

Writing the Biography of Dr Qazi Ashfaq Ahmad (1930-2022)

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The Australian Muslim ummah's narrative is tied to the pioneering men and women who collectively illustrate a meta-narrative about the migrant experience of Australia in the post-colonial era. Amongst the Muslim immigrants of the post war period, Dr Qazi Ashfaq Ahmad OAM (1930-2022) stands out as one of the most influential, active and philanthropic figures of this era. Ahmad was passionate about establishing institutionalised roots for Australia's Muslim communities. His extensive work has not only been critical to developing a sense of community, it has also been crucial for making sense of identity politics and social integration. The personal history of pioneers like him do not only relay a fascinating life across three Commonwealth nations like India, Papua New Guinea and Australia, but also portray how biographies reflect greater communal histories and national narratives. His life presents us with a remarkable history of a rich, complex, yet complicated personal life, but also a role model as a motivating social influencer and a pioneering Muslim leader in Australia. A man whose life is intricately related to the history of his community. The study is based on oral interviews with Dr Ahmad, key members of his family and colleagues, as well as community documents which were sourced, categorised and analysed. These identify and document family history and biography with local, institutional and ideological histories that locate Dr Ahmad's vision within broader historical contexts.

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