The civic potential of Muslim community organisations for promoting social cohesion in Victoria

Mario Peucker

January 2017

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY
MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA

ICV | ISLAMIC COUNCIL OF VICTORIA

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

FOREWORD BY THE ISLAMIC COUNCIL OF VICTORIA

Asasalamu Walaikum Waramathulahi Barakat

It is with great pleasure that we write this foreword on behalf of the Islamic Council of Victoria. Mario's association with the ICV and the outstanding piece of work he has produced, we believe gives the wider Australian community a better understanding of how the Muslim community lives and functions in Victoria.

We greatly appreciate that Mario has taken the time to meet with a very wide cross-section of the Muslim community. The research shows how the Muslims too can be, and are, part of the social fabric of Australian society. They have the same concerns and needs as any other Australian and that they are integral part of the Australian way of life.

Further it gives the reader an insight into the role of mosques, which not only act as a place of worship but as a social hub where the community gathers for various reasons of promoting harmony, social welfare and interaction amongst Muslims as well as the rest of the wider community.

One needs to understand that Muslims in Victoria and across Australia are not a homogenous community but one made up of diverse ethnic and cultural groups. In reality the Muslim community is a very good of example of a multicultural microcosm within a greater Australian multicultural society. The common denominator for the 200,000 plus Muslims in Victoria is our faith. Thus, mosques play an important role in bringing these various groups not only to practice their faith but also to promote harmony and dialogue.

The research also dispels myths of negativity such as " Muslims in the western world seek to socially isolate themselves and avoid interaction with non-Muslims", which is perceived by many who do not understand the Muslim community or have had no interaction with us and have based their judgement on hearsay or media reports.

We congratulate Mario on an excellent study and look forward to working with him in the future on activities of mutual benefit to the Muslim community.

Islamic Council of Victoria

Background and study

Previous studies have consistently found relatively high levels of scepticism and mistrust among substantial segments of society towards Islam and Muslim communities. This applies, to varied degrees, to most western countries, including Australia. One common theme of these negative attitudes revolves around the alleged tendencies of Muslims to self-segregate and avoid social interaction with the wider community. This is seen as having negative implications for the overall cohesiveness of society as it supposedly creates a parallel world, disconnected from the rest of society.

…what do ordinary Australians really know about Muslim community life and what happens behind these supposedly closed doors and walls of the local mosque?

Mosques or other Islamic community organisations are the centre of this critique, as they are often viewed as secluded places where social isolation and a sense of 'non-belonging' are being fostered. Accordingly, in Australia, research has shown that substantial proportions of the population have not only negative attitudes towards Muslims and their Islamic faith but also towards their institutions: One in four Australians, for example, support 'any policy that will stop the building of a new mosque', with a further 18 per cent being undecided on such *no more mosques* policies (University of South Australia

2015). But what do ordinary Australians really know about Muslim community life and what happens behind these supposedly closed doors and walls of the local mosque or Islamic community centre?

This question was the starting point for the study on the civic potential of Muslim community organisations for promoting social cohesion in Victoria. In partnership with the Islamic Council of Victoria (ICV), a research team from Victoria University set out to collect empirical evidence on the various activities and services provided within Muslim community organisations across the state. These empirical data, collected through a large state-wide survey, allow, for the first time in Victoria, insights into the activity profile of Muslim community groups, their target groups, aspirational goals and cooperation activities. This data set was subsequently analysed with regards to the potential contributions the surveyed community groups make to promoting social cohesion.

Methodology

As a first step, the research team sought to identify, as accurately as possible, all relevant Muslim community organisations in Victoria (estimated 100-120) and invited one representatives of each of these organisations to participate in the study by completing a questionnaire (online, offline or face-to-face). The responses from 68 organisations were collected. This constitutes a response rate of somewhere between 57 and 68 per cent, which is high given the nature of the study (e.g. voluntary participation, time constraints). The survey data was disaggregated to ensure full anonymity and then analysed (descriptive analysis). In addition to these quantitative survey data, a small series of qualitative

3

interviews were conducted with selected representatives from different community organisations; these interview data were not meant to inform the key findings of the study but to offer exemplary illustrations of how certain community services can contribute to social cohesion.

Social Cohesion

Social cohesion is a key concept used in this study. Chapter 3 presents a snapshot overview on prominent attempts to conceptualise social cohesion in academia and among policymakers. It discusses the British model of community cohesion with its strong focus on intergroup interaction as well as the Canadian-Australian model, which has become the most common reference in the Australian context. Following the work of Bernard (1999), the Australian scholars Markus and Kirpitchenko (2007: 26-29) identify three overlapping sub-dimensions of social cohesion (Markus 2015: 12):

- *The economic sphere*, including factors such as economic mobility, unemployment and poverty rates, income distribution, equal opportunities and life satisfaction
- *The political sphere*, including factors like political participation, civic engagement and voluntarism; and social capital (networks of trust)
- *The socio-cultural sphere*, including shared values, sense of belonging and attachment, common goals and visions

Despite the broad use of the Australian-Canadian model of social cohesion, there are two particularly contested facets. The first one revolves around civic and political participation ('active citizenship'): What kind of civic engagement is seen as a positive contribution to building social cohesion and how much opposition and dissent can be expressed through political participation? The second one is related to the individuals' sense of belonging, which is supposedly required in a cohesive society: What exactly is the frame of reference for this requested sense of personal attachment and who has the power to decide what fundamental values need to be shared by all members of society?

Muslim community services and activity profile: a literature review

Most mosques in Western societies are more than just places of worship, where Muslims perform their ritual prayers. They typically pursue a broader agenda encompassing cultural, social, civic or even political advocacy activities.

Most mosques in Western societies are more than just places of worship, where Muslims perform their ritual prayers.

While these diverse services and activity profiles have remained under-explored in Western non-Muslim majority countries, emerging research has identified three major areas of activities, in addition to religious services, which many Muslim community groups are engaged in: providing welfare and settlement services; engaging in interfaith dialogue or other outreach initiatives; and advocacy activities. Moreover, several studies have highlighted the mobilising effects of religious or faith-based community organisations on Muslims' civic and political engagement – which is a key dimension of social cohesion.

Key findings

The 68 surveyed Muslim community organisations in Victoria, including 32 mosques, represent a highly diverse community. The vast majority of them have been established since the mid-1990s and are located in Greater Melbourne. While around 40 per cent have paid staff, all of them rely heavily on community members to contribute their time as volunteers. All surveyed organisations maintain that these actively involved community members benefit from their civic engagement in multiple ways (e.g. learning new skills, expanding their networks, gaining self-confidence).

...most Muslim community organisations in Victoria are multi-purpose community hubs offering a range of services to Muslims – and often also to non-Muslims.

More than 60 per cent of Muslim community organisations in Victoria described themselves as multi-ethnic, stating that there is not one dominant cultural or ethnic group among those that participate in their activities and benefit from their services. Those with a dominant ethnic membership serve primarily Turkish Muslims or certain ethnic groups of African Muslims (e.g. Somali).

Activity profile

The survey findings confirm that most Muslim community organisations in Victoria are multi-purpose community hubs offering a range of services to Muslims – and often also to non-Muslims. In addition to traditional religious services, provided by most surveyed groups, a large majority also

runs cross-community outreach activities, such as open door events, cooperation with non-Muslim organisations, interfaith dialogue activities or participating in mainstream events. The third most common activity field is related to providing education and teaching services, which include predominantly religious, but often also non-religious programs (e.g. leadership programs, trainings aimed at increasing job opportunities).

Most Muslim community organisations run various leisure or recreational activities, most commonly BBQs, sports programs, youth camps and cultural events, and provide a range of community welfare and other counselling services, such as youth work, parent, family and marriage counselling, financial, domestic violence and unemployment/ career related counselling. Just over one quarter of Muslim community organisations consider themselves politically active, stating that they are involved in lobbying and advocacy work (e.g. PR and media work, organising demonstrations).

Cooperation

Muslim community organisations in Victoria are well connected with other Muslim and many non-Muslim groups and institutions. All except one organisation confirmed that they have cooperated in one way or another with both Muslim *and* non-Muslim groups. Most of them have worked with mosques and other Muslim community groups. The third most common type of cooperation partners are non-Muslim faith-based groups (e.g. church groups), followed by the state-wide Muslim umbrella organisation, Islamic Council of Victoria. All other cooperation partners mentioned by the respondents are not Muslim community groups but mainstream and/or multicultural organisations and public institutions.

Aspirations and goals

An overwhelming majority of Muslim community organisations in Victoria stress their commitment to strengthening an inclusive society; the aspirational goals that almost all organisations consider to be important or very important for their daily operation are:

- fostering Muslims' sense of belonging to the wider community,
- building bridges with the wider community,
- promoting social inclusion, and
- improving the public image of Islam and Muslims in Australia.

These 'wider community' oriented aspirations are usually accompanied by those that focus more on Muslims' faith, identity, community connections and wellbeing. The goals of keeping Muslim youth out of trouble, improving Muslims' socioeconomic opportunities and empowering them to express their views and concerns are also commonly expressed, while the intention to mobilise Muslims to become politically active or to contribute to the public debate are clearly less widespread.

Contributing to social cohesion

An analysis of these community organisations' activity profile, cooperation activities and aspirational goals highlights their potential for promoting key dimensions of social cohesion. Regarding the 'economic sphere' of social cohesion, many Muslim community groups work towards fostering their members' education and socioeconomic mobility and seek to improve their social and psychological

wellbeing in different ways and through a range of leisure and community welfare (e.g. counselling) services.

Related to this, community groups offer programs and activities that increase participants' social capital and networks of trust both within ('bonding') and beyond community boundaries ('bridging') – a key element of social cohesion. These findings of network enhancing effects are consistent with previous research. Moreover, these community organisations are sites of Muslims' civic engagement (volunteering), which highlights the civically mobilising effects of these community groups and hence their contribution to the 'political sphere' of social cohesion. This community-based civic engagement may also spill-over into more political forms of active citizenship, although political advocacy and lobbying play only a minor role within the activity profile of the Muslim community in Victoria.

The 'socio-cultural sphere' of social cohesion refers to citizens' sense of belonging to the polity and society, 'shared values' and a 'common vision' (Markus and Kirpitchenko 2007). Surveyed Muslim community organisations' agendas are driven by their commitment to strengthening Australia's multi-ethnic and multi-faith society, which accepts Islam as an inherent part. What Muslim community organisations seem to have in mind when speaking about a sense of belonging combines, on the one hand, a strong sense of being part of the Australian society and, on the other hand, Muslims' religious identity, which most community organisations also try to foster through some of their services.

1. BACKGROUND AND AIMS OF THE STUDY

One of the most common allegations Muslims in Western societies are confronted with is that they seek to socially isolate themselves and avoid interaction with non-Muslims. An international survey by the Pew Research Center found, for example, that the majority of people in several Western societies think that Muslims mostly try to 'remain distinct from larger society' (Pew 2006: 76; Pew 2017). These widespread perceptions go hand in hand with claims that Muslims' alleged self-segregation would lead to the consolidation of socially disconnected communities (Vertovec 2010), hamper their socio-cultural integration and their sense of belonging and, ultimately, erode social cohesion (Vasta 2013). Moreover, this 'seeming separateness' (Vertovec 2010: 85-86) causes concerns among policymakers not only for the cohesiveness but also the safety of society, as, according to interconnected allegations, these secluded pockets 'might provide a breeding ground for extremism' (ibid.).

Anti-Muslim apprehension and suspicion towards mosques and, by extension, the Islamic community more generally, is increasingly expressed on social media as well as offline.

In line with these perceptions, Muslim organisations, and mosques in particular, are often regarded as inaccessible 'prayer holes' for a supposedly isolated Muslim community, where potentially dangerous activities take place, hidden from the eyes and ears of the wider public. What McAndrew and Sobolewska observed in the British context holds true in many Western societies: 'Islam is perceived widely as a source of cultural threat ... and mosques are perceived as sites where difference is fostered' (2015: 53).

Such views can also be found within substantial segments of the Australian society (Pew 2017) – and they have been articulated publicly in an increasingly harsh and aggressive manner in recent years. This has reached new levels in the context of the 2016 federal elections, when Pauline Hanson's One Nation Party won four seats in the Senate with a primarily anti-Muslim election campaign, calling for, among others, a moratorium on building new mosques and video surveillance in all existing ones.

Such anti-Muslim apprehension and suspicion towards mosques and, by extension, the Islamic community more generally, is increasingly expressed on social media as well as offline. Anti-mosque protests are a particularly illustrative platform where anti-Islam agendas have been articulated, whenever plans to build a local mosque are announced. Mosque opponents from the local neighbourhood and beyond usually draw their criticism from a mix of aesthetic or infrastructure-related (e.g. traffic, noise, parking) counter-arguments and more or less overtly expressed anti-Muslim sentiments (Dunn 2001; Peucker and Akbarzadeh 2014: 153-154), accusing mosques of being vanguards of an alleged 'Islamification' of Australia, damaging the social fabric of the neighbourhood and increasing tensions, violence and, ultimately, terrorist threats.

There is no doubt that far-right wing fringe groups use anti-mosque protests to spread divisive political messages of aggressive nationalism, Islamophobia and bigotry. However, the reluctance to accept mosque and other Muslim community centres in their neighbourhood reaches far beyond

radical fringe movements and has become common among segment of Australian society across the political spectrum. A recent representative national survey found that almost one quarter of the population agreed (or strongly agree) with the statement 'I would support any policy that will stop the building of a new mosque', with a further 18 per cent being undecided on such *no more mosques* policies (University of South Australia 2015: 9). [1]

Recent research consistently argues that most Australians form their opinion about Islam, Muslims and their communities not based on personal experiences and encounters with fellow citizens of Islamic faith but rather on what they read and watch in the media (Rane 2010; Peucker and Akbarzadeh 2014: 91-92). But what do ordinary Australians really know about Muslim community life and what happens behind these supposedly closed doors and walls of the local mosque or Islamic community centre? These questions, together with the tenet that the prevalent lack of information often feeds suspicion or even fear and hostility towards Muslim communities, are the starting point for this research.

Only very few studies, both in Australia and overseas, have generated robust empirical insights into the multiple activity profile of mosques and other Muslim community organisations, for example, in New South Wales (Underabi 2014) or in Germany (Halm and Sauer 2012). A comprehensive analysis of these activities and their direct or indirect effects on the cohesiveness of pluralistic societies is largely lacking. This pilot study, conducted by the Centre for Cultural Diversity and Wellbeing (CCDW) at Victoria University in partnership with the Islamic Council of Victoria (ICV), seeks to

contribute to closing this knowledge gap for Victoria. It systematically maps the activities and services Muslim community organisations across Victoria offer or are involved in, and analyses how these activities may help foster social cohesion.

Only very few studies have generated robust empirical insights into the multiple activity profile of mosques and other Muslim community organisations.

Ultimately, the study sheds empirical light on Muslim community groups as ordinary stakeholders in Victoria's culturally and religiously diverse civil society, dedicated to supporting their Muslim community but also eager to contribute to the local neighbourhood or society more broadly.

---

[1] The Scanlon Foundation surveys (2010-2015) found that almost one in four Australian expressed negative personal attitudes towards Muslims (Markus 2016: 78).

2. METHODOLOGY

The study pursues a mixed-method approach. At its core is a large questionnaire-based survey among Muslim community organisations across Victoria, mapping their varied religious, educational, welfare, outreach and advocacy services and activities. The quantitative survey data was systematically analysed with the aim of gaining empirical insights into the activity profiles and goals of these community groups and answering the question as to whether and how Muslim community organisations contribute to social cohesion in Victoria. The survey is complemented by a small number of face-to-face interviews with selected Muslim community figures from different organisational backgrounds on their views on social cohesion and inclusion.

The survey data was systematically analysed with the aim of gaining empirical insights into the activity profiles of these community groups and answering the question as to whether Muslim community organisations contribute to social cohesion in Victoria.

The following section outlines the different components of the study's methodology, including identifying relevant organisations, designing the questionnaire, collecting data through the survey and face-to-face interviews, data analysis as well as methodological limitations.

Identification of Muslim community organisations

In order to map the various services, programs and activities provided by Muslim community organisations, it was necessary to first generate a list of relevant organisations that operate in Victoria – from metropolitan Melbourne to regional centres and rural areas. While it was clear from the beginning that it would not be feasible to develop an entirely exhaustive and up-to-date list given the informality and temporary nature of some Muslim community grassroots groups, the study sought to compile a list as comprehensive as possible. This required (a) extensive and systematic research, supported by the project partner, the Islamic Council of Victoria (ICV), and (b) a clear definition of what exactly was meant by 'Muslim community organisations'. A pragmatic definition was developed to decide for each identified organisation as to whether they are in-scope for our study. The organisations or groups generally needed to meet four requirements:

- have a Muslim leadership and management,
- have Muslim (formal or informal) members,
- serve local Muslims (neighbourhood, regional/state or national) as (at least one of) their main target group, and
- have their head office or at least an official presence in Victoria.

Islamic independent schools (primary and secondary education), business associations and those Muslim organisations that serve a very narrow primarily non-Muslim related purpose (e.g. community language schools), or not dealing with community members

(e.g. halal certification organisations) were not included in the sample.

Different search strategies were combined to identify relevant organisations. These included manual internet searches (using general search engines) for mosques and Muslim community organisations in Melbourne and regional centres across Victoria, as well as the use of web-based lists of Islamic organisations, prayer facilities and mosque, such as Islamicfinder.org, mosque-finder.com.au or ummahdirectory.com.au and, the ICV list of member and associated organisations. As a result, a preliminary list of around 80 organisations, including contact details, was generated, which subsequently grew in the initial phase of the project to almost 140 (e.g. through snowballing).

It is important to stress that this figure does not accurately reflect the actual number of Muslim community organisations across Victoria. For example, some of the identified organisations seemed to no longer exist, while others were not autonomous but rather sub-groups within existing organisations, and again others were listed under two different names. The research team concludes from this organisational mapping that the Muslim community landscape is characterised by well-established structures and organisations, but it is also, in parts, very informal and in constant flux, with new groups being formed and others disappearing on a regular basis. This makes it impossible to generate an accurate list of *all* Muslim community organisations in Victoria. We cautiously estimate that, as of mid-2016, there were around 100-120 active groups and organisations that meet the sampling criteria developed for this study.

This organisational landscape is in many ways highly diverse. Many are multi-ethnic; others are rather homogenous and dominated by people from a certain

national, cultural or ethnic background (e.g. Bosnian, Afghan, Sri Lankan, Somali). Some are very informal, others highly structured with clear roles and a high degree of institutionalisation and professionalisation; some focus on their local neighbourhood, others have a much greater reach beyond the state or even national borders. There are many mosques (or mosque associations), but also a range of Muslim youth, student and women's organisations as well as advocacy groups, education-focussed organisations and umbrella institutions (e.g. ICV).

Questionnaire design

Parallel to this identification and selection process, the research team developed and refined the data collection tools. This included, most importantly, designing and pre-testing the questionnaire-based survey.

... the Muslim community landscape is characterised by well-established structures and organisations, but it is also, in parts, very informal and in constant flux.

The prime purpose of this survey was to systematically gather data on the services and activities Muslim community organisations in Victoria were offering as well as collecting further organisational and other background information. In order to reduce the time for the completion of the questionnaire and to enhance the consistency and comparability of the result, most questions were posed as 'closed' questions, where respondents were asked to tick one or several ('multiple-choice') boxes; this included several Likert scales to give respondents a chance to rate certain answers from, for example, 'very important'

10

to 'not important at all'. In addition, the questionnaire contained several open-ended questions, where respondents could answer questions more freely and in their own words.

The initial questionnaire draft was extensively discussed within the research team and underwent a pre-test, which led to some terminological adjustment, additions and other minor revisions. The finalised version (see appendix A3) was uploaded on the online survey platform Qualtrics and a PDF version of the questionnaire was generated for completing it offline.

Quantitative data collection: Questionnaire

After the questionnaire was finalised, the research team set out to establish initial contact with all identified organisations. This was done in different ways, depending on, among other factors, the available contact details and responsiveness. Most organisations were contacted and invited to participate in the study via email or phone, in some cases Facebook Messenger was used, or a research team member went to the organisation's office or mosque directly to speak to a representative of the community group or association. Often the team had to email or phone organisations several times until a contact could be established.

The project was explained to represent-tatives of these organisations, and they were invited to participate either (1) by completing the survey online themselves, (2) through a phone interview or (3) a face-to-face interview conducted by one of the researchers, or (4) by completing and returning the PDF version of the questionnaire. Regardless of the data collection method, the questions asked were always identical and followed the structure and content of the online survey. Where appropriate, the invited

representatives were offered the option to answer the questions in a language other than English. The vast majority of participants, however, did not request to participate in a language other than English; only a very small number of interviews were conducted in Turkish by a native Turkish speaking member of the research team.

Not surprisingly, and similar to other researchers' experiences with similar studies (Underabi 2014), we initially encountered reluctance among many organisations to participate in this project. Despite these recruitment challenges, the research team, comprising of male and female researchers, two of them of Muslim background themselves and with personal community connections, managed to collect responses from 68 religiously and structurally diverse Muslim community organisations. Based on the assumption that there are currently 100-120 relevant organisations, this constitutes a coverage of between 57 and 68 per cent. The collaboration with the ICV was crucial for achieving such a high response rate.[2]

It turned out that very often personal contact was necessary to encourage participation. Accordingly, a large majority of responses were collected either via phone or face-to-face interviews, with the researchers reading out the questions and response options from the questionnaire and manually filling in the responses in an offline PDF version of the survey. Only a minority of organisations completed the questionnaire themselves without the assistance of a researcher, usually online and in some cases offline by filling in the PDF version. Although anonymous

---

[2] The research study on NSW mosques (Underabi 2014), which pursued a different approach in terms of themes and sampling (surveying mosques and *musallahs* only), identified 167 mosques/*musallahs* in NSW; altogether 50 of them completed the questionnaire used in the study.

participation was offered (i.e. without naming the organisation), almost all participating organisations (except for two) opted to be named and listed as participating organisations; their individual responses are treated confidentially and the data analysis presents only aggregated data with no references to specific organisations. The list of organisations that completed the questionnaire can be found in the appendix A2.

It turned out that very often personal contact was necessary to encourage participation.

All responses were entered into the Qualtrics online survey and descriptively analysed through the analytical tools provided by Qualtrics and MS-Excel. This included single-variable descriptive analysis as well as multivariate analysis.

Qualitative interviews

While the study primarily seeks to quantitatively map services and activities provided by Muslim community organisations, it also had a small qualitative component. In addition to the survey, the research team conducted several qualitative interviews with representatives of three very different Muslim community organisations in Victoria. These in-depth face-to-face interviews explore what social cohesion means to key figures in the Muslim community and how, in their view, their organisations' services contribute (or not) to promoting social cohesion in their day-to-day operation (interview guidelines, see appendix A4). The qualitative insights gained through these interviews are by no means representative of the diverse Muslim community, and they mainly reflect the personal views of the interviewed

community figures. Interviews were conducted in June and July 2016 with the following three people:

- Nail Aykan, executive director of the Islamic Council of Victoria (ICV)
- Mustafa Abu Yusuf, senior advisor for the Hume Islamic Youth Centre (HIYC) and Ahlus (Ahli) Sunah Wal Junah (ASWJ) (participated as HIYC representative)
- Ahmet Keskin, executive director of the Australian Intercultural Society (AIS)

The interviews were transcribed and systematically analysed.

Limitations

The mixed-method approach has been chosen as the most suitable and pragmatic way for this mapping study to gain empirical insights into the activity profile of Muslim community organisations in Victoria, but it has some inherent limitations. These are mainly linked to the questionnaire-based survey being the main method of data collection.

Participating in the study was voluntary; not all Muslim community organisations the research team asked to participate completed the questionnaire. As there was no random sample, the study cannot claim that the survey results are representative of *all* Muslim community groups in Victoria. It is possible, for example, that there is a bias towards Muslim community groups with a more outward-looking profile and/or those who are more familiar with partaking in surveys or other research. Their time resources may also have played a role in the organisation's decision to participate or not.

These are some of the factors that could have led to a sample bias. However, the nature of the data collection based on often multiple personal contacts and face-to-face interviews seems to have helped limit this

bias to a minimum. This assumption is underscored by the fact that the realised sample is not only quite large but also very diverse in terms of organisations' size, level of resources and institutionalisation. It comprises organisations representing different Islamic denominations/sects and includes also very small and poorly resourced community groups and organisations that are commonly considered to be situated rather at the margins of the Muslim community in Victoria.

The study finding may be affected by factors of social desirability. It is possible that some of those who completed the questionnaire, consciously or not, sought to give responses that draw a more favourable, i.e. socially desirable, image of their organisation. This is a common limitation of questionnaire-based survey. Granting anonymity to participants and guaranteeing that their response cannot be linked to their organisation but will only be presented as aggregated data (as done in this study) generally reduces the social desirability bias. What may have had the opposite effect, however, is that most questionnaires were not completed online, where there is a greater sense of anonymity, but within a face-to-face or telephone interview setting, which involves social interactions between researcher and participants.

The research team was not in a position to verify the responses provided through the questionnaire; as with surveys in general, the researchers rely on the participants' attempt to give accurate responses. There are no reasons to doubt participants' best intention to do so, but some responses may be subjective, and it is possible that in some cases another representative of the same organisation would have answered some questions in a slightly different way.

The final limitation refers to the qualitative component of the study, in particular to the

low number of interviews with selected community representatives.

...as with surveys in general, the researchers rely on the participants' attempt to give accurate responses. There are no reasons to doubt participants' best intention to do so, but some responses may be subjective

It is important to highlight that the qualitative data collected through these three interviews were not meant to inform the key findings of the study, but rather as exemplary illustrations of how certain community services can contribute to social cohesion. These are subjective perspectives from selected community figures, which are in no way representative of the diverse Muslim community landscape in Victoria.

3. Social Cohesion

Social cohesion is a key concept in this study. While it has become a very popular term in academia, among policymakers and in public debates since the late 1990s, the underlying notion of what holds a modern society together has been a central theme in sociological thinking since the very beginnings of the discipline. This reaches back to one of the godfathers of sociology, Émile Durkheim (1984 [1893]). Durkheim observed that modern society in the late 19th century no longer relied on 'mechanic solidarity' deriving from personal acquaintances (e.g. in village communities) and vastly similar life experiences, religious and cultural norms and views. In a society with a pronounced division of labour, growing diversity and social and spatial distance between its members, what was more important to ensure an integrated society and maintain social order was 'organic solidarity'.

Given the manifold sociological elaborations around social cohesion, there is a common consensus that there is not one generally accepted definition.

According to Durkheim, diverse modern societies do not require their members to share the same views and experiences or to know or even like each other, but they need to recognise 'a common normative order' (Portes and Vickstrom 2011: 473), maintained 'through centralised government and a uniform legal system' (Markus and Kirpitchenko 2007: 21). Durkheim's thoughts have influenced subsequent sociological approaches to social cohesion and social order in modern societies (e.g. Parsons 1951), positioning it mainly in a structural context of social integration and stability (Chan et al 2006: 275). These schools of thought, however, paid only little attention to micro-level and actor-related factors.

Social cohesion: process or outcome?

In the 1990s, policymakers in Canada, Europe and, with some delay, also in Australia started to utilise the concept of social cohesion. While the specific conceptualisations differed, policy-oriented definitions commonly include, in addition to structural dimensions, micro-level aspects such as trust both between people and towards state institutions, interpersonal interaction or relationships in diverse societies, mutual recognition and a sense of belonging to the political community.

Given the manifold sociological elaborations around social cohesion and the divergent use of the term in policy circles and public debates in specific national, local and community contexts, there is a common consensus that there is not one generally accepted definition. Some academics and commentators stress unresolved 'definitional confusions' (Friedkin 2004: 410) and claim the concept remains ambiguous, ill-defined and too slippery for empirical research (Chan et al. 2006). Others have been less critical and more pragmatic, although being aware of the conceptual weaknesses of the term (OECD 2011; Markus and Kirpitchenko 2007). The OECD (2011: 52), for example, acknowledges that 'social cohesion is both a means to ends … and an end in itself', and incorporates this complexity into its pragmatic conceptualisation: A society can be described as cohesive 'if it works towards the well-being of all its members, fights exclusion and marginalisation, creates a sense of belonging, promotes trust, and offers its members the opportunity of upward mobility' (OECD 2011: 53).

Notwithstanding the critical commentary on such broad definitions in the policy context, where social cohesion can become 'code' for a range of policy agendas (Rutter 2015; Husband and Alam 2011), social cohesion has served as a proxy for capturing many of the facets that shape a healthy political community and society. In the 1990s and early 2000s, Canadian scholars like Jenson, Bernard and Beauvais have led the way in consolidating the divergent attempts to define social cohesion, developing more advanced conceptualisations. But even these scholars refer to the term as a 'quasi-concept' (in reference to Bernard 1999), which lacks a clear and unanimous definition, and argue that it has remained unclear as to 'whether social cohesion is a cause or a consequence of other aspects of social, economic and political life' (Beauvais and Jenson 2002: 5) – or both, as one could add.

Jenson (1998: 15) proposes a multi-dimensional definition of social cohesion encompassing five components:

- Belonging (as opposed to isolation): shared values, collective identities, community belonging

- Inclusion (as opposed to exclusion): equal opportunities and access to labour market and other key institution

- Participation (as opposed to non-involvement): involvement and civic/political engagement

- Recognition (as opposed to rejection): acceptance and recognition of diversity

- Legitimacy (as opposed to illegitimacy): legitimacy of institutions that mediate conflicts in a pluralistic society

Bernard (1999) adds 'equality' as the sixth dimension of social cohesion and emphasises the three realms within which the different facets of social cohesion are situated: economic, political and socio-cultural (see also Markus and Kirpitchenko

2007: 23). Drawing on Jenson's work and applying a differentiation between formal and substantial aspects of social cohesion, he developed the following typology (Bernard 1999: 20).

Tab. 1: Dimensions of social cohesion

Sphere of activity	Character of the relation	
	Formal	*Substantial*
Economic	Insertion/inclusion	Equality
Political	Legitimacy	Participation
Socio-cultural	Recognition	Belonging

Based on Bernard 1999: 20

These conceptualisations have become influential in social research and policymaking not only in Canada but also in Australia (Markus 2015; Dandy and Pe-Pua 2013). They differ slightly from what could be described as the British model of 'community cohesion' (UK Home Office 2001; Cantle 2012), which is more tuned towards Putnam's social capital and draws on Forrest and Kearns' (2001) conceptualisation of social cohesion in a neighbourhood context. Forrest and Kearns identify five domains of social cohesion (2001: 2129):

- 'Common values and civic culture', including common codes of behaviour and support for political institutions and participation in politics

- 'Social order and social control', including absence of incivility and of threats to the existing order; tolerance and respect for difference; intergroup co-operation

- 'Social solidarity and reductions in wealth disparities', including redistribution of public finances and opportunities and equal access to services and welfare benefits

- 'Social networks and social capital', including high degree of interaction within communities and families, civic engagement and associational activity

15

- 'Place attachment and identity', including strong attachment to place and intertwining of personal and place identity

The 'Canadian-Australian' and the 'British' models are very similar, but one important difference is the stronger emphasis in the latter on intergroup, i.e. cross-cultural, interaction and relationships. Allegedly increasing segregation ('parallel lives') and diminishing opportunities for majority and minority groups to mingle and engage with each other have been identified as a key concern in the public and political debate around community cohesion in the UK since the 2001 riots in several northern English cities (Worley 2005). As a consequence, the discourse on community cohesion in the UK has focussed much more on this intergroup contact dimension – which stands in contrast to classical sociological theories, from Durkheim's (1984 [1893]) 'organic solidarity' to Parsons's (1951) *Social System* with their focus on structural facets of social integration.

Following Bernard's (1999) typology, the Australian scholars Andrew Markus and Liudmila Kirpitchenko (2007: 26-29) locate sub-dimensions of social cohesion in three overlapping spheres (Markus 2015: 12):

- *The economic sphere*, including factors such as economic mobility, unemployment and poverty rates, income distribution, equal opportunities and life satisfaction
- *The political sphere*, including factors like political participation, civic engagement and voluntarism; and social capital (networks of trust)
- *The socio-cultural sphere*, including shared values, sense of belonging and attachment, common goals and visions

This multi-dimensional conceptualisation acknowledges that, in order to promote social cohesion, members of society and the political community need to have equal access to socio-economic opportunities and resources; appreciate, respect or at least tolerate diversity; accept the fundamental principles and legitimacy of the political system; and develop some sense of collective identification and belonging – '*shared vision*', as Markus and Kirpitchenko (2007: 25; emphasis in original) describe it. Moreover, it encompasses active citizenship components pinpointing the positive implications of civic engagement and political participation for promoting social cohesion. Importantly, social cohesion is not merely regarded as a status or a political goal, but rather a 'continuous and never-ending process of achieving social harmony' (Markus and Kirpitchenko, 2007: 25).

This conceptualisation has proven to be a suitable basis for the development of methodological tools to conduct empirical research into social cohesion in Australia, most prominently within the longitudinal Mapping Social Cohesion Survey, funded by the Scanlon Foundation (Markus 2015). It has also received broad support in policymaking and academia and can be described as the main point of reference when discussing social cohesion in Australia. The Victorian State Government, for example, refers to this model in its Strategic Framework to Strengthen Victoria's Social Cohesion and the Resilience of its Communities (Victorian Government 2015).

Contested facets of social cohesion

Despite the broad recognition of this 'Australian-Canadian' model of social cohesion, there are two particularly contested facets. The first one revolves around the domain of civic and political participation ('active citizenship'). What

kind of civic engagement is seen as a positive contribution to building social cohesion and how much opposition and dissent can be expressed through political participation? These questions are particularly relevant and controversially discussed in the context of Muslims' active performance of their citizenship. Given the sense of concern within substantial segments of Australian society over mosques as the centre of Muslim community life, the contribution that Muslim Australians make by volunteering for a mosque may not be valued the same way as, for example, Catholic Australians' volunteering for a church-based welfare organisation.

In the British context, O'Loughlin and Gillespie (2012: 115) argue that, in response to 'diminishing prospects for effective participation in formal political processes', Muslim youth have focused their civic engagement on 'local and translocal personalised forms of political action rather than engage in conventional forms of national party politics'. It remains unclear to what extent their 'rebellious, critical, angry and disappointed' (ibid.) enactment of their citizenship is considered by policymakers and the wider public to be a valuable contribution to social cohesion or rather an indicator for their alleged opposition and disloyalty to the state.

Linked to this is the second contested facet of the social cohesion concept: individuals' sense of belonging, which is supposedly required in a cohesive society. What exactly is the frame of reference for this requested sense of personal attachment and who has the power to judge over individuals' belonging? The Australian scholar, Ellie Vasta (2013: 196), critically asks: 'do we have to have a shared sense of belonging to the nation to be responsible citizens', and what does belonging 'to a community, to a polity and to the nation' actually mean for social cohesion?

While most conceptualisations of social cohesion refrain from specifying the reference point for someone's sense of belonging, there is the risk of defining this rather rigidly and narrowly as national identity, shaped by a set of cultural norms and ideas proclaimed by the majority group in a polity, which is then 'thought to provide the only possible foundation to social cohesion' (Vasta 2013: 210). The *Team Australia* rhetoric, proposed by the then Prime Minister Tony Abbott, illustrates the potentially divisive and exclusionary effects of such a narrowly defined notion of national identity based on proclaimed 'moral hegemony' (Stratton 2016: 18).

What exactly is the frame of reference for this requested sense of personal attachment and who has the power to judge over individuals' belonging?

In contrast to these narrow and often rather assimilationist top-down interpretations of shared values and national identity (Kundnani 2012; Vasta 2013), the Council of Europe proposed a much broader understanding, emphasising that 'Social cohesion comprises a sense of belonging: to a family, social group, neighbourhood, a workplace, a country or, why not, to Europe … this sense of belonging must not be exclusive; instead, multiple identity and belonging must be encouraged' (quoted in, Beauvais and Jenson 2002: 4). This resonates with Tariq Modood's (2012) elaborations on national identity as being 'distinctly plural and hospitable to the minority identities … not obscuring difference but weaving it into a common identity in which all can see themselves, and that gives everyone a sense of belonging to

each other'. Such elaborations sit well with the research findings of Vasta and other scholars (O'Loughlin and Gillespie 2012; Mustafa 2016) that ethno-religious minority members may not have a sense of 'national identity', but nevertheless 'do contribute to the common good, contribute to the process of social cohesion and are "upstanding citizens"' (Vasta 2013: 2010).

Social cohesion: the perspective of Muslim community figures

In the qualitative fieldwork of this study on Muslim community services community figures were asked about their personal views on social cohesion and what it means to their community work. Their individual responses differ in some ways from the academic conceptualisations but also show some convergences. The general understanding of social cohesion for the interviewees is linked to diversity and multiculturalism. In Aykan's view, social cohesion is a continuation and expansion of multiculturalism 'on broader wings', as it goes beyond cultural differences and takes into account individuals' multi-layered identities; similar views were expressed by Keskin.

The common denominator among the interviewed community figures was that social cohesion means that 'different communities get along with one another' (Keskin), regardless of their differences, 'without any fear or anxiety' (Aykan). Describing this as the 'text book definition' of social cohesion, Abu Yusuf stated:

> ...communities can coexist as they are, but respect the rights and boundaries of the other... There are differences between communities. I may not agree with the way you believe in God.... or I may not agree with your sexual preferences, I may not agree with many things ... and I have the right to practice my faith and that is what social cohesion is.

Interviewed community figures all referred, in one way or another, to the notion of belonging. Keskin, for example, links social cohesion to 'making people feel they are part of this country and part of this country's future' and 'finding their place in society', associating this with accepting and embracing Australian values and 'an appreciation for being an Australian'. This resonates somewhat with what Markus (2015: 12) identifies as a common feature of social cohesion: 'mutual respect and common aspirations or identity shared by their members'. While such an allusion to a shared Australian identity was absent in the other interviewee's accounts, they similarly elaborated on the importance of individual and community acceptance (Abu Yusuf) and 'feeling included' in every aspect of society (Aykan). Moreover, all interviewees stressed that building positive interpersonal relationships (i.e. social networks of trust) in everyday life (e.g. the neighbourhood) is a vital dimension of social cohesion. This is in accordance with most academic conceptualisation, particularly the 'British' model of community cohesion (Forrest and Kearns 2001: 2129), but also present in Markus and Kirpitchenko's (2007: 27) and Markus's (2015: 12) operationalisation in the Australian context.

These are not the only overlaps between academic definitions and the understanding of social cohesion on the ground of Muslim community work. The interviews further elicited references to active citizenship (political sphere) and socioeconomic opportunity (economic sphere) of social cohesion. Keskin, for example, maintained that 'a pathway into a career' and 'community activism' within a Muslim or a non-Muslim organisation are two important 'factors that help a person find a place in society'. Aykan similarly highlights the importance of participation in all aspects of social life: 'access and opportunity is key', he stated.

4. WHAT RESEARCH TELLS US ABOUT MUSLIM COMMUNITY SERVICES[3]

Most mosques in Western societies are more than just a place of worship, where Muslims perform their ritual prayers. They typically pursue a much broader agenda encompassing cultural, social, civic or even political advocacy activities. This is not only in response to the contemporary needs arising from Muslims' diasporic situation, but it is also rooted in the Islamic tradition of mosques being multi-purpose community centres (Karim 2014). Asim (2011: 15-16) argues that the first mosque Prophet Mohammad built after migrating to Medina, known as Al-Masjid an-Nabawi, was not just a place for ritual prayers but also used as a site for teaching and learning, social gatherings and interfaith dialogues, as shelter for the homeless, and a platform for civic and political engagement. This multi-purpose nature may have temporarily weakened in early phases of settlement in the diaspora, but has remained, in principle, a key feature of mosques. In the British context, Asim (2011: 16-17) asserts that 'Mosques have always provided a variety of interconnected spiritual and civic services.'

These historical and contemporary activity profiles of mosques blur the general differentiation between *religious* organisations, whose purpose is predominantly religious, and *faith-based* organisations, which are influenced by religion but primarily provide services beyond religion (Torry 2005: 117-122). Mosques have traditionally been places of worship *as well as* social community hubs serving different

purposes and catering to diverse needs of the community – and this multiple purpose is gaining prominence as Muslim communities consolidate and become more established in non-Muslim majority countries.

Mosques have traditionally been places of worship as well as social community hubs.

Mosques may have been the first Islamic community organisations to be set up when Muslim settlements started to emerge in Western countries, but they are far from being the only ones today. In the course of substantial immigration in recent decades, large and continuously growing numbers of other Muslim faith-based organisations have been established, which have contributed to the diversification of Western civil societies. While usually not holding ritual community prayers, many of these community organisations offer a range of services. These diverse activity profiles have remained under-researched, but empirical evidence has started to emerge in the recent past that allows initial insights into the nature of many of these organisations (Amath 2015).

Acknowledging the enormous complexity and diversity of Muslim communities and their institutionalised representations in any given national context, the following paragraphs highlight some key areas in which Muslim community organisations have typically become active. This outline is not exhaustive, nor does it claim to cover the entire spectrum of Muslim community organisations. Instead it seeks to paint a preliminary picture of the diversifying activity profile of mosques and Muslim community organisations. Three major areas of activities, in addition to religious services, can be identified: (1) providing

---

[3] This section is a revised version of the chapter 'Muslim community organisations as civil society agents of social inclusion, cohesion and active citizenship – a cross-national overview' by the author of this report, which is included in the edited volume *Muslim Community Organizations in the West* (SPRINGER, edited by Mario Peucker and Rauf Ceylan, in press).

welfare and settlement services; (2) engaging in interfaith dialogue or other outreach initiatives; and (3) advocacy activities.

Welfare and settlement support

Promoting the wellbeing of local Muslim community members, including providing settlement support for new arrivals (e.g. immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers), has been a core function of many mosques and various Muslim community organisations in the West. While this was initially, and often still is, undertaken in a rather informal manner, it has generally broadened and, to some extent, professionalised as these communities have grown larger. Göçmen (2013) found in her comparative analysis that in the United Kingdom Muslim faith-based organisations 'and mosques gained importance as providers of social welfare. They cater to Muslim communities in different localities providing services such as education, employment, counselling advice, and asylum advice' (2013: 502). Similarly, in the German context, Göçmen (2013: 507) concludes that many mosques associations 'provide social, cultural, educational, and religious services' and 'play important roles in helping the integration of their community into German society'.

Promoting the wellbeing of local Muslim community members, including providing settlement support for new arrivals, has been a core function of many mosques in the West.

In some national settings, especially those with a proactive multicultural policy framework, cultural and ethno-religious minority organisations have received 'funding, technical assistance and normative encouragement' (Bloemraad 2005: 867) from governments to provide welfare and settlement services. In Australia, migrant and ethno-religious minority community organisations (including some mosques) benefitted from a paradigm shift in the country's welfare system during the early 1970s. Instead of funding mainstream community organisations (e.g. Neighbour-hood Council), the government decided to give money to migrant and minority community groups directly for providing culturally and religiously appropriate welfare services to their respective community members. Although Muslim communities had not been directly involved in the lobbying for these changes (that was mainly done by Greek, Jewish and other already more established minority communities at the time), this grants-in-aid system financially enabled mosques and other Islamic organisations to establish at least basic welfare, education and settlement services for their own community (Humphrey 1988; Jakubowicz 1989). This had far-reaching ramifications, as these community organisations not only became social welfare providers, but the government also expected them to act as intermediaries representing their community vis-à-vis the government. This positioned them as 'ordinary' stakeholders in a diverse civil society, comprising various religious, ethnic and cultural communities, and 'raised the public profile of Muslim communities' (Peucker and Akbarzadeh 2014: 148-149).

A recent large-scale survey among more than 1,100 Islamic community organisations (mostly mosques) in Germany provides empirical evidence on the range of welfare, settlement and integration-related services for both Muslim youth and adults (Halm and Sauer 2012). This includes, among others, parental,

educational and social welfare related counselling, German language courses, civic programs, and tutoring for high school students (Table 2).

Table 2: Welfare and settlement services: mosques in Germany

	For youth	For adults
Civics courses	66.5	48.2
Tutoring (high school students)	57.3	n/a
German language course	31.0	23.5
Computer/IT	27.7	15.2
Education-related/parental counselling	n/a	43.0
Social welfare counselling	n/a	43.2

Based on Halm and Sauer 2012: 77

Outreach and dialogue activities

In many Western countries, the 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York and Washington have turned out to be a watershed moment for Muslim communities in two oddly intertwined ways. On the one hand, it led to an unprecedented rise of anti-Muslim sentiments and suspicion, and on the other hand, it urged Muslim community groups to increase their efforts to actively respond to these processes of exclusionary Othering (Eck 2005; Bouma et al. 2007), by 'initiating multifaith and educational activities to dispel negative stereotypes and attitudes propagated by the media and political figures' (Halafoff 2012: 115). In Australia, the then president of ICV, Ramzi Elsayed, pinpointed this double effect: '[September 11] was a wake-up call, it slapped us in the face' as the Muslim community suddenly realised that they 'have to outreach' and address the anti-Muslim discourse: 'every-one realised we all have to be part of the

solution' (quoted in Peucker and Akbarzadeh 2014: 162).

While there had been interfaith and cross-community dialogue initiatives well before the tragic 9/11 events (Jonker 2005), their numbers skyrocketed since then in many Western societies, including Australia. There are now countless local – and a number of more prominent regional or nationwide – dialogue activities, bringing together representatives from all three Abrahamic faiths. This involves mosques as well as other Islamic faith-based organisations. Mosques have been increasingly eager to open their doors inviting non-Muslim fellow citizens to come and ask questions about Islam. These Open Door initiatives, which in the Australian context started in the early 2000s (actually just before the 9/11 attacks) have attracted many members of the wider community who use these opportunities to learn about Islam and to enter into a dialogue (Peucker and Akbarzadeh 2014: 163).

Mosques have been increasingly eager to open their doors inviting non-Muslim fellow citizens to come and ask questions about Islam.

Beyond these mosque activities, civically committed Muslims have set up a range of new Muslim community organisations, many of them affiliated with the global *Hizmet* (or *Gülen*) movement, particularly concerned with promoting education and dialogue with the mainstream community (Yükleyen and Yurdakul 2011).

Two surveys among mosques, one conducted in Germany (Halm and Sauer 2012) and one in New South Wales (NSW) (Underabi 2014), offer empirical evidence demonstrating that such cross-community

and interfaith dialogue initiatives have become important elements of many mosques' activity profiles. The German survey of over 1,100 mosques found that more than 60 per cent of the examined mosques are actively involved in interfaith dialogue initiatives. The NSW study among 50 mosques in and around Sydney revealed that 58 per cent of surveyed mosques run interfaith programs and 56 per cent hold Mosque Open Door events; moreover, 54 per cent of them stated that they are involved in mainstream 'community service activities' like Breast Cancer Awareness Month (Underabi 2014: 35).

Advocacy, media and political consultation

The active role in providing welfare and settlement support and engaging in cross-community dialogue initiatives indicates that many Muslim community organisations have become 'ordinary' stakeholders and actors within diverse civil societies. Against this backdrop, it is not surprising that they, like many other civil society groups, have also taken on advocacy tasks, representing and lobbying for their community vis-à-vis the media and policymakers (Amath 2015). This is not an entirely new component of Muslim community organisations' activity profile, but it has become more prominent over the past two decades in many Western countries, including Australia.

Muslim organisations have ramped up their efforts to make their voices heard in the public and political sphere.

As mentioned above, in Australia, for example, Muslim community organisations who received government grants-in-aid support for their welfare service provision have also been expected 'to act as intermediaries who could speak on behalf of their community' (Peucker and Akbarzadeh 2014: 148). Moreover, in many countries, Muslim community organisations have been dragged into the public arena as they engaged and negotiated with local government, for example, in the context of mosque building applications and the establishment of Islamic schools (Humphrey 2001: 41; see also Nielsen 2004).

Notwithstanding these early forms of advocacy work, Muslim organisations have ramped up their efforts to make their voices heard in the public and political sphere as the 'media-security nexus' (O'Loughlin and Gillespie 2012) shifted more towards securitisation and domestication (Humphrey 2009), aggravating the stigmatisation of Muslim communities and fuelling Islamophobia. Simultaneously, national governments have come to the realisation that they would not be able to achieve their political goals around 'integrating Islam' unless they entered into direct negotiations and cooperation with representatives of Muslim communities. This has created new advocacy and lobbying avenues for certain, often government hand-picked, Muslim community organisations, but it also put them at risk of being used in a rubber stamp exercise for governments, giving legitimacy to a political agenda that fundamentally differs from their own (Peucker and Akbarzadeh 2014).

The range of advocacy work performed by Muslim community organisations in the West is vast and differs from country to country. It includes active involvement in public demonstrations, participating in government-led consultations or advisory boards of various institutions, and engaging in media and public relations work (Peucker 2016). Various Muslim community organisations have (co-)organised public protests to express political views and

frustration within segments of the Muslim community, rallying, to name just a few examples, for a humane refugee policy, against racism or anti-Muslim bigotry, or calling for foreign policy changes or an alternative to globalisation (Peace 2015). One of most outstanding examples world-wide was the British *Stop the War* protests against the US-led war in Afghanistan (2001) and the 2003 invasion of Iraq (Peucker and Akbarzadeh 2014: 132-133). These mass anti-war protests – the largest protests in British history – were co-organised by the Muslim Association of Britain (MAB), and they were highly significant for they created 'new moral communities that transcended ethnic and religious differences' and contributed to 'transforming ideas of citizenship' (Geaves 2005: 73) among Muslims in the UK.

Active media engagement and intervention (Dreher 2003, 2010) has also become a key activity pursued in one way or another by a growing number of Muslim community organisations in Australia and elsewhere. While in many countries mosques seem to be lagging behind in this realm, other Muslim community groups have been leading the way (Peucker and Akbarzadeh 2014). Tanja Dreher (2010) identified a series of media intervention strategies, in particular aimed at tackling Islamophobia and public misconceptions of Muslims.

Active media engagement and intervention has also become a key activity pursued in one way or another by a growing number of Muslim community organisations in Australia and elsewhere.

These strategies include rather reactive PR work (e.g. publishing media releases) as well as active contributions to the media (e.g. media commentaries, interviews, letters to editor), media training for other community members, and liaising and cooperating with journalists.

While it remains difficult to accurately assess or quantify the extent to which Muslim community organisations are involved in these forms of advocacy, lobbying and public engagement activities, there is evidence that, in Australia and elsewhere, these activities have received increasing attention within many Muslim community organisations – despite often lacking resources. This is also supported by the recent emergence of a new generation of Muslim community groups whose prime activity focus is not on traditional community service but more on advocacy work, such as, for example, the Victoria-based Muslim Legal Network.

Mobilising effects on civic and political engagement

In addition to this range of services and activities, recent research has examined the potentially mobilising effects of religious community organisations on Muslims' civic and political engagement. This resonates with well-established theoretical and empirical accounts on the empowering and facilitating impact voluntary associations, including religious organisations, may have on their members' political and civic activism. Verba et al. (1995: 369), for example, prominently argue in their Civic Voluntarism Model that such civil society organisations tend to increase their members' inclination and capacity to become politically active in three ways. First, these civil society organisations, including religious associations, foster civic skills among their members, which are important also for political participation (e.g. communication and organisational

skills) (Foner and Alba 2008: 364–365). Second, they may directly encourage their members to become politically active (e.g. by calling upon them to vote). And third, these organisations may indirectly encourage political participation through 'political stimuli', like discussions about politics, which then increases people's interest and propensity to become active (Verba et al. 1995: 369).

...such civil society organisations tend to increase their members' inclination and capacity to become politically active in three ways.

Verba and his colleagues did not examine mosques in particular, but there is nothing to suggest their elaborations would not similarly apply to Islamic (religious or faith-based) community organisations. A large study of mosques across the US, based on 524 interviews with mosque representatives, underscored not only the social inclusivist attitude among mosques, with 98 per cent of the interviewed mosque leaders agreeing that Muslims should be involved in American institutions. But 91 per cent of them also agreed (71 per cent agreed strongly) that 'Muslims should participate in the American political process' (Bagby 2012: 20).[4] Similar, though slightly lower approval rates were recorded among mosque leaders in NSW, with 92 per cent of them agreeing that 'Muslims should be involved in Australian civic institutions' and 72 per cent stating that 'Muslims should participate in the Australian political process' (Underabi 2014: 44).

[4] Only among the overall very small number of Salafi mosques there was widespread opposition to Muslims' political participation in the US (Bagby 2012: 22).

Several empirical studies have found evidence for the political mobilisation effect of mosque attendance or active involvement. Jamal (2005) was among the first scholars who empirically demonstrated, based on a survey of 335 Muslim Americans in the New York area, that 'levels of mosque participation are directly associated with higher levels of political activity' (2005: 527), defined as non-electoral political participation (e.g. contacting media or politician, signing petition, attended political rally, volunteered for political candidate, active member of political party). On closer inspection, this association only applied to Arab Muslims, but not to African American or Asian Muslims in Jamal's sample. A few years later, Ayers and Hofstetter (2008) found in their statistical analysis of a survey among 1,846 American Muslims that their religious commitment, operationalised as mosque attendance, prayer and (religious) volunteering, is significantly positively associated with their political participation (2008: 17). In the British context, McAndrew and Sobolewska similarly conclude that Muslims who frequently attend mosques are 'overall more likely to engage in mainstream British politics given rates for engagement among British Muslims which are already high' (2015: 69).

The Dutch researchers Fleischmann and colleagues (2016) conducted a study on the effects of mosque attendance on participation in ethno-religious ('co-ethnic') and mainstream civil society organisations and on electoral participation (voting intention). The survey sample encompassed more than 2,000 people of Turkish as well as Moroccan background. The researchers found that for Turkish (Muslim) participants mosque attendance correlated significantly positively with civic participation in mainstream organisation *and* in 'co-ethnic' organisations, and that 'both forms of organizational participation

were positively related to voting intentions' (Fleischmann et al. 2016: 757). Given that these two forms of civic participation (mainstream and co-ethnic) do not seem to be linked, the authors conclude that 'co-ethnic and mainstream organizations fulfil the same mobilizing role within the Turkish community when it comes to intentions to vote' (ibid.). Direct positive effects of service attendance on voting intentions were not found for Moroccan Muslims. However, mosque attendance for them also positively correlated with higher rates of civic participation in both co-ethnic and mainstream organisations. Both types of organisational engagement significantly increased their political trust, which in turn leads to higher levels of voting intentions.

Muslims' active engagement within their religious community organisations have civically empowering effects that often spill over into political participation and increased civic engagement also outside Muslim community boundaries.

Another recent research study on active citizenship of Muslims in Australia and Germany (Peucker 2016) pursued a different methodological approach. While it did not generate statistically representative insights into Muslims' civic and political participation, the in-depth interviews with 30 civically active Muslims empirically explored how Muslims, who tend to begin their civic engagement within a Muslim community organisation, eventually move into forms of political participation. This pathway from civic Muslim community-based engagement to political activism, which was particularly prominent in the Australian sample, often followed a typical pattern: Active Muslims have worked tirelessly as volunteers within mosques or faith-based grassroots organisations, which would continuously increase their public profile as community activist and representative; many of them moved into leadership positions within the Muslim community organisations. This enhanced public profile and recognition tends to transcend community boundaries, and these Muslim figures find themselves – often unwittingly – in the arena of political participation as they are invited by government representatives to act as intermediaries, to provide policy feedback or sit on advisory boards, committees or other institutional platforms of political decision-making (Peucker 2016: 161-168).

Overall, the empirical evidence leaves little doubt that Muslims' active engagement within their religious community organisations have civically empowering effects that often spill over into political participation and increased civic engagement also outside Muslim community boundaries. These mobilising effects point to another way in which Muslim community organisations contribute to fostering social cohesion, adding to the above outlined key services in the area of welfare and settlement, interfaith outreach, and advocacy.

5. SURVEY FINDINGS: MUSLIM COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS IN VICTORIA

Altogether 68 Muslim community organisations participated in the study. In the first section of this chapter, some basic background information on these organisations will be presented, followed by a descriptive discussion of the various services offered by these organisations as well as their cooperation activities, target groups and goals.

Community organisations: types, location, structures

Almost half of the surveyed Muslim community organisations in this study described themselves as mosques or mosque associations. Other major types of organisations, according to respondents' self-description, were Muslim umbrella organisations (18), Islamic education organisations (15), and Muslim social and/or cultural organisations (14). Moreover, there were 13 Muslim youth

groups, eight Muslim women's groups as well as four Muslim university student associations and also four advocacy groups in the sample (Figure 1). It is important to mention that respondents could describe their organisation in more than one way – and many did. There were, for example, a series of mosque associations that also consider themselves umbrella organisations. A number of organisations that described themselves in 'other' ways, outside the given response options, were, for example, Islamic charity organisations.

Most Muslim community organisations are relatively young, with one half (34) established after the year 2000 and a further 14 between 1996 and 2000. There are, however, also some organisations with a much longer history; six of them, for example, were founded in the early 1970s (Figure 2). Interpreting the setting up of community organisations as a sign of civic engagement and commitment to playing a role in a diverse civil society, these figures suggest growing civic activism among Muslim communities in Victoria, especially since the mid-1990s.

Figure 1: Type of Muslim community organisation (self-description)
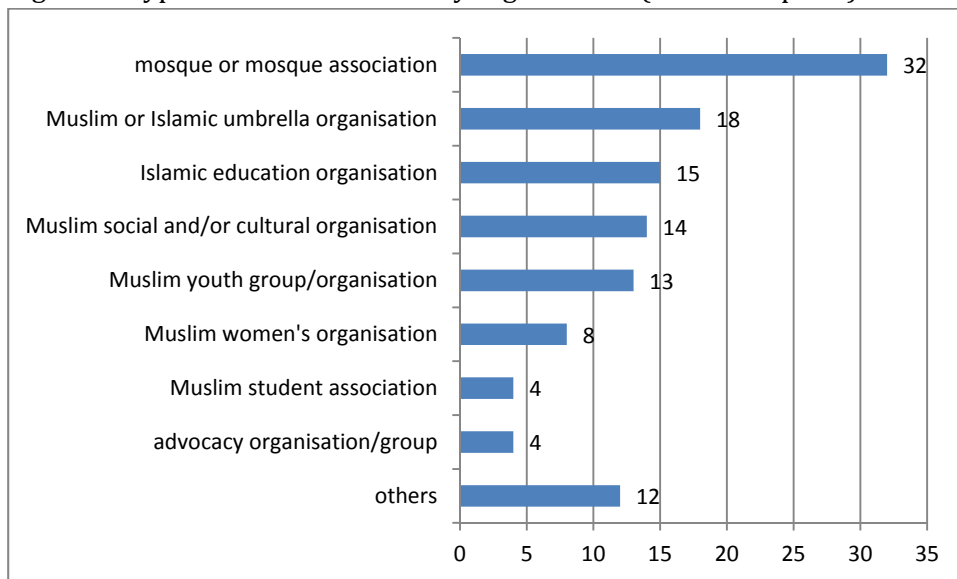
N=68 (multiple responses)

Figure 2: Year of foundation
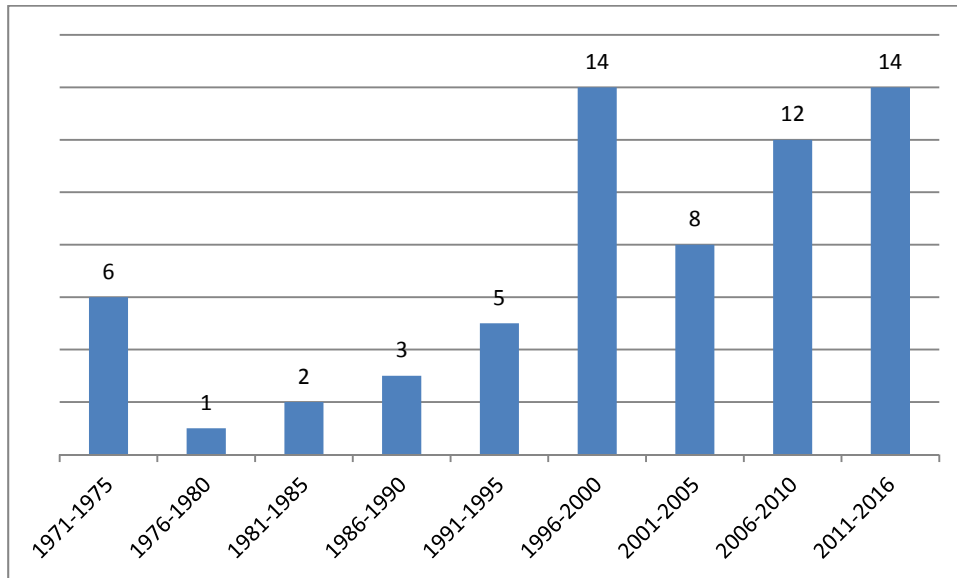
N=65; (missing=3; one of them stated 'late 1970s or early 1980s)

Given that the vast majority of Muslims in Victoria live in Greater Melbourne, it is not surprising that most Muslim community organisations are located in metropolitan Melbourne (62). Four stated they are based in regional centres in Victoria and two have their offices in rural Victoria.

The majority of almost 60 per cent of Muslim community organisations (N=40) do not have any paid staff or employees (Figure 3), and are run by volunteers only. Of those organisations that do have paid staff, 24 provided more information about the number of employees (the remaining four organisations did not know the number): Half of them (12) have between one and five paid staff (part or full-time). Seven organisations have been six and 15 employees, and four organisations estimated their total staff to be over 20 (Figure 4). A breakdown by type of organisation shows that two thirds of Islamic umbrella organisations have paid staff, while this applies to around 38 percent of mosques in Victoria. For Muslim youth, students and women's groups or Islamic education organisation the proportion of those who have paid staff is even lower (often around 20 per cent or less).

Muslim community organisations in Victoria rely heavily on active contributions of volunteers. There was not a single community organisation that does not have any 'community members who work or help out … voluntarily'. Sixty-two respondents estimated the number of volunteers in their organisation (the others 'did not know'); among those, 52 respondents[5] gave a general figure ranging from two to 100.

There was not a single community organisation that does not have any 'community members who work or help out … voluntarily'.

Most Muslim community groups have between 6 and 20 community members regularly helping out as volunteers (Figure 5). The total average is estimated to be around 15 volunteers per organisation.

---

[5] The other responses referred to the number of volunteers 'per week' (ranging between 5 and 25) or 'per year' (100 or over 200).

Figure 3: Staff
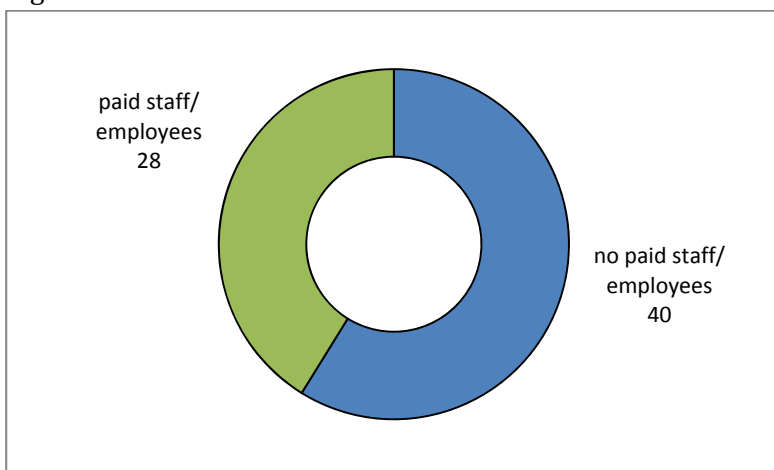
N=68

Figure 4: Number of paid staff/employees (estimated)
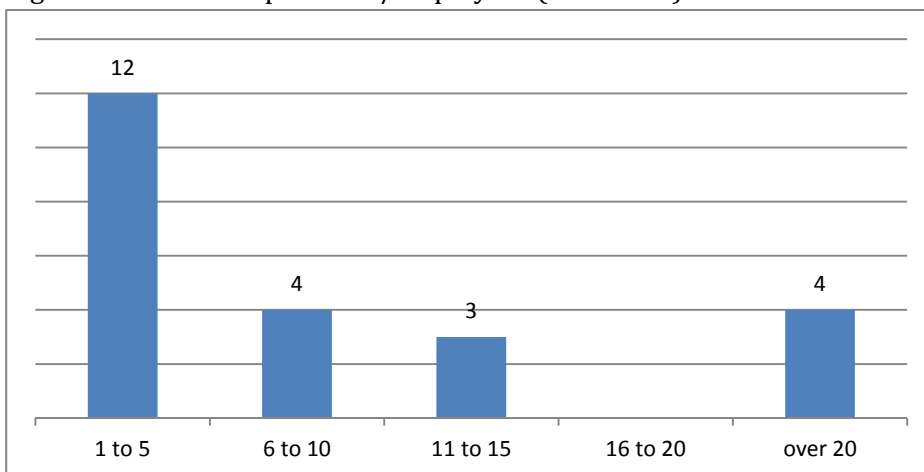
N=23 (one response missing; stated that organisation has 15 staff *including* those in Sydney)

Figure 5: Number of volunteers (estimated)
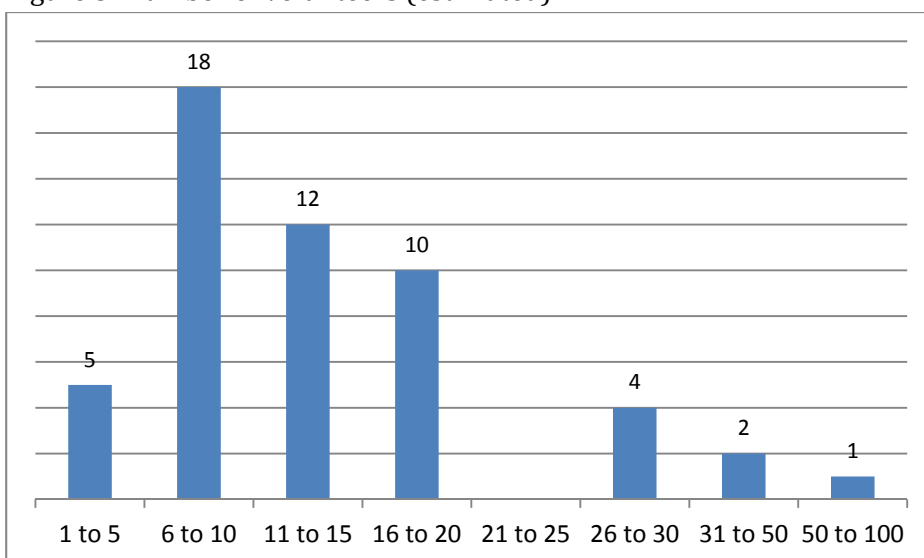
N=52 (missing=16)

Respondents were asked whether their organisation has any internal units, working groups or departments for specific groups within the community like, for example, youth, women, or seniors. Having such internal sub-structures can generally be seen as an indicator for a higher level of institutionalisation and, to some extent, professionalisation. Almost half of all organisations in the sample do not have such sub-structures (33). Among the other 35 Muslim organisations, the majority have internal units specifically for women (28) and/or for children or youth (mixed girls and boys, 22). Sixteen have set up internal units or departments for boys and young men only, and 11 for girls and young women only. Sub-units specifically for seniors (6), parents (4) and men only (2) are less common (Figure 6). Almost 60 per cent of mosques in Victoria have set up such organisational substructures for specific groups, most commonly for women, boys/young men and/or gender-mixed youth groups.

Figure 6: Internal units or departments for specific target groups
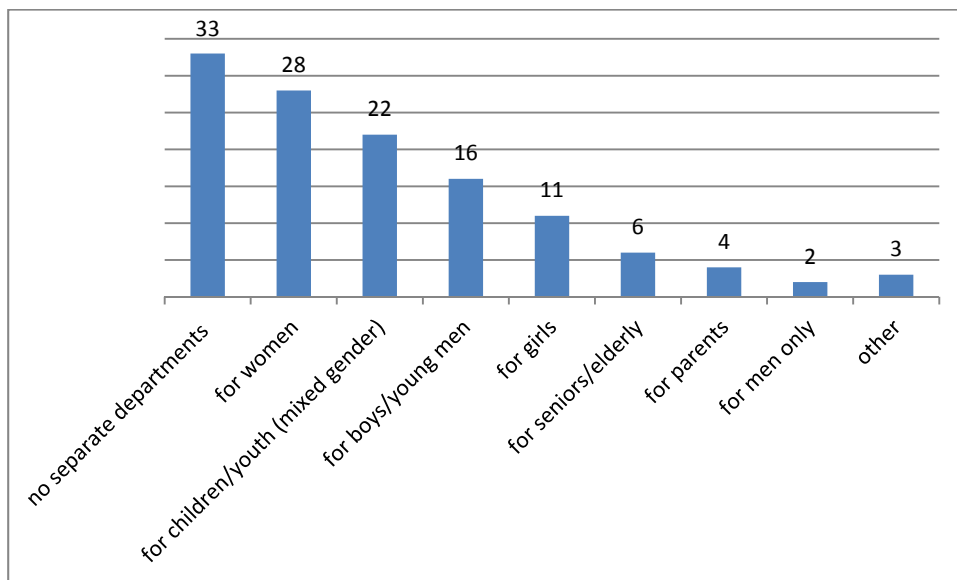
N=68; multiple responses (for those who do have separate departments)

Reach and target groups: who makes use of the services?

The spatial concentration of Muslim community organisations in Melbourne affects the organisations' reach. Asked where those who typically use their services come from, half of the respondents stated that they reach Muslims from across Melbourne, while 14 are mainly focussed on serving their local neighbourhood only. The remaining 20 organisations reach people from across Victoria (9) or even from across Australia (and in some cases also beyond) (Figure 7). As participants were supposed to tick only one box and only the 'widest' response category was considered, it is noteworthy that those with a broader reach (e.g. across Victoria) may also, or even pre-dominantly, reach people from Melbourne or from their *local* neighbourhood.

Muslim community organisations in Victoria differ broadly in terms of the number of people they reach with their services – from 60 people a year to many hundreds or even several thousand a week; some give even higher numbers pointing to

those who use their online services worldwide or attend large events. Some respondents gave a general figure, while others specified the number of people their organisation reaches per week, per month, per semester or per year. Due to these inconsistencies in the responses, it is difficult to paint a clear picture of these organisations' reach. Figures 8.1 and 8.2, however, offer some tentative insights.

Figure 7: Reach of service provisions
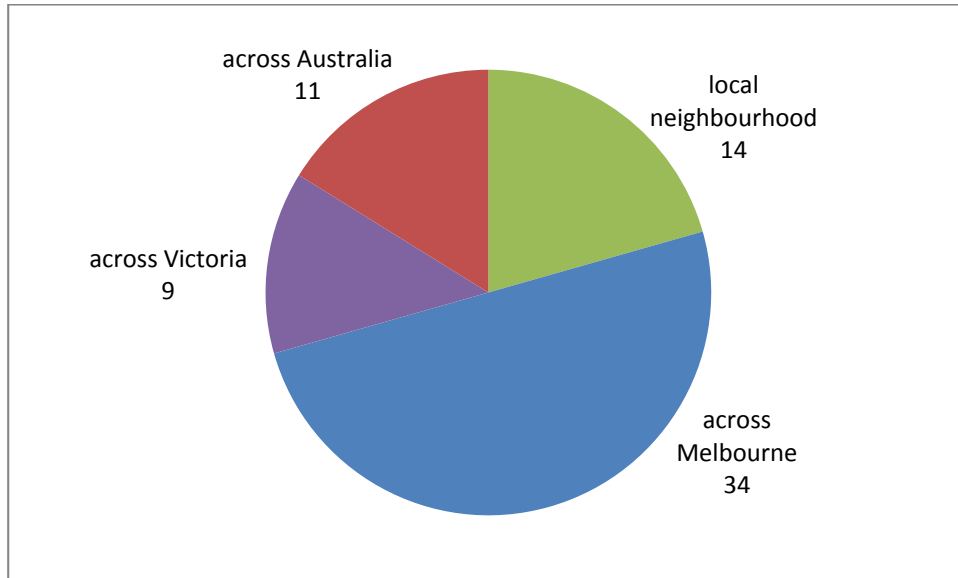
N=68 (only 'widest' reach category was recorded)

Figure 8.1: People reached (general)
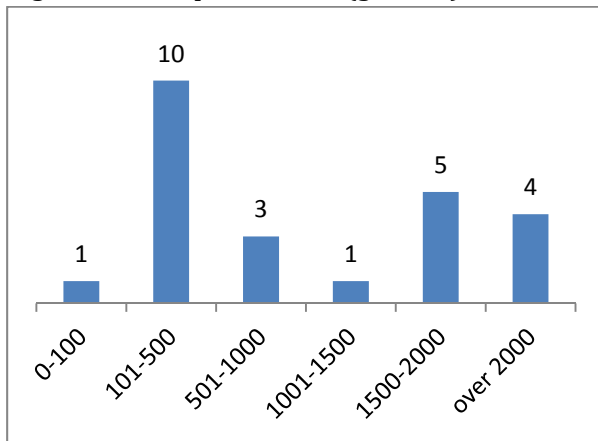
N=24

Figure 8.2: People reached weekly/annually
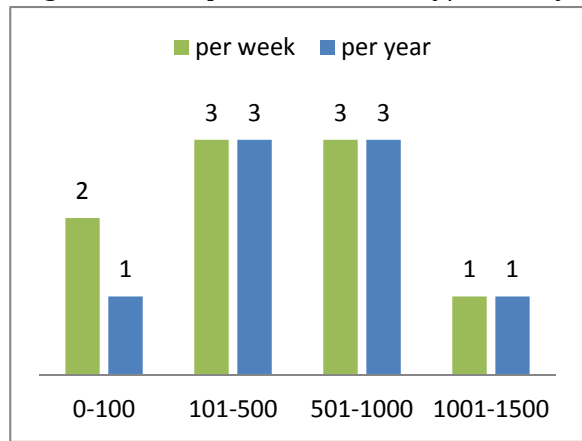
N (peer week)=9; N (per year)=8

More than 60 per cent of Muslim community organisations in Victoria described themselves as multi-ethnic, stating that there is not one dominant cultural or ethnic group among those that participate in their activities and benefit from their services. Among the remaining 24 community organisations, nine reach Muslims of predominantly Turkish background and further eight serve primarily certain groups of African origin, such as Somali, Oromo or Hararian Muslims. Moreover, there are a few Muslim community organisations that reach mainly Muslims of South-East Asian origin (e.g. Indonesian) and those from Afghanistan and Pakistan (Figure 9).

The majority of mosques (59%) and Islamic umbrella organisations (66%) in Victoria are not focussed on one particular ethnic or cultural community, and Muslim student associations and Muslim advocacy groups are all multi-ethnic, while Muslim youth and women's groups predominantly target specific ethnic or cultural sub-populations, typically those of Turkish heritage.

...over three quarters of them describe the wider community as being one of their main target groups they want to reach with their services.

The multifaceted activity profile (see below) resonates with the key target groups Muslim community organisations seek to reach. While most services target Muslim community members, the general openness of the surveyed organisations and their activities is demonstrated by the fact that over three quarters of them describe the wider community as being one of their main target groups they want to reach with their services. Moreover, half of the community organisations try to reach, often in addition to their general clientele, specifically Muslim youth (33) and Muslim women or girls (16), respectively. It is worth highlighting that a particularly high proportion of mosques in Victoria (27 out of 32; 84 per cent) stated that they consider the wider community to be one of their main target groups (Figure 10).

Figure 9: Predominant ethnic-cultural background
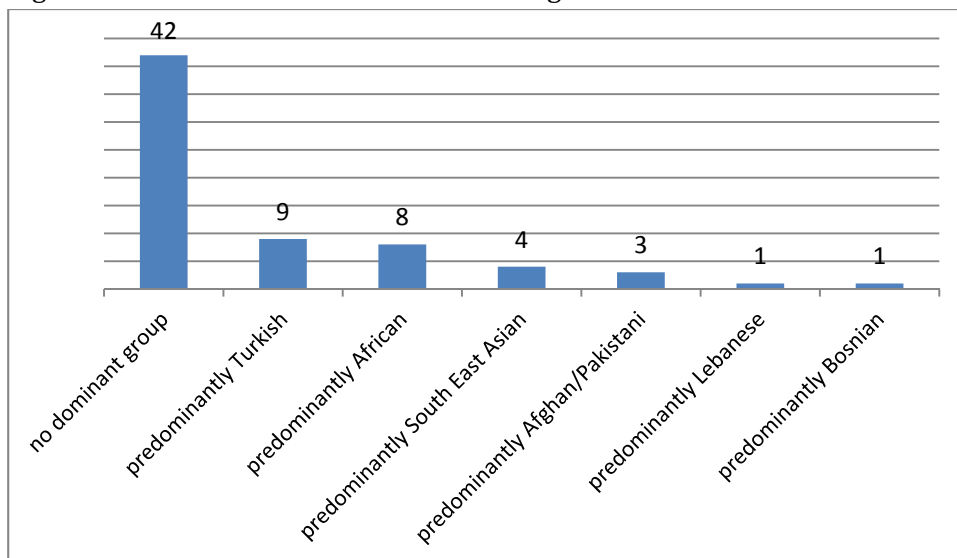
N=68 ('others' responses re-categorised)

Figure 10: Main target groups
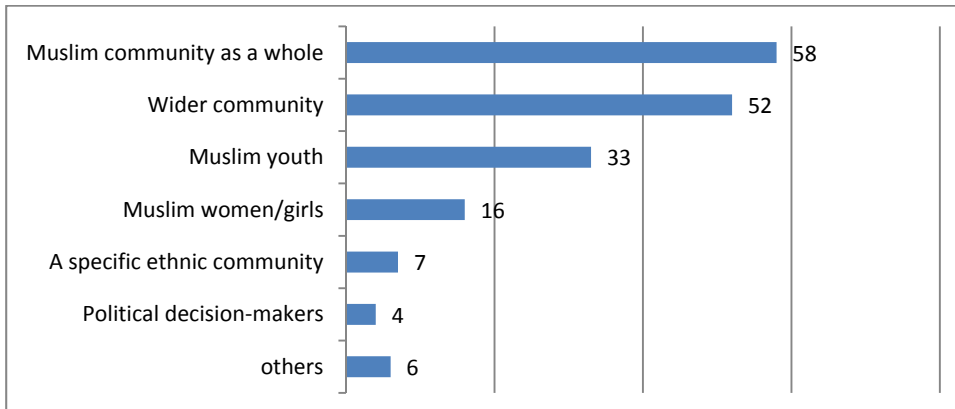
N=68 (multiple responses)

Services and activities

The survey findings confirm that most Muslim community organisations in Victoria are multi-purpose community hubs offering a range of services to Muslims and often also to non-Muslims. While 32 of the total of 68 community organisations describe themselves as mosques, 61 of them offer religious services. Cross-community outreach activities (58), education and teaching services (55), various leisure or recreational activities (55) and community welfare and other counselling services (51) are also offered by the vast majority of Muslim community organisations in Victoria. Just over one quarter of the Muslim community organisations (19) consider themselves politically active, stating that they are involved in lobbying and advocacy work (Figure 11).

Figure 11: General activity profile
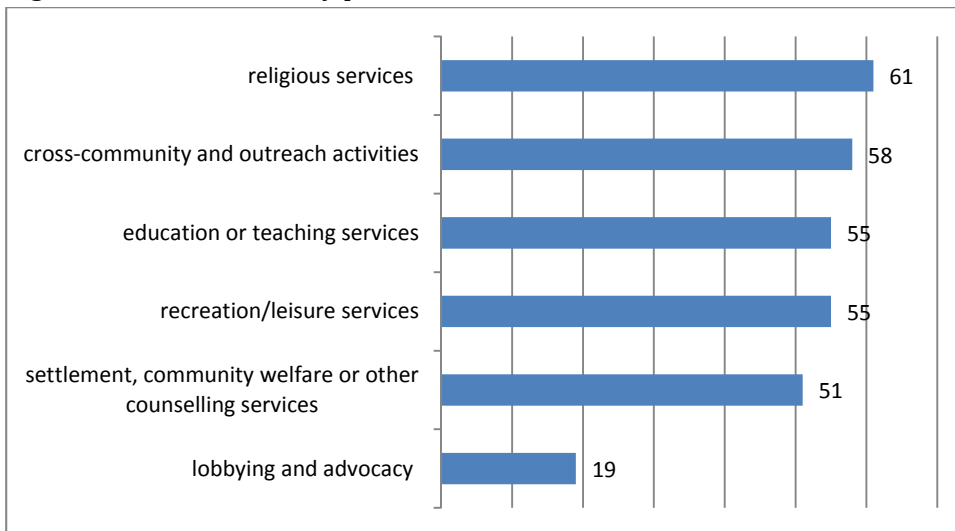
N=68 (multiple responses)

Religious services

Most Muslim community organisations provide religious services for their community members. They run daily prayers (43) and Friday prayers (40), hold Iftar (46) and major religious celebrations, like Eid (44), collect *Zakat* (alms-giving, 42) and offer general religious counselling (43). Funeral services and supporting Muslims in their preparation for the *haji* (pilgrimage to Mecca) are less common but are still provided by almost one third of Muslim community organisations in Victoria (Figure 12; for more details on frequency of these services, see Figure 12.A in the appendix A1). In addition, several organisations mentioned other services, most commonly, holding Islamic marriage celebrations (9). What applies to many Muslim community organisations is that these religious services attract more people than any of their other services, with often hundreds or even several thousands of Muslims attending of making use of these religious services every week.

Figure 12: Religious services
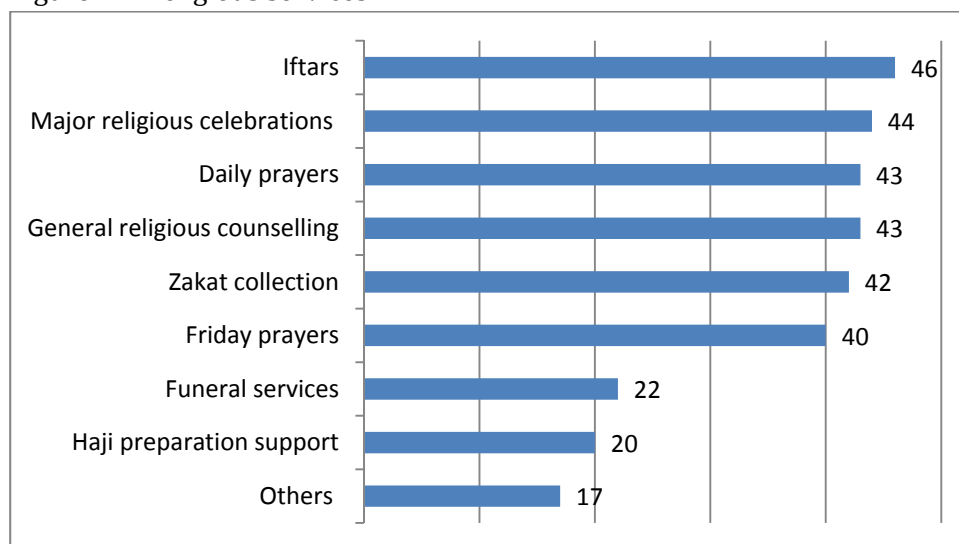
N=68 (multiple responses)

Cross-community and outreach activities

The second most common type of services provided by Muslim community organisations in Victoria are cross-community and outreach activities, with over 85 per cent of them offering initiatives and services in this area. Many regularly hold public lectures (often on a weekly basis), commonly cooperate with non-Muslim community groups (typically several times a year) and hold Open Door events (often daily) (Figure 13). More than half of all Muslim community groups are actively involved in interfaith dialogue initiatives, many of them several times a year or even on a weekly or monthly basis (for details on frequency, see Figure 13A in appendix A1). Moreover, around half of them are in regular contact or regularly cooperate with local councils and participate in mainstream community events such as Clean up Australia, Breast Cancer Awareness Day, or White Ribbon Day. More than a third of Muslim community organisations mentioned dialogue and cooperation activities with state or federal government representative, cooperation with the police, organising public information stands, and running information sessions for or at schools.

These outreach and cross-community activities tend to be very popular, reaching a large number of people, assumedly, given the nature of these activities, both Muslims and non-Muslims. According to the respondents' estimations, their organisations' services in this area reach several hundreds or, in many cases, even thousands of people every year.

Figure 13: Cross-community and outreach activities
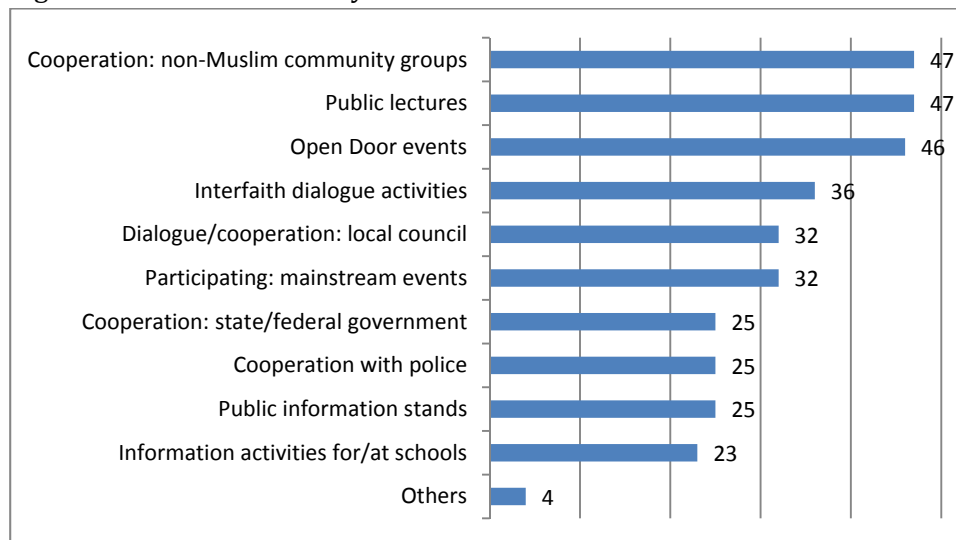
N=68 (multiple responses)

Education and teaching services

Another set of key services, provided by over 80 per cent of Muslim community organisations in Victoria, is related to education and teaching. This is a rather broad area including both religious and non-religious education offers (Figure 14; Figure 14A in the appendix A1). The former dominate the educational activities, with Quran classes for adults (42) and religious education programs for children, such as weekend/Sunday schools (36), being particularly popular services. Other commonly offered education-related services are leadership/empowerment and capacity building programs, typically offered several times a year, study tours/groups, trainings aimed at improving participants' job opportunities and employability and tutoring for high school students. A small number of Muslim community organisations run their own media training, civic courses, English classes or IT training.

Muslim community organisations differ enormously in terms of the estimated number of people they reach with these education and teaching services, generally ranging from 20 or 30 to over 500. Very few reach more than a thousand or, as in one case, up to 10,000 people every year.

Figure 14: Education and teaching services

Service	Value
Qu'ran classes for adults	42
religious education for children	36
leadership/capacity building programs	28
Arabic classes	28
study tours/groups	24
training: improving job opportunities	20
tutoring (high school) student	15
media training	10
civic courses	6
English classes	5
IT training	4
diploma	3
Others	13
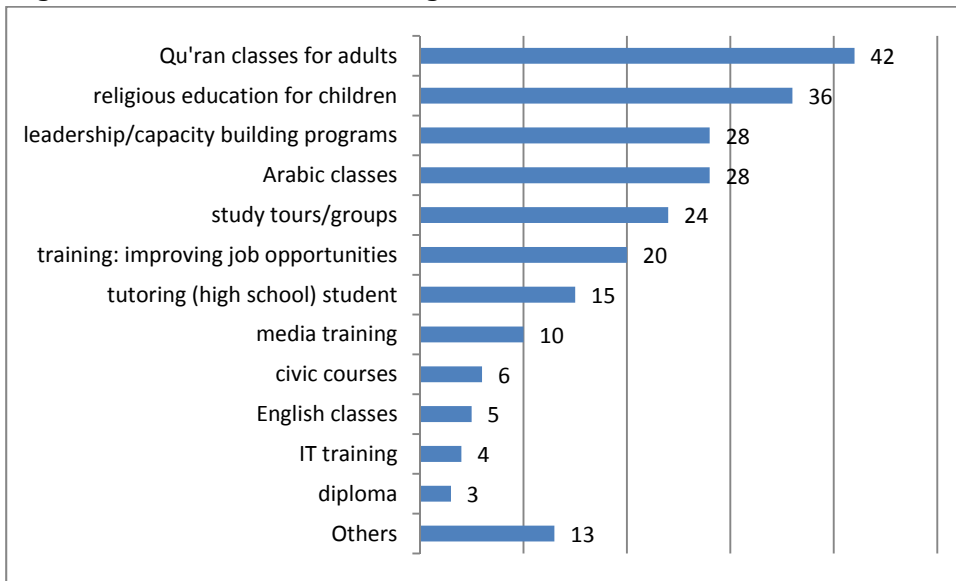
N=68 (multiple responses)

Recreation and leisure services

Eight out of ten Muslim community organisations in Victoria run social, recreational and leisure time activities, most commonly BBQs and picnics (45), various sport programs (42), youth camps (38), and cultural festivals (38) (Figure 15). Most of these programs and services are offered several times a year or monthly; Muslim youth camps are typically organised once or several times a year (Figure 15A in the appendix A1). Four out of ten organisations regularly offer excursions, while craft, cooking or arts classes or music and dance classes are less common (13 and 6 respectively).

The number of people that attend or participate in these activities depends largely on the kind of event, often amounting to around 100 to up to a thousand per event. The estimated number of people Muslim community organisations reach every year with these leisure and recreation services generally range between several hundreds to several thousands.

Figure 15: Recreation and leisure services

Service	Value
BBQs/picnics	45
Sport programs	42
Youth camps	38
Cultural festivals/events	38
Excursions	28
Craft/cooking/arts classes	13
Music/dance classes	6
Family/birthday parties	4
Others	5
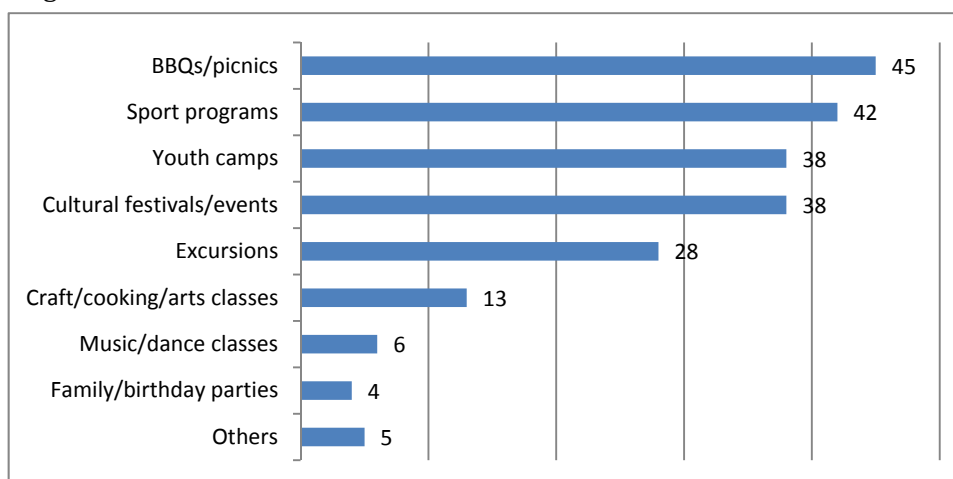
N=68 (multiple responses)

Settlement, community welfare and counselling services

Three quarters of Muslim community organisations in Victoria provide settlement support, community welfare and counselling services for their community; the support or counselling offers of almost all of them are also open for non-Muslims. The most common types in the area of counselling and welfare services are youth work/mentoring (41) and parent/family counselling (40), followed by marriage, financial, domestic violence/abuse and unemployment/career related counselling, which are offered by around half of all Muslim community organisations. Moreover, counselling related to drugs and alcohol abuse (31), settlement assistance (25) and services for homeless people (20) are provided by a substantial number of Muslim community organisations, while health services and legal support are rather uncommon (Figure 16). In contrast to most other activities, welfare and counselling services are predominantly provided on a daily or weekly basis (Figure 16A in the appendix A1).

The number of people who use the services of a particular community organisation ranges between 10 or 15 to around 300 a week. The estimated annual reach is usually between 50 and 500; one organisation reaches several thousand every year with their community welfare and counselling services alone. Given the time-consuming nature of these often personal counselling services, it is not surprising that the number of people or clients is smaller than those reached with other more collective activities provided by Muslim community organisations (e.g. ritual prayers or religious celebrations).

Figure 16: Settlement, community welfare and counselling services

Youth work, youth mentoring	41
Parent/family counselling and services	40
Support/counselling offers for non-Muslims	39
Marriage counselling	36
Domestic abuse/violence counselling	34
Financial counselling	34
Unemployment/career related counselling	33
Drug and alcohol counselling	31
Settlement assistance	25
Homeless service	20
Health service	9
Legal support	9
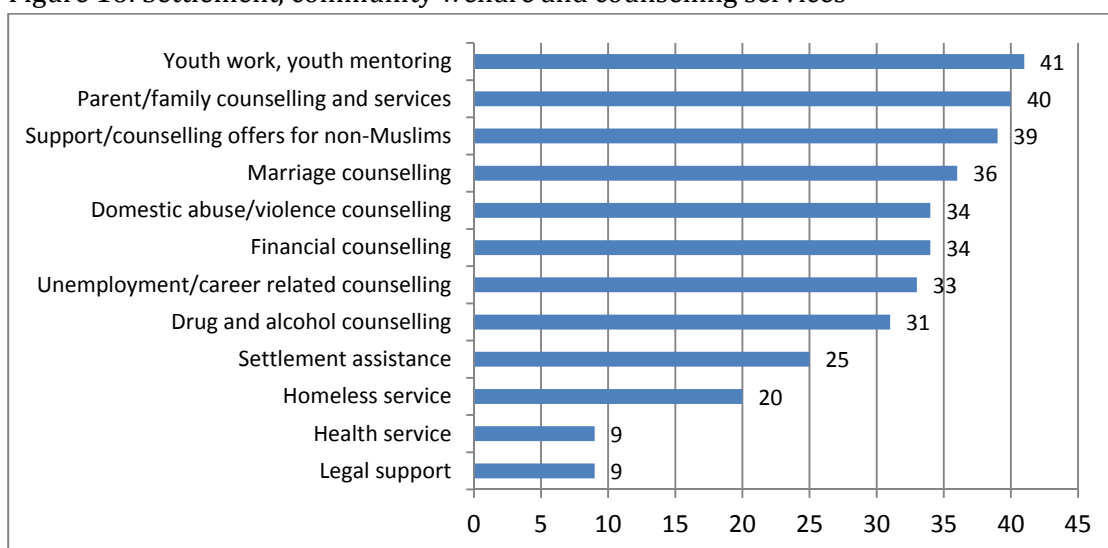
N=68 (multiple responses)

Lobbying and advocacy activities

Lobbying work and advocacy activities fare significantly lower on the list of service provisions. Just over one quarter of Muslim community organisations are active in this realm. The most commonly mentioned activity (N=18) is Public Relations and active media work, including, for example, giving media interviews and writing press releases. Moreover, 12 organisations described it as one of their advocacy activities to encourage their members to become politically active. Other political lobbying and advocacy services are: organising public demonstrations or petitions; preparing and submitting political submissions; and involvement in advisory work for governments (Figure 17, Figure 17A in the appendix A1). Despite the rather small number of organisations involved in advocacy and lobbying, it is noteworthy that many of those who mentioned this kind of political work are highly active: Around 18 percent (N=12) of Muslim community organisations in Victoria are regularly involved in three or more different types of political lobbying and advocacy.

Figure 17: Lobbying and advocacy activities

PR and media work	18
Encouraging members to become politically active	12
Organising public demonstrations or petitions	9
Preparing political submissions	9
Advisory activities for governments	8
Others	1
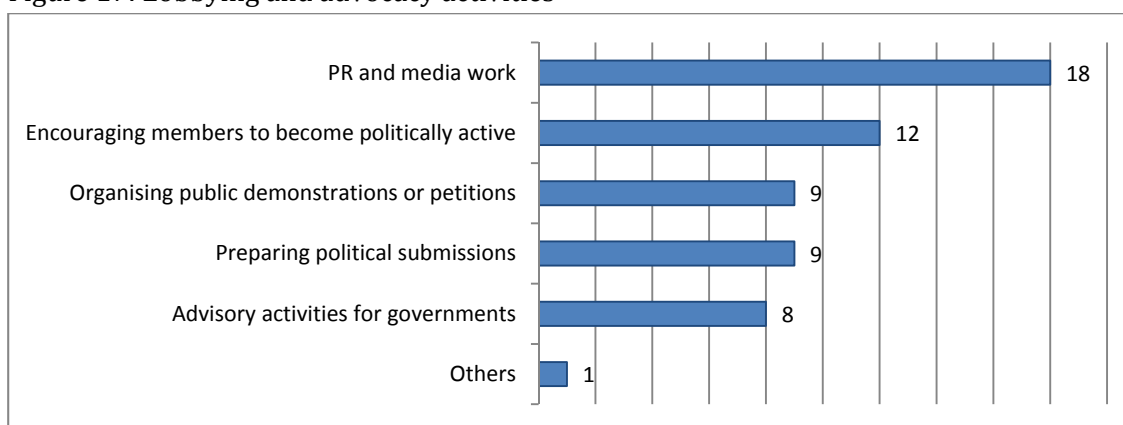
N=68 (multiple responses)

Cooperation activities

Muslim community organisations in Victoria are well connected with other Muslim and many non-Muslim groups and institutions. All but one participating organisations confirmed that they have cooperated in one way or another with different Muslim *and* non-Muslim groups – most of them quite regularly ('sometimes'); and not a single one of them stated they cooperated exclusively with other Muslim groups.

Almost all participating organisations cooperate with mosques and other Muslim community groups. These intra-community cooperation typically occur either 'often' or 'sometimes'. The third most common type of cooperation partners are non-Muslim faith-based groups (e.g. church groups), followed by the state-wide Muslim umbrella organisation, Islamic Council of Victoria. All other cooperation partners mentioned by the respondents are not Muslim community groups but mainstream and/or multicultural organisations and public institutions, the latter including also Islamic independent schools (Figure 18.1).

In order to better reflect the intensity of these interactions and collaborations, a cooperation index was calculated based on the frequency of these activities, taking into account whether collaborations occur often, sometimes or only rarely. This index (Figure 18.2) confirms strong intra-community interactions ('collective social capital', Tillie 2004) but also intensive cross-community cooperation especially with other faith-based groups, local councils, charities and other (non-religious) civil society organisations ('linking social capital', Woolcock 2001).

Figure 18.1: Contacts and cooperation
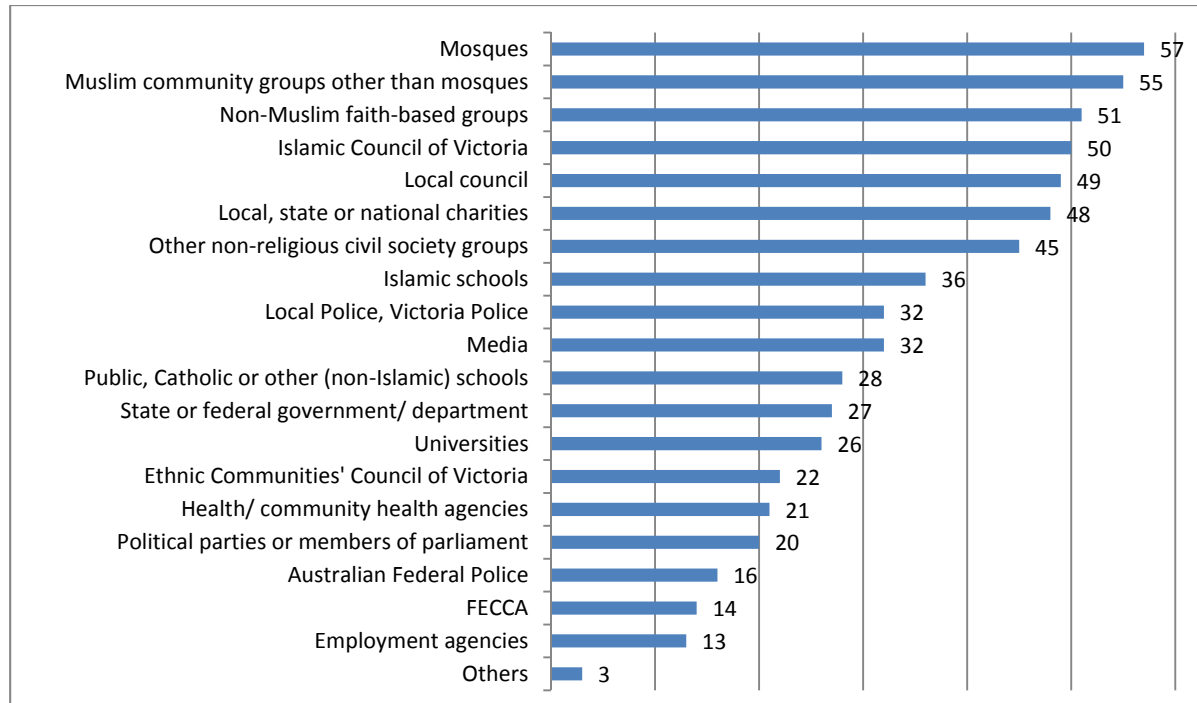
N=68 (multiple responses)

Figure 18.2: Cooperation Index

Mosques	127
Other Muslim community groups	124
Islamic Council of Victoria	104
Local council	96
Non-Muslim faith-based groups	93
Local, state or national charities	92
Other non-religious civil society groups	85
Islamic schools	71
Local Police, Victoria Police	60
Media	60
Universities	61
Public, Catholic or other (non-Islamic) schools	55
State or federal government/ department	53
Health/ community health agencies	41
Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria	35
Political parties or members of parliament	35
Australian Federal Police	34
Employment agencies	21
FECCA	17

N= 68; index calculate on the basis of frequency of cooperation (often=3; sometimes=2; rarely=1)

Goals and aspirations

Muslim community organisations in Victoria provide their services and run their activities with the intention to achieve a range of goals. The survey did not differentiate between goals that are formally endorsed by the organisation's leadership and those that are more informal; it also remains unclear as to whether the surveyed organisations have reached these goals and if so to what extent. In some cases, these goals may be deliberately and strategically pursued by the organisation, while in other cases, they may be more informal aspirations that may or may not have been put into practice in the daily operation of the organisation.

Notwithstanding this caveat, an overwhelming majority of Muslim community organisations in Victoria emphasised their commitment to strengthening an inclusive society. The aspirations that almost all organisations consider to be important or very important were:

- fostering Muslims' sense of belonging to the wider community,
- building bridges with the wider community,
- promoting social inclusion, and
- improving the public image of Islam and Muslims in Australia.

These 'wider community' oriented aspirations prevail, but they usually go hand in hand with those that focus more on Muslims' faith, identity, community connections and wellbeing. The goals of keeping Muslim youth out of trouble, improving Muslims' socioeconomic opportunities and empowering them to express their views and concerns are also commonly expressed, while the intention to mobilise Muslims to become politically active or the goal of contributing to the public debate are clearly less widespread (Figure 19.1). These findings are broadly confirmed by the calculated goal index, which takes into account as to whether a certain goal is considered 'very important' or 'important' (Figure 19.2).

Figure 19.1: Organisations' goals and aspirations (important or very important)

Fostering Muslims' sense of belonging to the wider community	65
Building bridges with the wider community	64
Promoting social inclusion	63
Improving the public image of Islam and Muslims in Australia	63
Strengthening Islamic faith, knowledge and/or identity	61
Increasing Muslims' general wellbeing (e.g. health, self-worth)	61
Strengthening relationships within the Muslim community	60
Keeping young Muslims out of trouble	58
Improving their socioeconomic opportunities	55
Empowering Muslims to express their views and concerns	55
Celebrating our cultural heritage	53
Encourageing Muslims to be politically active	50
Inviting others to Islam	50
Have a say in the public and political debate	48

N=68 (multiple responses); counts of those who stated 'very important' or important'

Figure 19.2: Organisations' goals and aspirations (index)

Fostering Muslims' sense of belonging to the wider community	126
Building bridges with the wider community	126
Improving the public image of Islam and Muslims in Australia	122
Promoting social inclusion	120
Strengthening Islamic faith, knowledge and/or identity	117
Increasing Muslims' general wellbeing (e.g. health, self-worth)	116
Strengthening relationships within the Muslim community	115
Keeping young Muslims out of trouble	114
Empowering Muslims to express their views and concerns	107
Improving their socioeconomic opportunities	103
Inviting others to Islam	98
Celebrating our cultural heritage	97
Have a say in the public and political debate	90
Encourageing Muslims to be politically active	85

N=68; index calculate on the basis of importance (very important=2; important=1)

Volunteering: beneficial active engagement

All Muslim community organisations in Victoria rely on community members who volunteer to help organise and run the various community services, regardless of whether they use the term 'volunteering' to describe their active community work (Madkhul 2007). Respondents in this study consistently maintain that actively involved community members benefit from their community engagement in multiple ways.

The vast majority of Muslim organisations in Victoria 'strongly' or 'somewhat' agree with *all* of the proposed statements on the various benefits for their volunteering community members (Figure 20.1). 'Improving their chances on the labour market' received the lowest approval rate, but still over three quarters described this as one of the positive effects of community engagement for their volunteers.

An index was calculated to highlight what positive impacts are considered to be

particularly strong and widespread (Figure 20.2). According to this index, the strongest effect is that community volunteers 'gain self-confidence and self-worth'; this is followed by 'making new friends' and 'expanding their social networks within the Muslim community', 'learning new skills', 'becoming more articulate and outspoken' and 'growing social networks outside the Muslim community'.

Figure 20.1: volunteering benefits
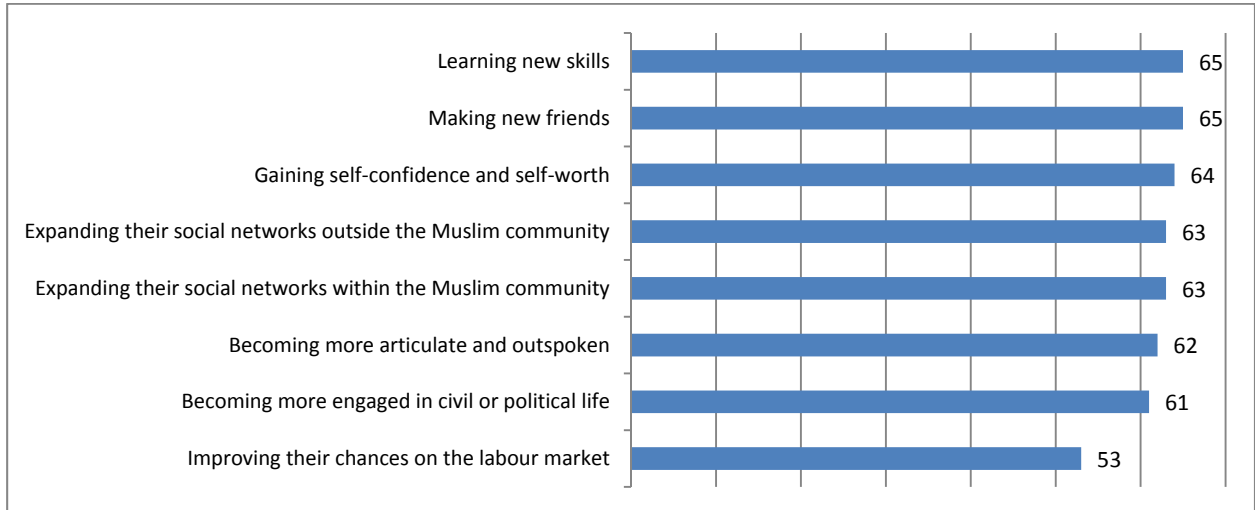
N=68 (multiple responses); counts of those that strongly agree and somewhat agree

Figure 20.2: volunteering benefits index
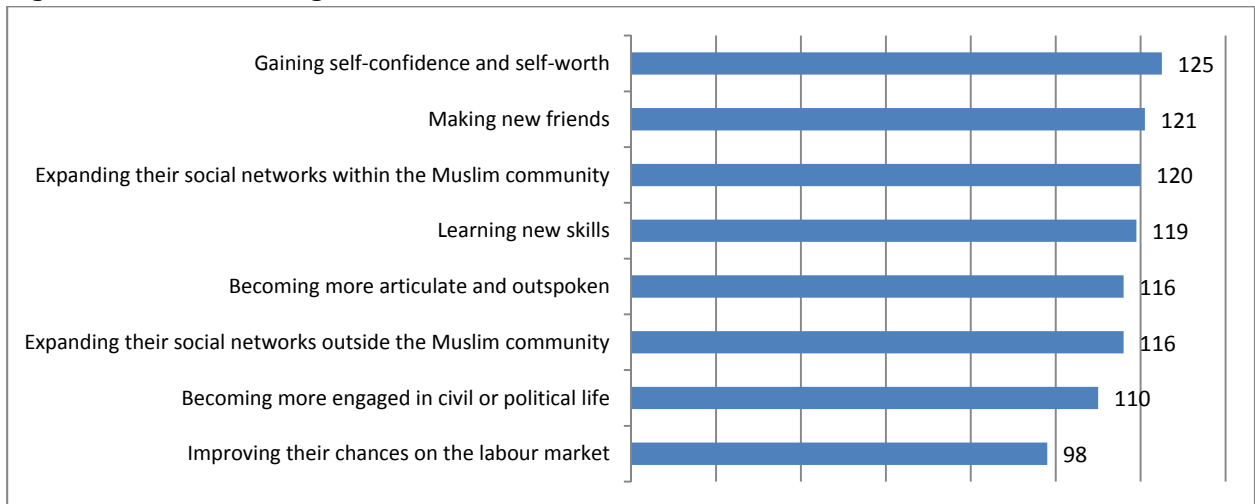
N=68; index calculate on the basis of degree of agreement (strongly agree=2; somewhat agree=1)

6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION: THE CIVIC POTENTIAL FOR PROMOTING SOCIAL COHESION

The empirical data collected for this study covers 68 Muslim community organisations in Victoria. This constitutes an estimated proportion of between 57 and 68 per cent of all such community groups across the state. Given the self-selective nature of the sample (i.e. organisations chose to participate in the survey or not), the findings cannot claim to be statistically representative of *all* Muslim community groups. The results are, however, representative for the majority of Muslim community organisations in Victoria, and they are suitable for drawing a tentative picture of the services, activities and goals of the Muslim community in Victoria more broadly.

Overall, the survey data analysis underscores that most mosques and other Muslim community organisations in Victoria are multi-functional community hubs with a strong cross-community activity and outreach profile. While catering for a range of needs of the Muslim community, including those related to their religious rituals and their everyday wellbeing, they offer their services within a well-connected social environment, characterised by a strong commitment to intercommunity dialogue and collaboration.

The key question of this study is whether, and in what ways, Muslim community organisations contribute to strengthening social cohesion in Victoria. In order to systematically examine this question, the following section uses as its reference Bernard's (1999: 20) and Markus and Kirpitchenko's (2007: 26) conceptualisation of social cohesion in three interconnected sphere and specific sub-dimensions within each of these sphere (Markus 2015: 12):

- *The economic sphere*, including factors such as economic mobility, unemployment and poverty rates, income distribution, equal opportunities and life satisfaction
- *The political sphere*, including factors like political participation, civic engagement and voluntarism; and social capital (networks of trust)
- *The socio-cultural sphere*, including shared values, sense of belonging and attachment, common goals and visions

Socioeconomic mobility and life satisfaction

The economic facet of social cohesion, described by Bernard (1999: 20) with notions of 'inclusion' and 'equality', encompasses in Markus's operationalisation two key sub-dimensions: first, socioeconomic mobility and equal opportunity, and second, life satisfaction and wellbeing (Markus 2015: 12). The descriptive analysis of the services delivered by Muslim community organisations underscores their multiple contributions to Muslims' education, economic mobility and employability as well as their overall life satisfaction, including social and emotional wellbeing.

Education and economic mobility/opportunities

Almost all Muslim community organisations in Victoria declared that it is one of their aspirational goals to improve Muslims' socioeconomic opportunities, and they have set up various activities to work towards it. Some of their services are directly and explicitly aimed at improving people's educational attainments, job prospects and financial situation. Almost one third of these community groups, for example, run training programs that are designed to improve job opportunities, and more than

one in five offer tutoring for high school students. Other relevant but less commonly offered educational services include English classes, IT training and diploma courses.

Almost one third of these community groups run training programs that are designed to improve job opportunities.

In addition, Muslim community organisations in Victoria seek to foster their community members' (and often also non-Muslim clients') socioeconomic wellbeing and mobility through certain counselling services. For example, half of the community organisations regularly offer financial counselling and unemployment and/or career related counselling. Youth work, which is an important part of most Muslim community organisations' services, is in many instances likely to also include activities and programs aimed at helping young Muslims find employment or advancing their professional pathway. In addition, general empowerment and capacity building programs (offered by over 40 per cent) may indirectly contribute to increasing Muslims' employability. The survey data also show that one in five Muslim community organisations have cooperated with employment agencies; half of them reported a more or less regular cooperation ('often' or 'sometimes') with these mainstream institutions.

Asked about *additional* services they would like to offer or expand if there were additional resources available, a range of community organisations expressed their eagerness to provide more education-related training programs, such as tutoring, leadership courses or civic/personal development programs, as well more

support services for refugees and (new) migrants. This was the most commonly mentioned area of support Muslim community organisations in Victoria would like to expand if they had additional funding and/or personnel.

Muslim community organisations themselves also offer employment opportunities for other Muslims. Over 40 per cent of them have paid staff, usually between one and five, but in some instance up to 15 or even over 20 employees. Based on the survey data, the tentatively estimated total number of Muslim employees within these organisations ranges between 150 and 200. But there is also a more indirect way in which Muslim community organisations promote Muslims' employment prospects – as an institutional platform for Muslim volunteers. On average around 15 Muslims regularly volunteer in each of these community groups; in some cases their number is much higher ranging between 25 and 100. The majority of respondents (78 per cent) are convinced that these volunteering experiences help 'improve their chances on the labour market'. National and international research on the effects of volunteering confirms this assessment, as Walsh and Black (2015: 20) found in their research review on youth volunteering in Australia: 'volunteering boosts young people's employability'.

Overall, the data analysis strongly suggests that the services and activities of many Muslim community organisations, directly or indirectly, help improve Muslims' socioeconomic opportunities and inclusion and thus decrease socioeconomic marginalisation and, on a macro-societal level, contribute to reducing wealth disparities – which is considered a key characteristic of cohesive societies.

This conclusion is supported by emerging research in Australia. Amath's (2015: 16)

recent Australian study found that many Muslim community groups pursue the aim of 'supporting the participation [of Muslims] in education and training', and 'facilitating participation in employment and in voluntary work'. One of Amath's interview partners, who leads a Muslim women's organisation in Sydney, for example, stated: 'We educate, we train, skill them up and now they (clients) are working at various government and non-government organisations at a local, state and national level' (quoted in Amath 2015: 17). Amath (2015: 20) concludes that these organisations have successfully assisted Muslim community members in getting 'the necessary education, training and skills to ensure that they are able to readily enter other areas of the work force'.

Life satisfaction and personal wellbeing

Nine out of ten Muslim community organisations in Victoria explicitly state that they try to increase Muslims' general well-being, such as their health or self-worth; almost equally important is the related goal of 'keeping young Muslims out of trouble'. To achieve these aspirations community organisations offer a range of counselling, welfare and recreational services.

These services go beyond the aforementioned employment and education related support activities and include, among others, parental, family and marriage counselling, support for victims of domestic violence, drug and alcohol counselling, youth mentoring, and financial counselling services. Around one half (between 45 and 60 per cent) of all Muslim community organisations in Victoria provide such welfare-related services. In addition, around one third of organisations offer settlement assistance for new arrivals and refugees as well as specific services for homeless people, which also contribute to improving people's wellbeing. Importantly, the majority of Muslim community

organisations emphasise that their counselling services are also open to non-Muslims. It is noteworthy that several organisations stated they would like to provide more support services for victims of domestic/family violence if they had additional resources.

Overall, the data analysis demonstrates that mosques and other Muslim community organisations provide a safe environment where Muslims can socialise, enjoy themselves and expand their social networks.

Counselling and support offers are complemented by a range of recreational and leisure services, which also help promote Muslims' physical, emotional and social wellbeing. Eight out of ten Muslim community organisations in Victoria regularly organise leisure-time activities, most commonly BBQs, sport programs, youth camps and cultural festivals; and over 40 per cent of them offer empowerment and capacity building programs, which also contribute to Muslims' personal self-esteem and increased life satisfaction. Overall, the data analysis demonstrates that mosques and other Muslim community organisations provide a safe environment where Muslims can socialise, enjoy themselves and expand their social networks.

These positive contributions do not only apply to those who make use of the various services of Muslim community organisations, but also – and possibly especially – to those who are actively involved as volunteers in organising and running these activities. According to the surveyed community representatives,

Muslim community volunteers benefit from their active engagement in many ways. The two strongest effects (based on the volunteering effects index), are both related to Muslims personal and social wellbeing: 'gaining self-confidence and self-worth' and 'making new friends'. This supports the findings of a recent qualitative study on the experiences of Muslims who have been actively involved in various (Muslim and non-Muslim) civil society organisations (Peucker 2016). More broadly, Australian as well as international research on volunteering has consistently found social network-enhancing effects of young people's active civic engagement (Walsh and Black 2010: 21).

The qualitative interviews with Muslim community figures revealed additional ways in which community organisations may seek to contribute to Muslims' general wellbeing.

> ***Voices from the community***
>
> **Nail Aykan**, executive director of the Muslim umbrella organisation ICV, pointed out that one of the key missions of ICV (in addition to providing specialised community services) is to improve Muslim community members' awareness of, and access to, the many already existing services offered by different agencies, be it governmental, private or community-based. Instead of trying to duplicate this general support infrastructure, ICV seeks to empower Muslims to make effective use of it. He explained that Muslims, especially those with a personal migration history, often '*don't know the system very well, they are not aware of all the services out there, they don't know how certain opportunities are generated. So what we are trying to do is to expose and raise awareness of the system [of service provisions] in Australia [and] introducing service providers to ... the community*' (Aykan).

> **Mustafa Abu Yusuf**, senior advisor of the Hume Islamic Youth Centre (HIYC), emphasised that the HIYC offers a '*safe refuge for a lot of troubled kids*', mainly but not only of Muslim background, often from '*broken families, [having] issues with law enforcement agencies, drugs, alcohol, all sorts...*'. He explains: '*We give them a place to come, to stay and [we] straighten them out*'. Abu Yusuf elaborates how through the Centre's youth camps and various other courses such as arts and crafts, cooking or religious classes these youth not only learn about the Islamic religion, strengthen their faith and overcome the 'identity crisis' many of them struggle with, but they also start acting more respectfully towards others.

Overall, the findings from this Victoria-wide survey highlight that Muslim community services improve Muslims' socioeconomic mobility and more broadly, boost their general life satisfaction, physical and psychological wellbeing and social connectedness. In doing so, they help foster these key dimensions of social cohesion.

Active citizenship and social capital

Participation in various aspects of society, also beyond the labour market, constitutes a vital component of social cohesion. This has been stressed by community leaders interviewed for this study, and is broadly agreed upon in academia and policy circles. According to Bernard (1999) and Markus (2015), the 'political sphere' of social cohesion covers political participation, voluntarism and civic engagement (active citizenship) as well as social capital, in the sense of Putnam's (2000) intracommunity 'bonding' and, importantly, inter-community 'bridging' social networks of trust (Markus and Kirpitchenko 2007). Do the services and activities of Muslim community organisations in Victoria

contribute to building and strengthening cross-community relationships between Muslims and non-Muslims and encouraging and facilitating civic and political participation?

Social networks and cross-community engagement

The survey data analysis reveals strong empirical evidence that mosques and other Muslim community organisations are anything but socially isolated 'islands' within Victoria's multi-ethnic civil society. Most of the surveyed community organisations are well-connected both within and outside the Muslim community and have been actively involved in a cross-community outreach and cooperation activities.

The bridge-building orientation is not only reflected in the organisations' aspirations and target groups, but it also features centrally in their activity profile

Three-quarters of the surveyed Muslim community organisations – and an even higher proportion among surveyed mosques (84 per cent) – described the wider community as one of their main target groups that they are trying to reach. Asked about the goals they are seeking to achieve, almost all community groups (95 per cent) stressed that it was one of their aspirations to foster Muslims' sense of belonging to the wider community and to build bridges with the wider community. These were the two most commonly stated and most highly ranked goals pursued by the organisations through their services and activities, even surpassing the aim of

strengthening Islamic faith, knowledge and identity.

> ***Voices from the community***
>
> The executive director of the Australian Intercultural Society, **Ahmet Keskin**, interviewed for this study, put a particularly strong emphasis on the cross-community relationship building aspect, describing it as the primary mission of AIS and a key mechanism to foster social harmony and cohesion. '*It's all about promoting cross-cultural understanding…the more interaction we provide between people … the better we believe social harmony can be created. And all that starts from having this first encounter'* (Keskin).

The bridge-building orientation is not only reflected in the organisations' aspirations and target groups, but it also features centrally in their activity profile. Eighty-five per cent of community organisations in Victoria run cross-community and outreach activities, which makes this the second most common type of services, after religious services. This includes running Open Door events, interfaith dialogue activities and participating in mainstream community events as well as various cross- and intracommunity cooperation. In fact, virtually all Muslim community organisations in Victoria have cooperated, with other Muslim and non-Muslim groups, including non-Muslim faith groups, local councils, charities, other non-religious civil society organisations, schools and universities or the police.

The *institutional* networks that arise from these dialogue and collaboration activities, be it cross-community ('linking social capital'; Woolcock 2001) or intra-community ('collective social capital'; Tillie 2004) also expand *interpersonal* relationships and social networks (bridging and bonding social capital; Putnam 2000).

This applies to those Muslims who are actively involved within the community organisations, as previous research has demonstrated (Amath 2013; Peucker 2016). The survey data confirms this: Almost all Muslim community organisations in Victoria stated that their volunteers benefit from their active community engagement by making new friends and expanding their social networks both outside and within the Muslim community. This is confirmed by other recent studies that discovered that Muslims who participate in mosque activities have greater social networks. McAndrew and Sobolewska (2015: 69), for example, conclude in their analysis of a large British data set (Ethnic Minority British Election Study 2010) that Muslims who attend mosques are 'more likely to have friends outside their ethnic or religious group'.

Peucker's (2016: 289) qualitative study on civically active Muslims in Australia and Germany found that these evolving social networks are often characterised by mutual trust; many of those active Muslims interviewed in Melbourne and Sydney 'highlight how they have developed sustainable cross-community networks of trust as a result of their engagement'. Peucker (2016: 283) concludes that 'it is this network *quality* that makes contacts valuable for individuals and their active citizenship as well as collectively, for strengthening social cohesion'. This resonates with social capital theorists' argument that more important than the sheer size of one's social networks is their quality and 'the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them' (Putnam 2000: 19).

Active citizenship

Peucker and Ceylan (2016: 9) recently asserted that the 'Muslim community context is of paramount significance for Muslims' enactment of citizenship'. This

encompasses two intertwined dimensions, as the two researchers argue: First, community organisations offer accessible opportunities for many Muslims to become civically active as volunteers (civic engagement), and second, their community involvement has civically and politically mobilising effects that enhance Muslims' active involvement beyond community boundaries. Peucker and Ceylan's (2016) conclusion confirms previous study findings and resonates with the insights the present survey offers into the work of Muslim community organisations in Victoria.

...research studies in the US and the UK have identified a statistically significant correlation between Muslims' mosque attendance and their political participation

Although only about one quarter of community organisations run political lobbying and advocacy activities, a large majority of all surveyed organisations state that they seek to empower Muslims to express their views and concerns (80 per cent) and to encourage them to be politically active (74 per cent). Mosques appear to be slightly overrepresented among those eager to promote Muslims' political activism, with close to 80 per cent of all surveyed mosques (25 out of 32) describing this as an important or very important objective. Similarly, Underabi's (2014: 44) mosque survey in NSW found that representatives of around 72 per cent of all mosques agree that Muslims should actively participate in the political process in Australia.

While the politically mobilising effect of mosques and other Muslim community organisations is difficult to quantify in

Australia, quantitative research studies in the US and the UK have identified a statistically significant correlation between Muslims' mosque attendance and their political participation (Jamal 2005; Ayers and Hofstetter 2008). McAndrew and Sobolewska (2015: 69) conclude that British Muslims who regularly attend mosques are 'more likely to engage in mainstream British politics'. Other studies have found that Muslims' attendance in mosques is positively associated with their *civic* engagement beyond Muslim community circles (e.g. youth or neighbourhood groups, civil society groups helping the poor) (Read 2015; Fleischmann et al. 2016). A Melbourne study came to similar conclusions: 'organized religiosity (i.e. religious practices organized by religious groups and institutions) is a statistically significant predictor of civic engagement among Muslims in Melbourne' (Vergani et al. 2015: 11).

The present survey results underscore that Muslim community organisations in Victoria are sites where many Muslims are civically active as community volunteers. All surveyed organisations rely on community members who contribute their time on a voluntary basis, with an average number of volunteers of about 15 per organisation. Nine out of ten surveyed community groups agree that these volunteers become more engaged in civil and political life as a result of their community-based volunteering. This assumption is consistent with other research findings suggesting that Muslim community activism is often the entry point to a subsequently unfolding and diversifying citizenship performed also in non-Muslim contexts, including the political arena. Peucker and Ceylan (2016: 14) conclude that 'Muslims' engagement within migrant and ethno-religious minority community organizations does not lead into a civic dead-end, but rather opens up

opportunities for broader political participation'.

Overall, the study findings confirm, in line with other research, that Muslim community services in Victoria make significant contributions to enhancing Muslims' social networks and active citizenship, two key dimensions of the political and civic sphere of social cohesion.

Sense of belonging and identity

The socio-cultural sphere, revolving around citizens' sense of belonging to the polity and society, their commitment to 'overarching shared values' and a 'common vision' (Markus and Kirpitchenko 2007: 29; see also Bernard 1999, Markus 2015), is one of the most contested facets of social cohesion (Vasta 2013).

...their agenda is primarily driven by a commitment to strengthening Australia's multi-ethnic and multi-faith society, where Islam is fully accepted as an inherent part.

The above discussed survey findings clearly show that Muslim community organisations in Victoria do not seek to establish themselves in opposition to the wider community nor do they promote exclusionary values or goals among their community members. To the contrary, in most cases, their agenda is primarily driven by a commitment to strengthening Australia's multi-ethnic and multi-faith society, where Islam is fully accepted as an inherent part. The main aspiration, highlighted by virtually all community organisations, is 'fostering Muslims' sense of belonging to the wider community'. This promoted sense of belonging, however, contrasts starkly with a narrowly defined

Australian Anglo-Saxon identity or a 'moral hegemony which ... is being more and more obviously identified with Christianity', as Stratton (2016: 18) observed in the Australian context.

What Muslim community organisations seem to have in mind when speaking about 'belonging' combines – seemingly without major tension or conflicts – a sense of being part of the Australian society and community, on the one hand, and an Islamic identity, on the other. Even those organisations that focus on strengthening Muslims' belief and religious identity do so not in opposition to the wider society.

> ***Voices from the community***
>
> **Mustafa Abu Yusuf**, senior advisor of the Hume Islamic Youth Centre, asserted that 'the HIYC team aspires to instil confidence in young Muslims to strongly and, more importantly, proudly identify with their Islamic beliefs, [and the HIYC team] proactively encourages youth to develop stronger relationships with their creator and to understand that their contributions to society are in fact an integral part of worshipping their creator'.

While the other interviewed Muslim community representatives put less emphasis on fostering a strong and 'proud' Islamic identity, they also rejected any potential contradictions between being Muslims and playing an active and positive role in Australian society, stressing the multi-layered nature of people's identity. These accounts resonate with Modood's (2012: 44) inclusive notion of national identity, which is 'distinctly plural and hospitable to the minority identities ... not obscuring difference but weaving it into a common identity in which all can see themselves, and that gives everyone a sense of belonging to each other'.

To conclude, this study provides, for the first time, evidence-based insights into the aspirations and activity profiles of Muslim community organisations in Victoria. Muslim community organisations have an enormous civic potential to be engines of social cohesion, making manifold contributions to all three spheres of social cohesion, the economic, the political and the socio-cultural. In addition to their religious services, they run various programs aimed at improving Muslims' education and socioeconomic situation as well as their general wellbeing, they commonly build institutional and personal cross-community relationships; empower and mobilise Muslims to become civically and politically active, and seek to strengthen Muslims' civic *and* religious identity.

This empirical study paints a picture that contradicts widespread perceptions of self-segregating tendencies among mosques and other Muslim community groups. Rather than hampering social cohesion through self-isolation and the promotion of an allegedly exclusivist Islamic identity, the vast majority of Muslim community organisations actively try to work towards social inclusion and a cohesive diverse society. They do so usually with very limited resources – and many of the participating Muslim community organisations underscored their eagerness to further expand their services, especially in the area of education and training programs and support for victims of domestic violence.

Building stronger relationships with these organisations and strengthening their capacities to put their aspirations into practice and to pursue their civic and community agendas appears to be an effective way forward on Victoria's continuous path towards maintaining and strengthening the cohesiveness of its multicultural and multi-faith society.

REFERENCES

Amath, N. 2013. The impact of 9/11 on Australian Muslim civil society organisations, *Communication, Politics & Culture* 46: 116–135.

Amath, N. 2015. Australian Muslim civil society organisations: Pathways to social inclusion, *Journal for Social Inclusion* 6(1): 6-34.

Asim, Q. M. 2011. *Mosques and Youth Engagement. Guidelines and Toolkit.* London: MINAB.

Ayers, J. W. and Hofstetter, C.R. 2008. "American Muslim Political Participation, Following 9/11: Religious Beliefs, Political resources, Social Structures, and Political Awareness", *Politics and Religion* 1(1): 3-26.

Bagby, I. 2012. *The American Mosque 2011. Basic Characteristics of the American Mosque. Attitudes of Mosque Leaders.* Washington, DC: Council on American Islamic Relations.

Beauvais C and Jenson J. 2002. *Social Cohesion: Updating the State of the Research Discussion Paper No. F/22.* Ottawa: Canada Policy Research Networks.

Bernard P. 1999. *Social Cohesion. A Critique. Discussion Paper No. F/09.* Ottawa: Canada Policy Research Networks.

Bloemraad, I. 2005. The Limits of de Tocqueville: How Government Facilitates Organisational Capacity in Newcomer Communities, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 31(5): 865 – 887.

Bouma, G., Pickering, S., Halafoff, A. and Dellal, H. 2007. *Managing the Impact of Global Crisis Events on Community Relations in Multicultural Australia.* East City, Qld/Melbourne: Multicultural Affairs Queensland/Department for Victorian Communities.

Cantle T. 2012. *Interculturalism: The New Era of Cohesion and Diversity.* Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.

Chan, J. To, H. and Chan, E. 2006. Reconsidering Social Cohesion: Developing a Definition and Analytical Framework for Empirical Research, *Social Indicators Research* 75: 273-302.

Dandy J and Pe-Pua R. 2013. *Research into the Current and Emerging Drivers for Social Cohesion, Social Division and Conflict in Multicultural Australia.* Canberra: Commonwealth Government

Dreher, T. 2003. Speaking up and talking back: News media interventions in Sydney's 'othered' communities, *Media International Australia incorporating Culture & Policy*, 109: 121–137.

Dreher, T. 2010. Community media intervention. In *Islam and the Australian News Media*, ed. H. Rane, J. Ewart and M. Abdalla, 185-205. Carlton: Melbourne University Press.

Dunn, K. M. 2001. Representations of Islam in the politics of mosque development in Sydney, *Tijdschrift voor economische en sociale geografie* 92(3): 291–308.

Durkheim, E. 1984 [1893]. *The Division of Labour in Society*. New York: Free Press

Eck, D. 2005. Dialogue and the Echo Boom of Terror: Religious Women's Voices after 9/11. In *After Terror: Promoting Dialogue Among Civilizations*, ed. A. Ahmed and B. Forst, 21-28. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Fleischmann, F., Martinovic, B. and Böhm, M. 2016. Mobilising mosques? The role of service attendance for political participation of Turkish and Moroccan minorities in the Netherlands, *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 39(5): 746-763.

Foner, N. and Alba, R. 2008. Immigrant Religion in the U.S. and Western Europe: Bridge or Barrier to Inclusion?, *International Migration Review*, 42(2): 360-392.

Forrest, R. and Kearns, A. 2001. Social Cohesion, Social Capital and the Neighbourhood, *Urban Studies*, 38(12), 2125–2143.

Geaves, R. 2005. Negotiating British Citizenship and Muslim Identity. In *Muslim Britain: Communities Under Pressure*, ed. T. Abbas, 66-77. London: Zed Books.

Göçmen, İ. 2013. The Role of Faith-Based Organizations in Social Welfare Systems: A comparison of France, Germany, Sweden and the United Kingdom', *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* 42(3): 495-516.

Halafoff, A. 2012. Muslim participation in Multifaith initiatives in Victoria, *La Trobe Journal* 89: 115-123.

Halm, D. and Sauer, M. 2012. Angebote und Strukturen der islamischen Organisationen in Deutschland. In *Islamisches Gemeindeleben in Deutschland*, ed. D. Halm, M. Sauer, J. Schmidt and A. Stichs, 21-156. Nuremberg/Essen: BAMF/ZfTI.

Humphrey, M. 1988. Community, Mosque and Ethnic Politics, *ANZ Journal of Sociology*, 23(2): 233–245.

Humphrey, M. 2001. An Australian Islam? Religion in the Multicultural City. In *Muslim Communities in Australia*, ed. A. Saeed and S. Akbarzadeh, 33-52. Sydney: UNSW Press.

Humphrey, M.2009. Securitisation and Domestication of Diaspora Muslims and Islam: Turkish immigrants in Germany and Australia, *International Journal on Multicultural Societies*, 11(2): 136–154.

Husband C and Alam Y. 2011. *Social Cohesion and Counter-Terrorism: A Policy Contradiction?* Bristol, UK: Policy Press.

Jakubowicz, A. 1989. The state and the welfare of immigrants in Australia, *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 12(1): 1-35.

Jamal, A. 2005. The Political Participation and Engagement of Muslim Americans: Mosque Involvement and Group Consciousness, *American Politics Research* 33(4): 521–544.

Jenson J. 1998. *Mapping Social Cohesion: The State of Canadian Research. Working Paper No. F/03.* Ottawa: Canada Policy Research Networks.

Jonker, G. 2005. From 'Foreign Workers' to 'Sleepers': The Church, the State and Germany's Discovery of its Muslim Population. In *European Muslims and the Secular State*, ed. J. Cesari and S. McLoughlin, 113-126. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Karim, K. 2014. Muslim Civil Society in Eastern and Western Contexts. In *Engaging the Other. Public Policy and Western-Muslim Intersections*, ed. K. Karim and M. Eid, 89-101. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Kundnani A. 2012. Multiculturalism and its discontents: Left, Right and liberal. *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 15: 155-166.

Madkhul, D. 2007. *Supporting volunteering activities in Australian Muslim communities, particularly youth*. Melbourne: Volunteering Australia (VA).

Markus A. 2015. *Mapping Social Cohesion: The Scanlon Foundation survey 2015*. Melbourne: The Scanlon Foundation/Monash University

Markus, A. 2016. *Australians Today. The Australia@2015 Scanlon Foundation Survey*. Melbourne: The Scanlon Foundation/Monash University

Markus A and Kirpitchenko. 2007. Conceptualising social cohesion. In *Social Cohesion in Australia,* ed. J. Jupp, J. Nieuwenhuyse and E. Dawson, 21-32. Leiden: Cambridge University Press.

McAndrew, S. and Sobolewska, M. 2015. Mosques and political engagement in Britain. Participation or segregation? In *Muslims and Political Participation in Britain* edited by T. Peace, 53-81. London: Routledge.

Modood, T. 2012. *Post-immigration 'difference' and integration. The case of Muslims in Western Europe*. London: The British Academy.

Mustafa, A. 2016. Active citizenship, dissent and civic consciousness: young Muslims redefining citizenship on their own terms, *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power 23*(4): 454-469.

Nielsen, J. 2004. *Muslims in Western Europe* (3rd ed.). Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

OECD. 2011. *Perspectives on Global Development 2012. Social Cohesion in a Shifting World*. Paris: OECD Publishing.

O'Loughlin, B. and Gillespie, M. 2012. Dissenting Citizenship? Young People and Political Participation in the Media-security Nexus, *Parliamentary Affairs* 65(1): 115-137.

Parsons, T. 1951. *The Social System*. New York: The Free Press

Peace, T. 2015. *European Social Movements and Muslim Activism. Another World but with Whom?* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Peucker, M. 2016. *Muslim Citizenship in Liberal Democracies. Civic and Political Participation of Muslim in the West*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Peucker, M. and Akbarzadeh, S. 2014. *Muslim Active Citizenship in the West*. London: Routledge.

Peucker, M. and Ceylan, R. 2016. Muslim community organizations – sites of active citizenship or self-segregation?, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, DOI: 10.1080/01419870.2016.1247975

Peucker , M. and Ceylan, R. (eds) 2017 (in press). *Muslim community organizations in the West. History. Developments and Future Perspectives*. Wiesbaden: Springer VS.

Pew Research Center (Pew). 2006. *Conflicting Views in a Divided World*. Washington, DC: Pew.

Pew Research Center (Pew). 2017. *Diversity welcomed in Australia, U.S. despite uncertainty over Muslim integration*. Washington, DC: Pew.

Putnam R. 2000. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Portes, A. and Vickstrom, E. 2011. Diversity, Social capital, and Cohesion, *Annual Review of Sociology* 37: 461-479.

Rane, H. 2010. Media content and inter-community relations. In *Islam and the Australian News media*, ed. H. Rane, J. Ewart and M. Abdalla, 104-119. Carlton: Melbourne University Press.

Rutter J. 2015. *Moving Up And Getting On: Migration, integration and social cohesion in the UK*. Bristol, UK: Policy Press.

Read, J.G. 2015. Gender, Religious Identity, and Civic Engagement among Arab Muslims in the United States, *Sociology of Religion* 76(1): 30-48.

Stratton, J. 2016. Whiteness, Morality and Christianity in Australia, *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 37(1): 17-32.

Tillie, J. 2004. Social capital of organisations and their members: Explaining the political integration of immigrants in Amsterdam. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 30(3): 529–541.

Torry, M. 2005. *Managing God's Business: Religious and Faith-Based Organizations and their Management*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

UK Home Office. 2001. *Community Cohesion: A Report of the Independent Review Team*. London: Home Office.

Underabi, H. 2014. *Mosques of Sydney and New South Wales. Research report 2014.* Sydney: ISRA/UWS.

University of South Australia (UNSA). 2015*. Islamophobia, social distance and fear of terrorism in Australia. A preliminary report*. Adelaide: International Centre for Muslim and non-Muslim Understanding (UNSA).

Vasta, E. 2013. Do We need Social Cohesion in the 21st Century? Multiple Langauges of Belonging in the Metropolis, *Journal for Intercultural Studies* 34(2): 196-213.

Verba, S., Schlozman, K.L. and Brady, H. 1995. *Voice and Equality. Civic Voluntarism in American Politics*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Vergani, M., Johns, A., Lobo, M. and Mansouri, F. 2015. Examining Islamic religiosity and civic engagement in Melbourne*, Journal of Sociology,* DOI: 1440783315621167.

Vertovec, S. 2010. Towards Post-Multiculturalism? Changing Communities, Conditions and Contexts of Diversity, *International Social Science Journal* 61 (199): 83-95.

Victorian Government. 2015. *Strategic Framework to Strengthen Victoria's Social Cohesion and the Resilience of its Communities*. Melbourne: State of Victoria

Walsh, L. and Black, R. 2015. *Youth volunteering in Australia: An evidence review*. Braddon: ARACY.

Woolcock, M. M. 2001. The place of social capital in understanding social and economic outcomes, *Isuma: Canadian Journal of Policy Research* 2(1): 11–17.

Worley, C. 2005 'It's not about race, it's about the community': New Labour and community cohesion. *Critical social policy* 25(4): 483-496.

Yükleyen, A. and Yurdakul, G. 2011. Islamic Activism and Immigrant Integration: Turkish Organizations in Germany, *Immigrants and Minorities* 29(1): 64-85.

A1. Additional figures

Figure 12A: Religious services (frequencies)

	Daily prayers	Friday prayers	Iftars	Funeral services	Zakat collection	Major religious celeb. (Eid)	Haji prep. support	General religious couns'ling	Others
offered daily	41	1	3	6	30	0	0	21	11
...weekly	2	39	0	13	2	0	0	14	3
...monthly	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	1
... several times a year	0	0	4	2	3	36	2	2	1
... annually	0	0	39	0	6	8	17	1	1
... less than once a year	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0

Figure 13A: Cross-community and outreach activities (frequencies)

	Inter-faith dialogue activities	Information activities for/at mainstream schools	Open Door events	Public information stands	Public lectures	Dialogue /cooperation with local council	Dialogue /cooperation with state or federal government	Cooperation with police	Cooperation with other non-Muslim community groups	Participating in mainstream community events such as Clean Up Australia, Br...	Others (please specify in the text box)
offered daily	2	1	23	3	2	1	1	1	0	0	0
...weekly	7	1	5	8	19	1	4	2	6	0	0
...monthly	4	4	1	4	10	3	0	1	2	0	0
... several times a year	20	14	11	5	16	25	19	17	35	12	2
... annually	3	1	5	2	0	1	1	3	2	12	2
... less than once a year	0	2	1	3	0	1	0	1	2	8	0

Figure 14A: Education and teaching services

	Arabic classes	Qu'ran classes for adults	religious education for children	study tours/gr oups	English classes	leadersh ip/capaci ty building	tutoring (high school) student	civic courses	IT training	diploma	media training	training: improvin g job opp.	Others
■ offered daily	3	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	4
■ ...weekly	25	36	36	13	3	5	12	1	1	2	0	3	6
■ ...monthly	0	1	0	2	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
■ ... several times a year	0	2	0	7	1	19	2	2	1	0	6	14	2
■ ... annually	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	1	3	1	0
■ ... less than once a year	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	2	0	1	2	0

Figure 15A: Recreation and leisure services (frequencies)

	Sport programs	BBQs/picnics	Youth camps	Excursions	Craft/cooking/arts classes	Music/dance classes	Family/birthday parties	Cultural festivals/events	Others
■ offered daily	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
■ ...weekly	10	3	1	0	1	2	0	0	0
■ ...monthly	8	13	0	3	1	1	0	0	1
■ ... several times a year	21	27	11	22	9	1	1	28	1
■ ... annually	2	2	25	2	1	1	2	7	0
■ ... less than once a year	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	3	0
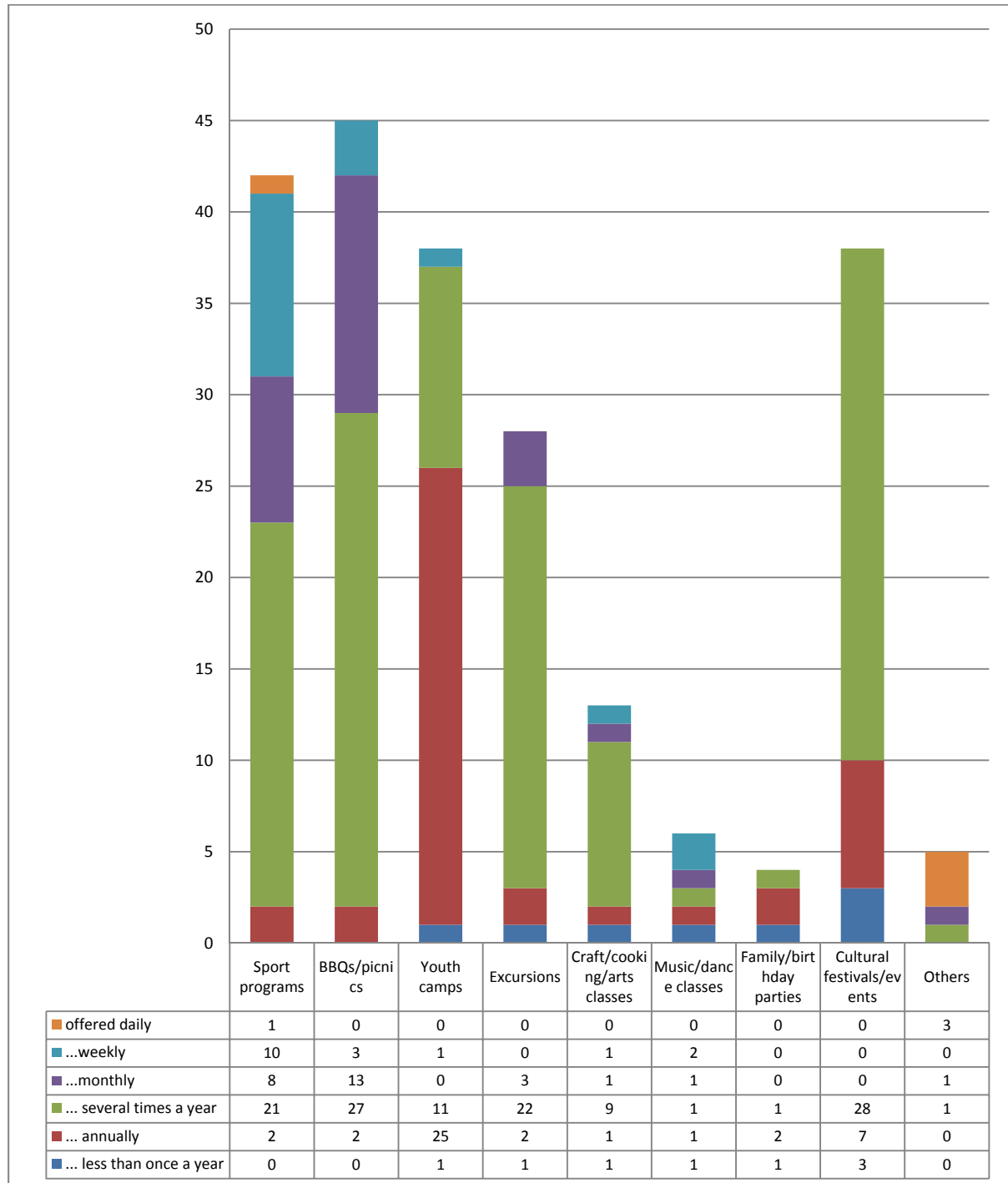
Figure 16A: Settlement, community welfare and counselling services (frequencies)

	Settlement assistance	Parent/ family counselling and services	Marriage counselling	Youth work, youth mentoring	Drug and alcohol counselling	Legal support	Financial counselling	Unemployment /career related counselling	Health service	Domestic abuse/ violence counselling	Homeless service	Support / counselling offers for non-Muslims	Others
offered daily	19	25	23	23	23	6	22	21	4	22	13	25	3
...weekly	2	11	9	13	5	1	7	7	1	8	4	9	1
...monthly	0	1	1	2	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	3	0
... several times a year	2	3	2	2	1	0	2	2	1	2	1	1	0
... annually	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0
... less than once a year	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1

Figure 17A: Lobbying and advocacy activities (frequencies)

	PR and media work	Organising public demonstrations or petitions	Preparing political submissions	Advisory activities for governments	Encouraging members to become politically active	Others
■ offered daily	1	0	0	1	4	0
■ ...weekly	4	0	0	0	1	0
■ ...monthly	3	0	0	1	1	0
■ ... several times a year	10	6	5	6	6	1
■ ... annually	0	1	3	0	0	0
■ ... less than once a year	0	2	1	0	0	0

A.2 List of participating Muslim community organisations (realised sample in alphabetical order)

1. A Beacon of Hope - The Next Generation
2. Ahlus (Ahli) Sunah Wal Junah (ASWJ)
3. Al Ansaar Islamic Association Inc.
4. Al Noor Mosque and Islamic Centre (Maidstone)
5. Al-Rushdi Islamic Association Inc.
6. Al-Taqwa Masjid (al-Taqwa College)
7. AMAFHH Federation
8. Ararat Islamic Welfare Association Inc
9. Australia Muslim Social Services Agency (AMSSA)
10. Australian Bosnian Islamic centre (Deer Park Mosque)
11. Australian Intercultural Society
12. Australian Islamic Mission [MP: head office in Sydney, establishing mosque in Bendigo]
13. Australian Islamic Social Association
14. Australian Islamic Youth Centre
15. Australian Light Foundation Inc.
16. Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights
17. Australian Western Thrace Turkish Association
18. Bilale Ethopian Community Association Victoria
19. Broadmeadows Turkish Islamic and Cultural Centre
20. Care with me
21. Cyprus Turkish Islamic Community
22. Elsedeaq Mosque (Heidelberg Mosque)
23. Eritrean Islamic Sociaty of Victoria (ERIS)
24. Fawkner Mosque Darul Ulum
25. Harari Islamic Society of Victoria
26. Harari United Islamic Association Melbourne
27. Human Appeal Australia
28. Hume Islamic Youth Centre
29. Institute of Belief Achieve Inspire
30. Islam Australia Inc.
31. Islamic Community Milli Gorus Brunswick Inc
32. Islamic Council of Victoria
33. Islamic Education and Welfare Association of dandenong Inc. (Hallam Mosque)
34. Islamic Relief Australia

35. Islamic Research and Education Academy

36. Islamic Sciences and Research Academy of Australia

37. Islamic Society at Deakin University

38. Islamic Society of Albury-Wodonga

39. Islamic Society of Geelong (Geelong Mosque)

40. Islamic Society of Melbourne Estern Region

41. Islamic Society of Victoria

42. Islamic Youth Organisation Inc.

43. Keysborough Turkish Islamic and Cultural Centre

44. Khalid Bin Walid Mosque (Albion)

45. La Trobe University Islamic Society

46. Mercy Mission Da'wah Incorporated

47. Milli Gorus Sareera Youth

48. Multicultrual Youth centre (MY Centre)

49. Muslim Legal Network

50. Muslims for Progressive Values

51. National Zakat Foundation Inc. (sub group of Mercy Mission)

52. Northcote Musallah

53. Omar Farooq Mosque

54. Oromo Islamic Resource Centre

55. Oromo Learning and Guidance Community Australia

56. Ramazan Education Foundation

57. Selimiye Foundation

58. Somali Islamic and Language School

59. Springvale Mosque

60. Sunnah Mosque

61. Swinburne Islamic Society

62. The Virgin Mary Masjid

63. Turkish - Green Island Turkish Women's Group Inc.

64. United migrant Muslims association

65. University of Melbourne Islamic Society

66. Westall Mosque - Indonesian Muslim Community of Victoria

Note: Two participating Muslim community organisations opted for anonymous participation

A.3 Questionnaire

On behalf of the **Centre for Cultural Diversity and Wellbeing** (CCDW), Victoria University, and the **Islamic Council of Victoria** (ICV), I would like to invite you to take part in a study that examines the many services Muslim community organisations across Victoria are offering to their community members.

We believe that the tireless efforts of mosques, Islamic centres and other Muslim organisations in Victoria serving their community has not been sufficiently recognised. This survey is part of a project that tries to change this. With your assistance, we hope we will be able to demonstrate how Muslim community organisations support their community members in many ways and, in doing so, contribute to the wellbeing of Victoria's diverse society. These insights will also help reduce ignorance among parts of the Australian population, which is often the reason for mistrust, suspicion and community tensions.

You know better than anyone else what religious, cultural or social services and activities your organisation is offering. Therefore, this project relies on you. We kindly invite you to complete the following questionnaire on the activities and services provided by the Muslim community organisation you represent.

Completing the survey will take approximately **15-20 min**.

You can choose to remain anonymous, and the organisation you represent will only be named with your approval. So there are no risks associated with participating in this project, and your participation is entirely voluntary. There are no negative consequences for you or your organisation if you choose not to participate. Further details are outlined in the information leaflet, which was sent to you via email. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me under Mario.peucker@vu.edu.au or call me under 03 9919 8589 (office hours).

Many thanks,

Dr Mario Peucker

1. What is the name of your organisation? [Note: We mean the organisation for which you are completing this survey. If you have indicated that your organisation should not be named, we will use the name only internally]

2. When was the organisation formally established? Please provide the approximate year.

3. What type of Muslim community organisations is this? [Please chose one or several boxes from the following]
☐ Mosque or mosque association
☐ Muslim or Islamic umbrella organisation (our members are other Muslim organisations, not individual people)
☐ Muslim women's organisation
☐ Muslim youth group/organisation
☐ Muslim student association
☐ Islamic education organisation
☐ Muslim social and/or cultural organisation advocacy organisation/group
☐ other [please specify]……………………………………..

4. Where is your organisation located [where is its office in Victoria?]
☐ metropolitan Melbourne
☐ regional centre in Victoria
☐ small regional town in Victoria
☐ rural (Victoria)

5. What area do you usually reach with your services? In other words: Where do those who use your services generally come from?
☐ local neighbourhood
☐ across Melbourne
☐ across Victoria
☐ across Australia

6. Overall, how many people do you think your organisation reaches with its services and activities?

7. Thinking of the people you reach with your services, do they predominantly come from a certain national, ethnic or cultural background?
☐ no, there is no dominant cultural or ethnic group
☐ yes, predominantly Lebanese
☐ yes, predominantly Turkish
☐ yes, predominantly African
☐ yes, predominantly Afghan and/or Pakistani
☐ yes, predominantly South East Asian
☐ yes, predominantly Iraqi
☐ yes, predominantly Bosnian
☐ yes, predominantly other Arabic
☐ yes, others [please specify]……………………………………..
☐ I don't know

8. Does your community organisation have departments for groups like, for example, youth, women, seniors? [You can tick more than one box.]
☐ no, we do not have any separate departments for specific groups
☐ yes, for boys/young men
☐ yes, for girls
☐ yes, for children/youth (mixed girls and boys)
☐ yes, for women
☐ yes, for me only
☐ yes, for parents
☐ yes, for seniors/elderly
☐ I don't know
☐ yes, for …. ……………………………………[*please explain*]

9. Are there any staff/people employed by your organisations who get paid for their work there? If so, how many approximately?
☐ No, we do not have any paid staff/employees here
☐ Yes, the number of employees here is …………………… [*write down the number*]
☐ Yes, but I don't know how many
☐ I don't know

10. Are there any community members who work or help out at your organisations voluntarily and without getting paid (volunteers)? If so, how many approximately?
☐ No, no one voluntarily contributes to or helps out at the organisation without getting paid.
☐ Yes, the number of people who spend time helping out here is approximately
……………………………………………[*write down the number*]
☐ Yes, but I don't know how many.
☐ I don't know if we have any community members who contribute as volunteers.

11.1 Does your organisation provide <u>religious services</u> such as daily prayers, haji assistance, funeral services, Iftars, Zakat collection etc.?
☐ Yes […continue with next question]
☐ No […continue with Q12]

11.2 What <u>religious services</u> are there? For those services your organisation offers, can you let us know how often these specific services are provided?

	offered daily	weekly	monthly	several times a year	annually	less than once a year
Daily prayers						
Friday prayers						
Iftars						
Funeral services						
Zakat collection						
Major religious celebrations (Eid)						
Haji preparation support						
General religious counselling						
Others [specify] ……………						
Others [specify] ……………						

11.3 Thinking about all these religious services your organisation is offering, how many people do you think you reach with these activities? Please type the estimated number in the text box.

12. Does your organisation provide <u>education or teaching services</u>, such as English or Arabic language classes, Qu'ran class, lectures/seminars, leadership/empowerment training, employment related courses, study tours etc?
☐ Yes […continue with next question]
☐ No […continue with Q13]

12.1 What <u>education and teaching</u> related services are there? For those services your organisation offers, can you let us know how often these specific services are provided?

	offered daily	weekly	monthly	several times a year	annually	less than once a year
Arabic classes						
Qu'ran classes for adults						
religious education for children (e.g. weekend/ Sunday schools)						
study tours/groups						
English classes						
leadership/empowerment training/capacity building programs						
tutoring (high school) student						
civic courses						
IT training						
diploma						
media training						
training aimed at improve job opportunities						
Others [specify] ……………						
Others [specify] ……………						

12.2 Thinking about all the education and teaching related services your organisation is offering, how many people do you think you reach with these activities? Please type the estimated number in the text box.

13. Does your organisation provide <u>settlement, community welfare or other counselling services</u>, such as youth work, parent/marriage counselling, financial or employment related counselling, mentoring, domestic violence support, drug and alcohol counselling?
☐ Yes [...continue with next question]
☐ No [...continue with Q14]

13.1 What are the <u>settlement, community welfare and counselling services</u> your organisation is providing? For those services your organisation offers, can you let us know how often these specific services are provided?

	offered daily	weekly	monthly	several times a year	annually	less than once a year
Settlement assistance						
Parent/family counselling and services						
Marriage counselling						
Youth work, youth mentoring						
Drug/alcohol counselling						
Legal support						
Financial counselling						
Unemployment/career related counselling						
Health service						
Domestic abuse/violence counselling						
Homeless service						
Support/counselling offers for non-Muslims						
Others [specify] ……………						
Others [specify] ………………						

13.2 Thinking about all these welfare and counselling services your organisation is offering, how many people do you think you reach with these activities? Please type the estimated number in the text box

14. Does your organisation offer services and run activities in the area of <u>recreation/leisure</u>, sport or other social/cultural events?

☐ Yes [...continue with next question]
☐ No [...continue with Q15]

14.1 What are kind of <u>recreation/leisure</u>, sport or other social events are your organisation offering? For those services your organisation offers, can you let us know how often these specific services are provided?

	offered daily	weekly	monthly	several times a year	annually	less than once a year
Sport programs						
BBQs/picnics						
Youth camps						
Excursions						
Craft/cooking/arts classes						

Music/dance classes					
Family/birthday parties					
Cultural festivals/events					
Others [specify]					
Others [specify]					

14.2 Thinking about all these recreation/leisure related services your organisation is offering, how many people do you think you reach with these activities? Please type the estimated number in the text box

15. Is your organisation involved in <u>cross-community and outreach activities</u>, such as Open Door, *dawah* related activities interfaith dialogue, cooperation with schools, governments, authorities and/or non-Muslim nongovernment organisations?

☐ Yes [...continue with next question]
☐ No [...continue with Q16]

15.1 What are kind of <u>cross-community and outreach activities</u> are your organisation offering? For those services your organisation offers, can you let us know how often these specific services are provided?

	offered daily	weekly	monthly	several times a year	annually	less than once a year
Inter-faith dialogue activities						
Information activities for/at mainstream schools						
Open Door events						
Public information stands						
Public lectures						
Dialogue/cooperation with local council						
Dialogue/cooperation with state or federal government						
Cooperation with police						
Cooperation with other non-Muslim community groups						
Participating in mainstream community events such as Clean Up Australia, Breast Cancer Awareness Month, White Ribbon Day)						
Others [specify]						
Others [specify]						

15.2 Thinking about all these cross-community outreach services your organisation is offering, how many people (Muslims and non-Muslims) do you think you reach with these activities? Please type the estimated number in the text box.

16. Is your organisation involved <u>in lobbying and advocacy work</u>, such as media work, lobbying, public protests, advisory work for governments?
☐ Yes [...continue with next question]
☐ No [...continue with Q17]

16.1 What kind of advocacy work is your organisation involved in? For those services your organisation offers, can you let us know how often these specific services are provided?

	offered daily	weekly	monthly	several times a year	annually	less than once a year
PR and media work (e.g. media interviews, writing press releases)						
Organising public demonstrations or petitions						
Preparing political submissions						
Advisory activities for Governments						
Encouraging community members to become politically active						
Others [specify] ……………						
Others [specify] ………………						

16.2 Thinking about these advocacy activities your organisation is offering, how many people do you think you reach with these activities?

17. If there are any other key services or activities your organisation is offering, please let us know what they are. Otherwise go to the next question.

	offered daily	weekly	monthly	several times a year	annually	less than once a year
……………………………………………						
……………………………………………						
……………………………………………						

18. What are your organisation's main <u>target groups</u> (those you want to reach with your programs/activities)? Tick <u>one or several</u> of the following boxes please.
☐ Muslim community as a whole
☐ Muslim youth
☐ Muslim women/girls
☐ Political decision-makers
☐ Wider community
☐ A specific ethnic community
☐ others, please specify ……………………………………………

19. If you want to make any comments about the services and activities provided by your organisations, you can do that in the following text box. If not, please go to the next question.

20. Are there any services or activities your organisation is currently not providing but would like to do so in the future, for example, if there were additional resources? What kind of services would you like to offer?

21. Has your organisation cooperated in one way or another with any other groups, institutions or organisations (Muslim or non-Muslim)?
☐ Yes […continue with next question]
☐ No […continue with Q23]

22. Can you let us know what groups, organisations or institutions your organisation has cooperated with? For those your organisation has cooperated with, please indicate how often?

	yes, but only rarely	yes, sometimes	yes, often	no
Islamic Council of Victoria (ICV)				
Mosques				
Muslim community groups other than mosques				
Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria (ECCV)				
Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA)				
Non-Muslim faith groups (e.g. church groups)				
Local, state or national charities				
Other non-religious civil society groups (e.g. women's groups, youth groups)				
Islamic schools				
Public, Catholic or other (non-Islamic) schools				
Universities				
Media				
Local council				
State or federal government or department				
Health/community health agencies				
Employment agencies				
Local Police, Victoria Police				
Australian Federal Police (AFP)				
Political parties or members of parliament				
Others [specify] ……………				
Others [specify] ……………				

23. Overall, what <u>goals</u> is your organisation trying to achieve with these activities and services? What needs are you trying to address and cater for? Please let us know how important the following goals are for your organisation.

	this is very important	this is important	this is only of minor importance	this is not important at all
Strengthening Islamic faith, knowledge and/or identity				
Fostering Muslims' sense of belonging to the wider community				
Having a say in the public and political debate				
Promoting social inclusion				
Encourage Muslims to be politically active				
Improving their socioeconomic opportunities, e.g. access to labour market				
Increasing Muslims' general wellbeing (e.g. health, self-worth)				

Empower Muslims to express their views and concerns				
Keeping young Muslims out of trouble				
Building bridges with the wider Community				
Improving the public image of Islam and Muslims in Australia				
Strengthening relationships within the Muslim community				
Celebrating our cultural heritage				
Inviting others to Islam				
Others [specify]				
Others [specify]				

24. Are there any other things you would like to share with us with regards to your organisation's goals?

25. [Ask this question only if YES in Q10] When you think about the community members who are actively involved in your organisations as volunteers, how do they benefit from their active engagement in your community organisation?

	Strongly agree	Somewh at agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewh at disagree	Strongly disagree
Learning new skills					
Gaining self-confidence and self-worth					
Expanding their social networks **within** the Muslim community					
Expanding their social networks **outside** the Muslim community					
Improving their chances on the labour market					
Making new friends					
Becoming more engaged in civil or political life					
Becoming more articulate and outspoken					
Others [specify]					
Others [specify]					

26. Overall, could you please describe in a few words the effects or impact of your organisation's activities on Muslims, the community and/or the wider society?

A.4 Interview guidelines

Services and goals

1. Can you say a few words about the community organisation you are representing, including your role, its **overall mission/purpose**? What are the main needs [XXX] is trying to address or cater for?

2. Can you give some **examples** for how the various activities/services at [XXX] contribute to reaching these goals? Are community members actively involved in organising and delivering these programs? How do those community members benefit from their active engagement?

Social cohesion and social inclusion

3. What do you **associate** with each of these terms?

4. What do they **mean to you**?

5. Are these terms or ideas you (explicitly or implicitly) **use internally at** [XXX] when planning programs?

6. How do you think [XXX] **contributes to fostering** a cohesive and peaceful multicultural and multifaith society?

A project by Victoria University's Centre for Cultural Diversity and Wellbeing (CCDW) in partnership with the Islamic Council of Victoria (ICV)