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**Universal Periodic Review Working Group – 23rd Session**

**Universal Periodic Review of Myanmar**

**Statement by Australia**

Australia commends Myanmar on the substantial progress made in improving the human rights situation since its last review appearance.

Australia welcomes Myanmar’s preparations for the 8 November elections and the decision to allow international election observers.

Australia remains concerned about the situation in Rakhine State. We encourage the Myanmar Government to ensure the rights of all communities in Rakhine State. **Australia recommends Myanmar address the root causes of the situation in Rakhine State, including articulating a clear pathway to citizenship for those who identify as Rohingya.**

We are also concerned by the passage of the ‘Protection of Race and Religion’ laws, which may curtail the human rights of women and religious minorities, and the criminalisation of homosexual acts in the 1861 Penal Code. **Australia recommends Myanmar repeal or revise the ‘Protection of Race and Religion’ laws and Section 377 of the 1861 Penal Code to ensure the rights of women, religious minorities and the LGBTI community are protected.**

We note that Myanmar retains the death penalty, though acknowledge that no executions have been carried out since 1989. **Australia recommends Myanmar establish a formal moratorium on the death penalty with a view to ratifying the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.**

Tanya Bennett