



PRESS RELEASE

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**AUSTRALIA'S NATIONAL
ISLAMIC ORGANISATION
REPRESENTING
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**45 Years of Community
Services**

24 April 2008

AFIC CONDEMNS ATTACK ON GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY

The President of the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils, Mr Ikebal Patel condemns the attacks on Griffith University's Brisbane based Islamic Research Unit by *The Australian* newspaper as distortions of fact leading to baseless accusations.

The Griffith Islamic Research Unit is doing important work in the Australian community and through its strong academic, community and government partnerships it provides a forum where scholars, intellectuals and students can interact which ultimately helps cultivate an informed public and a more sustainable pluralistic society, said Mr Patel.

Mr Patel acknowledged that the Australia's Muslim community is often asked to engage more with the wider Australian community and promote mainstream Islamic thought and traditions. Yet when these sorts of forums are conducted by a reputable University it gets subjected to unfair smearing by the media, and particularly *The Australian* newspaper.

He said that such attacks will discourage the Australian Muslims from taking active part in the public domain, and for institutions such as Universities to shy away from being constructively active in this area.

The Saudi Embassy has had a very positive engagement with the Muslims of Australia in cultural and social exchanges as well as providing a forum for all Australians to better understand the true meaning of the great religion of Islam, whose birth place after all was in Saudi Arabia. This should be strongly encouraged.

Mr Patel further said that whilst it is legitimate to examine The Griffith Islamic Research Unit funding sources, it would be fair to look at the work that it does, which is very valuable and specifically aimed at engaging the wider community in understanding the Australian Muslims and Islam in general.

For further information, please contact:

MR. IKEBAL PATEL (CHAIRMAN) ON 0420 366 539.