



THE HON SCOTT MORRISON MP

Prime Minister

THE HON PETER DUTTON MP

Minister for Home Affairs

THE HON PAUL FLETCHER MP

Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts

MEDIA RELEASE

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Halting the spread of terrorism and extreme violent content online

Websites hosting harmful and extreme content from terrorists will be blocked by the Morrison Government in the latest measure to keep Australians safe online.

The Government has accepted the recommendation of the Taskforce to Combat Terrorist and Extreme Violent Material Online to establish a clear and unambiguous content blocking framework for crisis events.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison said this action would protect Australians from exposure to violent events online like the Christchurch terrorist attacks.

“The shocking events that took place in Christchurch demonstrated how digital platforms and websites can be exploited to host extreme violent and terrorist content,” the Prime Minister said.

“That type of abhorrent material has no place in Australia and we are doing everything we can to deny terrorists the opportunity to glorify their crimes, including taking action locally and globally.”

Home Affairs Minister Peter Dutton said the Government was taking strong action to ensure extremist content of any description, does not gain a foothold anywhere in our country, including online.

“Our Government has really been leading the charge on combatting this scourge and this is another important step to ensure all Australians, of all ages, can feel safe at home and at work,” Minister Dutton said.

Following the attacks in Christchurch, Australian internet service providers voluntarily blocked access to offshore websites that were hosting the attacker’s footage and manifesto.

“This was a responsible move taken by Australia’s major telecommunications companies that prioritised the safety of Australians online,” Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and Arts, Paul Fletcher said.

“It is important that the Government gives the industry the backing it needs for this type of action, now and into the future.”

The eSafety Commissioner is working with industry on options to implement website blocking arrangements to quickly and effectively block access to specific domains hosting terrorist or extreme violent material from the Christchurch terrorist attack and for future similar events. The eSafety Commissioner will make these independent determinations on a case by case basis to keep Australians safe online while upholding important internet freedoms.

The Government is also establishing an updated crisis management framework, including a protocol for managing terrorist and violent material posted online, which was also a recommendation of the Taskforce report.

The new protocol will include a 24/7 Crisis Coordination Centre to monitor and notify relevant government agencies of online crisis events involving terrorist and extreme violent material and will provide the eSafety Commissioner with information to undertake rapid assessments.

“This new protocol will better equip our agencies to rapidly detect and shut down the sharing of dangerous material online, even as a crisis may still be unfolding,” Minister Dutton said.

These measures follow action taken earlier this year by the Morrison Government to ensure major social media companies stop the publication of violent terror content, including tighter monitoring and controls on live streaming and a simulation exercise to further test social media companies’ capabilities.

The Taskforce to Combat Terrorist and Extreme Violent Material Online was formed following a Summit on March 26 this year by the Prime Minister, with members from Facebook, YouTube, Amazon, Microsoft and Twitter, along with Telstra, Vodafone, TPG and Optus.

Taskforce members have committed to providing detailed implementation plans, setting out how each member will give effect to the recommendations, to Government by the end of September.

Legislative options will be used if digital platforms fail to improve the safety of their services, and address the gaps laid bare by the Christchurch terrorist attacks.

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