



*Mission Statement:*

*“ To evidence the Islamic spirit of love, compassion and charity in providing a range of services to the aged of South Asian Muslims in NSW that best meet the physical, spiritual, cultural and emotional needs of the individuals, their families and the Muslim community”*

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER - OCTOBER - DECEMBER / 2014

## SENIORS ARE ASSETS, NOT LIABILITIES

The growing number of seniors and their spending power make them an asset and not a liability as they are too often portrayed, a public forum in Melbourne heard recently.

Michael O'Neill, chief executive of consumer lobby group for the over 50s National Seniors Australia, said there was too much 'doom and gloom' surrounding the impact of ageing on the economy and the community.

"What some commentators are largely failing to understand is that the growing numbers of people who are seniors present a huge opportunity for business, for the community and for government," Mr O'Neill said.

"In a country as wealthy as ours, older Australians should be celebrated for their massive contributions as carers, as volunteers, for the time they devote to civic and social duties and in the workplace – as well as their substantial spending power," he said.

Instead, according to Mr O'Neill, older Australians are too often "demonised" and regarded as a "burden".

"They want to contribute to their own retirement and would live without government involvement if it was in their power to do so.

"But governments have to provide certainty in superannuation and investments and not give banks and financial advisers an unfair advantage by reducing consumer protection."

Mr O'Neill was speaking at the National Seniors Productive Ageing Centre's free public forum today at the State Library of Victoria.

He was one of a line up of leading experts from Alzheimer's Australia, the Stroke Foundation, beyondblue and other organisations who shared



their insights and healthy living tips for the over 50s.

Topics covered included Alzheimer's disease prevention and support for carers, stroke prevention, depression and anxiety in older people, physical activity for health living, healthy eating and health and employment.

(Source : DPS Guide)



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## SAMAA PLANS AHEAD

SAMAA held its annual general meeting on 12 Oct and elected its Team for coming year.

The team planned for the next twelve months.

The Volunteering Programme will be strengthened by allocating a volunteer for every elderly person and elderly couple, even if they do not have such a need currently. This will ensure that all elders have a volunteer whom they can approach as and when needed. The elders needing regular services will continued to be served.

SAMAA will hold two major picnics each year at a central location. A picnic is planned later this year.

Two major events will be held in 2015. Jashne Buzurg 2015 will be a Fund Raiser and will be held in March/April. This event will be attended by Parliamentarians, Muslim community leaders, Business people, Elders and wider community members. Eid Milan will bring together our Elders and community members to celebrate Eid.

Through coordination with aged care agencies, we will continue to seek partnerships and run various aged care programmes. It will include signing of memorandums of understanding with providers (including Nursing Homes) who are willing to provide culturally and religiously appropriate care to South Asian Muslim elders.

SAMAA intends to seek expressions of interest from seniors, retirees, pre-retirees and community members in its launch of building a retirement village for our elders. A retirement village is essentially a managed community for seniors where people of similar cultural background can enjoy the social contact, interaction, companionship and physical and emotional security. Along with such satisfying aspects of life matters in old age, SAMAA Retirement Village will facilitate religious and cultural needs of the residents which would make it priceless.

No grants are available to build a retirement village and therefore such a project has to be built through contribution by its members.



**SAMAA TEAM MEMBERS**

SAMAA will continue its efforts to build a high care facility (a nursing home) as an extension to the retirement village by seeking government grants and donations from community members. Once a resident of the retirement village needs high level care, they will be moved into the nursing home. The resident will thus continue to live in familiar environment while receiving high level care. In the meantime SAMAA will continue its current programmes of placing elders in Nursing homes, facilitating such care.

We will continue to publish newsletters to disseminate relevant aged care sector knowledge to our elders, carers and community.

## OBITUARY

Begum Safiyya Hartley, aged 67, wife of Br Abu Bakar Hartley passed away on 15 Oct after long sickness. Safiyya was an elderly member of SAMAA over past few years. She has left behind two sons, Nazeem and Zaheed. Zaheed cared for his seriously sick beloved mother for past 3 years. Despite severity of ill health, Safiyya always had a smile on her face and never complained once. SAMAA volunteers helped her from time to time.

At SAMAA, we extend condolence to the family of deceased. May Allah grant maghfirat to marhooma and sabr to dear ones... Ameen.

## SOCIAL ACTIVITIES AND MENTAL HEALTH

Analysing data from more than 3,000 study participants, University of Queensland (UQ) researchers found that people who took part in group social activities had reduced mental decline and memory loss than those who did not.

The study, led by Professor Catherine Haslam from UQ's School of Psychology, compares the impact of different types of social engagement on cognitive health, using data collected by the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing over a four year period.

"We wanted to discover whether older people benefitted more from interactions that took place in the context of social group activities, compared to those who had interactions with just one person such as a spouse or a friend," Professor Haslam says.

The study records participants' engagement in a range of group and one on one social activities and their performance on standard tests of memory, fluency and orientation.

It shows that social group activities are more important than one to one relationships in slowing cognitive decline, and that the effect became

more pronounced with increasing age.

"Fifty year olds with above average social group ties performed mentally more like 46 year olds," Professor Haslam says.

"The functional savings were much greater at the older end of the age spectrum, with 80 year olds performing more like 70 year olds."

Co-author, Dr Tegan Cruwys, from UQ's School of Psychology, says the findings provide important information about the types of social relationships people should invest in to keep themselves mentally active and independent for longer.

"In this context, it is not any social relationship, but active engagement in social groups that makes the most difference," Dr Cruwys says.

"When we consider the overall costs for a yet to be invented drug that could reduce an 80 year old's cognitive age by a decade, it seems a prudent investment to encourage older people to stay active in social groups."

(Source : DPS Guide)

## UPCOMING EVENT: ELDERS PICNIC

SAMAA is organizing a picnic for SAMAA Elders. It will be a day filled with fun and activities for our elders. The elders will have an opportunity to relax, meet their contemporaries and participate in various activities. We encourage elders to come prepared to present an item, such as read a poem or a story, tell a few jokes or sing a song.

SAMAA volunteers will be there to serve those with limited abilities. We hope to enjoy the barbeque, the traditional biryani and South Asian sweets.

**When:** Sunday 30 Nov 2014

**Time:** 11 am - 4 pm

**Where:** Bicentennial Park, Homebush

Please confirm your participation by ringing Robina Yasmin on 02 4620 4607.

Please try to bring a few garden chairs if you have at home.

***"Your Lord has commanded that you worship none but Him, and be kind to your parents. If either or both of them reach old age with you, do not say 'uff' to them or chide them, but speak to them in terms of honour and kindness. Treat them with humility, and say, 'My Lord! Have mercy on them, for they did care for me when I was little.'"* (Qur'an 17:23-4)**



## DEPRESSION INCREASES RISK OF FALLS IN ELDERLY

Falls are common in elderly people but the risk increases markedly when they have depressive symptoms, research from Neuroscience Research Australia (NRA) shows.

Depressive symptoms, antidepressant use, poorer balance and poorer cognitive functioning are all associated with increased risk of falls in the elderly. The researchers investigated the interactions between and the significance of these risk factors.

"Risk of falls increased by 55% in participants with any two risk factors and by 144% in participants with three to four risk factors," says study co-author, Dr Kim Delbaere, from NeuRA.

"The more risk factors a participant had, the more likely they were to experience a fall," says Dr Delbaere, also a conjoint senior lecturer at University of NSW (UNSW).

Depression and use of antidepressants increased the risk of falls independently of reduced cognitive and physical functioning.

"Depressive symptoms are a potentially modifiable risk factor for falls and should therefore be addressed in fall prevention programs, especially in high risk populations,"

The researchers suggest that therapies to reduce the likelihood of falls among older people experiencing depression should focus on a combination of physical exercise, including resistance and balance training, and psychosocial therapies such as mindfulness.

"Given that antidepressant medication may increase fall risk, treatment of depressive symptoms using non-pharmacological approaches should be considered as part of all prevention programs, especially in populations at high risk of falls," Dr Delbaere says.

"These could include stress reduction and relaxation techniques, and other cognitive behavioural and mindfulness techniques."

The study relied on data from 488 people aged 70 to 90 years living in the community in eastern Sydney who are taking part in the Sydney

Memory & Ageing Study being conducted by UNSW's Centre for Healthy Brain Ageing. The participants underwent comprehensive psychological, cognitive and physiological assessment, and were monitored for falls over the course of a year.

## LAUGH A LITTLE - BY DR. AHAD KHAN

A stone-deaf Elderly Patient visits his GP, after he listened to his GP & fitted himself with Hearing Aids for both ears.

The Doc asks: "How is your hearing now, Henry?"

The Patient replies: "Excellent Doc! - I can hear everything now!"

Doc: "That's good to know."

Patient: "Can I request you something Doc? Can you not tell my Family that I can now hear well?"

Doc: "Why Henry, won't they be delighted?"

Patient: "Yes they will be delighted. But it is best they do not know. It is very interesting to be in the same room & listen to their conversations, when they know that I cannot hear - I am now able to know what they really talk about me, behind my back!"

## DONATE TO SAMAA

Your donations to SAMAA are tax deductible. Please send you cheques payable to **South Asian Muslim Association of Australia Incorporated** to SAMAA's address. Please ensure that you provide your address so that the receipt can be sent to you. For depositing the money directly in a bank account, please note the following account details. Please send us an email with your postal address confirming your contribution.

**Bank:** ANZ **A/C Name:** South Asian Muslim Association of Australia Incorporated.

**BSB:** 012- 081 **Account Number:** 4877-20869

***If you give to charity seeking GOD's pleasure, these are the ones who receive their reward manifold. (HQ 30:39)***