

eSafety Youth Council

Biennial Report 2024-2026



June 2026



Acknowledgement of Country

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 and present. We acknowledge that the voices of First Nations young peoples are critical to shaping safe and inclusive online spaces.

Acknowledgements

With great appreciation, we thank the young people who formed the 2024-2026 eSafety Youth Council and committed their time and expertise to help us improve the online experiences for all young people. We would also like to thank the parents, carers and guardians of our members who supported and empowered their young people to participate in the Youth Council.

Contents

Commissioner's foreword	1
Message from the eSafety Youth Council	3
Member highlights and reflections	5
About the eSafety Youth Council	7
Summary of eSafety Youth Council events	15
What Council members saw – and what should change	17
Key achievements	25
Next steps for the eSafety Youth Council	27

Commissioner's

foreword

Message from the eSafety Commissioner

Young people are not just users of technology; they are experts in their own digital lives.

They know how online spaces are changing. They know where harm can happen. They know what support feels useful, and what misses the mark. They often see the gaps adults overlook.

Why youth voices matter

That is why youth voices are so important to eSafety's work.

The eSafety Youth Council gives young people a direct role in shaping how we think about online safety, how we design resources, and how we respond to emerging risks. It helps us test our assumptions and better understand what young people need from parents and carers, schools, platforms, government, and regulators.

This report is the story of the Youth Council's endeavours in the past two years.

Clear advice on complex issues

Over their term, Council members brought insight, honesty and practical ideas to some of the most complex online safety issues affecting young people in Australia. They discussed sexual extortion, image-based abuse, fight videos, recommender systems, echo chambers, deepfakes, and AI apps. They helped us understand not only what young people experience online, but what makes it easier or harder for them to seek help.

Their advice is thoughtful, but it is also direct. Young people want reporting pathways that feel safe and shame-free. They want adults to listen with curiosity, not panic. They want platforms to show care for user safety, not only compliance. They want online safety education that reflects the reality of their lives.

eSafety knows that when we listen to young people, we get results.

Helping shape national reform

The Youth Council also played an important role in national conversations about young people and social media, including the Social Media Minimum Age. Council members contributed to discussions on the legislation, the draft rules, the Theory of Change, youth consultation, and evaluation. They brought lived experience to a major policy reform designed to reduce the risk of harm to young people online.

As part of this work, eSafety's Statement of Commitment to Children's Rights for the Social Media Minimum Age reflects a simple principle: decisions that affect children and young people should take account of their rights, needs and voices. The Youth Council is helping us put that principle into practice.

A youth council that makes us better

I am deeply grateful to the members of the 2024–2026 eSafety Youth Council for their time, courage and care. They did not shy away from difficult topics. They spoke with honesty and clarity in conversations many people would rather avoid.

They also challenged us to explain how their input is used, to close the feedback loop, and to keep improving the way we work with young people. It is a challenge that makes us strive to be better.

The next generation of online safety leaders

This report also shows how the Youth Council helps young people grow as leaders. Members build confidence, develop new skills, connect with peers, and contribute to work that has real public value. They are not just advising on online safety; they are helping to shape its future.

As we look to the next Youth Council cohorts, we want to build on this impact. We want young people to keep shaping the policies, programs, and resources designed for them. We also want the Youth Council to continue growing as a platform for young leaders in online safety.

To every Council member: thank you. Your voices matter. Your work makes a difference. And your leadership helps us build a safer, more inclusive online world for young people across Australia.

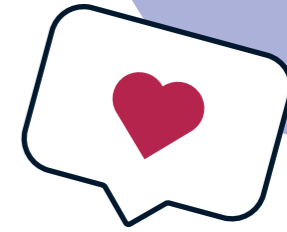


A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julie Inman Grant".

Julie Inman Grant
eSafety Commissioner

Message from the

eSafety Youth Council



With the second eSafety Youth Council having concluded its two years of service, it's important to appreciate all we've achieved through the group's work and efforts.

As someone who was part of two cohorts, I'd like to highlight how the Youth Council has developed over time as well.

The key to the Youth Council's success was creating a balance between discussing issues related to current eSafety objectives, whilst enabling young people to raise their own topics as well.

Whilst both Youth Council cohorts analysed existing protections on social media, sexual extortion, generative AI and age verification, they varied in the ways in which the different points of interest were prioritised.

Often, the work of this Youth Council would build on the previous one, such as identifying issues in the age verification tools that were developed by the first group. This highlights the significance of each Youth Council group in developing meaningful solutions and feedback.

The Youth Council also brought together new and varied voices, all of which offered essential perspectives on the key points of interest.

People from every state and territory have now had time on the Youth Council, which I believe enables it to be seen

as a genuinely unbiased voice for young people in the online safety discussion.

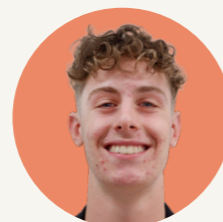
Outside of regular meetings, the additional opportunities offered to Council members are what allowed us to make our time on the eSafety Youth Council unique.

This exposed us to how work is done in the fields of marketing, international relations, journalism, policy, and others. Through this, and the chance to lead Youth Council meetings, I believe all of us have acquired new skills and experience which are fulfilling and can help us in future careers.

The work of this Youth Council is nothing short of remarkable, thanks to the effort and perspectives of all members and facilitators.

I am sure that our work for these last two years will set the foundation for future groups and will inspire other companies to implement youth voices into their decision-making.

I am so grateful to have worked alongside both the members of the eSafety Youth Council and the eSafety support team who helped make the eSafety Youth Council so impactful in the online space.



Elliot
eSafety Youth Council member (2022–2024 and 2024–2026 cohorts)

As a young person who has always been interested in technology and the internet, I've been fascinated by trying and testing new technologies throughout my childhood, teenage years and now as a young adult.

One thing that often comes with new technologies is a lack of safety, as the testing has not yet been done. While there are many advisory groups with technical experts in these tools, it is very different from having it be a consuming part of your life.

As a young person, I haven't grown up knowing what it was like before always being connected and online. It is in my blood and DNA, and that is why young people are so vital to the work that is done at eSafety.

As a young person using these tools, eSafety has given me the opportunity to be part of something bigger than myself. It has allowed me to share my voice and be valued for it.

It has also given me new connections, helped me grow my skills, such as communication, and allowed me to focus on what I want my future to look like – whether at eSafety myself, or in AI policy or safety.

As someone studying a double degree in Cyber Security and Law, eSafety has taught me so much that I would not have been able to learn anywhere else. I've had the opportunity to work with high-level government officials, communities and people impacted in these spaces to help make the internet and the world a healthier, happier and safer place.



William
eSafety Youth Council member (2024–2026 cohort)

Member highlights

and reflections



'I've learned and done so much! I wish I could do another term on the Council.'

'I have done a lot more than I ever thought I would.'

'The meetings have been engaging. I'm really enjoying the breakout rooms during the meetings which is helping me connect and contribute to the Council. I'm also loving all the opportunities to do more for the Council.'



'Working on the Social Media Ban was interesting. Making connections with other young people was also one of my favourite parts.'

'I'm really grateful that you've taken the feedback from the previous group and implemented it.'

'The connections I made with eSafety staff and other members was the most fun and rewarding part of being on the Council.'

'I was expecting to learn things about eSafety and that was it. However, I've learned several things about internet safety, as well several life skills that I've been able to integrate into my personal life beyond the Youth Council.'

'I learnt about how other people deal with opportunities and their backstories with social media, allowing me to think with a new perspective and approach jobs and tasks differently.'

'There's just been so many fun experiences, but it's also given me confidence in my own abilities.'

'Great opportunities that don't feel like they are just tokenistic and have value and meaning behind them.'



About the

eSafety Youth Council

The eSafety Youth Council (Youth Council) gives young people a direct way to share their experiences and help shape eSafety's work.

Council members, a group of young people aged between 13 to 24 years, advise eSafety on online safety issues, risks and trends affecting young people across Australia. Their insights help eSafety better understand how young people experience online harm, seek support, use digital services, and respond to new technologies.

Members contribute through meetings, consultations, collaborative projects and engagement opportunities with eSafety, government and external partners. Their input helps inform online safety policy, programs, resources, and public awareness activities.

The Youth Council also gives members opportunities to build skills, connect with peers, and take part in meaningful discussions about the future of online safety. It reflects eSafety's commitment to listening to young people and ensuring their voices help shape safer, more inclusive online spaces.

Recruitment

Applications for the 2024–2026 eSafety Youth Council opened in October 2023 and ran for two months, closing in December 2023.

The response showed strong interest from young people across Australia. eSafety received more than 190 applications, an 87% increase from the previous application round in 2022.

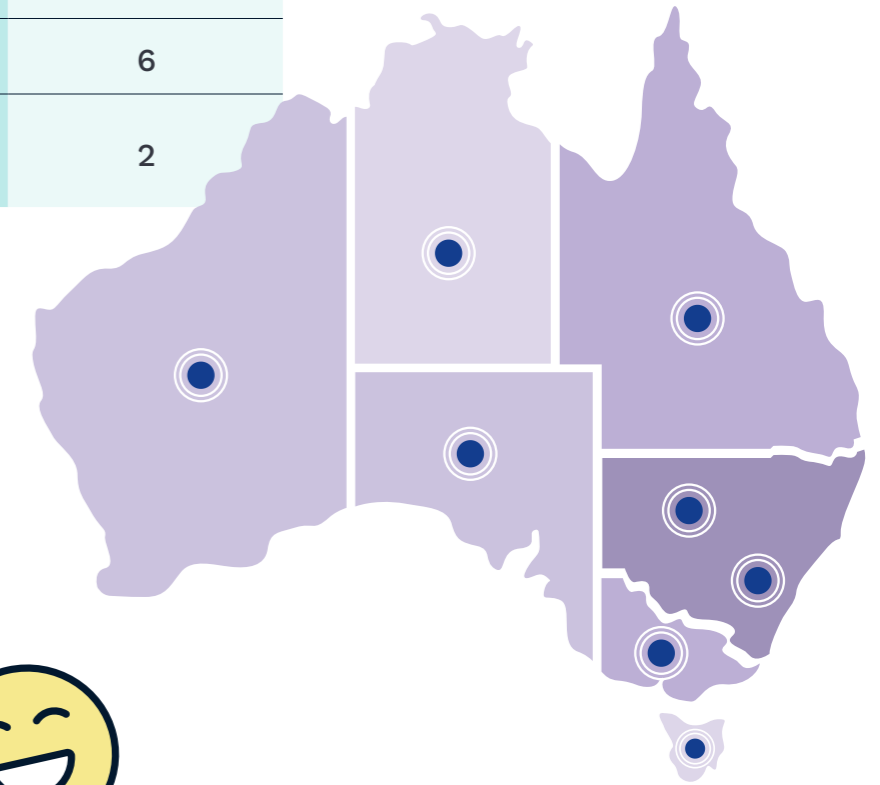
To support the recruitment process, eSafety led a comprehensive social media campaign with support from serving Council members. The campaign focused on reaching young people from under-represented groups and geographic locations, and was promoted through eSafety's social media channels, including @scrollatesafety and @esafetyoffice on Instagram, as well as eSafety's newsletter streams.

eSafety staff and Council members from the previous cohort also supported the assessment process. Together, they shortlisted 17 applicants for recommendation to convene the new eSafety Youth Council.

Member demographics

Members self-identified across multiple categories:

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	2
LGBTIQ+	5
From a CALD background	12
Living with disability	6
From a rural/remote community	2



'The connections I made were so meaningful and I am certain that I have made long-term friendships with my fellow members of the eSafety Youth Council.'



'It was great getting to meet with a diverse, like-minded group of Australia's youth to discuss issues impacting young people.'

The eSafety Youth Council's impact

The Youth Council provides an opportunity for young people to speak up, share their experiences, and help shape how online safety is supported across Australia. Between 2024 and 2026, eSafety has worked with 16 young people on the Youth Council to help us and the Australian Government to identify online safety issues, risks and trends that might otherwise be overlooked.

'I got to participate in a range of meaningful activities and develop real connections with the other members.'



Collaborate

Provided a direct line to the Australian Government and eSafety, to ensure the voices of young people remain central in influencing and designing online safety policy, programs and resources impacting them.

Met regularly online and in-person to discuss a range of online safety topics relevant to young people, including the impacts of sexual extortion, deepfake and AI apps and recommender systems on young people.

Collaborated on a range of projects with both internal eSafety staff and external stakeholders.

Co-wrote a letter submission on the influence and impact of social media on young people to the Joint Select Committee on Social Media and Australian Society.

Consulted with the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sports and the Arts on the review of the Online Safety Act 2021, the age assurance trial, the draft Social Media Minimum Age legislative rules, and the proposed digital duty of care on online services.

Influence

Influenced issues that matter most to members by engaging in meaningful discussions and consultation opportunities.

Inform

Provided valuable feedback informed by member insights and experiences, to guide eSafety's policy, program, and resource design.

Supported the development of eSafety's webpage content on echo chambers and radicalisation, and the online experiences of neurodivergent young people.

Contributed youth experiences and perspectives during eSafety's Social Media Minimum Age youth consultation roundtable about the possible impacts of age-restricted social media platforms and other key considerations.

Develop

Actively participated in a breadth of discussions and engagements with eSafety, Government and other stakeholders, to build the skills of members including critical thinking, facilitation, content creation and team-work skills.

Supported eSafety in youth peer researcher roles on the activities related to the evaluation of the implementation of the Social Media Minimum Age legislation.

Co-wrote a Youth Council-led letter for Safer Internet Day 2025, exploring what online safety means to young people today.

Turning youth voices into action

We give Council members additional opportunities to contribute beyond regular Youth Council meetings.

These opportunities help members share their views, build their skills, and deepen their understanding of online safety. They also help us bring young people’s perspectives into eSafety projects, policies and resources.

When we offer an opportunity, we consider:

- whether it is relevant to the Youth Council’s goals and eSafety’s priorities
- how members will be recognised for their time, including through financial honorariums or skill-building opportunities
- what child safeguarding measures need to be in place.

We want every opportunity to be meaningful, respectful and safe. Our approach is guided by the Best Practice Principles for Youth Engagement, as outlined in the [Youth Engagement Report](#).



'I really enjoyed all the different projects we've got to do. Being on the eSafety Youth Council, we get to look at so many different areas of policy and the practical implications and how do we actually reach young people.'

Engagement requests between 2024-2026



Types of engagement opportunities*



*Based on the APS framework for engagement participation

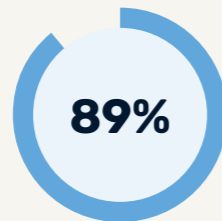
Measuring our impact

Youth Council member perceptions

By the end of their 2-year term:



strongly agreed they had the support they needed to participate fully in the Youth Council



agreed or strongly agreed their contributions to the Youth Council are valued



agreed or strongly agreed they felt connected to eSafety and/or the Youth Council



agreed or strongly agreed the Youth Council is a safe space in which they can share ideas, opinions and experiences



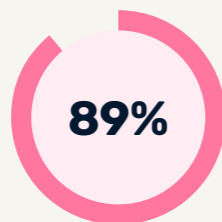
agreed or strongly agreed they were satisfied with the Youth Council meetings

Best Practice Principles of Youth Engagement

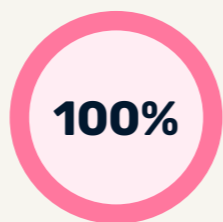
By the end of their 2-year term:



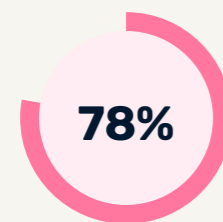
agreed or strongly agreed the Youth Council is fun and engaging



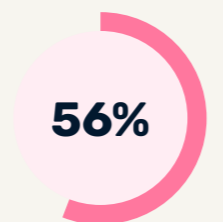
agreed or strongly agreed the Youth Council is diverse and inclusive



agreed or strongly agreed the Youth Council is collaborative



agreed or strongly agreed the Youth Council is youth-led and supportive



agreed or strongly agreed the Youth Council is action oriented

Case study: Building confidence and showing impact

At the start of their term, one Council member wanted to build confidence and collaboration skills. They identified several goals, including learning how to lead a group or meeting, express their thoughts and feelings, start conversations, speak up when they disagreed, and work well with others.

Midway through their term, they began to think more critically about how young people's contributions were being used.

This honest feedback helped us improve how we explain the impact of Council members' contributions. It also informed our efforts to give members clearer updates on how their feedback shapes future Youth Council projects and activities.

By the end of the term, the member reported growth in the same confidence and collaboration skills they had identified at the beginning. They also had a stronger understanding of how youth input contributes to Youth Council processes.

Their experience shows how meaningful participation can support practical skill development while helping young people better understand their role in shared decision making.

They reflected: 'I still have no idea where my (our) feedback is going and if it is being used or disregarded.'

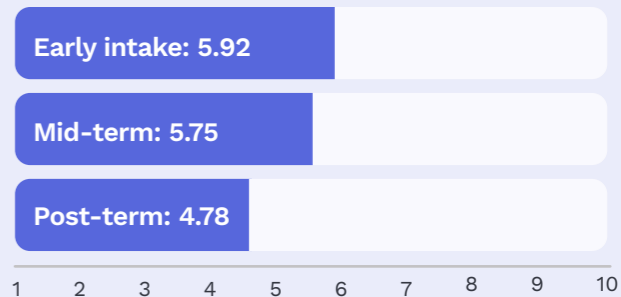
Sharing power over time

Across the two-year term, Council members were asked how they viewed the balance of power between adults and young people within the Youth Council.

Early in their term, members saw the Youth Council as youth-leaning. This view remained broadly consistent at the mid-term point. By the end of their term, members saw power as more evenly shared between young people and adults.

This shift suggests Council members developed a more nuanced understanding of shared decision making over time.

Average score (0–10 scale):



Key

- 0 = Adults hold all the power
- 10 = Young people hold all the power

Summary of

eSafety Youth Council events

May to August

- Meeting 1 (online): Discussed unsafe contact and grooming, echo chambers, and digital footprints.
- A Council member participated in a youth panel at the 2024 Digital Childhoods Summit in Canberra.
- Six Council members consulted with the [Australian Human Rights Commission](#) on the ‘Supporting quality engagement with children’ project.

January to April

- Two Council members participated in the 2025 National Youth Forum, a policy hackathon hosted by the Office for Youth.
- Five Council members co-wrote an article on [rethinking safety in a digital world for Safer Internet Day 2025](#).

May to August

- Three Council members participated in the [Global Online Safety Regulators Network ‘Youth Dialogues’ initiative](#).
- Meeting 5 (online): Discussed the Social Media Age Restrictions legislation.
- Six Council members co-wrote a [submission for the WSIS+20 review, calling for young people to be included in internet governance](#).

January to April

- 10 Council members consulted with the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sports, and the Arts to inform work on the Digital Duty of Care.
- Three Council members attended eSafety’s 2026 Safer Internet Day event in Canberra, with one member participating in the youth panel.
- Meeting 8 (in-person): Discussed help-seeking behaviours, deepfakes, and AI-generated harms affecting young people.

2024

2025

2026

September to December

- Meeting 2 (online): Discussed sexual extortion and fight videos online.
- Nine Council members helped co-develop the [WeProtect Global Alliance #MyVoice#MyFuture youth initiative](#).
- Meeting 3 (online): Discussed recommender systems and echo chambers, image-based abuse and sexual extortion.

January to April

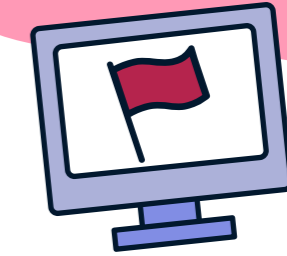
- Meeting 4 (in-person): Discussed the Social Media Age Restrictions legislation, and pitched solutions on recommender systems and echo chambers, image-based abuse, and sexual extortion.
- Two Council members co-facilitated co-design workshops with young people aged 13–24 years, to develop communication guidelines to support eSafety marketing communications.

September to December

- Meeting 6 (online): Discussed the Social Media Age Restrictions legislation.
- Meeting 7 (online): Discussed deepfakes and AI apps, and barriers to help-seeking for young people.
- Seven Council members collaborated with the [Daniel Morcombe Foundation](#) to develop new youth resources on sexual extortion and AI-generated image abuse.



What Council members saw – and what should change



Insights and recommendations on key online safety issues

Over the Youth Council's two-year term, members discussed a range of online safety issues affecting young people. The following insights and recommendations reflect the Youth Council's views. They have been shared across eSafety to help shape current and future policies, programs, and resources.

Fight videos online

Youth Council insights

- Fight videos may be shared by young people to bully or demean others, gain popularity, attract likes and interactions, provide entertainment or show evidence that a fight occurred.
- Fight videos are often shared in group chats or as Snapchat posts. They may also be described using mild language that does not reflect the level of violence shown, such as labelling graphic footage as 'lowkey crazy'.

Youth Council recommendations

- Encourage young people to report fight videos and give them the option to report anonymously, as fear of others finding out can discourage them from reporting.
- Share real stories from young people who have experienced fight videos being shared, to show others they are not alone and support is available.

'I think the thing I'm most proud of was like some of the discussions we had and when it came to going to a meeting, I knew we were going to have some really deep discussions that maybe I wouldn't get otherwise like outside of our little community.'

Sexual extortion

Youth Council insights

- Some young people see sharing intimate images as common, whether they feel pressured to share or see it as normal and accepted within their relationships.
- Education on sexual extortion is inconsistent, particularly for young people who have left secondary education. It can also be difficult to find resources that are appropriate, reliable, diverse and youth friendly.

Youth Council recommendations

- Develop education sessions for peers, parents and carers to help them support friends and family members experiencing sexual extortion.
- Develop resources on financial sexual extortion that mostly target boys and young men, and resources on non-financial sexual extortion that focus on girls and young women.
- Consult and collaborate with young people when designing complaints and reporting processes.

Image-based abuse

Youth Council insights

- Young people can experience long-term psychological impacts from image-based abuse, including shame, reputational harm and social isolation.
- Young people, particularly those from marginalised groups, may be reluctant to report because of stigma, fear of further impacts or concern about disappointing their family.

Youth Council recommendations

- Increase awareness of reporting and help-seeking support by incorporating interactive tasks into school curricula. Lessons could also be gamified or include virtual reality.
- Partner with a broad range of organisations and key community figures to reach marginalised communities where understanding of image-based abuse may be lower.

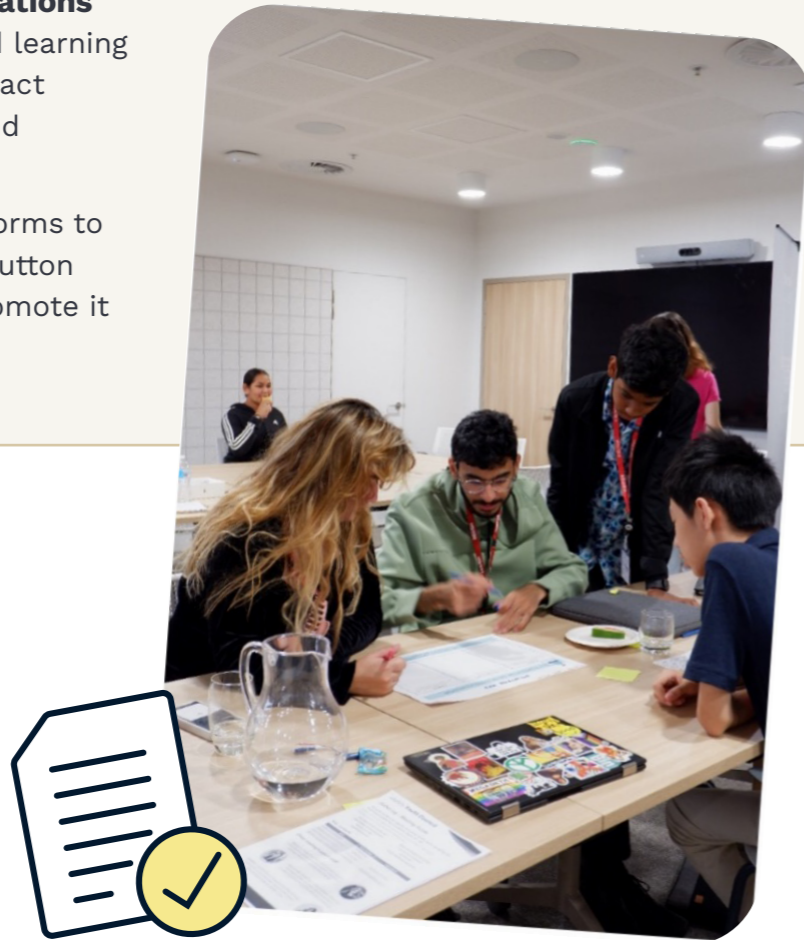
Recommender systems and echo chambers

Youth Council insights

- Social media recommender systems can have positive effects, such as connecting young people with relevant communities. However, they can also create echo chambers by reinforcing users' existing beliefs, increasing polarisation, and spreading harmful ideologies such as sexism and conspiratorial thinking.
- Poor digital literacy and limited user agency may mean many young people do not understand what recommender systems or echo chambers are, how they may be influenced by them, or what support is available.

Youth Council recommendations

- Use interactive or gamified learning experiences to make abstract concepts more tangible and thought-provoking.
- Require social media platforms to make an algorithm reset button easy to find and widely promote it to users.



Deepfakes and AI apps

Youth Council insights

- Young people can find it easy to circumvent moderation features by using indirect or roleplay language to prompt AI platforms to generate harmful content, such as asking an AI tool to phrase harmful content as a poem.
- Shame and fear around sexuality and nudity can affect young people, with girls and young women often bearing the brunt.
- Some young people may not think this behaviour is inappropriate. They may believe it cannot hurt the people involved if it is only for them or a few friends, or if they feel the content is not real.

Youth Council recommendations

- Prioritise prevention and early intervention to support young people before they engage in harmful behaviours. Bringing students together may be an effective way to address gender-specific issues related to AI apps and deepfakes.
- Implement male-led programs that empower boys and young men to hold their friends accountable. These programs should consider the online context, including how loneliness, access to pornography, and harmful gender-based ideologies can influence some boys and young men.



2025 eSafety Youth Council Gathering

On 24 and 25 March 2025, eSafety hosted a two-day Gathering in Canberra – the Youth Council’s first in-person meeting – to help members connect, collaborate, and learn.

Council members strengthened their civic education and media literacy skills and worked together to develop recommendations and solutions on online safety issues, which they pitched to eSafety senior leaders.

The Gathering began with a guided tour of the Australian Parliament House, giving the Youth Council the opportunity to visit the chambers where Australian laws are made, learn about the people who govern the country, and understand how they can participate in parliamentary law-making processes to have their voices heard.



Following the tour, the Youth Council met with then Minister for Communications, Michelle Rowland MP, to discuss the positive impact youth voices have in conversations about online safety.



Council members also made a visit to the National Film and Sound Archive to reinforce and reflect on their critical thinking and media literacy skills. They worked together to explore how and why stories are shaped in media.



Day 2 saw the Youth Council brainstorming how to effectively communicate and engage with children and young people about the Social Media Minimum Age legislation.



After working collaboratively in small groups for two months, the Youth Council pitched its recommendations and solutions to eSafety’s senior leaders on online safety education and prevention messaging for young people.



Recommender systems and echo chambers

A youth-led media campaign encouraging diverse content consumption and responsible digital engagement.

Image-based abuse

Incorporate interactive tasks into school curriculums for students to problem solve a realistic online safety issue while navigating the eSafety website.

Sexual extortion

A youth-led podcast that speaks to young people in language they understand and empowers parents and carers to discuss online safety issues with their children.

‘My favourite part of my involvement with the Council was going to Canberra together. It was so exciting and such a special way for us all to connect in person and have fun together. I think it helped us all collaborate for the rest of the term.’



A final conversation, with lasting lessons



Insights from the 2026 eSafety Youth Council Think Tank

On 16 and 17 March 2026, eSafety hosted the eSafety Youth Council Think Tank, marking the Youth Council's final meeting and the end of its two-year term. The Think Tank was an energetic conclusion to the Youth Council's work and highlighted the value young people's perspectives bring to policy and practice at eSafety.

The two-day Think Tank began with a welcome address from eSafety Commissioner, Julie Inman Grant, who thanked Council members for their sustained commitment over the past two years. She also emphasised the value of their lived, on-the-ground insights in shaping eSafety's policy thinking.

Council members discussed questions about the enforcement of the social media age restrictions, barriers to improving online safety, and the impact of algorithms on young people.

They also shared ideas about young people's help-seeking behaviours, and the roles parents and carers, educators, schools, and online platforms play in helping young people stay safe online.



What supportive help-seeking looks like to young people

For parents and carers

- Support for young people should start before a problem occurs. Have proactive, non-judgmental everyday conversations about online safety.
- Practice active listening and respond to your child or young person with curiosity, not just solutions.
- Work with your child or young person on next steps instead of taking complete control.

For educators and schools

- Council members called for systemic change, including easier, anonymous and shame-free reporting pathways at school.
- Young people need clear pathways to school-based and external support services. Adults do not need to be experts; they just need to help connect young people to the right support.
- Online safety education should reflect the reality of young people's online experiences and harms.



For online platforms

- Platform design affects how young people seek help. Access to humans, especially during appeals and serious online reports, is essential.
- Platforms should provide clear feedback on what happens after a report is made.
- Platforms should demonstrate care for user safety, not just compliance, by establishing clear, simple, and emotionally supportive reporting pathways.

The Youth Council Think Tank gave members time to connect, reflect on their work, and take part in deep conversations about complex online safety issues. We thank Council members for their insight, commitment, and willingness to engage so thoughtfully throughout their term.

Key

achievements



Helping to shape the Social Media Minimum Age

As of 10 December 2025, certain social media platforms are not allowed to let Australians under 16 have an account. The law aims to protect young people from design features that encourage them to spend too much time on screens or show them content that may harm their health and wellbeing.

Since June 2024, the Youth Council has contributed to national discussions about young people and social media, including the development of the Social Media Minimum Age legislation.

'When we were talking about the social media ban, that was one of the best conversations we had and we continued to have it for several meetings.. it was so amazing because every single time we spoke about it, it would be like 'What about this? What about that?' It was really good. I really loved how it got my brain seeking because even after the meetings, I would talk to my friends, I would talk to my mum...'

2024

- Submitted a letter to the [Joint Select Committee on Social Media and Australian Society](#).
- Consulted with the Government of South Australia on the legal examination into banning children's access to social media.
- Consulted with the Minister for Communications and Ms Delia Rickard PSM in a special meeting on the Age Assurance Trial and the review of the Online Safety Act.
- Participated in the NSW and SA Social Media Summit events.
- Presented [further evidence](#) at a youth roundtable for the Joint Select Committee on Social Media and Australian Society.



2025

- Consulted with the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sports and the Arts on the draft Social Media Minimum Age legislative rules.
- Provided input into eSafety's development of the Social Media Minimum Age Theory of Change.
- Consulted with eSafety on the Social Media Age Restrictions youth consultation roundtable.
- Collaborated with eSafety as youth peer researchers on the evaluation of the Social Media Minimum Age legislation.

'My favourite focus has been looking at the implementation of the social media under 16 ban because we got to actually run focus groups for the young people and even hear first-hand what their concerns are. It's very rewarding when you're talking to a 13-year-old and they share the exact same concerns that you, as a young adult, have shared. It gives you hope that young people in the future are critically thinking about things.'



eSafety's commitments to building internal capacity

Over four years and two cohorts, eSafety has strengthened its systems and capability to support safe and meaningful youth engagement. Our commitment to advocating for, and including youth voices in our policies and programs remains central to our work.

eSafety Youth Council support staff are trained in trauma-informed practices, facilitation, youth mental health first aid, child safeguarding and general youth engagement skills.

Council members are offered facilitation training, leadership mentorship, media and public speaking training and more.

All financial honorarium payments to Council members have been moved into eSafety's internal accounting processes.

Administration of all Youth Council meetings, including Council member travel, are undertaken by eSafety Youth Council support staff.

Next steps for the

eSafety Youth Council



As the Youth Council evolves, eSafety has reviewed and refreshed its way of working, informed by member feedback and evaluation findings.

For the 2026–2027 cohort, eSafety will introduce a new Youth Council model designed to strengthen impact, wellbeing, and transparency, and make engagement with young people more meaningful and relevant.

Membership term

What is changing: Reduce the membership term from two years to 18 months.

Why it matters: This will better support Council members to sustain their commitment and engagement.

Frequency of meetings

What is changing: Youth Council meetings will increase from quarterly meetings to meetings every two months.

Why it matters: This responds to Council members' requests for more regular meetings and more opportunities to work together.

Collaboration and impactful projects

What is changing: New Youth Council working groups will focus on awareness and partnerships, media and communications, and content uplift.

Why it matters: These groups will give Council members more opportunities to collaborate on action-oriented projects during their term.

Relationships with alumni Youth Council members

What is changing: eSafety will establish a new alumni initiative, the eSafety Youth Council – Alumni Collective.

Why it matters: This will help eSafety maintain relationships with former Council members, while amplifying and supporting the work of the Youth Council.

Feedback loops

What is changing: eSafety will strengthen how it shares updates on Youth Council projects through a dedicated newsletter for Council members, a new eSafety newsletter for young people, and co-designed [Digital Landscape](#) editions.

Why it matters: This will help Council members understand how their insights and suggestions are considered, while keeping young people informed about the Youth Council's activities.



