

## 'Fit in or f\*\*\* off': Senator Mehreen Faruqi faces racist abuse



**Senator Mehreen Faruqi, a Pakistani Muslim migrant who made Australia her home 27 years back, is no novice to racist abuse. But Australia is home and she's not going anywhere.**

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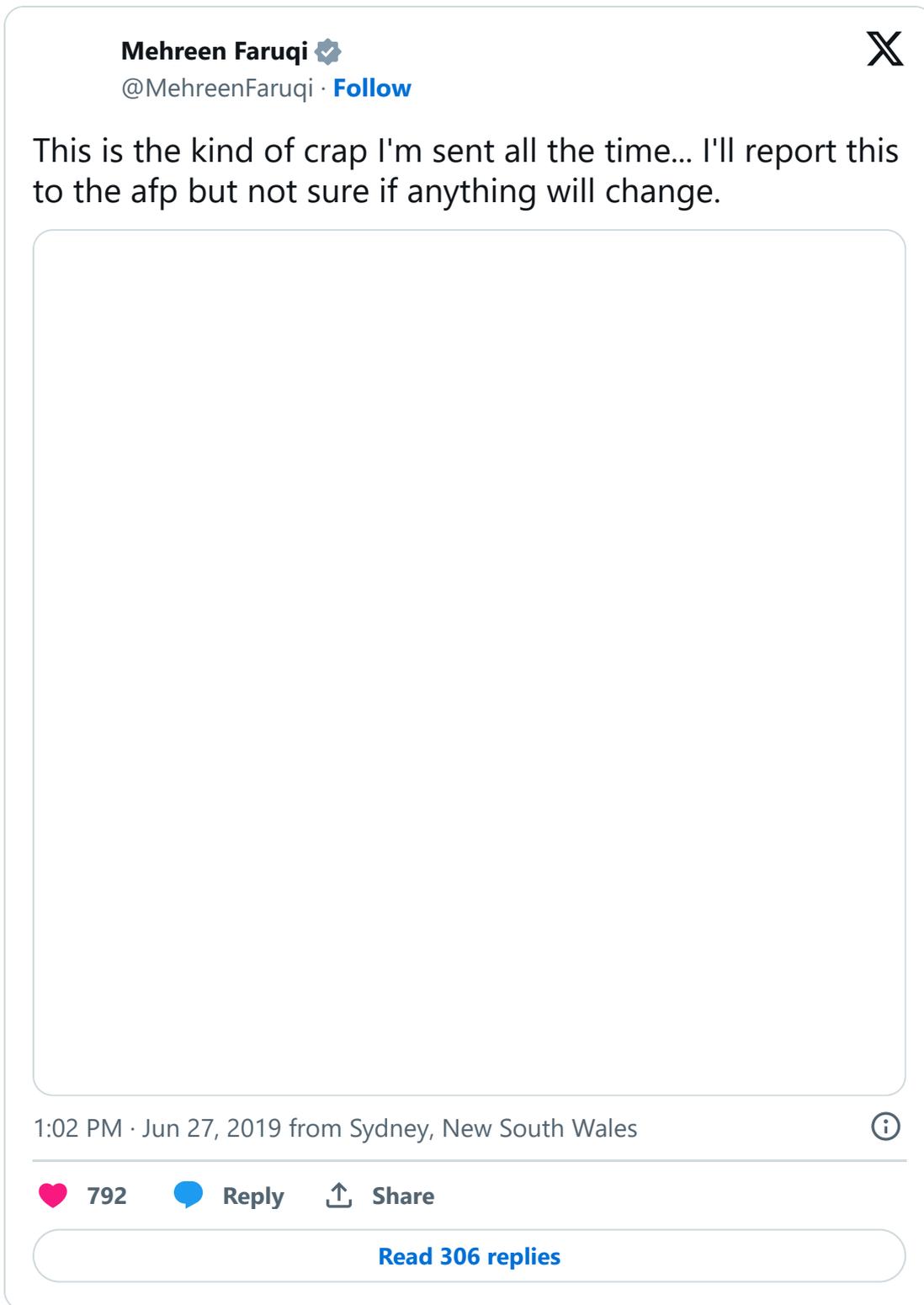
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***Disclaimer: The article contains language some readers may find distressing.***

Migrants across the world are often subjected to racist comments during their journey of blending into the country they make a home. But while they take this leap of faith, assuming that they will assimilate into their new home, they are often faced with rude shocks.

One prominent Punjabi migrant in Australia – now a well-known parliamentarian – frequently calls out racist remarks hurled at her. And these upsetting remarks come to her by all modes – email, Facebook, Twitter and even by post.

Meet Senator Mehreen Faruqi, who on June 26 tweeted a meme she received by email showing a white man pointing a gun with the words: 'This is Australia. Fit in or f\*\*\* off.' And this was only her most recent act of calling out racist abuse.



While many people came out in support of Ms Faruqi's tweet, there were several tweets which echoed the same hatred that was contained in the meme emailed to her.

"I get abusive, racist, sexist comments every day by email, phone or post. But this email was particularly threatening as it showed a man with a gun. In this day and age, there is an increase in right-wing extremism and terror attacks. It's scary and hurtful but I know people in public life like myself are often targeted. That makes me worry more about the

common migrants,” Ms Faruqi told **SBS Punjabi**.

A representative of the Greens Party in the Senate from New South Wales, Ms Faruqi says she's no novice to racial attacks.

Her Twitter and Facebook timelines are dotted with such posts, which come her way nearly every day.

A couple of years back, she even started a weekly social media post called 'Love letters for Mehreen,' in which she would post the most compelling racist message of the week and respond to it in a humorous way.

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She claims she endures more flak than most others due to her Pakistani background and Islamic faith.

"I'm a politician so I understand if people criticise me or my policies. But haters target me for my home country and being a Muslim. They tell me to go back. Why? Australia is my home for the last 27 years. I studied here, worked here, entered the political arena here. My children grew up here. I'm not going anywhere," she added.

So if public figures like Ms Faruqi are faced with racist attacks, how safe can the ordinary migrant feel in Australia?

"Racist and sexist comments received on social media and by email should not be taken lightly. These threats are real: sent to real people by real people. So I've learnt a lesson that we shouldn't suffer in silence," she advised.

"I kept mum for many years at the start. We've all put up with racism: whether it is experienced at the stage of sending our resume for a job or feel compelled to change our names during the job, it is real and present."

"But now, I post all racist abuse I receive on my Facebook and Twitter accounts. People support me a lot when they read my posts. Sometimes, I even complain to the police," added Ms Faruqi.

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Greens Senator Mehreen Faruqi often takes up the issue of racism in Parliament. Source: AAP

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