

Why is it taking so long to raise money for mosque rebuild?

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YOUR SAY: On Saturday, October 27, the Garden City Mosque opened its doors to the public once again as part of the fifth annual National Mosque Open Day.

Albeit the occasion was a low-key affair, it allowed for guests like myself more time to really mingle with the Muslim community who were very welcoming and hospitable as usual.

Glancing around the temporary place of worship, I noticed on the wall a small poster upon which it was written that the Muslim community of Toowoomba were aiming to raise \$890,000 in order to build a new mosque to replace that which was burnt down in 2015.

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Interestingly, the original mosque was destroyed early in 2015 by two arson attacks, yet here we are in 2018 and the Muslim community is still in need to funds to complete their endeavours. Why?

I had a most interesting discussion with the Islamic Society of Toowoomba founding president Professor Shahjahan Khan about this conundrum and made some simple, yet stark observations.

Toowoomba has a population of more than 130,000 people, so how hard is it to find 890 people to donate \$1000 each to complete the project? And what about the businesses of Toowoomba - some of those who would benefit directly from the building works?

As was reported in *The Chronicle* (18/06) "Toowoomba is one of the most generous regions in Australia (with residents donating) about \$8,745,804" in 2015/16 alone.

So what is wrong with, or stopping the people of Toowoomba from giving to this most worthy cause?

I suspect may be there are undertows of racism and bigotry playing a hand; could it be embarrassment, might people be worried where their money is going, or could it be

because there are no naming rights to be had?

For goodness sake people, you are not funding terrorism or extremism and you won't get into trouble for donating to the rebuilding of the Garden City Mosque - this a recognised charitable endeavour.

The Muslim community of Toowoomba are very peace loving people.

I get *The Chronicle* delivered daily and I can't say that I have ever read anything about a Muslim person doing harm to anybody in our community.

So come on Toowoomba, I challenge those of you who are in position of affluence to give what you can - it will only take 890 people.

GEORGE W. HELON, Kearneys Spring