



Australian Association of Islamic and Muslim Studies rejects attack on

Professor Amin Saikal AM

The Australian Association of Islamic and Muslim Studies (AAIMS) rejects the unprovoked attack on Professor Amin Saikal, Director of the Australian National University *Centre for Arab and Islamic Studies* by Michael Rubin, resident scholar at the *American Enterprise Institute* in today's *The Australian* Newspaper.

Dr Rubin makes the claim that Professor Saikal's Centre for Arab and Islamic Studies has made the Australian National University a 'laughing stock'. This is far from the case.

The Centre, amongst the best in the world, includes among its board members individuals across the political spectrum, including Professor the Hon Gareth Evans AO QC, Foreign Minister for Labor during the 1980s and the Hon Susan Ley, the current Liberal Member for Farrar. The Centre produces both outstanding scholarship (contributing to ANU's ranking of '5' (well above world class) in the 2015 Excellence in Research Assessment for Political Science and invites individuals with widely differing views to present - a key to outstanding academic engagement.

Professor Saikal, a member of the AAIMS Board of Advisors has been a faithful servant of Australia, having received an Order of Australia (AM) for service to the international community and to education in 2006. Professor Saikal has served his university ANU, and is a foundational figure in Australian Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies over past decades, resulting in his election as a Fellow to the Academy of Social Science in Australia.

This attack upon Professor Saikal and the Centre is unfounded, and only serves to malign a Centre at the forefront of developing mutual understanding and respect between the Muslim world and the West.

It is ironic that this attack has been used to further the case for a Centre for Western Civilisation. The *Centre for Arab and Islamic Studies* at ANU represents the best practices of Western Civilisation, fostering intellectual engagement with other cultures, informing policy makers and diplomats alike in the national interest.

The Australian Association of Islamic and Muslim Studies is proud to have Professor Saikal sit on its advisory board. We invite Dr Rubin to apologise for his ill-informed and unfounded criticism to an outstanding citizen of Australia.

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For further comment:

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