



## PRESS RELEASE

### Islamophobia Register Australia supports legislative protection against religious vilification

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The government announced last week that they would seek to introduce Religious Discrimination legislation, but only if they are able to secure bipartisan support for the bill.

The draft legislation has not been made public, but it is understood that the Coalition has seen it. It is understood that the government will seek to criminalise the vilification of people for their religion.

It is currently unclear whether the Coalition will support the legislation, although the Coalition has raised concern about these provisions acting as an “anti-blasphemy law”.

While the Register cannot comment on the specifics of the Bill as it has not been publicised – in principle the Register supports the move to make religious vilification unlawful. The Register’s Executive Director Sharara Attai stated:

“It is possible to criminalise religious vilification while at the same time ensuring that appropriate provisions are in place within the legislation for genuine and constructive debate and dialogue about religion in good faith – those two things can coexist. We cannot comment on the draft legislation as we have not seen it, but through our work we know how important it is to protect religious groups from vilification and in principle, we support the offering of this kind of protection.”

In the post-October 7 period since Israel’s war on Gaza began, the Register saw at its peak a 13-fold increase in incidents of Islamophobia being reported to it. Five and a half months on, reports of Islamophobia continue to come in at a significantly spiked rate and the Register predicts this will continue for quite some time.

In such a climate of significantly increased Islamophobia, the Register sees it as a significant time to bolster protection from religious vilification and is disappointed by the prospect that such protections might be shelved if the government fails to secure bipartisan support.

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**ISLAMOPHOBIA  
REGISTER**  
AUSTRALIA

### **About the Islamophobia Register Australia**

[Islamophobia Register Australia](https://www.islamophobia.com.au) is a not-for-profit organisation that has been leading the tracking and tackling of Islamophobia across Australia since its launch in 2014. It provides a secure and reliable online reporting platform that captures nation-wide data and offers first-hand support to victims of Islamophobia. Having recently expanded its board and appointed an inaugural Executive Director in December 2022, the Register has grown its operations to take its work and influence to the next level.

Its operating model has been commended and replicated by multiple other 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.

**Media Enquiries:**  
[contact@islamophobia.com.au](mailto:contact@islamophobia.com.au)