



Written by [James Heiser](#) on December 1, 2010

Burka Is Now Swimwear in Australia

If you think the Muslim burka is about as far from looking like “swim wear” as you can imagine, think again. Some Muslim women in Australia beg to differ. And the West Australia Health Department and Office of Multicultural Affairs are too beholden to the demands of political correctness to disagree with them.



According to a [story](#) by Nathan Watson at [InMyCommunity.com.au](#), the burka beach party is no laughing matter; the Equal Opportunities Commission has already decided a case favor of a Muslim woman who was not allowed to use a pool and water slides at Adventure World on account of her attire. In Watson’s words:

CONTROVERSY surrounding the swim attire worn by some Islamic women has prompted the development of a new policy on dress standards for the WA aquatic industry.

The WA Health Department and Office of Multicultural Affairs have approved the Leisure Institute of WA’s new policy for public swimming pools and its rollout is imminent.

Work began on the policy after a Muslim woman and her friends were stopped from using the pool and water slides at Adventure World in February 2009 because of their religious dress.

The Equal Opportunities Commission took up the case and the woman was awarded \$16,000 compensation and an apology in May this year.

The EOC confirmed it has dealt with several similar cases since.

But the matter of one’s attire while swimming is a matter of health and public safety, and it is on the basis of such considerations that swim wear is regulated in the first place. One need not be a prude to think that many of the outfits presently permitted at the pool or beach are absurdly minimal and revealing, but the answer to one extreme is not to leap to its opposite. Flowing, full length garments are normally not a great idea in the water because of the risk of drowning, and because they are less likely to be sanitary. As noted by the bloggers at [Gates of Vienna](#),

If non-Muslims were to wear similar clothing, it would be considered unhygienic, and they would not be allowed in the pool. But the magic of Islam can perform many wonders, and one of them seems to be to reverse bad hygiene. Say the shahada, and presto! The bacteria flee from the scene.

Matters touching sharia law or Muslim traditions are often consigned to a “reality avoidance zone” in Western politics, and the burka beach party is merely the latest example of this trend to be expressed “Down Under.” Nevertheless, in the way that life sometimes imitates art, all of this seems somewhat familiar:



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{youtube width="480" height="385"}DWAKtYGJZSM{/youtube}

"Swimwear," indeed.

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