

A message from

The Hon Michelle Rowland MP

Minister for Communications

To the readers of the Communications Law Bulletin and the members of CAMLA,

I commend this publication for the excellent work it does in shining a light on the brilliant women in our community and the issues that women face in the media and legal industries. I'm immensely proud to have been a part of a previous version of this special edition.

This International Women's Day, it is my pleasure to share with CAMLA members information about some recent initiatives that will help promote the safety of women and children – indeed every Australian – which is the number one priority of the Australian Government.

My colleague Katy Gallagher, Minister for Women, has just launched Australia's first national strategy to achieve gender equality: *Working for Women*, which outlines concrete plans to accelerate positive change for women over the next decade.

This builds on other commitments the Albanese Government has implemented to place women at the core of our policy and economic agenda.

We are delivering tax cuts for 100 per cent of women who pay tax – 90 per cent of whom will get more under Labor's tax cuts, and made key investments in cheaper childcare, in social and affordable housing and in women's health.



Our workplace relations and paid parental leave reforms are an investment in women's economic security and the broader economy.

Importantly, we are also progressing our ambition to end violence against women and children in Australia in one generation.

As Communications Minister, I am resolute in my commitment to keeping citizens and consumers safe online.

The National Plan to End Violence Against Women, for example, is seeking ways to address harmful gender stereotypes and gender-based violence online.

We must be proactive to ensure our legislative framework evolves as new harms emerge.

And we must ensure all Australians have the skills to navigate the online world safely and protect themselves online.

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Images above and overleaf: MOU signed at Australia House, London, 20 February 2024



Addressing online harms is a complex area, and one that demands a holistic approach. Earlier this week, the Australian Government's Online Harms Ministers Meeting convened for a second time, as part of our efforts to better coordinate action across Government.

On the international stage, we have joined forces to further advance online safety and security, and support safer and more positive experiences for citizens.

Just last month, I co-signed an historic Online Safety and Security Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Australia and the United Kingdom, ushering in a new era of bilateral cooperation between our like-minded countries.

Cooperation on a wide range of issues: from technology facilitated gender-based violence, illegal content, child safety, and age assurance through to harms caused by rapidly changing technology, such as generative artificial intelligence.

Both our countries now have legislation in place to promote a safer digital world, namely our *Online Safety Act 2021* and the UK's *Online Safety Act 2023*.

The MoU will enable us to jointly shape global consensus on this important issue with joint actions as our two countries implement regulatory frameworks to foster online safety.

Just like the path towards gender equality, online safety is not only a good proposition for women and girls; it benefits everyone.

I hope you have a happy, and also meaningful, International Women's Day this year and reflect on our achievements to date, and also on the work still to be done.

Congratulations on another wonderful edition!

Michelle Rowland

For a copy of the MOU media release see:

<https://minister.infrastructure.gov.au/rowland/media-release/australia-and-united-kingdom-join-forces-advance-online-safety-and-security>

For a copy of the MOU see:

<https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/department/media/publications/uk-australia-online-safety-and-security-mou>

Extract

Memorandum of Understanding Between The Government of The United Kingdom and The Government of Australia Concerning Online Safety and Security

Summary

1. The Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland ("the United Kingdom"), as represented by the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology, and the Government of Australia, as represented by the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts, (hereafter "both Participants") have decided to establish a forward looking and comprehensive online safety and security memorandum of understanding.
2. The UK-Australia Online Safety and Security Memorandum of Understanding (hereafter "this MoU"), builds on the existing deep and historic partnership between both Participants, including the Australia-UK Ministerial Consultations (AUKMIN) and the UK-Australia Cyber and Critical Technology Partnership.
3. This MoU will serve as a strategic framework for both Participants to jointly deliver concrete and coordinated online safety and security policy initiatives and outcomes to support their citizens, businesses and economies.
4. The initial focus and scope of this MoU will be on the following policy areas: harmful online behaviour, age assurance, safety by design, online platforms, child safety, technology-facilitated gender-based violence, safety technology, online media and digital literacy, user privacy and freedom of expression, online child sexual exploitation and abuse, terrorist and violent extremist content, lawful access to data, encryption, misinformation and disinformation, countering foreign interference, online scams/fraud, information sharing around regulation, and the impact of new, emerging and rapidly evolving technologies (such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) - including machine learning and generative AI models) in these areas.