Islamophobia on the Internet: The growth of online hate targeting Muslims

Select Extracts from Statements of Support for the Report
The full statements appear in the published report

The Hon Mark Dreyfus QC MP, Shadow Attorney General (current) and Attorney General (2013):

"I commend the work of Dr Andre Oboler and the Online Hate Prevention Institute on their recent report… The increased use of social media as a platform for the dissemination of hate speech is very concerning. I have worked closely with the Islamic community during my time in parliament, in particular when I was Attorney-General, and the issue of online hate targeting Muslims has been raised directly with me by a number of community leaders. It is also an issue that has been raised with me by our security agencies, because in demeaning, threatening and generally seeking to exclude members of the Muslim community from our multicultural society, online hate increases the risk factors associated with the marginalisation and radicalisation of Muslim youth."

The Hon John Brumby, Premier of Victoria (2007-2010) and Australian Member of Parliament (1983-1990): "Addressing racial and religious discrimination involves more than just changing laws. It requires a concerted effort to challenge behaviours and transform culture and attitudes...This report is a pointed reminder of the significance of this problem and an important call for ongoing work to highlight and address hate speech."

Ghaith Krayem, Secretary, Islamic Council of Victoria: "This report has opened an important discussion about a topic of great concern… it has become vital in our appreciation of the severity of this issue…The Islamic Council of Victoria is pleased to have been consulted throughout the production of this report, and in seeing the final report, we are pleased to endorse it and to play a part in ensuring its dissemination."

Nina Bassat AM, President, Jewish Community Council of Victoria: "This meticulously researched and well thought through Report by the Online Hate Prevention Institute of the problem of religious vilification against Muslims and the Muslim community, demonstrates graphically just how frequently and viciously one man's freedom of speech is another man's humiliation and degradation... The Report is not only an exposé; it is a call to action, and one can only hope that positive action will follow."

Prof. Andrew Jakubowicz, Principal Investigator, Cyber racism and community resilience research project (CRaCR), University of Technology Sydney: "OHPI must be commended once again for its detailed, sustained and courageous research, on which Australia will increasingly depend for the truth about the nastier side of the hate industry. As OHPI shows, the creators and supporters of these pages are not "mistaken" people who can be educated to be nice; they are deeply committed racists whose goal is to inflame society"

Dr Hass Dellal OAM, Executive Director, Australian Multicultural Foundation: "This report highlights how we cannot afford to be complacent when it comes to matters such as online vilification. The widespread access to online hate speech targeting specific groups has a negative impact on the community as whole, not to mention many physical and emotional health implications for individuals... I congratulate the Online Hate Prevention Institute for their important work against online hate campaigns. The recommendations in this report clearly highlight how we as an Australian community can work together to educate people and tackle online hate."

Peter Wertheim AM, Executive Director, Executive Council of Australian Jewry: "There is an ongoing need for research to inform policy discussions about what our society should consider to be reasonable and justifiable limits on freedom of speech, and the contribution made by OHPI is to be welcomed. The instances this report has documented illustrate how the internet and social media have sometimes provided a megaphone to individuals and groups motivated by racism and other forms of bigotry... the ECAJ commends OHPI for its work."

Priscilla Brice, Managing Director, All Together Now: "It seems as though online hate increases each year. Yet the response of authorities including Facebook has not kept up with the wider community's demands for appropriate policing of content and enforcement of policies designed to remove hateful content and punish perpetrators. Thanks to the work of OHPI there is now a robust and well-documented process for monitoring hate online and holding social media platforms accountable."

Dr Dvir Abramovich, Chair, B'nai B'rith Anti-Defamation Commission: "As this important and meticulously researched report by OHPI reveals, there is a disturbing rise of anti-Muslim bigotry on the internet in variety of platforms and fora such as *Facebook*. Such religious vilification is unacceptable, and the ADC supports the *Racial and Religious Tolerance Act and The Racial Discrimination Act* that make such egregious racial abuse illegal... Online hate is not just a growing problem, it is an insidious epidemic."

Craig Rowley, Chief Executive Officer, LeadWest: "Hate speech has no place in communities, and today that also means hate has no place online. Whatever form it takes, hate is dangerous. It damages individuals and their physical and emotional health. Hate tears apart the social fabric. Hate damages our society as a whole. Remarkable work is being done by the Online Hate Prevention Institute (OHPI)... [the report] is a timely and significant contribution to the elimination of hate in our communities."

(For more about this report, please see: http://ohpi.org.au/islamophobia-on-the-internet-the-growth-of-online-hate-targeting-muslims/)