happens at a similar rate as overall Australian males.

Table 21 – Muslim and Australian male marital status

	MUSLIM MALES		OVERALL AUST MALES	
	No.	%	No.	%
Married	70,359	56.1	3,944,382	50.7
Separated	3,786	3.0	225,600	2.9
Divorced	4,719	3.8	566,875	7.3
Widowed	809	0.6	185,982	2.4
Never married	45,741	36.5	2,855,080	36.7
Total	125,414		7,777,919	

Source: ABS 2006 Census data.

Table 22 – Muslim male marital status by age category

	MARRIED(A)			SEPARATED			DIVORCED			WIDOWED			NEVER MARRIED			TOTAL	
	No.	% ^a	% ^b	No.	% ^a	% ^b	No.	% ^a	% ^b	No.	% ^a	% ^b	No.	% ^a	% ^b	No.	% ^b
15-19 years	128	0.8	0.2	16	0.1	0.4	15	0.1	0.3	13	0.1	1.6	15,597	98.9	34.1	15,769	12.6
20-24 years	2,343	13.6	3.3	95	0.6	2.5	86	0.5	1.8	19	0.1	2.3	14,630	85.2	32.0	17,173	13.7
25-34 years	19,102	58.0	27.1	916	2.8	24.2	833	2.5	17.7	71	0.2	8.8	12,018	36.5	26.3	32,940	26.3
35-44 years	21,341	80.3	30.3	1,246	4.7	32.9	1,536	5.8	32.5	73	0.3	9.0	2,373	8.9	5.2	26,569	21.2
45-54 years	14,508	84.1	20.6	798	4.6	21.1	1,163	6.7	24.6	104	0.6	12.9	677	3.9	1.5	17,250	13.8
55-64 years	8,580	84.3	12.2	500	4.9	13.2	715	7.0	15.2	151	1.5	18.7	235	2.3	0.5	10,181	8.1
65-74 years	3,285	81.6	4.7	160	4.0	4.2	290	7.2	6.1	176	4.4	21.8	115	2.9	0.3	4,026	3.2
75-84 years	911	74.2	1.3	47	3.8	1.2	72	5.9	1.5	146	11.9	18.0	52	4.2	0.1	1,228	1.0
85 years and over	161	57.9	0.2	8	2.9	0.2	9	3.2	0.2	56	20.1	6.9	44	15.8	0.1	278	0.2
Total	70,359	56.1		3,786	3.0		4,719	3.8		809	0.6		45,741	36.5		125,414	

^a% within age; ^b% within marital status.

Source: ABS 2006 Census data.

Table 23 – Overall Australian male marital status by age category

	MARRIED(A)			SEPARATED			DIVORCED			WIDOWED			NEVER MARRIED			TOTAL	
	No.	% ^a	% ^b	No.	% ^a	% ^b	No.	% ^a	% ^b	No.	% ^a	% ^b	No.	% ^a	% ^b	No.	% ^b
15-19 years	1,772	0.3	0.0	407	0.1	0.2	544	0.1	0.1	297	0.0	0.2	692,779	99.6	24.3	695,799	8.9
20-24 years	28,385	4.2	0.7	1,705	0.3	0.8	1,054	0.2	0.2	430	0.1	0.2	650,082	95.4	22.8	681,656	8.8
25-34 years	483,213	36.6	12.3	23,825	1.8	10.6	29,556	2.2	5.2	1,287	0.1	0.7	783,176	59.3	27.4	1,321,057	17.0
35-44 years	879,627	61.2	22.3	55,379	3.9	24.5	116,897	8.1	20.6	4,008	0.3	2.2	381,334	26.5	13.4	1,437,245	18.5
45-54 years	911,200	67.0	23.1	66,048	4.9	29.3	178,089	13.1	31.4	11,036	0.8	5.9	193,708	14.2	6.8	1,360,081	17.5
55-64 years	794,367	72.5	20.1	46,136	4.2	20.5	147,917	13.5	26.1	22,887	2.1	12.3	84,826	7.7	3.0	1,096,133	14.1
65-74 years	501,072	75.0	12.7	21,587	3.2	9.6	65,566	9.8	11.6	39,523	5.9	21.3	40,695	6.1	1.4	668,443	8.6
75-84 years	289,456	70.2	7.3	8,946	2.2	4.0	23,804	5.8	4.2	67,473	16.4	36.3	22,781	5.5	0.8	412,460	5.3
85 years and over	55,290	52.6	1.4	1,567	1.5	0.7	3,448	3.3	0.6	39,041	37.2	21.0	5,699	5.4	0.2	105,045	1.4
Total	3,944,382	50.7		225,600	2.9		566,875	7.3		185,982	2.4		2,855,080	36.7		7,777,919	

^a% within age; ^b% within marital status.

Source: ABS 2006 Census data.

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, INCOME AND OCCUPATION

A higher proportion of Muslim men completed Year 12 or equivalent (57.6%) than did all Australian men (41.6%). The cumulative percentage of Muslim men who completed Year 10 or equivalent or higher was 77.1% for Muslim men and 74.9% for all Australian men. However, a higher proportion of Muslim men did not go to school (3.9%) compared to all Australian men (0.8%).

Table 24 – Highest year of school completed for Muslim and Australian males 15 years and older

	MUSLIM MALES		OVERALL AUST MALES	
	No.	%	No.	%
Year 12 or equivalent	72,225	57.6	3,236,746	41.6
Year 11 or equivalent	8,749	7.0	793,139	10.2
Year 10 or equivalent	15,776	12.6	1,792,347	23.0
Year 9 or equivalent	5,394	4.3	554,021	7.1
Year 8 or below	10,294	8.2	544,785	7.0
Did not go to school	4,878	3.9	59,674	0.8
Highest year of school not stated	8,098	6.5	797,201	10.2
Total	125,414		7,777,913	

Source: ABS 2006 Census data.

Of the Muslim men currently in school, a higher proportion are in Technical or further educational institutions, and also in University or other Tertiary institutions.

Table 25 – Educational institution attending for Muslim and Australian males

	MUSLIM MALES		OVERALL AUST MALES	
	NO.	%	NO.	%
Pre-school	3,411	4.7	160,204	5.2
Infants/Primary:				
Government	15,295	21.0	606,438	19.6
Catholic	405	0.6	170,405	5.5
Other Non Government	4,403	6.1	93,916	3.0
Total	20,103	27.7	870,759	28.1
Secondary:				
Government	11,897	16.4	387,667	12.5
Catholic	597	0.8	138,482	4.5
Other Non Government	2,604	3.6	113,787	3.7
Total	15,098	20.8	639,936	20.7
Technical or Further Educational Institution(a):				
Full-time student:				
Aged 15-24 years	2,454	3.4	45,244	1.5
Aged 25 years and over	1,604	2.2	18,226	0.6
Part-time student:				
Aged 15-24 years	1,327	1.8	74,884	2.4
Aged 25 years and over	1,810	2.5	65,179	2.1
Full/Part-time student status not stated	200	0.3	3,638	0.1
Total	7,395	10.2	207,171	6.7
University or other Tertiary Institutions:				
Full-time student:				
Aged 15-24 years	6,162	8.5	171,119	5.5
Aged 25 years and over	4,187	5.8	53,334	1.7
Part-time student:				
Aged 15-24 years	425	0.6	19,914	0.6
Aged 25 years and over	1,480	2.0	77,351	2.5
Full/Part-time student status not stated	195	0.3	2,478	0.1
Total	12,449	17.1	324,196	10.5
Other type of educational institution:				
Full-time student	1,015	1.4	16,016	0.5
Part-time student	902	1.2	29,299	0.9
Full/Part-time student status not stated	92	0.1	1,548	0.1
Total	2,009	2.8	46,863	1.5
Type of educational institution not stated	12,239	16.8	844,272	27.3
Total	72,704		3,093,401	

Source: ABS 2006 Census data.

Of those who reported a non-school qualification, Muslim males more often achieved more advanced qualifications than overall Australian males. A higher proportion of Muslim males had a postgraduate degree (14.4%) than all Australian males (5.4%), a Bachelor Degree (27.3% vs. 18.7%) and an Advanced Diploma or Diploma (13.3% vs. 10.9%). Australian males had a higher proportion earning Certificates (40.8%) compared to Muslim males (23.1%).

Table 26 – Non-school qualification for Muslim and overall Australian males

	MUSLIM MALES		OVERALL AUST MALES	
	NO.	%	NO.	%
Postgraduate Degree	8,670	14.4	236,078	5.4
Graduate Diploma and Graduate Certificate	867	1.4	84,687	1.9
Bachelor Degree	16,394	27.3	826,003	18.7
Advanced Diploma and Diploma	7,986	13.3	480,762	10.9
Certificate:				
Certificate nfd	1,057	1.8	91,120	2.1
Certificate III & IV(c)	11,895	19.8	1,645,882	37.3
Certificate I & II(d)	896	1.5	60,756	1.4
Total	13,848	23.1	1,797,758	40.8
Level of education inadequately described	1,983	3.3	102,028	2.3
Level of education not stated	10,280	17.1	883,729	20.0
Total	60,028		4,411,045	

(c) Includes 'Certificate III & IV, nfd'. (d) Includes 'Certificate I & II, nfd'.

Source: ABS 2006 Census data.

The Muslim male unemployment rate (12.6%) is higher than overall Australian males (5.2%). Muslim males born overseas had a slightly lower unemployment rate of 12.3% than Muslim males born in Australia (13.5%). The year of arrival substantially altered the unemployment rate with those having arrived earlier less likely to be unemployed than those who arrived more recently.

A similar situation exists for Muslim male participation in the labour force with Muslim males having a slightly lower participation rate (65.5%) than all Australian males (71.5%). There was little variation based on if Muslim men were born in Australia or overseas, but the participation rate did change based on year of arrival.

For males in the 15-34 year age range, there are higher full time employment rates for overall Australian males than for Muslim males, with 48.3% vs. 33.4% employed full time respectively. However, Muslim males aged 15-29 have a higher part time employment rate of 16.2% vs. 14.9%. Muslim males 15-34 were also more often unemployed with 9.4% reporting looking for work compared to 5.5% for overall Australian males.

Table 27 – Muslim male unemployment rates and participation in the labour force rates by year of arrival ‡

	UNEMPLOYMENT RATES	PARTICIPATION IN LABOUR FORCE (15+ YEARS)
	%	%
Born in Australia	13.5	66.2
Born Overseas		
- Arrived before 1981	9.0	52.9
- Arrived 1981-1990	8.5	76.2
- Arrived 1991-1995	11.5	70.7
- Arrived 1996-2000	13.4	69.8
- Arrived 2001-2006	16.1	64.2
Total Overseas-born males	12.3	65.7
Total Australian male Muslims	12.6	65.5
Total Australian male population	5.2	71.5

Source: ABS 2006 Census data.

Table 28 – Muslim male employment, unemployment and labour participation rates for the 15-19, 20-24 and 25-34 year age ranges

	15-19 YEARS		20-24 YEARS		25-34 YEARS		TOTAL 15-34 YEARS	
	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%
Employed, worked:								
Full-time(a)	1,220	7.7	5,072	29.5	15,697	47.7	21,989	33.4
Part-time	1,803	11.4	3,413	19.9	5,486	16.7	10,702	16.2
Employed, away from work(b)	126	0.8	309	1.8	597	1.8	1,032	1.6
Hours worked not stated	423	2.7	799	4.7	1,283	3.9	2,505	3.8
Total	3,572	22.7	9,593	55.9	23,063	70.0	36,228	55.0
Unemployed, looking for:								
Full-time work	659	4.2	1,254	7.3	2,434	7.4	4,347	6.6
Part-time work	596	3.8	668	3.9	607	1.8	1,871	2.8
Total	1,255	8.0	1,922	11.2	3,041	9.2	6,218	9.4
Total labour force	4,827	30.6	11,515	67.0	26,104	79.3	42,446	64.4
Not in the labour force	10,530	66.8	5,216	30.4	6,033	18.3	21,779	33.1
Labour force status not stated	412	2.6	443	2.6	800	2.4	1,655	2.5
Total	15,769		17,174		32,937		65,880	

(b) Comprises employed persons who did not work any hours in the week prior to Census Night.

Source: ABS 2006 Census data.

Table 29 – Overall Australian male employment, unemployment and labour participation rates for the 15-19, 20-24 and 25-34 year age ranges

	15-19 YEARS		20-24 YEARS		25-34 YEARS		TOTAL 15-34 YEARS	
	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%
Employed, worked:								
Full-time(a)	116,071	16.7	320,825	47.1	867,564	65.7	1,304,460	48.3
Part-time	148,911	21.4	124,924	18.3	127,246	9.6	401,081	14.9
Employed, away from work(b)	10,271	1.5	13,648	2.0	30,427	2.3	54,346	2.0
Hours worked not stated	15,589	2.2	20,353	3.0	32,490	2.5	68,432	2.5
Total	290,842	41.8	479,750	70.4	1,057,727	80.1	1,828,319	67.8
Unemployed, looking for:								
Full-time work	23,291	3.3	32,894	4.8	46,634	3.5	102,819	3.8
Part-time work	22,642	3.3	14,081	2.1	9,699	0.7	46,422	1.7
Total	45,933	6.6	46,975	6.9	56,333	4.3	149,241	5.5
Total labour force	336,775	48.4	526,725	77.3	1,114,060	84.3	1,977,560	73.3
Not in the labour force	319,775	46.0	102,446	15.0	111,465	8.4	533,686	19.8
Labour force status not stated	39,245	5.6	52,482	7.7	95,534	7.2	187,261	6.9
Total	695,795		681,653		1,321,059		2,698,507	

(b) Comprises employed persons who did not work any hours in the week prior to Census Night.

Source: ABS 2006 Census data.

Muslim males earn less income compared to all males. They are underrepresented in the higher weekly income categories of '\$1000-\$1599' per week and '\$1600 or more' per week than all males, and are overrepresented in the 'Nil or negative income' and '\$1-\$399' per week categories. A higher percent of Australian born Muslim males earn nil or negative income (17.2%) compared to overseas born Muslim males (9.5%). The distribution is fairly similar between overseas and Australian born Muslim males in the other income categories.

Table 30 – Gross individual weekly income for Australian males and by birthplace for Muslim males ‡

	AUSTRALIAN BORN MUSLIM MALES		OVERSEAS BORN MUSLIM MALES		TOTAL MUSLIM MALES (INCL BIRTHPLACE NOT STATED)		OVERALL AUST MALES	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Nil or negative income	4,565	17.2	8,988	9.5	14,027	11.2	458,972	5.9
\$1-\$399	8,721	32.8	37,541	39.7	47,872	38.2	2,030,297	26.1
\$400-\$799	6,189	23.3	23,567	24.9	30,544	24.4	1,862,342	23.9
\$800-\$999	1,756	6.6	6,497	6.9	8,461	6.7	738,010	9.5
\$1000-\$1599	2,106	7.9	8,483	9	10,805	8.6	1,225,459	15.8
\$1600 or more	977	3.7	4,185	4.4	5,281	4.2	728,246	9.4
Not Stated	2,273	8.5	5,399	5.7	8,422	6.7	734,584	9.4
Total aged 15 years and over	26,587	100	94,660	100	125,412	100	7,777,910	100

Source: ABS 2006 Census data.

Table 31 – Gross individual weekly income for 15-19 years, 20-24 year and 25-34 year age ranges for Muslim males and Overall Australian Males(*)

	15-19 YEARS		20-24 YEARS		25-34 YEARS	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Nil or negative income	5,423 *(232,418)	34.4 *(33.4)	2,803 *(55,309)	16.3 *(8.1)	2,767 *(41,091)	8.4 *(3.1)
\$1-\$399	7,172 *(304,436)	45.5 *(43.8)	6,886 *(198,553)	40.1 *(29.1)	9,279 *(169,928)	28.2 *(12.9)
\$400-\$799	797 *(58,720)	5.1 *(8.4)	4,833 *(246,983)	28.1 *(36.2)	10,650 *(378,211)	32.3 *(28.6)
\$800-\$999	65 *(3,823)	0.4 *(0.5)	865 *(58,606)	5.0 *(8.6)	3,306 *(189,532)	10.0 *(14.3)
\$1000-\$1599	35 *(2,413)	0.2 *(0.3)	527 *(42,090)	3.1 *(6.2)	3,805 *(292,507)	11.6 *(22.1)
\$1600 or more	40 *(967)	0.3 *(0.1)	146 *(8,281)	0.9 *(1.2)	1,390 *(121,541)	4.2 *(9.2)
Not Stated	2,234 *(93,023)	14.2 *(13.4)	1,114 *(71,834)	6.5 *(10.5)	1,742 *(128,238)	5.3 *(9.7)
Total	15,766 *(695,800)		17,174 *(681,656)		32,939 *(1,321,048)	

Source: ABS 2006 Census data.

As described in Hassan, 2009, a weekly household income of \$650 is the Australian threshold for poverty. Census data indicate that 40% of Muslim households (thus 40% of Muslim children) were living in poverty compared to 19% of non-Muslim households.

Table 32 – Children in poverty

INCOME PER WEEK	MUSLIM HOUSEHOLDS (%)	NON-MUSLIM HOUSEHOLDS (%)
Less than \$650 per week	40	19
\$650 or more per week	60	81

Source: ABS, 2006 Census, Special Tabulations, reproduced with permission from Hassan, 2009. Note: Excludes households where income was not stated or which were non-applicable.

The highest percentage of employed Muslim males work in Technician & Trade Worker jobs (19.6%), Professionals (15.7%), Machinery Operators & Drivers (15.5%) and Labourers (15.5%). Muslim males were less likely than all Australian males to work as Managers (10.2% vs. 16.1%) or Professionals (15.7% vs. 17.3%) and were overrepresented in Machinery Operators & Drivers (15.6% vs. 11.0%) and Labourers (15.5% vs. 12.3%) occupational categories.

Table 33 – Muslim and Australian males by category of occupation

OCCUPATION	MUSLIM MALES		OVERALL AUST MALES	
	No.	%	No.	%
Managers	7,147	10.2	788,628	16.1
Professionals	10,969	15.7	850,151	17.3
Technicians & Trade Workers	13,713	19.6	1,116,295	22.7
Community & Personal Service Workers	3,771	5.4	250,014	5.1
Clerical & Administrative Workers	4,210	6.0	317,008	6.5
Sales Workers	5,712	8.2	343,446	7.0
Machinery Operators & Drivers	10,904	15.6	541,624	11.0
Labourers	10,833	15.5	604,962	12.3
Not Stated/Inadequately Desc	2,667	3.8	99,005	2.0
Total Employed Aged 15 Years and Over	69,926	100	4,911,133	100.0

Source: ABS 2006 Census data.

The industries in which Muslim males are most employed are Manufacturing, Transport, Postal & Warehousing, and Retail Trade, while the industries in which all Australian males are most employed are Manufacturing, Construction, and Retail Trade. The difference between the percent of Muslim males within each industry compared to Australian males was not great, with no category having a difference of more than 5%. However, Muslim males were more represented in Transport, Postal & Warehousing and in Accommodation & Food Service compared to Australian males, while Muslim males were underrepresented in Construction and Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing.

Table 34 – Muslim and Australian male industry of occupation

INDUSTRY	MUSLIM MALES		OVERALL AUST MALES	
	No.	%	No.	%
Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing	734	1.0	195,010	4.0
Mining	368	0.5	90,832	1.8
Manufacturing	10,256	14.7	704,857	14.4
Electricity, Gas, Water & Waste Services	463	0.7	69,852	1.4
Construction	6,590	9.4	613,956	12.5
Wholesale Trade	3,316	4.7	258,836	5.3
Retail Trade	7,830	11.2	441,973	9.0
Accommodation & Food Services	5,782	8.3	247,691	5.0
Transport, Postal & Warehousing	8,012	11.5	328,757	6.7
Information Media & Telecommunications	1,381	2.0	101,916	2.1
Financial & Insurance Services	2,071	3.0	158,756	3.2
Rental, Hiring & Real Estate Services	668	1.0	75,841	1.5
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	3,600	5.1	328,191	6.7
Administrative & Support Services	2,733	3.9	137,244	2.8
Public Administration & Safety	3,456	4.9	341,898	7.0
Education & Training	2,462	3.5	212,814	4.3
Healthcare & Social Assistance	3,188	4.6	204,501	4.2
Arts & Recreation Services	389	0.6	66,487	1.4
Other Services	2,811	4.0	191,114	3.9
Not Stated/Inadequately Desc	3,814	5.5	140,604	2.9
Total			4,911,130	

Source: ABS 2006 Census data.

Muslim males participated in less volunteer work than males overall, as 8.1% of Muslim males reported volunteer work compared to 15.7% of overall males. The patterns by age well somewhat similar, though for those who did volunteer, Muslim men tended to do so at younger ages than men overall.

Table 35 – Muslim Males volunteer status

	VOLUNTEER			NOT A VOLUNTEER			NOT STATED			TOTAL	
	No.	% ^a	% ^b	No.	% ^a	% ^b	No.	% ^a	% ^b	No.	% ^b
15-19 years	864	5.5	8.5	12,415	78.7	11.8	2,488	15.8	25.3	15,767	12.6
20-24 years	1,363	7.9	13.4	14,466	84.2	13.7	1,344	7.8	13.7	17,173	13.7
25-34 years	2,742	8.3	26.9	28,281	85.9	26.8	1,915	5.8	19.5	32,938	26.3
35-44 years	2,462	9.3	24.1	22,370	84.2	21.2	1,735	6.5	17.7	26,567	21.2
45-54 years	1,649	9.6	16.2	14,457	83.8	13.7	1,146	6.6	11.7	17,252	13.8
55-64 years	799	7.8	7.8	8,705	85.5	8.3	678	6.7	6.9	10,182	8.1
65-74 years	258	6.4	2.5	3,425	85.1	3.2	342	8.5	3.5	4,025	3.2
75-84 years	44	3.6	0.4	1,050	85.3	1.0	137	11.1	1.4	1,231	1.0
85 years and over	17	6.1	0.2	225	80.6	0.2	37	13.3	0.4	279	0.2
Total	10,198	8.1		105,394	84.0		9,822	7.8		125,414	

^a% within age; ^b% within marital status. Source: ABS 2006 Census data.

Table 36 – Australian Males volunteer status

	VOLUNTEER			NOT A VOLUNTEER			NOT STATED			TOTAL	
	No.	% ^a	% ^b	No.	% ^a	% ^b	No.	% ^a	% ^b	No.	% ^b
15-19 years	91,208	13.1	7.5	502,511	72.2	8.7	102,087	14.7	12.9	695,806	8.9
20-24 years	81,192	11.9	6.7	527,372	77.4	9.1	73,099	10.7	9.3	681,663	8.8
25-34 years	152,400	11.5	12.5	1,043,543	79.0	18.1	125,110	9.5	15.9	1,321,053	17.0
35-44 years	241,636	16.8	19.8	1,076,276	74.9	18.7	119,317	8.3	15.1	1,437,229	18.5
45-54 years	262,287	19.3	21.5	991,802	72.9	17.2	105,994	7.8	13.4	1,360,083	17.5
55-64 years	202,408	18.5	16.6	807,961	73.7	14.0	85,754	7.8	10.9	1,096,123	14.1
65-74 years	125,331	18.7	10.3	465,354	69.6	8.1	77,771	11.6	9.9	668,456	8.6
75-84 years	56,180	13.6	4.6	280,418	68.0	4.9	75,863	18.4	9.6	412,461	5.3
85 years and over	6,409	6.1	0.5	74,323	70.8	1.3	24,312	23.1	3.1	105,044	1.4
Total	1,219,051	15.7		5,769,560	74.2		789,307	10.1		7,777,918	

^a% within age; ^b% within marital status. Source: ABS 2006 Census data.

Muslim males (8.3%) provided unpaid domestic assistance at a slightly higher proportion than overall males (7.9%) and tended to do so more often at a younger age, with 43.7% of Muslim males who provided unpaid assistance being 34 years or younger compared to 19.8% of Australian males who provided unpaid assistance being 34 years or younger.

Table 37 – Muslim Male unpaid domestic work

	PROVIDED UNPAID ASSISTANCE			NO UNPAID ASSISTANCE PROVIDED			UNPAID ASSISTANCE NOT STATED			TOTAL	
	No.	% ^a	% ^b	No.	% ^a	% ^b	No.	% ^a	% ^b	No.	% ^b
15-19 years	818	5.2	7.8	12,458	79.0	11.9	2,492	15.8	24.6	15,768	12.6
20-24 years	1,084	6.3	10.4	14,756	85.9	14.1	1,334	7.8	13.2	17,174	13.7
25-34 years	2,666	8.1	25.5	28,257	85.8	27.0	2,015	6.1	19.9	32,938	26.3
35-44 years	2,641	9.9	25.3	22,100	83.2	21.1	1,826	6.9	18.0	26,567	21.2
45-54 years	1,709	9.9	16.4	14,376	83.3	13.7	1,169	6.8	11.5	17,254	13.8
55-64 years	1,063	10.4	10.2	8,374	82.3	8.0	743	7.3	7.3	10,180	8.1
65-74 years	339	8.4	3.2	3,329	82.7	3.2	358	8.9	3.5	4,026	3.2
75-84 years	107	8.7	1.0	972	79.2	0.9	149	12.1	1.5	1,228	1.0
85 years and over	21	7.5	0.2	222	79.6	0.2	36	12.9	0.4	279	0.2
Total	10,448	8.3		104,844	83.6		10,122	8.1		125,414	

^a% within age; ^b% within marital status. Source: ABS 2006 Census data.

Table 38 – Australian Male unpaid domestic work

	PROVIDED UNPAID ASSISTANCE			NO UNPAID ASSISTANCE PROVIDED			UNPAID ASSISTANCE NOT STATED			TOTAL	
	No.	% ^a	% ^b	No.	% ^a	% ^b	No.	% ^a	% ^b	No.	% ^b
15-19 years	23,861	3.4	3.9	570,167	81.9	9.0	101,777	14.6	12.4	695,805	8.9
20-24 years	27,161	4.0	4.4	580,904	85.2	9.2	73,589	10.8	8.9	681,654	8.8
25-34 years	70,982	5.4	11.5	1,122,280	85.0	17.7	127,788	9.7	15.5	1,321,050	17.0
35-44 years	115,902	8.1	18.8	1,199,279	83.4	18.9	122,049	8.5	14.8	1,437,230	18.5
45-54 years	143,161	10.5	23.3	1,108,774	81.5	17.5	108,149	8.0	13.1	1,360,084	17.5
55-64 years	126,669	11.6	20.6	877,743	80.1	13.8	91,727	8.4	11.1	1,096,139	14.1
65-74 years	62,899	9.4	10.2	518,823	77.6	8.2	86,733	13.0	10.5	668,455	8.6
75-84 years	36,796	8.9	6.0	290,484	70.4	4.6	85,177	20.7	10.3	412,457	5.3
85 years and over	7,604	7.2	1.2	70,622	67.2	1.1	26,819	25.5	3.3	105,045	1.4
Total	615,035	7.9		6,339,076	81.5		823,808	10.6		7,777,919	

^a% within age; ^b% within marital status. Source: ABS 2006 Census data. † All tables denoted with this symbol were adapted from the 2007 report *Muslims in Australia*, produced by the Programme Statistics and Monitoring Section of DIAC, based on data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics Census of Population and Housing.

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