

JMA Report 2015

“Engaging Responsible Media”

DIRECTOR’S MESSAGE

It is with pleasure that we present an overview of JMA’s achievements for 2015. We have had another effective year working on a number of important cases acquired through monitoring and referral — a select few are included in this report. We have also had the opportunity to engage with several prominent community organisations assisting them to improve their media handling and public relations capabilities. Our media crisis management and training services have been further consolidated. We extend our sincerest gratitude to all our clients and patrons as well as to the team dedicated to JMA’s success. The support and contribution has been invaluable and we look forward to your continued patronage.

Dr Zachariah Matthews, Executive Director



MEDIA MONITORING CASES

Chris Uhlmann uses anti-Islam bait

Wednesday, 4 February 2015

In an interview with Prime Minister Tony Abbott on 17 December 2014 in the aftermath of the Sydney siege, ABC journalist Chris Uhlmann included the following claims while framing his questions: “... that significant minorities within them support and sympathise with violent jihadism?”; and, “that this is a religion that is resistant to scrutiny or criticism.” He also asserted to the PM: “But you constantly say these acts had nothing to do with Islam? Surely they do.” JMA wrote to Chris Uhlmann objecting to the claims on the basis that they were firstly unfounded and secondly that the false generalisations may have vilified Australians of Muslim faith. JMA argued that the opposite was the case where there seemed to be a disproportionate and sensationalist preoccupation with scrutinising Islam and Muslims. Mr Uhlmann rejected JMA’s assertions.

Andrew Bolt corrects Mufti error

Wednesday, 22 April 2015

On Monday 20 April 2015 the Herald Sun published an opinion piece by columnist Andrew Bolt titled “Hidden profits from halal certificates should be exposed and stopped.” JMA wrote to the columnist about several issues in the article. In it he referred to the Catholic faith as “a controversial dogma.” JMA enquired as to how the PM might feel about his faith being associated with the phrase as well as the term “sneaky” which was also used. JMA also highlighted that the columnist singled out halal certification for scrutiny but did not state whether the federal government certification proposal should include kosher products or not. Finally, he inaccurately reported that the Grand Mufti of Australia was appointed by Muslims Australia. Mr Bolt agreed to correct the error and subsequently removed all online references including several negative imputations of the current Mufti.

Appreciate respect shown

Tuesday, 23 June 2015

JMA wrote to the Shepparton News about an opinion piece titled "Respect Ramadan Values" (22/06/15). The article was a positive change for a faith group that is frequently covered by the media and usually in negative terms. A minor correction was pointed out that the Ramadan fast is from dawn to sunset rather than from sunrise as indicated. And although the list of exemptions may not have been exhaustive, includes children who have not reached puberty and menstruating women. The use of the word 'ignorance' may have been a bit harsh, but the piece certainly did improve awareness and promotes better understanding between diverse communities.

AAP headline-body mismatch

Wednesday, 29 July 2015

JMA wrote to AAP about the report "Principals 'not best to spot extremism'." The headline quote 'not best to spot extremism' could not be found in the body of the report. An unexplained mismatch.

CONSULTATION

JMA engaged/consulted on the following media reports:

- These crimes have everything to do with Islam (Sydney Morning Herald 12/01/15)
- Muslim leaders support Charlie Hebdo's right to offend (The Australian 14/01/15)
- Islamists cannot be permitted to abuse our tradition of tolerance (The Australian 26/01/15)
- IS is a plot by Western countries, Victoria's Al-Taqwa College principal tells students (The Age 23/3/15)
- Girls at Islamic school banned from running, teachers claim (The Age 23/04/15)
- Christopher Cullen murder trial: estranged wife Victoria Comrie Cullen found with throat cut at Taren Point (Sydney Morning Herald 11/05/15)
- Believe it or not, Islam central to radicalisation and ISIS (The Australian 27/06/15)
- Police shooting: shots fired outside police headquarters (Daily Telegraph 3/10/15)
- Guess who's coming to Bendigo (The Weekend Australian 17/10/15)
- Grand Mufti Ibrahim Abu Mohammed blames ISIS attacks on racism (Herald Sun 15/11/15)
- Australian Muslim Party aims to contest federal and state elections (The Age 16/11/15)
- The unwise Mufti (Daily Telegraph 18/11/15)
- Plan of attack: The making of a teenage terrorist (ABC Four Corners 23/11/15)
- Grand Mufti's links to banned Egyptian sheik stir up tensions (The Australian 16/12/15)

Crime Stoppers NSW deletes

Facebook post

Friday, 3 September 2015

On 19th August Crime Stoppers NSW posted a "Wanted" notice on its Facebook page for a man in connection with the crime of organised car re-birthing. JMA wrote to the organisation about some of the comments that were posted by readers in response to the notice. Comments included "Shoot him"; "It so happens the majority of the criminals these days appear to be middle eastern muslims"; "Always shifty Arabs" and "Funny they're always 'Middle Eastern'...he's probably hiding under his wife's hijab.." JMA indicated that comments like these may be in breach of racial and religious vilification regulations and also incited to violence. Crime Stoppers NSW subsequently agreed to delete the post and is yet to outline to JMA its procedure for reviewing comments and removing ones that are offensive.

'Helper' as associate, not subsevient

Thursday, 26 November 2015

JMA wrote to the Daily Mail Australia about the article "Grand Mufti's latest gaffe sees him refer to women as 'helpers' of men" in his White Ribbon Day statement" (25/11/15). It is obvious from the tenor of the Mufti's statement that the word 'helpers' as referenced to Prophet Muhammad was not used in the negative sense of subservience, but rather in the sense of advocating for women's rights — synonymous to words such as associate, teammate, supporter and collaborator. The false imputation therefore had the potential of vilifying the Prophet Muhammad and his followers.

CONSULTANCY SERVICES

Advocacy Packages

Package 1 (monitoring, acknowledgement)	— \$600
Package 2 (communicating, collaborating)	— \$1,200
Package 3 (formal complaint processing)	— \$2,400

Consultancy

Media Management (plans, releases, etc) — Enquire
Media Training (interviews, advocacy, etc) — Enquire

Your patronage is important for JMA's work.
Contact us if you wish to
purchase a package or engage our services.

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Just Media Advocacy

JMA engages the media to promote accurate and responsible reporting.

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