

# Islamophobia in Australia -III (2018-2019)

Dr Derya Iner

*In memory of  
Christchurch martyrs*



We acknowledge all First Nations peoples, Elders and Ancestors as the traditional and continuing custodians of the lands on which this website is accessed. We would also like to pay respect to the Elders both past and present, who are the traditional custodians of these lands.

Authored by

**Dr Derya Iner**

with contributions from

**Dr Ron Mason**

**Chloe Smith**

**Rita Jabri-Markwell**

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Senior Author's contact: Dr Derya Iner, Centre for Islamic Studies and Civilisations, Charles Sturt University. Email: [diner@csu.edu.au](mailto:diner@csu.edu.au)

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First, thanks to Mariam Veiszadeh for establishing the Islamophobia Register Australia (IRA) in 2014 and not leaving Islamophobia experiences in Australia in oblivion.

Islamophobia victims, proxies and witnesses accessing the IRA to report an incident deserve the biggest appreciation as they showed the real face of Islamophobia for everyday Muslims and did not let it go. If unreported, it comes across as if not lived! Please keep reporting...

Collaboration of the IRA with the Centre for Islamic Studies and Civilisation (CISAC) of Charles Sturt University (CSU) and Islamic Science and Research Academy (ISRA) transferred the verified incidents into an important dataset, which gave birth to this report. Thanks to A/Prof Mehmet Ozalp for CISAC's and Ahmet Ozturk for ISRA's support in this work. CISAC allocated me research time for one semester while ISRA funded the third Islamophobia report, without which this report could not be produced. Our statistician Dr Ron Mason and research assistant Chloe Smith were the backbones of this project. Ron was always available to answer my questions while Chloe was swiftly responsive to my every request. Sana Afiouni's assistance in organising references was quite helpful. My first assistant Iman Zayied's contribution continued especially in the compilation of reports that came through Facebook. Iman's imprints in this project will be long-lasting.

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My heartfelt thanks go to every individual mentioned here; it was a great pleasure to work with you all. In addition to professionalism, your collegial support and genuine effort to provide your best has made this report above the standards.

Last, but not least, thanks to my dear family, who deserves much appreciation for their support and sacrifice of family time with me.

This report hopes to raise public awareness about the real and disturbing face of Islamophobia in Australia, while calling on policy makers and researchers to use the report findings for their respective areas.

**Dr Derya Iner**  
Chief Investigator



## Incident

An event or occurrence of an Islamophobic nature that is a either physical or online event or occurrence characterised as Islamophobia/Islamophobic, including physical attacks, assault, damage to property, offensive graffiti, non-verbal harassment, intimidation and online threats.

## Islamophobia

Islamophobia is a form of racism that includes various forms of violence, violations, discrimination and subordination that occur across multiple sites in response to the problematisation of Muslim identity (Sayyid 2014).

## Online Islamophobia

Online Islamophobia is defined as Islamophobic prejudice that targets a victim in order to provoke, cause hostility and promote intolerance through means of harassment, stalking abuse, incitement, threatening behaviour, bullying and intimidation of person or persons via all platforms of social media (Zempi and Awan 2016, p.6).

## Offline Cases

Incidents reported to the Register that take place outside of cyberspace, in the physical world, including physical attacks and assaults, damage to property and threats received in the mail.

## Perpetrator

A person who abuses, attacks, harasses, intimidates and/or insults another individual on the grounds of that person's actual or perceived Islamic faith.

## Proxy Proxies

Acquaintances of the victim who submit incident reports to the Register on their behalf.

## Reporter

A person who submits an incident report to the Register.

## Witness

A person who witnesses an Islamophobic incident.

## Victim

A person who is subject to abuse, attack, harassment, intimidation and/or insults on the grounds of their actual or perceived Islamic faith irrespective of whether they identify as a Muslim.

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A woman wearing a light pink hijab and a grey blazer is sitting at a desk in an office. She has her hands pressed against her face, covering her eyes and nose, suggesting she is crying or in a state of distress. The desk in front of her has a computer monitor, a keyboard, a pen holder with several pens, a calculator, and a spiral notebook. In the background, there is a white shelving unit with some plants and office supplies.

# Executive Summary

The third Islamophobia in Australia report has been sourced from Australia-based Islamophobic incidents reported to the Islamophobia Register Australia (IRA) by victims, proxies and witnesses during 2018 and 2019. The IRA is the first of its kind in Australia to provide a unique platform for Islamophobic incidents to be reported, recorded and analysed to produce research reports in collaboration with Charles Sturt University’s Centre for Islamic Studies and Civilisation (CISAC).

### Report Objectives

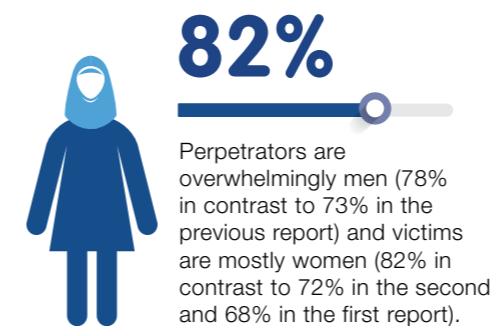
The overarching aims of the Islamophobia research reports are to raise public awareness about the increasing and normalising of Islamophobia in the Australian context and inspire academics, policymakers and the public to take action in their respective roles and areas to counter Islamophobia for a better, socially inclusive Australia. Like all forms of hate, Islamophobia contributes to entrenching a hate culture in society, which upsets liberal democracies, civic rights and the Australian way of life that is symbolised with mateship and “fair go” understanding. Populist far-right groups also use Islamophobia as permitted hate (Poynting and Perry 2006) and a legitimised gateway to sow divisive ideologies, eventually affecting other minority groups and the spirit of democratic and equitable involvement for all.

### Information about the Data

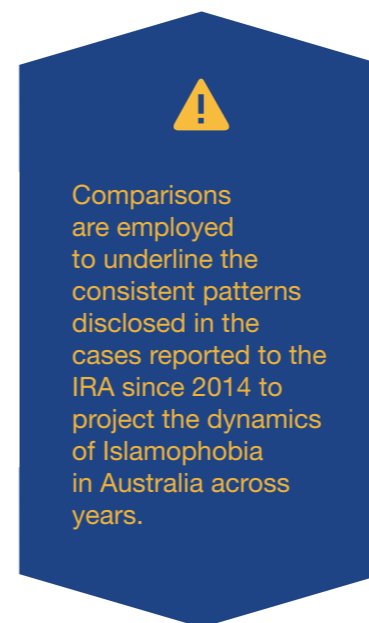
The present report analyses 247 verified incidents that occurred from January 2018 to December 2019 (24 months) – 138 of them occurred in physical circumstances, while 109 occurred online. This number comprises verified and authentic cases reported by third parties, fitting the definition of Islamophobia (Sayyid 2014; Zempi and Awan 2016, p. 6). Undoubtedly, analysed cases are only the tip of the iceberg. Islamophobia, like other hate crimes, is consistently underreported (Iner et al. 2019; Atta et al. 2018; Poynting and Perry 2006; Larsson and Stjernhol 2016; Alimahomed-Wilson 2017). Technical barriers to reporting include limited access to reporting tools and lack of English proficiency. Victims also don’t report due to associated shame, the perception that those incidents are ‘normal’ and too frequent, and the experience that reporting lacks benefit. In this period, a factor that led to a noticeable reduction in reporting was the IRA’s reduced visibility in the years of analysed cases.



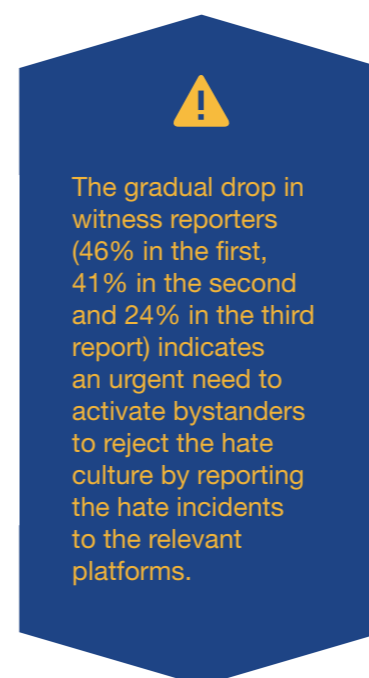
The present report analyses 247 verified incidents that occurred from January 2018 to December 2019 (24 months) – 138 of them occurred in physical circumstances, while 109 occurred online.



82% Perpetrators are overwhelmingly men (78% in contrast to 73% in the previous report) and victims are mostly women (82% in contrast to 72% in the second and 68% in the first report).



Comparisons are employed to underline the consistent patterns disclosed in the cases reported to the IRA since 2014 to project the dynamics of Islamophobia in Australia across years.



The gradual drop in witness reporters (46% in the first, 41% in the second and 24% in the third report) indicates an urgent need to activate bystanders to reject the hate culture by reporting the hate incidents to the relevant platforms.



### Methodology

The current report is produced following the previous report in methodology. The quantitative data analysis tool SPSS was used for descriptive analysis and cross-tabulation. The report content was thematically grouped and introduced under relevant headings. The authenticity of reporter narratives is preserved to give victims and other reporters a platform to voice their experiences, concerns and the impacts. Nevertheless, only a few representative cases could be introduced due to the limited space in the report.

Comparisons are employed to underline the consistent patterns disclosed in the cases reported to the IRA since 2014 to project the dynamics of Islamophobia in Australia across years. Although the analysis of reported cases may not represent all the incidents occurring across Australia in general, they remain a critical and valuable source for understanding manifestations of Islamophobia in the Australian context. Since comparisons are made using the same reporting platform, under the same circumstances and using the same type of data, it is accurate to derive conclusions based on comparisons between findings from the first two reports and the third.

Case numbers include the date of incidents to contextualise whether they took place before or after the 2019 Christchurch attacks. The analysis of the IRA data focuses on the physical (offline) and online incidents, comparison of the offline and online cases, and the pre- and post-Christchurch incidents. Illustrative case studies are also introduced throughout the report.

### Offline

#### People

Victims and their proxies made up 76% of the reporters. The gradual drop in witness reporters (46% in the first, 41% in the second and 24% in the third report) indicates an urgent need to activate bystanders to reject the hate culture by reporting the hate incidents to the relevant platforms.

Sexism in Islamophobia is growing. Perpetrators are overwhelmingly men (78% in contrast to 73% in the previous report) and victims are mostly women (82% in contrast to 72% in the second and 68% in the first report).

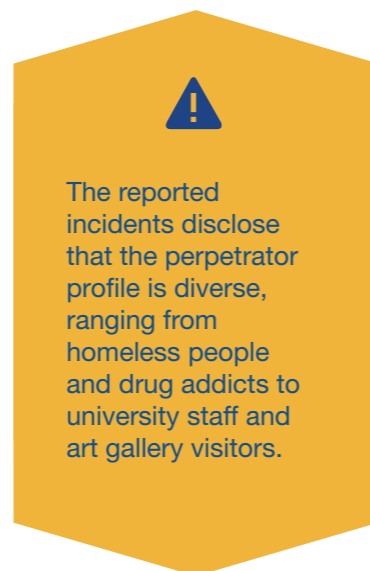
While domestic violence is beginning to receive the public attention it deserves, public violence against women also demands concerted attention and resistance. Hijabi women, unaccompanied women and women with children are vulnerable; therefore, they are the easiest targets for cowardly perpetrators. Of the 103 victims, 85% were wearing hijab, 48% were alone, 15% were with children and 12% were with other women. The abusive behaviours towards hijabi Muslim women also reflect intolerance to Muslims' visibility and especially women's expression of faith and difference through the hijab.

The reported incidents disclose that the perpetrator profile is diverse, ranging from homeless people and drug addicts (Case 234, 7 May 18; Case 228, 9 Dec 19) to university staff and art gallery visitors (Case 140, 14 Jun 19). The reported cases indicate that anti-Muslim hate breaches social and professional hierarchies. A person begging for donations on a university campus can shout at an Australian Muslim woman to leave her country (Case 234, 7 May 18). A patient in the chair of a Muslim dentist can call all Muslims terrorists (Case 134, 29 Dec 19). Physical cases also display that racist disrespect to Australian Muslims is normal social behaviour from ordinary people – fathers, mothers and children, and sometimes whole Australian families.

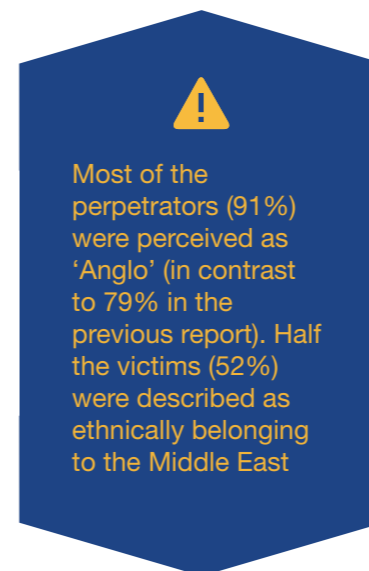
Like in previous reports, victim age was concentrated on young and middle adulthood (61%), whereas perpetrator age was concentrated on mid and late adulthood (57%). Almost one-quarter of victims (24%) were teenagers and children. In contrast, almost 2 in 10 perpetrators were above 50 years old (18%), and the above age 50 perpetrators were 2.6 times more than teenager perpetrators (7%). Apart from sexism, the age hierarchy was instrumental for perpetrators to abuse younger victims, especially children alone (15%) or with their mothers (15%).

Most of the perpetrators (91%) were perceived as 'Anglo' (in contrast to 79% in the previous report). Half the victims (52%) were described as ethnically belonging to the Middle East, followed by Sub-continent (17%) and Asia Pacific (14%).

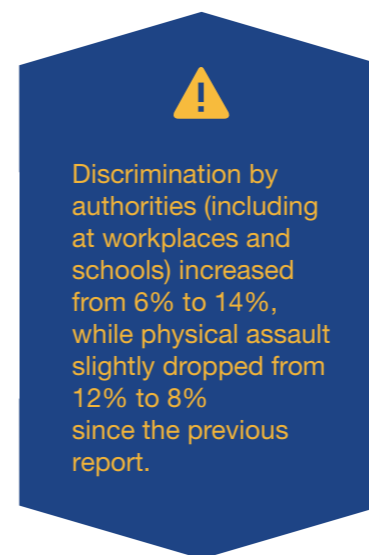
There was an existing relationship between the perpetrator and victim in 1 out of 5 cases. Despite their existing relationship with victims, perpetrators were fixated on their anti-Muslim bias (10% a work relationship, 8% a school relationship and 3% a social relationship).



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Discrimination by authorities (including at workplaces and schools) increased from 6% to 14%, while physical assault slightly dropped from 12% to 8% since the previous report.

## Incidents

Of the 138 offline cases, 85% (n=116) were interpersonal (in contrast to 72% in the previous report). The remaining generic cases included hate stickers and graffiti. Muslim and non-Muslim reporters found these generic cases disturbing because of the way they normalised anti-Muslim hate in the public psyche.

The majority of the incidents were hate speech (46%) followed by discrimination (14%) and multiple types of incidents at the same time (14%), then graffiti/vandalism (13%). Discrimination by authorities (including at workplaces and schools) increased from 6% to 14%, while physical assault slightly dropped from 12% to 8% since the previous report. The severest cases consisted of 2% for property damage (e.g. burning a mosque) and 3% for damage to individuals (e.g. hospitalisation).

The most common form of insult was targeting the Muslims' religion and/or religious visibility (51%), followed by the foul language (35%), xenophobic comments (34%), association with terrorism (24%) and presumption that Muslims kill/harm (15%).

Seeing Muslims as terrorists and killers was 12% in the first report when the ISIS threat was heavily reported in mainstream media in 2014-15. This proportion increased to 27% in the second report based on the 2016-17 reports. This number reached 40% in 2018-19 when ISIS was deactivated and no ISIS terrorism was recorded. The noticeable spike from 12% to 39% proves portrayal of Muslims as unconditionally terrorists and can be explained with the increasing influence of far-right extremist rhetoric and conspiracy theories, which justify extremist levels of anti-Muslim hate by demonising all Muslims as potential terrorists and killers. This narrative was one of the most popular post-Christchurch anti-Muslim narratives online.

The content of insults showed foul language aiming to diminish dignity and honour was directed chiefly at women (29% in contrast to 16% for men). On the contrary, males were often associated with terrorism (42% compared to 18% for women).

Discrimination experiences included workplace discrimination and vilification, which was analysed in the report's case study. According to the Australian Human Rights Report (AHRC 2021), almost half of Muslims (48%)

face discrimination in the workplace or when seeking employment. Although education is the only social upward mobility avenue for immigrants and minorities, discrimination experiences in employment, promotion and everyday workplace circumstances break the upward mobility chain for Muslims. According to the 2016 Australian census, although Australian Muslims score above the national average in tertiary and higher-level education, income per Muslim household scores below the national average (Hassan 2018). Eventually, the “overqualified” candidates withdraw from the corporate world to in-community jobs, from middle/upper class to lower class living standards and from white populated neighbourhoods to Muslim populated lower-income suburbs. This unavoidable shrink and isolation socio-economically impact the Australian Muslim community in the long run and across generations. The cases reported to the IRA capture the actual discrimination and vilification scenarios, such as religious discrimination during the job interview (Case 220, 23 Feb 18), being fired without notice presumably due to not adjusting to the inherently Christian but adversely secular workplace culture (Case 223, 20 Dec 19), being discriminated against and vilified at work by superiors (Case 197, 14 Sep 19) or colleagues due to their root belief about Muslims being terrorists (Case 229, 1 May 19; Case 164, 18 Nov 19). Denial of equal service to Muslim customers was sometimes captured but rejected by the managers (Case 200, 4 Jan 19) or blatantly expressed in the face of a waiting Muslim customer, as in the case of a staff telling his co-worker to “Serve the Australian man first! [Because] He is Australian!” (Case 70, 24 Jan 18).

### Locations

The distribution of Islamophobic attacks across the states is based on the number of reports to the IRA. Of the 138 offline cases, the IRA, which is based in Sydney, received the most incident reports from NSW (37%), followed by Victoria (29%) and Queensland (18%). Compared to the previous report, cases for NSW remained constant, while Victoria increased from 12% to 29% and Queensland increased from 7% to 18%. This increase can be interpreted in two ways: an increase in the reporters to the IRA and an increase in incidents in those states.

Guarded areas, where security personnel or surveillance cameras are in force, did not provide security for Muslims since there has been a continual increase of anti-Muslim incidents in guarded areas across the years (from 37% in the first, 60% in the second and 75% in the present report). It puts the effectiveness of security guards and systems into question and requires immediate action.



There is no meaningful correlation between the level of damage and presence/absence of security and 16% of severe attacks are observed in guarded areas in contrast to 9% unguarded areas. Thus, security guards and systems did not deter perpetrators from committing severe attacks in guarded places.

In a similar pattern to that found in the previous report, more than half the incidents occurred in commonly frequented places (63%), including shops (15%), public transport (12%), leisure centres and parks (12%), schools and universities (11%), and official buildings (9%). The incidents occurring among public crowds indicate accommodation of hate and allowance for perpetrators to brazenly attack individuals. Incidents occurring everywhere, including educational institutions, official buildings, leisure centres and playgrounds, reinforce the question: “Where is safe?”

Mosques, especially those vandalised after the Christchurch mosque attacks, are introduced as a case study. A nationwide survey found, of the 75 mosques across Australia, 58% experienced targeted violence between 2014 and 2019. The mosque attacks included arson, physical assault, graffiti, vandalism, verbal abuse, online abuse and hate mail, including death threats. Brisbane (89%) and Melbourne (70%) mosques were the most targeted (Poynting et al. 2021). The ten mosque vandalism cases reported to the IRA in the aftermath of the Christchurch attacks were recapped as “memories from Christchurch triggered” (Case 196, 11 Sep 19) due to the glorification of the Christchurch terrorist with white supremacist symbols on a mosque wall. Mosque attacks were also found to be “traumatic” (Case 252, 1 Apr 19), especially because of the timing of the mosque attacks (such as two days after the Christchurch and on the 20th anniversary of 9/11) and the frequency of attacks evoking the sense in the reporter that “Every week a mosque is being vandalised” (Case 252, 9 Apr 19).

The attacks went beyond mosque buildings and included mosques attendees, Islamic institutions and Islamic businesses. Each reported anti-Muslim hate incident was a manifestation against Muslims’ visibility in Western lands, including Australia. The driver for these more minor scale incidents is the same as that of the Christchurch terrorist to massacre Muslims in two mosques in New Zealand.

Multiculturally diverse suburbs showed not much difference from their less diverse counterparts in accepting and accommodating their Muslim residents. Of the reported 138 incidents, 51% occur in multiculturally more diverse



suburbs (in contrast to 44% in the previous report). Intolerance to Muslims in multicultural settings and narratives creates exceptional multiculturalism, aiming to expel Muslims from the national entity while still claiming Australia to be a multicultural society. The paradoxical cases included calling all Muslims terrorists regardless of living with them in the same suburb for 30 years (Case 134, 29 Dec 19), anti-Muslim abuse cases in some events funded to foster multiculturalism programs (Case 123, 11 Jul 19) and a multicultural soccer team leader discriminating against the teenaged Afghan players (Case 187, 8 Jul 19).

In most cases, the victim was alone with the perpetrator (54%; n=50). More than half the cases (66%) included third parties consisting of police, security, managers or public members, who took time to stop and watch the incident.

### Reporting to police

Of the offline cases, 29% were reported to the police (in contrast to 22% in the previous report). Reporters indicated that reporting did not bring any result and sometimes their calls were not even returned. Victims were exposed to repeat victimisation in the absence of tangible action and resolution by the police, security or managers, especially during their regular routines. The lack of legal enforcement and social pressure by the surrounding people also permitted perpetrators to continue their harassment. Sharing the same public transport while going to work or school, riding with the same perpetrator, using the same store or post office, interacting with the same abusive service provider or co-worker, or residing next to an abusive neighbour resulted in repeated victimisation.

### Bystander support

Support by surrounding people, even if not during but after the harassment, helped to alleviate the impact on victims. For instance, a bystander offering to accompany the harassed Muslim woman at the bus stop (Case 208, 10 Dec 19) or store staff asking the crying victim if she was okay (Case 207, 5 Jul 18) were positive notes.

### Victim impacts

Of the 88 cases that expressed an emotion, sadness was the dominant feeling (50%), followed by disappointment (43%), anger (33%), fear (32%) and humiliation (6%). Of the 56 cases, half (50%) the victims showed avoidance behaviour while 30% confronted the perpetrator and 20% displayed extended emotions such as crying and trembling. Victims expressed a deeper impact and long-term disappointment in the absence of third-party intervention and inaction.

Likewise, vulnerable victims such as young victims and mothers with children tended to report an impact by anti-Muslim harassment. The long-term impacts on these victims' wellbeing and sense of safety are expressed through the changes of behaviours, which included foregoing religious practices (such as no longer wearing hijab), avoiding public transport or places they used to shop or frequent. Those obliged to continue their practices and routines often reported increased vigilance, fear and anxiety around these daily activities.

Incidents of Islamophobia heavily impacted children, such as ongoing fear, anxiety and inability to maintain their normal sleep patterns. Such experiences reported by their parents could not capture what is going on in their children's world.

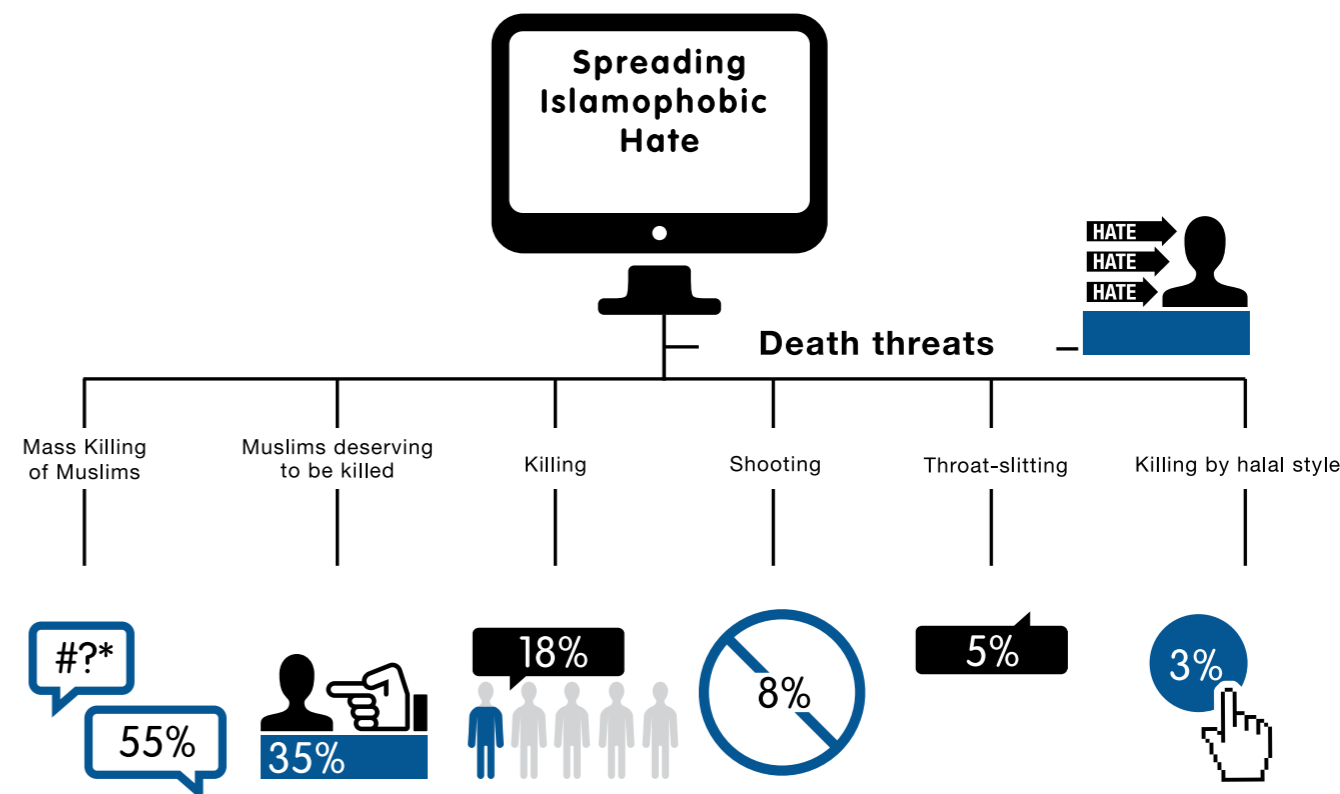
## Online Islamophobia

Online Islamophobia is of concern, given its easy and speedy reproduction and widespread and long-lasting distribution in the absence of strict monitoring and prevention of online hate.

The present report, which relies on third-party reporting, provides timely captured Islamophobia examples and reporters' responses and motivations behind reporting particular cases. Most of the online incidents presented in this report are not available anywhere else because they were removed either by the individuals or social media due to their harmful content. The present report predominantly captures the online far-right activities that heightened anti-Muslim hate in the first hours, days and weeks after the Christchurch attacks.

### Platform locations

Of the 109 online cases, Islamophobic incidents occurred mostly on Facebook (86%). An increase from 63% to 86% since the previous report was due to IRA's established visibility on Facebook as a reporting platform. Facebook's popularity among Australian users (ACMA 2020) and far-right extremist groups (Macquarie University 2020) were also influential in the widespread use of this platform. Regardless of more diligent measures introduced by Facebook in the aftermath of Christchurch attacks (TellMAMA 2020), online hate minimisation is not an easy goal to achieve because: a) what is harmful is still subject to discussion and it varies based on the time, place and socio-political context of the hate incident, and b) immediately detecting and removing harmful posts by dedicated, swift and closely connected worldwide extremist users requires similarly dedicated grassroots reporters to alert the social media providers and continually feed their artificial intelligence algorithms. Presently, some reporters expressed dissatisfaction with the social media providers' hate removal procedure and slow speed.



### Reporter and victim profiles

Given the nature of online platforms, 94% of the cases were reported by witnesses, 90% of whom were Muslim and directly affected by the reported content as victims. Online female reporters significantly increased since the last report (from 42% to 78%). Most of the perpetrators (78%) were in the 40 to 50+ age group and 91% were perceived as ‘Anglo.’ In contrast, most victims were ethnically from the Middle East (88%).

### Types of cases

Online interpersonal cases consisted of 10% and varied from verbal hate to intimidation through private messaging. Online hate activities consisted of political activities (17%), memes (13%) and targeting of the IRA (13%). Most of the cases (48%) included more than one of the listed activities.

Far-right parties and political leaders had a major role in creating online hate agendas, which were reproduced by far-right group administrators and followers, thereby served to the popularity of anti-Muslim politicians. Some political figures used their social media accounts to endorse and increase anti-Muslim discourse. For instance, (former) Casey Mayor Sam Aziz interpreted Muslims’ grief for Christchurch as “crocodile tears” (Case 41, 22 Mar 19), while (former) Senator Fraser Anning blamed Muslims as responsible for the Christchurch attacks (Case 243, 16 Mar 19). Ordinary hateful citizens applauded such statements as amplifying and empowering their societal position (Case 241, 15 Mar 19).

The online community is strongly built through third party reactions and responses to hate posts. Accordingly, public support displayed for hate posts was “disturbing” for reporters as much as the content of hate posts (Case 185, 15 Mar 19). Hate rhetoric was so monolithic and entrenched as a norm among the hate groups that anyone questioning it was harassed and silenced by the group members as traitors or terrorism sympathisers.

### Types of hate rhetoric

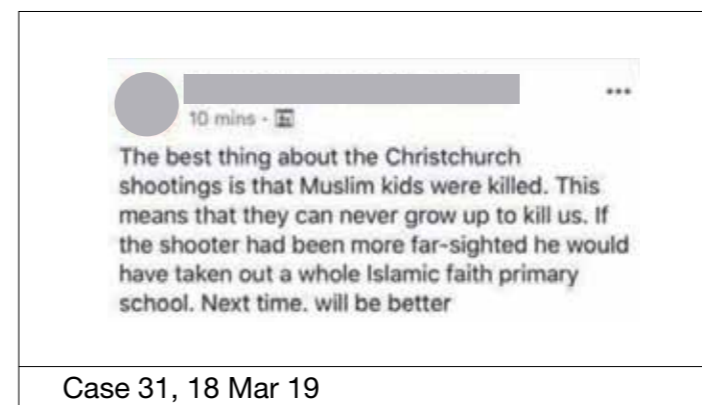
Problematising religious appearance and religion was the most popular hate rhetoric in the first two reports, although targeting Muslims’ religious appearance or Islam dropped from 63% to 47% since the previous report. In contrast, associating Muslims and Islam with terrorism almost doubled (increased from 28% to 53%) and presuming Muslims kill/harm increased from 25% to 36% since the previous report. Ironically, blaming Muslims as terrorists (53%) and killers (36%)



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The most popular death threat was mass killing of Muslims (55%). In line with beliefs about Muslims deserving to be killed, like in the case of Christchurch (35%), some extremists sought larger scale attacks to result in more killings of Muslims. popularity of anti-Muslim politicians.



Case 31, 18 Mar 19

dominated the hate rhetoric in the year when Muslims were hit by far-right terrorism. In contrast, the Christchurch killer was portrayed as a saviour concerned about his nation’s future (Case 19, 17 Mar 19).

Xenophobic content was the second popular hate content (48%), expressed in more serious forms, such as seeing Muslims as a dangerous threat, outlining anti-Muslim conspiracy theories like demographic invasion and accusing Muslims of playing the victim while trying to take over Australia. Such arguments wanted to justify that Muslims have no place in Australia and “Muslims deserve no lands” (Case 74, 12 May 19), pointing to Islam as a form of cancer that should be completely eradicated (Case 59, 15 Jul 19).

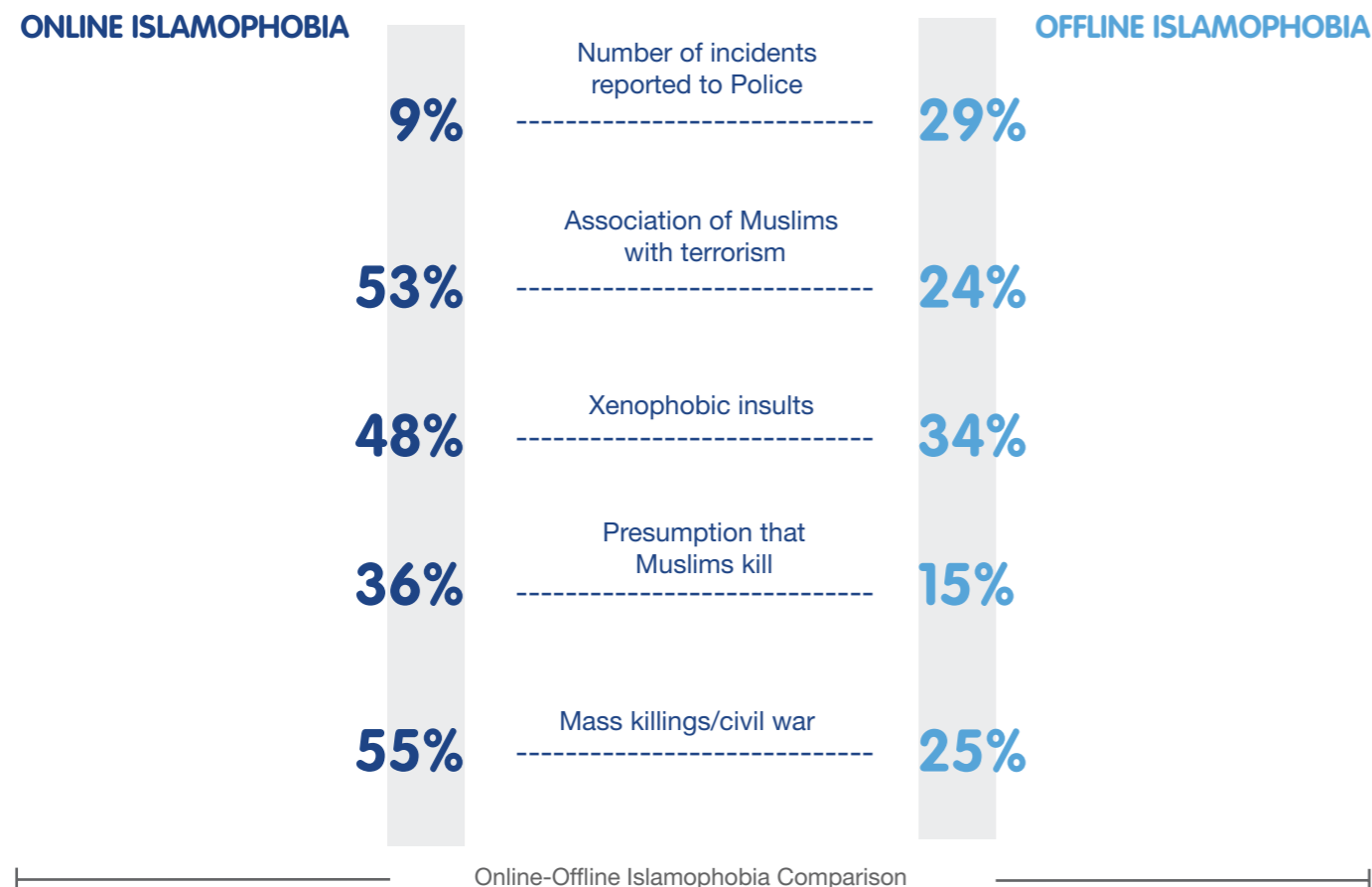
Perceiving all Muslims as unconditionally dangerous and potentially terrorist resulted in lack of sympathy for the Christchurch victims and justification for why Muslims deserved to be killed. Social media comments echoing this mindset made one reporter post *“I see many potential terrorists in the comments section”* (Case 8, 16 Mar 19). This showed how some Australians had psychologically excised Muslims from humanity, believing they act in concert to cause harm, lack human qualities such as independent thinking, and deserve collective guilt and punishment for the crimes of some.

The most popular death threat was mass killing of Muslims (55%). In line with beliefs about Muslims deserving to be killed, like in the case of Christchurch (35%), some extremists sought larger scale attacks to result in more killings of Muslims. For them, Christchurch was a start but not enough. Other death threats included killing (18%), shooting (8%), throat-slitting (5%) and killing by halal style (3%). The Christchurch attacks had an emboldening and dehumanising effect, reducing people’s moral barriers to violence and inspiring performative responses.

### Levels of severity

When perpetrator emotions are scaled according to level of severity, wanting to kill dominated the online hate increasing from 23% to 31% and disgust doubled (13%) since the previous report. The increase in violence and pre-violence stages (i.e. wanting to kill and feelings of disgust), especially in the aftermath of the Christchurch attacks, indicated the mobilising effect of the Christchurch terrorist and his anti-Muslim screed on far-right extremists. In contrast, least severe feelings dropped to half since the previous report (i.e. fury dropped from 50% to 27% and contempt dropped from 13% to 6%).

While online platforms became significantly violent in the aftermath of the Christchurch attacks, the reporters expressed anger, which spiked from 13% to 59% and sadness/worry, which spiked from 16% to 49% since the previous report.



**Impact on far-right activity**

Beginning from the first hours of the Christchurch mosque attacks and for the next two weeks, online hate platforms were exuberantly active on social media. The thematic grouping of those early posts consisted of justifying the Christchurch attacks by blaming Muslims or seeing them as deserving it and blaming government for accepting Muslim immigration. These arguments were initially endorsed by far-right politicians like Fraser Anning and spread by his followers on social media. Some far-right groups went further by applauding the Christchurch terrorist for his bloodshed. Some used insensitive language by making jokes about the Christchurch attacks. For instance, one expressed the joy of watching the Christchurch attacks repeatedly and calling it *“the best movie ever”* and hoping *“another 10,000 Christchurch shootings [to] happen”* (Case 127, 21 Mar 19). Concerningly though, some teenagers interpreted the live broadcast of the Christchurch attacks as a computer game: *“If y’all saw the video of him killing everyone, it looked like he was playing black opps4 [laughing emoji]”* (Case 14, 17 Mar 19). Such comments were supported by laugh emojis and thumbs up.

Some violent extremists expressed their desire to seek more killings and bloodshed, finding 51 deaths not enough. One man, who seems to be a mechanic, cyclist and father of a toddler, interpreted the Christchurch killings as *“50 are down and millions to go”* (Case 52, 19 May 19). Another supporter of the Christchurch terrorist in his 60s posted *“Hope it becomes a worldwide event”* (Case 12, 16 Mar 19). Brutally enough, one found the killing of children to be the best part of the bloodshed (Case 31, 18 Mar 19).

Some extremists suggested more violent means of massacring Muslims by posting *“I would've walked in there locked the door behind me and done it with a blade they died too quick”* (Case 38, 15 Mar 19).

One posted a photo of himself with a rifle in hand declared he is ready for a civil war in Australia (Case 9, 16 Mar 19), while another pledged to kill 10 Muslims at the start of civil war in Australia (Case 127, 21 Mar 19).

Public declarations by such extremists did not face any investigation or penalty regardless of multiple reporting and referrals to the police by different parties. A case study on some of these referrals and a limited criminal history of white supremacists in Australia are provided while highlighting the need for legal frameworks to adapt to ensure one clear standard.

The extreme levels of hate directed at Muslims by real people and in the aftermath of the Christchurch attacks raised concerns among Muslims who are readily accessible to those extremists in real life circumstances.

**Online-Offline Comparison**

138 offline cases are compared with 109 online cases as percentages. Accordingly, female reporters predominated in online and offline incidents. The likelihood of reporting to the police was greater for offline incidents (29%) than their online counterparts (9%). The proportions of reporting to police were still low considering the increase in far-right extremism, especially in online platforms.

Online hate rhetoric was dominant in all insult categories. Association of Muslims with terrorism (53% online, 24% offline), xenophobic insults (48% online, 34% offline) and presuming Muslims kill (36% online, 15% offline) were higher in online platforms. Likewise, the most dominant online death threats were mass killings/civil war (55% online, 25% offline) and karma/deserving to be killed (35% online, 25% offline).

Generally, the gap between online and offline cases was significant in cases of most and least severe hate feelings. Fury (as the least severe level of hate feeling) was more common offline (70% in contrast to 27% online), while wanting to kill (as the most severe level of hate feeling) was more common in online platforms (31% in contrast to 6% offline). This was apparently due to the increased level of online hate observed among far-right extremist groups, especially in the aftermath of the Christchurch attacks.

Online reporters mostly expressed anger (59%), sadness/worry (49%) and disappointment (18%), whereas offline reporters expressed sadness/worry (50%), disappointment (43%) anger (33%).

An association with hate groups was much more prevalent in online platforms (58%) than in offline scenarios (7%) mainly because it was hard to identify/confirm perpetrators’ profiles and ideological affiliations in physical circumstances.

**Pre and Post Christchurch Comparison**

The extreme level of hate (i.e. wanting to kill and remove by violence) did not occur in a vacuum. The strategic use of normalised Islamophobia by the populist far-right activists helped them recruit new members to their cause (Smith and Iner 2021). Likewise, normalised Islamophobia has led to the minimisation of extreme-right conspiracy theories as mere expressions of fringe political discourse

(Mondon and Winter 2017).

The statistics in 2018-19 from the Western countries including Australia are in tandem with present report findings that confirm Islamophobia is a continuum and Christchurch-type attacks are the last link in the anti-Muslim hate chain. Such violent attacks do not trigger guilt but escalate anti-Muslim hate while mobilising like-minded extremists to commit violent attacks offline and incite violence online.

In the wake of the Christchurch attacks, reporting of offline and online incidents increased significantly. The IRA received 12% of the entire physical cases and 65% of the entire online cases within the two weeks following the Christchurch attacks. To put this differently, reporting of offline case increased by four times while reporting of online cases increased 18 times within the two weeks after the Christchurch attacks.

In the post-Christchurch period, graffiti and vandalism increased from 4% to 17%, hate speech and threats increased from 41% to 49% and non-verbal intimidation increased from 2% to 5%. Likewise, verbal threats to people or property increased from 14% to 28%.

The popular hotspots after the Christchurch attacks were mosques (attacks increased from 2% to 11%), leisure/beach/parks (attacks increased from 4% to 11%) and carparks/vehicular (attacks increased from 13% to 17%).

An increase is observed in most forms of hate rhetoric in the post-Christchurch period. The increase included the presumption that Muslims kill (from 21% to 27%), association with terrorism (35% to 39%), use of foul language (27% to 36%) and attacks against religious appearance (46% to 50%).

Death threat cases sharply increased in the post-Christchurch period. Mass killing and civil war increased from 25% to 58%, threats to kill increased from 0% to 19% and shooting Muslims increased from 0% to 14%.

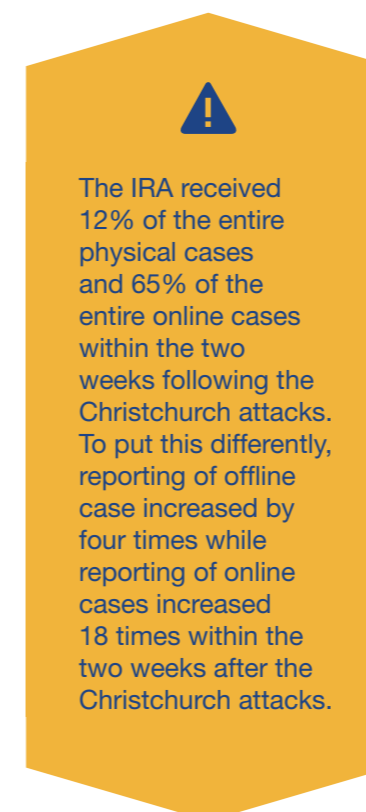
When all the pre and post Christchurch period incidents are compared, the proportion of fury (the least severe hate) decreased from 65% to 43%, while the proportion of wanting to kill (the most severe hate) increased from 10% to 28%. The drop in fury was more significant in offline cases (from 75% to 67%) and the increase in wanting to kill was more significant in online cases (from 25% to 42%).

The dynamics of pre and post Christchurch incidents in offline and online platforms disclose that anti-Muslim hatred is heightened and orchestrated by far-right parties and their social media groups through conspiracy theories and conflation of Muslims with terrorism in physical and online circumstances, even in the aftermath of Christchurch attacks when Muslims were the victim of far-right terrorism.

Nevertheless, the loud minorities spreading hate could not cease the support for the Australian Muslim community by officials, interfaith groups and the broader Australian society in the aftermath of the Christchurch attacks.

## Online-Offline Interaction

Offline and online interaction has been used in two ways: offline incidents leading to online cases and online incidents leading to offline cases. While perpetrators tried to spread hate and recruit new members to their cause widely (Case 248, 16 Dec 18; Case 25, 18 Mar 19), victims used the same



platforms to increase awareness and vigilance of the target community members against potential abuses (Case 43, 25 Mar 19).

The sense of realness in online platforms was sparked for reporters when the perpetrators were renowned individuals such as Islamophobic politicians, when perpetrators attacked real people and public figures like the Mufti of Australia (Case 23, 17 Mar 19) and media personality Waleed Aly (Case 54, 19 Mar 19) and when the online haters were known in person and real-life (Case 63, 24 Sep 18). For instance, hateful social media comments justifying the killings of Muslims in the Christchurch attacks by a registered nurse, who was working in a Muslim-populated hospital and interacting with Muslims daily, raised concerns in a reporter. The reporter was anxious about the safety of his own family and other Muslims who were likely to interact with that nurse and exposed her mistreatment in real life circumstances (Case 231, 16 Mar 19).

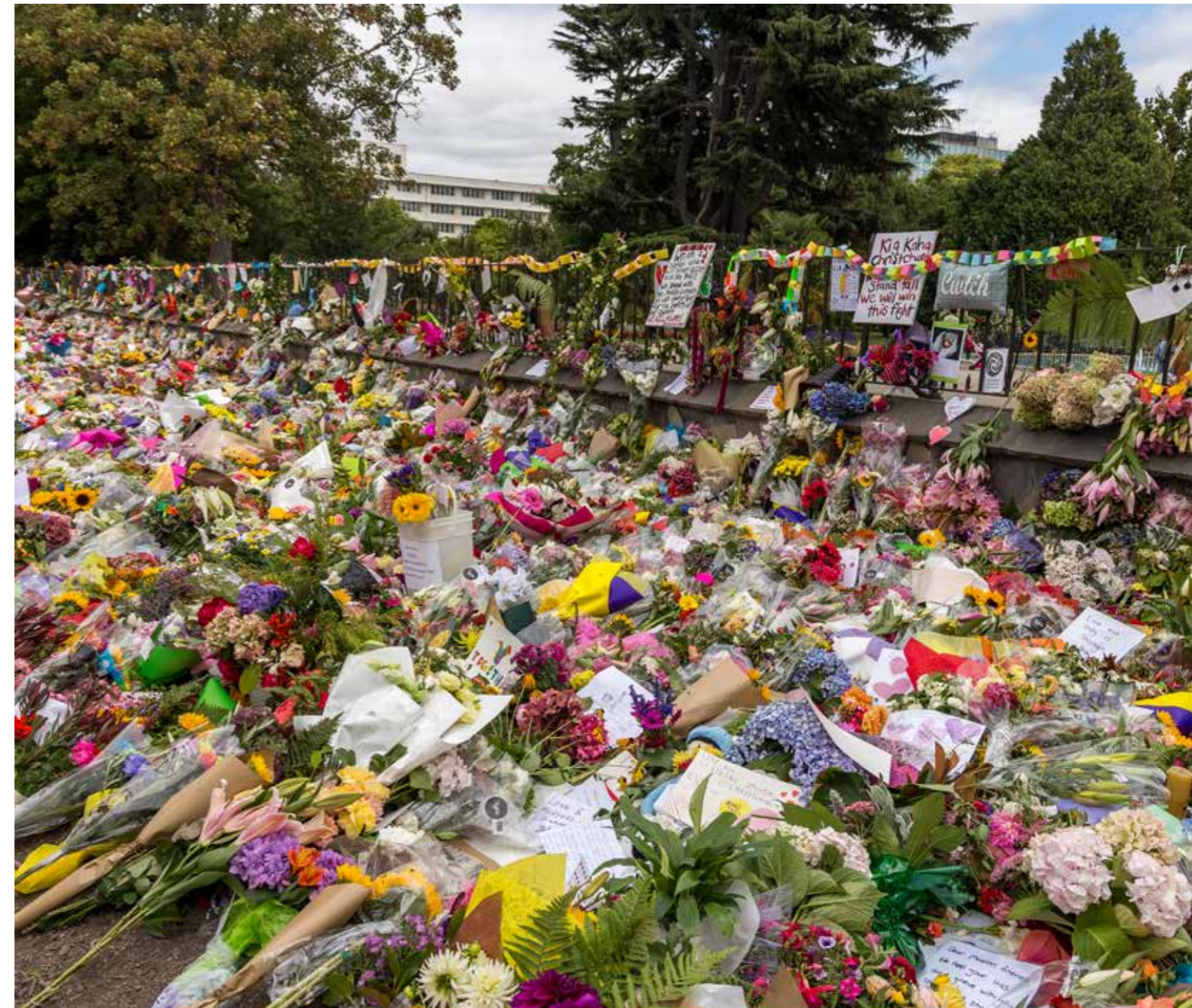
Unknown perpetrators were as feared as known ones. A person publicly calling everyone to mass-murder Muslims or expressing their joy for the idea of burning every single Muslim (Case 49, 8 May 19) was no less real for the target groups. Probably living in the same city or neighbourhood, Muslims have been easily identifiable and accessible to those extremists when they decide to turn their conviction into action.

Accordingly online platforms “not only become a fertile soil for the spread of hateful ideas but also motivate real-life action” (Muller and Schwarz 2020). The Christchurch terrorist and his copycats proved that offline and online operate hand-in-hand for easy, speedy and massive impact while leaving target communities in fear and anxiety between blurred lines of the offline and online world. Effectively engaging online platforms before and after their attacks, far-right terrorists triggered a series of offline and online hate crimes (such as violent attacks in real life and inciting violence in online platforms). The nature of these attacks proves the sheer division between offline and online is an illusion.

## Recommendations

Some repeated findings and the continual increase in numbers since the first Islamophobia report recommend taking immediate action in the following areas:

- Islamophobia is not a ‘Muslim’ problem but a social cohesion risk. It requires national engagement if Australia is to live up to its multicultural legacy.
- Positive action from the highest echelons of power is required to safeguard the dignity, equality and safety of every citizen and minority group, including Muslim Australians. Post-Christchurch support for Muslims by Australian politicians, media and the wider society showcased how to stand against hate and violence as a whole society.
- Public violence against Muslim women and children by predominantly male perpetrators demands concerted attention from government and the public, especially those dedicated to break the patterns of abuse directed at women and children.
- The continual increase in anti-Muslim abuse in guarded areas (from 37% in the first, 60% in the second and 75% in the present report) requires training security personnel and using surveillance cameras to deter anti-Muslim perpetrators from brazenly committing public attacks.
- Ideologically motivated mosque attacks in the aftermath of the Christchurch attacks were found to be “traumatic” for the Australian Muslim community. Countering these attacks and minimising their impact can start with systematically recording these attacks and researching the community for effective solutions from within.
- Anti-Muslim abuse taking place mostly in frequented public places (63%) requires training and mobilising bystanders. Improving third party attitudes is essential to counter hate incidents in society.
- There needs to be acknowledgement of the fact that Islamophobia not only exists but also increases in quantity and severity while continuously ruining everyday Muslim Australians’ lives, especially in the aftermath of the Christchurch attacks and due to the presence of Christchurch terrorist’s supporters and sympathisers readily available on social media.
- Social media platforms need to continue to take more responsibility for stopping the severe levels of hate in online communities, such as dehumanisation and disgust, which lead to wanting to remove/kill, and should be monitored carefully.
- The non-coincidental timing of inciting extreme hate and incitement to violence on social media suggests the need for intense monitoring and strategic moves by counter-terrorism organisations.
- Consideration needs to be given to the way that terrorism laws, categories and media reporting positions ISIS and other self-declared Islamist organisations as religious causes instead of ideological or political ones, and the effects this has on Islamophobia and reactionary racist movements, police relations and judicial decision-making.
- Review of the application of laws for terrorism conspiracy and more minor weapons-related offences is needed to ensure the full spectrum of political or ideological plans for violence are treated equally before the law.
- Australia’s legal consequences for platforms and perpetrators need to be clearer, recognising that what occurs online undermines Muslims’ physical and psychological security.



CHAPTER 1:

# Background of the data



## Introduction

The data analysed in this report has been sourced from Australia-based Islamophobic incidents reported to the Islamophobia Register Australia (IRA) by victims, proxies and witnesses during 2018 and 2019. The IRA is an incorporated organisation that provides a safe and confidential nation-wide platform for victims/reporters to report their experiences of Islamophobic incidents. The IRA is the first of its kind in Australia to provide a unique platform for Islamophobic incidents to be reported, recorded and analysed to produce research reports in collaboration with Charles Sturt University's (CSU) Centre for Islamic Studies and Civilisation (CISAC).

## The Impact

Islamophobia in Australia reports since 2017 have proved that Islamophobia is real and has devastating effects on the lives of victims and the Muslim community. Furthermore, as a historically entrenched and publicly normalised hate type (Lyons 2014, Green 2015, Akhbarzadeh 2016), Islamophobia is used by populist far-right groups and extremists to effectively spread divisive and dangerous white supremacist ideologies and recruit new members to their cause (Smith & Iner 2021).

The Islamophobia reports have received worldwide attention and media coverage since the beginning. According to CSU media metrics, potentially 750 million worldwide were introduced to Islamophobia in Australia Report II in the first week of its launch. The report (Iner et al. 2019) was covered by more than 490 media outlets, 90 times in overseas media, over 400 times on social media and over 300 times in print media.

The high-profile Islamophobia in Australia reports have influenced public decision-making, debates and discussions. The reports have been widely used by the Muslim community, human rights, advocacy and anti-racism organisations as well as politicians, ruling and opposition party leaders, ministers, senators and members of parliament. The reports' impact continues to grow.

## Report Objectives

The overarching aim of the Islamophobia research reports is to raise public awareness about the increasing and normalising of Islamophobia in the Australian context and inspire academics, policymakers and the public to take action in their respective roles and areas to counter Islamophobia. The reports in those states continually emphasise that Islamophobia is an entrenching hate culture in Australia. It



upsets Muslims and liberal democracies, civic rights, and the Australian way of life, which values social cohesion, mateship, and "fair go" understanding. Islamophobia also leads to hate crimes and violent extremist attacks, disturbing Muslim citizens' well-being and putting their lives in danger.

## Information about the Data

The present report analyses 247 verified incidents that occurred from January 2018 to December 2019 (24 months) – 138 of them occurred in physical circumstances while 109 of them occurred online. While reporting was down due to reduced visibility from the Register, the data presented in the report is only the tip of the iceberg. Victim reporters regularly mentioned multiple unreported experiences when approached by the Register's caseworkers for verification purposes. The research also supports that Islamophobia, like other hate crimes, is consistently underreported (Iner et al. 2019; Atta et al. 2018; Perry and Poynting 2006; Larsson and Stjernhol 2016; Alimahomed-Wilson 2017).

## Islamophobia Definition

The report has adopted several definitions for Islamophobia while registering and analysing the incidents. Accordingly, Islamophobia is an "anti-Muslim racism" (Runnymede Trust 2017) "rooted in racism and is a type of racism that targets expressions of Muslimness or perceived Muslimness. Hiding behind religious criticisms and religious slander to target Muslims is also considered Islamophobia (Muslim Council of Britain 2019).

**Offline Islamophobia** is a form of racism that includes various types of violence, violations, discrimination and subordination that occur across multiple sites in response to the problematisation of Muslim identity (Sayyid 2014).

**Online Islamophobia** is a form of prejudice that targets victims to provoke, cause hostility and promote intolerance through harassment, stalking, abuse, incitement, threatening behaviour, bullying and intimidation via social media platforms (Zempi and Awan 2016, p. 6).

## Methodology

All data in the report is generated from voluntarily reported Islamophobic incidents submitted confidentially through

the Register's Facebook page or website. Thus, the project is reporter-driven rather than a researcher-designed data collection.

The reported incidents of Islamophobia by Muslim and non-Muslim members of the Australian public have been diligently verified, collated, coded, analysed and published as biennial research reports (see Appendix 1) for the procedure of registering an incident for analysis purposes.

The current report, analysing 2018-19 incidents, largely follows the previous report in methodology. The quantitative data analysis tool SPSS was used for descriptive analysis and cross-tabulation. Although the cases reported in this analysis may not represent incidents occurring across Australia in general, they remain a critical and valuable source for understanding manifestations of Islamophobia in the Australian context.

Following the previous and current reports, this report compares offline (i.e. physical world) and online incidents proportionally using percentages. Numbers are given when needed to contextualise proportions.

Case numbers are included along with the date of incidents to contextualise the incidents' timings, whether they took place before or after the 2019 Christchurch attacks. In the few cases where the incident date was not given, the reporting date is included along with the case number.

The incident cases are introduced with minimal intervention, reflecting the authenticity of the victim, proxy and witness reporters' narratives. Due to lack of space, only a few examples appear in each category and type.

The analysis of the Register data comprises three chapters. The first focuses on incidents occurring in physical locations and are called offline incidents. The next focuses on online cases that occur in cyberspace. Both chapters include comparisons with the previous report where possible. The remaining last chapters compares offline and online as well as pre and post Christchurch incidents and concludes with a case study exploring the interaction between the offline-online hate platforms. to explore their unique and similar characteristics.

### Timeline of the Report

While Islamophobia was in force in its regular patterns, some striking incidents and attacks in 2019 made the year quite saddening, especially for Australian Muslims.



### 15 March 2019: Christchurch Attacks

“Nothing changes until somebody dies ... until the day a white supremacist walks into a mosque.” This statement was made two years before the Christchurch massacre by Matt Browning, a former undercover officer with the Arizona police who specialises in tracking far-right gang activity (ABC 2019). This statement was made to the Australian police and New Zealand law enforcement officials (Cohen & Mitchell 2019).



The Christchurch Mosque terror attacks were committed by an Australian far-right terrorist on 15 March 2019. The Christchurch terrorist killed 51 people and wounded dozens. The attacks astounded the world in their brutality. The livestream broadcast of the bloodshed by the far-right terrorist horrified Muslims living in Western societies including Australia. The escalated level of hate, contempt and violence spreading online in the aftermath of the



attacks displayed the level of danger that Muslims can face anytime again. The attacker's screed provided a concerning familiar narrative that argues the "Muslim invasion" of Western societies (including Australia) through migration. Although the targets were Muslims, the extreme far-right ideology and narratives posed a threat to all minority communities and multiculturalism in Australia.



## #KNOWTHEIRNAMES

### 20 April 2019: The Abuse of Two Afghan Women by NSW Police Officers

NSW Police engaged in misconduct by racially abusing Afghan women over an alleged unbuckled seatbelt. The video circulated in the media displays the level of bias and humiliation. One officer told the 24-year old woman "You have to be the most stupidest person I've met as the driver of a motor vehicle." The officer threatened the older woman with prison after demanding the pair produce identification: "We're taking her back to jail anyway," after learning the older woman recently migrated to Australia.

The officer also threatened the young woman: "Don't argue with me, love, or you'll be going in the back of the paddy wagon as an accessory to bloody murder." He accused the two women of "telling fibs" when they became confused about their ages and year of birth. The officer scolded the women by saying, "don't take advantage of our system."



The young woman also reported being accused of having drugs in the car, which would cost her being "shot from behind" in Afghanistan under the same circumstances.

### 20 November 2019: Parramatta Café Attack

A pregnant Muslim sitting with her friends in a café was bashed by a 44-year-old stranger on 20 November 2019. Security camera footage shows the perpetrator walking into the café and speaking to Rana Elasmari briefly then starting to leap across the table and punch Ms Elasmari several times in the head and body with both fists and knocking her to the ground. The pregnant victim later expressed her state at the time of the attack: "I made a conscious decision to turn my abdomen away from his punches, I wanted to protect my baby... I remember thinking it's OK, hit my head as long as you don't touch my baby."





CHAPTER 2:

# Offline (Physical) Cases

# 1. Demographics

## 1.1 Reporters: Victims, Proxies and Witnesses

Of the 138 offline cases, victims comprised the largest proportion of reporters (66%; n=91) followed by witnesses (24%; n=33) and proxies (10%; n=14). The number of witness reporters dropped to half since the last report (41% in Report II).

The decrease in witness reporting is a concern as it implies disinterest by surrounding people to report incidents. The low reporting by witnesses could be due to the incidents not being identifiable by third parties or not striking enough to mobilise them. Nevertheless, this drop is unusual when compared to the earlier ratio of the IRA witness reporters. The significant drop in witness reporting requires specific campaigns to mobilise third parties to report incidents and remove hate.

Over half of the hate speech and threats were reported by victims (57%; n=50) followed by proxies (36%; n=5) and witnesses (20%; n=6). Discrimination was reported mostly by proxies (29%; n=4) followed by victims (14%; n=12) and witnesses (10%; n=3). In contrast, witnesses were more active in reporting graffiti/vandalism (40%; n=12).

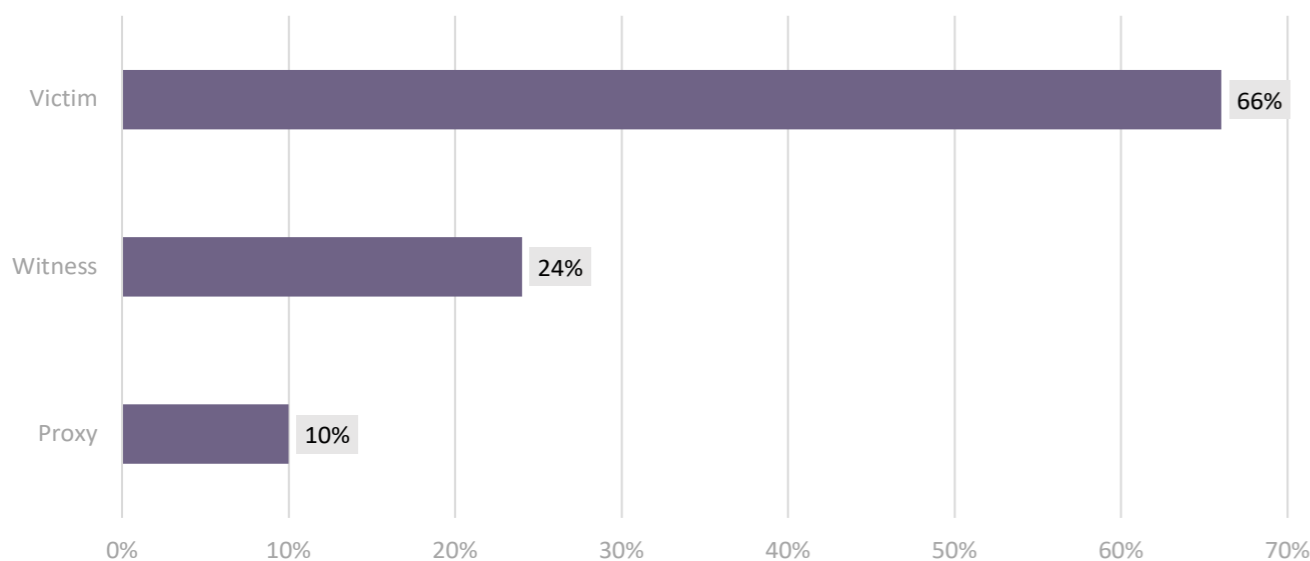


Victims are taking more action in reporting. Victims or their proxies report 76% of the cases.

*“...My daughter was coming back from school, she was walking and unexpectedly a man in his forties started cursing her because of her being Muslim and also said disgusting words to Muslim community at large. She felt shocked at the sudden aggression” (Case 26, 29 Nov 19).*

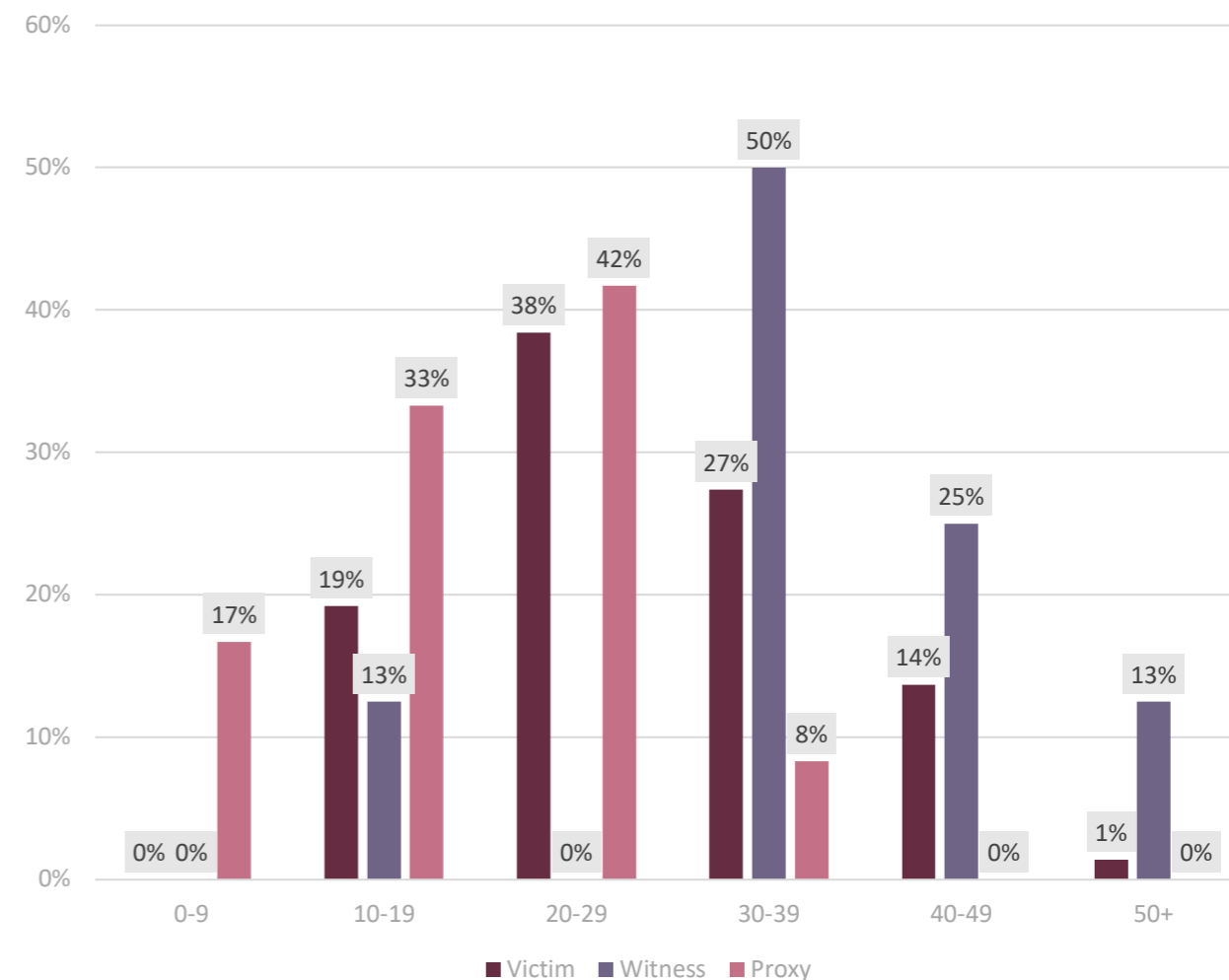
Proxies’ and victims’ ages were cross-tabulated to check if proxies reported the elderly and young children’s cases. Victim reporters mainly were 30% in the 20-29 year age bracket followed by 27% (n=20) in the 30-39 year age bracket and 19% (n=14) in the 10-19 year age bracket. Of the 135 offline cases, approximately 8% of the reporters were identified as non-Muslims, while 89% (n=124) were Muslim and 3% were unknown.

Incident Reports (%)

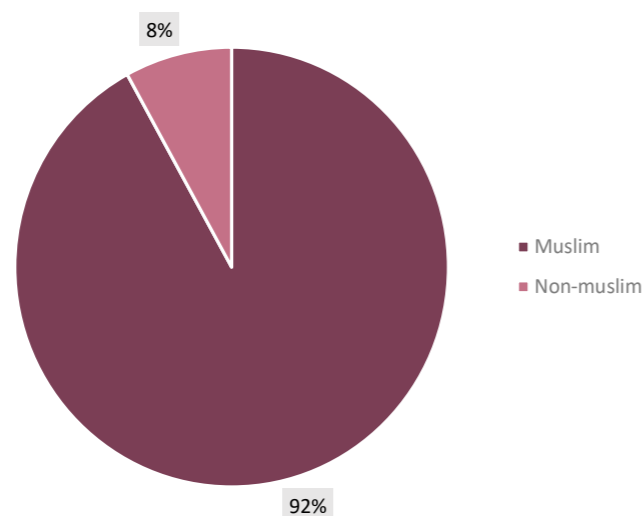


While witnesses consisted of surrounding people (including bystanders and passers-by), proxies were mostly close relatives reporting on behalf of their young children or parents. For instance, one incident was reported by a mother whose daughter was abused on her way from school to home nine days after the Parramatta café attack by an older perpetrator:

Reporter Type by Victim Age (%)



Reporter: Muslim and Non-Muslim (%)



In tandem with the drop of the witness reporters, the number of non-Muslim reporters dropped to half since the last report. The decline in witness and non-Muslim reporters appears as if anti-Muslim hate is Muslims' problem, but could also be affected by the reduced visibility of the Register in the relevant data period. Bystanders' action to counter hate (at least by reporting) is crucial to correct their illusion that Islamophobia is a Muslim problem.

## 1.2. Perpetrators and Victims

### 1.2.1. Gender of the Victim and Perpetrator

Muslim women who are easily identifiable and easy targets for men continue to bear the brunt of Islamophobia. Offline victims were predominantly women (82%; n=94), compared to 72% in the previous and 68% in the first report. The gradual increase in the number of women victims also underscores the culture of violence against women undertaken in the public domain. Since hijabi women are prime targets of Islamophobia, the increase in Muslim women's harassment also signifies the increasing intolerance to the hijab in public.

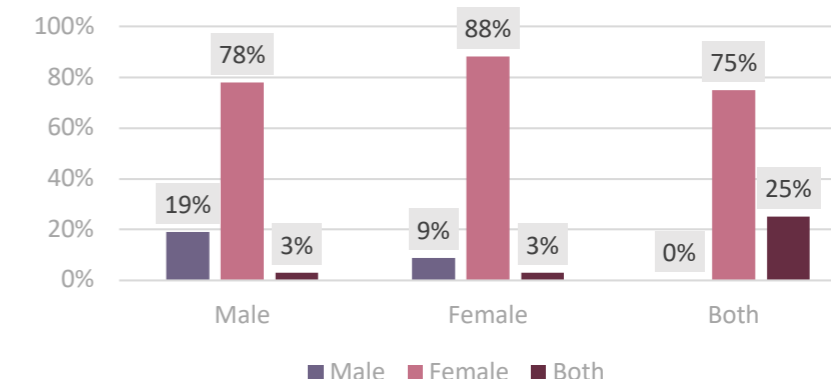
In contrast, 15% (n=17) of the victims were male. Female perpetrators mostly targeted females (88%, n=53), while in a few cases female perpetrators harassed male victims (9%, n=3).

The variety of offline cases reported to the IRA proves the perpetrator profile is diverse –ranging from homeless people and drug addicts (Case 234, 7 May 18; Case 228, 9 Dec 19) to university staff and art gallery visitors (Case 140, 14 Jun 19). Anti-Muslim hate breaches social and professional hierarchies. While a beggar on a university campus can shout at an Australian Muslim woman to leave her country (Case 234, 7 May 18), a patient in the chair of a Muslim dentist can also blatantly call all Muslims terrorists (Case 134, 29 Dec 19).



Islamophobia includes a thick sexism pattern: Men are overwhelmingly perpetrators (78%) and women are victims (82%).

Gender of Perpetrator and Victim (%)



The reported incidents illustrate the range of anti-Muslim hate is diverse and inclusive of ordinary people like fathers, mothers and children from everyday Australian families. For instance, a man with his two toddlers and wife did not hesitate to harass a Muslim woman while shopping in an Aldi store:

*"...He whispered 'f... Muslim' as soon as he saw me. He was on my right side and I did immediately glance and turn towards him, although I did not make any eye contact for fear of further retribution" (Case 146, 19 May 19).*

This blind hate leads perpetrators to extend the abuse to young Muslim children. In one incident, a parent abused a Muslim child playing at the playground with her Muslim mother. The perpetrator with his three children and wife first ignored the Muslim family waiting for their turn to ride then pushed his daughter riding the flying fox over the Muslim child while saying "f...ing muzzies" and laughing:

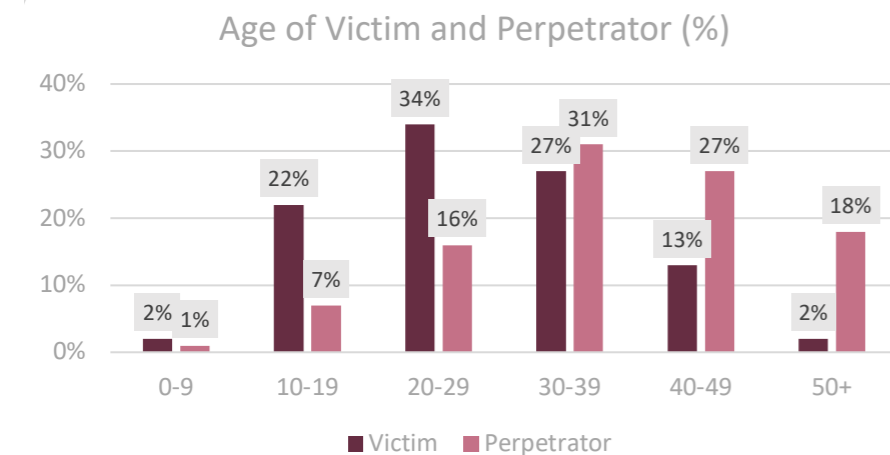
*"...The first couple on the flying fox kept going until the American couple said 'looks like you've been waiting long. How about your kids waiting up there on the podium.' So, I told my kids to wait on the podium and then the father pushed his daughter who was hanging on the flying fox into my daughter, kicking her feet until she collapsed to the ground" (Case 131, 25 Dec 19).*


### 1.2.2. Age of Victim and Perpetrator


The victim's and perpetrator's age was unknown unless the reporter explicitly stated them. Following a similar age trend in previous years' reports, victim age was concentrated on young and middle adulthood (61%), whereas perpetrator age was concentrated on mid and late adulthood (58%).

The 2% of elderly victims recorded should not indicate their absence but instead point to a deficiency of English proficiency or access to IRA's online reporting tool and the victim support services provided by IRA.

In contrast, the IRA records almost 2 in 10 perpetrators are above 50 years old (18%). The above age 50 perpetrators are 2.6 times more than teenager perpetrators (7%).



 Victims tended to belong to the younger age cohorts whereas perpetrators tended to belong to the older age cohort. Almost one quarter of victims (24%) were teenagers and children.

 From available data, 91% (n=70) of the perpetrators were perceived to be Anglo.

For the victims, 52% were described as ethnically belonging to the Middle East, 17% Sub-continent and 14% Asia Pacific.

#### 1.2.4. Social Relationship between the Victim and Perpetrator

In 78% of cases (n=93), no relationship existed between the perpetrator and victim. However, a (previously established) relationship existed between the perpetrator and victim in 1 out of 5 cases. Since the previous report, the social relationship between perpetrator and victim increased from 7% to 21%. Of the existing relationships, 10% indicated a work relationship, 8% a school relationship and 3% a social relationship. Apart from work and school relationships (which will be addressed under the incident types and hot spots sections), social relationships usually appeared as neighbourhood relations and casual relationships among students' parents. For instance, a Muslim woman at a children's birthday party faced a comment by another parent associating hijab with terrorism (Case 225, 21 Dec 19). The mother of a Muslim student, on another occasion was called a 'ghost' and told that Muslims caused the Christchurch attacks. The victim was generous calling her perpetrator a "gentleman" and the junior perpetrator a friend of her daughter:

*"I have had the father of my eldest daughter friend say to me directly, after the Christchurch massacre, 'the Muslims had it coming.' I was shocked and could only stare back in disbelief. The daughter of that gentleman would call me 'ghost' in front of myself and my daughter, referring to my hijab/scarf" (Case 205, 18 Oct 19).*

Age is used by elders as a hierarchical tool to abuse younger victims (for details, see the vulnerable victims section). For instance, on "punish a Muslim day," an elderly couple scared a young girl in a face veil at Central Station in Sydney:

*"Just as I walked past, the old man glared at me then suddenly the old woman said: BOO! I was waiting to order at ChaTime just outside the tunnel when this man with a mut caught my attention. And then I looked away. As he walked just behind me, he said in a voice that only I could hear but was still fairly clear: is that a bomb in your bag?" (Case 235, 3 Apr 2018).*

In some cases, Islamophobia was a family business where all members were involved in the abuse. For instance, a woman at Taronga Zoo was physically assaulted by an entire family:

*"Was shaken on the shoulder from behind. When confronted the perpetrator threatened to 'touch me properly' and to 'hit (me) in the vagina.' The perpetrators were two males around 18 years of age, accompanied by mother and father who verbally assaulted my husband and I when we confronted them" (Case 199, 6 Dec 19).*

#### 1.2.3. Ethnicity of the Victim and Perpetrator

The ethnicity of the perpetrator was not reported in most cases. From available data, 91% (n=70) were perceived to be Anglo. A significant increase was observed since the previous report in which the Anglo perpetrator rate was 79%.

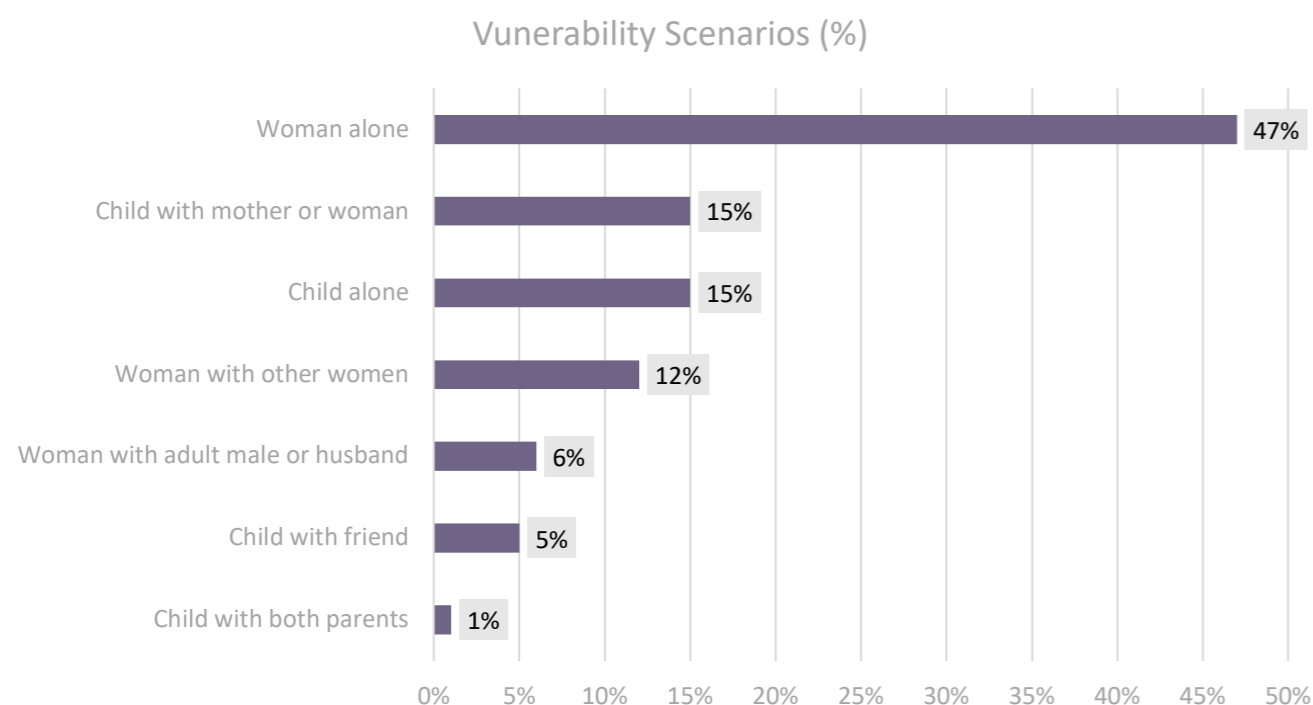
One type of social relationship was a hostile neighbour. In one case, some neighbours had consolidated their efforts to prevent the Muslim neighbour's house construction. They made four false reports and social media harassment to cancel the development plan:

*"I am currently still investigating 4 false reports to council and a petition that threatens to take legal action if council approves my development application for our family home... The particular parties involved with the petition spent from January to September harassing and stalking my property... This has carried over to false information about me circulating in the community, increasing social media harassment etc." (Case 204, 18 Oct 19).*

A Muslim woman with a face veil also reported a physical assault by her neighbour:

*"I had been the one attacked by my neighbour and had a knife pulled on me..." (Case 221, 19 Dec 19).*

### 1.3. Vulnerable Victims



Vulnerable people, such as hijabi women, unaccompanied women, women with children and children alone, have always been the easiest targets for cowardly perpetrators. Of the 103 victims, being women (82%) with an Islamic headscarf (85%) or alone (48%) put them at a higher risk of attack. Women with children (15%) or other women (12%) were also targeted. Children alone (15%) or with mothers (15%) experienced similar risks. The targeting of unaccompanied women increased from 33% to 47% since the last report, while for Muslim women without an Islamic headscarf, it increased from 4% to 15%. Targeting children alone (15%) or with their mothers (15%) was similar to the previous report statistics.

The presence of a male figure with women (6%) or children (1%) significantly dropped the risk of being a target of hate. In some cases, the perpetrator attacked the woman without realising her male company. For instance, a local drug addict threatened and sexually harassed the wife, not seeing the husband at first sight:

*"...He targeted my wife due to her wearing an Islamic headscarf and because he thought she was alone. He did not initially see me. Due to this imminent and extreme threat, along with the offender gesticulating with his private parts towards my wife (of his intended course of action which he also clearly verbalised) I defended my wife" (Case 228, 9 Dec 19).*

Likewise, juniors were blatantly targeted in the absence of parents, as showcased in the displayed example:



A previously established relationship existed between the perpetrator and victim in 1 out of 5 cases

*"While I was walking home with my brother, a man approached us aggressively telling me to take that 'f... rag off' my head. He tried coming closer while my brother kept on coming in front to protect me from him" (Case 179, 31 Oct 19).*

The long-term impact of this experience was "social anxiety", and the attacked child expressed that she "cannot leave the house without thinking they will be attacked again."

In 15% of cases the victim was a child alone, while in 33% of cases a proxy reported the victim was a child alone. Usually, parents were proxy reporters for their children's cases of abuse. A mother, reported a perpetrator physically and verbally assaulted her young daughters, who at the time were being escorted by an older brother:

*"Reporting on behalf of my daughters aged 14 and 10 who were being escorted home by my older son turning 16 this year. They were crossing the parking lot when a car reversed diagonally, hit a trolley which almost hit my youngest daughter. The man in the car reversed fully and then shouted the following words at my daughters: 'Speak English you terrorists' and then drove away" (Case 88, 13 Nov 18).*

The 10-year-old-daughter could not sleep afterward, questioning why the perpetrator called her a terrorist and what she did to him to make him angry.

In another case, a young hijabi girl was abused by a few young adult women at a toilet block. The case was reported by the victim's father, who wanted to teach his daughter that it is not okay to ignore or underestimate her abuse experience:

*"My daughter was assaulted (verbal abuse) at...today in the toilet by a few women in their thirties. She was splashed with soap and water and called a terrorist by a blonde lady. They were laughing after that. She was scared, froze, and hid in the toilet cubicle, came out trembling and in tears. We reported the incident to the management. :( Come on people she's only 14. If I see her...If I do...She does not want to make it a big deal. She says it's nothing. But my daughter needs to know that this is something. It is not right at all...it is not nothing. We should not 'accept' this. No one should" (Case 69, 28 Jan 18).*

In some cases, the child is alone with the hijabi mother. For instance, an adolescent boy from her daughter's local football club walked behind the daughter and kept yelling "Allah Akbar." These abusive behaviours continued when the hijabi mother was present as well. The mother reported:

*"On the 5th time I confronted the adolescent and advised I will escort him to the police office and we can call his parents so we can discuss the issue" (Case 202, 18 Oct 18).*

According to the mother's report, the "daughter became quite fearful and confused, she eventually has been diagnosed with anxiety and ADHD." Unaccompanied children victims tended to express sadness/worry (56%; n=5), while 56% (n=5) of them expressed disappointment. Fear/frightened was also expressed by those victim children accompanied by a friend or sibling (75%; n=3) and victim women accompanied by their children or other women (78%; n=7).

The most common concern expressed by vulnerable victims was sadness/worry (50%; n=44), followed by fear/being frightened (32%; n=28) and disappointment (43%; n=38). Anger was expressed in 33% of cases (n=29).

Vulnerable victims are harassed mostly in public places such as shops and shopping centres (15%; n=19); vehicles (16%; n=20); beaches or parks (12%; n=15), public transport (12%; n=15) or schools (10%; n=11).

Blatant perpetrators did not refrain from abusing juniors publicly. For instance, a 14-year-old girl was not taken on a bus by the driver and no one confronted him for his discriminatory act. Her mother reports the incident:

*"She was entering the bus and the driver said to her, 'Get off.' When she enquired 'Why?' He yelled at her 'Get Off!' She ran home crying as she didn't want to worry her grandad who was waiting for her at home & she didn't want to worry him if she was late" (Case 85, 12 Sep 18).*

#### 1.4 Assault in Front of Victims' Children

In some cases, women emphasised the abuse took place in front of their children. The victim reporters implied that facing harassment in front of their children was a source of anxiety for them.

The foul language and assault the mother faced in front of her four children upset the victim:

*"In the hardware store taking items off a shelf and a child rammed me with his trolley. I asked his mother to make sure he was more careful as he could hurt someone and she said 'f... off you scary Muslim b..ch' and her husband then told me to 'walk away before you get hurt.' I had four children with me, ages 11, 10, 8 and 6. They heard the entire assault" (Case 215, 23 Jun 18).*



In some cases, women emphasised the abuse took place in front of their children. The victim reporters implied that facing harassment in front of their children was a source of anxiety for them.



Case 67, 21 Mar 18



Case 116, 8 Apr 19

A niqabi woman yelled at the doctor's office in front of her young child and the people waiting for their appointments:

*"I made room for her and was polite to her by moving my pram so she was able to get through. She continued to call me names in front of my young child" (Case 86, 11 Oct 18).*

Although we cannot hear the stories from children's point of view, the memories of the harassment will likely leave long-term imprints. For instance, we cannot capture the feelings and memories of children about the perpetrators threatening to rip off their mother's hijab:

*"I was walking past three young boys in a car park at Harbour Town Queensland. I was with my two small children and they started saying 'let's rip it off her head!' I quickly got nervous and started pacing to get away with my children before the incident escalated. Alhamdulillah we made it to safety before anything serious happened" (Case 206, 7 Dec 19).*

The mother, who recently started wearing hijab, was "worried about wearing the scarf in Queensland," which she thought was "a target" in her state.

## 2. Incidents

### 2.1. Generic and Interpersonal Incidents

Interpersonal incidents are directed by individual perpetrators to targets in person at a physical location. In contrast, generic incidents are publicly directed at all Muslims in general. While a pamphlet demonising Muslims is categorised as a generic case, the same pamphlet mailed by a perpetrator to a Muslim individual turns the occasion into an interpersonal case.

Interpersonal cases increased in the present report. Of the 138 offline cases, 85% (n=116) were personal, in contrast to 72% in the previous report.

Anti-Muslim and anti-Islam hate stickers and banners were reported by Muslim and non-Muslim members of the public. Both types of

reporter expressed their discomfort for the public display and spread of anti-Muslim hate statements. It was disruptive for the reporters to see a car on the freeway with a sticker at the back “No room for Islamic fascism” along with icons about banning the burqa and sharia law (Case 67, 21 Mar 18), ‘Ban Islam’ sprayed on covered road signs along the highway at two locations and similar markings in the town of Cressy (Case 116, 8 Apr 19), anti-Islamic and anti-Muslim graffiti on four bus stops along Camp Road, Broadmeadows in Victoria (Case 117, 19 Apr 19).

Similar to the previous Islamophobia in Australia report, Combat 18 stickers have been reported in different states. A non-Muslim viewer from Tasmania reports:

*“Found a Combat 18 sticker in a Woolworths elevator. The sticker said ‘stop the Islamic takeover.’ I tore the sticker down & binned it. I didn’t know what Combat 18 were until I got home and Googled them. If I see the stickers again I will take a picture for evidence. I was just so outraged that I didn’t think beyond tearing it down” (Case 139, 24 May 19).*

*“A sticker from the white nationalist terrorist organisation (as proscribed in Canada) and hate group, Combat 18, was attached to a sign at the intersection of Curzon Street and Queensberry Street in North Melbourne...Removed but keeps being resprayed” (Case 151, 29 Nov 19)*

*“On almost weekly basis there is graffiti in the subway under Camp Road. It’s an ongoing thing for past 6 months” (Case 87, 18 Oct 18).*

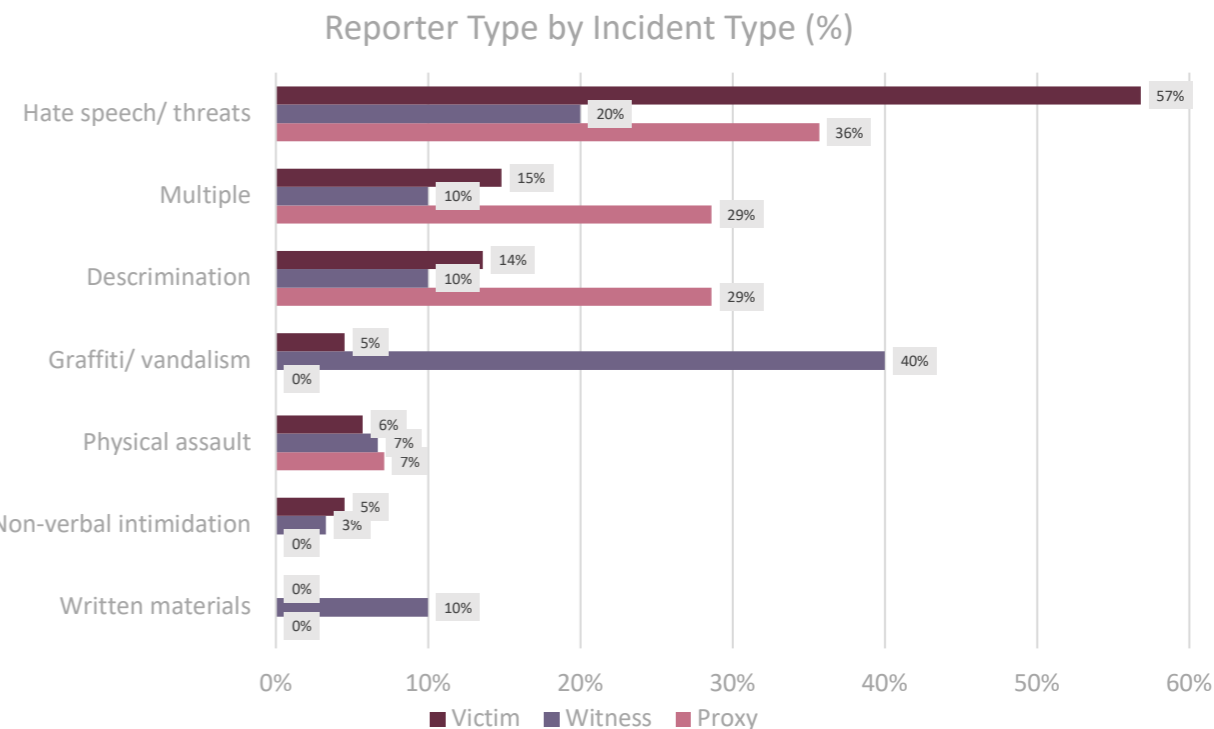
Generic cases (such as banners, stickers and graffiti) were as concerning as interpersonal cases since they contaminate the public discourse and normalise anti-Muslim hate in public while causing discomfort and worry for Muslim viewers.



Case169, 13 NOV 19



Case 87, 18 Oct 18



### 2.2. Incident Types

Of the 133 offline cases, the majority consisted of hate speech (46%; n=61) followed by discrimination (14%; n=19) and multiple types of incidents at the same time (14%, n=19) then graffiti/vandalism (13%, n=17).

Since the first report, hate speech and threats have been the most common assault type. The distribution of incident types and percentages had similarities to the previous report. Significantly, discrimination by authorities (including at workplaces and schools) increased from 6% to 14% while physical assault slightly dropped from 12% to 8%.

Of the 50 victim reporters, the majority (83%) hate speech and threats followed by non-verbal intimidation (65%), physical assault (63%) and discrimination (63%). While witnesses mostly reported graffiti and vandalism (75%), proxies reported discrimination cases (21%).



### Gender Dynamics

According to the 138 reported offline cases, females experienced a greater proportion of hate speech (55%) than males (38%), while males experienced a greater level of discrimination (31%) than females (14%). Where mixed sexes were reported, 25% had experienced physical assault compared to 7% of women and 6% of men.



## Case Study: Workplace Discrimination

Australian Muslims continue to be discriminated against in multiple contexts, including professional environments where Muslims are discriminated against as employees, co-workers, clients and customers. This means almost half of the Muslim community has been deprived of the equal opportunity that every Australian citizen should enjoy. Although education provides the only social upward mobility avenue for immigrants and minorities, discrimination experiences in employment, promotion and everyday workplace circumstances break the upward mobility chain for Muslims. The 2016 Australian census data shows, although Australian Muslims score above the national standards in tertiary and higher-level education, income per Muslim household scores below the national standards (Hassan 2018). In his report, Riaz Hassan concludes

*“Muslims are less likely to be employed than Australians in general, and this labour market disadvantage is worse for younger Muslims. Muslims are also underrepresented in high-status professional occupations and overrepresented in other occupational categories, which tend to have lower status. Muslims receive significantly less economic return for their level of education than other Australians. An econometric model shows that expected weekly income tends to be lower for Muslims and lower for migrants, and more so for Muslim migrants” (p. 12).*

Systemic discrimination in employment and the workplace results in educated but unemployed or underemployed members who steer to work in safer and non-discriminative workplaces, readily available within the community. The broken social upward mobility causes overqualified candidates' withdrawal from the corporate world to in-community jobs, from middle/upper class to lower class living standards and from white populated neighbourhoods to Muslim populated or culturally diverse suburbs. Due to heavy racism at work and employment, most candidates are discarded in advance and cannot reach the position. The unavoidable shrink and isolation impact Muslims in the long run and across generations since the problem is systemic and the burden of unemployment/underemployment is long-term.

### Religious Discrimination in a Job Interview

According to the reporter, her 16-year-old son, in his first job interview as an apprentice boilermaker, was eliminated on based on his religion and this experience left father and son disappointed:

*“On the application there was a question religion to which my son put Muslim. I was under the impression that this was illegal to ask but I could be wrong. He walked into the interview room and the manager...yells at him ‘Muslim, you are a Muslim. Don’t think you can work here and pray all day.’ My son politely said my prayers take me 5 minutes. There was no job description given to my son. No hours. No tour of the factory. Nothing. For he was a Muslim and there was no way*



The national survey by the Australian Human Rights Commission among 1,000 Muslims found that 48% of Muslims face discrimination in the workplace or when seeking employment (48%) (AHRC 2021).

*this ignorant fool was going to hire him. I am putting in an application to the anti-discrimination board. My 16 year old was left broken and my heart was shattered into a million pieces. We are both Australian born and raised but this man couldn't see past our religion” (Case 220, 23 Feb 18).*

### Fired without Notice or a Tangible Reason

A Muslim woman was given less than 24 hours' notice and advised not to attend work the following week although her 9-month-contract was still in force.

*“I have been doing my job fine since I started and there were no comments on my performance, even was going to move departments to take on a new position within the company. However, today after finishing work and going home I received a phone call by a staff member... advising me not to attend work on Monday. The reason they were letting me go with no notice as below: a) Not putting myself on break mode when I went to the toilet b) Apparently, I gave incorrect information causing loss for company c) I didn't get what they call a [Kris Kringle] present for Christmas” (Case 223, 20 Dec 19).*

The reporter reflected on all three options and concluded she was fired because she did not comply with the inherently Christian but adversely secular and racist workplace culture:

*“I believe this is not the case and the reason for my discharge was my faith as a Muslim that doesn't celebrate Christmas or drink alcohol. First, I only was told this in an email in my first couple of weeks to put myself on code and from there I have been following the rules. Secondly, if I was providing incorrect information and not performing well then this should have been addressed earlier and I should have been terminated in the first 2 weeks of work. Thirdly, it's not part of my contract to celebrate Christmas or buy presents. I was also asked to drink alcohol on the same day which I didn't agree to, also due to my faith. I think the real reason is me not following the company culture that they want to force upon me. Under the fair work scheme, racial discrimination is not acceptable. I should have the freedom to buy presents, not to celebrate Christmas and not to drink alcohol. This is not fair to me or any Australian to experience such a situation within the workforce” (Case 223, 20 Dec 19).*

The impact of workplace discrimination is long-term due to socio-economic shortages:

*As you may see from my CV holding the experience, qualification, references from previous employers and skills to perform in this field or any similar field. Leaving me with no notice has a negative outcome on me because I take care of an elderly mother, paying rent, groceries, etc.” This is not fair to me or any Australian to experience such a situation within the workforce” (Case 223, 20 Dec 19).*

Another Muslim employee expressed discriminative work conditions apart from being called a terrorist.

*“I was called a terrorist and I was told that I look like a terrorist for keeping a beard. The company I work for didn’t acknowledge halal food as an option, meanwhile accepting all other dietary requirements for other workers in the company, and refused flexible time for prayers including Friday prayers. I was also targeted and assaulted in a meeting room by an employee/manager. I was also singled out on many occasions in events because I do not drink and was told by my manager repeatedly that it is not the Australian way that you don’t drink.” (Case 197, 14 Sep 19).*

## Collegial Discrimination and Abuse in the Workplace

A woman at the workplace politically attacked their Muslim co-worker in front of other colleagues:

*“I was at my workplace, when my co-worker went on a rampage in the staffroom in front of my other colleagues and she said to me: ‘Pauline Hanson is what real Australians want. I don’t want to follow your shariah law, you follow my law.’ She then continued her rampage by telling me that ‘Your Nigerians are killing and attacking us.”(Case 227, 11 Jan 19).*

While the co-worker’s comments did not make sense to the victim, they echoed online disinformation that essentialises and demonises Muslims.

Numerous reports and follow up interviews since 2014 continuously expressed the anxiety and discomfort that Muslims experienced due to prejudiced everyday political conversations about Muslims in staffrooms. Such conversations were sometimes interpersonal, taking place between a Muslim staff member and colleague. The following conversation occurred on a Muslim nurse’s return from morning (fajr) prayer at the hospital’s prayer room. “Shocked” by the presence of a prayer room in the hospital, the colleague started playing a video inciting hate against mosques in Australia.

*“At this point I was in a state of shock as to what was taking place. I couldn’t believe that she actually thought it was appropriate to correlate my prayers in the hospital prayer room with an Islamophobic video protesting the building of a mosque. The video was clearly designed to be derogatory to Muslims and had in no way represented the Islamic*



Numerous reports and follow up interviews since 2014 continuously expressed the anxiety and discomfort that Muslims experienced due to prejudiced everyday political conversations about Muslims in staffrooms.

*faith. I told (my colleague) that I didn’t understand why she was showing me this video nor what her motive was. She exclaimed that she was showing it to me to show me what ‘my people’ are doing. She continued to say ‘Your people want to take over our country and build their temples or whatever you call it on Australian land. This is Australian land and it’s not for the Muslims to take over.’ I was absolutely stunned as to what I was witnessing take place in what I presumed to be a safe workplace environment. I couldn’t believe the abuse and accusations she was directing towards me. She continued with her extremely insensitive, racist, ignorant and Islamophobic comments. I was extremely confused and hurt at this point as so much had been said without me having the time to process it. Yet as bad as her tirade was, what topped it off was her comment ‘Your people - Muslims are killing people’” (Case 229, 1 May 19).*

This incident happened 1.5 months after the Christchurch attacks, in which 51 Muslim men, women and children were massacred at the time of prayer. Regardless, mosques are accused of being dangerous and Muslims of being killers. More importantly, this accusation was directed at individual Muslim co-workers in the workplace.]

*“I in no way understood how or why she was making me feel responsible for all these allegations. It was hurtful, abusive and highly ignorant. I immediately replied I will not sit here and listen to your racist remarks and I made it very clear I felt her comments were racist. As she noticed my stern response she began to behave as though she hadn’t said anything, and was rather only reiterating the content in the video. Which is completely baseless” (Case 229, 1 May 19).*

In the absence of law enforcement or an officer to escalate the situation, the Muslim nurse found herself defending herself and Islam although she was cognisant of the awkward situation.

*“Despite the deep pain and hurt I felt, in my moment of confusion I tried to explain to her that I had been studying Islam deeply for the past 6 years of my life and that Islam teaches me to follow the law of the land that I live in, to which she sarcastically said what Australia? I said yes Australia. She acted as though she was dumbfounded. The truth is I didn’t have to defend myself, nor should I feel the need to in the face of such racist hate-filled abuse. Yet I was still very shocked and had little time to process what had taken place” (Case 229, 1 May 19).*

Considering the Muslim community's post-Christchurch trauma, it was not only unfair but too much for the nurse, who burst into tears before ending her night duty in the early morning:

*... "After her tirade was over, I walked out the room and broke down into tears. The abuse I was subjected to finally sunk in and I was left miserable. I couldn't believe what had just taken place, I was accused and made to feel responsible for wanting to 'take over Australia' and 'kill people' all in the name of 'my people'" (Case 229, 1 May 19).*

Composing oneself and maintaining status quo at a workplace with the same person under similar circumstances is the only destiny in the absence of law enforcement and anti-racism workplace measures.

While a nurse could not differentiate an ordinary Muslim in the mosque from a terrorist in the aftermath of the Christchurch attacks, a criminology expert in the Department of Justice echoed the same sentiments calling Islamic awareness training in the department "borderline terrorism." The training was provided by a Muslim colleague in the same department and aimed to provide "an ability to manage offenders on terrorism charges as well as dispel myths about Islam in general." The assaulted reporter continued:

*"Initially I didn't want to raise the matter with my employer but felt that I needed to speak up particularly after Christchurch... Eventually with the assistance of my Director a formal report was lodged in May 2019 and since then I have been liaising with the department's legal branch in relation to the matter. Till now there has not been any result" (Case 164, 18 Nov 19).*

### Denial of Equal Service to Muslim Customers

Because of their identifiable religious affiliation, Muslims experienced discrimination or suffered poor service as customers and clients. Returning from a "beautiful holiday" in the new year, a Muslim family faced discrimination by a flight attendant who persistently ignored the family and boarded everyone except the family regardless of the long wait.

*"We stood there waiting patiently as she boarded one after another and ignored us as we stood directly in front of her. This was humiliating. It was only when another staff member noticed what was happening and checked us in that we got to board. All the while, the first staff member continued to ignore us and behave arrogantly towards us. It was awkward and uncomfortable and I'm so sad that my 3 young daughters witnessed how their mother was mistreated" (Case 200, 4 Jan 19).*



Because of their identifiable religious affiliation, Muslims experienced discrimination or suffered poor service as customers and clients.

The reporter's complaint to the airline received a long explanation in response denying the racism at their workplace but providing no evidence.

In another case, a café owner refused to serve a Palestinian hijabi woman's food insisting she would serve the Australian man first, even though his order was not ready yet:

*"I said to her, I do not want anything but some of the ready bread, and so did the worker, but she insisted, let her wait, serve the Australian man, I said again politely that why you are stopping him, I am running late and nothing will change if he just gave me my food, she said for the third time, he is AUSTRALIAN! Serve the Australian man first!" (Case 70, 24 Jan 18).*

The cafe owner made the victim feel that "you will never be AUSTRALIAN."

### Discrimination by Authorities

The unequal treatment of Muslim customers and clients extended to Muslim individuals who interacted with authority figures. A niqabi woman who reported her neighbour to the police for threatening her with a knife unexpectedly faced discrimination by the police as if she was the perpetrator:

*"I have police who have racially profiled me because of my niqab, intimidate me, unlawfully enter my home and search my home and harass me. I had provided all the details he had asked and he called for back up and I had 4 officers at my house. They told me everything they did to me was lawful and they had recorded everything after they had seen me take out my phone to find out, later on, all of it was a lie. They had been at the house for 5 hours. I had been the one attacked by my neighbour and had a knife pulled on me, but the officer who came to the scene looked at me wearing the niqab and just laughed. They also threatened my landlord as she had been asking them why they were there. They then kept calling me several weeks after telling me if I do not make a statement against them they will drop any charges against me, where there wasn't any. They got rid of the videos and statements they collected from me. They kept calling me to sign a paper of their version of the events. When I refused the officer had put in an application for a warrant of arrest and called 'immigration.' I do not know where to get and what to do. This is clearly Islamophobia/racial profiling" (Case 221, 19 Dec 10).*

A similar experience of police misconduct was experienced by two Afghan women, who were stopped by two NSW Police officers and arrested and humiliated over an unbuckled seatbelt allegation (Case 150, 20 Apr 19). During the incident, one officer told the driver she would “have to be the most stupidest (sic) person I’ve ever met as a driver.” The officers also threatened to handcuff the young lady and “take her back to jail.” The officer continued his threats: “Don’t argue with me love or you’ll be going back in the paddy wagon as (an) accessory to bloody murder.” Thanks to the public attention to a video capturing the harassment, an investigation was started against the officers.

In the aftermath of the Christchurch attacks, a man expressed his experience with the Border Police, who went through all his belongings at the airport. Harassment by officials has shaken the reporter’s trust in all white people: “I do not feel as comfortable as I used to around ‘white’ people as I used to” (Case 198, 12 Dec 19). Women in niqab or hijab also face discrimination by customs officers at the airport (Case 148, 8 May 19).

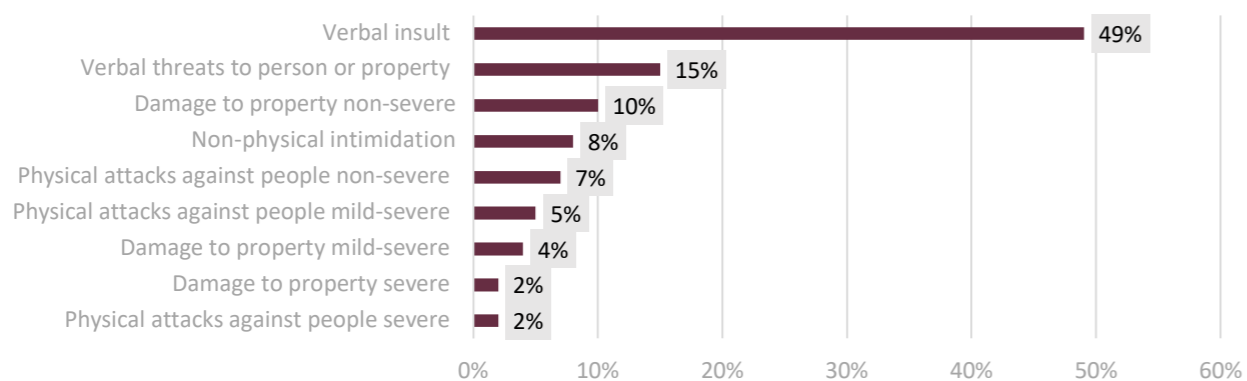
### 2.3. Physical Severity Levels

While the incident type gives further information about its nature, the incident scale provides information about levels of damage that can be externally assessed. The severity levels of all incidents were assessed according to physical damage. Incidents with verbal hate were categorised at **level 1** (the least severe); indication of physical damage to persons or properties without action (i.e. death threats) was categorised at **level 2**. Non-physical intimidation (i.e. noticeable staring, stalking and hand gestures) was categorised as **level 3**. Non-severe physical attacks against people (i.e. dodged attacks, spitting) were categorised as **level 4**. Mild physical attacks against people (i.e. bleeding, bruise) was categorised as **level 5**. Severe physical attacks against people (i.e. permanent damage, hospitalisation) was categorised as **level 6**.

Apart from damage to individuals, damage to properties was also scaled according to the caused harm and cost of damage. Non-severe damage (i.e. graffiti, things thrown not much damage) was categorised as **level 7**. Mild damage (i.e. things thrown, temporary damage, scratches, broken window) was categorised as **level 8**. Severe, permanent damage and costly damage (burning mosque or vandalising a workplace and damaging its maintenance) were categorised as **level 9**.

Of the 130 cases, most incidents were verbal including verbal insults (49%; n=63) followed by verbal threats to people or property (15%; n=20). In relation to property damage (16%; n=20), 2% was at the severest level (e.g. burning a mosque) while for physical attacks (14%; n=17), 3% were at the severest level (e.g. hospitalisation).

Physical Level of Severity for People and Property (%)



A Muslim woman was hit and punched in the face by a drunk woman. Upon the defence of the victim’s husband, the drunk woman’s boyfriend was also involved. The victim narrates:

*“I was walking out of a restaurant, and I could see a white young woman staring directly at me. My husband and I moved to the side to give way to her even though the pathway is very wide. Although I moved too, she came closer to me and barged into my shoulder. My husband asked her why she did that and she began to swear. I said to my husband we should leave as she was probably drunk. This infuriated her, she threw something and began to approach me from behind ready to hit me again. My husband protected me by pushing her away from me. Her boyfriend came and began to hit my husband, she did the same. She then turned around and punched me in the face. At this point a passing fire brigade pulled up and told my husband to stop, not realising he wasn’t the perpetrator” (Case 98, 5 Sep 18).*

Upon the arrival of a witness saying he saw everything and was ready to give a statement, the victim called the police.

Not all victims are lucky to have a male protector or witness willing to help. Two female international students from Indonesia faced harassment and one of them was punched on the ear at a bus stop, but no one interfered or stopped the perpetrators.

*“Two female students were about to catch a bus in bus stop just outside Target, Canberra Centre, when two females came and verbally abused the two students saying ‘Why are you here, why are you wearing black clothing, why are you still alive?...’ They were shocked and in silence. Then, one of the females punched one of the female students on the ear, made her fall to the ground and her knee bleed due to the fall. Surprisingly, the people who were passing by didn’t interfere or offer help. They then went to Canberra Centre security to report the incident, but they were told that there was no footage of CCTV facing in that area” (Case 96, 7 Feb 19).*

The incident was also reported to the Indonesian Embassy and widely covered by Australian, British and Indonesian media. The two students left Canberra out of fear. This unfortunate anti-Muslim hate incident with no public intervention shook the image of Australia for international students, who are a great source of income for Australian universities.

A brutal attack of a man against a pregnant Muslim woman sitting with her friends at a café at Parramatta was another internationally covered attack. The perpetrator shouted “you Muslims raped my mum” while punching the head and body of the pregnant woman with both fists and knocking her to the ground (Case 224, 20 Nov 19).

Property damage directed at mosques and Muslim-owned businesses also reached concerning levels. For instance, on the first Friday after the Christchurch attacks, two Muslim owned halal food businesses were attacked by a perpetrator:

*“There are two Muslim owned halal food businesses among a group of six shops in our shopping strip. The perpetrator parked his vehicle a few metres away, covered his face, went straight to our two businesses, smashed the front windows with a hammer and rushed straight back to his vehicle” (Case 110, 23 Mar 19).*

Mosques were also burnt and damaged in different states. The mosque attacks are handled in detail in the harassment hotspots section.

### 3. Location

#### 3.1. Report Distribution by State

The distribution of Islamophobic attacks across the states is based on the number of reports to the Register. Of the 138 cases, the Register, which is based in Sydney, received the most incident reports from NSW (37%), followed by Victoria (29%) and Queensland (18%). Compared to the

#### Gender Dynamics

When males were abusing males, 54% of cases were in level 1 (verbal) compared to 64% of women who were abused by men. In 18% of cases, the abuse involved some sort of physical harm, including spitting, bleeding, bruising, or hospitalisation.

In cases involving male to male abuse, 67% were limited to verbal insults, threats to the person or property and non-physical intimidation. For females abusing males, verbal insults accounted for 100% of the incidents.

Physical attacks (non-severe) were indicated in 15% of cases involving men abusing men, followed by damage to property (15%).

No male-on-male attacks reached level 6 or 7 (mild/severe to severe physical attack) in relation to severity, compared to when males were attacking females. In these cases, 10% (n=5) involved level 6 or 7 attacks (mild/severe to severe physical attack).

For males abusing females, in 79% of cases, the abuse was either verbal insults or nonphysical threats or intimidation. In 7% of cases, non-severe physical attacks were reported, while 5% of physical attacks were mild and the same proportion was severe.

In relation to females abusing females, in 79% of cases, the abuse was limited to verbal insults or threats to the person or property. 10% of cases involved non-severe physical attacks, followed by mild to severe physical attacks (7%) and severe physical attacks (3%).



contrary to expectations, of the 127 cases, targets faced harassment in guarded (75%) rather than unguarded areas (25%).

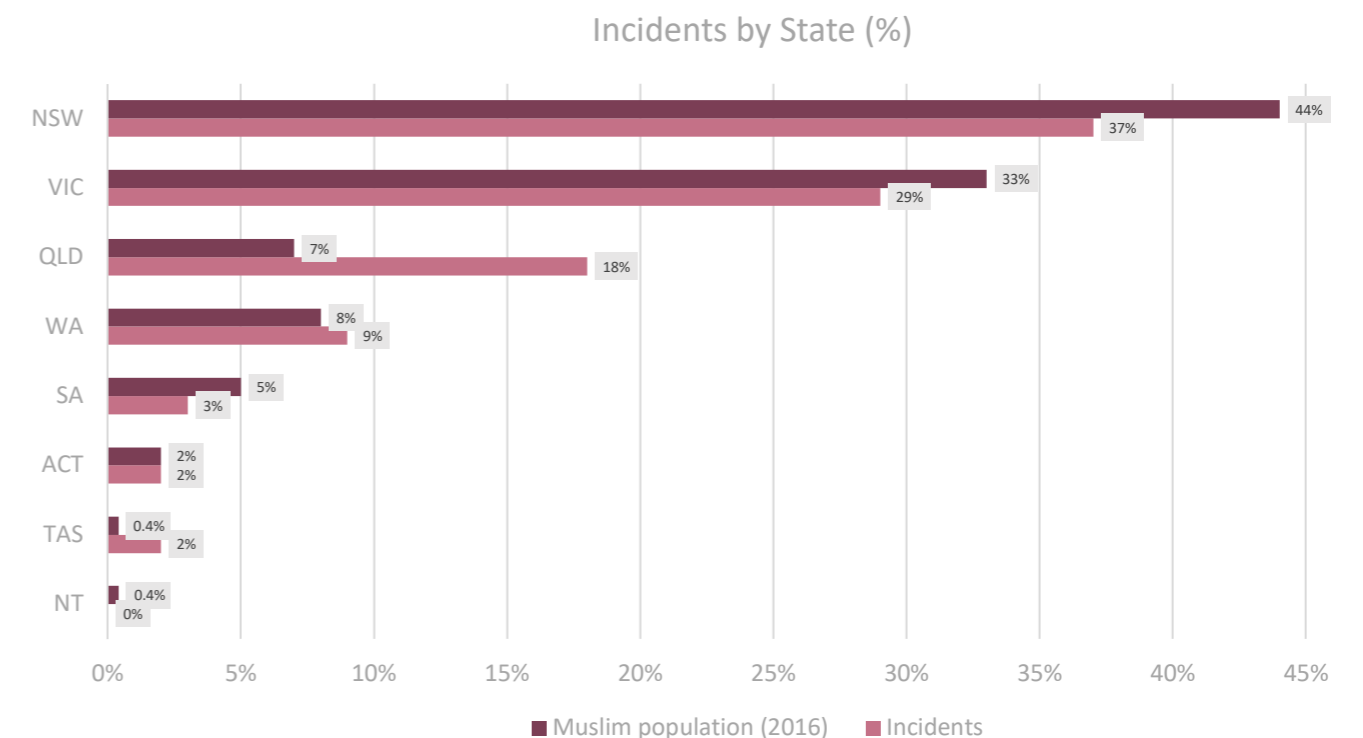
previous report, cases for NSW remained fairly constant, while Victoria increased from 12% to 29% and Queensland increased from 7% to 18%. This increase can be interpreted in three ways: an increase of reporters to the Register, an increase of incidents or more visibility of the IRA in those states.

The distribution of the Muslim population across states according to the 2016 census together with the incident distribution by state discloses a noticeable spike of Islamophobia in Queensland as the ratio of reported incidents is 2.5 times higher than the population in Queensland. New South Wales and Victoria, with the highest Muslim populations, disclose relatively lower numbers of incidents.

#### 3.2. Guarded/Unguarded Areas

Locations are categorised depending on their safety. Areas identified as ‘guarded’ are known to have people in proximity most hours of the day, such as police officers, security, trackwork personnel, surveillance cameras and other workers or officials. Unguarded areas include less secure places such as parks, roads, alleyways and playgrounds.

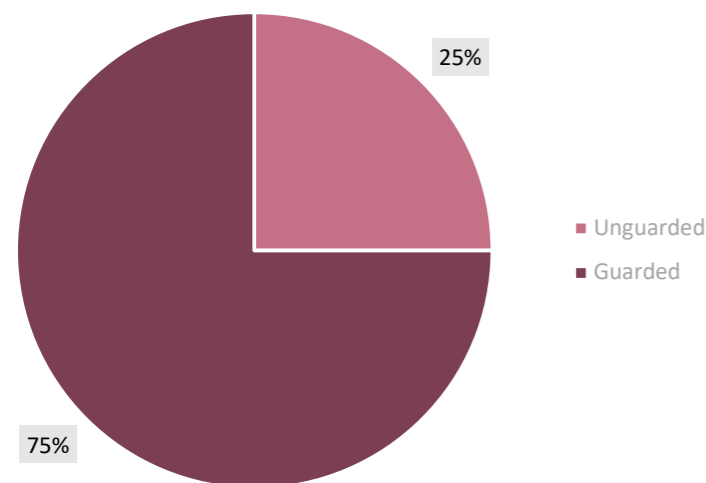
As noted in the previous report, contrary to expectations, of the 127 cases, targets faced harassment in guarded (75%) rather than unguarded areas (25%). This noticeable spike also requires investigation of this increasing safety failure, which requires a permanent solution.



A Muslim man whose wife was sexually assaulted by a local drug addict in public in the Muslim populated Kuraby questions the double standards and safety measures in guarded spaces:

*“Why is it that the Queensland Police and security are willing to engage in heavy surveillance of the local mosques and community for ‘alleged signs of radicalisation’ yet are aggressive in their attitude towards Muslims when they are victimised by drug addicts in public? As a husband I feel very worried. We live in Kuraby, which is the hub of the Muslim community in Queensland, and my wife was still threatened here” (Case 228, 9 Dec 19).*

Guarded / Unguarded (%)



The reporter’s complaint about the double standards in surveillance and guarded places is better understood in the light of supporting examples from Kuraby. Other reporters from the same community echo the community views and sentiments about how the officials handle hate crimes and extremism.

Unguarded areas were equally frightening, especially for women victims. A pharmacist was scared by the perpetrator during her long walk to her workplace in a rural area:

*“It happened twice from the same person as I cross a park to reach my work (I am a pharmacist) and as I walked near that person he started to shout out loud*

A gradual increase of anti-Muslim incidents in guarded areas across the years (from 37% to 60% and presently to 75%) builds doubt about the effectiveness of security guards and systems.



There is no meaningful correlation between the level of damage and presence/absence of security. Security guards and systems did not deter perpetrators from committing severe attacks in guarded places



*‘Terrorist... Terrorist... Let us shoot them.’ The second time was a week later just yesterday and the same thing happened as he saw me he said ‘Terrorist....Terrorist... Go and wash your head (as I wear a scarf). I called the police and they promised to do some investigations but no response till now. I feel threatened and I fear that it might happen again in a physical form specially I walk long distances from and to my work and that area is pretty rural and not many people walking around to give help or witness” (Case 212, 12 Dec 19).*

**Severity in Guarded/Unguarded Places**

There is no meaningful correlation between the level of damage and presence/absence of security. Security guards and systems did not deter perpetrators from committing severe attacks in guarded places (16% in guarded areas in contrast to 9% unguarded areas). Mildly severe attacks were 1.4 times more common in guarded areas (26% in contrast to 19% in unguarded areas).

Severe cases in guarded places included mosque attacks, attacks at individuals in cafés and shops, and trains, train stations, buses, and bus stops. These cases will be unpacked in the harassment hotspots section.

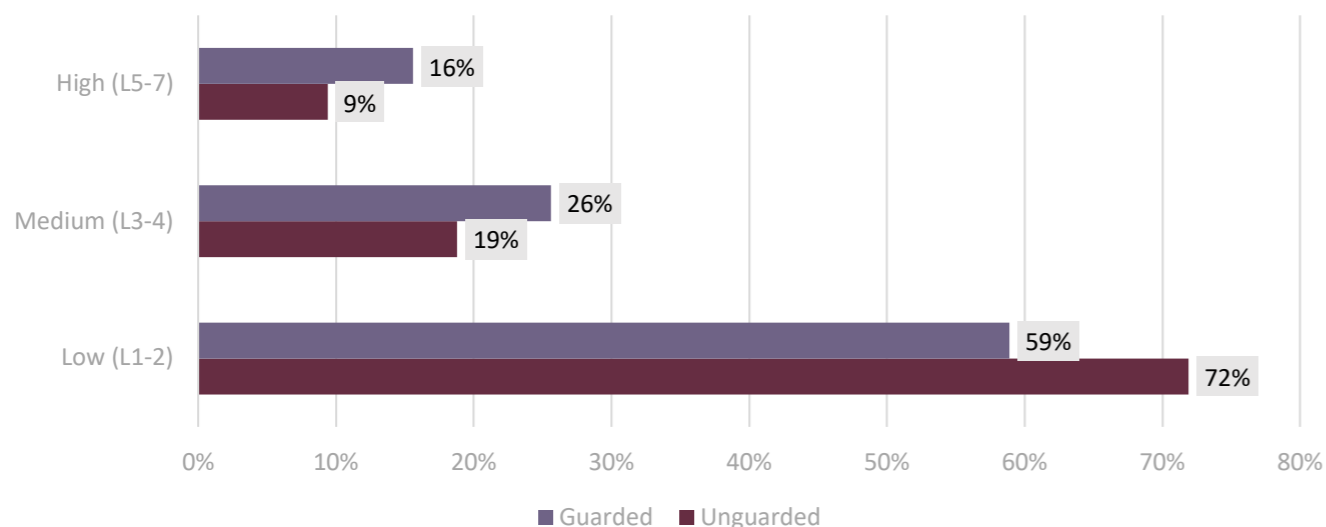
Serious and mid-level harm directed at individuals in guarded spaces once again indicates the ineffectiveness of safety guards and safety measures in guarded places and urges immediate action to reverse these numbers in future Islamophobia reports.

**3.3. Harassment Hotspots**

Incidents occurring everywhere including educational institutions, official buildings, leisure centres like pools and playgrounds, reinforcing the question of “Where is safe?” for the prime targets of anti-Muslim hate.

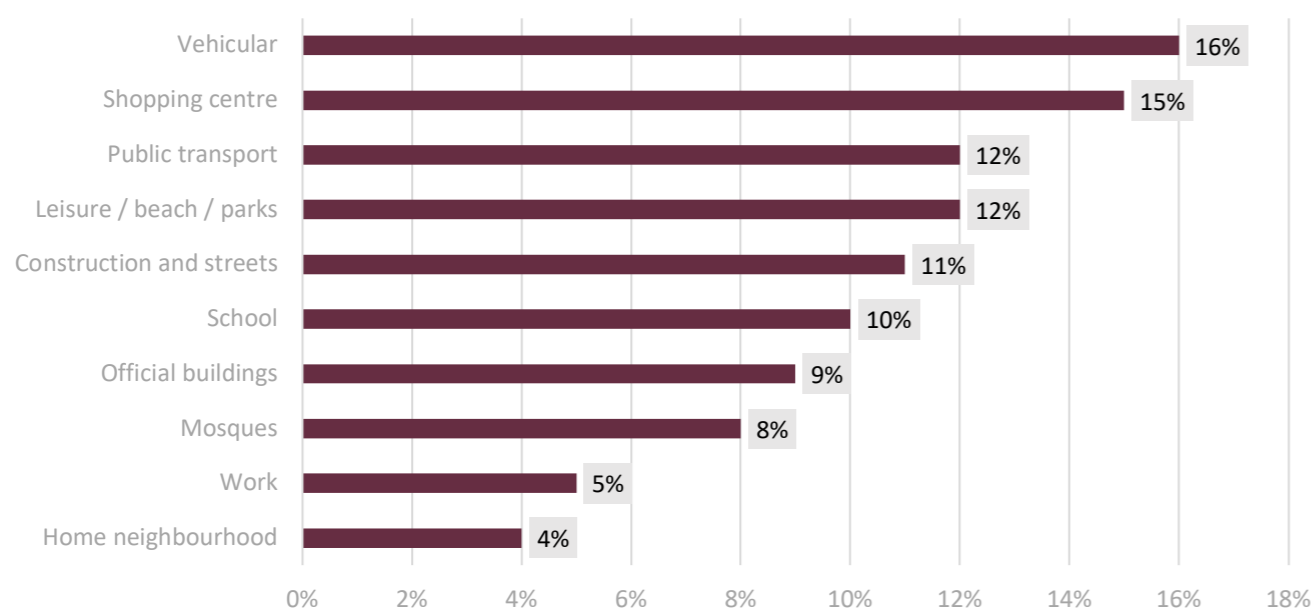


Severity in Guarded / Unguarded Situations (%)



Following a similar pattern to the previous report, more than half of the incidents (63%) took place in commonly frequented places such as shops (15%), public transport (12%), leisure centres and parks (12%), schools and universities (10%) and official buildings (9%). The incidents occurring among crowds displayed how the public accommodates hate and allows perpetrators to brazenly attack individuals because of their religious appearance and affiliation.

Hotspots (%)



While shops and shopping centres remain one of the most popular harassment hotspots, hate incidents at schools did not drop much (11% in the previous report).



While shops and shopping centres remain one of the most popular harassment hotspots, hate incidents at schools did not drop much (10% in the previous report).

**Where is Safe?**

**Shops**

Shops have been the most popular hotspots since the first Islamophobia reports. A Muslim woman with a face veil shopping in the Kmart was abused by two women with vulgar language in front of her young child. The victim mother and two-year-old child started crying:

*“I heard two woman speaking abusive things about me. I turned around and said I can hear you and my baby can hear you. She told me to ‘shut the f... up and take that f...s... off.’ She said I don’t know if you’re a man or a woman. I was that intimidated by this woman that I took my niqab off and proved her that I am a woman. I started to cry and my son started to get very angry at the woman as he seen his mother get abused” (Case 207, 5 Jul 18).*

Facing abuse in a place that she deemed “a safe place,” anxiety was triggered in her son and herself. Being unsure “where is safe,” the victim could not leave the house for long time:

*“I’m still shaken by the incident today. I shop there at least 2-3 times a week because it’s a safe place for my son and as everyone knows who we are and everyone is lovely to us. But this lady today was absolutely out of order. She also said ‘if my son came in here wearing a motor bike helmet he would be kicked out.’ I don’t think I will be able to leave my house any time soon. I’m suffering from anxiety and this woman has made it a lot harder for me” (Case 207, 5 Jul 18).*

**Gender Dynamics**

Men are usually harassed in cars/carparks and official buildings and at work while women are usually harassed at beaches and parks.

The hotspot distribution by gender reflects the places frequented mostly by Muslim men or women. The same pattern was observed in the previous reports as well. While males were significantly overrepresented in car parks, petrol stations and taxis (31%) compared to females (15%), females were the only group to be harassed at beaches or parks (16%). An additional 19% of males experienced harassment in official buildings compared to 8% of females with the same proportion of males experiencing harassment at work compared to 3% of females. Significantly, the number of men and women harassed in shops/shopping centres is similar (13% men and 15% women). This appears unusual women frequent shops/shopping centres during the day.

Harassment by vehicle was as common as harassment in shops and shopping centres.

Abuse via a vehicle is threatening in some cases and reminiscent of the murder of a Muslim family, who was run over by a ute as an act of anti-Muslim terrorism in Ontario, Canada, on 6 June 2021 (Staff and agencies, 2021). Intimidation was one form of vehicular abuse. In one case, the victim narrates *“He tried swerving me off the road, tried to hit my car and slammed his brakes in front of me and got out of his car to threaten me and taking pics of me”* (Case 94, 23 Jan 19). In some cases, anti-Muslim and xenophobic slurs (Case 190, 2 Oct 19) are thrown at driving (Case 97, 29 Jul 18) or pedestrian victims (Case 188, 7 Oct 19).

Public transport and stations were the second common anti-Muslim hate hotspot. This is concerning since, in most cases, the victims were on crowded trains, busses and stations, yet were left alone and undefended. For instance, a lawyer on a bus to the city was screamed at by a man for wearing hijab and was called *“f...king filthy terrorist.”* The victim continues:

*“I stood up to him and told him that I was born and raised in Australia and to leave me alone. He kept on persisting...I got to my stop and left the bus.”*

In the absence of any third-party action and intervention, even a lawyer could not stop the perpetrator and had to leave the bus to take another to get to work (Case 154, 24 Nov 19).

If it is unmanageable for a lawyer, one can imagine how similar situations could be hard for young Muslims to cope with, especially for those who are obliged to take public transport every day to go to school or work. In a similar scenario, a young Muslim felt defenceless and left the bus:

*“On the train while reading a book, was attacked by an elderly white man telling me where to go and what in was. Had to get off the train and catch the next one. No one said anything I felt defenceless”* (Case 132, 28 Dec 19).

### Cafés

Surprisingly, a café attack report in Melbourne arrived in the IRA email box two days before the Parramatta attack in Sydney. The Melbourne case was reported by the victims and bystanders independently.

*“A lady approached me and my friend started asking questions like why we are covered and we are not in Saudi Arabia. Then, held a knife from our table pointing sharp edge towards herself, handing it to me asking me to kill her since that’s what my religion teaching”* (Case 165, 18 Nov 19).



The victim expressed the impact of the incident on her:

*“Shaken, scared, worried for others who might be in my place younger and don’t know what to do or even can speak English to complain!”*

The victim’s motivation for reporting her experience was expressed as to raise awareness and see a real change:

*“I would like to see real, effective measures take place sooner than later and raise awareness in schools and universities”* (Case 165, 18 Nov 19).

The same incident was reported by a witness:

*“Two Middle Eastern middle-aged ladies wearing hijabs were seated at back of café eating food. A woman walked up to one of the seated women and started yelling at her. The victim moved herself away. The perpetrator became more aggressive. She looked like she was going to hurt victim... It was hard to hear because she was also hitting the table. 2-3 male workers approached the perpetrator. She grabbed one of the men by the throat. They then held her hands so she would not hit them and pushed her out of café. The security man grabbed her and pushed her inside the security room”* (Case 160, 18 Nov 19).

Two days after the café incident in Broadmeadows, the Australian public witnessed the attack of a pregnant Muslim woman at a café at Parramatta:

*“I was sitting with friends when a man approached us asking for money. We declined and he proceeded to say ‘you Muslims raped my mum’ and launched into a physical attack upon myself. He punched me 14 times and stomped on me too as I was on the floor. The attack was unprovoked. It was caught on CCTV and he has been charged.”*

Punched to the ground with repeated hits, the pregnant victim thought at that moment *“it’s OK, hit my head as long as you don’t touch my baby...I made a conscious decision to turn my abdomen away from his punches, I wanted to protect my baby”* (Carmody, 2020). The victim also developed severe anxiety:

*“I now have severe anxiety leaving my home. I do not go out at night and I am reluctant to attend any daytime events either. My husband needed to take time off work while I recovered physically and is still supporting me emotionally”* (Case 224, 20 Nov 19).



## School

Discrimination and abuse at school were undertaken by teachers, administration, friends and other parents. For instance, an 8-year-old daughter who decided to wear hijab in a private French school was reported to the principal by a teacher. The mother continues:

*“She [the daughter] was harassed by one of the teachers who then reported her to the principal. I received a phone call from the principal saying my child isn't permitted to wear hijab in school” (Case 226, 20 May 19).*

Some Muslim students or their proxies also reported discrimination by teachers due to the students' headscarf (e.g. Case 34, 20 Sept 19 and Case 201, 24 Dec 19). The impact of discrimination by teachers was explained by one reporter:

*“It made me feel isolated and alone, like no one wanted me there due to my religious and personal beliefs. Also made me feel unsure and uneasy about my personal choices and beliefs, especially because the comment was made by my teacher who is someone I am supposed to look up to” (Case 201, 24 Dec 19).*

Another hijabi student who was told by her soccer team member to “Go back your country” with a “dirty look”. The year 8 student was confused, “since the land is belonged to the First Nations” (Case 108, 21 Dec 19).

A pre-service teacher also reported discrimination by the administration and students, which made the teacher leave the school on her practical (Case 102, 18 Dec 19).

Not only schools but some educational materials also displayed a level of prejudice. A parent reported an Excel Year 9 NAPLAN test in which one question portrayed the burqa as un-Australian and oppressive (Case 68, 11 Feb 18).

School discrimination in primary and high school extended to universities. A university student reported discrimination by her invigilator at the exam. Accordingly, the victim's proxy reports that

*“the invigilator insisted on searching students' head scarf for concealed items and headphones. Also confiscated student's medication, she needed with her at all times, student fell ill during the exam as a result, OH&S report filed by myself. The same invigilator viewed illness with extreme mistrust, demanded additional searches...” (Case 249, 19 Dec 19).*

The student's proxy reported the student's evidence and arguments were dismissed in the misconduct investigation and the impact on the student was significant:



*“Student has certainly been greatly affected by this incident going on for around a year now...The incident had catastrophic effect on student's health and wellbeing, she was hospitalised for some weeks. This was due to a number of factors; however, the incident and refusal to correct it played a major part in precipitating the relapse, and her medical doctors wrote to advise the university accordingly... Student no longer has trust in the university processes. She currently has lost confidence in her ability to study and to interact with staff, on campus and on placements” (Case 249, 19 Dec 19).*

In another university, Student Services was hiring for an intern for its counselling section. The successful applicant was called for an interview to answer questions about her clothing and specifically her hijab. The applicant was asked:

*“Why she had to wear a cap under her scarf; why she had to wear her scarf wrapped around her head, under her chin and over her shoulder; could she remove her scarves when she was in some counselling sessions; could she stop wearing a black cap under her scarves; could she wear a different coloured cap; explain to non-Muslim students who she counselled, why she wore her scarves” (Case 161, 15 Nov 19).*

Such questions were justified by the Counselling Section manager interviewing the hijab applicant claiming the hijab, its shape and colour

*were visible markers of faith, and there was no place for this in the counselling section (despite the interview room being decorated with symbols from the Christian faith, such as crosses and quotes from the Bible); the black cap was the kind of clothing that could direct Muslim students towards terrorism. The reasoning given for this statement was that Muslim students seeking counselling are vulnerable and vulnerable Muslim students are prone to Islamic extremism” (Case 161, 15 Nov 19).*

The applicant who completed her internship submitted a formal grievance, but her complaint was not taken seriously and she was informed no further action need be taken. This incident was reported neither by the intern nor a Muslim relative of the intern. A non-Muslim staff member witnessing this injustice at the workplace reported the incident expressing she was “deeply disturbed about it.” According to the witness reporter, this case had two major issues:

a) the system in which an open act of vilification took place, and in which it appears an inadequate response to the case was given, and

b) staffing of student services with people who are inadequately trained to work with people from varied cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and who demonstrate a lack of critical thinking skills by conflating particular dress with extremist Islamic terrorism” (Case 161, 15 Nov 19).



The reporter was aware the interviewing manager’s attitude and actions “are not outliers within this university’s Student Services” and she wants to learn how such attitudes and actions can be challenged and the rights of discriminated individuals can be paid back. This example displays the systemic and legal dead ends that enable ignorant staff members to

## Case Study: Mosque Attacks

display blatant racism and discrimination at workplaces, including universities.

10 mosque attacks were reported to the IRA, most of which occurred in the aftermath of the Christchurch attacks. Although mosque attacks have been underreported to date, the research undertaken by a team of Islamophobia and hate crime experts in 2020 provides some insights about the frequency of attacks (Lewins 2021). Of the 75 mosques across Australia, 58% experienced targeted violence between 2014 and 2019. (Poynting et al., 2021.)

The mosque attacks included arson, physical assault, graffiti, vandalism, verbal abuse and online abuse and hate mail, including death threats. Brisbane (89%) and Melbourne (70%) mosques were the most targeted across Australia. This pilot study suggests mosque attacks in Australia are neither new nor rare and the anecdotes from the imams during the study implied community trauma and anxiety about mosque safety in the aftermath of the Christchurch attacks. (Poynting et al., 2021)

A more comprehensive study with robust, systematic and timely analysis of mosque attacks is underway by Iner et al. and aims to enhance long-term security measures for mosques, Islamic organisations and their respective communities. The following cases, which occurred in 2018 and 2019, are only a few drops from the pool of hate attacks directed at mosques and Islamic institutions across Australia.

Post-Christchurch mosque attacks continued in Germany, the United Kingdom, France, and Norway (Bayrakli and Hafez, 2019). Currently, there is an ongoing hostile campaign against mosques in France by the Macron government. Accordingly, one-third of the mosques in the country were

closed in less than a year due an alleged association with radicalisation. Radicalisation, which happens mostly online and targets mosques in mainstream society, is highlighted to be a wrong direction and confused message to the public (TRT World Now, 2021).

Due to the problematisation of mosques by authorities and far-right groups as cultural, demographic and security threats, mosques have been targeted before, during and after the Christchurch attacks. Some mosques like Kuraby Mosque in Brisbane face repeated attacks.

*“On 4th of July 2018, four individuals entered the mosque with a camera and demanded to film the mosque and when denied became abusive. Following day, they came to Darra Mosque and did the similar thing. I was present and so was many media outlets. They hurled abuse once again. Both incidents reported to the police and heavily reported by media.”*

The reporter interpreted the problematisation of mosques as an “early indicators of mosque attacks” (Case 104, 4 Jul 18).

Two days after the Christchurch attack, when the Muslim community was still under the shock of the Christchurch bloodshed, a “23-year-old [man] drove into Baitul Masroor Mosque in South of Brisbane and was heard yelling offensive language” (Case 232, 18 Mar 19). Although the offender was charged with drug driving, he still drove the car towards the mosque and rammed it into the mosque gates while shouting offensive words towards the people inside. The man was arrested and charged with wilful damage. Yet the police commissioner defined this act as “stupidity,” apparently to avoid further tension and fear in the Muslim community (Garcia, 2019).

Not only mosques but attendees are targeted by anti-Muslim haters. Mosque attacks in Australia in the 2014-19 survey discloses that just under 40% of mosques across Australia reported verbal abuse of their attendees in 2019. In addition, 17% had received threats of violence (with one physical assault), while 20% experienced objects thrown at them or the mosque. Apparently, no decline is observed in the problematisation of mosques and the attacks directed at mosques and attendees. (Poynting et al., 2021)

These attacks cannot be affiliated with mainstream members of the Australian public, who graciously supported Australian Muslims and shared their grievance by attending vigils, visiting mosques and leaving friendship messages and flowers at the doors of mosques across Australia.

The following case illustrates the abuse of an entire family who were going to a mosque in the morning to perform Eid prayer altogether.

*“At roughly 8:10am June 5th, I encountered the owner hurling insults at me and other Muslims parking in the parking zone in front of the cafe, which is a 1-2 minute walk from a mosque. It was just prior to eid salaah, she then proceeded to say ‘this is Australia,’ ‘you look scary,’ ‘what are you doing here’ and then proceeded to rant about the local council being corrupt” (Case 218, 5 Jun 19).*

The incident took place 2.5 months after the Christchurch attacks. The family members, including four young children, were highly distressed in the morning of their religious festival.

*“My 16-year-old brother was also with me, I’m worried as to whether he will feel the same way when putting on Islamic attire, what other impact it had on him. He froze during the incident, and I cannot stop thinking what could have happened if I wasn’t there to challenge that woman’s views. It’s my hometown, this my local masjid, we have been going there for years. To hear such hatred thrown at me just leaves me flabbergasted and humiliated. Currently and on the day, I have a fist length beard, was wearing a black thobe and cap. I’m just trying to follow the sunnah [the Prophet’s way], it’s incredibly hard not to be self-conscious and feel like you are doing the right thing when you are met this kind of antagonism” (Case 218, 5 Jun 19).*

Attacks directed at mosques remain a source of anxiety for Muslims and some reporters note the impact of those attacks as “community trauma” in the aftermath of the Christchurch mosque attacks.



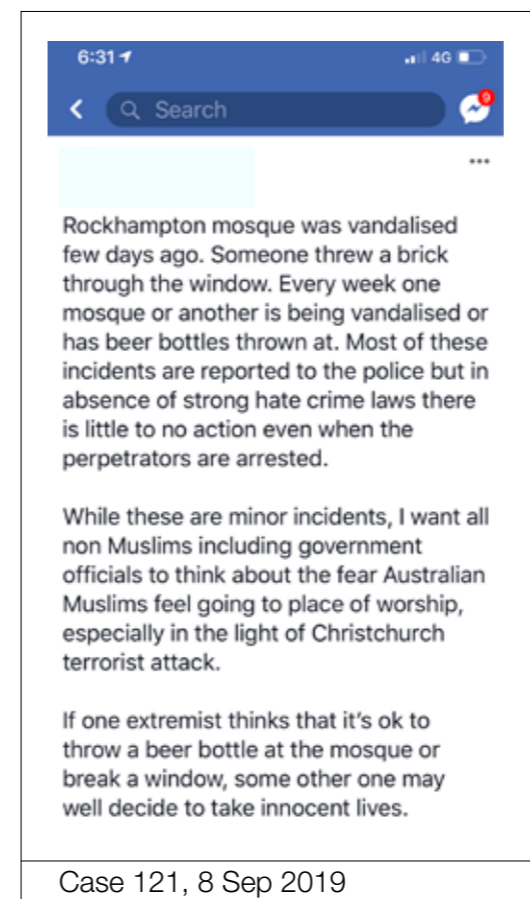
Case 252, 1 Apr 19



Case 252, 1 Apr 19



Case 252, 1 Apr 19



Case 121, 8 Sep 2019



Case 122, 11 Sep 19

Logan mosque was vandalised a few weeks after the Christchurch Mosque attacks (Case 252, 1 Apr 19). A week after the Logan mosque attack, Rockhampton Mosque was vandalised. The continuous mosque vandalism in Queensland gave the impression that launched with high attendance from the public.

*“Every week a mosque is being vandalised or has beer bottles thrown at it. Many are reported to the police but little to no action is taken in response” (Case 252, 9 Apr 19).*

Rockhampton Mosque vandalised - photos show windows broken from a brick being thrown. (Case 252, 1 Apr 19).

A few days before the 20th anniversary of September 11, the Canberra Islamic Centre was burnt by a group of people throwing flaming items through the window. The result was a broken window and burnt Qur’ans. The reporter explained the impact was a “general trauma to those who attend the centre” (Case 121, 8 Sep 2019).

Three days after the Canberra mosque attack and on the 20th anniversary of September 11, Holland Park and Arundel mosques were attacked in Queensland.



Case 252, 1 Apr 19

*“Early hours of 11 Sept, this was graffitied on front of Holland Park mosque. Swastika also painted over their sign. Trauma and memories from Christchurch triggered” (Case 196, 11 Sep 19).*

The Christchurch terrorist was glorified as a saint. ‘Remove Kebabs’ inscribed on the gun used to kill Muslims in the Christchurch attacks. In the afternoon of the same day, the 20th anniversary of 9/11, Gold Cost Arundel mosque was vandalised and the gates and fence were heavily damaged. The reporter also expressed the impact as a trauma for the community (Case 122, 11 Sep 19).

Apart from mosques and attendees, Islamically visible institutions or signs for these institutions were also targeted. The billboard indicating enrolments were open for an Islamic school was changed to “squad bomber enrolments” and the phone number defaced (Case 253, 5 Jun 18).

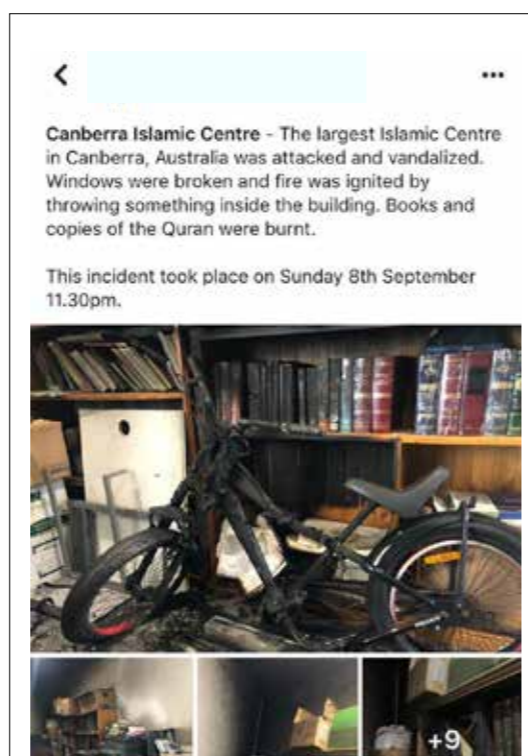
Likewise, a Muslim community newspaper, which has received multicultural awards and appreciation from the wider society, was accused of being a “terrorist magazine.” The perpetrator, who was in the magazine’s distribution list not only asked to be removed but also called all the Muslims terrorists and sexually abused the editorial staff via text and phone (Case 84, 7 Sep 18).

*“He called me a terrorist and the newspaper...a terrorist organisation, and all Muslims are terrorists. He ranted his hate for Muslims. After the phone call was ended, he texted me ‘Hi. Call me back,’ ‘You F...ing W...re” and ‘I’ll take it further.’ He emailed the newspaper ‘F... Islam’ and ‘Don’t ever contact me again as I never subscribed to your terrorist magazine. Mohamed was a paedophile” (Case 84, 7 Sept 18).*

Islamically visible businesses like halal food shops were vandalised and their windows were smashed (Case 110, 23 Mar 19). An Islamically visible residential house



Case 84, 7 Sep 18



Case 121, 8 Sep 2019

construction application was obstructed through false reports and social media campaigns (Case 204, 18 Oct 19) by following a similar method to cancel mosque constructions (Case 229, 1 May 19).

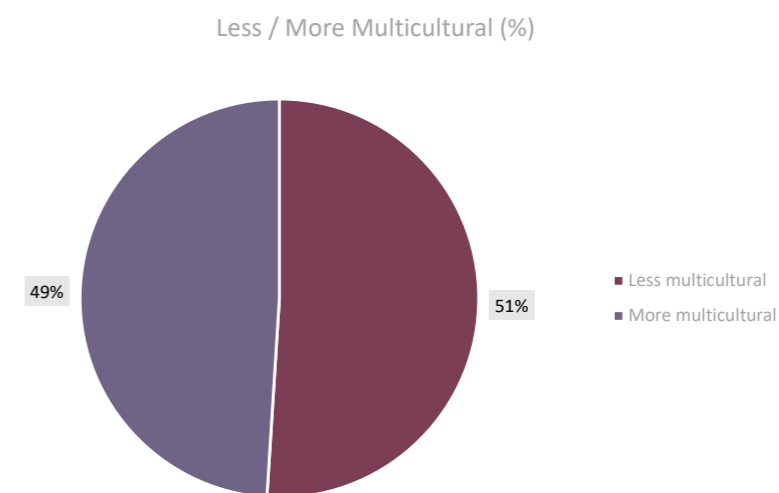
An Islamic fashion business also received delayed deliveries based on some “security concerns about carrying Muslim clothing.” The American shipping company TNT officers displayed anti-Muslim prejudice not only in shipping but also handling parcels. Unlike other parcels, Muslim clothes were unpacked and searched every time prior to delivery (Case 100, 24 Jan 19).

The attacks captured in the present report via third-party reports show an increasing and intensifying hate and intolerance towards mosques, mosque attendees, Islamic institutions, Islamic businesses and visibly identifiable Muslims. Each reported anti-Muslim hate incident is a manifestation against Muslims’ presence and visibility. It is aligned with the problematisation of Muslims’ presence in Western lands, which was declared in the Christchurch terrorist’s screed.

### 3.4 Multiculturally Diverse and Less-diverse Locations


The gap between the percentage of incidents in multiculturally more and less diverse suburbs is closing every year. Of the reported incidents, 49% occur in multiculturally less diverse (in contrast to 56% in the previous report) whereas 51% occur in multiculturally more diverse suburbs (in contrast to 44% in the previous report).

The everyday experience of multiculturalism in multicultural suburbs did not reduce some residents’ anti-Muslim prejudice and hate. Intolerance to Muslims in multicultural settings and narratives creates exceptional multiculturalism, which aims to expel Muslims from the national entity while still claiming Australia to be a multicultural society.



Regardless of living in a Muslim populated suburb for 30 years, a resident could not develop an understanding about regular Muslims but associated them with terrorists. A Muslim dentist reports her conversation with a patient:

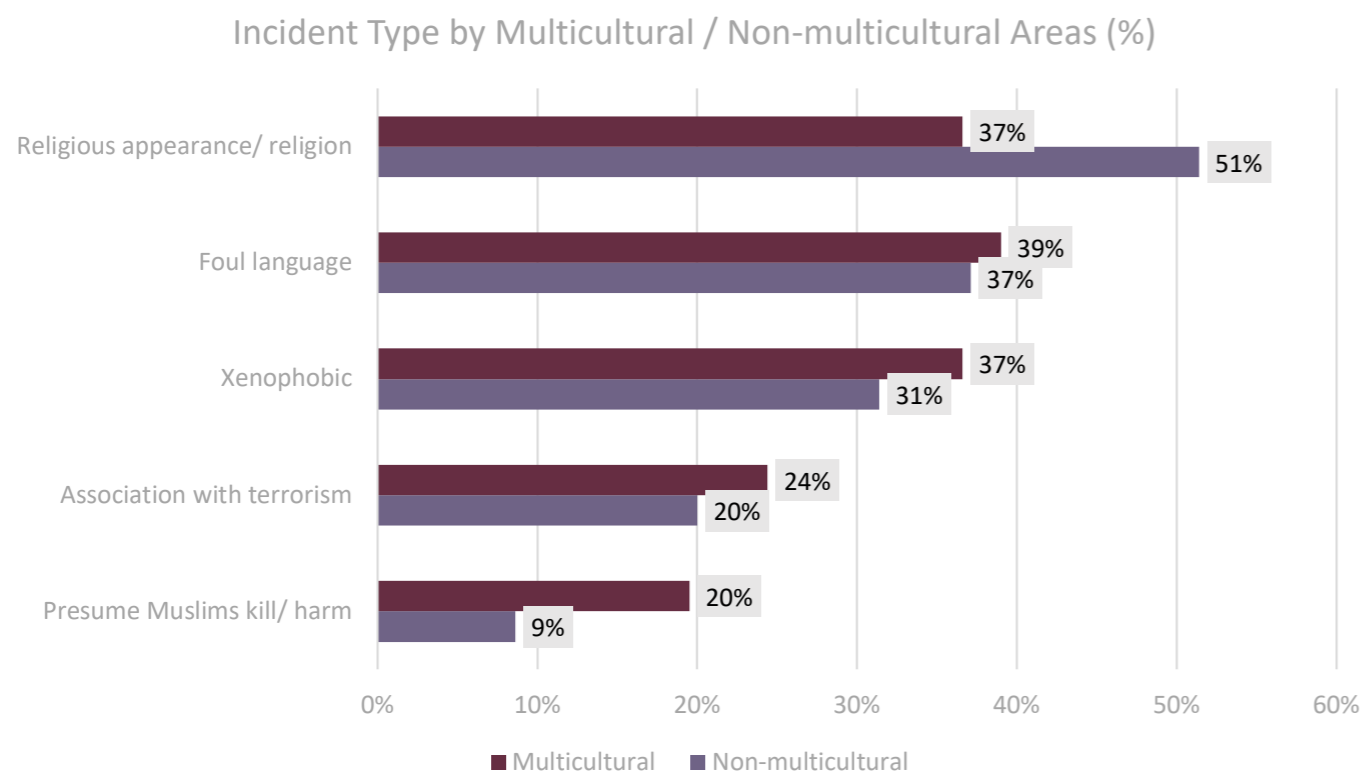
*“I was seeing a patient for the second time for treatment. After finishing the treatment, she mentioned she had moved after having lived there for 30 years. I mentioned that I had spent most of my life there. She then replied ‘yeah it is good for you, not for me. I don’t like living with terrorists.’ I told her that I did not appreciate her words and she remained indifferent and asked if she should book for her six monthly. I said ‘definitely not with me’ and she should be ashamed of herself. And she said she had Muslim friends and I replied ‘I don’t care. It’s still wrong’” (Case 134, 29 Dec 19).*



Apart from incidents occurring in culturally diverse suburbs, targeting Muslims under government funded multiculturalism programs was paradoxical.

Results indicate not a lot of difference between multicultural and non-multicultural areas in relation to incident content. The presumption that Muslims kill was more prevalent in multicultural (20%) than non-multicultural areas (9%), while an association with terrorism exhibited similar proportions. Very little difference emerged for foul language and problematisation of religious appearance with two percentage points separating multicultural versus non-multicultural areas. Foul language was more prevalent in non-multicultural areas, while attacks against religious appearance was more prevalent in non-multicultural areas, although the difference is not large. Xenophobia was more prevalent in multicultural (37%) than non-multicultural areas (30%).

The use of foul language was more common in shopping areas in multicultural areas (67%) than shopping centres in non-multicultural areas (33%). Religious appearance was problematised at the same rate (33%) in both areas.



### Exceptional Multiculturalism and Expelling Muslims from the Multicultural Legacy

Apart from incidents occurring in culturally diverse suburbs, targeting Muslims under government funded multiculturalism programs was paradoxical. One reporter highlighted “a series of verbal and physical assaults against hijabi women on a government-funded group excursion for migrants to appreciate Australian culture” (Case 123, 11 Jul 19).

Another reporter expressed the abuse of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) women that she witnessed in a women-only swimming session at a leisure centre. In the absence of genuine safety measures and cultural literacy about CALD communities, the incident reporter highlights the session did not accommodate migrant women’s need but left them exposed to racial slurs and religious vilification:

*“Why is racial vilification not taken as seriously as it should be taken? The Women’s Swimming Night is a night where many culturally diverse women attend, and they come to be in a safe environment, not to be terrorised and told they don’t belong in this country...I would like to know what training this centre has for racial vilification, because it seems there isn’t much that is done. I did not feel safe in this centre, and I would never recommend the centre to anyone...We pay a premium price to enter the facilities for Women’s Night, and I feel that the centre gave us substandard service – we did not feel safe, and I did not feel there was the right number of staff to patrons. It is also rude of the centre’s staff to tell us to ‘enjoy the entertainment’ for something that is so traumatic; this was mentioned as sort of a means of compensation for this experience – this is not okay” (Case 216, 3 Feb 19).*

Another reporter illustrated a similar paradox: A multicultural soccer team volunteer kept telling anti-Muslim slurs about the Afghan teenage boys in his soccer team. Regardless, he was awarded for his contribution to the team. The incident was reported by a non-Muslim witness reporter who could not stay indifferent to the coach’s anti-Muslim racism:

*“He [the coach] had never met them before, but immediately decided they were ‘hard to want to work with,’ spoke ‘limited English’ & repeatedly emphasised that they were just ‘really difficult/too hard/really tough kids/ratty kids.’ They ‘don’t appreciate the things you do, don’t toe the line’ & that he didn’t want to see them again at the end of the night, because he preferred kids that ‘understand English easily’ & ‘want to get into the Christian deal’ & who were ‘grateful and nice’ kids, & not ‘the mess’...” (Case 187, 8 Jul 19).*

The reporter highlights the coach had met these kids for the first time, which was at soccer one night before. Interacting with the same teenagers and having a chance to observe their behaviours, the reporter explains the coach’s complaints were baseless and made the reporter uncomfortable.

### Gender Dynamics

Of the 93 valid cases, women were targeted more in less multi-cultural areas than males (53% for women; 31% for men), while men were targeted more in multicultural areas than women (69% males; 47% females).

*“The kids were literally the best-behaved teenage boys I had ever met, & I have worked with teenage kids. Many had been here for several years, despite the claim they had been here just a few months. Certainly far better behaved than most Western kids. They were polite, told me their names, asked my name, taught me 1-10 in Dari...played a joke on me...Excellent English. They were quiet & polite, a couple played soccer skilfully & quietly & immediately stopped playing and sat down obediently when their leader asked them to. They told me that they loved Australia, that Australia was a really great country” (Case 187, 18 Oct 19).*

Developing a relationship with the Afghan teenagers, the reporter could capture the bigger racism picture faced by those refugee children in Australian schools:

*“They told me that 20% of their schoolmates bully them - call them terrorists (even though these guys have escaped terror), they were asked: ‘Is your bag a bomb? Is that ball a bomb?’ Parents also yell at them: ‘Go back to your country, terrorist.’ When asked what their response was, they responded with maturity & restraint: they ignored it. One of them said to me - hurt in his voice - those terrorists are just terrorists, they are not Muslims - I agreed: terrorists are just evil people & they hurt Muslims more than anyone, anyway. They had tried reporting it to the teachers who took no action. And despite this appalling racism, they still want to become doctors for Australia, play soccer for Australia” (Case 187, 18 Oct 19).*



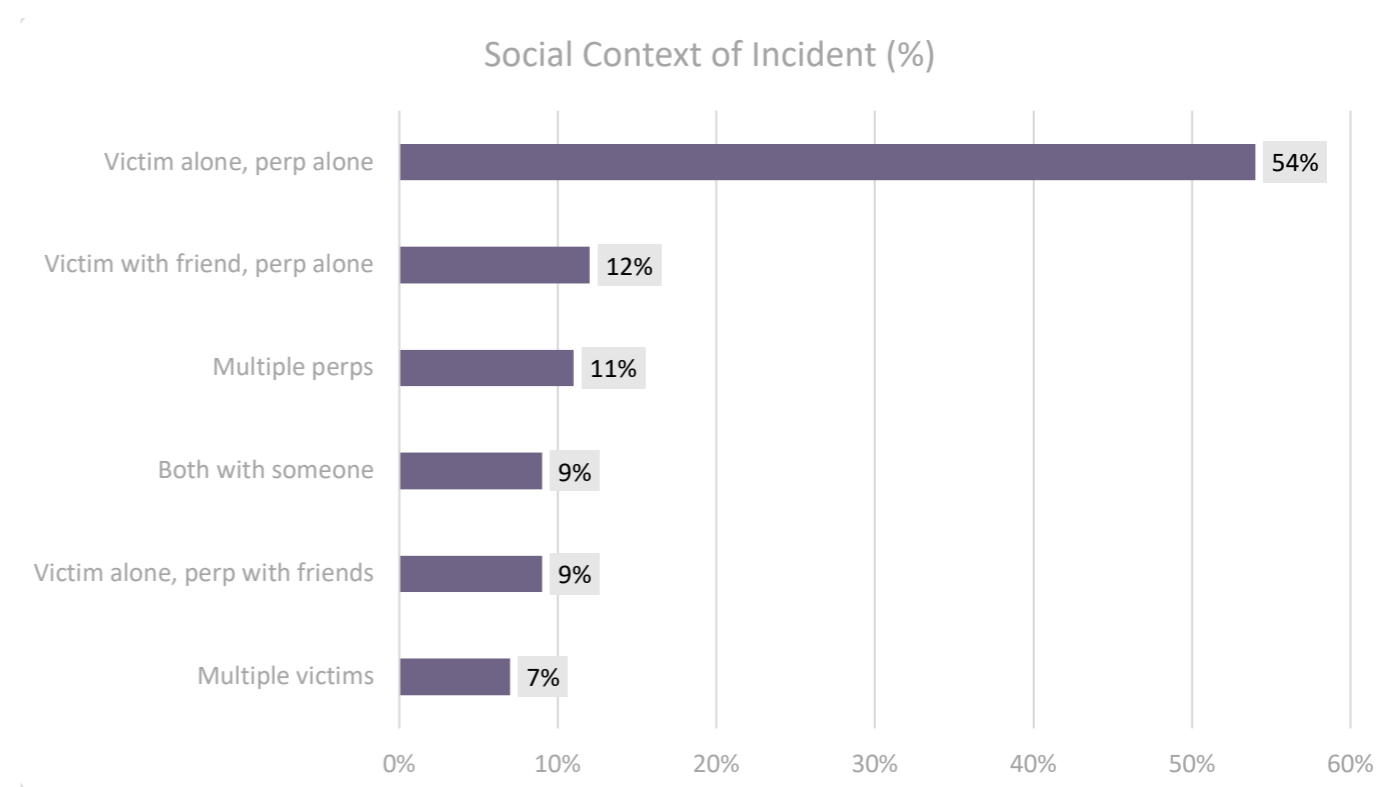
In most cases, the victim was alone with the perpetrator (54%)

## 4. Social Context

This section identifies the social context and setting of Islamophobic attacks by investigating the victims' and perpetrators' companions as well as the roles and responses of third parties surrounding the perpetrators and victims.

### 4.1. Company of the Victim or Target

In most cases, the victim was alone with the perpetrator (54%; n=50), followed by the victim being with a friend while the perpetrator was alone. Multiple perpetrators occurred in 11% of cases.



### 4.2. Third Parties

A third party was considered as anyone except those in the company of the victim or perpetrator. Unlike bystanders, members of the public who did not pay attention to the incident were categorised as passers-by. Others passing by were counted when their number was indicated by the reporter. Of the 138 cases, bystanders were present in 66% of cases.

### 4.3. Third Parties Responses

In 6 out of 8 applicable cases, which equals 75%, perpetrators were supported by their managers or supervisors. Usually, the companies and institutions did not give credit to the victim's complaint and they tended to ignore the abuse of their staff members (Case 187, 8 Jul 19; 200, 4 Jan 19). In some cases, teachers and school staff discriminating against students were backed by their administration (e.g. Case 102, 18 Dec 19; 226, 20 May 19; 249 and 250, 9 Dec 19).

**Support** of victims by third parties, including managers, security guards, police, and public members, alleviated the impact of incidents on victims while preventing perpetrators' further damage or future harassment attempts. For example, a family who abused and sexually assaulted the hijabi woman and her family was escorted out by staff at Taronga Zoo (Case 199, 6 Dec 19).

A man at the art gallery accused a Muslim volunteer of killing white people like himself was reported to the administration.

*"The administration of the gallery was so helpful and nice. They tried to do anything to fix the situation but things like that can't be undone"* (Case 140, 28 Mar 19).

For security guards (n=5), three (60%) took the side of the victim and two (40%) took the side of the perpetrator.

For ordinary people (n=26), 58% took the victim's side, 15% took the perpetrator's side, 12% took no side, while 4% walked by and 8% just stood and watched.

**Silence from the surrounding people** was tacit approval for perpetrators to brazenly hate and harass. In the absence of public interference and social pressure, a bus driver could brazenly yell at a hijabi girl to get off the bus and force her to go home by foot while crying (Case 85, 12 Sep 18), a hijabi girl in a shopping centre's toilet could be left frightened and hiding behind the cubicle (Case 101, 26 Jan 18), a man on a tram could threaten to be the hijabi woman's "killer on the loose" (Case 138, 25 Nov 19) and a Muslim woman's hijab could be pulled on the bus (Case 209, 1 Mar 19).

The victim threatened the perpetrator was frightened regardless of being in the crowd: *"People probably just thought he was a lunatic and dismissed him, but I was so horrified that I got off the tram"* (Case 138, 25 Nov 19).

The Muslim woman, whose scarf was pulled on the bus reports how she was left alone with the attacker: *"No one helped me for the rest of the 30-minute bus ride. Police were notified but no further action was taken"* (Case 209, 1 Mar 19).

The same victim mentioned experiencing five more attacks in the last few months and expressed that she was heavily affected by these repeat public attacks: *"I've been made to fear for my life. Fear to step out of my house. I shake and cry thinking about being attacked. It's terrifying. I was born here and call this place my home and now I've been made to feel like an alien"* (Case 209, 1 Mar 19).

For instance, a Muslim woman walking in the city with a friend had a bottle thrown at her by a woman in front of other people. The victim reported no action by any surrounding people: *"...as soon as I turned around, a woman swung a one litre bottle at my head. I immediately ducked under and she just walked away. No one said anything."*

Physical harassment in the middle of the city with no intervention made the victim feel as if she did not belong to Australia: *"I feel discriminated against and feel like I don't belong in the country I was born and raised in"* (Case 210, 11 Dec 19).

In another case, the perpetrator was screaming, smashing his bicycle and banging on things to scare the young hijabi girl riding home from university on the train. In the absence of surrounding people's actions, the young girl was worried about how to get through the situation and avoid harm:

*"A tall man with a bicycle sat around 2-4 metres away from me and as the train started moving he started to scream really loud about religion, brainwashing kids and if there is actually a god or what on and was swearing the whole time and making eye contact at me. He started smashing his bicycle and banging on something I couldn't see I was too scared to make eye contact with him. The first station passed but I didn't have the courage to go out as I was so scared that if I move he will do something to me. As the second stop came by around 10:50 at Bethania station an old woman stood up and looked at me and I went with her as I got out she said what a man or something like that I didn't hear properly I was in a state of shock. The train driver and officer at the train station heard him screaming and the train driver was like I will investigate it at the other train station as the train was moving"* (Case 92, 13 Jul 18).

Being left alone with an angry perpetrator left deep imprints on the young victim: *"I was so scared and also very sick that day I couldn't respond properly and called my father to pick me up as I didn't feel safe anymore on the train"* (Case 92, 13 Jul 18).

Yet the young victim is probably obliged to take train to school every day while carrying the fear and sense of insecurity in her heart. In cases of **no third-party intervention** and **silence by security guards, managers or the police**, victims expressed a deeper impact and long-term disappointment.

When complaints about two young perpetrators at the pool were continually dismissed by the lifeguard, the victim's stress and anxiety increased. The two teenagers in the pool verbally assaulted migrant women and physically harassed their children. The young perpetrators' racial slurs were "horrific," "deeply offensive and hurtful." They told Muslims to go back to their countries and starve to death. "Appalled by this behaviour," the reporter found the lifeguard and told her "what happened and how this is not okay."

*"As I turned around to go back to the warm pool, I noticed the two minors had now entered the kids' pool and were physically abusing other young children, most of African background, who patiently and quietly were trying to manage the incident, despite having horrific words said to them. Some of the kids in the pool were as young as 3 years' old and they should never be confronted with such violence, particularly in a safe space such as a public swimming pool. I saw kids having their heads dunked under water by these two girls, and nothing was being done to resolve the issue. I, once again, jumped out of the pool and informed the ONE lifeguard on duty"* (Case 216, 3 Feb 19).

The lifeguard simply suggested to ignore the girls. The same thing happened a third time during the passing 2.5 hours. Apart from lifeguard's inaction, the reporter was deeply worried about the migrant women's acceptance of the hate:

*"The majority being from migrant backgrounds who were too scared and unaware of what they could do in this instance. They internalised the hate, and felt marginalised, feeling as though their rights are not important and they need to suffer through this pain. They said that if they were to report it or saying anything, they would be in trouble by law enforcements. They were too scared to speak back or make any comments in fear of being arrested...simply for responding to hate speech. This is NOT how a public centre should be managing these incidents"* (Case 216, 3 Feb 19).

The victim's reports to management and the police were taken lightly and did not bear any result. The reporter explained the long-term impact:

*"This has long-term emotional and physical ramifications on communities and an individual's self-worth...I did not feel safe in this centre, and I would never recommend the centre to anyone. Imagine the trauma these families left the centre with. I, as an adult who was born and raised in Australia, feel such a huge amount of trauma from this experience, I can only imagine how much this has hurt the young children who were there as newly arrived migrants..."* (Case 216, 3 Feb 19).

In the absence of serious action and resolution by third parties, victims were left to the repeat victimisation especially in cases during their regular routines. Sharing the same public transport while going to work or school, riding with the same perpetrator, using the same store or post office and interacting with the same abusive service provider, working with an abusive co-worker or residing next to an abusive neighbour resulted in ongoing abuse and repeat victimisation experiences.

In cases of repeat victimisation, the lack of legal enforcement and social pressure by third parties left the victims helpless while permitting perpetrators to hate and continue their harassment. Some reporters reported their experiences with the same person by numbering multiple incidents in one report, such as one victim was verbally abused by the same person on the train while going to work (Case 89, 7 May 18), another victim was harassed always around the same spot (Case 90, 1 Jan 18), another victim was continually discriminated against by the same officer at a post office and in the absence of any action by store managers, the victim kept reporting to the IRA at different times (Case 245, 13 Feb 18 and Case 246, 14 Nov 17).

### Police Response

Of the 120 cases recorded, 29% of all incidents were reported to police Reporting to the police increased 9% since the last report.



Physical harassment in the middle of the city with no intervention made the victim feel as if she didn't belong to Australia.

A very small proportion of verbal insults were reported to police (4%), while 58% (n=10) of all verbal threats to person or property were reported to police and nonverbal intimidation was reported in 33% of all cases.

Reporting for physical attacks increased with the severity of attack. Thus 17% (n=12) of all low level attacks (verbal insults/threats) were reported to police compared to 54% (n=14) of medium level attacks (property damage and non-physical intimidation) and 50% (n=8) of all high level attacks (physical attacks).

Where the severity level was low, police took no side, while where the severity level was medium, 79% took the side of the victim and 22% took the side of the perpetrator. Where the severity level was high, 50% of police took the victim's side, 25% took the side of the perpetrator, while 25% took no side.

### Inattentive Police Response

In the case of Police (n=15), 60% sided with the victim, 20% sided with the perpetrator while 20% took no side.

Reporters usually share their experience in reporting to police. In many cases, reporting to police did not bring any result. This included being on hold for long time, which led victims to hang up (Case 191, 16 Sep 19), belated return calls from the police (seven hours later in Case 84, 7 Sep 18), police showing racial bias towards the niqabi victim who called the police for being threatened with a knife by the neighbour (Case 221, 19 Dec 19) and police telling the mother they cannot do anything about the repeat verbal harassment of her daughter by a teammate (Case 202, 18 Oct 18).

In one case, the husband who defended his sexually assaulted wife against a local drug addict. When he reported the incident to the police, he was threatened by one police officer to be arrested:

*"I defended my wife via physical means using REASONABLE force. When I went to...Police Station to report this, the crime Officer...was both rude and unprofessional and did not take my statement. Furthermore, he also threatened to have me arrested for defending my wife against a dangerous junkie who was an imminent threat to my wife. Some other officers at the station were sympathetic and I found them to be both fair and reasonable"* (Case 228, 28 Jun 19).



#### 4.4. Positive Action and Alleviation of Fear and Grief

Positive action refers to taking active action to stop or disapprove of the hostility directed at Muslims. Positive action by witnesses to soothe the victim and confront the perpetrator fall into this category. Of the 135 cases, 11% displayed positive action. This was similar to the positive action rate in the previous report.

##### “Would you like to come with me?”

When two female perpetrators made a niqabi woman cry together with her young child, a woman approached to dispel the perpetrators, the staff at the shop also came and asked if she was okay (Case 207, 5 Jul 18).

A bystander offered to accompany the harassed Muslim woman, who was frightened by a perpetrator at the bus stop:

*“I was waiting at a bus stop in the middle of the city and a lady came up to me and started yelling at me ‘Go home’ and ‘Why are you here?’ She was jabbing her finger almost in my face and gesturing wildly with her arms and I feared she was going to punch me. A kind lady came up to me and said, ‘Would you like to come with me?’ When I said ‘Yes please,’ she led me away and the other lady did not follow us” (Case 208, 10 Dec 19).*

Another victim scared of the perpetrator “rushed into a restaurant to seek help”:

*“The man followed me into the restaurant, racially and verbally abusing me...the staff got in his way so that he couldn’t come near me and they looked after me until my friend got there. Another man and his son came in to make sure I was ok and told me the psycho man had left and that it was safe to come out” (Case 58, 7 Jul 19).*

The victim asking help directly from the surrounding people shows how to effectively mobilise the bystanders. In another case, the victim harassed on the train got off the train and sought the Protective Service Officer’s (PSO) help. A Sikh PO, who was wearing a turban, was helpful. He spoke to the perpetrator and got back to the victim to take her details and statement (Case 145, 13 Aug 19).

The ownership of the bystander by acting and developing an emotional reaction was an advanced level of support. The abuse of a niqabi woman by two young white perpetrators (which took place two days after the Parramatta café attack) made the witness disgusted and sick:

*“A young woman wearing a niqab walked around the corner the same time two young white guys were turning the corner. One of the boys then stopped in front of her acting shocked. She walked past him. He turned around and then shouted ‘F...ing Terrorist!’ at her. I made sure to ask if she was alright afterwards as I felt sick and disgusted from the attack” (Case 157, 22 Nov 19).*



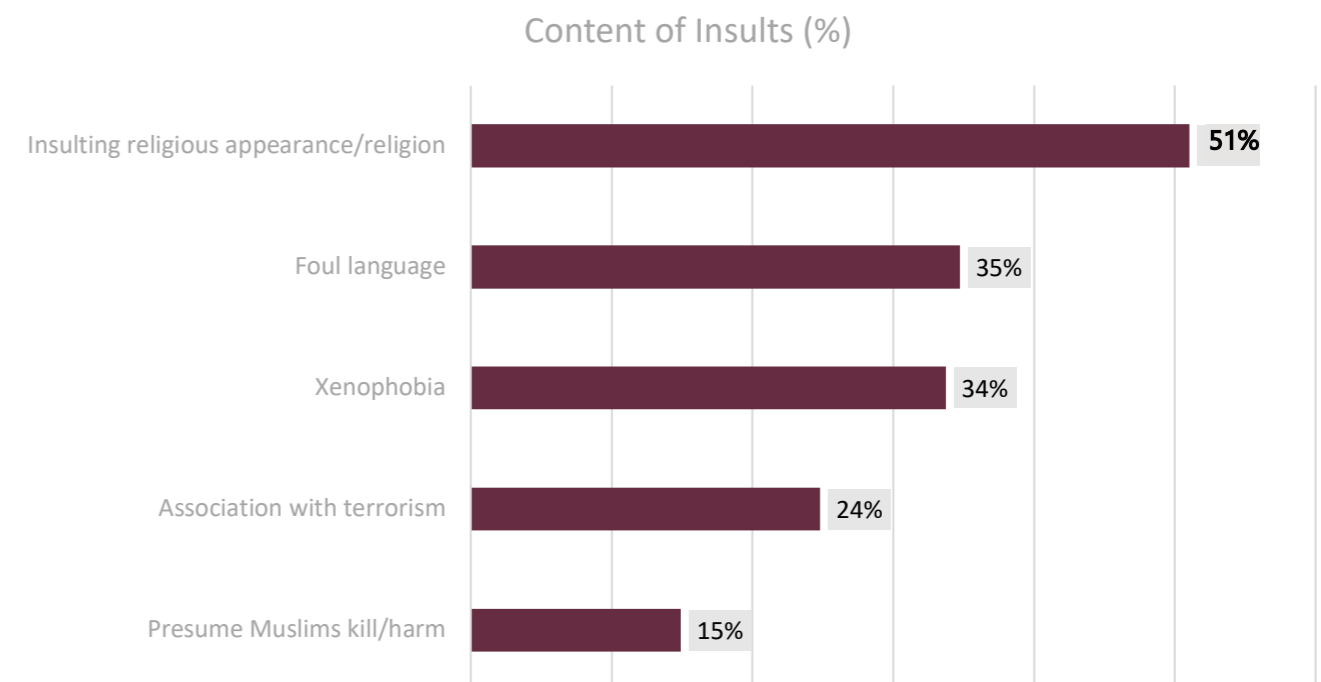
To put it differently insults problematising Muslim visibility and their presence (i.e. xenophobia) dominated the hate rhetoric.

## 5. Content of Insults

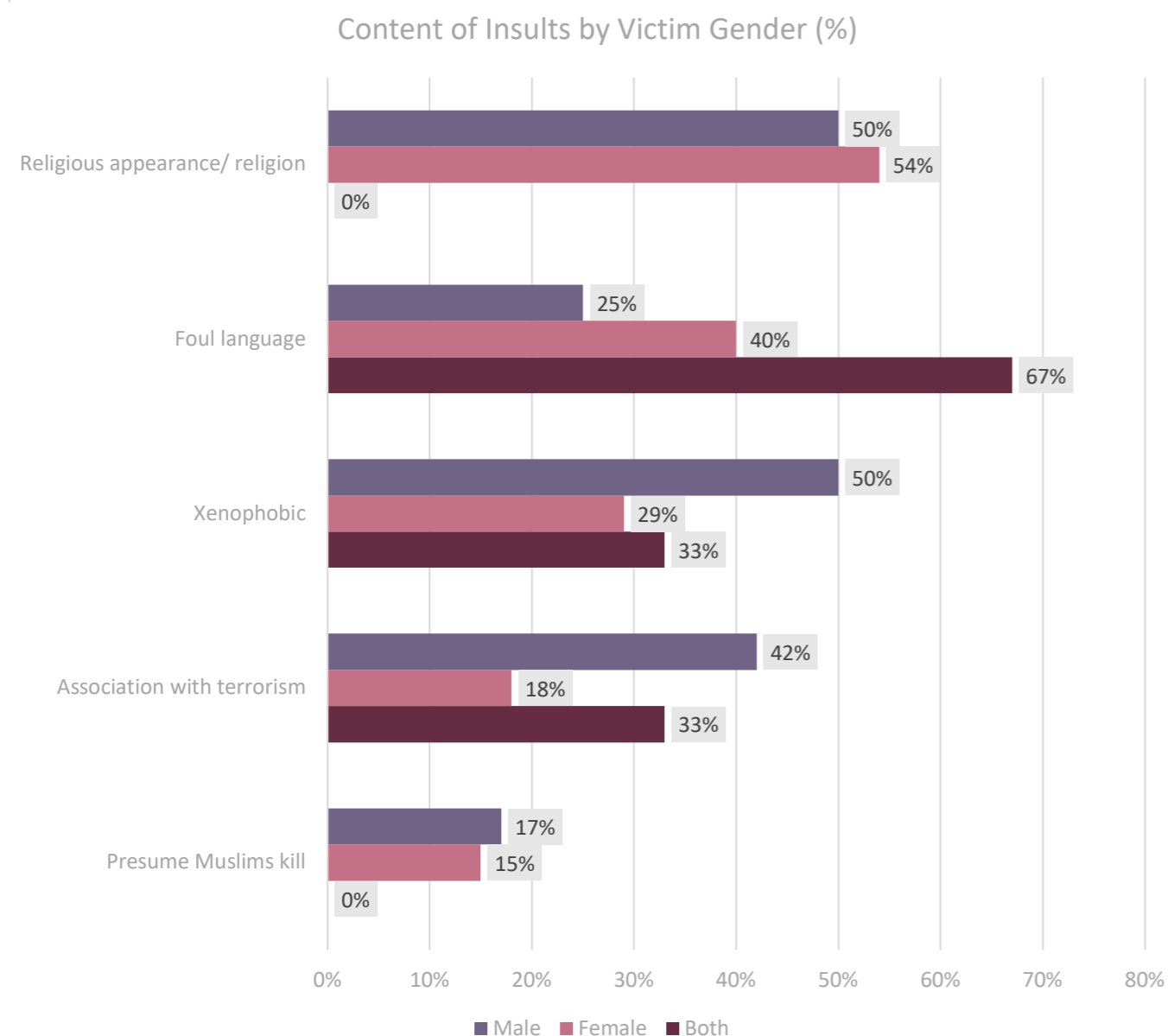
### 5.1. Insult Types

The most common form of insult was targeting the Muslims’ religion and/or religious visibility (51%; n=50). This has been the case since the first report. Of the 99 incidents, xenophobic comments were made in 34% of cases (n=34). Foul language was used in 35% of cases (n=35), association with terrorism was made in 24% of cases, while the presumption that Muslims kill was mentioned in 15% of cases (n=15).

To put it differently, 60% of the insults problematised Muslim visibility and their presence in Australia whereas 27% of the cases problematised Muslims as dangerous and security threats.



Seeing Muslims as terrorists and killers was 12% in the first report regardless of the ISIS threat in 2014-15, which increased to 27% in the second report based on the 2016-17 reports. This number reached 39% in the third report analysing the pre- and post-Christchurch reports in 2018-19. The noticeable spike from 12% to 39% proves the increasing influence of far-right extremist rhetoric and conspiracy theories, justifying their extremism by demonising Muslims as violent killers and terrorists. The fact that Muslims deserving to be killed is one of the most common themes in the aftermath of the Christchurch attacks, supports these findings.



### Gender Dynamics

The content of insults discloses sexism as foul language, which aims to diminish dignity and honour, was directed mostly at women (29% in contrast to 16% men). On the contrary, males were often associated with terrorism (42% in contrast to 18% women). Males were also victims of more xenophobic attacks (50%; n=6) than women (29%; n=21).

Attacking religion (males 50% and females 54%) and the presumption that Muslims kill (males 17% and females 15%) exhibited no sheer difference. In 71% of cases where a male was abused, they wore religious attire, while 29% of incidents related to multiple victims and attires. For females, 90% of all abuse related to wearing a hijab and, in 9% of cases, a niqab.

### Unconditional and Everlasting Association with Terrorism

The portrayal of all Muslims unconditionally for every type of Muslim in the present report proves the problematic unconditional association of Muslims with terrorism/violence.

A man shouted at a café two weeks after the Parramatta café attack that all Muslims (Case 36, 3 Dec 19), all Muslim residents of a multicultural suburb (Case 134, 29 Dec 19) and all Muslims in Australia (Case 84, 7 Sept 18) are terrorists. Children and teenagers were also called terrorists by adult perpetrators, as in the cases of three siblings in a parking lot (Case 88, 13 Nov 18), a young girl at a toilet block (Case 101, 26 Jan 18) and young Afghan soccer players (Case 187, 8 Jul 19). A shopper with a beard was called “Taliban” and “Muhammad Bin Laden” by the store manager (Case 219, 3 Feb 18), an employee was called a terrorist at his workplace (Case 197, 14 Sep 19), plus a visibly Muslim woman walking on the street (Case 154, 22 Nov 19), a woman lawyer (Case 154, 24 Nov 19) and a woman pharmacist (Case 212, 12 Dec 19) were also called terrorists. Even a Muslim man helping a woman to put her trolley on a train was told to leave it and called “f...en Muslim terrorist dog” Case 46, 13 Apr 19). These incidents, some of which took place after the Christchurch and Parramatta café attacks and directed at Muslims from all walks of life, show the unconditional and everlasting association of Muslims with terrorism.

The level of hate against Muslims when the Christchurch attacks were still fresh was observed not only online but also in physical circumstances and even among educated people like those visiting art galleries. A Muslim volunteer was accused by the perpetrator for killing white people like himself:

*“As a volunteer at the Art Gallery... I stand up and welcome the people who enter the gallery. A man came around 1:45 pm. I stood and welcomed him. He asked ‘are you a Muslim.’ I replied with a smile ‘yes.’ He said ‘you shouldn’t be here.’ I didn’t understand what is he talking about, so I asked him politely ‘excuse me.’ He denied while moving his head, ‘people like you are killing white people like me.’ He continued while leaving ‘You shouldn’t be here in this country’” (Case 140, 28 Mar 19).*

### 5.2. Death Threats

Although Muslims are portrayed as terrorists and killers, death threats directed at Muslims in physical circumstances occurred in 4% of cases.



The portrayal of all Muslims unconditionally for every type of Muslim in the present report proves the problematic unconditional association of Muslims with terrorism/violence.

## 6. Severity of Hate Rhetoric

The intensity of hate speech can be conveyed to the victim through the power of the expression directed at the target at the time of the harassment. Following the previous report, the intensity of negative emotions was assessed according to the literature on the psychology of radicalisation and violent extremism as cited in the first Islamophobia report (Iner et al. 2017, p. 66). Each severity level builds from the previous one.

**Fury** is the first step of hate, which indicates the perpetrator’s strong level of annoyance, displeasure, or hostility.

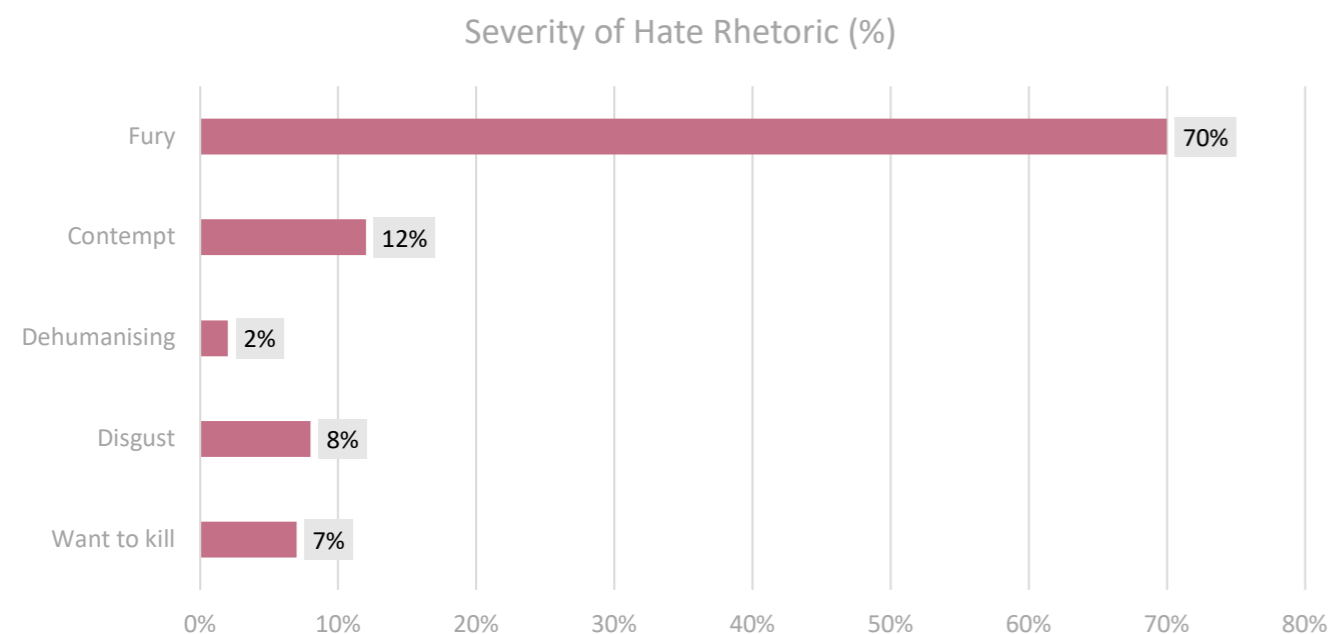
**Contempt** is a feeling of disdain towards a person or thing they perceive beneath their dignity and unworthy of respect. It is followed by dehumanising victims, which deprive a human of any positive human qualities and see them as sub-humans.

**Dehumanising** a victim leads to and is very much mixed with disgust, which is a feeling of revulsion aroused by something unpleasant or offensive.

Dehumanising and **disgust** legitimise extreme levels of hatred and lead to wanting to remove.

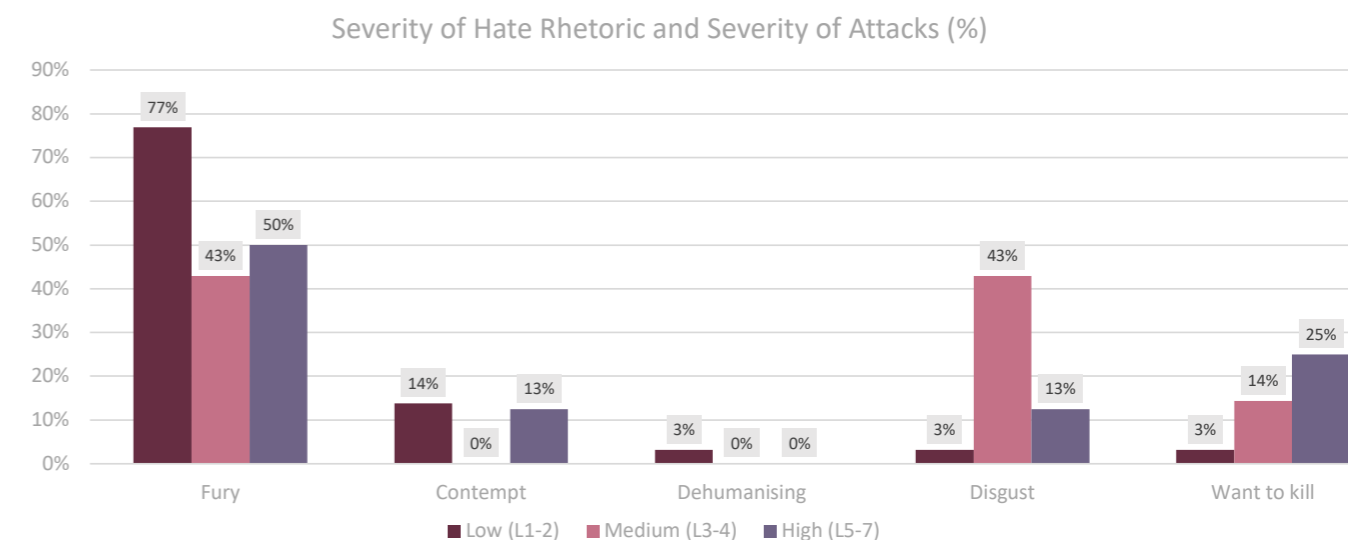
**Violence/wanting to kill** is an outcome of wanting to remove. This level of hate considers the possibility of harming, killing and even massacring (as suggested in the extreme Islamophobic discourse of hate). The gradually increasing severity directed at victims does not arouse any guilt in perpetrators since dehumanising Muslims and seeing them as lower than animals leads to repulsion and justifies removing them by force and violence.

Of the 84 cases, 70% of incidents were level 1, followed by 12% level 2, followed by disgust and wanting to kill.



Fury was noted in 51% of the insults targeting religion and religious appearance, 37% using foul language and 32% expressing xenophobia. The most severe feeling (i.e. wanting to kill) was mentioned in half of all cases for xenophobia and religion.

The data suggest a relationship between severity of hate rhetoric and physical severity ( $r=.310$ ). Thus, the greater the level of hate rhetoric (from fury to wanting to kill), the greater the likelihood of engaging in physical assault. In incidents where the severity of the rhetoric was ‘fury,’ 77% were rated as low physical severity, 43% as medium severity and 50% as high severity, compared to those expressing a desire to kill. In these cases, 3% were deemed low severity, 14% were medium severity and the remainder (25%) were deemed high severity (see table directly below). However, the data should be interpreted with caution due to the low number of cases.

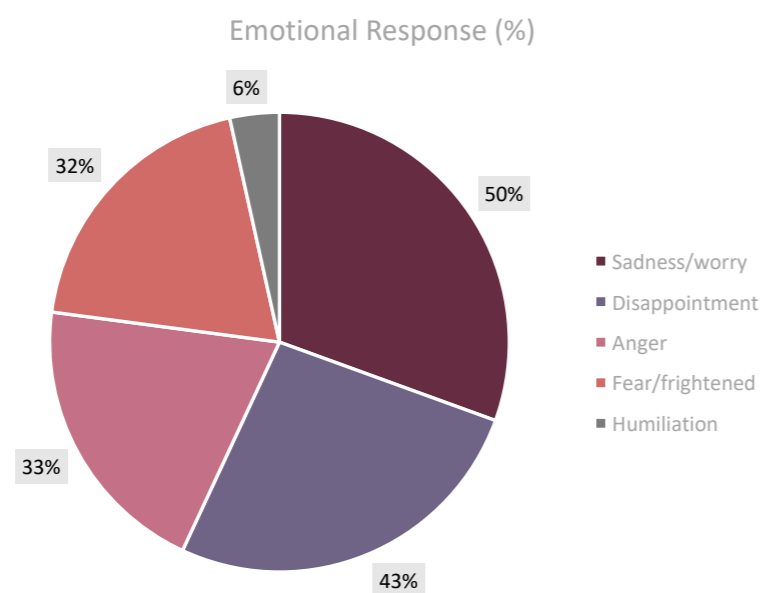


## 7. Response, Reaction and Impact

### 7.1. Expressions of Emotions by Reporters

Reporters consist of victims, their proxies and witnesses. Emotions expressed or indicated at the time of reporting are additional information. Sometimes multiple emotions were expressed in one case. Those emotions were expressed by the victims or their proxies, who happened to be parents, partners, or other close family members. Witnesses described the victims’ responses or expressed their own feelings at the time of reporting. Muslim witnesses reporting a generic anti-Muslim hate case can be interpreted as victims since they were personally affected and expressed their emotions. For instance, an offensive sign about Islam and Muslims on the back of a car going down the freeway was “shocking” for the Muslim witness reporter (Case 67, 21 Mar 18).

Of the 88 cases that expressed an emotion, sadness was the dominant feeling (50%) followed by disappointment (43%), anger (33%), fear (32%) and humiliation (6%).



### Anger

This category grouped a list of close feelings like annoyance, fury, irritation, frustration, rage and being sickened. The following incident discloses frustration:

*“Hello, today this woman started yelling at my family and swearing about Islam without any reason. This happened on a train going from Guildford to the city. The lady randomly come on and started ranting at us to take off hijab that we are dogs because her family have married a Muslim. This is what Muslims have to go through daily!” (Case 65, 15 Jul 18).*

### Sadness and Helplessness

This category grouped a list of close feelings like hopelessness, helplessness, despair, distress and being upset. Upon mistreatment by the police, a victim feels not only sad but also helpless:

*“I really don’t know where to get help. Islamic organisations are only making khutbas and social media posts about Islamaphobia incidents and are not doing anything to help. I cannot afford a private lawyer. I really don’t know where to get help” (Case 221, 19 Dec 19).*

### Fear

This category grouped a list of close feelings like being scared, nervousness and anxiety.

*“I was waiting at a bus stop in the middle of the city and a lady came up to me and started yelling at me ‘Go home’ and ‘Why are you here?’ She was jabbing her finger almost in my face and gesturing wildly with her arms and I feared she was going to punch me” (Case 208, 10 Dec 19).*

### Humiliation

This category grouped a list of close feelings like feeling shame and embarrassment.

*“I proceeded to the Customs and Quarantine area and the guy who was collecting the arrival forms asked me to exit as I have nothing to declare. I had a small bag in my possession. I was out waiting for Uber to pick me up and I saw two Border Securities requesting me to come back inside the airport and they collected my passport and told me the guy who asked me to go out made a mistake. I asked them how can he make a mistake as it was his choice to select who should go further screen? Wallahi [I swear God that] I was so embarrassed in public as people were looking at me especially me wearing Jilbaab. It’s been three weeks now but I can’t still stop thinking about it and I’m worried now flying out to go for holiday or travel to see my family back in Africa” (Case 148, 14 Apr 19).*

### Disappointment and Shock

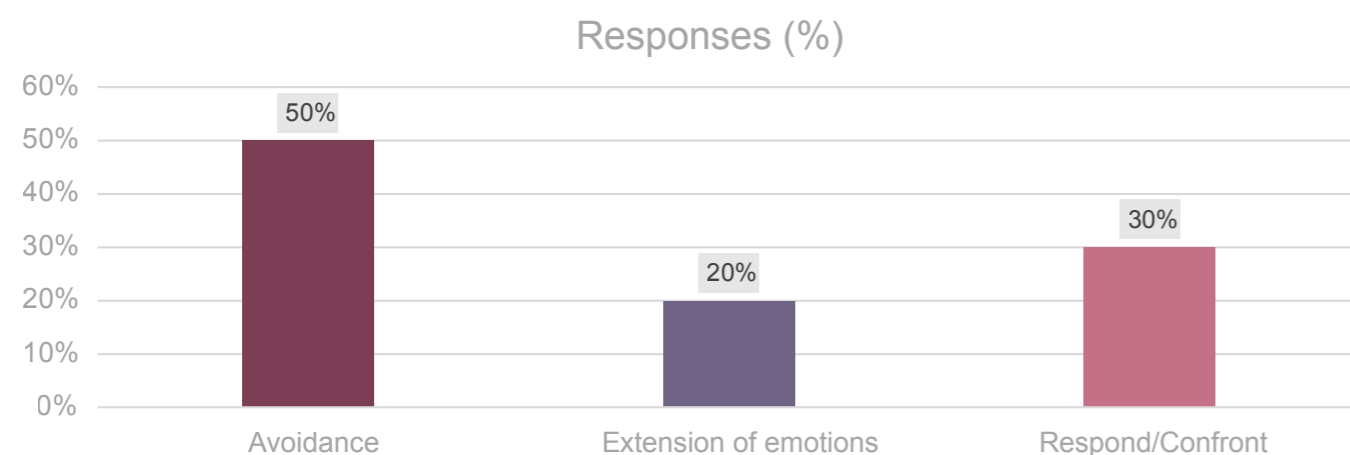
This category grouped a list of close feelings like being shocked and surprised in a negative way that triggers disappointment.

*“I was walking towards a cafe...from my college - I was with my 2 female friends who witnessed this incident. A male, Anglo Saxon, slowed down his vehicle, put the window down, and yelled Islamophobic slurs at me. I didn't react. He continued. No one did anything. I was told to just ignore him. I was so shocked that I even forgot to capture it on my phone” (Case 35, 5 Dec 19)*

## 7.2. Responses by Reporters

Sometimes, the reporter expresses multiple feelings. For instance, a young girl abused in the city by an older man first avoided facing him by “minding her own business.” Since he kept staring and shouting at the victim with “a nasty face,” the victim tried to be nice while feeling helpless and she wished him a nice day. As the perpetrator kept yelling and getting “very aggressive,” the victim took a photo of him to report. Because the perpetrator looked “as if he would return to attack,” the victim started to fear for her own safety (Case 135, 25 Sep 18).

Of the 56 cases in which victims displayed a reaction, 50% (n=28) showed avoidance such as ignoring and walking away, 20% (n=11) displayed extended emotions such as crying and trembling while 30% (n=17) responded by confronting the perpetrator.



**Avoidance** was a behavioural response, which included ignoring and walking away. In most cases, this was a coping mechanism for women to avoid escalation of the perpetrator's hate and harassment.

*"I was walking near Target at...Melbourne, when suddenly I heard a man shouting like 'Religion is...blablabla...' repeating several times. I walked further away but his voice remained loud, which means he was walking towards me. I did not dare to look back and entered the shops quickly to find my friends and the voice stopped"* (Case 158, 22 Nov 19).

**Extension of emotions** was demonstrated by physical reactions like crying, shaking, going crimson and sweating. When a young girl was assaulted and called a terrorist in the toilet, she reported her physical reaction to the fear:

*"I was scared, frozen and I hid in the toilet cubicle. I was trembling"* (Case 101, 26 Jan 18).

**Confrontation** cases mostly included a verbal response by victims. The following example was unusual since the victim was equally angry at the perpetrator, which triggered physical abuse by the perpetrator:

*"I was walking back to my car from a doctor's appointment. I walked past a couple and the guy barks at me. I couldn't take this sort of stuff anymore, so I turned around and said 'what's your problem mate?' He got in my face and hurled abuse- typical crap such as go back to where u came from, etc. I responded by saying I was born here. He spat on me. From there I swore and was angry. He spat on me another time. I threw my drink at him and he kicked me in the stomach – it just made connection so it didn't hurt. He even eggs his girlfriend to try and fight me (she didn't). No one came to help when this guy first started bridging up. But eventually a few Muslim men did come and help. The police were called and they actually found a knife in his pants"* (Case 163, 1 Mar 19).



### Gender Dynamics

In the case of male victims 12% (n=2) responded with avoidance compared to 29% (n=25) for women. No males expressed and extension of emotions compared to 10% (n=9) for women, while 12% (n=2) of males felt the need to respond or confront compared to 14% (n=13) of women.

## 7.3. Opinions and Perceptions Shaped by the Incidents

Opinions and perceptions are shaped due to the experienced incidents and were sometimes expressed by the victims. For instance, the association with terrorism made by a colleague in the Department of Justice was reported by the victim but there was no tangible result or action, which led the victim to disappointment: *"I feel unsupported and unappreciated given that I have served the department for the last 16 years of my career and feel that they don't take this seriously..."* (Case 164, 18 Nov 19).

A young girl who was verbally abused while getting off a bus did not share her experience with her parents, but her abuse experience shaped her views about the neighbourhood and sense of belonging: *"I did not tell my family since I did not want them to be worried about me when I leave home or have negative feelings about the area we live in or being in Australia in general. The impact is an ongoing lack of belonging"* (Case 162, 20 Nov 19).

Another victim developed the view that people would think she is against the government and defence force just because she is a Muslim: *"Many many many people (parents in the school my children attend/some ex-veterans/nationalists) will state the view that if I am Muslim I am automatically against the government and the Australian defense force...I am still subject to this opinion and events such as ANZAC and REMEMBRANCE DAY are NOW particularly challenging to attend. I am treated like I am constantly placed in contempt...This particularly frustrates me as I so openly support many veteran services such as mates for mates, soldier on..."* (Case 203, 18 Oct 19).

Sometimes proxy and witness reporters also expressed their perceptions about how such anti-Muslim abuse can happen in Australia: *"I am not a victim of this incident, and I am not Muslim. But I am very upset about this incident. This is for two reasons. My friends and their friends experience this level of Islamophobia. I don't believe that they should experience open vilification in Australia."*

The witness reporter found the racist environment quite "uncomfortable: *The sort of derogatory language and demeaning tone used by the dental assistant was not only extremely offensive, however, had made not only the student involved in the event, but also myself very uncomfortable. We would not like to be placed in an environment surrounded by such negativity, disrespect and complete disregard for people's religions"* (Case 143, 29 Apr 19).

Islamophobia in academic settings made some reporters question their belief in the institutions. Following discriminatory practices in the hiring department of a university, one proxy witness noted

*"I always believed that universities were safe places for people from diverse backgrounds. I also thought they were safe places for people to express their opinions. This incident has shaken my belief in the safety of a place of tertiary learning for students and academics. It also concerns me – for the long-term future - because I would like to see my 3-year-old son go to university. This makes me wonder what kind of (in)tolerance is he going to experience at a place where I have always felt that there was freedom of thought and movement: a place where a person is not vilified for being themselves" (Case 161, 15 Nov 19).*

## 8. Long-term Impact of the Incidents

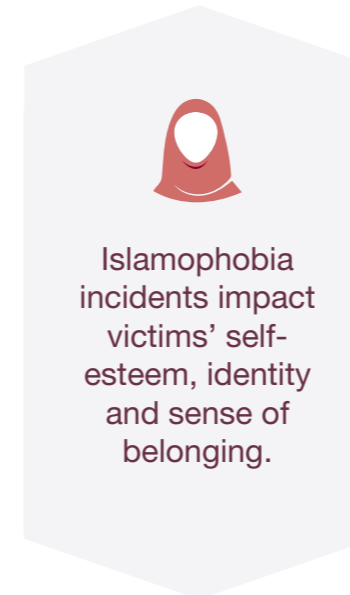
Reporters were asked in the incident report if and how they were impacted by the incident. The answers to this question indicated many individuals and families experienced long-term consequences because of their experiences of Islamophobia. These impacts spanned beyond the immediate emotions felt at the time of the incident. In many cases, ongoing physical and emotional consequences were reported that impacted the victim's quality of life and ability to conduct their normal daily activities.

The reported psychological impacts of Islamophobic attacks on children or their families were often quite significant. A young girl was traumatised after she and her mother were followed on five separate occasions, with her mum reporting *"my daughter became quite fearful and confused, she has diagnosed anxiety and ADHD" (Case 202, 18 Oct 18).*

Another victim reporter told the IRA that her *"child fears that perp knows their address and will attack them one day" (Case 191, 16 Sep 19).* Other reports of hatred and abuse demonstrate the activation of fear and anxiety within families: One victim reported *"I feel like it has triggered my anxiety of being in public with my Islamic attire. My 8-year-old son is very scared and says he's so scared he feels like this man is going to come to our home to harm us tonight" (Case 95, 13 Dec 19).* Other victims similarly reported being *"Worried about implications on her children" (Case 93, 14 Jul 18)* and feeling *"scared for my safety and my baby's" (Case 103, 19 Dec 19).*

A proxy witness reported that their 10-year-old daughter could not sleep after being verbally attacked and questioned her father why the perpetrator called her a terrorist and what she did to him to make him angry (Case 88, 13 Nov 18). A victim reporter also told the IRA that *"my daughter refuses to go to playgrounds now" following an incident (Case 131, 25 Dec 19).*

A victim reporter described *"physical injury and bruises, psychological trauma and fear, does not trust authority for safety, children exposed to abuse at young age" after herself, her children and other migrant women at the pool were physically and verbally abused by two young perpetrators (Case 216, 13 Dec 19).*



A woman with her two young children was threatened to have her headscarf ripped off her head. Afterward, the victim felt unsafe wearing her headscarf in public: *"Maybe it's a target. I only just put it back on" (Case 206, 7 Dec 19).* After being targeted at her local Kmart, one victim reported that she *"took off niqab in public, will not leave the house" (Case 207, 5 Jul 18)* and ongoing social anxiety after being approached and yelled at when out walking with her brother (Case 179, 31 Oct 19). Being abused by a total stranger in the street left one victim with an *"ongoing lack of belonging" (Case 162, 20 Nov 19).*

Incidents reported to the IRA were also found to impact victims' self-esteem, identity and sense of belonging. One victim reporter, after being verbally abused by a stranger, said: *"I've encountered this verbal abuse 3x this year. And 2x in the past during my visit to Australia. This has since made me become very conscious of my identity as a Muslim, not only on the streets but also in my workplace. In my workplace, I always feel that people belittle me, probably thinking I was a Muslim migrant with no real skills (I'm not a migrant, I'm just a student), although this may be just my assumption, but that's how they come across. I get very discouraged due to my over-consciousness about my identity" (Case 153, 25 Nov 19).*

A victim reported a significant impact on their self-esteem after being verbally abused by a café owner when walking with family: *"To hear such hatred thrown at me just leaves me flabbergasted and humiliated... it's incredibly hard not to be self-conscious and feel like you are doing the right thing when you are met this kind of antagonism" (Case 218, 5 Jun 19).*

A victim reporter expressed fear and alienation after experiencing multiple attacks in a short space of time: *"Of course I feel like I'm affected. That was the first incident that had happened to me, and prior to that I'd already been wearing the hijab for 2 years without backlash. Since then I've experienced five more attacks all in the space of several months. I've been made to fear for my life. Fear to step out of my house. I shake and cry thinking about being attacked. It's terrifying. I was born here and call this place my home and now I've been made to feel like an alien" (Case 209, 1 Mar 19).*

Reporters also expressed concern for the broader community when an Islamophobic incident occurred. One witness reporter said they were *"feeling worried for the Muslim families in the shopping centre and in the community" (Case 36, 3 Dec 19).* After seeing a sticker from the anti-Muslim hate group Combat 18, a witness said it *"makes me fearful for my friends and neighbours" (Case 151, 29 Nov 19).* A victim also said they were *"shaken, scared, worried for others that might be in my place, younger and don't know what to do or even can speak English to complain" after being harassed while at a café with a friend (Case 165, 18 Nov 19).*

Discrimination in the workplace has a profound effect on victims. One reporter who was dismissed with less than 24 hours' notice wrote to the IRA that *"Leaving me with no notice has negative outcome on me...I feel that I will be unsafe at workplace and anytime I can be kicked anywhere if I'm not doing what they ask me to do" (Case 223, 23 Dec 19).*

On another occasion, a proxy reported, *“My 16 year old son was left broken and my heart was shattered into a million pieces”* following a discriminatory job interview (Case 220, 23 Feb 18).

A victim of multiple incidents of discrimination in the workplace reported, *“it has made me feel very vulnerable, targeted and singled out. I feel scared, worried and anxious”* (Case 197, 14 Sep 19).

Another victim was left *“questioning the safety of workplace”* after a co-worker shared Islamophobic ideas and a video with her (Case 229, 2 May 19). *“Things like this can’t be undone,”* expressed a victim reporter who had been told that *“people like you are killing white people like me”* in her volunteer role (Case 140, 28 Mar 19).

Islamophobic incidents are often compounded by unsupportive reactions by those around them. For instance: *“I’m spending my holiday break thinking about it. Called the manager and I felt her reply lacked empathy. I don’t think she understood the gravity of the situation”* (Case 134, 29 Dec 19).

A victim reported that *“I really don’t know where to get help”* after being racially profiled and threatened by the Police (Case 221, 19 Dec 19). One victim reported a *“distrust of authority for safety because Police sided with perp”* in an incident where a woman and her baby daughter were physically threatened and stalked by an unknown man (Case 119, 8 Apr 19).

A proxy reporter wrote of the devastating consequences a university student faced during an incident of bullying and discrimination in university, then afterward when the university gave her no support in handling the incident: *“A year after the incident, still finds it distressing to talk about and within a minute or two of starting to talk, she gets upset, and we have to discontinue the conversation. Student no longer has trust in the university processes. She currently has lost confidence in her ability to study and to interact with staff, on campus, and on placements. She also has a young daughter less than 1 year and believes the impact of the above harmed her ability to care for her daughter. She has thus gone from 1 year ago - confident and working hard to earn her grades towards her qualifications in health sciences - to abandoning her studies on account of staff behaviour”* (Case 249, 2019). Some victim reporters’ expressions suggest the impacts of these incidents are intensified if they experience repeat victimisation. Significant consequences were reported in cases where the victim was the target of abuse on separate occasions by the same person; on separate occasions by a different person/s; or when an incident of Islamophobia occurred and the victim consequently experienced further Islamophobia by the reactions of authorities (such as management and the Police).

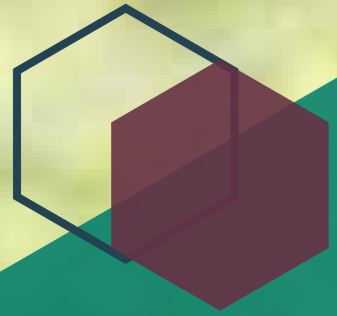
Vulnerable victims tended to report they were impacted more significantly by these incidents. This was particularly the case of young victims (even more so when they are targeted without the presence of a caregiver) and women that were either alone or with children. The long-term impacts on these victims’ wellbeing and sense of safety are highlighted in the changed behaviours of victims – from foregoing religious practices (including wearing a headscarf) to avoid public transport or places they used to shop or frequent. Those that were obliged to continue their practices and routines often reported increased vigilance, fear and anxiety around these daily activities.



Incidents of Islamophobia heavily impacted children – there were many accounts of children experiencing ongoing fear and anxiety and being unable to maintain their normal sleep pattern.

Incidents of Islamophobia heavily impacted children – there were many accounts of children experiencing ongoing fear and anxiety and being unable to maintain their normal sleep pattern. Their experiences were often captured when a parent is either a proxy reporter and describing the incident (and impact) from the child’s perspective or when the parent and child are victims of an incident. Yet it is not possible for the full experiences of children to be captured. Because adults widely use the reporting platform, we often do not hear these children’s experiences and when provided, it is rarely in their own words. Research into best practices and techniques for interviewing children is required to unpack and develop this shadowed aspect in the future.





CHAPTER 3:

# Online Incidents





## Introduction

Online Islamophobia is widespread. Although copious Islamophobia cases can be found on social media, this report relies on cases reported to the IRA only by victims, proxies and witnesses. Even cases targeting the IRA are only included if they are reported by third parties. This method provides authentic data, which includes not only online Islamophobia examples but also the sentiments of reporters along with what type of cases mobilised them to report. The interpersonal online cases like intimidation of victims via online channels, also show the connectedness between the interpersonal generalised Islamophobia and cyber abuse.

The online cases whose screenshots are taken and stored by IRA for later research purposes are an important data source since many reported cases, particularly during times of heightened tension, are presently unavailable. This is mainly due to the removal of harmful content by the perpetrators or social media. Islamophobia reports have provided the online activity of anti-Muslim haters by capturing fearsome debates and campaigns at the time. The first Islamophobia report (2017) captured the fervent online campaigns and discussions on anti-halal and anti-mosque campaigns in Australia during 2014-15 along with the moral panic and incitement of hate in the aftermath of each ISIS terrorist attack and local cases like the Lindt Café siege and Parramatta shooting. The second Islamophobia report highlighted fresh arguments on the ISIS terrorist attacks in 2016-17, far-right parties' election campaigns and problematising of Muslim public figures like Yassmin Abdel-Magied and the Grand Mufti of Australia. The first-hand source data presented in this chapter is especially important since 1) most of the cases are no longer available on social media, and 2) the sentiments captured at the time of reporting authentically display how the heightened online hate in the early days of the Christchurch attacks impacted the reporters.

## Terminology

Variations of Islamophobia and its connection with racism and far-right movements:

**Islamophobia and racism relationship:** Islamophobia is anti-Muslim racism (Holloway 2016). Although Islam is not a biological race, it becomes a socially constructed race in the ideas and practices of Islamophobia. All Muslims and characteristics supposedly associated with Muslims are essentialised into one group and thus racialised (Cervi 2020).

**Islamophobia and far-right relationship:** Over the last few years, scholars have increasingly classified far right parties on the basis of their populism, nativism and radicalism/extremism.

Populism is adopted to ideologically appeal to the wider population. Populism views society as “the pure people” and “the corrupt elite.” Adopting a nativist approach in their all political arguments, they seek a privileged status in securing jobs, housing and other benefits with the motto of “our own people first.” Membership in the nation is hereditary and often includes a shared ethnic, linguistic and religious background (Golder 2016).



The present report predominantly captures the online activities of far-right groups who were triggered to heighten hate in the first hours, days and weeks of the Christchurch attacks.

Far-right and white supremacist movements seek to devalue and dehumanise racial, cultural, religious minorities, feminist and LGBTQ communities (Macquarie University 2020). They perceive these groups to pose a physical and existential threat to the dominant Christian white race (Smith and Iner 2021, p. 9).

Although they hold a range of discriminatory views, Islamophobia has become “the acceptable public face of the far right” (Vidgen et al. 2020). Populist far-right groups strategically use Islamophobia because it is the commonly shared and normalised type of hate in political and public rhetoric (Shaheed 2020, pp. 5-6). By targeting Muslims, the far-right appeal to a broader audience than by targeting groups that are better protected and/or less acceptable form of hate in society (Hafez 2014, p. 485). Adopting an Islamophobic agenda has provided the far-right with an opportunity to move from the fringes to a more central-right position (Akhbarzadeh 2016, Macquarie University 2020).

We adopted the following terminology to acknowledge nuances between radical, extremist and terrorist in the far right:

**Far-right radical:** They are intellectually engaged with far-right ideologies although they do not openly embrace or show any signs of violence. Radical movements work for change within the framework of democracy but believe the liberal elites must be replaced (Bjorgo and Ravndal 2019, pp. 2-4).

**Far-right extremist:** Unlike far-right radicals, far-right extremists have an open and “explicit anti-democratic stance” (Guerin et al., 2020, p. 8). As an ideologically motivated violent extremism, “far-right extremism denotes support for violence to achieve political outcomes or in response to specific political or social grievances” (ASIO 2021). While radicalism bears a rebellious opposition against the establishment, extremism poses threats not only against the establishment but “against all those who do not embrace its dogmatic recipe for a transformation of society.” (Botticher 2017, pp. 75-76). Radicalism is not a moderate form of extremism nor is it easy to draw a clear line between the two as far-right parties and groups are motivated to hide their extremism to avoid legal repercussions (Golder 2020).

According to ASIO’s 2018-19 Annual Report, the threat from far-right extremism in Australia has increased in recent years and “will remain an enduring threat” as the far-right extremist groups are “more cohesive and organised than they have been over previous years” (ASIO 2019, p. 20).

**Far-right terrorist:** A person or group who commits an act of far-right motivated violence, i.e. “extreme right-wing terrorism” (ASIO 2020). This can be seen as an outcome of far-right extremism leading to violence. Christchurch was “an evolutionary step for far-right terrorism” (Hutchinson 2019).

Especially in this chapter of the report, these terms were applied in specific contexts. For instance, the Christchurch terrorist is addressed as a far-right terrorist, and those applauding the Christchurch terrorist, seeking more bloodshed and/or promising to get involved in assassinating Muslims, are labelled far-right extremists. The term Islamophobe is used to describe those who displayed a more normalised, lower level



The sentiments captured at the time of reporting authentically display how the heightened online hate in the early days of the Christchurch attacks impacted the reporters.

of Islamophobia, such as fury and contempt, and dehumanising (without disgust or wanting to kill). The term “Islamophobe” is used in cases of no identifiable connection with far-right groups.

If a clear association is exhibited with far-right groups or their online activities (such as posting, reacting, commenting, resharing) under the banner of far-right social media groups, these people are addressed as far-right members. Those far-right members that exhibited a severe level of anti-Muslim hate (disgust and wanting to harm/kill/exterminate Muslims) are also addressed as far-right extremists.

ASIO defines how far-right extremism grows within the flexibilities of the available platforms free from legal restrictions and the police force:

*“Ideologically motivated violent extremists—specifically nationalist and racist violent extremists—remain focused on producing propaganda, radicalising and recruiting others, and preparing for an anticipated societal collapse. They are security-conscious and adapt their security posture to avoid legal action. Nationalist and racist violent extremists are located in all Australian states and territories. Compared with other forms of violent extremism, this threat is more widely dispersed across the country—including in regional and rural areas. The emergence of nationalist and isolationist narratives globally is normalising aspects of ideologically motivated violent extremist ideology, including nationalist and racist, and specific-issue violent extremism (ASIO 2021).*”

As addressed in the 2018-19 report by ASIO, “Online propaganda remains an indispensable tool for extremists.” Although online radicalisation is widely recognised, when and how to intervene is debated. The overlaps between the Christchurch terrorist’s conspiracy arguments and everyday anti-Muslim rhetoric blurred the lines between far-right extremism and everyday anti-Muslim hate. Also, it further complicated the question of when and how to assess the level of online radicalisation and intervene. Accordingly, countering violent extremism (CVE) experts and social media operators play a waiting game. “Low risk” platforms like Facebook and Twitter are instrumentalised by extremist groups to spread delegitimisation and dehumanisation of the target groups.

This online Islamophobia chapter showcases how anti-Muslim hate has widely circulated to everyday internet users and how anti-Muslim hate is strategically fuelled by far-right extremist groups to the extent of applauding the Christchurch terrorist and seeking further violence.

## Social Context and Online Platforms in Australia

The social context of online cases is made up of Australian internet users. Active Australian internet users were 88% of the population in 2019 and 2020 but increased to 89% in 2021 (Granwal 2021). Almost all Australians (99%) have access to the internet, according to the ACMA consumer survey in 2020 (ACMA 2020). In 2021, the number of internet users in Australia was an estimated 22.13 million (Degenhard 2021). Australian internet users, on average, used 4.4 types of devices to access the internet in contrast to 4.0 in 2019 (ACMA 2020).

## Online Hate Platforms

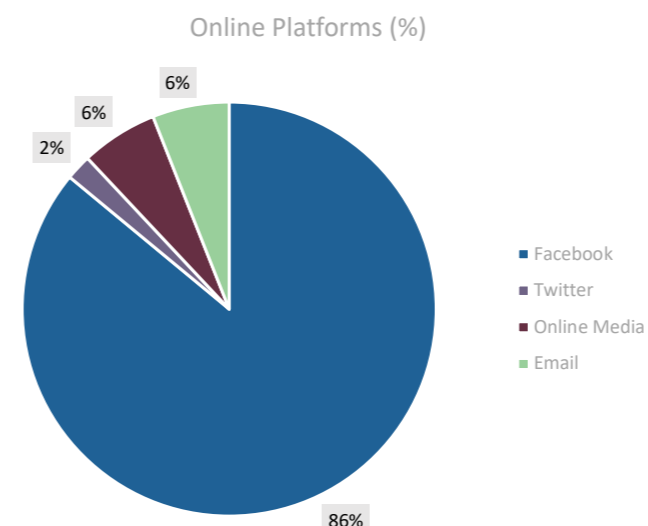
According to Digital 2020: Australia (Kemp 2020), Australia has 18 million active social media users (71% penetration) and they mostly use YouTube and Facebook followed by FB Messenger, Instagram, WhatsApp and Twitter. Facebook was the most popular social networking app used by 63% of Australian users (ACMA 2020).

In addition to the active use of Facebook by hate-groups, IRA’s strong online presence through its Facebook page, which has also been used for incident reporting for some years, should have contributed to a high number of incident reports from this platform. Likewise, the lack of IRA’s presence and reporting channels on Twitter, Instagram and other social media handles might have contributed to the lower number of incidents from these platforms.

Of the 109 cases, Islamophobic incidents occurred mostly on Facebook (86%; n=94), followed by email (6%), online media (6%) and Twitter (2%). There is a significant increase in Facebook hate incidents from 63% to 86% since the last report.

Research mapping the online activities of far-right groups in Australia mentions 30 active far-right extremist groups on Facebook in 2011-19. Although the activities of some of them declined in 2018, they revived in 2019. The report also addressed the use of Facebook for extremist far-right activities:

*The commitment to posting on Facebook, even with increasing moderation, reflects in part the global popularity of the platform and an enduring commitment to the values/norms expressed within these groups around nationalism, patriotism and anti-immigration (often expressed as racism and Islamophobia (Macquarie University 2020, pp. 27-28)*



Eventually, the Christchurch terrorist posted links for a Facebook live-stream of the attack, including a preferred soundtrack. Although Facebook detached and removed 1.5 million uploads of the video in the next 24 hours of the attacks, they were not as fast as the aggressive far-right extremists, who widely circulated the video and screed of the Christchurch terrorist among the worldwide 3 billion active users (Statistita, 2022). The cyberspace and its “low risk” platforms were effectively dominated by far-right violent extremists to propagate their ideologies worldwide (Thomas 2020, p. 51).

Regardless of more diligent measures introduced by Facebook to prevent extremist hate groups in the aftermath of Christchurch attacks (TellMAMA 2020), the result is unsatisfactory because a) what is harmful is still subject to discussion and and it can always vary based on the time, place, and socio-political context and b) immediately detecting and removing harmful posts by dedicated, swift and closely connected worldwide extremist users at scale requires concerted effort from dedicated grassroots reporters and artificial intelligence algorithm developers, and b) what is harmful is still subject to discussion.

From some reporters' point of view, online hate prevention measures by social media platforms are poor. For instance, a non-Muslim reporter found Facebook standards were "rubbish" in response to a meme that outlines the great replacement conspiracy theory as a form of propaganda to incite hatred of Muslims in Australia. The reporter continues:

*"This doesn't go against their 'standards' Feeling angry...and I'm not even Muslim. This is vile"* (Case 66, 4 Apr 18).

Although Facebook introduced new measures to prevent online extremism after the Christchurch attacks, such as those far-right extremists who were exuberantly celebrating the attacks, used Facebook to incite violence. For details, see Post-Christchurch Online Cases.

Another non-Muslim reporter found the posted image dangerous and took action to report it to the Anti-Discrimination Board and Facebook. The image was posted for a few months and linked Islam to cancer.

The characterisation of Islam as a cancer or disease is built on the premise it is living, growing and potentially deadly. Islam is given living qualities to veil an attack on its adherents that cause it to grow as a religion, portraying them as virulent. (Abdalla et al. 2021). In this image, a powerful bomb represents the treatment for the cancer, which is an extreme method for killing people. This image shows how Islam can be used as a proxy to covertly dehumanise Muslims and incite genocidal violence. (Case 59, 15 Jul 19).

While the Anti-Discrimination Board did not get back to the reporter, Facebook did not find any problem with the post and advised the reporter to remove the reported person from her own news feed. The meaning and timing of the post distressed the reporter, who does not believe in any religion:

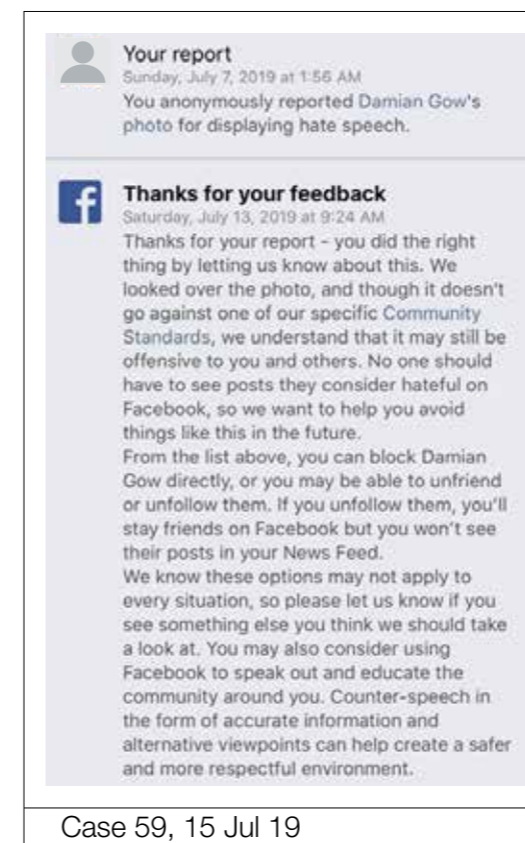
*"Hi I personally don't believe in any religion. I must say I was pretty pissed off when I saw this post that came up in my news feed. I complained about it to Facebook and Guess what?! It's NOT against their standards!! I have even complained about it to the anti-discrimination board with no response yet! I don't need my name kept private I know some lovely Muslim people a fan happy to stand by them"* (Case 59, 15 Jul 19).

The reporter was disappointed due to the inaction by Facebook in the aftermath of Christchurch attacks. (Case 59, 15 Jul 19)

Global tech companies may fall short in assessing the limits and variations of online hate in national contexts and local cultures. Furthermore, socio-political climate and the timing of hate posts can deepen the meaning and the impact (as showcased by the above example). Some global anti-hate norms and de facto rules can be counterproductive since human intelligence can easily overcome such predetermined formulas and AI technologies by shrewdly playing with words under a certain climate and time while still remaining within the set limits. Therefore, it is essential for tech companies to assess the reported cases beyond their literal meanings and by considering their contexts, timing and impact. A global strategy to counter hate will be more effective with the inclusion of target communities, broader silent societies and the national governments.



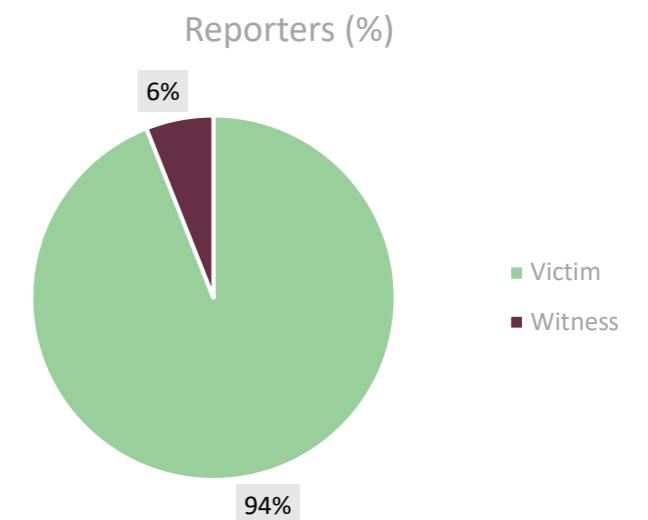
Case 59, 15 Jul 19



Case 59, 15 Jul 19

## 1. Demographics

**1.1. Reporters: Victims, Proxies and Witnesses**  
The verified online cases consisted of 109 reports, which were made up mainly by witnesses (94%) and the remainder (6%) were victims. The decrease in the numbers of online cases was due to the IRA' reduced daily visibility to third party reporters.



### 1.1.1 Gender of Reporters

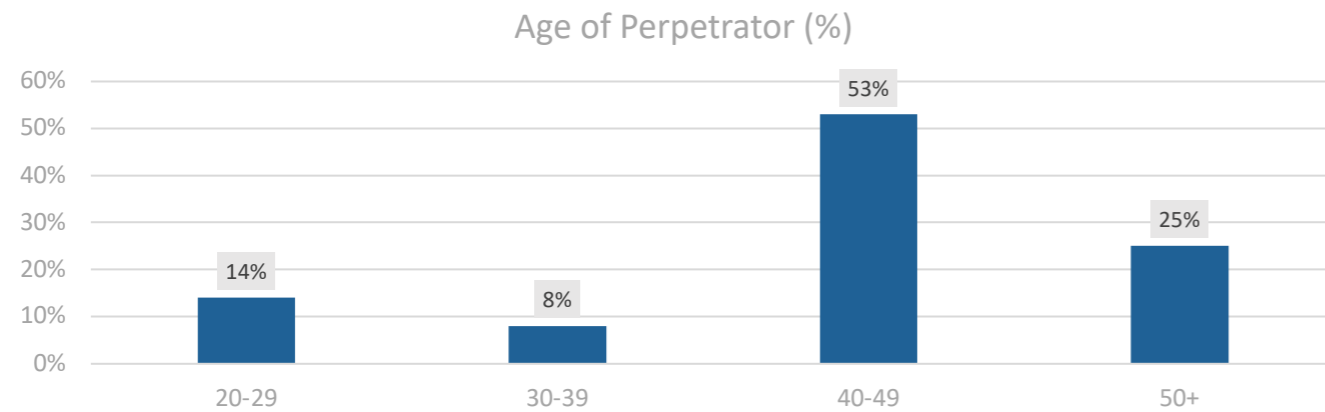
Online female reporters significantly increased (from 42% to 78%) since the last report. The driving reason behind this increase is unknown. The withdrawal of online male reporters from 58% to 22% suggests the need for more investment in mobilising online male reporters.

### 1.1.2. Religion of Reporters: Muslim or Non-Muslim

Of the 109 online cases, 90% were Muslim and 10% non-Muslim. The proportion of non-Muslims reporting has decreased from the previous report, where non-Muslims accounted for 35% of all reporters. Since the spread of online hate is a societal problem, more inclusive anti-hate campaigns are needed to take collective action. Witness reporters, especially Muslim reporters (88%), can be considered the direct targets of online Islamophobia. Consequently, many of them raised concerns about anti-Muslim hate posts and their destructive effects.

### 1.1.3. Age of Victim and Perpetrator

The ages of perpetrators were reported only in 36 cases. According to the available data, the age of perpetrators tended to be located within the 40-49 year age group; 78% of all perpetrators were in the 40 to 50+ age group. Since most online cases are generic, the available number for victims' ages is very small (n=12) and has not been taken into consideration.



### 1.1.4. Ethnicity of the Victim and Perpetrator

The ethnicity of victim and perpetrator was additional information and in a large proportion of cases, the victim's ethnicity was not known. Of the 109 cases, only 8 recorded the victim's ethnicity. Of this group, Middle Eastern victims made up 88% of the total. A similar picture also emerged with perpetrators, where ethnicity was recorded for 35 of the total number. In the case of perpetrators, 91% were reported as 'Anglo'.

## 2. Incidents

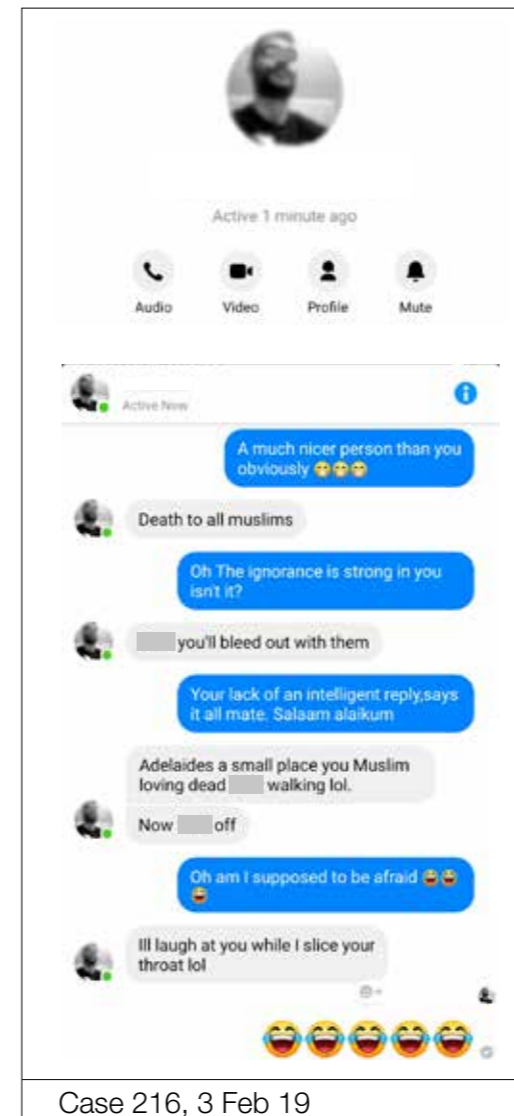
### 2.1. Incident Reporting Platforms

Many reporters opted for submitting their incident reports via direct message to the Register's Facebook page. Of the online incident types, 86% were reported through Facebook.

### 2.2. Generic/Interpersonal

Generic cases target all Muslims without focusing on an individual whereas interpersonal cases are aimed at targeting specific individuals in online platforms. Of the 109 incidents, 90% were generic and the remainder was personal. There was about a 10 % increase in generic cases since the previous report.

Online interpersonal cases varied from verbal hate to intimidation through private messaging. This type of intimidation was directed at not only Muslims but also non-Muslims, who objected to online vilification of Muslims as bystanders. Online intimidation included sending death threats to targets and their families. In one case, the victim was identified in a Muslim women's Facebook group and started to be harassed via individual messages, which included offensive material criticising her Islamic faith and God. She reported it to Facebook but did not get a response. The incident



happened one day after Christchurch (Case 126, 16 Mar 19). Rarely, alternative platforms enable personal interaction, such as Marketplace (Case 129, 22 Apr 19), were also used for interpersonal harassment.

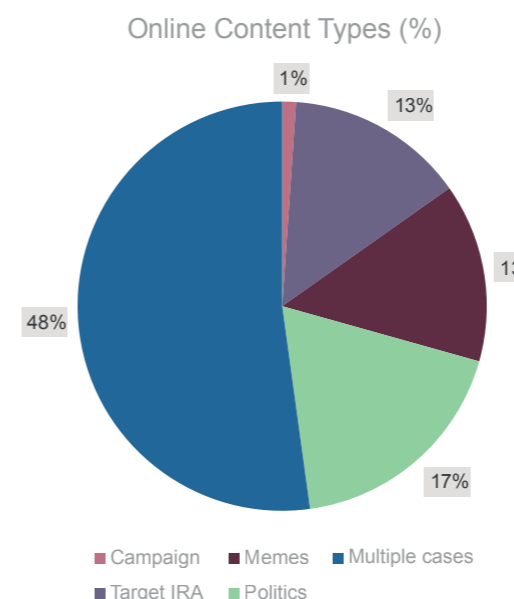
In some cases, comments under the posts, which were written by different viewers, initiated interpersonal conversations. Muslim and non-Muslim individuals faced blame, harassment or threats when they confronted anti-Muslim posts. This was an example of generic cases becoming interpersonal. Yet they were not taken into account in the coded data unless the reporter highlighted the interpersonal harassment taking place in the comments section. For instance, the victim in the displayed example is harassed due to confronting the perpetrator's comment under a post. The non-Muslim confronter was harassed via Facebook Messenger (Case 216, 3 Feb 19).

## 3. Report Content Types

Content type was coded in the data to identify online harassment tactics. They provide some insights about the types of online harassment. Of the 109 cases, the largest content type was multiple cases (48%), followed by politics (17%), memes (13%) and targeting of the IRA religious appearance (both 13%). There were no reports of petitions this time.

### Campaigns and Rallies Organised Online

Campaigns included boycotting products or organisations and boycotting or organising rallies. They constituted 1.3% of the online cases. The displayed post by an anti-Muslim far-right group showcases how physical anti-Muslim rallies are organised through social media. The post also encouraged supporters to organise similar rallies in their own cities, mentioning the same type of protests overseas in Poland, Hungary and Slovakia, thereby showcasing the increasing interconnectedness of local far-right movements with their international counterparts. The rally date was deliberately chosen to be the first day of Ramadan. The meeting time was decided to be when Muslims were about to break their fast.



Anti-Muslim hate is so extensive that even the spiritual fasting practise of Muslims was problematised and made part of an anti-Muslim rally campaign (Case 248, 5 May 19).

Social media platforms are similarly used for petition campaigns and letters of complaint to be sent to the politicians. The displayed post attempts to mobilise people by using the provided letter to pressure politicians and widely share Islamophobic memes and media content by providing link to such content (Case 25, 18 Mar 19).

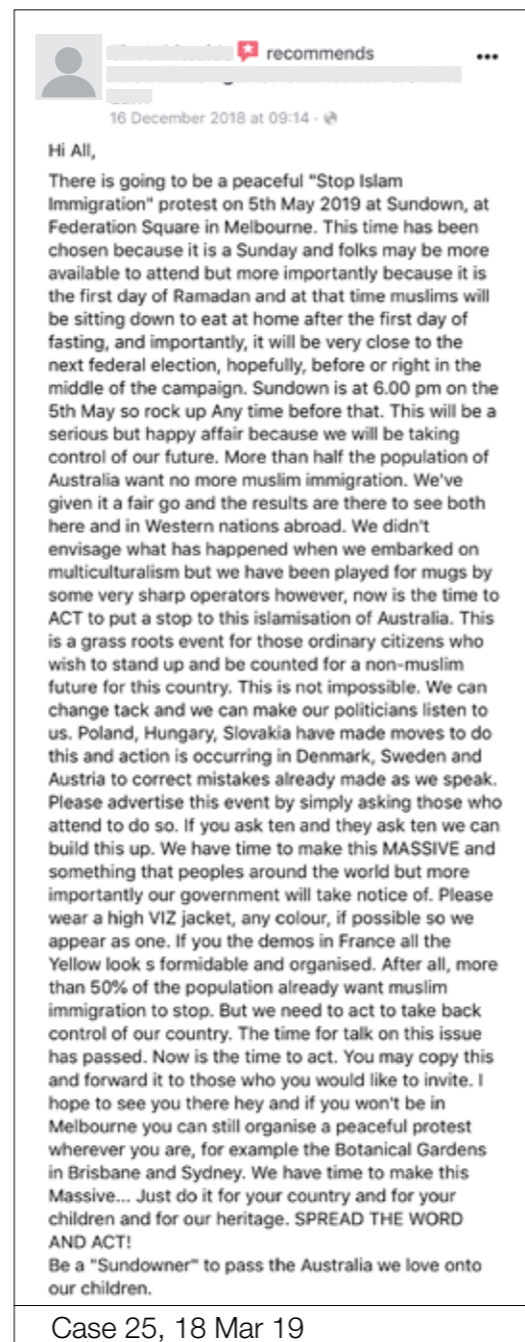
### Political Parties and Politicians Endorsing Anti-Muslim Hate

Organised far-right political campaigns/politicians constituted 17% of the 109 online cases reported to the IRA. Far-right parties have a major role in spreading hate ideologies. The predominant hate culture, in turn, serves to political agendas and popularity of these parties (Bayrakli and Hafez 2019). Following the same strategy, Anti-Muslim political parties and figures in Australia used social media effectively to endorse and spread anti-Muslim hate sentiments and open a legitimate space for ordinary people to follow them in anti-Muslim hate. Instead of expressing sympathy or sending condolences to the Muslim community in the week of Christchurch, former Casey Mayor Sam Aziz posted a list of ISIS terrorist attacks and blamed Muslims for showing no reaction to them and calling Muslims' grief for Christchurch as "crocodile tears" (Case 41, 22 Mar 19). The reason behind Aziz's skewed argument was the conflation of ordinary Muslims with terrorism.

Fraser Anning's anti-Muslim posts and statements in the aftermath of Christchurch similarly made the grieving Muslim community targets of far-right extremists and Islamophobes. The displayed post in an anti-Muslim far right group in the aftermath of Christchurch attack attempted to mobilise Australian Islamophobes to support Fraser Anning's statements about Muslims on the day of the Christchurch attacks (Case 243, 16 Mar 19).

### Memes

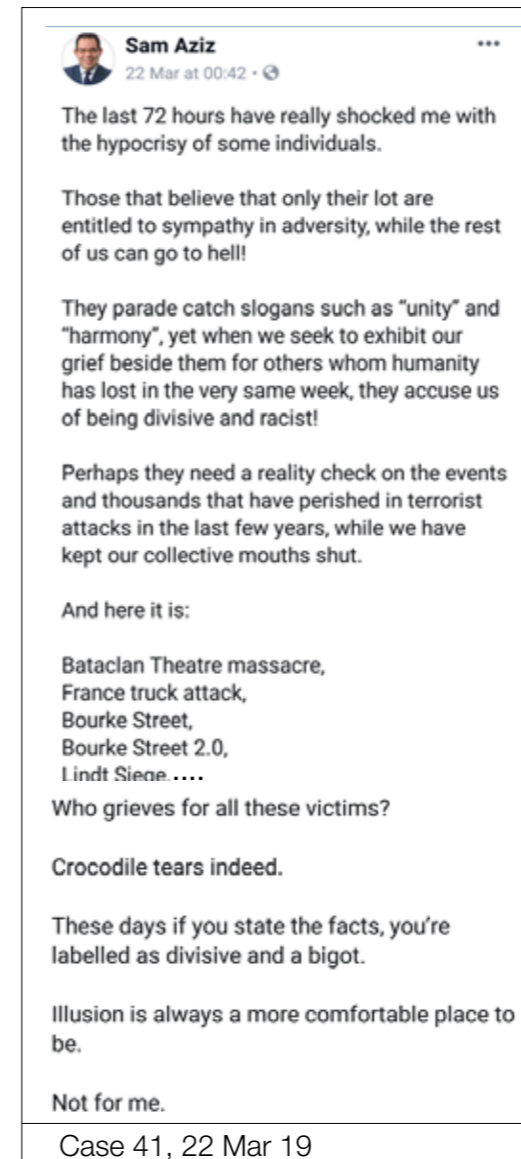
Memes constituted 13% of the 109 online cases. They were effective hate tools as visual aids with minimal words, which could deliver strong and sharp messages and enabled social media users



Case 25, 18 Mar 19



Case 41, 22 Mar 19



Case 41, 22 Mar 19



Case 243, 16 Mar 19

to easily digest and quickly distribute among their networks. The Christchurch memes started circulating immediately after the attacks. The displayed meme was reported to the IRA four days after the Christchurch mosque attacks (Case 53, 19 Mar 19). Christchurch was the deadliest terror attack committed by an Australian, but the Australians sharing these kinds of memes infer that ISIL attacks in Australia are a much more significant problem and threat.

### Targeting the IRA

The IRA was a regular target of Islamophobes. Only those cases reported by third parties were taken into account and constituted 13% of the 109 online cases. In one case, the reporter witnessing the harassment of the IRA was surprised:

*"I never thought someone would take the time to seek out an Islamic advocacy platform and use it to spread hate. Learnt a lot about the audacity and extremity of some people"* (Case 105, 19 Dec 19).

Accordingly, the perpetrator used the IRA to report 'Christianophobia' and made a mockery of the Register's message regarding protecting Muslims. He required protection of Christians and criticised the intentions of the Diversity Council Australia.

### Usual/Unusual Excuses to Hate

Among the listed types of online harassment, 98% used common conspiracy arguments about Muslims whereas 2% introduced unusual excuses to attack Muslims. Although Muslims were attacked mostly after terrorist attacks by ISIS and Al Qaida, they were similarly attacked after the Christchurch attacks. Waleed Aly, co-host of Network Ten's news and current affairs television program The Project, was heavily attacked by anti-Muslim groups because of his speech on TV and interview with Prime Minister Scott Morrison. Despite doing his usual job, he was targeted because of his Muslim identity. Aly's emotional speech about Christchurch raised hatred instead of empathy among some anti-Muslim groups and individuals (e.g. Case 183, 12 Mar 19 and Case 124, 21 Mar 19).

In another case, a missing woman was announced to the public by the WA police. A Facebook user turned an ordinary police post about the missing woman into an Islamophobic argument since the woman was

Muslim. The anti-Muslim commenter stated her husband has probably killed her already. The reporter of this case was worried about how the victim was denied basic dignity because she was Muslim:

*“This comment spreads a negative image of Muslims, stereotypes all Muslims because of the actions of one, and fuels Islamophobia. Would that comment have been made if it was Jane Doe????” (Case 114, 3 Apr 19).*

### 4. Social Context

Although online platforms accommodate people with vastly diverse views, they also facilitate the social grouping of like-minded people. Online platforms further feed individuals’ ideologies by sending recommendations and suggestions from like-minded people or sources. While bringing people together, these platforms equally serve to divide people by race, culture, ideologies, etc. The interpersonal attacks section in online platforms also showcases how people of opposite views are harassed, intimidated and thereby silenced in social media groups.



1 hr · 🗨️

we think the Senator has nailed it AGAIN !!  
What do you think Australia???

100DAILY.COM.AU  
**Australian Senator Condemned For 'Dangerous' Comments On Mosque Massacre**

👍👎🗨️ 105    62 Comments · 15 Shares

👍 Like    🗨️ Comment    ➦ Share

He is saying what most Australians feel and believe  
7h Like Reply 🗨️ 109

I'd hate to say it, but this just states what most are thinking but are afraid to say it. Tell it like it is!! No one deserves to be slaughtered like this, but when they strike back I bet many of you will change your view & agree with this unfortunate post 😞  
7h Like Reply 🗨️ 187

View 87 more replies

Case 241, 15 Mar 19

🚫🚫 ... Outrage as Australian politician blames Muslim immigration for Christchurch mosque shooting which left 49 dead and 48 injured  
An Australian politician has blamed the Christchurch shooting on immigration

Senator for Queensland, William Fraser Anning made the remarks on Friday  
He said immigration had allowed Muslim fanatics to migrate to N... See More

DAILY MAIL

Case 241, 15 Mar 19

The only politician with his head screwed on right. Say it like it is.  
3h Like Reply 🗨️ 25

Had to happen it's called Karma  
3h Like Reply 🗨️ 16

I hope he wins to shut the world up or at least keep them away from us  
3h Like Reply 🗨️ 13

For comparisons, don't forget 9/11, London, Birmingham, Paris ,Madrid, Marsailles. Moscow,or Boston, to name a few...but lethal reactions to all of that can never be justified in The West.  
4h Like Reply 🗨️ 13

View 1 previous reply

Case 243, 16 Mar 19

Aussie Aussie Aussie Aussie  
18 Mar. at 8:27 am · 🗨️

The sad reality....

Case 243, 16 Mar 19

A despised outgroup is an essential component for hate groups to create an online hate community, recruit new members and mobilise existing ones. In the case of Islamophobia, anti-Muslim hate is endorsed by far-right politicians, giving potent fuel to active far-right groups. The displayed post aims to create an online community that supports Fraser Anning and finds Muslims guilty even when they are murdered by a terrorist in a mosque. The administrators of these groups are instrumental in activating and mobilising their followers to foster online hate. The post’s statement acts as an invitation for online audiences to confirm and celebrate. Accordingly, there are responses from followers like *“He [Anning] is saying what most Australians feel and believe.”*

Other responses try to convince undecided commenters by posting *“I'd hate to say it, but this just states what most are thinking, but afraid to say it... When they strike back I bet many of you will change your view & agree with this unfortunate post” (Case 241, 15 Mar 19).*

Comments like this build on the dehumanising idea that Muslims act in concert, possessing a diminished capacity for human warmth, independent thought and free will; their religion programs them towards depravity and inhumanity, and; their subhuman violence is a permanent threat.

The witness reporter finds such blatantly anti-Muslim statements from a parliamentarian “disgusting:”

*“I understand freedom of speech but, his speech goes against everything that makes us Australian and a Multicultural society. Like we are almost in 2020, how do we still allow such people in Parliament?” (Case 241, 15 Mar 19).*

The third party is deliberately involved in the discussions by group admins’ intriguing posts. In the following case, the page followers are invited again to applaud Fraser Anning (Case 243, 16 Mar 19). Some comments beneath the post about Fraser Anning include,

*“The only politician with his head screwed on right, say it like it is.”* Another, *“I hope he wins to shut up the world or at least keep them away form us”* and *“It's called karma” (Case 243, 16 Mar 19).*

The idea of Christchurch being ‘karma’ speaks to the idea of Muslims being collectively guilty for terrorist acts, essentialising Muslims as people with no human depth or diversity.

Sometimes, the group admins found their followers’ actions of “commenting only” insufficient and called on them to act by taking part in rallies, petition campaigns and organised rebellions. This is one way online hate platforms can produce offline (real/physical) hate actions. For details, see the Campaigns and Rallies sub-section under the Report Content Types and Online-Offline interaction section.

### Third Party Response

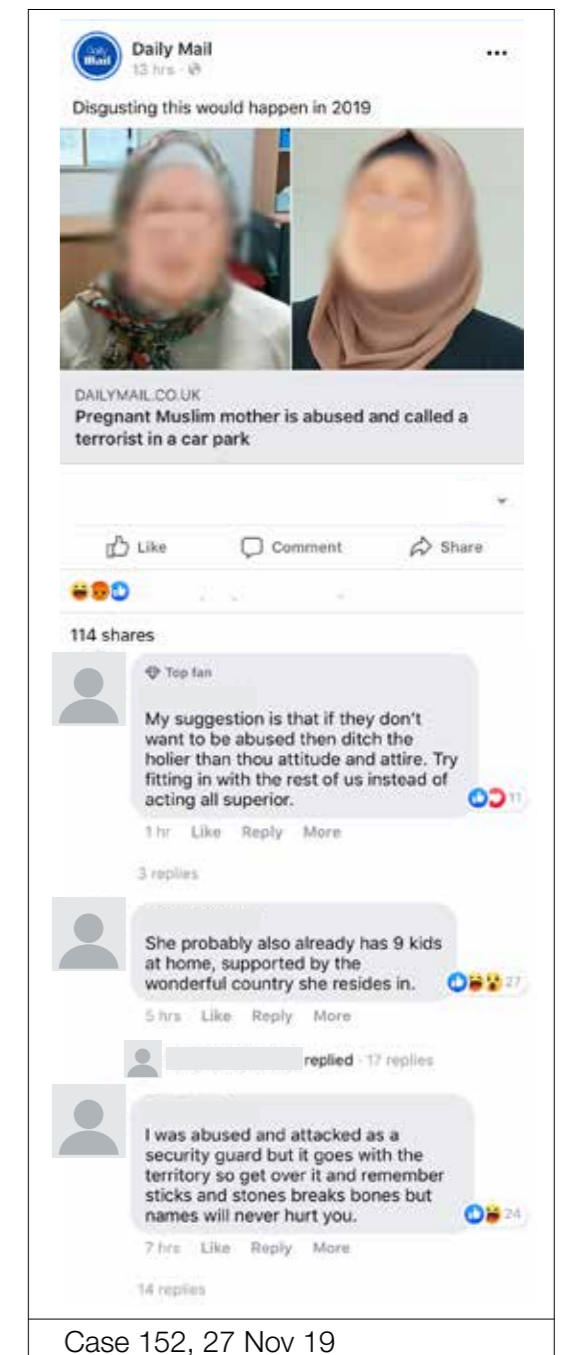
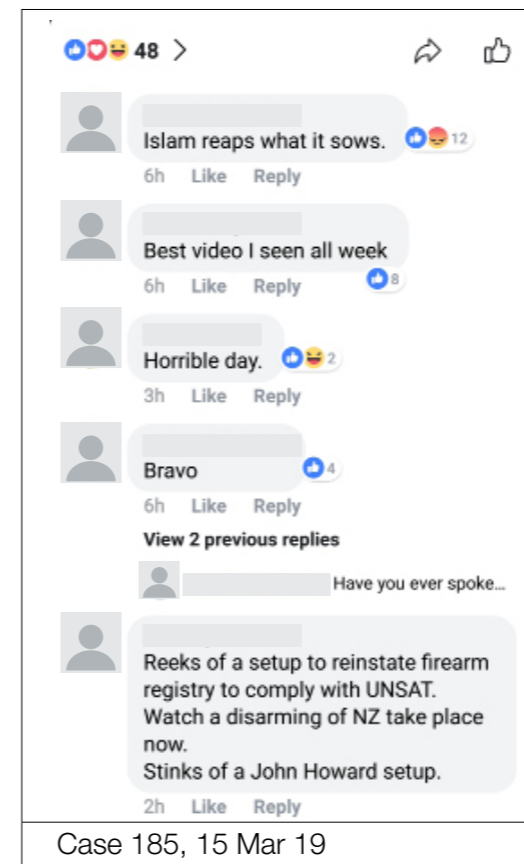
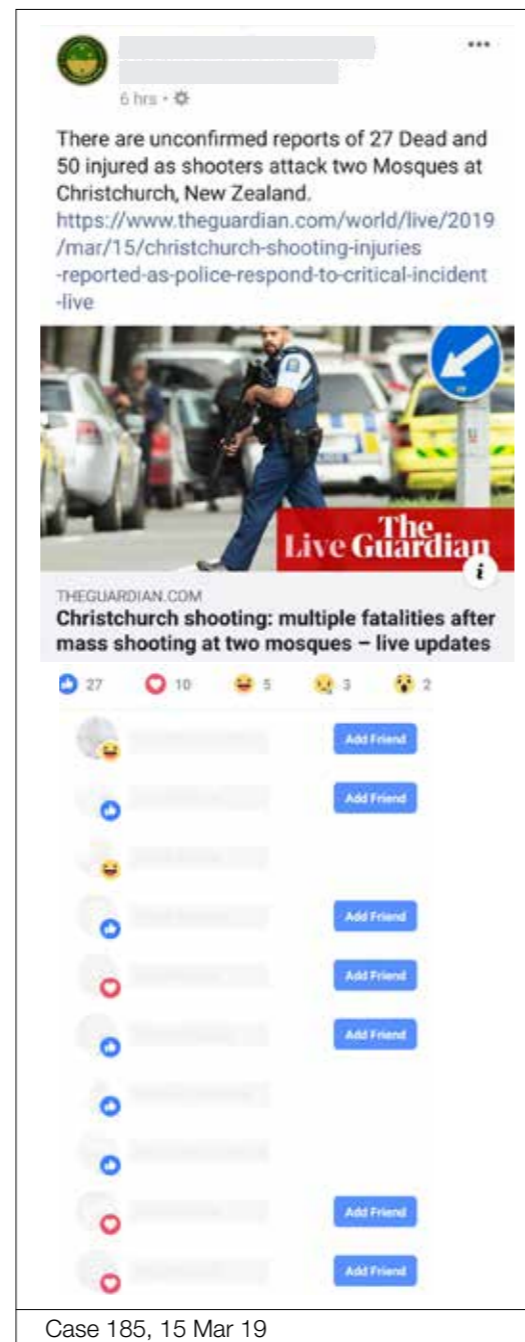
Online incidents occur in a strong online community where individuals can immediately exhibit their response by clicking on a list of emojis readily available for each post and related comment. Reactions to the posts indicated the presence and active participation of third parties in online anti-Muslim hate incidents. Yet, it is difficult to interpret the meaning behind emojis as they do not clearly indicate if the reaction was to the post content or statements about the posted material.

Accordingly, not only the post content but also the public support behind those posts was “disturbing.” For instance, a reporter was upset about the comments and reactions on the anti-Muslim hate posts posted on a far-right Facebook page on the day of the Christchurch attacks:

*“What is disturbing is the numerous comments Islamophobic comments and laugh and likes making a mockery of the post and the Massacre. It is really sad that people can say such vile things” (Case 185, 15 Mar 19).*

### 4.1. Third-Party Bystander Response

While silencing empathetic online bystanders, the same hate groups created an indifferent bystander community, which often find an excuse to condemn



The emoji responses supporting hate motivated posts indicate the presence of a much wider hate community behind the individuals’ hate posts.

Muslims. For instance, victims of Islamophobia speaking about their harassment experience to mainstream media were criticised by a group of Islamophobes for complaining about their conditions in Australia. According to their arguments, these women would have had worse experiences in their own households and home countries; therefore, they have no right to complain about their Islamophobic experiences in Australia. Knowing nothing about these women’s high-profile, the online hate groups reinforced the “oppressed Muslim women” stereotype although the oppressors in this case were neither Islam nor Muslim men but their like-minded Australians (Case 152, 27 Nov 19),

### 4.3.1. Reporting to Police/Police Responses

Of the 109 online cases, only 9% were reported to the police. Regardless of the terrifying posts by far-right extremists in the aftermath of the Christchurch attacks, 40% of which were at the level of wanting to kill/harm Muslims, reporting to police did not increase much since the last report (7%).

In one case, the report informed the police about the violent post by tagging the relevant police unit on Facebook. Apparently, the perpetrator did not refrain from inciting violence nor did the police take action. Instead, the reporter drew the perpetrator's hate on himself:

*"Hi, I am XXX from Perth, WA. A news report was published in PerthNow facebook page on Waled Aly and PM's interview. A person named XXX XXX made a comment there saying 'I wish Waleed was in the NZ mosque'... when i have tagged Australian Federal Police, he then replied to me saying 'Mahmudul Karim. I wish you were there too...' I have reported this person to the esafety commission website. Hopefully they will take some action. I feel threatened and unsafe. I have attached the screenshots here"* (Case 124, Mar 19).

Inaction by police and Facebook scared public viewers about the danger inflicted by some extremist perpetrators. One of them was active on Facebook "pledging" in the aftermath of the Christchurch attacks to kill 10 Muslims every day after a civil war starts in Australia. He defined himself under his profile photo as "Unafraid to speak the Truth." The reporter of this post was concerned about the level of violence spread by this extremist perpetrator:

*"This post is not ok and action needs to be taken in addressing this hate speech & radicalism. Extremely disturbing and I'm afraid he might cause harm"* (Case 127, Mar 19).

Although this perpetrator was reported to the police, no action was taken. Similar experiences of reporting such extremists to the police are addressed in the case study on Conflation of Muslim Identity with Terrorism.

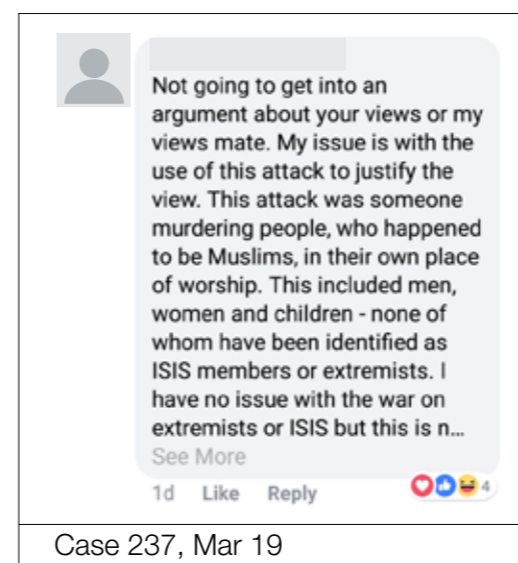
A few online incidents, including inciting violence or death threats, were reported to other agencies like the E-safety Commission (Case 124, 21 Mar 19) and Australian Anti-discrimination Board (Case 59, 15 Jul 19). Reporters were informed about the receipt of the complaint, but no further action was taken.

### 4.4. Positive Action

Disagreeing or confronting the perpetrator in far-right groups was not easy. The reporters taking this step displayed a positive sign for resisting the hate culture. Yet, most of them were silenced by intimidation and abuse by the group's dominant hate culture.

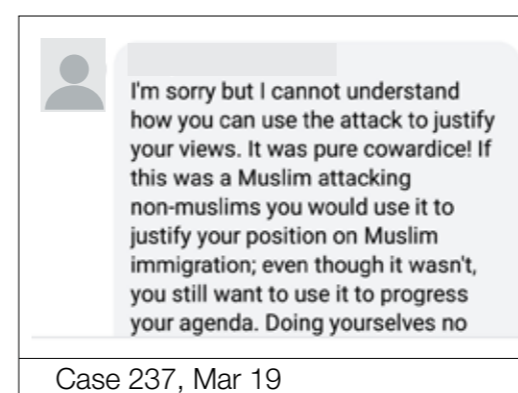
For instance, a social media user was shocked by some far-right members' justification of the Christchurch attacks. Upon reading the hate comments on an anti-mosque page right after the attacks, the reporter reacted to the group's and followers' posts:

*"I'm sorry but I can't understand how you can use the attack to justify your views. It was pure cowardice! If this was a Muslim attacking non-Muslims you would use it to justify your position on"*



*Muslim immigration coma even though it wasn't, you still want to use it to progress your agenda"* (Case 237, Mar 19).

The classical online perpetrator reaction to such objections was to create a social and moral panic by evoking fear through the response "wait and see, you will be the next." In this case, the reporter felt obliged to make a clear distinction about ordinary people and terrorists:



*"Not going to get into an argument about your views or my views mate. My issue is with the use of this attack to justify the view. This attack was someone murdering people, who happened to be Muslims, in their own place of worship. These include men, women and children-none of whom have been identified as ISIS members or extremists. I have no issue with the war on extremists or ISIS"* (Case 237, 17 Mar 19).

Apart from individual social media users questioning far-right groups' hate rhetoric, some reporters offered to help stop some of those hate channels. For instance, a Russian speaking Facebook user reported an Islamophobia Facebook page run by Russians in Australia. Finding their hate level too much after the Christchurch attacks, the reporter asked how to report this group and offered help to translate the hateful content on the group's page:



*"Hi how do we report Islamophobic activity in a Facebook group? There is particular group for Russian speaking people... where people have been posting racist and islamophobic posts and comments for years. I just can't handle it anymore since the massacre because they (most of the commenters) unequivocally support senator's Anning words and try to justify the murder. I'm happy to translate whatever is needed. What can I do to stop that? Thanks"* (Case 3, 17 Mar 19).



Another sensible move in the aftermath of the Christchurch attacks was the investigation of a white supremacist company. This case was also featured in the media and newspapers:

*"A Christchurch insulation company has come under fire for openly using white supremacist and Nazi-related symbolism as part of their branding and advertising" (Case 71, 17 Mar 19).*

The company was registered to a Christchurch address and the owner also had white supremacist videos and Nazi imagery on his YouTube channel. The business' website and Facebook page were taken offline after the Christchurch attacks. Another company also declared withdrawal of their support from the white supremacist company with the statement:

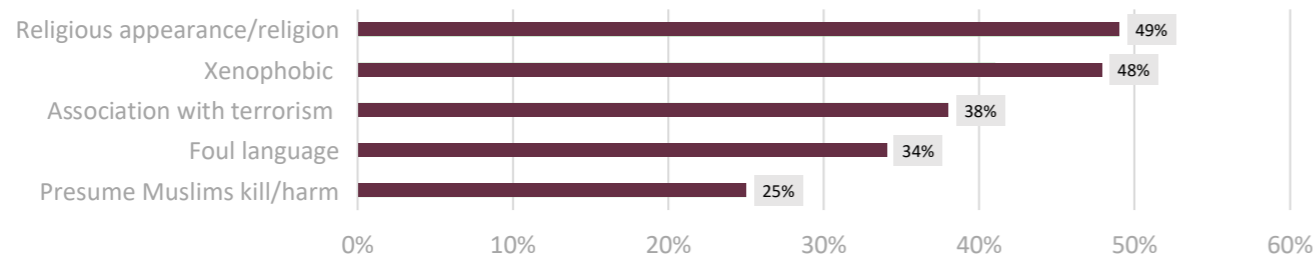
*"We are extremely concerned by the reports we have read about this company and have no interest in dealing with companies or people of this ideology" (Case 71, 17 Mar 19).*

### 5. Content of Insults

Of the 109 online incidents, 53% associated Muslims with terrorism or were xenophobic (48%). Targeting Muslims' religious appearance or Islam was reported in 47% of cases followed by the assumption that Muslims kill (36%) and foul language (33%). Conflating Muslims with terrorism was the most popular hate rhetoric, which doubled since the last report (28%). Although Muslims were victims of far-right terrorism in 2019, they were still associated with terrorism and killing.

The spike in anti-Muslim harassment and severity level of anti-Muslim hate in the aftermath of the Christchurch attacks showcase an unconditional hate and abuse directed at Muslims. The brutal killing of 51 innocent worshippers during their union with God at congregational prayer, which was livestreamed by the far-right terrorist, invoked further hate and desire to exterminate Muslim among some hate groups.

Content of Insults (%)



#### Presume Muslims Kill/Harm

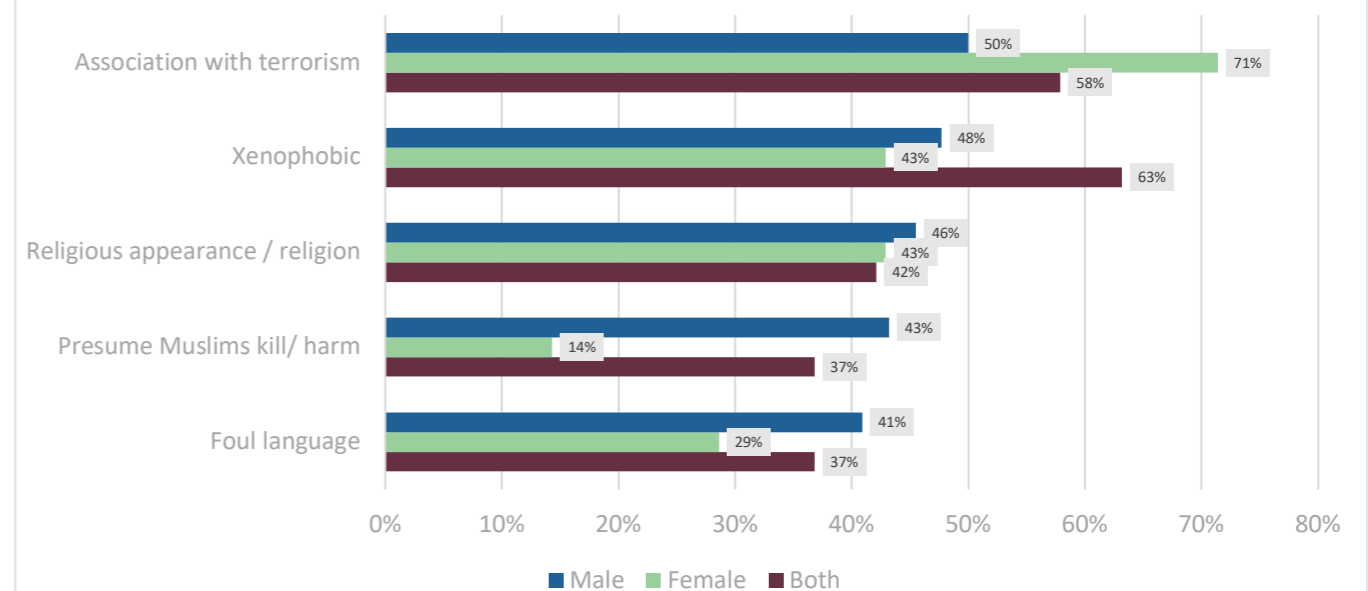
Presuming Muslims kill or harm comprised 36% of the hate rhetoric. Seeing Muslims as violent and harmful was a commonly made justification in the aftermath of the Christchurch attacks.

*"There used to be over ten million Christians living in the Middle East where are they? dead! Christians got slaughtered but no media coverage or outrage. Doesn't matter what country it happens in, it's a global issue. sad but true" (Case 178, 16 Mar 19).*

#### Gender Dynamics

For male perpetrators, 48% employed xenophobic insults compared to 43% of women perpetrators, while 46% of males and 43% of females insulted Muslims' religious appearance and religion. Male perpetrators were more likely to use foul language (41%) than women perpetrators (29%), while 50% of male and 71% of women perpetrators associated Islam/Muslims with terrorism. In contrast, males were also overrepresented in insults presuming Muslims kill (43%) compared to women (14%).

Content of Insults by Gender (%)



Another anti-Muslim commenter was speculating about Muslims' revenge on Australians by attacking them on Anzac Day, which triggered more hate among the followers who were senselessly repeating to kill all Muslims just two days after the Christchurch attacks (Case 15, 18 Mar 19).

Seeing Muslims as killers was done with no sign of sympathy for the tragedy that had recently occurred. One white supremacist complained the media had double standards in favour of Muslims while covering the Christchurch attacks.

*"When terrorists yelling Allahu Akbar kill thousands of innocents 'it is nothing to with Islam' ...but when a single non-Muslim attack happens immediately the media and politicians brand it as far right white supremacists ... double standards much"(Case 177, 15 Mar19).*

The reporter was shocked by this "media double standards" argument: *"This post is an absolute joke! Despite them saying that they do not condone the violent attacks, they still insult Muslims and are so blind or just blatantly lying because Muslims are the most ostracized people in the media and the whole world knows that!!!" (Case 177, 15 Mar 19).*

### 5.2. Association with Terrorism

Association with terrorism was the most popular hate content, reaching 53%. The sympathetic portrayal of the Christchurch terrorist by some media and social media platforms was criticised by some Muslims. Accordingly, the far-right terrorist was introduced as an innocent white boy with good character. In contrast, Muslim victims were impersonalised and mentioned as mere numbers and casualties.

This argument was criticised by some users. Accordingly, Muslims' expectation for a just portrayal of the Christchurch terrorist and the murdered people was considered too much. For instance, one Islamophobe asked what is special about Muslims and their religion so they seek a special treatment:

*"I cannot believe what I am reading. Muslims have committed terrorist attacks all over the world on innocent people and now you are all surprised someone has retaliated. It was bound to happen. There are numerous religions, why is yours better than anyone else's???" (Case 8, 16 Mar 19).*

Perceiving all Muslims unconditionally as dangerous and terrorists stimulated some harsh comments, which do not show any sign of pity or sympathy towards the Christchurch victims. Such comments being readily available to the public upset some viewers. One Muslim social media user reviewing the violent comments replied by saying

*"I see many potential terrorists in the comments section" (Case 8, 16 Mar 19).*

### 5.3. Foul Language

Foul language comprised 33% of the hate rhetoric. Most of the time, foul language was coupled with other anti-Muslim sentiments.



Case 8, 16 Mar 19



Case 56, 12 May 19

The insults and sense of disgust about Muslims (and whoever "don't eat bacon") were also directed at anyone who did not share the perpetrator's views about Muslims.

*"So true I don't care what everyone else thinks about them in my eyes the murdering f... a...holes dirty dogs and whoever don't think the same you must not be Australian so f... off and be with them in their country can't trust anyone that doesn't eat bacon." (Case 40, 23 Mar 19) .*

The use of foul language about Muslims was not limited to ordinary people. Senator Fraser Anning, as an Australian representative in parliament, used extremely indecent language when asked why he does not like Muslim:

*"Because they are f...ing pieces of sh...t who should of stayed in their own country instead of coming over here and f...ing ours up trying to change our laws to their liking post op is that what you want to hear, you little f...?" (Case 56, 12 May 19).*

This comment was liked by 108,000 followers of Anning. Despite a successful vilification claim against Fraser Anning in 2021 identifying over 80 hate artefacts on his public pages (Chalmers and Robertson 2021), Facebook refused to take down his page.

### 5.4. Insulting Muslims' Religious Appearance/ Religion

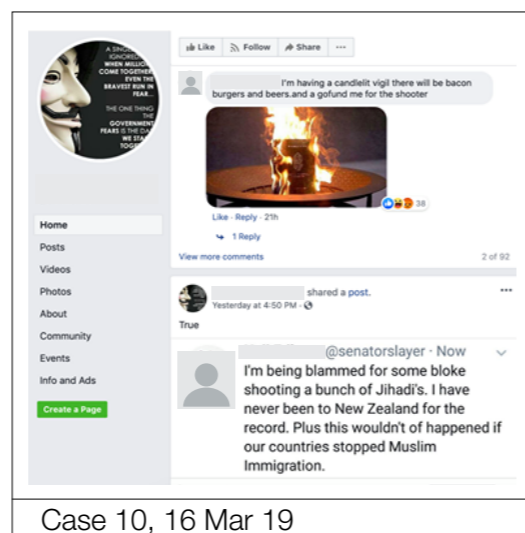
Insulting one's religious appearance or values has been a dominant hate rhetoric (47%) since the first Islamophobia in Australia report. In the displayed post, the perpetrator mocks Islam, its holy book with the image of a burning Qur'an. (Case 10, 16 Mar 19).

### 5.5. Xenophobic Content

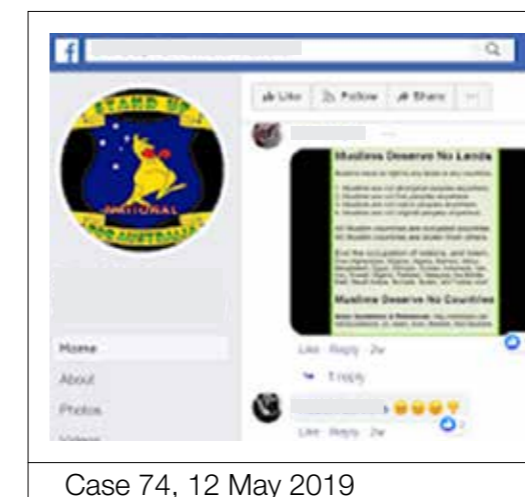
Xenophobic attacks against Muslims took more serious forms in the present report. Muslims are seen as a dangerous threat, as outlined by anti-Muslim conspiracy theories like "The Islamic Domination of the West." An image with the same title was posted by an anti-Muslim hate group on Facebook. The page admin put forward commonly seen narratives



Case 40, 23 Mar 19



Case 10, 16 Mar 19



Case 74, 12 May 2019

that Muslims cunningly infiltrate Australia, suck Australian resources, play the victim but want to take over Australia:

*“The Islamic Domination of the West: Pretend to be a refugee in order to gain access to your chosen country. Play the minority card while out-populating on a scale of more than 5 to 1. Infiltrate politics and call others racists and bigots if they don’t agree with you. Implement a watered down version of Sharia Law with the help of the leftists. Kill all those who do not submit to Islam and dominate every Western country. Open your eyes, look around, take notice. This is not a joke, this is reality” (Case 66, 4 Apr 18).*

In tandem with the spread of the great replacement theory, which was echoed in the Christchurch terrorist’s screed, the xenophobic insults were more severe than shouting at Muslims to go back where they come. The displayed post argues why “Muslims deserve no lands” (Case 74, 12 May 19).

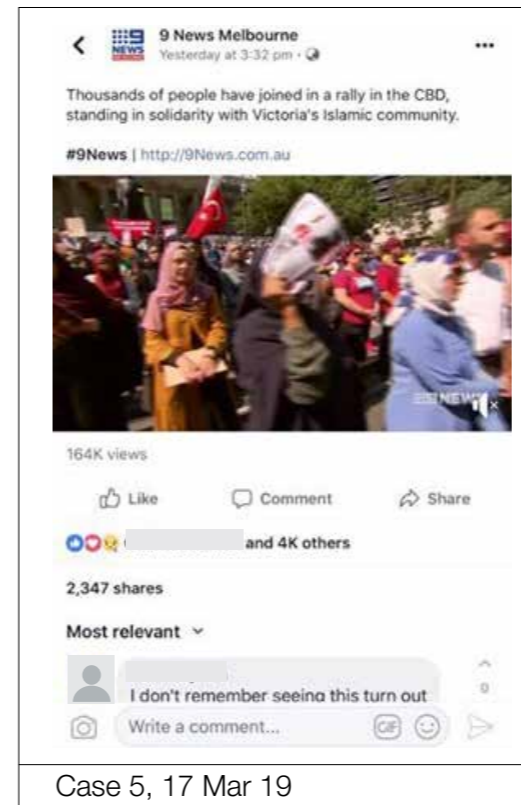
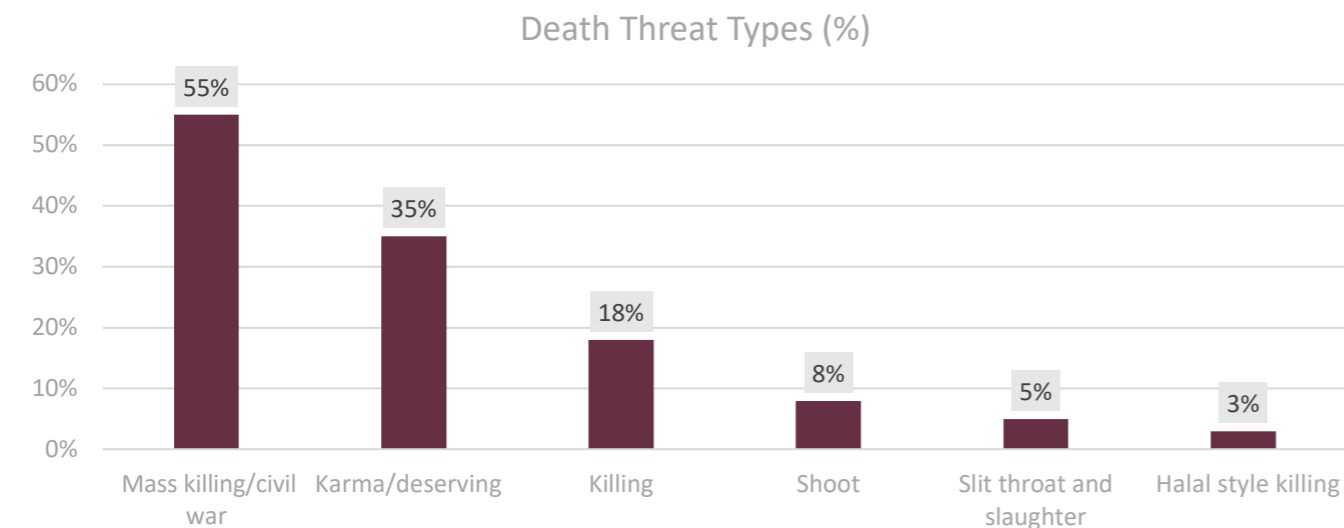
Concerningly, some anti-Muslim circles found the attack reasonable or expected as a sign of people’s frustration with Muslims. In contrast to the portrayal of Muslims as terrorists and killers and those deserving no land, the Christchurch killer was portrayed as a saviour who was concerned about his nation’s future (Case 19, 17 Mar 19).

**5.6. Death Threats**

The Christchurch attacks broadcasted live online did not create pity but anger among the far-right extremists. Heartened by the terrorist’s bloodshed and massively circulated anti-Muslim manifesto, many sympathisers of

**Gender Dynamics**

Only males made death threats, with 22% indicating karma or that death was deserved, 70% indicating mass killing or civil war, 22% made a direct threat to kill, while 7% indicated slitting throats and slaughter. A further 7% indicated death by shooting and 4% indicated death halal style.



the Christchurch terrorist declared they were ready to start a civil war and massacring Muslims in Australia. Such content consisted of the highest death threat rate so far (20%) among those online cases reported to the Register by third parties. Because reported anti-Muslim hate cases are only the tip of the iceberg (Iner et al. 2017), one can estimate a much higher number of posts on social media promising and pledging to massacre Muslims in the aftermath of the Christchurch mosque attacks. Yet neither an action nor a charge was observed for inciting violence. Likewise, reporting violence cases to the police by the Register, advocacy groups, legal bodies and third parties did not bear any tangible result.

Associating Muslims with terrorism (53%) and killing/harming (36%) in the same year as over 50 Muslims were massacred in a mosque was justified by karma and deserving to be killed in 13% of the cases.

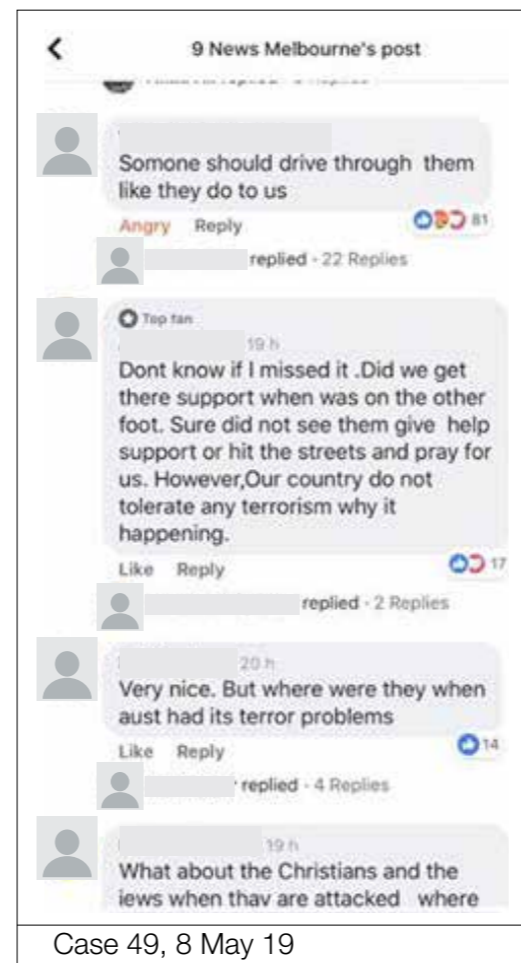
Apart from mass killing (55%) and karma/deserving to be killed (35%), 40 online cases included death threats like killing (18%), shooting (8%), throat slitting (5%) and halal killing (3%).

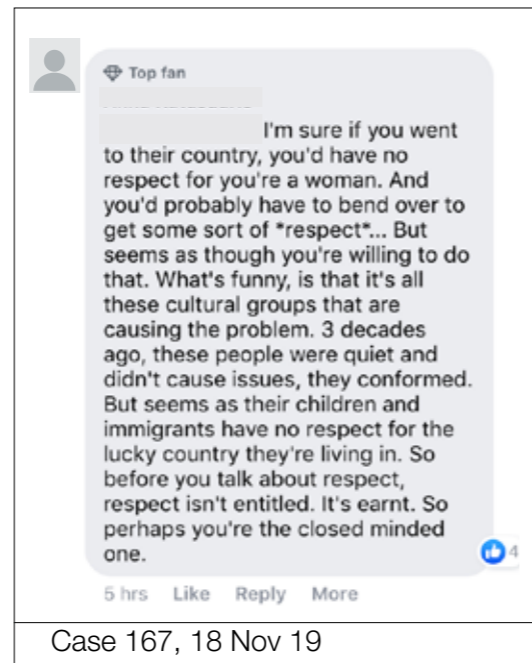
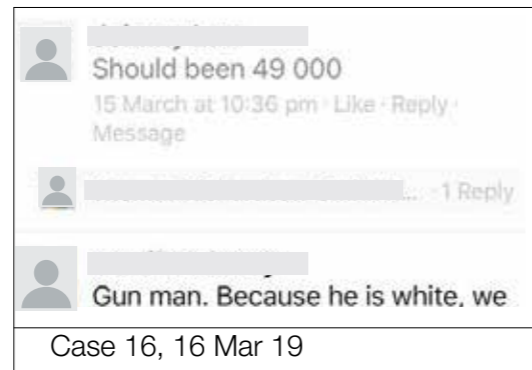
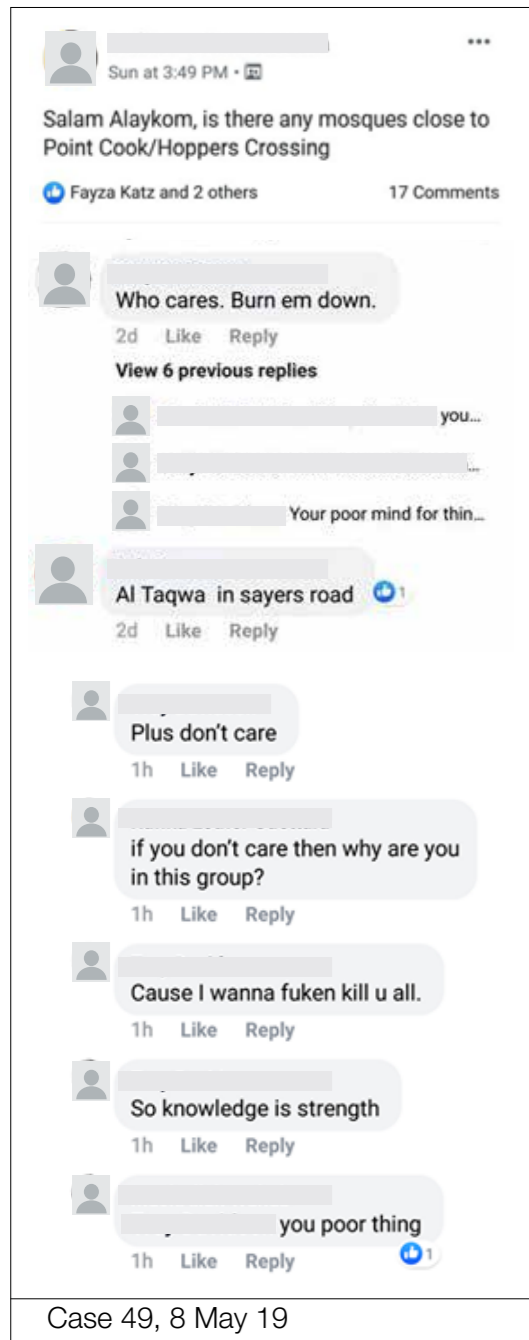
**5.7. Deserving/Karma**

Perceiving Christchurch attacks as deserved by Muslims was the second highest threatening argument (35%). Portraying Muslims as killers and terrorists, who want to take of Australia by infiltration or force arouses an intense level of hatred that leads to the rise of extremism. Consequently, they interpreted the Christchurch attacks as deserved. One said *“Islam reaps what it sows”* (Case 40, 16 Mar 19), while another repeated the aspect of deservedness: *“What goes around comes around for the victims of Islamfascism, karma is a biatch.”* The other comment by Jay Peake states, *“Karma! And it’s only going to get worse”* (Case 1, 16 Mar 19).

**5.8. Killing/Shooting**

To share the grief of the Muslim community, a church organised a prayer service for the Christchurch Muslims and announced it on Facebook. Someone posted under the invitation *“Do we bring guns?”* (Case 30, 20 Mar 19), which was responded to with a laugh emoji by another follower in the group. A joking or flippant attitude can hide threats and Islamophobic sentiments.





### Mass Killing / Civil War

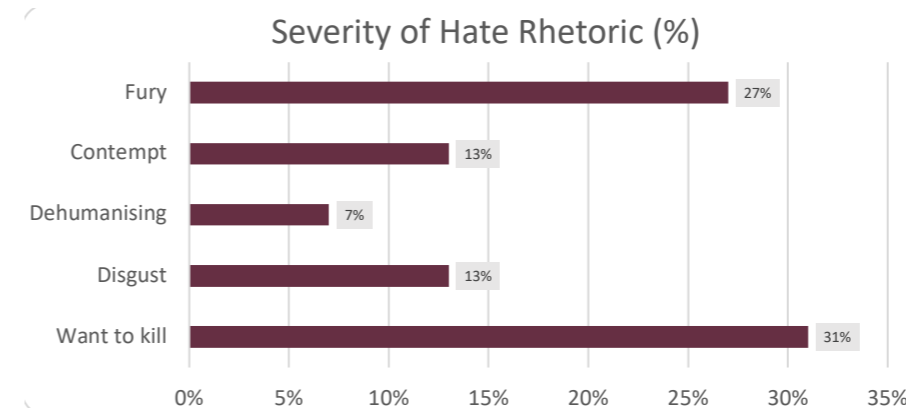
In line with deservedness, some extremists sought larger scale attacks in which more Muslims could be killed. These violent extremists wanted a civil war or expressed their desire to see more bloodshed. Accordingly, Christchurch was considered a start but not enough.

The display of solidarity with Muslims after the Christchurch attacks was harshly criticised by sympathisers of the Christchurch terrorist. The high attendance at the solidarity meeting in Victoria was blamed on some far right circles. One said, "I don't remember seeing this turn out when Christians were killed," while another said "someone should drive through them like they do to us" (Case 5, 17 Mar 19).

Far-right extremists continued to scare Muslims. Upon a Muslim woman's question to find a mosque in a suburb, she was answered by an Islamophobe "don't care I wanna f...n kill u all." When the woman asked why he was following the Facebook group, the perpetrator said his interest in the Muslims/mosques page was for intelligence purposes. Another commenter also backed the perpetrator by posting: "Burn them all" (Case 49, 8 May 19).

The perpetrators were furious far-right extremists who were not satisfied with the scale of the Christchurch bloodshed. When the Christchurch attacks were still fresh and the death numbers were increasing, one extremist posted that the number of casualties should have been 49,000 instead of 49 (Case 45, 15 Mar 19). Another post wished for increasing death numbers as if playing bingo. Some suggested seeing five zeros at the end of the number of Christchurch casualties (Case 16, 16 Mar 19).

## 6. Severity of Hate Rhetoric



### Gender Dynamics

Wanting to kill was reported by a greater proportion of male (52%) than female reporters (37%), with little difference emerging between gender groups for the remaining hate levels.

Of the 85 applicable incidents, wanting to kill was the most common type of rhetoric (31%). There was a significant increase from 23% to 31% since the last report. Of the 85 cases, 13% disclosed disgust, which is a prior state to committing violence without feeling any guilt. The feeling of disgust doubled since the previous report. The increase in violence and pre-violence stages (i.e. wanting to kill and feelings of disgust), especially in the aftermath of the Christchurch attacks, indicates the mobilising effect of the Christchurch terrorist and his anti-Muslim screed on far-right extremists.

In contrast to the increase in the higher level of hate, the level of hate dropped since the previous report. Fury, the least severe feeling in the emotional severity scale, was recorded in 27% of cases (in contrast to 50% in the previous report) and contempt was reported in 13% (in contrast to 6% in the previous report). Dehumanisation (7%) was similar to the previous report (8%).

### 6.1. Fury

Fury comprised 27% of applicable cases. It is a strong feeling of annoyance, displeasure or hostility by the perpetrator.

A range of Islamophobic statements were made in these screenshots. The majority are xenophobic in nature, such as statements like "they can go back any time - imagine the money we would save in welfare payments" and another user commented (Case 167, 18 Nov 19).

### 6.2. Contempt

Contempt consisted of 13% of applicable cases. It is defined as disdain and seeing one as unworthy of dignity. This appears mostly in perceiving the target (and their religion, culture or country of origin) as inferior. The displayed post explains to another fellow why Muslims do not deserve respect. *“What’s funny is that it is all these cultural groups that are causing the problem... but seems as their children and immigrants have no respect for the lucky country they’re living in”* (Case 167, 18 Nov 19).

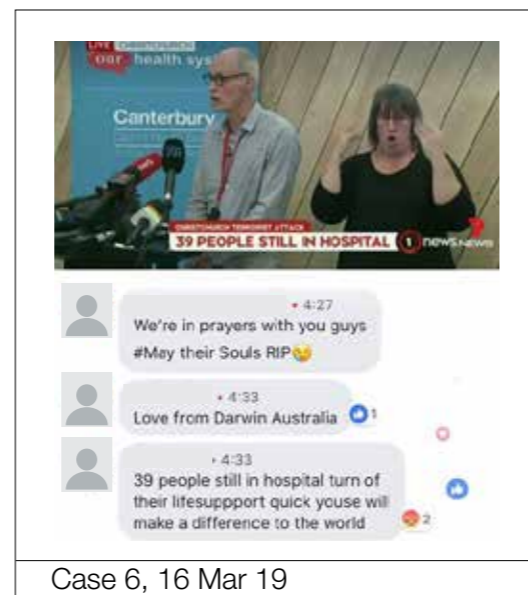
Similar sentiments about immigrant Muslims were expressed even for the Christchurch victims. In the displayed post, Muslims’ congregational prayer on a Friday midday was problematised. *‘Muslims’ F.. them. The should have been at work not praying in the middle of the day for 3 hours everyday, you do know the Aussie government pays for them to leave work and pray”* (Case 16, 16 Mar 19).

### 6.3. Dehumanising

Some common dehumanisation ways were calling Muslims *“the dogs”* (Case 11, 16 Mar 19), *“animal bastards”* (Case 238, 16 Mar 19), *“Muslim dogs”* (Case 50, 9 May 19; Case 233, 17 Dec 19) and *“smelt like camel shit”* (Case 194, 16 Dec 19). Dehumanising leading to disgust was a reason behind getting rid of them, i.e. wanting to kill/harm Muslims. For instance, likening the Christchurch Muslims in congregation to *“rats,”* one extremist suggested killing them with a blade (Case 38, 15 Mar 19). Seeing Muslims as dangerous terrorists was a sufficient reason behind exhibiting and inciting extremist and violent sentiments about Muslims.

### 6.4. Disgust

Disgust brings an instinct, which is to remove the thing causing the disgust. Accordingly, expressions of disgust were combined with willingness to kill Muslims in many cases. The feeling of disgust is aroused by dehumanisation, extreme level of xenophobia (e.g. deserving no land to live) or conflating Muslims with terrorism and killing. Accordingly, it would be better if there were fewer Muslims. When a far-right extremist called the martyrs of the Christchurch attacks *“clowns,”* another interpreted the mosque attacks as *“A few less Muslims, who cares”* (Case 16, 16 Mar 19).



In response to the headline *“39 PEOPLE STILL FIGHTING FOR THEIR LIVES”* on TV, one extremist posted *“39 people still in hospital. Quick, turn off the life support, you see [it] will make a difference to the world”* (Case 6, 16 Mar 19).

### 6.5. Want to Kill / Harm

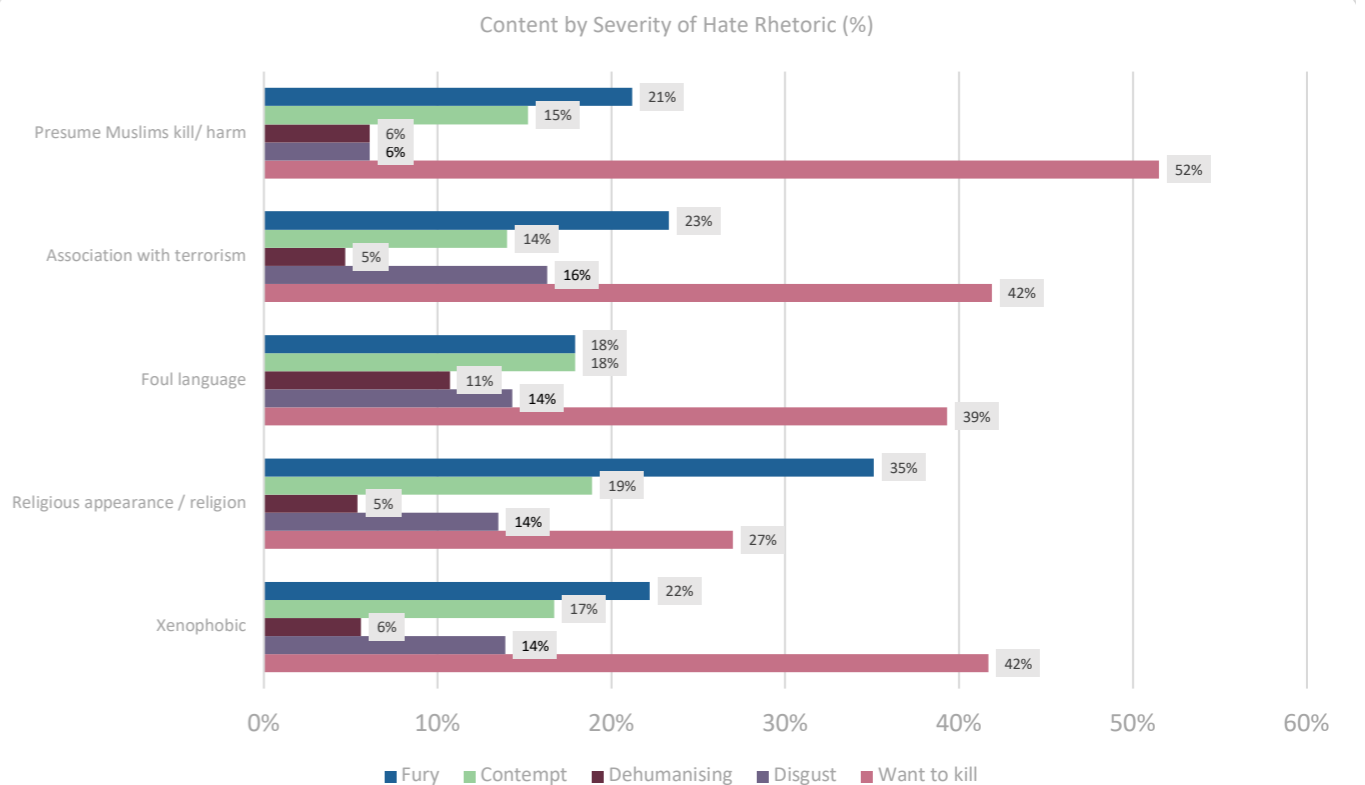
In another post, the killed Muslims in the Christchurch attacks were likened to *“clowns:”* *“Team New Zealand F... yeah, he should have been yelling derka derka derka while shooting these clowns”* (Case 16, 16 Mar 19).

Online perpetrators were bold enough to threaten Muslims publicly in the aftermath of the Christchurch attacks. Brushing Muslim respondents’ comments in red, the colour of blood, a woman perpetrator commented that *“a good Muslim is a dead c...t, so yes I’ve painted them all with the same brush!!!”* and she was applauded by likeminded anti-Muslim perpetrators saying *“F... kill them all”* (Case 40, 23 Mar 19).

### 6.6. Relationship between Hate Content and Severity

The content of insults was analysed to explore which can lead to a heightened sense of hate, ranging from fury (level 1) to wanting to kill/ harm Muslims (level 5). Wanting to kill (level 5) was at its highest when content included the perception that Muslims kill (52%). This was in line with the concept of karma and deserving killing, which was recorded as the most popular curses among the death threats.

Likewise, xenophobic insults (42%) and associations with terrorism (42%) were the secondmost common content stimulating a desire to kill/harm Muslims (level 5). These trends were in line with the trends from the previous reports. Accordingly, Muslims are demonised as killers and terrorists while playing victim to justify the extremist far right violent discourse. For details, see the next section on the violent far-right narratives on post-Christchurch online platforms.



## 7. Post Christchurch Online Cases

Beginning from the first hours of the Christchurch mosque attacks and for the next two weeks, online hate platforms were quite active on social media. The extremist cases reported to the IRA during this time period included justifying the Christchurch attacks and murdering 51 innocent people by blaming Muslims and the government for accepting Muslim immigration. These arguments were initially endorsed by far-right politicians like Fraser Anning and spread by his followers on social media. Some far-right groups went further by applauding the Christchurch terrorist for his bloodshed. Some used insensitive language by making jokes and caricaturing the Christchurch attacks. Some violent extremists expressed their desire to seek more killings and bloodshed, finding 51 deaths not enough. Some other extremists suggested more brutal means to cause more bloodshed. Some sympathisers of the Christchurch terrorist expressed their willingness to follow him by causing bloodshed and killing Australian Muslims once a civil war starts in Australia.

### 7.1 Copycatting Senator Fraser Anning's Anti-Muslim Narrative: Blaming Muslims

The blame on Muslims and the government rather than the far-right terrorist in the first hours of the Christchurch attack was endorsed by the anti-Muslim far-right senator Fraser Anning. Anning tweeted: "Does anyone still dispute the link between Muslim immigration and violence?" and blamed the Muslim immigration: "The real cause of bloodshed on New Zealand streets today is the immigration program which allowed Muslim fanatics to migrate to New Zealand in the first place" (Press Association 2019).

Anning's statements were provocative in this sensitive time - an Australian parliamentarian fanned the flame of anti-Muslim extremism while shifting the blame from the far-right terrorist to the killed and wounded Muslims as well as the entire Muslim community.

These sentiments were echoed by far-right social media groups: "The result of people have a gutful of governments not listening to concerned citizens and lowering Islamic immigration" (Case 176, 16 Mar 19). The reporter was concerned by this post: "This pretty much states the reaction of not limiting Muslims in the country results in people killing them off. Seriously, how sad!" (Case 176, 16 Mar 19).

shared a post.  
2 hrs · 🌐

what will it take for our Governments to listen to the people?

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/live/2019/mar/15/christchurch-shooting-injuries-reported-as-police-respond-to-critical-incident-live>

**THE RESULT OF PEOPLE HAVING A GUTFUL OF GOVERNMENTS NOT LISTENING TO CONCERNED CITIZENS AND LOWERING ISLAMIC IMMIGRATION**

I'd hate to say it, but this just states what most are thinking but are afraid to say it. Tell it like it is!! No one deserves to be slaughtered like this, but when they strike back I bet many of you will change your view & agree with this unfortunate post 😞

7h Like Reply 187

View 87 more replies

saying all Muslims are terrorists is like saying all Catholics are pedophiles

7h Like Reply 124

View 19 previous replies

well it's true.. priests are...

He is saying what most Australians feel and believe

7h Like Reply 109

Case 174, 16 Mar 19

132 >

As unfortunate as this attack is and is to be deplored , maybe the government's of Australia and New Zealand can now see how fed up the people are getting of Islam and the preferred treatment they enjoy to the detriment of those born in the respective countries.

6h Like Reply 27

BLOODY RIGHT . WE ARE STARTING TO FIGHT BACK . I BLAME ALL POLITICIANS.

5h Like Reply 16

577 >

1h Like Reply

What goes around comes around for the victims of islamifascism, karma is a biatch

1h Like Reply 6

Karma! And it's only going to get worse

1h Like Reply 4

View 4 previous replies

Case 178, 16 Mar 19

22 hours ago · 🌐

From the [redacted] facebook page, comments advocating terror attacks on muslim and justifying mass murdering on the innocent muslims, does anyone still doubts that there equality is being applied in Australia?

Islam declared war on us. What do you expect in a war??? There are going to be casualties it's just up till now it's been Islam inflicting them on us. Someone just decided to give some back to them that's all.

Like Reply 1

View 18 previous replies...

Case 174, 16 Mar 19

Do you fully support senator Fraser Anning  
Who was only defending himself  
Against a young brainwashed fool  
Who smashed an egg in his head  
Fools want the senator charged .. piffit  
**SHARE IF YOU STAND WITH FRASER ANNING**

were quite right to do a citizens arrest, The only pity is that Senator Anning didn't connect a little harder.

1h Like Reply

Well done Senator 🙌

55m Like Reply

Aussie traitor is what he is. Bloody good reflex reaction senator Anning and who better to back you up but awesome veteran's good job men.

40m Like Reply

35m Like Reply

Fuckn five year old mooron,wouldn't know what a Muslim smelt like the cunt,to fuckn young, should have kinged the cunt instead of jabbing him

Case 239, 16 Mar 19

Anning's views were widely supported by like-minded far-right individuals claiming it is "what most are thinking but afraid to say." One post reads as "I agree with Anning, the dogs had it coming." (Case 11, 16 Mar 19) and "expect them to fight back since Muslims are killing people" (Case 233, 15 Mar 19), while another says "Just to be clear, the Muslims have carried out 34,720 deadly terror attacks since 9/11" (Case 11, 16 Mar 19). The reporter found these posts "shocking" (Case 242, 15 Mar 19).

A post in a similar tone not only blamed Muslims for the bloodshed but also interpreted it as an expected outcome because of the war with Islam. "Islam declared war on us. What do you expect in a war? There are going to be casualties it's just up till now it has been Islam inflicting them on us. someone just decided to do some back to them. that's old" (Case 174, 16 Mar 19).

Surprisingly, this post was screenshotted from the NSW Police Force's Facebook page instead of Anning's or a far-right group.

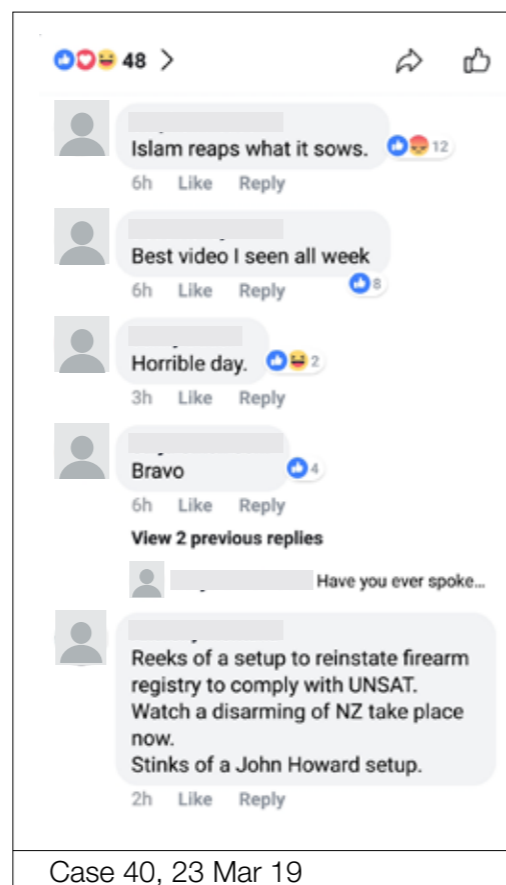
The egging of Anning by a young Australian initiated another stream of far-right extremist hate making the "egg boy" as a target. Some far-right pages immediately activated their supporters to back Anning and defame the "Egg Boy" (Case 238, 16 Mar 19) as a "traitor" and "F...ing five year old moron" while calling the far-right members who knocked the boy to the ground and choked him as "awesome veterans good job" (Case 239, 16 Mar 19). A video recording of the choking of the "egg boy" by Fraser's brutal fans illustrates the life-threatening moment for the young boy (Young, Molloy and Smith 2019).



Case 78, 17 Dec 19



Case 10, 16 Mar 19



Case 40, 23 Mar 19

Anning targeting prominent Muslims like Waleed Aly was similarly picked up by anti-Muslim far-right groups and individuals. Anning posted an image of Waleed Aly stating, "Welcome to Australia where an Islamic apologist dictates public opinion on national news" (Case 78, 17 Dec 19). Anning's page hosted ongoing insults and hateful comments directed at Waleed Aly (Case 80, 17 Dec 19). Another far-right group posted similar sentiments about Waleed Aly "Dip sh..t of the year goes too..." with an image of Waleed Aly that shows Aly holding the Qur'an and strapped to dynamite (Case 54, 19 Mar 19). The reporter of those insults stated "This is really annoying to witness, people go so far to disrespect and dehumanise others" (Case 80, 17 Dec 19).

Anning's page hosted ongoing insults and hateful comments directed at Waleed Aly. Some of them were life threatening (Case 124, 21 Mar 19).

Targeting Muslims in the aftermath of the Christchurch attacks extended to Grand Mufti Ibrahim, who was appointed as a religious leader by mosques across Australia. The similar circles who started a smear campaign against the Mufti in the aftermath of the 2015 Paris attacks by ISIS terrorist recommenced a similar campaign, but this time in the aftermath of Christchurch attacks (Case 23, 17 Mar 19). Muslims received similarly harsh treatment even when they were the victims of far-right terrorism and bloodshed disclosed an unconditional hate for Muslim religious leaders, prominent Muslims and the entire Muslim community.

## 7.2. Applauding the Christchurch Terrorist: Innocent Terrorist vs Terrorist Muslims

Blaming Muslims for the Christchurch attacks paved the way for justifying the Christchurch terrorist. One anti-mosque page announced the mosque attacks in its first hours as "Young boy concerned about the future of the white race shoots up Mosque in NZ killing 29 Muslims" (Case 19, 15 Mar 19).

An anti-Muslim commenter from another anti-mosque page publicly thanked the Christchurch terrorist for killing 51 and wounding tens of Muslims: "We should thank those who did it" and he justified his views stating that "They will do the same given the chance but worse... Islam is all about converting or death." The Islamophobic comments continued in the comments section (Case 237, 15 Mar 19).

The Christchurch terrorist was publicly applauded by saying "Bravo" (Case 40, 23 Mar 19), "I salute him" (Case 184, 15 Mar 19), "I wish I COULD BUY HIM A BEER, TOP BLOKE" (Case 13, 16 Mar 19) and "top job well done" (Case 184, 15 Mar 19). An infamous far-right leader also suggested to initiate a Gofund me (crowdfunding) for the shooter (Case 10, 16 Mar 19).

## 7.3. Expressing Joy for the Christchurch Attacks via Jokes

Some people praised the Christchurch bloodshed with jokes. Such commenters reacted with laugh emojis and thumbs up, which expressed a level of insensitivity and hate even against the murdered and wounded victims, their families and the Muslim community. For instance, referring to the live broadcast of the Christchurch attacks, one commented "The best video I've seen all week" (Case 40, 23 Mar 19).

Another expressed the joy of watching the Christchurch attacks again and again. "I have watched the video of those 49 pigs getting killed a few times and it is the best movie ever. Watching their deaths made my ... [laugh emojis inserted]. I hope another 10,000 Christchurch shootings happen to you scum [laugh emojis inserted]. You deserve it all and more" (Case 127, 21 Mar 19).

Another sympathiser showed his support for the Christchurch attacks by making a joke using a connection between cleaning and cleansing. Using a famous cleaning company's name and logo, the

Christchurch supporter posted *“Jim’s Mosque Cleaning”* (Case 4, 17 Mar 19) right after the attacks.

Concerningly though, some teenagers interpreted the live broadcast of the Christchurch attacks as a computer game, putting a laughing emoji at the end: *“If y’all saw the video of him killing everyone, it looked like he was playing black opps4 [laughing emoji inserted].”* One reacted to this comment *“It is a terrorist attack, speak the truth”* (Case 14, 17 Mar 19). The teenager’s confused mind about the bloodshed in real life and in computer games displays an indifference to killings and violence.

#### 7.4. Seeking More Killings and Brutality

Some supporters of the Christchurch terrorist went beyond expressing their joy under jokes but clearly expressed that the Christchurch attacks and resultant casualties were not enough. They wished for more bloodshed. One said *“Should have had another five zeros on the end.”* Another increased the number as *“all of them”* while a third posted *“keep going.”* In the discussion of desired higher numbers for the Muslim deaths, one typed *“bingo”* as if it were a game rather than the lost lives of human beings (Case 16, 16 Ma 19). This discussion was made public while the number of deaths was increasing and there were still many people in the intensive care unit.

One man, who seems to be a mechanic, cyclist and the father of a toddler, interpreted the Christchurch killings as *“50 are down and millions to go”* (Case 52, 19 May 19). Another supporter of the Christchurch terrorist, appearing to be in his 60s, posted *“Hope it becomes a world-wide event”* (Case 12, 16 Mar 19).

Anti-Muslim hate was extreme to the extent of enjoying the killing of children in the Christchurch attacks (Case 31, 18 Mar 19).

These sentiments align with the screed of the Christchurch terrorist, who saw young Muslims not as children but a future threat: *“Preventing these enemies from reaching adulthood and their full potential of effect is of the importance. Why make your children fight when you could fight in their stead?”* (Tarrant 2019, p. 53).



#### 7.5. Clones and Supporters of the Christchurch Terrorist

The Christchurch attacks, their livestreaming, the video of the attacks and the screed of the far-right terrorist were readily available to public online and inflamed like-minded extremists. They were quick to disclose their violent extremist tendencies, yet the social media platforms and Australian Defence Force were slow to respond. None of these agencies raised charges based on those cases reported by the IRA, advocacy organisations, legal firms and concerned citizens from the Muslim community and wider Australian society.





In the early hours of the Christchurch attacks, one supporter of the terrorist posted *“Time to rise and take out trash”* (Case 184, 15 Mar 19).

The killing of Muslims is brazenly celebrated on social media by far-right extremists. One supporter of the Christchurch terrorist declared that he is ready with a weapon: *“I am ready for the Civil War”* (Case 9, 16 Mar 19). This extremist did not face any investigation or penalty regardless of multiple reports of the same case by different parties.

Another extremist responded to this civil war declaration with *“WPWW14/88”* and replied to the pro-civil war extremists with the *“blood and honour”* post (Case 9, 16 Mar 19).

WPWW is a supremacist acronym that stands for “White Pride World-Wide” and 14/88 is a white supremacist symbol. 14 represents the 14 words written by American domestic terrorist David Lane that “we must secure the existence of our people and a future for white children.” 88 represents David Lane’s 88 precepts or sometimes the 8th letter in the alphabet, which is “H” and represents Heil Hitler. (Case 7 & Case 9, 16 Mar 19).

Another violent extremist pledged to kill 10 Muslims every day when the civil war starts in Australia:

*“I know I am not alone in feeling this I’m sure, when the time comes for the Day of Reckoning and Australia becomes embroiled in its first Civil War on home because Islam tries to take over! On that day, I will begin killing them at the rate of 10 a day, every day! So that just in one year I alone will kill 3,650 Muslims! With enough like-minded Patriots to kill them too Australia will rid itself of Every Last Muslim on our home soil within just 2 or 3 years! Australia will beat Islam, even if it means beating it to that!”* (Case 127, 21 Mar 19).



Another posted that he read the Qur’an when he was “locked up” and in conclusion, he would *“put bullets in all of them [Muslims]”* (Case 38, 15 Mar 19). Many like-minded extremists illustrated how best the killing could have happened. One suggested killing Muslims with a blade: *“F... them I would’ve walked in there locked the door behind me and done it with a blade they died too quick”* (Case 38, 15 Mar 19).

The reporter expressed her concern in the early hours of the Christchurch attacks and asked if he should report it to the police:

*“On a group on Facebook, there are screenshots of someone who mentions they would have done a lot worse to the Muslims in the attack that happened in New Zealand. In light of the news that the government had no information about the current murderer, I thought it best to share these shots just in case... and thought it would be more serious coming from an organisation. Reporting extremely gruesome and foul talk”* (Case 38, 15 Mar 19).



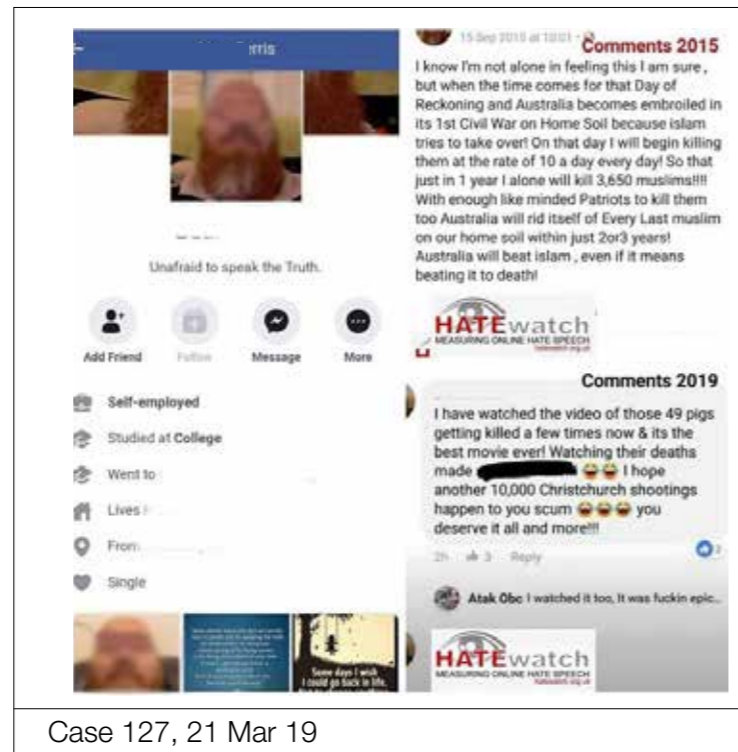
This extremist was referred to the Australian Federal Police on other posts, but no action was taken. (see below Rita's section).

Similarly violent posts were observed on the Facebook page of the perpetrator since 2015. Although this extremist man was reported to the police, no action was taken. These extremist posts invoked fear even among the non-Muslim viewers. The non-Muslim reporter expressed her fear as: *"This post is not ok and action needs to be taken in addressing this hate speech & radicalism. Extremely disturbing and I'm afraid he might cause harm"* (Case 127, 21 Mar 19).

Another reporter, reporting the same perpetrator's violent posts, was surprised to see no police action to prevent the spread of his incitement of violence: *"XXX XXX from Australia has been inciting terrorism & dreaming of killing Muslims since 2015. 4 years later he is glorifying the killings in NEW ZEALAND many times over, firstly it is shocking how he has been able to openly make these comments, secondly why the authorities have not already arrested him!"* (Case 32, 18 Mar 19).

A witness who still believes that Muslims kill Christians could not stand this level of brutality and reacted: *"I never see any comments like these when Muslims kill Christians"* (Case 7, 16 Mar 19).

The extreme level of hate against Muslims in the aftermath of the Christchurch attacks invoked fear of copycat attacks by far-right extremists who were boldly posting mass killing threats about Muslims. A man with his gun, who called the Christchurch terrorist a "white brother" and publicly declared his support, "terrified" the reporter of this case:



Case 127, 21 Mar 19



*"I am honestly terrified of the fact that people out there now hold this guy as some saint and could possibly trigger copycats who are emboldened by his act"* (Case 7, 16 Mar 19). Sharing the same fear, the reporters posted links to far-right extremist videos with harmful content, most of which were later deleted (Case 14, 17 Mar 17).

Apparently, no fine has been charged for inciting violence for the two years since introducing section 93Z of the Crimes Act (Knaus 2020). This law recognises public threats or incitements to violence (made on the basis of race, religion, sexuality or HIV/Aids status) a crime to result in a potential three-year prison sentence and \$11,000 fine. The stats also revealed that hate crime laws are rarely used by Australian authorities and only 21 people have been convicted under hate crime laws in Australia, despite state police forces recording thousands of offences connected to discrimination (Cohen and Mitchell 2019).

## Case Study: The Conflation of Muslim Identity with Terrorism and its Connection to Far-right Extremism

by Rita Jabri Markwell, (solicitor, Birchgrove Legal, and advisor, Australian Muslim Advocacy Network (AMAN))

The motive requirement for terrorism in Australian legislation provides that every terrorist act must have a religious, ideological or political cause (s 100.1 of the Criminal Code Act 1995 (Cth) definition of 'terrorist act'). Fortunately, the bulk of convictions in Australia has not been for the commission of terrorism but activity related to terrorism, such as conspiring to commit terrorism.

'Religious cause' and 'religiously motivated' are connected. The former refers to the legal category, and the latter relates to the label used by public authorities, politicians and media. Commonly used terms like 'radical Islam' or 'Islamic terror' flow from the legal label of 'religious cause.' Through media coverage of arrests, convictions and sentencing, the commentary of judges, politicians and law enforcement, there has been a steady and large-scale distribution of the idea that Islamic religiosity can cause terrorism.

The manifestos of terrorists Tarrant and Breivik portray Muslims as a subhuman, animalistic existential threat (Kaldor 2021, p.17). The information eco-system that perpetuates these narratives, the 'counter jihad' movement, claims to be non-violent (Lee 2017) and disseminates its ideas about Muslim identity through curated stories (Lee 2017). These online information operations amplify and contextualise mainstream media on terrorism to advance the idea that Muslims are programmed by their religion towards depravity and extreme violence. Moreover, these operations dehumanise Muslims, by attributing them subhuman value over time (Abdalla, Ally and Jabri-Markwell 2021).

To date, there has been no analysis of how Commonwealth laws and terrorism categories may bolster online dehumanisation operations within extreme right 'counter jihad' movements.

Mainstream political commentary on the Global War on Terror is also weaponised. Prime Ministers claimed Australia must defend itself from those who seek to destroy 'our way of life,' while characterising those others in religious terms. In far-right discourse, Islam is positioned as inherently incompatible with the Australian way of life (Peucker, Smith and Iqbal 2018) and as an existential threat (Lentini 2019; Kaldor 2021; Davey 2019).

Due to the scale of this information being spread across Australia, these ideas have taken root in Australian society.

## Legal and Political Endorsement of this Conflation

The conflation between Islam and terrorism continues to be tacitly and, at times, explicitly endorsed by authorities. When concerns were raised about this conflation, the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security (PJCIS) defended the ‘religious cause’ category as fitting with popular understandings of terrorism.

One expert questioned this, given the category had perpetuated popular understandings in the first place. Hardy (2011) argued the legal category fostered ‘this lack of critical understanding about the relationship, or lack thereof, between Islam and terrorism’ (p. 350).

Judges have also contributed. In a 2018 case, Justice Fagan referred to former cases to imply the defendant’s state of mind was typical for Muslim perpetrators (R v Khaja, 2018, p. 5), saying:

This country has been effectively under attack for 15 years by no less than 40 young Muslim men seeking really with a pretty uniform recitation of ideology to kill as many unbelievers as they could and to impose upon the country Sharia law. That seems to be the consistent, as it were, unifying thread of ideology (pp. 27-28).

Justice Fagan stated that ‘the ideology that underlines [violent jihad] is Islam,’ noting ‘that is what has been underlying each of these offences’ (pp. 27-28). This conclusion homogenised the specific motives of Muslim perpetrators. It eliminated discussion on the role of ISIL or Al Qaeda ideology, of grievances attached to foreign politics, and social or behavioural factors. Security study experts strongly caution against this reductive approach (Frazer and Jambers 2018, p. 2; Hardy 2011; Aly and Streigher 2012, p. 862).

In a later case in 2019, Justice Fagan also argued the Australian Muslim community is responsible for repudiating violent passages of the Qur’an that were, according to the law’s logic, causing terrorism. His Honour suggested the Muslim community indirectly contributed to ‘social division and mistrust’ by ignoring ‘incitements to violence’ in the Qur’an. He called for ‘explicit repudiation of verses which ordain intolerance, violence and domination...[that] embolden terrorists to think they are in common cause with all believers.’ (R v Bayda; R v Namao, [2019], [79]-[81]. Justice Fagan’s comments were reported across national media (Thompson and Scheikowski 2019; Whitbourn 2019; SBS News 2019; Stevens and Withers 2019).

Research has not demonstrated a link between religiosity in Islam and a propensity for terrorism. The inverse is more accurate, with individuals with poor religious knowledge being more susceptible to ISIL propaganda (Patel 2011, p. 14 and other factors being more prescient to radicalisation (Aly and Streigher 2012; Beller and Kröger 2018; Cherney and Murphy 2016). Australian Prime Ministers have also fallen into the trap of attributing collective blame (Conifer 2015; Davey 2018; Karp 2018; Henderson and Conifer 2015; Humphries 2006; Karp 2020). ; Medhora 2015). This thinking, unfortunately, follows the logic set within Australian law.

## Systemic Shortcomings

In the meantime, formal systems have struggled to respond to the full spectrum of extremist ideologies and exposed double standards across many levels.

### Conceptual Framing of Terrorism

ASIO recently announced the ‘Islamist’ or ‘Islamic’ category should now be referred to as ‘religiously motivated.’ This continues to rely on and endorse those groups’ self-made construction as a religious cause.

Conceptually, white supremacy is referred to as ‘ideologically motivated’ terrorism. ASIO chose to refer to this umbrella term to avoid headlining white supremacists, nationalists and separatists, right-wing extremists, and conflating various ideological agendas.

When viewed together, the conceptions of the different forms of terrorism are inconsistent. Self-applied descriptions are used for group movements in one sphere but not the other.

### Recognition of Terrorism Groups

At recognition level, the first white supremacist terrorist organisation was listed in 2021. There are now three on the list. For the data period of this report, several referrals were made to the National Security Hotline regarding stickers placed in Victoria, promoting an organisation connected to the 2010 Perth Mosque shooting. The organisation still operates in Australia and is labelled by researchers as a violent extremist organisation (Allchorn 2021, p. 14). It has since been listed as a terrorist organisation in Germany and Canada, but not Australia (p. 14), illustrating how white supremacist extremism has been given ample time and space to become organised within Australia’s liberal democracy.

### The Law’s Treatment of Motive

The purpose of a religious cause in the law is unclear. A religious cause is ideological, yet other types of ideological causes are not mentioned. A defendant may see their cause as religious, and similarly, another may see their cause as patriotic. (CDirector of Public Prosecutions v Galea [2020] VSC 750). Still, there is no ‘patriotic cause’.

Government-appointed experts have warned that considering the defendant’s religion and religious evidence can ‘inflate the impact’ of the defendant’s actions (Expert Panel on Terrorism and Violent Extremism 2017, p. 66), making it easier to prosecute than non-religious cases.

From an academic perspective, it may be valuable to discuss religious instruction, movements and texts, and how they are used in violent or extremist contexts. However, criminal laws serve a different purpose and are measured by other criteria. Criminal laws must serve a clear purpose, be straightforward to apply and support a single standard of justice.

## Prosecutions for terrorism conspiracy

There have been systemic failures at the prosecution level to treat all terrorism conspiracy equally. For many years, the Muslim community has perceived law enforcement to be politicised by the Global War on Terror (Akbarzadeh 2021), carrying in-group bias (Barry 2020, p. 89). A significant barrier to those threats being investigated and prosecuted as terrorism has been the lack of terrorist organisations of that nature being listed.

A limited review of case law and media reports indicates white supremacy is not a new problem. The cases below were consistently handled with more minor (non-terrorism) charges. This means they avoided the terrorist label, associated media coverage and severe penalties. An individual convicted of terrorism conspiracy can expect a custodial sentence between 12-20 years, even if they were a minor at the time of offending. The author does not argue that these offenders should have been prosecuted of terrorism, or vice versa, that terrorists should have been charged with non-terrorism offences. However, these cases do point to the need for analysis about the differences in conduct and intent to address the community contention that there is not one single standard.

- In 2010, WA police arrested two members of an extreme nationalist group for shooting at a Perth mosque. Although it was acknowledged the group had chapters worldwide and was based on neo-Nazism and white supremacy, they were not charged with terrorist offences. They were each charged with one count of causing criminal damage, discharging a firearm across a road and possessing an unlicensed firearm (Sapienza 2010). One man who fired the shots pled guilty and was fined \$9000 (AAP 2010).
- In 2014, a 26-year-old Caucasian male with associations with right-wing extremist groups was charged for using a carriage service to make threats against the Sydney Jewish Museum and received a 12-month recognisance and fine for the offence. In the same year, the individual was charged with 5 counts of possessing a prohibited firearm and received a 2 year bond for the offence. In 2016, the individual was charged with arson and intentional, reckless property damage for setting fire to a Pentecostal church in Taree; he received 22 months imprisonment with a 12 month non-parole period for the offence. After his release in 2018, the individual was placed under an extended supervision order under the Terrorism (High-Risk Offenders) Act 2017 (NSW) for 2 years (State of New South Wales v White (Final) [2018] NSWSC 1943). He was an adherent to Wotanism, which the Sydney Morning Herald described as a 'white separatist religion' (Ralston 2016).
- In 2017, a 26-year-old man was sentenced to 7 years (4.5 years non-parole) for offences of manufacturing and possessing guns and child pornography. Reportedly, he was stockpiling weapons, had plotted mass shootings at a shopping centre and was motivated by white supremacist ideology. He posted pro-gun violence and anti-government speeches on his online profiles and uploaded videos of homemade guns. He identified as a member of the Christian Separatist Church, an extreme, anti-Jewish church movement in the US (Alexander 2017).
- In the same year, a 48-year-old Caucasian male was sentenced to 16 months' imprisonment for sending death threats to a Member of Parliament and manufacturing a dozen firearms. His ideology was reportedly connected to the Sovereign Citizen movement. However, he was not charged with terrorism offences. In 2019, he was placed

under a further interim supervision order in 2019 under the High-Risk Terrorist Offender legislation (State of New South Wales v Hardy [2021] NSWSC 323).

- In 2019, a 28-year-old Caucasian male was charged with possessing a knife in connection with a terrorist act. At the time of sentencing, the individual was a renounced Christian, twice renounced Muslim and currently adhering to Judaism. At the time of the offending, the individual claimed to be a practising Muslim and made religiously framed threats towards police, Magistrate and court staff. Although he was charged in connection with a terrorist act, the Magistrate noted the offender's "adherence to Islam has been questionable in the past but is non-existent at present." His "plainly offensive and violent religious pronouncements" were "more a function of a state of confused suggestibility than of any genuine or devout adherence to misguided fundamentalism" (R v Pender [2019] NSW SC 1814 [54]).

The individual was sentenced to 3 years' imprisonment for the knife possession charge and warned that they may be subject to the High-Risk Terrorist Offenders legislation for further detainment. However, this was deemed unlikely based on the above mentioned circumstances [67]. Because the individual's actions couldn't be linked substantively to a genuine religious motive, he was excised from the sphere of terrorism.

- In 2020, an Adelaide man was convicted of a minor offence for attempting to manufacture an explosive, referred to as a 'Mother of Satan' bomb (Dillon 2019). The offender, in that case, admitted to being 'blinded by propaganda online' and possessed a copy of the Christchurch mass murderer's manifesto. It was suggested he was susceptible to this ideology because he had Post Traumatic Stress Disorder from a historical car accident. In a terrorism trial, this evidence would ordinarily be considered an example of ideological radicalisation. The judge told this offender to consider his anti-Islamic beliefs while on parole. He was sentenced to three years and three months in jail with a non-parole period of one year and seven months.
- A Caucasian male who was part of the anti-Muslim and anti-immigration 'Reclaim Australia' group had been identified by police in 2015 for possessing tasers, precursor chemicals and bomb-making manuals but charged with minor offences of possession of a prohibited weapon and a precursor substance. He was jailed (for an unknown period) and fined \$5,000 (Deery 2015). Applying the law in this case, the Magistrate characterised the group's beliefs as falling within the realms of legitimate political discourse, saying 'you are entitled to hold those views however offensive they may be to the majority.' (Deery 2015).

Galea was convicted of possessing a flare without reasonable excuse at an anti-mosque protest in October 2015 and fined \$1,000 (ABC News 2016). The Victorian Joint Counter Terrorism Team (JCTT) began investigating Galea in January 2016 following concerns he was preparing or planning to carry out acts of violence supporting his radical right-wing beliefs. In August 2016, the JCTT executed a search warrant on Galea's residence and he was subsequently charged with terrorism offences (CDPP 2021).

In December 2019, Galea was convicted for terrorism conspiracy and preparing a document to facilitate terrorism. He spoke of wanting to witness the mass extermination of "the left" and Muslims. Galea researched ingredients and methods for making explosive devices and unsuccessfully tried to recruit others to assist with the planned attacks. He was sentenced to 12 years' imprisonment, with 9 years non-parole (CDirector of Public Prosecutions v Galea [2020] VSC 750). This appears to be the first case of a Caucasian male in Australia being convicted of terrorism conspiracy.

### Prosecutions under Terrorism Advocacy, Incitement to Violence and Related Criminal Laws

- Between 2009-2021, there was one commenced prosecution and zero convictions under the federal law of urging violence against groups distinguished by race, religion, nationality, ethnic origin, or political belief (Senate Question, Number 121, 2020; Attorney General's Department, 2022). Similarly, the incitement to violence laws introduced in New South Wales in 2018 have not yet resulted in a single conviction. In April 2019, law firm Birchgrove Legal referred three incidents to the Australian Federal Police for prosecution. Their correspondence referred to relevant laws at the federal and NSW state level (s 80.2(3) of the Criminal Code Act 1995 (Cth) (advocacy of terrorism); s 474.17 (using a carriage service to menace, harass or cause offence); s 93Z of the Crimes Act 1900 (NSW)).

The AFP responded that it uses a 'Case Categorisation and Prioritisation Model' (CCPM), available on their website and noted it would take no further action. A response from Home Affairs to a Question on Notice the following year said public comments on social media urging violence would be designated as a priority (Senate Question, Number 1211). However, there was no protocol between the AFP and the e-Safety Commissioner's office for handling these complaints and securing evidence.

- In June 2020, the Australian Muslim Advocacy Network (AMAN) referred an individual for prosecution to the Australian Federal Police, under the federal law of using a carriage service to menace, harass or cause offence (s474.17 Criminal Code Act 1995 (Cth)). The individual administered public pages on mainstream social media, reaching large audiences. He published a steady flow of disinformation, which AMAN alleged was engineered to generate disgust and fury towards Muslims, portraying them as an existential threat to Australia and the West. The material did not explicitly encourage nor directly threaten harm to any person; however, AMAN alleged it triggered violent threats. The AFP's response again noted that no further action would be taken, but this time provided reasons. The AFP explained that s474.17 was not designed for this scenario. Among other requirements, it would need to cause significant apprehension or fear for

their safety from the addressee of the material. AMAN argued it did create reasonable fear, particularly in the wake of the Christchurch attacks. In this instance, AMAN did not want to bring vilification action against this individual, fearing he would use this action to build support for his cause. AMAN has since recommended civil penalties for such actors and the platforms that enable them, using a notice and action take-down model (AMAN 2021).

### The Effects of an Inadequate Legal Framework

The above systemic shortcomings point to gaps in our legal framework:

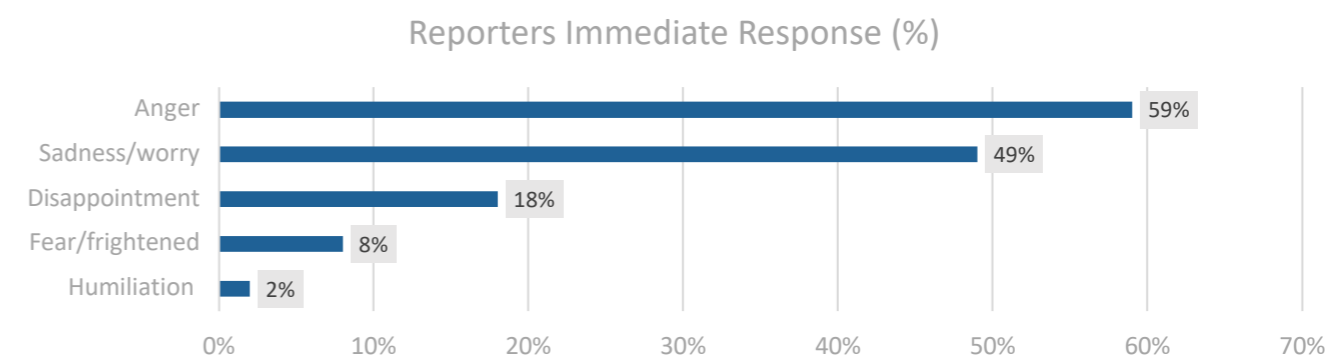
- Flaws with our terrorism list and the counterterrorism strategy's reliance on that list.
- The lack of regulation of digital platforms concerning Australian standards on hate speech and disinformation.
- The lack of adequate laws to deter hate crimes and encourage victims to report.

Together, these gaps have created an environment of impunity for bad actors. Moreover, the focus on the official terrorist list meant intelligence and data would concentrate on that work. There has been no coordination of community data collection points for hate incidents, or nationally consistent data on hate crime. It stands to reason that our national security agencies had no viable ability to assess the scale of the 'far right' threat at the time of the Christchurch massacre.

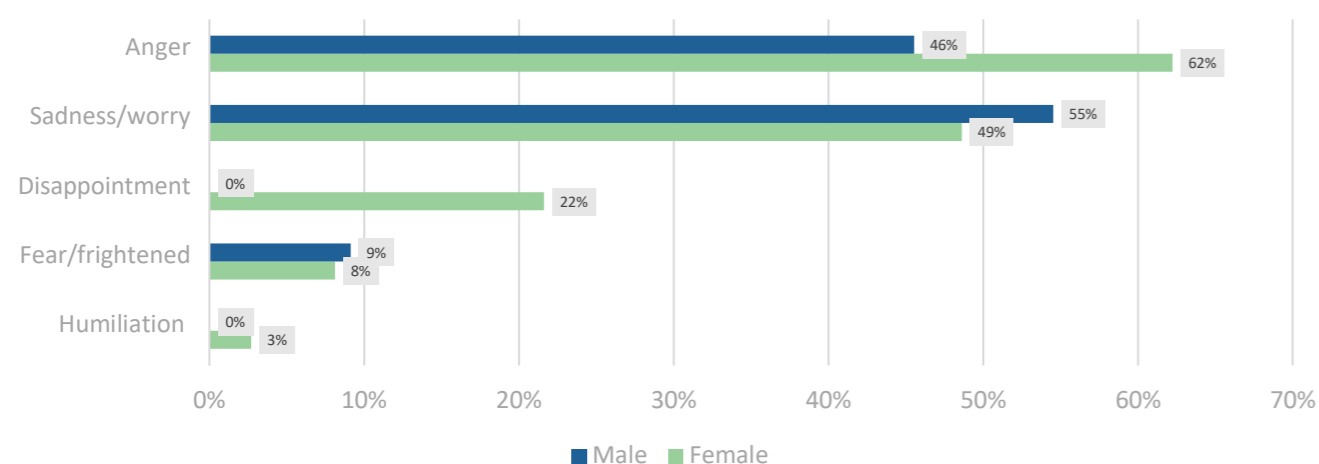
The gap in civil vilification laws based on religious belief and activity at the federal level and some states, including NSW, has also created legal uncertainty exploited by anti-Islam movements. Those movements were the 'predominant force' behind white supremacist and neo-Nazi cells in Australia (Allchorn 2021, p.8).

## 8. Response, Reaction and Impact

The reporters' feelings mostly belonged to the witness reporters of the online cases. Muslim and non-Muslim witnesses expressed their emotions about the posts they are reporting. Of the 109 online cases, anger was the most common feeling, which spiked from 13% to 59% since the previous report. The second common feeling was sadness/worry, which spiked from 16% to 49% in the present report. Disappointment (18%) and being frightened (8%) were also observed in the online cases of the present report, which heavily collected cases about and in the aftermath of the Christchurch attacks.



Reporters Immediate Response by Gender (%)



### Gender Dynamics

For females, anger was the most common response (62%) followed by sadness/worry (49%) and disappointment (22%). For males, sadness/worry was the most common reaction (55%) followed by anger (46%).

### Anger

The media coverage of the Christchurch attacks was criticised, arguing that a lot of Christians are killed by terrorism but not much covered. Seeing no sign of mercy but rage within the 24 hours of the Christchurch attacks, the Muslim reporter was shocked: *“Just angry and upset that most of the rhetoric is ignorant, people making such false claims and believing it. It’s so ridiculous, are they just lying to themselves or are they living under a rock? We need to educate them! but will they listen?”* (Case 178, 16 Mar 19).

Claiming that casualties are expected due to the war on Islam sounded disgusting to the reporter in the context of the Christchurch attacks: *“Just disgusting how ppl can just shrug off human life like it means nothing. are they animals?”* (Case 174, 16 Mar 19).

### Sadness

A man problematising the concept of Islamophobia and mocking the IRA by reporting a case of “Christianophobia” upset the reporter of this case: *“He equated it to him supposedly not being allowed to throw a Christmas party, which is not even factually correct. Attacked the intentions of the Diversity Council Australia. Strange and upsetting ... I never thought someone would take the time to seek out an Islamic advocacy platform and use it to spread hate. Learned a lot about the audacity and extremity of some people”* (Case 105, 19 Dec 19).

### Fear/Frightened

A Muslim man said *“I feel threatened and unsafe”* when the perpetrator told him *“I wish you were there too (in the Christchurch mosque when Muslims were assassinated)”* (Case 124, 21 Mar 19).

Some posts inciting violence were also found extremely concerning and requiring police action. The reporter of the man who pledged to kill 10 Muslims every day stated *“His public posts are extremely disturbing & I’m afraid he might cause harm. This post is not ok and action needs to be taken in addressing this hate speech & radicalism”* (Case 127, 21 Mar 19).

The reporter of a post that argues in length why Islamophobia is not an irrational fear commented that *“[I] realised the extent of Islamophobia that still exists. Will be extra cautious in public”* (Case 168, 15 Nov 19).

### Disappointment

Smear campaigns against Waleed Aly, who is a widely accepted and appreciated TV program host, disappointed the reporter: *“Upsetting and disappointing to see people make a mockery of his broadcast especially since he is a great supporter of Australian culture and Australia as a lovely country”* (Case 230, 17 Mar 19).

The normalisation of killing Muslims in the Christchurch attacks was similarly shocking and disappointing. Shocked by the extent to which people are willing to condone violence against Muslims, under the guise of peace and social justice (Case 182, 16 Mar 19). Similar sentiments were echoed by another reporter: *“Just a little shocked how much people think it’s okay to kill for a kill or the NZ attacks make it okay if because of the Paris and Sydney and other attacks? How do people think that is okay when their very laws do not even accept capital punishment? Where does the foul mentality come from? Really disappointing”* (Case 183, 12 Mar 19).

### Impact

The most dominant impact was an ongoing concern among the reporters since anti-Muslim hate rhetoric is becoming normalised among hate groups and fed by like-minded followers’ posts. Witnessing the mocking of halal food by an anti-Muslim hate group one reporter expressed her concerns: *“Becoming sad... the reality is that Muslims can just be ridiculed so easily, and Facebook doesn’t do much to prevent this from happening.”* (Case 75, 17 Dec 19).

A post explaining the Christchurch massacre by blaming the government “for not listening to concerned people” aroused similar sentiments: *“Feel like this is just becoming normalised. Once you begin to hear so much hate speech it really just becomes normal jargon which is really sad because that is not acceptable”* (Case 176, 16 Mar 19).

Extreme levels of hate directed at Muslims by real people, who are likely to intermingle with Muslims at some capacity, raised concern. This will be addressed in detail in the next chapter on online-offline interactions.


CHAPTER 4:

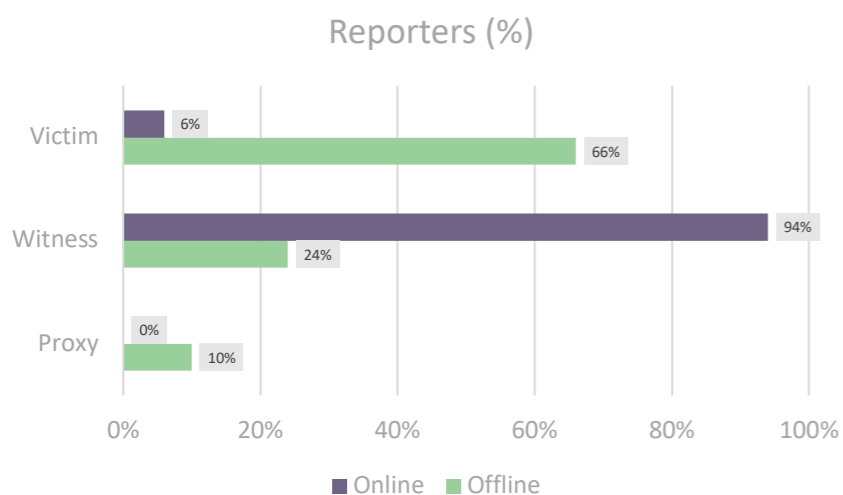
# OFFLINE AND ONLINE COMPARISON



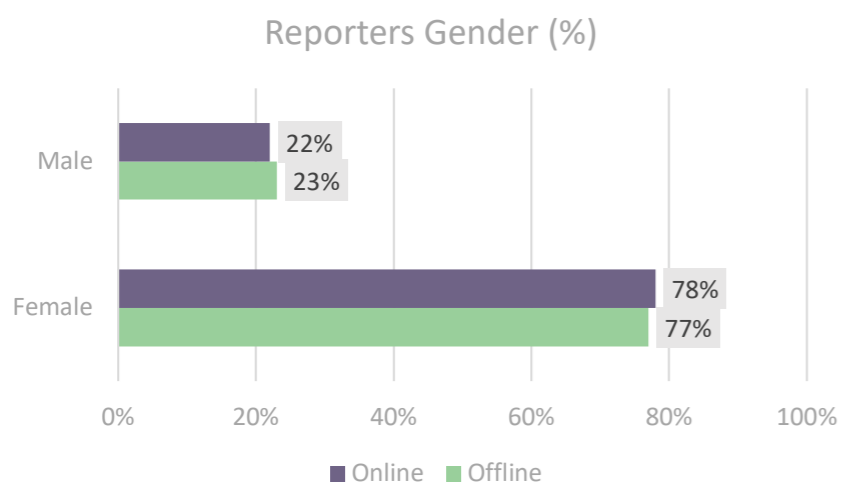
# 1. Demographics

Comparisons are based on 138 offline and 109 online cases as percentages. Witnesses made up the greatest number of reports online, while victims were more closely associated with offline incidents.


  
There is a significant increase in online female reporters (from 42% to 78%) since the last report.



Results for gender indicate very little difference in gender composition in relation to online and offline incidents, with females predominating in online and offline incidents.

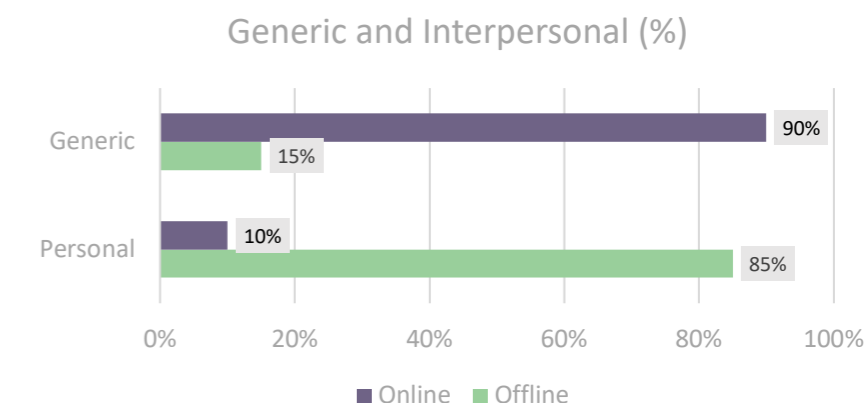


There is a significant increase in online female reporters (from 42% to 78%) since the last report. The withdrawal of online male reporters from 57% to 22% suggests the need for more investment in mobilising online male reporters.

  
The likelihood of reporting to the police was greater for offline incidents (29%) than online incidents (9%).

# 2. Incidents

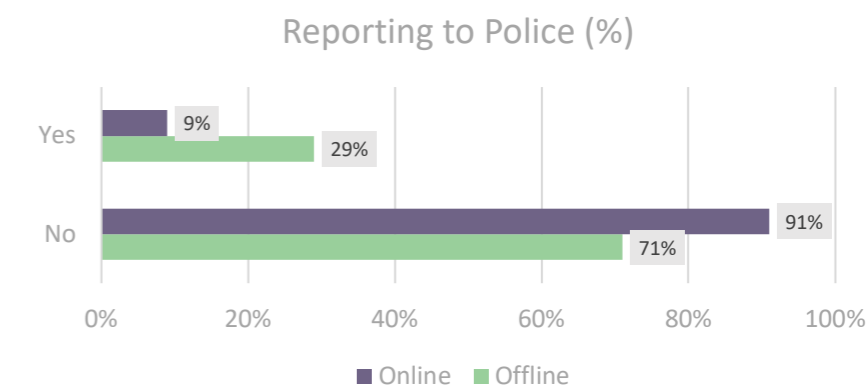
Similar results emerged for online and offline scenarios in relation to generic and interpersonal incidents. Thus 85% of all incidents were personal and 90% of online incidents were generic.



Since the previous report, an increase is observed in online generic (from 80% to 90%) and offline interpersonal cases (from 72% to 85%).

# 3. Social Context: Third Parties

The likelihood of reporting to the police was greater for offline incidents (29%) than online incidents (9%). However, in both cases, the proportions of people reporting incidents to police were low.



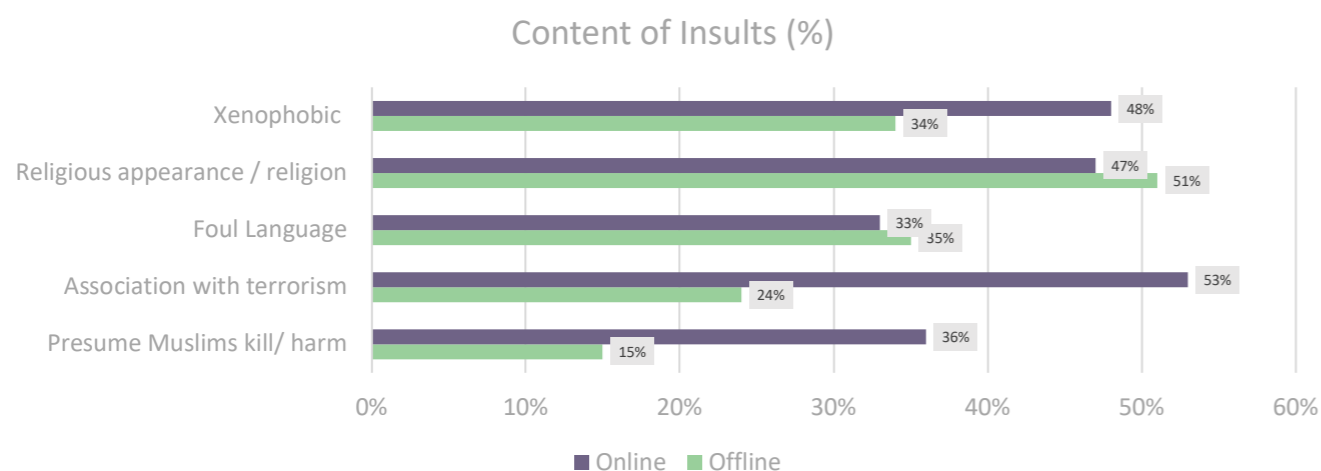
Since the previous report, reporting to police slightly increased in offline (from 22% to 29%) and online cases (from 7% to 9%). Considering the heightened danger of online cases supporting terrorism and the genocide of Muslims and glorifying Tarrant in the aftermath of the Christchurch attacks, reporting to police was still significantly low.



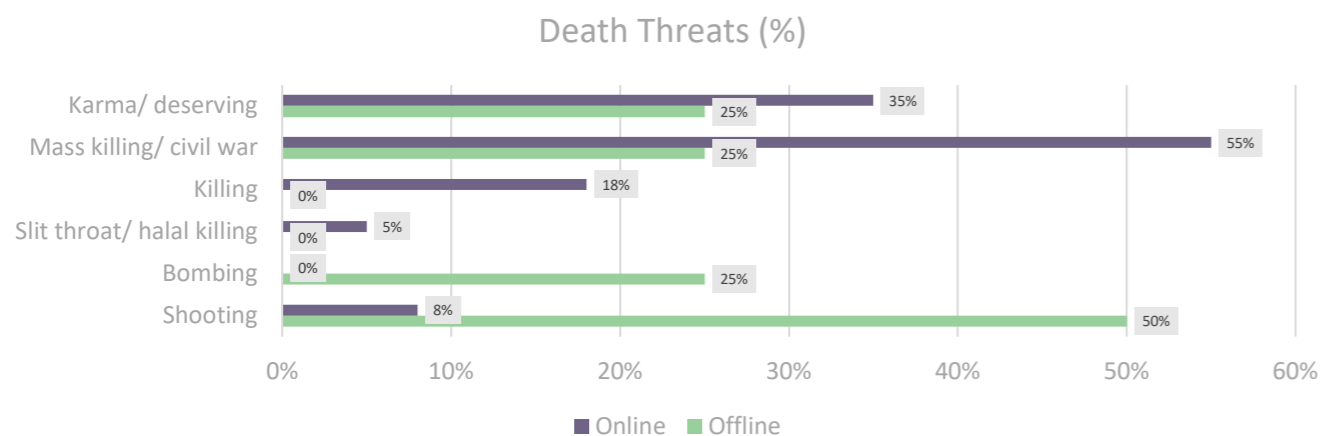
## 4. Content of Insults

Content of insults was coded according to repeated criteria relating to Muslims' religious appearance and religious values or ethnicity, use of foul language, and presumptions that Muslims are associated with terrorism and wish to harm or kill others.

Generally, online incidents dominated all the insults categories. Comments associated with terrorism were much higher online than offline (53% versus 24%), while xenophobic insults were more common online than offline (48% versus 34%). A significant gap was also observed in relation to Muslims killing, with 36% of these comments being made online versus 15% offline.




Death threats were more common online than offline, with 'mass killings/civil war (55%) and 'karma deserving (35%) being the most common form of death threats online. This was followed by threats to kill (18%).



## 5. Severity of Hate Rhetoric

Being online or offline was not a deterrent to expression of hate as there was no meaningful and distinctive distribution between online and offline hate levels. The least and most severe levels of hate fury and wanting to kill were dominant in online hate rhetoric (fury 70% in contrast to 27% offline and wanting to kill 31% in contrast to 6% offline). The remaining severity levels of hatred (i.e. level 2-4) were observed mostly in offline cases.

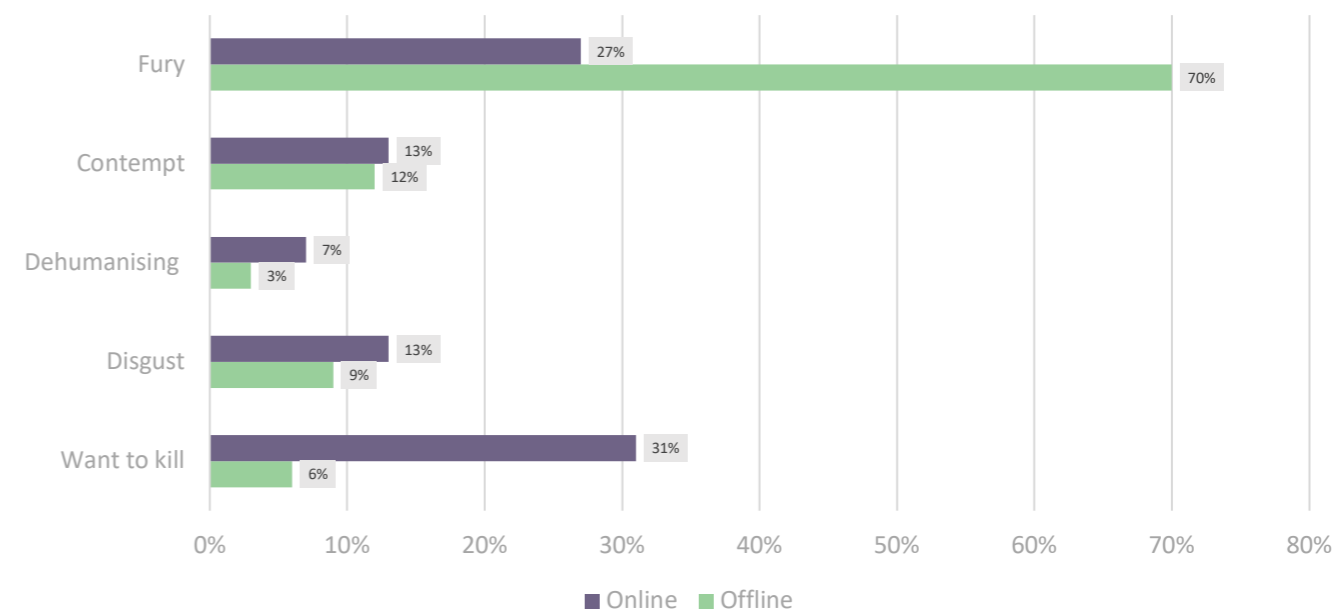


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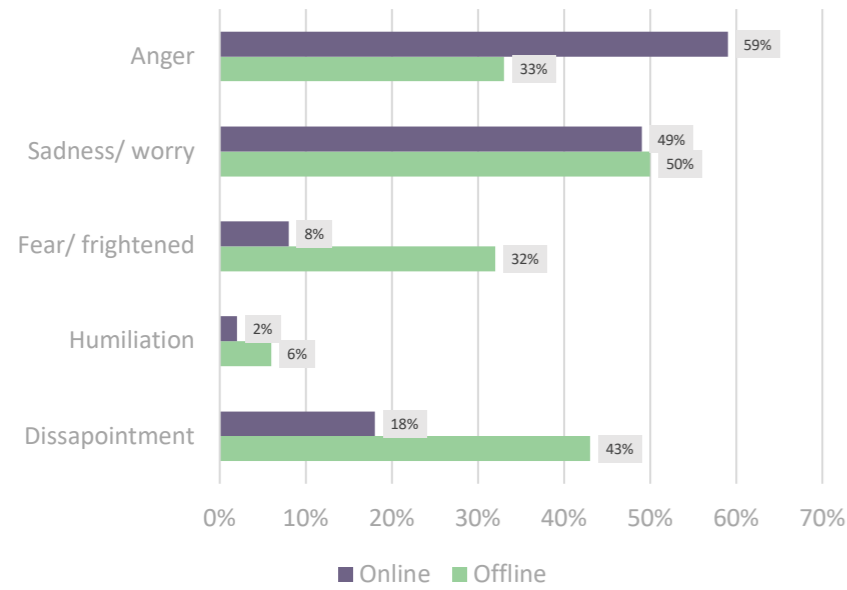
Severity of Hate Rhetoric (%)



## 6. Reporters' Response and Reaction

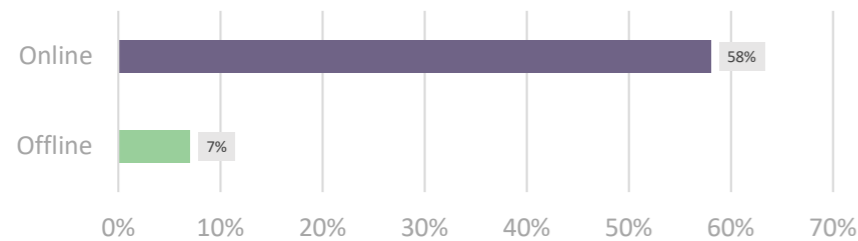
Anger (59%), sadness/worry (49%) and disappointment (18%) were the more common emotions online, while sadness/worry (50%), disappointment (43%) anger (33%) and fear/being frightened (32%) were the most common emotions by the offline case reporters. Disappointment and fear/being frightened were much more common responses offline than online.

Reporters Immediate Response (%)



An association with hate groups was much more prevalent in online platforms (58%) than in offline scenarios (7%) mainly because, unlike online platforms, it was hard to identify/confirm the perpetrators' profiles and ideological affiliations in physical circumstances.

Association with Hate Groups (%)



Disappointment and fear/being frightened were much more common responses offline than online.



An association with hate groups was much more prevalent in online platforms (58%) than in offline scenarios (7%)





CHAPTER 5:

# PRE AND POST- CHRISTCHURCH COMPARISON

The Christchurch attacks were not a surprise to Muslims: “an attack against Muslims was only a matter of time” (Mao 2019). The extreme level of hate (i.e., wanting to kill and remove by violence) does not occur in a vacuum. Salient features to this eco-system include:

1. Anti-Muslim hatred is heightened and orchestrated by far-right parties and their social media groups through conspiracy theories and conflation of Muslims with terrorism in physical and online circumstances (Smith and Iner 2021; Iner et al. 2019).
2. Those conspiracy theories are, in part, propagated through information operations that dehumanise Muslims cumulatively without incurring regulation or moderation (Abdalla et al. 2021).
3. The severity of hate rhetoric is also steadily increased by conspiracy theories and moral panic in the nation over time (Iner et al. 2017; Iner et al. 2019).
4. The strategic use of normalised Islamophobia by the populist right helps the populist right and extremist elements recruit new members to their cause (Smith and Iner 2021).
5. Normalised Islamophobia has led to the minimisation of extreme-right conspiracy theories as mere expressions of fringe political discourse (Mondon and Winter, 2017).

## 1. Pre-Christchurch Climate

The continuum of anti-Muslim hate and its amplification by far-right extremists is best showcased with the heightening of Islamophobia and violent far-right attacks in 2018-2019. A report published by the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR) in April 2019 disclosed that 15% of survey participants selected migration as one of the top threats to Europe, while 22% expressed concerns about so-called Islamic radicalism, which ranked highest among all threatening scenarios (Krastev et al., 2019). According to the report, Europeans were still more concerned about Islamic radicalism than far-right extremism even in the aftermath of the Christchurch Mosque attacks.

The risk of normalising far right and white supremacist ideologies in Europe, and its violent consequences, were underlined by the Council of Europe in the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance report. The Secretary-General of the Council of Europe highlighted the shocking reality that “anti-Semitic, anti-Muslim and other racist hate crimes are increasing at an alarming rate.” (ECRI, 2019 as cited in Bayrakli and Hafez, 2020, p.9). Accordingly, far-right political actors who share similar anti-EU, anti-Muslim and anti-immigration ideologies with white supremacists contribute to this increase (Bayrakli and Hafez, 2020).

Islamophobia was on the rise in the UK during 2018-19. The official statistics recorded an increase of 10% –3,530 documented cases of Islamophobic hate crime, representing 47% of all recorded religiously motivated hate crime offences. The percentage of Muslim adults (16 or over) who were victims of religiously motivated crime in 2017-18 was nearly twice as much as the number of followers of other religions according to Metropolitan Police, Hate Crime Dashboard (Bayrakli and Hafez, 2020).

The Pew Research Centre underlines that discrimination against Muslims in the USA was the highest among that directed at nine different target groups. Most American Muslims (82%) reported some forms of discrimination, while more than half (56%) expressed a lot of discrimination. (Pew Research Centre, 2019).

The UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion and Belief (2020) recorded a biased public perception of Islam and Muslims in Canada. Accordingly, 46% of Canadians have an unfavourable view of Islam – more than for any other religious tradition; more than half of people living in Ontario think mainstream Muslim doctrines promote violence; 52% of Canadians feel that Muslims can only be trusted “a little” or “not at all”; and 51% support government surveillance of mosques (as compared to 46% of Americans). In turn, Muslims were the most targeted group compared to other groups targeted by hate. Muslims and Indigenous peoples had the highest percentage of women victims (45%) between 2010 and 2018 (Kanji, 2020).

Muslim individuals and communities in New Zealand were potentially at heightened risk of attack in the 2018 National Security Situation Update (The Royal Commission of Inquiry, 2020, p. 491). The Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Terrorist Attack on Christchurch Mosques stated that they were aware of new far-right groupings but had not systematically assessed those groups, nor did they produce a national intelligence assessment of the contemporary far-right environment. The terrorist attack of 15 March 2019 changed the public perception of terrorism in New Zealand. It also reinforced that the terrorist threat comes from different groups and ideologies (The Royal Commission of Inquiry, 2020, p. 613).

The perception of Muslims in Australia was not different. Social cohesion reports recorded exceptionally high negative attitudes towards Muslims. In 2018-19, however, negative attitudes towards Muslims were “in a marginally higher range” (39%-41%) in comparison to the negativity towards Buddhists and Hindus (6%-7%) and Christians (12%-14%) (Markus 2020).

## 2. Post-Christchurch Climate

The Christchurch attacks did not change anti-Muslim sentiments as the negative attitude towards Muslims was still 37% in 2020 (Markus, 2021). A nationwide survey found that 58% of the mosques in Australia had faced some form of attack and/or vandalism in 2014-2019 (Poynting et al. 2020). The proportion of mosque attacks across Australia was 29% in 2019 in the wake of the Christchurch massacre. These were disproportionately distributed between the states, with more attacks directed at mosques in Brisbane and Melbourne (Poynting et al., 2021). Of the recorded attacks in 2019, 30% were graffiti attacks, 17% were hate mail, 17% were multiple attacks, 12% were one or more arson attacks (with one mosque reporting six incidents). Just under 40% of the mosques reported verbal abuse of their attendees in 2019. In addition, 17% received threats of violence (with one physical assault), while 20% experienced objects thrown at them or the mosque (Poynting et al., 2021). See the case study on mosque attacks in the Offline chapter for examples.

The Australian Human Rights Commission’s 2020 report, which was based on extensive consultations with Muslim communities across Australia and a nationwide online survey among 1,000 Australian Muslims, found that 80% of Muslims experienced Islamophobia while 43% of Muslims faced workplace discrimination (Sharing the Stories of Australian Muslims, 2020).

Engaging online facilities and platforms, the Christchurch terrorist made a broad impact. The online activities of the Christchurch terrorist sympathisers after the attacks similarly kept the anti-Muslim hate fresh and heightened. TellMAMA, an anti-Muslim hate register in the UK, reported a 692% increase in anti-Muslim hate attacks after the attacks. Targeting mosques or other Islamic institutions in the UK increased by 433% between February and March, from 3 to 16 incidents, respectively (TellMAMA, 2020). Likewise, 20 police forces across the UK recorded 1,213 anti-Muslim incidents from January to June 2019 (TellMAMA, 2020).

A few weeks after the Christchurch attacks, on 27 April 2019, an anti-Semitic mass shooting took place at Poway synagogue in California, leaving one person dead and three others injured. The 19-year-old terrorist, who the Christchurch terrorist inspired, followed the pattern by submitting his so-called “screed” on 8chan, an online anonymous message board, before the attack.

On 3 August 2019, a 21-year-old American white supremacist intended to kill Latinos via a mass shooting in El Paso, leaving 22 people dead and 26 others injured. Following the Christchurch terrorist, he published his white nationalist screed online, echoing the great replacement conspiracy. This attack prompted seven mass white supremacist attacks in the two weeks following the shooting (TellMAMA, 2020).

On 10 August 2019, a 21-year-old white supremacist in Norway killed his Asian stepsister and rushed to a nearby mosque to kill as many Muslims as possible but only found three. Being warded off by those Muslims, the attacker could not kill anyone with his shotgun, two rifles, and nail gun while wearing a bulletproof vest. Mimicking the Christchurch terrorist, he carried a GoPro camera to livestream his mass mosque shooting (Libell and Specia, 2020).

On 2 June 2019, the district president Walter Lübcke was murdered by a far-right terrorist in Germany. The attacker is believed to have associations with militant far-right organisations like Combat 18 (whose stickers in Australia have been frequently reported to the IRA by public viewers) and Network Hannibal, which -according to the German police- recruits former and active security service agents, soldiers and police officers along with right-wing individuals and having a hit-list to assassinate more than 20,000 high-ranking individuals and “pro-immigration” politicians (Bayrakli and Hafez, 2020).

On 9 October 2019, on the Jewish holy day of Yom Kippur, a 28-year-old German far-right terrorist attempted to mass murder Jews by entering the synagogue in Halle. Livestreaming himself but failing to breach the security systems in the synagogue, the far-right terrorist ended up killing a passing woman. Next, he rushed to a kebab shop and killed a man in the shop. (Liebowitz, 2019)

The Christchurch attacks marked an evolutionary step for far-right terrorism (Hutchinson, 2019). Engaging online facilities and platforms in their execution strategy, far-right terrorists caused widespread and long-term impacts, which triggered copycat attacks during 2019.

### 3. Pre- and Post-Christchurch Incidents Reported to the IRA

4x

Offline case reports increased four times, whereas online case reports increased 18 times within the two weeks after the Christchurch attacks.

In the aftermath of the Christchurch attacks, the support for the Australian Muslim community by officials, interfaith groups and the broader Australian society was tremendous. Almost every local mosque received support letters, flowers, and visits by locals. Interfaith communities organised vigils and thousands rallied in Melbourne to support that Muslim community (Axelrod, 2019).

Meanwhile, after the Christchurch attacks, anti-Muslim hate and far-right groups exuberantly orchestrated and amplified the hate rhetoric.

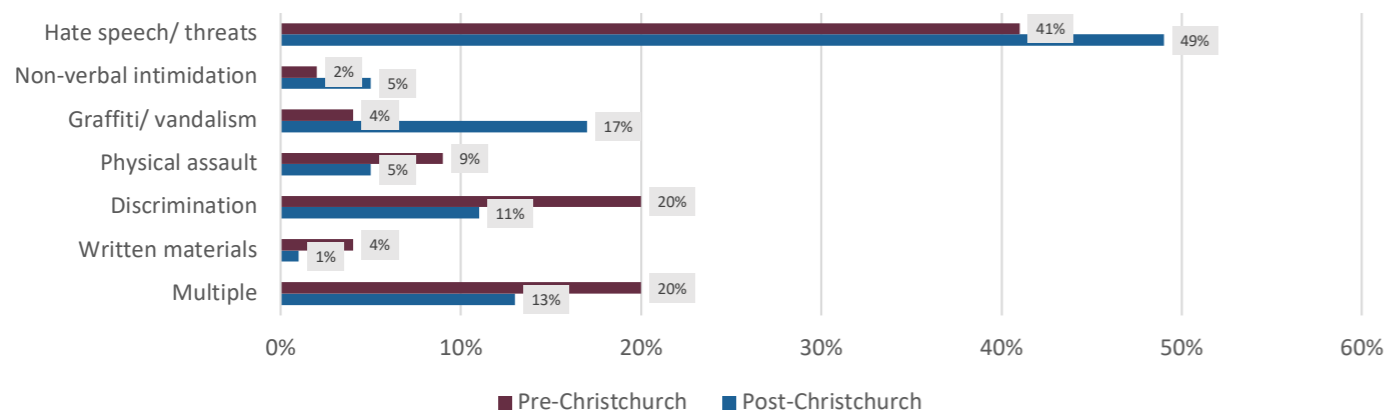
Of the 109 online incidents, 65% were reported in the two weeks following the Christchurch attacks. In contrast, 12% of the 138 physical cases were reported within the same period. When the weekly average report number is considered, offline case reports increased four times, whereas online case reports increased 18 times within the two weeks after the Christchurch attacks.



### Offline Incident Types and Severity of Physical Attacks

Increases in incident types for pre- and post-Christchurch data were observed for graffiti and vandalism (from 4% to 17%) and from 41% to 49% for hate speech and threats, while nonverbal intimidation increased from 2% to 5%.

Offline Incident Types Pre and Post-Christchurch (%)

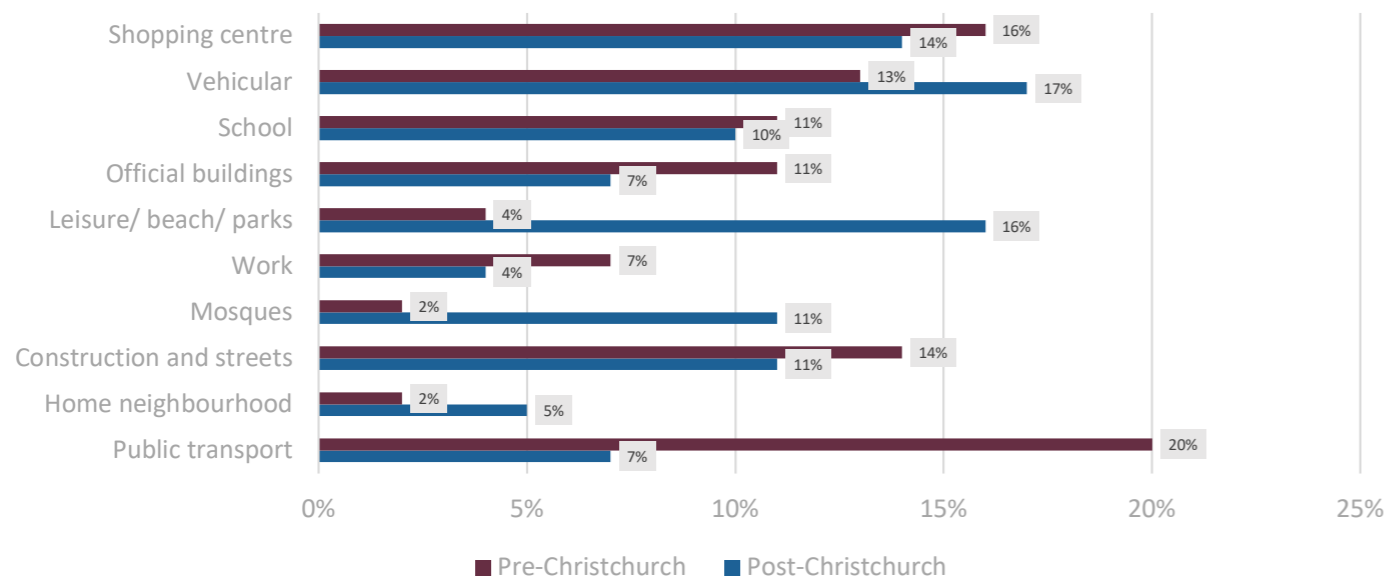


The severity level of physical attacks remained constant, but verbal threats to people or property increased from 14% to 28%.

### Hot Spots

A more significant proportion of home or neighbourhood sites was reported while attacks directed at mosques increased from 2% to 11% in the post-Christchurch period. Incidents in leisure/beach/parks increased from 4% to 11%, while incidents in carparks/vehicular increased from 13% to 17% in the post-Christchurch period.

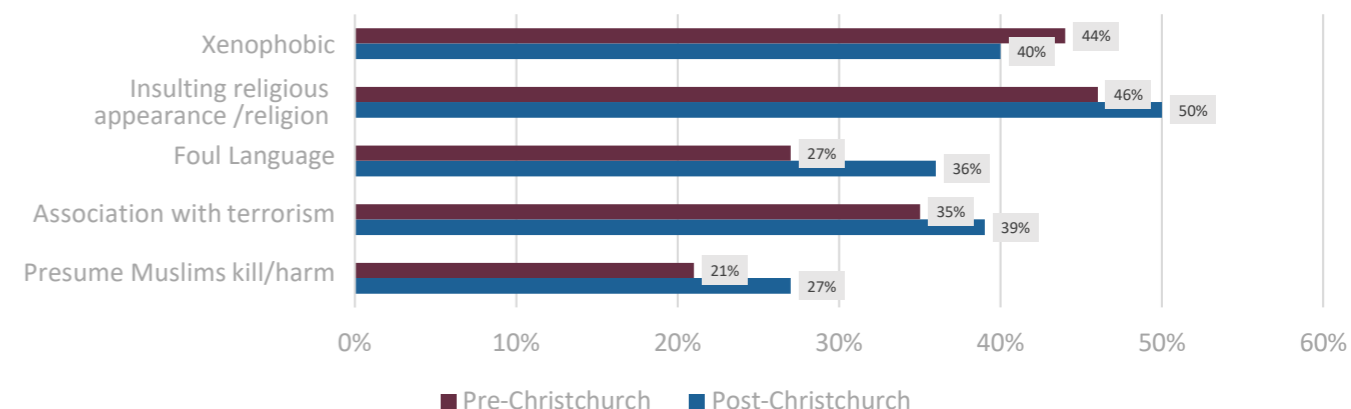
Hot Spots Pre and Post-Christchurch (%)



### Hate Rhetoric

An increase is observed in almost all forms of hate rhetoric in the post-Christchurch period. The increase included the presumption that Muslims kill (from 21% to 27%), association with terrorism (35% to 39%), use of foul language (27% to 36%) and attacks against religious appearance/religion (46% to 50%).

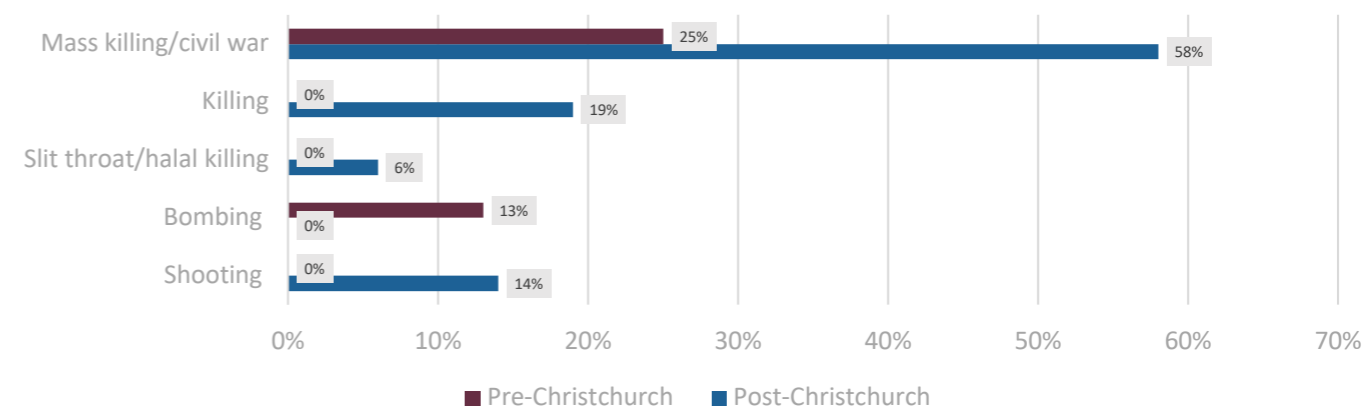
Hate Rhetoric Pre- and Post-Christchurch (%)



### Death Threats

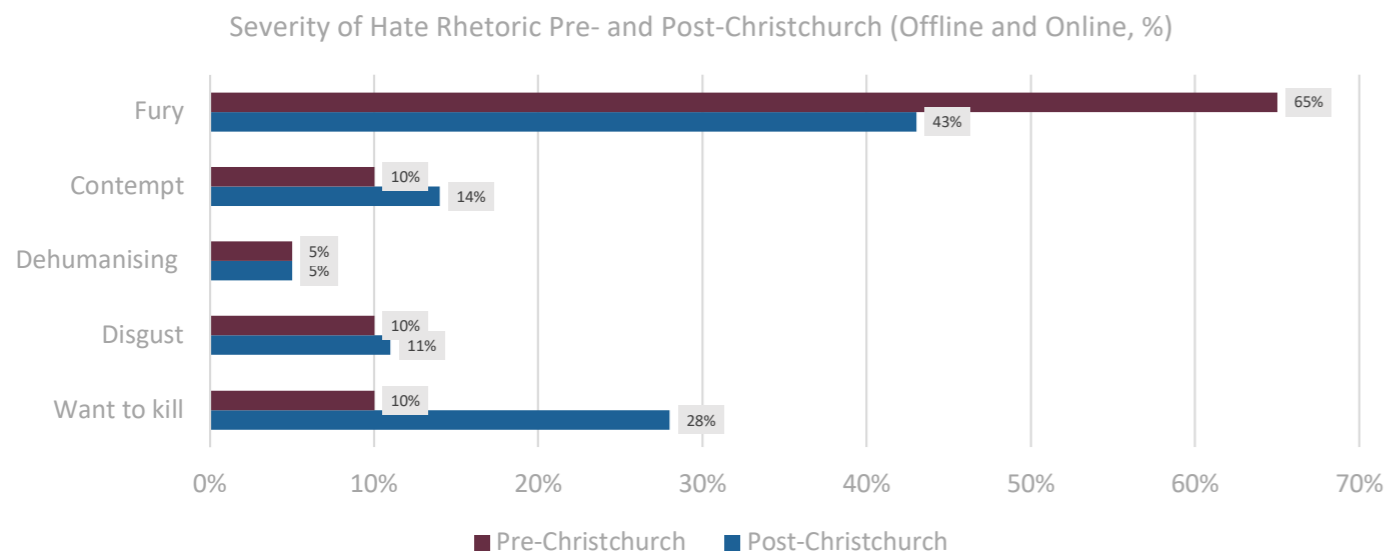
Death threat cases increased overall (including offline and online) but a sheer increase is observed for posts proposing mass killing and civil war (from 25% to 58%) in the aftermath of the Christchurch attacks, followed by threats to kill (0% to 19%) and shoot Muslims (0% to 14%).

Death Threats Pre- and Post-Christchurch (%)

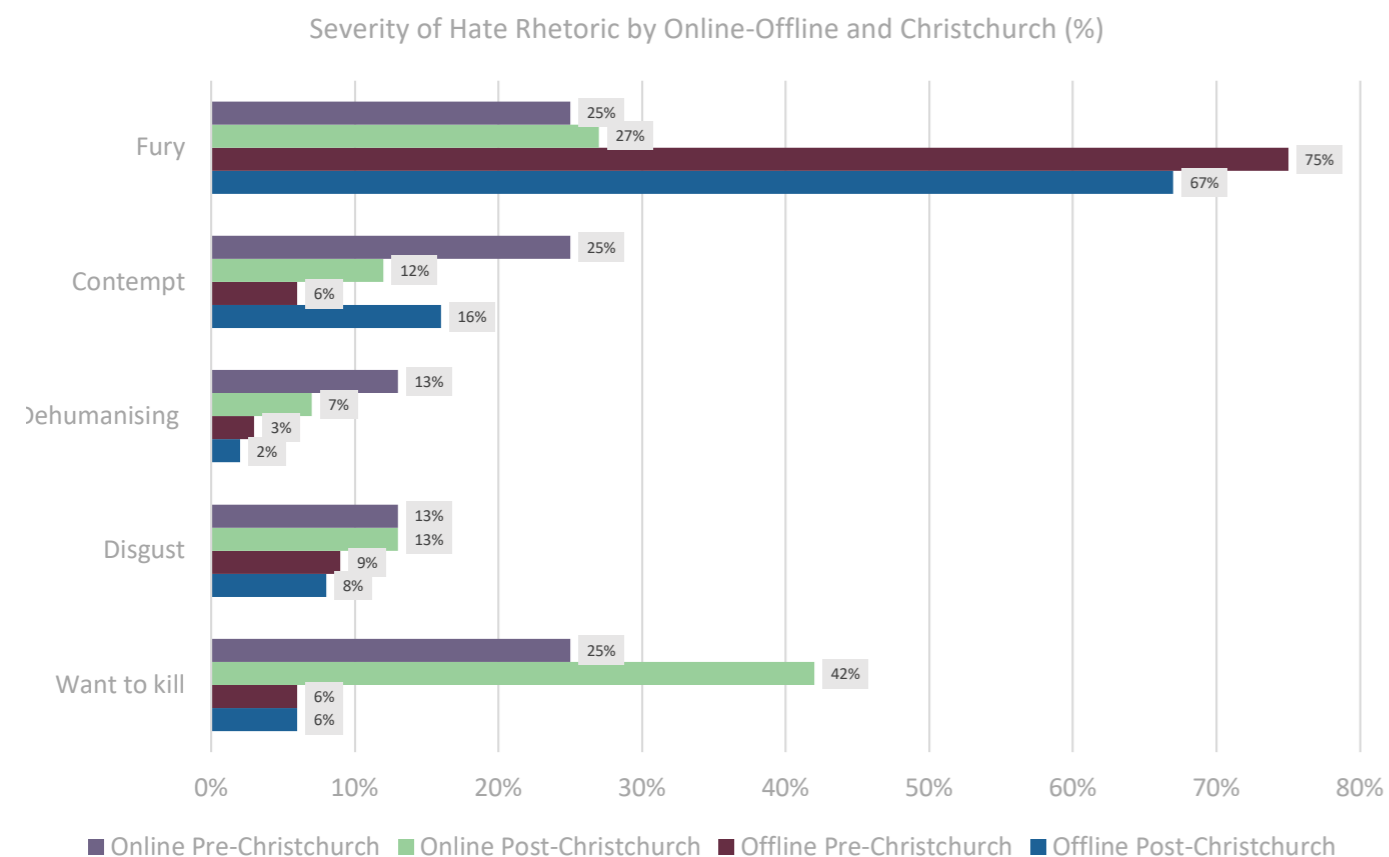


### Severity of Hate Rhetoric

When all the pre- and post-Christchurch period incidents are compared, the proportion of fury (the least severe hate) decreased from 65% to 43%, while an increase is observed in contempt (from 10% to 14%) and wanting to kill (from 10% to 28%).

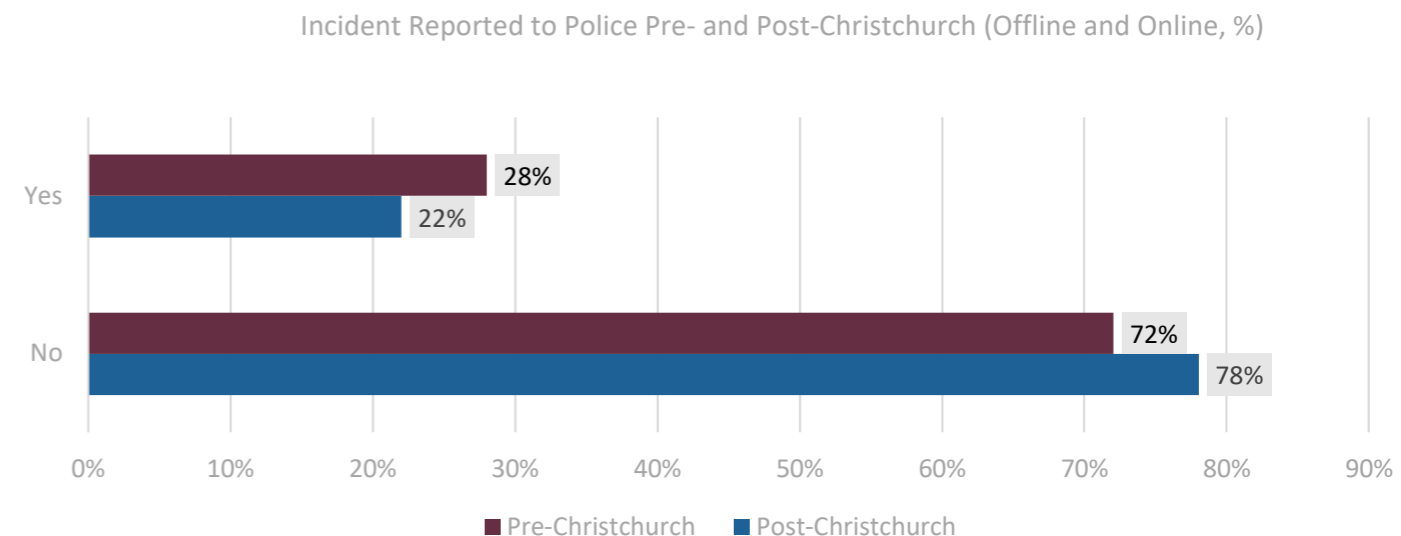


The drop in fury was more significant in offline cases (from 75% to 67%) and the increase in the most severe form of hate (i.e., wanting to kill) was more significant in online cases (from 25% to 42%) when pre- and post-Christchurch periods are compared.



### Reporting to Police

Very little difference emerged in relation to reporting offline and online incidents to the Police, with 72% not reporting to police pre-Christchurch and 78% not reporting post-Christchurch.



## Case study: Online-Offline Interaction

Since the first Islamophobia report (2017), offline and online interaction has been introduced in two ways. Offline incidents leading to online cases and online incidents leading to offline cases. Perpetrators and victims used the interaction between the physical (offline) and online world. While perpetrators tried to spread hate and recruit new members to their cause widely, victims used the same platforms to increase the awareness and vigilance of the target community members against potential abuses.

### 1. Offline Becoming Online

Victims shared their physical abuse experiences on social media to inform the public and warn Muslims about potential hate incidents. For instance, a woman driving with her toddler was threatened by a shooting hand gesture. Two days after the Christchurch attacks, this type of abuse in public scared the victim and mobilised her to call everyone from social media to be vigilant against potential abuse. The post states, “Ladies wearing headscarves please be vigilant. An a... t in a car driving past thought it was a very funny thing to shout, ‘bang bang’ at me while I was waiting to cross the road near the Mcdonalds intersection...” Thankful that her toddler was busy with her mosquito bites and did not realise the threat, the victim “urge[d] everyone to be very vigilant and careful of their surroundings.” (Case no, 17 Mar 19)

While Christchurch was still fresh, the Australian Muslim community shared some physical incidents triggered by the Christchurch attacks. For instance, a neighbour who emptied her rubbish bin on a Muslim teacher’s car (Case 43, 25 Mar 19) was pictured and shared on social media with many comments underneath blaming the action.

## 2. Online Becoming Offline

Far-right groups use social media to reach a broader anti-Muslim community and mobilise them to act in the physical world, such as attending anti-Muslim rallies (Case 248, 16 Dec 18), signing petitions, and sending complaints to the parliamentarians. One post highlighted that online activity is not enough; Tangible actions should be taken **“We can no longer sit on the fence.”** (Case 25, 18 Mar 19). Furthermore, declaring a state of emergency (due to being at war with Islam and Muslims), the poster asks everyone to join the war: **“Those who have a voice, the time has come to speak up. Those who have courage, the time has come to act. It's not enough just to be informed an angry. We need to win their hearts and minds - because, make no mistake about it- WE ARE AT WAR!”** (Case 25, 18 Mar 19).

## 3. What is Real and What is Not?

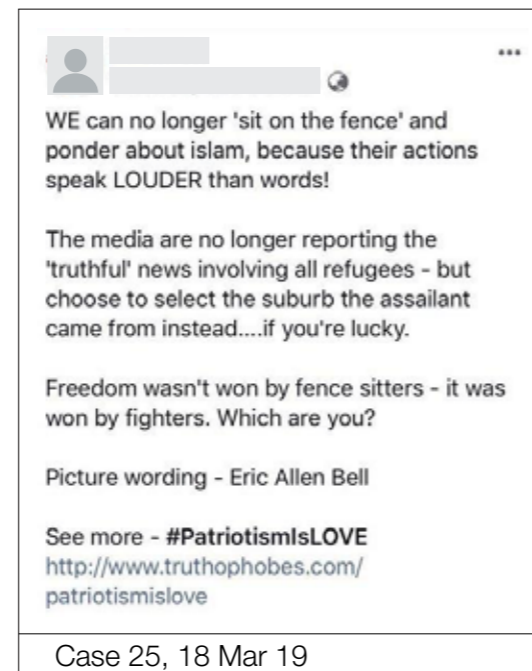
The sense of realness was sparked for reporters when the perpetrators were renowned individuals such as Islamophobic politicians like the (former) Casey Mayor Sam Aziz (Case 41, 22 Mar 19) and Far-right Politician Fraser Anning (Case 239, 16 Mar 19 Case 240, 15 Mar 2019; Case 51, 12 May 19) both of whom immediately blamed Muslims for the Christchurch attacks from their Facebook pages.

The sense of realness was also in force when real perpetrators attacked particular individuals and public figures like a hijabi candidate running for the Salisbury Council (Case 64, 29 Jul 18), Grand Mufti of Australia (Case 23, 17 Mar 19) and the TV program host Waleed Aly (Case).

Online haters, known in person and real-life, worried the reporters. One reporter said, **“This man is a disgusting bigot, I know of him and I could not believe what he is saying. He has more than one account his real name is R..... B.....”**(Case 63, 24 Sep 18).

Likewise, hateful social media comments in the aftermath of the Christchurch attacks by a registered nurse, who was working in a Muslim-populated hospital and interacting with Muslims daily, raised concerns in the reporter. The nurse posted: **“Muslims slaughter Jews Christians Buddhist and others daily now they know how it feels hopefully this is a wakeup call for them to start acting civilised”.** (Case 231, 16 Mar 19).

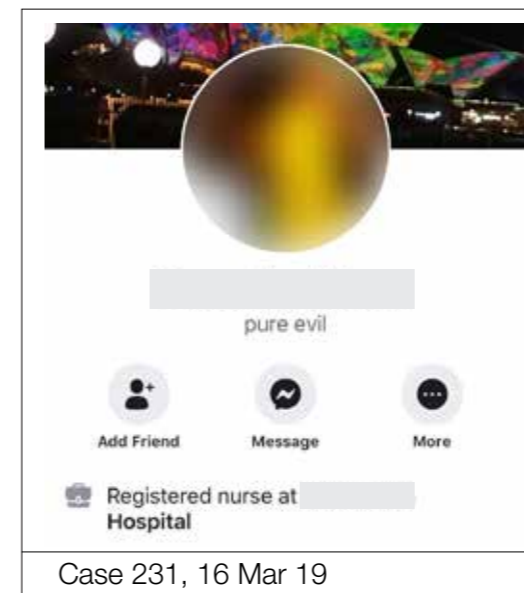
The reporter was worried about being the patient of this nurse in real life.



Case 25, 18 Mar 19



Case 25, 18 Mar 19



Case 231, 16 Mar 19



Case 231, 16 Mar 19

**“It saddens me to think that if I had an emergency B.... hospital will be the last hospital that I would consider going to knowing that there is someone that works there that could cause more harm than good towards me due to the fact that she has hatred towards Muslims. I would be concerned to take my wife my kids or any other family member for that matter.”** The reporter anxious about the safety of his own family and other Muslims, called everyone to stop going to that hospital: **“I would urge all Muslims to stop going there until this Individual is dealt with and to ensure that she is not the only on in that workplace that has hatred towards Muslims.”** (Case 231, 16 Mar 19)

**“This is a post that was put up by a registered nurse that works in Bankstown hospital a place where people's lives are in her hands and majority of these people are Muslims.”** (Case 231, 16 Mar 19).

The interconnectedness of the offline and online world raise anxiety among the target groups due to.

- The fear of unknown perpetrators. A person publicly calling everyone to mass-murder Muslims or expressing his joy for the idea of burning every single Muslim (Case 49, 8 May 19) is real. They are likely to live in the same city or the same neighbourhood or to work in the same workplace with a Muslim. The interaction of a person of this mindset with a Muslim in real-life circumstances is likely to be coloured by hate.
- The fear of well-known perpetrators. Some hate trolls renowned to the public keep posting disturbing hate posts without facing any consequences. This concerns the target groups and other public viewers (Case 127, 21 Mar 19).

The everyday examples of hate captured above showcase that artificially dividing the hate world into offline and online experience is void since they are interdependent and continually feed each other. A German study exploring the social media hate-crime relationships in their article **“Fanning the Flames of Hate”** highlights the link between online posts and anti-refugee incidents in Germany and concludes that social media has **“not only become a fertile soil for the spread of hateful ideas but also motivates real-life action.”** (Karsten and Schwarz, 2020).

Aware of this fact, the Christchurch terrorist and his copycats effectively used both to inspire their comrades while maximising the impact worldwide.



#### 4. The Cyclical Operation and Impact: Online-Offline-Online

The Christchurch attacks were an example of the real-life consequences of online radicalisation, following a long lead up of far-right narratives gaining prevalence in Australia and throughout the West (Davey, 2019). The narratives declared by the Christchurch terrorist were not new. They were found to be prevalent in Australian far right groups on Facebook in the year before Christchurch (Peucker et al., 2018), and have been cycling online since before the Oslo terror attack in 2011 (Archer, 2013). In 2015, a substantial online study found the transnational extreme right ‘counter jihad’ movement was surviving in plain sight on social media, propagating the myth that Muslim were an existential threat through terrorism and immigration (Lee, 2015). This movement continues to operate in plain sight today (Abdalla et al., 2021).

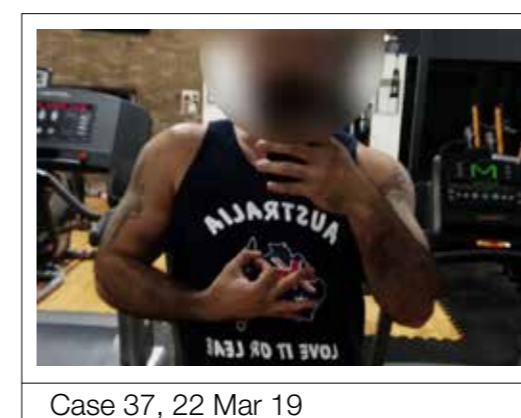
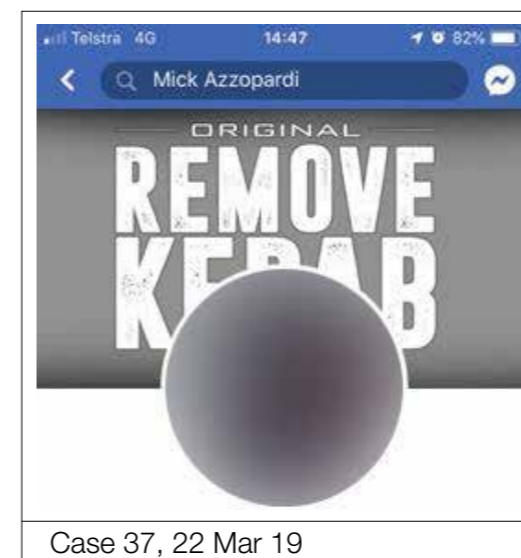
Offline becoming online and triggering hate further and wider for more offline abuses is best showcased in the Christchurch attacks and its ripple effects during 2019. The Christchurch terrorist aimed much more than killing 51 worshippers. The far-right terrorist wanted to “saturate media coverage beyond the act of terror itself,” (TellMAMA, 2020, p.11) as Anders Breivik did by killing 77 young labour activists in 2011, in the meantime introduce his white supremacist screed to an online audience via email.

A decade after Breivik, the Christchurch terrorist was more advanced in increasing the ripple effect of his terrorism by using technology. He first announced the attack online and provided links to his white supremacist screed and forthcoming livestream through the Facebook’s video facility. The announcement of an attack on social media before its execution was “the first instance of the modus operandi that would be adopted by the future attacks.” (Baele et al. 2020). The Christchurch terrorist announced at 08:28 am local time on 15 March 2019 by posting on 8chan, “I will carry out an attack against the invaders.” His post was replied to in 2 minutes by including a meme in the same fashion. Later comments in the thread were about the livestream video. For instance, an anime-style image of Hitler saying, ‘Good luck sh..t poster. Rolling for many dead ch...s and niggers, holy f... [Link removed] OP f...delivered I just saw him kill so many f... hajis.’ (Baele et al. 2020).

The easy, speedy and massive circulation of the livestreamed far-right terrorism in Christchurch could not be stopped. Despite trying to stem its flow, the giant tech companies were beaten by what they created. They indeed operated as the most efficient service providers but this time on behalf of the Christchurch terrorist and his violent extremist ideology. The copycats used online platforms in a very similar fashion. A few weeks later (27 April 2019), the Poway synagogue shooter similarly used 8chan to announce his attack and provided links to his ‘Open Letter’ and livestream video. Next, the El Paso attacker followed the exact same pattern (03 August 2019) (Baele et al. 2020).

The engagement of online facilities inspired novel hate attacks both offline and online, further blurring the real and online worlds. For instance, the day after the attacks, a 50-year-old British man who watched the live stream of the Christchurch terror attack hit random cars with a baseball bat and shouted in public that he was going to kill a Muslim. His Facebook posts echoing anti-Muslim hate included the appraisal of the Christchurch terrorist and his resentment about the sympathy the Muslim community received in the aftermath of the Christchurch attacks (TellMAMA, 2020). A professional soldier from the North Macedonian Republic called for the Nobel Prize in Literature to be given to the Christchurch terrorist (no measure was taken to terminate his role in the army). Anti-Muslim hateful cases were also observed in Australia immediately after the Christchurch attacks (e.g., Case 128, 22 Mar 19, Case 144, 15 Mar 19; Case 133, 27 Mar 19).

The ripple effects of the Christchurch attacks extended to global cyberspace, where hate groups praised the Christchurch bloodshed, glorifying the Christchurch terrorist and cheering for more violence (Bayrakli



There were proud supporters of the Christchurch terrorist from Australian soil. The following individual proudly flagged his support for the terrorist by putting his profile “remove kebab” slogan right after the Christchurch attacks (Case 37, 22 Mar 19). The same supporter also posted an image of himself on Facebook imitating the Christchurch terrorist’s hand gesture immediately after the terrorist’s court appearance with the same hand gesture in September 2019.

and Hafez, 2020). For instance, far-right activists encouraged their audiences to download and read the terrorist’s screed. A flood of comments on social media justified Christchurch as karma or deserving revenge for terrorist attacks committed by so-called Muslims. Similar far-right activity was observed in Australian cyberspace (for details, see the Online Islamophobia chapter).

The “Remove Kebabs” phrase is used among far-right extremist circles to refer to the cleansing of Muslims. “Remove Kebab” was also written on one of the weapons of the Christchurch terrorist who describes himself as a “part-time kebab removalist” in this screed. This phrase was also graffitied across the Holland Park mosque in Brisbane months after Christchurch in 2019. Some found the Christchurch massacre to be less violent and proposed more violent scenarios (for details, see the Online Incidents chapter). The Christchurch terrorist’s hand gesture is also known as a white supremacist symbol of racism and hate, which became popular after the use of the Christchurch terrorist.



There was not much difference between the far-right terrorists and their online supporters expressing extreme hate and inciting violence. The statements of online case reporters disclose their fear and anxiety due to seeing many “potential terrorists” online (Case 8, 16 Mar 19) and freedom to incite online violence (Case 5, 17 Mar 19; Case 231, 16 Mar 19; Case 127, 21 Mar 19).

The sheer division between offline and online is an illusion. Likewise, ignoring the actual consequences of online hate and violence in real world is an underestimation. The Christchurch terrorist and his copycats proved that offline and online operate hand in hand for easy, speedy and massive impact while leaving target communities in fear and anxiety between blurred lines of the offline and online world.

## Data Registration Protocol

**The registration protocol ensured the authenticity and accuracy of the data.**

- > Reports were accorded with the definitions of Islamophobia and other terms listed in the glossary section
- > Incidents were counted if reported by targets, proxies or witnesses.
- > Although the Register is a frequent target of Islamophobic attacks, self-reporting was avoided and cases attacking the Register were discarded in the statistical analysis to avoid inflating the numbers
- > The authenticity of the data was examined (the procedure is explained below)
- > Where possible, essential data missing from the report was retrieved by contacting the reporter
- > After verifying and cleaning the data, coding was undertaken, following inductive and deductive methods
- > When the reporter mentioned another Islamophobic incident, it was counted as a separate case in the data analysis
- > Duplicated reports of the same case were considered under the same case number.

### Confirmation and Verification Process

To ensure data reliability, every case was meticulously scrutinised to discard instances with insufficient information for verification and rule out any likelihood of fabrication

### Confirmation and Verification Process

- > Sending emails for affirmation by the reporters. If a response was not received, a second email or call was made to the reporter. Invalid emails ('bouncing') or incorrect phone numbers (false or answered by a different person) led to the report being discarded
- > If confirmation details were missing, extra measures were applied and scrutinised. Where photographs, news articles, videos and other evidence clearly showed the Islamophobic incident, it was counted as authentic
- > Reports with genuine URLs were deemed authentic

### Other excluded cases involved

To ensure data reliability, every case was meticulously scrutinised to discard instances with insufficient information for verification and rule out any likelihood of fabrication

- > Cases not evidently Islamophobic or where crucial details were missing. For example, one report stated merely that the victim was 'offered pork'
- > Cases that occurred earlier than the incident years of analysis
- > Cases that occurred abroad
- > Hate cases directed at the Register and not reported by third parties
- > Cases identified as fake or that failed to pass the confirmation process. Fake reports were mostly self-evident due to false or exaggerated email addresses like or ihatemuslims@hotmail.com and phone numbers like '(666) 666-6666' The narrative in fake reports also tended to include extreme exaggeration, erroneous details and/or foul language

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**Layout/design:**  
Lama Fadda (lamafadda@gmail.com) and Kais Al Kaissi

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