Media Release

Law Council
OF AUSTRALIA

2 July 2026

Action needed as Australia accepts fewer than half of UN human rights recommendations

Australia has appeared before the UN Human Rights Council in response to its Fourth Cycle Universal Periodic Review (UPR) – an important opportunity to reflect on its human rights track record and ways to improve.

Speaking before the UN Human Rights Council this week, Law Council of Australia President, Tania Wolff, reiterated the Law Council's call for Australia to fully implement and uphold human rights obligations and standards, including under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture, and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

"Australia received over 300 recommendations designed to strengthen our human rights framework, and ensure Australians enjoy rights and protections that reflect international commitments," Ms Wolff said.

"We welcome the Government's acceptance of recommendations in relation to Closing the Gap, cultural heritage and addressing First Nations overrepresentation in prisons.

"However, the Law Council is disappointed the Australian Government has only accepted 128 of the 332 recommendations from this review.

"We are particularly disappointed that calls from 27 countries to raise the minimum age of criminal responsibility to 14 and introduce a federal Human Rights Act were only noted by the Government.

"The Law Council's submission to the UN highlighted these – along with the continuing overincarceration of First Nations people – as urgent priorities for our nation.

"The UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination has also sounded the alarm about the overrepresentation of First Nations children in our criminal justice system in a recent alert to Australia.

"Australia's international obligations extend across all jurisdictions and cannot be deferred or diminished by the complexities of the federal system.

"Commitment must now lead to action.

"We call on the Australian Government to lead a coordinated national response to give full effect to the recommendations accepted through this process."

Contact: Kristen Connell | 0400 054 227 | kristen.connell@lawcouncil.au