

Australia's first Muslim MP sworn in on Koran

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SYDNEY — The first Muslim elected to Australia's parliament was sworn in on Tuesday with his hand on his parents' Koran.

Ed Husic, whose mother and father are Bosnian migrants, said it was an enormous privilege to serve in Canberra as he conceded that his unique place in Australian political history was something of a milestone.

"Given my background, there are some people taking a small slice of pride or happiness," he told The Australian newspaper.

Husic, a former union boss who grew up in the western Sydney area he represents, won his place in the 150-seat House of Representatives in Canberra for the ruling Labor Party in August 21 polls.

He was among the MPs sworn into Australia's 43rd parliament by the chief justice of the high court in Canberra on Tuesday.

Muslims make up about 1.7 percent of Australia's heavily Christian population of 22 million.

Husic was upfront about his religion when interviewed last month.

"If someone asks me are you Muslim I say yes. And then if someone says 'Well do you pray and go to a mosque and do all the other things that are associated with the faith?' I say no," he told ABC TV last month.

"I often get told that I describe myself as non-practising when in actual fact I don't go round saying that. Like I just say 'I'm Muslim'."

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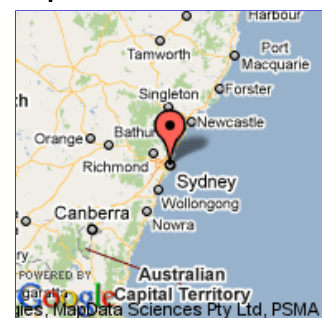
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