

## **“Stuck between two worlds“: The struggles of being Muslim in Australia**

### **Muslim Youth Forum**

**Organised by the Australian Intercultural Society (AIS)**

Thursday 3 November, 6:00-8:00pm

VU MetroWest, 138 Nicholson St Footscray

#### **Panellists' biographies**

##### **Amet Balla**

Amet is a Premium Compliance Auditor for WorkSafe Victoria. He completed his Bachelor of Business (Management) degree at Victoria University in 2014 achieving a distinction average. Since 2013, he has been passionately involved in community service as a volunteer Youth Committee Member of the Albanian Australian Islamic Society. He was recently selected amongst 15 Muslim Australian youth to participate in the *2016 Leadership Development Umrah Tour* of Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Turkey and Dubai (UAE) hosted by charity organisation Human Appeal International Australia. Amet aspires to be a role model, leader for positive change and point of counsel for fellow community members, in particular the Muslim youth of Melbourne.

##### **Cennet Koyu Osmani**

Born in the western suburbs of Melbourne and the eldest of three children, Cennet was among the first women in her community group based around the Australia Light Foundation to finish school. She appreciates the Foundation for teaching her the basics of Islam and the fundamentals of life. She completed her Bachelors degree in psychology at Victoria University and a Masters degree in counselling. Cennet has engaged in youth community work and self-development with the Australia Light Foundation, Selimiye Foundation and Australian Bosnian Islamic Centre. Growing up as a Muslim in a non-Muslim society, Cennet became determined to help those who struggle with their identity as Muslims. Cennet works as a counsellor at a private school in the southeastern suburbs.

##### **Oussama Abou-Zeid**

Oussama hails from the Newport Islamic Society, inner west of Melbourne, where he has been honoured as the 2013 Youth Citizen of the Year for Hobsons Bay for organising a football match between the Jewish and Muslim youth communities. Currently studying a Bachelor of Construction Management at Deakin University in Geelong, Oussama has a passion for faith, family and AFL.

In 2014 he was elected as Youth Premier of Victoria, elevating his role to the head of the Youth Parliament and positioning him as one of Victoria's foremost youth representatives. Elected by his peers, Oussama is building on his reputation as a community leader and youth activist. In 2015 he was nominated as Co-Chair the Social Cohesion and Community Resilience Advisory Group, working alongside State Ministers including the Deputy Premier. He was also one of four youth chosen to represent Australia at the 2015 Youth Summit in New York, where youth around the world exhibited their findings on how to combat Violent Extremism.

##### **Rida Khan**

Born in Pakistan, learning Japanese as her first language and then moving to a n Australian rural town in 2005, Rida has encountered a variety of cultures and developed multilingual skills. She has

been part of various leadership programs including Doxa Youth Foundation, ABC3 My24, Ancora Imparo Monash Vice Chancellor Leadership Program and the Multicultural Youth Network (MYN) in conjunction with Office of Multicultural Affairs & Citizenship (OMAC). While her academic focus remains on the healthcare sector, she regularly interacts with communities across Melbourne regarding multi-faith and multicultural issues hoping to objectively represent the voice of youth from all walks of life.

### **Soreti Kadir**

An Oromo poet and writer, Soreti began her professional career in the aid and development sector working for World Vision Australia in multiple roles, and partnered with World Vision Ethiopia in developing youth focused disability workshops.

Her expression as a spoken word artist and an emerging writer encompasses her passion for critical thinking, the strengthening of the Afro-descent diaspora and community engagement. She is currently studying a Bachelor of Arts at the University of Melbourne with a double major in international politics and sociology.

She is committed to cultivating the power of the Afro-descent diaspora and is constantly trying to navigate an in depth understanding of how the diaspora can shape the future of the African continent through her work as one of the cofounders and the directing manager of In Our Own Words, an NGO focused on self-awareness, de-colonial thinking and community empowerment.