



1 June 2021

## Government taking baby steps to protect young people

Christian schools have welcomed the Government's long awaited response to the "Protecting the age of innocence" report.

The Government, in its response released earlier today, expressed its support for the recommendations of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs report 'Protecting the age of innocence' tabled in February 2020 ([https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/House/Social\\_Policy\\_and\\_Legal\\_Affairs/Onlineageverification/Report](https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House/Social_Policy_and_Legal_Affairs/Onlineageverification/Report)).

The Committee said there was "widespread and genuine concern...about the serious impacts on the welfare of children" associated with porn exposure. Speaker at the recent Christian Schools National Policy Forum, Melinda Tankard-Reist of Collective Shout, has been one of a number of researchers and advocates documenting the harms of pornography to children for over a decade. The Committee concluding that age verification "could create a significant barrier to prevent young people ... from exposure to harmful online content."

Earlier this year Christian Schools Australia wrote to the Prime Minister and other Ministers urging them to adopt the Committee's recommendations and take action on this issue.

"It is vital that the Commonwealth Government provide clear leadership in addressing these issues of sexual assault and harassment" said Mark Spencer, Director of Public Policy, "The immediate introduction of legislation to put the recommendations of the Standing Committee's report into effect and introduce age verification would demonstrate the Government's commitment to provide such leadership".

While welcoming the Government's response he made it clear that this is only the first step in the process.

"The Government has flagged a 12 to 18 month period for further research and consultation"

"We know that those who oppose these measures, who want to continue to allow young people to have access to these materials will raise objections and concerns" he said.

"Parents and other who care about young people need to continue to encourage the Government to deliver on these recommendations."

ENDS

### For all media enquiries:

Mark Spencer, Director of Public Policy  
Christian Schools Australia  
[mspencer@csa.edu.au](mailto:m Spencer@csa.edu.au)  
0419 419 224



### About Christian Schools Australia

Christian Schools Australia is the largest association of Christian schools in the country and has 132 member schools educating over 65,000 students and employing nearly 10,000 staff at 168 locations across Australia. CSA is part of a global ACSI network of 24,000 schools educating in excess of 5.5 million students in over 108 countries world-wide.