



THE HON PAUL FLETCHER MP
Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts

MEDIA RELEASE

9 September 2019

Preventing terrorists from harming Australians online

The eSafety Commissioner has today issued a direction to Australia's largest internet service providers requiring them to continue blocking access to eight websites that host video of the Christchurch terrorist attacks or the manifesto of the alleged perpetrator.

Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts, the Hon Paul Fletcher, said that keeping Australians safe from this type of horrific content is a key priority for the Morrison Government.

“Australian internet service providers acted quickly and responsibly in the wake of the terrorist attacks in Christchurch in March this year to block websites that were hosting this harmful material,” Minister Fletcher said.

“ISPs called on the Government to provide them with certainty and clarity in taking the action they did, and today, we are providing that certainty.”

The eSafety Commissioner has consulted with the specific website administrators, providing them with the opportunity to remove this content. Most have complied and the eight remaining offending websites will be subject to the blocking directive.

“We cannot allow this type of horrific material to be used to incite further violence or terrorist acts,” Minister Fletcher said.

“Website blocking is not a universal solution to online harms, but it is important that this option be available to the eSafety Commissioner in extreme cases such as this.”

The direction requires ISPs to implement a 6 month block, during which time the eSafety Commissioner will review and remove sites from the list as and when the offending content has been appropriately taken down.

The eSafety Commissioner is working with industry to develop an additional protocol to govern the rapid removal of terrorist and extreme violent material in a crisis event.

The arrangements announced today implement a key recommendation of the report of the Taskforce to Combat Terrorist and Extreme Violent Material Online, which is a joint industry/Government group formed to develop clear and tangible actions to prevent the dissemination of terrorist and extreme violent material online.

The Morrison Government is taking a leading role in efforts to prevent social media from being exploited by terror and hate groups to achieve their destructive goals.

The Prime Minister led the development of the Osaka G20 Leaders' Statement that secured a global commitment to prevent online platforms from being used for terrorist and violent extremist acts, and was one of 17 country signatories to the pivotal Christchurch Call to Action.

The Government's commitment to addressing this type of horrific material was again demonstrated during the August G7 Summit in Biarritz, when Prime Minister Morrison announced a new OECD project to develop voluntary transparency reporting protocols for the major online platforms.

This work will help to establish standards and deliver on commitments under the Christchurch Call to Action to implement regular and transparent public reporting in a way that is measurable and supported by clear methodology.

END

Media contact:

Brad Hatch | 0448 162 679 | Brad.Hatch@communications.gov.au