

PRACTICE BASED TEMPLATE

Submissions must not exceed 300 words (excluding title & authors). The document **must not** be password protected or saved as read only as this may result in your abstract failing to upload successfully. Use Arial 12 point type only. Please structure your submission using the subheadings below. If the abstract does not fit the headings, please put full abstract beneath introduction and we will remove the headings once submitted.

Australia's new social media policy: the world is watching

Authors:

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Background/Purpose:

In December 2025, Australia will implement the world's first legislation that aims to restrict access to social media by young people under 16 years old. A year earlier, the Social Media Minimum Age legislation was passed with bipartisan support from the Australian parliament due to concerns about the deleterious impact of social media on the mental health of young Australians.

Approach:

From December 10 2025, the Australian Government will require social media companies to take reasonable steps to verify the age of their platform users. This includes a variety of social media platforms, including YouTube. Companies face fines of up to \$50million for failing to comply, but there will be no consequences for adolescents (or their parents) who fail to comply.

Outcomes/Impact:

This presentation will 1) review the evidence about the impact of social media on young people's mental health; 2) describe the approach that the Government is taking to evaluate the implementation of the new legislation; 3) present Australian baseline data about perceptions of the social media ban; 4) position this legislation within a wider suite of possible policies (eg social media bans in schools); and 4) identify what approaches other countries are considering.

Innovation and Significance:

Widely appreciated as a major social experiment, the results of the Australian Governments' evaluation of this arguably radical policy will influence whether other countries introduce similar legislation.

Professor Susan Sawyer is a member of the ESafety Commission's Academic Advisory Committee which is overseeing the evaluation of the new legislation.