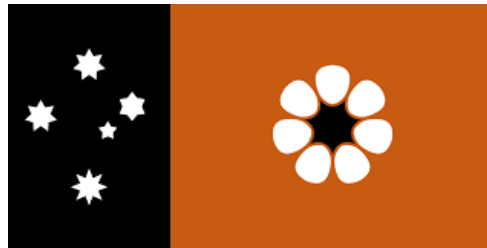




Australian International Islamic College

Darwin Campus



Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC)



Interviewed:

His Eminence Shaikh Abdul Quddoos Al-Azhari

The National Grand Mufti of Australia

Monday the 14th February 2022

At AIIIC Darwin campus

25 Bowerlee Rd, Darwin NT Australia

Introduction



I thank the ABC for this opportunity to talk about the first Islamic school in Darwin

Actually, I was the first Imam of the Darwin Mosque from 1983 to 1991 – almost 40years back. I have beautiful memories working with the small Muslim community and various groups multi faith and multi-cultural forums and the wider Australian communities.

I am really happy to be interviewed by the ABC

Questions

1. Can you please describe your feelings on finally being able to establish an Islamic school in Darwin

- Darwin Islamic school project was a dream for the community for many years. Naturally I have been delighted to see this dream come true

2. You have mentioned you have been trying to get it done for 25years. Why did it take so long?

- Establishing a school is a long process.
 - Cost a lot of money
 - Require right staff
 - Enough students to sustain
 - You need a right block of land
 - All necessary approvals
- Alhamdulillah thanks to Allah this time all the pieces came together. We were able to start this one. The first Darwin Islamic school. I am grateful to the Northern Territory Community, all relevant authorities and for both federal and territory governments for their support

3. Now that it is established what are you hoping will come out of this school?

- We hope and pray to the almighty god, this school will become a school of excellence and become the pride of the community and the pride of Australia. Our school will be opened to all not only just for Muslims. As the number grows the classes will be extended to full primary and secondary schools.

4. You mentioned there is interests in foreign student exchanges. Can you tell us a bit about that?

- The excellent reputation of our school in Australia has attracted interest from all around the world. We are grateful to the almighty god and for everyone who has helped us and is helping us in establishing schools in Brisbane, Gold Coast, Darwin and over seas
- Australia's good standing makes our school very attractive to overseas students. AIIC already has the approval of CRICOSE and international exchange program. We already have sister schools in southeast Asia, middle east and Indian sub-continent.

5. What challenges have covid presented to the long-awaited opening?

- Covid hurt the whole world. People lost their loved ones. They have lost their livelihoods. Many initiatives and activities have staled tremendously.
- During this period we started remote teaching program which have maintained the education of our students
- Covid definitely delayed our progress in Darwin. We hope and pray that covid will be over soon insyah allah and that we can return to business as usual.

6. How will this help Muslim families and children.

- We have just formed a P&C committee. The committees recommendation and suggestions will be taken on board we will work hand in hand with the wider community and authorities
- AIIC Darwin campus will endeavor to meet the aspirations of the people
- We would like to see the Territorian Muslims to stay in Darwin

7. What is the curriculum like?

- AIIC follows the Australian Government curriculum we have been accredited to provide Australian based curriculums by both federal and northern territory government
- There will be a few hours in a week for Arabic and Islamic studies
- All of these will be in the bounds of the Australian curriculum

8. How many teachers do you have, how many staff and how many children?

- We have started with 40 children. 4 full time teachers. 3 supporting staff. 2 bus drivers. And 5 cleaners, maintenance and grounds men. We are hoping to expand and grow to accommodate more children. We have great interest from local and international students.
- We have approximately 3000 students, 300 teaching staff, 400 supporting staff members in all our schools

9. Do you have the capacity to guide through till the end of school?

- This is how we have started all other schools. Started with a small number and the school has grown with the children until we grow to year 12 and prepare them for university.
- Our children from other schools in Australia have graduated as doctors, lawyers, engineers, accountants and many other sort after professionals.
- Both local and international students after completing their school education will be promoted to proceed and attend Charles Darwin University Insya Allah

10. Where has the funding come from?

- All our funding is local. Our trust, Australian Islamic Educational Trust has provided the initial funding. There is a government grant to support private schools (Not for profit schools) To provide quality education. We AIIIC, operate under the rules of this system.

Conclusion

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the ABC and the listeners and audience of the ABC for this opportunity for me to talk to you all

THANK YOU I am very grateful. May the peace and blessing of God be upon you all.