

## CHEAT SHEET

EACH WEEK THE PENDULUM DEBRIEFS GLOBAL EVENTS BY INTERVIEWING COMMUNITY SOURCES

# Australia's controversial burqa ban debate explained

Ariela Marcus-Sells, assistant professor of religious studies, explains Australia's burqa ban

**Ariana Reyes**  
Contributor | @elonnewsnetwork



**Ariela Marcus-Sells**

whether to become the 14th nation to ban the wearing of the burqa in public spaces.

**Q: What is the significance of the burqa?**

**A:** There is often some confusion about "the burqa." A burqa is a one-piece robe with a mesh faceplate that originates in the mountains between Afghanistan and Pakistan — only women from this region wear this particular item of clothing. A generic face-veil is called a "niqab" and is often worn with a black robe called an "abaya" and a headscarf called a "hijab."

**Q: Do you think similar bans might happen in other countries?**

**A:** My understanding of the bill being debated in Australia — I haven't heard of a law being passed



An Afghan woman wearing a burqa stands in street in Kabul, Afghanistan.

PHOTO COURTESY OF TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

yet — is that it would ban all full-face coverings in public spaces. The rationale presented for the bill is that not being able to see people's faces presents "a security threat."

**Q: Do you think it is right to ban the burqa — not only in Australia, but also in different countries where this is happening?**

**A:** These bills are manifestations of Islamophobia, the hatred and fear of Islam, Muslims and the discriminatory practices that result

from that fear. Features of Islamophobia include the belief that Islam is, by definition, separate and "other," and that a Muslim identity is therefore incompatible with belonging to a Western nation state. Islamophobic narratives present Islam as a threat and Muslims as manipulative in order to justify racist discrimination against them.

**Q: What do you think the burqa ban does to the religion of Islam and Muslim women?**

**A:** The law under debate in Australia is Islamophobic because it presents the clothing choices made by Muslims as a security threat in order to justify racist discrimination against Muslim women.

**Q: Considering the burqa is such an important aspect of Islam and considering that many 21st century women see this as, "Oppression to women," how do you think Muslim women feel about the burqa ban?**

**A:** The burqa is not an import-

ant part of Islam — it is a piece of clothing with cultural and religious significance for some women. Different Muslim women will have different opinions about such a ban. Many Muslim women do object to veils of various kinds, others choose to wear veils for a variety of reasons — some cultural, some personal, some political and some religious. My opinion is that stripping women of their right to dress as they choose is unjustifiable under any circumstances, and stripping only Muslim women of that right is simply racism.

## Crime rates decline, students applaud campus safety and police

Lower crime rates as a result of campus safety and police community involvement

**Maggie Brown**  
Assistant News Editor | @maggieabrown

The 2016 annual crime and fire report showed that in the past three years, campus crimes have been dropping.

**CRIME DECREASE**  
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Since 2014, there have been no reports of aggravated assault and a 55 percent decrease in liquor law violations. Franks claims that because there have been more interactions between students and officers, there is less crime.

"It's all about partnership. No successful police department is standoff-ish in their community," said Dennis Franks, director of Campus Safety and Police. By joining in with students and faculty at College Coffee, attending floor meetings in residence halls and hosting Coffee with a Cop, campus police have found more ways to get involved with the students.

Campus police said the most crime they see is liquor law violations. But students such as Elon University freshman Adam Behrman said the police are always there to help.

"I have always seen police cars around at unsafe times," Behrman said. "I've seen the blue lights everywhere on campus. I've nev-

er felt like I'm in a situation where I could be harmed and not have help."

Officer Cory Ray, who has been with the Campus police since 1996, watched the police force grow.

Ray agrees that a more personable police caused the decrease in students violating the law. As the school has developed, crime has not increased.

Franks pushes his officers to be more active on campus, talking to students and not just patrolling in cars. He likes to see his police force on bikes and on foot.

"It's those one-on-one conversations you remember versus, 'I saw the police drive by with the window rolled up,'" Franks said. "It's about, 'I saw the officer stop and say, hey, how are things going today? That is more impactful. I think it helps people realize the police are just people, too, and that it's a partnership. We have to work together to keep our community safe.'"

Franks said with more officers participating in community events, he has seen the crime rate drop. He believes this involvement is the most important part in reducing crime in a community.

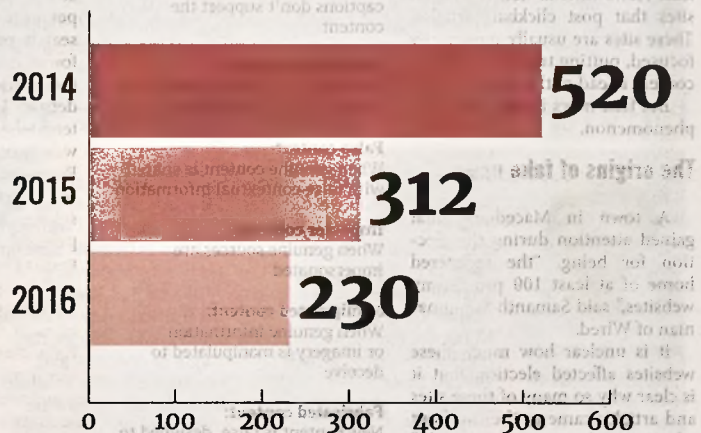
Freshman Abby Shutzberg said, "There is always a number I can call so I feel safe. It makes me feel better about going places alone. Campus police is always apparent, very present, easily accessible and involved in student life."

Traditionally, parents and students have felt safe on Elon's campus.

"I've never felt threatened or unsafe on this campus. Even when we came on campus a year ago I felt safe, and the fact that campus is even safer is reassuring," said sophomore Nicole Kister.

Mike and Pam Bruno, parents of freshman William Bruno, felt that even amidst the crisis going on in the world, their son is safe at Elon.

### LIQUOR LAW VIOLATIONS



SOURCE: 2016 ANNUAL CRIME AND FIRE REPORT  
LEAH KALLAM | DESIGNER

"I think people feel less safe now because of what is going on in the world," Pam Bruno said. "With people in big places, [parents] may tend to feel frightened by it. Terrorist threats and crazy kids doing random acts of violence."

"With all of the safeguards Elon provides, the safety factor doesn't even enter my mind," Bruno said.

Campus police are present to do more than just policing. Programs such as Operation ID represent campus police as a force that is one with the community and students.

"Our objective is to create and maintain a safe environment for students, employees and visitors," Franks said. "We focus on talking to the community and being a part in the community. Without the community, we are not successful."

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**ABBY SHUTZBERG**  
FRESHMAN