



THE HON PETER MALINAUSKAS MP

PREMIER OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Mr Ahmed Zreika
President
Islamic Society of South Australia
Via email president@islamicsocietysa.org.au

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Dear Mr Zreika

Thank you for writing to me about Adelaide Writer's Week which is part of the Adelaide Festival.

The Adelaide Festival is independent from Government, and under the *Adelaide Festival Corporation Act 1998*, is not subject to Ministerial direction on the artistic nature or content of performances or other events or activities conducted or promoted by the corporation.

I respect the law and the fundamental democratic principles behind it and have made it clear at every juncture that I would not seek to direct the board.

However, when asked by the Board for my opinion, I made it clear that the State Government did not support the inclusion of Dr Abdel-Fattah on the Adelaide Writers' Week program.

In 2024, the Board determined to prevent the appearance of Jewish author, Mr Thomas Friedman at the Adelaide Writer's Week following the receipt of a letter, co-signed by Dr Abdel-Fattah on 6 February 2025, expressing grave and urgent concern at his inclusion in last year's program due to alleged racist statements towards middle eastern countries and regimes.

In my assessment, that decision was an entirely reasonable one and I have publicly noted my support for this. I believe a decision to remove one author because of racist commentary or hate speech should be applied consistently.

The conflict between Israel and Palestine evokes exceptionally strong and polarising views and emotions. Freedom of speech is fundamental to Australia's democratic society and any Australian is entitled to express their views on this conflict, including their strong opposition and condemnation of the views or actions of involved parties.

I have stated publicly that no state or non-state party is above the law – including the state of Israel and Hamas.

I have publicly acknowledged and expressed my horror about the cataclysmic human toll in Gaza, noting that the killing of innocent Palestinian civilians should never be acceptable as a strategy in any armed conflict. I have also stated that the ongoing destruction of their homeland is not acceptable.

However, regardless of my or anyone's views on the conflict, I believe that behaviour and speech that is insulting, racist in any form, promotes religious discrimination or hate speech is never acceptable.

My views on Dr Abdel-Fattah are in no way related to her Palestinian heritage or her strong opposition to the state of Israel. She is entitled to have these views and to talk about them freely.

However, she has actively undermined the cultural safety of others, celebrated the murder by terrorists of innocent civilians, and been involved in the doxxing of other artists and academics because of their faith or cultural background.

Dr Abdel-Fattah has expressly committed herself to denying cultural safety to others who do not share her opinions, as well as actively campaigned for the removal of several others from festival programs because she does not support their views.

This is fundamentally inconsistent with the principles of the Adelaide Festival and Adelaide Writers' Week. Namely, that people of all views should be able to express themselves in a culturally safe way.

I do not believe these actions are consistent with social cohesion and common decency. My government condemns and rejects all racist or antisemitic behaviour, remarks or sentiment, including some of the remarks and actions attributed to Dr Randa Abdel-Fattah.

I recently discussed the impact of the Bondi terror attack on Australia's Muslim community during a press conference and strongly condemned a reported increase in Islamophobic incidents that have occurred since.

In addition, following receipt of your correspondence on 22 December 2025, I made a referral to SA Police to ensure appropriate consideration and action is taken in relation to the safety concerns raised.

I was pleased to lead a motion in South Australia's Parliament celebrating South Australia's Muslim community and its significant contribution to our state since the first Muslim settlers in 1865. This motion is on the public record in Hansard.

I also offered the State Government's support for those escaping Gaza through our new arrivals support package, which I also publicly spoke about in the media.

Similarly, I have offered my support to Australia's Jewish community following Australia's worst race-based terror attack on Australian soil.

I appreciate my government's ongoing dialogue with the Islamic Society of SA and assure you that my views with respect to Adelaide Writer's Week have always been about promoting compassion and common decency between human beings, regardless of their race or religion. I hope that we can continue to work together to ensure we can achieve this for South Australia.

I thank you for writing to me about this.

Yours sincerely



Peter Malinauskas
PREMIER

19 / 1 / 2026