**Human Rights Council – 45th session

General Comment**

Commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Work

**Australia Statement**

**6 October 2020**

Australia will join consensus on this text in recognition of the spirit behind the resolution. Australia shares the penholder’s unquestionable commitment to eliminate racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance.

While no country in the world can claim to have eradicated racism, Australia is a country that is proud of its diversity, where almost one in two people were either born overseas, or has at least one parent who was. We reject racism and xenophobia in all its forms.

However, Australia does not support the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. It represents a missed opportunity. Instead of achieving a consensus document which could be embraced by all states – the kind of consensus document befitting such an important cause as fighting racism – the World Conference Against Racism, and the subsequent Durban Review Conference, were misused by a handful of states to serve an anti-Israel agenda. The Durban Declaration is tainted by this unconscionable bias.

Racism is a problem throughout the world and yet Israel is the only country mentioned in the Program of Action. Singling out Israel in this way is not helpful, and does nothing to achieve the Durban Declaration’s goals. Countries with serious cases to answer are able to avoid accountability and reform for as long as Israel is solely targeted. We will join consensus on this resolution as a measure of our commitment to the fight against racism and xenophobia, but this should not be interpreted as Australian support for the Durban Declaration and Program of Action.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank South Africa for its constructive approach to negotiations and for considering Australia’s textual amendments.

**272 words**