

CAN AUSTRALIA THRIVE IN AN ERA OF PLURALISM?

Peter Adamis 16 December 2025

A Personal Reassessment in 2025. A decade ago, I posed a provocative question in my article "Can the Western World Survive Under Islam." (<https://abalinx.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/CAN-THE-WESTERN-WORLD-SURVIVE-UNDER-ISLAM.pdf>) As I reflect on the intervening years, I have come to recognise that my original concern was fundamentally incomplete. The authentic challenge facing Australia and Western democracies is not whether Islam itself poses an existential threat, but whether liberal democracies can maintain their defining characteristics—pluralism, rule of law, individual rights, and free expression—whilst addressing legitimate security threats from ideologies that explicitly reject these principles.

When I first articulated my concerns in 2014, I focused heavily on demographic change. The subsequent decade has fundamentally altered my analytical framework. I have witnessed millions of Muslims living peacefully within Western societies, contributing meaningfully to economic, cultural, and social development. Yet the global terrorism landscape has shifted markedly, with Burkina Faso emerging in 2024 as the country most severely affected by terrorism.

Most alarmingly, the attack on Sydney's Bondi Beach on 14 December 2025 crystallised the security threat I had warned about. During a Hanukkah celebration, two gunmen killed 15 people in Australia's deadliest mass shooting since Port Arthur in 1996. Authorities recovered improvised explosive devices and designated the incident as terrorism targeting Australia's Jewish community. NSW Police confirmed that Islamic State propaganda had previously identified Bondi Beach as a symbolic target since 2016. The attack did not emerge in isolation. I have traced a disturbing trajectory of ideologically motivated violence affecting Jewish and communal targets across Australia, including the 2015 Parramatta police shooting, the 2024 synagogue arson attack in Melbourne, and the 2024 Wakeley church stabbing.

Yet I must reassess my 2014 demographic concerns. European Muslims comprise approximately 4.9% of the population, with migration rather than natural increase driving growth. Conversion to Islam does not significantly add to Muslim population growth in Europe, with roughly 160,000 more people leaving Islam than converting between 2010-2016. In North America, whilst Canada's Muslim population increased 145% and the United States saw 90% growth between 2000-2025, the United States Muslim population remains approximately 3-4% of the total.

Legitimate integration concerns do arise in certain contexts. Sweden experienced profound challenges after accepting more asylum seekers per capita than any European nation. Malmö's over 30% Muslim immigrant population correlated with crime pattern shifts, though this reflects not inherent Muslim criminality, but rapid, under-resourced integration challenges. Australia's approach has differed markedly from European experience. The Bendigo mosque disputes of 2015 initially exemplified cultural anxiety, yet a decade of community dialogue transformed conflict into integration. The Bendigo Islamic Community Centre established an "open mosque" welcoming broader participation and founded an Interfaith Council.

The Bondi Beach attack reminds me that complacency remains unwarranted. Yet it should not trigger blanket suspicion of Muslim communities, which would validate extremist narratives. Rather, it demands intelligent security policy grounded in evidence, sustained community engagement, and recognition that Western societies can maintain both security and pluralism. The test facing Australia is whether we possess sufficient wisdom to distinguish genuine threats from baseless fears. The future depends upon choices made today.

In closing, I would like to add that despite some misgiving within Australian society, selective immigration and multiculturalism at its best is and has always been a positive aspect of Australia's growth. However, having said that, it should never be at the expense of the Australian people, and those who make Australia home are expected to integrate, share our values, and respect our institutions and way of life without losing sight of who they were and where they came from. Australia, in my opinion, is a very tolerant country until someone attempts to change our way of life.