

**From:** s22(1)(a)  
**Sent:** Monday, 19 May 2025 2:02 PM  
**To:** DLO Wells  
**Cc:** CHISHOLM, James  
**Subject:** Deep Dive slide deck - Social Media Minimum Age and Age Assurance Trial ~~SEC-PROTECTED, CAVEAT - CH.CABINET~~  
**Attachments:** Deep dive - s22(1)(a)(ii) and Age Assurance Trial - Slide deck.pptx

~~PROTECTED, CH.CABINET~~

Hi s22(1)

Please see attached slide deck for the s22(1)(a)(ii) and Age Assurance Trial Deep Dive tomorrow morning. These are a comprehensive set of slides which we can focus on different topics during the meeting, depending on what the Minister would like to cover.

Please let me know if any questions/concerns.

s22(1)  
 Group Executive Officer & Director, Group Strategy • Communications and Media Group  
 s22(1) @infrastructure.gov.au  
 P s22(1)(a)(ii) • M s22(1)(a)(ii)  
 GPO Box 594 Canberra, ACT 2601

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

~~PROTECTED, CH.CABINET~~

**From:** s22(1)(a)(ii)  
**Sent:** Thursday, 29 May 2025 11:26 AM  
**To:** DLO Wells  
**Cc:** s22(1)(a)(ii); s22(1)(a)(ii); s22(1)(a)(ii); s22(1)(a)(ii); s22(1)(a)(ii); s22(1)(a)(ii); s22(1)(a)(ii)  
**Subject:** RE: MO Briefing Request - Due to DLOs by Thursday 29.5.25 - MO Meetings with Google and Meta [SEC=OFFICIAL]  
**Attachments:** MO Briefing Request - Google.docx; Attachment B - s22(1)(a)(ii); Attachment C - s22(1)(a)(ii); Attachment D - Digital Industry Group Inc's letter on the Age Assurance Technology Trial.pdf; Attachment F - s22(1)(a)(ii)

OFFICIAL

Hi s22(1)(a)(ii)

Please find attached the A/g Dep Sec cleared brief for Google and its attachments.

I'll send through another email with the Meta brief.

Thanks,  
s22(1)(a)(ii)

s22(1)(a)(ii)

Age Assurance Taskforce • Digital Platforms, Safety and Classification Division

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

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**From:** DLO Wells <DLO.Wells@mo.communications.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 28 May 2025 11:17 AM  
**To:** s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au; s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au; s22(1)(a)(ii) @INFRASTRUCTURE.gov.au; s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au; s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au; s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au  
**Cc:** DLO Wells <DLO.Wells@mo.communications.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au; s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au

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**Subject: RE: MO Briefing Request - Due to DLOs by Thursday 29.5.25 - MO Meetings with Google and Meta**  
**[SEC=OFFICIAL]**

OFFICIAL

Hi All,

Just confirming the google attendee will be s47F & the Meta attendees will be s47F, s47F and s47F.

Many thanks,

s22(1)(a)

s22(1)(a)(ii)

Department Liaison Officer • Office of the Hon Anika Wells MP • Minister for Communications and Minister for Sport

[DLO.Wells@mo.communications.gov.au](mailto:DLO.Wells@mo.communications.gov.au)

M s22(1)(a)(ii)

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

**Sent:** Tuesday, 27 May 2025 1:57 PM

**To:** DLO Wells <[DLO.Wells@mo.communications.gov.au](mailto:DLO.Wells@mo.communications.gov.au)>; s22(1)(a)(ii)

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); s22(1)(a)(ii)

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);

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

**Cc:** VANDENBROEK, Sarah <[Sarah.Vandenbroek@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:Sarah.Vandenbroek@infrastructure.gov.au)>; s22(1)(a)(ii)

s22(1)(a)(ii) [@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:s22(1)(a)(ii)@infrastructure.gov.au); Irwin, Andrew <[Andrew.Irwin@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:Andrew.Irwin@infrastructure.gov.au)>; s22(1)(a)(ii)

s22(1)(a)(ii) [@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:s22(1)(a)(ii)@infrastructure.gov.au); CHARLES, Susan <[Susan.Charles@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:Susan.Charles@infrastructure.gov.au)>; Hyles, Andrew <[andrew.hyles@communications.gov.au](mailto:andrew.hyles@communications.gov.au)>; Age Assurance Trial Taskforce <[AgeAssuranceTrial2@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:AgeAssuranceTrial2@infrastructure.gov.au)>

**Subject: RE: MO Briefing Request - Due to DLOs by Thursday 29.5.25 - MO Meetings with Google and Meta**

**[SEC=OFFICIAL]**

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Thanks s22(1)(a)(ii)

We are happy to lead on these briefs and coordinate across the group for input, considering s22(1)(a)(ii) and the Age Assurance Technology Trial will be a key topic of discussion.

I assume that other likely topics to be raised in these meetings include:

- s22(1)(a)(ii) (s22(1)(a)(ii) )

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- s22(1)(a)(ii) (s22(1)(a) )
- s22(1)(a)(ii) (s22(1)(a)(ii) )

Let me know what I've missed. s22(1)(a)(ii) will be the key contact and reach out to your teams for content (thanks s22(1)).

Kind regards

s22(1)(a)(ii)

Age Assurance Taskforce • Digital Platforms, Safety and Classification Division

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

P s22(1)(a)(ii)

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**Sent:** Tuesday, 27 May 2025 1:47 PM

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

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); s22(1)(a)(ii)

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); s22(1)(a)(ii)

**Cc:** DLO Wells <[DLO.Wells@mo.communications.gov.au](mailto:DLO.Wells@mo.communications.gov.au)>; VANDENBROEK, Sarah

<[Sarah.Vandenbroek@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:Sarah.Vandenbroek@infrastructure.gov.au)>; s22(1)(a)(ii) [@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:s22(1)(a)(ii)@infrastructure.gov.au); Irwin,

Andrew <[Andrew.Irwin@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:Andrew.Irwin@infrastructure.gov.au)>; s22(1)(a)(ii) [@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:s22(1)(a)(ii)@infrastructure.gov.au); CHARLES, Susan

<[Susan.Charles@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:Susan.Charles@infrastructure.gov.au)>; Hyles, Andrew <[andrew.hyles@communications.gov.au](mailto:andrew.hyles@communications.gov.au)>

**Subject:** MO Briefing Request - Due to DLOs by Thursday 29.5.25 - MO Meetings with Google and Meta [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hi All,

The Minister's Chief of Staff is having an introductory meetings with both Google and Meta.

The meeting times and dates are still TBC but the MO have requested briefs to support their meeting. Giving you visibility of this request while details are still being ironed out. As soon as I hear anything further on the details yet to be confirmed, I'll pass them on. The MO has requested the brief to be emailed to the DLOs by 12 Noon on Thursday 29 May. Apologies, I acknowledge this is a tight turnaround.

Given the Minister will not be attending the meetings, formal meeting briefs are not required to be provided via PDMS. A similar, if not the same, template can be used for these briefs. I've included meeting details below as available:

Google:

- What – Introductory meeting with MO and Google
- When – TBC
- Where – Virtual
- Attendees –

- Google attendees TBC (bios required – I'm awaiting confirmation from the MO)
- Barnaby Kerdel, Chief of Staff
- s22(1)(a)(ii), Senior Advisor
- Who requested the meeting – Chief of Staff
- Topics for the brief
  - Department to advise on likely meeting topics to be raised by Google
- Relevant adviser – s22(1)(a)(ii)
- Relevant documents
  - s22(1)(a)(ii)

#### Meta:

- What – Introductory meeting with MO and Meta
- When – TBC
- Where – Virtual
- Attendees –
  - Meta attendees TBC (bios required – I'm awaiting confirmation from the MO)
  - Barnaby Kerdel, Chief of Staff
  - s22(1)(a)(ii), Senior Advisor
- Who requested the meeting – Chief of Staff
- Topics for the brief
  - Department to advise on likely meeting topics to be raised by Meta
- Relevant adviser – s22(1)(a)(ii)

Happy to discuss if you have any questions.

Many thanks,

s22(1)(a)

s22(1)(a)(ii)

Department Liaison Officer • Office of the Hon Anika Wells MP • Minister for Communications and Minister for Sport

[DLO.Wells@mo.communications.gov.au](mailto:DLO.Wells@mo.communications.gov.au)

M s22(1)(a)(ii)

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 <p><b>Australian Government</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts</b></p>	<b>Meeting/Event Brief</b>
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**To:** Barnaby Kerdel, Chief of Staff

**MEETING:** Introductory meeting with Google

**Timing:** XX May 2025

**Venue:** Virtual

**Meeting with:** s47F, Public Policy Senior Manager, Google Australia and YouTube

You requested the introductory meeting with Google to discuss the Government's approach to social media regulation.

**Our Proposed Objectives:**

To highlight the Government's approach to social media regulation, including:

- s22(1)(a)(ii)
- the Age Assurance Technology Trial,
- s22(1)(a)(ii)
- 
- 

**Their Objective:**

To discuss the Government's approach to online safety, s22(1)(a)(ii)


**Key Points:**

s22(1)(a)(ii)


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s22(1)(a)(ii)



Age Assurance Technology Trial

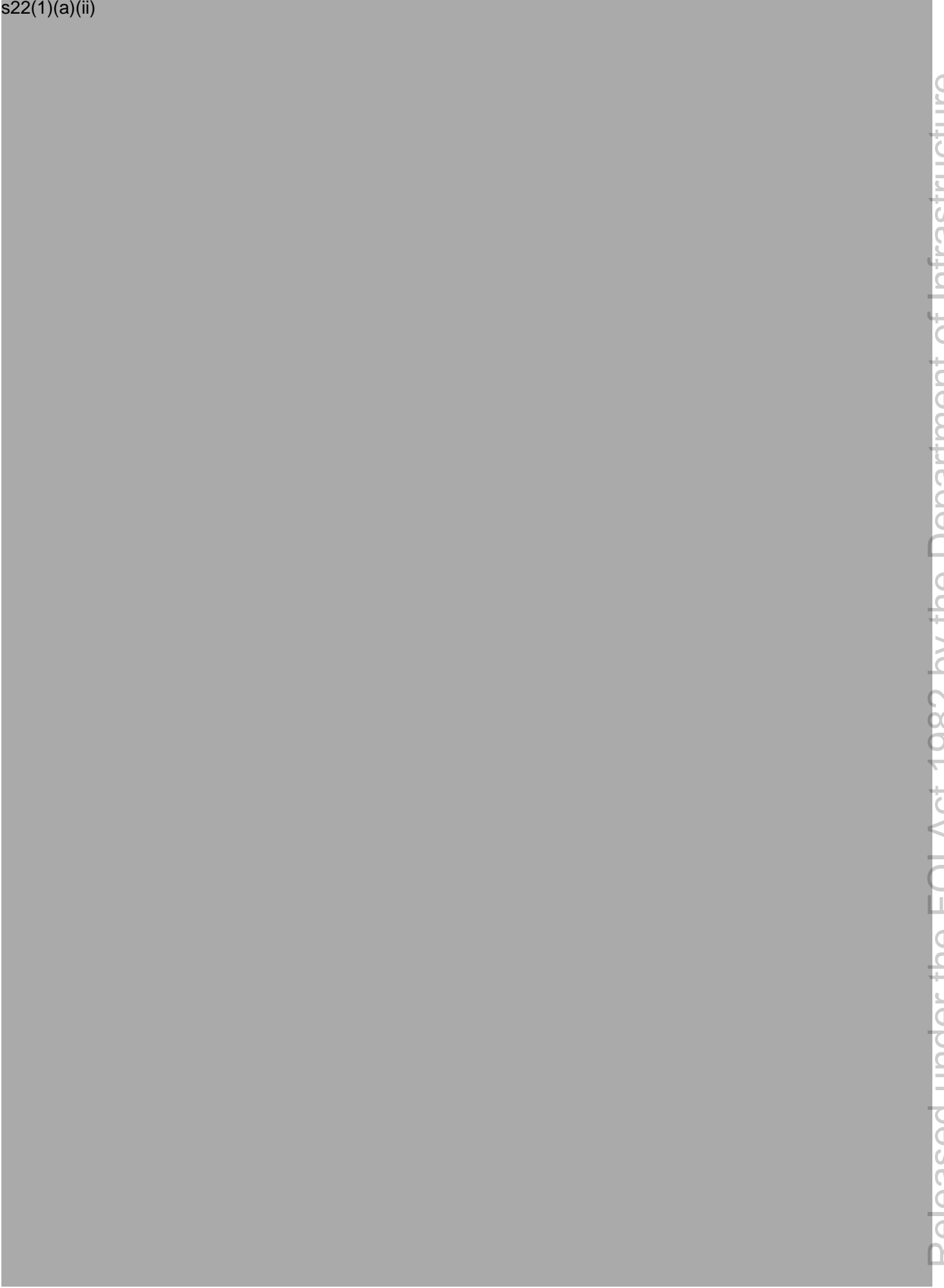
9. On 1 May 2024, the Prime Minister announced a \$6.5 million age assurance trial, to examine options to protect children from online harm, including from social media and access to age-restricted content like online pornography.
10. The technology trial is assessing the feasibility of age assurance technologies in real-world applications, to identify whether they are accurate, user-friendly and compliant with privacy laws.
11. More than 50 providers have submitted their technologies for assessment. This includes age verification, estimation and inference approaches across different levels of the tech stack, as well as parental consent and control solutions.
12. The Age Check Certification Scheme is due to report back to Government on the results of the technology trial by July, with the results to be released thereafter.
13. The trial does not set industry standards or define universal benchmarks for age assurance performance. It does not evaluate the commercial viability of these systems, assess their business models or provide a comprehensive policy recommendation for deployment.
14. s47C  

15. The Digital Industry Group Inc. (DIGI), on behalf of its members (which includes Google), sent a letter to the department raising concerns regarding the process of the technology trial and the ability to robustly inform reasonable steps guidance. A copy of DIGI's letter can be found at **Attachment D**.

s22(1)(a)(ii)



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s22(1)(a)(ii)



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Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts



**Stakeholder Implications:** Apart from the above, the Department does not anticipate any additional stakeholder implications arising from the meeting.

**Sensitive and Critical Information:** N/A

Name: Sarah Vandenbroek  
Position: First Assistant Secretary  
Division: Digital Platforms, Safety and Classification  
Ph: s22(1)(a)(ii)  
Mob: s22(1)(a)(ii)  
Date Cleared: 28 May 2025

Contact Officer: Andrew Irwin  
Division: Digital Platforms, Safety and Classification  
Ph: s22(1)(a)(ii)  
Mob: s22(1)(a)(ii)

**Attachments:**

Attachment A: s22(1)(a)(ii)

Attachment B: s22(1)(a)(ii)

Attachment C: s22(1)(a)(ii)

Attachment D: Digital Industry Group Inc.'s letter on the Age Assurance Technology Trial

Attachment E: s22(1)(a)(ii)

Attachment F: s22(1)(a)(ii)



Mr. Andrew Irwin  
Assistant Secretary Online Safety Branch  
Digital Platforms, Safety and Classification Division  
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts  
By email: [Andrew.Irwin@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:Andrew.Irwin@infrastructure.gov.au)

CC: s22(1)(a)(ii) [@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:@infrastructure.gov.au); Ms Julie Inman Grant, eSafety Commissioner  
[Julie.InmanGrant@esafety.gov.au](mailto:Julie.InmanGrant@esafety.gov.au).

16 April 2025.

## Re: Age Assurance Policy and the Age Assurance Technology Trial

Dear Andrew,

We are writing to you concerning the Department's current process for developing the Government's policy on age assurance for online services and online content under the Online Safety Act (2021) (the OSA) in the context of the current Age Assurance Technology Trial (the Trial).

DIGI supports government's aim of the Trial 'to determine the effectiveness of available technologies to better protect young people by limiting their access to harmful and inappropriate content online'<sup>1</sup>. We are participating in the Trial as a member of the Advisory Board, and some of DIGI's members have submitted expressions of interest for their age assurance methods to undergo testing.

While DIGI supports the aims for the Trial, it has become increasingly apparent that the Trial provider, the Age Check Certification Scheme (ACCS), is encountering some significant issues in progressing the project. We are seriously concerned that the results of the Trial will not be sufficiently robust to inform the reasonable steps that industry must take to implement age restrictions under the OSA.

The issues concerning the Trial, which are outlined in this letter, have been raised with ACCS by DIGI and other stakeholders on the Advisory Board and ACCS has undertaken to consider our feedback<sup>2</sup>. However, many of these issues appear to be inherent to the timing and scope constraints under which the Trial is operating. Despite the consultation between ACCS and the Advisory Board, we remain concerned that addressing the most critical issues with the Trial will require substantial changes to the project, which cannot be achieved within the allocated time frame. While we support the very sensible intentions of the Trial, industry now faces a situation where the Trial is unlikely to yield sufficient clarity about the effectiveness of different age assurance technologies in time for regulated service providers to start building and deploying technologies to comply with the requirements of the OSA.

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<sup>1</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> These issues are being documented in the minutes of the meetings of ACCS with the Advisory Board.



In light of these concerns, we would value a meeting with you as soon as possible (which we appreciate may need to occur after the caretaker period) to better understand your plans for informing government decisions on age assurance.

## Background

The Trial represents a \$6.5 million financial investment by the Australian Government<sup>3</sup>, and is due to deliver an interim report this month and a final report in June 2025. The results of the Trial are not only important to those online industry providers who will be required to implement age assurance solutions, but to all Australian users who will need to undergo age assurance to access certain online services.

It is critical to acknowledge that the regulatory environment in which the Trial is taking place has dramatically changed since the Trial was announced in May 2024 and that this has serious implications for the scope and importance of the findings of the Trial. When the Trial was announced in May 2024, the scope of the Trial was focused on evaluating the efficacy of technologies in restricting access of under 18-year-old users to online pornography and other high impact online content. At this time, government had not decided to impose age assurance requirements on industry in the absence of any clarity that the technology or market for age assurance technologies had evolved since the Office of the eSafety Commissioner found in March 2023 that the market was “immature”, and there was no “silver bullet”<sup>4</sup> solution that could be implemented. It was not until July 2024 with the release of the eSafety Commissioner’s Position Paper on development of the Phase 2 codes that it became clear that eSafety expected industry to implement extensive age assurance requirements as part of the code development process. The Paper outlined how eSafety considered industry should implement age assurance requirements across the digital technology stack to restrict users from accessing pornography and other content unsuitable for users under 18. In the Paper, eSafety also advised industry that the results of the Trial would inform the implementation of the Phase 2 Codes should they be registered. DIGI raised with eSafety our concerns about implementing such wide-ranging age assurance requirements in the Phase 2 Codes, in advance of the Trial and requested that the codes be deferred. eSafety declined industry’s request, which put industry in the difficult position of developing the Phase 2 Codes without being able to consider the outcome of the Trial.

A further and profound change in the regulatory context for the Trial occurred in November 2024. Within weeks of the Trial commencing in November 2024, parliament passed the Social Media Minimum Age Act (2024) (SMMA). The result of this development was that the provider, ACCS, had to rapidly pivot the focus of the Trial to evaluating the effectiveness of solutions for assuring whether users of age restricted social media services are over the age of 16. As you are aware, verifying the age of online users under 16 is far more challenging than verifying whether users are adults and requires very different age assurance solutions, for example facial estimation solutions, since children under 16 may not have official identification documents such as drivers licenses or passports.

Both the Phase 2 Codes process and the SMMA established expectations that a wide range of industry participants would undertake age assurance on their services regardless of the outcome of the Trial. These regulatory developments also removed the possibility that the Trial may find no age assurance

<sup>3</sup> We understand it is budgeted to cost around \$6.5 million. Department of Infrastructure, Media Release 15 November 2025 <https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/departments/media/publications/tender-awarded-age-assurance-trial>

<sup>4</sup> Office of eSafety Commissioner, *Roadmap for Age Verification* 29 August 2023.



technology is sufficiently effective to be implemented in Australia because the requirement had already been established in regulation.

## DIGI concerns about the Age Assurance Technology Trial

### Governance of trial

DIGI is concerned that the governance structure for the Trial does not provide a strong foundation for testing a robust or sufficiently broad sample of age assurance solutions that can be readily implemented in Australia by the commencement of the SMMAA in December this year.

The industry engagement for the Trial is being led by Iain Corby, the Executive Director of the Age Verification Providers Association. Mr. Corby has declared a conflict of interest in relation to the Trial because of his role as a director and Executive Director of The Age Verification Providers Association.<sup>5</sup>

The Trial has been conducted through a self-selective expression of interest process and to date, the Trial has received 51 expressions of interest from companies offering several types of age estimation technologies at different stages of operational readiness. As the director of this association, Mr. Corby has well established connections with an extensive range of third-party age assurance solutions providers, and this has served to encourage a high level of participation from that sector of the industry. However, the outreach to other potential participants and industry sections by ACCS has been patchy.

DIGI is uncertain about the representativeness of the sample group of participants in the Trial, especially when compared to the age assurance solutions available in the market, including those not being assessed in the Trial. e.g. some proprietary solutions and government developed solutions. If the government does not intend for the Trial to fully evaluate age assurance solutions, the industry needs clarity on how the results will guide age-assuring users under the OSA.

### Approach to testing

We understand that the testing environment for the Trial is a laboratory version of a social media site. This is a serious limitation of the Trial in the current regulatory context. If registered, the Phase 2 Codes set an age assurance requirement on a much broader range of services than social media services, including gaming services, websites, and app distribution services. The requirement for age assurance under the Online Safety Act will vary across different segments of the technology stack. This variation is influenced by factors such as the services provided by individual providers and the volume of data collected by these services. As a result, no single age verification method can be effectively applied to the diverse services required for age assurance under the OSA. As DIGI members continue to examine possible approaches to age assurance, it is becoming increasingly clear that a package of solutions may yield the best age assurance results. The appropriate approach will differ between services, based on factors such as pre-existing data availability, the nature of content on the service, etc. Because the Trial is only testing selected technologies in isolation in an artificial social media environment it will not evaluate

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<sup>5</sup> <https://ageassurance.com.au/conflict-of-interest-register/>



how a package of solutions can enhance the overall effectiveness of age assurance technologies across the digital ecosystem.

## Test plan for the project.

The revised scope of the Trial has made it challenging for the provider to develop a robust test plan for the project. In order to test the effectiveness of age assurance solutions for the purposes of the SMMAA, ACCS must test solutions on a representative sample of child participants within an appropriate age range. However, the Advisory Board Committee has raised concerns that the current testing plan has some significant deficiencies.

At the most recent meeting on March 14, ACCS advised the Advisory Board that a Mystery Shopping company had been engaged to recruit child participants to undergo testing for the project. This company has no previous experience of working with children and proposes recruiting their own employees for the project. Advisory Board members at the meeting, raised concerns that this method of engaging children for the project is contrary to best research practices that safeguard child participants rights and wellbeing and is unlikely to yield a sufficiently representative test sample of Australian children (including those with special needs) within an appropriate age range for the project. Given the important aims of the Trial, and its cost to the taxpayer, it is concerning that ACCS does not yet have a robust testing plan in place.

## Impact of age assurance on the community

We strongly believe that the scope of the Trial must be significantly expanded to include a thorough evaluation of user's experiences of age assurance solutions in a live setting. Without this information it will be difficult for the government to make an informed assessment of the likely impact of implementing different technological solutions on the community at large.

ACCS plans to focus the Trial on verifying the technical claims of technology providers about the tested solutions, particularly their ability to estimate social media users' ages accurately. Furthermore, the test environment is a laboratory social media environment and will not include 'live testing' of the technologies (as was stated in the Department's media release). A major limitation of the project scope is that it will not include a thorough assessment of the usability of different solutions (including by different age demographics with different levels of digital literacy) nor will it evaluate the propensity of users to circumvent the technology in various ways, for example by using a VPN or handing their device to an older user. Therefore, while the Trial will likely yield useful data about the extent the tested solutions can accurately estimate age, we would caution the government against relying on that data to draw broader conclusions about the likely response of the community to the implementation of those technologies in Australia.

## Next steps

DIGI supports the pivoting of the Trial scope to encompass the SMMAA. We and our members participating in the Trial will continue to work constructively with the Trial provider to progress the project within these constraints. However, we think it is important to record our concern that the outcomes of the project may not meet the Government's needs.



As part of the process for development for the Phase 2 Codes under the OSA, DIGI considered a wide range of views from industry stakeholders about the different technological solutions for conducting age assurance online and developed a flexible and pragmatic approach for implementing age assurance requirements across the digital ecosystem. DIGI members – and many other companies – have continued to think deeply about the approach to age assurance since the Trial commenced. Indeed, many companies have announced new approaches to age assurance during the Trial. We would welcome the chance to meet with the Department and share our experiences and perspectives directly, to ensure forthcoming government decisions account for the limitations and challenges of the Trial.

I hope this articulation of concerns at this stage of the process is useful, and I look forward to meeting with your team to further discuss these matters.

Yours sincerely,

s47F

A large grey rectangular box redacting the signature of Dr. Jennifer Duxbury.

Dr. Jennifer Duxbury  
Director Policy, Regulatory Affairs and Research  
Digital Industry Group Inc.

**From:** s22(1)(a)(ii)  
**Sent:** Thursday, 29 May 2025 11:27 AM  
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OFFICIAL

Hi s22(1)(a)(ii)

As flagged, please find attached the A/g Dep Sec cleared brief for Meta and its attachments.

Please let me know if you have any issues or questions. I have left the date highlighted on both briefs, noting the meetings dates haven't been confirmed.

Thanks,  
 s22(1)(a)(ii)

s22(1)(a)(ii)  
 Age Assurance Taskforce • Digital Platforms, Safety and Classification Division  
 s22(1)(a)(ii) @infrastructure.gov.au  
 P s22(1)(a)(ii)  
 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.*

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

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 <p><b>Australian Government</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts</b></p>	<b>Meeting/Event Brief</b>
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**To:** Barnaby Kerdel, Chief of Staff

**MEETING:** Introductory meeting with Meta

**Timing:** XX May 2025

**Venue:** Virtual

**Meeting with:**

1. s47F [REDACTED], Director of Public Policy, Meta
2. s47F [REDACTED], Head of Policy Programs, Australia, Meta
3. s47F [REDACTED], Executive Assistant, Meta

You requested the introductory meeting with Meta to discuss the Government's approach to social media regulation.

**Our Proposed Objectives:**

To highlight the Government's approach to social media regulation, including:

- s22(1)(a)(ii) [REDACTED]
- the Age Assurance Technology Trial,
- s22(1)(a)(ii) [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

**Their Objective:**


To discuss the Government's approach to online safety.

**Key Points:**


s22(1)(a)(ii) [REDACTED]

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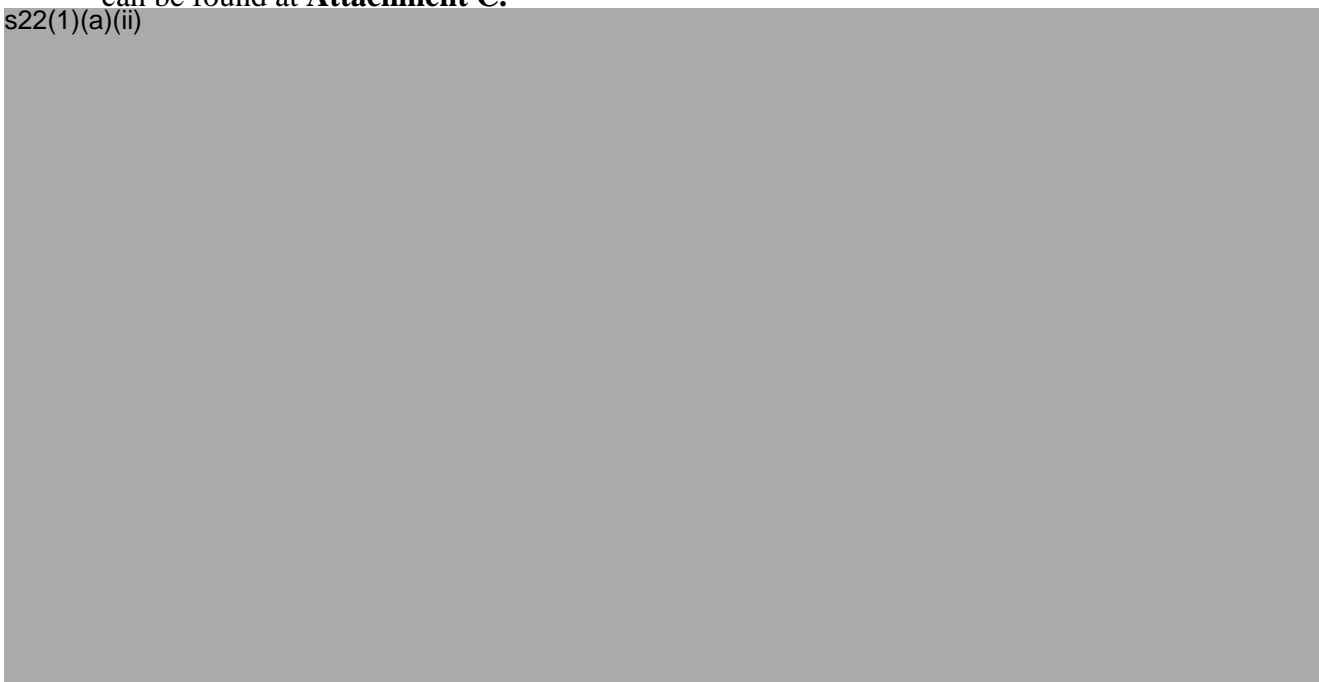
s22(1)(a)(ii)




Age Assurance Technology Trial

7. On 1 May 2024, the Prime Minister announced a \$6.5 million age assurance trial, to examine options to protect children from online harm, including from social media and access to age-restricted content like online pornography.
8. The technology trial is assessing the feasibility of age assurance technologies in real-world applications, to identify whether they are accurate, user-friendly and compliant with privacy laws.
9. More than 50 providers have submitted their technologies for assessment. This includes age verification, estimation and inference approaches across different levels of the tech stack, as well as parental consent and control solutions.
10. The Age Check Certification Scheme is due to report back to Government on the results of the technology trial by July, with the results to be released thereafter.
11. The trial does not set industry standards or define universal benchmarks for age assurance performance. It does not evaluate the commercial viability of these systems, assess their business models or provide a comprehensive policy recommendation for deployment.
12. s47C  

13. The Digital Industry Group Inc. (DIGI), on behalf of its members (which includes Meta), sent a letter to the department raising concerns regarding the process of the technology trial and the ability to robustly inform reasonable steps guidance. A copy of DIGI's letter can be found at **Attachment C**.

s22(1)(a)(ii)



s22(1)(a)(ii)



**Stakeholder Implications:** Apart from the above, the Department does not anticipate any additional stakeholder implications arising from the meeting.

**Sensitive and Critical Information:** N/A



Name: Sarah Vandebroek  
Position: First Assistant Secretary  
Division: Digital Platforms, Safety and  
Classification Division  
Ph: s22(1)(a)(ii)  
Mob: s22(1)(a)(ii)  
Date Cleared: 28 May 2025

Contact Officer: Andrew Irwin  
Division: Digital Platforms, Safety and  
Classification  
Ph: s22(1)(a)(ii)  
Mob: s22(1)(a)(ii)

**Attachments:**

Attachment A: s22(1)(a)(ii)

Attachment B: s22(1)(a)(ii)

Attachment C: Digital Industry Group Inc.'s letter on the Age Assurance Technology Trial

Attachment D: s22(1)(a)(ii)

**From:** VANDENBROEK, Sarah  
**Sent:** Friday, 6 June 2025 11:04 AM  
**To:** DLO Wells  
**Cc:** CHISHOLM, James; Irwin, Andrew; s22(1)(a)(ii); s22(1)(a)(ii); s22(1)(a)(ii); Age Assurance Trial Taskforce  
**Subject:** FW: MO Briefing Request - Due to DLOs by COB Friday 6 June - MO Meeting with TikTok [SEC=OFFICIAL:Sensitive]  
**Attachments:** Attachment A - Biographies.docx; Attachment B - s22(1)(a)(ii); Attachment C - s22(1)(a)(ii); Attachment D - s22(1)(a)(ii); Attachment E - Digital Industry Group Inc.'s letter on the Age Assurance Technology Trial.pdf

OFFICIAL:Sensitive

Hi s22(1)(a) – as requested, the information below and attached is provided to support the Office's meeting with TikTok.

Regards,  
s22(1)(a)

#### MINISTER WELLS' OFFICE – MEETING WITH TIKTOK

##### **Expected Attendees**

- Ms Ella Woods-Joyce, Director of Public Policy, TikTok
- Ms Sabina Husic, Public Policy Lead, Data and Privacy, TikTok

##### **Proposed Objectives:**

To highlight the Government's approach to social media regulation, including:

- s22(1)(a)(ii)
- the Age Assurance Technology Trial,
- s22(1)(a)(ii)
- 
- 

##### **Their Objective:**

To discuss the Government's approach to online safety, s22(1)(a)(ii)

##### **Key Points:**

s22(1)(a)(ii)

s22(1)(a)(ii)

Age Assurance Technology Trial

- On 1 May 2024, the Prime Minister announced a \$6.5 million age assurance trial, to examine options to protect children from online harm, including from social media and access to age-restricted content like online pornography.
- The technology trial is assessing the feasibility of age assurance technologies in real-world applications, to identify whether they are accurate, user-friendly and compliant with privacy laws.
- More than 50 providers have submitted their technologies for assessment. This includes age verification, estimation and inference approaches across different levels of the tech stack, as well as parental consent and control solutions.
- The Age Check Certification Scheme is due to report back to Government on the results of the technology trial by July, with the results to be released thereafter.
- The trial does not set industry standards or define universal benchmarks for age assurance performance. It does not evaluate the commercial viability of these systems, assess their business models or provide a comprehensive policy recommendation for deployment.
- s47C [REDACTED]
- The Digital Industry Group Inc. (DIGI), on behalf of its members (which includes TikTok), sent a letter to the department raising concerns regarding the process of the technology trial and the ability to robustly inform reasonable steps guidance. A copy of DIGI's letter can be found at **Attachment E**. s47C [REDACTED]

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s47C



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s22(1)(a)(ii)

**Sensitive and Critical Information:** In the past, TikTok has sought to exploit perceived misalignments in position between the department and Minister Rowland's Office. Statements made in meetings with TikTok have appeared in the media shortly after the meetings.

**Attachments:**

Attachment A: s22(1)(a)(ii)

Attachment B: s22(1)(a)(ii)

Attachment C: s22(1)(a)(ii)

Attachment D: s22(1)(a)(ii)

Attachment E: Digital Industry Group Inc's letter on the Age Assurance Technology Trial

OFFICIAL:Sensitive

**From:** DLO Wells <[DLO.Wells@mo.communications.gov.au](mailto:DLO.Wells@mo.communications.gov.au)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, 3 June 2025 9:47 AM

**To:** s22(1)(a)(ii) <[s22\(1\)\(a\)\(ii\)@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:s22(1)(a)(ii)@infrastructure.gov.au)>; Age Assurance Trial Taskforce <[s22\(1\)\(a\)\(ii\)@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:s22(1)(a)(ii)@infrastructure.gov.au)>

**Cc:** DLO Wells <[DLO.Wells@mo.communications.gov.au](mailto:DLO.Wells@mo.communications.gov.au)>; VANDENBROEK, Sarah

<[Sarah.Vandenbroek@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:Sarah.Vandenbroek@infrastructure.gov.au)>; Irwin, Andrew <[Andrew.Irwin@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:Andrew.Irwin@infrastructure.gov.au)>; CHISHOLM, James <[James.CHISHOLM@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:James.CHISHOLM@infrastructure.gov.au)>; s22(1)(a)(ii) <[s22\(1\)\(a\)\(ii\)@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:s22(1)(a)(ii)@infrastructure.gov.au)>; s22(1)(a)(ii) <[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)>; CMGroupExecutive <[CMGroupExecutive@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:CMGroupExecutive@infrastructure.gov.au)>

**Subject:** MO Briefing Request - Due to DLOs by COB Friday 6 June - MO Meeting with TikTok [SEC=OFFICIAL:Sensitive]

OFFICIAL:Sensitive

Hi All,

The Minister's Chief of Staff is having an introductory meeting with TikTok on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> June. The MO has requested a brief to support their meeting. Grateful if we could please have the meeting brief emailed to the DLOs by COB Friday 6<sup>th</sup> June. Given the Minister will not be attending the meeting, a formal meeting brief is not required to be provided via PDMS. A similar, if not the same, template can be used for these briefs. I've included meeting details below as available:

- What – Advisor meeting with TikTok
- When – Tuesday 10 June, timing TBC
- Where – APH
- Attendees –
  - Ella Woods-Joyce, Director of Public Policy, Tik-Tok (bio requested)

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- Sabina Husic, TikTok (bio requested)
- Barnaby Kerdel, Chief of Staff
- s22(1)(a)(ii), Senior Advisor
- Who requested the meeting – MO
- Topics for the brief
  - Department to advise on likely meeting topics to be raised by TikTok
- Relevant adviser – Summer Brady

Very happy to discuss if you have any questions.

Many thanks,

s22(1)(a)

s22(1)(a)(ii)

Department Liaison Officer • Office of the Hon Anika Wells MP • Minister for Communications and Minister for Sport

[DLO.Wells@mo.communications.gov.au](mailto:DLO.Wells@mo.communications.gov.au)

GPO Box 594 Canberra, ACT 2601

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

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[infrastructure.gov.au](http://infrastructure.gov.au)



*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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MS25-000810



Australian Government

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

**To:** The Hon Anika Wells MP, Minister for Communications and Minister for Sport (for decision)

**Subject:** Age assurance trial: Release of consumer research and initial technical trial findings

**Timely Date:** Please action by Thursday 19 June 2025 to allow a media release and publication of findings ahead of the eSafety Commissioner's National Press Club address s47C

**Recommendation/s:**

1. That you **agree** to release the age assurance consumer research final report (**Attachments A–C**), with timing and details to be settled with your office.

**Agreed / Not Agreed / Please Discuss**

2. That you **agree** to release a summary of the initial findings from the age assurance technology trial, with timing and details to be settled with your office.

**Agreed / Not Agreed / Please Discuss**

The Hon Anika Wells MP

Date:

**Comments:**
**Key Points:**

1. On 1 May 2024, the Prime Minister announced \$6.5 million in the 2024–25 Budget for an age assurance trial, to examine options to protect children from online harm, including from social media and online pornography. The trial comprises 3 key elements – consumer research, stakeholder engagement and a technology trial (see **Additional Information** for background).

*Consumer research – final report*

2. On 2 January 2025, the Social Research Centre (SRC) delivered a final report on research into Australians' attitudes towards the use of age assurance technologies (**Attachments A–C**). Based on a survey of 3,947 Australians (80% adults and 20% people under 18 years), key findings include:

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- a. Australians broadly understand the importance of age assurance as a means of preventing children from accessing inappropriate material – around 9 in 10 adults expressed support to some extent for using age assurance methods.
- b. Australians have limited unprompted awareness of online age assurance methods, however awareness increases when prompted with a description.
- c. Likelihood to use age assurance technologies is mixed – there is higher acceptance for using age assurance to access adult-oriented services compared to general services.
- d. Australians have significant security and privacy concerns related to digital platforms use of personal data.

3. s47C

4. s47C

#### *Technology trial – initial findings*

5. On 18 May 2025, the Age Check Certification Scheme (ACCS) delivered a draft report outlining initial findings from the independent assessment of age assurance technologies. At a high level, the draft report found (see **Attachment D** for more detail):

- a. Age assurance can be done in Australia, with no noteworthy technical impediment.
- b. There is no one-size-fits-all age assurance solution, however there is a wide range of technologies that can be readily applied by online services.
- c. Age assurance providers are making appropriate internal policy decisions about the handling of personal data.
- d. Performance of technologies was broadly consistent across all demographic groups included in the testing process, which involved a nationally representative sample.

6. ACCS is due to deliver a final report in mid-July 2025, at which point the Department will brief you on the findings. The report will also be used to inform the eSafety Commissioner's regulatory guidance to industry on what constitutes 'reasonable steps' under the minimum age obligation. s47C

#### **Sensitivities:**

7. s47C

8. The Department considers that releasing these initial findings provides an opportunity for positive messaging on trial outcomes, which will maintain momentum around online safety initiatives while the social media minimum age legislative rules are being finalised.

9. s47C

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**Financial impacts: N/A**

**Legal/Legislative impacts: N/A**

**Stakeholder Implications:** See Sensitivities

**Consultation:** N/A

### Media Opportunities:

s47C

11. In addition to the statement, ACCS is expected to verbally brief members of their Stakeholder Advisory Board, of which a selection of major digital industry stakeholders are members. A verbal briefing of this group, followed by a public statement ensures equal and consistent public messaging and mitigates against misleading media reporting on the issues related to the technology trial.

12. The eSafety Commissioner is scheduled to speak at the National Press Club on Tuesday 24 June 2025. Release of the technology trial initial findings prior to this address will enable the Commissioner to reinforce positive messaging during her address.

**Attachments:**

## Attachment A: Consumer Research Analytical Report

## Attachment B: Consumer Research Technical Report

**Attachment C: Consumer Research 2-page summary of key results**

**Attachment D: Draft ACCS statement**

### Attachment E: Proposed timeline – age assurance trial announcement strategy

Cleared By: James Chisholm

Position: Deputy Secretary

Division: Communications and Media Group

Mob: s22(1)(a)(ii)

Cleared Date: 5 June 2025

Contact Officer: Andrew Irwin

Section: Online Safety Branch

Ph: s22(1)(a)(ii)

Mob: s22(1)(a)(ii)

**Instructions for Ministerial Services: Nil**

**Do you require a signed hardcopy to be returned:** No

**Responsible Adviser:** s22(1)(a)(ii)

**PDMS Distribution List:** Barnaby Kerdel, s22(1)(a), s22(1)(a)(ii), Jim Betts, James Chisholm, Sarah Vandenbroek, Andrew Irwin, s22(1)(a)(ii), s22(1)(a)(ii), s22(1)(a)(ii), s22(1)(a), s22(1)(a), s22(1)( )  
s22(1), s22(1)(a) ,,,, ( )  
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**Additional Information:****Background – consumer research**

- In mid-2024, the Department approached 7 suppliers through the mandatory Management Advisory Services Panel (SON3751667).
- On 28 August 2024, the Department executed an Order for Services with the Social Research Centre (SRC), valued at \$278,293.40 (incl. GST).
- The Department worked closely with SRC to develop a research framework to effectively examine Australians' willingness to use age assurance technologies to access online services where pornography is likely to be encountered, and other services that may pose harm to children, including social media.
  - Best efforts were made to align survey questions with the rapidly shifting policy space, particularly in light of the announcement (10 September 2024) and subsequent development of legislation to introduce a minimum age for holding social media accounts.
- The research consisted of 3 key components:
  - **Cognitive testing** to ensure survey questions and response options performed as intended.
  - An **online survey** completed by 3,140 adults and 807 children/young people aged 8 to 17 years. SRC provided a nationally representative sample, sourced primarily from a probability-based online panel, supplemented with sourced from a non-probability online panel in order to boost the sample of adults, parents, and their children.
  - An **online community** to further probe the online survey findings, with participants who consented to future research as part of the survey. The online community occurred over 3 days, comprising 3 discussion groups of 100 people each – young people 18-25 years, parents of children up to 16 years and other adults aged 25+.

**Background – technology trial**

- In November 2024, following an open tender process, the Government awarded a contract to the Age Check Certification Scheme (ACCS) to conduct an independent assessment of the feasibility of age assurance technologies, based on criteria including (but not limited to) accuracy, ease of use, privacy protection, and data security. Rather than trialling a single technology, the purpose of the trial is to assess the maturity of the existing market for age assurance technologies and methods.
- More than 50 providers have submitted technology for assessment. This includes age verification, age estimation and age inference technologies across different levels of the tech stack, as well as parental consent and control solutions.

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**Background – stakeholder engagement**

- In May 2024, the Department established a cross-government working group of relevant Commonwealth departments and agencies – including the office of the eSafety Commissioner – to provide a whole-of-government lens to the age assurance trial, including in relation to privacy, security and human rights issues.
- From August to October 2024, the Department held roundtables with a wide-ranging public stakeholder base, comprising more than 120 participants, including young Australians (including First Nations youth), parents and child-development experts, mental health organisations, the digital industry, and community and civil society organisations.

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Programs 'at a glance'



## Programs 'at a glance'

Program	Funding over forward estimates (\$m) <sup>1</sup>	End date	Major brief prepared	Contact
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## Outcome 5

<b>Age Assurance Trial</b> Trial of age assurance technology to limit children's access to age inappropriate content online, including from social media and access to age-restricted content like online pornography.	-	30 June 2025	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sarah Vandenbroek, First Assistant Secretary, Digital Platforms, Safety and Classification Division; s22(1)(a)(ii)   s22(1)(a)(ii)
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s22(1)(a)(ii)

**OFFICIAL: SENSITIVE**