

**Senate Environment and Communications Legislation Committee  
Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Bill 2024  
[Provisions] – Representative Sample**

On 21 November 2024, the Senate referred the provisions of the Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Bill 2024 [Provisions] to the Environment and Communications Legislation Committee for report by 26 November 2024.

Submissions closed on 22 November 2024. The committee received approximately 5,000 contributions from individuals. The committee has published the following as a representative sample.

## Sample 1

To Whom It May Concern,

I email tonight with regard to the above mentioned proposed Bill.

Should I be surprised that you have given us less than 24 hours to write and submit a submission? Not at all. We now are all very aware of the tactics used by the duopoly to get through legislation that purely is an agenda of the majority of politicians in Parliament today.

I am at a loss to understand the nature of this bill but can only presume it is to push through your intended government ID, or digital ID. There are so many more ways to combat the bullying online, both from a parental side to a political side.

Firstly all social media groups can be made to monitor all activity online and should a suggested bullying incident occur, the social media platform can do whatever they feel appropriate. This would be simple and instantly stop the bullying, but rather you propose to ban every youth from social media because of a few bad eggs. How is it that fact checkers can check every ounce of information posted on a social media site, but the instance of bullying cannot be controlled? Because no-one is being paid by the government to monitor bullying. Why not? Well I would love to know. On a daily basis anything I, as a 61 year old woman, is fact checked and even though my information can be factual, it still is monitored and if the fact checker believe a post is not fact, a notice is placed on my post that they don't believe my post is factual. How about in the same scenario, a bully has a notice put on all their posts, "I am a bully and I have been caught bullying on this social media app, I have said horrible things to people or told someone to go kill themselves". How long would the instance of bullying last then? I am doubting very long, but hey that's too simple isn't it. Rather we will force every Australian to get a digital ID and have way more control over what everyone does. We can see straight through you all.

My daughter was severely bullied at high school. I fought so hard to get any assistance from anyone. I went to the high school who said they couldn't do anything because it was outside of school hours it was happening, so I went to the police who tried to dismiss me. Only that Brodie's Law had recently come into action, they were forced into actually assisting. Social media companies did absolutely nothing even though I sent through many screen shots. I cannot remember but I do believe their response was that what was happening wasn't against their community standards so there was nothing that could be done. Yes the social media companies allowed it to continue. The fact that police and social media wash their hands of this and you the government do little to change any laws that force their hand, is why it continues to this day, and worse as each year goes by. You, the government, would rather force every person in Australia to be controlled by your internet ID and undoubtedly at some point take full control of a person account.

What you all are basically saying is that parents are too stupid to be able to monitor their child and what happens to them on the internet. Rather, 100 or so people in Australia believe they have to right to choose what happens in a child's life, completely taking a parents rights or wants out of the picture. Where in any piece of the constitution does it say that a government has the right to choose what a child does in their household?

It is very obvious that the majority of people in the Parliament do not actually realise what their job is. You are working for the people, not to control the people. You must listen to the people, not rally together as a united front to push through an agenda that is only beneficial to the Parliament, not to the people of Australia.

Try as you may this bill should not succeed. The people of Australia are speaking up loud and clear now and we will tell you what will happen in our lives. If somehow you all manage to push it through, do you think you will successfully achieve your agenda? Not on your life. We will all leave social media and you still will not be able to force your digital ID upon us.

As I stated earlier, listen to the people. We do not want any legislation that can control any further aspects of our lives. Our voices are loud and we will ensure that you hear us.

### **Sample 2**

Dear Committee Secretariat

I make my submission to the Senate Standing Committees on Environment and Communications.

It is my submission that this Bill at the very least needs be provided an extension of time for debate which recognises and resembles an actual democracy and due process. 24 hours is hardly a respectful or democratic time frame to invite submissions on this Bill which is no more than a national Digital ID programme dressed in a very poor disguise and hiding behind a façade of keeping children safe on social media. It is the parents responsibility to keep their children safe..... not the Govt.

Labour and the Coalition are trying to rush this Bill through the Seante without debate so they can force everyone into using their Age Verification Identity technology.

It is absolutely clear that this Bill is being rushed through the senate because the Govt does not have the numbers to pass the atrocious freedom crushing Misinformation and Disinformation Bill next week that was to serve the same back door purpose of ramming Digital ID, facial recognition and biometrics down the throats of every Australian.

Providing Senators a fake enquiry of only five (5) days to review, including a weekend, to scrutinise and run this Bill past experts is not transparency or democracy. What a stitch up! The public are losing more confidence in Govt by the day with this disgraceful behaviour.

All of the experts have stated in the Govts own joint social media inquiry report handed down Monday 18<sup>th</sup> November 2024 did not recommend this sort of Bill as a measure. They did however recommend that the needs of parents and children's needs be met by a whole host of measures that did NOT go down this authoritarian path of this Online Safety Amendment Bill.

We know that when the two major parties get together to ram things through Parliament you know they are failing the public debate. No real enquiry, no real review and no scrutiny. Disgraceful. Absolutely disgraceful and unconscionable conduct by the whole of our Govt.

This Bill needs more time to be debated and scrutinised and should not come back to Parliament for a vote until a respectful amount of time is provided for public debate and scrutiny.

### **Sample 3**

I wholeheartedly oppose the ongoing over regulation of the citizens of Australia.

This bill is overstepping the boundaries of parent/child rights and responsibilities. Parents are the ones that should be controlling their children's on-line safety. Taking the responsibility for all will only absolve lazy parents from their own accountability.

If parents give their child a device, it is on THEM to ensure the child is equipped with the knowledge to stay as safe as possible. Same as they are responsible to ensure the child is able to walk along/cross a roadway and not put themselves in the way of harm.

Unforeseen accidents happen and they will always happen. It is tragic when they do and it is naturally distressing for all involved. We can not legislate our children to safety. We can only educate both the parent and child to be aware of the danger.

It is high time the government legislators keep their hands off families. They make a damned mess of it every time they try.

If you want my honest opinion the age group that is most in danger by way of scams etc., is the elderly. They are forced into using technology and THEY are the ones most at risk!

#### **Sample 4**

Dear APH,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to The Online Safety Amendment Social Media Minimum Age Bill 2024.

This Bill is not only misguided but a harmful piece of legislation. It infringes on personal liberties, threatens freedom of speech and creates significant privacy risks.

While this Bill presents as a child safety initiative, it effectively mandates ID verification for all users, forcing every individual to prove their age to access social media. This raises significant concerns about privacy, data security and the potential for misuse of personal information.

It is very concerning to me the undemocratic way in which this Bill is being rushed through Parliament providing only 24 hours for public submissions. This approach leaves next to no time for Australians to inform themselves of the content of this proposed legislation and fully consider the broader implications of it on our lives.

I urge the Parliament to reject this Bill and instead pursue alternative solutions that prioritize online safety without impinging on the fundamental democratic rights of all Australians but first I want to see public hearings on this enquiry before it is allowed to advance or progress any further.

#### **Sample 5**

Hi there

Under no circumstances should parents have their responsibilities waived by government, government bureaucrats or social media companies to determine what they see.

This responsibility lies solely on parents.

This also then affects everyone else who should not have to provide ID for internet use. People have a right to privacy.

A solution is to provide restrictions for device companies to sell these devices to children which offer 24/7 internet access. This then pushes the responsibility back to parents.

The benefits are:

- children learning how to interact face to face
- children learning to read facial expressions
- a significant reduction in neck problems
- a significant reduction in the number of eye problems
- children sleeping better at night

- improved parental supervision of their children on the internet at home
- parents not having to pay for expensive devices and phone plans
- less arguments at home regarding phones and children. Parents can buy a phone which just does phone and text if required.

This would help parents more so than

Interfering in other people lives.

It is A BIG FAT NO FOR THIS BILL.

THIS is overreach by the government. It's not their job

It's wrong.

### **Sample 6**

To the Committee Secretary - Senate Standing Committees on Environment and Communications,

I am writing this submission to express my strong opposition to the Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Bill 2024.

Protecting children from the harms of social media is an obvious issue we all agree on, however, what I don't agree with is introducing a blanket measure which is not beneficial for children, and imposes digital age verification measures on everyone!

The social media ban will rely on effective age verification processes being applied, resulting in all Australians being required to prove their identity in order to access social media. This process would involve Australians to provide social media companies with sensitive identity information, like biometric data, which poses a risk to our privacy rights as it can fall into the hands of data hackers. The recent data breaches directly show that this risk is real!

Enforcing Australians to prove their identity is also a violation of human rights in terms of privacy by way of forcing everyone to share their private identity information to corporate social media platforms.

This Bill also is in violation of the human rights of young Australians who use social media platforms in a mutually beneficial way to communicate with each other – share ideas, opinions and engage in social activities (which does no harm to others). Removing this from young people completely violates their freedom to engage in these activities.

This Bill is being rushed through the Senate, giving Australians almost no time to have their say - the time frame of 24 hours to lodge a submission is unreasonable and not feasible. Especially as the Senate had previously voted on an amendment that would ensure the inquiry would extend through to February 2025 to analyze this Bill.

As the Senate represents my Will, I reinforce my strong opposition to the Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Bill 2024 [Provisions], and urge all Senators to vote against this Bill.

## Sample 7

Dear Committee Secretary,

I am appalled by the contemptuous way the Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Bill 2024 has been presented and “consulted” on. Australians are not fools, and it’s insulting to suggest that this legislation is about protecting children online when it is a thinly veiled attempt to introduce a digital ID system under the guise of online safety.

Let me be clear: allowing a mere 24 hours for submissions on a bill with such far-reaching implications is an absolute disgrace. This is not consultation but a blatant effort to stifle public engagement, avoid scrutiny, and ram through legislation without resistance. Such behaviour demonstrates a shocking lack of respect for Australians' intelligence and practical fundamental rights.

The premise of this bill is as deceptive as the process surrounding it. While it claims to protect children by setting a minimum social media age, it is abundantly clear that the objective of collecting and storing practicals is to impose invasive age verification systems requiring sensitive personal data. Collecting and storing This is not about safety—it’s about surveillance.

Australians will not stand for a government that creates a centralised personal information database, a fundamental practice that practically opens the door to digital ID systems. Have you not considered the catastrophic risks of such a system, including breaches, misuse, and the erosion of fundamental privacy rights? Do you genuinely believe we are too naïve to see through this charade?

What’s worse, this bill utterly fails to address the actual problem of keeping children safe online. Real solutions lie in education, better parental tools, and community support—not authoritarian measures that compromise the privacy and freedoms of all Australians.

To say that the handling of this bill is an embarrassment would be an understatement. The lack of transparency, the rushed process, and the misleading rhetoric are a slap in the face to the public and to democracy itself.

Australians demand better. We demand a government that respects our intelligence, engages us meaningfully in the legislative process, and prioritises real, practical insults and solutions to genuine problems—not hidden agendas wrapped in platitudes about safety.

I strongly urge you to reject this disgraceful bill and instead focus on transparent, ethical, and inclusive approaches to online safety. Anything less insults the very people you are meant to represent.

## Sample 8

Dear Respected Senators,

I am expressing my strong opposition to the proposed Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Bill 2024. While I appreciate the intent behind this legislation, I believe it is fundamentally flawed and will result in unintended harm to young Australians.

The bill’s proposed age restrictions rely on enforcement mechanisms that are invasive and impractical. Mandatory age verification would compromise privacy, disproportionately affect young people without easy access to formal identification, and likely fail to prevent savvy youth from bypassing restrictions. Instead of ensuring safety, this approach risks pushing young people towards unregulated platforms where harmful content is far more prevalent.

Moreover, the bill underestimates the positive role social media plays in young people’s lives. These platforms facilitate critical connections, foster learning, and develop essential digital skills needed in a modern world. Restricting access would isolate young users, limit their opportunities to engage in valuable online communities, and hinder their ability to build digital literacy in a controlled

environment.

Rather than rigid prohibitions, a better solution would involve investing in digital literacy education, improving content moderation standards, and providing parents with tools to manage their children's social media use. These strategies are more practical, equitable, and likely to produce meaningful outcomes for online safety.

I strongly urge you to reconsider the approach proposed in this bill. Protecting young Australians online requires thoughtful, balanced solutions, not blanket bans that risk causing more harm than good.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. I trust you will prioritise a more effective and equitable strategy for addressing online safety.

### **Sample 9**

Good afternoon,

I am writing as a concerned parent of two children, aged 13 and 16, to express my strong opposition to the Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Bill 2024. While I understand the intention behind this bill is to protect young people, I believe it represents a step backward in terms of both personal freedom and the free speech rights of our children.

In Australia, children at the age of 13 are granted significant rights and responsibilities, such as the ability to work, make medical decisions, and even consent to certain legal matters. The proposed restriction on social media access based solely on age is inconsistent with these rights and undermines the principle of personal agency. It also unnecessarily limits children's ability to participate in important discussions, connect with peers, and access educational resources that are increasingly available through social media platforms.

Imposing an arbitrary age limit creates a dangerous precedent for restricting free speech. Social media platforms are not only a place for entertainment but also vital spaces for learning, self-expression, and engagement with global ideas. By denying children access based on their age, we risk stifling their ability to contribute to public discourse, exchange ideas, and take part in conversations that are shaping their generation. The online world is an extension of the physical world, where young people should have the opportunity to voice their opinions and be heard.

Furthermore, such restrictions fail to address the root causes of online harm. It is not the age of the user that matters, but their level of digital literacy, responsibility, and parental guidance. Rather than limiting access, we should focus on educating children about online safety, providing parents with the tools to manage their children's digital lives, and holding platforms accountable for ensuring safe environments for all users.

As a parent, I firmly believe that the decision of whether a child should have access to social media should lie with the family, not the government. With proper guidance and monitoring, children can safely navigate these platforms and benefit from the opportunities they provide. This bill would unnecessarily infringe upon the rights of parents to make these decisions and limit the ability of children to engage with the world around them.

I respectfully urge you to reconsider this bill and focus on solutions that empower families and protect free speech, rather than imposing restrictive age limits.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

## Sample 10

To the Inquiry Committee,

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the proposed 'Social Media Minimum Age' Bill. While ostensibly intended to protect young people, this legislation appears to serve as a backdoor for the implementation of a national Digital ID program, an initiative that raises significant privacy and civil liberty issues.

The bill's requirement for age verification creates a dangerous precedent by compelling Australians to submit sensitive personal data to access online services. This measure not only infringes on individual privacy but also exposes citizens to potential data breaches, misuse, and surveillance.

Alarmingly, the speed with which this bill is being pushed through Parliament, with limited opportunity for public debate or scrutiny, undermines democratic principles. Such an important policy change, with far-reaching consequences for all Australians, deserves thorough consideration and consultation.

While protecting children online is a goal we all support, this bill is not the right approach. Instead of enforcing a sweeping Digital Identity system, alternative measures—such as better parental controls, education programs, and robust enforcement of existing online safety laws—should be prioritized.

I strongly urge the committee to reject this legislation in its current form and advocate for a transparent, balanced approach that genuinely addresses online safety without jeopardizing Australians' privacy and freedoms.

## Sample 11

Committee Secretary

I write to you in relation to the *Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Bill 2024 [Provisions]*. I understand that submissions close by the end of the day, permitting for one day of submissions. Firstly, this is a highly unusual time frame and I have grave concerns that the highly expedited nature of this bill raises legitimate concern around corrupt behaviour during this process.

Secondly, the enforcement of this bill will be ineffective. Users of social media who are under 16 years of age and those aged 16 years or older who do not wish to participate in an ID verification process will simply employ the use of a proxy server or virtual private network (VPN) service based in another jurisdiction, thereby evading the enforcement of this bill. I note that this is not a difficult process and there are many young people who are aware of it. Further, any effort to implement additional laws regulating the use of proxy servers or VPN services will be highly unfruitful in its results and uneconomical for a multitude of reasons stemming from the very nature and structure of the World Wide Web (WWW) itself. I've not begun to mention how unattractive this bill will be to tourists from foreign countries who may wish to use social media while in Australia, who may choose not to visit at all.

Thirdly, the Australian Human Rights Commission has prepared well-thought and constructive feedback on their 'serious reservations' in relation to this bill. I highly recommend that the Committee review it in its entirety and carefully consider all of the arguments made, and that the government adopt a more open-minded approach to respecting differences in opinion on this bill than it currently has. I stress that this bill is highly contentious in nature and will cause consequences for years to come if not implemented correctly.



Finally, I wish to provide my closing remarks that this bill sets an alarming precedent in which the Australian Government is increasingly involved in the private lives of its citizens in an increasingly inappropriate manner.

### **Sample 12**

To whom it may concern

I am writing to express my deep concern and opposition to the implementation of a Digital ID system and the proposed social media ban for young people in Australia. These policies raise serious issues regarding privacy, data security, and governmental overreach, and I fear they would lead to significant consequences for Australian citizens.

It's easy to look at the horrors of some social media platforms like Facebook and Snapchat (which to my understanding is except from this policy), but platforms like YouTube have become indispensable tools for learning. They provide access to a vast array of instructional content, from academic tutorials to practical life skills. Students use YouTube to deepen their understanding of school subjects, learn new languages, and explore creative outlets like coding, music, and art. In many cases, this platform serves as a supplement to traditional education, offering explanations and examples that teachers and textbooks may not fully cover.

Blocking young people from accessing this wealth of knowledge risks isolating them from a crucial aspect of modern education. Furthermore, it disregards the reality that digital literacy and access to information are essential skills for succeeding in today's world.

Rather than a blanket ban, a more balanced approach—such as promoting parental controls or education on responsible internet use—would better address the challenges without denying young Australians access to these critical resources.

The social media ban would require the introduction of some kind of Digital ID system. Conveniently enough the government seems to have this ready. Unfortunately, this system presents a major risk to individual privacy. Such a system consolidates vast amounts of personal data in one place, making it a “honeypot” for cybercriminals. With the ever-present risk of hacking, it's difficult to imagine a system that would be entirely secure from attacks, putting the personal information of millions of Australians at risk. There are already effective methods in place for tracking those engaging in illegal activities online without implementing such intrusive measures on the entire population.

Together, these measures seem to reflect a troubling shift towards increased monitoring and control over citizens. The combination of a Digital ID and restrictions on digital spaces risks creating an environment where Australians feel watched and restricted in their online activities. This is not a reflection of a free society; rather, it suggests a poorly thought-out agenda aimed at comprehensive surveillance.

I strongly urge you to reconsider these policies, which would negatively impact our personal freedoms and online experiences. There are ways to address security and illegal activities without compromising the privacy, autonomy, and well-being of Australians.

Thank you for considering my concerns.

### Sample 13

Dear Secretary,

**This Bill MUST NOT be passed.** I wish to record my objection to this, as a natural born, indigenous Australian.

The majority of Australians are not stupid. This can clearly be seen by the amount of comments across all social media platforms that object to this. This is just a segway for Digital ID to be rammed down our throats and further, the government has no business in "stepping" into peoples homes and parenting our children. It is reminiscent of when the government thought it a good idea to come into our homes, our communities and steal our children.

I would also ask for the Prime Minister to provide names of the "thousands" of people who supposedly begged him to put this in place. I do not believe him. He's never here, so where did he find the time? I also find his claim that under 16 year olds asked him to take away their freedoms and censor them as LAUGHABLE and an unmitigated lie.

PLEASE don't pass this.

### Sample 14

I totally and utterly disagree with this Bill from banning kids under 16 on social media. This I believe is not to protect our children but instead to use our kids as an excuse to usher in Digital ID and facial recognition for everyone. This is censorship at its highest and used for surveillance and tracking, which breaches our Privacy Act. It has nothing to do with keeping anyone safe.

There are measures parents can take to curb phone usage and apps to restrict site that kids can access. One can also block person and report then online encase of bullying. Therefore this proposed bill is not required and completely an overreach from government and a intrusion of our Privacy.

I do not consent to this Bill and it must be scrapped immediately.

### Sample 15

Please stop this Bill. Why is the government infringing on parents jurisdiction. I think it is a good thing if governments share advise and ideas with the people on how best to or not to use things but I think it breaches human rights to freedom of choice, is too heavy handed and unreasonable to outright ban under 16 year olds using social media.

When my children were younger the devises would go in a designated spot and were only used during certain times. This worked well.

Also I read some platforms will be allowed and not others. why does the government get to decide u tube is ok but not other social media platforms? Isn't this censorship? I think to make the best choices we need to get as much information as possible from a large variety of sources. To me this defeats the whole purpose. If you ban it I think you need to ban all

Alos i think it is unreasonable that the public are only given 1 day to respond to this bill. This does not seem a reasonable amount of time.

Lastly I think it would be helpful for the public to see debates on Bills so we get more information on issues around The Bill.

Thank you for your time

### Sample 16

Honourable Members of the Senate Committee,

I strongly urge you to reconsider this bill. You have not provided any evidence that it will be effective and the risk to public privacy too great. You will cause more damage to kids and the general public than you can solve with these measures. There are so many issues with this bill and I don't have the time to put them down now as you have given very little time for public feedback.

### Sample 17

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to you with regards to the Social Media Minimum Age Bill 2024

I am a mother of , a grandmother of and a foster carer of over years so I think it would be fair to say that I am not only aware and morally obliged, but legally obligated with the duty of care of minors and therefore understand the importance of keeping "our" children safe.

As I take my duty of care very seriously, I am aware that there are a multitude of software options available to parents/schools/libraries etc to ensure that minors are protected online.

I question whether Digital ID for minors will in fact put them in MORE HARM by providing potential predators with their personal details and/or biometric data.

That being said, I see NO REASON that I should be required to submit my personal identity details to enable me the right to social media platforms when there are already systems that can protect our children from harm online.

I will put it boldly, not to offend but so as not to have any misunderstanding –

I do NOT agree with Social Media Minimum Age Bill 2024

### Sample 18

Dear Committee Secretary,

I am deeply concerned about the Social Media Minimum Age Bill 2024.

It seems to me that this bill is nothing more than a sneaky way to bring in digital ID because it would be impossible to police unless every single person in this country used identification to access online platforms.

The government has not explained (or even outlined) how identity and age verification for users over the age of 16 will be handled, who's collecting the data, where it's being stored, and who can access it. Nor have they explained how this data would be guaranteed to remain private and safe. I don't believe they can guarantee the privacy or safety of this data, and therefore it's unconscionable to coerce Australians to hand over their personal details in order to access social media platforms. Threatening social media platforms with hefty fines if they don't do the government's bidding is also completely unacceptable

On top of all of that, this bill is also infringing upon parental responsibility for our children, and upon our discretion in managing our children's online presence. Children are the responsibility of their parents, not of the state. It's yet another example of government over-reach.

There are ways to keep our children safe online and it all begins with the guidance and care of parents and other responsible adults in our children's inner circles.

This bill needs to be scrapped. We can focus on digital literacy programs, protective behaviours, and safer platform features instead.

I (and my fellow Australians, I'm certain) will be watching this closely.

### **Sample 19**

To whom it may concern,

As a parent, I am deeply concerned about the proposed legislation that seeks to set a minimum age for social media use. While I understand the well-meaning intent behind such a measure, I believe it oversteps the proper role of government and encroaches on parental rights and responsibilities.

Decisions about when and how children should engage with social media should rest with families, not lawmakers. As parents, we know our children best and are uniquely equipped to assess their maturity, readiness, and ability to navigate online spaces safely. By mandating an arbitrary age threshold, the government risks creating a one-size-fits-all solution to a nuanced issue.

Instead of imposing restrictions, I urge policymakers to focus on empowering parents through education and resources that help us guide our children in the digital world. Collaboration with tech companies to improve parental controls, enhance online safety tools, and promote media literacy would be far more effective and respectful of family autonomy.

Social media can have both positive and negative impacts on young people, and it is up to parents to weigh those risks and benefits within the context of their own families. I firmly believe that the government should support us in this role, not supplant it.

Thank you for considering my perspective. I hope you will prioritize parental rights and reject legislation that undermines them.

### **Sample 20**

This law has to be one of the stupidest overreaches of government control. The people advocating for this as well as the senators calling for it are those who claim to be pro freedom and rights to citizens. Yet it seems those same people refuse to take accountability for their children, and would rather pawn off their failures of monitoring their children online to companies who had no control over it to begin with.

Turning our country into a pariah state for tech companies because of backwards laws just because parents are incapable of being honest and saying they shouldn't let their kids on social media, either due to immaturity or an utter negligence to monitor what their child is doing.

How about you just promote parents actually talking to their kids and maybe not let them just have free reign over an iPad to rot away. Educate not eradicate a right a parent should have to raise their child.

### **Sample 21**

To Whom This May Concern,

Hope you are well.

I writing to this committee and am hoping you can all see clearly enough to vote against the "Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Bill 2024 [Provisions]".

"The road to hell is paved with good intentions."

It's either a sinister act by the government to use children as a means to gain further control of the public by inadvertently enforcing social media platforms to request for age verification (digital ID - Invasion of privacy on the Internet) or the government is incapable of foreseeing that this cements the use of age verification for "all" people on social media platforms. Either way, it's wrong!

This should be left to parents to decide what their children are exposed to on Social Media, not the government!

This is clearly government overreach to ensue further control upon its population. I also find it shameful that the government is not allowing enough time for the public to be aware of this bill amendment. 24 hours? This should be illegal. How can you expect the public to act on this in the timeframe given? It's sneaky and means I trust the two parties or 'uni-party' even less than I already do.

I hope this message passes on so that you realise that more and more people are waking up to this abhorrent government intervention behaviour.

I respectfully request you use that power for the good of our country, citizens, children and grandchildren.

### **Sample 22**

Greetings,

This bill does not meet any of the minimum requirements to be considered a worthwhile piece of legislation. It is entirely unenforceable -- on what level of the internet's infrastructure would the ban be applied? Australian network providers? Individual IP's? How would VPN's not entirely circumvent the ban?

Which social media sites are being targeted? At what level of social interactivity and ability to post about oneself does a website qualify as a social media platform?

Is there any plan to prevent one ID being used for multiple accounts? What if an adult creates the account and then gives the login details to a child?

Besides being unenforceable, it's also useless. What evidence is there that this ban would do more good than harm? What evidence is there that cyberbullying wouldn't simply move back to channels of direct contact such as texting and email? Have there been any studies commissioned about the ways children and teens interact with social media, and how removing those interactions would affect their ability to socialise and connect with their peers? What about children in unsafe or unsuitable living conditions who will lose the ability to learn that they are being mistreated + their ability to contact their support system?

This bill should be thrown out immediately. It is a waste of taxpayer money and of the Committee's time.

### **Sample 23**

Dear Committee Secretary,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the Australian Government's proposed ban on social media use for individuals under the age of 16. While the stated intention behind this proposal—protecting children from harm online is commendable, the broader implications of such a policy suggest far more concerning issues related to digital surveillance, freedom of speech, and privacy.

At the heart of this proposal is the potential to introduce a mandatory digital identification system. While it is framed to regulate access to social media platforms, the real impact of implementing such a policy would be the creation of a system that requires every Australian to be digitally identified to use online platforms. This would enable unprecedented levels of state control and surveillance over citizens digital activities, extending well beyond social media usage.

Such a move would allow the government to monitor and censor online activities, infringing on Australians' fundamental rights to freedom of expression and privacy. The proposed system would create a digital surveillance apparatus, undermining both civil liberties and the open nature of the internet.

The introduction of a mandatory digital ID linked to social media usage raises significant concerns about censorship. Once individuals, especially minors, are required to register under such a system, it becomes easier for governments or powerful private entities to track, monitor, and potentially censor online content based on politically motivated reasons. The idea of real-time monitoring of online activity is deeply troubling and could lead to the restriction of information and the silencing of voices critical of government policies, corporate practices, or social issues.

This type of system could very easily be used to suppress dissent and limit freedom of expression, not just for minors but for all Australians, as the government could expand the scope of control over time.

Rather than banning social media for young people under the guise of protection, the government should be focused on promoting digital literacy, providing education on online safety, and ensuring that young Australians are equipped with the skills to navigate the digital world responsibly. A blanket ban on social media will not solve the complex issues related to cyberbullying, misinformation, or mental health problems. Instead, it could drive these issues underground or push them to less regulated platforms.

Furthermore, social media is an essential tool for communication, education, and engagement with a global community. Denying young people access to these platforms removes a vital space for self-expression, learning, and social interaction, stunting their personal development in the digital age.

Instead of imposing restrictions on social media use, the government should focus on policies that empower young people to make informed choices online. This includes:

Digital literacy programs that teach young Australians how to assess online content, identify misinformation, and manage their digital footprints.

Stronger protections against cyberbullying and harmful content, without infringing on free expression or enabling widespread surveillance.

Better regulation of social media platforms, holding them accountable for harmful content and ensuring they act in the best interests of users.

In summary, the proposed ban on social media access for Australians under 16 years old is not only an overreach of government power but also a potential Trojan horse for a much larger digital identity and surveillance program. It could lead to the erosion of privacy, freedom of expression, and the integrity of the internet itself. I urge the Australian Government to reconsider this proposal and focus on solutions that protect young people's safety online without infringing on their fundamental rights.

I respectfully request that this submission be considered as part of the consultation process.

Thank you for considering my views on this important issue.

### **Sample 24**

Dear Sir/Madam,

I wish to object to the time frame in which the 'Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Bill 2024'

[Provisions]

Is being implemented.

I do not agree with the Proposed Bill, children have and need to be able to have free speech. We do not need more 'Nannying' of our children from whom our future politicians will be selected. They need to have more free thinking, less hand holding and encouragement to have ' the courage of their convictions'

Please stop this Bill.

### **Sample 25**

This is my submission relating to the Online Safety Bill that will be presented tomorrow.

In all fairness I have not been given the time to put forward all my concerns regarding this Bill.

In short. I am appalled and totally disgusted that this needs to be addressed given the options readily available to all households, to prevent this 'Online abuse' that the Government feels the need to protect the teenagers from.

I have successfully sheltered my 4 Teens from online abuse. My methods were easy and anyone can do it.

All it takes is a concerned parent.

The government is NOT MY BABYSITTER.

I am against the Online Safety Bill.

Yours in truth.

### **Sample 26**

I am writing today in regards to my concerns with the social media bill. It is very obvious that this bill is a national Digital ID program dressed in a very poor disguise.

Labor and the Coalition are trying to rush it through the Senate without debate— so they can force everyone to use their Age Verification Digital Identity technology which Australians have been very clear that they DO NOT want.

The reality if the bill passes would be 20 million Australians will have to upload a biometric facial scan to social media platforms to assess their age, or more likely, sign in with Digital ID, which comes into force on 1 December. This Social Media Ban has been deliberately delayed until now.

A "Ban" that requires 20 million Australians to "assure" social media companies of their highly personal digital data is not actually a Ban. Rather, it's the groundwork for a system of total Digital-ID surveillance.

With Digital ID, government can control what you buy, where you go, what you say on social media, decide whether you should travel or not.

This social media ban legislation is a Trojan Horse to engineer enough take up of Digital ID to force it onto everyone.

It is up to the parents to take control of their own children's social media usage and not the responsibility of the government to enforce digital ID on to the citizens. This bill should not go ahead, especially because Australians have voiced their concern with digital ID and the government is being really sneaky and dishonest by trying to push this through without proper debate or consultation by the concerned citizens.

I urge you not to rush this bill through without proper consultation and full transparency to the citizens of Australia.

### **Sample 27**

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am most displeased and concerned with the Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Bill 2024.

Please do not allow this to go further. Please make this a public document. My name should be not be included.

I would be grateful if the Committee would consider these key concerns:

The Bill poses a threat to Australian's privacy rights, it forces citizens to constantly provide personal information to various online platforms.

These platforms may not always effectively protect Australian's data, increasing the risk of leakage and compromising privacy. Online privacy must be protected when considering safeguards for victims of abuse, and people in the criminal justice system among others. This proposed bill is likely to backfire and make matters worse for our most vulnerable citizens.

By removing anonymous free speech, the Bill makes Australians think twice before expressing their true opinion online, effectively silencing honest and healthy debate. Anonymity online while not perfect is essential for free speech to flourish. The proposed bill threatens Australia's standing as a vibrant democracy which values the free speech of its citizens.

The Bill undermines parents/caregiver's ability to determine the limits of their child's online activity and undermines their role as the key decision maker in their child's life.

This one size fits all approach is contrary to Australian's many and varied parenting styles and methods.

Please reject this Social Media Digital ID Bill in its current form.

### **Sample 28**

To the Committee Secretary.

Please accept my submission for the above Bill.

I am deeply concerned that this Bill will have negative consequences into the future resulting in even more heavy handed censorship from our Government being extended to adults using social media.

Parents already have the means to control what their children see and do on their phones and it is the right of all parents, NOT Government, to set the rules in their family.

It is a huge concern to me that our Government is, Bill by Bill, inflicting more and more control over it's citizens.

A democracy treasures it's right to free speech, sharing of different ideas, using common sense, questioning it's Government's policies and holding them to account.



We do not want Government over reach on how we live within our family units & how we chose to use social media.

I fear that we are losing our democratic rights in Australia and I sincerely hope that this Bill will be defeated.

### **Sample 29**

To whom it may concern,

Please represent my views to the senate committee.

I am opposed to this bill

I am concerned about the privacy of all Australian citizens due to the lengths social media companies would need to go to, to identify who actually is over 16. I don't believe that it is safe and/or fair to all Australians over the age of 16 to have to provide such proof to these corporations. It may be digital ID, or biometric. Whichever, I have been hacked and I don't wish to have more of my personal data online. This process I perceive as dangerous to Australian citizens.

I don't like that an unelected government official will have the power to interpret and decide on the rules which will govern all Australians' use of social media. I see this as further government overreach following the massive amount of government overreach during the recent pandemic.

I don't like that this legislation has been sprung upon the public with little time for public submissions.

Please take my concerns seriously

### **Sample 30**

My husband and I as well as other family members are opposed to this bill.

We also object to the limited time for submissions.

We already have an ESafety Commissioner who is meant to help safeguard our children.

This also means that every person will be required to provide identification to to access social media and we object to data being collected and monitoring every comment or like we may post on social media.

The government should be prioritise the protection of our personal data and ensure our privacy rather than imposing invasive technologies upon us.

### **Sample 31**

Hello,

I writing to you to express my concern about the Social Media Minimum Age Bill being rushed through. I would urge you to postpone this until the new year so that it can be fully explored and put together well. I have grave concerns about it being rushed through.

Sincerely,

### **Sample 32**

To the Committee Secretary, Senate Standing Committees on Environment and Communications

I am writing to you about the Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Bill 2024.

It is quite clear to me that this bill has little to do with protecting children online. This is the misinformation/disinformation bill and a digital ID bill in disguise.

I would remind you that the Australian people are not stupid. We are not impressed with this clear and blatant attempt at revoking our right to online privacy.

Even the least intelligent person could see that it would be impossible to police such a policy unless every single person in this country uses identification to access online platforms.

Please understand that this sort of totalitarian approach toward removing the rights of all Australian people to free speech will simply shine a very bright light on all those senators and politicians who back this bill.

I am disgusted to realise this bill is not about online safety, but about implementing a digital ID and destroying freedom of speech.

The Australian people have long memories. We are watching - and we are not impressed.

This bill should be stopped.

### Sample 33

To the senate,

I object to the bill currently residing in the senate for the following reason;

It is **NOT** the Australian Government Corporation's **JOB** to monitor and/or teach our children what they can and cannot watch and /or read on social media, it is the child's Mother and/or Father's responsibility. Our children are **NOT** your children. See to your own children (*If you do not have your own children then I suggest you get yourself a cat or a dog*) and let our children alone. We, the Australian people are responsible for our own children and will not suffer the interference of a communist corporation and a Tyrannical leader interfering in the raising of our children.

Sincerely and vehemently,

### Sample 34

As a concerned citizen, I oppose the idea that average Australians are criminals who have zero rights online much less to their own voice, privacy and ability exist in the digital space on their own terms. I'm opposed, as are many, to this Digital ID Bill and I want it blocked. Thank you

### Sample 35

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing to express my deep opposition to the Social Media Minimum Age Bill, as I believe it presents significant risks not only to the freedom of expression but also to personal privacy and the potential introduction of mandatory digital identification.

The proposed legislation aims to set a minimum age for accessing social media platforms, purporting to protect minors from potential harms. However this approach raises serious concerns about the implications of age verification systems. The most pressing issue is the likelihood that enforcement will necessitate the creation of digital IDs to authenticate users' ages. Such a requirement could lead to heightened surveillance and the accumulation of sensitive personal data, making individuals vulnerable to data breaches and misuse.

Moreover, limiting social media access based on age undermines freedom of expression for all users, especially younger voices that contribute valuable insights on social issues. Society ought to empower

young people rather than alienate them through stigmatization: restricting their access to information and platforms stifles their participation in vital conversations.

### **Sample 36**

Dear Senator/s

As a teacher and parent, I am very concerned about the government's overreach in deciding what can and cannot be seen, heard and expressed on social media by adolescents.

This is reminiscent of the Mis and Disinformation Bill gagging free speech.

There is enough control over our time, thoughts, employment, health etc without adding the Age Verification to adolescents and my default, adults who have to also verify their age.

I use social media, YouTube, information in the classroom as a teaching tool and that choice is my professional judgement appropriate to subjects of study, not a bureaucrat's.

If the government is really concerned about protecting children, they should stop transexuals being allowed into primary school libraries grooming children in sexually inappropriate ways.

It is parents' responsibility to care and protect their children, not the government's.

### **Sample 37**

Dear Sir/Madam,

I write to respectfully request for your vote to stop the Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Bill 2024 [Provisions] from being passed.

This is simply a blatant way of having all individuals' ID checked and has nothing at all to do with the safety of our children. Parents who are worried about their children accessing harmful online content, govern their child's activities while they are using social media. No one should be forced into proving their identity to access their social media accounts.

I thank you for your time and for your consideration.

### **Sample 38**

Dear Senators,

It was unfortunate to see the events unfold that saw the Social Media Minimum Age Bill 2024 pass with only a 24-hour window provided for submissions and insufficient time to properly debate and flesh out in the Senate.

I believe this decision will be highly regretted down the track and will only push youth towards the darker recesses of the net to avoid the ban whilst also having unintended consequences on youth mental health.

All Aussies know this was not about the kids. It's a trojan horse to implement a China style surveillance state.

It would have made more sense to educate parents of the applications already available to monitor and restrict what their children have access to. Instead every Australian has to bear the burden of this bill.

This was NOT the will of all Australians.

What a sad and dark day this will be remembered as.

### Sample 39

Dear Senators,

The Senate just voted to gag debate on the social media ban later this evening and that there will be just 1 hour of debate left before it is put to a vote.

The debate will start later this evening (ETA ~7pm) - after 27 other Bills are rammed through the Senate.

It seems, through this very action & other underhanded actions, that our very democracy is a farce. The Parliament should be more accountable to the people than this and I as a citizen, deeply oppose this motion to gag debate.

So, I wonder if a judicial review required at this point?

Section 50 of the Constitution authorises the Senate to make rules and orders with respect to the mode in which its powers, privileges, and immunities may be exercised and upheld, and the order and conduct of its business and proceedings. Standing orders and other rules made by the Senate embody procedures designed to ensure that parliamentary business, especially legislation, is conducted in an orderly, open and predictable manner devoid of surprise, haste or sleight of hand.

The government practices this week are violating the constitution and the rights of all Australians.

The bills they pushed this week haven't been conducted in an orderly, open and predictable manner devoid of surprise, haste or sleight of hand.

When the government violates the Australian Constitution, the High Court of Australia can declare the legislation unconstitutional and invalid. This process is called judicial review and no doubt, there will be a push for this, if you continue to take underhanded approaches as senators, acting without integrity or accountability on behalf of the people.

Of course, we will vote all of you that vote yes out and then push for a judicial review.

SO vote no and listen to what YOUR constituents are telling you, rather than what the WEF agenda puppets are wanting to push through. Stop selling your country out.

### Sample 40

Hi,

I am gravely concerned about the idea that all Australians will have to use a digital ID in order to use social media. This seems a gross infringement on our privacy rights and ability to use social media in a free and unhindered way.

I understand concerns about youth on social media and as a parent it has been a difficult road to navigate and still is with a 19yo adult. But essentially parents need to communicate with kids and they need to be educated about restricting their own child's access to social media platforms like tik tok and snap chat, where there are many questionable feeds. This is a new age we live in and we are trying to navigate it, but china like media restrictions and digital ID for social media seems to be moving away from democratic process where individual freedoms should be honoured and education, information and sharing of ideas should be preserved.

I do not think bills like this are the solution to our problems.

Kind regards,

### **Sample 41**

Hello,

I would like to raise serious concerns with the rushed timeframe of this inquiry, It is completely inappropriate and undemocratic, and shows a complete disregard for the opinions of not only experts but also regular citizens.

Given the number of submissions, it is impossible that they could have been properly reviewed before the hearing took place. Now with the report due today, it is impossible that a significant number have been properly reviewed and taken into account before the report is written. This is clearly obvious watching the pace that reviews are published online.

I took the trouble of writing a well-researched submission, and the fact that it has not yet been published indicates that it likely has not have even been looked at yet. Yet the report is due today?

This process must be halted. All submissions should be reviewed and another hearing held, and a proper time be taken to assess and make findings.

It is not possible that the inquiry can make a proper findings in this time. Any progress of the bill should be halted and a proper consultation held.

Thanks,

### **Sample 42**

To Whom It May Concern,

I email tonight with regard to the above mentioned proposed Bill.

Should I be surprised that you have given us less than 24 hours to write and submit a submission? Not at all. We now are all very aware of the tactics used by the duopoly to get through legislation that purely is an agenda of the majority of politicians in Parliament today.

I am at a loss to understand the nature of this bill but can only presume it is to push through your intended government ID, or digital ID. There are so many more ways to combat the bullying online, both from a parental side, to a political side.

Firstly all social media groups can be made to monitor all activity online and should a suggested bullying incident occur, the social media platform can do whatever they feel appropriate. This would be simple and instantly stop the bullying, but rather you propose to ban every youth from social media because of a few bad eggs. How is it that fact checkers can check every ounce of information posted on a social media site, but the instance of bullying cannot be controlled? Because no-one is being paid by the government to monitor bullying. Why not? Well I would love to know. On a daily basis anything I, as a 61 year old woman, is fact checked and even though my information can be factual, it still is monitored and if the fact checker believe a post is not fact, a notice is placed on my post that they don't believe my post is factual. How about in the same scenario, a bully has a notice put on all their posts, "I am a bully and I have been caught bullying on this social media app, I have said horrible things to people or told someone to go kill themselves". How long would the instance of bullying last then? I am doubting very long, but hey that's too simple isn't it. Rather we will force every Australian to get a digital ID and have way more control over what everyone does. We can see straight through you all.

My daughter was severely bullied at high school. I fought so hard to get any assistance from anyone. I went to the high school who said they couldn't do anything because it was outside of school hours it was happening, so I went to the police who tried to dismiss me.

Only that Brodie's Law had recently come into action, they were forced into actually assisting. Social media companies did absolutely nothing even though I sent through many screen shots. I cannot remember but I do believe their response was that what was happening wasn't against their community standards so there was nothing that could be done. Yes the social media companies allowed it to continue. The fact that police and social media wash their hands of this and you the government do little to change any laws that force their hand, is why it continues to this day, and worse as each year goes by. You, the government, would rather force every person in Australia to be controlled by your internet ID and undoubtedly at some point take full control of a person account.

What you all are basically saying is that parents are to stupid to be able to monitor their child and what happens to them on the internet. Rather, 100 or so people in Australia believe they have to right to chose what happens in a child's life, completely taking a parents rights or wants out of the picture. Where in any piece of the constitution does it say that a government has the right to chose what a child does in their household?

It is very obvious that the majority of people in the Parliament do not actually realise what their job is. You are working for the people, not to control the people. You must listen to the people, not rally together as a united front to push through an agenda that is only beneficial to the Parliament, not to the people of Australia.

Try as you may this bill should not succeed. The people of Australia are speaking up loud and clear now and we will tell you what will happen in our lives. If somehow you all manage to push it through, do you think you will successfully achieve your agenda? Not on your life. We will all leave social media and you still will not be able to force your digital ID upon us.

As I stated earlier, listen to the people. We do not want any legislation that can control any further aspects of our lives. Our voices are loud and we will ensure that you hear us.

### **Sample 43**

The Australian government's proposed Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Bill 2024 seeks to prohibit individuals under the age of 16 from accessing social media platforms, with social media companies mandated to enforce age restrictions through age verification technologies. While the bill's aim of protecting children from online harms is commendable, it raises significant concerns regarding privacy, equity, practicality, and, notably, parental rights.

While the Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Bill 2024 is well-intentioned, its implementation risks unintended consequences that outweigh its benefits. The bill infringes on parental rights, jeopardizes privacy, and may exclude vulnerable groups, all while failing to address the root causes of online harms.

A more effective approach would involve empowering parents, enhancing digital literacy education, and promoting proactive moderation by platforms. By prioritizing these measures, Australia can create a safer online environment without compromising the rights and freedoms of its citizens.

### **Sample 44**

To the Committee Secretary, Senate Standing Committees on Environment and Communications.

I am writing to you about the Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Bill 2024.

I am firmly against government ban on children from social media. I am of the opinion that is best left to their parents to monitor and used as a penalty for failing to do chores.

This ban has the effect of depriving all children of all the great things that social media has to offer, such as: online entertainment, hobbies, crafts, sports, broader knowledge, ideas for life, funny animal videos, social contact with friends and relatives online, and even facetimeing with remote relatives and parents on vacation or camps

The utility of social media is so great that children need to participate in it in order to come to terms with the broader views they can only attain from the online and international community.

It's an appalling attempt at censoring the youngest voices in the community. It's also a poorly disguised trojan horse of forcing everyone else into digital ID age verification to use social media. This is inconvenient and annoying, just like having to login to make comment to provide public feedback on such bad governance policies.

Children ought not to be deprived and punished as a whole segment of society, simply because of incompetence in monitoring the few sordid individuals who would commit cybercrimes against them, as they may also do to adults.

This and other legislation, such as the MAD bill and voice referendum, is so appalling, that I propose to ban the current policy makers and politicians from drafting any further nonsense heretofore. They're actually hopeless at doing their job, which is supposed to be to represent the people, rather than their own interests and agendas.

This bill should be stopped.

Regards,

### **Sample 45**

Committee Secretary,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed legislation that would mandate the creation of a digital ID for access to social media platforms, particularly under the pretext of regulating access for individuals under the age of 16. While I recognize the importance of protecting minors online, I firmly believe that this approach is misguided and infringes upon the rights of Australian citizens.

The introduction of a digital ID system for social media access raises significant concerns regarding privacy, data security, and government overreach. Forcing citizens to create a digital identity not only creates an unnecessary bureaucratic barrier but also poses risks related to the collection and storage of personal information. In a time when data breaches are increasingly common, the potential for misuse of such information is alarming.

Moreover, it is essential to highlight that the Australian public has a fundamental right to privacy and autonomy in matters concerning parenting and family life. The government should not assume the role of parent, dictating how families manage their children's online activities. Instead, responsibility should lie with parents and guardians, who are best positioned to make informed decisions about their children's internet usage.

Implementing this legislation would not only undermine parental authority but also set a concerning precedent for government interference in personal lives. The focus should be on education, awareness, and providing resources for parents to navigate the digital landscape, rather than imposing restrictive measures that limit access to information and communication.

I urge the government to reconsider this legislation and prioritize solutions that empower families rather than infringe upon their rights. The aim should be to foster a safe online environment through collaboration with parents and educators, rather than through invasive regulations that would affect the entire population.

Thank you for considering my views on this important issue. I hope to see a more thoughtful approach that respects individual freedoms and promotes responsible online engagement.

Yours sincerely,

### **Sample 46**

Sir/Madam

I would like to express my vehement objection to this e-Safety Bill for the following reasons.

This Bill's verification creates serious risks of data breaches and misuse, exposing all Australians to identity theft or worse. Hacking is rife now, nothing is safe which is why we don't want the Digital ID also. This is just a Trojan horse to Digital ID...so obvious!

The eSafety Commissioner has been granted too broad powers to interpret what "reasonable steps" for compliance mean, without proper parliamentary oversight. This puts too much control in the hands of an unelected official. It cannot even be discussed by the Senate!

While the Bill claims to protect privacy, it doesn't adequately ensure data collected for age verification will be destroyed or prevent third-party misuse. Australians deserve stronger protections. We do not trust the govt who has repeatedly proven itself to lie.

Age assurance systems may de-anonymize social media users, linking real-world identities to online accounts. This undermines free expression and online privacy. Australia is a democracy, please keep it this way.

With only hours now to submit feedback and a five-day inquiry, there's no time for proper public or expert scrutiny of the Bill. You know rushed laws lead to dangerous unintended consequences. How can you support the naivety of this? It will never be safe

Please stop this process today! It is time this government acted for the people, not themselves. Please respond to Australia's requests for a change.

Do it for our future, for the freedoms of your children and grandchildren.

Very sincerely

### **Sample 47**

Dear Committee Secretary,

I am writing today to ask the committee for consideration for a minimum extension of two weeks for The Mindful Nurse Australia's submission on this matter please, that being the "Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Bill 2024 [Provisions].

My ultimate request would be for an extension of four weeks please, to allow the time required to maximize quality of public participation in this decision making of the highest order, that being our children, our future.

Just as the Senate Standing Committees requires time to prepare, we, the people, as public participation in decision-making of these matters of the highest order, require time to prepare.



For the Committee to provide only a 24-hour period, for any public consultation, is not of integrity, nor fair, nor just and may be viewed as an abuse of power and obstruction of public participation in the decision-making process.

The United Nations and member state delegates are obligated to uphold public participation in decision-making, complete transparency in processes, human rights such as dignity, fundamental freedoms such as free speech, and established tenets of international law.

I hope the committee reconsiders their submission timeframe for The Mindful Nurse Australia's submission and all of the Australian Public's submissions for the Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Bill 2024 [Provisions].

This bill, as with all bills, deserves time. Moving forward, I hope parliament can establish a minimum of four weeks submission period for all proposed bills to ensure true, considered, public participation both now and in future.

Is there any reason why this bill cannot be addressed when parliament returns in 2025?

I thank the Committee for providing the opportunity for submissions and I hope the Committee will grant more appropriate time for Community to speak to this matter of the highest order.

Thank you for your consideration.

### **Sample 48**

Hi there,

I am writing to express my genuine concern and lack of Information about this bill.

I feel that the Bill does not openly discuss how this will be enforced and the repercussions of parents not able to or willing to enforce this with children under the age of 16.

Additionally, a lot of independent and some public schools use resources such as YouTube for learning content, I myself have personally also shown my children videos from content creators such as 'Neil Does Maths' what implications does this bill present to moving this content to another platform that is accessible to children under 16?

As a parent I am genuinely concerned about the overreach of government supervision and wish for the bill to be transparent on the issues above before proceeding through.

Thanks for your time.

### **Sample 49**

Dear Senator,

I am writing to oppose the Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Bill 2024.

As a parent of three young children, I believe it is incumbent upon me to manage and guide my children as they navigate social media when I deem that they are mature enough to manage all that comes along with its use.

I do, in principle, I agree with protecting children from the perils of social media and believe a minimum age recommendation is sensible.

The government's role in this should be to provide appropriate guidance supported by evidence based research to best inform the public on measures to best assist families and protect their children.

However, requiring social media users to verify their age is a step too far and something I deeply oppose. Social media is a tool for all to use at their own discretion.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my letter in opposition of this amendment.

Sincerely

### **Sample 50**

Dear Minister

I am writing to express my concerns about the proposed legislation to ban social media access for individuals under the age of 16 in Australia. While I understand the government's intention to protect young people from potential harm online, I believe this decision could set a troubling precedent for the future of digital rights and freedoms in our country.

Firstly, the blanket restriction on social media use for young people under the age of 16 risks creating an environment where personal freedoms are curtailed without fully addressing the root causes of online harm. By blocking access to platforms widely used by younger generations, we risk further isolating them from essential forms of communication, social interaction, and access to information. Many young people use these platforms to engage in educational content, creative expression, and to connect with peers, mentors, and communities that provide important support.

Moreover, this ban could unintentionally stifle the digital literacy of the next generation. The internet is an integral part of modern life, and the ability to navigate online spaces safely and responsibly is a crucial skill. Rather than restricting access, I urge the government to focus on digital education, equipping young people with the tools to identify misinformation, safeguard their privacy, and develop critical thinking skills in an online environment.

I also want to highlight a broader concern about this policy setting a dangerous precedent for future measures that could infringe upon digital rights. While the current proposal may seem narrowly focused, there is a real risk that it could evolve into a step toward a mandatory online identification system for all Australians. If this ban is implemented, it could open the door to further digital surveillance measures, where young people (and eventually all citizens) are required to prove their identity to access online spaces. Such a move would not only infringe on individual privacy rights but also raise significant concerns about the security and misuse of personal data.

There is also the issue of fairness and accessibility. Young people from lower-income backgrounds or those in remote areas often rely on social media as their primary means of accessing information, education, and even opportunities for employment. By removing these platforms from their reach, the policy may disproportionately affect those already disadvantaged, widening the digital divide in Australia.

In conclusion, I urge you and your colleagues in the government to reconsider the proposed ban on social media for those under 16. Instead, I encourage a more comprehensive approach that focuses on education, regulation, and the protection of young people's rights and freedoms online, while promoting their ability to participate in the digital world in a safe and responsible manner.

Thank you for considering my concerns. I look forward to seeing a more balanced and thoughtful approach to this important issue.

Sincerely,