



## COMMUNIQUE

### **From the Islamic Council of Victoria (ICV) to the Muslims of Victoria**

#### **Regarding the ICV's nomination for AFIC President**

**Melbourne, 12 April 2006**

Assalamu `alaikum wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuhu

The purpose of this communiqué is:

- to announce the ICV's nomination for AFIC President in the upcoming elections; and
- to explain to the Muslim community of Victoria the reasons for the ICV's decision.

The ICV issues this communiqué in the interests of transparency.

#### **Executive Summary**

This document is an Executive Summary of the full communiqué. To read the full communiqué, please go to:

[www.icv.org.au/assets/2006\\_afic\\_noms\\_reasons.pdf](http://www.icv.org.au/assets/2006_afic_noms_reasons.pdf).

The ICV executive committee, in light of community feedback, and after much careful deliberation and consideration, nominated **Ikebal Patel** for the position of AFIC President.

The ICV made this decision on the basis of the stated concerns and desires of the Muslim community in Victoria. The ICV found that the most pressing concern the Muslims of Victoria have about AFIC is its transparency and representativeness. The community feels very strongly that AFIC is a closed organisation. Of particular concern is:

- The **criteria for nomination** to AFIC exclude the vast majority of Australian Muslims from nomination. It also ensures that the same people keep returning to the AFIC board.
- The **secrecy of AFIC's financial documents**:

- The complete **absence of women and youth** in AFIC.
- AFIC's **ability to control membership** of the ICV and other state councils.
- AFIC's **lack of consultation** with state councils and Muslims generally.

Other concerns raised by the community were:

- The security of the ICV's continued tenancy at Jeffcott Street; and
- AFIC's poor performance in media.

A large majority of community responses supported **Ikebal Patel**. This was largely on the basis that he addressed the community's major concerns more satisfactorily.

A minority were undecided, while a larger minority recommended **Shujat Mantoo**. This was generally on two bases. The first was that it would be best for the ICV to nominate persons from Victoria. The second was that Ikebal was rumoured to be related to the AFIC CEO, Amjad Mehboob.

The ICV made a public commitment to consult the community and take the community feedback into consideration in making a decision. Accordingly, the ICV considered itself bound to follow the will of the community, as expressed in the feedback received, unless there were very compelling reasons not to do so.

The executive committee believes that Ikebal Patel is most closely in tune with prevailing community attitudes towards AFIC. Ikebal was openly critical of much of AFIC's past conduct. The ICV considers it of great importance that Ikebal was capable of constructive self-criticism.

The AFIC nomination criteria are a cause of major concern. The criteria make it impossible for AFIC to become open and democratic. The ICV felt it very significant that Ikebal listed reform of these criteria in his policy.

Finally, the ICV felt Ikebal had expressed a stronger desire to increase consultation with the ICV in the next term.

Nevertheless, the ICV still has significant concerns:

- Neither candidate was prepared to guarantee the ICV's ongoing tenancy at Jeffcott Street.

- Neither candidate was able to provide a satisfactory response to questioning about how they would improve AFIC's media performance.
- Neither candidate seemed supportive of relinquishing AFIC's control of the approval of the state councils' membership.

The ICV executive committee took very seriously the minority of community feedback in support of Shujat Mantoo's nomination. Such feedback was highly valued, and occupied much time in the committee's deliberations.

The ICV also took seriously allegations that Ikebal was related to Amjad Mehboob, the AFIC CEO, as there are significant concerns with his performance. Since the ICV has received that feedback, it has also received communication from Ikebal categorically denying that there is any relation between Amjad Mehboob and him.

The ICV also considered whether it was appropriate not to nominate any candidate. On this issue, the ICV accepted community feedback that it was better to nominate a candidate so that they could be held to account.

Wa `alaikum assalam,

ICV executive committee:

Malcolm Thomas (President)  
Ramzi Elsayed (Vice President)  
Nail Aykan (Secretary)  
Asad Ansari (Treasurer)  
Sherene Hassan (Executive committee member)  
Waleed Aly (Executive committee member)