



THE HON PAUL FLETCHER MP

Minister for Communications, Urban Infrastructure, Cities and the Arts

MEDIA RELEASE

8 August 2021

Government tells big tech to put safety first

Social media and tech companies will be expected to protect their users from online harms such as bullying and cyber abuse under a new set of Basic Online Safety Expectations (BOSE) released for public consultation today by the Morrison Government.

Following the passage in June of the tough new *Online Safety Act 2021*, Australians are now encouraged to have their say on the BOSE, which sets out a series of demands to big tech that reflect how the community expects to be kept safe online.

Under the BOSE, online providers will be subject to core expectations, additional expectation and reasonable steps to ensure the safety of users on their platforms. While core expectations include taking actions to deal with longstanding harms such as cyberbullying or kids accessing violent material, reasonable steps could include actions against such emerging risks such as ‘volumetric attacks’ where ‘digital lynch mobs’ seek to overwhelm a victim with abuse; or that products for children have the highest privacy and safety settings set as default.

Other expectations include:

- That providers take steps to prevent children accessing class 2 material such as R18+ content;
- That services do more to prevent unlawful or harmful material on anonymous accounts;
- That providers take steps against cyber-bullying, non-consensual intimate images of a person and promotion, incitement or instruction in abhorrent violent conduct; and
- That users have clear ways to make reports or complaints to services.

Australia’s eSafety Commissioner will have the power to order tech companies to report on how they are responding to these harms and issue hefty fines of up to \$555,000 if they don’t respond.

Minister for Communications, Urban Infrastructure, Cities and the Arts, the Hon Paul Fletcher MP, said online safety was a priority of the Government: “We we will always fight to protect all Australians, but especially children, from online harm and we expect big tech to step up and deliver on these expectations.”

Consultation is now open for all Australians to have your say on the proposed BOSE. After considering feedback, the Minister will make the final BOSE in early 2022. Submissions are open until Friday 15 October 2021.

More information, including how to participate, is available at www.communications.gov.au/have-your-say/draft-online-safety-basic-online-safety-expectations-determination-2021-consultation

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