



Baptist Union of NSW **MEDIA RELEASE**

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Camden Islamic school court challenge

The Baptist Union of NSW affirms the right of Camden community leaders to express their informed opinion on the proposed Islamic school in Camden and on the Quranic Society which is supporting the development application.

Baptists are committed to living in harmony with people of all faiths and no faith. We are also committed to maintaining a free and democratic society in which no particular religion exercises undue power and influence over another.

We are therefore concerned at the community unrest generated by the Quranic Society's activities in Camden and by allegations that a dangerous political ideology may be driving development plans. If the allegations can be substantiated then the Camden Christian leaders are correct in opposing the development application.

Australians absolutely oppose all form of seditious activity. No politician or community leader would want to be associated with decisions that could lead to a religious-based legal system overriding or operating in conjunction with Australian law.

An overwhelming majority of Arabic Australians are loyal and peace-loving citizens, and many are Christian. The concerns raised over the development application are not based on racial prejudice but on political ideology which would seek to radically transform Australian society, restrict democratic freedoms, and privilege one religion over all others. These community concerns ought to be taken seriously by all sectors of society.

While it is true that Jewish, Christian and Muslim believers are "people of the book," the Judeo-Christian tradition springs from the Old and New Testaments of the Holy Bible whereas the Muslim religion does not. The three faiths each claim Abraham as an exemplar or patriarch, but several core doctrines of these faiths are mutually exclusive. We have lived with this reality for centuries.

The Baptist Union of NSW acknowledges the place of multifaith dialogue and encourages warm personal relations between members of all religious groups. Baptists support freedom and mutual respect in matters of religion. We do not want to see these Australian values eroded by stealth.

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