



# Fact sheet—Online Safety Reform Proposals— Overview

## What is proposed?

The Government will develop a new Online Safety Act to consolidate Australia’s current legislative framework and update it in light of changes to the online environment. The proposed elements of a new Act would include:

- A set of basic online safety expectations for industry (initially social media platforms) that make clear the community’s expectations for online safety, with associated reporting requirements.
- An enhanced cyberbullying scheme for Australian children to capture the range of online services that they are using, and not just social media platforms.
- A new cyber abuse scheme for Australian adults to facilitate the removal of serious online abuse and harassment, supported with a civil penalty regime.
- Consistent take-down requirements for image-based abuse, cyber abuse, cyberbullying and seriously harmful online content, requiring online service providers to remove such material within 24 hours of being requested to do so by the eSafety Commissioner.
- A reformed online content scheme that would require the Australian technology industry to be proactive in addressing access to harmful online content and that would expand the eSafety Commissioner’s powers to address illegal and harmful content on websites hosted overseas.
- An ancillary service provider scheme to empower the eSafety Commissioner to disrupt access to seriously harmful online material made available via search engines, app stores and other ancillary service providers.
- An additional power for the eSafety Commissioner to respond rapidly to an online crisis event (such as the Christchurch terrorist attacks) by requesting internet service providers block access to terrorist and extreme violent content.

## Why is this needed?

Australia’s online safety initiatives are world leading. However, new harms continue to emerge as technology evolves and as end-users engage online in new and different ways. It is important that all Australians are able to engage safely online if the significant benefits of our connected society are to be realised. An independent review of our existing legislative arrangements concluded in 2018 found that while the eSafety Commissioner has achieved much success since it was established, there is a need to review the current legislative arrangements, including consolidating the disparate elements into a single piece of online safety legislation.

## How can I provide comment on the proposed new arrangements?

A discussion paper provides more detail about the proposed new arrangements. The discussion paper, supporting information and advice about how to make a submission, can be found online at the Department of Communications and the Arts website at: [www.communications.gov.au/have-your-say](http://www.communications.gov.au/have-your-say). Public consultation on the reform will be open until 19 February 2020.

