

General Information about Islam and Muslims

Introduction

There are around **1.6 billion Muslims** in the world that's about 23% of the global population. Islam is currently the world's second-largest religion (after Christianity) and it is the fastest-growing major religion.

The faith of Islam shares a very close history with Christianity and Judaism. Islam promotes the same values of modern society - equality, freedom, justice, civil rights, peace and harmony.

Islam has an inherent beauty that can be appreciated as was done by the early communities of Christians and Jews when multifaith communities thrived in peace and harmony.

Meaning of "Islam"

Islam is a Arabic word which means 'submission' and is derived from a word meaning 'peace'. In a religious context it means complete submission to the will of God.

Sometimes Islam is referred to as Mohammedanism. This is a misnomer because it suggests that Muslims worship Muhammad (peace be upon him (pbuh))* rather than God. 'Allah' is the Arabic name for God, which is also used by Arab Christians and Muslims alike.

Islam means submission to God in every aspect of life including faith, family, peace, love and work.

** Muslims are required to recite blessings whenever the name of the Prophet is mentioned or written.*

Muslims and their beliefs

Followers of Islam are called Muslims.-It is important to recognise that Muslim people are not a single, homogenous group. There are approximately 600 000 000 Muslims in Australia from over 120 countries across the world.

Muslims believe in one God. Allah is the Arabic word for God . Muslims believe in all the Prophets, including Adam, Moses, Abraham, Jesus and Muhammed the last messenger, peace be upon them.

The Holy Qur'an, is a compilation of the verbal revelations given to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) over a period of twenty three years. The Holy Quran is the Holy Book or the Scriptures of the Muslims. It lays down for them the law and commandments, codes for their social and moral behaviour, and contains a comprehensive religious philosophy

Muhammad (pbuh) - Prophet and Messenger of God

Muhammad (pbuh) was born in Mecca in the year 570 CE, at a time when Christianity was not yet fully established in Europe.

His father died before his birth and his mother died shortly afterwards, he was raised by his grandfather and later by his uncle who was from the respected tribe of Quraish. During his youth and well before prophet-hood he became known as 'Al-Amin' the truthful, for his truthfulness, generosity and sincerity.

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is one of the most documented religious figures in history. His existence and life are all carefully recorded and preserved. He was a deeply spiritual person and had long detested the decadence of his society.

It became his habit to meditate from time to time in the Cave of Hira near the summit of Jabal al-Nur (the 'Mountain of Light') near Mecca.

At the age of 40, while engaged in a meditative retreat, prophet Muhammad (pbuh) received his first revelation from God through the Angel Gabriel.

This revelation, which continued for twenty-three years, is known as the Qur'an. As soon as he began to recite the words he heard from Gabriel, and to preach the truth which God had revealed to him, he and his small group of followers suffered bitter persecution, which grew so fierce that in the year 622 CE, God gave them the command to emigrate.

This event, the Hijra (migration), in which they left Mecca for the city of Medina some 260 miles to the north, marks the beginning of the Muslim calendar (referred to as Hijra).

The Ka'ba is the original place of worship which God commanded Abraham and Ishmael to build more than four thousand years ago.

It is the cube-shaped building in Mecca. God commanded Abraham to summon all mankind to visit this place, and when pilgrims go there today they say "At Thy service, O Lord", in response to Abraham's summons.

This pilgrimage is called the Hajj and is one of the obligatory duties for all Muslims who are physically able and who can financially bear the cost.

After several years in Medina the Prophet (pbuh) and his followers were able to return to Mecca triumphantly, where they forgave their enemies and established Islam in this holiest of cities.

Before the Prophet (pbuh) died at the age of 63, the greater part of Arabia had accepted his message, and within a century of his death Islam spread to Spain in the West and as far East as China.

Pillars of Islam

The framework for a Muslim's life consists of faith, prayer, charity, fasting and the pilgrimage to Mecca for those who are able, both physically and financially.

1. FAITH (IMAN);

"There is no god worthy of worship except God and Muhammad is His messenger". This declaration of faith is called the Shahada, (to bear witness) a simple formula which all the faithful pronounce.

In Arabic, the first part is "la ilaha illa'Llah" (there is no god except God); "ilah" (god) can refer to anything which we may be tempted to put in place of God such as wealth, power, and the like. Then comes "illa'Llah" (except God), the source of all Creation. The second part of the Shahada is "Muhammadur rasulu'Llah" (Muhammad is the messenger of God).

A message of guidance has come from God through Muhammad (pbuh) who was a man and a person like us.

2. PRAYER (SALAT);

Obligatory prayers are performed five times a day and are a direct link between the worshipper and God.

There is no hierarchical authority in Islam, and no priests, so the prayers are led by a learned person who knows the Qur'an, and is chosen by the congregation.

These five daily prayers contain verses from the Qur'an, and are said in Arabic, the language of the revelation. However, personal supplication can be offered in any language after the prayer.

Prayers are performed at dawn, noon, mid-afternoon, sunset and nightfall, and thus determine the rhythm of the entire day.

3. Tax for the (support) of the Poor (ZAKAAT);

One of the most important principles of Islam is that all things belong to God, and that wealth is therefore held by human beings in trust.

In Arabic, *Zakat* means purification, growth and blessing. It is a charitable practice that requires all able Muslims (those who meet the requirement of Zakat) to contribute a fixed portion of their wealth – 2.5% of savings – to help the needy. Our possessions are purified by setting aside a proportion for those in need.

The Prophet said, 'Even meeting your brother with a cheerful face is sadaqa' (Tirmidhi).

The Prophet also said: 'Charity is a necessity for every Muslim.' He was asked: 'What if a person has nothing to give?' He replied: 'He should work with his own hands for his benefit and then give something out of such earnings in charity.' The Companions asked: 'What if he is not able to work? The Prophet said. 'He should help the poor and needy persons.' The Companions further asked 'What if he cannot do even that?' The Prophet said 'He should urge others to do good.' The Companions said 'What if he lacks that also?' The Prophet said 'He should check himself from doing evil. That is also charity' (Al-Bukhari & Muslim).

4. FASTING (SAWM);

Muslims are required to observe the fast for one whole month every year during the Islamic lunar month of Ramadan from first light until sundown, abstaining from food and drink.

The religious significance of Ramadan consists not only in the obedience to God but also in moral and spiritual discipline such as purifying one's mind of bodily desires and evil thoughts, strengthening one's will, caring and sharing in the hardships of others especially the poor and forgiveness and goodwill towards others.

Those who are sick, elderly, or on a journey, and women who are pregnant or nursing are permitted to break the fast and make up an equal number of days later in the year.

If they are physically unable to do this, they must feed a needy person for every day missed.

Although the fast is most beneficial to the health, it is regarded principally as a method of self-purification.

By cutting oneself off from worldly comforts, even for a short time, a fasting person increases one's spiritual status and gains true sympathy with those who go hungry.

The end of Ramadan is marked by a feast-day of Eid-al-Fitr marked by prayer, thankfulness and visiting family and friends.

5. PILGRIMAGE (HAJJ);

The annual pilgrimage to Mecca in Saudi Arabia- the Hajj is an obligation only for those who are physically able and have the financial means to perform it.

The annual Hajj begins in the twelfth month of the Islamic year (which is lunar) so that Hajj (and Ramadan) falls in different seasons of the year.

Pilgrims wear special clothes: simple garments, which strip away distinctions of class and culture, so that all stand equal before God.

The rites of the Hajj, which are of Abrahamic origin, include circling the Ka'ba seven times, and walking seven times between the mountains of Safa and Marwa as did Hagar during her search for water.

Then the pilgrims stand together on the wide plain of Arafat and join in prayers for God's forgiveness (in what is often thought of as a preview of the Day of Judgement), and slaughter (sacrifice) animals whose meat is distributed to the poor and needy and neighbours.

The close of the Hajj is marked by the Eid-al-Adha festival, which is celebrated with prayers and exchange of gifts.

Importance of family in Islam

The family is the foundation of Islamic society. Peace and security offered by a stable family unit is greatly valued and seen as essential for the spiritual growth of its members.

A harmonious social order is created by the existence of extended families; children are treasured, and rarely leave home until they are married.

Islam exhorts its adherents to maintain close contact with family members and to care for each other including the elderly and the extended family.

Elderly in Islam

In the Islamic world old people's homes are very rare. The strain of caring for one's parents in this most difficult time of their lives is considered an honour and blessing, and an opportunity for great spiritual growth.

God asks that we not only pray for our parents, but act with limitless compassion, remembering that when we were helpless children they put us before themselves.

Mothers are particularly honoured: the Prophet taught that 'Paradise lies at the feet of your mother' (Al-Jami & Musnad Al-Shihab). When they reach old age, Muslim parents are treated mercifully, with kindness and selflessness.

In Islam, serving one's parents is a duty second only to prayer, and it is the parents' right to expect it.

The Qur'an says: "Your Lord has commanded that you worship none but Him, and be kind to parents. If either or both of them reach old age with you, do not say "fie' to them or chide them, but speak to them in terms of honour and kindness. Treat them with humility, and say 'My Lord! Have mercy on them, for they did care for me when I was little' (17:23-4).

Women in Islam

Islam sees a woman, whether single or married, as an individual in her own right, with the right to own and dispose of her property and earnings.

Men and women are equal in the sight of God although they play different but complementary, mutually supportive and reinforcing roles in the family and society.

Islam gave rights to the woman at a time when there was no equality between men and women. Both men and women are expected to dress in a way that is modest and dignified.

The Messenger of God (pbuh) said: 'The most perfect in faith amongst believers is he who is best in manner and kindest to his wife' (Tirmidhi & Ibn Majah).

Marriage in Islam

A Muslim marriage is not a 'sacrament' but a simple, legal agreement in which each party is free to include conditions.

The main components of marriage include the proposal (offer) and acceptance by the bride and the groom in the presence of witnesses and the payment of Mahr (dowry). Marriage customs vary from country to country but the fundamentals remain the same. According to Islam, no Muslim female can be forced to marry against her will; her parents can simply suggest young men they think may be suitable.

Divorce is permissible as a last resort. The religion of Islam was revealed for all societies and all times and so it accommodates widely differing social requirements. If circumstances warrant the taking of another wife, Islam sanctions this right only under a strict condition that the husband is scrupulously fair and just, with ample economic ability to support another wife. This is to be done in consultation with both partners. If the man cannot be totally fair to both wives, the Qur'an advises that he should not marry more than one. The recommendation to marry "only one" is very specific and is

the norm. Today, it is rare for a Muslim man to have more than one wife. Fourteen centuries ago there were many widows and women often abandoned. To offset the large number of unprotected women Islam allowed marriage to a maximum of four wives, considering that polygyny was a commonly accepted practice of the time. Islam, subject to the conditions indicated above, allows polygyny and gives proper legal status and social recognition to all concerned including the offsprings.

Polygyny, however, is illegal in Australia and Muslims are required to adhere to Australian law.

Muslim view on death

Muslims believe that the present life is only a trial and preparation for the next realm of existence in the Hereafter.

Death, therefore is another state of the living soul - although the physical self has decayed and becomes a part of the earth, the spiritual self is still aware and in a state of sleep awaiting its Resurrection.

Death is not a time for mourning or uncontrolled wailing and weeping, instead it is a time for sober reflection. When a Muslim dies, he or she is washed, usually by a family member, wrapped in a clean white cloth, and buried with a simple prayer preferably on the same day.

Muslims consider this one of the final services they can do for their relatives and an opportunity to remember their own brief existence here on earth.

The Prophet (pbuh) taught that three things can continue to help a person even after death; charity which he had given, knowledge which he had taught and prayers on their behalf by a righteous child.

Islamic Leadership - Role of Mufti, Imam & the Mosque

After the death of the Prophet (pbuh) in 632 CE, the Muslim community elected a successor or Caliph to the Prophet (pbuh) to act as the religious and political leader of the Muslims in the world.

This was based on his qualifications as a leader and most importantly on his piety.

The Caliph's primary role is to oversee the correct and efficient running of the Muslim community's affairs.

To maintain order and update laws and address social and political issues. Since the fall of the Ottoman Islamic State in 1924 there has been no Caliphate.

In the absence of the Caliph, the closest Muslims get to an authoritative leader is the Mufti or Grand Mufti (usually of a country) who is appointed, in most cases, by the government of the day.

The Mufti works closely with government authorities in advising on matters relevant to Islam.

In Australia, there is a Mufti appointed by the Australian National Imam's Council ANIC. The Mufti provides religious advice to the community and mediates in disputes, giving rulings on matters of religious interpretation.

The Mosque, referred to as the "house of God," plays a pivotal role in the lives of all Muslims; to attend prayers five times daily, if they can. The mosque is a focal point for the local community, providing peace and tranquillity to the worshippers.

The leader of a Mosque is known as the "Imam" who is usually chosen by the congregation and the community leaders to conduct formal services and to provide religious, social and welfare guidance to the congregation.

There is no formal priesthood in Islam and in the absence of an Imam, religious services can be conducted by any knowledgeable person from amongst the congregation.

Sunni & Shi'a Muslims

After the death of the Prophet (pbuh) disagreement occurred among the companions on who should be elected as the Caliph and subsequently a split or schism (Shi'a) occurred between two main factions: the Shi'ites and the Sunnis.

In the Shi'ite sect of Islam the popular consensus is that the successor should be a direct descendant of the Prophet (pbuh). However, in the majority Sunni adherents of Islam the successor is the one most suitable based on his piety.

Muslim dietary requirements

Muslims consume what is commonly referred to as Halal. Halal is an Arabic word meaning lawful or permitted. In reference to food, it is the dietary requirements as per the teachings of the Holy Quran

O ye who believe! Eat of the good things wherewith We have provided you, and render thanks to Allah if it is (indeed) He whom ye worship" (2:172).

The Prophet taught that 'your body has rights over you', and therefore the consumption of wholesome food and living a healthy lifestyle are seen as religious obligations.

It is vital to avoid any toxins and the consumption of harmful products including drugs and alcohol and any activity which may adversely impact the overall physical, mental and spiritual health of the individual.

The Prophet said 'Ask God for certainty (of faith) and well-being; for after certainty, no one is given any gift better than health!' (Tirmidhi).

Muslims Contribution to Civilization

Education and learning in the Islamic world achieved great heights during the Middle Ages

The contribution of early Muslims to science, education, leisure and modern civilization hardly gets a mention in any of the western history books. The 1.000 year period beginning in the fifth century and is commonly known as the Dark Ages in the Western world. In Islamic societies, the era was anything but dark. In fact from the seventh century on, while the rest of the world languished, the international language of science was Arabic. Thousands of social ,

scientific and technological achievements were spawned by men and women of different faiths and cultures who lived in Muslim civilization.

For more than 1,000 years from the seventh century onwards, the Muslim world stretched from southern Spain, as far as China. During this period scholars, male and female and of many beliefs worked collaboratively to build and improve upon ancient knowledge. They made breakthroughs that led to an incredible expansion of knowledge and prosperity - a golden age of civilization.

Within a few hundred years, great civilizations and universities were flourishing, for according to the Prophet (pbuh), 'Seeking knowledge is an obligation for every Muslim [man and woman]' (Ibn Majah). The synthesis of Eastern and Western ideas and of new thought with old, brought about great advances in medicine, mathematics, physics, astronomy, geography, architecture, art, literature, and history. Many crucial systems such as algebra, the Arabic numerals and also the concept of the zero (vital to the advancement of engineering), were transmitted to medieval Europe from the Islamic world. Sophisticated instruments, which were to make possible the European voyages of discovery, were developed, including the astrolabe, the quadrant and good navigational maps.

The progress of mathematics, science, architecture, exploration, education and medicine during Muslim civilization is remarkable and its noteworthy to see how ideas and knowledge migrated from the east, paving the way for the Renaissance – another great age of development.

Becoming a Muslim

By saying "there is no god except God, and Muhammad (pbuh) is the Messenger of God" the believer announces his or her faith in God and all His messengers, and the scriptures. It is incumbent upon the potential believer to research and study the teachings and explanations of the Qur'an in order to make a balanced and rational decision when embracing Islam as there can be no compulsion. Acceptance of Islam must be by one's free will.

Freedom of conscience is laid down by the Qur'an itself: "There is no compulsion in religion" (2:256); and, "If it had been thy Lord's Will, they would have all believed - all who are on earth! Wilt thou then compel mankind, against their will, to believe!" (10:99).

By embracing Islam, in fact, a person comes back to his/her Creator (hence referred to as a "revert" rather than a "convert" to Islam), and receives the greatest blessing of God. The All-Forgiving and Most-Merciful God forgives all the past sins and mistakes of such a person and he/she starts his/her life with a clean slate, as if born again.

According to the saying of the Prophet (pbuh):

"If a person embraces Islam sincerely, then God shall forgive all his past sins, and after that the reward of his good deeds will be ten times to seven hundred times, and an evil deed will be recorded as it is, unless God forgives it" (Al-Bukhari).

Spread of Islam

Among the reasons for the rapid and peaceful spread of Islam was the simplicity of its doctrine - Islam calls for faith in only One God worthy of worship and that all humans are equal.

In a world where slavery was widely practiced the message of Islam appealed to the poor and the disadvantaged. It also repeatedly instructs man to use his powers of intelligence and observation.

"O' Mankind! We created you from a single soul, male and female, and made you into nations and tribes, so that you may come to know one another. Truly, the most honoured of you in God's sight is the greatest of you in piety. God is All-knowing, All-Aware" (49:13).

Those who reverted during the rapid expansion of Islam did so because of the humane and just behaviour of the early pioneers of Islam and most of all because of the simple message of Islam.

It is also historical fact that Muslims, Christians and Jews lived in harmony for centuries in the early Islamic states of Spain and the Balkans. No churches or synagogues were destroyed and Christianity and Judaism remained intact. Those who became Muslims did so because of the exemplary behaviour of Muslims and their great improvements in the standard of living of their communities.

Extremism and terrorism condemned by Islam

Islam does not preach nor condones any form of terrorism or any acts of violence.

Various terms are often used which promote a negative image of Muslims in political conflicts around the world.

Islam stands for peace and harmony and, like most Australians, Australian Muslims are respectful and peaceful people.

Islam advocates patience and moderation in difficult and trying situations. Allah exhorts Muslims:

"Help one another in noble actions and pious duty. Help not one another in sin and transgression" (5:2).

"Nay, seek (Allah's) help with patient perseverance and prayer: It is indeed hard, except to those who are humble. Who bear in mind the certainty that they are to meet their Lord, and that they are to return to Him" (2:145).

"For, Allah is with those who restrain themselves and those who do good" (16:128).

Quotes from the Holy Qur'an:

Call of Islam:

"Say: O' You people! Now truth has reached you from your Lord! Those who receive guidance, do so for the good of their own souls; those who stray, do so to their own loss: and I am not (set) over you to arrange your affairs" (10:108).

Patience & reliance on God:

"Follow the inspiration sent to you, and be patient and constant, till Allah decides: for He is the Best to decide" (10:108-109).

"Only those who are patient will receive their reward in full without reckoning" (39:10).

Enjoining good & forbidding evil:

"(They are) those who, if we establish them in the land, establish regular prayer and give regular charity, enjoin the right and forbid wrong: with Allah rests the end (and decision) of (all) affairs." (22:41).

"Help one another in noble actions and pious duty. Help not one another in sin and transgression" (5:2).

Social obligations:

"Worship none save Allah (only), and be good to parents and to kindred and to orphans and the needy, and speak kindly to mankind, and observe prayer and pay the Zakat (tax for the poor)" (2:83).

Justice & fairness:

"Give full measure when you measure, and weigh out with a right balance and justice" (17:35).

"O you who believe! Be you staunch in observing justice, and bear witness for Allah, even though it be against yourselves or your parents or your kindred. Whether the person be rich or poor, in either case Allah is nearer to both. So follow not vain desires lest you lapse (from truth) and if you lapse or fall away, then verily, Allah is ever aware of what you do" (4:135).

Brotherhood of mankind:

"O Mankind! Verily, We have created you from a single pair of a male and a female, and have made you nations and tribes that you may know one another. But verily the noblest of you, in the sight of Allah, is the best in conduct. Verily Allah is Knower, Aware" (49:13).

Relations with Christians & Jews:

"O People of the Book (Christians and Jews)! Come to common terms as between us and you that we worship none but Allah, that we associate no partner with Him, that we raise not from among ourselves Lords and patrons other than Allah" (3:64).

Quotes from the Prophet of Islam (pbuh)

Humane qualities of mankind:

`God has no mercy on one who has no mercy for others.' (Al- Bukhari & Muslim)

`None of you truly believes until he wishes for his brother what he wishes for himself.' (Al- Bukhari & Muslim)

Trust

`The truthful and trusty businessman is associated with the prophets, the saints and the martyrs. (Tirmidhi)

Neighbours

`He who eats his fill while his neighbour goes without food is not a believer.' (Sunnan Al Baihaqi & Al Hakim).

"By Allah, he does not believe: By Allah, he does not believe: By Allah, he does not believe," It was said, "Who is that, O! Messenger of Allah?" He said, "That person whose neighbour does not feel safe from his evil" (Al- Bukhari).

Moderation in Islam

"The deeds of anyone of you will not save [from the (Hell) fire]." They said, "Even you, O! Allah's Messenger?" He said, "No, even I (will not be saved unless and until Allah protects me with His Grace and Mercy).

Therefore, do good deeds properly, sincerely and moderately, and worship Allah in the forenoon and in the afternoon and during a part of the night, and Al-Qasd (always adopt a middle, moderate and regular course) whereby you will reach your Al Qasd, i.e., target (Paradise)" (Al-Bukhari).

Islam's respect for other Religions

Islam teaches Muslims to be kind and just in dealing with people of other religions.

"As for such as do not fight against you on account of (your) faith, and neither drive you forth from your homelands, God does not forbid you to show them kindness and to behave towards them with full equity: for, verily, God loves those who act equitably" (60-8).

"Because of this, then, summon [all mankind], and pursue the right course, as thou hast been bidden [by God]; and do not follow their likes and dislikes, but say: 'I believe whatever revelation God has bestowed from on high; I am bidden to bring about equity in your mutual views. God is our Sustainer as well as your Sustainer.

To us shall be accounted our deeds, and to you, your deeds. Let there be no contention between us and you: God will bring us all together - for with Him is all journey's end" (42:15).

History provides many examples of Muslim tolerance towards other faiths: when the Caliph Omar entered Jerusalem in the year 634, Islam granted freedom of worship to all religious communities in the city and under 500 years of the Muslim Moors in Spain, Christian Churches and Jewish institutions flourished.

Also, during the 14th century in Anatolia the Christian Armenians preferred the rule of the just Muslim Ottomans rather than the harsh rule of the Byzantine empire.

Similarities between Islam, Christianity & Judaism;

No person can be a Muslim if he does not believe in Jesus. Muslims revere Jesus Christ as a prophet of God. They also believe that his mother, Mary, was chosen by God above all women of all nations and that Jesus was miraculously conceived. He performed many miracles in his short life, like giving life to the dead and healing the blind and the lepers through God's power. The Holy Qur'an teaches Muslims that Jesus was not crucified by the Romans but in fact raised to Heaven and to return to Earth before the end of time as we know it.

Christians and Jews are regarded as "People of the Book" because they follow one of the four Holy Scriptures; the psalms of David, the Torah of Moses, the Injeel (Bible) of Jesus and the Qur'an of Muhammad (peace and blessings to them all). These books contain the same fundamental message from God; that is to return to the righteous path and belief in the one true God. Muslims believe in all the prophets that Christians and Jews believe in - Joseph, Jonah, Job, Zachariah and John the Baptist among others."In matters of faith, He (God) has ordained for you that which He had enjoined upon Noah - and into which We gave thee [O Muhammad (pbuh)] insight through revelation - as well as that which We had enjoined upon Abraham, and Moses, and Jesus: Steadfastly uphold the [true] faith, and do not break up your unity therein" (42:13).

Allah says, "We did aforetime give Moses the Guidance, and We gave the Book in inheritance to the Children of Israel - a guide and a reminder to men of understanding (40:53-54).

Islam in Australia

The history of Muslims in Australia dates back to the 17th century, well before European contact with the mainland. The Makassan traders from Indonesia had a harmonious relationship with the Indigenous people of northern Australia.

The early fleets of settlers also used Muslims, from coastal Africa and the islands and territories under the British Empire, as slaves and navigators.

There were also a number of convicts who were sent to Australia for the crime of 'disobedience'. Most of these early Muslims inter-married with the local community and their descendants were assimilated into the society.

However, in the 1860's a large number of "Afghan" cameleers arrived in Australia to work the camel trains which opened up the interior of the continent.

They also accompanied the great explorers and were instrumental in guiding the teams through the hot and arid terrain. They eventually settled in the areas near Alice Springs and in the Northern Territory and many inter-married with the Indigenous population.

The remains of the oldest mosque in Australia is situated near Maree in South Australia and the Great Mosque of Adelaide was built by the descendants of the cameleers.

Muslims have continued to contribute positively to this nation. The Bosnian and Kosovar Muslims participated in the Snowy Mountains Scheme in the 1960's and in recent times, the largest and most lucrative Halal food export trade in the world is operated by

Muslims here in Australia with benefits to numerous industries and businesses as well as the Australian worker.

According to the 2016 ABS census notes 2.6 % of Australia's population adhere to Islam as a religion. The character and outlook of Muslims in Australia is often generalised and stigmatised with stereotypes, however Muslims are as diverse as the number of nationalities in the world. Islam was delivered as a mercy to all humanity and welcomes all to its embrace.

Structure of the Australian Muslim Community

Fifty three years ago, the then Muslim leaders of Australia adopted an organisational structure to organise the Muslim communities in this country.

Local Muslims formed individual organisations to serve their needs - such as building mosques and providing basic religious education to their children. In 1964 these organisations united to form a federation called the Australian Federation of Islamic Societies (AFIS). In 1976, the structure was changed to reflect the needs of the growing community. Islamic societies in each State and Territory were established which formed State Islamic Councils as State umbrella bodies. The State Islamic Councils, in turn, formed the peak, national umbrella organisation, the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils (AFIC) now known as Muslims Australia with its headquarters in Sydney. Muslims Australia represents Muslims of Australia at the national and international level.

Further information about Islam and Muslims can be sourced mosque, Islamic society/council or Islamic centre in your area.