



# Muslims in Australia and their Faith

Afghan cameleers, commonly known as 'Ghans', were the first Muslims to bring Islam to Australia, initially arriving in South Australia in the 1830s. They played a vital role in the country's early exploration as well as its economic development by helping to establish settlements, trade and communication routes and transporting goods to remote outback areas.

The rail links across the Australian outback and Australia's Overland Telegraph lines were all built with the assistance of these Muslims, opening up Australia's vast interior.

While Islam's birthplace is in the Middle East, Arab Muslims only comprise approximately 20% of the total global Muslim population. Between 2010 and 2050, the top five countries with the highest percentage of Muslim population are in Asia and Africa and include Indonesia, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nigeria. Today Muslims in Australia represent 2.6 % of our total population (ABS 2016 Census). They have brought with them their rich cultural heritage and great diversity in ethnicity, language, traditions, migration patterns, life experiences, and skills.



Reviewed by  
**Abdulsalam Alim**  
Imam of Masjid Abu Bakr,  
Adelaide

<sup>1</sup> Department of Immigration and Citizenship, The Australian Journey – Muslim Communities (Canberra: 2009)

<sup>2</sup> Pew Research Center, "The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections, 2010-2050", 2015 and for more details see Pew Research Centre, Mapping the Global Muslim Population, A Report on the Size and Distribution of the World's Muslim Population, Forum on Religion and Public Life, (Washington DC: 2009)

## Famous Australians who are Muslims include:

**Anne Aly**, academic and MP

**Bachar Houli**, AFL midfielder (Richmond)

**Carmen Marton**, Australia's first world taekwondo champion

**Hon. Ed Husic MP**, the first Muslim to be elected to federal parliament (2010)

**Fawad Ahmed**, cricketer

**Dr Mehreen Faruqi**, NSW Greens MP

**Mona Shindy**, Captain in the Royal Australian Navy

**Nazeem Hussain**, stand-up comedian

**Tarek Elrich**, Australian international footballer (soccer) A-League and Adelaide United player

**Sabrina Houssami**, Miss World Australia 2006

**Usman Khawaja**, cricketer

**Waleed Aly**, writer, academic, lawyer, well known media presenter and Gold Logie winner.

## Islam and Muslims

Islam preaches Absolute Monotheism – there is only one God and no partners can be associated with Him. It is one of the three Abrahamic faiths that can trace their origins to Prophet Abraham, the other two being Judaism and Christianity.

Allah is the Arabic name for God.

Muslims believe Prophet Muhammad preached Allah's Message that was revealed to him through Archangel Gabriel and later compiled in a book called the Qur'an. Those who believe and practice this message are called Muslims.

### There are Five Pillars of Islam:

1. Sahadah or the Declaration of Faith: "There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.
2. Daily prayers: There are five obligatory daily prayers at five set times.
3. Fasting: Fasting for one month during Ramadan, the ninth month on the Islamic lunar calendar is an obligation for those who fulfil certain conditions, such as being fit and healthy.
4. Zakaat: This is the obligatory charity in the form of an annual contribution of a prescribed portion of one's annual net savings or accumulated wealth to assist the poor and the needy.
5. Hajj: This is the pilgrimage to Makkah (Mecca), Saudi Arabia, compulsory once in a lifetime for every adult Muslim who fulfils set conditions, one of which is being able to undertake the journey physically.

ACH Group is partnering with the Islamic Society of SA (ISSA) and the Islamic Arabic Centre to offer aged care services to Muslims.

Funded by the Australian Government Department of Health.



Founded in 1952, ACH Group is a not-for-profit community organisation promoting opportunities and services to support good lives.