



AUSTRALIAN MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

E-mail UN.Geneva@dfat.gov.au

Chemin des Fins 2, Petit Saconnex, 1211 Geneva 19 Ph +41 22 799 9100 Fax +41 22 799 9175 www.geneva.mission.gov.au

Nicholas Purtell

Universal Periodic Review of the Kingdom of Tonga – 15th Session

Statement by Australia

21 January 2013

Australia welcomes the delegation from Tonga and appreciates its constructive engagement in the Universal Periodic Review process. We highly commend Tonga's constitutional and political reforms which, since the November 2010 elections, have meant that the majority of parliamentary seats are held by directly-elected Peoples' Representatives.

Tonga is on track to meet gender equality in terms of access to education, but more needs to be done to fully achieve Millennium Development Goal Three – Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women. Australia commends Tonga's efforts to promote gender equality through schools, the national marking of International Women's Day and White Ribbon Day and the Tonga Police 'no-drop policy' for domestic violence cases. We also commend Tonga for progressing work on a Family Protection Bill. Nevertheless, rates of domestic violence still remain high. **We recommend that Tonga ratify the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.**

We also recommend that Tonga prioritise legislation and domestic policies aimed at eliminating domestic violence and protecting women's rights and gender equality, particularly in relation to property, family and employment.

Australia notes the death penalty remains applicable for murder and treason in Tonga. However, Australia welcomes the fact that Tonga is abolitionist in practice and has not carried out an execution for thirty years. **Australia recommends that Tonga abolish the death penalty and ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Second Optional Protocol.**