Islamist push with West’s values

EXCLUSIVE

ANTHONY KLAN

MORE than 200 people packed the headquarters of hardline Islamist group Hizb ut-Tahrir in Sydney’s west last Friday night to cheer as the group’s local head called for the overthrow of Australian society into an Islamic totalitarian state — while relying on the nation’s democratic traditions to achieve that goal.

Despite the rallying by such groups, the Australian National Imams Council and the nation’s top Islamic figure, the Grand Mufti, yesterday called for the rejection of anti-terror security legislation that would extend laws banning the advocacy of terrorism. “We are especially concerned that the new laws will broaden the definition of ‘advocating’ terrorism to include ‘promote’ and encourage’, as well as ‘counsel’ and ‘urge,’” the council said. “ANIC is aware that this provision is of particular concern to preachers, who spend a large proportion of their time teaching and advocating on social justice issues.”

Hizb ut-Tahrir, which is estimated to have as many as one million members worldwide, states as its aim to replace the “corrupt society” of Western countries “so that it is transformed into an Islamic society”.

The group made headlines last week when spokesman Wessam Doureihi appeared on ABC’s Continual on Page 2

INSIDE

OUR Australian culture, with its intrinsic value of free speech, does not mean tolerating an ideology that would take us back to the dark ages. It means exposing the ideology for what it is retrograde, repellent and espoused by men threatened by educated, confident women.

JANET ALBRECHTSEN P14

MORE REPORTS P2

WORLD P10
Islamist push with West’s values

Continued from Page 1

Lateline and continually refused to condemn terrorist group Islamic State, despite repeated questioning from host Emma Alberici.

Mr Doureihi dodged the question when asked whether he was “outraged” by images of a seven-year-old Australian boy “hanging up severed heads like trophies” in Iraq or Syria.

At Friday’s public lecture, “The War to End a Blessed Revolution” — in reference to the foreign campaign against Islamic State in Syria — Hizb ut-Tahrir’s Australia head Ismail Alwaiah called for a “new world order” and said he was willing to “sacrifice everything” for the group’s goals.

Underlying the hardline nature of the group, the audience chanted in unison in response to regular screams of “Takfir” from an audience member throughout the presentation. Takfir is a highly evocative term used by Muslims accusing other Muslims of apostasy, or being unbelievers, because they hold less radical interpretations of Islam. It is also used against non-Muslims.

Other Muslim groups have been eager to point out Hizb ut-Tahrir is at the radical fringe of the religion and does not represent them.

Tony Abbott has said the government will “have another look” at Hizb ut-Tahrir after the new anti-terror laws are introduced to see if it should be banned as a terrorist organisation.

While Friday’s lecture raised a number of reasonable concerns, such as the deaths of Muslims in the Middle East as the result of foreign actions, Mr Alwaiah’s lecture often wandered into rambling territory and much of the logic was counterintuitive.

Despite seeking the abolition of democracy and the imposition of a totalitarian Islamic state in Australia, the group relies on Western democratic concepts and railed against its perceived violation of freedoms under the new anti-terror laws.

The group bemoans the fact the new laws would bring about “restrictions of rights to a lawyer”, and would allow for computers to be “hacked without a warrant” and for people to be stopped “randomly in the street”. “Nobody likes to be victimised, targeted, oppressed,” says Hizb ut-Tahrir’s website.

Mr Alwaiah repeatedly said he was open to have his opinions changed if presented with a convincing argument. When presented with simple questions, like his spokesman Mr Doureihi, Mr Alwaiah refused to respond.

Non-Muslim audience member Alison Bevege repeatedly asked what the penalty for her would be for apostasy, being a non-Muslim, under Hizb ut-Tahrir. Mr Alwaiah refused to answer directly and went on to speak about Muslims killed in the Middle East at the hands of foreigners.

Mr Alwaiah said he would have a “conversation” with Ms Bevege later.

Many Islamic scholars consider apostasy a crime, with several stating it was punishable with the death penalty.

Mr Alwaiah’s response to the question was similar to that of Mr Doureihi, who told Lateline that if she wanted answers to her questions regarding Islamic State, “you have my number”. 