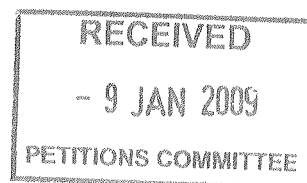




**THE HON NICOLA ROXON MP
MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND AGEING**



Mrs Julia Irwin MP
Chair
Standing Committee on Petitions
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mrs Irwin *Julia*

Thank you for your letter of 29 October 2008 regarding a petition about the social impacts of khat use in Australia that was recently submitted to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Petitions.

My Department is aware of the recent East African Women's Foundation campaign, and also recognises that among localised communities residing in Australia, khat is consumed for traditional and cultural reasons.

There are currently Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) regulations in place limiting the importation of the plant for personal use. At this point in time, the Australian Government does not intend to pursue changes to regulations related to khat importation.

In relation to writing to other Ministers about this matter, I suggest you also contact the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, the Hon Tony Burke MP, whose portfolio includes AQIS.

I trust that this information is of assistance and I look forward being informed of the outcome of the Standing Committee on Petitions' consideration of the khat petition.

Yours sincerely

NICOLA ROXON

18 DEC 2008