ISLAMOPHOBIA IN AUSTRALIA

REPORT V
2023 – 2024

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MONASH University

ISLAMOPHOBIA REGISTER AUSTRALIA

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We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and culture. We acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded and we pay our respects to Elders past and present.

CONTENTS

Statement by the Founding Chair

When I started a humble Facebook page in 2014, I never imagined that we would reach the critical milestone of 10 years of operation and launch our fifth academic publication. This achievement is a testament to the dedication of our staff, board, academic team, volunteers, partners, and supporters—without whom we wouldn't have come this far.

Reflecting on this latest publication, I do so against the backdrop of an unprecedented surge in Islamophobic incidents across our nation. The academic team, led by the talented Dr Susan Carland, has done an exceptional job elevating the analysis in this report, which covers a period marked by the highest number of incidents since our inception. This alarming rise is largely driven by Anti-Palestinian racism, with Dr Naser Alziyadat providing critical insights in the dedicated chapter on this issue.

We are also immensely grateful to Dr Derya Iner and ISRA, whose work laid the essential academic foundations on which this report builds. We thank them for their invaluable contributions.

The challenges we face as a community are profound, and the landscape is increasingly turbulent. As I reflect on the Register's journey over the past decade, I am reminded of the complexities of navigating both community and political minefields. It is against this backdrop that I am considering what role I will continue to play in the organisation I often refer to as my "third child."

We are always striving to meet the evolving needs of a community that remains under siege and politically overlooked. In the past year, Dr Nora Amath, supported by a dedicated national team, has played an essential role in helping the Register navigate this challenging terrain.

As we reaffirm our mission to lead the national effort in tracking, reporting, and addressing Islamophobia through evidence-based research, integrated support, policy reform, and education, we do so with the strength of our team and the unwavering support of the community. Together, we are confident that the next chapter of Islamophobia Register Australia will continue to drive meaningful change.

Mariam Veiszadeh
Founding Chair, Islamophobia Register Australia

Statement by the Executive Director

As we launch the Islamophobia in Australia Report V, we do so at a time when our work has never been more urgent. This report lays bare the stark reality of Islamophobia in our nation, with the highest number of incidents recorded since the Register's inception. These findings are deeply concerning, but they also reaffirm the critical role of our work in documenting, understanding, and combating anti-Muslim hate.

This milestone publication is the result of tireless dedication from our academic team, led by Dr Susan Carland, and builds on the foundational research of Dr Derya Iner and ISRA. I extend my deepest gratitude to them and to all those who contributed their expertise to this report. Amidst what Amnesty International has described as as a genocide in Gaza, this edition includes a dedicated section on anti-Palestinian hate and racism. Dr Naser Alziyadat offers critical insights into how Islamophobia intersects with broader socio-political realities, deepening our understanding of these urgent issues.

At the heart of this work are the individuals, communities and organisations who courageously report their experiences of Islamophobia. Their willingness to come forward ensures that these incidents are not ignored but documented, acknowledged, and addressed. We are profoundly grateful to them for trusting us with their stories and strengthening the collective fight against hate.

As we reflect on a decade of impact, we also acknowledge the vision, leadership and incredible efforts of our Founder and Chair, Mariam Veiszadeh, whose dedication helped establish the Register as a vital national institution. At the Register, we remain steadfast in our mission—to advocate for those affected by Islamophobia, to push for systemic change, and to ensure that no act of hate goes unnoticed. As we mark a decade of this work, we do so with a renewed commitment to amplifying voices, strengthening our advocacy, and building a more just and inclusive Australia.

Dr Nora Amath Executive Director, Islamophobia Register Australia
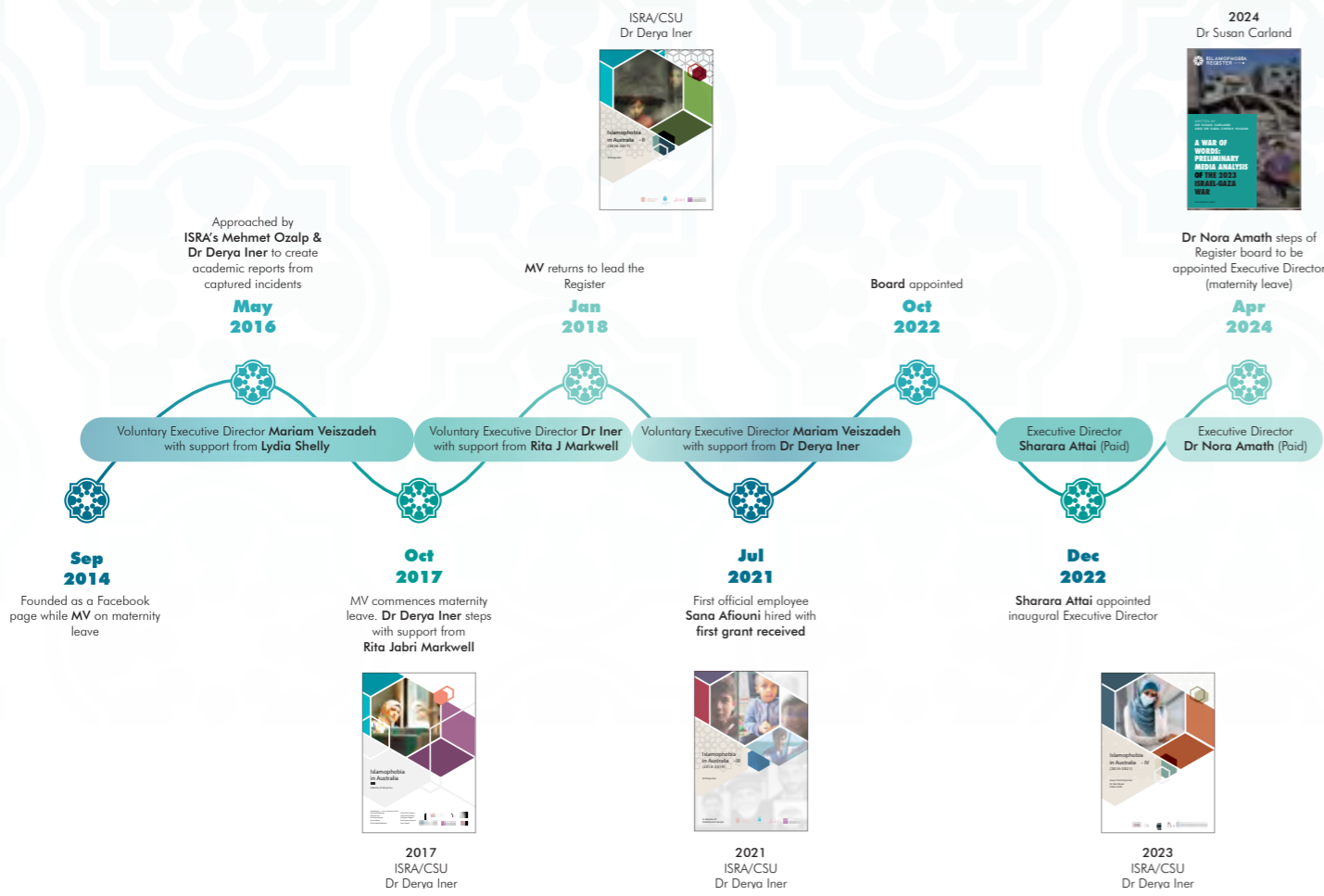
10 Years of the Islamophobia Register Australia

In 2014, the Islamophobia Register Australia (The Register) began as a simple Facebook post by Mariam Veiszadeh, giving Australian Muslims a platform to report and document hate. Over the past decade, this grassroots initiative has grown into a national force, driving change, exposing Islamophobia, and advocating for a more just and inclusive Australia.

Beyond reporting, the Register has expanded its services to connect victims with mental health and legal support, including police and human rights institutions, while pushing for stronger protections. Recognising the power of education, it delivers Unpacking Islamophobia and Bystander Intervention workshops and bespoke training, equipping individuals,

communities, and organisations with the tools to challenge discrimination.

The Register's groundbreaking reports have shaped public discourse, offering data-driven insights into Islamophobia's prevalence and impact. These publications have gained national and international media attention, amplifying the voices of those affected and informing critical policy decisions.

A decade on, the Register is more than a register—it's a catalyst for change. As Islamophobia persists, its role remains vital in the fight for a safer, more cohesive Australia.

10 YEARS of COMMUNITY SUPPORT IMPACT

Timeline

Sep 2014
Founded as a Facebook page while **MV** on maternity leave

Voluntary Executive Director **Mariam Veiszadeh** with support from **Lydia Shelly**

May 2016
Approached by **ISRA's Mehmet Ozalp & Dr Derya Iner** to create academic reports from captured incidents

Oct 2017
MV commences maternity leave. **Dr Derya Iner** steps with support from **Rita Jabri Markwell**

2017
ISRA/CSU
Dr Derya Iner

Voluntary Executive Director **Dr Iner** with support from **Rita J Markwell**

Jan 2018
MV returns to lead the Register

ISRA/CSU
Dr Derya Iner

Voluntary Executive Director **Mariam Veiszadeh** with support from **Dr Derya Iner**

Jul 2021
First official employee **Sana Afiouni** hired with **first grant received**

2021
ISRA/CSU
Dr Derya Iner

Oct 2022
Board appointed

Executive Director **Sharara Attai** (Paid)

Dec 2022
Sharara Attai appointed inaugural Executive Director

2023
ISRA/CSU
Dr Derya Iner

2024
Dr Susan Carland

A WAR OF WORDS: PRELIMINARY MEDIA ANALYSIS OF THE 2023 ISRAEL-GAZA WAR

Dr Nora Amath steps of Register board to be appointed Executive Director (maternity leave)

Apr 2024

Executive Director **Dr Nora Amath** (Paid)

Endorsements

"The Islamophobia in Australia Report 5 provides a sobering and urgent analysis of the escalating levels of anti-Muslim prejudice, both online and offline, between 2023 and 2024. The findings reveal a disturbing surge in Islamophobic incidents, with 309 in-person incidents reported—more than double the annual average of previous reporting periods.

Equally alarming is the sharp rise in online hostility, with 366 verified incidents, more than twice the rate of earlier years. These numbers are not just statistics; they represent real lives impacted by fear, violence, and systemic discrimination. The report's inclusion of an original analysis of over 18,000 tweets further underscores how domestic and international events exacerbate anti-Muslim sentiment, highlighting the interconnectedness of online rhetoric and real-world harm.

A particularly distressing aspect of the report is the disproportionate targeting of Muslim women and girls, who constitute nearly 75% of victims. From verbal abuse and physical assaults to the desecration of religious spaces, Muslim women bear the brunt of Islamophobia, often while navigating public spaces, workplaces, and educational institutions.

The report also documents the psychological toll on victims, with 86.6% reporting emotional responses such as fear, anger, and humiliation, and 92% experiencing long-term impacts on their mental health and daily lives. These findings underscore the urgent need for targeted interventions.

There is a growing sentiment within the Australian Muslim community that Islamophobia is not treated with the same urgency or seriousness as other forms of prejudice and discrimination. This disparity exacerbates the harm caused by Islamophobia, fostering a sense among Muslims that their experiences and rights are undervalued, rendering them second-class citizens in a society where power and influence are often concentrated elsewhere.

This report serves as a critical call to action—a stark reminder that true justice and inclusion cannot be realised without confronting the pervasive and escalating threat of Islamophobia. It challenges us to reflect on these inequities and to take meaningful steps toward a society where all forms of hate are met with equal resolve and accountability."

Professor Mehmet Ozalp, Head of School, Centre for Islamic Studies and Civilisation, CSU; Executive Director, Islamic Sciences and Research Academy

"The Islamophobia in Australia Report (2025) alerts the public to a sharp spike in Islamophobic incidents—the highest number recorded in the report's history—bringing Australia in line with trends observed in the UK and USA. However, this remains just the tip of the iceberg due to the inherently low reporting rates within the Muslim community, driven by:

* Limited awareness of reporting mechanisms and individual rights;

* Fear of systemic bias, inaction, or disappointment with authorities;

* Socioeconomic and linguistic barriers, particularly for first-generation immigrants, elders, and new arrivals;

* Reluctance to report incidents due to cultural norms or a perceived duty to maintain community cohesion;

* Variability in the capacity and outreach of report-collecting organisations within the community.

The alerting report findings highlight the urgent need for leaders to foster a caring and constructive tone that embraces Muslim community members and actively rejects their vilification. While opportunistic hate groups exploit existing tensions, everyone has a responsibility to safeguard social cohesion by eliminating the breeding ground of hate. Now more than ever, it is essential to standardise and adhere to neutral definitions of hate and racism, classify behaviours based on actions rather than stereotypes, ensure equitable and empathetic responses to all hate-related incidents, and nurture interfaith and cross-community solidarity (Iner 2025). The present report serves as a vital resource for the public, policymakers and advocacy groups while maintaining its research integrity. Congratulations to the Register and its dedicated team for introducing this crucial work at such a crucial time.

Associate Professor Derya Iner, Former Deputy Chair of the Islamophobia Register Australia, lead author of Islamophobia in Australia Reports I-IV (2017–2023). Research Coordinator at CISAC & CSU

"The Islamophobia in Australia Report 5 (2023–2024) is a vital, data-driven account of the alarming rise in Islamophobia, documenting a sharp increase in both online and offline attacks. It highlights the disproportionate targeting of Muslim women, the intersection of Islamophobia with anti-Palestinian hate, and the profound psychological and social toll on victims. Through rigorous analysis and firsthand accounts, the report presents compelling evidence for urgent policy responses, stronger legal protections, and greater public awareness. More than just a statistical record, it is a powerful call to action for policymakers, law enforcement, educators, and community leaders to address and combat Islamophobia effectively. The Islamophobia Register Australia deserves high praise for its unwavering commitment to documenting these incidents, supporting victims, and advocating for a more just and inclusive society."

Mohamad Abdalla AM, Professor of Islamic Studies and the Founding Director of the Centre for Islamic Thought and Education (CITE), the University of South Australia.
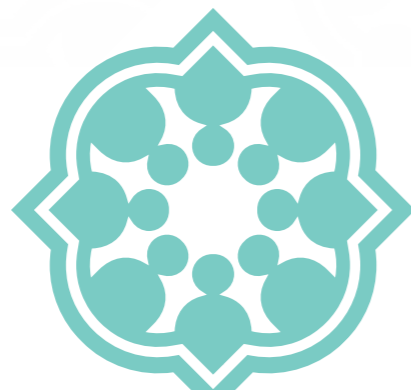
"Islamophobia is a stark reality that, according to this report, disproportionately impacts women three times more than it does men. Every person deserves to live in our society and be protected from verbal insults, physical harm, and negative attitudes projected towards them. This report is not simply about numbers. Each incident has a story, experience and name behind it. Whether it's the way you dress, practice your faith, or worldview that you hold - there is no justification for harmful attitudes and attacks on Muslims. From the time of the early Meccan period of revelation, after the first three years of revelation, Muslims have experienced persecution, many times by those closest to them in proximity. Although resilience is called for as a quality to place our trust in Allah,

concrete steps must be taken by people of influence, authority and stewardship in Australia to not only bring perpetrators to account, but more importantly, not fuel Islamophobia with divisive political commentary that holds Muslims accountable to a different standard. Our Islamic tradition reminds us that we are custodians of this land, and as such, need to lift our game as a society to care for each other in line with our spiritual beliefs and faith traditions, no matter what ethical framework we draw upon."

Shaykh Ahmed Abdo, Imam, co-founder of Shifa Institute, Chairman of the Council of Imams NSW

"The findings of this report are alarming, especially in a country like Australia, which prides itself on being one of the most multicultural in the world. We have built a society that thrives on cultural diversity, where people from different backgrounds, beliefs, and traditions live and work together in relative harmony. From my experience, the widespread misconceptions about Islam need to be addressed. Islam is a religion followed by individuals from various cultures, yet it is often misunderstood and misrepresented. There is a dangerous tendency to conflate Islam with political conflicts that occur in some parts of the world, while ignoring the fact that Muslims, including refugees, are often the victims in these conflicts. This distortion of reality results in Australian Muslims bearing the weight of both the violence and instability in their countries of origin, as well as the prejudice and discrimination they face here in Australia. Some have even sought safety from those

misfortunes in this new home, which they love and cherish. It is crucial that Islamophobia Register Australia expands its research to include a thorough examination of the broader factors that shape these harmful attitudes. This should involve analysing both global and national media narratives, the influence of public figures, and international political discourse. By doing so, the Register will be able to offer more targeted and evidence-based recommendations to Australian institutions and enforcement bodies, which will help to foster and maintain the social harmony we all value in our society."

Dr Basma Al-Ansari (BMedSc, MIPH, PhD), the Menzies Centre for Health Policy, The University of Sydney; the Centre for Alcohol Policy Research (CAPR), La Trobe University; Women's Reference Group Representative for NSW, Department of Home Affairs

"This timely report demonstrates that we must not allow any form of racial or religious hatred to divide us as an Australian community, and to consider the social and economic impact

of discrimination on all communities, and on the future generation of Australian Muslims."

Dr.Bulent (Hass) Dellal AO

"This report's meticulous documentation of testimonies on the escalating crisis of Islamophobia in Australia offers critical insights into its prevalence, patterns, and impact. It is an essential resource for policymakers, researchers, and community leaders committed to fostering a more inclusive

society. It is a call-to-action for a renewed commitment to social justice."

Dr Faiza El-Higzi OAM, political science academic, social justice practitioner, the University of Queensland

"The research is a very important part of combating Islamophobia, and provides integral data for government, corporate bodies, and NGOs to align on the issues and solutions. Although horrifying to read, the research and impact demonstrates that more investment needs to be directed into deeper research on this growing issue. I endorse the work of the research team in providing evidence-based research, and

I also encourage more investment into ongoing research into Islamophobia. This is not a Muslim issue - this is a society issue that needs to be taken seriously."

Ali Fahour- Director Bachar Houli Foundation and Islamic College of Sport

"I want to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the entire team for their unwavering dedication in producing this report. The findings were deeply confronting—particularly the accounts of murder and rape threats, along with the deeply troubling fact that, for the first time in the Register's history, an explosive device was left at someone's property. The sharp increase in Islamophobia highlighted is alarming, especially given the significant underreporting of its prevalence and the dismissive rhetoric some Australian politicians continue to perpetuate. I was particularly disheartened to learn that only

18% of 309 Islamophobic incidents were actually reported to the police. Understanding the underlying reasons for this underreporting is crucial, and this report explores this issue comprehensively. The thoroughness of the report, illustrated by the analysis of over 18,000 tweets, is truly impressive. It demonstrates the high level of commitment that went into producing this essential work."

Sherene Hassan OAM, Director of Education and Community Engagement, Islamic Museum of Australia

"Now more than ever, we must confront Islamophobia head-on. The statistics are alarming, but the lived reality is even more so. All Australians, including Muslim Australians should be able to go about their work, attend shopping centres & participate in activities of everyday life without fear of intimidation or abuse. If there was ever a time for our nation to address Islamophobia with the urgency it demands, that time is now."

Azmeena Hussain Chairperson, Islamic Museum of Australia. Principal Lawyer, Maurice Blackburn Lawyers, Deputy Chair, SBS Advisory & Director, Victorian Institute of Sport.

"While the Report documents an unprecedented spike in recorded instances of Islamophobia, it also makes clear that these historic high numbers represent a substantial underestimation of the true scale of Islamophobia in Australia. This Report makes sobering reading for those who want insights into the gendered nightmare of Islamophobia, and the long-term impacts it leaves for so many Muslims living in Australia."

Aftab Malik, Australia's Special Envoy to Combat Islamophobia

"A growing body of research studies, public surveys and various other forms of digital data all point out to a basic fact: that hatred, deep antipathy and discrimination directed against Muslim Australians continue to grow in ways that are impacting not only the victims of these acts but also broader social cohesion and intercultural relations. Against this troubling background, the 2025 Islamophobia Report presents timely and critical empirical evidence on this scourge. But It does not only present facts and statistical evidence on Islamophobia in Australia but more importantly it also provides personal perspectives from ordinary Muslim Australians who are subjected to this form of hatred and bigotry on a daily basis. Crucially, the Report offers a pathway towards combating Islamophobia that I hope policymakers and political leaders will take on board. The research team behind this impressive Report have done an excellent job in putting it together, they are to be commended".

Fethi Mansouri, Deakin Distinguished Professor; Founding Director, Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation; UNESCO Chairholder, Cultural Diversity and Social Justice

"The findings of Islamophobia in Australia Report 5 highlight the rising hostility towards Muslims in Australia, particularly women, within a broader landscape of declining social cohesion. Rather than addressing these fractures with policies of equity and justice, successive governments have deepened securitisation and discrimination, perpetuating historical exclusions that extend from the White Australia policies to present-day surveillance practices. This report situates Islamophobia within Australia's broader racial project, where ongoing settler-colonial violence intersects with the systemic targeting of racialised communities. The increase in anti-Muslim sentiment parallels the suppression of Indigenous sovereignty movements and hostility towards those advocating for Palestinian self-determination. These interconnected forms of repression manifest through policies that marginalise and criminalise dissent, exacerbating social divisions and entrenching inequality. Academia must respond by amplifying affected voices, fostering critical scholarship on Islamophobia, settler-colonialism, and state violence, and advocating for policy interventions grounded in justice. The data in this report is not just an academic exercise but a warning: without urgent intervention, Australia risks further entrenching itself as a nation unable to reconcile with its violent past and present.This report should serve as a catalyst for meaningful structural change, pushing beyond performative allyship towards real transformation."

Professor Troy Meston, First Nations Research Program Lead: Gulbali Institute, Charles Sturt University, Yuwaalaraay/Gamilaroi Muslim

"The Islamophobia in Australia Report makes for grim reading for those of us advocating against the scourge of anti-Muslim hate in our country. The findings are by no means surprising however. For the countless silent victims, many from the most vulnerable segments of the Muslim community, who know that their Muslimness comes with a high price for their mental and physical wellbeing, this report painfully describes their lived reality. At a time of heightened tensions and dishonest and irresponsible political narratives that seek to downplay the threat of Islamophobia, the work of the Islamophobia Register has never been more important."

Adel Salman, Board Adviser and Media Spokesperson, Islamic Council of Victoria

"The perception in some circles that relations between Muslims and non-Muslims have always been strained is shaped by views of historical conflicts, media discourses, and political narratives rather than informed understanding of history and contemporary realities. Relations between Muslims and non-Muslims have varied significantly across different eras and regions. Since the latter half of the twentieth century and certainly over the past few decades there is tremendous interest in and conversion to Islam around the world, especially in Western societies. However, the current era has also been marked by intensifying social tensions and international conflicts at the centre of which is Islamophobia, racism and supremacism. To combat this phenomenon, it must be recorded, examined, and understood, which is the work the Islamophobia Register Australia has been doing for over a decade. Its latest report identifies a deeply disturbing but not unexpected escalation of Islamophobia in Australia to unprecedented levels of in-person incidents and online attacks between January 2023 and November 2024. The problem is exacerbated by a diminishing sense of humanity, rising extremism, and media and political rhetoric that understate or even deny Islamophobia and its contribution to conflict, violence, and hate nationally and internationally. Government and media mishandling and manipulation of emotions, ignorance, and misinformation in the wake of events on 7 October 2023, and the genocide that followed, triggered a surge in Islamophobic and anti-Palestinian hate, highlighting

the intersection of these forms of bigotry and racism. Victims experience severe psychological distress, with 87% reporting fear, anxiety, and long-term emotional harm. Islamophobia not only alienates Muslims but also weakens national unity and social harmony. The report calls for stronger hate crime legislation, media accountability, and targeted education to combat misinformation and stereotypes. In respect to the latter, universities have been profoundly disappointing in their response. Some cut courses and programs that offer students crucial knowledge and intercultural competencies regarding Islam, Muslims and religious and cultural diversity more broadly, necessary to refute Islamophobic narratives. Others curtailed the academic freedom of staff and free expression of students who dared to challenge the ideological drivers of dehumanisation and supremacism. The report recommends workplace and institutional reforms, increased support services, education and public awareness campaigns to rehabilitate human decency, inclusivity, and respect. Addressing Islamophobia is vital for the safety, wellbeing, and equal participation of Muslims in Australian society. Failure to act risks further division and instability across the nation and globally."

Professor Halim Rane , Griffith Centre for Social and Cultural Research, Islam-West Relations Field of Study Leader, Griffith University

"As a community leader with over three decades of experience in community building and cross-cultural education, I have witnessed firsthand the profound impact of Islamophobia on individuals, communities, and society as a whole. The findings in this year's report are deeply troubling, highlighting a sharp rise in Islamophobia that demands urgent and decisive action. Islamophobia is not just a problem for Muslims—it is a challenge for all of society. When any group is marginalised, the very fabric of our communities is weakened. If we do not take this issue seriously, we risk heading down a dangerous path of further division, fear, and injustice. It is the responsibility

of policymakers, educators, media professionals, and everyday citizens to recognise the impact of Islamophobia and take meaningful steps to counter it. I commend the Islamophobia Register Australia for their invaluable work in documenting these realities and bringing these critical statistics to our attention. Their efforts are essential in driving awareness, accountability, and meaningful change for a more just and inclusive society."

Saara Sabbagh OAM, Founding Director, Benevolence Australia

"I commend the authors of this vital report and the Islamophobia Register for their tireless efforts in documenting and addressing the alarming rise of Islamophobia in Australia. At a time of heightened tensions, their work is more crucial than ever in supporting victims of Islamophobia, raising awareness, and advocating for meaningful change. As the leading organisation in this space in Australia, Islamophobia Register plays an essential role in ensuring that Islamophobia

is recognised as a serious societal issue. I very much hope this report serves as a wake-up call for policymakers and the broader community to take urgent action in tackling this growing threat to social cohesion."

Abdullah Saeed, Sultan of Oman Professor of Arab and Islamic Studies, University of Melbourne

"The Islamophobia in Australia report is an important contribution in mapping and explaining the alarmingly sharp increase in reports of incidences of Islamophobia, influenced by overseas and local crisis events. It is likely that these incidents of Islamophobia are grossly underreported and consequently underestimated by policymakers, law enforcement, education providers, and other relevant bodies. Even more worrying is when Islamophobia is downplayed or its existence denied, despite clear and compelling evidence of the harm it represents not only to Muslim Australians, but to the fabric of our society generally. This is why the report is an important contribution to our knowledge of this dangerous prejudice and the extent to which it threatens Australian social cohesion.

Furthermore, the report has highlighted certain dimensions that require addressing, not the least of which is the gendered element of Islamophobic attacks. As the authors note, this gendered dimension is cultivated through an essentialised stereotyping of Muslim women and men, in which Muslim women are the eternally oppressed and Muslim men the eternal oppressors. This positions (particularly visible) Muslim women as the "ideally vulnerable target", evidenced by their disproportionate representation in the statistics (with the

interesting exception of incidents occurring in school contexts).

Another important dimension is the cross-over of Islamophobia with anti-Palestinian racism, which spiked due to the October 7 Hamas attacks and Israel's subsequent declaration of war in Gaza. This international conflict, along with local crisis events involving Muslim perpetrators such as the Wakeley church stabbing—or even those incorrectly speculated as involving Muslims, such as the Bondi Junction stabbings—are shown to be catalysts for spikes in Islamophobic incidents in Australia.

The recommendations from this report should be seriously considered by politicians, law-enforcement, government agencies, education bodies, and other community organisations. Islamophobia is not a fictional or exaggerated concept; it is a very real and pervasive form of prejudice that results in actual harm to the individuals that experience it, and damages Australia's social wellbeing more generally."

Dr Rachel Woodlock, Deputy Director of the National Centre for Contemporary Islamic Studies at The University of Melbourne, co-editor of the book Fear of Muslims? International Perspectives on Islamophobia

Photo by Muktasim Azlan on Unsplash

Introduction

This report draws on data of Islamophobic[1] incidents from a time of significant social discord in Australia.

In 2023 the Scanlon Social Cohesion Index, which measures the social cohesion rate of Australia every year, dropped to its lowest level on record. In 2024, the ASIO director-general stated that Australia is becoming "more volatile and unpredictable" with an increase in "extremism, division, and elevated intolerance". In the same year, the Federal government appointed its first Special Envoy for Social Cohesion due to the "great deal of concern about disharmony", and appointed Special Envoys to Counter Islamophobia and Antisemitism in response to growing discrimination and attacks.

In this environment, Islamophobia has flourished.

"When walking to get into train station, a man said to me "I'll rip that scarf off your head and smash your head and rape you."

This is demonstrated by the Scanlon Foundation who found in July 2024 that one third of Australians say they have a negative attitude towards Muslims - a 7% increase from 2023 and nearly three times higher than negative attitudes towards Jewish people. This sentiment was also strongly reflected in the data studied for this report – from 1st January 2023 to 30 November 2024[2] – which showed a substantial increase in the number of reports of Islamophobia received by the Islamophobia Register Australia ("the Register") compared to the Register's inception in 2014.

Between the 1st of January 2023 and the 31st of November 2024 there were 309 confirmed in-person (or "offline") incidents of Islamophobia reported to the Register. **This is**

more than double the number of off-line/in-person incidents identified in all previous Register reports.

For example, between January 2014 and December 2021 there were 515 in-person incidents reported and confirmed for the entire eight-year period. This is an average of approximately 123 incidents for the equivalent time frame (23 months) for reporting of incidents within the present report. Thus, **this report includes more than 2.5 times the number of in-person incidents compared to any other reporting period.** The Register also received 366 verified online incidents. This is again a far higher rate than previous study periods by the Register; between 2014-2021, a total of 415 online incidents were recorded for the entire eight year period, which averages to 52 per year. Thus, **this report includes more than three times the number of online incidents compared to any other reporting period.** In addition, the online component of this report provides an original analysis of over 18,000 tweets from Australia, sampled using a rigorous methodology to identify trends in online hostility toward Muslims. The findings indicate that key domestic and international events influence both online and offline manifestations of Islamophobia.

We have taken a rigorous approach to data verification for both in-person and online incidents (explained in the Methodology, below) to ensure the robustness of this report. Even accounting for this, the number of verified instances of both online and in-person or offline Islamophobia included in this report was significantly higher than any other reporting period in the Register's history.

While this report contains the highest number of in-person and online reports of any in the Register's history, this is probably a substantial underestimation of Islamophobic incidents in both spheres.

For in-person incidents, research[3] indicates that the number of incidences of Islamophobia reported to, and formally confirmed by, the Register is likely a many-fold underestimate of the true extent of Islamophobic incidents in Australia. As mentioned above, 2024 Scanlon data indicates that negative sentiment towards Muslims is high (34%), and has increased in the past 12 months. Given there are close to one million

Muslims in Australia, one might assume that many incidents are not being reported.

Additionally, data gathered from participants that have reported incidents of Islamophobia suggest that many Muslims may not have trust that any action will result from reporting of Islamophobic events; many Muslims reported having low trust in police or other authorities taking seriously or responding to incidents of Islamophobia. Finally, the Register is a small, not-for-profit organisation with only four paid staff (just two of whom are full-time), constraining the amount of outreach they can do to the community.

Even with limited resources, the Register is the nation's original and leading organisation tracking and tackling Islamophobia, and the services it offers victims who report incidents are extensive. The following services are all offered free-of-charge to any person who reports an incident:

- Emotional support in follow-up phone calls

- Referral to a psychologist (in majority of cases, a Muslim psychologist) with a minimum of ten free appointments with a Mental Health plan

- Free general legal advice and referral to pro-bono law firm partners for ongoing advice and representation

- Contacting police on victim's behalf, submitting a report, and following up with police on victim's behalf

- Submitting reports to the Australian Human Rights Commission or the state-based human rights commissions on victim's behalf

- Support connecting to and speaking with media if victim wants to share their experience

- Advocacy and support letter for religious accommodations

These all-encompassing and religiously- and culturally-appropriate services mean that victims of Islamophobia are not left isolated after reporting an incident. This matters in the context of the findings of this report. Given the mental health impacts of incidents reported by victims outlined in "psychological impact" section, and victims reluctance to report to other reporting bodies outlined in "reporting to other bodies" section, these wrap-around services are crucial and fulfil a gap otherwise unmet.

While the reported incidents and themes are spoken about discreetly in this report, they are not atomised. They form a coherent, terrible swarm of increasing Islamophobic prejudice that is manifesting in people's behaviour in destructive and sometimes violent ways.

This surge in reported incidents of Islamophobia - which included physical assaults that caused hospitalisations, a genuine bomb being left at a home, an arson attack, graffiti attacks calling for the killing of Muslims, vandalism, hate mail, Muslim women having their hijabs pulled off and being spat on, school children being targeted, and hundreds of instances of Islamophobic abuse and threat - happened over a backdrop of dangerous rhetoric by some Australian politicians that argued Islamophobia was fictitious or that it was not an issue.

Such arguments are inexplicable in the face of the evidence (the Register released multiple press releases outlining these cases and the rise in incidents during this time, and there was national media coverage of many of these incidents), and perilous to fostering a unified Australia which was already struggling. It is also deeply confusing and alienating for Australian Muslims to feel the quantifiable, documented hate crimes they experience are dismissed as imaginary or insignificant for a seemingly partisan agenda. Rejecting the grim reality because it is politically inconvenient does not make the problem go away; it facilitates it. This rhetoric may then

influence public sentiment. A recent poll shows only 9% of Australians believe that Islamophobia has increased.

It is for this reason that this latest Islamophobia in Australia Report is so important. Any group of Australians that are being targeted and abused threatens the safety of everyone, and the scale of the increase demonstrated in this report is especially concerning. Social unity for all Australians – not just Muslims – rests on a sober and fact-based account of our social terrain, strategies to improve it, and a willing public and leadership.

Note: We include many accounts victims have made to the Register during this 23-month study period in this report. Some of these reports contain descriptions of violence, threats, and expletives. Pseudonyms have been used. Some statements have been edited for clarity and length.

"My daughter was traveling home from a school excursion by train with a large group of students all escorted by their teachers. On the platform someone pulled off my daughter's hijab. The teacher reported to me later that the perpetrator also made racist comments."

Islamophobic Incidents – overall numbers and types

Between the 1st of January 2023 and the 31st of November 2024 there were 309 confirmed in-person (or "offline") incidents of Islamophobia reported to the Register. This is **more than 2.5 times the number of off-line/in-person incidents identified for the same time period in all previous Islamophobia Register Australia reports.**

During the study period, the Register also received 366 verified online incidents. This is a far higher rate than previous study periods by the Register; between 2014-2021, a total of 415 online incidents were recorded for the entire eight year period, which averages to 52 per year. Thus, **this report includes more than three times the number of online incidents compared to any other reporting period.**

In addition, the online component of this report presents an original analysis of over 18,000 tweets from Australia examining trends in online hostility toward Muslims. The findings demonstrate that fluctuations in online and offline Islamophobia are influenced by key domestic and international events.

"I am now anxious every morning when entering the building and even for some time was continuously late due to panic attacks about entering the building."

**150%-250% increase in offline and online incidents**

This means that there was a 250% increase of reported online incidents, and a 150% increase in offline or in-person incidents. That averages nearly one in-person or online incident every day of the 700 days for the report period.

The in-person Islamophobic incidents from 2023-2024 were categorised into seven types. The most common form of Islamophobia was verbal intimidation/harassment (60.8%),

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

followed by discrimination (9.4%), physical assault (9.1%), property damage (8.1%, e.g., vandalism, fire-damage), non-verbal intimidation/harassment (e.g., offensive finger gestures, fist waving, 6.8%), and written intimidation/harassment (e.g., hate mail, letters, leaflets, 5.5%). For the first time in the Register's reporting history, there was also one incident of a genuine explosive device being left at a person's property, which had to be dealt with by police (bomb, 0.3%).

Beyond mere numbers, these in-person incidents included physical assaults that caused hospitalisations, a genuine bomb being left at a home, an arson attack, graffiti attacks calling for the killing of Muslims, vandalism including the desecration of a mosque, hate mail, Muslim women having their hijabs pulled off and being spat on, school children being targeted, and nearly 200 hundred instances of Islamophobic verbal abuse, including threats of murder and rape.
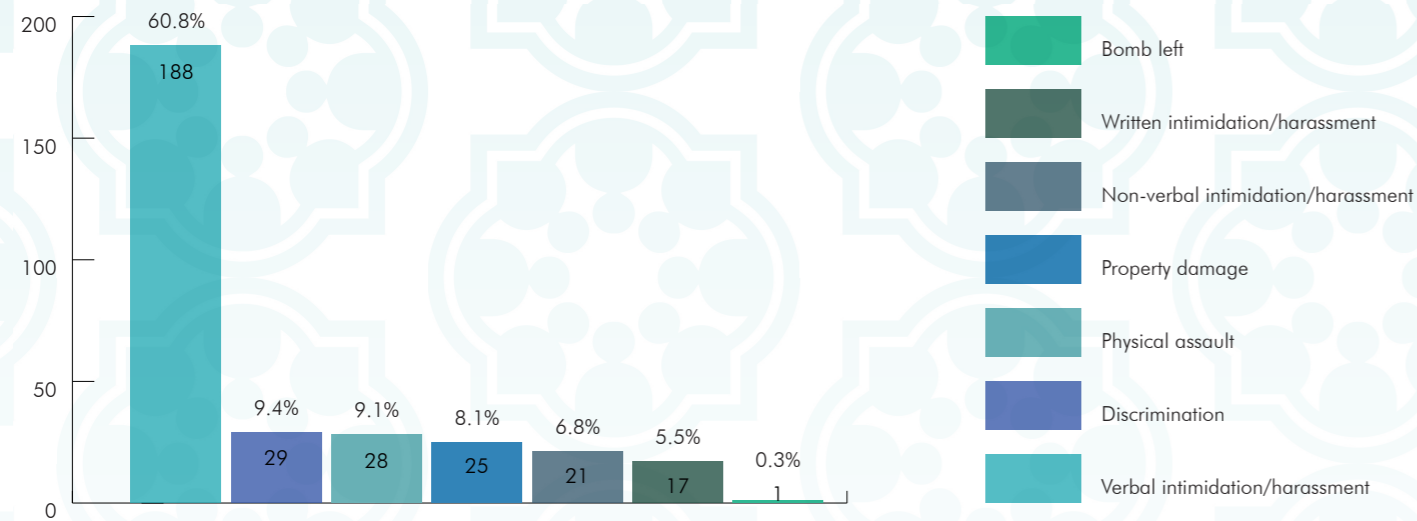
1. Type, number, and percentage of the different types of Islamophobic incidents, 2023-2024; n=309

As demonstrated in Table 3, below, compared to previous years of reporting, verbal intimidation and harassment has increased as a percentage – from 2014-2021, it made up 45% of all reports. In 2023-2024 it made up 61% of reports.

Physical assault has also increased as a percentage of overall reports – from 20214-2021, physical assaults made up 8% of all reports. In 2023-2024, they made up 9% of overall reports.
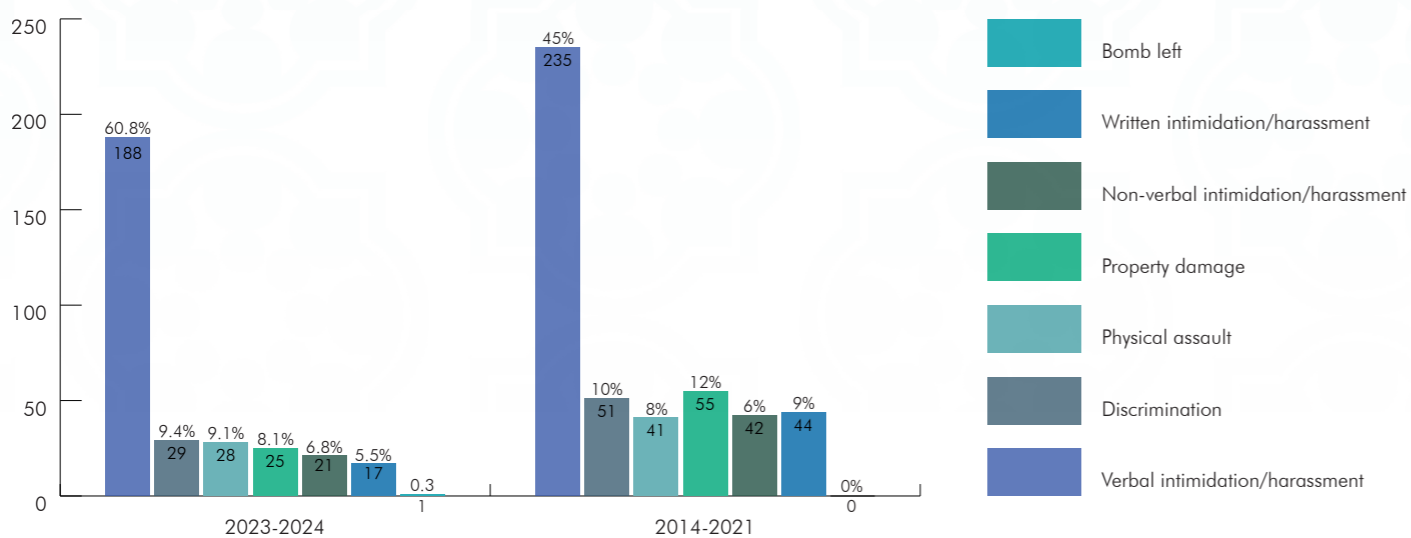
2. Type, number, and percentage of the different types of Islamophobic incidents, 2023-2024 compared to 2014-2021

Gender:
Like previous reports, gender was a prominent feature of Islamophobic incidents. Muslim women and girl were again the overwhelming victims of Islamophobic incidents:
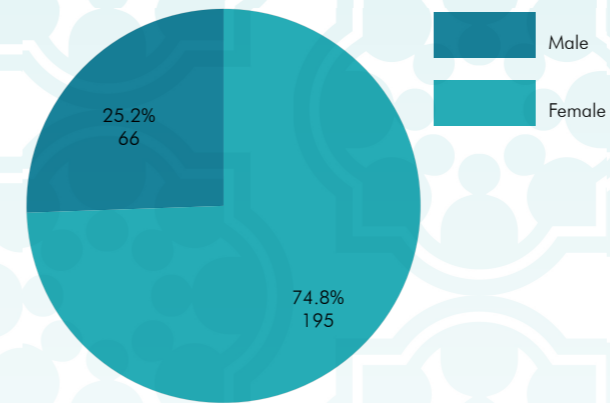
3. In-person/offline incident number and percentage by gender
Note: total number of incidents listed here and in all cases involving gender split is lower than the overall figure reported above due to some incidents not having the gender of the victim reported, either because victim chose not to list it, or because they saw it as irrelevant to the incident (eg, graffiti)

Muslim women and girls were the most common victim of all types of attacks (including physical attacks) in nearly all settings.

Muslim women and girls:

- were 79% of the reported victims of verbal abuse

- were 60% of the victims of physical abuse (female Muslims reported 33% more physical assaults than male Muslims did)

- were 95% of the victims of reported incidents on public transport

- were 74% of reported incidents at shops

- were 83% of reported incidents on the street, parking, or driving

- were 100% of the victims of spitting incidents, either as the only victim (71%) or as a victim alongside a male victim (29%)

- experienced nearly five times the number of Idslamophobic incidents on the street, driving, or parking compared to male Muslims

- reported more than three times the number of Islamophobic incidents at workplaces than men, which is particularly significant given Muslim women are under-employed compared to Muslim men in Australia

- specifically targeted in a threat on a Muslim school; the perpetrator called the school and said he would specifically target schoolgirls who wore the hijab with a knife

**"I started wearing the hijab at the start of this year and ever since I've been experiencing racist jokes and comments from other students, like, 'towel head', 'bomber', '9/11', 'Taliban', 'stupid hijabi bitch', and I have had pork thrown at me."**

Men and boys were the perpetrator of 72% of all Islamophobic incidents, regardless of the gender of the victim.[4] However, regardless of whether the perpetrator was male or female, Muslim women and girls were much more likely to be the victims:
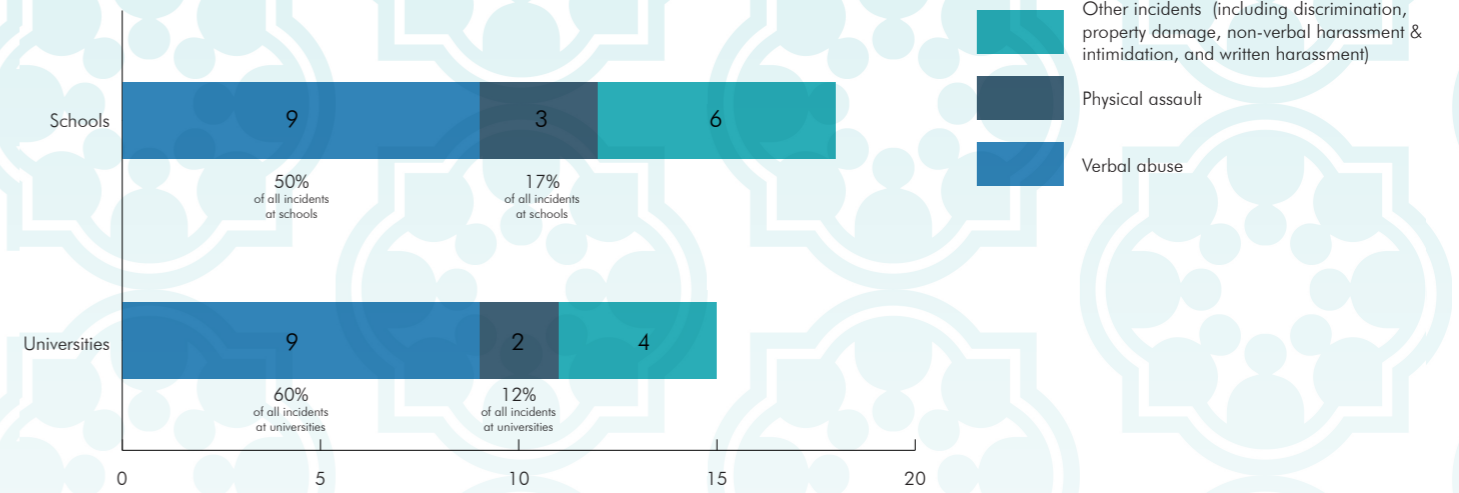
Legend:
- Male victim
- Female victim

Female perpetrator: 81% / 19%

Male perpetrator: 73% / 27%
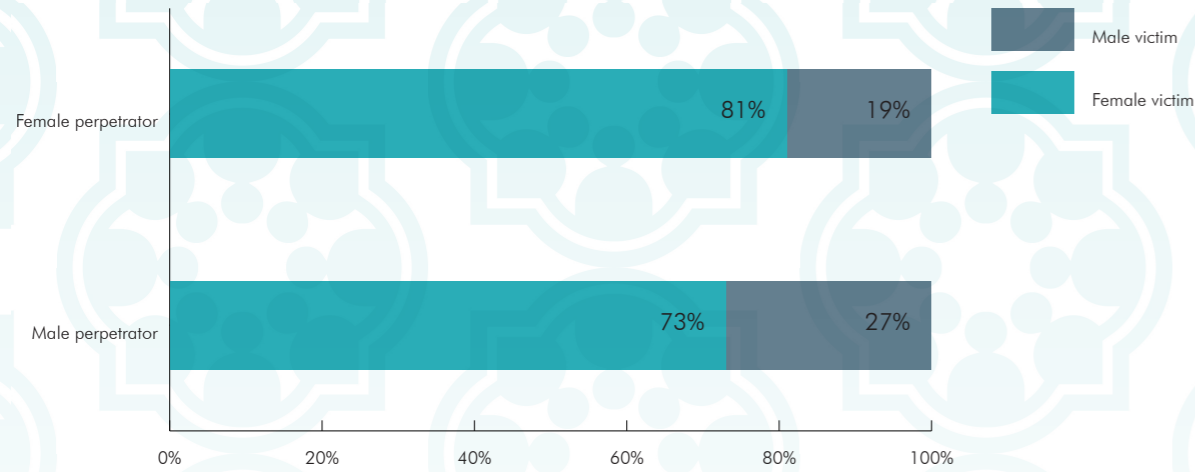
4.

The only place where male Muslims had a higher proportion and raw number of Islamophobic incidents compared to female Muslims was at school:

Legend:
- Girls (n=6)
- Boys (n=10)

37% / 63%
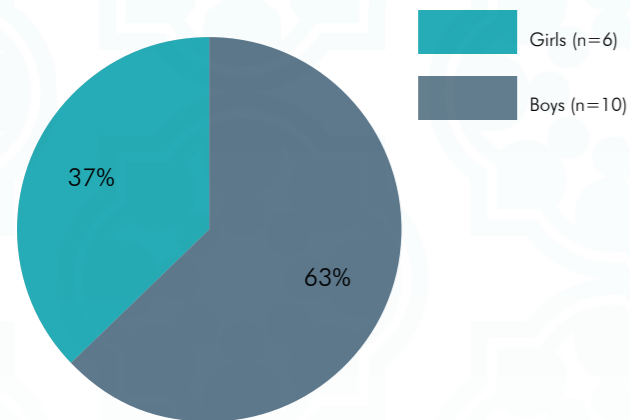
5. Overall incidents reported at school by gender

"My son was targeted by nine boys from his school. He has been harassed both physically and verbally while being at this High school. They kept calling him "terrorist, bomber, Osama bin laden" and they also physically attacked him."

Schools: 9 | 3 | 6
50% of all incidents at schools | 17% of all incidents at schools

Universities: 9 | 2 | 4
60% of all incidents at universities | 12% of all incidents at universities

Legend:
- Other incidents (including discrimination, property damage, non-verbal harassment & intimidation, and written harassment)
- Physical assault
- Verbal abuse

6. Physical and verbal incidents at schools and universities

Beyond this unusual gender split, educational settings were sites of multiple Islamophobic incidents:

Pro-Palestine protests and symbols:

Featuring for the first time in the Register reports and as a clear indication of the time period in which this study occurred, reported incidents at pro-Palestinian protests constituted 8% of the total reported incidents in 2023, all occurring after October 7. In 2024, incidents at pro-Palestinian protests slightly exceeded 5% of the total, while those reported at pro-Palestinian university encampments made up 8%. Additionally, incidents involving victims displaying pro-Palestinian symbols accounted for 8% of total incidents in 2023 and **rose to one quarter of all reported incidents (25%) in 2024.**

Psychological impact:

The majority (86.6%) of Muslims reporting in-person Islamophobia described one or more psychological or emotional responses, such as fear, anger, humiliation, despair, or sadness. Of the 198 victims that provided responses regarding the long-term impacts of Islamophobia, 92% reported one or more long-term impacts on their own lives or that of their family or community. The long-term impacts reported related to their mental wellbeing, with fear and anxiety commonly reported. These psychological responses were more than just feelings; these negative emotions affected victims' ability to travel to and engage in work, school, and their communities.

"I have had one surgery to fix the break, however I now need another to fix the nose and correct my breathing."

Overall recommendations (more specific recommendations are provided in each section):

1. Recognise and address Islamophobia as a gendered issue: Federal, State, and local governments, as well as law enforcement agencies, should formally recognize the gendered nature of Islamophobia and incorporate it into gender-based abuse and violence frameworks, with explicit policies and dedicated funding targeting key sites of gendered Islamophobia.

2. Implement comprehensive law enforcement reforms: Provide specialised training for police on recognizing and responding to Islamophobia (including its intersection with anti-Palestinian sentiment), improve reporting mechanisms, establish clear protocols for investigating Islamophobic incidents, and ensure officers understand the psychological impacts on victims.

3. Enhance public safety in key locations: Develop targeted safety initiatives in areas where Muslims, particularly women, experience high rates of Islamophobia, including streets, shopping centers, and public transport. This should include increased security measures, improved lighting, and bystander intervention campaigns.

4. Address workplace discrimination: Implement stricter workplace anti-discrimination policies, provide support for victims to understand their rights and reporting options, and fund cultural competency training programs for employers and employees.

5. Reform educational institutions: Implement mandatory Islamophobia awareness training for school and university leadership, focusing on policy reform, student experience, and duty of care. Develop specific programs addressing the unique experiences of Muslim boys in schools, while ensuring comprehensive protection for all Muslim students.

6. Fund Palestinian-led training and support: Provide Federal and State government funding for Palestinian organisations to deliver anti-Palestinian hate training in educational institutions and community settings, and to support Australian Palestinians affected by discrimination.

7. Establish comprehensive psychological support services: Create dedicated funding streams for culturally appropriate mental health services for victims of Islamophobia, including in-person and telehealth options, one-on-one counseling, and support groups, with specialised training for mental health professionals.

8. Enhance public awareness and education: Develop comprehensive community education campaigns about the psychological, social, and economic impacts of Islamophobia, focusing on challenging stereotypes about Muslims, particularly Muslim women, and promoting inclusive communities.

9. Support robust research initiatives: Fund substantive research on the mental health, economic, and educational impacts of Islamophobia to inform evidence-based policy development and intervention strategies.

10. Hold media accountable: Implement training programs for media professionals on responsible reporting of issues affecting Muslim communities, and strengthen the E-Safety Commissioner's enforcement against online Islamophobia and disinformation campaigns.

11. Establish sustainable funding for the Register: Provide Federal government funding to support the ongoing work of the Register as a trusted community reporting mechanism and support service for victims.

12. Develop coordinated bystander intervention programs: Create and implement nationwide bystander education campaigns focused on empowering the general public to safely intervene when witnessing Islamophobic incidents in various settings.

13. Ensure Muslim women's voices in policy development: Commit to regular consultation with Muslim women's organizations and leaders about their needs and recommendations, and ensure their representation in mainstream discussions about gender-based violence.

"I was sitting in the food court in a shopping centre with my 5 kids when an unknown lady yelled out 'F*** Muslims' and punched me in the head, knocking me out in front of my kids. I was admitted to hospital, where a CT scan showed my nose was broken. Me and my kids are seeing a psychologist for the trauma as my kids are very much traumatised. We don't leave the house unless it's necessary as we have a fear that it will happen again. I was unconscious for a few minutes and my kids ran away scared as she went to hit them too. My youngest was 3 and he fled the scene as he was scared. A stranger found him at the car park, running onto the road."

"Graffiti was spray-painted on my driveway and footpath outside my house. Graffiti included several large swastikas, and text 'Death to Palestine' and 'Get out, Muslim cunt'. I have a small Free Palestine poster outside my front door."

"When walking to get into train station, a man said to me "I'll rip that scarf off your head and smash your head and rape you.""

"I was walking with my children in Westfield when a man and his friend walked right up to me and spat on me then continued walking. I asked him why he spat on me, and he said, "Because you are Muslim". I was wearing my jilbab [long hijab and robe].I was extremely terrified as I was with my young children and was fearful of my safety."

"6 friends wearing keffiyehs enter the elevator of our hotel, following the drunk Caucasian assailant. The assailant noticed our keffiyehs and started calling us "Muslim terrorists", "you fucking terrorist cunts", "you support these fucking terrorist Muslim cunts" and "I'll kill every one of you cunts". He started punching us, grabbing at our keffiyehs and pulling one person's keffiyeh around their neck and choking them. He prevented us from trying to protect each other or escaping the elevator. Five of the six members of the group were physically assaulted, I filmed it."

"I was sitting in the food court in a shopping centre with my 5 kids when an unknown lady yelled out 'F*** Muslims' and punched me in the head, knocking me out in front of my kids. I was admitted to hospital, where a CT scan showed my nose was broken. Me and my kids are seeing a psychologist for the trauma as my kids are very much traumatised. We don't leave the house unless it's necessary as we have a fear that it will happen again. I was unconscious for a few minutes and my kids ran away scared as she went to hit them too. My youngest was 3 and he fled the scene as he was scared. A stranger found him at the car park, running onto the road."

"A call came to our mosque. The caller said, "It's no wonder that the NZ killer went to your mosques and killed so many of you. I would do the same, too.""

"I started wearing the hijab at the start of this year and ever since I've been experiencing racist jokes and comments from other students, like, 'towel head', 'bomber', '9/11', 'Taliban', 'stupid hijabi bitch', and I have had pork thrown at me."

"A man accessed our mosque, walked among the worshippers, and took photos. He then came with a plate of faeces from his vehicle and desecrated parts of the mosque, taking photos of his wrongdoing."

"My daughter was traveling home from a school excursion by train with a large group of students all escorted by their teachers. On the platform someone pulled off my daughter's hijab. The teacher reported to me later that the perpetrator also made racist comments."

"Graffiti was spray-painted on my driveway and footpath outside my house. Graffiti included several large swastikas, and text 'Death to Palestine' and 'Get out, Muslimcunt'. I have a small Free Palestine poster outside my front door."

"My son was targeted by nine boys from his school. He has been harassed both physically and verbally while being at this High school. They kept calling him "terrorist, bomber, Osama bin laden" and they also physically attacked him."

"A man told me as I was walking along the beach, "I would like to take you for a shag in the bush and throw you over the edge of the cliff"." He also said "what is that on your head?" about my hijab."

"I was walking into my local pool. A man intentionally crossed the road towards me so he could approach me and said, 'You are going to die, you are going to die, all Muslims are going to die. I can't wait for you to die. You are going to get killed and it will be great'. I was shaking. He walked ahead of me and continued to repeat it and turning around and laughing."

"I was leaving the train carriage with my dad when this lady said 'Fuck you Muslims, you are stealing our cars and money, you started everything and you are all going to die, anyway. You are stinking up the country and creating all the issues'."

'We have a Palestinian flag flying on our property. An unknown individual left an improvised petrol bomb on my partner's vehicle in our driveway. Attached to the device was a hand-written note reading: "ENOUGH! TAKE DOWN FLAG! ONE CHANCE!!!"'

"I am now anxious every morning when entering the building and even for some time was continuously late due to panic attacks about entering the building."

"We are all afraid to leave our house. My eldest daughter quit her job as she's scared to leave us alone".

"The incident occurred one week ago. I feel traumatized and extremely anxious. I have had panic attacks and nightmares. I have also been unable to work."

'We walked over to a park, and encountered a man who was eating a sandwich and a coffee. He got up and stated, "No wonder the Jews want to kill you." We thought we misheard him and asked him what he said. He abused us some more before leaving, and then he turned around and spat the sandwich he was eating at us. It flew through the air and hit my husband and me. My husband yelled, "why did you spit at us?", to which he then threw his coffee at us.

"My children were hurt and upset. We are traumatised and worried about being in public places."

"My mind is on high alert (fight/flight response is constantly switched on)- fear of wearing a hijab and getting verbally and/or physically harassed or assaulted."

IN-PERSON INCIDENTS

Location – states and places

Islamophobic Incidents by State and Territory

There are large differences in the number of Muslims living within each State or Territory of Australia. According to the 2021 Australian Census New South Wales (NSW: 349,240: 43%) and Victoria (VIC: 273,028: 33%) are home to the largest numbers of Muslims accounting for nearly 77% of all Muslims in Australia. This is followed by Western Australia (WA: 66,764: 8%), Queensland (QLD: 60,381: 7%), South Australia (SA: 40,302: 5%), Australian Capital Territories (ACT: 14,602: 2%), Tasmania (TAS: 4,947: 0.6%), and Northern Territory (NT: 3351: 0.4%). Given this difference

in the location of Muslims, it is expected that there would be greater incidences of Islamophobia in those States and Territories with the highest number of Muslims.
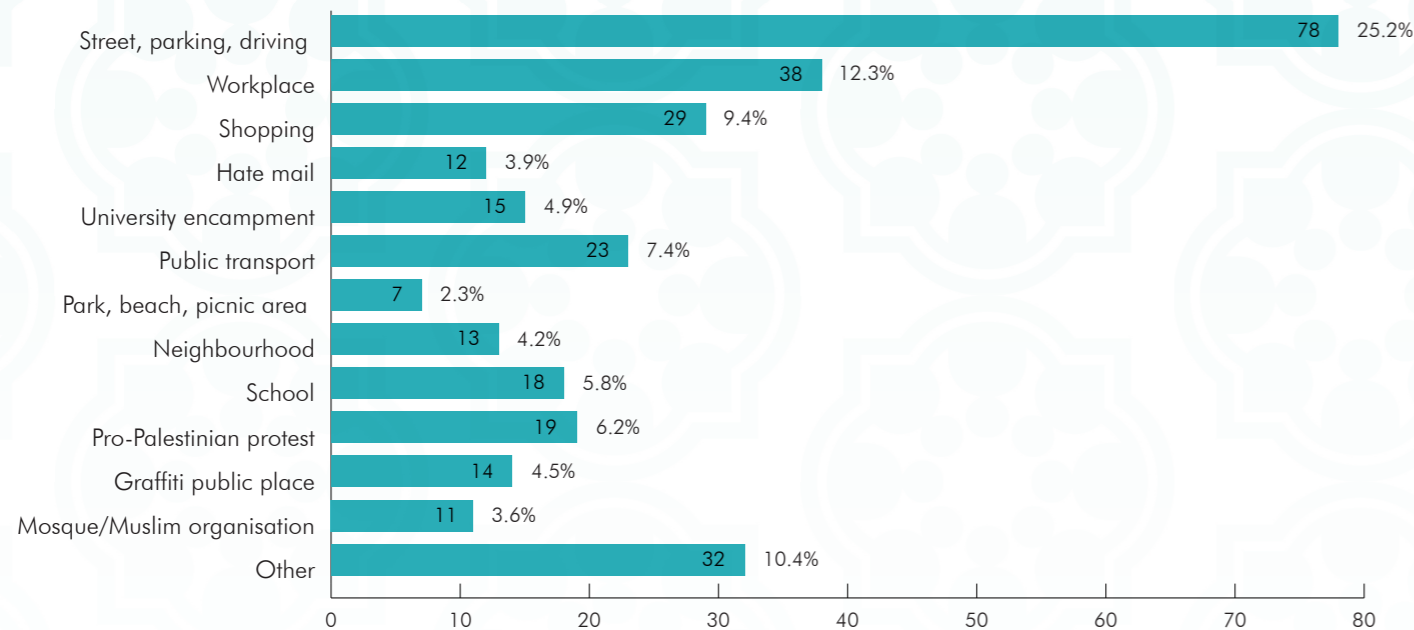
There were considerably more reported incidences of offline Islamophobia in NSW (139: 44.9%) and VIC (79: 25.6%). QLD (38: 12.3%) and SA (30: 9.7%) had similar proportions of incidents given Muslim population size in those states, with WA having a slightly lower number of incidents reported (20: 6.5%). The ACT and TAS combined had 3 incidents of Islamophobia (1%) reported.

State	Incidents	Percentage
NSW	139	44.9%
VIC	79	25.6%
QLD	38	12.3%
SA	30	9.7%
WA	20	6.5%
ACT	2	0.65%
TAS	1	0.3%
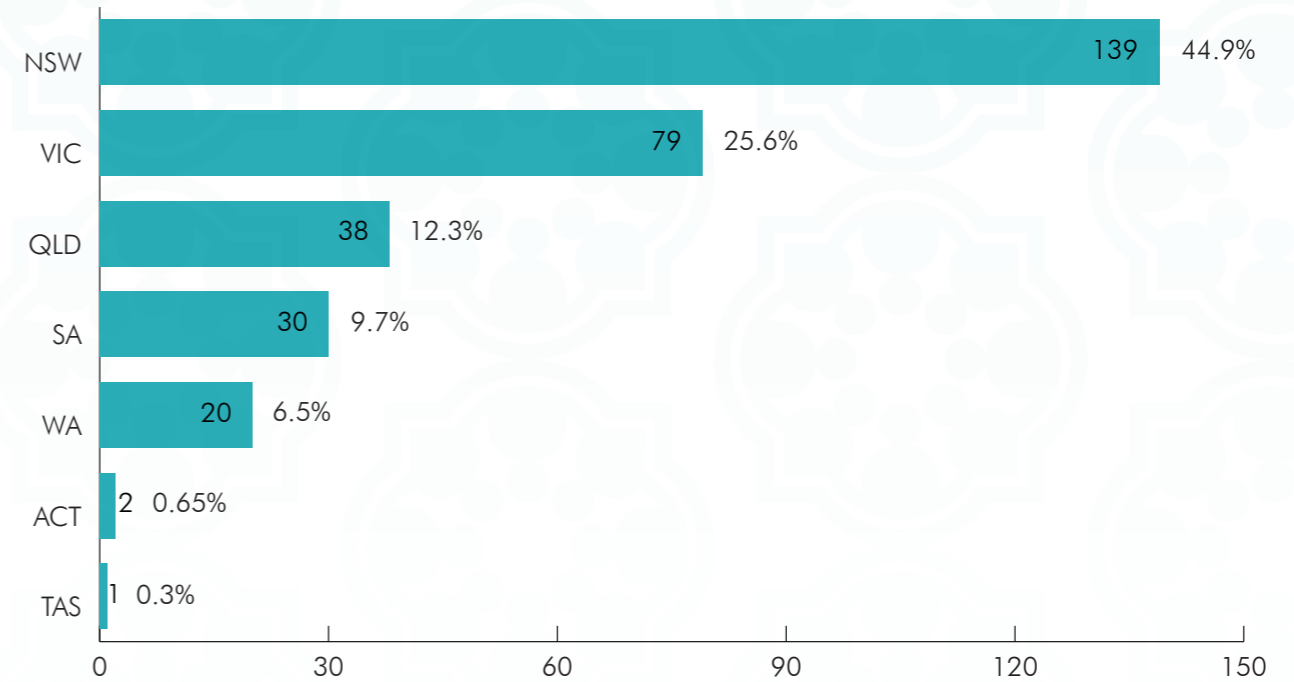
7. Islamophobic Incident by State/Territory; n=309

Islamophobic incidents by place

The settings within which Islamophobia occurs plays a role in the ways in which Muslims feel and live their lives, and can have significant financial, psychological, health, and social impacts. For example, if incidents of Islamophobia frequently occur on public transport, then this can affect the safety and ability of Muslims to travel to work, school, health centres and other aspects of life. It can also lead to social isolation and poorer mental health. Similarly, Islamophobia in school and work settings can lead to poorer economic outcomes through self-exclusions and avoidance. Accordingly, the Register collected data on the contexts and settings within which Islamophobia occurs in order to identify potential points for intervention (e.g., increased security, education, policies). Table X below details the number and proportion of Islamophobia in different settings and contexts.
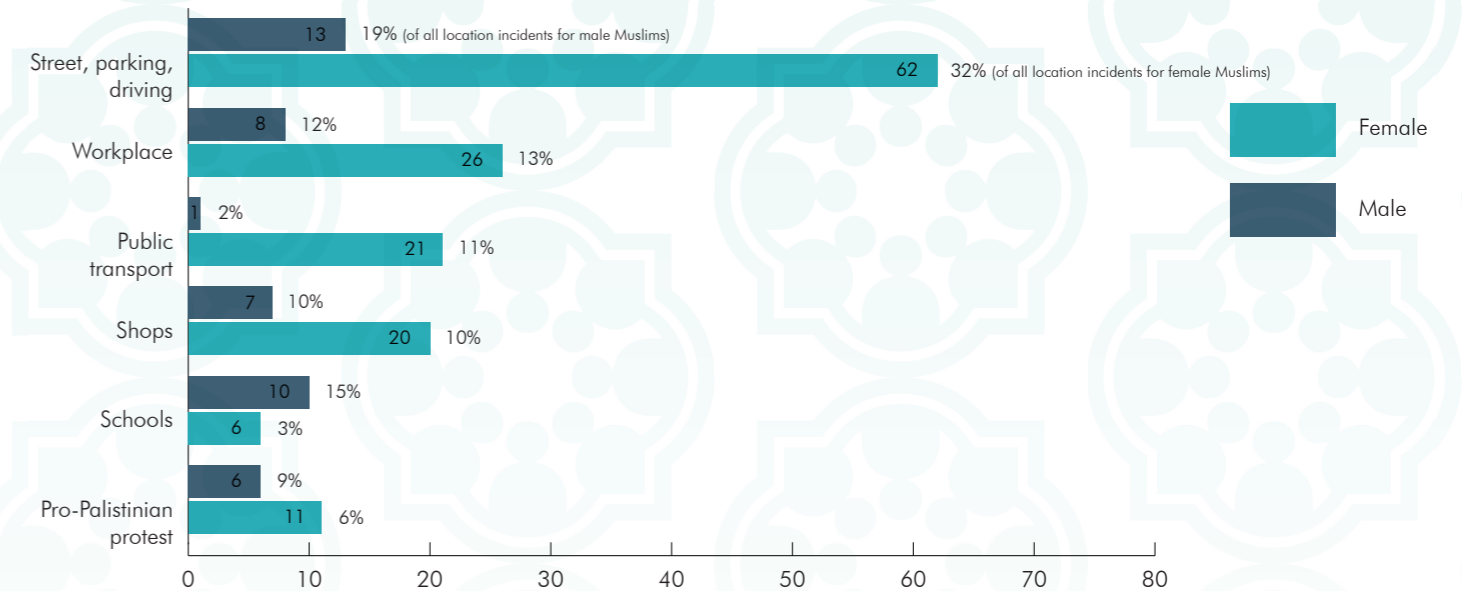

Street, parking, driving — 78 — 25.2%
Workplace — 38 — 12.3%
Shopping — 29 — 9.4%
Hate mail — 12 — 3.9%
University encampment — 15 — 4.9%
Public transport — 23 — 7.4%
Park, beach, picnic area — 7 — 2.3%
Neighbourhood — 13 — 4.2%
School — 18 — 5.8%
Pro-Palestinian protest — 19 — 6.2%
Graffiti public place — 14 — 4.5%
Mosque/Muslim organisation — 11 — 3.6%
Other — 32 — 10.4%

8. Number and percentage of all reported Islamophobic incidents in different daily contexts; n=309

"I was leaving the train carriage with my dad when this lady said 'Fuck you Muslims, you are stealing our cars and money, you started everything and you are all going to die, anyway. You are stinking up the country and creating all the issues'."
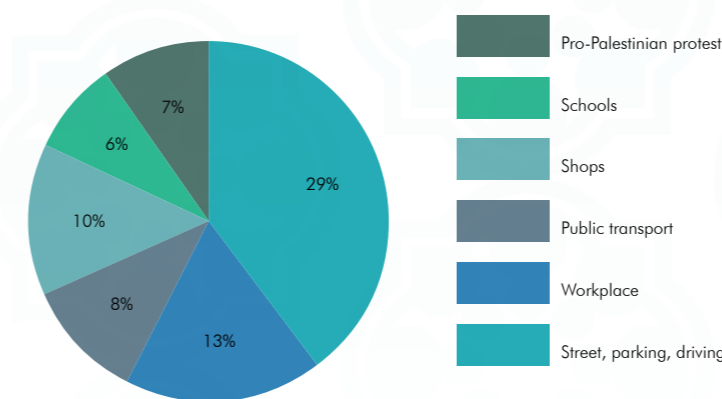
Unsurprisingly, places where diverse groups of people come together (public places, workplaces, educational settings, etc) are the locations of the most reported incidents of Islamophobia.

When broken down by gender, some important concepts are revealed:

Street, parking, driving — Male 13 — 19% (of all location incidents for male Muslims); Female 62 — 32% (of all location incidents for female Muslims)
Workplace — Male 8 — 12%; Female 26 — 13%
Public transport — Male 1 — 2%; Female 21 — 11%
Shops — Male 7 — 10%; Female 20 — 10%
Schools — Male 10 — 15%; Female 6 — 3%
Pro-Palistinian protest — Male 6 — 9%; Female 11 — 6%

Female
Male

9. Top 5 sites of incidents for males and females

Note: total number of incidents listed here and in all cases involving gender split is lower than the overall figure reported above due to some incidents not having the gender of the victim reported, either because victim chose not to list it, or because they saw it as irrelevant to the incident (eg, graffiti or hate mail)

Pro-Palestinian protest — 7%
Schools — 6%
Shops — 10%
Public transport — 8%
Workplace — 13%
Street, parking, driving — 29%

10. Top 5 overall sites for both genders – as a percentage of overall site incidents

For both female and male Muslims, the street, driving, and parking was the location of the most incidents, being the site of a quarter of all reports to the Register (25.2%). Road rage in Australia has also increased since 2021,[5] making these volatile and potentially risky sites for drivers to exhibit hostility and even violence towards Muslims. While this was the most common location to receive Islamophobia for males and females, the experience was quantifiably more serious for

Muslim women: nearly five times the incidents against female Muslims on the street, driving, or parking compared to male Muslims occurred (n= 62 compared to n= 13).

The second most common site of incidents for male and female Muslims combined was the workplace. The workplace was the location of 12% of the overall reports for all Muslims, but again the situation in raw numbers was more serious for Muslim women: **women reported more than three times the number of Islamophobic incidents at workplaces than men (n= 26 compared to n = 8).** **This is even more significant when we consider that Muslim women are under-employed compared to Muslim men in Australia,[6] and thus the number of Islamophobic incidents reported about Muslim women is disproportionate to their numbers in the workplace.**

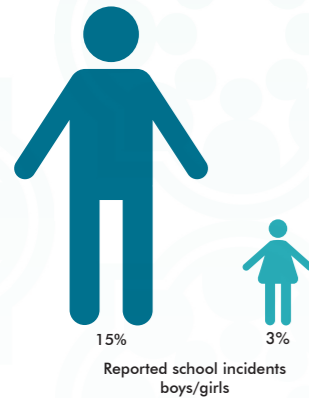
8   26
Reported workplace incidents
male/female
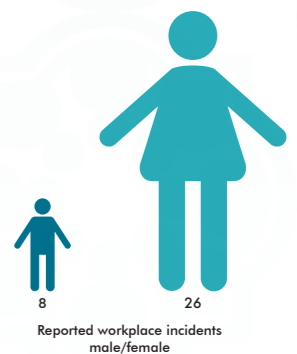
Shops and shopping centres again featured prominently for male and female Muslims. It was the third most common site of Islamophobia for female Muslims, and the fourth for male Muslims. Similar to discussions about the street, parking, and driving and the workplace, while the proportions were similar (shops made up around 9% of incident sites for both female and male Muslims) the actual number of reported incidents

against female Muslims at shopping centres was nearly three times the number reported by male Muslims at shopping centres (n= 20 compared to n= 7).

While most of the places in the five most common incident sites were similar for female and male Muslims, **public transport was a notable exception. It was the third highest location of incident for female Muslims with 22 incidents forming 11% of the overall incidents against female Muslims, while it did not appear anywhere in the top five for male Muslims. In fact, there was only one incident reported against male Muslims on public transport for the entire two-year study period.**

School was the only location to receive a higher number of cases reported against Muslim boys than girls. Schools were the second most common incident site for male Muslims, but did not feature in the top five list for female Muslims. **Of all the reported incidents at schools, boys made up 63% of them.**

15%   3%

Reported school incidents boys/girls

Schools made up 15% of the incidents reported for Muslim boys compared to 3% for Muslim girls. In raw numbers, there were ten incidents against boys at school compared to 6 for girls, indicating as a proportion of the overall incidents against both genders and total incident numbers, schools were a site of greater reported Islamophobia for boys than girls. Given the much lower number of overall reported incidents for male Muslims, the high number of incidents reported for Muslim boys at schools, particularly in comparison to girls, is particularly noteworthy.

These findings demonstrate areas for specific place-based interventions to address and reduce Islamophobia against Muslim women and girls and Muslim men and boys in targeted ways. While overall Islamophobia against both female and male Muslims was present in all listed spheres and should be tackled as such, the data indicates particular areas for females and males can be loci for targeted attention.

Recommendations:

- Lack of safety on streets for Muslims, and particularly Muslim women, needs urgent focus, as streets being deemed unsafe causes isolation and exclusion by targeted groups. Increased security (street lights, patrolling support staff) and campaigns to teach bystanders how to support victims is warranted. This is also required for shopping centres, who could run advertising campaigns inside centres that support inclusion and safety, and increase security measures

- Road rage against Muslims, and particularly Muslim women, warrants particular focus and attention from traffic authorities

- Workplace Islamophobia, particularly against Muslim women who are under-represented in the workforce, can be tackled with stricter workplace policies, support for victims to know their rights and report discrimination, and funding for cultural competency training in the workplace

- The public transport statistics against Muslim women and girls in particular is highly concerning and requires urgent attention through increased and targeted security, and campaigns to promote inclusion. Bystander education and campaigns should also be employed.

- Targeted Islamophobia training at schools that focus particularly on the experiences of boys should be supported and rolled out by the Department of Education, including a focus on bullying and school responsibilities and duty of care to all Muslim students

"The incident occurred one week ago. I feel traumatized and extremely anxious. I have had panic attacks and nightmares. I have also been unable to work."
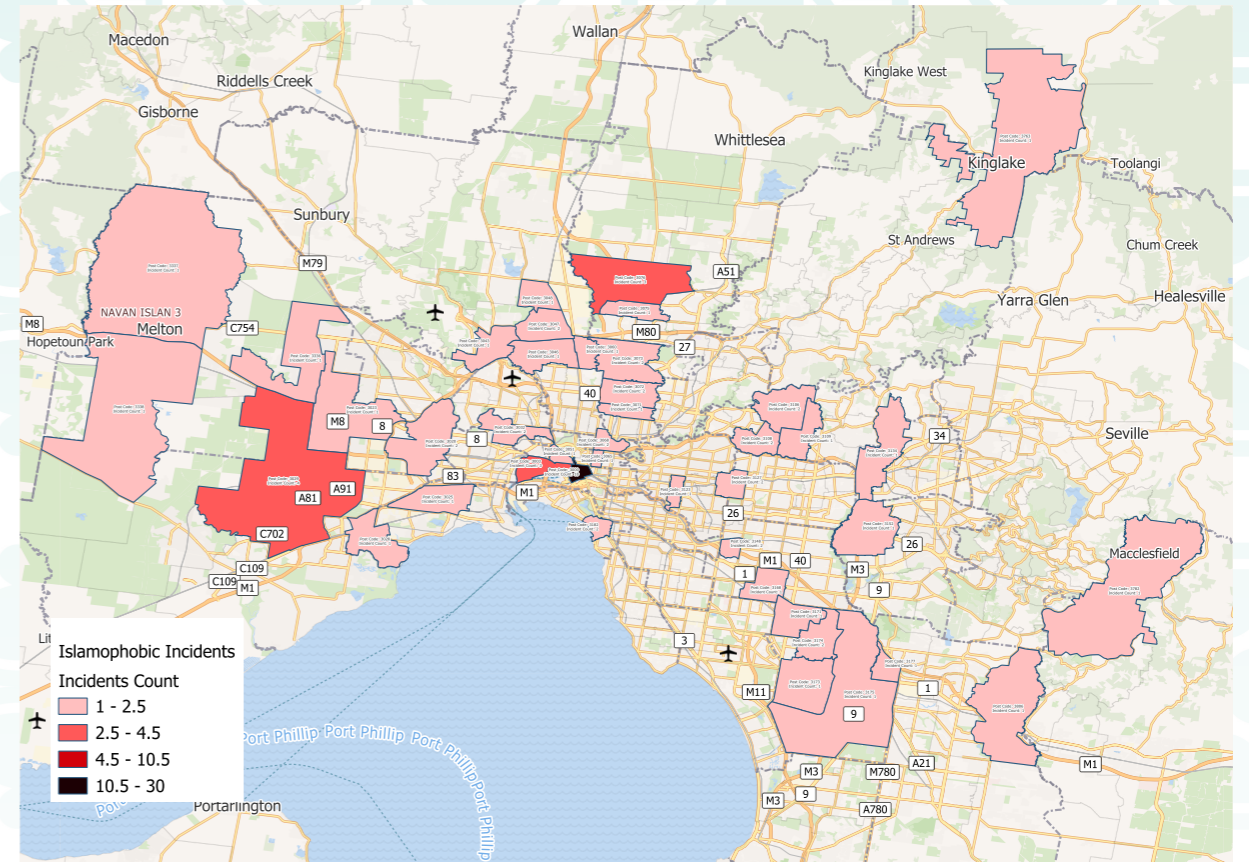

Incident map Victoria
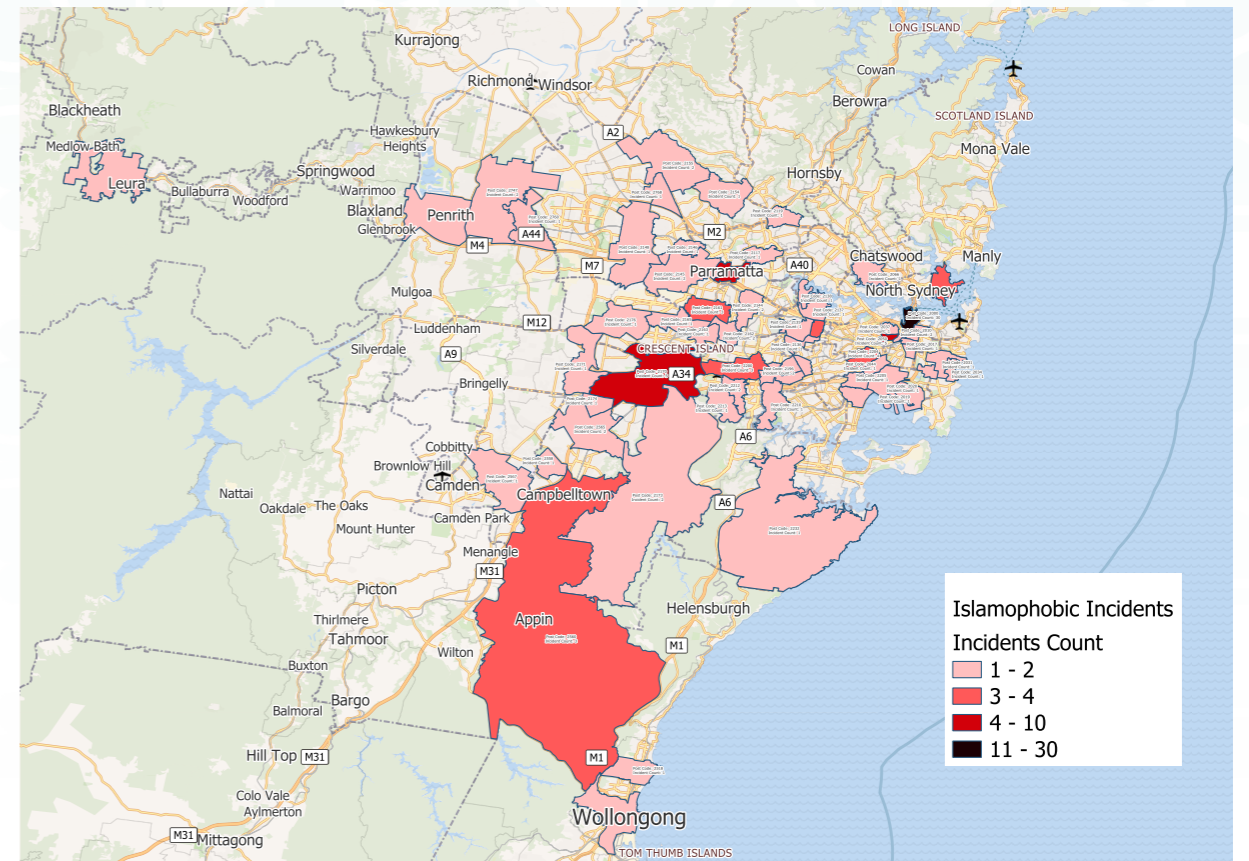
Incident map NSW

Gender and Islamophobia

It is well-established that Islamophobia is gendered in both belief and manifestation[7].

The latest data in this report affirms these findings, demonstrating that **Muslim women and girls were the most common victim of all types of attacks (including physical attacks) in nearly all settings, and that males are the most common perpetrators of these attacks.**

As can be seen in Table 1, female Muslims were considerably more likely to be the victims of reported in-person Islamophobic attacks (75%) than male Muslims (25%). This finding is consistent with previous reports that also indicated that approximately three quarters of all off-line or in-person Islamophobia is directed at females.

Legend:
- Male
- Female

25.2%
66

74.8%
195
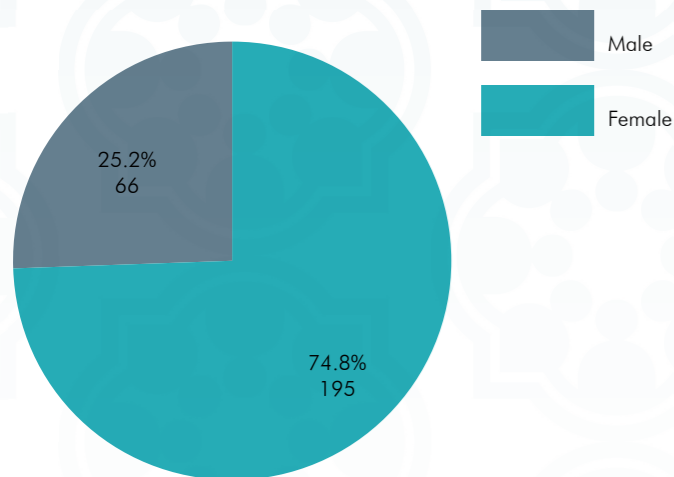
11. Incidents of off-line/in-person Islamophobia for Female and Male Muslims

Note that differences in the numbers of incidents in Table 1 from the total of 309 is due to reports of property damage and or written intimidation/harassment that were not in person, or where no gender was provided by the person reporting the incident.

Female Muslims (women and girls) were over-represented in both verbal abuse and physical assault incidents compared to male Muslims.

72% of all the incidents against female Muslims were verbal abuse, compared to 56% of all incidents against male Muslims.

Of all the incidents reported to the Register, 53% were instances of verbal abuse against female Muslims compared to 14% being male Muslims.
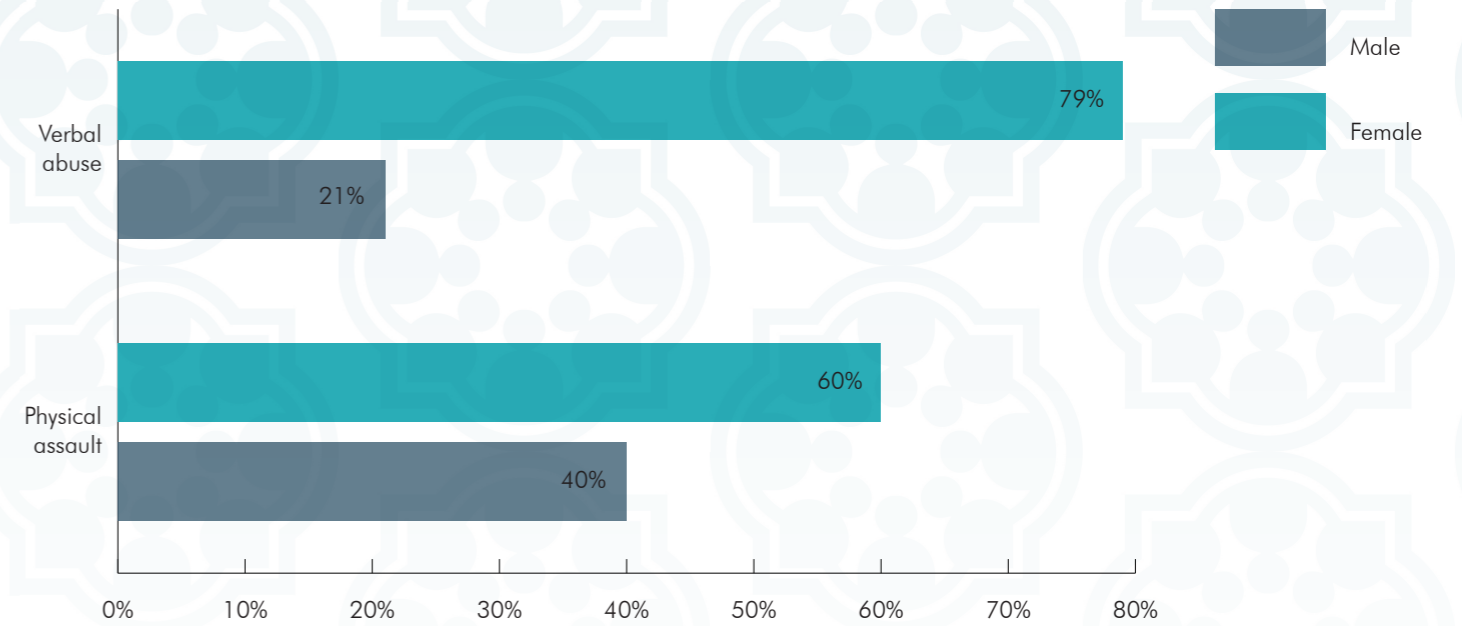
"I was walking into my local pool. A man intentionally crossed the road towards me so he could approach me and said, 'You are going to die, you are going to die, all Muslims are going to die. I can't wait for you to die. You are going to get killed and it will be great'. I was shaking. He walked ahead of me and continued to repeat it and turning around and laughing."

There were 15 incidents of physical assault against female Muslims, which made up 8% of all incidents against female Muslims. There were 10 incidents of physical assault against male Muslims, which made up 15% of all the incidents reported against male Muslims. Therefore, **female Muslims reported 33% more physical assaults (n = 15) than male Muslims did** (n = 10). Overall, physical assaults made up 6% (n = 25) of all incidents reported to the register.

Verbal abuse against female Muslims was not benign, and sometimes included threats of murder and rape:

"When walking to get into train station, a man said to me "I'll rip that scarf off your head and smash your head and rape you." (incident # 4212)

Legend:
- Male
- Female

Verbal abuse — Male 21%, Female 79%
Physical assault — Male 40%, Female 60%

12. Physical and verbal abuse, victim by gender

Legend:
- % of all incidents against male Muslims
- % of all incidents against female Muslims

Verbal abuse — n=140 72%, n=37 56%
Physical assault — n=15 8%, n=10 15%
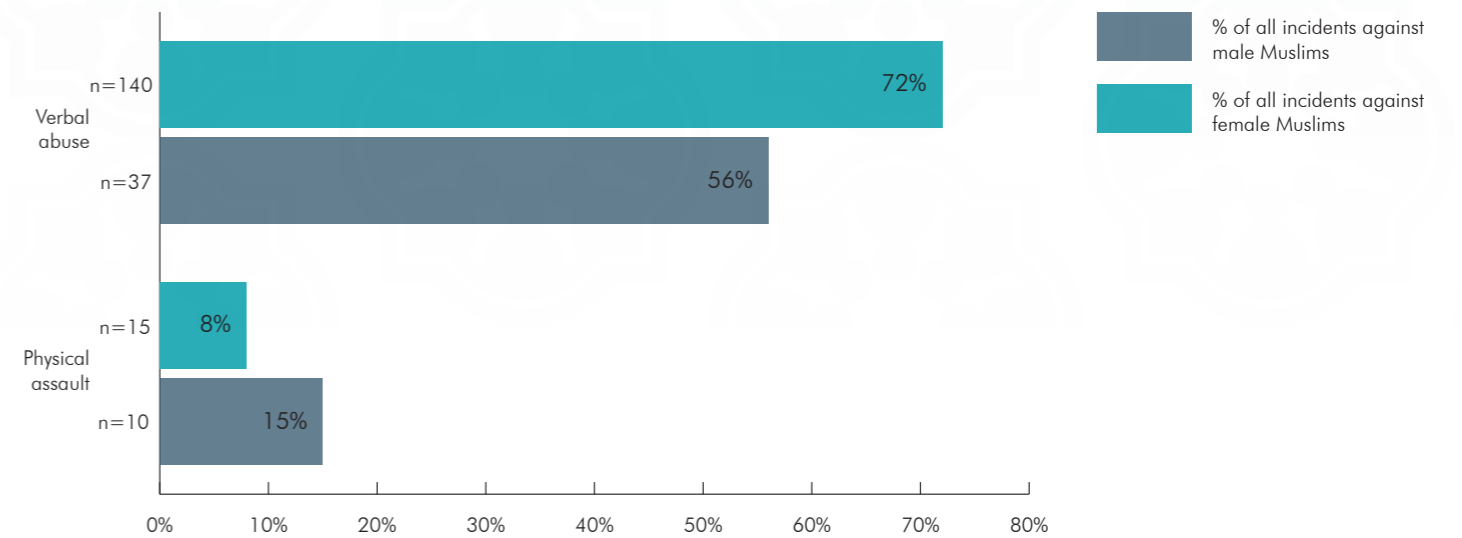
13. Physical and verbal abuse as a percentage of overall incidents of gender

"A man told me as I was walking along the beach, "I would like to take you for a shag in the bush and throw you over the edge of the cliff". " He also said, "what is that on your head?" about my hijab. He had a big dog, it looked like a German Shepherd." (incident # 2926)

"I am a single mum with two young children. My neighbour has been verbally abusing me and my children. She has stated that she will 'take my kids away and kill them', said 'go back to your country', and called out 'Allah Akbar'. (incident # 1848)

"I was walking into my local pool. A man intentionally crossed the road towards me so he could approach me and said, 'You are going to die, you are going to die, all Muslims are going to die. I can't wait for you to die. You are going to get killed and it will be great.' He repeated this same thing multiple times. I did not respond. I went into a state of shock. I was shaking. He walked ahead of me and continued to repeat it, turning around and laughing." (incident # 2362)

Such threats were not limited to individual female Muslims, but also included a threat made to a Muslim school, in which the perpetrator said he would come to the school with a knife and target Muslim school girls who wore hijab (incident # 2919).

Physical assaults against female Muslims were also serious. Women and girls having their hijabs pulled and ripped off, being spat at, and physical attacks requiring hospitalisation were reported:

Hijab being pulled[8]

"Walking down the street, a stranger approached me and, unprovoked, inquired about my ethnicity. Upon disclosing my Australian nationality, she made a derogatory comment about my being from Thailand (I am not from there). The encounter escalated as she requested to see my identification and passport. The woman then approached me physically, attempting to forcibly pull my scarf. I attempted to walk away, hoping she would let go. However, she persisted, refusing to release my scarf. In an act of self-defence, I gently tugged my scarf (without touching her), and quickly walked away." incident # 2683

"I was waiting for the bus, scrolling my phone. Suddenly, my hijab was pulled from the back. I was shocked and

turned around. I saw a man in his 30's. He was walking while turning back and was looking at me. I yelled, 'Oh my god', and quickly covered my hair. I did not move and kept looking at my phone. After 1-2 minutes, a lady approached me asking whether I was okay. I cried straight away. At the same time another guy in his 50's also came to me. Both of them stood beside me and we took the same bus." incident # 3161

Being spat at

"I was walking with my children in Westfield when a man and his friend walked right up to me and spat on me then continued walking, I asked him why he spat on me and he said because you are Muslim. I was wearing my jilbab [long hijab and robe combined]. I was extremely terrified as I was with my young children and was fearful of my safety." incident #3175

Serious physical assault

"I was sitting in the food court in a shopping centre with my 5 kids when **an unknown lady came from the back of my head and yelled out 'F*** Muslims' and punched me in the head, knocking me out in front of my kids.** I did make a police report and was admitted to hospital, where **a CT scan showed my nose was broken. I have had one surgery to fix the break, however I now need another** to fix the nose and correct my breathing. **Myself and my kids are seeing a psychologist for the trauma as my kids are very much traumatised.** We don't leave the house unless it's necessary as we have a fear that it will happen again.

This lady that assaulted has seen me with a hijab and attacked me. I was unconscious for a few minutes and my kids ran away scared as she went to hit them too. My youngest was 3 and he fled the scene as he was scared. A stranger found him at the car park, running onto the road." incident # 2309

"I was getting ready to take my children out for a walk, including my toddler who is autistic. We were about to leave when a man, without a shirt, came towards me and attempted to lunge at me. He demanded that I hug him. I refused and he started abusing me. He said, 'You fucking Muslims. You fucking black Muslim refugee. You are all fucking bad. You fucking Muslims.' I got scared and ran into the house and locked the door. He came to the door and banged on it. He had a wine bottle and some gas containers. I was scared he was going to burn us. My 18 year old son went out and confronted him. He attacked my son and swore at him. We called the police and they came around 6pm, so for 2 hours he abused us. He has been charged and given a sentence of 4 weeks. He said that he will come back and hurt us. My kids and I are so scared. My eldest daughter has quit work as she's scared to leave the house. We feel so unsafe. I have been through a Civil war and never have I felt so unsafe." incident #3323

"A girl came up to my friend and said, "Can I pat your dog?" referring to her toddler in the pram. Then she said to her, "Go back to your country", and tried to pull off my friend's hijab repeatedly. She also punched her in the face numerous times, while other teenagers filmed the incident on their mobile phones." [News updates of this incident report the Muslim woman victim was hospitalised over this attack][9] incident #4222

Muslim women and girls:

- were 79% of the reported victims of verbal abuse

- were 60% of the victims of physical abuse (female Muslims reported 33% more physical assaults than male Muslims did)

- were 95% of the victims of reported incidents on public transport

- were 74% of reported incidents at shops

- were 83% of reported incidents on the street, parking, or driving

- were 100% of the victims of spitting incidents, either as the only victim (71%) or as a victim alongside a male victim (29%)

- experienced nearly five times the number of Islamophobic incidents on the street, driving, or parking compared to male Muslims

- reported more than three times the number of Islamophobic incidents at workplaces than men, which is particularly significant given Muslim women are under-employed compared to Muslim men in Australia

"My mind is on high alert (fight/flight response is constantly switched on)- fear of wearing a hijab and getting verbally and/ or physically harassed or assaulted."
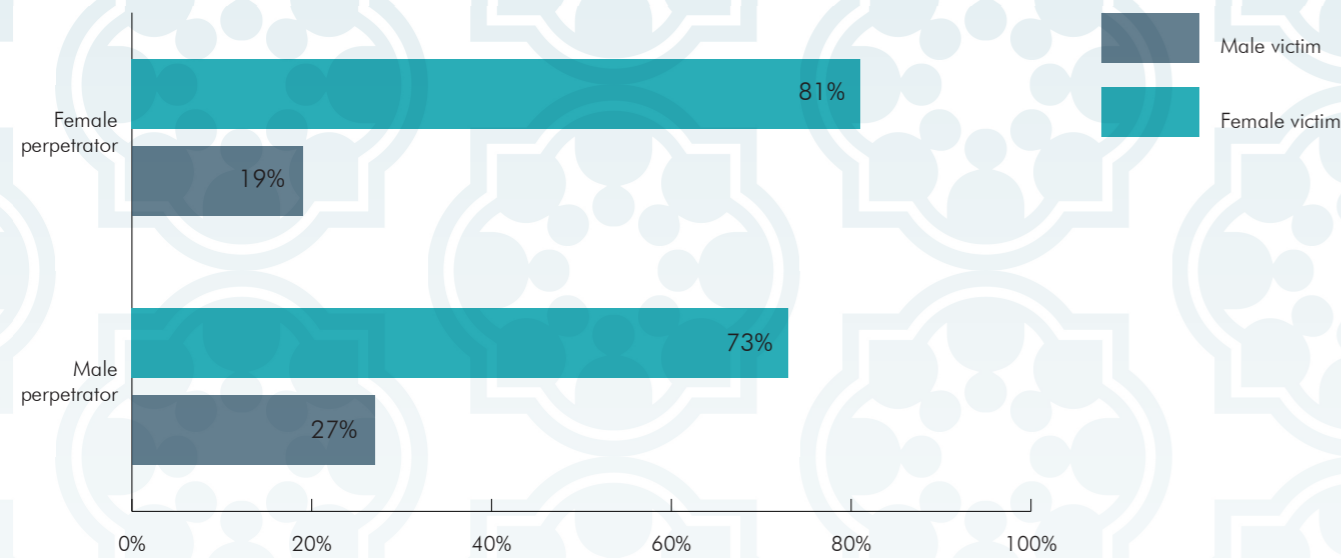
14. Gender of perpetrator and victim

Men and boys were the perpetrator of 72% of all Islamophobic incidents, regardless of the gender of the victim.[10]

When the perpetrator was male, 73% of the victims were female Muslims and 27% of the victims were male Muslims. When the perpetrator was female, 81% of the victims were female Muslims, and 19% were male Muslims. Thus, regardless of whether the perpetrator was male or female, Muslim women and girls were much more likely to be the victims.

Identifiable Muslim women and girls (that is, female Muslims who wore the hijab – headscarf – or the niqab – face-veil) were much more likely than other groups to be the victims of all forms of Islamophobia:
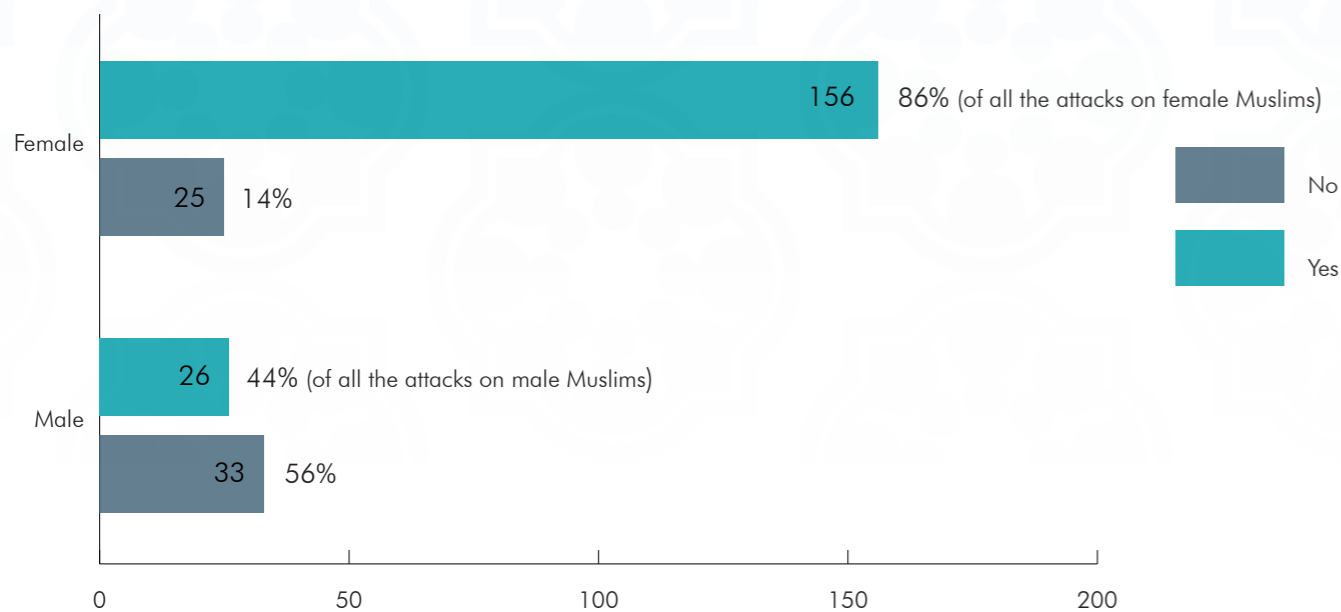
15. Was the victim wearing any visible religious markings (hijab, niqab, prayer cap, robe, beard etc)?[11]

"I was walking with my children in Westfield when a man and his friend walked right up to me and spat on me then continued walking. I asked him why he spat on me, and he said, "Because you are Muslim". I was wearing my jilbab [long hijab and robe]. I was extremely terrified as I was with my young children and was fearful of my safety."

The above data demonstrates that Muslim women and girls are much more likely to be the victims of Islamophobic incidents than Muslim men or boys, whether verbal or physical, and in far more settings. Also significantly, males are much more likely to be the perpetrators of Islamophobic attacks against women and girls.

While the above statistics highlight the number of incidents of Islamophobic abuse against Muslim women and girls, to address this phenomenon, the gendered nature of this Islamophobia must be appropriately conceptualised. That Muslim women and girls are far more likely to be the targets of all forms of Islamophobia does not explain the complexity of the issue, nor provide solutions. This section will highlight critical findings from our latest data set to explain the nature of the gendered Islamophobia reported to the Register, and offer proposals for its treatment.

Gendered Islamophobia is a binary:

Gendered Islamophobia is often conceptualised as what happens to Muslim women, and the fact that Muslim women are the disproportionate victims of Islamophobic incidents. While this is true, it misses the crucial prior step - framing that facilitates this fact.

Stereotypical ideas about Muslim women that have persisted for many decades are that they are oppressed, submissive, and meek individuals without agency, power, or voice. For this stereotype about Muslim women to exist, it requires the opposite (also longstanding) stereotype to exist about Muslim men: Muslim women are oppressed because Muslim men are oppressive. Muslim women are submissive because Muslim men are domineering. Muslim women are meek because Muslim men are violent. Muslim women have no power or voice because Muslim men are controlling. These stereotypes about Muslim men and Muslim women cannot exist in isolation; each requires the other. Muslim men cannot be oppressors unless Muslim women are oppressed, and vice versa.

This framing of Muslim men and women – both as separately stereotyped but also as intertwined - is present within this data set of reported incidents. The below case study reported to the Register shows the way gendered Islamophobia is interdependent:

"My husband and I were verbally attacked by a woman. I was wearing hijab and a long, full-sleeve dress at the beach. My husband and I were sitting on some rocks near the water. The perpetrator, a woman who was bikini-clad and walking in a towel aged 20-30 years, pointed at my husband. She yelled, 'Hey you! Why don't you let her wear a bikini? This is Australia and she is allowed to wear a bikini. You are in Australia. We are women, we have breasts, we should be allowed to wear a bikini at the beach!'
To this, my husband did not respond. I stood up and stated, 'It's my own choice to wear this'. Next, the perpetrator yelled, 'Well then, you're so blinded and controlled by him that you don't even realise. I'm Indian! Even I wear a bikini. This is Australia and you should wear a bikini at the beach!' She continued to yell racial insults directed at my hijab and my husband, this time covering her face with her beach towel.

My husband and I were hurt, especially as we were in a public area and had neither seen nor interacted with this woman before. To be yelled at by a stranger was quite humiliating." incident # 1938

This example encapsulates the way gendered Islamophobia operates. The perpetrator first blames the Muslim husband for the wife's clothing, assuming he is controlling her. When the Muslim woman asserts her agency over her clothing, the perpetrator dismisses this as the woman being dominated by her husband, while unironically then herself telling the Muslim woman how she should dress.

Understanding the symbiotic relationship between stereotypical views of Muslim men and women clarifies the antecedent of gendered Islamophobic abuse. It also provides another possible explanation for the disproportionate Islamophobic verbal and physical attacks of Muslim women – it is not merely because Muslim women are more identifiable due to the hijab (headscarf) or niqab (face-veil) some Australian Muslim wear.

Muslim women and girl's religious clothing undoubtedly plays a large role in identifiability and targeting. Of all the reports made to the Register by women and girls, 86% (n = 156) of those reports were about victims who wore religious clothing such as the hijab or niqab.

Identifiability of female Muslims is only part of the story, however. Some Australian Muslim men also have identifiable physical markers (beards, religious caps, robes), and these have been referenced by Muslim men and boys when reporting incidents to the Register. In one incident, because of his religious clothing (a robe and a traditional Muslim cap commonly called a kufi or a taqiyah), a Muslim child was labelled as Hamas: *"My friend was walking down the street and he was wearing his cultural clothes with a skull cap, when a school girl and her friends shouted, 'Hamas boy! Hamas boy!'"* (incident # 2682).

In another report, a Muslim man was targeted because of his beard:

"I was by myself and went to buy snacks from the supermarket. While I was busy browsing, this lady stood right next to me out of nowhere and kept staring and observing me. I kept busy and did not react. After a while, as I was done browsing and approached the check-out counter, the lady was being served and said to the lady at the check-out counter, 'You know what, we need to be really cautious, especially with these ones

with the beard'. I was shocked and disgusted but did not react." (incident #2929)

Given Muslim boys and men also reported being targeted due to their religious appearance, visibility and religious identifiability may not be the only factor when it comes to the high number of incidents reported about female Muslim victims. Certainly it plays a role, even a significant one, but we postulate it is the visibility of Muslim women in conjunction with the gendered stereotypes that exist about them that facilitate the greater number of attacks against Muslim women.

The disproportionate attacks on Muslim women are, alongside visibility, a consequence of the gendered Islamophobic beliefs raised above. Because Muslim women are seen as meek, they are also perceived as an easier target of Islamophobic attacks than Muslim men who are seen as violent and domineering. Perceived victim vulnerability is a recognised motivator in the targeting of crime by perpetrators,[12] and Muslim women, in stark contrast to Muslim men who are seen as aggressive and domineering, are widely perceived as weak and submissive. The stereotypes of Muslim women as oppressed creates something of an ideally vulnerable target to the would-be Islamophobic perpetrator – they are identifiable and they are seen as easier targets. Thus, the gendered Islamophobic beliefs about Muslim women may be regenerative, leading to and creating more gendered Islamophobia attacks.

"A man told me as I was walking along the beach, "I would like to take you for a shag in the bush and throw you over the edge of the cliff"." He also said "what is that on your head?" about my hijab."

Finally, we consider the likelihood of reporting. As previously stated in this report and other research supports, the number of Islamophobic incidents reported to the Register is likely an under-representation of the true number of events. It may, therefore, be the case that female Muslims are more likely to report to the Register than male Muslims. This is speculative at this point and requires further investigation.

We therefore believe that **visibility alone may be insufficient to explain the over-representation of Muslim women as the victims of Islamophobia** in the data, especially considering reports of Muslim men and boys also being targets due to physical identifiability at far lower rates than women. We propose that Muslim women and girls, due to gendered Islamophobic attitudes about their weak and submissive state, alongside identifiable markers, help create an "ideally vulnerably victim" in the minds of perpetrators, increasing the likelihood Muslim women are targeted. Thus, there is a **gendered abuse element to Islamophobia that needs to be considered alongside other forms of gendered abuse.**

This matters for this research, as it provides essential context for the data that emerges, and because it offers insight for countering Islamophobia. When tackling Islamophobia, focussing only on the outcome of this binary gendered Islamophobia – that is, the disproportionate attacks on women – will mean tackling the symptom, and not the cause.

Given the decidedly gendered nature of both victims and perpetrators, and the nature of many attacks, we propose instead of considering this only within a race or religious bigotry framework, that we consider these Islamophobic incidents also as a form of gender-based abuse, and tackle this abuse using approaches gleaned from other gender-based abuse approaches.[13]
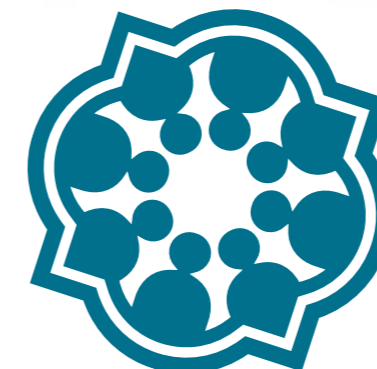
Recommendations:

- Train police, social workers, and legal professionals to recognise Islamophobic attacks as potentially gendered violence

- State and Federal public awareness campaigns that challenge stereotypes about Muslim women and highlight the gendered nature of Islamophobic violence

- Anti-gender based violence organisations to work with the Register to incorporate Islamophobia into their advocacy and support frameworks

- Ensure that Muslim women's voices are included in mainstream gender-based violence discussions

- State and Federal government commit to start regularly consulting Muslim women's organisations and leaders about their needs and suggestions

- Targeted funding and support for Muslims women's organisation, particularly those that focus on Islamophobia

"A man accessed our mosque, walked among the worshippers, and took photos. He then came with a plate of faeces from his vehicle and desecrated parts of the mosque, taking photos of his wrongdoing."

Anti-Palestinian hate & Islamophobia

As previously noted, reports to the Register spiked after October 7 2023. This date was a significant trigger point in the lifespan of this report and warrants specific attention. In previous *Islamophobia in Australia* reports, other consequential spark events similarly caused a spike in incidents and required dedicated analysis in the reports, such as the Christchurch mosques terrorist attacks in 2019. The surge in reports to the Register after Oct 7 were predominantly either Islamophobic, anti-Palestinian, or a combination of the two.

The intersectional relationship between Islamophobia and anti-Palestinian hate is complex and contested. There is a documented overlap and relationship between anti-Palestinian hate and Islamophobia, their roots, and their manifestations.[14] This phenomenon may have demographic roots, as Palestinian Muslims constitute approximately 98% of the population in Gaza and the West Bank, with Christians making up about 2%,[15] and some political rhetoric used in Gaza employs religious symbolism. Palestine holds religious significance in Islam; Jerusalem holds the Al-Aqsa mosque, which is Islam's third holiest site,[16] while also serving as a centre of Islamic scholarship during key historical periods.[17] Furthermore, the media often demonises or reduces the Palestinians' activism against the Israeli occupation, framing Palestinian nationalism and global support only as an Islamic struggle. This framing has contributed to the Islamisation of the Palestinian cause.[18] Reports to the Register indicate that Australian media have perpetuated these narratives, underscoring the impact of media representation on public perception.

It is worth noting that conflating Islamophobia and anti-Palestinian hate ignores the distinct experiences of Christian and Druze Palestinians, risks confusing political and racial bigotry with religious hate, and ignores the distinct aspects of anti-Palestinian hate that are not present in Islamophobia.[19]

Although these discussions and distinctions are very important, the Register does not take a position on these matters. Instead it collects and details the valid incidents reported to the Register (which included numerous reports of anti-Palestinian hate), and distinguishes elements of anti-Palestinian racism and vilification from Islamophobia when presented by reporters.

We therefore include[20] a separate section on anti-Palestinian hate and its connection to Islamophobia in this report for multiple reasons:

> 'We walked over to a park, and encountered a man who was eating a sandwich and a coffee. He got up and stated, "No wonder the Jews want to kill you." We thought we misheard him and asked him what he said. He abused us some more before leaving, and then he turned around and spat the sandwich he was eating at us. It flew through the air and hit my husband and me. My husband yelled, "why did you spit at us?", to which he then threw his coffee at us.

First, the Register received **reports from Palestinians** about their vilifying experiences post-Oct 7 which are important to document, particularly during this time of social unrest. This includes experiences such as, "I was at work when a patient walked past me and loudly proclaimed, *"how good is the bombing they're doing in the Middle East?"*. The patient knows I'm Palestinian." (incident # 2795)

Second, the Register received **reports from non-Palestinian, non-Muslims whose public support for Palestine caused incidents** they reported to the Register. Again, these reported instances are an important snapshot of the social climate Muslims, Arabs, Palestinians, and their supporters experienced during 2023-2024, for example:

> *"The incident occurred in our staff room during lunch. The perpetrator regularly makes comments about hating Arabs/ makes jokes about Islam and Ramadan etc. He is disgusting. On this day, someone said, "Tell her (meaning me) - she's a pro-Palestine supporter". To which I turned around and said, "Tell me what?" The perpetrator said, "I hope all the Palestinians die. I hope ALL ARABS die. Let them die." And then I obviously went off at him. It was right after the tent massacre in Rafah. Everyone else stayed silent. I left crying. I am white Australian with no ties to Palestine."* (incident # 3524)

Third, the Register received multiple reports demonstrating that the perpetrators of incidents were conflating Islamophobia and anti-Palestinian prejudice, and that the victims who reported the incidents similarly saw them as connected: *"I was carrying a Palestinian flag and a man approached screaming, 'You Muslims are all terrorists'."*

> The conflation of Islamophobia and anti-Palestinian racism in the three weeks after 7th October alone led to an increase of 1300% of reports to the Register compared to the same period the previous year.

In our research methodology, we developed anti-Palestinian bias indicators (discussed below in the Methodology section) to adequately code for these incidents.

Reported incidents at pro-Palestinian protests constituted 8% of the total reported incidents in 2023, all occurring after October 7. In 2024, incidents at pro-Palestinian protests slightly exceeded 5% of the total, while those reported at pro-Palestinian university encampments made up 8%. Additionally, incidents involving victims displaying pro-Palestinian symbols accounted for 8% of total incidents in 2023 and rose to one quarter of all reported incidents (25%) in 2024.

It must be noted that more than one victim who reported such incidents to the Register was neither Muslim *nor* Palestinian, but due to their public support for Palestine was subjected to abuse that sometimes conflated Islamophobia and anti-Palestinian hate, and these victims chose to report to the Register.

These instances included some of the most serious ones reported to the Register, including verbal insults, graffiti, violent physical assaults, and a genuine bomb placed on a victim's car:

Graffiti:

"I was walking on the Maribyrnong trail and was confronted with Islamophobic graffiti that read: October 7 Muslim Scum." incident # 3497

"Graffiti spray-painted on my driveway and footpath outside my house. Graffiti included several large swastikas, and text 'Death to Palestine' and 'Get out, Muslim cunt'. I have a small Free Palestine poster outside my front door but it is not very visible from the footpath." incident # 3516

Violent assault:

"6 friends wearing Keffiyehs (5x people of colour) entered elevator of our hotel lobby, following the drunk Caucasian assailant. The assailant noticed our keffiyehs and started calling us "Muslim terrorists", saying, "you fucking terrorist cunts", "you support these fucking terrorist Muslim cunts" and "I'll kill every one of you cunts". He started punching us, grabbing at our keffiyehs and pulling one person's keffiyeh around their neck and choking them. He prevented us from trying to protect each other or to escape the elevator. Eventually we resorted to restraining him until police came, about 10 minutes after the start of the incident. 5 of the 6 members of the group were physically assaulted, and I was the witness who filmed (I was out of his reach to be hit)."[21] (incident # 3718)

Bomb on victim's car:

'We have a Palestinian flag flying on our property and my partner displays a sign with information on the current situation in Gaza and the West Bank. An unknown individual left an improvised petrol bomb on my partner's vehicle, which was parked in our driveway. Attached to the device was a hand-written note reading: "ENOUGH! TAKE DOWN FLAG! ONE CHANCE!!!"' (incident # 2854)

This bomb was found by police to be a genuine explosive device and the perpetrator sentenced.[22]

A common site of conflated Islamophobic and **anti-Palestinian hate reported to the Register was around pro-Palestine protests, vigils, and university encampments.** It was not unusual for these statements to report violence including when children were present:

'We had finished at the Palestine rally in Melbourne city. We walked over to a nearby public park at 2.30pm, looking for a place for my husband and I to pray and for our children to play.
We encountered a man who was sitting there eating a sandwich and a coffee. He got up and stated, "No wonder the Jews want to kill you.
We thought we misheard him and asked him what he said. He continued to abuse us and state we were on his land and he was born here. He asked if we spoke English. My husband and I asked him to move on and I started to record him.
He abused us some more before leaving, and then he turned around and spat the sandwich he was eating at us. It flew through the air and hit my husband and I. My husband yelled, "why did you spit at us?", to which he then threw his coffee at us. We yelled at him to leave us alone. Another witness intervened and pushed him away, and he left.' incident # 3714

'Our group of mothers with babies were gathered on the steps of Parliament and were doing a silent demonstration/protest calling for a ceasefire.
An Israeli supporter came 2 hours after we set up and started to intimidate us, saying we were standing in his space.
While most of us got scared and moved away, one of our older members tried speaking to him to ask if there was any issue and why he seemed so rude.
He got violent after that, and began yelling and screaming at us, accusing us of taking his space. When bystanders saw him yelling and pushing women they intervened, however the perpetrator got extremely violent, began to scream and push people away.
He started verbally abusing and then threatened to burn us. He said, "You bloody terrorists. You Palestinians deserve to be killed and slaughtered this way. Israel is right in killing you all, you all should be completely wiped off. You are coming here and want all the space for yourselves." He did all this in front of women and children.

The police did not remove him from there, despite listening to our testimonies. Police did not take any action. We felt extremely fearful. We couldn't leave each other alone and had to wait till he left as we were scared to walk back to the car park.' incident # 2557

More incidents reported from university encampments are detailed in the "Education" section.

These incidents of conflated anti-Palestinian hate and Islamophobia contain some of the most extreme instances of violence and threatening attacks (such as the genuine bomb being placed on the car of a person supporting Palestine) reported to the Register during the 2023-2024 period.

Recommendations:

- State and Federal government funding for Palestinian organisations to support local Australian Palestinians and advocate against anti-Palestinian hate

- Enhanced training for law enforcement that clarifies definitions of Islamophobia and its connection to anti-Palestinian hate so police can better support victims

- Training for media and politicians to better under anti-Palestinian hate and its connection to Islamophobia and the role they have in perpetuating both

'We have a Palestinian flag flying on our property. An unknown individual left an improvised petrol bomb on my partner's vehicle in our driveway. Attached to the device was a hand-written note reading: "ENOUGH! TAKE DOWN FLAG! ONE CHANCE!!!"'
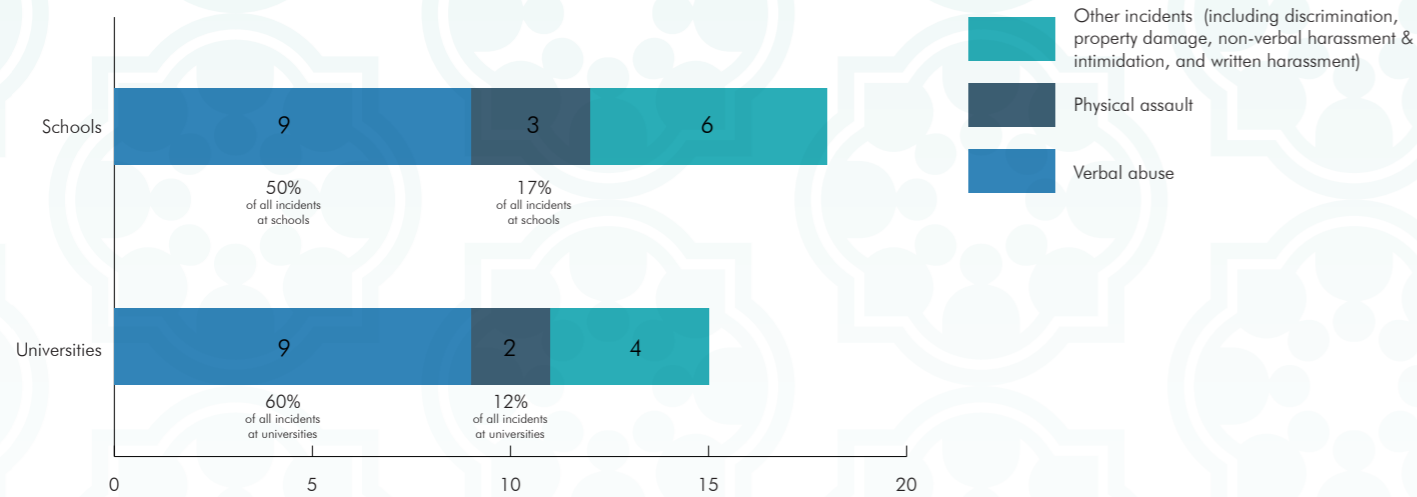
Education

The Register received 33 reports of Islamophobic and anti-Palestinian incidents occurring at educational settings (schools and universities) during the study period, which was 9% of all the reports made to the Register over the 2023-2024 period. Of these, 18 occurred in schools, and 15 in universities (including encampments at universities). Overall, verbal abuse and hate speech made up 54.5% of reported incidents at the combined educational settings, and physical assault made up 15% of incidents reported at educational settings. Islamophobic graffiti at a university was also reported.

saying he would specifically target schoolgirls who wore the hijab with a knife.

Schools and universities are micro-publics that replicate the sentiments and behaviours of broader society, and young people being subjected to hateful behaviour and violent attacks warrants particular focus and concern. The incidents reported to the Register are significant because young people – either under-aged school children or university students – are in learning environments that have a mandate for safety and inclusion. Such Islamophobic

Legend:
- Other incidents (including discrimination, property damage, non-verbal harassment & intimidation, and written harassment)
- Physical assault
- Verbal abuse

Schools: 9 (Verbal abuse) | 3 (Physical assault) | 6 (Other)
- 50% of all incidents at schools
- 17% of all incidents at schools

Universities: 9 (Verbal abuse) | 2 (Physical assault) | 4 (Other)
- 60% of all incidents at universities
- 12% of all incidents at universities

16. Physical and verbal incidents at schools and universities

Incidents for school children included verbal abuse, sustained bullying based on religion, and physical assault by other students, as well as discrimination and failure of duty of care by staff and school administration. A Muslim school received a serious threat of violence that required police presence. University students reported being threatened, abused, physically assaulted, and fireworks being thrown at them, and being inadequately supported by University administration. These reports from school and university students are not unique: a systematic review[23] of 44 international studies found all 44 studies included Muslim students (aged 5-18, and university students) who experienced religious discrimination.

These incidents reported to the Register again included girls who wore the hijab being targeted – **two incidents included schoolgirls whose hijabs were pulled by assailants, and the threat made to the Muslim school included the perpetrator**

incidents can have a profound and long-lasting effect on young people, and have been demonstrated through research to cause lowered grades and test scores, negative mental health impacts such as stress, anxiety, low self-esteem, and weakened national identification, and negative behaviour such as fear or reluctance to attend school or university[24] (Abu Khalaf et al, 2022; Thijs et al, 2018). Indeed, incidents reported to the Register (outlined below) mirrored these negative outcomes.

Schools

The Register received multiple reports of school children being bullied by peers explicitly due to being Muslim or because of their support for Palestine:

> "I started wearing the hijab at the start of this year and ever since I've been experiencing racist jokes and comments, like, 'towel head', 'bomber', '9/11', 'Taliban', 'stupid hijabi bitch', and I have had pork thrown at me." incident # 2162

> "After BTN [featuring a segment on the war on Gaza] was aired in the classroom, my son was called a "terrorist, because you support Palestine". This was said by a child in year 5 to my son in year 5 in the classroom." incident # 2657

Such bullying incidents would sometimes escalate to physical assaults on school children:

> "My son was targeted by nine boys from his school. He has been harassed both physically and verbally while being at this High school. They kept calling him "terrorist, bomber, Osama bin laden" and they also physically attacked him." incident # 3063

> "My daughter, Aaliyah, was verbally abused and physically bullied by two female classmates. They began by verbally taunting her, suggesting she should "go back to her home country", and making jokes about her ethnicity. They hit her bag and claimed there were bombs inside, labelling her as a terrorist. Aaliyah reported it to a teacher, but nothing happened. Another day, the two girls abused her again, and tried to pull off Aaliyah's hijab. Aaliyah tried to defend herself and one of the girls kicked Aaliyah. Aaliyah reported this to the teacher again, but was warned she might be suspended for defending herself. Our daughter does not want to go back to school at all now. She broke down in tears and even suggested homeschooling to avoid facing harassment." incident # 4206

Violent Islamophobia was not limited to attacks from other children. The Register also received reports of physical assaults and threats of violence made by adults on school children. This included an incident of a Muslim school girl on a field trip:

> "My daughter was traveling home from a school excursion by train with a large group of students all escorted by their teachers. On the platform someone pulled off my daughter's hijab. The teacher reported

to me later that the perpetrator also made racist comments." incident # 4813

And a Muslim school in Melbourne reported receiving a threatening phone call, in which the perpetrator *warned he would come to the school with a knife to harm students, and specifically target schoolgirls who wore the hijab* (incident # 2919). As well as the school needing to organise onsite security, the threat was serious enough for police to attend the school, and close down surrounding streets.

Reports were also made during 2023-2024 of **institutional** discrimination made to students either because they were Muslim, or because of their support for Palestine. **This included school teaching, support, or leadership staff mocking their need for halal food, ignoring reports of Muslim students being bullied for their religion, and preventing students from praying at school,**

> *"My two sons were praying Dhuhr salah (midday prayer) and a teacher interrupted their prayer by walking through the rows and moving their belongings around. The teacher asked them to stop praying, which they did. They were then told they would no longer be allowed to pray at school."* (Incident # 3521)

Educational institutional discrimination reported to the Register also included preventing students from wearing clothing

that demonstrated support for, or cultural connection to, Palestine. This included a teenager from a Sydney High school who was banned from attending his formal for wearing a keffiyeh to his Year 12 graduation. The teenager, who had Palestinian heritage, attended a school that had a practice of encouraging students to wear cultural attire and had allowed other students to wear cultural attire. The report to the Register stated that wearing the keffiyeh was *"totally appropriate, as culture can be a defining practice for many, and the school has encouraged this in the past."*

Another incident reported to the Register demonstrated how any item with reference to Palestine could be deemed as "harmful" by schools:

> *'My son wore a t-shirt to school that had "Palestinian Mineral Soap" written on it. He told his school he supports the Palestinian people and is opposed to genocide. The school told him that it was 'harmful behaviour' to wear this, because they have Jewish students who may feel that it is hostile. I told them in an email that it is not antisemitic, and I understand they have a uniform policy but it's not ok to call his t-shirt "harmful". The principal then emailed me threatening to suspend my son for wearing this t-shirt, claiming again that it is 'harmful behaviour'. This is clearly anti-Palestinian racism, I am appalled.'* incident # 4360

These incidents reported by school children and their parents demonstrate a failure by schools to understand, protect, and support Muslim students, and a lack of awareness of the significant impact such Islamophobic discrimination has on students. As the student above, who reported being abused at school when she started to wear hijab, said, **"it has made me feel upset and most of all frustrated that schools and teachers are allowing this to happen, and that is normalised, and the people who say these racist comments don't get any punishment."**

When considering the gendered element of Islamophobia, schools were an important outlier. **Schools were the only location to receive a higher number of cases reported for Muslim boys than girls.** Of all the reported incidents at schools, boys made up 63% of them.
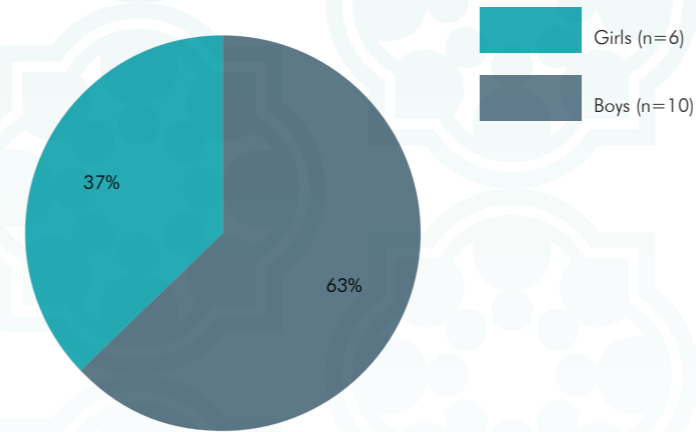
17. Overall incidents reported at school by gender

Schools made up 15% of the incident sites reported for male Muslim compared to 3% for female Muslims. In raw numbers, there were ten incidents against boys at school compared to 6 for girls, indicating as a proportion of the overall incidents against both genders and total incident numbers, schools were a site of greater reported Islamophobia for boys than girls. Given the much lower number of overall reported incidents for male Muslims, the high number of incidents reported for Muslim boys at schools, particularly in comparison to girls, is particularly noteworthy.

Universities

There were 15 reports made to the Register about incidents on campuses during 2023-2024.

These contained this threatening graffiti found in a male bathroom at a university in Victoria, which praised terrorist Brenton Tarrant (the Australian who killed 51 Muslims in two mosques in New Zealand) and advocated killing all Muslims:
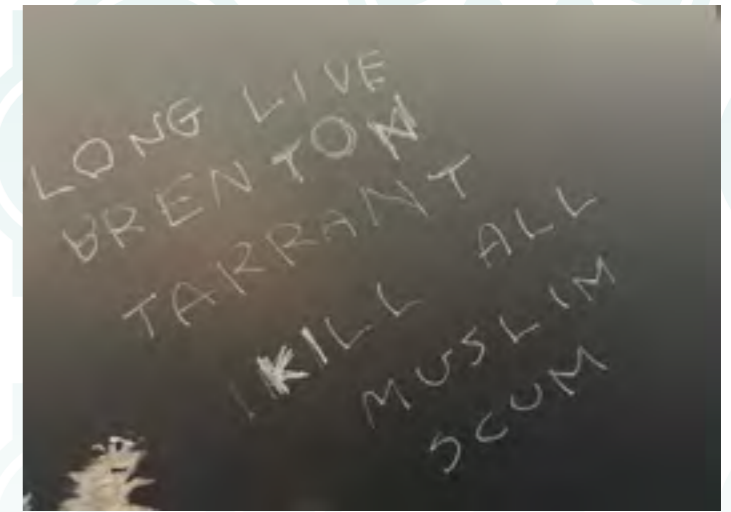
The study included the period of university encampments for Palestine, and the Register received multiple reports of harassment and abuse of attendees at encampments. These included verbal abuse, such as: *"I was at the University encampment. Female students were peacefully sitting by their tent, and two men and one woman shouted the "C" word at us and walked away."* (incident # 3331). Another incident demonstrates the way verbal insults and Islamophobic tropes of demanding Muslims unceasingly condemn terrorism was used alongside unauthorised filming to later defame protesting students online with Islamophobic insults:

> *"I was at the encampment helping with a bake sale and drawing on our chalkboard. A group of people, men and women, approached our camp. The woman held phones to our faces and asked us if we believed in October 7th, if we don't support Jewish women's rights, and if we condemn Hamas. To the visibly Muslim women, a man then proceeded to make the statement, 'It seems as though the men are silencing and oppressing the women here. Women, we believe in your freedom of speech and we believe in all of your rights'. This video was then uploaded to Instagram and we were labelled as "a Taliban group"."* (incident # 3432)

This incident again demonstrates the way gendered Islamophobia manifests as both assuming the worst of stereotypes while at the same time reinforcing and recreating them. The Muslim women are automatically declared to be "silent and oppressed", because the Muslim men present must be "silencing and oppressive". The perpetrators, noting their apparent distinction to the Muslim men there, state they "believe in your freedom of speech and all your rights" to the Muslim women present, and yet then proceed to label these same Muslim women as the Taliban to their online audience, negating their freedom of speech and rights and branding them terrorists.

Incidents reported at university encampments also included harassment and physical assault:

"Perpetrators came to the encampment, started to film, and opened tents trying to see what was inside. They then stopped at the women's tent, trying to intimidate them. A male Muslim student saw the female Muslim students being intimidated and ran from the other side of the quadrangle to help them. When he was about five metres away from the women's tent, a male perpetrator pushed his hand out trying to stop him running, hitting his right shoulder, and making him stumble. Security was there to witness. Security called police and students called police, too. Police only arrived 1.5h hours later, only interviewed 1 person far away from the camp, and didn't even approach the camp. Those nine perpetrators stayed on campus and had lunch on campus." incident # 3414

The above reports also demonstrate the students' frustrations with the lack of institutional and law-enforcement support for the attacks they received.

Another incident reported to the Register included serious assault, when lit fireworks were thrown into their encampment in the middle of the night targeting students, risking serious injury and fire.

The encampments were a challenging time for universities to navigate. However these incident reports demonstrate that students were on the receiving end of significant Islamophobic and anti-Palestinian abuse and that they do not feel they were supported adequately by universities, nor that Islamophobia and anti-Palestinian sentiment was taken seriously.

Recommendations:

- Coordinated Islamophobia training for all Vice Chancellors groups (VCGs) at all universities in Australia, focusing on rectifying policies, hearing student experiences, and better duty of care to Muslim students. Similar anti-Palestinian hate training should be run by an appropriate Palestinian body for all universities.

- Coordinated Islamophobia training for all school principals and deputy-principals at all schools in Australia, focusing on rectifying policies, hearing student experiences, and better duty of care to Muslim students. Similar anti-Palestinian hate training should be run by an appropriate Palestinian body for all schools. Similar training for the Department of Education.

- Training on Islamophobia, anti-Palestinian hate and trauma-informed service delivery for National Student Ombudsman (NSO) staff

- Targeted Islamophobia campaigns at schools that focus particularly on the experiences of boys should be supported and rolled out by the Department of Education, including a focus on bullying and school responsibilities and duty of care to Muslim students

Psychological impacts of Islamophobia

Islamophobia has impacts on numerous areas of life including access to education, transport, medical/health settings, and employment. Aside from the obvious barriers arising from blatant acts of Islamophobia, the ongoing psychological and emotional consequences arising from Islamophobia (e.g., fear, sadness, humiliation, anger) also influence Muslims willingness to access and engage with these important areas of life. Systematic research reviews show that Islamophobia is associated with poorer mental health (greater rates of anxiety, depression and stress, avoidance of health care settings, and a host of negative health behaviours and outcomes).[25] Similarly, stress and fear arising from Islamophobia appears to be related to educational and career choices,[26] which further exacerbates inequalities for Muslims.

Because of these associated consequences, the Register offers free counselling and psychological support to all who have stress/trauma from Islamophobia. Accordingly, the Register collected data from victims of Islamophobia on the potential psychological and emotional impacts. Specifically, Muslims victims were asked to indicate whether they felt one or more of the following psychological/emotional responses to the Islamophobic event:

1. Sadness/worry (unhappy, upset, concerned, nervous)

2. Fear/being scared (panicking, feeling unsafe/insecure)

3. Humiliation (shame and embarrassment)

4. Disappointment (despair, helpless, surprised/shocked)

5. Anger (annoyance, fury, irritation, frustration, disgust, rage, sickened)

"We are all afraid to leave our house. My eldest daughter quit her job as she's scared to leave us alone".

Those indicating experiencing one or more of the psychological or emotional impacts were subsequently asked whether they felt any associated long-term impact from Islamophobia: Specifically, they were asked: Can you tell us if the incident left any long-term impact? If so, what type of impact?
The majority (86.6%) of Muslims reporting in-person Islamophobia (309) described one or more negative psychological or emotional responses, with an average of 2.8 per person. The most commonly reported emotion (194 people) was Sadness/Worry *(unhappy, upset, concerned, nervous),* with 175 people reporting Disappointment *(despair, helpless, surprised/shocked),* 175 people reporting Anger *(annoyance, fury, irritation, frustration, disgust, rage, sickened),* 161 people reporting Fear/Being Scared *(panicking, feeling unsafe/insecure),* and 100 people reporting Humiliation *(shame and embarrassment).*
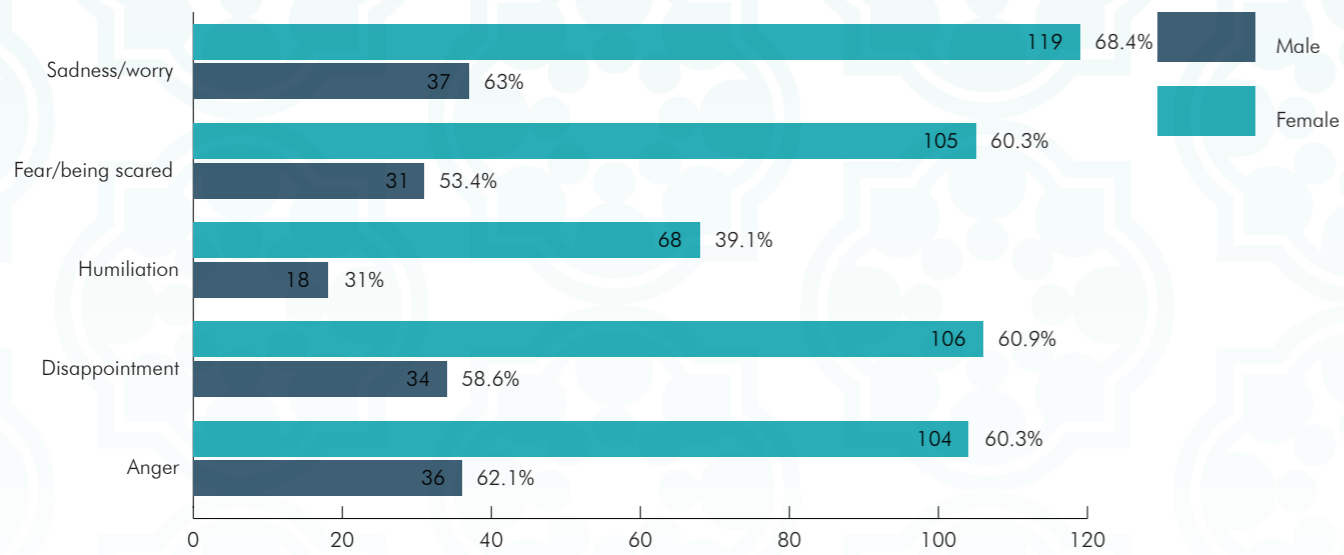Table X below provides a breakdown of the different types of emotions experienced by male and female Muslim victims during and/or following the Islamophobic incident. We conducted chi-squared statistical analyses to see if there were

differences between females and males on the proportions of emotions. No statistically significant gender difference (p's > .05) was found with both groups experiencing similar frequencies of different emotions following Islamophobia, suggesting that while Muslim women and girls were more likely to be the victims of Islamophobia than men and boys, the impact on both genders was similar.

We also conducted statistical tests to assess if there was a difference in the emotional responses felt by females and males depending on whether the incident was an aggressive in-person (verbal and physical assaults) vs other forms of off-line/in-person Islamophobia (vandalism, written threats, etc). Again we found no statistically significant difference or interaction (all p's > .05).

"My mind is on high alert (fight/flight response is constantly switched on)- fear of wearing a hijab and getting verbally and/or physically harassed or assaulted - fear for Muslim women who visibly follow Islam - worried about the Islamophobia spreading quickly in community and impacting good citizens lives"

After experiencing abuse by a member of the public at her workplace Muslim victim # 2996 stated: *"I now am anxious every morning when entering the building and even for some time was continuously late due to panic attacks about entering the building."*

Note: Differences in total numbers of emotions for females and males in the table versus text is due to non-reporting of the gender of the victim in The Islamophobic Register.

18. Number and percentages of emotions following the Islamophobia for females and males

Note: Differences in total numbers of emotions for females and males in the table versus text is due to non-reporting of the gender of the victim in The Islamophobic Register.

Qualitative responses on the long-term impacts of Islamophobia:

One hundred and ninety-eight people provided qualitative responses regarding the long-term impacts of Islamophobia. Of those, 183 reported one or more long-term impacts on their own or their families and communities lives. The long-term impacts reported fell into a number of areas related to their mental wellbeing or general life. Fear and anxiety was identified by several individuals; for example, reporting on an incident of shouted verbal Islamophobic abuse experienced at night while walking near a Mosque *Female Muslim Victim # 2303* stated that:

Similarly, other reported effects on their mood, for example Muslim victim # 2991 reported that she and her children had received Islamophobic abuse from her neighbour when celebrating a birthday party and that because of the incident:

"My daughters were scared and (it) left me very depressed."

Others reported that fears raised by Islamophobia have impacted their perceptions of safety in public places. Following being spat on and abused in a park by a man, Muslim victim

#3714 wrote: *"My children were hurt and upset. We are traumatised and worried about being in public places."*

Similarly, after experiencing an assault and verbal abuse outside her home with her young children that reportedly resulted in a 4-week sentence for the perpetrator, victim 3323 stated that: *"We are all afraid to leave our house. My eldest daughter quit her job as she's scared to leave us alone".*

A consistent finding in the qualitative responses is that the fear and mental health impacts of their experienced Islamophobia affect most aspects of their life such as shopping and using public transport. For example, after being spat in the face at a shopping mall while with her young children victim #3175 said that:

"I am too scared to go shopping in non-Muslim populated areas especially with my children. I'm really heartbroken by the incident considering I'm a female and a revert. I'm Croatian and have never experienced such behaviour and am horrified by what our people face on a daily basis".

Similarly, victim #4218 reported feelings of fear, distress, and humiliation after being screamed and spat at by another passenger while on a train, but in reporting on the long-term impacts also stated: *"Yes I am now really uncomfortable to travel on public transport... I have lived over 20 years in Australia and never experienced such racism".*

Other victims reported incidents severely impacting their capacity to work, such as this victim who experienced a violent attack: *"The incident occurred one week ago. I feel traumatized and extremely anxious. I have had panic attacks and nightmares. I have also been unable to work."*

It is clear from the reports provided by victims of Islamophobia from 2023 to 2024 that such incidents do regularly affect
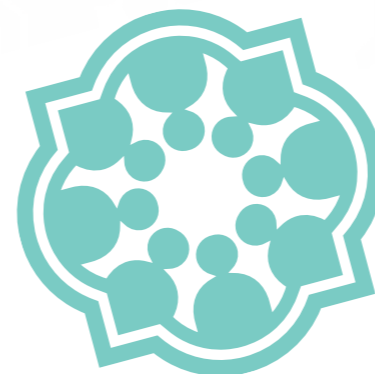
their mental health in a number of significant ways and for substantial periods of time. Additionally, the ongoing fear, anxiety and psychological distress appears to undermine some Muslims sense of safety in, and desire to utilise, everyday services such as public transport, and common life settings such as shopping centres and workplaces.

Recommendations:

• Substantial funding for psychological support for victims of Islamophobia through in-person and telehealth services. This can be one-on-one as well as facilitated support groups.

• Educate the broader community about the psychological and emotional effects of Islamophobia.

• Provide training on coping strategies, emotional resilience, and self-care for those impacted by Islamophobia.

• Funding for substantive research focused on the mental health impact of Islamophobia.

• Research into the economic impacts of Islamophobia (due to time off work, inability to visit shops) and educational impacts (time away from school, decreased marks, lowered performance)

Reporting Attitudes

Muslims appear to lack the intention to report Islamophobic incidents to relevant authorities, such as the Australian Human Rights Commission, the Anti-Discrimination Board NSW, or law enforcement in cases of personal assault or abuse.

Among the 309 cases documented in this report, **only 56 (18%) were reported to the police, 5 (1.6%) to the Australian Human Rights Commission, and 2 (0.6%) to the Anti-Discrimination Board NSW, despite the Register offering free services to support victims to report to any of these services should they wish.** Although these entities were listed as options in the reporting form on the Register's website, 63 (23%) of the cases were reported to alternative entities, such as work supervisors, school principals, or Islamic organisations.
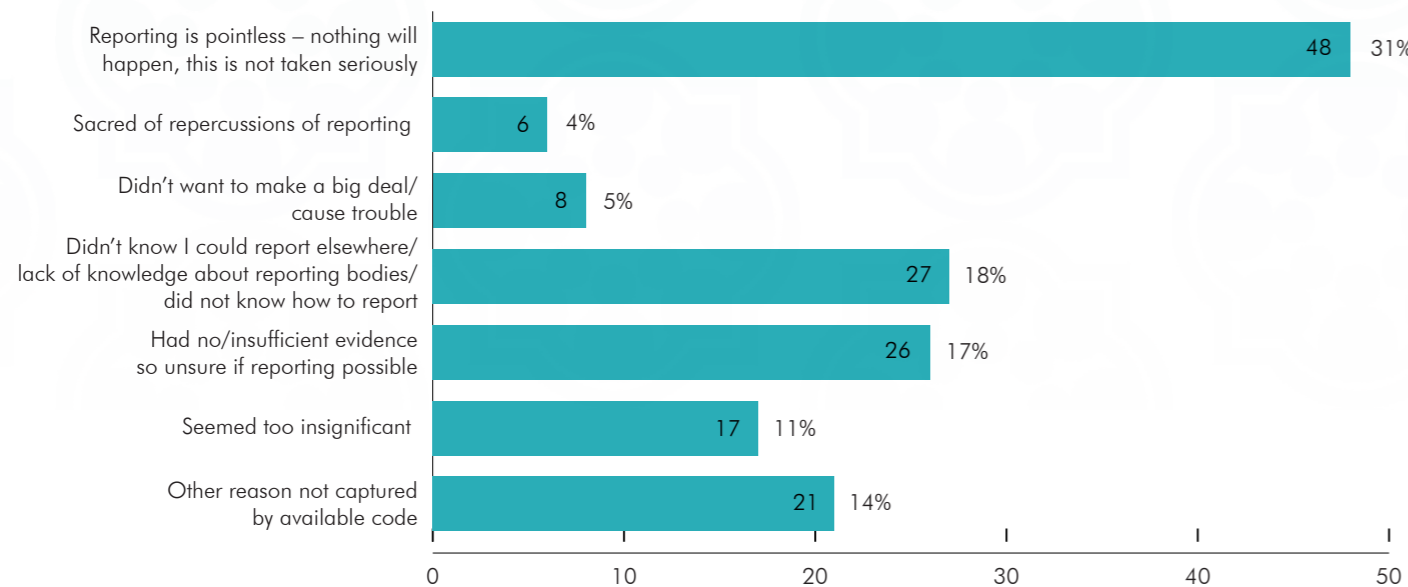
The 177 cases that opted not to report to any authority (Australian Human Rights Commission, Anti-Discrimination board NSW, law enforcement) represented a majority of 57% of the cases reviewed.

However, 141 individuals provided insights into their reasons for choosing not to report to the police, the Australian Human Rights Commission, or the Anti-Discrimination Board NSW:

Among these, 31% felt that reporting was "pointless," believing that "nothing will happen" or that "this is not taken seriously." Another 5% expressed concerns about not wanting to "cause trouble," while 4% indicated they were "scared of repercussions" from reporting. These insights, making up 40% of the reasons identified by respondents for why they did not report, suggest the need for initiatives aimed at bridging the trust gap through education and awareness between the Muslim community and these entities, particularly the police.

Moreover, a lack of knowledge about the reporting bodies and the reporting process emerged as a significant concern, accounting for 18% of the 153 responses. In comparison, 17% noted they were "unsure if they could report." This highlights the importance of education and awareness as a crucial policy recommendation.

These responses also demonstrate the crucial role the Register plays, being trusted to capture incidents, report them, and offer support services for a community that is untrusting or unaware of other reporting authorities.

Recommendations

- Awareness campaigns to increase Muslims' knowledge of reporting bodies and their rights under the law

- Islamophobia training for enforcement, including a focus on taking reports of Islamophobia seriously

- Federal government funding to support the work of the Register to ensure Muslims have a long-established community reporting mechanism they trust

Reason	Count	Percentage
Reporting is pointless – nothing will happen, this is not taken seriously	48	31%
Sacred of repercussions of reporting	6	4%
Didn't want to make a big deal/cause trouble	8	5%
Didn't know I could report elsewhere/lack of knowledge about reporting bodies/did not know how to report	27	18%
Had no/insufficient evidence so unsure if reporting possible	26	17%
Seemed too insignificant	17	11%
Other reason not captured by available code	21	14%

19: Reasons for not reporting, where respondents could provide more than one reason for why they did not report (153 responses provided from 141 people) n=153

ONLINE ISLAMOPHOBIA

Online Islamophobia

During the relevant period, the Register received 372 verified online incidents, of which 366 took place between the 1st of January 2023 and the 31st of November 2024. The verification process involved two key steps. First, individuals submitting reports were required to upload evidence of the incident, such as a screenshot or a link to the content. Second, the research team conducted a thorough review of all submissions to ensure that the reports were legitimate and accurately documented. This process helped confirm the authenticity of each case before inclusion in the dataset.

The majority of reported incidents occurred on social media platforms, with Facebook and Facebook Messenger being the most frequently cited, accounting for 30.6% (n=114) of cases. Instagram followed closely, representing 25.8% (n=96) of incidents. Twitter/X collectively accounted for 11.0% (n=41) of cases, while YouTube was cited in 3.0% (n=11) of incidents. Various websites or blogs contributed 5.1% (n=19) of cases.

Beyond social media, email harassment constituted 4.0% (n=15) of cases, highlighting the presence of direct and targeted attacks via digital communication. Additionally, 20.4% (n=76) of incidents fell under the "other" category, which includes various digital platforms, apps, and cases where the reported case happened on multiple platforms.

The timeline of incidents, presented in the next figure, illustrates a notable increase in reported online incidents following October 7th, 2023. Before this date, the average number of reported incidents per day was 1.06, with relatively low variability (SD = 0.25). However, after October 7, the daily average nearly doubled to 1.95 incidents, with a much higher variability (SD = 2.05), indicating a surge in reported cases. A statistical test (t-test) confirmed that this difference is not due to random variation (p < 0.001).

This finding suggests that the events of October 7 were a turning point, leading to a marked escalation in Islamophobic discourse in online spaces. This pattern aligns with trends observed in offline, in-person incidents, reinforcing the conclusion that the broader socio-political context during this period contributed to a rise in both online and offline expressions of Islamophobia.
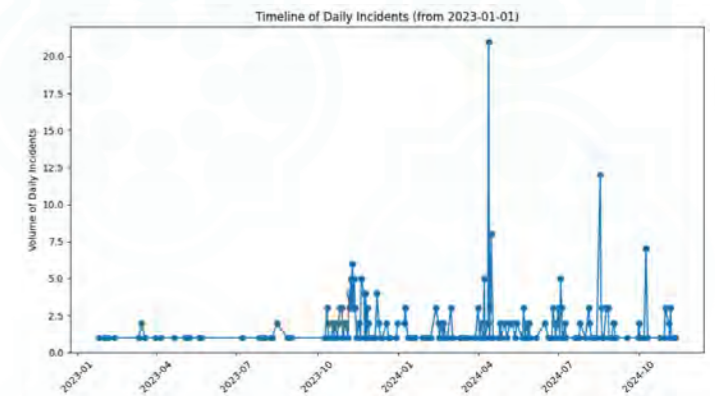
Only 36 of the 372 online incidents reported to the Register were direct attacks on individual Muslims or Muslim organisations via online digital media, such as targeted harassment via email (n=15) or social media or messaging platforms (n=21).

All other cases reflect public expressions of Islamophobia in news outlets and on social media, primarily in the form of social media posts, comments, news items, petitions, memes, and petition campaigns. These incidents are qualitatively different from direct harassment cases reported to the Register, as they capture manifestations of Islamophobic sentiment within public discourse. These are mostly reported by concerned citizens (both Muslim and non-Muslim) or identified by the Register staff. As the data collection methods for these public expressions of Islamophobia and Islamophobic discourse are not systematic, they cannot be reliably used to assess fluctuations and trends in Islamophobic sentiment within Australian public opinion during the relevant period, however they provide an important snapshot of the nature of reported online incidents during the study period across various platforms are targeting different groups (individuals/private incidents versus public/group incidents).

To provide context and to better understand trends of Islamophobic discourse during the relevant period, we also conducted an ad hoc data collection of tweets originating from Australia, specifically posted by Australian users, over the relevant period. This was done using a standardised approach to data collection, ensuring consistent sampling of discussions about Muslims and Islam in Australia. Within this dataset, we employed AI-based classification to identify Islamophobic tweets, that is, tweets expressing hostile, derogatory and dehumanising language, as the examples provided in this section demonstrate. Importantly, this analysis does not aim to quantify all Islamophobic incidents that occurred online during the relevant period. Rather, it seeks to provide context for interpreting these incidents and to examine whether there is a relationship between significant socio-political events—both overseas and domestically (such as terrorist attacks)—online Islamophobia and offline incidents of Islamophobia. This method allows us to contextualise the reports of online Islamophobia made to the register within broader trends in Australian public discourse and to capture the environment in which the public expressions of Islamophobia recorded in the register occurred.

The Register has previously documented reports highlighting biased or prejudiced portrayals in media and inflammatory content on social media.

Such public expressions are particularly significant because they contribute to shaping societal norms and attitudes. Decades of research on consensus theory demonstrate that individuals who harbour racist or prejudiced views are far more likely to voice or act on these views when they perceive them to align with the majority opinion. When public discourse—whether through news reports or social media commentary—affirms these biases, it emboldens individuals to express and act on their prejudices more openly.

Moreover, research has shown that political statements can legitimise racism by fostering a social climate where discriminatory beliefs and actions appear acceptable or even encouraged.

This section delves into these dynamics, providing insights into how public expressions of Islamophobia contribute to broader patterns of prejudice and discrimination, ultimately shaping

societal attitudes toward Muslim communities. Understanding these patterns is crucial for developing strategies to counteract the normalisation of Islamophobia in public discourse.

The relationship between public expressions of Islamophobia and violence

There is compelling evidence that hate speech by politicians can instigate real-world violence, with serious implications for societal security.

For example, Piazza (2020) demonstrates that hate speech from political figures significantly increases domestic terrorism rates. By analysing data from 156 countries over nearly two decades, Piazza finds a clear correlation: as the frequency of hate speech by political parties rises, so does the number of domestic terrorist attacks.

For instance, in countries where hate speech is rare, the average number of annual terrorist attacks is fewer than one. Conversely, nations with high levels of hate speech experience nearly ten attacks annually.

Piazza's findings are particularly striking.

The research reveals that for each incremental rise in hate speech frequency, the rate of domestic terrorism nearly doubles.

This relationship holds even after accounting for factors such as regime type, population size, and economic conditions, underscoring the independent and substantial impact of hate speech.

The study further highlights how hate speech exacerbates political polarisation, which acts as a mediator in the link between hate speech and violence. Remarkably, 84% of the impact of hate speech on terrorism is mediated through increased polarisation. This suggests that polarisation not only divides societies but also amplifies the risk of violence. Piazza (2020) concludes that the rhetoric of political figures has tangible security consequences, and fostering civility and tolerance in political discourse could yield a significant "security dividend" by reducing domestic terrorism.

These findings emphasise the critical role of political and public discourse in either fuelling or mitigating societal violence. In this context, tracking Islamophobia in public expressions becomes essential. By analysing the ways in which Islamophobia is communicated in public forums, this report aims to deepen our understanding of how Islamophobia manifests and its broader implications for Australian society.

Insights from social media trends

In this section we present our study of X (formerly Twitter) posts, providing a detailed analysis of trends in public expressions of hostility towards Muslims in Australia. X is an ideal platform for this study because, as a mainstream social media platform, its content moderation policies significantly

relaxed following Elon Musk's acquisition, allowing hostile language to flourish and enabling the return of numerous fringe groups, including anti-Muslim users previously removed, making it particularly suited for tracking Islamophobia.

The data for this analysis was sourced from Brandwatch, a social media analytics platform. Using generic hashtags commonly associated with Islam and Muslims (#quran, #islam, #muslim, #muslims, #islamic), tweets were retrieved and filtered through Brandwatch's geo-targeting capabilities to ensure they originated from Australia. This process resulted in a dataset comprising 18,506 tweets, posted between 1 January 2023 and 1 December 2024.

While this dataset offers a valuable snapshot of online discussions, it is important to acknowledge its limitations. The data is restricted to tweets containing the selected hashtags and, as a result, does not comprehensively capture discussions tied to specific events or broader contexts. For example, tweets discussing specific incidents like the Wakeley church stabbing in Sydney on 15 April 2024 may not be fully captured in this dataset. To address this, we conducted a targeted data collection for the Wakeley incident, which is also presented in this section. However, due to resource constraints, it was not feasible to perform dedicated analysis for every potential trigger event separately.

Additionally, not all tweets that use these hashtags will contain Islamophobia. After this initial selection was carried out, we used an AI-based classification approach to detect Islamophobia. This methodology (discussed further below) aligns with standard practices for assessing public sentiment on specific topics. Conceptually, the dataset functions as a lens—focusing on a portion of the broader discourse to reveal critical insights into temporal trends and the influence of key events or drivers of hostility. While it does not encompass the entirety of public discussions, it offers a clear and focused perspective that informs our understanding of the dynamics of online Islamophobia.

Data classification methodology

The collected tweets were classified using a zero-shot approach with ChatGPT 4o, which involved prompting the model to identify tweets expressing hate, contempt or offense towards Muslims and Islam. The tweets were processed through the ChatGPT API. To check its accuracy and make sure the classification captured Islamophobia, the research team tested the model on a random sample of 50 cases from the dataset. They also manually coded these cases and found that the model's classifications matched theirs 92% of the time.

A post-hoc qualitative analysis of a random sample of the tweets classified by the AI model allowed for the identification of distinct forms of Islamophobia, which manifested through generalisations, dehumanisation, and the association of Islam with violence. One common form of hostility involved the use of derogatory labels and personal attacks, delegitimising individuals based on their Muslim identity.

Another recurring pattern was the collective attribution of blame, where Muslims as a whole were held responsible for historical or contemporary events.

Dehumanising and vilifying language was also prevalent, with tweets portraying Islam as inherently corrupt or immoral, reinforcing negative stereotypes without evidence. Similarly, calls for exclusion and expulsion—such as statements suggesting Muslims should "go back to their countries"—framed them as permanent outsiders, aligning with broader xenophobic narratives.

The automatic linkage between Islam and terrorism was another key feature, often conveyed through hashtags like "#Islam #Terrorism" without context, reinforcing the false equivalence between Islam and politically motivated violence. Additionally, some tweets relied on conspiratorial narratives, portraying Muslims as orchestrating secret plots, fostering distrust and amplifying fears.

These rhetorical strategies contribute to the normalisation of prejudice in online discourse, shaping public perceptions and reinforcing Islamophobia in Australia.

To protect the anonymity of all social media users in this study, we will de-identify all quoted tweets by removing user handles and making slight modifications to the text. These modifications preserve the original meaning while preventing the re-identification of specific content.

Anti-Muslim hostility on X in 2023 and 2024

The following plot presents the weekly counts of Islamophobic tweets between 1 January 2023 and 1 December 2024, alongside the weekly counts of offline incidents reported to the register during the same period. The figure shows that key trends, such as the increase following 7 October, are reflected in both timelines, with a rise in both reported offline incidents and online Islamophobia in the months immediately after 7 October until the end of 2023.

While some spikes in online Islamophobia and offline incidents coincide, others appear to be independent. This section examines specific spikes, highlighting instances where the two timelines align and where peaks in online Islamophobia are linked to content circulating on the social media platform X or international events (for example, the Southport riots in the UK), which have little to no impact on offline incidents.

Weekly Figures of online Islamophobia and Incidents Reported
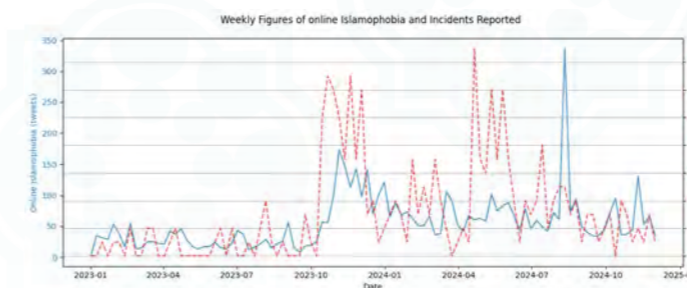
The following plot presents the daily counts of Islamophobic tweets between 1 January 2023 and 1 December 2024, highlighting a significant shift around October 7, 2023.

Prior to this date, the average daily count of such tweets was relatively low, at 3.65. However, in

the aftermath of October 7, this figure rose to an average of 10.93 tweets per day, giving a total of 6229 tweets originating from Australia containing anti-Muslim sentiment in the study period.

Importantly, the average daily count of tweets classified as not containing any hostility in this dataset increased slightly from 15.54 before October 7 to 17.69 after October 7. This sustained increase in Islamophobic tweets, especially when contrasted with the modest rise in non-hostile tweets, underscores a significant escalation in online Islamophobia, suggesting that the events of October 7 had a profound and lasting impact on the volume of hate speech observed in 2023 and 2024.

Daily Islamophobic language with Total Tweet Volume
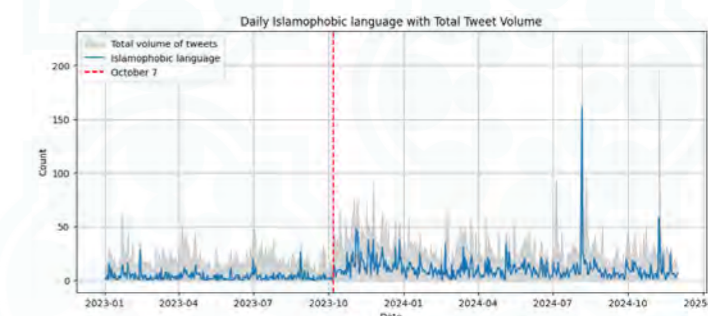
We examined specific sections of the timeline, identifying dates where Islamophobia exceeded two standard deviations from the mean (mean = 8, standard deviation = 10).[27] These dates were: 13 February 2023; 4, 5, 6, 19, and 25 November 2023; 6, 22, and 27 December 2023; 21 February 2024; 14 March 2024; 5 May 2024; 5 and 6 August 2024; and 8 and 9 November 2024.

Analysis of the data classified as Islamophobic on these dates revealed that many increases were unrelated to global or national trigger events. Instead, they were driven by the widespread dissemination of anti-Muslim propagandistic content on the platform, often featuring graphic videos of violence from war zones, falsely framed as Muslims attacking Christians. For example, nearly all Islamophobic tweets on 13

February 2023 were triggered by Australian users retweeting a video from 11 September 2022, originally depicting violence allegedly in Nigeria. The video was reposted with captions such as: "This is what Muslims are doing to Christians in Nigeria". There was no apparent reason for its resurgence, yet many Australian users in our dataset retweeted it. This pattern—where graphic content originating in unspecified times and places is recirculated, generating anti-Muslim sentiment independent of any national event—was observed on multiple dates with high levels of Islamophobia. Examples include November 2023 (mainly retweets of a 2022 post by Geert Wilders), December 2023 (retweets of a video showing soldiers vandalising a tomb with a cross in an unspecified location), and various peaks in 2024.

Some increases, however, were associated with relevant events in Australia and internationally.

On 25 November 2023, many Islamophobic tweets referenced the Dublin anti-immigration riots of 23 November 2023. The riots, triggered by the stabbing of three children and a care assistant in Dublin, involved vandalism, arson, looting, and assaults on the Gardaí (Irish police) and members of the public. The suspect was an Algerian national. Far-right activists amplified public anger online, leading to clashes between demonstrators and police. By the end of the night, 34 people were arrested, 60 Gardaí had been assaulted, and the Garda Commissioner attributed the violence to far-right influence. Islamophobic tweets in Australia supported the rioters, as exemplified by one post: "It is refreshing to see the people of #Ireland rising up against the cancer on humanity that is #Islam. We need to overcome this parasite on civilization."

Islamophobic tweets frequently targeted pro-Palestinian demonstrators, particularly during periods of intense protest, even when specific protests were not directly referenced. In December 2023, when pro-Palestinian demonstrations were widespread in Australia and globally, one example of Islamophobia posted on 6 December reads: "Still waiting for Muslim leaders to come out and condemn the #Palestinians who invoked the name of Allah as they engaged in an orgy of rape and murder against thousands of #Israeli men women and children. #Islam #HamasMassacre #HamasRapists".

Many of the online incidents reported to the Register contained anti-Palestinian content circulating in social media, often including calls for violence, harassment, and incitement against Muslims and pro-Palestinian individuals.

One example involved Facebook comments on a video from protests in Caulfield, which followed the arson attack on a burger restaurant. In the comments, some users explicitly incited violence, with one calling for an airstrike and another suggesting they would gather a large group to attack with bricks and baseball bats (incident # 2536).

Another report described persistent harassment and intimidation via Instagram over the course of a month, involving calls for violence against Muslims and Palestinians, including statements urging to "finish them off" (incident # 2559). The person who submitted the report to the Register expressed concerns that the perpetrator had violent intentions.

These cases illustrate how online hostility can escalate into direct threats and harassment, reflecting broader patterns of politically and ideologically motivated intimidation in digital spaces.

Importantly, in the same month and also around the pro-Palestine protests, the Register received reports of incidents targeting individuals in-person, such as incident # 2675:

> An Arab male was wearing a keffiyeh in the car on the way to the Sunshine Coast's Pro-Palestine rally. He had friends in the car who were also Arab males who were also wearing the keffiyeh. A young male they passed

while driving threatened to egg the car, but a bystander stopped him. The male was standing near the meeting point for the rally, so this seemed deliberate and targeted.

Similarly, on 14 March 2024, another day when counts of anti-Muslim tweets peaked, many tweets referenced current discussions in the media about repatriating Australians from Gaza. One post stated: "#Muslim migration. *And guess what, despite the chaos caused by Muslims in Europe, & the UK, Albo and Wong are doing their best to fill Australia with Muslims, and you now see that our police are too terrified to deal with their mass aggression."*

This anti-immigrant sentiment towards Muslims was also reflected in in-person, individual reports received by the Register around the same time, including:

> *"For the first time in 32 years [since coming to Australia], I experienced Islamophobia. At 7am on my usual work around my local beach, an elderly Caucasian man cycled past me and swore at me, yelling "Go back to where you came from" and "bloody Muslim". I didn't have time to photograph him as he was in motion on his bike. A non-Muslim woman who was walking by noticed and came to comfort me and asked what happened"* (incident # 2835)

On 5 May 2024, Islamophobic tweets focused on university encampments protesting against the war in Gaza, which had begun in late April and continued into early May. For example, a post reads: *"The #Left alliance with #Islam is based on ignorance. Young ppl such as the students on university campuses believe that Islam is the religion of peace & tolerance. It's not. It's based on getting non-Muslims to submit & resorting to violence".*

Again, in-person, individual incidents on university encampments were also reported in the same timeframe to the Register. These included verbal abuse, such as, *"A male walked by the encampment and shouted to us at the encampment, 'Hey, you Hamas terrorists! It's all over now. Pack up and leave!"* (incident # 3303) and physical assault, including an incident where a group opposed to a University encampment approached the camp, filming attendees against their will, trying to intimidate protestors, and opening tents without permission. A male protestor who was part of the encampment saw some of the female protestors being intimidated and ran over to help, when *"a man pushed him to*

stop him from running, hitting his right shoulder and causing him to stumble" (incident # 3414).

On the same day, a stabbing incident in Willetton, Western Australia, also triggered a surge in Islamophobia. A 16-year-old boy, described as a Caucasian male who had converted to Islam, stabbed a member of the public before being shot by police. The attack generated a wave of Islamophobic sentiment, exemplified by posts such as: *"#perth, #Australia Muslim terror attack in #Willetton. #islamic online influence has been blamed. When will we learn that Islam has no place in the West."*

The highest peak in Islamophobia across the dataset occurred in early August 2024, particularly on 5 and 6 August. Many of these tweets discussed the anti-immigration riots in the UK. These riots, which took place from 30 July to 5 August 2024 in England and Northern Ireland, followed a mass stabbing in Southport on 29 July in which three children were killed. False claims spread by far-right groups that the perpetrator was a Muslim

asylum seeker fuelled broader Islamophobic, racist, and anti-immigrant sentiment.

Misinformation played a central role in escalating hostility, with Australian users engaging in Islamophobia in response. The following tweet illustrates the type of rhetoric driven by misinformation: *"It seems like the #British_aisle has turned into a scene straight out of a dystopian movie, with gangs of #Muslims roaming the big cities, brandishing long sticks and shouting 'Allah Akbar' like they're auditioning for a role in a low-budget action flick."*

Islamophobia before and after the 2024 Wakeley church stabbing

To examine the Wakeley church stabbing, we conducted an ad hoc data collection to capture the event's context and social media discourse. On 15 April 2024, a knife attack took place during a live-streamed sermon at Christ The Good Shepherd Church in Wakeley, a suburb of Sydney. The assailant stabbed Bishop Mari Emmanuel, resulting in permanent vision loss, and injured two others before being apprehended. The New South Wales Police classified the incident as a religiously or ideologically motivated terrorist act and arrested a 16-year-old suspect with a documented history of mental illness. Recognising that terrorist attacks linked in media with jihadist groups like ISIS or al-Qaeda are often associated with surges of Islamophobia both on social media and in real-world contexts, we selected this case study for bespoke analyses. Using Brandwatch, we extracted data from Australian users of X during that week. The hashtags were carefully chosen to comprehensively capture social media discussions surrounding the Sydney church attack. Event-specific hashtags like #SydneyChurchAttack, #SydneyStabbing, and #AustraliaAttack ensured the inclusion of posts explicitly referencing the incident. Religious and community-focused hashtags, such as #BishopMarMari and #AssyrianAramaicChurch, focused on retrieving discussions about the church, Bishop Mari Emmanuel, and the Assyrian Christian community central to the event. Additionally, hashtags like #terrorism, #MuslimTerroristAttack, and #Islamic_terrorism captured the ideological framing of the attack, reflecting both official classifications and broader Islamophobic narratives. Broader terms like #Islam, #Muslim, and #Quran extended the dataset to encompass wider discussions about religion, ideology, and related hate speech, enabling an analysis of both direct event discourse and its broader societal impact.

The following tweet is an example of the Islamophobia expressed in the aftermath of the Wakeley church stabbings:

#Sydney, Australia's Bishop #MarMariEmmanuel, was 1 of 4 stabbed during an attack at Christ The Good Shepherd Church. The Bishop is reported in stable condition. Please pray. 🙏 #Islam is evil & we must de-Islamize!

This specific Islamophobia was again mirrored in the in-person, individual incidents reported to the Register at the same time and prompted by the same event:

> *"The perpetrator kept following my daughter in the car. When he managed to catch up to her, he drove beside her, and yelled and swore at her about her religion. He had a cross in the car and a picture of the Assyrian priest that was wounded on his back window"* (incident # 3178)

We classified data for Islamophobia using the ChatGPT API. The following figure shows the daily counts of Islamophobia, revealing a significant spike around the Wakeley stabbings.
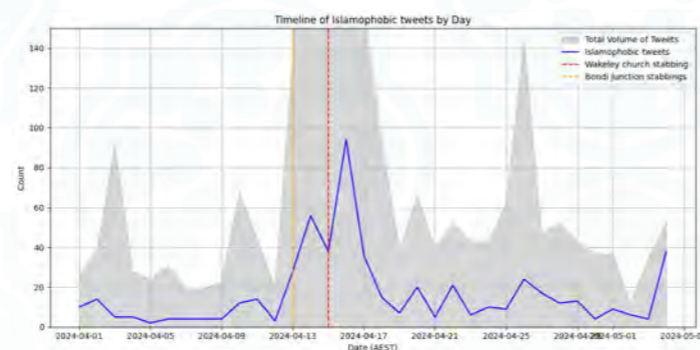
Notably, there was also a marked increase in the preceding days, linked to the Bondi Junction stabbings on 13 April 2024. In this incident, Joel Cauchi fatally stabbed six people and injured twelve others before being shot by police. Misinformation falsely linking the attack to Islamic terrorism circulated online, fuelling Islamophobic and anti-immigrant sentiments, which explains why the event was associated with an increase in Islamophobia in our data.

This is an example of tweets that falsely linked the attacker to the Muslim faith in the wake of the Bondi Junction stabbings:

Suspected terror attack in Sydney. 4 killed multiple injured including a child. I wonder what religion the assailant was? The religion of peace? #sydney #westfield #Terror #islam #bondi

Importantly, the 13th of April 2024 marked the highest single-day spike in reported online incidents across the entire timeline, with 21 incidents recorded in a single day—a figure well above the daily average of 1.8 incidents. Many of these reports were linked to reactions following the Bondi knife attack, with users engaging in speculative and Islamophobic discourse before official details were confirmed.

Reported incidents included Islamophobic comments on Facebook regarding the Bondi Westfield incident (incident #3233), multiple tweets from different accounts labeling the attack as a "terrorist attack" before any information about the perpetrator's identity or motive was released (incident #3125),

and Instagram comments speculating about the Bondi massacre before details were determined (incident #3128). This surge in reports highlights how major events can trigger rapid escalations in online hostility, often fueled by premature assumptions and inflammatory rhetoric.

Overall, the analysis suggests that Islamophobia is driven by both domestic events, such as the Wakeley stabbings, and international events, such as the UK 2024 riots and the Dublin 2023 riots. Islamophobia is actively cultivated and amplified across national boundaries through the spread of misinformation and emotive content of dubious origin, which can trigger peaks in online anti-Muslim hostility in Australia. Many surges were driven by graphic videos lacking verifiable context, falsely depicting Muslims as perpetrators of violence. In both national incidents, such as the Bondi stabbings, and international events, such as the UK riots, misinformation played a key role in misidentifying offenders as Muslim when they were not. Despite this, the misinformation spread widely online, fuelling Islamophobia. A recurring theme was the portrayal of Muslim men as sexual predators, terrorists, or inherently violent, reinforcing hostile narratives.

Recommendations:

- Training for politicians and media staff to realise the direct impact their comments and work has on the proliferation of Islamophobia

- Better intervention and enforcement by E-safety Commissioner to reduce online Islamophobia and harmful Islamophobic disinformation campaigns and hold digital platforms accountable

Methodology

Background

The Islamophobia Register Australia utilises an online platform and subsequent support services to assist victims with reporting incidences of Islamophobia. Its primary platform for reporting utilises an online survey methodology to collect incidences of Islamophobia and associated details. The survey collects detailed data on the date, time, place/context (postcode), gender, ethnicity and age of victim, and type of Islamophobic incidence (and links to any supporting information such as photos or film). Data on whether the victim was wearing identifiable religious items or attire and what they were (e.g., Hijab) is collected in order to understand why they may have been targeted. Additionally, victims are asked if/what emotional response and impact was felt during/following the Islamophobic incident. This data allows the Register staff to reach out and offer support to victims should they want it. Information on the gender, estimated age, and ethnicity of the perpetrator was also collected.

The Register also collects email addresses and phone numbers from the victims (reporting persons) as part of the incident submission. As well as allowing victim support via email and follow-up phone call, this allows the Register to contact the victim regarding in-person/offline incidents to verify the incident, gain further details, and ensure there are no false incidences of Islamophobia being reported. In some instances, vexatious and false reports are submitted to the Register, and are screened out of the data and this report. The verification practice, therefore, also allows the Register to offer additional psychological or legal support to victims should they require it.

Data Screening and Validity Checks

To verify and validate the cases, we followed a robust multi-step methodology. First, we separated the reports submitted to the Register from those that were incomplete or unsubmitted (eg, victims would sometimes start a report and not finish it because they ran out of time, and therefore not pressed 'submit'. While this incomplete report was not formally 'submitted', the initial half-complete report would initially appear in the dataset. Therefore, only reports that were completed that the victim pressed 'submit' on would

be counted). In 2023, the dataset consisted of 479 initiated cases, of which 174 were completed and submitted. As of November 29, 2024, the dataset included 937 initiated cases, with 274 reports completed and submitted via the Register's online form.

Next, we tracked the Register's follow-up by phone and email with the victims reported to verify the occurrence of the incidents. This process resulted in 150 verified cases in 2023 and 206 in 2024.

Finally, we reviewed all these cases individually to assess whether the verified incidents met specific criteria: Was the incident reported by more than one person, as in the case of graffiti, targeting religious buildings, resulting in duplicate reports or incidents involving multiple victims? Was the victim reporting a genuine incident that had been verified by the Register, but was actually an incident that happened some years ago and was only being reported now? Such incidents meant that genuine cases of Islamophobia were discounted, not because they were inauthentic, but to maintain the time period of the dataset. Was it a clearly vexatious case, where Islamophobes submitted Islamophobic reports to abuse the Register? All of these steps in the process was to ensure a robust and rigorous dataset that met strong standards of reliability.

After applying these criteria, we identified 124 cases in 2023 and 185 in 2024, up to November 29.

Categorisation of Off-line/In person Islamophobic Incidents

Incident Type

The Register survey collects incident data via qualitative (written) responses where the victim describes the Islamophobic incident. As such, this qualitative data needs to be analysed and recoded (categorised) into appropriate incident types based on their nature. This allows for more detailed quantitative and qualitative analysis. In the present report seven different types of Islamophobic incidents were identified, re-coded, and analysed for this report.

Each incident type encompasses a broad range of behaviours; for example, property damage includes incidents ranging from graffiti to arson. Verbal intimidation and harassment

represent the most commonly reported form of Islamophobia, while discrimination captures cases where individuals faced exclusion or unfair treatment. Physical assault includes any direct bodily harm, whereas non-verbal intimidation and harassment cover behaviours such as threatening gestures or hostile body language. Written intimidation and harassment involve threats or abuse conveyed through letters, emails, or online messages. In one case, a bomb threat was also reported, which we kept as a separate category.

Islamophobia Incident Coding Reliability

To ensure the reliability of this classification, four researchers independently coded a randomly extracted sample of 100 cases testing the main coded incident types. This inter-rater reliability assessment helped ensure that the correct incident types had been identified and could be accurately and reliably identified and coded by independent coders. We then re-checked any cases there was disagreement over. We conducted inter-rater reliability tests (Fleiss Kappa's) to statistically confirm that the coding had good reliability. We report below the results of these reliability tests.
For 'verbal intimidation/harassment,' the inter-rater reliability assessment yielded a Fleiss' kappa of 0.7, with annotators reaching 86% agreement. For 'property damage,' the Fleiss' kappa was 0.8, with 96.1% agreement, while for 'physical assault,' the Fleiss' kappa was also 0.8, with annotators agreeing in 95.7% of cases. Due to the limited number of examples available in the dataset used for inter-rater reliability assessment, we were unable to calculate reliable kappa values for the remaining categories. However, given the satisfactory/good level of agreement obtained for the categories assessed—most of which are primarily descriptive in nature—we are confident that the annotations remain consistent and straightforward across the dataset.
For some analyses, we further grouped the incident categories into broader classifications. First, we distinguished between clearly criminal incidents -including property damage, physical assault, and bomb threats- and incidents that may or may not be criminal, depending on the circumstances and legal interpretation. This second category included discrimination, verbal intimidation/harassment, written intimidation/harassment, and non-verbal intimidation/harassment. Whether these incidents constitute a criminal offence varies by jurisdiction and is ultimately determined by judicial authorities. Second, we categorised incidents based on whether they occurred in person (verbal intimidation/harassment and physical assault) or not in person (property damage, bomb threats, discrimination, written intimidation/harassment, and non-verbal intimidation/harassment).

Context

As detailed above, the context within which the incident occurred was collected from victims. This factor is important as it allows for the identification of contexts that may be particularly prone to Islamophobia for Muslims (e.g., walking in public, using public transport). Similar to incident reporting, victims provided qualitative narrative descriptions of the specific contexts in which these incidents occurred. Subsequent qualitative analysis and coding revealed a diverse range of contexts/settings for Islamophobia. These included public and private spaces, workplaces, educational institutions, transportation hubs, and locations associated with protests or religious institutions. By categorising incidents according to their setting, it allowed us to identify where such events take place, and how they may affect everyday lives of Muslims encountering Islamophobia
within them.

Bias indicators

Drawing from the qualitative narrative descriptions of the incidents, we identified a set of 'bias indicators'—specific facts, circumstances, or patterns that suggest an act was motivated, at least in part, by bias. These indicators included anti-Muslim, anti-immigrant, or anti-Palestinian verbal remarks made by the offender; the visibly identifiable religious attire of the target (such as a hijab); the target's display of pro-Palestinian symbols; the occurrence of the incident at a pro-Palestinian protest; and the targeting of a religious building. Using these bias indicators, we then created a new category specifically *for anti-Palestinian bias indicators*. This category included all incidents that involved at least one of the following: anti-Palestinian verbal remarks, the display of pro-Palestinian symbols by the target, or the occurrence of the incident at a pro-Palestinian protest. This classification allowed us to systematically identify and analyse anti-Palestinian incidents, which are reported in the relevant section of this report.

Analysis and Reporting

Within the report we provide both quantitative and qualitative analysis of Islamophobic incidents and associated factors (e.g., gender, emotional responses, context, state/territory locations). We report the numbers and percentages (%) of incidents as they pertain to different factors, and qualitative examples in the form of victim's words (sometimes edited to ensure anonymity, and always with pseudonyms). Where we examined factors such as relationships between gender and Islamophobic incidents (e.g., binary yes/no data) we used Chi-squared proportional tests to establish statistically significant differences. Cross-tabulation tests using Pearsons X2, were also used to examine potential 'interactions' between, for example, gender, wearing religious attire/symbols, and Islamophobic incidents. We report the results of these tests and associated p-values were conducted. All numbers/counts and proportions (%) of incidents and associated factors of interest are reported in text and tables throughout the report.
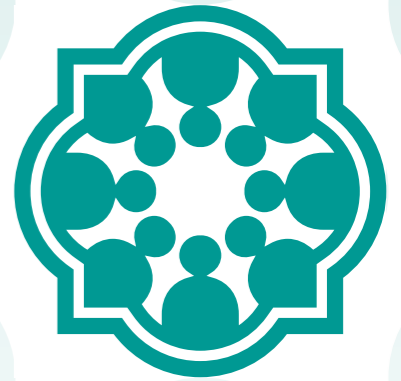
"6 friends wearing keffiyehs enter the elevator of our hotel, following the drunk Caucasian assailant. The assailant noticed our keffiyehs and started calling us "Muslim terrorists", "you fucking terrorist cunts", "you support these fucking terrorist Muslim cunts" and "I'll kill every one of you cunts". He started punching us, grabbing at our keffiyehs and pulling one person's keffiyeh around their neck and choking them. He prevented us from trying to protect each other or escaping the elevator. Five of the six members of the group were physically assaulted, I filmed it."

Conclusion

This report documents an alarming escalation of Islamophobia in Australia during 2023-2024, with findings that demand immediate attention and action from political leaders, media organisations, and the broader community.

The period saw more than double the number of verified incidents compared to any previous reporting period, including physical assaults requiring hospitalisation, an arson attack, a genuine explosive device left at a residence, and widespread verbal abuse including threats of murder and rape. Most concerningly, this surge in reported incidents occurred against a backdrop of political rhetoric that attempted to dismiss Islamophobia as "fictitious" or "not an issue" – a stance that this report refutes with extensive empirical evidence.

The gendered nature of Islamophobia emerges as a critical finding, with Muslim women and girls being the victims in 75% of reported incidents. They experienced 79% of verbal abuse cases, 60% of physical assaults, and 95% of incidents on public transport. They were victims in 100% of spitting incidents, and reported three times the number of Islamophobic incidents at workplaces compared to me. This targeting of Muslim women manifested across multiple spheres of public life, affecting their ability to work, travel, shop, and participate fully in society. We urge Islamophobic incidents against women and girls to be considered gender-based abuse.

Educational settings emerged as particular sites of concern, with Muslim students facing sustained bullying, physical assaults, and discrimination. The report documents disturbing incidents including threats of violence against Muslim schoolgirls wearing hijabs, physical attacks on students, and institutional discrimination. These experiences lead to negative impacts on academic performance, mental health, and school attendance.

The surge in Islamophobia during this period was significantly intertwined with anti-Palestinian sentiment, particularly after October 7, 2023, when reports to the Register increased by 1300% compared to the same period the previous year. By 2024, incidents involving victims displaying pro-Palestinian symbols accounted for one-quarter of all reported incidents, and included some of the most serious attacks documented – including a genuine explosive device left with a threatening note demanding the removal of a Palestinian flag. This conflation of anti-Palestinian sentiment with Islamophobia resulted in Muslims and non-Muslims alike being targeted for their support of Palestine, demonstrating how political tensions can amplify existing prejudices and create new vectors for discrimination and violence.

The psychological impact of all the incidents reported from men, women, and children is profound and long-lasting, with 92% of victims reporting ongoing effects on their mental wellbeing and daily activities, including anxiety, depression, and social isolation. Critically, this report likely captures only a fraction of total Islamophobic incidents in Australia, suggesting the experience and impact of Islamophobia on Muslim Australians is far more pernicious than documented here.

The findings of this report require immediate and comprehensive action:

1. The ignorance of the extent and impact Islamophobia by some politicians and the broader community requires urgent attention

2. Federal and state governments must recognise Islamophobia against women and girls as a form of gender-based violence and fund targeted intervention programs accordingly.

3. Educational authorities must implement mandatory Islamophobia awareness training for all school staff and develop specific protocols for protecting Muslim students, with particular attention to gendered experiences.

4. Law enforcement agencies require specialised training in recognising and responding to Islamophobic incidents, with clear accountability measures for handling reports, and training from organisations like the Register to better support victims.

5. Media organisations must adopt guidelines for responsible reporting on issues affecting Muslim communities and avoid amplifying harmful stereotypes.

CONCLUSION

6. Public transport and retail sectors need to implement bystander intervention programs and clear protocols for protecting Muslim passengers and customers.

7. Mental health services must receive dedicated funding for culturally appropriate support for victims of Islamophobia.

The social fabric of Australia depends on addressing Islamophobia as the serious, documented phenomenon it is. This report provides clear evidence that Islamophobia is not only real but poses a significant threat to the safety, wellbeing, and fundamental rights of Australian Muslims, which inevitably impacts on feelings of safety and community for all Australians. The question is no longer whether Islamophobia exists, but what we as a society will do to combat it. Politicians, media organisations, and community leaders must move beyond acknowledgment to meaningful action. The cost of inaction - or worse, dismissal - is not just the continued discrimination and abuse of Australian Muslims, but the erosion of Australia's goal of a fair, inclusive, and multicultural society.

Endnotes

1 We use the following definition for this report: "Anti-Muslim bias or Islamophobia can be described at an individual level as the stereotyping of, biases against, or acts of hostility toward Muslims individually or collectively, or Islam as a religion. At the institutional, systemic, and societal levels, anti-Muslim bias or Islamophobia can be manifested as the securitisation of Islam, or constructing Muslims as a security threat" (FIANZ Submission to the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Attack of Christchurch mosque). However, we would also add that anti-Muslim bias and Islamophobia can also manifest against people perceived to be Muslim.

2 Due to the significant escalation of Islamophobia from Oct 7 2023 onwards and the urgency in publicising findings, the limited resources available for this report were focussed on the Jan 1 2023-Nov 30 2024 period. The data from 2022 is intended to be released in the future.

3 Vergani, M. & Navarro, C. (2020) Barriers to reporting hate crime and hate incidents in Victoria: a mixed methods study, Centre for Resilient and Inclusive Societies; Kamp, A., Sharples, R., Vergani, M. & Denson, N. (2023) Asian Australian's experiences and reporting of racism during the COVID-19 pandemic, Journal of Intercultural Studies, 45: 3, pp 452-472; Peucker, M., Vaughan, F., Doley, J. & Clark, T. (2024), Understanding reporting barriers and support needs for those experiencing racism in Victoria: research report, Victoria University: Melbourne

4 Some incidents had an unknown perpetrator, such as hate mail and graffiti

5 https://www.budgetdirect.com.au/car-insurance/research/road-rage-study.html

6 https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-06-04/fact-check-muslim-workforce/9800656; https://www.unisa.edu.au/contentassets/4f85e84d01014997a99bb4f89ba32488/australian-muslims-final-report-web-nov-26.pdf

7 Alimahomed-Wilson, S. (2020). The Matrix of Gendered Islamophobia: Muslim Women's Repression and Resistance. Gender & Society, 34(4), 648-678; Khokhar, F. J. (2021). Reclaiming the narrative: gendered Islamophobia, its impacts and responses from Muslim women. Social Identities, 28(2), 267–28; Perry, B. (2013). Gendered Islamophobia: hate crime against Muslim women. Social Identities, 20(1), 74–89

8 These physical assaults of pulling the hijab off or attempting to pull it off are decidedly gendered, because the perpetrators chose the clothing item that is characteristically representative of Muslim women. The Register did not receive any reports of other clothing items of Muslim women (shirts, pants, skirts, jackets) being pulled or removed by perpetrators; the only item targeted was that which is symbolic of Muslim women.

9 https://7news.com.au/news/muslim-woman-allegedly-assaulted-headscarf-pulled-while-at-adelaide-shopping-centre-with-toddler-c-15806757

10 Some incidents had an unknown perpetrator, such as hate mail and graffiti

11 This table does not include incidents such as hate mail, graffiti, etc

12 Chakraborti, N., & Garland, J. (2012). Reconceptualizing hate crime victimization through the lens of vulnerability and 'difference'. Theoretical Criminology, 16(4), 499-514. https://doi.org/10.1177/1362480612439432; Bones, P. D. C. (2013). Perceptions of Vulnerability: A Target Characteristics Approach to Disability, Gender, and Victimization. Deviant Behavior, 34(9), 727–750. https://doi.org/10.1080/01639625.2013.766511; Hough, M. (1987) Offenders' choice of target: Findings from victim surveys. Journal of Quantitative Criminology, 3, 355–369. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF01066836

13 Several studies and initiatives in Western countries have examined Islamophobic incidents as a form of gender-based abuse, proposing strategies to address this issue by integrating approaches from gender-based violence prevention. See 1. Ahmed A. The Gender of Islamophobia. In: Choudhury CA, Beydoun KA, eds. Islamophobia and the Law. Cambridge University Press; 2020:249-260.
Also see, Ahmad, S. (May 2018). Unlearning Islamophobia in anti-Violence Against Women Work. Learning Network Brief (34). London, Ontario: Learning Network, Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children. www.gbvlearningnetwork.ca;
See also Seta, D. (2016). Forgotten Women: The Impact of Islamophobia on Muslim Women. ENAR.

14 Bazian, H. (2015) The Islamophobia industry and the demonization of Palestine: implications for American studies, American Quarterly, 67: 4, pp 1057 – 1066; Abu-Laban, Y. & Bakan, A. (2022) Anti-Palestinian racism and racial gas lighting, The Political Quarterly, 93: 3.; Plitnick, M. & Aziz, S. (2023) Presumptively antisemitic: Islamophobic tropes in the Palestine-Israel discourse, Centre for Security, Race and Rights, Rutgers University Law School 6 Zine, J. (2023) How Islamophobia and anti-Palestinian racism are manufactured through disinformation, The Conversation, Oct 24, via: https://theconversation.com/how-islamophobia-andanti-palestinian-racism-are-manufactured-through-disinformation-216119

15 Cultural Atlas. (n.d.). Palestinian culture: Population statistics. SBS. Retrieved February 1, 2025, from https://culturalatlas.sbs.com.au/palestinian-culture/palestinian-culture-population-statistics

16 Altunkaya, N. (2019). Sûf Hareketi Açısından
 Mescid-i Aksâ ve İsrâ'nın İrfânî Boyutu. 3(1), 7–19. https://doi.org/10.46595/JAD.458317

17 Aydin, E. E. (2022). An Islamic Seminary in the XVI. Century in Jerusalem: The Tâziyya Madrasa. Hitit Ilahiyat Dergisi, 21(1), 203–232. https://doi.org/10.14395/hid.1052227

18 Fekete, L. (2024). Anti-Palestinian racism and the criminalisation of international solidarity in Europe. https://doi.org/10.1177/03063968241253708

19 Fayyad, A. (2024) It's not Islamophobia, it's anti-Palestinian racism, Vox, 5th June, via: https://www.vox.com/policy/352663/anti-palestinian-racism-islamophobia-antisemitism; Kestler-D'Amours, J. (2024) 'Call it by its name': how hateful rhetoric feeds anti-Palestinian violence in the US, Al Jazeera, 29th February, via: https://www.aljazeera.com/news/longform/2024/2/29/call-it-by-its-name-how-hateful-rhetoric-feeds-anti-palestinian-violence

20 The Register also sends all instances of anti-Palestinian hate that occurs in schools to the Anti-Palestinian Racism in Schools register run by Australia Palestine Advocacy Network (APAN)

21 News coverage of story:
https://www.adelaidenow.com.au/subscribe/news/1/?sourceCode=AAWEB_WRE170_a_GGL&dest=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.adelaidenow.com.au%2Ftruecrimeaustralia%2Fpolice-courts-sa%2Fgary-wylde-sentenced-for-violent-racially-charged-attack-on-propalestinian-activists-in-adelaide-cbd-elevator%2Fnews-story%2Ff5ddad4286623b3ac620e286416ef45c&memtype=anonymous&mode=premium&v21=GROUPA-Segment-1-NOSCORE

22 https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/article/2024/may/07/sydney-man-sentenced-to-12-months-in-jail-after-planting-homemade-bomb-outside-pro-palestinians-house

23 Abu Khalaf, N., Woolweaver, A. B., Reynoso Marmolejos, R., Little, G. A., Burnett, K., & Espelage, D. L. (2022). The Impact of Islamophobia on Muslim Students: A Systematic Review of the Literature. School Psychology Review, 52(2), 206–223

24 Thijs, J., Hornstra, L. & Charki, F.Z. (2018) Self-Esteem and National Identification in Times of Islamophobia: A Study Among Islamic School Children in The Netherlands. J Youth Adolescence 47, 2521–2534; Abu Khalaf, N., Woolweaver, A. B., Reynoso Marmolejos, R., Little, G. A., Burnett, K., & Espelage, D. L. (2022). The Impact of Islamophobia on Muslim Students: A Systematic Review of the Literature. School Psychology Review, 52(2), 206–223

25 Samari, G., Alcalá, H. E., & Sharif, M. Z. (2018). Islamophobia, health, and public health: a systematic literature review. American journal of public health, 108(6), e1-e9.

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27 The mean represents the average number of anti-Muslim tweets per day, while the standard deviation measures how much daily counts typically vary from this average. A value exceeding two standard deviations from the mean indicates an unusually high level of anti-Muslim hostility, as this threshold captures extreme deviations that are statistically unlikely under normal conditions.