



## **THE HON PAUL FLETCHER MP**

Minister for Families and Social Services

## **THE HON KELLY O'DWYER MP**

Minister for Women, Minister for Jobs & Industrial Relations

### **MEDIA RELEASE**

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## **Keeping Australians Safe - New investments to protect women and children**

The Morrison Government is working to keep Australians safe, funding a new round of trials to prevent violence against women and better protect family and domestic violence victims, including a trial of new technology to detect unauthorised surveillance software installed on victims' devices or in their homes.

This builds on the Morrison Governments recent announcement of a \$78 million investment to give hundreds more women and children escaping domestic and family violence a safe place to sleep

The software trial is one of four projects funded by the Morrison Government to explore the use of innovative technology to keep women and children in vulnerable communities safe.

Minister for Families and Social Services Paul Fletcher said, "Technology Trials were announced as part of the \$100 million Women's Safety Package and are designed to test innovative ways technology can be used to keep women and their children safe, and hold perpetrators to account."

"The Morrison Government has zero tolerance for violence against women. We have already committed well in excess of \$350 million to address women's safety," said Mr Fletcher.

Under the trial, the eSafety Commissioner will research development of a tool that could sweep a victim's devices or physical environment to establish whether their technology has been compromised by malicious software or covertly-installed hardware.

Domestic violence victims would be better protected from perpetrators, building a safer community. The trial would also explore how such a solution could be delivered to frontline workers and affected women.

The Government is also investing \$1.39 million for the Office of the eSafety Commissioner and the AIDS Council of NSW (ACON) to undertake technology trials to keep victims safe.

“There is currently no national resource that explores domestic violence and promotes healthy relationships specific to these communities,” said Mr Fletcher.

The eSafety Commissioner will also receive \$665,000 to produce two AppBooks to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander elders to recognise, call out and manage technology-facilitated abuse.

A third project by the eSafety Commissioner will be funded \$240,000 to study the ways children unintentionally disclose their identity to perpetrators of technology-facilitated abuse, and how to reduce this risk.

Minister for Women, Kelly O’Dwyer, said technology-facilitated abuse was an area of developing knowledge that the eSafety Commissioner was well-placed to target.

“All women and children deserve to be safe, whether it’s at home, in the workplace, in our communities or online.

“We know how important it is to keep our women and children safe online, which is why we established the Office of the eSafety Commissioner in 2015.”

“The Office of the eSafety Commissioner has considerable expertise in developing innovative, scalable, evidence-based and sustainable online safety tools for all Australians. They are the experts in online safety, including technology-facilitated abuse.”

“These new tools will be of great benefit to women across Australia.”

Since its launch in 2015, the Office of the eSafety Commissioner has developed a range of initiatives to help all Australians navigate online safety. This includes a portal to report image-based abuse, a complaints scheme to remove harmful cyberbullying content and access to immediate support.

The fourth project will see ACON funded \$340,000 to expand its Say It Out Loud website ([www.sayitoutloud.org.au](http://www.sayitoutloud.org.au)) to help domestic violence workers better support people of diverse sexuality or gender.

“The expansion of the Say It Out Loud website will mean even more Australians living in rural and remote areas can better connect with domestic violence services,” said Ms O’Dwyer.

Examples of other technology trials funded under this measure include YourCase, a web app that will allow family violence victims to track, document and interact with their court proceedings digitally; and using GPS tracking to track family violence perpetrators and alert police and victims when the perpetrator is nearby.

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