



# AUSTRALIA

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## Universal Periodic Review of Switzerland – 14th Session

### Statement by Australia

29 October 2012

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Australia commends Switzerland's strong domestic human rights record and the leading role it plays internationally in promoting human rights and mediating conflicts.

Australia welcomes the work Switzerland has undertaken since its last Universal Periodic Review in strengthening its support for and protection of human rights. This includes Switzerland's revisions to the Asylum Act and Federal Act on Foreign Nations to strengthen protections against *non-refoulement* and its signature of the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse. We also welcome the establishment of the Swiss Resource Centre for Human Rights and National Commission for the Prevention of Torture.

Australia also commends Switzerland's constitutional amendments reinforcing guarantees to access to justice and the independence of the judiciary, and its moves to strengthen gender equality and women's rights, including through the introduction of paid maternity leave and legislation and programmes to combat violence against women and trafficking in women.

**Australia recommends that Switzerland adopt further anti-discrimination measures, including implementing the Council of Europe's recommendation for Switzerland to adopt comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation and prohibit discrimination regarding employment and accommodation in civil matters.**

**Australia also recommends that Switzerland establish anti-discrimination ombudsmen in each of its cantons and strengthen further the powers of the Swiss Federal Commission against Racism in line with the Council of Europe's recommendations.**