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

**Universal Periodic Review of Uzbekistan**

**8 November 2023**

**Statement by Australia**

Thank you, [President/Vice President]

Australia commends Uzbekistan’s closure of Jaslyk [*Jas-lik*] prison colony, efforts to eliminate detainee torture, criminalisation of domestic violence, and strengthening protections for women and girls.

Australia is concerned Article 221 of the Criminal Code is used unfairly against human rights defenders and government critics.

Australia recommends **Uzbekistan:**

1. **Strengthen the Office of the Ombudsperson to enable its accreditation as an A-status national human rights institution in line with the Paris Principles.**
2. **Refrain from using Article 221 of the Criminal Code to punish persons exercising their rights to freedom of expression, including through the extension of prison sentences without due process.**
3. **Decriminalise consensual same-sexual activity between consenting adults through repealing Article 120 of the Criminal Code.**

[120 words]