



PRESS RELEASE

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Human rights lawyer Sharara Attai and an impressive board appointed to lead the Islamophobia Register Australia into its next chapter

The non-profit that is leading the tracking and tackling of Islamophobia across Australia, is expanding its team as it grows its operations to take its work and growing influence to the next level.

Sharara Attai has joined the Islamophobia Register Australia as its inaugural Executive Director commencing in December.

Attai, a lawyer and human rights advocate, said she is thrilled to be leading Islamophobia Register Australia (the Register).

“It is such an honour to be joining the Register team. Islamophobia Register Australia has quickly grown to become an important organisation tackling Islamophobia in Australia and I am thrilled to be appointed as its Executive Director.” Attai said.

Attai was most recently a senior lawyer at RACS (Refugee Advice & Casework Services) where she practised refugee and immigration law for 8 years. During her extensive years of practice, she has given legal advice, assistance and representation to countless asylum seekers and refugees from a wide variety of countries. Assisting vulnerable and traumatised people has characterised much of Sharara’s work over her time at RACS. In her role, Sharara also spoke on various panels about refugee rights, delivered community information sessions and was involved in drafting parliamentary submissions on legislative reform.

As well as refugee rights, Sharara has also been involved in various forms of advocacy on a range of other issues including raising awareness on issues facing Australian Muslims in the West and highlighting Muslim experiences, promoting meaningful cross-cultural dialogue, and the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan.

In 2018, Sharara set up an intergenerational playgroup at an aged care facility, which throughout its 21 months of operation served as a source of joy for many children, carers and residents alike.

Sharara is also a picture book author, with her debut title 'Benji the Refugee' to be released in 2023.

“Through my role, I am determined to grow the influence and reach of the Register and will continue providing essential support to victims of Islamophobia,” Attai said.



The Register was founded in 2014 by **Mariam Veiszadeh** in response to the growing anecdotal evidence suggesting a rise in incidents of Islamophobia. The Register is a non-for-profit organisation and is the first of its kind in Australia to provide a unique platform for incidents of Islamophobia to be reported, recorded and analysed into published reports. The Register also works at a grass roots level to empower victims through a multitude of victim support services (mental health, advocacy support and pro bono legal support).

“We are beyond delighted to bring on Sharara to help guide the Register into its new chapter. Sharara is well respected across the industry and has a proven track record of making an impact. Sharara has some excellent ideas about how to make what started as a side hustle for me, an even greater force of change to be reckoned with,” Veiszadeh said.

Veiszadeh will remain a non-executive board director and act as Founding Chair of the Register alongside **Dr Derya Iner** as Deputy Chair and Principle Researcher.

The Register is also honoured to announce its **expanded new board** with diverse representatives from across Australia which includes academic and broadcaster **Dr Susan Carland (VIC)**, experienced entrepreneur **Hilal Yassine (NSW)**, digital strategist **Mobinah Ahmed (QLD)**, CEO of Australian Muslims Women’s Centre for Human Rights, **Diana Sayed (VIC)**, experienced executive and academic **Dr Nora Amath (QLD)**, Health executive **Basim Alansari (NSW)**, writer and early childhood professional **Naima Ibrahim (NSW)**, education pioneer **Silma Ihram (SA)** and Yamatji Badimaya woman and community advocate **Safiah Rind (WA)**.

Now in its 8th year, the not-for-profit has cemented its position as the leading and well-respected organisation tackling islamophobia in Australia. The Register is proud to also announce its **newly launched legal support service** which offers pro bono legal support to victims of islamophobia with established partnerships with multiple law firms including Baker McKenzie, DLA Piper, Ashurst and Herbert Smith Freehills.

Its operating model has been **commended by and replicated by countless marginalised groups** who have approached the Register to support them in the establishment of their own reporting models.

This includes the First Nations Racism Register, ‘Call it Out’ founded by the National Justice Project and the Jumbunna Institute. The Register was also recently invited to provide evidence at the Disability Royal Commission who are looking to make formal recommendations to create a similar organisation to track and tackle disability hate.

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