**Human Rights Council – 39th Session**

**Interactive Dialogue**

**Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons &   
Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation**

**10 September 2018**

**Australian Statement**

Australia thanks the Special Rapporteur and the Independent Expert for their reports.

Australia shares the Independent Expert’s concern regarding social exclusion of older people. We are committed to addressing these issues in both policy and practice, as we made clear in our recent Voluntary National Review of Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Unfortunately, in Australia elder abuse persists, including by family members, in particular financial abuse. This is unacceptable, and we are developing a *National Plan to Address Elder Abuse*. A draft of the plan is expected to be finalised later this year.

We are concerned about the gendered experience of older persons globally. Older Australian women continue to be particularly vulnerable to later-in-life homelessness, due to factors including a lack of retirement funds, financial dependence, and family and domestic violence.

We are committed to addressing gender inequality across society, reducing the potential intergenerational vulnerability of older women. For example, in 2017, Australia launched a national strategy aimed at increasing women’s economic security: *Towards 2025: An Australian Government strategy to boost women’s workforce participation*.

Australia is taking these, and other actions, to address the challenges faced by older persons, in the absence of a specific international legal instrument on these issues. We would welcome the Independent Expert’s reflections on other examples of states demonstrating similar initiatives.

**217 Words**