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MUSLIMS AUSTRALIA AUSTRALIAN FEDERATION OF ISLAMIC COUNCILS INC.

Press Release

RE: Muslim Australia Response to the Prime Minister

Following on from the tragic events in Melbourne on Friday 9 November there have been a number of reported comments by the Prime Minister and other politicians that are of deep concern to Australian Muslims. Today Muslims Australia – AFIC President, Dr Rateb Jneid, wrote to the Prime Minister to register our dissatisfaction. In that correspondence the following points were raised:

- Australian Muslims are as invested as all Australians in the safety and security of our country and it is inappropriate for political leaders to continue to call this in to question. To suggest that Imams and leaders of the community are not doing what they can in this regard is untrue and extremely disappointing.
- Violent crime is not something that is limited, or unique, to Muslims and violence perpetrated by an individual who happens to be of the Muslim faith should never be reflective of the whole community.
- The responsibility for keeping the community safe is that of law enforcement and not community members and leaders. It is disingenuous to place such a burden on lay people when security agencies have an enormous amount of resources at their disposal.
- The tragic incident in Melbourne on Friday is no different, based on what we know so far, than the Bourke Street incident 12 months ago. The faith of the individual does not detract from the information that has emerged about his mental health, substance abuse and criminal history. What role his faith may or may not have played in motivating his actions is clearly difficult to ascertain otherwise the security services would have taken action against him previously.
- It appears to us that when a Muslim commits such acts then all other possible factors are either downplayed or ignored. This is a privilege that is extended in most other incidents to such perpetrators.
- The allegation by Minister Dutton that leaders within the Islamic community are withholding information that is vital to security matters is insulting and offensive and may put members of our community in danger. It is without any basis and



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we demand that those comments are withdrawn and that he issue an unreserved apology.

- The comments of the Prime Minister, and Home Affairs Minister, serve no purpose other than to foster an ill-conceived notion that all Muslims are somehow responsible for the actions of every individual within our community. This is not a burden that is placed on any other community.

Muslims Australia – AFIC calls on the Prime Minister and Minister for Home Affairs to retract their statements and apologise to the community. Our political leaders should be building bridges and harmony rather than a cause for division and discord.

12 November 2018

End.