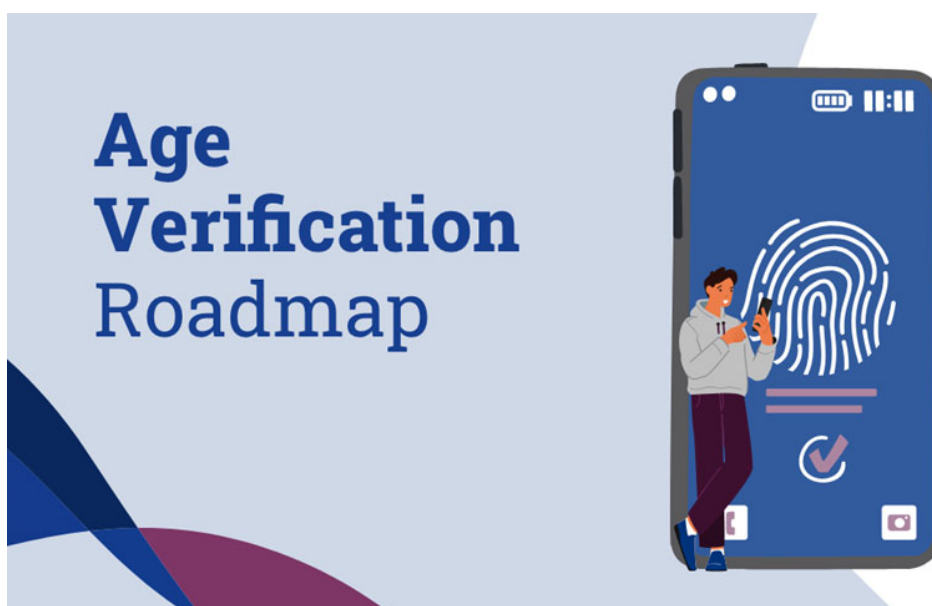


From: AVroadmap@esafety.gov.au
Sent: Thursday, 31 August 2023 10:30 AM
To:
Subject: Australian Government responds to eSafety's proposed age-verification roadmap

No images? [Click here](#)



Dear

Today, the Australian Government responded to eSafety's *Roadmap for age verification and complementary measures to prevent and mitigate harms to children from online pornography*.

At the request of the previous government, eSafety developed a roadmap that outlined how age verification and other measures could be used to prevent and mitigate harms to children from online pornography. This was presented to government in March 2023 for consideration.

A holistic response to age-assurance and other complementary measures:

After almost two years of careful consultation and analysis, eSafety's position is that there is no regulatory or technical silver bullet when it comes to protecting children from harmful, age-inappropriate content. Instead, a holistic approach is needed that respects and affirms

a range of human rights and promotes the best interests of the child through technological and educational measures.

The age-assurance industry is new and evolving, with a small but growing number of companies providing a diverse range of solutions to address the technical and legal complexities of assuring, estimating or verifying age. Moreover, international standards continue to be developed and refined. On this basis, we recommended testing age-assurance technologies in an Australian context through a pilot project, while continuing to observe international technical and regulatory developments, before moving to mandating technical measures.

The Australian Government's response:

In its response, the Australian Government acknowledges concerns about the effectiveness, privacy and security of some age-assurance technologies. The response also recognised the nascent state of the age-assurance industry, and the comprehensive work already being done across government to address intersectional issues identified in the roadmap. Government will decide on next steps with respect to an age-assurance pilot following the conclusion of the industry codes/standards process for 'Class 2 material' and will continue to monitor industry and global developments closely.

Next steps for eSafety:

The roadmap identifies 'next steps' for eSafety to carry out as part of its existing regulatory and educative functions.

In particular, eSafety will support industry associations to draft a set of [industry codes](#) to limit children's access to 'class 2' material, including online pornography, after phase 1 of the codes and standards process is complete.

eSafety will continue to conduct meaningful research and develop new resources targeting young people and industry that address online pornography and the use of safety technologies.

We will also advocate for industry to deploy other complementary measures – both educational and technological – to mitigate potential online harms to children, as well as adopt [Safety by Design](#) across product or service lifecycles.

eSafety will consistently engage with overseas online safety regulators implementing age-assurance or verification measures and closely monitor international pilots of these technologies.

As a valued contributor to the development of this roadmap, eSafety thanks you for your time and expert advice. The roadmap will serve as a blueprint for our future work addressing children's harmful encounters with online pornography.

To find out more, read:

- [The Australian Government's response](#)
- [The full background report to the age-verification roadmap](#)



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From: AVroadmap@esafety.gov.au
Sent: Thursday, 31 August 2023 5:16 PM
To: AVroadmap@esafety.gov.au
Subject: Australian Government responds to eSafety's roadmap for age verification [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Dear Colleagues,

Today, the Australian Government responded to eSafety's *Roadmap for age verification and complementary measures to prevent and mitigate harms to children from online pornography*.

At the request of the previous government, eSafety developed a roadmap that outlined how age verification and other measures could be used to prevent and mitigate harms to children from online pornography. This was presented to government in March 2023 for consideration.

A holistic response to age-assurance and other complementary measures:

After almost two years of careful consultation and analysis, eSafety's position is that there is no regulatory or technical silver bullet when it comes to protecting children from harmful, age inappropriate content. Instead, a holistic approach is needed that respects and affirms a range of human rights and promotes the best interests of the child through technological and educational measures.

The age assurance industry is new and evolving, with a small but growing number of companies providing a diverse range of solutions to address the technical and legal complexities of assuring, estimating or verifying age. Moreover, international standards continue to be developed and refined. On this basis, we recommended testing age assurance technologies in an Australian context through a pilot project, while continuing to observe international technical and regulatory developments, before moving to mandating technical measures.

The Australian Government's response:

In its response, the Australian Government acknowledges concerns about the effectiveness, privacy and security of some age assurance technologies. The response also recognised the nascent state of the age assurance industry, and the comprehensive work already being done across government to address intersectional issues identified in the roadmap.

The response requests that eSafety proceed to test its new regulatory powers available under the *Online Safety Act*, which includes supporting industry associations to develop codes that outline how industry will protect children from age inappropriate content, such as online pornography. Government will consider a trial of age assurance technologies in Australia once the codes are in effect.

Next steps for eSafety:

The roadmap identifies 'next steps' for eSafety to carry out as part of its existing regulatory and educative functions.

In particular, eSafety will:

- eSafety will support industry associations to draft a set of industry codes to limit children's access to 'class 2' material, including online pornography, after phase 1 of the codes and standards process is complete.
- Continue collaborating with other departments and agencies, contributing to intersecting Australian Government initiatives and reform activities, such as the *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032*, consent and respectful relationships education and the Privacy Act Review.
- Conduct meaningful research and develop new resources targeting young people and industry that address online pornography and the use of safety technologies.
- Advocate for industry to deploy other complementary measures – both educational and technological – to mitigate potential online harms to children, as well as adopt Safety by Design across product or service lifecycles.

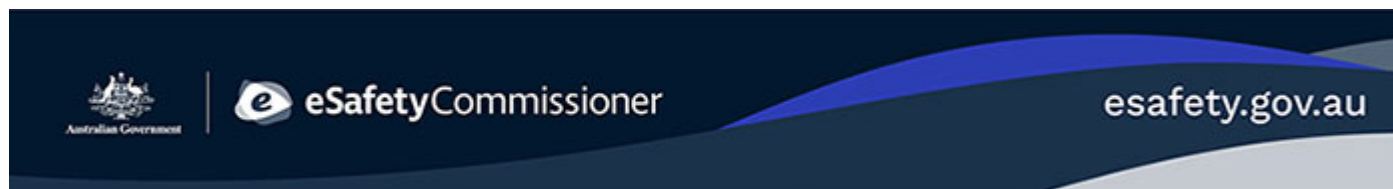
eSafety thanks you for your time and expert advice in drafting the roadmap and the background report. The roadmap will serve as a blueprint for our future work addressing children's harmful encounters with online pornography. We look forward to continuing to work with you on these important issues.

To find out more, read:

- [The Australian Government's response](#)
- [The full background report to the age verification roadmap](#)

Kind regards,

The AV roadmap team



eSafety acknowledges all First Nations people for their continuing care of everything Country encompasses — land, waters and community. We pay our respects to First Nations people, and to Elders past, present and future.

From: AVroadmap@esafety.gov.au
Sent: Thursday, 31 August 2023 5:18 PM
To: AVroadmap@esafety.gov.au
Subject: Australian Government responds to eSafety's proposed age-verification roadmap [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Dear Colleagues,

Today, the Australian Government responded to eSafety's *Roadmap for age verification and complementary measures to prevent and mitigate harms to children from online pornography*.

At the request of the previous government, eSafety developed a roadmap that outlined how age verification and other measures could be used to prevent and mitigate harms to children from online pornography. This was presented to government in March 2023 for consideration.

A holistic response to age-assurance and other complementary measures:

After almost two years of careful consultation and analysis, eSafety's position is that there is no regulatory or technical silver bullet when it comes to protecting children from harmful, age inappropriate content. Instead, a holistic approach is needed that respects and affirms a range of human rights and promotes the best interests of the child through technological and educational measures. On this basis, eSafety recommended testing age assurance technologies in an Australian context through a pilot project, while continuing to observe international technical and regulatory developments, before moving to mandating technical measures.

The Australian Government's response:

In its response, the Australian Government acknowledges concerns about the effectiveness, privacy and security of some age assurance technologies. The response also recognised the nascent state of the age assurance industry, and the comprehensive work already being done across government to address intersectional issues identified in the roadmap.

The response requests that eSafety proceed to test its new regulatory powers available under the *Online Safety Act*, which includes supporting industry associations to develop codes that outline how industry will protect children from age inappropriate content, such as online pornography. Government will consider a trial of age assurance technologies in Australia once the codes are in effect.

Next steps for eSafety:

The roadmap identifies 'next steps' for eSafety to carry out as part of its existing regulatory and educative functions.

eSafety will support industry associations to draft a set of industry codes to limit children's access to 'class 2' material, including online pornography, after phase 1 of the codes and standards process is complete. The codes cover eight key sections of the online industry. If an industry drafted code doesn't meet statutory requirements, the eSafety Commissioner can develop a mandatory industry standard.

Noting the Government’s future intention to consider an age assurance technology trial, eSafety intends to continue its engagement with other online safety regulators on age assurance and verification, closely monitoring international pilots and legislative and regulatory developments.

eSafety will continue conducting meaningful research and developing new resources for children and industry that address online pornography and the use of safety technologies. We will also advocate for industry to deploy other complementary measures – both educational and technological – to mitigate potential online harms to children, as well as adopt [Safety by Design](#) across product or service lifecycles.

As a valued contributor to the development of this roadmap, we thank you for your time and expert advice during this process. The roadmap will serve as a blueprint for our future work addressing children’s harmful encounters with online pornography.

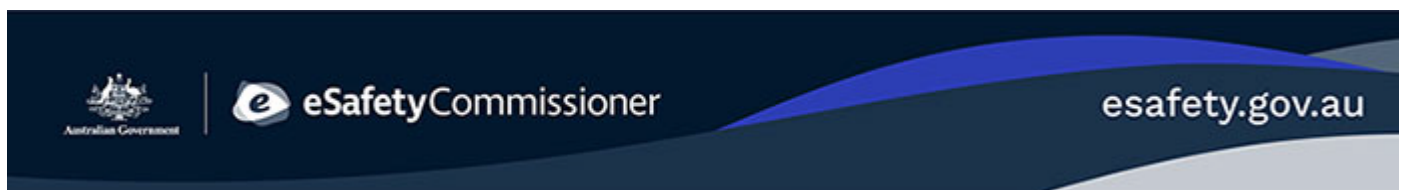
We are happy to provide further information on the industry codes development process and eSafety’s broader next steps – please reach out to the team at avroadmap@esafety.gov.au.

To find out more, read:

- [The Australian Government’s response](#)
- [The full background report to the age verification roadmap](#)

Kind regards,

The AV roadmap team



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