

# Protecting voices at risk online





# Commissioner's foreword

eSafety's purpose is to safeguard Australians at risk from online harms and to promote safer, more positive online experiences. We do this by engaging in research, analysing reporting trends and consulting with representative groups to understand underlying issues that make someone vulnerable to online abuse. eSafety's initiatives to support those at risk are informed by this evidence-based approach.

COVID-19 has forced the world into the biggest experiment in remote working and education in history, revealing how fundamental digital technology is to the way we work, socialise and access key information. But it has also shown how online connectedness can be weaponised to perpetuate abuse. Nearly 4 in 10 adults (38%) reported a negative online experience during the COVID-19 restrictions in Australia and eSafety's complaints figures spiked during the peak months of March and April 2020.

Our recent research into online hate speech also makes for sobering reading. Around 14% of adults aged 18 to 65 are estimated to have been the targets of online hate speech, directed at them on the basis of their race, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, religion, disability or another defining characteristic, in the 12 months to August 2019. Of particular concern is that some people face greater risk than others — for example, we know that people identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander or as gender or sexuality diverse experience online hate speech at more than double the national average.

We also know that socio-economic circumstances and the inequalities of access further entrench disadvantage and discrimination online. The evidence of a growing digital divide in education is particularly troubling at this time, with the Gonski Institute for Education's Growing Up Digital Australia (2020) report finding that children living in lower socio-economic circumstances lack access to the devices and reliable internet connections needed for their education both in the classroom and at home. These disparities have become exacerbated and more visible due to COVID-19.

To support those most at risk, there is a need for targeted strategies, resources, programs and communications that are inclusive of different people and communities and are designed to meet their specific needs. This requires a tailored approach that takes account of the needs and online risks faced by people of differing ages, genders, abilities, cultural and linguistic backgrounds, religions, sexualities, and geographic locations.

At eSafety we pride ourselves on our in-depth research and strong relationships with the communities we serve. It is only through this evidence-based approach, collaboration and co-design that we can work towards a more positive and inclusive online world — one in which all Australians are able to participate online, access critical online safety advice and get support when they need it.

This statement provides an overview of the complex underlying issues that determine who is at risk. It outlines current initiatives and prioritised areas for future investment. Our aim is to ensure our programs and reporting schemes are reaching those most at risk. Rather than providing a blueprint, our hope is that our research and future work will remain responsive and innovative as we continually improve our strategies for protecting those who are most at risk online.



**Julie Inman Grant**  
eSafety Commissioner

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# Our approach

Australia's population of more than 25 million people is made of up diverse individuals and communities. This statement outlines how we use evidence to shape and prioritise our resources and programs to support, protect and build the capacity of those people who are most at risk of online harm. Our aim is to improve the online safety outcomes for people who experience disproportionate rates of online abuse or face additional barriers to protecting themselves from online harm. This includes improving their ability to access support and recover from abuse and other negative online experiences.

eSafety's research, reporting schemes and programs provide critical insights into the nature, prevalence and impacts of online harm.

We use a multidimensional or 'intersectional' lens to understand the risks. This approach recognises that some people may be more at risk of experiencing online abuse if they are vulnerable, due to the presence of other factors in their lives. These may relate to gender, age, race, religion, disability, sexuality, cultural background or geographic location. These factors can apply at an individual, social or systemic level and may impact an individual's ability to recognise online risks, use preventative measures to protect themselves from harm, or seek help. These factors also impact on a person's ability to fully participate online and reap the benefits of being online and connected.

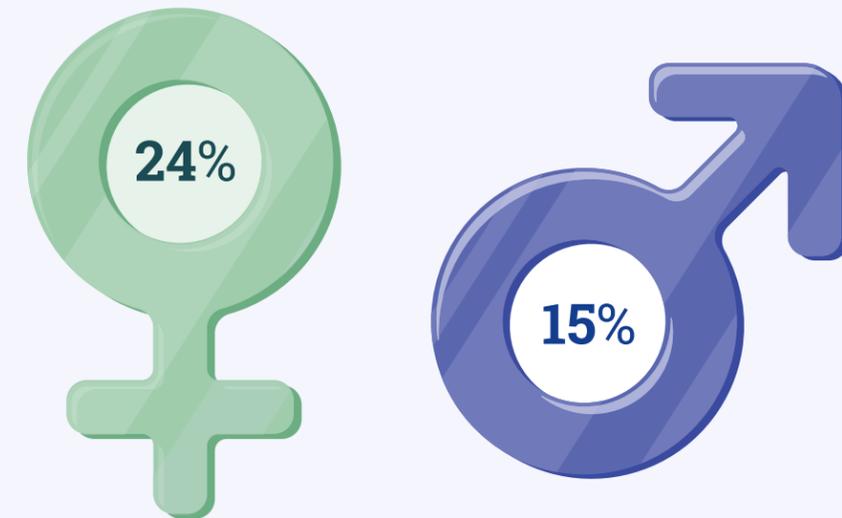
The findings from our research into [Online Hate Speech \(2020\)](#) demonstrate the importance of a multidimensional approach to the provision of online safety help and advice. For example, this research reveals that men (15%) and women (13%) are just as likely to experience online hate speech, but that women are disproportionately targeted on the basis of their gender and physical appearance. These findings are consistent with our wider research and investigative work, which indicate disproportionate risks for various Australians.

The challenges of protecting those most at risk are numerous and ever-changing. eSafety is committed to continually improving and adapting our prevention strategies, tailored programs and reporting schemes to protect and support those most at risk of online abuse. We do this through: undertaking whole-of-agency training and awareness opportunities to strengthen staff knowledge and skills; conducting our own in-depth research and keeping up-to-date with key findings from other national and international research; analysing trends from our reporting schemes and investigations; and ongoing testing of our programs and resources in the field. We also continue to consult and collaborate with target audiences, frontline workers, advocates and others working in online safety — including NGOs, industry, academia, educators, and other government agencies and experts.

This statement outlines eSafety's research, targeted initiatives and strategic priorities for key groups identified as being disproportionately at risk of online harms.

## Reasons for online hate speech

### Gender



Women are **1.6 times** more likely to experience abuse based on their gender

### Physical appearance



Women are **1.5 times** more likely to experience abuse based on their physical appearance

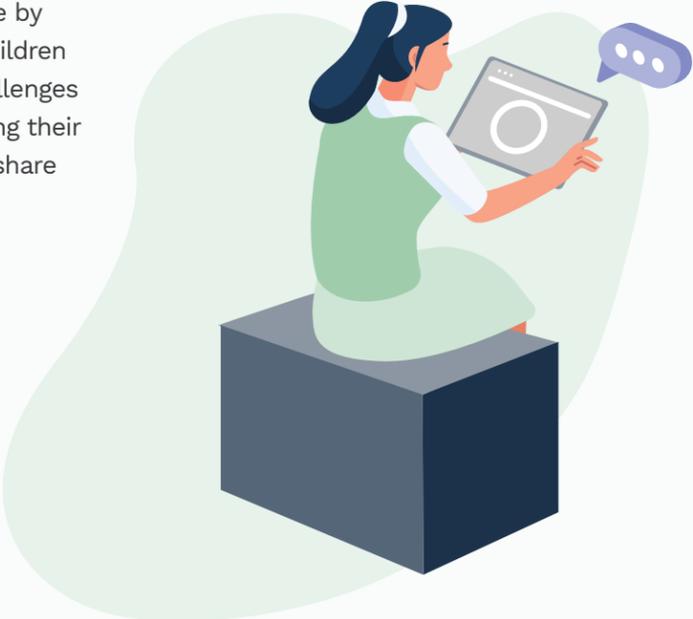
# Children and young people

Children and young people aged up to 25 have never known a world without online technology and it is integrated into their everyday lives and education. While they often have expertise in using new technologies, children and young people are still learning and maturing. This means they are more likely to engage in risk-taking behaviour, and may lack the maturity, judgment and resources to handle adverse situations. Further, not all children and young people have the same levels of digital literacy, critical reasoning skills, impulse control and resilience that are needed to identify risks and manage potential online harms.

The level and nature of online risks children and young people are exposed to change as they grow older and mature. Younger children require close support to ensure their safety, rights and interests are protected online. Older children and young people still rely on adult support, but may need more advanced guidance to help them navigate negative online experiences, call out online abuse or become active bystanders.

The online risks that children and young people can be exposed to include cyberbullying, viewing sexually explicit, violent or age-inappropriate content (whether intentionally or not), sending nudes or sexting, the non-consensual sharing of intimate images (known as image-based abuse), unwanted contact, and online grooming or sexual abuse by predators. Protecting the online privacy of children and young people also presents specific challenges as they may be unaware of the risks of sharing their personal data, or their family or friends may share personal data about them.

About 25% of the victims eSafety has helped with image-based abuse are under 18 while those aged 18 to 25 are also at increased risk of image-based abuse and other forms of online abuse. Young women in this demographic are also at greater risk of gender-based and sexualised online abuse, and technology-facilitated abuse as part of domestic and family violence. Other factors that increase the risk of online abuse for children and young people of all ages include having a disability, living in out-of-home care, identifying as LGBTQI+, being Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander or being from a culturally or linguistically diverse background.



# Key research

## Noted by teachers

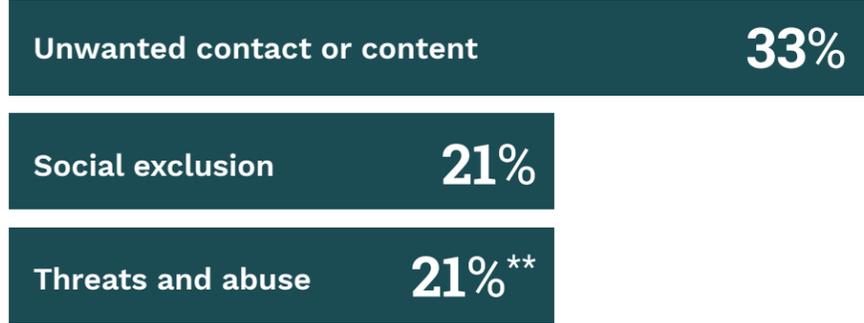
**81%**  
of teachers **noted increases** in the prevalence of **online harassment and bullying.**



Over **1/3** of teachers have dealt with more than **10 incidents** of cyberbullying and online harassment in the last **3 to 5 years**.\*

## Young people's experience

The top three **negative online experiences** reported by **young people** in Australia include:



Nearly **1/3** young people **aged 14 to 17** years have some **experience with sexting**, including sending, being asked, asking, and sharing or showing nude or nearly nude images or videos.\*\*\*

### References

\*Gonski Institute for Education, Growing Up Digital Australia: Phase 1 Technical Report, 2020. \*\*eSafety Commissioner, State of Play – Youth, Kids and Digital Dangers, 2018. \*\*\*eSafety Commissioner, Netsafe, UK Safer Internet Centre and University of Plymouth, Young People and Sexting – Attitudes and Behaviours, 2017.

## Targeted initiatives

eSafety regularly consults with children and young people, key organisations supporting children and young people, and educators and experts in online safety education. We also support States and Territories with best practice guidance and resources to teach and support online safety in Australian schools and communities. Key initiatives include:

- **Cyberbullying scheme** — advice, support and assistance to remove abusive content through our [cyberbullying complaints scheme](#) for children and young people aged 18 and under.
- **Image-based abuse scheme** — advice, support and assistance to remove abusive content through our [image-based abuse reporting scheme](#) for all ages.
- **Digital content for children and young people** — advice on online safety and key issues in age-appropriate language for [Kids](#) (5 to 12) and [Young People](#) (13 up to 25) in easily findable sections on our website.
- **Focused research** — such as [State of Play – Youth, Kids and Digital Dangers \(2018\)](#), [State of Play – Youth and Online Gaming in Australia \(2018\)](#) and [Young People and Sexting – Attitudes and behaviours \(2017\)](#).
- **Resources and research for educators** — an [Educators section](#) on our website linking to classroom resources, virtual classrooms and professional training on a range of online safety issues, including cyberbullying and respectful online relationships, suitable for primary and secondary teachers and early childhood educators; digitally accessible content for children and young people living in rural and remote locations; an [Online Safety Toolkit for Schools](#); research such as [Best Practice Framework for Online Safety Education \(2020\)](#).
- **Resources and research for parents and carers** — advice on online safety for [Parents and Carers](#) of children of all ages — including Under 5s (0 to 5), Kids (5 to 12) and Young People (13 to 17) — in an easily findable section on our website; research such as [Parenting in the Digital Age \(2019\)](#), [National Parent Survey \(2018\)](#) and [Parenting and Pornography \(2018\)](#).

## Strategic priorities

eSafety is developing a youth engagement strategy to ensure we hear from young people directly about their online safety needs, and our services and programs reflect youth voices. eSafety's ongoing research, community consultation and collaboration with educators and frontline workers also supports the evidence-base for new strategies for specific groups:

- **Children experiencing family violence** — qualitative research into children and technology-facilitated abuse in situations of domestic and family violence informs the development of tailored advice and resources.
- **Children and young people living in out-of-home care** — online safety advice and support for young people living in kinship, foster and residential care.
- **Children and young people** — work to ensure our reporting schemes are responsive to young people's needs; new Kids and Young People web content about emerging online safety issues; and new resources for children under 5 years old.
- **Parents and carers** — a guide to young people and gaming and advice and support for parents and carers of children with disability.

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# Older Australians

For many older Australians, the online world is a vital source of information and connection and a key way to access services like online banking and support from government agencies. Age is one of the strongest determinants for lower digital participation. Some older Australians are highly digitally literate and active online, while others struggle to engage with the digital world. Being digitally excluded or disengaged can mean that older people are restricted in their ability to connect with family and friends, conduct business or access key online services.

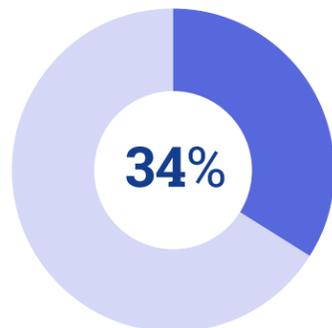
Lower levels of digital participation and access in people aged 50 and over correlate with lower incomes and whether people were required to use the internet for work. A higher proportion of older people living in regional areas, from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, older people with disability and women also have lower levels of digital literacy.

There is also an intergenerational digital divide between younger and older seniors, with higher levels of digital literacy in the 50 to 65 year age range and lower levels of digital literacy and engagement in the over 65s.

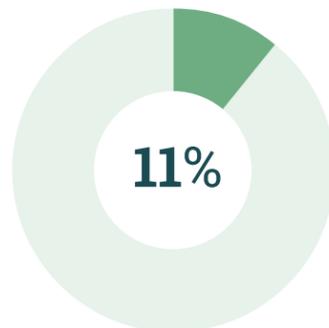
Older Australians are at increased risk of online fraud, phishing scams to steal personal information, investment scams and dating and romance scams. They also experience online abuse and image-based abuse.

## Key research

### Australians 50 years or over



Had either low digital literacy levels or did not use digital devices or the internet.\*



Did not have any form of internet access.\*

**3/4** of people who are **digitally disengaged** are aged **70 years** or over.\*

#### Reference

\*eSafety Commissioner, Understanding the Digital Behaviours of Older Australians, 2018.

# Targeted initiatives

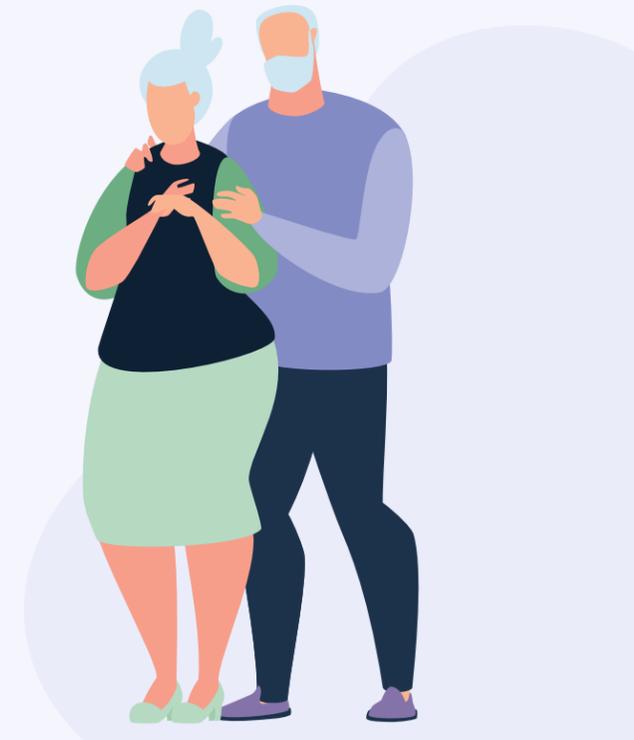
Key initiatives to support older Australians are based on consultation with representative groups, feedback from our programs in the field, and qualitative research such as Encouraging the [Digital Participation of Older Australians Through Mentoring \(2019\)](#). They include:

- **Digital literacy for older Australians** — The [Be Connected](#) website managed by eSafety supports face-to-face and interactive online training. Its resources are designed to increase the digital literacy and confidence of older Australians aged 50+ who have had minimal or no engagement with technology. Hundreds of Be Connected learner resources are translated into eight languages and include captions and audio descriptions.
- **Intergenerational mentoring** — Be Connected [Young Mentors](#) is a program that facilitates the transfer of technical skills and online safety advice from young mentors to older Australians.
- **Online safety advice and support** — the [Seniors](#) section of the eSafety website provides easily findable, tailored online safety advice and support for older Australians, as well as access to the reporting schemes for adult cyber abuse and image-based abuse.

## Strategic priorities

Building on existing programs, research and ongoing consultation, new strategies are designed to support:

- **Digital literacy for older Australians** — the development of new webinar presentations and online courses for Be Connected and continuous improvements to the accessibility of online resources.
- **Culturally and linguistically diverse older Australians** — the development of resources in community languages as well as new in-language access pages for all translated content.
- **Older Australians experiencing online abuse** — research defining the threshold of adult cyber abuse and the development of resources to combat online abuse of older Australians.
- **Grandparents** — the development of a guide to online safety for grandparents and carers outlining key online safety advice for older Australians and children in their care.



# Women

For many women, the internet is a lifeline of connection, support and positive online experiences. However, women experience online abuse at higher levels and in different ways than men. They are disproportionately more likely to be targets of online abuse, particularly image-based abuse, and are more likely to experience abuse that is sexualised and gender-based.

Between 2017 and May 2020, nearly 55% of victims who reported image-based abuse to eSafety were female. Once reports of sextortion (a type of blackmail) are excluded, 70% of image-based abuse victims helped by eSafety are female.

Although women experience online hate at similar levels to men, the abuse they receive disproportionately targets their gender and physical appearance. Women with public profiles such as politicians, journalists and business leaders are likely to face higher levels of gender-based abuse such as threats of stalking and rape.

Women (and their children) are also at greater risk of technology-facilitated abuse as part of domestic and family violence. In addition, technology facilitated abuse often occurs in the context of other factors such as cultural and linguistic diversity, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin, disability, lower socio-economic circumstances, and living in regional and remote areas.

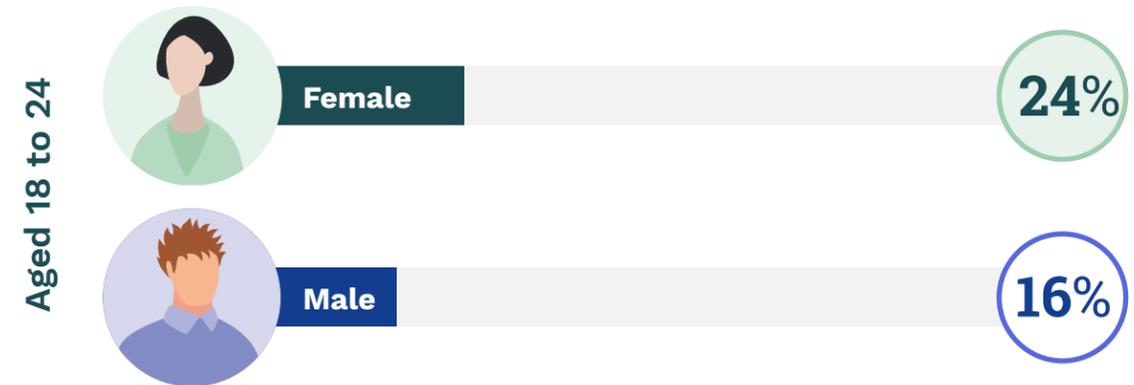
## Key research

### Online hate



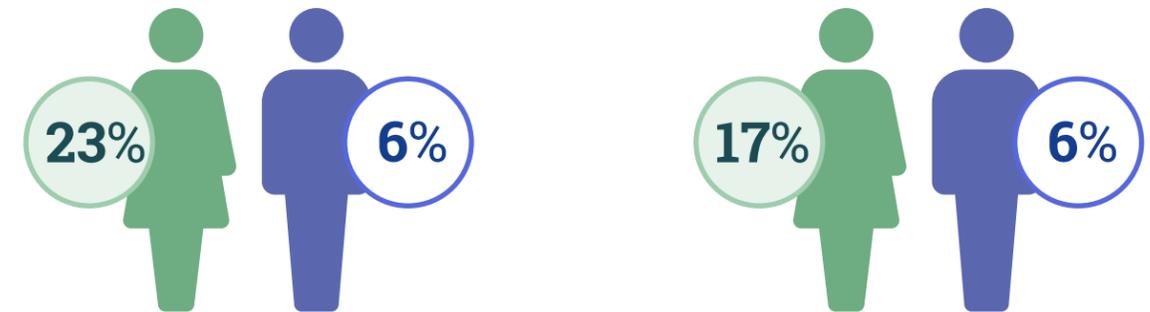
However this abuse disproportionately targets women's **gender (25%)** and **physical appearance (21%)\***

## Nude or sexual image shared without consent



Women aged 18 to 24 are much **more likely (24%)** than men of the **same age (16%)** to experience someone **sharing a nude or sexual image** of them without their consent.\*\*

## Domestic and family violence



**23%** women **6%** men have experienced emotional abuse from a former or current partner.

**17%** women **6%** men have experienced physical and/or sexual violence from a current or former partner.

A 2015 survey of domestic and family violence frontline workers noted that **98%** of clients had experienced **abuse through technology**\*\*\*

### References

- \*eSafety Commissioner, Online Hate Speech, 2020. \*\*eSafety Commissioner, Image-base Abuse National Survey: Summary Report, 2017.
- \*\*\*(Woodlock, Delanie (2015) ReCharge: Women's Technology Safety, Legal Resources, Research and Training, Women's Legal Service NSW, Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria and WESNET, Collingwood) Targeted initiatives

## Targeted initiatives

eSafety's initiatives targeting women are informed by reporting statistics and feedback from programs and frontline workers. They also take into account the findings of our research reports, such as [Online Hate Speech \(2020\)](#), [Online Safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women Living in Urban Areas \(2019\)](#), [Women from diverse backgrounds \(2019\)](#) and [Image-based Abuse National Survey \(2017\)](#). Our initiatives include:

- **Tailored advice for all women** — tailored advice and reporting pathways in a section for [Women](#) on eSafety's website, including online safety tips and how to deal with online abuse such as trolling, cyberstalking and image-based abuse.
- **Women experiencing domestic and family violence** — advice and support for all women experiencing [technology-facilitated abuse](#) as part of domestic and family violence, with factsheets translated into 12 languages.
- **Women with intellectual and cognitive disabilities** — [Easy English](#) guides to support women with disability.
- **Frontline workers supporting women** — [workshops and online learning](#) for frontline, specialist and support staff in the domestic violence sector across Australia; and a customisable booklet to help [frontline workers across the world](#) to safely support women who are victims of technology-facilitated abuse, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Women with public profiles** — [Women Influencing Tech Spaces \(WITS\)](#) resources with advice about online safety for women in politics, journalism, advocacy, sport, entertainment or corporate leadership roles, who receive disproportionate levels of online abuse.

## Strategic priorities

We are developing an evidence base to inform future resources to assist frontline workers supporting women impacted by technology-facilitated abuse and resources empowering women to report and deal with online abuse including:

- **Frontline workers supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women** — advice and support for specialist staff working with women affected by technology-facilitated abuse.
- **Women with intellectual and cognitive disabilities** — qualitative research exploring experiences of technology-facilitated abuse.
- **Empowering women** — targeted initiatives addressing the specific needs of women experiencing online abuse, including additional targeted programs for women whose professional life puts them in the public eye.



# People with disability

Almost one in five Australians live with disability and many others experience disability at some point in their lives.

Many people with disability have safe, enjoyable and positive online experiences. However, many Australians with disability experience a 'digital disability divide' and have lower levels of digital inclusion compared to other Australians. Barriers to accessing online content include the affordability of support devices, appropriate coding for screen readers, levels of audio description and captioning of video content, and the availability of key advice and content in Easy English.

Young people with disability are at greater risk of online harassment, cyberbullying, image-based abuse, unwanted contact and grooming by sexual predators. Adults with disability are at increased risk of online hate speech, adult cyber abuse, image-based abuse, and technology-facilitated abuse as part of domestic and family violence.

## Key research

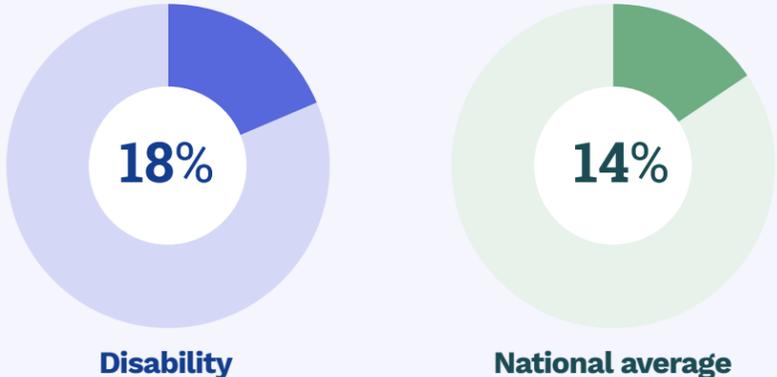
### Image-based abuse

**Over half** of people with disability requiring assistance with their **daily living activities** or **communication needs** have...



## Online hate speech

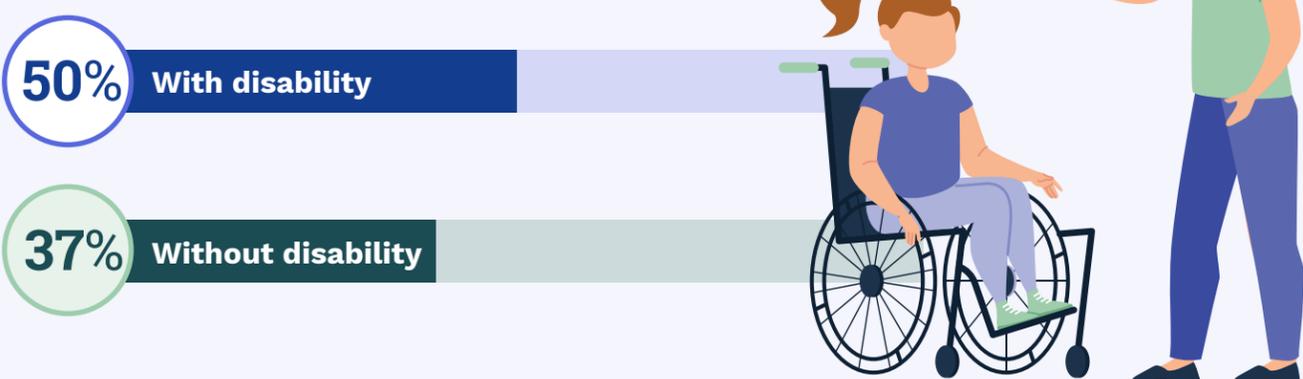
People with disability experience online hate speech at **higher levels** than the **national average** in Australia.



This abuse disproportionately targets their **disability (25%)** and physical **appearance (24%).\*\***

## Online conversations with strangers

**Half of young people** with disability have engaged in online conversations with strangers compared to just over one third of young people **without disability**.



Young people with disability are also more likely to **disclose personal** information online.\*\*\*

**Reference**  
 \*Nicola Henry, Asher Flynn and Anastasia Powell, 'Image-based Sexual Abuse: Victims and Perpetrators', Trends and Issues in Crime and Justice, No. 572 March 2019. \*\*eSafety Commissioner, Online Hate Speech, 2020. \*\*\*eSafety Commissioner, State of Play: Youth, Kids and Digital Dangers, 2018.

## Targeted initiatives

eSafety undertakes research and consultation with experts and representative groups, to ensure we support people with disability so they can manage online risks in ways that recognise their strengths and diverse experiences.

- **Accessibility** — we continue to monitor and improve the accessibility of the eSafety and Be Connected websites. We are working toward working toward Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 AA compliance, with an initiative to provide captioning and audio description for key video content. We also regularly conduct external accessibility reviews.
- **Easy English resources** — an online safety guide for young people; guides for women with intellectual and cognitive disabilities on the topics of technology-facilitated abuse and image-based abuse.

## Strategic priorities

We are committed to continually monitoring and improving the accessibility of our online resources and reporting tools, as well as ensuring the language and structure of our resources is clear and easy to understand. New strategies are designed to support:

- **Children and young people with disability** — online safety resources and support for children and young people; and qualitative research into the online safety of young people with intellectual disability.
- **Adults with disability** — online safety resources, support and prevention strategies for people with disability experiencing image-based abuse and adult cyber abuse; quantitative research on digital confidence and the information needs of Australian adults and the negative online experiences of adults, including a focus on people with disability.
- **Parents and carers** — online safety resources for parents and carers of children with disability, including children on the autism spectrum.
- **Educators** — teachers' guide to supporting the online safety of students on the autism spectrum.



# Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

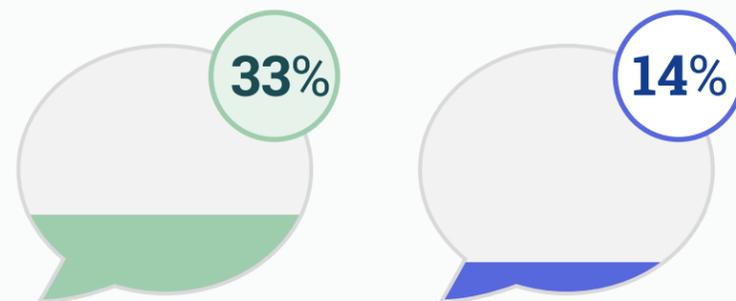
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples use technology and social media in ways that differ across cultural and language groups, and across urban, regional and remote communities. In addition to everyday communication, social media and online communication are used to maintain connections to community and share cultural knowledges and practices.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults are at increased risk of online hate involving racism, image-based abuse and online abuse. Children and young people are at increased risk of cyberbullying, online racism and sexting or sharing intimate images. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women also experience online abuse and technology-facilitated abuse as part of family violence at much higher rates than the general population.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples face unique online safety challenges. Cyberbullying, adult cyber abuse and technology-facilitated abuse often occur within and across kinship groups, clans and communities as well as between individuals. The use of mobile devices as the main means of accessing the internet, high rates of device sharing and lower levels of literacy and digital literacy mean that conventional online safety advice may not be culturally appropriate or effective. Intergenerational trauma and racism also impact how online abuse is experienced by many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities, amplifying the abuse and adding to the impact.

## Key research

### Online hate speech



**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples** experience online hate speech at **more than double** (33%) the **national Average** in Australia (14%).\*



## Image-based abuse



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are **twice as likely** to experience image-based abuse (50%) as non-Indigenous Australians (22%).\*\*

## Family violence

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples experience family violence at **much higher rates** than the general population.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander **women** are **hospitalised** for family violence at **32 times the rate** of non-Indigenous Australians.\*\*\*



### References

\*eSafety Commissioner, Online Hate Speech, 2020. \*\*Nicola Henry, Asher Flynn and Anastasia Powell, 'Image-based Sexual Abuse: Victims and Perpetrators', Trends and Issues in Crime and Justice, No. 572 March 2019. \*\*\*Cited in eSafety Commissioner, Online Safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women Living in Urban areas, 2019.

## Targeted initiatives

eSafety is committed to consultation and co-design with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities to ensure online safety prevention and intervention strategies are effective and culturally sensitive. Key initiatives include:

- **Elders and adults** — [Your online Journey](#), an app with step-by-step instructions and videos about digital literacy and online safety, a [quick guide](#) to image-based abuse for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and tailored online safety [advice for parents](#).
- **Women** — qualitative research on [Online safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women living in urban areas \(2019\)](#).
- **Young people** — [Be Deadly Online](#), an education program covering issues such as cyberbullying and sexting, developed with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
- **Educators** — a [professional learning](#) webinar for teachers designed to support vulnerable student populations, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people.

## Strategic priorities

New evidence-based resources will be designed in collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities and support services, to support and enable:

- **Elders** — the development of resources to support Elders to recognise, call out and manage technology-facilitated abuse and the impacts of online abuse and fight videos.
- **Frontline workers supporting women** — the creation of resources to support frontline workers to empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women to identify and report technology-facilitated abuse and protect and support their children.
- **Educators** — the development of new educational resources that address the online safety needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people and are inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices.
- **All Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples** — the ongoing development of inclusive and tailored resources; quantitative research on digital confidence and the information needs of Australian adults and the negative online experiences of adults, including a focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



# Cultural and linguistic diversity

Nearly one in four Australians speak a language other than English at home and Australians identify with more than three hundred different ancestries. Online access provides an important way for people to participate in cultural activities, be informed about local events, build social networks and stay in touch with friends and family living overseas.

People from culturally and linguistically diverse communities have a broad range of digital literacy skills. Multicultural young people are often highly digitally connected but there is also evidence of a digital divide between some newly arrived migrant parents and their children. These parents may rely on their children for help using the internet because of insufficient digital knowledge or English proficiency. This can make it more difficult to effectively assess and monitor their children's online safety. Lower levels of English proficiency also correlate with higher levels of socio-economic disadvantage.

People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are at increased risk of online hate speech targeting their race, ethnicity or religion, and adult cyber abuse. Women from diverse backgrounds experience image-based abuse as part of domestic and family violence at higher levels than the national average in Australia. Children and young people from diverse backgrounds are at increased risk of cyberbullying, making contact with strangers online and sharing information with people who they have not met in person.

## Key research

### Online hate speech

People from **culturally and linguistically diverse** backgrounds experience online hate speech at **higher levels (18%)** than the **national average in Australia (14%)\***.

**This abuse disproportionately targets their:**



Religion



Race



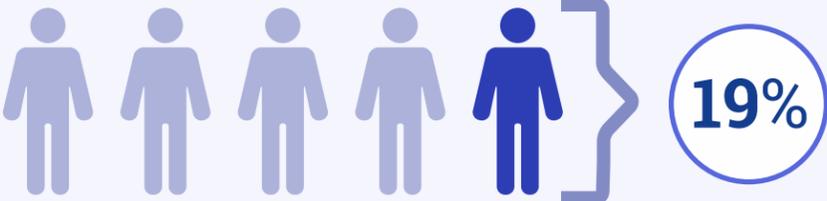
Ethnicity



### Image-based abuse



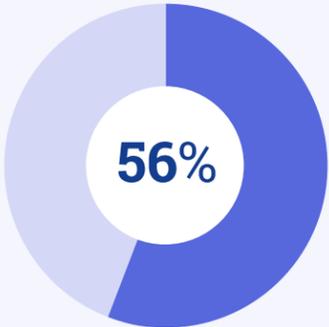
**Almost 1 in 5 people (19%)** who speak a **language other than English** at home have experienced image-based abuse.



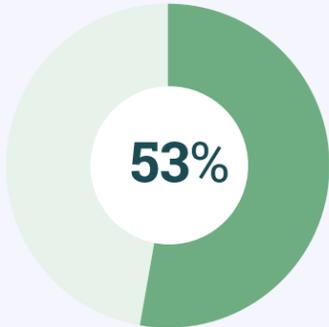
Compared to people who speak **English only (11%)\*\***.

### Cyberbullying

**Young people** from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are at **greater risk of cyberbullying**.



Racist comments



Hateful comments

**More than half** have also encountered online hate, including seeing **racist comments (56%)** and **hateful comments** about cultural or religious groups (53%).\*\*\*

#### Reference

\*eSafety Commissioner, Online Hate Speech, 2020. \*\*eSafety Commissioner, Image-based Abuse National Survey: Summary Report, 2017. \*\*\*eSafety Commissioner and Department of Education and Training, Social Cohesion National Survey, 2017.



## Targeted initiatives

eSafety conducts research and works closely with representative groups and community organisations to understand the online risks and identify the needs of people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Tailored resources are translated into multiple languages. Key initiatives include:

- **Young people** — inclusive advice and educational programs, such as [The Lost Summer](#), an online game promoting online safety and respect for different cultures and identities; lesson plans and videos for [Tagged](#) are translated into five languages; and research including State of Play – Youth, Kids and [Digital Dangers \(2018\)](#), State of Play – Youth and [Online Gaming in Australia \(2018\)](#), [Social Cohesion National Survey \(2017\)](#) and [Young People and Sexting – Attitudes and behaviours \(2017\)](#).
- **Parents** — [Online Safety: a guide for parents and carers](#) translated into five languages, [Start the chat](#) online safety tip sheets, podcasts and videos translated into 16 languages, easy-to-read [guidance in English](#) about key online safety issues affecting young people; and research including [Parenting in the Digital Age \(2019\)](#), [Digital Parenting \(2018\)](#) and [Parenting and pornography \(2018\)](#).
- **Women** — postcards and downloadable guides on domestic and family violence and key online safety issues [translated into 12 languages](#); and research including [Women from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds \(2019\)](#).
- **All people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds** — easy-to-read online safety advice in English; key online safety [resources translated into 22 different languages](#) on eSafety’s website; and over 130 [Be Connected](#) digital literacy resources and webinars translated into eight languages.

## Strategic priorities

eSafety is committed to ongoing research, improvement and translation of our resources to ensure accessibility for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. We have also identified the need for tailored resources for:

- **Islamic communities** — tailored resources about adult cyber abuse; tailored resources about image-based abuse, providing advice and raising awareness that showing an image of a person without attire of religious or cultural significance can be a form of image-based abuse.
- **Women from Indian communities** — tailored resources on the impacts of adult cyber abuse and how to get help.
- **Older people** — additional tailored resources on the Be Connected website for older Australians and people with low digital literacy.



# LGBTQI+

For lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and or intersex people, and other sexuality and gender diverse people, the online world can be a lifeline. It offers a vital source of information, support and connection. But at the same time, people who identify as LGBTQI+ are at higher risk of online abuse — including homophobic and transphobic cyberbullying, adult cyber abuse and image-based abuse.

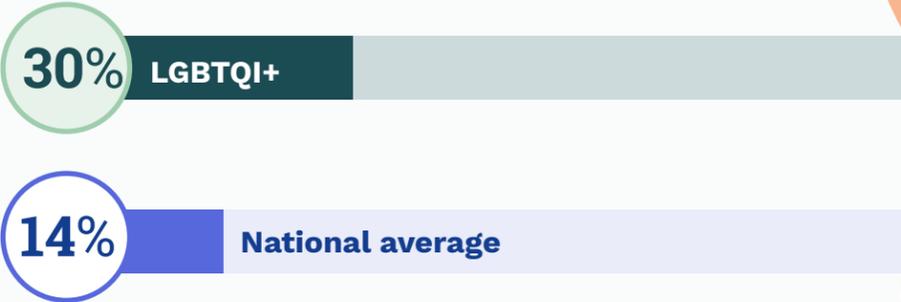
Online abuse can take the form of online harassment and can include threats to 'out' someone to their family, friends, community or workplace. LGBTQI+ people are also more likely to engage in risk-taking behaviours, such as the consensual sharing of intimate images. Young LGBTQI+ people, in particular, are at increased risk of image-based abuse, cyberbullying and online abuse.

Other factors that increase the risk of online abuse for LGBTQI+ people include living in rural areas, being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, having a culturally or linguistically diverse background or having one or more disabilities. These factors can also influence the ability of LGBTQI+ people to recognise online risks or seek help and support.

## Key research

### Online hate speech

LGBTQI+ people experience online hate speech at **more than double** (30%) the national average in Australia (14%).\*

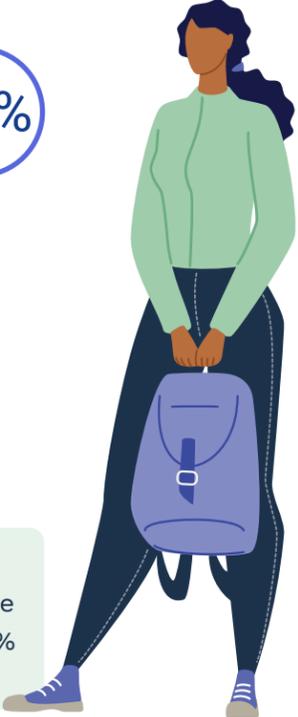
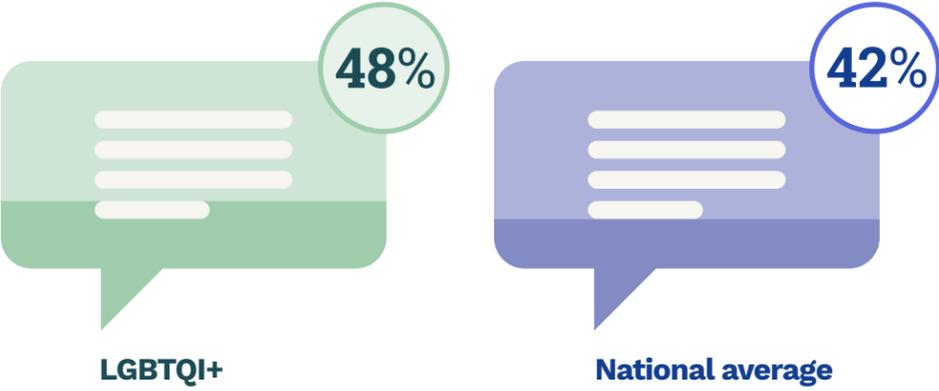


### Image-based abuse



**1 in 3** lesbian, gay and bisexual people (36%) experience image-based abuse compared to **1 in 5** (21%) heterosexual people in Australia.\*\*

### Negative online experiences



LGBTQI+ adults are **more likely** to be the targets of negative online experiences than the national average in Australia with the top negative experience cited as repeated **unwanted messages** (experienced by 48% of LGBTQI+ adults compared to the average of 42%)\*\*\*

#### References

\*eSafety Commissioner, Online Hate Speech, 2020. \*\*Nicola Henry, Asher Flynn and Anastasia Powell, 'Image-based Sexual Abuse: Victims and Perpetrators', Trends and Issues in Crime and Justice, No. 572 March 2019. \*\*\*eSafety Commissioner, Adults' Negative Online Experiences, 2020

## Targeted initiatives

eSafety is committed to consultation and collaboration with representative groups to ensure our website and reporting schemes use inclusive language and terminology and are designed to meet the needs of LGBTQI+ people of all ages and backgrounds. Key initiatives are designed to support:

- **Young people** — tailored advice for LGBTQI+ young people on online safety and on how to deal with cyberbullying and online abuse.
- **Educators** — a professional learning webinar designed to support vulnerable student populations, including LGBTQI+ young people.
- **Adults** — LGBTQI+ quick guide to image-based abuse, personal stories of image-based abuse from LGBTQI+ people, tailored advice on domestic and family violence; other tailored advice for the LGBTQI+ community, including safer ways to connect online, dealing with homophobic and transphobic abuse and reporting pathways for online abuse; and quantitative research on digital confidence and the information needs of Australian adults and the negative online experiences of adults, including a focus on LGBTQI+ people.

## Strategic priorities

There is scope to improve our understanding of the online needs of various LGBTQI+ people and communities, create new tailored and inclusive resources and build the capacity of support services through knowledge sharing to support:

- **Young people** — the creation of inclusive education programs about online safety featuring the experiences of LGBTQI+ young people.
- **Adults** — development of detailed advice on how to deal with adult cyber abuse and online hate, including homophobic, transphobic, racist and/or sexist abuse, for LGBTQI+ adults from a range of different backgrounds.



## Conclusion

The online world includes benefits and opportunities unforeseen even a generation ago. eSafety is committed to creating a safer, more inclusive online world where all Australians are supported and empowered to enjoy digitally-enabled lives.

As the world's first regulator dedicated solely to online safety, eSafety is uniquely placed to know the risks and benefits of being online. We recognise the importance of building our organisational capacity to better understand the multidimensional needs of those who are most at risk online. We need to be culturally responsive, innovative and agile to ensure our reporting schemes, targeted initiatives and programs are accessible to everyone.

Our development of responsive, inclusive and tailored advice and resources is informed by in-depth research, community consultation, co-design and feedback from existing programs. We also share our knowledge and expertise, to foster best practice across other organisations in the online safety sector and those working with at-risk groups. In this way, eSafety is continually improving Australia's approach to protecting, supporting and building the capacity of those most at risk of online harm.



