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Universal Periodic Review of France – 15th Session

Statement by Australia

21 January 2013

Australia commends the positive steps that France has taken to protect human rights since its last Universal Periodic Review, including its commitment to worldwide abolition of the death penalty. We also welcome France's efforts to give practical effect to the responsibility to protect.

Australia welcomes ongoing programs to modernise French prisons and the government's announcement to construct three new facilities by 2015. We are concerned, however, about some aspects of prison management, including overcrowding, access to medical treatment and mental health services and the high rate of suicides. **Australia recommends that France implement measures to improve conditions in French prisons, including by allocating greater resources to rehabilitation of detainees, improving prisoners' access to medical treatment and instituting preventive measures to lower suicide rates.**

Developments affecting the rights of people of Roma origin in France, including reports of insanitary conditions in immigration camps, prolonged pre-trial detention, and compulsory repatriation based on discriminatory provisions targeting Roma, have received widespread attention. **Australia recommends that policies be reviewed to ensure that the rights of Roma people in migration camps are fully respected, that they are not unlawfully targeted for removal and that removal orders are subject to a full individual assessment.**

HE Mr Peter Woolcott.