



islam awareness week



Muslims in NZ – since 1874.

The first Muslim migrants were Chinese gold diggers working in Dunstan, in the South Island, recorded in the government census of April 1874. In 1950 there were about 150 Muslims and the first Muslim organisation was established. Soon after, a boatload of European refugees brought about 50 Muslim men from Albania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia. In the 1960s a number of Asian students also began arriving. In April 1979 the national body for Muslims, the Federation of Islamic Associations of New Zealand (FIANZ), was formed. There was an influx of Indo-Fijians (a large minority of whom are Muslims) in the 1970s, mostly into Auckland. In the 1990s Somalis and Middle Eastern people began arriving in the main cities. There's been a steady trickle of converts to Islam since the 1970s. The 2001 census recorded 23,000 Muslims in total. While few in number, NZ Muslims are ethnically diverse, originating from over 40 countries, including 3000 European Muslims and 700 Maori.

What is "Islam Awareness Week"?

Islam Awareness Week is a week of information and activities organised by local Muslims to increase New Zealanders' awareness of their beliefs, values and practices, and to tackle misinformation about their religion in a positive way. The aim is to achieve greater understanding between us all, by promoting communication and new relationships. It's also hoped to reduce ignorance and misconceptions about the world's second largest religion: prejudices about Islam often result from misinformation through news media reporting on world events involving Muslims. Most provide little or no perspective as to what Islam's take is on the issue or the position of the other 1.3999 billion Muslims. Negative reporting has been a major cause of the ignorance of Islam we see today.

On the other hand, interactions during Islam Awareness Week provide a chance for all of us to find out directly from each other what it is that concerns us or we want to know about. Activities during the Week such as Mosque open days, talks, video screenings and information displays will allow people an insight into the Islamic way of life and the Muslims who follow it. Some may build on what they know, others might change what they thought they knew, or learn basic facts, such as that most Muslims are not Arabs, or that Islam means peace. Others may be interested in topics of their own interest whether it be Peace, Women, War, Law, God, or whatever – if we just come to know each other a little better in our own ways, Islam Awareness Week will certainly have achieved its goal.

You can keep updated with Islam Awareness Week information and events in your area online, at: www.islamawareness.co.nz Or Telephone (09) 627-5677 (AK) or (04) 387-8023 (WN) or your local Islamic Centre or Mosque Or email: info@islamawareness.co.nz



"Muslim Heritage"

www.islamawareness.co.nz

