

PAULINE HANSON

IMPACT: Pauline Hanson is an Australian Senator who promotes anti-Islam and anti-immigrant views. She has called for a ban on Muslim immigration to Australia as well as the burqa, and has linked Islamic schools, mosques, and Halal certification with terrorism. She blames Islam, in addition to immigration more broadly, for the demise of “white Australia.”

- Pauline Hanson is an **Australian Senator and leader of the right-wing populist One Nation political party**. Hanson has been a key figure in Australia’s public discourse on race since the mid-1990s. Since her election to the Australian Senate in 1996, **she has used her public profile to promote anti-immigrant, anti-Asian, and anti-Aboriginal views as well as Islamophobia**. A self-identified believer in anti-white racism, Hanson has also repeatedly decried the demise of “white Australia.”
- In a 2016 speech before the Australian Parliament, **Hanson claimed that Australia was “in danger of being swamped by Muslims, who bare a culture that is incompatible with our own.”** She then **called for “stopping further Muslim immigration and banning the burqa.”** These are sentiments Hanson has repeatedly expressed in the years since, often as part of inflammatory statements in the wake of tragic attacks on Muslims. She offers no credible evidence to substantiate these claims.
- In the wake of the 2017 London Bridge terror attack, **Hanson released a video promoting the #Pray4MuslimBan as a counterpoint to the #PrayForLondon which was being used to express global sympathy over the attack**. Her comments were condemned by both major political parties in Australia. Hanson responded to this condemnation by **arguing that “Islam is a disease: we need to vaccinate ourselves against that.”** She also used the opportunity to call for a ban on Muslim immigration to Australia. The Prime Minister at the time called her comments dangerous: “Demonising the Muslim community, or attributing to all Muslims responsibility for the crimes of a tiny percentage, is exactly what the terrorists want.”
- Hanson has used her media profile to make unsubstantiated accusations against Islam and Muslims. In response to an incident where a driver ran his car into pedestrians on Bourke St Mall in Melbourne in January 2017, she stated: “All terrorist attacks in this country have been by Muslims.”
- In 2015, **Hanson claimed that Halal certification in Australia was funding terrorism**. She stated: “It’s estimated it’s a \$3 trillion industry and this money can go to mosques, Islamic schools and it’s even estimated that it can go to terrorism.”
- Hanson has also **spoken at Reclaim Australia rallies. Reclaim Australia is a far-right extremist group** that opposes Islam and has attracted neo-Nazi members. Its rallies are known for their racist and violent protests. In a 2015 rally, Hanson spoke against sharia, Islamisation, and the ‘halal tax’.
- In 2016, Hanson **called for a ban on building new mosques until there had been a royal commission “to determine Islam is a political ideology, not a religion.”** The claim that Islam is a political ideology has been used by other conservative and populist commentators to perpetuate the myth that Islam is a threat to Australia. She has also **called for CCTV to be installed inside all mosques and Islamic schools**.
- In August 2017, **Hanson undertook a stunt by entering the Australian Senate chamber wearing a burqa**. She did this because she wanted the burqa banned in Australia. She called on the government to ban full-face coverings in public places and linked the burqa to terrorism. Hanson was widely condemned by both major political parties, including a statement from the Government leader of the Senate, George Brandis, who said: “To ridicule that community [Muslim Australians], to drive it in to a corner, to mock its religious garments, is an appalling thing to do, and I would ask you to reflect on what you have done.”

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- Hanson has consistently denied that her views about Islam and Muslims are racist; she uses the common denial technique that Islam is not a race. This position has been repeated by her fellow One Nation party members, including Senator Malcolm Roberts who used his Facebook page to claim that “Islam is not a race. Islam is not a religion. Islam is a political ideology.”
- In October 2018, **Hanson put forward a motion in the Australian Senate that they acknowledge “1. The deplorable rise of anti-white racism and attacks on Western civilisation, and 2. That is ok to be white.”** The motion was only narrowly defeated (31-28) as the Coalition Government at the time voted with the motion. In her tweet regarding the motion, Hanson wrote that “if the Senate won’t agree to this then we have to admit Australia truly has an anti-white racism problem.”
- **A key aim of Hanson’s One Nation party is the eradication of “radical Islamic terrorism,” which she links to anti-white racism and the demise of “white Australia” and Western civilization.** In part, the party’s policy reads: “The terrorists say they want to kill white people and wipe out Western civilisation. The rise of anti-white racism in the Australian media is providing succour to these extremists. One Nation will introduce a penalties regime for anti-white racism, on equal standing with other forms of racism.”
- In the aftermath of the March 2019 Christchurch massacres, another Australian Senator, Fraser Anning tweeted that “the real cause of bloodshed on New Zealand streets today is the immigration program which allowed Muslim fanatics to migrate to New Zealand in the first place.” The Australian Senate was unified in condemning the Senator, who later removed the tweet. **Pauline Hanson and her One Nation party members abstained from voting in the Senate censure, effectively supporting Senator Anning’s claims.**
- In August 2019, Hanson used her Twitter account to claim that a “twitter mob” was trying to get her de-platformed from Twitter. She called on her followers to use #WakeUpToRacism to share their experiences of anti-white racism. The hashtag was quickly co-opted by others who used it to ridicule her claims of anti-white racism.

This factsheet is published in collaboration between the Bridge Initiative and researchers at the Challenging Racism Project at Western Sydney University. More information about this project can be found [here](#).