



AUSTRALIAN MUSLIM ADVOCACY NETWORK

AMAN files Press Council complaint over *The Australian's* false claims about Muslim bodies

23 February 2026

AMAN has referred an article by Chris Merritt published in *The Australian*, titled “Islamic bodies seek to abolish hate speech laws yet jail those who criticise religion” (19–20 February 2026), to the Australian Press Council.

The headline and article are false and materially misleading. The joint submission did not seek to “jail those who criticise religion.”

Its primary position was that criminal hate speech laws should be removed. As a secondary and reluctant position, it supported extending existing protections—currently limited to race and ethnicity—to cover the targeting of people because of their religious belief or activity.

Such protections for people already exist in civil laws across the country and include public-interest exceptions, which we also called for in any criminal version.

The article also falsely claims the organisations sought to exclude “religiously motivated” attacks from terrorism laws in a separate submission. No such recommendation appears in the relevant submission.

This claim follows a swathe of opinion pieces in the same masthead propagating the same lie.

The article also tries to tarnish the reputation of Muslim organisations that were signatories: the Australian Muslim Advocacy Network, the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils, the Australian National Imams Council, the Lebanese Muslim Association, the Muslim Legal Network NSW, Muslim Votes Matter, the Muslim Women Association, the Shia Muslim Council of Australia and the Muslim Vote.

The same article also asserts that criticism of Zionism amounts to hate speech, which Australian courts have rejected.

“Such media campaigns are designed to mobilise anti-Islam sentiment, highlighting the role that *The Australian* plays in driving that movement and pointing to the strong overlap between Zionist and Anti-Islam movements,” said a spokesperson for AMAN.

The NSW submission is here:

<https://www.aman.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/20250806-Joint-Submission-Independent-Review-NSW-Criminal-Incitement-of-Hatred.pdf.pdf>

The INSLM submission on defining terrorism is here:

<https://www.inslm.gov.au/system/files/2025-10/joint-community-submission-coordinated-by-aman-dtreview.pdf>

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