

Janeth Deen interviewed by Ryan Williams¹

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Transcribed by Ryan Williams (26 September 2023).

SUMMARY

Janeth Deen was born in the Northern Territory before moving to Brisbane with her family in the early 1940s. Her family ran several prominent businesses in Brisbane, and were active in the Muslim community, including the establishment and operations of the Holland Park Mosque. After raising her family, Janeth devoted more time to exploring her Muslim faith, and in the process helped establish a number of charities, societies and boards.



KEYWORDS

Brisbane, family, children, Holland Park Mosque, Queensland, Muslim, charity shop, migration, school teacher, Deen's café, Catholic school, Arabic, Pakistan, Colombo Plan, Rockhampton, Islamic College of Brisbane, Muslim Charitable Foundation, pilgrimage, Mecca, Kuraby Mosque, Muslim Historical Society, Islamic Society of Holland Park.

SPEAKERS

Janeth Deen, Ryan Williams

Janeth Deen 00:07

My name is Janeth Mumtaz Begum Deen. I was born in Tennant Creek, Northern Territory on the 10th of August 1942. My grandfather had shares in mines up there, gold mines - Tennant Creek was a gold town - and he had the rights to the bore, and he had a plant that separated the tailings of the gold. But in 1942, Darwin was bombed, and the government took the machinery for the war effort. So the Deen family came to Brisbane.

Janeth Deen 00:48

The original person [who] came to Australia was Foth Deen, my great grandfather, he came in 1898. My grandfather came in 1922. My father came in 1936. I am the first generation of Deens born in Australia. But we have had a long history in Australia. They came as hawkers. ...My grandfather had money ...[when he came], he was in gem collector in India. ...The family were very well off in India, they owned a village. They rented houses out...over there, and they had a cement plant over there. So they...were not poor people. They came out here to start a life in a new country. They had to leave the

¹ This transcription has been edited on request of the interviewee to improve readability and accuracy. Ellipsis are used to indicate the removal of single words or short phrases that were insubstantial to the meaning of the text and words in square brackets indicate additions to clarify the text.

women behind because of the White Australia Policy. And it was very hard because the White Australia Policy only allowed young men to come when they were a certain age, because they wanted them to work in the fields or do the laboring work. Most of them were not educated, they were only educated in their own language. My father did learn pidgin English. He did learn to read and write but my uncle Norman...only learned to sign his name. It was very hard for them.

Janeth Deen 02:16

When they left the Northern Territory, they came to Brisbane. They had a house on the corner of Nursery and Logan Road, Holland Park. And they had a business where they bought their stores from D & W Murray, and Thomas Browns who were the wholesalers. They still did some of the hawking, but after the war years, they opened cafes. The first cafe they had was number one, Melbourne Street, where the [Queensland] Museum is today. They had a cafe in Moorooka. They had one in Ascot, they had the Eldorado in the Valley. The Cremorne theatre was across the road from the Deen's cafe. So they had a very vibrant business because the Americans were here during the war [and in the area] because of the Brisbane line. The Americans was mostly centred around South Brisbane area not far from the Trocadero and in West End. They had camps all over Brisbane, but they were very active in the south Brisbane area. ...The family made a good living out of the cafe. We moved to 16, Cordelia Street south Brisbane, where my uncle Noor and my father shared a house. It was a two story house, one family lived upstairs and one family lived downstairs. It was so easy to go to walk to the cafe in Melbourne Street from Cordelia Street. I can remember they even had air raid shelters around there and we had lights on the Brisbane River search lights in the garden on the Brisbane River. Those search lights used to go on every night.

Janeth Deen 04:09

When I was very young, I went to St. Mary's Catholic school, [which]was my first school because the Deens did not want the ... males to teach their daughters and St. Mary's was very close to the house. It was on the corner ...it had a convent across the road from it too. We learnt the Catholic religion very well. And we didn't have very much education in the Muslim religion at that time, because the men were all busy, and the women couldn't understand Arabic. My mother came from an Indian father and ... a German mother. But my mother's father could only speak in his own language, and my German grandmother couldn't understand the Arabic. So we didn't really understand [Muslim] prayers. So the first prayers that we learned as children were the Catholic prayers...I know all my Catholic prayers I know all my Hail Mary's, the Apostles Creed, and the whole lot. ...Being a child, when you go to those schools, at that time, they put the fear of hell into you in, in the Catholic religion. You were terrified to do anything because you could've had a venial sin or a mortal sin and all that sort of thing. I used to say my prayers every night in the Catholic religion.

Janeth Deen 05:40

...The Deen's got involved with the Holland Park mosque. The men always went to the mosque... on Fridays. It was a...very small Muslim community in those days. Most of the people...came from all over the South Coast. They used to come from the South Coast... [and] from the North Coast. They came from everywhere, because this was the first mosque on the East Coast of Australia. And originally it was only a tin shed where they met. ...It was the original Indian labourers [who] got together and they signed an agreement to build the first mosque on the East Coast of Australia in 1908. And they did all

the paperwork because my grandfather and a few of the other members were educated. My grandfather did graduate school in India, and they put all the paperwork through, and then the Holland Park Mosque was established in 1908. And it was a Queenslander. It was the most beautiful building. It had a mango tree in the backyard. It had beautiful verandas. ...Most of the people [who] attended the prayer sessions on Fridays, were men because in our religion, it's compulsory [for men] to go to Jumma on Fridays, and the women hardly ever came to the mosque. In fact, some of the people [who] built the mosque didn't want women to come into the mosque. It was only when the women started to, to be a little bit educated and they decided, why can't we go [pray in the mosque] too? ...Then they enclosed the verandas. ...The women had to pray at the back of [men]. When the cafes did close in the late 1940s, the Deen's bought a wood factory in Maryville Street, 33 Merivale Street. They bought it off a Chinaman and they manufactured beautiful furniture out of Australian hardwoods and softwoods and they had a Lacquer Plant. Later on they had a chrome plating plant in Stanley Street. And they turned the cafe into a Furniture Showroom. They only kept the cafe in 240 George Street and Number One Melbourne Street as showrooms. They sold the other cafes, and they went into the furniture business and it became known as South Brisbane Furnishing Company. In George Street, they were two doors down from Trittons. In those days [there was] Royal Art, Coupon Furniture Trittons, and South Brisbane Furnishing Company. They were the main furniture people in Brisbane. High purchase [agreements] came in and people used to buy furniture on the high purchase agreements. And some of the Deen brothers, they all got together [to run the business], and Nasib Deen ran the furniture factory with his cousin Ali Dean and my mother and father [ran the showroom]. My father was Wasir and my mother was Eunice [with] my uncle was Sadiq. They looked after the showroom and Noor Deen ran the chrome plating plant. So it was a joint family [business]. In the meantime, my grandfather Fazal, [who] was a...very well known figure in the community, he had [Selwyn] House on Wikham terrace and Strathaird Guest House. Later on, he bought Chelmsford Hotel down the Gold Coast and Holiday Inn, [which] was under my father's name. So they branched out.

Janeth Deen 09:49

They were very keen on sports cars. They liked American cars. My grandfather went over to India just before India and Pakistan were separated to get his youngest son Naisab married. They [were] caught up in partition [of] India [and Pakistan]. And they had to leave their village and they had to [travel] into ... the Muslim part, [which] became Pakistan. ...Naisab got married over there. Jagir, the eldest brother who had gone home, lost his daughter, [she] died in partition. He never came back to Australia, [Jagir], [was] the eldest brother. He stayed there until he died. ... Naisab came back to Australia with Fazal and they had a terrible time [during the war]. ...They brought the women, the whole family, and moved from Pakistan. ... When they came to Australia, they arrived in Australia on the 25th of March 1949. ...Naisab brought his wife, his little daughter, Sultana, [who] was one of the first babies born in Pakistan. She was born in transition under a cart or somewhere like that. And the mother was with her, the father was separated. But they came to Australia in 1949. And Naisab's wife was expecting a second baby, Sultan, and he was born in Australia in 1949.

Janeth Deen 11:37

So the women came in 1949, [our] grandmother, my father's mother, his sisters, his first wife, and he had two sisters, the younger one, [Hushmuth], and the older one, [Nasib Bebe], and the whole family [was] united in Brisbane in 1949. My grandfather had been through a lot of trauma during the

separation. ...Wazir and Noor bought a freehold property in Wynnum that they called it Pakistan House for the family. Not only did they buy a beautiful house for them, they bought a Rolls Royce car...My grandfather was proud to own a Rolls Royce car that had a roof that you can turn down and [he would] go for rides in the back of it with his grandchildren. He didn't have a lot of grandchildren in those days, because it was only early in the peace. My mother had about three or four [children], Noor had about three or four [children]. And Nasib had the two [children]. So it wasn't a big family at that time. It's a very big family today. ...In their house, Pakistan House, they had a room for each family. We all used to go down on the weekend, because the women were out there. ...The women were very devout Muslims, and now the men had teachers for their children. So my Aunty Nasib bebe had to teach us the Quran and the Kather, [which] is like the first book that you read. It's the Arabic in simple language, and then it goes on to the Quran. So every weekend, we had to go down to my grandfather's house at Wynnum. And they taught us the religion. The only trouble was, it was all in Arabic. And we couldn't understand. And so that's where I say, I'm a child of a migrant. I'm torn between two religions in two cultures, and I didn't belong to either of them... We weren't allowed to mix with our Australian friends after school. We had to be picked up and taken home. they had very strict controls over their children. And we had to learn to pray, we had to learn to do everything according to the religion. Not only that, we had to wear those Pakistani clothes, salwars and kameez and when you put the pants on the line, they took the whole side of the lineup. It was very hard for us. We were brought up as Australian. On the weekend, we had to wear those clothes, you know, and it was very hard for us because we never had that kind of control before.

Janeth Deen 14:46

My mother moved [with] her family moved into the house in Merivale Street. We left [the] house that we shared with my uncle because families were getting too big and we moved into the house in Merivale Street with we still went to St. Mary's School. And then in 1951 we moved to a house at New Farm in 10 Mountford Road New Farm. So we moved to Holy Spirit [School], New Farm, where Archbishop Duhig was head of the Catholic Church in Brisbane at the time. And we used to stay in part in [his] house there with the staff [in] Archbishop Duhig's house until they picked us up after school. And I can remember the nuns were very strict there I can even remember the nun [who] taught me sister Filipina Mary, she was so tough, and we had to learn the piano... If we didn't get the keys right, they used to knock us on the knuckles and I was tone deaf, I hated music, and my sister Aisha she was really musical she just played music going into school. It was quite a good life. In 1951, some [paint] or something got caught in the fire [in the factory]. My uncle Ali and my uncle, and a family friend named ... Cliff Mohammad, [who] lived in the house, supervising [so] nobody broke into the factory. [The fire spread to the house]. And my uncle had to break [the window] to get out of the house [near the factory].

Janeth Deen 16:46

...They moved to New Farm with [us] after that. We had a very beautiful big home a New Farm. It was a really beautiful Queenslander. [It was] very massive – it had the ballroom and everything in it. Because the family were well to do with that time. ... I suffered from [anemia and stomach problems]- when I was a little girl in the cafe I had run away from home looking for my father. ...There was a bottle under the sink that had lemonade on it and I drank it but it was kerosene. So I suffered from trouble in my stomach. So my father sent me down to the guesthouse down the Gold Coast [on the weekends]...On the eighth of August 1953, I was down in the Gold Coast and our family home burned

down. My little sister Maryam [was] burned to death. I was down with my half brother Bashir. ...My uncle rang me up and said turn the news on. And when I turned the news on, I was devastated. I didn't know where my family was because ...the whole house burned down and everything went and my family had to move into my grandfather's house at [Wynnum]My mother never my mother was pregnant with my brother...at the time, she went into the fire, trying to get her baby out. ...She got overcome by smoke and couldn't get the baby out and she ended up in hospital. And two days later on my 11th birthday, my brother Yusuf was born. We had very close connection most of our life.

Janeth Deen 18:34

...The family moved to my grandfather's house [in Wynnum] and we had to go to Manly Convent. I don't think it exists today. In 1950, the end of 53, My father bought a house a New Farm on 539 Brunswick Street across the road from Avalon units was a very big house it had 10 bedrooms. It also had grand ballroom and it had a maid's quarters at the back. My mother worked in the [shop] most of the time. ...We had, believe it or not, ... Aboriginal nursemaids and Aboriginal women helping in the house. They had their own quarters at the back of their house. It was really sad to see their lifestyle. We weren't allowed to mix with them. I don't know they had some racial distinction coming from India. They used to say that you [had] to concentrate on your studies and you [had] to concentrate on your religion, and you haven't got time to mix with other people. You know, we weren't allowed to mix with the outside community. That's why I'm saying, I'm a child of a migrant and I'm mixing in school with the children but couldn't mix with them after school. ...When we moved to [the house in] New Farm, I was going to Sommerville House. And my cousin Sultana went to Sommerville house and my sister Aisha. But when the fire came, I had to leave. We came from Holy Spirit to Sommerville House. Aisha and I were the older two, we went to Sommerville House and Sultana was only in prep at the time. At Sommerville House, it was really good school. That's where I [mixed] with the Greeks and the Jewish children. Because they had similar backgrounds to us...they were migrants too. They...were very restricted too so I had met a lot of really nice Jewish friends, and really nice Greek friends. And I've still kept up relations with them all these years.

Janeth Deen 21:01

When the house burned down, I had to leave Sommerville house and go to New Farm state school. That was the first time in my life. I was in a co educational school. I did scholarship there, but I had a lot of trauma in my life. I didn't pass the maths exam for scholarship. ... I still went to, later on, from New Farm school, I went back to Sommerville house in junior. My father had to pay those days because there was no scholarships. And it was pretty expensive, but they wanted to give us a good education. They didn't want us to do any clerical work, any work where you dealt with the public. They wanted to make us doctors or something like that. In 1957, my father had a heart attack and died in bed overnight. My mother woke up and found he passed away and I was doing my junior exam. I wasn't really happy. I was my father's oldest daughter. I was very close to him. Girls are close to their father and I was very close to mine. And that's why my religion became important. I never did anything in my life that my father objected to. I never wore makeup. I never wore [short] clothes. I had to do everything that he wanted...If I went to a dance, I wasn't allowed to dance. I did [go to a] Masonic ball. But I didn't dance. They didn't like to dance in the religion, you know that they had very strict rules. I was devastated when my father died. My grandfather then had lost Selwyn house in Strathaird to the University of Queensland. They took it over and he was getting sailors to come. So he talked my mother into moving

out of our home in New Farm and living with him [in] Wynnum...He rented the house out to the sailors like a guest house. It wasn't fun living with my grandfather. He was very strict and we were teenagers. ...We wanted to mingle. We weren't allowed. We weren't allowed outside the house. It was very restrictive. And then we found out that my grandfather was going to marry us out to our first cousins. ...My mother was a bit upset. So one night when he was out, we just moved out. My mother couldn't drive but she got someone to pack us up with the clothes on [our] backs and we moved out and we moved into a house in Graham Street, South Brisbane, right next door to my Uncle Nasab and his children. We stayed there, the family business went into bankruptcy after my father died. For some reason or other the brothers all didn't get together and they began to feather their own nests and they put money into cars and they didn't pay their bills properly. They couldn't. There was of course booms and busts in businesses which resulted in furniture slumps at the time. So we lived in this house in Graham street, a three bedroom house with with my father's first wife, my half brother and mums, 10 children. ...Then... my half-brother ... got the furniture truck and he moved out after his mother died. His mother died from his cerebral aneurysm and he moved out and started a...furniture removalist business, moving furniture. My mother got a loan from the Commonwealth Bank [to put] a deposit to buy a housing commission house [in] Mount Gravatt. And Aisha and I had to drop out of school because we had to help mum bring up the rest. She had a lot of children. My mother had 11 children. She had 10 at the time because Maryum had been burned to death. ...I had to do a business course. Aisha worked at the Lennons Hotel, I worked for Jack Roberts. He had five car yards. He had a panel beating business. He had the franchise for Volkswagens. So I worked in the office there, and we all handed our whole pay over to mum to help her. And Mum let us have a bit of freedom: we could mix...with the wider community.

Janeth Deen 26:16

One thing in my life, I always was proud of my religion and my culture. I never wanted to marry out of my religion or my culture because I didn't want people to... have racist [disputes]. So I wanted to marry in my own religion and in my own culture. My father in law Faqir Deen, who was distant relative to my grandfather, ...came chasing my mother at the time. Beforehand, I went out with a lot of Asian students. We had the Colombo Plan at that time, and a lot of Asian students came to study in Australia under the Colombo Plan. ...We went to the Blind Hall in South Brisbane for Eid, we used to invite them to our place because the Colombo students in those days [found it]very hard to get spices. ...The Indian spices and there was no Indian takeaways or anything. So Mum had to invite them home and we had friends with all the different races like Sri Lankans and Bangladeshi's, and Pakistanis, we had good relations, but I only intermingled with those people because I, I did have friends outside but I never went out with anybody who was out of my race or religion....

Janeth Deen 27:47

Then...my father in law came courting my mother, [and] had brought his son up there [to visit]. Now his son came into our family when we were young. ...I used to have a crush on him. ...He was he was a short distance runner. He had a state record and he played football. ...I ended up marrying him but he had been brought up in an orphanage and his mother was an Australian and her marriage had broken up, that's another big story, I can tell you later. ...I told him I'm only marrying you if you promise to be a Muslim. And it was very hard because he liked his beer. He liked his football, and all of that. So being brought up in the Christian religion, and the Muslim region, I always felt it was very important for you to

get married in a holy place. In those days, Muslims only had nikahs in halls, nikahs are the marriage service, in halls or in their private houses. But I insisted on having my wedding in the Holland Park mosque. ...I had the first wedding in the Holland Park mosque, I set the trend for the people to follow. And, and it was very hard because I had to get used to my husband's Western way of life.

Janeth Deen 29:26

I ended up having five children. I had my eldest son [in 1961], and 18 months later I had twins, two years later, a daughter. And then two years after that another daughter so ended up with five children. I did have Muslim prayers read in their ears when they were born. ...We don't have christening services, we have special services. When babies are born, they usually sacrifice if they have a daughter, they sacrifice one beast. If they have a son, they'll sacrificed two. And they had ... a hakika. But we didn't do sacrifices in those days because we weren't wealthy enough. ...I had my family by 1970.

Janeth Deen 30:23

... I was very busy...I had to work most of my married life, because we had to start off with nothing. I worked in five different industries. My first job was Stanley Motor Body Works for Jack Roberts and he owned the Treasury Hotel. He was [one of the] Roberts brothers [who owned many] hotels as well as car yards and businesses in the valley. When I had my eldest son, I had to leave because you couldn't have maternity leave or anything. ... I went [back] to work when he was three months old, I went to work for Jenyns Corsetry [in] West End, in the office, it was office work until I had the twins and I stayed there until a month before I had the twins because Jenyns were manufacturing maternity ware and all [other clothes] and they wanted me to model some of their clothes. So I stayed, stayed on at Jenyns until I had the twins. [After] I had the twins, I went to work after they were three months old. I had to put my children in childcare centres and I had to pay high fees at the time. ...I wanted, one of the main things in my life was that I wanted to give my children a home and an education. So I had to work. I went to work for Gradwell Company in Grenier Street, in the valley, he was a manufacturer's agent. He was the best person I've ever worked for really. He was a real, honest businessman. He looked after his staff. I stayed there until my husband was transferred. My husband was an insurance man. He worked for Transport and General Insurance Company, which was owned by AGC finance company. And he was transferred to Mackay. So I had to leave my job and go to Mackay. I didn't work in Mackay I had to get used to a country town very hard when you go to a country town and you're new. People don't speak to you until you get to know them. So I moved. We stayed in Mackay for a year and a half. And then we came to Brisbane. ... I had my daughter Helen in Brisbane, but when we came to Brisbane and we lived with my father in law who was living on his own. My husband and [his father] had bought a house before [we were] married, they [were]tenants in common. ...We moved in with my father in law. And then my husband [was] transferred to Ipswich so we moved to Ipswich. I didn't work in Ipswich because Helen was a baby. From Ipswich we bought a house [in] Sunnybank. It was really nice. Queenslander, it was a wooden house that had four bedrooms. I'd only been in there for a short time before we were transferred again. So we went up to Rockhampton, we lived in Rockhampton from 1970 to 74. Mackay was the sugar industry. Rockhampton was the cattle industry. It was real man's town, it was very hard to get into Rockhampton to get to know all the people but then I went to work in Rockhampton, I worked for a Price Right store, I did the office work but I used to work on the counter as well. The man who owned the Price Right store was a builder and he had the store so we could get the goods pretty cheaply... for his building. It was very interesting getting into Rockhampton. I took the

children to the scouts group, and I did want them to learn a little bit about religion, so I took them to the St. Paul's church up there. ...We didn't have any mosques or anything I just wanted them to learn a little bit about religion. ...I always had a religious conflict. I never belonged to any of the religions. I used to say my prayers in both religions all that time. But I didn't think it would hurt them as [they] ...believed in God I learned to meet people and then I did [voluntary] work with (they called it the sub normal children at the time) and I did Lamington drives and I got to know the town. You have to get out to know the town, don't you, they don't come to you, you have to go and intermingle. ...I had the children in Scouts and I had them in swimming classes. ...I got to know a lot of the people in the town I really enjoyed living up there in the time. One of my sons got TB, one of the twins, so I had to leave my job at the Price Right Hardware to take him to get all the injections. It was very sad because he was only little. And they used to say to him, we'll give you a bag of lollies if you don't cry after you have the needles. It was really sad. That son, [has]always associated me with pain. He was an asthmatic. I was always a when he was in pain, for some reason. When he got over the illness, I went to work for Elders, Elders was the stock and station agent. And working in our country town was really good because you'll learn the whole business you'll learn how to do pedigree bull [catalogues]...you learn how to do real estate, ...they sell big properties. They had building supplies, stores. Elders was the fifth biggest company in Australia at the time.

Janeth Deen 36:21

In 1974, AGC was going to transfer my husband to Brisbane in April...I said, nobody's [going to] make my children change school in the middle of a term. So I said, I'm going to Brisbane, he can stay up here. And I packed my station sedan. [In Rockhampton],it was really funny, I am a Muslim, but when I worked at the Price Right hardware store, they said we're going to the races. And I said I can't go the races. It's against my religion or they said it won't hurt you to come. So I went to the races and you had to have a bet. Now I knew nothing about horses. So I picked three horses or names I picked: Rajah Sahib and Prince charmer and Charlton boy. Rajah Sahib because it was an Indian name, Prince Charmer because I used to think my husband was Prince Charming, and Charlton Boy because I liked Charlton Heston in the 10 commandments. I won \$540 which was a lot of money in those days. So I bought this station wagon, I wasn't going to give it back to them. I bought a car, and I took all the scouts in the back of the car to scouts.... And so when I said to my husband, I'm going to Brisbane I'm packing the station waggon I had to put the necessary things to come to an empty house. And I brought the children to Brisbane, I said to them, you have to pray all the way, because if we have a flat tyre, we have to empty the car. And I had linen, I had crockery, I had five children, I had food, saucepans, everything in that car. I did make it to Brisbane and we came to our empty house in Sunnybank that we had rented out. Then I had to look for a job [in Brisbane]...You couldn't transfer from Elders in those days. But Elders had two positions. One in the stock department, one in the finance department, the girl who was my boss in Rockhampton, she came down to she got the job in the stock department and I got the job in the finance department. She never spoke to me after that she wanted the finance job. But it was a really rewarding experience working for Elders [and] I was in the finance department when the clients from the country used to come down to make the cash flow sheets and everything... My boss was a finance manager. So I used to have to entertain the clients while they were waiting...They used to tell me stories about when our family were hawkers and everything. It was such a beautiful job. You worked at Elders, it was like a big family. They looked after their staff and I was in charge of the staff accounts. So I knew everybody in every country town if they wanted to get staff loans or anything. I did

the debtors ledger for all the clients in the country. So in those days, we used to get the statements coming in and we had to send them to the branches. So I got to know a lot of the clients and I really loved Elders. But then what happened? The corporate raiders came in. John Elliott came in and he took over Elders. Holmes-a-Court wanted to buy it. But Elliott ended up taking it. He got his cricketer to come in (was it Bobby Cowper who came in?) and there was no retention of anyone over 50. He did so much damage to the company. All those people had worked for Elders, most of their working life during the recession and everything. It [ended in] so many deaths and so many so many sad stories.

Janeth Deen 40:22

I was lucky. I did a part time degree. Our great Prime Minister Gough Whitlam made sure people could have an education. So I went to Griffith University at nighttime and I studied a Bachelor of Arts. I had a full time job at Elders and I had five teenage children, but I did it three nights a week. And I persevered until I graduated. When Elliot came in, he didn't I wasn't over 50 I was lucky. I was in my late 40s. So I still had a job there in the finance department, but I managed to finish my degree and by the time all the other people retrenched, I had also a degree with Kelvin Grove Teachers College. It was a joint programme that we did with Griffith and Kelvin Grove. So I graduated as a teacher. At the time, Joh [Bjelke-Peterson] came in and he retrenched a lot of teachers and I didn't get a job. So I went back to work part time at [elders] in the finance department and then Colin Young from Emmanuel College in Cararra, wanted me to be a commerce teacher. I graduated as a history economics but I worked 30 years in offices. So I had to become a history economics teacher, a commercial teacher. And I did teach history at Emmanuel. I stayed there for two years. So I became a teacher. And at that time, my son was going through University, and he became the first one in the Deen and Ramah family to have a university degree. He graduated as a doctor. He's now a heart specialist at Greenslopes. He graduated from the University of Queensland.

Janeth Deen 42:18

...I taught at Emmanuel College for two years. And then my father in law, he had bypass surgery for his heart, and he lost his leg. And my sister in laws were going to put him in a home. I said you can't put an older Indian in a home, they have to have their own food and their own family, there's no homes that cater for Muslims. So I said he's staying in his own home, and I had to leave a Emmanuel college and then apply for a job in Brisbane...I went for Education Queensland, and I got a contract in Balmoral high. And I made sure that the family had a roster system so that we looked after my father in law and he stayed in his own home until he passed away...He passed away Greenslopes Hospital in September 1990. My son was his doctor. He was so proud to have his own grandson looking after him... I then worked for Education Queensland for 20 years. I did it on a contract. What do you call it? Relieving teacher programme because my daughter had triplets. And I wanted to be free to be able to help her with the triplets...She made sure she had maternal welfare people help her. I only picked them up on certain days of the week.

Janeth Deen 43:52

[Before] my husband passed away from cancer in 1996, we bought a house in Sunnybank, another house, a bigger house. He had went off with one of his girlfriends who he worked with...I said to him, I'm not going to be in a triangle...I divorced him, butI stayed friends with him...And then the children told me that he wasn't eating and all that so I ended up bringing him back to my house when I split up

and I nursed him until he died even though I was divorced from him. He died from bladder cancer because he smoked most of his life.

Janeth Deen 44:42

Then, after I had bought another house in Sunnybank my brother Yusef wanted to go to Abu Dhabi and my mother had lived with him so I had to bring my mother to my house to look after her while I was teaching. She ended up getting Alzheimer's so I looked out to her for 11 years and then I had to put her in into a nursing home because one morning, I went to give her her medicine and I took, I took her medicine instead of my medicine...Then my son said, and Mum, you can help with the triplets and you can't look after your mother. So we put her into Cinnamon Village, nursing home and all the family went up to see her all the time...She couldn't walk after she had a hip replacement surgery. I couldn't look after her. I did look after her and bathed her and cleaned her and everything like that, feed her and everything until I couldn't do it any longer.

Janeth Deen 45:41

So when mum went into the home, I decided I had no body at home. It's about time I reconciled this business about being a child of immigrant and not belonging to any religion. So I did my hardest to try to study Islamic religion, because by that time, we had translations in English! And we had an English version of the Quran, we had all the Hadiths, we had everything. And so I decided, I'm going on the pilgrimage to Mecca. An inner voice told me I had to do it...I studied very hard... I didn't have anybody in my family to go with me. Because my children... ended up following the religion of their wives or their spouses, and Yusuf and I were the only ones in our religion and my brother Fazal was too but he wasn't practicing...Yusuf married a Fijian lady and he came back to his religion, he did become a Christian at one stage, but he came back to Islam and stayed in Islam until he died...I had to resolve this inner conflict. So I studied the religion in depth. It took me a long time to do it. And I went on the pilgrimage. The day before I went, I fell down and broke my arm. I was hanging curtains in the triplets house, and I fell down on their toys and broke my arm...My son said, you can't go to hajj, you have to have a cast on your arm if you go on the plane, it's going to swell. I said, I don't care. I'm going and the doctors put a half cast on, and I went over. And the good thing about it was you had to report to a doctor over there every day. Being a sticky-beak, I used to ask them all the questions...My sister said to me, when you go over there, don't ask questions, because I'm well known for being a questioner...I said, Well, if I don't ask questions, I'm not getting answers...When I went to Hajj, it was the most spiritual journey you could ever have...Then it all made sense to me. Thank God, I learned all the Christian religion because I knew all about the prophets. It taught me the history of the prophets It's an Abrahamic faith. I don't know why I had any conflict...It made so much sense to me...and it all fell into place it was the most spiritual journey I have ever undertaken and, and it was an awakening, and it put my mind at ease...I didn't have to worry about the Christian religion. It was part of an Abrahamic faith. It was the Jewish religion, the Christian religion, and then the Muslim region. And I just followed the progression of the Muslim religion, everything evolves, you know.

Janeth Deen 49:01

Then I was very, very upset because when you go to the pilgrimage, you see, the beggars from all over the world come, because they make more money there than they do at their home for a whole year...It really touched me to see some of them. So when I came back to Australia, I thought you can't go on a

pilgrimage, a spiritual journey and do nothing for it. I was thankful that God had given me a good life. I had always had a job. I educated my children. I had a home. It's my turn to give back to the community. So then, I used my long service leave and I opened a welfare shop in Woodridge. Why did I open it in Woodridge? Because Woodridge was a low socio economic area. It had a smorgasbord of all the different groups of people. It had single parents, it had Aboriginals, it had elderly, it had migrants, it had homeless, it had everyone. So I went into the Parkland Shopping centre and I opened a welfare shop. Now what is a welfare shop? A welfare shop is where you help people in the community. You just don't sell the goods, you have to use the money to help them. At that time, the Labour government had let all the refugees come into Australia and even if they came by boat, they were allowed to stay. ...There were a lot of Muslims in the area, then there were a lot of Hazara Afghans. That was the biggest group that I found. As a matter of fact, at the time, there were a whole lot of people who came in. There were the aboriginals who used to sleep in the park. I used to get them blankets to sleep in the park and cover them up... Sometimes when the police came chasing them I let them sleep on the floor in the welfare shop... I helped the people, migrants when they came, we got the goods from the Muslim community. They donated secondhand goods, furniture and everything. They helped a lot of people who got married, set up their houses, helped the new migrants with what good furniture, everything. And I used to let the people who came by boat they'd come and take three of everything so that they had change of clothes, set up their homes with crockery and cutlery and all that. [In 2008] came when I set the welfare, Queensland Muslim Welfare Association up, I had to get committee members. I was the president. I got my sister who was Church of Christ and her husband. I got my girlfriend Wilma, who was Methodist, Presbyterian, then I said to Osman Rane and Hussain Goss, you're two of the first families you can come on too. So I had a Muslim Welfare Society, with Christians and Muslims on the group. And my sister and my girlfriend used to help me run the shop and my brother in law. And I used to have to hire utes and pick up goods from people. I did the moving, I'd go and pick up goods from Muslim people, they'd load them on the utes, I had to hire the utes pay the extra petrol, deliver them. And I even delivered to students up in Toowoomba wherever they [needed goods]... hen 2011 came, my girlfriend was flooded. She lost her house. Now sister had a breakdown. She suffered from schizophrenia from being in the house fire.

Janeth Deen 53:09

And I had nobody to help me in the shop. In the meantime, I had to go up to Ipswich to give them goods we went to Coles store, we had to wear steel-capped boots and helmets and everything to give it to the people of Ipswich because there wasn't enough stuff coming to help people. In the meantime, the men decided we're going to open a charity. They approached me to bring the welfare shop under the charity. There were seven members who started the Muslim Charitable Foundation. And I was the only female on it. Because of my welfare shop. I said, Yes, I'm happy to join, you know, I need people to help. So the Muslim Charitable Foundation became a charity in its own right. It was a lot different to a welfare shop, because they use the money that you [donate], it's like a tithe that you pay at the end of your fasting period. You pay a certain percentage of money on the money you've got in the bank, to give to charity. Charity is one of the pillars of Islam. It's a very important pillar. And the Muslim people take that very seriously. They will give you anything for charity, if you ask them for charity. They're not stingy in any way because they think they will get rewarded from Allah for giving charity. To feed somebody is very important. The Muslim charitable foundation started in 2009. The welfare shop in 2008. I finally closed the welfare shop in 2011... I gave my full time to helping the Muslim Charitable Foundation. We

are a non for profit organisation, we are 100% voluntary, 100% donations go to the people. If we have any admin fees we pay it ourselves. And that became the main focus.

Janeth Deen 55:31

In 2008. I also had another focus. 100 years of the Holland Park mosque, and Mustafa Ally got the job of writing the book...He had come from Durban. And he needed someone to take him around to interview all the families and to learn a little bit of the history of the mosque. So I was his offsider. And I did a lot of research in the State Archives, and the State Library. And we sort of worked hand in hand Mustafa did most of the religious work on the book. And I gave him all the history of the people in the area and I introduced him to a lot of people. We did a lot of interviews to meet the main families. So I said to Mustafa why don't we start a Historical Society. I'm a history teacher. And you've written a book. So we co founded the Muslim Historical Society...Then we did a lot of work with the Historical Society... I'm an Aussie, whether people believe it or not, and I'm an Aussie Muslim. And I've been living in this area most of my life, and I was very upset that we didn't have any of the Australian flags on our property. So I put a put a request out and say Imam Uzair as a you've been here 20 years, let's have a celebration for your 20 years. And let's have a flag raising ceremony. So we had a flag raising ceremony on the front lawn, and I got an Aboriginal lady that had Muslim descent. And I had a Queenslander, and I had Senator Claire Moore to do the Australian flag. Why did I put three flags there? The Aboriginal flag because we took the land of the aboriginals and there was so many Aboriginals [who] married Muslim Cameleers, we had to recognise [them]. The Queensland flag because Holland Park Mosque is the first mosque on the east coast of Australia. Queensland beat all the other states and we had to celebrate. And the Australian flag because we are dinky-di Aussies. And Australia gave us a new chance of life and new chance to start life. So that's why we had the flag raising ceremony. We had a big tent out on the front lawn, we invited...all the old families.... We invited...members of parliament, [and] we invited people from the Mount Gravatt Historical Society, because I am in five historical societies as well. We had a big celebration, we had a big meal afterwards. And at that time, I decided, being a school teacher, you have to reward people for their work. So I did a plaque, I [asked] Senator Claire Moore to put a plaque for Haji Rane, who was the longest serving Imam. He was a volunteer imam who travelled the whole state to do his duty, who even used to pick papers up if people dropped them, who did charity work. He visited everybody in hospital when they were sick. He did the Ghushl as he helped bath the men's bodies. He kept a record of everybody who was buried in the graves that he did services for. I rewarded him with a plaque and I also gave the family a trophy. Then I gave Imam Uzair a plaque for being 20 years. Then I gave an award to Arif Khan who says the Azam. He'd been doing it for over 20 years, five times a day. Okay, I gave him a trophy too and then I did a plaque to trophy all the Imams that have been in the service of the community. So we had a big celebration, and at that time, Southern studios, were doing a video on the mosque, The Mosque Next Door, so they videoed it. So it was a really interesting experience and then I said to Mustafa, we've got to open a mini museum. So I opened a mini museum. I put the Holland Park mosque on the Heritage Trail, so that if people in Brisbane want to come because it was an iconic building, we had so many important visitors here. We even had the [Nawab of Pataudi]. When he came to play with [Donald Bradman], he snuck out of the cricket ground and came to pray up here. If you have a look in that book, there's a picture of it there. So it's had a long history of VIPs of people, really important leaders [who] have come over the years. It was an iconic building, and everybody at Mount Gravatt knew where the mosque was. And we had no opposition when the mosque was built,

because it was out in the sticks. We had nobody complaining that they're building a mosque. They all thought it was a novelty...We had no religious persecution in those days, because we were away from everybody. And we only had a small minority of people even though Australia wanted a white Christian country. We didn't have any of problems, so I was really thrilled to join the Historical Society and it's been rewarding because you keep up...with change... and you get to know all the different groups [who] came over the years.

Janeth Deen 1:01:28

...I even [went] into Government House and I [asked] the governor of Queensland Penelope Wensley to be one of our patrons. So we used to take the historical society to Government House and people then started to realise Muslims have been here more than 100 years...then I even took it to City Hall...They gave me a prominent place in City Hall, and people were saying, "Oh, we didn't know [Muslims have] been here that long." And even I joined [the historical society] ...down to the Gold Coast, because I got one of the ladies from the Gold Coast be in the Historical Society. I tried to get the members from the original families to be there to bring their history and I tried to get people, you know, after the war years, we [had] the European migrants. And then after we [had] the business migrants, there was a whole history of Muslims coming into Australia. First of all, it was the ones with fair coloured skin, the Albanians and the Yugoslavs and all of those people. we got to know some of those. They did really good work here...We did have a few of the original families [from India]. There were 5 original families. We had many [other] ones in the old days, but they became Christians... The five original families that were related to the Howsan Family, we were the Deens, the Raness, the Goss's, the Muhammad's. And Ramah was my mother's side of the family. [Abdul Raman] was a first caretaker of the Mosque and my mother's father...We had people [who] came from the Gold Coast, the Gosses, and we had Khan's family. There were quite a few families that were the first family settled in the area... They were continuous Muslims. There were many in the old days [who] changed, you know, because the mothers were Christians, and the fathers couldn't speak English... So they followed the Christian religion... I have recorded what I can. Muslims don't really share a lot of their history. They don't like taking photographs... and it's very hard to get them to get artefacts and everything. But the first Muslims in Australia were the Makassans and that they were the Indonesians [who] came out for sea cucumbers and we have some of the families around, but not many of them.

Ryan Williams 1:04:12

I'm curious about what are the main challenges you see for Islam in Queensland today?

Janeth Deen 1:04:19

We didn't have a lot of racism. There has always been racism in Australia, even against the white people. They even had racism against the Catholics and Protestants in [the early days], there's always been racism. But September the 11th was the one that really caused us a lot of trouble. We had the Kuraby Mosque burned down. We had pigs heads [left in the mosque]. We even had a fire here, but not a very big one. People been putting pig's heads outside, all sorts of things like that, and women have been getting [insults] - In the early days, the women integrated They didn't wear veils, because not many of them came to the mosque in those days...After the migrants came, business migrants came, they started [to wear them] when the White Australia Policy was abolished, we got people from all different countries coming. And they all had their cultural habits. You know, a lot of them, people got

upset when they saw the women with the black dresses, the abayas and the covering on their face. Now, if you go to the pilgrimage to Mecca, you don't cover your face in the Haram. You have to wear modest clothes, but you don't cover your face that comes from the Middle Eastern people and a lot of the Africans. And then we found a lot of the Australian women became reverts, they wore [the face covering], where they only show their eyes. Now, I felt sorry for a lot of the Australian people, because I grew up in Australia and I know, when they first saw the women who came completely dressed in black, and with those hijabs on their face, it was a shock to the Australian people that. Little children thought they were boogie men...and the people in the supermarkets and that they were all afraid even we were afraid when we first saw it. It's just that you have to get used to other cultures in other races and other customs, [until] people now they're not as bad, but some of the Right Wing people, they do attack people who wear hijabs and some of the people think, ah, you coming to take [over] our culture...If you look at the "Mosque Next Door" [television program] you'll see an interview with my niece and myself. My niece was in the army, Catherine was in the army. And she had a lot of Australian values. And she's a strict Catholic...She didn't like the fact that you can't celebrate Christmas...you know, a lot of the cultural habits are changing. She didn't like that we're Australian, we should live the Australian way of life. If you come here you should integrate. But we're a multicultural society. Now we have to learn to be tolerant, we have to learn to respect each other. After all, we are all the children of God doesn't matter what religion or what race you are. You have to appreciate each other as an individual, as a brother and sister in your religion, you know...you don't attack people. Islamophobia really did hurt a lot of women. And we had it in jobs when they went to go to jobs, if they had Muslim names, they never got an interview. If you change your name, you'll get an interview...I never suffered racism in a big way. And I've been here for eighty and a half years. I never suffered it, mainly because I suppose I was isolated by my family. And never even when I did intermingle, I never suffered it, you know, but I've always respected different religions. I like studying the history of religions. And I've joined five historical societies. I am in multicultural societies. I've been a member. I'm the president of Queensland multicultural Council at the moment, but I worked my way up. I've been in it since ... it was founded. I'm a member of the ethnic community council, I go to meetings there. I was on the forum for Christians, Muslims and Jews, so I got to know other religions. When when I was a child, one of my girlfriends was a Baptist ministers' daughter. I used to go to their church. I don't mind going, your church is where you pray, really. You can say your own prayers in your own religion. Wherever you go is your church, I feel. You don't have to worry about being in someone else's church as long as you respect their religion.... I've also been a foundation member when I was on the Islamic Council of Queensland. I was because of the forum for Christians, Muslims and Jews that we decided to form the Queensland Faith Community Council. The Queensland Faith Community council represents all the different religions...I was a foundation member of that, although I'm not on the Islamic Council of Queensland now. I'm not on it at the moment, but I do go to all their meetings, not the formal meetings, but meetings where they are trying to show the religions to other people, where they have events, I'll go to all their events. One of the ladies got an award from the Pope recently, Margaret Naylor, she got an award from the Pope, so I was invited to her award ceremony. I've been into the Jewish church Synagogue when one of my very close friends is on the board of deputies. And I go to church of Jesus Christ. I've been to a lot of their functions, and I've invited them to our functions.

Ryan Williams 1:10:54

In your current work what do you find most rewarding?

Janeth Deen 1:10:57

Most rewarding has to be the charity work. No matter where you go the Muslim Charitable Foundation made its name there. It is the biggest Muslim Charity for Queenslanders, ...the welfare shop was the first charity in Queensland. But the first formalised, [Muslim charity] where people come in and we pay their rent, we pay their electricity. If they've got no income, a lot of the people now come by boat, they've got no income whatsoever. So we got a very good system, we interview people, we just don't pay [bills] like that. We bring their bank statements in, or their Centrelink statements, we ask them...to bring their bills in [if they want help]. They have to. We keep a record we keep scrupulous records because we are a charity and we are, we are audited. We give food hampers out, we give clothing out, we give furniture out. It is so rewarding to know that you made a difference to someone's life. My second favorite one is of course the historical society because that's the cultural side, it keeps you up to date with change and, and you go to meet all the different people [who] come and you you're proud to show your history off. So I really enjoy the Historical Society, [meeting]people [who are] in other historical societies, I've been a member of the Royal Historical Society. I'm Vice President Mount Gravatt Historical Society, that was very important one because all the people in the Mt Gravatt area are ...in their late 80s 90s. And they know the history of the Muslims because I grew up in this area. They even went to school with my mother's brothers and sisters.... So I'm very lucky that in my retirement, I'm not stagnating at home. I'm out there doing work. I'm on the board of the Islamic College of Brisbane. I'm the director of the Muslim Charitable Foundation. And we've started a new organisation now called Queensland Muslims. And I'm one of the foundation members of that. Now that represents all the Muslim organisations in Queensland that are not affiliated with AFIC, AFIC is the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils. They've been through the mill down south [over finances]. We wanted to be transparent and above boardso [as members we have] the Islamic women of Australia, [we have] charities, we have some of the mosques, got the Kuraby Mosque, and the Slacks Creek Mosque and a few other mosques, we got business organisations. [We have] 33 organisations that are member of Queensland Muslims, like the Somali Association, all the different associations, so we represent [them], I [organized] on the first ever citizenship ceremony when I was on the Islamic Council from a Muslim organisation in Australia. I put that on at the Islamic college. I [organized] one in the hall across the road here. I did one at the school where I made the school children participate. So they know a little bit about politics and they know that they have to be involved. So I made the school children invite the people in, set up the stage for the VIPs, set up the hall, put the program's out, give the afternoon tea, and they really enjoyed it...they felt very important, you know, and you have to let children know that they're part of the community and they have to participate. You can't be stagnant. So I really enjoyed all of that sort of work. In my retirement, I'm very, very busy.

Janeth Deen 1:15:18

This mosque was a very big enterprise. They had been renovating it for years and years. Now, one person that I met who is very important, was Ismail Cajee . I met him first of all, through the welfare shop, when we had the welfare shop. He was one of the founding members of Muslim Charitable Foundation. He did all the legal work and opened all the bank accounts and made sure everything was run. Then he -[became] the president of the Islamic Society of Holland Park, and he took on a big role in making sure that everything was above board, because what we found out was the mosque didn't have [everything in place] - the trustees of the mosque, passed away and all sorts of things and the

most could have gone into outside hands. So Ismail took over, to make sure that the mosque was run, where it could be kept in the Muslim community. The Muslim community owned it, and they set up a board of trustees. And he set up this society where they got to know the public and they invited all the VIPs all the parliamentarians and everyone to know what was going on in the Muslim community because they weren't very active [before this]...when Ismail was there, and he brought Ali Kadri over there, Ali Kadri was his spokesman. Ismail does work behind the scenes and wanted somebody else to do the work with the public. So Ismail got Ali Kadri there and he became the person that was a spokesman before that, before that the Kuraby mosque had the most brilliant speaker was Dr. Muhammad Abdullah. He was Palestinian. He was the best spokesperson we ever had. And guess what? We lost him he went over to Adelaide. He opened an Islamic centre up in Adelaide and he's done all the Islamic curriculum and everything. He's gone over to Adelaide [University and he took his] ... staff over there. But then Ali Kadri took over [as spokesman]... Ali Kadri came from India, and he was a new migrant to Australia to learn. He had to learn a lot about the community. He had a degree in political science and a whole lot of [other] things. He learned the hard way. In the beginning, he was a little bit aggressive because he came from Gujarat where Modi killed a lot of the people over there when he was in charge of the area and Ali was a little bit of aggressive. He thought everybody was against him...Nowhe's developed and he became a good leader. He started the Islamophobia register, he did a whole lot of things.

Janeth Deen 1:18:16

Ismail then went from the Holland Park Mosque, to the Islamic College of Brisbane. In the old days, everybody lived around the mosque, because that's where the religion was. But when the schools opened [they moved to other areas], the Islamic College of Brisbane was the first school it's been known for about 27 years now. People started to move around. And then the Muslim community started to live in Kuraby and then they opened the Kuraby mosque. We had we had a whole history of mosques in Brisbane, first mosque was Holland Park. Then there was West End then there was Lutwyche. I don't know if the Gold Coast was before Darra, but there's one at the Gold Coast, one at Darra. One at Ipswich. There's about 20 to 25 Mosques. There's prayer rooms in universities, there's prayer rooms in shopping centres and Dreamworld and a whole lot of those areas now that Muslim religion has spread because we've had many migrants coming. Ismail Cajee went to the Islamic College of Brisbane because it was in bad shape because of AFIC. AFIC owns the land that it's built on. And it was an AFIC school [is no longer] an AFIC school. ...It went into, well, it was almost going to go into receivership. But [Ismail] got together and employed. Dr. Barrett who was very high up in the education department who is retired from there and he worked at the school. First of all, he worked at the Australian International College, but then he came to the Islamic College in Brisbane. and Ismail and Dr. Barrett did a lot of work to build that school up. And they made it a school now where they don't have principals, they have CEOs, and they had have head of learning and all of that sort of thing. They made it up to be a very prosperous school. And, and it's got people on waiting lists now. Ismail does a lot of work behind the scenes. He's renovated the school, they put new buildings up since he's been there. He's a very good businessman. He's very good for making sure everything is legal, and transparent. That's one thing that he is very well known for. So I would say out of all the people that have done work for the Muslim community, besides Haji Rane and Rane brothers, and the Deen family, Ismail Cajee has done so much. The Deen family, they had a big, big hand in in renovating the mosque, the buildings for mosques, they had a hand in every single mosque that's been built, in the

renovation work. The Rane family have done a lot of the charity work, and that they, their father was the imam for 30 years and he trained Osman to do the work that he carried out so Osman does it with the charity. They're the main people in Muslim families.

Janeth Deen 1:21:39

...Ismael took on a group that decided that they're going to raise money to build this, to rebuild the mosque. It's like a rebuild. It's not a renovation, it's a rebuild. They had to keep certain parts of the mosque because of heritage listing. They engaged an architect and engineers. And then they had a whole team of people. Shahid Ali's son Imran, and, and I forget the other boy's name, [Tariq], the Ali family were in it. The Islamic Society of Holland Park committee, did all the fundraising. They even held a big fundraising dinner down at the Gold Coast. What was the name of the place down the Gold Coast? [Versace] No, no, it was a very big, well known place that they had a big fundraising dinner and they raised a lot of money. The Muslim community will give money for mosques. If you ask them.... [Do we have] too many mosques. No, there are not too many. Because on Fridays, they're all packed, jam packed. But during the week, people are working, they can only come here, when they've got time off work. And the people [who] have their own businesses come and pray. People [who] can have time to get away can come like salesmen, and all of [those] they come and pray on the way. So we decided that we're going to renovate the Holland Park Mosque because it is a Mother Mosque, no matter what they say about the mosque the mother mosque, it it set the example for the whole Muslim community and everything that goes on in the Muslim community started from here. So it has that special place in history. It will always be the mother mosque, even though we're going to build a big Islamic Centre in Kuraby area. This will be the mother Mosque and will be revered.... So it took a lot of time it took quite a few years to raise money to build it. It was on the programme for many, many years. When Ismail Cajee came along, he made sure it was started and he got a good committee. He got good people behind him. He didn't do it all on his own. He was good at picking the right people to help. Of course, the Muslim community donated the money. You have to say that they will support anything that you ask them for in charity and religion, they will do that. It's part of their religion. And it took a few years and it took a lot of heartbreak to see some of the old relics going. But we've got some over in the historical society. They've taken the flags down I'm still on their back about where to put them and they say, "oh, we don't want to spoil the architecture or anything" I said, "but I don't care". What do you want to do? We have to have the flags here. We're Australian, you know, they said oh we might put them across the road and I said no you can't put them across the road, it's got to be on the Mosque premises. And you know, so we've got to work out where we're going to put them... This mosque took a lot of money about 2.4 million. And that came from the Muslim community. We have got some very prominent business people in the area, the business migrants came out. And a lot of the Indian migrants had got very good skills, and a lot of the other business migrants from different countries, they all put in everybody put in [donated] and, and everybody owns the mosque. It doesn't belong to any one person, we have got a board of trustees [who] look after the running of the mosque, but we only are the landlords of the mosque. The Islamic Society of Holland Park run the mosque. They do all the groundwork. [Trustees] own the Imam's house across the road and we own the ...two halls across the road and the house. In the future, we might have to do something about the parking in the area. Because the local people get upset. On Fridays, there's no parking here, we might have to do something to develop [the land], there's always forward plans going. But there's so many other mosques in Brisbane to help rebuild. And there's only a certain number of people we have donor fatigue sometime. This mosque is all paid for.

Ryan Williams 1:26:40 [film does not include this section of the interview]

You've traced quite a remarkable history of Islam in Queensland and part of the family history that you were a part of as well. Where do you see a place of Islam within Queensland today?

Janeth Deen 1:26:53

It's one of the fastest growing religions in Australia. It will be because a lot of the people, especially the Somali population have lots of children...that there's a very big Muslim population coming [as migrants]. And we've got a lot of educated people, they're in every section of the community. They're in lawyers, doctors, you name it, every professional job that there is, we got people there, we've got a lot of leaders... now. They're all [around] Australia, very good in making people feel at home. Even though we do have a certain amount of racism. Australia is the best country in the world. We're a multiracial, multicultural country. And Islam has a big role to play in the community. And to fulfil the rights of Islam, you have to be good citizens. You have to seek knowledge. You have to worry about your fellow human being, even as Jesus said, treat your brother as you treat yourself. So Did Prophet Muhammad in his last sermon say that an Arab is not higher than anybody else, you are all equal. If you listen to the last sermon of Prophet Muhammad, it gives you the rules to follow in life, you know, and Islam is really a doctrine that lets you lead a good, clean life, really. And it is an Abrahamic faith. And that's the beauty of it. You know that we all believe in one God, you know, and that doesn't matter how you worship that God as long as you believe that he is the Person who created you, you know, although a lot of scientists that believe [in evolution].