



# Diwan Al Dawla

**DIWAN AL DAWLA**  
ABN 99 761 464 044

**1855 PUTTY RD**  
COLO NSW 2756

**www.aldawla.org**  
info@aldawla.org

## PUBLIC STATEMENT

### A. DIWAN AL DAWLA

1. Diwan Al Dawla is a public guild that advances a way of living based upon a Qur'ānic narrative and approach.
2. The name of the guild is composed of the Arabic word *dīwān*, which means an administrative front and *al dawla*, which means a religiously autonomous entity that arises. The use of the word al dawla promotes the binding of collaborative effort upon autonomous standards of religious self-governance that are independent of entities that represent secular socioeconomic structures and modes of living.
3. Associates of Diwan Al Dawla, known as *aṣḥāb al dawla* or those associated with al dawla, live as a spiritual guild separated from secular worldviews to pursue a practical mode of living under an oath of allegiance and dedication to the religious purposes of Diwan Al Dawla, which include religious activities of devotion, self-discipline, ritual baptism (*wuḍū'*), inter-community prayers, contemplation and religious study.
4. Religious practice of Diwan Al Dawla at the Southern Chariot Religious Site or known in Arabic as *Ribāṭ Al Dawla* included the use of a hippodrome (round horse track) on the southern side of the site to ride the Arabian horse in a free-spirited environment that aids younger members in carrying out the religious practice of self-discipline and religious contemplation, while they have access to spiritual counselling.
5. According to the governing rules of Diwan Al Dawla, the association is not governed by a committee of representative members, rather each member takes individual responsibility for actions that they've undertaken in pursuit of the purposes of the association. Furthermore, a member who holds an asset or a property on trust for the purposes of the association does not have control powers over other members' activities in relation to this asset or property. (Rules 4.8, 4.9 and 6.6).

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## B. DIWAN AL DAWLA'S RELIGIOUS OATH

6. In a liberalist society, where the state is separated from religion, a religious association has to make the conscious choice of crossing the line of separation to become incorporated in state law. Such a choice is fundamental.
7. On the contrary, to be an incorporated religious organisation is to have by default entered into a legal contract with the state to abide by its laws. Unlike unincorporated basic religious charities, such incorporated religious associations are under legal obligation to comply with state laws.
8. Diwan Al Dawla has not entered into a social contract with a state, which upholds religious cross symbols that our members consider to be abhorrent and that our brethren in religion have been persecuted by at the admission of the designer of its coat of arms.

## C. NSW COAT OF ARMS AND ITS RELIGIOUS SYMBOLS

9. The NSW government upholds religious symbols in its Coat of Arms and its State Badge. The same religious Coat of Arm is used by the NSW parliament and the NSW courts. According to the explanatory notes published by the designer of the NSW Coat of Arms, NSW Government Printer William Gullick, the oldest religious element in the design of the NSW Coat of Arms is the Red Cross of St. George on the shield. Gullick states that the Cross was used "in allusion to the old badge of the Colony, the Red Cross of St. George". He further states that "borne on the ordinary [i.e. Cross] are the four golden stars ... representative of the Southern Cross, with the central emblem of the Lion ... [which] was intended by the first designers to represent the "Lion in the South"". (William Gullick, *The New South Wales Coat of Arms With Notes on the Earlier Seals*, Government Printer: Sydney, 1907).
10. Gullick adds in an Appendix to his notes that "the legend of St. George came to us from the East. The Greek Church honors him as the Great Martyr Captain of the noble army of Martyrs. His cult in the East formed very early as Constantine the first Christian Roman Emperor built a church in his name about 323 AD only". He says, "There is also another legend of his appearing at the head of an army of the Seven Champions of Christendom – a celestial knight who won a great victory over a Moslem host". He adds "the cult of St. George was henceforward specially promoted in England by Richard Coeur de Lion who had invoked his name in the Crusade Wars in Palestine and since then at Coronations the plain white banner of St. George with its red cross is carried in the procession ... in token of Christian Knighthood". He ends the appendix on the Cross of St. George with the following lines, "With the memories entwined around in glorious history, may we ever keep the sentiment alive "*Under the Southern Cross*" [Gullick's italics]".
11. The four stars on the St. George Cross illustrate what is called the Southern Cross (an allusion reinforced by being placed on each arm of the St George's cross). Gullick placed a white cross on a blue field, then voiding the white cross with the

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red cross of St George, and the golden Southern Cross and the Lion in the South (an allusion to the Lion of Judah).

12. All three signs are blatant religious symbols that are tied to deep religious narratives and histories whose use by representatives of NSW Government departments, agencies and leaders is described in section 4(4) of the *State Arms, Symbols and Emblems Act 2004*.

#### **D. DIWAN AL DAWLA AS A BASIC RELIGIOUS CHARITY**

13. In Australia, five conditions define the relationship between a religious association and a state government and its laws and determines whether the religious association has willingly entered into a social contract of compliance with the state in matters of religious practice. Such a decision by a religious association is often based upon social and cultural factors, as well as, financial influences such as being eligible as a religious association to receive state grants.

14. Diwan Al Dawla is a de facto basic religious charity, as it meets the following five conditions:

- i. It is an unincorporated entity.
- ii. Its charitable purposes are solely for the 'advancement of religion'.
- iii. It does not belong to a group.
- iv. It is not a deductible gift recipient (DGR).
- v. It does not receive public grants.

15. Diwan Al Dawla does not claim an exemption from Australian law. Rather its assertion is based on the line of non-compliance with state laws in religious practice.

16. The Southern Chariot Religious Site was a consecrated religious site that was conditioned upon remaining religiously autonomous. It cannot be conditional upon compliance with the laws of a state that upholds cross symbols. To do so would have been religious subservience, which we consider to be religiously abhorrent and a frightening thought.

17. For the Southern Chariot Religious Site to be imposed with the laws of another religion is to be desecrated. As the use of coercion against two of its religious practitioners has now taken place, Diwan Al Dawla has removed from its gateway the four religious flags and their flagpoles, as well as, the two signs that read "Southern Chariot Religious Site" and Ribat Al Dawla in Arabic. Diwan Al Dawla has relinquished the Southern Chariot Religious Site as a religious site.

18. Our religious practice and what is ancillary to it must remain free. Our religion cannot be dictated to by another religion.

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## **E. DIWAN AL DAWLA AND RELIGIOUS SYMBOLISM**

19. Furthermore, from the religious perspective of Diwan Al Dawla, by adopting crusader coat of arms symbolism in its halls of judgement, the NSW courts, are, therefore, taking sides in an ancient religious dispute between two interpretations concerning the life of the Prophet ʿĪsā (Aramaic/Proto-Arabic: ʿĪsā, Greek: Iēsoûs, English: Jesus).
20. Diwan Al Dawla, as an unincorporated basic religious charity, considers that the use of religious symbols by the NSW court implies that it is not a secular judge that is at arm's length from disputants who use contradictory religious symbols.
21. An unincorporated basic religious association that does not share the NSW court's religious symbols, which it upholds in its coat of arms and on its correspondence, therefore, is given a condition before it is to resort to a NSW court for secular protection. This condition is a religious narrative, which implies members of a religious association have to succumb to a war statement that extends back to the crusader period. By upholding these religious symbols, the NSW court is effectively making a religious and a political affirmation about the crusades and enforcing the historical version of those who massacred over those who were violated.

## **F. VIOLATION OF DIWAN AL DAWLA'S RELIGIOUS FREEDOM**

22. Members of Diwan Al Dawla are, therefore, faced with the problem that a state coercive force that is portrayed as a secularised entity is upholding blatant religious symbols, while attempts are being made to interfere with our religious life and to impose upon us others' definition of what constitutes the good and the moral in relation to our religious practice.
23. To use such symbols while monopolising the use of force, the NSW court is by default eliminating us and our religious assets from being protected unless we actively succumb to an acknowledgment of a religious narrative about the crusades that we wholeheartedly disagree with. How can it be that I'm expected to be loyal to the religious symbols of another religion, because such symbols are given coercive force?
24. Our members believe that this predicament encourages and incites religious violence against us by hit squads who share the desire to uphold their own religious symbols that they consider to be official over ours, which they consider to be outlawed.
25. I reject any attempt to violate the religious freedom of the members of Diwan Al Dawla and condemn strongly any action that has been taken against us in that regard. I accuse any involved state funded bureaucrat of showing contempt against our religious practice and of being dismissive of our elaborate requests in that regard.
26. In fact, the use of coercive force against Diwan Al Dawla and its members in matters of religious practice, constitutes religious persecution. Our members hold to

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this principle, and they have their intellectual and spiritual position to bear witness to it.

27. It was of utmost religious importance that Diwan Al Dawla's religious site be taken, by the upholders of the religious symbols of another religion, as an autonomous space that remained free from outside intervention and free from the infringement of coercive measures that meddle with our mode of spiritual worship and the exercise of our religious freedom.
28. This has not taken place. Our religious site was desecrated, and as a result the members of Diwan Al Dawla have decided to stop using the property at Colo as a religious site.
29. On behalf of members of Diwan Al Dawla, their families, their supporters and their friends, I, therefore, make the plea that all aggressive action against our religious freedom be immediately terminated.

## **G. RELIGIOUS DISADVANTAGE**

30. Diwan Al Dawla's religious practice involves a sustainable benevolent enterprise that tackles the religious disadvantage of individuals who are members of its religious community.
31. Diwan Al Dawla's mission involves tackling the structural religious disadvantage that has resulted from a state government upholding religious symbols that bear crusader crosses and which has social and religious narrative implications. Such aggressive use of religious symbols, we believe, has introduced imbedded psychological biases that play out with issues of religious discrimination, social disenfranchisement and financial disadvantage.
32. Furthermore, it is the hypocrisy of bearing crosses over what is supposed to be secular such as public institutions and public flags that has resulted in an ensuing religious hypocrisy on the association level. Hypocritical religious associations are willing to incorporate their religious practice to become incorporated under the symbols of another religion. It is this religious hypocrisy, which has ultimately bred radicalisation among a youth subculture that have continued to struggle with such religious hypocrisy.
33. Diwan Al Dawla's objective is to fight religious hypocrisy and to empower its members, particularly its young members, in overcoming structural religious disadvantage by providing them with a practical missionary engagement accompanied by religious counselling to positively drive their autonomous spiritual life.
34. For Diwan Al Dawla, religious separation does not necessarily imply secular isolationism. The concept of the secular implies that a religious practitioner of Diwan Al Dawla could be invested in a secular process without being coerced, but such consent is not attained when forced to become subservient to an entity that

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uses the religious symbols of another religion. This is a serious matter of religious persecution.

### *Conclusion*

35. Diwan Al Dawla as an unincorporated basic religious charity carries a solution to an ongoing religious crisis that only an unincorporated religious association of its like can tackle. Diwan Al Dawla is an alternative to incorporating one religion under a state that bears the religious symbols of another religion. An alternative that is a historical reality in Australian society and not one to be granted by its religious adversaries.
36. Our basic religious way is grounded in a unitarian narrative of pure tawḥīd, which entails that our religious practice be free from any interference including that from state-based institutions. This independence in religion is giving promise to a generation of religiously disadvantaged young men and women in the face of oppressive powers. Our way is one of civilisational building and hope, we reject for the destruction and despair of tyrannical dark forces to control and prevail in our lives.