



**31<sup>st</sup> Session of the Human Rights Council  
Item 6 – UPR Australia  
Statement by  
the International Lesbian and Gay Association  
Joined by: Human Rights Law Centre  
17 March 2016**

*delivered by Zhan Chiam*

Thank you Mr. President,

This statement is made jointly with the Human Rights Law Centre and in consultation with Australian NGO's and advocates who work on sexual orientation, gender identity and intersex issues.

Since Australia's first Universal Periodic Review in 2011 we have seen significant advances in the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people.

We warmly welcome Australia's commitment to ensuring that state and territory laws can no longer discriminate against our communities. However, marriage remains a key area of inequality. We are concerned that Australia is determined to proceed with a costly and unnecessary plebiscite, or national opinion poll, when this issue could be decided with a parliamentary vote and end the discrimination entrenched in the law.

Germany and Canada recommended that Australia prohibit the practice of non-therapeutic sterilization without consent. We are disappointed that Australia failed to respond to these recommendations with reference to people with intersex variations, particularly given that the Special Rapporteur on Torture and other UN agencies have called on States to end forced or coerced unnecessary medical interventions against intersex people. We urge Australia to take action on these violations and implement the recommendations of the 2013 Senate inquiry into this issue.

Similarly, we call on the Australian Government to ensure that States and Territories allow change of sex on birth certificates without invasive and unnecessary surgery.

We strongly welcome and support Australia's statement of the diversity of families but also call on Australia to harmonize laws relating to adoption and reproduction to ensure the equal legal protection of children in all families.

We thank the Netherlands, Spain, Iceland, Israel and Sweden who raised specific lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex issues with Australia in this review and we stand ready to continue working with the Australian Government to ensure we see many more advances for the rights of LGBTI people in the years ahead.

I thank you.