Joint Statement on Lodgement of Submission to the Royal Commission into Antisemitism and Social Cohesion

A coalition of Muslim community, legal, advocacy, anti-racism, monitoring, representative and victim support organisations has lodged a joint submission to the Royal Commission into Antisemitism and Social Cohesion.

The submission advances a clear position that social cohesion is built through equal protection, institutional fairness, democratic participation and the right of all communities to speak, grieve, organise and advocate without collective suspicion.

Australia must confront antisemitism seriously while also recognising Islamophobia, anti-Muslim, anti-Palestinian racism and anti-Arab racism, and protecting lawful advocacy for Palestinian rights, anti-genocide protest, Muslim civic participation and the broader democratic space in which people of conscience seek justice.

The submission calls for an approach in which every community's safety, grief, identity and lawful advocacy are treated with equal institutional seriousness. Social cohesion is strengthened when public institutions protect people consistently, recognise harm across communities, and preserve democratic space for lawful political expression. Communities are more likely to trust institutions when they see that protection is not selective, fairness is not conditional, and urgency is not reserved for one group while others are treated as risks to be managed.

The submission raises the following key points.

First, social cohesion must protect all communities.
Social cohesion depends on trust, fairness, belonging, participation and confidence in public institutions. The submission argues that Muslim Australians must be able to participate in public life, raise issues of conscience, express religious and moral concerns, support humanitarian causes and engage in advocacy without fear of being mischaracterised or treated with suspicion.

Second, antisemitism should be addressed within a broader anti-racism framework.
The submission calls for the Australian Human Rights Commission's National Anti-Racism Framework to be adopted, implemented and properly resourced as the core policy foundation for addressing antisemitism, Islamophobia and other forms of racism. It argues that Australia already has a national roadmap for addressing racism, and that antisemitism should not be dealt with through a separate or parallel architecture that sits outside this broader framework.

Third, Islamophobia is directly relevant to social cohesion.
Islamophobia, anti-Palestinian racism and anti-Arab racism are directly relevant to social cohesion because social cohesion is not just about whether communities physically coexist. It is about whether communities feel safe, protected, heard and able to participate in public life without being treated as suspects. When Muslim, Palestinian and Arab communities are treated as suspicious, foreign, dangerous or politically illegitimate, they are less likely to report harm, engage institutions, speak publicly, organise, protest or participate fully in civic life. Social cohesion cannot exist where some communities are protected while others are securitised, silenced or disbelieved.

Fourth, antisemitism must be distinguished from legitimate political expression.
Palestine advocacy is lawful democratic participation. Advocacy for Palestinian rights, opposition to genocide, criticism of occupation and apartheid, support for boycott activity, and criticism of Israel or Zionism as political structures are not inherently antisemitic. Political speech should be assessed by its target, content and context. Hatred directed at Jewish people because they are Jewish must be addressed. Lawful criticism of states, governments, militaries, political ideologies and public policy positions must remain protected.

Fifth, the IHRA definition should not be adopted as the basis for public policy.
The submission opposes the use of the IHRA working definition of antisemitism as the basis for government, institutional or public policy responses. Its examples relating to Israel and Zionism create a serious risk that legitimate political expression will be mischaracterised as antisemitic.

The submission recognises that the Commission has adopted the IHRA definition for its work. Given that position, the submission argues that any use of the definition must be accompanied by clear safeguards. The IHRA examples should not be applied mechanically and must be assessed in full context.

Sixth, the practical impacts on Muslim Australians are real.
The submission identifies the practical risks for students, workers, mosques, imams, Islamic schools, community organisations and peaceful protesters. If definitions, guidance or complaints processes are applied too broadly, Muslim Australians may avoid speaking, praying, fundraising, organising, advocating or protesting in legitimate ways. This would weaken public trust and reduce Muslim participation in Australian civic life.

Seventh, institutions need clear guidance.
The submission calls for schools, universities, workplaces, public bodies, complaints agencies and law enforcement agencies to receive clear guidance that distinguishes antisemitism from legitimate political expression, religious and moral speech, humanitarian advocacy and peaceful protest. It also calls for procedural fairness, contextual assessment and consultation with affected communities before policies or training are implemented.

To that end, the submission also supports the adoption of the Australian Muslim Advocacy Network's Dehumanisation Framework as a practical standard for identifying harmful racist speech and discourse. This framework focuses on whether people, identified by a protected attribute, are portrayed as less deserving of equal human treatment. It provides a clearer and more consistent basis for addressing hate while protecting legitimate criticism of states, governments, militaries and political ideologies

Eight, extremism and terrorism must not be explained through religion-first causation.
Religious language, symbols, flags or asserted justifications may form part of how a perpetrator frames an act, but they do not establish the root causes that led an individual to the point of violence. The submission calls on the Commission to avoid normalising terms such as "religiously motivated terrorism," "radical Islam" or "Islamist extremism" as explanatory categories.

Nine, community-led monitoring and reporting should be supported.
The submission calls for stronger support for community-led monitoring, reporting and response mechanisms. Communities affected by racism are often best placed to identify emerging patterns of harm, barriers to reporting and the practical impacts of institutional responses. The work of organisations such as the Islamophobia Register Australia should be supported as part of a broader national approach to racism, alongside reporting and monitoring mechanisms for antisemitism and other forms of racism.

The full submission is a comprehensive contribution to the Royal Commission's work. It goes beyond immediate community concerns and addresses broader questions about racism, extremism, institutional trust, democratic participation and the future of social cohesion in Australia. These issues matter for all Australians. The way the country responds now will shape how public institutions manage disagreement, how minority communities are treated, and how confidently Australians can participate in difficult debates without fear of being mischaracterised or excluded.

At its core, the submission argues for a careful and consistent national approach. Australia must be able to confront antisemitism seriously while ensuring that responses to racism do not silence other communities, narrow legitimate public debate, or create new forms of suspicion and exclusion.

Social cohesion is strengthened when communities can speak, grieve, disagree, advocate and participate within a framework of equal dignity, equal protection and institutional fairness.

The full submission is available to download here: Joint Muslim Community Submission

Signatory Organisations to the Joint Submission Included

1. Alliance Against Islamophobia (AAI)
2. Australian Federation of Islamic Councils (AFIC)
3. Brisbane Muslim Fellowship
4. Islamophobia Register Australia (Register)
5. Islamic Council of Queensland (ICQ)
6. Islamic Council of Victoria (ICV)
7. Islamic Council of Western Australia (ICWA)
8. Muslim Legal Network NSW (MLN)
9. Muslim Votes Matter (MVM)
10. Muslim Women Australia
11. Queensland Muslims Inc (QMI)
12. The Muslim Vote (TMV)

Dated: 22 June 2026
Media Enquiries: Any of the signatory organisations may be contacted for comment.