

## COMPLAINT TO THE AUSTRALIAN PRESS COUNCIL

### A. Complainant Information

Name: Daud Batchelor on behalf of ....

### B. Publication Details

Publication 1: The Australian Newspaper

Date: 22/04/08

Headline: Top uni 'begged' for Saudi funding

Publication 2: The Australian Newspaper

Date: 23/04/08

Headline: Uni 'an agent of extreme Islam'

Publication 3: The Australian Newspaper

Date: 23/04/08

Headline: Editorial: Independence Matters

### C. Contact with Publication

Contact Details: Letter to the Editor [to be] sent to The Australian today with CC: to Nick Cater, Editor, Weekend Australian.

### D. Principles Breached

Principle 1. Newspapers should not publish what they know or could reasonably be expected to know is false, or fail to take reasonable steps to check the accuracy of what they report.

Principle 5. Publications are free to advocate their own views and publish the views of others on controversial topics, as long as readers are readily able to recognize what is fact and what is opinion...

Principle 7. Publications should not place any gratuitous emphasis on the race, religion, nationality...of an individual or group.

Principle 8. Where individuals or groups are singled out for criticism, the publication should ensure fairness and balance in the original article. Failing that, it should provide a reasonable and swift opportunity for a balancing response in the appropriate section of the publication.

Note that we are seeking publication of a Letter to the Editor as a balancing response from the Queensland Muslim Community. If in the event such letter is not published, The Australian would be in breach of Principle 8 and its own undertaking to publish

letters related to its attacks on the Australian Muslim community, as per Nick Cater's letter of September 26, 2007 to Jack Herman, Executive Secretary, APC.

### **E. Specific Reasons for the Complaint**

The Muslim Community in Queensland unfortunately has to register another complaint to the Australian Press Council regarding further ongoing misrepresentation and unfounded smears by The Australian against a Muslim institution, this time the respected Griffith University Islamic Research Unit of Griffith University (GIRU).

The Muslim Community is appalled by this 'below the belt' and slanted reporting, particularly Kerbaj's articles of April 22 and 23 in respect of a donation of \$100,000 by the Saudi embassy to GIRU. GIRU's work is fully supported by the Queensland Muslim Community as it is addressing issues and seeking solutions to enable the smooth integration of Muslims into Australian society. Its programs form a significant component of the Government's National Action Plan to Build on Social Cohesion, Harmony and Security. Specific research is being conducted for example, on the peaceful resolution to the Israel-Palestinian conflict, prevention of domestic violence and ethics in Islamic finance.

In contravention of APC Principles Nos. 1, 2 and 7, the Australian's journalistic standards have demonstrably sunk when a journalist and its editor can imply that GIRU and the Griffith University have been taken over by a foreign power when a small donation is provided *without strings attached*. Such funds for Islamic educational institutions in the West are often provided by Muslim benefactors and governments as a normal source of support. The failure of The Australian's editor to adhere to APC principles is further demonstrated by broadcasting slanders by judge Clive Wall, who provided not a shred of evidence for his statements such as Griffith Uni has become 'an agent of extreme Islam'.

This complaint against The Australian is in addition to three others brought to the attention of APC in August 2007, and follows the upholding of our complaint against The Australian for exaggerated negative reporting of a Muslim institution in the APC's Adjudication No. 1382. It seems however with the latest attack that The Australian believes it has a green light from the APC to proceed further with publishing slander and innuendo against Muslim institutions in Australia. We believe the APC should reprimand The Australian for repeated breaches of its Statement of Principles, and guide The Australian to provide enlightenment to the Australian public of the many positive contributions of Muslims to Australian society, and to enhance the building of social unity and harmony among all Australians.