



**THE SENATE
SENATE FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENCE AND TRADE
REFERENCES COMMITTEE**

**Inquiry into the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)
Public Hearing –2 November 2018
Questions Taken on Notice
Australian Human Rights Commission**

1 HANSARD, pp. 33–34

ACTING CHAIR: I just want to get that time frame, because one of the issues that people have raised is that the VNR is probably a step, and it's actually the first step that some people have had.

...

ACTING CHAIR: Professor Croucher, one of your specific recommendations was this engagement and an awareness campaign. But, in terms of your view about the timing and how active it was—my own view, and I'll put it on record, is that it was just ticking along and suddenly the VNR came up and there had to be something done really quickly and we had to gather stuff. The VNR was in July and it was, really, April, May, June that there seemed to be an urgency. I don't know whether that's just my view.

Prof. Croucher: Without expressing a personal opinion on this, I think it's welcome that something is being done.

ACTING CHAIR: Absolutely.

Prof. Croucher: This is a beginning, and there are always possibilities for criticising time frames et cetera, but it's a good start. I think where bodies like the Australian Human Rights Commission as the national human rights institution and Dr Goldie and the key civil society players can add value to the next iteration of that process is by commending perspectives that will make it a really good process, and building on an initial base where we have had some mapping of existing initiatives is good. It provides the starting point for that engagement. But without a proper understanding of what the SDGs mean in this world, and the utility of them as providing a framework, both to map really good things that are being done but also to have a really candid look at where there are gaps in the data, where the process of—it's like the lens of strategic planning, with goals and indicators and actions. The action bit is what we're working on. It provides a really useful way, in a world in which we've committed to using the SDGs, where they can be a very constructive tool for conversations across civil society, the national human rights institution and government, in respect of the good work, but to, frankly, use them as a mirror to see where the work needs to go further and to use, as we've advocated as HNRI, a human rights approach to help us draw those lines on the road of what's a very useful map. But there are bits that are missing in it.

You asked earlier about specific timings. If you want a precise response on that, we'd have to look at that specifically.

ANSWER

The Commission began its involvement with the VNR process in November 2017, when it was asked by the Attorney General's Department to provide case studies for the report.