



## **THE HON PAUL FLETCHER MP**

Minister for Communications, Urban Infrastructure, Cities and the Arts

### **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Keeping Australians Safe Online**

The Morrison Government has today introduced a new Online Safety Bill into Parliament that will better protect Australians from online harms.

The Bill sets out a modern regulatory framework for online safety, strengthening the powers of the eSafety Commissioner to counteract cyberbullying, toxic online abuse, harmful content and image-based abuse (the non-consensual sharing of intimate images).

Minister for Communications, Urban Infrastructure, Cities and the Arts, the Hon Paul Fletcher MP, said that keeping Australians safe online is a priority for the Morrison Government.

“When people interact in person, they take for granted that the rule of law applies. People should be able to expect the same when they interact online,” Minister Fletcher said

“This Bill reflects the Morrison Government’s expectation that industry must work harder to prevent online harms occurring in the first place, and introduces important new protections for Australians when things do go wrong.”

The Bill includes a world-first cyber-abuse scheme for adults that will assist victims of seriously harmful online abuse to have the material removed, when online platforms fail to act.

The Bill also allows the eSafety Commissioner to require social media services, relevant electronic services and designated internet services to provide identity and contact information about end users in relation to cyberbullying, cyber abuse, or image-based abuse. Civil penalties will apply to services that fail to comply with a written notice from the eSafety Commissioner.

“The Morrison Government wants Australians to engage online confidently -- to work, communicate and be entertained, without fear of being viciously trolled or exposed to harmful content,” Minister Fletcher said.

For further information about the new Online Safety Bill, go to [www.communications.gov.au/online-safety](http://www.communications.gov.au/online-safety)

## **Background**

Other key features of the Bill include:

- A set of new basic online safety expectations for industry that make clear the community's expectations for online safety, with associated reporting requirements for service providers.
- A rapid website-blocking power for the eSafety Commissioner to respond to online crisis events, such as the 2019 Christchurch terrorist attacks, by requesting that internet service providers block access to material depicting or promoting terrorist and other abhorrent conduct.
- 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 notified to do so by the eSafety Commissioner.
- An updated Online Content Scheme requiring industry to do more to keep users safe online through updated industry codes, and empowering the eSafety Commissioner to respond quickly to the "worst of the worst" online content, no matter where it is hosted.
- New powers for the eSafety Commissioner requiring app stores to remove apps enabling the provision of the most harmful kinds of online content, such as child sexual abuse material, in addition to powers to require search engines to delete links to sites that have not complied with take-down notices.

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