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Muslim Women's National Network of Australia, Incorporated

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Regional Islamic Da'wah Council of South East Asia and the Pacific (RISEAP) Awarded Hajja Aziza Abdel-Halim, A.M. at its 18th General Assembly held in Bangkok, Thailand, in November, 2019.

RISEAP's President, T.Y.T Tun Pehin Sri Dr. Haji Abdul Taib Mahmud awarded Hajja Mrs. Aziza Abdel-Halim, A.M. an award in recognition of her invaluable contributions and exemplary leadership over almost 3 decades in the service of Muslim minorities in the South East Asia and Pacific region. Aziza had served RISEAP as the Deputy Chairperson of its Women's Movement from 1984 to 2009 and Chairperson from 2010 to 2014. She also represented women's voice as Vice President on the Executive Committee of RISEAP. In these roles she fostered better understanding among Muslims in our Region as well as between Muslims and non-Muslims.

Aziza holds an Honours degree in Bachelor of Arts, Alexandria University and DipEd. Teachers College, University of Sydney. She emigrated from Egypt to Australia in 1970 with her family. Her first position was teaching English at St. John's High School in Auburn, NSW, followed by Parramatta High School and then Auburn Girl's High School. This is where she led the drive for multiculturalism, the study of Arabic and Islamic culture. She assisted in the introduction of Islamic Arts course for HSC students. Over many years she had been invited to speak about Islam to groups of people at the Churches, schools, Rotary clubs, Guides NSW as well as presenting papers at several Universities and contributed Islamic articles in the regional magazines, such as Al Nahda in Malaysia, The Muslim Reader in Singapore, and the Da'wah Magazine of the Islamic Council of Philippines. She was the editor of Muslim Women's National Network of Australia, Inc., the association she founded and led since 1991 to establish links and lines of communication between various Muslim women's organisations and the wider Australian community. Aziza was awarded the Order of Australia in 1988 for her service to the Muslim community, especially women, and has received several other awards from Australian and regional organizations. She is also one of the founding members of Women's Interfaith Network. In 2008, she published a book, "Did You Know? Refuting rigid interpretations concerning the position of Women in Islam and Muslim's interaction with non-Muslims", which has been widely circulated in Australia and its region.

RISEAP was inaugurated in November 1980 by the late Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra, Al-Haj, the Prime Minister of Malaysia and he was its first elected President. The current President Taib since 1988 passionately shares late Tunku's vision of encouraging the leaders of Muslim organisations to grow in self-confidence in managing their respective organizations. Thus, in 1984 RISEAP decided to form a Women's Movement, a far-sighted initiative, compared to other International Islamic Organisations such as World Muslim League or even the World Assembly of Muslim Youth have yet to admit women participants in their decision-making process.

RISEAP's main agenda is to: 1) make it more convenient for Muslims to perform their ibadah; 2) recognize the need to discharge one's social responsibility to ensure Islamic education and da'wah addresses the social changes of our times; and 3) the need for a conscious effort to foster inter-communal ties in the context of present day plural societies, including collaboration with people of other religious traditions.

MWNNNA, Inc. is privileged to be part of RISEAP which facilitates a Regional forum for training and sharing news, views and ideas. MWNNNA, Inc. congratulates Aziza on her well-deserved RISEAP Award.

Contributed by: Hajja Zubeda Raihman, President MWNNNA, Inc.; Secretary RISEAP Women's Movement.



Hajja Aziza Abdel-Halim, A.M.

