



AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL IMAMS COUNCIL



14 September 2021

PUBLIC STATEMENT

ANIC holds deep reservations about the approach of the NSW Government and enforcement agencies relating to the restricted LGAs

The Australian National Imams Council (**ANIC**) is deeply concerned about the approach of the NSW Government and enforcement agencies relating to the application and enforcement of Public Health Orders and Restrictions in the affected local government areas in Sydney, in particular South West Sydney.

Based on ANIC's engagement with the community, reports it has received and other information which has been publicly disseminated, there has been an increasing tension, suffering and sense of alienation and differential treatment within the communities in South West Sydney. A direct factor in this has been the disproportionate and varied approach of the NSW Government and enforcement agencies in the application of the public health orders and restrictions to the relevant communities in contradistinction to the application of those orders in other parts of Sydney.

The experience of frustration and distress felt by many communities in the affected parts of Sydney has been worsened by the images which have been shared of people enjoying the outdoors in the Eastern Suburbs and other parts of Sydney. The images show people sitting and standing in groups at beaches, sunbathing and gathering with little regard for the requirements to wear masks and socially distance. It is also apparent that there is little visible enforcement or action taken, and certainly not instances of multiple police confronting one person to issue an infringement for not wearing a helmet.

According to ANIC's Spokesperson, Bilal Rauf:

There is a real and observable disparity in the approach to enforcement in, say, the Eastern Suburbs as compared to the patrols issuing infringement notices to residents of South Western Sydney in shopping centres and parks. While it is important that we act, together, to overcome the virus and encourage compliance, there needs to be an equitable and consistent approach.



Otherwise, the beautiful city of Sydney will be further fractured and the communities which bear the brunt of the enforcement will be left feeling like the scapegoats for the NSW Government's seeming inability to manage and respond to the virus. There needs to be a collaborative, considered and consistent approach to managing the virus which takes into account the mental wellbeing of people.

ANIC is engaging with other community organisations to attempt to understand and work towards addressing the concerns which have been raised by the communities in the affected local government areas in Sydney. It has also sought a meeting with the NSW Government and enforcement agencies to raise the concerns about the inconsistent application and enforcement of Public Health Orders and Restrictions and instances of disproportionate responses of NSW Police.

You may contact ANIC's Spokesperson, Bilal Rauf in relation to this statement on (02) 8377 4178 or spokesperson@anic.org.au.

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