

Submission of Berend de Boer on proposed halal regulatory framework MPI Discussion Paper No: 2018/06

About the Submitter

- 1 This submission is made by Berend de Boer in a personal capacity.

Summary

- 2 This proposal formally introduces Sharia law into NZ, and therefore should be entirely rejected.
- 3 This proposal also makes a specific religion preferred for specific roles in our food production chain, and MPI does not have the statutory powers to do that.

The proposal itself

- 4 I see no reason that MPI proceeds with this proposal, and in my opinion it should be abandoned. The reason for this proposal seems to be that MPI has identified a '*market failure*' and will now be using taxpayer money to '*rectify*' this.
- 5 But if the market has not created its own certification, there is probably a good reason for it: it might simply not be worth the money.
- 6 For MPI to proceed with this proposal it should outline why certification cannot be left to the market, the benefits in dollars, and the cost to taxpayer in dollars. The proposal fails entirely to quantify its benefits, and should therefore be rejected. Those who benefit from certification should pay for it themselves.

This stealthily introduces Sharia law in NZ

- 7 Going down the path of recognising halal food on a national level means we will, silently and irrevocably, introduce Sharia law into NZ law. Why on earth do we want to introduce an entirely foreign law into our own? This seems not to have been thought through well.

- 8 We now will need to employ an army of experts and advisers on Sharia law at government level. Has MPI thought this through?
- 9 As this proposal makes Sharia law part of the NZ regulatory framework it should be rejected.

This introduces Sharia law in NZ companies

- 10 Once this framework is in place, with all the taxpayer funded enforcement mechanisms, NZ companies may find it expedient to do halal certification for a lot of their products.
- 11 So they will need to hire experts in Sharia law to make sure they do it right. This proposal will introduce Sharia law in NZ companies, do we really want to go down that route?

What is halal?

- 12 MPI is extremely silent on what halal actually means. It not just introduces Sharia law into NZ, it also forces companies to say a Muslim prayer when creating the food!
- 13 Here is how halal meat is created:
 - 14 1. It can only be done by Muslims (NZ workers are going to love this).
 - 15 2. The throat must be cut.
 - 16 3. The head of the animal must be facing Mecca.
 - 17 4. An Islamic prayer must be said.
- 18 Does MPI really want to force companies to say a Muslim prayer so our products are now halal certified? That's pretty out there isn't it?

Where does the certification money go?

- 19 The proposal is entirely silent on who is going to do the certification: obviously Muslims. Where does the money go that is extracted from NZ consumers this way? The proposal includes not a single safeguard that halal certification is not used to finance terrorism or export hate speech to Western countries.

Who is a proper Muslim?

- 20 Section 65a says that to become an approved halal organisation, it must be staffed by practising Muslims. Is MPI now going to decide who is a proper Muslim? They can't even agree upon that themselves! That shows you how religious this stuff is.

Freedom of choice

- 21 If MPI proceeds with this framework—despite not informing the taxpayer of its costs nor benefits—the NZ consumer should have the freedom to reject food that has been processed according to halal practices.
- 22 NZ consumers may not want to pay for the extra cost associated with food that is processed according to Islamic law. Therefore any food that has received halal certification should be clearly labelled as such.
- 23 This is a key point for me: so section 92–94 should be rewritten. Any food that has been processed in a halal sanctioned way or will receive halal certification at some point in the chain should receive a very large and visible label in NZ supermarkets so consumers can reject or choose this if they so wish.
- 24 I propose that section 92–94 are replaced with:
- 25 *“MPI proposes to allow companies no flexibility in food that will receive halal certification at some point. Food intended to receive halal certification when sold to consumers either in NZ or abroad must be labelled when sold to NZ consumers. There will be two labels:*
- 26 *1. Food that has been processed according to Sharia law but will not receive halal certification for the NZ market, but will receive it for overseas markets, will be labelled with a logo saying ‘halal prepared’.*
- 27 *2. Food that is certified by Islamic scholars will say ‘halal certified’.*
- 28 *The logo must be clearly visible and at least 4cm².”*

Christians cannot eat halal food

- 29 For Christians it is forbidden to knowingly eat food sacrificed to devils. As Paul writes to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 10:20,28):

- 30 *“But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. ... But if any man say unto you, This is offered in sacrifice unto idols, eat not for his sake that shewed it, and for conscience sake ...”*
- 31 Halal meat falls under this category as it is sacrificed to a devil. The god of the Muslims is not the God who created the heavens and the earth, and who reveals himself in his book, the Bible. The Koran opposes the most basic tenets of Christianity, therefore this Islamic prayer is not a prayer to the true God, but to a devil.
- 32 With this proposal MPI may soon exclude Christians from eating NZ lamb as it might become impossible to find non halal lamb.