

MOSQUES — ATTACKS

460. Mr P. ABETZ to the Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Interests:

Could the minister please outline the state government's response to last night's torching of a car and graffiti vandalism attack outside the Thornlie Mosque?

Dr M.D. NAHAN replied:

I thank the member for the question. Just to inform members, last night a car was set alight at the Thornlie Mosque. A few days before that, at Southern River Mosque, there was another attack. These incidents are an attack on all of us. Luckily, we live in a very harmonious society committed to diversity of religion, ethnicity and freedom of expression. By singling out a certain segment of the community, in this case the Muslim community, this is an attack on us. Just on the people, they are no different than ISIS.

It was made worse by some conditions. Firstly, we are in the holy month of Ramadan and during Ramadan, after the fast is broken, people go to the mosque so the attackers knew that there would likely be a large number of people there. Secondly, the Thornlie Mosque is associated with the Australian Islamic College Thornlie, which has 2 000 kids. The attempt was to illustrate hatred and discrimination to young minds. Also, the school has a large number of children of the foreign students who pay money to attend Curtin University. They are mainly from the Middle East, but also a range of other places. It sends a signal to our guests—our foreign students—and their children that Western Australia is not a hospitable place. Thirdly and probably worst of all, in the attack at Southern River Mosque, someone threw a pig head into the building, defiling the mosque. It is despicable. We could see the reaction, particularly of the Islamic community, as being reviling and defensive, but the sheikh Yahya Adel Ibrahim said this; he is the imam of the mosque, the school, and at Curtin University —

“Thankfully our community won't start hating and playing blame games and singling out groups of people in our society.

He goes on to say —

“I know the outpouring of support from the community will be overwhelming because Perth has the best, kindest, and most warm-hearted people.”

That is how to respond to hatred like this. I would like to thank the sheik for it and I would like all of us—in government, and hopefully Parliament—to stand by our Muslim brothers and sisters at this time of attack.