Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights
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MEDIA RELEASE

Beyond the Headlines: Protecting the Rights and Futures of Children Returning from Syria

14 May, 2026

There is an alarming media frenzy surrounding the return of Australian women and children from Syria. Sensationalist reporting and fear-mongering headlines are drowning out reason, distorting public perception, and putting children at risk of further harm. Amid this noise, it is critical that genuine efforts remain focussed on supporting the children's recovery and wellbeing.

Rather than viewing the children primarily through the lens of public security or speculation about who they may become, the focus should be on the practical and compassionate measures needed to help them heal, rebuild their lives, and successfully integrate into Australian society through access to education, healthcare, community support, and social connection.

Our response cannot, and must not, be driven by political posturing or public outrage. It must be guided by our duty of care and our commitment to protecting children whose lives have been shaped by some of the most unstable and dangerous circumstances.

They must not bear the consequences of the adults around them. While the women will face the full legal consequences of their actions, their children require protection, stability, and care.

Leaving vulnerable children without support has lifelong consequences. Children who grow up without safety, stability, or hope face a far greater risk of ongoing harm and social exclusion. We cannot allow fear, assumptions, or political agendas to define their futures before they have had the chance to shape them for themselves.

The Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights calls on the Australian Government to adopt a humane and measured approach to the care and re-settlement of these children. They have already endured prolonged trauma and displacement, experiences that can have serious long-term effects on mental health and development. Australia has both the capacity and the responsibility to ensure these harms are not compounded by neglect or stigma.

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Every child deserves to grow up safe, nurtured, and given the opportunity to heal, thrive, and reach their full potential.

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