جمعيّــة المشَــاريع الخيريّة الإســلاميّــة
Islamic Charity Projects Association
45 Brancourt Ave
Bankstown, 2200
NSW, Australia
icpa.org.au
Tel: (612) 9707 4842
Fax: (612) 9790 6660
contactus@icpa.org.au

Ramadan the month of Enlightening

ICPA Hosts 27th Annual Iftar dinner in observance of Ramadan 1442/2021

In a joyful ambiance at the Al Amanah College Grand Hall, the Islamic Charity Projects Association under the patronage of Darulfatwa Australia held its 27th Annual Ramadan Iftar Dinner on Friday the 16th of April coinciding with the fourth day of Ramadan 1442 AH.
The Annual Iftar dinner has been a landmark event and staple part of the Holy month for over two decades providing a great opportunity to not only facilitate understanding of Ramadan and the Islamic faith but also enhance social harmony and build strong ties between Muslims and the wider Australian community. Last year, the Annual Iftar Dinner had to be cancelled due to large scale social restrictions imposed by the government to curb the spread of COVID-19. Muslims were repeatedly praised during the evening for their resilience and effort to comply despite the difficult circumstances they were faced with in terms of the cancelation of their festivities and mosque closures.
Attendees expressed their gratitude to be able to experience "normality" again after a year of challenging and unprecedented circumstances in light of covid-19

Upon the setting of the sun, guests were given the opportunity to break their fasts and perform prayers before the program for the evening officially commenced. The Iftar dinner played host to a comprehensive line up of government officials, ambassadors, consulate generals, councilors, public services representatives, religious leaders, diverse community representatives and media including:

Professor Sheikh Salim Alwan chairman of Islamic High Council of Australia-Darulfatwa, The Hon Alex Hawke MP Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services and Multicultural Affairs representing the Prime minister of Australia, The Hon Scott Morrison, The Hon Chris Hayes MP | Chief Opposition Whip | Federal Member for Fowler representing Leader of the Opposition, The Hon. Anthony Albanes, the Hon Dr Geoff Lee MP Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education Minister for Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans representing the premier of NSW the Hon Gladys Berejiklian. Leader of the Opposition, The Hon Jodi McKay MP, Mr. Jason Clare MP, | Federal Member for Blaxland, Mrs Anne Stanley MP Federal Member for Werriwa, The Hon. Shaoquett MOSELMANE, MLC, Ms Melanie GIBBONS, MP Member for Holsworthy, Mr Paul Lynch MP Shadow Attorney General Member of Liverpool, Ms Julia Finn MP Shadow Minister for

Consumer Protection, and Shadow Minister for Carers Member for Granville, Mr Jihad Dib Member for Lakemba Shadow Minister for Skills and TAFE, Shadow Minister for Youth, Shadow Minister for Juvenile Justice, and Shadow Minister Assisting on Multiculturalism, Ms Tania Mihailuk MP Member for Bankstown, His Excellency Mr Karim Medrek Ambassador of Morocco to Australia, His Excellency Haji Zakaria bin Haji Ahmad, High Commissioner of BRUNEI to Australia, His Excellency Izzat Salah Abdulhadi is the Head of the General Delegation of Palestine to Australia & New Zealand, His Excellency Frank Bwalya, HIGH COMMISSIONER OF ZAMBIA, Mr Khandker Masudul Alam, Consul General of Bangladesh, Mr. Gamal Atta, the Deputy Consul General representing the Consul General of Egypt Mr Yaser Abed, Mr. Maher Dabbagh - Honorary Consul of Syria, Mr M. Abdul Rahim representing the Consul General of Sri Lanka, Mr Neville Tomkins International Commissioner at The Scout Association of Australia, Dr G.K (Hari) Harinath, OAM Chair Multicultural NSW Advisory Board, The Hon Karl Asfour Mayor of Bankstown City Council, Deputy Mayor, Clr Masood Chowdhury representing Mayor of Campbelltown George Brticevic, Clr Nathan Hagarty, Clr Ali Karnib, Clr Alex.kuskoff, Clr Geoff Shelton, Clr. Bilal El-Hayek, Clr George Zakhia, Clr Nadia Saleh, APM Commander Murray Reynolds – Bankstown Police Area Commander, Superintendent Adam Whyte Liverpool Local Area Commander, Superintendent Adam Johnson Auburn Local Area Commander, Superintendent Anthony Cooke St George Police Area Commander

The official ceremony began with a heartfelt recitation of verses from the Holy Qur'an by sheikh Muhammad Sabbouh, followed by a magnificent performance of the Australian National Anthem by Ms Mariam Saad which received a standing ovation from the crowd.
The MC for the evening, Mrs Ola Nafeh then invited Mr. Muhammad Mehio, President of the Islamic Charity Projects Association to give his keynote address. Before he officially commenced with his speech, Mr. Mehio conveyed his deepest condolences to the Queen, Governor general, the Prime Minister and the people of Australia for the loss of his majesty Prince Phillip, the Duke of Edinburgh. Mr. Mehio then congratulated Muslims in this blessed month, encapsulating the merit and value of this great occasion.

"The month of Ramadan is a period of fasting, reflection, devotion, generosity, sacrifice and sympathy with those in the world who experience shortages in food and basic needs", he said.

جمعيّــة المشَــاريع الخيريّة الإســلاميّــة
Islamic Charity Projects Association
45 Brancourt Ave
Bankstown, 2200
NSW, Australia
icpa.org.au
Tel: (612) 9707 4842
Fax: (612) 9790 6660
contactus@icpa.org.au

Mr Mehio expressed the difference that the ICPA has made within the Australian Muslim community with its noble aims and objectives that have led to many successes spanning over 32 years of achievements. He also called upon those in attendance to extend a hand and cooperate with the ICPA specifically in its methodology and strategy of spreading the proper and moderate teachings of Islam".

Appointed as the chairman of Darulfatwa, the Islamic High Council of Australia, Professor Shaykh Salim Alwan Al-Husseiniyy spoke of the merit of the month of Ramadan, emphasising the lessons that can be derived from observing the month.

"Speaking with kindness and refraining from gossip and back-biting are among the deeds of righteousness that the religion urges us to observe during Ramadan and other months", he said.

As a peak Islamic body representing Muslims of Diverse backgrounds in Australia, Darulfatwa Australia stood side by side with government bodies, especially the Health Department to ensure the health and safety of the community during the pandemic.

"During these trying times, we found resolve in technology and social media channels as our window and reach to society, enabling us to deliver messages of awareness and guidance and to urge compliance with the laws administered in these difficult circumstances to prevent increased infections"

Following a video presentation of the achievements and growth of the ICPA as a primary community builder was a speech delivered by the Hon Alex Hawke MP Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services and Multicultural Affairs representing the Prime minister of Australia, The Hon Scott Morrison. Mr. Hawke expressed how much of a privilege it was to be invited to the ICPA Iftar dinner and conveyed his gratitude on behalf of the Australian government to the 600,000 Muslims for their sacrifice and compliance during the challenging covid-19 period. He also reflected on how the pandemic saw a decrease in negative attitude towards Muslims.

"In the last year, out of all of the problems, troubles and divisions we've had, when we monitor social cohesion in Australia and we do every year, we found that in the last 12 months that the biggest single drop in negative attitudes towards Islam that we've had on record, about 6% down".

جمعيّــة المشَــاريع الخيريّة الإســلاميّــة
Islamic Charity Projects Association
45 Brancourt Ave
Bankstown, 2200
NSW, Australia
icpa.org.au
Tel: (612) 9707 4842
Fax: (612) 9790 6660
contactus@icpa.org.au

"This is a reflection of how more Australians have appreciation of just how great the Muslim community is in Australia" , he said.

He continued by commending the ICPA for being a great community for Australia.

Among those who also expressed their joy in attending the Iftar dinner with the diverse community is the Hon Chris Hayes, MP Chief Opposition Whip Federal Member for Fowler representing Leader of the Opposition, The Hon. Anthony Albanese. Mr. Hayes spoke of the values of Ramadan from his perspective as well as the noble contribution of Muslim Australians within the fabric of Australian society.

"The principles of Ramadan very much support our very way of life", he said.

Mr. Hayes added "Ramadan is also a time to reflect on the contribution that Australian Muslims have made to our great nation, the success of Al Amanah College is just but one of them".

Mr. Hayes concluded by announcing that he will not be contesting the upcoming election as he is moving towards his retirement. He thanked all those who made him feel welcome over the many years of attending the ICPA Ramadan Iftar Dinner.

The Hon Dr Geoff Lee MP Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education Minister for Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans conveyed his best wishes to the Muslim community on the advent of Ramadan.
Representing the premier of NSW, the Hon Gladys Berejiklian, Minister Geof Lee acknowledged the Australian Muslim community for complying with health orders in the height of the covid pandemic despite it causing heavy disruption to their Ramadan festivities. He expressed that the Muslim community was an inspiration to the rest of the community.

"The Australian Muslim community were example to the rest of the world about what it means to make those sacrifices, to not get together, not celebrate in traditional ways, having to change the way we look at life and how we celebrate our faith", he said.

جمعيّــة المشَــاريع الخيريّة الإســلاميّــة
Islamic Charity Projects Association
45 Brancourt Ave
Bankstown, 2200
NSW, Australia
icpa.org.au
Tel: (612) 9707 4842
Fax: (612) 9790 6660
contactus@icpa.org.au

He ended his speech by congratulating the ICPA for their exceptional work to engage the youth, women, scouts and in promoting the values of peace and harmony.

Leader of the Opposition, The Hon Jodi McKay stated that the ICPA Iftar dinner was her first Iftar of this year and expressed her delight in being able to come together with the community after being deprived of that due to covid-19 restrictions last year.
She also reflected on the merit of the ICPA Iftar dinner in providing opportunities for her to learn about Islam and the outstanding contribution of the Muslim community.

"It allows me to truly reflect on Islam and allows me to truly reflect on the incredible contribution that our Muslim community makes and it allows me to understand why it's so important that we never take for granted our multicultural community", she said.

The speeches were followed by an Awards presentation ceremony where Mr. Shaoquett Moselmane MLC, Mr. Chris Hayes MP and His Excellency Mr. Karim Medrek Ambassador of Morocco to Australia were recognized by the ICPA for their long and dedicated services to the community.

It was an honor for the Islamic Charity Projects Association to host such an Iftar dinner as part of its commitment to building a peaceful society. The Islamic Charity projects Association, wishes to thank all those who attended to celebrate the spirit of Ramadan, enhancing the strength of our cultural diversity, social harmony, and community togetherness. Wishing you all many happy returns.