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News24.com.au has uncovered details of Labor's \$87 million in funding for muslim organisations through multiculturalism grants, including millions in funding for a controversial organisation which supported the repatriation of ISIS brides.

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‘Yet another red-hot rort’: 94 per cent of multicultural grants go to Labor seats

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The Albanese government has awarded about \$87 million in multicultural grants to Muslim-linked organisations since coming to office, including millions to the controversial Australian National Imams Council.

An analysis of grant records provided to News24.com.au by One Nation identified more than 100 grants and grant variations involving Islamic institutions, Muslim community organisations and other groups with documented links to the Muslim community between 2022-23 and 2025-26.

The largest individual funding commitments included \$27.5 million associated with the Australian National Imams Council’s security program, \$16.5 million for the Bachar Houli Foundation, \$12.65 million across grants to the UMA Centre, \$5.5 million for the Afghan Islamic Centre and Omar-Farooq Mosque and \$4.4 million for the Foundation for the Islamic Museum of Australia.

Other recipients ranged from Islamic societies, mosques and Muslim women’s organisations to cultural centres, welfare organisations and community language schools.

Some organisations are explicitly Islamic institutions, while others are community or cultural organisations with documented links to Muslim communities.

It follows a previous [News24.com.au analysis of grant records](#) which found the government had awarded \$385.9 million in grants categorised as multiculturalism between 2022-23 and 2025-26.

That analysis found about \$86.7 million went to organisations identified as Muslim-linked, representing around 30 per cent of grants associated with religious organisations.

ANIC receives largest share

At the centre of the funding is the Australian National Imams Council, headed by president Imam Shady Al-Suleiman.

Grant records supplied to News24.com.au show a \$24.75 million grant and a \$2.75 million variation associated with the Security Uplifts for Muslim Communities program.

The Department of Home Affairs describes the underlying program as a \$25 million investment over three years to improve security at Muslim faith-based sites, including mosques, schools and Islamic centres.

ANIC is administering the program, with eligible Muslim organisations able to apply for money for measures including CCTV, alarms, access controls and security.

Home Affairs told News24.com.au that the department could track funding distributed by third-party organisations and confirmed neither Melbourne's Al Bayyinah Islamic Centre nor Bankstown's Al Madina Dawah Centre had received grant funding.

ANIC this week condemned controversial remarks by Al Bayyinah preacher Abu Ahmad after reporting on a sermon in which he quoted material referring to taking up arms against enemies.

The council said it was deeply concerned by the remarks and condemned incitement to violence, while stressing that the conduct of individuals should not be used to vilify religious communities.

Questions over ANIC

However, the government's decision to channel the security program through ANIC has previously prompted criticism from another major Islamic body.

The Australian Federation of Islamic Councils said last year the government had allocated the \$27 million in funding to ANIC through a closed, non-competitive process.

AFIC argued there had been no open call allowing other mosque boards, Islamic councils or national bodies to compete to administer the funding.

It also disputed ANIC's representative status, arguing the organisation represented individual imams rather than mosque boards and community institutions.

AFIC said it wrote to Mr Albanese and Multicultural Affairs Minister Anne Aly on September 9, 2025 outlining what it called “serious concerns” about the arrangement.

AFIC said the government provided no response to the concerns, which the Albanese government did not deny when asked by News24.com.au.

The disagreement has continued this year. In February, AFIC president Rateb Jneid said: “The Muslim community is not ANIC”.



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President's previous controversy

President of ANIC Al-Suleiman has himself been the subject of political controversy, but he has continued to meet with members of the government.

In 2016, then-prime minister Malcolm Turnbull condemned comments the imam had made about homosexuality.

Mr Al-Suleiman condemned homosexuality in an online sermon and associated it with the spread of diseases including HIV/AIDS.

In 2022, the council also welcomed the Albanese government's repatriation of ISIS brides from camps in north-east Syria.

“The Australian National Imams Council (ANIC) and the Muslim community welcome the repatriation of Australian women and children from North-East Syria,” Al-Suleiman said in a joint NGO statement.

He described it as a “good and positive step” that would give the women and children an opportunity to return to Australia and begin a new life.

Labor defends spending

The Albanese government has defended its broader multicultural grants program, arguing the spending is designed to improve security and strengthen social cohesion.

A spokesperson for the Minister for Multicultural Affairs told News24.com.au the government “proudly invests in communities right across Australia”.

“We make no apology for investing in Australian communities, if other political parties don’t want to back Australians that’s up to them,” the spokesperson said.

“All funding is delivered in line with Commonwealth Grants Rules and Principles.”

Home Affairs has separately said the government is investing more than \$500 million in multiculturalism and social cohesion.

This was despite the majority of Australians saying multiculturalism has become a challenge for social cohesion, amid the national debate on “monoculture”.

The [News24 Pulse / YouGov July poll found 46 per cent of voters believe multiculturalism](#) was becoming a problem for social cohesion.

A further 10 per cent said multiculturalism had not served Australia well, while 37 per cent said it continued to serve the country well.

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