Outlook

Re: Citation errors in age assurance technology report [SEC=OFFICIAL]

From s47F @accscheme.com>
Date Tue 2026-08-11 4:46 PM
To s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>

OFFICIAL

Hi s22(1)(a)

That is fine. Please can you send over a meeting request for that time.

Some bullet points for you from what I believe to be the case:

- The source of this story is an activist working for the Freedom Fighters Campaign
- Guardian told me that they (not sure if it was them or the activist) had run the report through an AI analysis tool called Pangram and it had highlighted two sections (D.16 Emerging Theoretical Approaches in Age Estimation: Ergonomics, Physiology and Interaction Patterns & E.12 Innovation and Research in Age Inference: Insights From the Australian Context) which it claims is 100% AI generated. Neither are, as I personally wrote both of them. The D16.1 & D16.2 both refer to science that we have seen presented in various forums, including the Global Age Assurance Standards Summit; & E12.1 refers to papers submitted to the Trial from sources including the eSafety Commissioner.
- Each of the science papers that were listed were checked and verified against the US National Library of Medicine (this was a process carried out by a human being in the trial team) and each were verified as genuine papers. All of the papers referred to do exist.
- The key point that Freedom Fighters are complaining about in relation to D.16 is not the papers or the veracity of the science involved, but that a DOI number in the metadata is incorrect. I have, in response, provided the full deep link to each of the papers - showing that they are all genuine and that we checked them at the time.
- The key point on E.12 is that the links contain metadata indicating chatGPT, but they accept that the papers are genuine.
- Each of the fields of science referred to - as clearly stated in the text on D.16 - do not refer to the application of this science directly to age assurance technology but to understanding the correlation of age to certain measurable biometric features of humans. We are aware that for each of these fields, age assurance vendors are exploring operational deployment of them, but had not done so by the time the trial concluded. Some of them have now.

We did not use AI to generate the report, nor carry out the primary research. However, we did use AI to assist with making some sections more succinct or for editorial purposes. We have used open-source searching (which, of course, now includes augmented AI), but every paper and reference was independently verified against a third source, in this case the US Library of Medicine.

In one case, the activist is alleging that one paper we referred to was not published until July 2025, whereas we referred to seeing it in March 2025. That further shows that we were not using AI to conduct primary research.

The core allegation that these papers are AI hallucinations is rejected. They are genuine papers, the science behind them does exist, the sections returned by Pangram as AI generated were written by a human (in this case, that was actually me and I do remember writing them).

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There does appear to be some inconsistencies in the DOI metadata. The links were checked at the time, but not necessarily the deep metadata. They worked and connected to genuine papers.

Although I have not yet seen what the journalist is planning to write, the core of the allegation that the report's research is founded on AI hallucination is rejected.

Best Regards

s47F

OFFICIAL

From: s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>
Sent: Tuesday, August 11, 2026 2:38 AM
To: s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>; s47F @accscheme.com>
Subject: Re: Citation errors in age assurance technology report [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hi s47F

We understand this article will be released soon. It would be great to set up a time to chat to ensure we're across any relevant details.

Are you available **Wed 12 August - 8.00am UK time / 5.00pm Canberra** time?

Thanks
s22(
1)(a)

s22(1)(a)(ii)
Assistant Director • Social Media Minimum Age • Online Safety Branch
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From: s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, August 06, 2026 7:24 PM
To: s47F @accscheme.com>; s22(1)(a)(ii)
@infrastructure.gov.au>
Subject: RE: Citation errors in age assurance technology report [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Thanks s47F. This was raised with us today as well. I really appreciate the info below. Incredibly useful.

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I acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land on which we meet, work and live.
I recognise and respect their continuing connection to the land, waters and communities.
I pay my respects to Elders past and present and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

OFFICIAL

From: s47F @accscheme.com>
Sent: Thursday, 6 August 2026 7:22 PM
To: s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>
Subject: Fw: Citation errors in age assurance technology report

Hi s22(1)(a)(ii),

s47F at the Guardian is sniffing around a 'the AATT report was written by AI' type story. This is not true and I have responded to him in detail as below.

He says that he is going to be seeking a quote from the Comms Minister. I thought the below might assist you with that.

Best Regards

s47F

From: s47F @accscheme.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 06, 2026 9:58 AM
To: s47F @theguardian.com>
Subject: Re: Citation errors in age assurance technology report

Hi s47F

I have gone back to the team that provided this section of the report and verified these links.

Frank, et al.

This is a correct citation. The fuller citation is Frank, M., Biedert, R., Ma, E., Martinovic, I., Song, D., 2013. Touchalytics: on the applicability of touchscreen input as a behavioral biometric for continuous authentication. IEEE Trans. Inf. Forens. Secur. 8 (1), 136–148. doi: 10.1109/TIFS.2012.
Here is a link to the work.
[1207.6231] Touchalytics: On the Applicability of Touchscreen Input as a Behavioral Biometric for Continuous Authentication

It would appear that the annoted citation in the report may not have directed to the full citation.

Jamal, et al

This is a correct citation, but we think that Jamal may no longer be listed as an author. We do not know why.

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The correct full doi is: **https://doi.org/10.3390/s25113509**
Here is a link to a synopsis of the work Using Wearable Sensors for Sex Classification and Age Estimation from Walking Patterns - PMC

Seidler, et al

This is a correct citation, the link to it is at Motor control and aging: links to age-related brain structural, functional, and biochemical effects - PubMed.

There is another study on this issue cited by Seidler in their research, which is Cole et al., Experimental Brain Research, doi:10.1007/s00221-009-2046-7 (2010). We did not cite this as a separate example, but there is cross-citation in our notes of verification.

Voelcker-Rehage.

We accept that this citation is not as clear as it should be, but it does link to genuine work by Claudia Voelcker-Rehage. The text appears to have been written by synthesising multiple papers into one concise statement, but then only one citation was attached.

This is the link to the genuine work. Age-related changes in grasping force modulation - PubMed

Weber, et al.

This was cited in a paper to us submitted by Monash University (here is a link to the paper) 252514819_oa.pdf. It does not appear that the Weber link still exists, so may have been withdrawn or redirected.

Chang, et al.

This is a correct citation. Here is a link to the source material - Electrocardiogram-Based Heart Age Estimation by a Deep Learning Model Provides More Information on the Incidence of Cardiovascular Disorders - PMC

As a general observation, I am advised that we used the US National Library of Medicine to independently verify the papers and materials submitted (National Center for Biotechnology Information) or we relied upon the statements received from the relevant University (in accordance with their policies).

I am confident, that whilst open source searching may have been used, AI was not used to generate the citations. As ever, it is possible that a much more detailed citation might assist readers in finding the relevant papers, but all of the links above are openly available and just by putting the citation provided into Google and checking, these links do come up.

I hope that assists with your enquiry.

Best Regards

s47F

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From: s47F @theguardian.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 06, 2026 12:43 AM
To: s47F @accscheme.com>
Subject: Re: Citation errors in age assurance technology report

Hi s47F ,

I'm not sure if you're aware but the DOI citations, which are the ones we have checked, do not change online. A DOI address is a "permanent address for an article or data set". So I am not sure how you can put it down to the address suddenly changing.

Did your researchers google or use a chatbot to find papers that align with what you were seeking to convey in the story and then use the AI generated summaries to provide the above examples?

Kind regards,

s47F

---

s47F

Technology reporter

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On Wed, 5 Aug 2026 at 21:53, s47F @accscheme.com> wrote:

> Hi s47F
>
> I will have to get the team to go back to the archive folders for this project - which won't be today.
>
> I do not necessarily believe that the citations were wrong, but I am aware that they change very quickly online and what can be a correct citation one day, can be wrong the next. That is why we stated when we last accessed them.
>
> We did not use AI to create references. So any suggestion otherwise is simply not true.
>
> The government did not spend $6.5m on *this report*. That was the entire budget for all of the work it undertook on age assurance related activities. This report was only an aspect of that.
>
> Best Regards
>
> s47F
>
> ---
>
> **From:** s47F @theguardian.com>
> **Sent:** 05 August 2026 9:49 AM
> **To:** s47F @accscheme.com>
> **Subject:** Re: Citation errors in age assurance technology report
>
> Hi s47F
>
> Thanks for that. Would you be able to provide links to the correct citations or explain how those referenced relate to the report?
>
> Just unclear to me how less than a year later a number of citations can be wrong.
>
> Senator Fatima Payman has called for the government to get a refund of some of the $6.5m spent on the report, akin to what happened with Deloitte over AI hallucinated citations.
>
> I'll be seeking comment from the Comms Minister in the morning on this aspect too.
>
> Kind regards,
>
> s47F
>
> On Wed, 5 Aug 2026 at 5:55 PM s47F @accscheme.com> wrote:
>
> > Hi s47F
> >
> > Thank you for the citations and the additional information.
> >
> > The spreadsheet highlights six potential mismatches on citation, two of which claim the report does not now exist and four of which suggest the citation could be clearer. This is from more than 300 citations of material in Part K of the Age Assurance Technology Trial report. The

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spreadsheet does not acknowledge that the report states (against every one of the citations) when the cited material was accessed by the AATT team and checked and we have our own log and verification check of all of these.

All of the referenced material was gathered by the academics and researchers working on the project at the time and came from multiple sources referenced elsewhere. Citation of material was also independently reviewed by the Ethics Panel set up under the Trial. The presence of citation errors is not, in itself, evidence of AI hallucination and these errors - which relate to correct fields of study but mismatched authors to genuine reports are not typical of AI errors. It would seem more likely that these reports have moved or been recited in some way since the verification process was completed.

It would not be correct to conclude from these isolated citation errors that the report was AI-generated or that its findings are unsupported by objective evidence. The Australian Age Assurance Technology Trial was not produced by asking an AI system to generate a report. It was developed over an extended period through original experimental work, interviews, participant studies, laboratory testing, statistical analysis and contributions from multiple authors amongst approximately 50 people working on the project. Drafts were subject to review by the project team and the Ethics Panel.

Whilst every effort was made to verify all of the content of the report, if there are individual errors within citations, I can only apologise for those. I am not convinced that they would be AI hallucinations - that is not how we were working during the Trial - but even with open-source searching for academics, there are challenges with citation and these kinds of citation errors pre-date the AI age in any event.

Best Regards

s47F

From: s47F @theguardian.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 05, 2026 7:14 AM
To: s47F @accscheme.com>
Subject: Re: Citation errors in age assurance technology report

Hi s47F

We've just had a look ourselves, and it seems a lot of the DOI references in Part D do not actually link to papers that say what they say they are. I've attached a spreadsheet outlining the problems.

We have come across this issue before - where someone asks an AI or Google to find citations for them and then doesn't check them. Is it possible whoever authored this section of the report did not check the citations before publication, even if they authored that part of the report themselves?

I'm looking to do a story tomorrow.

Kind regards,

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s47F

---

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Technology reporter

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On Wed, 5 Aug 2026 at 13:43, s47F @theguardian.com> wrote:

> Thanks s47F
>
> ---
>
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On Wed, 5 Aug 2026 at 12:47, s47F @accscheme.com> wrote:

> Hi s47F
>
> We did not use AI in the generation of the report or the cited materials. These were all materials that were submitted to us by trial participants or interested parties. Each one of them were checked as genuine links and reports and that they were relevant to the specific issue being cited. They were all individually subject to human review.
>
> Best Regards
>
> s47F
>
> Sent from my I-Phone
>
> > On 5 Aug 2026, at 02:10, s47F @theguardian.com> wrote:
> >
> > Hi s47F
> >
> > I hope you are well.
> >
> > I am not sure if you are following the social media ban amendment legislation working its way through parliament, but a submission in that accuses the Age Assurance Technology Trial report of having citations that appear to be AI hallucinated.

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They point to page 94 of Part K of the report. which mentions a citation for "Weber et al", however if you follow the Digital Object Identifier provided next to that citation, it actually links to a paper which no one with the name ‘Weber’ worked on.

Another work, cited as ‘Jamil et al.’ contains a Digital Object Identifier which links to a paper that lists no author with the name Jamil.

Just wondering if you could confirm if you did or didn't use AI in the preparation of the report, and whether these errors were human or AI related?

Kind regards,

s47F

---

s47F

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Outlook

RE: For ASAP advice: Guardian query - Age assurance tech report [SEC=OFFICIAL]

From s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>
Date Thu 2026-08-06 4:44 PM
To Media <media@infrastructure.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>
Cc s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>; VANDENBROEK, Sarah <Sarah.Vandenbroek@infrastructure.gov.au>

OFFICIAL

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Hi s22(1)(a)(ii)

Sorry for the delay.

All good from me

Thanks
s22(1)(a)(ii)

s22(1)(a)(ii)
Acting Assistant Secretary • Online Safety Branch
Digital Platforms, Online Safety and Classification Division
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I acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land on which we meet, work and live.
I recognise and respect their continuing connection to the land, waters and communities.
I pay my respects to Elders past and present and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

OFFICIAL

From: Media <media@infrastructure.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, 6 August 2026 4:43 PM
To: s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>
Cc: s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>; Media <media@infrastructure.gov.au>
Subject: Re: For ASAP advice: Guardian query - Age assurance tech report [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Thanks s22(1)(a)(ii)

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s22(1)(a)(ii) please let me know when good to go your end.

Cheers
s22(1)(a)

s22(1)(a)(ii) (she/her)

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From: s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, August 6, 2026 3:03 PM
To: Media <media@infrastructure.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>
Cc: s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>
Subject: RE: For ASAP advice: Guardian query - Age assurance tech report [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

I'm okay with this.

s22(1)(a)(ii), grateful for your clearance.

s22(1)(a)(ii)

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From: Media <media@infrastructure.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, 6 August 2026 2:22 PM
To: s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>
Cc: s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>; Media <media@infrastructure.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>
Subject: Re: For ASAP advice: Guardian query - Age assurance tech report [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Boo I thought we were going back to the future.

Have pulled together some lines below but am 100% open to your views/suggestions. Suspect these will go from a departmental spokesperson.

Proposed response

The department's contract with ACCS to deliver the age assurance technology trial stipulated that ACCS comply with the Commonwealth Supplier Code of Conduct. The code outlines minimum expectations of suppliers, including in relation to ethics, integrity and accountability.

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Background

The department is examining the concerns raised below and will engage with ACCS as appropriate.

Happy to chat!

Cheers

s22(1)( )

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From: s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, August 6, 2026 1:59 PM
To: Media <media@infrastructure.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>
Cc: s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>
Subject: Re: For ASAP advice: Guardian query - Age assurance tech report [SEC=OFFICIAL]

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Make that 'AI **use**' and '**2024** version' lol

s22(1)(a)(ii)

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Assistant Director • Social Media Minimum Age • Online Safety Branch

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From: s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, August 06, 2026 1:52 PM
To: Media <media@infrastructure.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>
Cc: s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>
Subject: Re: For ASAP advice: Guardian query - Age assurance tech report [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hi s22 (1)

The contract doesn't include anything specifically around AI us, but it did require ACCS to comply with the Commonwealth Supplier Code of Conduct, which includes obligations relating to integrity and standards of professional conduct.

The contract references the 2042 version of the code (it has since been updated): Supplier Code of Conduct

Cheers

s22(1)(a)

s22(1)(a)(ii)

Assistant Director • Social Media Minimum Age • Online Safety Branch

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From: Media <media@infrastructure.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, 6 August 2026 11:54 AM
To: s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>
Cc: s22(1)(a)(ii) Media <media@infrastructure.gov.au>
Subject: Re: For ASAP advice: Guardian query - Age assurance tech report [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hello team

We have a little more time with this - so something by 4pm would be great. Let me know if you'd like to chat it through!

Cheers

s22(1)
( )

s22(1)(a)(ii))

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From: Media <media@infrastructure.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, August 6, 2026 11:47 AM
To: s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>

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Cc: Media <media@infrastructure.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>
Subject: For ASAP advice: Guardian query - Age assurance tech report [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hi s22(1)(a)(ii) and team

MO have received the below/attached about the ACCS report.

Question highlighted below is there anything in our contract with ACCS that goes to AI use, or generally sets requirements around integrity/accuracy that we can point to?

Happy to chat if easier!

Cheers

s22(1)( )

s22(1)(a)(ii)

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I acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land on which we meet, work and live.

I recognise and respect their continuing connection to the land, waters and communities.

I pay my respects to Elders past and present and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

From: s47F @theguardian.com>
Sent: Thursday, 6 August 2026 9:47 AM
To: s22(1)(a)(ii) @mo.communications.gov.au>
Subject: Age assurance tech report

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Hi s22 (1) ( )

Hope you're well.

Apologies for the long email but I'm working on a story for tomorrow regarding alleged AI hallucinations in the age assurance technology trial report.

The Free Speech Union in their submission to the amendment bill identifies at least two citations in the report that don't match up with what the actual papers say or who the author is. I've found four at least with my own searches (attached in spreadsheet).

FSU point to page 94 of Part K of the report. which mentions a citation for "Weber et al", however if you follow the Digital Object Identifier provided next to that citation, it actually links to a paper which no one with the name 'Weber' worked on.

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Another work, cited as 'Jamil et al.' contains a Digital Object Identifier which links to a paper that lists no author with the name Jamil.

You can see the spreadsheet for examples, it all seems to be around part D of the report. It seems to be what we find when someone uses AI for their report, where it hallucinates citations that either don't exist, or the paper doesn't say what they're claiming.

Just wondering if the government has sought assurances from ACCS that they did not use AI, and if you would be seeking a refund if they've been found to have?

Thanks!

s47F

---

s47F

Technology reporter

The Guardian | Australia

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Bluesky: s47F

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Outlook

Re: For advice - Follow up: Age assurance tech report [SEC=OFFICIAL]

From Media <media@infrastructure.gov.au>
Date Tue 2026-08-11 10:08 AM
To s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>
Cc s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>; Media <media@infrastructure.gov.au>

OFFICIAL

Thanks! I've sent up for consideration.

Cheers
s22(1)

OFFICIAL

From: s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>
Sent: Tuesday, 11 August 2026 9:55 AM
To: Media <media@infrastructure.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>
Cc: s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>
Subject: RE: For advice - Follow up: Age assurance tech report [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hi s22(1)(a)(ii)

The below background might be useful to share with the MO.

Background

- ACCS published 2,900 pages of individual vendor reports and data tables alongside the report.
- Anonymised test datasets, evaluation templates and audit records of methodology alignment with ISO and IEEE standards are available on the Open Science Framework.
- Together, the report and the associated digital resources offer a complete reference framework, ensuring that readers, researchers and policymakers can trace the basis of the trial's conclusions and explore the wider landscape of age assurance technology evaluation.
- ACCS conducted 'challenge sessions' with an ethics committee, lawyers and auditors, mapping whether the evidence supported the 12 key findings of the trial. **All findings were found to be valid**.

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From: Media <media@infrastructure.gov.au>
Sent: Tuesday, 11 August 2026 9:53 AM
To: s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>
Cc: s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>; Media <media@infrastructure.gov.au>
Subject: For advice - Follow up: Age assurance tech report [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hi s22(1)(a)(ii)

We've received the below follow up from the Guardian - is there anything further we want to add to our response or happy to let it stand? I think it's reasonable to leave as is. Let me know your thoughts!

Cheers
s22(1)(a)

s22(1)(a)(ii)

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OFFICIAL

From: s47F @theguardian.com>
Sent: Tuesday, 11 August 2026 9:49 AM
To: Media <media@infrastructure.gov.au>
Subject: Re: Age assurance tech report [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hi s22(1)(a)(ii)

I'm preparing to file this today and was wondering if the department had followed up our findings and had addressed them with ACCS at all?

Kind regards,

s47F
---
s47F
Technology reporter

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Bluesky: s47F

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On Fri, 7 Aug 2026 at 16:39, Media <media@infrastructure.gov.au> wrote:

OFFICIAL

Thanks s47F

Cheers
s22(1)(a)

Media Services
media@infrastructure.gov.au
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OFFICIAL

From: s47F @theguardian.com>
Sent: Friday, 7 August 2026 4:20 PM
To: Media <media@infrastructure.gov.au>
Subject: Re: Age assurance tech report [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hi s22(1)(a)(ii)

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As promised, here are the issues we have identified.

We spoke to one of the authors cited who said the author who appeared in the citation was never an author of the report, and it was not submitted until after their supposed access date. Additionally, we have identified references to ChatGPT in URL sources in the report, which suggest AI was used.

We are filing on Monday now on this.

Thanks!

s47F
---
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On Fri, 7 Aug 2026 at 12:16, s47F @theguardian.com> wrote:

> Thanks s22(1)(a)(ii).
>
> I will come back with other evidence to the department later today.
>
> ---
> s47F
> Technology reporter
> The Guardian | Australia
> ---
> +61 (0) s47F
> s47F @theguardian.com
> ---
> Bluesky: s47F
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> ---

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On Fri, 7 Aug 2026 at 12:15, Media <media@infrastructure.gov.au> wrote:

OFFICIAL

Hi s47F

Your query has been referred to the department for response, please see below.

Attributable to a spokesperson for the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts
The department is examining the concerns raised below and will engage with ACCS as appropriate.

Background
The department's contract with ACCS to deliver the age assurance technology trial stipulated that ACCS comply with the Commonwealth Supplier Code of Conduct. The code outlines minimum expectations of suppliers, including in relation to ethics, integrity and accountability.

Cheers
s22(1)(a)(ii)

Media Services
media@infrastructure.gov.au
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GPO Box 594 Canberra, ACT 2601

Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts
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From: s47F @theguardian.com>
Sent: Thursday, 6 August 2026 9:47 AM
To: s22(1)(a)(ii) @mo.communications.gov.au>
Subject: Age assurance tech report

s22(1)(a)(ii) - duplicate email chain

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e, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts

Outlook

Re: Age assurance tech report [SEC=OFFICIAL]

From Media <media@infrastructure.gov.au>
Date Tue 2026-08-18 2:38 PM
To s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>
Cc s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>; VANDENBROEK, Sarah <Sarah.Vandenbroek@infrastructure.gov.au>; Media <media@infrastructure.gov.au>

OFFICIAL

Hi s22(1)(a)(ii)

Thanks for the chat - as discussed we'll wait for the Hansard to drop and point s47F to that, indicating we don't believe it contradicts the original background provided.

Cheers
s22(1)

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OFFICIAL

From: s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>
Sent: Tuesday, 18 August 2026 2:19 PM
To: Media <media@infrastructure.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>
Cc: s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>; VANDENBROEK, Sarah <Sarah.Vandenbroek@infrastructure.gov.au>
Subject: RE: Age assurance tech report [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hi s22(1)(a)(ii)

We are saying that the previous background was unclear and want to specifically point out that the issue is that the links to the citations are not working, not the problem being the citation.

Thanks
s22(1)(a)(ii)

s22(1)(a)(ii)
Acting Assistant Secretary • Online Safety Branch

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From: Media <media@infrastructure.gov.au>
Sent: Tuesday, 18 August 2026 1:31 PM
To: s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>
Cc: s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>; VANDENBROEK, Sarah <Sarah.Vandenbroek@infrastructure.gov.au>; Media <media@infrastructure.gov.au>
Subject: Re: Age assurance tech report [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hi team

Just jumping in on this one. Are we saying that the previous background provided is incorrect and/or we've since received further information? If so I feel we need to explicitly state that - let me know

s22(1)(a)

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From: s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>
Sent: Tuesday, 18 August 2026 1:12 PM
To: Media <media@infrastructure.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>
Cc: s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>; VANDENBROEK, Sarah <Sarah.Vandenbroek@infrastructure.gov.au>
Subject: RE: Age assurance tech report [SEC=OFFICIAL]

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OFFICIAL

Hi s22(1)(a)(ii)

Please see our proposed response below. Can you please check with the journalist if now that we have made this correction to the background that he still wishes to quote us?

Proposed response:
We acknowledge how you have concluded that there is a contradiction on the behalf of the department, given the differing language used between the response in writing and that used in the inquiry hearing. For clarity, we would like to amend the wording of the background from the version initially provided. Specifically, we wish to clarify that the minor errors that current exist relate to the accessibility of the source documents via the links in the report. The links were correct at the time the report was published.

Revised background: ACCS has confirmed that there are now some errors related to links within citations given the movement of source documents since the report was finalised. These issues are within in a section outlining emerging approaches in age assurance (Section D.16), which does not go to the broader conclusions of the Trial.

Thanks
s22(1)(a)(ii)

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From: Media <media@infrastructure.gov.au>
Sent: Tuesday, 18 August 2026 11:19 AM
To: s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>
Cc: s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>; Media <media@infrastructure.gov.au>
Subject: Re: Age assurance tech report [SEC=OFFICIAL]

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OFFICIAL

Hi s22(1)(a)(ii) and team,

The journo s47F has followed up this morning on his request to attribute the background lines.

Based on the below emails I think it can be attributed but I would be keen to get your ok officially on this.

Have you seen if there is a Hansard transcript available so we can confirm we aren't contradicting?

s22(1)(a)(ii)
Senior Media Officer • Media Services
E s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au P 02 s22(1)(a)(ii)

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From: VANDENBROEK, Sarah <Sarah.Vandenbroek@infrastructure.gov.au>
Sent: Monday, 17 August 2026 1:40 PM
To: s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>; Media <media@infrastructure.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>
Cc: s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>
Subject: RE: Age assurance tech report [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Thanks, doesn't seem much point in responding now that the article is out, but good that the media team is checking.

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From: s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>
Sent: Monday, 17 August 2026 1:15 PM
To: VANDENBROEK, Sarah <Sarah.Vandenbroek@infrastructure.gov.au>; Media <media@infrastructure.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>

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Cc: s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>
Subject: RE: Age assurance tech report [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hi Sarah,

I've done a quick and dirty transcription below, based on the recording: Senate Environment and Communications Legislation Committee | 14/08/2026

The article also seems to have been published already: Report supporting Australia's teen social media ban appears to contain AI hallucinations, Senate hears | Social media ban | The Guardian

Media team is currently checking whether we still need to respond to the further query, noting the article is already out.

From 8:01:25:
SV
- We became aware of the issue late last week or early this week
- Met with CEO of ACCS on Wednesday
- Clarified there are a couple of errors in the links, assured the links were checked at time and something might've changed in interim
- Assured as well that source docs do exist and are available online

PAYMAN
- Have you commenced review about other errors there might be in report?

SV
- We don't believe there are any errors in the report
- Other than couple links that could be broken, not aware of any other issues with the report

PAYMAN
- Curious why not reviewing further for other errors?

SV
- Reviewed at time produced – report was put through ethics committee and legal review
- No reason to doubt validity
- No concerns about accuracy or validity of information in report

PAYMAN
- Except links broken
- Contractual penalties given errors fall below expected

SV
- There were some links that were broken

NN
- Also add that those errors related to a small number of references
- What we are talking about here is quite a small number of errors

PAYMAN
- Understand but lot of money spent

DM
- Important to be clear on evidence that while there are links broken now, not same as there having been an error in report at time it was handed to government

PAYMAN
- But indicates lazy report writing - what doing to send a message

DM
- Don't agree - if it was broken at time

HENDERSON
- Have you verified that assertion from ACCS

DM
- That is advice we have from ACCS

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From: VANDENBROEK, Sarah <Sarah.Vandenbroek@infrastructure.gov.au>
Sent: Monday, 17 August 2026 12:53 PM
To: s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>; Media <media@infrastructure.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>
Cc: s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>
Subject: RE: Age assurance tech report [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

s22(1)(a)(ii) – can someone in your team please listen back to what was said at the hearing to see whether we agree that we are contradicting ourselves.

Then we can decide how to respond.

Thanks
Sarah

OFFICIAL

From: s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>
Sent: Monday, 17 August 2026 12:47 PM
To: Media <media@infrastructure.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>; VANDENBROEK, Sarah <Sarah.Vandenbroek@infrastructure.gov.au>
Cc: s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>
Subject: RE: Age assurance tech report [SEC=OFFICIAL]

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s22(1)(a)(ii) and @VANDENBROEK, Sarah

See below. Grateful for your views.

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From: Media <media@infrastructure.gov.au>
Sent: Monday, 17 August 2026 12:45 PM
To: s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>; VANDENBROEK, Sarah <Sarah.Vandenbroek@infrastructure.gov.au>
Cc: s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>
Subject: Re: Age assurance tech report [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hi team,

MO cleared that response including background thank you.

The journo has come back with the following:

You're background comment seems to contrast with what was said in the hearing, which was "We don't believe there are any errors in the report. We're not aware of any other than a couple of links that may have potentially been broken. We're not aware of any other issues in the report."

I would like to quote the background comment and attribute to the department as it seems to be contradictory with what was said in the hearing.

Are you comfortable with this?

s22(1)(a)(ii)
Media Services
E media@infrastructure.gov.au
MEDIA LINE +61 2 s22(1)(a)(ii)

OFFICIAL

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From: s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>
Sent: Monday, 17 August 2026 10:00 AM
To: Media <media@infrastructure.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>; VANDENBROEK, Sarah <Sarah.Vandenbroek@infrastructure.gov.au>
Cc: s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>
Subject: RE: Age assurance tech report [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hi s22(1)(a)(ii)

Confirming the below was cleared for response to MLex last week.

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From: s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>
Sent: Monday, 17 August 2026 9:43 AM
To: Media <media@infrastructure.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>; VANDENBROEK, Sarah <Sarah.Vandenbroek@infrastructure.gov.au>
Cc: s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>
Subject: RE: Age assurance tech report [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hi s22(1)(a)(ii)

The below is what was provided last week to MLex (but I have added an additional line). I think we can also use it for the Guardian.

s22(1)(a)(ii), @VANDENBROEK, Sarah – for your visibility.

> The final report of the independent Age Assurance Technology Trial found that age assurance can be done in Australia, in a private, robust and effective manner. This does not mean that all technologies evaluated in the Trial met each assessment criteria to a high standard, but rather that the Trial found examples of technologies performing to a high standard against these metrics. The final report is one component of a broader evidence base on the efficacy of age assurance.

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The ACCS has confirmed that each reference was independently verified against a third source. ACCS has also confirmed with the department that although AI was used for editorial purposes, preparation of the report and primary research was done by staff members.

Background

ACCS has confirmed minor citation errors in a section outlining emerging approaches in age assurance (Section D.16). This section does not go to the broader conclusions of the Trial.

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From: Media <media@infrastructure.gov.au>
Sent: Monday, 17 August 2026 8:55 AM
To: s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>
Cc: Media <media@infrastructure.gov.au>
Subject: Fw: Age assurance tech report [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Importance: High

OFFICIAL

Hi team,

The below enquiry has come in from The Guardian. Given the short deadline and previous emails with the journo, I wanted to see your thoughts on a response before I pull anything together.

I will flag with the MO as well.

s22(1)(a)(ii)
Senior Media Officer • Media Services
E s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au **P** 02 s22(1)(a)(ii)

Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts
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infrastructure.gov.au

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I recognise and respect their continuing connection to the land, waters and communities.
I pay my respects to Elders past and present and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

From: s47F @theguardian.com>
Sent: Monday, August 17, 2026 08:39
To: Media <media@infrastructure.gov.au>
Subject: Re: Age assurance tech report [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hi s22(1)(a)(ii)

Wanting to get a response from the department following Friday's Senate hearing. Did department officials mislead the Senate regarding the issues in the AATT report?

Officials claimed that it was old links that no longer worked in the report, but DOI references (which is what is included in the report) are permanent and immutable, so it's not possible that is the issue.

We also raised with you that the corrected links Allen provided are also not correct. Unless he has supplied correct links to you (which I am happy to receive), it appears the department just accepted Allen's word on it without thoroughly investigating.

Is that the case?

I'm filing at 11am.

Thanks,

s47F
---
s47F
Technology reporter
The Guardian | Australia

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s47F @theguardian.com

Bluesky: s47F

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Melbourne
VIC 3000

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theguardian.com/au

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OFFICIAL

On Tue, 11 Aug 2026 at 10:57, Media <media@infrastructure.gov.au> wrote:

OFFICIAL

Thanks s47F - yep, our previous response remains accurate.

Cheers

s22(1)(a)

Media Services
media@infrastructure.gov.au
MEDIA LINE+61 2 s22(1)(a)(ii)
GPO Box 594 Canberra, ACT 2601

Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts

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Note to media: Information contained in this email is not for attribution unless specified otherwise.

From: s47F @theguardian.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 11, 2026 10:33 AM
To: Media <media@infrastructure.gov.au>
Subject: Re: Age assurance tech report [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Thanks s22(1)(a)(ii) Given the last on the record statement I have from you says you were seeking to address what we found with ACCS, I assume that is ongoing?

Particularly given we identified citations that do not exist, or do not say what the report suggests they say, contain wrong author names, and there was clear ChatGPT use in the creation of the report.

Thanks,

s47F

---

s47F

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FOI 27-131 and FOI 27-139 and FOI 27-140 - Document 4

Technology reporter
The Guardian | Australia

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the Guardian app for Android and
iOS

OFFICIAL

On Tue, 11 Aug 2026 at 10:26, Media <media@infrastructure.gov.au> wrote:

> OFFICIAL
>
> Hi s47F
>
> Thanks for reaching out. We can provide the following additional background:
>
> - ACCS published 2,900 pages of individual vendor reports and data tables alongside the report.
> - Anonymised test datasets, evaluation templates and audit records of methodology alignment with ISO and IEEE standards are available on the Open Science Framework.
> - Together, the report and the associated digital resources offer a complete reference framework, ensuring that readers, researchers and policymakers can trace the basis of the trial's conclusions and explore the wider landscape of age assurance technology evaluation.
> - ACCS conducted 'challenge sessions' with an ethics committee, lawyers and auditors, mapping whether the evidence supported the 12 key findings of the trial. All findings were found to be valid.
>
> Cheers
> s22(1)(a)
>
> **Media Services**
> media@infrastructure.gov.au
> **MEDIA LINE**+61 2 s22(1)(a)(ii)
> GPO Box 594 Canberra, ACT 2601
>
> Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts
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OFFICIAL

From: s47F @theguardian.com>
Sent: Tuesday, 11 August 2026 9:49 AM
To: Media <media@infrastructure.gov.au>
Subject: Re: Age assurance tech report [SEC=OFFICIAL]

s22(1)(a)(ii) - duplicate email chain

partment of
port and the Arts

Outlook

Fw: For clearance by COB: MLex request for comment AAATT trial social media minimum age [SEC=OFFICIAL]

From Media <media@infrastructure.gov.au>
Date Thu 2026-08-13 5:59 PM
To s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>

OFFICIAL

FYI - I'll let you know if any changes from MO

s22(1)

OFFICIAL

From: s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, 13 August 2026 5:34 PM
To: Media <media@infrastructure.gov.au>
Cc: s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>; VANDENBROEK, Sarah <Sarah.Vandenbroek@infrastructure.gov.au>; MACKAY, David <David.Mackay@infrastructure.gov.au>; CHAPPLE, Clare <Clare.Chapple@infrastructure.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>
Subject: FW: For clearance by COB: MLex request for comment AAATT trial social media minimum age [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hi s22(1)(a)(ii)

Please see some edits proposed by s22(1)(a)(ii) in the email below in red. Please call if you have any questions or wish to clarify.

Thanks
s22(1)(a)(ii)

s22(1)(a)(ii)
Acting Assistant Secretary • Online Safety Branch
Digital Platforms, Online Safety and Classification Division
s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au
P +61 2 s22(1)(a)(ii) • M +61 s22(1)(a)(ii)
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I recognise and respect their continuing connection to the land, waters and communities.
I pay my respects to Elders past and present and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

OFFICIAL

From: s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, 13 August 2026 4:14 PM
To: s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>
Cc: s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>
Subject: RE: For clearance by COB: MLex request for comment AAATT trial social media minimum age [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hey s22(1)(a)(ii)

Made some changes to the media response below, in red. Grateful for your clearance by COB.

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I pay my respects to Elders past and present and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

OFFICIAL

From: Media <media@infrastructure.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, 13 August 2026 1:41 PM
To: s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>
Cc: Media <media@infrastructure.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>
Subject: For clearance by COB: MLex request for comment AAATT trial social media minimum age [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Importance: High

OFFICIAL

Hi team

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We've received the below from a journo at Mlex. Have pulled together a proposed response and suggest keeping it fairly high level rather than relitigating report findings from over a year ago - but let me know if you have a different view. Lines about the report are drawn from the media release we put out at the time.

Could you please let me know if any changes by **COB today?**

s47F **MLex**

I'm comment from the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts ahead of the Aug. 14 Senate inquiry hearing into the Online Safety Amendment (Strengthening Enforcement for the Social Media Minimum Age) Bill 2026.

The Free Speech Union of Australia has raised a number of allegations about the Australian Age Assurance Technology Trial, which was commissioned by the department. Its submission alleges the trial contains references that appear to have been AI-generated or hallucinated; points to trial data that it says shows some age-assurance systems allowed more than 40% of 10-year-olds through an age gate; and alleges some systems significantly overestimated the ages of Indigenous young people.

Could the department please respond to the following questions:

1. Does the department accept that the Australian Age Assurance Technology Trial contained inaccurate, fabricated or AI-generated references? What scrutiny or quality-assurance processes were applied to the trial and its final report before publication?
2. Does the department dispute the Free Speech Union's analysis that the trial data showed some systems allowing more than 40% of 10-year-olds through an age gate? If so, what does the department consider the correct interpretation of those results?
3. What is the department's response to the Free Speech Union's allegation that the trial data showed significant age-estimation errors involving Indigenous young people, including two 15-year-olds reportedly estimated to be 57 and 62.83 years old? Does the department accept that these results occurred, and if so, how were they taken into account in the trial's conclusions about the effectiveness and suitability of age-assurance technologies?

I'm also interested in whether the department has a response to the Australian Human Rights Commission's concerns about the impact of the social media minimum-age restrictions on Australians with disability, including evidence cited by the commission that some young people with disability have experienced increased isolation or difficulty accessing platforms because of age-assurance measures

///

Proposed response - departmental spokesperson

The final report of the independent Age Assurance Technology Trial found that age assurance can be done in Australia, in a private, robust and effective manner. This does not mean that all technologies evaluated in the Trial met each assessment criteria to a high standard, but rather that the Trial found examples of technologies performing to a high standard against these metrics. The final report is one component of a broader evidence base on the efficacy of age assurance.

Despite some errors in a small number of citations in the report, the ACCS has confirmed that each reference was independently verified against a third source. ACCS has also confirmed with the department that although AI was used for editorial purposes, preparation of the report and primary research was done by staff members.

The social media minimum age is about protecting young people's wellbeing. The law was developed in close consultation with young people, parents and carers, academics and child development experts, industry, and community and civil society organisations and informed by evidence-based research. Importantly, the minimum age does not cut off the internet for

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under-16s. They are able to continue to keep in touch with their loved ones, engage with their peers, learn and be creative online – through messaging apps, online gaming and services that are primarily for the purposes of education and health support.

Background

ACCS published 2,900 pages of individual vendor reports and data tables alongside the report.

Anonymised test datasets, evaluation templates and audit records of methodology alignment with ISO and IEEE standards are available on the Open Science Framework.

Together, the report and the associated digital resources offer a complete reference framework, ensuring that readers, researchers and policymakers can trace the basis of the trial's conclusions and explore the wider landscape of age assurance technology evaluation.

ACCS conducted 'challenge sessions' with an ethics committee, lawyers and auditors, mapping whether the evidence supported the 12 key findings of the trial. All findings were found to be valid.

The department's contract with ACCS to deliver the age assurance technology trial stipulated that ACCS comply with the Commonwealth Supplier Code of Conduct. The code outlines minimum expectations of suppliers, including in relation to ethics, integrity and accountability.

Cheers

s22(1)(a)

s22(1)(a)(ii)

P +61 2 s22(1)(a)(ii) • **MEDIA LINE** +61 2 s22(1)(a)(ii)

From: s47F @mlex.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 13, 2026 12:25 PM
To: Media <media@infrastructure.gov.au>
Subject: MLex request for comment AAATT trial social media minimum age

You don't often get email from s47F @mlex.com. Learn why this is important

To Whom it May Concern,

My name is s47F . I'm a reporter with MLex.

I'm comment from the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts ahead of the Aug. 14 Senate inquiry hearing into the Online Safety Amendment (Strengthening Enforcement for the Social Media Minimum Age) Bill 2026.

The Free Speech Union of Australia has raised a number of allegations about the Australian Age Assurance Technology Trial, which was commissioned by the department. Its submission alleges the trial contains references that appear to have been AI-generated or hallucinated; points to trial data that it says shows some age-assurance systems allowed more than 40% of 10-year-olds through an age gate; and alleges some systems significantly overestimated the ages of Indigenous young people.

Could the department please respond to the following questions:

1. Does the department accept that the Australian Age Assurance Technology Trial contained inaccurate, fabricated or AI-generated references? What scrutiny or quality-assurance processes were applied to the trial and its final report before publication?
2. Does the department dispute the Free Speech Union's analysis that the trial data showed some systems allowing more than 40% of 10-year-olds through an age gate? If so, what does

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the department consider the correct interpretation of those results?

3. What is the department's response to the Free Speech Union's allegation that the trial data showed significant age-estimation errors involving Indigenous young people, including two 15-year-olds reportedly estimated to be 57 and 62.83 years old? Does the department accept that these results occurred, and if so, how were they taken into account in the trial's conclusions about the effectiveness and suitability of age-assurance technologies?

I'm also interested in whether the department has a response to the Australian Human Rights Commission's concerns about the impact of the social media minimum-age restrictions on Australians with disability, including evidence cited by the commission that some young people with disability have experienced increased isolation or difficulty accessing platforms because of age-assurance measures

I would appreciate a response by 11 a.m. on Aug. 14. Please let me know if you need any clarification on the questions,

Thanks very much and best regards,

s47F

MLex

Mobile: +61 (0) s47F
Email: s47F @mlex.com
Web: https://mlexmarketinsight.com/
Socials: Twitter | LinkedIn | Facebook

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Outlook

Re: For clearance by COB: MLex request for comment AAATT trial social media minimum age [SEC=OFFICIAL]

From s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>
Date Thu 2026-08-13 2:34 PM
To s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>
Cc s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>

OFFICIAL

I'm not sure about including the level of detail re the dept being provided with links... have made some edits to that for your consideration, s22(1)(a)(ii)

The department has considered the matters raised by the Free Speech Union, including by engaging with the trial provider. While ACCS has acknowledged some errors in a small number of citations in the report, it has confirmed that each reference was independently verified against a third source. ACCS also confirmed that although AI was used for editorial purposes, preparation of the report and primary research was done by staff members.

s22(1)(a)(ii)
Assistant Director • Social Media Minimum Age • Online Safety Branch
P +61 2 s22(1)(a)(ii)

OFFICIAL

From: s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, 13 August 2026 2:29 PM
To: s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>
Cc: s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>
Subject: Re: For clearance by COB: MLex request for comment AAATT trial social media minimum age [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

I like your additions - anything to add s22(1)(a)(ii)

Kind regards
s2
2(1

s22(1)(a)(ii)
A/g Assistant Director • Social Media Minimum Age • Online Safety Branch
s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au
P s22(1)(a)(ii)
GPO Box 594 Canberra, ACT 2601

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Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts
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From: s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, August 13, 2026 14:08
To: s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>
Cc: s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>
Subject: RE: For clearance by COB: MLex request for comment AAATT trial social media minimum age [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

I think we need to go harder on this one, particularly if we consider FSU is rubbishing the report unnecessarily. See my thoughts below. Welcome any additions you might have, based on your analysis.

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OFFICIAL

From: Media <media@infrastructure.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, 13 August 2026 1:41 PM
To: s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>
Cc: Media <media@infrastructure.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>
Subject: For clearance by COB: MLex request for comment AAATT trial social media minimum age [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Importance: High

s22(1)(a)(ii) - duplicate email chain

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s22(1)(a)(ii) - duplicate email chain

///

Proposed response - departmental spokesperson
The final report of the independent Age Assurance Technology Trial found that age assurance is practical and achievable, with a range of technologies that can be used effectively for different use cases. The report forms part of a broader evidence base on age assurance technologies.

The department has considered the matters raised by the Free Speech Union, including by seeking responses from the trial provider, ACCS. While the organisation has acknowledged some errors in a small number of citations in the report, the department has been assured the papers exist and been provided with appropriate links. ACCS has further confirmed that although AI was used for editorial purposes, preparation of the report and primary research was done by staff members.

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s22(1)(a)(ii) - duplicate email chain

s22(1)(a)(ii) - duplicate email chain

FOI 27-131 and

s22(1)(a)(ii) - duplicate email chain

FOI 27-131 and

Outlook

RE: For review: Deadline 11am Friday: MLex request for comment Free Speech Union allegations AAATT [SEC=OFFICIAL]

From s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>
Date Fri 2026-08-14 11:17 AM
To Media <media@infrastructure.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>

OFFICIAL

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Thanks s22(1)(a)(ii) Hm I don't know if we can say those citations have been corrected. I think we can say: The department is working with the ACCS to correct the citations in the report.

s22(1)(a)(ii) and s22(1)(a)(ii) – agree?

s22(1)(a)(ii)
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I pay my respects to Elders past and present and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

OFFICIAL

From: Media <media@infrastructure.gov.au>
Sent: Friday, 14 August 2026 11:15 AM
To: s22(1)(a)(ii)@infrastructure.gov.au>
Cc: Media <media@infrastructure.gov.au>
Subject: Fw: For review: Deadline 11am Friday: MLex request for comment Free Speech Union allegations AAATT [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hello! All good with this?

s22(1)(a)

OFFICIAL

From: s22(1)(a)(ii)@mo.communications.gov.au>
Sent: Fr day, 14 August 2026 11:14 AM
To: Media <media@infrastructure.gov.au>
Cc: s22(1)(a)(ii)@mo.communications.gov.au>
Subject: Fw: For review: Deadline 11am Friday: MLex request for comment Free Speech Union allegations AAATT [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

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Hiya, thanks for this, just a couple of suggestions below, otherwise looks good!

OFFICIAL

From: Media <media@infrastructure.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, 13 August 2026 5:40 PM
To: s22(1)(a)(ii) @mo.communications.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii) @mo.communications.gov.au>
Cc: Media <media@infrastructure.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>; KENNEDY, Cathie <Cathie.KENNEDY@infrastructure.gov.au>
Subject: Deadline 11am Friday: MLex request for comment Free Speech Union allegations AAATT [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hi s2 2(1

As flagged yesterday, this journo has come to us - deadline **11am tomorrow (Friday).** Grateful for clearance of our proposed response -

s47F **MLex**

1. Does the department accept that the Australian Age Assurance Technology Trial contained inaccurate, fabricated or AI-generated references? What scrutiny or quality-assurance processes were applied to the trial and its final report before publication?
2. Does the department dispute the Free Speech Union's analysis that the trial data showed some systems allowing more than 40% of 10-year-olds through an age gate? If so, what does the department consider the correct interpretation of those results?
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I'm also interested in whether the department has a response to the Australian Human Rights Commission's concerns about the impact of the social media minimum-age restrictions on Australians with disability, including evidence cited by the commission that some young people with disability have experienced increased isolation or difficulty accessing platforms because of age-assurance measures.

Proposed response - departmental spokesperson
The final report of the independent Age Assurance Technology Trial found that age assurance can be done in Australia, in a private, robust and effective

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manner. This does not mean that all technologies evaluated in the Trial met each assessment criteria to a high standard, but rather that the Trial found examples of technologies performing to a high standard against these metrics. The final report is one component of a broader evidence base on the efficacy of age assurance.

~~Despite some errors in a small number of citations in the report,~~ the ACCS has confirmed that each reference was independently verified against a third source. ACCS has also confirmed with the department that although AI was used for editorial purposes, preparation of the report and primary research was done by staff members.

The social media minimum age is about protecting young people's wellbeing. The law was developed in close consultation with young people, parents and carers, academics and child development experts, industry, and community and civil society organisations and informed by evidence-based research. Importantly, the minimum age does not cut off the internet for under-16s. They are able to continue to keep in touch with their loved ones, engage with their peers, learn and be creative online – through messaging apps, online gaming and services that are primarily for the purposes of education and health support.

Background
ACCS published 2,900 pages of individual vendor reports and data tables alongside the report.
Anonymised test datasets, evaluation templates and audit records of methodology alignment with ISO and IEEE standards are available on the Open Science Framework.
Together, the report and the associated digital resources offer a complete reference framework, ensuring that readers, researchers and policymakers can trace the basis of the trial's conclusions and explore the wider landscape of age assurance technology evaluation.
ACCS conducted 'challenge sessions' with an ethics committee, lawyers and auditors, mapping whether the evidence supported the 12 key findings of the trial. All findings were found to be valid.
The department's contract with ACCS to deliver the age assurance technology trial stipulated that ACCS comply with the Commonwealth Supplier Code of Conduct. The code outlines minimum expectations of suppliers, including in relation to ethics, integrity and accountability.
A small number of errors in citations in ACCS's report have been corrected.

Cheers
s22(1)(a)

s22(1)(a)(ii)

P +61 2 s22(1)(a)(ii) • **MEDIA LINE** +61 2 s22(1)(a)(ii)

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Online Safety Amendment (Strengthening Enforcement for the Social Media Minimum Age) Bill 2026

s22(1)(a)(ii)



Age Assurance Technology Trial Report – allegations about use of AI

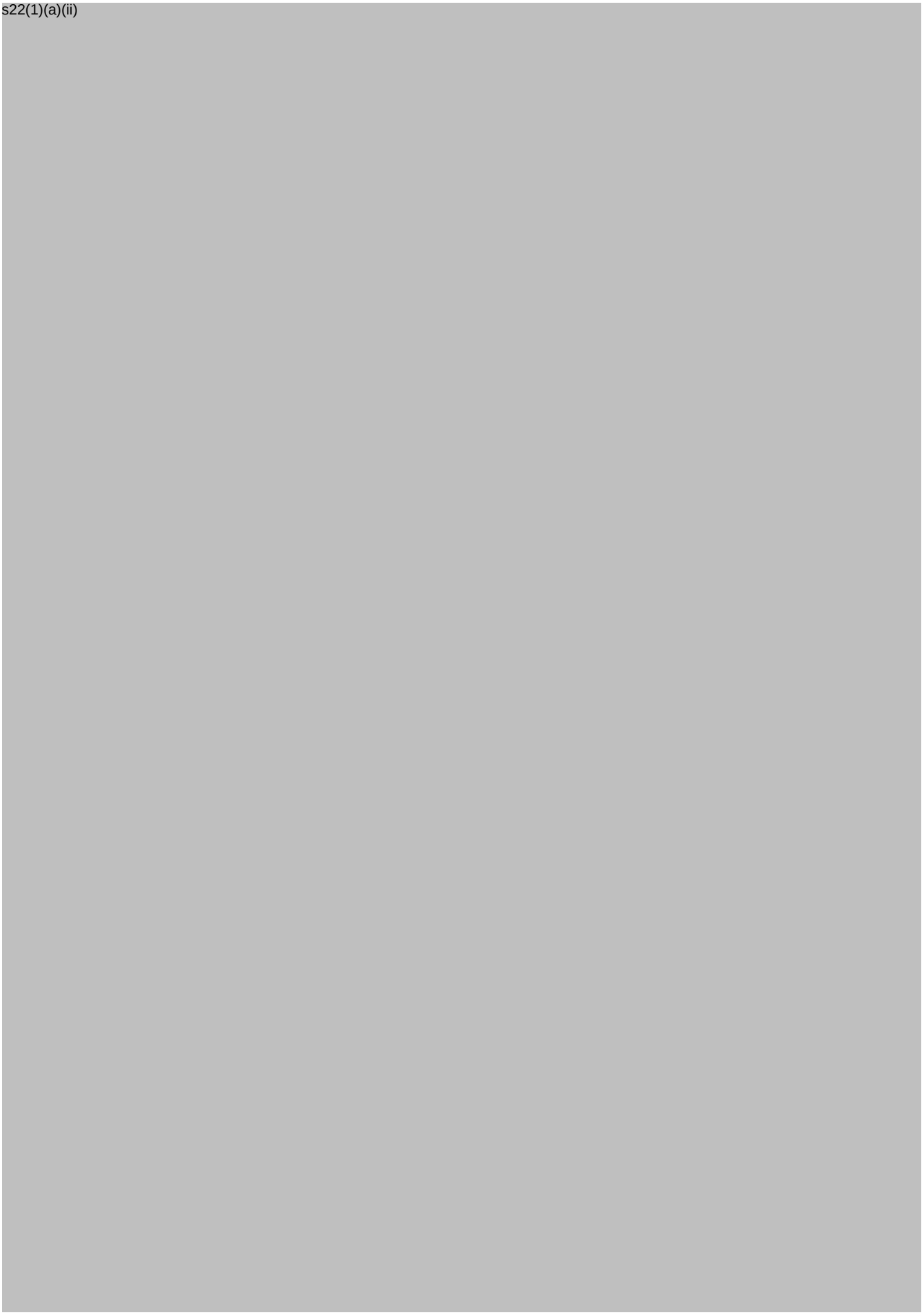
- We have discussed this matter with the Age Check Certification Scheme (ACCS). The organisation has acknowledged some minor errors in citations in the report, which are related to the unique identifiers for those particular scientific papers. However, the papers themselves exist and ACCS has provided to us correct links and references to those papers.
- ACCS has confirmed that AI was used for editorial purposes, but that the report and primary research was done by staff. This includes every paper and reference being independently verified against a third source, via the US Library of Medicine.
- On that basis, we do not consider those minor issues to impact the integrity or robustness of the report.

s22(1)(a)(ii)



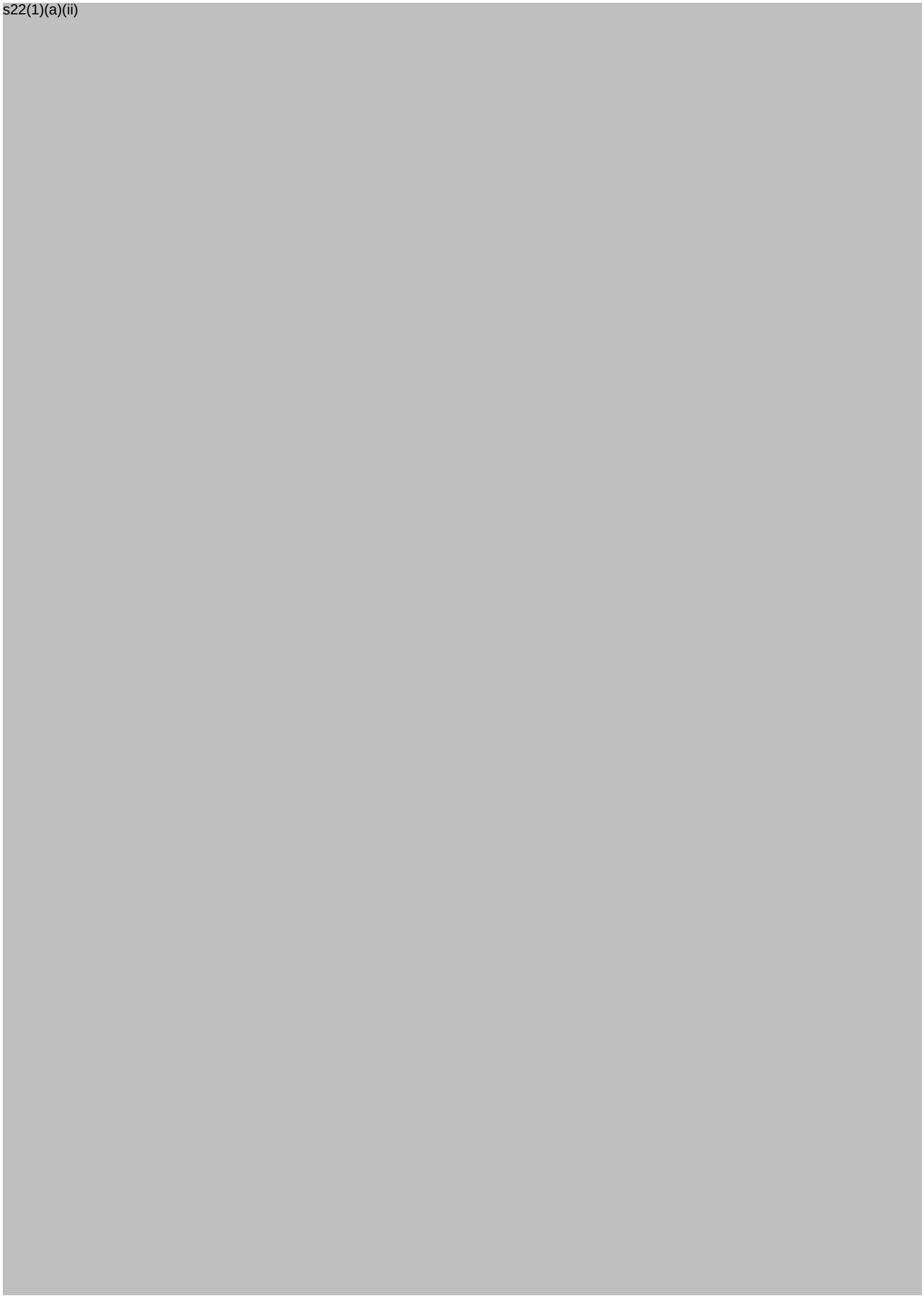
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s22(1)(a)(ii)



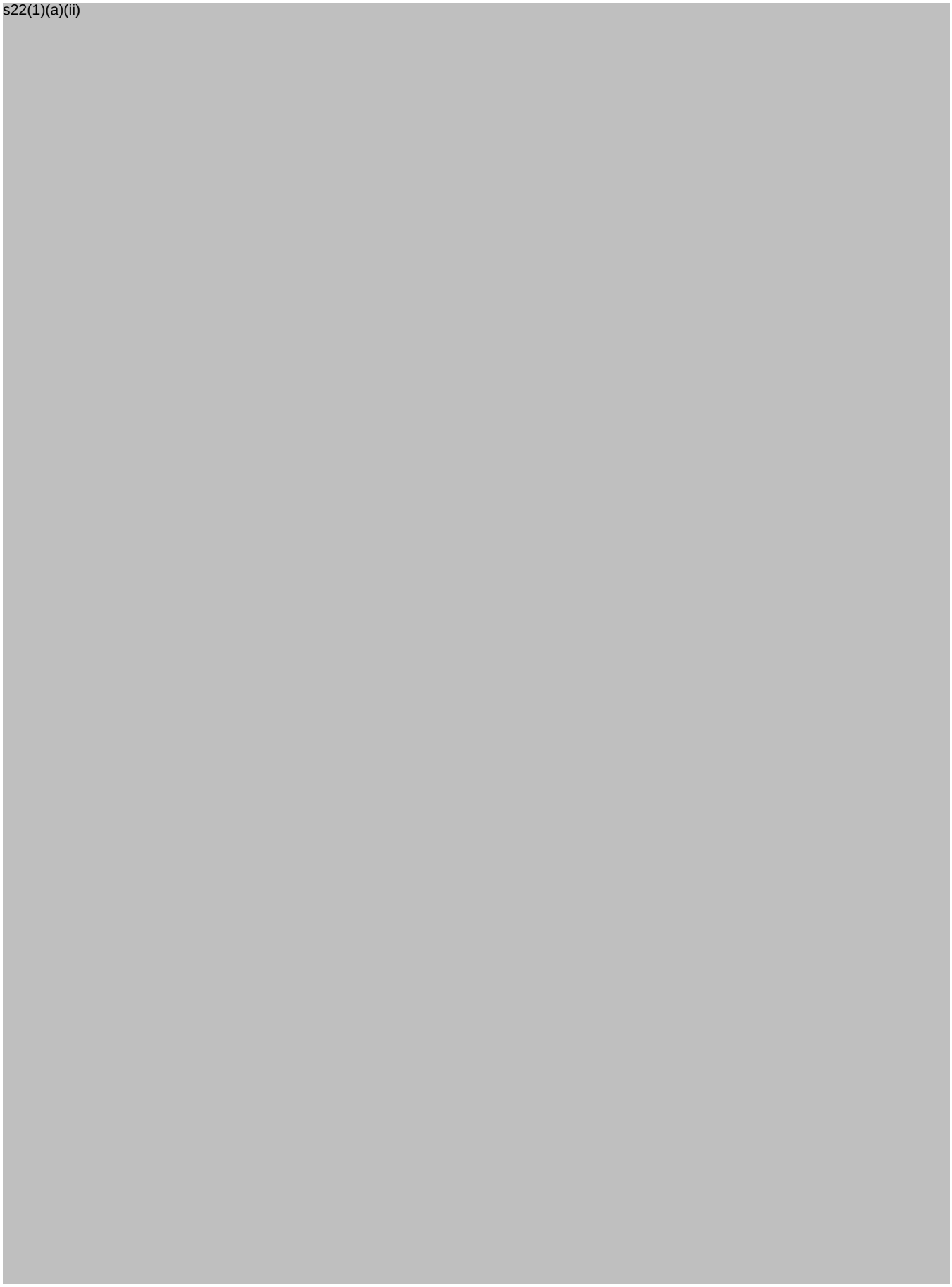
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s22(1)(a)(ii)



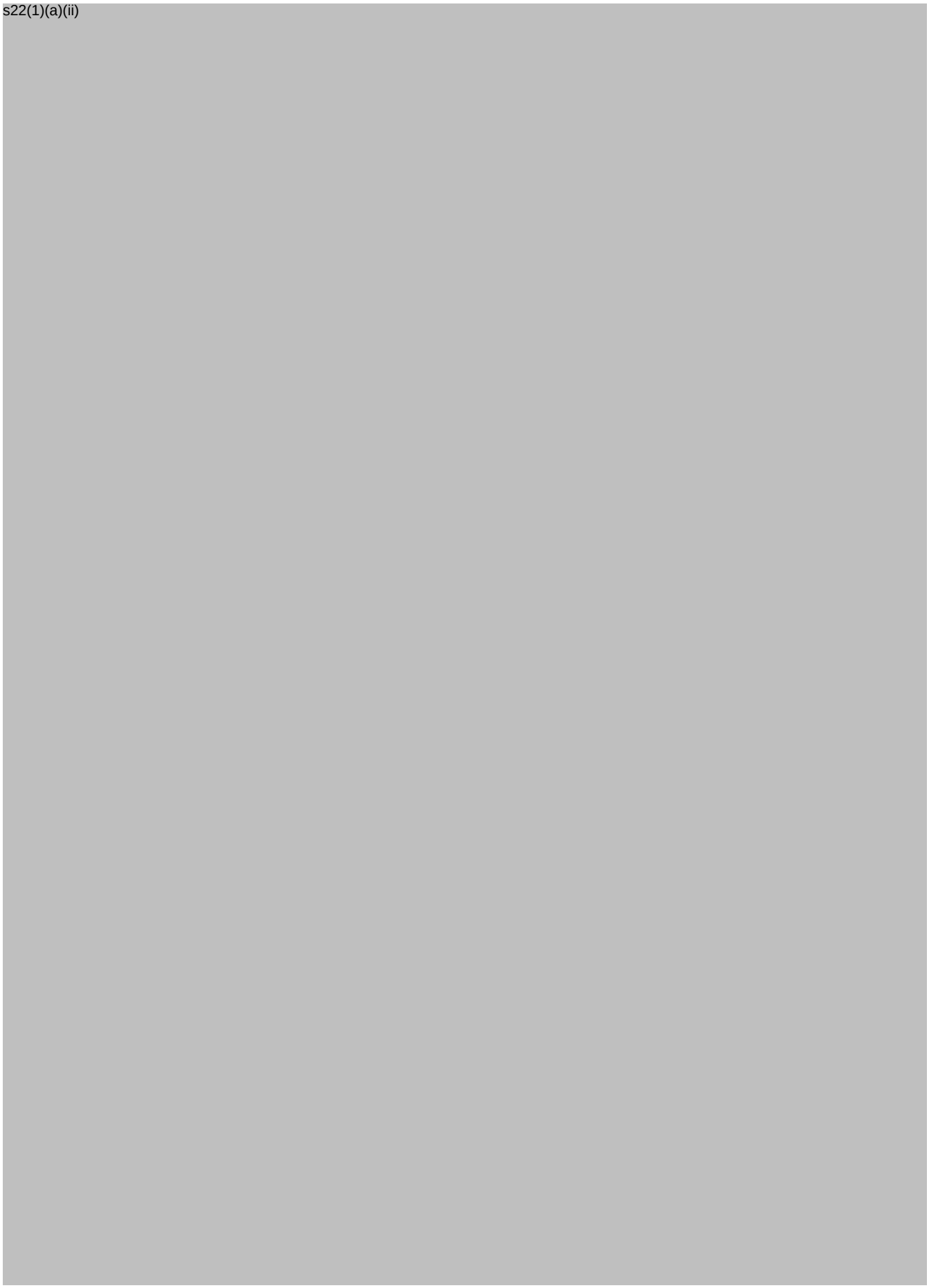
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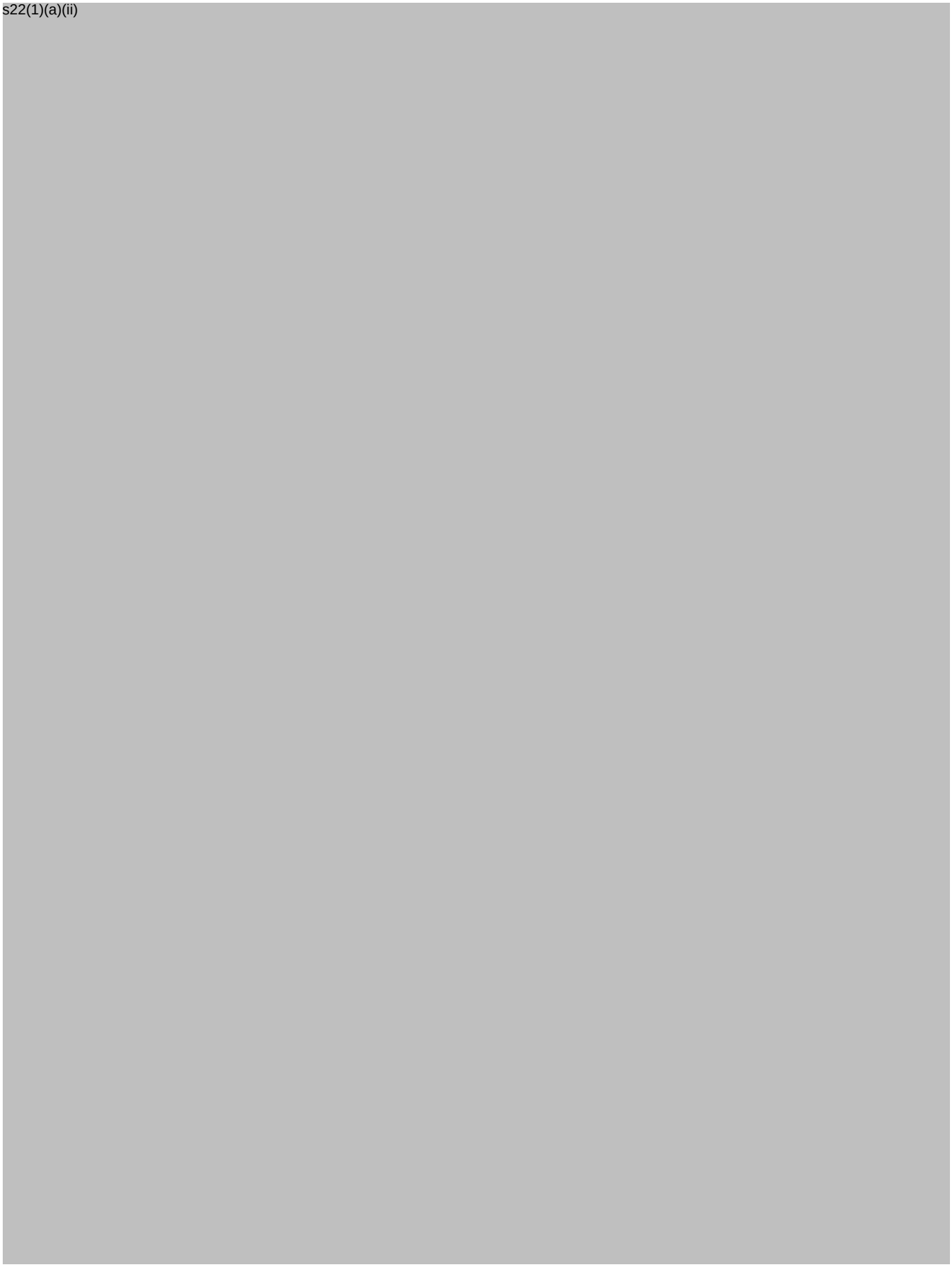
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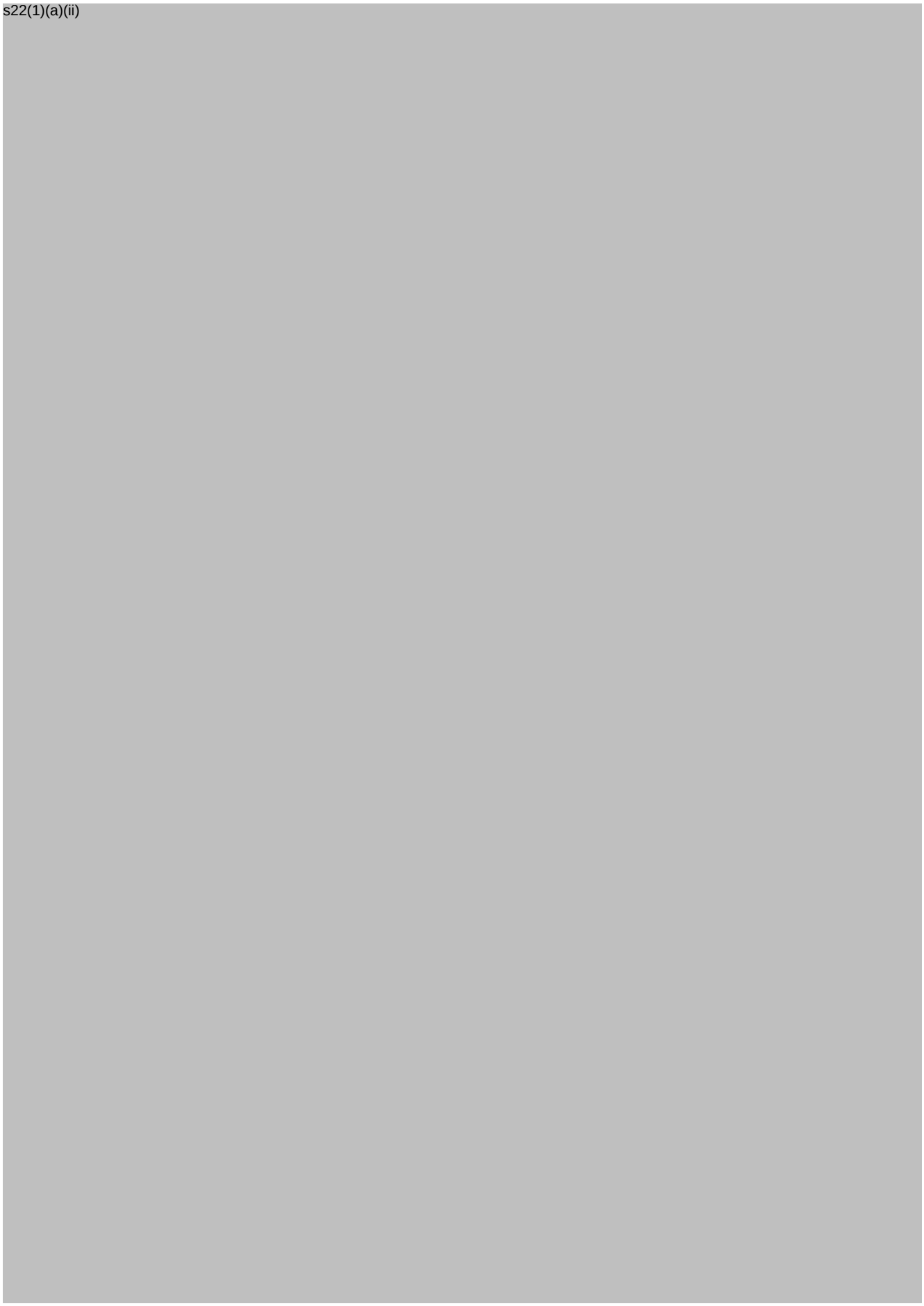
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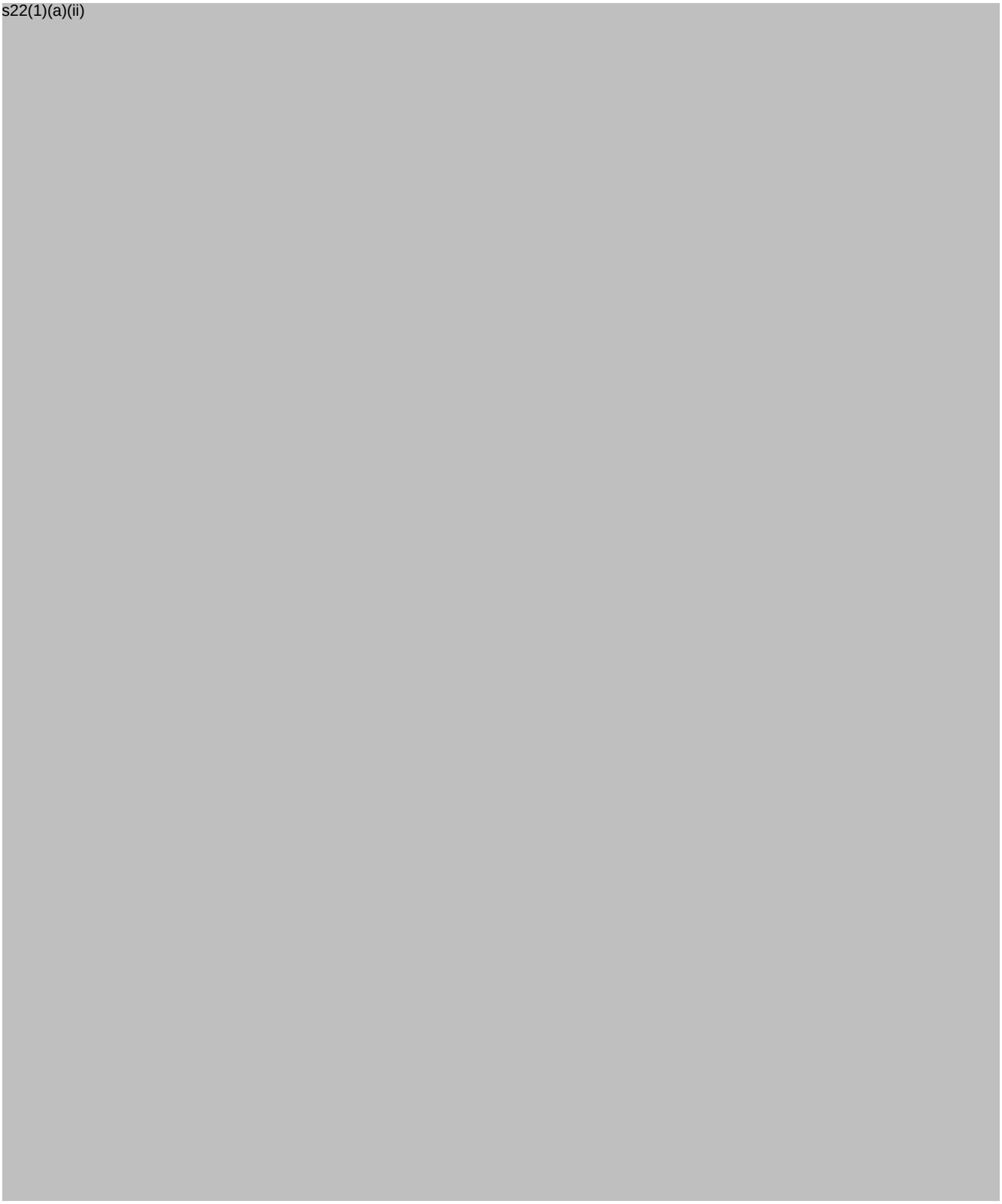
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s22(1)(a)(ii) 14/08 10:54

s22(1)(a)(ii) on FSU - can you tell me how many citations they identified as erroneous and how many citations there are across the entire report? I think Part K is the complete bibliography @

14/08 10:55

I will look up FSU

s22(1)(a)(ii) 14/08 10:58

let me know if you want me to od anyrhing s22(1)(a)(ii)

14/08 10:58

can you do the AATT report part pls

s22(1)(a)(ii) 14/08 10:59

yep

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