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

**Universal Periodic Review of Morocco**

**Statement by Australia**

Australia welcomes Morocco’s ongoing work to strengthen human rights, including through providing training in election observation, combatting discrimination, and the investigation and prevention of torture. We commend the National Human Rights Council’s establishment of the National Human Rights Training Institute in 2014 to facilitate this work.

We commend Morocco’s ratification of the Optional Protocol of the Convention Against Torture. **Australia recommends Morocco ratify the first Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.**

**Australia further recommends Morocco formally abolish the death penalty, and ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.**

Australia acknowledges recent steps taken by Morocco to address issues of violence against women. **Australia recommends Morocco amend domestic legislation to remove all forms of gender-based discrimination and protect the rights of women and children.**

Australia notes recent laws passed by Morocco to establish the Supreme Judicial Council and the Statute for Judges. **Australia recommends Morocco take further steps to ensure judicial independence, which is important in guaranteeing fair trials in accordance with international human rights standards.**