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

**Universal Periodic Review of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan**

**Statement by Australia**

Australia welcomes Pakistan’s efforts since its last UPR to address violence against women and girls, including work at federal and provincial levels.

Australia remains concerned about ongoing religious, ethnic and gender-based violence and encourages Pakistan to continue its efforts to foster tolerance. **Australia** **recommends Pakistan enact and enforce legislation to afford legal protections from violence and discrimination to all its citizens, including women and girls, the LGBTI community and religious minorities, including through effective prosecutions in accordance with the rule of law**.

**Australia recommends Pakistan enact and enforce legislation that facilitates women’s social, political and economic empowerment, including in relation to child marriage and forced conversion.**

While noting Pakistan’s constitution grants freedom of expression, Australia remains concerned by violence against human rights defenders and **recommends Pakistan take steps to protect freedom of expression, including online freedoms.**

Australia remains concerned at Pakistan’s continued use of the death penalty. **Australia recommends Pakistan reinstitute its moratorium on the use of the death penalty, as a first step towards complete abolition, and accede to the Second Optional Protocol of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights**. **Australia further recommends that Pakistan ensure due process is afforded to all persons accused of criminal offences, as well as protection from public persecution.**