

A Review of:
“A National Response to Islamophobia: A Strategic
Framework for Inclusion, Safety and Prosperity”
or
The Malik Report

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Introduction and Background to the Report

In the light of the escalation of anti-Semitism in Australia during 2024, our Prime Minister, Mr Anthony Albanese, ironically, deemed it essential to order an examination into combating not anti-Semitism, but into combating Islamophobia in Australia. Rather than directing attention to the pressing matter at hand, that of anti-Semitism, he redirected his attention and his resources towards Islamophobia, having created a false equivalence between the two issues and thus missing the immediate point of need.

Given this action by the Prime Minister, at a time when there had been a spate of historic anti-Semitic events against Jews and Jewish property, one must ask the question: What was the Prime Minister's reason for appointing a Special Envoy to Combat Islamophobia?

Thus, on 30 September 2024, the Prime Minister announced the appointment of Mr Aftab Malik as the Special Envoy to Combat Islamophobia in Australia. Mr Malik's appointment is a 3-year term, which commenced on 14 October 2024. In line with this appointment, Aftab Malik proceeded to conduct an enquiry into combating Islamophobia in Australia and how to "combat" the Islamophobic attacks upon Islam and Muslims.

On 12 September 2025, Mr Malik delivered to the Prime Minister a report entitled:
A National Response to Islamophobia: A Strategic Framework for Inclusion, Safety and Prosperity.

Aftab Malik is a United Nations Alliance of Civilisations "Global Expert" on Muslim affairs. He served in the NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet for nearly a decade, and he is a guest lecturer in the Department of Law at the University of Sydney, where he co-teaches an Introduction to Shariah.

Australians will do well to pay close attention to this report. It appears to introduce a strategy of embedding, special considerations and processes into our national institutions, that will specifically benefit one religion, that of Islam and its adherents. Professor of Law at Alphacrucis University College, Dr Augusto Zimmermann, recently wrote that what is proposed in this report is "a whole-of-society response, spanning government, law, health, education, media, sport and political culture." (Zimmermann, 2025).

The Report

The report's introduction proposes that combating Islamophobia is "an urgent priority" (Malik, 2025, p.6). It states that Islamophobia is "real and pervasive" (Malik, 2025, p.6) and that the messages of Islamophobia by politicians and the media in Australia are "a social licence to hate Muslims" (Malik, 2025, p.8).

Professor Greg Craven, lawyer, academic, and former vice-chancellor of Australian Catholic University, stated that the report was intent upon "making the case that Australia is an anti-Muslim hellhole." Commenting on the report, Craven concluded that Malik's report has failed to make that case. (Craven, 2025)

The introduction to the Report closes by recommending the creation of an overarching oversight monitoring mechanism or task force, which is deemed to be the essential

requirement to ensure that any of Malik's recommendations that the Prime Minister accepts will be enforced across Australia's civil institutions. There are seven components listed that describe this newly proposed bureaucratic watchdog that will oversee all aspects of these changes across our national institutions.

Proposed Changes and Applications to the Australian Government

To remedy Malik's accusations of Islamophobia against the Australian people and Australia's institutions, his report presents a suite of 54 recommendations which propose significant changes to twelve of the Australian Government's key institutions.

The 54 recommendations are further divided into many more detailed subcategories that introduce changes and adjustments to be implemented by these 12 key targeted governmental institutions. Malik has effectively proposed around 180 recommended changes, applications, and adjustments to the following 12 Commonwealth government departments and institutions:

1. The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet - Recommendations 1-4; (a total of 6 changes and adjustments);
2. The Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights – Recommendations 5-6; (a total of 23 changes and adjustments);
3. The Department of Home Affairs – Recommendations 7-16: (a total of 33 changes and adjustments);
4. The Attorney-General's Department: Recommendations 17-27: (a total of 14 changes and adjustments);
5. The Department of Education: Recommendations 28-34: (a total of 57 changes and adjustments);
6. The Department of Health, Disability and Ageing: Recommendations 35-37: (a total of 3 changes and adjustments);
7. Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade: Recommendations 38-40: (a total of 3 changes and adjustments);
8. The Australian Sports Commission: Recommendation 41: (a total of 8 changes and adjustments);
9. The Department of Social Services: Recommendations 42-44: (a total of 3 changes and adjustments);
10. The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations: Recommendations 45-49: (a total of 5 changes and adjustments);
11. The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts: Recommendations 50-53: (a total of 15 changes and adjustments);
12. The Parliament of Australia: Recommendation 54: (a total of 10 changes and adjustments).

Whilst the report targets key institutions of the Australian Government, Malik states that these recommendations should not be restricted to only the Commonwealth's institutions, but that they should also be extended to all Australian states and territories. Malik states:

“As such, any recommendations accepted should be formally included in the agenda of the National Cabinet to track and coordinate across federal, state and territory governments.” (Malik, 2025, p.26).

Thus, if Malik’s recommendations are wholly accepted by the Albanese government, there could be many more than the originally proposed 180 changes and adjustments to the targeted Commonwealth institutions. The Malik-inspired follow-on to Australia’s states and territories would impose many more similar changes to our state and territorial government jurisdictions, in addition to his proposed original changes to the Commonwealth’s institutions.

A Brief, Closer Look

When one takes a closer look at the details of these recommendations and their political and cultural implications, the familiar idiom “the devil is in the details” becomes clarifying. A brief glance over these recommendations may deliver a simplistic response, that it all seems reasonable; however, should one take time and thought to consider the possibility of the political, legal, and bureaucratic consequences of these recommendations, much caution and greater scrutiny become an urgent imperative.

This paper presents a brief, but closer look at some of Malik’s 54 recommendations to the Australian Government. If left unchecked, Malik’s report presents a Pandora’s Box of undemocratic possibilities. The following paragraphs explore how some key Commonwealth departments could be changed to be used as adversarial entities, targeting the Australian people, our democratic principles, and our Australian way of life. Malik’s report may be seen as a step towards the legal weaponisation of the term “Islamophobia” against the Australian people, Australia’s institutions and the Australian culture.

Before introducing the 54 recommendations, Malik states that it would be “essential” to establish an overarching monitoring body to ensure that the approved recommendations progress effectively across the community (Malik, 2025, p.27). Malik certainly wants any of his recommendations that are approved by the Albanese Government to be firmly established and legally enforced.

Defining Islamophobia

Given that Aftab Malik’s appointment is as the Special Envoy to Combat Islamophobia in Australia, and that Malik’s report addresses the topic of combating Islamophobia, with his suite of new policies, processes and legal ramifications, it is preposterous that Malik himself declared that there is no accepted definition of the term Islamophobia. Malik states “there is no universally accepted definition of Islamophobia” (Malik, 2025, p.5), yet his report seeks to require the nation’s governmental, cultural, bureaucratic and legal institutions to “combat” this undefined phenomenon.

Rather than taking up the challenge of defining Islamophobia, Malik, as Special Envoy to Combat Islamophobia, sidesteps his obvious duty of defining it, yet he then seeks “to convey its pervasiveness and impacts” (Malik, 2025, p.5), and to combat this undefined entity, to seek out and discover it, to determine its impacts and consequences, and to punish with the full force of law, those who may offend against it.

The 54 Recommendations to the Australian Government

This abbreviated commentary of the Malik report will merely touch on some of the key issues of Malik's detailed set of recommendations to the Australian Government.

1. The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (Recommendations 1-4)

1.1 The Department's Functions

The focus areas of the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet are Domestic Policy, Government, International Policy & National Security and the Office for Women. (Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, 2026).

1.2 The Malik Recommendations

Starting at the apex of our government, the Department of the Prime Minister, Recommendations 1-4 address 6 changes emphasising the urgency of addressing Islamophobia in the Australian Public Service, in the realms of human rights and Australia's counter-terrorism laws. The report recommends that the Prime Minister and his cabinet:

1. confront Islamophobia with all the force of the law, currently available to other forms of discrimination (Rec. 1);
2. formally recognise 15 March as the International Day to Combat Islamophobia, as established by the United Nations General Assembly (Rec. 2);
3. design minority-group inclusive practices into the recruitment processes of the Australian Public Service. These practices are aimed at improving the retention of minorities, including Muslims, as employees, and encouraging Muslims and members of other minority groups into leadership positions in the Australian Public Service (Rec. 3 - 3a.);
4. commence an examination of Australia's counter-terrorism laws to discover if these laws discriminate against Australian Muslims (Rec. 4-4a.).

1.3 Concerns Arising from Recommendations 1-4

Recommendations 1-4 of the Malik report, if approved, would establish one religion – Islam, and the presumed threat of Islamophobia as an urgent priority in the Prime Minister's and the Cabinet's considerations of discriminatory practices. Given that discriminatory practices in Australia are already dealt with via current appropriate “rights, protections and legal recourse” (Rec.1), why would there be a need to require the Prime Minister's Department to give special attention to discriminatory practices against Muslims, above other people groups in Australia?

Recommendation 2 proposes a gazetted day (15 March) to call the nation to “Combat Islamophobia” in alignment with the practice of the United Nations General Assembly.

When it comes to national iconic days such as Australia Day and ANZAC Day to be celebrated as a nation, various political interest groups have used these special days to contribute to social division rather than “social cohesion”. With these concerns in mind, creating another official day where Australians would be required to recognise the alleged problems faced by a minority religious group may contribute to more societal division. Focussing a day on one religious group may incentivise other religious groups to seek similar recognition. Given that the Malik report states that it seeks to contribute to “social cohesion”, a stated, undefined goal and a key term that he uses 17 times in his report, the recognition of one minority religion over others sets up further division in this nation rather than social cohesion.

Recommendation 3 emphasises the preferencing of minority groups (including Muslims) in the Australian Public Service’s employment processes when recruiting staff, retaining staff, and creating leadership opportunities. Given that Muslims only comprise 3.2% of the total Australian population (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021), this proposed new preferment of Muslims and other minorities in staffing and leadership positions may lead to ethnic staffing disproportionality in the Australian Public Service.

In addition to this potential, proportional over-representation in the Australian Public Service, this recommendation may lead to the introduction of various minority people-group quotas into the employment and leadership policies of the Australian Public Service. Would the introduction of religious people-group quotas, in turn, create a new racial or religious competitive, lobbyist playing field in our presumably disinterested Commonwealth bureaucratic agencies?

In our free, fair and equality-based society, employment in the Public Service, and in particular, the appointment to leadership positions should always be based on merit. Staffing and leadership positions in the Australian Public Service should not be allocated to a preferred religious group, nor should there be quotas for such staffing and leadership positions.

Recommendation 3 moves close to contradicting Section 116 of Australia’s Constitution, which states:

“Commonwealth not to legislate in respect of religion.

The Commonwealth shall not make any law for establishing any religion, or for imposing any religious observance, or for prohibiting the free exercise of any religion, and no religious test shall be required as a qualification for any office or public trust under the Commonwealth.”

(Australian Constitution s.116)

If Malik inclines to make recommendations that come perilously close to contradicting the Australian Constitution and the spirit of egalitarianism it stands for, one must be very careful to scrutinise any of his recommendations. The Australian people must examine his other recommendations to determine if they contradict, or push the boundaries of Australian, state, territory, and local laws, customs and mores.

Recommendation 4 proposes that Australia’s counter-terrorism laws be reviewed independently, so that Muslims will not be discriminated against during counter-terrorism investigations. This review of our counter-terrorism laws seeks to “investigate potential discriminatory application and effect on Muslim-Australian communities.” (Rec. 4a.).

Why should special considerations be applied to Muslims when federal and state police officers pursue the criminal activities of terrorists in Australia? When it comes to protecting the Australian people, counter-terrorism agencies must be free to do their work, irrespective of any religiously affiliated group. Would such special considerations of the Muslim communities hamper counter-terrorist investigations if they were to be applied to potential Islamist terrorism investigations, or investigations into any other form of terrorism?

The role of the police is to follow the evidence of a case. Police should not be hampered by preferential consideration of any specific religious or political group when conducting counter-terrorism investigations. Would this recommendation impede evidence-based counter-terrorism investigations and possibly present unwarranted dangers to the people of Australia?

2. The Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights (Recommendations 5-6)

2.1 The Committee's Functions

The Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights' responsibilities and functions are to examine Bills and Acts for their compatibility with human rights and to report to both Houses of Parliament on that issue. The committee may also inquire into any matter relating to human rights, as referred to it by the Attorney-General. (Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights, 2026).

2.2 The Malik Recommendations

Recommendations 5-6 of the Malik report, if approved, require the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights to apply 23 changes and adjustments to key government agencies and to the entire Australian community. These changes establish two commissions of inquiry, each with explicit terms of reference and far-reaching powers that search for and examine what Malik deems to be possible areas in our society that are susceptible to the threats of Islamophobia, anti-Palestinian racism and anti-Arab racism.

The first proposed commission of inquiry is set to examine key government agencies, the Australian media, and the entire nation for discriminatory practices and their effects upon intergenerational demographics, social cohesion and democracy, mental health, the daily lives of Muslims, and effective police reporting in Australia. The terms of reference for this commission of inquiry specifically focus this examination upon what Malik calls Australia's presumed "main drivers and causes of anti-Muslim hate, prejudice, dehumanisation, discrimination, vilification, and racism" (Rec. 5, 5a.-m.).

This commission would be empowered to examine all arms of the media for their undocumented yet presumed contribution "to rising hostility towards Muslims" (Rec. 5c.). This forensic examination of how Islamophobia impacts the lives of Muslims would also be applied to many other areas of Australian life, ranging from Australia's workplaces, to schools, to sports, as well as accessing healthcare, employment, and housing (Rec. 5g.). The commission will be tasked to examine why Islamophobia is under-reported to police and other authorities and to address the lack of an official definition of the term "Islamophobia",

given that it is a contested and undefined term. (Gabsi, 2024; Awan & Zempi, 2020) (Rec. 5i.-j.).

The recommendations for the first commission include the following:

5. Establish a commission of enquiry into Islamophobia. The commission will be controlled and directed by specific terms of reference to examine:
 - a. key government agencies and their policies;
 - b. the current extent of Islamophobia in Australia, with a focus on:
 - (i) anti-Muslim hate,
 - (ii) prejudice,
 - (iii) dehumanisation,
 - (iv) discrimination,
 - (v) vilification and
 - (vi) racism.
 - c. the role of: media reporting, documentaries, film, social media and political discourse “in contributing to rising hostility towards Muslims”;
 - d. the intergenerational impact of Islamophobia;
 - e. the impact of Islamophobia on social cohesion and democracy;
 - f. the mental health impacts and the economic costs of Islamophobia;
 - g. The impact of Islamophobia on the daily lives of Muslims at:
 - work, school, sport, accessing healthcare, accessing employment and accessing housing for Muslim refugees, and those with disabilities and with intersectional identities;
 - h. barriers to Muslims reporting Islamophobia;
 - i. reasons for the under-reporting of Islamophobia to police;
 - j. the impact of defining Islamophobia;
 - k. our international reputation as an inclusive democracy;
 - l. how to determine the progress of this commission; and
 - m. how cultural and religious biases combine to produce employment barriers for Muslim applicants.

The second new commission of enquiry is prescribed in Recommendation 6. Its brief is to examine the extent of anti-Palestinian racism and anti-Arab racism in Australia, and to interrogate and address “their main drivers, causes, impacts and experiences” (Rec. 6, 6a.-b.).

2.3 Concerns Arising from Recommendations 5-6

One concern about these two recommendations, incorporating their 23 changes and applications, is that Australia’s Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights would create two new commissions of inquiry. The first would be a permanent, anti-Islamophobic surveillance agency represented in all Australian states and territories, that would be empowered to initiate anti-Islamophobia probes into all spheres of Australian society.

Secondly, the commission of inquiry into anti-Palestinian racism and anti-Arab racism in Australia would also create similar, permanent anti-Palestinian racism and anti-Arab racism federal surveillance agency branches in all Australian states and territories, thus establishing a new form of racially-based surveillance culture and scrutiny in Australia.

Both new commissions are designed to assume that Australians and Australian institutions are nationally guilty of discrimination towards Muslims, Palestinians and Arabs. The first

commission's terms of reference set this approach by assuming, with no evidence, that there is a national "rising hostility towards Muslims" (Rec.5c.) and that our nation supports and sustains "drivers, causes, impacts and experiences" (Rec. 6a.), that fuel racism toward Palestinians and Arabs (Rec. 6, 6a.-b.).

These recommendations imply that current protections of the human rights of Australian Muslim, Palestinian and Arab citizens are inadequate, and thus, special protections for these citizens, and to address their presumed incidents of Islamophobia are warranted.

One must ask the following questions: Are Australia's current human rights protections adequate for all Australian citizens? If not, where do they fail? If current protections have failed, how does the creation of more laws, albeit laws relevant to specified people groups, remediate the problem? Does Australia require a separate suite of laws to cater for the needs of Muslims, Palestinians and Arabs?

Does not the need for such special protections for selected people groups indicate that the current national protection laws and bureaucracies are inadequate for all Australians and thus Australia needs a root and branch overhaul of current protections, not just for three people-groups, but for all Australians equally?

Further, do Australians want the Commonwealth to establish a permanent, bureaucratically-based surveillance culture across the nation that is dedicated to the concerns of three specific people-groups? Would such a surveillance culture give rise to a legal system of "search and punishment" permanently scrutinising the nation to detect alleged human rights problems to punish?

3. The Department of Home Affairs (Recommendations 7-16)

3.1 The Department's Functions

The Department of Home Affairs is responsible for the following areas of functioning: "Criminal Justice, Cyber Security, Immigration and Citizenship, Multicultural Affairs, National Security, Settlement Services, Critical Infrastructure Security, and Social Cohesion" (Department of Home Affairs, 2025).

3.2 The Malik Recommendations

Recommendations 7-16 with their 33 changes and applications in the Malik report apply to the Department of Home Affairs. They prescribe new, and extensive Commonwealth funding programmes and grants for research into Islamophobia, and to combat Islamophobia by producing and distributing anti-Islamophobia programmes (Rec.7). The funding will also be used to purchase, install and maintain safety and security infrastructure for Islamic institutions such as Islamic centres, schools and mosques. This funding will also finance protection, planning and capability, incident management and wellbeing and resilience, as well as minor construction, training, security risk assessments, risk mitigation and cybersecurity protection for Muslim organisations (Rec. 8, 8 a.-g.).

Funding will be provided to monitor and report Islamophobic hate crimes, working with the Australian Federal Police (Rec. 9-10).

Commonwealth grants will be aimed at building partnerships with states, territories and local governments to combat Islamophobia and “strengthen social cohesion” (Rec.11) across many and varied social, communication, artistic, historic and online sectors of Australia.

Specifically, these Commonwealth grants will be directed nationally towards, community education programs, youth engagement projects, media monitoring, advocacy, production of arts and cultural festivals, documentaries, social media initiatives, digital storytelling, online platforms, partnerships with tech companies to develop digital tools and campaigns in digital spaces, and for developing Islamophobic awareness programs (Rec. 11, 11a.-m.).

The recommendations also prescribe funding for “bystander training to include capacity-building for frontline practitioners, workers and teachers to recognise and respond to Islamophobic incidents.” All Australian Federal Police officers will be required to engage in mandated “compulsory religious sensitivity training” to better deal with Islamophobic hate crimes (Rec. 14, 15, 15 a.-c.)

The Department of Home Affairs would also review the Migration Act, with respect to the Minister’s ability to “refuse visas for visitors promoting hate speech” (Rec.16).

3.3 Concerns Arising from Recommendations 7-16

This suite of recommendations, if accepted by the Albanese Government, highlights a massive new Commonwealth funding programme, whereby the Department of Home Affairs will require the Australian taxpayer to fund a broad field of communication modes supportive of Muslim interests and advocating special protections for Muslims. The majority of these recommendations would make this department a marketing agency for the Muslim community. They enable the production and propagation of Islamic and anti-Islamophobic publicity resources and systems across all communication mechanisms, including live events, educational programmes, social media and online platforms.

These programmes will be produced as educational training packages targeting many varied audiences, including frontline practitioners, workers, teachers, youth, social media audiences, and both the arts and the media communities.

The recommendations would establish a national Islamic and anti-Islamophobia publicity operation whose footprint is designed to inhabit all imaginable communication systems, including community programmes, youth engagement projects, the production of festivals, and digital spaces.

One must ask the question: Does the function of the Department of Home Affairs include the role of becoming a publicity platform for one specific religion?

Recommendation 16, if approved, would empower the Minister of Home Affairs to “refuse visas for visitors promoting hate speech” (Rec. 16). Should this recommendation be implemented, it would effectively prohibit any international intellectual or any victim of Islamic terrorism, who may be critical of any Islamic ideology, or current or historic practice, from entering Australia. Should there be any ministerial confusion between constructive

critique and hate speech, international visitors and refugees could be deemed to be unwelcome by the Minister on an ideological or political whim.

Thus, overseas intellectuals who have made critical assessments of Islam, such as Ayaan Hirsi Ali, Rev. Franklin Graham, Douglas Murray, Sam Harris, Richard Dawkins, Salman Rushdie, and Gideon Sa'ar, the Israeli Foreign Affairs Minister of Israel, would not be granted entry to Australia.

Further, with respect to the Minister's power over visas, any person currently residing in Australia who had previously been a victim of Islamic terrorism overseas and who may describe or criticise the historic Islamic terror events and atrocities to which they have been subjected could be deemed to be a promoter of hate speech in Australia.

For example, the Fondation Pour L'Innovation Politique (Fondapol) has extensively documented data that covers Islamist terrorist attacks in the world from 1979 to 2024. FONDAPOL's research has cited 85 Muslim-majority and non-Muslim nations that have suffered attacks by Islamist terrorists (Reynie, 2024).

The data indicate a significant rise in Islamist attacks and deaths resulting from those attacks over 3 data collection periods. The data indicate 2,194 attacks and 6,817 resultant deaths from Islamist terrorism, for the first data collection period. The second data collection period indicates a significant rise in Islamist attacks and resultant deaths around the world. However, during the third data collection period of 2013 to 2024, there has been an alarming increase in the number of Islamist attacks (56,413) and deaths (204,937) attributable to global Islamist terrorism, as indicated in Figure 1. The FONDAPOL study summarises these gruesome statistics: "Between 1979 and April 2024, we recorded 66,872 Islamist attacks worldwide. These attacks caused the deaths of at least 249,941 people." (Reynie, 2024, p.3).

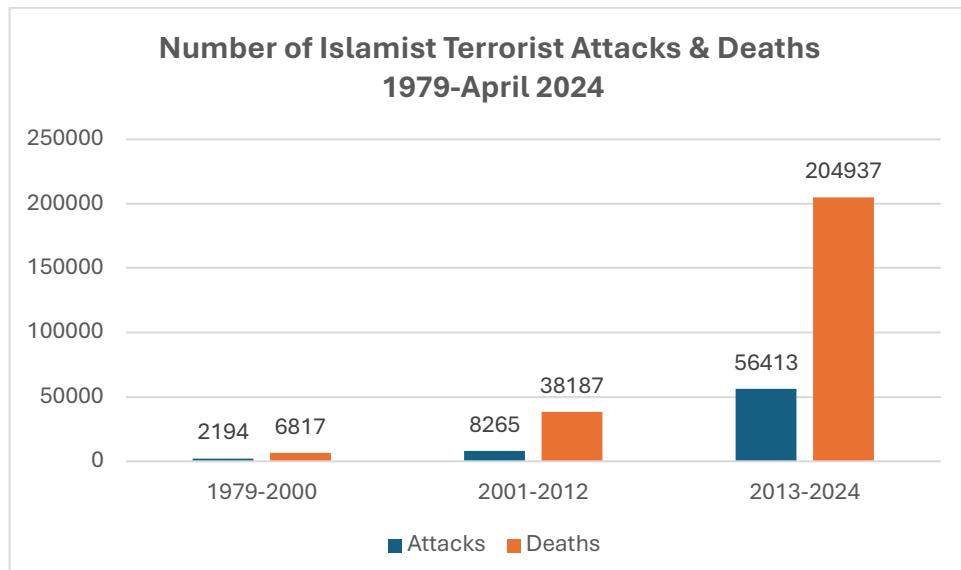


Figure 1: The Number of Islamist Terrorist Attacks & Deaths 1979-April 2024
Fondation Pour L'Innovation Politique, 2024

There are many examples of both Muslim and non-Muslim victims of this Islamic terrorism overseas who have fled from their homelands and have found safe refuge in Australia. 86.3% of Islamist attacks and 88.9% of the deaths caused by Islamist attacks have been perpetrated

in Muslim countries (Reynie, 2024, p.91). These refugees not only deserve the safety that they have found in Australia, they also deserve to be permitted to tell their stories about the horrors they have seen and endured, if they choose to do so. They must be free to speak without the fear of being labelled a hater or an Islamophobe.

Would such visa holders, currently residing in Australia, be denied their visas if they were to tell their stories? If Recommendation 16 were to be approved, such visa holders would be precluded from speaking about their experiences under the threat of the sanctions set in Malik's recommended new hate speech laws. Should they dare to speak of the historic events that they have experienced, they would be declared to be a promoter of hate speech, punishable by sanctions that would be applied to Malik's newly proposed laws. When Recommendation 16 is viewed in this light, it would introduce an effective new set of gag laws upon those victims.

Whilst it is important to note that both Muslims and non-Muslims have been victims of these atrocities, and thus it is illogical and unacceptable to label all Muslims as terrorists, it is significant that Malik does not mention these historic atrocities in his report.

Recommendations 7-16, if approved, would allocate massive new Commonwealth funding programmes, whereby the Australian taxpayer would be required to fund a broad range of Islamic interests. Essentially, if these funding recommendations were to be accepted by the government, the Department of Home Affairs would become a permanent publicity centre for the propagation of one religion, that of Islam. Effectively, the Department of Home Affairs would become a taxpayer-sponsored mouthpiece for its preferred religion - that of Islam.

Currently, the Department of Home Affairs and the Minister face a possible conflict of interest that illustrates how politics and ministerial responsibilities may work against each other. The sitting Minister for Home Affairs, the Honourable Tony Burke, the Member of Parliament for the Australian electorate of Watson, faces such a historic conflict of interest.

More than a quarter of the population of the seat of Watson is Muslim. ABS data from around 2021 indicate that the Muslim population in the seat of Watson is around 25.1% (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021), making it a significant demographic in this traditionally Labor seat.

Minister Burke's ministerial responsibilities include Cyber Security, Immigration and Citizenship, Multicultural Affairs, National Security, Settlement Services, Critical Infrastructure Security, and Social Cohesion. Minister Burke's political interests involve securing the electoral support of voters in his seat of Watson, including the significant Muslim vote. Thus, there is a conflict of interest between Mr Burke's ministerial responsibilities of National Security, Immigration and Multicultural Affairs and his interest in securing the support of Muslim voters in his electorate.

This conflict of interest was clearly demonstrated when Minister Burke disbanded the Australian Federal Police's "national surveillance team" set up under the Commonwealth High Risk Terrorist Offender regime in late 2025, just weeks before the deadly Bondi terrorist attack on 14 December 2025. Ironically, in contrast to the Malik report's proposed funding generosity to the Minister's department, the dismissal of the "national surveillance team" was justified due to a lack of Commonwealth funding (Green, 2026).

This case has demonstrated that there is a clear tension between Minister Burke's concerns for his Muslim constituents, who, in this case, constituted a significant proportion of his electorate, and his responsibilities for national security when it comes to dealing with Islamic terrorism. Why would the Minister who is responsible for national security close a “national surveillance team” due to insufficient funding?

This error of judgment was greatly highlighted, given that the head of ASIO, Mr Mike Burgess, reports directly to the Minister for Home Affairs, and that he reported to the Minister that the status of the possibility of a terrorist attack was “probable” at the time. Further, the Minister’s decision was found to be wanting given that the Bondi terrorist attack occurred some weeks following this closure. A minister in the Australian Parliament must not only do right, but he or she must be above reproach, and thus be seen to do right.

For a federal Minister to have such a large Muslim contingent in his or her electorate and still hold responsibilities for immigration, national security and the like, gives the appearance of a significant conflict of interest. This conflict of interest is an example of when a Minister may be compromised in his or her responsibilities, when the situation is thus politicised.

4. The Attorney-General’s Department (Recommendations 17-27)

4.1 The Department’s Functions

The Attorney-General’s Department is responsible for supporting the services of the Australian Government Solicitor to work to uphold the rule of law in Australia and overseas, and for the support of various commissions and inquiries (Attorney-General’s Department, 2026).

4.2 The Malik Recommendations

Malik’s Recommendations 17-27, inclusive of their 14 changes and applications, apply to the Attorney General’s Department. They prescribe changes to laws concerning racial and religious discrimination and racial hatred. If the changes were to be accepted, the Department would provide professional development courses and resources for legal professionals and their staff and would link these changes to state and territory police agencies to ensure their implementation.

The Department would include the category of Muslims in the ethno-religious category of the definition of race in the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*, as it does for Jews and Sikhs (Rec. 18a).

Furthermore, Malik proposes the introduction of district “hate crime scrutiny panels” (Rec. 20b), and a Muslim “advisory panel” to comment on new counter-terrorism legislation that may affect Muslim communities (Rec. 21).

Malik proposes that the Attorney-General’s Department should provide religious discrimination training for all its legal professionals (Rec. 22) and it would establish staff

training to recognise and address “unconscious biases” that he presumes, without evidence, may affect their decision-making (Rec. 23).

The Department would be required to also develop guidelines and resources for legal practitioners handling cases involving Islamophobia, so that victims would be treated with appropriate consideration and religious sensitivity (Rec. 24). It would also be expected to launch campaigns to make the Australian community aware of the legal implications of Islamophobia, hate crimes, and discrimination. (Rec. 26).

4.3 Concerns Arising from Recommendations 17-27

This set of recommendations incorporates fourteen changes and applications targeting the Attorney General’s Department that focus on providing legal strength to Malik’s anti-Islamophobic cause. Malik seeks to redefine Muslims into the ethno-religious category of the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* (Rec 18a), presenting this recommendation despite the disputed view that Muslims are a specific race, over the undisputed fact that Islam is a religion, and that Muslims are members of that religion. Professor Craven calls this proposal “outright silliness”, given that “Muslims are not a race. There are Muslims from Algiers, Israel, Malaysia and Australia. The whole point of Islam is that it is meant to be a universal religion, like Catholicism.” (Craven, 2025).

Again, Malik advocates for the creation of more panels to generate ongoing investigations of the Australian community, by searching for hate crimes and to advise the department on the impact of new counter-terrorism laws on Muslim communities.

If these recommendations were approved, the department would formally instruct the legal profession on religious discrimination and seek to eliminate a proposed institutional “unconscious bias” (Rec. 23) against Muslims, which Malik has assumed exists, again without any evidence, throughout the Attorney General’s department. It would create databases and reports focussed on Islamophobia and launch awareness campaigns addressing hate crimes and discrimination. The department would collaborate with state and territory police agencies to ensure that these recommendations would be given legal effect.

Given the ongoing escalation of hatred and terrorism against Jews in Australia, since October 7, 2023, including the recent Islamist terrorist massacre at Bondi, one wonders whether this attention to hate crimes and discrimination should be addressed to Australia’s Jewish communities rather than, or at least as well as, to the Muslim communities.

Anti-Semitic incidents have increased in Australia from an average annual number of anti-Jewish incidents of 342 from October 2014 to September 2023 to an average of 1,858 incidents for the years 2024 and 2025 (Nathan, 2025). Figure two demonstrates that in the last two years, since the atrocities of October 7, 2023, anti-Jewish incidents have increased by more than five times the average number of anti-Jewish incidents than during the ten years before October 7, 2023.

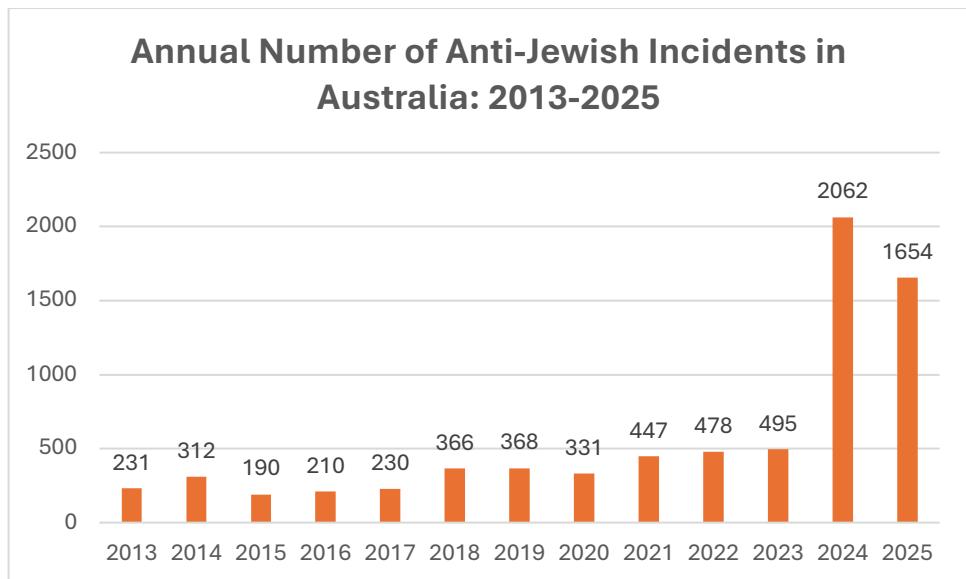


Figure 2 Annual Number of Anti-Jewish Incidents in Australia: 2013-2025 (Nathan 2025)

Whilst all criminal and discriminatory behaviour towards any religious group is reprehensible and is unacceptable in our free, fair and egalitarian nation, there is no denying that anti-Semitism must be addressed in Australia.

5. The Department of Education (Recommendations 28-34)

5.1 The Department's Functions

The Commonwealth's Department of Education provides the strategic direction and national leadership of Australia's education system, through early years education, school-based education, and higher education and research. The Department of Education advises the Australian Government on education and informs the reformation of Australia's education system (Department of Education, 2026). The Department of Education operates no schools.

5.2 The Malik Recommendations

Recommendations 28-34 apply to the Department of Education. These recommendations consist of around 57 changes and applications to be implemented across the entire Australian educational landscape, from pre-school education through to Australian schools, to the tertiary education sector. The changes introduce an explicit focus on Islam, Islamophobia and the Muslim, Palestinian and Arab peoples into the entire education community and into the school curriculum and various educational programmes.

Recommendation 28 proposes the creation and establishment of an overarching *Anti-Racism and Inclusivity Framework* for the whole of Australia's education landscape. If given approval, this Inclusivity Framework would specifically include issues concerning Islamophobia, anti-Palestinian racism, and anti-Arab racism in its purview.

The new overarching educational framework would be applied to inform and guide Australia's entire educational domain, inclusive of all students, staff, policies, curriculums, and communities. It is prescribed to focus on relevant policies, the law and research; creating

guidelines; providing resources, teacher and staff training and support, and to create monitoring and reviewing mechanisms to ensure that all approved processes come into effect (Rec. 28, 28a.-h.i.)

In a similar vein, Recommendation 29, which comprises 24 whole-of-sector changes and applications for Australia's school systems, directs attention to the Australian Curriculum. Thus, these Recommendations focus upon the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA).

In the same spirit as Recommendation 28, Recommendation 29 proposes for ACARA a “*Whole-School Anti-Racism and Inclusivity Framework*”, which would direct Australian schools to a new focus on “First Nations racism, Islamophobia, anti-Palestinian racism, anti-Arab, anti-Asian racism, etc.” (Rec. 29).

To give effect to this “*Whole-School Anti-Racism and Inclusivity Framework*” within the Australian Curriculum, Malik proposes that the Department of Education would:

- establish a multi-stakeholder working group composed of representatives from all sections of Australia's vast education sector;
- review existing policies, research and legal frameworks for racial discrimination and Islamophobia to check that they align with national standards;
- align the “*Whole-School Anti-Racism and Inclusivity Framework*” with the Australian Human Rights Commission's *National Anti-Racism Framework*;
- create guidelines for staff involved in Islamophobic incidents, Islamophobic awareness campaigns, and for support services for affected students and staff;
- provide resources, professional development, and support to embed these guidelines effectively into schools;
- provide teacher and educator training for managing Islamophobic-driven bullying incidents;
- provide teacher and educator training on Islamophobia, commonalities between the 3 Abrahamic religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, and on Islam-West history, exchanges and encounters;
- consider the impact of these changes upon teacher workload, consistent with the *National Teacher Workforce Action Plan*;
- establish monitoring, evaluation and review processes that ensure sustained improvement of these processes (Rec 29, 29a-h.).

If Recommendation 31 were to be approved, the Education Department would review the national curriculum pertaining to Islam, Muslims and Muslim history in both primary and secondary education to ensure that content is accurate and to include Muslim contributions to Australia, to Western civilisation and to the development of universal human values (Rec. 31).

The Australian curriculum would be restructured to integrate Islamic history and Islam-West cross-cultural encounters and exchanges into all school history subjects. In the ethics and civics subjects, the curriculum would include a focus on Muslim contributions to ethics in general, and to universal human ethics in particular (Rec. 31a.- b.).

In the humanities and social science subjects (e.g. the arts and religious studies), the curriculum would require students to compare Islamic perspectives with Western (and other) perspectives and practices. (Rec. 31c.)

The Education Department, in collaboration with the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), would develop a program and associated teaching and learning materials that feature the commonalities and distinctions between Judaism, Christianity and Islam. This is designed to explore ethics subjects and to promote interfaith dialogue among schools (Rec. 32, 32a.-d.)

The Department of Education would require Islamic Studies and Education to be integrated into university and college courses as an “essential component” of Australia’s higher education awards. The Department would invest in developing programs and research into the national effort to combat Islamophobia. Islamic studies at the tertiary level would incorporate correcting widespread misinformation about Islamic beliefs and practices, and engagement with Muslim histories. It will focus on dismantling harmful Islamic/Muslim stereotypes and create space for Muslim voices and scholarship (Rec. 33, 33a. i.-iv.).

The Department would establish collaboration and coordination with state and territory education authorities, agencies and departments to achieve all the outcomes to be derived from these recommendations (Rec. 34).

5.3 Concerns Arising from Recommendations 28-34

Once again, these recommendations, if approved, specialise in compulsorily prescribing one religion to be prioritised above all others. The recommendations would hold authority across the entire Australian educational landscape, ranging from early childhood education to K-12 schooling and to all tertiary educational sectors, including TAFE, various colleges and all universities. This wholistic prescription of integrating the favoured religion into Australia’s education system would also include making Islamic and anti-Islamophobic additions to all educational curriculums, university-based teacher training courses, teacher registration qualifications, professional development courses and staff training.

This new state-preferred religion would be integrated into the entire Australian educational system. Given that Australia already has a private educational sector, which allows for the establishment of faith-based educational institutions of most religious and philosophical persuasions that can cater for pre-school, primary, secondary and tertiary education levels of learning, why would the Department of Education single out and institutionalise one religion, above all others, for government-preferred, compulsory, universal religious study?

One observable irony with respect to the Commonwealth’s new interest in religion in school-based education is that sectarian religious studies in state schools are not compulsory for school children; rather, religious education (RE) has been allocated an “opt-in” status for students for many years. Nonetheless, by way of contrast, the compulsory infusion of Islamic topics into several of the eight Key Learning Areas of the school curriculum for all primary and secondary students, gives the appearance, of a government-preferred religion soon to be inhabiting what has been deemed to be a secular school system, that has been founded on the principles of free, compulsory and secular education, since 1872 (Goodman, 1982).

This begs the question: since when did the Commonwealth and the Albanese government become so enthusiastic about religion?

Such preferment of one religion is not the characteristic of an open, equitable, inclusive society that claims to be secular and thus blind to religious preference when it comes to government policies and processes. These recommendations do not seem to be merely combating Islamophobia, rather they seem to be elevating one religion above all others - that of Islam and establishing it on a legislated Commonwealth Government platform.

If these recommendations are approved by the Albanese government, Islamic education will become compulsory learning for all Australian students. The favouring of one religion over all others and making it compulsory learning for all students is not conducive to “social cohesion”. It becomes educational, religious social coercion.

The Department of Education is required to support the education of all Australian students. It must never become an agency whose aim is to proselytise our students into a state-preferred religion.

6. The Department of Health, Disability and Ageing (Recommendations 35-37)

6.1 The Department’s Functions

The Department of Health, Disability and Ageing develops and delivers policies and programmes on health, disability and aged care. It also provides advice to the Australian Government on health, disability and aged care and works with a wide range of stakeholders to ensure better health for all Australians. (Department of Health, Disability and Ageing, 2026)

6.2 The Malik Recommendations

Recommendations 35-37 apply to the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing. These recommendations consist of 3 changes and applications to be implemented across this sector. Recommendation 35 provides funding to boost mental health services for Muslim victims of Islamophobia. The Department will create an Islamophobia-related trauma protocol (Rec. 36) and will develop mandated compulsory sensitivity training for all health and mental wellbeing practitioners (Rec. 37).

6.3 Concerns Arising from Recommendations 35-37

Thus, if approved, the department would expand mental health services and processes focussed to Muslims who have been traumatised by Islamophobia. All health and mental wellbeing practitioners would be required to undergo compulsory religious and cultural sensitivity training. Given the context of the Malik report, the compulsory religious training would only be focussed to Muslims and to the religion of Islam. There is no stated scope of the religious and cultural sensitivity training being extended to people of other religious beliefs and to other religions.

If working for better health is important to this department, why are these processes not applied to other religious groups? Are Muslims the only people who require such services?

7. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Recommendations 38-40)

7.1 The Department's Functions

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) promotes and protects Australia's international interests to support our security and prosperity. The department works with international partners and other countries to tackle global challenges, increase trade and investment opportunities, protect international rules, keep our region stable and help Australians overseas. (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2026).

7.2 The Malik Recommendations

Recommendations 38-40 apply to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. These recommendations consist of 3 changes to be implemented. The Department will disclose Australia's policies and processes for combating Islamophobia to Muslim-majority countries. It will require all Australian embassies and missions overseas to commemorate an international day of solidarity and education on Islamophobia on 15 March annually. (Rec. 39).

The department will also work with other countries' combating Islamophobia envoys and anti-Muslim hate coordinators to facilitate "global best practice" (Rec. 40).

7.3 Concerns Arising from Recommendations 38-40

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's functions include an interest in supporting Australia's security, addressing global challenges, and keeping our region stable. One part of carrying out these responsibilities is to direct its attention to the matter of Islamic terrorism, which was born abroad but has found its way to Australia. For the department to carry out these responsibilities whilst disclosing Australia's anti-Islamophobic initiatives and policies to officials in Muslim-majority countries may introduce a conflict of interest at times when our national security may be threatened, as it was during the Bondi massacre.

Recommendations 38-40 include Australia in a globally-coordinated combating Islamophobia operation. Does the proposed close association with Muslim-majority countries not only potentially compromise our national security, but would such information-sharing with non-democratic countries also introduce the possibility of adopting policies or shades of policies from abroad that may conflict with Australian laws or with the Australian way of life?

Would officials of Muslim-majority nations, that operate according to the Sharia, present laws, policies, processes and suggestions that do not align with Australia's policies, which are based on our democratic principles of equality before the law, the rule of law, fairness and freedom of speech? Would these recommendations open the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and its practices, to shades of the Sharia, or the Sharia itself?

Do these recommendations expose Australia to unnecessary problems and legal contradictions? Are not the Australian government, the states, and the territories already able to deal with relevant criminal acts, such as hate speech, according to our own laws at this time? The Department of Foreign Affairs may work with foreign agencies, but it must not be under an obligation to report to, or be subservient to, another foreign agency, especially if that agency represents a non-democratic nation.

The proposal to introduce an international day of solidarity and education on Islamophobia through Australian embassies and missions overseas (Rec.39) again begs the question, why focus our overseas offices on one religion? What image does such a mono-focus on one religious group create for our international image and reputation? Surely the Department of Foreign Affairs should present to the world an image of Australia that is equitable, just and fair. We are not a nation that favours one religion or one ideology that is foreign to our beliefs, above all others. We are a nation that accepts equally, people of all goodwill and cultures. We do not favour one group above the rest.

Given the recent escalation of anti-Semitism in Australia over the last two years, as mentioned above, would not anti-Semitism take priority if any religious group were to be chosen for special attention? Nonetheless, given the stated secular nature of the Australian Government, why would our government's overseas offices allocate such special attention to allocating one day to one specified religion annually?

8. The Australian Sports Commission (Recommendation 41)

8.1 The Commission's Functions

The Australian Sports Commission fosters participation and success in sport. The Commission is responsible for: Sporting facilities and camps, the Australian Sports Directory, Sport Connect, Career Development, Research and Innovation, Athlete Engagement Programs, Learning Resources and All Services, and Programs (Australian Sports Commission, 2026).

8.2 The Malik Recommendation

Recommendation 41 applies to the Australian Sports Commission. This recommendation consists of 8 changes that will provide funding to various Islamophobia projects including but not limited to grants for: interfaith sports; educating coaches and volunteers about cultural sensitivity and religious practices; the reporting of Islamophobic incidents; establishing scholarships for youth from religious backgrounds; renovating sports facilities with spaces for prayer, reflection and meditation; mentoring and skill development of youth from different faith backgrounds by professional athletes; encouraging partnerships between sporting organisations and Muslim community groups to build relationships and understanding.

8.3 Concerns Arising from Recommendation 41

The enticement of receiving Commonwealth grants, for various religiously-related purposes, will incentivise sports groups and clubs to align themselves with one preferred religion – that of Islam. This incentive to obtain Commonwealth grants and funding has the potential to transform sporting bodies in Australia into proselytising agents for Islam, leading children, youth and adults to Islam via the means of well-funded, religiously-based, sporting activities. across Australia.

The question must be asked if Australian sport should present to children and adults a government-preferred religion. Do Australians want to mix their sport with religion, specifically, the religion of Islam?

9. The Department of Social Services (Recommendations 42-44)

9.1 The Department's Functions

The function of the Department of Social Services is to improve “the economic and social wellbeing of individuals, families and vulnerable members of Australian communities” (Department of Social Services, 2026).

9.2 The Malik Recommendations

Recommendations 42-44 apply to the Department of Social Services. These recommendations consist of 3 changes to be implemented by the department, Australia-wide. The department will review existing support services and raise awareness to assist Muslims who may be victims of hate crimes and Islamophobia. (Rec. 42-43) The department will investigate the reasons why Islamophobia is not being reported sufficiently and why currently available resources and services are not being utilised effectively (Rec. 44).

9.3 Concerns Arising from Recommendations

These recommendations introduce a new category of concern for the Department of Social Services, that of concern for a specific group of religious people. In consultation with Muslim communities, the department will grow in its support of Muslim communities by increasing awareness of Islamophobia and anti-Islamophobia support resources and services, and of methods for reporting Islamophobia to authorities.

Do Australians wish to further expand the Commonwealth's Social Services bureaucracy to cater to the needs of one specific religious group? If these recommendations are accepted by the government, the Department of Social Services will be seen to be focussed towards, or possibly favouring, one religious group, that is Australia's Muslims, rather than being focussed to the needs of all Australians, on a just, fair and equal basis.

As mentioned elsewhere in this paper, the Department of Social Services should certainly also have activated concern for refugees, who would no doubt be suffering from PTSD, both Muslims and non-Muslims, who have fled from their home countries as a result of atrocities perpetrated by Islamist extremism.

10. The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (Recommendations 45-49)

10.1 The Department's Functions

The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations supports “people in Australia to have safe, secure and well-paid work with the skills for a sustainable future.” The

department's key responsibilities are for Skills and Training, Employment and Workplace Relations. (Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, 2026).

10.2 The Malik Recommendations

If Recommendations 45-49 were to be approved by the Albanese Government, they would be applied to the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations. These recommendations are 5 additional processes that would be included in the department's employment-related policies and practices. These new processes would be focussed to all relevant employment policies and workplaces Australia-wide.

The department would support Recommendation 10 of the Australian Human Rights Commission's National Anti-Racism Framework, to amend the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* to require Australians to eliminate racial discrimination as a positive duty. (Rec. 45)

The department would create reporting mechanisms to prevent employers from discriminating against Muslim applicants and employees (Rec. 46). It would also fund and resource Muslim entrepreneurs to promote a positive representation of Islam in the business sector and for advertising their businesses (Rec. 48). The department would also direct resources to support Muslim women's economic empowerment (Rec. 49).

10.3 Concerns Arising from Recommendations 45-49

Questions of government preferment as opposed to equity issues again arise from these recommendations. This suite of recommendations requires the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations to create policies and new sections of the department dedicated to combating Islamophobia and discrimination against Muslim applicants and Muslim employees.

Fears of discrimination against Muslims or any other minority group in the workplace are already ameliorated by the *Fair Work Act 2009* and other anti-discrimination laws that have been effective until now. The *Fair Work Act 2009* is Australia's national law, which creates a safety net of minimum entitlements and protections for workers from discrimination and unfair treatment. The Act is supported by the Fair Work Commission and the Fair Work Ombudsman to manage the current system and to enforce compliance for most Australian workplaces. The *Fair Work Act 2009* applies to all Australian citizens and visa holders, with key protections against discrimination, bullying and exploitation, irrespective of any religious affiliations.

One of the Act's "Key Workplace Rights & Protections" is "Freedom from Discrimination: Protection from unfair treatment based on age, gender, race, religion, disability, etc.". Other "Key Workplace Rights & Protections" include freedom from bullying and harassment; freedom from physical and psychological harm; equal pay for equal work; and the ability to make complaints to independent authorities.

Given Australia's current protections of all workers, with religion being a protected characteristic already nominated in the workplace domain, as well as in other domains of Australian law, one must ask the question, why would Australians expect to have those protections repeated and extended in a particular way, applicable to one group of religious people, namely, Muslims? Australian society is based on equality, fairness and justice for all citizens. There is no need to isolate one religious group for additional and preferred treatment

in the Australian workplace. Muslims already have workplace protections and the means of redress if necessary, available to them via their current workplace protections.

Recommendation 45 presents an interesting conundrum to the Australian workforce. It seeks to incorporate into the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* a clause that makes it a “positive duty to eliminate racial discrimination”. Does this proposed legal requirement constitute it to be a crime if a worker is deemed to not be seeking to, or to not be seen to, give effect to his or her “positive duty to eliminate racial discrimination”?

If this attempt to legally require workers to perform or be seen to perform certain undefined positive duties, who decides whether the undefined duty was or was not performed by the worker? What would be the penalty for such a misdemeanour? Who would decide what the penalty would be?

11. The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts (Recommendations 50-53)

11.1 The Department’s Functions

The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts “connects and enriches every Australian community, underpins our economy and society, and empowers our regions.” The department provides “policy advice and delivers programs, projects and services in the infrastructure, transport, communications, sport and arts sectors, supporting our regions and territories.” (Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts, 2026).

This department is a rearranged mix of many different responsibilities, created by the Albanese Government following Labor’s election victory on 21 May 2022. The “Key Areas of Responsibility” of this department involve the management of Australia’s national infrastructure and transport, our regional development, communications tech, the arts and culture, and our national and community sport. The department focuses on how connected diverse communities are (e.g. cities and regions), their economic growth, and their cultural vibrancy.

11.2 The Malik Recommendations

Recommendations 50-53 apply to the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts. These 4 recommendations present 15 changes and applications directed to informing the broad Australian community about Islamophobia and the contributions of Muslims to the Australian culture.

The Department will establish an educational not-for-profit centre to affirm the presence, contributions and achievements of Muslim Australians, promoting initiatives in the arts, culture and the media (Rec. 50). It will fund Muslim filmmakers, writers, artists and content creators (Rec. 51), and strengthen online safety laws concerning online hate, by actioning relevant sections of the *Online Safety Act 2021* that currently apply to this department (Rec. 52).

The department will implement an integrated strategy to combat Islamophobia, inclusive of funding where relevant, across various forms of media reporting, including online media, relevant to Muslims. This would involve the development of youth and family-based educational programs, educating journalists about Muslim identity, addressing social media algorithms and platform dynamics in shaping and disseminating narratives about Muslim identities and the risks of hate speech online. It will create media campaigns and platforms for promoting Muslim voices and stories to be heard positively, and for ongoing national conversations about youth, media regulation and social cohesion with the aim to build an inclusive society (Rec. 53, 53a.-d.).

11.3 Concerns Arising from Recommendations 50-53

Malik presents 15 changes and applications to the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts that again focus on Muslims and Islamophobia. Because the reach of this department's portfolio is so vast, the proposed anti-Islamophobia and pro-Islamic changes and applications reach far and wide into the many facets of the vast local, state, territory and national fabric of this nation.

Recommendations 50-53 direct many changes to Australia's various forms of media communication systems, in the interests of creating "socially cohesive storytelling" "about Muslim identity" (Rec. 53 b. ii) and understanding "the complexity of identity formation" of Muslims (Rec. 53 b. iv), and to promote narratives and create "platforms for Muslim voices and stories to be heard authentically and positively" (53 c. ii).

Here, Malik has proposed that this Commonwealth department that extends its reach across many areas of interest, Australia-wide, should use its vast resources and powers to influence all areas of communication to shape an acceptable public identity for Muslims.

The emphasis of these recommendations is all about publicity and image formation in the eyes of the Australian people, or what Senator Roberts has called "Propaganda" (Roberts, 2025). Malik recommends that this Commonwealth department be engaged in "creating platforms for Muslim voices and stories to be heard authentically and positively." (Rec.53 c.ii).

All human cultures and people groups have both positive elements and negative elements in their history. Some events in Australia's Muslim history are positive and productive, while others are negative, such as the Battle of Broken Hill of 1915.

Otherwise termed "The Broken Hill Massacre", the Battle of Broken Hill was the first recorded Islamic terrorist attack on Australian soil. On New Year's Day 1915, two men, Mulla Abdulla and Gool Badsha Mahomed, opened fire on an open-sided picnic train, which was transporting 1,200 people to a picnic ground at Penrose Park, Silverton, near Broken Hill. Four people were killed, and seven were injured. (Department of Planning and Environment, 1915). Another example of the negative aspects of Australia's Muslim history is Australia's latest Islamist terrorist event at Bondi on 14 December 2025, where 16 people were killed, and 40 were injured. Not all the history of any people group is positive, nor can all historic events of people groups be presented "positively".

With Malik's recommendation to present Australian Muslims' stories "positively", whilst there are many positive stories to tell, there is the danger of misrepresenting or overlooking

the stories that are not positive, such as the 1915 and 2025 Islamist terrorist attacks. Truth and facts must be presented to the Australian people, irrespective of the optics. This hard lesson has been presented in Australia's European settler history, where evil has been part of our story. For example, the notorious Myall Creek Massacre of 28 Aboriginal men, women, and children on 10 and 11 June 1838. Notably, the seven perpetrators were hanged for their crimes (Piggin & Linder, 2018).

The point is made that, irrespective of religious, national, or cultural backgrounds, history is not to be manipulated into positive "spin" to meet present political needs of either special interest groups or of governments. If Malik also recommends that the Muslim stories are to be "heard authentically" (Rec. 53 c. ii), then not all of Islam's stories will be heard as positive stories.

All human histories hold both positive and negative events in their extensive catalogues. The value of recognising the strengths, weaknesses, victories and failures of societies is that they can assess their performances, critique them, learn from them, and make changes for a better future. The West has been famous for its self-analysis, evaluation, and critique, and for its improvements for the better, when applicable. This can only happen when truthful telling of history, with its good, bad and ugly features are open for all to see.

However, once again, Malik has sought to make the Commonwealth Government a publicity and image-forming agency for this religious group. Malik is clearly interested in the power of media communications that "influences perceptions" (Rec. 53 a.). He advocates "equipping journalists with insights and best practices for reporting on a range of issues about Muslim identity, with an emphasis on respectful, accurate and socially cohesive storytelling" (Rec. 53b. ii).

Do Australians want to see their government manufacture an image of Muslims that suits government policy? More specifically: do Australian Muslims want their government to represent them in a way that suits government policy? I believe that the majority of Australians would answer those two questions with a resounding "No."

The recommended changes, if approved, would extend new responsibilities to this department, which is already a potpourri of very diverse, disparate bureaucratic functions and responsibilities. It would be difficult to define and monitor the activities of the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts with its new religious layer of responsibilities, given how distance, remoteness, and unconnectedness are the really major common threads connecting the department's Key Areas of Responsibility.

To impose an extra layer of attention to Islamophobia and the religion of Islam onto this diverse portfolio of dissimilarities augurs a litany of nongermane bureaucratic perplexities and unsolved budgetary and fiscal puzzles for this department's future.

12 The Parliament of Australia (Recommendation 54)

12.1 The Department's Functions

The Parliament of Australia comprises the House of Representatives and the Senate. Its responsibilities include Bills and Legislation, Tabled documents, Chamber documents, Hansard, Senate Estimates, Committees, Statistics, and Petitions. (Parliament of Australia, 2026).

12.2 The Malik Recommendation

Recommendation 54 applies to the Parliament of Australia. This recommendation comprises 11 changes and applications aimed at aligning parliamentarians, political parties, and parliamentary processes with the objectives of the Malik report.

Should Recommendation 54 be accepted by the Albanese Government, the Parliament of Australia will endorse Recommendation 26 of the Australian Human Rights Commission's *National Anti-Racism Framework*, to develop behavioural codes for the conduct of all Australian Parliamentarians and staff to take a zero-tolerance approach to racism, with appropriate sanctions including: developing behaviour codes for all Australian Parliamentarians and staff on what constitutes Islamophobia and implementing mandatory, annual training programs on Islamophobia for all parliamentarians and their advisors.

Recommendation 54a.ii requires the Parliament also to set guidelines for leading political parties in relation to Islamophobia, so that they publicly affirm inclusive values and their rejection of Islamophobia when parliamentarians engage in hate speech or such behaviour. The Australian Parliament's guidelines would include delivering formal reprimands to parliamentarians and temporary suspension from the party room or various party-granted roles.

Finally, recommendation 54a. iii & iv include the setting up of an independent oversight of the Parliament of Australia for conducting complaints re. Islamophobia (Rec. 54, 54a.).

12.3 Concerns Arising from the Recommendation

The 11 changes and applications embedded into Recommendation 54 apply to the behaviour codes and standards applicable to the religion of Islam and to Muslims in relation to the as yet undefined Islamophobia and to hate speech. If this recommendation is accepted, all Australian Parliamentarians and their staff will be compelled to comply.

Whilst this may sound like a reasonable position to some, it is to be noted that the Parliament of Australia already recognises and complies with "Behaviour Codes and Standards" applicable to all Parliamentarians and staff who "have a shared responsibility to ensure that Commonwealth Parliamentary Workplaces meet the highest standards of integrity, dignity, safety and respect." (Parliament of Australia, 2025).

In October 2024, the Australian Parliament committed all members and staff to appropriate behaviours by endorsing the existing standards under the *Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984*, as well as the Behaviour Code for Australian Parliamentarians, and Behaviour Standards for Commonwealth Parliamentary Workplaces. Also, the Independent

Parliamentary Standards Commission (IPSC) has been established as an independent investigation and sanctions framework that enforces the Behaviour Codes and Standards for Commonwealth parliamentary workplace participants. Complaints about the behaviour of members of parliament and their staff may be addressed according to the *Parliamentary Workplace Support Service Act 2023*.

Because there already are parliamentary behaviour codes, behaviour standards, two Commonwealth Acts and an independent monitoring commission with powers to sanction, it is safe to say that the behaviours of all staff associated with the Parliament of Australia are clearly stated, monitored and assessed.

The question must be asked: why would the Australian Parliament need another layer of scrutiny, focused on one specified religion, to ensure that members of parliament and their staff do not commit Islamophobic offences against members of that religion?

Would not the current safeguards, policies and procedures, which are to be applied to all Parliamentary workplace behaviours, be sufficient to safeguard the Islamic community? Why has Malik deemed that current parliamentary behavioural safeguards are insufficient and that special attention is warranted to further scrutinise the Australian Parliament when it comes to Islam and to Muslims?

Would Australians be happy to see the members of one religion given special privileges to interrogate the Australian Parliament, a particular political party or a particular politician? If this recommendation were to be approved, no doubt it would be politicised as a tool to oppose, sanction and exclude independent or minority party dissenters in the parliament.

There has been a recent example of such a sanction in the Australian Senate, when Senator Hanson was excluded from the parliament on 11 November, 2025 for a determined number of days following her protest against the wearing of Islamic burqas. The senator's action was deemed to have "engaged in behaviour in the chamber that was intended to vilify and mock people on the basis of their religion ... etc." (Australian Parliament, 2025).

Because Senator Hanson's behaviour was declared to be inappropriate and that she was sanctioned by the Senate by exclusion from the Senate for a time, this event indicates that the current system of behaviour codes and processes are working. Thus there is no need for the introduction of an Islamic layer of scrutiny upon the Australian Parliament.

However, this event illustrates another problem, not only of legislating an Islamic lens through which to assess and control the Australian Parliament, political parties and elected representatives. It also illustrates the politicisation of assessing an offence when it comes to subjective interpretations. What is the standard by which to determine that an offence has occurred in the parliament against the undefined phenomenon of Islamophobia?

In this instance, the Hansard records that the Senate, by means of Senator Wong, accused Senator Hanson of intending to vilify and mock people. Senator Hanson rejected that assessment of her personal intentions. She stated that she had other intentions as reasons for her action. Senator Wong assumed that she knew what Senator Hanson was thinking and that she knew Senator Hanson's reasons and intentions for her action.

Senator Wong's incorrect and presumptive knowledge of Senator Hanson's thoughts and motives was used to exclude an elected representative from the Senate for a period. This event was a successful, political mind-reading exercise that enabled a political opponent to have a Senator removed from her duties as a Senator of the Australian Parliament. Aftab Malik has recommended that the Prime Minister enshrine politicised events like this one in law, using an Islamic/Islamophobia lens as a filter to determine expulsion criteria and suitable sanctions.

Is recommendation 54 an attempt to unduly influence the Australian Parliament by a religious group?

Would such privileges influence the parliament or its members to give special preferences or special exemptions to the religion of Islam and its co-religionists? The current standards and behaviour codes set by the Australian Parliament must apply to the interests of all Australians and all Australian communities. No single religious group of Australians should be empowered to scrutinise and influence the Australian Parliament in pursuit of its own vested interests.

Conclusion

Aftab Malik's report entitled: "*A National Response to Islamophobia: A Strategic Framework for Inclusion, Safety and Prosperity*" now rests in the Prime Minister's office.

It is vital to note that Malik's report has only presented a suite of recommendations to the Prime Minister. The recommendations only come into effect if the Albanese government accepts some or all of Malik's 54 recommendations. If some or all of the recommendations are not accepted, they will not affect the Australian people, our institutions and our way of life.

Senator Malcolm Roberts gave a speech about Malik's report in the December 2025 Senate Estimates Committee meeting. He stated that "This is not a balanced report – it's one-sided propaganda!"

In line with Professor Zimmermann's warning that the report proposes change for the "whole-of-society" affecting Australian "government, law, health, education, media, sport, and political culture" (Zimmermann, 2025), Senator Roberts went on to state that, "Australia will not be commanded to re-write its moral code based on hastily defined 'phobias' because of cultural disagreement." (Roberts, 2025).

The report situates Islamophobia as the new urgent focus of the Prime Minister, giving Muslims and other minorities preferred employment and leadership positions in the Australian Public Service. Malik has presented a false equivalence between the documented number of anti-Jewish incidents in Australia and undocumented, anti-Islamic incidents in Australia.

The report recommends changing Australia's counter-terrorism laws and agencies to ensure that Muslims are not offended by our anti-terrorism policies and practices. This recommendation implies that our counter-terrorism agencies ought to pay attention to the sensibilities of one people group during counter-terrorism investigations. Our counter-

terrorism must be free to follow the evidence of each case and not be hampered by consideration of any preferred people group. The safety of the Australian people must not be sacrificed for political or bureaucratic considerations

Malik recommends the nation-wide establishment of many new, permanent commissions and panels to scrutinise the Australian people, our key institutions, and our laws for discrimination and or hate. If such recommendations were to be approved by the Albanese government, it would turn our nation into an Orwellian state with the goal of elevating one religious ideology, its adherents, its practices and its history into a privileged state of protection, rendered immune from open analysis, debate or critique. This protection would establish 8th-century-style primitive blasphemy laws in Australia and impose a fear-based gag order on all things Muslim, past, present and future, over the Australian people.

Malik seeks to legislate Islamic preferment into Australia's Human Rights and legal mechanisms. His recommendations, if approved, would also require Australia's pre-school children, our school children, the Australian school curriculum, and our college and university students to be indoctrinated in Islamic theology, ethics and history throughout their formal learning lives. Further, Malik wants to politicise the school curriculum by introducing the study of anti-Palestinian racism and anti-Arab racism into the curriculum and thus into the education of Australian school children and young people.

If topics addressing anti-Palestinian racism and anti-Arab racism were to be formally introduced into our schools and universities, it would provoke division in our schools and greater division and even more anti-Semitism in our universities, beyond what we have recently witnessed before the Bondi Massacre, and since 7 October 2023.

Our educational institutions are not designed to be sites of oppositional political activity, whether it be school students against fellow school students, or university student activists against fellow Jewish university students, reflective of religious disputes and war zones on foreign soils.

Compulsory religious sensitivity and Islamophobic education and training are also in Malik's sights for legal staff, frontline workers, teachers, lecturers, school staff, parliamentarians and their staff, federal and state police, counter-terrorist staff, media professionals, and government bureaucrats. This level of indoctrination has a whole-of-society application.

Through Malik's grandiose funding and grants recommendations, he recommends the use of taxpayer money to support the saturation of Australia and its institutions with what Senator Roberts has called "one-sided propaganda" (Roberts, 2025). If the Prime Minister approved Malik's funding wish list, he would transform several sections of our government departments into well-funded advertising and Islamic brand-shaping agencies.

Malik ignores current laws, such as the *Fair Work Act 2009*, which is already set up and operating to protect all Australian citizens and visa holders, including Muslims, from discrimination, hatred, bullying and harassment in the workplace. However, Malik recommends the establishment of special laws and protections for Muslims in the workplace. Australia's general laws apply to all Australians. There is no need to duplicate those laws for the people of one religion.

One of Malik's greatest affronts to our democracy is his final recommendation, in which he seeks to impose further restrictions upon our parliamentarians, their staff, political parties and parliamentary processes. Again, Malik ignores the established protections covering the conduct of our parliamentarians, such as the *Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984*, current "Behaviour Codes and Standards", and the like. Rather than these and other protections, Malik recommends that new checks and balances be imposed on the Australian Parliament, created to meet the interests of Islam and Muslims. This would hand over an undemocratic, politicised control structure over the Australian Parliament to a religious group and their interests.

The report borders on recommending that Australia should introduce a kind of "Voice" for one religious group and move the nation to a quasi-form of institutionalised religious apartheid by granting that group special rights, privileges and exemptions on the grounds of the religion of its members.

Whilst the term "Islamophobia" has not been satisfactorily defined, the report enables this term to become an effective tool that can cancel any critique of Islam, and it is being used to give Islamists easy access to Western institutions. When determining what constitutes a hate crime or a breach of the undefined Islamophobia's legal parameters, one must ask the question: who decides what has been said or done by a person in the street, or by an elected member in the Parliament, is a crime or a breach of protocol?

The report comes close to contravening Section 116 of the Australian Constitution, by establishing a quasi "Established Religion" to be preferred and favoured by the Australian Government.

In conclusion, whilst it is the right of any citizen in our democracy to present their point of view, after having read Aftab Malik's report, I believe that Special Envoy Malik has used a mechanism of our democracy as an instrument to commence a process of dismantling our democracy. This process has been initiated at the invitation of the Prime Minister of our nation.

This brief analysis is my personal view. I accept any errors as my own responsibility. It is my hope, that the people of Australia become familiar with the key anti-democratic features of Aftab Malik's report entitled: *A National Response to Islamophobia: A Strategic Framework for Inclusion, Safety and Prosperity* and for the sake of preserving the freedoms that we currently enjoy in Australia, and for the sake of our children and our children's children, we must approach all politicians and request that they communicate with the Prime Minister a firm and clear message: "Scrap the Malik Report."

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