



AUSTRALIA

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

Universal Periodic Review Working Group – 22nd Session

Universal Periodic Review of Panama

Statement by Australia

The Government of Australia appreciates the engagement of the Panamanian delegation in the Universal Periodic Review Process. Australia recognises the efforts of the Government of Panama to improve the human rights situation since the last review.

Australia welcomes recent legal reforms to improve the Panamanian judicial system, including the move from an inquisitorial to an accusatory system, which has the potential to reduce the judicial backlog and the time taken to process and resolve cases. **Australia recommends that Panama continue to expand the new accusatory system to those provinces and districts where the system is not yet in place.**

Australia remains concerned about prison conditions in Panama, particularly relating to overcrowding, lack of adequate medical services and prolonged pre-trial detention. **Australia commends Panama's efforts to reduce overcrowding, but recommends that Panama continue to take steps to improve overall living conditions for prisoners.**

Australia acknowledges laws enacted protecting the rights of indigenous people and the progress that has been made in raising the level of economic and social well-being of this part of Panamanian society. However, Australia remains concerned that indigenous people continue to be disadvantaged in their access to basic services, education and health. **Australia recommends that Panama continue to work to reduce the levels of poverty in indigenous communities.**

