

# Australia targets tech giants with 'harmful content' standards

November 20 2023

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Australia's internet watchdog wants to force technology giants to crack down on deepfake child abuse material and "pro-terror content" under new, industry-wide protocols being developed in the country.

Australia's eSafety Commissioner said Monday its standards would require [tech companies](#) to do more to tackle seriously harmful content, including "synthetic child sexual abuse" material created with artificial intelligence.

The regulator said it had been forced to step in after giving the [technology industry](#) two years to develop its own codes.

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These codes "failed to provide sufficient safeguards", the eSafety Commissioner said, and lacked "a strong commitment to identify and remove known child sexual abuse material".

The new standards, which have been released for consultation and still need parliamentary approval, would impact companies such as Meta, Apple and Google.

"These world-leading codes and [standards](#) cover the worst-of-the-worst online content including child sexual abuse material and pro-terror content," said eSafety Commissioner Julie Inman Grant, a former Twitter employee.

They would apply to websites, photo storage services and messaging apps, Inman Grant said.

"Our focus is on ensuring industry take meaningful steps to prevent the proliferation of seriously [harmful content](#) like child [sexual abuse material](#)."

Previous efforts by Australia to hold tech giants accountable have proven difficult to enforce.

The country passed its groundbreaking "Online Safety Act" in 2021, spearheading global efforts to hold tech giants accountable for what

users post on social media.

But attempts to exercise these sweeping new powers have occasionally been met with indifference.

The eSafety Commissioner slapped Elon Musk's X with an Aus\$610,500 (US\$388,000) fine earlier this month, saying the company failed to show how it was scrubbing child sexual abuse content from the platform.

X ignored the deadline to pay the fine, before launching ongoing legal action to have it overturned.

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Citation: Australia targets tech giants with 'harmful content' standards (2023, November 20) retrieved 14 August 2024 from <https://techxplore.com/news/2023-11-australia-tech-giants-content-standards.html>

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