

Community Policing Partnership Project: Helping to Build Social Cohesion and Harmony with Australian Muslim Communities

Background

The *Ismae Report* found that many incidents of discrimination were not reported to police or government authorities due to fear of victimisation; a general lack of trust in enforcement agencies and lack of knowledge about the law and complaints processes.

It advised that mechanisms for building trust between Muslim communities and law enforcement agencies were necessary to reduce the risk of further marginalisation of these communities, in particular of young people and women.

Similar issues were raised in the *Unlocking Doors* project. Community members felt that there was the need to:

- address the diverse impact of racial and religious hatred on different Muslim communities
- improve community knowledge of how to report an incident to police, HREOC and other agencies
- improve police understanding of the serious impact of racial hatred and where to refer victims when it is not a crime
- increase trust and confidence in police and police processes

Project

In partnership with the Australian Multicultural Foundation, this project will enable partnerships between police and Muslim communities across Australia.

Joint community and police projects will receive funding of up to \$10,000 to establish local networks aiming to build trust, facilitate a stronger sense of social participation, respect and inclusion within communities.

Objectives

- improve relationships and increase trust between Muslim communities, police and support services.
- promote awareness amongst Muslim communities of their rights and responsibilities and avenues of complaint.
- demonstrate good practice examples of partnerships which improve relationships between police and Australian Muslim communities, and which can be used as a set of pilots to be replicated with other communities and in other locations.
- strengthen awareness of the diversity of Muslim communities, an understanding of Islam and issues relevant to Muslim communities across the general ranks of police through education, consultation and other activities.
- provide a two-way flow of experience, information and direction for police and Muslim communities to identify emerging issues and address common questions and challenges to break down stereotyping on both sides.
- develop training and resources for law enforcement agencies to assist in responding to complaints of discrimination and abuse. To be used at a local level but which may be applied in various community policing settings.

The Australian Multicultural Foundation (AMF)

The AMF has worked with Australian police services for the past 17 years. The AMF was co-partner with the Chief Commissioners' Conference of Australasia in the establishment of the Australian Police Multicultural Advisory Bureau. The AMF also assisted in the establishment of the Multicultural Faith Advisory Council for Victoria Police and has developed a range of community policing and research projects with Police agencies throughout Australia under their *Mosaic Fund* program.