



USMAA NEWSLETTER

*The official newsletter of United Sri Lankan
Muslim Association of Australia
Vol II - 2020/2021 - December 2020*



LET'S WELCOME THE NEW YEAR

2020 has been a challenging year for all of us. As we head into the new year, let's not forget the lessons we learned and the good deeds we engaged in despite the tough times.

WELCOME TO THE LATEST EDITION

Assalamu alaikum dear Brothers and Sisters,

Welcome to the second newsletter for the year 2020/2021. This has been a tough year for us all and the Management Committee (MC) wishes to express their gratitude towards all members who have been showing a keen interest in the continuous improvement of USMAA and we look forward to your support in the future as well.

USMAA reached a significant milestone in December 2020. Our beloved organisation reached its 30th anniversary and I'm sure we would have loved a grand celebration. However, let's reserve that thought for now until we get through these tough times in sha Allah.

What's in this issue?

Let's take a look at the events during the second quarter of the current financial year. Afterwards we dive into some news and interesting topics including a few words on the 30th anniversary of USMAA. We have an interview with one of our members who decided to advertise her business with us. We finish off with some thoughts to reflect on. Enjoy!

PAST EVENTS

USMAA'S INAUGURAL DEBATING COMPETITION (03 OCT 2020)

USMAA's Inaugural Debating Competition for kids was held on 03rd October 2020 via Zoom. In the weeks leading up to the debate, several workshops were held to prep the youngsters in the art of debating. The workshops were designed to introduce our kids, the future of USMAA, to a new skill during lockdown; a skill that would be useful not only during their school life, but more importantly when they step into the workforce.

The teams were formed based on their age category and two debates were held. The kids displayed plenty of skill, perseverance, grit and a good command of the stage while debating the two topics; "Schools should ban uniforms" and "Australia should close all zoos."

The kids were enthusiastic and enjoyed the new experience. There was great feedback from the parents as well. Overall, the event was a tremendous success and we wish our young debaters the very best in their future activities.

CENTRELINK INFORMATION SESSION (20 OCT 2020)

The Positive Aging Sub Committee organised an insightful virtual information session with a Centrelink Financial Information Officer. The event was well attended and the primary focus was to provide our members some valuable information with regard to Centrelink services, pension and retirement funds, jobkeeper / jobseeker payments, superannuation etc.

A special thank you goes out to Sis Sithy and the Positive Aging Sub Committee for their hard work and dedication in continuously adding value to our community.

OPEN Q&A SESSION WITH HON. MINISTER JASON WOOD (07 NOV 2020)

An open Q&A session was held (via Zoom) with the Honourable Minister Jason Wood, who is the Federal Assistant Minister for Customs, Community Safety and Multicultural Affairs. The minister graciously accepted our invitation to speak to us and respond to questions posed by the audience.

USMAA extended the invitation to several other Islamic organisations from around Australia and we had good representation from the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils (AFIC), Islamic Council of Victoria (ICV), Islamic Council of Queensland (ICQ), Board of Imams Victoria (BOIV), Austra-Lanka Muslim Association (ALMA), Benevolence Australia, Darul Jailani Australia, Sri Lanka Muslim Association of South Australia (SLMASA), Canberra Australian Sri Lankan Muslim Community (CASMA) and the Bangladeshi Community in Queensland to name a few.



Several pressing issues were discussed and the Hon. Minister responded to questions and provided clarification on key matters concerning community safety and multicultural affairs.

PAST EVENTS (CONT.).

The Hon. Minister also invited USMAA to take the lead in creating a WhatsApp group for the nationwide Australian Muslim community, which he will be a part of. It is a great opportunity for USMAA to bring Muslim organisations spread across the whole country under one umbrella.

We are grateful to the Hon. Minister and his staff for their assistance in making this event a success. A special thanks also goes out to our Management Committee member Bro Naushad for taking the initiative at the outset and pushing us to make this event a reality.

BEAUTY TIPS & TRICKS - LADIES EVENT (05 DEC 2020)

USMAA organised a virtual event targeting all our lovely ladies. The session revolved around beauty tips and tricks to prepare for social events as COVID restrictions had eased.

The event had 3 presenters. Shazra Abdeen from Makeup by Shazra did a demonstration on some quick makeup tips, Rushana Nazeem from Danas Collection/Danas Ladies Salon and Rifka Naufal from Hartt conducted hijab draping masterclasses. All presenters did an outstanding job and the audience loved the neat little tips and tricks that will help them glam up.

VIRTUAL ESCAPE ROOM (12 DEC 2020)

The USMAA Youth Sub Committee hosted a virtual escape room event which consisted of several activities such as puzzles, brainteasers, quizzes and code breakers. It was great to see a good turn out from our members who brought out their competitive side while having a good laugh with other participants.



The tasks required teams to put their brains into overdrive. There was amazing feedback from everyone who attended. The winning team received Uber Eats vouchers because as we understand it, Uber Eats vouchers seem to be worth more than gold these days 😊

It was a splendid effort by the Youth Sub Committee and whilst wishing them the very best for the future, we eagerly await their next event.

USMAA CELEBRATES 30 YEARS

USMAA reached another significant milestone. It has been 30 years since our elders created this amazing community organisation to keep us united and to help us protect our Sri Lankan identity. We will be eternally grateful for the hard work put in by these individuals to create a platform for us and future generations.

An organisation is only as strong as its roots and foundation. As such, please find below the list of our honorary Founder Members and the rest of the first-year members (honorary Inaugural Members), per the membership applications in the USMAA physical archives. These applications have been scanned and saved to the USMAA website, minus the personal details and signatures of course. Further artefacts can be found on the “Committees from Past Years” page on the USMAA website (<https://usmaa.org.au/past-year-committee/>)

If you do have any photos or information about our past events, please share them with our Committee, so that we can preserve it on our website. In sha Allah 20 to 30 years from now, your grandchildren and great grandchildren can look back fondly and proudly at your achievements.

Please take a moment to thank Allah for preserving this organisation for us and of course the hard-working members who kept the flame burning for the past 30 years. Due to the prevailing pandemic situation, we have been unable to organise an event to commemorate this significant milestone in USMAA's history. In sha Allah once the situation becomes more favourable, we will endeavour to host an event to celebrate this milestone.

USMAA Founder Members - 22 December 1990

*Abbas, M Anes
Alawi, Almaz & Imrana
Alaudeen, Hyder-ali
Amirdeen, Nuhaim & Zahra
Amirdeen, Nuwaiz & Fara
Asraff, AH M & Pam
Aslam, Shahul Hameed & Shireen
Azoor, Jamaldeen (Jeno) & Sherine
Azoor, Sharir & Fathima
Buhary, Nisthar & Rizni
Cader, Yoosuf & Razana
Dole, Eddie & Farah
Eshaarc, Mohamed & Manna
Fahim, Ahamed
Fauzee, Mohamed & Evelyn Joy*

*Hafeel, Husain & Sabrina
Haniffa, Fahmi & Shirin
Haris, Fazlun & Sabreena
Hassan, Mohamed H
Hassen, Athena & Yousoof
Hilmy, Mohamed
Ismail, Imtiaz & Mariam
Issadeen, Imtiaz and Kimie
Kamar, Mohamed & Hareesa
Kamoor, Tuan & Rameeza
Mahroof, Hadji Marikkar & Safira
Marikkar, Jiffry & Sithy
Marikkar, M Bazeer
Meerapillai, M Naufan
Mehrudeen, Haneef & Salma
Mohamed, Sultan Mohideen*

*Mohideen, Aunty Ayesha
Mohideen, Haja & Fareeda
Mohinadeen, Ikram & Shantha
Mohinudeen, Haneef (Chota) & Sherina
Pierez-Mohamed & Ramzani
Razack, Bawa
Razack, Shakeel
Salahudeen, Mohamed (Ungi) & Naufara
Segumohamed, M Niyyaz
Shafeek, A Iqbal
Shariffdeen, Naufal & Rahuma
Tokhi, Aqa & Ganeema (Ziada)
Wahab (nee Ibrahim), Shamshad
Zarook, Salih & Rizana*

USMAA Inaugural Members - 1990 to 91

*Abdul-Sattar, Moshi
Amjadeen, Kaleel R & S Fareena
Ansareem, M.A.M & Fiyasha
Badurdeen, Fazly & Zulficar
Cader, Sabri A
Doole, B.L & Wanessa
Fauzee, Yasmine J
Fowzul, Mohamed*

*Haseeb, Mohamed & F Farriyah
Hassen, G Irshad
Liyaufouz, Mohamed & Firowsiya
Mohideen, Jiffry A & Kairun Nisa
Mubarak Thaha, Imran
Nizar, M. H & Azeeka
Rahim, M Sherajh & Dawn
Razak, M. Z. M
Salim, M Sherindeen & Sithy N*

*Seyed, Zain
Thowfeek, Muhammed & Niza
Vajuhudeen, A.M & Rinoza
Wazeer, A.F.M & Sithy S
Wijayanayake, Rukshan (Aff)
Zafarulla, Rahuman
Zuhair, A.G.M
Zuhair, Segu M. M & R Rizmuniya
...Plus the Founder Members*

OTHER NEWS

USMAA'S RESPONSE TO THE CREMATION ISSUE IN SRI LANKA

The situation in Sri Lanka with regard to the management of COVID19 is far from ideal. To make matters worse, all those who pass away due to the virus are being cremated regardless of their religious beliefs. This has received a lot of media attention both in Sri Lanka and overseas. The government seems to be relying on ill-informed "expert" advice when it comes to carrying out the final rites of our fellow brothers and sisters in Sri Lanka.

USMAA has been working closely with the Islamic Council of Victoria (ICV) and other organisations such as Australian Federation of Islamic Councils (AFIC), Board of Imams Victoria (BOIV), Australian Advocacy for Good Governance in Sri Lanka (AAGGSL), Melbourne Human Rights Forum to name a few. Our aim is to make a united stand against the inhumane practice of denying a dignified burial for our deceased brothers and sisters in Sri Lanka.

USMAA has already submitted a letter to His Excellency the President of Sri Lanka Mr. Gotabaya Rajapaksa imploring that he reconsider the decision to cremate all those who succumb to COVID19. Further, USMAA reached out to the United Nations (through AAGGSL) to intervene in this matter. Many non-Muslim organisations have also joined this campaign under AAGGSL.

Further, a few committees and sub-committees have been formed to brainstorm and carry out other awareness campaigns in Australia and to reach out to the Australian parliament to raise concerns on this gross violation of human rights. Several of our senior USMAA members such as Bro Fahmi, Sis Sithy, Bro Eddie, Sis Ziada, Sis Rizana and others have been at the forefront in this matter and are representing USMAA in these committees.

In addition to the work being done in Melbourne, there are teams working across the states with Australian Sri Lankan Muslim organisations in other parts of the country.

A lot of important activities are being carried out in the background and we are looking to find a peaceful resolution to this matter. Our primary aim is to create awareness among the general public as well as the key figures who have influence at a Diplomatic level.

May Allah provide us the wisdom and patience to deal with this matter appropriately and may He unite us in our efforts to bring relief to those who are suffering both physically and mentally due to this issue. Ameen!

USMAA TRADES PAGE

The USMAA Trades Page is off to a good start masha Allah. Some of our members have advertised on the page. Please visit <https://usmaa.org.au/trades/> to view and support our members who have advertised.

Please direct any queries to marketing.manager@usmaa.org.au

USMAA MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

The USMAA Mentorship program is in full swing. We have several brothers and sisters who have signed up to become mentors for our youth. If you are keen to mentor anyone or be mentored, please reach out to our Facility Manager Uzmaan via an email to facility.manager@usmaa.org.au

OTHER NEWS (CONTINUED)

A/MINISTER JASON WOOD ACKNOWLEDGES OUR SECRETARY FOR HER HARD WORK

Our Secretary Sis Ruzna Shums has been recognised by A/Minister Jason Wood for her dedication to multicultural work and helping make Australia a successful multicultural nation. Masha Allah this is a great achievement. We too second the minister's choice and please join us in congratulating Sis Ruzna and wishing her the best of luck for the future.



USMAA MATRIMONY SERVICE

The USMAA Matrimony Service is now up and running. We received several requests from members to start such a service and after lots of hard work in refining our approach, we have launched this as a free service as we trial it out. We understand that members may have their concerns in furnishing their details. All queries can be directed to matrimony@usmaa.org.au. In addition, we have an FAQ page setup on our website which can be accessed via the link below. Hopefully this covers most of the concerns that you may have.
<https://usmaa.org.au/matrimony-list/>

Further, if you have any thoughts and ideas on how we can improve the matrimony service, please send us your suggestions to the matrimony email address.

HAVE YOU RENEWED YOUR USMAA MEMBERSHIP FOR FY21?

Our Treasurer Bro Azmaan has a kind reminder to our members to please renew their USMAA membership for the current financial year. Invoices have been emailed to all financial members to renew their membership for 2020-2021. Only 42 members/families have paid subscriptions so far and we kindly request all members to assist USMAA by making their payments at the earliest.

Given the current environment, we are unable to organise fund raisers and are reliant on subscriptions for ongoing costs.

You will be considered a non-financial member for this year if payments are not received. In the event you are undergoing financial difficulty, please email treasurer@usmaa.org.au to make a special arrangement.

INTERVIEW WITH THE OWNER OF MAKEUP BY SHAZRA



We caught up with Shazra Abdeen who is the owner of Makeup by Shazra. She has advertised with us in our USMAA Trades Page on the website and we thought of getting to know a little bit about her and what drives her.

Tell us briefly about yourself and what brought you to Australia?

Assalamu Alaikum. My name is Shazra Abdeen. I am a mum of 2 with a deep passion for all things makeup! I moved to Australia in 2013 after my wedding. I fell in love with this place and I am glad to be a part of this community.

Tell us briefly about your business and where you operate?

I am based in Wollert (Northern suburbs), and I run a Makeup and Hair business that offers a mobile service i.e. I can come to you if you prefer to get your makeup/hair done at home or another venue. My specialty is natural makeup, where I enhance a person's appearance to give a more natural look.

How and why did you get involved in this line of work?

My passion for makeup heightened when I was 15, but growing up in Sri Lanka which has a conservative environment, I had to put a pin in it unfortunately. I recently completed a qualification at MakeupHQ and I am now finally working towards my passion, thanks to my husband and parents pushing me to do so.

What are some of the challenges you faced in your journey to this point?

Keeping up to date with social media trends! I had been off social media for a few years and you can imagine the shock I got when I finally had to get into it to promote my business. The world of social media had changed so much that I was struggling to keep up with the trends. It was daunting at first, but with a little help, I have now

picked up the basics. It truly is amazing how technology has advanced and it is humbling to see how the younger generation has mastered it.

What do you love about your work?

Makeup has been my passion for ages and it is something that makes me happy. I love it when my clients are happy with the end result. It is extremely satisfying to see and hear how much they love the makeup.

What made you advertise with USMAA?

The USMAA community has been a special crowd for most of us. I have met so many wonderful people through USMAA and I know for a fact that many of the mums with little ones will benefit from my mobile service option where I can come to them to provide my services. I'm also hoping that USMAA will be a good platform to help create more awareness about my business amongst the public, especially when it comes to supporting small local businesses.

What benefits can you provide our readers with?

As mentioned previously, since I can come to you to provide my services, it will be convenient especially if you have little ones. In addition, I do makeup tutorials on my Instagram page. Also, I'm planning to run workshops at Dash Finishing School in Malvern. In sha Allah if all goes well, I might start hosting workshops for the general public.

INTERVIEW WITH THE OWNER OF MAKEUP BY SHAZRA (CONT..)

Anything else that you wish to say to our readers?

My husband has taught me that doing what I like matters, especially when you are a mum with young children and have no time to breathe! (It's so easy for us mums to "let go" of ourselves when these little humans enter our lives!). It is never too late to start doing what you love.

The USMAA Management Committee wishes Shazra the best of luck in her journey and hope that our readers will reach out to her if they wish to get their makeup done. Please visit her website to see what services are on offer and follow her on social media.



https://www.instagram.com/makeup_by_shazra/

<https://www.facebook.com/makeupbyshazra>

<https://makeupbyshazra.com.au/>

EDITOR'S THOUGHTS

What an year this has been! Never in our wildest imaginations could any of us have predicted how 2020 would have played out. I sincerely hope that the new year will be far better. In saying that, we must not forget what we have learned from 2020. I urge you to pause for a moment and reflect on some of the lessons that you learned personally.

One key takeaway for me is that predicting the future is tricky. Factors outside of your control can significantly impact your plans - either propelling you forward or knocking you off course. Those who can adapt easily are often better off than those who resist change.

2020 will be remembered as the year when our lives changed dramatically. Cities, parks and malls that were bustling with life became unrecognisably quiet. We started to realise that the simple things in life that we took for granted were no longer easily accessible. Plans were thrown out the window and we were confined to our homes. Some people realised that there were strangers living in their homes. They turned out to be family members. Jokes aside, I hope the additional time spent at home made families closer instead of driving them apart.

Australia has been able to manage the COVID situation far better than most other countries in the world. It's unfortunate how bad politicians in some other countries toy with human lives and emotions. The present situation in Sri Lanka is clear evidence of that. The cremation issue has been a burning topic (no pun intended) all over the world. Hopefully all the media attention and our efforts in reaching out to organisations and governments that have the ability to make an impact will bear fruit soon. The Management Committee would like to express our gratitude to the senior USMAA members who have volunteered their time for this cause. May Allah reward you for your actions and may He also

bring relief to our brothers and sisters in Sri Lanka. Ameen!

I make it a point to always touch on the continuous work done by the Janaza Sub Committee (JSC). Rain, hail, shine, COVID or not, they have been ever ready to jump into action when the need arises. There simply are no words to express our gratitude for their sacrifices. May Allah bless them with good health and reward them for their efforts. Ameen!

Finally, with regard to USMAA's 30th anniversary, it's quite unfortunate that we weren't able to celebrate it in true USMAA style. Despite us having zero cases during that period, the Management Committee felt that it was better to wait it out as it would have been tragic if our celebrations were to spark off a COVID cluster. This is also the primary reason that we haven't gone back to hosting any physical events so far. In sha Allah when the time is right, we can "get-on-the-soft-drinks" (modified from the original expression for halal reasons).

Jzk.

Rizan Abdeen (Vice-President/Editor)