



PRESS RELEASE

There is an issue with Islamophobia in Australia - challenging incorrect inflammatory remarks made by the Opposition

Wednesday 29 May 2024. Sydney, Australia

The Shadow Education Minister Sarah Henderson's declaration on ABC Radio Canberra yesterday that *"there is no issue with Islamophobia"* is factually incorrect, egregious and inflammatory.

As the leading organisation dedicated to monitoring and combating Islamophobia in Australia, we've documented an unprecedented surge in Islamophobia since October 7th 2023.

The Islamophobia Register Australia ('The Register') previously reported on 23 October 2023 that reports of Islamophobia had increased ten-fold, followed by a thirteen-fold increase a month later.

Unfortunately, since then, the number of incidents reported to the Register has continued to spike at an alarming rate.

In our latest [press release issued last week](#) (24/05/24), we document a disturbing 39-fold increase in reported incidents just on university campuses alone (in the same time period post-October 7). Reported incidents include verbal abuse, intimidation, threats, harassment and physical assault. We are deeply concerned about this surge and its impact on Muslim students, staff, and faculty. We would have hoped that such a surge in campus-based prejudice and harassment would be of significant concern for the shadow Minister for Education. That it is being dismissed out of hand by Min. Henderson is highly concerning.

In other reported incidents in the last few months (outside of university campuses) a woman had her hijab ripped off her head in Brisbane. In another, a young Queensland man was physically assaulted, defending his mother and younger sibling who were attacked and called *"You ***** Muslims. You ***** black Muslim refugees"*. In another incident 2 young women were physically attacked in Sydney and one of them had her hijab pulled off her head. No where in Australia is immune to the scourge of Islamophobia. Sadly, incidents of islamophobia simply do not generate the same levels of publicity as other forms of discrimination.

At a time of rising social tensions, a senior member of the Opposition saying something so ill-informed, incendiary, and endangering to the safety and cohesion of all Australians is troubling and irresponsible.

-ENDS-



About the Islamophobia Register Australia

The Register 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. The Register has published four academic reports on Islamophobia in Australia and more recently a media report examining post October 7 2023 media coverage of Israel-Gaza. In addition to its reporting platform, victim support services and academic research, the Register also provides education and training on Islamophobia and engages in policy and law reform. Having expanded its board and appointed an inaugural Executive Director in December 2022, the Register has since 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 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

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