Australia has been a strong supporter of an open ended working group initiative that is inclusive, but yet will allow for a robust debate on how to advance nuclear disarmament. It is for this reason we put forward an OEWG proposal as contained in the draft outcomes document at the NPT Review Conference.

An important criteria for us is that we ensure the mandate and rules of procedure for any OEWG will be crafted in a way that will encourage the participation of those that actually possess nuclear weapons.

In the face of unresolved and substantive differences with the mandate and rules of procedure for the “taking forward nuclear disarmament negotiations” resolution, Australia abstained. Without sufficient reassurance on these two issues, it was clear to us that nuclear weapon states would not participate, as occurred in 2013. If this is again the case for the OEWG process in 2016, this would be regrettable.

We remain ready to work with willing partners to shape an inclusive but robust process, whose mandate also covers practical and effective measures that will truly advance the nuclear disarmament agenda.