



# SAMAA

## South Asian Muslim Association of Australia Inc.

www.samaa.org.au  
Serving Elders since 2007

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"



SAMAA & IWAQ meeting: Report on Page 5

## INCREASING CHOICE

### RELEASE OF HOME CARE PACKAGES

The Department of Health released over 14,000 home care packages in March with the majority to consumers who had never previously held a home care package. The release also assigned packages to consumers who were currently in care but were awaiting a package at their approved level.

The department will now move to a more regular release schedule, with packages likely to be released weekly.

All clients who receive a package will receive a letter with a unique referral code.

Clients accessing care for the first time will be encouraged to research providers using the

service finder or by contacting My Aged Care to help them. These clients can either take their referral code to their chosen provider or ask the contact centre to send an electronic referral on their behalf. Providers are encouraged to update their information in the provider portal to show consumers the services they genuinely offer and the associated costs.

Information is not yet available on expected wait times or position in the queue. This is because the system is new and the department needs time to analyse the take up of home care packages, and ensure that meaningful information is available. Data on wait times should be published in the second half of this year.

You decide what services you receive under your home care package.

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Knowing how much each service costs and what type of services you can receive lets you get the most out of your package. Ask the provider for the itemised cost of each service. Services can include general support such as washing, ironing and gardening, or personal assistance such as dressing, showering, using the toilet or making meals and eating. It may also include nursing services as well as support to access aids and equipment.

Take a copy of your home care package approval letter and support plan as well as your income assessment outcome (if you have it) to potential providers, as this will help your discussions.

You may be expected to contribute to the costs of your services. Some of the costs will be subsidised by the government but you may also be expected to pay: a basic daily fee; an income-

tested care fee (if your income is over the maximum income for a full pensioner, you may be asked to pay this fee). You can then arrange for a formal income assessment to be completed by the Department of Human Services on 1800 227 475.

Each provider will have administration costs associated with providing care and services. You should be clear on what those costs are and the impact to your available home care package funds.

## SAMAA's Recent Events

### *SYDNEY HARBOUR CRUISE*

More than 100 people including SAMAA elders, their families, SAMAA members and volunteers enjoyed the annual Sydney Harbour cruise on Sunday 12 Feb 2017.

They filled the chartered boat to its capacity which cruised through the Sydney waters for four hours, starting at Darling Harbour and touching the iconic spots of the Sydney Harbour Bridge and Sydney Opera House and many other spectacles that make up the harbour.

The audience enjoyed the South Asian Music and songs. Sydney singers Riyaz Shah, Priya Das, Malik Diwana and a few elders entertained those present with thrilling performances. Intercontinental Menu for lunch was much liking of everyone.

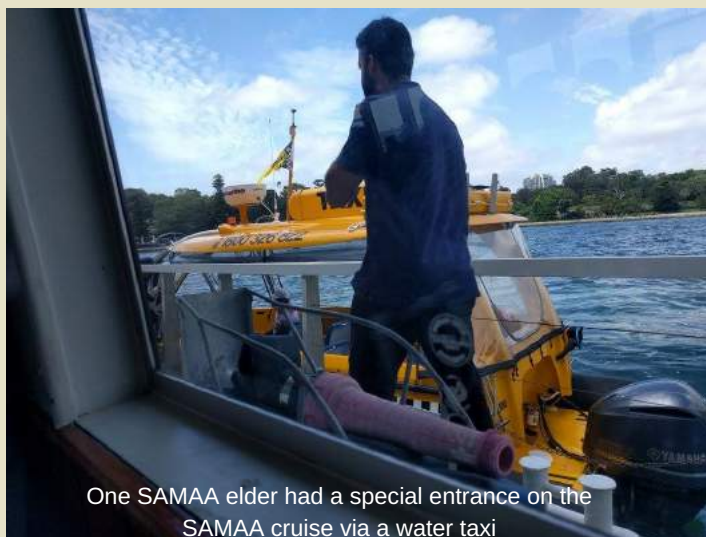
During SAMAA briefing, Mr Zahid Jamil requested elders to come forward in telling about their aged care needs to SAMAA so that appropriate services can be arranged. He said that there seems to be a cultural trend

among our elders not to mention about their issues which makes it difficult to register them through MyAged Care and during Aged Care Assessment process. Many of our elders, thus, miss out on services which are available to them.

He also mentioned that those who are interested in being part of Retirement Village project should let SAMAA team know. Elders thoroughly enjoyed the cruise and requested it to be repeated each year.



Cruise attendees enjoying the Mediterranean cuisine



One SAMAA elder had a special entrance on the SAMAA cruise via a water taxi



# QAWWALI NIGHT

## A HUGE SUCCESS

South Asian Muslim Association of Australia (SAMAA) staged another very successful event for elders of the community. The Mehfil-e-Qawwali on Sunday 19 March 2017 at Bankstown Sports Club Sydney theatre is described as a magical evening by those who attended it. Well over 300 people including elders, their families, SAMAA volunteers and members, wider South Asian community as well as Anglo-Saxon fans of this classical art filled the stunning theatre. The Acoustics of the Auditorium was of the highest quality, so is the lighting and other features. The ensemble of Tahir Faridi Qawwal gave an outstanding performance in singing very popular numbers of Ustad Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan and Sabri Brothers. The group mesmerised and enchanted the audience for well over three hours, receiving rapturous applause repeatedly. With their rich rhythmic grooves, soaring vocal melodies and the classical performance, the performers were able to spellbound the audience. It was an exceptional exhibition of the ancient tradition of Sufi music. The lead singer Canadian born and a revert Tahir Hussain Faridi showed total mastery of this art with its smooth melodic overtures, fierce leaps of vocal passion & rich vocal choruses which captivated the audience. The group represents Australian wing of world famous Fanna Fi Allah Qawwali group.

The senior SAMAA Elderly Mrs Kaneez Fatima Ali presented gifts to the artists. Mrs Saba Abdi introduced to the audience the origins of classical music and poetry of Qawwali. Mrs Shaheen Firdose was MC for the event.

The Event was designed as a Service to the Elders in our Community as SAMAA does at regular intervals to alleviate loneliness of community elders. The elders get an opportunity not only to entertain themselves but also meet their contemporaries. The Elders well appreciated SAMAA's efforts at catering to their Culturally & Linguistically Divergent Needs.

The event was supported by Multicultural NSW as well as Bankstown Sports Club.

Mr Zahid Jamil of SAMAA told audience about current programmes of this benevolent institution. Apart from its voluntary services, SAMAA offers various services in partnership with a major service provider Uniting in culturally and religiously appropriate manner. These include Social Support Programme, Home Care as well as Nursing Home Care. Mr Jamil urged elders and their families to cooperate with SAMAA in registering the elders through MyAged care so that professional services can be arranged for them. He mentioned about huge

reluctance among community elders in mentioning their difficulties to SAMAA and relevant agencies and thus missing out on services which they deserve. He said that our elders have given huge sacrifices in raising their children and families and a few of them have offered their services to the community and the nation. They deserve the best treatment in old age when they need it most. He also requested the community support including financial support as donations to SAMAA are tax deductible.

Dr Ahad Khan, in his vote of thanks, mentioned about the community organisations who supported the event. These included Indian Crescent Society of Australia, Edhi Foundation, Gujrati Muslim association, media partners including SBS Urdu, Australasian Muslim Times, SadaeWatan, Radio Suinye To, Radio Dosti, Public Telegraph, India Link etc. He thanked SAMAA volunteers and audience. You can listen to a few video clips of the evening at SAMAA Facebook.



# SANGEET MEHFIL

## ANMOL FILMII GEET

SAMAA arranged a musical night featuring renowned Sydney singer Mr Saleem Zaman on May 13 at Hurstville Civic Theatre. A large audience, majority of them seniors, packed the hall and enjoyed some of the most popular numbers of 70s and 80s. From ballads with ornate Urdu couplets to soulful lyrics and light film songs with exceptional melodies, thrilled the crowd who forced the programme to continue beyond the scheduled finish time.

Saleem Zaman was accompanied by a very fine female singer Sirisha Telugu who won the hearts of the audience.

Their performance was par excellence which captivated & enthralled the Audience.

Dr Ahad Khan introduced the singers and thanked SAMAA member and volunteers.

In his SAMAA report, Mr Zahid Jamil told audience that such cultural programmes and picnics are arranged to alleviate social isolation of seniors. SAMAA, not only provides its own volunteering services but facilitates professional services through its partnerships with major service providers.

Currently SAMAA enjoys partnership with major service provider Uniting and may also bring on board IWAQ (Islamic Women Association of Queensland) in its capacity as service provider. IWAQ specialises in Social support programme and Home Care services and is expanding its operations to NSW.

Dr G K Harinath, Chairperson of Multicultural NSW presented

bouquets to the singers and applauded SAMAA for its exceptional role in providing volunteering services to the community elders. He said that Multicultural NSW was committed to supporting communities from various ethnic backgrounds and promoting multiculturalism in New South Wales.



Saleem Zaman & Sirisha Telugu performing for the audience



Dr G K Harinath (Chairperson Multicultural NSW) with Dr Ahad Khan and Zahid Jamil

## OBITUARY



Mr Syed Nusruth Hadi, a respected SAMAA elderly member left us for heavenly abode on 30 Nov 2016. Born in Hyderabad, India, Mr Hadi migrated to Pakistan and worked for PIA for many years. He migrated to Australia in 1978 and worked as an accountant for many companies. Late Mr Hadi leaves behind his wonderful wife and 3 daughters and a few grand children. At SAMAA, we extend heartfelt condolence to the family and pray for maghfirat of the deceased.



# IWAQ MEETS SAMAA

The Director of IWAQ, Galila Abdelsalam met SAMAA team on 24 April and made a presentation about the services offered by IWAQ in aged care. She was accompanied by IWAQ Sydney manager Alice (Ayesha) Oronzo.

IWAQ provides aged and disability support services for under and over 65 year olds.

IWAQ aims to help seniors to live their life in the best way possible by putting them in the driver's seat in goal setting, decision making and service planning. Every care or service plan is unique and is designed in conjunction with our clients, their loved-ones and designated health providers.

SAMAA expects to work in coordination with IWAQ in offering appropriate services to SAMAA elders. The Islamic Women's Association of

Queensland Inc. (IWAQ) was established in 1991 to cater for the unmet needs of the multicultural community specifically Muslim women and their families. Its focus has, however, broadened over the years to many areas including aged care services. It is now expanding its services as an Aged Care Service Provider to New South Wales.

## RAMADAN & DIABETES

BY DR NISA SHERIFF

Fasting during Ramadan is obligatory for all healthy adult Muslims. There is often an intense desire to fast even in those who are eligible for exemption. Many individuals with diabetes will be eligible for this exemption however safe fasting with diabetes is possible. Often patients with diabetes avoid consulting health professionals during Ramadan, usually due to the perceived threat of advice against fasting. However it is important for patients to consult their doctors prior to Ramadan to ascertain their risk and formulate an individualised management plan.

Diabetes mellitus is a complex condition in which the body cannot maintain healthy glucose levels in the blood. Insulin, a hormone produced by the pancreas, is important in helping the body to utilise glucose for energy. Type 1 diabetes (T1DM) is an autoimmune condition that affects approximately 10% of people diagnosed with diabetes. It occurs when the pancreas is unable to produce any insulin. All patients with T1DM require insulin treatment and omission during fasting is

dangerous. Type 2 diabetes (T2DM) usually develops when insulin cannot work properly or the body becomes 'resistant' to the insulin that is produced. Often patients with T2DM will be on tablets to control their blood glucose level but may also require insulin treatment. Diabetes that is not well controlled can be associated with a range of long-term complications including heart disease, kidney disease, blindness and amputations.

The global prevalence of diabetes continues to rise with in excess of 400 million people living with diabetes worldwide. India, Indonesia, Egypt and Bangladesh are in the top ten countries with the highest number of adults living with diabetes.

In addition, there is a disproportionately high prevalence of diabetes in Muslim-majority nations. Studies have shown that approximately 40% of patients with T1DM and 75% of patients with T2DM fast for at least 15 days during Ramadan.

### Fasting with diabetes

There are many physiologic changes that occur during Ramadan related both to the fasting itself and the altered sleep-wake cycle. Overall total body weight typically decreases or remains stable during the holy

month. During fasting blood glucose levels fall and insulin production is reduced. In healthy individuals, the liver can release glucose from stores for approximately 12 hours before fat stores are utilised for energy. Patients with diabetes have reduced capacity to cope with both prolonged fasting as well as excessive feasting at iftar. The risks or severe hypoglycaemia (low blood glucose), severe hyperglycaemia (high blood glucose), dehydration and metabolic complications (eg diabetic ketoacidosis) are particularly heightened.

Can people with diabetes fast?

It depends.

The decision to fast is a personal one and certainly many people with diabetes are exempt. The decision will also be influenced by geographical location and the expected duration of fasting. If fasting is expected to be greater than 15 hours per day then fasting all days will likely be difficult.

There are particular characteristics, which place patients at high risk:

- Patients at risk of hypoglycaemia
  - o Patients treated with insulin are at highest risk
  - o Patients taking medications in the sulfonylurea class (eg

gliclazide, glipizide, glibenclamide, glimepiride). These medications act by stimulating insulin secretion from the pancreas. Other types of diabetes medications do not cause hypoglycaemia but can increase the risk if taken in combination with insulin or a sulfonylurea.

- Patients with poorly controlled type 1 diabetes
- Patients on dialysis or severe kidney disease
- Elderly patients with ill health
- Pregnant patients

Older people are particularly vulnerable to diabetes related complications during Ramadan, however many have enjoyed fasting for many years without issues. Their risk should be assessed by the presence of comorbid illnesses, functional capacity and cognitive function. Old age alone is not considered dangerous.

What can be done?

It is vital that patients with diabetes work with their treating clinicians (Endocrinologist and/or GP) to create an individualised diabetes management plan that is safe for the month of Ramadan. It may not be possible for all people with diabetes to fast. Detailed guidelines have been formulated by the International Diabetes Federation in collaboration with the Diabetes and Ramadan International Alliance to facilitate management of patients during fasting.

Practical tips and recommendations:

- See your doctor (Endocrinologist or GP) to create a diabetes plan for the month of Ramadan BEFORE commencing fasting
- Maintain contact with your doctor to trouble-shoot any problems that arise
- Diabetes monitoring
- It is most important for patients to check their blood glucose levels regularly during fasting. This may be numerous times per day depending on individual circumstances and risk of hyper and hypoglycaemia.
- Diabetes treatment
- Often the treatment regimen will need to be changed for fasting days. For example pre-mixed insulin (a combination of long and short acting insulin) may need to be changed to separate long and short acting components. Insulin doses may need to be reduced.
- Certain medications may need to be dose-reduced or ceased temporarily.

Avoid risk

- Always carry glucose treatment when travelling and be willing to break the fast if necessary.
- When to break the fast:
  - o Blood glucose less than 4.0 mmol/L
  - o Blood glucose greater than 16.6 mmol/L
  - o Symptoms of hypoglycaemia (eg trembling, sweating, palpitations, confusion), hyperglycaemia (eg extreme thirst, hunger, frequent urination, nausea/vomiting), dehydration or other illness

- Contact your doctor to prevent further complications before resuming fasting

Diet

- Avoid eating very large meals at iftar which can cause hyperglycaemia
- Avoid eating significant amounts of processed carbohydrates, sugar, desserts or fried foods at suhoor or iftar
- Avoid sugary drinks and caffeinated beverages
- Begin iftar with plenty of water and 1-2 dates to raise the blood glucose level
- Eat balanced meals consisting of low GI carbohydrates 45-50%; protein 20-30% (eg legumes, fish, meat); and fat <35% (mono and polyunsaturated preferred)
- Eat plenty of vegetables
- A diet plan for Ramadan can be created with your GP, Endocrinologist or dietician

The majority of patients with diabetes can be safely managed during Ramadan if adequate education is provided before, during and after Ramadan. It is important for patients, old and young, to involve their treating clinicians in their diabetes management to avoid unnecessary risks of fasting.

Dr Nisa Sheriff,  
Endocrinologist |

**At SAMAA, we wish our elders, volunteers, South Asian and other Muslims a blessed Ramadan.**

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Allah Almighty has said, {And as for those who can fast with difficulty, (e.g. an old man), they have (a choice either to fast or) to feed a Miskin (poor person) (for every day).} [Surat Al-Baqarah 2:184]

Ibn Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, said, "a permit (not to fast in Ramadan) was given to the old man and the old woman who are unable to fast, so for every day they feed a poor person." [Reported by Al-Bukhari]

## Donate to SAMAA

SAMAA has the privilege of being a Deductible Gift Recipient. Your donations to SAMAA are tax-deductible.

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Please notify SAMAA via email of the contribution made so that we can send you the receipt for tax purposes.