

Human Rights Council – 38th Session

Clustered Interactive Dialogue: Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity & Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association

18 June 2018

Australian Statement

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

The Independent Expert's report reminds us that the lived experience of LGBTI persons globally is often characterised by violence and inequality. This is why Australia strongly supports this mandate, and is a member of the Equal Rights Coalition.

As the report identified, traditional sex and gender roles are used to excuse the dehumanisation of LGBTI persons and suppress women's rights globally. All individuals are entitled to equal rights and protection from violence and discrimination. Traditional cultural values must not be used to justify the denial of human rights.

As the report notes, denying the existence of LGBTI people, or fostering stigmatisation and hatred that discourages self-identification, frustrates both human rights and economic development. As the 2030 Agenda recognises, development must be inclusive to be sustainable.

Criminalisation of consensual same-sex sexual relations is unacceptable. It promotes negative stereotypes and discrimination. States must decriminalise and positively promote inclusion and tolerance.

Australia actively supports equal freedoms of association and assembly for all, including LGBTI people. We proudly support peaceful advocacy for LGBTI rights.

We are very disappointed by cases where states deny these rights, or fail to enable LGBTI individuals to gather, celebrate and express themselves safely.

We welcome both mandate holders' views on how states might foster safe environments for LGBTI persons to exercise their freedom of association and assembly.

230 words