**Human Rights Council - 39th Session**

**Resolution on the Safety of Journalists – General Comment**

**27 September 2018**

**Australian Statement**

We thank the core group for this resolution, which supports the fundamental right to freedom of expression enshrined in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, freedom of expression is one of the pillars of Australia’s membership of the Human Rights Council.

Threats to the safety of journalists are an affront to all countries that embrace human rights. Freedom of the press plays an essential role in any vibrant democracy by helping to create a culture of accountability.

We welcome the resolution’s condemnation of attacks and violence against journalists around the world and call for thorough investigations into these incidents. Perpetrators of violence against the press must be brought to justice.

As the resolution makes clear, we need to do more to raise public awareness of the importance of journalism, particularly given the increasing use of targeted disinformation and smear campaigns to discredit journalists’ work. The denigration and intimidation of journalists not only undermines their credibility but incites animosity and violence towards them.

Australia is proud to be a member of the “group of friends” on the safety of journalists in UNESCO and in Geneva, as well as a member of the Freedom Online Coalition. We urge other countries to consider joining these groups to defend freedom of expression and freedom of the press.

We commend resolution L.7 and fully support it.