**Universal Periodic Review Working Group - 24th Session**

**Universal Periodic Review of Seychelles**

**Statement by Australia**

Australia welcomes the recent focus in Seychelles on good governance and encourages the President to ensure democracy and rule of law are upheld through transparent, strong, effective and independent institutions, including the Human Rights Commission.

Australia is concerned by the impact of restrictions on freedom of expression and assembly in Seychelles. **Australia recommends Seychelles amend the Public Order Act to allow for freedom of assembly and remove restrictions on freedom of the press by relaxing libel laws that could be used to impede journalists.**

Australia commends Seychelles on its efforts to address domestic violence, including appointment of an Ambassador for Women and Children. However, we are concerned by a recent increase in gender-based violence. **Australia recommends Seychelles pass the Domestic Violence Act and ensure adequate resources and training for officials dealing with gender-based violence.**

Australia is concerned by ongoing issues in the law and justice sector including lengthy remand times, excessive use of force by security officers and lack of judicial independence. **Australia recommends Seychelles provide adequate resources and training, including to law enforcement officials, to ensure effective institutions that comply with human rights norms.**

Australia notes Seychelles’ criminalisation of same-sex relations violates rights to privacy and freedom from discrimination, both protected under international law. **Australia recommends Seychelles repeal laws criminalising consensual, same-sex relationships between adults.**