



## Statement on Senator Pauline Hanson's National Press Club address

18 June 2026

Senator Pauline Hanson used the National Press Club to revive a tired and divisive narrative: blaming Muslims, multiculturalism and immigration for Australia's challenges. The Australian National Imams Council (ANIC) rejects that premise entirely. We will not respond from a position of apology for our faith, our community, or our place in this country.

Muslims have been part of this continent's story since before British settlement. Makassan traders from the islands to our north were visiting the coasts of Arnhem Land and trading with Aboriginal people for generations before the First Fleet arrived. The cameleers who helped open the interior came later, and the first mosques were built under Queen Victoria in the 1800s. We are not guests asking to stay. This is our home, and our place in it is settled.

ANIC opposes violence and incitement without reservation, whoever commits it. But Senator Hanson draws no meaningful line between a criminal fringe and well over a million Australian Muslims. To vilify an entire faith community is not policy. It is division dressed as public debate, and it weakens the social harmony Australia needs.

We would add a point of principle. The label "extreme" is often applied selectively and politically. A view that one person finds extreme, another may regard as ordinary. Many Australians, by that same measure, would regard Senator Hanson's own views as extreme. More importantly, holding a strong or unpopular opinion is not a crime, and it does not lead inevitably to violence. A confident society tolerates a wide range of beliefs and judges people by their actions, not their thoughts.

The distinction Senator Hanson refuses to make, between belief and violence, and between a community and the few who break the law, is the very distinction that protects everyone's freedom, including her own.

Australia's real pressures, housing, energy and the cost of living, are not eased by blaming those who pray differently, look different, or speak another language at home. Australia is strongest when it protects freedom of religion, equal citizenship, multicultural harmony and respectful disagreement.

ANIC's invitation to Senator Hanson stands, as it has for many years. We believe in dialogue with all Australians and remain open to engaging constructively for the greater good of our nation and the country we all share.