**Universal Periodic Review Working Group – 27th Session**

**Universal Periodic Review of Finland**

**Statement by Australia**

Australia congratulates Finland for its long-standing commitment to the promotion of human rights, both domestically and internationally.

We welcome the Government’s introduction of the Second National Action Plan on Fundamental and Human Rights in Finland and decision to establish a permanent Government network of contact persons.

Australia welcomes Finland’s prohibitions against age discrimination and initiatives to improve social and health services for the elderly.

Australia commends Finland’s progress in the field of discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity. However, Australia is concerned that the Act on Legal Recognition of the Gender of Transsexuals still includes a requirement of infertility or sterilisation before gender reassignment can be legally recognised. **Australia recommends legislative reform to remove the requirement of infertility or sterilisation as a condition for the legal recognition of gender reassignment.**

While welcoming Finland’s efforts to criminalise sexual offences, Australia is concerned by the ongoing high levels of violence against women and domestic violence, and the high attrition rate of rape cases. **Australia recommends that Finland establish a national action plan to address domestic and family violence.**

**Australia further recommends Penal Code reform to define rape as a sexual violation, irrespective of the degree of violence used or threatened by the perpetrator.**