

AUSTRALIA's UPR Report

Vivat membership in Australia - SSpS **37** – SVD **60** – OMI **62** – CSSP **22** – ASC **10**

Link to docs: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/PAGES/AUSession10.aspx>

The Universal Periodic Review of Australia was held on the 27th January 2011. The delegation of Australia was headed by Senator the Hon. Kate Lundy, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister. At its 12th meeting held on 31 January 2011, the Working Group adopted the report on Australia.

Three documents were prepared in advance for this review. They can be accessed at the link above.

A list of questions prepared in advance by Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland was transmitted to Australia through the troika. These questions are available on the extranet of the UPR.

The delegation emphasized that the Australian Government is committed to a fairer and more inclusive Australia, stating that a community that respects the rights of all citizens is stronger, safer and more resilient to challenges.

The delegation noted that while Australia has in place a broad range of laws, policies and programmes to respect, protect and promote human rights, there are also human rights challenges in particular areas. These include closing the gap in opportunities and life outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, and in achieving gender equality and reducing violence against women.

The delegation described a nation-wide human rights consultation held in 2009, conducting over 65 community roundtables and public hearings in more than 50 urban, regional and remote locations. The consultation received 35,000 submissions, making this the largest consultation of its kind in Australia.

During the interactive dialogue, 53 delegations made statements. A number of delegations expressed their condolences and sympathy for the victims of the floods which recently affected Australia. Some delegations commended the State under review for its comprehensive and broad consultation process in the preparation of its national report and welcomed the event on combating racism through sports convened by Australia on 26th January, in Geneva.

The topics/issues that received attention during the inter-active dialogue included:

1. Australian Human Rights framework – Bill of Rights, human Rights education.
2. Indigenous peoples.
3. Discrimination.

4. Gender Equality
5. Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.
6. Children.
7. The Disabled
8. Migrants – irregular. Racial crimes against Migrants.
9. Ethnic minorities.
10. Administration of Justice and the Rule of law.
11. Using island to enable offshore processing of asylum seekers.
12. Refugees.
13. Trafficking and smuggling of persons.
14. Role of cultural heritage in the National Reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.
15. Use of forcé by Law enforcement officials and the use of “tasers” by pólice.
16. Sub-standard prison-conditions.
17. Human Rights awareness training.
18. “Closing the Gap” campaign.
19. National Human Rights Action Plan.
20. Human Rights violations against women.

They are listed at the end of the Draft Report, cf., website link at the end of this summary.

You can also access them on the UPR-info site. www.UPR-info.org
(On the home page, choose recommendations – then follow the links to the session where your country has been reviewed. (unfortunately, the recommendations do not appear on this site until the report has been approved by the Human Rights Council (HRC), which is several months after the Review.)

A word about recommendations that are made during this review process. The country in question (or State under Review SuR) is being asked by other countries to make changes regarding the exercise of Human Rights within their territory. Hence, the recommendations are very important in relation to any future action or developments regarding Human Rights within a country. Those recommendations that are accepted will be implemented by the SuR. That is the promise. NGOs can also take these recommendations into their future plans. They can continue to lobby their government in relation to those recommendations that have been accepted. They can also continue to campaign about those recommendations that have not received the support of the country concerned.

After a survey of these recommendations made to Australia, five stand out as receiving most attention.

- 1. Treaties and their Implementation.**
- 2. Discrimination and it's many forms.**

3. Violence against Women.
4. Indigenous People and a variety of issues.
5. Immigration, Migrants and related matters.

The delegation stated that all recommendations will be examined by Australia and they will provide a response no later than June 2011.

The above (incomplete) summary is based on the Draft Report of the Review.

It can be accessed at:

http://lib.ohchr.org/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session10/AU/Australia-A_HRC_WG.6_10_L.8-eng.pdf