



Office of Hon Chris Carter
MP for Te Atatu
Minister of Education
Minister for Ethnic Affairs
Minister Responsible for the Education Review Office

11 March 2008

Arsham Parsi
Executive Director
Iranian Queer Organization (IRQO)
By e-mail: arsham@irqo.net

Salam Arsham

I am writing to congratulate IRQO on being awarded the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission *Felipa de Souza Award*. As an openly gay Member of the New Zealand Parliament, and a Minister in the Government, I salute your organisation for bravely taking on homophobic oppression and intolerance

In my role as Minister for Ethnic Affairs I am responsible for liaising with the many communities who now call New Zealand home – including the large Iranian expatriate community who mostly live in our largest city, Auckland. In addition, as a constituency Member of our Parliament I have, in the past, helped Iranian gays and lesbians to regularise their immigration status and avoid being deported back to Iran.

Consequently I am very familiar with the issues your organisation works on and I believe your award is very well deserved.

With warm regards

Hon Chris Carter
Minister of Education
Minister for Ethnic Affairs