

## Human Rights Council – 37th Session

### Item 3 Annual Interactive Debate on the rights of persons with disabilities – Article 13 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities – access to justice 7 March 2018

#### Australian Statement

Australia is committed to implementing article 13 of the CRPD and achieving goal 16 of the SDGs. Australia recognises that ensuring effective access to justice for persons with disabilities is crucial in ensuring they can exercise their legal rights on an equal basis with others.

We are committed to improving the lives of people with disability in Australia. We are implementing our National Disability Strategy 2010-2020 that drives a more inclusive approach to the design of policies, programs and infrastructure so that people with disability can participate in all areas of Australian life. This includes improving access to justice for all people with disability engaging with the system, including as witnesses, jurors and victims of crime, as well as offenders.

Also in this vein, Australia's National Partnership Agreement on Legal Assistance Services 2015-20 is providing approximately \$1.3 billion over five years in funding to community legal centres and legal aid commissions. People with disability or mental illness are priority clients under this Agreement.

We acknowledge people with disability are overrepresented in the Australian correctional system. In our second UPR review, we committed to improving the way the criminal justice system treats people with cognitive disability who are unfit to plead or found not guilty by reason of mental impairment. To deliver on this commitment, Australia set up a cross-jurisdictional Working Group to consider these issues.

A question to the panelists: what good practices would you recommend to States to ensure meaningful participation of persons with disabilities in decision-making regarding access to justice?

Words 254