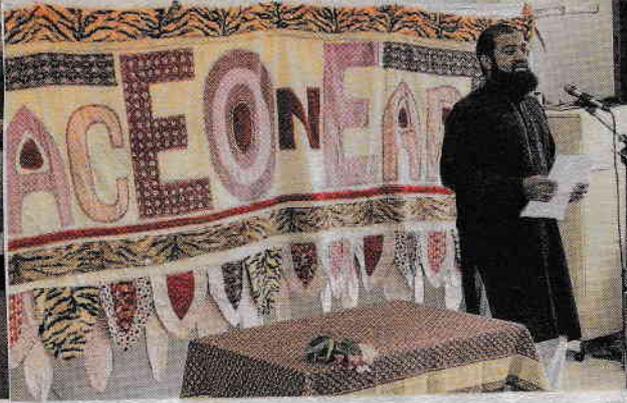




MOVING FORWARD: Marlia Hardy, organiser Sabina Baltruweit and former Lismore mayor Jenny Dowell. Photo: Amber Gibson



SHOCKED: Head of the Northern Rivers Muslim Association, Abdul Aziz speaks at the ceremony. Photo: Sophie Moell

EMOTIONAL TIMES: The ceremony was in Lismore Regional library and commemorated all who were affected by the Christchurch shooting. Photo: Amber Gibson

Peace group calls for healing on terrorism

Lismore gathers to honour those hurt by Christchurch massacre

AMBER GIBSON

Amber.Gibson@northernstar.com.au

A SHOCKED community gathered on Saturday to hear leaders of Lismore call for action against terrorism and commemorate those lost during the Christchurch shooting. At 2pm inside Lismore Regional Library, Northern Rivers Peace Group Remembering and Healing held the ceremony to reflect on the March 15 attack. Among a full house of guests were speakers including head of the Northern Rivers Muslim Association Abdul Aziz, Member for Lismore Janelle Saffin, Lismore Mayor Isaac Smith,

former mayor Jenny Dowell and organiser Sabina Baltruweit. Mr Aziz said when he heard about the mass shooting he prayed that this was labelled as an act of terrorism. "I saw live footage and I thought it was a TV show, I didn't believe it. I did not believe a single second of it, it showed like an Xbox game," Mr Aziz said. "This event is proof and evidence to the entire world that terrorism has no colour, has no race and has no religion." "We call upon governments around the world to bring an end to hate speech and the politics of fear."

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MUSLIM LEADER ABDUL AZIZ

"Islamophobia is real, it kills Muslims and has left its pain for many years." Mr Smith said he was proud of everyone who came to unite as a community at the event. "I look out here and I see a sea full of leaders. I see faces. I

see minds. I see people who are willing to stand out, to speak up and to make a difference. That is why Lismore is so special." Ms Baltruweit said she was moved by the powerful speakers and the support from the community. "I think the next step is to take a look at what can we do ourselves to eliminate racism and violence in all its different shapes and forms," Ms Baltruweit said. "As Abdul Aziz pointed out, it is a terrorist attack and terrorism comes in all different shades and we need to unite all together." Member of the Muslim community Marlia Hardy has lived

in Australia for 15 years. She is a happy resident of Lismore. "I feel love today, I have been in Australia for a long time. I have been living in the Lismore community for many many years and so far have not any issue with racism," Ms Hardy said. A member of the Remembering and Health group, Ms Winterford, said she had only one comment, "Peace is possible and this is proof." Ms Dowell said, "A sign as simple as a smile can go a long way to reassure people in our community in times of stress so I urge everyone to reach out that smile or that hand of friendship."