



## United Sri Lankan Muslim Association of Australia



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### ‘Expression of Interest’ for a new ‘Community & Sri Lankan Affairs Subcommittee’

Dear USMAA members,

As you may know, USMAA was formed by our Seniors as a break away from another organisation for several reasons. One of the reasons was, us wanting to support our brethren in Sri Lanka in times of need, be it financial, moral or international support. That was 30 years ago.

Today, our connection to the ‘nation of heritage’ may not be as strong with some of the new Management Committee (MC) members being born in Australia and some having spent most of their lives here. Future MCs may comprise solely of second and third generation Austro-SL Muslims as well.

Realising this horizon risk now, the current MC has decided to trial out a new subcommittee (SC) that could assist the MC with wider Australia community affairs (e.g. the bush fire initiative) and Sri Lankan issues (e.g. forced cremation of Coronavirus infected/suspected janazas).

Right now the main priority of this MC is the survival of USMAA and we have introduced frameworks and processes to IA make sure we **have** an organisation to fight for our brothers and sisters in SL. We are unable to therefore battle on two fronts. By creating this new SC, the MC can delegate external affairs that it does not have the capacity and sometimes the experience to undertake. This also gives some of our USMAA members an opportunity to earn the merit of Allah by doing something that they are passionate about.

The exact ‘model of engagement’ has not been finalised by the MC and we await the number of applications for the Expression of Interest (EoI) before devoting any time and energy. This SC will operate similar to the other SCs with a Chair to lead it and the President will be an Ex-officio member, as per the constitution. Further, the term would be for a period of three (3) years and the Chair could change, if required, from year to year depending on who has the best relationship with each new President. The official name of this SC has not been finalised as yet.

I understand that some of our senior members may feel that USMAA is not doing enough with regards to the SL Coronavirus issue, but I would like to remind that USMAA pioneered the initial letters of protest to the Government of Sri Lanka, solely first and then jointly with other organisations around Australia back in March 2020 when this all began.

In fact today, we wrote to nine (9) Members of Parliament (MP), including the Prime Minister of Australia, with regards to the forced cremation issue in SL requesting them to 'highlight this matter at the next Parliamentary sitting to draw international attention and to use all diplomatic resources to persuade the Government of Sri Lanka' to change its stance. We would like to thank bro. Fahmi H for his continued guidance as well.

We have participated in the Motorcade initiative organised by the MHRF and were also co-signatories to the letter written by AAGGSL to the Secretary General of the UN.

Finally, we may have to get used to conceding the leadership role that USMAA carried for the last 30 years when it comes to SL affairs in the near future (not just yet though). There are more capable and willing organisations now with SL issues being their **sole** purpose unlike USMAA, which is a community based organisation with a plethora of responsibilities.

**Action Required:** Kindly email the [info@usmaa.org.au](mailto:info@usmaa.org.au) or me personally [President@usmaa.org.au](mailto:President@usmaa.org.au) if you would like to express your interest in joining this subcommittee IA.

If adequate interest is not received, the MC will not pursue this initiative any further.

Jzk,..Falih Shums (President)



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