



4 May 2009

HEAD OFFICE

932 Bourke Street, Zetland
Sydney NSW 2017
PO BOX 7185 SSBH,
Alexandria NSW 2015
AUSTRALIA
Tel: (02) 9319 6733
Fax: (02) 9319 0159
admin@afic.com.au
www.afic.com.au

MELBOURNE OFFICE

66-68 Jeffcott Street West
Melbourne VIC 3003
AUSTRALIA
Tel: (03) 9329 1228
Fax: (03) 9329 1677
aficmelb@bigpond.com

AFIC SCHOOLS

Malek Fahd Islamic School
Tel: (02) 9642 8766
Fax: (02) 9642 5479

Islamic School of Brisbane

Tel: (07) 3841 3645
Fax: (07) 3841 4320

Islamic College of SA

Tel: (08) 8340 7799
Fax: (08) 8340 9988

Langford Islamic College

Tel: (08) 9458 5206
Fax: (08) 9258 5661

Islamic School of Canberra

Tel: (02) 6241 9554
Fax: (02) 6241 5448

- Halal Certification & Accreditation
- Muslims Australia Magazine
- Islamic Schools Projects
- Zakat & Charitable Services
- Imams & Religious Services
- Dawah Work
- Interfaith Dialogue
- Political Advocacy

MEMBER STATE COUNCILS

Muslim Council of NSW
Islamic Council of VIC
Islamic Council of QLD
Islamic Council of WA
Islamic Council of SA
Islamic Council of ACT
Islamic Council of NT
Islamic Council of TAS
Islamic Council of
Christmas Island

MEMBER SOCIETIES

Over 100

The Hon Kevin Rudd
Prime Minister
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Prime Minister,

Re: **United Nations Durban II Review Conference against Racism, Racial
Discrimination and Xenophobia in Geneva**

The Australian Federation of Islamic Councils expresses its strongest disappointment at the Australian Government's boycott of the United Nations Durban II Review Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination and Xenophobia in Geneva in April 2009.

Under your leadership the Australian Government has made positive inroads into Australia's history of racially motivated rules and regulations. Your Government's apology to Indigenous Australians was welcomed by all communities and stood as an example of acceptance. This courageous stand taken under your leadership redeemed Australia's standing as a country of "Fair Go" within the international community.

On the one hand the Australian Government is taking a very strong stand in the case of Fiji when the present regime has a very open agenda to rid the country of all forms of institutionalised racism that has been ingrained in the constitution over the last 20 years or so through coups, some of which were bloody. The Australian Government has refused to engage with a close neighbour to identify the real reasons for the present crises. On the other hand, the Australian Government keeps on condoning the State of Israel and its racist policies towards Muslims and Christians.

The stand taken by the United States of America and its closest allies including Australia in boycotting this Conference was condemned in the strongest terms by the international community including the Vatican.

The Australian, American, New Zealand and Canadian Governments all have abhorrent histories in relation to their indigenous populations. They have all made some restitution in the past but their absence from this conference demonstrates that from time to time, for political expediency, these countries will shut their eyes to racism that is still prevalent across the world.

Whilst Australia is trying to garner international support for its seat on the UN Security Council, this boycott in support of Israel does not demonstrate fairness to the over 180 participating countries in this conference. And it does not seem to be inherently in the interest of Australia or the majority of its people.



الاتحاد الاسترالى للمجالس الاسلامية
**AUSTRALIAN FEDERATION
OF ISLAMIC COUNCILS INC.**
AUSTRALIA'S NATIONAL ISLAMIC ORGANISATION
A. R. B. N. 002 757 155

It is encouraging to note the Conference formally adopted consensus resolution that governments applauded as an improved basis for action against racism and xenophobia.

It is our fervent hope that your government will seriously consider the views and sentiments of the majority of Australians when making decisions as to whether we participate in important international conferences. Australia should stand as a beacon in this region in eradicating racism and xenophobia here and across the globe.

This will mean taking an independent stand which will require breaking away from time to time from our close allies if they are for reasons of justice, inclusiveness and above all a "Fair Go for All". This after all is one of those Australian Values that all Australians are made to realise as one of the corner stones of our GREAT COUNTRY. And this is a value the Australian Muslims are reminded, and in fact from time to time forced to embrace if we wish to make this country our home. It is very disturbing when the Australian Government is very selective in the application of this principle when it comes to ALL people.

This was a conference which had many aspects but all of them to do with Racism. It would have been prudent to attend the conference and if necessary, when the opportunity presented itself, the Australian delegation could still have taken a stand on any issue it chose. But by attending it would have demonstrated that Australia acknowledges its coloured past (no pun intended) and is willing to engage with the world community to make the present globalised world a better place with an objective view on issues.

Honourable Prime Minister, Racism is a phenomenon that has no barriers in the present world, just as pandemics such as Swine Flu. And these diseases require leaders with the courage and the conviction to tackle the issues head on but with fairness and inclusiveness.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ikebal Adam Patel', written in a cursive style.

Ikebal Adam Patel
President