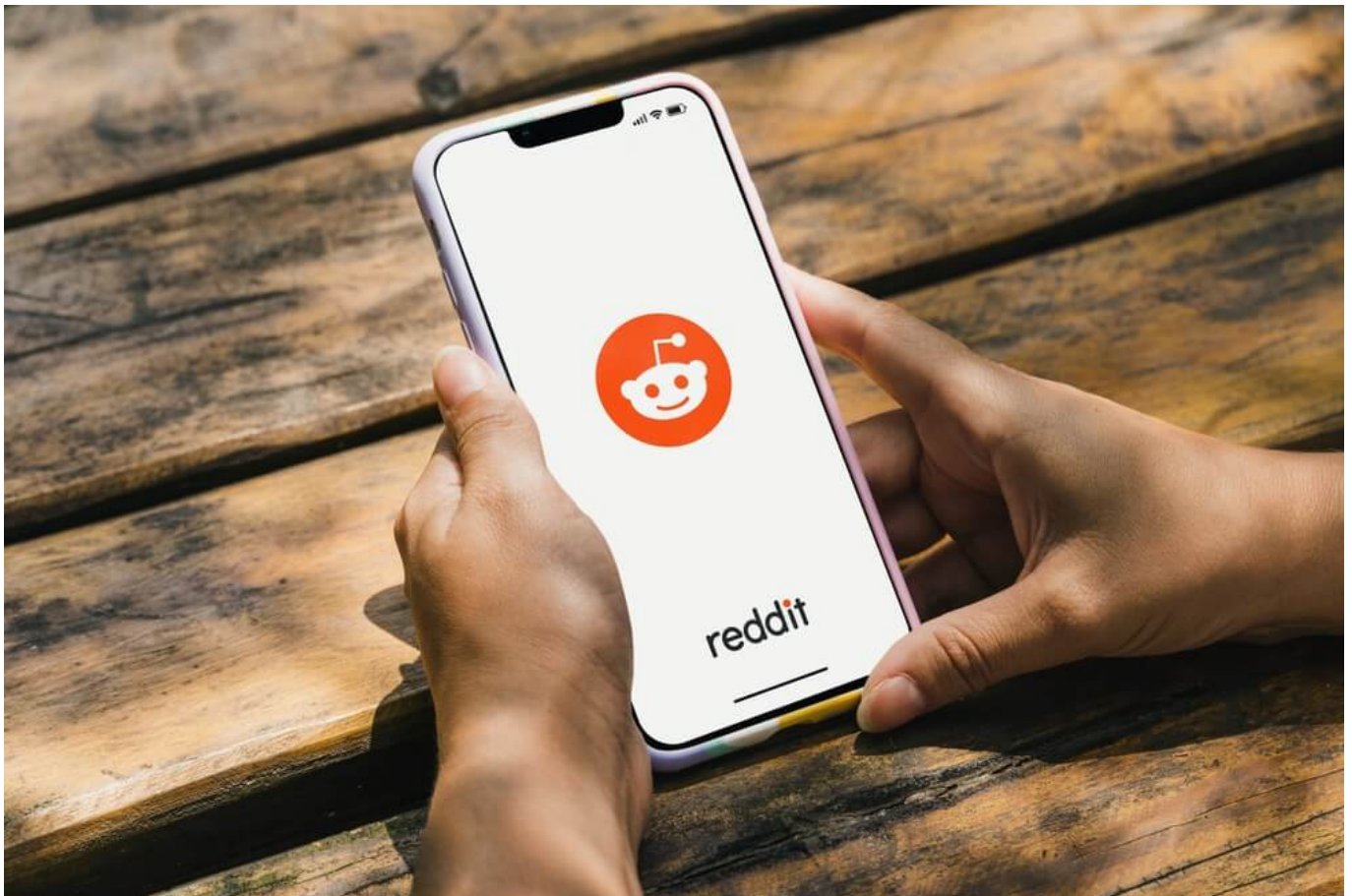




By: TA | AP Brief

Australia is expanding the list of social media platforms that will be banned for those under 16



Australia has added message board Reddit and livestreaming service Kick to its list of **social media platforms** that must ban children younger than 16 from holding accounts.

The platforms join Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Threads, TikTok, X and YouTube in facing a world-first legal obligation to shut the accounts of younger Australian children from Dec. 10, Communications Minister Anika Wells said on Wednesday.

Platforms that fail to take reasonable steps to exclude children younger than 16 could be punished with a fine of up to 50 million Australian dollars (\$33 million).

"We have met with several of the social media platforms in the past month so that they understand there is no excuse for failure to implement this law," Wells told reporters in Canberra.

"Online platforms use technology to target children with chilling control. We are merely asking that they use that same technology to keep children safe online," Wells added.

Australia's eSafety Commissioner **Julie Inman Grant**, who will enforce the social media ban, said the list of age-restricted platforms would evolve with new technologies.

The impact of the ban

The nine platforms currently age-restricted meet the key requirement that their "sole or significant purpose is to enable online social interaction," a government statement said.

Inman Grant said she would work with academics to evaluate the impacts of the ban, including whether children sleep or interact more or become more physically active.

"We'll also look for unintended consequences and we'll be gathering evidence" so that others could learn from Australia's achievements, Inman Grant said.

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European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen told a United Nations forum in New York in September that she was "inspired" by Australia's "common sense" move to legislate the age restriction.

Critics of the legislation fear that banning young children from social media will impact the privacy of all users, who must establish they are older than 16.

Wells recently said the government seeks to keep platform users' data as private as possible.

More than 140 Australian and international academics with expertise in fields related to technology and child welfare signed an open letter to Prime Minister Anthony Albanese last year opposing a social media age limit as "too blunt an instrument to address risks effectively."