



# Duty and Service

Speech delivered by

The Most Eminent

**Sheikh Abdul Quddoos Al Azhari**

**National Grand Mufti of Australia**

At the Parliament House

Of Northern Territory

Australia



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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 سيدنا محمد وعلى آله وصحبه أجمعين. أشهد أن لا إله إلا الله وحده لا شريك له وأشهد أن سيدنا محمدا عبده ورسوله.

I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land and pay my respects to their elders, past, present and emerging.

I would also like to thank and acknowledge the presence with us today of:

The Honourable Ngaree Ah Kit MLA, Minister for Multicultural Affairs,  
International Education and Minister for Disabilities

The Honourable Lauren Moss MLA, Minister for Equality and Inclusion

Br Taher Sukkarieh, Vice-Chair, Australian International Islamic College

Br Sadaruddin Chowdhury, Chairman, Islamic Council of Northern Territory

Br Ghulam Abbas, Vice-Chairman, Islamic Council of Northern Territory

Acmadon Ali Djawas, President, Islamic Society of Darwin

Dr Othman Abdul Hameed, Vice President, Islamic Society of Darwin

Imam Abdullah Ali and Hafiz Shahzad Assistant Imam of ISD

Committee members from the Islamic Society of Darwin and Palmerston

Dear friends, 40 years ago, I came here as an Imam to serve the Darwin Muslim community and to guide and help the Islamic society of Darwin and Northern Australia in general. I was the first appointed Imam and held this position for about 10 years. I have studied at Darwin Community College (DCC)/DIT and NTU where I graduated as a teacher. I was also teaching at Nakara, Parap & Wagaman Schools.

After Darwin I moved to Queensland where I held different jobs until the opportunity arose for me to acquire the first premises to run my first place of worship and also my first humble school Brisbane Muslim School (BMS).

25 years later, as I reflect, I feel that I was tremendously blessed by Allah, the Almighty to help me succeed, Allah Ta'ala blessed me with sincere and dedicated members of my community and placed me in a nation where any citizen can work and is empowered to overcome impediments and realise his or her dreams.

In this country, we are blessed with accountable federal, state, territory governments and local councils. The accountability of Australian public officials that Australia enjoys is among the best in the world, it may even be unmatched as the best in the world.

I am grateful to Allah, Ta'ala, for all these blessings that have allowed me to establish four Muslim schools in Queensland and the first Muslim school in the Northern Territory and five Primary/Secondary schools and academy in Tamil Nadu, India.

Respected members, dear friends, Australia is the real land of opportunity and the Northern Territory is a truly blessed part of Australia. Australia is the only place where a humble migrant of limited means can start from nothing, be made to feel equal and be shown the trust of the whole system of government to achieve something for his fellow citizens.

I am very humbled and very delighted to receive this honour today.

In this work, I have been guided by profound verses in the Qur'an and by the glorious Sunna of our beautiful Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings upon him. The first verse:

وَقُلْ اَعْمَلُوا فَسَيَرَى اللّٰهُ عَمَلَكُمْ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ ۗ وَسَتُرَدُّونَ اِلَىٰ عَالِمِ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿التوبة 105﴾

**And say: "Work: Allah sees your work, and His Messenger, and the Believers will see: Soon will ye be brought back to the knower of what is hidden and what is open: then will He reveal to you the truth of all that ye did." (Holy Qur'an 9:105)**

This verse means that we must strive and do good, our work is on display, our work builds a foundation. Allah sees it while we do it, and in the afterlife, our work will be on display, the Prophet, (peace and blessings upon him) and all the believers will all be able to see, and the truly eye-opening part of the verse: Allah will reveal to us what we truly achieved. The last part is the difference between work that is planned well and work that is haphazard. Did we plan

and set a foundation for more good, or did we just go with the flow. Did we examine and analyse what will happen with our work, did we install the safety features to minimise the opportunity for negative exploitation. Something for us all to think about.

The second verse is actually four words from a much longer verse:

وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ ﴿المائدة 2﴾

... Cooperate on goodness and piety ... . (Holy Qur'an 5:102)

These four Arabic words that are made up of two compound words and two simple words that translate into five English words guide us to find help from people who are either right-minded or inclined to be right-minded so that we can uplift each other through this good work that creates goodness for humanity.

One of the instructions (Hadith) of our Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings upon him), that influenced me to establish centres of educational excellence is:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ وَأَهْلَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ حَتَّى النَّمْلَةَ فِي جُحْرهَا وَحَتَّى الْحَوْتَ لِيصَلُّونَ عَلَى مَعْلَمِ النَّاسِ الْخَيْرِ. (الترمذي)

*Indeed, Allah, His angels and everyone in the heavens and earth, even the ant in its anthill and even the fish will pray for a blessing for the person who imparts beneficial knowledge to people. (Tirmizy)*

And the Hadith says:

سَيَأْتِيكُمْ أَقْوَامٌ يَطْلُبُونَ الْعِلْمَ، فَإِذَا رَأَيْتُمُوهُمْ فَقُولُوا لَهُمْ: مَرْحَبًا مَرْحَبًا بِوَصِيَّةِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ -صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ- وَأَقْنُوهُمْ. (ابن ماجة)

*People will come to you seeking knowledge, when you see them, say: welcome, welcome to those whom the messenger of Allah, (peace and blessings upon him) commended to us, then facilitate for them the acquisition of knowledge. (Ibn Majah)*

You see my dear friends, these two Ahadith make it a duty for us to facilitate learning for those who seek it and to encourage others to seek beneficial education and show them the benefits they will have through this education.

These projects my dear friends are not about religion, they are also not about diminishing its value. There has never been a conflict, any conflict between science and religion in Islam. On the contrary, as you have seen, Islam promoted science and strongly encouraged all people to acquire beneficial knowledge.

Our projects dear friends are about putting our best efforts in order to give more to the human family. They are about drawing out the best intellectual workings of the human mind, to train young people and nurture them to work together and to think about a better future for their nation Australia and a better future for the human family.

Dear friends, the honour of being elected National Grand Mufti of Australia in April 2021 is an honour that compels me to renew my zeal to give more to our community. As humbling as this role and responsibility may be, it means little, and it would be a burden in this life and in the afterlife if it is not employed for the service of humanity. Receiving this honour in April of 2021 has strengthened my resolve for four important duties.

- The first is to increase my service to Australia and my service to humanity,
- second is to exert every effort to steer away from community politics.
- The third duty is a duty as difficult and yet as easy as our will, I will start it with a question: Do we have the will – to put our collective good above our perceived personal inclination? Do we understand that our genuine rather than misguided personal interests and benefits will only be achieved by putting the common good first?
- The fourth duty my dear friends, brothers and sisters is to help us understand our common good and through that achieve an outcome of unity and goodwill in our human family.

With these words, I would like to first thank our Lord Allah and then to extend my heartfelt gratitude to everyone who has helped make these educational projects materialise. You can see, our entire world depends on these efforts and we all have a role in building a better future for our children, a better future for Australia and a better future for humanity.

I thank everyone who is with us today, The Honourable Lauren Moss MLA, Minister for Equality and Inclusion

The Honourable Ngaree Ah Kit MLA, Minister for Multicultural Affairs



Dr Rateb, President, Australian Federation of Islamic Councils

**Executive Committee Members of**

Islamic Council of Northern Territory

Islamic Society of Darwin

Islamic Society of Palmerston

Imam and Assistant Imam of Darwin Masjid

Our beautiful children who have performed the Nasheed and their parents & ISD volunteers

Staff from the Indonesian Consulate

Staff from Protocol NT Parliament House and PA to Honourable Minister for Multicultural Affairs

Once again please accept my sincere thanks and gratitude to every one of you for organising and gracing this occasion with your presence. Thank you very much.

May Allah bless you all

Assalamu Alaikum Wa Rahmatullahi Wa Barakatuhu

Peace and blessing of Allah upon you all



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