

Civil society's informed contribution to social cohesion debate must be encouraged and valued, not condemned

The Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA) is disappointed over Senator Lambie's call to condemn the Multicultural Council of Tasmania (MCoT), our Tasmanian peak member, for contributing factual input to the public discourse on Islam.

The disproportionate response and the unwarranted attack from Senator Lambie overlooks the significant and informative messages voiced by the representative civil society organisation. FECCA endorses the right of MCoT as a civil society organisation, to express their views without unwarranted attack, in particular, responding to allegations that religiously diverse Australians seek to establish a parallel legal system.

FECCA and its members strongly support our legal system that is based on democratic principles and the rule of law. For decades, MCoT has been contributing great value to fostering the foundations of Tasmania's diverse and harmonious society.

Senator Lambie's response to MCoT's statement fails to facilitate a respectful, knowledge-based and transparent exchange in our society, and silences civil society groups who seek to contribute to the public debate.

FECCA Acting Chairperson Eugenia Grammatikakis said, "At FECCA, we call for all discussions to be brought within the bounds of acceptable discourse. We remain concerned over the increasingly hostile and often misinformed attitudes towards Muslim Australians, and our members rightly seek to address these concerns through an informed, reasonable and constructive debate on multicultural issues."

Media Comments: FECCA Office – (02) 6282 5755 or media@fecca.org.au.