

Islamic School's Debut in HSC Top 10

Anna Patty Education Editor - December 20, 2007

THE Sydney Islamic school Malek Fahd has swept into the top 10 HSC performers this year, joining James Ruse Agricultural High, which has maintained first position for the 12th consecutive year.

State selective schools hold seven positions in the Herald's list of top HSC performers.

The private boys' school Sydney Grammar, which is also selective, and Ascham School for girls, are also in the top 10.

Although Malek Fahd Islamic School is not selective, like some other private schools, it has been known to encourage underperforming students to repeat a year or consider another school.

James Ruse, which selects the cream of the state's academic talent, has bettered the success it had last year. The proportion of its year 12 students who scored 90 or above rose from 65 to 74 per cent, the Herald's analysis shows.

Larissa Treskin, who replaced Michael Quinlan as principal of the school last year after he served 15 years, said students had lifted their overall performance in the HSC this year.

"We had a great improvement across the board in the percentage of students in band six [a score of 90 or more]," she said.

"Their teachers are thrilled that all the hard work by everybody has resulted in such great achievements."

Of the school's 48 year 11 students who completed their HSC agriculture exams this year, 45 scored 90 or above, including James Sin, who topped the state.

Hornsby Girls' High School relinquishes its No.2 position on the Herald's HSC league table, to drop into fifth position in this year's results.

North Sydney Girls' High is ranked second this year, followed by Sydney Girls' High in third position and Baulkham Hills High in fourth.

The first private school to appear on the table is Ascham, in sixth place, swapping the position it held last year with seventh-placed Sydney Grammar.

Malek Fahd is ranked ninth this year and was 15th last year.

Sydney Boys' High School is 10th in the table this year and was eighth last year. Malek Fahd and Sydney Boys' High are each ranked in the top five schools for their performance in maths, but close to 40th in English.

The president of the NSW Board of Studies, Gordon Stanley, said there was a record number of all-rounders this year - 1035 students achieved 90 and above in at least 10 units of study.

(Most subjects are worth two units, some are worth one and advanced courses are worth three or four.)

Last year 800 students scored 90 or more in 10 units.



ISLAMIC COLLEGE OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA YEAR 12 GRADUATION

2007 was a really special year at the Islamic College of South Australia because this was the first time that we had a Year 12 class.

The two boys and eight girls who comprised the class will go down in history as the very first Year 12 students at the College. For these students and their teachers it has been a most interesting, exciting and challenging experience, and we are all now eagerly anticipating the release of the final results and the first round of offers for university.

The highlight of the year for the students was undoubtedly the Graduation Dinner, which was held late in the year at the ornate Stamford Grand on the seafront at Glenelg. This well-renowned venue gave due importance to the occasion and made the students feel very special.

The event exuded sophistication, with the students looking resplendent in their suits and formal dresses as they indulged in a sumptuous three course dinner joined by with their teachers and their parents.

Each student was introduced to the gathering and presented with a Graduation Certificate as well as a dazzling memento, which took the form of an engraved crystal paperweight.

One of the most emotional parts of the evening was when the students got up one by one to thank their teachers. Their sincerity was clearly evident and it touched all of those in attendance. It was uplifting to witness the obvious joy that could be seen in the faces of all the students throughout the evening. And they must have thoroughly enjoyed themselves because, by their own admission, they could not believe how quickly the time passed.

As I said to the students on receiving their Graduation Certificates, "We, at the College, are very proud of what they have achieved so far, and we wish them great success and happiness in the future."

Mr Rodney Graham
(Senior School Coordinator)





“My best subject was Arabic, and I worked really hard to maximise my score in this subject to compensate for weaknesses in some of my other subjects. Hopefully I will get a high enough TER score overall to get into university and study for a degree in Information Technology.”

Mustafa Alvazan



“Our Year 12 teachers are very dedicated and caring, and we owe them a great deal for our success this year. They did everything that they possibly could to help us achieve our best, always giving constant support and encouragement along the way.”

Elif Yavuz



“I was pleased that I missed only a couple of days of school for the entire year. This gave me the continuity of learning that is paramount to success at Year 12. It enabled me to link the content of one lesson to the next and helped me to get my assignments done on time.”

Amira Ali



“Of the ten students in Year 12 this year, eight undertook studies that lead to university courses. We are eagerly awaiting our results and the university placement offers that follow shortly after. I hope to get into a Secondary Science Teaching course so that I can return to the Islamic College one day as a teacher.”

Miyashaer Abudureyimu



“The small class sizes in Year 12 at the Islamic College of SA provided a close working relationship with our teachers and enabled constant personal attention throughout the year. This benefitted us enormously in understanding concepts and completing assignments.”

Aise Sert



“One of the great things about the Islamic College is that it attempts to find career pathways for students of all abilities. I couldn't cope with the mainstream Year 12 subjects, so the College arranged for me to do a course specifically designed to prepare students for the workforce. I enjoyed it immensely, and I now have the confidence and skills to take up a suitable position of employment at the start of next year.”

Huriye Akyildiz



“I realised that I wasn't suited to the traditional Year 12 subjects and I wanted to take up a trade when I left school, so I did a “Construction” course as part of my study for the SACE. I couldn't be happier. I gained a lot of skills and confidence, and I am now in a position to begin my apprenticeship as an electrician.”

Kurban Muhammad



“We were very lucky to get along so well as a group, because the stress of Year 12 study can leave you depressed and despondent. You need to be able to rely on the support and companionship of your friends to help you to get through the difficult times.”

Zainab AlSweedy



“One of the main ingredients for success at Year 12 that I learnt over the year was the importance of being organised. Good organisation and sensible planning enable you to be efficient in your study, to get work done on time, and ultimately to relieve the stress of having to do too many things at the same time.”

Samira Ali



Students should make the most of Year 12. Although it is a very stressful year it can also be very enjoyable and rewarding. We appreciated our status in the school and the privileges afforded us. This is the year that we will look back on with the fondest memories. We will remember our teachers and friends, our exams and assignments, the special occasions like our graduation dinner, and all those priceless moments of laughter and fun.”

Muharrem Jeroff

ISLAMIC COLLEGE OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA KINDERGARTEN



This year we have enjoyed lots of exciting events and activities in the kindergarten. In term 1 we celebrated Harmony Day. We did some preparation with the year 4s before heading to St Therese School for an activity day and shared lunch. On another day we made fruit salad and enjoyed it for morning tea. During the lovely warm weather of term 1 we spent a lot of time outside on activities such as sand and water play, painting and crafty activities.

During term 2 we had a very exciting visit from a fire crew from the Woodville fire station. They brought along a truck, talked about fire safety, showed us their uniforms and even let us have a turn at holding onto the fire hose! Then we all climbed up into the fire engine! They blew their siren when they left and it was so loud!

During this term we also enjoyed participating in Sports Day, and had fun with buddy reading with the year 6 girls. At the end of term 2 we farewelled 9 of our kindy students who went up to reception. The kindy children did a wonderful performance at the assembly and we enjoyed a lovely farewell party.

In term 3 we joined in with Jump Rope for heart activities including a dress up relay, obstacle course and beaded rope skipping. We also had an exciting visit from the Zoomobile. The Zoomobile came from the Adelaide zoo and brought along 5 interesting animals for us to learn about. We had the opportunity to feel the delicate skin of two green tree frogs, we watched as a pair of sugar gliders nibbled on some nectar, we saw a desert lizard change from plain yellow to yellow with brown patterns, we listened to the call of a tawny frogmouth bird and we were very surprised to watch a snake slithering along on our kindy mat area! Later that same week we celebrated Book Week with a parade in our colourful costumes, and we enjoyed a shared recess with the whole of the junior primary.

Term 4 we all participated in Eid celebrations and enjoyed the Eid party. At the end of the term we will once again farewelled 24 more children as they graduate from the kindy. We did an assembly performance of 'Twinkle, twinkle little star', 'Five cheeky monkeys' and the suras 'Al Fatiha' and 'Al Ihlas'. The children proudly wore their graduation hats, and received certificates. Everyone did a wonderful job and they were all very proud of their achievements.



VALUES EDUCATION



In term 4 the year 10's participated in two "Values Education" workshops with year 10 students from St Ignatius College. The first workshop took place at ICOSA in our wonderful computer rooms. In groups the students prepared Power Point Presentations on the nine values for Australian schooling, for example "Doing your Best" or "Care and Compassion". During the second workshop students presented their excellent Power Point Presentations at St Ignatius College. Both workshops included fantastic halal lunches along with a game of soccer. All students commented on how their peers were "just like themselves." The nine values for Australian Schooling are practiced by our students.

Our students have enriched these values by integrating them with Islamic Values which are fundamental for every single member of the Muslim Community.

Our school is proud to be part of Values Education and we are proud to be incorporating these values into our curriculum.

Values for Australian Schooling

1. Care and Compassion.
2. Freedom
3. Respect
4. Doing your Best
5. Honesty and Trustworthiness
6. Responsibility
7. Fair Go
8. Integrity
9. Understanding, Tolerance and Inclusion



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Islamic College of Brisbane

Achievements for 2007

Year 12 Results

100% entry into universities

100% OP 1 & 15

Australasian Schools Competition

SCIENCE - 14 Distinctions & 60 Credits

MATHEMATICS - 2 High Distinctions, 27 Distinctions & 55 Credits

COMPUTER SKILLS - 1 High Distinction, 5 Distinctions & 9 Credits

WRITING - 5 Distinctions & 4 Credits Out of 9 Participants

SPELLING - 1 High Distinction, 7 Distinctions & 24 Credits

ENGLISH - 2 High Distinctions, 7 Distinctions & 43 Credits

Australian Mathematics Competition for the Westpac Awards

WESTPAC MATHEMATICS - 3 High Distinctions, 30 Distinctions & 101 Credits

Holy Qur'an Recitation Competition ICQ

QUR'AN RECITATION - 7 out of 8 - First Positions

4 out of 8 - Second Positions

Rio Tinto Science Competition

5 Distinctions & 2 Credits out of 10 Participants

OPTI-MINDS DISTRICT CHAMPIONS

GETTING ON WITH THE NEIGHBOURS: MUSLIM LEADERS DELEGATION TO MALAYSIA AND INDONESIA

by Sr Jamila Hussein and Br Ikebal Patel

23.10.2007 - 2.11.2007

South East Asia is home to more than 200 million Muslims. Australia's nearest northern neighbor, Indonesia, is the world's largest Muslim country, with more than 194 million Muslim citizens. Sixty per cent of the population of Malaysia, are Muslims, and there are substantial Muslim minorities in other South East Asian states.

Yet in Australia, perceptions of these two countries, and of Islam and Muslims generally are often negative. Most Australians at some time have enjoyed a holiday in (Hindu) Bali, but memories of the Bali bombings, the Australian embassy bombing in Jakarta, the Schapelle Corby and 'Bali 9' drug cases and the 'war on terror' cloud understanding. Many Australians believe that anything associated with Muslim countries or Islam is to be feared.

In Malaysia and Indonesia, perceptions of Australia is not always positive. Memories of Pauline Hanson and the White Australia policy continue to convince some that Australia is a racist country. More recently, negative statements by some politicians & hostile articles by some media commentators have given rise to a belief that Muslims are discriminated against in Australia. So, despite the work of government authorities on both sides to improve official relations, there remains a wide gap in perceptions between the two populations.

This must be of concern to the governments of both countries because of the necessity for cooperation in trade, foreign affairs, defence and to combat terrorism.

It was felt that the best way to convince South East Asians that Australia was not anti-Muslim, was for them to hear this from Australian Muslims themselves, led to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade agreeing to send a delegation of eight senior Australian Muslims from eight different ethnic groups to Malaysia and Indonesia to meet with opinion makers in both countries, establish connections and disseminate a message of cross-cultural understanding.

The delegation included Dr Ameer Ali, Sheikh Shafiq Khan, Ikebal Patel the President of the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils, Tom Zreika the President of the Lebanese Muslim Association, Imams Amin Hady & Sabri Samson. There were two women, Faiza El-Higzi from the Premier's Office in Queensland & Jamila Hussain, an Islamic law lecturer from the University of Technology Sydney. The delegation spent five days in Malaysia and then five days in Indonesia, meeting with variety of people who are involved in everything from policy making to education, women's advocacy, welfare work, aid distribution and inter-faith activities. The delegation began with a visit to ABIM, the Malaysian Islamic Youth Movement where they

were briefed on the work of the movement and the fact that one of their vice-presidents is a woman no gender bias here. They reported that their members' perceptions of Australia were mixed, and Dr Ali informed them, as he informed others later, that in Australia Muslims were granted freedom of worship, and were not in any way persecuted. While the Australian government was secular, it was not anti-religious. As an example of the even handed treatment granted to Muslims as well as other communities, he mentioned that all private schools, including Islamic schools, received funding from the government, something which does not happen in either Malaysia or Indonesia.

The delegation later met with the Deputy President of opposition party, PAS (Parti Se Islam Malaysia), and on a subsequent day, met YAB Tuan Guru Dato' Hj Nik Aziz bin Nik Mat, the Chief Minister of Kelantan which is ruled by PAS.

Delegates met with the Minister for Religious Affairs (JAKIM) at Putra Jaya and discussed among other issues, the halal meat trade between Australia and Malaysia. The Minister presented each delegate with a special copy of the Holy Quran. While still in Malaysia, the delegation visited several pondok/pesantrens (Islamic schools) where they were impressed by the efforts being made to provide an education at reasonable costs for even the poorest children in society.

The delegation also met with UMNO Youth, the youth wing of the ruling coalition, a representative of the Islamic feminist lobby group, Sisters in Islam, and INCIEF, a new global university in Islamic finance which has put together programs to train professionals in the field of Islamic finance and insurance. Razali Mahfar, the Chief Operations Officer explained that Malaysia has a totally enabling environment for Islamic finance and they saw training in Islamic finance as an antidote to extremism as it provided suitable employment for young people who might otherwise be led away by extremist ideology.

The delegation completed their visit to Malaysia, with a dinner with the Syariah Law Committee of the Malaysia Bar Council with whom they discussed recent developments in law in Malaysia.

The delegation was briefed at the Australian embassy on the economic situation in Indonesia and the aid Australia provides. Australia is building two thousand new schools in Indonesia and later in the week the delegation visited one of these at Taskimalaya near Bandung, the first junior secondary school the district has ever had. Villagers told the delegation of the extent to which the school and the delegation's visit had improved their perceptions of Australians.

The delegation also met the leaders of the giant Indonesian Islamic organisations, Muhammadiyah and Nahdatul Ulama, which together claim 80 million members and run their own universities, schools and kindergartens as well as hospitals and other forms of welfare, and visited two universities, one run by Muhammadiyah in Jakarta and the other, the State University in Bandung. At Universitas Muhammadiyah Prof Dr Hamka,



Faiza El-Higzi gave an enlightening presentation to assembled students and staff. The delegation from Australia explained the Australian government initiative of the new Centre for Excellence in Islamic Studies. At these universities, the delegation met some alumni from Australian universities among the academic staff and were assured of their willingness to form links with Australian universities with exchange programs for students and staff.

There are about 30,000 pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) in Indonesia. The delegation visited one large pesantren run by Nahdatul Ulama at Cengkareng. The situation of Muslims in Australia as being open and free from prejudice was explained. Imam Amin Hady also addressed the assembly. Later, the delegation met with the Minister for Religious Affairs, HE Muhammad Maftuh Basyuni who explained the organisation of his department and its responsibilities, not only for adherents of the Islamic faith but also for minority religious communities such as Christians, Buddhists and Hindus.

The delegation also met with the Majelis Ugama Islam (the Islamic Religious Council). The MUI has branches at village level in each of the 33 provinces. MUI has a council of advisors including former Ministers for Religious Affairs & former leaders of Islamic organisations & Indonesian intellectuals. The MUI has a Commission for fatawa which gives rulings on religious and moral issues.

The delegation attended a reception given by the Centre for Dialogue and Co-operation among Civilizations and were welcomed by the Chairman, Professor Dr M. Din Syamsuddin and other prominent Indonesian intellectuals with a presentation Sr Jamila Hussain on

the situation of Muslim women in Australia.

The delegation attended Juma'ah prayer at the Istiqlal mosque, the principal mosque in Jakarta which, at capacity, can hold half a million people. The Australian delegation was invited to address the congregation which some estimated at 70,000 persons. Imam Amin Hady and Dr Ameer Ali expressed the goodwill of Australians & the Australian government towards Indonesia & Indonesians & informed the congregation of the benefits of living as a Muslim in Australia. This was an opportunity which would never have been accorded to any non-Muslim diplomat, or indeed to the Foreign Minister himself.

The delegation met with the Minister for Cooperatives & Small Enterprises and head of the PPP party (Partai Persatuan Pembangunan United Development Party) Mr Suryadharma Ali. Mr Ali leads the largest of the Islamic parties in Indonesia.

Overall, the visit was very positive. Some of the delegation, who were more used to Middle Eastern interpretations of Islam, and had never before visited the Muslim countries of South East Asia, gained a new perspective on Muslim societies. The delegation gained a great deal of good publicity in the Indonesian press. All of those in the delegation learned much about the ways our own society is viewed by our neighbours and the importance of establishing neighbourly links with the countries of our region. Several opinion leaders told the delegation that they had changed their previously negative opinion of Australians after meeting the delegates and hearing what they had to say.



AFRICAN EXPERIENCE IN AUSTRALIA INQUIRY

The experiences of African Australians and African Muslim Australians will be examined nationally for the first time next year, by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC), National Race Discrimination Commissioner Tom Calma announced early in December.

The national African and African Muslim Communities in Australia project's steering committee will meet for the first time shortly to develop a human rights-focused initiative that will inform future policy and research.

Commissioner Calma said the project would investigate the pressing human rights needs faced by African Australians who settle in Australia. "These needs present unique challenges for service providers and policy-makers," he said. "The project will also comprehensively look at housing, education, health and employment needs to name a few areas.

"We particularly hope the report will debunk some of the myths about African Australians that have been voiced so readily in the media and in recent public debate," he said.

The project will be undertaken as a partnership between HREOC, the Federal Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Adult Multicultural Education Services (AMES) in Victoria, Australian Red Cross and the Diversity in Health Institute.

Mr Calma said close community participation would be an essential part of the project and included Samia Baho from the Centre for African - Australian Women's Issues and Abeselom Nega, Chair of the Federation of African Communities Council, as steering committee members.

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Academic Excellence at Australian Islamic Schools

The President of the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils, Mr Ikebal Patel congratulated the HSC students of Malek Fahd Islamic School in Greenacre on their excellent HSC results. Out of the 71 students sitting for their HSC this year, the pass rate of 100% was achieved, with 4 students claiming the prestigious Premier's Award.

Mr Patel stated that Malek Fahd Islamic School commenced in 1990 with a total of 150 children in Kindergarten to Year 4 with five teachers. Today Malek Fahd Islamic School has about 1800 children and 120 teachers.

In 1998 the school had its first Year 12 class and all the 24 students qualified for university entry. Since then, the school has been the number one school in the Bankstown Education district. 100 per cent of the Year 12 students have qualified for university entry since its commencement with a number of the students now having qualified as lawyers, doctors, engineers, teachers, nurses etc.

The Australian Federation of Islamic Councils operated Islamic College of Brisbane has also followed in the tradition of Malek Fahd Islamic School by being one of the top six schools in Queensland for the second year running.

Mr Patel also confirmed that the Federation's owned Islamic College of South Australia which had its first cohort of year 12 also had fantastic results with all year 12 students passing and being eligible for university entrance. "We are very proud of the results of our students in Adelaide. It is a great first Year 12 result", he said.

Mr Patel attributes the successes at Malek Fahd Islamic School, Islamic College of Brisbane and Islamic College of South Australia to the hard work and due diligence of students, parents, teachers and support staff respectively with the very good support from the respective State Education Departments and the Federal Department of Education Science and Training.

"I congratulate each and every one of the students and teachers, and wish all a well deserved holiday and wish all students every success in their chosen discipline at University", he said.

Mr Patel concluded, "Islam places a very high priority on education. It is incumbent on all Muslims to seek knowledge - Higher education provides considerable value to individuals, the economies where educated individuals live and work and society in general".

