

2016

Australian Intercultural Society
Advisory Board Report



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AIS Advisory Board Meeting

Monday, 28 November 2016

Attendees: Prof Rae Frances, Nick Hatzoglou, Tim Cartwright APM, George Donikian, Susan Riley, Major Brendan Nottle, Ian Gray, Hon Bruce Atkinson, Shane Marshall, Prof Greg Barton, Ahmet Keskin, Tanya Deane, Fatih Tuncer, Guner Hussein, Luke Veli, Tekin Sahan, Hulusi Turgut, Musa Ilhan

Apologies: Barney Zwartz, Bishop Phillip Huggins, Prof David de Kretser AC and Prof Fethi Mansouri

Advisory Board

- Chair of Advisory Board, Rae Frances, moving on to new role in ACT
 - Vote for a new chair
- Seeking new female members. Suggestions sought.
 - Last year's suggestions:
 - Chief Justice of Family Court Diana Bryant
 - Stephanie Bansemer-Brown: former Network Ten executive

Advisory Board

Professor Rae Frances	Dean, Faculty of Arts,	Monash University
Shane Marshall	Retried	Federal Court Australia
Hon Bruce Atkinson	President of the Legislative Council	Victoria Parliament
Professor Greg Barton	Director, the Centre for Islam & the Modern World,	Monash University
Tim Cartwright APM	Retried	Victoria Police
Prof Dr David de Kretser AC	Former Governor of Victoria	Monash University
George Donikian	Presenter/Broadcaster	Donikian Media
Ian L Gray	Retried	Coroners Court of Victoria
Nick Hatzoglou	Manager of Club Cricket	Cricket Australia
Bishop Philip Huggins	Bishop of the Northern & Western Region	Anglican Diocese of Melbourne
Professor Fethi Mansouri	UNESCO Chair	Deakin University
Major Brendan Nottle	Officer	Salvation Army
Susan Riley	Former Deputy Lord Mayor of Melbourne	City of Melbourne
Serdar Takimoglu	Executive Principal	Sirius College
Barney Zwartz	Senior Fellow	Centre for Public Christianity

Executive Team

Ahmet Keskin	Executive Director	Australian Intercultural Society
Esmay Yucel	Executive Officer	Australian Intercultural Society
Tanya Deane	Projects Officer	Australian Intercultural Society
Zekai Ergun	Accountant	Selimiye Foundation
Dr Cahit Guven	Lecturer	Deakin University
Guner Hussein	Solicitor	RSG Lawyers
Musa Ilhan	Service delivery manager	Unisys
Ergun Kirmaci	National Sales Manager	Multivac
Kerem Kiris	Business owner	Telecommunications
Tekin Sahan	General Manger	Allied and Sunny
Fatih Tuncer	Projects Officer	Australian Catholic University
Salih Tuncer	Solicitor	Sabelberg Morcos Lawyers
Hulusi Turgut	Director of Operations	Sirius College
Lutfullah Veli	Director of Finance	Selimiye Foundation
Mustafa Yilmaz	Editor	Yeni Vatan Newspaper

Launch of Research Chair

- AIS is continuing its support of academia as a peacebuilding initiative by sponsoring a research chair at Deakin University's Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation
- Chair of Islamic Studies and Intercultural Dialogue
- Academic: Professor Ihsan Yilmaz, previously Professor of Political Science at Fatih University (Turkey), Lecturer at the University of London and research scholar at the University of Oxford
- Speakers: Vice-Chancellor Jane den Hollander, Prof Ihsan Yilmaz, Prof Fethi Mansouri, Professor Ori Soltes; Emeritus Prof Gary Bouma AM
- Date: 22 November 2016



Parliament Iftar

○ 11th Annual Victorian Parliament Iftar Dinner

- Co-hosts: Hon Robin Scott and Inga Peulich
- Keynote speaker: Governor of Victoria Hon Linda Dessau AM
- MC: George Donikian
- Federal Members included Greens VIC Senator Janet Rice
- 30 registered, 20 VIC State MPs attended including Hon Bruce Atkinson, Hon David Hodgett (AIS study tour alumni), David Southwick, Craig Ondarchie, Natalie Suleyman
- Consul-generals or honorary consul-generals of 30 countries including Spain, US, Japan, Pakistan
- Other guests included Judge Anthony Howard QC, Federal Court Judges the Hon Justice Tony Pagone and Mordecai Bromberg, VIC Supreme Court Justice Chris Maxwell
- CEO of Shrine of Remembrance Dean Lee, Oxfam CEO and AIS study tour alumni Helen Szoke, Sarah Abo from SBS World News and IFLC 2017 co-host, Chairman of Maurice Blackburn Steve Walsh, Jasbir Singh President of the Sikh Interfaith Council of Victoria, Director of Emergency Medicine at the Royal Melbourne Hospital George Braitberg
- Premier Hon Daniel Andrews hosts his own iftar so he was not in attendance. Hon Matthew Guy cancelled last minute due to illness
- Attendees: 240
- Date: 20 June 2016
- [Photos and videos](#)



University Iftars

- **5th Annual Deakin University Iftar Dinner**
 - Keynote speaker: Helen Kapalos, Chair of the Victorian Multicultural Commission
 - Opening remarks & MC: Prof Fethi Mansouri, Director of the Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation
 - Speaker: Vice Chancellor Prof Jane den Hollander
 - Speaker: Zaheen Kareemy, President of the Islamic Society of Deakin University
 - Attendees included: Former Governor General Dr Peter Hollingsworth, Principal of Mt Hira College Sara Salarzadeh, CEO of Selimiye Foundation Mesut Lelik
 - Attendees: 60
 - Date: 9 June 2016
 - [Photos and video](#)



○ **Monash University Iftar Dinner**

- AIS first established relationship with Monash University in 2001
- This year's iftar was hosted with Monash University Residential Services, so most attendees were students and some staff
- Keynote speaker: Victorian Ombudsman Deborah Glass
- Interfaith panel: Father John Dupuche, Cantor Michel Laloum and Mr Omer Ergi speaking on the topic of fasting in their respective faith traditions
- AIS expresses its sincere appreciation for Prof Rae Frances and her many contributions to make these iftar dinners a reality
- Date: 15 June 2016
- [Photos and videos](#)



○ **La Trobe University Iftar Dinner**

- Eighth (and largest) annual iftar dinner
- Keynote speakers: Renowned AFL coach Mick Malthouse and Sue Crow, Manager at Melbourne City Football Club
- Speaker: Vice-Chancellor Professor John Dewar
- Improved attendance thanks to more effort placed into planning on the University's end
- Attendees included: Colin Brooks MP, Consulate General of Malaysia, Anglican Archdeacon Emeritus Philip Newman, Principal of Ilim College Aynur Simsirel
- Attendees: 100
- Date: 28 June 2016
- [Photos and videos](#)



○ **Victoria University Iftar Dinner**

- Second dinner with VU (first was in 2009)
- Keynote speaker: Federal Member for Gellibrand Tim Watts MP
- Speaker: Vice-Chancellor Prof Peter Dawkins
- Strengthening of a relationship: VU became a supporting partner in the Muslim Youth Forum
- Attendees included: Prof Greg Barton, AFP & VICPOL representatives, General Manager of Islamic Museum Ashraf Naim, Mayor of Maribyrnong Cr Cameron McDonald
- Attendees: 100
- Date: 29 June 2016
- [Photos and videos](#)



Inaugural Iftars

○ Ambulance Victoria Iftar

- A collaboration with Ambulance Victoria, Benevolence Australia and the United Muslims Migrants Association (UMMA)
- Aim was to encourage more people of CALD background to consider a career as a paramedic (or volunteer for the Ambos)
- Beneficial partnership as we have limited reach to Muslims in Eastern suburbs
- Speakers: Chair of the Board of Directors for Ambulance Victoria (and AIS study tour alumni) Ken Lay APM, Islamic Museum of Australia curator Tasneem Chopra, Dr Zuleyha Keskin from Islamic Sciences and Research Academy
- MC: CEO of Ambulance Victoria Associate Professor Tony Walker
- Whirling dervishes performance
- Attendees included: Chair and board members of Ambulance Victoria, Chair of the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre Maxine Morand, CEO of Asthma Foundation Victoria Robin Ould, CEO of Alfred Health Prof Andrew Way, CEO of Emergency Management Victoria Neil Robertson
- Attendees: 80
- Date: 8 June 2016
- [Photos and video](#)



○ **Legal Profession Iftar Dinner**

- Hosted in collaboration with the Law Institute of Victoria and the Muslim Legal Network of Victoria
- Keynote speaker: Chief Magistrate Hon Peter Lauritsen speaking on recent developments in the Magistrates Court of Victoria
- Speaker: President of the Law Institute of Victoria Steven Sapountsis speaking on “Diversity and inclusion in the law”
- Welcome remarks: President of the Muslim Legal Network of Victoria Jazeer Nijamudeen
- Bill Shorten was scheduled to attend but had to cancel. Shadow Attorney-General Hon Mark Dreyfus QC spoke in his place, accompanied by Federal Member for Batman David Feeney.
- Attendees included: Mostly of legal background, first female Muslim magistrate Urfa Masood, Judge Catherine Lamble from Magistrates Court
- Venue: Islamic Museum of Australia
- Attendees: 70 guests
- Date: 16 June 2016
- [Photos and video](#)



○ **VICSport Iftar Dinner**

- Hosted in collaboration with VICSport and proudly supported by AFL and Cricket Australia.
- Venue: Islamic Museum of Australia (tour included)
- Panel: Paralympian Madeleine Hogan, Cricketer Fawad Ahmed, AFL player Ahmed Saad
- MC: Sports journalist Angela Pippas
- An opportunity for the sporting community from all types of sports to engage with the Muslim community
- Attendees included: CEO of Disability Sport and Recreation, Gymnastics Victoria Hockey Australia, Swimming Australia, Cricket Victoria, Victorian Olympic Council
- AIS kindly thanks Nick Hatzoglou for his leadership in this unique initiative, the first of its kind as sports iftars to this date have been limited to a few sports. Most members from VICSport on the night were attending an iftar dinner for the first time.
- Attendees: 90
- Date: 4 July 2016
- [Photos](#)



- AIS and our sister organisations extend their sincere appreciation to George Donikian who hosted the Parliament Iftars in VIC, [Queensland](#) (Queensland Intercultural Society), [Perth](#) (Intercultural Harmony Society) and [New Zealand](#) (Pearl of the Islands Foundation)

Home Iftars

- 26 home iftars. Attendees included:
 - Federal MPs: Hon Maria Vamvakinou, Rob Mitchell and Peter Khalil
 - State MPs: Nina Springle, Cindy McLeish, Craig Ondarchie and Bronwyn Halfpenny
 - Media: Dave Hughes (thanks to Sirius College), Karen Percy (ABC), Norman Hermant (ABC), Herald Sun & ABC journalists and staff
 - Legal: VIC Solicitor General Richard Niall, Supreme Court of Victoria Justice Karin Emerton, County Court Judge Hon Frances Millane
 - Others: President of NGV Council of Trustees and Director of National Australia Day Council Janet Whiting, now CEO of Australian Chinese Business Council Helen Sawzcak, head of Community at Melbourne Football Club Sue Crow, Board member of DFAT's Council on Australia Latin America Relations Victor Pertou, AMES Australia CEO Catherine Scarth, Asian Australian Lawyers Association President Reynah Tang, VICSport CEO Mark McAllion (his first iftar)
 - VMC: Helen Kapalos, Teresa De Fazio, Grahame Leonard and Chin Tan (former VMC Chair)
 - Family-friendly affair as many guests wanted to attend with their younger children, so we tried to match them with hosts who also had children
 - Please see appendix for feedback





Lectures, Panels and Conferences

- **The power, and confusion, of language: How a professional wordsmith adapts and appreciates the real power words have in our community**
 - Speaker: Andrew Holden, then Editor-in-Chief of *The Age*
 - Facilitator: Jennifer Martin, lecturer at University of Melbourne's Centre for Advancing Journalism and Editorial Assistant at *The Citizen*
 - Attendees included: Jim Middleton (Sky News), Chin Tan (former Chair of the VMC) and students from Sirius College
 - Attendance: 60 people
 - Date: 18 November 2015
 - [Photos and Video](#)



- **Social cohesion: A shared goal and a shared responsibility**
 - Speaker: Andrew Colvin APM OAM, Andrew, Commissioner of the Australian Federal Police
 - Facilitator: Helen Kapalos, Chair of Victorian Multicultural Commission
 - Attendees include: AFP State Manager John Beveridge, OMAC Director Hakan Akyol, VEOHRC chairperson John Searle, Khalil Eideh MP, community leaders (JCCV, Nigerian Society)
 - Attendance: 100 people
 - Date: 17 February 2016
 - [Photos and Video](#)



○ **Multiculturalism, tolerance and the law**

- Speaker: Hon Mark Dreyfus QC , Federal Member for Isaacs, as well as Australia's Shadow Attorney-General and Shadow Minister for Arts
- Facilitator: Tim Cartwright, former Deputy Commissioner of Victoria Police, Family Violence Reform Implementation Monitor
- Attendees included: three past presidents of the Law Institute of Victoria, including Reynah Tang of the Asian Australian Lawyers Association
- Attendance: 55 people
- Date: 17 March 2016
- [Photos and video](#)



○ **Creating the best society for our children**

- Speaker: Hon Diana Bryant, Chief Justice of the Family Court of Australia
- Facilitator: Victoria Police Assistant Commissioner Dean McWhirter, head of Australia's first Family Violence Command
- Attendees included: Country Court Judge Hon Frances Millane, leaders or staff at social service organisations or government departments or legal counsels
- Attendance: 55 people
- Date: 5 May 2016
- [Photos and video](#)



- **US elections: What it means for Australia and the region**

- Speaker: Lydia Khalil, non-resident fellow at Lowy Institute for International Policy, international security expert
- Facilitator: David Weinberger, Principal Lawyer, Kliger Partners (replacing Jim Middleton, SKY News)
- Attendance: 70 people
- Date: 26 October 2016
- [Photos and video](#)



- **Roundtables with Kerim Balci**

- Speaker: International guest Kerim Balci, editor in chief of *Turkish Review*, one of the publications whose website was shut down by the Turkish government
- Roundtables held with *The Australian/Herald Sun*, *The Age/Australian Financial Review*, ABC Newsroom, Deakin University and Islamic Sciences and Research Academy (ISRA)
- AIS arranged a radio [interview](#) with ABC Radio National Saturday Extra with Geraldine Doogue on matters relating to Turkey (“Turkey in the fray”)
- Date: 29 February - 2 March 2016

- **Recent developments in Turkey**

- Topic: Originally advertised as a roundtable, increased registrations turned it into a lecture on recent developments in Turkey
- Speaker: Kerim Balci, editor in chief of *Turkish Review*
- Hosted by the Australian Institute of International Affairs
- Attendance: 50 people
- Date: 1 March 2016



○ **Reporting the Middle East : Perils and possibilities**

- Speaker: Kerim Balci, editor in chief of *Turkish Review*, and Tony Walker, international editor of the *Australian Financial Review*
- Facilitator: Jennifer Martin, lecturer at University of Melbourne's Centre for Advancing Journalism and Editorial Assistant at *The Citizen*
- In collaboration with the University of Melbourne's Centre for Advancing Journalism
- One year subscription to *Turkish Review* was offered for free as limited time offer
- Attendance: 60 people
- Date 2 March 2016
- [Photos and Video](#)



○ **United or divided? Muslims and Christians in a globalised world**

- Speaker: Professor John Esposito, Professor of International Affairs and Islamic Studies at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C
- Facilitator: Tasneem Chopra, cultural consultant, Islamic Museum of Australia curator
- Organised with the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne and Australian Catholic University
- Attendance: 250 people
- Date 4 December 2015
- AIS also organised two radio programs for Prof Esposito: [3AW](#) & [ABC NewsRadio Breakfast](#)
- [Photos and audio recording](#)



- **Finding spirituality through art in the modern world: Jewish, Christian and Muslim perspectives**
 - Speaker: Prof Ori Z Soltes, Georgetown University, former Director of B'nai B'rith Klutznick National Jewish Museum in Washington DC
 - In collaboration with Monash University
 - Attendees: 85 people
 - Date: 21 November 2016
 - [Photos and Video](#)



○ **Third Australasian Conference on Islam: Refuting the theological foundations of violent extremism and radicalisation**

- Event partners: Deakin University, Australian Catholic University, Charles Sturt University, Islamic Sciences and Research Academy (ISRA)
- Attendees: 100 people
- Date: 13-14 October 2016



○ **Stuck between 2 worlds : Misunderstandings between parents and children**

- Moderator: Del Irani, ABC Breakfast presenter, pulled out a few days before due to family emergency. Esma Yucel filled in.
- Panellists: Five Muslim youth of different backgrounds (ethnic, religious practice, profession), three women, two men
- Supported by a grant from the Victorian Government and in-kind support from Victoria University
- Originally to be a Balkans Iftar Dinner, then Balkans Youth Panel and finally a Muslim Youth Forum after discussion with event partners Deer Park Bosnian Mosque and Albanian Australian Islamic Society in Carlton. Unfortunately, both partners withdrew their support.
- Topic was chosen via an online poll by Muslim youth.
- Closing remarks by Tina Hosseini, Youth Commissioner of the Victorian Multicultural Commission.
- First time AIS has hosted a forum. Feedback was positive overall.
- Looking into repeating this forum with a different topic and target audience next year.
- Attendees: 120 people
- Date: 3 November 2016
- [Photos and video](#)



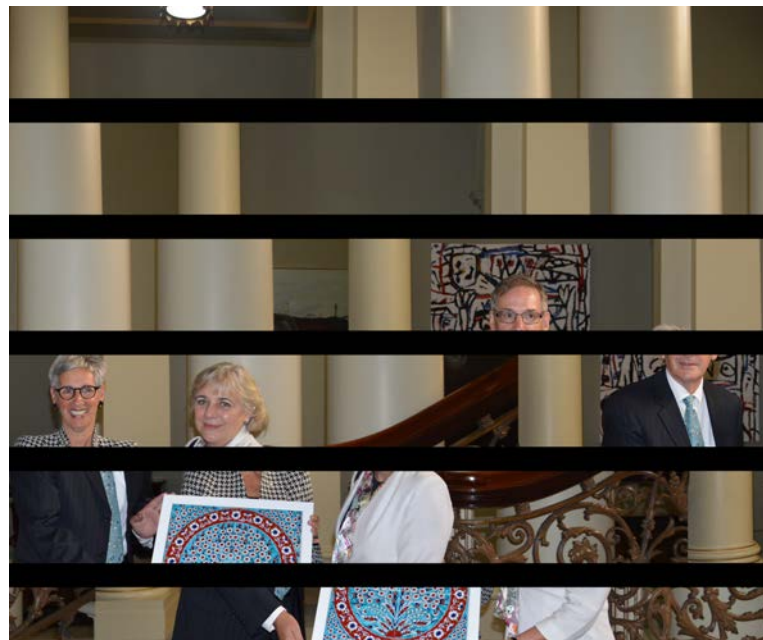
○ **Sirius College Speaker Series**

- Sirius College and AIS extends their sincere gratitude to AIS Advisory Board members and others who volunteered their time to speak to their students at various campuses about their careers, life journeys and general advice.
- External speakers: Tim Wilson MP, Hon Mark Dreyfus MP, Victorian Ombudsman Deborah Glass, Victorian Multicultural Commission Youth Commissioner Tina Hosseini; Postponed: County Court Judge Hon Frances Millane
- Advisory Board members: Hon Bruce Atkinson, Shane Marshall, Susan Riley, Rae Frances; Postponed for next year: Tim Cartwright, Fethi Mansouri, George Donikian



○ **Luncheon at Government House**

- Host: Hon Linda Dessau AM, Governor of Victoria
- Date: 9 February 2016
- Attendees included: Prof Rae Frances, Shane Marshall, Prof David de Kretser AC, Bishop Philip Huggins, Prof Greg Barton, Susan Riley, George Donikian, Nick Hatzoglou, Barney Zwartz, Ian Gray, Tim Cartwright APM, Ahmet Keskin, Esmay Yucel, Tanya Deane, Executive Team members: Fatih Tuncer, Kerem Kiris, Hulusi Turgut and Cahit Guven
- Follow up event attended by Esmay Yucel – roundtable of women theologians in July. Thank you to Bishop Philip Huggins for helping arrange this.



Outreach

○ Hosting Chinese delegation

- Visiting senior court delegation from China who came to learn about Australia's court system and multiculturalism.
- Date: 26 November 2015
- Organised in partnership with Sabelberg Morcos Lawyers
- Session at VIC Parliament and AIS
- Afternoon Session at Parliament – attendees included: Hon Bruce Atkinson, Cindy McLeish, Nazih El-Asmar, Christine Fyffe, Nina Springle, Colin Brooks, Michael Gidely
- Session at AIS - attendees included: Journalists from *The Age* and *Herald Sun*, staff from DFAT, VIC Solicitor General Richard Niall, Helen Sawczak (now CEO of Australian Chinese Business Council)



○ Brazilian visitors

- AIS hosted in Melbourne two Brazilian academics, Prof Massimo Canvecacci and Prof Renato Janine Ribeiro, the latter of whom served as Minister of Education in 2015, after the IFLC. They met with Brazilian and Columbian consul-generals, Deakin University's ADICAG, Swinburne University's VPs for Engagement and International and Students and were hosted by Hon Bruce Atkinson
- Date: 26 April 2016



- **New Zealand Advisory Board meeting**

- George Donikian and Ahmet Keskin were invited to attend the [Advisory Board](#) meeting of the Pearl of the Islands Foundation.
- Date: 3-4 April 2016



- **Islam and democracy: Breaking down the myths**

- Pearl of Islands Foundation invited Prof Greg Barton to present on “Islamic and democracy: Breaking down the myths” in [New Zealand Parliament](#), Victoria University and the foundation
- Ahmet Keskin and Greg attended Federation of Islamic Associations of New Zealand (FIANZ) hosted Eid reception in Parliament
- Greg spoke on [Radio New Zealand](#)
- Date: 14- 15 September 2016



○ **International Festival of Language and Culture in Sydney**

- 2nd International Festival of Language and Culture held in Australia (first in Melbourne last year)
- Venue: Sydney Opera House ([Highlights video](#))
- AIS assisted Affinity Intercultural Foundation with the promotion and helped arrange VIP meetings.
- Sold out event: 2000 people
- Student performers from 22 countries
- MC: George Donikian and Sara Abo (SBS)
- Speakers:
 - Governor General of Australia, HE Gen the Hon Sir Peter Cosgrove ([Speech Video](#))
 - Governor of NSW, Hon David Hurley
 - Craig Laundry, Assistant Minister for Multicultural Affairs representing the Prime Minister
- VIP visits or attendance:
 - Hon Trevor John Khan, Deputy President and Chair of Committees
 - Assistant Minister for Multicultural Affairs Hon Craig Laundry on behalf of Prime Minister
 - Shadow Minister for Citizenship and Multiculturalism Michelle Rowland on behalf of Federal Opposition Leader Bill Shorten
 - Minister for Multiculturalism Hon John Ajaka on behalf NSW Premier Mick Baird
 - Shadow Minister for Multiculturalism Sophie Cotsis on behalf of NSW Opposition Leader Luke Foley
 - Chief Justice James Allsop, Australian Federal Court
 - Hon Justice M J Beazley AO, President of the Court of Appeals, Supreme Court of NSW
 - NSW Police Deputy Commissioner Catherine Burn
 - Hon Jason Clare MP
- Covered on SBS News on 17 April
- AIS and Affinity extend their appreciation to George for his immeasurable contribution to this major event





- **International Festival of Language and Culture in Romania**

- After his stellar work in 2015 and 2016 IFLCs in Australia, the Romanian IFLC committee invited George Donikian to MC their event
- Accompanied by Ahmet Keskin and Executive Team member Salih Tuncer
- Visited several dignitaries (MPs, journalists) throughout the week
- Date: 15 May 2016



- **Events in Turkey**

- What happened in Turkey:
 - On Friday 15 July, Turkey witnessed a coup attempt by sections of the military, which left hundreds dead and over a thousand injured. The overnight attempt was successfully thwarted with the government back in control.
 - While admitting the scarcity of information at the early hours of the night, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and figures close to him were quick to lay blame on the [Hizmet \(“service”\) Movement](#), a global faith-inspired civic movement inspired by the teachings of Turkish Muslim scholar Fethullah Gulen.
 - Hizmet-affiliated or supporting organisations and persons in Turkey have been targeted. As a result, media organisations, universities, schools, businesses being shut down, seized or vandalised, journalists jailed and many others arrested. Over 100,000 people have been purged from various sectors of society (private, government, business, education, media) and imprisoned without evidence, including those who have no connections to Hizmet or even those who are against Hizmet. Allegations of torture are rampant.
- As the AIS, we have always [stated](#) that the founding of our organisation was inspired by Gulen’s teachings. We clearly state that we and our affiliated organisations in Australia have never had nor have any such political agendas or aims. Our activities and our efforts to engage in dialogue with all sectors of society regardless of political views are a testament to this.
- Current situation in Australia
 - AIS and Affinity Intercultural Foundation are being defamed. Turkish ambassador and consulates in ACT, NSW and VIC have been disseminating English and Turkish material and meeting with politicians and community groups, [warning](#) them not to attend our events.
 - Turkish community strongly divided, some withdrawing their support of AIS
- Known effects on AIS: study tours cancelled indefinitely; Bosnian group who was to host the Muslim Youth Forum with AIS withdrew their support.
- AIS response:
 - Released a public [statement](#).
 - Sent letters to and asked to meet with the Premier and Opposition Minister, forwarding to them the material disseminated by consulates.
 - Met with stakeholders (government, media, academia, community) to explain the situation.
- AIS extends its appreciation to Advisory Board members who spoke highly of AIS in the [Herald Sun](#) article (see appendix).
- Greg Barton spoke to [ABC Lateline](#) about Turkey events.

Postponed programs

- **March 2016: Luncheon with Mandy Wicks**
 - Speaker: Mandy Wicks, SBS Director of Audio and Language Content
 - Postponed due to scheduling conflicts on AIS's end
- **August 2016: Luncheon with Hon Matthew Guy**
 - Speaker: Hon Matthew Guy, VIC Leader of Opposition
 - Postponed early August due to scheduling conflicts on the speaker's side
- **First half of 2016: Success School**
 - Helping young people aspire to and work towards success
 - Four modules: goal-setting, communication skills, project management, job-ready skills. Initial program to have 15-20 participants.
 - Consulting within networks for assistance (such as Rotary Club, Victoria Police mentoring program)
 - Mentors sought within AIS networks
 - Postponed due lack of time for preparation

Media mentions

- **10 October 2015: *The Australian***
 - Ahmet Keskin quoted in *The Australian* "[Sydney shooting reflects the battle for young minds](#)" by Chip Le Grand and John Lyons
- **12 January 2016: Crikey**
 - AIS mentioned in "[Australian allies of Turkish cleric may have to choose sides](#)" by Alex Mitchell
- **21 April 2016: *The Age***
 - Ahmet Keskin and his family were profiled in *The Age* along with eight other Muslims on "Australian Muslim Faces". Titled "[Back then we were all tagged as 'ethnic'](#)" by Beau Donnelly
- **27 June 2016: 774ABC with Jon Faine**
 - Esmat Yucel on the Conversation Hour 774 ABC with Jon Faine live from Dandenong Market with several other guests talking about diversity and inclusion initiatives. Listen [here](#).



- **20 July 2016: Crikey**
 - AIS mentioned in article [“Two men at the centre of bloodshed in Turkey”](#) by Irfan Yusuf
- **20 July 2016: SBS**
 - AIS and events in Turkey are the focus of the article [“Turkey’s ‘most wanted terrorist’ and his well-connected friends in Australia”](#) by Rick Feneley
- **20 July 2016: SBS**
 - AIS and events in Turkey are the focus of the article [“Turkey ambassador warns of possible threat from Gulen’s Australian followers”](#) by Rick Feneley
- **16 August 2016: Herald Sun**
 - AIS and events in Turkey are the focus of the article
 - Online: [“Prominent Victorians vowed to stand with local charity which key ally Turkey has labelled a terrorist organisation”](#)
 - Print: “Turkey wont scare us off”(see appendix)

Marketing

- We’re putting in time to reconnect with past event attendees and updating extensive contacts database with the help of high school and university student volunteers, but it’s a lengthy process. We’re seeking pro bono consulting on how to maintain connections and improve relations.
- Social media reach has improved
 - Parliament Iftar was a trending Twitter topic in Melbourne that night thanks to George’s repeated reminders to the audience
 - We’ve posted more photos from our iftars this year and tagged others, hence increasing our exposure on Twitter and Facebook
 - Ramadan is prime time for AIS in terms of social media reach (Twitter in June-July 81,000 impressions, 2000 profile visits)
 - Three experiments with paid promotions on Facebook (2014, 2016) increased exposure and awareness of AIS as well as registrations, but less than 40% registered came to the event.
- Networking and recommendations from AB
 - Ahmet and Executive Team members happy to join you at events where you think we could learn about and meet others and promote the work we do. Thank you to all AB members who have invited us to network with others.

Appendix

○ Event collaborations or partnerships

1. Parliament of Victoria
2. Australian Institute of International Affairs (AIIA)
3. Ecumenical and Interfaith Commission of the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne
4. Ambulance Victoria
5. VICSport
6. Cricket Australia
7. AFL
8. Law Institute of Victoria
9. Muslim Legal Network
10. Sabelberg Morcos Lawyers
11. Deakin University
12. Australian Catholic University
13. Victoria University
14. La Trobe University
15. Monash University
16. University of Melbourne
17. Charles Sturt University
18. Islamic Sciences and Research Academy (ISRA)
19. Equal Employment Opportunity Network
20. Sirius College
21. Benevolence
22. United Muslim Migrants Association

○ Media

- Ahmet Keskin (“The Peacemaker”) and his family were profiled in *The Age* along with eight other Muslims on “Australian Muslim Faces”. Titled “[Back then we were all tagged as ‘ethnic’](#)” by Beau Donnelly



“We know what the elephant in the room is.”

Scroll down

AUSTRALIAN MUSLIMS SPEAK UP

Nine men and women from around Australia give voice to what it's really like to live as a Muslim. Ahmet Keskin, 44, a father and executive director of the Australian Intercultural Society, tells how he talks to his children about being Muslim. Beau Donnelly reports.

Growing up, I was one of the only Muslim kids at school. Back then we were all tagged as “ethnic”. I thought my fair hair and complexion would have helped me go unnoticed but I still felt like the odd one out. I remember once being asked by the other boys why I didn't go to football training for one month in grade 8. They thought I'd chickened out. I didn't explain what Ramadan was because I wasn't comfortable with my



Ahmet as a nine-year-old schoolboy.

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rowing up, I was one of the only Muslim kids at school. Back then we were all tagged as “ethnic”. I thought my fair hair and complexion would have helped me go unnoticed but I still felt like the odd one out. I remember once being asked by the other boys why I didn’t go to football training for one month in grade 8. They thought I’d chickened out. I didn’t explain what Ramadan was because I wasn’t comfortable with my identity as a child. Now I see Islam as a positive force in my life and place it at the foreground of everything I do as an Australian-Muslim.

I encourage my kids to be proud of their background. I always tell them to remember that they are an Australian of Muslim faith with heritage that traces back to Turkey. When they ask me about discrimination against Muslims I tell them to counter that negativity by being the best person and the best Muslim they can be. I remind them that if they want others to accept them as they are, that they have to accept others.

When we see protests against mosques on the news we talk about the purpose of a mosque – or a church, synagogue, or temple – that these are places of worship and that we have the freedom to choose our faith. I explain that some people feel threatened by what they see as foreign and unfamiliar. And I tell my children that to respond to fear with violence is wrong.

When my daughter asks me why people who proclaim to be Muslims carry out violent acts, I tell her that there are historical and current grievances that they are unable to resolve and that they see violence as the solution.

I explain that there is no place in Islam for radicals and extremists.

That a Muslim is always a balanced person who considers another’s viewpoints, no matter how diametrically opposed they might be. That even if you feel you’re not being heard, you can’t coerce your views onto others.

When we ask non-Muslims what they would like to know, they typically ask where in Islam is the prescription towards becoming radical. I wouldn’t say I get tired of having to explain that that is not part of our faith, but the questions always do have that theme. We know what the elephant in the room is, what their main concern is, but sadly it’s blocking the way for people to learn about the essence of the Islamic faith. I would prefer to tell people who we are and what we stand for. There are far more commonalities

There are huge challenges facing us as Muslims, both in terms of how we practise our traditions and also the way we approach contemporary society. There are voices in the Muslim world that are calling for greater engagement and scrutiny within our community. I believe our community does need to have some internal reflection and self-criticism so that Muslims can succeed wherever they live. Love of one’s country and service to one’s people is not a foreign concept in Islam, but it is important for all of us to revisit those views and see how else we can improve the world we live in.

Portraits Chris Hopkins *Design* Jo Gay

- **Prominent Victorians vowed to stand with a local charity which key ally Turkey has labelled a terrorist organisation**
 - James Dowling, *Herald Sun*
 - August 16, 2016
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Turkey won't scare us off

VIPs defend society

PROMINENT Victorians have vowed to stand by a local charity, which key ally Turkey has labelled a terrorist group.

The Turkish Government claims the Australian Intercultural Society is part of the "Fethullah Gulen terrorist organisation" responsible for the recent coup attempt.

Former state coroner Ian Gray, retired police deputy commissioner Tim Cartwright, ex-Victorian governor David de Kretser and retired judge Shane Marshall all sit on the charity's advisory board.

Both Opposition Leader Matthew Guy and Premier Daniel Andrews have spoken or are due to speak at events organised by the society.

But Turkey's ambassador to Australia and its consul-general in Melbourne have warned politicians to stay away. Consul-general Mehmet Küçükşakallı called the society a "threat to Australia", which should not be supported.

He said in a statement: "We continue to inform Australian public, officials and dignitaries about the true colours of this terrorist organisation and its global network that covers Australia in various forms."

But society executive director Ahmet Keskin said the organisation was Australian and did not involve itself with over-

JAMES DOWLING

seas conflicts. He said it promoted interfaith and intercultural dialogue and was disappointed to have its name tarnished by Turkey's rulers.

US-based imam Fethullah Gulen is an enemy of Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdogan. In a crackdown that followed the July 15 coup attempt, which saw 250 killed, loyalist troops and police arrested tens of thousands of judges, military chiefs and academics linked to the Gulen movement. They were sacked or jailed.

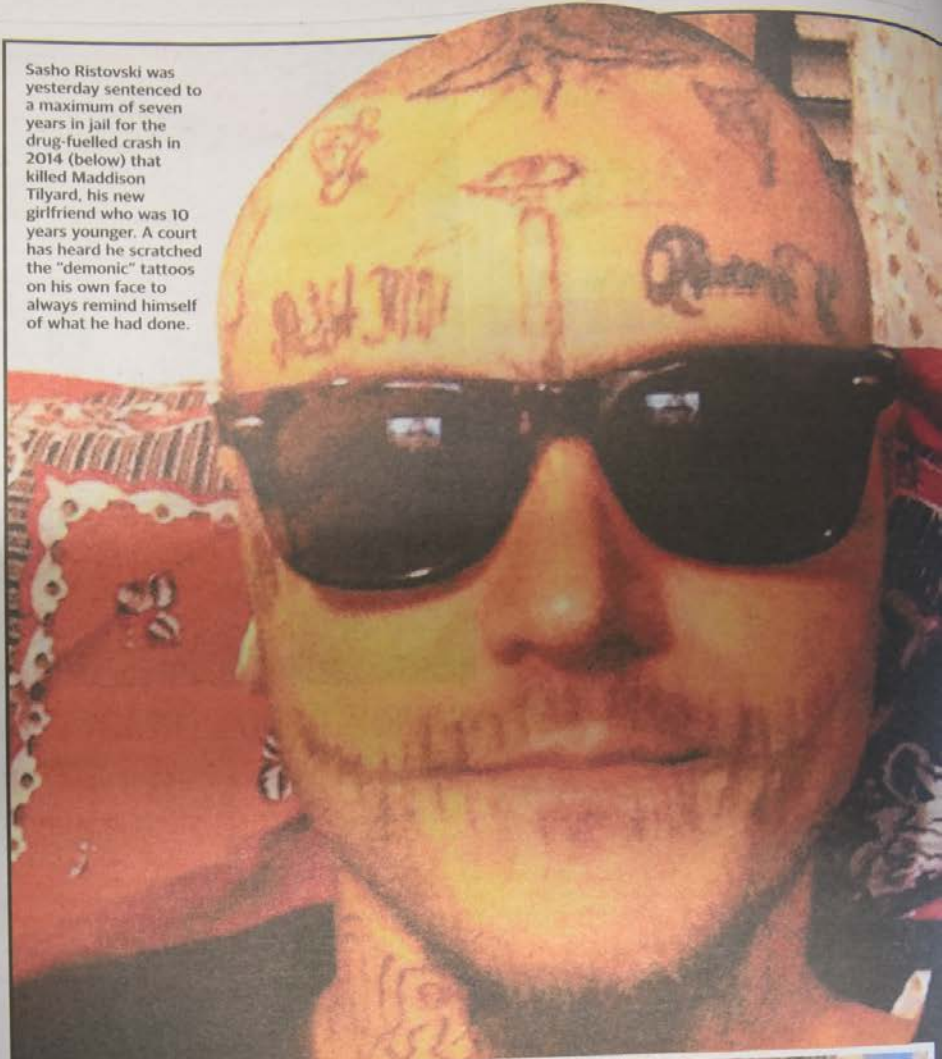
At the time, the Australian Intercultural Society condemned the coup bid.

Liberal politician Bruce Atkinson, who retired from the charity's advisory board in 2014, said: "They go out of their way to promote an understanding of the Islamic faith. In the seven years I have known them I have never heard them utter anything about politics in Turkey or even Gulen."

Deakin University counter-terrorism expert Professor Greg Barton, who is on the advisory board, said he was confident the group was not political, adding that Turkish officials in Australia were likely to be following orders from Ankara in condemning it.

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Sasho Ristovski was yesterday sentenced to a maximum of seven years in jail for the drug-fuelled crash in 2014 (below) that killed Maddison Tilyard, his new girlfriend who was 10 years younger. A court has heard he scratched the "demonic" tattoos on his own face to always remind himself of what he had done.



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Retired Victoria Police deputy commissioner Tim Cartwright, ex-state Governor David de Krester and retired federal judge Shane Marshall all sit on the organisation's advisory board. Picture: Brendan Francis

Law & Order

Prominent Victorians vowed to stand with a local charity which key ally Turkey has labelled a terrorist organisation

James Dowling, Herald Sun
August 16, 2016 8:00pm
Subscriber only

PROMINENT Victorians have vowed to stand with a local charity which key ally Turkey has labelled a terrorist organisation.

The Turkish government claims the Australian Intercultural Society is part of what they have dubbed the "Fethullah Gulen Terrorist Organisation" that was allegedly responsible for a coup last month.

Former state coroner Ian Gray, retired Victoria Police deputy commissioner Tim Cartwright, ex-state Governor David de Krester and retired federal judge Shane Marshall all sit on the organisation's advisory board.

Both opposition leader Matthew Guy and Premier Daniel Andrews have spoken or are due to speak at its events.

But Turkey's ambassador to Australia and consul general for Melbourne have warned politicians to stay away from the group and vowed to continue to inform "dignitaries about the true colours of this terrorist organisation."

Melbourne Turkish consul general Mehmet Küçüksakallı said organisations like the Australian Intercultural Society were part of the global "Gulen terrorist organisation."

"The Consulate General/the Consul General himself, continue to inform Australian public, officials and dignitaries about the true colours of this terrorist organisation and its global network that covers Australia as well, in various forms and occasions."

He said the global Gulen organisation — which draws inspiration from moderate American based imam Fetullah Gulen — posed a threat to Australia and should not be supported.

The Australian Intercultural Society has previously released a statement condemning the attempted July 15 coup, which killed 250 people.

Its website states its aims as "promoting multiculturalism and fostering intercultural and interfaith dialogue".

In a crackdown following the coup Turkish judges and military officers linked to the Gulen movement have been jailed in their thousands.

Liberal politician Bruce Atkinson said any alleged link to the charity and the Turkish coup was fanciful.

Eastern Metropolitan MLC Mr Atkinson retired from its advisory board before the 2014 election but said he still supported the group.

“They go out of their way to promote an understanding of the Islamic faith

“In my seven years that I have known them I have never heard them utter anything about

politics in Turkey or even the Gulen movement.

Deakin University counter-terrorism expert Greg Barton said the Turkish crackdown on group’s associated with Gulen was purely political. Prof Barton, who is on the advisory board, said he was confident the group was not an Islamist organisation or even political.

“There is no wolf in sheep’s clothing.”

He said local Turkish officials were likely under directions from Ankara to issue warnings.

Melbourne Council deputy mayor Susan Riley said she still supported the group and had seen nothing to suggest it was involved in any terrorist activity.

Chair of the Victorian Multicultural Commission Helen Kapalos said separate meetings had been held with Turkish officials and the AIS after the coup.

“Everybody wants to ensure that communities remain supportive of another and that both sides support the democratic process in Australia and in Turkey,” she said.

Home iftar feedback

Every year, AIS reaches out to Muslims families asking if they would like to host those who aren't Muslim in their homes for an iftar dinner during Ramadan. We're fortunate to know many generous families who take pride in making their best foods to honour their guests.

We have been running this initiative for over a decade. Participants' feedback has indicated that these dinners not only facilitate understanding of the Islamic faith, but also enhance the Muslim community's sense of belonging in Australian society.

Remarks from attendees

"It was a privilege & delight to share an iftar dinner with the Pullu family. Many thanks to AIS for the opportunity!

"So many stories, so many laughs and so much food! It was such a privilege to have been invited."

"I felt so privileged to attend my first iftar that I went to another. I was grateful for stunning food and company"

"I didn't know what an iftar dinner was. Tonight was a great night, my first iftar dinner, at the home of an Olympics wrestler and his family. Thank you AIS for the invitation."

"The iftar dinner program is a lovely initiative by AIS. It was a warm and interesting evening. There was such an amazing spread of food, and very kind of the host to cater for our mixed little vegan and vegetarian group. At my house, we're still eating the baklava that the host sent me home with!"

"We enjoyed a wonderful meal and great company. It was a generous gesture for the hosts to welcome us into their home and we felt warmly welcomed."

"It was a very enjoyable occasion for myself and my family, and a valuable opportunity to gain insight into Muslim traditions and appreciate we all share a common humanity. All the children got on fabulously and didn't want to leave."

"Thank you very much for organising the night. I really enjoyed the night and please pass on my thanks to the host family for their tremendous hospitality. My fiancée loves the Turkish delights they gave us."

"Thanks for the photos and for the invitation to last night's dinner. What a lovely family! And their hospitality was exceptional - I probably don't need to eat until next week."

Remarks from home iftar hosts

"If it weren't for AIS, I would not have been able to host these people in my home."

"Please let us know if we can host more people next year."