eSafety's Implementation of the Social Media Age Restrictions:

2026 Update to Statement of Commitment to Children's Rights

November 2026

Australian Government | eSafety Commissioner

eSafety.gov.au

Background

The **social media minimum age** (**SMMA**) obligation requires providers of **age-restricted social media platforms** (**platforms**) to take reasonable steps to prevent Australian children under the age of 16 from having accounts. It was **enacted** by the Australian Parliament in November 2024, with the obligation taking effect in December 2025.

Ahead of the obligation taking effect, the eSafety Commissioner (**eSafety**) held **consultations**, including with **children and young people** and **children's rights experts**. In response to what they told us, eSafety published a **Statement of Commitment to Children's Rights** in September 2025. The statement outlined what we were doing to implement the SMMA obligation in a way that respects and protects children's rights, consistent with the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child** and **General comment No. 25 (2021) on children's rights in relation to the digital environment**.

Since the SMMA obligation took effect on 10 December 2025, eSafety has continued monitoring and assessing platforms' compliance against the obligation.

In March 2026, we published **a compliance update**, which highlighted early compliance concerns and announced eSafety's investigations into five platforms including Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok and YouTube, all of which remain active as of November 2026.

Throughout this period, eSafety has continued to have regard to and uphold its commitment to children's rights. This document provides an update on the actions eSafety has taken in the year following the publication of our initial statement.

eSafety's activities to fulfil our commitment

1. Recognising and grounding the lived experiences and perspectives of children and young people in the decisions that affect them.

eSafety has continued to engage with children, young people and their families throughout this period and has drawn on their insights to inform our work.

- We have consulted with eSafety's **youth council**, consisting of children and young people aged 13 to 24 years, on the SMMA implementation and resource development. Engagement with the Youth Council continues through bi-monthly meetings, providing regular opportunities for members to share their views and contribute to eSafety's work.
- We have engaged with eSafety's **Parent Advisory Group**. This included the group providing expert advice and detailed feedback to inform the development of eSafety's **Online Safety Guide for Parents and Carers**. Members helped ensure the resource reflected the needs, experiences and concerns of parents and carers while providing practical advice consistent with the SMMA to support families navigating these changes.
- We are developing a Children's Online Safety Socio-Ecological Model to support policy development, program design and prevention activities. The model adopts a child-centred and strengths-based approach, recognising that children's online safety and digital wellbeing are shaped by multiple interconnected influences. It will provide a practical resource to support decision-making, collaboration and prevention efforts across government and non-government sectors.
- We have continued research with children and young people, and parents and carers, as part of eSafety's broader evaluation of the effects of the SMMA (see item 8 below). Findings from this qualitative research support the interpretation of the quantitative results, ensuring the lived experiences of children and young people, parents, and carers are meaningfully reflected in evaluation findings and reporting.

2. Ensuring guidance for platforms reflects the views and best interests of children and young people.

eSafety considered and reflected the views of children and young people in the development of **regulatory guidance** for platforms to comply with the SMMA obligation. eSafety made clear that respect for and protection of fundamental human rights underpin all the guiding principles within the regulatory guidance and providers should have regard to the best interests and rights of children and young people in the design and operation of their services.

This included:

- guiding platforms to take a privacy-preserving and data minimising approach
- encouraging transparent and age-appropriate communication regarding how and why decisions about accounts are made and where they can get support, and giving children and young people choice and control over what happens to their information
- encouraging the use of accessible, inclusive and fair age assurance methods, and avenues for review.

eSafety has continued to meet with industry to assist services to improve the safety of their services for Australian children and end-users.

3. Providing information about the implementation of the SMMA Act in formats that are relevant and accessible to children and young people, and tailored to meet their needs.

This includes ensuring information is age-appropriate, culturally specific and available in a range of languages.

- eSafety developed a range of child- and youth-centred digital literacy and online safety resources as part of the **Social Media Age Restrictions Hub**. These include quick facts, Frequently Asked Questions, on-demand videos, webinars and tailored guidance for children and young people, parents, carers and educators. These resources are available in up to 10 languages and tailored to the needs of a range of communities.
- eSafety has promoted **resources to support First Nations young people** which were developed by Government. The resources aim to provide support to prepare for the restrictions.
- eSafety has continued to deliver digital and algorithmic literacy materials that build digital resilience and critical reasoning skills, ensuring readiness to navigate social media safely at 16 and beyond. This includes:
    - A new **Family Tech Agreement** for families with children aged 9 to 12 years, and 13 to 15 years. This is aimed at supporting proactive and empowering conservations between parents and children, as well as supporting families to navigate the potential challenges with age restrictions.
    - New issues of the **Digital Landscape**, a quarterly resource created by the Youth Council that speaks directly to children and young people, sharing what's happening in online safety each term and any resources or tips that might be helpful. Edition 2 (December 2025) was dedicated to the SMMA.

4. Producing and promoting access to developmentally appropriate, best-practice online safety education, and supporting others to educate children and young people.

- In addition to the resources developed as part of the **Social Media Age Restrictions Hub**, over 40 pieces of existing online safety guidance have been updated in eSafety's **Toolkit for Schools** (**Toolkit**) between September 2025 and March 2026.
- **Trusted eSafety Providers** continue to promote and use the Toolkit and the underpinning **Best Practice Framework for Online Safety Education** (**Framework**) throughout their engagement with schools and community groups.
- The **National Online Safety Education Council** remains a key conduit for promoting eSafety's education resources, including the Toolkit, Framework and Classroom resources.
- eSafety's resources are regularly promoted to educators across early years, schools and tertiary sector through newsletters and organic socials. This included activity for **Safer Internet Day 2026**. Parents and carers are similarly engaged through tailored communications and social media.
- eSafety delivered a suite of Social Media Age Restrictions **webinars** between November 2025 and March 2026 reaching 5,232 parents and carers, educators and youth-serving professionals to understand the changes, their purpose and implications.

5. Coordinating the activities of Commonwealth agencies in relation to online safety, and promoting coordination among other organisations who support online safety.

- eSafety has continued to host Community of Practice sessions for **Trusted eSafety Providers**, to convene the **Youth Council** and the **Parent Advisory Group**, and to hold meetings with the **National Online Safety Education Council** on a regular basis. During these stakeholder engagement meetings, eSafety provides updates related to SMMA implementation, seeks feedback, and helps provide solutions to challenges encountered.

6. Working with other independent regulators, including through the Global Online Safety Regulators Network, to champion a coordinated and human rights-based approach.

- eSafety continues to reinforce our commitment to children's rights through active participation in the **Global Online Safety Regulators Network** (**GOSRN**). In January 2026, GORSN published its **position statement on age assurance and online safety regulation**, calling for a common, principles-based and privacy-preserving international approach to

age assurance and including a commitment to engage children and young people in this work.

- eSafety has strengthened its cooperation with the European Commission's Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology (**DG CNECT**), and the UK's Office of Communications (**Ofcom**) via a technical cooperation group on age assurance. The group was announced in **November 2025**, and has continued meeting throughout 2026.
- Global momentum in support of social media age restrictions continues to accelerate, with more than 60 jurisdictions actively considering, legislating or implementing measures similar to those implemented in Australia. There has been outreach from each continent on eSafety's implementation of the SMMA obligation, with close engagement with the European Union, United Kingdom, Canada, France, Malaysia, and Singapore, among others. eSafety shares regulatory insights and evidence through bilateral engagements, submissions and appearances, and promotes an approach which is underpinned by children's rights.
- eSafety continues to work closely and meet regularly with the **OAIC**, which released **new regulatory guidance** on age assurance in March 2026. In July 2026, eSafety made a **submission** to the OAIC's consultation on the draft Children's Online Privacy Code, outlining our shared commitment to regulatory coherence, coordination and cooperation, and our support for a regulatory approach that protects and upholds the rights of children.

7. Operating complementary regulatory schemes to make the online environment safer for children and young people.

- eSafety has continued to receive and action reports from children, young people and their advocates in relation to **cyberbullying** and **image-based abuse** they are experiencing, both on platforms that have obligations under the SMMA, as well as other online services. We were careful to **communicate** to children and young people that they should continue to reach out to us to seek help with these issues, and that we would not contact platforms to alert them to underage complainants. We have been pleased to see that this messaging has cut through, and that children and young people do not appear to have been deterred from seeking our help.
- eSafety continues to assess and enforce compliance with the **Unlawful Material Industry Codes and Standards** focused on child sexual abuse and pro-terror content. In the last few months our enforcement action has led to eight of the most popular **'nudify' services** in Australia either withdrawing from the country or putting in place age assurance. We

have also taken action against **'chatroulette' apps**, leading to one service's removal from the Google and Apple app stores. Apple has subsequently removed or issued warnings to over 100 of these risky apps and terminated the accounts of dozens of app developers. In August 2026, eSafety also secured **a court enforceable undertaking from Roblox** to limit the ability of adults to contact children, and ensure children's accounts are private by default. eSafety has also commenced civil penalty **proceedings against Telegram** for allegedly failing to detect and remove pro-terror material from its service.

- Since September 2025, nine additional **Age-Restricted Material Codes** have come into force to prevent children from encountering age-inappropriate material such pornography, violence and content that promotes suicide and disordered eating. Approximately 90% of the most popular pornography services now have age assurance in place, and eSafety's engagement has led to several key AI companies services also putting in place age assurance. To support the implementation of code requirements relating to self-harm material, eSafety engaged a range of stakeholders across the Australian mental health sector to help build **clinically-informed and rights-respecting regulatory guidance**.
- Between December 2022 and July 2026, eSafety published six **transparency reports** focused on steps online providers are taking to address child sexual exploitation and abuse on their services. Three of these were findings relating to one-off transparency notices and the other three were findings relating to periodic transparency notices requiring services to report every 6 months for a 24-month period. The final report in this series is set to be published in early 2027. eSafety's transparency reports expose both good practice and safety gaps, holding providers accountable and promoting safety uplift.

8. Rigorously evaluating the outcomes of the SMMA, and including children and young people in this research.

- eSafety has commenced a comprehensive **evaluation** of the SMMA and has appointed an **Academic Advisory** of leading experts – including experts in children's rights – to guide this work (led by Stanford University's Social Media Lab).
- Several members of the Youth Council have worked with eSafety as peer researchers in the evaluation. This means they help shape and take part in different parts of the project – such as helping design how we engage children and young people, helping run group discussions, and contributing to how we make sense of both the stories and data we collect. Their involvement ensures the evaluation reflects young people's real experiences and perspectives.

- A **methodology report, a theory of change** and the first in a series of evaluation reports, have been published and made publicly available. This report, **Early days, early insights: Understanding experiences of social media age restrictions at the three-month follow-up | eSafety Commissioner**, describes the early findings from the commencement of the age restrictions (November to December 2025) and data from the three-month follow-up survey (March to April 2026). This report is the first in a series of reports of evaluation findings that will be published over the course of a two-year evaluation, drawing on data collected from a diverse, nationally representative sample of children aged 10 to 15 and their parents or carers.

9. Promoting Safety by Design, and providing our input, insights and expertise into ongoing online safety law reform discussions, including in relation to a digital duty of care.

- In March 2026 eSafety published a Safety by Design toolkit titled '**Designing for safety – Preventing child sexual exploitation and abuse online**'. In the toolkit, there are five practical tools and a resource list to help companies place child safety and rights at the centre of digital product design and development. It is grounded in sector insights and designed for companies of any size, translating Safety by Design into day-to-day practice.
- eSafety has shared input, insights and expertise, predicated on **Safety by Design principles**, with the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts (**DITRDCSA**) to inform the Australian Government's online safety law reform discussions, including the **Online Safety Amendment (Digital Duty of Care) Bill 2026** that was introduced to Parliament on 15 October 2026.
- eSafety has continued to provide the Youth Council with opportunities to inform online safety law reform discussions, including engaging with DITRDCSA and the Minister for Communications on the Online Safety Amendment (Digital Duty of Care) Bill 2026.

