



AUSTRALIAN MUSLIM ADVOCACY NETWORK

ABN: 36 606 000 542

11 July 2020

Lachlan Heywood
Executive Director
Daily Mail Australia

Dear Mr Heywood

Advisory Guidelines: Religious Terms in Headlines

We refer to the abovementioned Guidelines issued by the Australian Press Council in 2004.

On the 8 July, your news service published an article with the headline: *Victoria's biggest Islamic school at the centre of coronavirus cluster has 2,000 students who are ALL being treated as close contacts*. The authors were Kylie Stevens and Jackson Barron. **It was shared 1.2k times directly from your website, and even more through social media.**

On the 8 July, your news service published an article with the headline: *Private Islamic school becomes Victoria's second biggest coronavirus cluster – as more than 100 infected students and teachers are linked to the college*. The authors were Kylie Stevens and Jackson Barron. **It was shared 2.7k times directly from your website, and even more through social media.**

On the 9 July your news service published an article with the headline: *Islamic school 'mega-cluster' that led to 100 cases of coronavirus was sparked by a family gathering*. The author was Kelsey Wilkie. **It was shared 9.8K times directly from your website, and even more through social media.**

On the 25 June your news service published an article with the headline: *How family who broke public health restrictions by celebrating the end of Ramadan caused one of Victoria's biggest COVID-19 clusters*. The author was Alana Mazzoni. **It was shared 31K times directly from your website, and even more through social media.**

A 2017 image of a mosque prayer gathering was used alongside this headline, and appeared within social media posts, which would have been readily interpreted as a the 'gathering' referred to in the headline by social media viewers. Within the article, your news service has also used an image of a random Muslim family shopping, again associating the spread of coronavirus with Muslims more generally (Annexure A)

As you are a constituent member of the Press Council, we wish to make a complaint about the decision to emphasise religious terms within these headlines. We also wish to make a complaint about the images used within the 25 June story.

We ask the Daily Mail to consider how such news is used within social media networks to foster harmful prejudice against members of our faith community.

ANNEXURE B contains a small sample of comments from Facebook of people sharing and commenting on shares of these articles.

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The Press Council's *Statement of Principles* asks members to 'avoid causing or contributing materially to substantial offence, distress or prejudice... unless doing so is sufficiently in the public interest.'

In the *Advisory Guidelines on Religious terms in headlines*, the Council 'urges publications to be aware of the sensitivities of groups about whom they are reporting. Headlines are a particular problem, given the need to capture the essence of a story within a limited compass, and require particular care.'

It is requested:

1. The headlines must be amended immediately to remove the word 'Islamic', including in the URL for the story that appears when it is shared.
2. Both images (see Annexure A) with the 25 June 2020 story must also be removed.
3. All reasonable measures must be taken to avoid repetition of this harm.
 - a. A directive needs to be issued within the Daily Mail to immediately avoid using religious terms in headlines, as part of a commitment to avoiding harm. Members of our community are on the receiving end of public acts of hatred against their families and places of worship. The online fomentation of hatred has real world consequences.
 - b. We are prepared to brief your staff and answer any questions, including through a virtual gathering, should that be of assistance.

We also highlight two recent examples of clusters within schools, reported by the Daily Mail, where the religious affiliation of the school was not highlighted in the headline.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8371567/Three-students-linked-coronavirus-infected-Melbourne-school-test-positive-COVID-19.html>

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8444133/Melbourne-school-closes-SECOND-time-month-student-tests-positive-coronavirus.html>

The sentiments expressed in this letter reflect significant concerns already raised by the Islamic Council of Victoria, and the Alliance of Australian Muslims, of which we are a member organisation.

Yours sincerely,

Rita Jabri Markwell

ANNEXURE A

Images used in the 25 June article

The following image appeared with the headline on social media.



DAILYMAIL.CO.UK

Family who celebrated Muslim festival caused COVID-19 cluster

One of Victoria's biggest coronavirus clusters came from a Muslim family who...

Images from within the article



© Getty Images

A gathering in Coburg, north of the city, last month has been linked to at least 14 cases across multiple households. Pictured: Muslims gather to perform the Eid Al Adha prayer at Sunshine Mosque in Melbourne, Australia on September 1, 2017. Large gatherings were cancelled in 2020 due to COVID-19



Victoria's active cases have jumped from 58 to 143 in the past eight days, while the rest of the country combined has only had 20. Pictured: Shoppers at Broadmeadows shopping centre on June 23



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ANNEXURE B

Reply



Dawn Douglas They still wont get tested, no have no thought for anyone else. The virus causing a virus.

Like · Reply · 1d



Errol J Bissaker 2 viruses together Funny that Both need to be eradicated

Like · Reply · 1d



Sparks Methven Robert I don't hear about Allah protecting the muslambes anymore.Have they got the message.

Like · Reply · 1d



**Chris Saunders** What a cluster fuck

Like · Reply · 1d

**Ian Mawby** Wow..... really.....never would of thought

Like · Reply · 1d

**Rich Dalton** Why Australian government allows this build this bullshit in this beautiful Christian country

Like · Reply · 1d

**Wayne Lang** Brian Twist. Ken Banney

Like · Reply · 1d

**Nathan Nankivell** This is not a surprise to anyone. They don't go by our rules. They have their own rules.

Like · Reply · 1d



↳ 2 replies

**Ibrahim Soussou** great good ridden

Like · Reply · 1d

**William McCallum** Beau Butler exploded like a bomb?

Like · Reply · 1d

**Gary Wright** Just get this shit out of our country!

Like · Reply · 1d

**Jude Ryan** Burn the place down this is Australia not some desert pig hole

Like · Reply · 1d

**Stephen Bowskill** Australia should never have let them in, they are not interested in integrating. Look at the mess Britain is in now.

Like · Reply · 1d





Crann Oh Another "gift" from the inbred camel f#ckers

Like · Reply · 1d



Stanley Starkey and on it goes.

Like · Reply · 1d



Angela Dostal Yep them and the 'cedar meats factories' families and their contacts that and the Hotel quarantine bugles is what is causing the 'outbreaks'.

Like · Reply · 1d



↳ 2 replies



Frankie Gaz Don't forget the Eid, celebrating end of Ramadan. Fucking disgusting the freedoms islam has in Western countries. Don't forget the illegal halal tax put on us by companies that pay massive monthly fees to halal certifiers. Time we all refused to pay it at the checkout.

Like · Reply · 1d



Paul Anderson Yep! "You can't have flexible rules, anymore than you can have,near virgins".

Like · Reply · 1d



Robert Cowan Hoax we all know why turd bull got a steel fence around parliament house. They know that we are coming with a short rope and a tall tree.

Like · Reply · 1d



Diane Allwood Derrick The police had to know about the Ramadan Celebrations they happen every year and this year was not going to stop them! The police and Dan allowed these celebrations just like they allowed the rally! Dan just has too many close mates with Muslims !

Like · Reply · 1d



↳ 7 replies



Gaynor Fisher They should not be able to have separate schools at all

Like · Reply · 23h



David Knowles Kill the virus - demolish the school..

Like · Reply · 23h



Steve Gaylor Nuke Them 

Like · Reply · 22h



Michael Manaton Dot

Like · Reply · 22h



Michael Manaton Don't let them out of the place


Like · Reply · 22h



Robert Johnson Typical selfish lot . Pull it down

Like · Reply · 21h



Chas Miller Don't treat any Muslim then 

Like · Reply · 21h



Jackie McCallum Murdering half wits.....

Like · Reply · 20h



Patricia McConnochie Why Re you surprised they wont use hand sanitisers because they contain alcohol and some of their hygiene leaves a lot to be desired ...

Like · Reply · 18h



Glenn Willmot No soap

Like · Reply · 1h



David Wilkinson Close all down good plan doze them all

Like · Reply · 1d



Peter Rush Yeah so

Like · Reply · 1d



Robert Hanley Victims

Like · Reply · 1d



Rob Owen No surprise there considering the cult members are largely responsible for this outbreak

Like · Reply · 1d



↳ 1 reply



Rudolf Hummer Where do we live ??

Like · Reply · 1d



Rudolf Hummer

NO



Like · Reply · 1d



Mike Jedski Isn't life wonderful

Like · Reply · 1d



Rob Townsend Normal they just won't comply

Like · Reply · 1d



Peter Nicholas Gheorghiu Good news

Like · Reply · 1d



Lindsay Ferguson Not surprising



**Sue Windred**

Yesterday at 14:29 · 🌐

Where was this on the news

[Show Attachment](#)

1

3 Comments 1 share



Like



Comment



Share

**Graeme Osborn** Maybe we should let the virus run its course through these people. Natural attrition.

Like · Reply · 22h

**Joseph Ellul** yup these people that are trying to implement their own law in our country already seem to be above the law....

Like · Reply · 22h

**Damian Huxham** That cluster is related to the unit complex shut downs.
They knew but publicising it would more than likely end in more protests.

Like · Reply · 8h

**Lea Phillips**

Yesterday at 16:04 · 🌐

Them cunts again

[Show Attachment](#)**Phil Jarvis**

21 hrs · 🌐

That's the problem with these cunts they don't fucking listen look at the shit that's happened in Leicester similar thing

[Show Attachment](#)