

Signatories to this Statement

NSW

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| Al Zahra Mosque | Arncliffe |
| Imam Hasan Ltd (Centre) | Annangrove |
| Imam Husain Islamic Centre | Earlwood |
| Imam Ali Centre Ltd | Guildford |
| AA Noor- Nabi Akram Islamic Centre | Guildford |
| Almahdi Cultural Association (Almahdi Mosque) | Campbelltown |
| Muhammadi Welfare Association | Kemps Creek |
| Masjid Al Rida | St Marys |
| Husayneyat Sayeda Zaynab | Rockdale |
| Imam Sajjad Centre | Auburn |
| Australian Ahl Bait Islamic Centre | Auburn |
| Australian Peace Association | Heckenberg |
| Alsajjad Islamic Society | Auburn |
| Imam Ali College Ltd | Beverly Hills |
| Taha Group (Academy) Australia | Campbelltown |
| Alsadeq Arabic Association | Arncliffe |
| Miraj Institute | Bankstown |
| Eqraa Arabic School | Cecil Hills |
| Imam Mahdi Youth Inc | Auburn |
| Muslim Cemeteries Funeral Services | Leppington |
| Al Zahra Funeral Services | Arncliffe |
| Imam Reza Welfare Association | Sefton |

QLD

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| Islamic Shia Council of Queensland | Underwood |
| Alseraj Iraqi Association | Kuraby |
| Fatima Zahra Islamic School | Stretton |

VIC

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| Al Asr Society of Australia | Altona North |
| Elia Society Australia | Ardeer |
| Panjtan Society of Victoria | St Albans |
| The Aleyasin Community of Australia | Forest Hill |
| Australian MADE Inc | Doncaster |
| Abu Talib Community Centre | Hallam |

WA

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| Ahlulbayt Community of Western Australia | Bennett Springs |
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SA

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| Light of Guidance | Pooraka |
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ACT

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| Imam Hasan Centre | Canberra |
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NT

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| Northern Territory Mo'mineen | Winnellie |
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TAS

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| Al Abbas Centre | Howrah |
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Serious Concern Regarding the Silencing of Activism

28th February 2025

The Shia Muslim Council of Australia

www.smca.net.au

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Subject: Serious concern regarding the silencing of activism on Palestine and Islamophobia

The SMCA condemns the recent developments which represent a silencing of voices speaking up against the genocide and human rights atrocities being committed in Palestine and Lebanon. In the last few weeks we have seen:

- Universities Australia (UA) adopt a **controversial definition of anti-semitism** which goes beyond its stated aim of protecting Jewish Australians on campus, and includes criticism of Israel and the Zionist regime.
- The threat to stand down **Muslim community leader Wesam Charkawi** from his position as a student support officer at a public high school.
- An investigation into research grants awarded to **writer and activist Dr Randa Abdel-Fattah**
- The standing down of **prominent cricket commentator Peter Lalor** for his social media activity in relation to highlighting human rights abuses in Palestine.

These developments, amongst others, are very concerning. While the people of Palestine and Lebanon continue to be attacked and killed by the Zionist regime, local voices of protest are being systematically silenced.

Australian universities in particular must remain a welcoming environment for all students, regardless of their background, faith, or political beliefs. It is imperative that these institutions foster open dialogue and critical thinking, rather than stifling legitimate discourse. Notably, the **Jewish Council of Australia** and the **Australian Jewish Democratic Society (AJDS)** have criticized the new definition of anti-Semitism for potentially conflating Jewish identity with support for Israel and Zionism, potentially suppressing legitimate criticism of the Israeli regime and undermining the very principles of academic freedom and inclusivity that universities are meant to uphold.

We call on the Australian government, its institutions, and media outlets to uphold the principles of free speech and fairness, and to avoid using unfair dismissals and other forms of pressure as a means of silencing or intimidating activists who speak out against genocide and oppression. Our university campuses, schools and government departments should be places where everyone feels safe and empowered to express their views without fear of retribution. To uphold these values would be of paramount importance for future generations of leaders and politicians.