

**Australian Parliament  
Joint Standing Committee on Migration  
Submission no. 457**

Dear staff,

I would like to submit this email to the Inquiry into Multiculturalism in Australia.

I have been an English teacher for 22 years in government schools in Canberra, where I have upheld the values of a non-racist and egalitarian society.

I believe the Australian Government should resist calls from the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils for the introduction of sharia law in Australia.

Islam as practised around the world is historically absolutist and there is a need for a more progressive version of Islam that embraces Australian democracy. The Muslim group Affinity, associated with the Auburn mosque, has I believe worthwhile things to say about the form that a more progressive Islam could take in a modern democracy.

In contrast, the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils may purport to be moderate, but is in fact quite conservative. Its website acknowledges the importance of sharing the faith of Islam such that people may commit themselves to Islam, but it does not acknowledge the validity and acceptability of the reverse: of Muslims converting to other faiths. In a modern democracy, this silence is telling.

AFIC's submission to the committee notes on p3 that the criteria for valuing law and cultures should be their conformity to sharia. This is not as benign as AFIC portrays. Wherever sharia has been introduced, it has produced deep suffering and inequality.

I also wish the committee to note that the dhimma was not enlightened, as the AFIC's submission suggests, but was a cruel and dehumanising third alternative to forced conversion or death. It resulted in brutal second class citizenship and it scarred people for the rest of their lives.

Yours sincerely,