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Universal Periodic Review Working Group – 24th Session

Universal Periodic Review of Republic of Palau

Statement by Australia

Australia commends the Republic of Palau on its engagement in the UN Human Rights Council and the Universal Periodic Review, which requires considerable effort given Palau's limited capacity as a Small Island State.

Australia congratulates Palau on strengthening its laws to protect family members against violence with the establishment of the *Family Protection Act 2012*, which criminalises domestic violence.

Australia commends the steps taken by Palau to decriminalise male homosexuality, with the introduction of legislation in 2014 to remove offences relating to consensual same-sex conduct between men.

Australia welcomes Palau's signing of several international human rights treaties in September 2011, including the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Australia commends Palau's ratification of the CRPD in 2013. We also welcome Palau's endorsement of the *Pacific Regional Strategy on Disability*, under the Pacific Islands Forum, in 2014.

Australia recommends that Palau ratifies the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women at the earliest opportunity.

We are pleased to be working in partnership with Palau through our *Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development* program, which aims to improve the political, economic and social opportunities for Pacific women. **Australia recommends that Palau continue to promote gender equality through its policies and programs.**