

Muslim Community/QPS Consultative Group

Wednesday 11 February 2015 1900hrs – Islamic College of Brisbane

Meeting Notes

- Opening Du'a and introductions.
- Apologies noted
- Adoption of minutes – no objections

Action Items from Previous Meeting

Standing items:

QPS report:

Chief Superintendent McCarthy: Brisbane Regional [BR] (2) Police Liaison Officer Positions had closed and BR received 107 applications. Panel consisted of three police and one Muslim community member. Interviews conducted on 14 January and now at vetting stage.

AC Peter Martin: Situation is stable in Brisbane Region. Commissioner Ian Stewart is aware and very supportive of this reference group and continuing engagement, as well as supporting the various organisations in the Muslim community. With regards to the new Muslim PLO positions, there is no end date with these positions, and funding will continue as necessary.

Logan Police: 2 incidents – hate mail being distributed to some houses, and an assault matter in December 2014. Matter is being investigated. Will update next meeting.

John Fox: Community Engagement Unit (Cross Cultural Liaison officers - John Fox [JF] and Chris Sang) have now visited all but 4 of the Mosques and Prayer rooms in Queensland. The general consensus at most mosques, was that there is a lack of reporting criminal incidents. JF said we must encourage people to report to police, regardless of how minor the incident may appear. The Community Engagement project will cease in March.

JF confirmed there is still no suspect for arson attempt in Toowoomba Mosque, however a full security audit has been done on the premises. Encourage local imams and community leaders to have security audits carried out on all mosques. Sultan Deen and Ali Kadri noted that alarm systems installed in mosques would not be practical as most mosques are open 24 hours a day.

ADCQ report

Commissioner Kevin Cocks: To engage with Restore Australia representatives requires a lot of ground work before you could successfully bring together a range of stakeholders to be able to provide a safe environment for constructive conversations to be held with a view for reconciliation of difference and building social cohesion in the stakeholder groups. ADCQ is happy to work with Detective Sup 't Darryl Johnson and Ali Kadri to discuss how to best engage with Michael Holt/Restore Australia.

ICQ report

Mr Ismail Cajee, past chairman of the Islamic Society of Holland Park Mosque, was elected unopposed as the new president of the Islamic Council of Queensland [ICQ] at its AGM on Sunday (18 January 2015). Mr. Cajee said that his first priority was to increase the membership of ICQ by inviting other non-Mosque based Muslim organizations to join ICQ. Mr. Cajee said this will allow ICQ to properly represent the diversity within the Muslims in Queensland and efficiently provide services with the help of community partners. His position in ICQ will allow him to reach out to the wider community across Queensland to overcome the rising tide of negativity attached with Islam and Muslims. Prof. Shahjahan Khan was elected as the Council's vice president.

AFP report:

AFP noted their support for the 'Somali' football team and came third in the Australian Somali Tournament in Melbourne.

While online hate is not necessarily AFP jurisdiction, there is certainly a limit where it can become a Commonwealth Offence. If you or your community are offended by something on the internet, contact Brisbane AFP branch and request a prosecution case. Also, report on the Attorney Generals Department www.reportextremism.livingsafetogether.gov.au

Two men arrested in Brisbane in September 2014, are still in custody. Their cases will be mentioned in court in early march 2015, and community members are free to attend and hear the evidence.

Two men arrested in Fairfield Sydney this week on terrorism charges. One is an Australian citizen, the other is a Kuwaiti national with Australian Permanent Residence.

General Business

Email: Shahjahan Khan [Toowoomba Mosque] cited of two incidents at Japanese Garden. A former USQ PhD student and a current USQ staff, Dr Saddam Allwayzy has spoken to Shahjahan Khan after an email was sent to some USQ colleagues. Dr Allwayzy mentioned two incidents, one at his home (near Japanese Garden) and another on in the Queens Park.

In the later incident Dr Allwayzy was hit on his head. He called police but no response. Shahjahan Khan advised Dr Allwayzy to email him details of the two incidents so that we could take it further with police. Shahjahan Khan said he never heard of this kind of attacks in his 23 years of living in Toowoomba.

It was suggested that a strong statement from the Federal government (AFP or other agency) might be timely and effective. It was further suggested that if a formal request was required, that could be formulated from the meeting and Sultan Deen to send letter and progress this if required.

Kemal Begic: Invited John Fox and Community Engagement Unit back to Bosnian Islamic Centre to discuss a security audit. The Mosque Official Opening held in November 2014 was a great success. Only complaint coming from the Bosnian community was that no media was present except the Australian Muslim Times.

AC Peter Martin: QPS always try to push positive stories out, however it is very difficult as mainstream media is selective. QPS were very grateful to have been invited to the Bosnian Islamic Centre Opening, and the Commissioner and other Commissioned Officers were welcomed by the community.

Ali Kadri: Disappointed at the lack of action by the QPS and AFP to control Right Wing Extremism and extremist groups, such as Restore Australia and Islam for Infidels.

Zoltan Swain: Qld Ethnic Liaison Officer (ELO) – Department of Immigration and Border Protection, Department of Immigration and Border Protection, indicated that the Commonwealth Attorney-Generals' Department, had recently extended the closing date for applications for Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) services and the Living Safe Together Grants Programme:

Applications will now close at: 5.00pm on Monday 2 March 2015.

More information on how to lodge an application for funding can be found on the Attorney-Generals' Department website at: www.ag.gov.au/cve

Wafa El-Kholed: So many Muslim youth are being bullied and marginalised and having to leave schools, simply because they are Muslim. They turn to other avenues, and perhaps risk becoming radicalised.

AC Peter Martin: suggested representative/s from Education Queensland [EQ] and Independent Schools Queensland to be invited to the next reference group meeting to participate in discussions of school bullying on the grounds of race and religion. Also, the role of School based Police Officers to discuss and how they can assist in these situations.

Yasmin Khan offered and prepared below email to EQ inviting them to the next meeting:

*'During our community meetings with the QPS Metro South Region Muslim Community Reference Group, it was brought to our attention some harassment and bullying going on in schools because children are of the Muslim faith. Whilst we are in no way suggesting that is rampant, it would be reassuring to parents in the community to hear from Education Qld, Catholic Education and Independent Schools Qld, to see what strategies they have in place to counteract this issue, what incidences, if any they have come across, what reporting methodology is there and what statistics are available. **Our next meeting is 7.00pm on 22 April 2015 at the Islamic College of Brisbane and we would appreciate a representative from your organisation come along to our meeting and offer your expertise to the community. We look forward to welcoming you then.***

Ali Kadri: There needs to be a statewide strategy implemented to counter ALL forms of violent extremism, including right wing extremism. Also, thank you to ADCQ and QPS for responding to emails regarding this issue.

Daud Batchelor: This meeting can only be reactive to federal government policies, especially regarding projecting military force in to the Middle East. Supported Ali Kadri's concerns about right wing extremists. The Open Forum organised by Pam Danson on plans for development of an Islamic Centre in Maroochydore originally to be held 17 January, 2015 in Nambour, was cancelled due to "overwhelming concerns about safety and the tone of how people might have behaved". It is highly probable Ms Danson was referring to potential behaviour of members of the extremist organisation Restore Australia who would have impinged on free discussion at the Forum. Police should be aware of such threats and take appropriate action to protect the security and freedoms of all Queenslanders pointed out to Commissioner Peter Martin, had reported there had been no significant incidents related to Muslims. DB pointed out that indeed the history of the Muslim community in QLD was one of respect for the law without significant incidents; that the Muslim community in QLD has been established for well over a century and some were pioneers. The Muslim community has a close ongoing productive relationship with QLD Police.

Sultan Deen: perhaps Daud can send a letter to the Attorney General's Office to outline the concerns being felt by the Muslim Community.

A/Superintendent Les Bulless: It was noted that the QPS also has a range of Volunteers in Policing (VIPs) and that a few other cultural groups had asked that people from their community be considered to be trained and used in the VIP program. A/Superintendent Bulless will send information of the VIP program to be distributed to the members of the QPS Muslim reference group.

Dr Adrian Cherney: University of Queensland provided a brief summary of completed research examining Muslim community attitudes towards counter-terrorism policing and laws. This research involved the collection of focus group and survey data from Muslims living in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne. A summary of the research has been provided by Adrian Cherney (attached), who will along with Tina Murphy from Griffith University provide a more detailed outline of the research results at the next reference group meeting. The attached summary is for public release and distribution.

Up and coming events:

21 Feb Logan Mosque event; Jamal to send Sgt Bellos details for distribution to all members.

~~21 Feb~~ Sunnybank/Salisbury Meal on Wheels Open Day: Yasmin to send Sgt Bellos details for distribution to all members. [Postponed due to weather]

~~22 Feb~~ Bald Hills Mosque Open Day: [now 8 March 2015]

28 Feb-01 Mar Community Picnic at Bosnian Islamic Centre/Independence Day Celebrations. Kemal to send Sgt Bellos details for distribution to all members.

14 March World Harmony Day at Springfield (ISHP): Ali to send Sgt Bellos details for distribution to all members.

Last Sunday of EVERY month – Community picnic at Bosnian Islamic Centre – ALL Welcome

Next Meeting:

7.00pm on Wednesday 22 April 2015 at ICB and all are welcome to attend.

Closing Du'a and close by chair

Action items:

1. Yasmin Khan Letter to Education Queensland
2. Sultan Deen Letter – Halal food
3. John Fox Follow Up security audit for Bosnian Mosque
4. Jamal El Khoed Flyer for Logan Mosque Dinner
5. Kemal Begic Flyer for Bosnian Mosque
6. Daud Batchelor Letter to the A-G Office
7. Insp Les Bulless Information on Volunteers in Policing [VIP] program
8. Dr Adrian Cherney Report on findings from Project Summary Australian Research Council Project – *Avoiding Community Backlash in the fight against terrorism*