

MESSAGE FROM THE PREMIER OF QUEENSLAND



This is a very special time for our fellow Queenslanders in the Muslim community with the celebration of the holy month of Ramadan.

Many Australians are aware that during this month Muslims fast from dawn to dusk as well as provide generously for poor and disadvantaged peoples around the world. Soon you will be celebrating Eid ul-Fitr, the Islamic holiday that heralds the end of Ramadan.

No doubt many Muslim families will gather to celebrate at events formal and informal, including Queensland's celebration of Muslim culture, Eidfest 2007, held on Saturday 27 October at the Mt Gravatt Showgrounds.

My government is pleased to support Eidfest 2007 through Multicultural Affairs Queensland, which actively promotes and supports such cultural celebrations throughout the state.

I take this opportunity to invite members of the Muslim community to attend another celebration of this state's great diversity and a definite highlight on Queensland's festival calendar, the Multicultural Festival 2007.

Held at the stunning Roma Street Parklands, this year's festival will feature a broad range of activities, food and craft stalls, community music, dance and workshops catering for all tastes and ages.

As well as offering fun and enjoyment, both of these great celebrations are reminders of the many ways in which Queensland has been enriched and strengthened by its diversity of peoples, languages, religions, traditions and cultures.

I wish you well on this auspicious occasion in the calendar of all Muslims.

ANNA BLIGH MP
PREMIER OF QUEENSLAND



A MESSAGE FROM EMBASSY OF ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN



The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan on the occasion of the holy month of Ramadan wishes the Muslim community and the Islamic Federation of Islamic Councils a safe and peaceful Ramadan.

The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan would like to express its gratitude for the month of Ramadan and anticipation for the upcoming Eid-ul-Fitr celebrations. The month of Ramadan is a special date for Muslims as it allows them to become closer to Allah. The philosophy underpinning Ramadan revolves around specific requirements that demonstrate self-control and a willingness to help out people in the community. It is time where Muslims are expected to be generous and pious to all members of the community while refraining from bad language, greed lust and gossip. The virtues of kindness, generosity and obedience play a significant part in conveying the message of Islam and uniting the Islamic Community (ummah).

The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan congratulates the Muslim community in their commencement of the holy month of Ramadan and extends its best wishes to families and children of the Muslim and Australian community.

Yours Sincerely,
Amanullah Jayhoon
Ambassador



OPINIONS

CREATING EXTREMISTS IN AUSTRALIA - *Paris Style*

By Ikebal Patel - President Australian Federation of Islamic Councils

It is a frightening thought that in a multicultural and western society in Australia, much like France and other western polarised countries, we could have a repeat of the violence and lawlessness similar to what happened in France last year.

Whilst there was evidence of some involvement of non migrant French in the weeks of anarchy, and there fore the root causes of this lawlessness can be identified with general community issues, there is no avoiding the fact that a lot of the violence was perpetrated by first and second generation children of mostly migrant muslims.

Could this ever occur in the streets of Sydney and Melbourne? Although one could argue that this has already happened in Redfern, and Macquarie Fields in recent times, and both without any involvement of local Muslims. But with evidence of the marginalisation of certain members of the migrant community, the breeding grounds for these frustrated generation of young Australian is very real and promoted indirectly by all concerned in positions of legislative power or as employers.

Skill Shortage

Whilst it is acknowledged that there is a serious shortage of skilled and qualified people in various fields, including medical, engineering, town planners, building surveyors etc, it is not hard to jump in a taxi in any major city in this "land of milk and honey" and "fair go" and have a migrant rush you off to your next appointment or to the airport, or the party that started 2 hours ago. And some of these migrants do not even know how to read the road signs, let alone drive a car!!

And it does not take long to realise that you are in the company of the highest qualified taxi driver any where in the world, if only you give another human being the decency by saying g'day and starting a conversation. And the lament that a lot of these people have is that they are not getting the break to get that first job to have the "Aussie experience" required to secure that eventual job. It is a vicious cycle of catch 22.

And for a lot of these people, all they want is some guidance from the employment agencies to secure their first employment. But what a lot of these people are saying is that these employment agencies are not interested until you register with Centrelink and get unemployment benefit. To a lot of these people receiving any benefit is a sign of sure failure in their new homeland, as if they are bludgers. So they start driving taxis or doing cleaning jobs whilst they attend the local TAFE and enrol in the local University to freshen and localise their qualifications.

"And for a lot of these people, all they want is some guidance from the employment agencies to secure their first employment."

On the day of their graduation with the local qualifications, they are euphoric as now they surely can write letters home to their country of birth and assure their elderly parents that the money for their medication will definitely increase with their new jobs they will secure soon due to the reported shortage of skilled people and acknowledged by all including the Prime Minister.

Now to get the letters off for these advertised jobs. "We do not care about the pay to start off with, we will work for free to get the elusive Australian experience" is a claim of a lot of these highly qualified taxi drivers and cleaners. But after continually writing for months on end without even a reply to their application by these individuals who may have a Muslim sounding name, frustration starts to set in.

Aussie Jobs for Aussies

Others who have been a little entrepreneurial have sent two letters of application, identical in content except for the names, one being their real name, mostly Muslim, and the second one sounding much like your average Aussie Anglo Saxon name. And it is no surprise that the "Aussie" gets the interview. And the response that a lot of these people receive in the interview when they claim their real self did not even get a lousy response is that they did not think "you would be so intelligent and well qualified". And with equivalent Australian qualifications at that as well.

Hard Earned Money and a Little Extra to take Home

Now lets imagine one of these skilled migrant, who has been forced to take up a taxi driving job in his new homeland when he was used to a middle class job with a lot of respect and a standing in his community "back Home" resigned to the fact that he will always be driving a taxi.

This man, who feels he is not contributing to his fullest capability in this new home of his, also has to take a lot of the abuse in trying to make a living only because he is different, he looks like a Muslim, or is black, and is driving a

bunch of fairly happy and very drunk Aussies. And to top it all off, he gets a free helping of recycled food from the back seat of the taxi from some one who has obviously had a little too much to drink.

This man gets home at 6 in the morning just when his young ones are getting up. Obviously this state of mind and frustration of his will radiate in conversations to his family. His children will not be able to get the same opportunities as he received in education , especially with the user pay regime now coming in at our Universities.

Ripe for Breeding Extremism

If these are not grounds for breeding extremism from a marginalised group of people, and especially from the first and subsequent generation of the children and grand children of these people who will be growing in homes with looser and looser discipline as the parents will be working harder at making ends meet. And with our Governments very draconian family reunion migration policy, the elderly grandparents can not join the children to offer support, guidance and discipline to the grandchildren.

It is the responsibility of all governments, federal and state as well as employers to look hard at their employment policies and how it is implemented in practical terms. Sure we have all the Anti Discrimination and Equal Employment Opportunity Legislation but at the coal face the reality is a total lack of inclusiveness of all people. These legislations are only there as lip service to meet our international obligations but in practical sense, life for some Aussie Taxi Drivers who look different is no milk and honey or as glitzy as Paris by night.

It would be a difficult exercise to identify all root causes of extremism, but any contributory factors that could be removed from the journey is one excuse removed, and the cost is effectively nil whilst eventually going towards an inclusive and fairer society.

Ikebal Patel

Executive Member of the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils



THE BOOK, SHARI'A CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM

By Dr Nadirsyah Hosen

Reform in Indonesia (ISEAS, Singapore, 2007, 271 pages) has just come off the press. The book has been launched during the Indonesia Update conference held at ANU (Australian National University), Canberra, 7-8 September 2007.

ISEAS (Institute of Southeast Asian Studies) is the largest publisher in the region of scholarly books about Southeast Asian politics, economics and social issues.

This book focuses on constitutional reform in Indonesia (1999/2002) from the perspective of shari'a. Since the end of Soeharto's New Order government in 1998, Indonesia, the largest Muslim country in the world, has amended the 1945 Constitution four times. Soeharto's departure also opened the way for several Muslim groups and political parties to propose the introduction of shari'a into the Constitution. This book poses the crucial question implicit in the amendments to the 1945 Constitution: can shari'a and democratic constitutionalism be fused without compromising on human rights, the rule of law, and religious liberty? The contributions of Islamic political parties in Indonesia to the process and the outcome of the amendments, by adopting a substantive shari'a approach, reflect the ability to deal with a modern Constitution without abandoning the principles and the objectives of shari'a. The study reveals one possible picture of how Islam and constitutionalism can co-exist in the same vision, not without risk of tension, but with the possibility of success.

Dr Nadirsyah Hosen

Lecturer, Faculty of Law
University of Wollongong, NSW Australia

Email: hosen@uow.edu.au

Phone: +61 2 4221 4192

Fax: +61 2 4221 3188

Website: <http://www.uow.edu.au/law/acastaff/UOW016709.html>



HAVE YOUR SAY

YOUR COMMENTS

If you wish to have an article published in Muslims Australia, forward your article by email in word format to:

aficmelb@bigpond.com

Please ensure to include your contact telephone number.

Note: Due to space constraints, your contributions should be concise to be considered for publishing.

COMMON CALL TO ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

We the religions of Australia have a shared sense of moral purpose on global warming. Each of our diverse traditions has a common concern for our planet and a deep reverence for life. We believe we are called to respect and care for this precious gift. We strongly acknowledge the interdependent relationship between our welfare and that of our environment. And while recognizing the uniqueness of our distinctive traditions, we agree on a common call to action on Climate Change.

We accept the overwhelming scientific evidence that global warming is real and that it is human-induced. We acknowledge that the effects of climate change will not discriminate between religions and that the environment is our shared responsibility. All of our traditions call us to serve and protect the poor and vulnerable. And it is the world's poor, who have contributed the least to this problem, who will suffer the most from global warming. The future impact of climate change on families, on whole communities and all other life will be significant. We must act now in order to halt any further damage and ensure a future for all our children and grandchildren.

Drawing from our different faiths we offer motivation and ethical principles to help Australians change their ways. Global warming is not just a political and economic issue; it is a moral and spiritual issue that calls for leadership from faith communities. As respected moral citizens within our communities we have an obligation to lead by example on what is essentially a moral issue that affects us all. We therefore commit to reducing greenhouse gas emissions both at our places of worship and in our homes.

We firmly believe that our faith based action can help realise substantial changes for Australia. We also recognise the vital role Government policies will play in combating climate change. The CSIRO have calculated that the negative effects of climate change will be severely experienced in Australia. For the sake of all citizens and future generations we call upon the Australian Government to show foresight and innovative leadership on issues relating to climate change. Furthermore, as a wealthy and secure nation surviving in an already harsh environment, we are well-placed and, indeed, have a responsibility to provide international leadership in the global response to avoid dangerous climate change.

A conclusion of the IPCC and CSIRO is that the cost of switching to a clean economy is likely to be significantly less than the social cost of climate change impacts. The CSIRO's submission to the Prime Minister's Task Group on the Emission Trading recommended reductions in annual GHG emissions of 60-90% from 1990 or 2000 levels by 2050. In order to achieve these recommendation we strongly call upon the Australian Government to

1. Ensure Australia's greenhouse gas emissions peak and begin to decline in the next three to five years, set a long term reduction target of at least 80% below 1990 levels by 2050 and a pathway of strong interim targets to meet the long term target.
2. Ensure all new electricity generation comes from clean energy and legislate a clean renewable energy target of 25% by 2020.
3. Set world's best energy performance standards and establish a priority package of efficiency measures to cut energy waste and deliver all Australians cost effective energy savings, particularly for low income households.
4. Ratify the Kyoto Protocol, help neighbouring countries make the switch to clean energy and prepare for climate change, and lead the world in a response that avoids dangerous climate change of global warming more than 2 degrees above pre-industrial levels.



IKEBAL ADAM PATEL
 PRESIDENT, AUSTRALIAN FEDERATION OF ISLAMIC COUNCILS
 21 August 2007



IBM'S SUPPORT IN COMMUNITY PROJECTS



IBM has a long history of supporting communities around the world, through a diverse range of programs, focusing on the use of IBM technology and expertise, especially in disadvantaged communities.

IBM Executive for Corporate Citizenship and Corporate Affairs for Asia Pacific, Louise Davis, is a member of the Federal Government Steering Group for Bringing Communities Together, and through this connection, IBM has been able to donate technology to the Islamic School of Canberra and the Islamic College of Brisbane. IBM has been supporting local communities including Muslim students, through partnership with Maribyrnong City Council in Melbourne.

At the Muslim Symposium in Canberra on 5 May, Louise reconfirmed with Ikebal Patel, President of the Federation of Islamic Councils, IBM's commitment to supporting Muslims and other communities and will donate technology to the Malek Fahd Islamic School in Greenacre, Sydney and Langford Islamic College in Perth.

IBM is very pleased to work in partnership with FACSIA and the AFIC to help Muslim communities through the donation of IBM technology and through IBM volunteers, possibly as mentors for Muslim young people.

MUSLIMS SUPPORT ACTION FOR A HUMAN RIGHTS LAW

The question I am most often asked is why we started the new matilda campaign for a human rights act. The best answer is the story of Shayan. It and others like it had become widely known by 2005 when the online magazine new matilda was launched. Readers immediately challenged the legal basis for government action in such disturbing cases. Five year old Shayan had arrived with his family in 2000, put into Woomera then Villawood detention centres and though very ill, detained without proper care. Later he was put into foster care. Only in 2002 was the child reunited with his family. Such stories provoked us to action.

We do not accept that children and adults seeking asylum in Australia should be detained for lengthy periods, or deprived of their freedom, dignity and other basic human rights such as education and health. We do recognise the pressures on government and accept the need for strong laws to protect all in Australia from terrorists. But unchecked erosion of human rights by government in the name of anti terrorism is not the right way to defend democracy.

The recent undermining of the presumption of innocence by Immigration Minister Andrews in the case of Dr Haneef is a case in point. If a human rights act had been in place, it is unlikely that the minister would have acted so precipitously, and, according to the federal court, wrongly.

Australia is now the only democracy without a law to protect traditional human rights. In the difficult climate created by the anti terror laws, it is crucially important that we have a human rights act to provide checks and balances against rushed and extreme laws and mistakes in the implementation of them. We also need a human rights act to educate the community against discriminatory attitudes towards minorities, especially Muslims who have been badly affected by poorly informed community fears.

We have drafted and published a model bill which embodies in an ordinary act of parliament Australia's existing responsibilities

under the major UN human rights conventions. Our campaign started October 2005, and it will end when the Australian parliament has enacted such a law.

As neither major party is as yet prepared to consider a human rights bill, we are urging the Senate to set up an inquiry into the state of human rights protection in Australia and the need for a human rights law. A thorough parliamentary inquiry would take us closer to our goal.

The new matilda campaign is now seeking support for this inquiry from religious, ethnic and civil liberties groups. We are greatly encouraged that Mr Ikebal Patel, the President of AFIC, the peak national body representing Australian Muslims has agreed with our call for a senate inquiry. In making this important decision, AFIC demonstrates that Australian Muslims understand well how their rights could be better protected in law, and also how everyone in Australia, Muslims along with all other Australians would benefit from the process of defining in law which rights we want protected, how that protection could fit with necessary anti terror laws, and how our entire society would experience increased safety from a law that prevented religious and cultural discrimination.

Susan Ryan AO

Chair, New Matilda Human Rights Act Campaign Committee

For further information, or to register your support, and download the draft Human Rights bill, visit us at

www.humanrightsact.com.au





CAMPAIGN ENDORSEMENT (organisation)

FOR AN INQUIRY BY THE SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL & CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS INTO THE NEED FOR AN AUSTRALIAN HUMAN RIGHTS ACT.

Please complete, as appropriate and add any required qualifications or conditions and return to
humanrightsact@newmatilda.com or via post.

We,

(Organisation)

1. Confirm that the New Matilda Human Rights Act for Australia (HRAA) campaign may include our name and logo (see below) on the campaign website, with an active link to our own web-site, as an organisation supporting a Senate inquiry into the need for an Australian human rights act.
YES / NO
2. Will provide a short statement of endorsement (refer page 2) for a Senate inquiry into human rights legislation, for the campaign website.
YES / NO
3. Will permit the New Matilda HRAA campaign to use our endorsement in promotional material calling for a Senate inquiry.
YES / NO
4. Will support the New Matilda HRAA campaign by publishing, as appropriate, news of campaign initiatives etc via our own website and newsletters. Will encourage our members to individually endorse the campaign for a Senate inquiry.
YES / NO
5. Will support the New Matilda HRAA campaign, as/where appropriate, in joint campaign initiatives, providing speakers, facilities, funding support, etc. (be negotiated on a case by case basis).
YES / NO

Additional comments or qualifications:

LOGO

As per 1 above; please attach a JPEG of your logo and web-site link

STATEMENT OF ENDORSEMENT

As per 2 above; this can be provided later and is intended for posting on the campaign web-site. Endorsement can be confined to support for a Senate inquiry or for broader endorsement of the need for Australian human rights legislation.

(Name & Position)

(Date)

SPEECH FOR HARMONY AMBASSADORS

Zoya Patel

Hello everyone! My name is Zoya Patel, and I'm an Indian and a Muslim. I was born in Fiji, and I've been living here since I was three. I am now fifteen years old. Some of my interests include creative writing, reading, horse riding and debating. I am also an animal and human rights activist, and I have strong beliefs where animal and human welfare is concerned.

Because I've been living in Australia for so long, I sometimes consider myself more Australian than Indian, but the truth is, my culture influences my life in many ways.

Sometimes I try and imagine what my life would be like if I was still living in Fiji or India. If I was still in India, there is a very small chance that I would have the experience that I have in public events, like debating and public speaking, and it is even more unlikely that I would ever be allowed to horse ride or even learn to swim.

As it is, I am the first girl in my family to participate in anything like the Harmony Ambassador program or even to join a debating team. For some of my relatives, like my two sisters, it was a matter of choice, but for my relatives who grew up in Fiji, it was never really an option.

Being a Muslim affects my life in many ways as well. It affects the clothes I wear, the social life I'm permitted, and the foods I can eat. When the September 11th attacks occurred, I was about 12. And the impact they had on my life was staggering. With the animosity that was suddenly being directed at Muslims, I couldn't even state my religion to anyone without potentially putting myself in danger. Our local mosque was threatened several times, and my mum had to stop wearing her headscarf in public for a couple of months, for fear of what could happen if people knew she was Muslim.

On the other side of the scale, when she did wear her scarf, we had random people approaching us in shopping centers, introducing themselves and telling us that they were on 'our side'. I had to question, what side is that? Shouldn't we all be united in times of need, not turning against each other?

I go to Telopea Park School in Canberra, and there's a huge range of nationalities there. Yet, it is very rare for a racist incident to occur. If the whole world could be like that, Peace wouldn't seem like such a far off dream, and could become a certain reality.

So by becoming a Harmony Ambassador. I hope to spread the word that if we could all just accept each other and live harmoniously, we could learn to value each others differences, and lead far more satisfactory lives, instead of turning on each other because of differences that shouldn't matter.



RAMADHAN MESSAGE FROM SENATOR LYN ALLISON



On behalf of the Australian Democrats I would like to extend to readers the best wishes of the Australian Democrats during this most sacred time in the Islamic calendar and thank AFIC for the opportunity to say a few words.

We know that Ramadan and the Eid ul- Fitr festivals are deeply important to Muslim Australians and times of great spirituality, prayers, fasting, charity and self discipline and sacrifice.

We wish you a peaceful Ramadan and thank you for allowing us to, in small ways, be part of this religious and cultural experience. It is important that those of different faiths and indeed no faith can celebrate their diversity and have a good understanding of one another's practices. Whilst religions differ, people everywhere have a humanity that is common and this is what is important.

I hope to join Muslims communities, as I have often done in the past, in the celebration of the Festival of Breaking the Fast.

Lyn Allison,

Senator for Victoria &
Leader of the Australian Democrats

RAMADHAN MESSAGE FROM THE GREENS



Ramadan is a time of reflection, a time which brings the Muslim community together and a time to deepen appreciation for what we have and of the suffering of those around the world who do not have enough.

The Greens, both Muslim and non-Muslim, share with you this appreciation and, at a time when we are facing a federal election, hope that the broader Australian community can also take time to think of those who are less fortunate, and resolve to make a difference in their own lives in the coming year to extend a hand of compassion to them.

Sadly, the impact of global climate change threatens to worsen the plight of the poorest peoples on this planet as rising sea levels, increased storm activity and worsening drought become a reality.

We will all have to act together to make the changes necessary to avoid catastrophic climate change, and Greens parties around the world are a part of making that united effort happen.

We are also proud to be a voice of compassion in the national parliament, and we are proud to also be a champion of multiculturalism. The Greens recognise the huge value that our multicultural society brings to the cultural, and economic fortunes of Australia. We will work hard to ensure that governments at all levels support cultural diversity.

Finally, The Greens would like to congratulate the Australian Muslim community for your continuing contribution to this country and exemplary conduct during a time of significant pressure from the media and some politicians who have unfairly demonised those of a Muslim faith or background.

Best wishes for Ramadan and the year ahead

Senator Kerry Nettle
Australian Greens Spokesperson for Multiculturalism

FUND RAISING FOR KURABY MADRESSA

Alhamdulillah, Kuraby Masjid was the successful bidder for the house next door to the Kuraby Masjid. InshAllah, this house is part of the greater plan to expand the learning centre of our Masjid. There are two phases to this plan.

PHASE ONE of this project is to pay for the purchase of this house which settles in 28 days (02/10/2007). The cost of this purchase is \$270,000.

PHASE TWO is to build a complete new structure housing classrooms for the proposed expansion of the Madrasa, an Imams residence, library, Dawah Centre etc. We will endeavour to consult with the community on an appropriate model for this phase. We estimate that the cost of this phase will be approximately \$500,000. The total cost of the project is estimated at \$770,000.

Our immediate need is to settle the purchase of the house, as we only have 28 days to finalise this phase.

We request your urgent support, as this purchase can only be achieved with the support of the community, InshAllah. Donations for the purchase and subsequent development of this property can be made directly to any of the following persons:

Imraan Nathie	0431 300 111
Muhsin Ally	0400 134 786
Mohammed Said Dawoodjee	0400 126 456
Mahmood Surtie	0411 172 786

Alternatively, you are welcome to directly deposit your contributions into the bank account of Kuraby Masjid, the details are as follows:

Name	Islamic Charitable Trust Fund
Bank	Commonwealth Bank
BSB	064162
Account No.	1031 1340

May Allah guide us all in our endeavours to expand the facilities of our Masjid and bless our community with unity and prosperity, Ameen.



MESSAGE FROM THE EMBASSY OF THE ARAB REPUBLIC OF EGYPT

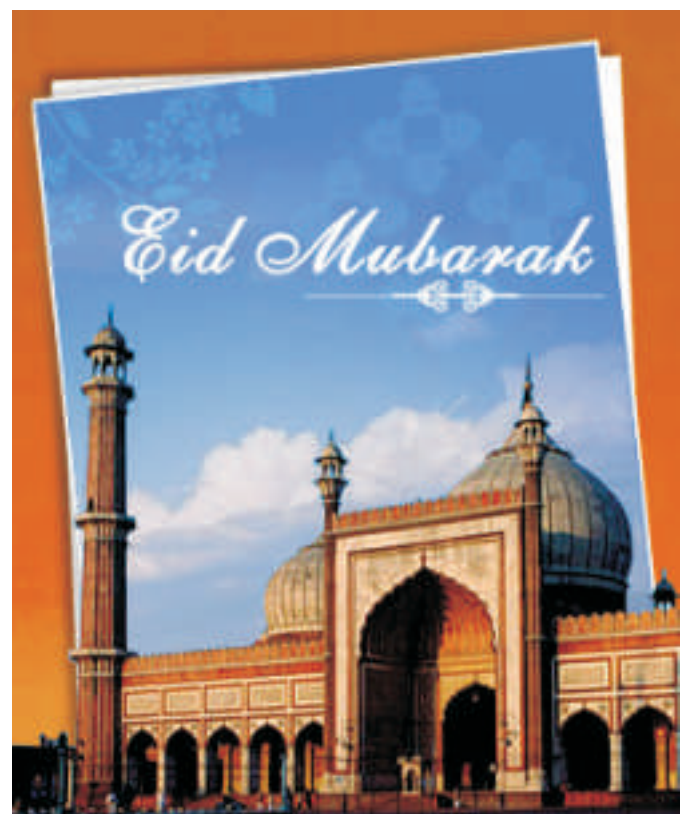
It is my pleasure to participate in the coming edition of "Muslims Australia" with this congratulatory message on the occasion of the Holy month of Ramadan and Eid-Uul-Fitr:

On the occasion of the Holy month of Ramadan, it is my pleasure to wish Muslims in Australia a blessed Ramadan and joyful Eid-Uul-Fitr.

This is the time of year when we recall the profound spiritual message of our great religion, a message that brings us together for the success and harmony of our societies. May Allah grant every one of you a healthy and blessed life.

Wishing you and The Australian Federation of Islamic Councils Ramadan Mubarak.

Mohamed M. Tawfik
Ambassador of the Arab Republic of Egypt



FALLING Wishes

On a chill, blustery autumn afternoon, two girls ran between the tall silver birch trees, trying to catch a wish. The wind whipped their hair out behind them, and tugged at their skirts.

In front of them, past the trees, a huge green oval stretched, speckled with clusters of blue clad students. It ended at the base of several tall buildings, one with a sign reading "Telopea Park School" painted onto it.

The girls were laughing, lifting their faces to the grey sky as yellow leaves rained down on them, leaving the tree branches bare and gleaming. One girl, with dark curly hair and brown eyes, stretched her hand out. By a stroke of luck, a small, speckled brown leaf flew straight into it, and her fingers closed in triumph.



"I got one!" she called out to her friend.

"Oh! Not fair!" the second girl grinned, flicking blond hair out of her eyes.

The wind dropped a little, and the dark-haired girl held out the leaf for inspection.

"So, that's five years good luck and a wish?" she asked.

The other girl nodded.

"You're so lucky. I can never catch these things!" She complained.

As if on cue, the wind started again and the leaves fell with a faster fury, tangling past them and fluttering to the ground.

The girls chased futilely after the tiny, yellow scraps, grasping after the wishes, always with the hope that they would catch one eventually.

"I keep touching them, but then they fly off again," the blonde girl remarked, grabbing at a leaf, only to have it whoosh around her hand instead.

"Well, maybe that accounts for something," dark haired suggested.

"Yeah, its probably, like, one year of luck," the other girl agreed.

Far way, the distant sound of the school bell reached their eyes, signalling the end of lunch. The girls turned to trudge back to where their bags lay in the grass.

"Damn," fair-haired sighed. "I didn't catch any."

"Hey, you'll probably get heaps next time," her dark-haired friend reassured her, patting her shoulder sympathetically.

"Yeah," the girl sighed. She yawned and stretched her hands up to the sky.

The wind picked up suddenly, blowing with fierce intensity. Leaves fell like a storm. Just as the girls were about to bring her hands back down, a perfect, golden leaf fluttered down to catch in her fingers. The girl closed her hand around it and stared at it in amazement.

Dark-haired burst into laughter.

"Not so unlucky after all, hey!" she teased, bumping her friend lightly with her hip.

"Make a wish!"

Fair-haired grinned, and, closing her eyes, whispered her wish to the leaf. She kissed it gently, and let it slip back into the current of the wind.

"What did you wish for?" her friend asked, curiously.

"Ah- if I told you, it wouldn't come true!" Fair-haired grinned, and, laughing, she turned and started walking back to class.

For a minute, dark-haired stood, considering the trees. Then she smiled. Shaking her head, she turned back to her friend.

"Wait up!" she called, running to catch up.

Behind them the leaves fluttered to the ground, silently falling, taking their wishes with them.

Zoya Patel.