

## AFIC Urges Fairness in Pro-Palestinian Protests

Sunday 15th October, 2023

The Australian Federation of Islamic Councils (AFIC) has **called on the NSW government to exercise fairness in its approach to pro-Palestinian protesters today**. Expanding the powers to search individuals without cause at legally permitted gatherings can be perceived as a provocative act and undermines trust in the government.

Many in the Muslim community, and indeed others, feel inhibited in expressing their support for Palestinians due to the 16-year-long illegal blockade and 75 years of displacement. This is further exacerbated by a perceived governmental bias in favour of Israel. The implementation of these expanded powers will be viewed as an attempt to intimidate and restrict the right to protest and freedom of speech.

While other communities have received assurances from both State and Federal Governments regarding their safety and protection, the Muslim community has yet to see the same level of concern. Mosques, schools, and other Muslim institutions continue to experience threats, hate calls, and abuse.

AFIC consistently receives reports of threats and hate crimes against the Muslim community and has made direct representations to the government on these matters. This ongoing situation has led AFIC to issue two notices this week, advising heightened vigilance during all prayer sessions, particularly Friday prayers.

Dr. Rateb Jneid, President of AFIC, stated, "If the actions of NSW Police are heavy-handed today, it will send a message that it is acceptable to assault, threaten, and harm Muslims. Everyone must be free to express their support for Palestinians."

AFIC is aware that the organisers are acting responsibly and have issued their own statement about the proposed rally.

Authorised:

**Dr Rateb Jneid**  
President of AFIC