4.7 million accounts restricted. The children are still online.

SHOW for Platforms — a plain-language guide for government

In its first month, the social media minimum age rule saw platforms deactivate, remove or restrict 4.7 million under-16 accounts, according to eSafety. Yet eSafety's early insights found most under-16s were still using social media.

The law requires platforms to take reasonable steps to prevent under-16s holding accounts, regardless of parental consent.

The rule is being enforced. The goal — keeping young people safe online — is not yet being met.

The problem with one rule for every family

- **It treats every parent the same.** A parent who has carefully prepared a capable 15-year-old has no way to make a different choice for their own child.
- **It pushes young people out of sight.** Those who get around the blocks end up on accounts with no youth protections at all.
- **It sits uneasily with Australia's commitments.** Australia ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1990. It asks governments to respect parents' guidance "in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child" (Article 5), and protects children's access to information (Articles 13 and 17). The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child asked Australia in 2012 and again in 2019 to bring the Convention into domestic law.

A workable alternative

SHOW for Platforms protects young people and keeps parents in charge.

- **Every item of content is rated** on four open axes — Spice, Heat, OMG and WTF.
- **Parents set a ceiling** for their own child. Content above it isn't served.
- **Serious harms are flagged automatically** — self-harm promotion, dangerous challenges, bullying, scams — and gambling is held to the legal age in each jurisdiction.
- **Youth accounts default to safety** — no contact from unconnected adults, location off.
- **Independent certification** by accredited certification bodies checks that platforms do what they say. r8rly.org, as governing body, publishes the SHOW Standard and audit criteria so every certifier tests the same way; it does not certify or audit. The full audit report goes from the certification body to the platform and to the relevant regulator, with a right of reply for the platform before it is finalised. r8rly.org keeps a public register of certified platforms — certified or not certified, and the date — based on certifiers' notices.

- **Learning Dividend (optional)** — a separate module, not a condition of certification. Verified curriculum content is promoted in youth feeds and helps fund school regions, paid for by platforms, not by advertising to children.

What it costs government

Nothing to build. The standard is free and open. Platforms pay certification bodies for their own audits. It works with the regulatory tools already in place — eSafety's Phase 2 industry codes — and with international regimes such as the EU Digital Services Act and the UK Online Safety Act.

What we ask

r8rly.org will make a submission to eSafety first, then engage with the European Commission under the Digital Services Act, before any pilot begins.

1. **Consider youth services certified against the SHOW audit criteria** as a proposed class of service for exemption under the Minister's legislative rules for the social media minimum age.
2. **Reference SHOW for Platforms** in the development of industry codes on age-appropriate content.
3. **Support an Australian pilot** with one platform and one independent certification body, and measure the results.
4. **Take part in the consultation** on the optional Learning Dividend.

The full addendum is available at **r8rly.org**.

Sources: eSafety Commissioner, "Platforms restrict access to 4.7 million under-16 accounts across Australia" — https://esafety.gov.au/newsroom/media-releases/platforms-restrict-access-to-47-million-under-16-accounts-across-australia · eSafety Commissioner, "Early insights from eSafety's comprehensive evaluation project" — https://esafety.gov.au/newsroom/media-releases/early-insights-from-esafetys-comprehensive-evaluation-project · UNSW Newsroom, "Is Australia's social media ban a breach of children's rights?" (Oct 2026) · UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Articles 5, 13, 17 · UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, concluding observations on Australia (2012, 2019)

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