



Australian Federation  
of Islamic Councils

03 August 2021

**Police Commissioner Mick Fuller**  
**1 Charles Street**  
**Parramatta NSW 2150**

**Dear Commissioner Fuller**

Re: Policing in Sydney's Southwest during current lockdowns

The current strict lockdowns have brought unfortunate but avoidable confrontations between police officers and members of the community.

We do understand and appreciate the difficulty faced by authorities enforcing the lockdown restrictions.

What seems to be amiss in the equation is an appreciation of the difficulties facing minorities who are doing their best to abide by the restrictions and be responsible citizens only to be told in a very authoritarian, costly and humiliating manner that their best efforts are not good enough.

The blame hurled on community members in police statements that attempt to justify excessive over policing of the Southwest with respect ONLY to COVID enforcement is widely perceived as a selective experiment in dehumanisation of minorities that deserve to be treated with the same respect as all other citizens.

Once COVID restrictions are over, the police will, as we have seen in the past, attempt to rebuild relations with the community through community leaders. Unless the police ease off now and show understanding and treat people with respect, these relations will unfortunately continue to deteriorate as will trust in and respect to authority.

The citizenry is accustomed to the usual attempts by government authorities closing ranks and covering up overzealous conduct by coming up with questionable charges against their victims. The police statement concerning the recent Auburn incident reeks of such attempts.

**Australian Federation of Islamic Councils**

*The peak body for Australian Muslims representing  
State and Territory Islamic Councils and Societies*



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In the interest of reclaiming long-term good relations that we have worked hard to rebuild after the abysmal failure of ethnic scapegoating over past decades, I urge you commissioner to issue a very strong directive to all officers, especially those in the Southwest to stop these overzealous recriminations. Such overzealous recriminations create criminals out of good citizens. Failing to evolve police behaviour to one of respectful coexistence will further harm the good standing of the Police Service and the required respect and cooperation that are needed to keep society safe.

Kind regards,

**Dr Rateb Jneid**  
*President, AFIC*

Cc: Premier of NSW  
Minister of Police