**Universal Periodic Review Working Group – 38th Session**

**Universal Periodic Review of Belgium**

**Statement by Australia**

**5 May 2021**

Australia commends Belgium’s continued leadership on human rights issues in multilateral fora, including on global abolition of the death penalty and the protection of children in armed conflicts. Australia also welcomes Belgium’s establishment of a national human rights institution, the Federal Institute for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights.

Australia recommends that **Belgium:**

1. **Pursue ‘A status’ accreditation under the Paris Principles for its national human rights institution.**
2. **Ratify the *Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture*.**
3. **Work with civil society to finalise and implement Belgium’s National Action Plan against racism and related forms of discrimination.**
4. **Strengthen protection against hate crimes by eliminating distinctions between types of hate speech online, standardising the legal interpretation of hate as an aggravating factor for crime and strengthening the collection of disaggregated data on hate offences.**