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

**Universal Periodic Review of Sierra Leone**

**Statement by Australia**

**12 May 2021**

Australia welcomes the Sierra Leone Government’s decision to allow girls who are pregnant or have a child to attend school. This is a vital step toward improving education opportunities for all girls. We further commend Sierra Leone’s establishment of One Stop Centres for survivors of sexual violence, and we encourage the Government to remove barriers to accessing emergency contraception and safe and legal abortion services.

Australia is concerned the death penalty remains a sentencing option. We welcome the President’s commitment to abolish the death penalty after a long-standing de facto moratorium.

Australia recommends that **Sierra Leone:**

1. **Implement legislation that prohibits female genital mutilation (FGM) practices; protect and assist survivors; and support educational outreach to relevant communities on the harms of FGM.**
2. **Proceed with the abolition of the death penalty and ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty**
3. **Pass anti-discrimination legislation to explicitly extend protections to LGBTI persons and prevent discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity or sex characteristics.**