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I am a PhD candidate from the School of Social Sciences and Psychology at UWS. My PhD project investigates the impact of mosque sermons on audiences in Sydney's mosques. My most recent research resulted in the publication of the NSW and Sydney Mosque Report.

Mosques, Muslim Leaders and Social Cohesion

Have mosque leaders done enough to promote social cohesion in the Australian context? This paper reports from a survey of 50 mosque leaders (Imams, office bearers and committee members) in NSW, and the recording and content analysis of 50 mosque sermons, 10 of which were recorded in the week immediately after the Martin Place Siege in Sydney. Survey results show that mosque leaders play a pivotal role in the promotion of peace and social solidarity in the Australian society. Mosque leaders strongly support Muslim-Australians integration with the wider Australian society through participation in the country's political and civic institutions. The sermons delivered in mosques on Fridays focused primarily on topics and issues of a social and spiritual nature, emphasising the importance of ethical conduct in all aspects of life. Most sermons delivered in the week immediately after the Martin place siege condemned the incident from an Islamic perspective. The evidence provided in this paper presents that religious leaders, as purported by Durkheim, play an essential role in facilitating social cohesion.

