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## Media Release – *for immediate release*

### Australians support minimum age for social media but acknowledge challenges

[Melbourne, 29 July 2025] – New research by the Social Research Centre reveals that **88% of Australians support setting a minimum age for social media**, with 90% backing measures that ensure effective monitoring and enforcement. The study of more than 2,000 adults and parents across Australia highlights both the perceived benefits and challenges of implementing age assurance policies.

#### The case for stronger protection

Supporters of a minimum age believe such measures would play a vital role to protect children's mental health and development, as well as shield them from online harms. Many survey respondents see age restrictions as a necessary safeguard in an increasingly digital world.

#### Balancing realities and responsibilities

The research also underscores the practical difficulties of enforcing a minimum age with concerns that children will find ways to bypass restrictions. This highlights the critical role of parental involvement with widespread agreement that clear policies would help parents manage their children's social media use more effectively.

While the study identified overwhelming support for strong controls, it also found that a "one size fits all" approach was not necessarily appropriate. Eight in ten Australians recognise that certain digital services, particularly those providing educational or health-related content, should be exempted from restrictions.

#### On-going debate and challenges

The findings also reveal areas of public concern, including:

- **Exclusion from positive digital spaces:** Half fear that strict age restrictions could limit children's access to online communities where they can participate positively (49% agreement).
- **Exemptions for low-risk platforms:** Views were divided around whether platforms demonstrating a "low risk of harm to children" should be treated differently (48% agreement), perhaps highlighting the challenges associated with assessing levels of risk.
- **Impact on digital literacy:** Around a third express concern that restrictions could reduce opportunities for children to develop critical digital literacy skills (34% agreement).

Commenting on the findings, Kipling Zubevich, CEO of the Social Research Centre, said: *"While the majority of Australians see the value in setting a minimum age for social media access, there is a clear recognition that enforcement is key. Without strong mechanisms in place, children may still find ways to engage with these platforms. This is why parental involvement remains essential. The discussion is not just about setting laws, but ensuring they are practical, effective, and balanced with the benefits that online spaces can provide."*

**About *Life in Australia*™**

*Note that while on related subject matter, this study is independent to the recently released Age Assurance Consumer research that was commissioned by DITRDSCA<sup>1</sup>.*

*Established in 2016, Life in Australia™ is the highest-quality online panel in the country, and one of the few probability-based online panels globally. Unlike traditional online opt-in panels, Life in Australia™ uses rigorous recruitment and maintenance procedures to ensure that results are truly representative of the Australian population.*

*As response rates to traditional telephone surveys decline, probability-based online panels like Life in Australia™ strike the perfect balance between cost-effectiveness, speed, and data reliability. This makes the panel a trusted source of high-quality, methodologically rigorous survey data for a wide range of research applications.*

**About the *Social Research Centre***

*The Social Research Centre, owned by the Australian National University (ANU), delivers high-quality social research that informs policy and drives positive social impact. We partner with government, academia, not-for-profits, and mission-aligned commercial clients to provide robust, methodologically rigorous insights across key social issues, including education, health, employment, and social cohesion. Our expertise spans survey design, data management, and advanced qualitative and quantitative methodologies, ensuring that decision-makers have access to insights they can trust.*

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/departments/media/news/age-assurance-consumer-research-findings-published>