



www.libertyvictoria.org.au

Victorian Council for Civil Liberties Inc
Reg No : A0026497L

GPO Box 3161
Melbourne, VIC 3001
t 03 9670 6422
info@libertyvictoria.org.au

PRESIDENT
Professor Spencer Zifcak

SENIOR VICE-PRESIDENT
Georgia King-Siem

VICE-PRESIDENTS
Jamie Gardiner
Anne O'Rourke
Rachel Ball

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT
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Press Release

Liberty Expresses Concern about Campaign Against Muslim Prayer

Wednesday 2 March 2011

Liberty Victoria expressed its concern today about a campaign being waged against the inclusion of a session for Muslim Prayer at the Alma Road Neighbourhood House in East St. Kilda.

A petition has been issued by a little known organization called the Q. Society of Australia, against an application to the City of Port Phillip for an amendment to the Neighbourhood House's planning permit. The amendment would facilitate a single session of Muslim Prayer to take place at the House each Friday.

The President of Liberty Victoria, Professor Spencer Zifcak, said today: 'This campaign bears all the hallmarks of a deliberate attempt to deny to one religion the freedom of religious belief accorded to every other religion'.

He noted that Jewish groups had welcomed the planning application.

The Q. Society objects to the proposed amendment principally on the ground that to allow an expansion in the number of people of Muslim faith to pray during the prayer session

would be contrary to social cohesion in the area where people of the Christian and Jewish faiths are in a majority.

‘The Islamic prayer group has been meeting without incident or concern at the Neighbourhood House for some years’, Professor Zifcak said.

‘This new attack on its capacity to do so can only injure the religious feelings of people of the Islamic faith and damage the social cohesion that the objectors profess to support’.

‘Liberty condemns any and every expression of religious intolerance and discrimination. This is yet another regrettable example of exactly the kind of intolerance that should in no way be encouraged in a pluralistic and democratic society’.

For further comment contact:

Professor Spencer Zifcak

President

Liberty Victoria

Ph. 0417490110

Email: spencer.zifcak@acu.edu.au

For further Information please contact: