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### **Submission in response to the new Online Safety Act**

The Australian Library and Information Association is the professional organisation and peak body for the Australian library and information services sector. On behalf of our 5,000 personal and institutional members, we provide the national voice of the profession in the development, promotion and delivery of quality services to the nation, through school, public, university, TAFE, government, law, health and other special libraries.

Last year, we responded to the Australian Government's Online Safety Legislative Reform Discussion Paper and were pleased to participate in the Online Safety Forum, in Canberra, on 11 February 2020. At that time we made the following comments, which hold true today:

- We applaud the move to bring together existing measures in a single framework and support the expansion of the role of the Office of the eSafety Commissioner, in order to strengthen its role as the primary agency for the protection of all Australians online.
- We recognise the challenge of achieving consistency across all online services and platforms, and devising legislation which is tech-neutral, remaining relevant in a rapidly advancing environment.
- We fully endorse the need to protect people who are often vulnerable or at risk.
- We acknowledge the balance required to tackle harmful online content while ensuring freedom of expression and freedom of speech.

In principle, we support the aims of the Online Safety Bill. Our concern remains that there should be no unintended consequences in the way the legislation is implemented, making it difficult for libraries to be compliant. One example of this would be excessive reporting requirements associated with the Basic Online Safety Expectations.

We will continue to work with the Office of the eSafety Commissioner in our shared goal of helping Australians be confident users of the internet, able to access online content safely.

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