

# Faith-based

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Feedback has been collated from community-led reports and previous publicly available community engagement activity across government and NZ Police. We have pulled the feedback into one place to identify themes that have helped inform the Standing Together Against Hate series and greater NZ Police work.

The community feedback has been grouped into the following themes: Identity, Engagement, Government, Law and Protection, Support, Data, and Communications and Media.



"Social cohesiveness will mean that minority and marginalised groups in society will no longer feel like they're validating their existence or justifying their identities. It will mean safety, belonging and dignity for every New Zealander."

"If we see everybody as equal, then it brings us together. Understand we are all equal first. Respect the uniqueness but look for similarities."

"They strongly felt that social cohesion should not be conflated with assimilation."

## Key themes

Its important all communities are free to celebrate and practice their religion and culture.

Concepts of 'belonging' cannot be confused with assimilation.

For Muslim people, being able to follow their religion without being discriminated against or insulted is crucial. This means:

- **women walking down the street** wearing hijab without hearing racial or Islamophobic slurs, or being abused. They want to feel confident to go out alone without fear.
- employers **enabling Muslim employees to take time out to pray** during their working days
- **children not being bullied** at school for being Muslim
- children **feeling proud of their identities** as Muslims
- **not seeing the Muslim community vilified** in the news each day. Instead, they seek a change in narrative that normalises Islam.'

"faith is often found at the intersection of sexuality, and those who belong to faith groups and rainbow groups described feeling pulled between the two. For them, not needing to hide all aspects of their identity would be empowering."

The Government needs to consider the fatigue of some communities from the level of consultation.

"Over-consulted, but not understood. We will share views on 20 different things, and policy advisors will pick the top three."

## Key themes

Positive engagement would result from agencies honouring the time communities spend, showing how feedback has been considered, what actions will be taken, and what lessons have been learnt.

Better quality engagement would go a long way to restoring trust between communities and government.

"The Muslim community is still healing from the trauma and devastation of the mosque attacks. One of the discussion points was wanting to restore their faith in Government and their handling of consultation processes."

"We hear Government saying they want to talk to communities but then don't do it. [They are] not contacting the right people. They need to action the words that they said would lead to a compassionate community."

"Faith-based participants reported that hate speech and its impact are unlikely to be understood by people who haven't experienced it."

"The Canterbury ethnic and faith-based communities wanted to see meaningful acknowledgements of racism, colonialism and what root issues are driving them. They also wanted to know specifically what is being done to prevent extremism and radicalisation."

"The government needs to give a clear policy proposal and test it out. It needs to be workable, measurable, practical, that can't be weaponised against faith."

## Key themes

**Faith-based communities continue to experience discrimination across society.**

**It is important for government to understand where institutional racism continues to persist and to take meaningful action to address this discrimination across wide ranging environments.**

**When it comes to policy, terminology means different things to different people.**

**Communities need to see how strategies will be workable, measurable, practical, and will mitigate any risks of being weaponised against them.**

"examples of unlawful behaviour and implications of the law would make government proposals more accessible to faith-based groups and give the community confidence that the Government has a good grasp of what it is proposing"

"Faith-based communities experience discrimination and hate speech in a variety of environments, including at work, school, and online. It is directed at ideologies, such as Islam, and is part of broader experiences of racism. Everyone wanted to make sure that law changes do not impact the right to freedom regarding religious ideologies."

# 'Law & Protection'

"We talk about inciting but where does it start? Where do we excuse it, where does it start? Someone like a comedian joking in front of 300-400 people. Is it incitement? It is the start of incitement. You might not take it seriously but someone else might think, 'Oh, this is okay.'"

"often speech that incites hatred cannot be identified until it becomes public, and more resourcing is needed to discover non-public forums inciting hatred."

## Key themes

**Question where the line is with the legislation, where does behaviour cross the threshold, what is considered acceptable.**

**Concern that unintended consequences could see those who are practicing their faith or teaching their religious beliefs could be targeted.**

**There is a need to balance freedom from discrimination with freedom of expression.**

**All communities need to be able to have conversations and open dialogue in order to grow together.**

**Laws alone are insufficient to protect people there needs to be a focus on broad, longer term, prevention measures.**

"People have different ways of expressing themselves. They have their freedom."

"Faith-based communities, in particular, are concerned over the proposed reforms' impingements on free speech, and therefore balance is needed."

"While legislation is good for 'firefighting', it is also essential to look at prevention."

"If you start to avoid any speech about religion because you don't know what you'll say wrong, how can we grow together? There is richness in diversity of views."

## Key themes

**Culturally appropriate support services would see inclusive approaches that consider the roles and acceptable practices within faith-based communities.**

Participants spoke of feeling dismissed by doctors. They need:

- culturally appropriate health care
- Muslim women having their preferences met for female clinicians when giving birth
- general practitioners and other clinicians to respect their husband's role in appointments.

What we heard from Faith-based communities about

# ‘Communications & Media’

‘More platforms are needed to show the everyday lives of Muslims and other communities and break down stigma and stereotypes. These communications and engagements would offset mainstream media portrayal of Muslims only concerning the mosque attacks.’

## Key themes

**Sharing stories of communities can help to breakdown stereotypes and offset harmful narratives in mainstream media.**