

s22(1)(a)(ii)

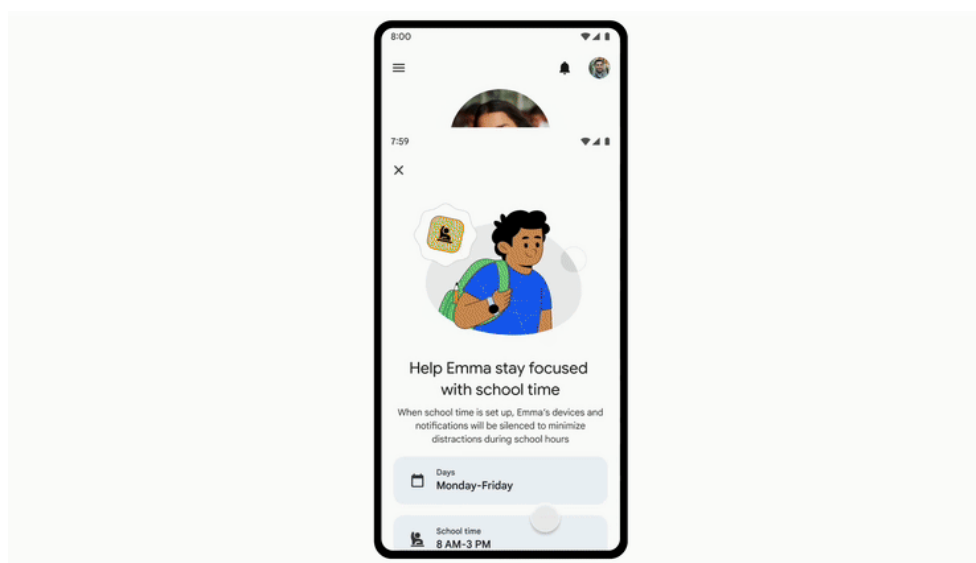
UNOFFICIAL

From: s47F [REDACTED]@google.com>
Sent: Monday, 5 August 2024 5:51 PM
To: Gannon, Bridget <Bridget.Gannon@infrastructure.gov.au>
Cc: s22(1)(a)(ii) [REDACTED]@google.com
Subject: [Announcement] Google Announces New Global Features for Kids & Families

Hi Bridget,

I hope this finds you well and surviving the winter!

I am writing to share a recent announcement about [new, global features](#) giving parents more control over their kids' use of technology - School time mode and supervision tools for parents of teens on YouTube. These features build on Google and YouTube's commitment to creating safer experiences for families across its platforms with parental tools and dedicated features that help young people and their parents navigate their time online.



[School time mode](#) allows parents to have the ability to set their child's personal device to limited functionality during school hours. Parents can schedule and select which apps are allowed during school time and have the option to allow calls or texts from specific contacts. This feature is now available on Fitbit Ace LTE smartwatches, and will launch more broadly in coming months.

New **YouTube supervision** features for parents of teens will be rolling out later this year. Parents and teens will soon be able to link their accounts, enabling parents to gain access to shared insights.

To learn more about these features, please visit our [keyword blog post](#). For more information on parental controls and our internet safety educational material, click [here](#) and [here](#).

Cheers,

s47F



s47F

YouTube Government Affairs and Public Policy -
Australia and New Zealand

s47F

s47 [@google.com](mailto:s47@google.com)

From: s47F [REDACTED]@google.com>
Sent: Tuesday, 13 August 2024 7:53 AM
To: Gannon, Bridget
Subject: Call Follow Up
Attachments: Terms of Reference - Legal examination into banning children's access to social media (1).pdf; CONFIDENTIAL - Consultation paper 2B - Draft measurement framework - Effectiveness of the Australian Code of Practice on Disinformation and Misinformation (2).pdf; America's most powerful export to the English speaking world may be anxiety.pdf

Hello Bridget,

Thanks again for your time yesterday. I realise I may have promised a type 1 conversation and ended up with a type 2 so thank you for bearing with me.

As promised, I am attaching the SA ToR, the ACMA measurement framework consultation paper and the Atlantic article.

I am keen to stay in touch on these issues so please reach out if there is anything further you want to discuss.

Cheers,

s47F [REDACTED]



s47F [REDACTED]

YouTube Government Affairs and Public Policy -
Australia and New Zealand

s47F [REDACTED]

s47 [REDACTED][@google.com](mailto:s47F@google.com)

From: Age Assurance Trial
Sent: Tuesday, 20 August 2024 4:47 PM
To: s47F@google.com; s47F@google.com
Subject: Invitation to Age Assurance Trial Virtual Roundtable [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Attachments: Background - Age Assurance Trial.pdf; Google - Invitation to Roundtable.pdf

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Dear s47F

On 1 May 2024, the [Australian Government announced \\$6.5 million](#) in funding for an age assurance trial, to examine options to protect children from harmful content such as pornography, social media and other age-restricted online services. The Trial responds to increasing community concern about the impact of online pornography and social media on Australian children.

Please find attached some further information regarding the trial and a letter from James Chisholm, Deputy Secretary, Communications & Media Group, inviting you to participate in an industry stakeholder roundtable on Tuesday 27 August 2024.

Please RSVP by **23 August 2024** to confirm your attendance. Discussion questions will be shared closer to the meeting date.

Roundtable details

Date: Tuesday, 27 August 2024

Time: 10:00am – 11.30am (AEST)

Location: A meeting invite will be sent shortly with a MS Teams link.

Kind regards

Age Assurance Trial Taskforce

Online Safety Branch • Online Safety, Media and Platforms Division

s22(1)(a)(ii)@infrastructure.gov.au

GPO Box 594 Canberra, ACT 2601

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

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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.*

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The age assurance trial

On 1 May 2024, the Australian Government announced \$6.5 million in 2024–25 to conduct a trial of age assurance technologies. The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communication and the Arts (the department) is facilitating the trial.

Why do we want to speak to industry?

The Government wants to minimise the harm that can arise from young people accessing content online that is not appropriate for them. To do this, we want to consult with industry to understand what age assurance technology you are already using, what plans you have to respond to actions in other jurisdictions, and your views on what level of the tech stack age restriction can be applied. The trial is looking at age assurance technologies to keep young people safe online, but they need to be effective while also balancing privacy and security. We acknowledge that the conversation around age verification and assurance on social media is particularly complex.

During the industry roundtable, we want to hear from you about the evidence behind the effects on children from using social media (good and bad), how willing Australians are to use different age assurance technologies to access social media and age restricted content, and what other initiatives might be effective from Government to support keeping children safe online.

What is age assurance?

Age assurance is a broad term that includes both age *verification* and age *estimation* solutions. The word ‘assurance’ refers to the varying levels of certainty different solutions offer in establishing an age. Technologies might examine a user’s identity documents, facial features, voice, key strokes, language used online or sites accessed.

- Age verification measures determine a person’s age to a high level of accuracy. An example is the use of physical or digital government identity documents to establish a person’s age.
- Age estimation technologies provide an approximate age of a person. This lower threshold could involve less collection of personal data.

What is the trial doing?

The age assurance trial will involve an independent assessment of a range of age assurance technologies, reviewing their effectiveness in relation to various criteria, including accuracy, privacy and security requirements. This assessment will look at 2 streams, considering age assurance technologies that could be used to prevent access to:

- online pornography by children and young people under the age of 18; and
- social media platforms for an age range of between 13 and 16 years.

As part of the trial, the department is speaking with a range of stakeholders, including youth, parent groups, academics, industry groups, community organisations, and First Nations bodies. The department has also established a Cross-Government Working Group that brings together government agencies with expertise on age assurance, privacy, safety and security.

The age assurance trial also involves researching how parents, young people and other consumers feel about using these technologies, international approaches, evidence surrounding age limits for social media, and the harms and benefits associated with social media use.

The technology assessment, consultation and research outcomes will help the department develop advice to Government at the conclusion of the trial. Government can then decide on the next steps.



Australian Government

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

s47F

Google Australia and New Zealand

s47F [@google.com](mailto:s47F@google.com)

s47F [@google.com](mailto:s47F@google.com)

20/08/2024

Dear s47F

Age Assurance Trial

I'm writing to seek your engagement on the Government's trial of age assurance technology. On 1 May 2024, the Australian Government announced \$6.5 million in funding for an age assurance trial, to examine options to protect children from harmful content such as pornography, age-restricted online services, and social media.

The Trial responds to increasing community concern about the impact of online pornography and social media on Australian children. The Government has tasked the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, and the Arts (DITRDCA) to progress the trial, which aims to determine the effectiveness of available age assurance technologies as an option for addressing both:

- Access to pornography by those under the age of 18; and
- Access to social media by children in the 13 to 16+ years age band.

The Trial will also consider the right minimum age for access to social media by children.

Invitation to Roundtable

You are invited to attend a Virtual Roundtable discussion at 10am Australian Eastern Standard Time (Sydney/Melbourne/Canberra) on Tuesday, 27 August 2024. The Roundtable will seek to understand the age assurance and detection practices of industry, including planned responses to age related regulations internationally, and to gain insight into industry's capability, challenges and willingness to implement further age assurance technologies in the Australian context.

GPO Box 594, Canberra ACT 2601, Australia

• (02) 6274 7111 • infrastructure.gov.au

I strongly encourage you to share the views of your organisation regarding how age assurance methods can best be adopted and at what level/s of the tech stack would these be most effective.


To encourage free conversation, the Roundtable will be held under Chatham House rules – that is, remarks will not be attributed to any one participant. This Roundtable is part of a series of consultations to inform the Government's Age Assurance Trial.

Please RSVP to this invitation by Friday, 23 August 2024 to allow the Department to send an invitation with an MS Teams link.

Future engagement

A key aspect of the Trial is an independent assessment of existing age assurance technologies. It is expected that the independent assessor will engage with all age assurance providers, digital platforms and websites during the trial. We are seeking your cooperation to support testing of age assurance technologies in a real-world environment. This will be discussed at the Roundtable on 27 August.

Yours sincerely



James Chisholm
Deputy Secretary
Communications & Media Group

From: s47F [REDACTED]@google.com>
Sent: Thursday, 22 August 2024 12:47 PM
To: Age Assurance Trial
Subject: Re: Invitation to Age Assurance Trial Virtual Roundtable [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Hi there,

Thank you for your email.

Google and YouTube will be represented by:

- s47F [REDACTED], YouTube
- s47F [REDACTED], Google (s47F [REDACTED]@google.com)

Kind regards,

s47F [REDACTED]



s47F [REDACTED]

YouTube Government Affairs and Public Policy -
 Australia and New Zealand

s47F [REDACTED]

s47F [REDACTED]@google.com

s22(1)(a)(ii) - Duplicate of Document 3

s22(1)(a)(ii) - Duplicate of Document 3



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From: Google Calendar <calendar-notification@google.com> on behalf of s47F @google.com>
Sent: Monday, 26 August 2024 2:24 PM
To: Age Assurance Trial
Subject: Accepted: Age Assurance Trial Virtual Roundtable - Industry [SEC=OF... @ Tue Aug 27, 2024 10am - 11:30am (AEST) (Age Assurance Trial)
Attachments: invite.ics

s47F has accepted this invitation.

OFFICIAL

Thank you for confirming your attendance at the Age Assurance Virtual Roundtable, which will seek to understand the age assurance and detection practices of industry, including planned responses to age related regulations internationally, and to gain insight into industry's capability, challenges and willingness to implement further age assurance technologies in the Australian context.

Please find a MS teams link below. Attached are discussion questions for the meeting and a one page brief on the purpose of the discussion and background on the Age Assurance Trial.

We look forward to your attendance and hearing from you.

Kind regards
Age Assurance Trial Taskforce

Microsoft Teams Need help?

Attachments

Error! Filename not specified. Background - Age Assur...

Error! Filename not specified. Industry Roundtable Di...

Join the meeting now

Meeting ID: s22(1)(a)(ii)

Passcode: s22(1)(a)(ii)

Dial in by phone

s22(1)(a)(ii) # Australia, Canberra

Find a local number

Phone conference ID: s22(1)(a)(ii)

Join on a video conferencing device

Tenant key: s22(1)(a)(ii)

Video ID: s22(1)(a)(ii)

More info

For organisers: Meeting options | Reset dial-in PIN

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When

Tuesday Aug 27, 2024 · 10am – 11:30am (Eastern Australia Time - Sydney)

Location

[View map](#)

Age Assurance Trial - organizer

s47F - creator

s22(1)(a)(ii)

□ □ □ □ □

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Journal of Internal Medicine 258: 103–111

□ □ □ □ □

[illegible]

s22(1)(a)(ii)

Irwin, Andrew

s22(1)(a)(ii)

s22(1)(a)(ii)

s22(1)(a)

s22(1)(a)(ii)

[View all guest info](#)

Invitation from [Google Calendar](#)

You are receiving this email because you are an attendee on the event. To stop receiving future updates for this event, decline this event.

Forwarding this invitation could allow any recipient to send a response to the organizer, be added to the guest list, invite others regardless of their own invitation status, or modify your RSVP. [Learn more](#)

[Find a local number](#)

Phone conference ID: s22(1)(a)(ii)

Join on a video conferencing device

Tenant key: s22(1)(a)(ii)

Video ID: s22(1)(a)(ii)

[More info](#)

For organisers: [Meeting options](#) | [Reset dial-in PIN](#)

OFFICIAL

From: s47F@google.com>
Sent: Friday, 6 September 2024 4:11 PM
To: Age Assurance Trial
Cc: s47F, s47F, s22(1)(a)(ii)
Subject: Re: Invitation to Age Assurance Trial Virtual Roundtable [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Hi s22(1)

Thanks for the quick response.

If we could allow 45 mins at 1:30 on Wednesday, that would be perfect.

The correct Google attendees are cc'd.

Cheers,

s47F



s47F

YouTube Government Affairs and Public Policy -
Australia and New Zealand

s47F

s47F@[infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:s47F@infrastructure.gov.au)

On Fri, Sep 6, 2024 at 4:00 PM Age Assurance Trial <s22(1)(a)(ii)@infrastructure.gov.au> wrote:

OFFICIAL

Hi s47F

Thank you for getting in touch.

Andrew Irwin can do 1.30pm on Wednesday – please let me know how long you would like the meeting for and s22(1)(a) can sent the invite.

s22(1)(a)

s22(1)

s22(1)(a)(ii)

Director • Age Assurance Trial Taskforce • Online Safety Branch • Online Safety, Media and Platforms Division

s22(1)(a)(ii)@[infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:s22(1)(a)(ii)@infrastructure.gov.au)

P s22(1)(a)(ii) • M s22(1)(a)(ii)

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I would like to 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 Islanders.

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From: s47F [redacted] <s47F@google.com>
 Sent: Friday, 6 September 2024 3:34 PM
 To: Age Assurance Trial <ageassurancetrial@infrastructure.gov.au>
 Cc: s47F [redacted] <s47F@google.com>; s47F [redacted] <s47F@google.com>
 Subject: Re: Invitation to Age Assurance Trial Virtual Roundtable [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Dear Age Assurance Trial Taskforce,

Thank you for the opportunity to join the industry roundtable last week.

We would appreciate being able to share further our perspective on some of the issues canvassed in the roundtable. Would it be possible to schedule a time to meet next week?

From our perspective, the following times would work for us:

- Monday 9 September between 3 and 4
- Tuesday 10 September after 4
- Wednesday 11 September between 1 and 3

Cheers,

s47F [redacted]



s47F [redacted]

YouTube Government Affairs and Public Policy -
Australia and New Zealand

s47F [redacted]

s47F [redacted] <s47F@google.com>

s22(1)(a)(ii) - Duplicate of Document 3

Pages 18-19 (Document 7) removed in their entirety as irrelevant under s22(1)(a)(ii) of the FOI Act as duplicating material from Document 3.

s22(1)(a)(ii)

-----Original Appointment-----

From: Google Calendar <calendar-notification@google.com> On Behalf Of s47F**Sent:** Monday, 9 September 2024 7:59 AM**To:** Irwin, Andrew**Subject:** Accepted: DITRDCA and Google | Catch Up [SEC=OFFICIAL] @ Wed Sep 11, 2024 1:30pm - 2:15pm (AEST)
(Irwin, Andrew)**When:** Wednesday, 11 September 2024 1:30 PM-2:15 PM (UTC+10:00) Canberra, Melbourne, Sydney.**Where:** Webex Link / 5.008 Kakadu

s47F has accepted this invitation.

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~~~~~  
-- Do not delete or change any of the following text. --

When it's time, join your Webex meeting here.

Join meeting

More ways to join:

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s22(1)(a)(ii)

Join by meeting number

Meeting number (access code): s22(1)(a)(ii)

Meeting password: s22(1)(a)(ii) when dialing from a video system)

Tap to join from a mobile device (attendees only)

s22(1)(a)(ii) ## Australia Toll

Join by phone

s22(1)(a)(ii) Australia Toll

Global call-in numbers

Join from a video system or application

Dial s22(1)(a)(ii)

You can also dial 210.4.202.4 and enter your meeting number.

If you are a host, click here and login site to view host information.

Need help? Go to <https://help.webex.com>

Privacy: Please refer to the department's Webex Privacy Collection Notice at

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for information on what information may be collected and how it will be managed where a meeting is recorded. Privacy information is also provided by Cisco, the owner of Webex, at

<https://www.cisco.com/c/en/us/about/legal/privacy.html>

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**When**

Wednesday Sep 11, 2024 · 1:30pm – 2:15pm (Eastern Australia Time - Sydney)

**Location**

Webex Link / 5.008 Kakadu

[View map](#)

**Guests**

Irwin, Andrew - organizer

s47F - creator

s47F

s47F

Age Assurance Trial



s22(1)(a)(ii)

[View all guest info](#)

Invitation from [Google Calendar](#)

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**From:** Gannon, Bridget  
**Sent:** Monday, 9 September 2024 7:01 PM  
**To:** s47F  
**Subject:** RE: [Announcement] Google Announces New Global Features for Kids & Families  
 [SEC=UNOFFICIAL]

UNOFFICIAL

Thanks s47F

BG

**Bridget Gannon** (she/her)

A/g First Assistant Secretary • Online Safety, Media and Platforms Division

[bridget.gannon@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:bridget.gannon@infrastructure.gov.au)

P s22(1)(a)(ii) • M s22(1)(a)(ii)

GPO Box 594 Canberra, ACT 2601

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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.*



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**From:** s47F @google.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, 9 September 2024 7:00 PM  
**To:** Gannon, Bridget <Bridget.Gannon@infrastructure.gov.au>  
**Subject:** Re: [Announcement] Google Announces New Global Features for Kids & Families

Hi Bridget,

Further to below, I am writing to let you know that last week we published a [blog](#) announcing that voluntary supervised experiences for teens and families are now beginning to roll out globally.

Designed in partnership with independent experts from our [Youth and Families Advisory Committee](#), this new option allows parents and teens to link accounts in our new Family Center hub. In Family Center, parents will be able to see shared insights into their teens' channel activity. This will include what channels they own and the number of uploads, comments, subscriptions, and more. Linked accounts can also receive email notifications about channel activity and access to [resources](#) created with external experts to support conversations between parents and teens about responsible content creation.

Our commitment to supporting the important role parents play in their family's online experiences, as well as offering age-appropriate features and safeguards on our platform, is core to [YouTube's Youth Principles](#), which guide all of our work in this space. Our Principles acknowledge the difference in developmental needs between younger children and teens, which is reflected in the range of experiences offered to families through [YouTube Kids](#), [supervised experiences for pre-teens](#), and now a new teen supervision option.

Over the years, we've invested in a range of features to protect our users, from combating the promotion of eating disorders and suicide to introducing new privacy and wellbeing protections. And we recently rolled out new safeguards that limit recommendations of videos with content that could be problematic if viewed in repetition, especially for teens. This next step to support teens and families builds on our continued work that aligns with independent-expert advice that teens need an online environment where they have the autonomy to explore the age-

appropriate content they love, their privacy respected and the ability to express themselves, while putting their safety first.

We will continue engaging with experts and parents as we expand and evolve this experience. You can find information on other youth wellbeing policies, products and topics on our [How YouTube Works site](#).

As always, please let me know if you'd like to discuss further.

Cheers,

s47F



s47F

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s47F

s47 [@google.com](#)

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s22(1)(a)(ii)

**From:** s47F [REDACTED]@google.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, 4 October 2024 5:57 PM  
**To:** Irwin, Andrew <Andrew.Irwin@INFRASTRUCTURE.gov.au>  
**Subject:** Google Submission: SA Children (Social Media Safety) Bill

Hi Andrew,

I hope all is well?

We have just lodged a submission on the SA Bill (attached) which we thought might be of interest to understand our perspective on that proposal.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Cheers,

s47F [REDACTED]



s47F [REDACTED]

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s47F [REDACTED]

s47F [REDACTED][@google.com](mailto:s47F@google.com)



## **Submission on the Children (Social Media Safety) Bill 2024**

**4 October 2024**

## Executive Summary

Today's children and teens are growing up in an increasingly digital world. At Google and YouTube, we're committed to creating a safer online experience for kids and teens. We know that while the internet is an incredible tool for learning, playing and connecting, it also poses risks, especially for you people. We take seriously our responsibility to promote positive and safe online experiences, and we support regulatory approaches that promote both online safety and balanced practices.

We appreciate the focus of Australian governments on this important issue and welcome the opportunity to contribute to local conversations on how to get this right. We believe this is best done at the national level, through a consistent approach that aspires to regulatory harmonisation and global interoperability, reflecting the global nature of the internet. This provides clarity and certainty to users, online services and policy makers and enables better and more consistent experiences.

We agree with [public health](#) and [mental health](#) experts that technology companies have a responsibility to design and build better online experiences. We are encouraged by the increased global interest in ensuring that online services address risks to children and teens.

When it comes to regulating children's use of social media and other digital services, we believe that well-crafted regulation can be an effective tool to build on industry efforts to keep children and teens safer online. At Google and YouTube, we have long worked with families and experts to build age appropriate products that align with kids' and teens' developmental stages and needs, to develop settings and tools that give families flexibility to manage their unique relationships with technology, and to implement policies, protections and programs that help keep every child and teen safer online.

But as governments contemplate these issues, they should carefully consider the broader impacts of regulatory proposals and avoid side effects like blocking access to critical services and education, requiring people (including adults) to submit unnecessary identification or sensitive personal information, or treating an older teen the same as a younger child.

We are concerned that blunt measures to restrict access to the online world, without careful consideration of the types of services they should apply to, risk failing to take account of the positive effects of some of these technologies. This includes education, connection, mental health, personal growth and support for marginalised communities.

To ensure any regulation is risk-based and proportionate, the services to which it applies should be informed by the harms the regulation is seeking to address. What those harms are should be clearly articulated and evidence-based, drawing on expert research. Adopting broad definitions of covered services based on limited evidence may result in a policy response that impacts access to services without reasonable justification.

Further, we note that any requirements to assure the age of users comes with tradeoffs, such as intruding on privacy interests, requiring more data collection and use, or restricting adult users' access to important information and services. In introducing any such requirements, legislation should afford service providers sufficient flexibility to discharge obligations in a way that is proportionate, risk-based and allows for technological flexibility to take account of the novel, imperfect and evolving nature of age assurance technologies.

We support legislation that tailors protections to the age of the child, supports mental health and wellbeing, tackles different risks with proportional responses, and gives space for product and business improvement. Drawing on our significant experiences with governments, regulators, and experts across the world, we have developed a [Legislative Framework to Protect Kids and Teens Online](#). The Framework outlines some principles for laws seeking to improve online experiences and keep children and teens safer when using the internet. We hope that sharing our experiences and perspectives will advance the work of the policymakers and experts addressing these issues, and we look forward to engaging constructively with them.



## Introduction

Google and YouTube appreciate the opportunity to make a submission on the Children (Social Media Safety) Bill 2024 (the Bill).

Google's mission is to organise the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google achieves this by providing users with a range of services to exchange information and ideas. When it comes to children, we believe deeply in technology's ability to contribute to their education, development, and engagement with their peers. At the same time, we recognise that children also face a particular set of risks online, and we fully understand the responsibility we have to keep our child users safe.

We put the safety of children at the heart of how we develop our services — allowing them to fully and safely derive the benefits provided by our products. Over the years, we have invested heavily in building safety features and controls in our products that help keep Australian families safe online. We've built on this work by providing additional ways for parents to help their children build healthy habits – and have access to enriching educational content. We recognise that new risks are continually emerging and we are always thinking about what more can be done to protect children. We also believe that protecting children should not mean shutting off access to valuable services, but ensuring that they can access the service with appropriate safeguards.

In this submission, we provide an overview of Google's and YouTube's approach to protecting children online, our perspectives on regulatory responses informed by our experiences in other jurisdictions and our views on the proposed regulatory model.

## Google's Approach to Online Child Safety

We're committed to maintaining a safe and positive online experience for kids in Australia and around the world. We have a three-pronged approach to kids and families:

- Build age-appropriate products that align with kids' and teens' developmental stages and needs,

- Offer a number of settings and tools that give families flexibility to manage their unique relationships with technology, and
- Implement policies, protections and programs that help keep every child and teen safer online.

This means we do not take a one-size-fits all approach and we build products that are flexible and meet the developmental stages of children as they grow. What works for a child 0 - 12 should not necessarily be copied and pasted for teens that are 13-17 years old. And what works for one family may not be what others want for theirs. We believe every child and every family are different, but all children deserve to be able to access and use services in ways that respect their unique vulnerabilities and protect them from harm and abuse.

### **1. Age Appropriate Products**

We have led the way in designing products specifically for kids and families. This includes:

- [Family Link](#) - a downloadable app that helps parents set the digital ground rules for their children, including through app management, activity reports, and location tracking.
  - Parents using Family Link can also supervise their child's experience across Google's products by enabling parental controls over the content to which their children have access on the platform.
  - Family Link allows parents and caregivers to set downtime for their children's devices and enables time limits for apps to encourage a healthy balance. It also empowers parents to approve or block apps prior to download.
  - Additionally, Family Link allows parents to make meaningful choices about their children's data. Parents can view and manage permissions for websites and extensions accessed through Chrome as well as apps downloaded on a child's device. This tool also gives parents access to manage children's accounts and data settings, including resetting a child's password, editing personal information, or deleting their account if necessary.
- [YouTube Kids](#) - a stand-alone app built from the ground up to be a safer and simpler experience for children to explore. YouTube Kids prioritises enriching and inspiring content - a result of content policies developed in collaboration

with external experts; does not include any personalised advertising; and includes more tools for parents and caregivers to control and customise the experience for their families. For example, parents can block a video or channel, can handpick which videos to make available for their children, and also have an option to only allow content selected by trusted partners such as UNICEF.

- [Supervised Experiences](#) on the main YouTube platform, where a parent or caregiver creates and links a child's (under the age of 13) account to their own. This experience comes with three tailored content settings for parents to choose from, as well as digital well-being and privacy protections and parental controls. We also disable a number of standard features normally available on YouTube, such as the ability to create content or write comments.
- A new voluntary [teen supervision option](#) launched in September 2024. This new experience is designed to keep parents informed about their teens' channel activity on YouTube and help them provide encouragement and advice on responsible content creation. Parents can see shared insights into their teens' channel activity on YouTube including the number of uploads, subscriptions and comments. Parents (and teens) will also receive proactive email notifications at key events, like when teens upload a video or start a livestream, providing an opportunity to offer advice on responsible creation supported by resources to guide conversations.

## 2. Settings and Tools

For our flagship products that are built for everyone, we have a number of automatic protections in place for younger users. This includes:

- **On Search:** SafeSearch offers protections to help filter out explicit content — such as adult or graphic violent content — in Google's search results across images, videos, and websites when enabled. SafeSearch is on by default for users under 18. In addition, explicit imagery is blurred by default when it appears in Search results.
- **On YouTube** for all users under 18:
  - Autoplay is turned off by default, and on YouTube Kids and in Supervised Experiences, a parent can completely disable autoplay.
  - “Take a Break” reminders pause a video until a user dismisses or resumes playing the video, and are turned on by default.

- Bedtime reminders, which let users set a specific time to receive a reminder to stop watching videos and go to bed, are turned on by default.
- We set the default upload, livestream and livechat settings to the most private setting available, and use transparency notices to remind them who can see their content with each setting option.
- We block access to mature content and limit recommendations of videos with content that could be problematic if viewed in repetition.
- We prohibit personalised advertising based on age, gender, or interests.

### **3. Policies, Protections & Programs**

We have strict content and privacy policies in place to protect our young users across our products, including for the ads kids see. We regularly review and update these policies and roll out product improvements.

On YouTube, our [Community Guidelines](#) outline the types of content that are not allowed on YouTube, including cyberbullying, pornography, content promoting suicide and self harm and eating disorders, and content that endangers the emotional and physical well-being of minors. They also govern [age-restrictions](#) on content that may not be appropriate for viewers under 18, and require users who want to view the content to be signed-in and their account age must be 18 or older. In addition, we have content policies for [YouTube Kids](#) and [supervised accounts](#) that help guide which content is eligible to be included in the different content settings available for families. Finally, we've worked with third-party experts to develop [kids quality principles](#), which we use to guide how we surface content in YouTube's recommendations, include content in the YouTube Kids app, and shape our monetisation policies.

We have also updated our recommendation systems to ensure that teens aren't overly exposed to content that, while innocuous if seen in isolation, could potentially be problematic for some if viewed repeatedly. Through consultation with our [Youth & Families Advisory Committee](#), and with input from academic research, we have identified content categories that meet this criteria including 1) negative social comparison content, including content that encourages altering physical features, body weight, or physique to obtain an idealised physical appearance and 2) content that features real-world social aggression, including physical intimidation or verbal

altercations in confrontational situations. We have implemented guardrails for teens and tweens to limit repeated recommendations of videos related to these topics.

For users under 18, we do not serve targeted ads and we [restrict sensitive ads categories](#) for our youngest users on [YouTube Kids](#), in [supervised experiences](#), and in [Made for Kids content](#). We prohibit ads in additional categories such as foods and beverages, religion, or politics, as well as ads with inappropriate content such as scary imagery, crude humour or sexual innuendo.

### **A consistent national approach**

We welcome Premier Peter Malinauskas' [statement](#) on 10 September 2024 that South Australia prefers a uniform national approach. We acknowledge that the Prime Minister has indicated the national legislation will be informed by the work of former Chief Justice French.

There is global consensus on the need for strong protections for kids and teens that don't unduly limit their access to services that support learning, growth and development. Where possible, policy makers should promote consistency and interoperability, reflecting the global nature of the internet. This provides clarity and certainty to users, online services and policy makers and enables better and more consistent experiences.

We abide by the laws of the jurisdictions in which we operate and our strong preference is for unified standards and requirements at the federal level. This is particularly the case in a smaller market like Australia, where fragmentation of requirements across jurisdictions would introduce a challenging compliance burden for industry and potential friction for users across the country.

### **Regulating Children's Access to Social Media**

Digital tools and experiences are a foundational part of children's and teens' everyday lives. Over the years, we have seen how innovative technologies like AI and access to high-quality, diverse content can yield enormous benefits. We believe that the appropriate safeguards can empower young people and help them learn, connect, grow, and prepare for the future.



To that end, online services should build age-appropriate products that align with children's and teens' developmental stages and needs; offer tools that give families flexibility to manage their relationships with technology; implement policies, protections, and programs that increase online safety for every child and teen; and provide informative and accessible digital literacy materials.

Well-crafted legislation can be an effective tool to build on these industry efforts to keep children and teens safer online. We support legislation that tailors protections to the age of the child, supports mental health and wellbeing, tackles different risks with proportional responses, and gives space for product and business improvement.

### ***1. Raising the age of digital consent and parental consent requirements***

We are concerned that blunt measures to restrict childrens' and teens' access to the online world, without careful consideration of the types of services they should apply to, risk failing to take account of the positive effects of some of these technologies, including education, connection, mental health, personal growth and support for marginalised communities such as teens who are experiencing unusual illnesses or are LGBTQI+. In addition to risk, a number of studies have shown significant benefits from using online services and we have included a list of relevant studies at [Annex A](#). We are also concerned that parental consent requirements for older teens do not adequately take into account their increasing developmental capacity and autonomy.

Completely banning all access for users under 14 would potentially prevent South Australian teens from using a platform like YouTube which they may rely on for everything from looking up a video to help with maths homework, catching up on the latest news or sports highlights, watching documentaries on topics of interest, or consuming quality entertainment content from an Australian content creator.

Parental consent requirements for 14 and 15 year-olds would mean that by default, they are cut off from accessing services and this important Australian content, unless their parent makes an affirmative choice to opt them in. This could restrict teens' access to helpful services and age-appropriate information they depend upon to learn, grow, civically engage, and stay in touch with friends and family. This can be especially damaging in an educational context.

Effectively raising the age of consent to 16 will harm teenagers who have legitimate needs to access online resources, but may have barriers to obtaining consent from their parents. This is a particular concern for teenagers who may not be able to get permission from their parents or who may want privacy from their parents. This could include situations where parents are not proficient in English or not technologically savvy, incapacitated or abusive, and circumstances where a teenager is simply exploring ideas that aren't shared by their parents.

Moreover, consent requirements do not ultimately protect kids and teens from any risks that may arise after a parent grants consent, that is once they actually start using the service. Using cars as an analogy, consent requirements make it more difficult to get into the car, but they don't make you any safer once you're actually driving. We believe instead that legislation should put meaningful protections in place (like seatbelts, airbags, speed limits) for every aspect of an online service that a minor is reasonably likely to access.

## **Children (Social Media Safety) Bill 2004**

### **1. Scope of Services**

The regulation of digital platforms can be challenging given the complexity of the industry and the diversity of services. But in doing so, it is vital to take into account the fundamental differences between services to avoid an overly broad and indiscriminate approach. Care must be taken to ensure that definitions of regulated sections of industry are appropriately scoped to capture those services that pose the greatest risk of harm of the type the regulation is intended to address.

The Online Safety Act 2021 defines 'social media services' broadly to capture a range of services beyond what is generally considered to be 'social media'. However, the definition of a 'social media service' proposed under the Bill significantly expands on the Online Safety Act definition including to cover the separately regulated category of 'relevant electronic service'.

Mr French's report suggests that the definition of a social media service under the Bill would also extend to search engines and app distribution services, as well as email and messaging services. That approach would see the Bill apply to online services ranging from simple SMS messaging apps to games, search engines, email and app stores.

We suggest that any definition of services in scope should be informed by the harms the regulation is responding to. That is, any regulation should first determine what is to be regulated before determining who or what should be within the scope of that regulation to ensure that any response is risk based and proportionate. Any assessment of harms in order to determine services in scope should be evidence-based, drawing on expert research given the potential impacts on access to valuable digital services for individuals under the age of 16.

Those potential impacts on access to digital services also require that any definition should be carefully drafted to capture only the services relevant to the harms being addressed and to exclude services that are fundamentally different.

Our products operate in a fundamentally different way from social media. For example, YouTube is a video sharing platform where users come to find and consume video content. But YouTube does not operate a social network built on a social graph – in other words, we don't generally connect viewers to content through their social network. This has very real consequences for the design of our services. It means we rank content based on usefulness, relevance, and authority – not predicted interactions with other users who are “friends” or “connections”. We have shared more information on YouTube's recommendation system in this [blog](#).

YouTube also does not offer common social media features that increase risk of exposure to harmful contact or conduct, such as direct or private messaging. Additional features such as the ability to upload content or write comments are disabled for users under 13, and comments are also disabled (read and write) on any “made for kids” content on YouTube (including YouTube Kids and YouTube Main). Only registered users can upload content to YouTube. To unlock access to any of YouTube's intermediate or advanced features, creators must undergo additional verification.

Perhaps most importantly, YouTube is a platform designed to provide users with a different, higher-quality online experience than social media platforms. This includes educational content, news and current affairs and music videos, as well as content from a diverse range of Australian and international creators. According to research by Oxford Economics, in Australia:

- 74% of teachers who use YouTube agree that YouTube helps students learn.



- 72% of teachers who use YouTube agree that YouTube helps to tackle gaps in education by providing a way to access quality information.
- 81% of parents who use YouTube agree that YouTube (or YouTube Kids for children under 13) helps their children learn.
- 84% of parents who use YouTube agree that YouTube (or YouTube Kids for children under 13) provides quality content for their children's learning and/or entertainment.

As part of its inquiry into digital platforms services, the ACCC's Sixth Interim Report into the provision of social media services by social media platforms acknowledged that YouTube is significantly differentiated from other social media services as it "lack(s) features designed to facilitate social connections, and are used by users differently (for example, YouTube is often accessed through connected TV)"<sup>1</sup>.

We urge a careful, evidence and risk based approach to determining the services that should be covered by any legislation.

## **2. Duty of care approach**

The Bill proposes two duties on covered services to (1) prevent access for under 14's and for 14 and 15 year olds without parental consent and (2) to take reasonable steps to prevent access by these users (cl 8). Clause 11(6) provides a defence to the first of these duties where the provider of a social media service proves that it had taken all reasonable steps to prevent access to its service.

What amounts to 'reasonable steps' is not articulated in the Bill, but Mr French's report notes that 'regulatory guidelines could set out minimum standards necessary for compliance ... [but] the ultimate judgement of whether reasonable steps were being taken would be for a court on an enforcement action' (at page 41).

It is important that service providers are afforded sufficient flexibility to discharge this duty in a way that is proportionate, risk-based, and allows for technical flexibility.

Age assurance remains a complex challenge requiring careful consideration. Any method to determine the age of users across services comes with tradeoffs, such as

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<sup>1</sup> [ACCC Digital platforms services inquiry: Interim report 6: Report on social media services](#), March 2023, p.11

intruding on privacy interests, requiring more data collection and use, or restricting adult users' access to important information and services.

Where required, age assurance – which can range from declaration to inference and verification – should be risk-based, preserving users' access to information and services, and respecting their privacy. Where legislation mandates age assurance, it should do so through a workable, interoperable standard that preserves the potential for anonymous or pseudonymous experiences. It should avoid requiring collection or processing of additional personal information, treating all users like children, or impinging on the ability of adults to access information. More data-intrusive methods (such as verification with “hard identifiers” like government IDs) should be limited to high-risk services (e.g., alcohol, gambling or pornography) or age correction.

Moreover, age assurance requirements should permit online services to explore and adapt to improved technological approaches. In particular, requirements should enable new, privacy-protective ways to ensure users are at least the required age before engaging in certain activities.

Finally, because age assurance technologies are novel, imperfect and evolving, requirements should provide reasonable protection from liability for good-faith efforts to develop and implement improved solutions in this space.

### **3. *Direct right of action in tort***

The Bill proposes powers for the regulator to issue infringement notices and apply to the court for remedies where there is a breach of a duty of care. In addition, the Bill would grant a right for a child's parent to bring an action directly against the provider of social media.

Regulators have experience working on complex issues, and equipping them with appropriate resources and authority to enforce a law is the right path to that law being enforced with clarity and consistency. This is especially important in the case of novel and untested regulation. Compared to regulator enforcement, the right for a parent to bring a private claim is more likely to create uncertainty and confusion regarding the scope of conduct required by the Bill. Private claims also risk generating inconsistent precedent and compliance expectations across cases. Private rights of action are best

deployed where regulatory enforcement approaches have failed. It would be premature to apply them here.

If the right to bring a private claim is maintained in the Bill, meaningful guardrails should be included to incentivise compliance and limit abuse:

- The requirement for damages to be paid into a Children's Online Safety Fund is an appropriate safeguard against abuse of the private right to bring a claim.
- Damages for non-economic loss should be subject to a cap, consistent with the approach proposed for the statutory tort envisioned by the *Privacy and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024*.
- Parents should be required to notify the regulator before bringing a claim. Unlike private plaintiffs, regulators are generally better suited to investigate claims and have deep experience with complex compliance issues. The regulator should be required to review the claim before action is commenced, and should be required to intervene if the private lawsuit covers facts or issues that the regulator is currently investigating with the same defendant.

#### **4. Prevention of Access**

Banning access to services is a potentially blunt response that does not take into account the many types of protections for children and teens online. Similarly, such an approach does not take into account the differences in maturity, capacity and risks of harm between children and teens.

Instead, requiring services to provide age-appropriate experiences offers a more proportionate and risk based means to better protect kids and teens while also meeting their need for access to digital tools that help them learn and develop social and digital literacy skills, compete in the global economy, and connect with family and friends. A ban on access will instead preclude kids and teens from accessing the basic benefits of the online world and may have unintended negative effects on vulnerable youth.

This approach also fails to offer parents and caregivers the autonomy to make decisions that reflect their unique needs and preferences. Robust parental control options for children under the age of consent provide parents and caregivers with the meaningful ability to understand and manage their child's experience on a service. Where appropriate, this can include settings and tools that include options to control

content and account settings, limit screen time, and apply additional privacy protections.

Finally, preventing access to services fails to acknowledge that many such services are accessible without requiring users to sign in. Consistent with Google's mission to prioritise access to information, Google respects the value of anonymity that comes with the signed out state and the ability to use internet services without being identified. We offer robust baseline protections for signed-out users that mitigate risk to these users while protecting their access to information and right to privacy. For example, on YouTube, we disable all participation features such as video uploads, commenting and subscribing, and block access to age-restricted content.

### **Alternative regulatory approaches**

We recommend more flexible and inclusive methods for all families that can ensure safer, age-appropriate experiences for children while allowing them to enjoy all the benefits that technology has to offer. In short, legislation should protect kids and teens on the internet, not from the internet.

We suggest that Age-Appropriate Design Codes (AADCs) generally tend to account for these issues in a risk-based way, have a workable baseline of protections backed by accountability and regulatory oversight, and allow flexibility for families to make the decisions that suit them.

Such approaches are better aligned with the recommendations in the [US Surgeon General's Advisory on Social Media and Youth Mental Health](#) which supports a nuanced approach, including:

- That technology companies conduct assessments of the impact their products have on children and adolescents, and prioritise user health and safety in their design and development.
- That companies "enforce age minimums in ways that respect the privacy of youth users." This emphasis on privacy contrasts with hard age verification requirements which would require companies to collect more data than they already do.
- That policymakers and tech companies develop age-appropriate health and safety standards that take children and teens' developmental stages into

account. This means being able to treat kids like kids, teens like teens, and adults like adults.

Google recently shared its [Legislative Framework to Protect Children and Teens Online](#), which outlines some principles for laws seeking to improve online experiences and keep children and teens safer when using the internet. The Framework reflects our belief that good legislative models — like those based on age-appropriate design principles — can help hold companies responsible for promoting safety and privacy, while enabling access to richer experiences for children and teens.



## Annex A

- [National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine – Consensus Study Report on Social Media and Adolescent Health. December 2023](#)
  - "The report concludes there is not enough evidence to say that social media causes changes in adolescent health at the population level, but research shows social media has the potential to both harm and benefit adolescent health. ... For these reasons, the report says a more judicious approach is warranted rather than a broad-stroke ban, and does not make recommendations for specific limitations on teens' access to social media."
  - "... Legislators' intent to protect time for sleep and schoolwork and to prevent at least some compulsive use could just as easily have unintended consequences, perhaps isolating young people from their support systems when they need them."
  - "Social media has the potential to connect friends and family. It may also be valuable to teens who otherwise feel excluded or lack offline support. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, questioning, and other (LGBTQ+) teenagers may find support online that they do not have in their offline world, as do young people coping with serious illness, bereavement, and mental health problems."
- [American Psychological Association Health Advisory. May 2023](#)
  - The APA's advisory summarises the broad base of "the scientific evidence to date," based on studies that collectively involved thousands of adolescents. The APA found that social media *"is not inherently beneficial or harmful to young people."* The outcomes of social media use depend on the individual child, and parents must make their own decisions for that use. The APA also specifically notes that social media may be particularly helpful to marginalised teenagers or those facing mental health challenges:
    - *"Social media may be psychologically beneficial particularly among those experiencing mental health crises, or members of marginalised groups that have been disproportionately harmed in online contexts. For instance, access to peers that allows LGBTQIA+ and questioning adolescents to provide support to and share accurate health information with one another is beneficial to psychological development, and can protect youth from negative psychological outcomes when experiencing stress. This may be especially important for topics that adolescents feel reluctant to or are unable to discuss with a parent or caregiver."*

- **Decline in Independent Activity as a Cause of Decline in Children's Mental Wellbeing: Summary of the Evidence, Gray et. al., Journal of Pediatrics, February 2023**
  - "Much recent discussion of young people's mental health has focused on the role of increased use of digital technologies, especially involvement with social media. However, systematic reviews of research into this have provided little support for the contention that either total screen time or time involved with social media is a major cause of, or even correlate of, declining mental health."
  - "A primary cause of the rise in mental disorders [among teens] is a decline over decades in opportunities for children and teens to play, roam, and engage in other activities independent of direct oversight and control by adults."
- **Oxford Internet Institute, "Impact of digital screen media activity on functional brain organization in late childhood: Evidence from the ABCD study," November 2023**
  - "In a study of nearly 12,000 children in the United States, no evidence was found to show that screen time impacted their brain function or well-being."
- **"Teen Life on Social Media in 2022," Pew Research Center**
  - *"Eight-in-ten teens say that what they see on social media makes them feel more connected to what's going on in their friends' lives, while 71% say it makes them feel like they have a place where they can show their creative side. And 67% say these platforms make them feel as if they have people who can support them through tough times. A smaller share – though still a majority – say the same for feeling more accepted. These positive sentiments are expressed by teens across demographic groups."*
  - *"When asked about the overall impact of social media on them personally, more teens say its effect has been mostly positive (32%) than say it has been mostly negative (9%). The largest share describes its impact in neutral terms: 59% believe social media has had neither a positive nor a negative effect on them. For teens who view social media's effect on them as mostly positive, many describe maintaining friendships, building connections, or accessing information as main reasons they feel this way."*
- **"Teens and Mental Health: How Girls Really Feel About Social Media," Common Sense Media, March 2023**
  - This study from Common Sense Media found that teens who are already at risk or dealing with mental health challenges are more likely to have negative experiences with social media, but those same teens are also more likely to value the benefits of social media, like finding resources, community, or support.

- The same report also found that 65% of adolescent girls think that YouTube has had a positive effect on people their age. This was the highest percentage for any platform reported.
- [#StatusOfMind, Royal Society for Public Health, 2017](#)
  - This [report](#) from the Royal Society for Public Health in the UK found Instagram and SnapChat the most detrimental to young people's mental health and wellbeing. YouTube stood out from the rest as having a **net positive** effect on mental health. YouTube was rated highly in categories like community building, awareness, and self-expression. YouTube was the only platform where teens reported feeling **less** depression, loneliness, anxiety.
- ["Social media's enduring effect on adolescent life satisfaction," Oxford Internet Institute, 2019](#)
  - [This study](#) found that "social media use is not, in and of itself, a strong predictor of life satisfaction across the adolescent population." More specifically, it concluded that most links between life satisfaction and social media use were "trivial," accounting for less than 1% of a teenager's wellbeing – and that the effect of social media was "not a one-way street." The director of research at the institute, said: "99.75% of a person's life satisfaction has nothing to do with their use of social media."
- ["Media Use in School-Aged Children and Adolescent," American Academy of Pediatrics, 2016](#)
  - The [American Academy of Pediatrics policy statement](#) notes that research suggests not only risks but benefits associated with the use of social media for the health of children and teenagers. Benefits include exposure to new ideas and knowledge acquisition, increased opportunities for social contact and support, and new opportunities to access health-promotion messages and information.
- ["Time spent online: Latent profile analyses of emerging adults' social media use," Journal of Computers in Human Behavior, 2017](#)
  - Social media is a central conduit to information, advice, and relationships for youth (Coyne et al., 2013, Davis, 2012). It can expand their reach, enrich the quality of their social networks, and facilitate social engagement (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007) during a period when peers are a powerful source of influence (Borsari and Carey, 2001, Borsari and Carey, 2003). Social media use is also associated with important psychological dividends for youth, such as diminished loneliness (Lee, Noh, & Koo, 2013), higher self-esteem (Steinfield, Ellison, & Lampe, 2008), and perceived social support (Best, Manktelow, & Taylor, 2014). Finally, SMU may enable identity development. Spies Shapiro and Margolin (2014) found that SNS provided ethnic and sexual/gender minority youth with a safe and supportive environment to explore their identities and forge communities, which importantly, often crossed over into offline life.



- **“Out Online: The Experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Youth on the Internet,” Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network, 2013.**
  - This report notes the beneficial that internet access can have for LGBT youth/
  - *“Fortunately, the Internet may also provide access to beneficial resources for LGBT youth. Historically, LGBT people have been some of the earliest adopters of the Internet and social media. Due to their stigmatisation in broader society and at times, a lack of supportive peers, many LGBT youth may turn to online spaces for support, which potentially offer them their first opportunity to connect with other LGBT people. In addition, the Internet may afford LGBT youth the opportunity to access otherwise unavailable information about their sexual and gender identities. Online spaces may also permit a wider range of civic engagement from a more diverse group of participants, including from LGBT youth. Access to and use of these resources may also promote better well-being among LGBT youth, perhaps particularly if they allow LGBT youth to be more open about identifying as LGBT.”*
- **Annual Research Review: Adolescent mental health in the digital age: facts, fears, and future directions. The Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 2020.**
  - “The most recent and rigorous large-scale preregistered studies report small associations between the amount of daily digital technology usage and adolescents’ well-being that do not offer a way of distinguishing cause from effect and, as estimated, are unlikely to be of clinical or practical significance.”
  - See also:
    - [NYTimes: Panicking About Your Kids’ Phones? New Research Says Don’t.](#) (Quoting Candice Odgers, report co-author and professor of psychological science and informatics at the University of California, Irvine)
    - [“The great rewiring: is social media really behind an epidemic of teenage mental illness?” Candice Odgers, Nature, 2024.](#)
    - [“Is social media fueling youth mental health crisis?” Interview with Candice Odgers, UCI School of Social Ecology.](#)

s22(1)(a)(ii)

From: s47F @google.com>  
 Sent: Friday, 4 October 2024 9:22 PM  
 To: Irwin, Andrew <Andrew.Irwin@INFRASTRUCTURE.gov.au>  
 Cc: VANDENBROEK, Sarah <Sarah.Vandenbroek@infrastructure.gov.au>  
 Subject: Re: Google Submission: SA Children (Social Media Safety) Bill [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Hi Andrew,

Thanks for your email and I am impressed with your stamina on a Friday afternoon!

Thank you also for the introduction to Sarah! Welcome to the new role - we look forward to working with you.

I will indeed be at the Social Media Summit on Thursday. It would be great if we could find some time to say hello in person on the sidelines or for a quick catch up before or after the event?

Cheers and have a good weekend,

s47F



s47F

YouTube Government Affairs and Public Policy -  
 Australia and New Zealand

s47F

s47 @google.com

On Fri, Oct 4, 2024 at 6:44 PM Irwin, Andrew <[Andrew.Irwin@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:Andrew.Irwin@infrastructure.gov.au)> wrote:

OFFICIAL

Hi s47F

Thanks for sharing your submission - I've already started reading it.

Not sure if you've met our new First Assistant Secretary, just in case you haven't, cc'ing Sarah Vandenbroek.

Don't know if you'll be attending the Sydney leg of the social media summit, but Sarah and I will both be there.

Cheers,

Andrew

### Andrew Irwin (he/him)

Assistant Secretary • Online Safety Branch  
• Digital Platforms, Safety and Classification Division

[Andrew.Irwin@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:Andrew.Irwin@infrastructure.gov.au)

Ps22(1)(a)(ii) • Ms22(1)(a)(ii)

GPO Box 594 Canberra, ACT 2601

**Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications and the Arts**  
**CONNECTING AUSTRALIANS • ENRICHING COMMUNITIES • EMPOWERING REGIONS**

*I am part time – working 9.30-4.30 Monday and Tuesday, 9-2.30 on Wednesday, and regular hours on Thursday and Friday.*

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*I would like to 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 Islanders.*

**Ngunnawal Country**



Pages 49-50 (Document 11) removed in their entirety as irrelevant under s22(1)(a)(ii) of the FOI Act as duplicating material from Document 10.



Australian Government

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

# Age Assurance Trial – Consultation Roundtable Summary

Themes: Benefits, Harms, Actions

| Youth        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|--------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Date         | 14 August 2024: Office for Youth – Youth Steering Committee<br>22 August 2024: eSafety Youth Advisory Council                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Objective    | To hear about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Experiences of the benefits and harms of social media</li> <li>Views on what is an appropriate age to begin using social media</li> <li>Willingness to engage with age assurance technologies to access social media</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Attendees    | 24 attendees from 2 youth bodies                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Key Messages | <p><i>Benefits</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Young people strongly support social media as a tool for forming and maintaining connections with friends, family, work networks and community groups – particularly for young people with family in different states or countries, or those who live in regional or remote areas.</li> <li>Other promoted benefits of access to social media included the ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Broaden horizons and challenge biases, including by learning about other cultures and countries</li> <li>Stay up to date with news, politics and events (local and global) – including through access to perspectives that might not appear in mainstream media</li> <li>Access opportunities and broaden professional network</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><i>Harms</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>However, young people recognise the significant harms posed by social media, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Detriment to mental health, including addictive behaviours</li> <li>Mindless engagement, including ‘doomscrolling’ – i.e. algorithms determining what’s seen (lack of agency)</li> <li>Lack of control over digital footprint</li> <li>Addiction, including decreased attention span</li> </ul> </li> <li>It is important to recognise the different levels of harm posed by different platforms. In particular, young people questioned whether <b>messaging apps</b> would be included under any legislated age restrictions.</li> </ul> |

## OFFICIAL

|  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|--|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | <p><i>Actions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Young Australians largely believe that <b>all parties are responsible</b> for keeping young people safe online, however, emphasised that <b>social media companies should be primarily responsible</b> for making their platforms safe, with government to support with appropriate regulations.</li> <li>When asked 'How likely would you be to use an age assurance technology to access social media?', participants responded: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>64% Likely, 27% Very Likely, 9% Neutral.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
|--|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

## Parents/carers and child-development experts

|                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
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| <b>Date</b>         | 16 August 2024                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Objective</b>    | <p>To hear about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Experiences with their children using social media</li> <li>Views on an appropriate minimum age for social media access</li> <li>Attitudes towards age assurance technologies</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Attendees</b>    | 23 attendees from 13 organisations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Key Messages</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents are overwhelmed with the prospect of managing children's social media access, and are calling for a cultural and/or legal change, with some suggesting legislating an age limit now and implementing enforcement in the short-medium term.</li> <li>Children have a right to access safe shared online spaces, and striking a balance between the benefits and the harms is key.</li> </ul> <p><i>Benefits</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social media has many benefits, including a way to talk to and connect with friends, establish identity, and as a regulation tool for neurodivergent children (e.g. Roblox).</li> </ul> <p><i>Harms</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It also can be addictive, provides an avenue for cyberbullying, and algorithms show harmful or inappropriate content (e.g. horror, pornography) that children don't want to see.</li> </ul> <p><i>Actions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social media needs to be defined and potentially not include messaging apps.</li> <li>An age limit for social media had strong majority support at 16 or 18 (with notable support for 18), however some thought 16 was too old.</li> <li>Digital literacy education for children and parents is critical. Parents need strategies to create healthy screen routines and support children to safely use technology.</li> </ul> |

## Academia

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|------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Date</b>      | 23 August 2024                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Objective</b> | <p>To gain insight into academic findings in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Benefits or harms to youth on social media</li> <li>Appropriate minimum age for social media access</li> <li>Australians' attitudes towards the use of age assurance technologies</li> </ul> |
| <b>Attendees</b> | 15 attendees from 12 institutions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

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| <b>Key Messages</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There were strong and at times conflicting views on the issue of social media harms from the perspectives of attendees.</li> </ul> <p><i>Benefits</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Forming social ties online is important for people who are marginalised.</li> <li>Media and digital literacy.</li> <li>Convention of the rights of the child – right to privacy, social experience.</li> <li>Efforts being made to keep kids out – change that to regulating tech companies to create appropriate online spaces for children and teens.</li> </ul> <p><i>Harms</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children's age to exposure to sexual and violent content is getting younger and younger. There is link between exposure to pornography and early sexual experiences.</li> <li>Increase in sextortion of young children.</li> <li>Children report seeing unwanted ads, can't control algorithms to curate their feeds. Seeing sexist, racist and homophobic content.</li> <li>We do not have longitudinal data about the impact smart phones and social media has on children.</li> <li>Children are being groomed by the apps to be lifetime users.</li> </ul> <p><i>Actions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Age verification is important, but <b>one of many supports</b> needed, particularly <b>education</b>.</li> <li>Mental health is complex and there is not one solution, but the complexity should not cause a standstill. Age Assurance may not be perfect but still worth doing.</li> <li>Platforms should be more responsible.</li> </ul> |
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## Industry: platforms/hardware providers

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| <b>Date</b>         | 27 August 2024                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Objective</b>    | <p>To gain insight into:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Current age assurance and detection practices of platforms, including planned responses to regulations proposed internationally</li> <li>Industry's capability and willingness to implement further age assurance technologies</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Attendees</b>    | 23 attendees from 12 organisations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Key messages</b> | <p><i>Benefits</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Out of scope for this discussion.</li> </ul> <p><i>Harms</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants noted that there are different levels of harm from types of adult content and highlighted the importance of hearing the views of safety advocates and young people.</li> <li>It is important to clearly define what harms we are seeking to address (particularly on social media) as a first step to determine an effective and proportionate solution.</li> </ul> |

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|                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For pornographic material, there were concerns that age verification at the website level has resulted in users choosing to use alternative sites rather than verify their age. An unintended consequence of this is that users move to websites that have poor content moderation processes to manage illegal material.</li> </ul> <p><i>Actions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Industry emphasised the importance of alignment with international regulatory approaches when it comes to age assurance.</li> <li>There was broad recognition that responsibility for user safety sits at <b>all levels</b> of the tech stack – device level, app store, platforms, websites – therefore a <b>multi-tiered</b> approach to age assurance is required.</li> <li>Highlighted the importance of future proofing any policy or regulatory response, particularly as the digital environment in the near future could be very different to how users engage with platforms today.</li> <li>Getting policy principles right to frame our approach to the issue. Suggested establishing policy principles that guide our approach to the issue of age assurance, including that responsibility sits at multiple levels, proportionality of response to harms, subsidiarity – regulating the point of access.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Community Organisations</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Date</b>                    | 12 September                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Objective</b>               | <p>To hear views from across the Australian community on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Willingness to use age assurance technologies;</li> <li>Experiences of benefit or harm for youth on social media; and</li> <li>Perspectives on inclusion considerations or concerns.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Attendees</b>               | 15 attendees from 10 organisations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Key Messages</b>            | <p><i>Benefits</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social media provides an avenue to access news and connection, particularly for LGBTQI+, CALD, neurodivergent and regional/remote youth.</li> <li>Mental health support and information is commonly sought on social media. Young people like to seek support foremost from peers, such as preparedness to seek formal help, or support when their home isn't a safe place.</li> <li>Mental health organisations use social media to engage with young people, and these early support avenues are important for reaching vulnerable groups.</li> </ul> <p><i>Harms</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Addictive algorithms, radicalisation, online misogyny and time spent on social media are the biggest concerns.</li> <li>Children are exposed to pro-eating disorder content and mental health misinformation on social media, which they can struggle to differentiate from factual and reliable information.</li> <li>Young people don't have the digital and interpersonal skills to navigate spaces designed and intended for adults.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unintended consequences – a greater cultural shift is needed, but is unlikely. A social media ban is unlikely to result in kids going outside, but instead onto less regulated online spaces for connection and information e.g. AI chatbots.</li> </ul> <p><i>Actions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regulation to make social media safer is needed, as age assurance alone will just delay harms and punishes young people rather than platforms.</li> <li>Education is important to help children and parents. Parents are not adequately informed and safety is not adequately discussed in plain language by platforms. Children need critical thinking skills at a lower age now, as they access the internet as a whole for information.</li> <li>Young migrants are usually more digitally literate and have better English than their parents, often sharing devices and teaching their parents how to access social media.</li> </ul> |
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## Civil Society Organisations

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| <b>Date</b>         | 16 September 2024                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Objective</b>    | <p>To hear views on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Views on benefits and harms of social media and pornography on young people</li> <li>Willingness to use age assurance technologies</li> <li>Perspectives on inclusion/access considerations or concerns</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Attendees</b>    | 7 attendees from 5 organisations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Key Messages</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some attendees challenged the assumption young people should not access pornography, pointing to research suggesting that youth accessing pornography can contribute to healthy sexual development.</li> <li>Noted the risk of age restrictions pushing young people into other areas of the internet that are less regulated and more harmful.</li> <li>Noted that some groups such as LGBTIQ+ youth use social media to build community and highlighted the risk that cutting young people off from networking opportunities who are isolated could have negative consequences.</li> <li>Acknowledged research on the use of social media by young people indicates that it exposes them to harmful material. Regardless, a majority of young people say that being on social media has positive experience online and was fundamental to their wellbeing.</li> <li>Stated that solutions to online harms should be proportional to the problem and should not cause harms or loss of human and digital rights for the population</li> <li>Consider the affordability aspect of certain youth using social media and digital messaging as a low/no cost option compared with text and calls.</li> <li>Noted that the business model of major social media platforms are the basis of many online harms experienced by users. Consider that effective dispute resolution as recommended by the ACCC's Digital Platforms Inquiry is essential to improving online safety and consumer harms.</li> </ul> |

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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regarding appropriate age for children to access social media, there is no perfect age that will apply to all children as it depends on individual maturity, cultural, sociological factors.</li> <li>Suggest that a minimum age should align with the age of puberty.</li> <li>By creating a minimum age for social media, there is the potential that government is penalising users for the inability of companies to design safe services.</li> <li>The main factor that determines whether exposure to online pornography harmful for children is whether it was wanted or unwanted. It is common for post pubescent teenagers to seek out pornography. On the other hand, pre-pubescent kids don't seek it out and unwanted exposure (by algorithms, ads or peers) is harmful.</li> <li>Reaching parents and trusted adults and educating them to 'talk soon, talk often' about sex and pornography is vital to healthy sexual development.</li> <li>Concerns that parents and young people lack digital literacy and skills to use technology tools to prevent children seeing unwanted pornography.</li> <li>Important to roll out education for parents and encouraging discussion between children and parents of online experiences.</li> <li>Note that the negative impacts of lack of control on social media services is experienced by all users – not just children. Consider broader regulation to increase control for all users to tailor their online experiences.</li> </ul> |
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## Age Assurance Providers

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| <b>Date</b>         | 8 October 2024                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Objective</b>    | <p>To hear views on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The current age assurance and detection practices (including by social media platforms), including planned responses to regulations proposed internationally</li> <li>The digital industry's capability and willingness to implement further age assurance technologies</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Attendees</b>    | 9 attendees from 8 organisations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Key Messages</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overall, participants agreed that fast implementation and scalability of age assurance technologies is generally not an issue for providers. Some current technologies can conduct hundreds of thousands of checks per day, and could be implemented for use in Australia in days or weeks. Other providers are at an earlier prototype stage.</li> <li>Age assurance providers discussed the many different types of data that can be used and the benefits each present, including varying biometric indicators of age and government identity documents, as well as models like double-blind tokens.</li> <li>Age assuring for 18+ is more achievable in the short term than the 13-16 range, due to the increased ability to use existing government ID.</li> <li>Some providers stated that age <u>estimation</u> (rather than verification) is currently more achievable for 13-16 year olds, while others stated they are currently age <u>verifying</u> teenagers using government ID.</li> </ul> |

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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some providers of biometric age assurance technologies stated they can check ages in the 13-16 range now, while others provider who do not use biometrics require further data and training.</li> <li>The issue of children using VPNs to get around age assurance was invalidated, as providers discussed the ability for websites to detect and block any users utilising a VPN, e.g. Netflix is currently doing this.</li> <li>Providers raised that social media services and users alike will want low friction age assurance, with social media services also wanting low cost options. Adult content websites will particularly need low cost options as they have even lower ad monetisation and revenue per user than social media.</li> </ul> |
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## First Nations Youth

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| <b>Date</b>         | 15 October 2024                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Objective</b>    | <p>To hear First Nations youth's views on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Experiences of the benefits and harms of social media</li> <li>Willingness to use age assurance technologies and/or barriers to use</li> <li>Proposed actions to reduce the negative impacts of social media and access to age-restricted content on young First Nations people</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Attendees</b>    | 6 attendees from across the Office for Youth's Youth Advisory Groups                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Key Messages</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants highlighted that racism against First Nations people is prevalent on social media services, especially in comments sections.</li> <li>It was noted that <u>any</u> content posted by a First Nations person, or containing a First Nations person, invariably draws racist commentary – racism is not limited to content that is about First Nations politics or culture.</li> <li>Participants expressed that facing such racism is very confronting and makes them less willing to engage in social media.</li> <li>It was noted that social media companies lack understanding of the unique nature of racism towards First Nations communities, and therefore fail to recognise and address complaints when reported.</li> <li>Concern was also raised about protection of Indigenous cultural intellectual property and stories.</li> <li>However, participants also discussed the benefits of social media, including as a means for First Nations people to share knowledge and culture, seek mental health support, and connect with community – often to build on connections initially made in-person at First Nations community events, or to stay connected with friends and family who are geographically dispersed.</li> <li>Participants noted that First Nations people's ability to use age assurance technologies may be restricted due to lack of ownership of ID documents, including due to the financial barriers of obtaining these documents.</li> <li>Participants proposed a range of suggested complementary actions to the social media age minimum legislation, including greater investment in ways to connect First Nations communities (such as knock-out sporting events), funding for mental health services to boost First Nations-targeted support and outreach, and advertising campaigns to encourage young people to stay connected with friends and family via means other than social media.</li> </ul> |

## OFFICIAL

**From:** s22(1)(a)(ii)  
**Sent:** Monday, 28 October 2024 8:30 AM  
**To:** s47F  
**Subject:** RE: Meeting consult on the design of the Commonwealth's draft Bill to enforce a minimum age for access to social media [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hi s47F

Thank you we have put you in to the 3pm spot.

And thank you for the invite to your office though the meetings will be held in our Surry hills office.

Many thanks

s22(1)

OFFICIAL

**From:** s47F @google.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, 25 October 2024 4:18 PM  
**To:** s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au>  
**Subject:** Re: Meeting consult on the design of the Commonwealth's draft Bill to enforce a minimum age for access to social media [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Hi s22(1)

Thanks for your email.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet as early as possible in that window (or alternatively earlier that day) to accommodate US colleagues who may join.

We are also happy to welcome Departmental representatives to our office in Pyrmont.

Cheers,

s47F



s47F  
 YouTube Government Affairs and Public Policy -  
 Australia and New Zealand

s47F  
[s47F@google.com](mailto:s47F@google.com)

On Fri, Oct 25, 2024 at 11:54 AM s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au> wrote:

OFFICIAL

Dear s47F

As you are aware, on [10 September 2024](#) the Prime Minister announced that the Government would introduce legislation this year to enforce a minimum age for access to social media.

The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communication and the Arts (the department) is conducting targeted consultation on the design of the draft Bill.

The Government will make the final decision following all consultations.

Departmental representatives will be in Sydney on Friday 1 November for in-person or virtual meetings. Please respond with your availability between 3 and 5pm on Friday by COB Tuesday 29 October and we will endeavour to find a time that suits.

Kind regards

s22(1)(a)(ii)

Executive Assistant to Sarah Vandebroek . First Assistant Secretary • Digital Platforms, Safety and Classification Division.

NISHI, Level 5 Mountain side.

s22(1)(a)(ii) [@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:s22(1)(a)(ii)@infrastructure.gov.au)

P s22(1)(a) • M s22(1)(a)(ii)  
GPO Box 594 Canberra, ACT 2601

Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts  
CONNECTING AUSTRALIANS • ENRICHING COMMUNITIES • EMPOWERING REGIONS

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OFFICIAL

**From:** Age Assurance Trial  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 30 October 2024 2:25 PM  
**To:** s47F  
**Cc:** Age Assurance Trial; Irwin, Andrew  
**Subject:** RE: Discussion for draft Bill to enforce a minimum age for access to social media [SEC=OFFICIAL]  
**Attachments:** Social Media Minimum Age Law - Legislative Design Principles.docx

## OFFICIAL

Hi s47F

Thank you for confirming that you agree to the conditions. Please find attached a copy of the key design principles.

We would like to reiterate that this document, along with any associated material, are strictly confidential information. They should not be further disseminated, distributed or reproduced, or otherwise used for any purposes without the Commonwealth's prior express consent in writing.

Kind regards

**Age Assurance Trial Taskforce**

Online Safety Branch • Digital Platforms, Safety and Classification Division

s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au

GPO Box 594 Canberra, ACT 2601

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

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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  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 30 October 2024 2:03 PM  
**To:** Irwin, Andrew ; s47F  
**Cc:** Age Assurance Trial ; VANDENBROEK, Sarah  
**Subject:** Re: Discussion for draft Bill to enforce a minimum age for access to social media [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Good morning Andrew,

Thanks for your email.

For Google/YT, the document should be sent to:

- Myself
- s47F @google.com)
- s47F @google.com)

- s47F [REDACTED]@google.com)
- s47F [REDACTED]@google.com)

I understand you have been in touch separately with s47F [REDACTED].

On another matter, I called yesterday to ask whether it is possible to push back our meeting to either later in the day on Friday or alternatively Monday of the following week. We have colleagues joining from the US, where it is Halloween and they will be juggling family commitments. Grateful advice.

Cheers,

s47F [REDACTED]

On Wed, 30 Oct 2024, 6:18 am Irwin, Andrew, <[Andrew.Irwin@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:Andrew.Irwin@infrastructure.gov.au)> wrote:

## OFFICIAL

Good morning,

If you are receiving this email it is because you have been invited to meet with Minister Rowland's Office and the Department on the design of the draft Bill to enforce a minimum age for access to social media. Thank you to those who have already responded to the invite.

The attendees from our side will be:

- s22(1)(a)(ii) [REDACTED], Deputy Chief of Staff, Minister Rowland's Office
- s22(1)(a) [REDACTED], Senior Adviser, Minister Rowland's Office
- Andrew Irwin, Assistant Secretary, Department of Infrastructure
- s22(1)(a)(ii) [REDACTED], Specialist Advisor, Department of Infrastructure

In advance of this discussion, we propose to provide you with a document outlining the key design principles of the draft social media minimum age law. That document, along with any associated material (including this email) are strictly confidential information and will be provided to you only for the purpose of facilitating an informed discussion on Friday. They should not be further disseminated, distributed or reproduced, or otherwise used for any purposes without the Commonwealth's prior express consent in writing.

If you could confirm by return email that you agree to these conditions, we will provide a copy of the key design principles. This will be done on an individual, not organisation, basis. If there are others in your organisation that you would like to discuss the principles with ahead of the roundtable, please provide me with their email address and this email will also be sent to them.

We look forward to meeting with you on Friday.

Regards,

Andrew

## Andrew Irwin (he/him)

Assistant Secretary • Online Safety Branch  
• Digital Platforms, Safety and Classification Division

[Andrew.Irwin@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:Andrew.Irwin@infrastructure.gov.au)

Ps22(1)(a)(ii) • Ms22(1)(a)(ii)

GPO Box 594 Canberra, ACT 2601

**Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications and the Arts**  
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*I am part time – working 9.30-4.30 Monday and Tuesday, 9-2.30 on Wednesday, and regular hours on Thursday and Friday.*

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*I would like to 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 Islanders.*

**Ngunnawal Country**



OFFICIAL

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Australian Government

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

## Social media minimum age legislation: Design principles

**Legislation purpose statement:** The Bill will amend the *Online Safety Act 2021* with the aim of minimising the risk of harms to young Australians from social media, place responsibility on social media platforms for the safety of their users, and incentivise safe innovation on digital platforms

| Principle                  | Proposed policy elements                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Regulated activity</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Age restricted social media platforms must be able to demonstrate having taken 'reasonable steps' to prevent under-age users from 'having an account'.</li> <li>Onus is on platforms – not parents, carers or educators.</li> <li>Penalties will apply for any breach.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Regulated platforms</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The new obligation will apply to 'age-restricted social media platforms', which captures a range of services that facilitate online social interaction.</li> <li>There will be flexibility to further target the definition through regulations. In the first instance, these will be used take the following services out of scope: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Instant messaging</li> <li>Online gaming</li> <li>Services that primarily support the education and health of users</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
| <b>Exemption framework</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There will be exemptions from the new obligation, if platforms and services can demonstrate they meet certain criteria.</li> <li>The criteria will require platforms to demonstrate harm minimisation to children engaging on platforms, including those arising from addictive features.</li> <li>The criteria will be set out in a legislative instrument, to be co-designed in 2025 with experts, industry and young people.</li> </ul>                                                                             |
| <b>Parental consent</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parental consent will not feature as an exemption to platforms for the minimum age obligation.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Grandfathering</b>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grandfathering arrangements will not feature. Platforms will be expected to remove existing account holders under the minimum age.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Privacy protections</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Platforms must not use information and data collected for age assurance purposes for any other purpose, unless explicitly agreed by the user.</li> <li>Once the information has been used for age assurance, it must be destroyed or de-identified by the platforms.</li> <li>Penalties will apply for any breach.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Commencement</b>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The minimum age obligation will commence no earlier than 12-months after Royal Assent of the Bill.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Review</b>              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An independent review of the legislation will be conducted within 2 years of effective commencement or in line with future Online Safety Act reviews, whichever is sooner.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

**From:** s47F [REDACTED]@google.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 30 October 2024 8:15 PM  
**To:** Irwin, Andrew  
**Cc:** s47F [REDACTED]; Age Assurance Trial; VANDENBROEK, Sarah; s22(1)(a)(ii) [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Re: Discussion for draft Bill to enforce a minimum age for access to social media [SEC=OFFICIAL]  
**Attachments:** image001.png; image002.png

Hi Andrew,

Thanks for getting back to me. If we could adjust our meeting time to 4-4:30 that would be appreciated.

Cheers,

s47F [REDACTED]

On Wed, 30 Oct 2024, 10:23 am Irwin, Andrew, <[Andrew.Irwin@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:Andrew.Irwin@infrastructure.gov.au)> wrote:

#### OFFICIAL

Hi s47F [REDACTED] thanks for that we will send the confirmation email to those addresses.

Apologies, I don't think your call came through to me yesterday? If you're referring to this discussion re the draft minimum age Bill, I'm afraid we have limited flexibility to ensure we can involve the Minister's Office and as I'm sure you can appreciate our own deadlines.

That said, we could move something and meet at 4-4.30pm on the same day (1 Nov) if that helps you?

Let me know,

Cheers,

Andrew

#### OFFICIAL

**From:** s47F [REDACTED]@google.com>

**Sent:** Wednesday, 30 October 2024 2:03 PM

s22(1)(a)(ii) - Duplicate of part of Document 14

Pages 66-67 (Document 15) removed in their entirety as irrelevant under s22(1)(a)(ii) of the FOI Act as duplicating material from Document 14.

**From:** s47F @google.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 30 October 2024 9:02 PM  
**To:** Age Assurance Trial  
**Subject:** Re: Discussion for draft Bill to enforce a minimum age for access to social media [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Thank you so much and yes, I confirm that I agree to the conditions of disclosure.

s47F

On Wed, 30 Oct 2024 at 11:24 AM, Age Assurance Trial <s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au> wrote:

#### OFFICIAL

Good afternoon s47F s4 s47F and s47F

Following on from s47F's request below for you to also view a document outlining the key design principles of the draft social media minimum age law.

That document, along with any associated material (including this email) are strictly confidential information and will be provided to you only for the purpose of facilitating an informed discussion on Friday. They should not be further disseminated, distributed or reproduced, or otherwise used for any purposes without the Commonwealth's prior express consent in writing.

If you could confirm by return email that you agree to these conditions, we will provide a copy of the key design principles. This will be done on an individual, not organisation, basis.

Kind regards

#### Age Assurance Trial Taskforce

Online Safety Branch • Digital Platforms, Safety and Classification Division

s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au

GPO Box 594 Canberra, ACT 2601

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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 @google.com>

**Sent:** Wednesday, 30 October 2024 2:03 PM

s22(1)(a)(ii) - Duplicate of part of Document 14

Pages 69-71 (Document 16) removed in their entirety as irrelevant under s22(1)(a)(ii) of the FOI Act as duplicating material from Document 14.

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**From:** Irwin, Andrew  
**Sent:** Thursday, 31 October 2024 9:25 AM  
**To:** s47F  
**Cc:** s47F; Age Assurance Trial; VANDENBROEK, Sarah; s22(1)(a)(ii); s22(1)(a)(ii)  
**Subject:** RE: Discussion for draft Bill to enforce a minimum age for access to social media [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Will do.

OFFICIAL

s22(1)(a)(ii) - Duplicate of Document 15



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Pages 73-75 (Document 17) removed in their entirety as irrelevant under s22(1)(a)(ii) of the FOI Act as duplicating material from Document 15.



**From:** Age Assurance Trial  
**Sent:** Thursday, 31 October 2024 9:38 AM  
**To:** s47F  
**Cc:** Age Assurance Trial; Irwin, Andrew  
**Subject:** RE: Discussion for draft Bill to enforce a minimum age for access to social media [SEC=OFFICIAL]  
**Attachments:** Social Media Minimum Age Law - Legislative Design Principles.docx

OFFICIAL

Hi s47F

Thank you for confirming that you agree to the conditions.

We would like to reiterate that this document, along with any associated material, are strictly confidential information. They should not be further disseminated, distributed or reproduced, or otherwise used for any purposes without the Commonwealth's prior express consent in writing.

Kind regards

**Age Assurance Trial Taskforce**

Online Safety Branch • Digital Platforms, Safety and Classification Division

s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au

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OFFICIAL

**From:** s47F  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 30 October 2024 8:30 PM  
**To:** Age Assurance Trial  
**Subject:** Re: Discussion for draft Bill to enforce a minimum age for access to social media [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Hi,

Thank you for the email. I am confirming via this reply that I agree with the conditions set out in the email.

Best

s47F

On Wed, Oct 30, 2024, 10:24 AM Age Assurance Trial <s22(1)(a)(ii)@infrastructure.gov.au> wrote:

OFFICIAL

Pages 77-80 (Document 18) removed in their entirety as irrelevant under s22(1)(a)(ii) of the FOI Act as duplicating material from Document 16.

**From:** Age Assurance Trial  
**Sent:** Thursday, 31 October 2024 10:26 AM  
**To:** s47F  
**Cc:** Irwin, Andrew; Age Assurance Trial  
**Subject:** RE: Discussion for draft Bill to enforce a minimum age for access to social media [SEC=OFFICIAL]  
**Attachments:** Social Media Minimum Age Law - Legislative Design Principles.docx

OFFICIAL

Hi s47F

Thank you for confirming that you agree to the conditions.

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Kind regards

**Age Assurance Trial Taskforce**

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OFFICIAL

**From:** s47F  
**Sent:** Thursday, 31 October 2024 10:11 AM  
**To:** Age Assurance Trial  
**Cc:** Irwin, Andrew ; s47F  
**Subject:** Re: Discussion for draft Bill to enforce a minimum age for access to social media [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Hi,

I agree to these conditions.

s47F

On Wed, Oct 30, 2024, 3:42 PM Age Assurance Trial <s22(1)(a)(ii)@infrastructure.gov.au> wrote:

OFFICIAL

Pages 82-85 (Document 19) removed in their entirety as irrelevant under s22(1)(a)(ii) of the FOI Act as duplicating material from Document 16.

s22(1)(a)(ii)



-----Original Appointment-----  
**From:** Google Calendar <calendar-notification@google.com> On Behalf Of s47F  
**Sent:** Thursday, 31 October 2024 11:49 AM  
**To:** Irwin, Andrew  
**Subject:** Accepted: Meeting consult on the design of the Commonwealth’s draft... @ Fri Nov 1, 2024 4pm - 4:30pm (AEDT) (Irwin, Andrew)  
**When:** Friday, 1 November 2024 4:00 PM-4:30 PM (UTC+10:00) Canberra, Melbourne, Sydney.  
**Where:** Teams Link / Level 6, 23-33 Mary Street, Surry Hills, NSW 2010.

s47F has accepted this invitation.

OFFICIAL Attachments

Hi s47F

- image001.jpg
- image001.jpg
- image001.jpg
- image001.jpg
- mg\_info.txt

The meeting is located in the Sydney office, level 6, 23-33 Mary Street, Surry Hills, NSW 2010. The building is known as NSW Teacher’s Federation Building and is a short stroll away (six-eight minutes) from Central Station (Elizabeth Street exit).

[cid:image001.jpg@01DB26F4.39BAF0F0]

Upon arrival, please use one of the two lifts on the building’s ground floor to access the Reception on the 6th floor. If Reception is not attended, please use the doorbell to advise staff of your arrival.

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

Please feel free to contact s22(1)(a) (Executive Assistant in Sydney) on s22(1)(a)(ii) if you have any questions or need assistance finding your way into the office.

Alternatively, please see the link below for a virtual meeting.

Microsoft Teams Need help?  
Join the meeting now  
Meeting ID: s22(1)(a)(ii)  
Passcode: s22(1)

Dial in by phone  
s22(1)(a)(ii) # Australia, Canberra  
Find a local number  
Phone conference ID: s22(1)(a)(ii) #  
Join on a video conferencing device  
Tenant key: s22(1)(a)(ii)  
Video ID: s22(1)(a)(ii)  
More info  
For organisers: Meeting options | Reset dial-in PIN  
s22(1)(a)(ii)

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OFFICIAL

When

Friday Nov 1, 2024 · 4pm – 4:30pm (Eastern Australia Time - Melbourne)

Location

Teams Link / Level 6, 23-33 Mary Street, Surry Hills, NSW 2010.  
[View map](#)

Guests

- Irwin, Andrew - organizer
- s47F - creator
- s47F - optional
- s47F - optional
- s47F - optional

[View all guest info](#)

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tation from [Google Calendar](#)

are receiving this email because you are an attendee on the event. To stop receiving future updates for this event, decline this event.

Forwarding this invitation could allow any recipient to send a response to the organizer, be added to the guest list, invite others regardless of their own invitation status, or modify your RSVP. [Learn more](#)

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s22(1)(a)(ii)

-----Original Appointment-----

**From:** Google Calendar <calendar-notification@google.com> On Behalf Of s47F**Sent:** Thursday, 23 January 2025 9:50 AM**To:** Irwin, Andrew**Subject:** Accepted: Google and OSB follow up discussion [SEC=OFFICIAL] @ Thu Jan 23, 2025 4pm - 4:30pm (AEDT) (Irwin, Andrew)**When:** Thursday, 23 January 2025 4:00 PM-4:30 PM (UTC+10:00) Canberra, Melbourne, Sydney.**Where:** Andrew's Office / Webex Link

s47F has accepted this invitation.

OFFICIAL

**Attachments**

Re: Meeting Follow Up ...

~~~~~  
-- Do not delete or change any of the following text. --

When it's time, join your Webex meeting here.

Join meeting

More ways to join:

Join from the meeting link

s22(1)(a)(ii)

Join by meeting number

Meeting number (access code): s22(1)(a)(ii)

Meeting password: s22(1)(a)(ii) when dialing from a video system)

Tap to join from a mobile device (attendees only)

s22(1)(a)(ii) ## Australia Toll

Join by phone

s22(1)(a)(ii) Australia Toll

Global call-in numbers

Join from a video system or application

Dial s22(1)(a)(ii)

You can also dial 210.4.202.4 and enter your meeting number.

If you are a host, click here and login site to view host information.

Need help? Go to <https://help.webex.com>

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for information on what information may be collected and how it will be managed where a meeting is recorded. Privacy information is also provided by Cisco, the owner of Webex, at <https://www.cisco.com/c/en/us/about/legal/privacy.html>

OFFICIAL

When

Thursday Jan 23, 2025 · 4pm – 4:30pm (Eastern Australia Time - Melbourne)

Location

Andrew's Office / Webex Link

[View map](#)

Guests

Irwin, Andrew - organizer

s47F - creator

s22(1)(a)(ii)

[View all guest info](#)

Invitation from [Google Calendar](#)

You are receiving this email because you are an attendee on the event.

Forwarding this invitation could allow any recipient to send a response to the organizer, be added to the guest list, invite others regardless of their own invitation status, or modify your RSVP. [Learn more](#)

From: s47F @google.com>
Sent: Thursday, 23 January 2025 9:51 AM
To: s22(1)(a)(ii)
Cc: s22(1)(a)(ii); Irwin, Andrew
Subject: Re: Meeting Follow Up [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Morning s22(1)(a)(ii)

Thanks so much for sending through the invitation. I have added my colleague s47F to the call as well.

We look forward to connecting later today.

Cheers,

s47F



s47F

YouTube Government Affairs and Public Policy -
Australia and New Zealand

s47F

s47F @google.com

On Thu, Jan 23, 2025 at 9:34 AM s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au> wrote:

OFFICIAL

Good morning s47F

I have sent over an invitation for 4PM today.

Please reach out if you need anything else! 😊

Kind Regards,

s22(1)(a)(ii)

Executive Assistant • s22(1)(a)(ii), A/g Assistant Secretary • Digital Platforms, International and Policy Branch

Executive Assistant • Andrew Irwin, Assistant Secretary • Online Safety Branch

Executive Assistant • Sarah Vandenbroek, First Assistant Secretary • Digital Platforms, Safety and Classification Division

Digital Platforms, Safety and Classification Division

s22(1)(a)(ii) [@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:s22(1)(a)(ii)@infrastructure.gov.au)

PH: 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.



 LGBTI Ally

OFFICIAL

From: s47F [@google.com](mailto:s47F@google.com)

Sent: Wednesday, 22 January 2025 4:55 PM

To: Irwin, Andrew <Andrew.Irwin@INFRASTRUCTURE.gov.au>

Cc: s22(1)(a)(ii) [@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:s22(1)(a)(ii)@infrastructure.gov.au); s22(1)(a)(ii)

[infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:s22(1)(a)(ii)@infrastructure.gov.au)

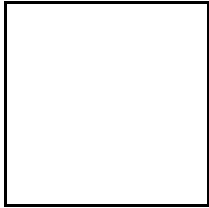
Subject: Re: Meeting Follow Up [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Thanks Andrew, we can do 4pm on either Thursday or Friday.

Please send through an invite if you would prefer to use Webex or Teams, otherwise I am happy to send through a Google meet if you have a preference for which day.

Cheers.

s47F



s47F

YouTube Government Affairs and Public
Policy - Australia and New Zealand

s47F

s47 [@google.com](mailto:s47F@google.com)

On Wed, Jan 22, 2025 at 4:46 PM Irwin, Andrew <Andrew.Irwin@infrastructure.gov.au> wrote:

OFFICIAL

Hi s47F

Unfortunately nothing before 11.30 on Friday itself – after 3.30 Thursday or Friday?

Cheers,

Andrew

OFFICIAL

From: s47F [@google.com](mailto:s47F@google.com)>

Sent: Wednesday, 22 January 2025 4:32 PM

To: Irwin, Andrew <Andrew.Irwin@INFRASTRUCTURE.gov.au>

Subject: Meeting Follow Up

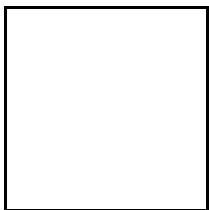
Hi Andrew,

Good to see you today - thank you for convening the meeting.

We would like to take you up on your offer for a follow up call. Would you happen to have any availability before 11:30 on Friday?

Cheers.

s47F



s47F

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Policy - Australia and New Zealand

s47F

s47 [@google.com](mailto:s47@google.com)

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