Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights
Equality without exception

MEDIA RELEASE

Muslim Women and Children Remain at Risk as Government Falls Short on Islamophobia

29 July, 2026

Ten months after it was first delivered, the Federal Government has released its response to the Special Envoy to Combat Islamophobia's report. The report highlighted the urgent need to address the structures and systems that have created, sustained, and continue to exacerbate institutionalised Islamophobia.

In a social and political climate where anti-Muslim hate remains pervasive, and where negative stereotypes and misinformation are too often amplified and legitimised by sections of the media and political leaders, the harmful impacts on Muslim communities across Australia continue to deepen.

Women and children remain at greater risk of anti-Muslim aggression, violence and harm. Women and young people continue to share with us the ways in which these harms impact their daily lives, wellbeing, ability to access services and feel a sense of safety and belonging. As one participant from our Tackling Islamophobia program reflected:

"We're constantly reminded that we are something to fear, something to be vilified... It makes me want to socially withdraw."

This experience is not isolated. It reflects the broader reality of many Muslim women, whose everyday lives are shaped by fear, exclusion, and the expectation of hostility. What was needed was decisive political leadership, accountability and action to tackle and disrupt the growing prevalence of Islamophobia. The safety of Muslim women, children and communities depends on it.

The Federal Governments response to the Special Envoy to Combat Islamophobia's report has failed to achieve this. Despite the report outlining 54 recommendations, the Government has failed to meaningfully engage with the majority of these recommendations, leaving critical reforms unaddressed.

Offering only opaque recognition of the harms experienced by Muslim communities, the response from the federal government unfortunately reinforces the inequity and impassivity we have become so accustomed to.

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Our pain remains dismissed. Our safety ignored. Our rights to justice and equality unattended.

While the response acknowledged a need to prioritise women and children, it stopped short of recognising or committing to addressing the complex ways in which Australia's laws, systems and policies continue to perpetuate this harm. Investing in Muslim community organisations and supporting grassroots programs is an important first step.

However, without addressing the structures that reinforce and systematise the normalisation of Islamophobia, we will not tackle the hostility experienced by Muslim communities in Australia. Muslim women and children must be protected from racism and discrimination, and while efforts to address education and reporting are useful, they do not address the underlying structures and systems that create, sustain and entrench anti-Muslim racism.

We call on the Australian Government to stand alongside Muslim Australians by addressing all 54 recommendations of the report. Undo the damage of decades of institutionalised anti-Muslim racism, review the laws which target, profile and embed systemic racism towards Muslim communities, and make a commitment to protect the safety of women and children who remain at risk of harm, violence, and exclusion.

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