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PRESS RELEASE

ANIC Condemns the Recent Islamophobic Letters Sent By Senator Brian Burston from One Nation

The Australian National Imams Council (ANIC) condemns the recent Islamophobic letters sent by Senator Brian Burston of the One Nation Party to school principals.

The letter was based on falsehood and an ignorant misunderstanding of the religion of Islam. Such deviant acts are divisive manipulations of political influences on schools and the general public.

Australia is a great nation that prides itself in its diversity and harmony. However, these actions are not reflective of our proud morals and values. We are stronger when united and we should be working towards building bridges rather than spreading hate, fear and desolation.

ANIC rejects the claims made by Senator Burston that Muslim leaders are not countering radicalisation. Over the past years, religious leaders have worked tirelessly through intervention programs, rehabilitation initiatives, awareness events, direct youth programs and much more to target this issue. Muslim leaders have been at the forefront working with schools, families, community centres and the Government at large to counter radicalisation and ensure safety in our communities.

It must also be understood that extremism and radicalisation have no religion, but rather this is an issue resulting from the ostracization of some youth who then mischannel these emotions into the wrong avenues. As an elected Senator, the influences and responsibilities come with the position need to be upheld with the utmost integrity and veracity. Such influences should not be used as fear mongering tactics that only spread unsubstantiated fear and only contribute towards extremism.

The claim that the Qur'an encourages to kill Non-Muslims and rewards this with Paradise is unfounded and completely skewed. The verse that the Senator is referring to in Chapter 9, Verse 5 which has been taken entirely out of context. The Verse was revealed during a time of war and was specific to a certain incident, time and place. This lack of understanding displays the sheer ignorance of the Senator and his party, particularly with regard to the religion of Islam.



Claiming that Islam is incompatible with Western Civilisation is contradictory with hundreds of years of history. Islam entered the Western World in the early 7th century through Spain and has always been a religion of peace, tolerance and understanding.

ANIC also rejects the claims that Islam is a 'political, economic, totalitarian regime with a supremacist ideology wrapped in the skin of religion' as mentioned in the letter. These claims have no basis and are both unwarranted and unconstructive in the progression of the Australian peoples and in addressing this issue. Radicalisation, or any such issue, will never be resolved by spreading hate and ignorance. Rather we must stand united against such prejudices and work together towards stronger communities and a brighter future.

Needless to say, ANIC agrees with the Senator and promotes the notion of free speech and free-thinking Australians and welcomes variance of opinions and ideologies that people have. However, ANIC encourages the Senator and his party's opinions to be based upon accurate knowledge and understanding and is always happy to provide such assistance.

ANIC commends the NSW Education Minister Rob Stokes for his swift action, response and condemnation of Senator Burston's letter and urge all Senators and Politicians to condemn such actions that are not representative of the great strength in diversity that Australia is so renowned for. ANIC would also like to extend their thanks to those who have spoken out against these repugnant acts and appreciate their support.

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