



SHEPPARTON News

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October 7, 2022
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Facelift for Victoria's first mosque



By **Youssef Saudie**
Mar 15, 2022



Ribbon cut: Several community leaders came to see the unveiling of the Albanian mosque. Photos: Youssef Saudie Photo by Youssef Saudie

Shepparton's Albanian Mosque has unveiled its refurbishments, drawing hundreds of community members to celebrate the renovated place of worship.

It has been revamped to fit its growing community, with funding from donations and the Victorian Government.

Mosque president Reg Qemal said he was proud to see what had been achieved and delivered for the community.



Pride in mosque: History is embedded in the Albanian mosque of Shepparton. Photo by Youssef Saudie

“I would especially like to thank our members of the local Albanian community as well as the non-Albanian community for their generous donations,” he said.

The Albanian mosque was the first mosque in Victoria, established in 1960, and this is its biggest renovation.



*Fond memories: It was a time to recognise and reflect on the strong history of Albanians in Shepparton.
Photo by Youssef Saudie*

The mosque has been modernised with freshly-painted walls, new carpets, a green garden and upgrades to its community centre, including a kitchenette.

"We've been able to redesign a new layout within the existing footprint, which is more suitable for today's community needs," Mr Qemal said.

City of Greater Shepparton Mayor Kim O'Keeffe said the development was important for the town's diverse communities to continue to "grow and flourish".



*Community together: People from across greater Shepparton came to see the unveiling of Albanian mosque
Photo by Youssef Saudie*

She said the Albanian community was a “really great testament” to what City of Greater Shepparton was all about.



Full of joy: Zinet Hasankolli and Hyrmet Mehmet have been part of the Shepparton Albanian mosque for decades. Photo by Youssef Saudie

“I’m really proud of the Albanian community in the way that they have connected their culture so strongly to our own community and made the community their own,” Cr O’Keeffe said.



Food to celebrate: There was a variety of food served in the mosque's new kitchenette. Photo by Youssef Saudie

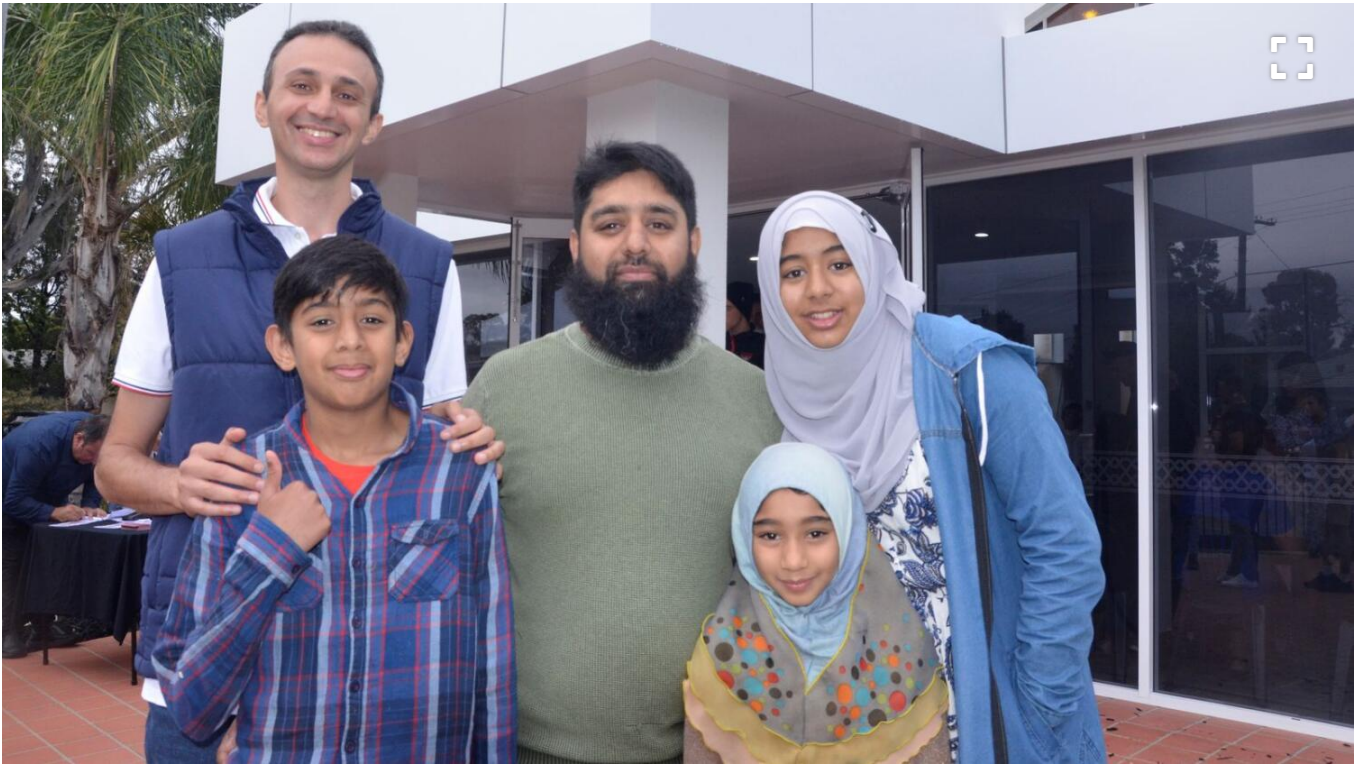
Qunoot Shaikh, 14, has been going to the mosque as long as she could remember, and was excited to see the refurbishment.

"I grew up in it, my siblings grew up in it, we live really close to it; seeing it makes me happy on the inside," she said.

"Now we can welcome more people in and the community can grow — more friends, more people, more parties."



Giving back: The Albanian mosque is a place built on the support of the community. Photo by Youssef Saudie



A second home: Families and friends are always welcome at the mosque. Pictured are (from left) Shady Ibrahim and Awwaab, Saleem, Qunoot and Taiba Shaikh. Photo by Youssef Saudie



By **Youssef Saudie**



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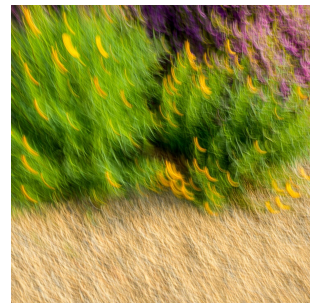
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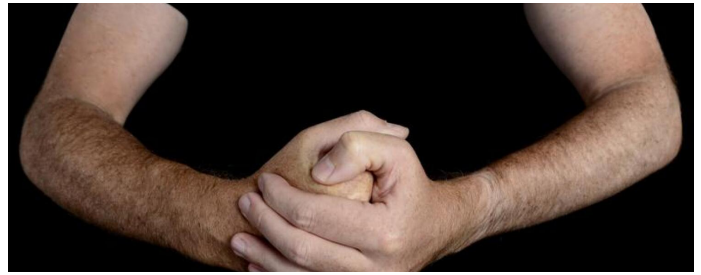
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