

Online portal helps Australians impacted by image-based abuse

From tomorrow, Australians who have had intimate images or videos shared without their consent will be able to access tangible support and advice through an online portal being piloted by the Office of the eSafety Commissioner.

New research released by the eSafety Office reveals a significant number of Australians have experienced image-based abuse with statistics as high as 1 in 5 for women aged 18-45, and 1 in 4 for Indigenous Australians.

“This is a world-first government-led initiative, empowering Australians who experience this insidious form of abuse with practical information and a range of options to help resolve their situation and relieve their distress,” says eSafety Commissioner Julie Inman Grant.

The research shows victims’ intimate images were most commonly shared without consent on popular social media sites. Facebook/Messenger accounted for 53%, followed by Snapchat at 11% and then Instagram at 4%. Text messaging and MMS were other common channels for distribution.

“Australians will be able to report intimate images or videos that have been shared without their consent directly through to our portal. We will work with social media providers, websites and search engines to help facilitate the removal of the image-based abuse,” says Ms Inman Grant.

While the research revealed that image-based abuse had severe impacts on victims’ mental health and physical wellbeing, only one in four took action to resolve the issue, with 22 per cent indicating they didn’t know what to do.

“Our portal now gives victims a place to seek assistance. Understanding that Australians reporting to us are likely to be in distress, the portal provides clear and concise information about the steps victims can take to reduce the impact of the abuse, in an easy and intuitive way,” says Ms Inman Grant.

“During this pilot phase we plan to work closely with victims of image-based abuse and stakeholders, to help us ascertain the volume and complexity of reports and to inform the final features of our portal which will formally launch in early 2018,” adds Ms Inman Grant.

For more information, please visit: www.esafety.gov.au/imagebasedabuse