**Universal Periodic Review Working Group – 30th Session**

**Universal Periodic Review of Turkmenistan**

**Statement by Australia**

Australia appreciates Turkmenistan’s steps to establish a National Human Rights Institution through the office of the Ombudswoman for human rights. We acknowledge the Ombudswoman’s participation in the March 2018 meeting of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions in Geneva. **Australia recommends that Turkmenistan strengthen the Ombudswoman’s office to enable its accreditation as an A-status National Human Rights Institution in line with the Paris Principles**.

Australia notes Turkmenistan has ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, but is concerned that those rights are widely restricted in practice. **Australia recommends Turkmenistan take positive steps to protect and promote the freedoms of expression and assembly,** **including by: enforcing legal provisions that safeguard media pluralism and prohibit censorship; and ending forced mobilization of residents for participation in government-organised mass events.**

Australia welcomes Turkmenistan’s introduction of a prison reform program to improve conditions for some detainees. **Australia recommends Turkmenistan ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and establish an independent mechanism for monitoring of all places of detention.**

**Words: 177**