



# USMAA NEWSLETTER

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



## WELCOME TO THE LATEST EDITION

Assalamu alaikum dear Brothers and Sisters,

We were fortunate enough to get a taste of freedom for a few months, but here we are.....with a large part of the country back again in lockdown and under restrictions. Unfortunately this will be the tune over the next few months and we have to make peace with it. Our thoughts and prayers go out to everyone who is doing it tough due to the latest outbreak and restrictions. May Allah grant us patience and the understanding to do what's right to overcome these times. The future is in our hands.

### What's in this issue?

Let's take a look at the events during the fourth quarter of financial year 2020/2021. Afterwards we dive into some news, notices and interesting topics. To finish off, there will be some thoughts to reflect on. Enjoy!

## PAST EVENTS

### **COVID VACCINE ROLLOUT - INFO SESSION (11 APR 2021)**

The COVID vaccine rollout was a hot topic this quarter and we felt that it was important to update our members on details such as eligibility, registrations, vaccine centres and other concerns. Dr. Mackie Abu-Bakr (GP) who is also a well-known USMAA member agreed to conduct a virtual information session to educate the community and answer any questions that members had with regard to the vaccine. There was a good turn-out and several key points were covered, ensuring that members reaped maximum benefit from the session. A special thanks to the Positive Aging Sub-committee for organising the event.

### **IFTHAR 1 (17 APR 2021)**

USMAA was able to host a physical event at the Mulgrave Community Centre after a lapse of over a year due to COVID. We were fortunate to get the opportunity to organise the Ifthar events, Alhamdulillah. Due to capacity limits enforced by the Monash Council, we were forced to cap the participants at 100. A new ticketing system was trialled for this event and we were able to monitor registrations and create a waiting list so that others could attend in the event of last minute cancellations.

It was heart-warming to see the community back at the Mulgrave Hall. Although we conducted several virtual events, it was hard to establish a close personal connection without a face-to-face meetup. The food was a major hit and our gratitude goes out to everyone who helped in one way or another (dates, faluda, short eats, grocery shopping etc.), Special mention should be made about Sis Nizra and her champion team for sponsoring the event as well as handling the meal service. We look forward to more

culinary delights from them in the future as well.

Our members engaged in Tharaveeh prayers at the venue after dinner. It was an extremely successful event which we all felt good to be a part of.



### **IFTHAR 2 (01 MAY 2021)**

Riding on the success of the first Ifthar, we were able to host the 2nd Ifthar event also at the Mulgrave Community Centre. This time, the cap for participation was set at 120 by the Monash Council. This change was a timely welcome to us as it allowed more members to participate.

Participation was at maximum capacity and it was once again great to see some faces that we hadn't seen in over a year due to the pandemic.

## PAST EVENTS



Special mention should be made about Bro Nazeem and his team's tireless efforts in the kitchen to prepare meals for the event. The food was top notch and we received good feedback on the meals.



Similar to the 1st Ifthar, Tharaweeh prayers were conducted at the hall. Our gratitude goes out to everyone who volunteered their time and effort in making this event another special occasion.

## 27TH NIGHT RECITALS (08 MAY 2021)

The Positive Aging Sub-committee organised 27th Night Recitals at the Notting Hill Community Centre. There was a decent turn out from our membership. Members brought food to share and there were prayers, recitals and short talks to round off an important night in the month of Ramadan.

Unfortunately due to the prevailing government restrictions due to COVID, this event too had a limited capacity that could attend the venue. However, for those that did manage to attend, it was a night well spent.

## EID-AL-FITR DINNER (22 MAY 2021)

The much anticipated Eid-Al-Fitr dinner was held at the Mulgrave Community Centre and it was spectacular to say the least. It was great to see our members come out in numbers as this event had proven to be a popular one over the past several years.

# PAST EVENTS

There was a long list of dignitaries and special invitees who graced the Eid Dinner occasion.

- Hon Jason Wood – Federal MP and Asst. Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Community Safety.
- Hon Julian Hill – Federal MP for Bruce.
- Hon Brian Little – Mayor for the City of Monash
- Mr. Kapila Fonseka – Consul General of Sri Lanka to Victoria, South Australia & Tasmania
- Ms. Diana Perera – Consul at the Consulate General of Sri Lanka in Melbourne
- Mr. Ranj Perera – Senior Adviser to Hon Jason Wood MP and President of WeCare Victoria.
- Mr. Lionel Bopage – President of Australian Advocacy for Good Governance in Sri Lanka (AAGGSL)
- Mr. Adel Salman – President of Islamic Council of Victoria (ICV)

We were indeed privileged to hear from most of the invitees above and we are honoured to have such great allies working for the betterment of our community. We hope to continue these apolitical alliances well into the future.



## OTHER NEWS AND NOTICES

### **FITRA PROJECT 2021**

Alhamdulillah this Ramadan we were overwhelmed with the generosity of our USMAA Family. We raised two and a half times more than the required target for the two Zakat Al Fitr projects that were identified for this year.

Therefore, not only did we increase the scope of the already identified projects (in Muttur and Anuradhapura), but we also spread the love even more by assisting two additional but similar projects. Our gratitude goes out to everyone who helped change the lives of over 150 orphans and 70 families that were struggling to make ends meet. The prevailing lockdown situation in Sri Lanka compounded their troubles. May Allah bless our members abundantly and accept your charity. Ameen!



### **USMAA CENTRE PROJECT**

As in the past, USMAA has once again been in touch with several local councils seeking a land to lease or a property with a building in order to establish an USMAA Centre. The most recent correspondence was sent to the following councils along with copies to prominent politicians who are known allies of USMAA.

1. Monash City Council
2. Knox City Council
3. Dandenong City Council
4. Casey City Council
5. Kingston City Council

The letter was shared with the membership and progress details will be passed on to the next committee so that this marathon effort can be completed by future Management Committees in sha Allah.

## OTHER NEWS AND NOTICES

### COVID AID FOR SRI LANKA

USMAA has partnered with two organisations namely **Australian COVID Appeal for Sri Lanka** and **Sri Lanka COVID Aid** to provide assistance to the healthcare sector in Sri Lanka in combatting the pandemic that is ravaging the country. As everyone is aware, going through political connections in Sri Lanka is not always the best option, so the above organisations are working directly with prominent frontline workers in Sri Lanka to assess the need of the hour, purchase equipment and make donations to the hospitals that need critical life-saving equipment.

We are grateful to the members who contributed towards this cause as we have now raised \$1000 which will be split equally between the two organisations mentioned above. Bro. Nazeem Yakoob, from USMAA's Community & Sri Lankan Affairs Advisory Group (CSLAAG), graciously agreed to represent USMAA for the above fundraising efforts. May Allah bless everyone for their generosity. Ameen!

### USMAA WHATSAPP GROUP

If you haven't already, please join the USMAA WhatsApp group. Only admins can post in the group, so you can be relieved that there won't be constant forwards like those groups you can't seem to get out of. We use it to keep you updated on USMAA events, notices, activities and some events of closely affiliated groups. You can join the group using this [link](#).

### USMAA AGM 2021

The notice for the upcoming Annual General Meeting (AGM) was sent out on 8th June. The key details are as follows:

**Date:** Saturday 24th July 2021

**Time:** 4pm - 5.30pm

**Location:** Mulgrave Community Centre (or Zoom depending on the COVID situation in the state)

This year, apart from the 11 roles in the Management Committee, the 3 Trustee roles are up for grabs too. If you are keen on serving the community in the Management Committee or as a Trustee, please fill out the [nomination form](#) and revert to the Returning Officer (secretary@usmaa.org.au) no later than 5.00pm on Saturday, 10 July 2021. May Allah reward you for your time and effort in serving the community. Ameen!

## **EDITOR'S THOUGHTS**

Another year gone! It's mind-boggling how the days pass us by so quickly. We are indeed at a loss as mentioned in Surah Asr. As the curtains draw on the time of the current Management Committee, I feel glad at what we managed to achieve during our time, despite the pandemic.

Given that COVID restrictions were in place, we were forced to host a majority of our events virtually including the AGM in 2020. Our virtual events included various information sessions on the pandemic and vaccinations, presentations on Centrelink and household energy saving tips, debating and creative writing workshops for kids, fun family events like the virtual spectacular and the virtual escape room, religious talks for Ramadan and Haj, a ladies event for beauty tips and tricks and a Q&A session with the Asst. Minister for Multicultural Affairs to name a few. Physical events included the 2 ifthar events and the Eid dinner this year. We are grateful to the subcommittees who organised and conducted some of the events above. A great deal of effort went into all of them.

Apart from the events, USMAA was involved in several charitable work and community issues in order to assist people both in Australia and Sri Lanka. With the assistance of member donations, food relief packs were provided to vulnerable parties during the height of the pandemic and funds were provided for the procurement of essential medical supplies for hospitals in Sri Lanka. Further, USMAA was involved in several appeals to prominent political figures to intervene in the issue around cremation of COVID-related deaths in Sri Lanka. A few other initiatives have been conducted and you would've already received emails about them.

Looking back at the past year, we as a community have made good strides and it's our responsibility to keep the momentum going well into the future. I'm grateful to everyone who has

helped in one way or another to serve the community. It has been an incredible journey with the current Management Committee and I have been fortunate to have worked with the current team and I look forward to maintaining this friendship going forward. I hope that others will put their hands up to take on the responsibilities of the Management Committee. Several user manuals, policies and procedures have been documented to make life easier for future committees. So rest assured, you won't be left scratching your heads once you take up positions. May Allah reward you for the time and effort you put into serving the community. I wish everyone the very best and may Allah bless you and keep you safe. Ameen!

Jzk.

Rizan Abdeen (Vice-President/Editor)