



MALEK FAHD ISLAMIC SCHOOL

ABN: 41003 864 891

KNOWLEDGE IS LIGHT & WORK IS WORSHIP

www.mfis.nsw.edu.au

INFORMATION UPDATE

FROM THE BOARD OF MALEK FAHD ISLAMIC SCHOOL

11 October 2021

Assalamualaikum

Our new Principal

We are delighted to share with you the news that Dr Zachariah Matthews will be the next Principal of Malek Fahd Islamic School.

Dr Matthews will in January succeed Mr Bruce Rixon whose appointment finishes at the end of the year.

As many of you are aware, Dr Matthews joined our School this year as Director of Faith and Australian Islamic Identity, a key role in the School Executive in which he works to strengthen the School's Islamic values and ethos in an Australian context.

Dr Matthews previously was Deputy Principal of Western Grammar School in Plumpton where he was responsible for operational management, student wellbeing, staff welfare and performance, community engagement, media and publications. He was Acting Principal when required.

Throughout his career he has developed a deep knowledge of the educational landscape as it relates to Islam and faith-based education. He is strongly involved in the development and implementation of teacher and student programs to ensure effective systems and processes.

Many in our community will have seen or heard Dr Matthews at Islamic forums and conferences, read his papers or seen him interviewed in the media on Islamic topics. He is active with youth and involved with boards of community-based and national organisations devoted to civic initiatives. Notably, he helped coordinate national statements in regard to the Australian Government's Muslim Community Reference Group, the pro-hijab campaign and others. He also was on the Board of the Australian Muslim Civil Rights and Advocacy Network and served as executive director of Just Media Advocacy.

Before settling on a career in education, his background was in pharmacy, lecturing at the University of Sydney's Pharmacy Faculty and managing a government hospital pharmacy department.

Dr Matthews undertook his Quran memorisation in South Africa from a young age, before continuing Islamic studies in South Africa, the United States and Australia. He holds a Bachelor of Pharmacy (South Africa), Bachelor of Science (Hons Pharmacology, South Africa), Doctor of Pharmacy (USA) and Master of Islamic Studies (Australia).

Dr Matthews demonstrates a collaborative, considered and holistic approach to leadership. He values the need to consult broadly with parents, students, staff and community to ensure priorities and results are aligned. His career experience is strongly supported by his Masters of Leadership and Management studies, along with a completed Master of Islamic Studies.

Dr Matthews' appointment concludes an extensive national search in which the Board chose from an exceptional field of candidates. The Board appointed an experienced national education recruitment firm to advise it and adopted a two-stage expert panel interview and review process with internal, external and specialist Islamic education leaders.

Dr Matthews will take over from Mr Rixon who has given exceptional service and commitment to Malek Fahd for the past five years. This was a period of remarkable turnaround and consolidation of the School, its structure, leadership, transformative educational programs, learning support, student wellbeing and professional development of teaching staff. Under Mr Rixon's leadership, the School established considerable improvements in governance, compliance and reporting, all of which are essential to our strength and future.

As the School year winds up, we will continue to celebrate Mr Rixon's achievements and farewell him.

Dr Matthews will continue to work closely in support of Mr Rixon as he prepares to take up his appointment in the new year.

With you we look forward with great anticipation to his contribution to the continued success of Malek Fahd Islamic School.

Jazakallah Khairan for your ongoing support.

Wassalam.

THE BOARD

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