**Universal Periodic Review Working Group – 22nd Session**

**Universal Periodic Review of Bulgaria**

**Statement by Australia**

Australia commends Bulgaria on its commitment to the protection and promotion of human rights, and for its ongoing engagement with the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process. The expansion of the Commission on Protection against Discrimination and the Ombudsman strengthen Bulgaria’s human rights framework. **Australia recommends Bulgaria take steps to establish an A-status National Human Rights Institution.**

Australia welcomes Bulgaria’s efforts to reform the judicial system, and fight corruption and organised crime. **Australia recommends Bulgaria continue to address legal and procedural limitations which obstruct the effective prosecution of crime and corruption cases.**

Australia also notes that the resurgence of hate crimes dilutes Bulgaria’s human rights framework. **Australia recommends Bulgaria take concrete steps to put in place adequate legal protections against incitement of hatred - including hatred motivated by xenophobia and homophobia - in line with Bulgaria’s international and domestic obligations.**