



Lessons of Christchurch are too Important to Ignore, says Council

“The Ethnic Communities Council of WA extends its deepest condolences to the family and friends of the 49 people killed and the many who were injured in the dastardly act of terrorists in Christchurch earlier today. Some of those killed and injured have close relatives in Australia and other parts of the world and we grieve with them,” said Council President Ramdas Sankaran.

“We are aware that some of them reside in Perth and our Council will extend cost free emotional/psychological support for those who need it and assist them in whatever other ways that we can.”

We applaud the way the NZ Prime Minister Ms Ardern responded to this abhorrent attack and it is a timely reminder for our politicians in the lead up to the coming election not to spread fear, hatred etc. and divide Australians when they should be doing all they can to unite us”, he added.

“Ms Ardern described it as “one of New Zealand’s darkest days” and her staunch rejection of the “extremist ideology” and added “many of those directly affected by this shooting may be migrants to New Zealand, they may even be refugees here. They have chosen to make New Zealand their home. It is their home. They are us. The person who has perpetrated this violence against us is not. They have no place in New Zealand. There is no place in New Zealand for such extreme and unprecedented acts of violence.”

“Our Council is extremely pleased that Prime Minister Morrison condemned the attack that occurred as an act by an extremist, right-wing, violent terrorist. We are also pleased that there has been no attempt to focus on the ethnicity or religion of the terrorists or calls made to leaders/institutions of their ethnicity/faith to apologise for what they did”.

“Extreme acts of hatred don’t happen in a societal vacuum, as fear, mistrust hatred etc. are all inter related. So blame for the deplorable deeds of an individual should never be attributed to the ethnic group or faith of that person. Regrettably politicians and media commentators with vested interests have often ignored this in Australia”, said Mr. Sankaran.

“Our Council also commends PM Morrison’s condemnation of the remarks by Senator Fraser Anning blaming the murderous attacks by a violent, right-wing, extremist terrorist in New Zealand on immigration as disgusting”. The real cause of bloodshed on New Zealand streets is the outcome of hatemongering such as this, said Mr. Sankaran

“Our Council sincerely hopes that politicians, in the lead up to the May election, ensure that the debate is factual and not inflammatory nor indulging in dog whistling on important matters such as immigration, population policy, asylum seekers etc. will undermine the social cohesion that is so critical to prevent incidents such as the one in NZ.”

In condemning the terrorists, “Ms Ardern also said, that “You may have chosen us, but we utterly reject and condemn you. New Zealanders were not chosen for this act of terror because they condone racism but rather that they represent diversity, kindness, compassion and a refuge for those who need it”.

“There is no better way to emphasise social inclusion and hopefully she has set an example for our political and other leaders to follow in doing everything they can to promote diversity, kindness, and compassion and most importantly provide a refuge for those who need it, especially when UNHCR has provided them refugee status based on justifiable fear of being persecuted”, said Mr. Sankaran.

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