

Open letter to His Excellency Dr Mahmoud Babaei
Ambassador of Iran
Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran
25 Culgoa Circuit
O'Malley ACT 2606
ambassador@iranembassy.org.au

19 Oct 2011

Dear Dr Babaei,

As Australian academics, we join with our counterparts from other countries in calling on Iran to remove any discriminatory elements from its education system.

In particular, we seek Iran's commitment to make higher education accessible for students from all religious backgrounds, including members of the Bahá'í Faith.

We are united in condemning any policy barring students from higher education on the basis of their religion, or causing them to be expelled from their studies due to their religious faith.

We note that Universities Australia (formerly known as the Australian Vice-Chancellors Committee) has, on behalf of all Australian Universities, previously raised this issue in its letters to UNESCO dated 20 February 2006, September 2007 and 28 June 2011. We reiterate their call to support access to education for all, irrespective of religious faith, seeking that this injustice be revoked.

We ask that you remind your Government that on 24 June 1975 Iran ratified the ***International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*** which includes “*the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.*” On the same day Iran also ratified the ***International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*** which recognises “*the right of everyone to education*” and that “*higher education shall be made equally accessible to all, on the basis of capacity.*”

We understand that on 22 May 2011 Iranian authorities raided 30 homes and arrested 16 Bahá'ís involved with the Bahá'í Institute for Higher Education. We further understand that many of those arrested are still in prison simply for being a part of an initiative which provides higher education to those otherwise denied access to Iranian universities.

We call for the arrested individuals to be treated in accordance with the rights to which they are entitled under international law and be released immediately.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Iftekhar Admad *Edith Cowan University*

Ms Kate Ala'i *Curtin University*

Professor Kamal Alameh *Edith Cowan University*

Professor Lawrence Angus *University of Ballarat*
Associate Professor Mark Arnold *University of Sydney*
Dr Sreten Askraba *Edith Cowan University*
Associate Professor Javid Atai *University of Sydney*
Professor Richard Bell *Murdoch University*
Associate Professor Bill Atweh *Curtin University*
Associate Professor Geoff Bamberry *Charles Stuart University*
Professor David Battersby *University of Ballarat (VC)*
Mr Andrew Baumanis *Edith Cowan University*
Dr Derek Bland *Queensland University of Technology*
Mr Charles Boyle *Papua New Guinea University of Technology*
Associate Professor Pat Bradbery *Charles Stuart University*
Associate Professor Deon Canyon *Curtin University*
Dr Douglas Chai *Edith Cowan University*
Professor Kevin Croft *University of Western Australia*
Professor Peter Daivis *RMIT University*
Professor Vaile Dawson *Curtin University*
Dr Deirdre Drake *Edith Cowan University*
Dr John Ehrich *Edith Cowan University*
Mr Brian Firth *University of Ballarat*
Dr Kirsty Foster *University of Sydney*
Dr Wlodzimierz Gornisiewicz *Edith Cowan University*
Professor Lelia Green *Edith Cowan University*
Ms Marjike Groothuis *University of Ballarat*
Professor Daryoush Habibi *Edith Cowan University*
Professor Nanette Hassall *Edith Cowan University*
Associate Professor Stephen Hinckley *Edith Cowan University*
Dr Ravi Jagadeeshan *Monash University*
Dr Long Jia *University of Ballarat*
Ms Kathleen Keogh *University of Ballarat*
Associate Professor David Liley *Swinburne University of Technology*
Dr Johnny Lo *Edith Cowan University*
Dr Graeme Lock *Edith Cowan University*
Dr Geoffrey Lummis *Edith Cowan University*
Dr Greg Maguire *Edith Cowan University*
Dr Miccal Matthews *Edith Cowan University*

Professor Alistair McCulloch *University of South Australia*
Dr Charlynn Miller *University of Ballarat*
Professor Fariborz Moshirian *University of New South Wales*
Dr Lynette Moss *Edith Cowan University*
Associate Professor Ute Mueller *Edith Cowan University*
Mr John Murray *Edith Cowan University*
Professor Fazel Naghdy *University of Wollongong*
Associate Professor Golshah Naghdy *University of Wollongong*
Associate Professor Adam Osseiran *Edith Cowan University*
Dr Tapan Rai *Edith Cowan University*
Dr Alexander Rassau *Edith Cowan University*
Dr Steven Richardson *Edith Cowan University*
Professor Geoffrey Roy *Edith Cowan University*
Professor Greg Schiemer *Australian National University*
Professor Linc Schmitt *University of Western Australia*
Associate Professor Margaret Schnitzler *University of Sydney*
Professor Frank Stagnitti *University of Ballarat (Pro Vice Chancellor)*
Associate Professor Andrew Stranieri *University of Ballarat*
Mr Shamsheer Syed *University of Ballarat*
Professor Moses Oludayo Tade *Curtin University*
Dr Robert Tierney *Charles Stuart University*
Dr Kerry Tilbrook *Charles Stuart University*
Dr Elena Tsvetnenko *Curtin University*
Professor Billy Todd *Swinburne University of Technology*
Professor Matthew Tonts *University of Western Australia*
Ms Kylie Turville *University of Ballarat*
Professor Duane Varan *Murdoch University*
Dr Graham Wild *Edith Cowan University*
Professor Graham Williams *University of Wollongong*
Dr Helen Wu *Edith Cowan University*
Dr Zonghan Xie *Edith Cowan University*
Associate Professor David Yost *University of Ballarat*
Dr Jason Zein *University of New South Wales*
Professor Didar Zowghi *University of Technology Sydney*

cc: Ms Irinia Bovoka (Director-General of UNESCO)

Ms Navanethem Pillay (UN High Commissioner for Human Rights)

Mr Mohammad Khazaei (Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations)