



# Fact sheet—Online Safety Reform Proposals— Cyberbullying Scheme

## What is proposed?

The new Online Safety Act will expand the cyberbullying scheme for Australian children by extending its reach from social media platforms to all of the online services now used by Australian children. In addition, the time within which online services must act to remove content will be reduced from 48 to 24 hours.

## Why is this needed?

According to research conducted by the eSafety Commission, 1 in 5 Australian children have experienced cyberbullying, yet under our current arrangements, the Commissioner can only issue take down notices to have cyberbullying material removed from social media services (such as Facebook or Snapchat).

The longer cyberbullying material remains online, the more harm it can cause. To date, eSafety has worked cooperatively with social media services to remove cyberbullying material swiftly – on average, in less than a day – in some cases, less than 30 minutes.

## How will it work?

The current complaints-based mechanism for dealing with cyberbullying material will remain in place. Under these arrangements, an Australian child, or their representative, can request that a platform hosting cyberbullying material take it down.

If this does not occur within 48 hours, a report can be made to eSafety to issue a take-down notice. Under the Government's proposal, eSafety will be empowered to issue take down notices to the full range of platforms (such as games and apps) that are being used by Australian children.

Under the proposal, these services must remove cyberbullying material within 24 hours.

## Who will be covered under the scheme?

The cyberbullying scheme will continue to provide an important safety net to Australian children experiencing cyberbullying.

The scheme defines cyberbullying material as material that 'is intended to have an effect on a particular Australian child that is likely to have the effect of seriously threatening, seriously intimidating, seriously harassing, or seriously humiliating the child.

## How does the scheme interact with other actions to prevent cyberbullying and other online harms affecting children?

The eSafety Commissioner is working to address cyberbullying through a variety of means, of which the cyberbullying scheme is one element. Other approaches include working with schools to develop guidance materials and policies, referrals to other agencies (including NGOs) to provide support to victims and perpetrators, conducting research to inform approaches and developing guidance materials for parents and carers.

