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## Senate Enquiry into Food Certification Schemes

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We take this opportunity to submit our thoughts on the Islamic Halal Certification schemes.

### ***1. Islam does not require a Halal Certification tax***

There is no requirement in Islamic scriptures from the Quran to the Sunnah for a Halal Certification tax. From 622 at the time of Mohammed, to the rightly-guided caliphs, to the end of the Ottoman Caliphate in 1924, there has never been a Halal Certification tax. The Muslim Brotherhood invented this scheme in the late twentieth century as a device for raising money for Islam and Jihad.

### ***2. Restrictive labour practices and rising costs through the Supply Chain***

The effect of imposing Islamic strictures on our food supply chain has resulted in restrictive labour practices and added costs which the Australian consumer is lumbered with. At the abattoir, only Muslim slaughtermen can be employed and Muslims are provided with prayer rooms, special washrooms and toilets which adds to the end cost. Now even transport drivers are being required to be of Muslim faith and this Halal Certification is impacting every step of the Australian Food Supply Chain. Australia is a secular country and no faith should be accommodated in the way that Islam is now gifted.

### ***3. Poor labelling and lack of consumer choice***

Once the consumer goes to the supermarket, the choices are poor and misleading. The majority of items are now Halal Certified but only a small number are clearly marked. Many products have a hidden Halal symbol that is visible only when you open the product, and many more have had a Halal Certification tax paid but is not labelled. A growing number of Australian consumers object to supporting the Islamic faith and will buy non Halal products only. The role of the Australian Government is to protect the 22 million Australians who don't want to support an Islamic Certification tax. Export is only a small component of the total and if overseas customers want certification, they should pay for it.

### ***4. High risk of funding terrorism***

It is a fact that the larger Halal Certifiers like ISNA in America, MAC in Canada and UOIF in France have been proven to divert funds from Islamic charities to terrorist organizations like HAMAS. The Grand Mufti of Australia visited Gaza in December 2012 and met with HAMAS leaders, promising material support from the Australian Muslim community. There is an unacceptable risk that funds will filter from Islamic charities to terror groups like HAMAS. The Australian Government should minimize risk by shutting down the Halal Certification schemes.

***Conclusion***

The Islamic Halal Certification schemes are not required by Islamic scripture and the effect on the Australian Food Supply chain has been to apply restrictive labour practices and increase costs at every step. The Australian consumer is grossly disadvantaged by the current labelling standards, given poor options and is treated as inferior to the Muslim population. Sharia law should never take precedence in Australia where we treat every citizen the same under Australian law.

Finally, the risk of funding terror is unacceptably high so the Australian Government should act to close down the Halal Certification schemes.

Thank You

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