

National Centre of Excellence for Islamic Studies

On 1 May 2007 Council **RESOLVED** to adopt the following as Council's statement concerning the Centre of Excellence for Islamic Studies -

“That, in view of the establishment by the Federal Government of a National Centre of Excellence for Islamic Studies, the NSW Council of Churches –

- a) **reiterates** the classic Christian confession that Jesus Christ is God and Lord of all.
- b) **acknowledges** that religious discourse is an essential element of intellectual and academic life in secular public institutions as much as it belongs in private colleges and seminaries;
- c) **encourages** continuing government fostering and support of faculties for the academic study of religion and the training of religious practitioners;
- d) **affirms** Australia's Judeo-Christian heritage as the essential and enduring foundation of the nation's public values, traditions and institutions;
- e) **affirms** the basic human right of all persons to freedom of thought, conscience and religion including freedom to change one's religion or belief, and freedom to manifest one's religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance;
- f) **rejects** any assertion that all religions and spiritual traditions are equally true or valid;
- g) **opposes** the introduction of any form of *shari'a* law in any Australian jurisdiction given the official separation of religious authority from political authority in Australia known as the separation of church and state;
- h) **rejects** as erroneous the teaching of the Koran and Hadith traditions that Muslims may subjugate persons of other faiths and persecute or execute those who convert from Islam to Christianity or any other faith;
- i) **urges** the Federal Government to apply appropriate legal and administrative sanctions including the withdrawal of public funding to persons and institutions in Australia found guilty of offences referred to in h) above; and
- j) **calls** on the Federal Government to regularly monitor the National Centre of Excellence for Islamic Studies to ensure that the rights of individuals, most notably women, are fully protected according to Australian law.”