



AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL IMAMS COUNCIL



4 August 2023

Landmark Legislation to Prohibit Religious Vilification Passed by NSW Parliament

The Australian National Imams Council (ANIC) and Muslim community in NSW embrace the passing of historic legislation in the NSW Parliament yesterday to prohibit religious vilification. It sends a clear message that religious vilification is not acceptable.

The new law will help to make our communities safer. The new provision makes it unlawful to “by a public act, incite hatred towards, serious contempt for, or severe ridicule of, a person or group of persons, because of their religious belief, affiliation or activity”.

It is the first time in NSW that protection has been provided against vilification on the ground of a person’s religious belief, affiliation or activity.

Advisor and Spokesperson for ANIC, Bilal Rauf, said: “*This change is significant. Despite that the NSW Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 has been in operation for over four decades, it has never protected persons based on their religious belief, affiliation or activity. Many attributes are protected. A number of attributes have further protection against vilification. For the first time, the new law will provide protection against vilification on the basis of a person’s religion. It is a first step in bringing into line the discrimination legislation with modern standards and the multicultural nature of our society.*”

While the new amendment is long overdue, particularly in a climate of increasing Islamophobia and anti-religious sentiment, there is still a need to provide protection against discrimination on the ground of religion (and not just vilification). ANIC will continue to advocate for such broader protection. As it stands, there remains no discrimination laws in NSW or federally which provide this broader protection.

ANIC thanks the NSW Government for acting swiftly in its first 100 days to prohibit religious vilification. ANIC is especially grateful to the Premier of NSW, Hon Chris Minns, Attorney General, Hon Michael Daley, NSW Minister for Multiculturalism Steve Kamper, Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Hon Jihad Dib, and other ministers and MPs for pursuing the bill.

ANIC is proud to see the amendment made. It has worked tirelessly behind the scenes to advocate for such a change, including providing input as to the approach and provision to be adopted. ANIC also acknowledges the support and contributions of other faith communities. This passing of the bill is a testament to the relationships that have been built between the various faith communities over the past few years.

For any media inquiries, please contact ANIC’s Spokesperson, Bilal Rauf, on 1300 765 940 or spokesperson@anic.org.au