



الاتحاد الاسترالي للمجالس الاسلامية
THE AUSTRALIAN FEDERATION
OF ISLAMIC COUNCILS INC.

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15 October 2007

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Islam

Assalamo alaikum wa Rahmatullahe wa Barakatuhu

As you may or may not have heard, there was an article published in the Sunday's newspapers suggesting the federal government, in particular Minister Kevin Andrew's Office of Immigration and Citizenship is considering a ban on hijabs, burqas and niqabs at Australian Airports in the name of security.

This can be very easily seen as a discriminatory act and make us Muslims angry. We, however believe that now the federal election has been formally announced, this is bait for us to get upset with the government and hence cause us to rise up in protest in the hope that they may win some extra votes by using "anti-Muslim" sentiment.

On the other hand this may be a legitimate review of current procedures at Australian airports in regards to how Muslim women, in particular those who cover their face such as the niqab are addressed, or this may be the way in which this issue is justified at this time just before an election.

We are therefore attempting to contact the Minister's office for an explanation and to hopefully resolve any issues that his office may have with this matter, or at least to quell this becoming an election issue.

Alhamdulillah we have not had any reported issues with our sisters passing through Australian airports nor do we believe them to be a security risk based on the clothing they may wear given the sophisticated security in place along with the procedure for identifying a sister who covers her face in public. We believe there are the provisions of more intrusive search facilities available to adequately address this mode of dressing.

At this stage there is no ban in place and hence we strongly urge that the Muslim Community across Australia to not be misinformed by rumours and rhetoric which may be spread based on this topic. We believe this is simply no more than a scare tactic by the federal government who are trying to address a particular voting group and may be aided and abetted by some in the media.

The Muslim leadership is urged not to respond to this issue to play into the hands of these media outlets, or even these politicians. We have an appropriate response to this issue if required but are waiting to see if this issue is pushed any further.

Please be reminded that as Muslims living in Australia we are bound to uphold the security and the laws of the land that we live in where they do not contradict with our own beliefs.

Should the federal government move to implement such a ban we will communicate such information as it comes to light and advice of any further action to stop such legislation should it be required.

This is not the first time that the one day in our calendar which we would most like to have some peace with our loved ones is targeted by the media and those in power. In the meantime, please enjoy your eid with your friends and family and do not let such topics distract us from such a joyful time.

We will update you with further information on this topic as it comes to hand.

Ikebal Adam Patel,
President,
Australian Federation of Islamic Councils.

Representing the following state councils and their member organisations:

The Muslim Council of New South Wales
Islamic Council of Victoria
Islamic Council of Queensland
Islamic Council of Christmas Islands
Islamic Council of ACT
Tasmanian Muslim Association
Islamic Council of South Australia
Islamic Council of Northern Territory
Islamic Council of Western Australia

Wassalam
Yours brotherly in Islam,



Ikebal Adam Patel,
President.