

NSW Launches \$1M Program Against Anti-Muslim Hate

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SYDNEY – The New South Wales government has unveiled a \$1 million initiative to fight anti-Muslim hate, including a support hotline for victims and programs to raise awareness of Islamophobia.

The program will fund a case management system for those affected by Islamophobic abuse, helping authorities and communities better understand the prevalence and nature of

these incidents. It will also support training for police responding to anti-Muslim attacks and provide broader community support services.

The announcement follows a massive pro-Palestine march across the Sydney Harbour Bridge, which drew an estimated 225,000 to 300,000 participants. The march was initially opposed by Premier Chris Minns on public safety grounds, but proceeded after a Supreme Court ruling in favor of the organizers.

Minns' cautious approach caused tension within the NSW Labor Party, particularly among MPs representing constituencies with large Muslim populations.

"Anecdotal evidence indicates Islamophobia is far higher than reported. We don't want Australians suffering in silence or enduring racism without help," Minns said. "Naked racism and Islamophobia have no place in our state or country, and it is abhorrent that people perpetuate this behavior."

The Action Against Islamophobia program, which will manage the grant, is run by the Australian National Imams Council (ANIC). ANIC President Imam Shadi Alsuleiman highlighted the rising impact of anti-Muslim hate, leaving many Muslims hesitant to engage in daily religious activities, such as attending mosques or wearing the hijab.

"Islamophobia appears in multiple ways, including microaggressions often dismissed as ignorance or rudeness. Understanding how Muslims experience this discrimination helps guide a holistic response," Alsuleiman said.

Recent data underline the urgency of the program. The 2024 Mapping Social Cohesion report by the Scanlon Foundation showed negative attitudes toward Muslims have remained the highest among all faith groups for over a decade, increasing from 27% in 2023 to 34% in 2024. The Islamophobia Register Australia reported a 530% rise in incidents from October 2023 to July 2025, with more than 1,500 cases logged.

Minister for Multiculturalism Steve Kamper said, "This program will play a critical role in providing support to victims while spreading awareness of the importance of rejecting racism in all its forms. To safeguard our vibrant multiculturalism, we must act to stamp out hatred faced by our Muslim community."

The NSW government has also acted to counter antisemitic incidents, which surged following recent conflicts in the Middle East. In February, new laws were passed to combat

hate speech, offensive Nazi symbols, and harassment at places of worship. Minns emphasized that these laws protect all faith communities.

The Executive Council of Australian Jewry reported a 316% increase in antisemitic incidents in the year following October 2023 compared with the previous 12 months, highlighting a broader challenge in tackling religious-based hate.