

Table of Contents

- ***Violent Newcastle mosque attack condemned***
-

Violent Newcastle mosque attack condemned

AAP (06.0.2012) - NSW Citizenship and Communities Minister Victor Dominello today appealed for help in bringing the offenders to justice.

"Attacks on places of worship whether those places are Muslim, Christian, Jewish, Buddhist, Hindu or other are unacceptable in a society that values religious freedom and social tolerance," he said in a statement.

Two unidentified men attacked the Wallsend mosque minutes after a group of children had finished a scripture class on Monday evening, The Newcastle Herald reported.

Seven people were trapped inside when one man with a large tattoo of a cross on his neck attempted to gain entry.

He kicked open the fence gate, hurled an object at the mosque's front door and then kicked the front door.

Both men tried to knock over the front fence before one of them shouted what appeared to be abuse.

Vic Alhadeff, chief executive of the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies, said religious bigotry had no place in Australia.

"We strongly condemn attacks on all faith groups, whether it be mosques, churches or synagogues," he told AAP today.

Mr Dominello said he had asked the Community Relations Commission to offer its assistance to police.

He said they could "liaise with the mosque and local community representatives to determine steps that can be taken to promote community harmony going forward".

A website for the Newcastle Muslim Association states the local Muslim population has grown significantly during the past five years and the mosque can no longer accommodate prayer sessions, forcing the association to hire the adjacent Masonic Hall.

"We are also experiencing major difficulty with parking and in recent times, this has caused a negative impact on the surrounding neighbourhood," the website states.

The association has paid \$1.45 million for an 8800sq m block of land to build a much larger mosque at an additional cost of \$5 million.

It will be located about five minutes' drive from the current mosque, the website states.
