

## Following in the footsteps of our beloved Prophet (pbuh): the Qard Hassan Victoria No Interest Loan Scheme\*



Pictured are, Jason Murphy (Marketing Manager, Faculty of Law and Management, La Trobe University), Michael Lanyon (Founding Partner of Logie-Smith Lanyon Lawyers), Professor Ishaq Bhatti (Director, Islamic Banking and Finance Programme, La Trobe University and Hyder Gulam FRCNA (Senior Lawyer, Logie-Smith Lanyon Lawyers

The Islamic Council of Victoria (ICV), being the peak representative body of Muslim organisations in Victoria is proud to join the National No Interest Loan Scheme (NILS) network and offer the Qard Hassan NILS program to the Muslim community in Victoria.

The Islamic Qard Hassan NILS program aims to fulfill the current gap in financial services for low-income earners by providing Shariah compliant loans of up to \$1000 for the purchase of essential household goods and services. There are no fees, charges or any other costs to the borrower. Loans are considered for items such as whitegoods (ie fridges and washing machines); household furniture; car repairs and certain educational and medical expenses. Loan repayments are negotiated with the borrower at an affordable fortnightly rate and paid over a period of eighteen months with no interest.

Qard Hassan NILS is not, however, a form of emergency relief or welfare. The program aims to provide a hand up - not a hand out. Loans are approved based on the willingness and capacity of the applicant to repay the loan. Therefore, loans are not provided for living expenses such as food and utility bills rent and bond or debt consolidation.

While Muslims may be familiar with the concept of qard hassan or 'benevolent loans', the current NILS model was developed thirty years ago by Good Shepherd Youth & Family Service (GSFYF) a community-based organisation who work to raise

awareness of the experience of people on low

incomes, inequitable social structures and financial and social exclusion. The GSYFYS recognise the importance of providing an equitable model of credit that based on a commitment to upholding individual dignity and respect with loan payment arrangements based on a person's capacity to repay. NILS is based on the concept of circular community credit. When a loan is repaid, the funds are then available to benefit others in the community. The community focus of the NILS model ties in seamlessly with the Prophet Muhammad's (pbuh) example of giving generously to those in need and to the collective spirit of the Muslim community.

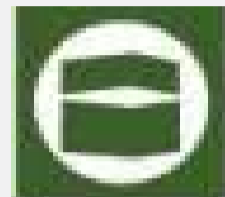
The success of the NILS model hinges on its ability to provide real solutions to essential needs and in empowering people who are experiencing real distress and financial hardship. The GSYFYS provide a case study of a NILS borrower had previously been hand washing her clothes for 8 months after her washing machine exploded. She tried to find a loan from banks, stores and rental schemes but they did not believe she would be able to pay them back - 'They make you feel like you're a nobody'. Getting a NILS loan to purchase a new washing machine significantly reduced her workload and successfully paying off the NILS loan gave her a sense of achievement - she says, 'I'm proud of myself. That's exactly what it's like, I can do it... When you start paying it, you think, I'm actually paying for something that is mine forever, as long as it lasts.'

Qard Hassan Victoria NILS and its sister programs South Australia and New South Wales are the first of their kind, run by Muslim auspice agencies and benefitting the Muslim community. Many Australian Muslims, particularly the more newly arrived communities, are socially and economically marginalized. The 2001 ABS Census found that 43 per cent of Australian Muslims had a weekly income of less than \$200 compared with 27 per cent for all Australians. According to the 2006 ABS Census, the age-specific unemployment rates for Australia Muslims were two to four times higher than those of non-Muslim Australians. These indicators point towards economic disadvantage among many Australian Muslims and highlight the need for a program such as NILS.

For the last 4 years, the funds for the NILS programs has come via the National Australia Bank, which has committed over \$15 million in loan capital to existing and new NILS programs. The bank also has sponsorship of an annual NILS conference. For more information about this program contact 03 9328 2067, e-mail to [qardhassan@icv.org.au](mailto:qardhassan@icv.org.au) or visit the ICV website at: <http://www.icv.org.au>.

\*By Adeeba Hanif - ICV NILS Program Coordinator, Nazeem Hussain - ICV Treasurer, Nadeem Hussain - ICV NILS Committee Member, Hyder Gulam FRCNA - ICV Board Member

## ISLAMIC COUNCIL OF VICTORIA (ICV) ANNOUNCES NEW EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 13th December 2010



The elections for the ICV, as the peak body for more than 90 000 Victorian Muslims, took place yesterday at the Annual General Meeting. The new ICV executive committee are composed as follows:

President: Hyder Gulam  
Vice President: Ramzi Elsayed  
Secretary: Sherene Hassan  
Treasurer: Nazeem Hussain  
Executive Committee Member: Mohamed Nur  
Executive Committee Member: Craig Dent

As the new President of the ICV, Hyder has previously served two years on the ICV executive committee. Hyder is a registered nurse, a qualified lawyer, and an accredited mediator. He has post graduate qualifications in business/management, law and nursing. He has served as an officer with the Royal Australian Air Force, both in Australia and overseas. Hyder practices mainly in the areas of Commercial & Corporate Law.

Sherene Hassan, ICV Secretary and Media Spokesperson stated, "Hyder is one of the most inspiring dedicated individuals I have ever met and I am looking forward to him leading the team."

I am confident the new members, Craig and Mohammed will bring a lot to the committee given their exceptional skillbase, corporate and community experience."

Newly elected President of the ICV, Hyder stated: "I am humbled to be elected and thank God and the Muslim community for having faith in me. I am very happy with the composition of the new ICV Executive, which conveys strong stability and balance with many of the preceding Executive staying on, with an infusion of some very good talent."

Past President Ramzi El-sayed stated: "I am delighted to be elected Vice President, and hope to continue and see to fruition some of the projects which I have been personally involved with."

## Australian National Imams Council (ANIC) "Eid Dinner" 2010



Australian National Imams Council (ANIC), the peak umbrella organisation of Imams in Australia organised its inaugural "Eid al Fitr Dinner" in Melbourne on 9th October 2010. The event was to show appreciations to organisations and community groups that held Iftar Dinners during the month of Ramadan that have become part of Ramadan celebrations in Australia for the past few years.

About 200 guests from Government of Victoria, Immigration Department, Australian Federal, Police, Victoria Police and various community organisations have attended the

dinner. The Chief Guest was the Minister Assisting the premier on Multicultural Affairs the Honourable James Merlino MP. There were many Imams from New South Wales, Western Australia and Victoria. ANIC President Sheikh Abdel Azeim Afifi and Mufti of Australia Sheikh Fehmi Naji Imam welcome the guests.

Many Government and Community organisations in particular Australian Federal Police, Victoria Police, Universities, Faith Communities and service organisations such as Metropolitan Fire Brigade and others have been steadfastly organising Iftar Dinners in Ramadan annually. It has become part of

Ramadan celebrations and a platform to share and appreciate our religious traditions with members of all faith communities and the general public in a harmonious atmosphere. ANIC President Sheikh Abdel Azeim Afifi said "It is time to recognise the importance of Iftar Dinner. Over the past few years it has proved to be an excellent way to promote awareness of Islamic rituals among all Australians. We appreciate any programme to promote tolerance and accommodating our faith is indeed commendable. ANIC is proud to host this dinner and recognise all those who organise Iftar Dinners this year. Mufti of Australia Sheikh Fehmi Naji Imam

welcomes the idea of "Eid al Fitr Dinner" and said this is our "Thanks giving" to appreciate everyone involved in Iftar Dinner programs. It is our tradition to say "Thank you". I remind you a hadith recorded in Abu Dawud from Abu Hurayrah that the Prophet salaallaho aliahi wasalam said "Whosoever is not thankful to the people, then he is not thankful to Allah". I sincerely commend all our brothers and sisters who work hard to organise an excellent dinner tonight. I also warmly welcome all of you tonight and hope this would be an enriching experience of learning our faith, our rituals and hospitality that you may treasure for long time to come. Chief guest Honourable James Merlino MP expressed his gratitude to ANIC for organising the inaugural "Eid al Fitr Dinner" in Melbourne. In his address to guests Honourable Minister said "We are proud to have developed very good relationship with all faith communities in particular the Islamic community in Victoria. We as a Multicultural society celebrate our cultural diversities and share with others. Iftar dinners and the ANIC Eid dinner tonight demonstrated this and I commend the Australian National Imams Council for this exemplary initiative.

Report prepared by;  
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ANIC Secretary