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To <etc@parliament vic.gov.au>

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Subject Inquiry into Dress Codes and School Uniforms in Victorian
Schools

June 5, 2007

Ms Karen Ellingford
Executive Officer
Education and Training Committee
Parliament House
Spring Street
EAST MELBOURNE 3002
Dear Ms Karen Ellingford,

In response to the '**Inquiry into Dress Codes and School Uniforms in Victorian Schools**', the Atheist foundation of Australia Inc would wish to make the following points:

Dress Codes and the type of uniforms chosen should be as a result of consensus agreement between principals, staff, parents and school committees under the guidelines set out below.

- Such Codes and the type of uniforms chosen must reflect the secular nature of Australian society and not that of any particular religious, commercial or political ideological stance.
- Such Codes and the type of uniforms chosen, if of a religious, commercial or political nature, can create divisive feelings amongst students and the wider community, reinforcing negative stereotypical thoughts and behaviours.
- Such Codes and the type of uniforms must not include religious, commercial or political symbolism by way of jewellery or attached paraphernalia.
- Such Codes and the type of uniforms must not include headgear clearly indicating a religious, commercial or political persuasion. (E.g. Jewish skull cap – Islamic Hijab – Hindu turban – or the likes of Ronald McDonald shoes etc)
- Such Codes and the type of uniforms must be sun-smart without identifying with any particular religious, commercial or political ideological stance.
- Such Codes and the type of uniforms must not be used as a method of indoctrination into any particular religious, commercial or political ideology.
- There must be no exemptions to Dress Codes and School Uniforms chosen by principals, staff, parents and school committees, using the above provisos, apart from the situation where the health of the student is compromised by such regulation.
- Australia is a secular nation and its laws and regulations must be a reflection of that. What better way to reinforce the benefits of secular democracy than having its future voters taught all else is secondary to the rule of law applicable to everyone. Turmoil throughout the world, especially the religious type, should act as both a guide and warning that failing in this area is an invitation for future strife.

It is the considered opinion of the Atheist Foundation of Australia Inc that if Australia is to retain its privileged status of a harmonious country well into the future, religious, political or commercial symbolism must be kept out of all schools.

Yours Sincerely,

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