

My Concerns about Halal Certification in Australia

By JM3435

I have no problem with food bearing a Halal certification symbol. I acknowledge that Halal certification increases the export opportunities for some Australian produce.

I believe that any fees for certification should be minimal and only cover the cost of verifying food meets the halal requirements.

There should be no surplus of fees over the cost of certification that goes to any religious cause, whether mosques or the advancement of Islam in Australia. If there is any surplus going to Islamic causes, how can this not be considered a religious tax?

The CEO of Halal Australia publicly acknowledged that profits from halal certification go to fund mosques. On Abc.net.au/radionational/programs/bushtelegraph/halal/5843904, Dr Muhammad Khan, the CEO of Halal Australia, says there is nothing wrong with money from Halal certification going to mosques. "It is absolutely not necessary to talk about this subject matter," he says. "Don't (Kosher certification organisations) fund their own synagogues? Why can't the Islamic certification body give donations to mosque projects?"

I am opposed to a portion of my payments for food going to any religious group whether it be muslim, Christian, jewish, whatever. I know that Sanitarium is owned by a Christian group. I have the choice to not buy Sanitarium products. Where 75%+ of products are halal certified, it is difficult to avoid buying halal certified products and paying a fee, portion of which goes to Islamic causes. Attached article - The Australian "Halal certification charter signed in secret in Mecca" (Rick Morton 25 May 2015) talks of the Muslim leader's control of the "booming halal certification market" – why is that market booming in Australia for covering produce that is not for export to muslim countries?

Halal certification in Australia should be the responsibility of a government authority. Any excess of fee revenue over certification checking should stay in public revenue and be for the benefit of Australian people generally, not for a particular religious group.

Why can't there be an honesty system where food manufacturers make a declaration that their produce is halal after following clear guidelines. Audits could be carried out.

I have read that The Islamic Halal certifying organisations insist that certifiers must be Muslim. If that were the case, that would be discrimination. There should not be a whole industry built around halal certification and certainly not an industry that discriminates by refusing to employ non muslims.

In Food Magazine October 2013 there was an article stating that abattoirs were paying \$27,000 per month for halal certification. These fees seem excessive. Even if fees do not seem high, say \$1,000 per year per producer. \$1,000 for 20,000 food producers is \$20,000,000 per year. I hope the Enquiry establishes how much revenue is being generated in this unregulated industry – and where it is going.

Why are halal certification fees being paid for so much food which is not going to be exported?
Example - supermarket bread sold in Australia.

Why are halal certification fees paid for hot cross buns, a food that celebrates a Christian event?