



AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL IMAMS COUNCIL



9 February 2022

PUBLIC STATEMENT

ANIC Supports the Inclusion of an Anti-Vilification Provision in the Religious Discrimination Bill

The Australian National Imams Council (ANIC) continues to support the Religious Discrimination Bill. ANIC also welcomes the proposed inclusion of an anti-vilification provision in the Bill and reports of the Australian Labor Party supporting the Bill (subject to certain amendments being included).

ANIC, along with other Australian Muslim advocates, has sought the inclusion of an anti-vilification provision over many years. Such a provision is necessary to protect against hate speech and vilification on the ground of a person's religious belief or activity in an environment of increasing anti-Muslim hatred and a proliferation of right wing and white supremacy ideology.

In this regard, ANIC has worked directly with the government and Labor party to provide its feedback relating to the Bill and proposed anti-vilification provision. It is important to note that the proposed anti-vilification provision draws from the existing provisions and definitions contained in the Bill and is focussed on conduct that a reasonable person would consider would threaten, intimidate, harass or vilify the other person or group on the ground of their religious belief or activity. It sets a high bar which does not stifle debate nor discussion but provides an important protection against speech which incites hatred or violence.

ANIC hopes that there can be a sensible discussion about the Bill with bipartisan support and a broad support of the inclusion of the proposed anti-vilification provision.

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

(02) 8377 4178 or spokesperson@anic.org.au