



Public Statement

23 December 2024

ANIC's Statement Regarding the Recent Hate Crime at Bankstown Central Shopping Centre

The **Australian National Imams Council (ANIC)** condemns in the strongest possible terms the appalling verbal and physical assault on a visibly Muslim woman and her child at Bankstown Central shopping centre on Friday, 20 December 2024. This vile act of aggression targeted at a mother and her 10-year-old daughter is a stark and alarming example of the hate-based violence that is becoming all too common experience for Muslims in Australia.

The incident, reported to ANIC's **Action Against Islamophobia (AAI)** initiative on Saturday, 21 December 2024, highlights a deeply distressing lack of police response at the time. This incident must be unequivocally classified and thoroughly investigated as an Islamophobic hate crime. An AAI case manager has provided support to the victims who remain traumatised by the incident and has escalated the matter to the NSW Police Hate Crimes unit for further investigation.

We are gravely **concerned** and **disappointed** that it took more than **24-hours** for police to respond to the victim's call for assistance and their subsequent failure to initially classify this attack as a hate crime. This delay exacerbated the **trauma** experienced by the mother and her young child, leaving them unsupported at their time of greatest need.

ANIC insists on a **comprehensive** and **transparent investigation** by the NSW Police into both the delayed response and the procedural lapses in handling this serious matter. It is critical that the person responsible for this **hate crime** is held accountable under the law to deter future acts of hatred and violence.

In response to this incident and amid a rising number of **Islamophobic** and **anti-Muslim incidents** being reported to community-based organisations, ANIC **strongly advises** the Muslim community to exercise **vigilance** and **caution**.

ANIC remains committed to **supporting victims** of Islamophobic hate crimes through our AAI initiative and will continue to **advocate for systemic changes** to ensure the safety and security of all communities across Australia.

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