



8 September 2006

The Premier  
New South Wales  
State Plan  
Premier's Delivery Unit

## **SUB: SUBMISSION ON THE *Draft* STATE PLAN-A New Direction for NSW**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission on the State Plan. The Sikh Council of Australia is a non-profitable religious and charitable Organisation that represents the Sikh community both living in metropolitan and regional/rural New South Wales. A copy of the document "The Sikhs-An Introduction" is attached to provide an overview into the beliefs and practices of the Sikhs.

### **Theme 2: Respect and Responsibility**

Members of the Sikh community are part of a highly visible minority community. As a part of their religious and cultural traditions Sikhs have a distinct appearance mainly due to their turbans and beards. Sikhs have been subjected to a number of incidents related to hate crime and verbal and physical abuse especially events that followed 9/11, Bali bombing, Iraq war and London bombing being mistaken as a part of a terrorist organisation. As a result many Sikh families do not feel safe in NSW and many have resorted to cutting their hair and removing turbans. Many do not feel welcome to participate in the mainstream community events or sports and enjoy Australian way of life.

The State Plan must consider above in response to priorities nos.1, 3, and 4.

### **Theme 3: Improving Services**

The New South Wales should consider improving access to services for members of Sikh community especially education services for Sikh children. Due to their distinct appearance, many Sikh children are subject of bullying at schools leading to lower self-esteem and poor educational outcomes and life skills.

Many members of Sikh families are not well versed in English thereby reducing their capacity to access the government services.

The State Plan must consider above in response to priorities nos.1, 8, 9, 13, 14, 15 and 17. It is submitted to develop cultural sensitivity training for public service providers (e.g. health, education, police and justice) as well as implement effective anti-bullying programmes in public schools that include awareness and sensitivity towards Sikh religious practices.

It may be of interest for you to know that as a part of their faith practices, Sikhs are not required to smoke or take drugs. Thus Sikh community helps to achieve improved health outcomes (reference priority 6).

#### **Theme 4: Growing prosperity across NSW**

Sikhs have contributed significant to the economic prosperity of NSW especially rural and regional NSW e.g. Woolgoolga and Griffith. Many skilled migrants in recent years have also contributed in diverse professional occupations and through business investments. Sikh community have potential to engage further in NSW economy provided the State Plan implements helpful measures in consultation with the community to overcome many challenges faced by Sikhs due to their unique appearance referred above.

The State Plan must consider above in response to priorities nos.19, 20, 21 and 22.

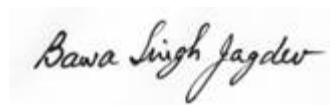
#### **Theme 5: Environment for Living**

The Sikh community supports priorities outlined under the State Plan (reference priorities 23 to 29). Sikhs religious philosophy promotes respect for self, community and environment.

Please contact Inderjeet Singh on 0425362754 for any clarification on the above submission points.

The Sikh Council of Australia look forward to working with NSW Government in implementing the State Plan priorities.

Yours faithfully,



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Enc. The Sikhs – An Introduction