

Aussies write in support of Dr M

MELBOURNE: Many Australians have rallied to back Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's speech to the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) which sparked an outcry from Western nations.

Writing to the editors of newspapers in Australia, they said Mahathir had a right to make his thoughts known to the world and some said his speech was taken out of context.

In a letter to *The Australian* newspaper, Ian Boyce, of the suburb of Prospect in Adelaide said: "Any anti-Jewish remark evokes a powerful response in our culture, as the spate of letters on Dr Mahathir attest."

"But it should be remembered that billions of people, not all of them Islamic, agree with him. Our interpretation of what is going on in the world is different from those who think that Israel is a bully.

"The image of boys slinging stones like David against Goliath, lives in the memory of many and Dr Mahathir knows it," he added.

Stating that the abuse that had been directed at Mahathir was an over-reaction, David Roberts, of the Melbourne suburb of Watsonia, said: "For Dr Mahathir to urge Muslims to use their brains, not bombs, is not unreasonable."

"This incident exposes a double standard in the media. Since the 9/11 terrorist attacks, Muslims have suffered extensive abuse. Why are negative comments that are directed towards Judaism so much more unacceptable than negative comments directed at Islam?"