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Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence

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Minister for Counter Terrorism

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Acting Minister for Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans

MEDIA RELEASE

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NEW CAMPAIGN TO STOP PUBLIC THREATS OF VIOLENCE

A multimedia campaign launched today will target hate and xenophobia including online abuse and in the community during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Attorney General Mark Speakman said there were alarming reports the pandemic is fuelling racist abuse towards some members of the community.

“Stopping the spread of COVID-19 has required every member of the community to make enormous sacrifices. But the challenges we’ve faced are never an excuse for racism, scapegoating or scaremongering,” Mr Speakman said.

“We need to work together to combat abusive and violent behaviour that discriminates against cultural or religious groups as well as other sections of our community.”

The Stop Public Threats campaign will help victim-survivors and the community understand their legal rights, and ensure that threats of violence are reported to police for investigation.

Acting Minister for Multiculturalism Geoff Lee said the campaign is a valuable resource for diverse communities across NSW.

“Racial abuse and racial vilification in all their ugly forms are never acceptable and go against everything we stand for in NSW. No member of our community should ever feel attacked due to their cultural or religious background,” Mr Lee said.

“This campaign will empower diverse communities with information about how to respond to and report racially motivated incidents.”

The campaign includes a podcast, website, videos, posters and social media materials for legal professionals and the community to send a clear message that physical and verbal abuse is completely unacceptable.

It builds on the NSW Government’s introduction of tough penalties of up to three years’ imprisonment for anyone that publicly incites violence against someone on the grounds of race, religion, sexual orientation, gender, intersex or HIV/AIDS status.

Minister for Counter Terrorism Anthony Roberts said the campaign reinforces the need to stand firm against any form of racism or discrimination.

“Our response to the pandemic and the worst bushfire season on record in NSW earlier this year demonstrates our community’s incredible resilience,” Mr Roberts said.

“There is a small number of individuals with extreme and violent views who want to divide us. We need to reject this behaviour and protect the rights of all NSW residents.”

Keep NSW Safe – a coalition of over 30 religious and cultural groups and high-profile individuals – successfully advocated for the NSW Government to make incitement to violence a crime.

Its spokesperson and the CEO of the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies Vic Alhadeff welcomed the campaign and said it was an excellent opportunity to educate the community.

“One of the critical issues we see is that a lot of people do not understand their legal rights, so this will address misconceptions and encourage people to come forward and report crimes,” Mr Alhadeff said.

To report public threats of violence call the Police Assistance Line on 131 444. In an emergency always contact Triple Zero (000). For more information on the “Stop Public Threats” campaign go to: <http://www.stoppublicthreats.legalaid.nsw.gov.au/>.