1. Sara Cheikh Husain is a PhD scholar affiliated with Alfred Deakin institute for citizenship and Globalisation at Deakin university [1]. She is a member of the Challenging Racism Project CRP at Western Sydney University [2]. Her research is funded by the Australian Government Research Training Program Scholarship RTP through the UNESCO Chair for Comparative Research on cultural diversity and Social Justice [3]. Her research focuses exclusively on Victorian Muslim Community Organisations' perceptions of Islamophobia as well as their anti-Islamophobia strategies and actions. This supplementary document is issued in reference to her un-published findings. Findings in this document are indicative of a sample of 25 Victorian MCOs. While this cannot be generalized to the scale of all Australian MCOs, it gives a good head start on MCOs' anti-Islamophobia strategies.

2. Muslim Community organisations MCOs are any entity encompassed of a collection of Muslims who come together under the umbrella of a designated title and mobilise online or offline to achieve different goals such as religious, civic, communal and creative.

3. Since 9/11, Australian MCOs have been actively engaging with the public, the government and the media as representative of the Muslim communities in the national deliberation on 'everything Islam' (Amath 2015, p. 180). This has led into a surge in the numbers of MCOs to fulfil internal and external new needs (Amath 2015, p. 180).

4. Sara Cheikh Husain findings indicate that anti-Islamophobia activities by Victorian MCOs' falls within 3 intertwined strategies: 1) building the capacity of the Muslim communities, 2) building bridges with the wider community, and to a lesser degree, 3) Advocacy at the social, media and political level.

5. **Building the religious and civic-political capacity of Muslims:** Many MCOs believe that building an entrenched Islamic religiosity combined with advancing Muslims' youth national belonging is an essential step towards cultivating a 'good' Muslim population that is capable of providing counter narratives to Islamophobia discourses through positive engagements. This is achieved through religious and civic educational programs for Muslims such as leadership programs, public speaking and media and political awareness.

6. **Building resiliency and strengthening Muslims' confidence in their identities:** Many MCOs are aware of the damage stigmatisation does to Muslims' identities, especially the youth. Therefore, many MCOs respond through building Muslims resiliency and providing spaces and programs to cultivate Muslims' civic and religious belonging and their capacity to feel and act as legitimate citizens to disrupt the underlying assumption of their "other-ness" (Cheikh Husain 2020).

7. **Educating Muslims about their civic-political rights and the problem of Islamophobia:** this is due to the fact that Islamophobia incidents are underreported which normalises the problem and undermine countering efforts. Umbrella MCO believe that Muslims need to understand

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their rights and the importance of reporting racism in order to tackle the underreporting of Islamophobia incidents by Muslims. This is achieved through educating Muslims about recognising Islamophobia, about their civic-political rights and their duties as Australian Muslims.

8. **Grassroots openness and accessibility:** Many MCOs invite non-Muslims to their spaces. This is often during Ramadan whereby Muslims use iftars as an opportunity to connect with non-Muslims. however, one main event is the Open Mosque day. The National Open Mosque Day became an annual event whereby participating mosques across Victoria offer Victorians a first-hand opportunity to interact and have conversations with Muslims inside their houses of worship. Although mosques are always open and accessible to the public, the Open Mosque Day pin an annual day to publicise the openness of mosques to encourage the public to step in to interact with Muslims and learn about Islam firsthand. Furthermore, mosques with award winning architectural designs organise public tours to visit the mosque.

9. **Grassroot Connecting with non-Muslims:** many MCOs organise or facilitate face-to-face interactions whereby Muslims and non-Muslims meet to have conversations. Speed Date a Muslim by the Moroccan Soup Bar[4] is a well-publicised example of this strategy. These one-to-one conversations such as Meet a Muslim, Cuppa with a Muslim, Speed Date a Muslim, and many more similar initiatives are born to respond to the publics' fear of Muslims. Through face-to-face interactions, MCOs aim to educate non-Muslims about Islam and Muslims and humanise and normalise Muslims' existence and experiences. For example, an MCO hired small stations at two of the busiest streets of the city to run frequent open-street outreach events where Muslim youth from both genders give out coffee, dates, water and souvenirs to the public to counter Islamophobia narratives.

10. **Collaboration with other religious and civil organizations:** many MCOs believe it is fruitful to collaborate with other civil and religious organizations to fight Islamophobia. This allows the exchange of resources and experiences which have a positive outcome on the scale and impact of their joint collaborations. This is often the case with collaborations with the Jewish Communities (Cheikh Husain). For example, the Jewish Community Council of Victoria (JCCV), Australian Intercultural Society (AIS), Australian Union of Jewish Students and Benevolence Australia initiated a collaborative project: *the bystander Intervention program[5]* in response to Islamophobia and anti-Semitism, as part of the Victorian Anti-Racism and Anti-Discrimination Action Plan by the Labour government (Cheikh Husain 2020). Also, collaboration with non-Muslims groups amplify their solidarity with Muslims. This can generate more coverage and acceptance within the wider community than Muslims' anti-Islamophobia voices. City councils are primary stakeholders to many collaborations, albeit their focus on providing funding. The Islamophobia action network is an example of a grassroot network of Muslim and non-Muslim academics, activists and organizations who are concerned and work in the space of countering Islamophobia.

11. **Creative means:** MCOs utilises creative means such as visual arts and performative culture to humanise Muslim experiences and educate and connect with non-Muslims. The Islamic

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[4] https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/06/world/australia/speed-date-a-muslim-melbourne.html
[5] http://www.intercultural.org.au/bystander-intervention-program/

Museum of Australia IMA[6] and SalamFest[7] were established to provide a counter narrative to misrepresentations of Islam and Muslims as well as to revive and celebrate Muslims' civilisation, culture and contributions to the world. The five galleries at the IMA for example, showcases the core teachings of Islam to 'dispel misconceptions about women and words like Shariah, Jihad' and celebrate Muslims' achievement through-out history in science, architecture, arts and their achievements within the Australian context. SalamFest is a three-day annual festival started in 2015 with zero budget but with the support of the State library of Victoria and the support of local and international Muslim artists and performers who participated for free. The festival highlights the peaceful nature of Islam as a religion and humanises Muslims as people with rich diverse cultures. The 'Ways to be a Muslim' is a creative exhibition showcasing photographs, videos and statements by Muslim youth. The exhibition is born out of collaboration between many MCOs to give Muslim youths the agentic space to stress creatively their diversified ways of belonging to Islam at the same time challenge Islamophobia narratives which homogenises the Muslim Community. Also, the exhibition features faith as the generating force for Muslims to 'be a better human being' who 'help others', 'service the elderly' and 'respect the environment'.

12. **Education programs for non-Muslims:** MCOs also invest in providing direct forms of educational programs in the form of workshops, public seminars and training programs for schools, teachers, service providers, counsel workers, and anyone who is interested to know more about Islam. Many MCOs feel it is necessary to educate personnel within the government, therefore, some run workshops for the corrective system and the police. Some MCOs label these programs in reference to Islam such as Ask a Muslim and Islam 101, others refer to them as cross-cultural trainings, professional development, diversity training or even interfaith dialogues. Despite the labels, almost all these initiatives share the same objective of educating their non-Muslim target audiences about Islam to combat ignorance and dismiss assumptions associated with Islam and Muslims. Other forms of educational initiatives are ad-hoc. For example, participating in conferences on Islamophobia, invite lecturers and facilitate dialogue and conversations between Muslims and non-Muslims academic and non-academic experts in fields related to issues pertaining to Islam and Muslims such as race, racism, religion, citizenship and democracy.

13. **Interfaith dialogue and multifaith engagements**: Halafoff (2011) detailed how Muslim religious actors actively engaged in interfaith dialogue and peace building initiatives with Jewish and Christians. Cheikh Husain thesis finds that MCOs seem to have a very encompassing perception of Interfaith dialogues whereby every interaction they take with non-Muslims is regarded as interfaith engagement. These engagements vary in its scale from massive annual gathering of religious representatives orchestrated by umbrella organisations, to micro-scale at the level of university Islamic associations and conversations with non-Muslims at the public library or at annual dinners.

14. **Social advocacy:** social advocacy are initiatives deliberately with the aim of gathering communal solidarity with Muslims' challenges and raise awareness about Islamophobia's nature, scale and discourses through educational and civic means. This takes the form of: a) the two Australian Islamophobia reports documenting and analysing incidents of Islamophobia in Australia (Iner

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[6] https://www.islamicmuseum.org.au/

[7] https://salamfest.com/

2017, 2019). The reports were granted good amount of publicity in the mainstream media. B) 'Muslims down under'[8] is an online- offline social advocacy campaign by an umbrella MCOs. The website informs the public of the extend of islamophobia, calls for communal solidarity and invites people to ask questions through joining their nationwide events called "Islam under the spotlight" and "coffee and Islam". This is in conjunction to banners of selected citations of scholarly work to debunk myths on Islam and Muslims on their social media accounts such as Twitter and Facebook using online. Also 'Muslims for Loyalty,' and 'Muslims for Peace' campaigns are about distributing letterbox pamphlet at the city and regional areas. C) At the time of the interview, the same organisation held 22 Quran exhibitions in 2018 in libraries and community centres, book stalls at local markets and festivals to distribute Quran, books and pamphlets along-side banners featuring teachings from Islam, the prophet's life, to debunk Islamophobia narratives on Islam's association with terrorism, Muslims disloyalty and other anti-Islam topics. In conjunction to 85 Street-campaigns where young Muslims stand at shopping centres or in the city holding banners that say, *'I am a Muslim, ask me anything'*. D) Voices against Bigotry is an online campaign aimed at encouraging non-Muslims to take a stand against Islamophobia.

15. **Political and media advocacy:** those are initiatives at the level of the government and the media. Political and media advocacy is limited to few MCOs through maintaining good relationships with local and federal government bodies and trust with media outlets, calling for reformations in policies and media practices, representations and reporting, lobbing politicians, producing organisational public policies to influence government policies, writing submissions. For example: the Islamic Council of Victoria ICV's latest position statement on Islamophobia (ICV 2020). Also, an online MCO addresses Muslims with guidelines on how to engage with the media and where to go to lodge a media related complain[9]. The Website also addresses journalists offering them a 'free outreach program' to learn about "*the structure of the Muslim community in Australia, schools of thought and insights into the way the Muslim community relates to one another."* Besides, it offers a reference list of Islamic organisations in accordance with their speciality as a guide for journalist to approach reliable and relative sources from the Muslim community when writing about Islam.

16. Overall, MCOs anti-Islamophobia strategies at the grassroots level aims to a) normalise Muslims, 2) increase the visibility of Muslims b) empower Muslims in order to achieve the overarching aim of providing counter narrative to Islamophobia discourses.

17. Cheikh Husain findings of MCOs strategies are comparable to the countering Islamophobia Kit (Easat-Daas 2019) developed by Cordoba foundation (TCF) which aims at providing recommendations based on best practices by 270 field interactions. The Cordoba foundation (TCF) recommendations fall mainly within two strands, the legal and the social. At the legal level, the report calls for the empowerment of Muslims to know their legal rights in order for them to pursue legal action against institutional islamophobia. At the social level, the report calls on Muslims, especially Muslim women, to step forward and provide counter narratives to Islamophobia discourses using artistic and creative mediums such as arts and films as well as engage in dialogue with the wider community members. This falls within the reports' broader aim of giving Muslims voice and space to be visible as well as establishing Muslims as normal

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[8] https://www.muslimsdownunder.com/
[9] http://fair.org.au/media-activism/who-speaks-for-islam/

and integral part of the national context which then provides counter narratives to Islamophobia discourses on Muslims as threats, gender inequality in Islam and the Muslims as outsiders.

18. Cheikh Husain thesis argues that the above-mentioned strategies are up for debate as examples of 'good' or 'effective' anti-Islamophobia practices. This is due to the following factors impacting their activities.

19. **Resources:** Australian MCOs are pressured to engage in the previous examples, despite their limited financial and personnel resources. This has a great impact on the sustainability and continuity of their programs with many taking the form of ad-hoc engagements susceptible to the availability of funding. Also, this places a strain of pressure on MCOs to split the resources between their key activities and fighting Islamophobia, especially, that many of these MCOs were established towards providing Muslim services. Moreover, MCOs' dependency on government funding to run their key activities deters them from conducting advocacy that challenges institutional/political forms of Islamophobia. Furthermore, many MCOs lack the political or media expertise that allow them to engage beyond their initial organisational objectives given that most of these organisations are founded and run by volunteers. This factor also limits the time allocated to anti-Islamophobia activities which impacts the continuity and effectivity of MCOs' engagements. Therefore, MCOs feel pressured to stretch themselves (time, resources, expertise, etc) beyond their capacities.

20. **Self-silencing:** "MCOs to practice self-silencing, primarily to safeguard their financial funding since many depend on the government to secure financial support for their key services. This compromises their ability to advocate openly against institutional forms of Islamophobia despite their recognition of the institutional aspect of the problem (Cheikh Husain 2020, p. 13)

21. **Grassroot focus for an institutional problem:** Islamophobia is a global phenomenon that is cultivated with national and international negative discourses by politicians and the media. MCOs' efforts focus mainly on changing perceptions at the grassroots level. This is not effective for many reasons. 1) Australian Muslims are 2.6% of the wider population, which means that their impact and outreach as people is limited in comparison to the impact and outreach of the media. 2) many Muslims are critical of the national Counter Terrorism legislation and the political language. They believe that these are fed by Islamophobia and reproduces Islamophobia. Grassroots engagements do not tackle that level of the problem.

22. **Pre-set framework for activism:** MCOs were pressured to involve as representative of Muslims within a pre-set framework dictated by the nations' agenda of the 'war on terror'. The national agenda of the 'war on terror' connected the national security of Australia to the management of the Australian Muslims' integration through social cohesion policies as 'softer counter-terrorism' approaches (Cole 2017; Dunn et al. 2015; Sohrabi 2013; Williams 2011). This approach was initiated in 2006, with the institutional formation of the Muslim Reference Group (or Muslim Advisory Group) to emphasize the responsibility of Muslim faith leaders to promote the Australian values as a mean to halt Muslims' radicalisation and enhance integration (Roose 2016; Sohrabi 2013). Despite receiving a lot of criticism from within the Muslim communities who were cynical of the input provided by an institutionalised-hand-picked Muslim group, a 10

years National Action Plan NAP was born out of that initiative. The NAP encompassed a myriad of projects at the academic, and civic-political levels to address 'the underlying causes of extremism' through 'supporting Australian Muslims to participate effectively in the broader community' (MCIMA 2006, p. 6). The NAP and the many similar programs that followed, funded research and community projects to promote moderate Islam and manage the religious leadership of Muslims as a deradicalization mean (Dunn et al. 2015; Humphrey 2010; Poynting & Mason 2008; Sohrabi 2013). Halafoff (2011) argues that the Australian state government promoted multifaith initiatives within a strategy to enhance social cohesion and to counter extremism, albeit its focus on the Muslim communities. MCOs are essential stakeholders in the execution of this social cohesion agenda. They initiate and participate in intercultural and interfaith dialogues, deradicalization, empowerment and the like of programs implemented under the umbrella of preventing religious extremism through enhancing Muslims' integration (Edwards 2018; Peucker 2017; Peucker & Ceylan 2016). Edwards (2018, p.294) calls it an 'industry', whereby, MCOs access government funds and engage in extensive relationships with other civil organisations in order to solve politicised problems pertaining to the integration of Muslims.

23. In light of the above, S. Cheikh Husain finds that It is counter intuitive that MCOs' anti-Islamophobia engagements are initiated and framed within a narrative that problematises Muslims and requires them to upskill their communities as well as educate, justify, defend, explain and engage with non-Muslims to prove loyalty and peacefulness. In doing so, MCOs are not given the space, time and resources to strategically plan and determine the level and nature of their civic-political participation in the national dialogue around Islam and Muslims. Instead, they are pressured to act within the confinements of a pre-determent framework that is founded on the problematisation of Muslimness without the adequate resources to undertake this extra burden.

24. **Who are the target groups?** At the moment, MCOs strategies are pre-determent by the national agenda prioritising social cohesion which places expectations on Muslims to perform actively within certain cross-cultural engagements (Cheikh Husain 2020). While this is arguably beneficial in providing counter narratives, albeit the problematic issues indicated above, still, their remain a gap in response whereby the target audiences are not identified.

25. A recent study aimed at Understanding Victorians' varied attitudes towards Muslims (Kevin Dunn 2020) shows that Islamophobic groups fall within various segments with characteristics that determine the extent to which each group is Islamophobic. Understanding this allows strategic anti-Islamophobia responses shaped and directed to influence a designated Islamophobic group based on their characteristics. For example, the report recommends a focus of 'containment and proscription' as a strategy to tackle the disruption caused by the **'Islamophobic group'** (9%) which hold a supremacist hostile disposition towards Islam and Muslims. Interfaith and connection through social media and storytelling, for example, are recommended towards the **'Islamophobic with assimilationist tendencies'** (23%) group who are more likely to be Christian and are concerned about cultural assimilation of Muslims. 'Education that de-centres stereotypes and re-humanises Muslims will build resilience to the influence of Islamophobia in the **'Undecided' group'** (17%) with stories that demonstrate the ordinary

hopes and civic participation of Muslims. The **'Progressive with concerns'** group (32%) and the **'Progressive group'** (19%) are open to influence and would be the ones attending one mosques and interfaith dialogues. A better and sensible public discourse about Islam and Muslims would reassure the concerns of the former, while the latter can be utilised for anti-racism work as influences within their networks and by their diversified capacities.

26. Based on the above, S. Cheikh Husain recommends:

   a. The assessment of the effectiveness of current interfaith and cross-cultural engagements on combating Islamophobia. This is recommended in the light of the lack of a clear and measurable evidence of the effectivity of these programs on advancing social cohesion and reducing radicalisation, albeit their hard-core consistency and pressure on Muslims (Peucker et al. 2016). An effectivity assessment allows MCOs to devise an informed decision regarding the nature and level of their participation in such engagements.

   b. The development of an Australian response to Islamophobia supported from political leadership, that encourages responsibility from governments at all levels, industry and the broader NGO sector. Community-driven strategies need to be responsive to evidence about who to engage in what way, in light of previously mentioned research on categories of Islamophobes. This places the emphasis on non-Muslims responding to behaviour from non-Muslims, rather than placing the burden on Muslims to fix this problem.

   c. Part of this national response would include assessing legislation that is necessary and appropriate to contain and proscribe the most extreme category of Islamophobes – recognising that conciliation-based anti-discrimination laws may often not be appropriate or effective to preserve community security and reduce public harm. Civil and criminal laws at the federal and state level need to be reviewed for their fitness to purpose, in a process that accounts for the experiences of community and civil society.

   d. The need to increase the level and nature of Muslim organisations' collaboration with non-Muslim organisations and anti-racism stakeholders in order to combine voices, resources and expertise. Through collaboration, the civil society show solidarity with Muslims which have an impact on the public perception of the problem. Moreover, collaboration expands the reach of the message to achieve an effective impact.

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