

Another Successful Food Festival and Open Day of Toowoomba Mosque

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Alhamdulillah, Muslims in Toowoomba had another successful community event on Saturday, 31 July 2021 in spite of the pandemic and lockdown in many parts of Australia and Queensland. This was the 8th Annual Toowoomba Annual International Food Festival and Garden City Mosque Open Day. The event now an important part of annual calendar of Toowoomba and it has been financially supported by grants from Queensland Government.

The diversity and taste of food were great. The environment was very welcoming and engaging. People asked questions informally and in the formal session, as well as during viewing of the inside of the reconstructed Masjid building. In general, the participants were very happy and left with an impressive positive note.

The speakers were very positive and highlighted the contribution of Muslims and the Mosque in the social fabric of Toowoomba. The guest speakers appreciated the message of unity and upheld the actions of the Islamic Society of Toowoomba to bring people together to create a peaceful and harmonious community breaking barriers of nationality and ethnicity.

The formal presentation session started with the recitation of the Holy Quran by Br Abdu Mohamed. The speakers included Cr Paul Antonio, Mayor of Toowoomba Regional Council; Hon Garth Hamilton MP, Federal Member for Groom (Toowoomba); Professor Barbara de la Harpe from University of Southern Queensland; Inspector Km Hill representing the Queensland Police Commissioner; Mr Mark Creedon, Principal of Darling Height State School; and Professor Shahjahan Khan, President of Islamic Society of Toowoomba. A recorded message of Minister for Multicultural Affairs Queensland Hon Leanne Liard MP was played. Hon David Janetzki MP, State Member for Toowoomba South could not join the event as he had to be in quarantine. Associate Professor Dr Mainul Islam delivered the Vote of Thanks acknowledging all the guests, sponsors, volunteers and participants.

With reference to the contemporary practice to protect people from the covid-19 pandemic, Professor Khan noted Dr Craig Considine's article in the Newsweek that suggested that Muslims and non-Muslims are following Islamic Shariah by practicing Lockdown and Quarantine. As Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said, "If you heard the plague of land, do not enter it, and if it occurred on the land while you were on it, do not get out of it." (Lockdown); and the Messenger ordered, "keep those with contagious diseases away from healthy people." (Quarantine).

We received fairly good media coverage. The event was covered in the Daily Chronicle last weekend and it was posted and shared in many social media which helped us to reach out to much wider population, especially those who could not make to the event.

All these were possible, firstly because of the help of Allah, and secondly, the sincere contributions of members of the community, our brothers and sisters, who prepared yummy food and sold it, helped set up the stalls and dismantle them, erected the fences, carried the gazebos, clean the chairs and tables, and collected and damped the rubbish. Jazakum Allah Khair.

In spite of the covid-19 pandemic lots of people turned up through out the day keeping everyone busy and engaged. People kept coming and leaving continuously. We missed a good number of expected participants from Brisbane and Gold Coast areas due to sudden lockdown in greater Brisbane and surrounding regions.

I believe your sincere hard work and the willingness to present Islam and Muslims to the people in this city and region are the key to the success of the event. And all of you did this only to please Allah SWT. I am sure this will make a positive and longstanding impact within the wider community.

Our special thanks to the communities who had food stalls including our sisters and brothers of Australia, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bosnia, Egypt, India, Malaysia/Indonesia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Sudan/Eritrea, and Middle Eastern countries.

May Allah accept our efforts and contribution to the house of Allah and to the community, and reward everyone with the best in both worlds.