Australian Government | acma Australian Communications and Media Authority

Australian Government | eSafetyCommissioner

Corporate plan 2025–26

For the period 2025–26 to 2028–29

Australian Communications and Media Authority

eSafety Commissioner

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Corporate plan 2025–26

For the period 2025–26 to 2028–29

Part 1

Australian Communications and Media Authority corporate plan 2025–26

Part 2

eSafety Commissioner corporate plan 2025–26

Acknowledgement of Country

The Australian Communications and Media Authority
and the eSafety Commissioner acknowledge First Nations peoples as the
Traditional Owners and Custodians of Australia.

We respect and celebrate First Nations peoples
as the original storytellers and content creators of the lands
on which we work, and honour the enduring strength
and commitment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
to the land, waters and their communities.
We pay our respects to Elders past and present.

Artwork from *Connected and United* © Amy Allerton

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Introduction

Statement of preparation

I, Nerida O'Loughlin, as the accountable authority of the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA), present the *Corporate plan 2025–26* of the ACMA and the eSafety Commissioner (eSafety), which covers the period 2025–26 to 2028–29, as required under paragraph 35(1)(b) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act).

Nerida O'Loughlin PSM
Chair and Agency Head
7 July 2025

About this corporate plan

The ACMA is a non-corporate Commonwealth entity under the PGPA Act,[1] as a listed entity established under subsection 6 of the *Australian Communications and Media Authority Act 2005* (ACMA Act). For the purposes of the PGPA Act, the eSafety Commissioner is not a Commonwealth entity; the relevant Commonwealth entity relating to the eSafety Commissioner is the ACMA. Section 170 of the *Online Safety Act 2021* provides that the eSafety Commissioner is an official of the ACMA for the purposes of the finance law.[2]

Our corporate plan includes an introduction, our purposes, key activities and our operating context and performance. The reporting period covers the 4 reporting periods from 2025–26 through to 2028–29, as required under the PGPA Act. The eSafety Commissioner's corporate plan is presented in Part 2 of the document.

Australian Communications and Media Authority

The ACMA is the independent Commonwealth statutory authority for the regulation of communications and media services in Australia. Our purpose is to contribute to maximising the economic and social benefits of communications infrastructure, content and services for Australia. We do this by maintaining, enforcing and improving regulation to drive industry performance and protect consumers. We manage public resources to enable industry to deliver services to the community. This work underpins our vision: a connected, informed and entertained Australia.

1 The ACMA is a listed entity for the purposes of finance law under section 6 of the ACMA Act.
2 The finance law comprises the PGPA Act and the Rules and any other instrument made under the PGPA Act, and relevant Appropriation Acts: section 8 of the PGPA Act.

eSafety Commissioner

The eSafety Commissioner (eSafety) is Australia's independent regulator for online safety. eSafety fosters online safety by exercising powers under Australian Government legislation, primarily the Online Safety Act, to protect Australians from serious online harms and to promote safer, more positive online experiences. eSafety achieves this through regulation, national leadership and coordination, research, and educational and awareness activities that promote online safety. eSafety leads and coordinates online safety efforts across government departments, authorities and agencies. The eSafety Commissioner is an independent statutory office holder.

Under the Online Safety Act, the ACMA makes staff available to assist the eSafety Commissioner to perform their functions and exercise their powers to such extent as the eSafety Commissioner reasonably requires.

Part 1

Australian Communications and Media Authority corporate plan 2025–26

Message from the ACMA Chair

As the accountable authority of the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA), I am pleased to present the ACMA corporate plan for 2025–26. The eSafety Commissioner's corporate plan is presented in Part 2, reflecting our separate regulatory and operational functions.

Recent heightened geopolitical volatility as well as declining public trust in business and institutions are having an impact globally on social cohesion and economic certainty.

The communications and media sectors are not immune to global disruptions. These sectors are also integral to maintaining connected communities and advancing Australia's economic prosperity.

Public trust and confidence in communication and media services are essential to industry's own success and can only be secured when organisations act in the best interests of consumers and audiences.

Technology and service innovation present opportunities for industry growth and even better consumer experiences when designed with people at the centre.

For the ACMA's part, we have a significant role in enhancing consumer trust by making sure that the systems underpinning communications and media operate with transparency, accountability and resilience.

We do this by setting clear expectations for industry, taking decisive action where needed, and empowering consumers to understand and exercise their rights. We also foster a regulatory environment that gives industry the confidence to innovate and invest in vital communications infrastructure and services.

In our *Corporate plan 2025–26,* we recommit to our vision of a connected, informed and entertained Australia, with key activities for the next 4 years that will:

- support an efficient and reliable communications infrastructure, and
- build consumer trust in the use of communications content and services.

We remain committed to building a high-performing organisation to deliver these activities by investing in the development and wellbeing of our people. We also need to understand and make use of new technologies, including artificial intelligence, to improve our own productivity and know how it is being used in the entities we regulate.

The commencement of this plan coincides with the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the ACMA following the merger in 2005 of the Australian Communications Authority and the Australian Broadcasting Authority.

Over the past 2 decades, the ACMA has worked at the intersection of rapid technological advancement, shifting societal demands and expectations, and an evolving digital environment. The coming decades are likely to see even further increases in the pace of change and innovation in the critical sectors that the ACMA regulates.

The performance measures in this plan will ensure that we continue to deliver on our purpose to contribute to maximising the economic and social benefits of communications infrastructure, content and services for Australia over the next 4 years.

I look forward to bringing this corporate plan to life over the next year and beyond. I will report on our performance against the plan in our Annual Performance Statement in the ACMA's annual report. See page 50 for the message from the eSafety Commissioner.

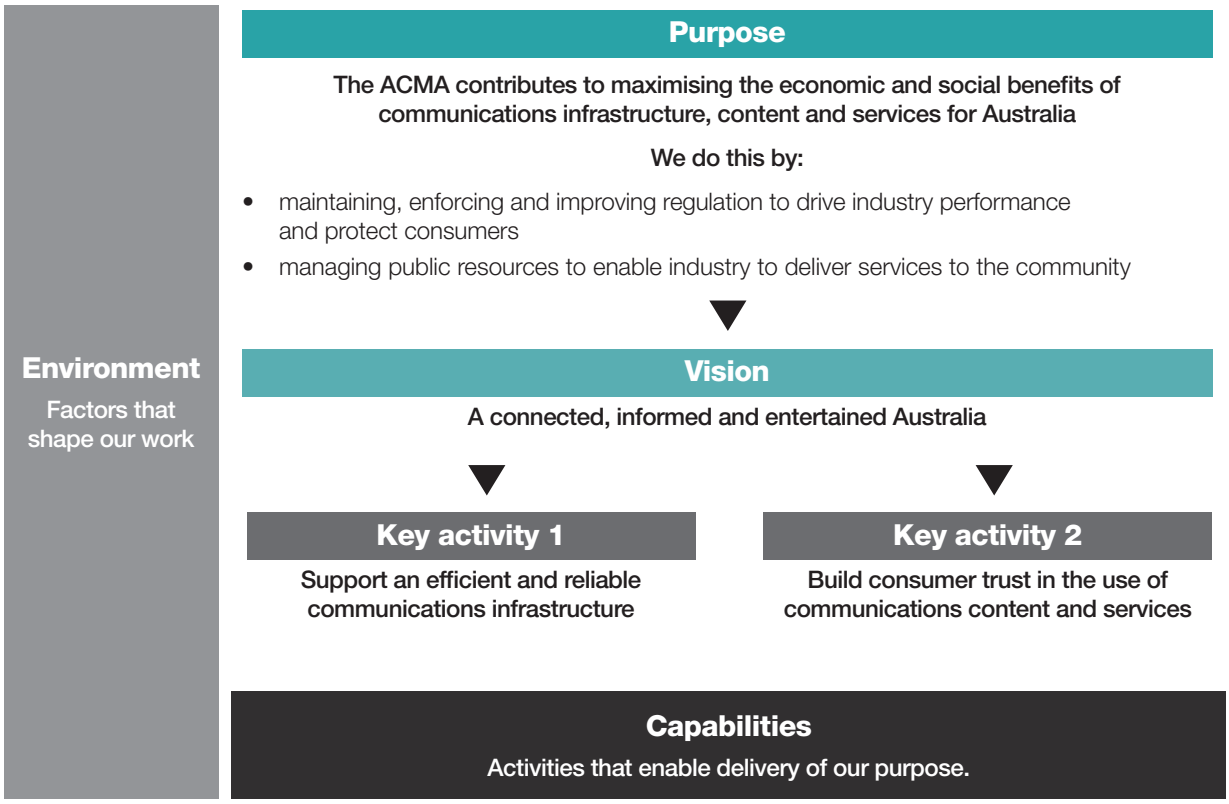
Nerida O'Loughlin PSM
Chair

Our purpose

The ACMA contributes to maximising the economic and social benefits of communications infrastructure, content and services for Australia.

Our 2 key activities enable us to deliver on our purpose over the time of this corporate plan. We have also included an externally focused vision statement to describe what we want to achieve through our work.

Our performance framework is illustrated below.



Our environment

Australia's communications and media sectors are integral to an inclusive, connected, cohesive, productive and creative society, and facilitate essential services for communities, businesses and government.[3]

As the regulator, we operate in an increasingly complex environment, characterised by evolving technologies, changing consumer expectations and preferences, and complex global supply chains. These challenges require an agile and informed response, working in collaboration with other international and domestic regulators, industry, government and the community.

Global factors

Australia continues to navigate volatile international conditions. Several global factors pose risks to the outlook in Australia, including escalating geopolitical tensions, disruptions to international trade and slowing global growth.[4] These global drivers contribute to Australian consumers experiencing increased and sustained cost-of-living pressures,[5] including for communications services. They also affect the sustainability of, and investment in, the communications and media sectors.

We deal with issues that cause harm to consumers – such as scams, unsolicited communications, misinformation and disinformation,[6] and online gambling. These issues have a global dimension that can challenge our efforts to enforce Australia's rules. Emerging technologies such as AI also pose unique challenges for regulators, including, for example, where they affect the Australian news and media environment.

Supply chain issues continue to affect telecommunications provision. Heightened demand for new technologies, along with the global adoption of the internet of things (IoT) and connected services, have resulted in an acute shortage of chipsets in recent years. Geopolitical instability has disrupted trade routes and increased transportation costs since 2022.[7] These factors have affected the development and distribution of some radiocommunications services and equipment in the Australian market.

Conversely, global development of telecommunications technologies will likely create opportunities over the coming years, with Australian industries able to leverage innovations around 6G, low Earth orbit satellites (LEOsats) and private networks. International harmonisation of spectrum arrangements means Australia can capitalise on global economies of scale. These issues will all come into play as we plan for spectrum use over the coming years.

3 Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts (DITRDCSA), *Australian Communications and Media Authority Statement of Expectations*, DITRDCSA website, 20 December 2024, accessed 15 January 2025.
4 Commonwealth of Australia, 2025-26 budget papers, *Budget Paper No. 1*, budget.gov.au website, n.d., p. 33.
5 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), *Selected Living Cost Indexes, Australia*, ABS website, Septmber 2024, accessed 15 January 2025.
6 Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA), *Online misinformation*, ACMA website, November 2024, accessed 30 January 2025.
7 GlobalData, Supply Chain Disruption: Thematic Intelligence, GlobalData, 14 May 2024; and GlobalData, Geopolitics in Tech, Media, & Telecom: Thematic Intelligence, GlobalData, 20 March 2024.

Communications infrastructure

Telecommunications services are essential to our modern community. Accessing phone services and the internet is critical for people to work and connect to education, health and government services and each other.

Our reliance on communications products and infrastructure continues to grow, with mobile phone use now almost ubiquitous – 95% of us use them to go online, 98% to make calls and 96% to send texts.[8] Our appetite for data also continues to rise, with Australians using an average of 10% more data in 2024 than in 2023.[9]

This increasing need for advanced connectivity across all of Australia's economic, social and public-interest activities is a key driver of the demand for spectrum, which supports wireless communications.

Spectrum fuelling innovation

We continue our work ensuring Australian spectrum planning reflects international trends and supports the take up of new technologies. Higher-speed, lower-latency connections are driving innovations, including in 5G/6G, Wi-Fi 6e and 7, and satellite direct-to-device (D2D) services using LEOsat networks.

The take up of 5G is expected to continue to grow,[10] aided by the refarming of spectrum previously used for 3G and/or currently used for 4G to support expanded 5G deployments across a wide range of frequency bands. Radio local area network (RLAN) technology, specifically wi-fi, has become an integral part of everyday modern life and its use continues to expand as more diverse devices use these networks. This creates competing demand for mid-band spectrum, to the extent that demand exceeds supply.

The growing competition in the satellite communication sector has spurred innovation, prompting operators to explore new deployment models that challenge regulatory frameworks. The Australian Government plans to expand the existing Universal Services framework to include a Universal Outdoor Mobile Obligation (UOMO). The new obligation will require mobile operators to provide reasonable and equitable access to baseline outdoor mobile coverage across Australia. Operators plan to leverage their existing mobile coverage as well as emerging D2D services enabled through LEOsats.

Emerging D2D services, for example, represent a significant change for regional and remote area connectivity. While this capability is in its early stages of maturity, these innovations could bring potential benefits to a large, geographically dispersed country like Australia.

Late last year the ACMA released guidance to industry confirming that satellite D2D services that use frequencies allocated for terrestrial mobile services can use spectrum licences, preferably those allocated Australia-wide, without the need for further approvals. Globally however, the convergence of these new services may present challenges for regulatory frameworks and, as the technologies evolve, new regulatory challenges may emerge in the Australian context.

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8 ACMA, *Trends and developments in telecommunications 2023–24*, ACMA website, December 2024, accessed 24 June 2025.

9 Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC), *Internet activity report – for the period ending 30 June 2024* [PDF], ACCC website, 2024, accessed 20 May 2025.

10 Ericsson predicts that in the 6 years between the end of 2023 and 2029, global 5G subscriptions are forecast to increase by more than 330%, from 1.6 billion to 5.3 billion. 5G coverage is forecast to be available to more than 45% of the global population by the end of 2023 and 85% by the end of 2029.

The increasing complexity of both satellite and terrestrial networks is also driving the integration of novel technologies such as AI and machine learning, which can optimise networks' service delivery at various levels, from cloud to consumer.

Australia continues to be a significant contributor to global radiocommunications, including long-standing involvement in the International Telecommunication Union Radiocommunication Sector (ITU-R). In anticipation of the next treaty-level World Radiocommunication Conference in 2027, Australia will continue to support international cooperation on radiocommunications to promote certainty through the development of international regulatory arrangements and spectrum harmonisation to support present and emerging technologies.

Content and services

Multiple major telco network outages in recent years, and the closure of all 3G networks in Australia in 2024, have heightened attention on the effectiveness of Australia's emergency service ecosystem, including for the Triple Zero service. Governments and consumers expect the regulatory environment to facilitate a highly reliable, effective, interconnected emergency service system that can be accessed when people need it. Anticipated markets for D2D calling can also contribute to greater and more reliable access to emergency services into the future.

Amid heightened consumer expectations of communication services, there is greater need to evolve the consumer protection regulatory framework and hold the telecommunications industry to account for delivering on those protections. This is occurring in an environment where the telco market is large and diverse, supply chains for delivery of services can be long and not well integrated, and the products and services available to consumers are highly complex.

Scams continue to present a significant threat to the economic and social wellbeing of Australians, with combined reported losses to scams in 2024 of $2.03 billion. These losses were 25.9% less than in 2023, and similar decreases in the number of reports to Scamwatch and other reporting entities over 2024 may indicate some success in scam prevention activities. However, scams remain a significant threat to Australians' financial and emotional wellbeing.[11] Perpetrated mostly by criminal syndicates, existing and emerging technologies such as AI are used to create sophisticated scams that are increasingly difficult for Australians to identify. Scammers continuously test perceived and actual weaknesses in systems, processes, regulations and markets.

Illegal online gambling poses a range of serious harms for some consumers, including financial distress, relationship breakdown and mental health issues. With over a third of Australian adults undertaking some form of online gambling (in the 6 months to June 2024), the government continues to review the current regulatory framework for online gambling and gambling advertising and has introduced measures to protect consumers.

In 2024, Australians continued to shift to online sources for viewing and listening, reflected in declining audiences for free-to-air television and broadcast radio.[12] We are turning off terrestrial television to watch video-on-demand services, more of us are using smart TVs,[13] and we're listening to more audio delivered online.

11 National Anti-Scam Centre, *Targeting scams: Report of the National Anti-Scam Centre on scams data and activity 2024,* National Anti-Scam Centre website, March 2025, accessed 24 June 2025.
12 ACMA, *Communications and media in Australia: Trends and developments in viewing and listening 2023–24*, ACMA website, December 2024, accessed 20 January 2025.
13 ACMA, *Communications and media in Australia: Trends and developments in viewing and listening 2023–24*.

These changing audience preferences, coupled with sustained economic pressures, continue to disrupt the Australian media landscape. For example, while TV advertising revenue in 2023–24 was down 8% compared to the previous year, broadcaster video-on-demand (BVOD) revenue was up 13% to $441 million for the same period.[14]

In particular, these changes give rise to concerns around the long-term availability and sustainability of public interest journalism and media diversity in Australia.[15] They may also lead to further consolidation in the market at the same time as the industry considers the investment needed for longer-term technology choices for delivering its services.

The Australian Government is taking action to improve the safety of AI systems through effective management of the risks posed by these technologies. The use of AI to generate multiple types of convincing and realistic content (such as image, audio and video) is a growing challenge that is contributing to the spread of disinformation and misinformation at scale.

Our regulatory environment

In December 2024, the then Minister for Communications, the Hon Michelle Rowland MP, issued a Statement of Expectations (SoE) to the ACMA to provide greater clarity about the government's policies and objectives for the ACMA, in line with our statutory objectives, and the minister's priorities. The SoE emphasises a proactive regulatory approach, particularly in areas of public safety, such as the effective operation and accessibility of the Triple Zero emergency call service, consumer protection and the management of technological transitions. It also highlights the importance of the ACMA actively monitoring sectors to identify regulatory gaps, advising the government on emerging risks, and engaging in public education to minimise consumer harm.

We responded to the Minister's SoE with our Statement of Intent (SoI) in March 2025, detailing how we will meet these expectations. The SoI commits us to utilising our full regulatory powers to deliver public interest outcomes, adopting a risk-based and evidence-led approach to enforcement, and enhancing transparency and accountability in our operations. It also underscores our commitment to collaborating with stakeholders and improving regulatory frameworks so that all Australians can access effective communication services.

In fulfilling these commitments, we will also contribute to broader government priorities, including supporting First Nations Australians' and Closing the Gap targets, advancing the Net Zero by 2050 commitment, and strengthening cooperation across the Indo-Pacific region. This includes initiatives such as the Telecommunications and Radiocommunications Training Program, launched in 2024, which fosters regional partnerships and capacity-building aligned with these objectives.

14 ThinkTV, *Total TV advertising market records $3.3 billion in ad revenue for FY24* [media release], ThinkTV website, 13 August 2024, accessed 26 March 2025.
15 DITRDCSA, *News Media Assistance Program (News MAP)*, DITRDCSA website, n.d., accessed 30 January 2025.

More broadly, there are several major government reforms or reviews underway that may influence our environment over the life of this plan. These include:

- whole-of-government requirements regarding integrity in the public service, including the establishment of the National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC) and the release of a new APS Integrity Action Plan
- a proposal on a new prominence framework for radio[16]
- the ministerial policy statement on expiring spectrum licences that guides policy development
- the intended response to the House of Representatives inquiry into online gambling and its impact on those experiencing gambling harm, on which we continue to provide implementation advice
- the intended response to the first statutory review of BetStop – the National Self-Exclusion Register™[17]
- a ministerial direction for the ACMA to make an enforceable industry standard to ensure appropriate support is provided to telecommunications customers experiencing domestic and family violence[18]
- the implementation of Australian content regulation for streaming services as part of the National Cultural Policy 'Revive'
- the review process to reform the Universal Service Obligation[19]
- whole-of-government activity considering the safe and ethical use of AI across the public service. We are contributing to these discussions from a regulatory policy perspective as well as looking into how AI may be more widely used to support agency outcomes.

Over the period of this corporate plan, several co-regulatory codes and regulatory instruments will be implemented or subject to review, including:

- the Telecommunications Consumer Protection (TCP) Code
- the Numbering Plan
- the Telecommunications (Emergency Call Service) Determination
- the Commercial Radio Code of Practice
- the Commercial Television Industry Code of Practice.

Under the 'sunsetting' obligations in the *Legislation Act 2003*, the ACMA also reviews, updates and remakes, as necessary, the many legislative instruments that we are required to make for the efficient operation of the regulatory system. In 2025–26, some 25 legislative instruments will sunset in this way and will likely need to be updated and remade after public consultation.

16 Minister for Communications, *Listening out for views on radio prominence* [media release], Minister for Communications website, 30 September 2024, accessed 30 January 2025.
17 Minister for Communications, *Review of BetStop launched* [media release], Minister for Communications website, 22 October 2024, accessed 28 January 2025.
18 Minister for Communications, *Better protections for telco customers experiencing domestic and family violence* [media release], Minister for Communications website, 8 October 2024, accessed 30 January 2025.
19 ITRDSCA, Modernising universal telecommunications services, ITRDSCA website, n.d., accessed 27 January 2025.

The ACMA's role in the changing environment

Access to efficient, reliable and secure communications infrastructure and services remains critical. We will continue to support the communications sector so that Australians can access the services they need while enforcing consumer safeguards.

We will continue to look for opportunities to proactively collaborate with stakeholders to explore and address new and emerging regulatory challenges. We will also continue to work with our international counterparts to collaborate on matters of mutual concern.

Our operating context

The ACMA's regulatory role

Under functions set out in Part 2, Division 2 of the ACMA Act, the ACMA is responsible for regulating broadcasting, radiocommunications, telecommunications and some online content in accordance with 4 principal Acts – the *Radiocommunications Act 1992*, *Telecommunications Act 1997*, *Telecommunications (Consumer Protection and Service Standards) Act 1999* and the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992*.

There are other Acts that confer regulatory jurisdiction on the agency or are relevant to the ACMA, such as the *Spam Act 2003*, the *Do Not Call Register Act 2006* and the *Interactive Gambling Act 2001*. We may also make legislative instruments in areas where primary legislation requires or permits.

eSafety Commissioner

The eSafety Commissioner (eSafety) is Australia's independent regulator for online safety. We continue to support the Commissioner as an independent statutory office holder. Details about the work of eSafety, including activities and performance information, are provided in *Part 2: eSafety Commissioner corporate plan 2025–26,* the 2024–25 ACMA Portfolio Budget Statement and eSafety's annual report.

Governance

The ACMA is a statutory authority established by the ACMA Act. The ACMA's Chair serves as Agency Head, with powers, functions and accountabilities under the PGPA Act, the *Public Service Act 1999*, the *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988*, the *Fair Work Act 2009* and various other pieces of legislation.

The Authority

The Authority is a collegiate, regulatory decision-making body of between 3 and 9 members, including the Chair and Deputy Chair. The Authority also has 2 associate members appointed under cross-appointment arrangements with the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) to support collaboration between the sectoral and economic regulators.

Members are appointed by the Governor-General and associate members are appointed by the Minister for Communications.

At 1 July 2025, the Authority comprised:

- Nerida O'Loughlin (Chair)
- Adam Suckling (Deputy Chair)
- Carolyn Lidgerwood (Full-time Member)
- Samantha Yorke (Full-time Member)
- Anna Brakey (Associate Member)
- Catriona Lowe (Associate Member).

Authority members may lead an area of the ACMA's work and chair internal committees aligned with their relevant skills and expertise. Current internal committees are the:

- Content Committee
- Gambling Committee
- Telecommunications and Consumer Committee
- Spectrum Committee.

The Authority is advised, guided and assisted by agency staff employed under the Public Service Act. The Authority may also delegate some decision making to staff. Staff are ultimately accountable through their line managers and general managers to the Chair.

The *Code of Conduct for Authority members and associate members* sets out the Authority's strategic intent, approach to business, duties and responsibilities, and the culture and values that guide its work. The code is reviewed regularly by the Authority, most recently in 2025.

Audit and Risk Committee

In accordance with section 45 of the PGPA Act, the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) helps the ACMA to comply with legal requirements and provides a forum for communication between the Chair, senior managers and internal and external auditors of the agency. The ARC provides independent advice to the Chair on the appropriateness of our financial and performance reporting, risk oversight and management, and system of internal control.

The PGPA Rule 2014 provides direction on the composition of audit and risk committees. Under subsection 17(4), all members of the ARC must not be officials of the ACMA and the majority must not be officials of any Commonwealth entity.

At 1 July 2025, members were:

- Ian McPhee AO PSM, Committee Chair
- Mark Ridley, external member
- Josephine Schumann, external member.

The ARC meets at least 5 times each year.

Executive Management Committee

The Executive Management Committee (EMC) consists of the agency's senior leadership team – the Chair (as Agency Head), Deputy Chair and the 5 Senior Executive Service (SES) Band 2 General Managers.

The EMC's core responsibility is to support the Chair in carrying out statutory responsibilities, and provide collective advice to the Chair in areas including:

- setting strategic priorities and assigning associated resources and activities
- managing strategic risk
- establishing agency policies and procedures.

Major project boards

The Enterprise Project Group (EPG) is a sub-committee of the EMC and is chaired by a senior nominee of the Chair. Meeting monthly, the EPG supports the EMC and Chair by prioritising investment in major digital initiatives and providing oversight and assurance to agreed programs of work.

Divisional Digital Boards (DDB) allow each division to identify and prioritise new digital and ICT requests. The boards have oversight of high-priority projects throughout their lifecycles, and assess the benefits of these projects to ensure they align with the priorities of each division and the ACMA. The DDBs deliver priorities to the EPG for decision and provide an escalation point for project teams to inform and seek advice from the EPG.

In addition to the EPG and the DDBs, significant projects, such as major ICT developments, may have a standalone project board to oversee, guide and govern their work.

Artificial Intelligence Steering Committee

The AI Steering Committee is chaired by an Authority Member and contains staff representation from all divisions and eSafety. The committee considers all matters relating to the policy, ethics and implementation of AI, provides approval and prioritises the use of AI, and advises the EMC on the strategic application of AI.

Advisory committees

Part 7 of the ACMA Act enables us to establish advisory committees to assist with performing our functions. We have 2 advisory committees that bring together the telco industry, consumer organisations and government:

- Consumer Consultative Forum (CCF) – convened under section 59 of the ACMA Act, the CCF assists the ACMA to perform its functions in relation to matters affecting consumers.
- Numbering Advisory Committee (NAC) – established under section 58 of the ACMA Act, the NAC advises on telephone numbering, including number rights-of-use, number porting and phone scam reduction activities.

Management and staff committees

Our principal body for formal consultation and discussions on workplace relations of national focus or significance is the National Consultative Forum (NCF). The NCF works collaboratively with our employees and their representatives to identify and implement any major workplace changes or updates to relevant policies or procedures. The NCF meets 3 times a year and is chaired by the Chair as Agency Head.

The National Work Health and Safety Committee (NWHSC) provides a consultative forum to consider broad workplace health and safety issues that may need to be addressed at an organisational level. The NWHSC is chaired by the General Manager, Corporate and Research Division and meets on a quarterly basis.

Culture and Values Network

The Culture and Values Network is co-chaired by 2 ACMA senior staff. With members in each office location, the network aims to foster a committed, impartial, accountable, respectful and ethical workplace that embraces diversity and celebrates inclusion.

Our culture and values – including our organisational values of being curious and questioning, collaborative and purposeful – help shape our agency and are embedded in our priorities and activities.

Annual compliance priorities

Each year, the ACMA targets key areas for improved industry compliance. These are known as our annual compliance priorities. The Authority consults on and chooses areas that are of public interest or specific issues that are having a negative impact on the community, including consumer harm. These key areas guide our efforts to deliver effective compliance and, where necessary, targeted enforcement action.

In 2025–26, we will be focusing on:

- TV prominence
- tackling the supply of dodgy devices
- mobile number fraud
- compliance with Triple Zero and public safety requirements
- enforcing new rules to support consumers affected by domestic and family violence.

We will also continue work that reflects our Enduring Priorities which operate alongside, or sometimes underpin, our annual priorities and reflect our long-term focus on matters of significant and ongoing harm to the Australian community:

- protecting vulnerable telco customers – our work will focus on compliance with telco complaint handling rules
- minimising gambling harms – we will take action to disrupt illegal offshore wagering services and promote the BetStop – the National Self-Exclusion Register and compliance with relevant rules.
- combating spam and telco scams – our focus will be on addressing persistent unwanted marketing

Risk oversight and management

Our risk management framework supports effective decision making and creates a shared understanding of our risks and mitigation plans. The framework is designed to identify our risks transparently and systemically through standardised processes.

Our framework is developed in accordance with section 16 of the PGPA Act and the Commonwealth Risk Management Policy. The key components of risk oversight are the quarterly consideration of strategic risk by the EMC and advice provided by the ARC to the Chair on the health of our risk management framework. We review our risk framework annually, so it remains relevant in our continually evolving operating environment.

We foster a work culture that supports the identification of risks through business planning processes and risk management-enabled decisions consistent with our risk appetite.

Our risk appetite

When delivering on our purpose, we engage with risk to ensure our activities as a statutory regulatory authority are fit for purpose and that there is a willingness to pursue innovation in our systems and processes. As a result, our appetite for risk will vary according to the activities being undertaken.

We work towards ensuring all ACMA staff understand both the potential benefits and potential risks before activities start, and appropriately authorised controls are in place to mitigate and manage those risks.

Our appetite for engaging with opportunity and risks extends to the management of shared risks with other entities to deliver on the government's objectives.

Our risk appetite is outlined below. Internal documentation provides further guidance in developing and applying our risk appetite to the regulatory activities we undertake.

Area	Risk category
Work health and safety	We have **no appetite** for activities that could compromise workforce requirements including capability, safety and wellbeing.
Systems and infrastructure	We have **low appetite** for the loss or degradation of critical ICT infrastructure, applications and services.
Financial	We have **no appetite** for internal fraud. We have **no appetite** for non-compliance with accounting standards, government financial management orders and relevant regulatory requirements.
Trust	We have **no appetite** for behaviour or activities that are unethical, corrupt or illegal. We have a **low appetite** for action that may negatively affect stakeholder trust in the ACMA.
Data and information systems	We have a **low appetite** for compromises of the security of our data and information systems. We have a **high appetite** to use data and information systems for improved operational efficiency and decision making.
Strategy	We have a **high appetite** to pursue strategies that contribute to maximising the economic and social benefits of communications infrastructure, content and services for Australia. We have a **high appetite** to pursue strategies that minimise consumer harms through our regulatory activities.
Innovation	We have a **high appetite** for fostering innovation that contributes to better regulatory outcomes and continual improvement in our systems and processes.

The following table sets out key risks that must be managed to meet the ACMA's functions.

Key risk	How we will manage risk
Reduction in public confidence in the communications and media services we regulate	• Monitoring and researching industry and consumer behaviours to understand trends and developments and support evidence-based decision making. • Improving regulation where possible in response to market changes and emerging harms. • Taking compliance and enforcement actions proportionate to harms caused by non-compliance. • Identifying and actively addressing regulatory gaps and redundancies.
Inadequate resources to meet our objectives	• Implementing corporate planning processes that support effective budget setting. • Making continual improvements to our governance arrangements to ensure resource allocation is aligned to organisational priorities. • Engaging with stakeholders to assess resource implications arising from changes in the agency's regulatory remit.
Loss or degradation of critical ICT infrastructure	• Maintaining cyber security enhancements to meet essential government controls. • Testing and detecting internal intrusion. • Investing in ICT infrastructure. • Enabling effective disaster recovery capability.

Our culture and values

Our culture and values support us to achieve our purpose, now and into the future. They shape how we work with each other and our stakeholders, and how we approach the opportunities and challenges in our environment.

We are committed to the Australian Public Service (APS) values of being impartial, committed to service, accountable, respectful, ethical and demonstrating stewardship. We also embrace diversity and celebrate inclusion. These values underpin our role as an independent decision maker, responsible for balancing sometimes competing public interest objectives and informed by a deep knowledge of the sectors we regulate.

Our senior management aligns with the Secretaries Charter of Leadership Behaviours, which sets out the behaviours secretaries expect of themselves and the Senior Executive Service and want to see in leaders at all levels across the Australian Public Service.

Complementing the APS values, we have developed ACMA-specific values, which are outlined below. We continue to embed our culture and values in all our priorities and activities.

We are purposeful

Our commitment to delivering tangible and significant benefits to all Australians provides direction and drives our work. We are committed to maintaining and enhancing our expertise and contribution to the work of the APS. We are outcomes-focused and strive for high performance. We are timely, measured and transparent. We engage with and manage risk, and adapt quickly to changing expectations and priorities by being agile and flexible.

We contribute to a positive and professional workplace that encourages us to do our best work. We appreciate and support each other and take time to recognise, communicate and celebrate our accomplishments.

We are curious and questioning

We look around us and into the future to explore new ways of addressing ongoing challenges and maximising opportunities. We look deeply into issues from the perspectives of our stakeholders to develop new understandings.

We ask astute questions and interrogate the implications of matters relevant to our work. We gather and analyse data from multiple sources. We value critical thinking and analysis to support rigorous and innovative approaches to our work.

We value and invest in learning and opportunities for professional development. We seek out information and learn from international research and the experiences of other jurisdictions.

We are collaborative

We collaborate within the ACMA and externally with the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts (DITRDCSA), other regulators and relevant agencies, and across all levels of government. We engage proactively and creatively with industry and the community and demonstrate a clear understanding of their issues and challenges. In doing so, as with all our work, we maintain the highest levels of integrity.

We articulate and promote the work of the ACMA to maximise awareness of what we do. We seek out and value diverse perspectives and ideas. We are respectful and share knowledge generously.

Diversity and inclusion

We aim to foster and maintain an inclusive culture at the ACMA.

As we approach the end of our inaugural Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) July 2023 – July 2025, our focus will be on developing and implementing our new RAP. We will apply any lessons learned from the previous plan and continue to build on these to sustainably and strategically take meaningful action to advance reconciliation.

We currently participate in the Australian Government Indigenous Apprenticeships Program, managed through Services Australia. Two staff members also participated in the Jawun Secondment Program in the past year – we will continue to support our staff take this opportunity to strengthen cultural awareness and understanding and partner with First Nations communities and organisations.

We will continue to implement our Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2024–26. The strategy builds on our existing initiatives to increase the diversity of our workforce and foster an inclusive workplace. It aims for all employees to feel valued, respected and able to contribute to the organisation, openly and safely.

Critical capabilities

We recognise that our skills and expertise as a regulator are fundamental to achieving our purpose. We will continue to develop our most critical capabilities and respond to our changing operational context.

Workforce capability

Supporting our people to deliver the ACMA's purpose remains critical.

Working under the ACMA's *Enterprise Agreement 2024–2027*, we will continue to focus on updating our supporting policies, guidelines and information. Our agreement includes several new employment conditions that improve our workplace flexibility and provide conditions to attract and retain key staff to support our work.

We will continue our workforce planning activities to develop a plan that ensures our agency has the right human resources to deliver its purpose now and well into the future. We'll consider current and emerging skills gaps, trends in the labour market and the skills required to underpin capability against our developing strategic agenda.

Enhancing the capability of managers and staff is ongoing, through learning and development opportunities and guidance materials. We will use the performance process to maximise the contribution our people make to our objectives, and ensure our people have access to challenging and rewarding careers.

We will keep engaging with whole-of-government initiatives such as the APS professional streams and entry-level programs to support developing critical skills, such as regulatory capability, digital and data literacy, and engineering.

In 2025–26, we will continue working to bring core work in-house in line with the APS Strategic Commissioning Framework. Our targets for 2025–26 will focus on reduced outsourcing of administration, data and research, and ICT and digital solutions work.

Regulatory capability

Our key regulatory capabilities include understanding, contributing to, and implementing, broader policy and regulatory frameworks using our full range of regulatory tools and methods. We continue to strengthen our strategic and regulatory capabilities in response to emerging technologies, business models, and consumer behaviours and expectations.

Developing and improving our regulatory capability remains a key focus of the ACMA's Organisational Capability Framework. We provide a range of learning and development opportunities to embed regulatory best practice across our workforce, and investigate opportunities to partner with other agencies, including the APS Academy, for regulatory practice training.

Research and data capability

As an evidence-based regulator, our decisions are informed and supported by research.

Our research program provides strategic and regulatory analysis of consumer, market and regulatory developments in the evolving communications, media and online environment. It allows us to examine the effectiveness of regulation and informs regulatory and program design, as well as advice to government.

We will continue to grow our data capability and maturity in line with our Data Strategy and Governance Framework. We'll do this by making our data more discoverable, usable and secure, as well as prioritising efforts to improve our advanced analytics including geospatial capabilities. We will also continue to embed appropriate data governance structures.

We will continue to collaborate across the APS, including with the Data Professional Stream and the Data Champions Network, to align with APS data reforms and outcomes under the Australian Data Strategy.[20]

Digital and ICT

We maintain critical business systems that allocate, manage and sell spectrum, manage spectrum interference, support our participation and development of international standards and regulate media diversity.

These systems also provide compliance and enforcement functions for scams, spam, gambling, content and other areas.

We will improve services to the Australian public by implementing a new end-to-end digital spectrum management platform, scheduled to be online by 2026. A new system to better protect Australians from SMS scams, which allows positive identification of the sender, is being built to go into service in December 2025. These join other online systems for consumer and content regulation, designed and built in consultation with stakeholders.

As service delivery via online systems becomes business-as-usual, we continue to evolve our Digital and ICT Strategy 2024–28 to deliver advanced technologies that can help us regulate more efficiently, in line with the Data and Digital Government Strategy.

Our charging environment

We collect revenue on behalf of the Australian Government through broadcasting, radiocommunications and telecommunications taxes, levies, fees and charges.

We operate within the Australian Government Charging Framework for the regulatory activities we cost-recover from industry, including the Annual Carrier Licence Charge and access-seeker fees for BetStop – the National Self-Exclusion Register and the Do Not Call Register. Cost recovery arrangements are constantly monitored and reviewed annually to ensure they are fit for purpose and adequately reflect the cost of ACMA's activities. All charges, levies and taxes collected from industry are returned to the government's Consolidated Revenue Fund.

During the period of this plan, our focus will be on implementing new cost recovery arrangements as approved by the government, including for the Sender ID Registry, and continuing to refine the efficiency of cost attribution processes.

20 Department of Finance, *Australian Data Strategy: The Australian Government's whole-of-economy vision for data*, Department of Finance website, 2022, accessed 27 May 2024.

External cooperation and partnerships

In undertaking our regulatory role, we work with government, industry and international colleagues to achieve outcomes that are in the long-term interests of all our stakeholders. This includes the millions of Australians who use and rely on communications and media networks, devices and services, together with the businesses that supply them. Our work also supports defence, security, emergency and law enforcement services in their use of spectrum.

Domestic collaboration

Our domestic relationships include working closely with the DITRDCSA to progress improvements to the regulatory framework within which we operate, as well as with other government agencies and regulators, industry, industry bodies and consumer advocacy groups to enhance collaboration and deliver better outcomes for Australians.

We work closely with the ACCC and have members cross-appointed to enhance collaboration between agencies. These arrangements help to better serve the interests of our broader stakeholder base and benefit decision making. We also support the ACCC-led National Anti-Scam Centre (NASC), including through being a member or observer on NASC committees.

We enter into memorandums of understanding (MoUs) with other government agencies and regulators to facilitate information sharing and collaboration and to promote industry compliance and consumer protection. Details of our MoUs are on our website.

We are one of 4 government regulators, along with the ACCC, the eSafety Commissioner and the OAIC, to form the Digital Platform Regulators Forum (DP-REG). DP-REG gives members the opportunity to share information, collaborate and coordinate on cross-sectoral issues such as digital platform regulation. DP-REG also engages across areas of the government as part of its work to support the responsible use of AI within government.

In addition, we work closely with industry, industry bodies and consumer advocacy groups to consult on priorities, work programs and proposed regulatory changes. This includes consulting on our annual five-year spectrum outlook and annual compliance priorities to ensure that our regulatory efforts are proportionate to the problem at hand and meet the needs of industry, government and the community.

International collaboration

We work closely with international regulators and take part in global forums to help deliver the best results for Australians and the Australian communications industry. By building strong co-operative relationships and partnerships, we can promote and protect Australian interests and support broader government policies and activities.

We have strong relationships with international spectrum regulators, industry and international radiocommunications forums. We continue to participate in the work of the Asia–Pacific Telecommunity (APT) and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) through leading Australian engagement in ITU Radiocommunication Sector Study Groups and the APT Wireless Group. We are also heavily involved in the DITRDCSA-led preparatory activities for ITU World Radiocommunication Conferences, by providing technical and regulatory expertise.

We are particularly focused on strengthening the relationship and cooperation between Australia and the Indo–Pacific to support broader government policies and activities. Following delivery of our successful Telecommunications and Radiocommunications Training Program (TRTP) in 2024, which was attended by 33 delegates from 14 countries in the region, we continue to undertake additional training and engagement initiatives.

The increasingly global nature of our work – especially in areas such as online gambling laws, scam reduction, captioning quality, media diversity and digital platforms – also means we must continue to find new and innovative collaborative approaches with overseas regulators and organisations.

We have MoUs in place with overseas gambling regulators, including the Netherlands Gaming Authority and New Jersey Division of Gaming Enforcement (NJDGE). We are also a member of the International Association of Gaming Regulators (IAGR), a global forum for gaming regulators to exchange information and discuss policy issues. We are a member of IAGR's Statistics Advisory Committee and recently became a member and co-chair of the Compliance and Enforcement Sub-Committee.

We continue to enter into MoUs with international regulators and networks to combat scams, including with the UK Office of Communications, the Infocomm Media Development Authority of Singapore, New Zealand's Department of Internal Affairs, Canada's Radio- television and Telecommunications Commission, the US Federal Communications Commission and the Unsolicited Communications Enforcement Network.

As part of our DP-REG membership, we also participate in the International Network for Digital Regulation Cooperation (INDRC). The INDRC brings together regulators from Australia, the Netherlands, Ireland and the United Kingdom to examine coherence across digital regimes and gather insights into how overseas jurisdictions approach domestic regulatory coherence and cooperation.

The ACMA is a founding member of the Media and Online Regulation Forum (MORF) – a collaboration mechanism between media regulators, including Ireland's Coimisiún na Meán, the United Kingdom's Ofcom and Canada's CRTC. MORF provides a forum for regulators to share knowledge and experiences on content and media regulation.

We also meet with international digital platforms and organisations to stay abreast of important technological developments, particularly as they pertain to misinformation and disinformation.

Our performance

We report on our performance through our Annual Performance Statement, demonstrating progress toward our purpose and the outcomes in this plan.

Alignment with regulator best practice principles

The ACMA's regulatory approach aligns with the Australian Government's expectations for regulators to operate in a modern, transparent and accountable manner, as set out in the Regulator Performance Guide (RMG 128). Our performance framework reflects these best practice principles and supports effective, proportionate and outcomes-focused regulation across all areas of our work.

Continuous improvement and building trust

Regulators adopt a whole-of-system perspective, continuously improving their performance, capability and culture to build trust and confidence in Australia's regulatory settings.

We regularly review and evolve our regulatory frameworks to keep them fit for purpose, transparent and responsive to industry and community needs. Our focus is on strengthening compliance certainty and building confidence in our regulatory decisions.

We apply this principle by:

- maintaining the high availability of our critical services (for example, numbering, the Do Not Call Register, BetStop – the National Self-Exclusion Register) to promote reliability and public confidence
- undertaking licensing, permit activities and investigations within statutory or target timeframes to support trust and consistency
- monitoring our performance to drive improvements in service delivery and regulatory practice.

Risk-based and data-driven

Regulators manage risks proportionately and maintain essential safeguards while minimising regulatory burden, and leveraging data and digital technology to support those they regulate to comply and grow.

We take a proportionate and evidence-based approach to regulation, focusing on areas of greatest harm or potential impact. We use data and digital tools to support compliance, inform decisions and deliver efficient regulatory services.

We apply this principle by:

- regulating equipment to appropriately mitigate risks to networks and the safety of users and workers
- using risk-based assessments to inform compliance activities across content, services and infrastructure
- using consumer survey data to understand how Australians access and rely on communications services
- leveraging data and technology to guide our regulatory focus and support efficient, targeted interventions.

Collaboration and engagement

Regulators are transparent and responsive communicators, implementing regulations in a modern and collaborative way.

The ACMA works closely with industry, government and the community to deliver regulatory outcomes that are practical, timely and well-informed. We aim to build shared understanding, support compliance and contribute to effective domestic and international regulatory frameworks.

We apply this principle by:

- consulting with users, industry and government to help shape our spectrum management decisions
- informing international engagement strategies through consultation with industry and government
- using collaborative approaches in enforcement actions to support improved compliance outcomes.

Our assessment methodology

The ACMA's performance measurement framework is a key component of the agency's annual performance measurement and reporting, in accordance with the Commonwealth Performance Framework. It allows us to report on the outcomes we achieve and our effectiveness in achieving our purpose. It encompasses:

- **key activities** – the significant areas of work that we undertake to achieve our purpose
- **performance objectives** – the high-level organisational strategies that underpin our vision and purpose and inform our planning and performance
- **performance measures** – how we will assess our success in delivering our key activities, consistent with our performance objectives and, ultimately, our purpose
- **methodologies and data** – the sources of information and approach we use to monitor our progress and assess performance against the measures.

Our performance measures have a target for 2025–26 and targets for the 3 forward years covered by this plan.

To assess our performance, we will measure our results against the associated target and assessment criteria, and report them as met, partially met or not met in our Annual Performance Statement.

The description, rationale and method for assessing each performance measure is listed in the section 'Detailed performance measures'.

Key activity 1: Support an efficient and reliable communications infrastructure

We manage Australia's Radiofrequency Spectrum Plan and the Telecommunications Numbering Plan to make spectrum and numbers available for existing and new communications services. Our spectrum allocation decisions support the rollout of new communications technologies, bringing benefits to Australians using communications services. Our licensing, authorisations, rulemaking, and compliance and enforcement activities underpin reliable communications networks. Efficient management of numbering allows telecommunications providers to supply services to new customers and promote competition.

Key activity 1: Support an efficient and reliable communications infrastructure	
Performance objective 1: The ACMA's spectrum planning, allocation and licensing activity meets the needs of the communications industry	
Performance measure 1.1	The spectrum management work program is informed by the ACMA's consultation with spectrum users, industry and government
Performance measure 1.2	Apparatus licensing issue and renewal decisions meet the statutory requirements
Performance measure 1.3	Communications infrastructure compliance activities are informed by a risk-based assessment of harm
Performance measure 1.4	Major spectrum allocations are held effectively
Performance objective 2: The ACMA's contribution to the international spectrum framework supports the needs of the Australian communications industry	
Performance measure 2.1	Australia's international engagement strategies are informed by the ACMA's consultation with industry and government
Performance objective 3: The ACMA's activities contribute to telecommunications infrastructure providers having confidence that they are appropriately authorised and enabled to provide communication services	
Performance measure 3.1	Telecommunications carrier licensing and submarine cable permit activities meet statutory requirements
Performance measure 3.2	Equipment regulation appropriately mitigates the risk of harm to communications networks and people using or working on those networks
Performance measure 3.3	Numbering services are available 99% of the time and 99.9% of numbering transactions are processed within 5 seconds

Key activity 2: Build consumer trust in the use of communications content and services

We undertake compliance and enforcement of rules relating to communications content and services. We educate consumers on the protections they can expect, and industry on their obligations. This contributes to consumer confidence in industry's performance in delivering communication content and services.

We also maintain BetStop – the National Self-Exclusion Register (NSER) and a number of other registers that contribute to consumer protections, such as the Do Not Call Register (DNCR).

Key activity 2: Build consumer trust in the use of communications content and services	
Performance objective 4: The ACMA's activities contribute to Australians having confidence in the content and services available to them	
Performance measure 4.1	Australians' usage of communications services
Performance measure 4.2	The NSER data checking service is available to the wagering industry 99.95% or more of the time for the year
Performance measure 4.3	The DNCR is available to the Australian public 99.5% or more of the time
Performance measure 4.4	Investigations undertaken are completed within target timeframes
Performance measure 4.5	Communications content and services compliance activities are informed by a risk-based assessment of harm
Performance objective 5: The ACMA's regulatory activities contribute to Australians having access to diverse media content and services	
Performance measure 5.1	Enforcement decisions to accept or give agreed measures, enforceable undertakings (EUs) or remedial directions, or to seek injunctions, deliver improved compliance by the relevant regulated entity
Performance measure 5.2	Community broadcasting licence renewal decisions are made within the statutory timeframes
Performance measure 5.3	Media control notifications and captioning order applications are processed within statutory timeframes
Performance measure 5.4	Annual compliance results for Australian content and captioning reporting are finalised within 6 months of reports being received

Detailed performance measures

Key activity 1: Support efficient and reliable communications infrastructure

Performance objective 1: The ACMA's spectrum planning, allocation and licensing activity meets the needs of the communications industry

The ACMA is responsible for managing the radiofrequency spectrum in accordance with the Radiocommunications Act. Our spectrum management activities include:

- maintaining the Australia Radiofrequency Spectrum Plan, consistent with ITU Radio Regulations
- developing and maintaining spectrum band and channel plans
- authorising the use of spectrum by issuing spectrum and apparatus licences (including developing of licence conditions) and developing and maintaining class licences
- monitoring compliance with spectrum management regulations by enforcing licensing rules and investigating interference and, where required, taking enforcement action.

Performance measure 1.1: The spectrum management work program is informed by the ACMA's consultation with spectrum users, industry and government			
2025–26	**2026–27**	**2027–28**	**2028–29**
Stakeholder consultation milestones achieved, and progress reports published	Stakeholder consultation milestones achieved, and progress reports published	Stakeholder consultation milestones achieved, and progress reports published	Stakeholder consultation milestones achieved, and progress reports published
Description Our plans to manage spectrum are published yearly in the five-year spectrum outlook (FYSO), which includes our annual work program. A draft FYSO is developed by subject matter experts who monitor domestic and international technology and market trends to identify drivers for spectrum demand. The draft FYSO is published on the ACMA website and spectrum users are invited to comment on the draft FYSO and annual work program. We also publish a response to submissions, and a 6-month and annual progress report.			
Rationale Consultation with users, industry and government enables us to balance competing needs and gather valuable information on spectrum usage trends, and future requirements. It helps us plan, allocate and licence spectrum to support efficient and reliable communications infrastructure.			
Method We will undertake a qualitative assessment. This will include reviewing internal records that document our consultation with users, industry and government to develop the spectrum management work program and assess whether the program was informed by the views and issues raised.			
Type of measure: Output.			
Data/information sources: Published FYSO, consultation submissions received and progress reports, internal program documentation.			
PBS links: Outcome 1, Program 1.1 Communications regulation, planning and licensing.			
Regulator performance principle: Collaboration and engagement.			

Performance measure 1.2: Apparatus licensing issue and renewal decisions meet the statutory requirements			
2025–26	**2026–27**	**2027–28**	**2028–29**
100% of apparatus licensing issue and renewal decisions meet the statutory requirements	100% of apparatus licensing issue and renewal decisions meet the statutory requirements	100% of apparatus licensing issue and renewal decisions meet the statutory requirements	100% of apparatus licensing issue and renewal decisions meet the statutory requirements

Description

There are approximately 167,000 apparatus licences currently on issue, with around 16,000 issued annually. All apparatus licence issues and renewals are managed through our spectrum licensing system, SPECTRA, which is designed to meet the statutory requirements in the Radiocommunications Act.

We allow suitably qualified people, called accredited persons, to perform certain activities for radiocommunications licensing. Approximately 90% of apparatus licences are issued via accredited persons. They understand the rules and what we require for radiocommunications licences and use their technical expertise to process licence applications in SPECTRA on behalf of applicants.

Rationale

Ensuring apparatus licensing is timely and meets requirements allows the communications industry to plan for investment and future network development efficiently and with confidence.

Method

We will qualitatively assess licences processed in SPECTRA, including a sample of 'out-of-policy' applications (those that require additional technical assessment) against statutory requirements. We will assess system upgrades for new Radiocommunications Assignment and Licensing Instructions (RALIs) and invoicing for licence renewals against timing requirements.

Type of measure: Effectiveness.

Data/information sources: Spectrum licensing system, SPECTRA.

PBS links: Outcome 1, Program 1.1: Communications regulation, planning and licensing.

Regulator performance principle: Continuous improvement and building trust.

Performance measure 1.3: The ACMA's communications infrastructure compliance activities are informed by a risk-based assessment of harm			
2025–26	**2026–27**	**2027–28**	**2028–29**
Compliance priorities are informed by a risk-based assessment of harm	Compliance priorities are informed by a risk-based assessment of harm	Compliance priorities are informed by a risk-based assessment of harm	Compliance priorities are informed by a risk-based assessment of harm
Description Communications infrastructure compliance activities include our efforts to deliver effective compliance and, where necessary, targeted enforcement. These actions contribute to ensuring that licensees operate within the relevant rules and interference is effectively managed.			
Rationale Our annual compliance priorities are designed to be targeted, proportionate and responsive to regulatory needs. This approach strengthens the effectiveness of compliance strategies, directs resources to areas of significant concern, and bolsters public confidence in our regulatory processes.			
Method We will identify bid proposals and project plans relevant to each compliance priority and qualitatively assess whether each priority has been informed by a risk-based assessment of harm. This includes potential and actual risks of harm relevant to the compliance issue.			
Type of measure: Output.			
Data/information sources: Annual compliance priorities and internal business and project plans.			
PBS links: Outcome 1, Program 1.1 Communications regulation, planning and licensing.			
Regulator performance principle: Risk-based and data-driven.			

Performance measure 1.4: Major spectrum allocations are held effectively			
2025–26	**2026–27**	**2027–28**	**2028–29**
Policy objectives and timeframes achieved	Policy objectives and timeframes achieved	Policy objectives and timeframes achieved	Policy objectives and timeframes achieved
Description We are responsible for allocating spectrum to users. We use auctions to allocate spectrum if demand for available spectrum exceeds supply to ensure it is effectively and efficiently allocated. There are several auction formats that can be used. Choice for a specific allocation will depend on a range of factors, such as the characteristics of the spectrum for sale and the anticipated demand for the spectrum.			
Rationale Spectrum is a valuable economic resource that we manage to promote the long-term public interest derived from its use. The measure considers whether allocating spectrum licences through our auction activities meets industry demand, aligns with policy objectives and are conducted within required timeframes.			
Method We will qualitatively assess whether each auction achieved the object of the Radiocommunications Act and the communications policy objectives of the government, and whether it was delivered within the FYSO timeframes. Both need to be achieved for this measure to be met.			
Type of measure: Effectiveness.			
Data/information sources: End project reports and FYSO progress reports.			
PBS links: Outcome 1, Program 1.1: Communications regulation, planning and licensing.			
Regulator performance principle: Continuous improvement and building trust.			

Performance objective 2: The ACMA's contribution to the international spectrum framework supports the needs of the Australian communications industry

The ACMA is responsible for leading Australia's engagement in the ITU Radiocommunication Sector Study Groups, Working Parties and Task Groups, Australian Radiocommunications Study Groups (ARSGs), and the Asia–Pacific Telecommunity Wireless Group (AWG) and preparatory meetings. We also provide expert technical and regulatory advice to DITRDCSA.

We participate in these forums to support Australian Government policy and ensure that the outcomes maximise the social and economic benefits of domestic spectrum use.

Performance measure 2.1: Australia's international engagement strategies are informed by the ACMA's consultation with industry and government			
2025–26	**2026–27**	**2027–28**	**2028–29**
Australian positions are informed by consultation	Australian positions are informed by consultation	Australian positions are informed by consultation	Australian positions are informed by consultation

Description

Australian Radiocommunications Study Groups (ARSGs) provide expert advice to assist in our development of Australian positions and contributions to the above-mentioned international forums. Membership includes representatives from major telecommunications providers, broadcasters, international and national satellite providers, and various government departments and agencies as well as amateur radio, satellite, maritime and radio-astronomy experts.

Rationale

This measure provides a long-term qualitative assessment on whether our contribution to the international spectrum framework:

- is informed by consultation with industry and government to ensure that domestic interests are considered
- supports Australia's interests.

Method

We will assess whether consultation undertaken through ARSGs was consistent with the guidelines. If the consultation was inconsistent, we will determine if the complexity of the matter warranted the approach used. Our assessment will be supplemented by examining our management of the domestic preparatory process for ITU-R Study Group meetings. We will qualitatively assess whether the ITU-R meeting outcomes reflect the preparatory process undertaken in attending and briefing ITU-R Study Group meetings.

Type of measure: Output.

Data/information sources: ARSG meeting documentation and guidelines, and internal documentation.

PBS links: Outcome 1, Program 1.1: Communications regulation, planning and licensing.

Regulator performance principle: Collaboration and engagement.

Performance objective 3: The ACMA's activities contribute to telecommunications infrastructure providers having confidence that they are appropriately authorised and enabled to provide communication services

The ACMA is responsible for regulating telecommunications carrier licensees and submarine cable permit holders under the Telecommunications Act. This includes assessing, granting or refusing applications for carrier licences, nominated carrier declarations and submarine cable permits within set timeframes.

The ACMA also regulates telecommunications, radiocommunications and electrical/electronic equipment under the Telecommunications Act and Radiocommunications Act. Under this role, we make legislative instruments (technical standards) that impose obligations on suppliers at the point of supply to the Australian market.

The ACMA also manages Australia's phone number system by providing phone numbers to telecommunications providers that are then provided to customers.

Performance measure 3.1: Telecommunications carrier licensing and submarine cable permit activities meet statutory requirements			
2025–26	**2026–27**	**2027–28**	**2028–29**
100% of licensing and permit decisions meet statutory requirements	100% of licensing and permit decisions meet statutory requirements	100% of licensing and permit decisions meet statutory requirements	100% of licensing and permit decisions meet statutory requirements

Description

The ACMA is responsible for ensuring that licences for telecommunications carriers and permits for submarine cabling meet statutory requirements.

For telecommunications carrier licences, this includes consulting with relevant agencies on applications and administering application fees, notices of surrender and notices of cancellations. We also maintain an electronic register of carrier licences and nominated carrier declarations.

We assess and grant or refuse applications for submarine cable installation permits.

Rationale

This measure provides a long-term qualitative assessment of the effectiveness of our telecommunications carrier licensing and submarine cable permit activities. It assesses the extent to which we meet statutory requirements in our decision making.

Method

We will qualitatively assess whether statutory requirements for telecommunications carrier licences and submarine cable permits have been met in our licensing and permit decisions. The statutory requirements relate to:

- licence and permit applications
- licensed carrier formal warnings or remedial directions
- cancellation of carrier licences
- the electronic register of carrier licences and nominated carrier declarations
- revoking nominated carrier declarations
- permit extension applications
- suspensions and cancellations of permits.

Type of measure: Effectiveness.

Data/information sources: Internal decision-making packages and related carrier licence records.

PBS links: Outcome 1, Program 1.1: Communications regulation, planning and licensing.

Regulator performance principle: Continuous improvement and building trust.

Performance measure 3.2: Equipment regulation appropriately mitigates the risk of harm to communications networks and people using or working on those networks			
2025–26	**2026–27**	**2027–28**	**2028–29**
Regulatory requirements met	Regulatory requirements met	Regulatory requirements met	Regulatory requirements met

Description

The ACMA regulates the supply of certain telecommunications, radiocommunications and electrical/electronic equipment under the Telecommunications Act and Radiocommunications Act, and makes legislative instruments (ACMA mandatory technical standards) that impose obligations on suppliers at the point of supply to the Australian market, including:

- meeting applicable technical standards
- record-keeping
- correctly labelling with the regulatory compliance mark.

Maintaining appropriate and effective ACMA mandatory technical standards contributes to telecommunications infrastructure providers having confidence that they are appropriately authorised and enabled to provide communications services.

Rationale

This measure provides a long-term qualitative assessment of the effectiveness of our equipment regulation activities to appropriately mitigate the risk of harm to communications networks and people using or working on those networks.

Method

We will undertake a qualitative assessment of our equipment regulation reform program and its continued impact to establish whether equipment regulation appropriately mitigates the risk of harm to networks and people using or working on those networks. This includes equipment regulation reports being actioned in accordance with our regulatory functions and that the reform program demonstrates that:

- equipment regulation appropriately reflects Australian safety standards
- existing instruments are reviewed with industry, including electrical safety regulators in states and territories being consulted about any proposed changes.

Type of measure: Effectiveness.

Data/information sources: Consultation packages, internal documentation and legislative instruments.

PBS links: Outcome 1, Program 1.1: Communications regulation, planning and licensing.

Regulator performance principle: Risk based and data driven.

Performance measure 3.3: Numbering services are available 99% of the time and 99.9% of transactions are processed within 5 seconds			
2025–26	**2026–27**	**2027–28**	**2028–29**
Numbering services are available 99% of the time and 99.9% of transactions are processed within 5 seconds	Numbering services are available 99% of the time and 99.9% of transactions are processed within 5 seconds	Numbering services are available 99% of the time and 99.9% of transactions are processed within 5 seconds	Numbering services are available 99% of the time and 99.9% of transactions are processed within 5 seconds

Description

The ACMA is responsible for managing Australia's phone number system. We provide phone numbers to telecommunications providers that then provide those numbers to their customers.

This target is output-based and provides a long-term quantitative assessment of our numbering services by measuring the extent to which the numbering service is available to the telco industry and the time taken to process transactions. The numbering allocation system and services are provided under contract by ZOAK Pty Ltd to perform these functions on behalf of the ACMA.

Rationale

The measure evaluates the availability of ACMA's numbering services to industry, contributing to telecommunications infrastructure providers' confidence that they have access to this resource supporting end-to-end connectivity and provision of communications services.

Method

We will make a quantitative assessment of information provided by ZOAK Pty Ltd on a monthly basis about the percentage of time the numbering service is available, and the percentage of transactions processed within 5 seconds. The annual assessment will be based on the 12 monthly assessments.

Type of measure: Output.

Data/information sources: Monthly performance reports provided by ZOAK Pty Ltd.

PBS links: Outcome 1, Program 1.1: Communications regulation, planning and licensing.

Regulator performance principle: Continuous improvement and building trust.

Key activity 2: Build consumer trust in the use of communications content and services

The ACMA's activities contribute to Australian consumers having confidence in the content and services available to them.

Performance objective 4: The ACMA delivers activities that contribute to Australian consumers having confidence in the content and services available to them

We do this by:

- regulating the communications and media services sector by checking it follows rules set in legislation, industry codes and standards, and licences
- conducting research, performance analysis and reporting relating to media content and services, including complaints, compliance, network reliability and service standards
- issuing and managing broadcast content licences and community broadcasting licences
- investigating media content and service providers and, if necessary, taking compliance and enforcement actions.

Performance measure 4.1: Australians' usage of communications services			
2025–26	**2026–27**	**2027–28**	**2028–29**
95% of Australian adults are connected	95% of Australian adults are connected	95% of Australian adults are connected	95% of Australian adults are connected

Description

Our annual consumer survey tracks changes in the ways Australians engage with media and communications services and the confidence that consumers have in the content and services available to them.

This measure supports our purpose by providing insights into Australian consumers' access to and use of communication services, particularly through the internet and their mobile devices. It focuses on the proportion of adults who are digitally connected. We utilise data-driven research and analysis to assess progress toward the ACMA's vision of a connected, informed and entertained Australia. The 95% benchmark reflects the expectation that the vast majority of Australian Adults are connected through regular use of communication services, indicating strong access and uptake across the population.

The survey process is outsourced to a research consultancy.

Rationale

This measure contributes to the overall performance objective through research and analysis that informs our understanding of how consumers access and use communications services. Measuring access and usage is a proxy for the effectiveness of ACMA activities in supporting widespread access and connectivity, as well as consumer confidence in content and services available to them.

Method

Two independent indicators each need to reach 95% to achieve the target. Collectively, they are proxies that relate to connection – the proportion of Australian adults who accessed the internet in the past 6 months and the proportion of Australian adults who have used a mobile phone for communication in the past 6 months.

We will agree on the survey processes and procedures with the research consultant each year, including the sample size, error rates, weighting methods and sample quality. For all annual consumer surveys, the sample is representative of Australian adults, and a probability-based panel or Computer Assistant Telephone Interviewing (CATI) research design is required.

Type of measure: Effectiveness (proxy).

Data/information sources: Annual consumer survey data.

PBS links: Outcome 1, Program 1.2: Consumer safeguards, education and information.

Regulator performance principle: Risk-based and data-driven.

Performance measure 4.2: The NSER data checking service is available to the wagering industry 99.5% or more of the time for the year			
2025–26	**2026–27**	**2027–28**	**2028–29**
The NSER data checking service is available to the wagering industry 99.5% or more of the time for the year	The NSER data checking service is available to the wagering industry 99.5% or more of the time for the year	The NSER data checking service is available to the wagering industry 99.5% or more of the time for the year	The NSER data checking service is available to the wagering industry 99.5% or more of the time for the year

Description

The ACMA administers BetStop – the National Self-Exclusion Register (NSER), which allows Australians to self-exclude from all licensed interactive wagering services for 3 months or more. The wagering industry queries the register to stop or not start providing services to those individuals.

Our performance measure is tied to the availability of the industry-facing service, as this is the core aspect that enables licensed interactive wagering providers to action an individual's request to self-exclude. This supports the policy intent of the project by reducing the extent of gambling harm in the community and will provide confidence to consumers that their decision to self-exclude will be supported by the service.

Rationale

The measure provides a long-term quantitative assessment of our performance in providing the national self-exclusion service by evaluating the availability of the data-checking service to the wagering industry.

Method

We will assess the availability of the data-checking service using a quantitative assessment of performance indicator data provided monthly by the register operator. This will identify the percentage of time each month that the data-checking service was available and will be used to calculate the availability across the year.

Type of measure: Output.

Data/information sources: Monthly performance reports and incident notifications provided by the register operator, Dataworks Group Limited (formerly IXUP).

PBS links: Outcome 1, Program 1.2: Consumer safeguards, education and information.

Regulator performance principle: Continuous improvement and building trust.

Performance measure 4.3: The DNCR is available to the Australian public 99.5% or more of the time			
2025–26	**2026–27**	**2027–28**	**2028–29**
The DNCR is available to the Australian public 99.5% or more of the time	The DNCR is available to the Australian public 99.5% or more of the time	The DNCR is available to the Australian public 99.5% or more of the time	The DNCR is available to the Australian public 99.5% or more of the time

Description

The Do Not Call Register (DNCR) is a secure database where individuals and organisations can register, check or remove their Australian telephone, mobile and fax numbers to opt-out of receiving most unsolicited telemarketing calls and faxes. The ACMA is responsible for establishing and overseeing the DNCR and has contracted IVE Group Australia Pty Ltd to provide the service.

Rationale

This performance measure provides a long-term quantitative assessment of the availability of a service that enables industry to meet its obligations under the Do Not Call Register Act. Achieving the measure demonstrates that the ACMA's DNCR activities contribute to Australian consumers' confidence in the services available to them.

Method

We will make a quantitative assessment on the availability of the DNCR to the Australian public on a monthly basis. The annual assessment will be made based on the 12 monthly assessments.

Type of measure: Output.

Data/information sources: Monthly performance reports provided by IVE Group.

PBS links: Outcome 1, Program 1.2: Consumer safeguards, education and information.

Regulator performance principle: Continuous improvement and building trust.

Performance measure 4.4: Investigations undertaken are completed within the target timeframe			
2025–26	**2026–27**	**2027–28**	**2028–29**
90% of investigations are completed within 6 months, 95% within 12 months and 100% within 18 months of commencement	90% of investigations are completed within 6 months, 95% within 12 months and 100% within 18 months of commencement	90% of investigations are completed within 6 months, 95% within 12 months and 100% within 18 months of commencement	90% of investigations are completed within 6 months, 95% within 12 months and 100% within 18 months of commencement

Description

We investigate and enforce compliance with rules set in legislation, industry codes, standards, determinations and licence conditions.

Investigations commonly arise through complaints and referrals we receive, or our intelligence-gathering activities, and our assessment of the risk to Australians. The complexity of the investigations – which include novel issues, technical matters, external advice, amount of data involved, intended outcome and/or multiple parties with relevant information – can vary, affecting the time required to conduct each investigation.

Rationale

This measure provides a long-term quantitative assessment of the efficiency of our investigation of media, content and communications services.

It is important that the measure can accommodate a range of complexities, so it does not act as a potential disincentive to consider and conduct investigations into high-risk and complex matters. Accordingly, the performance measure was revised in 2024–25. The revised measure is more robust as it requires 100% of investigations to be completed within 18 months, whereas the 2023–24 measure had no 'backstop' for 5% of investigations.

Method

The number of investigations completed within 6, 12 and 18 months of being opened will be divided by the total number of investigations completed in the reporting period to establish a percentage of investigations completed within each of those timeframes.

Type of measure: Efficiency (proxy).

Data/information sources: Internal investigation records.

PBS links: Outcome 1, Program 1.2: Consumer safeguards, education and information.

Regulator performance principle: Continuous improvement and building trust.

Performance measure 4.5: The ACMA's communications content and services compliance activities are informed by a risk-based assessment of harm			
2025–26	**2026–27**	**2027–28**	**2028–29**
Compliance priorities are informed by a risk-based assessment of harm	Compliance priorities are informed by a risk-based assessment of harm	Compliance priorities are informed by a risk-based assessment of harm	Compliance priorities are informed by a risk-based assessment of harm

Description

We set annual communications content and services compliance priorities to deliver effective compliance and, where necessary, targeted enforcement of matters that have been identified by the Authority as areas of focus. Our actions under compliance priorities contribute to ensuring that Australians can have trust and confidence in the content and services available to them.

Rationale

This measure provides a long-term qualitative assessment of whether our communications content and services compliance priorities take a risk-based approach to identifying key areas for improved industry compliance.

Annual compliance priorities are targeted, proportionate, informed by evidence, and focused on reducing the potential for consumer harm. Consistently setting compliance priorities that align with this measure strengthens the effectiveness of compliance and enforcement strategies and activities, directs resources to areas of significant concern and bolsters public confidence in our regulatory processes.

Method

We will identify bid proposals and activity workplans relevant to each compliance priority and undertake a qualitative assessment of these to see if each priority has been informed by a risk-based assessment of harm. The risk-based assessment will include considering factors set out in the ACMA's compliance and enforcement policy.

Type of measure: Output.

Data/information sources: Annual compliance priorities and internal business and project plans.

PBS links: Outcome 1, Program 1.2: Consumer safeguards, education and information.

Regulator performance principle: Risk-based and data-driven.

Performance objective 5: The ACMA's activities contribute to Australian consumers having access to diverse media content and services

We are responsible for the compliance and enforcement of media content and services. This includes monitoring industry to ensure it follows the rules set in legislation, industry codes, standards and licences. If a regulated entity does not comply with their obligations, a range of enforcement tools can be used, consistent with our published compliance and enforcement policy. We are also responsible for broadcasting licensing and renewal decisions for the media content and services industry.

Performance measure 5.1: Enforcement decisions to accept or give agreed measures, enforceable undertakings (EUs) or remedial directions, or to seek injunctions deliver improved compliance by the relevant regulated entity			
2025–26	**2026–27**	**2027–28**	**2028–29**
90% of deadlines met	90% of deadlines met	90% of deadlines met	90% of deadlines met
Description Under our compliance and enforcement policy, we adopt a strategic risk-based approach, which recognises that breaches of the rules established by Acts and instruments will be dealt with effectively and efficiently. We take regulatory action commensurate with the seriousness of the breach and the level of harm.			
Rationale The measure is designed to assess how effective we have been in achieving behavioural change in non-compliant entities by assessing whether entities complied with the obligations set out in agreed measures, enforceable undertakings (EUs), remedial directions, or injunctions. These obligations have been designed to contribute to improved compliance over time by the entity.			
Method We will identify and monitor each entity that is subject to agreed measures, EUs, remedial directions or injunctions required to be reported to the ACMA. We will identify the number of obligations that the entity complies with, as well as if it had subsequent findings of non-compliance for the same compliance issue. This will indicate whether the enforcement actions are delivering improved compliance.			
Type of measure: Effectiveness.			
Data/information sources: Internal records of agreed measures, EUs, remedial directions and injunctions.			
PBS links: Outcome 1, Program 1.2: Consumer safeguards, education and information.			
Regulator performance principle: Collaboration and engagement.			

Performance measure 5.2: Community broadcasting licence renewal decisions are made within the statutory timeframes			
2025–26	**2026–27**	**2027–28**	**2028–29**
100% of decisions made within statutory timeframes	100% of decisions made within statutory timeframes	100% of decisions made within statutory timeframes	100% of decisions made within statutory timeframes

Description

The ACMA is responsible for community broadcasting licensing and renewal decisions. Community broadcasting plays an important role in Australia, delivering content that is diverse and relevant to the local community. The goals of community broadcasters are to:

- promote a diverse range of broadcasting for the Australian public
- develop and reflect Australian identity, character and cultural diversity
- provide local content.

Rationale

This measure provides a long-term quantitative assessment of our activities by evaluating the extent to which community broadcasting licence renewal decisions meet statutory timeframes. Timely decision-making is essential to maintain continuity in community broadcasting services, which provide diverse and locally relevant content to the Australian public. Meeting the measure demonstrates that the ACMA's community broadcasting licensing activities are conducted efficiently and support Australian consumers' access to diverse media content and services.

Method

We will use a quantitative assessment of whether community broadcasting licence renewal decisions were made within the statutory timeframes. We will identify licences due to expire in the relevant financial year where an application for renewal has been received from the licensee and compare the date the renewal decisions were made to the licence expiry dates.

Type of measure: Efficiency (proxy).

Data/information sources: Records of licence renewal applications.

PBS links: Outcome 1, Program 1.2: Consumer safeguards, education and information.

Regulator performance principle: Continuous improvement and building trust.

Performance measure 5.3: Media control notifications and captioning order applications are processed within statutory timeframes			
2025–26	**2026–27**	**2027–28**	**2028–29**
100% of notifications and applications processed within statutory timeframes	100% of notifications and applications processed within statutory timeframes	100% of notifications and applications processed within statutory timeframes	100% of notifications and applications processed within statutory timeframes
Description The ACMA is responsible for monitoring and enforcing statutory control and media diversity rules, including managing registers with information about the control of media operations. We are also responsible for processing applications for target reduction or exemption orders from captioning obligations by broadcasters.			
Rationale This measure provides a long-term qualitative assessment of our media control activities and management of captioning order applications by measuring if we process notifications and applications in statutory timeframes.			
Method We will compare the date that media control notifications and captioning applications were received with the date the notifications/applications were processed to assess if we met timeframes.			
Type of measure: Efficiency (proxy).			
Data/information sources: Notification and application records.			
PBS links: Outcome 1, Program 1.2: Consumer safeguards, education and information.			
Regulator performance principle: Continuous improvement and building trust.			

Performance measure 5.4: Annual compliance results for Australian content and captioning reporting are finalised within 6 months of reports being received			
2025–26	**2026–27**	**2027–28**	**2028–29**
Annual compliance results for Australian content and captioning reporting are finalised within 6 months of reports being received	Annual compliance results for Australian content and captioning reporting are finalised within 6 months of reports being received	Annual compliance results for Australian content and captioning reporting are finalised within 6 months of reports being received	Annual compliance results for Australian content and captioning reporting are finalised within 6 months of reports being received

Description

Certain broadcasters are required to broadcast a minimum amount of Australian content and report to the ACMA annually. There are also rules about showing captions on some programs that broadcasters must report on to the ACMA each year. We use this data to prepare and finalise the following reports:

- content compliance report (metropolitan networks)
- content compliance report (regional networks)
- free-to-air broadcasters' and subscription TV licensees' captioning compliance reports.

Rationale

The measure provides a long-term quantitative assessment of our efficiency by assessing whether we completed annual compliance results within 6 months of receipt of industry information.

Method

We will compare the dates when industry data was received with the dates the reports were finalised to assess whether the annual compliance results for Australian content and captioning reporting were finalised within 6 months.

Type of measure: Efficiency (proxy).

Data/information sources: Annual compliance results and internal documentation.

PBS links: Outcome 1, Program 1.2: Consumer safeguards, education and information.

Regulator performance principle: Collaboration and engagement.

Part 2

eSafety Commissioner corporate plan 2025–26

From the Commissioner

Our responsibility, our moment

In a world where harm moves at the speed of technology, regulation must be just as nimble – and far more human.

At eSafety, this means more than keeping pace; it means leading with clarity, purpose and care. Australians count on us to act when harm occurs, but also to anticipate it, prevent it, and drive real-world change that reduces risk and enhances safety.

Every day, people from all walks of life – children, parents and carers, educators, industry leaders, and frontline responders – turn to us for support, guidance and action. They do so because they know the internet, while indispensable, can also be dangerous.

This Corporate Plan outlines our strategy for 2025–26 and beyond. It arrives at a time when digital harms are evolving rapidly, and expectations of regulation have never been higher. This is our responsibility – and our moment – to deliver.

Inside the storm of technological change

Australians are among the most connected people on the planet. We rely on digital services to work, learn, socialise and play. Yet the very technologies that power our lives are being weaponised in ways that cause profound harm – particularly to children, women, and other groups at heightened risk.

Generative AI is accelerating the creation of deepfakes, non-consensual content and synthetic child sexual abuse material. Immersive technologies are creating new opportunities for exploitation. Algorithms are shaping the content we see in ways we don't always understand, amplifying division and entrenching harm. Platforms operate at global scale, but often without accountability.

In this environment, regulation must be agile, proactive and grounded in a deep understanding of how technologies are used – and misused – in real life. That's the foundation of this plan.

Sharpening our regulatory agenda

eSafety's role is to protect Australians from serious online harm. But we do more than respond to complaints or enforce rules – we work across prevention, protection, and proactive systemic change.

This year's plan builds on a strong regulatory foundation. We are overseeing the next phase of enforceable industry codes and standards. We are implementing new Social Media Minimum Age requirements. We are leading global efforts to address technology-facilitated gender-based violence and abuse. And we are expanding our data, AI and digital capabilities to stay ahead of emerging risks.

This is a forward-leaning agenda. It positions eSafety not only as a regulator, but as a partner in shaping a safer digital future – one built on transparency, accountability and human rights.

Partnership is our superpower

No single agency can solve these challenges alone. Our success depends on strong partnerships – across government, industry, civil society and communities.

We are proud to support frontline services, fund prevention initiatives, and co-design resources with the people most affected by online harm. We work closely with the Australian Communications and Media Authority, the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission and others through the Digital Platform Regulators Forum. And we contribute to international efforts through the Global Online Safety Regulators Network and INHOPE.

Above all, I want to recognise the people who make this work possible: our staff. The compassion, expertise and resilience they bring – often while working with distressing content – is the foundation of everything we achieve.

Prepared for what's next

The online challenges we face will keep evolving – and so will we.

With this plan, we are setting a course that is not only clear, but courageous – rooted in evidence, guided by empathy, and ready for what lies ahead.

We will continue to lead with integrity, act with foresight, and regulate with purpose because keeping people safe online demands nothing less.

Julie Inman Grant
eSafety Commissioner

About us

About the eSafety Commissioner

The eSafety Commissioner (eSafety) is Australia's independent regulator for online safety. We work to protect Australians from serious online harm by using our powers under Australian Government legislation – primarily the *Online Safety Act 2021* (the Online Safety Act).

Online harm refers to actions that occur entirely or partly online and can damage a person's social, emotional, psychological, financial or physical wellbeing. These harms can come from content, conduct, or contact.

The Online Safety Act defines eSafety's responsibilities. It includes a world-leading initiative – the Basic Online Safety Expectations – and provides for the development of industry codes or standards to regulate illegal and restricted online content. The Act also includes four reporting schemes:

- the Adult Cyber Abuse Scheme
- the Cyberbullying Scheme for children
- the Image-Based Abuse Scheme
- the Online Content Scheme for illegal and restricted material.

Additionally, eSafety has powers under the Act to restrict access to material depicting abhorrent violent conduct during an online crisis event.

The eSafety Commissioner is an independent statutory office holder, supported by staff from the ACMA. In keeping with the Australian Government's Statement of Expectations and eSafety's Statement of Intent, this corporate plan has been developed in line with the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act) and related legislation and guidance material.

Purpose

To help safeguard all Australians from online harms and to promote safer, more positive online experiences.

Vision

Through prevention, protection and proactive systemic change, Australians are supported and empowered to engage more safely online, and globally industry is enabled to meet legislated safety expectations.

Values

Our culture and values support us to achieve our purpose, now and into the future. We are committed to the Australian Public Service (APS) values of being impartial, committed to service, accountable, respectful, ethical and good stewards.

Complementing the APS values, we have developed our own eSafety-specific values.

Innovation – challenging the status quo and doing things differently to lead the world to a safer online environment.

Empowerment – providing skills and knowledge to Australians so they have positive online interactions and know what to do when they encounter online harm or feel unsafe online.

Compassion – supporting Australians through difficult online experiences, providing help in an inclusive, empathetic and respectful way.

Fairness – approaching our work ethically and transparently, in a considered, fair and proportionate manner, informed by evidence and research.

Collaboration – genuinely connecting with partner organisations and industry bodies, cooperating, and sharing information, insights and expertise.

Excellence – providing online safety leadership on behalf of the Australian Government, ensuring we always have the Australian people in mind when improving and delivering our regulatory services and functions.

Our key activities

We achieve our purpose through three key pillars:

Prevention: eSafety designs and delivers educational materials to prevent online harms, working with key sectors and community members to build user capability and resilience.

Protection: eSafety alleviates online harms through our investigations and regulatory schemes, in response to reported and identified harms.

Promoting proactive and systemic change: eSafety implements and enforces industry regulatory measures and expectations to drive proactive and systemic change in online safety.

Further information on our strategic priorities can be found in the Australian Government's Statement of Expectations and our corresponding Statement of Intent, and the eSafety Strategy 2022-25.

Corporate planning framework

The environment

The global, domestic, technical, regulatory and fiscal factors that affect our work.

Purpose

To help safeguard Australians at risk from online harms and to promote safer, more positive online experiences.

Vision

Through prevention, protection and proactive systemic change, Australians are supported and empowered to engage more safely online, and globally industry is enabled to meet legislated safety expectations.

Key activity 1 – Prevention

eSafety designs and delivers educational materials to prevent online harms, working with key sectors and community members to build user capability and resilience.

Key activity 2 – Protection

eSafety alleviates online harms through our investigations and regulatory schemes, in response to reported and identified harms.

Key activity 3 – Proactive and systemic change

eSafety implements and enforces industry regulatory measures and expectations to drive proactive and systemic change in online safety.

Capabilities

Activities that enable us to deliver on our purpose.

Our environment

Australians are among the most connected people in the world.[1] We rely on digital platforms to study, work, socialise, shop, play and access essential services. But as our reliance on technology grows, so do the risks we face online.

Technological change is accelerating. Advances in artificial intelligence (AI), immersive technologies, recommender systems and decentralised platforms are reshaping the way we interact, communicate and learn. While these tools offer new opportunities, they are also being used to cause harm – often in ways that are difficult to predict or detect.

The online environment is increasingly shaped by global forces. Most of the services we regulate operate across borders and under multiple legal systems. At the same time, domestic expectations of safety, privacy, transparency and accountability continue to rise.

eSafety is responsible for protecting Australians from serious online harms, including illegal and restricted content, cyber abuse and image-based abuse. But these challenges do not exist in isolation. They overlap with broader issues such as misinformation, data misuse and online scams.

To be effective, we work in close partnership with government agencies, industry, and civil society. This includes our collaborations with the Australian Federal Police and state and territory law enforcement agencies, and state and territory children's commissioners. We also work with the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC), the Australian Securities and Investment Commission (ASIC), and the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority (APRA).

We are a member of the Digital Platform Regulators' Forum (DP-REG), which brings together eSafety, the ACMA, the OAIC, and the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) to support a streamlined and cohesive approach to regulating digital platforms.

We continually assess the regulatory landscape and adapt our approach to remain responsive and forward-looking. This section of our corporate plan outlines the global, technological, fiscal and regulatory forces shaping our work, and how eSafety is responding to keep Australians safer online.

Global environment

We operate in a complex, fast-moving, interconnected digital world.

Most of the companies we regulate under the Online Safety Act are based overseas, shaped by different laws, political priorities, and cultural contexts. While major online safety laws are now in force – such as Australia's Online Safety Act, the European Union's Digital Services Act, and the United Kingdom's Online Safety Act – geopolitical shifts continue to influence how technology companies operate, often with global consequences.

To support a more consistent and effective international approach to regulation, eSafety works across the globe with governments and regulators to promote citizen-centric online safety frameworks. We do this as a member of the Global Online Safety Regulators Network, through other multistakeholder groups, and through bilateral partnerships with regulators in the European Union, the United Kingdom and across the Asia-Pacific region.

1 Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, December 2023, Internet Activity Report – Period ending 30 June 2023 (accc.gov.au)

In 2025, global negotiations will shape how the digital ecosystem and emerging technologies are governed. These include follow-up work from the United Nations *Global Digital Compact* and *Cybercrime Convention*, both adopted in 2024, and the 20-year review of the UN *World Summit on the Information Society* (WSIS+20) in 2025.

International debates regarding AI and other emerging technologies will continue to evolve and it is important that there is a continued focus on these technologies being designed, developed and deployed safely, ethically, and in the public interest. eSafety will continue to support the Australian Government in advancing our values and priorities in international forums, with the goal of creating safer and more positive digital spaces for Australians.

Tech environment

The technology landscape is evolving rapidly. To keep pace and help shape this complex and dynamic environment, we are refining our regulatory approach.

We use data and insights to better understand how online services and platforms are being used – and misused – and to identify emerging risks. Our work includes:

- horizon and environmental scanning
- research into current and emerging online safety issues
- promoting safety-enhancing technologies and design
- delivering education, engagement and awareness programs across the country.

You can find our position papers on technology trends and challenges at Tech trends and challenges | eSafety Commissioner.

As new technologies emerge and existing ones evolve, so do the risks and opportunities they bring. Our goal is to encourage innovation that benefits users, while identifying and addressing potential harms before they become widespread.

We are closely monitoring developments in areas such as AI, algorithms, age assurance technologies, encryption, and decentralisation. These advances are transforming the digital ecosystem at speed.

Our horizon scanning and research help ensure we remain a responsive and forward-looking regulator.

The following sections outline some of our areas of focus.

Generative AI

The use of machine learning to create digital content, such as text, images, audio, video and multimodal simulations of experiences is evolving rapidly, with improvements in quality, speed and capabilities happening at pace. Generative AI has the potential to support online safety. For example, large language models (LLMs) can help detect and moderate harmful online material more effectively at scale. Generative AI may also enhance digital learning and promote skills such as critical thinking and AI literacy.

The risks from generative AI are already significant and growing. Existing and emerging harms include:

- highly realistic child sexual exploitation and abuse material, which may be synthetic, AI-generated, or based on images of real children, making it harder to determine if a child is at risk and needs to be identified and rescued
- terrorist and violent extremist content produced using advanced generative tools, including multimodal foundation models (MFMs)
- non-consensual deepfake images and videos which falsely depict people in situations and activities that never happened
- large volumes of fake or manipulated content used to bully, abuse, or manipulate individuals, making harmful content harder to track and remove.

Generative AI is being incorporated into major search engines and online services, with full integration expected across the digital ecosystem.

To respond to these risks, eSafety is:

- engaging with developers and platforms, building on our August 2023 position statement, which outlines Safety by Design measures for the generative AI lifecycle.
- applying new requirements introduced in May 2024 under the Basic Online Safety Expectations, that service providers take reasonable steps to proactively minimise unlawful or harmful use of generative AI.
- progressing enforceable industry codes and standards under the Online Safety Act, which apply to class 1 and class 2 material – regardless of how it is generated. Class 1 and 2 are categories of material provided for by the Online Safety Act, with reference to the National Classification Scheme. Class 1 refers to unlawful and seriously harmful material such as child abuse material and material that advocates terrorism. Class 1C and class 2 material is content that is restricted, such as online pornography and other high-impact material not suitable for people under 18 years of age.
- publishing free education resources for a range of audiences to support safe and ethical AI use, including professional learning webinars and user guides on AI features in popular platforms and apps.
- working with other Australian Government agencies leading AI policy and regulatory responses, including the Department of Industry, Science, and Resources (DISR) and contributing to cross-regulator efforts through DP-REG.
- partnering with the US Department of Homeland Security to develop a toolkit to counter child sexual exploitation and abuse.
- partnering with international governments, regulators, civil society organisations, and academic experts to promote coherence and best practice.

Immersive experiences

Immersive technologies – including augmented reality (AR), mixed reality (MR), and virtual reality (VR) – allow users to interact with digital content in three-dimensional environments that look, sound and feel highly realistic. These technologies are creating new ways to connect, learn and play, but they also present significant safety risks.

The term 'metaverse' is often used to describe these digital spaces, where people can engage with each other in shared virtual environments. While there is no single definition, and the term is constantly evolving, the concept typically refers to online 3D spaces that closely simulate real-world interactions.

As immersive technologies evolve, so do the associated risks and harms. Existing and emerging risks include:

- the weaponisation of immersive technologies to perpetrate terrorism and violent extremism
- new channels for child exploitation and inappropriate contact with children
- exposure of children to age-inappropriate content
- technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV) made more confronting by the hyperrealism and real-time experiences of immersive environments.

To reduce these risks, it is essential to embed Safety by Design principles and robust governance measures from the earliest stages of development and to apply them throughout the product lifecycle. Immersive platforms are subject to the Basic Online Safety Expectations, and immersive platforms, devices and app distribution services are subject to industry codes and standards.

eSafety is working with global, cross-sector partners to anticipate and prevent harms linked to immersive technologies. This includes:

- our updated position statement on immersive technologies, published in May 2025
- our annual gift guide, which provides practical safety advice for parents, carers, and others considering immersive tech for children.

Recommender systems

Recommender systems and their algorithms are used by online platforms to rank, prioritise, and personalise the content users see. These algorithms create curated content feeds by analysing user behaviour and interests.

These systems rely on a wide range of data. Some of this data is provided by users, through search queries, content interactions, and feedback. Other data is collected in the background, such as how long a user views content, their location, or demographic details. This information is used to optimise the feed to maximise user engagement, advertising revenue, and time spent on the platform.

Recommender systems can have positive effects. They can help users discover interesting, relevant, or educational content that aligns with their preferences. However, they can also amplify harm. If a user engages with potentially harmful content – such as disordered eating, hate speech, misinformation, terrorist manifests, or suicide ideation – the algorithm may recommend similar material, reinforcing exposure and increasing potential harm to their physical, emotional, and developmental wellbeing.

This can lead to ‘rabbit holes’ and ‘echo chambers,’ where users are repeatedly exposed to harmful or extreme content without seeing balanced or alternative views. These effects have been linked to broader social issues, such as polarisation, problematic internet usage, isolation, and poorer mental health outcomes.

eSafety is working to reduce the risks and adverse effects of recommender systems by:

- using our regulatory powers to hold services accountable.
- engaging with stakeholders and communities to build shared understanding of the benefits and risks of recommender systems.
- partnering with the Stanford Social Media Lab to create resources that improve algorithmic literacy for young people.

Age assurance

The digital environment plays a central role in children’s lives. It supports how they learn, connect, play and grow. As children get older, their online behaviours evolve – along with the types of risks, harms and opportunities they encounter.

To create safe, age-appropriate spaces and experiences, online services must be able to determine how old their users are. This allows platforms to apply the right safety and privacy settings based on age.

Age assurance refers to the processes used to verify, estimate or infer a user’s age or age range. These processes help platforms:

- apply age-specific safety settings.
- confirm that users are old enough to consent to their data being collected.
- control access to age-restricted content and experiences.
- reduce harmful contact, such as interactions between children and unknown adults.

eSafety is overseeing the development and enforcement of industry codes and standards to protect children in Australian from exposure to class 1 and class 2 material, such as online pornography. We are also implementing the *Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Act 2024* which sets a mandatory minimum age of 16 for accounts on certain social media platforms.

The world will be watching as Australia rolls out Social Media Minimum Age requirements. eSafety has developed a sophisticated strategy for evidence and evaluation, including through the establishment of a global Academic Advisory Group. This will ensure eSafety is gathering vital evidence, evaluating the efficacy of our interventions and assessing the impact in tandem with world-renowned academics and researchers. This is important to the integrity of this regulatory intervention but will also be valuable to those seeking to learn from Australia’s experience.

Our work in age assurance builds on:

- our 2023 roadmap and background paper on age verification and complementary measures to prevent and mitigate harms to children from online pornography
- our 2024 issues paper on age assurance
- regulatory guidance on meeting the Basic Online Safety Expectations, including how platforms should prevent children from accessing class 2 material
- transparency reporting from service providers about their age assurance practices
- our 2025 research into how 8-12 year-olds are using social media.

eSafety is an observer on the Stakeholder Advisory Board for the Australian Government's Age Assurance Technology Trial. We recommended this trial in our 2023 Age Verification Roadmap. The Trial explored technologies to prevent children and young people under 18 from accessing online pornography and to enforce age restrictions on social media platforms for users under 16.

We will consider the trial's technological findings as we implement major policies – particularly the social media minimum age and the development and enforcement of industry codes and standards to protect children from inappropriate material.

Our future work in this area will also be informed by the outcomes of our regulatory actions, and other developments in the space.

Fiscal environment

In 2025-26, eSafety will receive funding of $71.7m and an average staffing level of 242, as outlined in the Portfolio Budget Statements. This funding supports our ability to meet current regulatory and operational obligations.

Regulatory environment

The *Online Safety Act 2021* is the foundation of Australia's online safety framework. It outlines the powers and responsibilities of the eSafety Commissioner and reflects the evolving nature of online risks. Since eSafety's establishment in 2015, our remit has expanded significantly to meet the demands of a rapidly changing digital environment.

To ensure the legislation remains fit for purpose, the Australian Government commissioned an independent review of the Online Safety Act, led by Ms Delia Rickard PSM. The final report, delivered on 31 October 2024, recognised eSafety's critical role and outlined 67 recommendations to strengthen the Act. These included introducing a digital duty of care that would require platforms and services to take reasonable steps to prevent foreseeable harms.

While the Australian Government is considering its response, eSafety looks forward to working with government, industry and stakeholders to improve online safety for all Australians.

Given the complex and interconnected nature of online safety regulation, eSafety contributes to a wide range of policy and regulatory processes relevant to our role.

Key areas of focus will include:

- **Supporting a legislated duty of care**: We will work with the Australian Government on its commitment to introduce this new obligation. This builds on our ongoing work to drive systemic change, including our leadership on Safety by Design, industry codes and standards, and the Basic Online Safety Expectations, which have enhanced industry accountability and transparency.
- **Delivering the Social Media Minimum Age**: We will provide advice to the Minister on the legislative rules for the Social Media Minimum Age requirements and will develop clear, practical guidance on what constitutes reasonable steps to prevent underage users from having accounts. This work will involve broad consultation.
- **Reviewing the Voluntary Online Dating Code**: After nine months of operation, we will assess the code's effectiveness and provide advice to government on whether further regulatory action is required.

Our response in this evolving environment

Our multifaceted operating model supports the development of our regulatory maturity and helps us operate as efficiently and effectively as possible. It outlines our key functions, partnerships, and interactions with national and international governments, as well as the Australian community. This model underpins our purpose and guides the delivery of our core activities.

Prevention

We aim to prevent online harm before it occurs through research, education, awareness raising and capacity building initiatives. Our goal is to equip Australians with the practical skills and confidence to be safe, resilient and positive participants in the online world – and to know where to seek help when issues arise.

We believe education and capacity building is a lifelong journey that should begin as early as possible and continue across all stages of life. Drawing on our regulatory insights and using co-design approaches, we will continue to tailor online safety information to meet the needs of diverse groups.

Protection

We support people experiencing online harms by administering four complaints and investigations schemes:

- the Adult Cyber Abuse Scheme
- the Cyberbullying Scheme for Australian children
- the Image-Based Abuse Scheme
- the Online Content Scheme for illegal and restricted content.

These schemes compel the removal of abusive and harmful content, limiting the ability of perpetrators to continue their abuse. They also give eSafety the power to take enforcement action against platforms and service providers that fail to comply with regulatory notices.

Speedy removal of harmful content helps provide relief for complainants.

Further information is available at Regulatory schemes | eSafety Commissioner.

Proactive and systemic change

We drive proactive, systemic change in the online industry by using insights from our complaints and investigations schemes, research, stakeholder engagements, and horizon scanning. We consult with international governments, industry, academics and subject matter experts in Australia and from around the world to spot trends and identify risks before they escalate.

The Online Safety Act allows industry bodies to develop codes to regulate illegal and restricted content across eight sections of the online industry. If a draft code provides appropriate community safeguards, the Commissioner can register it, making it enforceable. If a code does not provide appropriate community safeguards, the Commissioner can determine enforceable standards instead.

The first phase of these industry codes and standards was completed in 2023-24. It focused on reducing the risk of Australians accessing illegal content, such as child sexual abuse material. Six industry codes have been registered, and standards are in place for the remaining two sectors.

The second phase focuses on material inappropriate for children, such as online pornography. Industry submitted nine draft codes for assessment on 20 May 2025. The Commissioner decided to register three of these codes relating to hosting services, internet carriage services, and search engine services on 20 June 2025. The Commissioner is continuing to consider the remainder of the submitted codes.

The significance of these industry codes and standards has been recognised in the Australian Government's increase in penalties for breaches to almost $50m at the end of 2024.

More information is available at Industry codes | eSafety Commissioner.

We have powers to require mandatory reporting from service providers on how they are meeting the Basic Online Safety Expectations. These reporting obligations are enforceable with civil penalties. We can also publish statements on the extent to which services are meeting the Expectations, helping to promote greater transparency and accountability from service providers.

More information is available at Basic Online Safety Expectations | eSafety Commissioner.

Our Safety by Design initiative encourages online platforms and services to prioritise user safety from the outset, rather than retrofitting safeguards after harm has occurred. It helps technology companies anticipate, detect and eliminate online threats early by embedding safety into their systems, leadership and culture.

We work closely with industry and online safety experts to develop practical tools, guidance, and principles to support risk assessments, improve safety, and increase transparency.

Capability

Workforce capability

Our People

Our people are central to our purpose. They are passionate, skilled and dedicated to keeping Australians safe online. We are committed to supporting their wellbeing and success by fostering a safe, inclusive and positive workplace.

As our regulatory responsibilities grow in scale and complexity, so too does the size of our agency. To support current and future priorities, we are developing a strategic human resources workplan to ensure we have the capability, capacity and culture to meet the demands of this dynamic environment.

Our 2025 eSafety Census Action Plan outlines our commitment to improving employee experience. We will continue to refine our approach in response to future census results.

We also recognise and celebrate the impact our people make. Our 2025 Excellence Awards program marked the launch of a new way to acknowledge outstanding contributions – both in outcomes and in how our people demonstrate the eSafety values.

Workforce Planning and Capability

We are building our workforce planning maturity by embedding it into our annual business planning cycle. Our focus areas include succession planning, staff retention, and developing the skills we need to lead as a digital regulator. This will help us deliver on our strategic and operational goals now and into the future.

Given our unique role and the technological complexity of our work, we will also continue to harness expertise from the technology, academic and non-governmental organisation (NGO) sectors to meet our priorities.

Wellbeing

Staff wellbeing is paramount, and we are committed to providing a safe, healthy and supportive workplace – particularly given the emotionally demanding nature of many of our regulatory roles.

eSafety is committed to the Work Health and Safety Commitment Statement of the ACMA, and together with the ACMA, we offer a range of health and wellbeing initiatives and resources for our people. In 2025-26, we will strengthen our psychosocial risk monitoring, finalise our Wellbeing Framework, continue to build leadership capability in this area, and focus on improving work design.

Diversity and inclusion

The joint ACMA and eSafety Diversity and Inclusion Strategy outlines our commitment to building a workplace that reflects the diversity of the Australian community. We recognise that diversity includes background, identity, life experience and skills. Having a diverse workforce drives creativity, empathy, and excellence and enables us to better serve all Australians more effectively.

We will continue to work with the ACMA to implement initiatives under the strategy and the Reconciliation Action Plan. This includes celebrating culturally significant days, providing staff with training and development opportunities, and increasing our use of affirmative measures in recruitment.

Technology and digital capability

Technology, data and digital capability are critical to eSafety's ongoing success. These functions ensure our people are well supported and enable us to operate as an effective, modern regulator.

In 2025-26 we will update our key technology, data and digital strategies and roadmaps. These updates will outline how we plan to remain innovative and maintain our position as a data-driven regulator, supported by fit-for-purpose technology.

Throughout 2024-25, in partnership with the ACMA we made strong progress in establishing a governance framework for the introduction of AI and machine learning services and published our first AI Transparency Statement. This framework reflects current Australian Government best practice. In 2025-26, we will continue to explore how AI can be used responsibly to help us better educate and protect Australians online.

Through 2025-26 we will progress the following key programs of work:

Enhance regulatory technologies and technical capabilities

Technology continues to play a critical role in supporting our regulatory functions. These functions are expanding, with Phase 1 Industry Standards commencing in December 2024, ongoing work on Phase 2 Industry Codes, and the introduction of new measures under the Social Media Minimum Age requirements.

In 2025-26, we will enhance our regulatory technology and technical capabilities to support these growing responsibilities and improve the operational efficiency of our existing systems.

The wellbeing of our staff remains a key consideration in all technology design and decisions. We will continue to explore emerging technologies, to strengthen our capabilities while supporting the psychosocial safety of our teams.

Enable eSafety as a data driven organisation

Building on our 2022-23 eSafety Data Strategy, and with foundations now in place, in 2025-26 we will continue to strengthen and leverage our capabilities to further enable eSafety as a data driven organisation. A key focus will be embedding use of a centralised Data Platform, Data Catalogues and Data Dictionaries. These tools will continue to improve eSafety's data quality, expand staff access to key data and insights, and provide operational efficiencies in how we capture and use data as an organisation.

Enhance core ICT delivery, governance (including AI) and cyber security capabilities

eSafety will continue to modernise its digital capability to improve delivery speed, scalability and flexibility of its ICT systems.

We will apply appropriate governance measures to the use of AI and machine learning, in line with whole-of-government guidance. As opportunities arise, we will use these technologies across eSafety to support Australians facing online harm and to help staff who deal with impactful material.

We will establish effective enabling technology solutions to support implementation of the Social Media Minimum Age requirements and continue evolving our complaints and investigations systems to meet regulatory requirements and operational needs.

eSafety will continue to improve the maturity of cyber security to ensure systems, technology and applications are secure-by-design, robust and safe for use in line with whole-of-government and industry best practice.

Strategic communications capability

In 2025-26, eSafety will strengthen its strategic communications to support our expanding role and deepen engagement with the Australian public. We design our digital products, resources and services with the diverse audiences of the Australian public in mind, applying industry and government best practice to make sure they are accessible and user-friendly.

Our goal remains to provide clear, practical and reliable guidance on online safety, whether for members of the public or members of industry. Our key priorities include:

Increasing public awareness of eSafety

We raise awareness of eSafety's role as Australia's online safety regulator and the work we do across prevention, protection and proactive and systemic change. This is essential for our initiatives and programs to succeed. We have evolved our successful search engine optimisation (SEO) strategy to include answer engine optimisation (AEO), and are expanding marketing activities, supporting awareness-raising campaigns, and engaging through public events, proactive earned media, strategic partnerships and stakeholder outreach.

Supporting regulatory measures

As our regulatory functions grow, so does the need for communications that explain and support our actions. In 2025-26, our strategic communications will highlight the role of regulation in protecting Australians online and encourage greater industry compliance by promoting transparency and accountability.

In addition to our regular outreach, reports, tech trends papers, and other research, we have launched a new series of Online Safety Advisories to raise awareness of topical online safety issues and threats. We have also launched an industry supervision function to ensure those companies we are regulating understand their responsibilities.

Supporting Australians with social media age restrictions

In response to the upcoming social media minimum age requirements, we are committed to delivering clear and consistent messaging, along with comprehensive information and resources. Our initiatives will provide age-appropriate guidance for children and young people as well as tailored resources and training for their parents, carers, education sectors and youth-serving professionals ensuring they can effectively navigate these changes.

Transparency and accountability

As part of our commitment to openness and accountability, we will continue to publish timely updates on our web site and respond to high volumes of media enquiries. Our goal is to provide accessible information about key actions and emerging issues that matter to the community.

Risk management

eSafety's risk management culture

Effective risk management contributes to improved performance, sound governance and supports good business decision making. We support our risk management culture through active engagement with risk, good governance, risk awareness and training.

Risk management framework

eSafety utilises the ACMA Risk Management Policy to provide broad policy direction and guidance to our staff. The ACMA Risk Management Policy aligns with the ISO 31000:2018 Risk Management – Guidelines, the requirements of the PGPA Act, and the Commonwealth Risk Management Policy, including oversight from the ACMA Audit and Risk Committee and the eSafety Risk and Compliance Committee. In addition, we have developed an eSafety Risk Guide and eSafety-specific templates to support risk management activities. Our risk management processes articulate our objectives, recognise compliance requirements, identify potential opportunities, consider what may go wrong, and look to prioritise, mitigate and manage risks.

Regulatory risks

The Regulatory Advisory Committee (RAC) supports the eSafety Commissioner in providing advice about the exercise of key statutory powers, significant regulatory decisions or potentially significant online harm and novel circumstances falling within the scope of our regulatory schemes. The RAC supports the assessment of regulatory priorities over the planning cycle, safeguards consistency and objectivity and ensures key regulatory decisions have broad considered input from relevant areas of eSafety.

eSafety's key risks

Key risks	Management response
Australians suffer from online harms	• Complaints-based schemes for Australians experiencing online harms with clear regulatory guidance on their operation • Referral to appropriate support services • Education resources and programs to support all Australians including young people, parents/carers, educators, professionals, and those most at risk of online harms including women, First Nations people, people with disability, LGBTIQ+ and CALD communities • International engagement with fellow regulators and regulated entities • Basic Online Safety Expectations, Safety by Design and industry codes and standards
eSafety has insufficient resources to meet increasing regulatory responsibilities	• Regular engagement between eSafety and the Minister for Communications • Senior Executive Group oversight • Program/project management discipline applied • A flexible, capable workforce operating under a regulatory model which allows for high levels of team support and/or provision of surge capacity • Best practice for regulators • Australian Government planning, reporting and transparency requirements • Deployment of additional operational resources, as required
eSafety is unable to maintain effective stakeholder relationships	• Regular meetings between eSafety and the Minister for Communications, the ACMA, and the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts (DITRDCSA) • Leadership, coordination and stakeholder engagement in key sectors such as education, mental health, domestic and family violence, and key community organisations • Building industry, community and internal capability • Improving data collection and analysis to assess impacts • Relationship management and coordination process and systems
eSafety is unable to effectively respond to emerging trends and global developments	• Research and evaluation programs • Global connections through various forums providing thought leadership and learning from evolving regulation frameworks • Stakeholder engagement in key sectors such as education, domestic and family violence, and key community organisations • eSafety takes an anticipatory and forward-looking stance

Key risks	Management response
eSafety staff are hurt while carrying out their duties	• Workplace Health and Safety policies, training and governance established and maintained • Protocols enforced to prevent or minimise psychosocial harm or vicarious trauma • Business continuity management
eSafety resources are not used effectively	• Australian Government planning, reporting and transparency requirements • Regular meetings between eSafety and the Minister for Communications • System of risk management and internal control • Internal audit program and independent Audit and Risk Committee • Increased focus on outreach and awareness raising activities
Our communication and information assets are compromised	• System of risk management and internal control • Protective security, data breach and disaster recovery arrangements • Business continuity management • Privacy management arrangements

Cooperation

eSafety's impact is strengthened by the partnerships we form across sectors, jurisdictions, and communities. As the online environment grows more complex and interconnected, collaboration is essential to achieving meaningful change at scale.

In Australia, we work closely with government agencies, other regulators, civil society, and community organisations to amplify the reach and effectiveness of our programs. We also support and invest in communities to extend the reach of online safety initiatives. This includes funding prevention programs that address technology-facilitated gender-based violence, supporting families and carers through targeted education campaigns, and developing resources for organisations that work with children and young people. Programs such as Young Mentors promote digital inclusion through intergenerational learning and skills sharing.

Globally, eSafety contributes to international efforts to improve online safety standards and enforcement. We are active members of the Global Online Safety Regulator's Network, the WePROTECT Global Alliance and the International Association of Internet Hotlines (INHOPE), working to share best practices, and regulatory approaches, and remove harmful content across borders.

Across all these partnerships, we focus on practical collaboration - sharing knowledge, building capability, and supporting a safer online environment for everyone.

ACMA

The Online Safety Act establishes the eSafety Commissioner as an independent statutory office holder, supported by the ACMA.

Under section 184 of the Act, the ACMA provides staff to carry out eSafety's functions, as well as some corporate support services through a Memorandum of Understanding. All eSafety staff, except the Commissioner, are employed by the ACMA and are subject to its entitlements, protections and obligations.

While eSafety operates independently from the ACMA, the support it provides is essential to delivering on our purpose and achieving results.

Case studies

Preventing Tech-based Abuse of Women Grants Program

The Preventing Tech-based Abuse of Women Grants Program provides $10 million in funding over three rounds from 2023 to 2027. It is part of the Australian Government's commitment to the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032, which recognises the need to address technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV) across prevention and response activities.

The program supports innovative, community-led projects that raise awareness of, and challenge, the gender and social norms that enable tech abuse. This includes projects that promote respectful attitudes and behaviours among men and boys in digital settings. By funding a diverse range of non-government organisations, eSafety is building local capability and extending its reach to help improve online safety for Australians.

To date, the program has supported projects in a variety of prevention settings and communities, including:

- workplaces
- programs engaging men and boys
- refugee and migrant communities
- regional and rural areas.

In line with the National Plan, the program also supports tech-for-good initiatives that explore tech-based solutions to tech-facilitated harms.

eSafety is working in partnership with all funded organisations to ensure each project is evaluated and contributes to research outputs, new resources, and the broader evidence base on technology-facilitated abuse as a form of gender-based violence.

Families Capacity Building Program

As part of the National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse, eSafety launched the Families Capacity Building Program – a strategic prevention initiative that emphasises partnerships and cooperation across the child safety sector.

The program focuses on building knowledge, confidence and capability among parents, carers, and professionals who support children. Key components include:

- targeted social media campaigns aimed at helping parents and carers understand online risks and how to manage them
- new resources to support conversations about consent, safety and relationships in the digital age, with practical advice on keeping children safe on games, apps, and social media
- an online hub for community organisations and services, designed to build the capacity of intermediaries who work with children and families.

The program aims to reduce stigma around discussing online abuse and empower adults to provide effective support for young people.

A strong community response is central to eSafety's approach to protecting children and young people. To enhance engagement, we work with child and family-serving organisations – including those in the out-of-home care sector – to integrate online safety into their policies and programs.

One example is the 'Safe and Connected: Supporting Online Safety for Children and Young People in Care' program, delivered with the Australian Centre for Excellence in Therapeutic Care. Initiatives such as this exemplify our partnership approach. They also expand our reach to diverse communities, strengthen sector capability, and create safer environments for children and young people across a range of care settings.

Young Mentors

Developed by eSafety as part the Be Connected initiative, the Young Mentors program promotes intergenerational learning through collaboration and partnership. It connects teenagers with older Australians to share digital skills and knowledge, build confidence, and support safe participation in the online world.

The program benefits both groups. Older Australians gain essential knowledge and confidence in using technology, while young people develop communication and leadership skills.

Young Mentors is delivered through partnerships between schools and community organisations. The program involves weekly one-hour mentoring sessions delivered over six weeks. eSafety has recruited schools, libraries, councils, aged residential care facilities, and other community groups to deliver the program.

Feedback from participants has been overwhelmingly positive. In 2024, 96 per cent of older Australians surveyed said their digital knowledge had improved after completing the program.

Since launch, more than 230 organisations have registered for Young Mentors and downloaded the program toolkit. The toolkit is available free of charge to schools, libraries, councils, aged residential care facilities, and other community groups.

Collaboration with law enforcement agencies

eSafety has strong relationships with law enforcement agencies across Australia. These include agreements with NSW and Queensland Police, and the recently signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with South Australia Police. The existing MoU between eSafety and the Australian Federal Police was also strengthened in 2025.

Our relationships with law enforcement agencies support the joint investigation of matters ranging from cyberbullying to image-based abuse, adult cyber abuse, youth crime online and other forms of illegal and harmful content.

As well as jointly investigating offences, eSafety also provides information, resources and training to help police officers around Australia deal with online harms.

Digital Platform Regulators Forum (DP-REG)

eSafety is a founding member of the Digital Platform Regulators Forum (DP-REG), a collaboration between Australian independent regulators focused on issues related to digital platform regulation. Other members include the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC), the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC), and the ACMA.

DP-REG provides a platform for members to share information, strengthen coordination, and contribute expertise on mutual areas of interest. In 2024-25, the eSafety Commissioner chaired the forum with their priorities including the impact of algorithms, improving digital transparency, and building collaboration and capacity building across the four members.

Global Online Safety Regulators Network

eSafety is a founder and inaugural chair of the Global Online Safety Regulators Network, which brings together online safety regulators from around the world to share best practice and insights, build knowledge, and support coordinated approaches to online safety issues. The Network's mission is to develop regulatory coherence across jurisdictions and encourage compliance with rights-respecting online safety regulation.

The Network experienced significant growth in 2024, as outlined in its 2024 Annual Report. Membership grew to nine regulators and 18 observers, broadening its geographic reach and deepening its collective expertise. There is now participation from six continents.

In December 2024, the Network published its Three Year Strategic Plan which outlines shared priorities for 2025-27. The plan centres on three key themes:

- building regulatory coherence across jurisdictions
- contributing to the evidence base of online safety and surfacing best practices
- facilitating information sharing and coordination to support compliance.

In 2025, UK regulator Ofcom will continue as Chair of the Network, with Ireland's Coimisiún na Meán serving as Vice-Chair.

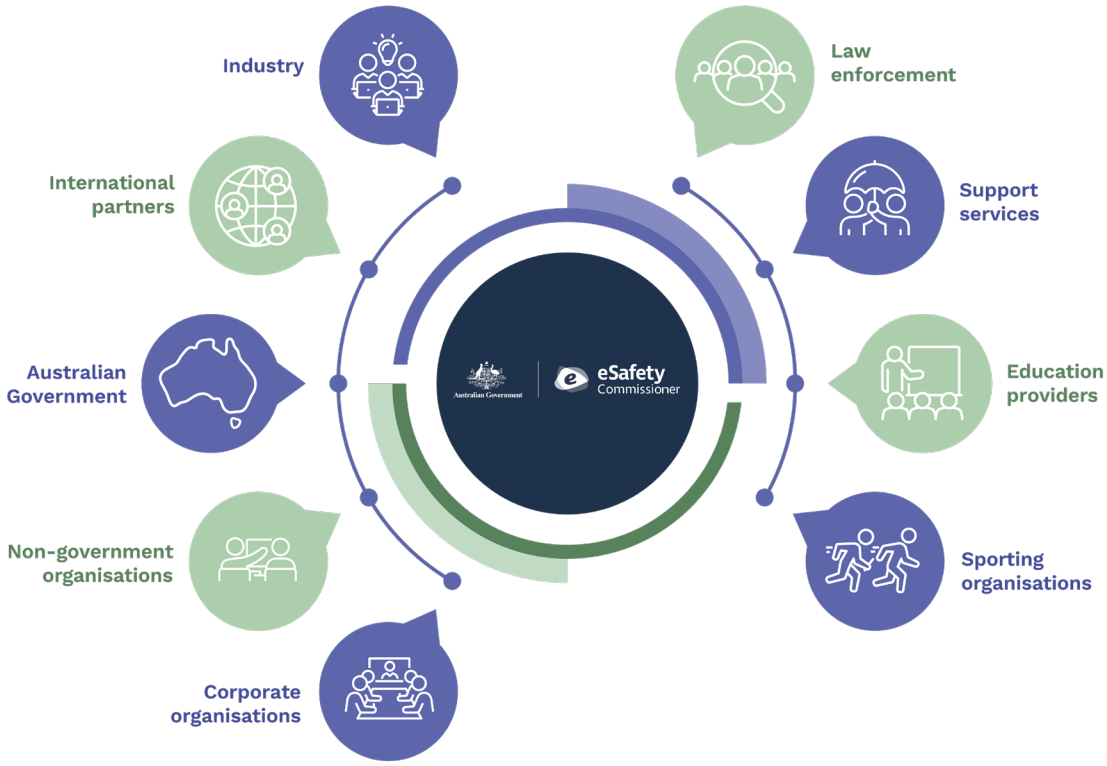
eSafety and INHOPE – the International Association of Internet Hotlines

The International Association of Internet Hotlines (INHOPE) is a global network of 55 hotlines working to ensure the rapid removal of child sexual abuse material (CSAM) from online platforms. The Australian Government has been a member of the INHOPE network in various forms since 1999.

Each year, eSafety shares thousands of CSAM URLs with the network to support swift action by law enforcement and industry partners. eSafety has also served on the INHOPE Board and contributes to several of its working groups.

The unique role of INHOPE allows eSafety and its international counterparts to overcome jurisdictional and cross-border barriers. This collaboration strengthens global efforts to eradicate online child sexual abuse and exploitation.

Our stakeholders and partners



Performance measures

Key activity 1: eSafety designs and delivers educational materials to prevent online harms, working with key sectors and community members to build user capability and resilience.

Performance area 1.1 **Australians are enabled by education, training and resources to prevent online harms.**				
PERFORMANCE MEASURE	**TARGETS**			
	2025-26	**2026-27**	**2027-28**	**2028-29**
1.1.1 Number of young people and adult participants in eSafety training and awareness sessions.	At least 25,000 participants	Increase from previous year		
1.1.2 Number of Be Connected learners who meaningfully engage with resources on beconnected.esafety.gov.au	185,000	Maintain		
1.1.3 Number of surveyed Australians aged 16 and over who have an awareness of the eSafety Commissioner.	38%	Increase from previous year		
1.1.4 Proportion of users satisfied with the assistance received through the Technology Facilitated Abuse (TFA) support service.	Establish baseline	-	-	-

Targets for measure 1.1.4 from 2026-27 onwards are contingent on receiving ongoing funding for the program.

Rationale:

By undertaking research, delivering education and training programs and producing online resources, we work to set a foundation to mitigate risk and prevent online harm from happening. We work with our prevention partners, such as community groups, educators, law enforcement agencies and Trusted eSafety Providers, to expand awareness and extend the reach of our online safety messages and services.

Methodology:

1.1.1 We will make a quantitative assessment of the number of participants recorded in each session. Data will be in the form of monthly reports provided by internal trainers and staff members who conduct sessions. Training and awareness sessions include those delivered to teachers, pre-service teachers, mental health, social services and wellbeing professionals and domestic and family violence workers, corporates, parents and carers, senior Australians and others.

1.1.2 We will make a quantitative assessment of the number of learners who have engaged meaningfully with resources on the Be Connected website. Unique visitors to the site will be considered to have meaningfully engaged with the resources if they have completed at least one activity.

Performance area 1.1 continued

1.1.3 We will make a quantitative assessment of surveyed Australians' awareness of the eSafety Commissioner. The assessment will be made as the proportion of respondents from a nationally representative sample of approximately 1500 Australians aged 16 and over, who when prompted as to whether they are aware of the eSafety Commissioner respond in the affirmative.

1.1.4 Successful implementation of a program for a support service to provide practical advice, guidance and support to frontline workers and the victim-survivors they support experiencing technology-facilitated abuse in the context of family, domestic and sexual violence (TFA-FDSV).

Rationale for changes:

1.1.1 No change.

1.1.2 The previous performance measure captured satisfaction measured on an optional survey. As the number of visitors to the site who would take the optional survey fluctuated, an assessment of the number of visitors completing at least one activity was considered a more rigorous measure of engagement

1.1.3 The target for this performance measure in 2024-25 was to establish a baseline from a survey of a nationally representative sample of Australians. The present target captures that baseline.

1.1.4 The change in this performance measure and target reflects the shift from implementation of the Technology- Facilitated Abuse (TFA) Support Service to delivery.

PBS links:

Program 1.3 – The eSafety Commissioner

This program contributes to the outcome by helping safeguard all Australians from online harms and to promote safer, more positive online experiences.

eSafety designs and delivers educational materials to prevent online harms, working with key sectors and community members to build user capability and resilience.

Performance area 1.2

Educational programs, strategies and tools are based on an understanding of the specific needs of groups most at risk of online harm.

PERFORMANCE MEASURE	TARGETS			
	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
1.2.1 Educational resources are informed by research and/or insights and involve co-design or collaboration with targeted cohorts and/or advocates.	✓	Maintain		
1.2.2 Publication of research reports and papers that build the evidence base relating to online safety for Australians.	6 reports or papers published	Maintain		

Rationale:

Through research, education and training programs, we work to set a foundation to prevent online harm. We co-design and develop evidence-informed resources and advice to increase the online safety and resilience of groups most at risk of online harm, such as young people, children, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, women, LGBTQI+ communities, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, older Australians, and people living with disability.

Methodology:

1.2.1 We will undertake case study analysis of a selection of new or updated resources published throughout the year. We will identify case studies from a random selection of new or updated resources published throughout the year. These case studies will highlight the impact or performance of those resources

1.2.2 We will make a quantitative assessment of the number of published research reports on the eSafety website, or in peer-reviewed journals.

Rationale for changes:

1.2.1 No change.

1.2.2 No change.

PBS links:

Program 1.3 – The eSafety Commissioner

This program contributes to the outcome by helping safeguard all Australians from online harms and to promote safer, more positive online experiences.

eSafety designs and delivers educational materials to prevent online harms, working with key sectors and community members to build user capability and resilience.

Key activity 2: eSafety alleviates online harms through our investigations and regulatory schemes, in response to reported and identified harms.

Performance area 2.1 **eSafety takes action to alleviate reported online harms.**				
PERFORMANCE MEASURE	**TARGETS**			
	2025-26	**2026-27**	**2027-28**	**2028-29**
2.1.1 Proportion of adult cyber abuse complaints where action is taken.	At least 80%	Maintain		
2.1.2 Proportion of cyberbullying complaints where action is taken.	At least 80%	Maintain		
2.1.3 Proportion of image-based abuse complaints where action is taken.	At least 80%	Maintain		
2.1.4 Proportion of critical Online Content Scheme investigations actioned within two business days.	At least 90%	Maintain		

Rationale:

The Online Safety Act gives us powers to protect all Australians across four reporting schemes: the Adult Cyber Abuse Scheme, the Cyberbullying Scheme for Australian children, the Image-Based Abuse Scheme, and the Online Content Scheme for illegal and restricted content.

We give responsive and compassionate help to people experiencing a range of online harms. Once someone reports harmful content to us, we aim to alleviate or reduce the harm as quickly as possible. We use our regulatory powers assertively but judiciously. We use a range of regulatory actions to get results for people reporting online harms through the adult cyber abuse, cyberbullying, and image-based abuse schemes.

Our performance measure for the Online Content Scheme for illegal and restricted content considers the time it takes to action a critical investigation, rather than the proportion of finalised matters. Critical investigations refer to regulatory investigations into child sexual exploitation material that is or is likely to be refused classification content under the National Classification Scheme. Our measure for this scheme is based on eSafety's response time because we refer almost all child sexual exploitation material to the INHOPE network for removal action by hotlines, industry and law enforcement within the hosting jurisdiction. Child sexual exploitation material represents approximately 87% of all material reported to the Online Content Scheme.

Methodology:

2.1.1 We will undertake a quantitative analysis of data to determine the proportion of adult cyber abuse complaints that result in action being taken. Action includes, but is not limited to, the following examples: facilitating removal of material, referral of the material to industry, law enforcement or another agency, remedial action to alleviate reported online harms, compliance with a notice, the commencement of an investigation process such as the use of information gathering provisions or finalisation of a complaint.

Performance area 2.1 continued

2.1.2 We will undertake a quantitative analysis of data to determine the proportion of cyberbullying complaints that result in action being taken. Action includes, but is not limited to, the following examples: facilitating removal of material, referral of the material to industry, law enforcement or another agency, remedial action to alleviate reported online harms, compliance with a notice, the commencement of an investigation process such as the use of information gathering provisions or finalisation of a complaint.

2.1.3 We will undertake a quantitative analysis of data to determine the proportion of image-based abuse complaints that result in action being taken. Action includes, but is not limited to, the following examples: facilitating removal of material, referral of the material to industry, law enforcement or another agency, remedial action to alleviate reported online harms, compliance with a notice, the commencement of an investigation process such as the use of information gathering provisions or finalisation of a complaint.

2.1.4 We will undertake a quantitative analysis of data which captures the creation of reports and a change in report status. Action includes, but is not limited to, the following examples: facilitating removal of material, referral of the material to INHOPE, industry, law enforcement or another agency, remedial action to alleviate reported online harms, compliance with a notice, the commencement of an investigation process such as the use of information gathering provisions or finalisation of a complaint.

Rationale for changes:

2.1.1, 2.1.2, and 2.1.3: In each performance measure the term 'successful' has been removed, as this implies that for this measure to be complied with content is removed. However, this definition does not accurately capture the total resources that are applied to the triaging, assessment and investigation of complaints, particularly where removal of the content is not possible. In many cases the content associated with complaints cannot be removed for example; the material has already been removed, the threshold requirements under the OSA schemes cannot be met or the complainant withdraws consent. By removing the term 'successful' and replacing this with the term 'action' this will now capture all response activities therefore accurately reflecting the resources applied to the entirety of the complaint process.

2.1.4 Replacement of the term 'finalised' with 'actioned' as the current measure does not accurately capture the total resources that are applied to the triaging, assessment and investigation of complaints, particularly where removal of the content is not possible. For example, where the threshold requirements under the OSA schemes cannot be met or the material does not meet the Classification Board definition of refused classification.

PBS links:

Program 1.3 – The eSafety Commissioner

This program contributes to the outcome by helping safeguard all Australians from online harms and to promote safer, more positive online experiences.

eSafety alleviates online harms through our investigations and regulatory schemes, in response to reported and identified harms.

Key activity 3: eSafety implements and enforces industry regulatory measures and expectations to drive proactive and systemic change in online safety.

Performance area 3.1

Regulatory measures are in place and are leading to transparent positive safety interventions.

PERFORMANCE MEASURE	TARGETS			
	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
3.1.1 Australians are protected from illegal and restricted online content through compliance with industry codes or standards.	At least 10 compliance activities undertaken.	12	15	15
3.1.2 Publication of transparency summaries in relation to responses received to reporting notices or information requests under the Basic Online Safety Expectations.	At least 2 transparency summaries published in relation to responses.	Maintain		
3.1.3 Implementation of the social media minimum age requirements for Australian children under the age of 16.	Formulation and promotion of guidelines for the taking of reasonable steps to prevent age-restricted users having accounts.	Promote, monitor and enforce compliance. Review and iterate guidelines over time. Contribute to independent review of social media minimum age framework as required under section 239B of the Online Safety Act.		
3.1.4 Positive safety interventions have been taken by online safety providers in response to eSafety's regulatory activities	✓	Maintain		

Rationale:

The Online Safety Act specifies industry regulatory measures to drive proactive and systemic change in online safety. These include industry standards or codes, the Basic Online Safety Expectations, and the social media minimum age.

The Act provides for industry bodies or associations to develop codes to regulate certain types of harmful online material, and for eSafety to register the codes or determine standards. The development and registration of the first round of industry codes and standards was completed in 2023-24, focussing on class 1A and class 1B material. The second phase of industry codes development (or the determination of industry standards if proposed codes do not provide appropriate community safeguards) focuses on class 2 material. Class 1 and 2 are categories of material provided for by the Online Safety Act, with reference to the National Classification Scheme. Class 1 refers to unlawful and seriously harmful material such as child abuse material and material that advocates terrorism. Class 1C and class 2 material is content that is restricted, such as online pornography and other high-impact material not suitable for people under 18 years of age.

Performance area 3.1 continued

The Basic Online Safety Expectations Determination 2022 sets out the Australian Government's expectations that social media, messaging, gaming, dating, file-sharing services and other apps and websites will take reasonable steps to keep Australians safe. The current determination was registered on 30 May 2024. eSafety can require online service providers to report on how they are meeting any or all the Expectations under the Online Safety Act, and can request information from providers under section 20 of the determination.

The *Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Act 2024* introduces a requirement for certain social media platforms to take reasonable steps to prevent children under 16 from having accounts. This is one part of a broader strategy to create safer digital spaces for everyone. The change aims to complement existing measures for protecting young users, especially where there are particular risks associated with accessing potentially harmful social media content and features such as algorithms tailoring content, and persistent notifications and alerts that have been found to have a negative impact on sleep, stress levels and attention. The onus is on the applicable service providers to implement systems and processes to ensure people under the minimum age cannot create or keep a social media account. The age restriction requirements will take effect by mid-December 2025.

Across the reporting period we will continue to use our powers to improve transparency and track positive safety interventions that can be linked to eSafety's actions. Evidence may include statements from online service providers that changes have been made because of eSafety regulatory activity, either communicated publicly by providers or to eSafety. Where appropriate, we will publish case studies and updates on these interventions. eSafety will also begin to use statements of compliance or non-compliance to incentivise industry to improve safety processes.

Methodology:

3.1.1 Number of compliance activities undertaken. Indicative compliance activities for the reporting period include monitoring and desktop review, issuing requests for information, assessing code compliance reports, and considering complaints and referrals. More formal investigations and potential enforcement actions may also be considered in instances of serious or deliberate non-compliance.

3.1.2 Number of transparency summaries posted on the eSafety website.

3.1.3 Publication of guidelines on the eSafety website.

3.1.4 Assessment of positive safety interventions made by providers following eSafety regulatory activities. A positive safety intervention is considered to be a change made by a provider to address an identified area of weakness.

Performance area 3.1continued

Rationale for changes:

3.1.1 This performance measure is renumbered from measure 3.1.2 in the 2024-25 Corporate Plan. The targets for future years have been increased to reflect the greater number of codes and standards in effect and eSafety's broadening enforcement focus.

3.1.2 The measure removes and replaces measures 3.2.1 and 3.2.2 from the 2024-25 Corporate Plan as part of our ongoing review of our performance information.

3.1.3 This is a new measure for 2025-26 in response to the introduction of the *Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Act 2024*.

3.1.4 This measure has been re-ordered from measure 3.2.3 of the 2024-25 Corporate Plan but there is otherwise no change.

PBS links:

Program 1.3 – The eSafety Commissioner

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eSafety implements and enforces industry regulatory measures and expectations to drive proactive and systemic change in online safety.

Regulatory performance

The Australian Government is focused on lifting regulator performance, capability and culture. To achieve these expectations and comply with best practice, we have developed tailored performance monitoring and reporting processes.

Our strategic objectives and performance measures directly support the accomplishment of the Government's three principles of regulator best practice:

1. Continuous improvement and building trust: Regulators adopt a whole-of-system perspective, continuously improving their performance, capability and culture, to build trust and confidence in Australia's regulatory settings.

2. Risk-based and data-driven: Regulators manage risks proportionately and maintain essential safeguards while minimising regulatory burden, and leveraging data and digital technology to support those they regulate to comply and grow.

3. Collaboration and engagement: Regulators are transparent and responsive communicators, implementing regulations in a modern and collaborative way.

		Principles of regulator best practice		
Key activities	**Performance area**	**Continuous improvement and building trust**	**Risk-based and data-driven**	**Collaboration and engagement**
1. eSafety designs and delivers educational materials to prevent online harms, working with key sectors and community members to build user capability and resilience.	1.1 Australians are enabled by education, training and resources to prevent online harms.	✓	✓	✓
	1.2 Educational programs, strategies and tools are based on an understanding of the specific needs of groups most at risk of online harm.	✓	✓	✓
2. eSafety alleviates online harms through our investigations and regulatory schemes, in response to reported and identified harms.	2.1 eSafety takes action to alleviate reported online harms.	✓	✓	✓
3. eSafety implements and enforces industry regulatory measures and expectations to drive proactive and systemic change in online safety.	3.1 Regulatory measures are in place and are leading to transparent positive safety interventions.	✓	✓	✓

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