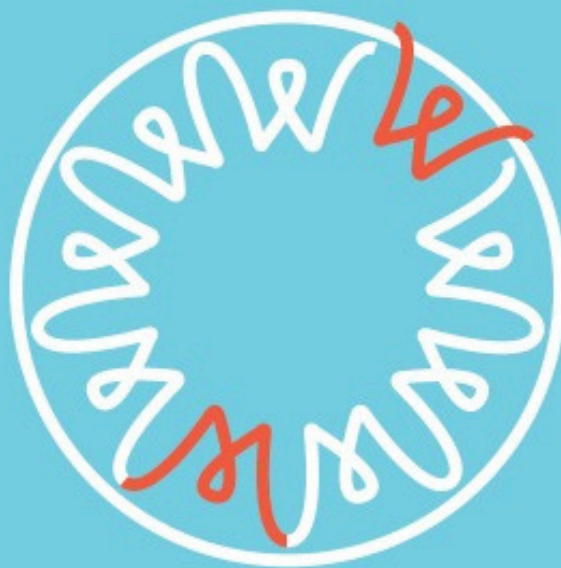


**Submission to the Victorian Government on  
Improving Multicultural Policies, Services, and  
Systems**

**Submitted by:** Centre for Muslim Wellbeing

**Date:** 11/06/2024

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Centre for  
Muslim  
Wellbeing

## Acknowledgement



**Bismillah Ar-Rahman Ar-Raheem** *In the name of Allah, The Most Compassionate, The Most Merciful*

We begin by acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the lands on which we live, work and gather, including the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people of the Kulin Nation, and all First Nations peoples across Victoria. We pay profound respect to Elders past and present, and honour their enduring connection to land, water, skies, and culture.

We acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded—this has always been and always will be Aboriginal land. We stand in solidarity with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, upholding shared values of justice, healing, dignity, and collective care.

Inspired by the divine attributes of Ar-Rahman (The Most Compassionate) and Ash-Shafee (The Healer), we affirm the strength, resilience and spiritual wellbeing of our Multicultural and Muslim communities. We honour the lived experiences of those we serve, whose voices guide our advocacy for systems that are compassionate, inclusive, and grounded in holistic wellbeing.

We are guided by Al-Adl (The Just) in our commitment to equity and fairness, Al-Wasi' (The All-Encompassing) in embracing the richness of diverse cultures and faiths, and Al-Hakeem (The All-Wise) in seeking thoughtful, evidence-informed solutions. We call upon An-Nur (The Light) to illuminate pathways of hope and healing, and As-Salaam (The Source of Peace) as we work towards environments that nurture peace, dignity and belonging for all.

Together, we strive to embody these divine values in service, policy, and community—fostering a Victoria where wellbeing is a shared right, and where all communities—especially those whose voices have been historically marginalised—are valued, included, and supported to flourish.

## About the Centre for Muslim Wellbeing

### Who we are

The Centre for Muslim Wellbeing (CMW) is a not-for-profit, community-led organisation established in 2018, dedicated to improving the mental health, spiritual wellbeing, and social inclusion of Muslim communities in Victoria. Established in response to a critical need for culturally and faith-informed care, CMW is grounded in lived experience, guided by evidence, and driven by community partnership.

We work at the intersection of mental health, community development, and faith-based healing, serving as a trusted bridge between government, services, and communities. Our work honours the diversity of Muslim identities and promotes dignity, resilience, and collective care across generations.

### What we do

CMW delivers a wide range of culturally responsive initiatives and advocacy efforts, including:

- **Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) and suicide postvention** training tailored for Muslim and multicultural communities
- **Healing circles and trauma recovery programs**, including faith-informed group work, grief workshops, and collective resilience initiatives
- **Youth and men's wellbeing programs** incorporating spiritual mentorship, mental fitness, and psycho-social education
- **Cultural intelligence (CQ) and anti-racism** training for schools, workplaces, and frontline services to strengthen service inclusivity
- **Community peer support initiatives** for carers, new migrants, and women, designed to reduce isolation and build community capacity
- **Policy advocacy and systems engagement** to ensure Muslim voices are embedded in mental health reform, anti-racism strategies, and multicultural policy

Through partnerships with primary health networks, faith leaders, education providers, and grassroots organisations, CMW has reached thousands of community members across Victoria, delivering practical impact while championing systemic change.

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## 1. Executive Summary

The Centre for Muslim Wellbeing (CMW) welcomes this opportunity to contribute to the Victorian Government's review on improving multicultural policies, services, and systems. We commend the government's commitment to strengthening community harmony, rebuilding interfaith dialogue, and ensuring systems better reflect and support multicultural and multifaith communities.

Our submission draws from grassroots experiences, sector expertise, and policy engagement across mental health, community development, and faith-based wellbeing. It addresses systemic inequities affecting Muslim and broader multicultural communities and proposes tangible, culturally responsive solutions.

This paper directly addresses the terms outlined by the Victorian Government's Multicultural Review (2024), and how the Victorian Government's multicultural mechanisms can:

- Deliver on legislated and agreed multicultural functions and objectives
- Address and prevent racism and discrimination
- Promote community harmony and reject division in the context of local and global events
- Rebuild interfaith dialogue
- Address local issues and community crises in a timely and strategic way
- Engage the broader Victorian community in matters relating to social cohesion.

These themes further embed opportunities to rebuild interfaith dialogue, a timely strategic response to crisis and advancing social cohesion in Victoria.

We present **14 recommendations** grounded in lived experience, community-led innovation, and evidence-based practice.

### Summary of recommendations:

1. Integrate Mental Health and Wellbeing into Multicultural Policy and Reporting
  2. Strengthen the Leadership, Influence, and Equity Impact of the Victorian Multicultural Commission (VMC)
  3. Build a Culturally Diverse and Inclusive Workforce in Health and Community Services
  4. Establish a Rapid Response Multicultural Taskforce
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5. Fund Healing Circles, Inter-Community Dialogues, and Trauma-Informed Programs
6. Support Faith-Based and Intercultural Community Leadership
7. Provide Multi-Year Operational Funding to Key Multicultural Organisations
8. Invest in Cultural Navigators and Bicultural Liaison Roles
9. Co-Design Services with Communities
10. Adapt Services Beyond Translation
11. Enhance Digital and Social Media Engagement
12. Strengthen Anti-Racism Frameworks by Building the Capacity of Existing Institutions
13. Mandate Anti-Racism and Cultural Safety Training Across All Government Sectors
14. Promote Public Narratives of Belonging and Wellbeing Campaigns

## 2. Centring Muslim Wellbeing in Victoria

Muslims in Victoria represent one of the fastest-growing and most diverse religious groups in the state. According to the 2021 Census, over **273,000 people** in Victoria identify as Muslim, making up just over **4% of the state's population**, with concentrated populations in Melbourne's northern and western suburbs. The community comprises individuals from over **70 ethnic and linguistic backgrounds**, including South Asian, Arab, African, Turkish, Southeast Asian, and European heritages.

Despite a high degree of community resilience and social contribution, CMW's work has highlighted several interlinked and systemic challenges that continue to undermine wellbeing:

- **Underrepresentation in Mainstream Services:** Many Muslim Victorians remain disengaged from mainstream mental health and social services due to a lack of culturally and religiously appropriate care. CMW's community consultations have repeatedly highlighted a lack of trust in services, particularly among newly arrived communities, men, and young people.
  - **Discrimination and Islamophobia:** Reports of Islamophobic abuse have surged in recent years, with women disproportionately affected. This not only contributes to trauma and hypervigilance but has also led to growing cynicism and disconnection from institutions perceived as unresponsive to Muslim concerns.
  - **Cultural Stigma and Internalised Silence:** Mental health stigma remains a barrier, especially among older generations and men. CMW's peer support programs have
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shown that culturally grounded and faith-sensitive dialogue spaces are critical in breaking the cycle of silence and shame.

**Barriers to Access and Navigation:** Migrants and refugees

- often face complex system navigation challenges, compounded by language barriers, visa insecurity, and culturally incongruent models of care. CMW has seen an increase in requests for advocacy and cultural liaison roles to help bridge this gap.

**Impact of Global Crises:** Events such as the war in Gaza and

- anti-refugee rhetoric have deeply impacted community mental health. In recent months, CMW has received an influx of referrals linked to vicarious trauma, intergenerational distress, and community grief, especially among youth and carers.

### Emerging Trends and Community Disenfranchisement

CMW's ongoing engagement reveals a growing sense of disenfranchisement, particularly among:

- **Young Muslims**, who feel disillusioned by media narratives and the lack of political or institutional accountability in responding to Islamophobia and global injustices.
- **Community leaders and service navigators**, who are increasingly overwhelmed by the emotional labour of supporting others without adequate systemic support.
- **Muslim men**, whose social withdrawal and disengagement from help-seeking is creating a silent crisis — one that CMW is addressing through targeted programs like healing circles, men's groups, and embodied wellbeing sessions.

These insights point to an urgent need for **system-wide responses** that are trauma-informed, spiritually inclusive, and grounded in meaningful partnership with community organisations like CMW. They also present opportunities — as CMW's programs demonstrate — for culturally safe, peer-led, and faith-informed models of care to fill service gaps and rebuild trust.

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### 3. Victorian Government's Multicultural Mechanisms: Recommendations & Case Studies

#### 3.1 What is Working Well

The Victorian Government has demonstrated a long-standing commitment to multiculturalism through legislative frameworks, portfolio structures, and community engagement initiatives. Key areas of strength include:

##### **Legislative Commitment and Accountability**

Victoria remains a national leader in legislating multiculturalism. The Government's commitment is embedded in:

- *Multicultural Victoria Act 2011*
- *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*
- *Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001*

Additionally, Victorian Government departments are required to report annually on their multicultural initiatives, ensuring transparency and accountability throughout the public service.

##### **Integration of Multicultural Priorities Across Departments**

The establishment of dedicated diversity portfolios, such as within the Department of Health following the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System, has supported the integration of multicultural perspectives into service design, policy development, and funding priorities. This reflects a positive shift toward more inclusive systems reform.

##### **Increased Engagement with CALD Communities**

There has been a growing effort across various sectors, including education, mental health, and family violence, to engage culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities in policy consultations and program co-design. While not yet consistent across all departments, these efforts mark an essential step toward more inclusive and participatory decision-making.

##### **Support for Cultural and Faith-Based Celebrations**

Government funding and formal recognition of cultural and religious events have helped foster a sense of belonging, community pride, and social cohesion. This visible support affirms the value of Victoria's multicultural identity.

These initiatives provide a strong foundation for multicultural policy in Victoria. Strengthening leadership, representation, and equity across systems will ensure these gains are not only sustained but



translated into improved outcomes for all communities, as outlined below.

### 3.2 Multicultural Victoria: Advancing Wellbeing Now and into the Future

a) Deliver on Victorian Government functions, objectives and address systemic barriers

#### 1. Integrate Mental Health and Wellbeing into Multicultural Policy and Reporting

To achieve equitable health outcomes, mental health and wellbeing must be embedded in all multicultural policy, planning, and reporting frameworks. The government should:

- Explicitly invest and include mental health and wellbeing in the Victorian Multicultural Policy Statement and related reporting frameworks.
- Align state and federal multicultural and mental health policies to ensure coordinated, holistic service delivery for CALD communities.
- Mandate disaggregated data collection across the health system—by ethnicity, religion, language, visa status, and migration background—to identify service gaps and support targeted, culturally responsive interventions.
- Increasing investment and culturally responsive services by special multicultural organisations to expand and continue the network of Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals, as well as early intervention services and programs.

#### 2. Strengthen the Leadership, Influence, and Equity Impact of the Victorian Multicultural Commission (VMC)

To remain a credible, effective, and forward-facing voice for multicultural communities, the VMC requires proactive leadership, strong policy influence, and community accountability. The VMC should:

- Lead as a bold, public-facing advocate—shaping inclusive policy, influencing public discourse on multicultural issues, health, and wellbeing outcomes, and responding swiftly to emerging issues affecting diverse communities.
  - Deepen its influence across government by delivering timely, expert advice on policy, program design, and systemic reform, particularly in areas impacting multicultural health, mental health, and social equity.
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- Build long-term partnerships with grassroots organisations and faith and community leaders across metropolitan and regional Victoria to remain visible, connected, and responsive to lived experiences.
- Ensure portfolio stability by embedding the VMC and Multicultural Affairs within a consistent departmental home to support continuity, accountability, and long-term strategic impact.
- Review and modernise the VMC's structures and initiatives—including the Commission, Commissioners model, advisory groups, programs, and awards—and strengthen collaboration with national and interstate bodies as well as Victoria-wide to ensure a focused mandate, inclusive leadership, measurable outcomes, and relevance to contemporary multicultural priorities.

### 3. Build a Culturally Diverse and Inclusive Workforce in Health and Community Services

To ensure culturally safe and responsive service delivery, the government needs to invest in a diverse multicultural workforce and address systemic barriers faced by CALD professionals. This includes:

- Funding scholarships, traineeships, and leadership pathways for CALD individuals—particularly minority groups, women, and young people—to enter and thrive in health, mental health, and human services sectors.
  - Supporting bridging programs and streamlined processes for recognising overseas qualifications, especially in underrepresented professions such as social work, psychology, and allied health.
  - Partnering with health professional bodies and multicultural organisations to promote inclusive recruitment, retention, and progression strategies.
  - Building long-term, sustainable pipelines that reflect the cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity of Victoria's population across all levels of the workforce.
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### **Case Study 1: From Training to Transformation — Cultivating a Diverse Mental Health Workforce**

Through funding partnerships with the Victorian State Government's MHWD team and the North Western Melbourne Primary Health Network (NWMPHN), CMW has delivered culturally adapted Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training to over 250 community members, many from underrepresented backgrounds. Participants include women, youth, carers, and emerging community leaders. Several graduates have since gone on to become peer workers, bilingual support staff, or continue studies in allied health or community services.

By embedding Islamic and cultural framing into the training, CMW has enhanced confidence, knowledge of early intervention, and pathways into the mental health sector, helping to cultivate a community-driven, culturally safe workforce from the ground up.

b) Promote community harmony and reject division in the context of local and global events

#### **4. Establish a Rapid Response Multicultural Taskforce**

We recommend the establishment of a dedicated, cross-sectoral task force that can be quickly mobilised in times of local or global crisis (e.g., geopolitical conflict, community trauma, natural disasters). This task force should include representatives from multicultural, multifaith, youth, mental health, and community sectors. Its roles would consist of:

- Advising the government on culturally appropriate and sensitive public communications.
- Coordinating mental health and psychosocial support services for impacted communities.
- Ensuring the availability of culturally safe community spaces and support services.
- Facilitating emergency funding pathways for community-led crisis responses.

#### **5. Fund Healing Circles, Inter-Community Dialogues, and Trauma-Informed Programs**

Invest in culturally and spiritually informed initiatives that prioritise community wellbeing. Faith-based healing models should be

formally recognised, integrated into wellbeing systems, and funded alongside clinical approaches. Faith-based frameworks of mental health, collective healing, and spiritual coping are central to the multi-faith and multicultural communities. Investment could include:

- Healing circles facilitated by trained community leaders and mental health practitioners.
- Inter-community dialogue events fostering cross-cultural understanding, empathy, and solidarity.
- Trauma-informed workshops and wellbeing initiatives are designed to address the emotional toll of conflict, racism, or displacement.

#### **6. Support Faith-Based and Intercultural Community Leadership**

Provide ongoing support to community leaders who are often at the frontlines of crisis response. This should include:

- Access to supervision, debriefing, and counselling.
  - Capacity building in trauma response, conflict mediation, and civic engagement.
  - Recognition and resourcing of the emotional labour often carried by these leaders.
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### **Case Study 2: Strengthening Emergency Mental Health Systems through Community-Led Interventions**

In the aftermath of a violent attack at a Melbourne shopping centre in 2024, where the broader Muslim community experienced collective fear, grief, and heightened public scrutiny, the Islamic Council of Victoria (ICV) referred affected individuals and families to the Centre for Muslim Wellbeing (CMW) for support.

CMW quickly mobilised a trauma-informed community response, providing culturally and spiritually safe counselling, debriefing spaces for community leaders, and support to local imams managing community grief. This rapid, trust-based intervention — facilitated through existing relationships with both government and community stakeholders — helped stabilise emotional distress and prevent long-term disengagement.

The incident underscored the indispensable role that faith-based and intercultural leaders play in community recovery, reinforcing the need for systems that support them as a formal part of the emergency and mental health response infrastructure.

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### Case Study 3: Healing Circles & Trauma-Informed Recovery

In response to the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, the Centre for Muslim Wellbeing (CMW) has been delivering healing-based and trauma-informed programs for both newly arrived Palestinian families and long-standing Arab and Muslim communities impacted by vicarious grief, displacement, and intergenerational trauma.

In 2024, CMW partnered with Foundation House to co-facilitate healing circles and wellbeing workshops for newly arrived Palestinian women, children, and young people. These sessions integrated faith-informed grounding techniques, creative arts, storytelling, and bicultural peer support to provide culturally safe spaces for emotional expression and collective recovery.

Key program components included:

- Women-only storytelling and song circles to honour grief and resilience
- Youth theatre and shadow puppetry exploring identity and loss
- Faith-integrated grounding practices such as dhikr and reflective journaling
- On-site Arabic-speaking mental health support

Outcomes from these programs included:

- Strengthened peer bonds and intergenerational connection
- Increased trust in service providers through CMW's culturally safe model
- Early engagement in mental health supports by participants previously disengaged

This case highlights how culturally and spiritually grounded healing approaches can restore dignity, reduce stigma, and foster recovery, especially in communities where trauma is both lived and inherited. It also illustrates the importance of working in partnership with grassroots organisations and bicultural facilitators to meet communities where they are.

c) Ensure access to government services for people in multicultural communities

### 7. Provide Multi-Year Operational Funding to Key Multicultural Organisations

To ensure stability and long-term impact, the government should

provide core operational funding to trusted and specialist multicultural and multifaith organisations. This would:

- Enable continuity of culturally safe service delivery and community leadership.
- Facilitate planning strategically, support workforce development and retention, build governance capacity, and scale proven initiatives.
- Reduce dependency on short-term, project-based grants that often fragment impact and increase administrative burden.

### **8. Invest in Cultural Navigators and Bicultural Liaison Roles**

Embed dedicated roles within key government services (e.g., health, education, justice) to:

- Act as trusted intermediaries between culturally diverse clients and service providers.
  - Bridge cultural and language gaps in service delivery.
  - Support community members in navigating complex systems without fear, stigma, or confusion.
  - Establish a Centralised Directory of Culturally Competent Services: Many multicultural communities struggle to navigate fragmented service systems. A central, publicly available directory of culturally competent health, legal, mental health, and social services would support more timely, informed, and appropriate help-seeking by individuals and referring professionals. This resource should include information on language support availability, religious and cultural competencies, and service user feedback, where appropriate.
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### 9. Co-Design Services with Communities

Adopt participatory and co-design approaches that centre community voices from the outset of policy and service development. This includes:

- Culturally specific, in-language and trauma-informed consultation processes.
- Testing pilot models in partnership with local communities before statewide implementation.
- Ensuring services are not just translated linguistically, but also spiritually and culturally relevant.

### 10. Adapt Services Beyond Translation

Translation of documents is not sufficient. Services must integrate:

- Cultural understandings of health, mental illness, disability, and family dynamics.
- Faith-informed approaches to healing and support.
- Gender-sensitive, intergenerational, and community-centred service models.

### 11. Enhance Digital and Social Media Engagement Strategies

Many multicultural communities rely on platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook groups, and ethnic media channels for communication. The government should:

- Develop a digital engagement strategy that meets communities where they are, at their convenience.
  - Provide digital literacy and engagement training for multicultural organisations.
  - Ensure emergency alerts and key updates are disseminated through community-trusted digital channels and influencers.
  - Invest in inclusive Artificial Intelligence (AI) as a tool, where appropriate, to support culturally responsive strategies and services.
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#### **Case Study 4: The Case for Multi-Year Funding to Sustain Community Mental Health Impact**

In 2018, the Centre for Muslim Wellbeing (CMW) received seed funding from the Victorian State Government through targeted multicultural and mental health grants. This enabled CMW to pilot culturally responsive initiatives such as faith-informed Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) workshops, healing circles, and community psychoeducation programs tailored to Muslim communities.

While the programs were highly successful, with strong community participation, sector engagement, and demonstrated improvements in early help-seeking, the funding was limited to short-term, project-based grants. CMW was unable to retain key staff, invest in scalable digital tools (e.g., in-language video content, WhatsApp outreach), or meet rising demand from other regions due to the absence of multi-year operational support.

Despite clear impact and consistent positive evaluation feedback, the lack of recurrent funding limited the ability to plan long-term, build infrastructure, or embed programs into broader service systems.

This case highlights the urgent need for multi-year core funding for trusted multicultural organisations — enabling them to maintain continuity, retain a skilled bicultural workforce, and implement sustainable digital engagement strategies that respond to community realities.

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### Case Study 5: Bridging the Gap — Cultural Navigators as Trusted System Connectors

The Centre for Muslim Wellbeing (CMW) regularly receives phone calls, emails, and referrals from individuals and families who are overwhelmed by the complexity of Victoria's mental health and community service systems. Many are newly arrived migrants, caregivers, or individuals with limited English who are unsure of where or how to seek help.

CMW's team of bicultural staff and trained peer workers play a crucial informal "navigator" role — guiding community members through:

- Understanding eligibility for services like mental health care plans, NDIS, housing support, or family services
- Making culturally safe referrals to trusted providers, including Muslim or multilingual clinicians
- Advocating on behalf of clients with service providers when language, literacy, or cultural differences create barriers
- Explaining service pathways in accessible, in-language formats and offering follow-up to ensure support is accessed

One example includes a recently arrived Afghan mother caring for a child with a disability who contacted CMW via WhatsApp. A bilingual staff member supported her in understanding the NDIS application process, arranged a culturally appropriate interpreter, liaised with a local community health centre, and remained in contact throughout the process until services were successfully accessed.

These one-on-one navigation supports are not formally funded. Yet, they are among the most in-demand services provided by CMW — and are often the first point of trust-based engagement between Muslim communities and the broader service system.

This case illustrates the urgent need to embed and fund cultural navigator roles within public systems formally, and to resource organisations like CMW to continue playing this critical bridge-building function.

d) Address and prevent racism and discrimination

### 12. Strengthen Anti-Racism Frameworks by Building the Capacity of Existing Institutions

Rather than creating new standalone services, the Victorian Government should strengthen existing institutions such as the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission

(VEOHRC) and the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) to lead and coordinate anti-racism efforts. This can be achieved by:

- Increasing their resourcing to expand accessibility for culturally and linguistically diverse communities.
- Supporting the establishment of community-informed pathways for reporting racism that are integrated into VEOHRC's broader human rights remit. Collaborating with
- community organisations to deliver joint outreach, education, and psychosocial support.
- Ensuring data from reports of racism informs systemic reforms across government.

### **13. Mandate Anti-Racism and Cultural Safety Training Across All Government Sectors**

Institutionalise ongoing anti-racism education for all government staff and funded service providers. This should include:

- Modules on unconscious bias, Islamophobia, and systemic discrimination.
- Sector-specific training tailored to health, education, law enforcement, and community services.
- Clear accountability structures, including performance indicators and feedback mechanisms.

### **14. Promote Public Narratives of Belonging and Wellbeing Campaigns**

Invest in public education and multilingual mental health campaigns led by multicultural communities that:

- Co-designed with communities and delivered via trusted channels such as ethnic media, mosques, community leaders, and cultural events.
  - Promote values of justice, dignity, and social cohesion as well as health literacy initiatives, particularly in mental health, delivered in-language and through culturally resonant formats. This is essential for reducing stigma, increasing access, and promoting early intervention for multicultural communities.
  - Celebrate cultural pride and resilience.
  - Counter harmful media narratives and disinformation.
-

### Case Study 6: Public Campaign of Wellbeing

For Mental Health Month in October 2023, the Centre for Muslim Wellbeing (CMW) partnered with the Australian National Imams Council (ANIC) to deliver a nationwide public awareness campaign focused on reducing mental health stigma within Muslim communities.

The campaign centred on the development of Friday khutbah (sermon) resources, co-designed by Muslim psychologists, community advocates, and religious leaders. These khutbahs were distributed to Imams across Australia and focused on:

- Understanding mental health through an Islamic lens
- Encouraging early help-seeking as a form of self-care and faith
- Promoting collective responsibility for emotional wellbeing in the ummah (community)

Key elements included:

- Jumma khutbah templates on compassion, resilience, and the prophetic model of seeking help
- Supporting talking points and Qur'anic references tailored for diverse cultural contexts
- Promotion through ANIC's network, CMW channels, and WhatsApp community groups

Impact:

- Khutbahs were delivered in over 60 mosques across Australia, including major mosques in Victoria
- The initiative reached thousands of congregants, many of whom reported hearing mental health discussed openly in their mosque for the first time
- Imams expressed appreciation for having faith-aligned, culturally sensitive resources to address a topic often viewed as taboo

This campaign demonstrated the power of collaboration between faith leadership and mental health organisations to shift public narratives, reduce stigma, and embed wellbeing into spiritual spaces.

## 4. Conclusion

The Victorian Government has made significant strides in embedding multicultural values across its policies, legislation, and service delivery. Yet ongoing disparities—exacerbated by global conflicts, rising racism, and local social cohesion challenges—demand a deeper and more integrated systems response. The intersection of mental health, spiritual wellbeing, cultural safety, and multicultural inclusion must now become a core focus of policy reform.

Our recommendations call for a courageous and coordinated shift: one that recognises the inherent strengths, lived experiences, and resilience of multicultural communities, embeds faith-informed and culturally grounded frameworks into mainstream systems, and actively empowers Muslim and other CALD voices to shape equitable, responsive, and inclusive institutions.

The Centre for Muslim Wellbeing stands ready to collaborate with government, the Victorian Multicultural Commission, and the broader community sector to co-design transformative solutions that foster healing, dignity, and belonging for all Victorians.

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## 5. Contact Us

Centre for Muslim Wellbeing

Ayman Islam – [executiveofficer@cmw.org.au](mailto:executiveofficer@cmw.org.au)

Website: [www.cmw.org.au](http://www.cmw.org.au)

Email: [admin@cmw.org.au](mailto:admin@cmw.org.au)

Phone: (03) 9125 4229

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