

**The next five years of
preventing sexual violence
in Australia: informing the
National Action Plan
2027-2032**

Teach Us Consent's Submission to the Second
National Action Plan to End Family, Sexual and
Domestic Violence (National Action Plan)

July 2026

**TEACH US
* CONSENT**

Acknowledgement of Country

Teach Us Consent acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the First Peoples and Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we work, and pays respect to their continuing connection to land, waters and culture, cared for over more than 60,000 years.

We acknowledge the systemic violence, including sexual violence, that First Peoples have faced and continue to endure as a direct result of colonisation, and recognise that this history shapes the safety challenges we work to address today.

We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders past and present, and to their stories, traditions and living cultures. We commit to walking alongside First Nations Peoples in building a brighter future, free from violence.



Glossary of terms

Term	Acronym	Definition
Australian Child Maltreatment Study	ACMS	A national study measuring the prevalence of child maltreatment in Australia, including child sexual abuse, cited in this submission to evidence the rise in adolescent-perpetrated sexual harm.
Australian Institute of Criminology	AIC	The Australian Government's national research and knowledge centre on crime and justice, cited in this submission for research on reporting options and links between violent pornography and sexual violence perpetration.
Australian Survey of Secondary Students and Sexual Health	ASSSH	A national survey of secondary school students measuring sexual health knowledge, behaviours and experiences, including exposure to pornography and experiences of relationship violence.
Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research	BOCSAR	The New South Wales Government agency responsible for independent research and statistics on crime and criminal justice, cited in this submission regarding SARO reporting data.
Department of Social Services	DSS	The Australian Government department responsible for administering the National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children 2022–2032 and its Action Plans, to whom this submission is addressed.
Image-based sexual abuse	IBSA	The non-consensual creation, distribution, or threatened distribution of intimate images, referred to in this submission alongside NCII as a significant and rising form of technology-facilitated sexual violence.
Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex	LGBTQI+	An inclusive term referring to people of diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, and intersex variations; used in this submission to refer to a population group who experience disproportionate rates of technology-facilitated and sexual violence.
Men's Behavioural Change Programs	MBCPs	Structured perpetrator intervention programs aimed at addressing and changing violent, coercive and abusive behaviours, referenced in this submission as a mechanism for accountability outside the criminal justice system.
Non-consensual intimate imagery	NCII	Intimate images shared or distributed without the consent of the person depicted, referenced in this submission in relation to platform detection schemes such as StopNCII.org.
Personal Safety Survey	PSS	A national survey conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics collecting data on the nature and extent of violence experienced by people in Australia, including sexual assault, and used as a key data source on rates of police reporting.
Sexual Assault Reporting Option	SARO	An anonymous, informal reporting mechanism introduced by NSW Police, allowing victim-survivors to document experiences of sexual violence without initiating a formal police investigation.
Technology-facilitated abuse	TFA	Abuse perpetrated or amplified through digital technologies, including stalking, coercive control, tracking, harassment, and non-consensual image sharing, often occurring alongside or escalating into offline violence. NCII is an example of TFA.
Technology-facilitated sexual violence	TFSV	A subset of TFA specific to sexual harm, encompassing conduct such as image-based sexual abuse, sexual harassment via digital platforms, and coercion or exploitation carried out through technology.
The Second National Action Plan	Second Action Plan	The second phase of action under the National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children 2022–2032, developed by the Department of Social Services to build on progress made in the first Action Plan period.

The state of sexual violence in Australia today: a snapshot

**10-14 year
old girls**

In Australia, girls aged 10–14 are the demographic group most likely to be victims of sexual violence.

650%

The eSafety Commissioner reports tech-facilitated abuse has increased by 650% over five years.



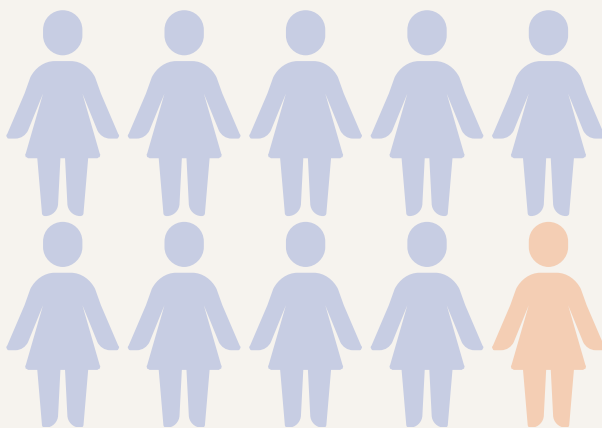
The Australian Child Maltreatment Study (ACMS) found that adolescent-perpetrated abuse has risen. Among 16–24-year-olds, sexual harm inflicted by other adolescents (18%) was reported more often than harm inflicted by adult perpetrators (12%).

60%

60% of pornography is encountered by young people through social media (eSafety, 2022)

1 in 5

A 2025 RMIT Study shows that 1 in 5 people surveyed experienced image-based sexual abuse (IBSA).



92% of women who experience sexual assault do not report it to police.



Introduction

1. Teach Us Consent welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Department of Social Services (DSS) regarding the Second Action Plan (National Action Plan) under the National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children 2022–2032 (National Plan).
2. Teach Us Consent supports the Second Action Plan's intent to build on the progress made under the National Plan to date. This submission focuses in particular on the distinct and worsening trajectory of sexual violence in Australia, the emergence of new technology-facilitated harms that existing frameworks were not built to address, and the central role young people now occupy as both victim-survivors and the demographic most likely to perpetrate child sexual abuse.
3. Our organisation's submission is informed by our direct work with young people and children aged 13–25 through mass digital consent education, youth-focused research and our Youth Advisory Group(s). In addition to youth engagement, a robust evidence base, ongoing sector consultation, tech and social media companies, and Teach Us Consent's Expert Advisory Board contributes to our knowledge base immensely. Collectively, this shapes the policies we call for.

About Teach Us Consent

4. Teach Us Consent Global Limited is a youth-led, registered Australian charity committed to pioneering consent education to foster healthy relationships and prevent normalised sexual violence, particularly among young people.
5. Established in 2021, our organisation launched a petition calling for more holistic and age-appropriate consent education in Australia, alongside a platform for people to share anonymous testimonies of sexual assault. After gathering over 44,000 testimonies and 6,600 personal stories, consent education was mandated in the national curriculum.
6. In 2025, Teach Us Consent launched the Fix Our Feeds campaign, calling on the Australian Government to require social media platforms to offer an opt-in model for algorithmic feeds, bringing the principle of affirmative and informed consent to young people's online experiences. The campaign has attracted broad cross-sector support, including from public health experts, gender-based violence researchers, men and masculinities experts, prominent world-leaders, and young people.
7. Teach Us Consent continues to advocate for legislative, policy and cultural change alongside mass digital education, with the goal of eradicating normalised sexual violence.

The State of Sexual Violence today

8. Australia has made significant progress in some respects under the National Plan. Recorded rates of physical assault and intimate partner violence against women have declined or held steady over the past two decades, and female intimate partner homicide has fallen substantially since 1990. While numbers remain unacceptably high in spite of this improvement, this trend signals the consequences of effective sustained investment into domestic and family violence prevention.
9. However, sexual violence has not shared in this progress. Recorded sexual assault victimisation have risen significantly, with increases recorded in almost every state and territory, including New South Wales (up 12%), Queensland (up 11%) and Victoria (up 13%).



10. Of those recorded as victim-survivors, 81% were women and 39% were aged between 10 and 17.
11. The female victimisation rate has increased by 64% in the time period of 2010-2024, from 144 per 100,000 females to 237 per 100,000 females.
12. The male victimisation rate has doubled in the time period of 2010-2024, from 26 per 100,000 males to 52 per 100,000 males.

Declining reporting rates

13. Teach Us Consent understands meaningful reporting pathways and accountability measures can be a powerful form of prevention.
14. Alongside the significant rise (ABS, 2025) in sexual violence across the country, reports of sexual assault made to police are falling (AIHW, 2023). Indeed, the rate of police reports of sexual assault consistent fell from 13% to 8.3% in the 5 years between 2016 and 2022, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics Personal Safety Survey. This indicates that the actual rate of sexual violence perpetration in Australia is much higher, and that victim-survivors are being increasingly discouraged to report.
 - a. **Personal Safety Survey (2022)**
Year % reporting most recent sexual assault to police
 2005 19%
 2012 15-17%
 2016 13%
 2021-22 8.3%
15. 92% of women who experience sexual assault do not report it to police. Up to one third of Australians believe allegations are frequently motivated by regret or retaliation, and one in five consistently mistrust women's reports of rape. These attitudes are a direct cause of underreporting, and require the same generational and holistic work on attitudes that consent education exists to do.
16. The SARO (Sexual Assault Reporting Option) was introduced by NSW Police in 2023, as part of a trial with Teach Us Consent. This reporting option has proven to be a preferred reporting option for many victim-survivors of sexual violence, especially as it relates to historical instances of sexual violence.
17. Jackie Fitzgerald, the BOCSAR Executive Director, stated approximately 1 in 4 sexual assault reports are now submitted through the SARO platform. In the year to June 2025, 23% of all sexual assault reports in NSW were made through SARO.
18. Additionally, underreporting remains a significant concern as it relates to technology-facilitated sexual abuse. Research finds that underreporting is further compounded when the harm is technology-facilitated.
19. Teach Us Consent hypothesises that this trend reflects a deliberate choice by victim-survivors to opt out of the criminal justice system, shaped by factors including distrust of police, reluctance to pursue accountability through that system, and the well-documented risk of re-traumatisation through court processes.
20. As peer-on-peer perpetration of sexual violence continues to increase, we predict that this will further discourage reporting. This is because, often, victim-survivors who have been sexually assaulted by a minor - especially someone known well to them, such as a partner or friend - do not want that perpetrator to enter the criminal justice system. Instead, they often prefer perpetrator interventions that involve genuine accountability, reflection, and recognition of the harm they caused.



21. Increasingly, young people in particular are seeking alternative paths of redress and accountability, such as informal mediation between family, community, the perpetrator and the victim-survivor. Teach Us Consent supports the consideration of additional ways to achieve 'justice' from the perspective of victim-survivors and prevent future perpetration.
- a. This could include greater accessibility of Men's Behavioural Change Programs (MBCPs), such as through government support, as MBCPs currently cost in excess of \$4,300. MBCPs have a proven track-record of being effective in preventing future perpetration. Additionally, Teach Us Consent supports increased investments in perpetrator interventions and availability to perpetrators without a criminal conviction or record.

Young People and Sexual Violence

22. Young people are becoming the primary targets of an information environment normalising attitudes underpinning violence, while simultaneously emerging as the most likely perpetrators of sexual violence against another adolescent (ACMS, 2023). This presents a structural problem the Second Action Plan must confront.
23. The face of sexual violence perpetration is changing. The Australian Child Maltreatment Study (ACMS) found that while adult-perpetrated child sexual abuse has declined, adolescent-perpetrated abuse has risen. Among 16–24 year olds, sexual harm inflicted by other adolescents (18%) was reported more often than harm inflicted by adult perpetrators (12%), signifying a generational shift.
24. To make sense of this increase, the ACMS points to societal pressures and gender norms, which is pervasively promoted on social media by highly optimised recommender algorithms, and increasingly, the unprecedented rates at which young Australians are accessing pornography, including violent pornography.
25. The 8th Australian Survey of Secondary Students and Sexual Health (2026) shows that, of Australian young people who have been in a relationship:
- a. 37% said they had felt frightened of someone they were in a relationship with at some point.
 - b. 31% reported having experienced technology-facilitated harassment or tracking by a partner.
 - c. 2.6% reported being forced by a partner to have sex.
26. Victimization is shifting in parallel. Rates of sexual assault are increasing among victims aged 10–17 and 18–24, even as rates among children aged 0–9 have fluctuated downward.
27. Children and adolescents are increasingly exposed to online harm at a scale that has become the norm, rather than the exception. eSafety's National Survey of children aged 10 to 15 found 96% had used social media, and 71% had encountered content associated with harm, with many experiencing harm directed at them personally.
28. This trend is overwhelmingly gendered. Girls experience child sexual abuse at roughly double the rate of boys (37.3% vs 18.8%) and emotional abuse at 1.4 times the rate (35.6% vs 25.4%); physical abuse is broadly comparable across genders. Physical abuse has declined slightly overall, and sexual abuse has declined for boys but not for girls. Multi-type maltreatment remains common and is likely to grow as technology-facilitated violence adds a compounding layer of harm.



Radical Misogyny in the Digital Age

29. It is imperative that the Second National Action Plan acknowledges that a significant driver of gender-based violence across the country is through online misogynistic radicalisation, driven by advanced social media algorithms. Currently, 63% of young men surveyed watch men and masculinity influencers.
30. Online misogyny is not a static category of content. Instead, it operates as a pipeline with abundant onramps and very few offramps. Young men, often experiencing very real emotions of loneliness, rejection or emotional distress, seek out validation and belonging in their online environments. Instead, algorithms target them with misogynistic content repetitively, all in the aim to capitalise off their emotions and keep them online for longer.
31. Researchers from Dublin City University (2024) tracked accounts created to mimic 16- to 18-year-old boys on TikTok and YouTube Shorts. Within minutes of signing up, these accounts were bombarded with masculinist, anti-woman, and other extremist content, regardless of the users' interests.
32. The progression into radical misogyny is well-documented in the research on incel and broader "manosphere" communities, which traces a continuum from sympathy with anti-feminist grievance through to a justification of violence. Research has mapped this as a structured radicalisation process, comparable in pattern to pathways into other forms of violent extremism, making this not only a gender-based violence issue but a security one.
33. The consequences are direct and documented: research shows that misogynistic content encourages disrespect toward women, normalises aggression and coercive control and has been shown to justify domestic, family, sexual and gender-based violence as well as violent extremism.
34. In a poll put to Teach Us Consent's 80,000+ Instagram audience, we asked "Do you know someone who has been radicalised by the algorithm?". 63% of respondents answered "yes" and shared the following testimonies:
 - a. "My brothers started quoting sexist and derogatory male influencers from social media."
 - b. "All my mates and I see stuff about gambling from influencers and ads but when we ask our girlfriends, they just don't see that sort of content on their feeds. It's hard to get it off your mind when you see it so often."
 - c. "I've had to stop having real conversations with my brother."
 - d. "My ex-bf started consuming more and more red pill media. Eventually broke up with him."
 - e. "Young men 18-24 I used to work with in construction. Mistrust, hateful toward women."
35. Women teachers are experiencing the consequences of misogynistic radicalisation and hypermasculine behaviours in the classroom, with numerous reports on the rise in sexual harassment and expressions of male supremacy in the classroom.
36. In 2022, Reset Tech Australia released a discussion paper on their research: Algorithms as a weapon against women. The study showed how 10 experimental YouTube accounts were recommended videos with messages antagonistic towards women and feminism. Interacting with this content then resulted in more overtly misogynistic 'manosphere' and 'incel' content getting recommended.



37. This is consistent with what Australia's own security agencies are observing. ASIO has reported a marked rise in young Australians being radicalised online, with minors increasingly appearing in counter-terrorism caseloads and incel ideology identified alongside white nationalist material.
38. Anti-Feminist Violent Extremism (AFVE) is the most prevalent form of violent extremist attitudes in Australia. Misogynistic radicalisation acts as a gateway for other forms of extremism. In the University of Melbourne's Report "Misogyny, Racism and Violent Extremism in Australia" (2024), it states that "...attitudes about gender role adherence resulted in a respondent being 4.86 times more likely to support religious violent extremism, 2.8 times more likely to support ethnically motivated violent extremism, 5.28 times more likely to support white supremacist violent extremism, and 2.52 times more likely to support incel violent extremism". This study examining the attitudinal drivers of support for violent extremism among the Australian public found that racist and misogynistic attitudes were strong and significant influences on sympathy for violent extremism. This makes addressing misogyny a matter of security urgency, not merely a social one.
39. This research states that currently, support for anti-feminist violent extremism was highest amongst 18–29-year-olds, of whom 19 percent agreed with the legitimacy of violence to resist feminism.
40. Teach Us Consent notes the immensely harmful repercussions the consumption of this content has for young men and boys as well. Movember's 2025 research states: "Young men who watched these influencers were more likely to report worse mental health outcomes, a reduced willingness to make their mental health a priority, and a higher rate of risk-taking (such as steroid use or exercising while injured)".
41. The Adolescent Man Box Report (2025) found that boys who strongly support restrictive ideas about "being a man" are more likely to cause harm to themselves and others.
42. The Second Action Plan cannot treat online misogyny as a content problem alone and instead recognise it as a pathway into the very violence the National Plan exists to end.

Pornography harms

43. Incidentally or intentionally, young people are accessing pornography at higher rates than ever (AIFS, 2017). Due to the increased accessibility of pornography through online porn sites and social media, it has never been easier to access pornography. The 8th Australian Survey of Secondary Students and Sexual Health (ASSSH) (2026) states 77% of young people had viewed pornography unintentionally and the average age at which respondents first unintentionally viewed pornography is at 11.5 years. The average age respondents first intentionally viewed pornography is at 13 years.
44. Whether viewing porn incidentally or intentionally, porn consumption in adolescence means that years before children have the opportunity to independently explore their sexuality, they are exposed to limiting ideals about theirs and others' sexual roles through porn. Some young people have become "desensitised" to pornography because it's so common in their online experiences (eSafety, 2022).
45. Pornography frequently presents exaggerated or harmful depictions of sex, creating distorted perceptions of intimacy, consent, pleasure, body image and gender roles.



46. For young people in particular, harmful pornography consumption is associated with a range of harmful attitudes, behaviours, and experiences, “including risky sexual behaviours, more sexually objectifying and stereotypical gender views of women, rape myth acceptance, sexual coercion and aggression, and sexual and dating violence victimisation” (M. Crabbe, M. Flood, K. Adams, 2024).
47. In the Australian context, porn consumption is already causing real harm. Around 50 per cent of young Australians have engaged in ‘choking’, or strangulation, during sex. Research has found that the more pornography someone watches, the less likely they are to believe that consent is required to strangle someone during sex. Research also shows the more pornography someone watches, the less likely they are to intervene as a bystander to a sexual assault (I. Conte, L. Sharman & H. Douglas, 2025).
48. In 2025, the Australian Institute of Criminology linked frequent intentional viewing of violent pornography to an increased risk of perpetrating sexual violence in heterosexual cisgender men.
49. Teach Us Consent campaigned in support of age-gating porn sites to discourage underage access to pornography. We note the critical introduction of age-gating porn sites by the eSafety Commissioner last year, and believe it will make a genuine difference in deterring underage porn access - especially accidental porn access.
50. However, porn remains accessible for young people on social media, and through VPN access to override age-gating obligations. Indeed, pornography is highly present in young people’s online worlds. Even when not intentionally visiting traditional porn sites, it is still prevalent. 60% of pornography is encountered by young people through social media (eSafety, 2022).
51. Porn sites often employ sophisticated algorithms to encourage longer time on their sites, in order to increase advertising revenue. Indeed, mainstream porn targets, engages and captures the attention of young men and boys by design. It advertises on male-focused spaces like gaming, fitness sites or Reddit, the content itself appeals to young men and boys by centering male pleasure. It plays into typically masculine tropes, and dopamine receptors mimic familiar online experiences, like gaming. The sense of perceived loneliness many young men are feeling, which is being experienced at high rates, is being exploited by mainstream porn, who market content with language such as “are you lonely?”.
52. Teach Us Consent urges the Government to consider the harm algorithms on porn sites can bring through its unsafe design. Unsafe design practices include ‘gamifying’ porn consumption to create an “addictive” quality, and suggesting more extreme and violent content through algorithms to capture the attention of boys and men in particular.

Digital environments as a critical site of primary prevention

53. Australia is making considerable investment into the prevention of domestic, sexual and family violence. However, due to the lack of legislative guardrails as it relates to social media algorithms, these investments are being undermined by social media and pornography consumption.
54. Young - and older - Australians spend a significant amount of time in digital environments. This comes alongside the well-known and documented erosion of “third-spaces”.
55. Children and young people remain among the most active, and most vulnerable, users of digital services in Australia. Prior to Australia’s social media delay implemented in late 2025, 96% of children aged 10 to 15 had used social media, and the majority used communication platforms to message, call or video call others (eSafety Commissioner, 2024).



56. Around 1.3 million children aged between 8 and 12 were estimated to have been using social media in 2024, with YouTube, TikTok and Snapchat among the most popular platforms (eSafety Commissioner, 2024).
57. Since the implementation of the social media delay, while platforms deactivated up to 4.5 million social media accounts (eSafety, 2026) across platforms, at least 20% of teenagers aged 13-15 years-old still use social media regularly (Qustodio, 2026).
58. While many violence prevention efforts seek to use physical spaces as opportunities to promote healthy relationships messaging, Teach Us Consent notes that the digital environment should be recognised as a primary site of prevention. In doing so, positive messaging can intercept and replace harmful messaging by meeting young people where they are already spending so much of their time.
59. Without this counter-messaging delivered by trusted, culturally-relevant accounts, harmful messaging can become the primary source of information for young Australians, as it relates to manhood, gender norms and expectations more generally, and relationships.

Technology facilitated abuse (TFA) - a rapidly escalating threat to safety

60. The surge in sexual violence in Australia is compounded by new forms of sexual violence that existing frameworks were not built to prevent.
61. Stalking, coercive control and other forms of technology-facilitated abuse (TFA) are emerging as core features of violence perpetration, with half of Australian adults having experienced technology-facilitated abuse in their lifetime.
62. A 2025 RMIT Study shows that 1 in 5 (22.6%) people surveyed (n=16,000) experienced image-based sexual abuse (IBSA). This same study shows a significantly higher rate of TFA victimisation among youth and LGBTQ+ groups.
63. Women, gender-diverse people and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and girls disproportionately experience technology-facilitated abuse on social media, including harassment, impersonation, non-consensual intimate image (NCII) sharing and identity-based abuse. eSafety research finds Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women experience TFSV at much higher rates than the general population. Young First Nations women and girls are significantly more likely to experience image-based abuse and stalking, while older women are more likely to experience technology-facilitated financial abuse.
64. Victim-survivors have anonymously shared with Teach Us Consent their experiences of technology-facilitated abuse:
 - a. "A guy shared nudes around that were sent to him by a girl from my school- she was so terrified of him she would literally run from him. He still made year 12 Prefect."
 - b. "Boys would make group chats with random people (girls and boys) and post explicit images of girls in them. They were people our age from schools all over. I don't know who they were but it reminds you that you are completely helpless and that they have zero respect for women."
 - c. "I remember a friend from X High School telling me they discussed their female friends' bodies at great length, and would send each other girls' Instagram photos to discuss changes in attractiveness. Girls' nudes were shared around, particularly boys in the older grades would ask younger boys for nudes of girls in their year. "



65. According to the 2025 RMIT research, nearly a third (30.9%) of victim-survivors chose not to report or disclose their experience at all. This research recommends digital interventions, including by requiring technology companies to make technologies safer by design.
66. The eSafety Commissioner's image-based abuse (IBA) scheme has expanded victim-survivors' access to redress in a meaningful way. Yet, even this has not kept pace with skyrocketing rates of TFA, as reports have risen by more than 960% in under five years.
67. Research consistently shows that technology-facilitated abuse and offline sexual violence sit on a single continuum, with online conduct frequently escalating into offline harm and vice versa, as technology lowers the barriers to perpetration. These new forms of harm demand novel and appropriately informed prevention efforts.

Why Young People's Voices Matter

68. Violence prevention programs designed and delivered by adults for adolescents are consistently found to be less effective, partly because young people distrust curricula that overrides their autonomy. Youth-led and co-designed programs better reflect young people's lived experience and needs, and several have demonstrated measurable reductions in perpetration and improvements in bystander behaviour over time.
69. This extends to boys and young men. Movember's 2025 study of over 3,000 young men found that despite high public interest in masculinity content online, there has been a lack of attention given to the voices and experiences of young men engaging with this content and how it is impacting their health. Boys and young men need to be heard on their own terms, as interventions that treat them only as a problem to be managed will keep missing the conditions that make them receptive to harmful content in the first place.
70. This is an evidence-based design principle, and one the Second Action Plan should treat as such. Prevention and education efforts funded under the Plan should be designed with young people, rather than merely being delivered to them.

Recommendations:

1. Recognise the digital environment as a primary site of prevention

Children and young people spend a significant amount of time on their phones; anywhere from 5-8 hours is the estimated average total for the Gen Z cohort. This makes the digital environment as, if not more, influential than schools and other third spaces. The government should recognise this as an opportunity to optimise the digital environment as a place to undertake meaningful and targeted prevention efforts to counter harmful messaging and present positive messaging. In addition to this, the digital environment must be regulated to prevent harm through opt-in algorithms on social media platforms and pornographic sites.

- 1.a. Algorithmic reform - require opt-in algorithmic feeds across social media platforms
 - o Young people are disproportionately passive consumers of algorithmically curated content. Research finds that young people aged 12-17 watch whatever the algorithm recommends without actively seeking content out and that there is a fundamental limit to the ...



- ...agency young people can exercise over what they see. This passivity is the product of platform design, as algorithmic recommendation systems are built to maximise engagement, not protect its users.
- Existing platform safety features insufficiently address the harms this passivity produces, as established in this submission. When the content being passively consumed includes misogynistic, violent or non-consensual material, the implications for attitudes and behaviour, and specifically sexual violence, are direct and documented.
- Addressing this requires intervention at system level. Teach Us Consent recommends an opt-in model for algorithmic feeds - the central ask of our Fix Our Feeds campaign.
- In December 2025, Teach Us Consent launched a campaign to address the harms social media algorithms are causing - Fix Our Feeds. It calls on the Federal Government to introduce a world-first reform: an “opt-in” feature for algorithms on social media platforms. The campaign comes at a crucial point in time when the Albanese Government is reviewing the Online Safety Act (2021) (Cth) (OSA) and crafting a new Digital Duty of Care (DDOC).
- An opt-in model would require platforms to obtain active consent before serving algorithmically curated content, rather than defaulting users - and particularly young people - into feeds that surface misogynistic and non-consensual material regardless of harm. The evidence in this submission clearly sets out that exposure shapes attitudes, and attitudes drive perpetration. Exposure should require consent, not be assumed by default.
- The purpose of this policy is to directly target the algorithmic recommender systems that are responsible for the mass and predatory dissemination of content that creates harm. Key features of opt-in algorithms would include:
 - This policy is content-neutral in that it doesn’t seek to remove content. Rather, it acknowledges that, while online content can be innately harmful, it is the recommender systems themselves, powered by algorithms, that create the pathways for radicalisation, among other harms.
 - Preferences would be fixed until intentionally changed by the user. An opt-in feature would allow users to change their preference at any point and across platforms. We propose users should be able to turn their algorithms on and off at will, and that this preference should be fixed until users change them.
 - An opt-in feature is based on the principles of consent. An opt-in algorithm would provide people who use social media with greater autonomy over how they consume content. In practice, ‘opting-in’ to an algorithm would require the platforms to ask for informed and affirmative consent to use our behavioural data to inform algorithms and shape the content we see. For the first time, we would be offered a genuine choice between content curated by social media platforms based on algorithms, or content from accounts they follow only and without recommender content.



1. b. Algorithmic reform for porn sites - extend algorithmic reform to pornography platforms and fund awareness of existing reporting infrastructure

- Pornography platforms remain largely unregulated in Australia despite being a significant channel for fuelling non-consensual intimate imagery sharing. Recommendation systems on such platforms are purposefully designed to maximise engagement, actively surfacing increasingly extreme, fetishised and violent content, and it is a matter of minutes before users are exposed to content depicting violence, coercion or non-consent. This matters directly for sexual violence outcomes. AIC research found that more frequent intentional viewing of violent pornography was associated with a statistically significant increase in the probability of perpetrating sexual violence among heterosexual men, with men who watched violent pornography twice as likely to have engaged in sexual violence.
- These harms are particularly acute for young people. Research finds that adolescents who consumed violent pornography were six times more likely to be sexually aggressive compared to those who viewed non-violent pornography or no pornography at all. Young people themselves identify that pornography negatively shapes their understanding of consent, expectations of sex and views on gender, and for young men and boys, exposure to violent and misogynistic content in formative years is directly linked to harmful sexual attitudes, violence and negative relationship outcomes. The mechanism is not passive exposure but algorithmic. A young person who accesses pornography is not simply encountering it, but being progressively guided toward more extreme content by a system designed to maximise engagement.
- Teach Us Consent therefore recommends the Second Action Plan drive algorithmic reform on pornography platforms through an opt-in model for recommended content so that users are not defaulted into escalating material. This measure would structurally constrain the algorithmic escalation toward violent content that the evidence links directly to perpetration - among adults and young people alike.

1. c. Positive messaging on healthy and respectful relationships to counter harmful content online

- The effectiveness of positive messaging through social media is documented in the Australian context. The Promoting Consent Initiative (PCI), a \$3.5 million government-funded online education initiative undertaken by Teach Us Consent, was successful in engaging priority groups to promote healthy and respectful relationships.
- Boys and young men, First Nations Australians and young people living in regional and rural areas, were highly engaged with the approximately 150 pieces of content disseminated through social media as part of the PCI. For instance, boys aged 17-18 were the cohort most likely to watch the PCI content till the end, and go to the Teach Us Consent website to learn more.
- Teach Us Consent recommends sustained investments in similar digital campaign efforts to undermine the pervasive narratives perpetuated by social media algorithms, by intercepting feeds with healthy content.



Victim-survivors of sexual violence face numerous barriers to formal reporting, not least that perpetrators are most commonly a current or former partner, family member, or someone they share a home with. Where this is the case, formal reporting to police carries additional risks of retaliation, loss of housing, and continued exposure to the perpetrator. In addition, victim-survivors may: worry they will not be believed by society or the law, or the consequences they'll face if people find out; fear for their safety including fear of the perpetrator; distrust or fear of police and the justice system; or maybe they don't even know how to report.

As perpetration and victimisation of sexual violence increasingly involve children, Teach Us Consent believes existing reporting and justice response mechanisms are currently inadequate. For instance, victim-survivors often do not wish for the perpetrator to go through the criminal justice system due to their young age and/or relationship to the perpetrator. Victim-survivors deserve greater reporting options that align with their wishes for themselves and the perpetrator, and police should be better equipped to deal with sexual violence reports when they arise, to encourage further reporting where that is the wish of the victim-survivor.

2. a. Nationalise anonymous reporting across states and territories

- Teach Us Consent recommends the Second Action Plan fund and recommend mandating the national expansion of the anonymous sexual assault reporting option to all Australian jurisdictions. The reporting experience for sexual violence must be redesigned to be trauma-informed, more accessible, and closely connected to support. The Government should also consider allowing this database to be used to identify repeat perpetrators.
- Anonymous reporting mechanisms are not an alternative to formal reporting, but often represent the only form of reporting victim-survivors feel safe and comfortable to pursue. The Sexual Assault Reporting Option (SARO), currently available in NSW, saw a 46% increase in reports following a 2025 awareness campaign. In the year to March 2025, SARO made up 22.8% of all sexual assault reports and drove 40.5% of the total increase over the past decade.
- Case Study: ([AIC, 2023](#)) Through the case studies of Bonnie* and Quinn* below, the AIC demonstrates how the SARO can support victim-survivors to:
 - Regain power and control: support workers noted that having an additional option, aside from a formal reporting option or not reporting at all, helped them have a level of control over the process, especially if they have had negative experiences with formal reporting in the past.
 - Document their experiences: informal reporting options are also preferred in context where victim-survivors want to tell their story in their own way, in the privacy of their own space.
 - Protect their community: some victim-survivors use this reporting option as a way to put the perpetrator on record, and many recommend the SARO to contribute to a database where repeat offenders could be identified to protect their community.
 - Access to support: SARO reports allow for victim-survivors of sexual violence to receive support. When VIC's SARA was in use, support workers would make follow-up calls to all who left contact details and opted-in to receiving additional support.



- “Bonnie* (*real name concealed for privacy) said she used the SARO because she did not want to make a formal police report. She was in a relationship with the person who assaulted her, she understood the ‘high level of proof that’s required to convict someone of sexual assault’ and she knew she would ‘need a lot of evidence’ and that her case would have been ‘complex and difficult to establish’. Bonnie was also having difficulties recognising the experience as sexual assault and she did not want to be questioned by police. Bonnie said she felt the SARO was a ‘safer way’ of making some form of report where she felt ‘somewhat in control of the situation’ and she was ‘reassured to know that it wouldn’t go any further’. Bonnie said she thought it was a good tool for ‘encouraging people who wouldn’t necessarily report otherwise because it’s a less intimidating way of doing so’. Similarly, Quinn* (FG2), who had also used the SARO, said ‘the thought of going to the police station is terrifying for most victims, so the fact that you can do something online from the safety of your own home, that’s definitely a positive there’”.

2.b. Mandate new training for police and other first responders to respond to sexual violence reporting

- Where victim-survivors wish to seek justice through the criminal system, they deserve a response that is trauma-informed and are connected to support. To do so, police across every Australian jurisdiction should receive trauma-informed training necessary to respond to a sexual violence report.
- As established in this submission, victim-blaming attitudes prevalent in the broader community are often replicated within the very institutions victim-survivors are expected to report to, leading to secondary victimisation and re-traumatisation - and this represents a direct driver of underreporting. Teach Us Consent therefore recommends the Second Action Plan fund trauma-informed sexual violence response training for frontline police, with a specific focus on technology-facilitated abuse and intimate-partner perpetrated sexual violence - two of the most underreported forms of sexual violence.
- To encourage more reporting of sexual violence and greater justice for victim-survivors seeking it through the criminal justice system, Teach Us Consent recommends the Government mandate police training for sexual violence reports, with an additional focus on tech-facilitated abuse. Culturally appropriate ways to respond to and support First Nations and CALD people making a report of sexual violence should be a key part of this training.
- As more young people are becoming victim to sexual violence, police officers should be trained to ensure they are equipped with the skills they need to offer trauma-informed support to younger victim-survivors of sexual violence in particular if they make a report.

2.c. National survey to understand victim-survivor reporting intent

- In order to better support victim-survivors with meaningful ways to acknowledge the harm perpetrated against them and offer address and accountability, victim-survivors across the nation should be surveyed to understand what an ideal format for this would be.



- Teach Us Consent recommends a confidential survey, such as the Personal Safety Survey, to assess the preferred reporting and redress options victim-survivors, including young people, First Nations people, LGBTQ+ and other priority groups to inform how the justice system can best serve them and prevent sexual violence perpetration into the future.

3. Make technology-facilitated sexual violence prevention a priority

- 3. a. Nationalise anonymous reporting across states and territories
 - As established in this submission, young people are increasingly both victim-survivors and perpetrators of technology-facilitated abuse - and, furthermore, are disproportionately more likely to normalise it.
 - As digital natives for whom technology is deeply embedded in relationships and daily life, many harmful behaviours go unrecognised as abuse. Research finds that while young people develop sophisticated digital safety skills, many have low literacy in data privacy principles, little confidence that platforms protect them adequately and a low understanding of what constitutes harmful behaviours online - including coercive control, which only two in five young people aged 18-24 can identify by name. This combination of constant exposure, normalisation of controlling behaviours, and low awareness of what constitutes harm means technology-facilitated abuse often goes unrecognised and unreported among young people.
 - Research from RMIT (2025) notes that improving the awareness of IBSA may influence reporting, to give greater effect to existing laws and deter perpetrators in the future; “As our study shows, the failure to take any action in relation to IBSA may stem from shame, a lack of awareness, deficient recourse options where they live ... or an unwillingness or inability to deal with many of the structural barriers associated with taking action...we recognize that cultural norms around sexuality and taboos, as well as general awareness of IBSA, may influence reporting”.
 - Victim-blaming attitudes compound this further. The 2017 eSafety research found that few bystanders take action when they witness image-based abuse. An effective campaign must therefore work on both sides - equipping victim-survivors with clear pathways to support and reporting, while building the bystander awareness and community attitudes that make reporting feel safe in the first place.
 - Teach Us Consent therefore recommends the Second Action Plan fund a dedicated national public awareness campaign on technology-facilitated abuse targeting young people.
 - Existing awareness of where to seek support for victim-survivors of technology-facilitated abuse is critically low, and where it exists, it skews toward formal channels - directing people toward investigation rather than support and reaching them after harm has already occurred. This is particularly acute for young people, for whom the gap between experiencing harm and knowing how to respond is widest.
 - An awareness campaign targeting young people should seek to inform them about what TFA is, common forms of TFA perpetration, unhealthy behaviours reinforced by technologies, how TFA can cause real harm, how to make a report, how to support a victim-survivor of TFA, and where to seek support.



- To reach young people, Teach Us Consent recommends the campaign be platform-native, culturally-relevant and distributed across the social media platforms where this harm is actually occurring, in formats young people consume, rather than through traditional channels that do not reach them.
- This campaign should be co-designed with young people from the outset. As the evidence in this submission demonstrates, prevention efforts designed by adults for young people consistently underperform those that centre young people's own experience and voice.
- Teach Us Consent recommends this public awareness campaign functions as a preventative education tool - not only directing young people to support, but proactively building their understanding of what constitutes harm and why consent is essential online. The evidence that this approach is successful exists in our own organisation's practice.
- Through our own Promoting Consent Initiative, we reached 5.8 million young people with platform-native resources, and over one third reported positive shifts in their understanding and behaviours related to consent. A national public awareness campaign co-designed with young people and delivered on the platforms where this harm occurs, can do this same work and shift the attitudes that underpin abuse before it happens, not after.

3. b. Platform-level prevention of IBSA - Mandate proactive detection and takedowns of non-consensual intimate imagery (NCII) across all online platforms

- Platform accountability for the circulation of non-consensual intimate imagery currently relies almost entirely on victim-survivor-initiated reports. When content spreads to less visible private sharing channels, victims frequently have no way of knowing where their images are circulating.
- Platform participation in proactive NCII detection schemes, already recommended by eSafety to victim-survivors, remains voluntary. This means that a victim-survivor whose images spread to a non-participating platform has no proactive protection.
- Teach Us Consent therefore recommends the Second Action Plan require all designated social media platforms to implement proactive NCII detection, either through mandatory participation in StopNCII.org or an equivalent hash-sharing scheme, as a condition of operating in Australia. The forthcoming digital duty of care reforms to the Online Safety Act provide the right vehicle for this obligation and the Second Action Plan should explicitly support and accelerate its inclusion.
- Teach Us Consent further recommends platforms be required to publicly report on their rates of proactive NCII detection and removal, so that accountability is measurable and proactive, rather than reactive.



4. Invest in meaningful cultural change to prevent sexual violence

4. a. Fund counter-advertising during major sporting events

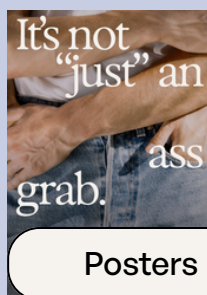
- Teach Us Consent recommends the Second Action Plan fund a national counter-advertising program to run during major sporting broadcasts, including State of Origin and the AFL Grand Final.
- Male-dominated sports have been identified in the research literature as environments that promote limited forms of masculinity that foster violence-supportive attitudes, making sporting contexts a priority setting for prevention.
- Research shows that gender-based violence spikes consistently around major Australian sporting events - domestic assaults in NSW increase by 40.7% on State of Origin nights, Victoria Police prepare for a 20% increase in family violence on AFL Grand Final day, and Berry Street reported a 30-40% increase in calls for help during the 2023 AFL final. This increase is consistent regardless of whether teams win or lose, pointing to the environment as the driver.
- Alcohol and gambling advertising are overwhelmingly present in major sporting broadcasts, which cultivates an environment where gender-based violence can occur at staggering rates. 87% of alcohol ads aired during daytime television in Australia are placed in sport programming, and research confirms these ads are targeted specifically at young male fans using hegemonic masculinity framing.
- Teach Us Consent believes that creating positive cultural change is where meaningful prevention happens. As these major sporting events capture the attention of so many men and boys, with players being prominent role models for many audience members, major sporting events can act as key platforms for important counter messaging.
- This should be delivered through a combination of government-funded advertising and mandated discounted or donated advertising space from broadcasters and sporting bodies. Additionally, sports teams themselves could enter formal partnerships with Australian violence prevention organisations to deliver this messaging.
- The UK's National Centre for Domestic Violence provides a direct precedent. It's "The Not-So-Beautiful Game" campaign during the 2018 World Cup explicitly named the domestic violence spike during major football tournaments and reached audiences at the moment of highest risk.
- The evidence demonstrates that counter-advertisements exposing alcohol harms run before NRL State of Origin games successfully lowered perceptions of the appropriateness of drinking while watching sport, and increased intentions to reduce alcohol consumption among viewers. This context acts as an effective and powerful place to prevent harm, especially in Australia.



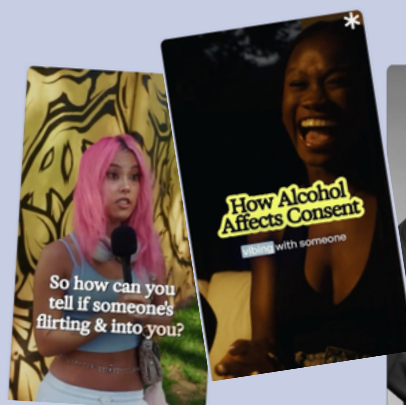
5. Improve consent education delivery in school settings

5. a. Provide Government-endorsed consent education lesson plans for educators

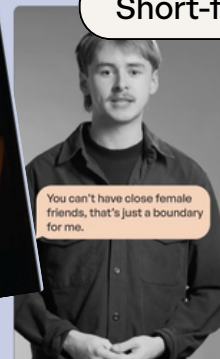
- The 3rd Australian Survey of Teachers and Relationships and Sexuality Education 2026 revealed that, while consent education was viewed as valuable by most senior educators, educators generally indicated experiencing a range of challenges in delivering consent education.
 - RSE teachers reported worrying about negative reactions from parents (60.4%), responding to student disclosures of sexual violence (60%), or saying the wrong thing in an RSE lesson (59.5%)
 - Despite the federal government's 2022 mandate for consent education across foundation to year 10, many RSE teachers had not been advised by their school of these policy changes (42.9%), nor received any training or support to implement them (52.4%).
- It is evident that educators delivering this content require additional support to provide them with the tools and content to deliver this information.
- Teach Us Consent recommends the Second Action Plan fund a national rollout of lesson plans created by experts in consent education, such as Teach Us Consent. This would be in collaboration with experts in education, respectful relationships, harm prevention and child psychology.
- In receiving an endorsement from the Government on these lesson plans, we believe educators will feel empowered, confident and supported to deliver the content in an evidence-based, age-appropriate way.
- Ideally, these lesson plans would not be compulsory, but opt-in and freely available for schools and educators who are interested.
- This should be complimented with a targeted educator outreach effort that includes:
 - Free, culturally-relevant, government-backed assets already created through the Promoting Consent Initiative that educators can use in their classrooms. These assets are proven to resonate among young people, including target groups such as boys.
 - A virtual information night for educators to attend to ask additional questions from experts.



Posters



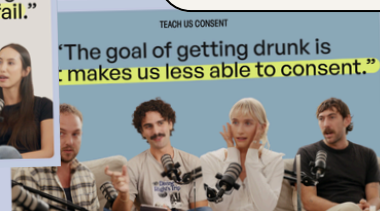
Short-form videos



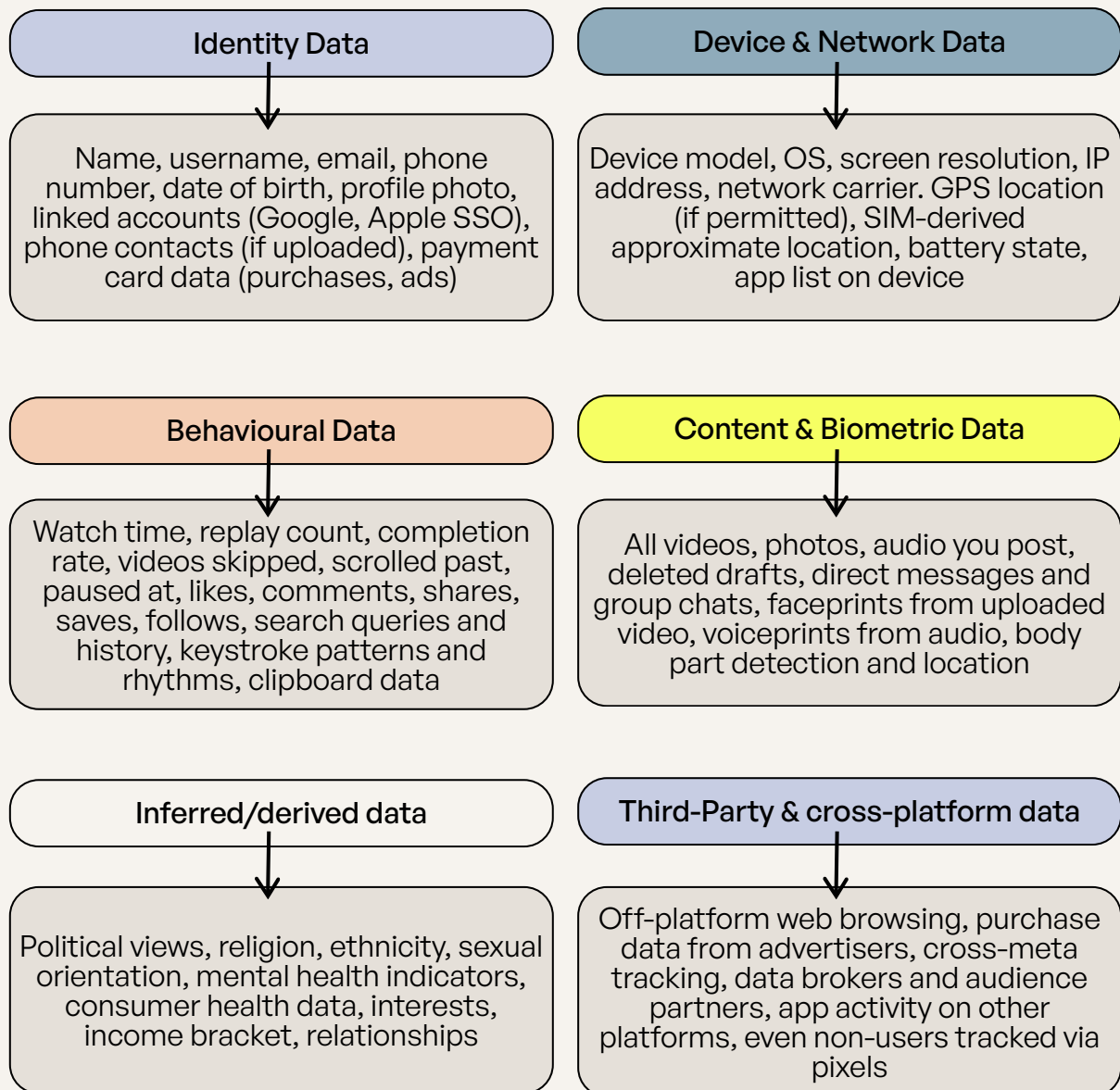
First-Nations specific resources



Vodcasts



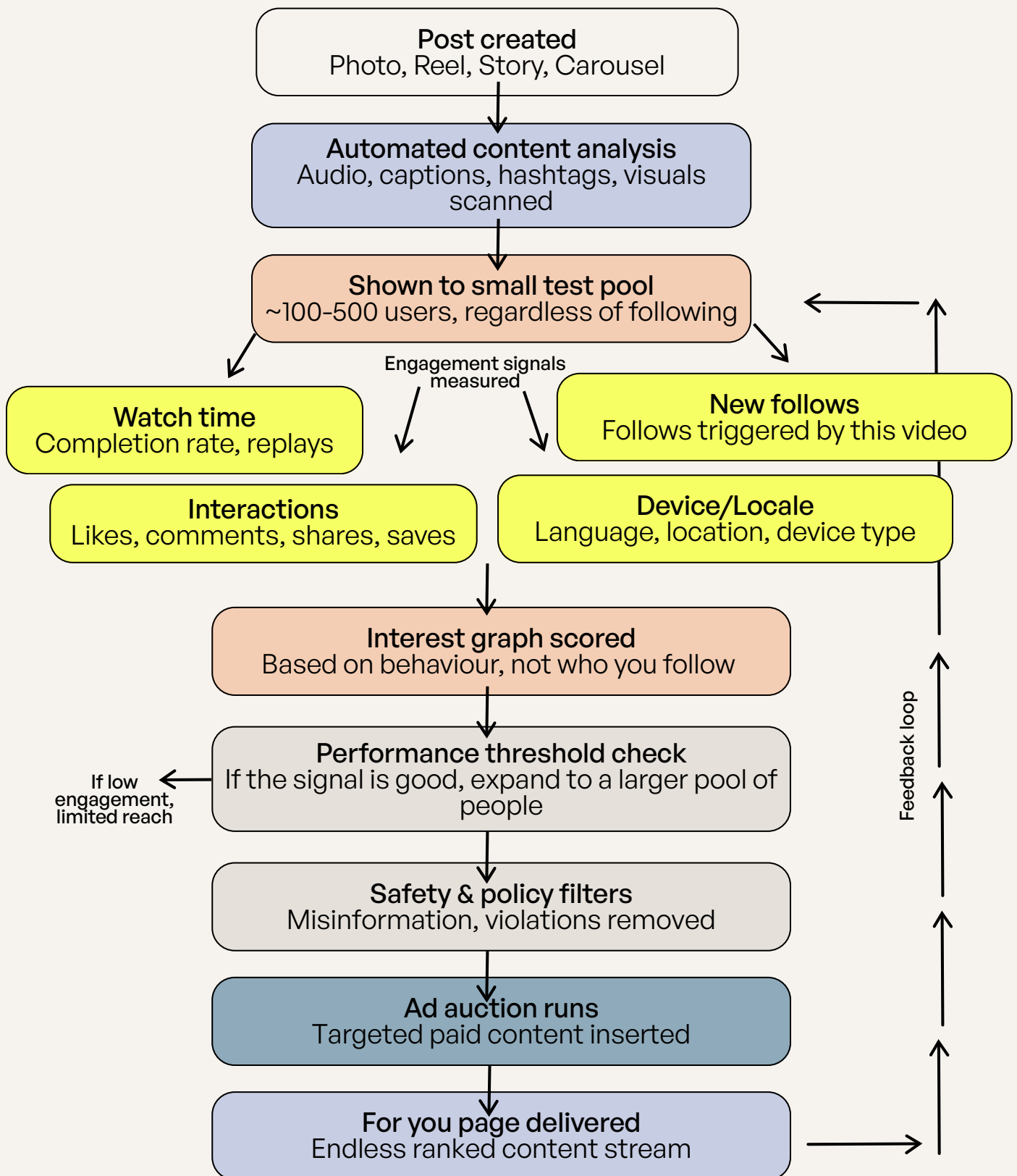
Attachment A: The data social media companies collect from us to inform their algorithms



Note: this information collection does not specifically relate to every single social media platform, but broadly reflects the data collected across Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp and other mainstream platforms.



Attachment B: A visual interpretation of an algorithm



Algorithmic recommender systems are rarely made available to the public. This visual interpretation does not claim to be entirely accurate, and is based upon the information we know from the TikTok Newsroom (2020) and public experience/commentary.

Analysis

Interest graph

Signals

Filters

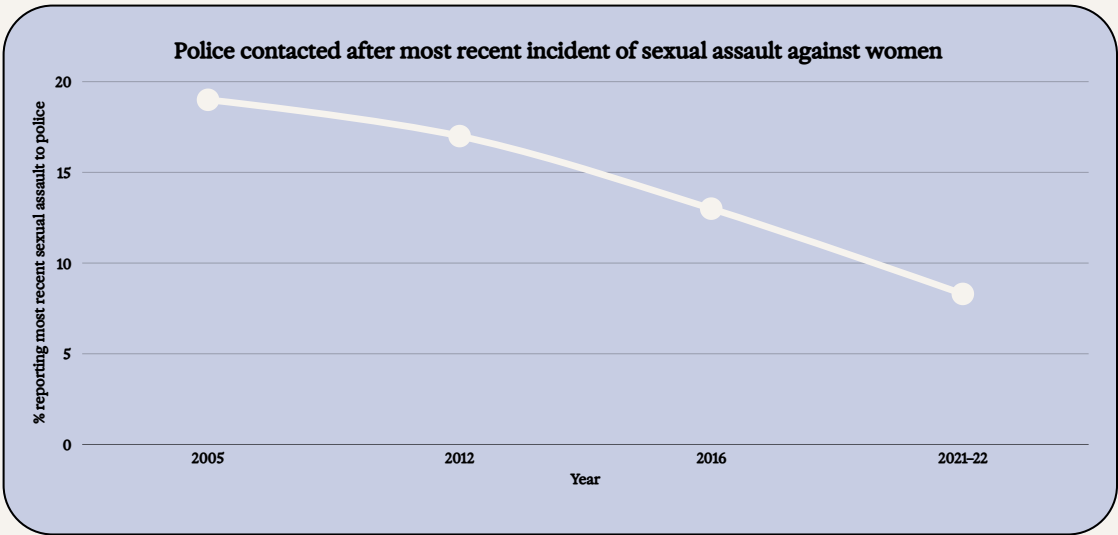
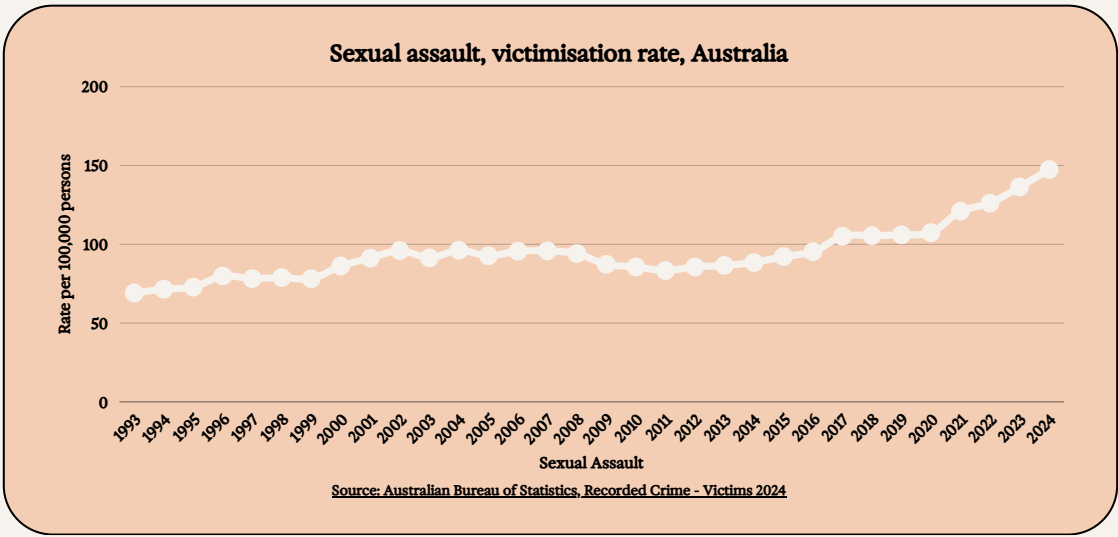
Ads



Attachment C: The State of Sexual Violence in Australia

Sexual violence across the country is rising (ABS, 2025), while reports of sexual assault made to police are falling (AIHW, 2026).

The rate of police reports of sexual assault fell from 13% to 8.3% in the 5 years between 2016 and 2021, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics Personal Safety Survey.



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