**UN Human Rights Council – 23rd Session**

**Submission of Australia’s National Human Rights Action Plan 2012 constituting Australia’s Universal Periodic Review mid-term report**

Australia is a strong supporter of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR): a process which is both central to our approach to human rights and a critical element of our advocacy on human rights issues. At the mid-point between our UPRs, we would like to update the Council on our progress in implementing our UPR recommendations.

Australia's first UPR took place in January 2011. Of the 145 recommendations made, we accepted over 90 per cent of them.

We are pleased to present to the Council Australia’s National Human Rights Action Plan in fulfilment of our commitment to provide an interim report to the Human Rights Council prior to Australia’s next UPR appearance in 2015.

Australia’s National Human Rights Action Plan, launched on Human Rights Day, 10 December 2012, cites all of our accepted UPR recommendations and details how Australia will implement them.

Since Australia’s UPR and the subsequent launch of the National Action Plan, there have been a number of significant developments which clearly demonstrate Australia’s commitment to the implementation of our UPR recommendations as well as the promotion and protection of human rights more broadly. We invite the Council to take note of some major developments under the National Action Plan highlighted in the update document included with the Action Plan. Principal among these developments are:

* the appointment of the first National Children’s Commissioner within our National Human Rights Institution, the Australian Human Rights Commission;
* the adoption of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Peoples Recognition Act, which came into effect on 28 March 2013, as a first step towards constitutional recognition of Australia’s first peoples;
* the introduction of a Bill to amend the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* to provide protection against discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity and intersex status; and
* the establishment of DisabilityCare Australia, an independent body charged with delivering Australia’s national disability insurance scheme to be progressively implemented from July 2013.

Australia is firmly committed to the UPR process and looks forward to engaging with the Human Rights Council and other countries during its next review in 2015. A final monitoring report for the National Human Rights Action Plan will be timed to coincide with preparations for our next UPR.