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DRIVE-BY SHOOTING: AMAN CALLS FOR POLICE AND ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES TO LEARN FROM CRITICISM

AMAN is urging police and elected representatives to reflect on their response to the drive-by shooting of a 20-year-old Muslim on the Christchurch Anniversary and calling for the Queensland Government to introduce hate crime scrutiny panels, as recommended by the Queensland parliament.

New details have emerged about the family's concerns following the attack. Initial police reports were minimal and omitted contextual details about the victim's religious dress, the significance of the timing and place to the Muslim community. Those reports also didn't indicate a high-level response. After some community pressure, police held a press conference on day three.

Until then, the family felt they had no choice but to elevate the issue themselves and seek information online, feeling increasingly vulnerable. The family was also not informed about support services until days later.

Despite the medical evidence suggesting it was a bullet, later confirmed by surgery, police continually referred publicly to an 'assault' by a "projectile", adding to community concerns that police were downplaying the shooting.

The family also reached out to elected representatives, including Queensland Premier and federal Member of Parliament Jim Chalmers, but received no response.

- The family spoke to the office of Jim Chalmers (federal representative) on the Monday after the shooting, requesting support. The family rang again on Friday, expressing concern that the family had not received the same level of support because the boy's "skin wasn't white enough".
- The family also contacted the office of their local state MP, Mick De Brenni. They were instructed to see Mr. De Brenni during his mobile visit at a local shopping centre. The father and wounded son went to visit the shopping centre only to be informed by neighbouring businesses that the mobile service had been disbanded a long time ago. There has still been no response from De Brenni's office.

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The family is grateful that the offender has been taken into custody and charged. However, questions remain about the investigation, which AMAN is pursuing with QPS.

This incident underscores why Queensland needs to introduce hate crime scrutiny panels, as recommended by the Queensland Parliament during the review of hate crime laws. Such panels are used in the UK to facilitate genuine dialogue between community experts and police, improve investigations and build confidence.

AMAN is reaching out to QPS to explore the possibility of gaining a comprehensive understanding of the investigation.

“Our community frequently hears politicians and police *privately* express concern for us. However, when we witness such a lack of empathy and urgency after a major harm to our community, it sends the exact opposite message,” says a spokesperson for AMAN.

“Families and the communities they come from need to know their case is being fully investigated, their concerns are heard, and they are not alone, with no efforts to hide important facts from the community.”

“Regardless of whether it's charged as a hate crime, the unprovoked attack instilled significant fear in the family and community, demanding a more immediate, elevated, and empathetic response.”

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