



10 January 2025

Senator the Hon. Katy Gallagher

Minister for Finance, Minister for Women, Minister for the Public Service

The Hon. Anika Wells MP

Minister for Aged Care and Sport

Dear Ministers

**Re: Boycott of all men's cricket matches against Afghanistan**

We are writing to raise with you and formally condemn the dire circumstances faced by women and girls living under the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, and to seek that you commit to steps that demonstrate Australian government support for their rights. As a feminist association representing the sex-based rights of women and girls, AF4WR expects the Australian government to recognise the humanitarian obligation to formally respond to international circumstances such as those currently faced by Afghan women and girls.

The Australian men's cricket team is scheduled to play the Afghanistan men's team as part of the International Cricket Council (ICC) Champions Trophy on 28 February. We call on the Australian Government to announce a sporting boycott of all matches featuring Afghanistan, in all sports, until the rights of women and girls in Afghanistan have been restored. In particular, we note that Afghanistan is currently in breach of ICC rules which stipulate that all member countries must have pathways in place to enable the participation of women and girls in cricket. The Afghan women's cricket team is currently in exile in Australia, its members unable to return to their home country where they face almost certain death for daring to play the sport they love. For Australia to participate in the Champions Trophy match, in these circumstances, is against both the rules and the spirit of cricket.

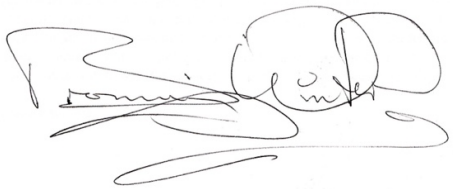
As you are no doubt aware, the lives of Afghan women and girls since the Taliban returned to power in 2021 have become increasingly constrained. Afghanistan is the only country in the world in which female education is completely banned and there now exists a new generation of Afghan girls deprived of any formal education. Women are forbidden from working. No public visibility of human females – from the age of puberty onwards – is allowed, resulting in the full coverage of their bodies in public under burqas. Nor may women or girls leave their home for any reason without a male chaperone. Over the past year, increasing restrictions mean that women and girls are forbidden to speak in public, to sing, to converse with each other and now, to be seen via a window in their homes: windows that enable this must now be walled up.

The restrictions described above are official policy of the Taliban in Afghanistan, and heavily policed. What the policies indicate on a day-to-day human level is the systemic implementation of the dehumanisation of all women and girls living in Afghanistan. This constitutes an urgent humanitarian crisis that must be addressed at every opportunity.

The decision for the Australian men's cricket team to play against Afghanistan demonstrates to the Taliban an acceptance of its authority and conduct. This cannot be allowed to occur. Women and girls matter more than cricket. Australia must stand up for the women and girls of Afghanistan and cannot be seen to accept the Taliban regime's conduct or policies, in theory or practice.

We call on you to announce a boycott of all sporting matches in which the Afghan men's team will participate, in protest at the continuing humanitarian crisis inflicted upon Afghan women and girls. Sporting boycotts such as this have been utilised in the past where diplomacy has failed and the erasure of human rights for females in Afghanistan constitutes the need for such action again. We ask also that you take any further available political and diplomatic steps to demonstrate that the Taliban policies in question are unacceptable and must be overturned.

Yours sincerely



Emeritus Professor Bronwyn Winter  
Co-Convenor, Australian Feminists for Women's Rights

cc. International Cricket Council