

Media Release

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Mahjabeen a finalist in Multicultural Awards

Helping to develop the first Muslim aged care resources in Australia has earned ACH Group Project Manager Mahjabeen Ahmad a nomination in the Governor's Multicultural Awards, to be announced as part of Harmony Day on Tuesday (March 21).

Mahjabeen is Project Manager of the Muslim Communities Partnership, a two-year program which aims to develop culturally appropriate aged care services for South Australia's 20,000-strong Muslim community.

Since coming to Australia in 2010, Mahjabeen has dedicated herself to being a change agent by creating awareness and better understanding about Muslim aged care issues in the broader community and initiating projects within the aged care industry and state-level peak bodies to promote inclusiveness.

ACH Group's Ivy Diegmann says Mahjabeen is a strong advocate for her Muslim community, championing their health and aged care needs so that providers can be more aware of and better understand these needs and provide culturally appropriate services.

"She works tirelessly to help educate the Muslim community about the Australian aged care system, build the community's trust and confidence, and reduce cultural reluctance and misperceptions about accepting support from aged care providers," she says.

Mahjabeen's achievements include:

- Conducting the first empirical research on aged care needs of Muslims in South Australia titled *Designing Aged Care for Muslims in South Australia: An exploratory study*, set to be completed this month.
- Breaking new ground with a suggested model of spirituality for ageing Muslims published in a co-authored article that has informed the development of the *National Guidelines for Spiritual Care in Aged Care*. Her pioneering research *Muslims in Australian and their Aged Care Needs: An Exploratory Study with Reference to South Australia* was included in Review of Australian Research on Older People from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds.
- Developing the first Muslim aged care resources in Australia at staff and organisational levels with her project *Muslim Communities - a CALD Partnership Model*. This model aims to ensure Muslims receive services that meet their religious and cultural needs.
- Since she joined ACH Group in 2015, Mahjabeen has provided cultural diversity training to hundreds of the not-for-profit organisation's 1700-strong staff at induction

and refresher training sessions to better equip them to provide services and improve customer experience. She also engages with the Aged Care Assessment Team meetings to build better understanding of Muslims needs.

- Overseeing the creation of a prayer room in a former meeting room at the ACH Group headquarters at Mile End.

As the first Muslim Board and Executive Committee member of the Multicultural Communities Council of SA (MCCSA), Mahjabeen has led the way to connect the MCCSA with the Muslim community through various community engagements. She played a critical role in promoting Islamic calligraphy through introducing classes to older ethnic women at MCCSA under the government's Healthy Ageing grant.

"Mahjabeen is a role model in resilience, courage, and grit for migrant women who come to Australia much later in life and find the motivation to make a difference," Ivy says. "We congratulate her on her nomination and wish her well."

The awards will be hosted by His Excellency the Honourable Hieu Van Le AO, Governor of South Australia, in the grounds of Government House.

A total of 34 per cent of ACH Group employees are born in a country other than Australia. ACH Group will host a shared lunch to mark **Harmony Day** on **March 21**.

Mahjabeen is a finalist in the Aged Care category (individual).

About ACH Group

ACH Group is a not-for-profit aged care organisation that has been offering services to support good lives for older people in South Australia since 1952.

As well as accommodation options across Adelaide, the Fleurieu Peninsula and East Melbourne, the group offers a range of health, wellbeing, respite and support services, help at home and social activities.

Our 1700 specialist staff and hundreds of volunteers share the belief that older people should be valued and respected, connected to their communities and in control of their lives.

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