



PRESS RELEASE

Islamophobia Register Australia welcomes NSW Police's anti-hate campaign

Friday 20th January 2023

Islamophobia Register Australia urges people who have experienced or witnessed Islamophobia in NSW to report to both the Register and NSW police, whose roles are different but complementary.

New South Wales (NSW) Police have just launched a **new anti-hate campaign** that aims to raise awareness about and prevent hate crimes and incidents, encouraging victims and witnesses to come forward and report these to the Police.

The Islamophobia Register Australia (the Register) is pleased with this latest announcement from NSW Police highlighting a commitment on their part to amp up their efforts at tackling hate within the community.

The Register's Executive Director Sharara Attai said,



"It is clear that the prevalence of hate crimes and incidents directed at diverse minority groups undermines social cohesion and this campaign represents an important step in combatting hate and bigotry."

The Register, which is leading the tracking and tackling of Islamophobia across Australia, has been collating data on Islamophobic incidents and crimes throughout Australia since 2014. It is a community-based organisation created by and for the community. The Register is run by members of the Australian Muslim community with lived experience of Islamophobia.

Last month, the Register announced that it is expanding its executive team as it grows its operations to take its work and growing influence to the next level.

The Register is a holistic service that collates data, publishes high quality academic reports, offers victim support services and will soon be expanding to engage in advocacy and law reform activities as well as delivering education and training resources and programs to various segments of the community.

The devastation that hate crimes and hate incidents can have on individuals and communities is well known to the Register. These kinds of incidents are horrible and distressing for victims, but the impact doesn't stop there. The impact of Islamophobic incidents extends to the Australian Muslim community as a whole and it requires a community-led response.

In the latest Islamophobia in Australia report which was published in March 2022, it was highlighted that of all the offline cases (ie. incidents that occurred in physical circumstances as opposed to online incidents) received by the Register, the highest number of incident reports from throughout Australia were from NSW, representing 37% of those incidents.

The Register encourages Australian Muslims in NSW to report Islamophobic crimes and incidents to both the Register and to NSW Police whose roles are different but complementary. As a law enforcement agency, NSW Police can investigate the matter and consider whether charges can be laid or if they can otherwise intervene.

Through the Register's work, it has been recognised that in some scenarios victims may not even realise that the conduct that was targeted at them constitutes a crime, which is why a campaign of this kind is vital. It will also allow NSW Police to collect critical data on hate and may assist them in deciding how to allocate their resources. These are important steps from law enforcement in combatting a climate of hate. The Register is a holistic, community-run, Australia-wide service whose role is complementary to this. Combatting hate requires a concerted effort from all sectors including government, law enforcement and community.

The Register has produced 3 academic reports since its inception in 2014. These reports are a first of their kind in Australia and have helped bridge a unique gap in terms of research in this under-resourced area. The impact of these reports are self-evident as the report findings are quoted whenever Islamophobia in the Australian context is addressed. The Register with its expanded influential board and executive team is working on releasing its 4th Islamophobia in Australia report to be released in the coming months.

The Register urges victims and witnesses of Islamophobia across Australia to continue reporting to the Register. For NSW victims and witnesses in particular, it is encouraged that they report to both the Register and NSW Police. With consent, the Register is also able to make referrals to NSW police on behalf of victims or witnesses where they require assistance with contacting NSW police or where they would prefer not to engage with police directly.

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