



## AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL IMAMS COUNCIL



27 October 2021

### PUBLIC STATEMENT

#### Disappointment and Concern About School Picnic Day Conduct

The Australian National Imams' Council (ANIC) is disappointed and deeply concerned about the recent dress up of a group of Year 12 students at an end of year "muck-up" day, claiming to be "terrorists". An image which has been shared in the media shows six male students from Gilroy Catholic College in Castle Hill dressed in a Kaffiyeh - a traditional Arabic headdress - white shirts, pants and sandals, pointing water guns.

The conduct demonstrates anti-Muslim sentiment and conflates dress commonly worn by many Muslims of an Arab background with "terrorists". It is hurtful, offensive and perpetuates a negative narrative which has a real impact on people from Arab and Muslim backgrounds. By allowing the senior students to participate in such conduct, the school has also condoned and implicitly shown support for such behaviours.

According to Dr Ghamra-oui, ANIC Senior Education Advisor, "ANIC recognises that the common good is cornerstone to Catholic Education and while the principal Ms Merryweather has profusely apologised for the students' action, this unfortunate event has reinforced the need for tighter policies and procedures across Australian schools for countering racism and anti-Muslim sentiment."

Given the importance of preventing and countering vilification against religious and minority groups, ANIC hopes the school will take steps to recognise the real impact and prejudice of such behaviours and views.

**You may contact ANIC's Spokesperson, Bilal Rauf in relation to this statement on**

**(02) 8377 4178 or [spokesperson@anic.org.au](mailto:spokesperson@anic.org.au).**