

Universal Periodic Review Working Group – 32nd Session

Universal Periodic Review of Vanuatu

Statement by Australia

Australia thanks Vanuatu for its report and commends its efforts implementing its second cycle recommendations, including by passing Vanuatu's first freedom of information law (2016) and launching its first *National Disability Inclusive Development Policy* (2018).

Australia commends Vanuatu's implementation of the *Family Protection Act 2008*, recognising domestic violence as an offence and increasing the availability of family protection orders.

But Australia is concerned that high levels of domestic violence persist, and remains committed to supporting Vanuatu to combat domestic violence and increase access to justice, particularly outside urban areas.

Australia welcomes Vanuatu's free and fair elections in 2016, but notes an absence of women in the current Parliament. **Australia recommends Vanuatu take steps to encourage female candidates' participation in the 2020 national elections.**

Australia is encouraged by the importance placed by the Vanuatu government on education for all. **Australia recommends Vanuatu consider compulsory education to facilitate children to commence school at the right age.**

While recognising Vanuatu's consistent stance against capital punishment, **Australia recommends Vanuatu accede to the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to prevent introduction of the death penalty.**