Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network Australia (MYAN)

Submission to the Legal and Constitutional Affairs References Committee Inquiry into Right Wing Extremist Movements in Australia

April 2024

![MYAN multicultural youth advocacy network (australia)]

About Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network Australia (MYAN)

MYAN is the national peak body representing the rights and interests of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds in Australia, and those who work with them.

We work in partnership with young people, government, and non-government agencies at the state and territory and national levels to ensure that the needs of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds are recognised and addressed in policy and service delivery. We provide expert policy advice, undertakes a range of sector development activities, and support young people to develop leadership skills.

MYAN's vision is that all young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds are supported, valued and thriving in Australia.

MYAN remains committed to contributing to the protection and strengthening of Australia's multiculturalism. It is fundamental to our vision and core business and we value working collaboratively government and the community in achieving this. A strong multicultural and socially cohesive Australia is fundamental to our success as a nation, and particularly significant for young people who arrive in Australia as refugees and migrants, and those born in Australia to refugee or migrant parents.

MYAN acknowledges the traditional custodians upon the lands on which we work and pay respect to their Elders past and present. We acknowledge that Sovereignty was never ceded and recognise that this land was, is, and always will be Aboriginal Land. We work towards reconciliation with, and self-determination for the First Peoples of this country.

About this submission

MYAN welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Legal and Constitutional Affairs References Committee Inquiry into Right Wing Extremist Movements in Australia.

This submission provides a national perspective; drawing on the MYAN's breadth of experience working with young people aged 12-24 from refugee and migrant backgrounds, their communities and the youth and multicultural sectors across Australia.

Our submission is focused on the rise in Australia of ideologies, groups and individuals commonly referred to as 'right wing extremists' who believe that 'white identity' is under attack and prescribe to a set a ideologies that include promoting the notion of exclusionary 'white nationalism' which at its core is a profoundly racist concept.[1] We believe these racist ideologies are a threat to inclusive democracy and multicultural harmony, and inconsistent with the values shared by the majority of Australians. These groups have no place in contemporary Australia.

Far-right extremism, characterised by its divisive and hateful rhetoric, directly contradicts the values of unity, respect, and equality that form the cornerstone of Australian society. Such ideologies foster an environment of fear and hostility, which we have seen tragically lead to real-world violence, and discrimination against communities based on race, religion, sexuality and gender identity and/or cultural background. This is particularly concerning for the youth we advocate for, as it impacts their sense of belonging and safety, and hampers their opportunities for full participation in Australian life.

MYAN's key concern is that the racist foundations of these movements presents a critical risk to Australia's community cohesion. MYAN condemns extremism and hate speech in all its forms, and we urgently call on all levels of government to recognise and address the racist elements present in these movements. We call for more public debate on this issue, stronger policy and legal responses, and more effort to regulate systems and forums that promote these ideologies.

Response to Terms of Reference:

Our submission responds broadly to "Right wing extremist movements in Australia, with particular reference to: (a) the nature and extent of movements and persons holding extremist right wing views in Australia, with a particular focus on:

      (i)   the threat posed by extremist movements, including right wing extremism.

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[1] Human Rights Council of Australia (2020) *Submission to the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs References Committee Inquiry into Nationhood, National Identity and Democracy* Available at:
https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Legal_and_Constitutional_Affairs/Nationhood/Submissions

1. Far right extremism in Australia

1.1. **Racist ideologies are directly affecting Australia and its political life.** Recent reports from the Australian Security and Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) about the increasing threat in Australia from 'extreme, right wing terrorism'[2] is of grave concern to MYAN. Since taking on the role of ASIO Director-General in 2019, Mike Burgess has consistently reported in each yearly threat evaluation that the danger posed by right-wing extremists has escalated according to ASIO's findings.[3]

1.2. While the focus of violent extremism has overwhelmingly been on Islamist terrorism and radicalisation[4], **there is an urgent need to widen the scope of what counts as 'violent extremism' in an era of alt-right extremism across the world.**

1.3. For example, **America's domestic counter terrorism strategy ignored the growing danger of far-right extremism** in the two decades since 9/11 (mainly focused on American and foreign born jihadists), **which had significant consequences for public safety and community cohesion.** Studies show that between 2008-2017, 71 percent of the extremist-related fatalities committed in America were committed by members of the far right or white-supremacist movements.[5]

1.4. **The monitoring and investigation of extremism in Australia must include domestic right wing and white supremacist extremist groups and individuals.** The right wing extremist attacks in Christchurch in 2019 demonstrate that it only takes one individual to listen to, embrace and act on a violent extremist ideology to have a tragic and devastating impact.[6]

1.5. Although white nationalistic ideology has existed in Australia since colonisation[7], since 2001 **Australia has witnessed the formation and rise of numerous alt-right or neo-Nazi groups,** including the True Blue Crew, the United Patriots Front, the Conservative National Party, the Antipodean Resistance, the Soldiers of Odin, Identity Australia, Reclaim Australia, the National Socialist Network, and the Lad's Society, amongst many others.[8] These groups are known for combining online organisation with intimidating street activity.[9]

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[2] Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (2019) *Annual Report 2018-19* Available at https://www.transparency.gov.au/annual-reports/australian-security-intelligence-organisation/reporting-year/2018-2019-22

[3] Grant. C (n.d) *Right-Wing Extremism in Australia* Foreign Affairs, Defence and Security Available at: https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/BriefingBook47p/RightWingExtremismAustralia#:~:text=A%20particular%20trend%20identified%20by,only%20a%20few%20years%20before

[4] Agius C, Cook K, Nicholas L, Ahmed A, bin Jehangir H, Safa N, Hardwick T & Clark S. (2020) *Mapping right-wing extremism in Victoria. Applying a gender lens to develop prevention and deradicalisation approaches* Melbourne: Victorian Government, Department of Justice and Community Safety: Countering Violent Extremism Unit and Swinburne University of Technology.

[5] Anti-Defamation League (2018) *Murder and Extremism in the United States in 2017: An ADL Centre on Extremism report* Available at: https://www.adl.org/resources/reports/murder-and-extremism-in-the-united-states-in-2017

[6] Ibid.

[7] Campion. K (2019) *A "lunatic fringe?" The persistence of right wing extremism in Australia* Perspectives on Terrorism, Volume 13 Issue 2.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Markus, Andrew (2018) *The far right's creeping influence on Australian politics* Available at: https://theconversation.com/the-far-rights-creeping-influence-on-australian-politics-93723

1.6. **Research has identified a number of commonalities shared across these contemporary groups**. Although there can often be division between and within these groups[10], they perceive themselves as speaking on behalf of the 'common person', and share some or all of the follow characteristics:

- False ideas of biologically or culturally separate races and false narratives of threat to the imagined "white nation".[11]
- A nostalgic, ultra-nationalism view of Australia, where 'true Australians' shared values and cultural characteristics that are threatened by 'outsiders' who are the risk to Australia's social fabric, including non-white immigrants, Muslims, and those who support Aboriginal land rights, multiculturalism, environmentalism, human rights and animal rights.
- Anti-Semitism .
- A stereotyping and deep opposition toward Islam, Muslims and Muslim cultures.
- A belief that immigrants must assimilate into a 'unitary' Australian culture.
- A general disdain for progressive people and ideas.
- A strong sense of heterosexual gender distinction whereby men are 'heroic' protectors of 'capable but vulnerable' women and thus have a general disdain for feminists and their supporters and the LGBTIQ+ community.
- General distrust in government and government systems
- A willingness to defend the state against what they consider to be poor government policies threaten the integrity of the nation (including democratically elected governments).
- A strong support of national defence including a willingness to support violence and militant activities in defence of nation and their perceptions of national culture.[12]

1.7 **Violent speech and violent action are connected**.[13] Ideologies that project false and dangerous ideas of biologically or culturally separate races and false narratives about the primacy of the "white nation" threaten the cohesion of Australian society.

Recent examples include:

- A group of men from the Nationalist Socialist Network — a fringe Australian organization — repeatedly performed the Sieg Heil salute on the steps of Victoria's state parliament in March 2023[14]

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[10] Ibid.

[11] Human Rights Council of Australia (2020) *Submission to the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs References Committee Inquiry into Nationhood, National Identity and Democracy* Available at:
https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Legal_and_Constitutional_Affairs/Nationhood/Submissions

[12] Lewis, J., Lewis, B., Cameron, R., Pond, P., Ghumkhor, S. and Mohamud, M.H., (2017) *Mediating Extremist Violence: A Report on the Role of Media, Far-Right Politics and Gender in Extremist Violence and Social Cohesion in Victoria*. Melbourne, Vic, Australia: Community Resilience Unit of the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

[13] Australian Human Rights Commission (2017) *How to respond to the upswing in racism* Available at:
https://humanrights.gov.au/about/news/opinions/how-respond-upswing-racism

[14] Mercer. P (2023) *Australia confronts threat of far-right extremism* VOA News, May 3rd, 2023 Available at:
https://www.voanews.com/a/australia-confronts-threat-of-far-right-extremism/7076430.html

- In 2023 a group of 30 people marched through the streets of Ballarat shouting white supremacist slogans.
- A gathering of the far-right National Socialist Network in the Grampians where a cross was burnt (an act linked to the Ku Klux Klan) and overt white supremacist slogans were chanted.
- Multiple attacks on Jewish and Islamic schools and religious buildings.[15]
- The distribution of posters at universities across Melbourne that included anti-Asian slurs and threats to deport Chinese students.[16]
- The distribution of anti-Jewish and anti-homosexual posters, that included disturbing, graphic images.[17]
- Abuse, harassment and intimidation of Jewish and Muslim children (as young as toddlers).[18]
- 368 anti-Semitic incidents- including physical assaults- logged in the 12 months to 30 September 2019 by the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, representing a 30 percent increase from the previous year. [19]
- A 107% increase in the number of anti-Semitic graffiti incidents from 2018 to 2019.
- An upsurge in racist incidents against Asian Australians and international students, triggered by racist assumptions that people from China or those who look 'Asian' are to blame for the COVID-19 pandemic.[20]

1.8 **History has clearly demonstrated how dangerous exclusionary nationalist and racist sentiment is for liberal democracies.[21]** Australia's social cohesion, the efficiency of our multicultural policy, and many Australians would be significantly harmed by any return to concepts of an ethnically or racially defined 'nation'[22].

1.9 **National identity should emphasise shared democratic values,** rather than a person's ethnicity or the length of time someone has lived in Australia. Traditional concepts of Australian nationhood that rely on stereotypes that are at odds with contemporary Australia would alienate many in the

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[15] See for example Iner, Derya, ed. (2019) *Islamophobia in Australia Report II (2017-2018). Sydney: Charles Sturt University and ISRA*; Executive Council of Australian Jewry (2019) *The ECAJ 2019 Antisemitism Report* Available at: https://www.ecaj.org.au/the-ecaj-2019-antisemitism-report/

[16] Kwai. I & Xiuzhong Xu. V (2017) *Anti-Chinese posters at Melbourne Universities are tied to white supremacists* The New York Times July 25 Available at: https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/25/world/australia/anti-chinese-posters-melbourne-universities.html

[17] Nathan. J (2018) *The rise of Australia's activist far-right-how far will it go?* The ABC, 31 January Available at: https://www.abc.net.au/religion/the-rise-of-australias-activist-far-right-how-far-will-it-go/10095024

[18] Executive Council of Australian Jewry (2019) *The ECAJ 2019 Antisemitism Report* Available at: https://www.ecaj.org.au/the-ecaj-2019-antisemitism-report/; Iner, D ed. (2017) *Islamophobia in Australia* 2014-2016. Sydney: Charles Sturt University and ISRA

[19] Nathan. J (2020) *Antisemitism in Australia and how to counter it* The Age, February 11 Available at: https://www.abc.net.au/religion/antisemitism-in-australia-and-how-to-counter-it/11953896

[20] The University of Sydney Law School (2020) *Covid-19 and hate crime in Australia* Available at: https://www.sydney.edu.au/law/news-and-events/news/2020/05/07/covid-19-and-hate-crime-in-australia.html

[21] Tavan. G Dr (2018) *Aggressive nationalism is on the rise* Latrobe University Available at: https://www.latrobe.edu.au/news/articles/2018/opinion/aggressive-nationalism-is-on-the-rise

[22] Human Rights Council of Australia (2020) *Submission to the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs References Committee Inquiry into Nationhood, National Identity and Democracy* Available at: https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Legal_and_Constitutional_Affairs/Nationhood/Submissions

community including young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds who share a sense of civic duty, and connection to Australia.[23]

2.   Methods of recruitment and communication

2.1 **Far right extremist groups adopt sophisticated recruitment and radicalisation techniques, including the deliberate targeting of young people**, similar to those seen among jihadists[24]. Given the Australian Government's significant investment [25]in counter terrorism activities[26] in the last two decades alone, there will be many evidence-based learnings that can be applied here.

2.2 **Because many of these groups have not been proscribed as terrorist groups in Australia**, they remain free to recruit, influence, and organise.[27]

2.3 A notable trend that ASIO has observed, beginning with their 2020 assessment, is **the decreasing age of individuals being drawn into extremist activities.** In 2021, individuals under the age of 18 comprised 15% of all individuals involved in ASIO's counter-terrorism probes, showing a significant rise from just a few years earlier. By 2022, the Director-General highlighted that those being influenced by radical ideologies in Australia are younger than previously seen, evidenced by both an increase in the proportion of minors involved and a decline in the age at which radicalization occurs.[28]

2.4 **Studies suggest that far-right youth subcultures are volatile and fragmented** and that people who join these groups are not necessarily ideologically aligned—many of them learn their racist behaviours within the group—but are often attracted to the proximity to violence.[29]

2.5 **Studies indicate that platforms such as Twitter, YouTube, and community forums like 4chan and Reddit play a significant role in garnering public backing for far-right initiatives and coordinated acts of violence**. These platforms, alongside other social media networks, discussion sites, specific online gaming environments, chat services, talk radio, cable news, and traditional print media, are facilitating the spread of modern far-right ideologies in various ways.[30] For example, it is apparent that the Christchurch terrorist was sustained by, and interacted with, a broader sub-cultural online environment that supported his plans to carry out a terrorist attack (of which he discussed online for

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[23] MYAN (2019) *Submission to the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs References Committee Inquiry into Nationhood, National Identity and Democracy* Available at www.myan.org.au

[24] Human Rights Council of Australia (2020) *Submission to the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs References Committee Inquiry into Nationhood, National Identity and Democracy* Available at: https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Legal_and_Constitutional_Affairs/Nationhood/Submissions

[25] E.g. In the 2018-19 financial year, the Australian Federal Police (AFP) alone spent $27,416,195 on counter-terrorism operations

[26] E.g. $13.4 million in 2015 to prevent and counter radicalisation and involvement with extremist groups (including $1.6 million for the Living Safe Together Grants Programme)

[27] McGowan, Michael (2019) *Australian white nationalists reveal plan to recruit 'disgruntled, white male population'* The Guardian Australia, 12 November Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2019/nov/12/australian-white-nationalists-reveal-plans-to-recruit-disgruntled-white-male-population

[28] Grant. C (n.d) *Right-Wing Extremism in Australia* Foreign Affairs, Defence and Security Available at: https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/BriefingBook47p/RightWingExtremismAustralia#:~:text=A%20particular%20trend%20identified%20by,only%20a%20few%20years%20before

[29] Marwick, A., Clancy, B., & Furl, K. (2022) *Far-Right Online Radicalization: A Review of the Literature*. The Bulletin of Technology & Public Life. https://doi.org/10.21428/bfcb0bff.e9492a11

[30] Devries, M., Bessant, J., & Watts, R. (Eds.). (2021). *Rise of the far right: Technologies of recruitment and mobilization*. Rowman & Littlefield.

over a year) and that his extremist views and prejudices were nurtured by an online community that was simultaneously local and transnational in its scope.[31]

3. Racism a core foundation of far right extremism

Despite anti-discrimination law, racism, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia and discrimination remain prevalent within Australian society. MYAN agrees with the comment from the then Opposition Leader Anthony Albanese that "everyone everywhere has a responsibility to confront racism wherever it exists-including here in Australia."[32] **We remain seriously concerned about signs that organised racism is on the rise**, and that individuals are also emboldened to engage in racist behaviour and criminal activity.

3.1 **COVID-19 resulted in extreme isolation for many people who are using online platforms to spread right wing hate**[33] and conspiracy, and people were at risk of radicalisation through the extreme accessibility of this material in the mainstream space.[34] Many subscribers to the white supremacy theories espoused by far-right extremist groups expressed on online platforms, support for violence, armed action, revolution, terrorism and race war.[35]

3.2 **This makes particular groups in our society more vulnerable** than ever to racism,[36] including young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds.

3.3 **Racism and discrimination exists despite the diversity of the Australian community.** Recent findings from the Scanlon Foundation's 2023 Mapping Social Cohesion Report has found that while support for multiculturalism remains high in Australia one-in-six (18 per cent) people said they experienced discrimination in the last 12 months because of their skin colour, ethnic origin or religion. This includes more than one-in-three (36 per cent) from non-English speaking backgrounds, 41 per cent of migrants from a Chinese background, 50 per cent of Indian Australian migrants, 45 per cent of African and Middle Eastern Australians and 39 per cent of people who have migrated to Australia in the last 10 years. Within these groups, those who experience discrimination report a significantly weaker sense of belonging and personal wellbeing.[37]

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[31] Macklin, G. (2019). *The Christchurch attacks: Livestream terror in the viral video age*. CtC Sentinel, 12(6), 18-29.

[32] Albanese. A (2020) Interview. Conducted by the Today Show June 3rd, 2020.

[33] For example a 20 analysis of online Islamophobia revealed that 51.4% of the online harassments were found to be of a violent nature – expressing, encouraging and facilitating violence Available at: https://www.isra.org.au/site/user-assets/Repeort%201-%20islamophobia-in-australia%20updated%20201920190318150537.pdf

[34] Blakkarly. J (2020) *Why white supremacists and neo Nazis are 'delighted' with the corona virus outbreak* The Guardian, 21 April Available at: https://www.sbs.com.au/news/why-australian-white-supremacists-and-neo-nazis-are-delighted-with-the-coronavirus-outbreak

[35] Executive Council of Australian Jewry (2019) *The ECAJ 2019 Antisemitism Report* Available at: https://www.ecaj.org.au/the-ecaj-2019-antisemitism-report/

[36] Southphommasane. T (2018) *Race politics is back* [Opinion piece] 6 August Available at: https://humanrights.gov.au/about/news/opinions/race-politics-back

[37] O'Donnell, J. (2023). *Mapping social cohesion 2023*.

3.4 **Australia lacks a clear and consistent definition of hate crime.** The laws that protect Australians from different forms of hatred are diverse, there are differences between states and territories and people can be reluctant to report hate crimes as they are either unaware of protections under these laws and/or fear retribution from perpetrators as a result of reporting.[38] These gaps have led to a lack of comprehensive data about the incidence of hate crime in Australia. The New Zealand Royal Commission into the Christchurch attack noted that there are often 'fluid boundaries' between hate crimes and right-wing terrorism.[39]

3.5 **Similarly, gaining reliable data on hate crimes perpetrated by far-right extremists is complicated** by current debate over exactly what constitutes violence motivated by far-right ideology.[40] This is compounded by the lack of any systematic way to track acts of far-right violence in Australia.[41]

3.6 **Racism has significant detrimental impacts on mental health**, and can contribute to feelings of anger, depression, heightened fear, and for young people from refugee backgrounds, flashbacks to trauma experienced prior to arriving in Australia.[42] Multiple studies across Australia report a relationship between racism and health and wellbeing outcomes, and the American Academy of Paediatrics has called racism a "core social determinant of health" and "a driver of health inequities".[43]

3.7 **Racism adds unnecessary costs to the workplace and the economy.** One recent study revealed that the annual cost of racism results in more than 3% of Australia's Gross Domestic Product, adding unnecessary costs to the Australian workplace and economy.[44]

3.8 **Racism works against Australia's goal of building a fair and inclusive society**. By contributing to marginalisation and isolation, racism is a key barrier to social inclusion. Experiences of racism diminish a young person's sense of connection and belonging, and diminishes their participation in education, employment, and recreational activities. [45]

4. Politics and the Media

4.1 **Dangerous right wing extremist narratives have the ability to influence and infiltrate Australian politics.** Across the world, racism and xenophobia are becoming normalised as populist right-wing and

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[38] Mason. G (n.d) *Navigating legislation protecting Australians from all forms of hatred* Available at: https://tacklinghate.org/trainingmodule/navigating-legislation-a-guide-for-victorian-practitioners-working-on-tackling-hate/

[39] Grant. C (n.d) *Right-Wing Extremism in Australia* Foreign Affairs, Defence and Security Available at: https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/BriefingBook47p/RightWingExtremismAustralia#:~:text=A%20particular%20trend%20identified%20by,only%20a%20few%20years%20before

[40] Harris-Hogan. S (2017) *Violent extremism in Australia: an overview* Australian Institute of Criminology Available at: https://www.aic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-05/tandi491.pdf

[41] Ibid.

[42] MYAN (2020) Covid-19 and Young People from Refugee and Migrant Backgrounds: Policy Platform Available at: https://myan.org.au/wpcontent/uploads/2020/05/myan-policy-platform-2020-26.5.20-final.pdf

[43] Trent, M. Dooley, D.G. and Dougé, J (2019) The impact of racism on child and adolescent health. Pediatrics, 144(2)

[44] Elias. A (2015) Measuring the economic impacts of racial discrimination Available at http://dro.deakin.edu.au/eserv/DU:30079135/eliasmeasuringthe-2015A.pdf

[45] MYAN (2020) *COVID-19 & Young People from Refugee & Migrant Backgrounds* Available at: https://myan.org.au/wpcontent/uploads/2020/05/myan-policy-platform-2020-26.5.20-final.pdf

extreme far-right discourses become more mainstream[46]. We have seen how anti-Semitic, anti-Muslim and anti-immigration rhetoric can become normalised within political systems across the world. It contributes to the normalisation of intolerance, which can then be exploited by far right extremist groups[47]. Examples in Australia include:

- A (now former) Australian Senator calling for a "final solution" to immigration, and a return to "White Australia".[48]
- This same Senator blaming the Christchurch terror attack on Muslim immigration.[49]
- As recently as 2019, the existence of an Australian political party (the now defunct Rise Up Australia) with an overtly Islamophobic agenda and a strong opposition to multiculturalism.
- Claims by an Australian Senator that Australia was being "swamped" by both Asians and Muslims, and that Indigenous Australians are treated "too favourably."[50]
- Senators voting in favour of a motion to condemn 'anti-white racism' and acknowledge the "deplorable rise of anti-white racism and attacks on Western civilisation" and that "It's ok to be white"-sentiments that echo far-right ideology.[51]
- A Senator suggesting physical punishment for a First Nations child who chose not to sing the Australian National Anthem at school.[52]
- A current Senator and former MP agreeing to speak at anti-Muslim rallies in 2016 which were advertised on neo-Nazi website Stormfront.[53]
- Calls by a Senator to instigate a parliamentary inquiry into food label certification focused on halal certification.[54]
- A Senator inviting notorious far right speaker Milos Yiannopoulos to speak at Parliament House in 2017.
- In 2014, the then Prime Minister of Australia claiming that he wished the burqa was not worn in Australia; that he might support calls for it to be banned in federal parliament.[55]

4.2 Disturbingly, there have also been **links between the youth branches of right-wing parties in this country and far-right extremists. For example,** in 2018, the National Party in New South Wales was

[46] Close. L (2020) *Extremists hiding in plain sight* Australian Strategic Policy Institute available at: https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/right-wing-extremists-hiding-in-plain-sight/

[47] Campion. K (2019) *A "lunatic fringe?" The persistence of right wing extremism in Australia* Perspectives on Terrorism, Volume 13 Issue 2.

[48] Karp. P (2018) *Fraser Anning speech 'straight from Goebbels' handbook', says Pauline Hanson* The Guardian, August 15 Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/aug/15/fraser-anning-speech-straight-from-goebbels-handbook-says-pauline-hanson

49 Karp. P (2019) *'Full force of the law' should apply to Fraser Anning after egging incident, Morrison says* The Guardian, March 17 Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/mar/17/full-force-of-the-law-should-apply-to-fraser-anning-after-egging-incident-morrison-says

[50] Iner, D ed. (2017) *Islamophobia in Australia* 2014-2016. Sydney: Charles Sturt University and ISRA.

[51] https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/oct/15/ok-to-be-white-australian-government-senators-condemn-anti-white-racism

[52] Tavan. G Dr (2018) *Aggressive nationalism is on the rise* LaTrobe University Available at: https://www.latrobe.edu.au/news/articles/2018/opinion/aggressive-nationalism-is-on-the-rise

[53] Iner, D ed. (2017) *Islamophobia in Australia* 2014-2016. Sydney: Charles Sturt University and ISRA.

[54] Ibid.

[55] Grattan. M (2017) Tony Abbott: consider burqa ban in places dedicated to 'Australian values' The Conversation, 6 September Available at: https://theconversation.com/tony-abbott-consider-burqa-ban-in-places-dedicated-to-australian-values-83590

rocked by revelations that far-right activists had infiltrated the state branch and taken up office-bearing positions in the Young Nationals. [56]

4.3 **Australia's leaders, including parliamentarians and political leaders, must stand together to oppose racism and racial supremacy and show unity in condemning any signs of extremism and hate speech in Parliament**. Both sides of government must take clear, decisive action in eradicating any trends towards the normalisation of racism, discrimination, prejudice, and hate speech.

4.4 **These narratives are also shared across media platforms.** There are concerns in Australia that dominant sections of the media industry appear to be contributing to the radicalisation of politics in Australia, and giving a platform to extremist, 'far right' ideology. This concern was highlighted by a former Australian Prime Minister whose petition calling for a Royal Commission into media garnered almost half a million signatures.

The media has a key role in driving debate about major issues. [57]Although they are essential communication tools in modern societies, the interaction between online and broadcast media systems adds an additional complexity whereby racist and discriminatory discourses are amplified and broadly disseminated.[58] **Recommendations:**

Addressing the rise of right-wing extremism is a multifaceted challenge that requires a comprehensive approach. For Australia, a country known for its diverse society and robust democracy, tackling this issue is critical to maintaining social harmony and national security. Below are four recommendations that can contribute to addressing right-wing extremism in Australia.

1. Invest in an immediate review of Australia's terrorism laws to ensure they are equipped to respond to the threat of right-wing extremism.
2. Embed a national definition of, and take steps to criminalise hate crimes and hate speech in federal law.
3. Develop an Australian Parliamentary Code of Conduct to protect against racist ideas which threaten social cohesion including deliberate misrepresentations and stereotyping of refugee and migrant young people in public narratives.
4. Work with media industry bodies, law enforcement, and community groups to develop national guidelines for responsible reporting on immigration, extremism, and particular groups within the Australian community.
5. Improve online regulation and monitoring to address online radicalisation and right wing extremism propaganda by limiting its appeal, and reducing access to extremist material on-line. The internet and social media platforms are often used by right-wing extremists to

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[56] Seccombe, M. (2018) Neo-Nazi Nats and party infiltrations, The Saturday Paper, November 10 Available at: https://www.thesaturdaypaper.com.au/news/politics/2018/11/10/neo-nazi-nats-and-party-infiltrations/15417684007114#hrd
[57] Australian Human Rights Commission (n.d) *The Racial Hatred Act: the media and racial hatred* Available at: https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/racial-hatred-act-media-and-racial-hatred
[58] Lewis, J., Lewis, B., Cameron, R., Pond, P., Ghumkhor, S. and Mohamud, M.H., (2017) *Mediating Extremist Violence: A Report on the Role of Media, Far-Right Politics and Gender in Extremist Violence and Social Cohesion in Victoria*. Melbourne, Vic, Australia: Community Resilience Unit of the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

spread their ideology, recruit members, and organise activities. The Australian government, in collaboration with tech companies, should enhance efforts to identify and remove extremist content online.

6. Implementing stricter regulations on hate speech and providing support for victims of online extremism are also vital measures.

7. Foster social cohesion and resilience among communities by funding initiatives that encourage education, dialogue and collaboration between different cultural, religious, and ethnic groups.