



Public Statement

21st February 2025

ANIC & BOIV Unequivocally Condemn Victorian Shadow Attorney-General's Comments on Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

The **Australian National Imams Council (ANIC)** and its state body the **Board of Imams Victoria**, unequivocally condemn the appalling and offensive comments made by the Victorian Shadow Attorney General, Michael O'Brien yesterday, who exploited and distorted core Islamic principles and beliefs to further the political opportunism on the new anti-vilification laws.

Mr O'Brien portrayed Muslims who oppose cartoons of **Prophets (Muhammad) (peace be upon him)** as being overly rigid. He added that Victorian law should, therefore, define hate crimes 'through the eyes of a reasonable person,' implying that any objection to cartoonist depictions of Islamic Prophets is 'hardline' and 'unreasonable.'

These remarks not only distort the values and beliefs of the Muslim community but also diminish the sincere concerns of Muslims who seek to protect the sanctity of religious figures. In Islam, portraying Prophets is strictly prohibited, stressing the reverence of these highly respected figures. This includes **prophets of Islam, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus**, peace be upon them all. Such representations are considered a breach of the sacred principles that guide how Muslims honour and protect the image of the Prophets. Therefore, it is deeply troubling that Mr O'Brien would suggest that such depictions, often designed to insult and provoke, should be dismissed as acceptable, particularly by Muslims who unquestionably hold every Prophet—especially Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)—in the utmost esteem.

At a time when Islamophobia is at an all-time high and the Victorian Muslim community is facing physically violent attacks fueled by Islamophobia, Mr O'Brien's attempts to redefine vilification are extremely concerning. His narrow, subjective standard undermines the rights and dignity of the Australian Muslim community by misusing core Islamic beliefs for political gain.

We call upon Mr. O'Brien to publicly **withdraw** his comments and **apologise** to the Australian Muslim community for the **offence** they have caused. We urge all political leaders to take a stand against such harmful rhetoric and work towards fostering unity, respect, and understanding for all Australians, regardless of their faith.

anic.org.au

For media enquiries, please contact: media@anic.org.au

Australian National Imams Council (ANIC) represents over 300+ Imams from all states and territories