

New online safety laws

The Online Safety Act 2021 is now in place, making it easier to fight the most serious types of online abuse.

What's it about?

The Online Safety Act 2021, introduced by the Australian Government, give eSafety stronger mechanisms to address serious online abuse if it meets the high threshold of being 'seriously harmful' to an individual.

The laws include:

- a new Adult Cyber Abuse Scheme, which focuses on severely abusive content that is menacing, harassing or offensive and intended to cause serious harm to someone who is 18 or older.
- a stronger Cyberbullying Scheme for seriously threatening, harassing, intimidating or humiliating content that targets a child.
- an updated Image-Based Abuse Scheme – for intimate images and videos that have been shared without consent.
- And, a more modern Online Content Scheme, to remove illegal and restricted content such as material that encourages terrorism or depicts the sexual abuse of children.

How does it work?

It is important to first report the child cyberbullying or adult cyber abuse to the online platform where the content appeared. If the platform does not respond, a report can be made to eSafety at **[eSafety.gov.au/report](https://www.esafety.gov.au/report)**.

Image-based abuse and illegal or restricted content can be reported to eSafety straight away.

The new laws supports eSafety to work with online platforms to remove the harmful content. Online platforms include social media companies, websites, messaging services, chat apps and gaming platforms. The harmful content can include posts, comments, emails, messages, memes, images and videos.

If the content is not removed, eSafety can have the online service provider fined. eSafety can also have a fine issued to the person who posted or shared the adult cyber abuse, cyberbullying content or image-based abuse.

Other online issues.

There are certain forms of abuse that are not covered under the new laws. However, if the below experiences are combined with seriously harmful or abusive content, the new laws could still apply.

Examples of what the Act does not cover in isolation:

- Defamatory comments
- Political satire or journalism
- Spams and scams
- Identity theft and fraud
- Hacking

If you have been scammed online, visit www.scamwatch.gov.au.

If you have been a victim of cybercrime, call the Australian Cyber Security Hotline on 1300 292 371 or visit www.cyber.gov.au.

Can I make a report on behalf of someone else?

If you are a parent, carer or guardian of a child, you can make a report about cyberbullying on their behalf. You can also make a report on behalf of an adult individual if they have authorised you to do so. You can report through [eSafety.gov.au/report](https://esafety.gov.au/report).

Learn more

Go to [eSafety.gov.au](https://esafety.gov.au) to learn more about the *Online Safety Act 2021*, or to report abuse.

Online safety laws: we've your back.

Authorised by the Australian Government, Canberra.