**Universal Periodic Review Working Group – 44th Session**

**Universal Periodic Review of Bangladesh**

**13 November 2023**

**Statement by Australia**

Thank you, [President/Vice-President]

Australia commends Bangladesh on efforts to promote social and economic inclusion of hijra. We acknowledge replacement of the Digital Security Act with the Cyber Security Act, but reiterate our 2018 recommendation that such a law should enforce constitutional provisions safeguarding freedom of expression.

Australia remains deeply concerned about reports of disappearances and extrajudicial killings, and calls for the perpetrators to be investigated and brought to justice. We continue to underscore the importance of free, fair, participatory and peaceful elections.

Australia recommends **Bangladesh:**

1. **Safeguard freedom of expression by amending Cyber Security Act provisions that criminalise speech.**
2. **Review the breadth of death penalty offences to align domestic legislation with Bangladesh’s ICCPR obligations**.
3. **Amend the Penal Code, including section 377, to decriminalise consensual same-sex relations between adults.**

[114 words]