

Islamic Council of Victoria

المجلس الإسلامي في فكتوريا

19 March 2008

Margaret Gardener
Vice-Chancellor
RMIT University

Dear Margaret,

It has come to our attention that RMIT have made a decision to make the newly designed dedicated prayer space for Muslim students into a multi faith facility. The Islamic Council of Victoria (ICV) expresses its disappointment in such a decision. This decision impacts directly the current student population and is in our view a step backwards in the provision of student services at RMIT. The removal of this existing student facility we are sure will greatly impact both the current and future reputation of RMIT University both locally and internationally.

It is common place across universities throughout the USA, UK and in Australia to have a dedicated place of worship for Muslim students. RMIT has had such a space on the rooftop for many years that has ably supported the Muslim need to pray during the day. We believe it was due to partly to the popularity of this facility that prompted the need to allocate a dedicated space within the construction of a new building. We are confident that the removal of this facility will be detrimental to the positioning of RMIT as a "Muslim friendly" learning institution, especially to those who knew it once existed and now have seen it removed.

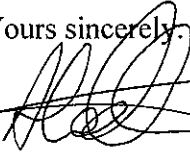
It also disappoints us that during a meeting in early February with representatives from Student Services, Chaplaincy and Project Management we were informed that there would be consultation with the Muslim Chaplain Mr. Riad Galil on this issue before any decision was made. It is our understanding that this consultative process has not taken place as Mr. Galil believes it should remain a dedicated prayer facility.

RMIT University has been viewed by the Muslim community as a progressive and supportive organization. We know that amongst our overseas contacts that this news will be taken very badly. It is our responsibility as the peak Islamic body within the state of Victoria to inform the embassies and consulates of countries such as Saudi Arabia, The UAE, Malaysia, Indonesia etc and our local 40-50 Mosques within Melbourne and regional Victoria of your decision. We cannot guarantee the ongoing support for RMIT as a preferred place of learning now that such an integral dedicated facility has been removed.

We truly hope you decide to reconsider your decision and reverse your current stance and re-establish the status quo of having a dedicated Muslim prayer facility for RMIT Muslim students located at your city campus as you do at other campuses across Melbourne..

If you would like to discuss this issue please feel free to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Ahmed Imam', written over a horizontal line.

Ahmed Imam
Chief Executive Officer