



MEDIA RELEASE: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Aussie women say “NO” to burqa ban

60% of Aussie women put personal fears aside and stand firmly behind supporting the right of other women in Australia to wear the burqa in public places, reveals a snap poll conducted by The Heat Group, Australia’s largest marketer to women. While Aussie women say “yes” to wearing the burqa in a public place, they feel confronted those donning the burqa (61%) and believe that this may present security risks (70%).

Half of all Australian women (50%) believe that banning the burqa restricts the religious rights of Australians, and worry that should the ban be put in place, the flow-on effect may include restrictions to exercise other cultural or religious freedoms.

“Australian women want to support the burqa, however this poll show there is an element of personal conflict when it comes to this particular religious expression,” says Gillian Franklin, Managing Director of The Heat Group. “On one hand, Aussie women are prepared to stand up to the “clothing police” and agree people should be able to wear whatever they want in public, particularly when it comes to cultural and religious choices. On the other hand, they are worried about the lack of transparency and the safety risks of identity-concealing clothing.”

“The Australian Government’s decision, announced today, to drop the proposed controversial burqa ban in Parliament House is in line with what women across Australia are thinking and feeling,” said Ms Franklin.

As a prominent and influential Muslim community representative, Susan Carland is a welcome contributor to the sensitive topic that is burqas in Australia. “It is wonderful to see the positive and accepting attitudes towards some Muslim women’s dress reflected in the latest Heat Poll. I believe greater availability of information regarding the numerous safety measures already in place in Australia for women that cover their faces (eg, at airports, when driving, when dealing with security personnel) may help lessen the fears everyday Australians have about the small number of women in our country who cover their faces, and lead to even greater acceptance.”

ENDS.

Media Info: Soraya Calavassy, AC Agency / 02 9356 4700 / 0434 612 018 / soraya@acagency.com.au

ABOUT HEAT GROUP Despite being relatively unknown to the everyday shopper, Heat is a brand that touches millions of lives each year. Industry data shows that someone, somewhere will purchase a product that was distributed by Heat every 2.6 seconds. The Heat Group is the exclusive Australian distributor of Max Factor, COVERGIRL, Bourjois, essence and Jeanne Arthes fragrances, the official licensee of Warner Bros. personal care, and the owner and distributor of ultra3, Billie Goat Soap and MUD. Heat is recognised as one of Australia’s most successful entrepreneurial companies and works to make a difference to the lives of Australian women every day.

ABOUT SUSAN CARLAND Listed as one of 500 Most Influential Muslims in the World list and as a “Muslim Leader of Tomorrow” by the UN Alliance of Civilizations, Carland is the regular paper reviewer on ABC TV’s News Breakfast and the Muslim correspondent on the ABC radio’s “Sunday Nights ” program. In 2012, The Age included Carland as one of the 20 Most Influential Australian Female Voices list by The Age. Carland is also a PhD candidate at Monash University, specialising in gender, sociology and the Australian Muslim experience.