

27th Session of the UN Human Rights Council**Oral statement delivered by Ms Anna Brown****Item 8 General Debate**

Thank you Mr President,

Over three years ago this Council drew attention to the systematic violations suffered by people all around the world on the basis of their sexual orientation and gender identity. Years later, the need to act is greater than ever before.

And so we welcome the draft resolution presented to this Council, which affirms that existing human rights principles apply to individuals who face discrimination and violence because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Importantly, the resolution recalls that the Vienna Declaration affirms that all human rights are universal and that while the significance of various particularities and backgrounds must be borne in mind, States have a duty to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms regardless of these differences.

The resolution calls for dialogue and reporting on violations experienced by LGBT people. The need for specific attention to these violations is real and pressing. LGBTI people across the world experience murder, abuse, rape, and other forms of violence, simply because of who they love or who they are. Continued dialogue and information is critical in order to respond to this global problem.

One of the benefits of concerted attention by the Council on specific human rights violations is increased information sharing and learning from examples of positive practice from states.

In Australia, just last week, two state governments introduced legislation to erase criminal convictions for consensual homosexual sex from the records of older gay men. While homosexuality was decriminalised in Australia decades ago, unknown numbers of men live with the shame, stigma and practical barriers to work and volunteering presented by a criminal conviction. These laws mirror reforms in the UK and draw on the precedent of South Africa removing criminal convictions for sex between people of different races.

However, violations are also experienced by LGBTI people in Australia, as they are across the world. We experience significantly poorer mental health outcomes and face discrimination, harassment, abuse and hate crimes.

We urge states to support this resolution and afford us the dignity and rights that we are entitled to as human beings.

We are watching. The world is watching. The time has come.

Thank-you.