**Human Rights Council – 45th session**

**Interactive Dialogue on the High Commissioner for Human Rights’ Country Report on Georgia**

**5 October 2020**

**Australian Statement**

Australia thanks the OHCHR for the reports provided today, and its critical role providing technical assistance around the globe. Australia‘s comments relate to the report on Georgia and we thank Georgia for its cooperation with the Office.

We commend Georgia’s protection of human rights during COVID-19, and its success in recording one of the lowest per capita rates of infection in Europe. We applaud Prime Minister Gakharia’s commitment to ensuring the upcoming elections will be held in a democratic and transparent environment.

Australia strongly supports Georgia’s sovereignty and territorial integrity. We remain concerned by the human rights situation in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, including restrictions on freedom of movement, and the lack of access by human rights investigators to these Georgian regions. We call on the Russian Federation to use its influence to facilitate unimpeded access to the occupied territories by OHCHR and the international community, to investigate the human rights situation.

In line with Australia’s opposition to the death penalty in all circumstances for all people, we condemn the introduction of the death penalty in Abkhazia.

We are also concerned at reported violence against marginalised groups including women and girls, persons with disabilities and the LGBTI persons.

Australia encourages Georgia to continue in its efforts to protect human rights and promote a secure and tolerant society.

***201* Words**