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## Muslim-friendly tourism in Australia: Challenges and prospects

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Received:11/1/2024  
Accepted:25/6/2024  
Published:31/7/2024

### Abstract

In recent years, the Muslim travel market has been recognised as an untapped and promising segment by tourism destinations worldwide, including OIC (Organization of Islamic Cooperation) and non-OIC countries. As a result, these destinations have started to develop Muslim-friendly environments for visitors and have tailored their products and services to meet the interests and needs of Muslim travellers. Currently, there is a growing demand for Muslim-friendly tourism globally. Australia is one of the destinations that is demonstrating an interest in positioning itself as a Muslim-friendly destination. However, minimal research has been conducted in this area within Australia. Consequently, there is a lack of awareness among tourism stakeholders in Australia about the true potential of this rapidly growing segment. As a result, no established systems or guidelines are in place to promote this lucrative tourism sector. Therefore, the possibility of developing, managing, and positioning Australia as a Muslim-friendly tourism destination has not yet been explored. This paper examines the challenges and prospects of Muslim-friendly tourism in Australia and provides recommendations for developing this lucrative sector. A literature review and other document reviews were undertaken in this study.

### Keywords:

Halal; Tourism;  
Australia; Challenges;  
Prospects; Muslim-  
friendly.

### 1. Introduction

Today, Muslim-friendly tourism is experiencing significant growth worldwide, driven by the increasing number of Muslim tourists each year. According to Eddahar (2018), numerous non-Muslim countries, including the United Kingdom, Germany, France, and more recently, Japan, Australia, and South Korea, have started catering to the needs of Muslim tourists. This includes providing halal food, prayer facilities, and other amenities aligned with Islamic practices (Eddahar, 2018). Muslim-friendly tourism expenditures substantially rose from US\$58 billion to US\$102 billion in 2021. Projections for 2022 indicated a 50% increase, reaching US\$154 billion, with expectations of further growth to US\$189 billion by 2025. This reflects a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 16.5% over four years (Dinar Standards, 2022). This trend highlights the lucrative potential of the Muslim-friendly tourism market and the increasing importance of destinations to accommodate the needs of Muslim travellers.

Australia's tourism industry is an essential sector of the country's economy, contributing significantly to employment, income, and economic growth. Australia's natural beauty and diverse cultural experiences make it a popular destination for international and domestic tourists. The country has numerous iconic attractions, such as the Great Barrier Reef, Uluru National Park, the Sydney Opera House, Blue Mountains National Park, and the Great Ocean Road. According to Abodeeb *et al.* (2015), "Australia has long been a competitive global tourism destination, successfully attracting inbound tourists from diverse countries and cultures for many

decades". Australia is a world-leading tourist destination, and the tourism sector contributes \$152 billion to national economic growth, supports more than 300,000 businesses, and employs more than 660,000 Australians (Australian Government, 2021). Moreover, Australia is currently one of the highest-yielding destinations in the world, with international visitors spending \$44.6 billion in 2018-19 (Australian Government, 2021). Australia is one of the countries that have begun introducing itself as a Muslim-friendly tourism destination. It has gained recognition in the Muslim travel market over the years and has secured the 08th position among non-OIC destinations in the global Muslim Travel Index 2024 rankings (CrescentRating, 2024). However, to maintain its appeal as a Muslim-friendly destination, several shortcomings need to be addressed, including the limited availability of halal food in regional areas and the scarcity of Muslim-friendly service facilities.

### 2. Types of tourism promoted by tourism Australia

There are several agencies responsible for promoting tourism in Australia at the international, national, and state levels. At the national level, Tourism Australia is the government agency responsible for promoting Australia as a tourism destination to international and domestic markets. Tourism Australia is responsible for attracting international visitors to Australia for leisure and business events. Tourism Australia (Tourism Australia, *n.d.*) promotes various types of tourism to cater to a wide range of interests and preferences. Here are some types of tourism Australia promotes: Nature and Wildlife Tourism, Coastal and Beach Tourism, Adventure

Tourism, Indigenous Tourism, Food and Wine Tourism, City and Cultural Tourism, Eco-Tourism, Outback, and Indigenous Cultural Experiences. Another government agency, the Australian Trade and Investment Commission (Austrade), is responsible for promoting Australia as a global trade, investment, and education partner. It also provides research and policy support to Tourism Australia's efforts in promoting the export of Australian tourism services (Austrade, *n.d.*). Tourism Australia is promoting Muslim-friendly Tourism through its official website and at travel trade shows in Indonesia and Malaysia, such as the Malaysian Association of Tours and Travel Agents (MATTA) (Tourism Australia, *n.d.*).

### 3. Muslims in Australia

Islam is a significant minority religion in Australia, with a diverse and growing Muslim community. Contact between Muslim Indonesian fishermen from Southern Sulawesi and Indigenous people in northern Australia from around the 1750s is the earliest evidence of a Muslim connection to Australia. However, it was not until the 1860s, with the arrival of the Afghan cameleers, that Muslims settled in more significant numbers in Australia. Islam in Australia is a minority religious affiliation. Today, mosques, Islamic schools, halal food outlets, and various Islamic organisations and cultural centres across Australia cater to the needs of the Muslim community. According to the 2021 Census in Australia, the combined number of people who self-identified as Muslims in Australia from all forms of Islam constituted 813,392 people, or 3.2% of the total Australian population (Australian Bureau of Statistics - Census 2021).

Muslims in Australia are diverse, coming from various cultural backgrounds and practising different Islamic traditions. They contribute to Australian society in various ways, including education, healthcare, business, arts, and sports. Overall, Islam is an integral part of the multicultural fabric of Australia, and the Muslim community continues to make significant contributions to the nation's diversity and social fabric. Local Muslim communities enhance the tourism hospitality industry by opening Halal eateries and restaurants in major cities and suburbs. Muslim-friendly restaurants in Australia are plenty and prominently display the halal sign, although be mindful that they are self-certified (Snapkauskaite, 2018). Another significant contribution by the local Muslim community in Australia to enhancing tourism was the establishment of The Islamic Museum of Australia. Founded in May 2010, the museum aims to showcase Muslims' rich artistic heritage and historical contributions in Australia and internationally through various artworks and historical artefacts (The Islamic Museum of Australia, *n.d.*).

### 4. Defining Muslim-friendly tourism

The concepts of 'Halal tourism' and 'Muslim-friendly tourism' are often used interchangeably by academics and practitioners, suggesting they are similar. Muslim-friendly tourism specifically caters to the needs and requirements of Muslim travellers who adhere to Islamic principles and practices. The core idea behind 'Muslim-Friendly' tourism is to enhance the travel experience for observant Muslims. It closely aligns with the 'Halal Tourism' concept but encompasses a broader context, including provisions for performing religious duties (Battour, 2018). Therefore, Muslim-friendly tourism offers essential halal services, such as halal food and drinks or separate swimming pools and

provides comfortable spaces for Muslims to perform their daily prayers.

### 5. Muslim-friendly tourism in Australia

Australia has been trying to project its image as a Muslim-friendly tourist destination for several years. The first visitor guide was launched by Tourism Australia in 2015, which is a significant milestone for Australia in promoting itself as a Muslim-friendly destination. Building a positive image of a destination is of prime importance for every country because "destination image has a significant impact on decision-making in tourism or travel, both prior to and during the visit. Tourists often have little knowledge of places not yet visited, and the pictures held by tourists of these places can have a significant impact on their selection of a destination" (Govers *et al.*, 2007). According to Abodeeb *et al.* (2015), marketers promoting Australian destinations must develop a strong image, identity, and brand to reduce any potential negative perceptions that current and prospective Arab tourists may have.

There are several places that Muslim tourists would prefer visiting during their trip, such as the Islamic Museum of Australia (IMA), situated in Melbourne, which provides insights into Islamic art, culture, and history through various exhibits and interactive displays. Islamic Cultural Centres and prominent mosques in the main cities, including the Auburn Gallipoli Mosque, an Ottoman-style Mosque in a suburb of Sydney. In addition, the Broken Hill Mosque in NSW is one of the most intriguing heritage sites built in 1887; it is now the only surviving mosque built by Afghan cameleers in Australia (Broken Hill City Council, *n.d.*).

11.4 Short-term visitor arrivals, Australia — Top 10 source countries(a) — 2021-22			
Rank	Country of Residence	'000	2020-21 to 2021-22 change ('000)
1	New Zealand	191.64	107.93
2	India	134.47	131.25
3	UK	133.85	125.74
4	Singapore	121.06	117.20
5	USA	100.10	89.90
6	China(b)	35.56	32.16
7	Canada	27.34	25.84
8	Indonesia	26.89	25.46
9	Germany	22.12	20.79
10	Malaysia	20.98	20.03
	<b>All countries</b>	<b>1191.83</b>	<b>1040.96</b>
a. Top 10 source countries based on year ending June 2022.			
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Overseas Arrivals and Departures, Australia November 2022			

Figure 1: Short-term visitor arrivals, Australia - Top 10 source countries - 2021-22.

In addition to the Muslim visitors from Middle Eastern, African, American and European countries, the data is equally compelling for the heavily Islamic southeast Asian tourist market to Australia. Indonesia was Australia's 08th largest inbound market for visitor arrivals and the 15th largest market for total visitor spends and visitor nights. Visitors from Indonesia generated \$0.8 billion in total expenditure in 2018. Malaysia was Australia's seventh largest inbound market for visitor arrivals, the ninth most significant market for total visitor spends, and 10th for visitor nights. Visitors from Malaysia generated \$1.3 billion in total expenditure in 2018 (Australia *et al.* Asia, 2019).

Despite the growing number of inbound Arab tourists, there is limited knowledge about how Australia is marketed to and

perceived by the "Arab world". This is particularly relevant for the Gold Coast in Queensland, which Arab visitors increasingly favour due to its famous beaches, shopping opportunities, and family-friendly apartment-style accommodation (Michael *et al.*, 2011; Mick, 2007).

## 6. Challenges and barriers to developing Muslim-friendly tourism in Australia

Australia is one of the world's leading tourist destinations, boasting stunning landscapes, diverse wildlife, vibrant cities, and a rich multicultural environment. However, literature and document reviews conducted in this study reveal several potential shortcomings that could hinder Australia's attractiveness as a Muslim-friendly tourist destination.

### 6.1 The lack of Muslim-friendly tourism and hospitality service offerings

The CrescentRating Faith-Based Service Needs 2.0 (CrescentRating 2021) assists service providers in identifying the most critical service experiences for Muslim travellers. These needs are categorised as "Need to have," "Good to have," and "Nice to have." The availability of halal food falls under the "Need to have" category, and any destination promoting Muslim-friendly tourism must prioritise this aspect.

One of the shortcomings in promoting Australia as a Muslim-friendly destination is the limited availability of halal food, particularly in regional areas, as finding halal food options can be challenging. In Australia, socioeconomic, housing, and employment precariousness stressors and difficulties in accessing halal foods were identified as challenges (Kavian *et al.*, 2020). Increasing the halal food availability and improving its attribute quality is indisputably becoming essential to fulfilling Muslim travellers' Muslim-friendly tourism needs and providing them with pleasant tourism experiences, especially in non-Islamic countries and tourism destinations (Jia & Chaozhi, 2021). Although Australia has been producing halal meat since the 1950s, there is a need to improve the current understanding of halal food principles (Zulfakar, 2015).

The limited availability of Muslim-friendly facilities is another challenge for Muslim tourists. This other important element falls under the "Need to have" category. The availability of appropriate prayer facilities, such as mosques or designated prayer rooms at critical places such as airports and tourist destinations, is essential for Muslim tourists. In some areas of Australia, limited or no dedicated prayer facilities may be available. Besides consumable products and services, having places of worship (i.e., mosques) at destinations adds to Muslim tourists' confidence about travelling to these places (Moshin *et al.*, 2020). According to Nurdiansyah's (2018) research findings, the failure to recognise and fulfil the growing global demand for Muslim-friendly travel experiences means that many international tourism destinations, particularly those located outside of Muslim-majority localities, have been unable to benefit from the segment's burgeoning potential fully.

In many non-Muslim countries where Muslims are the minority, such as Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Korea, the United Kingdom, Europe and the United States, finding halal food and beverages as well as "Shari'ah compliant"

accommodations and hotels as well as touristic products and activities may prove to be challenging (Ramli & Zawawi, 2017).

### 6.2 The lack of resources and other challenging factors

No certification bodies offer certification for halal restaurants, halal kitchens (food preparation areas in hotels), or halal food storage facilities in Australia. Moreover, no agencies in Australia offer a Muslim-friendly hotel rating system. Their services are limited to removing alcohol from the mini-bars, catering halal food and providing information on Muslim-friendly restaurants in their area. Muslim-friendly restaurants in Australia are plenty and prominently display the halal sign. However, be mindful that they are self-certified, as currently, there is no official restaurant certification body in Australia (Snapkauskaite, 2018).

Another area of concern is the shortage of halal industry-trained professionals in Australia. This shortage affects the Muslim-friendly tourism and hospitality industry and the Australian halal meat supply chain, including halal slaughterhouse workers, supervisors, auditors, laboratory technicians, and so forth. According to Zulfikar (2015), his study found that there is a shortage of halal auditors and inspectors at the halal certifier organisations in Australia.

Many countries have faced a massive challenge in obtaining visitor visas to visit Australia, which has a direct impact on tourism arrivals. According to the Tourism and Transport Forum Australia (Visitor visa reform—reducing the barriers for travel to Australia, 2014), the cost and inconvenience of obtaining a visa to visit Australia represent one such barrier. Therefore, Australia cannot afford to lose the competitive advantage of our proximity to the rest of the world through complacency.

In recent years, the competition for Muslim-friendly tourism market share in the Australasian region has intensified. Six countries, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, Hong Kong, Japan, and the Philippines, are on top of the GMTI 2022 ranking list and are ahead of Australia. Traditionally, countries like Singapore, the United Kingdom, Germany, and France attract Halal tourists; however, new trends such as Japan, Korea, and Australia are current players in the competitive sector (Liberato *et al.*, 2020).

### 6.3 The lack of awareness and support systems

Tourism Australia, the national tourism organisation, is responsible for promoting Australia as a travel destination for domestic and international travellers. They took the lead on this front by launching a visitor guide 2015 for Muslim tourists in Australia, reaching out to the Muslim travel market, especially from Malaysia, Indonesia, and Singapore. However, there has been a gap in targeting other Muslim-majority countries by Tourism Australia, particularly the MENA region (Middle East and North African countries). As a result, this has been seen as a lost opportunity. Abodeeb *et al.* (2015) state there is still a limited understanding of how to market to and accommodate Arab visitors effectively. Gaining insights into Arab culture, along with Arab tourists' perceptions and motivations, can help tourism businesses develop and deliver successful tourism products. Tourism Australia cannot ignore the significant portion of Muslim-friendly tourism from the OIC member countries.

The lack of awareness, a challenge amongst tourism service providers about the needs and expectations of Muslim travellers, is crucial. Cultural sensitivity, language barriers, knowledge about Islamic practices, and familiarity with dietary requirements play critical roles in the Muslim-friendly tourism and hospitality industry. Abodeeb *et al.* (2015) insist on their research findings on “the importance of culture in tourism marketing from a supply-side perspective”. This can enhance the effectiveness of marketing Australia as a tourism destination in Arab countries. There has been a notable increase in studies examining cultural influences on consumer behaviour in tourism, hospitality, and leisure, especially in Australia, the USA, Europe, and New Zealand (Reisinger & Moufakkir, 2015).

Due to the limited research on opportunities for Muslim-friendly tourism in Australia, businesses, destination management organisations, and tourism stakeholders lack awareness and understanding of the potential benefits of developing this sector in the country. In the twenty-first century, the number of Arab tourists visiting countries worldwide, including Australia, has increased. However, very little academic research has been conducted on how Western destinations can effectively market to Arab visitors and adequately prepare for a more mobile Arab population (Abodeeb *et al.*, 2015). According to the study conducted by Nurdiansyah (2018), Muslim travellers remain relatively under-served due to factors such as a lack of awareness amongst tourism authorities and service providers of the market's significant growth potential, as well as poor understanding of this demographic's specific needs and preferences.

## 7. Muslim-friendly tourism and the prospects for Australia

Muslim-friendly tourism is one of the fastest-growing segments in the global tourism industry, with many countries and regions recognising the economic potential of serving Muslim travellers. Australia has also been making efforts to tap into this market. Given below are some prospects for Muslim-friendly tourism in Australia:

### 7.1 Boosting the local tourism

Developing Muslim-friendly tourism products and services will benefit the Australian economy and its destination image more significantly. Australia's geographical location, natural beauty, and religious and cultural inclusiveness are some of the critical selling propositions for marketing Australia as a Muslim-friendly destination. In addition, the existing 813,392 Muslim population in Australia (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021) will benefit. It will help boost local tourism since the tourism industry stakeholders meet Muslim-friendly tourism requirements. According to (Fathan *et al.*, 2022), research findings indicate the development of Muslim-friendly tourism can catalyse empowering the local economy. It creates more job opportunities, thereby reducing unemployment. By opening businesses and employment prospects, it improves people's welfare. Additionally, it can increase individuals' income, enhancing the community's overall ability to achieve a higher standard of living.

### 7.2 Improve strategic economic relationships with the OIC member countries

Australia is a close ally of the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and appointed its first-ever Australian Envoy to the OIC in June 2011 (Australian Bureau of Statistics – Yearbook 2012). This initiative aims to foster bilateral relationships and promote a strategic economic outlook with the OIC's 57 member countries. It also presents a significant opportunity to promote Australia as a Muslim-friendly destination. Moreover, Australia could begin implementing the Halal Tourism Services standards developed by the Standards and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries (SMIIC), an affiliated institution of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). The OIC/SMIIC 9:2019 Halal Tourism Services standards provide comprehensive guidelines for developing and managing Muslim-friendly tourism facilities, products, and services (The Standards and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries, *n.d.*). These standards are designed to meet the specific needs of Muslim travellers, ensuring their faith-based requirements are accommodated, even in non-Muslim countries. Therefore, tourism industry stakeholders in Australia can use these standards to develop Muslim-friendly tourism products and services.

### 7.3 Opportunity to seek support from the Muslim-majority countries

Understanding the true impact that the halal industry can create, Australia is currently making some genuine efforts to secure a place in the global halal industry. For example, Australia is known as the first and only country in the world which has a government-supervised halal meat programme (Zulfikar *et al.*, 2013). All Australian meat processing establishments exporting to Islamic countries must conform to the Australian Government Authorised Halal Program (AGAHP) – this is a collaborative programme jointly administered by Islamic Societies and the Australian governmental organisation (The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, 2023) in order to successfully produce a high-quality standard of meat production that meets both the international food safety standards and Islamic religious requirements. Therefore, Australia's longstanding commitment and support over the past four decades in exporting quality halal meat to Muslim-majority countries, along with the established supportive relationships, can be leveraged by Australia to position itself as a Muslim-friendly tourism destination.

### 7.4 Prospects to engage with the global halal industry stakeholders

Governmental organisations in Australia have been engaging with global stakeholders for several years to promote the halal industry. In September 2022, Austrade, one of the leading Governmental organisations, partnered with Malaysia's Halal Development Corporation (HDC) in organising the World Halal Business Conference Circuit in Melbourne, Australia (Austrade, *n.d.*). Several halal industry segments and discussions were held during this conference, and MOUs were signed. Malaysia ranked as the top Muslim-friendly destination in the Global Muslim Travel Index for eight consecutive years, from 2015 to 2023 (The Edge Malaysia, 2024). Malaysia has been one of the pioneering countries in developing Muslim-friendly tourism. Therefore, such partnerships and

collaborations will undoubtedly help Australia develop a Muslim-friendly tourism sector through knowledge sharing, establishing industry standards and best practices, certifying service providers, and offering training and development opportunities for industry players, all of which are crucial areas for implementation.

### 7.5 Marketing and the destination image

Marketing Australia as a Muslim-friendly destination can attract more visitors from Muslim-majority countries. Japan's tourism industry and the government have collaborated to attract more Muslim tourists. As a result, it is believed that Muslim tourists now find visiting Japan more convenient than before. In addition to infrastructure, Japan offers airlines with relatively affordable prices and free visas for several countries visiting Japan, such as countries with Muslim-majority populations, namely Indonesia and Malaysia, which flooded Japan with Muslim tourists (Damhuri, 2020). To optimise services for Muslim tourists, Japan has launched the "JNTO" (Japan National Tourism Organization) website, making it easier for Muslim visitors to find halal options (JNTO, 2023). The website includes features such as the locations of halal restaurants, Muslim-friendly accommodations, and places of worship. These strategies help Japan maintain its position among the top 10 destinations in the non-OIC destinations in the Global Muslim Travel Index rankings (CrescentRating, 2024). Japan got 23rd place on its first GMTI ranking in 2013, then moved up significantly every year to 17th (2014), 11th (2015), eighth (2016), sixth (2017), and fourth (2018), and third place in 2019 (Food diversity today 2019).

Australia has recently positioned itself as a Muslim-friendly tourism destination compared to Japan. It has quickly gained recognition in the Muslim travel market, securing the eighth position among non-OIC destinations in the Global Muslim Travel Index 2024 rankings (CrescentRating, 2024). Australian governmental organisations like Tourism Australia and Austrade can play a pivotal role in promoting Muslim-friendly tourism to Muslim-majority countries. In addition to featuring a section dedicated to Muslim-friendly tourism on the official Tourism Australia website, the organisation can strategically target its global promotional campaigns towards Muslim-majority countries. Tourism Australia's global campaign, "Come and Say G'day," has been launched in key tourism markets worldwide, welcoming international travellers to Australia and supporting its visitor economy (Tourism Australia, *n.d.*). These campaigns can be expanded to Muslim-majority countries in the Middle East and North Africa to draw Muslim visitors to Australia. Meanwhile, Abodeeb *et al.* (2015) state in their research findings, "facilitate more effective destination marketing of Australia as a tourism destination in Arab countries, understanding Arab culture and Arab tourists' perceptions and motivations that can assist tourism businesses to create and deliver successful tourism products, especially at the regional level". Furthermore, Australia can join the prestigious Arabian Travel Market (ATM), an esteemed international travel and tourism event held annually in Dubai (Arabian *et al.* Dubai, *n.d.*). This event offers an excellent opportunity for Australia to present its Muslim-friendly tourism and hospitality products and services to a global Muslim audience.

### 7.6 Air connectivity to bring Muslim travellers from the Middle Eastern region

Another excellent opportunity to attract Muslim travellers from the Middle East and North African regions is Air

connectivity. Direct flights from Middle Eastern destinations such as Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Doha are available. For example, Qatar Airways operates 40 weekly flights to six Australian cities, offering travellers more options and enhanced connectivity via Hamad International Airport in Doha (Qatar Airways, *n.d.*). Emirates Airlines operates 63 weekly services to Australia, with the capacity to transport more than 55,000 passengers per week to and from its major cities (Emirates, *n.d.*). Air connectivity is a crucial driver for growth, especially for attractive tourist destinations (Dimitriou *et al.*, 2018).

### 7.7 Conducting academic research and enhancing halal knowledge

Conducting academic research on Muslim-friendly tourism in Australia is of utmost importance. Such research helps understand and address Muslim travellers' specific needs and preferences, representing a significant segment of the rapidly expanding market. By studying their cultural, dietary, and religious requirements, academia can assist tourism industry stakeholders, including government policymakers and service providers, in developing products and services that align with the principles of Islamic travel. As a multicultural society, Australia stands to gain both economically and socially from the insights and recommendations produced by academic research on Muslim-friendly tourism.

In Japan, the Japanese government and local agencies, such as the JTA (Japan Tourism Agency); JNTO ((Japan National Tourism Organization), Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, local tourism associations, and local chambers of commerce, have started providing grants to support the creation of halal knowledge platforms. These grants have dramatically expanded the available information and activities related to halal knowledge. These initiatives promote seminars, training courses, and classes to manage the flow of halal knowledge rather than focusing solely on promoting halal standards and certification systems in tourism activities. Some universities and students also contribute to developing halal knowledge management platforms (Yasuda, 2017). These platforms connect stakeholders such as tourism companies and consultants, government institutions, and local administrations, facilitating sharing experiences in managing halal knowledge within the Muslim-friendly tourism sector.

The Taiwanese government, the local Muslim community, and Halal institutions are crucial in developing Muslim-friendly tourism in Taiwan. The government leverages its soft power through public diplomacy to brand Taiwan as a Muslim-friendly destination. Meanwhile, the local Muslim community contributes by organising educational seminars, introducing halal products at various events, and disseminating information about Muslim-friendly tourism and the industry via social media (Mahendra, 2021).

Therefore, Australia can adopt various strategies its neighbouring countries employ to raise awareness and implement Muslim-friendly tourism.

## 8. Conclusion

This paper examined the challenges and prospects of Muslim-friendly tourism in Australia and recommended further developing this lucrative sector. Muslim-friendly tourism can significantly enhance the tourism industry through job creation, infrastructure development, and improved cultural exchange. Positioning Australia as a Muslim-friendly

destination will boost the tourism industry and promote a more inclusive and tolerant society.

Despite the fast-growing potential of this market segment, there is a notable lack of awareness among Australian tourism stakeholders about its true potential. Consequently, no existing systems or guidelines are in place to support this sector. Further research is needed to identify the full potential of Muslim-friendly tourism. The findings will further help establish a governance framework and design, develop, and manage the Muslim-friendly tourism sector in Australia. This framework will guide policymakers and industry stakeholders in devising strategies to advance this rapidly growing tourism sector. As the global travel landscape continues to evolve, accommodating the needs of Muslim travellers is both a strategic initiative and a reflection of Australia's commitment to providing enriching experiences for all tourists.

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