



National Taskforce for Social Media, Body Image and Eating Disorders Recommendations

1 Content Regulation

2 Algorithm Accountability

3 User control

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Recommendations

The National Taskforce for Social Media, Body Image and Eating Disorders is a group of leading experts in the eating disorder and social media field working to address the harms of social media use on body image and eating disorder risk.

Drawing on lived experience, clinical, academic, and policy expertise, the Taskforce has developed evidence-informed recommendations to reduce the harms caused by social media and support safer digital environments. The recommendations in this paper are in alignment with the National Eating Disorders Strategy 2023-2033, Prevention 4.7 and Prevention 5.1.

We call on the Australian Government to adopt the following actions:

Body image and eating disorder specific recommendations

1. Ensure social media platforms promptly remove **pro-eating disorder content** (i.e., extreme diet, exercise, and weight loss) through both internal screening and external notification processes, or face significant financial penalties.
2. Ensure social media platforms proactively and reactively remove **cyberbullying content quickly**, including appearance-based content, or face significant financial penalties.
3. Require social media platforms to create a “**shield function**” for users to opt-out of appearance-based content and advertisements.
4. Require social media platforms to prioritise the presentation of **diverse physical appearances** (e.g., diverse body sizes, shapes, genders, colours, abilities) within their algorithms and advertisements.
5. Require platforms to remove **inbuilt beauty filters** (i.e., filters that alter a person’s appearance to match beauty ideals) from social media accounts for those under 18.
6. Ensure evidence-informed **body image and eating disorder harm minimisation** is embedded across key systems that support children and young people—including:
 - a) Pre-service training and ongoing professional development for educators and health professionals.
 - b) The eSafety Commissioner’s initiatives and state/territory mental health menus or directories.
7. Invest in the evaluation of new and existing **body image intervention and eating disorder prevention programs** to understand their effectiveness and implementation.

8. Provide funding to roll out, implement and evaluate evidence-based **body image intervention and eating disorder prevention** at scale.
9. Provide financial support for a **targeted call for research** into social media, body image, and eating disorders.
10. Require that platform **duties of care explicitly cover harms** related to body image, disordered eating, and pro-eating disorder content.

Non-topic specific recommendations

1. Impose significant financial penalties when social media platforms are **not transparent about their algorithms** and do not allow algorithm risk audits by independent bodies to be regularly and publicly available.
2. Require social media platforms to provide **free access to their data** to vetted researchers in a manner that is unbiased and easily interpreted.
3. Require social media platforms to allow users to **reset recommender algorithms**, easily, on demand and with clear and accessible information about the effect and duration of the reset.
4. Require platforms to regularly engage in **meaningful collaboration with experts** (i.e. individuals with a lived experience, researchers, clinicians, eating disorder organisations) to allow ongoing discussions which ensure their practices and systems are expert-informed and mitigate harm.

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