

Halal-approved funds paid by Australian companies are being used to build mosques and religious schools in Indonesia

From [ABC](#)

Australian companies paying for halal certification could be helping pay for mosques and other Islamic developments to be built in Indonesia, an ABC investigation has found. Anti-halal certification campaigners are furious that the money for certification is being used to fund overseas religious schools and mosques, reports ABC Four Corners.

'Halal' which means 'permissible' or 'allowed' in Arabic acts as green light for Muslim consumers – and many big brands like Bega cheese, Cadbury chocolate and Kellogg's cereal have all made the lucrative decision to pay fees to be granted the label.

JBS Australia Pty Ltd, one of Australia's largest meat processing companies, paid \$2.4 million for halal certification in 2014. Australian tea company Madura used to pay \$1,400 a year to gain the halal accreditation

Majelis Ulama Indonesia, Indonesia's biggest halal authority, accepts thousands of dollars from Australian halal certifiers wanting to be granted the right to export 'Halal certified' meat to Indonesia.

Although the MUI claims it does not charge fees for access to the Indonesian market, an investigation by the ABC has revealed profits from Australian halal certifier have been

channelled back into Muslim communities in Indonesia. However, the ABC Four Corners program has reported that the ICCV's profits from halal certification in Australia are also travelling to Indonesia to help build a sprawling \$5 million development controlled by a senior MUI official.

The ABC also confirmed that Mr Ozyurek is financially contributing to the five-hectare development which included the construction of a mosque in Jonggol, West Java.

Former president of the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils (AFIC) Ikebal Patel told Four Corners MUI officials had to be kept happy if Australian halal certifiers wanted to be granted the right to certify exports to Indonesia. But in 2011, while Mr Patel was AFIC president, he wrote to the MUI offering \$10,000 along with a 70:30 split of the profits, in exchange for halal certification rights.

"We made it very clear that this money was to go to MUI, but not to individuals and that is something that I was very, very clear about," he said. "We wanted to make sure that I, as the president of the federation at the time, wanted nothing to do whatsoever with making a bribe to individuals."

Four Corners has learnt MUI halal chairman Amidhan Shaberah heads an unregistered private foundation, titled The Good Deeds for the Hereafter Movement, which is building the mosque project.

The costs of halal certification vary widely. One of Australia's largest red meat processors, JBS Australia Pty Ltd, paid \$2.4 million for halal certification in 2014. The cost of halal certifying all Vegemite production is about \$10,000 a year, while less than \$20,000 covers the certification of more than 70 Cadbury confectionary products.

Australian Food and Grocery Council chief executive Gary Dawson said the impact on consumers was minimal.

Kirralie Smith who runs the anti-halal certification website Halal Choices told the ABC that halal certification is 'a religious fee. The money at the end of the day, whether one cent from my pocket, but collectively it's \$1,000, \$2,000, \$10,000, \$27,000. Whatever the final figure is, is going to fund things that I'm not I'm not happy ... to be funded, without my knowledge and consent,' said Ms Smith.

Daily Mail Australia has contacted the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils and the Islamic Coordinating Council of Victoria for comment.

The Truth About Halal, reported by Geoff Thompson and presented by Kerry O'Brien, goes to air on Monday 7th September at 8.30pm