



Universal Periodical Review of the Commonwealth of Australia
9 November 2015
Intervention by the delegation of Estonia

Estonia warmly welcomes the delegation of the Commonwealth of Australia to its second UPR. We thank Australia for their report and information provided in the opening speech.

Estonia recognises Australia's contribution to the promotion and protection of human rights globally.

Estonia notes with appreciation Australia's efforts in implementing the recommendations from the last UPR session. We respect Australia's focus on advancing civil and political rights in their country, especially protecting the freedom of expression online/offline and the freedom of religion and belief. We commend Australia for appointing a full-time Human Rights Commissioner to follow up on human rights efforts and welcome the release of the National Human Rights Action Plan in 2012. We support Australia's priorities to empower persons with disabilities, the adoption and implementation of the National Disability Strategy 2010-2012 and DisabilityCare Australia. Estonia would like to commend authorities for their work to improve gender equality and reduce violence against women and children. It is still regrettable that corporal punishment remains lawful in Australia.

We are glad that Australia has taken further steps to close the gap between the treatment of indigenous and non-indigenous peoples, one of Australia's few human rights issues that has been a source of concern. In this light, the recommendation by a parliamentary committee for an amendment to refer explicitly to indigenous peoples in the Constitution is very welcome.

We also welcome the Government's commitment to achieve constitutional recognition for Indigenous Australians. The Indigenous Advancement Strategy that commenced on 1 July 2014 includes a number of broad-based and individual advancement programs. We welcome the National Indigenous Education Action Plan 2012-2014 and the National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Early Childhood Development, as we consider it of utmost importance to guarantee equal opportunities and services for all children and youth. We would like to commend the dedication to giving additional attention to the gap in the health status between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children.

Estonia would like to make the following **recommendations** to the Government of Australia:

- to ratify the Optional Protocol of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OP-CAT);
- to remove the reservation to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and to prohibit corporal punishment of children in the home and all other settings;
- to develop in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples a National Strategy to give effect to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and to facilitate the constitutional recognition of Aboriginal Australians.

Finally, Estonia very warmly notes Australia's active participation in the Freedom Online Coalition in global fora.

We wish the delegation of Australia a successful review meeting. Thank you!