

Media Release
Australian Retailers Association
15 January 2009

RETAILERS HORRIFIED AT UNEDUCATED CALLS TO BAN HIJAB

Peak industry body the Australian Retailers Association (ARA) is in no way affiliated with Scott Driscoll's Queensland Retail Traders and Shopkeepers Association (QRTSA) and firmly believes any suggestion by that organisation to the banning the hijab or any cultural clothing to allow entry into retail environments is misguided, uneducated fear mongering and disturbing in its nature.

According to ARA Executive Director Richard Evans, the ARA takes retail security very seriously.

"We understand banks and many other retail environments such as petrol stations display signs to ask customers to remove full faced motorcycle helmets and hoodies yet Mr Driscoll's comments are extreme and harking back to a day when xenophobia was rife and serves to create a culture of angst, anger and mistrust," Evans said.

"No one who takes the rich culture of modern Australia seriously would diminish themselves by suggesting cultural or custom clothing is a security risk. This is subliminal xenophobic behaviour and it saddens to have someone from a respected Queensland retail organisation not realise the consequences of such lazy speech," Evans said.

For over 105 years, the Australian Retailers Association (ARA) has been the peak industry body in Australia's \$292 billion retail sector which employs over 1.5 million people. As an incorporated employer body under the Workplace Relations Act and with a range of member services including business consulting, policy development, advocacy and education, the ARA supports and represents over 5000 members throughout Australia. Visit www.retail.org.au or call 1300 368 041.

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For interview opportunities with ARA Executive Director Richard Evans contact:

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