



## Annual General Meeting Minutes 2020

**Date** Saturday 25 July 2020

**Time** 3: 30 pm – 5.30 pm

**Venue** Via Zoom Video Conferencing

**Attendees** USMAA Management Committee (MC):  
Falih Shums, Miqsan Mohinudeen, Ruzna Shums, Faariq Furqan,  
Uzman Nazeem, Rizan Abdeen, Shazia Faleel, Hanif Mohamed  
and Dhilhaam Fazil

House represented by;

Rizvie Mohideen, Fahmi Haniffa, Eddie Dole, Nawaz Vilcassim,  
Imtiaz Mohamed, Nazeem Yaqoob, Nizar Haniffa, Jainudeen  
Azoor, Zafar Issadeen, Seyad Azman, Naushad Usoof, Yusuf  
Zarani, Hishan Naufal, Fayaz Zurfick, Rasmy Kabeer, Zabid bin  
Hamid, Dilshard Siddeek, Basith Mohideen, Raashed Mohideen,  
Shimal Zackariya, Hilmy Cader, Mishal Mohinudeen, Haneef  
Mohinudeen, Mahroof, Mackie Abu-Bakr, Usoof Mahroof, Anas  
Sheriffdeen, Ali Haniffa, Shabeer Haniffa, Nizar Idroos, Musthafa  
Muhajireen, Asmih, iphone (no number or name specified) and  
081655 (ID displayed on Zoom)

Sithy Marikar, Farah Dole, Shirin Fahmi, Ziada Tokhi, Rushana  
Nazeem, Nizra Haniffa, Fathaya Mohamed, Hishama Anver,  
Khadija Haniffa, Shamara Mohinudeen, Shazra Issadeen, Fatima  
Abdulla, Shazna Bashith Abu-Bakr, Mumtaz, Rushana Usoof,  
Ayesha, Mariam, Rizana Zubair, Wahida Farook, Rifka Naufal,  
Shahla Vilcassim, Yasmin Vilcassim, Hilma Marikar, Shazreen  
Hammard, Minhaja Hashim,

**Apologies:** Amr Siddeek, Adhil Thaha

### 1. Welcome and Introductions

We had quorum of 68 people.

Rizan Abdeen, the Master of Ceremonies for the AGM event, welcomed the members and informed them that the proceedings would be recorded and requested members to turn off their videos if needed.

The AGM was called to order at 3.30 p.m. and proceedings commenced with a recital of *qiraath* by Talia Shums.



## 2. Acceptance of minutes from previous Annual General Meeting 2018/19 and Special General Meeting 2018/19

**Proposed resolution:** *That the minutes of the 2018/19 Annual General Meeting be accepted.*

- Moved : Nawaz Vilcassim
- Seconded : Yasmin Vilcassim

No matters arising from the minutes.

## 3. President's address by Bro Falih Shums

Bro Falih commenced his address by outlining the reasons for conducting the AGM via Zoom this year. He then thanked the MC, Trustees, mentors/senior members and volunteers for all the assistance extended to ensuring another successful year for USMAA.

He mentioned that although the MC hosted only seven events for this year, due to the COVID19 lockdown, the MC had been quite busy with other initiatives and back office tasks such as:

- Initiating a comprehensive excel database for record keeping
- Compiling a job manual for the MC
- Documenting process manuals for other tasks, policies and process maps
- Initiating comprehensive record keeping and simplification of financial data

The main idea behind documenting policies and procedures is to ensure the handover process for new Committees is seamless.

## 4. Secretary's Report by Sis Ruzna Shums

Sis Ruzna commenced by outlining the subscription fee collection for the year which consisted of 133 membership payments totalling \$6,615. She then detailed all the events that the MC had hosted for the year. It was mentioned that the lockdown imposed in March 2020, due to the COVID19 pandemic, prevented the organisation of any hall based events thereafter. The numerous general initiatives that were undertaken by the MC were highlighted including:

- the circulation of a survey to ascertain the feedback of the members on a variety of topics,
- revamp of the newsletter
- creation of a WhatsApp group named 'USMAA Family' consisting of the USMAA members to enable the circulation of time-sensitive information,
- initiation of a new invoicing system to facilitate the structure collection of annual membership payments,
- creation of a sisters' only WhatsApp 'Quran Reading Group' and
- the significant upgrade undertaken to the USMAA website to make it more user-friendly and mobile phone friendly



She also detailed the many charitable projects that were initiated by the MC this year which included:

- 'Help the Homeless Drive' which collected dry rations on two occasions to be donated to the Cornerstone Contact Centre in Dandenong which caters to the homeless community
- the multi-faith Bushfire Appeal fundraising dinner
- the COVID19 fundraiser to assist the International students who were adversely impacted by the lockdown. Assistance was extended both directly and through the multi-faith initiative 'VIC Lanka COVID Aid' where USMAA was a participating organisation and
- the Fitra project for the year which involved the provision of dry rations to 31 Muslim villages in the Musaali District in Mannar.

Sis Ruzna also outlined the Subcommittees' activity for this year. Grants received by USMAA and the Positive Ageing Subcommittee were highlighted.

In conclusion, Sis Ruzna thanked the MC, their families, the volunteers and the Members for their efforts invested to ensuring the year was a success.

***Proposed resolution:*** That the Secretary's report for 2019/2020 be accepted

- Moved: Sithy Marikar
- Seconded: Yusuf Zarani

## 5. Treasurer's Report

Bro Falih informed the members that the Treasurer's Report would not be tabled at this AGM as two members, who are Accountants, had brought to the attention of the MC, some discrepancies in the financials the night before the AGM. The errors related to a system glitch, the MCCA account balance not been updated and burial site balances also not been updated.

Bro Falih conceded that it was unfortunate that the independent book-keeper who assisted with the preparation of the financials and the independent Auditor, who audited the 2018/2019 financials and was appointed as the Auditor for the current year, had not picked up these issues. Once the errors are rectified, the report will be tabled at an SGM.

## 6. General Matters

Bro Falih outlined the main activities undertaken by the Subcommittees for the year. He commenced by thanking bro Eddie for his unflagging commitment to the Janaza Subcommittee (JSC). He then detailed that the JSC had purchased 6 grave sites at Bunurong and released two this year. The JSC had also been busy with distributing dry rations to the international students, apart from the day job of assisting Sheikh Ismail.



He then mentioned that the Positive Ageing Subcommittee was only able to get one program off the ground before the Covid19 restrictions were imposed. He informed the members that Sis Sithy had been passionately planning for a Seniors Expo but had now postponed this event for later in the year when the restrictions are lifted.

The Education SC had also planned to host the Ladies Night in April but had to call it off due to the lockdown.

Bro Falih was the designated spokesperson for the Subcommittees given the medium the AGM was conducted. He also made special mention and thanked Bro Ritzvi, as the president of the ICV, for his diligent efforts to educate the community leaders on C19 and most importantly his outstanding work on Islamophobia. Bro Falih also thanked Bro Imtiaz for his contribution to the community as the Multicultural Commissioner.

## 7. Appointment of an auditor

**Proposed resolution:** Mr. Paul Liu from M&T Tax is appointed as USMAA's auditor for the next reporting period.

- Moved: Nawaz Vilcassim
- Seconded: Fahmi Haniffa

## 8. Presentation of the MC for 2020/21

Position	Nominee	Proposer	Seconder
President	Falih Shums	Yusuf Zarani	Asadh Yusuf
Vice President	Rizan Abdeen	Falih Shums	Ruzna Shums
Secretary	Ruzna Shums	Yusuf Zarani	Shahla Vilcassim
Treasurer	Seyad Azmaan	Falih Shums	Ruzna Shums
Asst. Secretary	Shazia Faleel	Falih Shums	Ruzna Shums
Asst. Treasurer	Faariq Furkan	Falih Shums	Ruzna Shums
Editor	Zafar Issadeen	Falih Shums	Ruzna Shums
Committee Member	Naushad Usoof	Falih Shums	Ruzna Shums
Committee Member	Uzmaan Nazeem	Falih Shums	Ruzna Shums
Committee Member	Vacant		
Committee Member	Vacant		

**Proposed resolution:** The above committee be elected as the new Management Committee for 2020/21

- Moved: Nawaz Vilcassim
- Seconded: Fahmi Haniffa



Bro Falih flagged that there were two vacancies in the MC. He mentioned that he would ideally prefer to fill them with someone with a business analysis background who could document all the USMAA processes for the future committees and the second position with someone with sales experience to launch the advertising program. However, he confirmed that he would also be open to anyone who had a good attitude to do community service.

## **9. Appointment of a new member to the JSC**

Bro Fawas was appointed as a new committee member to the JSC for 2019/22

## **10. Appointment of two members to the Youth Committee**

The following two members were appointed to the Youth Committee:

- 1) Amr Siddeek
- 2) Ali Haniffa

Bro Falih spoke about the importance of volunteering in the Youth Committee and encouraged parents to coax their children to participate as it would carry some weight on the resume when applying for jobs after completion of their tertiary education.

## **11. “What does 2020/21 look like for USMAA”**

Bro Falih mentioned that the MC had a strong focus to concentrate internally and get the ‘House in Order’ as there was a strong lobby for it. Hence, the primary focus this year was to fine tune work started last year in drafting MC job descriptions, manual and process maps to assist future committees to takeover seamlessly.

In the absence of hall-based events at least till end 2020, more attention will be directed to formulating mentoring programs, job advice, resume advice etc. The MC was also keen to launch the trial of the Matrimonial Services which will need some work to ensure all precautions are taken.

He continued that USMAA wanted to help each other’s business so the plan is to use the USMAA website as an advertising platform with a Trades Page. This again would take up considerable time from an MC perspective.

The MC has also identified that the youth of today are not interested in hall-based events and hence this year, more virtual events targeting the youth will be launched.

Finally, the dream of the USMAA Centre is still alive, he confirmed. A high level plan has been drafted and will be published in the website once the rest of the MC members have approved it.

## **12. Other Matters**



- a. Proposed resolution: extend free membership for the forthcoming year to the international students on the USMAA database.

- Moved: Nawaz Vilcassim
- Seconded: Sithy Marikar

Bro. Fahmi Haniffa suggested that the MC contact all the students on the USMAA Membership database and offer free membership for the forthcoming year. This is in recognition of the financial hardship this category is currently facing due to the lockdown.

- b. Steps that can be taken to regain the cash grant offered by Monash Council:

Bro Yusuf Zarani explained that due to an audit by the Auditor General's Office, the Council was under scrutiny on all grants provide to the community. The cash and hall grants by the Council are offered to benefit all communities and to strengthen community ties across other communities. The audit report had found many organisations using the grant incorrectly causing the Council to withhold the cash grant component from USMAA for financial year 2019/20 year.

Bro. Imtiaz speaking on this topic pointed out the following:

- During his tenure as President, the cash grant had been withheld as well. It was later revealed that there was a perception that USMAA was a religious organisation and this had caused the cash grant to be withdrawn
- Subsequently several initiatives were taken to establish that USMAA undertook multi-faith events
- USMAA should explore applying for the many Multicultural grants currently available. He offered to assist if required.

Bro Ritzvi Mohideen continuing this topic and flagged that:

- since all Councils were secular, they rejected applications for grants if they are based on religious grounds
- grants are awarded based on the number of residents in the Monash represented in our USMAA membership
- future grants may be extended for activities addressing Youth Engagement, Domestic Violence, Mental Health etc
- Currently new grants are being offered to assist organisations to reach out to their communities who are impacted by the COVID19 lockdown e.g. grants for media development and for Zoom accounts etc
- USMAA needed to be proactive and become involved in Council activities such as joining the Monash Interfaith Group (MIG) where USMAA is currently represented only by Sis Sithy and Bro Ritzvi

Bro Fahmi Haniffa concluded this discussion with the following:

- USMAA should conduct more functions catering to the broader community



# United Sri Lankan Muslim Association of Australia

PO Box 5194 Brandon Park Victoria 3150

E-mail: [info@usmaa.org.au](mailto:info@usmaa.org.au)

ABN: 16 2071 753 19

- Annual functions had been conducted in the past with invitations extended to local Councillors thereby strengthening ties with key decision makers for the grants

## c. Applying for grants from other Councils as well

- Sis Sithy Marikar mentioned that historically USMAA had applied to only the Monash Council for grants. However, with our membership are now residing in Dandenong as well, it would be prudent to apply for grants from the Dandenong Council as well
- Bro Imtiaz Mohamed disagreed with this proposal because applying for multiple councils will break-up our membership and it will not be sufficient to justify achieving a full grant from any one Council. He re-iterated that to obtain a full grant 75% of the membership should be in the Monash Council precinct
- Bro Fahmi Haniffa also pointed out the importance of highlighting the charitable initiatives such as the COVID19 Assistance program for the international students in the Secretary's Report so that organisations such as Consumer Affairs would become aware of USMAA's contribution to society. The Secretary's Report for 2019/2020 detailed the assistance extended by USMAA both directly and through the multi-faith initiative 'VIC Lanka COVID Aid' where USMAA was a participating organisation. In response, Bro Falih informed that the MC was planning on creating a Charitable Initiatives page on the USMAA website to showcase all the good work that our organisation has been undertaking for the benefit of the underprivileged in our society. He mentioned that this page would be useful when applying for grants in the future as it would act as evidence of USMAA's engagement with the wider community

## d. Purchase more burial plots while the prices were reasonable: Bro Eddie Dole solicited member's feedback on whether USMAA should cease to purchase any more burial plots as JSC currently held 25 plots in total.

- Sis Sithy mentioned that with the community growing in numbers, the need for grave sites will increase as well. Hence, it would be prudent to purchase the burial plots now instead of waiting till the future when the prices of the sites would have increased
- Bro Nazeem Yaqoob agreed with Sis Sithy and encouraged the purchase of more sites now as the cost of burial plots would continue to increase in the future
- Bro Imtiaz Mohamed confirmed the same sentiment and also encouraged individuals to purchase their own sites privately
- Bro Eddie concluded this session by agreeing to continue the purchase the sites in line with Members' wishes



# United Sri Lankan Muslim Association of Australia

PO Box 5194 Brandon Park Victoria 3150

E-mail: [info@usmaa.org.au](mailto:info@usmaa.org.au)

ABN: 16 2071 753 19

- e. USMAA members' entitlement to a burial plot: Bro Fahmi Haniffa requested Bro Eddie to elaborate the benefits of USMAA investing in burial sites as assets on our Balance Sheet. He requested clarity regarding the confusion that the burial plot is an entitlement to the USMAA Members
- Bro Eddie mentioned that the cost of burial is exorbitant and families struggle to find the money to meet the cost. USMAA steps in in such instances and offer their services including the burial plot. Families often reimburse the costs when they manage to raise the needed funds. Hence, it is not an entitlement but rather a service to those in times of need for which reimbursement is often received down the track. There are no guarantees of a free burial site unless financial hardship is demonstrated.
  - Bro Imtiaz Mohamed also mentioned that he had commenced documenting instructional procedures for JSC that would benefit all USMAA members. This document will be presented to the MC first before tabling it to the membership
  - Sis Sithy, Bro Mackie Abu-Bakr and several members, using the chat function, strongly endorsed the work undertaken by Bro Eddie and his team and extended their appreciation for assisting them each in their times of need
  - Bro Fahmi agreed that the operational aspects of the JSC were being handled well but that the usage of funds issue needs to be addressed
  - Bro Eddie also briefly explained the below which was further clarified by a phone conversation with Bro Falih. They will form the Janaza Operational Policies

## USMAA INC JANAZA SUBCOMMITTEE – INTERMENT POLICY

a	Members are encouraged to purchase their own burial plot and give the relevant details to the Janaza Sub Committee (JSC) so that they are readily available at time of need
b	If members do not have their own plot, the family has to purchase one on the day of the burial and give all details to the Imam of the Mosque (Sheikh Ismail)
c	If members do not have a plot, the JSC can provide an USMAA owned plot. Members are then required to settle at the present day market value in full to the USMAA JSC
d	If members are unable to reimburse immediately due to financial hardship, then an instalment plan can be worked out with the JSC to pay off the market price of the plot
e	On very rare occasions, if the family is experiencing extreme financial hardship, the Janaza SC may waive the reimbursement from the grieving family and bear the cost of the plot under the JSC banner. This decision lies solely with the JSC in consultation with the USMAA MC. Families will have to demonstrate clear financial hardship
f	All Cemetery and Mosque charges have to be settled directly by the family prior to the burial





## 11. Close of Proceedings

- Brother Jainudeen Azoor congratulated the MC for a job well done. Bro Fahmi echoed his sentiments. Sis Sithy thanked Sis Ruzna for her efforts in assisting the international students as part of USMAA's Covid Assistance programme
- The meeting came to a close at 5:10 pm with the recital of qiraath by Zacky Shums.

## 12. Conclusion of AGM

### Action Items

No	Action	Progress	Who
20/7/1	Setup SGM	New	Ruzna S
20/7/2	Appoint new auditor	New	S Azmaan
20/7/3	Bro Yusuf to liaise with Bro Imtiaz for grants	New	Yusuf Z
20/7/4	Continue purchasing grave sites in line with members' instructions	New	Eddie D
20/7/5	Documenting instructional procedures for JSC	New	Imtiaz M
20/7/6	Journal USMAA Centre donations to an asset account	In progress	S Azmaan
20/7/7	Students to be given free (Hardship) memberships	New	Ruzna S

### Acronyms Used

Name	Description
MC	Management Committee
USMAA	United Sri Lanka Muslim Association of Australia Inc.
AGM	Annual General Meeting
SGM	Special General Meeting
Bro	Brother
Sis	Sister
JSC	Janaza Subcommittee
SB	Subcommittee