



## Secretary's Report 2021/2022

The 2021/2022 Management Committee (MC) was elected at the AGM held on Saturday, 24 July 2021. The new team comprised the following members:

<b>Title</b>	<b>Name</b>
President	Rizan Abdeen
Vice President	Reza Jamal
Secretary	Minhaja Hashim
Treasurer	Anas Sherifdeen
Committee Members	Zafar Issadeen Sithy Marikar Ahmad Jahfar

### Membership

This year our subscription-fee collection was as follows.

<b>Membership Category</b>	<b>FY2021/22</b>	<b>FY 2020/21</b>
Individual	10	8
Family	63	68
Pensioner	6	2
Pensioner Family	15	8
Student	4	6

I would like to welcome all new members and thank all our existing members for supporting this organisation.

### Management Committee Meetings

All MC meetings were conducted via Zoom. Meetings were generally held on Tuesday evenings. In the lead-up to events, meetings were more frequent and event specific. The MC also maintained a WhatsApp Group, to discuss ideas and utilise technology to make time-sensitive decisions in-between meeting dates. The use of technology meant that although the MC members were geographically spread across Melbourne, meetings and decisions could be made efficiently and effectively.

### Subcommittees

Due to the lockdown situation in Victoria and a high volume of COVID cases for a majority of the financial year, unfortunately most plans were put on hold. However, we managed to organise the following to keep our members engaged.



# United Sri Lankan Muslim Association of Australia

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ABN: 16 2071 753 19

- The Janaza Subcommittee (JSC) continued their essential service despite rain, hail, shine and COVID. Their commitment to provide the community with this selfless service even at odd hours of the night should be commended. JSC managed to purchase 2 grave sites at the Bunurong Cemetery during this financial year. They also gave a hand during funerals of other Muslim communities.
- The Positive Ageing Subcommittee (PAS) organised the following events which were well received by the members.
  - 15<sup>th</sup> Sep 2021 – Energy Simplified Webinar by the Consumer Policy Research Centre (via Zoom), providing useful tips on how to reduce our household energy bills.
  - 12<sup>th</sup> January 2022 – Info Session - Omicron, Testing, 3<sup>rd</sup> Dose & COVID-safe practices
  - 27<sup>th</sup> Apr 2022 – Ramadan 27<sup>th</sup> Night Recitals at the Mulgrave Community Centre.
- The Youth Subcommittee organised the following virtual and physical events, showcasing their event management talents and leadership skills.
  - 28<sup>th</sup> Aug 2021 – Virtual Escape Room
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Oct 2021 – The Heist. Virtual Escape Room with a twist.
  - 27<sup>th</sup> Feb 2022 – Youth Netball Pay & Play event (Ladies only)

## Events

As mentioned before, the lockdowns in Victoria meant that most event plans had to be put on hold for a major part of the financial year. A mix of virtual and physical events were organised during the year to keep our current members engaged and draw in new members. Please refer the USMAA website and Facebook page for more details and photos of events. The MC's calendar of events was as follows:

- 17<sup>th</sup> Aug 2021: Virtual Lecture – The Importance of Ashura
- 25<sup>th</sup> Sep 2021: Virtual Event – Contact Tracing and COVID situation update.
- 04<sup>th</sup> Dec 2021: Sri Lankan Night – Members dressed in colourful attire to enjoy a Sri Lankan cuisine which included Hoppers.
- 19<sup>th</sup> Mar 2022: USMAA Fun Run 2022 – An outdoor fun event was organised at the Freeway Reserve adjacent to the Mulgrave Community Centre. Unfortunately this event had to be cancelled due to a poor turnout.
- 09<sup>th</sup> Apr 2022: First Ifthar event was held at the Mulgrave Community Centre.
- 21<sup>st</sup> Apr 2022: Second Ifthar event was held at the Mulgrave Community Centre.
- 02<sup>nd</sup> May 2022: Eid Al-Fitr Breakfast event was held at NumberNinety Receptions in Oakleigh.
- 07<sup>th</sup> May 2022: Eid Al-Fitr Dinner event was held at the Mulgrave Community Centre.
- 18<sup>th</sup> June 2022: Ladies' Night – A Bridgerton themed fun night for the ladies with the aim of raising funds to purchase essential medical supplies for Sri Lankan hospitals. This



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event also had a segment on creating awareness about Domestic Violence in the community.

The Eid Al-Fitr Dinner event was graciously attended by several dignitaries including Vivienne Nguyen (Chairperson – Victorian Multicultural Commission), Hon. Jason Wood (Federal Assistant Minister for Customs, Community Safety and Multicultural Affairs), Hon. Julian Hill (Federal Member for Bruce), Hon. Brian Little (Former Mayor of Monash), Hon. Kapila Fonseka (Consular General of Sri Lanka), Ms. Cassandra Fernando (Labor candidate for Holt), Ranj Perera (Liberal candidate for Holt), Dr. Mohamed Mohideen (Victorian Multicultural Commissioner and Vice-President of ICV), Dr. Lionel Bopage (President – Australian Advocacy for Good Governance in Sri Lanka), JC Weliamuna (Former High Commissioner of Sri Lanka to Australia), Forough Derakhshan (Vice-President – Monash Interfaith Gathering), Pamela Kosij (Multicultural Development Officer – Monash Council) and Dilkie Perera (National President of Australia-Sri Lanka Business Council).

The Ladies Nite event was a tremendous success with prominent Human Rights personnel addressing the audience to create awareness around domestic violence. In addition, several games and fun activities were held with plenty of food, music and dancing. After deducting the costs, we had generated approximately \$10,000 towards purchasing urgent medical supplies to Sri Lankan hospitals.

In addition, USMAA was invited to attend events organised by other organisations.

- Monash Interfaith Gathering (MIG) Harmony Day celebrations: USMAA assisted with refreshments and sound setup.
- Member Forums organised by Islamic Council of Victoria (ICV) to discuss issues faced by the Community.
- Samaritan Journey initiated by the Methodist Church of Sri Lanka. The event was organised to create awareness of the economic crisis in Sri Lanka and initiate relief efforts.

### Grants Received

The Monash Council provided USMAA with;

- In-kind Hall Hire Grant to cover expenses for the hiring of the Mulgrave Community Centre and its facilities.
- \$2000 cash grant to be used for Community Strengthening and for Domestic Violence Awareness.

The Positive Aging Subcommittee managed to secure a \$2000 grant from the Victorian Multicultural Commission aimed at providing much needed support for seniors.



## Charitable Initiatives

- USMAA managed to collect approximately \$2000 through Zakat-al-Fitr donations. The money was distributed among 4 orphanages in remote parts of Sri Lanka to help them celebrate Eid Al-Fitr. In addition, food hampers were distributed among several poor houses surrounding 1 of the orphanages.
- Urgent medical supplies worth \$10,000 were donated to hospitals in Sri Lanka that were facing severe shortages of life-saving drugs. Funds were raised through USMAA's Ladies Nite event.
- USMAA managed to secure Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs) through the Islamic Council of Victoria (ICV) which were distributed free-of-charge among the community, especially to individuals and families that did not have easy access to RATs.

## General matters

USMAA issued a letter to the New Zealand High-Commission condemning the attack in Auckland on 03<sup>rd</sup> September 2021 by a Sri Lankan individual with an Islamic background. The NZ High-Commission were appreciative of the letter.

The Community & Sri Lankan Affairs Advisory Group has been regularly monitoring issues pertaining to Muslims in Sri Lanka and working with individuals such as Dr. Lionel Bopage where appropriate. Some of the issues discussed included the cremation of individuals who passed away due to COVID, proposed reforms to Muslim Marriage & Divorce Act (MMDA) and the present economic and political crisis in Sri Lanka.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, I would like to thank the entire USMAA Management Committee, all Subcommittees and everyone who helped in various ways for the hard work put in over the course of the year. We could not have done this without you.

May Allah shower his blessings on each and every one in our community. May our organisation go from strength to strength in the years to come. Ameen!

Yours sincerely,

Minhaja Hashim  
Secretary  
USMAA