



# UN Human Rights Council – 39th Session

## Oral statement – Submission of Australia's Universal Periodic Review (UPR) monitoring website as Australia's UPR mid-term report

Australia is a strong supporter of the UPR process. At the mid-point between our second and third cycle, we would like to update the Council on our progress in implementing the UPR recommendations from 2015.

Of the 290 recommendations, Australia accepted 150 and noted 50 to consider further. In December 2017, Australia launched its UPR monitoring website. The website provides information on Australia's position on each of the recommendations from our last UPR appearance.

I am pleased to advise that the UPR monitoring website will be updated this year as Australia's mid-term report on UPR implementation. I am also pleased to advise the Council of several developments that demonstrate Australia's commitment to implementing our UPR commitments.

In 2015, 29 states recommended that Australia ratify OPCAT. On 21 December 2017, Australia ratified OPCAT. Over the next three years, the Australian Government will work with states and territories to establish Australia's National Preventive Mechanism.

In Australia's second UPR, several states made recommendations that Australia should work towards promoting the rights of Indigenous Australians. This year, Australian governments have been refreshing the 'Closing the Gap' targets to improve outcomes for Indigenous Australians. While there is still work to do, Australia is on-track to meet three of the current 'Closing the Gap' targets.

A third major development in implementing recommendations made during Australia's second UPR is that same-sex marriage is now recognised under Australian law. In December 2017, amendments to the definition of marriage in the *Marriage Act 1961* took effect, which allow two people to marry, regardless of their sex or gender.

Australia looks forward to engaging with the Human Rights Council and other countries during our next review in 2020.

# Written statement – Submission of Australia’s Universal Periodic Review (UPR) monitoring website as Australia’s UPR mid-term report

Australia is a strong supporter of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), a process which is both central to our domestic policy settings and a critical element of our international advocacy on human rights. At the mid-point between our second and third cycle, we would like to update the Council on our progress in implementing the UPR recommendations from 2015.

Of the 290 recommendations, Australia accepted 150 and noted 50 to consider further. Australia made nine voluntary commitments, including to develop a public and accessible process for monitoring progress against UPR recommendations. This commitment was fulfilled in December 2017 when Australia’s UPR monitoring website was launched. The website provides information on Australia’s position on each of the recommendations from our last UPR appearance.

I am pleased to advise that the UPR monitoring website will be updated this year as Australia’s mid-term report on UPR implementation. I am also pleased to advise the Council of several developments that demonstrate Australia’s commitment to improving human rights and implement our UPR commitments.

In 2015, 29 states recommended that Australia ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT). On 21 December 2017, Australia ratified OPCAT. Upon ratification, Australia made a declaration under Article 24 of OPCAT to postpone the implementation of National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) obligations for three years. The Australian Government will use this time to work with states and territories to establish Australia’s NPM, given the states and territories manage many of Australia’s places of detention.

In Australia’s second UPR, several states made recommendations that Australia should work towards promoting the rights of Indigenous Australians. This year, Australian governments have been refreshing the ‘Closing the Gap’ targets to improve outcomes for Indigenous Australians. Australia is on-track to meet three of the current ‘Closing the Gap’ targets. For example, Australia is on track to halve the gap in mortality rates for Indigenous children under 5. There is still work to do, and Australian governments are committed to working with Indigenous Australians to develop an agenda that reflects their diverse needs, strengths and aspirations. Following extensive consultations, Australian governments worked with Indigenous academics, experts and practitioners to draft potential ‘Closing the Gap’ targets that align with the priorities identified by Indigenous Australians. These targets will be considered by Australian governments later this year.

A final major development in implementing recommendations made during Australia’s second-cycle UPR is that same-sex marriage is now recognised under Australian law. In December 2017, amendments to the definition of marriage in the *Marriage Act 1961* took effect, which allow two people to marry, regardless of their sex or gender.

Australia is firmly committed to the UPR process, and this year has also submitted its first voluntary report on achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. We look forward to engaging with the Human Rights Council and other countries during our next review in 2020.