
QUEENSLAND COUNCIL FOR CIVIL LIBERTIES

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MEDIA RELEASE BURQA BAN WOULD VIOLATE RIGHTS

Mr Cope, President of the QCCL today condemned proposals to ban the wearing of the burqa in public as an unjustified violation of established rights.

“People in our society are free to wear what they like, so long as they are wearing something, absent specific compelling circumstances such as safety and security” said Mr Cope.

Some people find tattoos offensive and frightening. But a ban on the burqa is no more justified than a ban on showing tattoos in public.

QCCL has no issue with people being forced to show their face at airports, in banks and on driver’s licences as these are necessary safety and security measures.

“It is often said that a ban on the Burqa will help women liberate themselves. Banning burqa wearing women from public institutions will ultimately result in them avoiding such places entirely. That is not liberation.” Says Mr Cope

In fact it is more likely that such laws by targeting the experience of one religious group will stigmatise these women and feed their alienation from the majority of society.

It is often said that these women must be being forced to wear these headscarves. Where is the evidence for that proposition?

Mr Cope said, “There are arguments that one can understand for wearing the burqa. I do not agree with them. But you can make a rational argument for it. Why do we presume that these women do not agree with those arguments? ”

Any attempt to learn whether these women really believe they should be wearing the burqa is extraordinarily dangerous. That way leads to the inquisition

Obviously if there is evidence some women are being forced to wear the burqa, that is domestic violence and should be dealt with appropriately. However to presume that is happening is to treat the women as less than human.

ENDS

For further information contact Michael Cope President QCCL on 07 3223 5939 during office hours and on 0432 847 154

