



## Universal Periodic Review Working Group – 17th Session

### Universal Periodic Review of Belize

#### Statement by Australia

The Government of Australia welcomes the steps taken by the Government of Belize to advance human rights since its Universal Periodic Review (UPR) in 2009 and its pro-active investigation of alleged human rights violations.

While Australia was disappointed the position of Ombudsman had not been filled since December 2011 and that the Ombudsman had failed to produce any mandatory annual reports since 2009, Australia welcomes the three year appointment of the new Ombudsman in January 2013. **Australia recommends that the Government of Belize ensures that the Office of the Ombudsman continues to operate at full capacity and is brought into conformity with the Paris Principles.**

Australia welcomes Belize's commitment to providing human rights training to law enforcement officials, judicial officers and all State officials, including on the protection of vulnerable groups such as women, children, indigenous peoples and persons of minority sexual orientation or gender identity. However, Australia remains concerned about the continued use of excessive force by security forces. **Australia recommends that Belize addresses the excessive use of force by law-enforcement officers by ensuring public agents are held to account for allegations of misconduct, abuse and violence.**

We note Belize retains the death penalty as part of its laws but acknowledges its de facto moratorium on executions. **Australia recommends that Belize abolish the death penalty for all crimes and accede to the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on International Civil and Political Rights.**