

In the name of Allah, The Most Beneficent, The Most Merciful



AUSTRALIAN INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC COLLEGE (First Islamic School in Northern Territory)



Welcoming Address

by

The National Grand Mufti of Australia
Sheikh Abdul Quddoos Al Azhari

22nd January 2022

25 Bowerlee Road, Berrimah-Darwin

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, The Most Beneficent, The Most Merciful

الحمد لله رب العالمين والصلاة والسلام على أشرف الأنبياء والمرسلين

Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the universe, peace and blessing of Allah upon our beloved Nabi, Muhammed (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasalam)

I would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we meet today, the Larrakia people and pay my respect to the elder's past, present and emerging.

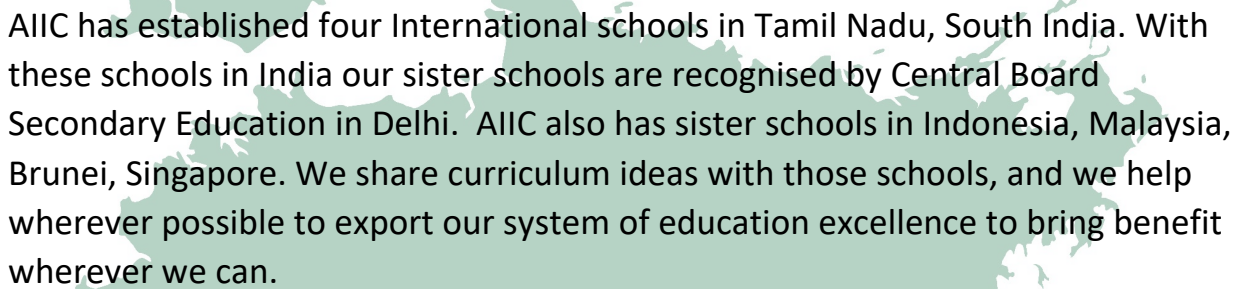
Honourable Master of Ceremony Imam Mohamed Abder Rahman Azhari, Honourable Ms Eva Lawler, Minister for Infrastructure and planning, Honourable Lord Mayor of Darwin Mr Kon Vatskalis, Honourable Lord Mayor of Palmerston Ms Athina Pascoe-Bell, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly Hon Ms Ngaree Ah Kit, Former Education Minister Honourable Syd Steirling, Acting Assistant Commissioner of Police Mr Sachin Sharma, The Indonesian Consulate Mr Gulfan Afero, President and committee members of the Islamic Society of Darwin, President and committee members of the Islamic Council of Northern Territory, President and committee of the Islamic Society of Palmerston. Respected parents, invited guests, ladies and gentlemen, brothers and sisters

Assalamu Alaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuhu. May the Peace and Blessing of God upon you all.

Welcome to you all, I am very grateful that you were able to take the time from your busy schedules to join us today on this auspicious occasion, the opening of the first Muslim school in Darwin.

I along with the Darwin community I am very grateful to the Government Ministers of the Northern Territory Government for their support for establishing the first Islamic School in Darwin over the course of the past two years to get this project to fruition.

From its humble beginning with 20 children at our Woolloongabba Campus in 2002, The Australian International Islamic College has seen miraculous transformation and growth to establish our main campus in Durack in 2005, our third campus at the Gold Coast in 2009, our fourth in Logan in 2021 and today, 2022, in Darwin, the first place that I worked when I first came to Australia three decades ago.



AIIC has established four International schools in Tamil Nadu, South India. With these schools in India our sister schools are recognised by Central Board Secondary Education in Delhi. AIIC also has sister schools in Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei, Singapore. We share curriculum ideas with those schools, and we help wherever possible to export our system of education excellence to bring benefit wherever we can.

The AIIC has always and will always continue to work with government authorities and the community to ensure maximum transparency and the expected excellence in education delivery, student welfare and student achievements.

The AIIC always ensures that our teachers hold up to date statutory registrations and continue to professionally develop to ensure that they can deliver the best quality education in a safe, caring and respectful environment that encourages student curiosity, learning and achievement.

From the first day, AIIC has been faithfully teaching the Australian curriculum from Kindy to year 12. We have, with the blessings of Allah, the support of the Australian government and the dedication of our parents and students, been able to deliver excellence in education to ensure that our student cohort have access to their chosen courses at university.

Our college has produced doctors, lawyers, engineers, architects, nurses, accountants and many other sought-after professionals who are today contributing to Australia, its people and its economy.

Distinguished guest, Honourable Ministers, members of parliament, ladies and gentlemen, when a child is born,

- parents are overjoyed with the miracle that has been growing before their eyes. The parents' first real challenge is when this child becomes of school age
- They realise that they will have to trust the care of this child to strangers. They will worry; what will be the best school for my child, will they be bullied, will the teachers keep them safe, will they educate them well. Once this choice is made and the child and the parents become accustomed to this new institution in their lives, they start to think about where they would like their child to focus in their education
- A few years later, the panic sets in to choose an appropriate university course and an appropriate career.

Allah, Ta'ala teaches us a beautiful prayer in the Holy Qur'an, in Sura Al-Furqan

رَبَّنَا هَبْ لَنَا مِنْ أَزْوَاجِنَا وَذُرِّيَّاتِنَا قُرَّةَ أَعْيُنٍ وَاجْعَلْنَا لِلْمُتَّقِينَ إِمَامًا ﴿٧٤﴾

Our Lord, grant us from our spouses and our progeny a coolness for the eyes, and makes us a model for those who do good. (Al Qur'an 25:74)

To paraphrase this prayer in today's English:

Our Lord, give rest and comfort to our eyes that are worried over the future of our children (and to the eyes of all onlookers), keep them safe and bless them with the useful learning that will help them live with independence and dignity.

We are not only asking to rest our eyes, but to also make sure that anyone who looks at our children will see in them positive, helpful and pleasant citizens.

Another very significant verse that guides us as educators is the subtle reference in Sura Ar-Rahman. Allah, Ta'ala tells us:

الرَّحْمَنُ ﴿١﴾ عَلَّمَ الْقُرْآنَ ﴿٢﴾

The Most Compassionate, taught the oft-read book (Qur'an). (55:1-2)

Teaching must be motivated and delivered with compassion for the student, education is not hammered or chiselled into the child, it is delivered in a compassionate and caring environment.

To us at AICC, education is not merely a profession, it is a calling to serve future generations and prepare them for a better future.

This project of establishing an Islamic school in Darwin has been in the planning for many years, when I first came to Darwin in the early eighties, it was my dream and aspiration, today, this dream has, Alhamdulillah, become a reality for me, for the 3000 strong NT territory Muslims and for the people of Darwin.

Once again, I thank you for gracing this occasion with your presence. We greatly appreciate your help and support to fulfill this dream. Enjoy the remaining program.

Walaikum Assalaam Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuhu

May the blessings of God be upon you all.