**Universal Periodic Review Working Group – 28th Session**

**Universal Periodic Review of Guatemala**

**Statement by Australia**

Australia welcomes progress Guatemala has made towards achieving gender equality and improving health and wellbeing for LGBTI persons, however; Australia remains concerned that women, transgender and transsexual people remain a target of violence and discrimination, and that impunity for such crimes is high. **We recommend Guatemala take steps to place higher priority on the prosecution of violence and discrimination against women, transgender and transsexual people, as well as access to justice for victims of these crimes.**

Australia is concerned by reports of a lack of independence of the judiciary. The UN-led International Commission Against Impunity (CICIG) has uncovered widespread corruption. **We recommend Guatemala cooperate with, and support the work of, the International Commission Against Impunity. Australia recommends Guatemala take steps to approve and implement the 2016 Constitutional reform on the appointment of the judiciary as this would help ensure its independence.**

Australia remains concerned human rights activists are regularly threatened and are heavily penalised by the justice system. **Australia recommends Guatemala implement safeguards for human rights defenders by introducing legislation to protect freedom of association and assembly.**

Australia acknowledges the death penalty has not been used in Guatemala since 2000. **Australia recommends Guatemala formally abolish the death penalty and accede to the Second Optional Protocol of the ICCPR.**