



MEDIA RELEASE

International Symposium on Liberty and Islam in Australia

14 February 2014, Melbourne – The civil rights group **Q Society of Australia** will host the first ‘International Symposium on Liberty and Islam’ in Australia in March 2014. Last year the openly Islam-critical group hosted the Dutch politician Geert Wilders. The visit of the popular European MP was marred by controversies about cancelled venues, refused banking services, security threats and violent clashes between police and protesters picketing the Melbourne venue.

This year’s symposium is scheduled for the long Labour Day weekend 7 to 10 March in Melbourne and consists of presentations, workshops and social events. A panel of 14 authors, scholars and activists from the USA, Egypt, Sudan, the UK, Israel, Denmark, India and Australia provides opportunity to network, hear a variety of views and exchange experience.

As the resurgence of Islam’s political, social and financial impact is fuelling fears, animosities and violence around the world, this symposium offers unique opportunities for policy makers, social and economic leaders, as well as interested members of the public.

Q Society’s speaker Andrew Horwood believes that it is critical for effective policy development to understand how the spread of Islam impacts on indigenous people and established multi-ethnic societies like Australia and New Zealand. The presentations and discussions will deliver insights and hands-on experience from regions of the world which have been faced with the same problems for much longer.

According to the president of Q Society, Mrs Debbie Robinson, our leaders are not only facing mounting problems as a result of the growing number of radicalised Muslims living amongst us; but must find a response to what she describes as ‘socio-political jihad’ and the balkanisation of communities along religious and ethnic fault lines.

Q Society speaker Andrew Horwood points to a national survey conducted by Roy Morgan Research in October 2013. Answers to a series of questions probing public perception and personal views on Islam validate that a majority of Australians are concerned about the spread of Islam into their communities. “While some Australian politicians still insist that our brand of multiculturalism is superior to what has been tried and failed in Europe, the reality is we are merely a decade behind and catching up fast” Mr Horwood argues.

Q Society of Australia is associated with the worldwide SION group of Islam-critical civil rights organisations. SION stands for *Stop Islamisation of our Nations* and was founded by American writer and political activist Pamela Geller, together with Islamic scholar and author Robert Spencer. SION is the co-organiser of the symposium, the third after similar events in Stockholm and New York.

Seats for the main event on Sunday 9 March sell for \$90, which includes lunch, tea and coffee. The complete list of presenters and schedule of events, including links to online ticketing, can be found on the event website www.sionaustralia.com

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