

المجلس الإسلامي لأستراليا الغربية

THE ISLAMIC COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

PRESS RELEASE

16 June 2014

Muslim community's religious leaders are outraged and condemn *The West Australian* newspaper's sensationalist and misleading news headlines: "**Islamic Boss and brothers implicated in organised crime probe**" p.1 and "**Islamic Chief firearms charge**" p.10 [May 29 2014] in recent reporting of alleged firearm and drug charges laid against West Australian Muslim citizens. This was yet another failed attempt by the *West Australian* to marginalise Muslims with its distorted paranoid mindset. Why did the *West Australian* newspaper single out the religion of the accused? There is absolutely no relationship between the alleged crime and Islam. The accused person is a director of numerous companies and a board director of a Muslim school. He is a president of Islamic Council WA (ICWA) but this does not give the sub-editor of the *West Australian* the right to use misleading religious labelling to describe the President's alleged offence? Offenders who commit alleged crimes are dealt with by the court and should never be condemned or 'demonised' by the press just because of their religious identity or belief system unless religion is directly connected to a relevant crime. We demand explanation why no attempt was made by the *West Australian* to report on the identity of actual offenders who were arrested in January with the 2 kg prohibited drugs sized from a car in Kewdale.

We are of the view that the *West Australian* newspaper is not motivated by desire to report news fairly or objectively when it comes to Muslims or Islam. This type of politically driven reporting by the *West Australian* does not win any favours or support for your newspaper in the Islamic community.

This Islamophobic mindset of the *West Australian* is synonymous of an inherent racist ideology of framing Muslims and Islam in threatening terms as the "Other" is wrong. Muslim community will not tolerate *West Australian's* agenda to criminalise and ostracise it from the mainstream Western Australian community. The myopic racialised and euro-centric world view of the *West Australian* has to be corrected because State of Western Australia in 2014 is a vibrant multicultural and multi-ethnic that embraces diversity of all West Australians and Muslim West Australians are an integral part of this reality. Muslim community will never accept Islamophobic reporting from a tabloid press and will condemn the *West Australian* at every given opportunity.

We insist you correct your newspaper's editorial policy to reflect media ethics and fair reporting. To assist and educate *West Australian* newspaper media policy makers ICWA is willing and ready to provide free Introduction to Islam courses for *The West Australian* journalists, cartoonist and its Sub Editors through ICWA's cultural Islamic awareness program.

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