



THE SOCIAL MEDIA DELAY

Have you heard the news? Starting December 10, 2025, the Australian government will require major social media platforms to prevent users under the age of 16 from creating or maintaining accounts. This includes Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, Reddit, YouTube, Threads, X, and Kick. The law is designed to protect young people from the risks associated with social media, such as excessive screen time, exposure to harmful content, and online interactions that may affect their wellbeing.

Australia is one of the first nations in the world to bring in such a ban (or, to be more precise, a 'delay'). The Prime Minister has compared the law to laws requiring people to wear seat belts while in the car, it's there for the common good.

This short video introduces the new law and the intention behind it:

I think this is a significant step in the right direction; frankly, people under 16 don't yet have the maturity or discernment to be posting and viewing the often-unregulated content that comes up on social media.

If your child already uses any of these social media platforms, please have a conversation with them. Explain to them that they will no longer have access to these platforms, and why this is a good thing. Make it clear that this is in their best interest and something you support.

However, the new law will not completely make the internet a safe space for your child. YouTube is on the banned list, but under 16s can still view YouTube videos without an account. Messaging apps like WhatsApp and Discord will still be permitted, as will gaming platforms like Twitch and Roblox (although this might change over time). In my experience, some of the most upsetting

things that happen online are in private message groups between young people. Please continue to monitor your child with these. Requiring laptops to be in a public place, rather than bedrooms, and leaving phones outside the bedroom at night are helpful steps, as is ensuring you have open conversations about who your children are talking to online.

Finally, encouraging your child to spend time off-screens is valuable as well. Arranging for your child to socialise in-person, encouraging participation in extra-curricular activities like sport, music and church groups, and spending time as a family away from screens can be helpful strategies. Technology can bring us closer together; but we need to help our young people use it wisely.

Let's work together to support our young people as they navigate this changing digital landscape. By staying informed, setting clear boundaries, and fostering open communication, we can help them grow into confident, resilient and responsible digital citizens. For more guidance and practical resources, I encourage you to visit the <https://www.esafety.gov.au>, which offers excellent support for parents and carers.

Mr Samuel Mills

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