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Australian Government

Department of Infrastructure, Transport,  
Regional Development, Communications and the Arts

# OUTCOMES DOCUMENT FOR THE ONLINE HARMS MINISTERS' MEETING

1 October 2024

Australian Government Ministers with responsibility for addressing online harms met for the third time on 1 October 2024 to discuss and improve cross-Government coordination in tackling important issues. Chaired by the Minister for Communications, the Hon Michelle Rowland MP, Ministers discussed social media age limits for children.

## Social media age limits for children

Attendees, including Ministers and department representatives from members' portfolios, noted a range of jurisdictions globally are currently considering measures to limit children's access to certain online services, including a minimum age to access social media.

Ministers agreed any minimum age would be determined with reference to research and evidence. The Hon Amanda Rishworth MP, Minister for Social Services, noted the work of the Australian Institute of Family Studies and offered to request they conduct a scan of existing literature. The Hon Emma McBride MP, Assistant Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention and Assistant Minister for Rural and Regional Health, noted research from the National Mental Health Commission will be available at the end of October. Assistant Minister McBride also noted mental health and suicide prevention organisations had provided public statements related to the harms and benefits of youth access to social media. Ms Meg Brighton, Deputy Secretary, Department of Education, said the department's Youth Steering Committee had engaged with the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts, who are leading the minimum age to access social media work. Attendees also discussed recent evidence from the National Survey of Australian Secondary Students and Sexual Health that suggested a drop in youth viewing pornography.

Ministers noted the importance of children's continued access to support and education services and discussed complementary measures for those impacted. s47C

Ministers and attendees also raised the importance of media and digital literacy as a complementary measure.

Ministers and department representatives discussed whether exemptions for some social media services should be considered and noted possible approaches. Ministers also discussed compliance with a minimum age for social media access and considered the implications of possible means of circumventing requirements. Ms Brighton noted that a mobile phone ban in schools had received positive feedback and compliance.

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<b>DATE:</b>	1 October 2024	<b>TIME:</b>	3:00-4:00pm
<b>LOCATION:</b>	Parliament House		
<b>ATTENDEES:</b>	<b>The Hon Michelle Rowland MP</b>	Minister for Communications (Chair)	
	<b>The Hon Amanda Rishworth MP</b>	Minister for Social Services (Virtual)	
	<b>The Hon Mark Dreyfus KC, MP, Attorney-General</b>	Attorney-General	
	<b>The Hon Stephen Jones MP</b>	Assistant Treasurer, Minister for Financial Services; <i>representing the Treasury portfolio.</i>	
	<b>The Hon Emma McBride MP</b>	Assistant Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, Assistant Minister for Rural and Regional Health; <i>representing the Health portfolio</i>	
	<b>Ms Padma Raman PSM</b>	Executive Director, Office for Women, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet <i>On behalf of Senator the Hon Katy Gallagher, Minister for Women</i>	
	<b>Ms Meg Brighton</b>	Deputy Secretary, Schools, Department of Education <i>On behalf of the Hon Jason Clare MP, Minister for Education</i>	
	<b>Ms Gemma Sandlant</b>	Assistant Secretary, Office for Youth <i>On behalf of the Hon Dr Anne Aly MP, Minister for Early Childhood Education, Minister for Youth</i>	
	<b>Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts representatives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr Jim Betts, Secretary (Facilitator)</li> <li>• Sarah Vandenbroek, First Assistant Secretary, Digital Platforms, Safety and Classification Division</li> <li>• Andrew Irwin, Assistant Secretary, Online Safety Branch</li> <li>• s22(1)(a)(ii) [REDACTED], Director, Policy and Engagement (Virtual)</li> </ul>	
<b>APOLOGIES:</b>	<b>Senator the Hon Penny Wong</b>	Minister for Foreign Affairs	
	<b>Senator the Hon Katy Gallagher</b>	Minister for Women, Minister for Finance, Minister for the Public Service	
	<b>Senator the Hon Malarndirri McCarthy</b>	Minister for Indigenous Australians	
	<b>The Hon Tony Burke MP</b>	Minister for Home Affairs, Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, Minister for Cyber Security, Minister for the Arts	
	<b>The Hon Ed Husic MP</b>	Minister for Industry and Science	

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<b>DATE:</b>	<b>1 October 2024</b>	<b>TIME:</b>	<b>3:00-4:00pm</b>
	<b>The Hon Jason Clare MP</b>	<b>Minister for Education</b>	
	<b>The Hon Dr Anne Aly MP</b>	<b>Minister for Early Childhood Education, Minister for Youth</b>	
	<b>The Hon Tim Watts MP</b>	<b>Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs</b>	

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# Freedom of Information Request FOI 25-254

## List of Online Harms Ministers' Meetings

**March 2025**

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This document provides a list of the of the Online Harms Ministers' Meetings up until 1 October 2024:

- 19 October 2023
- 04 March 2024
- 01 October 2024

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