



Fact sheet: Online Safety Charter

The Government expects digital platforms and large technology firms to take a greater level of responsibility for the online safety outcomes of their services. Firms such as Facebook, Twitter and Google are pervasive in our community and deliver significant economic and social benefits. However, recent experience has shown that these services can be the conduits for offensive and harmful content and conduct.

The Government is committed to improving online safety outcomes for all Australians, particularly children. The Government will consult with stakeholders and parents in developing an Online Safety Charter to outline its expectations for industry.

What is the Online Safety Charter?

The Online Safety Charter will set out the Government's expectations for social media services, content hosts and other technology companies in enhancing online safety for Australian users. It will seek to articulate community expectations in relation to the identification and removal of harmful and illegal content, tackling abusive conduct, and improving transparency for users. The Charter will be based on the premise that behaviour that is unacceptable offline should not be tolerated or enabled online, and that content that is harmful to users, particularly children, should be appropriately restricted.

What will it cover?

The Online Safety Charter will explicitly focus on children, recognising that children are vulnerable Australian internet users and need special protection. At a minimum, the Charter is expected to include four areas of key focus:

1. content control and greater responsibility for removal
2. user experience
3. safety by design
4. accountability.

The Charter is not intended to cover other areas of concern with respect to the activities of large technology firms, such as digital privacy, disinformation, cyber security and competitive impacts. These issues are being considered and addressed through other mechanisms, including the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission's current Digital Platforms Inquiry.

Who will develop the Online Safety Charter?

The Charter will be developed by the Minister for Communications and the Arts in consultation with parents, the key digital platforms and other large technology firms that have the capacity to address undesirable behaviour and positively influence online safety. The Charter will be finalised in mid-2019.

What will happen next?

The Charter is an important advance in the Government's broader reform agenda for online safety. This agenda will be informed by the findings and recommendations of an independent review of the online safety regulatory framework conducted this year by Ms Lynelle Briggs AO. The report of the review, and the Government's response, will be released in 2019.

