**Human Rights Council – 45th session**

**Enhanced Interactive Dialogue on the High Commissioner’s Oral Update on COVID-19**

**14 September 2020**

**Australian Statement**

Australia thanks the High Commissioner for her oral update and ongoing leadership in highlighting the human rights implications of COVID-19.

We are particularly concerned about the disproportionate and discriminatory impacts of COVID-19 on people in vulnerable situations, including indigenous peoples; women and girls; and people with disabilities.

Australia welcomes the focus on the disproportionate impacts of COVID-19 in the High Commissioner’s report on the rights of indigenous peoples. The Australian Government has worked in partnership with Indigenous Australians to protect Indigenous communities. We urge all States to work with indigenous communities to address the impacts of COVID-19.

Women and girls’ human rights have also been disproportionately affected. COVID-19 has escalated gender-based violence and reduced access to essential services including life saving sexual and reproductive health services. Systemic change is needed. We need everyone’s full capabilities – men and women – to chart our economic and social recovery.

People with disabilities may experience barriers that make it difficult to keep themselves safe from COVID-19, including difficulty accessing public health information and a lack of adequate or accessible water, hygiene and sanitation facilities. Australia urges all States to support disability-inclusive responses and recovery efforts.

**190 Words**