

# Supporting and promoting online safety in video games

**Our industry has a track record of making games that are played in a fun and safe way. Game companies offer a range of controls and settings that empower players and give parents the ability to control what games their children play, when and how they play games, and whether they communicate with others. We support sensible and appropriate online safety laws, and we will continue to collaborate with Australia's eSafety Commissioner and New Zealand's Netsafe on community awareness-raising.**

## Are online video games a safe place for children?

Online video games are some of the safest places for children to be connected to the internet, and video gaming is among the safest online activities that children can participate in. Unlike many popular online platforms, social media services and messaging services, most video games allow little to no interactivity outside of the gameplay experience, have limited and filtered chat functionality, and provide a wide range of family tools and settings that prioritise online safety.

## How does the video games industry help to protect children from harm?

Of the whole digital sector, video game companies have arguably implemented the broadest and most proactive range of safety features to provide a safe and fun online environment. Our industry takes a multi-level and multi-pronged approach to online safety that span all consoles and devices, as well as within games themselves. Key safety features include online safety companion apps, activity monitoring tools, account restrictions, privacy settings, age limits, internet filters, chat filters, and options for reporting, muting, blocking others. Many video game companies also have behaviour-focused codes of conduct which are actively enforced through warnings, suspensions, and bans. Our industry is constantly improving on these tools, and provides information and resources to educate players as well as parents and guardians on their use.

## How can governments most effectively support online safety in gaming?

We believe that the most effective way that governments can support our industry's action on online safety is to focus on community awareness-raising, particularly among children and their parents and carers, and to improve knowledge of safe digital practices and on the usage of family settings, tools, and functionalities that already exist that help to make gaming safe. Our research tells us that while only around 11 per cent of Australian and New Zealand parents were unfamiliar with family controls, around a third had only limited familiarity. We would love to do more work with Australia's eSafety Commissioner and New Zealand's Netsafe to help reach those parents.

While we believe awareness-raising should always be at the centrepiece of Australia and New Zealand's online safety policies, we support other policies if they are well-designed and evidence-based. However, we urge caution against regulatory interventions, especially if they take a 'one-size-fits-all' approach that treat games like social media and messaging services, which have different challenges, or impose the same expectations on companies regardless of size or scale.

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