



OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

Mr Bawa Singh Jagdev
Secretary
Sikh Council of Australia Inc
170 Ninth Avenue AUSTRAL
NSW 2179

22 SEP 2005

Dear Mr Jagdev

Thank you for your correspondence of 31 August 2005 to the Prime Minister regarding the wearing of headscarves by Muslim women. The Prime Minister has asked me to reply on his behalf.

As you may be aware, the Prime Minister has stated that he does not believe it is practical or desirable to ban the wearing of headscarves. The Australian Government is committed to ensuring that all Australians respect the freedom of religion and racial equality enshrined in our law and that Muslims living in Australia, and abiding by our laws, are able to express and to practise their religion and their beliefs without intimidation and without interference.

The government is confident that initiatives such as the recent summit with Islamic community leaders and the work flowing from that summit will help to reinforce the shared vision of all Australians that all forms of violence or terrorism and acts or language which promote hatred, violence or terrorism will not be tolerated. The clear message to every Australian from recent events is that it is in everyone's interest to continue to promote harmony and mutual understanding between the Islamic community and the broader Australian community and to unite together against the threat of terrorism.

Thank you for bringing your views on this very important matter to the attention of the Prime Minister.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'SB', followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Simone Burford Senior Adviser