



Fact sheet: Online Safety Research Program

The Online Safety Research program will build a comprehensive and consistent evidence base to inform online safety policies and programs, and ensure that initiatives by Government and others have meaningful on-the-ground impact in protecting vulnerable Australians, particularly children.

Program outcomes

Understand the eSafety needs of vulnerable communities

There is an absence of reliable research about how eSafety issues affect vulnerable communities. The research program will have a particular focus on vulnerable groups. It will also provide a more sophisticated understanding of the eSafety issues and challenges facing regional and rural areas of Australia and particular demographic segments of the community.

Program rollout

The research program has three main phases

The first phase will be targeted youth consultation undertaken by the Office of the eSafety Commissioner in early 2019. This will ensure that the youth voice is heard in eSafety.

The second phase will establish an annual National eSafety Survey. The survey will track eSafety issues and trends over time, across the Australian community, and its findings will influence the direction and priorities of future research and other eSafety measures. In addition, the annual survey will enable the effectiveness of online safety activities to be more effectively measured and assessed.

The third phase of the program will include commissioned research to better identify the needs of vulnerable communities, including Indigenous communities, where children's online safety issues can be more acute due to the small and intimate nature of family and social networks and a high-level of device sharing.

The priorities of the research program and its progress will be overseen by a committee comprising the heads of Commonwealth agencies and departments with a role in online safety. The findings of the research will be integrated with other aligned work being undertaken by academics, universities and non-government organisations in relation to online safety, and collaboration and co-funding of projects will be facilitated and encouraged. It is intended that the research funded under this program will complement the work of the National Office for Child Safety and other related Government research programs.