



17th August 2017

ECCV pleased with Senate's reaction to Senator Pauline Hanson burqa question time stunt

The Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria recognises the stunt of Senator Pauline Hanson in this afternoon's question time as an act of racial vilification, undignified and in poor taste.

ECCV Chairperson Eddie Micallef says, "ECCV were pleased with the Senate's reaction to Senator Pauline Hanson's stunt in question time this afternoon. Others were able to overcome their political differences to see the issue at hand which is that people have the right to religious freedom".

ECCV believes that the right of Muslim women to wear the burqa is a fundamental aspect of their cultural traditions. The ECCV Chair adds "Multiculturalism protects the rights of all Australians to express their cultural heritage, to maintain their language and religion belief in equal measure, without upholding the rights of any special group as being above any other".

The Chair of ECCV declares that "such unbecoming behaviour is grossly out of place in a parliamentary setting that should provide role models around gender equality".

Senator George Brandis' condemnation of Hanson's stunt and following applause from the Senate demonstrated majority support from all sides of government. "Australians believe in the right of Muslim women to choose to wear the burqa, free from coercion and discrimination" explains Mr. Micallef.

ECCV recognises the Muslim women of Victoria as a vulnerable group due to their high visibility in the community and the targeted discrimination they receive. Incidents of unfair public harassment are explained in detail in the ECCV Social Cohesion Policy Paper, On the Road with Australian Muslim Mothers. The ECCV roundtable discusses the lived experiences of Australian Muslim mothers in Melbourne's outer suburbs.

Eddie Micallef encourages "the Australian Government to support and empower these women through facilitating continuing proactive intercultural dialogues, promote informative, open education programs that support better understanding and cross-cultural engagement".

For more information and/or media comment, please contact Leenie Fabri, Communications & Media Officer via lfabri@eccv.org.au / 0422 480 319

References:

http://www.eccv.org.au/library/2014-10_POS_Cultural_and_Religious_Dress_FINAL.pdf

http://eccv.org.au/library/Final_ECCV_Social_Cohesion_Policy_Brief_4_Muslim_Mothers_SK.pdf